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POLISH INDEPENDENT PRESS REVIEW

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1. Five Years of Clandestine Broadcasting

Summary: Since its first broadcast four months after the imposition of martial law in Poland, Radio Solidarity has expanded its network and improved its techniques; this paper traces the radio’s history as well as describing the scope of its broadcasts and how it has managed to overcome its technical problems.

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On 12 April 1982, the day before the start of the fifth month under martial law, Radio Solidarity first went on the air in Warsaw. The broadcast lasted eight minutes and was relayed on a short-wave frequency from a homemade transmitter; it was heard clearly by many thousands of listeners in various districts of Warsaw.

The notion of a clandestine radio station in Poland that would supplement the unofficial press in providing uncensored information was conceived by Zbigniew Romaszewski, a former member of Solidarity’s National Commission and a founder member of KOR [the Workers' Defense Committee], who together with his wife Zofia produced Radio Solidarity’s initial broadcasts.

Independent broadcasters have now been operating for five years and, despite numerous setbacks, have managed to break into the airwaves of official state radio and television in more and more cities. Radio Solidarity, which originally consisted of a small team of enthusiasts, now encompasses broadcasting crews from several independent organizations, including Fighting Solidarity [Solidarnosc Walczaca] and the latest arrival on the scene, the Independent Students’ Association, which transmitted its first broadcast in Warsaw on 8 March 1987, the anniversary of the 1968 student protests.

Commemorative stamps have also been issued by Radio Solidarity. The equivalent of a first day cover envelope and a block of five different stamps depicting radio symbols were released in April 1985 on the radio’s third anniversary; the clandestine radio of Warsaw celebrated the fourth anniversary of its first broadcast with the release of a 50-zloty stamp depicting the emblem of the city of Warsaw in gold, red, and black.

Origins and Expansion. The concept of a Solidarity radio station goes back to the 27-point Gdansk Agreement in which the workers striking in the Gdansk shipyard formulated their demands; item 3 called for greater access to the official state media for the representatives of various organizations, as well as for guaranteed freedom of speech as laid down in the Polish Constitution. Although officially signed by the authorities on 31 August 1980, these demands were never fully implemented.
Solidarity had asked for one hour a week of television time in order to present its views on subjects ranging from the economy to social problems. Negotiations culminated in a meeting on 19 February 1981 between Solidarity's representative Karol Modzelewski and a representative of state television and radio at which it was formally agreed that Solidarity would have access to the mass media.

In the event, of eight subjects proposed by the opposition only two were ever made into programs for the state television: one concerned the implementation of a shorter working week and free Saturdays (the program, which was presented by Zbigniew Bujak, Jan Rulewski, and the economist Ryszard Bugaj, was generally well received) and the other discussed the problem of economic reform; in the latter program official ministerial representatives monopolized the debate and rarely allowed the opposition to speak.

In view of the authorities' failure to give Solidarity regular access to the media, Solidarity began to develop its own radio network even during its legal existence. Attempts to break the state's monopoly on information resulted in the production of a series of tape-recorded radio programs; these were then copied onto cassettes and these cassettes were made available in Warsaw, Gdansk, and Wroclaw and subsequently throughout most of Poland. Many professional journalists who had left the official sector edited the programs and thereby contributed to the evolution of professional independent journalism in Poland.

The nascent radio network was driven underground by the imposition of martial law, but in April 1982 Radio Solidarity started broadcasting in Warsaw, thanks to the efforts of Romaszewski. It seemed that the sporadic broadcasts would cease when he was arrested together with his wife and eight other activists on 29 or 30 August 1982, just before the second anniversary of the signing of the Gdansk Agreement. On 24 January 1983, however (the day the trial of the radio's activists started in Warsaw), Radio Solidarity could be heard once again. On February 17 Romaszewski was sentenced to a prison term of four-and-a-half years; he was released under the terms of the "amnesty" of 8 August 1984. His trial and that of other radio activists failed, however, to halt the development of the radio's network. Following Warsaw's example, regional broadcasting stations were set up. In 1982 stations appeared in the Solidarity centers of Cracow, Bielsko-Biala, Poznan, Gdansk, Bydgoszcz, Nowa Huta, Wroclaw, and Gorzow as well as in several other smaller localities. Now local stations also operate in various districts of Warsaw and neighboring towns; a station in the town of Siedlce to the east of Warsaw, for example, transmitted its first broadcast in June 1983. Programs from a station in Katowice were first heard on 29 April 1984; and a station in Pulawy, an industrial town southeast of Warsaw, went on the air in April 1986.
Transmitting Techniques. When interviewed by the underground quarterly Reporter, the chief technician of Radio Solidarity claimed that building a radio transmitter was the simplest part of clandestine broadcasting: "any electronics enthusiast can do it; but then you need someone who is a radio fanatic actually to run the risk of broadcasting."²

The first broadcasts were relayed on the same short-wave frequencies as official Polish radio; none lasted longer than two minutes, since that was the time needed by the security police to track down the active transmitters, which were usually located inside a building or concealed somewhere in a street. Tygodnik Mazowsze has documented several dramatic raids by the militia on transmitting stations:

we all remember those long columns of radio detector vans, militia vehicles with lights flashing as though they were a mobile discotheque; the traffic was stopped, cars were searched, and a helicopter circled the building.³

Soon, however, the militia abandoned such spectacular campaigns and resorted to jamming: within a minute or two of an independent broadcast's coming on the air, it would be drowned by blaring music.

The homemade transmitters are powered by heavy-duty accumulators, which are situated inside a parked car, for example, or on the top of an apartment block. In one case, in December 1985, an accumulator was enclosed together with an amplifier in a metal cart and chained to a concrete post in front of the Uniwersam store in Warsaw.⁴ On that particular occasion, Radio Solidarity was commemorating the fourth anniversary of the imposition of martial law. The program went out at 3:30 P.M., at the height of the rush hour in Warsaw. To the vast amusement of a crowd of onlookers and listeners, the militia tried to stop the broadcast by kicking the cart and jumping on it. But it was only after they resorted to crowbars that they were able to silence the broadcast--35 minutes after it had started.

"Above-ground" broadcasting has also been tried by ingenious technicians in Torun. Three balloons were used to lift a radio transmitter above the city; the relayed broadcast lasted 30 minutes.

