

Communists considered religion to be one of the main threats to their power. They paid a lot of attention to the fight against religion and churches. Various means were used - from propaganda, through administrative actions and brutal repressions. Catholic Church in particular has become victim of these activities. So far historians have paid much attention to describing of the policy of the Communists towards the Church.

The aim of the project is to investigate the subject area that so far has not been covered by the current research – i.e. the reaction of the Church to the actions of the Communists. I wish to explore both the forms and the strategies of resistance as well as the adaptation means and cooperation with the regime.

The issue of reaction to the policy of the Communists will be examined in the perspective of the history of three churches - the Czech, the Polish and the Slovak. Each of them collided with totalitarianism at another point in their history, having had different experiences in the past, and being differently perceived by their own society. Contrary to appearances, the communist policies in Czechoslovakia and Poland were not uniform, especially after 1956.

An extremely interesting strand of the planned research project is the assistance given by Polish Church to the Czechs and the Slovaks. Clergymen from across the southern border would hide in Polish monasteries, they would partly follow their formation in Polish churches, and their ordination would be performed in a Polish church. Young Czechs and Slovaks participated in the oasis movement camps, many took part in pilgrimages, as well as masses celebrated by John Paul II in 1979, 1983 and 1987. Religious literature, edited in exile in Czech and Slovak languages, was smuggled across-the border.