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THE IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY OR THE NATIONALISTIC FACE OF TERRORISM A THEORETICAL CONTEXT AND SELECTED EXAMPLES

INTRODUCTION AND THE SCOPE OF CONSIDERATIONS

The name *the Irish Republican Army* (IRA) first appeared in the news on August the 30th, 1919. This is when the sworn armed groups fighting in the Irish War of Independence 1919-1921, first, with the British police forces, and then with the regular army, were given that name (Cronin 1980: 125, 132, McCracken 1958: 43, Townshend 1975: 18). The organisation of the IRA of that time can be described, as seen from the perspective of the experiences of the 20th century, as an armed partisan structure (Ryszka 1975: 168), practically the first one in 20th century Europe. Therefore the substantive coverage of hereby considerations is characterized by two deliberately selected approaches, namely chronological and factual one. Thus the last one hundred years' epoch remains a background for the below narration regarding the facts and events which remain the objects for reflections.

The narration is concentrated around research issues which refer to the analysis of, successively: 1/ interdependencies of Nationalism and Republicanism in the Irish tradition, 2/ the violence perceived as partisan or terrorist activeness in historical, contemporary, and spatial contexts, 3/ the Irish nation's alterations in chronological perspective, 4/ the author's typology of premises for military resistance and its exemplification.

Methods applied in this study are the empirical and comparative analysis accompanied by historical and descriptive one.

In reference to the initial opinion as above the number of British, but also Irish, academics, journalists, and especially politicians, considered the IRA as a terrorist organisation in particular. This statement, however, practically ends any discussion. It means disregarding the individual motivations of the armed Republicans, but, especially, ignoring the political-legal context of the acts of violence. Indeed, it is very difficult to distinguish terror, based on the ideological and political criteria, from the struggle for national liberation *par excellence*. This distinction has no chance of receiving a fully objective interpretation, especially by the politicians, even though, as Krzysztof Karolczak has noted, "(...) terrorism is a strictly political

phenomenon. It is not an ideology, but a kind of political activeness or a means to achieve an intended political goal” (Karolczak 2010: 9). However, the supporters, and/or performers of these actions, always use the ideological arguments, overusing them intentionally. In the case of the IRA, they base their viewpoint on the Irish understanding of ‘*republicanism*’, which in their case, is tantamount to the broadly understood ‘*nationalism*’. Such a *iunctim* is crucial for understanding the character of the process of the Irish people political emancipation, in which the IRA played an important part. For that reason, it is important to begin the present considerations, by placing the two above notions: nationalism and republicanism, within the Irish chronological context.

NATIONALISM AND REPUBLICANISM IN IRELAND. THE INTERDEPENDENCIES

In Ireland, nationalism is a wider term than republicanism, hence it is a logical premise of the latter. Today, the debate about nationalism is more ideological than academic, mainly due to the many dramatic events which happened in the 20th century on the global scale. From the academic point of view, nationalism is an integrative ideology, which first appeared in the 18th century, and for that reason, it cannot be considered academically, only as a negative phenomenon. Let us start with the synthetic definition of nationalism, formulated decades ago by Hans Kohn, who considered it as a “(...) state of mind in which an individual feels the greatest loyalty for the national state (...)” (Kohn 1965: 9). Nationalism is treated as an ambiguous and thought-provoking concept, e.g. Peter Sugar wrote that it is “(...) an expression of group psychosis based on nationality (Sugar 1997: 8)” and Tom Garvin declared it to be “(...) a cultural phenomenon with political consequences (Garvin 1990: 21)” Naturally, there have been attempts at classifying the term, according to time and, inevitably, at dichotomising it. The former was done by Carleton Hayes, who distinguished enlightened, humanitarian nationalism, revolutionary Jacobin nationalism, traditional, liberal, and finally, integral nationalism (Hayes 1931, Altermatt 1998: 33). The best known, frequently quoted, dichotomist approach to nationalism was introduced by H. Kohn. Having divided nationalism into two antagonistic types of *political* and *ethnic* (or ethnic-linguistic or ethnic-cultural) ones, he inspired successive generations of researchers supporting, but also criticising, his typology (Walicki 1982: 66-69, Walicki 1993: 217, Walicki 2000: 296).