The dates and times of broadcasts are announced in the underground press or by scattering leaflets. The latter method has the distinct disadvantage, however, of also notifying the security forces, which have often managed to track down a transmitter even before it has started relaying the broadcast. To counter this problem, technicians have recently developed a new system of broadcasting, which takes advantage of the fact that the sound track of some Polish television channels can also be obtained on certain shortwave (FM) radio frequencies. Radio
broadcasts transmitted on these frequencies are effectively immune to jamming; if the authorities were to jam the sound, the television signals would also be disrupted. Also, Radio Solidarity now often announces its programs and frequencies by flashing messages across television screens; slogans such as "Solidarity Lives" or "Don't Vote" are also transmitted in this way. The ideal combination now seems to be a Solidarity still on the television screen and sound from a radio set.

Since Radio Solidarity broadcasts on shortwave frequencies, its programs can only be received within a radius of one to six kilometers. In September 1986 there were about 20 broadcasts per week in several districts of Warsaw; in February 1987 there were over 20. There are apparently more people offering their services than there is equipment for them to use. To reach a maximum audience, radio broadcasts over television frequencies are made during peak viewing times, such as during the evening news at 7:00 P.M., in the intervals during football matches, or just before a popular serial is aired. On average, each broadcast reaches an audience of 100,000 listeners. Two independent studios prepare a weekly program lasting about ten minutes, which is then broadcast from several points in the capital.

Broadcast Content and Target Audiences. The history and content of clandestine broadcasting has been well documented in the unofficial press; exhaustive articles have appeared in Solidarnosc Radia i Telewizji [Radio and Television Solidarity], a paper edited by former employees of Polish state radio and television who had experienced journalism during the Solidarity period and who later found themselves unable to return to their former place of employment.

Programs vary in length from three to ten minutes, depending on whether they are aimed at radio or television transmission. The content of broadcasting is varied: appeals urging the population to boycott official elections, news of arrests of political activists, news of price hikes, commemorations of Solidarity and national anniversaries, profiles of local heroes (such as Lech Zondek, who died fighting on the side of the Afghan rebels in 1985), interviews and speeches by Solidarity's leaders, and details of political trials, as well as information on the Polish economy, education, and social problems. Independent broadcasts have also catered for particular needs and occasions. During the political prisoners' week organized by Solidarity from 3 to 10 November 1985, for example; a special broadcast was transmitted for the political prisoners held at Rakowiecka Street prison. The main purpose of these broadcasts was to reassure those inside of continued support for them.

Factory workers have been addressed by clandestine radio on internal networks; the most recent case was in January 1987 in the EDA electrical appliance factory in Poniatowa. The
management had decreed that "every time a worker left his post, whether to go to the toilet or to see his doctor," he would have his wages cut appropriately. There would, however, be no such penalty for attending meetings, discussions, or further training. The new arrangements met with protest even from the official trade union in the factory; however, management refused to allow the trade union to read its protest over the factory radio. Several days later, news of the protest reached the workers through a Radio Solidarity broadcast in the town.

The audience's response has generally been positive—not just for political reasons: some people, particularly the elderly, have expressed satisfaction with the quality of Radio Solidarity's broadcasts, which they say are far more audible than the official ones.

The authorities have reacted not only by trying to detect the transmitters but also by producing their own fake versions of Radio Solidarity broadcasts; the radio's signature tune has proved difficult to reproduce, however, and few people have been taken in by, for example, appeals in 1983 (purported to be from the Solidarity leadership) for those in hiding to make themselves known.

**Plans and Prospects.** For the time being, it does not look as though the authorities are likely to develop a successful method of jamming clandestine radio broadcasts on the same frequencies as official state television. Taking advantage of the opportunity this offers, Solidarity Radio has launched an appeal to coincide with its fifth anniversary and addressed to all independent organizations, political parties, trade unions, and publications. The appeal announces that Radio Solidarity is planning a series on pluralism in Poland today, not the official version but the real state of affairs; and it calls on groups that would like to present their views to submit texts for programs lasting eight or nine minutes. These will be broadcast alongside the radio's normal program and should each reach an audience of about 100,000. Since for most of these people this will be their only contact with the opposition in Poland, authors are urged to present their arguments clearly and simply.

Radio Solidarity has also appealed to independent authors to submit texts to the radio and to cooperate with it in working out a more attractive and varied program. More money is also needed to develop the necessary technical resources.

Although Radio Solidarity plays a relatively minor role within Poland's opposition scene, it is an undeniably dramatic one; and its prime importance is in reaching parts of the population that would otherwise have little or no contact with oppositional activity. The authorities have, however, recently stepped up their campaign against clandestine broadcasting; they have said that "persons producing and possessing illegal radio
transmitters will be punished with a prison term of up to three years in jail." The statement, which was issued by the official Polish news agency, was carried in the Polish press.  

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1 For further details on Zbigniew Romaszewski, see Polish Situation Report/16, Radio Free Europe Research, 15 September 1982, item 3.

2 No. 1, summer 1985.

3 No. 198, 11 February 1987.

4 Tygodnik Mazowsze, no. 152, 3 January 1986.


7 Trybuna Ludu, 24 April 1987.
2. Critical Views of Independent Publishing

Summary: In recent months several underground publications have printed articles and letters at times highly critical of all aspects of independent publishing, from the selection of material through the poor quality of printing to methods of distribution.

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One of the first fundamental criticisms of the underground press was made by the political commentator of the Warsaw underground weekly KOS, using the pseudonym Dawid Warszawski. He published his article in an independent teachers' monthly in October 1986. He began by querying the premise that independence from state censorship means independence as such:

There is a widespread belief that in post-December [1981] Poland the independent press has flourished; its supporters cite a truly impressive number of titles published outside the state censorship. Let us note, however, that independence from the state system of press guidance need not mean independence as such, we can only speak of the latter when a publication is not dependent on any decision-making center other than its own editorial board. This condition cannot, of course, be ever fully achieved, but one can stop at various stages when aiming for it. We can fairly safely say, however, that a publication serving as a means of communication for any party or social group has quite a long way to go yet [before becoming fully independent].

One should ask oneself, though, whether aiming at independence is a value in itself; in other words, whether a publication that might become more independent should try it. Because independence does not necessarily guarantee the greater veracity of a paper or better information. It does guarantee something else: that only professional, journalistic reasons decide what material is published and what rejected. No one manipulates the editors, nor does anyone protect them. They stand or fall by their own action.

