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**‘Maximum of Information’ – ‘Minimum of Records’:  
 Collection Building Policy in the Work of Director  
 of Department of National Archives and Chief Directors  
 of State Archives (1945–1989)**

*‘Maksimum informacji’ – ‘minimum materiałów’: polityka gromadzenia  
 w działalności Dyrektora Wydziału Archiwów Państwowych i Naczelnych  
 Dyrektorów Archiwów Państwowych (1945–1989)*

ABSTRACT

The policy of accumulation of archives in the Polish Republic of People between 1945 and 1989 depended on many factors, including the attitudes of the Director of Department of National Archives and Chief Directors of State Archives, his political opinions, education, professional experience and knowledge of archives. The policy of accumulation of archives was connected with political realities, and selection and evaluation of records. In this period two methods of evaluation were applied: the list of records of institution and archival assessment. The list of records was the evaluation a priori, the archival assessment

PUBLICATION INFO			
			e-ISSN: 2449-8467 ISSN: 2082-6060
			
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SOURCE OF FUNDING: Statutory Research of the Faculty of History of the University of Warsaw			
SUBMITTED: 2019.03.08	ACCEPTED: 2020.01.15	PUBLISHED ONLINE: 2020.12.21	
WEBSITE OF THE JOURNAL: <a href="https://journals.umcs.pl/rh">https://journals.umcs.pl/rh</a>		EDITORIAL COMMITTEE E-mail: reshistorica@umcs.pl	

posteriori. In archival legislation of this time the list of records was preferred, while the assessment wasn't as popular. The list of records was seen as a simple and cost-effective method. However, it led to the formation of formalistic and bureaucratic system, which wasn't perfect. In this system many errors and inconsistencies occurred, which was indicated in archival legislation and in archival literature. This formalistic and bureaucratic system was close to the communist state's ideology.

**Key words:** Witold Suchodolski, Rafał Gerber, Henryk Altman, Leon Chajn, Tadeusz Walichnowski, Marian Wojciechowski, evaluation of records, selection, list of records, archives of institution

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The collection building policy is the most important factor shaping the content of the archival resources. This term should be understood as all forms of activity aimed at extracting documents worthy of perpetual storage and care, consisting in keeping them in good physical condition and enriching the knowledge about them. Collection building policy involves both theoretical considerations and procedures to achieve afore-mentioned goal. Therefore, it is closely related to the evaluation of documents. However, activities in this area should be considered as one of the elements of the collection building policy. The evaluation of created documents becomes the basis for the development of tools enabling the practical application of the developed criteria and principles of evaluation as well as the process of collecting documents of historical importance, and eliminating and destroying those which have not been assigned such a status. The title of this study refers to a text by Leon Chajn, one of the Chief Directors of the State Archives, on the social roles played by state archives in a communist state<sup>1</sup>. Collection building policy was one of those roles.

The necessity to evaluate the records, caused by the inability to store all of them due to their considerable amount, inspired polemics about their scientific, administrative and social usefulness. It became necessary to specify how the documents that were considered worthy of perpetual storage could be used. Evaluation should be considered as the basic factor determining the scope of collection building. It is a very complex process, marked with the danger of subjective judgments. It was the subject of frequent reflections occurring mainly in publications dedicated to the activity of archives. Considerations regarding this process were visible both in Polish and foreign publications on this subject. Evaluation is of

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<sup>1</sup> L. Chajn, *Rola i zadania państwowej służby archiwalnej w Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej*, 'Archeion' 1971, 56, p. 21.

interest not only to employees of historical archives but also to those employed in administrative institutions. A good example is the text by Élodie Belkorchia from the office of the mayor of Aubervillier in France, published in 'La Gazette des Archives' in 2016<sup>2</sup>. She perceives evaluation as a phenomenon that changes over time and is shaped by political and cultural conditions. It cannot be ignored that it is also dependent on the social roles played by archives. They are also influenced by the format of archival activity. The value of the material gathered in elite-oriented archives is different from the one in archives open to the needs of a diverse user. Attitudes towards evaluation are visible in various social groups – state and local administration, researchers, and other social groups interested in the past. Evaluation and the criteria used in it can be considered one of the substantive foundations of the collection building policy.

The collection building and the underlying evaluation take many forms<sup>3</sup>. The archive administration's activities aimed at preserving the most valuable documents may be manifested in the form of issuing legal acts for their preservation and protection. The steps taken to implement legal acts into social practice are another type of those activities. Legislation defining the scope of collection building is the result of state policy. Archive administration is only one of the elements of its organizational structure. As a rule, it is assigned to a specific management department. There were various autonomous archival networks in the Polish People's Republic. Each of them could develop the resources and pursue a collection building policy in line with their social roles and their own needs. The use of legal acts as tools to define the scope of collection building has a long and rich tradition. This practice is visible in all political systems. Legal acts on collection building have been issued since the establishment of the Polish network of state archives in 1919. Collection building policy models are very diverse and, as a rule, largely dependent on the political systems in which specific archival networks operate. Archive administration can pursue a collection building policy not only with the help of tools such as legislation. Another tool is the archival theories published in scientific journals published by it. In Poland it was 'Archeion'. From the very beginning, the journal had close ties with the archive administration as its publisher. The institutions responsible for the collection building policy,

<sup>2</sup> É. Belkorchia, *La valorisation: mutation(s) dans le temps long*, 'La Gazette des Archives' 2016, 244, pp. 193–206.

<sup>3</sup> The latest perspectives on evaluation, see: H. Robótka, *Wartościowanie akt. Przeszłość i przyszłość*, in: *Dokumentacja masowa. Z problematyki kształtowania zasobu archiwalnego*, eds. I. Mamczak-Gadkowska, K. Strykowski, Poznań 2012, pp. 25–48; E. Pełakowska, *Wartościowanie dokumentacji masowej – próba zdefiniowania problemu*, in: *Dokumentacja*, pp. 7–12.

as a rule, had not only a professional character but also a specific political profile. The roles of scientific publications and legal acts are different. The content of the former is used to investigate the existing problems. Their role is also to popularize a specific issues, show their social importance, and strive to create the desired professional attitudes. The created regulations are of a different nature. Their goal is to create exact operational rules, describing and creating procedures for the correct implementation of the designed effects. When using the texts published in 'Archeion' after 1945 as a historical source, one should be aware that they were the result of the views of the author, the team managing the archives, which was the Department of State Archives, and then the Head Office of State Archives and the censorship board of that period.

The purpose of these considerations is to present the position of the archives' managers – the director of the Department of State Archives and the Chief Directors of the State Archives – in the field of the collection building policy in the Polish People's Republic in 1945–1989 and its conditions. They will contribute to enriching the knowledge about the archives of this period and the factors shaping their management. Both the collection building policy and directors' attitudes in this area were not considered separately in the communist state<sup>4</sup>. The related problems are part of the history of archives contained in publications on the history of archives by Andrzej Tomczak<sup>5</sup> and Janusz Tandecki<sup>6</sup>. The latter, whose work deals with the history of archives in the communist period, also included the results of research and reflections on collecting in his work. He focused primarily on presenting the system of resource shaping and archive supervision<sup>7</sup>. The publication does not discuss the relationship between ideology and the principles of collecting. The collection building policy pursued by the Security Service became a separate subject of considerations<sup>8</sup>. Their author, Stanisław Koller, should be considered the creator of a research trend aimed at in-depth reflection on the relations between the activities of an institution implementing specific ideological

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<sup>4</sup> In the publication by Z. Chmielewski, dedicated to European archival thought, the selection of files was combined with the problems of editing, see: Z. Chmielewski, *Problemy archiwistyki podzielonej Europy. Selekcja i opracowanie dokumentacji 1918–1991*, Warszawa 2017. This work was based on the works on archival theory, it did not analyse the Archival Law.

<sup>5</sup> A. Tomczak, *Zarys dziejów archiwów polskich*, Toruń 1982, pp. 244–367.

<sup>6</sup> J. Tandecki, *Archiwa w Polsce w latach 1944–1989. Zarys dziejów*, Toruń 2017.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 83–104.

<sup>8</sup> S. Koller, *Wykaz akt oraz zarządzenia, wytyczne i decyzje kierownictwa Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych w procesie brakowania i niszczenia akt operacyjnych Służby Bezpieczeństwa w latach 1956–1898. Analiza porównawcza*, in: *Archiwa Polski i Europy: wspólne dziedzictwo – różne doświadczenia*, ed. A. Kulecka, Warszawa 2017, pp. 137–192.

goals in a communist state and its policy of evaluating and collecting documentation. It should also be emphasized here that the institutions of the Security Service had the right to make independent decisions regarding this sphere of activity. We can speak of an ideologization of evaluation conditioned by many factors, including current needs resulting from the role of the ministry in the political system of power. The presented study should be treated as a preliminary list of problems related to the discussed issue. Some of the signaled issues may be further extended and deepened.

The purpose of these reflections is to show the different aspects of the collection building process as seen in the theory and actions of directors. In the course of this study, an attempt will also be made to answer the question: what influence did the political system and state ideology have on the scope and problems of collecting resources in archives? The following factors influencing the collection policy will be discussed in this text: 1. General archive law, 2. Attitudes of the director of the Department of State Archives and the Chief Directors of the State Archives. Within these main problems individual issues will be presented chronologically. This will allow to capture the intricacies of the collection building policy. The subject of the analysis will be primarily the publications of this circle appearing in 'Archeion' addressed to the archivists – employees of state archives, as well as historians.

The dates of these considerations were set between 1945 and 1989. The first year meant the creation of a communist state administration bound by a close alliance and ideology with the Soviet Union. In 1989 there was a political breakthrough, the beginning of the process of abolition of the political system. It was created by introducing the principles of a democratic state of law into the constitution of the People's Republic of Poland, the elections on June 4, the election of the National Assembly consisting of two parliamentary chambers of the Sejm and the Senate, restoration of the presidency, appointment of the first non-communist government, and commencement of work on a new constitution<sup>9</sup>. These changes marked the end of a certain political period.

The communist state system had several characteristic features. These included: the effective exercise of power by the communist party, the large role of the executive power represented by the Council of State and the Council of Ministers, activities of which were subordinated to the realization of the party's interest as a specific ideological and social group, the small role of the Sejm, which most often pursued the policy of one party by enacting legal acts relevant for its implementation, minor

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<sup>9</sup> M. Żukowski, *Dzieje administracji w Polsce w XX wieku*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 710–721.

role of the society in selecting representative bodies, minor role of local government institutions. The consequence of such a model was the centralization of power, the accompanying centralization of decisions, and party supervision over central and local government administration. Marek Żukowski, quoting C.J. Friedrich, pointed to the following features of the 'totalitarian syndrome': 1. An 'official ideology' attempting to regulate and formalize all areas of life, 2. 'the only mass party' led in a dictatorial manner by one man, 3. 'system of terrorist police control', 4. Monopoly of the party and its personnel implemented with the use of available communication and domination techniques, 5. Full party control over the armed forces, 6. Central party control and leadership over the entire economy<sup>10</sup>. The system of the communist state in Poland was related to the dependence on the USSR. M. Żukowski, referring to the research of A. J. Gawenda, pointed to the existence in Central and Eastern Europe of a system of satellite states cooperating with this country in the sphere of foreign, economic, defense and ideology policies<sup>11</sup>. The domination of communist ideology in the social space was connected with significant limitations of sovereignty and belonging to a specific sphere of influence. In Poland the idea of a communist state coexisted with the format of the satellite state of the USSR. The communist system in Poland in the years 1945–1989 was subject to significant changes. There were periods of domination of political doctrine as well as its liberalization and erosion. They manifested themselves in acute political crises, which took place in 1956, 1968, 1970, 1980–1981. The effect of said crises was usually a change in the personnel managing the party and the state. New government teams attempted to implement new social and political projects. It should be pointed out, however, that the changes of the management elites in the archives did not take place in the same rhythm as the replacement of the party and state elites.

