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The Institutions of Security and Public Order in the System of the Polish People's Republic on the Example of the Citizens' Militia

Instytucje bezpieczeństwa i porządku publicznego w ustroju PRL-u na przykładzie Milicji Obywatelskiej

Abstract

The aim of the article is to present the formation of the Citizens' Militia as one of the institutions guarding security and public order in the period of the Polish People's Republic. The author synthetically analyzes the "security system" of the totalitarian state, showing changes at the turn of the years in the functioning of the Citizens' Militia, which were largely dependent on the political situation in the period of the People's Republic of Poland. The author synthetically shows the changes in the functioning of this formation which took place at the turn of the years, and which were largely dependent on the political situation during the period of the Polish People's Republic. The conclusion is that the MO at that time was heavily dependent on the political events that took place in the years 1944–1990 (i.e. the Thaw '53, June '56 or December '70).

Keywords: Citizens' Militia, totalitarianism, Polish People's Republic, security institutions, public order, security in People's Poland.

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie formacji Milicji Obywatelskiej jako jednej z instytucji stojących na straży bezpieczeństwa i porządku publicznego w okresie PRL-u. Autor w sposób syntetyczny ukazuje zmiany na przełomie lat w funkcjonowaniu tej formacji, które w znacznym stopniu uzależnione były od sytuacji politycznej. Konkluzją jest to, że MO w tym okresie była mocno uzależniona od wydarzeń politycznych, jakie miały miejsce w latach 1944–1990 (tj. Odwilż '53, Czerwiec '56 czy Grudzień '70).

Słowa kluczowe: Milicja Obywatelska, Polska Republika Ludowa, instytucje bezpieczeństwa, porządek publiczny, bezpieczeństwo w Polsce Ludowej.

1. Introduction

Taking up the issue of defining the Citizens' Militia (hereinafter called MO) as an institution of security and public order in the period of the Polish People's Republic, the reflections conducted here focus on the issue of the functioning of the MO in the period from the end of World War II to the period of great social, economic and political changes that took place at the turn of the 80–90s of the last century in Poland. Before assessing this model of formation, it is necessary to point out the political conditions of the events that took place in Poland starting from 1944. Poland of the post-war period found itself in the bloc of socialist countries, the sphere of influence of the communist USSR. As a result, there were no potential or real possibilities to return to the pre-war system of state structures, and thus also to restore the institutions of security and public order. Systemic solutions of the 'puppet' PKWN and KRN benefiting from the support of the USSR were imposed on Poland¹. Z. Jakubowski, writing about the dissolution of the National Police, claimed: "the cited legal act was a consequence of the implementation of one of the tasks of the people's revolution, resulting from the Marxist-Leninist teaching on the need to overthrow the old, bourgeois state machine and the construction of a new state apparatus. In Polish conditions, such a solution was also necessary due to the role played by the National Police until 1939, and some of its officers also during the occupation"². As T. Pączek rightly points out, the Citizens' Militia was an element of the Polish communist state, just like every police force in the world, it used secret collaborators in its work. The instructions were often contrary to law of the time and often violated human and civil rights. It should be noted that in the Stalinist years, they were also a tool in combating political opponents³. As a result of these activities, the system of security authorities of the People's Republic of Poland was based on totalitarian assumptions. In 1956, Carl J. Friedrich together with Z. Brzeziński published the classic work *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*⁴, articulating five features of totalitarianism⁵. As L. Mażewski notes, the theory of totalitarianism created by them would be a point of reference for research

¹ P. Dobosz, *Modele administracji policyjnej w zmieniających się uwarunkowaniach istnienia Polski* [in:] *100-lecie Policji. Organizacja i funkcjonowanie*, eds. E. Ura, M. Pomykała, S. Pieprzny, Rzeszów 2019, p. 23.

² Z. Jakubowski, *Franciszek Jóźwiak – Witold. Życie i działalność*, Warszawa 1974, p. 190 et seq.

³ More: T. Pączek, *Agencja Milicji obywatelskiej w świetle instrukcji operacyjnych*, "IBN Studia nad Bezpieczeństwem" 2016, Issue 1, p. 65 et seq.

⁴ C.J. Friedrich, Z.K. Brzeziński, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, Cambridge, Mass. 1956, pp. 9–11.

