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Abstract of Ph.D. thesis entitled:

Repressions against veterans of the Home Army: Warszawa, Lublin and Kielce-Radom districts in the years 1956–1989.

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the community of Home Army veterans in the years 1956 – 1989 based on the example of Warszawa, Kielce, Radom and Lublin. After 1956, former soldiers of the Home Army, the biggest military formation in Poland during the Second World War, were a social and political elite, as well as an inspiration and role models for members of many communities, such as scholars, democratic opposition, young people of school age and university students. Throughout the existence of the Polish People's Republic, veterans of the Second World War who served in the Home Army were also treated as actual or potential enemies of communist authorities that ruled the country. Up to and including 1989, Home Army veterans found themselves among social and political groups that were under the most intensive investigation of the communist security apparatus. Its long-term plans and operational strategies aimed to bring about a disintegration of groups of people who fought for independence and had ties to the Home Army or post-war anti-Communist underground organizations.

The first chapter of the thesis discusses the establishment of veteran organizations in the years 1944 – 1949. It was inspired by the Polish Workers' Party. Their aim was for example to provide financial assistance to veterans of the Second World War. Such organizations were also formed to give authorities full supervision over their members, especially former Home Army soldiers. The Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy was formed in 1949. In September, a merging congress was held. It put an end to the operation of at least partially pluralistic veteran organizations and combined them into one monolithic society, controlled by a Stalinist management board.

The second chapter is devoted to issues related to Polish October 1956 and its impact on the revival of the Home Army community. Its key element is a presentation of plans and operational strategies of the communist security apparatus, which were directed against the community of Home Army veterans, in particular its former commanding officers from the Supreme

Command. An important element of this chapter is an analysis of changes in the Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy after 1956. I attempted to answer the question of how much these changes affected the position of veterans in the social and political system of the Polish People's Republic and within the society itself.

The third chapter is an attempt to present political concepts concerning the functioning of the Home Army community. The authors of these concepts were soldiers who had ties to the Supreme Command of the Home Army. This chapter also discusses different visions on the functioning of the Home Army community. An important issue was to prove that there were conflicts between the former officers from the Supreme Command of the Home Army as to their political plans.

The fourth chapter presents the activity of former Home Army soldiers in the country, as well as operational strategies of the Security Service directed against these soldiers. An important aspect in the analysis of this problem were discussions held at the meetings of the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. These discussions concentrated on the communists' attitude towards Home Army veterans.

The fifth chapter discusses the situation in the community of Second World War veterans and in the Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy when it was led by General Mieczysław Moczar. An important element of this chapter is an attempt to answer the question of how much the politics of this charismatic leader contributed to the fact that he was supported by Home Army soldiers. The sixth chapter presents the situation in groups of Second World War veterans when Edward Gierek was the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. An important element of this chapter is a presentation of the veterans' attitude towards democratic opposition (the Workers' Defence Committee and the Movement for Defence of Human and Civic Rights) and a discussion of their cooperation with the Catholic Church led by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński.

The seventh and final chapter discusses the situation within the community of Second World War veterans before and after the introduction of martial law in Poland. Another important element of these reflections is a

presentation of the establishment of veteran circles which operated as part of Solidarity (Independent Self-governing Trade Union "Solidarity") at the central and local level.

During the period of martial law in Poland and afterwards, the Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy was at the centre of attention of the Security Service. Positions in the society were filled with officers from the Polish People's Army. The security apparatus was trying to control the society and its members as much as possible.

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