

Project aims at writing a book containing sociological portrait of secret police officers in PRL (Polish People's Republic). The role played by (consecutively) the Security Office and the Security Office – key departments ensuring the regime's stability – is highlighted in a majority of historical writings. While the cadres of security apparatus are considered to be the most ardent supporters of the communist system, so far they have attracted little attention from scholars. The vast majority of authors, writing on secret police functioning and structure, considered its cadres to merely “a clone army”: a set of identical individuals, equally corrupted and having identical motivations and world views. In such an approach officers are not deemed to be a part of society but seen as isolated entity – anonymous perpetrators.

The goal of the present study is to fill that gap and to stand against above tendencies. I'm going to reveal the identity of the “system's henchmen” and show where they came from – what motivations propelled them into joining the Security Service what were their careers dominant models. The micro-historical perspective will be taken into account as well: I am going to describe the officer's social background, their everyday life, their outlook to the world.

The envisaged study will draw on an innovative methodology combining the prosopography with the oral history. It will provide the missing knowledge on social history of PRL and on mechanisms ensuring the regime's stability.