⁵ This is: 1) an all-encompassing and imposed ideology with chiliastic characteristics; 2) a hierarchically organized and ideologically passionate mass party; 3) control over the armed forces; 4) modern organized control over the means of mass communication; 5) using not only mass terror but also the achievements of psychology to control the social masses.

on sovietization, but this soon turned out to be an illusion. The totalitarian model did not explain the process of transformation launched in the USSR after the death of Joseph Stalin, turning out to be too static⁶. As H. Arendt notes, with the end of the era of the Soviet dictator, an authentic, though never ambiguous, process of detotalitarianization began in the USSR⁷. Therefore, in the Polish People's Republic, the literature of the subject distinguishes the period of totalitarianism which functioned until 1956, with the starting date of which remains disputed: 1944 or 1948. "At least from 1948, a system of totalitarian government was introduced in Poland, with the communists hiding their anti-democratic and repressive activities behind the propaganda formula of «building socialism»"⁸. The second period, dating from 1956 to 1989, is the time of detotalitarianization of the system, i.e. the transition from the growth phase to the descending phase characterized by, among others, the indoctrination of the security services, the lack of free courts, and the repression of citizens. T. Scheffler rightly notes that there is a qualitative, not a quantitative difference between authoritarianism and totalitarianism (for example, the difference in the scale of violence)⁹.

2. Liquidation of the National Police, creation of the Citizens' Militia

The end of World War II led to structural and systemic changes, which also concerned the structures of the pre-war National Police that was dissolved by the PKWN Decree of August 15, 1944¹⁰. The Citizens' Militia was created, which functioned in various organizational structures until 1990¹¹.

"In the system of socialist power, the institutions of security and public order played an important role. Their tasks did not focus only on combating criminal crime, protecting life and health, but also covered the sphere of ideological and

⁶ See: L. Mażewski, *O totalitaryzmie i procesie detotalitaryzacji. Przypadek PRL*, "Przegląd Sejmowy" 2022, No. 2(169), pp. 223–231.

⁷ H. Arendt, *Korzenie totalitaryzmu*, Warszawa 1989, p. 16 et seq. From the Introduction to the Polish edition by D. Grinberg, we learn that totalitarian systems do change, but without reference to the detotalitarianization process that took place in the People's Republic of Poland (L. Mażewski, *O totalitaryzmie...*, *op.cit.*, p. 226).

⁸ R. Spałek, *O totalitaryzmie i komunistach w PRL*, <https://przystanekhistoria.pl/pa2/teksty/83659,O-totalitaryzmie-i-komunistach-w-PRL.html> [access: 20.07.2023].

⁹ T. Scheffler, *Przestępstwo publicznego propagowania faszystowskiego lub innego totalitarnego ustroju państwa (art. 256 k.k.). Analiza doktrynologiczna wybranych wypowiedzi piśmiennictwa i judykatury*, "Studia nad Autorytaryzmem i Totalitaryzmem" 2018, Vol. 40, No. 4, p. 155.

¹⁰ Journal of Laws No. 2, item 6.

¹¹ Cf. K. Kędziński, *Kształtowanie się struktur i organów Policji w Polsce*, "Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Informatyki Zarządzania i Administracji w Warszawie" 2013, No. 1(22), p. 92 et seq.

political influence on the society. The years 1944–1947 were the time of fierce power struggle between the communists supported by the Red Army and the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the USSR (NKWD) and the London camp¹².

The PKWN Decree of 7 October, 1944, on the Citizens' Militia¹³ was the first legal act after World War II that concerned security and public order. Article 1 of this Decree stated: "The Citizens' Militia is a legal and public formation of the Public Security Service", which stipulated that the newly established formation was directly subordinate to the Ministry of Public Security. As P. Dobosz rightly points out, it was a political repression against policemen guarding the pre-war democratic legal order¹⁴. The tasks of the militia included: protection of security, peace and public order; investigation and prosecution of crimes; execution of orders of administrative authorities, courts and prosecutor's office within the scope provided for by law (Article 2). It was a formation organized according to a military model. The organization of the MO was adapted to the territorial division of the state. In the voivodships there were voivodeship headquarters, headed by the voivodeship commander, in the powiats – powiat stations headed by powiat commanders, while at the lowest level there were local stations and MO stations¹⁵. The Commander-in-Chief of the Citizens' Militia was the head of this formation. He was appointed and dismissed by the PKWN at the request of the head of Public Security and reported directly to this manager. The Head of Public Security also determined the manner of appointment, transfer and dismissal of officers, the internal organizational structure and the detailed scope of activities and service relations in the Citizens' Militia¹⁶.

