

Wojciech Marcinak

CATEGORIZATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE PRISONERS IN KOLYMA CAMPS IN THE 1944–1956

In the years 1944–1956 the prisoners of Kolyma forced-labour camps (*lagry*) were divided into three main categories. They were imprisoned in three types of camps, i.e. Corrective Labour Camps (ITL), Hard Labour Camps (*katorżnyje*, KTR) and – since 1948 – Special Camps (OL). The system of Kolyma special camps was named BERLAG (*bieregovoj* – “shore camp”). In the aforementioned kinds of camps prisoners were subject to the respective regimes, with the relatively most lenient in the ITL camps. They had to bear all the hardships of existence in the forced-labour camp, yet a range of possibilities to survive was, in that case, comparatively wide. They could work in the kitchen, the administration of the camp or the utility rooms. Those were the possibilities, which the prisoners of the other camps were deprived of. Nevertheless, more than an inconvenience, even in the ITL was, forced coexistence with the criminal prisoners, who usually harassed and tormented other inmates. The second category was *katorga* (KTR), prepared, above all, for the prisoners accused of political crimes. They were given identification numbers, which was a change in comparison with the ITL. The convicts were forced to do the most severe labour in mines and could not hold any posts inside the camp. They were treated with rigid strictness by the guards, who put them in fetters on their way to the mines and were permanently in charge. The last group consisted of the prisoners of the special camps, which were created all over the Soviet Union after 1948, specially for political prisoners. Eventually, the majority of Polish prisoners, both from the ITL and the KTR, were transferred to the Special Camps, with new, identification numbers. Relocation meant a change for a worse for many of them. Special Camps constituted a separate and different structure. Specially trained officers of the MWD (*Ministerstvo vnutrennich del*) were the escorts and guards. Discipline was somewhat similar to that in the KTR camps. The prisoners were put in fetters while going to their work destination and worked in the most difficult conditions. For example the uranium ore mining. The only favourable change was the separation from criminal prisoners, as it put an end to the terror they had spread in other camps to an end.

Bruno Kamiński

THE TRIAL OF LASZLO RAJK AS A PRELUDE TO THE PROPAGANDA ONSLAUGHT ON TITO (ON THE BASIS OF “TRYBUNA LUDU” AND LOCAL PRESS’ ACCOUNTS)

The political trials in the Soviet bloc’s states constituted a perfect opportunity to propaganda manipulation aimed at establishing in the citizens’ consciousness desired image of reality. The trial of the Hungarian Republic’s former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Laszlo Rajk, which was conducted in September 1949 was a classic example of making use of one political actor in order to direct the burden of accusations against another political figure from outside the immediate circle of the dock.

In practice, the trial of Rajk and his accomplices indicated the beginning of propaganda onslaught on the alleged instigator of a plot of the whole group – the leader of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito. This trial was organized in accordance with the most elaborated native patterns of the USSR, the country which was interested

in the general discrediting of Yugoslavia. This resulted from the fact that the latter state was excluded from Kominform due to its ideological and political departures from Marxist-Leninist line promoted by Moscow especially since 1947, when Kominform was established. The important element of the trial was its proper highlighting in mass media.

This was the reason why the Hungarian authorities invited many journalists from socialist states and Western countries to inform about the process. These actors were supposed to be observers of the professional competence of the socialist judiciary. In reality, the journalists gathered in a courtroom were fed lies, which were professionally composed into the bill of indictment of Rajk and which referred to the crimes of Tito.

The biased accounts in the socialist press were a continuation of manipulations taking place in a courtroom. Seemingly they provided the honest and detailed picture of the situation, in fact they were supposed to smuggle into consciousness of the readership a top-down established image of reality. The articles concerning Rajk's trial, which were published in "Trybuna Ludu", an official press organ of the PZPR constitute the perfect example of this tendency. In the accounts, the messages embedded in the text were strengthened by the special exposition and gaudy typography, what was meant to attract the attention of the reader. The analysis of the press accounts on the trial juxtaposed with the historians' knowledge to date gives the opportunity to present the range of the press distortions and to assess the extent to which the press complied with Moscow's directives.