The totalitarian state should be considered a form of an ideological structure. One of the reasons for this view is the domination of one party in the structures of power. Its ideological program was the basis of state ideology and propaganda. As a result, it becomes a point of reference and evaluation of other theories and political attitudes. The totalitarian state did not guarantee pluralism understood as respect for views other than those created by the party ideology. A characteristic feature of this system was also the identification of party ideology and propaganda with the

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 404.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 404–405; M. Żukowski quoted the publication of A.J. Gawenda, *Ustrój Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej i panujący w niej system polityczny*, Londyn 1958.

state one. It is related to the lack of tolerance for ideas and attitudes other than those of party and state. Archival policy was one of the elements of the activities of the Polish communist state. The collection building served various purposes. They were, among other things, the legitimization of the power of the communist party, the politics of memory and a number of other tasks that changed over time. Although the People's Republic of Poland should be considered an ideologized state, one should be asked to what extent this phenomenon concerned archival activities, and above all, people pursuing the goals set by the state in this field. In this case, it is necessary to consider the question – what was the political activity in a state that did not allow a multitude of views and attitudes? Was the membership in the Polish United Workers' Party established in 1948 an only sign of it? Was consent to the ideas contained in the program of the communist party without belonging to it also a sign of affirmation of the party? It is worth considering how archivists and the professional circle they created perceived the role of ideology in shaping their workshop and activity, an important element of which was the collection building policy. Archive activity has a very strong relationship with the humanities and social sciences. The relations of these fields of knowledge with the state ideology could turn out to be particularly close. The following general question is related to this: do all ideologies shape scientific theories or is it just a feature of communism? The answer to them, however, would exceed the objectives of this study. This is a complex issue that requires analysis in the field of the history of philosophy and methodology of sciences as well as of the relationship between them and specific political systems. It should be pointed out, however, that archival activity has many links with historiography. In the Polish People's Republic it was only possible to practice historical science related to party and state ideology. This was due to the fact that these activities were subject to the supervision system of party and state institutions, including censorship<sup>12</sup>. The ideological contexts of historiographic activity meant the necessity to apply the principles of historical materialism in the methodology; to introduce the category of progress as a factor serving the periodization of history; to study the history of social groups forming the ideological alliance of workers and peasants, i.e. labor and peasant movement, and to both partners of this union – the working class and the peasantry; to treat the revolution as a method of gaining power and to study the history of

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<sup>12</sup> See the publications: R. Stobiecki, *Historia pod nadzorem. Spory o model historii w Polsce (II połowa lat czterdziestych – początek lat pięćdziesiątych)*, Łódź 1993; idem, *Historiografia PRL. Ani dobra, ani mądra, ani piękna... ale skomplikowana*, Warszawa 2007.

revolutionary movements<sup>13</sup>. Those factors constituted an important factor shaping the process of assessing the value of records.

Janusz Łosowski made an attempt to create a catalog of ideological content appearing in scientific publications. Soviet archival studies textbooks became the subject of observation. Such content was considered to be 'information relating to the political reality', including the 'party program', its implementation, building scientific theses based on ideas appearing in propaganda messages and other forms of party and state activity<sup>14</sup>. Czesław Biernat tackled the broad problem of the reception of Marxist-Leninist ideology in Polish archival studies<sup>15</sup>. His considerations should be treated as a preliminary sketch for researching the relationship between archival theories and political and state ideas. Their continuations may take various forms of scientific statements.

The main task of these reflections will therefore be to show what factors shaped the policy of collecting archival records in the political and ideological system of the Polish communist state, with particular emphasis on the attitudes of the director of the Department of State Archives and the Chief Directors of the State Archives. Two types of sources will be used in this study. The first will be theoretical articles by the director of the Department of State Archives and by the Chief Directors, published in archival studies journals, primarily in 'Archeion'. The second, supplementing, will be the legal acts they issued. In this study theories concerning the collecting of archival materials will be presented. It will not reflect real actions taken by state archives. An attempt to outline this issue would require reading the lists of defective records kept in state and institutional archives. It is an extensive material. Reaching it is more difficult than reaching articles published in magazines. This study is based on published sources. It should be treated as a preliminary sketch of the problems of collection building in Polish archives in the years 1944–1989. On the basis of the source materials used, it will not be possible to determine the full catalog of gains and losses resulting from the implemented model of the collection building policy.

Collection building is one of the archival activities. It is related to other areas of archives' activity – storing, organizing, processing and sharing. The tasks in this field are linked with other activities carried out by the

<sup>13</sup> R. Stobiecki, *Historiografia*, pp. 194–208.

<sup>14</sup> J. Łosowski, *Treści ideologiczne w sowieckich podręcznikach archiwistyki*, in: *Archiwa Polski i Europy: wspólne dziedzictwo – różne doświadczenia*, ed. A. Kulecka, Warszawa 2017, p. 102.

<sup>15</sup> Cz. Biernat, *Marksistowsko-leninowska teoria archiwistyki i jej percepcja w Polsce*, 'Teki Archiwalne' 2001, 28, Seria Nowa 6, pp. 5–15. The article contains a general thesis that Polish archival studies has not been ideologised.

described institutions. The aforementioned roles of archives will be presented in the context of the field of activity, which is crucial from the point of view of this study.

## 2. COLLECTING ARCHIVAL RECORDS IN THE LIGHT OF NATIONAL LAW – A DECREE, ORDERS AND AN ARCHIVAL ACT

The general problems of collecting archival records were regulated by legal acts issued by institutions with the power to enact national law. The following documents should be considered the basic legal acts regulating the collection policy: 1. Decree of 29 March 1951 on state archives [Dekret z 29 marca 1951 r o archiwach państwowych]<sup>16</sup>, 2. Order of the Council of Ministers of 26 April 1952 on the state archival resource [Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 26 kwietnia 1952 r. w sprawie państwowego zasobu archiwalnego]<sup>17</sup>, 3. Order of the Council of Ministers of 19 February 1957 on the state archival resource [Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 19 lutego 1957 r. w sprawie państwowego zasobu archiwalnego]<sup>18</sup>, 4. Order of the Council of Ministers 30 of December 1958 [Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 30 grudnia 1958 r.]<sup>19</sup>, 5. Order of the Minister of Higher Education of April 9, 1963 on the division of archival materials into archival categories and setting the terms of their storage [Zarządzenie Ministra Szkolnictwa Wyższego z 9 kwietnia 1963 r. w sprawie podziału materiałów archiwalnych na kategorie archiwalne i ustalenie terminów ich przechowywania]<sup>20</sup>, including the labels of the archival categories and an exemplary list of typical records, 6. Act of 14 July 1983 on the national archival resource and archives [Ustawa z dnia 14 lipca 1983 r. o narodowym zasobie archiwalnym i archiwach]<sup>21</sup>, 7. Order of the Minister of Science, Higher Education and Technology of 25 July 1984 on the principles of classification and qualification of documentation as well as the principles and procedure for transferring archival materials to state archives [Rozporządzenie Ministra Nauki, Szkolnictwa Wyższego i Techniki z dnia 25 lipca 1984 r. w sprawie zasad klasyfikowania i kwalifikowania dokumentacji oraz zasady i tryb

<sup>16</sup> Text in (among other publications) 'Archeion' 1951, 19/20, pp. 4–5.

<sup>17</sup> 'Dziennik Ustaw' 1952, 24, 164 and 165.

<sup>18</sup> 'Dziennik Ustaw' 1957, 12, 66.

<sup>19</sup> 'Dziennik Ustaw' 1959, 2, 12.

<sup>20</sup> 'Monitor Polski' 1963, 37, 184.

<sup>21</sup> 'Dziennik Ustaw' 1983, 38, 173; see: *Archiwa. Przepisy prawne*, ed. J. Góral, Toruń 2000, pp. 19–41.

przekazywania materiałów archiwalnych do archiwów państwowych]<sup>22</sup>. The Decree of 1951 and its supplement, i.e. Order of the Council of Ministers of 26 April 1952, together with its entries, should be considered the apogee of collection building policy. The materials created by state institutions dominating in political, social and economic life belonged to the state archival resources. The scope of collecting was determined by the position of the state and its dominant role in the political system. It covered all kinds of materials created by state institutions, dominating the social space due to the role of the state as the owner of production factories, agricultural plants, banks and materials taken over as a result of decrees changing the social and political structure. This legal act excluded political parties' archives from the Chief Director administration<sup>23</sup>. The Order of the Council of Ministers of February 19, 1957, confirmed the regulations from 1951 and 1952 by acknowledging the existence of a network of archives not subject to the Chief Director of State Archives and by creating the possibility of entrusting the collection of archival materials to other cultural institutions – libraries and museums. The abovementioned document excluded the Ministers of National Defence, Interior and Foreign Affairs from the supervision of the Chief Director<sup>24</sup>. Such a regulation was a modification of the Decree of 1951. In 1957 the Ministry of Public Security no longer existed, it was replaced by the Ministry of the Interior. The Order of 1957 confirmed the political parties' archives would be administered by these institutions<sup>25</sup>. This legal act provided for the possibility of collecting archival materials by certain libraries and museums, primarily related to the Polish Academy of Sciences, and universities<sup>26</sup>. It also specified the periods for which records-making institutions stored the records. The principle was adopted that the higher the position of the office in the hierarchy of institutions, the longer the period of storing case records, e.g. central offices could keep records for 15 years, voivodeship offices for 10 years, county (Polish: *powiat*) offices for 5 years, and district (Polish: *gmina*) offices only for 3 years, mechanical documentation for 5 years. The vital records could be stored for 100 years<sup>27</sup>. The Order of the Council of Ministers of December 30, 1958, created a list of libraries and museums in which archival materials could be stored<sup>28</sup>. This legal act was supplemented by the Order of the Council of Ministers of December

<sup>22</sup> 'Dziennik Ustaw' 1984, 41, 216; see: *Archiwa. Przepisy prawne*, pp. 87–114.

<sup>23</sup> 'Dziennik Ustaw' 1952, 24, 165, art. 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, art. 5.1.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, art. 5.2.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, art. 6.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, art. 10.

<sup>28</sup> 'Dziennik Ustaw' 1959, 2, 12, art. 1.

30, 1985. Legal acts from the years 1951–1958 created several networks of archival materials collection. They were: state archives, archives of ministries (National Defence, Foreign Affairs, Public Security/Interior), archives of political parties, selected libraries and museums. In 1963 a document was published containing the labels of the archival categories and an exemplary list of typical records<sup>29</sup>, not free from ideological influences, as it contained, among others things, class 143 – records of workers' inventiveness. A decisive departure from the regulations of the decree of 1951 and the Order of the Council of Ministers of 1952 was the Act on the National Archival Resources and Archives of 1983<sup>30</sup>. This legal act introduced the concept of a national archival resources composed of two segments: state and non-state one. These statements meant a departure from the dominant role of the state in society and permitting the existence of non-state forms of property. They also had a decisive influence on the scope of the collection. A number of documents created by non-state institutions fell outside the scope of state archives collection. However, the act confirmed that the materials taken over as a result of the political reforms and the archival regulations of 1951 and 1952, confirmed in 1957, belonged to the resources of state archives<sup>31</sup>. The act also retained centers for collecting archival materials other than state archives. The regulations on this matter were included in the Orders of the Council of Ministers of 1957 and 1958. It created a network of separate archives not subject to the Chief Director of State Archives<sup>32</sup>. The network of party archives found itself in the sphere of non-state recorded archives<sup>33</sup>. The Order of the Minister of Science, Higher Education and Technology of 1984 became the publication of a uniform thematic list of typical records occurring in institutions supervised by the Chief Director of State Archives, in which the number and classification entry were graphically separated. It created the legal basis for the classification and qualification of various types of documentation created in these institutions. This legal act also introduced the concept of 'documentation' as all documents created by a specific institution, regardless of their historical and informational value and its division into 'archival materials' and 'non-archival documentation'<sup>34</sup>. The uniform thematic list of typical records referred to the political structure of the communist state and the functions of institutions performed in this system. It survived until 2002.

