

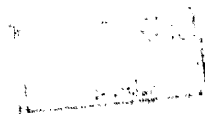
**DILEMMAS OF THE LITERARY LEFT IN POLAND**

**1945-89:**

**Polish writers and post-war politics**

A thesis submitted to  
the University of Manchester  
for the degree of PhD  
in the  
Faculty of Economic and Social Studies  
1994

By  
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis considers writers and politics in the People's Republic of Poland. In particular it looks at the left literary community of revisionist, post-revisionist, and ex-party writers, and also at writers who belonged to what Adam Michnik termed the 'New Evolutionism' which grew out of the failure of revisionism, and which was closely linked with the foundation of KOR, the birth and growth of Solidarność and with the struggle against the martial law authorities. While it covers the whole post-war period, this study concentrates on the years 1949-80. It presents a portrait of selected members of the post-war generation of Polish writers. It uses their biographies, professional careers and their literary works to illustrate aspects of the changing political and cultural complex, and details how the 'communist' take-over affected the practical and professional aspects of the writers' lives. It shows how literature charted the internal, moral and spiritual contours in post-war Polish political and social life. The thesis is structured in a series of parallel chapters whereby discussion of a literary work is prefaced by a lengthy discussion of the literary/political context. In the late 1940s many saw cooperation with 'communism' as a way forward: Andrzejewski's novel *Ashes and Diamonds* (1948) explores the complex moment of transition, not to enthusiasm for 'communism', but to a weary, conservative tolerance. Lem's novel *Solaris* (1961) may be read as a warning about what happens to a society that lacks self-awareness, a warning that the collective cognitive faculties were being damaged by censorship. Kapuściński's Aesopian story *The Emperor* (1978) shows that within Gierek's drive to industrialise, frustration manifested itself as Third World mentality and ambition within a supposedly modern European nation. Konwicki's *A Minor Apocalypse* (1979), which anticipated the great shipyard strikes of 1980 by only a few weeks, shows that the impact of the censor, and the lies and manipulations of political life, had severely damaged cognitive skills to the point where 'Polish unreality' was a normal feeling: he showed a Warsaw where life was so distorted that it was no longer possible to distinguish the 'truth' of even the simplest daily situation. The thesis includes original interview material from: R.Kapusiński, J.Żuławski, A.Międzyrzecki, C.Miłosz and P.Rypson. There are four appendices: abbreviations used in the text, selected biographical material; censorship regulations on literature; tables illustrating aspects of publishing and material from a survey of the Polish Writers' Union.

## DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Signed:

Carl Tighe

16 February 1994

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The chapters on Lem, Kapuściński, Andrzejewski and Konwicki grew from teaching materials presented for Manchester University Extra-Mural Studies Department 1987-91. The chapter on Stanisław Lem's novel *Solaris* appeared as 'Kozmik Kommie Konflikts: Stanisław Lem's *Solaris* - an Eastern Bloc parable' in: P.Davies ed., *Science Fiction, Social Conflict & War*, Manchester University Press, 1990. Parts of Chapter Eight have been presented as the annual lecture to the Welsh Union of Writers and Llafur (Society of Welsh Labour Historians) at University College Aberystwyth, 21 September 1990. A short text has appeared under the title 'Nowa-mowa - Newspeak' in the *The Works*, edited by Nigel Jenkins, Welsh Union of Writers, December 1991, and 'Partyspeak in Poland' in *Our History Journal*, November 1991. An extended version has appeared as 'Living in Unreality: Politics and Language in the People's Republic of Poland', in *The Journal of European Studies*, June 1992. Chapter Ten has been accepted for publication in *The Journal of European Studies*. The interview with Kapuściński has appeared in: Nigel Jenkins (ed.), *The Works*, Welsh Union of Writers, December 1991. I have cited several pieces of my own earlier writing, journalism and research in footnotes and in the bibliography and I have made use of interviews conducted with Jerzy Jarzębski, Czesław Miłosz, Ryszard Kapuściński, Juliusz Żuławski, Artur Międzyrzecki and Piotr Rypson.

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Dedicated to the memory of

Norman Leach

who died in June 1991.

A writer,

an honorary central European,

a good friend much missed.

## PREFACE

What does the political scientist know?  
The political scientist knows the latest trends  
The current state of affairs  
The history of doctrines

What does the political scientist not know?  
The political scientist does not know about desperation  
He doesn't know the game that consists  
Of renouncing the game

It doesn't occur to him  
That no-one knows when the changes may appear  
Like an ice-floe's sudden cracks

And that natural resources  
Include knowledge of venerated laws  
Ability to wonder  
And a sense of humour

Artur Międzyrzecki, 'What does the Political Scientist Know?'

- 1 aims and definition of subject
- 2 choice of texts
- 3 political context: communism and socialism
- 4 review of previous literature
- 5 research methods and source materials
- 6 plan of study

## 1 AIMS AND DEFINITION OF SUBJECT

This study sets out to understand the cultural and political phenomenon of the post-war Polish writer by demonstrating the historical importance of writers in Polish society and the role they played in recent national history. It concentrates on the developing role many writers took during the 'socialist' period as loyal but dissenting oppositionists, often Marxist, their underground publishing endeavours through the 1970's, their work in the build-up to the events of 1980-81 and their part in the collapse of 'socialism' of 1989. It sets their professional and personal experience of 'socialism' in the context of political developments by outlining the practical and professional changes wrought by the post-war 'socialist' take-over. It combines general chapters on political events within the broad periods of post-war Polish history, roughly indicated by changes in the leadership, with detailed chapters on the life and work of particular writers who exemplified the dilemmas of these periods.

This study concentrates on the biographies, literary works and professional careers of representatives of the independent, mainly ex-Party, creative literary Polish *inteligencja* (intelligentsia)\*, sometimes called the revisionists or, more recently the New Evolutionists. It analyses their efforts to redefine their traditional role within a rapidly changing post-war society, linking them with their increasingly ambivalent readership in the *biurokracja* (bureaucracy), *nomenklatura* (Party nominated positions

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\* Definition of the post-war Polish *inteligencja* poses a problem. In post-war Polish statistics employees are usually divided into two broad categories: 'non-manual' and 'manual', that is 'working class' and the 'intelligentsia stratum' - often referred to as 'white collar workers'. Sometimes when presenting sociological research the intelligentsia stratum is divided into 'intelligentsia' (with academic degrees) and 'white collar' (office clerks and similar workers). Thus the post-war Polish *inteligencja*, following Soviet guidance, is a very large and varied entity compared to the pre-war *inteligencja*. It includes all those with a higher and further education, and also those who have a secondary school diploma: all professionals, white collar workers, almost all those employed in non-manual independent and semi-independent occupations such as dentists, doctors, surgeons, lawyers, judges, teachers, writers and artists, architects, administrators, technicians, heads of state economic enterprises, civil servants, the religious hierarchy, engineers, journalists, technicians, clerical workers and some shop assistants. By 1973 the post-war *inteligencja* (including white collar workers and those with secondary education) comprised over 35 per cent of the population. Topolski has estimated that of that number, 35 percent came from worker backgrounds, 20 per cent from peasant backgrounds, 40 per cent from the old *inteligencja*, and 5 per cent from the old bourgeoisie and *szlachta* (nobility). J.Topolski, *An Outline History of Poland*, Interpress, Warsaw, 1986, pp.274-75. See: L.Kolakowski, 'The Intelligentsia', in: A.Brumberg (ed.), *Poland: The Genesis of a Revolution*, Vintage, New York, 1983, p.54; also table five in appendix three and the bibliography section on the *inteligencja*.

in industry, publishing, education) and Party. To study the writers ranged against the Party is to examine the power and authority of government. Although Miłosz's description of writers facing the Hegelian sting (unavoidable dialectic plus the proximity of the Red Army) has been generally accepted, in fact the situation is hardly so sharply defined in Poland. There is a very strong streak of pragmatism among the Polish *inteligencja*, which argued that post-war Poland 'was as good as they were going to get'. This is an attitude that has its roots in the Positivist tradition. There is also a consistent view that says Poland had somehow to make the leap from the eighteenth to the twentieth century and could not do so without central planning and a certain degree of socialist thinking. Poland's problem was that because of the legacy of the Partitions, large scale industrial capitalism and class politics had not developed by 1945. In many ways Poland was still pre-capitalist, and socialism in all its aspects was seen as foreign and anti-Polish, an import from the mistrusted Soviet Union and the expansionist Russia of old. This study explores the ambiguous position of writers, the agents and the victims of change, in this complex transition to modernity.

The present study deals with a clearly defined period 1945-89 and with a fairly clearly defined professional group. It views that profession's reactions to 'socialism' over the whole period in question, charts changes in opinion and developments in literary technique, and links the growth of the underground and opposition movement to changes within Polish social structure. This study 'fills a gap' in that it provides discussion of highly political literary texts, presents original interview material with leading literary figures, and provides statistics which have not been given attention in English before. The study is unique in that it straddles several disciplines (politics, literary history, linguistics, sociology) and draws on a very wide range of materials to create a portrait of two, perhaps even three, generations of writers. It treats important literary personalities as political and social figures and assesses their role in firstly supporting and then opposing 'socialism'. It also indicates the ambiguities of their current position in the new post-'socialism' Poland, outlining their inability to limit, lead or direct the political power of the Polish working class after the collapse of 'socialism' in 1989.

As yet political science has not absorbed the study of creative literature into the

mainstream of its concerns or its methods of analysis, and while I am concerned with the political implications of the authors' work and their careers, I am not using a political science approach to this material since such an approach cannot yet be said to exist. Nor am I conducting an exercise in literary criticism. This study is a cultural history seeking to uncover and recover basic materials and set out an area of study: it is a broad cultural history blending literary, social and political themes. It examines through literary, historical and biographical materials, the politics of making literature and the politicality of the profession of writer. It seeks to explore a complex political-cultural nexus in a country where politics and literature have for many years been inextricably intertwined. It does this by setting specific literary works in the context of the author's professional career and publishing history, and by exploring the very specific and inter-connected literary and political context. This study aims to provide a context in which to view the work and development of certain writers. It is a context with which they interacted. It is not a history of state policies towards writers, nor is it a history of all Polish writers in the period.

This study deals with Polish literary culture in the 'socialist years' 1945-89, but it concentrates particularly on the years 1948-80. These were the years when writers occupied positions of great moral authority in Poland: these years include the brief honeymoon between writers and Party, the writers' increasing disenchantment with the authoritarianism and boorishness of the Party, and then their open opposition to the one-party state. These were the years when many writers, still believing that it was possible to reform the Party, but impossible to shake off the power of Moscow, became successively 'revisionists', dissidents, advisers to *Solidarność*, and finally politicians. Although I have made an effort to indicate other currents within the Polish literary-political complex, I have made little attempt to follow these through comprehensively in my narrative. There are many other writers whose works, activities and political thought are only mentioned here: Party hacks, 'Catholic'-Pax collaborationists, Catholic neo-positivists, die-hard Catholic anti-communists, exiles, émigrés. Though they figure in the narrative they are not my subject.

My subject is what I have called the Literary Left. Elsewhere in this study I have made the point that it is very difficult to define what is left or right in post-war Poland.

This label, however inadequate, serves to identify a broad range of writers who are ex-Party, non-communist and non-Catholic, but who are broadly in sympathy with the underlying humanitarian aims of liberal marxism. At various points in the post-war period these writers might equally have been referred to as fellow-travellers, independent Marxists, revisionists, dissident Marxists, the generation of '68, or just simply ex-Party. This group of leftist writers, disproportionately active and influential to their actual numbers, may also be seen as a part of a larger movement called New Evolutionism. After the final defeat of the revisionists with the anti-Semitic purge of 1968, there was no satisfactory name for scattered oppositionists until 1976, when Adam Michnik dubbed the intellectuals who were attempting to rebuild civil society the 'New Evolutionists'. Michnik, anxious to unite dissidents, claimed that revisionism (mainly ex-Party or non-Party socialists) and neo-positivism (mainly the Catholics associated with the *Znak* group, or those who published in *Znak* and *Tygodnik Powszechny*) were both aspects of Evolutionism and that their failure left the opposition with the task of building a new opposition movement to link up with the Polish working class, outside the Party and outside the Church. Although I have called these writers Leftist, I doubt this would have made them all happy. There is some evidence, for example, to suggest that Andrzejewski would not necessarily have been happy about being included in a group with social-activists like Michnik, Blumsztajn, Lityński and Kuroń. The individual relationships of all these writers to the Party varied enormously over time, and New Evolutionism was a very broad but essentially a very fragmented series of social, political and artistic movements (the Party had made it so) seeking resolution and unity only in opposition to the Party and in a vision of a democratic Poland. In many ways these creative humanist-socialist-activists were some of the best minds of their generation(s), and the fact that the Party could not make use of their talent, could not sustain their loyalty, could not absorb or respond to their record of life in the People's Republic of Poland is not only a record of the total lack of originality and lack of dynamism within a party crippled and made tame by Stalin and the Stalinists, but also one of several reasons why the words 'socialism' and 'communism', as applied to post-war Poland must appear here within inverted commas. (See section 3 of this Preface for further discussion of this point.) These

people give the lie to Stalinist and Catholic church claims that what existed in the east bloc was socialism.<sup>1</sup>

I have chosen to look in detail at four prose writers, all of them examples of literary left Evolutionism. Their experience is diverse but over the period of the 'socialist' years their outlooks converge. Taken together the four writers I have chosen make a recognisable group and their works, while clearly part of a much bigger narrative, form within themselves a recognisable sequence. Three of the four were members of ZLP (Związek Literatów Polski, Polish Writers' Union); three of the four had been members of the Party; two of the four were published underground; two of the four have enormous international reputations; three of the four live (or lived) in Warsaw, the fourth lives in Kraków; one made his début in the late 1930s, one in the 1940s, one in the 1950s, and one in the 1960s: one began publishing in the pre-war right wing magazines, another began with the post-war 'socialist' literary magazines, another with the post-war Catholic journals, and the last began with the Pax journal *Słowo Powszechne* and then moved to the influential and respected Party journal *Polityka*. Although these writers do not easily form a political group or a literary movement, their common themes, the similarity of their careers, their shared war-time and/or post-war experience, their orientation towards the politics and style of the pre-war PPS (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, Polish Socialist Party), and their general (though neither uniform nor unanimous) sympathy for the idea of 'socialism with a human face' all made it possible to treat them as components of a larger narrative which included the biographies of writers like Czesław Miłosz, Kazimierz Brandys, Leszek Kołakowski, Stefan Żółkiewski, Stanisław Stomma, Andrzej Kijowski, Stefan Kisielewski, Tadeusz Borowski, Marek Hłasko, Zbigniew Herbert and many others mentioned in this study. In many ways these writers, though they were bitterly disappointed and frustrated by Moscow and by the Party, were nevertheless in direct line of spiritual descent from the PPS. This showed in their sympathy with the ideals, ambitions and protests of 1968, with the un-realised utopian socialism of that year's demonstrations. Even in 1993 they did not necessarily find the idea of 'socialism with a human face' ludicrous. Although Polish 'socialism' failed them and revisionism did likewise, although there was no recognisable literary or political movement to contain

them and foster them, they nevertheless held out for their ideals. The inability of the Party to win and retain the sympathy and loyalty of intellectuals who were generally sympathetic to the cause of socialism, and who as independent intellectuals, who knew they stood to lose financially and socially in any capitalist 'open market', is a measure of the Party's failure.

I have concentrated on prose writers since they make up the bulk of the Polish writing community and the bulk of Polish literary publishing: in 1964 writers estimated prose at 54 per cent of total output, poetry 32 per cent, criticism 23 per cent and drama 18 per cent. The largest groups of writers in ZLP were: prose writers 34.1 per cent of membership. Prose writers and the *beletrystka* (writers of fiction) outnumbered all other categories of writers in the People's Republic.<sup>2</sup> I have also concentrated on prose writers for practical reasons. Polish poets, particularly Herbert, Miłosz, Barańczak and Zagajewski, and the playwrights Mroźek and Różewicz have all had a profound influence on Polish literary-political life. However, on the one hand poetry was too internal, too private for my purposes. Further, poetry itself was rarely a target for the censor or an adequate enemy of totalitarianism since bureaucrats often despised poets too much to take their work seriously, and because the meaning of poetry can hardly ever be simply extracted for political purposes. On the other hand, theatre was too public and its protest or comment often lay in a particular actor's look or gesture. It is difficult to analyse play texts satisfactorily, since the text, radical and suggestive though it might well be, is less than half the theatrical event, and unless the radical content is emphasised or given utterance, unless it is backed up by those intangible 'production values', may well pass un-noticed. On the third hand, however, the novel is linked historically with the growth of the cities, the development of a bourgeoisie, the development of journalistic observation and the measure of internal moral and psychological growth as a response to external pressures. Prose, and the novel in particular, are primarily concerned with social and political context, explored through the lives, experiences and opinions of character. The novel (and political observation like that of Kapuściński) is probably the most accessible of the available literary forms and is also the form that responds most fully and thoughtfully to social, moral and political change through its use of moral dilemma, description and character analysis -



that is through its analysis of characters and their ongoing engagement with society and the life of the nation. Even though Polish poetry has had a great deal of attention paid to it in English, I had no wish to get bogged down in poetics or in trying to make poetic language (in translation) available for political science. In short, prose was far more tractable and suitable for my purposes.

Literature is a complex and rich human creative act: a book aids awareness, particularly in the area of the individual's relationship to society, and as such is of profound interest not only to free and independent readers, but also to any government attempting to monitor and change the way of life and the thought patterns of its citizens. The existence of any work of literature has inherent moral, social, political and epistemological implications - all complex and fused. To any regime, but particularly an authoritarian one, literature is an important gauge of popularity and civil ambition, and as such is either a record of success or a target for correction and suppression. As Lionel Trilling has written:

If we ever want to remind ourselves of the nature and power of art, we have only to think of how accurate reactionary governments are in their awareness of that power. It is not merely the content of art that they fear, not merely explicit doctrine, but whatever of energy and autonomy is implied by the aesthetic qualities a work may have. Intensity, irony, and ambiguousness, for example, constitute a clear threat to the impassivity of the state. They constitute a *secret*.<sup>3</sup>

The writers included here came to understand their highly ambiguous relationship to their government and society not through the literature of politics (boy meets tractor, odes to the six year plan, hymns to Stalin, songs in praise of our state security bureau) but through the politics of literature. Their struggle was to observe and write as they saw fit, to be judged on their merit, on artistic and social standards, on the accuracy of their perceptions, rather than according to Party needs. For many it was a matter of refusing consent. As Zbigniew Herbert put it:

It didn't require great character at all  
our refusal disagreement and resistance  
we had a shred of necessary courage

but fundamentally it was a matter of taste

Yes taste<sup>4</sup>

Undoubtedly many writers saw the new bureaucrats as men without taste. Cooperation with them was profitable but distasteful. Yet the historical and cultural forces that had formed Polish taste meant that no matter how much they tried to deny or avoid it, the bureaucrats were also conditioned by the same spectrum of cultural and national historical forces. The Party was reluctant to punish Polish writers too heavily for transgressions (after all, they were Poles) and were unlikely to pursue any policy as ruthlessly as the Soviets.

## 2 CHOICE OF TEXTS

This study covers a wide range of literary-left opposition to 'socialism'. At various points that opposition may be identified as the hesitant and backward looking alliance of a writer like Andrzejewski, or it may be the loyal revisionist socialism of writers like Konwicki, Brandys and Kołakowski. After 1976 the opposition, which included the surviving revisionists and neo-positivists, writers, independent trades unionists, students and independent Catholic intellectuals, were increasingly independent of state structures and sources of finance. The reforming, humane, subtle, creative aspects of secular-left thought, and the liberal and moral principles of leading Catholic intellectuals, informed KOR (Komitet Obrony Robotników, Committee for the Defence of Workers) and TKN (Towarzystwo Kursów Nauk, Society for Academic Courses, the 'Flying University'), and most of the dissident and underground journals. The New Evolutionists of the 1970s and 1980s did not address themselves to the authorities but, through an increasingly independent underground publishing industry and a growing independent trades union movement, addressed a public that no longer looked to the state for its moral, spiritual, political, cultural or artistic life.

New Evolutionism's desire for evolution towards democracy was based on faith in the working class and its steady and un-yielding stand against the government, combined with the intelligentsia's formulation of alternative programmes and the

defence of moral principles and human rights, the creative intelligentsia's increasingly independent elucidation, in poems, essays and novels, of the changes affecting Polish society and public life, and its revelation of the mechanisms by which the Party attempted to influence the Polish language. Michnik linked the New Evolutionism with the tradition of the 'insubordinate' intelligentsia of the early 1900s, and with writers like Stanisław Brzozowski, Stanisław Wyspiański, Stefan Żeromski and Zofia Nałkowska. He recognised that many people who might be seen to be part of this movement might not agree to the name New Evolutionism, and that individuals might choose to see themselves as more Catholic, more Polish nationalist, more traditionalist, more conservative, more secular-left than such a catch-all title might allow, but for Michnik this was not important. The important elements were the broad alliance of intellectuals and workers in their struggle against the Party. He did not over-estimate the importance of the intellectuals' actions, nor did he see the workers as always making the right decisions or alliances. But together these voices, weak and sporadic, were nevertheless authentic and involved in a process in which all would learn. Together the oppositionists formed an independent public opinion with nonconformist oppositionist attitudes which helped undermine the Party. This course was followed by people from various traditions and social strata: former revisionists, former neo-positivists, conservative Catholics, parish priests - in short all those who were politically aware before 1968 and all those who became politically aware after the events of 1968. Neither the revisionists nor the neo-positivists managed to create a broadly based democratic political platform, but it was precisely to overcome this error that the Catholic and leftist New Evolutionists (whether by conscious strategy or by accidental convergence) founded ROPCiO (Ruch Obrony Praw Człowieka i Obywatela, Movement Defending Human and Civil Rights), KOR and TKN, and, in order to make an even closer connection with the Polish industrial working class, that the intellectuals of these organisations, many of whom were writers, ex-revisionists and ex-Party members, flocked to support *Solidarność* in 1980-81.

In an area as subjective as literature any choice of materials is inevitably affected by personal experience, sympathy, recognition and preference, and is further complicated by problems in defining what is 'the left' in post-war Poland. I have not

attempted to write the whole history of the post-war period, but have sought instead to look at particular works, biographies and personalities, and to visit certain points in that history in order to show that over time the biographies of individuals transcend the difficulties of terminology and definition. Inevitably, matters of personal taste, censorship, the availability of texts and the imperfections of my understanding intervene between this study and the 'reality' of Polish literary culture as seen and experienced by a Pole. While I am confident that I have done no disservice to Polish literature or those who helped me with my research I must emphasise that I have not attempted to write as a Pole might. Indeed it seems to me that at this moment, when Europe is in a state of flux, and nationalism is resuming its pre-war career at an alarming rate, it is particularly important for sympathetic 'outsiders' to take their own view of matters, and break the national moulds established over so many years. In the case of Polish literature's ghetto-mentality, the sudden emergence to democratic freedoms, capitalism and the free market, and political responsibilities such as Poles have never before experienced, this is particularly important. There can be no pretence that this study is a portrait Polish readers would totally agree with, or that they would find it a pleasant portrait.

The subject matter of this study is writers. I have quoted extensively from a wide variety of written sources, but particularly from the works of creative writers. A conventional method of analysis would be to paraphrase, and thus to interpret, these writers. However, paraphrase would certainly do the writers concerned a grave injustice. They are professionals: observation, reflection and words are their business. They have taken pains to express themselves as clearly and pithily as possible. Their style, in a culture that put particular emphasis on the political role of literature and where the details of style were so important in judging the political stance of the writer, is part of their message. There is much to be gained by extensive quotation not only in terms of grasping the writers' world, but in getting the flavour of their daily life and political thought. Their words, their selection of words, are an essential part of their reaction to events, and I believe that it is possible, important and necessary to convey the range and texture of their vivid, accurate and succinct thought (and also its limitations) via extensive and varied quotation.

In each case the texts chosen for detailed study had to conform to certain specifications: they had to be, in my opinion, interesting and well written in their own right such as to warrant attention as literature. They also had to be sufficiently revealing of the period in which they were written to make them good material for political and historical analysis. The books had to display literary techniques I could identify and relate to the political and social environment. They also had to be by writers whose career path had some merit in showing how writers affected, and were affected by, their cultural/political environment. It was important that the studies chosen should reflect on dilemmas which would not be experienced by exiles and émigré writers. In choosing to write about the literary left and the New Evolutionists I also made a conscious decision to concentrate on dilemmas which would not necessarily have been apparent to writers who were opposed to 'socialism' right from the very first, or those Catholic writers who, in writing for the independent Catholic journals *Znak* and *Tygodnik Powszechny*, accepted (however grudgingly) censorship and the *de facto* power of the Party while maintaining a distinctive loyalty to the Church and its teachings. I was particularly concerned to follow the lives, works dilemmas and careers of writers who had gone along with the 'socialists', only to change their minds at a later date. In this the changing and developing individual biographies reflected the changes in the literature, the political strategies and the growth of the opposition. As far as possible I was also concerned to present as wide a range of prose material and novelistic styles as possible and the choice of case study reflects this concern.

In each of the case histories the reader is urged to consult appendix four, where an outline of the author's publishing history in terms of the number of editions in print per year is available as part of a wider portrait of the Polish publishing industry's response to political and economic pressures. In addition to the case studies a great number of other texts are used in this study: of particular note are those by Zbigniew Herbert, Adam Michnik, Adam Zagajewski, Leszek Kołakowski, Czesław Miłosz, Stefan Kisielewski, Kazimierz Brandys and Stanisław Barańczak. The choice of supporting texts has been determined by many years of reading Polish literature for pleasure and for information. Some biographical details for these writers are contained in appendix

two and the reader is urged to consult these as the narrative and analysis develop.

Andrzejewski's *Ashes and Diamonds* was chosen because, as a historical novel with some claim to social and political accuracy, it is one of the most important post-war literary texts and details the dilemmas of Polish society in the early years of 'socialist' rule. I do not believe that any study of the period could proceed adequately without taking note of this book. Further, Andrzejewski's subsequent career was of vital importance to the growth of the underground publishing industry, in the foundation of KOR and the connection of intellectual and worker resistance to 'socialism' from the mid-1970s. A possible alternative for discussion was Brandys' novel *Sons and Comrades* (1957, 1960), but on consideration this novel, though it was distinguished, had not anything like the impact, vividness, centrality or enduring influence of *Ashes and Diamonds*. This was a notion confirmed by the enduring success of Andrzej Wajda's film of the book.

The choice of *Solaris* by Stanisław Lem may at first seem a little capricious. I wanted to include as wide a range of prose as possible and Lem is quite simply the world's (and science fiction's) most successful writer. *Solaris* is his most famous work, and while it is not overtly political, the very lack of open and clearly identifiable political content, Lem's consistent refusal to be drawn into open discussion on the subject, his appearance of a-politicality, made it intriguing. His interest in science fiction was the slightly more accessible part aspect of a much wider movement within Polish society at this time, a retreat into obscurantism, into literary theory and into highly abstract intellectualism. The subject matter of the novel, which was something more than just a trash science fiction theme, clearly had implications for the would-be social and political engineers of the Party, particularly as it was written at a time of increasing censorship. Lem's silence drew attention to the difficulties he might have experienced had the censor been alerted to what lurked in this 'pulp medium', and its apparent distance from the matter of 'the real world' made it an interesting task to draw links and parallels. The fact that the book had been made into a very successful and popular film by the highly serious and philosophical Soviet director Andrei Tarkovski confirmed that speculative material was there to be found in the novel.

Ryszard Kapuściński was chosen because he represented yet another kind of

writing and his quasi-journalist fables represented another strategy for dealing with the political situation. It was, however, difficult to choose between Kapuściński's various books on the 'Third World'. *The Emperor*, with its very exact comments on the impact of money, the nature of courtly rituals, the mentality of politicians, and its demonstration of how Ethiopian society worked, connected with the points I wanted to make about Poland in the 1970s and the kind of place Gierek's policies were creating. While the author faced the same censorship as Lem, he chose a different way to get around the blocks imposed by the state: Kapuściński was a journalist, a foreign correspondent, ostensibly writing about distant locations, but with a sharp journalistic eye on Poland. Not only did this book illustrate the difficulties of talking openly about certain problems, it also showed the Aesopian literary techniques available to subvert and even mock censorship, and still managed to present a very clear picture of the kind of place Poland was becoming.

With Konwicki's *A Minor Apocalypse* we return to novelistic writing, but it is a novel of a very distinctive, rambling, satirical, discursive and idiosyncratic kind. This novel appeared just a few months before the great shipyard strikes of 1980 and it is simply the best, most comprehensive and most sensitive record of the mood of desperation and cynicism of the final months of Gierek's period in office. Almost as soon as it was published it was a national and international success. The novel brought the underground literary and political culture of the People's Republic of Poland to a conclusion. The novel showed that things could not go on as they were, that social conflict was not a matter of ideology, that it was becoming impossible to distinguish secret policemen from dissidents, that the corruption and inefficiency sanctioned by the Party were becoming a way of life and that neither the Party nor the underground opposition were powerful or influential enough to control the increasingly evident frustration and lurking violence of daily life. The book anticipated the moral and political chaos of the next decade in a way that was sensitive to politics and human feeling, and which was nevertheless painfully vivid. The book summed up so many trends in Polish political, cultural and personal life that it would have been very difficult to leave it out or use it merely as a passing reference. Konwicki's openness and honesty about the twists and turns in his career, first as a member of the AK

(London backed Home Army), as an early *socrealist* (socialist realist), one of the first to abandon state publishing, and then one of the first to consider abandoning underground publishing, also had much to recommend it in illustrating the dilemmas faced by the professional writer.

To what extent are these writers a group? They probably do not see themselves as such. Andrzejewski is dead. Konwicki admires Lem, but they have only met two or three times. Lem keeps a distance from almost all other writers. Kapuściński is a journalist and, when he is in Poland, moves in very different social circles from most other writers. These writers are all highly individual characters, whose writing is distinctively their own. They nevertheless fall within the broad category of New Evolutionists. They share a common outlook, a converging and finally common attitude to the Party and a similar experience of the Party and the bureaucracy. They also share a common attitude to, and relationship with, the notion of socialism, though, understandably, some are more happy than others to make this specific. Their works display common features of engagement with the post-war Polish political set-up, almost always from an enlightened, un-dogmatic, democratic, left-literary point of view.

Each of the works chosen for detailed treatment in the case studies had to both sum up the failures and the ambiguities of the period which it represented, but it also had to have another rather elusive quality in, at the same time, it had to indicate some of the political and literary inheritance the following period would reveal: it had to sum up the past and in some way anticipate future developments. All four case studies have a complex relationship to their time. Each biography and each text encapsulate the past and prepare for the future, usually by warning of worse to come. The writers and their texts are rarely wrong. Taken together the case studies, with their detailed biographies, literary analysis and developing literary-political contexts, offer a *meta-narrative* within the main framework, showing a steady movement towards, and exploration of, the major theme of writing under Polish 'socialism', that which Brandys dubbed 'Polish unreality', recognised in its various forms by almost all the writers included here.



### 3 POLITICAL CONTEXT: COMMUNISM AND SOCIALISM

The classic Soviet distinction between socialism and communism (which was not made by Marx) was that socialism was a transitional phase in the development of society, between capitalism and communism. Communism, sometimes referred to as 'full communism', was the ideal classless, stateless and moneyless society of the future. 'Communist' parties were so called because they aspired towards communism. In the 1936 Soviet constitution, Stalin claimed that the USSR was already basically 'socialist', in that exploitation had been removed with the socialisation of the means of production and the adoption of a planned economy: this seems to be the functional definition of socialism. Although the intention of the Party was to shift Poland substantially in the direction of 'socialist' with the 1975-76 constitutional changes, it is clear that the kind of changes that the USSR looked for in Polish society had never in fact been implemented. Poland had retained private agriculture, had retained limited private enterprise and even maintained small scale private housing; also the Catholic church remained as an independent entity, so the term 'socialism' was even more vague when applied to Poland and to Polish conditions.

In the west Poland was generally described as 'communist', partly to differentiate it from the social-democratic tradition of socialism, which many in the western left did not wish to see conflated with what they regarded as the profoundly immoral and reactionary system of the USSR. Polish practice before 1989 was to describe Poland as socialist, with or without inverted commas, depending on the beliefs and loyalties of the speaker. However, many Polish speakers would use the terms socialism and communism interchangeably, without inverted commas, without a sense of irony and with very little sense of international perspective on the words. In practice it seems that communism and socialism were used interchangeably, by Poles and by westerners, to describe an almost unclassifiably complex hybrid political and social system.

It could hardly be argued that the post-war Polish 'socialist' state was a transitional phase between capitalism and full blown communism, or that communism was a point at which the membership of the PZPR (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, Polish United Workers Party) were aiming. Unlike the 'actually existing

socialism' of East Germany, in Poland there was very little system at all - a point made repeatedly in different ways by Polish writers: what system there was hardly worked, and those parts that worked were hardly socialist. 'Socialist' Poland abandoned its agricultural collectivisation programme and retained private agriculture, failed to impose socialist realism as the one acceptable art form, retained private home ownership and limited private enterprise, and after 1970 encouraged foreign investment. Poland had PEWEX (Przedsiębiorstwo Eksportu Wewnętrznego, Enterprise for Internal Export), a dollars only chain-store set up specifically to milk (and therefore legitimise) the lucrative black market in hard currencies, and, almost in passing, acknowledge the failings of the centralised planning system. Poland also had censorship, which, although it was a feature of the Soviet system, was not something of which Marx approved. Whatever we call it, the system that existed in Poland in the years 1945-89 not only did not work, it rendered itself ineffective, and in every part inoperative by its own contradictions. The inefficient, creaking corrupt mess that we came to know as the People's Republic of Poland was in fact a highly successful daily improvisation on the part of ordinary Poles who were determined to make something of their day and to preserve some self-respect in spite of the system set over them. If there was no system, then there was no socialism. In improvising so successfully, however, they were making it look as if the system worked badly when in fact it did not work at all. They had no choice.

Since I am not dealing with terms that have any precise analytic content, I have used inverted commas to highlight the ironic or questionable application of the terms. The use of inverted commas in this way is sanctioned as a literary device in numerous grammars and the employment of such a literary convention does not seem out of place in a study dealing with literary matters, nor in a study dealing so frequently with the difference between appearance and reality, between the illusions of those who lived within the 'charmed circle' of the Party, and those whose daily experience told them that the Party lied. The use of inverted commas to insist that socialism and communism in Poland were only so-called is not a retreat into a private language, nor is it a retreat from precision. It is, however, a refusal to accept both the Stalinist and Catholic Church designation. It would be entirely mistaken to think that by using the

words socialism and communism to describe Poland that we have in any way described the thing that was.

If Poland was a totalitarian state, that is, if Poland's rulers aspired to control or direct every aspect of its citizens' lives and make 'private life' impossible, then its attitude towards writers - the very fact of their relative freedom and their continued survival - is utterly inexplicable. The personal histories of writers in the People's Republic suggest that the state was only briefly (perhaps 1947-54) a would-be communist and would-be totalitarian state. For most of its life the Polish People's Republic occupied a de-ideologised 'socialist' authoritarian no-man's land which offered very little political thought beyond issues of nationalism. It was a place where being Polish and preserving things Polish had a special power, even among the Party membership. If this was not so, Polish writers could never have said and done the things they said and did, and certainly could not have expected to survive. Had the Polish authorities been serious about total control they would have closed down dissident operations and liquidated the opposition. This, along with many other things, they never did. The periodic activity of the security services was never more than a crude, violent joke. The Party's minimal commitment to totalitarianism can be seen throughout the post-war period, in almost all its dealings with writers and finally in the the collapse of Polish 'socialism' in 1989, an event that came about because of the Party's internal surrender after the withdrawal of Soviet support, rather than as the result of opposition victory.

#### 4 REVIEW OF PREVIOUS LITERATURE

Although there are several excellent anthologies of Polish poetry currently available in English, and the translated works of Andrzejewski, Lem, Kapuściński and Konwicki are currently on sale, very little English language material has been available *about* post-war Polish literature and its context: most of what has been written in English about Polish literature has been translated from Polish. Apart from scattered articles and essays on poetry by A.Alvarez and D.Pirie, to a surprising extent this present

study has the field to itself. Studies of Polish literature, where they exist at all in English, concentrate mainly on the nineteenth century classics, and on poetry, poetics and versification. There has been very little attempt to explore the specific political context of post-war literature.

It is not only that Poland is another of those Central European places which are far away and about which we know very little. Poles themselves think of their literature as 'only for Poles': it does not translate easily simply because it is so deeply embedded in the political and national context in which it was written. Miłosz's superb *History of Polish literature* (Miłosz, 1969, 1983) is a standard reference work, but while it is informed by the author's personal acquaintance with many of the contemporary and more recent writers, it treats the whole of Polish literary history. The same author's *The Captive Mind* (Miłosz, 1953) is still valid as an examination of the attractions that socialism held for certain personalities, but it can chart developments only in the immediate post-war years.

There have been a number of useful biographies and several very good history books in English on the post-war period, and useful glimpses of the artistic community can be gleaned from Jan Józef Lipski's *KOR* (1985). However, in English, apart from George Gömöri's *Polish and Hungarian Poetry: 1945-56*, (1966), and Adam Czerniawski's *The Mature Laurel* (1991), there has been very little in the way of detailed literary/political history of Poland's post-war years, and certainly no study which attempts to relate professional and artistic problems to the political system. An anthology of essays on Polish literature S.Eile and U.Philips (eds.) *New Perspectives in Twentieth Century Polish Literature* (1993), while it offers valuable insights on a wide range of Polish literature and deals with a number of interesting texts and authors, nevertheless suffers from all the usual problems of anthologised essays by diverse hands, and offers no coherent overall picture of the literary or political scene. More importantly perhaps, there has been no study of the writers and oppositionists so vital to KOR, the people who advised Solidarność, suffered under Martial Law, helped form the first democratic government in 1990, and who now find themselves at odds with the new Poland. One of the very few pieces of academic writing in English to deal directly with this post-war generation of Polish writers is George Gömöri's essay 'The

Cultural Intelligentsia: The Writers' (Gömöri, 1973).<sup>5</sup> However, this piece was published before the appearance of the only Polish sociological survey of writers by Andrzej Siciński.<sup>6</sup> As far as I am aware Siciński's findings have not been given any close attention in English, and so I have given them particular prominence in the present study.

To a very great extent the present study is a pioneering effort. It is important because it plugs a gap in plotting the literary/political careers of representatives of the post-war generation of writers. The exploration of literary life in Poland not only brings into question the notion of People's Poland as a 'totalitarian' society and holds up for scrutiny the limitations of the dissident community ranged against the 'socialist' government, but also shows that the dissidents were not as clear-headed about what they wanted for a 'free' Poland as many in the west might have assumed and this has implications for our understanding of what kind of place Poland is likely to become now that 'socialism' has collapsed. It is almost certainly because of this gap in our literature and understanding of the place, role and influence of this small key group within Polish society, that observers of 1989 were unprepared for the anti-intellectualism and anti-semitism which marked the collapse of 'socialism', were left with little background on the intellectuals' clash with President Lech Wałęsa, and very little sense of what these things meant in terms of Poland's pursuit of 'normality'. This study shows the roots of the social and political conflict between Solidarność and the dissident intellectuals that marred the first two years of 'democratic' Poland, and which seems set to provide a source of friction for years to come. Taken together, the case-studies and the chapters on the political-literary background provide a portrait of a generation of Polish writers living and working under 'socialism'. They raise important questions about the legacy of forty five years of 'socialism', about the kind of place Poland was, is and will be as the 'new Europe' approaches the twenty first century.

## 5 RESEARCH METHODS AND SOURCE MATERIALS

The main research method consists of contextualising and analysing primary literary

sources: four major case studies are presented for analysis, embedded in a narrative of literary and political events. The writers themselves are the main source of material for this study. Primary materials include books, interviews, essays, poems and articles produced by the writers themselves. Secondary sources consist of a wide range of literary histories, criticism, journalism, biographies and statistics. This study is an historical analysis of the role of writers in post-war Poland, a portrait of a small but influential group within Polish society. It looks at Polish 'socialism' as a clear era, with a beginning and an end, and it presents the human dilemmas of that period from the point of view of the writers. The study concentrates on the writer's relations to the state. It is not concerned to study or present changes in official views and statements, Party efforts to control the writers through decrees and statements of policy, or the system's ways of explaining itself or its behaviour, except in so far as the writers experienced these things.

Much of the interview material presented in this study (see the bibliography for details) was conducted on, and generated by, my research trips to Poland, and the questions asked of the writers were very much based on my personal experience and extensive contact with the country over a period of twenty years. The interviews were useful, not so much for gleaning startling revelations or stunning insights into the private lives or political actions of writers, but simply in confirming my understanding of the dilemmas facing writers, and provided a check-point for ideas on the ways in which Polish literary/political life was conducted. In many cases the interviews simply put into words things I had suspected about the unique interface between politics and literature in Poland.

Writing about post-war Poland is rather like asking a committee of blind men wearing thick gloves to describe an elephant by touch. So much literary and historical material has been censored or is simply unreliable that research often feels random and anecdotal and does not necessarily conform to the highest academic standards: research for a foreigner in Poland demands luck, patience and good connections in ways that a visit to the British Library does not. I hope I have struck a balance preserving accuracy of information and accessibility. However, some indication of the particular bibliographical problems I have encountered is called for.

My desire to use only published Polish source materials had to be tempered by practicality. The bibliographical history of many texts is complicated. Between 1944-89 it was not possible to publish a great number of important texts in Poland for political reasons. Particularly in the 1970s, when the department of the censor expanded its activities dramatically and when the growing opposition had an urgent need to express itself, a great deal of Polish comment appeared, often in a foreign language, in France, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, Sweden and the USA, long before it could be published in Poland. Kazimierz Brandys' diaries could not be published officially in Poland, but appeared in Paris as *Miesiąc: 1978-79* and *Miesiąc: 1980-81*, (Brandys, 1981 and 1982). These diaries appeared in English in 1983, at a time when in Poland possession of them was forbidden and could earn a prison sentence. Among a host of others, seminal works like Czesław Miłosz's poetry and prose, Lipski's *KOR* (Lipski, 1985), Adam Michnik's essays, Teresa Torńska's interviews with the ex-leadership of the Party, the influential report from the discussion group *Doświadczenie i Przyszłość* (Experience and Future) *Poland: The State of the Republic* (ed., M.Vale, 1981), the censorship regulations, Barańczak's essays, Kołakowski's work, Mrozek's essays, articles, short stories and plays, and the sociological work on *Solidarność* by Jadwiga Staniszkis, could often only be published abroad by émigré publishers, or by underground publishers. NOWa's attempts to publish Jan Nowak's *Courier from Warsaw* (Nowak, 1983) in Poland ended with arrest, prison sentences and fines.

The domestic 'second circuit' of independent publishers, though impressive, could produce only small editions which were difficult to get hold of and understandably paid scant heed to the needs of academic researchers. Zbigniew Herbert's collection *Raport z oblężonego miasta i inne wiersze* (Herbert, 1983) is a case in point: some of the poems included there were refused by the censor in the years 1956-57, others refer to Martial Law. The collection first appeared in an edition put together by prisoners at the Rakowiecka prison in 1983, but all copies were confiscated; a second edition was produced by the underground Wydawnictwo Dobro Powszedniego in 1984; a third edition which actually predated the second edition appeared from Kultura-Maison Littéraire in Paris in 1983. The publication of English language translations of the

poems in various magazines, and the appearance of the volume *Report from a Besieged City* (Herbert, 1985), pre-dated open Polish publication by several years.

Given the state of the post-1989 Polish publishing industry, tracking down first editions and underground editions (at least some of which originated clandestinely in the state publishing houses) would have been a complex, time-consuming nightmare. Since 1989 many previously banned or underground books have found enthusiastic domestic publishers. However, recent Polish editions of previously banned works often differ from the original editions - sometimes quite considerably. Writers have taken the opportunity to catch up with history. For example, Teresa Torńska, in launching *Oni* (Torńska, 1987) in Warsaw in 1990, acknowledged that the first edition had appeared from Aneks in London in Polish, followed by a French language version published in Paris. There had also been a censored 'official' Polish edition from Przedświt; the book had also been taken up and issued by other un-named publishers of the 'second circuit'; and there had been an English language edition in the USA and Great Britain. To complicate matters further the Polish edition of 1990 restored cuts demanded by the censor in the original 'approved' edition, but differed from the earlier edition and from the English language editions in that it had an extra chapter.

The censor watched all history books very carefully, and in the whole post-war period there are enormous 'grey areas' about which almost nothing was published. Predictably, these include the Katyn massacre, the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, detailed information about the Party and its decision-making processes, the fate of the KPP (Komunistyczna Partia Polski, Communist Party of Poland) and the persecution of the AK (Armia Krajowa, Home Army). A significant amount of investigative journalism was simply censored out of existence. The émigrés and opposition made a start at filling in these spaces, but biographies of the 'socialist' leadership, political analysis of the whole post-war period, particularly relations with the USSR, the decision to shoot at workers in 1970, the functioning of the security services and a whole range of other issues, still wait detailed exploration. Biographies, like Bohdan Rolicki's *Przerwana Dekada* (Rolicki, 1991), a book of interviews with Gierek, have begun to appear, but many are partisan and concerned to either assassinate opponents or whitewash party leadership. In 1976 Rolicki had assisted the authorities in slandering KOR from the



pages of *Życie Warszawy*: in an interview for *Svenska Dagbladet* (11 June 1976) he characterised KOR as a Zionist organisation whose ideas were a mish-mash of the utopian, Trotskyite, social-democratic and Christian-democratic. His book about Gierek is unreliable, inaccurate and distorted in its efforts to protect and justify Gierek, who is allowed to claim unchallenged that he knew nothing of the economic chaos and the declining economic health of the nation.) Bias and exaggeration are inevitable as Polish society comes to terms with its past: as Kapuściński remarked to me in conversation in May 1990 (see the bibliography for details), 'we have not come out of this a clean society.' There are many who want the 'socialists' punished, others who seek to defend old comrades. Understandably many books published since the collapse of 'socialism' bear the marks of the moral opposition's efforts to settle accounts (however generously), to name the guilty and praise the just.

While I have been able to take advantage of the new situation to obtain and use recently published, previously banned, books, the task ahead is still daunting. Also the long period of hand-over to democratic government in 1989-91 has made certain that large gaps in the records will persist as huge amounts of censored material and censorship records have been shredded. At the moment fragmented consciousness, fragmented history, vested interests and the overwhelming shock of the new are major stumbling blocks to accurate perception and analysis. Given the mountains of journalism, poetry, memoirs, censored novels and banned histories that still await publication there was a limit to what I could do. I decided to work with the material currently at hand, provided it appeared to be conscientious, reliable, well informed, and from a respected source. In this I relied upon my intuition as a professional writer, my experience of living in Poland and on the sensitive antennae of Polish friends and colleagues.

It will probably take several years for a reliable bibliography of the interaction between literature and politics in the post-war years to take shape. For the moment I can only recognise the limitations of this study by saying that while underground publishing in the years 1976-89 represents a major chapter in Polish cultural history and will be of vital importance to historians, the task of making a full and reliable bibliography on this subject will have to be undertaken elsewhere and by someone else.

As far as I am aware there has been only one major sociological survey of post-war Polish writers: A.Siciński's *Literaci polscy* (Siciński, 1971), using data gathered in the 1960s. I have abstracted a great deal of statistical material from it. As far as I am aware this is the first time Siciński's material has appeared in English. I have also been fortunate in finding what I suspect is a previously untapped source of statistics on the post-war publishing industry *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach XXXIII: 1987*, (Biblioteka Narodowa-Institut Bibliograficzny, 1989). I was also lucky enough to obtain a rare copy of the internal Party publication *Fakty i komentarze: stan gospodarki kraju po I kwartale* (Wydawnictwo Wydziału Pracy Ideowo-Wychowawczej KC PZPR, 1981), detailing the collapse of the economy in 1981, and *Kierunki reformy gospodarczej: projekt: projekty ustaw - o przedsiębiorstwach państwowych - o samorządzie załogi przedsiębiorstwa państwowego* (Komisja do Spraw Reformy Gospodarczej, 1981), the Party's proposed reforms scotched by Martial Law.

In dealing with specific literary texts by Andrzejewski, Lem, Kapuściński and Konwicki I have quoted from available translations where I am confident they are accurate. For the major texts I have given page references to the translated texts, and listed the Polish texts in the bibliography.

## 6 PLAN OF THESIS

This study makes use of clearly defined periods in the post-war years, each combined with a detailed case study showing an example from the period under consideration. An alternative arrangement of material would have been to group all the general history chapters together to make a narrative of the writers' relations with the state in Part One and then return to particular moments in that narrative with a selection of Case studies in Part Two. However, this would have meant that the background material was a long way from the case study it was designed to complement. In order to recover the background to each case history it would have been necessary to return to the earlier chapter. The pairing of chapters, on the other hand, seemed to be the best arrangement

of material, as it allowed for a development of narrative sequence and illustrative material and minimised repetition. Thus alongside the main narrative of the historical chapters there is a *meta-narrative* composed of the case studies, in which particular examples of the development of the phenomenon of 'Polish unreality' are examined in detail and set in a wider literary and political context. Thus chapters 2&3, 4&5, 6&7, 8&9 are arranged in complementary pairs: period study and case study.

Chapter One outlines the nature and range of the opposition to 'socialism' in Poland, showing briefly the history of the separate groupings and their difficulties.

Chapter Two takes up the narrative in 1945 and develops it up to 1953, showing how the 'socialist' take-over affected the profession of writer. It outlines the material blandishments offered to the writers in return for their cooperation and also shows the way the Party set about controlling the publishing industry and the writers' union. It also lists *nomenklatura* appointments in the publishing industry by the Party and notes the start of the system of censorship. The chapter concludes with a brief look at Czesław Miłosz's *The Captive Mind* (1953), an example of the growing disillusionment with the Party that was to build steadily towards the events of 1956, and a wickedly knowledgeable assault on the mentality of those who thought they could cooperate with the Party and retain their integrity as writers.

Chapter Three returns to the last day of war and first day of peace, the ambiguous transition to 'socialist' rule. This is a case study of Jerzy Andrzejewski's novel, *Ashes and Diamonds* (1948). It illustrates in vivid detail the themes of the preceding chapter and seeks, through a particular literary example, to extend our understanding of the dilemmas posed for writers by the 'socialist' take-over. The chapter also includes material indicating Andrzejewski's recantation of his association with the Party, anticipating more detailed material on intellectual opposition in chapters four and six.

Chapter Four resumes the narrative history of writers' relations with the state and deals with the growing intellectual frustrations in the years 1953-70. The chapter concentrates on the writer-revisionists, showing their hopes for socialism with a human face and belief that Poland could find its own unique national brand of socialism. It shows how the failure of revisionism was echoed in the problems of the writers with the growing censorship. It shows something of the legacy of the 'thaw' of 1956 in

the collapse of trust in the Party and in attacks on Jewish intellectuals in 1968.

Chapter Five looks back to the mid-point of the Gomulka years. It is a case study of Stanisław Lem's novel *Solaris* (1961). While this was an apparently innocent science fiction novel it could also be read as an example of the increasing difficulty of talking openly about social and political problems, a warning of the deep-seated social, political, moral and psychological damage that the system of censorship was working on the Polish psyche. It was also part of a widespread retreat into intellectual abstraction and theory as a way of coping with the increasing pressure of public life and the failure of political life.

Chapter Six deals with writers and Gierek in the years 1970-80. It shows how the Party managed to isolate the writers in a plush ghetto, with very little social connection to the enormous population of workers. Stress is laid upon Gierek's economic policies, and the massive strain these put on social and political life. The chapter shows the writers' efforts to combat their isolation, particularly after 1976, and their connection with the new independent social movements such as KOR and ROPCiO. Kazimierz Brandys' *Warsaw Diary* (1982) is used to show that writers were aware of the dangers and limitations of the rapidly developing underground publishing movement. The chapter ends with the apparently successful link-up of writer oppositionists and workers in the great shipyard strike of 1980, the collapse of the economy, the fall of Gierek and the creation of Solidarność.

Chapter Seven looks back to the closing years of this decade. It is a case study of Ryszard Kapuściński's *The Emperor* (1978). Ostensibly this was a piece of reportage on the feudal autocracy of Ethiopia, but was in fact a thinly disguised, detailed assault on the mentality and policies of the Gierek regime. It showed exactly how Poland resembled a country of the Third World, and how the sudden influx and availability of foreign capital had promoted within the Party, the *nomenklatura* and the leadership a wilful ignorance and callous indifference to the enormous social problems Poland faced by the end of the decade.

Chapter Eight deals with the difficult years 1980-81, showing the limits of Solidarność both as an idea and as an organisation; it shows how writers responded to Martial Law, and reveals the ambiguous literary legacy of General Jaruzelski - a man

who, unlike his predecessors in office, was very aware of Polish literary culture, but who nevertheless felt compelled to close down the writers' union and who put a large number of writers in jail in order to cut off Solidarność from its intellectual advisors and supporters. It also illustrates the long depression following the declaration of Martial Law, the promise of reform by Jaruzelski, the abandonment of censorship, the writers' gradual return to the state publishing houses and the sudden collapse of 'socialism'. Some attempt is made to indicate the shock of the collapse and the impact this had on writers who had just succeeded in reaching an accommodation with a 'liberal socialist' regime, but who now saw the free market destroy their professional structures, obliterate their social and political standing and wipe out their potential earning power. The intellectuals' sudden conflict with the new President Lech Wałęsa, and their longing for the financial security of the old system gave many writers a new and even nostalgic perspective on the 'socialism' they had fought against for so long.

Chapter Nine illustrates Gierek's closing year as a conclusion to the 1970s. It is a case study of Tadeusz Konwicki's novel *A Minor Apocalypse* (1979), a key cultural and political document for the 1980s. In this novel Konwicki develops the conspiratorial opposition and the anarchy of the secret police to their logical conclusion, showing that in a society where censorship blocks the free flow of information and warps the formation of opinion, it is impossible to know the meaning of any action, impossible to determine what is right or wrong, impossible to know what is real or unreal.

Although the periods of post-war Polish history I wish to discuss are clearly defined I have not limited myself to events within the periods under discussion. I have used materials from earlier or later periods where this has been necessary to illustrate a particular point. Likewise, in the chapters on literature I have not limited myself to discussing only one text, but have, where necessary, referred to a wide range of other material.

In order that this study might be reasonably self-contained and self-explanatory I have gathered together as much supplementary information around my particular subject as four lengthy appendices might reasonably be expected to contain. The material in the appendices holds many valuable insights on, and support for, the main

theme.

Appendix 1: Short notes and histories on some of the key organisations of the post-war years.

Appendix 2: A great many writers are mentioned in this study. No matter how interesting and important each and every one of these biographies might have proved, it would have been tedious to hold up the narrative to give biographical details for every writer. Further, scattering the biographies through the footnotes would have made it difficult to recover information about a particular writer. With this in mind I have gathered a selection of biographical material for the most important writers. A further purpose of this material is to make available a wider range of writers and opinions than occupies my main narrative. In addition to the four writers treated in detail in the main case studies, a dozen or so writers receive more than passing reference in the text, and perhaps 100 other writers are mentioned only briefly, appendix four gives detailed publication statistics for 46 leading writers, while appendix two lists a further 226 writers or leading figures on the Polish literary scene. In total the study makes use of, or refers to, well over 350 writers. While this is not in any sense a systematic sociological sample (nor is the material treated as such), it is nevertheless a very substantial sample of the 600 active membership of the ZLP, and of the broader writing community. As far as I am aware no such substantial and comprehensive coverage of the post-war generations of Polish writers has been available in English before.

Appendix 3: It is hard to appreciate the extent of censorship in the People's Republic. I have included the most important censorship records dating from the mid 1970s so that the reader might judge the probable extent of the interference. This material is presented not for analysis (Jane Curry has presented lengthy examination of these documents and examples in *The Black Book of Polish Censorship*, 1984) but simply as illustrative background material. Censorship is an important part of the story, but not my main concern, so it seemed better to include the material rather than expect the reader to hunt around for it elsewhere.

Appendix 4: This amasses statistical material as background to supplement the historical and biographical themes, and to highlight the dilemmas of the writers. The

material derives from two major sources. The statistics on the Polish Publishing industry are mainly drawn from *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach XXXIII: 1987* (1989). The statistics on the social and professional lives of writers derive from A.Siciński's survey, *Literaci polscy* (1971) using data gathered in the 1960s.

The bibliography is perhaps fuller than this study might strictly need, but as the subject matter of this study is so little explored in English I have treated the bibliography as a research tool for others. The bibliography is divided up into the major areas within the subject matter of the study.

## NOTES

- 1 A.Michnik, 'A New Evolutionism' (1976), in *Letters from Prison and Other Essays*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1987, pp.135-48. The essay was written just after the events in Radom, while Michnik was in Paris. In 1977, when KOR was transforming into a very active organisation nationwide, Andrzejewski seems to have sided with the writers Macierewicz and Naimski and the increasingly nationalist magazine *Głos* (Voice), against Michnik and his associates. Michnik, Kuroń and several others resigned from the board of *Głos*. The issue on which they divided initially was an article published in *Głos* by Michnik and then later, on whether or not KOR should send an invited observer to the Second Socialist International. After this *Głos* moved closer to ROPCiO (Ruch Obrony Praw Człowieka i Obywatela, Movement Defending Human and Civil Rights) and the social-activists came to dominate the *Information Bulletin* and *KOR Communiqué* - which, as these were the official KOR journals, did not please the writers of *Głos* who felt their independent social initiative, along with its journals, had been hijacked by the communists. J.J.Lipski, *KOR: A History of the Workers Defence Committees in Poland 1976-81*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1985, pp.360-62.
- 2 Translators made up 14.8 per cent of ZLP membership, poets 12.9 per cent, childrens and young persons writers 7 per cent, dramatists, 6.3 per cent, essayists 5.5 per cent, critics 3.7 per cent, satirists 3.3 per cent, radio writers 1 per cent, memoirists, diarists 1 per cent, biographers 1 per cent, film writers 0.4 per cent. A.Siciński, *Literaci polscy: przemiany zawodu na tle przemian kultury współczesnej*, Zakład Narody Imienia Ossolińskich Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Wrocław, 1971. Tables 12 & 13.
- 3 L.Trilling, 'Introduction', in: I.Babel, *Collected Stories*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1974, p.13. Or, as Steiner would have it: 'Whether by instinct or meditation, writers have always been aware of their special position in communist ideology. They have taken communism seriously because it has taken them seriously. Thus a history of the relations between communism and modern

literature is, in certain vital respects, a history of both.' G.Steiner, 'The Writer and Communism' (1961), *Language and Silence: Essays 1958-66*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1979, p.308.

- 4 Z.Herbert, *Report From The Besieged City And Other Poems*, Ecco Press, New York, 1885, p.69
- 5 G.Gömöri, 'The Cultural Intelligentsia: The Writers', in: D.Lane and G.Kolankiewicz (eds.), *Social Groups in Polish Society*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1973.
- 6 A.Siciński, *Literaci polscy: przemiany zawodu na tle przemian kultury współczesnej*, 1971.



# ONE

## LITERARY-POLITICAL OPPOSITION

1.1 post-war political map of opposition

1.2 Catholic church

1.3 neo-positivists

1.4 Catholic writers

1.5 revisionists

1.6 Polonia abroad

1.7 new evolutionism

### 1.1 POST-WAR POLITICAL MAP OF OPPOSITION

The American writer William Woods, who visited Poland in 1967, tried to define the range of political opinions he found. He characterised the Catholic *Znak* group and its associated newspapers as organisations of the far right; for him the Social Christian Action Association (founded October 1957 by Pax secessionists) occupied the centre, and Pax, the tame Catholic-'socialist' front organisation stood to the left. Cardinal Wyszyński he characterised as to the right of both the Vatican Council and *Znak*.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly things have changed a great deal since 1967. With hindsight it is possible to see that the range of opinion in post-war Poland was much wider, more complex and convoluted, much less clear cut than Woods was able to discern. In particular the problem of what exactly constitutes the 'right' and the 'left' has become even more complex and we are no longer certain as to which criteria to apply in seeking definitions. Certainly the visible array of approved organisations gave little hint of the complexity that underlay the official picture. Even the wide variety of unofficial organisations that sprang up in the 1970s did not adequately indicate to outsiders the complexity that underlay both the official and the unofficial positions possible within Polish opinion, since both the Party and the opposition imposed their own orthodoxies. Now, from the vantage point of post-1989, it is also possible to see that although they were largely invisible, and where visible were simplified on all sides, political, social, religious and artistic opinions were interwoven to a remarkable degree, and that artistic, religious and political developments reflected this interweaving.

In Poland the supposed certainties of the cold-war and the revealed contradictions pile up with frightening speed. After the war Polish society became atomised and ill-informed about itself to a remarkable degree. By the 1980s, however, its structures and social and political layers were by no means as solid or impermeable as outside observers often supposed. Indeed, the biographies of individual writers show that it was possible for an individual to move from one grouping and milieu to another. Even though many see Polish post-war society as polarised into the main blocs of 'socialist' party and Catholic church, in fact the Polish literary-political scene was much more divergent, covered a far wider spectrum, and, even within Party and Church circles,

was infinitely more divided against itself and wary of making alliances than any simple formula of government and opposition, 'socialists' and Catholics, could portray. The supposed monoliths of Church and Party stand neither in such stark contrast to each other, nor in such clearly defined opposition to each other, as was once supposed.

Opposition, the style of opposition, opposition alliances were not written in stone. An intellectual like Tadeusz Mazowiecki could start off in Pax, move into editing the left-liberal leaning (and therefore from the hierarchy point of view the least reliable) Catholic journal *Więź*, become an advisor to Solidarność, become Prime Minister in the first post-'socialist' government, only to be smeared by Wałęsa after a few months in office, accused (with Geremek, Michnik, Kuroń and others who had helped Solidarność through difficult times) of being a Jew and a crypto-communist. Bohdan Cywiński could edit the Catholic journal *Znak*, lecture for TKN and still be a member of the left-oriented KOR. Czesław Miłosz could accept a diplomatic post, break with the party, write a devastating critique of the crippling effect that Marxist thought had on Polish literary intellectuals, be banned from publication for many years, only to be welcomed back to Poland by the Party and awarded an honorary degree by the Catholic University of Lublin (in spite of his 'socialist' past), after achieving international repute as a Nobel prize winner. Pax and ZBoWiD (Związek Bojowników o Wolności i Demokrację, Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy) could link up in an anti-Semitic campaign, and the opinions of the party-sponsored Grunwald Patriotic Union on the subject could find damaging resonance with some members of the Church hierarchy. In 1980 one third of the membership of the Solidarność MKS (Inter-Factory Strike Committees) were also members of the Party.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly even these few examples contradict any simple dichotomy. Often, in order to understand a particular moment in Polish politics or literature, it is necessary to trace the histories of the various organisations, to follow the biographies of those involved and to examine their literary products.

## 1.2 CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Catholic church had evolved a very strong role in expressing Polish national opposition to partition and occupation (particularly in the Russian controlled area) throughout the 19th century. In the inter-war years this role became intertwined with Piłsudski's nationalism as the dominant ideology, so that in the post-war years, under 'Soviet occupation', the Church resumed its role as the guardian of Polishness and Polish nationhood, even though in practical terms its continued existence as an independent institution necessitated compromise with the secular authorities. It was the strength and entrenched character of this role that prevented the post-war authorities from carrying out any Soviet-style assault on the Church, even in the Bierut years. The Church remained a powerful independent institution to an extent that is unique in east central Europe. This, coupled with the fact that the 'socialists' failed to collectivise the peasantry or control the *intelligentsia* meant that 'socialist' penetration of Polish society was probably weaker than anywhere else in east central Europe, and the combination of peasantry, independent intellectuals and independent Church coupled with a mightily discontented industrial workforce made Solidarity possible. The support of the Church (however cautious) for Solidarity was in some respects a great help to Solidarity, and this was reciprocated by union demands for the extension of religious rights and activities.

The election of a Polish Pope had an electrifying effect on Poland. It was as if their nationhood was recognised, acknowledged and guaranteed from outside. The Pope's first visit to Poland was an astonishing spectacle in which the secular authorities were shown to be irrelevant by their virtual absence from every public event. The Pope's visit to Poland gave Poles a sense that they could be responsible for themselves, and that the power of the Party could be challenged. The election of a Polish Pope was a powerful input to the developing independent trades union movement and to the independence of dissident intellectuals. Just by the virtue of its existence outside Party control, the Church was a powerful beacon, a contradiction of everything the 'socialists' were trying to achieve. However, it must be said that for most of the post-war period the Church saw its role as offering passive resistance to

'socialism' rather than in actively challenging the secular authorities.

The Catholic social doctrine contained in Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), backed up by Pius XI's encyclical *Quadrogesimo Anno* (1931) (two documents directed against socialism and trades unionism which hampered understanding between socialists and Catholics for decades) was included in the Polish Constitution of 1935 and allowed the legal implementation of an alliance between Church and State. The inter-war Polish government accepted the Church's anti-socialist stance and did so to the social and economic advantage of the Church. As the church owned over 1,000,000 acres of land and massive holdings in buildings, it functioned in many respects as a large magnate might. The inter-war government treated it as a trusted partner and in return for its support the Polish state disbursed to the Church some 20,000,000 zł per year: the state paid out 17,465,499 zł in 1935-36 in salaries to priests, cardinals and bishops. The state also paid out 2,867 stipends to seminary students, but only offered 2,584 other studentships. The ultra-conservative church resisted every progressive movement in the inter-war years - everything from socialism to trades unions and independent peasant organisations.<sup>3</sup>

Pre-war Poland had been about 64 per cent Catholic. Post-war Poland, mainly because of the expulsion of the Germans and the extermination of the Jews, Mariavites, Jehovah's witnesses and most other religious minorities, and the boundary shift which excluded most Uniate and Orthodox Ukrainians, was more than 90 per cent Catholic. After 1945 the Church and the 'socialists' took a long time to adjust to each other. The new government assisted the church in re-opening the Catholic University in Lublin and gave the church huge sums of money from a very depleted budget to reconstruct its churches: 100,000,000 zł in 1944, 590,000,000 zł in 1945, 89,000,000 zł in 1946, 188,000,000 zł in 1947.<sup>4</sup> Indeed it looked for a while as if they might find a way of working together: Catholic rites were observed when Karol Świerczewski was buried, Polish radio broadcast Sunday mass until 1947, and Bierut's presidential oath in 1947 ended with the words 'so help me God'.

However, the Church was dispossessed of much of its inherited land with the land reform of 1944, and while it lost land in the old Polish east, it failed to secure the property of the German church in the new western territories. With the defeat of the

political opposition in 1947-49 the position of the Church changed dramatically. Under Bierut the 1950 Church-State accord failed. Many of the clergy were accused, among other things, of assisting or hiding AK members and about 900 priests were imprisoned. Cardinal Wyszyński himself was put under house arrest. For a while, like Jacob and the Angel, the two organisations appeared locked in mortal combat.

In 1956 the slow dissolution of the Stalinist bonds began. Against a background of intellectual unrest and increasing industrial dissatisfaction the government sought and obtained the support of the hierarchy in re-asserting its authority: in October Cardinal Wyszyński addressed Poles to call for 'calm, caution and prayers'. In return for this support the government agreed to give the Church certain privileges and concluded a new agreement in December 1956 which reinstated the Church's jurisdiction over its own affairs, confirmed the right to select its own hierarchy and mark its own administrative areas. It also revived *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Znak*, allowed five Catholic deputies to be elected to the Sejm, and allowed monks and nuns to return to the monasteries. As Bogdan Szajkowski wrote:

From then on the relationship between the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the leadership of the PZPR changed from that of dangerous enemies fighting an everlasting battle for the control of Polish souls, to that of indispensable allies. Although in the ensuing decades the battle and wasteful squabbings would continue, neither side would overstep the unwritten rule of the game.<sup>5</sup>

The deeply ambiguous role of the Catholic Church in the 'socialist years' has yet to be examined in any great detail, but it is clear that after an initial period of difficulty, both the Party and the Church realised that pragmatic cooperation rather than confrontation would be more fruitful. Certainly after 1956 the Church made valuable 'trade offs' with the Party. Apart from their disagreement about the Polish Episcopate's letter to German Catholics in 1965, it is clear that the Party and the Church were not the deadly enemies that many supposed. In almost every sphere the Catholic Church grew under the 'socialists'. In exchange for cooperation in maintaining social calm and good order, the Church received material benefits. Between 1945 and 1977 the Church built or gained planning permission for 1,900 new

churches. It was a rate of construction unequalled in the 1,000 years of Polish Church history. In 1977, when Poland had regained its pre-war population of about 35,000,000, the Church was not the hunted, furtive, underground creature that many supposed: there were 2 cardinals, 75 bishops, 19,000 priests (only 13,934 in 1937), 36,261 monks and nuns (only 23,696 in 1937), 14,152 church-owned buildings (only 7,257 in 1937) and 20 million regular communicants.<sup>6</sup>

However, in spite of its social and diplomatic achievements in the post-war period the Polish church had enormous difficulties in shaking off its pre-war past. It was bound by the pre-war expectations of the hierarchy and by the old Papal encyclicals. More at home with the certainties of Pius XI and Pius XII than with the uncharted territory opened up by John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris* and his 'Eastern Policy', and Paul VI's commitment to conciliation, détente and the improvement of the position of the Church in eastern Europe, the traditionalist Wyszyński was more concerned with defending the past and the Church as an institution, with preserving the role of the Polish church as a repository of morality independent of the Party, than he was with finding a way for Church and Party to cooperate further. He was a man of remarkable determination, but little flexibility; he accepted *Rerum Novarum* in toto, and saw no reason to move far from this. He argued that the Party never gave away anything of substance - and he was right: for him the Church was not free to act as a political force and therefore it was not free at all. That the Church was able to conduct its own business, publish his sermons, build churches and generally go about its business for most of the post-war period mattered little to him, compared with this basic limitation of its freedom. Thus, while Wyszyński's powerful sermons were relayed from the pulpit and the church was a refuge for those who ran to it, and it moderated the excesses and insensitivity of the Party, it was hardly a powerhouse of active opposition. Until the constitutional reforms of 1975-76 and the events at Ursus and Radom in 1976, the Church was modestly complacent about its social achievements and satisfied with its growth under the 'socialists'.

The atheist, socialist, dissident intellectual Adam Michnik attempted to put the best face on the possibility of links between the largely atheist and socialist intellectual dissidents and the Church in his book *Kościół, lewica, dialog* (Paris, 1977). He

emphasised the moral role of the Church, and gave the Church hierarchy a very clear indication that even a dissident Marxist might have expectations of it which were not being fulfilled. Michnik believed that the fundamental weakness of the Polish opposition had arisen from the division between the Church and the anti-clerical Marxists who were fighting for democratic socialism in the 1950s and 1960s. This division went back into the peculiarities of Polish history, to the Partitions, to the fact that Poland had never experienced for itself the disestablishment of the Church, the separation of temporal and spiritual authority, and to the fact that in a country where there was no large middle class to criticise and moderate the Church, all criticism would come from the Left. The repression and anti-semitic campaign of 1968 had effectively destroyed the anti-clerical Marxists outside the Party, but that did not mean that the common interests of the Catholic Church, Marxist intellectuals and workers could be ignored. Michnik argued that it was in the interest of the whole of Polish society to oppose any system that placed restrictions on the liberty of the individual since this was one of the fundamental tenets of the Christian value system, and, in Michnik's view, was also one of the prime objectives of 'socialism with a human face'. His message, doubtless tailored to Wyszyński's tastes, was nevertheless a shrewd tactical manoeuvre.

The Church also found it difficult to make an alliance with independent Marxist thinkers like Michnik, Kuron, Geremek and Modzelewski, not only because they were ex-Party independent socialists, but because it could not shake out from the hierarchy a residue of pre-war anti-Semitism. In February 1936 Cardinal Hlond circulated a pastoral letter in which he made it clear that in his opinion Jews fought against the Catholic Church, were free thinkers and constituted the vanguard of atheism, the Bolshevik movement, and revolution. Bishop Kaczmarek and Cardinal Hlond later said publicly that the Jews had only themselves to blame for the 1946 massacre in Kielce, since they occupied too many leading positions in an alien government.<sup>7</sup>

Most distant from the dissident Marxist elements of KOR were the conservative elements of the Catholic hierarchy, conservative oppositionist Catholics and the right wing émigrés. By the late 1970s the church hierarchy was busy developing links with ROPCiO, *Młoda Polska*, Catholic intellectuals like Leszek Moczulski who saw KOR



members as little more than communists in disguise, and the Catholic writers of KIK like Kisielewski, Mazowiecki and Cywiński, who refused any such simple schema. The Catholic hierarchy was always most uneasy about the sheer activism of the revisionist Marxists, and the wide range of discontented, state educated, atheist and secular youngsters associated with KOR. They, it seemed, proposed to challenge the power of the state, but not in the name of God or the Church. While KOR supported the Episcopate, the Episcopate did not necessarily reciprocate. Both organisations supported each other's social achievements, but the Church did not want to be seen as engaging in politics.

The rapid growth of independent social movements in Poland after 1976 meant that an amorphous third force had suddenly sprouted between Church and Party. This was made even more clear by the appearance of Solidarity. For Wyszyński and key members of his hierarchy, if the Catholic *inteligencja* were infiltrated by KOR and the non-Catholic dissidents then the Church stood to lose its leadership and moral authority. Any move whereby the Church was seen to offer more than mere toleration of these dissidents would lose the Church the confidence of the faithful and the cooperation of the Party. Though at a grass roots level, throughout the late 1970s, parish priests in contact with industrial workers soon became politicised and were not averse to assisting KOR, TKN, ROPCiO and the Free Trades Unions of the Coast in whatever way they could. In the 1980s several parish priests were to work very closely with Solidarność parishioners and would become politicised to the point of going against the instruction of their bishop.

The murder of Stanisław Pyjas brought the Church and KOR into even closer connection. After a sharp rebuke to the authorities by Cardinal Wojtyła, St Martin's Church in Warsaw became the scene of a KOR-led hunger strike in May 1977. Gierek, like Wyszyński, was alarmed at the prospect of dissident intellectuals and the Church converging, but unlike Wyszyński, Gierek was constrained by the flow of international finance, and in theory by the Helsinki Accords on human rights. In May 1980 the Party granted the Church substantial concessions, including a Polish edition of the official Vatican newspaper, the end of military service for some 200 seminarians and extended state pension rights for a wide range of Church employees. The Church, at the 173rd

conference of the Episcopate later in May 1980, maintained its ethical and political stance and made it clear to the Party that these concessions did not answer their problems, that the improvement of the economy and social conditions and an end to reprisals against people who held different opinions from those of the Party (a clear reference to the arrest of TKN and KOR members) were still necessary.

It took the PZPR some time to learn that the more they tried to combat the Church the more Poles would run to its aid. Once they had learned this lesson the main failing of the Party was that they could not imagine a socialist Poland with the continuing prominence of the Catholic church. By the end of 1981 *Solidarność* had wrung substantial concessions from the Party in the area of religious affairs. The Party, under pressure, feared that it had given away too much, that the dissidents were gaining confidence. In 1980-81 it was possible to see that the Church hierarchy was not, as many Catholic Poles had imagined it to be, the sole focus of opposition to the Party, nor was it the fundamental adversary of the state that many had assumed. On several occasions in 1980-81 the Church disappointed the faithful by failing to take a lead, by underwriting the deals offered by the Party (which the Party subsequently and consistently reneged on) and by constantly appealing for peace and harmony when, even though this was most ardently desired by striking workers, the ORMO and ZOMO riot police and the various provocateurs would not have it so.

Many, disappointed in Cardinal Glemp, failed to realise that the primate was informed and even dominated by a Pope who understood in detail the requirements of Poland and who had no intention of squandering the material and social achievements of the post-war years; while the USSR was still a power, he had no intention of provoking intervention by the Red Army; and while the Party was still there to be reckoned with he had no desire to admit KOR to the Church's monopoly on the role as spiritual guide, or its growing share in the confidence of the Party. After martial law the Church defined its role, much to the confusion of the congregation and many priests who had become politicised after working with *Solidarność*, but much to the relief of the authorities, as social rather than political. The Church had a difficult role to fulfil in trying to ensure calm and tranquillity, trying to reassure the military, assist the populace, succour the needy, sustain intellectual protest and still, somehow to make

it clear that it was not aiding the reinstatement of 'socialist' power directly or indirectly through offering too much support to left-leaning dissident intellectuals.

With the collapse of 'socialism' in 1989 the Church, proving Cywiński's point about its 'Julianic' ambition and orientation, tried to resume its inter-war role and began to campaign for changes in the abortion laws, for the reinstatement of religious education in schools and for the enshrinement of Catholicism as the legally recognised state religion with its position recognised in a new constitution. The Catholic writer Cywiński warned that the moral authority of the Polish church was inverse to its participation in political power. Deprived of that power by 'socialism', the Catholic church could do no more than survive the difficult times and wait for the moment of its return. Although written in 1971 his words were to predict quite accurately not only the line the Church would take on KOR and TKN in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and even on Solidarność, but also the line they would take after the fall of 'socialism':

Deprived of its political strength, it [the Catholic church] fights to preserve its spiritual leadership over the nation. It refuses to accept that there is any way other than the Church to bring about the spiritual or ideological integration of society, and it refuses to acknowledge the existence of any form of opposition other than those that it promotes and controls. If the existence of another form of opposition becomes quite obvious - one that offers some kind of ideological alternative, allowing it to come together apart from the Church - then the Julianic church condemns this opposition, or at least tries to disavow and devalue it in the eyes of public opinion. Never will the Julianic church be anxious to engage in any form of collaboration against the state with any independent centre of oppositionist thought.<sup>8</sup>

These changes provoked an upheaval within the Church itself: it no longer occupied a monopoly position, it was not the only institution offering spiritual shelter. It had been worth supporting the Church in the post-war years, even when it had disappointed, simply because it had nevertheless sustained the spirit simply by existing outside the orbit of the Party. However, after the collapse of 'socialism' Poles discovered that in a free and open society they need support neither the church ambition to control the private lives of Polish citizens, nor its bid to share state power. In the 1993 elections to the Sejm, as much in protest at the pace of economic reform and changes in the

abortion laws as at the Church's bid for a share of political power, the parties of the right and those backed by the Church lost heavily to the new social democratic party (formed after the dissolution of the PZPR) and the PZPR's old ally, the Peasant Party.

It is important to realise the size of the Church's publishing effort throughout the post-war period: the Catholic Church has probably always had more freedom to publish than popular mythology supposes. In the years 1945-78 the Church published over 8,000 book titles and a very wide range of its own journals. In total, by 1979, there were 48 Church publishing ventures, bringing out a total of 92 periodicals. The Catholic University at Lublin and the Catholic Theological Academy both produce several dozen titles per year. In addition there are a number of publishing houses specialising in particular aspects of Catholic life and interest, the most important concerns are: *Apostolstwo Modlitwy* (New Testament, Acts of the Apostles, Gospels); *Pallotinum*, publishing religious literature, including detailed accounts of the Second Vatican Council, Vatican documents, moral theology and a history of the Polish Church; *Znak*, a wide range of Catholic writing; *Księgarnia św. Jacka*, Katowice, prayer books and devotional literature, catechisms, theology, Gospels, Acts of the Apostles and material intended to preserve the Catholic-Polish character of Silesia; *Księgarnia św. Wojciecha*, Poznań, publishes The New Testament translated from Greek (18 editions by 1979), the Lives of the Saints, Bibles, Catechisms, prayer books and Catholic belles lettres, totalling about 20 new titles per year.<sup>9</sup>

In Poland, where no sizeable middle class had developed to confront the Church with substantial opposition and criticism during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the only possible source of dissent lay in the radical left, in the *literati* and, after the war, in the Party. This is something the Church, almost always in the position of moral monopolist and sole independent repository of 'Polish values', has found difficult to accept. It is clear that the malaise of post-war Polish literary culture was rooted in its relationship to a regime that lacked moral legitimacy and political authority but which aspired to be both a moral authority and a major and dynamic social force, the result being that it was nothing more than a failed and failing authoritarian regime. The Party ran the country on the basis of primitive political and personal assessments rather than ideological considerations. However, it was also clear

that throughout the post-war period the party and the dissidents learned a great deal from the church, and had gradually learned to take into account the life of the individual and the life of the spirit. Also under the influence of Marxism and contact with the dissidents, and through the politicisation of its priests in the early 1980s, the church learned a greater understanding of the problems of its own flock.

The confluence of a party that had learned about the inner life, about spirituality and immortality, about morality and conscience, and the possibility of a church that had an impact on the morality of public life, that responded fully and openly to the trades unions of its congregation, that saw beyond its own institutional survival, these were all much to be desired in Poland (and elsewhere). The tragedy was that these lessons, on both sides had to be learned again and again, on a personal and on an institutional level, and that every lesson learned was under pressure from Moscow and likely to evaporate at each and every change of circumstances. The rise of the independent social, artistic and political movements (but particularly KOR) in the late 1970s, and the sudden growth of *Solidarność* threatened not only the power of the Party, but also the authority of the Church. To a very great extent the limitations, intransigence, intelligence, inabilities, talent, and determination of both the Party and the Church mirrored each other - indeed, by the 1970s they were each other's products. And for this reason progress could not lie in either of their hands, but in the individuals and small independent groupings that lay between the Church and Party, group and individuals that were suspected by both, supported by neither.

### 1.3 THE NEO-POSITIVISTS

Stanisław Stomma coined the name neo-positivist for those who aimed to create a political movement based on the strategies of Roman Dmowski, recognising 'geo-political realities' but poised for the moment when it could act as the leadership for the nation. For Dmowski the moment had come in 1918. For Stomma the moment the neo-positivists awaited was the disintegration of the USSR.

The neo-positivists include all those members of the Catholic church who found

they could cooperate with the state through licensed but independent Catholic organisations like Znak, KIK (Clubs of the Catholic Intelligentsia), and the Catholic journals, and those who wrote for and edited the Catholic journals which had accepted state censorship. The most important of these Catholic periodicals was *Tygodnik Powszechny* (Universal Weekly, KIK/Znak), an independent Catholic journal with a variable print run of around 40,000, depending on relations with the Party. *Więź* (Link, established 1958 by ex-Pax members, later financed by KIK), was an independent Catholic monthly, edited by Tadeusz Mazowiecki, with a print run of 7,000 copies. There was also *Znak* (Sign, KIK/Znak), an independent Catholic monthly with a print run of 7,450 copies, subject to censorship.

Neo-positivists took for granted Poland's loyalty towards the powerful USSR (they had no option, especially since the USSR was the sole guarantor of Poland's new western border) but at the same time they rejected Marxism and socialist ideology. Znak adherents (unlike the Marxist revisionists) stressed their ideological and financial independence from the Party but nevertheless they expected rights to be granted from above rather than organised from below: they were hampered by their acceptance of the status quo and by their acceptance of the Church as the main moral and spiritual opposition leader. The Catholic church, working through Znak, had tried to establish that there was a useful distinction to be made between the State and the Party, that it was possible to cooperate with the one without succumbing to the atheist ideology of the other. It was always a delicate balancing act and was always open to criticism by hard-line Catholics and 'socialists' alike. The behaviour of the deputies, in taking an active part in the Party's *Ersatz* political pluralism, even in dignifying the Sejm with their presence, opens questions about the line of action chosen by the neo-positivists and Church groups. In the late 1960s and early 1970s a succession of personnel changes among the Znak deputies led to an increasing conformity of the movement's line with the Party's requirements: Tadeusz Mazowiecki, who had protested to the premier about the behaviour of the security forces in 1968, was replaced by Wacław Aulaytner; Stanisław Stomma walked out of the Sejm chamber rather than cast his vote in favour of the 1975-76 Constitutional reforms and was replaced at the next session.

Control of Znak finances was handed over to a new group called Neo-Znak. The

neo-Znak deputies were connected with an organisation called ODiSS - The Centre for Documentation and Social Studies. Set up in 1969 by the ex-Pax writer Janusz Zabłocki, this organisation published several journals, research on Polish Catholicism, and books by Zabłocki and Andrzej Micewski. The views of ODiSS, like those of Pax, were consistent with official perspectives. In the summer of 1976 the ODiSS-Znak deputies voted for price increases when the government wanted them to, and then for the restoration of the old prices when the government backed down. They remained silent in the aftermath of the Ursus and Radom demonstrations. By the end of 1976 Znak had disowned the remaining Sejm deputies. This was effectively the end of the Znak group of deputies in the Sejm. In spite of their failure it was the Znak deputies of the 1960s and early 1970s that Pope Jan Paweł II entertained at the primate's residence on his visit in 1979. No members of KOR were invited.<sup>10</sup>

#### 1.4 CATHOLIC WRITERS

As Miłosz has written:

The task of defining who is a Catholic writer is a hard one. Is he a man who belongs to a given denomination or one whose ideas, expressed in a literary form, are in agreement with Church dogma? Instead of losing ourselves in subtleties, we may apply a purely external criterion and call Catholic those writers who cooperate with Catholic magazines and publishing houses. Those writers have shown an obvious predilection for the historical novel, perhaps explainable by their longing for larger perspectives on human time.<sup>11</sup>

Only Hanna Malewska, Antoni Gołubiew and Teodor Parnicki, plus the public figure of Jerzy Zawieyski, were thought important enough for mention as Catholic literary figures by Miłosz. But there were others: Zofia Kossak, Jan Dobraczyński, Karol Bunsch, Roman Brandsteatter, Władysław Grabski, Kazimiera IIIakowiczówna, Jerzy Piechowski, Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina, Jerzy Krzysztoń, Andrzej Piotrowski, Zdisław Umiński, Maria Starzyńska, Marek Skwarnicki, Stanisław Stomma, Jerzy Turowicz. The trials and the dilemmas of Catholic writers are not the subject of this study. The

the issues they faced and chose to write about were of necessity very different from those of writers who chose to publish abroad or underground. Doubtless many Catholic writers felt they had occupied the moral high ground in declaring their allegiance. Almost all of them published in *Znak*, *Więź* and *Tygodnik Powszechny*. However, by publishing in these journals they indicated that they accepted the power of the Party and allowed their work to be subject to the censor. Writers who did not publish in these journals often regarded them as 'safe'.

As Miłosz warns, even where they were popular and translated into other languages, Catholic writers were generally 'behind' in their literary techniques and were often dependent upon French Catholic literature of a conservative or rightist slant for their literary models and political opinions.<sup>12</sup> In general when they were writing prose rather than poetry, Catholic writers often found their rationality inhibited by their Church stance: it was difficult to write inventively, out of a free-wheeling imagination and personal conviction (no matter how deeply held), when the institution of the Church had to be both represented and protected, and when its moral schema and political position were 'givens'. Before 1956 it was a rare writer who dared portray the clash between two kinds of 'good', between Catholic sanctity and Party loyalty, between the desire to enter heaven and the attempt to create a workers' paradise: after 1956 it was no longer a fit subject since the argument, if not won by the Catholics, had certainly been lost by the Party.

Michnik, a sensitive non-Catholic supporter of the best that the Church can do, has written that to try to divide Polish literary culture into Catholic and non-Catholic is both pointless and unnecessarily divisive:

As religion, Roman Catholicism may inspire, and has inspired, cultural diversity. But culture is one. There is no Catholic culture, Protestant culture, or non-believer's culture; there is only Polish culture. And it is precisely this culture - pluralistic, yet understood as a unity - that we must defend. We on the secular Left must defend this culture regardless of what the Church does. Let us say loud and clear: the confiscation of any book, even a religious book, we must treat as a confiscation of our own book. We must treat every act of police repression as repression aimed at us. We must defend every persecuted person as if he or she were our closest comrade. Only then will we be faithful to our ideals. All the rest is sham.<sup>13</sup>



For Michnik and most of the other revisionists and members of the secular left, the ideals of the Church were not a problem, even if the Church itself was. He has repeatedly stressed that contemporary Christian thought has had a huge impact on Polish intellectual life (even on the thinking of non-Catholic writers) and he has stressed that it would be difficult to over-estimate the role of Stefan Kisielewski, Hanna Malewska, Jerzy Turowicz, Jerzy Zawieyski, Stanisław Stomma, Antoni Gołubiew and Jacek Woźniakowski simply because they contributed to a culture that was broadly based and independent of official forms and norms. It is important to remember that although Polish national identity is often seen, and is certainly presented by the Church as being, indissolubly linked with Catholicism, Polish culture would be massively impoverished without its non-Catholic contributions.

### 1.5 REVISIONISTS

Isaac Deutscher wrote:

In the propaganda skirmishes against the USSR and communism, the ex-communist or ex-fellow traveller is the most active sharp shooter'.<sup>14</sup>

There is a bitter and undeniable truth in this, a truth which western leftist writers like Arthur Koestler and George Orwell, the ex-members of the British communist party, historians E.P. Thompson, Christopher Hill, Gwyn Alf Williams, Raymond Williams, the followers of the independent Italian socialist thinker and writer Antonio Gramsci, and a host of east-European ex-party members would recognise. Certainly the battle joined in Poland was not so much a simple confrontation between the moral authority of the Catholic Church and the police power of the state, but a subtle and only occasionally bloody war of manoeuvre between the Party and the dissident revisionists, members of KOR, their allies in the neo-positivist reaches of the church, politically active priests, Catholic writers and editors, the Znak deputies, and the liberal and ex-Party exiles. It must also be said that one of the prime allies of all the wide range of oppositionists was the Party itself. Party members found themselves persistently

undermined by the moral authority of the church, outmanoeuvred by oppositionist ex-members, out-organised by the underground publishing industry and KOR, outraged at the persistent provocations of the *milicja* and security services, lacking respect and self-respect, frustrated by the power and ambition of Moscow, alienated, misinformed and abused. Deprived of basic information about the activities of their government, their country and the world around them, Party members read whatever they could get their hands on, knowing that if it was written by 'the opposition' (émigrés, the Catholic hierarchy or by the dissident revisionists) it was far more likely to be truthful and accurate than the Party's own 'organs'.

Everyone active in public, literary or political life after the war was a part of the moral and political dilemma of Poland. Many chose active participation in public affairs, saving what could be saved of Poland for Poland. Others chose internal immigration or exile; a few chose permanent opposition, but in the early years those that showed their dissent did not avoid prison for very long. Many intellectuals worked with the new authorities grudgingly, but in the spirit of 'wait and see': Tadeusz Kotarbiński, Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz, Tadeusz Manteuffel, Kazimierz Wyka, Maria Ossowska and Stanisław Ossowski, Maria Dąbrowska, Leon Schiller, Antoni Słonimski, Jerzy Zawieyski. Those who became Party members or who lent their support in the early years, such as Leszek Kołakowski, Oskar Lange, Maria Hirsztowicz, Włodzimierz Brus, Krzysztof Pomian, Bronisław Baczko, Witold Kula, Kazimierz Brandys, Adam Ważyk, Władysław Bienkowski, Jerzy Andrzejewski, Edward Lipiński, Julian Przyboś, Wiktor Woroszyński, Jacek Bocheński, Bronisław Geremek, Jerzy Jedlicki, Adam Kersten and Stefan Amsterdamski, all believed that another variant than Soviet socialism could be developed in Poland and wanted to develop what Michnik has called an 'enlightened socialist despotism'.

The revisionists opposed passivity and internal exile, and they stressed activism and participation in public life. They had great faith in their ability to influence events, and believed that the party could be reformed. Their main idea was that enlightened and progressive people of ideas and culture should take over the party. Surprisingly, when it became possible to make critical comments on the government's literary policies, during the debates of 1954-55, and later in the years up to 1968, it was not the

Catholic writers like Zawieyski and Gołubiew who led the way, but the socialists and dissidents, the revisionists like Julian Pzyboś. The majority of oppositionist initiatives during the years 1956-68 originated with the revisionists rather than the steadfast oppositionists and anti-socialists of the Church or with the neo-positivists around *Znak*, *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Więź*, who had, after all, accepted censorship. From the late 1960s onwards the secular left struggled to make a connection with the powerful industrial working class and to develop a new method of approach. By this time many intellectuals in this circle had gone beyond revising Marxism and had distanced themselves from the Party.

After 1976 the majority of initiatives to combat the Party and the bureaucracy came not from the Church and its neo-positivist allies, but from the revisionist-descended KOR and the secular left. As ex-Party members moved further away from the Party and state publishing ventures, they began to publish in *Zapis* and made connection with writers like Jerzy Ficowski and the *Znak* group, Adam Stanowski, Władysław Bartoszewski, Bohdan Cywiński and Tadeusz Mazowiecki. Many of these people, revisionist ex-party people and Catholic neo-positivists alike, made alliance, not in the Church but in organising TKN, KOR and the underground journals of the late 1970s. They originated and disseminated dissenting points of view among the *inteligencja*. They took on the power of the courts, the police, the educational system. They promoted points of view among workers and the *inteligencja*, as well as among the Party membership which would later help to restore and revive independent civil life in Poland.

Revisionism, like neo-positivism, was a fragile entity, and the more social conflict became apparent in the 1960s the less tenable these two movements appeared. There were many similarities and points of contact between the neo-positivists and the revisionists. As Michnik put it:

To use a metaphoric comparison, if one considers the state organisation of the Soviet Union as the Church and Marxist ideological doctrine as the Bible, then revisionism was faithful to the Bible while developing its own interpretations, whereas neo-positivism adhered to the Church but with the hope that the Church would sooner or later disappear.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike the other political groupings the revisionists had an enormous influence on Polish learning, education, philosophy and literary culture, and they promoted political activism in a way that the Party and the Church did not. However, like the Catholic neo-positivists, the revisionists expected rights granted from above in response to sensible intellectual exchange. They were hampered by this and by the fact that they accepted and used, and were therefore limited by, the language of the Party, and by the party's acceptance of the USSR and, at least in the early years, by a sense of loyalty to the idea of Party discipline. The revisionists enjoyed a brief 'spring time' in 1956, but were broken and scattered by the anti-Semitic, anti-intellectual purges and expulsions of 1968 - events which severed the links between the Party and the revisionists and creative *inteligencja*.

## 1.6 POLONIA ABROAD

Any attempt to draw a map of post-war Polish thinking must register at least in passing the influence of Poles resident abroad. It would doubtless be interesting to study the literary reactions of Poles abroad to events within Poland, but such a study would have to gather material spread over every country and continent, and probably written in most of the major languages of the world, and remains, therefore, outside the scope of the present study.

In addition to the massive waves of Poles who had gone abroad before World War Two, there were soldiers of the Polish Army who had fought in the west and did not wish or were unable to return to post-war Poland, thousands of displaced persons, people who had left Poland with Mikołajczyk after the 1947 rigged elections, some 20,000 Poles of Jewish origin were forced out in 1968. There was also the powerless and outmanoeuvred remnant of the Polish Government-in-Exile, based in London, who provided a focus for a dwindling generation of aging Poles who invested it with lingering legitimacy.

Unlike right-wing groups in the rest of east-central Europe where the old order and the nobility had often been compromised by a readiness to 'do business' with the

Nazis, in Poland there had been almost no collaboration. Even the extremist parties of the right had fought against the Nazis and all could lay legitimate claim to unimpeachable patriotic credentials. In Poland the pre-war right was anti-Nazi, anti-Soviet and often anti-Semitic, so that by the end of the war there was no need to rethink the fundamental national and political values that underpinned Polish identity. Unlike the rest of Europe, where the traditional right wing felt a distant but compromising kinship with Fascism and Nazism, in Poland there was no crisis on the right. This confidence was backed up by the record of the Polish armed services (the fourth largest of the allied armies) in the fight against Nazism: fiercely nationalist, the Polish military acquitted itself magnificently in the campaign of September 1939, the Battle of Britain, Narvik, Tobruk, Monte Cassino, Falaise and Arnhem.

Among the various émigré cultural organisations pride of place doubtless goes to *Kultura*, a literary-political monthly published by the Institut Literacki in Paris under the editorship of Jerzy Giedroyc. Among its frequent contributors were: Czesław Miłosz, Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, Witold Gombrowicz, Leszek Kołakowski. This journal and these writers provided a focus for talent, dissent and information outside Party control. *Kultura* was read particularly among the Warsaw and Kraków university lecturers. Although the fact of the journal was very important for Polish literary and political culture, the journal was not sufficiently widely available to be influential except at third and fourth hand, and writers like Parnicki had to wait until Polish state publishers (who also read *Kultura*) were allowed to print them before they reached a popular audience.

Among the many émigrés who at various times exerted an influence on People's Poland through their writings, one would have to list: Miłosz, Kołakowski, Zygmunt Bauman, Jan Kot, Wat, Tadeusz Nowakowski, Konstanty Jeleński, Jerzy Peterkiewicz, Jerzy Stempowski, Józef Mackiewicz, Julian Tuwim, Witold Gombrowicz, Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, Mierosławski, Kazimierz Wierzyński, Marek Hlasko, Jan Lechoń. However, it must be said that the older generation of exiles and émigrés were petrified in their political attitudes and in their literature - they saw Poland as they remembered it or even as they imagined it under 'socialism'. They did not necessarily see it as it was or have any experience of the place after they left it - most could not return even

for visits - and this provoked hostility among young émigré Poles and the children of émigrés. There is now a younger generation of *diaspora* Polish writers, children of exiles and émigrés, who are bilingual, have been educated abroad, and who had no contact with Poland except through their parents' memories. There are many writers among the scattered *Polonia*, and it is possible to indicate only a few of the most prominent: Bogdan Czaykowski, Jan Darowski, Bolesław Taborski.

While the importance of the Polish exile and émigré community cannot be denied, Lipski has made the point that the anti-socialism of some of the émigré community was sometimes ill-advised and misinformed, a dangerous ally. For example, in July 1976 one hundred copies of a letter reached Poland from the extreme right-wing Catholic writer Jędrzej Giertych in London. Giertych claimed that all dissident activities in Poland were sponsored jointly as part of a plot between the intelligence services of the USA, West Germany, Israel and China as revenge for Soviet success in Angola and Cuba. While Lipski and others in KOR assumed this letter was a fake it turned out to be an 'authentic expression of the political thought of Jędrzej Giertych'.<sup>16</sup> Lipski has suggested that whether he knew it or not Giertych was assisted by the Polish security services.

## 1.7 NEW EVOLUTIONISM

In October 1976, while he was still in Paris, and just before he returned to Poland to take a key role in the newly formed KOR, Adam Michnik wrote a short essay entitled 'The New Evolutionism'. In that essay he said that since October 1956 there had been a profound hope in Polish society that 'socialism' could evolve. He identified two aspects of evolution: the revisionist and the neo-positivist.

He noted that the revisionists had believed that Soviet power could be humanised and democratised and that official Marxist doctrine was capable of assimilating contemporary arts and social sciences. He faced up to the fact that the revisionists were profoundly wrong, and that they had lost their battle to 'transform from within the doctrine and the Party in the direction of democratic reform and common sense'.

However, he also made the point that it was the revisionists who encouraged enlightened people with progressive ideas to lead the Party and it was the surviving revisionists and their evolutionist descendants of the next generation who in the 1970s forged links with the more progressive Catholics and social activists, put the established relationship between Church and Party under pressure and who obliged the hierarchy to re-think their attitude to independent social movements. In spite of the intellectual muscle wielded by the revisionists and by their neo-positivist allies it gradually emerged that they had made fundamental tactical errors in assessing their position in society and in dealing with the Party. Michnik wrote:

Revisionism had been tainted at its very source by the belief that the strivings and goals of the 'liberal' wing in the party apparatus were identical to the demands of the revisionist intelligentsia. I think that the revisionists' greatest sin lay not in their defeat in the intra-party struggle for power (where they could not win) but in the character of that defeat. It was the defeat of individuals being eliminated from positions of power and influence, not a set-back for a broadly based leftist and democratic political platform. The revisionists never created such a platform.<sup>17</sup>

By the mid 1970s the term revisionism was no longer applicable to the opposition: not only was the group broken by imprisonment, exile and expulsion from the Party, but the revisionists had come to realise that they could not revise or reform the Party from within, could not make it aware of the need for reform while the power of the USSR remained unshaken, and could not communicate anything from outside the Party using the language of the Party. In 1968 the hopes of the revisionists were dashed: by the time of the constitutional changes of 1975-76 the hopes of the neo-positivists in *Znak* had likewise been shown to be illusory. Both groups found themselves faced with a stark choice: they could co-operate with the Party or they could refuse. They realised that open and consistent criticism of the Party would earn them nothing more than absorption of their energies and eventually consistency of viewpoint with the authorities. To challenge the intraparty strategy of the revisionists and the muted criticism of the neo-positivists, it was necessary to create social solidarity outside the party through the struggle for the reform of the law and legal practice, through the expansion of civil liberties and human rights, and by steady and persistent pressure on

the government to withdraw its stranglehold on education, the media and on state-run society.

It was left to the surviving revisionists and neo-positivists, the writing fraternity, the furtive independent trades unionists, students and independent Catholic intellectuals to make the point that if the Party would not engage in dialogue with oppositionists, then society had no alternative but to go 'independent' of state sources of finance and build outside of established party and state structures. Revisionism and neo-positivism may have been finished as political movements, but their impulse (the reforming, humane, subtle, creative aspects of secular-left thought) was a powerful undercurrent throughout the 1970s and 1980s, informed the guiding principles of organisations like KOR, TKN, many of the dissident journals, and could be felt in the principles of the post-'socialist' Democratic Union party. The moral and political principles of the revisionists had a powerful impact on the Catholic church in the late 1970s.<sup>18</sup>

The New Evolutionists of the 1970s and 1980s did not address themselves to the authorities but to an independent public; they did not instruct the authorities on how to reform themselves but showed the public how to behave in the face of an unlicensed authority. In pointing out that the Party could always produce another revisionist movement from within its ranks whenever the going got rough, and that the aims of the New Evolutionists were gradual and slow change, Michnik wrote in 1976:

'New Evolutionism' is based on faith in the power of the working class, which, with a steady and un-yielding stand, has on several occasions forced the government to make spectacular concessions. It is difficult to foresee developments in the working class, but there is no question that the power élite fears this social group most. Pressure from the working classes is a necessary condition for the evolution of public life toward a democracy...The intelligentsia's duty is to formulate alternative programs and defend the basic principles. More precisely, I refer to those small groups of intellectuals who believe in continuing the traditions of the 'insubordinate' intelligentsia of the early 1900s - the tradition of writers such as Stanisław Brzozowski, Stanisław Wyspiański, Stefan Żeromski and Zofia Nałkowska. I feel solidarity with those traditions and those people, although I am the last person to overestimate the importance of their actions. But those voices, albeit weak and sporadic, are nevertheless authentic: they form an independent public opinion, with nonconformist attitudes and oppositional thought. This course is being followed by people from various traditions and social strata:



former revisionists (including the author of this article), former neo-positivists, and those who became ideologically aware after the events of 1968.<sup>19</sup>

The revisionists may not have created a broadly based leftist, democratic political platform, but it was precisely to overcome this error that KOR and TKN were founded, and, in order to make an even closer connection with the Polish industrial working class, that the intellectuals of these organisations, many of whom were writers, ex-revisionists and ex-Party members, became advisers to Solidarność in 1980-81.

#### NOTES

- 1 W.Woods, *Poland: Phoenix in the East*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972, pp.134-5.
- 2 J.Staniszkis, 'Evolution of Forms of Working Class Protest: Sociological Reflections on the Gdańsk-Szczecin Case', *Soviet Studies*, April 1981.
- 3 A.Piekarski, *Freedom of Conscience and Religion in Poland*, Interpress, 1979, pp.44-54.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p.59.
- 5 B.Szajkowski, *Next to God...Poland*, Pinter, London, 1983, p.19.
- 6 There were also: 29 episcopal commissions, 45 seminaries, 18,000 catechism centres, 15,792 catechism teachers, 20 vocational and secondary schools, a Catholic university in Lublin with over 2,000 full time students, a theological seminary and 8 major religious festivals. These figures are drawn from: A.Piekarski, *Freedom of Conscience and Religion in Poland*, 1979; B.Szajkowski, *Next to God...Poland*, 1983; *Kościół katolicki w polsce 1945-78*, Pallotinum, Warsaw, 1979; C.Tighe, 'The Church and State in Poland', *Monthly Review*, December 1986, pp.20-31.
- 7 C.Cviic, 'The Church', A.Brumberg (ed.), *Poland: Genesis of a Revolution*, Vintage, New York, 1983, p.307.
- 8 B.Cywiński, *Rodowody niepokornych*, Biblioteka Więzi, Warsaw, 1971, pp.262-64.
- 9 In addition, the Episcopal Commission, the Polish Secretariat for the Apostolate for the Sick, each Archdiocese, twenty five of the diocesan chapters, twelve diocesan centres, the Sisters of Our Lady of Loretto, the Reformed Carmelite Nuns, the Franciscan Friars, the Dominican Friars and the Divine Word Missionaries, and eight small Catholic organisations all have their own presses. For a detailed description of the size and operation of the Catholic publishing industry see: A.Piekarski, *Freedom of Conscience and Religion in Poland*, pp.151-164.
- 10 J.J.Lipski, *KOR: Workers' Defense Committee in Poland 1976-81*, University of

California, Berkeley, 1985, p.338.

- 11 C.Milosz, *History of Polish Literature*, University of California, Berkeley, 1983, p.504. Though post-war Poland is undoubtedly Catholic, it is as well to remember that there was nevertheless a significant Jewish contribution to literary and political life in the post-war years. While Catholic writers favoured the historical novel, Jewish writers seem to have preferred poetry and literary criticism. Adolf Rudnicki, Bolesław Leśmian, Julian Tuwim, Antoni Słonimski, Mieczysław Jastrun, Paweł Hertz, Roman Brandstaetter, Julian Strykowski and Artur Sandauer were all major literary figures who in the pre-war years, though they largely avoided specifically Jewish themes, had been attacked for 'judaising' the Polish language. In the post-war period, not forgetting the internationally renowned I.B.Singer and his brother Israel Singer (both of whom wrote in Yiddish and resided in the USA), we should also add, among others, the name of Kazimierz Brandys to the list of significant Polish Jewish writers. Błonski has hinted that Jewish involvement in socialist politics and literature in 1930s and 1940s sprang from the same roots: the ongoing crisis of the ghetto and 'the need to belong to a community'. Left wing politics, like Polish literature (as opposed to Zionism and Yiddish literature), appeared to be an 'eschatology of brotherhood'. Jan Błonski, 'Is there a Jewish School of Polish Literature?', in A.Polonsky ed., *Studies from Polin: From Stettin to Socialism*, Litman, London, 1993, pp.471-86. Also, in the same volume, see: M.C.Steinlauf, 'The Polish Jewish Daily Press'.
- 12 C.Milosz, *History of Polish Literature*, p.508.
- 13 A.Michnik, *The Church and The Left*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1993, p.157.
- 14 I.Deutscher, 'The ex-communist's conscience', (1957) in: C.Wright Mills (ed.), *The Marxists*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, pp.341-51.
- 15 A.Michnik, 'A New Evolutionism' (October 1976), *Letters from Prison and Other Essays*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1987, p.136.
- 16 A.Michnik, 'A New Evolutionism', *Letters from Prison*, p.137.
- 17 J.J.Lipski, *KOR: Workers' Defense Committee in Poland 1976-81*, pp.137-38.
- 18 *Ibid.*, pp.135-48.
- 19 *Ibid.*, pp.146-47.

## TWO

### WRITERS AND THE 'SOCIALIST' TAKE-OVER

State patronage of the arts does not restrict the autonomy of creative artists. All major decisions concerning cultural developments are taken by the state in cooperation with representatives of the groups concerned.

'State Patronage of the Arts', Ref.PF.VI.2-1, *Facts About Poland*, 1980.

Citizens of the Polish People's Republic have a right to enjoy cultural achievements and to participate creatively in the development of their national culture...The Polish People's Republic is concerned for the all-round development of scholarship, literature, and the arts, and surrounds with particular care the creative intelligentsia and those engaged in scientific, educational, literary and artistic work.

*The Constitution of the Polish People's Republic*, 1952.

- 2.1 writers 1938-45
- 2.2 the 'socialist' take-over
- 2.3 hacks and fellow travellers
- 2.4 the Party and the publishing industry
- 2.5 the Party and the writing profession
- 2.6 controlling professional structures
- 2.7 writers and the new order
- 2.8 Czesław Miłosz and *The Captive Mind*

## 2.1 WRITERS 1938-45

During the partitions Poland's poorly developed (and mainly gentry) civil society came to reside increasingly in the institution of the family, in the Catholic Church and in the literary life of the nation's language. Polish language and literature were of vital importance in resisting pressures on Polish identity. Writers, philosophers, anyone who managed to obtain an education and who still remained Polish, acquired a didactic national purpose. They took over the role of the absent political state. The intellectuals became, along with the Catholic Church, the political, moral and ideological life of Poland. It was during the partitions that the Polish word *wieszcz* came to mean not only a person inspired, a seer into the future, a genius of some kind, but also, in the hands of the great Romantic poet Mickiewicz (1798-1855), came to assume the meaning of national poet - that is a poet whose prime responsibility was to write for the nation, a poet who lived as he wrote, for the life of the nation. Polish literature perhaps inevitably became more national in its concerns than the Romantic literature of western Europe. As Zdzisław Najder said:

Talking about Polish literature and culture in general, one has constantly to repeat that it is almost devoid of the so called *bourgeois* element. It is traditionally a gentry culture.\* The origins of this phenomenon are very, very complex...When you talk about culture and cultural values in Poland, these values are always connected with the typical gentry code of behaviour: a code of honour, in which the most important notions are those of duty, of honour, of loyalty to your nation,

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\* The gentry: *szlachta*. Lords unto themselves, the *szlachta* saw the Polish state as the very embodiment of their 'Golden Liberty'. According to Wandycz, from the 16th century onwards they became an increasingly exclusive caste. By the end of the 16th century they probably totalled about 40,000 families, 700,000 persons, or 7-8 per cent of the population. P.Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, Verso, London, 1984, p.283. The word *szlachta* derives from the Old High German word *slacht* (modern German *geschlecht*), meaning race, ancestral descent, family. P.S.Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom*, Routledge, London 1992, p.31. *Szlachta* self interest, their right to veto, the difficulties of maintaining an elected monarchy, rendered Poland unable to defend itself against its rapacious neighbours. The privileged status of the *szlachta* was annulled by the partitioning powers in 1795, but this allowed the *szlachta* to make common cause with all levels of Polish society in a way that had been unthinkable before the partitions. *Kultura szlachecka* (noble ethos), with its sometimes contradictory ideals of equality, exclusivity, unanimity, unwavering individualism, resistance and hospitality, was to become a key feature in modern Polish style and identity. Their sense of Polishness, individualism and resistance gradually provided a focus for the Polish language and identity. See also: R.Okey, *Eastern Europe 1740-1985*, Hutchinson, London, 1986, p.26.

loyalty to your group. Much less important, sometimes virtually non-existent, are the notions of maintaining an economic standard, of preserving life for the sake of preserving life itself.<sup>1</sup>

As Paweł Hertz said, this model of poetic-national endeavour was to last from the partitions, almost unchanged, right up to the late 1950s:

Things which elsewhere were arranged in parliament, here, because of the lack of Polish national institutions and the great weight of the partitioning authorities, were arranged in journals and pushed their way into literature - particularly into poetry.<sup>2</sup>

After the failure of the 1863 uprising the Polish *inteligencja* became largely Positivist, and concentrated its energies on 'serious national literature and work' simply because there were few other outlets for its energies. Those who write about Poland often did so under disguise. Some writers saw this as a strait-jacket. Jan Lechoń pleaded: 'In Spring let me see only Spring. Not Poland.' The end of the First World War, the upheaval of the Russian revolution and the sudden restoration of Poland, for writers at least, meant freedom from the crushing weight of national responsibility. While writers felt themselves to be disorientated and cut adrift from the traditional Polish cultural landmarks, they were also free for the first time to explore new territory in Polish literature: in independent Poland they were released from the shackles of writing about 'Poland', of 'living in the national myth'.

One of the consequences of this release was that literature was seen as increasingly irrelevant to national life. However, between the wars Poland experienced an explosion of creative endeavour. In literature there was the young generation of the Skamander group - Jan Lechoń, Julian Tuwim, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz. With Polish independence, those who might normally have become frustrated provincial poets could turn to the new and rapidly expanding bureaucracy. The growing administrative class was influenced by this lively, nationalist and rather opportunistic intake and began to display signs of a 'mongrel Sarmatianism'\*; a new middle-class populist boorishness,

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\* *Sarmatianism*: The term seems to have been used perjoratively only after about 1733. 'The term...referred to alleged ancestors, the Sarmatians; the concept itself served as an ideology integrating

in its encounters with the art and literature of the new Poland. The arts between the wars were still largely unfunded and unsupported by the state, and inevitably there developed an artistic community that regarded the state, and was regarded by the state, with considerable suspicion.

This was a period when all the arts went through a massive experimental phase, reaching out to the avant-garde as well as back into the folk-culture of east-central Europe. Radio, film, theatre, architecture, all went through a period of brisk growth between the wars. Illiteracy, running at an average of 33 per cent, but as high as 76 per cent in parts of Galicia, was reduced by the introduction of compulsory primary education and there was a huge growth in independent out-of-school educational facilities organised by the farmers and peasants. There was also a massive increase in the circulation of newspapers in Polish, German, Czech, Ukrainian, Yiddish, Russian and Białorus. Museums, public libraries and the universities went through a massive expansion in this period. However, the institutes of learning produced more new members of the *inteligencja* than the society or the economy could absorb. Indeed, although the *inteligencja* seems to have increased from about 3.5 per cent (488,000; but 1,134,000 with dependants) of the population in 1921 to about 4.7 per cent in 1931, and then to 5.2 per cent in 1939, the 'market' for art works of all kinds seems to have shrunk considerably during the inter-war years. Any artist working in a non-representational or avant-garde style was likely to be marginalised.<sup>3</sup>

However, the arts made almost no impact on the country's political life. Nor were the arts a powerful force for social change when it came to Poland's undeveloped and backward rural districts. The writers and artists of independent Poland were a small and socially isolated segment of society, carried no political authority, had no political outlet, did not affect the alliance of Church and state or the interests of the remaining

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the multi-ethnic *szlachta* and put a specific stamp on it. Sarmatianism was more than a conservative landowners's outlook, anti-urban and anti-intellectual, characterised by superficial religiosity, a tendency towards economic waste and ostentatious luxury as well as arrogance of caste. Such traits were common to many a nobleman of seventeenth century Europe. Sarmatianism involved a view of Poland as a granary of Europe and a shield of Christendom against Turks and Tatars, but above all as the realisation of a superior form of government inspired by the Roman republic and based on the 'golden freedom'. P.S. Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom*, Routledge, London, 1992, p.89.

noble latifundians, or the growth of foreign finance capital from France and Italy, the investment plans of central government, the traditional power of the military or the entrepreneurial plans of the slowly growing middle class. They were politically and economically powerless. As utilitarian attitudes prevailed, writers had a particularly difficult time of it. Julian Tuwim took refuge in satirical catastrophist pessimism before departing for the USA where he stayed until 1946 and became a devout supporter of the post-war Polish regime. Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński turned to right-wing politics and nationalism in his search for certainty and a place in the Polish scheme of things. A number of Polish writers sympathetic to socialism took refuge in the Soviet Union: Antoni Słonimski, who wrote exuberant lyrical verse, departed for the Soviet Union in 1932, only to be disappointed by what he saw; Bruno Jasiński (1901-39) wrote futurist poetry before heading for Moscow where he became a member of the executive of the Soviet Writers' Union.

In reaction to the rise of Nazism in Germany and the continuing power of the military régime in Poland, many writers in the late 1920s and early 1930s turned to the KPP (Communist Party of Poland) and gave themselves to the 'new faith'. Aleksander Wat was one of them. He wrote, describing his feelings about the Poland of the late 1920s:

...my malice from that time, that terrible obstinate malice, came from a sort of intellectual hoodlumism. From a feeling that though the outward forms had been preserved, inside everything had been eroded, removed, cleaned out. It turned out that this was more than I could bear. I closed my eyes to it. I locked up all my ideas, everything. I threw the key into the abyss, the sea, the Vistula, and I threw myself into the only faith that existed then. There was only one alternative, only one global answer to negation. The entire illness stemmed from the need, that hunger for something all-embracing. In fact communism arose to satisfy certain hungers. The phenomenon was inevitable in so far as powerful hungers had arisen in modern societies, even in those of the nineteenth century. One of those hungers was for a catechism, a simple catechism. That sort of hunger burns in refined intellectuals much more than it does in the man on the street...<sup>4</sup>

The Polish writers in the Soviet Union were joined in 1938 by the membership of the KPP seeking refuge, at Stalin's invitation, from the Polish police and from the threat

of Nazi invasion. Perhaps if the writers and the KPP had taken note of the earlier death of party journalist Tadeusz Źarski (1896-1934) at the hands of the NKVD, they would not have accepted the invitation. At first Polish writers and the KPP were treated with respect, even welcomed. But as soon as they began to organise themselves they found that the Soviets did not trust them. The Polish Writers' Union was reorganised for them by the Soviets and was absorbed as a subsection of the Ukrainian Writers' Union, and as such had little or no freedom of action and no access to its own finances. K.S.Karol realised that the Soviet mistrust of the Poles went very deep:

I am called *polski pan*, even though I have explained a thousand times that in Poland, anybody is a *pan*, that it doesn't constitute a title, but a term equivalent to 'Mr' or 'Monsieur'. My colleagues...don't want to believe me. They are victims of a stupid propaganda campaign against the *panska Polcha* [the Poland of the *pans*] which has persuaded them that in Poland it is only the rich and the oppressors who are called *pan*.<sup>5</sup>

Very soon Soviet suspicion hardened into open mistrust and the arrests, deportations to the labour camps and executions began. The Party proletarian poets Ryszard Sztande (1897-1938) and Witold Wandurski (1891-1938), the party journalists Jan Hempel (1877-1937) and Julian Leszczyński (1899-1939, better known as communist leader Leński) were killed, along with perhaps 5,000 other Party members in the Soviet purge of the KPP; a further 14,000 Poles are thought to have been killed in the purges that followed the Bukharin trial. The writer Bruno Jasiński was arrested, sentenced to 15 years in the camps but died of typhus in transit to a camp in Kolyma, nobody knows exactly when or where; his wife was sentenced to 10 years. Aleksander Wat was marked for life by the experience of the GULAG. Others, like Broniewski who had become a communist without joining the Party and had taken refuge in the USSR in 1939 only to be arrested along with Wat, raged from prison:

Why should a revolutionary poet  
Rot to death in this Soviet hole?<sup>6</sup>



But Broniewski knew that life with the Nazis would not be much easier, found some way to stay 'on the left', and wrote an ode to Stalin as late as 1949.