For example: nearly all uncensored Warsaw publications—to remain within our own area—are "organs" of one organization or another. Even Tygodnik Mazowsze, though it does not say so on its masthead, is the mouthpiece of the Interim Coordinating Commission [TKK]. Only Przegląd Wiadomości Agencyjnych [Press Agency Survey] is a newspaper organ and this is probably why, apart from its excellent appearance, it has had such a dizzying career. Similarly, branch publications such as Tu Teraz [Here Now], are "organs," although in their case it is more natural and less harmful.
The results are obvious: these publications present reality in a rather one-sided way. We know everything about the follies, the crimes, and the behind-the-scenes dealings of the Reds, and almost nothing about the process of decision-making of the leadership of underground Solidarity. . . . We disclose secret Politburo documents, but we still do not know what Solidarity committees do, other than issue statements.

This state of affairs is not the result of a sinister plot. Quite simply, the "organ" press is not suited to treating "our" people in the same way it treats "the enemy," although the attitude toward one or the other should be completely different. . . .

As a matter of fact, the Interim Coordinating Commission, otherwise subject to much criticism, was the only underground organization that allowed the reporting of its activities, which showed the backstage aspects of it, including mistakes and slip-ups. This was the book Konspira [Conspiracy],² politically the most important document of the post-December [1981] period. . . .

All this does not mean that editorial boards should abandon all ambition of presenting the paper's political line; but it should be expressed in selective comments and not selective information. For instance, the initial differences between [Lech] Walesa and [Zbigniew] Bujak following the latter's release from prison may be presented as being of little importance in a commentary, but they should not be passed over in silence.

For almost five years [when the piece was written] the underground press has been mainly concerned with reassuring its readers of the justice of their views, rarely has it published texts demanding a revision of these views, or at least a new analysis [of them]. This did not happen because, at least in my experience, we were being subjected to political censorship but because we took ourselves more for propagandists of a just cause and, to some extent, for politicians rather than for journalists. If the pluralist underground press is to become a truly independent press, then these roles must be separated.

While Warszawski was mainly concerned with the editorial aspects of underground publications, some months later a writer signing with the double-entendre pseudonym of K.G. Buntowszczyk (the three initials being self-explanatory and the second name the Polish transliteration of the pejorative Russian word for rebel or troublemaker) published a lengthy broadside in a Cracow youth publication³ under the title "Illegal Publications, Dough, and Illusions." He, too, began by complaining about the prevalent self-satisfaction among underground publishers:

Among people with access to samizdat material (and especially among publishers) there prevails a rather boastful conviction about the great powers of parallel publishing: one speaks of its broad availability, large print runs, and new titles. If one adds the
[Underground] collections and lending libraries, the implication is that every Pole can lay his hands on illegal publications. There is also talk about its amazing quality. Yet I, writing from experience in my triple capacity as a distributor and an archivist of illegal publications and as a coeditor of Promienisci, can state above all that the reach of underground publications is very limited, at least when compared with the declarations and the expectations. There are many social groups in large cities never reached by underground publications; as for small towns, it is something else again. . . .

The author claims in a subheading that "The Publishing Market Exists Mainly for the Sake of Dough"; but he then swiftly qualifies his opinion:

Naturally—money is a great invention. Work must be paid for, and good work must be paid for well. I also think that there is nothing more hypocritical and Bolshevik than social work. . . . [Although] I must make clear that under certain difficult and unusual conditions it is obviously admirable. I am therefore happy to realize that dough, and pretty good dough at that, is made by authors, publishers, editors, proofreaders, translators, typists, printers, and distributors. But I will never accept highway robbery and, in this branch of work especially, making money as the principal objective. Trash is being printed, anything goes . . . . A publisher who receives a subsidy for a book and then reprints it in a sloppy manner at double the generally prevailing price can only call himself "Robber Editions."

The way to the reader passes through the distributor. Let me say right away that this is the most dangerous (the strongest likelihood of getting caught) and the least satisfactory (the large financial outlay) work. A distributor with direct access to a publisher gets a commission: usually 10%, not a small sum if you consider the average price of books nowadays. As for the lower levels of distribution, they frequently get no commission and their work is relatively harder. This is why I am not shocked when they add a couple of zloty to the price of a book. . . .

The troubles of carriers of illegal newsprint were brought to public attention in two letters to the editor and an interview in three issues of the major Solidarity weekly Tygodnik Mazowsze. Both the distributors in question are women, although the job involves heavy labor in trundling masses of print.

It all started with a small "newsstand." At first only the press, then books were added, although not too many: 30 to 50 copies of a single title. The years go by, nothing changes, the work has to be done. The point is, how to do it without being out of pocket? Some people simply change prices, but that is not the point.
Books are very expensive, few people can afford them. And their quality is declining. The best ones reach us, at the bottom, in one to three copies, and nobody wants to buy the junk for which we have had to pay. What can we do with it?

Since the time I started in the business, I've put in 30,000 zloty of my own. I truly cannot add more, since my monthly profit is one third of that sum. On the other hand, it would be a pity to drop the work.

So think about it, my dears, what could we do not to be exposed to losses and be able to go on? 5

The next issue of Tygodnik Mazowsze carried a report based on an interview with a distributor under the title "Sad But True."

I've been involved in distribution since martial law. Until mid-1984 I had no problems, either with the supply or with the sale of books. My main problem was a swift turnover; I did not want the goods to stay with me longer than two to three days. At that time, I could distribute up to 100 copies of a book. Today, active in the same circles, I can sell up to 10 copies—and that includes the titles most in demand. The youngest [customers], who had started families and have real trouble making ends meet, and the oldest readers, who cannot cope with the small, poor print, fell by the wayside. And even the most faithful customers will not take everything. People buy good novels, memoirs, reports, and historical studies, but they won't even borrow Helsinki reports and other pessimistic horror stories (prisons, tortures, lawlessness). There is a clear decline in interest in political studies, the Soviet Union and its literature—I keep hearing complaints about the surfeit and monotony of these publications. Poorly printed books don't sell (they used to), nor do numbers of works on the same subject (you cannot sell any reports on Afghanistan), very expensive books, but also poorly produced pamphlets, even if they are free.

But the greatest distribution problems are [presented by] periodicals. They are always late, some appear a year after going to the printer, so the material is generally out of date. Worse still, various publication repeat the same stuff. A reader will find one or two articles of interest after buying a fairly hefty volume; that makes him cross. Each volume contains boring, poorly written, inferior articles. All this discourages the reader. . . . And yet I keep hearing that Solidarity's pet projects are periodicals and that they must be given grants to keep them from falling. Let them fail, and let those remain on the market that have good editors and interesting authors. . . . Sometimes I get the feeling that [publications] exist more for the sake of publishers than for the reading public.
I have an even worse feeling: the independent circulation of the press ceases to be a tie and an encouragement to people; on the contrary, it discourages opposition. People are bored with the boring texts, yet they feel guilty about it and are ashamed to refuse to buy them. As a result, they try to avoid the distributor; they don’t show up at appointed meetings and they drop out of the movement.