<sup>29</sup> 'Monitor Polski' 1963, 37, 184.

<sup>30</sup> 'Dziennik Ustaw' 1983, 38, 173; as cited in: *Archiwa. Przepisy prawne*, pp. 19–42.

<sup>31</sup> 'Dziennik Ustaw' 1983, 38, 173, art. 15; see: *Archiwa. Przepisy prawne*, pp. 23–24.

<sup>32</sup> 'Dziennik Ustaw' 1983, 38, 173, art. 29.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, art. 42; see: *Archiwa. Przepisy prawne*, p. 35.

<sup>34</sup> 'Dziennik Ustaw' 1984, 41, 216, art. 1; see: *Archiwa. Przepisy prawne*, p. 87.

In the years 1945–1989 the archives were subordinated to various, although closely related, ministries. In the years 1945–1951 it was the Ministry of Education; in 1951–1957 – the Prime Minister; in 1957–1958 the Ministry of Culture and Art; since 1958 the Ministry of Science and Higher Education/Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Technology. From the point of view of operational efficiency, subordination to the prime minister should be considered the most advantageous. Such ties with ministries also had ramifications for the collection building policy. This policy was related to the needs of scientific research, administrative institutions, cultural activities and society.

### 3. ATTITUDES OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE ARCHIVES AND THE CHIEF DIRECTORS OF STATE ARCHIVES TOWARDS COLLECTION BUILDING

In 1945–1951, Department of State Archives of the Ministry of Education (former Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education) was the office implementing the collection building policy. Since 1951, this function was performed by the Chief Director of the State Archives and the office serving it – the General Directorate of State Archives. The second office inherited the competences of the first. These institutions were responsible for state archives. In the realities of the political system at that time they were institutions collecting historical resources until 1944 and records created after 1944 by the state administration in a broad sense, as all spheres of activity were subject to its control. This meant that these offices had no influence on the collection building policy in party institutions that played a key role in the decision-making process and in public security institutions. The nationalization of many areas of activity contributed to the expansion of the sphere of collection building by the net of state archives. Examples include bank records and notarial records. The establishment of state notary office caused that effects of the activities of these institutions were included in the archives. In case of the banks it was the same. The decrees on land reform and the nationalization of industry resulted in the influx of new types of records in state archives. The collection scope was widened significantly. Materials created as a result of the activities of aristocratic families and private companies landed in archives. The archives of the German administration remained in the territory of the Polish People's Republic, stored in archives located in areas allocated by the decisions and agreements of the powers of the anti-Nazi coalition, mainly the Soviet Union and the United States, with little

participation from Great Britain. The changing territory of the Polish state changed the shape of the network in this respect as well. The archives were not spared during the war. Poland suffered many losses. Documenting them has become one of the first tasks. There were attempts to recover the archives taken away from Polish territory. In the first years after the war the activity of the archive administration focused on recording losses, attempting to recover lost archives, taking over archives transferred as a result of nationalization, developing a stance on archival materials that fell within the borders of the Polish People's Republic, created as a result of the activities of the German and Prussian administration.

Witold Suchodolski, director of the State Archives Department since April 1945, took a similar stance in the Republic of Poland before the World War II since 1931. He assumed it after the death of Stanisław Ptaszycki<sup>35</sup>. W. Suchodolski was associated with the Piłsudski's followers. He was an activist of the Polish Socialist Party. He participated in the school strike in Łomża in 1905. In 1906, he was sentenced to exile to Siberia. He decided to flee to Galicia. Here, in 1907, he obtained his high school diploma and began studies at the Jagiellonian University. He participated in political activities. Since 1918 he was an employee of the Revenue Archive. In 1921 he joined the Polish delegation in the Mixed Re-Evacuation and Special Commission in Moscow. It dealt with the problems of returning Polish archives located within the borders of the Russia, and then the Soviet Union. Since 1929 he was an employee of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education<sup>36</sup>. This nomination was probably the result of his merit, which can be considered the organization of an exhibition of archives recovered from Russia<sup>37</sup>. Since 1929 he was the director of the Department of Science and Higher Education in the aforementioned ministry. In 1931 he became director of the Department of State Archives. The institution under the same name was restored on 19 April 1945<sup>38</sup>. It was included in the structure of the Ministry of Education, which referred to the work of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education. The department dealt with the archives existing in Poland in 1939, remaining

<sup>35</sup> B. Żongołłowicz, *Dzienniki 1930–1936*, ed. D. Zamojska, Warszawa 2004, pp. 214, 216.

<sup>36</sup> For the biographical entry, see, among others, B. Żongołłowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>37</sup> W. Suchodolski, *Wystawa rewindykacyjna Zbiorów Państwowych: wybór dzieł sztuki i pamiątek narodowych odzyskanych z Rosji na podstawie traktatu pokojowego w Rydze*, intr. W. Suchodolski, 1929.

<sup>38</sup> *Wydział Archiwów Państwowych w latach 1945–1947*, ed. R. Rybarski, 'Archeion' 1948, 17, p. 202; *Listy Michała Wąsowicza do Witolda Suchodolskiego i inne źródła archiwalne 1945–1954. Rzecz o archiwach, archiwistach i archiwaliach na Dolnym Śląsku*, eds. G. Trzaskowska, I. Łabowicz, Wrocław 2016, p. 14.

within its borders after 1945, and with the organization of the network of archives in Gdańsk and in the Recovered Territories<sup>39</sup>. W. Suchodolski was aware of living in 'the times of a historical breakthrough'; 'of changes in the social structure' and 'of radically changed geographic and political situation of the state'<sup>40</sup>. Most likely, he kept his position because in his biography he emphasized the episode of participation in the revolution of 1905 and the leadership in the school strike in Łomża<sup>41</sup>. He formulated a program of archives' activity as a result of reflection on the conditions in which he had to operate. As the most important task of the archives he considered sharing. It became a particularly difficult task after the war catastrophe. It required the reconstruction of archival aids enabling navigation through the resources of individual archives<sup>42</sup>. The condition for proper sharing was also the introduction of a thematic inventory using the principle of keeping the fonds in the structure archival resource<sup>43</sup>. The program of academic activity of the archives, necessary for the proper functioning of the network, was to include the following groups of issues: 1. 'History of social movements', including the 'working class'; 2. 'Genesis of forms of capitalism and its forms in Polish lands'; 3. 'The past of the Recovered Territories until World War II'<sup>44</sup>. These assumptions were consistent with the preferred directions of research in the humanities and social sciences as well as with the politics of memory and legitimization of the Polish state's borders established as a result of World War II. W. Suchodolski, as the director of the Department of State Archives, participated in the development of the program of recovery of Polish cultural goods<sup>45</sup>. He participated in the work of various bodies dealing with this issue, consisting of representatives of archives, libraries and museums<sup>46</sup>. He dedicated a separate brochure to this issue<sup>47</sup>. The Department of State Archives and its director consulted the issue of the exchange of German archives and book collections from the territory of Germany within the borders of 1947, located within the Polish state borders in the same year. The stance of this

<sup>39</sup> *Wydział*, p. 202.

<sup>40</sup> W. Suchodolski, *Archiwa wobec dzisiejszej problematyki badań historycznych*, 'Archeion' 1948, 17, p. 21.

<sup>41</sup> See the first mention of W. Suchodolski's death in: R.A. Rybarski, *Witold Suchodolski*, 'Archeion' 1967, 47, p. 283.

<sup>42</sup> W. Suchodolski, *Archiwa*, p. 20.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 22.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 20–21.

<sup>45</sup> *Wydział*, p. 213.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>47</sup> W. Suchodolski, *Zagadnienie prymatu strat kulturalnych w ogólnym programie odszkodowań*, Warszawa 1945.

group was presented as follows: 'The department constantly emphasizes that issuing any objects of this type prior to the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany may become very dangerous to Polish interests'<sup>48</sup>. There was visible caution in dealing with archives. The department, as an institution, expressed the hope that an international peace treaty would be agreed on to regulate the shape of the post-war world. There was a sense of temporariness and makeshift in this circle. A treaty similar to the one Versailles one, ending World War I, was expected. In contacts with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ministries the Department emphasized that issuing records outside the then Polish borders without its consent may mean an irreversible depletion of archives of high historical value<sup>49</sup>. The department also participated in talks about the planned archive-library-museum agreement with the USSR<sup>50</sup>. It was very careful about family and property archives taken over by the implementation of the decrees on land reform and nationalization. In the report of the Department of State Archives from 1948, they were counted among non-state resources<sup>51</sup>. The institution led by it also sought to protect the archives created during the activities of Germany before 1945. The department contributed to the creation and issuance of legal acts by individual ministries protecting the abovementioned materials. It cooperated in this field, among others institution, with the Ministry of Industry and Trade. It was this Ministry that prohibited 'to treat post-German records as waste paper'<sup>52</sup>. This legal act resulted in the cessation of mass and thoughtless destruction of German archives. The Department of State Archives tried to treat them as cultural property. It attempted to make this concept a category independent of the political values which became the source of their creation<sup>53</sup>. In this field it also cooperated with the Ministry of the Recovered Territories. On the initiative of the Department this Ministry also issued legal acts aimed at stopping the destruction of German archives<sup>54</sup>. It also led to the resolution of the Council of Ministers of April 10, 1947 allowing the state archival service to take over post-German records<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup> 'Wydział stale podkreśla, że wydawanie jakichkolwiek obiektów tego typu przed zawarciem traktatu pokojowego z Niemcami może stać się bardzo niebezpieczne dla interesów Polski'. *Wydział*, p. 213.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>51</sup> *Sprawozdanie z działalności Wydziału Archiwów Państwowych za rok 1948*, 'Archeion' 1951, 19/20, p. 463.

<sup>52</sup> 'traktowania jako makulatury akt poniemieckich'. *Ibidem*.

<sup>53</sup> On the threat to German files, see including: *Listy*, p. 202.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 17–18.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*.

The Department of State Archives headed by W. Suchodolski also developed a program for the recovery of Polish archives located within the territory of German occupation zones. The most famous element of it was the mission of Adam Stebelski (March 1947) to the British occupation zone<sup>56</sup>. The department controlled the evaluation in the offices of general administration and courts by sending by these institutions lists of records of categories A and B and issuing opinions on them<sup>57</sup>. The aforementioned institutions also cooperated with it in the development of detailed regulations and the transfer of records to waste paper<sup>58</sup>. In the report on the activities of the Department from 1945–1947 it was emphasized that this activity was carried out ‘without objections’ and ‘misunderstandings’<sup>59</sup>. In this way, they wanted to stress that cooperation in the field of control of the resources resulting from the activities of the institutions of the communist state was harmonious. It was also highlighted that this was the result of approval of all ministries for the focusing of the ‘archival service’ in the hands of one minister<sup>60</sup>. This phenomenon, resulting from the existing political system, has been treated as an attractive tool for the effectiveness of the state archival administration in the field of controlling the evaluation of records and securing archives. In 1949 W. Suchodolski was dismissed from the position of the director of the State Archives Department. The reason was the proposal to return the Dutch archival records, which then took place<sup>61</sup>. The issues of returning archives located on the territory of Poland after 1945 were of interest to the Department. This institution was a consultant to the government administration on these issues. In January 1946, the Department of State Archives discussed the request of the French Embassy for the return of archival record taken by the SS from the territory of that country and found in Poland. It was then that the conditions that should be met before handing over this type of material were formulated<sup>62</sup>. It must be acknowledged that the Department acted carefully in such cases. Z. Kolankowski, an employee of the Department, described the circumstances of W. Suchodolski’s dismissal in his memoirs about his work at this institution. The reason was the consent to return the materials of the ‘Archives of the Socialist International’ from Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Such a decision was made by W. Suchodolski together with Pro-

<sup>56</sup> *Wydział*, p. 212; *Listy*, pp. 19–20.