While the crimes of the Nazis in Poland are well known, those of the Soviets are less well publicised. The Soviets waged war on the Polish *inteligencja* in whatever form they could lay hands upon it. Thus when the NKVD massacred 15,000 captured Polish soldiers, including a large number of the Polish officer Corps in April 1940, it was seen not only as a strike against the military but an attempt to wipe out an important part of the Polish *inteligencja*. Of 230,000 Polish troops taken prisoner by the Soviets in September 1939, only 82,000 survived to join Anders' army. In the first two years of the war the NKVD and the other 'organs' of the state deported or imprisoned approximately 1.8 million Polish civilians: of these over 688,000 perished in Siberian settlements and the GULAG. Approximately 112,000 Poles eventually left the Soviet Union with General Anders' army. Some 600,000 were not allowed to return to Poland until after the war; 30,000 did not return until 1959; unknown numbers were forced to accept Soviet passports, and there are still thought to be 1½-2 million Poles in the territory of the former USSR.<sup>7</sup>

The writing community that remained in Poland also suffered its wartime casualties. Among many others, the lyric poet Józef Czechowicz (1903-39) died in a bombing raid on his home village near Lublin; the poet, critic and translator Tadeusz 'Boy' Żeleński (1874-1941) was shot by the Nazis when they occupied Lwów; Andrzej Trzebiński (1922-43) died in a Nazi street *akcion*. In the Warsaw uprising alone some 250,000 died (including the cream of the Warsaw *inteligencja* sympathetic to the AK and the London government), 550,000 were sent to the camps, 150,000 sent on forced labour. Among those who perished in Warsaw were the poets Stanisław Stroiński (1921-44), Tadeusz Gajcy (1922-44), Karol Irzykowski (1873-1944), Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński (1921-44) and Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski (1885-1944). Other writers died during the war: Emil Zagadłowicz (1888-1941), Tytus Cyżewski (1885-1945) and Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska (1894-1945) died in Manchester.

Although poets suffered very heavily, the war also brought to an end the experimental fiction of the inter-war years, fiction that was just beginning to free itself of the overwhelming burden of living within the established national literary tradition.

Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (1885-1939) introduced a feverish eroticism into his analysis of the sometimes fascistic impulses and inner life of the *inteligencja*. It was he who stated most clearly and explored most fervently the problems of the independent Polish literary community. He was born in Warsaw, brought up in the village of Zakopane and studied painting at the Kraków Academy of Fine Arts. He was a close friend of the anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski and travelled with him to India, Ceylon, Australia and New Guinea. In 1914, as a Russian citizen, he had been compelled to return to Europe. He had enlisted in an officer's training school, took up a commission in an elite Russian regiment and was decorated with the Order of St Anne for bravery. Instead of shooting him in the 1917 revolution his troops elected him political commissar. In spite of this Witkiewicz remained opposed to Marxism (along with most contemporary philosophy), and preferred to develop his theatre of Pure Form, his interest in hallucinogenic drugs, and his Catastrophist perception that humanity in the twentieth century was heading for unmitigated disaster with 'happiness for all'.

Those who had read Witkiewicz's massive novel *Nienasycenie* (Insatiability, 1930) knew that he was acutely aware of the problems of Poland's geographical and political position, of the precise nature of the Polish *inteligencja* and its roots, and of what lay in store for Poland under the rule of the Nazis and the cultural commissars from the east. In this novel Witkiewicz had satirised the *inteligencja*, the philosophy of Marxism, and the provincial boorishness that he predicted the Soviets would find and manipulate in Polish society. He showed a nation ruled over by a brilliant dictator called Dirty Face, an effete, bored and decayed gentry at the head of a primitive country that had fallen prey to a mysterious eastern philosophy and to the devastating effects of a pill of well-being called Murti-Bing. The Chinese Army, having subdued the Russians, approaches the Polish border. Dirty Face, famed for his ability to maintain neutrality, instead of fighting agrees to let the enemy behead him with full ritual honours. Poland is allowed to continue as it was, except that now social life is determined by the pill of Murti-Bing and by the Ministry for the Mechanisation of Culture. For the artistic community Witkiewicz's suicide on the evening of 17 September 1939, upon hearing news of the Russian invasion and partition of Poland,

drew a line under the social and cultural experiment in the life of the independent nation.

Bruno Schulz (1892-1942), through the magical and brilliantly effective prose of his two short novels *Sklepy Cynamonowe* and *Sanatorium pod Klepsydrą* (Cinnamon Shops, 1934, The Sanatorium under the Sign of the Hourglass, 1937) had explored his own sado-masochism and relations with his father and related these to the changing pattern of familial and religious orthodoxy in the face of the new industrial society growing up in the oil fields around the rural and mainly Jewish town of Drohobycz. And these in turn were related to the mythical aspects of national and personal identity that grew up in inter-war Poland. Schulz was interested in tracing personality as far as possible in national identity myths. He wrote:

To what genre does *Cinnamon Shops* belong? How should it be classified? I think of it as an autobiographical narrative. Not only because it is written in the first person and because certain events and experiences from the author's childhood can be discerned in it. The work is an autobiography, or rather spiritual genealogy, a genealogy par excellence in that it follows the spiritual family tree down to those depths where it merges into mythology, to be lost in the mutterings of mythological delirium. I have always felt that the roots of the individual spirit, traced far enough down, would be lost in the matrix of myth. This is the ultimate depth; it is impossible to reach farther down.<sup>8</sup>

Schulz, whose work, like Franz Kafka's, had its roots in Jewish tradition as well as in the atmosphere of the old Austro-Hungarian provinces, found sympathetic resonances in the thinking of Witkiewicz, Gombrowicz and Maria Dąbrowska and it seemed he was certain to achieve a wider audience when war broke out. Schulz was caught outside the Drohobycz ghetto and shot by an SS officer in 1942.

Witold Gombrowicz (1904-69) satirised the 'infantilism' of the decayed Polish nobility and the boorishness and mental poverty of the new middle class, exposing meticulously the childishness that lurked in *szlachta* and *inteligencja* attitudes and postures. For Gombrowicz Poland was fatally obsessed by noble myths about itself. For him it was the place where Europe drew to an end, where the cultural and political forms of the east and west met and softened each other, where Form and Degradation

had made a great compromise to create Polish culture. It was a place in need of the sharpest realism, but which, because of its history, was dominated instead by the Romantic tradition. Gombrowicz took it as his personal task to break free from this historico-cultural complex, to cease being a Pole in his writing. He wanted to prise the Poles free of Poland and 'local' Polish obsessions so that they would become 'simply human beings'.

Everything was effaced, disintegrated...Poland, deprived of those great cities (and their bourgeoisie) where life can be concentrated and complicated, where it can arise and flourish, had a rural, peasant culture, yes, a culture represented by squires and priests. The nobleman sitting in his farmstead made the peasant do the work, and the village priest was the oracle. This feeling of formlessness tortured the Poles, but at the same time it gave them a strange sense of liberty. It was one of the basic causes of their admiration for their 'Polishness'...Of course there was a Polish form - a fairly obvious one, Sarmatian style! But it was not very substantial, it already contained a destructive fragility.<sup>9</sup>

*Ferdydurke* (1938), his summation of these themes, caused a massive scandal when it was first issued, but its impact and its insights were overtaken by the outbreak of war which found Gombrowicz in Argentina. After the war Gombrowicz was to become a regular contributor to *Kultura*, in which his scandalously un-Polish and remarkably self-centred 'diaries' were to appear. His first entry (dated 1953) in the published version of the diary was a calculated affront to the inherited tradition of literary Polishness:

Monday  
Me  
Tuesday  
Me  
Wednesday  
Me  
Thursday  
Me<sup>10</sup>

Although he did not return to Europe until the 1960s, and never returned to Poland, his influence is strong among contemporary writers and can clearly be seen in the concerns

of Wiesław Myśliwski's *Palac* (The Palace, 1970) and its engagement with the rural life and the notion of the estate.

The trio of Witkiewicz the visionary iconoclastic drug-taker, Schulz the masochist Jewish provincial art teacher, and Gombrowicz the sometime homosexual satirist, represented the most experimental forms of art, the most hard-headed attitudes to national identity and myth, and the most outrageous lifestyles available to the Polish *inteligencja*. To a great extent their work was lost to the wartime generation. Their perceptions about Polish life and letters, and their development of Polish prose and fiction had to wait until the mid 1970s before interest in them could revive.

By the end of 1945 the Polish state had moved one hundred miles westwards to occupy (or re-occupy) territory roughly coincidental with old Piast Poland. One-fifth of the Polish population were dead, the intellectual centres of Warsaw and Poznań had been smashed and their populations killed, dispersed or re-located: the old cultural centres of Wilno and Lwów had been abandoned to the Soviets; the new Poland sat on the ruined German cities of Danzig (Gdańsk), Stettin (Szczecin), Oppeln (Opole), Breslau (Wrocław) - all of which were so badly damaged that it would be the mid-1960s before reconstruction would make any significant impact on their lunar landscapes. The pre-war *inteligencja* and the professions had almost ceased to exist. Even without the arrival of 'socialism', Polish cultural life could never be the same again.

## 2.2 THE 'SOCIALIST' TAKE-OVER

It is important to see the wide-ranging changes that took place in the working life of Polish writers after the war against the background of the 'socialist' take-over.

In December 1945, when the PPR (Polish Workers' Party) held its first national congress, it was widely thought that with the development of 'national communism', Gomułka's 'Polish road to Socialism' was an opportunity to create something that was neither capitalist, nor communist, but rather a uniquely Polish version of socialism. Minc, who was at that time a member of the Politburo and Minister for Trade and

Industry, led all those taking part to believe that this was the case. Only with the first national economic plan of 1947-9 (Minc's brainchild) did it become clear that the PPR had neither the imagination nor the licence from Moscow to do anything so bold. The PPR began to pattern cultural and economic life on the Soviet model.

By January 1946 all enterprises employing more than fifty workers per shift were nationalised without payment of compensation. In 1947 the Party launched the *bitwy o handel* (battle for trade), and by April over 7,300 enterprises had been nationalised; a further 5,870 had been confiscated by the end of 1948. The 1946-47 *reforma walutowa* (currency reform) and the 1948 *reforma bankowa* (banking reform) made independent banking virtually impossible and withdrew licences from smaller banks. Between 1947 and 1949 the number of privately owned industrial enterprises dropped from 19,800 employing 171,400 people, to 10,600 employing 84,800; in the same period the number of private retail outlets fell from 117,000 to 69,800; private wholesale outlets dropped by about a third; yet the private sector still contributed 21 per cent of total wholesale turnover. As a result of a shortage of skilled labour the government began to print excessive amounts of paper money in an attempt to attract workers into industry by offering higher wages. By the end of 1948 inflation was running at 19.8 per cent per annum (officially). At the same time the inefficiency of the state-led economy had already produced massive shortages of staple foodstuffs which the government aggravated by keeping prices low. The result was speculation, hoarding, profiteering and a burgeoning black market. In June 1947 the government launched a campaign against profiteering and threatened speculators with fines and terms of five years in prison. The government refused to open up the economy to any kind of free-market adjustment. Instead it prosecuted 69,000 businessmen for sharp practice and sent 788 to labour camps for retailing at inflated prices or for selling stolen goods.<sup>11</sup> Even before the 1947 elections there were possibly 100,000-150,000 people in prison for 'opposition', speculation, profiteering or membership of the AK; 50-100 death sentences were listed every month in *Głos Ludu*. In February 1948 the PPR sacked the Central Planning Board and set a new board the task of implementing a faster expansion of heavy industry, higher economic growth rates, a much accelerated rate of capital accumulation and a lower priority for consumption. By the end of 1949 a

massive apparatus of legal control and disincentives to private and individual enterprise had been established.

The PPS-PPR 'socialist' and 'communist' alliance rigged the 1946 referendum to the disadvantage of the PSL (Polish Peasant Party). The PSL is thought to have had over 600,000 members and was bigger than all the other parties put together. In 2,004 of the 11,070 voting districts PSL monitoring showed that 83.54 per cent of the electors had voted in their favour, yet when the results were announced the result went against the PSL. The PPS-PPR alliance continued against a background of rampant thuggery. At the January 1947 election to the Sejm 142 PSL candidates were arrested and a million voters were disenfranchised. In ten of the 52 electoral districts opposition candidates were simply struck from the ballot sheet. The PPS-PPR gave itself 80.1 per cent of the vote and 394 seats. The PSL won only 10.3 per cent of the vote and only 28 seats.<sup>12</sup> Many suspected that the ballot had been rigged but few would have believed that the PPS-PPR had exactly reversed the real electoral returns. Harassed, blackmailed, followed everywhere by the security services, Stanisław Mikołajczyk, the leader of the PSL, found himself and his party totally excluded from the government and rightly concluded that under these circumstances his personal safety could no longer be guaranteed. He left Poland in October 1947 and shortly afterwards the PSL was forcibly amalgamated with the remaining minority parties to become the ZSL (United Peasant Party), a token and utterly powerless opposition.

Increasing Soviet unease at the international pattern of events commonly called the Cold War doubtless put additional pressure on the Polish leadership. The development of Marshal Aid and the Truman Doctrine, the creation of the Cominform in 1947, the growing Soviet dispute with Yugoslavia that led to a general denunciation of 'national communism' and the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform in 1948 were all part of the unfolding power struggle taking place within the PPR. Władysław Gomułka was seen as too independent from Moscow, and unwilling to push through straightforward Stalinist economic and political changes. In September 1948 Gomułka was pushed out of his posts as General Secretary to the PPR and Vice-Premier, to be replaced by the Stalinist Bolesław Bierut. Later Gomułka and two of his associates, Zenon Kliszko and Marian Spychalski, were arrested and accused of 'right

deviationism', 'nationalism' and plotting with agents of the west. The PPR, between September and December 1948, expelled 50,000 supporters of Gomulka; the PPS expelled 82,000. Gomulka's surviving minor supporters in positions of responsibility found themselves suddenly demoted to menial posts.

In December 1948 the PPR called a special 'unification' congress for the following March. There it announced that the PPR was to merge with the PPS. There was enormous resistance to the idea from the PPS rank and file, many of whom were survivors of the pre-war party. They had survived the worst that the Nazis and Stalin had done, and had lived on as an underground organisation, moving steadily to the left throughout the war. In spite of Stalin's efforts the PPS had played an important part in wartime resistance and in the Warsaw Uprising and had emerged from the war to gain substantial support from industrial workers in 1945-6. The PPS was treated abysmally by the PPR from the end of the war. In the amalgamation of the two parties twelve PPS members were removed from the Central Executive Council, another twelve from the Supreme Council; in the next three years nearly 260,000 PPS members and protesting PPR members were expelled as the new PZPR cleansed itself of 'unreliable elements'. Simultaneously the PZPR announced its intention to liquidate capitalist elements by a programme of enforced agricultural collectivisation and unremitting class struggle in the cities. This was, however, little more than a rhetorical flourish; the Party never did implement full collectivisation and its own ideological and cultural inabilities prevented it from pursuing or even identifying class enemies with any accuracy. By the end of 1949 the 'opposition' parties PSL and SL had been forcibly amalgamated to form the ZSL. With the appearance of a tame opposition and a 'united' party of government, Poland had become a one-party state.

By the start of 1950 the administrative and economic apparatus needed to maintain the new régime in power was in place and the Party began to redistribute National Income with decisions to build steelworks, chemical plants, to develop coal mines and power plants, all based on the outdated and ill-considered Soviet industrialisation plans.



### 2.3 HACKS AND FELLOW TRAVELLERS

By 1945 the writer in what had been east-central Europe, but which with the descent of the Iron Curtain had become eastern Europe, faced a situation of incredible complexity in which cultural sensibilities and political loyalties were stretched in several directions. In Poland the literary culture was rooted in the values of the *szlachta* (gentry) and in the nationalist resistance movements, the secret codes and language of the partitions and occupation years. The re-orientation involved, now that it was no longer possible to be openly anti-Semitic, anti-Russian, anti-socialist and now that all work, commissions, publication, trades union membership, domestic accommodation and pensions came through state patronage, was massive. Although writers were not happy with the idea of censorship and the UB (Department of Security) they felt that in order to establish their state on its new territory these things were a necessary evil which would in time (as the theory had it) wither away to nothing. Writers were surprisingly willing to give 'socialism' a chance. In the manifesto of the PKWN (Polish Committee of National Liberation, the provisional Moscow-backed 'socialist' government) published in Lublin on 22 July 1944, it was announced that the new government of Poland intended to democratise culture and offer the *inteligencja* particularly favourable conditions, 'special protection'. This vague announcement was designed to attract the support of a wide range of left and left-sympathetic Poles. And the writers believed that they would now reap all the benefits of 'rational redistribution', of being recruited to build a new Poland, of being necessary to a new social order. At the same time they reaped the ambiguous national, social, artistic and economic benefits of belonging to a profession that had always been spiritually powerful, but politically weak. As Andrzej Szczypiorski wrote much later, echoing the sentiments of Aleksander Wat:

Artists are people inclined to fideism. Artists have to believe in something, otherwise they cannot be artists. Having, not without reason, lost their faith in democratic principles and in humanist civilisation that had effectively failed to oppose Hitler's tyranny, the intellectuals began feverishly to search for a new faith. They found it in the doctrine of collective living, scientific forecasting of the future, in the Hegelian spirit of history that comes from the East. The decline of

the world of values that had bred Hitlerism was undeniable. The spiritual vacuum in the Polish graveyard could not last indefinitely. Stalinism filled that vacuum.<sup>13</sup>

In pre-war Poland literature and the other arts had largely been unsubsidised. The 'socialists' offered an enormously enhanced financial and social position to artists of all kinds. For many this was the chance to create a stable and secure home life and build an artistic reputation within a profession that was clearly of great importance morally, socially and politically.

A significant number of writers sensed the opportunities that the new regime offered and genuinely wanted to be a part of rebuilding the new Poland. Some returning writers had spent some or all of the war in the USSR, under the watchful eyes of the ZPP (Związek Patriotów Polskich, Union of Polish Patriots), the political officers of Berling's army, and the ever present NKVD. For many of these there can be no generous explanation of their support for the incoming regime. They had spent the war in Lwów, Wilno and central Asia, had survived the Soviet occupation, imprisonment, the GULAG, deportations: they had witnessed and experienced the Soviet regime in action. They knew that there would be no Soviet liberation of Poland, merely 'liberation'. Those who were to become the founders of the revamped ZLP (Polish Writers' Union), the adherents of *socrealizm*, the architects of Poland's new cultural policies, their motives in supporting the new regime must forever remain mysterious, since even those who might be judged loyal party hacks had suffered along with the most experimental writers at the hands of the Soviets: Aleksander Wat, Mieczysław Jastrun and Adam Ważyk had all been members of the Party before the war; Władysław Broniewski had been a fellow traveller before the war; Leon Kruczkowski and Jerzy Putrament joined the Party during the war.

Also it was not unusual to find writers of the younger generation who joined the Party in the immediate post-war years: Mieczysław Jastrun, Julian Przyboś, Paweł Hertz, Adolf Rudnicki, Julian Strykowski, Jerzy Andrzejewski, Tadeusz Borowski, Jan Kott, Kazimierz Brandys, Tadeusz Konwicki, Leszek Kołakowski, Stefan Żółkiewski. They took up the challenge to revolutionise Polish literary culture. These people were a very small group within the Polish *inteligencja*, and a minute group

within Polish society as a whole, but they regarded themselves as representatives of the future and hoped by the power of their example to persuade others to give their support to the new regime. Some, like Tuwim, Słonimski, Iwaszkiewicz, Gałczyński made it clear that they were prepared to work with the Party, and in return a number were even given official appointments: Czesław Miłosz worked as cultural attaché in the USA and France 1946-51, Przyboś spent 1947-51 as a diplomat in Switzerland, Pruszyński spent 1948-50 as a diplomat in Holland, and Putrament worked as a diplomat in France 1945-50.

Yet even among those writers who joined the Party, offered it their support, or who simply refused to publish, there was a realisation that whatever happened in Poland depended on what happened in the Soviet Union, and that whatever Polish 'socialists' might say for public consumption, they were Poles first and 'socialists' second. Juliusz Żuławski said:

It was complicated. I believe that many Polish communists were afraid of Russia and some acted in a double way: they wanted it to be seen that they were very good communists, but at the same time they were also Poles, and they also tried to preserve what they could of the Polish identity. Many Polish communists acted this way. Double thinking, double acting. Of course they mouthed communist propaganda, but behind that they tried not to spoil everything. In Poland this was especially the case, much more so than in other communist countries.<sup>14</sup>

There can be little doubt that, professional considerations aside, simple selfishness played a major part in the decision as to whether or not, and to what degree, to side with the Party. To an astonishing degree these people failed to realise that by accepting Party directives and the development of the correct line and attitude to 'present reality' they cut themselves off from the respect and affection of the bulk of the Polish readership, turned themselves into mouthpieces for a party that regarded Marxism (if it thought about the matter at all) as a rigid dogma rather than a subtle interpretative system - a system ill-adapted by Lenin and Stalin for humane and sensitive government. In the eyes of the Polish nation 'Party' writers and fellow travellers were in grave danger of failing to put human understanding, perception and investigative faculties at the forefront of their literary work. The difficulties of their chosen path

were further compounded by the fact that by and large the leadership of the post-war Party, though they might be interested in writers, were not greatly interested in literature.

The Polish *inteligencja* were in a very uncomfortable position by 1945. Their history and their ambition, their place within Polish society had certainly contributed to Poland's plight, and it seemed they would be able to contribute precious little to Poland's future. Indeed they felt themselves to be under attack: their past was discredited by the partitions, by the failure of the revolutionary left and by the failure of Polish democracy. Their future was blighted by the threat of an alien and anti-nationalist 'socialism'. In the post-war years the survivors of the old class of the *inteligencja* became isolated, atomised and paralysed, bereft of initiative, deprived of material for thought, undermined in their sense of morality, barred from political power or national leadership. However, contrary to expectations the Party did not destroy the *inteligencja* - instead it encouraged a new party-sponsored *inteligencja* to grow and made laws designed to protect it. However, at the same time the state also tried to ensure that the *inteligencja* remained politically powerless. As Hirszowicz put it in 1980:

The geography and sociology of culture eliminated the figure of the old *intelligent*. He has been replaced by the professional, who for better or worse operates within a strictly designed division of labour. The Polish intelligentsia ceased to exist with the Second World War...Today in Poland the intelligentsia exists on a verbal level, partly in customs, in the style of life, in bric-à-brac, in the home atmosphere. That is all. It does not exist in the social structure or in the social life at large.<sup>15</sup>

Given the chance many of the surviving *inteligencja* figures would have overthrown their present in favour of a return to the pre-war days of simple martial virtues and the patriotic rule of Piłsudski. By 1945 a sizable portion of Poland's surviving *inteligencja* were involved in resistance to 'socialism' as part of an exercise that was deeply conservative, even retrogressive.

However, socialism did seem to offer a way out of the pointlessness and confusion that seemed to afflict the world in general, but Poland in particular. An alliance with

Moscow was perhaps the only way to preserve the Polish state. The development of Polish society out of its long semi-feudal history, out of the horrors of the second world war, towards a new, modern industrial future was bound to be complex and was bound to offend traditional *inteligencja* moral values, and in this it probably made little difference whether that development was towards socialism or towards capitalism. On balance, that this development was in the hands of Russian-backed 'socialists' was more offensive than the alternative. Even so, many of the *inteligencja* were inclined to take malicious delight in the 'socialist' persecution of the materialist and unimaginative bourgeoisie and the exclusion of the old nobility from public life. They saw no allies in the peasantry who resisted modernisation - even though it came in the form of collectivisation, saw no great friend either in that property-owning ally of the military - the Church, nor in the radio propaganda broadcasts of the western 'allies' who had abandoned them at Yalta.

For many the 'socialists' were seen as state and nation builders who were determined to create a strong unified Poland without national and ethnic minorities, within strong borders and with strong alliances. Polish civil society, rooted so tenaciously in the Church, literature, the Polish language and in clandestine organisation directed towards the national and increasingly nationalist struggle to re-establish the nation, had given Poles no picture of political life beyond the restoration of the Polish state. A very large number of people accepted 'socialism' in 1945 simply because they were exhausted by years of bloodshed and privation and had no clear idea of any other alternative. By 1945 many Poles felt they had run the gamut of twentieth century human and political possibilities in a very short space of time; many saw the 'socialist' regime as a way forward, as a way of ensuring the nation against German aggression. Some saw the 'nationalist deviationism' of Gomułka as preserving the nation against the Russians too.

Between the wars the alternative to the military order had not been the possibility of democracy represented within the tiny *inteligencja*, but rather, the growth of central planning and 'rational redistribution'. The implementation of this option after 1945 was not the work of writers and artists dreaming of transplanting western-style bourgeois democracy to east-central Europe, but the work of a tiny marginalised portion of the

*inteligencja* who had taken the option of revolutionary politics and who had survived the murderous intent of the NKVD. Throughout the post-war period Polish intellectuals, bureaucrats and revolutionaries blended in their own way the teleology of nationalism and socialism to forge a formula and process of state-run 'socialist' redistribution. In spite of problems with their attitude to the Soviet Union, many of the post-war Polish *inteligencja* were young and left-leaning, keen to take part in national politics for the first time. They did not see entry into the *biurokracja* as 'selling out'. A significant number of the *inteligencja* (including a number of prominent writers) were inclined to see socialism as offering a road out of Poland's long history of defeat, a way out of Poland's culturally entrenched anarchism, a way round the culturally and socially entrenched problem of poverty and lack of investment, a way to avoid a repetition of the semi-fascist military government that had ruled between the wars, a way to guarantee Poland's borders.

While aware of the specific nature of Soviet style 'socialism' and the supposed cultural and political break this represented, there were doubtless many who nevertheless felt that socialism of some kind was the slightly accelerated end towards which societies of all kinds, but particularly those of east-central Europe, were destined to travel. The situation of these states at the end of the war was seen as the foreshortening of an inevitable trajectory set long before the war. War itself was seen as a way of breaking apart the old values. In its scale and disruption of the old order it was far more effective than show trials, five year plans, collectivisation and purges. In this way socialism was an idea that appealed to dissatisfied and frustrated intellectuals and depended upon them for its impetus and its legitimation, its moral impetus and its visionary input. For all these people, post-war Poland was probably as good as they were going to get, but the particularities and peculiarities of Polish history could not but make this transition very ambiguous.

## 2.4 THE PARTY AND THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

In describing the literary set-up of 'socialist' Poland it is important to realise that

accurate information about the immediate post-war years is difficult to come by, and in order to establish just how well controlled the print and publishing industries were it is necessary to gather materials across the whole range of the post-war period.

By May 1945 the Nazis had destroyed more than half of Poland's reprographic equipment and 98 per cent of radio broadcasting machinery. More than 4,000 journalists and broadcasters had perished. Because of the extent of the social, human and material damage caused by the Nazis it was inevitable that a high degree of centralisation would be necessary in reconstruction. From the start the 'socialists' stressed that the media should be aware of the continuing external threat to Poland's existence, should foster a spirit of national unity, and that pluralism, even in journals run by the Church and by Catholic societies, should always be in harmony with Marxist-Leninist ideology. All matters relating to publication were overseen by the Wydział Kultury KC (Central Committee Department of Culture) and the Wydział Prasy KC (Central Committee Department of the Press) who worked through the MKiS (Ministry of Culture and Art) and through that Ministry's Rady AW (Panel on Arts and Publishing).

To a considerable degree the creation of the post-war publishing industry was influenced and shaped by the experience of war-time publishing for the PPR and the AL in the Soviet Union. The initial 'Implements of the Dissemination of Culture' were set up in the late 1940s and expanded from central institutions into regional centres in the 1950s. The 1960s saw the expansion of the entire cultural apparatus, not only through institutions and organisations, but also through a series of national campaigns: 'Building a New Culture for the Happiness of the Fatherland, for the Consolidation of World Peace: Days of Enlightenment, Books and the Press - May 1951'; 'Review of the Cultural Activities of the Working People - Man - Work - Creation'; '1974 - The Alliance of the Working People with Culture and Art'; '1976 - The Year of Libraries and Reading'; 'The Programme of Developing Libraries for the 1980s'.

The Polish authorities centralised and rationalised the whole of the publishing industry through the Ministry of Culture's Department of Books. They took control of the distribution and retail systems, took over typesetting, printing, binding, packaging and paper-making facilities and enabled the state postal service to monitor the

circulation of all printed and manuscript matter and the private dissemination of printed materials. They also established BMWW (Biuro Międzynarodowej Wymiany Wydawnictw, International Bureau for the Exchange of Publications), a monopoly import-export concern to control the purchase of printed materials from abroad. The government also started a bureau for the protection of intellectual property, which was not so much the copyright protection agency it claimed to be, but a clearing house for information as to who was publishing what. The government soon subsidised almost all legal publishing, printing, distribution and retailing; it taxed and rewarded authors, controlled the revenues of publishing houses and to a very great extent determined each publisher's annual list. None of this vast state publishing industry was subject to cost-accounting, nor subject to marketing or distribution costing. By and large the publishers published what they were allowed to publish, the distributors distributed what they were given, the bookshops sold what they were given.

The first method of controlling the artistic and creative world was financial. Although it is difficult to establish the exact size and value of the Polish arts budget, it is clear that while it was small compared with the budgets for almost every other aspect of the Polish economy, and minute compared with the amounts spent on maintaining a huge military apparatus, compared with the arts budgets wielded by western governments the Polish state arts budget was, nevertheless, enormous. According to official statistics for the period 1971-80 approximately 14,300,000,000 zł was spent annually by the Ministry for Arts and Culture (0.3 per cent of the national budget, compared with 0.7 per cent for science and technology, and 0.5 per cent for forestry). In the same ten year period the Ministry invested the sum of 3,800,000,000 zł (a cumulative figure representing 0.5 per cent of the national budget) and needed a further 4,400,000,000 zł (0.3 per cent of the national budget) in order to complete its various planned cultural projects.<sup>16</sup>

A second method of control was by direct appointments to important posts. In October 1972 the Central Committee drew up its latest list of direct *nomenklatura* appointments through which the Party had control of a vast series of other key appointments. A copy of this list found its way to the West and from this it has been estimated that of the 1.2 million 'management and responsibility' posts in the Polish



economy, something like 200,000 were *nomenklatura* posts for Party members, and perhaps a further 900,000 were *nomenklatura*-controlled appointments for Party members and others who were deemed suitable by the Party. It is thought that when families were taken into account over two million Poles (perhaps ten per cent of the population) owed their jobs, their incomes or their place in society to *nomenklatura* appointments or protection.<sup>17</sup>

Party control over publishing meant that chief appointments were made or approved by the Central Committee. These posts included: the Chief and Deputy Editors of *Trybuna Ludu*, *Nowe Drogi*, *Życie Partii* and *Chłopska Droga*; the senior editors of *Ideologia i Polityka* and *Zagadnienia i Materiały*; the chief and deputy editors and directors of PAP (Polska Agencja Prasowa, Polish Press Agency), Interpress, CAF (Centralna Agencja Fotograficzna, Central Photographic Agency), the Society for Artistic and Graphic Publications, the Society for Documentary Film Production, *Kronika* (Polish Film News); the senior editors of all national circulation daily, weekly and monthly newspapers; the directors and senior editors of all scientific and literary publishing houses; the directors of all specialised national institutes of scientific research; the President, vice-Presidents, administrative secretary and assistants of PAN (Polska Akademia Nauk, Polish Academy of Sciences); the directors of all foreign language publishing and broadcasting services of PAN; the departmental secretaries and assistant secretaries and directors of the Bureau of PAN; the chairman, vice-chairmen and directors of the RSW publishing conglomerate; the director of the *Książka i Wiedza* publishing cooperative; the chairman, deputies and directors-general of the Radio and TV boards; the President and Secretary-General of the Society of Polish Journalists; the President and Secretary-General of ZLP. The Regional Party Committees had power to control further appointments: the presidents and full-time leaders of artistic, social, cultural, sporting and para-military associations, also of professional bodies such as the Higher Technical Organisation and the Association of Polish Jurists; the chief and deputy directors of local Polish Radio and television broadcasting stations and centres; the chief and deputy editors of the main local daily newspapers and cultural and social magazines; the chief and deputy editors of regional press and book publishing houses; the rectors and vice-rectors of higher educational

establishments; the directors of regional museums.

In addition to the Party-nominated posts there were also the ordinary Party members in less crucial positions. Although most editors and journalists were encouraged to become Party members they were rarely if ever forced to do so. It has been estimated that in 1970-77 party membership in the gigantic RSW-'PKR' (Robotnicza Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza - 'Prasa, Książka, Ruch', Workers' Cooperative Publishing House - 'Press, Books, Action') print combine ran at about 51 per cent. In PAP (Polish Press Agency) it was thought to be about 56 per cent. In the Polish Radio and Television Committee membership was about 44 per cent. On the editorial boards membership was much higher: RSW-'PKR' editors were about 80 per cent party members; in radio and television it was said to be about 70 per cent.<sup>18</sup>

By 1976 there were 2,409 papers and journals published in Poland: 56 daily, 136 weekly, 86 bi-weekly, 571 monthly, 200 bi-monthly, 465 quarterly, 214 annual, 56 bi-annual and 625 others. By 1986 a total 3,083 magazines, newspapers and periodicals appeared, of these 2,986 were regular periodicals; 170 of these were official gazettes and 500 were for general consumption, the remainder were designated 'specialist interest' journals; no less than 58 publications paid attention in varying degrees to literary matters - a total of 2,255,800 copies. A number of 'official' journals also regularly devoted space to literary matters.<sup>19</sup> There were over 50 state publishing houses in the People's Republic of Poland, all coordinated through the Central Publishing Board of the Ministry of Arts and Culture. Of these 20 produced fiction, some on a regular basis, others only infrequently; many specialised in academic, civic and educational work, and economic or political texts.<sup>20</sup>

Of the various publishing houses by far the largest and the most important was RSW. It had been established in 1947 and was run by the Party Press Department to publish 'the central organs of the PZPR', like *Trybuna Ludu* and 20 Party regional and local papers. All profits from this enterprise went directly to the Party. RSW supervised and controlled the production of 160 journals, many of them with a substantial interest in literature, 46 daily newspapers comprising 80 per cent of all daily Polish newspapers. It also controlled three press agencies, owned or controlled 25 printing houses, and 30,000 'Ruch' street kiosks where the newspapers were sold along

with tram tickets, soap, stamps and post-cards. RSW employed 85,000 people in its own immediate concerns and a total of 500,000 people in related enterprises. RSW was not only a tame print monopoly, it was also the largest press conglomerate in Europe - bigger even than the giant West German Springer Press.<sup>21</sup>

While it was titled a 'workers' cooperative', the point has to be made that RSW had little to do with workers or with cooperatives, since very few of those who worked for RSW were members of the 'cooperative management committee', but rather, were simply employees. The traditional independence of the Polish cooperative movement was contradicted at almost every turn by RSW. Not only was the RSW the creation of the Party, but its work (supervised by the censor) was entirely for the Party and its official publications. RSW was a direct part of the Party machinery: the chairman and vice-chairman of RSW, along with the editors of all the various journals and publications produced by RSW, were Party-approved *nomenklatura* appointments, as were the directors, chief and deputy editors of CAF and the Interpress publishing house. RSW was in every sense an official publishing house to the extent that it was not possible to say where RSW began and the Party ended.

The distribution system was a nightmare. Printers, publishers and the distribution network were tied to the latest five year plan, and in the absence of marketing skills and cost accounting had to plan two or three years ahead. Every publisher sent new books to the state monopoly distribution service DSK (Dom Składnica Księgarska, Repository Book Store), which had 11 large warehouses. They in their turn would send books out to 18 regional organisations known as DK (Dom Książki, Book Store), who would then place books in particular bookshops. Bookshop managers had almost no say in the process and could exert very little influence over what appeared on their shelves. Składnica would often order books at a fixed price in a fixed number of copies - thus determining the size of the print run and the cost levels for the publisher: inflation and shortages were not taken into account, and contracts between Składnica and the publishers were not amended. Storing books also costs a fortune in subsidy and without cost accounting and computerised records it was neither easy to store books, nor, once stored, to find stocks of books when they were required. By 1989 Składnica's warehouses and outlets were packed with unsold books and it owed the various state

publishing houses, particularly PAN and Ossolineum, several billion zloties.

The enormous Polish print and publishing industry was as efficient as the rest of the economy in that it was massively over-staffed (probably by around 50 per cent) hugely subsidised, produced books that were cheap, but took an enormous amount of time to do so. It was easier for the publishing houses to produce large print runs than it was to produce small print runs and small books, which always proved to be more expensive. It is not unusual to hear tales of manuscripts accepted for publication and approved by the censor languishing in the publishing houses for 5-10 years before appearing in the shops. In part this was due to the inefficiency and low productivity of the publishing houses, but also due to the massive print and paper shortages that plagued the Polish publishing industry throughout the post-war period. However, even within the industry there was tension over the fact that the classics of modern literature and important translations took second place to political publications supported and promoted by the Party and the Ministry of Culture.

The Polish publishing industry was gigantic but clumsy. Subsidy meant that only books the government thought inoffensive or desirable were likely to appear, but it also meant that a great number of serious and scholarly books (which would not necessarily have found a publisher in a market economy) were published, distributed and sold cheaply. In 1978 over 54,000,000 copies of works of modern literature were published: that is one and a half books of fiction for everyone in Poland. Of this figure 12,000,000 copies were translations. Translations took up a huge (perhaps disproportionate) amount of time and money. Publication of works in translation was conducted through particular state publishing houses: PiW; the Nike series by Czytelnik; Spanish and South American literature by Kraków Wydawnictwo Literackie; Scandinavian literature by the Poznań Publishing House. This was supplemented by the monthly journal *Literatura na Świecie* (World Literature). In the years 1944-87 translations of foreign literature accounted for a total of 16,877 titles (due to a quirk in the way publishing is classified, 760 of these were translations from Polish into other languages): 4,862 from Russian, 3,734 from English, 1,976 from French, 1,574 from German. Over the years the number of foreign-language publications and translations reflected the growing crisis in the economy and the gathering political difficulties of

allowing any potentially 'dangerous' domestic material onto the market: foreign translations peaked at 2,370 editions in the years 1956-60, rose again to 2,101 in 1975 and then slumped to 400 by 1986.<sup>22</sup>

In general the Polish publishing community found outlets at the Annual Warsaw Poetry Festival and the MTK (International Book Fair), held every May in Warsaw. Also, throughout the post-war period the Ministry of Art and Culture paid particular attention to the creation of public libraries, and at their most effective in 1969 there were 50,000: approximately one local library for every 10,000 people. However, Polish libraries were generally poorly stocked and it seems that by 1971 they spent an average of only 13 zł per registered reader per year.<sup>23</sup>

Books by Polish writers usually appeared in editions of about 10,000 copies (the average print run of a new book of fiction in the UK is 1,600-2,000 copies). The office of the censor used the weapon of a very small print run (as small as 300) and the system of subscription-only purchase, to limit the power and influence of books which were deemed necessary but dangerous and whose circulation, therefore, was limited to professional readers and the inner party. The party could also rule that while a book might appear it was not to be reviewed or not to be reviewed favourably. In this way the author could not complain they had not been published, but the effect of the book was minimal. As in the West, dead writers were cheaper and safer to publish than live writers.

## 2.5 THE PARTY AND THE WRITING PROFESSION

In considering the relationship of writers to the Party it is important to remember just how unreliable the Party was, not only politically, but culturally too. As a result of Stalin's murderous policies, the PZPR inherited a mentally impoverished membership, made worse by the generally poor educational levels of the Party leadership through the 1940s. Staar says of the PZPR that by 1961, 26.1 per cent had less than a primary school education, 49.1 per cent had primary school membership, 19.5 per cent had a secondary education, and 5.3 per cent had a university education. Of its 3 million

members in 1984, only 369,000 qualified as *inteligencja* - that is had some form of higher education, or had successfully completed their secondary schooling. National data, on the other hand, showed that one in every three people had completed some form of education above the primary and vocational levels.<sup>24</sup> Poles knew the Party lacked legitimacy, but it was the only recognisable avenue of social and economic advancement. Those who joined the Party could claim that they would help to destroy the new movement from within, and, if they wished, could point to Polish Romantic literature for their justification. In Mickiewicz's *Konrad Wallenrod* (1828) Konrad, a young Lithuanian Pole, is captured by the Teutonic Knights but rises to become their Grand Master solely that he may lead them to massive defeat and avenge his country.<sup>25</sup>

The period 1944-49 was one in which writers were left pretty much to their own devices, to work out their own style, content, methods and relationship to the state and the reading public. The Party, in regard to cultural policy, was anxious to appear as a benevolent dictatorship engaged in a *lagodna rewolucja* (gentle revolution), though in every other sphere of activity it was busy criminalising and repressing all opposition. In 1945 the Party set the agenda for the Kraków ZZLP (Union of Professional Polish Writers) conference, where the major subject of discussion was the question: 'Was the War an ideological watershed?'. Chairman Julian Przyboś, a fanatical avant-gardist who was desperate to modernise Poland, while reluctant to support official cultural policies, nevertheless directed writers not to look back to already established Polish literary forms, but to look to the USSR, which he said, had the most progressive *avant-garde* poetry in the world. In general writers wrote about the war years rather than about new issues - they had a great deal of experience to catch up on both culturally and individually.

Even in conservative Kraków the ZZLP house at ulica Krupnicza 22 was host to numerous meetings and discussions between opposing political factions within the writing community, all of which passed off without rancour or violence. The Party attempted to swing this generosity of spirit and interest in resolving the issues suspended by the war around to its own ends by focussing writers' attention on the meaning of the war rather than on the experience of war. An example of the Party's liberality was the publication of Jan Kott's *Mitologia a Realizm* (Mythology and

Realism, 1946) in which he outlined the 'Marxist-Leninist laws of history' as they applied to Polish literary, cultural and political values, an ambiguous subject which involved an attempt to show how the Marxist world view and human rights were compatible. This would almost certainly have brought him to the attention of the authorities if he had attempted it a few years later. The censor only intervened on clearly defined issues and on specifically forbidden topics. Jerzy Borejsa, director of several major state publishing concerns and Secretary General of the 1948 Wrocław Congress of Intellectuals, invited foreign intellectuals to Poland to see the changes being wrought.

It was possible for a writer to join the Party and believe this was the way forward. For many it appeared that refusal to join the Party meant they would be left 'outside history', marginalised. In 1945 the Party created the literary magazine *Kuźnica* in an attempt to forge a link between the Polish enlightenment and the socialist 'camp of reform'. The magazine took its name from a group of Polish writers grouped around Hugo Kołłątaj (1750-1812), a leading figure of the eighteenth century Polish enlightenment, and it was deemed the communist-positivist flagship of the new situation, devoted to fighting against reactionary clericism, misplaced *szlachta* (gentry) idealism and outdated, outmoded Polish patriotism. Although it pushed the party line on *socrealizm*, it did not do so exclusively or dogmatically, but in a broad and questioning attempt to restore some of the best, humanist and socialist elements of nineteenth century literature. Intellectually the magazine was close to the style of the Marxist György Lukács, and although it advocated realism in literature it was in favour of Balzac's realism rather than Soviet *socrealizm*. The magazine devoted a great deal of space to the *inteligencja*'s self-criticism and the critical approach of the newer writers to the mental habits of the pre-war Polish writers and literary culture. On the negative side the magazine reflected the Party line in failing to follow the very rich seam of experimental verse that had developed in Polish literature between the wars, and rejected most *awantgarda* (avant-garde) and foreign translations. Nevertheless, the magazine gathered together and published writers like Zygmunt Żuławski, Kott, Brandys, Hertz, Ważyk, and Jastrun. *Kuźnica*'s first editor, Stefan Żółkiewski, was later to become head of the Party's Department of Culture: in 1948 he founded the IBL

(PAN Institute of Literary Research) and in 1957 became the first editor of *Polityka* - a personal development reflecting a general trend in Polish culture and university life in the post-war years, away from the difficult business of creating a suitable literature, either into increasingly difficult and impenetrable literary theory or into political journalism.

In July 1948 the PZPR held its first Congress and Jakub Berman was appointed a member of the Politburo, a member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee, and member of the Central Committee's Organisational Bureau. Although nominally his most powerful office was only that of under-secretary in the Council of Ministers, in effect Berman oversaw ideology, education, foreign affairs, security, culture and propaganda. Up to 1949 the position of writers was relatively unfettered, by and large a continuation of pre-war arrangements. The newly 'elected' government of 1947 had allocated, along with the ministries of forests, post and telegraph, agriculture and agricultural reform, the post of Minister of Culture to the SL (Stronnictwo Ludowe, Peasant Party) and while the appearance of liberal opinion was maintained by these allocations, in fact the post of Minister was less important than the Party-approved post of deputy minister or secretary of state. In 1949, its political dominance now almost assured by 'electoral success', the Party went over to the attack in cultural matters. At the Szczecin ZZLP conference Berman and the Party members of the union began to push in earnest for *socrealizm*. Berman later said he had decided to use 'every conceivable means' to influence Polish writers because: 'It was especially important to us to enlist the cultural circles on our side.'<sup>26</sup>

Catholic writers and the older writers resisted any form of coercion, so as yet the Party could not push too hard too quickly. In any case the Party wished to enlist influential Catholics to its side without necessarily enrolling them in the Party. For those writers who insisted on following the Catholic Church, Berman had set up Pax in 1945, a Catholic front organisation prepared to 'cooperate' in the new social and political order. The younger, newer writers were more easily influenced in favour of the Party, and soon both these groupings had become isolated from the bulk of the ZZLP membership, who were neither Party members nor active Catholics. In spite of the violence that marked some aspects of the 'communist' take over, in the early years



there was a great deal of give and take within the literary-political fraternity. In Kraków, where conservative Catholicism and informed socialism were the order of the day, where literary reputations were not established by hitching one's talents to Party power, it is said:

The onset of social realism did not take the usual course of self critiques and conversions to the new communist faith...Only in Kraków, in the house administered by the Polish Literary Union...could representatives of all attitudes towards the new system live side by side. Creators of revolutionary rhetoric, literary henchmen of the new power and editors of *Tygodnik Powszechny* (published under the auspices of the church and opposed to the new government) borrowed salt and vodka from each other.<sup>27</sup>

This may have been so up to the end of 1949, but after the Szczecin conference and with the economic changes made by the Party in 1950 such tolerance became difficult to sustain.

In 1950 Berman moved the magazine *Twórczość* from Kraków to Warsaw, presumably to control it better, and amalgamated the literary journals *Kuźnica* and *Odrodzenia* to form *Nowa Kultura*: 'one journal, with a line that was better adapted to the times'.<sup>28</sup> Berman's idea was that Polish writers should take over established Soviet models, but the effect was to strangle much Polish writing by forcing publishing houses and editors to refuse almost everything that did not conform to the precepts of *socrealizm*. The Party effectively reduced writing to a dull, conformist, grey imitation of dull, grey, conformist Soviet models. Given that Poland's literary culture was that of the *szlachta*, the Party felt it could not trust its writers not to stab it in the back. Also given the long tradition of Polish resistance in literature, the language of hints and guesses, of smuggled messages, it was inevitable that the PZPR should also take a great interest in controlling the products of its writers, of scrutinising their work for disloyalty and treachery. For the writers of the immediate post-war period the PZPR was prepared to provide far greater material comfort and ensure far greater success than the writer would have been able to enjoy in a free-market situation. But in return this meant that the writer had to indicate repeatedly a willingness to follow PZPR guide-lines. Writers in Poland, provided they did not fall foul of the censor or the

police, enjoyed an incredibly privileged position within 'socialist' society.

Writers were the exposed nerve of the *inteligencja* since they were both independent of, and bound to, the society and social structures that simultaneously nourished and confined them. Although many writers were attracted to socialism and joined the Party before 1945, it cannot be said that the Party had an easy relationship with creative intellectuals like Andrzejewski, Konwicki, Kołakowski, Kott, Ważyk or Brandys. In Poland the *literati* occupy by tradition a place of unusual influence and moral significance. In fact they occupy the position that the Party would have liked to hold - and in this the writers and the Party may be seen as rivals. By the late 1960s, while socialism had undoubtedly brought about a great levelling out of Polish society and its various earning potentials, in general occupations linked to the creative and semi-independent *inteligencja* rather than to industry, finance, politics or the *biurokracja* were still rated as ranking first in social prestige. The three most highly regarded professions were professor, doctor and teacher: on the subject of writers the statistics were silent.<sup>29</sup>

The Party believed fervently in mass literacy and in further and higher education. As well as a programme to eliminate the secondary illiteracy that resulted from Germanisation policies and Nazi educational restrictions, particularly effective in the new western border districts, the government intended to popularise and socialise the means of cultural production in all fields. This was the task it set an entire generation of cultural workers.<sup>30</sup> The Party was in fact storing up trouble for itself with its mass literacy campaign. By fostering literacy the Party contradicted its efforts to control the formation of opinion and thought and the free flow of information. The only way that mass literacy policies could help the Party was in combination with the Party's strict and exclusive control of the print and publishing industry and its use of censorship. The policies of the PZPR, directed at obtaining support for their programme from the *inteligencja*, were a contradictory combination of mistrust of the writers' individualism and independence, disgust at writers' ingratitude, rewards to those who went along with the PZPR line, and efforts to coerce or silence those who proved unreliable or less tractable.

The carrot offered to writers in return for cooperation also became apparent in

1949 when the PZPR announced a revised taxation system. As part of a programme of capital accumulation and investment in heavy industry, income from capital and sales of real estate was now subject to 92.5 per cent taxation: tax for tradesmen, those in handicraft enterprises and the independent professions (doctors, engineers, dentists, accountants, solicitors and legal counsels) rose to 80 per cent of gross income. However, the taxation of writers, artists and publishers was minimal, the lowest of all possible categories.<sup>31</sup> It was clear that in terms of its tax structure the Party valued the support of writers and artists far more than it valued the support of other independent professionals, or at least that it considered that writers needed more positive 'encouragement' if they were to be won over.

The PZPR offered the writer a far higher standard of living than they would have enjoyed under capitalism, a standard of living substantially better than the average Polish factory worker, university teacher or engineer. By the late 1960s, for example, a book of 250 pages might appear in a print run of 10,000 copies, but the writer would receive a royalty on the book that was the equivalent of about 5 months salary. A reprint of the book would earn the author a further royalty of 80 per cent on the original royalty payment, and subsequent reprinting would earn another 60 per cent royalty. This was further supplemented by the Ministry of Art and Culture Authors' Fund, sometimes by as much as 250 per cent on the original royalty sum. The Ministry also had in its gift a series of *wynagrodzenie dodatkowe* (special awards) available upon the demonstration of artistic, ideological or pedagogical worth. A writer could be rewarded by further editions of their book in a cheap version at a low and popular price. A writer deemed to be in favour could earn in total from one edition of a book 4-8 times as much as the average monthly Polish wage. A prolific writer looked upon with favour by the regime could become very wealthy within a short space of time. This special treatment for writers was well established by 1968, when it is thought that the average Polish salary was about 2,200 zł per month, and some 45 writers and artists earned over 10,000 zł per month (the same as the salary of the Deputy Prime Minister), while some writers were thought to have earned over 40,000 zł per month.<sup>32</sup> The Ministry made one further radical change in publishing practice: payment to the author was now dependent on the size of the print run rather than on actual sales. Thus

a book deemed favourable by the censor might prove unpopular, even unsaleable, but the author would nevertheless receive payment. The increasingly centralised production of books rose from 10,454,000 copies of 1,107 titles in 1945 to 118,000,000 copies of 4,611 titles by 1950 - more than four books per year for every man, woman and child living in Poland.<sup>33</sup>

Although outside the period under discussion here it is important to note that as late as 1974 the Party was still trying to woo writers and enhance the material conditions of those who offered it support or who did not cause trouble. On 1 January 1974 the Sejm passed a special Pensions Act which further enhanced the standing of the writer, raising the writer's pension by 20 per cent over the normal state pension. The act made more than modest provision for family, disability and funeral allowances, medical treatment and accommodation for any writer who had been 'in the creative arts' for 15 years or more.

## 2.6 CONTROLLING PROFESSIONAL STRUCTURES

Perhaps the most important fixed point in the life of Polish writers is their union. The ZLP grew out of the pre-war ZZLP, an organisation whose good works and reputation still linger warmly in the memory of the older generation of Polish writers. ZZLP was devoted to the practical work of the writer, to improving pay and conditions and protecting the rights of the authors. In the particularly Polish interface of literary ideas and political morals the union followed the line that the writer had to be free to express his own judgements and thoughts, and regarded itself as an organisation whose function was to protect the ability of writers to remain free to say and write just what they chose. Inevitably this led to the union's intervention in a number of cases, conflict with the authorities and charges that it was politically motivated. The union, however, maintained throughout its existence that it was above party politics and that its criteria were always primarily aesthetic and professional. In its lifetime ZZLP had protested against the assassination of Polish President Gabriel Narutowicz in 1922, against anti-Semitism, against the notorious internment camp set up by Piłsudski at Bereza

Kartuska, against the imprisonment of extreme right-wingers like Ferdynand Goetl, and left-wing members of KPP like Leon Pasternak. Its membership included Catholics, Jews and atheists, nationalists, socialists, communists and supporters of the ruling military *Sanacja* regime. In a period of rising extremism and dramatic social conflict ZZLP stood out as a bastion of tolerance, humanism, pluralism and the acceptance of human difference.

Przyboś, Czachowski and Iwaszkiewicz, the first three post-war Chairmen of ZZLP worked hard to return literary life to 'normality', but this was not what the Party wanted. The PZPR believed, with Stalin, that once it had control over the writers it would have control of the 'engineers of human souls': writers would be of enormous use in ideological legitimisation, rather than in purely literary tasks. The PZPR desperately needed writers and intellectuals. It had no capacity to 'buy' the nation, but there was a possibility that it could buy some writers and coerce others.

At the fourth congress of the ZZLP (20-23 January 1949) in Szczecin the Party characterised contemporary Polish literature as the bourgeois reactionary art of 'the philosophy of catastrophism, helplessness, mysticism and irrationalism' (*Trybuna Ludu*, 20 January, 1949). The Party, under Berman's direction, re-wrote the statutes of the Writers Union to make it conform to those of the other eastern bloc writers' unions, and assist it in mobilising the membership to support the new authorities. He also formally adopted for the union acknowledgement of the leading role of the Party and accepted a decree on the tenets of *socrealizm*, now judged the only worthwhile form of literature. Berman instructed Leon Kruczkowski, the new union Chairman, to prepare a 'production plan' by which literature would become part of the Six Year Plan. Also the union changed its name: instead of ZZLP (Związek Zawodowy Literatów Polski, Professional Union of Polish Writers), it became ZLP (Związek Literatów Polski, Union of Polish Writers). The change of name signified a 'democratisation' of the membership which enabled Party and bureaucracy *grafomani* (graphomaniacs) to secure membership. The party chose to see the influx of new members as rejuvenation, but for the 25 per cent pre-war membership the result of the change was a demoralising levelling-down, and a serious drop in the standing and prestige of their professional organisation. Many were unhappy about the changes and

felt that in spite of its liberal appearance the new union would not have sufficient independence from the Party to maintain either its own professional competence or the prestige of its members. Overseen by Włodzimierz Sokorski, the Minister for the Arts, the Party cadres within ZLP began to organise educational and organisational meetings, conferences and congresses. They also began to organise factory visits for writers.

The new union was now tied to the *pion* (plumb line) of social organisation, the downward transmission of ideas and directives from the Party. While in theory the ZLP remained a-political, in practice the Party hoped that the union could now do no other than interpret the directives of the Central Committee's Department of Culture, as they were transmitted by the Ministry of Arts and Culture. Almost at once the changes in ZLP's structure and function became apparent. There now appeared a hierarchy of political preference for publication, stipends and prizes. The main administrative divisions within ZLP were Zarząd Główny (Executive Committee, twenty members elected at the annual Congress, plus the chairmen of the regional branches), the Komisja Kwalifikacyjna (Qualifications Commission, controlling membership admissions), Sąd Koleżeńcki (Court of Colleagues, arbitrating within the union) and the Komisja Rewizyjna (Accounts and Auditing). In 1950 ZLP were instructed to develop sekcje twórcze (creative genre sections), which met regularly to discuss the ideological content of work in progress and to consider the implications of the latest edicts from the Party. The creation of these sections was an attempt to fragment and control decision-making processes within the union, but also to control the creativity of individual writers. There followed a series of meetings between the union and the officials of the Ministry of Arts and Culture about the fulfilment of literary instructions concerning *socrealizm* and the problems created when the Party decided to put the production of certain books and publications in the hands of inexperienced military and youth organisations whose literary aims were quite different from those of professional writers.<sup>34</sup> The union was in great danger of being bureaucratised into dull conformity. As if to confirm the new line, the final Kraków issue of *Twórczość* in December 1949 carried an 18 page poem in praise of Stalin. That same week the collected works of Joseph Stalin were published in Polish, and the journal *Nowa Kultura* began a series of articles on Marxist theory and the arts.

From the late 1940s the ZLP offered a range of incentives to membership: insurance schemes for writers and their families, *wczasowiski* (holiday centres in the countryside, but mainly the former private estate and chateau at Obory, near the picturesque town of Konstancin, just south of Warsaw), financial encouragement to young writers, grants, loans and scholarships for researching particular projects, or to travel abroad, access to well-placed editors and intercession with the censor. ZLP also provided in its Warsaw branch and through cooperation with other larger unions a club with a good, cheap subsidised restaurant and coffee shop where writers could meet and mingle with workers and officials from the Ministry of Culture and the Association of Tourists and Sightseers, who also shared the facilities. The writers' club, though famed for its uncomfortable chairs and its heating failures during the winter, was also well known for its good coffee and excellent *befsztyk* (beefsteak). Wednesday evenings were often given over to readings by particular writers, and the club frequently hosted exhibitions of contemporary art work. Entry was restricted to members of the club, which did not necessarily include all members of the union.

The ZLP's seventeen provincial branches, sometimes in cooperation with Klub MPiK (International Club of Press and Books), provided a reading room where foreign publications and some items of food were available. ZLP also had good relations and shared certain facilities with SARP (Association of Polish Architects), ZAIKS (Union of Authors and Composers for the Stage) and SPATIF (Association of Polish Artists of Theatre and Film, the actors' and performers' club). In cooperation with these and other arts organisations branches often supplied take-out sales of canned goods, sausage, vodka, paper, typewriter ribbons, writing materials, and access to foreign books not generally available. Members of ZLP also had access to the 'Czytelnik' coffee shop - established in 1956 by the Czytelnik publishing house on ulica Wiejska, where notices and announcements from ZLP usually appeared on the wall near the cloak room. This was a favourite haunt not only of the editors from Czytelnik, but the editors of the magazines *Twórczość*, *Pryzjaciółka*, *Nowa Wieś* and *Współczesność*, employees and officials of the nearby Ministry of Foreign Trade, members of PAP and the Communist Party Central Committee, all of which were located nearby. This was the coffee house favoured by ZLP Presidents Iwaszkiewicz and Putrament.

Membership of the writers' union indicated a certain practical degree of willingness to cooperate, to submit. But in general throughout the post-war years the ZLP was also an organisation that protected writers and which quietly fostered intellectual opposition by acting as a fall-back for disaffected creative Party members - something not envisaged by Berman. Although it was technically possible to be a writer without being a member of ZLP, in practice it was unlikely that anyone outside the union would ever get much written, let alone published by the state. However, we should not imagine anything too grand for ZLP facilities. Its property, located in a house once owned by Władysław Reymont, was certainly not as lavish as that of the Soviet writers' union. Brandys, for example, wrote of the ZLP canteen:

Two small rooms in a cellar, separated by an arcade and three small steps. The tables are crowded; seven people are waiting in line by the wall. Stuffy, airless. Tin forks and spoons, no tablecloths or napkins; when a chair becomes available, you have to sit with the remains of someone else's food. Prize-winning writers and poor poets come here for lunch, famous actors and older women living off translating and their memoirs, as well as a few popular lawyers. And quite a few striking, fashionably dressed girls...Well-known film-makers, owners of foreign cars and villas on the <Gdańsk> Bay, rubbing shoulders with blacklisted writers and a mob of skinny critics, mixed in with a few literary informers. All together, eating their cabbage soup with tin spoons...<sup>35</sup>

Nor should we expect too much from the writers' 'home', formerly an old *szlachta* estate consisting of a palace and a park at Obory. Writers shared the place with the Main School of Farming. Konwicki recalled it:

Obory, poor Polish literature's phalanstery. Hideous allotments of garden plots at an ancient bend in the Vistula, in the midst of an ancient landscape with age-old trees and an old-fashioned road paved with fieldstone. Neglected gardens, crooked paths lined with chestnut trees, and a park in terrible condition...I've remembered everything. Thirty years of this place, part prison, part hospice, part bordello for Warsaw's writers. I've spent so many months there. I've drunk so much vodka there. Been through so much there. The only problem I had was the writing.<sup>36</sup>

In cooperation with Klub MPiK, ZLP also helped provide a series of more than 10,000 meetings per year at the 1,900 literary appreciation circles where writers gave lucrative



public readings. In the years 1962-72 it is estimated that MPiK served a total of 30 million 'customers'. However the facilities offered by Klub MPiK were far from palatial:

There is a club in my neighbourhood which I have been visiting for years and where I am treated like an old customer...We all know each other although we seldom exchange greetings. We gather in this small smoke-filled room to sit in silence together, sipping black coffee and occasionally reading something. Some have their favourite journals. There is a respectable looking lady who does the crossword puzzles...a number of young women who study the fashion magazines. A young man devotes two hours each day to the sports papers. There are loyal readers of *The New York Times*, *Pravda*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, and *Le Monde*.<sup>37</sup>

The state also instituted a series of about 100 very large annual literary awards. The most prestigious of these was the State Literary Prize, awarded on alternate years: Lem, Kott, Andrzejewski, and Brandys were all recipients. Publishers, various Ministries including the Ministry of National Defence, Polish Radio and Television, various large industrial enterprises and other 'social organisations' all offered their own awards to writers and several of them even commissioned new works, often referred to as 'social commissions'. There was also a special annual prize offered by the Central Trades Union Council. There were a large number of competitions and festivals, all funded by the Ministry for Art and Culture, with a budget running into unspecified thousands of millions of zloties. The Ministry of Art and Culture also had in its gift trips abroad, either for research or literary tours to Polish communities in the USA, Canada, Brazil, France and England, appointments to the foreign embassies, work on delegations and international committees. In June 1979 the union mustered 1,220 members.<sup>38</sup>

The effect of such blandishments was undoubtedly to make some of the more successful of the older generation of writers both demoralised and cynical about their work, and as a result there was a temptation to become engaged in the defence of their personal privilege rather than the practice of writing. Some saw the manipulation of the publishing and print industry through the ZLP and the Ministry of Art and Culture as

little more than the management of ignorant political bosses. The majority of writers seemed sincere about their work, though, and believed wholeheartedly in the usefulness of their writing. Even so it was impossible to escape the fact that writers had become institutionalised and that their union had become bureaucratised to a remarkable degree. They were more like civil servants who happened to receive a slice of the enormous state arts budget, and, as such, even the most honest of these writers found it increasingly difficult to see criticism of the political system as anything more than an unjust and irresponsible personal attack on them and their work.

So much for the carrot. The stick was equally well developed. The powers of the censor were particularly useful. GUKPPiW (Main Office for the Control of Press, Theatre and Exhibitions, the censor) was initiated on 5 July 1946 mainly to deal with the control of press references to state secrets. This function was expanded to include a wider range of 'sensitive' materials in 1949, when GUKPPiW grew rapidly and expanded its operations into the provinces. It could recommend that a book should be withdrawn from circulation, or that its author could be blacklisted: this might mean that a writer was banned from writing for the newspapers or making radio and TV broadcasts, that the writer was not allowed to publish, that the writer was confined to working on translations of foreign literature, no longer mentioned in the press or media, or perhaps with only negative references allowed. (See Appendix three for a selection of censorship regulations relating to literature.) A ban might be for a particular period or it might be indefinite. In the case of a ban, the withdrawal of state subsidy, readings, prizes, awards, reprintings were all shown to be of particular importance not only in maintaining a writer's lifestyle, but in some cases for simply earning enough to live on. A ban coupled with the withdrawal of state finance usually signalled that the PZPR no longer wished the writer to continue working and perhaps it was time to emigrate. After the Szczecin conference it became very difficult for a writer to get challenging new work through the increasingly effective net of censorship to a readership: first the writer had to get past comment and criticism from the *sekcje twórcze*, then the editorial boards of the various reviews and journals dealing with creative literature, then past the editorial board of the state publishing houses, and finally past the censor. A writer who refused to follow the PZPR line or who offended

the PZPR in some way could be entirely ignored by the critics so that a book did not sell: the writer could also be threatened with expulsion from the union, or denied reprints of books already issued, or denied additional awards and prizes.

## 2.7 WRITERS AND THE NEW ORDER

The advent of 'socialism' brought about a massive transformation in Polish society. In the years 1931-60 the percentage of the population involved in agriculture shrank from 60 per cent to 38.2 per cent while the number of those employed in industry rose from 12.7 per cent to 25 per cent; in the post-war period the *inteligencja* went through a massive expansion.<sup>39</sup> Officially the major divisions within post-war Polish society were: workers, peasantry, *inteligencja*, and self-employed artisans. The post-war *inteligencja* were described (in conformity with Soviet ideology) as a stratum of society which, in harmony with the working class, undertook the leading administrative, scientific, executive and artistic tasks of the nation.\* One thing about the post-war *inteligencja* is clear: the conditions prevailing under 'socialism' gave them the opportunity to enhance their social standing to a remarkable degree. While socialism dictated a high evaluation of the workers' productive labour, the overall effect had been to enhance the social standing of all workers, peasants and certain sections of the *inteligencja*, while social revision downwards had affected only the public officials, priests, owners of private stores and owners of handicraft workshops.<sup>40</sup>

Thus the social standing of the *inteligencja* as a whole had not been downgraded by socialism. This can be seen in education, where given Poland's social and political structure, the *inteligencja* was over-represented at every voluntary or higher level to an incredible degree.<sup>41</sup> It is hard to be precise about the social background of contemporary Polish writers because very little research has been done on the subject.

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\* The pre-war definition of *inteligencja* had been much narrower, accounting, with the professions, for perhaps 5 per cent of the population in 1921. Of the pre-war situation it has been written: 'Unlike its counterparts in Western Europe the *inteligencja* could never be equated, even broadly with the 'educated classes', and a degree of political disaffection was taken for granted.' N.Davies, *God's Playground*, vol.II, OUP, Oxford, p.196 & p.406.

According to Szczepański the social composition (by origin) of the literary intellectuals at the turn of the century was: *szlachta* 57.1 per cent, *inteligencja* 23 per cent, *burżuazja* 15.4 per cent, peasantry 4.1 per cent.<sup>42</sup>

Only one sociological survey of writers has been undertaken in the post-war years, that by Siciński (who became Minister for Culture in the democratic government of January 1992) published in 1971. His study provides a unique portrait of writers in years 1963-64. According to Siciński between the years 1929-64 the number of full-time professional writers in Poland increased from 700 to 900, increasing from 358 to 1,025 between 1945 and 1967. However, there seems to have been no great change in the social structure and origins of this group. It seems that by 1964, in spite of a huge effort by the Party, less than half of Polish writers derived from a working class or peasant background. Among the members of ZLP, Siciński found that in 1929 56 per cent of writers came from independent professional, intellectual and white-collar backgrounds: by 1964 the figure had risen to 64 per cent. Writers from working class backgrounds rose from 4 to 15 per cent, and those of peasant background from 2 to 9 per cent in the same period.

Siciński produced figures showing that in general writers were married (75 per cent), male (3/1), prose writers (4/1), aged 41-60 years, came from white collar and independent trade backgrounds (64 per cent), lived in Warsaw (59.5 per cent) or Kraków (12.7 per cent), made their debut in the years 1930-38 (28 per cent) or 1940-48 (30 per cent), completed their university course or obtained a Masters degree (usually in Polish philology, foreign languages, the humanities or Law) trained to be teachers or journalists, published 5-7 books, supplemented their income as writers from another related source of work, frequently wrote essays and literary sketches for magazines, gave 1-5 public readings per year, possessed a radio (86 per cent) rather than a TV (31 per cent), owned a typewriter and a telephone, sometimes a fridge (43 per cent) and rarely a car (11 per cent). 15 per cent of writers owned more than 200 books, 26 per cent owned over 500 books, 19 per cent owned over 1000 books, 15 per cent owned more than 2,000 books, 4 per cent owned more than 4000 books, and 2 per cent owned around 6,000 books. Polish writers are a predominantly urban phenomenon: 5.4 per cent lived in towns or villages of up to 20,000 inhabitants, but 92 per cent lived in

towns of over 20,000 inhabitants.<sup>43</sup>

The majority of post-war writers did not think their earnings from writing were satisfactory; their favourite relaxations were radio and TV, theatre, hobbies, hunting, water sports, walking, and sitting in coffee shops or meeting with other writers; their reading was predominantly creative literature; they thought of their profession as politically and ideologically influential, and as socially responsible, but they did not see themselves as a social élite, and were not necessarily on the side of the authorities; 46 per cent of writers had a positive opinion of ZLP and its work on their behalf and did not think of PZPR members in the union as a separate group. They regarded the most pressing problems facing literature as the social standing of writers, lack of opportunities in society and the economy and the difficult material conditions of life in Poland.

By the late 1940s Polish writers occupied a rather shabby velvet prison located somewhere in the first circle of Hell. Their privilege could not be denied, yet pre-war ideology and values persisted, and were now connected with a union which, if was not exactly tame, was certainly severely hampered by the Party, by pressure on writers to become absorbed either into the approved mode of production or into the PZPR ethos, and to revise their historical role within Polish society. The PZPR insisted there was no social conflict in People's Poland: the official line propounded in *Polityka*, *Trybuna Ludu*, *Twórczość*, *Nowa Kultura*, *Kuźnica*, *Nowe Drogi* and the rest of the Party press was that the 'socialist transformations' underway in the People's Republic of Poland had abolished the 'basic exploiting classes' so that there were now two entirely non-antagonistic classes, the workers and the peasants, led by their vanguard the PZPR, all in total harmony.<sup>44</sup> This does not mean that all writers in Poland were part of the opposition. Many were members of the Party and some bureaucrats became 'writers' because they had managed to get a poem, a story or an article published in some obscure departmental magazine or an internal Party journal. Many of these enjoyed protection from the Party and when necessary would turn out *en masse* to block union decision making. After 1949 the literary magazines published a steady stream of *socrealizm*: poems about the victorious Red Army, Polish-Soviet friendship, the Polish People's Army, hymns to the security services, to the joys of the new People's

Constitution, to the sons of labour, to individual Stakhanovite workers in the new industrial centres, hymns in praise of Nowa Huta, poems urging the realisation of the latest five year plan, or the 1950 six year plan, odes praising Stalin: in 1950, for example, Broniewski wrote his ode 'Słowo o Stalinie' (A Word on Stalin): 'Glory to the name of Stalin, bringer of peace to the world, peace'. And of course there were poems denouncing Truman, Churchill and Tito. Herbert said: 'Society resisted until 1948'. After that the writers, or their silence, were bought:

The financial situation of the majority of the Writers' Union in those days was fantastic. Their careers were brilliant and fast. Italian, English, German and French writers are miserably poor. The great essayist Cioran, for example, is said to dine in some students' canteen and to be supported by Ionescu. His books bring him no money. An average writer in the West cannot support himself from his writing. He has to work at a university - if he has a suitable education - or in a bank, like Eliot. Whoever chooses to become a writer takes an immense risk, whereas here they lived in the lap of luxury, above the average of other professionals. The only risk was political. One had to know which way the wind blew. The material and social position of a writer is very important. I keep harping on about this inelegant subject like some kitchen maid. But here we come to the question of talent. If one was a member of the Writers' Union it was obvious that one's books would be published. I do not know of a single case where a book was turned down because it was badly written.<sup>45</sup>

Few writers were ever expelled from ZLP. Lem earned the distinction for failing to produce enough. Very few writers ever resigned. Herbert, who was particularly resistant to the blandishments of the new regime and who resigned from ZLP in 1948, described his reasons:

Because of a lie. Socialist realism had sounded. < sic > I had no chance to publish what I was writing then, and by my withdrawal I think I anticipated a dismissal from the union. It was like this: I was taken to observe an action to destroy *kulaks*. Armed bands of 'workers', who were not workers at all, would come and loot the property of the foes of the proletariat. They took away everything. Grain was loaded on horse carts; and the carts would stand outdoors in the rain and snow, the grain going to waste. It was the economic price of an historical experiment. I was a writer and could join a band to see for myself, in practice, not in the papers. I wanted to find out who was right, the spirit of the day or common sense. And conscience. They took grain away from a woman, Malcowa, who worked for a *kulak*. She went wild with despair. What could one do? Give the woman a

hundredweight of grain lest she and her son should die of starvation in the coming winter. I went to see the organiser of the action so that I could write a report and get them to give her a sack of grain. They explained that I did not understand the dialectic of history. Some time later I learned that Malcowa had hanged herself. I unstuck my photo. I sent my membership card back to the union. I went down to the bottom.<sup>46</sup>

Although many writers had been inclined to shrug helplessly at the extraordinary spectacle of a communist take-over in Poland, a significant number had also been prepared to go along with the new regime to see what they could get out of it. However, the drive to impose *socrealizm* as part of the latest plan simply alienated some writers and drove them out of new creative work. As Juliusz Żuławski told me:

The worst period for me was the period 1950-54. In this period, rather than risk new creative work of my own, I decided to translate English and American poetry. In 1951 for example, I ran to Byron (for political reasons) he was very much against British imperialism and against the Congress of Vienna. And so for many years I was a translator, and this was the case with a number of my friends. The classics were always considered safe: they were not dangerous; the authors were dead; they didn't write about Poland, about our situation. And it was possible to make a living out of the classics.<sup>47</sup>

For many writers 1948-49 was a professional and ideological cross-roads at which writers chose either to collaborate, or to preserve their individual stance and remain aloof in increasing danger of poverty and harassment. Some, the lucky few, managed, like Tuwim, to preserve their independence simply because the Party made no effort to win them over. Others, like Przyboś, retreated, continued to write, but refused to publish, and waited for better times. As Błóński was eventually to argue in *Życie Literackie*, the 'Socrealist Five Year Plan for Literature' produced few new poets between 1949-55, and saw a drop in the amount of verse published.<sup>48</sup> There was also little that was memorable in the prose of these years. However, by 1953 a large number of writers and intellectuals who had gone along with the new regime in the belief that they were building socialism and rebuilding Poland sensed that things had gone badly adrift and that it would not be possible to follow the Party line any further unless they managed to exert some influence on policy formation.

Most intellectuals on the left did not see that the actuality of the PZPR came anywhere near to their idea of socialism. Writers who had gone along with the new regime (Broniewski, Ważyk, Miłosz, Brandys, Słonimski, Tuwim, Jastrun, Gałczyński, Andrzejewski, Konwicki) came to see that after 1949 the prospects for Polish literature were increasingly bleak. Most agreed that mass publication of the classics and the cheap large-scale publication of new works by living writers were progressive policies, as was the war on illiteracy and the opening up of the educational system to the entire population. However, they also realised that the literature of *partyjność* (Party-mindedness) would satisfy no-one in the long run, would not interest an intelligent readership, would soon bore the new mass readership, and would satisfy the writers least of all.

## 2.8 CZESŁAW MIŁOŚZ AND *THE CAPTIVE MIND*

Although never a Party member, Miłosz had gone along with the communists and in 1946 had joined the Polish diplomatic corps to work as cultural attaché in Washington and then in the Paris embassy until 1951. He was not alone in this. Other writers had joined the communists as diplomatic representatives in the post war years: Miłosz was part of the privileged ruling elite. Only with the Peace Congress of 1948 and the revelation of Soviet machinations over the publication of a letter by Albert Einstein, had he begun to become suspicious. Miłosz felt increasingly that the 'communists' understood just enough about literature and its connection with Polish history to exploit and make political use of the writers' desperate need to belong, to have a place in society.

One night in 1949, returning home in the early hours of the morning from a diplomatic reception, Miłosz saw something which made him aware of the less glamorous side of his involvement:

I saw jeeps carrying prisoners, people just arrested. The soldiers guarding them were wearing sheepskin coats, but the prisoners were in suits, jackets with the



collars turned up, shivering from the cold. It was then that I realised what I was part of.<sup>49</sup>

For him this was the key event in his relationship with the new authorities. In 1951 he broke with the regime, abandoned his post and decided to remain in the west - first in Paris, later in California. In 1953 he published *Zniewolony umysł* (The Captive Mind) a series of essays that dissected, with all the precision of a scalpel in expert hands, the motives and opinions of the Polish *literati* in the late 1940s. The book was designed to show the moral, intellectual and professional gymnastics writers needed to perform if they were to find a way of giving and maintaining assent for Stalinism. It began with an analysis of Witkiewicz's reaction to communism, and among other things took in Andrzejewski's literary and political opportunism, Broniewski's exquisitely boring poetic adherence to Stalinism, and Borowski's disturbing search for forms adequate to portray Poland's experience of Nazism, his subsequent disillusionment with 'socialism' and his suicide.

There had never been anything like *The Captive Mind*. It was a remarkable performance. Miłosz had a way of cutting through the fog of posture and excuse to the core of the writer's social standing, self image, ambition and experience; he had a way of laying bare the most basic of human, political and professional considerations:

If the literature of socialist realism is useful, it is so only to the Party. It is supposed to present reality not as a man sees it (that was the trait of the previous realism, the so-called 'critical'), but as he *understands* it. Understanding that reality is in motion, and that in every phenomenon what is being born and what is dying exist simultaneously - dialectically speaking, this is the battle between the 'new' and the 'old' - the author should praise everything that is budding and censure everything that is becoming the past. In practice, this means that the author should perceive elements of class struggle in every phenomenon. Carrying this reasoning further, the doctrine forces all art to become didactic. Since *only* the Stalinists have the right to represent the proletariat, which is the rising class, everything that is 'new' and therefore praiseworthy results from Party strategy and tactics. 'Socialist realism' depends on an identification of the 'new' with the proletariat and the proletariat with the Party. It presents model citizens, i.e. communists, and class enemies. Between these two categories come the men who vacillate. Eventually, they must - according to which tendencies are stronger in them - land in one camp or the other. When literature is not dealing with

prefabricated figures of friends and foes, it studies the process of metamorphosis by which men arrive at total salvation or absolute damnation in Party terms.<sup>50</sup>

In the first difficult years abroad Miłosz provided a further portrait of the take-over in his novel *The Seizure of Power* (1955). There too, in the great gallery of characters who try in different ways to find a new way forward after the war, there is no single character who can oppose the idea of historical inevitability with any kind of counter ideology other than a vague and unsatisfactory desire to turn back the clock to the days before 1939. Miłosz's heroes are left with a series of possibilities: death in opposing the communists, isolation and madness, flight into exile, collaboration, suicide.<sup>51</sup>

Miłosz was no simplistic anti-communist: he never doubted that 'socialism' had been installed at the point of a Soviet bayonet, but his interest lay in human weakness, the moral and psychological make-up of characters who found they could cooperate with the new regime. This in itself set him apart from a very long tradition that saw Poles simplistically as virulently anti-communist and staunchly nationalist. He wrote:

To understand the course of events in eastern and central Europe during the first post-war years it must be realized that pre-war social conditions called for extensive reforms. It must further be understood that the Nazi rule had occasioned a profound disintegration of the existing order of things. In these circumstances, the only hope was to set up a social order which would be new, but would not be a copy of the Russian regime. So what was planned in Moscow as a stage on the road to servitude, was willingly accepted in the countries concerned as though it were true progress. Men will clutch at illusions when they have nothing else to hold to.<sup>52</sup>

Although *The Captive Mind* never appeared officially in the People's Republic of Poland (Miłosz was banned in the years 1951-56, enjoyed a brief legal 'outing' in the early part of the 'thaw' and was banned again 1958-66) the book's impact through smuggled copies and underground circulation was enormous. For the first time someone had said openly and without fear exactly what they thought was happening to literary and political life.

For Miłosz his book was simply one aspect of events, and was by no means the final word on the subject. In due course he said of *The Captive Mind*:

Even when I was writing it, I felt that it was fragmentary, just part of the truth, because things went deeper than that. Later on, in various essays and books, I tried to reach the source of the entire issue of communism in the twentieth century, the older sources, touching on the philosophical current that can be studied going back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: Hegel, the fascination with historicity. I tried to elucidate those issues. My colleague Herling-Grudziński thinks that I invented this problem in *The Captive Mind*. What I wrote was true with regard to a certain number of people in Poland. It's just that there were very few such people in Poland. In the end, this book describes the conversion to Marxism, if such a thing exists. In the conclusion of his book *Main Currents of Marxism*, Leszek Kolakowski says Marxism doesn't exist. But people believe that it does. Someone said that in Honduras anyone able to read ten lines of print in an hour considers himself a Marxist...I have to admit that I've lost interest in that issue. It's ceased to be relevant in Poland...Everything in Poland is much less complicated in that no one there believes in the magic power of Marxist philosophy. On the other hand, in the world as a whole, nothing could be more relevant for a great many people who are just learning to read and write than their genuine concern with Marxism...Marxism has vulgarised the idea of history, because it is a philosophy for simple souls. In the current historical situation, it's for yokels, young people. I'm not being contemptuous here. I consider Marxism a false and harmful philosophy, as I've said many times before. On the other hand, I don't deny that it has given people an awareness of history...<sup>53</sup>

With the death of Stalin, the year after publication, and the refusal of the Stalinist system to crumble away, Miłosz's analysis acquired a new long-term significance. In the years that followed students of Polish literature did not die at the barricades clutching illegal copies of *The Captive Mind*, but the book found damaging resonance in the thinking of those intellectuals and writers who stayed in Poland and those who stayed in the Party in the hope that they could reform the system from within. In years to come the younger generation of writers, like Zagajewski, while acknowledging Miłosz's seriousness of purpose, suspected that he had dignified the basest human motives by referring to Hegel and dialectics:

In *The Captive Mind*, Czesław Miłosz writes about the Hegelian sting, that is, about paralysing minds with the supposed unavailability of dialectics - and the Red Army. The dispute about whether Miłosz is right continues. His opponents claim that there was no sting, just fear, fear of fear, the desire for a career, the need for safety, money, and an apartment in Warsaw, or just good old conformity.<sup>54</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 A.Alvarez, *Under Pressure: The Writer in Society: Eastern Europe and the USA*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1965, p.20.
- 2 P.Hertz, 'Rozważanie na marginesie lektury', *Twórczość*, July 1959, pp.90-95.
- 3 A.Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland 1921-39*, OUP, Oxford, 1972, p.28.
- 4 A.Wat, *My Century: The Odyssey of a Polish Intellectual*, 1977, p.21.
- 5 K.S.Karol, *Solik: Life in the Soviet Union 1939-46*, Pluto, London, 1986, p.125.
- 6 J.Peterkiewicz & B.Singer (eds.), *Five Centuries of Polish Poetry: 1450-1970*, OUP, London, 1970, p.106.
- 7 The bodies exhumed by the Nazis at Katyn in 1943 included three generals, a rear admiral, 100 colonels, 300 majors, 1,000 captains, 3,500 lieutenants, 500 cadet officers, 200 naval and air force officers; reservists included 21 university professors and lecturers, 300 surgeons and physicians, 200 lawyers, judges, prosecutors, solicitors and court officials, 300 engineers, and hundreds of teachers, journalists, writers, industrialists and businessmen. Only in June 1990 did the Soviet Union admit it had found the bodies of some 13,000 uniformed Poles buried at various locations mainly in the Ukraine. President Gorbachev ordered a full scale investigation into the affair in November 1990. The investigation did not make progress because of KGB reluctance and it was only in October 1991, with the arrest of powerful KGB officials after the failed coup, that the Soviets admitted that orders for the execution of the Poles had come direct from Stalin, and the identity of two of the surviving executioners were revealed. *Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations, vol.II, 1939-45*, General Sikorski Historical Institute, Heinemann, London, 1967; L.Fitzgibbon, *Katyn Massacre*, Corgi, London, 1976. N.Bethell, 'Soviet agent reveals terrible truth of Polish massacres', *Observer*, 6 October 1991, pp.1-23. On the deportations and arrests see: B.Porajska, *From The Steppes to the Savannah*, Coronet, London, 1990; W.Sagajilo, *The Man in the Middle: A Story of the Polish Resistance 1940-45*, Secker & Warburg, London, 1984; Z.Zajdlerova, *The Dark Side of the Moon*, Harvester/Wheatsheaf, London, 1989, p.32; G.Herling, *A World Apart*, OUP, London, 1987; C.Moorhead, 'Out of the Darkness', *The Independent Magazine*, 26 January 1991, pp.26-38. On diplomatic attempts to trace and recover Poles deported or arrested by the Soviets see: S.Kot, *Conversations with the Kremlin and Despatches from Russia*, OUP, London, 1963. On the Soviet 'Passportisation' campaign see: P.Wat's Epilogue to: A.Wat, *My Century: The Odyssey of a Polish Intellectual*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1988, pp.361-82. Also: P.Raina, *Independent Social Movements in Poland*, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, 1981, pp.290-1; J.Garliński, *Poland in the Second World War*, Methuen, London, 1985. The full history of the campaign against the AK has yet to be written, but see: K.Kersten, *The Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland, 1943-48*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1991; A.Polonsky & B.Druker, *The Beginnings of Communist Rule in Poland, 1943-45*, Routledge Keegan Paul, London, 1980; J.Coutouvidis & J.Reynolds, *Poland 1939-47*, Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1986.
- 8 B.Schulz, 'An Essay for S.I.Witkiewicz', in: J.Kott (ed.), *Four Decades of Polish Essays*, Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 1990, p.109.

- 9 W.Gombrowicz, *A Kind of Testament*, Boyars, London, 1973, pp.53-4. See also: D.De Roux (ed.), *Rozmowy z Gombrowiczem*, Instytut Literacki, Paris, 1969, pp.89-91.
- 10 W.Gombrowicz, *Diary 1953-57*, vol.1, Northwestern University Press, Evanston Illinois, 1988, p.3.
- 11 *Rocznik statystyczny wewnętrznego 1947-67*, GUS, Warsaw, 1967; A.Jeziński, *Historia gospodarcze polski ludowej 1944-68*, WiN, Warsaw, 1971, pp.28-9; A.Aslund, *Private Enterprise in Eastern Europe*, Macmillan, London, 1985, p.24; J.Kaliński & Z.Landaua (eds.), *Gospodarka polski ludowej 1944-55*, vols. I & II, KiW, Warsaw, 1976.
- 12 T.Toranska, *Oni: Stalin's Polish Puppets*, Collins, London, 1987, p.275.
- 13 A.Szczypiński, *The Polish Ordeal*, Croom Helm, London, 1982, p.55.
- 14 Interview with J.Żulawski, 29 May 1990.
- 15 M.Hirszowicz, *The Bureaucratic Leviathan*, 1980, p.193. While some question the post-war sociological definition of *inteligencja*, others question whether 'communist' *inteligencja* is not a contradiction in terms. In conversation, the distinguished poet and translator, Artur Międzyrzecki, questioned the notion of the post-war Polish *inteligencja*: 'The fact is that always in Poland the *inteligencja* has practically not existed. It is a very, very tiny percentage of all Poles. A very small and politically powerless section of Polish society. Influential, maybe, but powerful, no. Also, for all practical purposes they practically ceased to exist after the war. Now we have a very different kind of intellectual, more a technical person. These people, the writers, the creative *inteligencja*, they now have the same training as the bureaucrats and the technocrats, and for that reason we can hardly say any more that we have a true *inteligencja*. The real difference lies in their family background - what their parents and grandparents were, and because of that in their education and their moral attitude...We don't any longer necessarily think of officials or bureaucrats as *inteligencja*. They have given all that up when they entered the Party or the machinery of state. They tend towards technical competence, *eksperci* - experts. No, we tend now to think of those who remain independent, the oppositionists, as real intellectuals.' Conversation with Artur Międzyrzecki, 1 June 1990, Warsaw.
- 16 *Rządowy raport o stanie gospodarki*, Nakładem Trybuny Ludu, Warsaw, July 1981, p.126. Izabella Cywińska, Minister for Arts and Culture, said that after the withdrawal of most major state subsidy to the arts, the arts budget still stood at 1.55% of the national budget. M.Duskov, 'I don't have the soul of an anarchist', *Euromaske: The European Theatre Quarterly*, no.1, Autumn 1990, pp.23-4. For comparison: the British state subsidy to the arts, which is said to lag behind most west European states, in 1992-93 stood at less than one quarter of a percent of the national budget, though it generated incomes for more than half a million people. 'Letter on Arts Funding to MP', Writers Guild of Great Britain, November 1993.
- 17 From three Central Committee directives dated October 1972 detailing *nomenklatura* appointments, in: 'Apparatus Power: the *nomenklatura*', *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, vol.4, nos.4-6, Winter-Spring, 1981, pp.55-6; also in: D.McShane, *Solidarity: Poland's Independent Trade Union*, Spokesman, Nottingham, 1981, pp.163-69; L.Weschler, 'Reporter at Large: Shock (Poland)',

- The New Yorker*, 10 December 1990, pp.86-136.
- 18 Z.Krzystek, 'Kim Jesteśmy?', *Prasa Polska*, August 1977, p.30.
  - 19 The most important of the state literary journals at various times have been: *Twórczość* (Creativity, a literary monthly); *Miesięcznik Literacki* (Literary Monthly); *Kultura* (Culture, a weekly published in Warsaw, not to be confused with the monthly of the same name published in Paris); *Nowa Kultura* (New Culture); *Literatura* (Literature); *Poezja* (Poetry); *Dialog* (devoted to Drama); *Przegląd Kulturalny* (Cultural Review); *Życie Literackie* (Literary Life, weekly, Kraków); *Literatura na Świecie* (World Literature); *Nowe Książki* (New Books, previews and reviews, fortnightly); *Rocznik Literacki* (Literary Yearbook, annual summary of literary life); *Pamiętnik Literacki* (Literary Souvenir); *Ruch Literacki* (Literary Movement); *Nowy Wyraz* (New Expression); *Poglądy* (Views, Katowice); *Odra* (Wrocław); *Kamień* (Stone, Lublin); *Pismo* (Print, Kraków); *Magazyn Kulturalny* (Magazine of Culture, Kraków); *Kuźnica* (The Forge); *Polityka* (Politics); *Forum*; *Trybuna Ludu* (People's Tribune, daily); *Odrodzenie* (Renewal); *Perspektywy* (Perspectives); *Panorama* (Illustrated weekly); *Tydzień* (The Week); *Głos Pracy* (Working Voice, daily); *Polska* (multi-language illustrated monthly produced in several languages). There were also the Pax journals: *Słowo Powszechne* (Universal Word, daily 100,000-180,000 copies); *Kierunki* (Directions, 20,000 copies weekly, subject to censorship). Pax also produced about nineteen other publications. ODISS published *Chrześcijanin w Świecie* (Christian in the World, 5,000 copies weekly), and French and German editions at 400 copies each per week. Zrzeszenie Katolików Caritas (Caritas Association of Catholics) published *Mysł Społeczna* (Social Thought, 15,000 copies weekly). In addition there were also the publications of Chrzescijanskie Stowarzyszenie Społeczne (Social Christian Action Association, a break-away from Pax, 1956), *Za i Przeciw* (For and Against, 50,000 copies per week), *Hejnal Mariacki* (Mariacki Call, 5,000 copies per month), plus a number of other publications dealing almost exclusively with religious matters. For further details of journal publication see: Table 30, 'Gazety i czasopisma według wydawców'; Table 36, 'Czasopisma', *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach XXXIII: 1987*, Biblioteka Narodowa - Instytut Bibliograficzny, Warsaw, 1989.
  - 20 The most important state publishing houses dealing with contemporary literature and the arts were: Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza Książki i Wiedza, 'KiW' & 'Książka i Wiedza' (serious social, political and philosophical literature); Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 'PIW' (History of literature, Polish and foreign literature); Biblioteka Narodowa, 'BN' (National Library); Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych, 'BWA' (Office of Artistic Exhibitions); Wydawnictwo Arkady, 'Arkady' (art, architecture and building); Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, 'WaiF' (fine arts, theatre, film, music, cinema); Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 'PWM' (music scores, books of music); Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 'LSW' ('popular' publications on literature, politics and history aimed mainly at the rural population); Wydawnictwa literackie, 'WL' (contemporary literature, memoirs, art, poetry); Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 'W.MON.' (military literature, history and contemporary fiction); Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza Czytelnik, 'Czytelnik' (contemporary literature by Polish and foreign authors, the first major

state publishing concern set up after the war, a 'cooperative' with a management board formed in Lublin in 1944 under Jerzy Borejsa); Wydawnictwo Zrzeszenie Księgarzy, 'Zrzeszenie Księgarzy' (Contemporary Literature). The other state publishing concerns which dealt with literature from time to time were: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Iskry, 'Iskry' (popular science, social and political books, fiction all aimed at the the young adult); Młodzieżowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 'MAW' (contemporary literature and socio-political publications aimed at young people); Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 'W.Poznańskie' (history of western Poland, but some contemporary literature); Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 'W.Lubelskie' (contemporary literature); Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 'W.Łódzkie' (contemporary literature); Wydawnictwo Śląsk, 'Śląsk' (mining, metalworking, and literature concerning the Silesian region); Pojezierze Stowarzyszenie Społeczno-Kulturalne w Olsztynie, 'Pojezierze' (specialised publications dealing with memoirs and the problems of the Western and Northern lands acquired from Germany in 1945); Redakcje Wydawnictw Pozaprasowych Pomorze, 'Pomorze' (social and political literature, contemporary literature, works relating to Pomerania). In addition there was Instytut Wydawniczy Pax i Zespół Prasy Pax, 'Pax', specialising in contemporary literature, religious literature, social science, periodicals. Belles lettres accounted for 18 per cent of Pax publications: their most popular Polish Catholic authors were Zofia Kossak and Jan Dobraczyński, and their favoured foreign writers included François Mauriac (20 editions), G.K.Chesterton (16 editions), and Graham Greene. In addition since its inception in 1949, Pax produced over 2,470 titles totalling over 28 million copies (that is about one third of all religious literature published in Poland). Pax also offered the annual Włodzimierz Pietrzak Prize for the best achievement in the literary field.

- 21 Among the newspapers owned by RSW were: *Trybuna Ludu*, *Gazeta Południowa*, *Trybuna Robotnicza*, *Życie Warszawy*, *Dziennik Polski*, *Echo Krakowa*, *Przyjaciółka*, *Kobieta i Życie*, *Przekrój*, *Perspektywy*, *Panorama*, *Tydzień*, *Polityka*, *Kultura*, *Literatura*, *Życie Literackie*, *Tworczość*, *Poezja*, *Dialog*, *Literatura na Świecie*, *Magazyn Kulturalny*, *Poglądy*, *Kamienia*, *Kurier Polski*, *Polska*.
- 22 Table 47, 'Tłumaczenia 1944-87'; *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach XXXIII: 1987*, Biblioteka Narodowa - Instytut Bibliograficzny, Warsaw, 1989.
- 23 'Listy', *Polityka*, no.2, (723), vol.xv, 9 January 1971. In contrast the UK has 2,500 public libraries, plus 16,500 other library facilities in hospitals, prisons and mobile units. 'Closed Minds, Closed Books', *The Guardian*, 24 June 1993, p.25.
- 24 R.F.Staar, *Poland: 1944-62: The Sovietization of a Captive People*, p.172. M.Hirszowicz, 'The Polish Intelligentsia', in: S.Gomułka & A Polonsky, (eds.), *Polish Paradoxes*, Routledge, London, 1990, p.156. See also J.J.Szczepański, 'Osobowość ludzka z processie powstania społeczeństwa socjalistycznego', *Kultura i Społeczeństwo*, VIII/4, 1964, pp.3-25.
- 25 A.Mickiewicz, Konrad Wallenrod, (1828), in G.R.Noyes (ed.), *Konrad Wallenrod and Other Poems*, Greenwood, Westport Connecticut, 1975. Some now see General Jaruzelski as a Konrad figure.
- 26 T.Torańska, *Oni: Stalin's Polish Puppets*, pp.268-9. Kersten claims that the Party had begun the process of controlling the writers before 1949. She points to a

- speech made by Bolesław Bierut, who opened a Wrocław radio station during the November 1947 ZZLP Writers' Congress in Wrocław. He complained that art should reflect the great changes the country was experiencing, rather than lagging behind the 'mighty current' of important political and economic developments. He looked to artists of all kinds to shape the culture of the nation, and called for an artistic 'offensive' to universalise culture and make it accessible to the entire nation. He also made it clear that work to a plan was necessary along the entire cultural 'front'. K.Kersten, *The Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland, 1943-48*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1992, pp.416-7.
- 27 W.Pačławski, 'Post-war Galicia. Stories in History', in: A.Michalów & W.Pačławski (eds.), *Literary Galicia: From Post-War to Post-Modern: A Local Guide to the Global Imagination*, Oficyna Literacka, Kraków, 1991, p.28.
  - 28 T.Torańska, *Oni: Stalin's Polish Puppets*, pp.269-70.
  - 29 A survey taken at the start of the 1960s gives slightly different results: Ministers and nurses ranked eighth, priests seventh, the milicja fourteenth. The difference between the two surveys, less than ten years apart, reflects the changing public perception of the role of nurses, policemen and priests: W.Wesołowski & A.Sarapata, 'Hierarchie zawodów i stanowisk', *Studia Sociologiczne*, no. 2/2, 1961, p.104; A Sarapata, 'Przemiany w hierarchii zawodów', *Studia Sociologiczne*, no.1. 1964.
  - 30 For Polish illiteracy figures see appendix four.
  - 31 L.Kurowski, 'Reforma podatkowa 1949r', *Państwo i Prawo*, no.12, 1949, pp.377-78.
  - 32 F.Fejtő, *A History of the People's Democracies*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1974, p.550, n.82. The American writer William Woods spoke to a number of writers on his 1967 visit to Poland, but he is surely mistaken in his view that 'a Polish novelist, while unlikely to make a living from novels alone, will probably earn about as much in purchasing power as will his western equivalent'. W.Woods, *Poland: Phoenix in the East*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972, p.156. Under socialism the Polish writer was much better off than in the inter-war period. For comparison, in the post-war period in Britain only a handful of writers have been able to make a living from writing - even working for TV. Editions in the west are smaller, reprints and 'paper-backing' are much less likely for books that are not an immediate commercial success, and many writers never earn back in royalties the publisher's initial advance. In Britain literature is more of an expensive hobby than a profession.
  - 33 Table 44, *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach XXXIII:1987*, Biblioteka Narodowa-Institut Bibliograficzny, Warsaw, 1989. Also: J.Topolski, *An Outline History of Polish Culture*, Interpress, Warsaw, 1986, p.279; *Facts About Poland*, 'The Dissemination of Culture', Ref.PF.VI.1-1, Interpress, Warsaw, 1980.
  - 34 J.J.Szczepański, *Kadencja*, Znak, Kraków, 1989, pp.5-7. Although the bulk of Lem's novels have been published by Wydawnictwo Literackie, a Kraków literary publishing house, *Śledztwo* (1959), *Solaris* (1961), and *Niezwyciężony* (1964) were published by the Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej (Ministry of National Defence).
  - 35 K.Brandys, *A Warsaw Diary*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1983, pp.72-3.



- 36 T.Konwicki, *Moonrise, Moonset*, Faber & Faber, London, 1988, p.167.
- 37 O.Budrewicz, *Incredible Warsaw*, Interpress, Warsaw, 1972, p.147
- 38 'Literature', *Facts About Poland*, Ref.PF.VI.7-1, Interpress, Warsaw, 1980.
- 39 *Rocznik statystyczny 1970*, GUS, Warsaw, 1970, p.40.
- 40 W.Wesołowski, 'Changes in the Class Structure in Poland', in: J.Wiatr (ed.), *Studies in Polish Political System*, Ossolineum, Wrocław, 1967, pp.79-80.
- 41 In the years 1964-65, for example, throughout the whole range of Lyceum Ogólny (pre-university high school) the children of the *inteligencja* constituted the largest group of students at 43.1 per cent. The children of the working class made up 26.3 per cent, and those of the peasantry 18.3 per cent. The situation is repeated at university, where in 1965-66 the *inteligencja* made up 53.3 per cent of students, workers 26.1 per cent, and the peasantry 14.1 per cent. At teacher training schools the proportions were less extreme but similar, with the *inteligencja* making up 38.3 per cent, workers 35.6 per cent, and peasantry 20.9 per cent. At Universities the children of the *inteligencja* dominated: they made up 65.5 per cent of the Arts Faculties, 55.9 per cent of Medicine, 51 per cent of Technical Faculties, 50.9 per cent of Physical Education departments, 43.2 per cent of Economics Faculties and 40.3 per cent of Agricultural Studies Faculties. Only in Theological studies were the 20.1 per cent of *inteligencja* students dominated by 45.6 per cent of peasant students and 27.8 per cent worker students. *Statystyka szkolnictwa: szkolnictwo ogólnoszkolące: opieka nad dziećmi i młodzieżą, 1964-65*, no.4, GUS, Warsaw, 1966; *Rocznik statystyczny szkolnictwa 1944-67*, GUS, Warsaw, 1967, p.434-5.
- 42 J.J.Szczepański, 'Materiały do charakterystyki ludzi świata naukowego w XIX i początkach XX w.', *Odmiany czasu teraźniejszego*, Warsaw, 1971, pp.50-1. See also: J.J.Szczepański, 'The Polish Intelligentsia: Past and Present', *World Politics*, vol.14, no.3, April 1962, p.419; A.Gella, 'The Life and Death of the Old Polish Intelligentsia', *Slavic Review*, vol.30, no.1, March 1971, p.17; J.Chałasinski, *Kultura i naród*, KiW, Warsaw, 1968; J.Chałasinski, *Przeszłość i przyszłość inteligencji polskiej*, Warsaw, 1958; J.J.Szczepański, 'Sociological Research on the Polish Intelligentsia', *Polish Sociological Bulletin*, nos.1-2, 1961; J.Żarnowski, *O inteligencji polskiej lat międzywojennych*, WP, Warsaw, 1965.
- 43 A.Siciński, *Literaci polscy: przemiany zawodu na tle przemian kultury współczesnej*, Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolinski Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Wrocław-Warsaw, 1971. In 1973 Gömöri, after examining the background of twenty writers, estimated that at least 50 per cent were descended from the pre-war, land-owning, professional class. G.Gömöri, 'The Cultural Intelligentsia: The Writers', in: D.Lane & G.Kolankiewicz (eds.), *Social Groups in Polish Society*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1973, p.159. It is worth contrasting Siciński's findings on the writing community with the character of the Polish priesthood: 60 per cent of priests come from villages in southern Poland, only 8 per cent come from towns and cities; 82 per cent of priests come from families with 4-10 children; more than 65 per cent of priests come from families where their parents had only a primary or incomplete primary education; 15 per cent came from families where the parents had a secondary education, and only 10 per cent from families with some kind of academic education. A.Piekarski, *Freedom of Conscience and Religion in Poland*, 1979, pp.149-50.

- 44 The official line was: 'Although the basic exploiting classes have been abolished, the class nature of social conflicts outlives the economic bases of domination and even the existence of the property classes. These conflicts continue to appear basically in the sphere of political attitudes and beliefs. The situation is additionally complicated by the existence of small private business which does not necessarily lead to polarisation and generation of class conflicts but potentially constitutes an area of influence of the former privileged classes. Finally, the legally and semi-legally functioning capitalist sector in spite of its economic weakness has some effect on the activeness of anti-socialist groups. Recognising the existence and the role of class conflicts in the contemporary political life of Poland, one must note at the same time the relative decrease of the sharpness of these conflicts in comparison not only with the first years after the war but also with the period of eight or ten years ago.' J.Wiatr, 'The Hegemonic Party System in Poland', in J.Wiatr (ed.), *Studies in Polish Political System*, 1967, pp.110-11.
- 45 Z.Herbert, 'Interview with Jacek Trznadel', *Partisan Review*, vol.LIV, no.4, 1987, p.574.
- 46 'Zbigniew Herbert: A Poet of Exact Meaning: A Conversation with M.Oramus', in: D.Wiessbort (ed.), *The Poetry of Survival: Poets of Central and Eastern Europe*, Anvil, London, 1991, pp.328.
- 47 Interview with J.Żuławski, 29 May 1990, Warsaw.
- 48 J.Boński, 'Za pięć dwunastu', *Życie Literackie*, 17 April, 24 April, 1 May 1955.
- 49 E.Czarnecka & A.Fiut, *Conversations with Czesław Miłosz*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1987, p.95.
- 50 C.Miłosz, *The Captive Mind*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1980, pp.216-7.
- 51 C.Miłosz, *The Seizure of Power*, Abacus, London, (originally titled *The Usurpers*, 1955) 1985.
- 52 C.Miłosz, *The Captive Mind*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1980, p.x.
- 53 E.Czarnecka & A.Fiut, *Conversations with Czesław Miłosz*, pp.147-150.
- 54 A.Zagajewski, *Solidarity, Solitude*, Ecco, New York, 1990, p.138.

## THREE

JERZY ANDRZEJEWSKI: *ASHES AND DIAMONDS*

The artist of Polish Romanticism was not someone who fulfilled himself entirely in the fabric of his art - in poetry, painting or sculpture. He tried to outdo himself, and the historical situation came to his aid. He was something more than an author; he was the conscience of the nation, a prophet and social institution. Poland in the nineteenth century was a country shorn of normal institutions: power, government, parliament, political life, public opinion. It was the poets who did duty for all these institutions. In a sense it was, of course, an act of usurpation.

Andrzej Wajda, 'Andrzej Wajda mówi', *Kino*, nu.1, 1968.

Jerzy Andrzejewski is probably Poland's best known modern novelist. He was born in Warsaw on 19 August 1909 and died there on 19 April 1983. His lifetime and professional career spanned virtually the entire post-war period and almost the whole Polish experience of the twentieth century: partition, independence, abbreviated democratic rule, military government, Nazi occupation, 'socialism', opposition, Solidarność, martial law. The only thing he missed was the collapse of 'socialism'. His life, his novel *Popiół i Diament* (Ashes and Diamonds, 1948) and his trajectory as an intellectual are important on a number of levels.

Andrzejewski was a student of the Jan Zamoyski Gymnazjum, and later of Polish Philology at Warsaw University in the years 1927-30. He was also associated with small and frequently unpleasant right-wing Catholic-nationalist magazines. He made his literary debut with a story called 'Kłamstwa' (Lying) in the right-wing anti-Semitic Warsaw daily *ABC*, for which, though he was no anti-semite (see his essay: 'The Issue of Polish anti-Semitism', *Odrodzenie*, 14 & 27 June 1946), he worked as a theatre and book critic. However, he was particularly associated with the right-wing, pro-Nazi,

anti-Semitic weekly paper *Prosto z Mostu* (Straight Out), which was edited by Bolesław Piasecki, leader of the ONR-Falangist Party.

Andrzejewski's literary career really began when *ABC* collected his short stories in a volume called *Drogi Nieuniknione* (Unavoidable Roads, 1936). Two years later his novel *Lad Serca* (Mode of the Heart, 1938), which had appeared as a magazine serial, was taken up and published to wide acclaim. The novel set an impressive moral conflict against a solemn and rather grand night-time backdrop. The central character of the novel was a priest and the 'action' was his late-night conversation with a murderer. Almost inevitably Andrzejewski was labelled a Conradian moralist, a conservative and a 'Catholic Writer', which, as Miłosz has said, in Catholic Poland is no small thing. Andrzejewski's period as a 'religious Catholic' was short but very intense, but the novel established him as a writer of considerable talent. In 1939, among other awards, Andrzejewski received the PAL Nagrode Młodych (Polish Academy of Literature's Young Writers' Prize), and by public poll was also awarded the *Wiadomości Literackie* Readers' Prize. However, the war disturbed what was clearly a promising literary career. During the German occupation Andrzejewski became a member of the AK, ran a small underground magazine and was widely regarded as a moral authority in the unwritten patriotic code of relations with Germans and the conduct of the underground. Andrzejewski became an important part of the culture of conspiracy.

Andrzejewski threw himself into the reconstruction of post-war Poland. In the years 1946-7 he worked in Kraków and was elected president of the Kraków ZZLP. His first post-war book appeared under conditions that were absolutely different from anything that Andrzejewski and millions of other Poles could have predicted in 1938. *Noc* (Night, 1946), a series of short stories written during the war, was not particularly adventurous in terms of style or political content and told simply and effectively of the horrors of the occupation.<sup>1</sup> The book received the 1946 City of Kraków Literary Prize. (For further details of Andrzejewski's post-war publishing history see appendix four). In the years 1948-52 he lived in Szczecin before returning to Warsaw to become editor in chief of *Przegląd Kulturalny*. He became Chairman of the Central Board of ZLP in 1949, and in 1952 was awarded the state Banner of Labour Order as a reward for his

'social achievements'. In the years 1952-7 he also sat as a Deputy in the Sejm and his circle of Party comrades included Ważyk, Wirpsza, Jastrun, żuławski, Dygat, Bocheński, Woroszyński and Hertz.

*Popiół i Diament* (Ashes and Diamonds), which had originally appeared under the title *Zaraz po Wojnie* (Right After the War) in serial form in *Odrodzenie* through 1947, was published in book form in 1948 and was at once massively successful. It was awarded the *Odrodzenie* Prize in 1948, and with the help of Andrzej Wajda's film of the same name (1957) became Andrzejewski's most famous work both in the west and in Poland. There can be little doubt that the appearance of *Ashes and Diamonds* was one of the major publishing events of the decade. It is the most widely reprinted of Andrzejewski's works and has become a classic of modern Polish literature. Along with Borowski's *Pożegnanie z Maria* (Farewell to Mary, 1948), Nałkowska's *Medaliony* (Medallions, 1946) and Miłosz's *Ocalenie* (Rescue, 1945) it stands out from most of the 'rubble literature' of the immediate post-war period, which was obsessed with simply and perhaps naively detailing the horrors of the Occupation. 1948-49 was a crucial time in the life of the post-war regime, and Andrzejewski's novel is important both for what it reveals openly, for what it does not talk about at all and for the ambiguous place it occupies in the literary and political debate of those years.

*Ashes and Diamonds* takes place in a Polish town - probably Kraków - in the spring of 1945. It is set on the last day of the war and the action unfolds against the declaration that the German army is about to lay down its weapons in surrender. The novel shows a range of Polish characters in these final moments of war and the first moments of peace. It is a portrait of the very ambiguous and many layered transition from war to peace, from the military society of pre-war Poland with its *szlachta* cultural and political values, to the 'socialist' values imposed at bayonet point by the Red Army at the end of the war. It is a portrait of Poland making the very painful transition from the pre-war society of massive peasantry, small middle class and tiny but powerful nobility, to a new society of 'workers' and Party bureaucrats. The move from war to peace is not the end of violence, however, it is merely a shift from one kind of violence to another: hostilities between the incoming 'socialists' and those whose loyalties lay with 'old Poland' and the government in exile were taken up with a

ferocious and intense savagery which both sides had learned and practised against the Nazis. For many it was a continuation in practice of the 'war against two enemies - Russia and Germany', already deeply embedded in the Polish political consciousness.

*Ashes and Diamonds* is a key text summing up many of the ambiguities, changes of attitude and the sacrifices necessary to accommodate the new regime. The subject of the book, the civil war that marked the transition to 'peace' in Poland, was still unfinished when the novel appeared. Between 1945-47 the assassination by the AK of PPR members, government officials and supporters averaged 200 per month, reaching a peak in May 1945 with 600 assassinations, and a second peak in September 1946 with 360 deaths. In June 1945, 16 leaders of the AK had gone on trial in Moscow charged with anti-Soviet activity - all had pleaded guilty. While it is estimated that over 60,000 AK members were still active in 1946, as a result of two amnesties in the period 1945-47 over 70,000 AK members left hiding and attempted to resume normal life: some 17,000 were arrested, tried and imprisoned. Many did not survive their brutal treatment at the hands of the authorities.<sup>2</sup>

Andrzejewski may have been influenced in his choice of subject matter by the assassination of General Karol Świerczewski (1897-1947: General 'Walter' of the French-Belgian volunteer contingent of the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War). He had been a founder member of the Central Bureau of the PPR in the USSR, a member of the Central Committee of the PPR and also of the National Land Council. In 1946 he became Deputy Minister of Defence, served on the Sejm's Military Affairs committee, was Inspector of the Army, commander of the Poznań military district and representative of the Polish military on the International Control Commission in Berlin. This central and very important member of the new authority was killed by 'Ukrainian nationalists' who attacked a convoy on an inspection tour of the eastern borders near the town of Baligród on 28 March 1947. Świerczewski, a leading socialist, was given a state funeral on 1 April 1947: Roman Catholic funeral rites were observed by Reverend Colonel Warchałowski, the chaplain general of the Polish Army, a church choir sang *De Profundis*, and *Salve Regina* was intoned over the open grave. (*Głos Ludu*, 2 June 1947.)

A second background event of note was the publication of *Drewniany Koń*

(Wooden Horse, 1946) by Brandys. Brandys (who had that same year joined the Party) took a sarcastic and bitterly ironic look at the early years of a young Pole of the *inteligencja*, who when confronted with the horrors of the occupation and the conspiracies of the resistance, found himself morally and spiritually inadequate and intellectually disarmed. To Brandys, who was deemed to be a man of the Left, the London-backed AK perpetuated the latent and often unconscious fascist tendencies within the *szlachta*, the reactionary and simplistic aspects of the pre-war political system and of Polish nationalism and Catholicism. Both Brandys and Andrzejewski were to revise their opinions of the Party over the next decade.

*Ashes and Diamonds* portrays a range of characters and their immediate social circle. Andrzej, son of Judge Kossecki, a member of an independent right-wing resistance group; Alek, the younger son, a member of a gang of juvenile thugs who pretend that they are part of a resistance movement. Maciek, an ex-student from Warsaw, in town to carry out the assassination of Szczuka for the AK. There are also the opportunists in the local government set-up, and in the local catering industry. There are representatives of the displaced and largely dispossessed nobility; Mme Staniewicz, the Puciatyckis and Teleżyński - all of whom found the war distasteful and who regard the incoming 'socialists' as upstart boors beneath contempt. More importantly there is the wretchedly pliable judge Kossecki, recently released from the Nazi concentration camp, who, although widely regarded as a lawyer without a stain to his character, was in fact, under the name Rybycki (*ryby* - fish), a concentration camp *kapo*, a trustee. The moral condemnation of these people, resides, particularly towards the end of the novel, in the figure of judge Kossecki. His moral collapse is indicative of the wider failure and the 'the bankruptcy of the petit bourgeoisie'; his plea that wartime has its own morality is set up to show that without the guiding light of communism, humanity is nothing more than a slave to circumstance. On the other side of the equation there is the self righteous communist Podgórski. There is Szczuka, the Party official recently liberated from a concentration camp. And we also hear of Maria, a communist martyr who, in contrast to Kossecki, helped her fellow prisoners selflessly and died in Ravensbrück. We are told that Maria's devoted and communist husband often thinks of her and cherishes her memory.

In setting up his gallery of characters Andrzejewski went to great lengths to show the deep divisions that had emerged in Polish society at the end of the war. Again and again the network of family and friends is riven by factionalism that had its roots deep in Polish history. *Ashes and Diamonds* was something of a departure from Andrzejewski's earlier books; although it indicated misgivings about the 'socialists' and the situation at the end of the war, it was clearly not hostile to the new regime - its view of Polish class politics, its portraits of the AK and the 'socialists' all made its attempted position quite clear. It condemned the old order and the continuing mainly right-wing underground movement and depicted the underground army as patriotic but tragically misguided. Andrzej, having bungled the assassination of Szczuka, goes to see 'the Colonel' - a cavalry officer who is very clearly a member of the pre-war military. After analysing what went wrong the colonel treats Andrzej to a disquisition on 'moral intelligence':

'We're living and fighting under very difficult and complex circumstances. But the war years, which were the testing years for everyone, have taught us that things have to be regarded in their elementary, basic set-up. There's no time for subtle discrimination, it must be simple and clear. Good is good, and evil evil. You agree?...So there's one thing we must get clear in the present situation. The Second World War is coming to an end. That's obvious. Another two or three days, perhaps a week - and it will be over. But we did not foresee an end like this. We thought that not only would Germany come out of the war defeated, but Russia too. Things have turned out rather differently. In today's set-up we Poles are divided into two categories: those who have betrayed the freedom of Poland and those who do not wish to do so. The first want to submit to Russia, we do not. They want communism, we do not. They want to destroy us, we must destroy them. A battle is going on between us, a battle that has only just started...What were you fighting for? Wasn't it for the freedom of Poland? But did you imagine a Poland ruled by blind agents carrying out orders from the Kremlin and established by Russian bayonets? What about your colleagues, your contemporaries? How many of them died? What for? In the end how can people like you and me - alive and still at liberty - how can we show our solidarity with our friends if we draw back half way?...Now take Szczuka...Who's Szczuka? One of the intelligentsia, a trained engineer, a communist, an excellent organiser into the bargain. And he's a man who knows what he wants. Now he's working for the Party in the provinces, but tomorrow if nothing changes, he'll hold a responsible State job. He may be a Minister the day after tomorrow. Let's say he's an idealist. He was put on trial several times before the war and was sent to gaol. He was two years in a prison camp. He's the more dangerous. We're not worried by careerists. When the time



comes they'll leave the sinking ship like rats. It's a waste to risk men like you - and bullets - on them. The cost is too high. But when it's a question of ideas which bring us enslavement and death, then our reply can only be death. The usual laws of battle. History will be the final judge as to who was right. We have already decided...' He inhaled his cigarette smoke and added with emphasis... 'because we have already chosen.'<sup>3</sup>

Andrzej who has doubts about what he is doing, says that he wants to be honest rather than intelligent about the armed struggle. The colonel replies:

'Moral intelligence is precisely what I mean...Like you, I'm a soldier and carry out orders of my superior officers. Blindly? No, I believe they're right, because as a soldier I'm also a man and do not forego the right to judge the world I live in. I assure you, lieutenant, that a man who does not want to be a judge does not want to be a man. And if one has the courage to judge, then loyalty towards oneself applies too. It's a matter, if you'll forgive me using such a big word, of conscience. That's all!'<sup>4</sup>

The colonel's position is almost certainly that of the London backed AK; the outline of the noble, officer-caste style is easily apparent. In this passage Andrzejewski makes a series of points, one of which is that after years of war, the ability to decide clearly for oneself has become clouded, that it has become extremely difficult to see the incoming regime, for a whole variety of reasons, as something with which it might be possible to cooperate.

