

RADIO FREE EUROPE *Research*RAD Background Report/339
(Poland)

8 December 1981

POLISH PRESS SURVEY: 29 OCTOBER TO 17 NOVEMBER 1981

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Summary: The main topics in the Polish press continue to be political developments (how to reconcile the ruling role of the party with democracy), freedom of expression (with two cases of censorship interference being reversed by the courts), and the continuing economic disasters.

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Politics

Gazeta Kujawska (the Bydgoszcz party daily) of 12 November 1981 published an article by the First Secretary of the Bydgoszcz Voivodship Committee of the PUPP, Henryk Bednarski, under the title "The Party is a System of Self-Government" that contained the following passages:

One must bear in mind the obvious, though still disregarded, fact that playing a leading role is not the party's innate characteristic, but arises from the results of its political work and this only, I must stress, when these results are positive. . . .

It seems to me that in the past it was forgotten all too often that the main idea of a socialist state must be the conjunction of the desires and undertakings of citizens with the activities of the administration and with state policy. . . . The people do not want and do not approve of bureaucratic centralism . . . and they are right, for it always arises from the rulers' mistrust of the popular masses. /It results in/ the impenetrable mystery, turning the function of government into some sort of magic act, available only to a selected few. True democracy

has no need of this. On the contrary, democracy lies in making the function of government available to the broadest social groups, both party members and those not in the party The most successful step here will be the handing over of many posts held to date by the state authorities to local self-government bodies and to self-managing institutions.

Obviously enough, one must first persuade such party and administration officials that they not only can but should be replaced. Investigative reporter Jozef Kusmierek (who published his findings a few years ago in samizdat version under the title What I Knew) has recently traveled in the Polish provinces and has watched the network of "connections" and back-scratching on the lowest administrative levels. He published his lengthy and pessimistic report on "Commune-level Nomenklatura" in the October 29 issue of the weekly Literatura:

It is characteristic of centralism that it concentrate the attention of the public on a few top figures. . . . It is an unavoidable disease of every /example of/ centralism: the luxury of public dissatisfaction and amazing moral and legal irresponsibility. It is now known that, apart from being freed of the duty of paying /party/ dues, no one can be charged in any other way. I was in the provinces, on the commune level, when this moral-legal principle received its pragmatic sanction. What a relief. Since nonpayment of dues is to be the highest penalty, one really need fear nothing. And fear one did. . . .

Kusmierek calculates that agricultural production in Poland is 1,000,000 million zloty annually, most of which was traded on the lowest, commune level. At least 1% of that gigantic sum, he thinks, stuck to the fingers of those responsible for purchases, cooperatives, local production:

A safety valve for centralism at the present stage lies in the fact that public attention has been concentrated on the 20-30 villas built for so-called decision-makers. If one considers that the last 5 years were marked by the replacement of ideology with investment, one can calculate that perhaps 30,000 smaller houses were built with the aid of that 1%. . . .

Small-house terror! Anyone wanting to escape from prison awaits changes that will set him free. But who wants to be freed of his little house and hence desires such changes? . . . I came back 16 months later to the commune level. What changes, what changes! What new labels slapped on old arrangements! . . .

Here, at the middle bureaucratic level of the pyramid, one could not remain uncritical of Gierek, Jaroszewicz, and their provincial governors. . . . At this level, one did not wait for August to express some criticism. . . . Not too little, not too much, precisely right for local requirements. . . . At this level one knows exactly when something is going to go bust. . . .

I was horrified when I took a closer look at the communes' management after August 1980. Investment in criticism during the previous period had paid off. . . . Here, on this level, one becomes a director by local choice and if the center wants to nominate anyone, watch out. This is not LOT, this is not Katowice Foundry, on this level it is the bakery, the dairy, lately even a gas station. And don't the center dare fill the post of the shoe factory director. It is their August 1980 victory to fill such posts on their own, commune level.

Your reporter, gentle reader, spent almost the whole of September scrutinizing the commune system. You may well ask: and where are the people, the workers, the private farmers? After all, nearly 70% of manual workers are still employed on this level. Has this commune population nothing to say?

How much can one say against men who are the only rulers of gas, of heating oil, of cigarettes, coffee, and sanitary napkins? This is not Gdansk or Katowice, this is commune Poland.