<sup>57</sup> *Wydział*, pp. 196–197.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 196.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>61</sup> See: B. Żongołłowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>62</sup> *Wydział*, p. 214.

fessor Józef Grycz from the Library Directorate. They did not ask for the opinion or consent of either the Foreign Department of the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Polish authorities became aware of their decision only when the Netherlands asked for freight wagons to transport the crates with the records<sup>63</sup>. The entry regarding the resignation was included in the biography of W. Suchodolski prepared by Zygmunt Kolankowski. It read 'On 1 March 1949, he was suspended in his activities for alleged extradition of Dutch archival records without consulting the authorities, and then transferred to the Central Archives of Historical Records as a researcher'<sup>64</sup>. This form of entry in 'Słownik' indicates a willingness to raise doubts as to whether the attitude of W. Suchodolski can indeed be regarded as a form of disloyalty to the communist state and should such action be the reason for his dismissal? There is also the question what Dutch records were concerned in this case. Z. Kolankowski's information was imprecise. The analysis of the contents of the 'Archeion' shows that in 1957, i.e. at the time when Henryk Altman was the Managing Director, the Netherlands received the archive records of the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, taken away by Germany during the war<sup>65</sup>. Among them were, *inter alia*, Karl Kautski's archive and his enormous correspondence, records of the Dutch Socialist Party (1896–1940), trade unions (1894–1940) and various associations tied with the Dutch socialist movement<sup>66</sup>. Probably W. Suchodolski and J. Grycz agreed to return the records, which Z. Kolankowski described as 'Archives of the Socialist International from Amsterdam'. In this case it remains mystery, why they were dismissed for their consent in 1949, and in 1957 it was decided to return these records. Perhaps it was caused by a change in the political climate after the event of 1956 and a greater openness to Western countries. The dismissal of W. Suchodolski and J. Grycz can also be treated as getting rid of people with uncertain political views, unconvinced of the communist authorities and their activities. They themselves could think that returning these records was obvious. They were taken by Germany during the occupation and placed in Gliwice. For the return of the Insti-

<sup>63</sup> Z. Kolankowski, *Praca w Wydziale Archiwów Państwowych (1949–1951)*, 'Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici' 1984, Historia 19, pp. 147–206.

<sup>64</sup> '1.II. 1949 r. został za propozycję ekstradycji archiwaliów holenderskich rzekomo bez uzgodnienia z władzami zawieszony w czynnościach i przeniesiony do AGAD jako samodzielny prac. nauk.'. Z. Kolankowski, *Suchodolski Witold (1887–1967)*, in: *Słownik Biograficzny Archiwistów Polskich*, vol. 1, 1918–1984, Warszawa 1988, p. 210.

<sup>65</sup> H. A.[ltman], *Przekazanie przez władze polskie cennych materiałów archiwalnych do Holandii*, 'Archeion' 1957, 27, pp. 334–335.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*.

tute's records in 1957, Poland received thanks in the form of manuscripts of communist activists Julian Marchlewski and Adolf Warski, and socialist brochures in Polish<sup>67</sup>. It is interesting that this gift, precious from the point of view of the values of the communist state, was not transferred to the state archives but to the Party History Department at the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party<sup>68</sup>. This case of 1957 suggests there was a concern for the collecting center (party archives), which was autonomous and parallel to the state. One of the forms of acceptance of new communist ideas<sup>69</sup> is the translation of the work of the leading theoretician of Soviet archival studies, K.G. Mitiayev, entitled 'Theory and Practice of Archival Work'<sup>70</sup>, done by W. Suchodolski and other people<sup>71</sup>, including some employees of Department. It was published in 1954, five years after his resignation. Translating could mean accepting the influx of Soviet theories and ideas into Polish archival studies. Such a stance was no longer associated with the holding of the position of director of the Department of State Archives.

The establishment of the office of the Chief Director of the State Archives was largely related to the activity of Rafał Gerber<sup>72</sup>. This historian and archivist is associated with giving a new face to archival activity. He sought to connect it with the communist ideology. It was supposed to shape new forms of archival work. On his initiative activities were carried out to achieve these goals. He was also the initiator of the decree of 29 March 1951 on state archives<sup>73</sup>. It was signed by Bolesław Bierut as President and Józef Cyrankiewicz as Prime Minister. Archive activity, like in the Republic of Poland in 1919, was regulated by a legal act of the same name, however, created in the legislative system of the communist state. It should also be pointed out that in the report of the Department of State Archives for the years 1945–1947 it was indicated that at that time the amendment to the decree of 7 February 1919 on the organization of state archives and the care of archival records was being worked out. It was caused by the

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>69</sup> On links between textbooks and the political sphere, see: J. Łosowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 100–123.

<sup>70</sup> K.G. Mitiajew, *Teoria i praktyka pracy archiwalnej*, Warszawa 1954.

<sup>71</sup> Among the translators, there were K. Murza-Murzicz, A. Rybarski, A. Sienkiewicz. A. Rybarski was W. Suchodolski's associate in the Department of State Archives, the author of reports on the activities of the Department and state archives published in the: 'Archeion' 1948, 17, pp. 196–220; 1948, 18, pp. 218–263.

<sup>72</sup> J. Jakubowski, *Gerber Rafał (1909–1981)*, in: *Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 1, pp. 71–72.

<sup>73</sup> 'Archeion' 1951, 19/20, pp. 4–5.

changes in political conditions of the archives' activity<sup>74</sup>. The first public information about the nature and scope of the changes appeared at the conference of archivists in Wrocław on 23 September 1948. It was then published in 'Archeion'<sup>75</sup>. A lecture on these issues was delivered at the conference by Rafał Gerber. Later, it was also published in 'Archeion'<sup>76</sup>. In those publications the vision of building a new formula for functioning of the state archival network was outlined. It was to be based on all the rights that the 'People's Democratic State' gave to the archives<sup>77</sup>. The state was to guarantee the effectiveness of operation by centralizing and controlling all types of archival records, regardless of the legal position of their authors<sup>78</sup>. R. Gerber pointed to the limited powers of state archives granted to them by a decree of 1919<sup>79</sup>, which prevented them from carrying out effective activities in the field of control over the handling of documentation in state administration institutions. The new law was to change this situation. The scope of archives' competences was also related to the defining the domain of collection building, i.e. the indicating the materials that should be included in the network. In R. Gerber's deliberations, there was a vision of the new organization and role of state archives network. The archives were to be present and active in 'all areas of economic, political and cultural life'<sup>80</sup>. The discussed considerations also included a vision of the new organization of the archive network. The Department of State Archives was to yield to the General Directorate of Archives as 'an independent branch of state administration'<sup>81</sup>. The rights of this institution in the field of collection building were very broad. It was to control all institutions operating in the state and all stages of documents creation, i.e. the office, institution archive and state archives. R. Gerber indicated that the General Directorate would supervise the records of 'authorities, offices and state and local government institutions, state enterprises and cooperatives, social institutions and organizations'<sup>82</sup>. The following activities were to be inspected: 1. In the chancellery –

<sup>74</sup> *Wydział*, p. 200.

<sup>75</sup> W. Suchodolski, *Potrzeby archiwów państwowych w świetle wniosków, zgłoszonych na wrocławskiej konferencji archiwistów*, 'Archeion' 1948, 18, pp. 47–48.

<sup>76</sup> R. Gerber, *Wytyczne do projektu nowelizacji dekretu o państwowej służbie archiwalnej (Referat wygłoszony dnia 23 września na konferencji archiwalnej we Wrocławiu)*, 'Archeion' 1948, 18, pp. 61–70.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 61.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 62.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 66.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem*.

'keeping records and forwarding them to the repositories', 2. In the repository – 'receiving records from the office, preparing for transfer to the state archives'<sup>83</sup>. The General Directorate of Archives was to visit the offices, repositories and archives<sup>84</sup>. Each institution and each stage of handling its documents were to be strictly controlled. This was to ensure the perfect operation of the archive network and to prevent incorrect evaluation and collection. One of the important elements of the program of changing the face of the archival network towards giving it features that can occur in the new state formula was the problem known as 'merging archives' divided between archives, libraries and museums<sup>85</sup>. It was not a new issue. Generally, it is related to the methodological difficulties of developing perfect criteria for dividing cultural heritage between the various institutional forms of its collection – archives, libraries and museums. The concept of an archive fond introduced the principle of collection in one institution archives resulting from the activity of a specific record-maker. This became the basis for the archives to formulate the necessity to collect entire fonds, a complete set of materials from one record-maker. This problem was pointed out by W. Suchodolski, who called it 'accumulating archival materials in non-archival collections'<sup>86</sup>. He also recalled the attempts made before 1939 to consolidate the collections<sup>87</sup>. This issue was elaborated on by R. Gerber by listing the materials stored in libraries that are of interest to archives. The issue of the boundary between the resources of archives, libraries and museums also took a new form of polemics resulting from the division of cultural goods taken over by decrees on land reform and the nationalization of industry<sup>88</sup>. In his considerations he also indicated the need for a network of county (Polish: *powiat*) archives. They were to guarantee good protection of archival materials in the field and to be an eye and ear of the General Directorate of Archives<sup>89</sup>. The ideas contained in the discussed paper began to be implemented in 1950. At that time, the Department of State Archives was transformed into the General Directorate of State Archives. The Decree of 1951 was a further implementation of the ideas contained in R. Gerber's paper of 1948. According to the memoirs of Z. Kolankowski, it appears that R. Gerber had a great influence on the shape and content of

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 67.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>86</sup> W. Suchodolski, *Potrzeby*, p. 54.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>88</sup> R. Gerber, *Wytyczne*, pp. 67–68.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 69.

the decree. Work on the amendment to the Decree on Archives of 1919 was already carried out by W. Suchodolski, as was mentioned in the description of his activities. As the Chief Director of the State Archives R. Gerber took over the project developed by Janusz Durko. The text was very extensive. R. Gerber decided that it would be shortened and based on the models of other countries, including the Soviet Union<sup>90</sup>. The final editorial form of the decree was the work of Z. Kolankowski in collaboration with R. Gerber. It was also consulted with the Legislative Office of Council of Ministers<sup>91</sup>. Since his employment in the Department R. Gerber conducted a kind of propaganda campaign for the new principles of organising the archival network. The text of the decree showed the ideology and rhetoric of the communist state. This legal act adopted the principle that state archives would fall under the competence of the prime minister, and not the Ministry of Education as before<sup>92</sup>. Despite the efforts to take control of all record-makers and archives, this legal act excluded archives subordinate to the Ministers of National Defence, Public Security and Foreign Affairs from the competence of the Chief Director of State Archives<sup>93</sup>. This meant that they could create their own rules of operation, including the collection of archives. The network of state archives was to deal with 'the collection and consolidation of archival materials'<sup>94</sup>. In the same issue of 'Archeion', in which the text of the decree was published, Rafał Gerber published the article 'Objectives and tasks of the archive service in Poland'<sup>95</sup>. It can be considered a specific program manifesto of the Chief Director. It was also a kind of official interpretation of the decree by the Chief Director. It defined the basic tasks that were to be performed by archives. The text uses revolutionary rhetoric. The activities of the archives were presented as 'a struggle for respect and understanding for the importance and significance of archival materials in society, for the scientific, cultural, administrative and political role of state archives'<sup>96</sup>. Referring to the situation of Polish archives, the Chief Director pointed to the 'war damage' causing gaps in the resources<sup>97</sup>. However, he emphasized that some compensation for these losses should be materials that had not previously entered the state archives and were not subject of collection. He mentioned

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<sup>90</sup> Z. Kolankowski, *Praca*, p. 221.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>92</sup> Article 8 of the 1951 Decree, 'Archeion' 1951, 19/20, p. 5.