The moral position is the important one, and that is simplified enormously by the Colonel. Yet strangely the moral/political language used here is almost identical to that used by Michnik in his essays on cooperation with the military government of General Jaruzelski.<sup>5</sup> Thought is moral rather than political, and great stress is laid on fidelity, honour, loyalty. Little serious political thought takes place in laying out plans for an alternative future. It is a consistent feature of Polish politics that the restoration of the previous incarnation of Poland takes precedence over everything else.

Andrzejewski also shows how the moral damage to Poland's youth by the occupation fed into the chaos of the civil war. Andrzej's younger brother Alek is a member of an underground group - in fact they are little more than a gang meeting in a

cave that was once their schoolboy hideout. In an argument about finance their leader, Jurek, shoots and kills Janusz. Marcin remonstrates with Jurek: 'We were going to fight for Poland, for good and noble causes...Don't laugh, you said so yourself.'<sup>6</sup> They have just come through a war, which as it was visited upon Poland was very much concerned with notions of blood and race, but the effect of the war and the massive loss of human life has been to devalue human life rather than elevate it. The good and noble causes of both sides slide into ugly, messy, personal disputes. This group, who plan to fight for 'freedom and justice', whose childish password is 'Freedom', remain just a gang playing at resistance. Beyond a childish brutality and spiteful variety of fascism they have no sense of politics, no ideology that goes beyond the purely national. And that is part of Andrzejewski's point: because of the peculiarities of Polish history there is no socio-political agreement to resolve differences without recourse to violence:

'But what are we going to do now? With all this on our minds, with all this blood...'

'Don't exaggerate. Why talk about it? Blood! Blood doesn't mean much.'

'Jurek, please don't talk like that. You shouldn't!'

'Of course blood matters, but not the blood of our enemies. We're going to shoot them down like dogs. That's our purpose and our justification. And the fact that he went first was only an accident...'<sup>7</sup>

Other members of the *inteligencja* do not come out of this situation too well either. The restaurateur Słomka, mayor Świecki, deputy mayor and architect Weychert, Chairman of the town council Kalicki, the editor of the local newspaper Pawlicki, are all morally flexible, that is they are corruptible. Drewnowski the mayor's secretary, and Pieniążek the journalist, show themselves to be little more than malleable, grafters, hangers-on who pander to the incoming 'socialists' with as much or as little conscience as they toady (*każdzić*) to the remaining members of the aristocracy. Indeed, Pieniążek hints very heavily that Pawlicki also collaborated with the Nazis. It is there in their names too, since rather in the manner of a morality play, some of the names have significant meanings indicating the characters of those concerned: Słomka - a straw; Świecki - worldly, mundane; Drewnowski - wooden, log; Pieniążek - small

change.

The values of the petit bourgeois class - the 'rotten bourgeoisie' as Major Wrona (*wrona* - crow) of the security police calls them - may have collapsed in the war and in the camps, but Andrzejewski is saying that in spite of this, the values and style of this class, backed by the popular legitimacy of the London government, still inform the political, social and moral patterns of the new Poland. Indeed we can see this in the way the official reception turns into a drunken debauch, a parade of snobbery, sentimentalism, furtive plotting, rampant opportunism and cynicism.

Nowhere are the potential and complexities contained within the moment of peace more in evidence than in the discussion between Major Wrona and Comrade Świecki:

'I know one thing. When we were in the forests, we imagined all this very differently. Some of our supporters are getting too tame and comfortable. If this goes on much longer, we shall lose the revolution. What's needed is to shake them up, like this.' He held up his clenched fists. 'Instead of doing away with the class war, we ought to intensify it, catch our enemy by the throat, because if we don't kill them in time, they'll put a knife in our backs.'

Świecki nodded with an understanding smile.

'That's all very well, major, but you're forgetting one thing. Politics isn't such a simple matter. At this stage we must first lessen various irritations.'

Wrona looked at him darkly.

'Whose? The kulaks? The landowners?'

'I'm speaking generally,' Świecki replied evasively. 'We must draw them to us, unite them with us.'

'But who?'

'What do you mean 'Who?'' Świecki asked in surprise. 'The nation'. Wrona's swarthy face darkened slightly.

'The nation? Comrade Świecki, do you really know the Polish nation, do you know what it's like and what it wants? Who do you want to unite? Those who think of nothing but pushing the workers and peasants back into poverty and degradation? Or perhaps those who shoot from behind cover at our best men? Are they supposed to be the Polish nation?'

Świecki opened his hands, 'I understand your indignation, I myself was very upset about many incidents...'

'But you'd like to inscribe 'Love one another, brother Poles' on the standard of the revolution?'

'The country's destroyed, the people are exhausted, we must think realistically.'

'No!' He brought his fist down on the table. 'That isn't the way, that's not the Bolshevik way. It's true our country is destroyed and the people are exhausted, but it looks to me as if you, Comrade Świecki, have no idea what great forces there

are in this exhausted nation. These communist forces will grow and wake up in other people...' His voice suddenly broke with almost boyish grief. 'It makes my heart ache to remember so many comrades who won't see this...'<sup>8</sup>

It may have been naive of Andrzejewski to suppose that Świecki's version of socialism would survive that of Wrona. Major Wrona has had a 'wholly admirable past in the underground movement', which is shorthand for belonging to the AL (People's Army, the 'socialist' resistance) rather than to the AK: his style of language, his use of the word 'kulaks', give him away as a creature made by the Party and its Moscow alliance.<sup>9</sup>

The novel was unusual in that it showed conflict between the forces supposed to be good and pure, and the 'fascistic wreckers' of the AK. But, even though Andrzejewski had clearly skewed the political struggle between the AK and the 'socialists' to fit his own personal and still rather Catholic moral scheme, what it also showed was that between the idealistic extremists of both left and right, there moved a host of confused, demoralised, exhausted Poles, many of whom saw no point in being other than opportunist. Further, the novel had as one of its main characters Maciek, a member of the AK.<sup>10</sup> Maciek Chełmicki (the name conjures up the word *helm*, helmet) represents the moral confusion and political chaos that haunted Poland in those years. At one point he attempts to explain to his commander the difference between killing during the war and killing now: 'But what is it I'm supposed to sacrifice everything for? I knew in those days. But now? You tell me! What do I have to kill that man for? And others? And go on killing? What for?'<sup>11</sup> His attitude has changed, he has met a girl, he wants to leave the underground movement, settle down, have a normal life. In his stumbling, incoherent way he is trying to find a solution not only to his own problems but those of the whole country. In the end, however, he abdicates responsibility and decides to accept someone else's solution. His agreement to commit one last murder leads to his own death.

In Maciek we have someone who is trying to reject the old order (or parts of it) and who is trying to work out a new way forward. His efforts are thrown into sharp relief by the scene around him: in the hotel pompous politicians and leaders, *arriviste*

local politicians, brutal local police meet in one room of the hotel. In the bar meanwhile the drunken, snobbish, plotting, hysterical old order dances a *konga* against a gross distortion of a Chopin Polonaise - 'The one that goes Tam-ta-tam, ta-ra-tata-tata-tatam' - with its highly charged nationalistic overtones parodied and distorted by the tired, bored musicians.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile brutalised youngsters, liars, self-seekers returned from the camps attempt to work out some new *modus vivendi* for themselves in which their future is bright and their past is obscure. The old moral order has been turned inside out. The first day of 'Peace' marks the onset of an assault by 'socialists' Poles on traditional Polish cultural and hierarchical values, on Polish beliefs and myths about Poland and its place in the world. It takes great courage to carve a path through all this, to decide how the future will be, either as a 'socialist' politician or as a member of the anti-'socialist' underground, but also as an independent individual building or rebuilding a private life from the ruins. Maciek and Krystyna are ordinary Poles. If Maciek is a defeatist, then so is Krystyna.

Andrzejewski makes much of the heroic defeatism implicit in the references (quotation and allusion) to classical Romantic poetry and to the music of Chopin. He asks: is this like the defeats of the Partition era? The novel is redolent of connections with Polish Romanticism in music and Literature, indeed it takes its title from the poem 'Za kulisami' (Behind the Scenes) by Cyprian Norwid (1821-83).<sup>13</sup> Indeed his use of the poem indicates very clearly that he wishes to consign evil to the ash and destruction of the past, and sees the possible moral victories of the socialist future as the diamonds hidden among the ash. There are also passing references to the dramatist Juliusz Słowacki (1809-49). But perhaps the major reference to 'classical' Polish literature is in the scene where the banquet guests dance the conga to Chopin - that in itself is a direct reference to Polish classical literature. Wyspiański's play *Wesele* (The Wedding, 1901) is a still popular tale of the 'situation of the nation'. It shows an attempt by the Kraków *inteligencja* to bridge the cultural gap between gentry and the peasantry by a wedding between a peasant girl and a Kraków artist. There is a scene when at dawn the drunken wedding guests shamle grotesquely through a patriotic dance, out of the house and into the farmyard - a scene which Andrzejewski makes direct use of in his description of the hotel party on the evening before Maciek

completes his assassination assignment.<sup>14</sup> These Romantic writers had their own, independent and ironic grasp of the difficulties of Poland's situation. It is to them, rather than to images of the future that Andrzejewski turns in trying to reconcile Poland to itself and its new rulers.

It is a most peculiar and ultimately self-defeating set of references, since it points out very clearly that a Polish writer, a member of the *inteligencja*, could not easily imagine any Poland without those artistic and political traditions, that Polish tradition was deeply ingrained even among those who wished to accommodate the new regime. Andrzejewski, in his use of classical Romantic texts harks back to Poland's traditional anti-Russian feelings, and *szlachta* moral values. He reminds people of what they are giving up, implicitly contrasts the new order with the old, undercuts his own message of cooperation, affirms an ideal that is Polish not Russian, *szlachta* rather than proletarian or Party. At one point Kalicki and Szczuka discuss Poland's future under socialism:

'Do you honestly see no difference between the Soviet Union and Tsarist Russia?'

'Of course I do. It's a different system. I don't deny there are differences. But Russian imperialism and Russian aggression are the same. No, no!' he gesticulated, 'I know what you're going to say, but please spare me your propaganda. I know where I stand. The East will always be the East. That never changes. Anyhow, you'll see in a year or two. Poland won't exist any longer. Our country, our culture will all be lost, all of it...'

At this moment his voice broke painfully. He stopped. Szczuka also said nothing for a time.

Kalicki shivered and sat up.

'I'm sorry for you, Jan,' he whispered at length. 'Life has beaten you.'

'Perhaps so,' he said in a controlled voice, 'but my life concerns me and me alone, whereas you're losing Poland.'<sup>158</sup>

Between them the resistance and the 'socialists' kill Szczuka and Maciek - the best and brightest, the most intelligent that either side has to offer. What they are left with are opportunists and drunks, rigid Stalinists, haughty and un-yielding nobles, well-meaning but ignorant peasants, confused and tired workers; it is from these that the People's Poland will be built.

It must be said that the novel is badly faulted. Andrzejewski has doled out judgment, allocating right and wrong, according to the most superficial Marxist moral gloss. In true Romantic and Conradian fashion the communist heroes are solitary figures in a hostile environment, struggling with a lumpen, reactionary, un-responsive society which is caught up in trying to restore the past, and which lacks all vision of the future. The AK here bears the blame for death and destruction. Their sense of patriotism, their commitment to the cause, their courage and resilience all count for nothing because they have decided to resist the Party. The communists in the novel are not tortured by doubts in the way that Chelmicki is: only he experiences a longing for peace, a weariness of death and destruction, a desire to accept the situation as it is. But his doubts count for nothing because he has made a wrong choice. Only the AK fight on against the 'progressive' forces in order to carry out their misguided orders: it is the AK, not the Party, who are accused of suppressing their humanity and their compassion. The novel is also badly faulted in its depiction of Szczuka: we only know that he is a communist from what the author tells us about him, not from what Szczuka says or does. Drawing a communist character was a problem for Andrzejewski because for many to be a socialist was a failure of patriotism, a failure of Polishness: it was to anti-Polish. In Poland nationalism was often a substitute for any more extended or developed ideology of left and right, conservative and progressive. The idea of 'Poland' became invested during the Partitions with all the power of ideology and all the mystery of a religious experience.

Although it is possible to show very broadly that *Ashes and Diamonds* went along with the notion that all art should now 'contribute to the ideological transformation and education of the workers in the spirit of socialism'<sup>16</sup> it managed to conform to a version of reality that was still close enough to the truth to disconcert those who believed in the Party line and who favoured total conversion to socialist realism. The novel offended the idea of socialist realism on a number of levels. Given the way the Stalinists behaved the terms 'socialist' and 'realist' were mutually exclusive. The last thing the 'socialists' of eastern Europe wanted was a literature that showed the reality, that probed the actuality of the 'socialist' take-over or the construction of a new version of class politics. This was especially so in Poland where the Party lacked all

legitimacy. The novel did not adhere to the tenets of *socrealizm* in depicting the communists as wholly attractive and blameless heroes in action. Wrona is presented as a line-toeing, insensitive, dangerous blockhead. Kalicki, son of a wealthy landowning family from Kiev, expelled from university for his socialist ideas, later an important member of the Polish cooperative movement, a member of the PPS, a deputy to the inter-war Sejm, is shown as full of scruples and doubts about the communist road to power. Szczuka too, it would seem, is a communist in name only: what he thinks about socialism, what his hopes, plans and dreams for Polish socialism might be are never revealed to the reader. The Party people drink, wench, have friends outside the Party, have ex-wives. They are not morally perfect, and because of this they are not Party literature banalities. Also, it must be said that the portrait of the Party heroes as solitary figures was probably deeply questionable in Stalinist and *socrealizm* terms.<sup>17</sup>

In this book there are no positive and clearly identifiable socialist heroes, no absolutely good men, no converted proletarians, no justifiably routed bourgeoisie, no worker-heroes. Indeed, the working class and the agricultural labourers, the average, ordinary Poles, are almost entirely absent from this book, as it concentrates exclusively on the various aspects of the *inteligencja*. Even Krystyna, the sole ordinary working girl who might be thought to occupy some special place in the pantheon of both Poles and communists, is no hero of labour and no paragon of virtue. Her wants are bourgeois, and she falls in love with an AK assassin: if she believes in the socialist dawn then it does not show. The Party workers too seek their justification in weariness and in the idea of 'Poland' rather than in the socialist future. That is, their plans, where they are articulated at all, are more nationalist than socialist.

It is also clear that Andrzejewski had adapted his earlier moral schema to the requirements of the new situation, but he had not abandoned it entirely. Andrzejewski, who in his Catholicism, and in his later dissidence, always sought some form of total world vision, some all encompassing sense of moral order, thought that he had found a resting place within Marxism. It is a book shot through with internal Party strife, international and class conflict, and human opportunism. There is no harmonising socialist principle at work. No dazzling radiance pours down from the summit of Soviet achievement, to light the Polish path. There is no glimpse of the wonderful land



that lies beyond immediate travail. There is no happy and definite conclusion in favour of socialism. There is no sense in this book that communism is the predetermined and inevitable end to class struggle, though Andrzejewski must have been aware that the failure to say that this was so left him open to charges of doubting the absolute necessity of communism. With hindsight it is possible to see that perhaps the book should be seen as aiming not to present socialism as a goal, but as explaining why socialism might be considered at this particular point of Polish history.

The characters in *Ashes and Diamonds* do not so much renounce their past as make an accommodation with the present in the hope of picking up the old ways at some time in the future. There is no sense that any of the figures here are the cardboard-allegorical, personified abstractions favoured by Soviet *socrealizm* - though a few have suggestive names. These are not simple figures who appear as peasant, landlord, party-man, noble worker, loyal comrade-wife, young hero. The specifically socialist content of the book may be lacking, yet, perhaps in spite of itself, the book is rich in nationalist reverberations. Whether it will or no, the book harks back to lost dreams, shattered illusions, and shows the weariness of death and struggle that gripped Poland in those years. It is not an optimistic tragedy, it is a book filled with doubt, remorse, and melancholy. It has very specific roots in the continuing social conflict and does not find any convincing resolution in socialism.

The success of the book was huge when compared to Andrzejewski's pre-war writings. It very quickly sold 100,000 copies, by 1966 had gone into fourteen editions and by 1989 had been reprinted in a total of 25 Polish editions. Long before this Andrzejewski rightly understood that under the new system his writings would reach a much wider audience than ever before. The patronage of the Party was now of vital importance, and after 1949 the Minister of Culture's calls to support the Party by writing a particular kind of literature could not be ignored with impunity. *Ashes and Diamonds* showed Andrzejewski veering, with some reservations, towards the new line of *socrealizm* and support for the Party. While *Ashes and Diamonds* did not conform to *socrealizm*: Party members were not spotless, the AK were not fascist wreckers. It was nevertheless seen to be a book which would move other writers towards that style. In any case, the Polish authorities did not feel that they could impose such a style with

any confidence just yet. *Ashes and Diamonds* had broken with convention by mentioning the AK and by writing, albeit rather cautiously, about the civil war. But this was something the Party was prepared to tolerate because it helped to show that the new regime was inevitable and offered Poland a new way forward. However guardedly, it supported the Party and books which offered support to the post-war regime were few and far between. As if in reward for his acceptance Andrzejewski received the *Odrodzenie* Literary award in 1948 and the novel was awarded the State Literary Prize.<sup>18</sup>

Miłosz had been a close associate of Andrzejewski during the war; he had narrowly escaped arrest with Andrzejewski in the first of the Nazi round-ups in Warsaw, had walked the rubble of Warsaw with him in 1945, and cooperated with him on a film at the end of the war. Miłosz has written a little uncharitably of the success of *Ashes and Diamonds*:

A novel that favourably compared the ethic of the New Faith with the vanquished code [of the resistance and the exiled London government] was very important to the Party...One city donated to him a beautiful villa furnished at considerable expense. A useful writer in a people's democracy cannot complain of a lack of attention.<sup>19</sup>

As far as Miłosz was concerned, Andrzejewski had merely exchanged the priest's cassock of the earlier novel for the leather jacket of the Party.

Not everybody was as restrained as Miłosz. Herbert spoke contemptuously of Andrzejewski as the oldest of the Stalinist 'old boys', and raged against the continued influence of the novel:

*Ashes and Diamonds*, reprinted again and again, poisoning the minds of the young. One hears that it was the 'Hegelian sting'. I am sorry, but Hegel was dead. He died a century earlier. It was Berman, Sokorski, Kronska who did the stinging. When I am speaking about a crime, it is the crime against the young generation, of those now in their twenties and thirties. They are still being raised on this kind of literature...Perhaps the times of terror were too much for the literary imagination. But what does it really mean? The spirit of history does not exist. The system was built by people. One can list their names...The gang of agents badly needed the *inteligencja*, the elite - a kind of cultural *nomenklatura*. What did the governments

have to offer? The divine status of a demiurge. Andrzejewski once told me that he was invited to visit by Berman. His host paced nervously in his office. Finally he stopped in front of his window and said, 'This country is on the edge of a civil war. Only a writer of your stature and talent could possibly...' Thus he suggested the subject of *Ashes and Diamonds*. They suddenly felt that 'the helm of history' rested also in their hands and that it was worth lying a bit to the confused nation upon which they looked with contempt...<sup>20</sup>

However we now regard the book in terms of its politics, there can be no doubt at all that it is a landmark in Polish literature. It helped to establish some sort of accommodation between the reluctant population and the ambitious Party. The book sprang from the shock of the occupation and the shock of the liberation: it is about a people who stand at a crossroads in their collective life, but who are effectively denied a say in how they will move forward, or even in which direction they will go. It played out a longing to have done with conflict, to renew some kind of certainty and forge some kind of national unity to repair the ravages not only of the Nazi Occupation, but the increasingly unpleasant rule of the colonels in the years before the war.

Although the novel is set in 1945 it is important to remember that it was written in 1947, that is before the full impact of Stalinisation under Bierut, before the attempted imposition of socrealism by Berman, and that it therefore typifies only the immediate post-war dilemmas. Andrzejewski, for all his prescience was not able to predict how Polish 'socialism' would develop. Although the book was criticised in the early 1950's for its attempt to transcend the differences between the various Polish political opinions and recent biographies, after the thaw of 1956 the idea that some sort of unity had to be achieved, that some sort of legitimacy accrued to the new regime, acquired new and rather ironic implications. The process by which Poland became a 'socialist' state had been presented as a unique possibility by which the whole Polish nation might become upwardly mobile. After 1956 increasing centralisation, the suppression of opposition, the abandonment of collectivisation, industrialisation by police methods all meant that the achievement of *Ashes and Diamonds* was seen in quite a different light. Many felt that whatever value the book may have held when it first came out was put in jeopardy by the nature of the regime that it helped establish. Konwicki for example,

who was literary adviser to Wajda on the film of the book, came to see it as a very damaging piece of fantasy:

The book that served as the basis for the film is the sort of political science fiction that we were writing at the time. It presented reality not as one saw it on the street but as created by an author well disposed to the newly arrived political doctrines and newly arrived regime...And so the novel depicted a Poland that was a bit fictitious, an ill-tempered society, politically turbulent, freed of its reactionaries, not shying away from feasting and revelry, precisely like the Roman Empire in the days before the final fall. But in reality that was a Poland of graves, of Auschwitz, deportation to Siberia, women and partisans slaughtered, a Poland of hunger and orphans, a Poland of torture and prisons, a Poland that had lost the war and lost hope.<sup>21</sup>

By 1983 the official line was:

*Ashes and Diamonds*...is devoted to the difficult problems of choice which faced many Poles on the eve of liberation...Andrzejewski's greatest merit lies in the acceptance of the new reality, while at the same time doing justice to those who had not solved their ideological problems and who were morally bound by oaths of loyalty to the decision of the Polish government in exile in London. Andrzejewski's sensitivity to moral problems places him at the head of the list of authors who summed up the failures of the Stalinist period and prepared the way for a literary thaw.<sup>22</sup>

During the early Stalinist years Andrzejewski was an apologist for the new regime. Perhaps in an effort to put his pre-war Catholic past away, sink himself entirely into the work of the new era and recover some impetus for his writing, perhaps to enhance his creative spark, Andrzejewski joined the Party in 1949. In 1950 published a volume of speeches called *Abv pokóji zwycięzyl* (That Peace May Triumph). It was clear that Andrzejewski was committed to understanding and presenting the mechanisms by which people, but particularly artists and intellectuals might change. To do this he identified two spheres that it was vital to understand: the Catholic Church and marxism, and to understand Marxism, he claimed, it was essential to know Russia. In 1951 Andrzejewski, as a result of his work in support of the Party, was invited to the Soviet Union, after which he wrote a book called, *O człowieku radzieckim* (On

Soviet Man) in which he said it was necessary to choose liberty - either that offered by Truman or that given by socialism. Any 'middle road' would inevitably lead to imperialist servitude. He went on to claim that the only true freedom lay in the USSR. Andrzejewski became increasingly drawn into Party affairs, into the public support of the Party and open criticism of Vatican policy towards Poland, 'living in his beautiful villa, signing numerous political declarations, serving on committees and travelling throughout the country lecturing on literature in factory auditoriums, clubs and 'houses of culture''.<sup>23</sup> In 1952 he published a long essay of *samokrytyka* (self-criticism) entitled *Partia i twórczość pisarza* (the Party and the creativity of the writer): this was followed by two volumes of essays called *Ludzie i zdarzenie* (People and Events). In these publications, which he referred to as *dialektyki, marksizm-leninizm-stalinizm*, he openly espoused and developed a Marxist world view. But he did so without great success. Years later Andrzejewski was to lament:

I wrote books which even in the encyclopedias are ignored. Just about all my books from that period...I wrote them very frankly, and *Partia i twórczość pisarza* even had a certain accent, you might even say it was prayerful.<sup>24</sup>

Looking back on these *dialektyki*, Miłosz thought his friend, in denouncing his failures through lack of Marxist faith, in admitting to faults in his personality in his early writing, was actually not damning those faults at all, but rather compounding them, glorifying in a new-found humility which was in fact just a different version of the Catholic religiosity he had been so keen to display before the war:

Other writers read his article with envy and fear. That he was first everywhere and in everything aroused their jealousy, but that he showed himself so clever - so like a Stakhanovite miner who first announces that he will set an unusually high norm - filled them with apprehension.<sup>25</sup>

However, while Andrzejewski was lauded by the Party, he was increasingly isolated from the Polish literati and became 'Alpha the Moraliser', one of the devastatingly accurate portraits in Czesław Miłosz's *The Captive Mind* (1953). In conversation with

Miłosz in 1991 I asked if he had changed his opinion of Andrzejewski: he replied that the more Andrzejewski had become involved with the Party the more his writing became 'flat and colourless', and that at this time Andrzejewski had been the protégé of the Stalinists, a 'respectable prostitute'.

Very quickly Andrzejewski's fame as a writer spread abroad. Within a very short time his work had been translated into French, German, English, Czech, Swedish, Bulgarian, Serbian, Hebrew, Persian and Japanese. However, Andrzejewski's efforts to follow the precepts of *socrealizm* were not successful. His next novel, *Wojna skuteczna* (Effective War, 1953) was a failure and seems to have prompted the beginnings of a crisis of conscience in which he began to react against the increasingly dogmatic Party line in both culture and politics. Although Andrzejewski was to comment that at every period of his life his 'temperament, intellect, intellectual predisposition and character' demanded the 'absolutely distinctive necessity of *fideizm* (fidelity)', 1953 was the year in which Andrzejewski began to lose his *fideizm* to the Party.<sup>26</sup> He was perturbed by the way in which the hugely enhanced state power was used in Poland. His collection of three allegorical novels, *Złoty lis* (The Golden Fox, 1954) showed a return to individualism and also a considerable disenchantment with the regime's aims and methods. In the manner of Aesop, it is the story of a boy who has a mysterious golden fox living in his wardrobe, but who by the end of story has been forced to compromise through social and parental pressure, and says he no longer believes in the existence of the fox. The publication of *Złoty lis* was significant in that this was the period just prior to the 'October Revolution' and the political thaw of 1956, and it marked the beginning of Andrzejewski's public discontent with, and eventual open opposition to, the Party.

In Polish history and literature it is not unusual to find national and social crises of such an order that they test all those who live through them: 'moments of truth' in which a great deal is revealed about individuals, classes, institutions, leaders. The world at large may not appreciate or understand these revelations or their content in any detail, but for Poles their importance and meaning are quite clear. Even those who as a result of these crises found themselves in total and lasting opposition to one another have often nevertheless agreed over what was revealed in the 'moment of

truth'. In such crises writers had to choose sides for themselves, and in doing so became unequivocally committed to a certain course of action. It is as though at a given moment each individual were waylaid by the historical process and forced to declare himself. The events of 1948-49, for a large number of Polish writers, were just such a moment. Andrzejewski remained a nominal member of the Party until 1957, and resigned when the planned magazine *Europa* was closed on Party instructions. Considering what Andrzejewski already knew about the Party this seems a small event to trigger such a decision, but perhaps it was the last straw: Andrzejewski was to say that it was as if *katarakti* (cataracts) had fallen from his eyes.<sup>27</sup> It is difficult to know what exactly prompted Andrzejewski's change of direction: some internal, personal decision, some argument with the censor, artistic discontent with the formulas of socialist realism, moral repugnance. Whatever it was, Andrzejewski's sensitive political antennae told him that a great wave of social and political unrest was building under the feet of the Party, and he, in his own way, was to make a significant contribution to that movement.

By 1981 Andrzejewski was a leading figure in the opposition, a founder member of KOR (Workers Defence Committee), and when interviewed by Trznadel in September of that year said that it was very important to realise the difficulty of creating a socialist model that was different from that of the USSR, that the struggle to do so was in itself corrosive. In essence he said that it was vital to communicate that such a struggle was not a counter revolution, nor was it a fight against socialism, or a fight against the USSR. He was reluctant to describe Poland as People's Poland as totalitarian, saying that totalitarianism was a system that claimed to be finished, completed, perfected which Poland's 'socialism' had never been. He baulked at describing the 'socialist' culture of the post-war years as totalitarian, saying that it was necessary to see what happened in its international context: it was part of the times. On the subject of *Ashes and Diamonds* he was reluctant to speak. He claimed that he had not re-read it since 1957 when Wajda was preparing his film script, admitted that he was simply too afraid to look at it again and that he could not remember it at all. 'This is not *kokieteria* (coquetry)...It was all a very long time ago.'<sup>28</sup>

What is fascinating about Andrzejewski's career is that he was to chart a path

followed by almost all of his generation of the Polish literati; he was one of the first to give his support to the 'socialists', and one of the first to withdraw it. Those who did not follow him were for the most part pre-war fascistic nationalists or mere Party hacks. *Ashes and Diamonds* still occupies a profoundly ambiguous place in post-war Polish literature: not wholly against the old regime, not wholly for the new regime; deeply opportunist, it is also an accurate and penetrating portrayal of the confusion and pain of those years. Time, politics and literary fashion may eventually prove that Andrzejewski was too much of a pragmatist, too rooted in contemplation of the right course of action, the right moral response to create literary works that would outlast his own lifetime by very much. However, anyone who wants to know how Poles thought and felt in the years 1936-83 about the differing directions of the political wind, the agonies of Poland's intellectual and cultural elite, and the response of the most sensitive of weather vanes, has to turn to the works of Andrzejewski. It has long been clear that Andrzejewski accepted the view that he was ever and always first to sense changing social opinion. However, it is also clear that he was hampered by his self-conscious concentration upon what was happening to the surface of political life rather than on how, beneath the surface, it affected the individual's existence, or how the individual's existence fed into changes in political life. In spite of this limitation, Andrzejewski's works have remained popular, especially with teachers and intellectuals now in late middle age, whose preference is for writers who grew up in Independent Poland, who began writing before the war, who treat subjects related to the recent past, and who have not emigrated to the west.<sup>29</sup>

Andrzejewski died on 19 April 1983. One obituary said:

Andrzejewski went through his periods of born-again religion - Catholicism, Marxism, Existentialism - which he recanted with a frankness and scrupulousness uncommon among Polish writers, taking upon himself all the responsibility for false choices, delusions and privileges...he was a writer of universal horizons, but one who brought his gaze to bear on very specific and typically Polish situations, describing them with the anger, exasperation and indignation of a moralist obsessed with restoration of the moral order...<sup>30</sup>



It was an accurate assessment of his work and his achievement in politics and letters. By the time of his death Andrzejewski had covered a great deal of ground, both political and artistic. His trajectory, from right to left, from Party apologist to dissident, from belief to scepticism, may be remarkable to western readers, but, as Miłosz has remarked, the twists and turns, the undoubted elements of opportunism that mark Andrzejewski's career, his 'metamorphoses and curious literary adventures' are not untypical of a writer of his generation from this part of the world.<sup>31</sup> The situations described in *Ashes and Diamonds* are long gone, yet many Poles (even those too young to have experienced the period of the novel) testify to the novel's power and durability: indeed for many the novel is 'the truth' about the period, an accurate portrayal, almost a historical document. That *Ashes and Diamonds* alone among his works may survive is testimony not only to Andrzejewski's ability as a writer, nor even to his later efforts to redeem himself, but to the enduring and deep-rooted divisions and problems of political legitimacy that 45 years of 'socialism' did nothing to resolve, diminish or render irrelevant.

#### NOTES

- 1 'The Trial' one of the most important of the stories from the collection in: A.Gillon & L.Krzyzanowski, *Introduction to Modern Polish Literature*, Rapp & Whiting, London, 1968. Further biographical details can be found in: J.Krzyzanowski (ed.), *Literatura polska: przewodnik encyklopedyczny*, 2 vols., PWN, Warsaw, 1984; W.Sadowski, *Andrzejewski*, Agencja Autorska, Warsaw, 1975.
- 2 J.Coutouvidis & J.Reynolds, *Poland 1939-47*, Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1986, pp.216 & 241. See also: K.Kersten, *The Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland: 1943-48*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1991, pp.222-23.
- 3 J.Andrzejewski, *Ashes and Diamonds*, Penguin, London, (1962) 1980, pp.49-51. This translation omits two important passages and renders Polish names into English in a rather strange manner: a list of corrections and the missing passages can be found in J.Andrzejewski, *Ashes and Diamonds*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Illinois, 1991.
- 4 *Ashes and Diamonds*, Penguin, London, (1962) 1980, p.51.
- 5 A.Michnik, *Letters from Prison and Other Essays*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1986.
- 6 *Ashes and Diamonds*, Penguin, p.73.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p.73.

- 8 *Ibid.*, p.117.
- 9 J.Andrzejewski, *Popiół i diament*, PIW, Warsaw, 1963, pp.178-9.
- 10 Wajda went even further by choosing this man as the protagonist for his film. *Popiół i Diament* was released on 3 October 1958, ten years after the book first appeared, and was massively successful. The film won a number of awards including: FIPRESCI Award, Venice, 1959; CFFMA Award, Vancouver 1960; Otto Selznick Silver Laurel, West Berlin, 1962; the Crystal Star of the French Motion Picture Academy, Paris, 1962; Annual Film Critics Award, Prague, 1965. A.Wajda, *Ashes and Diamonds*, *Kanal*, *The Generation*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1972; Andrzej Wajda, *Three Films*, Lorrimer, London, 1984. Like Konwicki, Andrzejewski did not like the film and complained that it did not represent the spirit of the book because it chose to portray only selected *wątki* (threads) of the plot. Andrzejewski doubted that any film could adequately portray the full complexity of the novel. J.Trznadel, *Hańba domowa: rozmowy z pisarzami*, Instytut Literacki, Paris, 1988, p.82.
- 11 *Ashes and Diamonds*, p.213.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p.171; *Popiół i diament*, p.277. Of the eighteen Chopin Polonaises, Kotowicz calls for the A-Flat 'Heroic' Polonaise, Op.53 (1842).
- 13 Cyprian Norwid's verses from the prologue to *Tyrtej, tragedia fantastyczna* stand at the start of the book but are cut from the English translation:  
Coraz to z ciebie, jako z drzazgi smolnej,  
Wokoło lecą szmaty zapalone;  
Gorejąc nie wiesz, czy stawasz się wolny,  
Czy to, co twoje, ma być zatracone?  
Czy popiół tylko zostanie i zamęt,  
Co idzie w przepaść z burzą - czy zostanie  
Na dnie popiołu gwiazdzisty dyjament,  
Wiekuistego zwycięstwa zaranie...  
<All around you, as from a charred splinter,/Flaming rags let fall;/Burning don't you know if you are free,/Or if that which is yours may be lost?/Will only ash remain, and chaos/Blown by the storm? Or lying/Beneath the ash will there be a starry diamond,/Eternal victory's dawning>. Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma wszystkie*, vol.4, J.W.Gomulicki (ed.), PIW, Warsaw, 1971. Wajda has a white horse running around in the background just after this poem is quoted in the film, perhaps a symbolic allusion to General Anders, commander of the Polish army in the middle east, who in 1946 boasted he would return to Poland on a white horse, signifying that he would restore the pre-war government based on an alliance of Church, military, bourgeoisie and landed gentry interests. Anders never returned. He died in London in 1972.
- 14 S.Wyspiański, *Dziela zebrane*, L.Płoszewski (ed.), WL, Kraków, 1958-60. The carefully planned theatrical wedding on which Wyspiański based his symbolic play, took place on 20 November 1900 and was between the poet Lucjan Rydel and the peasant girl Jadwiga Mikołajczykowna.
- 15 *Ashes and Diamonds*, pp.148-9. A reference to the opening line of the Polish national anthem: 'Poland is not yet lost, as long as we are living...'
- 16 Anon., 'Socialist Realism', *Universities and Left Review*, no.7, Autumn, 1959,

pp.57-67.

- 17 See: M.Kierczyńska, 'Młodeż podziemia w powieści Andrzejewskiego', *Kuźnica*, nu.23, 1947.
- 18 The situation of *socrealizm* was to change drastically after 1949 when, under the guidance of Jakub Berman, it became Party policy to foster and publish *socrealizm* in a Polish variant. *Socrealizm* was formally introduced by Minister for the Arts Sokorski at the writers' conference in 1949, and even though it was adopted and ratified with solemnity at each annual writers' congress, it was abandoned with the thaw of 1956.
- 19 C.Miłosz, *The Captive Mind*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1980, p.105.
- 20 Z.Herbert, 'Interview with Jacek Trznadel', *Partisan Review*, vol.LIV, no.4, 1987, pp.564-5. Also: A.Zagajewski, 'From the Little Larousse', in: J.Kott (ed.), *Four Decades of Polish Essays*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston Illinois, 1990, p.371. See also: S.Mrozek, 'Popiół? Diament?', *Kultura* (Paris), no.1, 1983, pp.22-41. On the other hand, Kisielewski, who as a Catholic writer for *Tygodnik Powszechny* probably had every reason to despise Andrzejewski's espousal of the 'socialist' cause, offended the censors because he praised Andrzejewski's even-handedness: '...a good novel cannot portray only the bright side of life. It has to have elements of black and white, light and dark. This is why *Ashes and Diamonds*, a book which is in my view historically inaccurate, continues to be such a popular novel when so many others have faded into oblivion: because its author divided the light and distributed equal portions to both sides.' Comments cut from *Tygodnik Powszechny* no.50, quoted in: *Report on Materials Censored*, GUKPPIW, 1-5 December 1974. Andrzejewski himself was philosophical about the fate of his book. He said: 'You know the legend, handed down from generation to generation, that the work of a writer passes silently, and only later will there be a judgement whether to send it to Hell or to Heaven. Of course the majority go to hell. Hell in this case is to be forgotten. Only the chosen are taken to memory Heaven'. J.Trznadel, *Hanba domowa: rozmowy z pisarzami*, Instytut Literacki, Paris, 1988, p.85.
- 21 T.Konwicki, *Moonrise, Moonset*, Faber & Faber, London, 1988, p.57.
- 22 B.Klimaszewski (ed.), *An Outline History of Polish Culture*, Warsaw, 1983, p.314.
- 23 C.Miłosz, *The Captive Mind*, pp.107, 109.
- 24 *Ibid.*, pp.109.
- 25 J.Trznadel, *Hanba domowa: rozmowy z pisarzami*, 1988, p.77.
- 26 J.Trznadel, *Hanba domowa*, pp.75-76. J.Andrzejewski, *The Slipper*, 1953; *The Great Lament of a Paper Head*, 1953; *The Golden Fox* 1954 (published collectively as *Złoty Lis*, The Golden Fox, PIW, Warsaw, 1954); M.Kuncewicz (ed.), *The Modern Polish Mind*, Secker & Warburg, London, 1963, pp.208-228, for a translation of 'The Golden Fox'. *Wielki lament papierowy głowy* was his first anti-Party piece, a satire on the twaddle writers dished up to desperate readers kept ignorant by the censor, an audience that is fickle and lacking in judgement - appears as 'The Great Lament of a Paper Head' in *Polish Perspectives*, vol.XXVI, no.3, 1983, pp.40-48.
- 27 J.Trznadel, p78.

- 28 *Ibid.*, p.83.
- 29 J.R.Fiszman, *Revolution and Tradition in People's Poland*, 1972, p.223.
- 30 Anon., 'Jerzy Andrzejewski: Obituary', *Polish Perspectives*, vol.XXVI, no.3, 1983, p.38-39. The same journal also published a short extract from 'The Great Lament of a Paper Head', carefully dated 'September 1953' to show that this was nothing new. Before that only 'Running Low', an extract from *Już Prawie Nic*, had appeared in the journal in September 1980, when under the impact of Solidarność censorship had virtually collapsed. Needless to say Andrzejewski's career after his flirtation with socialism is hardly mentioned in the official biographical material such as J.Krzyzanowski (ed.), *Literatura polska: przewodnik encyklopedyczny*, 2 vols., PWN, Warsaw, 1984; W.Sadowski, *Andrzejewski*, Agencja Autorska, Warsaw, 1975, devotes most of its space to his early life and a discussion of *Ashes and Diamonds*. Andrzejewski's involvement in the underground publishing industry and KOR were clearly a grave embarrassment to the Party.
- 31 C.Miłosz, *The History of Modern Polish Literature*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1983, p.493.

## FOUR

### WRITERS AS REVISIONISTS: 1953-70

Within the charmed circle, the mind moves in a fictitious universe, unable to distinguish reality from illusion. The history of the schism of communist intellectuals has yet to be written to the very end. Two of its chapters, two moments, deserve to be described in detail: joining the communist movement and leaving it, enchantment and recovery. The moment of recovery is perhaps more important.

Jan Kot, 'The Serpent's Sting', *The Theatre of Essence*, 1984.

- 4.1 the rise of revisionism
- 4.2 Catholics, 'Catholics' and the thaw
- 4.3 the failure of revisionism
- 4.4 the legacy of the thaw

## 4.1 THE RISE OF REVISIONISM

The warm breeze of reform was blowing very gently through Poland even before Stalin died. Poland had been proceeding very, very slowly with its programme of post-war economic re-orientation. It suffered confusion and loss of direction at Stalin's death - or rather its confusions and lack of direction were clearly revealed. In October 1953 the Central Committee agreed that the shortages of foodstuffs and consumer goods might be eased by dropping prices, slackening the drive to industrialise and lowering the rate of investment from 25.1 per cent of national income in 1953 to 19 per cent in 1954. At the same time, though, it continued its attempts to extend the inefficient agricultural collectivisation programme, and refused to open up consumer markets to independent producers. By the time of the PZPR Congress in March 1954 it was clear that the Party had run out of ideas and, at least as long as the current Stalinist framework was in place, was not united on any moves 'forward'.

The hardening of the arteries of state had proceeded at a remarkable pace through the early 1950s. At the 1954 congress, from a total of 1,228 delegates there were only 272 workers and 108 peasants, yet there were 620 white-collar and intellectual delegates. By 1954 worker members of the Party had dropped from 62.2 per cent in 1945 to 48.3 per cent; agricultural membership too had dropped from 28.2 per cent to 13.2 per cent in the same period. The bureaucratisation of the Party, white-collar workers and the independent professions, meant that white-collar Party membership rose from 9.6 per cent in 1945 to 36.4 per cent in 1954.<sup>1</sup> The zeal of the years 1945-47 died away in the comfort and comparative luxury that the upper echelons could now afford and which now alienated the élite from the condition and ambition of the masses. While the Party had made a few economic concessions, the Stalinists strengthened the police and censorship laws. To varying degrees the Central Committee, Party, bureaucracy and the local party bosses isolated themselves with the power of the *milicja*, 'yellow curtain' shops, beautiful secluded holiday resorts in the mountains and along the coast, with special medical care, access to foreign currency and foreign travel. They enjoyed the fruits of power almost as a ruling class.

The size of the Party and the speed of its growth meant that it had absorbed large

numbers from the bottom of Polish society, people who in fact had little understanding or sympathy with socialism and who used office and responsibility to enrich themselves and their protégés in the *nomenklatura* in the manner of tribal chiefs. 'Socialist' rule in Poland succumbed to the pressure of its environment in that it gradually adapted itself to this recruitment. While lip-service was still paid to Marxism, the Party became thoroughly penetrated by petty-bourgeois, nationalist and even misplaced religious elements. A kind of cynical and understandable survivalism was the key-note and for this reason many Polish 'socialists' clung to Stalinist ways. Many Party members had vivid memories of the Stalinist purges and had witnessed the behaviour of the NKVD at first hand. They knew that the Gestapo and the Okhrana had killed fewer Polish Party members than the NKVD, but they judged it safer to ride the tiger than attempt to dismount, safer to remain inside the Party than leave or try to live outside the Party under the prevailing 'normal' conditions. The ambiguous loyalty of the Polish Stalinists must also be pointed out. If these people were Stalinists they were also Poles, and both Gomułka and Bolesław Bierut resisted Stalin's demands for purges, show trials and executions.

Perhaps one of the earliest indicators of change within Poland on Stalin's death was the Catholic journal *Tygodnik Powszechny*. The paper had started publication in Kraków several weeks before the end of the Second World War, published by the Metropolitan Curia and supported by a number of Catholic intellectuals. For a long while it was the only genuine Catholic independent weekly newspaper, and while it was initially a-political, in 1946 it sharply criticised the Marxist ideas of the new authorities from a very Catholic moral standpoint. In 1953 all Polish newspapers were instructed to print laudatory comment on the recently deceased Stalin. The editor of *Tygodnik Powszechny*, Jerzy Turowicz, failed to comply. In March 1953 police occupied the journal's premises, arrested Turowicz and prevented publication. The journal was taken away from the Metropolitan Curia and handed over to Pax, who moved in their own staff and resumed publication under new editorial guidelines, but keeping the same name. The new editorial board and staff included Professor Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński, Jan Dobraczyński, Professor Andrzej Mycielski, Anna Morawska and Jan Prokop. It was clear that while the Party were prepared to tolerate licensed

criticism, nobody could yet act with impunity. Even so, the Polish Stalinists hesitated: the Catholic editors of *Tygodnik Powszechny* were not shot, did not disappear: it was possible to challenge the Party and live.

At the Eleventh Session of the Council of Culture and Art in February 1954, Minister of Culture Władysław Sokorski revealed his distaste for attempts to direct literature or intervene in cultural and creative processes. He admitted that *socrealizm*, which he had introduced at the Fourth ZLP Congress in 1949, had been a mistake and that the basis for such literature did not yet exist in Poland. He criticised prevailing Party orthodoxy on *socrealizm*, saying that there could never be any such 'definite artistic school or style or recipe' for creative literature. While the idea of *socrealizm* was still valid it had been clumsily implemented and had stifled individual 'free development' necessary to underpin objective truth. He also admitted that the Party's insistence on content over form had been misguided and promised that the system of Party directives to writers would now cease. Sokorski's comments (*Przegląd Kulturalny* 22-29 April 1954), along with supporting arguments from Hertz, Kott, and Przyboś (*Życie Literackie*, 2 May 1954), and less warm support from Putrament and Kruczkowski who felt that only the system of 'incentives' to writers was misguided (*Życie Literackie*, 13 June 1954), and critical comment from the loyal Stalinist Eligiusz Lasota, opened up serious debate within the ZLP at their annual conference in June of that year. Kazimierz Brandys was reported by *Nowa Kultura* as saying that the Party had produced an immature and limited appreciation of ideology and, therefore, produced an immature and limited art. He claimed that since ideology and art grew out of a mature appreciation of human cognition, the party and the writers had not so far been capable of producing anything other than poor self-knowledge and serious ideological mistakes, and that these had inevitably damaged progress towards a genuine socialist literature. Stalinists like Putrament defended the old Party line, but sensed that a new position was required. A tense period of watching and waiting followed: it was clear from Sokorski's speech that change was possible. The real question was: who had the nerve and the strength to actually set about making the changes?.<sup>2</sup>

In the autumn of 1953 Lieutenant-Colonel Światło of the '10th Department' of the UB (Department of Security), set up in 1952 to spy on the top Party officials and



government ministers, had defected to the west and published a series of articles revealing the extent of the UB's activities in spying on all branches of the administration, *nomenklatura* and even members of the Polish Politburo and the Central Committee. In the autumn of 1954 he began a series of radio broadcasts on the CIA-funded Radio Free Europe in which he described from personal experience the methods (torture and blackmail) of the Polish security services. He also described the extent of Soviet interference in Polish internal decision-making processes within the Party. These revelations brought out into the open what many Party members had known but had been too afraid to voice: the disclosure of privilege and corruption within the 'new ruling class' offended the deeply Catholic morality of many sincere Party members and widened the gap between the populace and the authorities. The liberal wing of the Party and much of the Party centre realised that if they were to survive without popular discontent and bloody confrontation they would need to act immediately. On 7 December 1954 the Party abolished the Ministry for Public Safety and transferred the minister, Stanisław Radkiewicz (the 'Polish Beria'), to the post of Junior Minister for State Farms. An investigation into the activities of the UB was started. Also, while thousands of political prisoners were set free, in December 1954 the Party magazine *Nowe Drogi* announced that the Party intended to rehabilitate those unjustly accused by the UB. Early in 1955 four UB officers and several army intelligence officers were expelled from the party and prosecuted.

Throughout 1955-56 the local Party cells were inundated with reading material, much of it unpleasant. Following detailed reports on Światło's accusations, the text of Khrushchev's address to the twentieth congress of the CPSU was circulated to Party members in February 1956, and this was followed by information about the faltering economy. Khrushchev's revelations legitimised a process that was already in train in Poland. The Party elite understood that while the *inteligencja* did not rule or exercise any kind of hegemony except through the good offices of the Party, the Party itself, in order to stabilise society and maintain its hold on power, had to appease the new *technokracja* and to reach some kind of an understanding with the intellectuals. By doing so the Party would take the wind out of the counter-revolutionary sail, and would ensure some measure of order and calm in a Party dominated by fear of *inteligencja*

treachery and disloyalty. Party cadres were increasingly aware that a gap had opened up between them and the inner group of the Party. For the average Polish 'socialist' it was clear that unless they themselves undertook radical democratisation and reform, de-Stalinisation would be carried out by anti-socialists.

The PZPR slowly relaxed its grip on the *inteligencja*. Journalists began to feel freer to write and investigate what they chose: with the encouragement of some Party members they initiated a campaign of democratisation through the cultural and political journals *Nowa Kultura*, *Przegląd Kulturalny* and *Po Prostu*. Early in 1955 the Club of the Crooked Circle began to meet at private addresses around Warsaw. It was rumoured that the club had been set up by the Party as a way of taking the sting out of intellectual attacks on the government by providing a private route for comment and discussion for the Warsaw *inteligencja*. However, over the following months the club became embarrassingly independent, feeling for contacts among the peasantry and the provincial *inteligencja*. By the spring of 1956 there were over 130 such clubs scattered across Poland.<sup>3</sup>

In January 1955 Kołakowski, then a young lecturer at Warsaw University, wrote in *Nowa Kultura* to protest at the primitive nonsense that masqueraded as ideological thinking, at the crudity of Party language in reducing Marxist literature and thinking to tired phrases, second-hand slogans and meaningless jargon. He had also protested at the primitive categories of thought and dogmatism that limited perception, understanding and cognition, talents needed not just to solve existing problems, but to uncover and identify new problems for solution. In March 1955 *Przegląd Kulturalny* published new poems by Słucki, one of which was entitled 'Rehabilitation'; *Twórczość* published new poems by Jastrun and Hertz in which anti-Stalin allusions were clearly intended; *Po Prostu* ran a number of sympathetic articles about the AK; Kołakowski complained in *Nowa Kultura* that most writers were paralysed by fear of the censor. As far as Kołakowski was concerned, the more the Party acknowledged different views and shared power with the *technokracja* the more stable Poland's economic situation would become: as it was the *technokracja* felt frustrated, abused, constricted socially and politically, their professional work made difficult if not impossible by inefficient central planning.<sup>4</sup>

On 21 August 1955 Ważyk published 'Poemat dla Dorosłych' (Poem for Grown-Ups) in *Nowa Kultura*, a journal which had already published full accounts of the ZLP's spring congress. Ważyk's poem was a bombshell and the magazine, much to the Party's embarrassment, sold out almost at once. Ważyk had up to this point been a staunch Party member. Even he, however, had eventually sickened at the fawning and self-seeking within the Party and the official literary hierarchy. Ważyk had been sent to the new industrial city of Nowa Huta to research an article about the life of industrial shock workers. It was this visit, the images, phrases and conversations with workers, that forced him to break with the 'paper myth' of the successful creation of a socialist city to house the New Man, and which formed the material of his poem. Ważyk, with all the wounded naivety of a child, denounced the Stalinists, the simplistic brutality of their thought and policies, and depicted the peasant-workers of Nowa Huta as inert and cultureless. He referred to Poland's 'socialist' literature as a 'five year old youngster which should be educated and which should educate'. He derided the 'achievements' of Polish Stalinism, emphasised the material, intellectual and spiritual poverty of the industrialisation programme, and raged against the hopelessness and helplessness of what he called the 'un-human Poland, howling with boredom on December nights':

All this is not new. Old is the Cerberus of socialist  
morality.  
Fourier, the dreamer, charmingly foretold  
that lemonade would flow in seas.  
Does it not flow?  
They drink salt-water,  
crying:  
'lemonade!'  
returning home secretly  
to vomit.<sup>5</sup>

In spite of these comments, Ważyk remained a Party member, still saw himself as 'with' the Party and wished to channel progress and reform through the Party. The Party, however, did not see things this way and criticised his 'petit-bourgeois gesture' and labelled the poem an 'anti-Party composition, a harmful and distorted picture of our reality, an insult to the working class'. They could not understand how such a

slavish Stalinist could have become an 'anti-socialist element'. Ważyk refused to admit publication of the poem was a mistake, so the Party sacked Paweł Hoffman, the magazine's editor, and most of the editorial board. Berman failed to get Ważyk expelled from the Party, however, and had to settle for getting him reprimanded. The Party was disconcerted to find that workers and Party members from all over Poland refused to condemn the poem by signing spontaneous petitions against it, and instead endorsed Ważyk's observations, saying that faults could not be hushed up and that the facts of life in Nowa Huta were well known. Thousands of illicit copies of the poem circulated from hand to hand and made Ważyk a popular figure. Before the end of 1955 censorship had virtually collapsed and censors debated whether to voluntarily dissolve their office.<sup>6</sup>

Khrushchev's revelations about Stalin's crimes at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU led to a crisis within the PZPR. Khrushchev opened up the political realities behind the 'inevitable march of history' trumpeted by the 'communists' and this in turn revealed the very low level of ideological thinking within the PZPR. After 1954 younger writers and Party members had become increasingly disillusioned with the progress made by the Polish economy and by the state of civil and political liberties. After Khrushchev's speech many non-Party people felt that they had 'known it all along' and were therefore unmoved. Party members, on the other hand, felt they had also known it, but had nevertheless gone along with the Party because they believed that this was somehow 'necessary'. This ideological vacuum in turn led to a rejuvenation of the ZLP (which had largely fallen silent after the 1949 congress) an event the authorities claimed they desired, but which they soon found they could not control.

On 19 February 1956, while the historic Twentieth Congress of the CPSU was still in session in Moscow, Poles were astonished to see large photographs of the old KPP leaders in *Trybuna Ludu*. They read that the KPP had been rehabilitated and its dead members (including the poets Wandurski and Stände) exonerated. They may have read about the heroic nature of the KPP, but the Party nevertheless felt constrained by its 'alliance' with Moscow and failed to offer any explanation of the circumstances or reasons for their deaths. From this moment on the suppressed question of national

identity and aspiration, undermining the leading role of the party, was to haunt the leaderships of the East Bloc. Now Party members felt they had been disloyal to Poland, that the Soviets had used them shamelessly, and that they had somehow to atone. They could not help but notice the similarity between the newly rehabilitated Tito's decision to adapt socialism to Yugoslav conditions, and the 'right-wing nationalist deviationist' ideas of Gomułka, who had been expelled and arrested in 1949.

On 12 March 1956 Bolesław Bierut, Polish leader since 1948, died of natural causes in Moscow, (many said he died of a stroke on being told the full extent of Stalin's crimes). On 20 March the PZPR elected its new leader, Edward Ochab, a 'communist' of long standing approved by Khrushchev. Caught between Soviet fear of democratisation and nationalism in Poland, and the increasingly vociferous demands of the Polish people, Ochab began a cautious process of liberalisation. In 1954 Gomułka had been quietly released from prison and preparations for his rehabilitation had been set in motion. Now Gomułka was publicly rehabilitated, as were a large group of party members and public figures - Spychalski, Kliszko, Tatar (a Brigadier general, chief of operational division of the AK high command), Kirchmajer (an AK general), Generals Moczar, Kuropieska and Komar, all of whom had been accused of supporting Gomułka's 'nationalist-deviationist' plotting in 1949-53.

Almost every day the pressure for democratisation grew. On 24-25 March 1956 the Council of Culture and Art met for its nineteenth session. Party members and ex-Party members of ZLP, people like Andrzejewski, Kott, Wążyk, Brandys, many of them winners of the State Literary Prize, led the debates. It was from among Party writers and ex-Party writers that the most vociferous and ferocious scourging of the Party came, and from their criticisms that the most thorough-going revisionism was developed. Jan Kott gave a talk 'Mitologia i Prawda' (Mythology and Truth) stating that art was being used by the Party to legitimise itself rather than the philosophy the Party was supposed to serve. He stated that everyone was required to believe that things were as good as they could be, but that in doing this, art no longer told the truth, but furthered a totally fictitious version of reality.<sup>7</sup> Słonimski (who had asked those Party members of ZLP with 'dirty hands' to step down from positions of power within the union), Sandauer, Przyboś, Karst, Jastrun, Wirpsza and Żiółkowski all

quibbled over Kott's Marxist terminology, but grudgingly agreed they had lied for the Party out of fear. The writer-converts to 'socialism', where they had not gone abroad or committed suicide in the early 1950s, were now to make the running and lead the way in criticism of the party line and in exploring the degree to which this affected literary culture. In uneasy alliance with these once zealous converts were the *pryszczaci* (pimplies), as Borowski had dubbed them, the younger writers of *Kuźnica* who 'heckled older writers, accusing them of flabby, bourgeois liberalism'.<sup>8</sup>

On 1 April 1956 *Po Prostu* published an article about the iniquitous system of 'yellow curtains' - private commercial 'special' shops for the *nomenklatura*. It then went on to attack the brutal, ignorant conformism of ZMP (Union of Polish Youth, 1948-56), the violation of the constitution and of human rights by the Department of Justice and Department of Security, lack of public accountability in the Central Council on Higher Education, and the interference of the censor in scholarly research at universities. On 21 April 1956 Sokorski, Minister for Art and Culture, the man who had allowed all this to happen by failing to impose the Party line in the arts and by failing to maintain proper discipline among the intellectuals, was dismissed from his post. On 25 April over 1,000 political prisoners and 28,000 'politicals' (AK members and leaders of the Peasants' Party) who were under surveillance, under suspicion, under suspended sentence, or who had been waiting for arrest, were all amnestied. The ministers of Justice and Security, who were responsible for their prosecution or imprisonment were themselves arrested and tried. On 5 May Berman, hounded by neo-Stalinists, who held him, a Jew, responsible for all Poland's ills and wanted him put on trial, decided he had seen enough liberalisation and resigned from the Politburo. But the fact was that while the Party wanted a degree of liberalisation and democracy, it wished neither in full measure. The Party was not planning to end the one-party state, nor to set up free elections. In June 1956 ZLP held its annual conference. Putrament attempted to hold the writers in check by criticising critics like Jan Błóński (for his article in *Życie Literackie*, 19 June 1955), but his desperate rearguard action was soon overtaken. On 28 June there were riots in Poznań to protest at the worsening economic situation: 50 workers were shot.

Commentators on 1956 have given prominence to the clashes in Poznań. Although

it is likely that these provided what the Party saw as an immediate and dangerous threat to the regime, it is also clear that the regime felt the demands of the writers and intellectuals had to be met in a different way. It was possible to disperse crowds with bullets and promises of more meat, but neither of these would greatly affect the intellectual threat to the Party's position. The main current of revolt may have been proletarian, but the main current of reform was intellectual and came from writers: Ważyk, Hłasko, Brandys, Andrzejewski, Jastrun, Kołakowski, Kott, Kazimiera Illakowiczówna and Hertz had all gained valuable insight into the nature of the regime they had up to this point tolerated or, in some cases, actively supported. Their opposition and ambition was now, quite by accident, associated and in harmony with demonstrating workers who were also denied any other means of communicating their political opinion and economic experience.

The links between the workers and intellectuals were extremely tenuous. There were still very few writers of peasant or working class background. The post-war *inteligencja* were no more aware or concerned about the working class or agricultural labourers than the pre-war inhabitants of the *szlachta*-*inteligencja* mental ghetto had been. As Herbert said:

It is vanity to think that one can influence the course of history by writing poetry. It is not the barometer that changes the weather. Please note that the only authentic workers' uprising in Poland - the Poznań rebellion - had no resonance in literature. It took the intellectuals by surprise.<sup>9</sup>

The Party had effectively shut its writers in a plush ghetto. The Poznań protest and the protest of the writers coincided but hardly overlapped, and if anything the Poznań protest opened the way for the intellectuals who up to this point had been fairly restrained about making public their criticisms of the Party. The Soviet satellites still clung to a decayed and decaying, increasingly corrupt and authoritarian bureaucracy. If anything Khrushchev's revelations about Stalin's crimes against Poles and the Polish Party made things even worse. Many began to believe that the Stalinists were sacrificing Stalin in order to preserve Stalinism.

*Socrealizm* nevertheless lingered. After 1956 the Party revised its publication

policy so that the size of editions was no longer based on the suitability of the author's ideological line. However, it still limited editions and reprints of books which were in any way experimental since these were deemed marginal to the Marxist point of view. The result was reflected in the publishing industry. Between 1955 and 1961 adult fiction rose from 790 to 831 titles per year, but the total number of copies produced fell from 14,411,000 to 12,704,000. The proportion of publishing allocated to adult fiction fell from about 20 per cent of total book production in 1955 to 10 per cent in 1961. Also it was widely rumoured that by 1956 one third of all fiction and creative literature went unsold.<sup>10</sup> Inevitably, there had been a vast flood of memoirs, recollections and analyses of the war years, and these had to some extent played into the hands of the Party and those in favour of *socrealizm* by emphasising the role that the Party played in rebuilding Poland from the ruins. In spite of this, however, the idea of story and plot was still not very strong in post-war Polish literature, and while novels remained steadfastly contemplative the role of the narrator became more pronounced and complex as writers like Borowski, Rudnicki, Brandys, and Konwicki struggled to portray the events of the war and immediate post-war years in a shifting combination of story, reportage and personal memoir. There had been a vogue, initiated by Hlasko, for hard-bitten Hemingway-style realism, yet still very few writers had given themselves up to *socrealizm*. The official version of Polish literary culture simply states:

Realism was accepted as the main aim. It was in accordance with Marxist and Leninist ideology, as well as with the political situation and the need for a hard-headed attitude towards postwar conditions. Realism gained ground gradually in the postwar years, which led at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s to the emergence of socialist realism...The first, lively postwar period of full discussions, finished in August 1948, when the tasks of socialist realism in literature and artistic norms were defined. The reign of socialist realism, common in countries of people's democracy, ended officially in Poland in 1956.<sup>11</sup>

In practice it was not so clear. In the years after the war the party waged a continual struggle against the 'Catastrophist School' of Polish literature simply because it wished to distinguish its history from other periods when it felt such a view might have been



warranted. The Party wanted to promote the idea that the new era was one of positive clear-sighted values, of work and achievement, of direction and unity. It did not want to be associated with any hankering after literature that promoted a view of life as inconsequential, random, undirected, pointless. It certainly did not want the public to see Party writers criticising, going into exile or committing suicide.

It was Tadeusz Borowski, perhaps one of the most desperate supporters of *socrealizm*, who had first seen the severe limitations of the approved style in both literature and political life. He had written a stunning, closely observed set of stories about his experiences in the Nazi camps. Although on the surface his writing was a graphic and detailed depiction of the camps, the amorality of his observation was at odds with the view of the world the Party wanted to present. Even though Borowski joined the Party in 1948 to become an enthusiastic supporter of the new regime, he nevertheless understood that his view of the senselessness and catastrophic quality of his experience, the failure of the Party to provide any deep-seated answer to his probing of the darkest side of human nature, and his failure to see any real solution in 'socialism' had only one possible conclusion. Unable to reconcile himself to the post-holocaust world, unable to find anything but emptiness, unreason and hate within himself, unable to believe that it was for this version of 'socialism' that the world had waited and fought, unable any longer to distinguish between the totalitarianism of the Nazis and that of Stalin, Borowski had gassed himself in Warsaw on 1 July 1951.<sup>12</sup>

Most writers did not follow Borowski's example, but by 1956 many Party writers like Ważyk and Andrzejewski felt the need to atone for their past gullibility and opportunism, and their implication in the crimes of the *czas błędów* (time of errors). It had become possible to debate the 'deformations' of socialism, the 'period of errors and mistakes', and it had become necessary to formulate a new programme for the ZLP which included the idea that the union should now defend the 'freedom of literary creation'. In practice, though, the acceptance of *socrealizm*, and also the reaction against it, were far from simple. Inevitably the Party could not accept individual initiative. Kołakowski has written:

The 'Polish October', as it was called, far from ushering in a period of social and cultural renewal or 'liberalisation', stood for the gradual extinction of all such attempts. In 1956 Poland was, relatively speaking, a country of free speech and free criticism, not because the government had planned it so but because they had lost control of the situation. The October events started a process of reversal, and the margin of freedom which still remained grew less year by year.<sup>13</sup>

For its role in mediating and in disseminating information of all sorts it appeared at first that ZLP would be rewarded with concessions. It seemed that in matters of style and form writers and their union would enjoy a 'hands-off' policy from the government and the censor, that, while the party might censor views that were too outspokenly anti-Soviet or anti-socialist, in matters genuinely creative the party would not interfere. The party, it seemed, looked to the writers to provide a broad stream of realism, engagement and commitment to the future of the Party, while hoping that the influence of the writers would actually help the party by widening its perceptions and understanding of the world and of Polish society and social relations. At the same time the Party failed to grasp that in literature 'socialist' and 'realist' were rapidly becoming mutually exclusive terms. Kolakowski later wrote:

The revisionists, unlike others who opposed the system from a nationalist or religious point of view, not only addressed themselves to party opinion but awakened an echo in party circles; they were listened to by the party apparatus and thereby contributed to its ideological disarray, which was the principal condition of political change. They used party language to some extent because they still believed in communist stereotypes, and to some extent because they knew it would be more effective...<sup>14</sup>

The Soviets feared that the PZPR would not be able to control this 'unrest'. Red Army tanks massed along the Polish borders, and Red Army divisions stationed in western Poland moved towards Warsaw. Without warning Khrushchev arrived at a small military airfield outside Warsaw. He harangued the Polish leadership for selling-out to Americans and Zionists. After agreeing to the revival of Gomułka's leadership in return for reinstatement of the leading role of the Polish Party and a pledge that Poland would remain in the Warsaw Pact he departed to attend to events in Hungary

and Suez. The Poles were extremely lucky. Khrushchev made major concessions to the Poles, hoping to buy them off and stabilise his western flank, while he dealt with the much more serious challenge posed by Hungary. In many ways the crisis in Hungary was to the advantage of the Poles. The Hungarians were proposing to leave the Warsaw Pact, something which the Poles, fearing German revanchism, could not contemplate. While the situation in Hungary deteriorated, the Polish crisis passed. Polish writers felt they had defeated the censor and had won a major victory for Polish culture. They saw the VIII Plenum of the PZPR, which opened on 19 October, and the subsequent election of Gomułka as First Secretary, as opening up a new era of cooperation, of a specifically Polish socialism, sensitive to the needs and embedded cultural imperatives of the Polish people. They saw the 'Polish road to socialism' as an end to material and intellectual poverty and an end to Party-sponsored lawlessness and mendacity. Indeed a statement to this effect from the Warsaw Branch of ZLP, saying that after 'years of lies and injustice' a 'time of hope' had finally arrived, and that the road to socialism now lay open, appeared in *Twórczość* in November.

A wide-ranging alliance of writers from the party, ex-party and *pryszczaci* combined at the 1956 ZLP elections to vote out the Party nominees who had previously run the union (Putrament and Żółkiewski both found themselves in disgrace) and elected as President the celebrated poet Słonimski. He was a pre-war liberal and Wellsian rationalist who had escaped to England at the start of the war and had returned to Poland only in 1951. Słonimski was looked upon with disfavour by the Party: not only were his pre-war Liberal connections questionable, but after a visit to the Soviet Union in 1932, during which he had observed the dogged loyalty and honesty of those members of his family who were trying to 'do their best' for Russia in spite of Stalinism and the purges, he had written a poem called 'Hamletyzm', in which he implied that it was better to be an honest questioning Hamlet than a confident 'socialist' with false answers.<sup>15</sup> The other three union executives were Jerzy Zawieyski, a Catholic, Przyboś, (ex-ZLP President, avant garde poet, historian and ex-representative of the People's Republic in Switzerland) and Michał Rusinek (PEN Club secretary). Maria Dąbrowska, Jastrun (possibly a concession to the Party), Stawar, Antoni Gołubiew, Kisielewski all joined the board of the union. Andrzejewski was

elected Chairman of the Warsaw branch, where more than 50 percent of the membership were registered. Party members accounted for about 25 percent of the total ZLP membership and they were in a weak position to attempt any reversal from within. Under Słonimski the ZLP set about reforming itself: its first move was to change its statutes to take out references to party control and approved ideological stances or favoured forms of writing; it emphasised the professional rather than the political nature of the union.

In the literary world the thaw of 1956 brought about a certain calm and creativity that had previously been lacking. Gomułka was quite out of touch with feeling among the writing community, indeed, according to his speech to the 1956 VIII Plenum he wanted simply to renew the Party line on *socrealizm* and seemed unaware of the writers' cynicism about the period of mistakes and errors. For Gomułka his election was the utmost limit of the cultural reform. In response to an open letter from Warsaw students requesting legal limitation and investigation of the office of GUKPPiW Gomułka made a speech on radio on 20 October 1956 pledging an end to collectivisation, promising a system of industrial wage incentives, worker self-management, profit sharing, and an end to the cult of personality; the Party was to relax its pursuit of AK members, provide a wage rise for workers, weed out Jews in high office and clamp down on intellectual trouble makers. In the short term he was prepared to let the young intellectuals shake up the older Soviet-oriented Stalinists in order that he might appear as national hero and assert his own brand of 'Polish socialism'. However, it was not possible in the long term to reconcile Party control with democratic freedoms, which Gomułka regarded as 'dangerous illusion'. He hoped to do no more than slowly consolidate his position.

Although support for Gomułka was massive (even *Po Prostu* bade him a cautious welcome on his first day in office) almost immediately Gomułka warned the Polish press that he was not sure the current freedoms (through 1955-56 a system of voluntary self-censorship was in operation) could be guaranteed indefinitely. Predictably, Gomułka was soon at loggerheads with the writers. They insisted that Poland needed greater freedom of expression. Gomułka saw this as a challenge and began to fear that Andrzejewski and the *rewizjoniści* were capable of forming the nucleus of a powerful

opposition. There were now among the new generation of writers a large number of angry young men who felt themselves betrayed and disappointed by the Party and the *biurokracja*. Many were very well-informed Party members.

In general ZLP was able to go about its business with very little interference in its internal workings and for a short period under Gomułka Poland enjoyed an unintentional renaissance in the arts: poetry, theatre, literature, cinema, translations of foreign and left-existentialist literature from Camus, Sartre, Faulkner, Becket, Ionesco, Howard Fast, Hemingway, Kafka - all flourished and flowered. New Polish writers and works began to appear: the poetry of Miron Białoszewski and Herbert, and Hlasko's hard-bitten short stories all began to appear at about this time. The great inter-war Polish writers Witkiewicz and Schulz were rediscovered. Articles about Miłosz's *The Captive Mind*, Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* and Orwell's *1984* also appeared between 1956-66. Konwicki's previously unpublished novel *Rojsty*, Lem's *Czas Nieutracony* (Time not Lost), Strykowski's *Głosy w Ciemności* (Voices in the Dark) and Brandys' short story 'Obrony Granady' (The Defence of Granada) all of which broke with political convention, appeared in print. For many people books became worth reading again. It has been estimated that in contrast to the period 1949-56 when a third of all books were unsold, in the years 1956 and 1960 only 10 per cent of all books, and 5 per cent of fiction went unsold.<sup>16</sup>

Herbert, whose first book of poems *Struna Światła* (String of Light) was one of the early fruits of 1956, was later to write that when he cleared his desk drawer of previously unpublishable poems he felt that he had somehow 'sold out'. Herbert felt that he had lost his muse by becoming a 'legitimate' poet. He lamented:

O my seven-stringed board  
 in you I dried and pressed my tears  
 my rebel's frozen fist and paper  
 on which one night I wrote down  
 my youthful comic testament  
 and now it's empty and cleaned out  
 I've sold the tears and the bunch of fists  
 in the market place they fetched a price  
 a little fame a penny or two  
 and now nothing scares off sleep

now not for me the lice and concrete  
 o drawer o lyre I have lost  
 and still so much that I could play  
 with fingers drumming your empty floor  
 and how good was a desperate heart  
 and how difficult to part  
 from nourishing pain which had no hope.<sup>17</sup>

Freedom brought with it new and untested problems. Some writers simply did not trust the spirit of adventure the Party was suddenly so keen to display. Tadeusz Rózewicz, unimpressed by the departure of the Stalinist leadership of ZLP, described the 1956 Writers' Congress as a meeting of the re-animated dead:

recently I came across a largish group of the dead  
 who sat in rows on chairs  
 their cheeks rosy  
 they laughed clapped sat down  
 were indignant got up  
 made personal remarks  
 among old corpses  
 hustled the young  
 they don't know  
 they're scatter-brained  
 they move their arms and legs  
 drive cars embrace new  
 standpoints and wives who are still warm  
 there was one experienced deceased  
 who kept winking at me  
 roguishly  
 and even tried to be reborn  
 in the eyes of the assembly<sup>18</sup>

#### 4.2 CATHOLICS, 'CATHOLICS' AND THE THAW

Pax was very much a creation of the Polish Stalinist years. Formally recognised in 1952, it grew around the weekly journal *Dzisiaj i Jutro* which had its first publication in Warsaw in November 1945 to become a hugely diverse industrial enterprise and a well developed publishing house. The organisation was supposed to be that of Catholics who

had declared co-operation with Marxists in the creation of a new socio-political reality without giving up their Catholic beliefs: Pax insisted that 'socialism' and Catholicism need not be in a state of perpetual opposition and conflict. Led by the ex-ONR-Falangist Bolesław Piasecki, who was widely rumoured to have done a deal with the 'socialists' in order to save his life, it was an elite organisation which at its height consisted of perhaps 800 members with perhaps 3,000 candidates waiting for membership. In addition it had perhaps 600 associated Pax-Caritas priests in 'priest circles'. Over the years Pax became a diverse manufacturing empire producing books and religious articles. Pax took literature very seriously and as well as publishing a great deal of foreign literature in translation and about 18 per cent of all nominally Catholic belles lettres it ran several journals, awarded the annual Włodzimerz Pietrzak Literary Prize, ran 70 public Pax libraries and some 200 Pax clubs (more than KIK ever had) which invited writers, actors and celebrities to give talks and lectures. In addition Pax had three Sejm deputies (rising to four in the mid 1950s). Pax also published *Ślowo Powszechne* and in 1947 numbered among its contributors the writers Jan Dobraczyński and Andrzej Micewski (who later became the biographer of Roman Dmowski and Cardinal Wyszyński): by 1950 they had been joined by the writers Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Janusz Zabłocki.

Throughout its lifetime Pax debated with *Znak* and *Tygodnik Powszechny*. The latter organisations insisting that it was they rather than the 'socialist' stooges of Pax who would maintain the traditional Catholic lay humanism of Poland (and by so doing, they hoped, prevent the spread of 'socialist' ideology). Neither Pax nor *Znak* managed to create a stable *modus vivendi* with the Censor, and censorship bulletins are laced with details of interventions. Pax, which towards the mid 1950s harboured ambitions of sharing power with the PZPR in a new Catholic-socialist Poland, may have been under pressure to restrain its phraseology in argument, but *Znak* was more heavily censored. The censors were particularly keen that the nature of the debate between Pax and *Znak* should never be fully and clearly revealed.<sup>19</sup>

However, throughout 1955-56 Pax was in severe difficulties: the new climate did not suit it at all. In June 1955, after a period which had seen particularly bad state Church relations, the Vatican forbade Catholics to read, distribute or take part in the

publication of the Pax weekly *Dzis i Jutro*, and placed Piasecki's book *Zagadnienia Istotne* (The Essential Problems) on the Vatican Index of banned books. Pax immediately withdrew the book from the shops, and ceased publication of *Dzis i Jutro*. At the end of 1955 the editors of the journal *Więź* (Link), a journal nominally representing the Polish intellectual Catholic left, decided to sever their connections with Pax. The writers Janusz Zabłocki and Tadeusz Mazowiecki (who was then editor in chief of the Pax newspaper *Wrocławski Tygodnik Katolików*) led the defection from Pax of the 'Fronde' group, which consisted of most of the Pax youth movement. *Więź*, edited by Mazowiecki and Zabłocki, though still subject to censorship, now combined revisionist hopes with a neo-positivist political strategy: it was sympathetic to reconciliation between Church and State but limited its aims to expanding civil liberties, to normalising relations between the Church and State, freeing the primate from house arrest, the end of administrative harassment on building projects, legalisation of RI in schools. It offered support to Gomułka when he took office and published the writings of Tadeusz Mazowiecki, and also Anna Morawska. *Więź*, in the words of J.J.Lipski, distanced itself from the style of Pax and 'excluded the insinuation of politically and socially obscurantist views under the label of Catholicism'.<sup>20</sup>

A little while later Dominik Horodyński (editor of *Dzis i Jutro*), Andrzej Kętrzyński, Andrzej Micewski and Andrzej Krasinski defected from Pax with another group called the 'Secessionists'. They formed the Social Christian Action Association in March 1957 and began to publish their own journal *Za i Przeciw* (For and Against). Within a short while Kętrzyński abandoned writing to take up a diplomatic post, and Micewski and Krasinski abandoned the new organisation (which fell under the spell of the west European New Left) to join the monthly *Więź*. Horodyński turned to reviewing for the literary periodicals and then became editor of *Kultura* (Warsaw).

In 1956 Cardinal Wyszyński, making use of the new control that the agreement with Gomułka had given him, began the removal of all Pax members and sympathisers from the hierarchy and from all clergy posts. The Movement of Progressive Priests collapsed at once. Even Piasecki's old friend Andrzej Micewski spoke out against him in November 1956, urging demonstrators at Warsaw Polytechnic to march on Pax and occupy its editorial premises.<sup>21</sup>



1956 closed with all the signs of a revisionist victory. Even for steadfastly oppositionist Catholics there were signs that Gomułka's 'socialism' would be of a flexible variety. In return for supporting Gomułka's return the Church was offered certain rewards. The Znak (Sign) movement, a group of academics from the Catholic University of Lublin associated with *Tygodnik Powszechny*, decided in 1948 to found the monthly magazine *Znak*. In 1953 the journal had been closed down by the authorities. Now it was re-opened and the circle of *Znak* writers was allowed to send a small group of Catholic deputies to the Sejm. Stefan Kisielewski, Jerzy Zawieyski and Stanisław Stomma were among the eleven Znak deputies to the Sejm in 1957. Janusz Zabłocki, who had only recently abandoned Pax, more or less stopped writing to become a Znak deputy. They hoped that the Znak movement deputies would in time form the nucleus of a 'real and independent' Polish government at the break up of Soviet power.

The Znak movement was Neo-positivist in that it accepted 'geo-political realism' and rejected the supposed Polish predisposition to revolt. In return for backing Gomułka the authorities also allowed the formation of the KIK (Clubs of the Catholic Intelligentsia). And as if to crown this triumph the Party was forced to rethink its position on the erstwhile Catholic newspaper *Tygodnik Powszechny*. With the power of Pax on the wane in Warsaw Party circles and under pressure from the Vatican, Pax ceased publishing *Tygodnik Powszechny* and instead put its efforts into a new journal *Kierunki*, which started publication in May 1956. *Tygodnik Powszechny*, subject to censorship and control on the size of its print run, was back in circulation on 25 December 1956, edited by Turowicz and most of the staff from before the Pax take-over: by 1958 the Znak Social Publishing Institute had assumed responsibility for publication. Most of the Znak deputies to the Sejm were associated with this paper - indeed Kisielewski and Stomma both appeared in the first of the revived issues, and in 1957, when the deputies first took up their place in the Sejm, they all wrote articles for the paper explaining their reasons for entering the 'socialist' parliament.

In the summer of 1957 the Vatican forbade all members of the clergy to write for, edit or publish in any Pax journal or publishing agency. Even the most obdurate Catholic could sense that the power of the Party was not as it had been and began to

wonder if the revisionists might not be right after all: perhaps the Party could develop a human face.

### 4.3 THE FAILURE OF REVISIONISM

Gomułka was a product of the Party. He believed he needed greater control over the press if he was to survive both the 'threat' from Germany, the threat from Moscow and the threat of democratisation from within Poland. He also felt he needed to narrow the base of his support and to make that support more definitely his own creation. Gomułka, almost immediately after his elevation to power, began to turn against his erstwhile supporters, Kott, Kołakowski, Lasota, Gottesman, Woroszyński, Ważyk and Andrzejewski. Towards the end of 1957 he began a purge in which over 200,000 people were expelled from the Party. The mood of national unity on which Gomułka had ridden to power began to evaporate. In 1962 Różewicz's play *Świadkowie czyli nasza mała stabilizacja* (The witnesses or our little stabilisation) appeared. In it he contrasted the surface tolerance and happiness of post-thaw Poland with the growing indifference to suffering, ideology and intellectual endeavour that he found lurking just beneath the surface. In the first part of the play an old couple go through what appears to be a normal morning routine, while just outside their window children bury a live kitten. In the second part of the play two bureaucrats who can neither see nor touch each other comment briefly on the nature of their satisfaction with 'civilisation'. As they talk a wounded animal - or perhaps it is a wounded man - drags itself slowly and painfully towards them.<sup>22</sup> What was referred to officially as *nasza mała stabilizacja* (our little stabilisation) very soon became known in popular parlance as the *rozzarowanie* (disenchantment).

It was often said that the later regimes of Gomułka, Gierek, Kania and Jaruzelski were mere continuations of what had gone before, no different from that of the early Stalinist regime in Poland. In fact there was a difference, though that difference has taken a long time to emerge and is not necessarily palatable to dissidents and independent intellectuals. The year 1956 marked the end of the Party's bid for total

control, and it marked the limit of the Party's willingness to follow the Stalinist line; it also marked the end of the Party's ability to think ideologically or act 'correctly'. Most Polish intellectuals and oppositionists were eventually to owe their lives and their ability to function on any level at all to this fact. Gomułka aspired to be authoritarian rather than totalitarian; he was prepared to sacrifice the 'inevitable progress of the historical march of the international working class' in order that Poland and Party-rule should survive. Within this complex of possibilities the Party too desired somehow, anyhow, to survive. Gomułka had staved off the threat of Soviet intervention and had halted, or at least slowed, the growth of anti-socialism in Poland. In standing up to Khrushchev and in getting the Soviet 'stooges' like Marshal Rokossovsky removed from the Polish government, he appeared to have freed Polish 'socialism' from Soviet puppetry, and in doing so had united Polish national feeling. Up to this point Poles had looked to anti-socialists to assert their national dignity: now, As Isaac Deutscher was quick to point out:

For the first time in its long, chequered, and tragic career, Polish communism had assumed the role of the exponent of the national longing for independence.<sup>23</sup>

From this time on the Polish Party leadership could organise nothing more effective than a long slow retreat from 'Marxism' and from any ambition they might have held about total control.

For most writers the elevation of Gomułka was the beginning of the process of reform. However, a few writers refused to see events this way. Kisielewski, for example, accused writers of confusing their own professional and personal problems with the larger national and political issues, and outlined the complex dilemma and the simplifications wrought by opposition that now faced writers:

International politics, as well as anti-Marxist or anti-communist vulgarities spread by some western and *émigré* factions, are doing great harm by meddling in Polish literary affairs. It all began even before the October crisis in 1956 which, in my opinion, was to a large extent warped by non-essential, purely personal literary fuss. A small group of writers, who in the past period had been in Poland the exponents of schematism, but wished to re-habilitate themselves during the 'thaw',

made a lot of noise, which was immediately taken up by the Western press and radio. The din they created drowned all common sense, and tiny personal-literary problems were irrelevantly placed next to the most important socio-economic problems of national existence. This demagoguery brought little profit and much harm, literature included. While before, there had been the threat of Marxist schematism, there now loomed an anti-Marxist one, even more dangerous (God preserve me from my friends). Finally the poor, genuine literary 'jester' finds himself now between the frying pan and the fire; both sides - for extra-literary reasons - demand of him a simple declaration. And he doesn't like that at all.<sup>24</sup>

Although relative freedom in the arts was to survive for nearly ten years, the limits of the 'Polish October' were signalled as early as December 1956, when GUKPPIW suppressed Adamiecka's *Prawda o Węgierskiej Rewolucji* (The Truth about the Hungarian Revolution), an eye-witness account of the Hungarian uprising, parts of which had already appeared in *Sztandar Młodych*, on the grounds that it might be seen as a provocation to the USSR. At the same time an anthology of Słonimski's theatre reviews was withdrawn for no good reason, and the various intellectual clubs that had sprung up at the end of 1956 were 'coordinated' under the control of a government centre of 'cooperation' and effectively stifled. At the ninth plenary meeting of the Central Committee in May 1957 Gomułka spoke out against Leszek Kołakowski and the revisionists. Gomułka accused Kołakowski of collaborating with the western Trotskyite-fascist press to slander Poland. The Party made a concerted effort to bring the independent writers and intellectuals back under its control. Having failed to bring to heel the newspaper *Trybuna Ludu* Gomułka had the editorial board sacked. Also that year Wygodzki's *Zatrzymany do Wyjaśnienia* (Held for Investigation) and Hłasko's *Cmentarze* (Graveyard) were withheld from publication because of the strongly negative image they gave of 'socialist' Poland.<sup>25</sup>

Attacks on the highly readable student magazine *Po Prostu* (Plain Speaking) began to appear in print. Through 1954-55 *Po Prostu* had led the way in pursuit of reform by insisting that the Polish people had a right to expect, even demand, accountability from the Party. The journal supported the notion of workers' councils, agitated for new elections to the Sejm, supported the formation of independent clubs for intellectuals and the extension of cultural activities into the provinces. As an adjunct to revisionism

the magazine was destined for trouble with the Party. In a short while the editor, Lasota, was dismissed; in June 1957 the magazine was forced to take a 'summer vacation'; on 7 September the current issue was seized while still on the printing presses; in October, exactly one year after the Party Plenum had brought Gomułka to power, the magazine, its editors labelled as *rewizjoniści*, was banned. Ten party members from the editorial board were expelled, six more were reprimanded by the Central Commission of the Party Control Board. Warsaw students demonstrated to protest at this action, but were met by police armed with tear gas and batons and there followed four nights of rioting and violent confrontation in October 1957. The decision to close the magazine was criticised by ZLP, but to no avail. Although the new magazines *Dialog* and *Współczesność* both appeared, a third magazine called *Europa*, edited by Ważyk, and which was planning to publish new work by Jastrun, Żuławski, Hertz and Andrzejewski, was suppressed at its first issue in mid-1957. In protest at this and the loss of *Po Prostu*, Jastrun, Hertz, Żuławski, Dygat, Kott, Ważyk and Andrzejewski all resigned from the Party in 1957. At the start of 1958 the journal *Nowa Kultura*, a leading outlet for the *rewizjoniści* was forced to accept a new party line by Andrzej Werblan, causing the mass resignation of almost the entire editorial board: Konwicki, Woroszyński, J.J.Lipski, Ścibor-Rylski, Wilhelm Mach, Marian Brandys, Kołakowski, Witold Wirpsza and Jerzy Piórkowski. This group regarded each other as comrades, although most of them were no longer Party members. This resignation was their exit from the official literary establishment and Lipski was subsequently refused a passport. Of this group only Piórkowski was to remain in the Party, rising in 1985 to the dizzy heights of First Secretary of the Party Organisation in the reformed ZLP.

Andrzejewski's novel *Ciemności Kryją Ziemię* (Darkness Covers the Earth) appeared against a backdrop of gathering storm as writers realised the thaw of 1956 was to be a short-lived affair. Ostensibly, the novel was about the Spanish Inquisition, but it was in fact a thinly disguised allegory about the nature of psychological and political pressure, about Stalinist repression of intellectual endeavour, and thus a very accurate gauge of the feelings of Poland's intellectuals. In the novel the young priest Fra Diego falls under the spell of the Grand Inquisitor Torquemada and is converted to

the methods of the Inquisition. The novel ends with Torquemada recanting his beliefs and methods in a death-bed scene. Furious, betrayed, frustrated at being misled so abysmally, Fra Diego slaps the Inquisitor's corpse across the face.

The increasing use of allegory and Aesopian language was evident not only in Andrzejewski's work, but also in the satirical stories of Mrożek (b.1930), particularly in the volume *Slon* (The Elephant, 1956, awarded the *Przegląd Kulturalny* annual literary prize in the spring of 1957). Aesopian language was present in a whole range of film, and was also signalled by the small but significant fact that the Po Prostu (Plain Speaking) Film Club changed its name to the Zig-Zag Club at about this time. This was a period which Tadeusz Konwicki characterised as:

A putting to sleep. A putting to sleep of society and of culture. It has to be remembered that this was a period of interminable conferences, plenary sessions of - I don't know - four or six hours, by Gomułka himself who monotonously read reports.<sup>26</sup>

Slowly but surely Gomułka eliminated his liberal supporters from positions of power and influence. Where he did not bore them to tears with his reports to Party Congresses he ousted them by bureaucratic methods. Even those who had been his strongest supporters and allies through his prison years and who had championed him in 1956 became victims: in 1959 Morawski left the Politburo and Bienkowski resigned from his post as Minister of Education. Zambrowski (Nussbaum), Matwin and Werfel (his other main supporters from 1956) lost their positions in 1963. In 1959 Gomułka had revived the UB under the leadership of Moczar, an anti-intellectual, anti-Semite of a particularly odious disposition. Now Moczar made great show of championing the patriotic partisans of the AK, the people who up to now had been ignored or hounded by the 'socialists'. He financed a series of films and books and set up ZBoWiD, a veterans' association. In doing so he courted intellectual favour as a patron and patriot, and harnessed frustrated right-wing nationalist energies to his own violent purpose.

In 1960 Andrzejewski's novel *Bramy Raju* (The Gates of Paradise) appeared. The subject was the medieval children's crusades from France into the Holy Land. The participants of the crusades weave together their stories and consciousness in an

adolescent confessional. Stylistically the book flouted every tenet of *socrealizm*, and even normal typography - although it had commas, it lacked all other punctuation. Further, the novel, which was initially intended as a film script, posed questions about the nature of mass movements, revolutionary philosophy and the nature of paradise, seeing the urge to be 'part of the movement' as lying in the individual's reluctance to be or stand alone, an urge primarily located in sublimated sex urges. The novel may well have been influenced by *1984* and Orwell's ideas on the functioning of the inner Party and the use made of sex urges by the leadership. In *Bramy Raju* it is impossible to disentangle the adolescents' interest in flesh from their passion for the crusade.<sup>27</sup>

Andrzejewski's books were highly praised by Polish critics, but his oppositionist activities did not endear him to the Party. It was said that he was flirting with treason to gain western currency in order to 'buy' the Nobel prize for literature.<sup>28</sup> Party newspapers slandered him and his associates mercilessly: he was said to be allied with Trotskyite revisionists, Zionists, anarchists, utopianists and West German Christian Democrats. He was accused of 'socio-political fickleness', of being a non-Marxist, non-Catholic. After 1962 it was increasingly difficult for him to get his work published in Poland, though it is thought that his international reputation protected him from any direct threat of punishment. But the thaw was becoming unpredictable: writers with a lower political profile did not have such problems. Nawrocka's novel *Powszedni dzień dramatu* (Common days of drama), about the fate of five young AK messengers during the Warsaw uprising, a subject that would have given the censor problems only a few years before, and which might even then have been considered too dangerous, was published without problems in 1961.

Within the ZLP Słonimski was voted out of office at the 1963 Writers' Congress, after Werblan, Starewicz and other Party members put pressure on individual writers to vote for their man, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz (1894-1980). He had been born in Kalnik in the Ukraine, the son of a white-collar worker, had studied law and music in Kijów, graduated in 1918 and moved immediately to Warsaw where as an 'exotic easterner' he made his mark as a poet, novelist, playwright and essayist. He had collaborated with his cousin Szymanowski on the opera *King Roger of Sicily*, and had been part of the Skamander movement. In spite of his flamboyant reputation as the Polish Oscar Wilde,

he had held diplomatic posts in Copenhagen, Paris and Brussels for Piłsudski's government. During the war he had remained in Warsaw and his home was a meeting place for underground writers. From 1956 he had been an editor with *Twórczość*. Whether he knew it or not the Party regarded Iwaszkiewicz as a flexible tool and were happy to have him heading the union. With his appointment the Party successfully neutralised ZLP as a forum for oppositionist ideas and limited for quite some time its public effectiveness as a focus of opposition. Under Iwaszkiewicz the Party got onto the ZLP executive board Kruczkowski and Putrament (a member of the Central Committee of the Party from 1964), both of them dull adherents of *socrealizm*.

Claims for *socrealizm* were half-heartedly renewed, but again Żółkiewski, who had been arguing for years that socialism could play a decisive role in Polish literature only if it was realistic in observing Polish daily life, was unable to persuade the union to adopt it as the only valid form of writing. From the mid-1950s writers rejected 'social commissions' in favour of writing what they felt was necessary. Less and less politically acceptable fiction appeared, or was presented to the publishing houses. The membership of ZLP remained determinedly revisionist. Inevitably fewer works of any quality or originality made it through the eye of the censor's needle. The Party and the Party members of ZLP reconciled the contradictions to their own satisfaction if no-one else's by claiming that they were, as Artur Międzyrzecki put it to me in conversation, 'integrating cultural values in a spirit of ideological coexistence' - double talk for doing nothing in a spirit of mutual antagonism.

ZLP tired of playing cat and mouse with the Party and on 17 January 1963 the Chief Administrative Board of the ZLP met to debate the collaborationist conduct of its chairman. As a result of this meeting members voiced their displeasure and disappointment in a letter to the Prime Minister. The Party too had tired of discreet attempts to rein in the writers. Probably at the suggestion of General Moczar, they accused ZLP of playing at opposition by courting the West, and in reply to the letter, at the instigation of the Party members on the Executive Board of ZLP, closed down *Nowa Kultura* and *Przegląd Kulturalny* - the two major Warsaw cultural weekly journals. In their place the Party set up a magazine called *Kultura*, its name stolen from the independent Polish journal in Paris. The response of many Polish writers was



simply to boycott the new journal, an unofficial policy that continued for many years. In July 1963 at the XIII Party Plenum the attitudes of Polish writers were debated at length and Gomułka, whose comments declaring war on 'hostile elements' were widely reported in the Party press, accused them of attempting to escape from themes connected with building Polish socialism. He complained of their lack of clear engagement in 'the cause', and connected them with *rewizjonizm*. He believed that *rewizjonizm* was a far greater danger than *dogmatyzm* ever could be.<sup>29</sup>

Although Gomułka knew that the writers were important to him and to the Party, he failed to understand anything at all about the nature of writing. He was no intellectual and mistakenly relied upon his experience of pre-war eastern Polish provincial life to inform him about the sophisticated post-war Warsaw *literati*. Gomułka demanded that writers should openly endorse his post-1956 course, which at first they did. However, gradually that course not only came to offend writers in its treatment of them, but came to represent a bumbling, inefficient and repressive dogmatism of zero intellectual content or originality. It must be said that the early Gomułka years were remarkable: while Gomułka disliked intellectuals and mistrusted writers, in general, as Szczypiorski commented:

There were no more persecutions by the police. There were no political prisoners. There were no political trials. There were no informers, nor were secret insidious activities allowed. There was no spying on fellow citizens...<sup>30</sup>

Rather, the regime attempted to down-grade the significance of writers through 'professional controls' of reward and finance, and where this did not work, it tried to censor them into silence. The leadership of the ZLP, dominated by Party members, refused to press writers' demands. Kruczkowski, Putrament and Iwaszkiewicz fell into disrepute among their fellows for failure to represent union interests adequately.<sup>31</sup> After 1959 there was less and less Party interest in *socrealizm* and meetings between the Polish leaders and delegations of writers became infrequent.

On 14 March 1964 writers and intellectuals, including Andrzejewski and Słonimski, signed a 'Letter of the Thirty Four' to the Polish government protesting at

repressive cultural policies. They demanded the rights guaranteed them under the Polish constitution. At this stage they still hoped to reform the Party from within, so their protests were couched in reasonable, mainly Marxist and professional terms: they protested at limited allotments of paper for books and periodicals, restrictions in book publishing, reductions in the size of print runs and the size and number of titles published, at increasing censorship of the national culture, at the lack of open discussion and information as obstacles to progress.<sup>32</sup> The letter was delivered by Antoni Słonimski personally to the office of Cyrankiewicz, the Prime Minister. The response of the authorities was to arrest J.J.Lipski, who had collected the signatures. They also banned the works of fourteen of the signatories, and dropped all scheduled payments, performance and publication for the others involved. Fourteen other signatories were invited to talk with Cyrankiewicz in an effort to divide the group and to warn them from following up the letter with further action.

Zenon Kliszko (a close personal friend and supporter of Gomułka on the Central Committee where he controlled the Personnel Section) addressed a Conference of ZLP writers of the Western Territories and tried to get the membership to sign a petition of protest at the Letter of the Thirty Four. He claimed that the letter was opportunistic, against the interests of Polish culture, that the authors had been swayed by the interventions of Radio Free Europe and by West German revanchists. Kliszko muttered angrily about the writers' failure to observe protocols in requesting the letter to be published abroad before the Prime Minister had seen it and before the government had a chance to consider it for publication in Poland. There were vigorous clashes between Maria Dąbrowska and Kliszko. Remarkably, 600 writers signed the petition, 400 refused. The numbers signing probably indicate the fear of those living in the Western Territories in the days before any international treaty recognised Poland's western frontier, rather than any real appreciation of the issues in hand.<sup>33</sup>

The ZLP Warsaw branch meeting of June 1964 was dominated by the Letter of the Thirty Four. It was rumoured the Central Committee were considering expelling those Party members of ZLP who had signed or supported the letter. Słonimski, who stood accused by Kliszko of mismanaging the letter, spoke in his own defence at the XIV ZLP conference in Lublin in September-October 1964:

Who is really guilty here? One cannot hide one's head in the sand and pretend to see nothing. The whole affair of the 34 and the letter would not have existed had there been no reason to write this letter. And the reason was the fatal situation of Polish culture. The fruits of October have vanished, censorship has gagged the people, the most famous names have disappeared from the columns of the literary journals, the books published in limited editions do not satisfy the needs of the readers. For all this you are responsible and it will not help to look for scapegoats.<sup>34</sup>

Ślonimski's speech received a standing ovation from the membership. Gomułka's reply was never made public - indeed it was unusual that he should have taken the trouble to attend the conference at all. This open, almost public row between the Party and the ZLP, and the defeat of Kliszko's attack on Ślonimski, marked the start of the Party's attempt to regain lost ground.

In October 1964 Khrushchev, who had been seeking rapprochement with West Germany, was removed from office. Gomułka had been concerned to create a strong national front in the face of Soviet overtures to West Germany - moves which Gomułka feared would threaten Poland's borders in some new Soviet-German partition. Even though he must have been relieved at Khrushchev's departure he was still determined to tighten his grip on dissenters as a way of preserving Poland. In line with Brezhnev's moves against Soviet dissidents in 1965-66, in the closing months of 1964 Gomułka appointed the hard line bully-boy Mieczysław Moczar Minister for Internal Affairs. The appointment was an indication of what was about to happen. Moczar did not like intellectuals; still less did he like Jews; Jewish intellectuals he liked least of all. Under Moczar's guidance the Party set about eradicating all centres of opposition, internationalism, independent thought, resistance to the Party line.

At the writers' congress in Kraków in December 1965 the ZLP put forward a list of candidates for its Executive that included a number of *rewizjoniści*. The Cultural Department of the Central Committee immediately intervened to block the elections and Starewicz managed to get the ZLP to agree to a revised list of candidates suggested by the Party: Iwaszkiewicz was re-elected, supported by Putrament and Centkiewicz. The only candidate on the list approved by the union was Artur Międzyrzecki, who was elected as Vice-President. Shortly after the ZLP congress, 70 year-old writer and

signatory Melchior Wańkowicz (a prolific writer of traditional 'gentry' tales and historian of the Battle of Monte Cassino) was arrested. He had written a personal letter to his daughter in the USA telling the story of the Letter of the Thirty Four. Even though it was against the law to intercept private correspondence, and even then such private material could hardly be described as the basis for a prosecution, the Ministry of the Interior and put him on trial, accused of having spread false information about Poland. Wańkowicz was tried in camera and sentenced to three years in jail. Although he was later granted an amnesty, his arrest and trial were a warning to the ZLP membership.

Following closely on the heels of Wańkowicz's arrest came the affair of Kuroń and Modzelewski. They had belonged to an obscure Marxist group which grew out of a scout troop named the Walterites, after 'General Walter' (Karol Świerczewski) of the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. This group was formed in direct contradiction of the British scouting tradition initiated by Baden-Powell. Often accused of fanatical Marxism the troop had been disbanded by the authorities. This milieu (if not the scout troop itself) could be said to include Jacek Kuroń, Karol Modzelewski, Seweryn Blumsztajn and Adam Michnik: these young socialists were active in the Warsaw university ZMS (Union of Socialist Youth) discussion club. These people were natural youth and student leaders. In 1964 Kuroń was a doctoral student in the Warsaw university department of Education, and Modzelewski was an assistant professor in the department of History. Kuroń and Modzelewski had worked on a Marxist analysis of the prevailing state of the political life in Poland. In November 1964 they were arrested and accused of writing a document designed to slander the People's Republic and its achievements. Instead of being prosecuted they were released and expelled from the Party and from the ZMS. Indignant at this treatment, in March 1965 they submitted their criticisms, titled *List Otwarty Do Partii* (Open Letter to the Party), to the Party Control Committee for consideration as an internal discussion paper. Both authors were arrested a second time.

Kuroń and Modzelewski argued that, although the state used the language and trumpeted the forms of socialism, in fact the forms and language were empty; they said that the Polish people did not own the means of production, but that the state owned

them. Thus economic power was tied very firmly to political power and to the *biurokracja*, and was led by the monolithic and unaccountable power of the Party. The proletariat had no power or rights at all, in spite of Party propaganda that said otherwise. Even within the Party there was no democracy since factions were outlawed and all orders were transmitted downwards rather than developed horizontally through discussion and lobbying. They indicated that on almost every level the *biurokracja* and the *technokracja* were sociologically indistinguishable by the early 1960s. For all practical purposes they wanted very similar things for themselves, for society as a whole and for the nation. The real differences lay in how they achieved their professional aims, since the needs of the *biurokracja* (increased centralisation, administrative powers, the scope for administrative decisions unfettered by recourse to the Sejm) contradicted those of the *technokracja* (a more fluid social structure, less rigid control over the economy, scope for individual action, access to a free market particularly in information) and those of the *technokracja* threatened the power of the *biurokracja*. The futurology of classical Marxist-Leninism had not predicted the rise of technological society, nor the problems and demands such a society would place on the highly conservative and resistant vertical command structures of the Party.

Effectively, Kuroń and Modzelewski said that the elite, free of effective public control and direct responsibility to the Polish people, now stood in the way of effective economic progress and political reform. Certainly the economic crisis that afflicted Poland and which the Party was powerless to resolve bore out their analysis. By 1964 the average Polish worker was not significantly better off economically than he had been during the wartime Nazi occupation. Kuroń and Modzelewski estimated that 26 per cent of workers' families lived below the poverty line, while 42 per cent lived on the poverty line; only 46 per cent of households had running water, only 25 per cent had toilets; there was a massive housing shortage and most families ate meat only once or at most twice a week. They warned that without substantial changes in social, economic and political organisation, without an end to censorship and the suppression of discussion, violent conflict between the workers and the authorities was inevitable:

In the nature of things, the working class is the chief opponent of the bureaucracy. The worker stands on the lowest level of the social hierarchy with everyone from the foreman to the prime minister above him and no-one below him. Because the exploitation of the worker constitutes the material basis maintaining the system, the entire apparatus of power and coercion is directed primarily against the working class. This is the way it was and the way it is now. The bureaucracy will not give up to the working class even one zloty and, in conditions of economic crisis and lack of reserves, it has nothing to give up under pressure. In this situation, any large-scale strike action cannot but transform itself into a political conflict with the bureaucracy. For the working class, it is the only way to change its situation. *Today, at a time when the system is going through a general crisis, the interest of the working class lies in revolution: the overthrow of the bureaucracy and the present relations of production, gaining control over one's own labour and its product, control over the production goals - the introduction of an economic, social and political system based on workers' democracy. The interests of the vast majority of white-collar employees coincides with those of the working class.*<sup>35</sup>

The Warsaw University Student discussion group was dissolved by the authorities and in July 1965, after a secret trial, the courts sentenced Kuroń to three years and Modzelewski to three and a half years in jail. The 18 year old Michnik was also jailed for two months for his involvement in the affair. Almost immediately student unrest broke out, but the Party restricted all access to the *Open Letter* and its contents.

The inevitable failure of Kuroń and Modzelewski's appeal signalled a crack-down on all open debate and public discussion. On 21 October 1966 - the year of Poland's Millennium celebrations, exactly 10 years after the October thaw, Kołakowski, then Professor of Philosophy at Warsaw University and a member of the ZLP, widely regarded as a leading non-institutional Marxist oppositionist who had spoken in court in defence of Kuroń and Modzelewski, addressed the students of the Warsaw University Institute of History on the subject of 'Polish Culture over the last 20 years'. His theme was the failure of Soviet socialism and the betrayal of the promised freedoms of 1956 in Poland and it was a scathing and comprehensive attack on the destruction of Polish political culture: he summed up the achievements of Gomułka's decade in office, listed the repressions, crushing of free speech, intolerance of even loyal left-opposition, the intrigues and lawlessness of the security services. He linked this to the deadly paralysis of the *biurokracja*, lack of democracy, and the Party's monopoly of political power -

all of which was steadily bankrupting the economy and ruining the health of the workers. At the same meeting Krzysztof Pomian, an associate professor in the same department, talked of the need for an independent youth movement and literary culture free from Party control. On 15 November both Kołakowski and Pomian were expelled from the Party.

No less than 22 Party writers (including Konwicki, later joined by Brandys) sent a letter to the Central Committee arguing that it was 'excessive' and 'alarming' for a loyal oppositionist Marxist like Kołakowski to be treated in this way. They stressed that the expulsion would deepen the ideological rifts within the Party and would retard the hope of authentic socialist development in Poland. The Party responded by attempting to intimidate the writers individually into withdrawing their signatures, then set up a committee to interview and investigate the professional credentials of the protesting writers. When the writers refused to withdraw their signatures, sixteen were expelled from the Party. Brandys and Konwicki resigned from the Party in protest.<sup>36</sup> It was clear that it was no longer simply a case of the Party finding two young upstart lecturers to be a nuisance, but a matter of silencing dissent, especially within the Party. From this date on writers of all kinds, who had come to believe that with the thaw they could say what was on their minds, realised that they were expected to suppress their conscience - something which in Catholic Poland would have been difficult, but which the unique cultural and political tradition of the writers and their standing within Polish society made unlikely. After 1960 the Party increasingly viewed writers not as a loyal and imaginative opposition committed to the cause of Polish socialism, but as a hostile and negative 'enemy within', a fifth column in the pay of western capitalists and German revanchists.

Increasingly Gomułka came to side with the Stalinists who had opposed his elevation, against the intellectuals who had supported him. Slowly but surely the rift between writers and government disconnected the Party from one of the most important barometers of public feeling.<sup>37</sup> Censorship obscured public feeling from the public itself, but also from the Party. Increasingly the Party represented not Polish public opinion, but the interests of a tiny group. Increasingly the Party failed to pierce the fog of its own invention, failed to see through the pacifying image of unity, unanimity and

public approval; the Party did not know what the public thought, did not believe what they heard on the grapevine, preferred a fiction made and supported by their own 'organs'. No matter how much this emerging class of Party and privileged *biurokracja* contradicted Marxist theory, those within it seemed deaf to loyal oppositionist criticism: the Party could hear no voice but its own, and even that was hesitant, uncertain, muted by censorship and self-censorship, and distorted by privilege.

On 29 February 1968 Andrzejewski and 233 other ZLP writers (including Słonimski, Paweł Jasienica, Kołakowski and Andrzej Kijowski) attended an extraordinary general meeting of the Warsaw branch of the ZLP held in the office of ZAIKS (Union of Artists and Composers) to protest at the way the government had banned Mickiewicz's play *Dziady* (Forefathers' Eve, 1823) on 30 January 1968. The play occupies a far more focal position in Polish cultural and political life than any play in English literature - perhaps the nearest equivalent would be to imagine *The Bible*, *Paradise Lost* and *King Lear* all rolled into one. The play came out of the experience of armed struggle against Partition and showed nineteenth century Russian despotism and the violent struggle waged against the Poles. The play provoked enormous audience response, and lines like 'They only send us fools and drunks from Moscow' (seen by the authorities as too provocative or too accurate, or both) resulted in prolonged applause, multiple curtain calls and the audience singing the Polish national anthem. It is thought that complaints from members of the Soviet diplomatic corps in Kraków were responsible for intervention.<sup>38</sup>

The crudity of the banning provoked prolonged student protest in both Kraków and Warsaw, and proved to be a magnificent opportunity for ZLP to condemn the primitive and politically contradictory nature of the government's cultural policy. At their February meeting the ZLP Warsaw branch attacked government interference in cultural matters, including direction of the content of literary works, as well as their distribution and reception in the press; arbitrary, damaging and woolly-minded censorship; the use of banning as a method of cultural policing; and warned that the failure of the government to listen to writers was steadily impoverishing Polish culture. Putrament was doubtless under pressure to dismiss the writers' efforts as an anti-government provocation, tried to persuade the writers to distance themselves from the



protestors. Putrament was worried that Radio Free Europe was paying close attention to the banning. It must have been clear to all concerned that it was not the government but the writers who were being provoked. Andrzejewski is said to have confessed that he was vexed and angry at a process that sterilised and destroyed Polish literary culture year by year. The government, he said, seemed determined to hold the thought and feeling of the Polish nation and its writers in contempt: every time the writers tried to initiate dialogue, social progress and reforms the authorities set out to damage and destroy the initiative. The authorities presented a wrongheaded and deliberately falsified version of Polish history and culture, Andrzejewski said. He added that criticism and hostility towards the government and its policies did not grow out of some secret and alien plot to damage and destroy the nation, but rather out of protest at the government's contempt for the nation.<sup>39</sup> Kolakowski said:

I repeat, and we will repeat endlessly, the most banal truths, that cultural life requires freedom, that it requires freedom to reflect on culture, its values and possibilities. But even this reflection is not possible, for every discussion inevitably leads to fundamental problems fortified with prohibitions. For even particular evaluation of culture is systematically falsified...The administration of culture has now entered a spiral movement, whence there is no exit to be seen, but which would inevitably deepen the abyss between real cultural life and the administration, would waste energy the more and administer greater damage in all spheres of spiritual life. In a situation which has given rise to a great deal of inevitable antagonism, bitterness, disillusionment, of the feeling of importance and clumsiness in the management of culture, the stifling of the expression of these objections by administrative measures has only one result: it will spur their aggrandisement indefinitely. We have the classical, the most banal example of reflexive coupling - the measures preventing the disclosure of resistance, the real source of which nobody considers, create a situation where a still larger number of these means of repression is necessary and endlessly so. We have approached a shameful situation where the whole of dramaturgy, from Aeschylus through Shakespeare to Brecht and Ionesco, has become a collection of allusions to People's Poland...<sup>40</sup>

GUKPPiW banned a total of eighteen writers who attended the February meeting of the ZLP Warsaw Branch. Międzyrzecki and Adam Tarn, among others, were forced to resign their influential editorships. Some writers were put under police surveillance. Others, deprived of their ability to earn a living, decided to leave Poland. Karst, Ślucky

and Wygodzki left for Israel. A short while later Gomułka spoke out to condemn the Warsaw writers of ZLP (Kisielewski and Słonimski in particular) as a gang of front-men behind which *rewizjoniści* and Zionist agents of imperialism operated to bring about Poland's destruction. The *biurokracja*, led by Moczar, sought to divert genuine political, economic and social grievances away from its own corruption and idiocy towards traditional scapegoats by setting off an anti-Jewish purge.

This was the start of an attempt to blame all Poland's troubles on the Jews and to purge the Party and *biurokracja* of Jews in order to eliminate independent intellectuals and to divert attention from the real causes of economic and cultural unrest. In part Polish efforts to suppress dissent were a result of Soviet efforts to silence dissident opinion, and followed-on from the earlier Soviet trials of Daniel, Sinyavski and Bukovski. But the persecution of Polish dissidents was also a response to events in the middle-east. In June 1967, during the Arab-Israeli war, Poland had taken a pro-Arab line, along with the rest of the Warsaw pact. Gomułka had often spoken of an Israeli fifth column operating in Poland, and there had been efforts to link Israel with 'revanchist West German' efforts against Poland. Gomułka's supporters (particularly Moczar's ZBoWiD organisation, Piasecki's Pax organisation, the army newspaper *Żołnierz Wolności*, *Trybuna Ludu* (the Party newspaper) and Pax's *Słowo Powszechne*) characterised *rewizjonizm* as a Zionist plot to overthrow Gomułka and bring down Poland.

In the spring of 1968, against a background of growing crisis in Czechoslovakia, student protest at the banning of *Dziady* continued. On 8 March riot police stormed Warsaw University. On 9 March the police baton-charged a peaceful demonstration by 20,000 people in central Warsaw. On 10 March Kuron, Modzelewski, Michnik and the more active of the student organisers were arrested. On 11 March *Trybuna Ludu* published a list of the 'golden youth' - student dissidents, the children of top party officials and senior members of the *biurokracja*, many of whom were Jewish. Among those so-named were Szlajfer (the son of a senior censor in the Warsaw head office of GUKPPiW) and Modzelewski (son of the Polish Foreign Minister of 1945-47). Newspapers revealed that Kuron's family name had once been Szretter, indicating that he too was of Jewish extraction. Along with 1,600 others, Michnik, also of Jewish

background, was expelled from university by special order of the Ministry of Education. Writers identified by the Polish press as resisting the anti-Jewish campaign or as being Jewish were harassed: many went into hiding. The critic Stefan Kisielewski, after being attacked as an 'ignoramus' in *Życie Warszawy*, was twice physically assaulted and beaten: two of his fingers were broken. Słonimski too was hounded and insulted in the Party press. Brandys and Rudnicki both had unpleasant encounters. At the same time Karsov, a 27 year old philology student, was sent to jail for three years, guilty of keeping a personal diary in which she recorded her feelings about the persecution of Polish intellectuals.

In the Sejm the Znak deputies Jerzy Zawieyski and Stanisław Stomma spoke out against the campaign, and the whole Znak group signed a letter of complaint to the Premier, but to no avail. Paweł Jasienica, famous for his history of the Piast dynasty, and Stefan Kisielewski, who had both dared to criticise the campaign, were attacked in a speech by Gomułka himself from the Palace of Culture on 19 March 1968. Accused, in a series of demonstrations, of taking part in the civil war of 1945-47 on the anti-'socialist' side, Jasienica was rumoured to have been arrested, had cooperated with the security services, informing against his comrades in order to save himself, had deserted from the Polish army and been part of a gang that committed a series of murders in Białystok in the years 1944-48. These slanders almost certainly hastened Jasienica's death. At his funeral in August 1970 Andrzejewski delivered the graveside tribute:

He was accused of actions he did not perform, and of crimes he never committed. Publicly abused and insulted, he had no possibility of defending himself. The right to publish was taken away from him; old books were removed from bookstores, and his new ones were not allowed to appear. This is something that one would think would be inconceivable after all the experiences of totalitarian governments, but - sadly - it is true. An eminent Polish writer, a creator of permanent cultural values, enjoying the great trust and respect of thousands of readers, in the prime of his literary life, was in one day pushed to the margin of public life and condemned to civil death.<sup>41</sup>

By the end of April 1968, 97 senior members had been expelled from the Party (80 had been fired from their jobs in Warsaw alone) many because of their 'concealed Zionist beliefs' revealed by the behaviour of their dissenting student offspring; 1,404 people, mainly Jews, were purged from the Party for offences 'against morality'. By the end of 1969 some 20,000 Poles of Jewish origin had applied for, and been granted, permission to leave the country. A large number of teachers (professors Bronisław Baczko, Włodzimierz Brus, Jerzy Morawski, Kołakowski, associate professors Zygmunt Bauman and Maria Hirszowicz) were accused of corrupting Polish youth and lost their jobs. Although Kołakowski was not Jewish, his wife was: he was dismissed from his post in the Philosophy Department at Warsaw University. Kott and Kołakowski, along with many others, left Poland for good: Kott became a Professor in the USA and Kołakowski moved to Oxford, where he worked on his massive *Main Currents of Marxism*. Adam Bromberg, Editor and director of the academic publishing house PWN was expelled from the Party and arrested on charges of leading an international criminal organisation with the aim of overthrowing the state. After a two-year investigation he was released and given permission to emigrate to Sweden. By attacking Jews the Party had effectively removed a slice of the independent intellectual opposition, had removed a large number of the old guard in the upper ranks of the Party, and had made Gomułka, whose wife was Jewish, acutely aware of how powerful his 'supporters' were. In effect Gomułka had been given notice, if he ever needed it, that liberalisation was out of the question. Given the wide-ranging political, social, cultural and economic failure of Gomułka's regime, this outburst of repressive measures convinced many that primitive nationalism channelled through anti-Semitism was the only 'ideology' the Party could now muster.

