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Abstract of Ph. D. thesis entitled:

**The struggle without victory. Partisan unit of Zdzisław Broński „Uskok”
1944-1949**

The aim of this thesis was an attempt to recreate the history of the partisan unit of the Home Army - Armed Forces Delegation for Poland - Freedom and Independence Association (AK-DSZ-WiN) led by 2nd Lt./Capt. Zdzisław Broński “Uskok”. While the commandant is one of the most recognizable field commanders of the underground of the post-war period (popularized, among others, thanks to his notes published in the form of a diary), the history of the group under his command has not yet been the subject of detailed analysis.

Functioning almost continuously from April 1944 to May 1949, the "Uskok's" partisan unit was one of the most active armed formations of the independence underground in the Lublin region. After the amnesty of February 1947, it also remained one of the strongest groups actively resisting communists in this part of the country. It came from the local structures of the AK Lubartów District, initially operating as a “wild” group, and then as the 6th platoon of the 8th infantry regiment of the Home Army legions. After the disbanding of the Home Army, it was subordinate to the command of the DSZ-WiN Lubartów District, and from May 1946 to the command of forest-based units of the WiN Lublin Inspectorate. From the fall of 1947, it was active in practice as an independent armed group, not associated with any superior underground structure.

Based on the available sources and materials, the combat achievements of the unit from 1944-1949 were presented. All the most important military actions were analyzed in detail, provisioning or ordering actions were not omitted. The attention was paid to the internal functioning of the unit, the role of the commander and staff representatives, which are of considerable importance in the activities of irregular formations. Much space was devoted to the constantly changing structure of the group. As much as possible, efforts were made to bring the everyday life of partisans closer and – more widely – to the functioning of the unit as a social structure, where, apart from the military hierarchy, there were also dependencies and interpersonal relations. During the reconstruction of activities, a lot of space was devoted to the attitudes of soldiers towards the civilian population, their views on the fight and even morale were taken into account.

Functioning in the reality of the ubiquitous terror, lawlessness and military superiority of communists, the unit often took radical and ruthless steps against the widely understood opponent (from uniformed services to civilians connected to a varying degree with the new "system"). Their emanation was, among others, numerous liquidation actions, the scale of which (i.e. the number of victims) and their legitimacy raise many doubts today. These operations, which are one of the most important parts of the group's activity, are devoted to significant parts of the dissertation. Efforts have been made not only to find out their causes, but also to reconstruct them thoroughly and to point out their repercussions.

The unit operated in three distinguishable periods of independence guerrilla activity: in the final months of German occupation, when the partisan movement developed spontaneously; in the years 1945-1947 – in the extremely difficult and turbulent years of political transformation and the appropriation of the state by the communists; finally, after the amnesty of 1947 – under conditions of overwhelming advantage of the power of security apparatus, which ruthlessly liquidated the last centres of armed resistance. Therefore, efforts were made to spot the similarities and differences at each stage of the branch's activities. This was particularly true of the changes taking place in its tactics, activities and directions of its actions, its numbers, methods and conditions of "storing" itself in the field (the latter aspect was directly related to the scale of support provided by the civilian population and its gradual reorientation).

Relatively much space has been devoted to the actions of the opposing side. The evolution of the forms of combating the group by units subordinate to the Ministry of Public Security (MBP) was traced, both in the military and operational dimensions. The tactics of the operational groups, their activity, as well as the scale of repression related to the undertaken pacification actions were shown. Furthermore, the non-legal aspects of fighting the unit were presented: the activity of sham groups and "death squads". Much space is devoted to crimes and individual murders committed against civilians during counter-partisan operations.

The dissertation has been divided into an introduction, ten chapters and a conclusion. The adopted structure is chronological, only the last chapter has a problematic character. The first nine chapters discuss in detail the history of the group, from its origins and march into the field in April 1944, to its symbolic and actual end, associated with the complete breakdown of the unit's structures in the spring of 1949 and the death of its commander (21 May 1949). The last chapter is of a summarizing character. It presents the structure and numbers of the unit in different periods of its functioning, characterizes the profiles of the most important representatives of the command staff, and describes the weaponry, uniforms and equipment. There was also an attempt to show the everyday life of partisans and the state of discipline in

the ranks of the group. The methods of maintaining the unit in the field, as well as forms of provisioning and financing were presented. Finally, a balance sheet of its five years of armed activity was made.

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