As far as we distributors are concerned, above all we are weary of financial problems, because we cannot avoid losses and have to pay for them out of our own pockets. We are also tired of trying to force people to buy books that we ourselves don’t find particularly attractive, of being blamed for various shortcomings and faults. An additional problem is the fact that unsold publications pile up, constituting a security risk and making me nervous. What gives me satisfaction is the feeling that one is taking part in history, as it were, and also finding a book that a customer really longs for.

The distributor then complains at length about the devil-may-care attitude of certain publishers who print books that are not in demand in a messy fashion in order to make a profit. She makes the following practical suggestion:

A distributor generally knows what books are in demand. Perhaps his opinion should influence the selection to some extent, or at least the print run? A way out could lie in printing advance notices with descriptions of planned publications, so that the readers could be informed and order in advance. Furthermore, a sensible balance should be struck between new books and reprints, because the demand for works of lasting value is greater than the supply. There should be a listing of "The Best of the Best," and these books should be reprinted from time to time, even with special grants, on condition that they be distributed in new areas. When reading groups undergo natural erosion, one must search for new readers in order to extend the reach of the free word among those who had not yet had the chance of knowing its advantages. I am thinking here, above all, of young people and of the rural population.

A few weeks later another letter to the editor, signed Kolporter [Distributor], explained that distributors had organized themselves, though not yet formally, into a group in order to advise publishers and improve the market in general. He commented as follows on the letter above:

We do not agree that it [the state of samizdat publishing] is sad. Simply, society is getting more mature, as is the market, while our intellectual colleagues in publishing houses and Leading Committees have been dozing off and have failed to notice it . . . . In the near future we shall draw up a list, on the lines of Promienisci, of books that we shall call loud and clear for the reprinting of . . . .7
K.G. Buntowszczyk, writing in *Promienisci*, expressed a very low opinion of independent publishers:

Oppositional thought proclaims that all writers should be given the chance to see print, even at the cost of a certain financial loss, and all in the name of independent culture. In this way, publishing has become the domain of dilettantes and self-important scribblers. For who is responsible for the quality of the printed word? In general, people without qualifications who have opened their own printing shops. They risk nothing by publishing trash, because (a) they and their authors remain anonymous, and (b) their print runs are short and usually disappear without a trace, so that no criticism is heard from below. ... Actually, at times, even serious houses such as NOWA publish poor works by famous writers. ...

"Buntowszczyk" then suggested that underground publishers start printing translations of world best-sellers, such as *A Clockwork Orange* or *The Name of the Rose*; adding almost at once that the general quality of translations was such that, when reading Hannah Arendt's Polish version of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, he was not sure that it was the same book. He warned that if the current downgrade slide continued, readers might begin to reject underground works just because they came from the underground. So what was to be done?

In the opinion of writers (fortunately not all of them), certain matters, though undeniable, should not be mentioned, because "it would harm our good name" or "destroy the solidarity of the nation" or "harm the young" or "might be exploited by the Reds." The Reds manage without our help. And anyway, our truth will never be of help in building the system of lies. Moreover, ethics apart, hiding our heads in the sand, telling half-truths if not outright lies, is equally harmful for practical reasons. How can one then speak of the veracity of parallel publications? And if the Reds find any fodder for their propaganda in uncensored papers, then [they do so] precisely in the ones that lie.

So how should one approach parallel publications? Coolly. Without naive faith in the magic of the printed word, expecting no miracles, changes in awareness, the construction of an underground society, and so on. Perceiving in it a good (and deservedly so) business, while maintaining the elementary principles of honesty and good sense. And, above all, rejecting decisively and ruthlessly all trash! It will do us all good.

This simple prescription was picked up by the Warsaw weekly *KOS* in an article about criticism of the underground press in the underground press; it made this final comment: "You will say, ladies and gentlemen, that this is minimalism. Perhaps, but only on such humble foundations can anyone try to raise such buildings as we dream of." 

Nika Krzeczunowicz
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1 Tu Teraz[Here Now], no.49/50, October 1986.

2 Paris: Spotkania 1984; and several underground editions in Poland.

3 Promienisci, no.10(86), 16 February 1987.

4 For more on the funding of underground publications, see Polish Independent Press Review/3, Radio Free Europe Research, 26 February 1987, item 1.


6 No. 203, 18 March 1987.

7 No. 207/208, 22 April 1987.

8 No. 5(113), 9 March 1987.
3. The Underground Press Looks at the Implications for Poland of Gorbachev's Policies

Summary: The Polish independent press has frequently commented on the current situation in the Soviet Union, focusing on the possible implications of the Kremlin's campaign for "openness" and "restructuring" for the Polish Church, the authorities, and the opposition.

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Coverage in the underground press of events in the USSR has increased substantially in recent months. This has been aided both by the greater readability of the official Soviet press that is regularly available in Poland and by the personal observations of people returning from trips to the USSR. The various interpretations of Gorbachev's current campaign for "openness" and "restructuring" were summarized by a political commentator writing under the pseudonym of Karol Grodkowski:

Mikhail Gorbachev. How are we to assess this phenomenon? What does it mean and what does it portend? The replies range from total optimism to complete disbelief. The limited amount of information that we have available is the same for all of us, so the conclusions drawn must inevitably be based more on intuition than on an understanding of the situation. At least three different standpoints have emerged from the discussion taking place.

Grodkowski went on to say that according to the first view:

Gorbachev has realized that the Soviet system and methods of rule are anachronistic, unproductive, and lack any prospects. He is aware that stagnation will lead to inevitable catastrophe: a political, economic, and cultural catastrophe as well as a disaster in the field of health and ecology. He is therefore intent on radical reforms that are so far-reaching that one can talk of a genuine restructuring or even democratization of the system. Those who support this view stress that Gorbachev is talking of rebuilding the system and not of improving or perfecting it. They also draw attention to the fact that he is saying the sort of things for which every Soviet citizen would have been arrested or confined to a psychiatric hospital just two years ago. They believe that Gorbachev has taken a personal risk and that he is waging a battle to the death. Defeat is possible, and even probable; this may be a defeat of the type suffered by Khrushchev, or some other violent event. The impact, however, that has been made on Soviet society makes it impossible for him to pull back. Supporters of this view claim that Gorbachev's efforts ought to meet with our sympathy and give us hope.