<sup>93</sup> Article 7 of the 1951 Decree, *ibidem*.

<sup>94</sup> Article 4 of the 1951 Decree, *ibidem*.

<sup>95</sup> R. Gerber, *Cele i zadania służby archiwalnej w Polsce*, 'Archeion' 1951, 19/20, pp. 6–18.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 6.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibidem*.

the case of archives of great land property 'jealously guarded until 1945' and transferred to the archives as a result of its liquidation<sup>98</sup>. The problem of transferring these archives to the resources was also the subject of A. Gerber's reflection in the previously quoted 'Wytyczne do projektu nowelizacji dekretu o państwowej służbie archiwalnej'. In this article he recognized that the seizure of these materials was becoming a form of economic transparency. In 1948 he wrote: 'Until 1945 magnates and capitalists kept jealously the secrets of their financial operations, preventing archival supervision in their administrations, establishments and institutions, but in Liberated Poland it became possible and – after the land reform and the nationalization of large industry – the duty of the archival service is to take care of these huge masses of archival records that need to be consolidated'<sup>99</sup>. The archival materials of these institutions in the resources of state archives enabled a kind of social control of their activities. R. Gerber was not alone in his view. Kazimierz Konarski, a well-known archivist and theoretician, also pointed to the benefits of taking over these archival materials. He stressed: 'Once upon a time these archival materials were almost completely inaccessible to most of the researchers, today the situation is changing radically'<sup>100</sup>. K. Konarski, while analyzing the provenance of these materials, pointed to the archives of state and official origin taken over by the private phenomenon of 'ideological theft' stimulating such behavior, that was occurring in the 19th century<sup>101</sup>. R. Gerber received theoretical support in his views on these archival materials. During his time as the Chief Director there were conflicts in this respect. Z. Kolankowski, as an informer of the 6th Unit of the 5th Department of the Ministry of Public Security, wrote about the dispute between the State Archives of Krakow and the Czartoryski Museum over the place of storing the archives<sup>102</sup>. Both the Archives and the Museum

<sup>98</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 6–7.

<sup>99</sup> 'magnaci i kapitaliści strzegli do 1945 r. zazdrośnie tajemnic swych operacji finansowych, nie dopuszczając do przeprowadzenia nadzoru archiwalnego w swych administracjach, zakładach i instytucjach, o tyle w Polsce Wyzwolonej, stało się możliwe i jest, po przeprowadzeniu reformy rolnej i upaństwowieniu wielkiego przemysłu, obowiązkiem służby archiwalnej zaopiekowanie się tymi wielkimi masami archiwalniami, domagających się scalenia'. R. Gerber, *Wytyczne*, pp. 61–62.

<sup>100</sup> 'Ongi były te archiwalia niemal całkowicie niedostępne dla szerszego ogółu badaczy, dziś sytuacja ta zmienia się radykalnie'. K. Konarski, *Nowe zadania polskiej archiwistyki*, 'Archeion' 1948, 17, p. 24.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 23.

<sup>102</sup> *Doniesienie informatora ps.* »Zyg« złożone zastępcy Naczelnika Wydziału VI Departamentu V MBP Mieczysławowi Lidertowi, 20 XII 1951, in: A. Kulecka, T.P. Rutkowski, *Oczami agenta. Środowiska naukowe i archiwalne w doniesieniach TW 'Zyg' – Zygmunta Kolankowskiego*, Warszawa 2012, p. 186.

wanted to keep them in their resources. Z. Kolankowski also mentioned the participation of politicians in the conflict, including MP Bolesław Drobner, and the academic circles, including professor Jan Dąbrowski. He also published an ideological commentary on people defending the affiliation of the Czartoryski archives to the Museum's resource: 'What comes into play here is the tendency of some factors to petrify the aristocratic remains reverently. Many political and cultural activists subconsciously succumb to these trends, promoted entirely by reaction'<sup>103</sup>. Moreover, the Chief Director indicated the expansion of the activities of state archives which incorporated 'city archives' into themselves, as well as economic, cultural, state and socialized institutions and enterprises<sup>104</sup>. Archives were also required to control records in offices and the process of their removal<sup>105</sup>. An idea of a very extensive supervision of records created and stored in a communist state was outlined here. The scope of collection was consistent with the definition of the state archival resources. In R. Gerber's thought it looked like this: 'In this way, the state archival resources include the entirety of the manuscript legacy of state, municipal and industrial administration from the past, together with private and family archives, as well as archival production of offices, institutions, state-owned and socialized enterprises'<sup>106</sup>. This fragment of R. Gerber's considerations was written in the form of a legal act. It was the Order of the Council of Ministers of 26 April 1952. According to it, the state archival resources as the concept determining the scope of collection include: archival materials created as a result of the activities of state and local government institutions and offices, state-owned enterprises, banks, institutions and cultural associations, liquidated private enterprises, institutions that used to exercise power over the lands that covered the current territory of the People's Republic of Poland, materials from the 'landed properties' taken over by the state after the land reform, families playing a historical role, and all other materials that were included in the resources of state archives<sup>107</sup>. Z. Kolankowski described the legislative

<sup>103</sup> 'Wchodzi tu w grę tendencja niektórych czynników petryfikowania z pietyzmem pozostałości magnackich. Wielu działaczy politycznych i kulturalnych ulega podświadomie tym tendencjom lansowanym całkowicie przez reakcję'. *Doniesienie informatora ps.* »Zyg«.

<sup>104</sup> R. Gerber, *Cele*, p. 7.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>106</sup> 'W ten sposób państwowy zasób archiwalny obejmuje całokształt spuścizny rękopiśmiennej zarówno administracji państwowej, municypalnej, przemysłowej z lat minionych wraz z archiwami prywatno-rodowymi, jak również archiwalną produkcją kancelaryjną urzędów, instytucji, przedsiębiorstw państwowych i uspołecznionych'. R. Gerber, *Cele*, p. 7.

<sup>107</sup> 'Dziennik Ustaw' 1952, 24, 165, art. 2, 3, 4.

process carried out in the General Directorate of State Archives after the decree on archives had been issued in 1951. This legal act required a number of detailed regulations. One of them was the aforementioned Order of the Council of Ministers of 26 April 1952 on the state archival resources. Z. Kolankowski in cooperation with Konstancy Murza-Murzicz, lawyer in Vilnius, 'Tatar' of 'Polish Tatars from Vilnius'<sup>108</sup>. These acts were created by the employees of the General Directorate, then agreed with the Legislative Office of the Council of Ministers; they also had to be approved by the Chief Director<sup>109</sup>. Such a process of creation also ensured a compliance with the ideology and current state policy. The above-mentioned regulation of the Council of Ministers of 1952 was probably the result of these activities.

In R. Gerber's considerations a new feature of the resources also appeared. It was a new type of archival material – materials recorded on new media. R. Gerber wrote about them as follows: 'The archive resources are enriched with a new type of sources resulting from mechanical production – photo- and phonographic materials'<sup>110</sup>. Extending the scope of collection to include new types of records, including those saved on new data carriers, posed new methodological tasks for the archives. Organizing and inventorying required the development of new methods and conducting research on the history of the office, which were to present the history of record-makers<sup>111</sup>. The Chief Director emphasized that organizing is connected with the discarding of records, i.e. the elimination and permanent destruction of those that were deemed not useful for research and other purposes. He believed that discarding in the archives should be done 'skillfully' and therefore would not bring any social harm<sup>112</sup>. His expectations for this process were very high. He wrote about it: 'An absolute condition for the correct discarding is to organize the fond and initially understand its specificity and the value of individual types of records and books in the entirety of this material'<sup>113</sup>. These views meant that the destruction of records could only take place after the fond had

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<sup>108</sup> Z. Kolankowski, *W Naczelnej Dyrekcji Archiwów Państwowych (kartka wspomnień)*, in: *Historia i archiwistyka. Księga Pamiątkowa ku czci Profesora Andrzeja Tomczaka*, eds. S. Kalembka et al., Toruń–Warszawa, 1992, p. 287.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>110</sup> 'Zasób archiwalny zostaje wzbogacony o nowy typ źródeł produkcji mechanicznej – materiały foto- i fonograficzne'. R. Gerber, *Cele*, p. 7.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 8–9.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 9.

<sup>113</sup> 'Bezwzględny warunkiem prawidłowego brakowania jest uporządkowanie zespołu i wstępne zorientowanie się w jego specyfice i wartości poszczególnych typów akt i ksiąg w całokształcie tego materiału'. R. Gerber, *Cele*, p. 10.

been prepared and the content and value of its individual parts had been analyzed. Such assumptions meant a long procedure of discarding. At the same time, R. Gerber assumed that it was not the only method of eliminating records considered unworthy of storage. He believed that record lists could also help in the elimination. For this reason he wrote: 'The archive service is faced with an exceptionally important task of great importance, not only scientifically, but also nationwide, to develop a central list of records with specific storage periods for individual types of records, which list should become a discarding-guide in the offices of current records. Without such a framework list central offices are unable to develop their departmental model lists of records'<sup>114</sup>. R. Gerber therefore allowed for discarding after the analyses and on the basis of *a priori* prepared lists. Expanding the range of operation of state archives meant that they were to popularize the issues of assessing the value of records by their authors. This process, however, was to be controlled by archival institutions. Expanding the scope of collection, requiring new methodological principles and rules of assessing the value of records, should lead to more intensive research in the field of recent history. However, he regretted that such a tendency was not visible in the historians' circle. This also had an impact on archivists. He wrote: 'The escape from recent history, which is an absolutely reactionary phenomenon among our historians, becomes especially harmful in archives'<sup>115</sup>. He treated the distancing from research on the history of the 19th and 20th centuries as an attitude associated with the approval of backwardness, and civilizational and ideological delay. R. Gerber believed that new research directions should be established, such as the history of a factory office records, history of accounting in capitalist enterprises of the 19th and 20th centuries and history of creating court archives<sup>116</sup>. In this context, he negatively assessed the personnel of state archives, treating it as an effect of the 'Medievalist school' that disregards the most recent archival records and has experience in assessing old archival materials<sup>117</sup>. For this reason, he critically evaluated programs preparing for the profession of archivist, writing: 'One-sidedness in educating students,

<sup>114</sup> 'Przed służbą archiwalną stoi wyjątkowo ważne o dużym znaczeniu nie tylko naukowym, ale i ogólnopaństwowym, zadanie opracowania centralnego wykazu akt z określonymi terminami przechowywania poszczególnych typów akt, który to wykaz winien stać się przewodnikiem przy brakowaniu w urzędach akt bieżących. Bez takiego ramowego wykazu nie potrafią urzędy centralne opracować swoich resortowych wzorowych wykazów akt'. R. Gerber, *Cele*, p. 10.