It should be borne in mind that the use of the two understandings of nationalism is associated with a dualistic division of Europe. The political nationalism is related to the theory of the sovereignty of nations and development of democracy, and considered as being *western*. The ethnic nationalism is an epitome of backwardness, lack of democratic traditions, as well as an inferiority complex being called *eastern* (Plamenatz 1976: 22). Thus, in Central and Eastern Europe, nationalism is assumed to have a narrow, i.e. ethnically excluding character, hence, gaining a negative meaning. In the West, its ethnically open and conceptually indifferent, i.e. ethnically inclusive,

version, is said to predominate (Bromke 1967: 9-10, Kellas 1991: 27, 73-74 & passim, Kupchan 1996: 4-5 & passim). This is why Irish nationalism is untypical, being *territorially western, but conceptually very close to the eastern one*.

I have complemented the division of nationalism into eastern and western ones by my own two approaches, which I have called *pluralistic* and *monistic* (Konarski 2001: 66-69 & passim). In the former, understanding nationalism is a set of several ideological orientations expressed by the activities of some political groups (parties, movements, armed organisations), both ethnically including and excluding, aimed at implementing the goals of a nation, or a community related to it. In the latter, I consider nationalism as one ideological orientation expressed by the actions of one or more ideologically related political groups, similar to the ones in the former understanding, mostly of ethnically excluding character, and also aiming at the implementation of the goals of a nation, or a community related to it. Thus, nationalism is expressive and dynamic, regardless of which of the above approaches is adopted by the researcher. This has been noted by Edward Shils, who said that it takes the shape of movements and parties with real leaders, members, and followers. It also has programmes and platforms (Shils 1996: 9). These are focused on the implementation of the strategic aim of the political (including military) actions resulting from the adopted nationalistic ideology. Its strategic goal is the *nation state*. The importance of nationalism is indicated by Hans Kohn's definition of nationalism mentioned above, which is based on two main facets: the evaluating (or axiologic) and causative ones. The former consists of the individual's highest loyalty towards the nation state, which is the manifestation of the latter, whilst at the same time, being the result of the actions of the individual and group advocates of nationalism.

Following Norman Davies, we should add here that in a nation state "(...) the majority of the citizens are aware of their shared national identity and belong to the same culture (Davies 1999: 863)". These two features: identity and culture are, thus, the essence of such a state, in the understanding worked out during the most recent two hundred years, which were constantly highlighted by the IRA. The nation state is, therefore, the essence of the national question, even if this assumption does not make it easier to understand it. Namely, Tom Garvin points at the changing attitude of Irishmen to their own national question, stating that the Irish changed it, whereas the English thought they had found a response to it. According to him, "Irish nationalism may be considered as 'absurd', 'funny', or intellectually disreputable', but for some, Irish nationalism is a sufficient reason to kill someone (Garvin 1990: 17)". This is a clear reference to the tradition of Irish uprisings and the IRA's activities.

As regards the evolution of the Irish national question, especially before the partition of the island in 1921, the aim of Irish nationalism, understood as a whole, was to win one of the three forms of political independence for an undivided Ireland: territorial autonomy, equal rights in a shared state of Great Britain, or the status of an independent republic. The legal methods to achieve the first two forms are the essence of so-called *constitutional nationalism* for which the republican form of the state was less important (Konarski 2001: 78, Lynn 1997).

The controversies among Irish researchers, concerning the issue of how republicanism should be understood, are rich and cognitively fertile. According to some of them, republicanism is an earlier phenomenon than nationalism, and it is often stressed that it never existed in a pure form (McDonagh 1987: 195-196). Others define republicanism as either nationalistic or egalitarian-social (MacDermott 1998: 3). The observation of the development of that nationalism between the late 18th century and December the 6th, 1921, when the Anglo-Irish Treaty (ending the 1919-1921 War of Independence mentioned already) was signed, convinces this author to analyse the relation between these two concepts. From that moment, republicanism became the leading exponent of nationalism, even if it was a heterogeneous phenomenon, both in its ideology and the adopted methods of operation. However, it is after the above-mentioned Treaty had been signed, that republicanism, also highly heterogeneous in its ideology and instruments, became the main representative of the broadly understood Irish nationalism.