Grodkowski commented on this particular view as follows:
This theory is derived mostly from Gorbachev's own words and from the changes that have taken place in the Soviet Union in the sphere of culture and information. They are considerable and at times quite sensational: the case of Sakharov, the changes in the press, publishing, films, and the theater. But all this can be revoked very quickly; the essential power structure has remained unchanged.

According to the second prevailing opinion:

Since Gorbachev is an orthodox Communist and Leninist, his aim is not that of genuinely changing the system but simply making it more efficient. He is intelligent enough to realize that Brezhnev's policy brought stagnation and drove the country into an impasse, and this in turn threatens to undermine the USSR's position as a superpower and may lead to internal disturbances as well as loss of control over the empire. So he will therefore try to make the economy more efficient, to streamline the way the country functions, to stimulate intellectual life, to overcome or at least reduce apathy, and to induce the ruling apparatus to be more efficient and show more initiative. By this he hopes to unblock, at least partially, the resources that are at present untapped. In other words, he would like to introduce more momentum into all areas of life. But this would be done within strictly defined limits: the present level of centralization would remain unchanged, as would the one-party system and ideological unity. Supporters of this view are concerned that these changes may prove to be a considerable threat to the West in general and to Poland in particular, since the present reforms are aimed at increasing the efficiency and might of a totalitarian, one-party, and aggressive Soviet Union that remains essentially unchanged.

Grodkowski commented on this view:

This is basically a naive point of view, although its proponents consider themselves to be realists. For it has never been proved that a totalitarian country can be improved and made more efficient without disturbing its essential character. A one-party system can of its very nature never be efficient, productive, innovatory, or conducive to creative thought. Not even Gorbachev will be able to achieve this.

There remains, however, a third view, which according to Grodkowski is even more cynical:

Everything that Gorbachev says and does is mere propaganda, and this propaganda is directed primarily—if not exclusively—at the West. Supporters of this view state: Do not allow yourselves to be fooled, all this is being done simply to gain greater access to Western credits and technology, to gain time, and to throw the West off its guard. The whole point is to divide the West, to strengthen pacifist tendencies, and to make it less willing to bear the brunt of defense measures. The nature of communism will never change; the only thing that does change is its tactics. What we are observing
at the moment is a carefully planned deception. There is nothing that has been done in the last two years of "restructuring" that cannot be revoked in forty-eight hours.

This third approach, said Grodkowski, was inadequate for assessing the current situation in the USSR:

Those who support this view tend to ignore the extent of the crisis that the USSR finds itself in. As a result of their profound skepticism about Moscow's words, intentions, and campaigns they argue as if they were convinced that the crisis was superficial and transient and that the country was, in fact, in better shape than its leader claims. And yet we have material evidence of the fact that the situation in the USSR is alarming.

Grodkowski concluded that none of these views could be accepted unconditionally; although Gorbachev had carried out "a veritable revolution in words and has sent a shock through Soviet society, he has so far failed to introduce any innovations either in the economy or in foreign policy." It was only in culture and communications that radical changes had taken place. "Such a discrepancy between words and deeds cannot be sustained for long," claimed Grodkowski; "within the next few months we can expect a crisis in Moscow that will decide the fate of Gorbachev's experiment."

What can the "Gorbachev experiment"--while it lasts--do for Poland? In an interview given to Der Spiegel, 2 Adam Michnik suggested that the Kremlin's present course might open up new possibilities for the Poles and bring more "openness" to Polish-Soviet relations. He claimed that there were now grounds for hoping for political compromises that would lessen international conflicts as well as the social conflicts prevailing in communist countries. Michnik cited here the recent Soviet publication of an interview with Jozef Cardinal Glemp, Primate of the Polish Catholic Church. He saw this as the first case of public recognition of the fact that there was a powerful institution in Poland that was independent of the state and that was widely respected by Polish society. "It has been shown for the first time," claimed Michnik, "that communist Russia has a partner in dialogue other than the communist nomenklatura."

Several publications seem to have speculated about the possibility of a new role for the Catholic Church in Poland as a result of Gorbachev's policies. The popular weekly Wola favored "a careful observation of the Church, which may--I repeat may--become the main political force in Poland to support Gorbachev's reform policy." That same paper in an earlier issue claimed that

The conciliatory steps taken by the Polish Catholic Church toward the Soviet Union under the leadership of Gorbachev have become a clearly noticeable fact. The Primate's delegation recently took
part in the Moscow peace forum; and let us not forget that there were no representatives delegated by the episcopate to take part in the official congress "In Defense of a Peaceful Future" held in Warsaw [16-19 January 1986]. This must have some significance.

It is important to add that the Pope sent a special message to the Warsaw meeting and that the episcopate was not expressly invited; the delegation in Moscow represented Glemp, who had been personally invited but had declined to attend. This is in marked contrast to the Polish authorities' attitude to the Church in Poland; one article entitled "Redder Than the Kremlin" mentioned that:

The Polish media "chief of staff" recently instructed the mass media to continue their guerrilla warfare against the Church. In the name of what? And what do they hope to achieve by this? Who is forcing them to do this when at the same time Literaturnaya Gazeta publishes an interview with Jozef Cardinal Glemp?

Unofficial opinion as expressed in the underground press seems to indicate that the authorities in Poland are not making maximum use of the opportunities offered by the present Soviet press campaign. The same article went on to say:

Up to now the ruling team has always told the Polish public and the West--either directly or indirectly--that it is under pressure from Moscow and that if it were left alone it would introduce reforms and a far more liberal rule and would make everything far more efficient.... A genuine opportunity to prove the validity of these myths has now arisen. This would be a good opportunity to introduce changes--albeit very carefully--that are based on common sense. At any rate, it is worth testing whether the Russians, who are absorbed by their restructuring and their internal problems, would not give us a freer hand than to date. But there are no signs that the Polish iceberg is beginning to melt.

Once again Poland's rulers are displaying a complete lack of any long-term concept or program. There is no one who is prepared to seize the chance and to show a measure of flexibility in adapting to the new political order. The intellectual sterility among the ruling elite is more glaringly obvious than ever before.... Even the Soviet press is considered to be too unorthodox for us. Our censors delete or abridge Soviet texts that they consider embarrassing; the more interesting ones appear only in special bulletins and in documents for internal use. The guiding principle used in vetting the Soviet press for public consumption is that of toning down critical comment.