In the summer of 1968 Andrzejewski compounded his 'errors' when he wrote a letter to Edward Goldstücker, the Chairman of the Czech Writers' Union, to sympathise with the Czechs and Slovaks and apologise for Poland's part in the invasion of Czechoslovakia. He wrote:

I write to you so that you and all your colleagues should know that during the days of your creative search, so important for the future of the whole world, you have had in the Polish writers and intellectuals, friends full of hope, and when you were

going through particularly difficult days for you and your people - we were with you, although deprived of free speech in our country. You must certainly know that the feeling of helplessness in the face of violence and force is the most painful of all human degradations, and that such a defeat becomes a particularly heavy burden when the best traditions of one's own country are insulted, freedom of speech annihilated and truth trodden down. I am quite aware that my voice of political and moral protest will not, and cannot outweigh the shame that Poland has brought on herself in the progressive opinion of the whole world. But this protest, born of indignation, pain and shame is the only thing I can offer you and your friends and colleagues in the current circumstances.<sup>42</sup>

At once the Party newspapers began a tirade of criticism directed at Andrzejewski. They also criticised the dramatist Sławomir Mrożek, who had supported Andrzejewski's opinions. He had been a Party member since just after Stalin's death, and had also written an open letter of protest at the invasion. The newspapers *Życie Warszawy*, *Sztandar Młodych*, *Kultura*, *Trybuna Ludu*, *Słowo Powszechne*, *Walka Młodych*, *Żołnierz Wolności*, *Stolica*, *Wrocławski Tygodnik Katolików* accused them both of anti-socialism, betrayal, cosmopolitanism, weakening the Warsaw Pact and mocking Polish traditions. Mrożek's plays were banned and not allowed on stage again until after December 1970. Mrożek left Poland to live in Italy and then in France. There was even a protest desertion of a kind from Pax. The poet Anka Kowalska left Pax in 1968 but retained her job as editor in the Pax publishing house. During the next six months the police arrested large numbers of dissenting and critical intellectuals and students.

For a while after March 1968 Polish writers were in such a state of ferment that many feared the Party might consider dissolving either the Warsaw branch of ZLP or even ZLP in its entirety. The Party feared the results of outright demolition and instead decided to neutralise ZLP from within. The 1969 Writers' Congress, held in Bydgoszcz under the leadership of Putrament, was shamelessly stage-managed: virtually all of the committees and positions of power were filled by Gomułka's men before the congress even began and the statutes of the union were re-written to give the executive greater scope to act without recourse to a mandate from the membership. By the end of the year the PZPR had established a very different kind of control over writers from that which existed in 1956. Gomułka's apparatus had set out to 'adjust'

Polish culture: where writers had once been the conscience of the nation, the authorities had now determined that the Party would fulfil that role. The effects of this new control were also felt in the Sejm, where the Znak started out as a group of 11 deputies in 1957, had been whittled down to 5 in the years 1961-69 (the writers Stanisław Stomma, Jerzy Turowicz, Stefan Kisielewski, Antoni Gołubiew, and Jerzy Zawieyski). The Znak deputies' contribution to the events of 1968 was modest: all five deputies, including Mazowiecki, signed an 'interpolation' addressed to the Prime Minister complaining about police brutality and asking him to restrain the security services, but only Jerzy Zawieyski protested at the anti-Semitic and anti-intellectual course of events and as a result was removed from his post on the State Council.

It was with the events of 1968-69 that the inabilities of the neo-positivist Catholic strategy and that of the Znak deputies in particular, became most obvious. The deputies had the opportunity to make speeches in which they displayed an 'Ersatz pluralism', but they were powerless, destined to fulfil the very limited role of a realistic, pragmatic and Catholic 'opposition to Your Royal-socialist Majesty'.<sup>43</sup> From 1969 even this was severely curtailed: there were to be only 3 Znak deputies (two of them writers, Professor Ryszard Bender of KUL, author of *Christian Social Initiatives in the Kingdom of Poland 1905-18*, and *Christians in the Democratic Movements of the Nineteenth Century*, and Janusz Zablocki, author of *On The Polish Crossroads*, who until 1956 been a member of Pax).

By the end of 1969 Gomulka's policies had effectively silenced the writing community by censoring and distorting everything they wrote in protest and by muting the voice of protest in the Sejm. In spite of these changes and the very clear political pressure on the ZLP there were no expulsions from the union. As Herbert said:

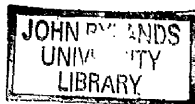
In 1956 they <the writers> thought they brought about the thaw. Next there came a painful blow. Gomulka was not only primitive, he knew that the government was already firmly in the saddle. It had its own apparatus of repression, lots of prisons, a sufficiently corrupted judiciary. Who needed *Ashes and Diamonds*? Who needed literature? Suddenly the writers saw the social demand disappearing. They felt the emptiness, so they joined the opposition. They <the Party> loved us, they pampered us, and suddenly they dumped us. That's how it looked in general terms. 1956 destroyed the myth of the engineers of human souls - the myth of political usefulness of those who were ready to support the system with their poems,

paintings and symphonies. The so-called elite was sent away empty handed despite its good service because the new lord was an upstart and held intellectuals in contempt.<sup>44</sup>

Only among the students and the frustrated radical *inteligencja* did writers have any following, understanding or support. Among the working class and on the streets there was little sympathy for writers, who were seen to inhabit a very comfortable position within Polish society.

One of the reasons for the failure of intellectuals and students to enlist working class support for their protest was that they still clung to the idea of socialism, saying that the real problem lay in having taken some kind of 'wrong turn' - hence their insistence on legal forms of appeal to the Party and the courts. The workers too were largely isolated in their attempts to formulate any kind of political thought and were not entirely to blame if they saw no connection between the amount of meat on the family board and the state of the nation's writing talent.<sup>45</sup> Most of the industrial proletariat were first generation, newly moved to jobs and homes in the city. They did not have any previous contact with the *inteligencja*, having been raised from 'rural idiocy' by the Party. This proletariat did not demonstrate at the banning of plays. Indeed, where workers were not massively indifferent to the struggle of the intellectuals, they sided with the authorities: it is said that there were workers who took the bus into Warsaw on their own initiative to help police chase students from the university campus.

The events of 1968 proved to be a turning point in Andrzejewski's professional as well as political thinking. His book, *Apelacja* (The Trial) was turned down by the censor. The refusal could hardly have come as a surprise since the novel charted a serious shift in the attitudes and perceptions of the public. It dealt with a man called Konieczny (the name means 'necessary, essential, indispensable') and his efforts to persuade the First Secretary of the PZPR to remove the surveillance of some thirty thousand secret agents, working in cooperation with a great electronic brain. Konieczny's fears may have been pure paranoid fantasy, but his experience in the resistance, his suffering at the hands of the Gestapo and the Polish Security Service,



and his rage at the exploitative nature of his work at the Prefabricated One-Family Home Factory were vivid and realistic foundations for his suspicions. Instead of bowing to the rejection of his novel, Andrzejewski sent it to Instytut Literacki in Paris.<sup>46</sup> He may have faced prosecution for slandering the state, but by the time the book was published in Paris officials of the Gierek regime took the line that his novel was about the final years of Gomułka, a period of 'mistakes and deviations', which they were anxious to disown. Gierek's officials were reluctant to appear punitive on behalf of a regime that they were trying to replace.

It is significant that Andrzejewski chose to turn to émigré publishing. As usual he was one of the first to sense new developments. Later in 1970 the government attempted to clamp down on this avenue of expression by putting on trial the 'Alpinists'. Six people accused of smuggling books from the Instytut Literacki in Paris into Poland. Their sentences ranged from 1½ to 4 years. There were no public protests or appeals for reduction of sentence, though under the amnesty of July 1969 sentences were reduced.

#### 4.4 THE LEGACY OF THE THAW

In 1961, when arguing for a 'socialist literature', Żółkiewski had written:

The social and political life of the Polish People's Republic presupposes free development of their creative powers for writers who are not communists and marxists; who, for instance, reconcile a religious outlook with the will to participate actively in the construction of socialism. Our struggle for a literature of ideas does not cancel out these freedoms. Yet we want to see the development of a literature consistently bound up with the socialist reconstruction of life. We reckon that the future belongs to that literature.<sup>47</sup>

This was all very well, but in practice the Party neither formulated a cultural policy beyond *socrealizm*, which it had been unable to make effective, nor reconciled Polish cultural imperatives with its own ambition. Żółkiewski felt it was necessary to sacrifice artistic independence, the ability to shape social, political and moral self-knowledge and consciousness.



On the other hand Dr Stanisław Stomma, chairman of the Catholic parliamentary club, and leader of the Znak deputies to the Sejm from 1957-76, wrote of the increasing divergence between 'the truth' and Party life:

I would like to illustrate the matter by the example of the creative artist or scientist. Here the conflict which may arise, and has often arisen, is between discipline and the search for truth. The matter, a delicate one, is more often than not submerged in silence, and very wrongly so. I say 'wrongly' because Marxism best demonstrates that it would be supernatural for such situations not to arise...The matter cannot and should not be bypassed in silence. Especially since there can be no divergence between politics and the search for truth when the latter is conducted from a Marxist position. A conflict is possible and it sometimes does occur in cases when faulty politics and organisational discipline are clashing with truth. But then faulty politics is not politics at all. Proper Marxist politics is *ex definitione* bound up with the search for truth, because it is bound up with the fight for human progress, and so this is the only way a creative person should view the conflict between politics and truth once he believes that he has discovered truth. Moral responsibility dictates this attitude to him, even if the truth he has found is not yet universally accepted. What would happen to progress and experimentation if only accepted truths were allowed? The history of science and culture shows that we would sink then into a bog of dogmatism and intellectual stagnation.<sup>48</sup>

Stomma was an exponent of what Michnik has called 'neo-positivist evolutionism'. That is, he applied the strategies of Roman Dmowski to contemporary conditions. He was a Catholic deputy who rejected Marxism but took as given Poland's close relationship with the USSR. Even though he took part in government he considered Catholicism to be a permanent component of Polish life. His ideas had been supported by the episcopate through the late 1950s because they won concessions at Gomulka's accession. Stomma may have been right, but it was naive to suppose that pointing out the contradictions would in any way delay or divert the Party from its course: Soviet willingness to intervene, the entrenched *nomenklatura*, the generally low level of ideological competence among both leadership and membership, all made this unlikely.

Kijowski too made an effort to salvage some elements of Marxism for the writers, even if only to save it from the Party:

Socialism is a reality objectively given *in toto* with all the duties and decisions ready, and not to be evaded. In it, one can have a divergent, non-socialist

conception of life, but one cannot follow a divergent social routine. For the faithful of the traditional individualistic psychology, it is a paradox not easily digested. This was evident in Polish literature of the years 1949-55, when writers tried, within the categories of the individualistic psychology transferred crudely from the positivist novel, to show how people grow into socialism...In real life it does not happen like this at all. The socialist way of life, and even socialist convictions, take root in an imperceptible, involuntary manner. An old humanist may well retain his reservations as to the Marxist theory of knowledge, or Marxist methodology, but this has not the slightest bearing on his social practice, which must conform to the actual society, must conform to reality...A naive contemporary novel in Poland tries to present the act of affirmation as an individual's magnanimous gesture in resigning his rights in favour of society, a belated gesture of the past century. The man living in a socialist society is confronted with a completely different moral task in relation to himself and the community: he must separate himself from the crowd, must exclude himself from the mass process which affects everybody in the same way notwithstanding their degree of consciousness; on the other hand, he must become conscious of the weight of personal responsibility which rests on him. In brief, it is not a question of understanding and accepting the new historical situation, but of understanding oneself in a new historical situation.<sup>49</sup>

This too may have been so, but the Party did not understand that by silencing free comment and moral judgement it was not only strangling the general public, but was submitting itself to slow self-poisoning. In fact the history of the Party's relations with writers and its consistent failure to formulate any cultural policy other than a half-hearted interest in *socrealizm* meant that in a roundabout way Stomma was right. Without Marxism the Party foundered on in a bog of dogmatism and intellectual stagnation, but it was a bog of the Party's own making. Had anyone within the Party understood anything about Marxism, and had they managed to speak out, and had they been understood, and had there been a willingness and ability to make change, and had they been allowed to do so by Moscow, the position might have improved. As it was Party discussion of artistic matters was at first merely an attempt to justify the unjustifiable, and then not even that.

Stefan Kisielewski (another *Znak* deputy to the Sejm, the *enfant terrible* of Polish letters) wrote an article entitled 'What is Socialist Literature' in *Tygodnik Powszechny* (7 February 1960) and in it he dared to ask of Żółkiewski, 'Really, what is Socialist Realism?'. Drawing his example from Kołakowski's essay about the writer as jester

(*Tworczość*, October 1959), he answered his own question by saying that Żółkiewski on behalf of the Party was trying to make high priests out of writers. Kołakowski had written that the Party wanted the writer to behave like a priest, to become a 'watchdog of the Absolute', guardian of a cult of recognised obvious truths. In Kołakowski's view this was not the function of the writer, whose task he defined as doubting the obvious and 'being impertinent about so called truths'. Kisielewski continued this line of reasoning, saying that Poland needed literary jesters rather than priests simply because socialism was in itself probably not the final stage of human consciousness, and, even if it was, it had not yet been achieved and therefore needed to be constantly challenged so that its methods could never be equated with those of 'the enemy'. Echoing Kołakowski, Kisielewski argued that socialist literature needed its satirists and jesters if socialism were to achieve any level of acceptance. A clearer statement of the argument for a left opposition, and its inevitable connection with an independent Polish literary profession, had not been made. The argument, however, could not be resolved.

While the Party had espoused *socrealizm* in the late 1940s and under Berman's Cultural leadership had pushed hard for its ritual adoption and re-affirmation at successive writers' conferences throughout the 1950s, the fact is that after 1952 the Party gradually lost interest in persuading the writers to follow the official line. After 1956 it became clear that unless the Party itself could write the required literature, that literature would not be produced at all. After *socrealizm* and the death of Stalin the Party simply did not have another Big Idea about literature, and contented itself with controlling output rather than provide inspiring input. After 1959 the formal meetings between ZLP delegations and the Party more or less ceased; the Party stopped trying to persuade the writers and shifted emphasis to censoring what it could not approve. Party pronouncements on literature, and officially approved discussions of particular aspects of literature (like that brief flowering in 1960 between Kołakowski, Kijowski, Stomma and Kisielewski quoted above) could be found in the pages of *Nowe Drogi*, *Polityka*, *Przegląd Kulturalny*, *Trybuna Ludu* and local papers in the regions hosting the annual writers' conferences. Generally the discussions and reportage were dull and uninformative, and useful only for tracing the current limits of official approval and the dim echoes of what was happening to *Polonia* and Polish letters abroad.

The spirit of *rewizjonizm* could only prosper if the Party took Marxist ideology seriously. What the *rewizjoniści* revealed was that Party practice had become increasingly ritualised, indispensable only to itself. As long as the *rewizjoniści* remained loyal to Marxism and used the language of Marxism, they cut the ground from under their own feet. Within a short while the Party reactionaries and dogmatists had re-asserted control and had branded deviation from the Stalinist norm as *rewizjonizm*. However, the efforts of the *rewizjoniści* were not without effect. Their comments were seen to be accurate: the Party was seen to be made up of people who were either bored, cynical opportunists, or who were part of a bureaucracy that was impervious to any kind of ideology except that of its own survival.

Eventually the *rewizjoniści* abandoned their hope of reforming Stalinism. It was clear that society could not be democratised if the Party could not open its structures and processes to serious contemplation. Slowly but surely it became clear to the *rewizjoniści* that if the One Party State was necessary to the survival of Polish 'socialism', then it was a logical impossibility that the Party would be capable of internal democratic reform without total disintegration. Kołakowski wrote:

Marxism had functioned for decades almost entirely as the political ideology of a powerful but self-contained sect, with the result that it was almost completely cut off from the external world of ideas; when attempts were made to overcome this isolation it generally proved too late - the doctrine collapsed, like mummified remains suddenly exposed to the air. From this point of view, orthodox party members were quite right to fear the consequences of trying to breathe fresh life into Marxism. Revisionist appeals which seemed the merest common sense - Marxism must be defended in free discussion by the intellectual methods universally applied in science, its ability to solve modern problems must be enriched, historical documents must not be falsified, and so on - all proved to have catastrophic results: instead of Marxism being enriched or supplemented, it dissolved in a welter of alien ideas.<sup>50</sup>

Kołakowski said that in a country which was still predominantly agricultural it would be very hard to withstand the overwhelming pressure of the petit-bourgeois culture and customs imposed by the Party, that only the Polish creative *inteligencja* had the 'skill to educate and influence culturally' to help the Polish working class to free

itself from the stifling peasant tastes and habits of the lower middle classes, the Party and *biurokracja*. Kołakowski claimed that the Party needed independent creative intellectuals precisely because they were able to help it reach wise decisions. They could do this because they were free in their thought and 'superfluous as opportunists'. But after 1968 Kołakowski had few illusions about how they were regarded by the authorities:

Those in power in all social orders strive to maintain the closest possible cooperation with the intellectuals. Failing this, they must rely exclusively on the support of the police and the army - apparently the most efficient method, yet experience has shown it to be deceptive if it is the sole means of ruling. The participation of the pedagogic intelligentsia (scientists, teachers, artists, journalists, propagandists) in the system of government is, other things being equal, in inverse proportion to the degree of repression; for the less one is capable of ruling by intellectual means, the more one must resort to the instruments of force. That is why intellectuals so often attract the instinctive animosity of the police and the army.<sup>51</sup>

Not without irony, Kołakowski attempted to locate both the attractiveness and the weakness of socialism for a society where class struggle has largely been absent from national history, and where civil society aspired to capitalism, bourgeois society, and bourgeois democracy, and where this particular dissolution of class struggle nourished the idea of national unity in a country whose strongest political tradition was that of nationalism:

Communism, in its promise of abolishing classes and class struggle, thereby cutting out the roots of social conflict, makes the bourgeois 'negative freedom' and human rights - rights of individuals isolated from, and hostile to, one another - useless. The division between civil society and the state, indeed the very distinction between the two, is done away with: 'real life' and spontaneous community, having absorbed the state, law, and other instruments of government that kept bourgeois society, with its privileges, exploitations, and oppressiveness intact and served to perpetuate it, has no need of such supports. Communism ends the clash between the individual and society; each person naturally and spontaneously identifies himself with the values and aspirations of the 'whole', and the perfect unity of the social body is recreated...by a movement upward on an 'ascending spiral' that restores human meaning to technological progress. Human

rights, in other words, are simply the facade of the capitalist system; in the new unified society they become utterly irrelevant.<sup>52</sup>

His words were to become increasingly relevant to the Polish situation after 1976. In 1978 Kołakowski concluded:

The main reason...that Polish revisionism gradually declined was...the disintegration of party ideology, undermined by revisionist criticism...Revisionism itself was a major cause of the fact that the Party lost its respect for official doctrine and that ideology increasingly became a sterile though indispensable ritual. In this way revisionist criticism, especially in Poland, cut the ground from under its own feet. Writers and intellectuals continued their manifestations, protests and attempts to put political pressure on the authorities, but they were less and less inspired by truly revisionist, i.e. Marxist, ideas. In the Party and the bureaucracy the importance of communist ideology was manifestly declining. Instead of people who, even if they had taken part in the atrocities of Stalinism, were in their way loyal communists and attached to communist ideals, the reins of power were now held by cynical, disillusioned careerists who were perfectly aware of the emptiness of the communist slogans they made use of. A bureaucracy of this kind was immune to ideological shocks.<sup>53</sup>

'Socialism' attempted to maintain itself in Poland by reference to the threat of German revanchism. It tried to ground itself by transferring civil organisation to central control and permission, by rubbing out whatever home-grown civil society survived the war and by silencing literature's capacity for pointing out the discrepancy between ideology and reality. The Party tried to replace civil society with the *biurokracja's* 'organs' of power, tame trades unions and 'front' organisations like Pax. The Party attempted to perpetuate itself by falling back on Soviet intervention, massive social engineering, and appeals to nationalism. But it could only succeed if it had at least a degree of cooperation from the populace. That is, it could only operate in the slim area where ideology was seen to be something that made sense in a Polish context: where political power and nationalism parted company any such legitimacy rapidly disappeared.

As Poland reconstructed itself after the war the 'ideology' of the Party emerged. That is, it was slowly revealed that the Party had a deep seated incapacity to deal with

the historically rooted cultural, economic and social aspects of power, and in particular with the problem of political legitimacy. The Party, in spite of its pseudo-ideological trumpeting about transforming Poland, was incapable of acknowledging this. There developed a condition of permanent crisis of legitimacy which was intimately related to the way that the 'socialists' had taken power and to the unacknowledged crimes that the Soviets had perpetrated against Poland in order to subdue it.

The post-war years (particularly after 1968) saw an increasing awareness that the *naród Polski* (Polish nation), the peasant farmers, the technocracy, the new bourgeoisie, the industrial proletariat and the writers had somehow failed to become active participants in their own political life, that they remained *obywatele* (citizens) in name only. *Spoleczność* and *społeczeństwo* (society) became key words for Poles who wished to think outside the Party, and they were words often set in opposition to *władze*, *sila*, *moc*, *mocarstwo* - words for power and the authority. Up to 1968 the intellectuals addressed their grievances to the Party and to the machinery of state, but after that date they came increasingly to search for ways of addressing society without resorting to Party permission or the machinery of state, and they encouraged an anti-state movement of independent, self-governing, self-help organisations with the clear intention of confining the state to the business of military protection, education, social security and the economy. After 1968, but only with any great success after 1976, there were the first stirrings of an effort to create a *społeczeństwo obywatelskie* (civil society) alongside, within and in opposition to the *państwo* (body politic, commonality, commonweal).

On the one side the Party lacked the intellectual skill to counter (and probably even consider) the idea that the *socrealizm* line had come to nothing, and still the Party would not grant basic freedoms. On the other side, Hłasko, the writer/jester on whom Kisielewski and others pinned their hopes, failed to produce anything that matched up to his earlier promise and talent. After editing *Po Prostu* from 1954 Hłasko published his first collection of short stories in 1956 and was awarded the Polish Publishers' prize. His next two books were turned down by the censors, but were accepted by *Kultura* (Paris). Hłasko went abroad in 1959, stayed away from Poland when he was accused of slandering the state, emigrated to Israel, moved to the USA, then West

Germany and, after years of difficulty in which he wrote little, took an overdose of sleeping tablets in 1969.

Although the annual writers' congresses of 1956-59 were awaited eagerly by the reading public, by 1960 they had become tedious, stagnant affairs. It was suspected that the sale of literary periodicals and books had begun to drop steadily; though statistics of book production were published, figures for book sales were another matter: writers of originality and worth took less and less part in public life, feeling they had to put distance between themselves and the men of power. Censorship allowed fewer and fewer original and challenging works through, and it seemed many writers had simply fallen silent. The cultural 'freeze' which followed the 'thaw' developed steadily from 1956 right up to the end of Gomułka's days. The political and cultural indifference of the working class meant that writers stood alone in their loyal opposition to Party power: in the rain of legal persecution and official hooliganism their sceptical and creative socialist response to Marxist philosophy drowned. The impulsive *rewizjonizm* of 1956 simply rotted away.<sup>54</sup>

The years 1956-70 extended and developed the post-war 'rubble literature' in the search for a new way forward. Poland rediscovered European literature, world literature, and links with modernist literary experiment, but in political life this was a period of improvisation, of strategy without intellectual underpinnings, without ideological direction. This was a period of shifting emphasis from internal self-censorship to institutional censorship. As the student leader Karpíński put it, government policy towards intellectuals shifted from the effort of influencing them towards attempts to compromise potential leaders of independent thought and opinion, even though the Party could gain no direct benefit from this. The *inteligencja*, who had started the Gomułka years with a programme that consisted of nothing more than 'simple trust and hope', were moving steadily towards active opposition.<sup>55</sup> The Party managed to keep workers and intellectuals out of step, while inexperienced, ill-educated and un-subtle leaders, backed by Moscow, produced little or nothing of ideological moment, except to elevate 'the leading role of the Party' to a magic formula that would somehow (anyhow) guarantee success. To ignore the fact that the



Party tacked and veered to maintain the fiction of its 'leading role' was to expect 32,605,000 people not to notice the emperor's new suit.

## NOTES

- 1 B.Bierut, 'Sprawozdanie KC na II zjazd PZPR', *Trybuna Ludu*, 12 March 1954, p.1-3.
- 2 *Nowa Kultura*, Warsaw, no.17, 1954, pp.3-4. On the verse of *socrealizm* see: D.Pirie, 'Engineering the People's Dreams: An Assessment of Socialist Realist Poetry in Poland 1949-55', in: A.Czerniawski (ed.), *The Mature Laurel: Essays on Modern Polish Poetry*, Seren/Dufour, Bridgend, 1991, pp.135-159. *Socrealizm*, though it was never a very stimulating or flexible literary form, need not necessarily have been such a deadly dull affair: for the Austrian socialist Fischer socialist realism could equally well embrace Kafka, Mayakowski, O'Casey, Brecht and Sholokhov. What was important was the fundamental attitude, the adoption of the socialist historical view of the working class and the acceptance of socialist society in all its contradictions. Beyond this, so long as artists attempted to show transitions to socialism in all their 'contradictory concreteness' he would have left the search for style and content to the artists. Stalinist bureaucratism made it an extremely limited and limiting art form. E.Fischer, *The Necessity of Art: A Marxist Approach*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1978, pp.107-115. Also, on the possible role that left-literature and art might have taken see: J.Berger, *Art and Revolution: Ernst Neizvestny and the Role of the Artist in the USSR*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1969, and: J.Berger, *The Success and Failure of Picasso*, Writers & Readers, London, 1980, p.89.
- 3 J.Karpiński, *Countdown*, Karz-Kohl, New York, 1982, p.41.
- 4 L.Kołąkowski, 'Światopogląd i krytyka', *Nowa Kultura*, 16 January 1955.
- 5 A.Ważyk, *Poemat dla dorosłych i inne wiersze*, Czytelnik, Warsaw, 1956, p.5. 'Poem for Adults' in: A.Gillon & L.Krzyżanowski (eds.), *Introduction to Modern Polish Literature*, Rapp & Whiting, London, 1968, pp.460-463. Ważyk's visit to Nowa Huta (literally, New Factory) was meant to be a pilgrimage to a special place in the iconography of Polish 'socialism'. It is said that the Party decided to build this first ever 'socialist city', centred on the massive steelworks, as a way of watering down neighbouring Kraków's un-repentant bourgeois character. There was no sound economic rationalisation for the venture: coal had to come from mines in Silesia, and iron ore had to be hauled over 1,000 miles from the USSR. The decision to build Nowa Huta was taken by the Polish government on 21 February 1949 and the foundations of the Huta Lenina steelworks were laid on 26 April 1950, by which time there were already 60 brigades of the *Służby Polsce* youth organisation at work: this un-characteristic dynamism was to mark the growth of the city as a whole. By 1955, when the city had already swallowed up several villages there were over 70,000 inhabitants and 30,000 construction workers living on estates of up to 20,000 residents. By 1983 there were 219,680 residents. Nowa Huta boasted the Europe's largest statue of Lenin and the city was

designed as a visual hymn to Labour. The main streets were the road to Kraków, a street of housing estates and flat blocks, and the massive boulevard (Aleja Lenina) leading to the steel mill. In line with the idea that there would be only one class under 'socialism', there was no shopping centre, no proletarian suburb and no middle class suburb. In line with the view that the new life would be collective it was initially planned that each flat would have a loudspeaker in it, that each district would have its own day-care centres and nurseries, a large canteen and a central kitchen. There was also a theatre, a hospital, an art gallery, and a Klub MPiK. No car parks were provided because it was believed that cycle paths would be of more use to the new workers. The assimilation of large numbers of poorly educated agricultural workers into city life and to industrial demands was always problematic. By the early 1970s, when I first visited the new city, brawls, alcoholism, prostitution, theft and gang warfare in the city were legendary. The design of the Huta Lenina Steel works (named on 21 January 1954) had been made available to Poland by the USSR in an agreement dated 1948: it is one of the largest steel mills in Europe and became operational on 22 July 1954. By the mid-1960s the mill was producing over 6 million tons of steel per year - one third of Poland's total steel output. What no-one knew at the time was that the design of the mill had been purchased by the Russians from the USA at the turn of the century. It was outdated even then, would only produce low grade steel and would spew a lethal fume of toxins onto the surrounding countryside for years to come causing massive health problems in nearby Kraków and literally eating away the Renaissance architecture. By 1990 bronchial complaints in the Kraków-Nowa Huta area were 30 per cent higher, and sick leave 40 per cent higher than in the rest of Poland. In 1991 the Kraków Ecological Society ran a special tour of Nowa Huta and invited tourists to 'Come and see an ecological disaster while it happens'. J.Lewiński, 'Nowa Huta Soul's Project', in: A.Michajłow & W.Pačławski (eds.), *Literary Galicia From Post-War to Post-Modern*, Oficyna Literacka, Kraków, 1991, pp.59-64; 'Metallurgy', *Facts About Poland*, Ref.PF.VIII.3-1, Interpress, Warsaw, 1980; L.Ludwikowski, *A Guide to Kraków and Environs*, SiT, Warsaw, 1979; J.Adamczewski, *Kraków od A do Z*, KAW, Kraków, 1986.

- 6 K-62, 'I, the Censor', in: A.Brumberg (ed.), *Poland: Genesis of a Revolution*, Viking, New York, 1983, p.260.
- 7 J.Kott, 'Mitologia i prawda', *Przegląd Kulturalny*, April 1-7, 1956. Although the difference between the vague ideological recommendations and exhortations of the third ZZLP Congress of 1947 and the hard-headed assault of the Fourth ZLP Congress in 1949 had been noted (Roman Szydlowski 'Nowe drogi polskiej literatury', *Trybuna Ludu*, 29 January 1949), critical comment on the changes to ZLP and the adoption of *socrealizm* could not emerge in print until the thaw was under way. Then a great number of writers made their feelings on Party interference clear: Artur Sandauer (*Nowa Kultura*, no.35, March 1956), Julian Przyboś, (*Nowa Kultura*, no.36, April 1956; *Życie Literackie*, 2 May 1954) and Adam Wazyk, (*Nowa Kultura*, no.42, October 1956), J.Stanisławski, *Po Prostu*, 25 March 1956. Jan Błński pointed out that the result of imposed Party schematism was that no new poets made their debut with a first volume of verse in the years 1950-54 (a notion that was confirmed by Siciński's research in the mid-

1960s), and that in the years 1949-55 Polish publishers had flooded the poetry market with appalling *socrealizm* pseudo-verse ('Za pięć dwunasta, I-III', *Życie Literackie*, 17 April 1955; *Życie Literackie*, 24 April 1955; *Życie Literackie*, 1 May 1955). Predictably Kruczkowski (*Twórczość*, no.7, July 1954, and *Życie Literackie*, 13 June 1954) and Putrament (*Życie Literackie*, 19 June 1955) saw these things in a more favourable light.

- 8 C.Miłosz, *History of Polish Literature*, University of California, Berkeley, 1983, p.457.
- 9 Z.Herbert, 'Interview with Jacek Trznadel', *Partisan Review*, vol.LIV, no.4, 1987, p.568. In spite of the fact that two books of his poetry were published during the thaw, Zbigniew Herbert can have had few illusions. His second volume *Hermes, pies i gwiazda*, Czytelnik, Warsaw, 1957, included the poem 'Węgrom' (On Hungary) a reference to the Hungarian uprising. The censor intervened to change the title to 'Stoimy na granicy' (We are standing at the border) and to delete the conspicuously placed date of the poem - 1956. The poems 'What I saw' and 'From the Top of the Stairs', both dated 1956 and referring specifically to the political events and personalities of that year, were deleted from the volume, though both poems had previously appeared in literary journals. These poems did not appear in either *Wiersze zebrane*, Czytelnik, Warsaw, 1971, or *Poezje wybrane*, LSW, Warsaw, 1970, but had to wait for first publication abroad. See: Z.Herbert, *Selected Poems*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977, and Z.Herbert, *Report From The Besieged City And Other Poems*, Ecco, New York, 1985.
- 10 Table 45, 'Książki według typów', *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach XXXIII: 1987*, Biblioteka Narodowa-Institut Bibliograficzny, Warsaw, 1989; H.Stehle, *The Independent Satellite*, Pall Mall, London, 1965, p.198.
- 11 B.Klimaszewski, *An Outline History of Polish Culture*, Interpress, Warsaw, 1984, p.309.
- 12 T.Borowski, *Wybór opowiadań*, PIW, Warsaw, 1959; T.Borowski, *This Way For Gas Ladies and Gentlemen Please*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976.
- 13 L.Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol.III, OUP, London, p.454.
- 14 L.Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol.III, pp.457-8.
- 15 A.Słonimski, 'Hamletyzm' from: *Okno bez krat* (1935) in: A.Słonimski, *Poezje zebrane*, PIW, Warsaw, 1964, p.308.
- 16 H.Stehle, *The Independent Satellite*, Pall Mall, London, 1965, p.198.
- 17 Z.Herbert, 'Drawer', (from: *Studium przedmiotu*, Czytelnik, Warsaw, 1961) in: *Selected Poems*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968, p.89.
- 18 T.Różewicz, 'A Meeting' (from: *Formy*, Czytelnik, 1958), *Conversations with the Prince and Other Poems*, Anvil, London, 1982, p.71.
- 19 J.L.Curry, *The Black Book of Polish Censorship*, Vintage, New York, 1984, pp.279-317.
- 20 J.J.Lipski, *KOR*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1985, p.19.
- 21 L.Blit, *The Eastern Pretender*, Hutchinson, London, 1965, p.190. It has been the fashion to judge Piasecki harshly for his connection with the fascist movement and then with the NKVD, and for his supposed willingness to undermine the Catholic church by recruiting to it priests and others who were prepared to collaborate with

'socialism'. Recently a different view of Piasecki has begun to emerge. 'He had a messianic idea. The Popes, and therefore the world, believed that Christianity and communism could not be reconciled. Since communism was the best system for just shares in the wealth of the State, Christians must come to see the moral value in the communist structure of society. And communists must come to see how Christianity could help them to their better goals. Most communist countries rejected God officially; most Christian countries rejected communism. Poland was a country both Catholic and communist. It must become the model for the world and the Church. Piasecki thought that he opposed an open-minded Catholicism to an obscurantist Catholicism. He called for a Church where the laity had rights, instead of a clericised Church. He called for a Church of truth instead of a Church of superstition and illiteracy; a Church of the common liturgy instead of a Church with its centre in special cults. He pleaded that even atheists are in a measure worshippers of God by their work for a better society. He wrote a book along these lines, *Essential Problems*. The Holy Office condemned it.' Owen Chadwick, *The Christian Church in the Cold War*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1992, p.42.

- 22 T.Różewicz, *The Witnesses and Other Plays* ('Świadkowie czyli nasza mała stabilizacja', *Dialog*, No.5, 1962), Calder & Boyars, London, 1970.
- 23 I.Deutscher, 'The Polish and Hungarian Revolts' (15 November 1956), in: I. Deutscher, *Russia, China, and the West 1953-66*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970, p.87.
- 24 S.Kisielewski, 'What is Socialist Literature?' (*Tygodnik Powszechny*, 7 February 1969), in: M.Kuncewicz (ed.), *The Modern Polish Mind*, Secker & Warburg, London, 1963, pp.366-373.
- 25 'When he wrote *Cemeteries* he shifted to the attitude of 'priest' as he described things he did not know (the internal life of high party ranks) using obsolete Orwellian schematism. Thus, we lost a writer, and what's more, the jester-type writer we need so much. Writing 'for the West' he chose schematism - and schematism, regardless of its brand, destroys a writer.' S.Kisielewski, 'What is Socialist Literature?' (*Tygodnik Powszechny*, 7 February 1960), in: M.Kuncewicz (ed.), *The Modern Polish Mind*, 1963, pp.366-73.
- 26 T.Konwicki in: N.Ascherson, *The Struggles for Poland*, (illustrated US edition) Random House, New York, 1987, p.168. J.Andrzejewski, *Ciemności kryją ziemię* (Darkness Covers the Earth, *The Inquisitors*), PIW, Warsaw, 1957. Andrzejewski's increasingly bitter disagreement with the authorities can be charted in his access to an 'official' reading public. Like Lem and Konwicki he found it harder to get his work accepted by the official publishing houses after 1976.
- 27 J.Andrzejewski, *Bramy raju*, (The Gates of Paradise) PIW, Warsaw, 1967.
- 28 A.Chmielewska, 'The Campaign' (*Zapis*, no.4, 1977), in: A.Brumberg (ed.), *Poland: Genesis of a Revolution*, Vintage, New York, 1983, pp.227-236.
- 29 For Gomułka left-deviationism included sectarianism, dogmatism, and adventurism; he identified these as 'leftism' (immature actions by the exploited); opportunism and revisionism on the other hand were linked with 'rightism') that is with those who exploit. For Gomułka 'leftism' was less of a problem than revisionism. W.Gomułka, *O aktualnych problemach ideologicznej pracy partii*, WiN, Warsaw, 1963, p.53; M.Waller, *The Language of Communism*, Bodley

Head, London, 1972, pp.64-5.

- 30 A.Szczypiorski, *The Polish Ordeal*, Croom Helm, London, 1982, p.72.
- 31 Few have anything good to say about Jerzy Putrament: Miłosz has described him as 'less than first rate'. Konwicki simply calls Putrament 'a Chekist': T.Konwicki, *Moonrise, Moonset*, Faber & Faber, London, 1987, p.338. For Szczepański, he fell from favour in 1950. Saying he might be able to help Szczepański, who had been suffering from the attentions of the censor for some time, Putrament solicited a manuscript of short stories. The manuscript was eventually rejected and returned to the Szczepański, but several stories went missing - the publishing house claimed they had returned everything Putrament had given them. Szczepański was later summoned to an interview with the *milicja* about these stories, which had mysteriously turned up in their possession. J.J.Szczepański, *Kadencja*, Znak, Kraków, 1989, pp.9-11.
- 32 1956-60: 6,217 titles, of which 896 were literature, poetry or criticism; 1961-65: 7,605 titles of which 831 titles were literature, poetry or criticism. In the same period there was a drop in the size of editions: in 1951-55, 92,466 titles were produced, with 14,411 of these as literature; by 1961-65 the total had fallen to 83,087 with 12,704 as literature - that is a drop in the size of the average edition from 18,200 to 15,300 in the years 1956-70. At the same time there was also a reduction in the size of books from an average of 160 pages to 121. Table 45, 'Książki według typów', *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach XXXIII: 1987*, Biblioteka Narodowa-Institut Bibliograficzny, Warsaw, 1989. For a much more optimistic set of figures see: *Rocznik statystyczny 1966*, GUS, Warsaw, 1966.
- 33 'The limited allotment of paper for printing books and periodicals, as well as severe press censorship is creating a situation that threatens the development of national culture. The signatories below, while recognising the existence of public opinion, of the right to criticism, of free discussions and of honest information as indispensable elements of progress, and motivated by civic concern, call for a change in Polish cultural policies in the spirit of rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the Polish state and in harmony with the welfare of nations'. J.Karpiński, *Countdown*, Karz-Cohl, New York, 1982, p.106. Several of those who signed Kliszko's letter of protest later recanted.
- 34 P.Raina, *Political Opposition in Poland: 1954-77*, Poets and Painters Press, London, 1978, pp.80-1.
- 35 J.Kuron & K.Modzelewski, *Open Letter to the Party*, International Socialism, London, nd., pp.47, 50-1. Their emphasis.
- 36 P.Raina, *Political Opposition in Poland: 1954-77*, 1978, pp.86-7.
- 37 At the same time other sources of information were disconnected: D.S.Mason in a survey of Polish sociological research wrote: 'The renaissance of public opinion research began to fade in the early 1960s, just as Gomulka's reform program did. The Polish October had opened up a two way flow of information between the population and the leadership, and public opinion research was one means to convey information from below. As the political system increasingly returned to its authoritarian pattern, the upward flow of information was cut off, and public opinion research became less useful.' D.S.Mason, *Public Opinion and Political Change in Poland: 1980-1982*, CUP, Cambridge, 1985, p.14. Other evidence

could be mustered for stagnation. J.R.Fizman has described the situation of literature in education at this period. In his analysis of material presented to the examinations commissions of 1966, he noted that in general students avoided questions where matters of taste or discrimination were involved, avoided ideological discussion, theoretical or speculative questions, avoided questions that revealed personal taste or initiative in private reading. They favoured highly particular questions that would enable them to repeat notes they had previously learned by rote. There were three basic examination *matura* subjects, repeated in slightly different form across the country: a) Show that the PRL continued the traditions of the previous 1,000 years of Polish history; b) Discuss the values that made Henryk Sienkiewicz important to Poles; c) Consider contemporary novels and say why they could be considered outstanding. By far the most popular examination choice was Sienkiewicz: he was the most frequently cited author in other questions too. The second most popular question related to the 1,000 years of Polish culture. Fizman points out that students were presented with a range of literary material in class, but only in anthologies in which the work of Iwaszkiewicz, Jastruń, Przyboś, Różewicz, Putrament, Czesko, Brandys, Breza and Słonimski appeared almost at random, with little background information, no explanation or thread of reason apparent in the selection. Although there had been several attempts to revise and review the structure of Polish literature teaching up to 1966, apart from questions relating directly to the PRL there had been little attempt to alter the content of the syllabus or break the pattern established in the 1930s, and only slightly modified by the 'socialists'. Although most teachers recognised this could not continue indefinitely, that changes had to be made and carried through, the inertia of the system, the sheer difficulty of re-training tired, underpaid, demoralised teachers made this unlikely. The educational system (like the political system) inhibited substantive reform, promoted learning 'parrot fashion', stifled honest personal response to literature, did nothing to help students develop their own cognitive faculties and failed to integrate or explain the rationale behind the literature of the post-war period. It perpetuated the values of the pre-war period without questioning them and paid lip service to the outward forms of the present. The Party may have made grand noises about the creation of 'socialist culture', but in practice it had no idea how to go about it. J.R.Fizman, *Revolution and Tradition in People's Poland: Education and Socialization*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1972, pp.274-285.

- 38 Although the play occupies a special place in Polish culture, many claim it is unstageable because its length, style and allusiveness make it unacceptable to modern audiences. The full work is not available in English: B.Taborski, *Polish Plays in English Translations: A Bibliography*, Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America Inc., New York, 1968. Part III of *Dziady*, the most important section, can be found in: H.B.Segal (ed.), *Polish Romantic Drama*, Cornell University Press, London, 1977.
- 39 P.Raina, *Political Opposition in Poland: 1954-77*, pp.120-21.
- 40 *Ibid.*, pp.121-2. The allusion in Kołakowski's speech is to Kott's influential lectures on Shakespeare. They tell by implication more about the feverish literary life of Warsaw in these years than they do about Shakespeare. An account of the

Warsaw ZLP meeting can be found in: J.Karpiński, *Count-Down: The Polish Upheavals of 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976, 1980...*, Karz-Kohl, New York, 1982, p.110-116. This volume is a collection of his writings covering the period up to 1976, originally published by the Instytut Literacki, Paris. Karpiński took part in the events of 1968 as a student leader and was imprisoned 1968-1971. The American writer W.Woods, who was present at the Warsaw ZLP meeting, asked how it was possible for 124 writers to vote on the government side and support the banning. He was told: 'You must first ask yourself who they were. Anybody who has ever written a government handout is a member of the union.' W.Woods, *Poland: Phoenix in the East*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972, p.169. It is possible that about twenty percent of ZLP were Party members. Szczepański was quick to point out that in 1980 as newly elected president of ZLP he knew which of his officers were members of the Party: of the 38 members and substitutes of the Zarząd Główny (General Management Board) six individuals were identified as PZPR: Edward Balcerzan, Tadeusz Drewnowski, Marian Grześczak, Stanisław Misakowski, Tadeusz Nowak, Jan Pieszcachowicz. J.J.Szczepański, *Kadencja, Znak*, Kraków, 1989, pp.15, 53.

- 41 J.Karpiński, *Count-Down*, 1982, p.151. The Polish government's ban on emigration was lifted for Jews in 1957. After that anyone who could prove they were Jewish and who wished to emigrate to Israel was automatically successful in gaining an exit permit. The bulk of Poland's surviving Jewish population left at this time either for Israel or the USA: those that remained were mainly either members of the Party élite or successful members of the artistic and literary community. A personal account of the anti-Jewish campaigns of the late 1950s can be found in: E.Hoffman, *Lost in Translation: Life in a New Language*, Minerva, London, 1989; and of 1968 in: J.Bauman, *A Dream of Belonging: My Years in Postwar Poland*, Virago, London, 1988.
- 42 P.Raina, *Political Opposition in Poland: 1954-77*, pp.164-5.
- 43 A.Michnik, *Letters from Prison*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1985, p.140.
- 44 Z.Herbert, 'Interview with Jacek Trznadel', *Partisan Review*, vol.LIV, no.4, pp.570-1. Also: J.Rupnik, *The Other Europe*, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, 1989, p.217. Michnik, one of the younger victims of 1968, connected this outburst of anti-Semitism with pre-war Polish fascism: 'To this day no one has written a monograph on the March events. I would advise whoever writes one in the future to consider this question: Which traditions of Polish political culture were reborn at that time? An analysis of the press, which in certain respects enjoyed more freedom then than at any other time, might be instructive. After all, even in the immediate aftermath of the breakthrough of October 1956, the censorship office confiscated articles that were openly anti-Semitic. Systemic crises always uncover real social consciousness. The crisis of 1956 revealed the outlines of Polish democratic thought. The crisis of 1968 highlighted those aspects of Polish thought which are backward, stupid, chauvinistic, and xenophobic. Władysław Bienkowski aptly dubbed it the obscurantist revolution.' A.Michnik, 'Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors', *Letters From Prison and Other Essays*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1985, p.203.

- 45 J.Staniszkis, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1984, provides abundant evidence of Gomułka's and Gierek's success in driving a wedge between the intellectuals and the workers.
- 46 J.Andrzejewski, *Apelacja*, (The Appeal) Instytut Literacki, Paris 1968.
- 47 S.Zółkiewski, 'Is 'Socialist Literature' Enough?' (*Nowa Kultura*, 17 January 1960), in: M.Kuncewicz (ed.), *The Modern Polish Mind*, 1963, p.376.
- 48 S.Stomma (from: *Mysli o politycei kulturze*, WL, Krakow, 1960), in: M.Kuncewicz (ed.), *The Modern Polish Mind*, p.350.
- 49 A.Kijowski, 'Travel by Air' (from: A.Kijowski, *Miniatury krytyczne*, WiN, Warsaw, 1961), in: M.Kuncewicz (ed.), *The Modern Polish Mind*, pp.363-5.
- 50 L.Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol.3, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987, pp.456-74.
- 51 'Intellectuals and the Communist Movement', in: L.Kołakowski, *Marxism and Beyond: On Historical Understanding and Individual Responsibility*, Pall Mall, London, 1969, pp.178-9.
- 52 L.Kołakowski, 'Marxism and Human Rights', *Modernity on Endless Trial*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1990, pp.207-8.
- 53 L.Kołakowski, *The Main Currents of Marxism*, vol.3, OUP, London, 1987, pp.464-65. E.P.Thompson, a western ally of the Polish 'revisionists', challenged Kołakowski's assumptions in an open letter: E.P.Thompson, 'An Open Letter to Leszek Kołakowski' (1973), *The Poverty of Theory & Other Essays*, Merlin, London, 1980, pp.92-192.
- 54 H.Stehle, *The Independent Satellite: Society and Politics in Poland since 1945*, Pall Mall, London, 1965, p.53. S.Kisielewski, 'What is Socialist Literature?' (*Tygodnik Powszechny*, 7 February 1969), in: M.Kuncewicz (ed.), *The Modern Polish Mind*, pp.366-373. L.Kołakowski, 'The Priest and the Jester: Reflections on the Theological Heritage in Contemporary Thought' (*Twórczość*, no.10, 1959), in: M.Kuncewicz (ed.), *The Modern Polish Mind*, pp.301-326.
- 55 J.Karpiński, *Count-Down*, 1982, p.112.



## FIVE

### STANISŁAW LEM: *SOLARIS*

The existing criteria of value have been falsified and distorted. The force brought to bear against consciousness must, sooner or later, develop into physical force. To take note of this and to give warning is the role of literature.

Stanisław Barańczak, a censored passage from the Catholic journal *Więź*, quoted in the GUKPPiW internal journal *Bulletin on Themes of Materials Censored*, Second Quarter, 1974.

In the former east-bloc science fiction could sometimes be seen as a form of dissidence, as an oblique way of considering important social and political themes, of side-stepping the censor in the never-ending battle to get un-policed ideas out of the writer's head and into the heads of a reading public. This is directly related to the way the Party attempted to manipulate society and the cultural and political media via the office of the censor. Post-war writers of east-central Europe have been fascinated by the way their societies have created and maintained themselves as closed information systems which control ideas. However, in so far as this idea and theme reveals ways in which eastern-bloc societies worked, writers were rarely allowed to discuss it openly. Lem repeatedly presents human society as a complex mechanism for transmitting information and for furthering a common sense of identity through particular kinds of language, ideas, plots and characters. Lem's writings are the product of the specific political and social tensions that developed after the 'thaw' of 1956 and the collapse of Party efforts to promote *socrealizm*. (For details of Lem's publishing history see appendix four.) Before looking at Lem's work in detail it is best to set his novel *Solaris* (1961) in that specific literary-political context.

Lem, perhaps wisely, has said little in public or in print that allows any direct

connection of his work to political life in Poland: he has not taken any high profile action to protest at Party actions, has never courted censorship or confrontation and consequently has never been banned.<sup>1</sup> Also, Lem has been able to produce 'serious' works of science fiction on his chosen themes precisely because he works in a medium that is considered to be an intellectual backwater of little or no serious thought, a trash medium where nothing lasts and where readers who have a taste for science fiction are unlikely to be those who will fathom social messages, political commentary, or moral significance. Although writers knew in detail how their work was related to political life and knew that it was impossible to avoid this connection, it was the writer who appeared to be a-political who was really the clever political writer - they knew exactly what to touch and what to avoid, what to appear to touch and appear to avoid. They were also the writers whose work was likely to survive and transcend their immediate context both in time and geography to appeal to a wider and not necessarily Polish readership.<sup>2</sup>

The jump from social and political problems to science fiction may seem huge, but virtually all of Lem's novels may be read as parables about what happens to society and to people when channels of communication are blocked, about the difficulty of making a revolutionary society or fundamentally changing human nature by social and political engineering on the slender basis of the knowledge of humanity that we have at our disposal. As such his novels are profoundly humanistic, a coded critique of the kind of societies that developed under Stalin and a plea for a socialism of gradual change and a human face.

The Czech novelist Milan Kundera has described east-central Europe as a laboratory where history made a strange experiment with humanity.<sup>3</sup> The defeat of Germany in 1918 brought forth a magnificent flowering of art and thought from among the 'smaller nations'. It was here that some of the most adventurous and far-reaching developments in modern fiction took place. Writers revealed what had been unleashed on the world in both personal and national terms by probing the collapse of the old empires and the rise of the new. They also anticipated many of the developments of the post-war world. East-central European literature has a rich tradition of utopian and absurdist writing developed in reaction to censorship, the bureaucratic procedures and

administration of the Austro-Hungarian, Prussian and Russian empires. Much east-central European literature is marked by strong anti-authoritarian elements, grotesque appreciation of human contradictions, very perceptive reactions to power structures and a keen appreciation of the social, personal and familial structures that underlie government.

East-central Europe up to the start of World War Two was the haunt of artists and writers who, freed from a narrow concern for 'national survival', recorded the process of transition from agricultural folk cultures to modern industrial nation-states, and they recorded it in all its personal ambiguities. This was where Bartók, Kodály and Janáček transformed folk music into experimental work; where Freud explored dreams and the unconscious, and writers such as Musil, Broch and Roth, Kafka, Schulz, Witkiewicz, the brothers Capek, Karinthy, Nesvadba and Hasek explored not only the 'outer limits' but the inner limits of humanity and human identity. They all wrote of the effects of modern social structures and political systems on the inner life of the individual - the borderlands of perception, of consciousness and its links with citizenship. They pursued relentlessly those elements that go to make up personal, public and political decisions. East-central Europe experienced the whole range of twentieth century possibilities within a very short time-span. The nations of east-central Europe saw the growth and break up of the old European empires, the development and impact of large-scale industry and the effects of increasingly centralised and often military governments upon their daily life. They experienced these developments first as distant provinces of the old empires, and then through the experience of building small, would-be democratic nations from the ruins of those empires. All experienced the totalitarian regimes first of Hitler and then of Stalin.

Without doubt Lem is a product of this intense history and literary tradition. Lem was born in the Polish-Ukrainian town of Lwów on 12 September 1921. Both his parents were doctors of very distant Jewish ancestry. His father had been a physician in the Austro-Hungarian army and had been captured by the Russians at the fall of the Przemyśl fortress in 1915. As an officer he was condemned to execution by firing squad, but was saved when a Jewish barber from Lemberg intervened on his behalf. Lem's father went on to become a successful (and therefore rather wealthy)

laryngologist in Lwów. As an only child Lem did not lack for toys and had a French governess. He finished his schooling at the Karol Szajnochas Gymnazjum in 1939, and was rumoured to have an IQ of 180 - 'the most intelligent child in southern Poland'. He started to study at the Lwów Institute of Medicine, but between 1939-1941 he was prevented from pursuing his studies by the Russian invasion of Poland and then, from 1941-44 by the German invasion of Russia. Since under the Nazis Poles were forbidden any kind of further education Lem worked with false Polish papers as a garage mechanic. He scavenged ammunition from the local German Luftwaffe arms dump, and on one occasion transported a gun for the resistance under the noses of the occupation forces. Inevitably, in December 1942, his false papers were 'blown' and he was forced to leave his job with a German car repair firm, hide the pilfered ammunition under the stairs in the garage and go into hiding while he obtained new papers. Hiding in the Lwów Botanical Garden he could hear the Nazis throwing grenades into the vaults of the Jewish Lyczaków cemetery as the last of the survivors from the Lwów ghetto were liquidated.

In 1944 Lwów was 'liberated' by the Red Army and Lem renewed his studies at the Lwów Institute of Medicine. However, in 1945 Lwów, along with the whole of eastern Poland, passed under Russian control. The following year Lem and millions of other Poles moved westwards to the new Polish People's Republic, leaving behind them their homes and most of their possessions. The Lem family lived in a single room in Kraków, and Lem senior now aged 71 was obliged to start work again. In 1946 Lem resumed his studies, this time at Kraków's Jagiellonian University. Eventually he finished his study of medicine in 1948, but he did so without taking his final diploma - the reason being that once qualified he would have been drafted for an extended period into the army medical corps. In 1947 he became a junior research assistant at the Kraków Conservatorium Naukoznawcze, where he made abstracts of scientific literature, many on the subject of cybernetics, for the journal *Życie Nauki*.

Lem's experiences of pre-war 'capitalist' Poland, of the Nazi and Soviet occupations and the postwar years in Poland made him profoundly aware of the fragility of all human systems, and that under pressure human behaviour was impossible to predict - two observations to which he was to return again and again.

Lem began writing in the late 1940s, short stories for a weekly crime magazine, as a way of supplementing his father's meagre earnings. His early work was part of the very rigid Stalinist literary bureaucratic world. His poems appeared in Katowice weekly newspapers and also in the Catholic journal *Tygodnik Powszechny*. His first published novel, *Człowiek z Marsa* (Man from Mars) appeared in 1946; *Astronauci* (Astronauts) appeared in 1951; there followed a volume of short stories *Sesame*, and another novel *Obłok Magellana* - (Cloud of Magellan, 1955): these works conformed fairly closely to the conventional science fiction of the day in that they were largely optimistic, had faith in technological innovation, the powers of human ingenuity and trusted in the idea of utopian worlds ruled by benign scientists and experts. His first 'serious' work, a trilogy entitled *Czas Nieutracony* (Time Not Lost, which includes the novel *Hospital of the Transfiguration*) though it was finished in 1948 (Lem's last student year), conformed more or less to the prevailing *socrealizm* mode, but apart from the first volume was clearly an artistic failure and was not published until 1956. This was virtually the end of Lem's flirtation with *socrealizm*.

Lem was expelled from the ZLP in 1951 for failing to produce enough to qualify him as a professional writer, yet by 1955 his novels and short stories had aroused sufficient interest for the city of Kraków to award him its Golden Order of Merit. Lem regards the period leading up to 1956 as one of mild brainwashing and has dubbed his early works as 'devoid of any value'. Certainly after 1956 although elements of detailed realism were incorporated in Lem's work, his novels and stories diverged ever more rapidly from *socrealizm*. While Lem was popular with science fiction enthusiasts perhaps the first book to make a wider impression was *Eden*, published in 1959, a tale of exploration on a distant planet in which the outlines of his interest in human capacity for empathy with alien beings and ability to understand alien patterns of thought and social structure were already in evidence, as was his underlying concern with human capacity for understanding itself. Increasingly though, Lem was concerned with the discrepancy between technology and human ability to put technology to good use. From the mid 1950s onwards Lem's novels portray power hungry characters whose inner life is a mystery even to themselves, whose motives are cruel, greedy and destructive, and for whom hostility to whatever is alien is perfectly natural.

Between 1956 and 1968 Lem was enormously productive - four plays, ten volumes of short stories, five Science fiction novels and an enormous book on cybernetic theory; according to the publicity material presented by André Deutsch, his British publisher, Lem's books have sold more than six million copies, have been translated into more than thirty languages and is particularly popular in what was the USSR. In 1973 Lem was awarded the Ministry of Art and Culture's Literary Prize (First Degree). Lem is co-founder of the Polish Astronautical Society and is a member of the Polish Cybernetics Association. He was elected an honorary member of the Science Fiction Writers of America, but his membership was revoked in 1975 after he was thought to have made rude remarks on western science fiction in a Frankfurt journal.

With *Solaris* (1961) Lem achieved considerable success. The book was translated into a number of languages but is probably best known as the basis for Andrei Tarkovski's film of the same name (1972). His books are translated into more than thirty languages, with over six million copies currently in circulation, two and a half million of these in the former Soviet Union. On average over thirty new translations of his work are made every year. With his books re-issued in a uniform Polish edition at the end of the 1980s, published in expensive trans-Atlantic hardback editions, and in a two-volume paperback selection by Penguin it is probably fair to say that Lem is one of the world's most successful science fiction writers.

Lem's situation was the same as that of any other eastern-bloc science fiction writer. Because science fiction was seen to be a minority interest it had a very low priority within eastern-bloc publishing programmes; whenever the inevitable print and paper shortages showed themselves science fiction publication is one of the first casualties. This inevitably meant that serious Polish writers favoured work in other more stable and rewarding areas. At first the authorities said they could publish only a limited edition because he was an unknown and because he was working in science fiction. Then, when his books sold out, received good reviews, came to the notice of foreign readers, the authorities worried that perhaps the public had read something into the work that they or the censor had missed. Reprints were not forthcoming until public interest had died down, or until the censor had checked that the work was perfectly safe, that there was, after all, nothing dangerous lurking between the lines.

It is often assumed that because Lem is now so well known in the eastern bloc his work was somehow encouraged by state patronage and official favour. Lem, however, feels that his work was tolerated by the authorities rather than encouraged. Almost all of his books appeared first in editions of less than 20,000. *Summa Technologiae*, for example, was first published in 1963 in an edition of 3,000 copies; even the highly successful *Bajki Robotów* (Robotic Fables, 1964) first appeared in an edition of 7,000 - small even by Polish standards. Only after 1978 did Lem achieve an edition of 100,000 on any of his books. The third edition of *Solaris*, (Kraków, 1976) consisted of only 30,000 copies, but by the third joint 1986 edition of *Solaris* and '*Niezwyciężony*' (Invincible, 1964) the print run rose grudgingly to 100,000. Lem believes that state 'patronage' held him back. In its absence he feels he might have achieved greater recognition without having to wait more than twenty years for his international reputation to establish him in Poland.<sup>4</sup>

Western readers encountering Lem for the first time sense the power of his writing, his massive literary and linguistic inventiveness, but find his playfulness, false naivety, grotesquery, his huge engagement with science fiction as a serious art form, and his willingness to use, undermine and break the conventions of western science fiction both daunting and unsettling - though in the terms of east European fiction these traits and manoeuvres are perfectly acceptable. That western readers know little about him or the context of his work tells us more of the power of Anglo-American science fiction than it does about Lem. Science fiction from the eastern bloc is a rather difficult topic, not because it was subject to censorship - every variety of writing had to contend with that, and if anything science fiction was rather loosely policed - but because the writing itself, like western science fiction, tends to be poor. Also since to western readers the literature lacks the hardware of conventional and dominant western science fiction models it seems at first glance to be a very poor, imitative genre. This 'poverty' is rather a failing in the conventional expectations of the science fiction reader brought up on western hardware-oriented science fiction. It is necessary to appreciate that for all his talent Lem comes from quite a different tradition of writing: Lem's work lacks hardware and spectacular space opera techniques, but it is, if anything, over-rich in 'ideas', characters and human situations.

The planners, publishers and markets of both east and west blocs are basically in agreement. In the west 'SF' is still a minority interest, regarded as a not altogether serious sub-species of literature akin to the detective story, romantic fiction and pornography, while in the Soviet Union, mainly as a result of the work of Lem and the Russian writers Boris and Arkady Strugatsky, it has only recently become fashionable to read *fantastyka*. In general both east and west regarded science fiction as a marginal and minority interest, a pulp industry. It was precisely this prejudice that gave Lem freedom to write almost anything he wanted. Lem's writings may be seen as pure fantasy, as 'escape literature,' out into orbit, away from the problems of political ideology or even from daily life. But also, and more productively, his work can be seen as a series of deeply subversive, telling critiques of the prevailing political system and the mentalities it created. *Solaris* is a powerful parable about the difficulty of breaking into or out of closed information systems, whether that system be a language, a country or a political set-up. Lem anticipated the almost obsessive development of this theme in dissident writings of the 1970s and 1980s. Dissidents like Kołakowski, Michnik, Bieńkowski, Kuroń, poets like Barańczak, and novelists like Brandys have all raised similar topics and have provoked the censor to take immediate action against them.

In this novel Lem pursues the idea of society as a 'closed information system' through the image of Solaris, a huge implacable yet apparently intelligent planet. The planet is covered by a mysterious sea which from time to time produces semi-solid 'mimoids' - forms of wondrous shape and size. There has been a long history of research into the planet, indeed the space station is equipped with a whole library of 'Solaristics', yet after years of investigation and the accumulation of a vast amount of detailed data about the planet, Solaris remains an enigma:

For a great many, particularly the young, the 'affair' gradually became a kind of touchstone for certain values: 'Basically', they said, 'there is greater matter at stake than the probing of Solaris civilisation. This is a game that turns on us alone, about the very borders of human cognition.'<sup>5</sup>



Kelvin, a psychologist, is sent to investigate events on a space station orbiting the planet. There he finds that in response to human attempts to 'jolt' the planet into acknowledging humanity by bombarding it with massive doses of lethal X-rays, the planet has retaliated by digging into the subconscious of its human explorers to reproduce their most shameful fantasies and memories. For as long as they hover over Solaris they are doomed to relive their most severe failures of sympathy and humanity, doomed to live with their presumption and inability to recognise those aspects of their own life and mentality that are deeply and limitingly human. They are haunted by Phi-creatures, apparitions manufactured out of their deepest unconscious by the planet. Thus a giant negress, naked except for a grass skirt, persecuted the scientist Gibarian until he committed suicide; something childish and powerful lives in Dr Sartorius' room, and Dr Snow is tormented by a Phi-creature which he manages to keep hidden from view. At one and the same time these things are newly identified and as old as humanity. The scientist Snow explains to Kelvin:

We moved out into the cosmos ready for anything. That means for loneliness, struggle, martyrdom and death. Modesty does not allow us to say so, but over a period of time, we think we're rather excellent. Meanwhile this isn't it at all, and our readiness becomes a pose. We don't want to capture the cosmos, we want only to extend Earth to cosmic frontiers. One planet might be desert like the Sahara, another frozen like the poles, or tropical like the jungles of Brazil. We are humanitarian and noble, we don't want to enslave other races; we want only to pass on our values and in exchange to penetrate their heritage. We have become followers of the Knights of the Holy Contact. This is an expensive falsehood. We are searching for nothing other than people. It is not necessary to have other worlds. It is necessary only to own a mirror. We do not know what to do with other worlds. One world is enough, but still we are stifling. It has to be the 'right thing', an idealised picture; it must be a globe, a civilisation higher than ours, but at the same time we hope again for a likeness that had developed like our own primitive past. At the same time on the other hand there is something unpleasant against which we defend ourselves, and we don't take with us from earth only the distilled virtue of humanity! We arrive here just like this, as we are in reality, and when we are shown that truth, that other part of us about which we would rather remain silent - we don't like it.<sup>6</sup>

Lem is mainly interested in the dilemma of investigator Kelvin. The planet very quickly digs into Kelvin's subconscious to find that he once had a girl friend called

Harey and that she, as a result of Kelvin's inattention and refusal to take her seriously, killed herself. Now the planet provides Kelvin with a new Harey, a woman who with her innocence and trust forces Kelvin to acknowledge the limits of his sympathy and his inabilities as a human being. Kelvin locks the new Harey in a space capsule and ejects her into space, but that night he wakes up to find her - or a new facsimile of her - beside him in bed again. She has no memory of the episode. The creation of Harey is linked with the planet's creation of huge, beautiful forms which crystallise into solid structures across the planet's surface, and which dissolve very slowly back into the sea. Sometimes these 'mimoids', which human research teams investigate and are large enough for planes to fly around inside, imitate huge human forms, but like the creation of Harey and the other Phi-Creatures, their exact purpose can only be guessed at.

Lem does not tell us if the planet is self-aware, or hint what communication with the planet might be like. He is much more interested in looking at the basis of the human characters and their drive into space. In many of Lem's novels the human protagonists begin to understand their new and alien environment only after all attempts at communication in human terms have failed: at this point they often experience a difficult aesthetic encounter. Kelvin feels that the planet has played despicable tricks with his unconscious, but while he will never understand or be able to communicate with it, he still has to come to terms with that entity, and experience it on its own terms rather than his. The only terms on which he can establish any contact with it are aesthetic. The beauty of the planet is a kind of truth, and truth resides in simply accepting that incomprehensible beauty. In the end the planet puts the humans in touch with a new perspective on their cosmic and personal failure, on their actual place in the universe.

*Solaris* forces the humans to face up to certain basic facts about themselves. What the planet has found in each of them is the core experience, the mainspring of their personality and presumption, their most shameful area of moral turpitude, the driving force that has led them to *Solaris*. The planet shows them that it is this which has driven them to conquer the stars, not a desire to meet or understand aliens. The planet, as far as we can know, has mastered its inner life, the humans have not. By its action it asks them to consider why it should respond and break its communication with itself

when Humanity is so lacking in self-knowledge and driven by piffling motives. The planet calls into question the human notion of 'I'. It asks them to consider that perhaps humans only mirror each other's preconceptions, run along in the tram tracks of human cognition, have not yet achieved the level of introspection and self-knowledge required to understand either the universe, the planet, or even themselves. Humanity is pouring its own inner chaos out into the universe.

At the close of the novel Harey realises that she is not human, that her presence is some kind of deception; if she is not fully human she has no place in Kelvin's life. The more human she becomes the less she accepts the mystery of her own existence. In secret Harey offers herself as a target for a new 'Matter Disintegrator' that Snow has developed. Kelvin wakes up one morning to find that Harey is not beside him. This time she does not come back. Kelvin recognises that Harey's appearance on the space station had been a 'cruel miracle', but it was one that gave him a second chance and her presence was something that he had come to accept and appreciate. Now she is taken away a second time he despairs, alternating between a desire to renew attempts at communication with the planet and a desire to annihilate it. He dreams that somehow the planet is 'visiting' him in his sleep. He takes a flight out over the sea and experiences for the first time the power and mystery of the huge, intelligent entity, its massive boredom with him, the banality of his own personality and desires:

Are we then to be a watch that measures the flow of time, now smashed, then repaired anew, whose mechanism the watchmaker sets in motion and which from its very first movement generates despair and love, knowing that it is the recapitulation of suffering, apparently profound, yet in sum, amounting only to a multiplicity of comic repetition. To repeat human existence, fine, but to repeat it like a drunk thrashing the same record, again and again throwing his newly minted coin into the depths of a capacious juke-box.<sup>7</sup>

All of Lem's protagonists are intellectually active, they want to solve the problems that beset them. Yet without exception they pay for their 'cognitive impulse', for their effort to recognise another way of processing, thinking, developing, being. They pay for the extension of their humanity with the painful recognition of their human limitations. In Kelvin's case, by repeating his earlier mistake of taking Harey's

presence for granted, he pays with the loss of the thing he has come to love. Jarzębski, Lem's most perceptive critic, points to a passage in *Pamiętnik znalezony w wannie* (Memoirs Found in a Bathtub, 1971):

What does it mean? Meaning. And so we enter the realm of semantics. One must tread carefully here! Consider: from earliest times man did little else but assign meanings - to the stones, the skulls, the sun, other people, and the meanings required that he create theories - life after death, totems, cults, all sorts of myths and legends, black bile and yellow bile, love of God and country, being and nothingness - and so it went, the meanings shaped and regulated human life, became its substance, its frame and foundation - but also a fatal limitation and a trap.<sup>8</sup>

Nature creates things; only humanity searches for and assigns meanings. To step outside that and accept the 'otherness' of another intelligence is perhaps to cease being entirely human.

Tarkovski's film version of the book displeased Lem. After seeing the shooting script he announced himself unpleasantly surprised at the long prologue set on earth, the undue importance given to Kelvin's mother - a figure who came to symbolise Motherland, ideas of home and Mother Earth and which he felt had more to do with Russian folklore and Tarkovski's own preoccupations than with his novel. Lem managed to persuade Tarkovski to drop most of the alterations, but eventually realised that the novel was a stalking horse for Tarkovski's own ideas and withdrew from the project. Although it is accounted one of the finest of all science fiction films, Lem has only seen fragments of *Solaris* on Polish TV:

I was expecting a visualisation of the 'Drama of Cognizance', seen as a contrast between the images of 'home, sweet Earth' and the 'Cold Cosmos', a drama in which the characters affecting the men in the station originate from the ocean and symbolise the antagonism between the vast open spaces of the planet and the small enclosed Station. Unfortunately Tarkovski took sides and favoured 'home sweet Earth' against the 'Cold Cosmos'. For a drama of cognizance in which the people, the envoys from Earth, keep on struggling with the enigma that cannot be solved by the human mind, Tarkovski substituted a moral drama *par excellence*, which in no way relates to the problem of cognizance and its extremes. For Tarkovski, the

most important facet was Kelvin's problem of 'guilt and punishment', just as in a Dostoyevsky book...<sup>9</sup>

Lem has said that the writer whose characters visit an alien intelligence is in a better position than a writer who has an alien intelligence visit Earth because the motives for an alien visit must be simple: to fight, steal, conquer, learn, play. If these motives are not sufficient, the only other strategy is to keep their motivation a secret. If humans stumble upon an alien intelligence, however, it is altogether a different matter: the alien is going nowhere, is living its life according to its own rules, and may therefore be utterly impenetrable. Thus in the encounter Humanity may find only itself and its limitations. Lem was quite clear about the theory and direction that lay behind *Solaris*. When he began work on the novel he had a developing design in mind: 'I knew there was to be an ocean on the planet and that it would interfere with the lives of the people in the station, although I was not aware, at that point, what the ocean was truly 'up to', or what the interference would in fact be.'<sup>10</sup> The process of construction gave him a great deal of trouble and the final chapter of *Solaris* was particularly difficult precisely because Lem was wrestling with his own self-knowledge and the limits of his own cognition:

This process of writing, which is characterised by the signs of a creation by trial and error, has always been arrested by blocks and blind alleys that forced me to retreat; sometimes there has even been a 'burning out' of the raw materials - the manifold resources necessary for further growth - stored somewhere in my skull. I was not able to finish *Solaris* for a full year, and could do it then only because I learned suddenly - from myself - how the last chapter had to be. (And then I could only wonder why I hadn't recognised it from the beginning.)<sup>11</sup>

Lem has said that the novel is 'a gnossological drama whose focal point is the tragedy of man's imperfect machinery for gaining knowledge'.<sup>12</sup>

Lem distinguishes between stories that have only a passing fashion (which interest us because they are parts of a world which is marvellous, but self-contained, with no bearing on the real world), putting most science fiction, in this category, and works like Franz Kafka's 'Metamorphosis' which, he says, is not a fantastic marvel of the

imagination, but a deep-seated recognition of the deformations of the human 'socio-psychological situation':

If the new phenomenon is of a qualitatively different scale - contact with 'aliens' in outer space, for example - it is all but certain that the repertoire of received, ready concepts will not be able to accommodate it without considerable friction. In all likelihood, a cultural, perceptual, and perhaps even a social-ethical revolution will be necessary. Thus instead of the assimilation of the new, we must imagine the re-ordering and even the destruction of fundamental concepts, the revaluation of truths that were previously indisputable, and so on.<sup>13</sup>

Lem blends the east-central European tradition of humanist fantasy with his own psychological insights. There is also a subtle, wily, independent Marxism at work too, and he has no time for structuralist attempts to divorce his work from its cultural and political context. He insists on a very close relation and obligation to the social norms that helped create his work and has complained frequently about science fiction's lack of awareness of the problems of narrative and the relationship of the genre to the cultural and political problems of the real world. For Lem it is important that science fiction should depict a world that is not only morally neutral - where humans act out their own choices out of their own volition and motivation - but also a recognisable world at some point further along our space-time continuum:

Only the outer shell of this world is formed by the strange phenomena; the inner core has a solid non-fantastic meaning. Thus a story can depict the world as it is, or interpret the world...or, in most cases, do both things at the same time. As in life we can solve real problems with the help of images of non-existent beings, so in literature can we signal the existence of real problems with the help of *prima facie* impossible occurrences or objects. Even when the happenings it describes are totally impossible, science fiction work may still point out meaningful, indeed rational problems.<sup>14</sup>

It is usual for writers to leave messages 'between the lines'. Indeed, recent Polish literature sometimes resembles a gigantic cryptic crossword to be read only by the initiate few. On a very crude level, the story could be said to portray a massively indifferent Party, its smugness at its own existence and its failure to respond to any

outside overtures. It is tempting to look for some direct political correspondences in the novel, perhaps for veiled references to the events and atmosphere of Gomulka's Poland. It would, no doubt, be interesting if the planet 'stood' in some way for the Party, and the scientists 'stood' for the efforts of the Polish people to contact that entity; but it would be equally possible to reverse this, to claim that the planet 'stands' for the Polish people and that the rough and insensitive intruders who try to make the planet conform to their way of doing things, to prod it into a mode of contact and behaviour they can predict and understand, are the Party. But it is not possible to take either of these notions very far.

The novel is not a political allegory; it would be mistaken to look for a series of point-for-point correspondences with Polish political life. Lem was far too wary of the censor for that, even though the novel is informed by the experience of living in Gomulka's Poland. In the manner of all parables, the novel has much wider implications: it is very clearly about the human ability to think within and outside a given set-up, about the limitations of human comprehension of things which are not human, about humanity's refusal to believe that it may be of no interest to an alien intelligence. It is also about the obsessive 'I' of human culture, and since the role of the individual is one which the Party has sought to redefine, the subject has further repercussions in that it seeks to reveal some of the mechanisms by which our perceptions are shaped and informed, how we see and how we are allowed to see the world and the universe around us.

The novel is an open-ended parable, a speculative entertainment, a philosophical adventure: it airs the idea, in a highly entertaining and enigmatic fashion, of what happens when expected modes of behaviour and communication do not open up. It is important to realise that dissident objections to what the Party was doing were still in their early stages: major works by Michnik, Kurón, Modzelewski, Geremek, Kołakowski, Bienkowski, the oppositional literature of Herbert, Brandys, Konwicki, Andrzejewski and many others, and the events of 1968, all lay in the future. Also it is not necessarily a part of the science fiction writer's job to come to any conclusions on the subject - indeed, it could have been unwise for Lem to do so. In his own way Lem is as enigmatic as his planet. The philosophical objection to censorship, indeed Lem's

objection to the idea of changing human nature, the effort to revolutionise human society on the basis of slender knowledge currently available, are there for those that want them and who are open to receive them.

Censorship was the main and all-pervasive feature of the business of perception in the eastern-bloc. It may be a characteristic of Stalinism, but it was not something which had much to do with Marx's ideas. A censored Polish press corrupted social life and meant that the government heard nothing but its own voice. In the post-war years censorship, rather than helping to smooth the path of progress towards socialism, actually suppressed legitimate grievances and set up a propaganda of success contradicted by everyday experience. This, as I hope to show in later chapters, in turn bred cynicism and antagonism towards the state and the authorities which the society had no way of satisfying, diverting or even easing. One of the effects of censorship, and one which literature continually struggles against, is that it makes the feelings and thought process of human discovery and cognition increasingly difficult and irrational. Censorship blocks channels of information and feeling within society and individuals. It guards the difference between truth and propaganda: because it erodes the language and the processes of cognition it also effectively destroys the perception that there is a difference. Not only does a society not know what it thinks, but eventually it does not know what it feels; and before long that society does not know what it knows.

Not all Polish readers are prepared to seek comfort in science fiction, however, and it is important to note the social and political context in which *Solaris* was written, and the social and political developments by which its concerns became increasingly relevant. Through the 1960s and 1970s Poles turned increasingly to the art of 'reading between the lines' in a literature that became ever more oracular and Aesopian; they turned to sources of information and feeling that were not in any way 'approved' and which were uncontaminated by the hand of the censor. They listened regularly (and illegally) to Polish language broadcasts from the West - Radio Free Europe, heard by 17 million Poles per week; the Voice of America, heard by 9 million Poles per week; and the BBC World Service and BBC Polish Service broadcasts, heard by nearly 7 million Poles each week. They also came to depend increasingly on gossip. This meant that Poles became easy victims to malicious-rumour mongering and often tended to



believe the most blatant nonsense simply because it came from some source other than their own official media.

Writers complained of the 'shell of falsification' that became increasingly effective in the 1970s. They regarded literature as an unofficial opposition that faced up to the moral bankruptcy of the regime and which acted as an alternative ideal within society. The readership of semi-legal magazines was enormous - particularly after the demonstrations and unrest of 1976. It has been estimated that for each copy of an underground journal there were at least thirty readers and countless others who heard the contents over the 'bush telegraph'. While the underground press had virtually no contact with the authorities, their publications were read by those in power with a view to finding and suppressing publication. This was virtually the only transmission of ideas from the bottom to the top of Polish society. It was certainly not possible to voice criticism within the official trades unions, through elections to the Sejm - the Polish Parliament, or in newspapers: these 'organs of state' formed a one-way transmission belt for the orders and policies of the Party. The Party, like the mimoids of *Solaris*, created beautifully formed social organisms with no content, forms whose purpose and workings remained veiled and mysterious, shrouded in secrecy. Like the Party, the planet held out the promise of a miraculous reworking of creation, but delivered only 'cruel miracles'. The Party remained a self contained, self confirming entity locked in a dialogue with itself rather than the society it led and shaped. Censorship shaped public consciousness and self-awareness as an incomplete and irrational, empty entity; it created a hunger for information, but did not foster introspection nor provide any framework in which information could be assessed.<sup>14</sup> The inevitable consequences of these actions were pointed out to the regime by the semi-official DiP 'Experience and Future' Group in 1978-79:

The effects of politics and economic policies we experience literally every day, but we feel ourselves left out of the decision-making processes, not only as active subjects but even as mere observers. We are left out and hence cut off from responsibility. A Polish citizen experiences the meanderings of politics and planning more or less as he experiences changes in the weather: as important changes he must adapt to but whose causes - wholly external - are not worth exploring more deeply, since he has no way of influencing them...What is more,

this system has created something that is more dangerous than indifference and cynicism, something that surely was not intended: it has created a state of collective *informational* psychosis.<sup>15</sup>

Poles began to feel that in their own private lives they were no longer in control and that therefore they were no longer responsible for their actions. Somehow *oni* (they), the authorities, government, *nomenklatura* and Party were to blame for everything.<sup>16</sup> The result was mounting frustration, mutual hostility, a complete failure of social responsiveness and responsibility, undirected, unspecific antagonism towards the state and society.

Michnik saw the growth of Polish right-wing opinion as a mark of confusion resulting directly from the work of the censor and the government's failure to establish or foster self-knowledge and responsibility within society:

I think that in Poland the conflict between the right and the left belongs to the past. It used to divide a society that was torn by struggles for bourgeois freedoms, universal voting rights, land reform, secularisation, the eight hour workday, welfare, universal schooling, or the democratisation of culture. A different distinction comes to the fore in the era of totalitarian dictatorships: one between the proponents of an open society and the proponents of a closed society. In the former, social order is based on self-government and collective agreements; in the latter, order is achieved through repression and discipline. In the vision of an open society, the state acts as the guardian of safety for citizens; in the vision of a closed society the state is a master and overseer who determines all modes of society's existence.<sup>17</sup>

At his grimmest Michnik claimed that every human move, feeling and reaction under censorship, even violent efforts to overthrow the regime, were nothing more than manifestations of 'slave mentality'.

As in Lem's novel, indifference provoked violence, but not necessarily further understanding on either side. Lem called into question the underlying human feelings that informed the processes of civil society. How can politicians re-make society (or humanity dare contact aliens) when they know so little of how society works, and so little about the influence their own individual fears and ambitions have on the processes of power, when there are no mechanisms of feedback on the effects of their re-

structuring? They know themselves so little, yet are powerful enough to subvert and pervert political thinking and theory. Lem is interested in the mainsprings of human ambition and activity. He is concerned about the values and the true extent of the human knowledge and understanding that Humanity is planning to export into space, and in the sense that the space race is also a revolution he worries about the presumption that humanity knows enough (morally and personally) to undertake any such engineering project when it has failed so spectacularly at home.

Władysław Bienkowski (ex-Minister of Education) has pointed out that censorship has made the business of integrating new knowledge about systems, social structures, the inner workings of human thought and its social and political manifestations almost impossible by creating barriers to resist all notions alien to a very narrow and highly selective interpretation of Marx. Bienkowski believes that twentieth century society has slowly abandoned force as a way of controlling its citizens and has concentrated on re-ordering social structures so that freedoms of all kinds are increasingly seen as some kind of commercial commodity - rights must be bought or earned by conforming to social norms. In east-central Europe this has meant that the relationship between behaviour and consciousness, the very idea of internalisation, of individual moral responsibility, have lost all meaning and instead have been replaced by learned behaviour patterns which have no personal rationale behind them. The Polish sociologist Julia Sowa has dubbed this phenomenon the 'dead field of public normative indifference'. It is a state of 'intellectual innocence' in which the citizen falls prey to chance impulse. While believing they are 'free' to decide for themselves on any issue, in fact they lack all self-knowledge and therefore lack all social and political judgement.<sup>18</sup> The result (as in Kelvin's case) is an increasingly chaotic social and inner life for the bulk of the population. In the same way that the failure of the planet Solaris to respond to the scientists provokes them to bombard it with massive doses of harmful X-rays, the monolithic indifference of the PZPR to public opinion and common sense provoked increasing hostility. Many writers and observers had warned that Polish society was heading for an explosion of discontent. Although the Party blamed *Solidarność*, the economic collapse of 1980 had been inevitable since the early 1970s. Had the government chosen to monitor the success of its own performance instead of

using the office of the censor to suppress discontent, they would have picked up the first rumblings from deep within Polish society long before the earthquake of 1980 and the declaration of Martial Law in 1981.

Attempts to control the formation of opinion inevitably destroy the possibility of ever finding out what minds think or might think. Ultimately the bid for control destroys self-awareness and self-knowledge. In this way political power and social or self-knowledge are linked in opposition to each other. The office of the censor erected an insurmountable barrier between what Marxism might have offered the Poles and what the Party did in the name of Marxism. The great outburst of clandestine publication in Poland in the 1970s was a direct effort on the part of Polish intellectuals not to succumb to the Party's bid for total control, to maintain some level of self-knowledge and social understanding. Lem's particular choice of themes was to a very great extent a direct response to that bid to control minds and remake society.

Kazimierz Brandys has described the twentieth century in Poland as an era of 'self diagnostic and self critical culture', of 'thinking about thinking', a period of taking many senses and meanings each of which reveals some part of an overall truth. For him everything fills a cognitive function, and he characterises the era as 'analysing itself while in the process of becoming', a process modified by introspection and self-analysis. For Brandys, as for Lem, it became essential to question the language in which the 'reality' of the closed, censored, 'socialist' world was presented. It became necessary to ponder anew the questions that tortured him as a schoolboy in order to restore some part of the faculty of cognition and introspection denied by censorship:

What is man? Does God exist? Does death mean the end, and how ought one to live? These are actually adolescent's questions; if you ask them, the fear of being laughed at is well justified. Dare we ask them in a civilisation where research by specialists has replaced philosophy? Our world, which is interested in technology, in genetics, and in the structure of language, has grown humble in the face of the universal problems; it has set itself narrower, better defined goals. In such a world, to go deep within oneself and ponder the secrets of Being, without electronic microscopes, without laboratories or accelerators - that can only be the quirk of a thinker from the provinces seeking a proof of the existence of God. Yet sometimes there is nothing else to do. When choosing a way of life, only naive

questions remain, because in such a world all questions with an ethical content appear to be naive.<sup>19</sup>

In the face of the cosmos Lem proposes a return to these considerations. In *Solaris* he questions the fundamentals of his own existence and the social order that both nurtures and stifles him. He writes out of a specific social and political context. What is it like to try to talk to an intelligent monolithic entity that consistently fails to respond? What are the effects of living under a regime/intelligence such as this? How can we know what we have created in a social revolution when we do not know ourselves sufficiently to understand what we are creating? Naive questions these may be. However, they undercut the 'ethics' of the one-party state, restore the status of self-knowledge and self-examination, they raise again the issue of Humanity's right to make a social revolution and to explore the cosmos.

*Solaris* was published at a time when the east-west space race was just getting underway and when the burden of military spending was clearly more than the inefficient eastern-bloc economies could support. The novel appeared after the first of the post-war Polish upheavals, but before the increasingly serious demonstrations of discontent in 1968, 1970, 1976 and 1980-81. Lem could not be expected to predict exactly how the influence of the Party and the censor would operate on the formation of moral and political attitudes, but working in a genre of limited appeal and small circulation and therefore largely ignored by the censor, he was able to pinpoint one long-term effect of blocks and barriers to the free flow of information and feeling within that particular society. Lem was able to foresee and indicate a very precise formation of discontent, of political and moral failure within Polish society, and to predict an area of increasing concern taken up by dissidents and by the leaders and thinkers of Solidarność some twenty years later.

## NOTES

- 1 Lem has harsh things to say about Poland's 'socialist' rulers in *Dialogi* (1957) and several of his stories have highly political implications - for example *Eden*, *The Futurological Congress*, the short story 'In Hot Pursuit of Happiness', and several of the tales in *Star Diaries*. However, only very rarely has Lem taken any clearly

- political action. In 1982 he resigned from editing a science fiction series when a novel by Ursula Le Guin was banned by the military government because it was translated by Stanisław Barańczak, the dissident poet in exile: J.J.Szczepański, *Kadencja*, Znak, Kraków, 1989, p.30; R.Sukenick, 'Poland', *Granta*, no.9, 1983, p.245. Lem's disenchantment with the regime, and its suspicion of him, can be seen in part in his publication history. His access to a reading public was drastically curtailed in spite of his increasing national and international reputation after the events of 1976. Further biographical details can be found in: J.Krzyżanowski (ed.), *Literatura polska: przewodnik encyklopedyczny*, 2 vols., PWN, Warsaw, 1984. A.Wójcik; 'Ambassador polskiej literatury', in: A.Wójcik & M.Englander (eds.), *Budowniczość gwiazd 1*, KAW, Warsaw, 1980, pp.36-92; P.Nichols, 'Stanisław Lem', in: P.Nichols (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, Grenada, London, 1981, p.350-2.
- 2 G.Konrad, 'A New Europe', interview with E.P.Thompson, in B.Bourne, U.Eichler & D.Herman (eds.), *Writers and Politics*, Spokesman, London, 1987, p.44.
  - 3 Milan Kundera, 'A Kidnapped West or Culture Bows Out', *Granta*, no.11, 1984, pp.93-123.
  - 4 In 1978, for example, Poland published a total of 54,000,000 volumes this included 12,000,000 'modern classics' in translation; 11,849 new titles by contemporary Polish writers appeared in editions of about 10,000 copies. 'Literature', *Facts about Poland*, PF.VI,1-1, 7-1, Interpress, Warsaw, 1980.
  - 5 S.Lem, *Solaris*, WL, Kraków, 1976, p.26. My translation. The English language edition of *Solaris* is a translation of a French translation from Polish. The English 'version' has: 'It was essentially a test of ourselves, of the limitations of human knowledge': *Solaris* (trans. J.Kilmartin & S.Cox), Arrow Press, London, 1973, p.23. In spite of his fame Lem was initially served very badly by his translators and publishers in Britain and America. Theodore Sturgeon has complained about the treatment given to writers from the Soviet Union and east-central Europe, saying that in passing through two or more languages the hazards of translation are more than doubled and that this is a process in which 'even a laundry list could hardly be expected to survive': T.Sturgeon, 'Introduction', to A.& B.Strugatsky, *Roadside Picnic and Tale of a Troika*, Kangaroo Books, New York, 1978, p.viii.
  - 6 S.Lem, *Solaris*, Kraków, 1976, pp.76-7.
  - 7 *Solaris*, Kraków, pp.208-9.
  - 8 J.Jarzębski, 'Stanisław Lem, Rationalist and Visionary', *Science Fiction Studies*, vol.4, no.2, July 1977, p.119. S.Lem, *Memoirs Found in a Bathtub*, Seabury Press, New York, 1973, p.148.
  - 9 'Stanisław Lem Answers Questions', *Foundation*, no.15, January, 1979, p.46.
  - 10 *Ibid.*, p.42.
  - 11 S.Lem, 'Reflections on my Life' (1984), *Microworlds*, Secker & Warburg, London, 1985, p.22.
  - 12 S.Lem, 'Metafantasia: The Possibilities of Science Fiction' (1981), *Microworlds*, p.196.
  - 13 S.Lem, 'On the Structural Analysis of Science Fiction' (1973), *Microworlds*, pp.35, 36-7.

- 14 J.L.Curry, *The Black Book of Polish Censorship*, Vintage Press, New York, 1984.
- 15 M.Vale (ed.), *Poland: The State of The Republic: Two Reports by the Experience and Future Group*, Pluto Press, London, 1981, p.25.
- 16 T.Torańska, *Oni: Stalin's Polish Puppets* Collins/Harvill, London, 1987.
- 17 A.Michnik, 'Letter from the Gdańsk Prison, 1985', *Letters From Prison*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1985, p.91.
- 18 W.Bieńkowski, *Motory i hamulce socjalizmu*, Instytut Literacki, Paris, 1969, p.82; W.Bieńkowski, *Theory and Reality: The Development of Social Systems*, Allison & Busby, London, 1981, pp.72-3; J.Sowa, 'Teoria grup odniesienia', *Studia Socjologiczne*, no.4, 1966.
- 19 K.Brandys, *A Question of Reality: Answers From Poland*, Blond & Briggs, London, 1981, pp.158. Zgorzelski has argued that Science Fiction is a good location for the clash between reality and unreality simply because of its development as a genre: in science fiction the fictional world slowly disappears as the new world becomes apparent through the fantastic elements, and that it is these fantastic elements that dominate the setting. Thus, as the reader becomes more aware of the new world there is always a clash with 'objective reality' until new linguistic and cultural equivalents are established. Equivalents replace the signs and tokens of the old world that is no longer valid, but they cannot do so entirely or they would be incomprehensible, and they cannot of themselves produce the fantastic elements since they are bound by the parameters of 'the known'. As equivalents emerge the apparent confrontation between the old world and the new disappears and attention can then focus on the meaning (if any) of the fantastic elements. In this way he presents the difficulty of ever breaking away from the basic dilemma that Lem confronts in *Solaris*: A.Zgorzelski, *Fantastyka: utopia: Science Fiction: ze studiów nad rozwojem gatunków*, PWN, Warsaw, 1980, pp.40-102.

## SIX

## WRITERS AND GIEREK: 1970-80

I visited Gierek's house in Warsaw just after he was forced out of office. There were two main rooms - one was a sauna, and the other was a television room. And this was how he lived taking saunas and watching TV. But the most striking thing was that in this great big house there was not a single book, not even a shelf for books. His only interest was in watching TV, like Idi Amin. Once Gierek was to meet some Secretaries of South American communist parties who were visiting Poland, and a colleague in the Foreign Affairs Secretariat of the Central Committee asked me to help prepare some background material for Gierek so that he would know something about these people and their country. So I prepared some documents, articles, reading matter. But he said 'No, no. It's useless, I need only half a page. If I give him a whole page he won't read it.'

Ryszard Kapuściński, 'The Writer as Fire Brigade', *The Works*, 1991.

6.1 political and economic background

6.2 writers in isolation

6.3 writers and independent social movements

6.4 Kazimierz Brandys' *Warsaw Diary*

6.5 towards Solidarność



## 6.1 POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Within a month of the signature of the Polish-West German Treaty Gomułka was ousted from office. His efforts to turn Poland into a self-supporting economy had failed, indeed the economy was rapidly grinding to a halt and the long awaited \$500,000,000 West German loan, promised on the signature of the treaty, could not arrive in time to disguise the mess Gomułka had made. In the years 1955-70 the compound annual growth of National Income fell from 8.6 per cent to 5 per cent; the growth in real wages fell from 7.7 per cent to 1.62 per cent. Between 1966 and 1970 prices rose by four and a half per cent. By 1970 Poland's debt to the west stood at \$303,000,000.<sup>1</sup>

On 12 December 1970, five days after the treaty was signed, the authorities announced that 46 categories of goods were to be subject to new prices: sugar, flour and meat prices were to increase by an average of 16-17 per cent; coffee was to go up by 92 per cent. Almost at once riots flared in Gdańsk, Gdynia, Elbląg and Szczecin. At least thirteen workers, some say as many as four hundred, died when police opened fire on a crowd returning to work in Gdynia. Gomułka suffered a minor stroke which blinded him. In an effort to prevent Moczar making a bid for the leadership the Central Committee elected Edward Gierek as First Secretary. Strikers in the Szczecin shipyards challenged the Polish leadership to visit them and hear their grievances. On 27 January, as yet more strikes broke out along the coast, Edward Gierek travelled north. He and his associates took taxis to the gates of Szczecin's Warski shipyard and after nine hours of bargaining and arguing with the shipyard workers, Gierek broadcast on the radio to say that the workers of Poland had been pushed beyond the limits of endurance. Sweeping economic reforms were needed.

Gierek arrived in office at a time when the west had cash, mainly derived from oil, to spare. He offered a new area of investment. The west, tantalised at the prospect of apparently disciplined and incredibly cheap Polish labour, decided to cooperate. Apart from the prospect of profit there was probably also an element of hard-nosed military strategy in the west's investment. If Poland could be drawn far enough into the capitalist western economy it would have great difficulty in extricating itself, and this

in itself, along with the obvious material wealth that would accrue from contact with western economies, would help undermine the Warsaw Pact and drive a wedge of uncertainty, prosperity and disloyalty between the Polish regime and Moscow. Investment would help to destabilise the east-bloc states and unsettle Moscow itself. If this was the strategy, it worked.

Gierek mopped up a considerable amount of hard currency and initially it appeared that his efforts to speed up the industrialisation of Poland were successful. In 1972 NI rose by 10 per cent - double the expected figure. In the years 1970-75 money wages rose by 56 per cent and real wages rose by over 40 per cent. Under Gomułka about \$100,000,000 per year had been spent on importing Western machinery: by 1972 the figure was \$700,000,000, and by 1974 Poland was spending \$1,900,000,000 per year on imported machinery. By 1976 approximately half of Poland's industrial capacity had been installed in the previous five years. The GNP grew by 50 per cent between 1970-76.

Gierek's economic gamble was reckless in the extreme, and was carried out in an unbelievably slap-dash manner. Gierek's plans meant that scarce domestic currency had to be re-allocated. In the period 1971-80 the share of National Income invested in agriculture fell by 2 per cent, in education by 5 per cent. Industrial investment, however, climbed to its peak level of around 41 per cent of National Income in the years 1974-76. As Poland fully expected to be earning enough to import certain goods in future, it collapsed its large and efficient chemicals and pharmaceuticals industry. Worse, as part of its financial bribe to workers the government continued to offer huge subsidies on basic commodities and to industrial production with the result that steel sold at a price lower than the cost of the coal used to smelt it, and bread cost less than the price of the wheat and rye used to make it. In the Gierek years Poland imported over 61,000,000 tons of grain per year for which it paid more than a third of its entire foreign debt to the west. Rather than feed grain to their pigs farmers gave them bread; rather than drink milk from their own cows, farmers sold milk to the state and then bought bottled milk from the local shop - it was cheaper. The development of the Gdańsk shipyards, the growth of Nowa Huta, the coal mines, a PVC plant, a bus company, the manufacture of Fiat Cars under licence, the manufacture of Massey

Ferguson tractors under licence - all these and many more gigantic national investments went ahead at an incredible pace. Yet Huta Katowice, the giant steelworks that was to swallow the bulk of foreign finance over the coming decade, was not even mentioned in the economic plans shown to foreign investors and had been tacked on at a later date without any adjustments made to cash allocations.

Inevitably, events outside Poland were to take a hand and Gierek's unstable economic venture came badly unstuck: a new war broke out in the Middle East in 1973 and inflation suddenly hit all industries using oil. Poland's oil, which came from the Soviet Union and Iraq, was not affected, but the war multiplied the cost of the technology which Poland was busy importing to support its initial investments, and at the same time cut back on international demand for goods which Poland was manufacturing. The cost of importing technology was raised even higher when OPEC raised oil prices in 1979. In 1971-5 Poland's imports from the west had risen by 450 per cent, while its exports to the west had improved by only 250 per cent. Hard currency debt rose from \$100,000,000 in 1971 to \$6,000,000,000 by 1975. By 1980 Poland's hard currency debt stood at \$29,000,000,000, and over 82 per cent of Poland's foreign earnings were spent on servicing that debt. Although Poland had the world's third highest economic growth rate through the early 1970s, it was becoming harder to buy basic commodities. The retail price index showed that real incomes were still rising and prices were falling, but the fact was that the goods referred to in the index were not available in the shops. In the years 1970-75 state sector prices rose by only 3 per cent while in the private sector prices rose by more than 37 per cent. Yet still the government continued to increase wage payments - 473,400,000,000 zł in 1970, rising to 883,000,000,000 zł by 1975 - yet even this enormous increase was probably behind the level of real inflation. In 1980 alone wages rose by 26.4 per cent, while the productivity of the economy dropped by 11 per cent. It is highly likely that around 40 per cent of Poland's Gross National Product consisted of damaged, imperfect and unsaleable goods - goods that were simply stored in warehouses. Such was the level of corruption and inefficiency within the Polish *biurokracja*, the severe limitation on all management initiative, the lunatic level of secrecy surrounding any and all statistics, the paranoid hoarding of raw materials by factory managers and the

low priority given to the needs and advice of the *technokracja*, that the Polish economy was by this time incapable of putting foreign loans to good use. Vast quantities of foreign currency were pumped into the Polish economy, but this money went into totally unworkable projects, disappeared into the pockets of well-placed individuals, was steadily squandered in simple wastage of work-hours and materials on a scale that is hard to imagine, and was lost in massive and pointless *biurokracja* controls.<sup>2</sup>

The significance of the events of 1970 and the apparent prosperity of the early Gierek years lay not only in the fact that a First Secretary had travelled to Szczecin to engage in dialogue with the workers, nor that the government had backed down over the price rises, but that these were events in which Polish intellectuals did not figure. The workers and the Party had reached their own understanding. The Party reaped a windfall with the apparent leap in prosperity: worker membership of the Party rose by over 2 per cent between 1976-80, making this the highest level of worker membership for the whole east-bloc: a staggering 27 per cent of these worker members were concentrated in 164 newly created giant industrial plants. By 1980 the PZPR had about 3,000,000 members. Around 1,250,000 of these were industrial workers. Perhaps 1,000,000 were state officials working in the civil service. A further 10,000 made up the PZPR *biurokracja* servicing Party internal needs.<sup>3</sup>

## 6.2 WRITERS IN ISOLATION

The events of 1970 confirmed a rift between workers and intellectuals that had been widening steadily for many years. Its seeds had been apparent in the very first months of the ZLP's existence, in the tax concessions to writers, and had been confirmed by the intellectual contribution to the events of 1956 where the economic revolt and the intellectual revolt had been two entirely separate affairs. The Party had effectively made the writers their plaything, hived them off into a plush ghetto, cut them off from the workers and then dumped them. Herbert, a poet not given to rash public pronouncements or demonstrations, identified the feelings of Polish writers and their

reaction to the steady isolation of the creative intellectuals during the late 1960s and early 1970s:

Contrary to popular belief, the lowest circle of hell is not inhabited by despots, matricides or those who are seekers after flesh. It is a refuge for artists, full of mirrors, pictures and instruments. To a casual observer, the most comfortable infernal department, without brimstone, tar or physical torture.

All the year round there are competitions, festivals and concerts. There is no high season. The season is permanent and almost absolute. Every quarter new movements spring up and nothing, it appears, can arrest the triumphal procession of the Avantgarde.

Beelzebub loves art. He boasts that his choirs, poets and painters outstrip the celestials. Better art means better government - that's obvious. Soon they will be able to test their strengths at the Two Worlds Festival. Then we'll see if Dante, Fra Angelico and Bach make the grade.

Beelzebub supports art. His artists are guaranteed peace, good food and total isolation from infernal life.<sup>4</sup>

Better art may have meant better government, but this was something which had not the slightest attraction for Gierek or the group of cronies he promoted to key positions from the Party apparatus in his old territory of Silesia. The intellectuals' belief that they were the elite, the moral leadership of the country took a hammering. For a long while after 1968 the independent *inteligencja* were lost. It took some time before they could sketch a new map. There was a shift in the thinking of the intellectuals after 1968. They had become isolated from the working class by their privilege, and isolated from the Party when they realised that they were not allowed to be a loyal opposition. Independent intellectuals saw themselves as a loyal opposition, and increasingly as the effective Polish *inteligencja*. The Party, they felt, had lost its claim to be part of the *inteligencja* because it demanded intellectual capacity but denied and successfully squashed individual creative initiative. Intellectuals saw that 'socialism', as they understood it, was no longer an option. The independent intellectuals were about to take a new path to the working places of the proletariat. Though worker membership of the Party was steadily rising, this seemed to be for pragmatic rather than ideological reasons, and was very probably a case of workers being recruited by the Party rather than actively applying for membership. For those opposed to the Party the old route to

contact with the workers - via the Party - was blocked off. Students and intellectuals had received no support from the workers in 1968, and as far as the workers were concerned the intellectuals were irrelevant to the struggles of 1970. The workers expressed a naive faith in the leadership of the Party and its claim to have honestly made mistakes which it was now busily rectifying. When Gierek, who twenty years previously had worked in Belgian coal mines and who still described himself as a worker, asked the striking Szczecin workers for help they roared in unison *Pomożemy! Pomożemy!* (We'll help! We'll help!).

The workers may have been fooled by Gierek's act, but others were not. In June 1971 Kołakowski published his 'Tezy o nadziei i beznadziejności' (Theses on Hope and Hopelessness, *Kultura*, Paris) in which he defined the Polish political system as 'despotic socialism' and observed that the Polish system was not an example of the 'perfect or unadulterated socialism' in which Kołakowski still had some faith - indeed he defined socialism mainly in opposition not to capitalism, but to Polish despotic socialism and the authoritarian Catholic church. For him socialism was only possible within a sovereign state, and Poland's subjection to the will and policy of the Soviet Union made this impossible. Kołakowski believed that the PZPR was corroding Polish political ideals in the hope of Sovietising the country as well as the state. Kołakowski also wrote that in Poland *sowietizacja* (sovietization) meant 'a situation where in public speech, nothing is or can be for real, all words have lost their original meaning'.<sup>5</sup>

For a while after 1968 it had still been possible to trace the dim outline of official policy on literature through debates, letters and articles in *Nowe Drogi*, *Przegląd Kulturalny*, *Państwo i Prawo*, *Kultura i Społeczeństwo*, *Twórczość*, *Kultura*, *Nowa Kultura*: slowly but surely, though, while these journals still published new poems, extracts of longer works, essays, the idea that government policy on the arts would be articulated, challenged and debated in some way in these pages disappeared. Beyond support for regional folk dance troupes, internationally renowned theatre groups such those of Grotowski and Tomaszewski, and the international Chopin competition, the Ministry for Arts and Culture appeared rudderless. Under Gierek the government did not have any policy on the arts except to put writers and their works under political scrutiny by the censor.

Something of the underlying feel of artistic life can be seen in Andrzejewski's early experience of the Gierek regime. In 1970 he approached the state publishing houses with his latest project. This was his novel *Miazga* (Pulp), an 800-page monster of a book, a long extract of which had appeared in the magazine *Twórczość* in 1967. It had been written and re-written over the long period 1963-70, and was described by one critic as 'the most important book written in Poland since the end of the war'.<sup>6</sup> Andrzejewski had detailed the slow cultural, linguistic and political decline of post-war Poland, but in doing so made no concessions at all to the censor. He had tried, he said, to write a book where 'black was black, white was white and where there was no double-think'. The book was delivered to the publisher in 1970, and given that the Gierek regime was trying very hard to promote a new liberal image of itself over the grey memory of the Gomułka years, Andrzejewski had high hopes for his book's success. After lengthy negotiations he agreed to the in-house editors' suggestion that there should be some 600 alterations, plus cuts and deletions totalling over 100 pages. The book went to the printers in 1972 and the *pierwsza szczołka* (literally 'first brush' or galley proofs) were run off and - as normal - delivered to the censor for consideration. On Andrzejewski's birthday in August 1972, he was informed by the office of the censor that *Miazga* would not be published after all.<sup>7</sup>

In 1975 Polish politicians began to amend the Constitution. They added three new areas; an article stating that citizens would be entitled to civil rights only if they fulfilled their obligations to the state - an opportunity to exclude large sections of the population; recognition that Poland's sovereignty was limited by its allegiance to the USSR; and recognition that the leading role of the party was now legally enshrined in the Constitution. Under Gierek and without any consultation with 'the people', Poland was destined to become a communist state rather than a people's or socialist state. Very soon after the proposed constitutional changes became public Anna Steinsbergowa and Jacek Kuron began collecting signatures for a letter of protest. Andrzejewski took on the task of coordinating what became known as the 'Letter of the 101'. The result of this was that a special GUKPPiW directive removed from the public domain all reference to those writers who signed. Their names were not to be mentioned in any publication or broadcast; any unavoidable mention of their name was to be referred

upwards to a higher authority before publication. This was a manoeuvre designed to rob individuals who chose to resist of the glory and the publicity of open black-listing: Andrzejewski's name was first on the list.<sup>8</sup>

By driving these people underground the censor did not stop them publishing and in fact only contributed to the growing intellectual disaffection. By 1976 there was a politically wide-ranging loose association of dissident writers and intellectuals, both in Poland and in enforced emigration, which included: the *rewizjoniści* writers and artists of earlier days - Andrzejewski, Kołakowski, Edward Lipinski; the historians who later worked in TKN, Bronisław Geremek, Jerzy Jedlicki, Adam Kersten; the philosopher of science Stefan Amsterdamski; the writers Wiktor Woroszyński, Jacek Bocheński, Brandys, Jerzy Ficowski; the Catholics of the Znak group, Władysław Bartoszewski, Bohdan Cywiński, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Adam Stanowski. All these people had distanced themselves from the Party. Only the Warsaw academic economist Lipiński retained a party card until the advent of Solidarność simply because he maintained a faith in the western 'Eurocommunist' version of socialism. He believed that something of value could still be salvaged from the wreckage created by the PZPR and Moscow, but this was a line which most Poles found suspicious because, although it was different from that of the Polish bureaucracy, it was still thought to be 'un-Polish'. The Party on the other hand mistrusted Lipiński because he did not acknowledge the guiding hand of Moscow.

Increasingly alienated and frustrated workers walked the streets with huge wads of paper money in their pockets and found there was nothing to buy, neither luxuries nor staples. A vast tidal wave of purchasing power with nothing to buy was bearing down on the Polish economy at increasing speed. On 24 June 1976 the Prime Minister announced that the price freeze initiated in 1970 could no longer be held. In order to bring Poland's food supply into line with more rational and commercial thinking and to combat hoarding it was planned to raise the price of foodstuffs. The long delay of six years meant that a great deal of lost time and revenue had to be made up. Retail prices would therefore rise by a staggering 69 per cent for meat, and 100 per cent for butter and cheese. There were other large increases over a wide range of foodstuffs.

The Polish workers' patience snapped and on 25 June work ceased all over Poland



in protest. At the Ursus tractor factory the workers blocked the rail line. At Radom, where workers were already angry at the aggressive and overbearing attitudes of a management which had increased shift quotas and refused to pay accident compensation, the workers marched to the city centre and besieged Party headquarters to loot the well stocked canteen. It is uncertain what happened next. Some say security service provocateurs ran amok, smashing shop windows and setting fire to buildings. By the end of the day 4 people were dead, 75 people were in hospital and over a million dollars worth of damage had been done. The price rises were withdrawn but 2,000 workers who had demonstrated were arrested. Most were soon released, but about 150 were severely beaten by the police, thrown out of their dormitories, dismissed from their jobs and, at illegal summary courts, were sent to jail with sentences ranging up to 10 years. Most were charged with 'collective responsibility' for damage; some were charged with crimes that had taken place after their arrest. All were the victims of 'simplified legal procedures' introduced two days before the price rises had been announced.

For many intellectuals 1976 was a turning point, a moment beyond which they could no longer give the Party the benefit of the doubt, the moment at which they realised the Party was not only incapable of reforming itself, but was barely in control of the state and the powers it claimed to lead. The realisation was painful, especially for those with a conscience who owed their living to state appointments, people who were expected to uphold the regime. Professor Stanisław Balbus, a literary theorist from the Institute of Polish Philology in Kraków's Jagiellonian University, picked out 1976 as his personal turning point:

Not until when Gierek dealt so brutally with the protesting workers of Radom and Ursus did I realise I could no longer live like this. I began to worry I was going crazy, that I'd become schizophrenic or insane if I didn't, once and for all, break from communism. I felt as though I was totally covered in shit and was searching for a way to shake it off. A while later, but a long time before the 'State of War', I handed over my Party membership card.<sup>9</sup>

Andrzejewski wrote a 'Message to the Victimised Participants of the Workers' Protest' which was widely publicised in Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Japan, in which he comforted the workers, expressed his 'unceasing hope' for them, his solidarity with them, and called for an end to intimidation by the state and Party. The letter had a profound impact on the Polish workers concerned, many of whom had studied Andrzejewski's works when they were at secondary school. Further, the letter seems to have galvanised the bulk of the Polish *inteligencja* into recognising that it could no longer remain silent in the face of such enormous and widespread official hypocrisy. In his essays Michnik had called for a new evolutionism, a new kind of positivism that would transform society by allowing it to organise itself by ignoring the state. He proposed to do this by a programme of working-class organisation, linked with intellectuals to defend the working class, and by making the public independent of the state in a wide range of activities.<sup>10</sup> Between them Andrzejewski and Michnik initiated a flood of *samizdat* material that far surpassed anything that Czechoslovakia or the Soviet Union produced. Without doubt the most important step in the development of an independent literary life and society was the establishment of KOR (Workers' Defence Committee) and the founding, that same year, of ROPCio (Movement for the Defence of Human and Civil Rights).

### 6.3 WRITERS AND INDEPENDENT SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

By the mid 1970s very few intellectuals would have taken exception to Michnik's description (echoing the earlier writings of Kolakowski and Miłosz) of Gierek's cultural policies:

The ruling communists are carrying out a long term cultural policy that is in essence a plan for the sovietization - devastation, 'totalitarisation' - of Polish culture. If they succeed in realising this programme, Poles will be transformed into a people of broken backs, captive minds, ravaged consciences. They will cease to be a nation and will become a collectivity of captives speaking a soviet dialect of Polish. The essence of this phenomenon - following Leszek Kolakowski, I call it 'sovietization' - is its attempt to mold consciousness so that any idea about changing the existing state of affairs will seem to be an irrational absurdity. This is

the most dangerous form of dictatorship, since it depends not only on depriving a person of physical freedom but on depriving the person of spiritual freedom as well. The soviet type of slave, after all, feels that he is free and is proud of his 'freedom'. In a classic sovietised system, culture is not a creative source of tension producing new ideas. It does not inspire critical thought or activate human inclinations towards freedom and authenticity. Instead, it is a dangerous instrument in the hands of a dictatorial power - more dangerous than open terror. Through organised lies, and through the mass media which become agents for the mass destruction of human hearts and minds, sovietised 'culture' blurs the boundaries between description and evaluation, between reality and its propagandistic image. It blunts social sensitivity and liquidates the capacity for autonomous thought. Sovietization entails the 'illiterisation' of society. For freedom of the press has meaning only where people truly know how to read; and one can meaningfully speak of freedom of expression only when a person is able to have his or her own opinion and to articulate it. *Homo sovieticus* is robbed of these faculties. He will not fight for freedom, for freedom is worthless to him. He will not even be able to explain the real meaning of this strange word freedom, for he is the unknowing captive of sovietised language. The sovietization of language is an essential stage in the sovietization of culture...<sup>11</sup>

With its anticipation of Konwicki and Kapuściński, this passage indicates not only the very deep seated nature of the cultural and human changes being wrought by 'socialism' under Gierek, but shows very clearly that Michnik considered the situation urgent and that even his proverbial patience was running out. But help was at hand.

Founded on 23 September 1976, KOR came into being to fight authoritarianism and to defend workers repressed or intimidated in trying to obtain their constitutional rights, rights which in theory were guaranteed by law but effectively denied by the Party. KOR sought to offer financial and legal support to those who were victimised by the authorities. Although its function was defined quite narrowly, its impact, coupled with the efforts of TKN, was to go far beyond its stated aims. The organisation had no common political purpose, indeed the diverse spread of its membership would have made this impossible. Among the founding members were the economist Lipiński, the actress Mikołajska, Andrzejewski, the Warsaw University lecturers Kuroń, Michnik and Lityński. By 1979 the group had grown to 34 members of whom no less than 13 had fought in the AK; most had spent time in prison for their oppositionist opinions; one of the founding members was a priest; several had spent time in Stalin's prisons. Many of the active members of KOR had been blacklisted for protest at changes to the

Polish Constitution, and many were *revizjonisćci* who had been in close contact for several years and knew each other's backgrounds and political thought processes very well. Andrzejewski, one of the first to sign the initial 'KOR Appeal', wrote a letter to inform the Sejm of KOR's existence:

The victims of the current repressions cannot count on any help or defence from those institutions whose mission is to help and defend them, such as the trade unions, whose role has been pathetic. Social welfare agencies also refuse their help. Given this situation, this function must now be assumed by the society in the interest of which those who are now being persecuted were protesting against the price increases. Society has no other means of defence against lawlessness than solidarity and mutual aid.<sup>12</sup>

By January 1977, 172 people including Konwicki and Brandys had petitioned the Sejm to investigate the violence following the strikes in Radom and Ursus. At the same time Andrzejewski, Brandys and several other writers launched the independent literary journal *Zapis* (record or list). The first issue contained an extract from an unpublished manuscript by Andrzejewski about the Russian novelist Boris Pasternak. This independent literary journal was to prove a highly influential venture and, along with the émigré publishing houses in Paris and London, was to give this growing and wide ranging dissident intellectual opposition a public voice. Before very long it had attracted to it the poet Woroszyński as editor.