<sup>115</sup> 'Uciezka od historii najnowszej, będąca bezwzględnie wstecznym zjawiskiem wśród naszych historyków, staje się specjalnie szkodliwa w archiwach'. R. Gerber, *Cele*, p. 8

<sup>116</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 9.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 8.

resulting from relying entirely on the old material, should be avoided. Departments of archival studies at universities should and must become centers of theoretical thought in this field. Especially, they must take up the most recent records<sup>118</sup>. Archives, in light of the ideas contained in the program manifesto of the Chief Director, should conduct extensive social activity, including cultural activity, manifesting itself in popularizing the resources and organizing exhibitions<sup>119</sup>. He considered sharing one of the most important tasks of archives<sup>120</sup>. Other archival activities were to be subordinated to it.

The analysis of the various activities of the Chief Director shows that he was not consistent in his ideological actions. On the one hand, he strove to reconstruct the ideological views of people employed in his archives, but on the other hand, he did not always act in accordance with this line. In an agent report by Zygmunt Kolankowski of 27 April 1951, addressed to Mieczysław Lidert, the deputy head of 6th Unit of 5th Department of the Ministry of Interior, the author informed that at the congress of the directors of state and city archives, which took place from 29 March to 2 April of that year, there were two papers presented that should be considered a manifestation of R. Gerber's new policy. The first was about the ideological training of archivists, the second about competition in archives<sup>121</sup>. The informer indicated: 'These papers were received with much frigidity'<sup>122</sup>. The circle of the archival elite, and directors should be considered as such, did not support the activities conducted in this direction. It was closer to the stance of keeping a distance from the Chief Director's proposal. The reaction and discussion of the papers resulted in the retirement of Jadwiga Karwasińska, a respected archivist from the Central Archives of Historical Records. The reason was her statement at the congress indicating her reluctance to compete in work<sup>123</sup>. From this report by Z. Kolankowski it appears that R. Gerber wanted to disseminate the ideas of communism in archives. However, he did not find the expected ideological support in this environment. Nevertheless, other reports of this agent indicate slightly different attitudes of R. Gerber towards the

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<sup>118</sup> 'Należy unikać jednostronności w kształceniu studentów, wynikającej z oparcia się całkowicie o materiał akt dawnych. Katedry archiwistyki na wyższych uczelniach winny i muszą stać się ośrodkami myśli teoretycznej w dziedzinie archiwoznawstwa, szczególnie zaś muszą się one zająć aktami najnowszymi'. R. Gerber, *Cele*, p. 17.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 15.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 11.

<sup>121</sup> *Doniesienie informatora ps. »Zyg« (Zygmunt Kolankowski), 27 IV 1951*, in: A. Kulecka, T.P. Rutkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

<sup>122</sup> 'Referaty te były przyjęte bardzo chłodno'. *Ibidem*, p. 129.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 128–129.

idea of a communist state. An example may be the attempts to transfer Z. Kolankowski to the Central Archives of Historical Records. R. Gerber refused his request on this matter. The motivation given was peculiar. Z. Kolankowski described the situation in the following way in a letter to Mieczysław Lidert (24 November 1951): 'I put forward a proposal to transfer me to the Central Archives of Historical Records as a researcher. Principal Gerber stated that it would be inadvisable because 'they believe you to be spying'. He did not give any further explanations'<sup>124</sup>. This meant that R. Gerber was careful in selecting his staff and striving to avoid conflict situations, also on the ideological basis, in archives. In the same report, Z. Kolankowski signaled to M. Lidert the existence of a conflict between him and the then director of the CAHR, Adam Stebelski, regarding the evaluation of records. It was caused by the stance towards the records of the Austrian military intelligence of 1915/1916. At the CAHR they were treated as rubbish that had to be sent to waste paper. The position of Z. Kolankowski, motivated by ideology, was different. He expressed it as follows: 'These records concerned the Austrian intelligence activities against left-wing Polish organizations in Dąbrowa Basin/SDKPiL and contained leaflets, etc.'<sup>125</sup>. Z. Kolankowski emphasized that those records could be assessed from different perspectives. From the point of view of the director of the CAHR they were of little value. However, if the basis for their assessment was to be significant for the history of left-wing social movements, the perspective underwent a radical change. R. Gerber's attitude towards Z. Kolankowski's willingness to move to CAHR also proves a certain distance from the phenomenon referred to as *szpiclowanie* (snooping). It can be concluded that he did not fully accept all methods of the communist state and treated some as too oppressive. In the memoirs published in 1992, Z. Kolankowski presented R. Gerber as a professional whose strong position was due to the 'legitimization by Soviet archives'<sup>126</sup>, i.e. the experience of working in them and his 'kinship with Jakub

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<sup>124</sup> 'Wysunąłem propozycje przeniesienia mnie do Archiwum Głównego Akt Dawnych na pracownika naukowego. Dyrektor Gerber oświadczył, że byłoby to niewskazane ponieważ 'oni tam uważają, że wy szpiclujecie'. Bliższych wyjaśnień nie dał'. *Doniesienie informatora ps. »Zyg«* (Zygmunta Kolankowskiego) złożone zastępcy Naczelnika Wydziału VI Departamentu V MBP, Mieczysławowi Lidertowi, 24 XI 1951, in: A. Kulecka, T.P. Rutkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

<sup>125</sup> 'Akta te dotyczyły wywiadu austriackiego prowadzącego przeciwko organizacjom lewicowym polskim w Zagłębiu Dąbrowskim/SDKPiL i zawierały druki ulotne itp.'. *Ibidem*, p. 157.

<sup>126</sup> R. Gerber worked, among others places, in the archive in Tashkent, see: Z. Kolankowski, *W Naczelnej*, p. 285.

Berman<sup>127</sup>. Having the appropriate ideological connections, R. Gerber, however, did not disregard the achievements of archival studies. For this reason, among other things, his distance to the idea of perfect evaluation is visible. Party ties did not save him from being dismissed from his position. His ideological attitude, in line with the expectations of the administrative authorities, did not defend him either. It was caused by various kinds of intrigues and the use of various mistakes made during the performed function<sup>128</sup>. During his term as the Chief Director of the State Archives, a many circular letters were issued concerning the procedures for discarding the records, the need to respect the rules established in this regard by state archives, and above all, the control of this process by these institutions<sup>129</sup>. They were to prevent, above all, losses that could result from the so-called non-archival discarding resulting from the transfer of records to waste paper due to a shortage of raw material for paper production.

Henryk Altman was also interested in problems of collecting and evaluating records<sup>130</sup>. During his term as the Chief Director of the State Archives, the Fourth Archival Methodological Conference was organized on the problems of the permanent value of records after 1944. It was held on May 12–14, 1958<sup>131</sup>. He himself was the author of an important article devoted to the problem of assessing records in the face of the necessity to destroy some of them because of their massiveness<sup>132</sup>. The value of the aforementioned text resulted primarily from the fact that H. Altman presented in it the latest theories on the evaluation of acts in various countries of the world, including the United States, Great Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany. The article was a clear signal that there are universal problems that occur in various political systems. Through his publication Altman pointed to the need to use the theoretical achievements of other countries in order to conduct analyses serving the rational, academic principles of record selection.

The discussions during the said conference took place in three committees. The first of them dealt with administrative records. Papers regarding

<sup>127</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 286.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 285–294.

<sup>129</sup> See: *Zbiór przepisów archiwalnych wydanych przez Naczelnego Dyrektora Archiwów Państwowych w latach 1952–2000*, eds. M. Tarakanowska, E. Rosowska, Warszawa 2001, pp. 15–23.

<sup>130</sup> M. Wąsowicz, *Altman Henryk (1897–1974)*, in: *Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 1, pp. 22–23.

<sup>131</sup> 'Archeion' 1958, 29, pp. 93–97.

<sup>132</sup> H. Altman, *Zagadnienie selekcji akt*, 'Archeion' 1958, 29, pp. 113–130. He previously published an article presenting the basic problems of archival studies and archival activity, see: idem, *Aktualne zagadnienia archiwistyki zachodnio-europejskiej*, 'Archeion' 1956, 25, pp. 207–220.

the topic were delivered by Leokadia Gołębiowska ('Akta o wartości trwałej w najwyższych organach władzy i administracji państwowej') and Wojciech Kostuś ('Akta o wartości trwałej w terenowych organach administracji'). The second committee dealt with economic records. Papers were delivered by Jerzy Landau and Zbigniew Tomaszewski ('Materiały o wartości trwałej w centralnych gospodarczych instytucjach koordynujących'), Alfred Wielopolski ('Akta bankowe o wartości trwałej'), Ireneusz Ichnatowicz ('Akta o wartości trwałej w przedsiębiorstwach przemysłowych'). The third commission dealt with agricultural records. The paper was delivered by Franciszek Cieślak and Wojciech Zyśko ('Akta o wartości trwałej w administracji rolnej państwowych przedsiębiorstwach rolnych i spółdzielni produkcyjnych')<sup>133</sup>. The goal of each of the speakers was to define records, or a series of records, with historical value and intended for perpetual storage. Their authors were not only archivists but also historians. It was therefore an attempt to obtain the opinion of the historians' community. In the conference introductory paper, it was emphasized that 'more radical methods' of record selection are necessary. The ones used so far were treated as ineffective and not significantly reducing the number of records stored, with a clear desire to maintain the maximum number of records<sup>134</sup>.

The conference papers were published in 'Archeion'<sup>135</sup>. These texts opened with the aforementioned article by H. Altman. In it he pointed to the assessment of the most recent records as 'the key problem of archival studies'<sup>136</sup>. This thesis was supported by pointing to the fact that this issue was a key subject of the debate at the 'international forum of archivists'<sup>137</sup>. This issue was dealt with successively by the First International Archives Congress in Paris in 1950, the International Round Table Conference on Archives in Namur in 1955 and the Third International Archives Congress in Florence in 1956<sup>138</sup>. These events were related to the activities of the International Council of Archives at UNESCO. This institution, as linked to the United Nations, gathered countries with different political systems. H. Altman pointed out the factors favoring the creation of mass records. One of them was the expansion of the state's tasks, also in the then 'capitalist' countries, expressed by the establishment of new offices<sup>139</sup>.

<sup>133</sup> 'Archeion' 1958, 29, pp. 93–94.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 94.

<sup>135</sup> See: 'Archeion' 1958, 29.

<sup>136</sup> H. Altman, *Zagadnienie*, p. 113.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 114.

He treated the nationalization of industry and the 'socialization' of agriculture as a natural process in socialist countries. This was the reason for the 'growth of administrative offices'<sup>140</sup>. The higher number and bigger role of state offices were presented as an important factor in creating mass documentation. H. Altman also searched for technical factors serving this process. He considered the popularization of typewriters to be the basic one<sup>141</sup>. It caused an increase in the number of records, as everything could be easily written and described. The phenomenon of mass production of records was accompanied by other ones. H. Altman emphasized: 'The number of records increases at the expense of their quality'<sup>142</sup>. He added that such masses contain 'details' and 'micro-facts'<sup>143</sup>. In his opinion the value of the records decreased. This 'hypertrophy of offices' must not be accompanied by the 'hypertrophy' of archives and archivists<sup>144</sup>. It would be both 'unreal' and 'pointless'<sup>145</sup>. This was for both financial and cultural reasons. The first of them decided that no state was interested in expanding the archives network due to high costs. Leaving the entire legacy of records without selection could lead to the 'researcher drowning in papers'<sup>146</sup>. H. Altman recognized the control of archives over the destruction of documents not requiring permanent storage as a specific legal standard in countries creating a large number of records<sup>147</sup>. Such a control was to ensure professional procedures during these activities. Its role was to protect records of permanent value against destruction. However, H. Altman pointed to the existence of problems related to the archival control over the elimination of records. His article provides a longer justification for its advisability<sup>148</sup>. He considered lists as one of the important tools for assessing the value of records. Their aim was to properly indicate what should be stored permanently and what could be destroyed<sup>149</sup>. In addition to the list, archival expertise was also used<sup>150</sup>. It was the second tool to evaluate and destroy records deemed useful temporarily, not perpetually. In the further part of the text H. Altman analyzed the models of evaluation and selection of mass records.