The measure of independence, however, that Polish society has achieved over the years ought to be safeguarded and possibly increased.
We cannot share the prevailing tremendous optimism of the West. . . . We should not invest too much hope in the Kremlin's new course. As things stand, any chance of introducing democratic mechanisms in Poland must be based on Moscow's recognition of our "right to be different," of our right to have social and political institutions that vary considerably from the Soviet model. The fact that public life in the USSR is undergoing a structural evolution allows us to bring pressure to bear that would advance us a step or two forward. Our efforts ought to concentrate on sustaining the advantage in the field of democratization and liberalization that we have achieved in the 40 years of our resistance and struggle. This lead seems to be diminishing—we are stagnating, they are not. . . . We see our greatest hopes not in Gorbachev's intentions but in the processes that his actions may set in motion.

A discussion that took place between several underground writers on Gorbachev's influence on the present situation in Poland was summarized in an article written in April 1987:

The Polish authorities have finally accepted that Gorbachev's line is gaining ground and that it would be a mistake to pursue their present delaying tactics. We can expect Gorbachev's policy to be transferred to Polish ground, and this would mean a declaration of war on the apparatus as well as some process of "democratization." So we may have an opening on at least three fronts: a new role for the Polish Patriotic Movement for National Rebirth [PRON]; an extension of the Catholic Church's charitable activity and that of Catholic lay organizations; and the go-ahead for the existence of various societies and trade unions but without Solidarity. . . . Further developments in Poland will be the result of fear on the part of the authorities and growing public pressure. If Gorbachev succeeds in pushing matters forward and retaining his position, then the hope that the changes taking place in Moscow will also reach us will begin to stir up public pressure.

This view was contradicted by another participant in that discussion:

Our authorities have no reason to feel threatened by the reforms taking place in the Kremlin. They have prepared a scenario for every eventuality that could develop in Poland and they will carry out sham undertakings as long as they can. They realize, moreover, that society will be content with anything it gets. They can see that the other side is paralyzed and that Solidarity is powerless, so they can go a long way in their various gestures and concessions, since nothing can threaten them or provoke an explosion.

The consensus among independent journalists seems to be that the present changes in the USSR ought to be fully exploited for the benefit of Polish society. This includes a re-examination of the blank pages of Polish-Soviet history and relations (for example, the Katyn massacre) and increasing the scope for private initiative. One publication called for
greater pressure on the party authorities; ridicule of their backwardness compared with the positive advances made by the [Soviet] center; and the abolition of censorship and the restoration of emigre publications and the independent press to their rightful place in Polish culture.

The official Polish paper Polityka\(^9\) recently quoted an interview with Janusz Albin, Director of the Ossolineum Library in Wroclaw, in which he said that his library collected underground publications, although their acquisition was difficult; the underground material he acquired could only be in the form of private gifts. Commenting on the parallel publishing movement, the interviewer from Polityka claimed that "there are books there that are significant for Polish culture."

Anna Pomian

3 No. 12(218), 30 March 1987.
4 Wola, no. 10(216), 16 March 1987.
5 CDN—Glos Wolnego Robotnika, no. 190, 28 March 1987.
6 Tygodnik Mazowsze, no. 201, 4 March 1987.
7 Ibid., no. 206, 8 April 1987.
8 Hutnik, no. 3(33), 23 February 1987.
9 16 May 1987.
4. Interviews with a Secret policeman and a Prominent Party Member

Summary: Interviews with a secret policeman on active service and a retired high-ranking party official appeared in underground publications last year; both men expressed their views on the past and present situation in Poland as well as their thoughts on the future.

* * *

From time to time someone in authority feels the need to give an interview to the opposition. For example, a secret policeman was interviewed by a Wroclaw monthly in 1985. That same year a compilation of interviews by Teresa Toranska with former important party members, entitled Oni [They], became a best-seller when it was published abroad and in the Polish underground press. At the end of last year two more such interviews appeared in different underground publications.

The Warsaw monthly Robotnik [Worker] carried an interview conducted in the summer of 1985 with "a retired high-level party official and a PZPR member still." The interviewer opened by asking what had made the official give an interview to an "unauthorized--in your book illegal--publication?"

A strange question, if you consider that it was you who pressed me to give you this interview. Still--I could have refused. An underground paper has its readers. There is no denying that they are specific readers. They look for information that would justify their hatred of the system now prevalent in the country. ... But I do not think that they lack patriotism.

An interview with a secret policeman in Replika featured the same policeman and was conducted by the same journalist (using the pseudonym "Ernest") as an earlier interview in a different Wroclaw monthly. The officer had one facetious and one more serious explanation of why he was giving the interview.

"Ernest" You took the risk of giving me this interview and having it published. Why?

Officer Not much of a risk. I could say that I am insuring myself in case you should win. You will need a trusted and professional cop. Or perhaps I am doing it for the heck of it. I will have fun reading it in some underground publication. ... You think you're the only ones who like letting the Reds, as you call them, have it? I like letting them have it, too. So, pick your answer.

Asked why, since he had no love for the Reds, he did the job he did and how he felt about it, the secret policeman answered:
I am counting the years until I can retire, waiting for the chance to start my own little business.

And this is when real life will begin?

Right! To be honest, I am too old to show off and pretend to you that things were any different. I joined the police force before I understood anything. I thought I was going to be a cop like in an American whodunit; and when I caught on, it was too late to get out and start something new. I had too much to lose. So I wait till I can get out and meanwhile try not to do too much harm to anyone. . . . And I have a feeling, only a feeling, because you don't talk about things like that on the job, that others think like me, too. That should keep you happy.

The retired party official tried to justify the actions of the communist regime in Poland in terms of the lesser evil:

We do have an influence on Soviet world policy, though not a decisive one, I admit. Solidarity and the whole crisis connected with it spoiled matters a lot.

So you think that the crisis was caused by Solidarity and not by your incompetence? that the party is all good, only the people are troublemakers?

Well, all right, one must agree that it was the fault of the party. I forgot for a moment who I was talking to and why. We took power thanks to the Red Army. We were most certainly supported by what might be called careerists. We secured obedience by force, there was no other way. We might have become another Soviet republic. . . . [But we did not,) that's something.

Do we owe that "something" to the attitude of Polish society or just to Polish Communists?

