

## **Strenuously Creating the Absurdity Propaganda Department of Polish United Worker's Party Warsaw Province Committee in the Years 1949 – 1953**

The aim of the text is to study day-to-day propaganda activities undertaken in the years 1949 – 1953 by the Communist Party apparatus. The study is based on the records of Warsaw Province Party Committee but the author believes that it portrays propaganda activities in Poland in general. Local differences were insignificant during the Stalinist period. Forms as well as the content of propaganda messages were programmed by the Central Party Committee. Party functionaries at the grass roots level bore responsibility for the implementation of directives they were given. The study is an attempt to examine the differences between what was planned and what was done. The message heard by millions of people was different than the message sent to them by highest party authorities. Factors that should be taken into account while discussing disturbances in the transmission of propaganda messages were the dullness and lack of education of many party activists, the weakness of local party structures and their inability to communicate effectively both with their superiors and the society.

Stalinist propaganda was a special phenomenon. Propagandists did not try to persuade anything. They even did not try to be persuasive. They knew it was possible to make people listen to them. Their objective was to impose a certain language, way of thinking, and ideology on the society as a whole. Moreover, communists were perfectly sure they would be in power for an unlimited period of time. It is therefore possible to trace their efforts to subdue the time: history had to be re-written because the past was to legitimize their power. Party agitators had to work busily each day to create the atmosphere of common enthusiasm and to interpret current events

in a way expected by the governing so that each disobedient individual would think he himself was the only person opposing the government. Party schooling, attended also by non-party members, was to wash people's brains and to make the job of future propagandists easier.

The most interesting question – the question of how effective the Stalinist propaganda was – can be answered only partially. There is a temptation to say that the only recipient of such propaganda were high party officials to whom local propagandists reported and that the whole activity was a pure ritual. The truth is, however, different. Even if people did not believe they were lucky to live in an affluent and democratic country they were quite efficiently taught that Stalinist newspeak was the only imaginable language of public discussion, they were thought to describe reality in an ideologized way. Whether they internalized the description or not did not really matter.

George Orwell was right. The power over the language means the power over the thought.