

Jak studiowałem w dobie polskiego stalinizmu

How I studied during the years of Polish Stalinism

SUMMARY

The author studied at the Department of Law of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow in the years 1950-1954. Ever since the school year of 1948/49, totalitarian practices were being introduced at universities in a very determined way. Coming from a family that strongly cherished the traditions of struggle for an independent Poland, the author experienced some difficulties in being admitted to the university, while throughout his studies he tried to avoid active forms of endorsing the new system. The article describes the organizational and psychological framework of the students' life in those times, when it was under constant and close scrutiny of the authorities. The article points out, however, that apart from quite a numerous group of enthusiasts of the new system or simple opportunists, students began to form small groups of friends whose attitudes were very remote from the uniformization of views and lifestyles expected by the authorities. Indeed, despite the fact that they could not ever reveal it publicly, a significant percentage of students had a critical attitude towards communism and the Soviet Union.

In the second part of the article the author discusses the attitudes of the professors, in as much as they could be identified at the time: the situation among lecturers of law, who had to take account of the existing legal situation, was particularly complicated, but there was no shortage of eminent professors at the Law Department of the Jagiellonian University who preserved an independent stance with regard to the system (A. Vetulani, L. Ehrlich, S. Grzybowski, W. Osuchowski and others). Some of the professors succumbed to pressure from party authorities, but it was rather only among the younger generation of lecturers that one could find ardent followers of the party line. There can be little doubt, however, that the role of PZPR (Polish United Workers' Party) and the people who were devoted to it, inexorably increased from year to year, with a short respite in the years of the thaw, between 1956 and 1962.