Polish society, of course. . . . Through the [continued] existence of Solidarity, Poland, though ruled by the party, is somewhat more important in the international arena than [it would be] without Solidarity. . . . Nor was Solidarity distasteful to everyone in the Kremlin. It laid bare basic diseases of socialism and provided an impetus for reform. The reformers' sails caught the wind, and their opponents got scared by the spectral prospect of swinging from a lamppost. Do you think that from this angle Gorbachev (who constantly harps on reform) thinks Solidarity is all bad? He will never admit it and will keep locking up his dissidents, because he is afraid lest the Soviet Union fall apart; but the dissidents are of some use to him, within limits. When a dissident tells the Western press that the Soviet Union is technically backward, he [Gorbachev] is delighted and locks the dissident up in an insane asylum as a reward.
The interview with the secret policemen continued with a question about the Patriotic Movement for National Rebirth (Polish acronym: PRON):

"Ernest" Don't tell me that you treat PRON as an opposition group or even an independent one.

Officer I never said that! But there are people in PRON who don't always talk the way they should. ... They are not members of the opposition; but if you, for instance, wanted to get ahead and decided that joining PRON would help, you still wouldn't want to be taken for a complete jerk by your peers. You would not spout all that bull from party training courses or the media, because no one would talk to you. [On the other hand,] you would have to declare your support for socialism, else they would kick you out of PRON. Still, you would see the bloody mess around you and hear how people talk. You would have to cope somehow, like those in the PRON elite, all those intellectuals who are members and like it. You would claim that socialism is good, but that it needs certain changes. ... [and] you would make up a list of changes necessary to improve socialism. ...

PRON is full of these types. Usually they are professors, scholars, some better known journalists. We keep an eye on them. They are allowed to advance their theories at PRON meetings, where no one listens except themselves and us. But they are not permitted access to the media. Now when Jaruzelski feels the need to scare the apparatchiks because they've been getting fresh, we get the instruction to line up those who have been advancing the need for economic reform; the media are also told to use the names on our list. So, all of a sudden the whole of Poland learns from the papers and television that the reform is not doing so well and that it must be extended; then comes the word that enough is enough, and the press is told to kick out the guys [who have been writing this stuff].

This way everybody is happy: Jaruzelski has a choice of reforms at his disposal, and the guys from PRON feel they are independent. No one makes them do anything; we just give first these guys a free rein, then another group, depending on what line is needed.

For example, we allowed Professor [Jozef] Kaleta, who has drafted an economic reform all of his own, to speak out a number of times; then we shut him up, permitting him to talk only to students or, at best, party activists. His views will be put back into circulation soon enough, you'll see.

(Indeed, Kaleta, a well-known economist, made quite a stir recently, when he disclosed in a popular student weekly that there was actually unemployment in Poland.8)
Officer Among famous PRON people we have Professor [Mikolaj] Kozakiewicz [a sexologist and, among other things, chairman of a PRON commission on moral renewal], who has always, meaning since the creation of PRON, maintained that we have to find a common language with some members of the opposition. Suddenly, he is all over the place. He has been "activated": he talks on the radio and was even allowed to be interviewed by the BBC; he has gained entry into the world. And all this thanks to your modest, quiet security policemen, who recorded what he had been proclaiming and put him forward when it became necessary to proclaim these things more widely. If something else had been required, then someone else would shine as the star of PRON.

"Ernest" But do you think that men like Kaleta and Kozakiewicz realize that they are being manipulated by the secret police?

Officer These are bright guys. If they don't realize it, it's because they don't want to. But I think it enters their heads from time to time.

This may put in a different light the fact that the authorities have recently granted permission to Marcin Krol, a critic of the regime, to publish Res Publica, a periodical that ceased underground publication in 1981. The pros and cons of seeking permission to publish officially (Krol had been trying for seven years) have been discussed in the underground press, but the only known report of permission having been granted was in Przegląd Wiadomości Agencyjnych [Press Agency Survey]. The commentator called the case a precedent and promising sign of change, a crack in the monolith; although he did add that one would have to wait for the actual appearance of the publication to see how independent it would be.

The secret policeman believed that the police force was better organized than the civilian administration, had less of a need to improve its material position, and that, along with its pecking order, this made it better suited to run the country. Whoever controlled the police--in his opinion the KGB and General Jaruzelski--controlled the situation.

"Ernest" [Yet] you say that the police in Poland are no good. Why?

Officer The scale of the opposition's growth in Poland over the last few years disqualifies the secret service as a police force. After all, opposition activists are not like American gangsters, with huge funds at their disposal, the best lawyers, and protected by corrupt politicians at the very top. The opposition in Poland has no ties with the authorities; it is made up of private people who have jobs with meagre pay and who manage, using the most peculiar equipment, to produce amazing amounts of publications and to maintain an organizational structure that is, for all practical purposes, impenetrable. And one more thing: whereas the American police
must stay within the law, not all that strictly but within
certain bounds all the same, the secret police hardly pay any
attention to the law. The secret police force has files on
about 10%, perhaps fewer, of the opposition ... and is
unable to pick up those 10% and then catch the rest. These
cops should all be fired, they are hopeless. Jaruzelski has
to use what he's got, because nothing better is available.

"Ernest" Poor Jaruzelski: the nation is not to his liking, the police
are also no good, the party apparat is equally useless. ... 
Still, this incompetent police did manage to catch three
successive Solidarity leaders in Wroclaw, and more recently
they caught [Zbigniew] Bujak himself.

Officer Underground leaders are always caught. It is only a question
of time. As for Bujak, look how many years it took to catch
him and how incompetently it was done! ... Having stumbled
upon him, they could have penetrated the structure of the
Interim Coordinating Commission (TKK) and the organization
of the Warsaw region. Instead, no sooner traced, he was set upon
by a whole antiterrorist brigade, while the network remained
unharmed. That was propaganda, not a police action.

The former party official was asked how he saw the future:

Official Communism is over, the people do not support it. Maybe it
will hang on in Mongolia. The Vietnamese are none too fond
of it. Castro will be finished in Cuba; the Cubans will let
the bearded Fidel have it, the marines will land—end of
song. Socialism is too weak economically. Two more terms of
some Reagan and the Kremlin will start capitulation talks.
Western capital will enter and the people will be pleased.
The beginnings will be tough, but another Marshall Plan will
be introduced and we shall catch up. ... Capitalism has
the dough and a system that works. I would like to add one
more thing, though: the people ruling Poland are not popular,
and small wonder. But I watched the squabbles within
Solidarity's leadership when it was still legal, and I listen
to Western radios sometimes. This [Solidarity] leadership is
a wasps' nest. They've nothing to fight about yet, but
already they are fighting. Maybe the nation will yet be
sorry to see us go.

Editor I still wish that this moment would come right now.

Official And I wish you lots of luck.

Nika Krzeczunowicz
1 RAD Polish Underground Extracts/16, 28 October 1985.


