

DESCRIPTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC (IN ENGLISH)

(State the purpose of the project, describe what studies will be carried out within the project and provide reasons for taking the particular research topics – maximum one standard typed page)

The place of Poland in the British strategy of supporting the resistance movement is the so far least investigated topic of the Second World War, one that has not been subjected to an insightful and detailed historical analysis. This was influenced by the unavailability of British source materials, closed for long years in the British archives, as well as greater interest of the English-speaking researchers in the subject of the resistance movement in the Western countries, which followed from the proximity and importance of these territories during Operation Overlord. Therefore, those events overshadowed some of the most difficult British military operations undertaken during the war into the territory of Poland, e.g. special flights into occupied Poland, intelligence actions and close cooperation with regard to sabotage and subversion on the occupied Polish territory and behind the Eastern Front. Relatively little has also been written on the fact that the British from the very onset of the war advocated the formation of the Polish underground structures, and after establishing the Special Operation Executive (SOE) they formed the Polish section within its structure. It provided guarantee for the British military and political bodies of cooperation concerning the Polish matters, was responsible for the planning, agreements and conducting conspiratorial actions together with the Poles in the range of sabotage and subversion on the occupied Polish territory and in occupied Europe.

The unknown history of the Polish section of the SOE comprises spectacular Polish-British special operations in Poland and in Europe showing the fates of extraordinary and remarkable people – both Polish and British – involved in the war against the Third Reich and its allies. Comprised in this history is also unique material on the history and activity of the Polish Underground State that was a part of the anti-Hitler coalition as being subordinated to the Polish civil and military authorities in exile.

Accomplishment of the proposed research project enables a broadening of the knowledge on the Polish-British relations during the Second World War. It also enables new primary source and cognitive research in Polish, British and American archives, which will bear the fruit of a detailed analysis on the place of Poland in the British strategy of supporting the resistance movement in Europe. The project is aimed at bringing to light little-known facts concerning the way the Polish matters were handled on the international scene because the SOE maintained contacts with many agencies of the British military and civil authorities: the Prime Minister Office, the Foreign Office, the War Office (Chiefs of Staffs), the Ministry of Aviation, Secret Intelligence Service and also contacted the Soviet and American intelligence in connection with Polish matters.

The effect of the project will be a monographic publication presenting the various aspects of the collaboration between the Polish section of the SOE and the Polish military authorities within the adopted British strategy of supporting the resistance movement, and characterising the jointly undertaken special operations and the Polish-British intelligence endeavours in the territory of Europe and in Poland. The results of the research will also be presented in papers and at international academic meetings, which will provide the basis for further detailed studies undertaken by subsequent researchers.