KOR and ROPCiO between them produced an estimated 30 newspapers and broadsheets, and although they could not hope to rival the official media it is clear that they achieved massive circulation. There were a vast number of underground literary journals founded in the 1970s, many of which survived Martial Law and continued into the 1980s - indeed there were so many it is impossible to mention them all. Most were associated or connected in some way with KOR. It is thought that by the end of 1978 there were probably around ten major unofficial publications; by 1980 there were probably 25, the most important of these being: *Robotnik* (KOR, the largest and most successful, published in editions of 20-40,000 copies, but probably had a circulation 4-5 times greater); *Gazeta Polska* (KPN); *Biuletyn Informacyjny* (KOR-KSS bi-monthly); *Komunikat* (KOR); *Merkuriusz Krakowski i Świata* (Mercury of Kraków and

the World, KOR associates); *Opinia* (Opinion, ROPCiO, with a print run of about 8,000); *Rzeczpospolita* (devoted to pressurising for participation in elections and to forcing the recognition of national and patriotic anniversaries ignored by the government); *Postęp* (Progress); *Spotkania* (Meeting, produced by the Catholics of Lublin); *Robotnik Wybrzeża* (the journal of the Free Trades Unions of the Coast); *Puls* (KOR, Łódź); *Głos* (Voice, KOR, estimated print run of 2,000 copies per month); *Indeks* (from SKS - Student Solidarność Committee); *Bratniak* (ROPCiO); *Gospodarz* (The Farmer, ROPCiO); *Res Publica* (Republic - founded in 1979, and so respected that it was offered legalisation in 1987 if it would accept censorship); and *Aspekt* (a journal dealing with social and humanistic problems in a non-partisan manner produced by a group of Free Democrats). The journal *Bratniak* estimated in January 1979 that the leading 25 underground journals each had a circulation of about 40,000 per year, but it was likely that the readership for these publications once in circulation was at least three times this figure and that many others heard about the contents at second or third hand. These publications made up a very efficient, consistent, conscious alternative to the state-controlled monopoly of 'real' literary publications. In effect they constituted a growing civil society which as far as possible ignored official culture, institutions and media outlets. Indeed these were the cultural aspect of a society that set out to define and organise itself in opposition to the state.<sup>13</sup>

The authorities, however, were beginning to panic at the thought of students, intellectuals and workers combining against them. On the morning of 7 May 1977 Stanisław Pyjas, a 23 year old student of Polish philology at the Jagiellonian University, an active member of KOR collecting signatures for the KOR petition to the Sejm demanding an investigation into the security services, and who was last seen in the company of a UB officer, was found dead at the bottom of a staircase on Kraków's Ulica Szewska. In mid-May, in order to prevent them attending Pyjas' memorial service, police arrested Kuroń, Michnik, Lipski, Jan Lityński, Antoni Macierewicz, Piotr Haimski, Mirosław Chojecki, Seweryn Blumsztajn, Wojciech Ostrowski and Wojciech Arkuszewski - almost the whole of the KOR committee set up to monitor the Pyjas affair. They were charged with having 'contacts with hostile foreign organisations' and with 'transmitting literature likely to damage the People's Republic

of Poland'. Great show was made of gathering materials against them. Onyszkiewicz and Łazarski, who had both avoided arrest, travelled back from the funeral by car; on the way home their vehicle was rammed by a lorry, seriously injuring both occupants. Stanisław Pietraszko, the student who had seen Pyjas in the company of the UB and who might have identified the officer in court, was found dead in Lake Soliński before the police concluded their 'investigation'. The police made no arrests and Pyjas's killer was never caught. Amnesty International adopted all 10 arrested as Prisoners of Conscience; by the end of the year Amnesty had investigated 30 other cases of the infringement of civil liberties and human rights in Poland. International pressure, mainly through finance, was able to exert some influence over the Polish leadership since the economy was now tied to the west through trade and debt, and had signed the Helsinki Accords on human rights in 1975. Although no official reason was given, nine members of KOR and the five remaining prisoners from Radom and Ursus were released in July 1977 - without doubt the visits of US President Jimmy Carter and West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, and the publicity given by Amnesty International helped.<sup>14</sup>

KOR, working with British and Swedish émigré connections, issued *The Black Book on Polish Censorship* (1977) and the *Documents on Lawlessness* (April 1978). These publications were based on censorship documents smuggled out of Poland to Sweden the previous year by the Kraków censor Tomasz Strzyżewski and were to have an enormous impact on the opposition's understanding of the censorship system. For many years Poles had known that the 'grey areas' of their history were policed rigorously by the censor. But here in detailed rules and examples Poles could see for the first time exactly how far censorship controlled a whole range of cultural, political and social opinions. For many writers who had wavered, the revelations were a turning point in their relations with the authorities. Andrzejewski wrote an introduction to the documents in which he said:

We are dealing with one of the greatest revelations of the postwar period...The thesis that in our life lies and dis-information play the foremost role is confirmed again. Not only historical tradition, the ideological sphere and national culture are falsified. Elementary facts are also suppressed or distorted, even those whose

neglect is a crime against citizens - for instance the information that a popular floor tile commonly used by construction companies causes cancer and that chemicals employed in agriculture directly threaten human health. This suppression is performed apparently for the sake of social peace and order, to pacify society. But at the same time society has reason to feel anxious and keeping quiet or lying will not remove the causes of this anxiety. Documents of censorship also reveal another mystification. The censors have assumed the role of guardians and custodians of state secrets. According to periodical reports on the censor's activities the 'state Secrets' rubric is very full, but there is no definite indicator as to what these secrets might be. In about 700 pages of reports one could perhaps find only 6 or 7 interventions by the censor that were really linked to some state secret. All the documents clearly demonstrate that the censors continually justify their existence through the need to protect state secrets, and that they continue to create those secrets. It is now impossible to gain access to information on thousands of parasites afflicting cattle, on the hazards of certain kinds of labour in the chemical industry, the social and religious activities of the church, the names of writers and scientists - even the titles of their books and films - of historical events, of obituaries. It is not possible to investigate these things because they are state secrets...Convinced that the superior social interests require this decision we publish the following materials, revealing the precision of this anti-human machinery, this anti-citizen, anti-national device...<sup>15</sup>

By the end of 1977 Andrzejewski, Konwicki and Brandys were leading figures in a rapidly developing underground publishing movement. Andrzejewski in particular was very active in the opposition and was by now a highly respected writer, a 'father figure' to many young oppositionists. In 1978 they helped launch the journal *Krytyka* (KOR) with an editorial board that included Barańczak, Miklós Haraszti, Kuroń, Michnik, Roman Wojciechowski, Jan Walc, Konrad Bieliński, Lytyński and Stefan Starczewski. This journal paid particular attention to events and independent political and artistic thought in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The government did not know what to do about the underground publishers or about KOR. Nor did it know how to respond to TKN (the Flying University), which in January 1978 began openly to give unofficial lectures and seminars on the 'lost years', the 'grey areas', the blanks of official Polish history. Their intention was to challenge the Party's monopoly on education and on outlets for original thought and scholarship. Among the active membership of TKN were Barańczak, Bartoszewski, Bienkowski, Karpinski, Kijowski, Konwicki, Lipski, Mazowiecki, Michnik, Szczepański, Wisława Szymborska,

Woroszyński, Zagajewski.

The list of courses offered by TKN indicated very accurately the hunger that the intellectual community felt for genuine and open discussion of Poland's recent history. From personal memory I can recall that in the first three years of their existence TKN offered lectures on (among many other topics): Tradition, The Philosophy of Knowledge, Education and Social Life, The History of Russian Literature, The Political History of People's Poland, The History of Polish Economic Thought, Selected Problems of Polish Literature, The Political Geography of the Polish Underground, Social Problems in Education, Social Life and Centralised Power structures, The Polish Underground during the Nazi Occupation, Twentieth Century Polish Political Thought, The Peasant Movement in Modern Poland, Polish-Jewish relations since 1918, Contemporary History of the Catholic Church, The Art of Reading Newspapers, Polish Literature Abroad since 1939.

The lecturers of TKN, the membership of KOR, ROPCiO, the Free Trades Unions of the Coast, and the other growing independent social movements faced intermittent, brutal and sometimes fatal police actions. Almost everybody involved in these organisations was arrested and beaten at one time or another - some were harassed for months on end. Yet it must be said that the response of the authorities was far from totalitarian. The spectacular growth of the Polish independent social movements and the underground publishing movement through the late 1970s, and the fact that they were tolerated by the security services, are hard to explain, especially since throughout the late 1970s there had been a persistent rumour that the budget of the Ministry of Internal Security was larger than that of the Ministries for Health, Education and Culture combined.<sup>16</sup> It cannot be denied that the security services had the power and freedom of action to wipe out the entire independent social movement and to cover their tracks afterwards. Timothy Garton Ash has written:

There can be little doubt about the feasibility of repression. At a meeting in 1978 a Colonel of the security service was asked why the police did not destroy the underground publishers. 'We know all the addresses, we could destroy everything in one night,' he sighed, 'but the high-ups won't allow us to'. The 'high-ups', notably Gierok himself, seem to have thought that this flowering of intellectual opposition would not amount to a serious political threat, while tolerance might



win them a broader measure of co-operation from the intelligentsia. Perhaps this reflected their low regard for ideas in general.<sup>15</sup>

The underground press was tolerated for several reasons. Strange as it may seem, no law was being broken by these activities unless lecturers or writers deliberately slandered the USSR or the People's Republic of Poland. The regime, where they thought about it at all, seem to have regarded the underground as something of a safety valve. They knew they could move against the underground if they wanted, but it actually provided them with a great deal of information they needed, particularly about the economy and society, information classified as secret which even they could not get through 'approved' channels. The authorities also knew that even if they managed to contain the underground they stood very little chance of ever destroying it completely. Also, with the Polish born Senator Muskie and Zbigniew Brzezinski so well placed in the US administration, international pressure meant that any overwhelming move against the underground would almost certainly end foreign credit, thus promoting internal pressure for political change.

This did not mean there was any relief from illegal semi-official harassment, though. Most members of KOR and the larger underground publishing houses faced constant surveillance, unexplained arrest, 48-hours detention and sudden release without charge. There were other forms of harassment. Andrzejewski's role in KOR was highly public and there were various attempts to discredit him. In October 1976, for example, he was supposed to have circulated a letter to various institutions and organs of the state in support of legal recognition and equality for homosexuals. In Catholic and highly traditional Poland had he done any such thing it would have been sufficient to make him a social leper. However, thanks to the efforts of KOR, it soon emerged that his signature had been forged.<sup>18</sup> A short while later, Bohdan Rolinski wrote a poisonous article (*Życie Warszawy*, 8 January 1977) entitled 'Miał to być diament' ('It had to be a diamond' - a reference to Andrzejewski's novel) in which it was said that Andrzejewski was using the foreign press to spread lies about Poland. The article characterised Andrzejewski as a political chameleon, claimed that his actions were damaging to the moral and social life of Poland, and warned him to keep

away from the pseudo-intellectuals and politically bankrupt associates (utopianists, Trotskyites, social democrats, bourgeois anti-socialists, Zionists, Christian democrats) that he rubbed shoulders with in KOR. The government also initiated legal proceedings against Andrzejewski and the actress Mikołajska and they were both ordered to report to a Warsaw court to hand over to a state bank some two million zł they had collected for KOR. KOR refused to hand over the money and issued a public statement complaining that it was being harassed illegally. Andrzejewski and Mikołajska did not go to court and they were each as a result fined 5,000 zł - nearly double the monthly salary of a university teacher.

In 1977-78 the authorities became increasingly worried at the attitudes of the intellectuals as they moved to support KOR and other independent social initiatives. The Party interfered in the internal workings of ZLP when the Qualifications Committee, acting on a resolution from the PZPR membership of the union, rejected the application of Jacek Bierezin on the grounds that he was the editor of an uncensored and unofficial publication, *Puls*, and that his poetry had been published by the Instytut Literacki in Paris. Although this was not a strategy that could be applied very widely it effectively denied a writer access to the significant social and economic benefits of the profession. There were other ways of interfering too, and in the months following Pyjas's death PEN, ZLP, the more independent minded members of the IBL section of PAN, the Catholic hierarchy, and KIK all found themselves under increasing pressure. PEN and ZLP intervened on behalf of Lipski after he was arrested as part of the KOR round-up. Szczypiorski, an official of the Polish PEN Club and later a member of the Zarząd Główny (Management Committee) of ZLP, recalled the authorities' treatment of Woroszyński:

In 1978 the committee of the PEN Club awarded a prize for distinguished translations to Witold Woroszyński, an author who belonged to a group of oppositionists. The prize was sharply condemned by Gierek's team. The Minister for Culture and the Arts informed me as treasurer of the PEN Club that he would not allow a money prize to be given to Woroszyński. A literary organisation that enjoys considerable respect in society had to limit itself to handing on to the laureate a scroll of praise and an empty envelope without any bank notes. The PEN Club demonstrated against this decision and the incident was mentioned in the

world press. But this small example illustrates the methods of pressures widely and daily applied at the time against all the citizens of Poland.<sup>19</sup>

The *nowa fala* (new wave) of post-1968 poets, Barańczak, Kornhauser, Krynicki, Zagajewski, Tomasz Jastrun, Krzysztof Karasek, Antoni Pawlak, Ewa Lipska, Leszek Moczulski, Lech Dymarski and Jan Kelus. They consisted mainly, but not exclusively, of disillusioned young Marxists from the Teraz group in Kraków. These were the first generation brought up entirely within the People's Republic of Poland. They attempted to hold a mirror up to 'socialist reality' by following and recording the twists and turns of official language in the early 1970s. Their poetic experiments with the language of the regime and the language of the streets was given additional and practical depth by the prose works of Janusz Anderman. However after 1976 most of these writers were banned from official publication and helped form the *drugi obieg* (second circuit).

#### 6.4 KAZIMIERZ BRANDYS' WARSAW DIARY

It is possible to see the anguish of writers at this time in the work of Brandys. Brandys was another who had been a member of the Party from the end of the war. Disillusioned by the events of the 1950s he had nevertheless remained a Party member until 1966. Stanisław Balbus was to recall a conversation between Brandys and Tadeusz Kwiatkowski in 1956, in which Brandys had said:

Good God, look at what they've done with us! Who has? asked Kwiatkowski. THEY have. The communists, replied Brandys. I don't understand, said Kwiatkowski, how you couldn't have known what was going on. Weren't you home? I didn't have a clue. Well then, you should have gone to the first tradeswoman on the market square, and she would have told you.<sup>20</sup>

His earlier naivety and his guilt at his support for the Stalinists accounts for his desperate, even obsessive need to make sense of the world he saw around him, and the depth of his disappointment in the Party:

We talked about Poland, about ourselves and others, at night and during the day, drunk or sober. There was an obsessiveness in the talk that suggested an addiction. None of us could do without it, and our need had a psychological source, like an interest in the occult. Returning home I would often say, 'Today was good, today we linked the chain.' The important thing was to establish an isolated, closed circuit. With the help of words we wanted to create a space of our own, a space in which we could be free. Our pronouncements on society, people, and books supplanted the injustice around us.<sup>21</sup>

The appearance of Brandys' diaries was one of the opposition publishing high-spots of the closing years of the Gieriek regime. As a co-editor of *Zapis* and 'literary lecturer' for the Flying University, he felt he hazarded his life with these activities: he experienced a series of threatening letters and phone calls referring to possible Jewish ancestry and foreign connections. In December 1978 ZLP sent him a questionnaire:

- 1 *What form has your work with publishers taken in recent years?* For six years no publisher in the country has offered to sign a contract with me for a new book.
- 2 *With film?* For ten years all my proposals have been rejected (not by the film directors).
- 3 *With radio?* I have not received any offers for six years.
- 4 *With television?* No offers for seven years.
- 5 *What problems would you like to bring to the attention of the Executive Board of the Polish Writers' Union?* The censorship. The censorship's criminal actions with respect to persons and texts. The censorship, but not only as an agency. As an activity destructive of public property - the culture of the nation.<sup>22</sup>

After his withdrawal from official publishing, Brandys lived on his royalties and income from foreign translations. He was under no illusions about the kind of thing that Polish literature was becoming. For Brandys Polish literature lacked power because it had not passed through historical stages that other European literatures had enjoyed. Polish literature had writing about life on the manor and the estate, but since Poland had not had a court it missed the tightly plotted drama of court intrigue; it lacked a bourgeoisie, so lacked comedy of manners; it lacked literature showing the humbug and hypocrisy of middle-class ambition, or the ambiguities of working-class struggle and poverty simply because those classes were too small to generate interest or

literature; it lacked the genre of police and crime stories since the police represented alien authority; Poland lacked any colonial holdings, so its literature lacked adventure stories:

We had not passed through the school of historical plot development, which created the literature of the countries that possessed a court, a bourgeoisie, colonies, and police. The court was the school for intrigue, the bourgeoisie the school for careers, the colonies the school for adventure, and the police the school where crimes are reconstructed. Those are the fundamental elements of a story: intrigue, career, adventure, crime. Those countries produced Molière, Balzac, Defoe and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. In Poland there was no court like at Versailles, a central focus for grand intrigues; the bourgeoisie developed late here and was weak; we had no colonies (Robinson Crusoe could not have come into being in a country without colonies); and we had no criminal police of the Scotland Yard variety. But we had the Miracle...<sup>23</sup>

Polish literature remained 'constantly burdened by the legacy of the Romantic poets': they had bequeathed to literature 'the duty of creating a national miracle'.<sup>24</sup> Polish literature, Brandys said, was massively and overwhelmingly about the nation:

Buried between the lines of every text printed are the names one is not allowed to mention, the facts about which one remains silent. The places and dates blotted from history create a dead zone where semi-poets gave interviews to semi-journalists and express their semi-truths to their semi-readers.<sup>25</sup>

Brandys had already identified what censorship and the resulting retreat from official media would do to Polish letters, but perhaps perversely he made no secret of his view that the clash between writers and state was an opportunity to renew the Polish writing elite. He saw the retreat from official publishing as the avoidance of officially sanctioned and directed mass culture, 'creativity that is bought and paid for'. He saw the exclusivity of underground literature as the ambiguous renewal of energy and the ancient vitality of Polish letters. The status of writer was offered by the authorities to anyone who satisfied conditions stipulated by the authorities, he said, but a writer was a person who 'did not accept offers'.<sup>26</sup>

Brandys was also well aware of the counter-arguments. If Polish literature had

been built up despite the prevailing authorities of the previous 100 years, by smuggling in its messages through the chinks in the system, and had thrived on secrecy and martyrdom, then surely the police were doing it a great favour by driving it underground. Brandys saw the complexity and danger of this argument, and wondered if a cultural/political deformation was in the process of becoming a national norm. He asked: 'Are we deceiving the tyrant or is the tyrant deceiving us?' He countered by saying that by writing as he pleased in *Zapis* he was refusing to be driven underground, was coming out into the open, refusing to allow his work to be distorted, was trying to find personal literary forms:

We are deviating from our years of being on the defensive, from the game we have been playing with our creative work. By employing tactics to deceive the tyrant, we were defending the last living values in our culture, we were ensuring their endurance, albeit in the form of allusions and sub-texts. In choosing open battle, we deprive ourselves of that possibility.<sup>27</sup>

In assessing Poland's inward-looking literary patrimony and its intersection with political life, Kazimierz Brandys complained that since the figure of the hero was automatically assumed to stand for Poland, it became impossible even in late twentieth century Polish writing to present human passion in anything like its full complexity. For him the question of what Polish literature 'knew' hinged upon whether it was, or ever could be, universal and available to outsiders, or whether it would remain purely local. Brandys has attempted something unusual in Polish literature in that he has tried to reveal the ways in which Polish national consciousness manifested itself - a kind of literary national pathology. For Brandys, though he could hardly expect it of any literature in any massive or thorough way, it was important that Polish literature knew little or nothing of the inner workings of power, parties, ideologies and political struggle, banking and economics, but knew much more of sacrifice in the name of the nation. He said bluntly that Poles were the children of the nation rather than the products of civilisation. Their lack of freedom through the partitions had meant that their knowledge of the world was gained through catastrophic uprisings, military

defeat, exile, oppression and conspiracy. He described the experience of living within the 'national myth' as the very opposite of the 'individual's relation to civilisation':

There is no chance to reveal the social, biological, and metaphysical components of life if they cannot be developed to the full in the life of the hero, if one must stop before the final consequences. One mustn't sink into madness, mustn't betray, mustn't kill, mustn't bring dishonour on oneself by one's weakness - how can one under such conditions avoid some feeble compromise, even if purely literary?...The result: society has ceased to know itself...Poland has suffered from a provincial complex made up of bitterness, pride and a somewhat perverse elitism...in these admonitions and allusions, this muttering which is incomprehensible to the uninitiated, there is a note of truth. Truth which is no less true for not being understood by strangers - in general, one does not grasp the truths that one has not been able to experience. And once again doubts arise: are these local truths or universal?<sup>28</sup>

Brandys dubbed this complex of literature, language, politics, resistance and deception *nierzeczywistość Polski* (Polish unreality). Like Konwicki, Brandys was well aware that the younger generation blamed the former advocates of *socrealizm* for the imposition of 'socialism'. Trying to explain the 1950s, or his own biography, to one such student of literature, himself a product of 'Polish unreality', Brandys wrote:

I realised that it was futile. I would not be able to re-create those issues, to re-produce them as a whole or break them down into their component parts. They seemed enigmatic to me too. Each time I attempt to arrive at some formulation, my thinking snaps in two, stopped by that 'contradictory doubleness' I have written of elsewhere. For example, 'I didn't know what was happening because I was deceived' provokes the immediate reply, 'I was deceived because I didn't know what was really happening'. But at the same time neither of those two sentences says everything. They would both require numerous addenda, references to the war years, the pre-war years, to my own biography and that of other people, as well as to many ideas, like social reconstruction, revolution, socialism, and still other ideas from another tradition, like organic work, making up for lost time in a civilisation's development, reform, evolution. He wouldn't have understood any of it.<sup>29</sup>

## 6.5 TOWARDS SOLIDARNOŚĆ

By the late 1970s the opposition was having enormous difficulty in framing protest at the policies and developments of Gierek's 'Second Poland'. For most Poles there was no practical or imaginable alternative to Gierek's ideology-less brand of Stalinism and many sincerely believed that what they were experiencing was socialism. Kisielewski, the great and bitterly accurate satirist and observer of Polish life, had the wit to name things for what they were. Kisielewski located Gierek's achievement in hiding the damage he had done to Polish society within the flow of paper money and the empty slogans of the industrial 'Great Leap Forward'. He noted that Gierek had 'made Polish Marxist socialism meaningless', and dared to wonder why this was hardly noticed by the workers and was not a matter of great concern to any but a few dedicated oppositionist intellectuals. Barańczak too noticed this. He said in an interview:

We were strongly influenced by Herbert and Miłosz, we just adored them. But there was something missing, you know, there was something missing because they were telling about moralistic problems without noticing that language is a part of morality. I mean they didn't notice the significance of language in the twentieth century...And for us the most interesting thing was not pure language but 'dirty' language, language spoiled and misused...that of mass media, of political speeches, posters, things like that.<sup>30</sup>

In general, though, the language to register these changes and frame a reply that made political and social sense in the twentieth century rather than the eighteenth century was missing. Only the 'dirty language' of the Party remained, the language of protest, the language of public debate, the language of politics and morality, or criticism had been crippled or killed by the Party itself. Failing of any other outlet, the language of protest moved further and further to the right, to nationalism, to chauvinism and to anti-Semitism: it harked back increasingly to solutions that were more appropriate to a bygone age.<sup>31</sup>

Oppositionist intellectuals had done their best to exhume other possibilities from Poland's past, looking at the socialist elements in Piłsudski's past, at the history of the old PPS: the intellectuals of KOR, TKN and ROPCiO showed that the Party was



steadily eroding the content of the language of socialism, slowly but surely ritualising reaction to crisis and destroying the moral basis of the PZPR's own authority. But it was in reaching for an alternative that KOR lost its leadership: by this stage the workers had lost all faith in what they understood to be 'socialism', but were prepared to cooperate with and to use the intellectuals in order to get rid of the regime.

The crucial year of 1968 had put paid to the last gleanings of independent socialist thought and opposition. Now, in framing their protest and their alternative vision, workers tended to turn towards those aspects of their collective past that had survived in folk history and Polish mythology - particularly that of the Church. The alternative to the PZPR was seen in the right-leaning, nationalist, Catholic and conservative organisations of ROPCiO, KPN, Młoda Polska (Young Poland movement), Znak, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, and KIK (Clubs of the Catholic Intelligentsia), or in the rather left-leaning but un-aligned KOR and perhaps in the idea of an independent trades union movement. It was with considerable ease that the workers wedded themselves to the nineteenth century ethos of the insurrectionary *szlachta*, seeing themselves as the noble national heroes leading the country out of ruinous 'socialist' oppression. To this they added the ideology of the pre-war National Democracy Party, with its insistence upon dissolving class conflict in the name of Polishness in order to present a united front against Jews and 'foreigner races'. KPN, in particular, gathered members on the basis of getting rid of 'socialists' and Jews to establish a new authoritarian 'Polish regime', strongly identified with Poland's military past, and saw itself as embodying the 'true Polish Catholic spirit'. Clear traces of these ideas can be found in the Church and within the Party - indeed much of the move towards the old right-wing position seems to have been inspired by the state security services and ZBoWiD (Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy) - and to some degree these ideas permeated the whole of Polish society during 1980-81. It is clear that the Party much preferred to deal with a right wing that it could manipulate rather than a left wing which it could not control.<sup>32</sup>

The late 1970s was a period of intense confusion and demoralisation for the artistic community. It is important to realise that not all writers and intellectuals were involved with KOR. This organisation, and indeed the whole of the active opposition movement, represented only a small proportion of the creative *inteligencja*. Many

writers (particularly the younger ones) were heading in the opposite direction, into an increasingly private world of family, friends, overseas publication and foreign readership. Many seem to have abandoned creative work altogether, or to have ceased offering work for publication.<sup>33</sup> By the late 1970s the *nowa fala* was in the process of being supplanted by the younger 1950s-born New Privacy poets, Krystyna Lars, Urszula Benka, Aleksander Jurewicz, Anna Czekanowicz, Tadeusz Żukowski, Stanisław Esden-Tempski, Katarzyna Boruń, Maria Korusiewicz, Grzegorz Musiał, Ryszard Grzyb, Włodzimierz Pawlak, Zbigniew Machej, Andrzej Sosnowski. They attempted to find a new private voice, avoiding the public private division foisted onto poetry by the regime, but they did so at a time when it was clear that the public was moving not into privacy as such, but into an alternative, parallel organisation of civil life. The withdrawal from even unofficial publishing ventures went hand in hand with a deeply felt effort to re-define the language in which official reality was presented by withholding cooperation from official public life and by fostering privacy, spirituality, the family and their immediate circle of friends. The award of the Nobel Prize for literature to Czesław Miłosz and the election of a Polish Pope, restored public life to the agenda in Poland. These events followed closely by the very public life of *Solidarność* and the resurrection of civil society that accompanied it contradicted much of what the New Privacy poets had been exploring and of this group only Bronisław Maj and Jan Polkowski managed to hold a reading public after 1980-81.

There can be little doubt that the election of the Polish Cardinal Karol Wojtyła as Pope Jan Paweł II in October 1978, and his visit to Poland in 1979, had an enormous impact upon the Polish consciousness. His election altered the situation by transforming what had been an internal Polish matter into a question of the relations between the Polish state and the Vatican state. Wojtyła was not only the Polish Pope, he was also a poet and dramatist who knew the Kraków intellectual and creative *milieu* very well. Poland's internal political life was further complicated when, in 1980, Miłosz, who had written a classic study of the impact of 'socialism' on the writers of his acquaintance, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. This award to an émigré Pole who was still actively engaged in Polish culture, coupled with the elevation of Wojtyła, had a considerable impact on the self-confidence of both ordinary Catholic

workers and Polish intellectuals. The public elevation of the Church and the writing community was a dangerous and heady business since it confirmed and legitimised the independent social movement. Since the election of a Pope and the award of the Nobel prize were international events, the Party stood little chance of controlling their effect on society. KOR took the opportunity to publish the first of the new Pope's encyclicals, *Redemptor Hominis*, and to remind readers of the moral and spiritual values that the Church, KOR and all dissidents were struggling to establish in Poland. A new-found confidence, literary and religious, reinforced the feelings and opinions that were already working to fuel a mood of moral protest against the Party.<sup>34</sup>

By the late 1970s there was a great deal of overlap between the various independent social organisations. Henry Wujec, Wojciech Arkuszewski and Wojciech Ostrowski, for example, were members of KOR and of the Warsaw KIK and sometimes found it difficult to reconcile membership of KOR with their desire not to bring down reprisals on KIK. Even in Pax things were changing: Anka Kowalska, a poet educated at KUL, worked as an editor at PAX, and operated as a link between Pax dissidents and KOR. Although she resigned her membership of Pax in March 1968 she retained her job as an editor with Pax but also edited KOR's illegal *Communiqué* and *Information Bulletin*. Only in the university chaplaincy in Gdańsk was there any real friction between the membership of KOR and the more overtly Catholic oppositionists. The university ministries in Lublin and Gdańsk were particularly well developed. In Lublin there were good relations between the ministry and KOR, though in the late 1970s many students in Lublin, perhaps reflecting the proximity of KUL and the Church's suspicion of the intellectuals in KOR, chose to put their energies into ROPCiO, Młoda Polska (Young Poland) and the magazine *Spotkania*. In Gdańsk it was not so simple. There, although Bogdan Borusiewicz was to become a very active member of KOR and friendly relations were to develop between KOR, Młoda Polska and the underground journal *Bratniak*, relations between KOR and the academic ministry were far from constructive. The Gdańsk academic ministry students were pietistic, noisy, drunken, boorish, aggressive, anti-Semitic and xenophobic: they published sections of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and chose as their hero Jędrzych Giertych, an emigré politician and writer of the extreme nationalist right wing

of the Endecja. In addition there was another Gdańsk group, ostentatious Catholic fascists called Defence of Life, Family and the Nation, whose main platforms were anti-Semitism, anti-abortion, anti-democracy and anti-socialism.<sup>35</sup>

By August 1980 Gierek's plans were in ruins. There were shortages of coal, oil, electricity, copper, petrol, flour, animal feed, meat, milk, cement, fertilisers. Even with a very good harvest much of the crop would be lost because of shortages in spare parts for tractors and farm machinery. On the black market the price for one US dollar had risen by over 800 percent between 1976-80. In March 1980 the government suspended its international debt (around \$29,000,000,000) and declared it would repay only the interest. It was clear that the authorities would have to place the economy on a more rational footing, but to do this they needed to reduce the massive inflationary pressures they had created. As part of a vague plan to 're-deploy labour' and introduce budgetary cuts with 1,200,000 redundancies, in July 1980 the government announced the withdrawal of subsidies on food (held static since 1970) and the introduction of commercial food prices, raising some food prices by 60-100 per cent, milk and bread by 200-300 percent.<sup>36</sup>

Workers in the major industrial enterprises had already been squeezed through the raising of productivity norms and the abandonment of safe working practices. They knew they would have to wait ten or fifteen years for a flat of their own or before they could expect to own a car - even a Trabant. Now they were expected to take a massive drop in their standard of living. At the same time the censors prevented cases of brutality, corruption and embezzlement in high places, along with the devastating reports of how ordinary Poles actually lived, from appearing in print. An explosion of social protest was inevitable, but this time, mainly because of the Party's failures in 1976, working class protest was informed and advised by experienced and determined political oppositionists. This time the workers, intellectuals, farmers and students were far closer than they ever had been. Within a very short period after the first shipyard strikes in Gdańsk Solidarność had a membership of around 10 million, student Solidarność had a membership of over half a million and Rural Solidarność had a membership of over 3 million.

## NOTES

- 1 C.Barker & K.Weber, *Solidarność From Gdańsk to Military Repression*, International Socialism, London, 1982, pp.111-120. A.Małachowski spent 1961 travelling around Poland talking to the new Poles of the People's Republic. It did not take much reading between the lines to see that the problems he described (even if they had historical roots) were clear and overwhelming: peasant/workers had no great understanding of what was happening to them in moving from the land into the factories, local managers were unable to raise productivity, failures to modernise effectively in industry (particularly mining), failure to help farmers improve yields, and the failure of both the drive to collectivise farming and to motivate the state-controlled cooperative sector were all inter-linked: the new lands to the west were being absorbed at a remarkable rate and were steadily modernising themselves from the ruins of old Germany, but the old Polish lands to the east were still lagging perhaps 50-100 years behind in work practices, productivity and general 'awareness of modernity'. These problems were not entirely of the Party's making, but the Party was not appreciative of the human difficulties, was not coordinating change effectively. A.Małachowski, *Rzeczniepospolita*, Iskry, Warsaw, 1964.
- 2 All the figures quoted here are derived from: D.M.Nuti, 'The Polish Crisis: Economic Factors and Constraints', in: R.Miliband & J.Saville (eds.), *Socialist Register 1981*, Merlin Press, London, 1981, pp.104-143. Nuti is making use of official statistics derived from: *Rocznik statystyczny 1980*, GUS, Warsaw, 1980; *Rocznik statystyczny 1981*, GUS, Warsaw, 1981, and *Rządowy raport o stanie gospodarki*, Nakładem Trybuny Ludu, Warsaw, July 1981. There is no shortage of commentary and statistics on the Polish financial crisis of 1980-81 in the pages of *The Financial Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Economist*, but see also: A.Nove et al. (eds.), *The East European Economies in the 1970s*, Butterworth, London, 1982, pp.91-138.
- 3 O.MacDonald, 'The Polish Vortex: Solidarity and Socialism', in: T.Ali (ed.), *The Stalinist Legacy: Its Impact on 20th Century World Politics*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1984, p.472.
- 4 Z.Herbert, 'Mr Cogito's Thoughts on Hell' (from: *Pan cogito*, Czytelnik, Warsaw, 1974), *Selected Poems*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977, pp.60-1.
- 5 L.Kołakowski, 'Tezy o nadziei i beznadziejności', *Kultura*, Paris, 6/285, June 1971, pp.3-21
- 6 R.Hammer, 'Poland: Its Writers and the Censor', *Index on Censorship*, vol.4, no.1, 1975, p.30.
- 7 The book was eventually published by the émigré and underground press: J.Andrzejewski, *Miazga*, NOWa, Warsaw, 1979, and later by Polonia Book Fund, London, 1981. It was published officially by PIW, Warsaw, 1982.
- 8 Those blacklisted in 1976 for their protests at the constitutional changes: Jerzy Andrzejewski, Stanisław Barańczak, Jacek Bocheński, Kazimierz Brandys, Marian Brandys, Witold Dąbrowski, Andrzej Drawicz (translator of Russian literature), Jerzy Ficowski, Józef Hen, Zbigniew Herbert, Andrzej Kijowski, Stefan Kisielewski, Jacek Kleyff (actor and author), Jonasz Kofta (actor and author), Julian Kornhauser, Wanda Leopold, Edward Lipiński (economist), Jan Józef

- Lipski, Andrzej Mandalian, Jerzy Markuszewski, Ryszard Matuszewski, Artur Międzyrzycki, Halina Mikołajska (actress), Wojciech Młynarski, Zygmunt Mycielski (music critic), Marek Nowakowski, Jan Pieszczachowicz, Jan Piętrzak, Antoni Słonimski, Michał Sprusiński, Jan Józef Szczepański, Irena Szymańska, Stanisław Tym, Jerzy Waldorf (music critic), Wanda Wilkomirska (violinist), Wiktor Woroszyński, Adam Zagajewski. J.L. Curry, *The Black Book on Polish Censorship*, Vintage Books, New York, 1984, pp.385-6.
- 9 S.Balbus, 'The Great Silence of the Black Hole: Literature in the Face of Communism', in: A.Michajłow & W.Paławski (eds.), *Literary Galicia: From Post-War to Post-Modern*, Oficyna Literacka, Kraków, 1991, pp.48-9.
  - 10 A.Michnik, 'A New Evolutionism' (1976) in: *Letters From Prison and Other Essays*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1985, pp.135-148.
  - 11 A.Michnik, *The Church and The Left*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1993, p.156.
  - 12 J.J.Lipski, *KOR: A History of the Workers' Defence Committee in Poland 1976-1981*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1985, pp.467-8. It is as well to stress both the wide variety of opinion represented by KOR, and also the 'literary' input among the founding membership: Jerzy Andrzejewski, novelist (see appendix two for fuller biographical details); Stanisław Barańczak, poet and lecturer, (see appendix two); Ludwik Cohn, attorney, took part in the defence of Warsaw in 1920 and again in September 1939. Imprisoned as a POW by the Nazis, three times decorated with the Cross of Valour. A pre-war activist, a member of the PPS in the left wing Stanisław Dubois faction. After the war he was a member of underground socialist party PPS-WRN and was imprisoned by the post-war regime: 1952-62 an active member of the Club of the Crooked Circle; Jacek Kuroń, educated as a historian. Twice expelled from the PZPR, once in 1955 and again in 1965. Spent almost six years in jail (see appendix two); Edward Lipiński, born in 1888, an economist, historian and socialist since 1906. A member of PAN. During the occupation he directed the underground Central Trade School. In 1948 a member of the PPS and then unwillingly a member of the PZPR. Probably the only member of KOR to still hold a Party card: 1956-62 an activist in the Club of the Crooked Circle; Jan Józef Lipski, a literary critic and historian (see Appendix One); Antoni Macierewicz, a historian and scout activist; Piotr Naimski, a biochemist and scoutmaster; Antoni Pajdak, an attorney at law, an ex-Pilsudski legionnaire, an active trades unionist and member of the inter-war PPS, a civilian member of the underground Polish government during the occupation, arrested by the Soviets in 1945, imprisoned in Moscow, returned to Poland in 1956; Józef Rybicki, a classical philologist and bibliophile. Before the war a director of education, a soldier in 1920 and 1939, an officer in the AK, decorated with the Virtuti Militari Silver Cross, a member of WiN (an underground anti-socialist organisation), imprisoned after the war, later a member of the Episcopal anti-alcoholism commission, in 1968 outspoken in his claims that Polish society had not yet addressed the problem of its anti-Semitism but that the middle of an anti-Semitic purge was not the time to do so; Aniela Steinsbergowa, an attorney who defended workers between the wars, defended members of the AK, author of a memoir about the rehabilitation of the AK published in Paris, an activist of the

PPS and a member of the Club of the Crooked Circle; Adam Szczypiorski, a professor of demographic history in PAN. An active member of PPS, after the war a director of education in the new western territories; Reverend Jan Zieja, a social activist, chaplain to the underground resistance during the war, decorated with the *Virtuti Militari* Silver Cross. Of no particular political persuasion, but anti-totalitarian, in favour of democracy and independence; Wojciech Ziemiński, technical editor and author on print graphics. Captured in France by the Nazis while attempting to join the allies he was sent to a forced labour camp. An active member of the Club of the Crooked Circle; Mirosław Chojecki, a chemist and scout activist; Emil Morgiewicz, a journalist, member of the underground Ruch organisation. Imprisoned 1970-72, reported on conditions in jail to Amnesty International; Waław Zawadzki, an expert in the field of publishing, ex-director of Wiedza publishing house and ex deputy editor in chief of PIW the State Publishing Institute (see appendix two); Bogdan Borusiewicz a Catholic historian from Gdańsk associated with the University Academic Ministry; Józef Śreniowski, a sociologist and ethnographer in Łódź, a student demonstrator in 1968; Anka Kowalska, a poet and editor at the Pax publishing house (see appendix two); Stefan Kaczorowski, attorney, former secretary-general of the Christian Democrat Party, took part in the Warsaw uprising, was Chairman of the wartime Warsaw city Board of Labour. After the war was active in the *odrodzenie* movement. Kaczorowski' first move on joining KOR was to denounce Jacek Kuron as a crypto-communist and ask for his removal (Kisielewski was apparently to make the same request some time later. Lipski, p.58) Kaczorowski left KOR shortly afterwards to join ROPCiO; Wojciech Onyszkiewicz, a historian and scout activist, later an editor of *Robotnik*. It is interesting to note that in KOR the ultra left wing ex-scouts of the Walterite group (Michnik, Kuroń, Modzelewski etc) met the rather right of centre ex-scouts of the Warsaw Black Troop. This Warsaw scout troop was named after the colour of their neckerchiefs, and met several times a year to discuss current events. The group harked back to the pre-war Baden-Powell tradition of scouting and to the AK: Antoni Macierewicz, Piotr Naimski, Wojciech Onyszkiewicz and Andrzej Celiński, all became members of KOR. The Black Troop also provided two editors (Ludwik Dorn and Urszula Doroszeńska) for the magazine *Głos*, and Marian Barański the TKN lecturer. As KOR grew, its membership did not become less diverse, however, it must be said that workers (and Wałęsa is a typical example) always regarded KOR activists as useful but untrustworthy. They could see only that KOR was mainly populated by Marxist members of a class they regarded as the *przywilejencja*.

- 13 J.J.Lipski, *KOR: Worker's Defense Committee in Poland: 1976-81*, Berkeley, 1985, p.305; D.M.Nuti, 'The Polish Crisis: Economic Factors and Constraints', *The Socialist Register 1981*, R.Miliband & J.Saville (eds.), 1981, p.121. The most important of the other journals were: *Zapis* (KOR, produced via *Index on Censorship* in London), *Sygnal* (Kraków SKS), *Przegląd*, *Wiadomości Naukowe*, *Głosno* (Kraków), *Placówka* (KOR), *Biuletyn Dolnośląski* (Lower Silesian Bulletin), and *Droga* (KPN). In addition to these the émigré journals *Kultura* (Paris: 10,000 copies plus 2,500 copies of a regular broadsheet), *Aneks* (Sweden: more than 40 publications by 1986), and the Brussels based *Solidarność* journal

*Biuletyn Informacyjny* (130 editions by 1985). The West German-based radio stations Radio Free Europe, Liberty, and Voice of America also became important clandestine sources of information. Lipski estimated that in the late 1970s, every month close to 100,000 copies of uncensored journals, newspapers, broadsheets and magazines appeared in Poland.

- 14 On the evening of his death a fellow student had seen Pyjas 'escorted' by Marian Palamarz, a member of the Security Service in charge of the section monitoring student affairs. Pyjas, like other members of KOR, had received threats of violence and there had been at least one attempt by the security services to blacken his reputation among his fellow students by circulating a letter in which he was named as a police informer. The public prosecutor refused to allow an independent medical inquiry and said a post-mortem showed Pyjas had choked to death from a cut lip sustained after falling down the stairs while drunk. It was clear that Pyjas had been beaten (probably by the security service) and then placed at the bottom of the stairs to make it look as if he had fallen. He had choked to death on blood not from a cut lip, but from serious injuries to his head. He had taken at least two hours to die. Nobody in the house had heard any disturbance in the night: as far as Pyjas' friends could say he had known no-one in the house, nobody in the house admitted to knowing Pyjas, and no reason was ever established for his presence there. 'Poland (Polish People's Republic)', *Amnesty International Report: 1977*, Amnesty International Press, London, 1977, pp.259-263. The incident is a repeated touchstone for J.J.Lipski in *KOR*, 1985. After his visit President Carter praised Poland's response to the Helsinki Accords on human rights and announced a further \$200,000,000 in trade credits.
- 15 J.J.Lipski, *KOR*, p.138. Introduction to *Czarna księga cenzury PRL*, ANEKS, London, 1977. J.L.Curry, *The Black Book on Polish Censorship*, Vintage Books, New York, 1984. Copies of the book were distributed to the Polish Academy of Learning, Polish PEN, the Union of Artists and Cultural Workers, ZLP, the Film-makers Association, the Film and Theatre Artists' Association, the Composers' Union, the Union of Visual Artists, the Historical Society, the Economists' Society, the Sociological Society, the Philosophical Society, the Social Anti-Alcohol Committee and the Association of Journalists.
- 16 J.Karpiński, *Countdown*, Karz-Kohl, New York, 1982, p.175.
- 17 T.G.Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1983, p.19. Also: D.Singer, *The Road To Gdańsk: Poland and the USSR*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1982, p.282 n.1.
- 18 J.J.Lipski, *KOR*, p.138.
- 19 A.Szczypiorski, *Poland's Ordeal: The View from Within*, Croom Helm, London, 1982, p.93. On the Bierezin affair and on the various independent organisations' defence of KOR members see: Lipski, *KOR*, pp.154-158, 312.
- 20 S.Balbus, 'The Great Silence of the Black Hole: Literature in the Face of Communism', in: A.Michajłow & W.Pačławski (eds.), *Literary Galicia: From Post-War to Post-Modern*, 1991, p.41.
- 21 K.Brandys, *Paris, New York 1982-84*, Random House, New York, 1984, p.140.
- 22 K.Brandys, *Warsaw Diary 1978-81*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1982, p.31.
- 23 K.Brandys, *A Warsaw Diary: 1978-81*, 1984, p.26.



- 24 *Ibid.*, pp.25-6.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p.42.
- 26 *Ibid.*, pp.25-6.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p.42.
- 28 *Ibid.*, pp.60-1.
- 29 K.Brandys, *A Question of Reality*, Blond & Briggs, London, 1981, pp.17-8.
- 30 S.Barańczak, 'Basically Impossible', in: T.Nyczek (ed.), *Humps & Wings: Polish Poetry since '68*, Invisible City 1, San Francisco & Los Angeles, 1982, rear cover and p.35.
- 31 S.Kisielewski, 'The School of Moronism or GTM', (*Kultura*, Paris, July-August, 1979) in: A.Brumberg (ed.), *Poland Genesis of a Revolution*, Vintage, New York, 1983, pp.281-4).
- 32 N.Ascherson, *The Polish August*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1981, p.114; *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, vol.4, nos.4-6, 1981, p.15.
- 33 See: C.Tighe, 'Andrzej D: Polish Poet', *Poetry Wales*, vol.23, no.4, pp.10-12.
- 34 Although Polish literature is not regarded as a 'world literature' and the names of even the most distinguished Polish writers remain almost unknown outside Poland, Miłosz was not the first Polish Nobel laureate: Henryk Sienkiewicz (1905), Władysław Reymont (1925), Isaac Bashevis Singer (1978) had all been Nobel winners before him.
- 35 Lipski, pp.19-20. The difference between the ministries in the two towns may be explained by the fact that Gdańsk had a far higher number of amnestied victims of Stalin's jails than any other town in Poland and also by the fact that Gdańsk university, which opened only in 1973, was a very rough and ready place with more than its fair share of teething problems - namely a great deal of corruption, professional rivalry among frustrated provincial academics, and intense police surveillance.
- 36 C.Barker & K.Weber, *Solidarność: From Gdańsk to Military Repression*, International Socialism, London 1982; also: D.M.Nuti, 'The Polish Crisis: Economic Factors and Constraints', in: R.Miliband & J.Saville (eds.), *Socialist Register 1981*, 1981.

## SEVEN

RYSZARD KAPUŚCIŃSKI: *THE EMPEROR*

Between western and eastern Europe - that is, at least Poland - there appears a certain distinct asymmetricality. In Poland the yearnings and ideas are European, but the civilisation is Asiatic: the means of production; the bureaucratic system; the appearance of the cities, towns and villages; the behaviour of the mob (when it is not a political, civic mob, but a throng hunting down a pair of shoes). This demonstrates how thin the crust of the élite's dream about Europe actually is, or, at least, how very Asiatic the rump attached to a European head.

Adam Zagajewski, *Solidarity, Solitude*, 1990.

The son of a village schoolmaster who had been driven from central Poland by poverty and unemployment to a post on the eastern Polish frontiers, Ryszard Kapuściński was born on 4 March 1932, in Pińsk, Polesia. It was a very underdeveloped area of eastern Poland - 'even poorer than Galicia - the Asia of Europe'. It was a town, Kapuściński was later to recall, of dirt roads, horse-drawn carts and wandering chickens; it had three motor cars, but lacked tarmac, concrete and telephones. Like most children in that part of Poland at that time, Kapuściński wore bark instead of shoes and ate flour and water pastries instead of meat and vegetables. The main language spoken in this area was Białorus (White Russian), along with Polish, Yiddish, Ukrainian, Russian, Lithuanian and German. The ethnic mix in Pińsk was 75 per cent Jewish, with substantial minorities of Moslem Tartars, Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, Armenians. It was a rich mix even by the standards of the old Polish Commonwealth. But it was a remarkably peaceful and harmonious community.

Pińsk was occupied by the Soviet Union in 1939. Kapuściński's father, an officer in the Polish army and decorated with the Cross of Valour, noted that Poles who did

not get a job with the Soviet administration or join the Party were liable for deportation to the GULAG. He decided that he and his family should move away as soon as possible and thus began a period in which the Kapuściński family 'wandered'. They eventually moved to a village near Warsaw. Kapuściński's father was by then involved in the resistance and they hid with another underground family. After a year the authorities came looking for them and they were forced to move, this time to a small tenement block next to the Warsaw ghetto. As a child Kapuściński and his friends used to hide in the bushes to watch the Nazi firing squads at work, and would report back to his father on the numbers they had seen executed.

After the war, with Warsaw totally destroyed by the Nazis and return to Soviet Pińsk unacceptable, the Kapuściński family wandered again. They eventually returned to Warsaw and took over a small fire-damaged building, which was all the shelter they could find in the ruins of the capital. Kapuściński's father became a stock clerk in a construction firm. Kapuściński's education during the immediate post-war period was chaotic: he has spoken of a ruined classroom without roof or ceiling, of fifty boys to a class with only one text book (Stalin's *The Problems of Leninism* in Russian) which they took turns at reading aloud. Kapuściński's early years in Pińsk had a lasting effect on his vision of the world:

Because Pińsk, even though borrowing so much from Europe, was not part of Europe. It was not until I was seven years old that I saw my first train. I didn't have a telephone until I was thirty, and I am still learning how to use it. People are always having to stop me as I'm half way through the door on my way to deliver a message to someone who might live miles away because it simply doesn't occur to me to dial a number. I'm made uneasy by technology, I don't trust it, I'm uncomfortable around it. But I am not uncomfortable in the Third World. I have always rediscovered my home, rediscovered Pińsk in Africa, in Asia, in Latin America. In Ethiopia I am at home. Amid poverty I am at home. I know what the life means. The society of Polesia was, really, a feudal one, a tribal society: it prepared me for Africa. You know sometimes I am asked if I will leave Poland, if I will emigrate. And my reply, half joking, is always the same: there is no need to emigrate. I already have. I am an emigrant from Pinsk, from this other world.<sup>1</sup>

His first poems were published in the Pax-Catholic daily newspaper *Ślowo Powszechne*, *Odrodzenie* and *Twórczość* when he was still a High School student. In

1948 Kapuściński joined ZMS (Union of Socialist Youth) and graduated from High School in 1950. It was his ambition to study philosophy:

At that time there were no philosophy courses. Traditional philosophy had been dismissed as bourgeois, and, while there were lecturers in philosophy, the only philosophy they could teach was bourgeois philosophy, and the university was therefore prohibited from hiring them.<sup>2</sup>

He entered Warsaw university in the autumn of 1950 and studied History. He graduated in 1955 having written a Master's dissertation entitled: *Rola inteligencji w królestwie polskim na przełomie XIX i XX wieku* (The role of the *inteligencja* in the kingdom of Poland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth Centuries) under the supervision of the historian Jabłoński, who later became Chairman of the Council of State.

While still a student he began work for *Sztandar Młodych* (Youth Banner, joint journal of the Executive Committee of ZMS and ZMW, Union of Rural Youth). In its time this was a militant investigative journal which maintained contacts with 'anonymous heroes' in industry and the bureaucracy. In 1953 (two years before Ważyk's famous 'Poem for Adults' on the same theme) Kapuściński wrote an uncompromising article about the new 'socialist' city of Nowa Huta and the Polish steel industry. In an article called 'This too is the Truth of Nowa Huta' he showed that although the gigantic steel works was a showpiece for the regime it was riddled with drunken supervisors, poor management and had appalling working conditions - facts which Kapuściński knew from friends who worked there and because he had worked in Nowa Huta during his student vacations. He concluded by saying that the people of Nowa Huta awaited justice for the skullduggery, insensitivity and hypocrisy that had been visited upon them, waited for the Party and the government to explain themselves knowing that there was no satisfactory explanation. Kapuściński was forced to go into hiding, protected by the workers at the plant. Eventually a special commission of inquiry was appointed. After an investigation the management of the steel works was fired and the government set aside money for the construction of further municipal facilities in compensation. Kapuściński was rehabilitated and at the age of 23 was

awarded a state prize, the Golden Cross of Merit, for investigative journalism.

Although he was invited to stay on at the university to teach he considered this rather boring and preferred instead to work as a journalist. In 1957-8 he began work on the weekly *Polityka*. His editor, Rakowski, sent him around Poland collecting material and writing articles about the consequences and the human truths that underlay Poland's economic and political changes of those years. This material eventually appeared as his first book, *Busz po Polsku* (Bush Polish Style, 1962), which looked with a fresh and unsentimental eye at the people of the more remote (and not so remote) rural parts of Poland as if they were peculiar anthropological specimens from the African bush. In 1957 he first visited Uganda. In 1960, just as he was finishing work on his book about Poland, Kapuściński heard that conflict had broken out in the newly independent Congo and sought permission to go.

In 1964, having survived his hazardous journey to the Congo via Khartoum and Juba, he joined PAP as Poland's only foreign correspondent. He asked to be sent to Czechoslovakia, but instead his editor sent him to India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the middle east, Japan, China, Latin America and again to Africa. He was the first, and because there was very little hard currency available, often Poland's only foreign correspondent, working for what was by international standards a very small news agency. For nearly twenty years he was quite literally Poland's eyes and ears in the world - he went where most Poles could not go. His reporting earned him a considerable reputation and he is best known for his journalism covering social conditions, wars and revolutions in the third world. By the time he returned to Poland in 1980 Kapuściński had covered wars in Honduras and El Salvador, a revolution in Zanzibar, a coup in Tanganyika, the South African invasion of Angola, a revolution in Burundi and civil war in Nigeria; he had met Che Guavara in Bolivia, Salvador Allende in Chile, Patrice Lumumba in the Congo and Idi Amin in Uganda, Ahmed Ben Bella in Algeria, Aghostino Neto in Angola; he had observed the end of Haile Selassie's reign in Ethiopia and the collapse of the Shah's regime in Iran. In Uganda he suffered from cerebral malaria, in Dar es Salaam he suffered from TB of the lungs ('no pain but you feel bad, and you're coughing up blood') and he cured an attack of parasitic stomach worms by smoking forty cigarettes a day and refusing to eat. In total

he has seen twenty seven revolutions, coups and wars and had narrowly escaped death several times: in the Congo he was sentenced to death by firing squad of Belgian paratroopers, he was frequently beaten up by one side or the other in the various civil wars and coups, and in Nigeria was doused with petrol but released just before he was due to be set alight. Kapuściński estimates that he has been sentenced to death, 'actually facing the guns', four times.

From his experiences came a disturbing and fascinating series of books detailing the birth of the Third World: *Czarne gwiazdy* (Black Stars, 1963); *Gdyby cala Afryka* (If All Africa, 1969) - a book which upset the Ethiopian government who refused to allow him back into the country for several years; *Dlaczego zginął Karl von Spreti* (Why Karl von Spreti died, 1970) a challenging account of the kidnapping and death of the West German Ambassador to Guatemala and the nature of dictatorship; *Jeszcze dzień życia* (Another Day of Life, 1976) about the liberation war and civil war in Angola; and *Wojna futbolowa* (Soccer War, 1978) an account of political life and popular expectation in South America. However, his most striking successes have been with the books *Cesarz* (The Emperor: Downfall of an Autocrat, 1978) about the final days of Haile Selassie's regime in Ethiopia, and *Szachinszach* (Shah of Shahs, 1982) about the Iranian revolution and the overthrow of the Shah.<sup>3</sup>

Kapuściński is not only a very well connected journalist, but an incredibly 'well decorated' writer with numerous state awards and prizes for his literary works: the Golden Cross of Merit, 1953; the Bruno Prize 1959; the Ministry of Art and Culture Prize 1967; the Bolesław Prus Prize 1975; the *Miesięcznik Literatury & the Nowych Książek* prizes, 1975; the People's Prize for Literature (Second Category) 1976; the *Kultura* Prize 1978. By the mid 1970s he was part of a generation of well known and respected journalists - Wojciech Giełżyński, Hanna Krall, Maciej Szumowski and Jerzy Lovell - who were about the same age, had largely come up through the Party youth movement, had developed a hard hitting, wry, subtle and allusive style in response to censorship, were increasingly worried by what they saw of Polish contemporary life, and increasingly disillusioned by the Party. Kapuściński in particular had become such a well known figure in Poland that he attracted the attention of Wajda, who was interested in the idea of a Polish intellectual who no longer feels 'at home' in his own

country and who is increasingly uneasy about the changes in Gierek's Poland. Kapuściński is believed to be the model for the journalist in Wajda's film *Bez znieczulenia* (literally 'Without Anaesthetic', *Rough Treatment*, 1978).

Kapuściński's current renown hides the very difficult start his books had in Poland. Many Poles brought up on standard Polish national literary fare, on the classical 'matter of Poland', could not penetrate his stories of the Third World. They saw them simply as tales from another part of the world, exotica with little or no immediate relevance to Polish life:

Most of my professional life has been spent outside Europe. As a foreign correspondent I witnessed the birth of the Third World and for me that completely changed the map of the world in terms of politics and culture. And I began to think that our literature was very parochial, very provincial. Its pre-occupations were with Poles, with Poland, with our fate, with our tragedy, with everything Polish. It was all very inward looking. Our literary classics were written in the nineteenth century, often by writers living in exile, but even living abroad they wrote about Poland. They were unable to make contact with other cultures, other civilisations, other countries. Even our travel writers, when they went abroad, looked for other Poles: 'I came eventually to Guinea, or China or some such place, and I found there Pan Kowalski, and he is 100 years old now.' And there would be how he helped the writer and then the old man's story, how he was a sailor, how he went with British troops from somewhere to somewhere, how he found a wife, had children - his fate, simply, as a Pole...I realised there was a place in our literature that had been completely neglected, and so my aim was to write in Polish introducing something we didn't have until now. And this subject was the Third World - a world which has a lot in common with Poland: the role of our *inteligencja*, the structure of our society, our experience as a colony until the end of the partitions in 1918, the legacy of this experience. This was the connection I decided to explore. For a long time my early books went unread and I suffered a lot because of that: I grieved. My first book was published in 1962 when I was living and working in Africa. From time to time I came back and I could still see my books unsold in the bookshops - always a bad sign in Poland. My colleagues said: 'Look you should write more about here and in such a way'. But I refused. People asked me why I don't write about Poland, but I always wrote about Poland! That's the one thing I always did, but of course, not in a text-book sense, or in an open way.<sup>4</sup>

Even though they were made available only in very small print runs, his books - once the Third World aspect had been penetrated by the readers - became remarkably

popular in the late 1970s and 1980s, and usually sold-out long before they reached the shops: there was a brisk trade in second-hand copies too, and Kapuściński used to buy all those he could find to give to friends. His books were released in a new uniform edition in Poland in 1988. Kapuściński's books also became international best sellers: *Shah of Shahs* has been translated into twenty six languages. *The Emperor* made it onto the Polish best seller list in 1978, an unusual distinction for a book of 'personal reportage', and has been translated into thirty two languages - including all the major European languages with the exceptions of Portuguese and Albanian.

*The Emperor* is a remarkable book. There is no plot or conventional story-line, and everything in the book takes place after the revolution that toppled the Emperor. On one level it is a piece of very superior political and historical reportage in which a Polish journalist - sometimes called 'Mister Kapoochitski' - attempts to piece together the life of Selassie's court and the events of the final days of the Emperor's regime. Kapuściński had first visited Ethiopia in 1963 and by the time of the revolution had extensive contacts there. His method of telling the story is deceptively simple: Kapuściński allows people to speak, and the result is a collage of often unattributed voices. It is a kind of verbal post-mortem. Kapuściński makes no pretence that this is legitimate 'straight' journalism built from 'attributable sources', and he has admitted many times that his practices would be unacceptable to *The New York Times* and most other serious newspapers. His method is to ask a few questions, collect papers, articles, letters, photographs, and reconstruct at a later date from memory - he takes few notes and does not often operate a tape recorder. The result may not exactly be journalism, but it is story telling, political observation and human interest at a very high level of effectiveness.<sup>5</sup>

On another level though, it is clear that *The Emperor* may also be read as a commentary on what was happening in Poland. Much had changed in Poland while Kapuściński was writing about events in Africa and South America. Perhaps the most important single event was that in 1970 Edward Gierek became First Secretary of the PZPR. Gierek had spent time in Belgium, working as a miner, and he knew something of the power of western capital. He used massive foreign trade credits and injections of borrowed hard currency to finance a number of huge industrial concerns: the Gdańsk



North Port (construction by Skanska of Sweden, cranes and gantries installed by Finland), the Ursus tractor Factory (Massey Ferguson), the Berliet Bus works (France), the Nowa Huta steel works, Huta Katowice steel works, the Włocławek PVC works (Lloyds Bank), the ethylene works at Płock. By the mid 1970s the Gdansk shipyards alone employed 28,000 workers. Unfortunately the Party relied upon people of proven party loyalty, rather than proven ability, to administer these funds. Many of these people were 'Gierek's Gang', cronies from his days as a Party official in Silesia.

The sudden influx of capital and personal wealth into an underdeveloped and mainly agricultural economy, an economy in which the leap into urban and industrial rhythms had still to be made by the bulk of the population, had huge and thoroughly unforeseen consequences. The economy was so centralised that it could not absorb huge amounts of money without 'leaking'. The economy had not the technical ability to put the money to good use. Not only was corruption a massive problem but much of the money was squandered on projects that could never come to fruition within the prevailing Polish economic and political set-up.<sup>6</sup> While the living standards of the bulk of the population declined after the initial rush of foreign capital, a small group in key political and economic positions prospered. A phenomenon known as *sultanizm* emerged in Poland. That is the behaviour of powerful men, who with party backing, lived pretty much as if they owned some primitive feudal sheikdom. In circumstances such as these the distinction between private and state budgets tended to get blurred. It was clear that in Poland and in Ethiopia the leader knew all about corruption, and he alone was responsible for the failures and the moral climate of his regime. That the leader was somehow misinformed or misled was perhaps the last refuge of the political innocent. This was the myth that Kapuściński was concerned to explode in *The Emperor*:

The magical aspect is that the highest one is endowed, often unconsciously, with divine characteristics. The supreme one is wise and noble, unblemished and kindly. Only the dignitaries are bad; they cause all the misery. Moreover, if the one on the top knew what his people were up to he would immediately repair the damage and life would be better. Unfortunately these crafty villains pull the wool over their master's eyes, and that is why life is so hard, so low, so miserable. This is magical thinking because, in reality, in an autocratic system it is precisely the

one on top who is the primary cause of what happens. He knows what is going on, and if he doesn't know, it's because he doesn't want to know. It was no accident that the majority of the people around the Emperor were mean and servile. Meanness and servility were the conditions of ennoblement, the criteria by which the monarch chose his favourites, rewarded them, bestowed privileges on them. Not one step was taken, not one word said, without his knowledge and consent. Everyone spoke with his voice, even if they said diverse things, because he himself said diverse things. The condition for remaining in the Emperor's circle was practising the cult of the Emperor, and whoever grew weak and lost eagerness in the practice of this cult lost his place, dropped out, disappeared. Haile Selassie lived among shadows of himself.<sup>7</sup>

The sudden influx of 'real money' to Poland bore startling resemblances to the arrival of economic and humanitarian aid in Ethiopia: one of the first effects was that among the increasingly well educated bureaucracy the 'cost of loyalty' suddenly escalated. In both places the influx of unsupervised foreign capital had remarkably similar results - a period of splendour and rapid growth, then corruption, structural waste, criticism, frustration and revolt. As one of the courtiers says: 'Who destroyed our empire? Reduced it to ruin? Neither those who had too much, nor those who had nothing, but those who had a bit.'<sup>9</sup> When Kapuściński wrote about the Ethiopian army officers finding dollars in between the pages of the Emperor's copy of *The Bible*, and of the 100,000,000 dollars the Emperor held in a Swiss bank account ('a few pennies to take care of my ailing son in a Swiss hospital')<sup>8</sup> the Polish readers had their own strong suspicion that the very same would be the case with the *nomenklatura*. Large numbers of Poles knew about individual examples of embezzlement or corruption but doubted they could effectively bring this to public attention in the Gierek-controlled media, and feared lest they put themselves and their families at risk.

It took a while for the facts to be made public and confirmed. When they came the revelations were as damaging and as massive as anything Kapuściński had revealed in Ethiopia, but conformed very closely to the outlines he had given. In September 1980, just a few weeks after the dismissal of the Gierek government, the director of the Minex Import-Export concern was accused of stealing \$700,000 worth of material benefits from foreign companies dealing with Poland over the previous seven years. And this was not an isolated occurrence. Under pressure from Solidarity, the Polish

Politburo announced that it had set up a special commission to investigate charges of corruption against Maciej Szczepański, the all-powerful Chairman of the State Committee for Radio and Television. In October 1980 it was announced by the Party Plenum after an all-night sitting that Szczepański had been found guilty of, among other things, misusing budget resources - as a specimen charge he was accused of embezzling 2,900,000 zł at a time when there was no film for the cameras. Szczepański was dismissed from his post. Later further charges were brought against him and the court heard from the prosecution that although he earned only 284,400 zł per year Szczepański had used his post on the Central Committee to buy seven private cars, a helicopter, two executive jets, a yacht, a farm, several villas including a 16 room mini-palace, ran a string of 4 black prostitutes, had 2 mulatto mistresses, an enormous collection of pornographic films, a villa in Kenya, and bank accounts in Switzerland and London.

Gierek had been a frequent guest of Szczepański at a specially built private villa in the fashionable ski resort of Zakopane, so this corruption went right to the top. Gierek too had a villa built at a cost of 27,200,000 zł, but had given in an inventory for only 4,100,000 zł so that they could buy it back from the state legally at a ridiculously low price. Gierek also owned two other houses which had cost the state most of the sum of 21,000,000 zł Gierek earned about 336,000 zł per year so it is clear he could not have built these places out of his own earnings. It is widely believed that he skimmed the money from housing budgets at a time when there was a 15 year waiting list for flats.<sup>10</sup>

Gierek had said 'enrich yourselves' in 1971, as part of his exhortation to make the industrialisation programme effective. But only well-placed Party members and bureaucrats had been able to do so. The extent to which the *nomenklatura* were implicated in the crimes of the Gierek gang can be seen in the knock-on effects of his downfall. By May 1981 no less than 13 Ministers, 40 Deputy Ministers, 18 of the 49 regional governors, 26 Deputy regional governors, 26 regional Party First Secretaries, 72 regional Party secretaries, 7 heads of Central Government Departments, 8 Parliamentary Deputies and 14 Directors of major industrial enterprises had all been fired; ex-First Secretary Gierek, ex-Prime Minister Babiuch and ex-Trades Union Chief Szydlak along with three others had all been expelled from the Party; two sacked

ministers committed suicide rather than face expulsion and legal proceedings.<sup>11</sup>

In Ethiopia aid disappeared like water into the ground to a far greater extent than international loans evaporated in Poland. The gigantic and inefficient Polish factories and enterprises were to become monuments of proof that money had filtered through. But at the same time 'tribal' instincts had worked to divert huge amounts of money into private pockets. This mechanism was deeply embedded in the way the Party and its leadership operated, and it was an inevitable consequence of a society in which it was necessary to pilfer in order to make up for the deficiencies of the system. It had its correspondence in Ethiopia:

The faction of 'personal people' was a peculiarity of our regime, created by the Emperor himself. His Supreme Majesty, a partisan of a strong state and centralised power, had to lead a cunning and skilful fight against the aristocratic faction, which wanted to rule in the provinces and have a weak, pliable Emperor. But he could not fight the aristocracy with his own hands, so he always promoted into his circle, as representatives of the people, bright young men from the lowest orders, chosen from the lowest ranks of the plebeians, picked often on little more than a hunch from the mobs that surrounded his majesty whenever he went among the people. These 'personal people' of the Emperor, dragged straight from our desperate and miserable provinces into the salons of the highest courtiers - where they met the undisguised hatred of the long-established aristocrats - served the Emperor with an almost indescribable eagerness, indeed a passion, for they had quickly tasted the splendours of the palace, the evident charms of power, and they knew that they had arrived there, come within reach of the highest state dignities, only through the will of His Highness. It was to them that the Emperor would entrust the positions requiring greatest confidence: the Ministry of the Pen, the Emperor's political police, and the superintendency of the Palace were manned by such people. They were the ones who would uncover intrigues and battle the mean, haughty opposition...Not only did the Emperor decide on all promotions, but he also communicated with each one personally. He alone. He filled the posts at the summit of the hierarchy, and also its lower and middle levels. He appointed the postmasters, headmasters of schools, police constables, all the most ordinary office employees, estate managers, brewery directors, managers of hospitals and hotels - and let me say it again, he chose them personally...<sup>12</sup>

In Poland 'personal people' were called *nomenklatura*. Polish readers saw in the Emperor's patronage both the massive powers of the First Secretary of the PZPR, and also appointments made to the *nomenklatura* - appointments made more often because

of loyalty to the leadership or to the Party than as a result of superior talent or ability. This coupled with the 'leading role of the Party' meant that a peculiarly powerful, and primitive bond prevented effective change:

Here let me mention that His Majesty did not oppose reform. He always sympathised with progress and improvement. But he could not stand it when someone undertook reform on his own, first because that created a threat of anarchy and free choice, and second because it might create the impression of there being other charitable ones in the Empire besides His Magnanimous Highness. So, if a clever and astute minister wanted to carry out even the smallest reform in his own backyard, he would have to direct the case in such a way and so present it to His Majesty that it would irrefutably, in the commonly accepted fashion, seem that the gracious, concerned innovator and advocate of the reform was His Imperial Highness himself, even if in reality the Emperor did not quite understand what the reform was all about. But not all Ministers have brains, do they? It sometimes happened that young people unaquainted with Palace tradition or those who, guided by their own ambition and also seeking popular esteem - as if the Emperor's esteem weren't the only one worth seeking! - tried independently to reform some little matter or other. As if they didn't know that by doing so they violated the principle of loyalty and buried not only themselves but also their reform, which without the Emperor's authorship didn't have a chance to see the light of day. I'll come right out and say it: the King of Kings preferred bad ministers. And the King of Kings preferred them because he liked to appear in a favourable light by contrast.<sup>13</sup>

Revelations of corruption and 'personal idiosyncrasy' in the highest places came as no surprise when they related to a feudal court. But Kapuściński was clearly pointing out (or better, making available) the idea that in any political system, even one laying claim to the determinism of Marxism, personality was an important factor. For a readership educated to believe in the all-knowing, all-seeing, ever-concerned Party, leading the people on the long march to a brighter future, the parallel with the over-arching power of the medieval Emperor was clear enough. The conclusion to be drawn was that, if these parallels held good, then the PZPR, the interlocked apparatus of Party and state, were no more than modern versions of the medieval court, Asiatic variations on an ancient theme, ancient methods of government (wearing ideological disguise) struggling to come to terms with industry and modern life.

The sudden arrival of hard currency and the growth of heavy industry in Poland

meant that the emerging new 'technical' middle class began to acquire real political and economic power. But above the *technokracja* was a stratum of Party people and government officials who prospered in ways that the IMF and the West German credit banks had not imagined. Although in newly independent ex-colonial Africa the processes by which international finance leaked into society, rather than supported the enterprises it was intended for, were slowly becoming evident, it had not been imagined that the situation would be repeated in a supposedly modern European state - particularly one where the overt expressions of state ideology indicated that this would be unacceptable. What no-one had realised was that Poland in the 1970s bore startling resemblances to the emerging states and economies of the Third World. In fact, in giving money to Poland without attaching conditions to its use, to the proposed methods of repayment, to the internal financial and industrial structures that were supposed to administer the money, western banks and governments were repeating the mistakes they had made in giving money to Ethiopia in the late 1960s. Western bankers and financiers saw what they wanted to see in Poland - what appeared to be a highly disciplined and above all cheap labour force. They did not enquire much further.

Another fact they had not bargained for was what the new rich would do with their money. A rich man in a 'socialist' state would not re-invest personal wealth in business or industry, as in the west. In Poland personal wealth went into maintaining a lifestyle that echoed the courts and feudal lordships of the *szlachta* era: Gierek's top officials had small armies of loyal retainers - drivers, pilots, secretaries, courtesans, house-keepers, tame officials and *milicja*. And this was not so very different from the Third World: Selassie had a man to wipe the urine of his pet dog from the feet of visiting officials, and a man to assess the right-sized pillow to push under his feet on each of his royal thrones. Money, it seemed, had different qualities, depending on how and where it was spent:

Do you know what money means in a poor country? Money in a poor country and money in a rich country are two different things...in a poor country, money is a wonderful, thick hedge, dazzling and always blooming, which separates you from everything else. Through that hedge you do not see creeping poverty, you do not smell the stench of misery, and you do not hear the voices of the human dregs. But at the same time you know that all of that exists, and you feel proud because of

your hedge. You have money; that means you have wings. You are the bird of paradise that everyone admires...Money transforms your own country into an exotic land. Everything will start to astonish you - the way people live, the things they worry about, and you will say, 'No, that's impossible.' Because you will already belong to a different civilisation. And you must know this law of culture: two civilisations cannot really know and understand one another well. You will start going deaf and blind. You will be content in your civilisation surrounded by the hedge, but signals from the other civilisation will be as incomprehensible to you as if they had been sent by the inhabitants of Venus...<sup>14</sup>

The failure of repeated efforts to change the system, both in Poland and Ethiopia, had very similar effects on behaviour:

Everyone felt helpless before the seemingly magic force by which things autonomously appeared and disappeared, and nobody knew how to master or break that force. This feeling of helplessness, of always losing, always falling behind the stronger drove them deeper into negativism, into numbness, into dejection, into depression, into hiding like partridges. Even conversation deteriorated, losing its vigour and momentum. Conversations started but somehow never seemed to be completed. They always reached an invisible but perceptible point, beyond which silence fell. The silence said, Everything is already known and clear, but clear in an obscure way, known unfathomably, dominated by being beyond helping. Having confirmed this truth by a moment of silence, the conversation changed its direction and moved on to a different subject, a trivial, second-rate, secondhand subject.<sup>15</sup>

Clearly Kapuściński's comments on Ethiopia relate equally to Poland, to changes in the language and oppositional attitudes and strategies in the mid 1970s. It is very important to realise that this book was published less than two years after the 1976 protests in Radom. It was to overcome precisely this sense of isolation, dislocation and hopelessness, here ascribed to the Ethiopians, that KOR was formed.

Kapuściński had enormous difficulty in establishing the form of the book. It was very important to him that it was not just another piece of journalism. Even though *Kultura* (Warsaw), who had commissioned the work, were pressuring him for the first instalment, Kapuściński locked himself away in his flat and disconnected the phone for two months while he wrestled with the material to find a form that satisfied him.<sup>16</sup> This context is important to understanding the *kind* of book Kapuściński was writing. As Jerzy Jarzębski has pointed out, one of the effects of communist party control on

public language was to compromise 'the document' as part of an on-going crisis of literature in which realistic novels and short stories, caught between *socrealizm* and attempts to render the shocking experience of 20th century Poland, succumbed to despair and to the schematism on offer from the Party. Realistic prose as well as being hijacked by the Party, was unable to render the scale of war and the communist take over within the terms of a conventional plot, *socrealizm* forced prose into a enhanced 'realness' that was stylistically false to the experiences at hand, and made it distant from any but the most crass and simplistic psychology of depression. The literature of *socrealizm* offended with its baldness, its lack of hope, its dullness and its severe literary and intellectual limitation. The crisis of prose continued throughout the post war period. It still continues. It has spawned a number of hybrid genres, among others the 'lying diaries' (that is diaries which were no such thing) of Brandys, Konwicki, Herling-Grudziński and Gombrowicz, the pseudo-documentary prose of Hanna Krall and Kapuściński, the interviews with witnesses by Trznadel and Torńska.<sup>17</sup>

Kapuściński has denied that his books are Polish political allegories, and has insisted that the political parallels between events in the third world and in Polish politics should be the focus of attention.<sup>18</sup> *The Emperor* is not an allegory. It is about Ethiopia and about the downfall of the last Emperor. But the spirit that informs the work, the details that the author thinks worthy of note, the sense of circumstance and history, of cultural specifics - all these have their roots in the typically Polish game of Hunt the Symbol, in the business of talking about Poland while ostensibly talking about something entirely different. For Kapuściński the third world became a lens with which to focus upon world events. But he knew that a Polish readership would eventually find parallels and correspondences in his work, and it is clear from the text itself that what caught his eye as a writer was the similarity between Ethiopia under Selassie and Poland under Gierek.

While it is possible for Kapuściński to point out correspondences in other people's books it would never do for him to acknowledge too openly that this is what he was doing in his own work. After all, he had to submit his work to the censor along with everybody else, and it would serve no useful purpose if the censor was alerted that Kapuściński was actually trying to outsmart him with some smuggled message. Instead



of complaining about the activities of the UB and the censor in Poland Kapuściński wrote of the Shah's Iran:

Oh, it's true', said the naive old man with a weak heart, trying to catch his breath, 'in such stifling weather its difficult to breathe.' In a moment the Savak agent pounced and said: 'Now you'll get the chance to recover your strength'. And without a word further he placed the old man under arrest. The other people at the bus stop had heard everything with dread: right at the start the feeble old man had committed an unpardonable mistake in using the word 'stifling' to a stranger. Experience had taught them not to say out loud such words as stifling (*duszność*), darkness (*ciemność*), burden (*ciężar*), chasm (*przepaść*), collapse (*zapaść*), bog (*bagno*), rot (*rozklad*), cage (*klatka*), grill (*krata*), chain (*łańcuch*), gag (*knebel*), stick (*palka*), boot (*but*), twaddle (*brednia*), screw (*śruba*), pocket (*kieszon*), paw (*lapa*), insanity (*oblęd*); also phrases of the kind - lie down (*położyć się*), lay flat (*leżeć się*), straddle (*rozkraczyć się*), on your head (*upaść na głowę*), waste away (*marnieć*), weaken (*słabnąć*), go blind (*ślepnąć*), go deaf (*gluchnąć*), sink in (*pogrążyć się*); and even sayings such as - something here limps (*kuleje*), something's not quite right here, something's not as it should be, something is rattling; because every one of them, these nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, could all be allusions to the regime of the Shah, they were a semantic minefield in which one careless step could blast you to smithereens.<sup>19</sup>

Kapuściński's books are not allegories, they stand in their own right. If anything his works are sly Aesopian fables. Kapuściński has written:

In Poland every text is read as allusive, every written situation - even the most distant in space and time - is immediately, without hesitation, applied to the situation in Poland. In this way, every text is a double text, and between the printed lines we search for sympathetic messages written in invisible ink, and the hidden message we find is treated as the most valid, the only real one. The result stems not only from the difficulty of open speech, the language of truth. It is also because this country of ours has suffered every possible experience in the world, and is still exposed to dozens of different trials, so that now in the normal course of things every Pole sees in histories that are not ours, connections with his own life.<sup>20</sup>

This does not mean that he has not had battles with the censor or with the Party, but simply that Kapuściński is a far more wily opponent than many who, where they have opposed the Party have done so headlong and publicly. Kapuściński has preferred

subtle manoeuvre to open confrontation. In an interview I conducted with him in Warsaw in 1990, Kapuściński spoke of his battle to get *The Emperor* past the censor. He found that the censor blocked him in the cinema and the theatre:

However, in the book version - and this is a good example of the bargaining process - *The Emperor* was published in a serialisation in *Kultura* [Warsaw]. It started very innocently and nobody noticed. First piece, second piece, third, fourth. Then the censor and the Central Committee began to complain that something had 'gone wrong' with this text. We decided that if anybody in censorship tried to make trouble for us we would report them to the Party Control Bureau, saying there is somebody who dares to compare this corrupt fascist dictatorship of Haile Salassie with the excellent leadership of Comrade Gierek. Who could say such a thing? Who could dare to see the text in this way? We were going to make a case against this censor and get him sacked from the Party. We said: 'Take away a piece of this text and next day you will be before the Party Control Bureau'. We silenced him, but we were careful just the same. Sometimes we took a long break, and then an isolated piece would appear. And so they allowed another extract and then another and another. Finally the whole thing was published. There was a rule that said when a piece has received the stamp of approval from the censor it need not be submitted a second time. So we took all these pieces to the publishing house and they said OK, no problem, everything has a stamp. When the book appeared, of course, there was an outcry: 'How did such a thing happen?' It's a good example of how we turned these handicaps to our own advantage. We used the distortion of language. These are tricks you can work when you know the system.<sup>21</sup>

Kapuściński was clear: the worlds of Gierek and Salassie were very close to one another. Poland under the 'communists', in spite of its European cultural heritage, was very much a part of the Third World. There was no doubt in Kapuściński's mind that Poland, along with vast tracts of the Soviet Union, had come to resemble the emerging Third World in the way the economy functioned (or failed to function) and in the mind set of the people who lived there. In his blackest moments he attributed queues (the trademark of centralised, Soviet-style economies) to socialism, but he also knew that socialism did not cause the basic problems from which much of the third world suffers - years of colonialism, drought, corruption, tribalism, advancing desert, wars of independence, exploitation by the first world, military manipulation by capitalists and communists alike. He knew that Poland's economic problems stemmed from very

deep-seated historical problems - its position between the developed west and the underdeveloped east, between democracy and autocracy. The queues were not what socialists had aimed for, but were a sure sign that Soviet-led 'socialist' attempts to solve these problems had not been successful.

Kapuściński sees history as a struggle between classes, and between competing systems, but he also sees it as a struggle between culture and the mob, between civilisation and bestiality. His years as a professional observer of the Third World have made him a sharp-eyed and uncomfortably perceptive critic of the new Poland emerging from the wreckage of the Soviet empire. Like many Poles he believed that the Soviet Union stood in a neo-colonial relationship to Poland. The main aim of the Soviets was not to destroy the Polish state, but to weaken and deprive the Polish nation by governing it with an élite that had already 'sold out' to foreign powers. In his opinion, long contact with politics deforms and corrupts because of its greed to control human destiny and individual actions, and because of its expansiveness into every sphere of human endeavour: progress, he once noted, is not a historical necessity, it is a possibility, and even an impossibility; he also said that the higher up the scale a crime was committed, the greater was the possibility that it would not be perceived as a crime, but as a necessary political manoeuvre.<sup>22</sup>

For Kapuściński, in contrast to the material wealth of the First World, the mentality of Third World inhabitants could also be found in *homo sovieticus*:

The communists failed in everything, but succeeded in one thing. They succeeded in creating Homo Sovieticus. A new type of man...Nobody trusts anybody. It's a question of cultural background. It's a question of organisation. It's not just a question of price, as everyone seems to think...They don't discuss how to produce a hundred or thousand refrigerators, but how to distribute ten of them. The mentality is distributive mentality, not productive mentality. The mentality is control mentality, not improvement and organisation mentality. You have thousands of different commissions who control each other, a huge bureaucracy that controls instead of producing.<sup>23</sup>

*Homo sovieticus* honoured the products of labour (consumer goods) and had statues and poems in praise workers, yet the Soviet system divorced production and earnings,

ruptured the connection between labour and wealth, sundered economic efficiency and consumption. In doing so it engendered massive dissatisfactions, destroyed faith in the future, and turned Party ethics and 'socialist' economics into weapons against culture. Whereas people in the western capitalist states wonder how to produce more and to sell more, *homo sovieticus* gave massive amounts of time and energy to pondering the nature of the distribution of scarce resources. While westerners want to be rich, *homo sovieticus* does not want to be rich, only to ensure that their neighbour is no richer. Society is largely static because loyalty, not talent, is rewarded; bribery is normal simply as a respite from tension and worry:

Things are arranged only for the members of the tribe...In this respect Russians are no different from the African tribes.<sup>24</sup>

Only in the Soviet attachment to the state is there any significant difference between them, but even in this the Soviet system was an anachronism, offering old and outdated solutions to new and rapidly multiplying problems.

Kapuściński's perception of what was happening to Polish society in the 1970s and 1980s was supported by sociological research, though very little of this revealing material was ever allowed past the censor. Walicki wrote:

An overwhelming majority of Poles do not identify with the institutions in which they work, do not think in terms of public good on the institutional level. Their loyalties and their feelings of belonging are two-sided. First they belong and are loyal to different primary face-to-face groups - from the family and groups of friends to informal cliques, mafias, and other personalised groups pursuing their interests in a half-legal way. From this lowest level of integration we have a sudden leap to the highest, most abstract and most sublimated, symbolic level: the level of national solidarity. Thus an average Pole does not belong to a large-scale institutionalised civil society; he belongs to different primary groups and, secondly, he belongs to his nation; not a nation as a system of political and economic institutions, but a nation as national tradition, national culture, the sphere of uniting symbols, of sublimated, lofty, patriotic feelings.<sup>25</sup>

It was clear from developments within the Polish language that the economic miracle had wrecked itself on this shoal, and that it had come dangerously close to making

Poland an ungovernable entity. The language reflected the fact that the official economy no longer functioned and that the state survived because private enterprise and the black market by-passed state structures. In the years 1974-80 certain usages were particularly vivid in conjuring up the reality of Polish life: *zalatwiać* (to arrange or to wangle); *kombinować* (to combine, but more specifically to improvise with materials at hand, for example in cooking, building, decorating); goods and materials, necessary papers, tickets could all be obtained if one had the necessary *znajomości* (acquaintances, contacts) to fix things; tea, coffee, meat, bread were not simply 'bought', it was necessary to *złapać* (grab, seize) them: such were the queues and the undignified scrum to get at scarce provisions that the shops no longer sell goods to customers, but in the language of the streets, *oni rzucają* (they throw) them to the *holota* (rabble). As in the emerging African states it was often necessary to offer a *lapówka* (bribe) in order to get even small everyday things done. Anyone who did not conform to these norms, who did not offer a bribe, who believed in moral principles and who expected to get things done by observing the rules was a *frajer* (literally a friar, a 'mug').

Kapuściński was aware very early that the power of the Party bosses was being abused, that Polish patience was exhausted, that without massive reform - which the Party was incapable of initiating or sustaining - something would snap. In August 1980, just after he returned to Poland, he was one of a very small group of journalists allowed inside the Gdańsk shipyards during the strike. He and 35 other journalists signed a declaration:

We Polish journalists present at Gdańsk during the strike, declare that much of the news published so far, and especially the manner in which it has been commented upon, does not correspond with what is happening here. This state of things leads to disinformation. The cutting of telecommunications and the impossibility of publishing materials that would show the facts in their true light is profoundly distressing to us and totally prevents us from honestly fulfilling our professional duties. We consider that it cannot but favour the solution of the conflict and contribute toward social developments in the future to give the population the complete story of events.<sup>26</sup>

The deformations of censorship and the corruption of language by the politicians were themes he was to return to again and again in his 'Warsaw Diaries'.

Kapuściński was a strong supporter of *Solidarność* and when martial law was declared he was dismissed from his job on the literary monthly *Kultura*. His *dowód osobisty* (identity card) was stamped to prevent him regaining his credentials or leaving the country. Throughout Martial Law he could not publish or work as a journalist and had to rely upon his wife's earnings as a doctor and on giving readings and talks where friends would pass the hat. His readership remained loyal:

Not so long ago I was asked to a town outside Warsaw to give a reading. It was scheduled to begin at five o'clock, and I arrived about half an hour early. But it was impossible to get in. The hall was packed. In fact, it was so packed that no one, with so many people squeezed up against the door-frame, was able to get out. By the time I succeeded in reaching the podium, I had been crushed and pressed and pulled by so many bodies that all my buttons had popped off. My shirt was torn, and I had lost my glasses. At around five-thirty, I began reading.<sup>27</sup>

He has, it seems, maintained a very special relationship with his readership - an example of the kind of moral and spiritual national leadership provided by a long tradition of Polish writers, so envied by the Party. In 1989, with the collapse of Polish 'socialism', Kapuściński took time off from writing a book about the collapse of the Soviet Union and the massive tide of would-be Soviet migrants who were poised to flood westwards, to become involved with the *Solidarność* Citizens' Committees organising for the democratic elections to local government and to the Sejm.

There can be little doubt that *The Emperor* was a work of major importance in focussing attention on the nature of Polish economic development and the mechanisms at work within the minds of individual Poles. It revealed elements of the Third World within Polish society - and for a nation that prided itself on being a modern European nation, the eastern bastion of Europe against an un-civilised Asia, a nation that took its cultural bearings from the west rather than the east, which looked to the west for its fashions and its political and economic ambitions, this was a bitter and frustrating observation. That these things were said by a man who was well connected in Polish government circles, a respected journalist, a decorated writer, a man who had travelled

throughout the Soviet Union and the rest of the east-bloc and who had lived in the third world for over 20 years, made the observation very difficult to dismiss or deny. Kapuściński's reflections fed into the growing stream of intellectual and economic discontent, increasingly focussed on the disastrous leading role of the Party and its monopoly of power, that was building towards the revolt of 1980.

## NOTES

- 1 W.Buford, 'An Interview with Ryszard Kapuściński', *Granta*, no.21, 1987, pp.84-52. Further biographical details can be found in: J.Krzyżanowski (ed.), *Literatura polska: przewodnik encyklopedyczny*, 2 vols., PWN, Warsaw, 1984; A.Pawluczuk, *Kapuściński*, Agencja Autorska, Warsaw, 1980.
- 2 W.Buford, 'An Interview with Ryszard Kapuściński', pp.85-6.
- 3 The Shah was a subject on which the Polish Censor was very sensitive and for many years it had been very difficult to discuss or even mention him. Iran was a very important trading partner (the drive towards industrialisation in the early 1970s depended on cheap Iranian oil) and Poland gave the Shah and his wife honorary degrees from the Jagiellonian University in 1978. Thus the GUKPPIW Instruction to Branch Offices, Section III, Relations with Foreign Countries, numbers 10 (n) and 12, revised 22 April 1975, cancelled 12 January 1976: 'All materials (including the most minor mention, photographs, etc) on the subject of the past or present of Iran, the Shah and his family, people connected to the Shah, or information forecasting the fate of the monarchy in Iran should be approved by the GUKPPIW leadership. In addition, matters related to the policy of Mossadek should not be discussed and Iran's role in the context of the politics of imperialist forces in the region of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean should not be emphasised.' 'Instructions for Censors' in: G.Schöpflin, *Censorship and Political Communications in Eastern Europe*, Frances Pinter, London, 1983, p.37. There were similar regulations to hide Poland's connection with the increasingly unpleasant Iraqi Baath Party: the full extent of Poland's cooperation with these people did not become apparent until after 1989. Poland was receiving 1,000,000 tons of Iraqi crude oil per year as part payment for military hardware. They were also planning to participate in a Korean-Brazilian consortium to build the new rail link between Baghdad and Basra. At the start of the Gulf War in 1991 Poland had 2,800 contracted 'specialists' working in Iraq, and 350 of Sadaam Hussein's tanks were of Polish manufacture. The severance of trade at the start of the Gulf War cost Poland \$300,000,000. Marcin Świącki (Minister for Foreign Economic Relations), 'Gulf Crisis Affects Poland', *The Warsaw Voice: Polish and Central European Review*, Warsaw, 7 October, 1990, p.13. Poland's trade connections with Rhodesia, South Africa and Idi Amin's Uganda were also protected by censorship. Because Poland maintained no links with the military regimes of Chile, Paraguay, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic there was little restriction on reporting these countries.

- 4 This interview was conducted at Kapuściński's home in Warsaw on 31 May 1990 against the background of the run up to the local government elections: C.Tighe, 'Writers as Fire Brigade: An interview with Ryszard Kapuściński', in: N.Jenkins (ed.), *The Works*, The Welsh Union of Writers, Swansea, December, 1991. pp.97-108.
- 5 'Ryszard Kapuściński talks with Paul Bailey', Third Ear, BBC Radio 3, 29 January 1991.
- 6 Poland's international debt rose from \$10,000,000,000 in 1976 to \$29,000,000,000 by 1981, with 92 per cent of hard currency earnings spent on servicing this debt rather than in creating new wealth. By 1980 there was a housing shortfall of 1,160,000 dwellings, and in the Gdańsk region alone there was a shortfall of 7,000 nursery school places and 11,000 kindergarten places. In the years 1978-80 real wages fell by 2.6 per cent; cancer, TB, hepatitis, and alcoholism increased at an alarming rate. As the economic pressure increased so the giant industrial enterprises cut corners and abandoned safe working practices in an effort to improve production. The Gdańsk shipyards, Nowa Huta, Huta Katowice and the coal mines of Silesia became particularly dangerous places. C.Tighe, *Gdańsk: National Identity in the Polish-German Borderlands*, Pluto Press, London, 1990, pp.241-6. Kapuściński's description of Gierek would appear to be accurate: 'He was a typical Party apparatus man: not a very bright man, not very intelligent, very slow. Also - and this characteristic became more and more pronounced - he was very lazy. In the last days of his period as First Secretary of the Party he stayed at home, he didn't even go to town, to the Central Committee, to work any more...I knew Gierek's secretaries at the Central Committee. And I remember them complaining that they gave him daily reports - of indescribable poverty and suffering, of drugs, prostitution, pollution, damage to health - any normal man would have cut his own throat in despair after reading them. But Gierek either left them on the side of his desk unread, or he read them and said nothing, simply retired to the sauna. At the time of the 1980 strikes Gierek was on holiday in the Trans-Caucasus, and he didn't want to return as he didn't consider the strikes important enough. But a delegation from the Central Committee flew out to him and General Jaruzelski forced him to return to Warsaw. Next day he made a speech on TV, and his press secretary told me that as Gierek emerged from the studio he handed him the text of the speech and said: 'Now everything will be calm, you'll see.' He was completely out of touch with reality. But that was the way he wanted to be, that was the way the Party wanted him to be. He didn't try to be informed, he didn't want to be informed.' Interview, Warsaw 31 May 1990: C.Tighe, 'Writers as Fire Brigade: An interview with Ryszard Kapuściński', in: N.Jenkins (ed.), *The Works*, 1991.
- 7 R.Kapuściński, *The Emperor*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, (1978) 1983, pp.153-4. Kapuściński gives Hajle Sellasje, and while some argue for the English version Salassie, I have followed the Americans in using Haile Selassie.
- 8 R.Kapuściński, *The Emperor*, pp.158 & 160.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p.113.
- 10 A.Brumberg, *Poland: Genesis of a Revolution*, Vintage Press, New York, 1983, p.50; D.Singer, *The Road to Gdańsk*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1982,



- pp.235-6. Local newspapers, after years of censorship, took great delight in exposing corruption and abuse. In particular, between November 1980 and December 1981, *Echo Krakowa*, *Gazeta Krakowska*, *Życie Warszawy* and *Głos Wybrzeża* were packed with revelations.
- 11 J.Taylor, *Five Months With Solidarity: A First Hand Report from Inside Hotel Morski, Gdańsk*, Wildwood, London, 1981, p.85.
  - 12 R.Kapuściński, *The Emperor*, pp.30-31.
  - 13 *Ibid.*, p.33.
  - 14 *Ibid.*, p.44-6.
  - 15 *Ibid.*, p.82-3.
  - 16 Kapuściński has talked of his difficulties in finding the form for the book: 'Writers in Conversation: Ryszard Kapuściński and Fred Halliday', Institute of Contemporary Arts Video, London, nd.
  - 17 On the crisis in prose writing see: J.Jarzębski, 'The Document. Polarities of its Employment by Białoszewski and Mackiewicz', S.Eile & U.Philips (eds.), *New Perspectives in Twentieth Century Polish Literature*, Macmillan, London 1993. Jarzębski's point is reinforced by publishing statistics. In 1986 Poland published a total of 1,084 titles (47,295,000 copies) of *literatura piękna* (Belles Lettres), of which 42 titles (1,080,200 copies) were memoirs and letters. In 1987 Poland published 1,217 titles (55,545,500), of which 74 titles (6,463,800 copies) were letters and memoirs, 31 of these (1,292,200 copies) were by contemporary authors. *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach XXXIII: 1987*, Biblioteka Narodowa-Institut Bibliograficzny, Warsaw, 1989, Table 28.
  - 18 R.Kapuściński, *Szachinszach*, Czytelnik, Warsaw, 1988, p.199.
  - 19 W.Buford, 'An Interview with Ryszard Kapuściński', pp.92-3.
  - 20 R.Kapuściński, 'Z Warszawy 1982', *Lapidarium*, Czytelnik, Warsaw, 1990, p.39. On the subject of allegory and allusion A.Alvarez has written: 'But the marriage of the arts and politics in Poland goes beyond any accident of the present political set-up or any Marxist theory of social awareness. It is a habit of mind which neither writers nor audience can shed, however politically indifferent, irresponsible, apathetic, or plain ignorant they feel themselves to be...in Poland it is impossible to write even about the birds and the bees without someone reading into it a political metaphor or allusion. Polish art runs instinctively to allegory. It is all, whatever its appearance, written in what they call 'Aesopian language', in which each detail can always be translated into terms of something else - something relevant to the immediate Polish situation. Hence when a scholar like Jan Kott writes about Shakespeare's histories, in the west it is hailed as a revolution in Shakespeare criticism, while in Poland it is treated as political comment - as though there were an implied erratum: 'For 'Tudor' read 'Polish' throughout.' A.Alvarez, *Under Pressure*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1965, pp.21-2.
  - 21 Interview with Kapuściński. C.Tighe, 'Writers as Fire Brigade: An interview with Ryszard Kapuściński', in: N.Jenkins (ed.), *The Works*.
  - 22 R.Kapuściński, 'Z Warszawy 1983', *Lapidarium*, Czytelnik, Warsaw, 1990, p.55.
  - 23 S.Schiff, 'The Years of Living Dangerously: An Interview with Ryszard Kapuściński', *Vanity Fair*, vol.54, no.3, (London edition) March 1991, p.193.
  - 24 R.Marszałek, 'An Eastern Tapestry: An Interview with Ryszard Kapuściński', *The*

*Insider*, Warsaw, 21 March 1991, p.10.

- 25 A.Walicki, 'The Three Traditions in Polish Patriotism', in S.Gomułka & A.Polonsky, (eds.), *Polish Paradoxes*, Routledge, London, 1990, p.33. Also: J.Koralewicz, I.Bialecki & M.Watson (eds.), *Crisis and Transition: Polish Society in the 1980s*, Berg, Oxford, 1987.
- 26 Kapuściński later spoke of his decision to sign this statement in spite of fears for his safety and worry about his job and family: 'For many journalists that signature was a huge decision. They wondered if there would be repression. I remember one colleague who signed and the next day came to me and said, 'Mr Ryszard, what do you think? I signed, but what will happen?' He was terribly upset. We all had the feeling that the decision was the right one, but risky...In the end, we were protesting against the whole propaganda line in connection with the Baltic coast...with what was going on there.' M.C.Albright, *Poland: The Role of the Press in Political Change*, Praeger, New York, 1983, p.41. As Kapuściński said: 'The Gdańsk strike of 1980 was not just a strike. It was our fight for our own language, a question of how to defend our language, how to defend our dignity, how to defend ourselves against the riff-raff who were in power. I mean that each totalitarian power has the intention to destroy and to manipulate the language, and to distort the meaning of words simply because this is the most effective way to control the mind. Language has a most important role, although it is not 'officially announced'. The Stalinists, much more than in any other political system, put a lot of emphasis on the domination of the language. The destruction of the language proceeds on different levels. Firstly, for example, by saying this is democracy when clearly there is no democracy. Secondly, the poetry of the language, using only particular formulations. I remember in the USSR when Aliluyeva defected to the west: She had been gone a long time, but they didn't admit it. Then one day a Party member came and he said - I was a witness to this - he said 'I've just come from a meeting of the Propaganda section of the Central Committee, and we can now talk about Aliluyeva, it is allowed, but only using the word 'traitor': you have to say 'traitor Aliluyeva'. This way, you can't say anything good about her. The third thing isn't very important - that most of the propaganda people are very uneducated people, with no cultural background. This primitiveness, this simplicity, this vulgarity was something very natural to them. They didn't have to practise or learn it. That is how they were. This combination of factors has led to a terrible destruction and distortion of the Polish language. Probably the effects will be with us for a whole generation at least. For writers, of course, the fight for the language is a very important part of our obligation: it is a big problem and a challenge. The impoverishment of language is common all over the world, but here in Poland this tendency is especially pronounced because of the Stalinist legacy.' Interview, Warsaw, 31 May 1990.
- 27 W.Buford, 'An Interview with Ryszard Kapuściński', p.93.

## EIGHT

## 'UNREALITY' TO DEMOCRACY: 1980-89

An older friend of mine, a man of outstanding intelligence and great novelistic talent, asked me a rather curious question: 'Did you notice that out there in the street everybody is acting abnormally? The salesman is pretending to sell, the bricklayer is building imaginary homes, newspapers don't have any news, the children's traffic warden is waving his lollipop like crazy, but there isn't really any traffic...' This friend of mine remembered the pre-war years, but I later realised that even people who had never seen anything other than the People's Republic of Poland had the same kind of feeling.

Jan Błóński, 'Jan Błóński', *Tygodnik Solidarność*, no.21, 1989.

8.1 'Polish unreality'

8.2 limits to Solidarność

8.3 martial law and the writers

8.4 the legacy of General Jaruzelski

8.5 the collapse of 'socialism'

### 8.1 'POLISH UNREALITY'

What follows here is an attempt to present the confused and confusing mental map - the fleeting and elusive mind set of a nation in turmoil - a picture of how the world appeared to many Poles at the end of the 1970s and the start of the 1980s. This nexus of political and cultural values both made and limited the freedom of action of the Party and Solidarność. It can be glimpsed only in partial statements and oblique references, but nevertheless it illuminates the role of writers and the chaos and bitterness of 1980-81, the Martial law years, and the pain and confusion of the collapse of 'socialism' in 1989.<sup>1</sup>

At first Solidarność seemed to be the solution to Poland's problems, but over the 16 months of its existence it became clear that all Solidarność could do was reveal the depth of the problems that Poland now faced - complex problems deeply rooted in the psyche of the nation - and act as a conduit for a wide range of often contradictory moral and spiritual protest at prevailing economic conditions and political behaviour. It emerged that the union, for all its special and remarkable qualities, was nevertheless deeply mired in the very problems it sought to relieve, deeply rooted in the actuality of 'socialist' Poland and in the social and intellectual structures created by the Party. Although the bulk of the population were either Solidarność members or supporters, most were only 'paper members' and after the first few weeks activists were outnumbered by the vast majority of 'grey masses' who simply awaited the outcome of the struggle. While many believed the 'unity' of the workers, farmers, intellectuals, students, and dissatisfied Party members would allow them to launch an effective programme of *odnowa* (renewal), the entrenched bureaucracy and the reactionary elements in the Party combined to create a situation of incredible confusion and ensure that renewal could not proceed without major social conflict. Solidarność was not and could never be a party. It had neither a mandate nor the remotest chance of being allowed to form a government.

In spite of the initial enthusiasm for the union, it soon emerged that unity of opinion was an illusion: unanimity of belief was often supposed to exist by union members, but in fact the membership were united only in their opposition to the Party.

The political ambitions contained within Solidarność were massively diverse, often difficult to extract in any coherent form. The Solidarność leadership had increasing difficulties in reining in members who were impatient for some kind of 'action'. As 1981 staggered from crisis to crisis the populace began to react against Solidarność and many came to see the union exactly as the government described them - as wreckers and hooligans. As the government reneged on its agreements and the economy spiralled downwards at an alarming rate, the membership of Solidarność, which had begun to decline after the beating of union members by secret police in Bydgoszcz and the cancelled general strike of March 1981, cast around for someone to blame for a year of pain, chaos, confusion and lack of personal, economic or political progress. Solidarność became increasingly dominated by KPN and moved steadily rightwards with a growing minority intent on anti-intellectualism, anti-Semitism and anti-socialism. Many felt themselves pushed towards desperate remedies. Many blamed the Jews for Poland's misfortunes, others advocated taking over the government. Writers and intellectuals in KOR and the advisers to Solidarność gradually realised that rather than 'forging links with the masses' since 1976, they had been talking to only a handful of active oppositionist workers. Opposition intellectuals were shocked to realise that they were often considered to be irrelevant to the solution of workers' problems and that they were regarded with considerable suspicion. Many union members regarded Michnik, Kuroń, Geremek and KOR as covert 'socialists' bent on leading the workers deeper into some other form of bondage - an attitude encouraged by Cardinal Wyszyński and after him by Cardinal Glemp. Many felt that the intellectuals were intent only on humanising the immoral and Godless 'socialist' system. But when it came to the question of whether the workers wanted to retain some form of socialism or to abolish the system entirely and install a market system there could only be a pained silence. The workers did not trust the 'socialists', trusted the intellectuals only on practical matters, and even then often felt confused and betrayed by them, had no experience of the free market, but could see it glittering and beckoning on the horizon. Although their needs were consistently greater, Solidarność was prepared at first to settle for independent trades unions: later they began to realise that there could be no such thing as an independent trades union operating within the existing political set-up.

And in any case whatever the workers of Solidarność may have wanted the overwhelming power of the Soviet military (whose fleet was visible manoeuvring in the Gulf of Gdańsk throughout the first Solidarność Congress in Oliwa) marked the limits of possibility.

## 8.2 LIMITS TO SOLIDARNOŚĆ

An important underlying factor in the life of Solidarność and a bone of contention in the months leading up to the declaration of martial law was the problem of what exactly the union wanted, where it was heading, how it framed its policies and made its alliances. These complex psychological, linguistic, economic and political features meshed in confusing and contradictory ways with what Brandys had dubbed 'Polish unreality'. Having lived in 'Unreality' for so long it was difficult for the Party to acknowledge the reality of its situation, difficult for intellectuals to establish with any certainty that they understood the reality of Polish unreality, and for the workers to trust either the Party or the intellectuals to understand that the reality of the workers' lives was a poverty-stricken hell.

By the mid 1970s the Party, the *biurokracja*, the *nomenklatura* and the professions were populated by large numbers of people who cynically said what the regime wanted to hear in order to keep their jobs and gain promotions, but who reserved their own 'private stance'. The double focus showed itself in the ironic distancing effects of a particular style of speech, statements that were on the surface true, but which were deeply misleading. A whole range of phrases suddenly acquired and required invisible inverted commas to indicate that these things were 'so called': 'wolny świat' (free world); 'prawa człowieka' (civil or human rights); 'swobody demokratyczne' (democratic freedoms); 'czerwone niebezpieczeństwo' (red menace); 'kultura zachodu' (western culture); 'wolność duchowa' (freedom of spirit); 'niezawisłość myślenia' (independent thought); *democracja zachodnia* (western democracy); 'żelazna kurtyna' (iron curtain). Inevitably, as sociologist and TKN lecturer Jadwiga Staniszkis has pointed out, 'normal everyday speech abounded with quotations, parenthetical

insertions, and turns of phrase that clearly indicated the speaker's distance from their own statements':

On the surface, this appears to be a very good mechanism of adaptation. The misleading statement addressed to the establishment was sufficiently 'recognisable' to enable the speaker to function and even be promoted in the official hierarchy. On the other hand, the 'distance-indicating' part of the sentence, recognisable by the speaker's own group (which as a rule was critical of 'officialdom') allowed him to save face and preserve a feeling of identification with the group. Thus, for the middle class there was no question of the disintegration of personality that was often the case with the workers, whose limited semantic ability prevented them from resorting to mechanisms of self-defence based on language decomposition. It was difficult for workers to construct phrases with an internal structure that would indicate their distance from their own statements. On the other hand the misleading official language was more tangible to them, because of their respectful attitude to the spoken word. As we have seen, during the strikes of summer 1980, this attitude resulted in a global rejection of everything that was said by the government sources and the creation of Solidarność's own sources of information.<sup>2</sup>

Ironic speech and cynicism slowly but surely cut loose any link between reality and ideology. On one level it allowed the speaker to toe the Party line. At the same time it indicated to their peers that this was not what they really thought. Brandys said:

For several years I was not able to do without the phrase 'in a certain sense'. I would use it at the beginning of one sentence out of three. When I realised what I was doing, I came to the conclusion that this linguistic habit reflected my awareness of the ambiguity of things.<sup>3</sup>

This dual code meant that even though life became increasingly schizoid there was no large-scale disintegration of personality - the existence of professional life, the Church, the family, and the continued presence and awareness of pre-war cultural values and history, albeit altered, helped prevent any massively obvious social breakdown at least until the advent of Solidarność began the release of social and economic pressures. In the early 1970s Polish sociologists, linguists and writers began mapping the 'failure of the inner dynamic', the trend towards privatisation - both in the economic sense and in the sense of social fragmentation, the internalisation of intellectual, moral and political

impulses.<sup>4</sup> There was a very strong sense that things had been different before the war, that Poland had at one time been a 'normal country', that now 'real life' was elsewhere, that outside Poland things were normal. However, it was very difficult for people to express this feeling without allying themselves with the pre-war right-wing military regime, or with the West German revanchists, or without appearing to be anti-Polish in some way. Nevertheless it was a feeling that showed itself in small ways. For example, the joke: 'Grandad why do you, an atheist, still go to Church?' 'Well, where else can I get pre-war quality these days?' The decline in quality at all levels was manifest. In the 1970s it was quite normal for professional people to add 'pw' to the letters after their name, meaning *przed wojną* (pre-war).

In the absence of any way of communicating feeling from the bottom of society to the top, the workers themselves increasingly turned to the Church and to the creative intellectuals outside the Party to mediate their case, articulate their demands and problems, force the Party to take them seriously, prevent confrontation between striking workers and violent repression by the armed forces, give content to the 'consultation' between workers and Party which was increasingly regarded as nothing more than mere ritual. The achievements of the Catholic Church were primarily moral and social, and as long as its institutional survival was not threatened the Church remained non-combative towards the PZPR. The Church continually said that calm and order were the prime requisites for life in Poland (Wyszynski said this during the Gdańsk strikes and Glemp said it when martial law was declared) and continually advised against efforts to change the system. Contrary to popular opinion the Church in Poland was not a semi-underground organisation. It was massively successful and expanded enormously under the 'socialists'. While it reluctantly sheltered atheist dissidents like Adam Michnik, who attempted to ground cooperation between Church and dissidents in moral protest rather than political understanding, the hierarchy also warned against both oppositionists and the Party, holding to a deeply embedded suspicion that all intellectuals operating outside specifically Catholic enterprises were 'socialists' in disguise. The Church was prepared to offer succour, but not prepared to confront the Party or develop publicly a critique of Party practice. Because of this, beyond a moral condemnation and a sense that somehow the Party and its values were



'not Polish', the populace lacked any substantial intellectual perspective on its plight and, with the exception of the mirage of western consumer society, lacked a coherent vision of an alternative society.<sup>5</sup>

Also it must be said that not only were the *inteligencja* limited in their social contacts (in spite of KOR the influence of intellectuals was socially and politically very limited) but the opposition intellectuals were in any case deeply non-ideological. The wide-ranging opposition of the mid-1970s was a peculiarly loose coalition of the system's opponents, often from very different social circles. That the opposition were non-ideological was frequently reported by puzzled western observers. I remember that Andrzejewski, like most KOR, ROPCiO and TKN members, when asked by foreign journalists about the political ambitions and programme of the oppositionists, could do no more than shake his head and shrug his shoulders. Later the relative absence of ideology was also evident in *Solidarność*. All sorts of tensions and tendencies co-existed within the opposition. Such was the degree of diversity of ambition and platform within the opposition, it could be no more than a conduit for voices of all kinds from within Polish society. These were not in themselves political parties, they were agents fostering the possibility of political parties. Piotr Ikonowicz, commenting from the perspective of his own efforts to found a new independent PPS in the winter of 1988, has written:

In the 1960s and 70s the structure of oppositional thinking still, remained in the dialectical range of class conflict...The common feature of <their> models was, apart from a simplified bi-polar vision of social conflict, its ideological anachronism. This consisted of a consistent use of one, and only one - Marxist - method to explain social phenomena and conflicts. It was not by coincidence that such people were called revisionists. They were trying to revise a doctrine they were unable to discard. It was not only too deeply rooted, but above all it was tempting for its grace and formal consistency...This was nevertheless the source of impotence of the opposition and the durability of the system. The ideology of the opposition remained one of the variations of the state ideology. It was therefore just as distant from the vivid, complex and changing social reality. With growing consciousness of that situation such groups as KOR tried to avoid ideological phraseology, proclaiming only slogans of a generally democratic nature and refraining from deeper analysis of social structure and ramifications.<sup>6</sup>

The peculiar non-ideological climate of the Polish opposition had several sources, but was mainly located in the failure of the revisionists to bring about any breakthrough in making a humanist Marxism possible in Poland, and reinforced by the political strait-jacket of the decayed and barely functioning Polish Stalinist system.

Censorship and propaganda functioned to atomise society: to ensure not that anyone believed what they were told by official media sources, but solely to disarm doubt, prevent the articulation of doubt, hamper the formulation of a vocabulary of protest and suppress the left opposition. The machinery of the Polish state was content to spoil public opinion rather than to actively shape it. As far as the authorities were concerned the Polish public could believe what it wanted just so long as its beliefs remained inchoate, unspecified, local: Poland remained a stable place just so long as people remained uninformed and disunited. The Party's abuse of power called forth its own response from the public and during the 1970s the art of the political joke - verbal resistance - assumed awesome proportions:

'Daddy, is it really possible to build socialism in one country?' 'Yes of course it is son, but then, you have to live somewhere else.'

Definition of alcoholism: a transitional stage between capitalism and communism.

The difference between the socialist system and the capitalist system is that under capitalism you have rigid discipline in production and chaos in consumption, whereas under socialism you get discipline in consumption and chaos in production.

The four crucial periods in the history of Soviet agriculture are...winter, spring, summer and autumn.

The difference between capitalism and socialism is that under capitalism man exploits man, but under socialism it is the other way round.<sup>7</sup>

The post-war Polish regime had followed the Soviet example, blurring and ignoring the distinction between state ownership and social ownership. By linking the existence of the Polish state to the existence of the PZPR and its guarantor the Soviet Union, and by constant recourse to the threat of West German revanchism, the Party

made opposition of any kind a form of disloyalty.<sup>8</sup> All opposition was characterised as deeply anti-socialist, anti-social and anti-national. Indeed the Party made a substantial effort to shift national perception towards understanding 'anti-socialist' to be the same thing as 'fascist', and see all opposition as an anti-patriotic alliance with foreign fascists. That the Party failed to make the term 'anti-socialist' its own was proved on 3 May 1981. A mob in the town of Otwock, provoked by beatings and unlawful arrests, were threatening to burn down a local police station and lynch a group of policemen. They had doused the police station in gasoline when Michnik appealed to them with words taken straight from a description of him in the Party newspaper *Trybuna Ludu*: 'My name is Adam Michnik. I am an anti-socialist force'. The mob applauded and let the policemen go. The policemen later thanked Michnik.<sup>9</sup>

Stanisław Starski has said that by the late 1970s abbreviated and truncated versions of powerful revolutionary slogans were displayed in hopeless, shameless pastiche. The meaning of fundamental terms had been transformed beyond recognition: 'socialism' had come to mean the existing social order, or the power of the PZPR; 'fraternal socialism' and 'socialist internationalism' had come to mean the limited sovereignty of the states of the Soviet bloc under the Brezhnev Doctrine, in other words, the power of the USSR to bend its geographical periphery to its will; 'counter revolution' now meant any activity that sought to undermine either the PZPR or its guarantor, the USSR; 'democratisation' an attempt to undermine socialism; 'socialisation' meant state ownership; 'internationalism' meant subordination to the interests of the Soviet Union; 'anti-socialist force' meant any form of political opposition; 'anarchist' meant opportunists belonging to some current of the European socialist tradition outside Soviet control; 'cosmopolitan' meant Jewish influence; 'reasons of state' indicated a clash with the interests of the USSR. Even the word 'ideology' came to assume a different meaning. To the increasingly embattled membership of PZPR 'ideology' meant not the function of socialist thought in transforming the world, but rather the narrower function of stabilising existing social relations in Poland by influencing individual opportunities, social groups and classes through their ability to frame grievances and get those grievances heard and acted upon. This was all part of a general phenomenon that Starski has called 'conceptual embezzlement' - a process that

reached deep into the possibilities of vernacular speech and writing, an Orwellian process, which fundamentally limited the conceptual framework and rendered the expression of a wide range of protest and oppositional ideas very problematic.<sup>10</sup>

The bulk of the *inteligencja* found that by the early 1980s their ideas of right and left were hopelessly confused (which was perhaps inevitable in a country that had 'socialism' before it had class struggle) and deeply cynical. Effectively, apart from the very small minority involved in active opposition, this class operated either as a moral agent of the Church, or as an opportunistic victim of the Party. In consequence, a whole range of political ideas - right, left, planning, responsibility, authority, consensus, the role of national and ethnic minorities in Polish culture - vanished deep into the collective subconscious, struggled to emerge in times of crisis, and often appeared transmuted into ugly, simplistic, moralistic solutions. In 1967 Kuroń and Modzelewski had warned that the absence of a left opposition would have an adverse effect on Polish life:

The bureaucratic system provokes natural antagonism and hate among the masses; it identifies itself with socialism but ruthlessly suppresses all opposition from the left, thus creating conditions favourable for spreading rightist ideologies among the masses. People look for ideological symbols to express their protest against the existing dictatorship and in the absence of opposition from the left expressing their real interests, they find the old symbols of the traditional right. In this manner, the bureaucratic dictatorship aids the traditional right and even enters into agreements based on collaboration with them as with Pax and agreements with the Church hierarchy.<sup>11</sup>

In the absence of a left opposition Poles looked increasingly to the right, to the Western leaders and the Catholic Church. The result was not just naive confusion, but often tragic misalliance and bitter despair. Brandys wrote:

Those who have been disappointed by the outcome of revolutionary utopias run the risk of making a hundred-and-eighty degree turn; that is, of rejecting everything implied by revolution. But to reject revolution as too brutal a method of changing social life is not without consequences. I know intelligent and honourable people who moved away from Marxism, or from having an interest in Marxism, to opinions belonging to the traditional, conservative right. They were swept into it by one crisis, one shock after another; they tore off their old skin and ended up no

longer able to understand the present-day world. The revolutionary movements in Asia and Latin America, as well as the tendencies on the new left in Western Europe, all of that is something inconceivable to them, suicidal. To them revolution heralds the slavery that is to come. They are beyond understanding that in certain situations revolution can get rid of obstacles to development and become one of the moral forces, while at other times it is up to the moral forces themselves to repair the damage caused by revolution. And there, too, lies another danger: that those who manage to escape one set of ready-made ideas can be engulfed by another set diametrically opposite.<sup>12</sup>

The distortions of an absent left opposition were made worse by the activity of the censor. Szczypiorski wrote:

If the Polish press says that the West is suffering from continual recession, then there is no doubt in people's minds that the Western economy must be thriving; when Polish television recites unemployment figures for the USA (or for West Germany or Great Britain) this must mean that unemployment there is inconceivable. No one will even hear of abuses or terrorism in some countries of the so-called free world. Foreigners thus sometimes find Poland to be a country of bizarre reactionaries who refuse to believe the crimes of the Chilean junta, are sceptical about the problem of terrorism in Italy, reject as untrue reports of racial segregation in South Africa, approve of the *Berufsverbot* in West Germany, and so on. A mind fed on garbage becomes poisoned.<sup>13</sup>

Szczypiorski was writing in 1979. By mid-1981 his list had begun to look very bland: it was possible to hear Polish intellectuals argue there should be no *détente*, that the west should support the white South African regime as a bastion of anti-communism, that the African National Congress was just a socialist front; I heard dismay at the earlier US defeat in Vietnam and Cambodia and withdrawal from south-east Asia, support for the idea of direct US intervention in Nicaragua, support for Ronald Reagan's Star Wars plan since one of its objectives was to bankrupt the Soviet Union, and the argument that it was essential for the naive and foolish west European governments to keep US cruise missiles on their soil simply because Soviet talk of peace was just a manoeuvre to disarm the west. Many Poles reasoned that their enemy's enemy must be their friend, and as such help from the western left was unacceptable. There was a great deal of confusion about who possible allies in the west might be - many Poles were

heartened at the support they received from Thatcher and Reagan since these leaders were anti-'socialist': that they were also anti-trades union simply did not register.<sup>14</sup>

The schizophrenia induced by this system could only be relieved by certain courses of action: withdrawal from all public life into a closed circle of friends; steadfast opposition both within and without the law; the creation of an alternative society which took no cognizance of the 'real' world - a path taken by many writers, artists and musicians; exploitation of the system through self interest and cynical manipulation, even to the extent of joining the Party. Staniszkis lamented that the birth of *Solidarność* had not relieved the stress of this situation, but rather inevitably, provided the opposition with a single avenue of expression for a whole range of confusions and discontents. *Solidarność* constricted expression and simplified the kind of political opinion it was possible to hold and became the single channel for all public opinion - a burden it could not easily bear. Staniszkis wrote:

It may sound like heresy, but Polish political life and especially the flow of ideas after August 1980 and the creation of Solidarity has been impoverished as a result of the impact of the populist and solidarist perspective pressed upon society by *Solidarność*. This view contrasts with the segmented, often morally ambiguous but nevertheless less uniform and less aggregated course of society in the 1970s. The earlier atomization of PZPR led to the pluralisation of positions and ideas. They varied from totalitarian utopians from the Sigma Club at Warsaw University, with their abstract, dialectical imagination, to the primitive demonstrations of a need to dominate, that were often fed by personal frustrations and rationalised in terms of 'class dictatorship', of the Club Warsaw 80. Varied reactions to the ritualisation of ideology were observed from the Karl Marx Club, which gathered a few dozen tired party intellectuals (and semi-intellectuals) to the much more primitive and populist Katowice Forum.<sup>15</sup>

It was not possible to simply shake off the ramifications of the false consciousness engendered by 'the system'. In the late 1970s Gierek's regime set up the DiP discussion group as a forum to analyse Polish social and public life. The group met once and had its Party sponsorship withdrawn, but eventually produced two reports, neither of which was published in Poland. They located the failures of Polish public life in the Party's lack of ideology and did not hesitate to spell out the consequences:

The system has created something that is more dangerous than indifference and cynicism, something that surely was not intended: it has created a state of collective informational psychosis. One week a couple of fires break out in a capital city of one and a half million people: well then, some mysterious arsonist must be on the prowl! Perhaps it is a sign of a power struggle! Posters are put up - as they are every year - announcing a call-up for military service: well then, it must be a general mobilisation; they are sending our boys to Vietnam! Or what about the explosion in the General Savings Bank at the Rotunda? Obviously a time bomb, dynamite, sabotage, a provocation... People who for decades have not been informed or who are misinformed, about the critical issues facing our country, people who see only the results of actions taken by the leadership (and to see them it is enough today just to walk into a shop), but who know neither the motives nor the reasons for those actions have a reflex reaction to every piece of news: 'they can't fool us!...' No, this is not even understandable scepticism. It is naive credulity in reverse. People who trust no-one and believe nothing will tomorrow accept the most improbable rumours and trust the first clever demagogue who comes along. A society that has no trustworthy political figure can easily become, in times of crisis and panic, an unpredictable society, a 'blind force'.<sup>16</sup>

By 1980 Polish workers had developed a very sharp suspicion of 'socialist' vocabulary. As they saw things 'socialism' was now inadequate to the task of clearing up the mess and the PZPR was unable to recognise reality. Kapuściński wrote of the 1980 strike:

On the coast they played out a battle about language, our Polish language, about its purity and clarity, about the reinstatement of unmistakable sense, about the purification of our speech from ready-made phrases and nonsense, about freeing it from a worrying plague - the plague of insinuation. 'It's like everything is wrapped in cotton wool', said one of the shipyard workers. 'Our language is hardened, but it isn't tempered.' I remember the first meeting of the MKS <Inter-Factory Strike Committee> with a government delegation. The MKS said: 'We request that our grievances are heard'. The government spokesman said: 'As you like, then I'll reply generally'. The MKS: 'No. We want you to reply in detail. Point for point.' They naturally mistrust the general reply, the generality of language. They protest at everything that promotes falsity, gaps, moulding like putty, mere soap suds, cheating. They are against sentences that begin 'Well as you know...' (really we don't know!), 'Well as you understand...' (really we don't understand!) One of the shipyard delegates: 'Better the bitter truth than sweet lies. Sweeties are for kids, we are grown ups.'<sup>17</sup>

However, there was still tension between the workers and the intellectuals. Public language had become a form of ritual, but one which had lost its flexibility and which had ceased to be an instrument to communicate feeling or information. Spread through a whole nation the effect was to propagate a change from the mass paranoia of the 1950s to massive and widespread social and political schizophrenia in the 1980s, a move away from a language-embodied ideology towards the absolutes of Catholic morality, towards the transparency of ritual gesture, and faith in symbols rather than words. Wałęsa was quick to fix on Catholic symbols to communicate with the led, but a consequence of this was a continuing gap between workers and their intellectual advisers:

The indecisiveness of the intellectuals, their second thoughts, their tendency to operate on a level of pure analytical models were often met with suspicion...<sup>18</sup>

Workers tended to see society and the nation in terms of their own immediate problems rather than in abstract, ideological or institutional terms. They held considerable faith in the existence of simple criteria of correctness, criteria that could not be reached by discussion and compromise or by mutual agreement, but which should somehow be apparent to all except the most dedicated evil intents. Even though they mistrusted the intellectuals who advised Solidarność, the workers often seemed to agree with Party members who spoke eloquently against giving the workers what they requested. Deputy Premier Jagielski's concluding speech to the striking shipyard workers of Gdańsk in August 1980 is a perfect example of how the Party could take advantage of this set of beliefs and attitudes, and illustrates how difficult it was even for top-ranking members of the government to talk plainly and, above all, honestly. In reading Jagielski's speech it is important to bear in mind that a month later the authorities refused to register the union in law, saying that as the agreement did not formally acknowledge the 'leading role' of the Party, and had in any case been exacted under duress, it had no validity. Throughout the negotiations - and even as Jagielski spoke - the shipyards had been surrounded by troops, Gdańsk had been isolated and the phones cut off, the workers had been reviled in the media as 'hooligans' and



'wreckers', and during negotiations the Party had tried to whittle away urgent social needs and political protest, to limit the workers' demands to simple pay increases:

Esteemed audience, I regard it as my duty to add a few words. Our joint work has ended as the chairman said. It really was not easy. The talks were difficult and demanded great effort. But they were concerned with vital issues. They concerned problems of employees, both those present here and those who are not, of their families, their wives and children, friends and colleagues at work. We tried throughout to understand the aims that prompted you. Sharp words were addressed to us. We used some ourselves. We tried to show the practical limits of what we could undertake and actually implement. I reiterate and confirm what has been said: we talked as Poles should talk to one another: as Poles with Poles. (Applause, acclamation.) I strongly confirm one final thing: we should take from this hall the same spirit that accompanied us throughout the negotiations. There are no winners or losers: no victory and no vanquished. What matters most is that we have reached agreement. We came to an understanding. The major guarantee of implementing our Agreement will be work and its results. Only effective work can produce the goods which we then share out. The whole country is watching us. Let us set an example of selfless, reliable work. We will manage it together, as stated. I am profoundly convinced that this will be the best proof of our patriotic, Polish, civic intentions. It will prove that we want, to the best of our abilities, to serve the cause of all working people, of our nation, of our socialist Fatherland: the Polish People's Republic. (Applause, noise, renewed applause.)<sup>19</sup>

Jagielski clearly drew on Party, liturgical and national sentiments in a shameless mish-mash of ready made phrases: he earned applause from the workers for this speech. It was not until the Party had reneged on almost every promise made to *Solidarność* that the workers finally tried a new tack. They began to suspect that the *inteligencja*, the Party and the KOR advisers to *Solidarność* were, perhaps unwittingly, playing games with each other. The conflict about intellectuals and Jews functioning as advisers and experts within *Solidarność* - a conflict that bubbled to the surface several times but most notably with the figure of the Szczecin *Solidarność* leader Marian Jurczyk and his anti-Semitic remarks - can be seen as confused conflict at one remove over the rediscovery of argument and abstract thinking on precisely the issue of how the union was to control its leaders, relate to intellectuals, and assess advice. These were also reactions to the undigested remnants of Poland's pre-war self, and a barely understood response to a whole range of economic pressures and political threats.

