

## THE IMAGE OF GERMANS AND GERMANY IN POLISH OPINION JOURNALISM 1944/1945-1949

### — Summary —

This dissertation is devoted to the instrumentalisation of the image of Germans and Germany in Polish opinion periodicals. In most cases they acted in interests of the new, communistic authorities. Author also includes the Polish press on emigration in the study, because she wanted to show the whole spectrum of journalistic discourse on the subject.

The end of the Second World War confronted Polish society with hardships associated with loss of families and properties. It was associated with mass resettlements. Nearly 2 million Poles had to leave the Eastern Borderlands and settle in the Western and Northern Territories. Their still German character did not facilitate adaptation in an unfamiliar environment. The injustices suffered by Poles from Germans were also still very much alive.

The German topic served something more than a collective reworking of war traumas. The sense of injustice inflicted and the expectation of historical justice were used by the new power to gain the widest possible support among the masses.

The aim of this dissertation is to critically analyse the discourse used to stabilise society. Or, more precisely, it will be an analysis of the discourse on Germany and Germans in texts devoted to this issue in Polish post-war journalism.

The author decided to trace stereotypes and political myths present in journalistic discourse carried out in the major periodicals of the time. These instruments facilitated manipulation of masses. Myths unite people who identify with them into a larger group, creating its patterns and logic. Stereotypes, on the other hand, allow a simplified understanding of the surrounding world and are a judgement on a foreign group.

The time caesura of this dissertation covers the key period of transition for socio-political processes. In fact, year 1944 outlines framework of the new political system in Poland. The Polish Committee of National Liberation was established. It laid the foundations of a system that lasted until 1989. The events of 1945 were just another stage in this process. Year 1949, on the other hand, is important because of the establishment of the two German states of West and East Germany at that time.

The post-war information policy proved so effective that anti-German resentment has persisted to this day. And paradoxically, those who know of German crimes precisely from media coverage rather than from their own experience, are they who manifest more resentment towards their western neighbours. Hence, uncovering the mechanisms that contributed to their creation has very practical consequences. The author hopes that her work will make it easier to counter such national prejudices and stereotypes.

**Keywords:**

Germany, Poland, Polish post-war press, post-war, Second World War, Western and Northern Territories