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<sup>140</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>141</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>142</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>144</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 115.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>146</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>147</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>148</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 115–116.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 116.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibidem.*

He pointed to the American model of 'transit storages', i.e. temporary archives<sup>151</sup>. Federal offices stored records in them. During the review and arrangement, the records of perpetual value were separated from those intended to be destroyed. Then he discussed the theory of the American archivist Paul Lewinson<sup>152</sup>, published in 'The American Archivist' (1957), in which selection was considered the fundamental task of archives. An institution that did not carry out such activities was treated as a record repository collecting the entire production of records without reflection. Only an institution that used rational methods of records selection for storage deserved to be called an archive. H. Altman described P. Lewinson's theories as a method of 'sampling' associated with the necessity to choose only a certain representation from among all acts worthy of perpetual preservation. H. Altman made the following quote from P. Lewinson: 'The archives do not store all records of perpetual value, but only a selected number of them'<sup>153</sup>. He considered these views as a result of the transfer of sociological theories to archival studies. Those views resulted from the search for methods to limit the number of records kept in American archives. H. Altman also presented the work of the Committee to examine the case of archival records of British offices, which was chaired by James Grigg in 1952–1954<sup>154</sup>. He also presented the basic theses of the report resulting from its deliberations. He emphasized that the following values were listed as the basic criteria of the value of acts: 1. Usefulness for state authorities; 2. For citizens 'in order to obtain information of a political nature' and thus to implement the idea of transparency; 3. Usefulness for scientific researchers<sup>155</sup>; H. Altman also presented more detailed records selection criteria formulated by the said Committee<sup>156</sup>. The evaluation was the result of analyses, which consisted of: 1. 'studies on the office', on the reasons for its existence and liquidation, structures, roles, personnel; 2. information in the records about people, places and events; 3. physical

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<sup>151</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 116–117.

<sup>152</sup> The problem of document evaluation in the United States was dealt with in 1949 by the Herbert C. Hoover Commission working on the reform of the executive power in that country. It was established by President H. Truman, see: K. Strykowski, *Dokumentacja masowa i jej wartościowanie w archiwach wybranych krajów frankofońskich (na przykładzie akt osobowych)*, in: *Dokumentacja*, p. 79.

<sup>153</sup> 'archiwa nie zachowują wszystkich akt o trwałej wartości, lecz jedynie pewną wybraną ich liczbę'. H. Altman, *Zagadnienie*, p. 118.

<sup>154</sup> S. Nawrocki also wrote about the activities of the Committee in: S. Nawrocki, *Brakowanie akt w archiwach angielskich według zaleceń Komitetu Grigga*, 'Archeion' 1959, 31, pp. 115–132.

<sup>155</sup> H. Altman, *Zagadnienie*, p. 119.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibidem*.

properties of records<sup>157</sup>. H. Altman then presented the theories of archivists of the Federal Republic of Germany, announced in 1957. Wilhelm Rohr, G. W. Sante and Herman Meinert presented a view on the necessity of selecting records. They indicated that only the records of those offices that 'stand out' with their activities can be taken into the archives. They also stressed that record lists were an insufficient tool for selecting records. They also presented the thesis that the records from the 20th century did not represent such value as those from earlier eras<sup>158</sup>. German archivists indicated that it is necessary to select those offices, records of which will be kept permanently, and sections (series) of records. The decision what to choose, in light of these theories, was left to the archivist<sup>159</sup>. H. Altman also presented Soviet theories, mainly by A. V. Elpatevski, published in *Istoricheskij arhiv* from 1958. They pointed to the role of archival expertise in the process of eliminating records deemed not worth preserving<sup>160</sup>. H. Altman should be considered a supporter of destroying records by the method of selection. He believed that this was the only rational way to control the mass production of records. H. Altman believed that the archivist was responsible for the application of this method. He stressed that for this reason his knowledge should be very extensive. The knowledge of the criteria for selecting records was not enough. There was also a need for extensive general knowledge described as the 'intellectual level'<sup>161</sup>. The article by the then Chief Director was intended to disseminate knowledge about the problems of collecting acquired through reading periodicals and archival publications from Western democracies. It was a manifestation of new political trends in the system of the Polish People's Republic. It was associated with openness to theories outside the communist circle and Soviet influence. H. Altman was also interested in storing records with a temporal value intended to be discarded. In one of the texts, he indicated two stances on this type of material. The first was represented by the archives of the American and Anglo-Saxon countries. Its idea was to store in these institutions all records created by offices, regardless of their value and purpose. It was connected with the existence of intermediate archives. It was there that the final selection of records was made and the division into those that required perpetual storage and those that did not have such a feature. The second stance was represented by the

<sup>157</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 119–120.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 123; see also: J. Chojecka, *Problematyka wartościowania dokumentacji masowej w Republice Federalnej Niemiec*, in: *Dokumentacja*, pp. 103–116.

<sup>159</sup> H. Altman, *Zagadnienie*, p. 124.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 125–126.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 130.

archives of 'most European countries'. It was based on collecting in the resources of these institutions only records of permanent value and requiring perpetual storage<sup>162</sup>. The publications on the evaluation of records in the 'Archeion' were in line with the theories of H. Altman, formulated on the basis of papers presented at conferences organized by the International Council of Archives. In 1958, a number of articles were published containing compilations of important series of documentation for all types of institutions operating within the communist state and for those kept in state archives.

During Henryk Altman's term as the Chief Director, the records were transferred to Poland by the Soviet Union, and exchanged with the German Democratic Republic. In 1958, information about these activities was published in the 'Archeion'. It was reported that the USSR handed over the records taken during the war from the territory of the People's Republic of Poland within the borders of 1945. These were: archival records from the former Wrocław Archive, manuscripts from the former Wrocław City Library, and manuscripts from the National Library (including Zamoyski Entail Library), the University Library in Warsaw, part of the Prussian estates' archival records, the archive of Gdańsk (Kamlaria), city records of Poznań, town and land records from the CAHR, archival records from the Archdiocese Archives in Poznań, Gniezno and Włocławek<sup>163</sup>. Subsequent transfers of records from the USSR took place in the 1960s. One of them on 4 October 1961. At that time, town and land records returned to Poland, including a large part from Lublin region, city records from Suwałki and Augustów regions, records of Polish Bank<sup>164</sup>. In 1964, the materials of the institutions of the 19th century Kingdom of Poland were transferred. On 13 May 1961, there was a mutual transfer of records between Poland and the German Democratic Republic<sup>165</sup>. At that time, 168 parchment documents from the Krakow Crown Archives, records of the Prussian administration and of Department of South Prussia and New East Prussia

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<sup>162</sup> H. Altman, *Zadania archiwów w świetle konferencji archiwów w Zagrzebiu*, 'Archeion' 1958, 28, pp. 3–9.

<sup>163</sup> *Przekazane Polsce przez Związek Radziecki materiały rękopiśmienne, wywiezione w czasie wojny przez hitlerowców do Niemiec*, 'Archeion' 1958, 28, pp. 246–252.

<sup>164</sup> H. Altman, *Przekazanie Polsce materiałów archiwalnych ze Związku Radzieckiego*, 'Archeion' 1962, 37, pp. 294–296; W. Maciejewska, *Druga partia z transportu akt przekazanych Polsce przez Związek Radziecki w latach 1961–1962*, 'Archeion' 1964, 40, pp. 300–301.

<sup>165</sup> H. Rappaport, *Rewindykowane z ZSRR w roku 1964 akta pomocnika generał-gubernatora do spraw policyjnych (Pomocznika Warszawskiego Gienierał Gubernatora po Policiejskiej Czasti) z lat 1897–1917 jako źródła do dziejów ówczesnego Królestwa Polskiego*, 'Archeion' 1968, 50, pp. 157–169.

(1793–1805) returned to the Polish collection<sup>166</sup>. Moreover, part of the archives of the Dukes of Szczecin was transferred to Poland. The German Democratic Republic received the records of the central administration of Prussia and records, incl. municipal ones from the territories belonging to this state after 1945<sup>167</sup>. It can be concluded that H. Altman was very active when it came to the issues of return and exchange of records as well as informing about this process in the archival press. During his time as the Chief Director of the State Archives, the foundations for the organization system, inspection of record repositories/institutional archives, rules for transferring records to archives, types of documents for documentation management, selection of record-makers, documenting the activities of state archives in the sphere of supervision were established<sup>168</sup>. At that time, 'Archeion' published articles on the permanent value of records and the analyses of various types of archival materials in terms of their academic and social usefulness<sup>169</sup>.

The next Chief Director of the State Archives, Leon Chajn, was also interested with problems of collection building<sup>170</sup>. His reflections on this were heard at the Sixth National Archival Methodological Conference, which was held on 4 and 5 December 1970. The 'Archeion' published the text of the paper delivered during this event<sup>171</sup>. It had the form of a specific program text. The archives were then subordinated to the Minister of Education and Higher Education. In the published text L. Chajn indicated the need to prepare a draft of law on archives. It was supposed to strengthen the position of the state archival service in administrative structures<sup>172</sup>. Legal acts of a lower rank than the law on archives were deemed insufficient and did not ensure the proper status of the General

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<sup>166</sup> H. Altman, *Protokół o wzajemnym przekazaniu materiałów archiwalnych pomiędzy Polską Rzeczypospolitą Ludową a Niemiecką Republiką Demokratyczną*, 'Archeion' 1961, 35, pp. 160–161.

<sup>167</sup> W. Maciejewska, *Wzajemne przekazanie akt przez Niemiecką Republikę Demokratyczną i Polską Rzeczypospolitą Ludową*, 'Archeion' 1962, 38, pp. 309–310; on other returns, see: Cz. Skopowski, *Zwrot Archiwum Unitatis (Braci Czeskich) z Leszna*, 'Archeion' 1962, 37, pp. 293–294, H. Lesiński, *Przekazanie akt do Woj. Archiwum Państwowego w Szczecinie przez Niemiecką Republikę Demokratyczną*, 'Archeion' 1964, 40, p. 303 (municipal files and part of Dukes of Szczecin archives).

<sup>168</sup> *Zbiór przepisów*, pp. 24–100.

<sup>169</sup> See including: J. Jaros, *Brakowanie akt najnowszych*, 'Archeion' 1956, 25, pp. 26–46; M. Bielińska, *Zasady oceny akt najnowszych*, 'Archeion' 1958, 29, pp. 99–112; Cz. Biernat, *Nowe metody nadzoru i opieki nad archiwami urzędów, instytucji i przedsiębiorstw*, 'Archeion' 1964, 10, pp. 81–94; S. Nawrocki, *Polityka brakowania akt w urzędach, przedsiębiorstwach i instytucjach*, 'Archeion' 1964, 40, pp. 95–104.

<sup>170</sup> M. Motas, *Chajn Leon (1910–1983)*, in: *Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 1, pp. 44–45.

<sup>171</sup> L. Chajn, *Rola*, pp. 17–23.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 17–18.