Kołakowski, who had concluded his efforts at reform with the equation: Democratic Socialism = Fried Snowballs, believed that it was impossible for the Party to reform itself, rebuild society or make a fresh start without ditching the entire corpus of historically compromised language. A consistent destruction of the past would require forgetting a language that carried cultural traditions, imposed certain structures of thought and thus limited the possibility of creating a New Man. Every language contained words and grammatical forms which should not be known by a New Man. Perfect Revolution would require techniques for throwing people back to the pre-linguistic stage. Indeed, there could be no hope of real success without 'genocide, slavery and bestiality'. For Kołakowski the idea of liberation for, from or by the Party was in itself a dangerous nonsense. Though there is a great deal of truth in what he said, such reductionism was rare. Kołakowski had nevertheless located an important limitation on what the Party could hope to achieve: 'The perfect revolution presupposes a perfect cultural desert.'<sup>20</sup>

The PZPR had never proposed a perfect revolution and never achieved a perfect cultural desert; its policies, far from recruiting creative intellectuals, seem to have reduced them to weary silence or driven them into opposition. The Party had not created a new language for the future, but it had succeeded in making Polish society into a strange, fragmented, confused entity. The Party's manipulation of information distorted public opinion in unpredictable ways, engendered a false consciousness, and promoted mistrust, social and political misunderstanding and the generation of irrational beliefs and attitudes. The effect of censorship was to block the formation of social and political micro-structures, to disrupt a whole range of social contacts and turn society from a dynamic developing body into an unpredictable mass. It was ironic that in a society so divided against itself, but as yet unaware of the fact, the name Solidarity should be chosen for the instrument of opposition. The longer the union existed the less solid it appeared.

By late 1981 the membership of Solidarność had made the same discovery that the revisionists and the Catholic neo-positivists had made before them - namely that as long as the Party held onto power and was backed by the USSR, as long as the bureaucracy and *nomenklatura* had a vested interest in keeping things as they were (no

matter how bad that was), no amount of idealistic talk about *odnowa* would help revitalise any aspect of life in Poland. Jan Prokop, in an article entitled 'Poland disappeared or the glacier of shit', wrote that by 1980 Polish political, artistic and public life stood in great danger of being 'officialised into nothingness by a million local Party secretaries'.<sup>21</sup> By the end of 1981 workers 'questioned, questioned questioned' dissident speakers who toured the countryside. But, as Kuroń soon realised, they had no common public or political language: dissidents did not hear answers in the questions, and workers heard only more questions in dissident answers: 'For the last 30-40 years all we had in common with which to talk about politics was the language of the bureaucratic picture of reality.'<sup>22</sup> This realisation, though it was crucial to national self awareness, was suppressed by the declaration of martial law. Indeed it is possible that the fragmentation of the opposition was just as important as the fragmentation of the Party in Jaruzelski's mind at this point. If there was one thing that the USSR could not stand it was uncertainty about exactly who was in control of the territory between itself and East Germany.

## 8.2 LIMITS TO SOLIDARNOŚĆ

Solidarność steadfastly refused to act as a political party. However, throughout 1981 the impact of 'freedom' on the economically and politically repressed populace, combined with the economic and social consequences of widespread shortages of even basic foodstuffs, resulted in increasing chaos in both public and private life. There can be little doubt that the authorities held back food and fuel supplies in the winter of 1980-81 in order to make it seem that Solidarność was responsible for economic collapse, but the fact was that the Polish economy was in a desperate mess. In March 1981 the Party detailed the state of the economy: industrial production had fallen by 11.8 per cent; coal production had missed its planned target by over ten million tons, the production of TV sets, radios, washing machines, cloth, cement, chemicals and medicines, electrolyte, aluminium, furniture, paper had all fallen massively; engineering production had fallen by 22 per cent, domestic construction by 14 per cent;

cheese production 32 per cent, meat and poultry production by 23 per cent; exports to the west fell by 25 per cent (coal exports alone had fallen by 76 per cent; imports had risen by 5 per cent) imports of foodstuffs had risen by 60 per cent (including 50,000 tons of meat, 50,000 tons of sugar, 50,000 tons of butter, 3,000 tons of milk powder, 15,000 tons of rice, 10,000 tons of barley, 6,000 tons of olive oil, and 40,000 tons of rape).<sup>23</sup> Although the Party report did not say so there were constant electricity failures and there was an epidemic of hepatitis. The economic situation was such that neither the government nor Solidarność could hope to rectify things without massive cooperation from the populace, and this the public was not prepared to give. The workers had been squeezed, the budgets shaved, the statistics massaged for so long that the economy and people were bankrupt financially, physically and emotionally.

In July 1981 the Party reluctantly decided to embrace reform before it was seen to have lost control. Citing article thirteen of the Constitution, which gave the Party the right to direct economic reform, they proposed 66 articles designed to streamline the economy. They recognised that the effect of 35 years of central planning and manipulation had resulted in economic and social stagnation, that for young people in particular life had become alienated and burdensome, and what passed for 'thought' was merely dreary and routine social conformism. The Party proposed to reform the Ministries of Finance, Labour, and Foreign Trade, Department of Economic Materials, Central People's Commission, the Central Department of Statistics and the National Bank. The reforms were to be administered by the 'central organs', but Party also proposed a series of monitoring commissions answerable to the Sejm. The plan also included 45 articles designed to help certain enterprises and cooperatives, which, though still controlled by the state, would now become independent and self-regulating along commercial lines, and they argued that the directors of state enterprises should be given greater freedoms of management.<sup>24</sup>

The idea of reform was welcomed, but the Party's ideas were much beside the mark of public opinion and did little to stabilise the economy. Their proposals did not include the demolition of the *nomenklatura*, did not do away with the leading role of the Party, did not address the problem of censorship, did not effectively rein in the power of the *milicja* or the UB, did not democratise election procedures, did not

address the problem of Poland's relationship to the USSR and did not discuss Poland's role in the Warsaw pact. For the writers of the opposition there were no guarantees of intellectual freedom, and no mention of reducing the Party's hold on university appointments, the mass media or publishing industry. Demoralised by mass desertion of its membership, the Party was now confused and angry at its failure to control security service 'provocations', but saw itself as too divided to carry out the reforms.

In mid-September Jaruzelski learned that the Soviet Union was planning to cut deliveries of oil to Poland from 13,000,000 tons to a mere 4,000,000 tons, and that this would be matched by reduced deliveries of all goods to Poland from the other Warsaw Pact countries. The economy was spiralling downwards at an alarming rate. In the spring of 1981 ration cards were issued but could not be honoured; in June, July and August there were hunger marches: by November it was normal to spend seven hours a day queueing for food. By December *Solidarność* was growing tired of government inadequacy and was moving steadily to a more confrontational attitude, in spite of Wałęsa's warnings that the union could not hope to win any violent clash with the authorities. On 11 December 1981 the Solidarity National Commission began its first session, and next day announced that it planned a day of protests for 17 December. Małachowski, spokesman for the *Solidarność* Mazowsze chapter, addressed the SDP (Association of Polish Journalists) reporting that *Solidarność* Mazowsze was preparing weapons to defend itself and had started to organise a workers' militia. The government already had tape recordings of senior figures in *Solidarność* talking of a move either to constitute themselves as an independent political party or to seize power. Jaruzelski knew that the USSR had set up military hospitals along the Polish borders and he had been instructed by Brezhnev that he should 'discover' arms and ammunition as a pretext to move against *Solidarność*. He had resisted the idea, but felt that if he did not move against *Solidarność* quickly, the Red Army might move against him. Jaruzelski's intelligence service told him that the Soviets had massed troops along the Polish borders and that Soviet intelligence had been active in Poland since the previous August, and he seems to have been prepared for the eventuality of Soviet intervention. Early in December 1981 the Polish army had begun to lay tank traps,

knowing that Solidarność had no tanks. At 14.00 hrs on 12 December Jaruzelski set in motion the orders declaring martial law.<sup>25</sup>

### 8.3 MARTIAL LAW AND THE WRITERS

Martial law was greeted by an exhausted populace with a mixture of anger and a sense of relief. The coup temporarily crushed Solidarność and ended a major attempt to restore the idea of an independent civil society; the PZPR was suspended along with Solidarność, 'official' publications and 'officially recognised organisations' suffered in the clamp-down. Among many others, the journals *Tygodnik Powszechny*, *Literatura* and *Kultura* were all closed down. *Tygodnik Powszechny* was later to reappear, but the military felt that there were too few reliable intellectuals and writers for them to re-open the other two journals. Among the other organisations banned by the military between 1981 and 1983 were: the Students' Union, the Union of Stage Artists, the Union of Visual Artists, and KIK. The Association of Film Makers only survived after its chairman, Andrzej Wajda, agreed to resign. The Kuźnica Club was disbanded by the military on 30 January 1983, when it was claimed that it had become a private club for the Kraków party *inteligencja* and that closure of this venerable remnant of *socrealizm* was in the interest of political consolidation. The suppression of SDP was probably the most fierce. By the end of March 1982 it is likely that over 1,200 of Poland's 10,000 professional journalists had been dismissed or forced to resign - 30 journalists resigned from *Polityka*, 20 from *Słowo Powszechne*, 13 from *Kurier Polski*. Among TV journalists 513 were dismissed and 40 suspended. A further 2,500 journalists are thought to have left the profession voluntarily. Polish PEN was presented with an idiotic list of political charges which, with grave and admirable dignity, they ignored; nevertheless they found themselves proscribed.

The 1980 ZLP congress and the election of J.J.Szczepański as President to replace Iwaszkiewicz, who had died in March 1980, had occasioned paroxysms of displeasure from the Party. Szczepański did not attempt to hide his lack of enthusiasm for the task, but the fact was clear to all - he was virtually the only member of the union who was

acceptable to the union membership and tolerable to the Party. By 1980 ZLP had over 1,300 members (about 600 of these in Warsaw, the bulk of the remainder in Kraków), organised in 17 regional branches. On 13 December 1981 writers attending the annual ZLP congress at the Palace of Culture had arrived to find the doors bolted and a handwritten note from the Mayor saying that in view of martial law he had taken it upon himself to cancel the remainder of the congress. Polish writers were among the first to be arrested: Tomasz Jastrun, Jan Połkowski, Andrzej Szczypiorski, Wiktor Woroszyński, Marek Nowakowski, Anka Kowalska, Piotr Wierzbicki, Janusz Anderman, to name but a few. Janusz Krupski, the editor of *Spotkania*, was only arrested after nine months in hiding. ZLP, seen by the military as one of the main foci of unrest, was vilified in the surviving press. Over the next few months ZOMO riot police broke up demonstrations and smashed printing presses. ZLP was instructed that it was no longer possible to run a writers' cafeteria as this constituted an illegal assembly under martial law regulations. Brandys wrote:

At the time of martial law there was a big debate in the papers and TV as to what to do with ZLP - it was suspended, but some wished to reform it, others to abolish it entirely. A small minority of members supported the military, but as soon as they were known the public boycotted the purchase of their books - it is said that in any case they were not very widely read, but published for political reasons, and that cartons full of their unread books are sitting in warehouses like coffins in a mortuary.<sup>26</sup>

By this time all 'normal' union activity was impossible and Szczepański and his committee spent most of their time trying to trace and contact arrested writers, send parcels of food and medicine, and petition the authorities for their early release. In December 1982 all writers were released from prison under an amnesty, but ZLP was instructed to purge itself of anti-socialist elements. The newspapers began a campaign to discredit ZLP, its officers, and Szczepański in particular - the police even went so far as to forge a letter from him to the Council of State in February 1983. In the autumn of 1983 the military decided that the union was unable or unwilling to cooperate and that it should be suspended. A short while later ZLP was dissolved. The Committee of ZLP wrote a 17 page letter to the Ministry of Internal Affairs to protest:

they criticised ministry officials for attempting to force the union into expelling and blacklisting opposition writers, for attempting to stage-manage the union's congress, and pointed out that ZLP had been founded some 63 years ago, was probably the single most influential cultural organisation in Poland and had its roots deep within Polish culture. Its dissolution, it said, 'would lead to huge and irreparable damage, not only to the literary community, but to the whole of Polish society and culture'. The abolition of the union did irreparable damage to relations between the creative *inteligencja* and the authorities.<sup>27</sup>

In March 1984 Government Spokesman Urban announced that in future those writers associated with the 'second circuit' would no longer be eligible for consideration by the state publishing houses, nor would they be eligible for membership of the new writers' union. On 3 March *Życie Literackie* published comment from Kazimierz Molk and the Military Committee for Literary Guidance and Active Culture in which 28 writers, the worst offenders against the military authorities, were named and effectively banned. Among these were: Miłosz, Kornhauser, Bocheński, Konwicki, Woroszyński, Żuławski. Shortly afterwards a new ZLP was created by the government. This took over the offices and finances of the old union, and even kept the old name. It was clear that any writer who remained outside the new union would not have access to the café, the library, the grants and pensions, the subsidised publishing incentives, the insurance scheme, the holiday homes, the medical care, and vacation opportunities abroad. In spite of this only unknown Party writers joined. Virtually all those who had any reputation refused.<sup>28</sup> Waldemar Łysiak never had a very high opinion of the ZLP, but by 1989 his view that the union consisted not of 'full writers', but only of incompetents, 'half writers, quarter writers and still worse', those 'whom the gods had allowed into Parnassus without credentials, photographs and stamps', was more than justified.<sup>29</sup>

Martial law was a time of moral crisis. Writers were faced with choices: continue with their work, cooperate with the Military authorities, refuse 'collaboration', go underground, or just fall silent. They were aware that the Polish reading public looked to them not to fall silent in times of crisis, and expected them to offer guidance. The decision often depended on how the writers viewed martial law. If they saw it as



occupation by the military, forced suspension of civil liberties, crushing of free expression and refusal to reform, then publication with the state was out of the question. For many martial law was not only a national, political and cultural shock, but a deep personal wound. Daily life, which had already become chaotic, now became completely unreal and many felt that the values of their world had been shattered. They searched for models on which to base their response, they looked for historical antecedents and found them in Kościuszko's 1794 uprising, the November rising of 1830, the 1831 Russo-Polish war, the rising of 1863, and the German-Soviet invasions of 1939. They took their bearings from these events, and many still speak of martial law as *wojna* (war).

If, on the other hand, writers saw martial law as a simple annexation, or even as a temporary set-back, then withdrawal from writing was an unsatisfactory short-term non-solution. Some saw truth in Jaruzelski's claim that he would push through the reforms initiated by Solidarność, and agreed that some effort had to be made to restore calm and order to a dangerously unbalanced society. They felt that in the long run history would absolve Jaruzelski from some of the blame and judged that cooperation with the new regime would be a kind of Positivism within a political set-up that offered no other possibility: they rationalised cooperation with the military as essential, healthy 'organic' work on behalf of the nation.

Zbigniew Bujak was one among many who had begun to talk of the differences between an underground society and an underground state - he had had enough of living underground. Kuroń wanted to conspire to seize power and proposed a general strike and programme of mass resistance. But Michnik, who had anticipated many of the struggles that would develop in the 1980s in a discussion he had joined with Kuroń and Lipski in the pages of *Biuletyn Informacyjny* in 1979, said that a non-violent struggle was taking place between an organised civilian society and the repressive apparatus of power. The aim of the opposition, he said, was not to take power, but simply to limit it; the real problem was how to limit it in the open, rather than through an underground system that was itself limited and subject to deformation. Michnik knew that to 'live as if they were free' was not the same thing as 'living in freedom'. *Samoorganizacje* (self organisation) was no substitute for democratic government and an open market for

information. The parallel civil society, with all its distortions and reflections of 'Polish reality' - itself distorted by the Party - was the only one that offered them satisfaction, self-respect, dignity and an inner life:

The publication of uncensored books and periodicals is the most frequently cited product of the opposition's tactic of creating independent institutions. The uncensored press is not just free from censorship, but it has virtually no contacts with the official system. I write 'virtually' because it often happens that these publications are read by people who are concerned with the system. And there is another point of contact: the police take every opportunity they can to confiscate copies of these publications. This is how the independent press can and should function under today's conditions.<sup>30</sup>

However badly shocked the Poles were by martial law, it did not destroy the will to restore civil society. Indeed the coup forced the public back on itself and far from suppressing the need for a civil restoration, it extended that feeling into the thinking of even loyal Party members.

#### 8.4 LEGACY OF GENERAL JARUZELSKI

Jaruzelski's legacy will prove complex and ambiguous. A 'socialist' from his youth, but of *szlachta* descent, Jaruzelski seems to have finally seen through the charade of Polish 'socialism' only in 1987-88, but he had been wavering for some time. In declaring martial law he spoke, not of the Polish state, but of the survival of the Polish nation, promising that he would carry through the reforms initiated by Solidarność. Even without the Party, which he had suspended, he was as good as his word; but eventually he came to realise that while the socialist system may have been very useful in the post-war reconstruction of Poland, the Party had 'exhausted its locomotive power' and was incapable of leading Poland's energy into 'constructive channels or towards genuine democracy'.<sup>31</sup> Jaruzelski slowly realised that without some form of social legitimacy (such as was accorded by democratic dialogue) he could not push through his reform of the economy, and could not now make the Party anything less than odious to the majority of Poles.

Jaruzelski seems to have been far more aware of Polish literary culture than any of his predecessors, or Wałęsa. At school Jaruzelski is said to have excelled in Polish literature, one of his classmates was the poet Gajcy, and his speeches were peppered with references to Andrzejewski, Wyspiański, Prus and Mickiewicz in a way that was most unlike other post-war leaders. Furthermore, he was not afraid of making connections between literature and politics, even when this went against the grain of received opinion:

What I have to say may sound harsh, but the truth may not be trimmed. Polish shortcomings are not a product of socialism. They have a combination of causes stemming from the complicated, centuries-long vicissitudes of our nation. Have those ascribing all the evil in Poland to the socialist authorities never looked into the great sages of our political journalism? From Modrzewski and Skarga, Staszic and Lelewel to Prus and Pruszyński - almost every generation faces the bitter question: Why is our understanding of the interest of the state so weak, our ethics of public life so low, our attitude towards work so frequently improper? Why is there so much envy and pig-headedness? Why does slander spread so easily and gossip find so ready an audience? The quality of human relationships also has an impact on the shape of civic attitudes. Last year, I asked in Parliament how it could happen that in Poland democracy turns so easily into anarchy, while the authorities so easily succumb to deformation. This subject has yet to be accorded sufficiently thorough reflection, reaching back to its roots. I think our movement should take up this issue, discuss it and bring it home to all sections of society.<sup>32</sup>

However sensitive he was to literature, Jaruzelski nevertheless dissolved ZLP and a whole range of other cultural organisations, and severely restricted those few that survived; the military even extended the censorship system to post-publication, in order to enable them to seize books already passed by the civilian censors. Jaruzelski's sensitivity to literature did not prevent several hundred deaths in the imposition of martial law, or the torture and death of Father Popiełuszko. Hundreds of independent intellectuals, writers and Solidarność advisers were imprisoned or forced into exile, thousands of ordinary Poles were punished for carrying, reading or possessing 'forbidden literature'.

In 1983 the underground opposition announced KKN (Committee for Independent Culture), founded to promote the work of oppositionist writers and artists through

tours, prizes, performances and exhibitions; a little later SKN (Social Committee for Learning) came into existence to promote independent social and science research in history, sociology, politics. In addition KOS (Committee for Social Resistance, founded 1981) published its own journal *KOS* (Blackbird); KOS and ZON (Committee for Independent Education) published *Tu i Teraz* (Here and Now) a journal devoted to literature, history, economics and philosophy. By this time some of the underground publishing houses, like NOWa, had become very big indeed, and were destined to play a vital role in underground culture during martial law and the years that followed. In 1981-82 alone over 40 books and 500 periodicals appeared from unofficial publishing houses. It was here that the works of Gombrowicz, Żeromski, Zbigniew Brzeziński, Kuroń, Günter Grass, T.G. Masaryk, Orwell, Joseph Brodsky, Osip Mandelstam, Bartoszewski and many others found a Polish readership. Krag, the largest of the underground presses managed to publish more than 52 books and journals in 1982, including Joseph Conrad, Mikhail Bulgakov, Bohumil Hrabal, Konwicki, Nadiezhda Mandelstam, Michnik, Miłosz and Artur Schnitzler. NOWa even exhibited its work at the Frankfurt International Book Fair. The success of these publications may be judged from the fact that without hesitation, virtually all the best and most respected writers in Poland contributed to them under their own names. By 1985 underground publishing was such an extensive business that an Independent Publications Fund was set up by *Solidarność* to assist the work of the larger houses. In October 1986 a Social Council for Independent Publishing was set up to oversee the quality of product, offer advice and settle disputes. Polish underground publishing had become a formidable cultural and political phenomenon.

From 1983 onwards Jaruzelski's government steadily liberalised the print and publishing industry.<sup>33</sup> With the demise of the censor, the reform of the economy and the end of police harassment many writers began to worry that by staying with underground publishers they were actually contributing to the further deformation of Polish culture. Jaruzelski, true to his word, had reined in the censor and the *milicja*, and created a more or less free market for comment and public opinion. His reforms undermined the moral purity of the writers' stance. Not only writers, but actors, film directors, theatre directors, editors, historians, journalists, artistic sponsors of all

kinds, having spent a couple of years in the unsubsidised underground, or working in the west, had heard the chill blast of the free market and decided that if socialism was to have a human face after all, then they might as well make a living from it. This return to state publishing was not accomplished without bitterness, but in a situation where it was possible to say and publish virtually anything, there was little point in maintaining a high moral profile and a poor bank balance. Konwicki's conversion was frank, disarming, cynical and self-critical:

Now I return again to my yoke. Of my own accord, I submit to the loving embrace of the noble office <GUKPPIW>, which resides in Warsaw at ulica Mysia. Here I am already safe. Here my pen is followed by the watchful eye of my known protector, my intellectual father, my spiritual guide. How heavenly and safe I feel. At last.<sup>34</sup>

The collapse of the PZPR came at the very moment of social surrender, a fact which has implications for the whole of Polish society: Party membership was growing again, many writers had abandoned the underground presses and their boycott of the state, and were once again showing their manuscripts to the large state publishers.

This was the world of the older, more established writers. However, there was another strand to developments in the literary world. As the *nowa fala* poets had been overtaken by the New Privacy poets, so these in their turn were overtaken by a generation of writers born in the 1960s: Marcin Świetlicki, Jakub Ekier, Krzysztof Koehler, Jacek Podsiadło, Marzena Broda, Marcin Sendecki, Artur Szłosarek, Paweł Marcinkiewicz, Tomasz Titków. Almost all of these poets were associated with the irregular Kraków magazine *brulion* (rough copy). Many of them referred to themselves as the new barbarians and were associated with the introduction of punk music into Poland: while they made use of outrageous postures shock tactics, pornography and Nazi materials, they were against Polish nationalist and military traditions, they were indifferent to the Church, disliked Polish religiosity and resented the strait-jacket of Polish literary tradition with its myths and images of heroic resistance. For these writers, Miłosz, Barańczak, Błóński, Zagajewski and the rest of the older oppositionist writers were the stifling 'establishment' with their endless obsession with political

stances, being morally and politically correct and their endless responsibility to the nation. For the new barbarians these were not issues at all, except insofar as they were to be by-passed and avoided.

## 8.5 COLLAPSE OF 'SOCIALISM'

1989-90 saw remarkable and entirely unpredicted change in east-central Europe. In 1988 Gorbachev let it be known that the Soviet Union was no longer prepared to prop up the regimes on its periphery. Almost at once the discredited, inefficient and hopelessly antiquated 'socialist' regimes of east-central Europe became unstable. Freed from the cloak of Moscow at last, Polish 'socialist' thought stood naked. One of the first organisations to scent the change was Polish PEN. They had been suspended by the Martial Law authorities in December 1981, and their democratically elected management body had been replaced by a military commissar. Their protests and a visit from the President of International PEN had been to no avail. Polish PEN refused to accept military interference and instead declared itself dormant. The military responded by initiating legal charges claiming PEN were agents of the West. PEN refused to answer the charges and simply waited for better times. Żuławski explained to me in interview:

In 1987, the government started trying to speak about how it might be possible to do something with PEN. They explained about how it might be possible to resurrect PEN if we would agree to do this without any elections, with people on the Board suggested by the government. The Minister of Culture, Mr Krawczuk, sat in this chair where you are sitting now, and made this proposal. I told him that according to our constitution there was only one way to re-open PEN and that was to call a free election of the board - and that in itself was a compromise, because we already had a board from 1981. But he was very nervous. A free election, he said, is very dangerous. He tried to make a secret deal with me. He said: 'You will be President for life, we guarantee it, if we can put our people on the board'. I refused any such malversation (sic) and told him that normal elections were the only way, in accordance with the International PEN charter and regulations. Then they sent me two different Party members - members of PEN, writers who were on the government side - to try to persuade me to make a deal, somehow, with the government and set up PEN without elections. I laughed and refused. I refused any and all preconditions. Several times I tried to get my point of view on this whole

subject printed in the newspapers, but always the censors withheld it. Then suddenly I was allowed to write something in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, an open letter addressed to the President of the Council of State and to the Speaker of the Sejm, and this was followed by a letter signed by most Polish PEN members (about 150) in my support. And after that we were all invited to the Belveder Palace to discuss things...suddenly, in 1988, the government agreed to ask me to call a general assembly of PEN and agreed to free elections to the board. They accepted PEN's own normal running, and they agreed to restore PEN, without any preconditions. It took many months to arrange...It is important to realise that PEN was restored a long time - several months - before Solidarność. We were the very first organisation to resume normal working. Our first meeting was held on 19 September 1988.<sup>35</sup>

ZLP was also affected by a change in the political climate. In June 1989 a large number of writers abandoned ZLP and formed the SPP (Association of Polish Writers) with the ex-ZLP president Szczepański as its elected chairman. The new organisation did not seek to replace the state-run ZLP, merely to by-pass it and if possible ignore it entirely. Membership was a matter of choice, no rewards were offered, and it was open to writers living abroad.

In the spring of 1989 PZPR offered round-table talks. These were followed by free elections in which the Party suffered a humiliating defeat, handed over power quite meekly to anyone who would take it, but could not call upon any organisation other than Solidarność to assume the mantle of leadership. Even before its electoral success Solidarność was itself in difficulties: it had no ideology beyond national feeling and no agreed policies. There was no clear social agreement to follow Solidarność's lead and the union was weaker in 1989 than it had been at any time since its birth. Its membership was declining while membership of the official trades unions was rising; its efforts to call a general strike had ended in disaster raising only patchy support; at the same time it had no control over the latest wave of independent strikes which were quite separate from the Solidarność initiative. Wałęsa's personal public standing was at its lowest ever in May 1988. In many ways Poland was as unprepared for its liberation in 1989 as it had been in 1918, and the same temptation loomed to surrender power to an authoritarian father figure.

Timothy Garton Ash has assured us that there was nothing new in the 'velvet

revolution' of 1989: this was a quiet, simple return to the old eighteenth century central European concept of civil society, of democratic and egalitarian relations assuming prominence over the post-war exploitative social relations and violent suppression of discontent.<sup>36</sup> But this is wishful thinking. Poland was and remains unstable and unpredictable: it is a nation superbly strong in patriotism, but with little or no sense of itself as a society. In the words of the adage, Poles still find it easier to die for Poland than to work for it. As the poet Cyprian Norwid (1821-83) warned at the time of the partitions, the virtues that sustained Poland through its darkest days could yet prove to be supremely anti-social in more liberal times. Michnik, Geremek, Kuroń and others have made it clear that their model of civil society is not that of the free market, nor of a bourgeois democracy; they do not have in mind the simple transfer of western models. Poland has its own history of noble democracy, which some characterise as anarchic, to draw upon. The emphasis of Michnik, Geremek, Kuroń and others is upon the enabling aspects of government, upon the strength of autonomous, self-governing, self-organised, local civic groupings; they seek to abandon state power and hope for the oppressive spoiling powers of the state to wither away. But they are faced with a conservative working class that rightly sees marketisation as a threat, which does not trust any political leadership, and which if it could have its cake and eat it would like to see a socialist system under any other name.

What was revealed by the collapse of 'socialism' was a frightening susceptibility to demagoguery, an enormous sympathy for nationalist, anti-semitic, populist political thought. Poland stood as a complex blend of the industrial and the irrational; modern enlightenment and modern ambition mixed with rural prejudice; eighteenth century enlightenment mixed with frightening ignorance. Where these contradictions were too great to contain in the transition to an open society, the almost intact structures and forms of past political thought surfaced, and though often inappropriate (e.g., anti-Semitism), they rose to impose some kind of order, vision and perspective on the swirling maelstrom of political life, where over 600 political parties, few with a membership of even 2,000, vied with each other. Much that was 'new' in the Republic of Poland (the People's Republic disappeared early in 1990, when the crown was restored to the Polish eagle) was in fact recycled pre-war history, a history that had



been held in abeyance. When Wałęsa was inaugurated as President in December 1990 he received his insignia not from Jaruzelski, the outgoing President who was not even invited to the ceremony, but from Kaczorowski, the London-based President of the émigré pre-war regime. Michnik was alone in protesting at this. The sudden transition to a free market economy and a convertible currency while the enormously expensive state-owned industries still limped along producing little that was saleable, caused a massive rise in unemployment, drug abuse, prostitution, gun ownership, car theft, house breaking, violent crime, divorce and suicide. As well as knee-jerk anti-'socialism' there was also a growth in anti-Semitism and anti-intellectualism. The power of the Catholic church also grew as it bid for a place enshrined in the new Constitution, campaigned for religious worship in schools and for new anti-abortion laws. All this spoke, not of 'the end of history', but of a resumption of the history interrupted by the Nazi invasion of 1939, and perhaps even a return to the history interrupted by the partitions.

After the 1989 elections the floors of both the Sejm and Senat (now graced with internationally renowned figures like Wajda and Szczypiorski) looked more like professional gatherings of writers, professors, historians and film-makers than legislative assemblies. Mazowiecki became prime minister, the sociologist of writers, Andrzej Siciński, became Minister of Arts and Culture. The poet Ewa Lipska was appointed cultural envoy to the key Polish Consulate in Vienna, and the poet Tomasz Jastrun was appointed cultural attaché to Sweden. As 'socialism' collapsed this pattern was repeated in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania.<sup>37</sup> However, for many writers the end of 'socialism' was the end of a career. There was a feeling that writers, in opposing 'socialism' without forming an alternative that protected their privilege, had killed the goose that laid the golden egg. Writers in Poland now faced a vastly different world from anything within their previous experience. If Polish writers had finally won the right to ignore politics, they were just about to learn that politicians had finally earned the right to ignore writers: indeed it seems that writers had earned the right to become politicians.

The political threat posed by writers was never as great as the PZPR imagined. Writers stood to lose too much by the destruction of the system of state subsidy. Polish

writers wanted to alter the relationship between central authority and civil liberty, not necessarily to dismantle entirely the system that afforded them such privilege. Most realised that their privilege as artists could not be maintained in an open society. They could not reconcile their work with the 'socialist' set-up, but many, understanding that Poland would eventually have to go through a period of class politics such as it had never before experienced, realised that socialism need not always be of the Soviet variety. Many would have preferred greater freedoms within socialism to the total freedoms of the free market. Many saw they could not guarantee civil freedoms under socialism as long as the Soviet Union was still in existence and still powerful. Writers sought change without seeking power. They gained power because they sought change, but the change they wanted was to make human conscience a political and artistic force. That may be why in 1990-91 they lost power almost at once to the rising populist element in the fragmenting ranks of *Solidarność*. Intellectuals may have been on the road to class power, but the workers were on that same road, and they were moving faster, travelling harder, pushing for power in ways that the intellectuals were not. The writers had not sought to capture state power, and were unprepared for total political power to drop into their laps. Indeed, after forty five years of struggle, having just reached an accommodation with the Polish government which now allowed them to say and write almost anything and still receive state subsidy, the collapse of 'socialism' was a grave and shocking blow which denied the opposition the moral victory it wanted and needed.

The PZPR had been obsessed with the problem of its authority. By the time the Party was prepared to listen to independent intellectuals and was free of the stifling Soviet control, Polish society as a whole was no longer prepared to accept the leadership of writers, no longer saw anything even remotely useful in what it understood to be socialism, placed its trust in the free market and the western right and began, under the leadership of Wałęsa (who has a bust of Piłsudski on his desk and whose proudest boast is that he has never read a book in his life) to see writers as covert 'socialists' and Jews who had done very nicely out of the old regime. At first *Solidarność* needed intellectuals and writers to advise it. Once they had established a toe-hold on power, *Solidarność* began to attack writers and intellectuals. In 1990

Wałęsa launched what he called a *wojna* (war) against the first democratic Polish government, saying that its ministers were crypto-communists: he tried to get Kuroń, the Minister of Labour (who is of Jewish descent) dismissed from his post, clashed with Mazowiecki, the Prime Minister (a devout Catholic intellectual, who it was said was also of distant Jewish descent), stripped the union's newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* of its *Solidarność* logo and tried to oust Michnik (also of Jewish descent) from his editorial post. Wałęsa's election to President made 'Polishness' a criterion for high office. He split *Solidarność* into a number of tiny feuding factions in which writers and intellectuals were mistrusted by the bulk of the population, and tried to set the provincial workers against the Warsaw intellectuals.

The transition from 'socialist unreality' to 'capitalist reality' has been incredibly painful for all Poles. As Kapuściński said:

First of all, Polish society is very complex and contradictory: it has been fighting a long time for its independence. And unlike our Czech neighbours, who found a way to wait for better times, our struggle has largely been a frontal assault. Now people here are very emotional. They are used to fighting, but they are exhausted. They have lost their enemy and as a result they are mistaken and confused. Society has no visible guidance. The old system is finished, but it has not quite disappeared, and whatever will replace it has not yet emerged. People don't know how to act, where to go, what to do. They are happy that there has been a change in the power system, that they don't have communists above them any longer, but on the other hand they don't know what they are any more. You don't find a lot of happiness here, only a lot of uncertainty and that is very tiring. We've come out of communism, but not as a clean society; there is a lot of riff-raff here, and as in any big change the scum always rises to the surface. Some people are using democracy. For them it is only a pretence. These are developments which make us fearful simply because there is no institution which can control them. At this moment there is almost no Polish state. The police are afraid to act, Customs and Tax cannot collect revenues, the Party doesn't exist, the government is weak. There are government structures, of course, but these don't extend into society. If a hundred men decided to go on the street and start shooting tomorrow there is no-one who could stop them. There is a power vacuum. And the riff-raff are using this moment. We have a rise of terrible mental backwardness, a *ciemnota* - a darkness of the mind, primitive hate, anti-semitism, anti-all races, something which is anti-everybody. The trouble is historical. Everything has a historical explanation - but that of course is no justification. This was always a very backward country with a very backward peasantry. The *inteligencja* was always very small, and most of them perished in Katyn and Oświęcim, emigrated or died in the Stalinist prisons. This nation now has a very, very tiny, limited *inteligencja*.

There is no real middle-class here; there is no stable element here; there is no tradition of bourgeois culture here. Ninety percent of the inhabitants of our towns are not town dwellers of more than one generation - they are a mixture from all over the old Poland, they don't even come from the same parts of Poland, and their fathers and grandfathers were illiterate peasants. This is very different from the society of Budapest or Prague. We are much closer to the society of the USSR. The problem is that there are no socially accepted, cultural, European, civilised institutions or organisations on a mass scale in this country. There are individuals and small groups, but they are unable to influence the mentality of the whole nation and the level of their civilisation. This country is in a very dangerous situation because if we cannot raise the level of our civilisation, our culture, very quickly we will be in trouble. We will be left aside for the next hundred years. Some people are aware of this, but the nation as a whole is not.<sup>38</sup>

#### NOTES

- 1 See: C.Tighe, 'A State of Mind', *Planet*, no.64, pp.55-70; 'Render unto Caesar: Church and State in Poland', *Monthly Review*, vol.38, no.7, December 1986, pp.20-31; 'Interview' in: N.Witts, *Something Broken in Poland*, BBC Radio 3, 14 October 1985; 'One step forward, two steps back', *Arcade*, September 1981; 'Who's to blame for the beatings that shocked a nation?' *The Edmonton Journal*, July 19, 1981; 'Peace, Jobs and Freedom', *Arcade*, July 1981; 'Notes from the Bread Queue', *Arcade*, May 1981; 'Conditions in Poland', 'Solidarity sparks emotions', 'In troubled times', World News Supplement to *The Edmonton Journal* featured several of this author's despatches from Poland, November 11, 1981; 'Martial Law', *The Edmonton Journal*, March 20, 1983; 'Poland', *The Edmonton Journal*, June 9, 1984; 'A State of Mind', *Planet*, No.64, August/September 1987; 'Man of Celluloid', *Arcade*, November 1981.
- 2 J.Staniszkis, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1984, pp.128-9.
- 3 K.Brandys, *A Question of Reality*, Blond & Briggs, London, 1981, p.31. Brandys was one of the first to observe the problem of what was happening to language under the influence of the Party. In a novel written during the months March 1956 to March 1957, that is during the brief thaw of 1956, Brandys, through the character of Zenon observed the discrepancy between language and reality: "What used to be has gone now, why don't they write about what *is*?" He cursed the trams and queues, the informers and careerists, the limousines the officials used. He hated life, himself and Roman <his brother>, his own failed hopes and the voice of the announcer on the wireless, and when saying 'the people' or 'freedom' he contorted his mouth contemptuously.' K.Brandys, *Sons and Comrades (Matka Królów, 1957)*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1961, p.82. On the difficult subject of the Party's influence on the Polish language see: J.Karpiński, *Count-Down: The Polish Upheavals of 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976, 1980...*, Karz-Kohl, New York,

- 1982; J.Staniszkis, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution*, pp.128-9; J.Bralczyk, *O Języku polskiej propagandy politycznej lat siedemdziesiątych*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Slavica Upsaliensia, no.24, Uppsala, 1987, pp.100-103; S.Amsterdamski, A.Jawłowska & T.Kowalik, *Język propagandy*, Zeszyty Towarzystwa Kursów Naukowych - Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza NOWa, Warsaw, 1979; P.Wierzbicki, *Struktura kłamstwa*, ANEKS, London, 1987; M.Głowiński, *Nowamowa po polsku*, PEN, Warsaw, 1990.
- 4 Cardinal Wyszyński's radio message to the Gdansk strikers - 'There are times when you should not demand too much, as long as there is order in Poland' - was particularly ill-timed and Bishop Kaczmarek of Gdańsk attempted to head off the anger of the parishioners by sending out priests to explain that the Cardinal's message had been cut and edited. The Party responded to this accusation by releasing the full text a few days later and it was clear that they had not tampered with the broadcast in any way. Mieczysław Rakowski, senior editor of *Polityka* and a senior Party figure, actually thanked the Cardinal for his intervention. This was a partnership that could admit a third member only with great difficulty. Indeed the moral impact of Solidarność challenged the hegemony of the Church, and while it tried to underwrite the promises of the Party in the name of social accord and Christian charity, the Church had enormous difficulty in accommodating those priests who became politicised and unhappy about the role of the Church. Father Jerzy Popiełuszko was one of many priests who felt that the hierarchy betrayed their 'flock' after Martial Law. His bishop tried very hard to silence him before the secret police took matters into their own hands and brutally murdered the 'Solidarity priest'. It is possible that the Church could not contain this internal dissent and felt that it had to move towards the new wave of opposition following Martial Law in order to gain control of the more sympathetic elements of a possible democratic government, or at least to gain the ear of non-'socialist' elements in a reformed and liberalised government. The Church's espousal of the role of honest broker between the underground Solidarność and the Military authorities was not by any means disinterested. See: C.Tighe, 'The Church and State in Poland', *Monthly Review*, December 1986, pp.20-31. For a less cynical view see: B.Szajkowski, *Next to God - Poland: Politics and Religion in Contemporary Poland*, Pinter, London, 1983. For an attempt to put the best face on the possibility of links between the largely atheist and socialist intellectual dissidents and the Church see: A.Michnik, *Kościół, lewica, dialog*, Instytut Literacki, Paris, 1977. For a description of the size and operation of the Catholic Church in Poland see: A.Piekarski, *Freedom of Conscience and Religion in Poland*, Interpress, Warsaw, 1979.
- 5 A.Malewski, 'Attitudes of the Warsaw Employers', *Polish Sociological Bulletin*, no.2, 1971; W.Adamski, 'Postawy społeczno-zawodowe młodzieży', *Studia Sociologiczne*, no.2, 1974; A.Sarapata, 'Z badań nad hierarchią prestiżu zajęć w polsce', *Studia Sociologiczne*, no.1, 1975; A.Sarapata & W.Wesołowski, 'Evaluation of Occupations by Warsaw Inhabitants', *American Journal of Sociology*, vol.66, 1961; S.Nowak, 'Social Structure in Social Consciousness', *Polish Sociological Bulletin*, no.2, 1964.
- 6 P.Ikonowicz, 'The Courage of Ideological Thinking', *International Socialism*,

no.41, Winter 1988, p.70.

- 7 Also: G.Benton & G.Loomes, *The Big Red Joke Book*, Pluto Press, London, 1976. Although Polish literature does not make much use of the pun, wits had enormous fun with the word *zjazd* - the word chosen by the Party to describe the annual Party Congress. As well as meaning congress the word also means a downward slope. The use of the pun was a sign of enormous pressures barely resolved through a joke. But both the pun and the joke are personal and private forms of revolt. They are not large scale and they are not public. This was not the case in July 1981, however, when hunger marchers' banners openly parodied Party slogans: 'With ration books to socialism'; 'The hungry will eat the authorities'; 'Hungry of all lands unite'; 'Citizens we are marching towards communism - you are requested not to eat on the way'; 'A spectre is haunting Poland - the spectre of hunger'. In political jokes and on the marchers' banners it was the language and the litany of Party language, the expected Party phrase or slogan, the Party catechism that was subverted and contradicted. D.Singer, *The Road to Gdańsk: Poland and the USSR*, Monthly Review Press, New York, p.240. It is important to realise that the hunger marches in the summer of 1981 were organised and attended mainly by women. The contradiction between the claims of the Party and the actual condition of women's lives must be stressed. Women achieved suffrage in Poland in 1919 and were guaranteed equal rights under the 1952 Constitution. By 1989 women made up 50 per cent of the population, 55.5 per cent of all students and 46 per cent of the workforce - of these 60 per cent worked in shops, in clerical positions, or in service industries. Although 70 per cent of the cost of modern contraception was paid for out of national insurance, contraceptives of all kinds were generally unavailable in the shops (unless a woman had dollars to spend in PEWEX) and only 26 per cent of women in 'spousal unions' used contraception of any kind. By 1989 abortions were estimated at 70-100 per 100 live births, so more than 60 per cent of Polish women had experienced at least one abortion: 60 per cent of Poland's 500,000 single parent families lived below the official poverty line. S.Drakulić, 'In Their Own Words: Women of Eastern Europe', *Ms*, New York, July/August 1990, pp.36-47; J.Tilbury & P.Hockenos, 'Catholicism Reigns in Poland's Halls of Power', *In These Times*, Chicago, 10-16 April 1991, p.9. Also: S.Drakulić, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*, Hutchinson, London, 1992. Although there were 80-90 (out of 460) women deputies to the Sejm throughout the 'socialist' years, this number dropped to 44 at the 1991 elections. P.Watson, 'Masculinism in Eastern Europe', *New Left Review*, no.198, March/April 1993, p.72.
- 8 E.Wnuk-Lipński, 'Social Dimorphism and its Implications', in J.Koralewicz, I.Bialecki & M.Watson (eds.), *Crisis and Transition: Polish Society in the 1980s*, Berg, Oxford, 1987, pp.159-177.
- 9 *Tygodnik Solidarność*, no.7, p.2; J.J.Lipski, *KOR: Workers' Defense Committee in Poland, 1976-81*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1985, p.450.
- 10 S.Starski, *Class Struggle in Classless Poland*, South End Press, Boston, 1982, p.183.
- 11 J.Kuron and K.Modzelewski, *An Open Letter to the Party*, International Socialism, London, nd., p.71. The hijacking of the language of socialism had been

effected largely under Gomulka when the term 'left' had come to be associated with the period of post-war national reconstruction and adherence to the 'values' of rigid Stalinist orthodoxy. Thus it was 'leftists' who obstructed economists in considering the profit motive and the law of value in socialist economies, and it was 'leftists' who attacked the Czechoslovak reforms of 1968. Those opposed to Stalinist orthodoxy, who threatened the achievements of 'socialism', were put on the 'right' whether they wanted to be there or not: M.Waller, *The Language of Communism*, Bodley Head, London, 1972, pp.64-5. Hoffman has said: 'linguistic dispossession is sufficient motive for violence, for it is close to the dispossession of one's self'; 'Does it still matter, in these triangulations, that my version of reality was formed in eastern Europe? It is well known that the system over there, by specialising in deceit, has bred in its citizens an avid hunger for what they still quaintly call the truth. Of course, the truth is easier to identify when it's simply the opposite of a lie. So much eastern European thinking moves along the axis of bipolar ideas, still untouched by the peculiar edginess and fluidity created by a more decentred world.' E.Hoffman, *Lost in Translation: Life in a New Language*, Minerva, London, 1991, pp.124 & 211. Barańczak, who spent ten years as a professor at Harvard after being hounded by the military authorities during Martial Law, has testified to the continuing debilitating effects of the Party's influence on his sense of political language and his decision-making processes: 'Someone who comes from central Europe, who in his own country declared himself in favour of democracy and freedom, someone who has actively opposed the repressive machinery of government - well, that newcomer to America may begin to have problems with his choice of 'ideals'. I don't mean 'ideology', but he will have difficulties in translating one mentality into another. There is a semantic problem. For example, if someone in America declares himself a 'liberal' it means he's on the left; in Poland it would be ridiculous to associate these two notions.' S.Barańczak, 'Translating The Self', *Gazeta International*, Warsaw, no.13, 31 May 1990, p.7. Also: S.Barańczak, 'Poems and Tanks', *Tri-Quarterly*, no.57, Spring/Summer, 1983, p.57.

- 12 K.Brandys, *A Question of Reality*, Blond & Briggs, London, 1981, pp.158-9. Elsewhere Brandys has written of the west's naivety in adhering to what he understands to be 'socialism': 'There are the western leftists. The left with its scruples about the world's first socialist country and its fear of providing grist to the right's mill. The left, the right. In our part of the world self-respecting intellectuals realized long ago that this was an idiotic distinction. In Poland any sane person who does not wish to make a complete fool of himself keeps such ideas to himself. But they still have currency in the west. The left, belonging to the left, solidarity with the left, are articles of faith for them and are at the same time their alibi. The colossus should not be annoyed; in its barbarian skull slumbers the people's revolutionary soul. In the West, revolution is part of the catechism of the intellectual left.' K.Brandys, *Warsaw Diary*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1984, p.166. Brandys sees the whole range of western left as merely a continuation of the Stalinist bureaucracies of east-central Europe rather than as separate entities with different histories, experience and theories. In the face of these difficulties Brandys felt obliged to fall back upon the unwritten code of his

forbears, that nineteenth century code of moral, nationalist behaviour based upon the *szlachta* values. In his diary entry for January 1979 he wrote: 'There are moments when the unwritten values create the culture. Perhaps those are only the moments of tension and crisis, situations in which the boundaries of everyday endurance must be overstepped and the rules of the game broken. Then the majority of examples from the history of literature become useless and one must appeal to other ones. To the unwritten ones. To acts and attitudes that have not been anthologised but are part of the collective imagination, impregnating it with their gesture, scenes, faces.' K.Brandys, *Warsaw Diary*, p.43.

- 13 A.Szczypiorski, 'Poland - the Fiction and the Reality', *Index on Censorship*, vol.8, no.6, November/December, 1979, pp.4-5.
- 14 This confusion led to suspicion of left-wing supporters in the west. Kapuściński, who was in the shipyards throughout the 1980 strike, remembers two Spanish Trotskyites visiting the yards with a request that they be allowed to 'join the revolution'. The MKS Praesidium (Inter-Factory Strike Committee) thanked them for their concern and said: 'We are not making a revolution here. We are arranging our affairs. Sorry, but please leave the shipyards at once and do not try to come back.' R.Kapuściński, *Lapidarium*, Czytelnik, Warsaw, 1990, p.32-3. It is perhaps as well to point out that the word 'socialist' by this time signified not a philosophy or world-view, but rather loyalty to the current ruling 'authorities'. When B.Rogowski came to address the Łódź Party in November 1980 he openly admitted that the Party had fallen victim to its own inability to accept independent organisations, its own choice of an incompetent leadership, and its manipulation of information, and went on to say that if the Party were to attempt 'renewal' it would have to rename itself and tie the new party very firmly to a thoroughly revamped notion of socialism: 'Socialist - that is, with the goal of constructing a society based on social ownership of the principal means of production, and on the principle of redistributing goods in accordance with the quality and quantity of the work performed...' B.Rogowski, 'What is to be Done?', *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, vol.4, nos.4-6, Winter-Spring 1981, p.54. Very similar points were made by M.Pinior, Z.Dąbrowska and P.Ikonowicz in 'Solidarity at the Crossroads' *International Socialism*, no.41, Winter 1988, pp.47-79. When in 1982 Michnik circulated his essay 'Conversation in the Citadel', J.Onyszkiewicz wrote: 'Socialism is a thoroughly discredited term. Is it good that you use it in your conclusion?' A.Michnik, 'Conversation in the Citadel', *Letters from Prison and Other Essays*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1985, p.333. Brandys: 'The opposition between left and right reflects the ethical and religious dichotomies of good and evil, heaven and hell, truth and lie. Totalitarianism blurs the distinctions, and eliminates the struggle between good and evil, because the evil is good. Hell is Paradise. A lie effectively performs the function of the truth. Minus signs are replaced by plus signs and vice versa. We must leave it to the dialecticians of the West to decipher what is on the left in this hugely over-staged theatre of humanity. The Poles, the Czechs, the Lithuanians no longer think in Europe's political categories. They abhor the perfidious means by which they have been deprived of the humanist decalogue. They have experienced the horror of an ascendant technology of nihilism - a horror that the West cannot comprehend.' K.Brandys,



- Paris, New York 1982-84*, Random, New York, 1984, pp.32-3.
- 15 J.Staniszkis, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution*, p.145. An example of this narrowing down - an essential tactical part of opposition to the Party - can be seen in the following: 'I want to struggle in a free and democratic society, by using political means, against conceptions of society such as those proclaimed, for instance, by the Confederation for an Independent Poland. However, in order to make this possible, today I plan to cooperate even with the KPN <Confederation for an Independent Poland, a right wing, anti semitic party> in a common struggle against a totalitarian, alien occupation regime.' D.Warszawski, 'An Open Letter From Solidarność to the Left', *In These Times*, 3-9 November 1982, p.17.
  - 16 M.Vale (ed.), *Poland: The State of the Republic: Two Reports by the Experience and Future Discussion Group (DiP)* Warsaw, Pluto Press, London, 1981, pp.25-6.
  - 17 R.Kapuściński, *Lapidarium*, pp.31-2.
  - 18 J.Staniszkis, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution*, pp.124-5.
  - 19 A.Kemp-Welch, *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations, 1980*, Macmillan, London, 1983, pp.141-2. The same liturgical and nationalist sentiments can be seen in the closing speeches of Lech Wałęsa too. This scene can be observed in Andrzej Wajda's filmed record of the negotiations *Robotnicy '80*. Wajda brought the un-edited rough-cuts of the film to a private showing in Kraków in November 1980 at which I was present. When Jagielski spoke of getting an agreement in black and white there was a sharp intake of breath from the cinema audience of around 300 people. When I asked what the problem was I was told that Jagielski's accent had betrayed him as a Jew - his intonation had been 'absolutely not Polish'. When Jagielski took offence at the workers' suggestion that they might be victimised, I could not help wondering whether Jagielski knew he was lying. In discussion afterwards I spoke to Wajda about this. Wajda assured me that Jagielski both knew and did not know he was lying, but that because Wajda and the intellectuals acting as advisers for Solidarność understood this, they were somehow deemed to be complicit. Wajda's record of the negotiations is a valuable supplement to the transcript, if only because the Party and the workers can be seen to talk right past each other: there is very little meeting of minds: what the workers thought they had gained was clearly not the ritual obeisance that Jagielski thought he had obtained. The agreement between the government and Solidarność, eventually legalised on 31 March 1981, had been negotiated mostly by the experts of both sides and was in the typical *inteligencja* style - full of allusions, mutual winks, and unbinding signals. For the working-class membership who felt that this was a binding social agreement, an historic document, the gaps and problems in the reality of attempting to strike a deal with government came as a terrible shock. They could see very plainly that in fact nothing they had fought for had been unequivocally agreed. The obscure language made it impossible to deduce from the text what was won and what was lost. A hierarchy built on semantic skills had reappeared and in the deal which appeared to have been struck between the intellectuals of both sides, proved as stable and as disadvantageous to the workers as their previous situation had been. Nearly all expressive functions in the movement were executed by its middle class members and workers felt their own creative powers had been expropriated. They no longer perceived Solidarność as

the vehicle of upward mobility; faith in their peaceful revolution and in their 'advisers' disappeared.

The Bydgoszcz crisis of March 1981 arose when the police severely beat several Solidarność members attending a local council meeting. The union threatened a general strike unless those responsible were brought to trial. A Party investigation affirmed that the victims had not beaten themselves, but would not take matters further. Wałęsa personally took over negotiations with the government, and left advisers outside during meetings with Deputy Premier Rakowski. Eventually he announced that the threatened general strike was suspended, but gave no satisfactory reasons. The police responsible for the beatings were never identified. After this Wałęsa was referred to as 'King Wałęsa', his authority came under pressure and union support began to wane. The combination of the climb-down over the Bydgoszcz beatings, the appearance of the agreement, the failure of the advisers and Lech Wałęsa's increasing autocratic behaviour meant huge disillusionment among the union membership. The initial stage of Solidarność's development ended with a visible demobilisation of its rank and file members over the spring and summer of 1981: J.Staniszkis, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution*, p.19. Accompanying this demobilisation was the growth of the right wing KPN within Solidarność, and within the thinking of the die-hard Stalinists. I blundered into an anti-Semitic rally held in the Kazimierz district of Kraków in April 1981. Standing next to the Jewish cemetery, under a banner reading 'The Jews are our misfortune' - the old Nazi slogan - a member of the Party-sponsored Grunwald Patriotic Union addressed the crowd for nearly an hour.

- 20 L.Kolakowski, 'Revolution - a Beautiful Sickness', in: L.Kolakowski, *Modernity on Endless Trial*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1990, p.224.
- 21 J.Prokop, 'Polska zniżczona albo lodowiec z gówna', *Zapis*, no.6, Warsaw/London, 1978, p.139-43.
- 22 J.Kuron, 'Zaczęły się schody', *Polityka*, no.47, XXXV, 23 November 1991, pp.8-11.
- 23 *Fakty i komentarze: stan gospodarki kraju po I kwartale*, Wydawnictwo Wydziału Pracy Ideowo-Wychowawczej KC PZPR, Warsaw, no.14, 17 April, 1981, pp.5-10. This document is boldly marked 'For Inner Party Use'. For many Party members this was the first time they had seen such statistics and the shock seems to have persuaded some to give the document wider circulation than the Party intended - which is how the document came into my possession in the spring of 1981. However, it has been suggested to me that the Polish economy was not in such bad shape, that the document was published in the hope that it would be circulated and help discredit Solidarność, and that the real cause of the problems lay in the fact that the authorities were restricting supplies of materials and foodstuffs. By this stage, as Konwicki demonstrated in *A Minor Apocalypse*, such paranoia was normal.
- 24 Komisja do Spraw Reformy Gospodarczej, *Kierunki reformy gospodarczej: projekt: projekty ustaw - o przedsiębiorstwach państwowych - o samorządzie załogi przedsiębiorstwa państwowego*, KiW, Warsaw, July 1981.
- 25 J.Kopeć, *Dossier generała*, Interim, Warsaw, 1991. Jaruzelski refused to discuss Martial Law for over a decade. His first words on the subject were an exclusive

- interview: W.Jaruzelski, 'The General's Story: Why I Declared Martial Law,' *The Warsaw Voice: Polish and Central European Review*, 15 December 1991, pp.7-10. He later spoke and wrote at some length on the subject: W.Jaruzelski, *Stan wojenny. dlaczego*, Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza, Warsaw, 1992; W.Jaruzelski, 'I've told everything I know', *The Warsaw Voice: Polish and Central European Review*, 24 May 1992, pp.12-13.
- 26 K.Brandys, *Paris, New York 1982-84*, Random, New York, 1984.
- 27 A full account of the activities of ZLP and its struggles during Martial Law can be found in: J.J.Szczepański, *Kadencja*, Znak, Kraków, 1988. Although the intellectuals joined Solidarność they feared that it would result in a genuine 'dictatorship of the proletariat', which was the last thing the intellectuals (even those in KOR) wanted. It is difficult to say just how the intellectuals as a class behaved in 1980-81: the publishing industry was a dinosaur that needed a long time to respond to any stimulus, and so left no visible record of the impact Solidarność had upon it. Apart from those intellectuals who wrote for journals there is very little record of activities or opinions, and it is difficult to distinguish genuinely held opinion from fashionable opportunist bandwagonism. Sławomir Majman has made the point: 'Zealous hypocrisy has become the most popular attitude towards a 'socialist' past. It's easy to pretend that real Poles had nothing in common with communism, that it was fate, nobody's fault and nobody's doing. That it was only the Kremlin and its agents dropped into the country from parachutes who shaped the country's image for nearly half a century. That nobody ever marched in a May Day parade under a red banner, raised his hand in consent during party meetings, cast his vote during elections, got an apartment and a coupon for a car after prostrating <himself> in the party cabinet. That all were born anti-communist and from their very first day knew that communism was hideous and was pushing Poland into an abyss. Only they didn't show it.' S.Majman, 'Departure of King Lear', *The Warsaw Voice: Polish and Central European Review*, no.11 (117), 15 March 1992, p.8.
- 28 *Facts about Poland*, 'Literature' Ref.PF.VI.7-1, Interpress, Warsaw, 1980. 'Index Index: Poland', *Index on Censorship*, vol.12, no.6, 1983, p.46. R.Stefanowski (ed.), *Poland under Martial Law*, Radio Free Europe, March 1984, pp.161-75, 187-200. C.Pszenicki, 'Freedom of Expression in Jaruzelski's Poland', *Index on Censorship*, vol.12, no.6, 1983, pp.19-24. One of the first journals to treat literary developments under Martial Law seriously was *Res Publica*, a journal which had been published 'privately' for some time, and had become such a respected journal that the authorities offered funds if it would accept a minimal level of censorship - the editors refused the offer: A.Bobkowski, 'Listy stare: klub literatury współczesnej: Andrzej Bobkowski do Wojciecha Jekiela', *Res Publica*, March 1989, pp.128-135; M.Orski, 'Nowa proza stanu wojennego', *Res Publica*, July 1989, pp. 58-65; J.J.Szczepański, 'Każdy ma swój podręczny panteon: Z Janem Józefem Szczepańskim rozmawia Krystyna Czerni', *Res Publica*, January, 1989, pp.89-97; T.Sobolewski, 'Dąbrowska sama w sobie', *Res Publica*, November 1988, pp.114-118. It is ironic that after more than forty years of trying to persuade writers to write in the vein of *socrealizm*, the single act of declaring martial law seemed to provoke an almost automatic switch to that style among writers who had

previously avoided it. Of the literature of Martial Law, and its obsessions with moral justice and Polish unreality, see in particular the short stories of Janusz Anderman: *Brak tchu* (*Poland Under a Black Light*, Readers International, London, 1985) PULS, London/Warsaw, 1983; *Kraj Świata*, (*The Edge of the World*, Readers International, London, 1988) Instytut Literacki, Paris, 1988; also M. Nowakowski, *The Canary and other tales of Martial Law*, (*Raport o stanie wojennym*, Instytut Literacki Paris, 1982), Harvill Press, London, 1983. Anka Kowalska, arrested by military authorities in 1981, has also written descriptions of life in the prison camps that are vivid and committed political poetry of a high order.

- 29 W. Łysiak, *Lepszy*, Oficyna, Warsaw, 1990, p.29.
- 30 A. Michnik, 'Some Remarks on the Opposition and the General Situation in Poland' (1979), *Letters from Prison and Other Essays*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1985, pp.151-2.
- 31 'Lapsed communist ushers Poland into democracy: Hella Pick interviews President Jaruzelski', *The Guardian*, 1 May 1990, p.9. The memoirs of both Gierek and Jaruzelski topped the Polish non-fiction best-seller lists in 1992-93; Gierek's book of interviews with B. Rolicki, *Przerwana dekada*, sold over a million copies. *Nowe Książki*, no.53, Orbis Books, London, 1993, p.2.
- 32 'Address to the First Congress of the Patriotic Movement for National Revival, 7 May 1983', *Jaruzelski: Prime Minister of Poland: Selected Speeches*, Pergamon Press, London, 1985, pp.64-5. Jaruzelski chose his writers with care. Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski (1503-72) a priest and Utopian intellectual who believed the state should be the guardian of Christian ethics and that the duties as well as the rights of citizens should be defined and enshrined in law; Piotr Skarga (1536-1612) a Jesuit preacher active mainly in Lithuania who attacked the *szlachta* for their belief that Poland stood because no-one ruled and who sought to make the state responsible for creating and keeping just laws in return for civic responsibilities from the populace; Stanisław Staszic (1755-1826) a priest who supported the emancipation struggles of the peasantry and saw the state as a combination of the middle class, burghers and the enlightened land owners in the struggle against the retrograde and conservative elements among the *szlachta* and foreign powers; Joachim Lelewel (1786-1861) a historian who took part in the 1831 uprising, but who is best remembered for his negative opinions on the stifling impact of the Catholic Church and the nobility on native Slav structures; Bolesław Prus (1845-1912) a novelist who was wounded during the insurrection of 1863, a progressive *intelligent* who had little time for the rich and who spent his free time in endlessly educating himself, he believed in the cooperative system and said that Polish society had made a serious error in modelling itself on *szlachta* values; Ksawery Pruszyński (1907-50) a *szlachcic* and journalist who held right and left in equal contempt. Jaruzelski was not alone in his concern that Poland could easily dissolve into anarchy and chaos. Ewa Łętowska, Poland's first Civil Rights Ombudsman, appointed in 1988, on finishing her four year term of office commented: 'This is a country that missed the benefits of the nineteenth century. It was in the nineteenth century that democratic institutions took shape in the world: the administrative court system developed in France, parliamentary democracy was consolidated in

England, the period of conquests ended in the United States and a more decent order prevailed. But Poland was partitioned in the nineteenth century and all those institutions were foreign, so a sense of state and law never took root.' E.Łętowska, 'Poland's Rough Road', *Newsweek*, 17 February 1992, p.48.

- 33 After Martial Law had been suspended several books appeared that quietly rewrote the pre-history of Poland, and Günter Grass' controversial novel *The Tin Drum*, about the complicated history of the city of Gdańsk (German Danzig), was finally released for publication in Polish after waiting fifteen years. Poland under the 'socialists' had particular difficulty in acknowledging certain aspects of its linguistic and pre-historic past since this undermined its claim to the 'recovered' western territories. However, from about 1983 attitudes relaxed and a wider range of informed opinion began to appear in print. Among many other ideas, the possibility that Poles had not been the very first settlers in the area of Poland, that they might have migrated into the area after Balts and Celts, that other ethnic groups had made significant contributions to the formation of Polish culture, if not openly acknowledged at least became peripheral. *The Tin Drum* held to a history of Gdańsk that was very different from that which the Party wished to promote. The official translation of the novel had been ready and waiting for 15 years, but had not been released. There had been a two-volume *samizdat* edition of the novel. Under Jaruzelski the novel (in a version which was not allowed to show Grass' real intentions, and which did not use the name 'Danzig') was finally published in Polish and discussed in a limited way in the Party press. That the Polish translation had been censored was not publicly acknowledged until 1991 when an edition was published with the words *Nie cenzurowane* (not censored) highlighted on the dust jacket. However, on closer inspection the edition proved to be a simple reprint of the earlier censored edition with a list of German place names appended - such are the joys of advertising in a free market. G.Grass, *Blaszany Bębenek*, PIW, Warsaw, 1983; G.Grass, *Blaszany Bębenek*, (nie cenzurowane) Wydawnictwo Morskie, Gdańsk, 1991; A Krzemiński, 'Krzyk gówniarza z bębenem na brzuch', *Polityka*, 1/1392, 1984. For a discussion of this and related problems see: C.Tighe, 'The Tin Drum in Poland', *Journal of European Studies*, xix 1989, pp.3-20.
- 34 T.Konwicki, 'Nowy Świat i okolice', *Czytelnik*, no.6, Warsaw, 1986.
- 35 Interview, J.Żulawski, Warsaw, 29 May 1990.
- 36 T.G.Ash, *We The People: The Revolution of 89: Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin and Prague*, Granta, Cambridge, 1990.
- 37 In the Ukraine the writers ceased all creative work to give their time and energy to the process of reform and the formation of a democratic opposition. In Hungary, where Geörgy Konrád had done so much to publicise anti-politics (a 'third way' between communism and capitalism) the playwright and short story writer Árpád Göncz became national president, and writers Péter Esterházy, Sándor Csoóri, István Csúrká and Miklós Haraszti (among many others) entered party politics either as highly visible members and spokesmen for the many new parties or as elected members of parliament. Konrád became President of International PEN (the first time a writer from 'eastern Europe' had ever held the post). In Bulgaria the new government heard that several countries had requested that the poet Blaga

Dimitrova should be their new Bulgarian Ambassador - in fact she became Vice-President. One of the first acts of the liberalising Bulgarian government was to set up an investigation into the assassination by poisoned umbrella of the respected writer Georgy Markov, who had been living in exile in London. In Romania the poet Mircea Dinescu, who was under house arrest as the December revolution started, hitched a ride on the first liberated tank and rode to the Bucharest TV studios; after a short and dramatic appearance on national TV he became chairman of the new democratic Romanian Writers' Union. In Czechoslovakia the admired and respected playwright Václav Havel, only recently released from prison, took a leading part in the Civic Forum and was soon elected Czechoslovak president.

- 38 Carl Tighe, 'The Writer as Fire Brigade: an interview with Ryszard Kapuściński', in: N.Jenkins (ed.), *The Works*, Welsh Union of Writers, Swansea, 1991, pp.106-7.

## NINE

TADEUSZ KONWICKI: *A MINOR APOCALYPSE*

Millions of people in Poland no longer know what is and is not the truth, and what it means to be a 'sincere witness'. For decades, not only our language has been changed but our mental criteria - we are different now, though if you speak to us in the west you will think we are the same as you. We do a great many things without being forced to, instinctively, and that's the whole tragedy...

Stefan Kisielewski, 'The School of Moronism or GTM', *Kultura* (Paris), July-August 1979.

Tadeusz Konwicki was born on 22 June 1926 in Nowa Wilenka (Nowa Wilejka) near Wilno in Lithuania. His grandmother, and before her his great grandfather, had leased a small grange from a neighbour at Bohin. They had also owned a small estate at nearby Miłowidy, but this had been confiscated in the aftermath of the 1863 uprising. Konwicki's father, who was a metal worker, died of TB aged 53. Konwicki's mother stayed behind in Lithuania in 1945 and worked on a kolkhoz, where she died aged 78. Thus Konwicki, although he came from a working class background, had a 'family memory' of a slightly grander past.

During the war Konwicki attended a *gimnazjum* (high school), run in secret by the underground because secondary education for Poles was forbidden by the Nazis. He graduated from high school in 1944, joined the AK and fought in the area around Wilno. After the defeat of the local Nazi forces his unit remained in the Lithuanian countryside and forests, and from July 1944 fought the incoming Soviet troops and NKVD. Towards the end of 1945 most of the AK in the Wilno area were persuaded to give up their arms, only to be arrested and sent to the GULAG: those who survived were not released until after Stalin's death. Konwicki was lucky. His commander

suspected a trap and marched his troops away from the agreed surrender points. His unit disbanded deep in the Lithuanian countryside. Konwicki, cut adrift, made his way home on foot, pretending he had been helping relatives with the harvest. Upon reaching home he found that the region had been ceded to the USSR and that most of his friends and relatives had already departed for the new Poland.

Konwicki succeeded in getting through to Warsaw and unlike many other AK members does not appear to have been arrested or imprisoned. He got a job in Gliwice for a while, working for the provisional government, and then, although he intended to study architecture, joined the department of Polish Studies at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. He became an editor and proof reader on *Odrodzenia* (Renewal), which was initially based in Kraków, and as he already had what appeared to be steady employment he never bothered to graduate from University. It is from his period on *Odrodzenia* that Konwicki remembers Lem, and even from sight identified him as coming from the *kresy* (old Polish eastern borders).<sup>1</sup> The *kresy*, which figures very largely in Konwicki's personal mythology and in his fiction, had been territory of the old Polish Commonwealth which had united the Grand Duchy of Warsaw with the Kingdom of Lithuania; it was a conglomeration of national identities which over many centuries had, in spite of the many languages represented there, given rise to a remarkably unified and singular culture and set of ethical beliefs and shared customs. This border area is the same milieu that produced, among many others, Mickiewicz and Miłosz from Lithuania, Kapuściński in Białorus, and Słowacki, Conrad and Lem in Galicia. It is here in the borders that the pressure of Polish Romantic literature was felt with great clarity. Konwicki claimed: 'I visited those places in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. I experienced the time and breathed its air. The nineteenth century survived there in backwoods, in the deserted islands of central Europe, until World War Two.'<sup>2</sup>

Konwicki has repeatedly tried to convey the 'intricate, omnipotent and formidable pressure' of this area and the traditions behind its culture:

Polish Romantic tradition has sunk its talons in us. We cannot escape it, or get detached from it. The mortal torture we suffer, the entire internal tension provoked by questions of what course of action to assume, and how to define ourselves in the



face of developments in which we constantly get entangled. All this stems from our obedience to the Romantic code. At all times we act and behave in keeping with the bans and orders of the Polish Romantic tradition which was born at an extremely dramatic point in Poland's history, and so much differs from the quieter mainstreams of Western Romanticism.<sup>3</sup>

Konwicki's experience was typical of a whole generation - a generation brought up on Romantic virtues and traditions of patriotism, freedom and faith, the imperative of fight to the death with honour. After the war this generation was faced with the problem of obeying that imperative, remaining faithful to their oath in the face of a rapidly changing political and military situation, continuing their struggle for Poland's freedom by fighting the 'communists'. For most of them the decision did not lie in their hands, but was decided for them by historical events - hence the importance to so many of Konwicki's characters of a persistent sense of guilt and personal defeat that lingered for years, particularly evident in his *Sennik Współczesny* (Dreambook of our Time, 1963). For many the lost land or place of their birth, and the time before the war came to assume the value of deep-seated personal myth. Konwicki's approval of Romantic 'virtues' is not total, however. It is conditional. He mourns the passing of his world, and appreciates its values, but at the same time he points out frequent cases of maladjustment to contemporary life. He renders contemporary values in a grotesque way, with unstinting irony and not a little sneering, but he is not above flagellating himself too when he feels he has deserved it.

In 1950 *Odrodzenia* was dissolved and Konwicki left Kraków and moved to Warsaw to work as an editor at *Nowa Kultura*, where he stayed until 1957, when the board of the journal were replaced. For a while he was also on the editorial board of the Iskry publishing house. Konwicki made his debut as a writer of short stories in both *Odrodzenia* and in *Nowa Kultura*. His novel, *Rojsty* (Marshes), was written in Kraków in 1946, but had to wait ten years before it was published. His first published book, *Przy budowie* (By Building, 1950), was a collection of reportage. He wrote *Władza* (Authorities, 1954), a *socrealizm* novel, and several short stories supporting the party line. (For further details of Konwicki's publishing history see appendix four.) For a while he was one of the 'pimples', but like the others he became disillusioned as the

grim life on the Polish streets steadfastly refused to conform to the dawn of the new era predicted and recounted in endless class-conscious and dutifully optimistic novels of the period.

Initially Konwicki was convinced that the Party was right to push Polish industrialisation and partly out of a misplaced sense of guilt he became a candidate for membership of the Party in 1946. Like many other Polish writers he saw social progress as linked to the rebuilding of Poland; like others he remembered pre-war Poland as a semi-feudal entity, an anachronism in modern capitalist Europe. He saw the Catholic church as a force determined to keep Poland as it had been - backward, ignorant, provincial - and saw the Party as a way of liberating Poland from its feudal past while at the same time exalting and confirming the role of the intellectual within the new social structure. Through the early 1950s Konwicki insisted on giving the new regime a chance. As well as writing about the socialist dawn that would put an end to backward, feudal Poland and usher in industrial wealth and prosperity, he also wrote against the AK, saying that they were wrong to resist the new order. Konwicki was not alone in this. Andrzejewski and Brandys (who joined and left the Party in exactly the same years as Konwicki) wrote along similar lines; Miłosz too was a Cultural Ambassador for the new regime in France and the USA; Borowski declared himself a follower of the new regime and worked actively for the communists for several years. Even several older writers - Tuwim, Broniewski, Nałkowska, Dąbrowska - some of whom had direct experience of the USSR, were prepared to suspend their disbelief in the hope that a new, better Poland would emerge from the wreckage of the war. Konwicki has repeatedly said that he is part of a generation that lost the war, whose dreams and aspirations were not fulfilled by fighting in the AK, nor by joining the Party. The war he had witnessed had first destroyed his material world and then steadily annihilated his moral world. His move towards the Party was an attempt to restore balance and direction, but he slowly came to see that he was aiding the destruction of the sense of morality and purpose he sought to restore.

He may have doubted the new regime from the very first, but the abortive anti-government protests in Poznań in 1956, brought on a severe crisis of conscience. It was clear that the democratic socialism that had been promised by Stalin was not about to

emerge in Poland - even after Stalin's death. Konwicki began to feel that he could not live with himself if he obeyed the party line or wrote *socrealizm* novels. Konwicki fell silent for nearly three years. When he started writing again it was not in agreement with any formula agreed by the Party. As he and many other writers abandoned 'approved social commissions' and began again to write out of their own feelings and compulsions, a gap opened up between their ambition and that of the Party. Although he later came to regret his writings of this period, and later still became an opponent of the regime, his colleagues in the AK never let him forget his past, and never quite forgave him:

I am seriously worried. I could easily justify my whole biography. I could with dignity explain its most complicated events. There is, however, one thread in it that I am unable to justify, that cannot ever be justified, that will defile me forever, even if the present and the future generation should forget about it, and even if they would never notice that horrible scar similar to the stigma of a villain. I am thinking about a few or perhaps one tenth of my articles written in the years known sadly as 'the period of mistakes and misjudgements'. I am not ashamed of any of my books and I don't disown any of them. For better or for worse, they were documents, an authentic proof of the state of my consciousness and that of my contemporaries. They might be useful to historians - at least for some statistics. But my political journalism, the articles that I won't name for shame and irritation, these articles foisted on me by a particular hysteria of the environment and by my own hysteria, these articles are my bastards that I cannot dress up as tragic dandies or drown secretly at night in deep water.<sup>4</sup>

Konwicki, like his protagonists, suffers from a bad conscience, continually haunted by those who accuse him of selling out to the forces of reaction, criticise him for his communism in the early days, and yet who are bored by his nagging sense of guilt and his long standing public argument with his own past. He is tortured by a highly developed sense of guilt - a guilt which is Catholic, tribal, personal and deeply historical. Nevertheless Konwicki still musters sufficient irony and detachment to see that he is often seriously misunderstood by a readership that considers itself wise, cynical and too well versed in the art of reading between the lines:

I did something rather provocative in *The Calendar and the Hourglass*. In a special little essay I presented myself as a veteran of the 'pimple-faced' movement, a

staunch Stalinist from the fifties, someone who took part in the Party's most secret cells. The point was to provoke discussion, a certain state of mind, and a clinical analysis of what had been prettily referred to as the 'period of mistakes and distortions'. I expected that this would result in a cornucopia of similar confidences, confessions, intimate revelations, self-exposures, acts of contrition, or an unruly revolt. Meanwhile I met with a dead silence like that which ensues when an irresponsible guest makes some terrible gaffe at a respectable party. But it wasn't a total silence. Every once in a while someone would suddenly leap up with the euphoria of discovery and unmask me as a former Stalinist. Initially, I found this a cause for consternation and wondered why these discoverers were so late in coming out with their revelations, why only now they hastened to inform and warn their contemporaries. After long reflection, and after much surprise and astonishment, I realised that the source of their revelations was my heroic and swaggering confession in *The Calendar and the Hourglass*, which was supposed to benefit all of society, but which had only brought poor me shame and disgrace.<sup>5</sup>

Konwicki had never been involved in the work of the upper echelons of the Party. As a former member of the AK he had been forced to remain on the sidelines, 'not kosher, with a stain that could not be washed away'. The reaction to his pseudo-confession revealed some of the complex opposition to 'socialism' that was developing in Poland - a reaction that hunted for, and was fascinated by, political dirt, and which saw anti-Polish conspiracies in every turn of events:

It is the young writers from the crannies of the opposition who have begun to show the greatest interest in that period. They even took me up, or perhaps I was high on their list of people connected with the crimes of the Stalinist era. I gave them my all, but I couldn't satisfy them. I searched my memory. I lashed my old body. I analysed my ego to its depths with utter cruelty. I referred them to the disclosures in *The Calendar and the Hourglass* and elsewhere. But it was never enough for them. They rejected my self-diagnoses, and my self-accusations as well. They demanded more.<sup>6</sup>

In 1963 Konwicki published *Sennik Współczesny* (A Dreambook For Our Time), and with that book seems to have begun a new publishing career in which he attempted to make a break with his own past and the mistaken allegiances of the immediate post-war period. The fact that the book was published at all is significant, but also exceptional. It deals with the experience of a man waking from a coma after a failed suicide attempt. It is set in a small provincial town where a strange religious sect is

based, and the story is told through a mixture of details of life in the town and flashbacks to the conflict between the NKVD and the AK at the end of the war. Miłosz, who has described the scenes of the winter fighting in the Lithuanian countryside as 'hard to match in postwar literature' has also said that the novel, if it is not an indictment, is at least a complaint 'not directed against anybody in particular', raised in the name of 'all those in Poland who acted out of the best moral motives, only to get bogged down in a quagmire of all-pervading ambiguity where good and evil lose their clear distinctions'.<sup>7</sup>

As more writers revolted against the precepts of 'official culture' and refused lucrative 'social commissions', so it became less likely that any book as open and clear as *A Dreambook for our Time* would ever be published again by a state publishing house. The books that followed - *Nothing or Nothing*, *Ascension*, and *The Chronicle of Accidents of Love* - were all subject to censorship, and Konwicki's behaviour made it certain that he would clash with the Party. Konwicki signed the 'Letter of the 22' protesting at the treatment of Kołakowski, who lost his job as Professor of the History of Philosophy at Warsaw University in March 1966 and was later expelled from Poland in the wake of the anti-Semitic purges of 1968. Konwicki, who says that from the moment he signed the letter he was a marked man, was promptly denounced by Gomułka as an enemy of order, an agent of the CIA and a capitalist stooge. He was summoned to a meeting of the Party at the Sala Kongresowa in the Palace of Culture and told to explain himself. He was not expelled, but from that day no-one in the Party spoke to him or rang him. Konwicki left the Party in 1966:

I belonged to the Party for almost fifteen years. My friends dragged me into it, as if it were a beer house or a brothel. I had fallen into bad company, and they had convinced me, a good boy from outside Wilno, to join the Party; they got me addicted. I fell into bad company - comrades from the Party basic organisation - and my family, my relatives, and my mother were all worried sick that I'd gone to the dogs. I stuck in the Party's throat like a chestnut still in its greenish, spiky shell. Prickly, aggressive, outwardly unswallowable. But inwardly, in my unhusked centre, I was a super zealot, super engagé. Soft soap on the inside, sandpaper on the outside. Exactly the opposite of what should have been, according to the technical prescription for corrupting a person's morality and world view.<sup>8</sup>

His increasingly uneasy relationship with the Party and his disfavour with the cultural moguls is shown quite clearly in the fact that he has been awarded only two state literary prizes: People's Prize (3rd category), 1950; *Nowa Kultura* Prize, 1959. From 1975 Konwicki's dissatisfaction with the attitudes and policies of the regime became more and more public and obvious. His clash with the authorities can also be seen in the record of his official state publications. After 1976, like Lem and Andrzejewski he found the state publishing houses reluctant to accept new work or to reprint previously published works. He began to write as if the censor did not exist, ignored all taboos. In January 1977 Konwicki signed the 'Letter of the 172' demanding that the Sejm set up a special commission to investigate abuses of police powers in harassing strikers at Radom the previous year. Later that year he offered *Komplex Polski* (The Polish Complex), for publication. It was a complex blend of time shifts and flash-backs designed to contrast an undignified and tawdry 'socialist' present with an heroic past. Predictably the censor tried to interfere and refused to licence the whole book. Konwicki refused to kow-tow and as a result was refused publication. Undaunted, Konwicki turned to the newly founded unofficial quarterly *Zapis*, published in London by *Index on Censorship*. *The Polish Complex* formed the third issue of *Zapis*, and although the initial market for the journal was mainly that of the émigré and exile community in Britain and the USA, many copies of the magazine found their way back into Poland illegally.

Konwicki's novels have established him as one of Poland's leading literary figures. Miłosz, who collaborated closely with Konwicki in scripting and making the film *The Issa Valley*, has said that Konwicki's literary evolution, 'with even more zig-zags than Brandys', is 'indicative of general changes in the mood of the country.'<sup>9</sup> Konwicki, like Kołakowski, Brandys, Ważyk and Andrzejewski, came to see his early allegiance to the new order as a kind of worship of false Gods. Increasingly he came to understand the links between the kind of literature available under 'socialism' and the kind of society that was being created. He related this to his feeling of what it was to be a 'provincial' in a literature that was itself an increasingly inward-looking and largely self-contained entity, in a literature that was historically provincial to world literature. One way or another 'socialism' seemed determined to keep literature as a

provincial entity. That is, it would prevent national literature from relating to the world, from becoming a world literature, or it would keep national literature as purely provincial-based folk-entertainment and encouragement for collective workers. 'Socialism', it seemed, was determined to cut off Polish literature from all that was modern, all that was radical, all that was newly perceived: the Party and the cultural moguls of the Ministry of Art and Culture were largely indifferent to literary convention, and cared not a jot for carefully developed theoretical works that opened up new areas of expectation or argument.

It was not only that Konwicki felt very keenly the trap of *socrealizm*, but he perceived clearly the trap into which the literature of any 'small' nation, but particularly Polish literature, with its national obsessions, might fall. In *The Calendar and the Hourglass* Konwicki explored the meaning of what it was to be a Polish writer. He recounted a trip to America and a meeting with Saul Bellow:

Perhaps he thinks, with some surprise maybe, that on the threshold of Asia, in the desert steppes, this middle-aged writer is cobbling together novels to be read by nomads. Maybe these novels are pretentious and imitate in a harsh sounding language the contributions of Western literateurs. Maybe this man is considered a classic, so well known that even the wayside goats stop to salute him. Maybe his life is safer and more bearable than that of authentic writers from a great metropolis. ...But there is also a pitiful epithet for me: 'One of the foremost', for in order to compensate for their smallness, small countries don't possess medium, average, good or very good writers; small countries have only great, most prominent and most illustrious artists. The most prominent artist of an unknown, exotic country is a most melancholy sight. The greatest artist from a provincial state - what could be sadder!<sup>10</sup>

The implication is that the writers are helpless provincials just as their government too is a helpless provincial in the backgarden of the super-powers. Even attempted totalitarianism makes writers provincial - both in personal behaviour and in literature. Konwicki had already noted that in 'socialist' countries literature was an 'incomplete torso' - strong on social and political themes, but 'lacking in De Sades', pornography, crime and science fiction. Every kind of 'deviation' in literature was thought to be either political or national sabotage.

Working as an artist under a 'totalitarian' regime created a whole series of problems for Konwicki - censorship and the necessity of ideological conformity being only the most obvious ones. Whenever conditions relaxed a little, the limits and boundaries of what the regime would tolerate could always be challenged, and perhaps even publicly satirised. The artist was invited to join the leadership of the intellectual wing of the government, and at the same time to join the leadership of the intellectual opposition. And this too imposed conformism and limitations of its own. In times of stress the Ministry of Culture, GUKPPiW and the Party attempted to impose *socrealizm*. That is they urged writers, painters and composers to create works which were directly accessible to the masses, to renounce the sins of bourgeois formalism, obscurantism, of *angst* and mental anguish in favour of the broad march of the successful proletariat. Yet in Poland, from the mid-1970s right through to the late 1980s the opposition too put pressure on artists to conform to a different ethos: they too began to demand simple, conservative, Catholic, romantic art which harked back to the older literary forms studied at school, approved by the church and the old *inteligencja*, themes and ideas which revived and fostered popular memory and patriotic emotions. Walicki has spelled out some of the complications:

It is no exaggeration to say that in the 1980s (beginning, perhaps, in the late 1970s) a major part of the Polish intelligentsia underwent an extremely intensive process of anti-Communist self-indoctrination. Buying, reading and distributing all manner of anti-Communist, or potentially anti-Communist, literature - from classical analyses of Communist totalitarianism and first-rate historical monographs to disparate memoirs, novels and journalistic writings, including even vulgarly propagandist tracts - was seen as a primary duty of a conscious Polish patriot. As a result, the perception of the surrounding sociopolitical reality became profoundly ideologised and thereby heavily distorted. A weak and frightened regime, begging for a minimum of popular support and trying to woo intellectuals by an almost total ideological surrender, was perceived as a powerful, omnipotent and all-pervasive totalitarian system. Its timid and selective repressive actions were compared to the Stalinist terror, or to the brutal performance of the Gestapo. Its functionaries were presented as the embodying an unshakeable belief in their historical mission - a position against which the opposition set its belief in absolute moral values. In fact this was a grotesque mythologization of the 'actually existing socialism' of the 1980s. But the mythological images held sway over people's minds, overshadowing the inconsistencies of reality.<sup>11</sup>



It was into this confusion and against this background that *Mala Apokalypsa* (A Minor Apocalypse) appeared in 1979.

The book is of interest not only because of its clear artistic merits, but because of the light it throws on the very specific political, literary and cultural atmosphere of the closing months of the Gierek era. It has been translated into more than 13 languages including English, Swedish, Finnish, Norwegian, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Czech and Italian and won the Italian Mondello Prize for Literature. It was a book that with its pessimistic and ironic attitude to official culture and its sharply derogatory portrait of life in the People's Republic of Poland, the state of things and the state of people's minds, could have expected no favour at all from state publishers. *A Minor Apocalypse* was not submitted to the censor but was published by *Zapis* in May 1979 - over a year before *Solidarność* was formed and more than two and a half years before Martial Law was declared. The novel describes the feeling and atmosphere of that period with brilliant clarity and perception. It is here that some of the consequences of censorship in guarding the difference between reality and Party claims were shown.

The novel concerns a typical Konwicki-like narrator who is approached one day by Hubert and Rysio, representatives of the underground opposition, and instructed to set fire to himself that evening on the steps of Party headquarters in Warsaw on the day that the Soviet and Polish First Secretaries are due to meet in Warsaw. The rest of the novel consists of the narrator's journey round Warsaw trying to find both matches and fuel, and his many and various encounters and conversations with people who know of the plan. It must be said that the novel cannot be read for its plot - which is almost non-existent - but rather for its attention to, and presentation of, significant and telling detail. It is a hideously accurate portrait of the cynical, confused, poverty-ridden, ailing and opportunist Poland of Gierek's last year in office.

Konwicki is a tireless chronicler of the more absurd aspects of 'communism' and ambiguities abound right from the start. Hubert walks with a cane and has a blind eye as a result of having once been interrogated not by the secret police, but by the AK. During a campaign of persecution in the 1960s Hubert (the person now asking the narrator to immolate himself) had attempted to hang himself. The opposition is not very impressive and there is more than a hint that the act of self-immolation is to be

undertaken by an opposition that has become desperate to be noticed, that has, in the face of a taciturn government's failure to respond to its petitions, 'gone to pot putting out all those semi-legal bulletins, periodicals, those appeals which are read by next to no-one'. It is not even certain that the government bothers to keep an eye on this opposition: when Hubert and Rysio leave, the narrator notes that 'no-one came running out from the half shadows' to follow them. Indeed it seems that both the government and the opposition could benefit from the immolation.

Rysio's brother believes that the office of the censor has been one of the leading and dynamic elements for social change in Poland and he is about to give a lecture to the censorship's department of allusions:

Allusions in works of art, allusions in the mass media...I, my good man, am a devotee of allusions. I have created a theory of how allusions function in a socialist society...Allusions play a vital role. Not calling a thing by its name reveals what it is; allusions have suggestive power, they reach into the listener's subconscious. Therefore, an undisclosed truth becomes a public truth. The tension caused by the hunger for truth or, rather, I would say, by people's complex about the truth, those dangerous tensions are artificially eliminated by a skilfully employed allusion. For that reason, allusions should not be repressed; quite the contrary, they must be encouraged, people must be taught to make more intelligent, more meaningful allusions. After a certain amount of time, people will prefer an allusion to the truth itself. Because an allusion is, in its own way, a sort of art form. An allusion is truth clad in metaphor.<sup>12</sup>

The narrator muses on the thought that Poland has been 'overrun by the bourgeoisie, a Soviet bourgeoisie':

Things had looked better at one time. We were children of the nineteenth century. Our fathers had been members of Piłsudski's Legions or his secret army, and during World War II we had been in the Home Army or the Union of Fighting Youth. That means, how to say it now, that means, how to explain it after all these years, that means, the hell with it, that doesn't mean anything now, at the end of our splendid twentieth century, a century of tyranny and unbridled democracy, foolish holiness and brilliant villainy, art without punch and graphomania run rampant.<sup>13</sup>

To say that something means nothing runs counter to Marxist thinking, but to say that this legacy of Polish history and culture means nothing is to reduce something central to Polish life to an inevitable nothing. But the meaning of things - or rather the impossibility of ever approaching meaning in this kind of society - is a major theme of the book. Here it is possible to learn more from the censored obituary notices than from any official information almanac; cinemas advertise Soviet films, but in reality show Polish films behind locked doors; the meat industry celebrates fifty years of the People's Republic of Poland with a giant number 50 made from sausage, but in reality it is only forty years and the sausages are made from sawdust:

'It's wonderful and it's terrible that nobody knows what his own gestures, actions, and follies actually mean. We're worried about the death of our nation, but at the same time the entire galaxy is hurtling off into an abyss, nothingness. It's hailing again. What an autumn.'

'I'd say it was still summer...'<sup>14</sup>

The confusion as to the date - they are not even sure what year it is - the season and even the weather is a logical development from Poland's real censorship laws - laws interposed to prevent the accurate perception of reality.<sup>15</sup>

In the streets there are crowds, enormous queues for basic commodities - matches are available only for hard currency - and long banners reading 'We have built Socialism' in both Polish and Russian. Also part of this are the crowds of Russian thugs that throng the streets and who are paid to attend official demonstrations chanting 'Polska, Polshe' in a language somewhere between Russian and Polish - intelligible to both, but neither Polish nor Russian:

A bunch of guys, not young but dressed as newspaper boys, were fast approaching us from Aleja Jerozolimskie. It was a group of some sort of activists, probably from a youth organisation. They were scattering a special edition of *Trybuna Ludu* and calling out shamefacedly: 'Poland awarded honorary title of First Candidate for membership in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics!', 'Extra! Poland a candidate for membership in Soviet Union!', 'Great Events in Polish history at the threshold of a new millennium. Extra!'<sup>16</sup>

The ironies and deformations within this society run very deep and those who perpetuate them are shameless. The Minister of Culture, who has spent his entire life 'making artists rot in jail and hounding poor art' has retired only to find that he envies artists the attention they receive, and consequently he too has taken up painting. At an exhibition of his works the guests are men of distinction:

...generals from the security police, governors, high officials from the Censorship, vice ministers. They too had become part of the artistic elite. They too were writing their memoirs and sensationalistic novels, carving tree roots, composing hit tunes, and sculpting busts of their colleagues who had passed away. Any of their children who did not wish for a career in politics were placed in art schools. And so now the regime had its own art. The regime is self-sufficient. It creates reality and mirrors it in art.<sup>17</sup>

The deformations extend deep into artistic creativity, even to respected members of the creative *inteligencja* opposition, making opportunist fellow travellers of even the best-intentioned artists. At one point the narrator is approached by a film maker called Bułat (possibly a rather wicked portrait of Wajda) who confesses that 'lying has killed me', and describes his own intellectual cowardice:

When I replay my films in memory, a sudden suffocating panic overwhelms me...Look I started with a film that slandered the Home Army, that is, the very milieu I came from, then I made a film glorifying the ill-fated Home Army. When the country was wasting away in a stupor, oppressed by the hopelessness of a situation that was half occupation, half freedom, I was making psychological films. I took a little of this and a little of that. I was trying to keep up with certain world trends. And then I made a film lampooning the intellectual elite and then I did one that smelled of anti-Semitism, though there really wasn't any in it. Do you see the iron logic in the path I've taken...? My artistic biography is the curriculum vitae of a fellow traveller. I've always thought I was doing what could be done at a given moment. But look closer at the consistent thrust of my ideas and statements. I was carrying out the Party line in Technicolour. I rolled along with it from one error to the next.<sup>18</sup>

Bułat, like the poet Ryszard Schmidt, has accepted government subsidy all his working life, and yet at the same time has managed to court the applause of the public by presenting himself as a critic of the regime and dedicated oppositionist intellectual.

The ultimate logic of such a system of conspiracy and counter-conspiracy is that the resistance and underground opposition might well turn out to be unwitting Police stooges, but that the Police see themselves as the real connoisseurs of art and politics. Tadzio, the young man who follows the narrator around, is exactly the same age as the People's Republic of Poland; he is a police informer and writes satirical poetry and jokes against oppositionists and dissidents for the Police Department of Propaganda. However, he is also a great admirer of the narrator's writings and is always ready with an apt quote. A Police Chief who interviews the narrator in a secret vault somewhere underneath a restaurant cloakroom says that he would rather not enforce total silence or censorship:

I even have an idea. You should write for one particular reader, that's always best. Me, for example. Reject censorship, *raison d'état*, all your fears, and write like a free man for other free men. You always were proud but never vain. The size of the printing isn't the important thing for you. Better one intelligent reader with a literary head than tens of thousands of coelenterates with toilet paper between their ears. Your book won't die in my hands. Only in my hands will it have a chance of lasting, of living forever.<sup>19</sup>

It is a world where the 'reality' of 'socialism' is a subject for mourning, where indifference and opportunism, sanctioned by the party and the amorality that surrounds the party, are finally victorious. But nevertheless there is a cynical, perverted underlying 'truth' that emerges about both the capitalist and the 'communist' world. Comrade Kobialka (the name means basket or pot), ex-First Secretary and a neighbour of the narrator, and who is probably a portrait of Gomulka, says:

It's all being held together by a string, by the thread of domestic production, by a spiderweb of hope. We have demoralised capitalism. Utterly and absolutely. By our own horrible example. We have them so tied up in agreements, economic agreements, scientific, cultural, athletic, what have you, we've got them tied up as with barbed wire, and so we can fail to meet deadlines, cheat on quantity in deliveries, not pay what we owe on time, lie, drown them in vodka, so that after a while the total socialist chaos we have invented and sustained will bare its teeth even there, among them. And you should be aware, neighbour, that for a while now they have been letting people leave Poland and go abroad. And what have they been doing there? They've been breaking the pay phones, riding the subways

without paying, slipping in ahead of the line everywhere, stealing silverware from restaurants, sneaking out on their hotel bills, getting people drunk, messing up public restrooms, and abusing the local women whenever they have the chance to. If we put all this together and draw our own conclusions, then, my dear neighbour, who will be surprised that the so-called free world is looking more and more like the Soviet world all the time. And here is the one last doctrine, it may be Lenin's, that hasn't been played out yet - if we don't overtake capitalism, then capitalism will wait for us.<sup>20</sup>

There is a thread of logic to this absurd extension and simultaneous demolition of Khrushchev's line on 'communist' economic development, but it is a seriously damaged and wilfully perverse line of reasoning which suggests that the 'moral virus' of 'communism' has even begun to affect capitalism. Also, clearly, this is a portrait of exactly the kind of people that 'socialism' has produced and the kind of internal logic and motivation it has engendered among its citizens. Konwicki's fiction here chronicles the insidious spread of a 'moral virus' which is indifferent to morality or value systems of any kind, revels in its own subjectivity, is increasingly self regarding, interested in nothing other than self perpetuation and increase.

The narrator confesses his distaste for this 'indecent' world. He is used to secrecy, plots and the role of writers within specifically Polish conspiracy, but his idea of conspiracy is different from that of the Party writers, the bureaucracy, the police. He is a product of the old Polish Socialist Party and the AK, rather than the creature of the regime. He prefers that writing and political activity should be voluntary, rather than the product of social and political blackmail; that writers should be disinterested rather than actively seek rewards; he prefers that writers and politicians should always be prepared to lose rather than desperate to win at any price. He acknowledges that it is almost impossible to transcend the conditioning of the time, the social mentality, the political system, the 'peculiarities of this phase of the historical process, the tightening or loosening of morality'. However, he feels that too many Polish intellectuals use the language of Marxism without pondering the moral and ideological problems that lurk within, and which decided the nation's fate for over forty years. For the narrator sin has become *the* form of virtue, moral imponderables have given place to amoral imponderables, amorality rules using the rules and language of morality: 'Evil has

tapped into our ethical code and turned itself into good.'<sup>21</sup>

Towards the end of the book the narrator visits Hubert in the intensive care section of the hospital. Hubert, one of the writers who informed the narrator that he was to immolate himself, is now on a life-support machine. Sitting beside the dying writer he reviews Hubert's career, and in doing so reveals a picture of the moral and artistic nullity of culture at all levels that faced writers by the end of Gierek's period in office:

You didn't have much of a life, you had a tough life, and they say you were always changing your views. You stifled your own human impulses, or perhaps it was your philistine habits, and you condemned the bourgeois and the philistine in those you loved. Few people loved you, many hated you. You were loved carelessly but hated with full intensity. What sort of moral logic guided your actions, my pale, stiff, inhuman pang of conscience?...When you started publishing in the émigré press and in the underground at home, the government's artistic salons chuckled and sneered that you were sucking up to the free West and trying to build a literary career on politics. When the students started copying your work on duplicating machines at night, when old cranks began knocking out copies on their typewriters, when your works, your desperate thoughts, and your hopeless hopes began to circulate through the country in editions of a few dozen copies, your colleagues, your faithful friends, keepers of Poland's flame, the vestal virgins of Poland's watchfires, they stepped up their ambiguous but profitable flirtation with our brainless regime. They rose to the top here in money and recognition, they took off abroad, availing themselves of the regime's support, diplomacy, money, the great machinery of the state. They winked significantly at people in the free world to say that they represented the moral strength of their oppressed country, that they both created and directed that moral force. But neither the one nor the other spared you any kicks, you poor beggar with your medieval upbringing...You're doing the right thing in dying, you old blackmailer. You'll slip away like a plumber who failed to fix the faucet. The world's evened out. There are no good or evil people. There is only a great unfathomable mob trampling itself underfoot. The life giving sources of the old morality have dried up and vanished in the sands of oblivion. There's no other source to draw from, no place to refresh oneself. There is no example, no inspiration. It is night. A night of indifference, apathy, chaos.<sup>22</sup>

*A Minor Apocalypse* gave vent to the bitter frustration of the opposition, but at the same time it showed that it was no longer possible to draw simple lines between the opposition and the government, between the writers and the party, that the moral nullity of the Party had reached deep inside the psyche of Poles in all walks of life to create a despondency and apathy, an opportunism and amorality that was massively

self-destructive and self-defeating and which had almost no resemblance to, or relationship with any recognisable ideology. In this way the narrator's hesitant, hung-over shamble towards martyrdom on behalf of the nation is glorified and trivialised.

Perhaps the final irony of the book comes as the narrator kisses his girlfriend Hope (Nadzieжда in the Polish text) goodbye. Written by an ex and anti-communist, by a hopeful and faithful ex and non-Catholic, the narrator, like the author, discovers that not only did people make the communist system what it is, but that they also 'created God' in opposition. This God of mercy is also the ambiguous God of the people. One day, he assures us, God will take them 'the chosen race out of the promised land'.<sup>23</sup> The book closes as the narrator, finally armed with both matches and gasoline, moves towards the steps of Party Headquarters. It is clear that what the Party has done is to rob human life of meaning and dignity: but this is only apparent when the annihilation of moral values is seen to have eliminated even the possibility of tragedy. It ends, not with an apostrophe to God, but with an ironic and yet Romantic invocation to the People which inverts the Party's ideology and language:

My legs are becoming heavy and my head is pulled down towards the earth from which I had arisen and to which I must, of my own free will, return. People, give me strength. People, give strength to everyone in this world who is, at this very moment, going, as I am, to make a burnt offering of himself. People, give me strength. People...<sup>24</sup>

It is clear that the book had a considerable impact, even in a limited underground edition, and in focussing attention on the absorption and normalisation of the damage to moral and cultural values made a great contribution to the climate that created *Solidarność*. However, it must be said that many assumed that the book was some kind of provocation set up by the security services to *osmalić* (smear) the underground. When Konwicki first approached NOWa with the manuscript they were very reluctant to take it on the grounds that it did nothing to aid 'mobilisation'. Konwicki's claim that honesty, even about the opposition, was necessary if literature was to deal in truth and wholeness was not something that was easily digested. He said that contemporary experience was like a cake with 150 layers, and every layer was equally necessary.<sup>25</sup>



Konwicki had made it clear that there was more than logic involved in the existence of the underground publishing and opposition movement; there was, even among Party members, a hunger, a desperate, deep-seated social, political and moral need for its existence.<sup>26</sup> Yet, for all the impact the book had at the time, and for all the accuracy of its perception that something in Poland was about to break, that something must break, on a massive, nation-wide scale, Konwicki later came to see that his attempt at satire had in fact been mocked by the course of events. Within a few months of the book's appearance the shipyard strikes in Gdańsk had produced *Solidarność* and the perfidy of the government was faced with massive moral opposition and an insistence that the law must be upheld, even by the authorities. The country's economic position stood revealed as disastrous and what little social responsibility remained, even though enforced as far as possible by *Solidarność*, was soon under threat from a massively discontented and frustrated populace. Just over a year after the book appeared Martial Law was declared to try, Jaruzelski said, to prevent the disintegration of the Polish nation.

In *Moonrise, Moonset*, which was written partly as a diary during the 'Solidarność year' and was to be the first wholly underground publication of a novel during military rule, Konwicki reconsidered the nature and accuracy of his satire in *A Minor Apocalypse* only to decide that Polish actuality continually beggared his imagination. He described how he found himself being interrogated by a policeman who was almost identical in mental attitudes to one he had had created in *A Minor Apocalypse*. Either this was the ultimate vindication of his perceptions or the ultimate nightmare. Life in Poland after August 1980, Konwicki concluded, rapidly came to resemble the extreme vision of *A Minor Apocalypse*:

A kilo of chicken costs four hundred zloties. Turkey is two thousand a kilo. The prophecies I made in *A Minor Apocalypse* have long since come true. Reality is now outdistancing me at great speed. A rapist has been apprehended because of his sugar ration card, which his victim found after the rape. There are lines in front of newspaper kiosks which have no newspapers. A few thousand letters from the West were found in a garbage dump in Ursus. All the letters had been opened, by persons unknown. A ton of bacon is rotting in another garbage dump. The post office still has not delivered the packages which arrived from abroad last August. Local Party and state dignitaries pack their bags and flee to remote provinces.

With the money a peasant gets from a litre of milk at a state purchase centre, he can buy three and a half litres of milk at the store next door...No one reads anything these days. If they do, they don't understand. If they read and understand, they forget it all immediately. That was said by Stanislaw Lem in a television interview and it made me fall off my chair with delight.<sup>27</sup>

On the one hand the idea of creating an unofficial publishing industry seemed to solve many of the problems the opposition faced in dealing with a censorship that was not sanctioned by law, a government that had no mandate to rule and a Party that relied on the police to maintain its leading role. On the other hand the logic of such an opposition was that it inadvertently created another, alternative, parallel world that still failed to mesh with any open system for creating or exchanging views, information and opinion. In its own way this was just as bad. At extremes it led oppositionists to mistrust everything the authorities said, and to believe everything that rumour chose to purvey. The underground opposition were moving steadily into territory where there were no real checks and balances on its thought or feeling. Polish life as a whole was becoming increasingly schizophrenic.

In Konwicki's vision it became impossible to distinguish morally between the conspiratorial policemen encouraging writers to write in the old Polish nationalist tradition, and oppositionists, moving rapidly beyond the old *Endecja* positions by asking people to set fire to themselves for no good reason. Indeed it was no longer possible to clearly divide the attitudes and opinions of the two groups satisfactorily on any level since there was no reliable way of saying who, in reality, was who. For that matter, in the chaos of Polish political life it was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain a grip on reality, to distinguish the *prowokacja* (provocation) from what was spontaneous, difficult to distinguish what was real and what was pure fantasy, gossip or censored nonsense. Konwicki's perceptions echoed the findings of sociologists too. By the end of the decade the Polish *inteligencja* were said to be 'much weakened psychologically, compared to the workers: their education and their social position, their awareness of social dissonance, their professional frustrations, their awareness of the meaning of social and political problems, and the unrelieved tedium of tension all served to increase anxiety and disquiet, and reduced their self-confidence'.<sup>28</sup>

Konwicki brought the clandestine and highly personal novel of opposition, and the idea of damaged conspiratorial thought to their logical conclusion in *A Minor Apocalypse*. He showed a man for whom death for the cause of the nation is totally undermined, yet who still considers that act to be somehow morally imperative. It is a sacrifice for an uncertain cause, requested by people for whom he has little respect; it is an action called to protest at people who know his works and want him to continue writing, by people who have no particular interest in him or his work. There was no going back on that artistic, psychological or political revelation and logic. Polish literature had reached the end of the conspiratorial line. From this point on to stay underground, to continue the conspiracy, to refuse to rise into the gloom of Polish day, to refuse confrontation with the already deeply embedded social, political and moral deformations of Polish 'socialist' society, would have caused even further damage. The brief 16 month life span of Solidarność was just such an attempt. The Military coup of 13 December 1981 reversed all this. In the short term, while the shock of Martial Law lasted, it was successful in setting Polish literature back to its old conspiratorial habits.

However, in the long term there could be no return. For Konwicki, as for Lem, Barańczak, Herbert, Brandys and others it had become essential to question the language in which the 'reality' of the closed, censored, 'socialist' world was presented, to try to restore some part of the faculty of cognition and introspection denied by censorship. By 1980, such was the effect of censorship, the control of the media and the damage wrought by Party language, that on the subjective level, and in the evidence gathered by numerous sociologists, it was clear that Polish society no longer knew what it thought, no longer knew what it really knew. Its perception of what was real and what was false had been seriously undercut; by and large Polish society was in the process of succumbing to the 'dead field of normative indifference'. It had begun to surrender to automatic patterns of thought and reaction. Even the underground opposition was beginning to succumb to the insidious effect of what Brandys had dubbed *nierzeczywistość Polski* (Polish unreality).<sup>29</sup> *A Minor Apocalypse*, published by the underground and émigré opposition only a few months before the great shipyard strike of 1980, sums up the feelings and tensions that marked the rise of Solidarność and the desperate cul-de-sac of both official and unofficial political and cultural life.

The novel, with its view of the seedy underside of dissident and Party life, vividly delineated the confusions of both the authorities and the opposition, the deeply embedded economic chaos, anarchy, self-interest, exhausting and exhausted moral, personal and cultural chaos that haunted Poland through the 1980s, and whose spectre still hovers.

#### NOTES

- 1 'Even with my lousy memory, I do remember Lem from 1945-46. In those days he wore a Jagiellonian University medical school cap and, if I'm not mistaken, knickers. Those slightly old fashioned trousers were engraved in my enfeebled memory cells because they were a certain sign of his provincialism. From those knickers I guessed that Lem came from the borderlands, probably Lwów.' T.Konwicki, *Moonrise, Moonset*, Faber & Faber, 1988, p.129. Further biographical details can be found in: J.Krzyzanowski (ed.), *Literatura polska: przewodnik encyklopedyczny*, 2 vols., PWN, Warsaw, 1984; J.Wegner, *Konwicki*, Agencja Autorska, Warsaw, 1973.
- 2 R.Piętrzak, 'Polish Syndrome', *Poland*, no.1, 357, 1989, p.24.
- 3 T.Konwicki speaking in interview: R.Piętrzak, 'Polish Syndrome', *Poland*, no.1, 357, 1989, p.24.
- 4 From: *The Calendar and the Hourglass*, WL, Warsaw, 1976; quoted in: J.Rostropowicz Clark, 'Introduction' to T.Konwicki, *The Polish Complex*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1984, p.xv.
- 5 T.Konwicki, *Moonrise, Moonset*, pp.28-9.
- 6 *Moonrise, Moonset*, p.29. Konwicki once said to Brandys: 'These kids are fascinated by moral pornography; they're excited by the idea of digging some smut out of us.' K.Brandys, *A Warsaw Diary: 1978-81*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1984, p.61.
- 7 C.Milosz, *The History of Polish Literature*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1983, p.500.
- 8 *Moonrise, Moonset*, pp.228-9.
- 9 C.Milosz, *The History of Polish Literature*, p.535.
- 10 J.Rostropowicz Clark, 'Introduction', T.Konwicki, *The Polish Complex*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1984, p.x. See also: K.Brandys, *A Warsaw Diary: 1978-81*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1984, p.26. The life of Joseph Conrad might be thought to contradict Konwicki and Brandys, but it must be remembered that Conrad (no matter what his debt to Polish literature and outlook) was writing in English. The experiences he recorded (the colonial world, seafaring, political intrigue, capitalism red in tooth and claw, spying, adventure) were not readily available as literary experiences within Polish culture. In order to gain these experiences, to find a way of writing about them and a readership Conrad had to live and work outside Polish language culture. Kapuściński's experience, I think, confirms this.

