

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY /SD/

The origins of the Democratic Party go to the years 1937 and 1938, when the Democratic Clubs were created and became active. These clubs had their origin in the traditions of the Polish democratic movements of the 19-th and the beginning of the present century and were one of the forms of protest of the people against the efforts leading to fascism and the totalitarian principles in the regime. The clubs were representing the opinion of those democratic groups of people who were not as yet politically organized. Standing close by with the Peasant and Workers' movement, the Democratic Clubs set as their program the fight for the human rights, democratic system of government, progress and economic reorganization of the country, reconstruction of Poland according to the democratic principles and closer relations with other democratic countries.

The Clubs were trying to secure the rights for the national minorities in Poland as well as to establish a peaceful cooperation with the neighboring countries. The Clubs were studying the following national problems: Ukrainian, Jewish, Byelorussian, Lithuanian and Czech.

In June 1938 in Lwów there took place a convention of the Democratic Clubs, which decided to create the Democratic Party. The next convention in Warsaw, held in April 1939 adopted the program and the constitution of the Party, organized the Supreme Council and the Executive Committee.

Toward the end of 1938 and during 1939 the Clubs and the Democratic Party participated in the local government elections, and succeeded in having their candidates elected in a number of centers.

Immediately after the defeat of Poland in September 1939 the Party began to organize its underground activities at home. In October 1939, under the Communist occupation of Poland there was organized the "FREEDOM UNION". It included the Peasant Party, the Polish Socialist Party, the Democratic Party and other ideologically similar organizations.

The members of the Party were active in the Home Army as well as in the administration of the Underground State. They were also very active in saving lives of the people in danger, among other many Jews.

During the war the Democratic Party was publishing a number of underground publications, carried on different activities and in July 1943 called a general conference in Warsaw.

During the last period of the Nazi occupation the Democratic Party had its representatives in the Council of the National Unity, and its representatives were among the 16 members of the Polish Underground, accused and tried in Moscow.

At the same time, during the war the Democratic Party was active also abroad. Toward the end of 1939 a Democratic Party group is organized in France, in 1941 there is a Democratic Club in Palestine, finally in 1942 - 43 there is organized a foreign Committee of the Democratic Party in London and a number of groups. The organization and the individual members of the Party carry on political and social activities, and also issue some publications.

The Democratic Party took part in the National Council of the Polish Republic.

In the years 1944 - 45 - with regard to the new political reality in Poland and abroad, among the emigres, like all the other political groups, the Democratic Party goes through a period of a serious crisis. In Poland there is created a Democratic Party, with the blessing of the government, directed by the communist agents. Therefore a number of its former leaders and members leave the political scene. Among the emigres, in spite of the fact that some of its members joined the governments sponsored Democratic Party, the majority of them elect the new Committee in exile, and its representatives enter the Council of the Polish Political Parties. Later on, after the political crisis among the emigres its members join the Democratic Concentration. At present the Party is one of the members of the Alliance of the Polish Democratic Parties.

The Executive Committee of the Democratic Party in Exile is composed of following members: Dr. Stanislaw Olszewski - president, Ign. Andrzej Rosner - vice-president, Dr. Zygmunt Hoffman, secretary general and members: Wladyslawa Chomsowa, Tadeusz Dabrowicki, assistant professor Dr. Kazimierz Grzybowski, Marian Piotrowski and Ing. Mieczyslaw Siekierski.

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