Chronologically, the sources of Irish republicanism should be sought in the period immediately before the French Revolution, when the Enlightened nationalism first appeared. There is no disagreement as to the ethnically-inclusive character of republicanism of that time, nominally supra-religious, even if anti-English, which is a paradox from the point of view of later events. Republicanism *in statu nascendi* was meant to unite the Catholics, Protestants, dissidents and unbelievers, for whom England was a shared enemy. Importantly, it is mainly young people, coming from the poorer social groups, who became republicans. The author and ideologue of Irish republicanism, Theobald Wolfe Tone, a Presbyterian by birth, and an atheist by choice, strongly stressed his hatred towards England (MacDermot 1969: vi). As a result, republicanism began to be perceived as an orthodox phenomenon, rejecting any bonds with the English, and then, the British, crown. Also, the social perception of republicanism changed in the 19th and early 20th century. Its antinomy, taking the form of a sinusoid, was the above-mentioned constitutional nationalism, at that time, much stronger than republicanism.

HISTORICAL, CONTEMPORARY, AND SPATIAL CONTEXTS OF VIOLENCE

In the past century, the IRA gained the image of an organisation being an emanation of the ethnically exclusive nationalism, combined with the unquestionable dogma about the formation of an independent republic on an undivided island of Ireland. The activities of the IRA were, thus, an intentional and practically-implemented form of violence, deriving from the axiology of republican nationalism. It should be remembered that the view that, according to its origins and its advocates, the IRA is one of the paramilitary organisations fighting for national liberation, has been criticised by the majority of observers. On the other hand, it should be remembered that achieving an academic, as well as a political consensus about the IRA and similar organisations, has never been easy due to the subjective attitudes manifested since antiquity. One of

the earliest examples of that situation is the Jewish sect of Zealots, or the group of Sicarii, incorporated by the former. Fighting in the 1st century A.D. against the Roman occupiers, they killed, usually with a dagger, not only the Romans, but also those whom they considered to be Roman collaborators (Białek 2005: 46-47.; Braclawska (n.d), Kowalski 2015). These methods made the Zealots a historical point of reference in the contemporary debates on whether they were forefathers of terrorism, or their actions should be defined as a struggle for national liberation. The debate whether the groups, which use armed force against the oppressor are guerrillas, *alias* freedom fighters, or simply terrorists, has been going on endlessly. These two interpretations constantly prove that the problem is approached subjectively by the antagonistic critics. Understandingly, the parties involved in the conflict have manifested opposite views, but the passage of time helps to alleviate the differences. It is worth noting here that the term 'guerrilla' has always been controversial, which has been aptly commented upon by Franciszek Ryszka, when discussing Carl Schmitt's reflections. "*A guerrilla is, firstly, a soldier from irregular troops, according to the military criterion, and a soldier who does not have the status of a combatant, in the legal terms*" [italics: F.R.], but he adds that "(...) neither the military nor the legal criteria have ever been precisely formulated (Ryszka 1975: 168)".

It is also difficult to interpret the cases of people who were first considered as terrorists, but who, after some time, were able to change their image and become politicians, although their past was often used against them, for example, the former Prime Minister of Israel, Menachem Begin, the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, and the former leader of Sinn Féin (Ourselves Alone-irl.), the party of the Irish Republicans, Gerry Adams, or the former Deputy First Minister of the autonomous government of Northern Ireland, and the Chief of Staff of the IRA from 1978-1982, Martin McGuinness (Moloney 2002: 513).

The objective distinction of what is resistance and what counts as terrorism, is made more difficult by the impossibility to reconcile the two principles: the right for self-determination of the group demanding it, and the right to unviolated territorial integrity of the state in which this group lives. In that case, the crucial role is played by the attitude of the internal and external, i.e. international, public opinion to the question, which of these principles is more important (Missala 2006). This is particularly significant as the precedents from the recent dozen years have revealed a chasm between the world powers' preferences for one of them. So, the approval from the USA, Germany, France, and Great Britain, in contrast to Russia's opposition to the emergence of Kosovo, has its contrasting parallel whereby the former four states (and many other ones) have objected to the creation of South Ossetia or Abkhazia which, in turn, were recognised by Russia (Skieterska 2008, *Jak Moskwa uznała...* 2018).