The scope of activity of the Citizens' Militia was defined very broadly, so that it could be used for political and propaganda purposes, as well as to fight against opponents of the ruling camp in the country after 1944. Social control in the field of legality, expediency and compliance with the directions of action of the State National Council over the activities of the Citizens' Militia was exercised by national councils. A number of coordination and control powers in relation to the militia were also granted to general administration bodies, i.e. voivodes and starosts¹⁷.

By the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of February 21, 1946, the Voluntary Reserve of the Citizens' Militia (ORMO) was established¹⁸. It was an armed formation organized on a military model. The main task of the ORMO was to

¹² A. Misiuk, *Historia Policji w Polsce od X wieku do współczesności*, Warszawa 2008, p. 171.

¹³ Journal of Laws No. 7, item 33.

¹⁴ P. Dobosz, *Modele administracji...*, *op.cit.*, p. 24.

¹⁵ K. Kędziński, *Kształtowanie się struktur...*, p. 93 et seq.

¹⁶ E. Ura, *Milicja Obywatelska w PRL. Pozycja prawna i zakres działania*, Warszawa 1975, p. 11.

¹⁷ S. Bolesta, *Pozycja prawna MO w systemie organów PRL*, Warszawa 1973, p. 17 et seq.

¹⁸ Resolution of the Council of Ministers – not published (Author's own collection).

strengthen the activities of the MO by using the civic (social) factor. The tasks of these units also included supporting the activities of the ruling camp, protecting security and public order, as well as fighting against hostile activities directed against the people's state¹⁹.

At the end of the forties of the last century, the militia was subordinated to the bodies of the Ministry of Public Security. Militia commanders also functioned as deputy heads of public security offices for militia affairs. Full responsibility for the state of security and public order was imposed on the heads of these offices²⁰. In this way, powers in the field of protection of security and public order were concentrated in the local organs of the Ministry of Internal Security. The MO task changes also began. The legal and underground opposition was liquidated, and consequently, the main tasks of the militia had to be transformed. The Soviet model was used, which assumed the introduction of repressions, an atmosphere of fear, suspicion, and which acted in such a way as to terrorize the society. The MO and the Ministry of Public Security were engaged to implement this policy. The priority of the political and educational division was changed, and therefore from that moment it was to deal with the strengthening of social feelings of friendship towards the Soviet Union²¹.

“In connection with the ever wider tasks imposed on the Citizens' Militia, new organizational units were established in the headquarters. On the basis of the Resolution of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of July 18, 1951, the Central Bureau of Population Registration and ID Cards was established at the Headquarters of the Citizens' Militia”²². As S. Pieprzny rightly points out, in the years 1944–1954 there were strong connotations and subordination of the MO to the Ministry of Public Security²³.

On April 6, 1950, on the basis of an order, the Minister of Public Security²⁴ ordered the Commander-in-Chief of the MO to reorganize the structure of all MO units as of May 15, 1950. This order liquidated the division of the investigative service, and instead established a division of criminal service.

¹⁹ Cf. more: J. Pytel, *Ochotnicza Rezerwa Milicji Obywatelskiej (1946–1989)*, Warszawa 2009, p. 10 et seq. See also: B. Jaworski, A. Zygadło, *Policja w ujęciu retrospektywnym. Historia i terażniejszość Policji w Łańcutie*, Łańcut 2017, p. 34 et seq.

²⁰ MBP Order No. 13 of 18 March 1949 (L. Dz. AC 072/40) [in:] E. Ura, *Milicja Obywatelska...*, *op.cit.*, p.12.

²¹ A. Misiuk, *Historia Policji...*, *op.cit.*, p. 177.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 178.

