

Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/digital-resources/articles/7574,Army-of-Free-Europe.html>

19.05.2024, 02:44

12.03.2021

Army of Free Europe

Soldiers! A time of ruthless fight against the Communist regime is near. (...) The Army of Free Europe (AWE) has a noble task ahead of it – to liberate the Homeland from the Bolshevik slavery. The Bolsheviks have the help of the Polish hands from the Polish United Workers' Party who gave death sentences for the greatest sons of the Homeland...



The Army of Free Europe was a conspiracy organisation of political-

military character which operated between 1954-1960 at the Kielce province. Its goal was “to fight against the Communist regime to liberate the Homeland”. Around 20 people were part of the organisation. It all began with the activities of Melchior Batorski, from the Zamojski region, who was part of the Home Army during the occupation. In 1944, he was heavily wounded in a battle near Radecznica.

When he returned to good health, he moved to the Kielce province and was hired at a post office in Raków (Opatów region). Most probably in 1954, he began the creation of a conspiracy group based on those from the Second World War. Its first member was Walerian Grosicki who was also part of the underground resistance during the occupation, first at the National Armed Forces and then at the Home Army. More members were enlisted from among the citizens of Raków and surrounding areas. In 1955, Melchior Batorski was transferred to work at a post office in Sandomierz, where he began creating new structures of the AWE. The command over the Raków group was taken over by Grosicki.

AWE's activities

Members of the organisation printed anti-Communist brochures and leaflets. They also wrote anonymous messages to local activists of the Polish United Workers' Party. The most spectacular action of the AWE was blowing up a statue in a square in Raków. At first, it was a monument in honour of Józef Piłsudski and soldiers fighting to regain Poland's independence between 1918-1920. The statue survived the

war, but in 1956 it suddenly changed its face.

The image of Piłsudski and its original plaques were taken down, and a red star was put in their place. This way, it became the symbol of gratitude for the Red Army and Polish-Soviet friendship. Several months after the red star was hanged, in November 1956, members of the AWE from Raków set explosive charges and the star was destroyed. The action was well prepared. The square and surrounding streets were guarded so no accidental pedestrians would walk in on the scene. The blast was quite strong. Window glasses broke in the nearby buildings. Following the operation, the Citizens' Militia conducted an investigation, witnesses were questioned, but it came to naught, the perpetrators were not found. At the same time, on several buildings in Raków, inscriptions appeared on walls, i.e.: "Ruskis be gone. We do not want such allies. Bolsheviks go home!"

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