The increasing polarisation of attitudes results in an utterly divergent dualism, which is expressed by an escalation of hate speech, the latter, in turn, becoming hate acts. This is a very dangerous, but also typical combination, which has appeared many times in the history of our species, even though we are called *homo sapiens*. Basing my views on such reflections, I wrote in 2016: "The appearance of hate speech usu-

ally has its origins in the past, and its advocates or apologists refer both to distant and more recent history. If there are no authority figures who can help overcome the mutual prejudices, especially those determined by the centuries-old past, then there appears to be a real danger that the verbally manifested hate, may become intentional physical violence. For that reason, one cannot be indifferent when hate speech begins to appear frequently, for the sin of omission always brings disastrous results. If the parties in hate speech are large social groups, i.e. social strata and social classes, or even nations, there will be a danger of systematic and broadly used violence. It may occur both between states, or within a state. The latter case can be illustrated by numerous civil wars, always bringing a severe trauma to their victims. The destructive character of both these extreme situations can be shown by numerous examples from both more distant and more recent history (Konarski 2016: 9-10).” This process of the escalation of hate speech, as stated, has led to many civil wars, as shown by the civil war in Ireland in 1922-1923 (Hopkinson 1988).

The arguments for using violence which springs from hate speech, have been repeated many times in the history of mankind. Those who support the right to self-determination, call them an inalienable part of the struggle for national liberation, whereas the response of the state defending the *status quo*, is considered by them as acts of state terrorism. By contrast, the repressions of the state are viewed as the necessary steps taken to maintain law and order. This discrepancy in attitudes has often been manifested by the internal and external observers of conflicts of different origins.

There are numerous examples of that from recent history. It has been clear for decades, how drastically the Kurdish nation has been treated by successive Turkish governments. In the last few years, this issue gained an international context after the intervention, *alias* invasion, by NATO states on Iraq in 2003, as a result of which, the political-territorial *status quo* in the Middle East was disturbed (*Turecki ostrzał...* 2018). It is unfortunately continued until now. On the other hand, a large part of Polish public opinion approved of the Chechens’ armed struggle to break away from Russia, also partly because of its historic bias against all the manifestations of the Russian state (“Rzeczpospolita”, 4.11.2002).

However, we are not alien to opportunism in our leanings, and attitudes towards similar armed struggles of other groups. There are many examples of a lack of special empathy on the part of Polish public opinion, one of them being the coolness towards the separatist movement in south-eastern Nigeria, which gave rise to the temporary state of Biafra, which existed in 1967-1970, and which was recalled by the riots of 2017 (Szewczyk 2018). Other examples of such ambivalence of Polish public opinion are apparent in the unenthusiastic attitude to the separatist tendencies of the province of Katanga, also known as Shaba, in the former Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) (Walczak 2014), or the similar movements in the Spanish Basque Country (Bachrynowski, Witecki 2011, Dobrzycki 2009: 192-203, Myśliwiec 2014).

The same was the case with the attitude to the rebellion of the historic provinces against the Georgian central power, namely, the abovementioned Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Baranowski B., Baranowski K. 1987: 12-16 & passim). A negative part in

stimulating these conflicts is often ascribed to Russia (Dąbrowski 2006, Tustanowska 20180). The inter-ethnic relations in the Caucasus region indicate that, even though Russia may have its interests there, this is not the sole cause of the antagonisms there. The ethno-political animosities in Georgia, albeit fuelled by Russia, were also caused by their presidents with authoritarian tendencies of varying degrees, such as Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Eduard Shevardnadze, and Mikheil Saakashvili. The leaders of the rebelling territories also used intransigent rhetoric. In turn, the Chechen independence movement lost its support in Poland and other countries, when the Chechens began to make use of the Islamic fundamentalists coming from other countries, or, when encouraged by one of its leaders, Shamil Basayev (Kuleba 2007) they intended the Chechen conflict to extend into other regions of Russia, or even beyond it. One may ask what was the point of disturbing the delicate balance of power after the first Chechen war, when Basayev (together with Umar Khattab) invaded Dagestan in 1999, which provided the Russians with a pretext to escalate the brutality of their actions (Matuszak 2007: 58 & passim). Summing up, the mosaic of the Caucasian conflicts originates from the mutual prejudices of the peoples living there, which Russia has been using from the time it started its conquest of the Caucasus. Both these conflicts, and the activities of Russia, are ever present in that region, which reflect on a typical approach taken by the great towards the small.