²³ S. Pieprzny, *Relatywizm wartości etyczno-moralnych funkcjonariuszy służb policyjnych w Polsce w latach 1919–2019* [in:] *100-lecie Policji. Organizacja i funkcjonowanie*, eds. E. Ura, M. Po-mykała, S. Pieprzny, Rzeszów 2019, p. 34.

²⁴ Organizational Order No. 031/org. of Minister of Public Security of 6 April 1950 [in:] B. Kopka, *Akty normatywne kierownictwa resortu bezpieczeństwa publicznego (1944–1956)*, Warszawa 2011, p. 1090 et seq.

3. The Thaw '53

Stalin's death in 1953 led not only to a thaw in public life, but also in the activities of public security organs. In Poland, on February 24, 1953, General A.E. Fieldorf "Nil" was murdered. In Polish reality, the political "thaw" was associated with a change in the internal policy of the Polish United Workers' Party and the assumption of the function of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party by W. Gomułka in October 1956. In the spring of 1954, the Central Dactyloscopic Registry and the laboratory of expertise were transferred to the militia. They were transformed into the Department of Forensic Science, which became the central research institution performing forensic expertise. Voivodeship forensic laboratories were established in the local units of the Citizens' Militia, whereas the posts of forensic technicians were introduced in powiats²⁵.

In 1954, changes in the functioning of the Ministry of Public Security began. Significant changes in the functioning of the militia during the Polish People's Republic were brought about by the Decree on the Citizens' Militia of 20 July, 1954²⁶. This Decree repealed the provisions of the PKWN Decree of 7 October, 1944 about the Citizens' Militia²⁷. The solutions adopted in the Decree were an important step towards making the militia independent of political tasks. However, the principle that the militia formation is part of the public security service was maintained. According to Article 1, the militia was defined as 'a military model and armed formation of the public security service', closely associated with the Ministry of Public Security. The tasks of the militia included guarding the internal law and order, waging an inexorable fight against all activities contrary to the will of the working people, protecting social property, guarding the safety, property and peace of citizens. The scope of activities of the Citizens' Militia included in particular: guarding the internal law and order; protecting social property and the safety and property of citizens; counteracting crime and crime prevention; conducting preparatory proceedings in criminal cases, carrying out orders of prosecutors and courts and other competences of state authorities – to the extent provided for by law (Article 2). It should be noted that the post-war legal regulations broke with the term 'Blue Police' or 'National Police', replacing it with the term 'militia', which referred to the Soviet models of the time.

Important in the organization of the Citizens' Militia was the Decree of December 7, 1954, on the supreme organs of state administration in the field of internal affairs and public security²⁸. Pursuant to the Decree, the Ministry of Public Security

²⁵ A. Misiuk, *Historia Policji...*, *op.cit.*, s. 178.

²⁶ Journal of Laws No. 34, item 143.

²⁷ Decree of 20 July 1954, on the Citizens' Militia (Journal of Laws of 1954, No. 34, item 143).

²⁸ Journal of Laws No. 54, item 269.

was liquidated, and in its place the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Committee for Public Security at the Council of Ministers were established. In the new organizational reality, the Citizens' Militia was separated from the organs of public security, and found itself within the structural framework of the Minister of Internal Affairs. At the same time, the activities of the militia were subject to supervision and control of the national councils functioning at that time²⁹.

During the social and economic changes that took place in the mid-fifties of the last century, the tasks of the ORMO also changed. On the basis of the ORMO Statute of 1955³⁰, it was transformed from a paramilitary organization into a voluntary social organization with elected organs (commissioner, commander). The statute also introduced changes in the organizational structure while maintaining the subordination of the ORMO to the Citizens' Militia. A new task of this organization was preventive – educational activity consisting in the fight against hooliganism, disrespect for state property, or disturbing public order. It seems important to indicate also broad competences in the field of participation in various types of social actions or deeds³¹.

