

Young people are marching in neat columns through the streets of Polish cities. They are proudly displaying flags with Falanga emblem. One can hear hobnailed boots stomping on the tarmac. And it is not important if it is a march, a demonstration or they are on their way to block the door of a theater in Warsaw. Slogans shouted through the loudspeakers are the same: 'Death to the enemies of our homeland! Down with the EU!, Communists will hang! Great Independent Poland!' And all of that topped with pictures of Cursed Soldiers, burning red flares and of course, a choir of catholic prayers. And why not? Even during the Jasna Gora pilgrimage, father Jan Poteralski glorified "patriots" saying: *You are the heroes of the 21st century!*

119.256-257) and the Code of Violations (Art.63a), which clearly indicate that propaganda of hate speech is against the law, it seems that the Polish nationalists are allowed to do more than just that. One could even get the impression that their actions suit the current government.

If an average John Smith lit a flare on the streets, he might be stopped for disturbance. And what if he started chanting something? Meanwhile, during their events, those who call themselves "patriots" with impunity release their worst emotions: calling for discrimination and even violence. Aggression and ignorance towards the people of other cultures can also be seen in the inscriptions on the walls: " Pole beats the Jew" or " Roma to the gas". Where is this hatred coming from? Hasn't the history taught us any-

## SYMBOLS OF HATRED

Hate speech is blooming. And it is not only limited to the placards, stickers or online forums any more. Hate is now in everyday gestures and behaviour present in public space. The spiral of hate is spinning faster and faster. Aggression – verbal and physical – directed at foreigners is escalating rapidly.

Is this symbolism random, coincidental? Swastika brings to mind Hitler and nazism. Today alt-right nationalists are putting on their banners symbols of Triskele (1) and celtic cross, presented as sniper reticles (2), and those emblems are for them the symbols of white supremacy and White Power movement.



1



2



3



4

Wolf's hook (3) – sign of bravery once used by Hitlerjugend, appears at football stadiums on banners and hooligans' logos. And then goes acronyms: WP – white power, 18 – first letters of Adolf Hitler's name, 88 – Heil Hitler, printed on t-shirts and hoodies. And finally aforementioned Falanga (4) – sign depicting the hand holding the sword, used by Polish nationalists.

"With the sickle, with the hammer – we will hit the leftist bumper!"- the youngsters chant their banner slogan. You might have doubts whether it is rational to express anti- communist emotions by referring to- with no doubts- as totalitarian symbols.

Despite the provisions of the Criminal Code (Articles

thing? Is the human dignity no longer important? Does being different means being worse nowadays?

Hatred also has the ability to debase other symbols. That is most likely why Jarosław Kaczyński was so easily unsettled by the Citizens of the Republic of Poland movement, who use white roses to accentuate their peaceful protests. So, although the colour white is a symbol of innocence and a white rose – of pure love, Kaczynski during one of the monthly Smolensk memorials that took place on 10th May 2017 roared: The white roses that can be seen just there are a symbol of hatred! A symbol of extreme stupidity and extreme hatred! For Kaczynski, the white rose has began to symbolise contempt so great that for his peace of mind people are being carried out by the police during manifestations. Amongst others – a legend of "Solidarity" Władysław Frasyniuk.

Hateful symbolism goes so easily hand in hand with hateful deeds. These are occurring in Poland already. Towards the end of June two attacks took place – those of the All-Poland Youth on KOD activists. Firstly, during protests in Radom a man was beaten (members of the police force that were meant to safeguard the proceedings were busy having fun at a local fair). Then, with an obvious lack of reaction from the government (memorable words from the PIS spokeswoman about "understanding" for the culprits) a trailer parked in front of the Prime Minister's Chancellery was broken into and flags were stolen. What can be done? Let's not agree to hateful symbolism and hateful speech in our surroundings, we need to report when law is being broken.

*Elżbieta Majewska-Cieśla*