Various legal aspects of nomenklatura are outlined in Tygodnik Powszechny of 1 November 1981 by Andrzej Kubas and Andrzej Rozmarynowicz, under the title "Legality and Nomenklatura." (1)

. . . To date, nomenklatura has been applied in all countries of people's democracies, it can therefore be accepted as a general attribute of the system. Yet it is something more than a cadre policy. It is a philosophy of power. It is a system ensuring the political authorities direct influence over all structures in the power apparatus, administration, and economy. (- - -) Hence the well-known "musical-chairs" in top jobs. On an adequately high level of power the most severe punishment would be a well-earned retirement pay, a typical expression of disapproval -- a move to a different job, also on a nomenklatura list, sometimes on an equally high

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- (1) In keeping with the new law on censorship, cuts made by the censor were marked in the text with the name and date of the law and the following sign (- - -), which has been retained when applicable in these excerpts.

level, rarely on a less important one, or -- another sign of disgrace -- appointment to a diplomatic post. In the most drastic situation, dismissal from the party. (- - -) . . . It is strange -- in our opinion -- that the representatives of the leading party, while defending the nomenklatura system, have failed to make an attempt to establish whether, and in what way, this system fits into the existing laws. We leave aside here the sad and unacceptable economic, political, and social effects of the extended duration of nomenklatura. We confine ourselves to the conflict between the persistent practice and the idea of "the rule of law," equally broadly accepted by the party.

Nomenklatura cannot be reconciled with the constitutional principle of equality before the law. It can hardly be compatible with the existing labor code and service, regulations, based on the principle of equal opportunities and career development, in keeping with the fundamental principle "to each according to his work." . . . Every state demands loyalty from people to whom it entrusts high posts. Nomenklatura . . . demands qualified loyalty: next to understandable civil loyalty, also, or rather above all, loyalty and obedience to a current ruling group, its current decisions, and this independent of personal judgment as to the justice of those decisions. . . .

It cannot be accepted that leading posts in enterprises, in scientific and cultural organizations, in cooperative units, etc., all posts demanding professional expertise, talent, honesty, and civil courage rather than compliance, should be filled by people selected from the viewpoint of their political qualifications. . . .

Which posts should be filled with the decisive influence of the party should depend, above all, on the law. The law must also define the instruments of social rather than party control over people selected by the party. This is the only alternative solution, other than the complete abolition of nomenklatura, and it should really have been introduced yesterday. . . .

Freedom of Expression

Halfway between the problems of party obedience (an aspect of nomenklatura) and of freedom of expression was the firing of Jacek Nachyla, the editor-in-chief of a party paper, Sztandar Mlodych, for publishing an interview with Jacek Kuron. (2)

- (2) See "Enigmas of Censorship," RAD Background Report/307 (Poland), Radio Free Europe Research, 9 November 1981.

The disgruntled editors of the paper met with the hard-line Politburo member Stanislaw Olszowski and the results of that meeting were reported in Sztandar Mlodych of November 13. The meeting was notable not so much for Olszowski's statements, which were evasive, as for the questions, which were still unyielding. The very title was telling: "We Don't Want to Be Yes-Men."

. . . The Basic Party Organization /at Sztandar Mlodych/ believes that the news of the recall of Jacek Nachyla was given arbitrarily, without providing factual and political reasons, without justification. . . . The Basic Party Organization believes that Comrade Jacek Nachyla has always consistently and decisively implemented the party line in his actions and behaved in accordance with the resolutions of the ninth special party congress. He has always maintained the principles of the PUWP and is its faithful and disciplined member. . . .

Olszowski: I would like to start with the fact that Sztandar Mlodych is a paper published by our party and destined for young people. As a party organization in this type of paper, it is your duty to spread the party line among young people. . . . As for the recall of your editor-in-chief, Jacek Nachyla, the reason was the publication of the notorious interview with Jacek Kuron. The party leadership was startled by the publication of that interview. We found it necessary to talk to Jacek Nachyla. To be quite frank, we did not intend to remove him from his post. During our conversation Jacek Nachyla said that he believed publication /of the interview/ to have been the right thing. And that it was a good journalistic job.

The article made popular a man who is an enemy of our party. We could not fail to draw conclusions: Comrade Nachyla was dismissed.

As for the interview, we realize that in their questions the interviewers clearly tried to show their attitude toward Kuron. While Kuron said only what he wanted to say. . . . If, alongside that interview, an article had been published showing his true image, refuting his views, one might imagine that the interview could have been published. In the way it was done, the interview with Kuron should not have been published and this is what we reproach Comrade Jacek Nachyla with. . . .

Waldemar Mickiewicz: The case of Sztandar Mlodych exemplifies all the conflicts of interest in the political management of the mass media. . . . It should be stated clearly: the CC finances this or

that paper and determines the policy. Other papers are political allies, and one should negotiate with them, like one does with allies, and not fight them as journalists.

The editor then complained about the difficulties of being a "party" paper, on the one hand Solidarity accuses it of being a "regime" paper, on the other, party members complain that they have to learn things from Solidarity publications in their plants. Finally, there is the inescapable fact that the official party press now has competition:

Why is the party press being eliminated from the market? Because we are not given any leeway. While our competitors use every trick, including low ones, to adjust to public feelings, . . . and they gain popularity and, hence, what passes for credibility. . . .