3 No. 116, 18 December 1986.

4 Replika, no. 52, December 1986.


6 RAD Polish Underground Extracts/12, item 3, 13 October 1986.

7 No. 11, 22 March 1987.
5. Are We Becoming Callous?

Summary: Jerzy Surdykowski, a former party member who was at the same time a member of Solidarity, wrote an article about opinions and principles affecting social and political life in Poland that appeared in Arka (no. 16, 1986), a journal published in Cracow. Although the article was written almost a year ago, Surdykowski's text (translated in full here) has not lost its topicality.

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Do the Victims Ask for It? An example of the most general sort: our discussions about the 16 months of Solidarity. The bitterness of the vanquished and scattered, those who no longer influence the course of events yet still believe that their painful deliberations will result in some bitter yet nourishing wisdom after the fact: did Solidarity go too far, did it want too much? What empowered us to think with such light-hearted trust, with such enfraptured hope, and with such little judgment? Why ever did we insult the party, undermine principles, and shake the foundations not so much of the globe as of the frightened apparatchiks? We should have been slyly politicking, sailing close to the wind, taking not even half our due but snippets of it, sitting quietly behind the torn but still serviceable screen of well-known and safe hypocrisy. [Instead] we violated interests, alliances, and the rules of political astuteness; and we deserved what came to us in the December [1981] show-down. It is probably true that by asking for less and aiming lower we would have survived slightly longer. Quite right, the voice of reason; and this is why it is not so rare for someone to shoot from the hip and say that all this was the sacred right of a free people even here, even in this miserable part of Europe, that it was not even enough and that the next time we should have to be even tougher, even more emphatic, even more impudent.

An individual example: a "speculator" caught red-handed. He sold something to someone, or produced something useful that proved to be needed and found takers, so that he made a large profit. How did he dare? It is not just a question of his not having registered with the appropriate office, failing to fulfill the formalities, and cheating the state of taxes. His greatest sin, unforgivable in the eyes of society, was the brave protest made by an individual against a common, though increasingly miserable fate. Enterprise, resourcefulness, independence: this is how he insulted us! More than through his unjustified gains, as calculated by the appropriate office. Or another example: a completely unknown young man or woman, a "foot soldier" of the underground, gets arrested for political activities and becomes a brief line in a list of prisoners of conscience. Why did they bother? Why the hell did they
distribute illegal publications, turn the handle of an illegal printing press? They could have avoided irritating the authorities; [they could have] sat quietly like all of us, grumbled quietly about the system over a glass of vodka, or left to sweep the streets in Hamburg.

I recently talked with a friend of Wladyslaw Frasyniuk, probably the most unfortunate of the political prisoners in People's Poland. After a lengthy description of the mistreatment to which Wladek is being subjected in prison, the question was finally put, clearly though not loudly: Why does he ask for it? Must he really stand up [to the guards], demand the rights due to him, even though this is unusual in a Polish jail? He could cave in a bit, come to terms with the guards and they would come to terms with him. It is possible to live even in a prison cell, to settle down within the real world, under real socialism. He could be like everyone else; after all, not every political prisoner is treated like that. So it is his own fault!

Or how about the murdered Father [Jerzy] Popieluszko? We all remember the unprecedented example of the defense [of his murderers], which was nothing but accusations that the victim had provoked his torturers by his outrageous sermons, his illegal symbols, his suspicious friendships, his improper travel, his offensive language, his subversive ideology. Yet there are so many responsible, reasonable priests who would not dream of acting so foolishly and thus can sleep peacefully, while guiding the moral health and the religious practices of their flocks. Yes, Father Jerzy was punished justly—though, indeed, too cruelly—for daring to make use of his civil right to free speech, for daring to be true to his priestly duty of condemning evil and to his intellectual duty of judging the world as he saw it.

And even if it was unjust, why did he stick his neck out? After all, he knew how things were.

And that unfortunate Grzegorz Przemyk, it was his own fault that he took his shoes off and sang loudly [in the street]. And the same goes for Marek Antonowicz. Why did he stand up to the militia? Everyone knows that one must be nice and gentle with cops.

Even the likes of [Stefan] Bratkowski: he is not in jail and his health is as good as it can be under the circumstances. Are his articles in the underground press not enough? Must he write letters to Gorbachev? Why irritate the bear? It will be his own fault if something happens to him.

And so on and so forth . . .

Even in ordinary cases of rape or assault, lawyers and reporters are increasingly insistent in asking whether the
victim did everything in his or her power to avoid the attacker's crushing aggression. Were they skillful enough in avoiding the blows? [Were they] careful enough? Could a particularly delicate approach not have saved them from the ultimate clash?

In this way, from the drama of grand politics to commonplace, urban disasters, there emerges a huge, threatening, and—worse still—inevitable as fate image of the aggressor who will strike us sooner or later, because such is his nature. All that remains for the potential victim is deception and mimicry, but above all the quiet and humble wisdom gained from the knowledge of the painful reality.

A Pole can take it.

This is how evil ceases to be evil and a base deed escapes condemnation, because we only talk pragmatically about effects, for which the victim is also responsible, after all. The aggressor knows it well, it was his intention all along that his aggression and his coercion should cease to be considered under the rubric of of ethics and become at worst blows of fate and preferably the immanent characteristics of the perhaps poorly organized but unfortunately inevitably real world. Who can make claims against a destructive hurricane? Can anyone sensible blame the wolf for biting and devouring his victims? It is much better to look for a safe haven.

In such a way a powerful, even if harmful, force seems not only to be milder and more bearable but also unavoidable. It does not incur moral, legal, or any other sanctions, but through the pressure of circumstances that transcend by far traditional values it may even permit an understanding wink toward the victims, smiling at them with the self-satisfied mug of one of its arrogant spokesmen.

Should one protest, appeal to reason? Should one appeal to feelings and values? It is not up to me and I am not good at it. I only note the manner of thinking that is spreading in Poland today; I observe the progress of its silent osmosis. (And trying to be reasonable myself, I am probably giving in to it as well.)

Translated by Nika Krzeczunowicz

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1 A Solidarity leader from Wroclaw, since released.
2 A high-school student who died of internal injuries in May 1984 after being picked up by the police. At a subsequent trial it was concluded that he had been fatally beaten by doctors and ambulance personnel while being taken to the hospital.

3 The college student Marcin (not Marek, as in text) Antonowicz died of a broken skull in November 1985 after allegedly leaping from a police van.

4 A well-known political journalist and the last Chairman of the Polish Journalists' Union, which has been banned since martial law, who writes for the Catholic and underground press and issues his own "Sound Journal" on tape.

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