- 11 A.Walicki, 'From Stalinism to Post-Communist Pluralism: The Case of Poland', *New Left Review*, no.185, January/February, 1991, p.98. 'Under Stalinism it was the authorities who used and abused politico-moral pressure, while now it was the opposition who organised such pressure in the name of national unity, enforcing non-collaboration with the authorities and silencing dissidents within its ranks. 'Dual consciousness' was now the lot of many Party members still loyal to the Party but exposed nonetheless, to the 'moral terror' of its enemies. Gone and forgotten were the times when the Party was able to impose communist ideals on intellectuals and artists; now intellectuals and artists engaged in actively delegitimising the system through both the political content of their works and ostentatious refusal to cooperate with official institutions.' *Ibid.*, p.96. The conformity of opinion required by the opposition worried others too. Barańczak said that continual confrontation with a powerful, relentless and cunning enemy produced a fortress mentality that was particularly damaging to cultural activity and that spontaneous creativity, in yielding to the obligation to defend certain values, unwittingly accepted the simplifications of collectivist restriction. S.Barączak, 'Renouncing the Contract' (1985), in: *Breathing Under Water and Other East European Essays*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1990, p.76. D.Pirie in writing of J.Krzysztoń's book *Madness* (1986) has said: 'What distinguishes *Madness*, one of the most significant (as well as popular) works in Polish in the 1980s from the underground establishment's direct and highly erudite criticisms of the Party and its state apparatus, is that it elliptically attacks all the mechanism (of the Party-State, Church and Opposition Nation) that are so destructive and from which there is no escape other than insanity.' D.Pirie, 'Private States of Mind: The Idea of Madness in Recent Polish Culture', *Edinburgh Review*, no.81, 1988, pp.65-74. Zagajewski has described the way that 'Poland' became the all-pervading, ingenious justification for Polish resisters 'shackled by the immortal plural': for him the choice was between the uniformity of 'communism' and the uniformity of society and 'the nation'. His solution was to withdraw from both into poetic solitude. A.Zagajewski, *Solidarity, Solitude*, Ecco Press, New York, 1990, p.138. Zagajewski, Konwicki, Barańczak and others felt the conformity offered by Solidarność was no real solution, that their obligation was not to produce 'useful literature' (they could have done as much for the 'communists' if that had been their aim) but simply to observe clearly and write well. N.Ascherson, 'Tungsten amid the Turmoil', *The Independent on Sunday*, 13 January 1991, p.18. It is clear that underground writers and intellectuals, who had enough of what they understood to be 'socialism', curbed one authoritarian streak in Polish culture only to impose their own brand of 'moral terror' through their ostentatious refusal to cooperate with the regime of General Jaruzelski and their refusal to see any difference between his regime and that of the Stalinist terror. There is only one decisive factor which can explain such behaviour and that is the historical relationship of nationalism and national identity to the unique role of the Polish writer. Starski has written: 'In the case of Poland...the loss of an independent Polish state, which did not survive the end of the eighteenth century and did not reappear on the map of Europe until 1918, has caused a profound intensification of the national frame of reference. The fact that Polish Romantic

poets had to replace society's lawyers, teachers and politicians shifted the whole burden of socialization to national culture and away from practical activities of administration. The durability of this national pattern has been proven in the years since World War II. Sociological research carried on by S. Novak since 1957 has confirmed a vague feeling on the part of Polish intellectuals that the majority of Poles view the state and 'state-leading groups' as historically coincidental... Devotion and loyalty go to the nation, the national community and tradition, which are felt to be definitely superior to the political organization of society. Thus what may appear as a purely demagogical slogan - 'We have signed the agreement, as a Pole does with a Pole' - which appeared after the Gdańsk, Szczecin and Jastrzębie agreements had been signed, was actually an expression of loyalty to Poland on both sides of the class barricades. This loyalty to the national heritage which surpasses differences of class and politics is by no means an un-mixed blessing...' S. Starski, *Class Struggle in Classless Poland*, South End Press, Boston, 1982, pp. 227-8.

12 T. Konwicki, *A Minor Apocalypse*, p. 35.

13 *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 68. In the late 1970s the censor was very sensitive to the subject of meat shortages and in state publishing houses the reference to sausage would almost certainly have been cut. S. Barańczak, 'My Ten Uncensorable Years: Or How Liver Sausage lost its Political Implications', *Index on Censorship*, vol. 10, no. 6, London, 1981, pp. 38-40.

15 Part of the censorship regulations in place in 1976 reads: 'In censoring the calendar the following pattern should be strictly followed: The holidays from work are: New Year - 1 January; first & second days of Easter - variable; first day of Whitsuntide - variable; Labour Day - 1 May; Corpus Christi - variable; *odrodzenie Polski* (rebirth of Poland) - 22 July; All Saints - 1 November; Christmas - 25-6 December. The following days which are not holidays should also be indicated in the calendar: Victory Day - 9 May; October Revolution - 7 November; Others according to the judgement of publishers.' 'GUKPPIW Instructions for Censors' in: G. Schöpflin (ed.), *Censorship & Political Communications in Eastern Europe*, Frances Pinter, London, 1983, pp. 63-4.

16 *A Minor Apocalypse*, pp. 105-6.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 82.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 92.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 119. The fact that this conversation takes place in an underground chamber was ridiculed as exaggerated, paranoid nonsense by the novel's critics. Eight months after the novel appeared an underground tunnel connecting Party Headquarters and the basement of the Paradis Cafe on Nowy Świat was discovered during renovation. T. Konwicki, 'Świat zdegradowany' in: S. Nowicki, *Pół wieku czyscca. Rozmowy z Tadeuszem Konwickim*, Oficyna Wydawnicza, Warsaw, 1990, p. 209. An earlier version of this theme can be found in Mroźek's play *Policja* (1958), where the last dissident has gone over to the government side; if the police are to survive they must provide dissidents from their own ranks. The last dissident, now working for the police, volunteers, though he now sees the error of his previous activities, to act as a dissident as a gesture of loyalty to his

new comrades and masters.

20 *A Minor Apocalypse*, p.124.

21 *Ibid.*, p.169.

22 *Ibid.*, pp.187-8.

23 *Ibid.*, p.231.

24 *Ibid.*, p.232.

25 A.Michnik, 'On Resistance' (1982), *Letters from Prison and Other Essays*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1985, p.55. Not everyone was enthralled by Konwicki's portrait of the demoralised Poland of late 1970s 'communist' Poland. For one writer at least Konwicki had become utterly and hysterically obsessed with himself and with his disgust at 'reality'. G.Herling-Grudziński, *Dziennik pisany nocą* (1973-79), Instytut Literacki, Paris, 1980, p.339.

26 T.Konwicki, 'Buchalteria niezależności' in: S.Nowicki, *Pół wieku czyśca. Rozmowy z Tadeuszem Konwickim*, 1990, pp.299-300.

27 *Moonrise Moonset*, p.128.

28 J.Koralewicz, 'Autoratyzm robotników i inteligencji', in: J.Koralewicz (ed.), *Spoleczeństwo polskie przed kryzysem w świetle badań socjologicznych z lat 1977-79*, PWN, Warsaw, 1987, p.80-110.

29 K.Brandys, *A Warsaw Diary: 1978-81*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1984. Also: K.Brandys, *A Question of Reality*, Blond and Briggs, London, 1981; J.Koralewicz, I.Bialecki & M.Watson (eds.), *Crisis and Transition: Polish Society in the 1980s*, Berg, Oxford, 1987; S.Nowak, 'A Polish Self Portrait', *Polish Perspectives*, no.2, 1981. Herbert put it thus: 'My primary task now is to make language free of hypocrisy and restore the logic of objects...' M.Oramus, 'Zbigniew Herbert: A Poet of Exact Meaning: A Conversation with Marek Oramus (1981)' in: D.Weissbort (ed.), *The Poetry of Survival: Post-war Poets of Central and Eastern Europe*, Anvil, London, 1991, p.328.

## CONCLUSION

The scrupulous and the just, the noble, humane, and devoted natures; the unselfish and the intelligent may begin a movement - but it passes away from them. They are not the leaders of a revolution. They are its victims. The victims of disgust, disenchantment - often of remorse. Hopes grotesquely betrayed, ideals caricatured - that is the definition of revolutionary success. There have been in every revolution hearts broken by such success. But enough of that. My meaning is that I don't want you to be a victim.

Joseph Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, 1911.

If you live long enough you will see everything - and also its opposite.

Polish saying.

- 1 Polish 'socialism' and the writers
- 2 dilemmas of the literary left
- 3 a note on literature and the free market



## 1 POLISH 'SOCIALISM' AND THE WRITERS

In Poland electrification plus the proximity of the Red Army did not mean communism. It meant the continuation and adaptation in opposition of older formations, even within the Party itself: it meant an almost irresolvable clash between culture and system; it meant that Polish culture was held in suspense, frozen, suspended, warped by considerations that were not its own. Polish society, even after the massive upheavals of the war and the attempted restructuring by the 'socialists', never quite managed to break with the past or do more than improvise from day to day. The Party was led by men who needed to woo writers but who mistrusted intellectuals. The cultural needs of the new leadership were more than modest and grew from a desire to stem the tide of reformism and preserve their own authority, rather than from a need for inner refreshment or quest for self-knowledge. As a result the Party failed to inject any element of dynamism into post-war cultural life.

It is important to realise the extent of Poland's compromise with 'socialism'. It was not that Poles simply refused to cooperate with the Party right from the first. In spite of its constant clashes with the system, Polish society had a growing Party membership throughout the post-war period. Most Poles saw the benefits of the system (even if they could not experience them as their own) in the post-war reconstruction, in the growth of towns, in the growth of the *czerwona burżuazja* and the professions, in the staggering upward mobility that shifted huge numbers off the land and into towns and factories, in the falling illiteracy rates, in the modest affluence that frequently threatened to show itself. Each successive political upheaval occurred at the same time as a rise in Party membership: in fact, as far as it is possible to tell from the figures available, membership rose steadily throughout the post-war period until at its high point in July 1980 Party membership represented around eight per cent of the population (see appendix four). This probably indicates not satisfaction with the Party, but that more people felt demoralised to the point where they had no option but to join in order to preserve their standard of living, further their career, protect their family. The Party created opportunists with a minimal commitment to ideals. After the mid-1950s the least of literature's enemies was Marxist ideology.

If 'socialism' was an uneven opponent for literature, a far more wily and insidious enemy was government subsidy. With the death of Stalin *socrealizm* was slowly abandoned. Writers found ways round their problems, new ways of publishing, new kinds of writing, a language of hints and guesses, a literature of enormous national responsibility which in many ways harked back to the partitions. On the surface this new literature promised that it was highly political, wily and inventive in its opposition to 'socialism'. But it was a literature that was tolerated and even subsidised by the 'socialists', and was clearly desired by the reading public, *nomenklatura*, *inteligencja* and Party. Nobody, it seems, not even the UB, wished to suppress the literature of opposition in its entirety, nor to replace it with the literature of *partyjność*. And under the surface appearance there was a void. Writers were united in what they opposed, but divided and uncertain about what they would replace it with.

'Socialists' and intellectuals alike had discovered that under the post-war leadership they were to be patronised but unhoused. Polish 'socialism' took over the intellectual framework of Marxism but refused to foster further thought on matters of politics, society, art or economics. The intellectual structures suggested by Marx as the shape of things to come stood as an outer shell, the absolute limit of legitimate thought. Inside that framework intellectual endeavour was supposed to cease, all questions answered. Polish 'socialism' did not challenge, never faced up to the fact that illegitimate intellectual activity was far more vital to the health of the society than were the legitimate activities of the Party and the *nomenklatura*. Throughout the post-war period the knowledge and technical expertise of the new *technokracja* were central to the development of the modern industrial society proposed by the Party. Yet the aims of the Party (centralised control and planning) were contradicted by social and economic needs and the requirements of the professional *inteligencja* the Party had created. And without that technical *inteligencja* the Party's project could not succeed. As Walicki pointed out, the *nomenklatura* appeared to operate as a new social class, but enjoyed corporate rather than ideological thinking: that is, they preferred to preserve their continued existence and privilege rather than further the aims of 'socialism':

In post-Stalinist Poland members of the *nomenklatura* were, as a rule, thoroughly de-ideologised, belonging to different 'special interest groups', closely connected with the 'second economy' and comprising also non-Party members. The inevitable pluralism of these groups contradicted the totalitarian ideal of a fully controlled, centrally planned economy...<sup>1</sup>

It was among these people that the writers found their readers. Indeed, to a great extent the Party, *nomenklatura* and opposition overlapped socially and politically.

Polish 'socialism' could not challenge this state of affairs because Polish 'socialism' was neither Polish nor socialist. Whether it knew it or not, Polish 'socialism' was never more than a compromise, a holding action within a given, and for the time being unalterable political situation. Polish 'socialism' was slow to acknowledge that class politics had not yet developed when the 'socialists' took over. Class struggle, the separation of Church and state, the development of local capital, the growth of an urban industrial working class and an urban commercial middle class, the growth of trades unions, none of these things had happened in Poland in the way that they had happened in western Europe. Class struggle had been irrelevant in Polish history and 'socialism' had preceded the emergence of right and left. Poland's development from the Enlightenment to the present had been buried in a struggle to exist. Poland was an 'undeveloped culture', closer in many ways to the emerging countries of the Third World than it was to its neighbours: even by 1980 much of the nineteenth century had yet to happen to Poland.

The Party, even though it tried to foist *socrealizm* onto the writers under Bierut, to censor the writers into silence under Gomulka, and to buy or ignore writers under Gierek, never formulated any serious cultural policy beyond a vague notion that, even if writers were troublesome, somehow culture was a good thing, but possibly irrelevant, and that too much culture was probably dangerous. They never did bring themselves to work out a relationship with the traditional role of Poland's writers. The highly centralised political establishment was never in a position to discover the real state of cultural life simply because there was no mechanism for discerning what the Polish public wanted to read, hear or see, and even if there had been it is unlikely the Party would have obliged since high on the public's list would have been a whole series

of topics which were all too embarrassing to be aired. What Polish writers achieved in this period echoed the achievement of the Party, a magnificent rambling improvisation that was no more than a 'holding action'. The cultural experience of Polish 'socialism' was an extended detour down a blind alley - the same blind alley that Polish culture had been consigned to in the partitions. Within this the conflict between writers and Party, if it can be described as such, was no more than extended wrangling about the real seat of social, political and moral, historically vested, authority. Polish 'socialism' could not challenge this state of affairs because Polish 'socialism' was neither Polish nor socialist.

In Poland the survival of the nation had been the only political consideration. Poles divided not into left and right, but into those who were against the government, who favoured the patriotic insurrectionary conspiratorial mode, and those who were for the government in a limited and reluctant fashion, who favoured the Positivist collaborationist 'organic work' mode. The emerging post-war *inteligencja* were very different from the pre-war *inteligencja*. They were integrated into the state in a way that the pre-war *inteligencja* had never been. The links between the economy and the government were much closer, yet at the same time, while the professional ethos developed within the *inteligencja*, many saw politics and opposition as a waste of time. What mattered was a well paid job, a secure home, professional status. If 'socialism' and party membership were the modern equivalent of 'organic work' for many, protest through petty theft, chiselling, absenteeism, alcoholism, conspiracy and a general refusal to give consent to actuality (a range of attitudes symbolised by the graffiti symbol of the tortoise) were the real life of many more. For a few conspiracy and resistance became a way of life. Even a casual glance into the essays of Michnik, Barańczak or Zagajewski or the interviews conducted by Trznadel reveals Polish culture as possessing a highly developed moralistic and emotional streak, a culture that placed greater emphasis on loyalty to the nation than on any ideology of class or division of left and right. Many writers (Brandys and Zagajewski in particular) lamented that this was so, and came to see their options as lying either in solidarity with the traditionalist masses, or in solitude. These were options that Schulz, Witkiewicz and Gombrowicz would have recognised. At the same time the old *szlachta*

vices of egoism and haughty, cultured independence, became national virtues: the Polish *inteligencja* saw itself as the major force for preserving national tradition, identity and the idea of independent political life.<sup>2</sup>

Poland was never a socialist state and Poles were never so serious about the idea of socialism as when free marketeers began the demolition of 'socialist' structures and the Catholic church began its bid for *Iranizacja* (Iranisation) after 1989. Nor, after 1956, did Poland have a totalitarian regime on the Soviet model. Each successive post-war government consistently failed to turn its authoritarianism into totalitarianism, failed to push through the collectivisation of farm lands, failed to suppress dissent, tolerated underground publishing, punished but did not eradicate or liquidate opposition, failed to promote social ownership, failed to move towards a moneyless or marketless economy, and failed to reduce the need for private enterprise. Indeed by accepting the 'second' economy (and creating the dollars-only PEWEX stores to make use of it) they recognised their system was inadequate and provided themselves with legal access to black-market goods and finance. By the 1980s all pretence to 'socialism' had gone and the regime sought minimal assent for its existence rather than active collaboration. For many members of the Party, Polish 'socialism' was a necessary evil, something to be tolerated, taken advantage of, used; it was a realistic acknowledgement that circumstances could not easily be altered, that nothing inside Poland could be solved until events outside Poland (in the USSR) were more favourable. The Party promoted reluctant acceptance of its continuance not on ideological grounds but solely on geo-political realities, namely proximity of the Soviet Union and the threat from Germany. At the moment Jaruzelski is seen as a pariah, and his regime is characterised in the blackest terms by most Poles. In spite of this, it may be that at some future date his coup and the 'social and political restructuring' of Martial Law will be seen as a clumsy attempt to dissolve irreconcilable elements in Polish social and political life.

Since 1976 the bulk of Polish writers have proved to be the (sometimes distant) ally of the proletariat against a wavering and opportunist bureaucracy, and against the monopoly power of the PZPR. However, without an undecided and sometimes sympathetic bureaucracy the writers would have had a very different time of it. Writers, unlike other sectional interests or pressure groups within Polish society,

sought to express much more than their own limited professional and social interests. While the Party asked writers to chart the course (positively) of social change in Poland, the writers were more interested in witnessing the change of genuine revolutionaries into reactionary bureaucrats, in spelling out the implications of this change for Polish society, in showing the human consequences of delaying the development of independent Polish political thought. Working within the inherited and refined tradition of the *szlachta* ethos supplemented by the moral authority of the Catholic Church, they recorded the human effects of the 'Asiatic mode of production' on the Polish people, the effects of crude and inefficient industrialisation, the moral and spiritual effects of the one-party-state. They charted, in their own ambiguous way, the continuing failure of political thought in Poland.

By making available a portrait of the authorities the writers wrote a limit to the insensitive and decaying values favoured by the inheritors of Stalin. At the same time they showed that while the Party took Moscow's opinion into account at virtually every stage of its supposedly internal processes, moral life in Poland was continually undermined simply because Poles were denied responsibility for themselves. At least until the mid 1970s, in spite of the blandishments offered by the state cultural apparatus, writers refused to equate socialism as a moral vision with the bureaucratic reality of 'socialism'. Most writers refused to believe that the continued institutional survival of the bureaucracy, Party and *nomenklatura* was synonymous with the survival of the nation. The writers articulated non-Party, national and nationalist, Catholic, middle-class ambitions, opinions and values, through which garb the old *szlachta* ethos peeps out. The creative *inteligencja* faced the spoiling powers of an authoritarian\*

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\* The difference between totalitarianism and authoritarianism is often a question of the degree of violence, the willingness to use violence, and the intention behind the use of violence. The essential points about a totalitarian system are, as Orwell said, that it embodies the supremacy of ideology as an institutionalised lie, that it sets out to control every aspect of life, to alter consciousness by rewriting history, censoring both past and present, and by using language in a way that is increasingly its own. In order to do this it usually needs a charismatic leader, the machinery of mass terror, a permanent purge and ideological mobilisation (revolutionary will). The systems that emerged in the 'socialist' bloc after Stalin's death differed from this. Khrushchevian reformism was more concerned with the means of social control, the machinery of state, rather than with the simple exercise of physical power. In its manipulation of society through the *nomenklatura* and its insistence on a 'totalitarian normality' it was relatively non-violent - or at least it used what has been called 'civilised violence'. The Party (with the exception of the Church in Poland) remained the only autonomous organisation, but intellectuals were

society with enormous bravery and resilience: under threat of violence they pitted knowledge gleaned at great personal risk, and intellect fostered in obscurity. The writers, but particularly those on the left, tried to interpret and elucidate to the Party and to the *czerwona burżuazja* the difficulties and social problems the Party was creating but which it could not hope to contain or resolve.

## 2 DILEMMAS OF THE LITERARY LEFT

I have presented here a portrait of a particular group of Polish writers in a very tightly defined period. I have studied the reactions of this very small but influential group to enormous political change. I have divided up the post-war years into periods roughly corresponding to changes in the political leadership and considered the impact of the various techniques the Party used to try to manage writers. I have concentrated on four particular writers who have in some way summed up and exemplified the dilemmas of other opposition writers, but particularly those on the left, in that period. I have rounded off by looking at the dramatic changes in the position of the writer with the events of 1989-93. The collapse of 'socialism' provided a natural ending to the story, with the experience of 'socialism' brought to a clear conclusion. Rather than repeat here the findings of each chapter, or attempt to rehearse the lessons revealed by the collapse of 'socialism', I would prefer to raise some of the broader implications of my research and possibly indicate fruitful avenues for further research.

Were the experiences of Polish writers particularly Polish, or were they typical of the experience of writers from the former eastern bloc? Undoubtedly each country developed its own style of 'socialism', its own national variant, which took into account to a greater or lesser degree the embedded cultural inheritance. Poland's experience was at first not so very unusual. Only later did it emerge that the

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increasingly called on to accept a level of censorship or self censorship, that is to renounce their function as intellectuals. Ideology was reduced to the level of ritual, while the government struggled with the economy and attempted to divert all questions into issues of nationalism. These points are argued at some length in: Jaques Rupnik 'Totalitarianism Revisited' in J.Keane (ed.), *Civil Society and the State*, Verso, London, 1988, pp.263-90. With this in mind it may be that in referring to the collapse of 'socialism' in 1989, we might be more accurate if we referred to the collapse of authoritarianism.

Polish writers were not going to be infiltrated or influenced by the secret police to the extent that this happened in East Germany, would not be subject to the treatment their counterparts in Czechoslovakia received after 1968, were not likely to be sent to the GULAG, or confined in a Soviet mental hospital. Nor, on the other hand were they to achieve the accommodation with the state, won slowly but surely by Hungarian writers through the 1970s and 1980s.

Writers' reactions to the Party and political events were many and various. (a) At first many showed idealism and willingness to cooperate, and clearly saw the Party as being a way to modernity, reconstruction, and national security. (b) Within a decade of the 'socialist' take-over and the Party's attempts to promote *socrealizm*, disillusion, fuelled by the perceptions of writers like Miłosz, had become wide-spread and, while accepting that there was little they could do to shake off the power of the USSR, many writers tried to revise Polish 'socialism'. (c) After the failure of revisionism many writers withdrew from any engagement with politics into intellectuality and literary theory, or into the steady production of apparently mediocre literature that did not draw attention to itself and which did not rock the boat. However much a writer like Lem tried to avoid politics by concentrating on the basic human dilemmas in a medium noted for pulp fiction, he was nevertheless affected by politics in that his decision to write science fiction was typical of the movement of disillusion. Further, since his books dealt with the issues of communication and moral choice, which lie at the heart not only of literature, but also of politics, they could still be read as political parables. (d) For those who chose opposition, their resistance was either oblique, like that of Kapuściński and Mroźek, or open like that of Andrzejewski and Konwicki. Some chose to write for their diaries, like Brandys. Others, like Herbert, wrote for their desk drawer and were content to remain little known. Some abandoned the official media and published abroad or underground. (e) Many writers of great talent and individuality found themselves 'emigrated', forced to live abroad. Exactly how influential leading 'Polonia' figures like Kołakowski and Miłosz were throughout this period is hard to estimate and certainly worthy of a separate study.

While Polish writers shared much of the general experience of 'socialism', their professional experience was uniquely ambiguous. Their experience was complicated by



factors related to the peculiarities of Polish history and culture, and by the inabilities of Polish 'socialism'. The Party's attitude of half-heartedly engineering human souls was without doubt a dismal failure. But could it have been anything other? The influence of national identity on the Party is difficult to calculate, as is the influence of the poor education of many of the leadership, but it is clear that both were major factors in tempering the Party's attitude to writers. The Party preferred the squalor of the carrot and stick, rather than head-on, open confrontation or violent suppression, and in any case lacked the daring to develop its own positive line on literature and culture. The overwhelming fact of censorship, and lack of creativity within the Party meant that the creativity of the opposition, and its ability to 'tell the truth' became essential not only to ordinary Poles, but also to many Party intellectuals.

While the PZPR was never strong or subtle enough to win over the population to its view of the world, it nevertheless controlled the media and could almost always muster enough coercive power to control public life, or at least to ensure its failure. Because it failed to legitimise itself in the eyes of the nation, the Party imposed censorship, control of the media and control of public expression. After 1968, when it had alienated the writers beyond the power of bribery, the Party tried to dump them and then to ignore writers completely; when this did not work it tried to frighten them, censor them, blackmail and smear them. The Party, through its failure to allow any development of self-awareness from within its own structures or through criticism of its actions from outside, developed a language that was increasingly meaningless and irrelevant to Polish daily life, while the writers and independent intellectuals struggled to restore meaning to a language devastated by the Party. The clash between the writers and the Party was for the most part low-key and unspectacular, but there could be no mistaking the fact that the efforts of the Party were in direct contradiction to the work of the writers, in direct opposition to virtually the whole range of modern professional economic activities and hampered social, political and personal self awareness.

It was not that the *inteligencja* insisted that the pursuit of material wealth was a soulless activity, or that writers insisted Mickiewicz was better than a Mercedes (owning even a Trabant was beyond the ambition of most Poles), but simply that in reaction to the living standards and 'achievements' of the Party (which were

profoundly un-Polish, lacking in spiritual value, and embedded in a hideously inefficient economy) the creative *inteligencja* insisted that it should be they rather than the Party who set standards of moral and social behaviour. Increasingly it was to the creative *inteligencja* that journalists and politicians turned as the dangerously demoralised working class of Poland emerged from the heady broth of rapid industrialisation and showed that it could be boorish, unsophisticated, undisciplined, ill-mannered, ruffianly and determined - traits which contributed to Poland's poor economic performance. This did not necessarily mean that the creative *inteligencja* were models of intellectual clarity or honesty, nor did it mean that they had any programme to offer beyond the concept of national identity and national survival.

In post-war Poland two value systems competed with each other. On the one hand there was the still surviving, slightly altered value system of the pre-war *inteligencja*, preserved in particular by members of the literary profession, nationalists, exiles and émigrés, and by the Catholic church, a system which had dipped in popularity in the immediate post-war years, but which revived strongly in the 1970s. On the other hand there were the watered down, stumbling, half-hearted 'Asiatic' values of the PZPR. The Party sought first to enlist writers to its support, then tried to dictate exactly how the writers should discharge their social and political responsibilities in shaping public (primarily middle-class) self-awareness and political consciousness. However, in so far as writers were part of the professional class, with professional demands that were very similar to the *technokracja*, they too found themselves hampered in their work by a Party that was itself the product of Moscow's anti-civil society, 'Asiatic statist' in outlook, and which was increasingly unwilling to allow scrutiny of its actions even by a loyal but independent creative *inteligencja*.

There was very little question of the Party being acknowledged as a genuine leadership. Indeed, its policy of mass literacy only opened up the possibility of well observed and well expressed frustration with the rest of the Party's policies and reluctance to allow the economic advancement of the new *technokracja* and *czzerwona burżuazja*. Doubtless Party members in key enterprises struggled to make the unworkable and inefficient economic system appear effective, but to maintain the system at all the Party was forced to allow a black market. It seems very likely that on

many key issues, so close were the attitudes of the more liberal sections of the Party and its critics, that the real divide was not whether a person was a member of the Party or a member of the opposition, but rather questions of age and gender, social origin and pre-war political experience.

Throughout the 1970s creative intellectuals of the secular left - a tiny group within the *inteligencja* - were the main focus of opposition to the Party, were in direct rivalry with the Party for the allegiance and opinion of the bulk of the *inteligencja*. The writers hinted to their readership that they knew what they were doing, that they understood the latest nuances of Party policy and that they were 'agin' it. Readers became adept at reading between the lines. In the early 1970s there were still interesting books to read, but as that decade ended and the censorship became increasingly entrenched, writers became less interested in 'saying something' and grew more and more obsessed with the act and process of writing, of speaking only and at length about the difficulties of writing under this social and political set-up. Another aspect of this development could be seen in the 'defeat' of literature by the censor and restrictive publishing policies and in the epidemic growth of underground publishing in the late 1970s. Not all underground literature was of high quality or of any great political significance, but to a readership starved of public debate, much - possibly too much - was read with a wink and a nudge. The struggle with the Censor and strategies to defeat or subvert censorship, rather than any other content, became major literary preoccupations. In the universities too, pure literary theory came to assume an awesome and stultifying stature: at almost every level there was a move away from the study of creative literature, away from literary history. Doubtless these were symptoms and reflections of the defeat of ideological thought within the Party itself.

Polish writers, in opposition or in the Party, were but two aspects of the east-central European *inteligencja* on the road to class power. The *inteligencja* began to re-emerge as a problem in the mid-1970s precisely because Gierek's technical revolution contradicted the Party efforts to retain central control by controlling the flow of information. The problem of the *inteligencja* emerged primarily as moral and normative - that is as a cultural phenomenon of political significance.

Without doubt writers were preservers of cultural and linguistic values - they saw

themselves as keeping the language pure, providing cultural and spiritual resources for an oppressed and abused nation. They fostered communication, a sense of continuing Polishness, trying to prevent the complete eclipse of traditional culture and a lapse in the continuity of values. However, while these things were at odds with the ambition of the Party, it seems that writers were actually assisted by the set-up. Even where they had not intended any political commentary, one was nevertheless read into their work by a readership desperate for the uncensored 'truth'. In this way writers often seemed to say and know more than was the case. Because political life was impossible, literature became inescapably political.

Writers recorded the inner life of the nation, and they were considered to be moral authorities. But did they ever initiate or influence change or lead a movement? Did they actually affect events? Were they important to the working class or were they, as it were, just the icing on the cake? Certainly writers felt that in supporting KOR, TKN, ROPCiO and Solidarność they were making a valuable contribution to reconstitution of civil society and the struggle for a better Poland. But in the longer term they found that the working class did not need them. They now feel that, as Wałęsa regards most intellectuals as crypto-communists, they are at loggerheads with the post-'socialist' government and that they have lost their place and function in the new, predominantly working class, Poland. Writers in Poland do not now command much of a readership, but it is very likely they would have commanded a much smaller, less educated readership in the post-war years had it not been for 'socialism'.

Without 'socialism', it seems, the writers would have been much less influential. But even with 'socialism', while they were a nuisance to the Party, they were probably not the powerful figures they imagined themselves to be. 'Socialism' preserved, but it also distorted. The collapse of 'socialism' revealed that writers were influential because the Party regarded them as such, but they were not powerful. It also revealed the limitation of the politicality of their writing in that it was no longer sufficient to appear, with a wink and a nod, with a parable or subtle satire, to know what was going on. To be involved in politics one had to be a politician, not a writer. The fact that so many writers, faced with an unsubsidised publishing industry and a free market, abandoned their careers as writers to enter politics, gives credence to this connection.

How far did 'socialist' experience of Polish literature fit in with the historically established pattern of Polish culture? The high social standing and oppositional status of writers was something that had developed from the experience of the partitions, and doubtless, had Poland experienced a prolonged period of calm and stability, the writing profession would have eventually come to resemble that of western Europe. However, 'socialism' warded off the threat of the free market and resumed the pattern set in the nineteenth century by allowing writers to act as an alternative moral Parliament. Throughout the 'socialist' period, just as it had been in the nineteenth century, Polish literature was the continuation of political life by other means: 'socialism' preserved a cultural pattern that would otherwise have died out. There is an interesting analogous situation with regard to religion too. It is ironic that in western Europe, where most governments profess some kind of religious affiliation, secularisation has proceeded faster and further than in 'socialist' Poland, where official anti-religious policies have reinforced and even frozen religious observance in its pre-war mode.

An interesting sidelight on the way Polish culture functions may lie in the observation that the old eastern Polish provinces continue to exert an enormous influence on contemporary Polish literature. Three of the four writers discussed at length here originated in the *kresy*. It seems that people from the margins of a society or a culture have an experience informed by dislocation, are in permanent exile, are outsiders, independent observers, part of, but not belonging to, their society; because of their particular double focus, they are perhaps more aware of the traumas, more aware of the deep personal changes that political life inflicts on the psyche.

The 'socialist' era is one of enormous contradictions, not only for writers, but also for the Party. The hesitancy of the Party can be seen in its desire to flatter and woo the writers, and then its desire to control them. It can be seen elsewhere too, particularly in the growth and development of the publishing industry. The policy of fostering mass literacy was contradicted by Party's need for a closed society in which they controlled the flow of information and where outside influences were entirely absent. Poland (and Poles) did not exist in a void: no regime, 'socialist' or otherwise, could start from an absolute cultural and linguistic desert, nor could they entirely wipe out the past. Foreign contacts, the lack of restriction on foreign visitors, the existence of an

underground and émigré press, the foreign radio stations all undermined the Party's bid for total control. Although the Party did not know it, the fact of mass literacy and the availability of vast quantities of inexpensive books, two policies fostered consistently by the Party throughout the post-war period, contradicted everything the Party needed if it was to achieve its stated ideological aims. The power of memory, the inherited culture, mass literacy all helped the ability to think beyond what was officially approved, and combined with the half-heartedness of the Party itself to undercut any 'new beginning', or fresh start.

It is highly probable that among the most important works of Polish 'socialist' era literature will be counted: Jerzy Andrzejewski, *Ashes and Diamonds*, Kazimierz Brandys, *Warsaw Diaries*, Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, *Daybooks written at Night*, Aleksander Wat, *My Century*, Witold Gombrowicz, *Diaries*, Czesław Miłosz, *Collected Poems* - certainly they had an enormous impact in Poland and they have also drawn considerable international attention. It will be seen at once that none of these books is by a Catholic; that three of the writers had at one time a close connection to the Stalinist régime; that all of the writers were eventually opposed to the 'socialists'; that four of these titles are by writers who spent all or most of the post-war period outside Poland. Also, four of these titles are biographies or memoirs of some sort. There is only one novel and one book of poems. Perhaps this is a reflection of the Polish experience of the 20th century, where often an individual's biography is stranger than any work of fiction, and, socially and politically, often even more revealing. The shift towards the 'real' of documents, diaries, confessions and memoirs as a part of an effort to insist on rationality and recover authenticity for prose is a phenomenon of the sociology of post-war Polish literature.

Perhaps one of the most important points that Polish writers in the 'socialist' years have to make is that writers are no more specially gifted in the art and craft of politics than anyone else; nor are they particularly adept at predicting the future; in reading the past they are equipped, as their own biographies indicate, with all the precise insight and understanding that self justification can ever bestow. Their special gift is not in politics, but in seeing, understanding and recording the details origin and meaning of the present, in seeing how the present grew out of the past, and warning from what

they know and can divine in the present what target time's arrow might strike.

The basic economic questions that face the new Poland are so overwhelming that the fate of literature is, to all except the writers, a very minor consideration. And there is always the possibility that the free market will allow Polish literature to develop in some new direction, if, that is, the younger generation see any point in literature, and can find the time and the money to write. The digestion of the 'socialist' experience and the establishment of a post-'socialist' generation of writers may take some time.

### 3 A NOTE ON LITERATURE AND THE FREE MARKET

What will happen to Polish writers now that the power of Party patronage and subsidy has crumbled away, now that Poland is poised to become a 'free' market economy with a democratic electoral system? Nobody can say for sure. Wałęsa gave an interview to *Playboy* in which he showed a deep misunderstanding of what writing could be like in a 'free' Poland. When the current troubles of martial law were over, Wałęsa promised, he would write a book:

I'll talk the way I'm talking. I'll say to someone, 'Listen, write this.' And out of it should come a book. Not a boring one. It has to be interesting. It has to overturn the old theories. And at the same time describe them, restore them in order to overturn them.<sup>3</sup>

Wałęsa was under the impression that he would 'write books and...earn lots of money'. That was in 1982. By 1991 the breakneck pace of economic reforms sponsored by Wałęsa, reforms which he said were proceeding too slowly, were being sabotaged by crypto-communists, reforms which had all but destroyed the readership, alienated intellectuals, demolished the state publishing industry and replaced it with uncontrolled, independent, piratical, low-brow and pornographic publishing, made it unlikely that anyone would earn a living from serious writing in 'free and democratic' Poland for a long time to come.

The privatisation of the giant RSW publishing combine was a matter of urgent

concern to the first post-'socialist' government of 1990: the enabling laws took precedence over the seizure of PZPR property, the election of a national President and the re-drafting of the Polish constitution. Between March and November 1990 the Liquidation Commission, set up by special act of the Sejm, estimated that RSW had been running with an annual government subsidy of 260,000,000,000 zł. The commission sold off 55 of its newspapers and proposed the sale of RSW's entire distribution network, nine printing houses and those parts of CAF (Centralna Agencja Fotograficzna, Central Photographic Agency) that were most closely involved in working with RSW. A further 107 RSW newspapers and journals were sold at auction: *Sztandar Młodych*, *Dziennik Bałtycki*, *Dziennik Łódzki*, *Express Wieczorny* and *Życie Warszawy*, this last for 40,000,000,000 zł to a Polish bidder backed by a Sardinian consortium. Many complained that these operations had been sold too cheaply to foreign buyers - for example *Dziennik Bałtycki* was sold for 12,000,000,000 zł, but in the previous year had shown a profit of 4,000,000,000 zł.

This, however, was only one of six newspapers bought by the right-wing French publisher Robert Hersant. Bids by the British press magnate Robert Maxwell were turned down (Polish revenge for publishing a sycophantic English language volume of interviews and speeches by General Jaruzelski during martial law, in which Maxwell referred to military rule as safe-guarding Poland from Solidarność and the threat to socialism). Another 70 newspapers were offered free or as worker buy-outs to journalists, to be run as smaller cooperative concerns. The Liquidation Commission also broke up the ownership of the RSW specialist publishing houses, namely: Interpress (the Party's outlet for foreign language publications about Poland); KAW, (Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, National Publishing Agency) specialising in social and political science books, albums, tour guides and serious books for young adults; KAR, (Krajowa Agencja Robotnicza, National Workers' Agency) publishing economics and political literature; KiW, (Książka i Wiedza, Books and Knowledge) a cooperative publishing books on sociology and political science; MAW, (Młodzieżowa Agencja Wydawnicza, Youth Publishing Agency) social and political literature, belles lettres for young adults; Wydawnictwo Współczesne (Contemporary Publishing) popular science, children's books, books for young adults, serious science texts for young



adults, social and political science texts. As a result of these sales and changes approximately 1,000 of Poland's 10,000 journalists lost their jobs and most independent writers found that they were no longer offered contracts or commissions for the future. Former RSW employees were unable to find work: such was the political and economic climate. By the end of 1991 the privatised Ruch kiosks were still the main distributors of newspapers and journals, and were still massively inefficient: they owed billions of zloties to publishers from counter sales, and even the most popular newspapers expected to recover only 10-20 percent of their costs through circulation via Ruch. The liquidation of RSW at the end of 1990 was said to mark the effective end of the 'socialist' political monopoly in Poland.<sup>4</sup>

The advent of the free market hit writers very hard. The collapse of ZLP and the withdrawal of state subsidy meant that the writers' retreat at Obory, the writers' cafe and restaurant, the whole way of life the writers had known under 'socialism' (prizes, readings, the Club of International Press and Books, even the possibility of publication itself) were about to disappear. The collapse of the state publishing industry had not been foreseen, and when it came the effects were swift. Within a few weeks of the departure of the PZPR Poland's publishing industry was in ruins. Balcerowicz's economic reforms devastated the Polish readership by introducing inflation at an average of 25 per cent per month: in some parts of the economy inflation reached 1,000 per cent per month. While incomes remained pegged, subsidy was withdrawn from a whole range of Polish industry and 'real' costs were passed on to the consumer. Inevitably book sales plummeted. PIW, which had regularly sold 30,000 volumes per year from its Contemporary Thought series, failed to sell even 5,000 by the end of 1990. PIW cancelled its plans to publish contemporary Polish poetry, translations of foreign classics and a series of contemporary Polish literature. A crippling 12 per cent interest rate on bank loans meant that by the end of 1990 even independent publishers found themselves in difficulties.

Publishers now found it difficult to get their books into the shops. The new independent distributors would only take books they felt they could sell at once and preferably at a huge profit. Publishers and authors found that their profit margins were wiped out by the speed of inflation before they could even collect their receipts. By the

autumn of 1991 there were 880 registered publishing houses in Poland, 600 of them private. By October 1993 there were over 2,000 publishers in Poland, almost all of them private.<sup>5</sup> In the period 1989-92 an average of 200 new publishing houses appeared each year, and an average of 200 publishing houses per year went bankrupt. These enterprises operated without effective copyright laws, without paying taxes or keeping accounts, without price control and without any legal restraint on publishing pornography, politically extreme or racist opinion.

Further, writers were afforded little guarantee for past work. The State Bureau for the Protection of Intellectual Property had acted as a clearing house to avoid duplication but had not arranged effective legal protection of writers' work, assuming that state monopoly would make this unnecessary. Writers, editors, publishers and readers were astonished at the speed and extent of the collapse: within a few weeks a host of small publishers appeared: writers began to see pirated editions of their books appear on the stalls and could do nothing about it. Between 1989 and 1992, among many others, *Mala Encyklopedia*, Herman Wouk's *The Caine Mutiny*, Erich Remarque's *Triumphal Arch*, EFL text books by Alexander, the EFL series *Kernel Lessons*, Alastair Maclean's novels *Circus*, *Puppet on a Chain* and *Floodgate*, Leopold Tyrmand's books *Życie towarzyskie i uczuciowe* (Life, Social and Emotional) and *Rok 1954* (The Year 1954), Milan Kundera's *La Valse aux Adieux*, Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* and six books in the *Namiętności* (Passions) series from ALFA were all the subject of legal complaints regarding piracy. Copyright had been guaranteed by a listing in the National Library's publication *Przewodnik biblioteczny*, but most of the small new publishers did not deposit copies of their books with the Library, produced only one book and then disappeared so that no legal action against them could proceed; in other cases print employees were bribed to produce more copies than had been agreed, and then to 'slip' them to a pirate. In some cases tiny 'club editions' were made, numbering less than 500 copies. Some of the smaller publishers tried to brazen the matter out in court claiming that they had received verbal permission to print; others said that their edition was too small to cause any real damage to the sales of the authorised version.

Many of the new publishers specialised in cheap and often inaccurate translations

of foreign best-sellers, cheap crime novels, horror novels and lurid pornography sometimes in editions of 100,000-200,000 copies. It was possible to buy *Światowy program żydowskiej masonerii* (The World Programme of the Jewish Masons), the Polish edition of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*; a Polish-language edition of the still banned *Mein Kampf* (Scripta Manent, Krosno) proved to be incredibly popular, even when the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General took steps to prosecute the publisher for 'publicly supporting fascism and fomenting nationalist agitation'. The Polish ISBN service, rather than the state copyright protection agency, turned out to be the only organisation that kept track of publishers, and they estimated that by November 1991 they were dealing with over 900 Polish publishing concerns - not all of whom were registered, plus untold numbers of 'pirates'. Although copyright protection in Polish law followed the principles of the Berne Convention, in practice, due to loopholes in the domestic law and the tardiness of the courts, publishers were not required to request an ISBN number, did not report insolvency, did not supply full publication details to either the tax office or the ISBN office and did not send copies of their publications to the National Library, did not publish catalogues of their titles, nor even advise booksellers of publication, but rather sold editions entirely to family and friends. Often when publishers did request an ISBN number they chose to register abroad, as a London or Paris based company. Even after an act of piracy was reported to the courts and legal proceedings were initiated it often took more than 60 days before any action was taken to uphold the law and move to find the pirate, by which time the pirate had made his 'killing' and had moved on. The Society of Polish Book Publishers was lobbying for changes to the law to protect the publisher's rights, as well as those of the authors, by extending copyright from 25 to 50 years and by punishing infringements with a maximum prison sentence of two years or fines up to 1,000,000 zł.<sup>6</sup>

After 1989 writers and publishers could no longer rely on sales of books to libraries since there was no longer any subsidy available and there was no reliable guidance from the Party, Składnica or from the publishers as to what librarians should purchase. Beyond the rather limited work of the Krakowski Ośrodek Badań Prasoznawczych (Kraków Centre for Press Studies) there was no guide to the new

commercial publishing industry. Librarians lacked professional advice and even lacked their own professional newspaper to review new publications.

In conditions where it was possible to say anything and publish what the market wanted at the highest price it could bear, the writers' product ceased to hold value. The sudden marketisation of the Polish publishing industry meant an abrupt end to *ambitna literatura* (serious literature) and the arrival of *literatura wagonowa* (waggon literature, something to read on the train). It was not only that by coming out into the light of day the writers now had to face the open market and compete with the pornography and dross of a 'free society', they had in fact lost almost overnight the role, built up over 200 years, as the moral conscience and speakers for a downtrodden, occupied and conspiratorial national culture. It is hardly surprising that most writers now see no future (or at least no substantial income) in literature, and have gone into politics - the only job that a career dealing in words has fitted them for. For the first time writers were thrown onto the free market at a time when Polish society was experiencing an indescribably chaotic range of transitions. Polish writers faced 'freedoms' new to their national culture; they were without the ready-made audience provided by underground publication or the 'muse of censorship'. Perhaps for the first time since the partitions there was no restraint upon what they could say. For writers brought up within an intense, inward-looking, conspiratorial, moralistic, anti-authority tradition, the lush indifference of the free market was a terrifying prospect. By the end of 1991 very few writers had written anything since the round-table talks of 1989. Some had ceased writing because they did not know what to write any more, some because they were 'giving their energy to the formation of democracy', some because they were now politicians, others because they had lost their bearings and could no longer make sense of what they saw or heard, many had stopped writing because their publishers collapsed. The state budget could no longer afford to offer subsidy. The economy was too weak to produce private patrons, the public too poor to afford works of literature. For nearly forty five years Polish 'socialists' and secret policemen had failed to suppress the writers: the free market managed it rather more efficiently within a matter of weeks. As a spokesman for the Czytelnik publishing house said in May 1991: 'We are dying. These are our last days. Can't you leave us in peace?'<sup>7</sup>

Miłosz was sure that Polish 'socialism', with all its talk about the redistribution of wealth as a primary social task, was fundamentally interested only in the issue of the source of authority. Speaking of the future of Polish literature he explained:

On the one hand you have this pseudo-Polish pseudo-communist pseudo-culture, working its peculiar deformation of the consciousness for forty five years through pseudo-literature. On the other hand you have the literature of the underground, which even though it tries to be 'free', follows every twist and turn of official culture - if only to combat it. The two march in lockstep, they are inseparable, and yet both are deeply unnatural. And now we are faced with the prospect of creating something from this mess. And the problem is that even when you put the official and unofficial cultures, and the people who made them, together you still do not have Polish literature. You have only the peculiar literature and culture, the mind-set, of the People's Republic of Poland. What we have to realise is the full implication, for our literature, culture, moral and spiritual life, as well as our politics, of the fact that our 'communism', for all its connection with Moscow, was a Polish affair, that its collapse was peculiarly Polish. And that the failure of our underground opposition to effect a clear victory was also fully and intimately a Polish failure.<sup>8</sup>

He also put the new dilemma of Polish writers clearly:

Does the victory of the multi-party system in the countries of central and eastern Europe mean the end of their estrangement from the west? Will they, by introducing the classical division of powers - a legislature, executive and judiciary - recognize the supremacy of all western values? Will the years of suffering under totalitarian rule be obliterated, erased and the people start from scratch? Should the thinkers, poets and artists join their western colleagues in the somewhat marginal role assigned to them in societies busy with selling and buying?<sup>9</sup>

Miłosz had no doubt that the downfall of 'socialism' in Poland had been brought about because writers and artists had insisted on the idea of personal vision and personal responsibility. The writers led intellectual protest, showed exactly how and why the Stalinist system could not work. Yet Miłosz is simplifying. The writers and oppositionists did not win: victory of a kind was handed to them. In the end the Party's surrender denied them the moral, social and political justification for their struggle. Was the collapse of the intellectuals a part of the collapse of 'socialism'? Are Polish

intellectuals a spent force? Do they have any vestigial power in a Poland dominated by disgruntled and confused industrial workers in crumbling and polluted cities? Zagajewski is clear about the nature of the failure:

In my part of Europe, intellectuals played a very important part in bringing down totalitarianism by educating the political élite in liberal and anti-communist ideas, but they didn't reach the whole people. It's quite sad that now, when they should be acting even more vigorously to educate the nation, they seem to have capitulated in front of new-born capitalism and the phenomenon of mass culture, the vulgarity of mass culture.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps Zagajewski is right. But it is also possible that the Party preserved the power and influence of writers far beyond its normal lifetime by courting them and then by attempting to suppress them. In the same way that Poles flocked to support their Church whenever it was under threat, they supported their dissident and oppositionist writers whenever they were seen to be in difficulties: under Polish 'socialism' both writers and Church survived and even prospered (in spite of their opposition) in the most unexpected ways. But Poland can be a very confusing place. It is possible that in a 'free' market the power of both writers and the Church will evaporate.

It is impossible to guess what the long-term impact of 'socialism' on Polish literature will be. It is sad to think that for all the years of 'socialism', Poland has little to offer world literature beyond a limited and compromised anti-'socialism', and that none of the post-war writers has been able to describe truthfully the mistakes they made in accepting their situation. If nothing else Polish literature records the ambiguity of the writers' position in an authoritarian society, and in so far as this has consequences for the future, one can only echo Piotr Rypson's comments, and wonder whether literature is permanently tainted in some way by the experience of 'socialism', where the younger generation of Polish writers will come from, and whether literature has to a great extent already been abandoned by the younger generation of Poles. It is clear that a very special epoch in the history of literature has come to an end. We have reached the end of the road as far as the idea of writers as engineers of human souls is concerned. The experiment in shaping human consciousness was for the most part a

hugely expensive waste of time and paper, and produced results that were far from those intended. For all that it has been through Polish literature has little apart from the fact of its survival and a substantial and ambiguous contribution to the literature of anti-totalitarianism to offer the free market of world literature. As Miłosz wrote:

It's bewildering to think that in selling ourselves to the communists, in return we obtained no great masterpiece. In Polish contemporary literature, even in the latest publications after the fall of communism, there is no book or books which could turn the moral collapse into something of artistic value. Not even one Doctor Faustus...The real drama of Polish literature is not only based on the fact that so many writers acceded to communism, but also - and maybe most importantly - not one of them was able to truthfully, courageously and with talent describe his mistake.<sup>11</sup>

This lack of moral certainty and lack of political reliability reverberates deep within the emerging social structure of the new Poland and is manifest in, among many other things, a deep mistrust of the morality of the older generation of writers and their involvement in contemporary political and cultural life. As Piotr Rypson said:

Even when the older generation of writers protested, they did so in comfort. This was the group who had agreed to allow Stalinism. Even when they disagreed with the Party, the Ministry of Culture protected them. You have to remember that the peasants in the Party and in the government were in awe of writers. They still wanted the writers on their side. And this generation of writers who formed the 'Stalinist laureate' - they are the main barrier to our culture. After 1968 many new and young writers simply felt blocked by these people. They had to find other avenues for their work. It was as if they refused the patronage of these people. Débuts in official magazines became increasingly rare: many, of course, found themselves 'emigrated' in 1968, 1970, 1976, 1981. Others simply went underground, which was, after all, only partly underground. But a large number of writers simply did not publish at all: they refused the whole thing, they wrote for themselves and for a small circle of family and friends. After 1970 and its promises began to fade away, this development, of living privately, of having a small circle of close friends, of not even going to certain places or certain events, of not coming into contact with certain parts of society in case you became somehow contaminated, this became a real socio-political phenomenon, a cultural phenomenon. It was this way for poetry, for music and for the visual arts. Now, in the 1990s you look around at our literary culture and you say: Where are the younger writers? Whole generations are missing. Our writers are all due for their pensions it seems. There are very few under sixty years of age. With the exception

of the *nowa fala* (new wave) of 1968, Barańczak, Kornhauser and Zagajewski (and two of these lived abroad after martial law), the younger generation of writers hardly exists at all. That is the work of the Stalinist generation. They blocked the younger writers in ways they did not know - with their approval, with their protest, with their taste and with their guilt. This older generation has terrible difficulties in admitting its mistakes or its part in what is happening now, this terrible, wonderful confusion. They write their memoirs, give interviews, but they don't tell the truth. They can't admit that they found their situation very comfortable. They were the hierarchy who sat in judgement.<sup>12</sup>

Few writers emerged from the wreckage of Polish 'socialism' with their reputation intact, namely Herbert, Lem, the writers around *Tygodnik Powszechny*, exiles and émigrés, a few others. Those who had continued to publish 'overground' after 1976 were deemed 'compromised'; those who had signed letters of protest in the 1970s but continued to enjoy the benefits of state publication, official favour and a comfortable lifestyle were also suspect. For many, particularly *Solidarność*i who had been imprisoned, writers who were published officially after 1981 were traitors and collaborators.

In Lem's view Polish literature did not, perhaps could not, take the chance to become universal under 'socialism', and stood no chance of doing so under capitalism. When asked about the future of Polish literature after the collapse of 'socialism' he said:

It's incredibly difficult to write under present conditions. Until recently it was possible to employ Marxism as a point of reference but now, not only is it a closed formation, but one which is entirely decaying. After all, despite everything else, Marxism supplied Polish literature with a chance to be universal. At the moment I can see no problem which in being Polish would at the same time reach beyond the limits of our local interests to the rest of the world. By way of consolation we could say that in countries with a strong market economy literature does not blossom either.<sup>13</sup>

In Poland literature was the continuation of politics by other means. While politics was impossible, literature was an imperative: as soon as politics became possible, literature became an expensive irrelevance, a cultural extra. In part it is a matter of what has happened to the words 'communist' and 'socialist'. From the late nineteenth



century up to the 1930s these words became popular with the poor subjects of largely dictatorial regimes of eastern Europe simply because their rulers used them as a term of abuse against ordinary men and women who asked for economic reforms and democratic rights, protested against bureaucratic abuse, and resisted the authorities in the execution of wanton and casual brutality. Forty five years after the 'socialists' took power that same mechanism has made the word 'capitalism' popular.

A disturbing aspect of the 'normalisation' process of 1991-92 was the obliteration of 'socialist' homage to writers on the left in the naming of streets. For example on 15 March 1992 the Kraków street ulica Ignacego Fika was renamed ulica Józefa Mackiewicza. Ignacy Fik (1904-42) had been a graduate of Kraków and Lwów universities and an important member of the Union of Independent Socialist Academic Youth. He had been imprisoned for several months in 1925, but had gone on to become a respected critic, poet and political writer. During the occupation he was the organiser of the underground publications *R-Rewolucja* and *Polska Ludowa*, and was Kraków city organiser for the PPR. On 21 October 1942 he was arrested by the Gestapo and taken to Montelupich. After torture he was shot on 26 November 1942. He betrayed no-one. His wife, arrested two days later, died of typhus in Oświęcim in June 1943, but his daughter survived to become a well known theatre critic.

Józef Mackiewicz (1902-85), was a Lithuanian Pole from Wilno and quite a different case. While a staunch supporter of the idea of a multi-racial commonwealth, he was also a bristling opponent of socialism. His most successful work is thought to be that in which he portrayed the vicious struggles between the London-and Moscow-backed resistance groups after the Soviet occupation of Wilno. After the war Mackiewicz resided and published in the west. He had been sentenced to death by a Polish underground court for collaborating with the Nazis out of hatred for socialism: that is, in 1943 while working as a journalist in Wilno he visited the site of the Katyn massacre, which was then under German control, and voiced the opinion in the German-controlled Polish language press and in a later book, that the Soviets were responsible for the massacre. This, along with his outspoken views on the Soviet-Polish war of 1920, was sufficient to make him an un-person in the People's Republic of Poland. At least one observer thought this particular change of street name to be a

'charlatan manipulation of history', deeply revealing of 'hypocritical shame in attempts to efface the heroic deeds of people whose only fault was that they were socialist, to negate any achievements of 'socialist' rule, to overlook the works of great artists just because they were left-wing':

Zealous hypocrisy has become the most popular attitude towards a communist past. It's easy to pretend that real Poles had nothing in common with communism, that it was fate, nobody's fault and nobody's doing. That it was only the Kremlin and its agents dropped into the country from parachutes who shaped the country's image for nearly half a century. That nobody ever marched in a May Day parade under a red banner, raised his hand in consent during party meetings, cast his vote during elections, got an apartment and a coupon for a car after prostrating himself in the party cabinet. That all were born anti-communist and from their very first day knew that communism was hideous and was pushing Poland into an abyss. Only they didn't show it.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps such a reaction to the fall of 'socialism' is inevitable.

The underground republic of letters, with its muse of censorship, the concept of writing as a standard-setting intellectual activity are very probably things of the past. In the future the high moral stance taken by critics of the government will be tempered by the market and literature itself will be influenced by commercial considerations. Kisielewski, echoing dozens of writers across the old 'eastern bloc' lamented that no republic of letters emerged from the ruins of 'socialism', or from the underground opposition, and wrote:

We are 'normalising' here. The age of the prophets - Sienkiewicz, Prus, Wyspiański - is over. The age of the 'engineers of human souls', as communist prophets were called, is also over. From now on only common books, be they interesting or not, will be published.<sup>15</sup>

In Poland, it is certain, the age of the prophets has gone. In its stead has come the age of profits.

## NOTES

- 1 A.Walicki, 'From Stalinism to Post-Communist Pluralism: The Case of Poland', *New Left Review*, no.185, January /February 1991, p.103.
- 2 M.Hirszowicz, 'The Polish intelligentsia in a crisis-ridden society', in: S.Gomulka & A.Polonsky (eds.), *Polish Paradoxes*, Routledge, London 1990, pp.139-40. M.Hirszowicz, *The Bureaucratic Leviathan: A Study in the Sociology of Communism*, Robertson, Oxford, 1980, pp.171-199.
- 3 L.Wałęsa, 'Playboy Interview: A Candid Conversation with the Charismatic Leader of Poland's Solidarity', *Playboy*, February 1982, New York, pp.61-162. With exception of his own ghosted literary efforts Wałęsa, regarded writers rather casually. See: Lech Bądkowski, 'A Man of What Substance?' (1981), in J.Kurski, *Lech Wałęsa: Democrat or Dictator*, Westview Press, Colorado, 1993, p.142.
- 4 'Forms of Ownership', *Facts about Poland*, Ref.VII.2-1, Interpress, Warsaw, 1980; E.Gajewska, 'Press Market: Workers of RSW Disband!', *The Warsaw Voice: Polish and Central European Review*, no.45, (107), Warsaw, 11 November 1990, p.4; C.Bobiński, 'Catching Up With Information', *Financial Times Survey: Poland*, 3 May 1991, p.xv; On the fate of RSW workers: K.T.Toeplitz, 'Ludzie zbędnie', *Polityka*, no.16, 21 April 1990, p.16.
- 5 *Nowe Książki*, no.53, Orbis Books, London, 1993, p.1.
- 6 D.Ślepwońska, 'Red Devils and Bogeys', *The Warsaw Voice: Polish and Central European Review*, 31 May 1992, pp.10-11; P.B.Kaufman, 'Remaindering Marx: Polish Publishing Goes to Market', *The Nation*, 20 May 1991, pp.660-4; A.Dubrawska, 'Book Publishing in Poland', *The Warsaw Voice: Polish and Central European Review*, 12 May 1991, p.9; R.Gott, 'A Headache After the Party', *The Guardian*, 26 February 1991, p.21; A.Waldoch, 'Freedom to Print?', *The Warsaw Voice: Polish and Central European Review*, 17 November 1991, p.9; L.Zukowski, 'Crime and Publishing', *The Warsaw Voice: Polish and Central European Review*, 24 November, 1991, p.9; A.Nagorski, 'Read All About it', *Newsweek*, 10 June 1991, pp.10-15. The changes of 1989-90 ended the fixed price monopoly on imported and exported books, with the result that, even after the sudden and massive inflation of the zloty, booksellers slashed prices by around 50%: *Nowe Książki*, no.49/50, Orbis Books, London, 1990. For the fate of publishing in the rest of the disintegrating East-bloc see also: M.Kane, 'Germany', *PEN International*, vol.XLI, no.1, 1991, pp.22-6; F.Zöld, 'A New Phase in Hungarian Publishing', *Hungarian Book Review*, nos.2-3, 1989, pp.6-8; G.Murányi, 'The Discreet Charm of the Free Press', *New Hungarian Quarterly*, no.122, vol.32, Summer 1991, pp.68-85.
- 7 I attempted to arrange a meeting with the state Czytelnik publishing house in the spring of 1991 to discuss the change to democratic government and the free market and their effects on the Polish writers and the publishing industry. It was very difficult to get anyone at this or any other publishing house to talk. This, over the telephone, was the only comment I managed to elicit from them.
- 8 C.Miłosz, Interview, 26 May 1990, Kraków. Also: C.Miłosz, *The Witness of Poetry*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1983, p.105.
- 9 C.Miłosz, 'The State of Europe', *Granta*, no.30, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1990, p.164.

- 10 A.Zagajewski in interview: K.Jackson, 'Beliefs for the Millennium', *Leonardo*, no.1, 3 April 1992, p.34.
- 11 S.Balbus, 'The Great Silence of the Black Hole: Literature in the Face of Communism', in: A.Michajłow & W.Paławski eds., *Literary Galicia: From Post-War to Post-Modern*, Oficyna Literacka, Kraków, 1991, pp.47.
- 12 Piotr Rypsen interviewed 5 June 1991, Warsaw.
- 13 'Stanisław Lem' interviewed February 1991 in: A Michajłow & W.Paławski (eds.), *Literary Galicia From Post-War to Post-Modern, A Local Guide to the Global Imagination*, pp.110-111. G.Konrad put it more bluntly: 'Books have become more expensive, whilst readers are poorer. Trash overflows and there is less time and money for literature, so many writers have joined the ranks of the unemployed. Gone is the sense of security that a book a year will support us, that we can keep on writing up to our dotage. The place of literature in life has shrunk.' G.Konrad, 'Something Has Gone', *PEN International*, vol.XLI, no.2, 1991, pp.79-81.
- 14 S.Majman, 'Departure of King Lear', *The Warsaw Voice: The Polish and Central European Review*, 15 March 1992, p.8. On Fik see: J.Adamczewski, *Kraków od A do Z*, SiT, Kraków, 1986, p.42. On Mackiewicz see: C.Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1983, pp.524-525 & 536.
- 15 S.Kisielewski, 'On Books and Money', *The Warsaw Voice: Polish and Central European Review*, Warsaw, 10 March 1991, p.7.

## APPENDIX ONE: ABBREVIATIONS

- AK** **Armia Krajowa** (Home Army, 1941-45). A loose term for a wide range of non-communist partisan groups who fought right through the war and some of whom continued to resist the new regime until the early 1950s. With more than 300,000 members who owed allegiance to the Polish government in exile, rather than the incoming 'socialist' government, it was a major threat to the new order. Although it was dissolved by its own high command in January 1945, and its members amnestied, many of those who admitted membership were arrested by the NKVD or SB. The spirit of the AK informed much of the dissident activity of the 1970s and the AK anchor symbol PW (Poland Fights) was seen as ubiquitous graffiti throughout martial law.
- AL** **Armia Ludowa** (People's Army). Moscow-backed resistance army which grew from 1942 and was established in April 1943, but which did not become effective until 1944. Membership around 50,000
- ATK** **Akademia Teologii Katolickiej**, Academy of Catholic Theology. A state operated and funded establishment founded in 1954 as a continuation of the theological faculties at Warsaw University and the Jagiellonian University. ATK is closely linked with KUL. The lecturers (who specialise in theology, Christian philosophy, canon law and a full range of other courses including Christian Archaeology, sacred art, patrology, mission study, apologetics, dogmatic theology), many of whom also teach at KUL, have state appointments and a canonical mission from the Polish primate, who is also Grand Chancellor of ATK. In 1978-79 there were 1,655 students. ATK publishes a wide range of theological and religious titles.
- DiP** **Doświadczenie i Przyszłość** (Experience and Future Discussion Group). Set up in November 1978 by the obscure but official Collegium of the Society for the Free Diffusion of Knowledge. Officially the group met once before the Collegium withdrew support. The group continued to meet unofficially and published two embarrassing reports on social and political problems through the Instytut Literacki in Paris.
- GUKPPiW** **Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowiska** (The Main Office for the Control of Press, Publication and Performance). The Censor. Head office used to be on Ulica Mysia, Warsaw.
- KIK** **Kluby Inteligencji Katolickiej**, (Clubs of the Catholic Intelligentsia). Formed in 1956-57, after the Catholic Znak group supported Gomułka's bid for power, from a merger of three Catholic discussion groups, the Dialogue Club, Start and Ognisko. They were later joined by the 'Fronde' and Secession schismatics from Pax. In March 1957 they held a conference and decided to affiliate to the All Polish Club of Progressive Catholic Intelligentsia and to alter their name and structure. KIK was officially recognised but independent, designed to act as a forum for religious, philosophical and political problems. The clubs operate in Warsaw, Kraków, Toruń, Poznań, Wrocław, Łódź and Lublin. Tadeusz Mazowiecki was a leading figure in the organisation. The clubs are associated with the journals *Tygodnik Powszechny*, *Znak*, and *Więź*. The total membership of KIK is about 4,000, with the bulk of the membership in Warsaw and Kraków. All the public pronouncements of KIK were subject to censorship. Before *Solidarność* had its own offices it often used facilities loaned by KIK.
- KKK** **Klub Krzywego Koła**, Club of the Crooked Circle. Came together early in 1956, meeting in private apartments in Warsaw. Dominated by academics with a large and influential following among Warsaw intellectuals. In 1956 the Club approached worker activists of the emerging workers council movement and met with representatives from the Żerań car factory. Together with the editors of *Po Prostu* they tried to form a United October Front of workers and intellectuals to get representation in the Sejm. One member was accused of collaboration with *Kultura* (Paris). The club was tolerated by Gomułka but closed down in 1959. Many of its most prominent members later joined KOR.
- KMPiK** **Klub Międzynarodowy Prasy i Książki** (Club of International Press and Books).
- KOR** **Komitet Obrony Robotników** (Committee for the Defence of Workers, also later

known as KSS-KOR after linking up with the Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej, Committee for Social Self Defence). Founded in September 1976 after the events of June 1976 in Radom and the Ursus tractor factory. In spite of severe police harassment it took upon itself the task of defending workers in court and gathering and publishing material on human rights abuses in Poland. Disbanded itself in 1981 saying its work was completed with the birth of *Solidarność*.

**KPN** **Konfederacja Polska Niepodległej** (Confederation for an Independent Poland). Founded symbolically on 1 September 1979 as a breakaway group from ROPCiO. A fundamentalist, nationalist party, their aim was to achieve a Third Polish Republic, freed from the domination of the USSR and the dictatorship of the PZPR. They looked back to military traditions, to the figure of Piłsudski and the inter-war Church to sustain their ambitions. They were led by Leszek Moczulski, who was imprisoned by the authorities in September 1980 after questioning the patriotism of the leadership and their right to rule. This arrest transformed a fringe extremist politician into a political prisoner and elevated the party considerably in the public eye. With a peak membership of perhaps 20,000 (1992), KPN was the largest of the post-war clandestine right-wing opposition groups and their membership provided the bulk of political prisoners in the PRL. They described themselves as 'True Poles', unlike the 'Jewish' membership of KOR, and they pursued an intolerant racist and anti-Semitic line reminiscent of the pre-war *Endecja*. They portrayed KOR as an unofficial offshoot of the PZPR and as KOR's influence waned in the summer of 1981, so the clear and simplistic policies of KPN gained ground among the membership of *Solidarność*, turning Polish patriots into Polish nationalists. In the 1991 general election KPN came fifth out of eighteen parties, polling 11 per cent of the total votes cast (less than four per cent of the electorate) to win 46 seats in the Sejm; after recruiting two more deputies KPN became the third largest parliamentary group.

**KPP** **Komunistyczna Partia Polski** (Communist Party of Poland, 1925-38). Founded KPRP after an amalgamation of the PPS-Lewica (Left) and the SDKPiL in 1918; changed name to KPP in 1925-6. Throughout the 1930s the KPP pursued an ultra-leftist line that Władysław Gomułka was later to label 'abstract revolutionism'. Although nominally they agreed to take part in an anti-fascist front, in practice they thought collaboration with the bourgeois parties would weaken their resolve and they worked for a Polish revolution along classical Bolshevik lines: they attempted to undermine the parliamentary parties, prepared for armed insurrection to seize power, supported militant occupation strikes, terrorist attacks on the authorities, and supported the ethnic minorities (including the large, vociferous and increasingly Nazified German minority). By 1938 over 7,000 KPP members were in Polish prisons. The KPP were increasingly seen to be traitors to Poland, lost their Sejm deputies and failed to make common cause with the Polish Socialist Party against the Sanacja regime. Also as the party was unable to operate effectively in Poland, Stalin lost patience with them. The KPP became increasingly associated in Soviet eyes with independent 'leftist Piłsudski-ist Trotskyite fascist' opinion. While KPP had supported Piłsudski's May 1926 coup in order to prevent a right-wing take-over, in the years that followed they found themselves reviled by Moscow for what became known as the 'May error'. Piłsudski started out as a socialist, but claiming that there could be no socialism without independence (which was rather the opposite of Polish socialist orthodoxy which assumed that there could be no independence without socialism) he blended his own variety of vaguely socialist paternalist nationalism in a country that was massively Catholic and agricultural, by ruling through a combination of military, Church, landowners and the rising power of industrial capital. Although the KPP recanted its 'error', Stalin nevertheless considered their independent streak a threat: he suspected that their cosmopolitanism was a complicated form of Polish patriotism. In 1938 Stalin invited the KPP leadership, who were being hounded mercilessly by the Polish authorities, to take refuge in Moscow. There, on the pretext that they had fallen prey to the influence of Trotsky, that the Party was riddled with police informers and that they were preparing to cooperate with the Nazis against the Soviet Union, Stalin had the leaders arrested and executed. Eventually

- all but one member of the Polish central committee had been liquidated, along with all the Polish members of the Soviet Executive Committee and the Polish members of the Control Commission of the Comintern. Perhaps 5,000 KPP members who were on Soviet territory at that time (practically the entire active membership) were executed. The party was disbanded, its name struck from the Comintern's register.
- KPRP** **Komunistyczna Partia Robotnicza Polska** (Communist Workers' Party of Poland, 1919-25). Founded 1918 when PPS-Lewica (Left) and the SDKPiL amalgamated. In 1925-6 it changed its name to KPP to signify a break with its past refusal to cooperate with the new Polish state authorities and its decision to enter elections to the Sejm.
- KUL** **Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski**, Catholic University of Lublin. The main centre of Catholicism, re-established after the war with four faculties - theology, canon law, moral teaching, law and the social sciences; the first matriculations were in December 1918. In 1937-38 it had 1,400 students. KUL was the first university to resume operations after the war and its inauguration ceremony was attended by Nikolai Bulganin. In the post-war period KUL expanded considerably and by 1979 had 2,140 students. During the sixty years of its existence over 30,000 students have graduated at KUL. More than two thirds of the episcopate graduated from KUL or undertook post-graduate study there. Karol Wojtyła was a professor there for several years and KUL as well as publishing a wide range of books also published his *Z zagadnień kultury chrześcijańskiej* (Selected Problems of Christian Culture). In spite of his 'socialist' past, KUL awarded Czesław Miłosz an honorary doctorate in 1980.
- MTK** **Międzynarodowe Targ Książki** (International Book Fair). The festival held in May, started in Poznań in 1956, but moved to Warsaw in 1958. It generally had about 300 stands representing 700 publishers from as many as 20 countries. This, with the Annual Warsaw Poetry Festival, was one of the main showcases for domestic publishing.
- ND** **Narodowa Demokracja** (National Democratic Movement - generally known as Endecja). Founded in 1897 by Roman Dmowski. Anti-Semitic, anti-German anti-nobility and anti-class politics: the party had a reputation for attempting to resolve economic problems and restore Poland to existence by appealing to national chauvinism. The party never achieved power, but formed a popular Parliamentary opposition to Piłsudski's military regime for most of the inter-war period. Its ethos was to inform much of the thinking of KPN and found echos in party's ZBoWiD and Grunwald Patriotic Union.
- NSZZ** **Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy 'Solidarność'** (Independent Self-Governing Trades Union 'Solidarity'). Founded in August 1980, suppressed by the military 1981, continued underground through the 1980s, revived at the end of 1989, split into myriad diverse factions prior to democratic election of 1991.
- PAN** **Polska Akademia Nauk** (Polish Academy of Sciences). Suggested at the First Congress of Polish Science in Warsaw in 1951, and founded in 1953. In 1963 its 'coordination' was taken over by the Committee for Science and Technology and it developed a huge network of operations in the social sciences, biology, mathematics, physical sciences, technology, agriculture, forestry and medicine with branches in Kraków, Poznań, Wrocław, Łódź, Gdańsk and Katowice, and research centres in France and Italy, though the centre of its activities remained in Warsaw. By 1986 it had over a hundred departments and committees, and over 75 research institutes connected to universities and various Ministries, 180 semi-independent learned societies attached to it, and 200 civic associations devoted to disseminating PAN's research work and results. PAN was still expanding in 1989.
- PAX** **Stowarzyszenie Pax** (Pax Association). Pro-regime Catholic discussion group and publishing house set up in 1945 by the anti-Semitic ex-ONR-Falangist Bolesław Piasecki as part of a deal to save his life. A pseudo-religious organisation designed to undermine Catholic authority, it became a massively diverse industrial enterprise. It published great many journals including *Dziś i Jutro* and *Słowo Powszechne*. It suffered damaging factions and desertion in 1956.
- PEWEX** **Przedsiębiorstwo Eksportu Wewnętrznego** (Enterprise for Internal Export). A dollars only chain store set up to sell imported goods and domestic produce for hard

currency.

**PPR**

**Polska Partia Robotnicza** (Polish Workers' Party, 1942-48). The Soviets allowed a revival of the KPP, renamed the PPR (*Polska Partia Robotnicza*, Polish Workers' Party), in January 1942, but with a Soviet-imposed leadership, at least two of whom had not been members of the party before the war. The Polish 'socialists' who formed the new Party were almost all survivors of the 1938 purge released from the camps. They were by no means the pick of the bunch: they were not the best known, most active, most imaginative, best experienced, most knowledgeable, most original or the most sensitive. They were merely those who had survived. Located mainly on Russian-controlled territory, with membership hovering around 4,000, the PPR was subject to enormous internal rivalry. Established in Poland when the founders, Nowotko, Finder and Molojec parachuted into Poland from the Soviet Union in 1942. Later that year Nowotko was assassinated by his deputy (who was later condemned to death by a Party court), and Finder was arrested by the Gestapo under mysterious circumstances and killed. Gomułka, who had survived the 1938 purge because he was under arrest by the Polish authorities for agitation among Chemical workers, emerged to become First Secretary by default. By July 1944 PPR had 20,000 members, by the end of 1945 over 300,000 members. Merged in 1948 with the PPS to form PZPR.

**PPS**

**Polska Partia Socjalistyczna** (Polish Socialist Party, 1892-1948). The party grew from the wreckage of Proletariat - Poland's first socialist party, founded by Ludwik Waryński in 1882. The Russian police arrested Waryński in 1884: he served 16 years hard labour, four other leaders were hanged and dozens more were exiled or imprisoned. Stanisław Mendelson and Bolesław Limanowski drew the remainder together and in 1892 founded the PPS. With around 12,500 members it was the largest of the left-wing political parties in Poland. In 1906 it split into two groups: the PPS-Lewica (Left) merged with the SDKPiL, but the PPS-Rewolucja (revolution), led by Piłsudski, moved towards the recovery of national independence and, in contrast to the SDKPiL, under his expert clandestine and conspiratorial leadership became the most important worker's party. In the almost free Sejm elections of 1928 the PPS won 64 of the 444 possible seats. During the Second World War most of the membership of the PPS went underground or formed part of the coalition government in London. Socialists who stayed in Poland fared little better than the communist party members who went to the USSR: they were hounded by the Nazis and untold thousands ended their lives like Norbert Barlicki (1880-1941), murdered in Oświęcim (Auschwitz). In 1944-45 the party was split: PPS-WRN (*Wolność Równość Niepodległość*, Freedom Equality Independence) remained underground while the 'communist' faction appropriated the name of PPS in a revamped version of the party in Poland. The two wings of the party were never re-united. In 1948 PPS was forcibly merged with PPR to form PZPR while the older 'independent leftist' activists of PPS were hunted down by the UB. The left-humanist influence of the old PPS is a steady undercurrent in the post-war left-liberal politics of the revisionists.

**PRL**

**Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa** (Polish People's Republic). Founded 1944-45 with the entry of the Red Army into Poland, its constitution dates from 22 July 1952. Abandoned on 29 December 1989 in favour of The Republic of Poland.

**PSL**

**Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe** (Polish Peasant Party. 'Official' dates: 1913-31, 1945-49). Founded 1895, it had a chequered career and formed a large part of the London government-in-exile 1939-45. After the PPR-PPS rigged the elections of 1947 this anti-socialist party was hounded by the 'socialists' until its leader Stanisław Mikołajczyk, fearing for his life, fled Poland. In 1948-49 PSL was purged and then forcibly merged with the puppet SL (Peasant Party) to form ZSL.

**PZPR**

**Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza** (Polish United Workers Party, the Party). Formed from the forced amalgamation of PPS and PPR in December 1948. The Party lacked legitimacy in the eyes of most Poles and was seen to have been installed by Soviet bayonets. After 45 years of increasingly poor leadership the Party was suspended by the Martial Law authorities in 1981 and although it was later restored, never recovered any real authority. The Party collapsed and nearly disappeared in the 'almost democratic'



elections of 1989, only to reform itself and split into two social democratic parties in 1989-90. The successor parties of the Democratic Left Alliance made a remarkable recovery and came second out of eighteen major groupings with 11.7 per cent of the vote in the 1991 general election. At the 1993 elections, together with their old allies from the 'socialist' years, the Peasants' Party, they were the largest bloc in the Sejm and formed the coalition government.

- ROPCiO** **Ruch Obrony Praw Człowieka i Obywatela** (Movement Defending Human and Civil Rights). Founded in March 1975, a democratic, non-Party, non-nationalist organisation devoted to the idea that the various declarations and treaties on Human Rights signed by Poland should be adhered to under Polish law.
- RSW-PKR** **Robotnicza Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza - 'Prasa, Książka, Ruch'**, (Workers' Cooperative Publishing House - 'Press, Books, Action').
- SD** **Stronnictwo Demokratyczne** (Democratic Party). Founded in April 1939, a small left-wing radical party appealing mainly to the *inteligencja*. It was penetrated by the PPR by 1944 and its name was taken over. It was merged to become a tame cohort of the PZPR after 1947.
- SDKPiL** **Socjal Demokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy** (Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, 1900-1918). Grew out of the SDKP (1893-1900), which had been founded by Róża Luksemburg and Julian Marchlewski, but which, having rejected nationalism, soon found itself in difficulties. In 1898-1900 the SDKP merged with the SDL (Social Democracy of Lithuania), founded by Feliks Dzierzhinsky ('Bloody Feliks', founder of the Cheka) and its fortunes revived. In general the party had a greater role in Russian than in Polish political life. It amalgamated with the PPS-Lewica to become KPRP in 1918.
- SL** **Stronnictwo Ludowe** (Peasant Party founded in 1931). Membership often moved between the pro-socialist SL and the much more independent and anti-socialist PSL. After 1944 the 'socialists' took over the PSL and the two parties were merged in 1949. The party survived the collapse of 'socialism' in 1989. In 1993 they beat the Solidarity Labour party, the right wing parties backed by the Church and the revisionist Democratic Union party to form a coalition government with the ex-'socialists' of the reformed SLD (Democratic Left Alliance).
- SPP** **Stowarzyszenie Pisarzy Polskich** (Association of Polish Writers). Founded 1989-90 as a free and democratic alternative to the 'official' ZLP.
- TKN** **Towarzystwo Kursów Naukowych** (Society for Academic Courses, 'The Flying University'). Founded in January 1978 by over 60 scholars, teachers and writers. The aim was to challenge the Party monopoly of education and outlets for scholarship and original thought. Based on an academic society created in 1885 in Russian occupied Poland by Marxist revolutionaries attempting to counteract the Tsarist regime's powers by helping young Poles preserve Polish national identity through self education at uncensored lectures.
- ZBoWiD** **Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację** (Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy), sometimes referred to as the 'Partisans'. An amalgamation of all veteran and PoW associations founded in 1949 under the guidance of General Mieczysław Moczar, who later became Interior Minister and who had close connections with Soviet Security service. Consisted mainly of war-time partisans and managed to include not only the more violent of the AL membership, but a substantial number of the disaffected, neglected and otherwise persecuted AK partisans: noted for its ability to organise pro-regime priests and violent demonstrations, and for its ugly anti-semitism. This organisation was particularly active after the outbreak of the Six Day War in June 1976, and in 1968 attacked Polish Jews - or rather attacked Poles of Jewish origin since most Polish Jews had perished in the holocaust or had emigrated. Moczar's power, and the appeal of his simple policies should not be underestimated. Though his manipulations did not manage to oust Gomułka, in 1970 there was a real chance that he would become First Secretary of the PZPR. However, Moscow, and most of the PZPR, backed Gierek. Once installed, one of Gierek's first acts was to purge Moczar and rein in ZBoWiD.
- ZLP** **Związek Literatów Polskich** (Polish Writers Union) 1945. Originally known as

- ZZLP, Zawodowy Związek Literatów Polskich, Trades Union of Polish Writers, the pre-war Writers' Union. In 1945 it was reformed as ZLP. It was suspended and disbanded by the Martial Law authorities who saw it as a focus of intellectual discontent and opposition. The martial law authorities set up another ZLP, using the same offices and finances, but the bulk of the writing fraternity simply failed to join. In 1988-89 SPP Stowarzyszenie Pisarzy Polskich, Association of Polish Writers, was founded as a free and democratic alternative to the 'official' ZLP.
- ZMS** **Związek Młodzieży Socjalistycznej**, Union of Socialist Youth, sometimes also known as ZMP, Związek Młodzieży Polski, Union of Polish Youth which was founded in 1887, taken over by the state in 1948 and reformed as ZMS in 1956; often referred to simply as Zet.
- Znak** (Sign) A group or 'circle' of Catholic deputies to the Sejm, closely associated with the journals *Znak*, *Więź* and *Tygodnik Powszechny*, who first took their seats in 1957. *Znak* ceased to sponsor the so-called *Znak* deputies to the Sejm after 1976. *Znak* was effectively replaced by a tame organisation of 'Catholic' deputies from ODiSS, the Centre for Documentation and Social Research. A nominally Catholic organisation set up by Janusz Zabłocki in 1967 within the framework of *Znak*, but which soon re-positioned itself in a closer alignment to the Party, seeking to reconcile *Znak* and Pax. It published the monthly journal *Christian in the World*. ODiSS opposed the *Znak* decision to challenge the proposed constitutional reforms of 1975, and replaced *Znak* as the Catholic organisation in the Sejm after 1976. Against *Znak* and Church wishes ODiSS kept the name of 'Znak'.
- ZSL** **Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe** (United Peasant Party). Formed late in 1949 from an amalgamation of what remained of the PSL after Mikołajczyk's departure, and the SL. A tame pseudo-peasant party.
- ZZLP** **Zawodowy Związek Literatów Polskich** (Trades Union of Polish Writers) Pre-war Writers' Union. See ZLP.
- WRON** **Wojskowa Rada Ocalenia Narodowego** (Military Council for National Salvation) Consisted of 21 military officers led by General Jaruzelski. Came into being on the night of 13 December 1981 to 'assist the constitutional authorities in imposing respect for law and public order' with the declaration of Martial Law. The Council governed Poland until Martial Law was suspended in January 1983. Disbanded 21 July 1983.

## APPENDIX TWO: SELECTED BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

(NB: These notes do not include authors covered in the main chapters.)

**AJDUKIEWICZ, Kazimierz**, 1890-1963. Philosopher, logician, founder of the Polish school of logical positivism.

**ANDERMAN, Janusz**, b.1949. Studied Slavonic Literatures at Kraków University, worked on *Student*, became an editor for PULS in 1978. State publishers accepted *Deaf telephone games* (1977), and *Playing for time* (1979), but refused *Poland Under a Black Light* (London, 1983) and *The Edge of the World*, (London, 1988). He has also produced screenplays and translations. In 1980 Anderman was responsible for liaising between ZLP and Solidarność; after Martial Law was declared he organised the Committee for Aid to Internees until he was arrested and imprisoned for six months at the Białołęka Camp. He is generally considered one of the most important of the writers of the Martial Law period.

**BAUMAN, Zygmunt**. Former party member, leading revisionist, writer and professor of sociology; lost his post at Warsaw University after March 1968 and left Poland soon afterwards; later a supporter of TKN from his home in Leeds.

**BACZKO, Bronisław**. Former Party member and leading revisionist, dismissed from university history teaching post after March 1968, later a supporter of TKN from his home in Geneva.

**BALICKI, Stanisław Witold**, b.1909. Director of PIW.

**BARAŃCZAK, Stanisław**, b.1946. Born in Poznań. A member of PZPR for several years, lived in Poznań and recognised as one of the most talented of the younger generation of Polish poets and teachers. Active in the student movement of 1968, lectured at Poznań University from 1969. By 1976 he had translated Dylan Thomas into Polish, had made significant translations from Russian and German, published three volumes of verse and was the winner of the A.Bursa Literary Prize, the All Poland Festival of Poetry Prize in Łódź, and the Koscielski Foundation Prize. His poetry is distrustful of linguistic clichés and official jargon and is often said to have paved the way for the New Wave of post 1968 poetry. In 1976 he became a founder member of KOR and later became editor of several journals including *Zapis* and *Krytyka*. He fell from grace with the authorities, suffered police harassment, was dismissed from his post in 1977 and was arrested on charges of attempting to bribe an official. Poetry published by NOWa. Lecturer for TKN, for which he was arrested in February 1978. Was offered the post of Professor of Slavonic Studies at Harvard University, but because of his support for KOR was refused a passport by the Polish authorities; he was able to take up the post only after 1981. Now he edits the *Polish Review* and frequently contributes to *Salmagundi* and *The Partisan Review*.

**BARTOSZEWSKI, Władysław**, b.1922. Born in Warsaw, studied at Warsaw university, was imprisoned in Oświęcim and released in 1941. Member of the AK and Żegota a wartime organisation to aid Jews, founder member of the Polish Jewish Aid Council, awarded a medal for his work by the Israeli government. Catholic Historian and journalist specialising in the holocaust, Polish resistance movement and Polish-Jewish relations, gained his PhD in Cambridge; professor of history at the Catholic University of Lublin. Arrested on trumped up charges in 1946, released 1954, a leading member of the Catholic Znak group and TKN lecturer, general secretary of Polish PEN, he protested at the 1976 changes to the constitution and was dismissed from his post in 1977. Arrested and imprisoned during martial law for his work with Solidarność. Author of 18 books and over 400 articles.

**BAK, Wojciech**, 1907-61. A religious poet from western Poland who made his reputation with the publication of his book *The Burden of Heaven* in 1934. The post-war regime did not look upon him with favour and after a while he was admitted to a mental hospital. He continued to write verse until 1958, and also applied several times for a passport to leave Poland.

**BENKA, Urszula**, b.1955, Wrocław. Studied Polish and psychology at Wrocław university. Made her debut in 1975 in *Odra*. Published two volumes of poetry before leaving Poland in the early 1980s to live in New York.

**BERMAN, Jakub**, 1901-84. Born of a modestly successful Jewish middle class family, he graduated in Law from Warsaw university, taught the history of social systems and gained a PhD on the structure of Polish cities. Joined KZMP in 1924, joined KPP in 1928 and was appointed to the section of KZMP dealing with *inteligencja*, where he became director of editors. In 1939 he went to the USSR, where he edited the Byelorussian 'communist' paper, *Standard of Freedom*, worked for Radio Kosciuszko and lectured and directed the Polish section of the Comintern. In December 1943 he was appointed to the Central Bureau of the PPR and was made responsible for communications in Poland. In 1944 he became a member of the Central Committee. He was later undersecretary of state for Foreign Affairs and undersecretary of state on the Council of Ministers. He helped found Cominform, was one of the architects of the PPS-PPR 'unification congress' that founded PZPR, edited the new party's programme declaration documents, was one of the main movers in the decision to collectivise agriculture and in the condemnation of the Yugoslav Party. A member of the Politburo, Central Committee and the Central Committee Organisation Bureau, a member of the Praesidium, Deputy Premier, Member of Parliament: responsible for ideology, education, culture, propaganda and foreign affairs. Fell from grace and lost all his posts with Bierut's death in 1956, was judged responsible for many of the errors of the immediate post-war years. Became senior editor for *Książka i Wiedza*, where he remained until his retirement in 1969.

**BIAŁOSZEWSKI, Miron**, 1922-83. Born in Warsaw, graduated 1942 from an underground high school, began the study of Polish literature at an underground university. As a result of the Warsaw Uprising he was deported to Germany. He spent the rest of the war working as a bricklayer's apprentice near Oppeln. He returned to Warsaw in 1945, but failed to complete his studies working instead at a number of odd jobs, as a letter sorter in a post office and as a reporter. He also wrote verse for children. He published a few poems, but was unable to conform to *socrealizm*, suffered the humiliation of consistent rejection for his idiosyncratic and often un-poetic, jarring verses and wrote for his desk drawer. Białoszewski, living in destitution in a shabby Warsaw apartment, was something of a hermit, and refused to take any part in public life. This did not change very much even after 1955 when a handful of his poems appeared *Życie Literackie*. He helped start a small theatre in a friend's apartment and began to stage his plays. After 1956 he published several volumes of poetry, but surprised his readership in 1970 by publishing his *Memoir of the Warsaw Uprising*. His last book, *Oho* (1985) was a grim realistic portrayal of martial law. In general his writing was wide ranging, lyrical, minutely observed, linguistically detailed, hilarious, unorthodox and highly individual.

**BIEŃKOWSKI, Władysław**, 1906-91. From a middle class background, had a university education. Professional journalist. A member of KZMP, member of central editorial office of KPP. A distinguished member of the AL. Joined PPR in 1942 and became a member of KRN departmental director and a member of the Central Committee 1945-48 where he was part of the secretariat. In spite of his close association with Gomułka, an exceedingly liberal personality. He was a key revisionist and played an important part in normalising relations between the Church and state in 1956. Director of the National Library 1949-56, Minister of Culture 1956-59, Minister of Education 1956-60. Dismissed from his post by Gomułka in 1960 after he lent his support to the growing democratic opposition movement and popularised his criticisms of the Party in *The Motors and Brakes of Socialism* - first published in Paris. He broke with Party discipline by not restricting his criticisms of the Party to the Party membership and by publishing abroad his comments on the failings of the regime; for this he was expelled from the PZPR in 1968; an influential revisionist and Flying University lecturer, his later works were published by NOWa. In 1977 he, with Kijowski and Kisielewski, audited the books of KOR in order to defend it against government propaganda.

**BIERUT, Bolesław**, 1893-1956. Educated by the Party in the USSR. Before the war a professional Comintern agent of the NKVD in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Austria; spent seven years in jail, in prison at the time of the destruction of the KPP. President of KRN, joined the Central Committee in 1948, 1947-52 Polish President, General Secretary of PPR Central Committee 1948, Chairman of PZPR Central Committee 1948-54, Prime Minister 1952-54, First Secretary of PZPR 1954-56. Died in Moscow during the Twentieth Congress.

**BŁOŃSKI, Jan**, b.1930. Literary critic and translator, currently professor of Polish Literary History at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. Accused of a nihilistic attitude towards the achievements of socialist Poland in 1955, he identified the failures of Polish literary culture in the slavish imitation in

pseudo-revolutionary verse of Broniewski. In the early 1950s he had the nerve to point out that literary débuts were declining in number, that the poetry that was published was dull and poor, and that the amount of verse being published was also declining. His comments paved the way for the publication of new poets in 1956 including Drozdowski, Białoszewski, Herbert, Harasymowicz.

**BOCHENSKI, Jacek**, b.1926. Born in Lwów, made his début as a short story writer in 1949. A contributor to, and then editor of, *Przegląd Kulturalny*. He wrote about his travels in Africa, but his best known work is a literary essay on Julius Caesar.

**BOREJA, Jerzy**, 1905-52. Professional journalist. Active in left-wing organisations in France and Spain 1922-27, joined KPP in 1929, spent the war in the USSR. When the Soviets entered Lwów they appointed him director of the Ossolineum publishing house and editor in chief of *Wolna Polska* - the organ of the Union of Polish Patriots. In 1944 he was appointed head of the Czytelnik publishing house and made responsible for non-Party publications. In 1948 he was general secretary of the International Congress of Intellectuals in Wrocław, and later edited *Rzeczpospolita*. He was responsible for reorganising the Polish press & publishing industry after 1945. He is generally regarded as the man the Party entrusted with the task of restructuring Polish intellectual life.

**BOROWSKI, Tadeusz**, 1922-51. Born in the Ukrainian town of Zhitomir, USSR. His parents were imprisoned in Stalin's camps in 1926 - his father, a book-keeper, was transported to Karelia to dig the White Sea Canal as a result of belonging to a Polish military organisation during World War I. Borowski lived with his aunt for several years and the family was reunited in Poland in 1932, when Soviet 'communists' were exchanged for Poles by the Red Cross. After being educated by Franciscan monks he graduated from an underground high school in 1940, worked as a night watchman and played the black-market, publishing his poetry in underground magazines. He had an active role in the wartime resistance but was arrested by mistake in 1943 and sent to Auschwitz and then later evacuated to Dachau. He was liberated by the Americans on 1 May 1945. He lived in Munich and Murnau for a while and returned to Poland in 1947. His first book *Farewell to Maria* (1948) depicted the cruel, amoral street life of occupied Warsaw and the camps. The stories that seemed to finish him were those of his second volume *World of Stone* (1948). This was a collection steeped in despair and horror, depicting without flinching the choice to be made if a prisoner were to survive the camps. They displayed a brutal nihilism, and bitter realism. Criticism of this collection led to a mental crisis and soon, in an effort to find a new and satisfying direction and a reason for persevering with his life he became a frantically active journalist and cultural worker and a convinced socrealist, and for his efforts he received a state literary prize. If the strain of trying to record the unspeakable had begun the process of driving him mad, the strain of trying to live the 'new life' of socialist culture finished the job. He embraced 'communism' as a rigid moral form in an effort to give shape to an immoral and pointless world. In 1949 he went back to Germany as a press officer attached to the Polish military mission. The effort of sustaining his activism in the face of the Cold War, the arrest of one of his best friends by the Polish Security Service, his own involvement in an espionage mission of some sort was too much and he gassed himself in July 1951. He was the model for Beta in Miłosz's *The Captive Mind*.

**BORUŃ, Katarzyna**, b.1956, Warsaw. Studied at the Łódź Film Seminar and at the Iowa University International writing programme. Made her début in *Nowy Wyrz* in 1974. She has published five volumes of verse and works as an editor on *Powściągliwość i Praca* (Temperance and Work).

**BRANDYS, Kazimierz**, b.1916, Łódź. From a middle-class Jewish family. A leftist from his youth, he protested openly against anti-Jewish prejudice within Warsaw University: graduated from the Law faculty just before the war and spent the war in Warsaw. After 1945 he went to Kraków where he was co-editor of the weekly *Odrodzenie* and fiction editor for *Kuźnica*. He returned to Warsaw in 1950. His first novel, *Wooden Horse* (1946) is a detailed portrait of the moral collapse of the Polish regime in the face of the Nazi occupation: it was written during the occupation. *The Invincible City* (1946) - a fictionalised account of the Warsaw uprising - was awarded the Warsaw City literary prize. His next work was *Between the Wars* (1948-51) - a four volume account of vacillating and deluded Polish *inteligencja* life between the wars. This quartet established his concern for psychology and for political context, but also showed his readiness to explore the complexities of the human condition - even under the supposed certainties of a Marxist regime. In 1954 he wrote *Citizens*, a piece regarded now a fully fledged socrealism bordering on manic parody of the form, possible only in a climate of what Miłosz

calls 'collective psychosis'. Although he was a *socrealist* it is sometimes claimed that Brandys was the least socrealist of the published writers of the Stalinist period. Certainly the 'positive' heroes of the Party in his novels, the only ones to see the threat of Nazism and link this with the history and development of capitalism, are boring personalities. Brandys was a member of the Party from 1946, but was not uncritical. With the thaw Brandys' sense of ideology and his concern to follow the Party, or even argue with it shifted considerably. While it is safe to regard him as a supporter of the Party up to the mid 1950s, after 1956 he threw in his lot with the revisionist oppositionists. His famous short story 'Defending Granada', *Twórczość*, January 1956, concerned a theatre groups efforts to stage a play by Mayakowski and the Party's successful efforts to get them to produce a worthless piece of *socrealizm* instead - idealistic young 'socialists' defeated by Party dogmatism, soulless conformity and routine. The story more or less announced that he would henceforth be opposing the regime he had helped create. The last of his books to be (just) acceptable to the Stalinists was *Mother of Kings* (1957), a moving tale in which a mother loses all her loyal 'socialist' sons to the mistakes of the Party or to the fascists. After the thaw Brandys moved on to less political and more existential works, presumably in an attempt to avoid politico-cultural pressures. In 1957-60 he produced four volumes of *Letters to Mrs Z - Memoirs of the Present Time* and several volumes of stories which won him high praise. Other well known works are *A way of Living* (1963), and *Joker* (1966). All these volumes dealt with the problems of the new Poland, showing great care, sensitivity and intelligence. He has twice been awarded the State Literary Prize, and in 1964 was awarded the Italian Premio Elba prize. For a while he was on the executive board of ZLP. In 1966 he resigned from the Party. In 1977 he published *A Question of Reality* in Paris - it was impossible to publish such a book in Poland. It is a first-person introspective narrative of someone trying very hard to come to terms with modern Poland and to accept the authoritarianism of the Polish 'socialists' - it includes some material about his pre-war and war-time experiences and is thought by some to be his best work, though others claim this for his *Warsaw Diaries 1978-87*. In 1978 he co-founded the dissident journal *Zapis*. He was blacklisted by the authorities after 1976, but was abroad when Martial Law was declared. Since then he has lived in New York and Paris. A selection from the journals was published in Paris by the Instytut Literacki in 1982. A further selection covering his years in Paris and New York, 1982-4, was published in Paris and New York in 1984. Possession of Brandys' diaries during Martial Law was said to be sufficient to earn a ten year prison sentence.

**BRODA, Marzena**, b.1966, Kraków. Made her début in 1985 as one of the barbarian poets around *brulion*.

**BROMBERG, Adam**, b.1912. Editor and director of PWN publishing house 1953-68. Expelled from the Party in 1968, arrested and accused of leading an international criminal conspiracy to subvert the Polish state. After two years of 'investigation' he was 'emigrated'. Runs a publishing house in Sweden.

**BRONIEWSKA, Julia**, 1904-81. From a middle class background, she was first wife of the poet Władysław Broniewski. She spent the war in the USSR working for the Union of Polish Patriots. After the war she was appointed secretary of ZLP, presumably to watch over the political activities of the membership.

**BRONIEWSKI, Władysław**, 1897-1962. Although presented as a proletarian poet by the Party he was in fact born of an *inteligencja* family in Płock. He fought in Piłsudski's legions in 1915, and as an officer in the Russo-Polish war of 1919-20, when he was decorated for bravery. He made his literary début in 1925. A socialist slowly turned 'communist', he was critical of inter-war Poland. In 1939 he wrote the famous patriotic poem 'Bagnet na bróń' (Fix bayonets). Arrested with Aleksander Wat in Lwów and imprisoned by the NKVD in 1940, he was released to join Anders' army in 1941 and journeyed through Persia, Iraq and Palestine. In spite of appalling treatment by the Soviets he remained a 'communist'. He returned to Poland in 1945 and, although he had written anti-Stalinist poetry in prison, became the PZPR's favourite poet. A slavish socrealist and propagandist, his poetry was an outstanding example of the tedious revolutionary pseudo-poetic style favoured by the Party. Traditional romantic verse shot through with socrealizm, verse veering between sentimental lyricism and revolutionary rhetoric, much of his output was tedious, pedantic and downright damaging to truth - poetic or otherwise. In 1950, when even those who had embraced *socrealizm* were becoming dissatisfied and sensed that Stalin might not live forever, Broniewski, whose ideological fervour had been waning, wrote his hymn of praise 'Słowo o Stalinie' (A word about Stalin) and was proclaimed a 'national poet'. In spite of this he does not seem to have ever been a member of the Party. His best poetry followed the

death of his daughter - poetry written in spite of himself and far better than his revolutionary self could ever achieve. After 1956 his revolutionary poetry was increasingly out of place: his anti-Stalinist poetry was published in Paris after his death.

**BRUS, Włodzimierz**, b.1921. Professor at Warsaw University, former Party member and leading revisionist, a distinguished economist with an international reputation, supporter of market socialism, dismissed from university post after March 1968 for supporting student protests, left Poland in 1972 and became a tutor at Wolfson College Oxford. A founder signatory of KOR and supporter of TKN.

**BRYLL, Ernest**, b.1935. Allusive, and highly intellectual poet with an interest in Greek, medieval and Renaissance history. His refusal to write about emotions is often seen as a response to the aridity of public life and bureaucratic rhetoric after 1945. A very popular poet in the 1960s, Miłosz suspended judgement when he first compiled his *Postwar Polish Poetry*, but by the 1983 edition he had decided that Bryll was an obscure, wilful poet who, Miłosz hinted, shunned his moral responsibilities. He was a supporter of the 'socialist' establishment and only became a critic after the imposition of martial law. In 1986 he had a volume of poems published in Paris.

**BRYSTIGIER, Julia**, (née Preiss), 1902-73. Member of the Zionist scout movement in Lwów before the war, joined the KPP in 1930. After the Soviet invasion in 1939 she became active in the Union of Polish Patriots and also in International Workers' Relief, first in Lwów and then in Samarkand. Joined the Central Committee in 1944, and between 1944-56 was departmental director in the Ministry of Public Security in charge of cultural affairs, charged with infiltrating youth organisations and the Church. She was also editor of *Czerwony Sztandar*. After 1956 she began writing novels under her maiden name.

**BUREK, Tomasz**, b.1938. Critic, essayist, contributor to *Twórczość*, teacher for TKN in the 1970s.

**BURSA, Andrzej**, 1932-57. Born in Kraków. Began a course in journalism at the Jagiellonian university, but found the political aspect of his studies, and his lack of funds, too oppressive and boring, so he switched to Slavonic studies. Worked as a reporter on a local Kraków newspaper. Various reports as having died of heart disease (Czerniawski) or committed suicide (Wieniawska). His slender output consisted of poems written after 1954, which appeared posthumously in 1958 and in a second collection in 1969.

**CHACIŃSKI, Stanisław**, b.1936. Lives in Wrocław. Published three volumes of verse. Published prose mainly in *Odra*.

**CYWIŃSKI, Bohdan**, b.1939. A Kraków Catholic historian and literary critic associated with *Znak*, editor in chief of *Znak*. Author of *The History of the Catholic Church in Independent Poland*. A founder member of KOR and a TKN lecturer. He had a profound influence on KOR circles in that he showed the importance of both the secular and Catholic nationalist traditions for modern Polish intellectuals and illustrated his idea of the harmony of ethical consciousness that could exist between Polish Catholic and secular social aspirations in his book *Genealogies of the Indomitable* (1974).

**CZAYKOWSKI, Bogdan**, b.1932. He was seven when he and his parents were deported to northern Russia. After wandering through Persia and travelling in India and Africa his family settled in London. He studied at Dublin university and obtained an MA in Slavonic Studies at London University. Perfectly bilingual he chose to write in Polish and edited a small poetry magazine for several years. Since 1956 he maintains close links with his contemporaries in Poland. Miłosz says that he is probably the most outspoken of his generation, attacking the position of the émigré with a view to using it as material for his writing, and thus transforming a weakness into a strength. He emigrated to Canada and now teaches Polish literature at Columbia university.

**CZEKANOWICZ, Anna**, b.1952, Sopot. Studied Polish at Gdańsk university. Made her début in 1976 as part of the *Współność* group. She has published five volumes of verse, the latest in 1991.

**CZERNIAWSKI, Adam**, b.1934. Born in Warsaw, but left Poland in 1941. He has lived in Turkey, Palestine, Lebanon and West Germany, arriving in England in 1947, where he has lived ever since. He studied English literature at London, Sussex and Oxford universities and now teaches at Thames Polytechnic. Essayist, poet, critic and translator, he leads a group of émigré poets named after its journal *Kontynenty*. Has translated a wide range of Polish poetry into English, including Staff, Norwid,

Herbert, Barańczak and Szymborska. His own poems were published in Kraków in 1978, and in Paris in 1981. His *Selected Poems 1953-78* appeared in English in 1982.

**DANISZEWSKI, Tadeusz**, 1904-69. Educated by the party. Joined KPRP in 1921 and spent 8 years in jail. Spent World War Two in the USSR, joined Central Committee in 1948. Chief of Kościusko radio station, chief editor of Polish publications in USSR, head of publications for the Union of Patriotic Poles in the USSR, head of Central Committee Historical Section, director of the Polish Institute for Party History.

**DAROWSKI, Jan**, b.1926. Born in Silesia and trained as a printer in Katowice. In 1944 he was conscripted into the Wehrmacht, but was captured by the Americans during the battle for Normandy and joined the Polish Armoured Division. After the war he settled in London and worked as a printer. A poet, translator and critic.

**DĄBROWSKA, Maria**, 1889-1965. Born in Russów, near Kalisz, she studied natural sciences, sociology and economics in Warsaw, Switzerland, Belgium, France and England. She also studied the peasant movement and the cooperative movement in Finland and returned to Poland to marry a noted social worker. For a ten years she worked in the Polish cooperative movement and then began to write fiction. She made her début with a collection of startlingly realistic stories in 1925. Her major work is *Noce i dnie* (Nights and Day), published in the years 1932-34, a four volume epic of life in Kalisz from the 1860s up to 1914, portraying the transformation of the gentry into the urban intelligentsia. Frequently nominated for the Nobel prize, she was considered the foremost realist in Polish fiction, a link between contemporary literature and the nineteenth century positivists. She was the conscience of the secular intellectual left after 1956, and the recipient of many awards from the 'socialist' government.

**DŁUSKI, Oskar**, b.1892. From a middle class background, with a university education he held a lecturing post. Joined the KPP in 1918 and became a Central Committee member in 1923, spent five years in prison. After the war became senior editor *Głos Ludu*.

**DOBACZYŃSKI, Jan**. An early member of Pax and a stalwart hack, Blit calls him a pre-war fascist. Associated with the Pax journal *Dziś i Jutro*: in 1953 he was one of the Pax editorial board that took over *Tygodnik Powszechny*. Writing in *Kierunki* in 1977 he argued that the Catholic Church should beware of offering support to dissidents since the bulk were Jews and Trotskyites acting on behalf of the West - and that these people were to blame for Poland's post-war misfortunes.

**DRZYCIŃSKI, Andrzej**. Co-author of Wałęsa's biography, *A Way of Hope*. Interned during Martial Law, later became Wałęsa's press spokesman.

**DYMNÝ, Wiesław**, b.1936. Born in Nowogrodek, north eastern Poland. Studied at the Kraków Academy of Fine Arts, wrote mainly for student theatres and reviews. Made his début as a short story writer in 1963.

**EDELMAN, Marek**. Doctor of Medicine specialising in heart problems. Last living leader of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. Lived in Łódź where he became a Solidarność activist, then a member of the Citizen's Committees and later a member of the Democratic Union Party.

**ĘKIER, Jakub**, b.1961, Warsaw. Studied Polish and German at Warsaw university. Worked as an editor at the Czytelnik publishing house 1987-91, then edited *Tygodnik Literacki* for a while. Made his début as one of the barbarians around *brulion* in 1990. He also translates German poetry.

**ELEKTOROWICZ, Leszek**. Poet, critic, translator of English and American poetry. For many years was an editor on the Kraków weekly, *Życie Literackie*.

**FICOWSKI, Jerzy**, b.1924. Served in the Polish army at the start of World War II. Made his début in 1948, and has since published numerous articles, essays, books and poetry, but was frequently banned during the Stalinist era and afterwards. An ethnographer and expert on Spanish poetry, Gypsy and Jewish culture in Poland, tireless biographer of Bruno Schulz. His poetry is a bare, stubborn exercise in remembering. Member of KOR, editor of *Zapis* in the late 1970s, from 1977 his poetry only appeared abroad or in underground editions.



**GALCZYŃSKI, Konstanty Hldefons**, 1905-53. Born of a lower middle class family in Warsaw, he and his family moved to Russia during World War One. They returned after 1918 and Gałczyński entered Warsaw university to study Classics and English, but did not complete his studies. His sympathies with the anti-Semitic right wing were well known and like Andrzejewski he was a frequent contributor to the right wing anti-Semitic journal *Prosto z Mostu*. He was captured by the Germans in the invasion of 1939 while serving as an ordinary soldier, and only liberated from a POW camp by the Americans at the end of the war. After spending time in Paris, Brussels and Rome in 1946 he returned to Poland amid loud and official (in spite of his past) acclaim. He was no avant gardist, but regarded politics as a handy prop in a private life that resembled a circus; was often censured for his failure to write verse *socrealizm*, swung from left to right, was happy to satirise capitalists and 'socialists' alike. He adopted the pose of the man in the street faced with irreconcilable demands of a highly politicised existence: he faked cooperation, wrote popular lyrics and nonsense rhymes and played the part of jester. He was perhaps the most peculiar of the apologists for the Party, and only briefly found favour with his 'Poem on a Traitor', about Miłosz's defection to the west. Miłosz has described him as a 'buffoon...a weak man, a drunkard, a vagabond...trying to survive and to bring people something of beauty.' (*The History of Polish Literature*, p.411) Significantly his work does not figure in either version of Miłosz's famous anthology of Post-war Polish Poetry. In the early 1950s, fearful of the Stalinists who had labelled him a 'petty bourgeois in socialist clothing' he stopped writing poetry and switched to translation. After 1956 his work found a popular audience.

**GIĘDROJĆ, Jerzy**, b.1906. Fought as an officer in the Carpathian Brigade at Tobruk and in Italy. Started the Instytut Literacki in Rome, but soon moved to Paris. His ambitions were literary, but his motivation was primarily political. The journal *Kultura*, published by the institute, was a focus for émigré and exiled Polish writers and also for dissident writers in Poland. It probably reached the height of its influence in the late 1960s, but was still through the 1970s.

**GOMBROWICZ, Witold**, 1904-69. Born in Małoszyce, died in Vence, France. Studied law, philosophy and economics. Made his début with a volume of short stories in 1937. He was on a trip to Argentina when World War II broke out. He did not return to Europe until 1963. His writing is experimental, lacking in conventional plot, illogical, distorted. He saw Poland as a place where the harsh contours of western European politics, art and social order began to blur and dissolve into the 'chaos' of the east. He attacked Polish infantilism and snobbery, its reliance on the mentality of the manor and the old nobility as examples of the degeneration of forms. His method was that of constant provocation, relentlessly satirising the very notion of 'Polishness'. A frequent contributor to *Kultura* (Paris) he was denounced by Catholic conservatives and championed by radical intellectuals. His work is still a sensitive issue in Poland.

**GOETEL, Ferdynand**, 1890-1960. Served in the Austrian army, was interned by the Russians as a socialist and an Austrian in 1914 and sent to Tashkent; after the revolution he was forced by the Bolsheviks to join the Red Army, but eventually escaped and returned to Poland via Persia and India. In the 1920s and 1930s his novels won international acclaim. In 1926 he was an apologist for the military rule of Piłsudski, but by 1938 had become an open supporter of fascism and Nazism. In 1945 he left Poland. Although his novels were important in helping to introduce modernism into Polish literature, his political opinions are still difficult for most Poles to accept. He died in England.

**GOŁUBIEW, Antoni**, b.1907. Catholic conservative rightist novelist whose most important work is probably the huge historical novel *Bolesław Chrobry* (1947-55) which deals with the conversion of Poland to Christianity.

**GROCHOWIAK, Stanisław**, 1934-76. Born in Leszno, western Poland. Poet, playwright, novelist and editor. Made his début in 1956. Reacting against the puritanism of the 1949-56 years he made a cult of ugliness, which he called 'turpism', even in dealing with love. He mocked the difference between the language and the reality of 'socialism' with a frank satirical intent, but from a clear metaphysical anguish and need for a new moral order. In 1962 he won the Ministry of Arts and Culture Literary prize.

**GROTOWSKI, Jerzy**, b.1933. Born in Rzeszów. A Theatre director and theoretician. Graduated from the Moscow State Institute of Theatre Arts. His productions and writings had a major impact on the evolving experimental theatres of the west in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Founded the Theatre of the

13 Rows in Opole, later the Teatr Laboratorium in Wrocław. Author of *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968). He left Poland in 1981 and now runs his own research centre at Pontedere in Italy.

**GRYNBERG, Henryk.** Born in the hamlet of Radoszyn near Mińsk, a graduate of the Warsaw School of Journalism. Published one volume of short stories in 1965 for which he was awarded the Koscielski Foundation Prize in 1966.

**HALECKI, Oskar.** Historian living abroad, professor at Fordham University New York, implacably opposed to 'socialism'. His works were published in the West, but not in Poland.

**GRZYB, Ryszard,** b.1956, Sosnowiec. Studied at the Wrocław High School of Fine Arts. Under Martial Law he was a founder member of the anarcho-expressionist group of artists and performers known as 'Gruppa', in whose journal, *Oj, dobrze już* (oh, all right then), his poetry appears from time to time.

**HARASYMOWICZ, Jerzy,** b.1933. Born in Puławy, central Poland, son of a Ukrainian major in the Polish legions. A professional forester. Lives in Kraków, took part in the early ZLP discussions about *socrealizm*, but tired of it. Writes poetry about remote highlands, villages and forests: he refuses to assign a socially useful meaning to his poetry and is indifferent to literary and political argument, but founded the Muszyna literary group. First volume of poetry published in 1956, followed by seven more volumes by 1965. Indifferent to religion, though very aware that his ancestors were of the Orthodox church, he feels that anyone who is not a Catholic in post-'socialist' Poland is very much a second class citizen.

**HARTWIG, Julia,** b.1921. One of Poland's most outstanding female poets and biographers, also a distinguished translator of French and American literature. Made her début in 1956.

**HERBERT, Zbigniew,** b.1924. Born in Lwów. Graduated from an underground high school. He took part in AK activities and studied Polish literature at an underground university. After the Soviet annexation of Lwów he moved to Kraków and graduated in Economics in 1947. He later studied Law and Philosophy at Toruń and Warsaw Universities. He resigned from ZLP in 1947 and worked for a while at the editorial offices of the Catholic *Tygodnik Powszechny*. Although he had begun publishing poems *Tygodnik Powszechny* this ceased when the magazine was taken over by Pax as a result of its refusal to publish a sycophantic obituary to Stalin in 1953. Herbert was doubtless penalised for his association with the journal and took up a series of underpaid jobs - in a bank, a peat cooperative and a small industrial enterprise - that kept him out of the public eye, away from the literary scene and relatively safe, until after Stalin's death and the start of the thaw. In 1954 he published a handful of poems; in 1955 a few more poems appeared in *Życie Literackie*, and in 1956 his first volume *String of Light* appeared to great critical acclaim. This was swiftly followed by *Hermes, Dog and Star*, (1957), *Study of the Object*, (1961). However, sensing that the thaw would not last, Herbert began a series of long study tours abroad in 1958, and was abroad again in the years 1965-71. In 1962 he published *Barbarian in the Garden* a collection of art/history essays. In 1973 he left Poland for West Berlin. The publication of *Mr Cogito*, (1974) was one of the literary high spots of the mid-1970s. In 1976 he signed a letter of protest at the Party's planned constitutional amendments. On his return to Poland in the spring of 1981 he joined the board of the underground journal *Zapis*, and expressed himself a supporter of Solidarność. His poems about Martial Law *Report from a Besieged City* (1983-84) were first published underground in Poland (but all copies were confiscated) and later in Paris. The politicality of Herbert's poems cannot be denied, but in general he has maintained a low and non-confrontational profile in his opposition. Among several other prizes, he has been awarded the Polish Institute of Sciences and Arts in America Prize, and the Austrian Nicholas Lenau Prize in 1965.

**HERLING, Gustaw,** (Herling-Grudziński) b.1919. Born in Kielce, he studied Polish literature at Warsaw University. He took part in the September 1939 campaign. In 1940, after setting up one of the first underground resistance cells, he was arrested crossing the Soviet border and sentenced to five years in an NKVD labour camp. He was released in 1942 and served in the Second Polish Corps in Italy where he fought at Monte Cassino and was decorated with the *Virtuti Militari*. After the war he married the daughter of the philosopher Benedetto Croce and lived in Rome, London and Naples. Since 1948 a regular contributor of many essays, fewer short stories and his *Daybooks written at night* to *Kultura* (Paris). His most widely read work is his account of the Soviet prisons, *Another World* (1953). A

founder member of the Paris based Instytut Literacki he is regarded as a prominent liberal essayist and writer of fiction.

**HERTZ, Paweł**, b.1918. Made his début in the late 1930s; a poet, novelist essayist and editor. An early champion of broad realism in literature, a member of the *Kuźnica* group and a supporter of the Party until the thaw.

**HIRSZOWICZ, Maria**. Held a post in sociology at Łódź. As associate professor of sociology at Warsaw university, sacked in March 1968. She is currently Reader in sociology at Reading University.

**HLASKO, Marek**, 1934-69. Something of a youth cult rebel-hero. He started publishing in 1954 and became editor of *Po Prostu*. His collection of stories *First Step in the Clouds* (1956) won him the state Polish Publishers' Literary Prize. In 1958 he received a visa to visit the west for two months. While he was away *Next Stop - Paradise and Cemetery* - the only book in which he displays any concern for ideology or *socrealizm* - were refused publication in Poland. Hlasko gave both books to the émigré magazine *Kultura* (Paris), opening himself to legal charges of slandering the state. His short story 'The Graveyard' was due to appear in *Trybuna Ludu* but the paper panicked at its own boldness and dropped the idea: a film based *The Eighth Day of the Week* was banned. The authorities refused to extend his visa, but Hlasko decided to stay abroad anyway: he travelled in Italy, Switzerland and West Germany. In 1959, though he was not Jewish, he emigrated to Israel where he worked as a truck driver and pimp. In 1966 he moved to the USA, where he worked illegally and wrote very little. In 1969 he moved to West Germany where he took an overdose of sleeping tablets and died. Steiner has said: 'The intriguing thing...is not the fact that he found 'socialist' Poland stifling and sought freedom in the west, but that he found the 'free world' almost equally intolerable.' (G.Steiner, *Language and Silence*, p.312.)

**HOFFMAN, Paweł**, 1903-78. Dealt with propaganda and the press in a wide range of official positions: in 1948 editor in chief of *Kuźnica*, and then editor of *Odrodzenie*, *Nowa Kultura*. Dismissed from all his literary posts after the events of 1968.

**HOLUJ, Tadeusz**, 1916-85. Born in Kraków, a graduate in law from the Jagiellonian university. Made his début in 1935 and published two volumes of verse before the war. Imprisoned in Oświęcim 1942-45. His novel about this experience, *End of Our World* won him the Ministry of Arts and Culture Literary Prize and the City of Kraków Prize in 1962. Well known as a 'socialist', but of a rather unorthodox kind. He believed that under a Marxist régime all artists had a very important role within the national tradition of creating and fostering social awareness and consciousness, in evaluating reality. In 1976 he was Kraków deputy to the Sejm. In May 1981, writing in the local Party newspaper *Gazeta Krakowska*, he bravely stood up to the Grunwald Patriotic Unions's anti-Semitic campaign, saying that such activities were not compatible with the party's ideology.