We are further hampered by our fears arising from past experiences. . . . The best critics /today/ are those who did not write at all then. They are the most "credible." How much has the party lost among party and social activists as a result? And who has taken their place? . . .

Jacek Nachyla said that he had not really been told what went wrong with the Kuron interview, except that "Kuron came out on top":

/Yet/ for the first time young journalists told him straight to his face that he is antisocialist, that they do not agree with him and . . . Kuron admitted himself that he lives by selling his views for hard cash. These were the reasons why I had the material printed. . . .

We have printed many interviews, not all were completely successful. But they all met with lively interest and response. . . . I was guided by the idea that one cannot conduct propaganda contrary to people's wishes. . . .

Obviously, there are risks. But we must trust each other. And if we are not credible to party members, then there is nothing to be done. . . . I must add that people have made my departure much easier. . . . What they did for me, as Jacek Nachyla, is of enormous value. I have realized that it is worthwhile to act like a human being -- because people will appreciate it. . . . During the ninth congress I heard one of the comrades call for a redder party press. Let's be honest: what good would the reddest possible paper be if nobody would buy it?

Aleksandra Jakubowska: I should like to ask again, because we have not been given an answer. Do you believe that our party unit was treated correctly when the decision to recall Jacek Nachyla was taken?

Olszowski: I don't think I have treated you badly. . . . Indeed, some views clashed. But it is more important that we should part in an atmosphere of friendship rather than reproaches.

It is almost impossible to find a paper (with the exception of the armed forces daily Zolnierz Wolnosci, which blithely continues its traditional, orthodox line) that does not complain about newscasts on Polish television, which seems to be the most manipulative of the media. Piotr Wierzbicki of Tygodnik Powszechny (1 November 1981) has a suggestion on how to break this "Monopoly in Lying":

I would propose this: let them set aside three minutes of television news on a special basis. Let the rest of the news be as "engaged," "combative," based on "real" rather than "apparent" objectivity, let it mix information with moral lessons . . . and let there be three minutes marked not by "real" objectivity but by a quite normal one, founded not on the "sole true" truth, but on plain, traditional truth. Let those three minutes set aside in the television news be filled by someone we trust. Let those three minutes be followed by a veritable storm of denials and polemics . . . proving for one hour long, if they will, that these three minutes were incorrect. I would have nothing against that. Those three minutes would be enough for me. . . . Supporters of normal truth would receive their three-minute dose. Are you afraid of that, Chairman L.? (3) Of three minutes of truth?

The two court cases, in which Tygodnik Solidarnosc was contesting a censor's decision, were both decided in favor of publishing the material in question, much to the jubilation of the press. Polityka of 14 November 1981 devoted a lengthy commentary to the first case, under the title "One-Nothing for the Readers," adding that: ~

Does praise of a literary work mean that the reader identifies with each word? . . . The charge against the readers from Lublin was absurd, leading in the final resort to the criminalization of the reading . public and to the extension of repression from author to reader. This is what the law can lead to when it enters the domain of literary criticism.

(3) Wladyslaw Loranc, Chairman of the Committee for Radio and Television.

Zycie Warszawy of 17 November 1981 under the title "Censorship Censored" on the second censorship case won by Tygodnik Solidarnosc, stressing that the court had not gone into the details of the rejected article, concerning itself solely with the question of whether criticism of certain aspects of the socialist system constituted a violation of the paragraph forbidding an attack or defamation of the constitution, and deciding it did not.

Slowo Powszechne of 16 November 1981 reported on the continuing investigation of allegedly antisocialist statements made during a rally in Trzebiatow by the Chairman of Solidarity's Western Pomeranian Chapter, Marian Jurczyk. The Pax daily believes that too much has been made of a case where the speaker himself admits that he is not a politician and lets himself get carried away. Worse still, there seem to be disparities between the tape recordings made at the rally by various individuals, the typewritten copy made available (by the militia?) to the Office of the Council of Ministers; moreover, disjointed excerpts from the tape were used to attack Jurczyk on Polish Radio.

In view of all this, there is a good deal of justice in a statement of November 2 by the Solidarity Committee in the Szczecin Shipyards, protesting against libel and attacks conducted by the mass media (and provocative in character) against M. Jurczyk.

The Economy

In view of the disastrous situation throughout the country, the papers devote a lot of space to advice on how to improve matters. No one seems to listen, however, and more and more people are getting the impression that they are being fed lies.