The next legal act concerning the functioning of the militia was the Decree of December 21, 1955, on the organization and scope of activities of the Citizens' Militia. According to the Decree, the Citizens' Militia was an armed formation, established to protect peace, law and order and public security (Article 1). It was subordinate to the Minister of Internal Affairs, who managed its activities (Article 2). Characteristically, it wasn't the commissioners but the headquarters, voivodeship, municipal, powiat and district headquarters, stations and offices (Article 4) that were established as authorities. The tasks of the Citizens' Militia included, among others: maintaining public safety; protection of peace, public law and order; protection of life and health of citizens; protection of social property and property of citizens; preventing and counteracting crime, organising the fight against crime and developing effective methods of combating it; conducting preliminary proceedings in criminal cases, carrying out orders from prosecution authorities, public security investigative bodies and courts – to the extent provided for by law; execution of orders of national councils and their presidiums – to the extent provided for by law; ensuring compliance with trade regulations, fire protection, sanitary and order regulations in open places, public order regulations in the railway area, marinas, beaches and bathing areas and other public places; ensuring compliance with traffic

²⁹ Resolution No. 140 of the Council of Ministers of 19 February 1955, on the supervision and control of the presidiums of national councils over the activities of the Citizens' Militia (M.P. No. 19, item 191).

³⁰ Order No. 223/55 of the Minister of Internal Affairs of November 19, 1955 on the statute of the Volunteer Reserve of the Citizens' Militia (MSW Journal of Laws No. 7, item 48).

³¹ Cf. J. Pytel, *Ochotnicza Rezerwa...*, *op.cit.*, p. 133 et seq. More: B. Jaworski, A. Żygadło, *Policja w ujęciu...*, p. 35 et seq.

and road traffic regulations; issuing identity cards and keeping population registers; registration of foreigners³².

On the basis of the above, one can observe the interference of the state in the social life of citizens³³. The MO officers used numerous preventive powers. These included: arrests of persons suspected of committing a crime, identification of persons for the purpose of establishing their identity, use of direct coercive measures, including firearms, the use of which was treated as a last resort³⁴.

The new organizational structure of the MO, which was formed in the years 1954–1956, was characterized by lability and was created in stages. This was influenced by the political transformations taking place in the Polish People's Republic and the changing normative acts that affected the functioning of the MO.

4. June '56

This situation changed a year later, because under the Act of 13 November, 1956, on the change of the organization of supreme public administration bodies in the field of public security³⁵, the Committee for Public Security at the Council of Ministers was liquidated (Article 1). Matters within the scope of its activity were referred to the Minister of Internal Affairs. In this way, the affairs concerning security and public order were again combined in the hands of one body of the supreme state administration, but in a different dimension of competence³⁶. Local security service organs were located organizationally in the headquarters of the Citizens' Militia. As P. Majer points out, the Security Service constantly played a dominant role in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Representatives of this division usually held the highest positions in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and local units³⁷.

It is impossible not to mention that the organizational formation of the organs of the Citizens' Militia was also influenced by political events. After the Poznań events, by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Polish People's Republic of 24 December, 1956, the Motorized Reserves of the Citizens' Militia (ZOMO) were established. The ZOMO functioned on a military basis and was a barracked paramilitary formation created to 'liquidate collective violations of public order'. It was a formation often used for special activities, for example, dispersing manifestations. In practice, the ZOMO formation was used for activities aimed at fighting

³² Journal of Laws No. 46, item 311.

³³ More: K. Kędziński, *Kształtowanie się struktur...*, *op.cit.*, p. 96 et seq.

³⁴ Cf. A. Misiuk, *Historia Policji...*, p. 181.

³⁵ Journal of Laws No. 54, item 241.

³⁶ E. Ura, *Milicja Obywatelska...*, *op.cit.*, p. 15.

³⁷ P. Majer, *Milicja Obywatelska 1944–1957. Geneza, organizacja, działalność, miejsce w aparacie władz*, Olsztyn 2004, pp. 262–268.

opponents of the socialist system. It was used on a large scale during the March 1968 operations in Warsaw and in the bloody crackdown on protesting workers on the Coast in December, 1970³⁸. "The ZOMO units operated in each voivodeship city, as well as a dozen or so companies in large agglomerations. In 1974, the Commander-in-Chief of the MO significantly expanded the scope of the tasks of ZOMO. These included, among others pursuing particularly dangerous criminals, or conducting police operations in conditions of serious threat or violation of public security and law and order"³⁹. The ZOMO units were dissolved by the order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of September 7, 1989⁴⁰.