THE IRISH NATION'S ALTERATIONS IN CHRONOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The points of reference for the violence used by the organisations, which claimed to be fighting for national liberation, including the IRA, are such notions as *nation*, *ethnic group*, or *national minority*. From the perspective of more than a dozen centuries, one can see many reasons why a community which was subordinated, occupied, or dependent, turned to military resistance, including intentional acts of terror. The subjectively motivated terminological controversies stimulate mutual antagonisms, which leads to violence. The communities called *dependent* or *small nations* become such, because of being named in this way by the ideologues and, more and more often, by the scientists. The authorities of the state which they inhabit call them, at best, minorities or (ethnic or national) groups. This, and similar dilemmas, faced by the scientists and politicians, have been reflected in the literature of the subject in recent decades (Chlebowczyk 1983, Hroch 2003, Krejčí, Velimsky 1981, Waldenberg 2000).

It thus seems inevitable to refer to the concept of 'nation' here, which in the Irish context, is naturally connected with the remarks about nationalism and republicanism made above. Indeed, there have been innumerable attempts at defining the term 'nation,' many of them dependent on highly individual approaches, often drawing upon the metaphors bordering on intellectual provocations. "A nation is (...) a great solidarity constituted by the feeling of sacrifices made and those that one is still disposed to make. It pre-supposes a past (...). A nation's existence is (...) a daily plebiscite," said Ernest Renan in his famous essay '*What is a nation?*' from 1887. He maintained

this lofty stance, adding: “A nation is a spiritual principle resulting from the profound complexities of history – it is a spiritual family (...) (Renan 1882). Antonina Kłoskowska, a respected Polish sociologist of culture, who died at the beginning of this century, commented both on Renan’s and Max Weber’s words. Referring to the latter, she said: “A nation appears (...) in the context of great social structures: the state and the society, but is not identified with them. (...)” Weber understood the nation as ‘Gemeinschaft’, a community of values. This is inalienably connected with the attitudes determining these values (Kłoskowska 1996: 85)”. “In contrast to the state, a nation is a social group of people, which is a cultural community” asserted Kłoskowska (1996: 24). Clearly, the special rank of the national attributes deriving from culture is unquestionable.

In the past hundred years, this cultural understanding of the nation was pre-dominant among the researchers analysing the case of the Irish nation, which has, in turn, became part of the strictly political debate. More than a dozen years ago, I wrote: “(...) starting from the first English invasion of 1169, till the late 1920s, the Irish nation was consecutively perceived in three ways, as: *an enslaved ethnic nation* (till the late 1770s), a *quasi-state (protestant) political nation* (the last two decades of the 18th century), and a *stateless ethnic nation* (during the time of the Anglo-Irish union in the period, 1800-1921) {italics: W.K.} (Konarski 2003: 95)”. I would also like to uphold my earlier view that as a result of the Anglo-Irish Treaty from December the 6th, 1921, “(...) a new variant of the Irish nation, called here a *divided ethnic nation*, was formed (1921-1998). Its appearance indicated that the two main postulates of the Irish nationalist movement, i.e., *maintaining the unity of Ireland* and *establishing a republican form of the state* were ruled out” {italics: W.K.} (Konarski 2003: 95). I completed my interpretation of what the Irish nation is, with reflections on the recent past, and concluded: “The Good Friday Agreement of April 1998, created the hope of starting the process of reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants. However, the still existing mutual prejudices, allow us only to say that, as a result of this Treaty, there appeared to be a *divided ethnic-political nation*. This should be perceived as a starting point for the development in the future of one more, final variant of the Irish nation, i.e., a *unified political nation*. The process may be successful if the obligations resulting from the Treaty are respected by the two parties. Only under such conditions, may there be hope that it will be considered as binding, not only by the political elites of these two groups, but also by the wide circles of the population of the provinces regardless of their denomination” (Konarski 2003: 97). The advancement towards such a goal was not without danger, yet it continued and, importantly, since 2006, there have been almost no acts of terror associated with concrete paramilitary structures. The progress of this process became uncertain when Brexit was announced, i.e. after the British referendum of June the 23rd, 2016. The resulting dangers connected with the expected restrictions on border traffic may give rise to hate speech, which may bring about hate acts. This threat is confirmed by, i.e., the event of September 10th, 2019, in the second largest town in Northern Ireland, where the police pre-