Tygodnik Demokratyczny of 1 November 1981 published an article, "Black Holes," by Danuta Frey in which she pieced together data from various sources, chiefly from the outspoken Przeglad Techniczny, asking a question to which there seems to be no answer -- what actually happens to things that are produced, since production has not fallen off all that much, so as to leave shelves absolutely empty. There still seem to be enormous disparities in the statistics.

Experts have calculated that if one deducts from the figure of this year's coal production the amount exported and compares the result with the corrected, falsified statistics (where the amount of coal was increased by some 5% by adding stones to it) of 1979, the amount of coal left for domestic consumption will be about equal to that for 1979. Not that there was enough of it then, but there was nothing like the shortage now being experienced. . . . Purchases of milk this year are twice those of the 1960s. Yet there is a total shortage of milk and milk products. . . . Where is the black hole into which it all disappears?

There seem to be more such black holes. . . . It appears from the corrected statistics that consumption plus exports of meat in Poland amounted to 62 kg per capita in 1979, while production was calculated at 93 kg. This means that there is a difference of 31 kg per capita, in other words, a total of about 1,000,000 tons of meat and fats.

P. S. Information from Trybuna Ludu (October 14) . . . "annual sugar production is to rise to over 1,600,000 tons of sugar. Some 960,000 tons will go for increased sugar rations and to industry." Could we not be told what will happen to all the rest, 640,000 tons of sugar or more?

A part of the mystery of what happens to production may have been elucidated by Jozef Kusmieriek in his article "Commune Nomenklatura," of which political excerpts were quoted above. He estimates that up to 30% of farm produce gets "spoiled" in transit from the producer to the consumer. This may mean that it truly rots, or that it has been sold under the counter. Only the middlemen, to whom his article is devoted, really know, since it is they who establish the "spoilage index."

One of the tragedies of Polish industrial production is its dependence on imported parts. Frequently, for lack of one small part a whole plant has to stop production. Zycie Warszawy cited such a case in its issue of November 12 and the discouraging response to what seemed a sensible solution. Adam Grzeszak wrote in "A Foreign Dollar Is Better":

The Predom-Termet factory ran out of a special tape necessary for the production of programming in washing machines. This caused a stoppage and 1,500 people had nothing to do because the couple of thousand dollars necessary for the purchase could not be had. This is what the press told us a couple of days ago. . . . After this news appeared a reader called us up and said that he and a few of his friends would be willing to lend the factory the necessary few grand. We accepted the role of go-between. It soon transpired that the loan of money for the production of washing machines or whatever interested neither the Associated Industries for Domestic Equipment Production, nor the relevant import enterprise Imper-Metal, nor anyone else. For a hundred reasons. The main one being it is not allowed. . . . Our law does not anticipate the possibility of private loans. . . . And why not? Actually, no one really knows. We prefer to get loans abroad, paying fat charges, turning our backs on our own citizens with foreign currency. . . . In the meantime, the Swedish firm unblocked its credits, tapes have been delivered, washing machine production is on. How much longer?

A similar case of official mindlessness was raised by Andrzej Bajorek in Zycie Warszawy of 11 November 1981. He disclosed in "Who Should Be Punished for Importing Washing Powder" that in a fit of panic buying a state enterprise called Torimex had decided to barter a certain number of Fiat 126s for Hungarian washing powder, toothpaste, paprika, soap, and tomato extract, all this in tiny amounts (apothecary drams, as he puts it), for instance 2,000 tons of washing powder, while the monthly national requirement is about 15,000 tons. It would be best, of course, he said to buy components (Polish powder factories cannot produce for lack of certain chemicals), but if not that, then at least get fewer goods but in perceptible amounts. "Surely, that much could have been settled with our brother Hungarians?"

In the very difficult supply situation, enormous amounts of private and institutional aid, especially food, are being sent from abroad. Literally all the papers print horror stories about the inability of the post office, or anyone else, with the possible exception of the Catholic Church, to deal with this "avalanche of good will." Some of this can be blamed on the regulations: a certain percentage of food parcels are still opened by customs officials, "just checking" for drugs, illegal press, or pornographic material. Some parcels are being stolen by gangs able to open containers with blow torches. Many get crushed in inadequate storage. It has been over a year now since the avalanche of parcels started, and nothing much is being done. A super-avalanche of Christmas parcels is now expected, and still nothing is being done. A particularly outspoken article on the subject in Kurier Polski of 11 November 1981 also fails to come up with an answer.

Slowo Powszechne of 13-15 November 1981 tried to amuse its readers by quoting from the Encyklopedia Powszechna (a four-volume general encyclopedia):

"CRISIS (from Greek): a serious breakdown in the process of economic growth in capitalism. Crisis is a phenomenon solely connected with the capitalist economies and does not occur in other socio-economic systems. . . ." We might be inclined to think that we live in a capitalist system, then?