At the turn of the fifties and sixties of the last century, the organizational structure of the MO changed. In 1957, operational and investigative groups appeared at the municipal and powiat level, which were later transformed into establishments called 'referaty'. From June 1, 1964, in cities with powiat rights, the city and powiat stations were established. In other cities, powiat stations continued to function. The exceptions were two voivodeship cities: Warsaw and Łódź, in which municipal stations of the MO operated, treated as equivalent to voivodeship stations. In other voivodeship cities, however, district MO stations operated⁴¹.

The duties and powers of the Citizens' Militia also increased as a result of changes in the Criminal Code that took place in the fifties of the last century. It is worth mentioning the tightening of criminal liability in relation to hooligans, which increased the scope of powers of the militia bodies⁴². Pursuant to the Act of 14 July, 1961, on the registration and control of population traffic⁴³, the MO was obliged to supervise the observance of the registration obligation by citizens. On the other hand, the Act of 17 June, 1966, on enforcement proceedings in administration ensured that the MO participated in enforcement proceedings in administration⁴⁴.

The beginning of the sixties of the twentieth century is a period of introduction of modern techniques in militia work in the field of forensics⁴⁵. A system of criminal registration of suspects, fingerprints, shells, firearms and tools used to commit a crime was created. Certain changes in the functioning and organization of the MO units were implemented. It began with the creation of new tactical and reconnaissance services, i.e. the so-called operational services. New types of crime led to the reorganization of the services of the criminal division. Other divisions

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ A. Misiuk, *Historia Policji...*, *op.cit.*, s. 181. More: T. Walichnowski, *Ochrona bezpieczeństwa państwa i porządku publicznego w Polsce 1944–1988*, Warszawa 1989, p. 152.

⁴⁰ Order No 071/89 of 1989 of the Minister of the Internal Affairs (IPN BU 1585/11730).

⁴¹ Decree of 21 December, 1955, on organization and scope of action of Citizens' Militia (Journal of Laws of 1955, No. 46, item 311). Cf. more: T. Pączek, *Agentura Milicji...*, *op.cit.*, p. 77.

⁴² Journal of Laws No. 34, item 152.

⁴³ Journal of Laws No. 33, item 164.

⁴⁴ Journal of Laws No. 24, item 151

⁴⁵ More: K. Kędzierski, *Kształtowanie się struktur...*, *op.cit.*, p. 98 et seq.

were created, among others, to combat counterfeiting and fraud. For the purpose of protecting state property, a division for combating economic crime was established⁴⁶.

Economic and technical evolutions that took place at the turn of the sixties and seventies of the twentieth century also had a huge impact on changes in the Citizens' Militia. A new division called the road traffic service was created, headed by the Road Traffic Inspectorate in KGMO, transformed in 1965 into the Road Traffic Control Department, which also functioned in the MO field units. In 1972, due to the growing traffic in Poland, the Road Safety Coordination Committee was established, which included representatives of selected ministries and organizations dealing with safety in land traffic⁴⁷.

5. December '70

The first half of the seventies brought about repeated changes in the organizational structure of the MO. The assumption of power in Poland by Gierek in December, 1970, brought a certain liberalization also in the sphere of militia activity. It commenced a period of 'Gierek's' openness to the world, a certain modernization of Poland, socio-economic changes, which in the first half of the seventies resulted in an improvement in the standard of living and high hopes for the future⁴⁸. The Act of 28 May, 1975, on the two-stage administrative division of the State and amending the Act on National Councils⁴⁹, led to further organizational changes in the MO – they were directly related to the reform of the administrative division. After the liquidation of powiats, some of the competences and tasks were taken over by the voivodeship headquarters, the rest were transferred to lower-level units: municipal and district offices, MO commands and stations. The lack of an intermediate link led to organizational problems related to the management of militia structures, which consequently contributed to the introduction of a new model of organization in 1983⁵⁰.

The Act of 14 July, 1983, on the office of the Minister of the Internal Affairs and the scope of activities of subordinate bodies⁵¹ together with the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 18 August, 1983, on the detailed scope of activities of the Minister of Internal Affairs⁵², defined the minister as the supreme body of state administration in the field of protection of state security and public order, as well as protection against unlawful attacks on human life and health, as well as the material

⁴⁶ Cf. A. Misiuk, *Historia Policji...*, *op.cit.*, p. 184.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 184 et seq.