Directorate as the body managing the state archival resources<sup>173</sup>. The new law was also to guarantee the protection of archives against 'destruction, illegal export and loss'<sup>174</sup>. L. Chajn pointed to the need for 'standardizing the methods of shaping and developing the resources'<sup>175</sup>. One of the directions of the Chief Director's activity was to 'extend the rights of archives in the field of supervision' by 'securing the correct archiving of archival materials at the time of their creation'<sup>176</sup>. This statement was evidence of the ineffectiveness of the existing supervisory system. The Chief Director judged that the rights of the supervising archives were insufficient to secure the archival materials at the record-makers. He pointed out that one of the reasons for this was the imperfection of regulations. They were dispersed and had low legal rank<sup>177</sup>. The situation required a change in this respect. L. Chajn also pointed out that new users, other than historians, started to appear in the archives. Most often they were representatives of other professions, e.g. technical staff<sup>178</sup>. There was a necessity to reflect on security also in terms of new needs. L. Chajn stressed the emergence of computer science, bringing new methods that could be used in archival activities<sup>179</sup>. Analyzing the existing model of the network of centrally managed archives, he emphasized that there were also decentralist tendencies. They were related to the activities of state archives seeking more and more autonomy in the network and in relation to the activities of the General Directorate. L. Chajn faced a dilemma: should the new act create a centralized or decentralized network?<sup>180</sup> Writing about supervision, he emphasized the necessity of a 'rationally organized' system of resource 'shaping'<sup>181</sup>. In the light of his theory, selection had to be a 'well thought-out process'<sup>182</sup>. Its theoretical basis was to be based on records processing, both ancient and modern, because it was this activity that made it possible to learn the value of the resources and the individual types of documentation that make them up<sup>183</sup>. He was a supporter of the multi-stage selection. Its first stage was to evaluate the authors of the records – institutions subject to supervision; the second stage was to

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<sup>173</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 18.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 19.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 21.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibidem*.

evaluate the documentation they created<sup>184</sup>. The qualification of records, i.e. the separation of records kept perpetually and the determination of the storage periods for materials other than those mentioned above, should be carried out in accordance with the principle – ‘maximum information’ with ‘the quantitative minimum of records intended for preservation in state archives’<sup>185</sup>. Therefore, he believed that records of great informative value, i.e. useful for various needs and research directions, should be stored forever. In the evaluation process it was possible to use foreign and own models<sup>186</sup>. L. Chajn did not restrict access to archival studies theories, regardless of their ideological conditions. He also continued cooperation with archival institutions established by H. Altman. He participated in the Round Archive Table conferences gathering archivists from various political systems<sup>187</sup>. During his term as the Chief Director of the State Archives, he issued a number of regulations standardizing the principles of supervision, arranging the norms, rules for transferring records to state archives, as well as organization and register of institutional archives<sup>188</sup>. At that time, the ‘Archeion’ published articles on various aspects of the collection building policy<sup>189</sup>.

Tadeusz Walichnowski, Leon Chajn’s successor, focused on the social functions of archives, and above all on popularising their resources<sup>190</sup>. For this reason, he considered the idea of ‘active information’ precisely addressed to individual social institutions as the priority of his activities<sup>191</sup>. He treated the situation in the field of selection as bad, devoid of academically explained methods and theories. He believed that further

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<sup>184</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>187</sup> L. Chajn, *W sprawie Międzynarodowej Konferencji Okrągłego Stołu Archiwów w r. 1970*, ‘Archeion’ 1970, 54, pp. 208–209; idem, *XIII Międzynarodowa Konferencja Okrągłego Stołu Archiwów w Bonn i Bad Godesberg oraz jej problemy*, ‘Archeion’ 1972, 57, pp. 179–185; idem, *XIV Międzynarodowa Konferencja Okrągłego Stołu Archiwów w Luksemburgu*, ‘Archeion’ 1974, 60, pp. 241–250.

<sup>188</sup> *Zbiór przepisów*, pp. 101–141.

<sup>189</sup> See including: M. Tarakanowska, *Problem brakowania akt w Polsce w świetle przepisów i literatury archiwalnej w latach 1918–1965*, ‘Archeion’ 1967, 46, pp. 43–55; I. Radtke, *Narastanie zespołów akt w zakładach pracy w świetle obowiązujących przepisów kancelaryjnych*, ‘Archeion’ 1968, 48, pp. 7–24; Z. Krupska, M. Tarakanowska, *Problem kształtowania narastającego zasobu aktowego w Polsce Ludowej*, ‘Archeion’ 1970, 53, pp. 41–58; B. Kubickowa, *akta powtarzalne w zespołach instytucji państwowych Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej (Próba oceny, problem brakowania)*, ‘Archeion’ 1971, 55, pp. 7–24.

<sup>190</sup> K. Kozłowski, *Walichnowski Tadeusz (1928–2005)*, in: *Słownik Biograficzny Archiwistów Polskich*, vol. 3, 1835–2015, Warszawa 2017, pp. 248–250.

<sup>191</sup> T. Walichnowski, *Aktualne zadania archiwów państwowych w Polsce*, ‘Archeion’ 1977, 65, p. 12.

research in this area was required<sup>192</sup>. He had many hopes for the activity of the Research Institute of Archival Studies he established (28 November 1976)<sup>193</sup>. Such an evaluation was caused by the lack of firm theses concerning the sphere of evaluation confirmed by good practice. These problems were accompanied by the constant discussion and a large number of criteria used in the document evaluation procedures. The correctness of the methods used was also not guaranteed. T. Walichnowski continued to issue regulations to improve archival supervision<sup>194</sup>. At the time when he was the General Director of the State Archives, the publication by Czesław Biernat, *Problemy archiwistyki współczesnej* (1977), important from the point of view of the collection building policy and related evaluation, was published<sup>195</sup>.

Marian Wojciechowski<sup>196</sup> did not leave his own reflections on the collection building policy. It should be noted, however, that during the period when he was the Chief Director, the Archive Act of 1983 was adopted. An exemplary list of typical records was also published in 1984 in the form of an order of the Minister of Science, Higher Education and Technology. In the addition to the aforementioned legal acts, a number of internal regulations was issued by the Chief Director. They regulated the taking over of records of liquidated institutions, rules for determining the institutions in which institutional archives were created, rules for transferring materials to state archives and rules for discarding<sup>197</sup>. While Marian Wojciechowski was serving as the Chief Director, a directive was also issued, concerning the rules of conduct in the event of damage to category A records in the resources of the institution creating them<sup>198</sup>. He was clearly aware of the imperfections of the existing system of collecting archives in the communist state. The political situation at the time contributed to the revelation of these imperfections. In 1982 there was a discussion on the principles of the functioning of the communist system, also conducted in the circles of state and party authorities.

A review of the archival law created by the Chief Director of the State Archives in 1952–1989<sup>199</sup> allows the identification of the following problems

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<sup>192</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 21.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 18.

<sup>194</sup> *Zbiór przepisów*, pp. 142–149.

<sup>195</sup> Cz. Biernat, *Problemy archiwistyki współczesnej*, Warszawa 1977.

<sup>196</sup> E. Rosowska, *Wojciechowski Marian Kazimierz (1927–2006)*, in: *Słownik Biograficzny* vol. 3, pp. 262–264.

<sup>197</sup> *Zbiór przepisów*, pp. 151–170.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 152.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 152–171.

related to collection building. In chronological order, they were as follows: 1. The transfer of a large number of records to waste paper, referred to as 'non-archival discarding of records'<sup>200</sup>, caused, among other factors, by the needs of the paper industry in the early 1950s, forcing the creation of quick instructions on methods of distinguishing category A records intended for perpetual storage from those that could be destroyed<sup>201</sup>, which meant the need to educate and popularize the division of records into these types; 2. The stance on post-German mass records; 3. The role of county (Polish: *powiat*) state archives in the process of securing archival materials; 4. Problems of arranging supervision and, above all, control over record repositories; 5. Compliance with archival law in the field of collection building; 6. General criteria for assessing the value of records; 7. Evaluation of various types of records, including those of national councils and of their presidia, wage cards and pay cards; 8. Methods of taking over archival materials, including creating records of the materials taken over, including audio recordings; 9. Methodology of creating record lists, a uniform thematic record list. Detailed archival regulations in the form of directives of the Chief Director of State Archives, instructions and guidelines supplemented the national law such as decrees and the law on archives. They were usually created by a team of employees of the General Directorate. They had to be approved by the Chief Director of the State Archives<sup>202</sup>. The indicated problems should be considered as common generalities related to the collection building policy and dilemmas occurring in the activities of each Chief Director of the State Archives.

#### 4. SUMMARY

The stance of the management circles of the state archival administration as a result of ideological influences and knowledge about archives and the materials stored in them was an important factor shaping the collection building policy. On the basis of the texts published in 'Archeion' it should be noted that the most attention was paid to these problems by Rafał Gerber

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<sup>200</sup> M. Bielińska, *Zasady oceny akt najnowszych*, 'Archeion' 1958, 29, pp. 101–102; in 1956, M. Bielińska published an article: *Stan i zadania archiwów polskich wobec aktualnych potrzeb nauki historycznej*, 'Archeion' 1956, 26. She raised the problem of the criteria for files selection in this text (see p. 3).

<sup>201</sup> *Pismo ókólne Naczelnego Dyrektora Archiwów Państwowych z 18 lutego 1952 r. dotyczące wytycznych w sprawie trybu postępowania przy przekazywaniu akt na makulaturę*, in: *Zbiór przepisów*, pp. 15–17.

<sup>202</sup> Z. Kolankowski, *W Naczelnnej*, p. 287.

and Henryk Altman. Both perceived it as a universal issue occurring in various political systems related to the culture of the growth of bureaucratic functions of the state and the rapid recording of information. They strove to find rational methods of assessing the created records. Henryk Altman initiated a series of articles containing historians' analyses of the suitability of various types of materials for historical research. The Chief Directors of the State Archives in the years 1952–1989 did not have experience working in the archives before taking up this important position. They tried to supplement the lack of it by getting to know the theoretical problems of archival activity. The choice of people at the head of the state archival administration depended on political competence. Professional qualifications did not play a key role in it. This phenomenon was visible in the case of Henryk Altman, Leon Chajn, Tadeusz Walichnowski and Marian Wojciechowski. The collection building policy carried out by the Chief Directors was largely subordinated to the needs of historical research. To a large extent it was also in accordance with the then directions of historical research related to the state and party ideology. The theoretical considerations show the complexity of the document evaluation process and its multifaceted nature. Despite this stance, the group managing the archives issued a number of detailed regulations helping to conduct this process properly. On the one hand, they aspired to have extensive knowledge of these problems, on the other hand, they were attached to or even enslaved by bureaucratic procedures. This group was guided by the assumption that as few records as possible should be stored and that archival records of high information value, and therefore of universal application, should be selected during the collection.

(translated by LINGUA LAB)

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#### STRESZCZENIE

Polityka gromadzenia archiwaliów w Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej w okresie 1945–1989 była uwarunkowana wieloma czynnikami. Znajdowały się wśród nich postawy dyrektora Wydziału Archiwów Państwowych i Naczelnych Dyrektorów Archiwów Państwowych, na które wpływ miały ich poglądy polityczne, wykształcenie,

doświadczenia zawodowe oraz wiedza o archiwach. Polityka gromadzenia miała ścisły związek z realiami politycznymi i wartościowaniem akt. W omawianym okresie widoczne było stosowanie różnych metod oceniania dokumentów. Najczęściej występowały wykazy akt jako wartościowanie aprioryczne prowadzone w kancelarii, registraturze i archiwum instytucji, oraz ekspertyza jako ocena posterioryczna. W prawodawstwie przeważało zalecanie wykazów. Ekspertyza była mniej popularna. Wykazy dawały złudzenie rozwiązań prostszych i bardziej ekonomicznych. Doprowadziło to do powstania sformalizowanego i zbiurokratyzowanego systemu, który nie był doskonały. Występowały w nim błędy, które były sygnalizowane w przepisach prawa, jak i w literaturze archiwalnej. Ten sformalizowany i biurokratyczny system był bliski ideologii państwa komunistycznego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Witold Suchodolski, Rafał Gerber, Henryk Altman, Leon Chajm, Tadeusz Walichnowski, Marian Wojciechowski, wartościowanie akt, selekcja, rzeczowy wykaz akt, archiwa instytucji

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