

Socialism, Decolonization and the Cold War: Multidimensional Relations of the Polish People's Republic with the Global South, 1955-1989

The main purpose of this project is to research the multidimensional relations of the Polish People's Republic with the Global South between 1955 and 1989 and to put these various links in the broader framework of decolonization processes and superpowers rivalry during the Cold War. What was the scope and dynamics of the Soviet dominance over the Polish external activities? Was the support for the national-liberation movements such as Palestine Liberation Organization or South West Africa People's Organization coordinated or overseen by the Soviet Union? Was there any division of labor within the Soviet Bloc's performances in the Global South? Why Polish contribution to the decolonization process was lower than other socialist countries such as GDR, Czechoslovakia or Bulgaria? How the national-liberation movements and countries from the Global South evaluated Polish support and activities? These are only few research questions which I will raise in this project.

Communist Poland was perceived by Eastern and Western scholars and politicians as the second most important state within the Soviet Bloc. Its demographic and military potential however did not influence the pillars of the Polish foreign policy towards the Global South which until the collapse of communism remained restraint compared to other Soviet Bloc junior allies. This project will address the question of the role the Global South played in the Polish external and domestic politics and it will analyze the various fields of interconnectedness between Poland and state and non-state actors from the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America. In order to look broader at the Polish approach towards the Global South, this project will focus on different areas such as cultural cooperation, educational activities, economic and political ties, ideological collaboration, as well as military and intelligence cooperation. All this ties had different origins, political and economic meaning, as well as its own dynamics. My research will evaluate the reasons of successful cooperation and underline the causes of failed efforts to improve Polish relations with newly independent states and national-liberation movements from different continents. I will distinguish also the most important domestic and external factors which influenced the Polish stance towards the Global South and I will compare this experience with achievements of other Soviet bloc countries.

The main advantage of the project is that it will focus on different spheres of cooperation. First of all, it will examine the political and ideological backgrounds of the relations distinguishing the role of Marxist agenda in the foreign policy. Secondly, it will evaluate the economic relations as one of the main pillars of the Warsaw's stance towards the Global South. Thirdly, the project will address the role of military and intelligence cooperation between communist Poland and the countries from Africa, Middle East, Asia and Latin America. Finally, the project will put emphasis on cultural, educational and social encounters which will allow me to look at the Polish approach towards the Global South from the prism of social history.