⁴⁸ W.J. Mikusinski, *Ruch zwiqzkowy funkcjonariuszy MO w 1981 r. Zarys historii*, Warszawa 2015, p. 10.

⁴⁹ Journal of Laws No. 16, item 91.

⁵⁰ Cf. A. Misiuk, *Historia Policji...*, *op.cit.*, p. 185.

⁵¹ Journal of Laws No. 38, item 172.

⁵² Journal of Laws No. 48, item 216.

and cultural heritage of the state. Pursuant to the Act, the Minister of Internal Affairs performed his tasks through the Security Service, the Citizens' Militia, subordinate military units and the fire brigade (Article 5). Tasks in the field of protection of state security and public order became included in the basic tasks of the Security Service and the Citizens' Militia. The Act fundamentally changed the organisational structure of the militia and in territorial division units established the following as local organs of the Minister of Internal Affairs: the heads of voivodeship internal affairs offices, the heads of regional⁵³, municipal and district internal affairs offices, as well as commanders of militia offices and stations (Article 5(4)).

6. The period of great social and political changes, the end of the Polish People's Republic – the creation of the Police

The social and political transformations which began in 1989 influenced the creation of a new formation of security and public order – the Police – by the Act of 6 April, 1990⁵⁴. Upon the entry into force of the Police Act, the Act on the Office of the Minister of Internal Affairs and the scope of activities of his subordinate bodies, as well as the Act of 31 July, 1985, on the service of officers of the Security Service and the Citizens' Militia, ceased to apply⁵⁵. Thus, the services subordinate to the Minister of Internal Affairs operating in the previous system were liquidated, and in their place new formations for the protection of state security⁵⁶ and security and public order were established.

It is impossible not to agree with S. Pieprzny, who, assessing the 45-year activity of the MO, emphasizes that during the so-called consolidation of people's power, there were numerous instances of abuse and exceeding the powers of the MO officers. All those who did so should bear individual responsibility for the iniquities committed. At the same time, it should be emphasized that in this formation, in all periods of its activity, served many functionaries observing ethical and moral principles. Many of them died in the service and many lost their health while performing official tasks related to guarding public safety and order⁵⁷.

To sum up, the Citizens' Militia as an institution of security and public order in the period of the Polish People's Republic at various times carried out not only tasks

⁵³ Cf. the Ordinance of the Minister of Internal Affairs of 27 December, 1985, on the territorial scope of operation of regional internal affairs offices and their subordinate units (M.P. No. 48, item 313).

⁵⁴ Consolidated text of Journal of Laws of 2011 No. 287, item 1687, as amended. More: K. Kędzierski, *Kształtowanie się struktur...*, *op.cit.*, p. 99.

⁵⁵ Journal of Laws No. 38, item 182.

⁵⁶ Pursuant to the Act of 6 April 1990, the Office of State Protection was established (Journal of Laws No. 30, item 180).

⁵⁷ S. Pieprzny, *Relatywizm wartości...*, *op.cit.*, p. 34.

typical for these bodies, but sometimes of a military or political nature. It should be noted that the functioning of the MO in the period of the Polish People's Republic was strongly dependent on political, social or economic events that took place in the years 1944–1990 (June '56, March '68, December '70). Despite the fact that the legal position of the Citizens' Militia in the system of public administration bodies was shaped differently during this period, it should be emphasized that regardless of subordination, organizational structure, scope of tasks, it was always an armed formation, serving the state, whose purpose was to protect security and public order. A negative aspect of the functioning of this formation was the elementary violation of human and civil rights as well as activities related to combating the independence underground.

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- Act of July 14, 1961 on the registration and control of population movement (Journal of Laws No. 33, item 164).
- Act of June 17, 1966 on enforcement proceedings in administration (Journal of Laws No. 24, item 151).
- Act of May 28, 1975 on the two-stage administrative division of the State and amending the Act on National Councils (Journal of Laws No. 16, item 91).
- Act of July 14, 1983 on the office of the Minister of the Interior and the scope of activities of subordinate bodies (Journal of Laws No. 38, item 172).
- Act of July 31, 1985 on the service of officers of the Security Service and Citizens' Militia (Journal of Laws No. 38, item 182).
- Act of April 6, 1990 established the State Protection Office (Journal of Laws No. 30, item 180).
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