vented a bombing (*Niespokojnie w Irlandii Północnej...* 2019). This would stop the process of shaping the socio-economic bonds between the inhabitants of an independent Republic and Northern Ireland, and especially the two communities, Catholic and Protestant, within the latter.

PREMISES FOR MILITARY RESISTANCE. THE AUTHOR'S TYPOLOGY

There are many reasons why a group of people defined as a small or dependent nation takes up military resistance, five of them being the key ones.

The first one is when the occupying state applies repressions intentionally, and constantly, refusing the targeted group the right to ethno-national difference, and, as a result, any form of political representation. One may mention here the military resistance of the Kurds against the Iraqis (in Saddam Hussein's time), and Turkish oppression (Bankowicz 2004b: 685, 772, 876), and of the Basque terrorist organisation with a national liberation profile, Basque Country and Liberty (Euskadi ta Askatasuna, ETA) against the Spanish repressions, during the rule of General Francisco Franco Bahamonde (Ramirez, Sullivan 1987, Szlachter 2007: 39-43).

The second case occurs when the physical existence of such a group is endangered. This is exemplified by the military self-defence organised by the Armenians, which was a response to the massacres of the Armenian civilians by the Turkish army and police, first at the end of the 19th century, in 1895-1896, and then during the 1st World War, in 1915-1916. This was due to the fact that the persecutions of the Armenians did not inspire a firm reaction on the part of the western powers, not intervening in their defence (Zakrzewska-Dubasowa 1990: 213, 229, Dobrzycki 2003: 183, Safran 2004: 185-186).

In the third case, the occupying state, which persecutes a dependent nation, is not submitted to any pressure by the influential third-party states, especially the great powers. One can mention here the indifferent, or even critical, attitude of public opinion towards the Irish (Grzybowski 1977: 293 & passim, Konarski 2001: 112 & passim, O'Beirne Ranelagh 2003: 126-129 & passim) and Polish (Zajewski 1986) military uprisings of the 19th century, which reminded the world about those unsolved national questions, and also the Armenians' self-defence, or the Kurds' struggles with the Turkish army, especially in the 1990s.

In the fourth example, the occupier treats the subordinated population in a changing way, and breaks the earlier agreed upon rules. The interesting instances of such behaviour are, for example, the violence towards the British forces by the Jewish and Arabic military organisations, at the time when Palestine had a mandate to govern the region (Bankowicz 2004a: 323, Dobrzycki 2003: 534-535), and the armed uprising of the ethnic group of the Druze in 1925, against the French forces in Syria, where France had the mandate (Bankowicz 2004a: 169-170, Dobrzycki 2003: 533).

The last example is the situation when the oppressive, *alias* occupying state, ignores the will to secede, democratically expressed by the dependent population.

A clear example is the military, or guerrilla, actions taken up by the IRA against the British forces in 1919-1921 (Townshend 1975).

Practically every case of the military actions carried out by the military organisations representing the above presented groups, requires an in-depth comparative analysis. For that reason, the terror applied, until recently, by Basque ETA had to be controversial, because under the democratic government of Spain – unlike during the dictatorship of general Franco – there have been, (and are), various guarantees allowing them to articulate their interests (Bachrynowski, Witecki 2011, Myśliwiec 2014). The same is the case with the IRA. I would like to stress that I consider the IRA of the 1920s and 1930s, as a military guerrilla or national liberation organisation, whereas that from the late 1990s, certainly was not one.