Aneta Bartczak

THE GERMAN ISSUE DURING THE PERIOD OF "THE GHOST OF GENEVA"

After signing the Act of Unconditional Capitulation, and ending the Second World War in Europe, Germany was divided into four occupation zones, whereas Berlin was splitted into four sectors. The control and responsibility for zones and sectors were born upon the USA, the USSR, the Great Britain and France, due to the acts signed within the years: 1944 and 1945. The acts were to make a decision about the future concerning four countries enumerated above. Dispersion of the common politics of four superpowers towards "Germany and Great Berlin as the integrity" caused the actual setting of two German countries in 1949, namely the Republic of Federal Germany and German Democratic Republic, closely connected with the political – military blocks, that is NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and The Warsaw Pact (Alliance of Communist Nations) since 1955. From that time the German issue has become the core element of reality.

In the first half of 1950s the previous suspense connected with the German issue was inferior to difficult dialogue between the East and the West initiated in Geneva (from 18th July until 23rd July 1955) during the conference of political leaders of four superpowers, specified as "the ghost of Geneva". The antagonistic blocks of the countries, being aware of danger of the new war outbreak, to with the politics of power would uneritably lead, started the period of transient cooperation. The period was characterized with attempts to develop the new rules of safety and disarmament. The German issue stepped down to the background, in comparison to the previous years, being the core point of the superpowers interest any more. Germany started to be viewed and treated as the element of militant balance to with the countries on the old continent were striving for after determining the political influences. As it turned out, the real prospects of achieving the detente and

normalization of relations between the East and West were faint. First of all, a state of affairs resulted from the irreconcilable position taken by the sides of the dialogue as far as the above mentioned issues and concerned. The natural consequence was the impossibility of solving the German case, that is creating the premise enabling the unification of the nation being torn between two countries.

Not only was the pan – German politics (the Deutschlandpolitik) absorbing the Republic of Federal Germany and German Democratic Republic, but also constituted the essential element of international politics, that is was its function. Taking into consideration the period in this facet, one should view it as time assigned for regeneration of strength, modification of strategy and political tactics as well as military structure inside the blocks, in a word – for “taking a deep breath” before the next confrontation which was initiated by USSR being disappointed with ineffectiveness of diplomatic endeavours taken up so far. Thanks to the USSR, the centre of political gravity was transmitted again from macro- to micro-scale on more and more urgent Berlin ground, tipping the balance and being the barometer of moods and relationships prevailing between four superpowers and two German countries.

Sławomir L. Szczesio

THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TOWARDS THE BREAK-UP OF YUGOSLAVIA IN 1990–1991

George H.W. Bush became the President of the United States of America in January 1989. It was a very important moment in world’s history: the end of the cold war, the break-up of the Soviet Union and the Eastern block, and the war against Iraq in the Persian Gulf. But one of the troubles for the Bush administration, as well as for the governments of Europe, was the issue of Yugoslavia, where there were brewing many threats and problems, such as ethnic tensions, the rise of nationalism, conflict in Kosovo, and the economic crisis.

When the cold war ended, Yugoslavia lost its geopolitical significance for the U.S. America further supported unity, independence, territorial integrity and the new Prime Minister Ante Marković, but it was mainly rhetorical support. In June, 1991, Slovenia and Croatia declared independence, and war and collapse of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia began. For American diplomacy, this was an European issue and a test of European foreign policy. As James Baker put it, “We don’t have a dog in this fight”. Furthermore, politicians in Europe claimed that, “this is the hour of Europe”.

The United States played a second-rank role on Yugoslavia and supported the efforts of the European Union. But, in December, 1991, the E.U., under the influence of German diplomacy, ignored the protests of the U.S., the U.N. and international mediators, and decided to recognize Croatia and Slovenia. Yugoslavia had in fact collapsed, but soon there appeared a new problem for Europe and America – tensions in the subsequent Yugoslav republics, Bosnia and Herzegovina.