CONCLUSIONS

I would like to repeat that the debate on what terrorism is, and what it is not, cannot be, by definition, objective, since almost any evaluating statement is always countered at different levels, depending on who made it. Using the right of the researcher, I would also like to present my view in this respect. I believe that one may speak about guerrilla, or national liberation actions, rather than terrorist ones, when the oppressive state applies violence, not respecting the legally guaranteed, democratically expressed, and correctly functioning mechanisms, designed to regulate the contentious issues. If, however, the successive concessions on the part of the state considered as the occupier, do not end, or do not limit the acts of violence on the part of the opponents of that state, which ruins the chances to achieve conciliation, then these acts should be considered as terrorist ones, escalating the conflict, and not be seen as guerrilla ones.

It is necessary to specify what armed resistance means. Namely, it is the use of violence, only against the political-military targets, which are the symbols of the state with which the subordinated group is fighting, embracing the civilian-military elite of that state, as well as institutions, i.e. the politicians, administration, police, or the army. It is these organisations and individuals, who use military resistance against the structures described above or similar, that are given contrasting and mutually exclusive evaluations, becoming terrorists or guerrillas, or fighters or rebels. These differences in interpretation have become part of their image in recent years, once the USA created a register of organisations considered as terrorist ones, which was the outcome of the political evaluation made by that world power.¹ This reflects the infamous opinion of Franklin Delano Roosevelt (and not only his) about "our son of a bitch" (in contrast to 'others' named in the same way).² This approach is an example

¹ <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm> (17.10.2019). (U.S. Department of State (n.d.)).

² Literally "our son of a bitch". Cf. (*Our son...* 2013).

of an extremely subjective evaluation of an organisation applying violence, and is often based on a biased perception of the premises and circumstances. The world has always been ruled by the strong, and they impose their evaluations. It is very difficult to objectify these assessments, but not impossible. If the violence is directed exclusively on the civilian emblems of the occupying state, then it does not make sense to discuss whether these are guerrilla acts or actual terrorism.

Attacking the cultural and educational institutions, or the civilians not directly engaged in the conflict, means that the idea of a real fight for national liberation is replaced by a degenerated version of violence, *ergo* politically motivated terrorism. Such political terrorism with only criminal results, is politically counter-productive for the population fighting to change its *status quo*. As regards the image, the last mentioned type of terrorism has been seen many times in the military actions of the IRA, including its manifold split organisations, however, not exclusively.

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Słowa kluczowe: Irlandzka Armia Republikańska, walka o niepodległość, Wielka Brytania, nacjonalizm, republikanizm

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ABSTRACT

The name the Irish Republican Army (IRA) first appeared in the news on August the 30th, 1919. This is when the sworn armed groups fighting in the Irish War of Independence 1919-1921, first, with the British police forces, and then with the regular army, were given that name. The organisation of the IRA of that time can be described, as seen from the perspective of the experiences of the 20th century, as an armed partisan structure, and oriented towards the national independence aspect, practically the first such organization in 20th century Europe.

However, a considerable number of British, but also Irish, academics, journalists, and especially politicians, considered the IRA as a terrorist organisation. This statement, however, practically ends any discussion. It means disregarding the individual motivations of the armed Republicans, but, especially, ignoring the political-legal context of the acts of violence. Indeed, it is very difficult to distinguish terror, based on the ideological and political criteria, from the struggle for national liberation par excellence. This distinction has no chance of receiving a fully objective interpretation, especially by the politicians. However, the supporters, and/or performers of these actions, always use the ideological arguments, overusing them intentionally.

The substantive coverage of the considerations presented here is characterized by two deliberately selected approaches, namely the chronological and the factual ones. Thus the last one hundred years' epoch remains a background for the proposed narration regarding the facts and events which remain the objects for reflections put forward in the article.

The narration focuses on research issues which refer to the analysis of, successively: 1/ interdependencies of Nationalism and Republicanism in the Irish tradition, 2/ the violence perceived as partisan or terrorist activeness in historical, contemporary, and spatial contexts, 3/ the Irish nation's alterations in chronological perspective, 4/ the author's typology of premises for military resistance and its exemplification.