**HORODYŃSKI, Dominik**. A member of the pre-war nobility and an early member of Pax, primarily associated with the Pax journal *Dziś i Jutro*. In 1956 he left Pax as a 'secessionist' and joined the Social Action Christian Association before taking up a diplomatic post as Poland's ambassador to Rome. In 1974 he became editor in chief of the reformed and liberalised *Kultura* (Warsaw). In 1977 he characterised a Warsaw hunger strike in which several distinguished and respected public figures took part as 'political exhibitionism'. (Lipski, p.155) lists him as one of those who slandered KOR in *Trybuna Ludu* in 1976-77.

**IZLAKOWICZOWNA, Kazimiera**, 1892-1983. Born in Wilno, later lived in Vitebsk and Warsaw, then studied literature in St Petersburg, Kraków and Oxford. At the start of World War I she was in Russia and worked first as a nurse then as an editor in one of the St Petersburg publishing houses. She went to Warsaw at the end of the war and became a civil servant in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She published her first volume of poems in Kraków in 1912. In the years 1926-35 she was personal assistant to Marshal Piłsudski. At the outbreak of World War II she escaped to Romania and took asylum. She taught foreign languages and translated German and Hungarian poetry into Polish. She returned to Poland in 1947 and settled in Poznań. She published at least ten volumes of poetry, essays and memoirs.

**IWASZKIEWICZ, Jarosław**, 1894-1980. Born near Kalnik in the Ukraine, son of a white collar worker but descended from a landowning family. His cousin was Karol Szymanowski. He studied Law at Kiev university and music at the local conservatory. He moved to Warsaw in 1918 and made his début as a poet in 1919. The most controversial member of the inter-war Skamander group of poets, who

in general considered Life to be a *primaeval* force, larger, more irrational and wiser than any intellect could ever grasp: he was criticised by the younger generation because of his complete lack of interest in social and political affairs. Considered an exotic easterner by many, he was often said to be the Polish Oscar Wilde because of his poetic sense and personal style. He was a pre-war diplomat for Poland in Copenhagen, Brussels, Paris and in Persia. While he remained a pessimist, he confounded critics with his determined amorality and Dionysian qualities. He remained in Poland throughout the war and took part in the literary and cultural resistance to the Nazis, and his home was a meeting place for the resistance movement. After the war he became president of ZLP for several years and from 1956 was editor of *Twórczość*. He received numerous state awards for his prolific literary output, the most successful part of which will probably prove to be his short stories.

**JASIEŃNICA, Paweł**, 1909-70. Arrested during the war for his membership of the AK, sentenced to death but later released. A Catholic essayist and author of extremely popular histories of the Piast and Jagiellonian dynasties. He played an important role in the opposition movement of 1956 as Chairman of the influential independent Club of the Crooked Circle. He criticised the anti-Semitic campaign of 1968, and in return was attacked in the press and by Gomułka himself before being slanderously accused of murder. His works were later published by NOWa.

**JASTRUN, Mieczysław** (Mieczysław Agatstein), 1903-83. Born near Tarnopol. Of Jewish origin. Completed a doctorate in Polish literature at Kraków University, worked as a teacher and published his first volume of poems in 1929. He tried to keep out of literary arguments, but was opposed to the Skamander group of poets. He risked his life to stay in Warsaw throughout the war, teaching in underground schools and writing for the resistance press. He was reluctant to publish in the early years of the People's Republic and suffered horribly at the moral collapse (particularly among his fellow writers) during the Stalinist repression. His poem 'Man' is eloquent testimony to his feelings. He was divided over his 'metaphysical needs' for isolation, and his need for a commitment to a morally stable political world. He only began to publish again with the thaw of 1955-56. Much of his writing from this period is existentialist, an attempt to accept both good and evil, intelligence and stupidity - indeed his best contemplative poetry stems from the period after 1956. He also wrote a great deal about Mediterranean culture and history. Something of a recluse he was deeply interested in metaphysics and moral themes in his later years, managed to keep out of post-war literary and political squabbles and published with *Tygodnik Powszechny*. He left behind him a huge body of work which includes poetry, essays, fiction, and translations from Russian, German and French.

**JASTRUN, Tomasz**, b.1950. Son of Mieczysław Jastrun. Made his début in 1978 and published several collections of poetry underground during the martial law period and before the collapse of 'socialism'. In the late 1970s he worked with the underground publishing house NOWa and in August 1980 joined striking shipyard workers in Gdańsk. He edited the Mazowsze region *Solidarność Biuletyn Kulturalny* and in 1981 was an editor for the *Solidarność* press agency. With martial law he went underground, but was finally arrested and interned in November 1982. His poetry appeared in the underground *Tygodnik Solidarność* in 1982, and in two samizdat editions. An outspoken critic of the martial law regime and the regime that followed it, in the late 1980s he edited *Res publica* and in 1990 was appointed Cultural Attaché to Sweden.

**JEDLIŃSKI, Jerzy**. Professor of social and economic history at the PAN Institute of History, Warsaw.

**JELEŃSKI, Konstanty**, 1922-87 (or b.1920). Born in Warsaw. Literary critic, anthologist and translator. Educated in England (or in France and Italy). During the war served with the Polish Army in France and took part in the Normandy invasion. A staunch (and possibly the original) defender of Gombrowicz, he settled in Paris in 1952.

**JĘDRZYCHOWSKI, Stefan**, b.1910. From a middle class background, a university educated economist, joined the PPR in 1932, spent one year in prison, spent most of the war in the USSR, became a Central Committee member in 1944-48, was an NKVD theatre censor in Vilnius, member of the Union of Patriotic Poles, political officer in Berling's army. In 1944 head of the PKWN propaganda department and PKWN representative in Moscow. Deputy premier 1951-56, Minister of Foreign Affairs 1968-71, Minister of Finance 1971-74, Ambassador to Hungary 1975-78.

**JUREWICZ, Aleksander**, b.1952 in Lida now in the ex-USSR republic of Belarus. Repatriated to Poland in 1957. Since his début in 1974 he has published several volumes of verse and two novels.

**KABATC, Eugeniusz**, b.1930. Born in Wolkowysk. Graduated in economics from Warsaw university in 1952. In 1957 founder and editor of the Warsaw fortnightly journal *Współczesność* intended as a showcase for the younger generation of writers. Author of three novels and two collections of short fiction. In 1956 won the City of Warsaw Literary Prize and in 1959 the Łódź Publishing House Prize.

**KAMIENSKA, Anna**, 1920-86. Born in Krasnystaw in eastern Poland. She trained as a teacher and during the war attended the literature seminars organised by the underground at Warsaw university. After the war she read Classics at KUL and then in Łódź. In the late 1940s she was editor for a number of journals. She made her literary début in 1949. Poet, translator of Latin, French, Bulgarian, Russian and Serbo-croat, critic, essayist, anthologist, editor of the book review section of *Twórczość*. Originally interested in peasant and rural poetic themes, she underwent a spiritual metamorphosis in the early 1970s and emerged as an important religious poet and prominent Catholic. She produced fifteen volumes of poetry, three novels, several collections of essays and a number of works for children and adolescents.

**KARASEK, Krzysztof**, b.1937. One of the generation of 1968. First published his poetry in *Poezja* in 1966, later one of the founders of *Orientacje* for new writers, and then of *Nowy Wyrz* (New Message). Also a translator and essayist. He worked for Polish radio in the poetry section.

**KARSOW, Nina**. Expelled from Poland in 1968, settled in London where she translated the short stories of Szymon Szechter and started her own publishing house.

**KARPIŃSKI, Jakub**. A leader of the student demonstrations in 1968, imprisoned 1968-71. Later a lecturer in sociology at Warsaw University and LSE. Associated with the journal *Głos*, NOWa and KOR and with the Instytut Literacki in Paris, he helped smuggle *Kultura* into Poland over the Tatra mountains. He often used the pen-name Marek Tarniewski.

**KARPIŃSKI, Wojciech**, b.1943. Born in Warsaw. A literary critic. He left Poland and has lived in Paris since 1981.

**KARPOWICZ, Tymoteusz**, b.1921. Born in the tiny hamlet of Zielona, near Wilno. Studied Polish philology at Wrocław university, where he also received his doctorate and took up a lecturing post. Made his début in 1948, but remained little known or published before 1958, when his second volume of verse was published. Four more volumes of verse were to follow between 1958 and 1972. A journalist and editor of the weekly Wrocław magazine *Odra*, he was also president of the Wrocław branch of ZLP for several years. In 1958 he was awarded the Wrocław city literature prize. He somehow managed to lead a rich inner life while outwardly conforming to the social and political pressures of the Party. Mainly known as a nature poet with four collections on the years 1957-62 and four more by 1972, he is also known as an essayist and literary critic. Among Polish post-war poets his roots are clearly drawn from the modernist tradition, but his use of language borders on the edge of unacceptability in that he often reads like a badly translated foreign author. He ceased publishing in 1972, left Poland in 1973 and since 1978 has been teaching Polish literature at Illinois university.

**KARST, Roman**. Young revisionist who reported for Radio Free Europe's Polish language broadsheet *Na Antenie* in the late 1960s, and left Poland for Israel after being blacklisted as a result of the party's investigation into protest at the banning of *Dziady* in 1968.

**KASMAN, Leon**, 1905-84. Member of ZMP, joined KPP in 1922, and spent a total of ten years in jail. Spent the war in the USSR where he worked for the Comintern. Parachuted into Poland to help organise the PPR in 1943. After the war he worked on Party propaganda. Editor in chief of *Trybuna Ludu* and editor *Trybuna Wolności* 1951-54 and 1957-67. Member of the Central Committee 1948-68. Dismissed from his post during the anti-Semitic campaign of 1968.

**KIJOWSKI, Andrzej**, 1928-85. Born in Kraków, died in Warsaw. He studied humanities at Kraków University and began his career as a critic in 1950. In 1955 he became an editor on *Twórczość*, and in 1958 moved on to the staff of *Przegląd Kulturalny*. He was particularly outspoken and popular in the early 1960s, and is best known as a critic working mainly in the Catholic *Tygodnik Powszechny*. He also wrote short stories, novels, essays and the film scenarios *The Wedding* and *The Orchestra*.

*Conductor* for Andrzej Wajda. In the 1980s some of his prose was published by NOWa, and he was one of the Citizen's Commission appointed to audit KOR's finances. In August 1980 he was one of the commission of experts appointed by Szczecin Solidarność.

**KISIELEWSKI, Stefan**, 1911-1991. Born Warsaw. Writing under the pen name 'Kisiel', a multi-talented liberal who nevertheless supported the Catholic church in so far as it defended individual freedoms against 'socialism'. An intellectual star in the Polish artistic firmament since the 1930s. One of the few writers of his generation not associated with *Kuźnica*, he maintained his independent opinions throughout the whole of his career, and for doing so earned the respect of the entire literary and cultural community and the endless attention of the censor - the regulations state that as a matter of course all his work has to be seen and approved. In the years 1957-65 he served as a Znak Deputy to the Sejm and in the 1960s was an editor for *Tygodnik Powszechny*, which also published much of his work. He wrote the original preface to Michnik's *Church, Left, Dialogue*. A member of the ZLP Committee in 1980. His connections with the dissident community were never disguised or hidden, yet his stature as a satirist was so great that although the Party kept a close watch on his work, he was able to write very much what he wanted and to fend off interference until Martial Law was declared. He was one of the Citizen's Commission appointed to audit KOR's finances.

**KOEHLER, Krzysztof**, b.1963. Associated with the Kraków barbarians of *brulion*, later with *Na Głos*.

**KOLAKOWSKI, Leszek**, b.1927. Born in Radom. An influential philosopher. Probably the most outspoken of the Marxist oppositionists and revisionists. Taught the History of Philosophy at Warsaw University. Expelled from the PZPR in 1966, and lost his post in 1968 after being accused of inciting student riots. In 1969 took up a post at All Souls College, Oxford: for many he remains a potent symbol of opposition. Although best known for his *Main Currents of Marxism* (1976-78), he has also written extensively on religion and the spiritual aspects of modern politics and culture. He is also the author of numerous short stories, fables and plays.

**KORNHAUSER, Julian**, b.1946. Born in Gliwice, made his début in 1972, but is generally considered a leading figure in the 'New Wave' 1968 generation. Co-founder of the journal *Teraz*. A distinguished poet, translator, novelist and essayist, with over a dozen books to his name. His essays *The Unrepresented World* (1974, with Adam Zagajewski), with their call for a return to plain speaking and honesty in public life and letters caused considerable controversy when they advocated a return to reality and plain speaking in literature and politics. With the shock of martial law Zagajewski almost stopped writing. In the mid 1980s he appeared to make a come-back and published in *Zeszyty Literacki*, *Pogląd* and *Tygodnik Literacki*, but apart from his volume *Inny Porządek*, which was almost ignored by the critics, he has published little. He teaches Slavonic Studies at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków and is an expert on the history of Yugoslav literature.

**KORUSIEWICZ, Maria**, b.1956 in Katowice. Studied English at the university of Silesia, but graduated in graphics from the Częstochowa teacher training college, after which she designed book jackets. Made her début in *Życie Literackie* in 1973. In 1987 she won a Ministry of Art and Culture Prize for her volume *The Women's Section at Dawn*.

**KOSSAK, Zofia** (Kossak-Szczuka, Kossak-Szatkowska), 1890-1954. Spent her youth on an estate leased by her father in Skowrodko in Wołhynia. Best known as a traditional Catholic novelist of historical themes. Her first novel *Blaze* (1922), about political life in the closing years of World War I, has been described by Neal Ascherson as 'one of the most viciously anti-Semitic books I have ever read' (*Games with Shadows*, p.232), and this may be why she is not mentioned in Miłosz's *History of Polish Literature*. She was hunted by the Nazis for the anti-Nazi views she had expressed before the war, and lived in Warsaw illegally. With the help of Witold Bienkowski (later a member of the *Pax Dziś i Jutro* group) and the Catholic historian Władysław Bartoszewski she co-founded the *Żegota* group, organising aid to Polish Jews. In 1942 she published an underground pamphlet entitled *Protest* asking all Poles, even those who disliked Jews, to take a morally unambiguous stance in regard to the crime of genocide. She was in Oświęcim for a while and on getting out, in 1941, she made her way to England and returned to Poland only in 1957. She often shows her protagonists as victorious in defeat, and links her study of

religious problems with political and psychological insight, and with the narrative of Polish political history. Her best known novel is probably *Blessed Are the Meek*, a life of St Francis of Assisi.

**KOT, Stanisław.** Formerly professor of history at the Jagiellonian University Kraków and later Polish ambassador to the USSR 1941-2. Strongly anti-Soviet, his works were published in the West, but not in Poland.

**KOTT, Jan, b.1914.** Born in Warsaw, graduated in Law in 1936. Later studied in Paris. In 1939 as part of his military service took part in the defence of Warsaw. He spent part of the war in Soviet-occupied Lwów, and then from 1941 returned to Warsaw where he joined the AL and edited an underground journal. He was one of the founder editors of *Kuźnica*, where he showed hostility towards modernism and sponsored the notion of 'grand realism'. In 1947 he won a PhD in French Philology at Łódź University. 1949 Professor of Romance Literature at Warsaw University, 1951 Professor of Polish Literature at Wrocław University. 1952 Professor Extraordinary of Polish Literature to Warsaw University. He specialised in the period of the French and Polish Enlightenment, Literary historian, theatre critic, translator of Sartre, Shakespeare, Aragon, Éluard. In 1956 a leading revisionist figure who revised his earlier opinions on modernism. Dismissed from his post in 1967 for political reasons. Lived since in the USA, where he is now Professor Emeritus at State University, New York.

**KOWALSKA, Anka, b.1932.** Born in Sosnowiec in Upper Silesia. Studied literature at the Catholic University of Lublin. Poet and editor at Pax, she operated as a link between Pax dissidents and KOR. Although she resigned from Pax in March 1968 she retained her job as an editor with Pax. Editor of KOR's illegal *Communiqué* and *Information Bulletin*. Winner of the Pax Pietrzak literary prize, arrested by military authorities in 1981, her descriptions of life in the prison camps are vivid and committed political poetry of a high order.

**KOZIOŁ, Urszula, b.1931.** Born in Biłgoraj in south eastern Poland, (or in 1935 in Rakówka in central Poland), she studied Humanities (or Polish Literature) at Wrocław University and graduated in 1953. She was refused access to postgraduate work on political grounds and sent to teach in provincial secondary schools. After 1953 she was allowed to resume her studies in Wrocław. Her poems appeared in a variety of journals, but her first volume of poems appeared in 1957, her second in 1963. In the 1960s she returned to teaching and in 1971 she was appointed co-editor and poetry editor of *Odra*. Since then she has written a novel, plays for the student theatre and radio, and a collection of essays. She lives in Wrocław.

**KRALL, Hanna.** Of Jewish family, she is one of Poland's most distinguished journalists. She worked for many years on *Polityka* but resigned with the imposition of martial law and began to publish underground and abroad. In 1986 she was awarded the Solidarność Cultural Prize for her autobiography *The Subtenant*. Her book *Shielding the Flame* (1977), a series of interviews with Marek Edelman, helped raise the issue of anti-semitism for Solidarność in 1980-81.

**KRÓL, Marcin.** Historian and journalist specialising in Kraków conservative traditions, editor of the independent monthly review *Res publica*.

**KRUCZKOWSKI, Leon, 1900-62.** Born and lived in Kraków, studied science at Kraków university. Fought in the September 1939 campaign and spent five years in a prisoner-of-war camp in Germany. A dedicated Marxist who held several important positions after the war. In spite of being rather unpopular with other writers as Chairman of ZLP up to 1956, they almost all grudgingly admit that he could tell a good tale and did not strain history too much in telling stories from a Marxist perspective. He employed documentary methods for added authenticity and opened up post-war Polish literature to Marxist influence and a revaluation of its traditional 'virtues' - even in socrealist mode he was interested in individuals.

**KRYNICKI, Ryszard, b.1943.** Born in Sankt Valentin in Austria. Studied Polish literature at Poznań university. Poet and translator of German, Austrian and English literature. A (possibly the) leading figure of the 'New Wave' 1968 generation, dedicated to exposing the evils and ills of 'socialist' Poland, advocating moral and social commitment as a reaction against *socrealizm* and the *hermetizm* of the previous generation of poets. His first volume of poetry was published in 1969, and his second appeared in 1975 but he was blacklisted immediately afterwards for his protests at the proposed changes to the Polish constitution. His next three books were published in Paris, and much to the annoyance of the



authorities were reprinted by the clandestine press in Kraków. He is fascinated by language and the unmasking of the language in which the party presented itself on various levels: he called his work 'linguistic poetry'. Miłosz has dismissed his poetry as 'the result of an unflinching adherence to principles', but other critics have been more impressed and it is said that his sparse meditations border on prayer. He has recently turned away from extreme lyrical gnomism to develop a more aphoristic and concise form of poetry to encapsulate his metaphysical and moral concerns. An editor of *Zapis* in the late 1970s, he won the Koscielski award in 1975 and the Polish PEN award.

**KUBIAK, Zygmunt**, b.1929. Born and lives in Warsaw. Literary critic, editor and translator of classical and modern poetry.

**KUNCEWICZ, Maria**, b.1899. Born in Samara, Russia, educated at Kraków, and Nancy universities, and at the Warsaw Conservatory. She made her début in 1926 and is mainly known as a novelist, translator and anthologist. In 1937 she was awarded the City of Warsaw Literary Prize; in 1938 she was awarded the PAL Golden Laurel Prize. She spent the years 1940-45 in England, where she founded the International PEN Centre for Writers in Exile. She made her home in the USA, where she became President of PEN USA and visiting Professor of Polish Literature at Chicago University.

**KUROŃ, Jacek**, b.1933. A charismatic figure, a historian, teacher, and prominent democratic activist. Originally a 'socialist' pedagogue he was expelled from the party in 1953 and again in 1956. He lectured at Warsaw university in the early 1960s, was arrested and sentenced to three years in jail in 1965, accused of attempting to overthrow the regime by writing (with Karol Modzelewski) *Open Letter to the Party*. Prominent during the student disturbances of 1968 he was arrested again. Frequently detained by the authorities in the 1970s, he abandoned his Trotskyite stance and became an advocate of anti-politics, urging the reconstruction of civil society. He was a founder member of KOR in 1976 and also of the TKN, adviser to Solidarność 1980-81. Arrested during martial law and accused of plotting to overthrow the government by force, he spent two and a half years in jail. Negotiated for Solidarność at the round table talks in 1989. In 1990 he became a Sejm deputy and Minister of Labour in Mazowiecki's post-'socialist' government, and then vice-chairman of the Democratic Union Party.

**LANGE, Oskar**, 1904-65. From a middle class family, university educated in economics, member of the PPS. Lecturer in the USA 1934-45, Poland's first post-war Ambassador to the USA, supported the merger of the PPS and PPR. Professor of economics in Poland 1949-65.

**LARS, Krystyna**, b.1950 Elk. Studied Polish at Gdańsk university, became part of the Współność group, writing for *Literaria*, *Punkt* and *Autograf*; founded and edited *Tytuł*; she has published several volumes of verse and has her own radio programme devoted to literary and cultural matters.

**LEC, Stanisław Jerzy**, (de Tusch-Letz) 1909-64. Lec ran the gamut of twentieth century experience. Born Lwów of a rich Viennese-Galician Jewish family with an aristocratic title, educated in Lwów and Vienna, died Warsaw. Studied Polish literature and Law at Lwów university where he became a poet of extreme leftist opinions, made his début in 1929 in the radical left periodicals. Imprisoned by the Nazis in 1941 he escaped from a concentration camp in 1943 to join the AL in Warsaw where he edited underground publications. Became a major, decorated for bravery. 1945-50 member of the Polish Political Mission to Vienna. A poet, aphorist, and satirist whose work appeared in a wide range of journals. Broke with the Stalinist regime in 1950 and emigrated to Israel, but returned to Poland after only two years and settled in Warsaw. He began to write his famous aphorisms in 1956, but with such delicious jibes as, 'Illiterates must dictate', it is not surprising, that they were collected only well after the thaw was underway: *Unkempt Thoughts*, 1957. His aphorisms border on poetry, they cannot be divorced from the public mood in the years 1956-66, but were also extremely popular under Gierek.

**LECHOŃ, Jan** (Leszek Serafinowicz), 1899-1956. Born into a poor white collar family, studied literature at Warsaw university. A co-founder of the Skamander group, he made his début as a poet in 1920. His themes were a search for form and the life of the nation. A poet turned diplomat, he was Cultural Attaché in Paris from 1930 to 1940. After the defeat of France he fled to Brazil with Julian Tuwim and later moved to New York where he edited the journal *Polish Weekly* and directed the Polish language programmes on culture for Radio Free Europe. Although he began to write early in his life he was intensely self critical. He sought to maintain the standards of the precocious genius of his early years and thus produced only a modest output. After going to the France he made use of the mask of his



role as a diplomat to disguise the failure of his talent and his interest: indeed his early success seems to have paralysed his talent. In the USA he seems to have published very infrequently, and even then his patriotic laments were out of place in the USA. Though some of his later work, the most personal and the most desperate, regained and even surpassed the intensity of his early work, he suffered severe bouts of depression and committed suicide by jumping from a New York sky-scraper.

**LEJA, Magda**, b.1935. Born in Warsaw, graduated in Art History from Warsaw University. Her début as a short story writer came in 1958. She was awarded the Booksellers's Prize for the best prose début of the year. In 1959 she published a novel and two books for children. She has also written extensively about her travels in India and Africa.

**LIPSKA, Ewa**, b.1945 in Kraków. From 1963 she studied art history and painting at Kraków Academy of Fine Arts. Although she began writing at age fourteen she did not belong to any poetic group and published very little, until her first collection of poetry appeared in 1967. She believed that 'socialism' had deprived Poles of 'true biography', that her generation had no heroic struggles, no arms to take up. This changed after March 1968. Close to the *nowa fala* poets of the 1968 generation in her concern with the power of public language. In 1970 she became editor at the Wydawnictwo Literackie publishing house. In 1973 she received the Kościelski Fund Award (Geneva) for her poetry. In 1975-76 she lectured at Iowa University and in 1979 received the Robert Graves PEN Club award. In 1981 she was one of the founders of the Kraków journal *Pismo* and continues to edit it. Her 1985 collection *Przechowalnia ciemności* (Storeroom of Darkness) was published underground by the Warsaw Independent Poet's and Artist's publishing house. In 1990 she became Polish cultural attaché to Vienna.

**LIPSKI, Jan Józef**, 1926-91. Literary critic and historian. A member of PPS between the wars, a soldier in the AK at the age of 16, wounded and decorated with the Cross of Valour for his part in the Warsaw Uprising; profoundly influenced by Miłosz's poem 'Traktat moralny' (Moral Tract, 1948). 1956-62 chairman of the Club of the Crooked Circle, 1957 editor for *Po Prostu*. After the suppression of *Nowa Kultura*, which he edited, in 1957, he was refused a passport. 1961 a member of PAN Literary Institute, 1964 chief sponsor and signatory of the 'Letter of the 34', banned from publication on numerous occasions. Left the Party, along with many others in 1966. Although he remained a socialist after 1968 he maintained close links with the Catholic Church and was a founder of KOR. Helped found *Zapis*, the first of the important underground journals. In 1981 he organised a strike at the Ursus factory in protest at Martial Law, for which he was arrested and dismissed from his post at the Literary Institute. Released by the authorities because of ill health he was soon re-arrested. In 1989 - believing that the new Poland would need a democratic left - he became chairman of the newly revived PPS, and was elected to the Senat on the Solidarność ticket. Regarded by all as a moral authority, he is best known outside Poland for his history of KOR.

**LUBIEŃSKI, Konstanty**, 1910-77. Politician and AK soldier. Joined Pax, but left in 1956 to join Znak, then left Znak to join Zabłocki in ODiSS.

**MACIEREWICZ, Antoni**, b.1948. Historian, expert on Maya Indians. Anti-Vietnam campaigner in the 1960s and early 1970s, protested against Polish constitutional changes in 1976. Co-founder of KOR, adviser to Solidarność. In the late 1970s he moved steadily away from a revisionist position towards Catholic nationalist and populist ideas. In 1990 became president of the Christian National Union and in 1992 was appointed Minister of Internal Affairs.

**MACHEJ, Zbigniew**, b.1958 Cieszyn. Studied Polish philology at Kraków university before returning to Cieszyn to become a secondary school teacher. Made his début in *Tygodnik Powszechny*. His first volume of verse was published by Czytelnik in 1984.

**MACHEJEK, Władysław** b.1920. Born near Miechów. Spent virtually his whole working life in Kraków. First Secretary of the Basal Party Organisation within ZLP. A pre-war 'communist' and notorious post-war 'communist' hack. He served each and every post-war leadership with slavish zeal, praising the new leaders and criticising those who were deposed: firmly believed that literature was a means to fight for a great idea and was a great help to the Party. He was editor in chief of *Życie Literackie* from 1951 - a haven for the obscurantist and reactionary elements of Polish literary life, and occasionally, when he sensed the wind blowing from another direction, even dissenting political opinion - from Kraków. His magnum opus is *Czekam na ostatnie słowo* (1976) a four volume novel about the

life of ordinary Party members, blaming the intellectuals, homosexuals, liberals and jews for all Poland's post-war problems. The Polish censor judged it so outrageous in its presentation of the Party's image that it intervened to prevent favourable reviews appearing, and stopped the novel being serialised (except in *Życie Literackie*) or reprinted. (See censorship regulation number 90). Irena Grudzinska-Gross, writing in ANEKS in 1977 had no hesitation in labelling him a fascist. Lipski lists him as one of the writers who slandered KOR in 1976. In 1980-81 he praised Solidarność, but turned against it after Martial Law was declared.

**MAJ, Bronisław**, b.1953. Born in Łódź. Studied Polish literature at the Jagiellonian university and co-edited the influential magazine *Student* which was suspended during martial law. Worked as a scriptwriter and actor with the KTO theatre 1977-81. Published his first book of poems in 1980 and has since published four more volumes. After 1981 his poetry was published abroad or underground. His latest volume was published by Puls in 1986 in London. In 1983, during the martial law period, he became editor in chief of *NaGłos*, a unique and very popular oral literary journal published in Kraków which managed to circumvent the military authorities and censorship. Compared to Krynicki and Barańczak the political and satirical aspects of his work are much more muted, but his insistent line that poets 'always talk about freedom', his belief that Stalinist poets had lied to preserve the truth, that surviving 'socialism' as a clean human being was to try and reconcile the irreconcilable, along with his preoccupation with the language of 'socialism' all made him very popular with Solidarność: he was awarded the Solidarność literary prize in 1984 and Miłosz dubbed him 'a Polish poet' in the line of Mickiewicz. His reputation rests on three volumes of verse published in 1980, 1981 and 1986. Since martial law Maj has written very little and has devoted himself to editing *NaGłos*, which since 1989 appears in printed form, but which, as Maj says, is 'completely a-political'.

**MALEWSKA, Hanna**, 1911-83. Studied at KUL, worked as a teacher and was active in the resistance during the war. A Catholic conservative rightist, after the war she lived in Kraków where she edited *Tygodnik Powszechny* and directed and wrote for *Znak*. Her novels are on historical themes set in ancient Greece, the Holy Roman Empire, ancient Rome, medieval France.

**MAŁACHOWSKI, Aleksander**. Journalist, writer and publicist. Sejm Deputy for the left-oriented Solidarność Labour Party. Chairman of the Solidarność Review Committee.

**MARCINKIEWICZ, Paweł**, b.1969 Opole. Studied English at Wrocław university and became a school teacher. Since his début in 1988 he has published three volumes of poetry.

**MATWIN, Władysław**, b.1916. Educated by the Party. Spent the war in the USSR where he served in the Red Army and then in Berling's army, a member of the Union of Polish Patriots. 1945-46 secretary to the PKWN in the Moscow embassy, 1946-48 First Secretary of the PZPR in Wrocław, 1948-64 member of the Central Committee. Editor in chief of *Trybuna Ludu* 1954 and 1956-57. Fell out of favour when Gomułka was deposed.

**MAZOWIECKI, Tadeusz**. Lawyer, essayist and Catholic activist. Although an early member of Pax he was never a Party member. After his association with Pax was concluded in 1956, he founded and was for many years editor of *Więź*. He was also a Sejm Deputy for *Znak*, but blotted his reputation with the Party by signing a letter of protest to the government in 1968, asking them to restrain the brutality of the riot police. He was active in the democratic opposition to 'socialism' in the 1970s, was a member of the Solidarność Inter-Factory Strike Committee in 1980, and an adviser to Lech Wałęsa. In 1981 he was editor in chief of *Tygodnik Solidarność* and was interned during Martial Law. Afterwards he was a member of the Citizen's Committee and took part in the round table discussions of 1989 and went on to become the first post-'socialist' prime minister. Was a candidate for the Presidency but lost to Wałęsa. Currently he leads the Democratic Union Party, which with fourteen percent of the vote was the largest party in the 1992 Sejm.

**MICEWSKI, Andrzej**. Catholic biographer. Popularised the views of Endecja with his biography of Roman Dmowski. Barańczak accused his biography of Cardinal Wyszyński of sycophancy.

**MICHNIK, Adam**, b.1946. Born in Warsaw of 'Polish Jewish pre-war communist family'. Studied history at Warsaw University, expelled in 1968 and sentenced to 3 years in prison for taking part in student demonstrations, later he worked in the Rosa Luksemburg Enterprise in Warsaw (a factory) while writing *The Church, The Left - Dialogue* (Paris, 1977), a founder member of KOR and TKN, a leading

adviser to *Solidarność*, spent over six years in prison at various times: arrested during martial law accused of attempting to overthrow the Polish government by force. Arrested again in 1984, released under amnesty in 1986. Took part in the round table talks of 1989. Edited the underground journals *Krytyka* and *Zapis*, currently editor in chief of *Gazeta Wyborcza* and is a deputy to the Sejm.

**MIĘDZYRZECKI, Artur**, b.1922. Born in Warsaw, served with the Polish division of the British army as a junior artillery officer in Italy during World War Two; afterwards studied literature and history in France and Italy. Married to Julia Hartwig. Made his début as a poet in 1943 while serving in Jerusalem. After the war he studied journalism in Paris and returned to Poland in 1950. His first volume published in Poland appeared in 1951, but he did not become well known until the late 1960s. He is best known as a poet of 'despairing civic passions' and as translator of Racine, Molière, Rimbaud, Apollinaire, René Char and Yves Bonnefoy. He has also translated Osip Mandelstam, Emily Dickenson, e.e. cummings and William Carlos Williams. In 1965 he was elected Vice-President of the Executive Board of the Writers' Union as part of a compromise between the union and the Party. He lost this post in the upheavals of 1968. In 1976 he was banned for his protests at the Constitutional changes. He was a respected member of ZLP, frequently called upon to chair meetings, and was vice president of Polish PEN when it was dissolved by the military in 1983. He was involved in a large number of underground publishing ventures throughout the 1980s, and published collections of verse in 1983 and 1987. In 1971 he won the Polish PEN Club prize, in 1977 the French Prix Annuel de Traduction, and in 1981 the Polish Society of Authors ZAIKS literary award. Since 1989 he has resumed his post as vice-president of Polish PEN. Author of ten volumes of verse, four books of criticism and five collections of fiction, his constant theme is the struggle of culture with despotic politicians.

**MIŁOSZ, Czesław**, b.1911. Born in Sztejnica, Lithuania. A pupil at the local grammar school and then in 1929 went to study Law at Wilno King Stefan Batory university and co-founded the Żagary group of poets. Started to publish in 1930 as part of the Second Vanguard movement (in reaction to Skamander and its opponents in the First Vanguard) and was branded a catastrophist. Published his first book of poems in 1933, graduated 1934, lived in Paris for a year before returning to Poland to work in the Wilno office of Radio Polski. His second book of verse appeared in 1936, but he lost his job because of his alleged leftist sympathies. He moved to Warsaw and found another job with Radio Polski. He escaped from Warsaw to Wilno at the start of the war and returned to Warsaw clandestinely a few months later. He edited an anti-Nazi anthology of poetry. His wartime poems *Ocalenie* (Rescue) appeared in 1945: this was to be his only collection of verse published in Poland until 1980. In 1948 he published his verse 'Treatise on morals' criticising rule by terror. He served in the Polish diplomatic Corps in the USA and France for several years. After his passport was withdrawn by the Polish authorities in 1950, he obtained an exit permit and requested political asylum in France in 1951. He lived as a freelance writer in Paris for most of the next decade, but had little literary success. His works were banned for many years in Poland and he was mainly published by the Instytut Literacki in Paris. In 1961 he moved to California. He is now Professor of Slavonic literature at Berkeley. Awarded the Neustadt International Prize for literature in 1978, and the Nobel Prize for literature in 1980. Although his work had been published by underground presses it was only with the Nobel prize that the official publishing houses in Poland were allowed to show his work.

**MINC, Julia**, b.1910. Born into a lower middle class family of Warsaw traders, she had a higher school education. Her father had been a member of the SDKPiL; she joined the the ZMP and then graduated to the KPP. She spent two years in prison. She and her husband Hilary Minc lived in France for a while, then in 1939 they moved to the USSR. Summoned to Moscow, she worked on Radio Kosciuszko, while her husband joined Berling's army. They returned to Poland in 1944 where she became editor in chief of PAP, a position she occupied until 1954 when for ideological reasons she was dropped. She worked in the State Commission on Employment until 1956 when her post was dissolved and she retired.

**MOCZAR, Mieczysław**, 1913-86. Came from a rural background, had only an elementary education and no profession or trade. Joined the KPP in 1937, spent the war in Poland. 1945-48 worked as deputy chief of security services in Łódź, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs 1957-64, Minister for Internal Affairs 1964-68, member of the Council of State 1969-76, Central Committee 1948-81, Politburo 1968-

71 and 1980-81. Best known for his use of violence and manipulation of ZBoWiD in the anti-Semitic purge of 1968.

**MOCZULSKI, Leszek**, b.1938. A Catholic lyric poet close to the spirit of the generation of 1968, who made his début in 1971 and has since published seven books. Leader of the right wing, nationalist, anti-Semitic party KPN. The problem of whether or not KOR and Solidarność should campaign for the release of Moczulski was much discussed in 1980-81. Eventually it was decided that no matter how odious KPN policies were, Poland should have no political prisoners and Moczulski should be freed.

**MODZELEWSKI, Karol**, b.1937. Historian and prominent opposition activist. Son of Zygmunt Modzelewski, Poland's first post-war ambassador to the USSR and later Minister for Foreign Affairs. Expelled from the PZPR in 1964, arrested in 1965 for his part in writing *Open Letter to the Party* with Jacek Kuroń. Arrested again in 1968, released in 1971. In 1980 he became leader of Wrocław Solidarność, and then Press officer for Solidarność and served on the union's National Commission. During martial law he was arrested in December 1981, sentenced to three years in jail and held without trial until 1983. Elected to the Senat in 1989 he had become a critic of admired but un-tried free-market shock-therapy idea, and went on to become leader of the social democratic Labour party.

**MROŻEK, Sławomir**, b.1930. Born near Kraków. Began his career as a cartoonist and satirical pamphleteer with *Szpilki*. He took part in the cabaret movement of the 1950s, joined the Party after Stalin's death, and after 1956 revealed himself as a master of the satirical short story in a collection entitled *Elephant*. In 1958 his first stage play *Police* appeared to great acclaim, and this was followed by several experimental pieces in the manner of the theatre of the absurd. His play *Tango* (1965) is a masterpiece recounting the power struggles within the generations of a single family. He travelled in Italy in 1963, and following his protests of 1968 Mrozek lived in Paris. He currently lives in Mexico.

**MUSIAŁ, Grzegorz**, b.1952 Bydgoszcz. Studied at the Gdańsk Medical Academy and became a part of the Wspólność group. His first volume of poems appeared in 1978.

**MYŚLIWSKI, Wiesław**, b.1932. Born in Dwikozy near Sandomierz. Graduated from KUL in Polish literature in 1956, and appointed assistant editor at Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza. In 1958 promoted to director of contemporary literature publishing at LSW. In 1975 helped found the literary and cultural journal *Regiony*. Best known for his novels *Naked Court*, (1967), and *Palace*, (1970) which display his complete lack of a sentimental vision of peasant life, his lack of interest in the Warsaw *inteligencja* and his devotion to the life and culture of the Polish provinces.

**NAJDER, Zdzisław**. Literary historian and expert on Joseph Conrad. An activist in the cause of Polish independence. Outside the country during martial law, he worked as Director of the Polish section of Radio Free Europe and was sentenced to death in his absence by the Polish authorities for his alleged collaboration with the US security services. Returned to Poland in 1989 and was appointed by Wałęsa to steer the Citizen's Committees. Adviser to Wałęsa and to prime minister Olszewski.

**NAŁKOWSKA, Zofia**, 1885-54. Born in Warsaw, daughter of a famous geographer, she showed an early interest in politics and the arts. Her first novel, published in 1906, was the product of a Positivist outlook and a strong understanding of sociology and psychology. She was an early adherent to modernism, but shifted to a more social and traditional style in the inter-war years, moving to a frankly experimental style at the start of the war. Active supporter of the post-war regime. She wrote 15 novels and two volumes of short stories, but the most translated of her works, published in 1947, is *Medallions*, an account of her work and harrowing experiences with the International Commission to Investigate Nazi War Crimes.

**NIEZABITOWSKA, Małgorzata**. A journalist under Mazowiecki at *Tygodnik Solidarność*, later Press spokeswoman for the Mazowiecki government.

**NOWAK-JEZIORAŃSKI, Jan**. Legendary soldier of the AK. Emissary for the AK during the Second World War, made five secret journeys from London to Warsaw via Stockholm; his experiences were recounted in his memoir *Courier from Warsaw* (1983), which was awarded the PULS prize in 1981: the printer and publisher Mirosław Chojecki of NOWa was put on trial for publishing it without permission in Poland. After the war remained abroad and worked as founder member and Director of the Polish

section of Radio Free Europe 1952-76. Currently he lives in the USA, and is a member of the Polish American Congress and an adviser to the US National Security Council.

**NOWAK, Tadeusz**, 1930-91. Made his début in 1948. Moved to Kraków in 1949 and became a member of the Young Writers Club, part of ZZLP. Graduated from Kraków university in 1954, worked as an editor in Kraków until 1977, after which he moved to Warsaw. Suspicious of organised religion and of political parties of all hues. Often called 'the surrealist peasant' his poetry represents the massive shift from rural to urban dwelling in the post-war period. Known for his poems, short stories and lyrical novels in which he sets the rural past against the urban industrial present. His first poems were published in 1953, and his first stories in 1962: in 1971-78 he published a long series of psalms in two volumes and established a reputation as a profoundly metaphysical and religious poet.

**NOWAKOWSKI, Marek**, b.1935, Warsaw. A graduate in Law from Warsaw University. Published his first story in 1957. Fascinated by the tough margins of society, a satirical commentator and sharp observer of Warsaw low-life - official and un-official. Produced 17 volumes, of which four were clandestine. Protested at the constitutional changes of 1976, signed the letter of the 101, edited *Zapis*. He was interned during martial law. Several of his vivid stories of internment were smuggled out of prison published underground by *Solidarność*: *The Canary and other Tales of Martial Law* was smuggled out of Poland in 1982. He chronicles the profound disintegration of Polish society, morality and culture under 'socialism'.

**NOWAKOWSKI, Tadeusz**, b.1918 spent five years in a Nazi concentration camp, and two years in a displaced persons camp. After the war settled in West Germany and made his reputation as a journalist. Wrote a novel about Displaced Persons.

**ORŁOŚ, Kazimierz**, b.1935. Opposed to Gierek's policies, in 1980 a member of the ZLP Committee, author of several novels and short stories that present a grimly detailed portrait of the decay of morality and the destruction of family life and social order in the Gierek years. Convinced that the Party could never be reformed by conscientious and honourable Party members.

**PARANDOWSKI, Jan**, 1895-1975. Born in Lwów, and graduated there in classical philology. Professor of classics at Lublin university. A leading translator, scholar of philosophy and philology, and prose writer dealing with Greece and Rome. His main idiosyncrasy is his refusal to draw a distinction between historical and current times. Made his début with a novel on the life of Oscar Wilde in 1921, followed by novels on the Olympic Games and religious crisis against the backdrop of World War I. Went on to write essays about Greek literature and history, ancient myths and legends, and to make a very successful translation of *The Odyssey*. In 1933 he became President of Polish PEN.

**PARNICKI, Teodor**, 1908-88. Born in Berlin, the son of a civil engineer, lived in Russia and Manchuria. Studied Polish, English and Oriental literatures at Lwów university. At the start of the war he was deported to the USSR by the Soviets and released in 1941. He travelled to Tehran, Jerusalem, England and Mexico, where he spent several years. He eventually returned to settle in Poland. A sophisticated and intellectually accomplished Catholic conservative rightist, seeking hidden truths and final answers, Miłosz has said Parnicki is 'undoubtedly the most inventive historical novelist'. His novels deal with a wide range of historical periods and are distinguished by their complex narrative method, their interest in psychology and their exploration of ambiguous 'facts'. He made his début in 1937 with a novel about Rome in the 5th century AD. Most of his novels about the ancient world were written while he was in Mexico and were published only after 1959.

**PAWLAK, Antoni**, b.1952. Graduated in philosophy from the Catholic Theological Academy in Warsaw. Contributed to *Student* and a variety of other youth publications in Gdańsk and Warsaw. Chairman of the Young Writers Association, he has published a prose recollection of his time in the army, and two chap-books of poetry; his first major collection of poetry was accepted for publication in 1975 but has still not appeared.

**PAWLAK, Włodzimerz**, b.1957 Korytowo. Studied at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts. Nihilist and pessimist, under martial law appeared and exhibited with Gruppa and wrote poetry and philosophical essays for *Oj, dobrze już* and *Co Słychać*.

**PEIPER, Tadeusz**, 1891-1969. A theoretician of the inter-war Kraków avant-garde grouped around the journal *Zwrotnica* (Switch). Decided poetry was a rational construction based on heightened and striking metaphors and beautiful phrases: he exalted mind, disliked inspiration and was a steadfast foe of the Skamander poets. Peiper's poems were often dismissed as mere illustrations of his theories and were not appreciated by the critics until the 1960s, by which time he was suffering from a mental illness and living in complete and voluntary isolation. His influence after the war was mainly felt through the poetry of Julian Przybós.

**PETERKIEWICZ, Jerzy**, b.1916, poet, anthologist and novelist settled in London after the war, obtained a doctorate at London university, where he taught Polish literature.

**PIASECKI, Bolesław**, 1915-79. From a middle class background. Leader and founder of the extreme right-wing ONR-Falange party in the inter-war years. Fought in the campaign of September 1939. Arrested by the NKVD in 1945, but did a deal in return for his life, released to form and direct Pax; editor of *Słowo Powszechne* and *Kierunki*, and author of several books, including *Important Problems*, *Forces of Development* and *Polish Patriotism*, all published by Pax. Opposed Gomułka in 1956 he slowly lost control of Pax, but remained a member of the State Council from 1971 until his death.

**PIĘTRZAK, Jan**. Writer and performer for Warsaw's satirical cabaret Pod Egidą. Fell foul of the censor repeatedly under Gierek.

**PIĘTAK, Stanisław**, 1909-64. Born of peasant family in Sandomierz. He produced pastoral narratives and lyric poetry. After the war he became increasingly unbalanced and committed suicide.

**PILCH, Jerzy**, b.1952. A Catholic writer. Author of *Confessions of an Author of Illicit Erotic Literature*. Editor of *Tygodnik Powszechny* and the bi-monthly conservative paper *NaGłos*.

**POBÓG-MALINOWSKI, Władysław**. Émigré pro-Sanacja historian, author of a three volume *History of Poland 1864-1945* (London, 1956-61). He claimed that the Soviets had betrayed Polish 'socialists' to the Nazis, but also that key Polish 'socialists' had collaborated with the Nazis.

**PODSIADŁO, Jacek**, b.1964 in Szewna. Made his début in 1984 in the underground journal *Wolność i Pokój*. Later published in *brulion*. Worked as a steeplejack for a while, was unemployed and homeless between 1989 and 1993. Has a programme on local arts and folk culture on Opole radio.

**POLKOWSKI, Jan**, b.1953. Brought up in Nowa Huta and lives in Kraków, studied Polish literature at the Jagiellonian university. One of the most gifted poets to emerge in the 1980s, his work, which appeared in *Zapis*, is tough, staccato, street-wise and tempered. Edited the clandestine journal *kos* 1977-79. An activist in the Kraków Student Solidarność Committee and in the Kraków Students' Press, he was co-founder and editor of the independent journal *ABC*. He also worked for Małopolska region Solidarność. He made his début in the underground press in 1980. Arrested and interned on the first night of martial law, three of his volumes of verse were published underground and a fourth volume was published by Puls in London. When he was released he edited the underground journal *Arka*. Later he edited and owned the right-wing nationalist Kraków daily newspaper *Czas*. His most recent collection of poems was published by the Catholic Znak organisation in 1990. Un-suited to public life and incapable of being one of Kołakowski's jesters, he announced in 1991 that he had given up writing and poetic reflection in favour of direct involvement in political affairs.

**POMIAN, Krzysztof**, b.1934. Assistant professor of philosophy at Warsaw University, historian of philosophy and leading revisionist, author of *The Warsaw Uprising: A Selection of Documents*, (London, 1945); expelled from the Party in 1968 after lecturing (with Kołakowski) on the fate of culture under the post-war regime and criticising the Party; one of his 'crimes' was that he had published abroad; left Poland to live in Paris; a supporter of TKN.

**POŚWIATOWSKA, Halina**, 1935-67. Born in Częstochowa, studied philosophy at the Jagiellonian university, Kraków. In 1958 she went to the USA to undergo open heart surgery, but also to study at Smith College, Northampton. When she returned she was appointed lecturer in philosophy at the Jagiellonian university, but was frequently too ill to teach and spent a great deal of her time in hospital. She made her début as a poet in 1958 and published three volumes of verse.

**PROKOP, Jan**, b.1931. Poet, translator, fiction writer, essayist and literary historian: member of the PAN Institute for Literary Research (IBL); in 1953 he was one of the Pax editorial team that took over *Tygodnik Powszechny*: author of three slim volumes of verse in 1971, 1978 and 1989. A teacher at the Jagiellonian university in Kraków and at the university of Torino in Italy, most of his work in the 1980s appeared underground or abroad.

**PRUSZYŃSKI, Ksawery**, 1907-50. Writer and journalist, a republican reporter during the Spanish civil war, Polish ambassador to Holland 1948-50.

**PRZYBOŚ, Julian**, 1901-70. Of peasant origins in southern Poland, but studied Polish literature at the Jagiellonian university and graduated in 1923. A great enthusiast for 'the modern'. He was a provincial secondary school literature teacher for most of the inter-war period. A member of the pre-war Kraków avant-garde, a follower of Tadeusz Peiper's theories, condemned the Skamander poets for letting a demon work through their poetry without let or hindrance and set up a series of poetic prescriptions for how poetry ought to be. Disillusioned by Piłsudski's failure to improve rural Poland and bring the peasantry into the twentieth century he saw socialism as a break through for Poland and became steadily more committed and political. He spent the early part of the war in Lwów, but returned to his village in 1941, where he wrote resistance poetry for the clandestine journals and began work as an agricultural labourer. In 1945 he became chairman of ZZLP. He later joined the party to help organise literary life in post-war Poland. He was a diplomat for People's Poland in Switzerland 1947-51, and later became an editor and head librarian. He seems to have realised on his return to Poland that Soviet styled 'socialism' was not going to create the democratic cultural and political life he had imagined. He felt that *socrealizm* was a return to outdated forms rather than an adequate response to the new. He withdrew to live in the countryside and offered distant sympathy to the revisionist opposition in the 1950s.

**PUTRAMENT, Jerzy**, 1910-86. From a middle class background, he had a university education. A writer and revolutionary Marxist even before the war, he returned from the USSR, where he had been a member of the press corps for the Union of Polish Patriots and an officer in the Berling's Polish Army. 1945-50 Polish ambassador to France. An active member of ZLP and editor of several journals he was also a member of the Central Committee and a staunch advocate of *socrealizm*. Few outside the Party have anything good to say about Putrament: Miłosz has described him as a 'less than first rate' writer. For Szczepanski, he fell from favour in 1950, after handing some of his stories to the police. Konwicki simply calls Putrament 'a Chekist'. He was the model for Gamma in Miłosz's *The Captive Mind*.

**RAKOWSKI, Mieczysław**, b.1926. From a middle class background, university trained journalist. Joined the PZPR in 1957. Long-time editor of *Polityka*; vice-prime minister 1981-85. The ninth and last 'socialist' prime minister 1988-89, the last first secretary of the PZPR.

**RYMKIEWICZ, Jarosław Marek**, b.1935. Graduated in Polish Literature and Philology from Łódź university. Made his début with a volume of poetry in 1957.

**RYPSON, Piotr**, b.1956. He was instrumental in introducing Punk music into Poland and was involved with the alternative music circuit. He is the author of a remarkable book called *Obraz Słowa: historia poezji wizualnej*, (Picture Words: a history of visual poetry) Akademia Ruchu, Warsaw, 1989.

**ROLIŃSKI, Bohdan**. Lipski lists him as one of those involved in the slander campaign against KOR. In 1977, writing in *Życie Warszawy* he accused Andrzejewski of socio-political fickleness, and characterised KOR as a mixture of utopianism, Trotskyism, Social Democracy, Zionism, Christian Democracy and NEP: he also accused KOR of being in the pay of western - primarily German - intelligence services. His book *Przerwana Dekada* (1991) was a series of interviews with Edward Gierek which claimed that he was kept in ignorance by the bureaucracy and therefore knew nothing of Poland's economic difficulties in the late 1970s.

**RÓŻEWICZ, Tadeusz**, b.1921. Born in Radomsko, central Poland. Began publishing during the war when he worked in a factory and as a teacher of Polish in an underground High School. He joined the AK in 1943. After the war he read art history at Kraków university, then moved to Gliwice in 1949 and finally to Wrocław in 1968. Made his début in 1947. Much of his poetry stems from the traumatic events of the war and his horror at the collapse of human values. His landscapes and characters are bleak, desperate, nihilistic and deeply humanitarian, and Różewicz's search is for a way out, for another way of feeling. Prodigious output - marred by his unsuccessful attempt to find comfort in ideology and



his efforts to conform to *socrealizm* - brought him numerous state literary prizes. His poetry belongs to the anti-poetic style which often sees art of any kind as an offence to suffering, and his surrealist plays arouse strong critical feelings among both Catholics and 'socialists' for both of whom his attack on sentiment, dream and wonder is unacceptable. For Różewicz humans are alone in a universe that lacks metaphysical justification - the only reality is that which they create in contact with other human beings, and that contact is usually mistaken, failed and generally bloody. He has been successful in failing to find solace in ideology of any kind: his writings undercut the supposed virtues of revolt. Różewicz has accepted Miłosz's description of him as a poet of chaos with a nostalgia for order.

**RUDNICKI, Adolf**, b.1912-91. Born in Zabno, made a name for himself chronicling life in the Warsaw ghetto, and Jewish life in the provinces. Made his début as a novelist in 1931, chronicled his military service in 1937, described Polish life in the artistic colonies 1938, and then produced five volumes of short stories. Although he was Jewish he survived the war by living on false papers. He attempted in later life to describe the fascinating and volatile interaction between Polish and Jewish cultures. A member of the *Kuźnica* group.

**RZYMOWSKI, Władysław**, 1883-1950. 1944-5 Director of Department of Arts & Culture.

**SENDECKI, Marcin**, b.1967 Gdańsk. 1986-90 studied medicine, then undertook postgraduate work at the university of Warsaw. One of the barbarians associated with *brulion* he made his début in 1987.

**ŚLONIMSKI, Antoni**, 1895-1976. Son of a famous Jewish doctor. Educated as a painter in Warsaw and Paris but made his début as a rebellious lyric poet in 1918 and became a founder member of the Skamander group, dedicated to the renewal of poetic language and the perfection of traditional metrical forms. A poet of the Warsaw cafe and the liberal *inteligencja*, a Wellsian rationalist and pacifist who despaired of the attraction and power of Nazism in Germany and the rise of anti-Semitism and nationalist chauvinism among the Polish right. Noted as a prominent member of the pre-war liberal left. He escaped to Paris after the defeat of September 1939 and then moved on to England, where he edited the journal *New Poland*. He returned to Poland only in 1951. He became one of the most respected cultural journalists and came to prominence in 1956-59, when as Chairman of the ZLP he showed himself an active spokesman for intellectuals opposed to Party controls and censorship. Michnik, who was his personal assistant in the early 1970s, regards him as a prestigious moral authority for all Polish dissidents and as his mentor.

**SOKORSKI, Włodzimierz**, b.1908. Became a member of PPS in 1926, imprisoned for political activities 1931-5. Spent the war in the USSR where he became deputy head of the Polish Union of Patriots, a political officer in the First Division of Berling's army. 1947-48 Deputy Minister for Education; 1948-52 Deputy Minister for Arts and Culture; 1952-56 Minister for Arts and Culture; 1956-72 Head of the Radio and Television Committee. 1948-75 a Deputy member of the Central Committee. In 1980 he became president of ZBoWiD.

**SOMMER, Piotr**, b.1948. Poet, translator of English and American poetry, editor of *Literatura na Świecie*. Made his début in 1977.

**SOSNOWSKI, Andrzej**, b.1959 Warsaw. Studied English at Warsaw university, and then lectured in American literature before becoming an editor for the state publishing house PIW and a regular contributor to *Literatura na Świecie*. Made his début as a poet in 1992.

**STAFF, Leopold**, 1878-1957. Born in Lwów, he studied law, philosophy and Romance languages at Lwów university. Made his début as a poet in 1901. He moved to Warsaw at the end of World War I. For a Polish writer Staff led a remarkably uneventful life. In spite of the fact that most of his manuscripts were destroyed in World War II, he managed to publish sixteen books of poetry - a seventeenth volume appeared posthumously. He also wrote plays, essays and made translations from several languages. He was awarded honorary doctorates from Warsaw and Kraków universities and received the PEN club prize for his translations. A benign old man of Polish letters, Staff's publishing career spans three very different eras of Polish history: he nevertheless achieved critical acclaim and the respect of fellow poets, particularly Różewicz.

**STANISZKIS, Jadwiga**. Associate Professor of sociology at Warsaw university, author of *Poland's Self Limiting Revolution*, (Princeton, 1986).



**STANUCH, Stanisław**, b.1931. Born in Polish Silesia, the son of a school teacher. Graduated in journalism in Kraków in 1954. He published book reviews and literary criticism, and his first novel - an anti-novel - was published in 1959, followed by a collection of stories in 1966. He now lives in Nowa Huta.

**STAWAR, Andrzej**, (Edward Janus) 1900-61. Critic, journalist, theoretician, 'socialist' activist.

**STASZEWSKI, Stefan**, b.1906. Born in Warsaw. Joined the KZMP at 14, studied at the Comintern school in Moscow. Worked for KZMP as first secretary in the western Ukraine. after arrest he returned to Moscow in 1934 to lecture for the Comintern. In 1936 he was expelled from the Party, arrested and sentenced th 8 years in a labour camp in Kolyma. (His older brother was killed by the NKVD in the 1937 purge.) Released in 1945 he was appointed propaganda secretary in Katowice, then head of the Central Committee press section, a post he retained until 1954. 1954-55 Deputy Minister for Agriculture, 1955-57 First Secretary of the Warsaw Party Committee. Editor in Chief of PAP until 1958, senior editor at PAN publishing house. Expelled from the Party in 1968 and retired. A supporter of Solidarność.

**STEMPOWSKI, Jerzy**, 1893/94-1969. Born in Kraków, died in Bern. Born into a gentry family he studied Humanities at Kraków, Munich and Zürich universities. Emigrated to Switzerland in 1939. Under the name of Paweł Hostowiec became a regular contributor of essays to *Kultura* (Paris): as an émigré he took an interest in a wide range of modern culture, and built on his classical schooling to produce a large number of philosophical essays on European history and society. He disliked mechanisation and the increasing power of groups over individuals, frequently citing the superiority of Greek culture to contemporary life.

**STERN, Anatol**, 1899-1968. A Futurist, like Wat, who believed in the power of words liberated from syntax. Too odd to be popular in inter-war Poland.

**STOMMA, Stanisław**, b.1908. Legal expert and Catholic publicist. A Znak deputy to the Sejm 1957-76; editor and journalist for *Tygodnik Powszechny*. In 1976 Stomma realised that he was involved in an impossible undertaking: he alone of the Znak deputies walked out of the Sejm rather than cast his vote on favour of the constitutional reforms. Adam Michnik has likened him at this moment to Tadeusz Rejtan, the 18th century Sejm deputy who tore his clothes and threw himself on the floor in front of the other deputies in an attempt to prevent them ratifying the partition of Poland. (A. Michnik, *Letters from Prison and Other Essays*, p.141) By the following session of the Sejm Stomma was no longer acceptable as a deputy. In 1981 Stomma, by then Emeritus Professor of Law at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, headed the Catholic Church's 'crisis team' set up by Cardinal Glemp to gather information about Martial Law, contact the military authorities, find out who had been arrested and negotiate for their release. Led the Catholic church-supported, conservative, right-oriented, Dziekania (Deaconery) group from the mid 1980s up to 1989 when it was dissolved.

**STROIŃSKI, Leon Zdzisław**, 1921-44. Born in Warsaw, studied Polish literature at the underground university during the occupation. Arrested by the Nazis after laying a wreath at the statue of Nicholas Copernicus in May 1943 (of his companions the poet Tadeusz Gajcy escaped, but the poet Waław Bojarski was killed) released after the strenuous efforts of his father, Stroinski spent his time forging German documents for the resistance. He was killed alongside Gajcy when the Nazis blew up the house they were defending during the Warsaw uprising. His total output amounts to only one slim volume, but his achievement in both prose and verse, juxtaposing grim realism and lyrical, humorous portrayals of the war have assured him a place in Polish letters.

**STRZELECKI, Jan**, 1919-88. Sociologist, socialist activist, underground youth organiser during the war. Joined PZPR and advocated 'socialist humanism'; in the mid-1950s he began to re-think the party's traditional hostility towards the church. In spite of the fact that he believed that change could only come from within the party itself he remained a figure of moral authority among intellectuals. In 1980 he became an adviser to Solidarność.

**SZCZEPAŃSKI, Jan Józef**, b.1919. Born in Warsaw, but lives in Kraków. A professor of sociology who had fought in the Polish army and then in the AK. He has stated that for him, in the immediate post-war years the division into left and right was a falsity and entirely artificial in view of the humanistic, intellectual and moral decisions that need to be made. He claimed that most Polish

intellectuals made the same decision, knowing that the 'socialist' functionaries were mystificators, primitive and arbitrary in their use of power, and that Polish intellectuals in giving their support in this way had not given sufficient thought as to how things were to be realised or what it really meant to be on the left under Stalin. Although he had begun publishing before the war he considers that he made his début as a writer in the 1950s with a series of novels and short stories that detailed the ethical and psychological aspects of wartime savagery. His first collection of stories was called *Buty* (1956) and displayed great awareness of moral problems, and a detailed almost *socrealist* attention to observed documentary detail. The collection was to have appeared in *Twórczość* but Kazimierz Wilka lost his nerve, so the stories were published by Turowicz in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, with the result that the magazine received over 300 letters protesting at the anti-patriotic nature of the stories. In the 1970s produced a series of essays on Conrad, Father Maksymilian Kolbe and Charles Manson. In 1971 he criticised, in the pages of *Polityka*, the emerging phenomenon of 'sultanism'. In the late 1970s he was a TKN lecturer. He served on the editorial board of *Tygodnik Powszechny* before it was given to Pax and again when it was taken away from Pax. He had a long and fruitful collaboration with Turowicz and *Tygodnik Powszechny*, a magazine which he described as 'po prostu liberalny' (simply liberal), he never quite reconciled himself to appearing in a Catholic journal. He felt that the Catholic church very explicitly chose to engage the Party only on issues where it could muster the greatest popular support, and that it used that popular support to defend important strategic positions. It did not engage in debate over issues where it could not present itself as under threat and could not muster popular support. (See his comments in: J.Trznadel, *Hańba domowa: rozmowy z pisarzami*, 1988. In 1980-81 he was a non-Party deputy to the Sejm and criticised the media for its failure to alert the country about the looming economic crisis and supported *Solidarność*. A non-Marxist, non-'socialist' of scrupulous integrity he was not afraid to point out that the interests of the Catholic church did not necessarily coincide with those of the Polish nation, and his 'collaboration' with the authorities made him a target for Catholic, independent intellectuals (like Lipski) and party hacks alike. He was elected chairman of ZLP in 1980. He was one of the few Sejm deputies who refused to ratify the formal ban on *Solidarność* in 1982. His battles to keep ZLP in existence after martial law was declared are chronicled in his *Kadencja* (1990). In 1983 the regime attempted to blacken his reputation by forging a letter to the Council of State with his signature on it. He described the martial law years as a 'golden age' for the Catholic church, in which it grew intellectually and found for itself tasks which it had previously been unable to identify clearly. In June 1989 elected chairman of STP The Association of Polish writers. Trznadel described him as a writer who dreamed of dictators without boots and of the end of dictatorships.

**SZCZYPIORSKI, Andrzej**, b.1920. Born in Warsaw. He took part in the 1944 Warsaw uprising, was captured and sent to a concentration camp. A novelist, journalist, member of ZLP executive and leading *Solidarność* activist, he was arrested by the military in 1981 and kept in jail for a year. In June 1989 he was elected to the Senat to represent *Solidarność*.

**SZECHTER, Szymon**, b.1920. Academic historian, political scientist and satirist, author of an unpublished book on the genesis of the peasants' strike and the Peasants' Party (SL) in the years 1936-7; his first book of short stories was confiscated by the censor in 1965, and had increasing problems with the authorities until he was expelled in 1968. After that date he lived in London, working closely with Nina Karsov, who translated many of his stories into English. Author of *A Stolen Biography*, 1972.

**SZLOSAREK, Artur**, b.1968. Studying comparative literature at the university of Bonn, made his début in the émigré *Zeszyty Literackie*. His first volume of poems was published by Oficyna Literacka in Kraków in 1991.

**SZYMBORSKA, Wisława**, b.1923. Born in Prowenta-Bnin in western Poland, she and her family moved to Kraków in 1931. She attended an underground high school and then studied Polish literature and sociology at the Jagiellonian University 1945-48. She abandoned her studies as the university lost its independence in the 'socialist' take-over. Made her début as a poet in 1945 but publication of her first volume of poems in 1948 was delayed for political reasons and her first volume only emerged in 1952. *That's why we live* and her second volume *Questions put to oneself* in 1954 were both highly political. She joined the Party after Stalin's death, and in the years 1953-81 she worked under Machejek as an editor of the Kraków literary weekly *Życie Literackie* as a poetry editor, book reviewer and columnist. In 1954 she received the Kraków City Literary Prize, in 1955 the State Literary Prize, and in 1963 the Ministry for Art and Culture Prize. She was a 'believer' in communism, but later said she fulfilled her

'rhymed duties' for the party in the naive conviction that she was doing right. Her reputation is not founded on any poetry of *partynosć*. She has published eight volumes of poetry and much of her output has appeared in *Twórczość*, *Odra* and *Puls* (London). She has also published essays and translations of French poetry. Her 1986 collection *People on the Bridge* was widely acclaimed one of the most important collections of post-war Polish verse. She still lives and works in Kraków and is widely regarded as the most outstanding female Polish poet in the post-war period. Her constant theme is support for the individual's right to doubt in utopias.

**ŚWIETLICKI, Marcin**, b.1961. A barbarian associated with *brulion*, who published his first volume of verse in 1992. He works as an editor for the Catholic *Tygodnik Powszechny*.

**ŚWIRSZCZYŃSKA, Anna**, 1909-84. (Also wrote under the name Świr) Daughter of a painter she was brought up as part of the Warsaw intellectual world. Studied medieval and baroque literature at Warsaw University. Her poems appeared in various magazines in the early 1930s, but her first volume of stories in 1936 brought her a reputation for skilful crafting. During the war she worked as a waitress and joined the literary underground. During the Warsaw Uprising she worked as a military nurse, an experience that marked her for life and is recorded in her second volume of poetry, *Building Barricades*, 1972. After the war she moved to Kraków. She is the author of fiercely and violently feminist poetry, and also concise and brutally erotic poetry. Two of her nine volumes of verse were 'bestsellers' in 1972 and 1974. She is generally thought to stand to one side of the main stream of Polish literature, perhaps because she disconcerts the mainly male critical circuit. Her last volume of verse was published shortly before she died.

**TABORSKI, Bolesław**, b.1927. Fought in the Warsaw uprising, imprisoned by the Nazis in a POW camp in Germany for the remainder of the war. Studied English drama at London University, worked as a theatre critic, translator and bibliographer of Polish theatre in English.

**TITKÓW, Tomasz**, b.1969 Warsaw. A student of psychology. Published his own first volume of poems in 1990.

**TOEPLITZ, Krzysztof Teodor**, (used the pseudonym KAT). Published regularly in the official journals. In the mid 1950s he was noted as an enthusiastic feuilletonist of reform, so much so that *Nowa Kultura* ceased to accept his work for a while in 1956. In the mid 1970s he had a book of his collected writings published, but the censors decided against allowing reviews to be published. (See censorship regulation number 94.) In spite of this he went on to hold a government post in the martial law period. In the era of *glasnost* he warned against taking reform too fast or opening up the reform process to democratic pressures.

**TRZNADEL, Jacek**, b.1930, in Olkusz. Poet, essayist and translator. In his youth an ardent member of the ZMS (Socialist Youth Movement), later a member of the Party who for many years kept a portrait of Stalin on his wall. Became a critic of the regime. Signed the letter of the 59 intellectuals in 1975. From 1978-83 Professor of Polish Literature and Director of the Polish Section in the Department of Slavonic Studies at the Sorbonne in Paris. A leading member of the Independent Historical Committee for research in the Katyn Massacre. Author of five books of poems, four books of essays, and translations of De Sade, Sartre, Levy-Strauss and other French literature. His best known work is *Domestic Shame*, (published simultaneously in Warsaw by NOWa and in Paris by Instytut Literacki) (1986), a series of critical and revealing interviews with ex-Stalinist writers, which was awarded the Independent Solidarity Cultural Committee prize in 1986.

**TUROWICZ, Jerzy**, b.1912. Editor of *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1950-53 and 1956-present: saw it as a journal designed to formulate Catholic opinion to the extent permitted by censorship, but did not see it as subject to the political guidance of KIK, despite its ties, nor did he see it as a simple pulpit for the Church. A democratic Catholic sympathetic to the idea of Christian socialism. With his consistent demand for democratic moral values in cultural and political life he was sometimes referred to as the 'Dean' of the opposition movement; he was a figure of huge moral authority for the secular left oppositionists. He signed the 'letter of the 34' in 1964, published the essays and articles of purged and persecuted liberals and Jews in 1968, and published pro-Solidarność writers during martial law. A member of the Citizen's Committee under Wałęsa, he is also the author of *Christians in the Contemporary World* (1963) and is a close associate of Pope Jan Paweł II.

**TUWIM, Julian**, 1894-1953. Born of middle class Jewish parents in Łódź, he was educated at a Russian Gymnasium and later moved to Warsaw University where he graduated in law and philosophy. A leader of the Skamander group of Futurist poets, he was popular between the wars and contributed light verse and songs to the Warsaw cabaret circuit: as well as pursuing his antiquarian interests he was a distinguished translator of Russian poetry. He spent the war years in the USA and returned to Poland in 1946 to become an enthusiastic supporter of the Stalinist regime. He was radical and conservative by turns, and his enthusiasm for the regime was probably an emotional reaction to the exciting potential of post-war reconstruction, rather than a serious ideological position.

**TWARDOWSKI, Jan**, b.1915. Priest in Warsaw. One of the most original of Polish religious poets. Made his début in 1937 but did not publish again until 1958. Has since published several more books of highly acclaimed devotional verse.

**WALICKI, Andrzej**. Professor at the PAN Institute of Philosophy in Warsaw until 1981. Now Professor of history, specialising in Russian and Polish intellectual history, at Notre Dame University Indiana.

**WAŃKOWICZ, Melchior**, 1892-1975. Author of numerous picturesque gentry tales and of a three volume history of the Battle of Monte Cassino. Signed the Letter of the 34 in 1964 and was tried for slandering the state.

**WAT, Aleksander**, 1900-67. Born Chwat, of Warsaw Jewish *inteligencja* family. Studied Philosophy at Warsaw University. Poet, editor, translator, literary critic. A founder of the Polish Futurist movement in the years before World War Two, he published a book of precocious experimental verse in 1919. Later he became a Marxist, and though never a member of the Party he was a 'fellow traveller' on the intellectual left. His conversion to Marxism coincided with a literary silence. He was editor in chief of the Party magazine *Miesięcznik Literacki* in the years 1929-32, but this was closed down by the Polish authorities and he spent some time in prison. In 1939 he escaped to the Russian zone of occupied Poland and in 1940 was arrested by the NKVD as a Trotskyite and Zionist agent of the Vatican. He was imprisoned in the Lubyanka and then deported to Kazakhstan in Soviet Asia where he converted to Catholicism. After his release as part of the 1941-42 amnesty for Poles, he went to Alma-Ata to search for his wife and child. He found them on a *kolkhoz*, but shortly afterwards, as they would not accept Soviet citizenship, they were all exiled to Ili. They returned to Poland in April 1946, but in the years 1949-56 Wat was labelled a 'hostile element' and was refused publication. After earning his living as a translator for a while, he was publicly castigated by his fellow writers for failing to support the regime's policies, and suffered a stroke which left him in considerable pain for the rest of his life. After 1956 he was able to resume his publishing career and his poetry appeared to great acclaim among the younger generation. The Party apologised lavishly, showered him with awards and he was allowed to travel abroad. In 1959 he left Poland to live in Italy and France. In 1963 he visited California where he recorded *Mój Wiek* (1977) with Miłosz. His health was poor, though, and his planned volume of philosophical investigation into the phenomenon of Soviet 'socialism' never materialised. Several of his most important works and many of his notes and essays were only published after his death. He died in Paris.

**WAŻYK, Adam**, 1905-82. Born in Warsaw of middle class Jewish family. Translator from Latin, French and Russian. An avant-gardist of the pre-war poetry circle and an enthusiastic cubist poet. Made his début in 1924. Switched to fiction in the 1930s but returned to poetry with the rise of Hitler. With the German invasion his poetry became increasingly 'socialist' and documentary. Spent the war in the USSR where he co-edited *Nowe Widnokreghi*. He returned to Poland as an officer of the AL and a devotee of Socialist Realism. His poetry was purified of the language and concerns of the inter-war period. He co-founded *Kuźnica* (where his function was that of ideological watch-dog), edited *Twórczość* 1950-54. Throughout the Stalinist period his credit was high - he was awarded the State Literary prize in 1952 and the PEN prize in 1953. He viewed himself as a severe and intellectually aggressive theoretician, a Marxist propagandist and advocate of *socrealizm*. He had been a steady and long-term supporter of the Party, and was a prime example of the drive towards *socrealizm* in Poland and of the effect that the new social order had on independent creative thought. Ważyk once described Stalin's mind as a 'river of wisdom'. He was an opponent of all 'rotten bourgeois liberalism' and one of the most intensely disliked of the Party writers. Although he had resumed his cubist poetry, he actually

wrote very little poetry after the war (and that was judged poor). Instead he produced a great deal of prose about the role of artists under 'socialism', and about how Polish writers needed to overcome their 'pre-war Sarmatian sensibility'. In 1955 his Poem for Adults, criticising Stalinism in the name of socialism, sent shock waves through the Party.

**WERFEL, Roman**, b.1906 in Lwów of bourgeois family. Joined KZMP at age 15, joined KPP in 1923. Spent two years in jail. Was sent to work for KZMP in the western Ukraine. Expelled from the KPP in 1936. Spent the war in the USSR, in Lwów and also in central Asia. Edited *Czerwony Sztandar* and edited the Polish language *New Horizons*, where he worked with Putrament, Broniewska and Jędrzychowski. After the war he worked for the Party in Lublin, as director of *Książka i Wiedza*, and senior editor of *Nowe Drogi*, *Głos Ludu*, and *Trybuna Ludu* until he was supplanted in 1956. In 1959 he was appointed propaganda director of the Wrocław Party Provincial Committee, in 1963 became director of the PAN Institute for the History of Polish Soviet Relations. In 1968 he was expelled from the Party and retired. He was rehabilitated by the Party in 1983.

**WIELOWIEJSKI, Andrzej**. An active member of KIK (Clubs of the Catholic Intelligentsia), a member of the Citizen's Committees under Wałęsa, later a leader of the Democratic Union party and a Senator.

**WIERBŁOWSKI, Stefan**, 1897-1973. From a middle class background, trained at university as a chemist. In 1925 joined the KPP, spent seven years in jail. Spent the war in the USSR. Became a member of the Central Committee in 1945 and then worked in propaganda: secretary of *Sztandar Wolności*, editor of *Nowe Drogi*.

**WIENIAWSKA, Celina**. Born and educated in Warsaw, she graduated in French from Warsaw university. She became a book reviewer for a daily newspaper. She first visited England in 1938. During the war she managed to escape to Italy in 1939 and then, after a two year journey through Turkey, Iraq and India, settled in England. She is one of the foremost translators of Polish literature into English.

**WIERZBYCKI, Piotr**, b.1935. Born in Warsaw, graduated in Polish Studies at Warsaw university in 1957, the year in which he made his debut in the fortnightly *Współczesność*. For ten years he wrote in *Literatura*, and from 1977 published his satires, pamphlets and prose sketches *Tygodnik Powszechny*. His book *The Enthusiast in School* was published by Czytelnik, but after 1976 his work appeared underground or abroad. He was arrested and interned during martial law. His book *Struktura Kłamstwa* (ANEKS, London, 1987), an analysis of Party language, won the Solidarność Culture prize for 1986, and the Independent Journalists' prize for the best book of 1986.

**WIERZYŃSKI, Kazimierz**, 1894-1969. Born in Drohobycz, son of a railway station master. Studied in Kraków and Vienna, before being drafted into the Austrian military during World War One. Spent three years as a Russian prisoner, escaped, took part in the 1920 Polish-Soviet war as a correspondent, settled in Warsaw. A founder member of the Skamander group, he made his début as a poet in 1919. Thought by some to be a naïve enthusiast of things modern, by others to be a classicist of the Romantic school. He went into exile just after the outbreak of the Second World War, making his way to France, then Portugal and Brazil before moving on to settle in the USA in 1941, thus becoming one of the few members of the pre-war Polish Academy of Literature to survive: his profound frustration, strong sense that he was an anachronism and his unhappiness with his conventional verse strategies led to a crisis of creativity in the years 1930-49. His *Life of Chopin* (1949) was a best seller in the US. After living in New York he moved on to New England, Italy and the UK. A staunch opponent of 'socialism' he never returned to Poland and viewed its fate as tragic.

**WIRPSZA, Witold**, 1918-85. Poet, playwright, fiction writer, essayist, translator of German literature. Party member and early socialist-realist poet, he published several Socialist Realist collections in the years 1949-56. He only emerged as an interesting and original poet in the 1960s, and then his verse provoked a heated debate because of its interest in the aesthetics, semiotics and politics of poetry. Increasingly active in the opposition from the mid 1950s, when he published anti-Stalinist poems in *Przegląd Kulturalny* in March 1955. After publishing in German a controversial book, *Pole wer bist Du?* (Pole, who are you?), on German-Polish relations, he was attacked and abused by the official

media and felt forced into exile. From 1969 he lived in West Berlin and his work only appeared in underground or émigré editions.

**WITTLIN, Józef**, 1896-1976. Born in Dmytrów in the Ukraine. Studied Philosophy and linguistics in Lwów and Vienna. After serving in the Austrian army he worked as a school teacher in Lwów. Made his début as a poet in 1920. In 1922 he became director of the Łódź Municipal Theatre and co-founder and professor of its Drama school. In 1924 he moved to Warsaw and started writing seriously. The start of World War II found him in France. With the fall of France he escaped to the USA, losing most of his manuscripts in the process, settled in New York in 1941, produced a memoir of Lwów (1946), over twenty novels, translations and plays, and two volumes of essays. He never returned to Poland and regarded its fate as tragic.

**WYGODZKI, Stanisław** b.1907. Member of KPP. His book *Remanded in Custody* was suppressed in 1957. He was banned after the *Dziady* protests and emigrated to Israel in 1968.

**WYKA, Kazimierz**, 1910-75. Born in Krzeszowice. Influential critic and professor at Kraków university. Strongly aware of the experience of the 'independent' inter-war generation. Often credited with 'liberating' the younger generation of critics from the bardism of *socrealizm* and schematism of the 1950s and 1960s. A supporter of compromise: defender of individual status as opposed to totalitarian claims: he also saw the social and moral value of limiting individualistic narcissism and aestheticism.

**WOJACZEK, Rafał**, 1945-71. Started to study literature at the Jagiellonian university, but gave up. An uncompromising, precocious and intensely Romantic poet of 'poetry or death, death or love, women or Poland'. Worked in a garage in Wrocław but committed suicide. His collected works appeared in 1976.

**WOJTYŁA, Karol**, b.1920, in Wadowice near Kraków, son of a captain in the Polish army. In 1938 started to read Polish philology at the Jagiellonian university but his studies were interrupted by the outbreak of war. He worked for a while in a stone quarry, then in a water purification plant, and kept up his studies with the underground university as well as taking part in underground theatrical productions. With the death of his father in 1941 Wojtyła enrolled as a theology student in the underground seminary. He completed his studies and entered the priesthood in November 1946. For the next two years he was sent to study at the Pontifical university in Rome, after which he was awarded a doctorate. On his return to Poland in 1948 he was sent as priest to a small village. He was eventually appointed parish priest in Kraków, and in 1951 resumed studies at KUL, where he was lectured and held a professorship. In 1958 he was appointed auxiliary bishop of Kraków and five years later became Archbishop. In October 1978 he was elected Pope. By 1978 he had published 5 books, 44 philosophical essays and 27 essays and other articles, plays and poetry numbering some 400 items. Many were issued under the pen names Andrzej Jawień and Stanisław Gruda. Much of his work was published by KUL and Pallotinum, and appeared in *Rocznik Filozoficzny* and *Znak*, but the bulk of his articles and poetry seems to have appeared in *Tygodnik Powszechny*.

**WOROSZYLSKI, Wiktor**, b.1927. Born in Grodno, son of a doctor. An enthusiastic supporter of communism in the 1940s and 1950s, a distinguished translator of Russian literature, essayist, fiction writer, biographer and poet. In 1945 he moved to Łódź, joined the Party as a young communist, worked as a journalist and began to write poetry. He attended the Moscow Gorky Institute of Literature in 1952 and gained a masters degree, followed by a Polish State Literary Prize for his poetry. He started his literary career as a convinced socrealist and ardent communist, but while he was in Moscow he became aware that his poetic talent was not developing and that this was connected with the way the Party had dictated how poetry should be written. On his return to Poland he published several articles critical of the Party over the previous decade and supporting the idea of reform. He then published several anti-Stalinist poems in *Po Prostu*. He had become increasingly disgusted by the ideological barrenness of the Party and supported the *rewizjonisści*. What he witnessed in Poznań and Budapest in 1956, while working as a journalist and editor for *Nowa Kultura*, the leading Party weekly journal, finally broke his faith in Soviet-styled 'socialism' and cured him of any further interest in working with the Soviet Union. He soon became a leading dissident. Some of his comments to the VII ZLP Congress of November-December 1956, when he urged the writers to support the Hungarian cause by condemning Soviet intervention, were reported in *Nowa Kultura* 9 December 1956. In 1966 he published his *Life of Mayakowski*. Although he was still seeking 'socialism with a human face' at a time when it was

unfashionable to do so, the last of his poems to be published by the state appeared in 1974, at a time when he was supposedly a-political. Though it was clear that he was revolted by ideological sterility and rigidity, his poems were still unrepentently socialist in outlook. In the late 1970s, as well as taking part in numerous protests, demonstrations and rallies, he was a co-founder and editor of *Zapis*. He was interned for one year during Martial Law after helping to organise a strike at the Ursus tractor factory.

**WOŹNIAKOWSKI, Jacek**, b.1920. A Catholic writer, art historian and essayist who viewed 'socialism' and the capitalism that followed its collapse with equal contempt. Professor at KUL, affiliated with *Tygodnik Powszechny*, director of the Znak publishing house. He viewed very dimly the Church's desire to squash polemic and all criticism of the hierarchy in the name of unity against the Party. He said that the Church's desire to silence criticism of the hierarchy after the collapse of 'socialism' was part of its effort to re-assert its pre-war position, an unacceptable bid to impose conformism, even a kind of communism.

**ZABŁOCKI, Janusz**, b.1926. By 1950 a member of Pax. In 1956 Zabłocki led the defection of the 'Fronde' group, which consisted of most of the Pax youth movement. In 1958 founded, with Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the journal *Więź*. After this more or less abandoned writing to become a Znak Sejm deputy. In 1969 he set up an organisation called ODiSS (Centre for Documentation and Social Studies) designed to find middle ground between Pax and Znak: this Pax-like organisation published several journals, research on Polish Catholicism, Zabłocki's *Na polskim skrzyżowaniu dróg* and Andrzej Micewski's biography *Roman Dmowski*. In December 1981 Zabłocki protested in the Sejm at the imposition of martial law but soon fell into line with the government.

**ZABŁUDOWSKI, Tadeusz**, 1907-84. spent the war in the USSR where he was editor for the Union of Polish Patriots. 1944-48, Chief censor; dismissed in 1948 when it was discovered that he had once translated the works of Leon Trotsky. Until 1968 he worked in publishing and the press, but was dismissed from his job and expelled from the Party in the anti-Semitic campaign of 1968.

**ZAGAJEWSKI, Adam**, b.1945. Born in Lwów. Studied philosophy and psychology at Kraków University, where he also edited the magazine *Student* and the dissident journal *Zapis*. Described by Miłosz as a disillusioned young 'socialist', he is generally considered typical of the generation of 1968, the *nowa fala* (new wave). In 1968 he founded the Kraków literary group *Teraz* (Now). Made his début in 1972 with the collection *Komunikat*, and was immediately recognised as leading representative of the Generation of '68, and has since published six collections of verse, three novels and five collections of essays. Like his contemporaries he perceives the Polish language to be damaged by the Party: he is concerned to restore simple truths to language, is obsessed with philosophical aspects of language and with restoring civic responsibility to society through poetry. In 1974 he received the Koscielski award for the volume of essays *The Unrepresented World* (with Julian Kornhauser), a book which was significant in locating his generation's response to the language of Polish 'socialism'. He was banned several times from 1976 onwards after his protests at proposed changes to the constitution. In 1979 he received a scholarship to travel to West Berlin. A strong supporter of Solidarność he has lived in Paris since 1982, editing a Polish-language journal.

**ZAWADZKI, Wacław**, 1900-78. He had been a member of the PPS but had been expelled in 1948 when it was merged to form the PZPR. Worked as the director of the PPS Wiedza publishing house, and joined the PZPR after October 1956 in the hope that the Party could and would reform itself, and became deputy editor in chief of PIW, the State Publishing Institute. In 1967 he resigned from the Party in protest at the expulsion of Kołakowski. He is the editor of many memoirs, an expert in the field of publishing, a bibliophile, member of ZLP and Polish PEN. A member of KSS-KOR from October 1976.

**ZAWIEYSKI, Jerzy**, 1902-69. Born in a small village near Łódź. Studied philosophy, and art history at Warsaw, Wilno and Paris universities. A professional actor, he made his début as a novelist in 1932 and went on to become write plays, diaries, and novels. He travelled extensively in Africa and Europe. A noted figure of the Catholic liberal left, close in outlook to the young Catholic intellectuals trained at KUL. He was one of a small but strong group of Catholic writers to take part in the 1949 Writers Congress in Szczecin, at which Sokorski had introduced Socrealizm and the ideological offensive to writers. While Zawieyski and other Catholics were prepared to go along with the reconstruction of Poland and cooperation with the 'socialists', they objected to *partyność* as a legitimate literary aim. His

group was isolated at the Congress and while many found it difficult to publish outside the Catholic press (*Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Znak*) in the years that followed, Zawieyski was unable to publish at all until 1956. He was one of the first *Znak* deputies to the Sejm in 1957, and in recognition of his integrity he was elected president of KIK, vice president of ZLP and was a member of the State Council 1957-68. Over the next few years he produced twenty five plays, four novels, two collections of short stories, several volumes of essays and articles. While labelled a Catholic writer Zawieyski always objected that there was no such thing, that religious subjects were limiting and that he wrote on moral and psychological themes from a purely human perspective. In 1968 he was the only *Znak* deputy to protest at the anti-Semitic and anti-intellectual course of events, was removed from his post on the State Council and died in obscure circumstances. Miłosz said 'His spiritual adventures...are moving in their evocation of the authentic torment of a modern Catholic'.

**ZÓŁKIEWSKI, Stefan**, b.1911. Studied Humanities and later taught at Warsaw University, where he appears to have joined the KPP in 1936. During the war he stayed in Poland and edited underground communist newspapers in Warsaw. A socrealist essayist and critic associated with *Kuźnica*, which he edited in the years 1945-49, during which time he was also Professor of Polish literature at Warsaw University, head of the Party's Department of Culture and in 1948 founded IBL. In the years 1955-59 he was Minister for Education and from 1957 was the first editor of *Polityka*. He edited several cultural journals in the 1960s and was a full member of the praesidium of the Polish Academy of Science. Until 1962 he was the director of *Nowa Kultura*.

**ŻUKOWSKI, Tadeusz**, b.1955 Gwardziejsk near Kaliningrad, of refugee parents from Belorus. The family settled on the Pomeranian coast in a village called Trzebiatów. Studied Polish at Poznań university. Made his début in 1982.

**ŻULAWSKI, Juliusz**, b.1911. A distinguished poet, essayist, novelist and the translator of Byron and Walt Whitman. He has been President of Polish PEN since his election in 1978. His handling of the government on Polish PEN's behalf brought him enormous respect from the literary community. His best-known works are *Past Tense Imperfect*, *Time Regained*, and his memoirs *From Home*. In 1971 he was awarded the American PEN Kister Prize, and the New York Jurzykowski Foundation Award in 1971.



### APPENDIX THREE: CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS

There is a specialised group in the press unit that reads religious publications...we call them the Saints. Another group, called the Funnies, would attend movie shows, theatres, cabarets. Work in the theatre was easier because one could hardly correct Musset or Fredro. One had to watch the staging...Censors of Posters had an easy job; censors of books terribly dull. The most noteworthy group, known as the aristocracy of censors, are the press people. The vanguard. They are the foundation of the business. It is the largest and the brightest unit. The first line of fire.

K-62, 'I, The Censor', *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 8 May 1981.

It is impossible to talk of Polish writing or publishing without reference to the system of censorship. It is difficult to grasp the scale and scope of censorship control: without permission from the office of the censor it was not possible to place a notice in the deaths column of the local newspaper, to order printed stationary, visiting cards, blank application forms or to decide the lettering on a grave stone. Kisielewski, referred to censorship as 'The Great Triumph of Moronism', a sentiment that most of his countrymen agreed with.<sup>1</sup> Yet even though it was a nationwide system, a basic characteristic of the Stalinist regime, and reached into every corner of the media, we know very little about the workings of GUKPPiW (Main Office for the Control of Press, Performance and Exhibitions). Indeed, one of the first rules of the censor was that no mention of the existence of the censor should be permitted. As KOR and TKN continually pointed out, no provision was made for the office of the censor in the constitution of the Polish People's Republic, and its legal right to function at all was continually questioned. It is important to realise, however, that Poland's censorship arrangements, with a central office and regional branches, differed from those of most Warsaw Pact countries. In East Germany, for example, the *Stasi* (Security Service) supervised a system where they appointed censors to reside in each publishing house, so that censorship was carried through simultaneously with the editorial process. Writers remained on the other side of the desk from editors and censors, and unlike in Poland, there was little possibility of collusion since the *Stasi* also ran an extensive system of informers.

One source of note on the subject of censorship is an interview 'I, The Censor', given by 31 year old ex-Censor K-62 to Barbara Łopieńska in November 1980 and published, against GUKPPiW's wishes, in May 1981.<sup>2</sup> The interview was threatened by GUKPPiW, but printers refused to print the paper without the interview. GUKPPiW finally agreed to let the article go with only a few cuts. Against usual practice, which did not acknowledge that cuts had been made at all, publication indicated censorship interventions by the use of brackets. K-62, apart from some information about the kind of person who becomes a censor and the path by which they find their way to this work, also revealed that in each of the Wojewódstwo capitals there was a GUKPPiW office consisting of a chairman, two vice chairmen, unit directors specialising in the press, books, performances, and analysis and training. Also each local office had facilities for printing its own material. According to K-62 in the 'old days' of the late 1940s and early 1950s censors had believed in what they did. Indeed, feeling within the office was so good that they went together in the autumn to help bring in the harvest. However, by the late 1970s and early 1980s a note of thorough and extremely bitter cynicism had invested the whole enterprise and those who joined the office had no high motivation at all. If anything it was quite the reverse, a job in censorship was seen as a simple career move, and increasingly those recruited seem to have been failed or frustrated writers and intellectuals who took the opportunity to vent their spleen or have their revenge on writers and perhaps on a society they felt owed them something more than they could achieve by more accepted career routes. This attitude was probably quite common among the younger censors. As a different censor once told me:

Censorship is a game, that's all. The artists must all be made to feel important, dangerous. Their stage play will be cut to ribbons and then they'll appeal to a higher authority, and the whole thing will drag on for months with discussions and alterations and, finally, they'll get their play without any serious changes or cuts. And they'll be happy. Far happier than if they had just been allowed to go ahead with it in the first place. They will feel that they have won a victory for Art, for Freedom, for Poland. You have to remember that if their play were passed uncut, without any problems, they would realise that what they have here is a harmless squib, rather than an atom bomb. It is the function of the censor to keep these people interested in squibs.<sup>3</sup>

Most of our information about the office of the censor is derived from the 700 documents smuggled out of Poland to Sweden by the Kraków censor C-36, Tomasz Strzyżewski, in February 1977. It is not possible to make up any sort of complete picture of the work of GUKPPiW. After Strzyżewski's escape the regulations governing access and availability of censorship materials and reports, which were already strict, were considerably tightened. His materials provide us with a snapshot of the work and priorities of GUKPPiW during the years 1974-77. The scope and depth of the censorship arrangements are difficult to appreciate. Censorship, taken together with the regime's monopoly of publishing outlets and the effect the Party had upon the Polish language, combined to control thought and expression to a remarkable degree. Almost every thing published by the state publishing houses went through the offices of the censor on Ulica Mysia, or through the local regional office, three times. The editors were required to first get permission to type-set, then to print, then writer and editor were required to defend their work together in front of the censor before they got permission to distribute the finished product. A book could be confiscated at any stage, and it is thought that several finished books were pulped because the censors noticed something they had overlooked at an earlier stage. It was sometimes possible for the writers and editor to get the censor to be responsible for making 'corrections', and it was also possible to appeal against the decisions of the censor to the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry for Arts and Culture, and the Ministry of Security, but very little is known about the process: it was also sometimes possible to appeal to the Party Control Commission.

Barańczak, from exile in Harvard, has made the point that censorship is not only intended to prevent the free spread of information and hamper the growth and development of independent thought, but is also designed to delete events that were not supposed to happen:

Any phenomenon, be it the deterioration of the economy, the publication of a dissident author's book, industrial pollution, or an airplane crash, can be magically made non-existent if no public mention of it is allowed (even though real people stand in lines, read underground books, suffer from pollution and die in airplane crashes.) Inversely, the wishful thinking of the leaders can magically become reality if the mass media, statistics, posters, and pop songs all project the image of a flourishing, dissent-free, clean, and fail-safe country (even though, again, real people stand in lines, read underground books...) This is, at least, the totalitarian ruler's dream. Censorship is necessary simply in order to let them keep dreaming. And the most frightening thing is that here, in the less schizophrenic part of the world <the west>, we most often discuss the 'views', 'personalities', and 'policies' of these dreamers as if they were wide awake, as if they really knew and wanted to know what is going on in their countries.<sup>4</sup>

The following selected details relate to the censorship of literature and are drawn from Strzyżewski's documents: *Czarna księga cenzury PRL: tajne dokumenty Głównego Urzędu Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk*, I & II, Aneks, London, 1986. <Additional editorial material in angled brackets>.<sup>5</sup>

#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR CENSORS

Instructions to Branch Offices, 2 March 1977

ARTICLE 2: Central Officials and Institutions,  
Drafts of Resolutions and Ordinances

Section 3: ...all works (books, handbooks) concerning the current structure and functioning of the state administration should be held up and referred to the authorities of GUKPPIW. (10 October 1974; revised 2 April 1975; revised 8 April 1975.)

ARTICLE 9: Culture

1 The names of the following persons may not be published and their scientific contribution may not be emphasised in positive terms: Bronisław Baczko, Włodzimierz Brus, Leszek Kołakowski, Krzysztof Pomian, However, brief information on the subject of work published by them may be permitted as well as all material criticising their creativity. In non-serial publications, scientific, socio-political and special periodicals their scientific work may be permitted and their contribution cited, provided that the normal censorship criteria are observed. The above-mentioned names and the titles of their works may also be permitted in bibliographical materials, lists of names, annotations, commentaries and so on. No work by Kazimierz Orłowski may be permitted for publication. Possible publications concerning this author should be approved by the GUKPPIW authorities on an *ad hoc* basis. Any publication by Stefan Kisielewski may receive permission for printing after prior consultation (each time) with GUKPPIW.

2 In scientific and special works, memoirs and monographs, the names, citations and discussion of the creativity and activity of the following persons is permitted without consultation: Ferdynand Goetel, Oskar Halecki, Marek Hłasko (cancelled), Marian Kukiel <strongly anti-Soviet member of the London government in exile>, Stanisław Kot, Czesław Miłosz, Zygmunt Nowakowski, Andrzej Panufnik <Sir Andrzej Panufnik, composer and conductor of the Warsaw Philharmonic, twice nominated for the State Laureate, awarded the Order of the Banner of Labour, but labelled formalistic, decadent and alien to the age of socialism in 1952; granted asylum in Britain in 1954, died 1991> (cancelled 11 February 1977), Artur Maria-Świnarski (cancelled), Władysław Półgłówny-Malinowski, Aleksander Wat, Kazimierz Wierzyński (cancelled), Józef Wittlin.

(a) However, the creative work of the above mentioned persons is not to be over-rated, and they are not to be presented in too favourable a light. In publications directly discussing the life and work of the above-mentioned persons, if this is not done in the text itself, the principle should be followed that in the foreword, epilogue or annotation a short description is given of the person with the position he has taken in the past, or now holds, in relation to our regime. In the specialist, cultural, literary and socio-political press, articles, essays and works concerning the above mentioned persons may be made provided that the principles given above are followed. However, their names and the titles of their works should be eliminated from the daily press, radio and television, except for critical information.

(b) In relation to the persons listed below, the principle of eliminating their names and mention of their works from the press, radio, television and non-serial publications not of a scientific nature should be followed. This does not apply to purely scientific publications, critical discussions, bibliographies or indexes and lists of names, in which names of the persons mentioned below and the titles of their works may be permitted where justified by the nature of the work:

Zygmunt Bauman

Zbigniew Brzeziński (cancelled 18 December 1976)

Edward Etler

George Flemming (Jerzy Działak)

Aleksander Ford

Henryk Grynberg

Piotr Guze

Marian Hemar

Łukasz Hirszowicz

Nina Karsow

Roman Karst

Julian Katz-Suchy

Jan Kott

Karol Lapter  
Michał Mirski  
Aleksander Peczennik  
Roman Palester (cancelled 11 February 1977)  
Stefan Ritterman  
Kalman Segal  
Dawid Sfar  
Szymon Szechter  
Leopold Tyrmand  
Andrzej Wirth  
Stanisław Wygodzki  
Eugeniusz Żytomirski  
Krystyna Żywulska  
Andrzej Brycht  
Witold Wirpsza.

3 No information should be permitted concerning the following books by Władysław Bienkowski:  
*Motory i hamulce socjalizmu* <Motors and Brakes of Socialism>,  
*Kryzys rolnictwa* <Crisis of Agriculture>,  
*Drogi wyjścia* <Ways Out>,  
*Socjologia klęski* <Sociology of Defeat>.

If whole items or excerpts are announced for publication, this material should be intercepted and referred to GUKPPIW.

4 In connection with the anti-Polish anti-socialist attitude of Henryk Jasiczek (Czech citizen of Polish nationality, residing in Czech Cieszyn, member of the Union of Polish and Czech writers), no works by this author, and no favourable assessments of his work, should be passed for publication.

5 Publication of the works of Vladimir Voinovich, Vladimir Maksimov or Nadezhda Mandelstam, any mention, discussion or information about these writers or their writing is not permitted. However, in the mass media short items related to Osip Mandelstam may be permitted, but if his works are presented for publication, the GUKPPIW should be advised. The content of this prohibition is intended solely for the information of censors (renewed 11 February 1976).

15 (a) All works, articles, and memoirs should have stricken from them any content intended to present events from the most recent history of Poland from a position of the political Right, to rehabilitate or popularise in society those traditions which are opposed to socialist Poland (for example, attempts to rehabilitate the period between the wars, the leaders of the second republic, to reduce their responsibility for the September defeat, attempts to provide justification for right underground groups from the period of the occupation by showing their struggle against the occupying forces while overlooking the battle waged by the Left, etc.

(b) The GUKPPIW authorities should have referred to it all material, information, obituaries, necrologies and the like announcing or giving information on various forms paying tribute to political and military groups or their key figures which in the past represented right-wing programmes or political views or military groups of the period between the wars (regiments, brigades and so on) or to soldiers of these groups. For example, religious funeral services, cemetery meetings, meetings at monuments, places of battles on the 1939 campaign, the Warsaw Uprising, etc.

(c) The GUKPPIW authorities should have referred to it all information (including biographical notes, chronologies, necrologies, obituaries) concerning the deaths of leaders and key figures of the pre-war power structure, émigré governments, active members of right wing organisations, unions, groups and so on operating abroad among émigrés.

20 PWN, <Polish State Scientific Publishers> will soon issue a supplement to the 1963 *Słownik Pisarzy Polskich* <Dictionary of Polish Writers>. The supplement will be distributed only through inside sales. Criticism of the manner of distribution adopted, and appeals to increase the size of the run or to run another edition should not be permitted. (See information note 42/74. 13 December 1974, cancelled 6 May 1976.)

21 In evaluating materials on the subject of the death of Polish officers in Katyn, the following criteria should be followed:

(a) No attempts to charge the Soviet Union with the responsibility for the death of the Polish officers in the Katyn forests are permitted.

(b) In scientific writing, memoirs, and biographies, formulations such as the following may be permitted: 'shot by the Nazis in Katyn', 'died in Katyn', 'fell in Katyn'. If such phrases as 'fell in Katyn' are used with a date of death, the date may be given only as coming only after July 1941.

(c) The term 'prisoners of war' should be struck from references to Polish soldiers and officers interned by the Red Army in September 1939. The correct term is 'interned'. It is permissible to use the names of the camps: Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostaszków, in which Polish officers were interned and later shot by the Nazis in the Katyn forests.

(d) Necrologies, obituaries, announcements of religious services announced for the intention of the victims of Katyn and information concerning other ways of paying respect to their memory may be permitted only with the approval of GUKPPIW authorities. Doubtful matters and questions not covered by this prohibition should be referred to GUKPPIW authorities. This prohibition is intended solely for the information of the censors. If there are any violations of this prohibition, the prohibition must not be referred to, and its existence must not be revealed. (See also information note 2/75. 14 January 1975.)

22 In 1973-4 Ossolineum publishing house issued a small edition of *Archiwum Polityczne Ignacego Paderewskiego* <Political Archive of Ignacy Paderewski>. The book was distributed though closed sales. Criticism of the size of the run or the distribution of this publication is not permitted. All critical assessment of the content of *Archiwum* should be referred to the GUKPPIW authorities. (8 July 1975)

24 No information or mention of the decorations below, decided upon or awarded in the past by Poland's bourgeois leaders, the émigré government, or émigré organisations abroad is permitted:

- (a) Cross of Merit for Heroism;
- (b) Cross of Merit of the Armies of Central Lithuania;
- (c) Volunteer's Cross for the War 1918-21;
- (d) Volunteer's Medal for the War 1918-21;
- (e) Memorial Medal for the War 1918-21;
- (f) National Army Cross (Krzyż AK);
- (g) Medal of the Defence of Freedom - reverse 'Poland to its Defender';
- (h) Medal to Honour Polish Fighters for Freedom.

Information and mention concerning other medals awarded during the second republic, World War II, and after the war abroad but not renewed in People's Poland may be permitted for publication only in scientific historical publications, veterans' publications, numismatic information, or mentioned in necrologies and posthumous memoirs of persons decorated. (Information note 35/75 contains a list of these decorations. 15 November 1975.)

#### ARTICLE 11: Miscellaneous

Section 21/B: All announcements of the KIK <Clubs of the Catholic Intelligentsia> and the monthly publications *Więź* and *Znak* must be approved by the GUKPPIW authorities. (18 March 1976).

#### ARTICLE 12: National Instructions

<Under these rules a number of specific interventions were recorded. 26 of the 140 Interventions listed for the period 1975-7 were are of a 'literary nature'. The following is not a translation but rather, a selection indicating those interventions related to literature. The material is clearly incomplete and it

must be assumed that most of the guidelines for the censorship of books was subsumed under other general headings. Also it must be assumed that unlike those recorded here most interventions were not made in documentary form but were, as K-62 suggests, conducted over the telephone. The long hand-over period from the Round-table talks of 1989 to the democratic elections of 1991, during which the Party retained control of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Censorship and the security apparatus, means that much if not all of the sensitive material seen by the censor in the years 1945-90 has probably now been destroyed. Attempts to reconstruct uncensored materials from this period will depend on whether the writers concerned kept copies. >

- 12 Closure of an experimental theatre in Puławy because of failure to adhere to the rules of censorship;
- 26 Control of announcements of state literary prize winners;
- 28 Censoring material related to the magazine *Szpilki*'s coverage of satirical cabaret at the Opole song festival;
- 34 Censorship of obituary notices, funeral announcements;
- 35 In connection with closing down 'reorganising' the publication of journals in the coastal region, the suppression of all favourable reference to the journals to be eliminated;
- 42 Censorship of an article on membership of the Polish Democratic Party;
- 45 Control of all references to the writer, Melchior Wankowicz (19 March 1974, cancelled 22 January 1976);
- 53 Suppression of sociological discussion about Polish social problems.
- 54 Suppression of a discussion about an article on scouting;
- 56 Control of reviews and references to Krystyna Kersten's *Repatriacja ludności polskiej po II-ej wojnie światowej* <The repatriation of Polish people after the second world war>, Ossolineum, Warsaw, 1974. 23 November 1974 cancelled 4 February 1976;
- 61 Suppression of all reference to Jerzy Stembrowicz's *Struktura, organizacja i tryb funkcjonowania rządu PRL* <Structure, organisation and functioning method of the government of the People's Republic of Poland>. 28 February 1975 cancelled 23 October 1975;
- 62 See number 84.
- 76 Intervention to control all reviews and mention of Adam Schaff's *Skice o strukturalizmie* <Sketches on structuralism>, Książka i Wiedza;
- 83 Control of references to the visiting Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko;
- 84 <With number 62> Interventions to control all reviews and references to Władysław Bartoszewski's book *1859 dni Warszawy*. <1,859 Days of Warsaw. The book had been awarded the Polish PEN Club Prize> (21 February 1975 cancelled 13 April 1975);
- 85 Blackout on the information that President of Uganda, Idi Amin, intended to erect a statue to Adolf Hitler. (30 April 1975, cancelled 12 September 1975);
- 90 Intervention to eliminate all favourable reviews of Władysław Machejek's 4 volume *Czekam na słowo ostatnie* <I'm waiting for the final word> and to prevent serialisation or publication of extracts. (22 May 1975, cancelled 4 February 1976);
- 94 Control of reviews and references to K.T.Toeplitz's *Opakowanie zastępcze* <Substitute packing>. (14 June 1975, cancelled 22 January 1976)
- 95 Control of all reference to, or discussion of, *Encyklopedia Warszawy*, PWN. (26 June 1975 cancelled 4 December 1975);
- 100 Control of foreign language announcements;
- 101 Suppression of all reviews and information on G.R.Feiwel's *The Intellectual Capital of Michał Kalecki: A Study in Economic Theory and Policy*, published in the USA. 11 August 1975 cancelled 22 January 1976. <Kalecki was one of Poland's most talented economists, but for reasons that have never been clear, was ignored by the Party>;
- 117 Suppression of all references or reviews of Adam Majewski's, *Wojenne opowiesci porucznika Szemrąja*, <The war tales of Lieutenant Szemraj> Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, Lublin, 1975. 11 December 1975, cancelled 4 December 1976;

- 120 Suppression of discussion about an article in *Polityka*, the following editorial explanation and the subsequent fate of the editor. (9 January 1976 cancelled 12 April 1976);
- 125 Intervention to suppress discussion of critical assessments of Polish literature following articles in *Życie Warszawy* and *Literatura*. The final contribution to the debate is to be an article by Jerzy Putrament to appear in *Życie Warszawy*. (29 January 1976 cancelled 12 April 1976);
- 127 Suppression of any description of the activities of *Parkan*, a group of poets in Bydgoszcz who pasted their works onto official announcements and bulletin boards. (13 February 1976);
- 137 Suppression of a reprinting of A.Młeczko's satirical comic strip from the magazines *Student* and *Odgłosy*. (26 May 1976 cancelled 27 December 1976).

#### ARTICLE 13: Local Instructions

<A total 29 local interventions were recorded in the period 1975-77, of which 11 were mainly concerned with suppressing or controlling information and discussion of local affairs. Only occasionally did this include any substantial control of literary, historical and cultural matters: e.g. local intervention number 164, dated 13 January 1977, concerned the problem of too many references to Roman Polanski. >

141 In connection with the death of Antoni Słonimski the following censorship principles should be adhered to:

- (a) The whole press may publish the PAP communiqué;
- (b) *Życie Warszawy* will publish obituaries by the Ministry of Culture and Arts, publishers and organisations, reminiscences by St.R.Dobrowolski (without right to reprint);
- (c) The central literary press, certain regional publications and the cultural editors of Polish Radio and Television will issue appropriate material and obituaries (after having them approved by the Department for Press, Radio and Television of the PZPR Central Committee);
- (d) All individual editor's recollections, commentaries, notes and the like must be approved by the Department of the Press Radio and Television of the PZPR Central Committee (5 July 1976, cancelled 16 October 1976).

#### NOTES

- 1 S.Kisielewski, 'The School of Moronism or GTM', (*Kultura*, Paris, July-August, 1979) in: A.Brumberg ed., *Poland: Genesis of a Revolution*, Vintage, New York, 1983, pp.281-4.
- 2 Reprinted in full in: *Index on Censorship*, no.6, 1981; also in a different translation, in: A.Brumberg ed., *Poland: Genesis of a Revolution*, Vintage, New York, 1983, pp.252-262.
- 3 C.Tighe, 'A State of Mind', *Planet*, no.64, August/September 1987, p.61.
- 4 'Big Brother's Red Pencil' (1984), in: S.Barańczak, *Breathing Under Water and Other East European Essays*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1990, p.66.
- 5 *Czarna księga cenzury PRL*, ANEKS, Uppsala-London, 1978; G.Schöpflin, ed., *Censorship and Political Communication*, Frances Pinter, London, 1983; J.Curry, *The Black Book of Polish Censorship*, Vintage, New York, 1984.

## APPENDIX FOUR: TABLES

TABLE ONE: THE SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF THE KPP: 1931

Category	Numbers	%
Industrial Workers	1,200	10.0
Peasants	3,360	28.0
Farm Labourers	360	3.0
Intellectuals	7,080	59.0

Source: adapted from: R.F.Staar, *Poland: 1944-62: The Sovietization of a Captive People*, Louisiana State University Press, New Orleans, 1962, p.72.

TABLE TWO: SOCIAL ORIGINS OF THE PARTY: 1945-61  
(% of membership)

	worker	agricultural	intellectual	other*
1945	62.2	28.2	9.6	---
1948	53.6	26.5	17.6	2.3
1949	51.9	19.2	26.1	2.8
1950	50.6	14.1	28.9	6.4
1952	60.0	17.0	20.0	3.0
1954	48.3	13.2	36.4	2.1
1957	39.9	12.8	38.8	8.5
1961	35.8	11.5	43.5	5.0

\* Artisans, retired people, housewives, etc. Sources: R.F.Staar, *Poland: 1944-62: The Sovietization of a Captive People*, 1962, Table 23. M.K.Dziewanowski, *The Communist Party of Poland: An Outline of History*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1959.

TABLE THREE: WHITE COLLAR AND INTELLECTUAL MEMBERSHIP OF PZPR: 1960-61

Engineers	17,315	3.9%
Technicians	41,472	9.4%
Forestry and Agriculture	10,295	2.3%
Professors & Research workers	3,446	0.8%
Journalists, artists & writers	2,989	0.7%
Teachers	35,102	7.9%
Economists & planners	38,308	8.7%
Government, administration	14,528	3.3%
Economic apparatus	23,946	5.4%
Students	3,734	0.9%
Total		43.5%

Source: adapted from: R.F.Staar, *Poland: 1944-62: The Sovietization of a Captive People*, p.176.



TABLE FOUR: ESTIMATED PARTY MEMBERSHIP: 1922-84

1922	10,000		KPRP
1924	5,000		
1925	2,100		
1926	3,000		
1927	6,900		KPP
1930	6,600 *		
1933	10,300		
1942	4,000		
1943	8,000		PPR
1944	21,649		
1945	30,000 - 69,239	January	
	176,337 - 262,652	February-March	
	301,695 - 206,510	April-June	
	188,904	July	
1946	235,450 - 347,115	January-June	
	364,000 - 556,000	July-December	
1947	555,880 - 848,000	January-December	
1948	531,000	November	PPS***
1948	958,000 - 1,500,000		PPR
1949	1,368,000		PZPR
1950	1,360,000		
1951	1,138,000		
1952	1,129,000		
1953	1,226,000		
1954	1,297,000		
1956	1,344,000		
1957	1,283,000		
1960	1,018,000 - 1,093,000		
1961	1,155,000 - 1,270,000		
1962	1,310,000		
1963	1,397,000		
1970	2,320,000		
1975	2,440,000		
1980	3,080,000	February	
	3,150,000 - 3,010,000	July-December ***	
1981	2,850,000 - 2,690,000	July-December	
1982	2,330,000	December	
1983	2,190,000	December	
1984	2,170,000	December	

\* E.H.Carr gives a figure of around 14,000, half of whom were in captivity. E.H.Carr, *The Twilight of Comintern 1930-35*, Macmillan, London, 1986, pp.257 & 263. \*\* The figure at around the time of the membership purge that marked the unification of the PPS and PPR. \*\*\* It is one of the ironies of Polish social life (and testimony to the Party's demoralising effect) that, contrary to popular mythology, Party membership rose steadily throughout the 1970s, and in times of economic distress tended to rise rather than fall. Membership of the PZPR reached its zenith in July 1980 just a few days before shipyard strikes broke out in Gdansk. Sources: PPR: *Rezolucje, odezwy, instrukcje i okólniki komitetu centralnego - 1946-47*, KiW, Warsaw, 1961, p.212; G.D.Jackson, *Comintern and Peasant in East Europe: 1919-30*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1966; R.F.Staar, *Poland: 1944-62: The Sovietization of a Captive People*; B.Bierut, 'Sprawozdanie KC na II zjazd PZPR', *Trybuna Ludu*, 12 March 1954; M.K.Dziewanowski, *The Communist Party of Poland: An Outline of History, 1959*; G.Sanford, *Military Rule in Poland: The Rebuilding of Communist Power 1981-83*, Croom Helm, London, 1986, p.189; N.Bethell, *Gomulka: His Poland and His Communism*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972; p.93. J.Wiatr, 'The Hegemonic Party System in Poland', in: J.Wiatr (ed.),

*Studies in Polish Political System*, Ossolineum, Wrocław, 1967, p.115; J.Coutouvidis & J.Reynolds, *Poland: 1939-47*, Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1986, pp.181, 236 & 284; K.Kersten, *The Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland, 1943-48*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1992, p.466.

TABLE FIVE: HIERARCHY OF PRESTIGE GROUPINGS, OCCUPATIONS AND POSITIONS IN TERMS OF PERCEIVED MATERIAL BENEFIT: 1962-67

	Occupation	Prestige	Material Benefit	ZLP
1	University Professor	1-4	4	
2	Doctor	1-2	2	2
3	Teacher	1-3	14	11
4	Engineer	1-4	7	2
5	Pilot			
6	Lawyer	1		3
7	Agrotechnician			1
8	Government Minister	5	1	1
9	Journalist	1		10
10	Skilled steel worker	3-5	5	
11	Skilled turner	3-5	8	
12	Priest		6	
13	Nurse	2	16	
14	Factory foreman	3		
15	Bookkeeper	2	11	
16	Master tailor	5		
17	Master locksmith	3-5	3	
18	Office Department Manager	2		
19	Private farmer		10	1
20	Professional Army Officer		9	1
21	Store keeper	5		
22	Railway guard	2		
23	Police officer		13	
24	Office desk officer	2		3
25	Office secretary	2		
26	Sales clerk	2	12	
27	Unskilled worker	4	15	2
28	Office cleaner	4	18	
29	Unskilled agri. worker	4	17	1

Prestige groups: 1 = inteligencja, 2 = Skilled worker, 3 = Private initiative, 4 = White collar, 5 = Unskilled worker. The figures listed under ZLP indicate the percentage of union membership with this background or professional training in 1964. Sources: adapted from: W.Wesołowski, 'Changes in Class Structure in Poland', Tables 12 & 13, in: J.Wiatr ed., *Studies in Polish Political System*, Ossolineum, Warsaw, 1967, pp.65 n.30, 78-9; A.Sarapata, 'Iustum Pretium', *Studia Sociologiczne*, no.3/6, 1962; W.Wesołowski & A.Sarapata, 'Hierarchie zawodów i stanowisk', *Studia Sociologiczne*, no.2/2, 1961, p.104; A.Siciński, *Literaci polscy: przemiany zawodu na tle przemian kultury współczesnej*, Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolinskih Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Wrocław-Warsaw, 1971, Table 40.

TABLE SIX: POLISH ILLITERACY 1921-60

1921	34.6 per cent (7,552,900)
1931	22.6 per cent (5,945,900)
1950	5.5 per cent (1,144,600)
1960	2.7 per cent (644,000)

Source: *Rocznik statystyczny: 1966*, vol.XXVI, GUS, Warsaw, 1966, p.34. It is generally said that illiteracy in Poland was 'wiped out' in the 1950s, and that by 1960 only the aged were resistant to tuition.

TABLE SEVEN: LIBRARIES: 1956-78

Year	Libraries	Stock	Av.Readers per library	Borrowings
1956	42,200	89,300,000	8,164	116,200,000
1960	44,800	115,700,000	9,883	151,400,000
1965	50,100	162,600,000	14,111	219,900,000
1970	52,400	214,700,000	17,387	276,700,000
1975	45,900	258,300,000	17,841	288,100,000
1978	37,600	276,400,000	18,239	271,100,000

Source: *Facts About Poland*, 'The Dissemination of Culture', Ref.PF.VI.1-1, Interpress, Warsaw, 1980.

TABLE EIGHT: CREATIVE LITERATURE FOR ADULTS: 1945-87

Date	Titles	Total copies	Average print run
1945-50	622	8,961,000	14,400
1951-55	790	14,411,000	18,200
1956-60	896	13,753,000	15,300
1961-65	831	12,704,000	15,300
1966-70	945	21,764,000	23,000
1971-75	1,061	28,780,000	27,100
1976-80	1,118	30,815,000	27,600
1981-85	1,035	37,544,000	36,300
1986	1,084	47,295,000	43,600
1987	1,217	55,546,000	45,600

Source: Table 45, *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach XXXIII: 1987*, Biblioteka Narodowa - Instytut Bibliograficzny, Warsaw, 1989.

TABLE NINE: TOTAL STATE BOOK PUBLICATION: 1986-87

	1986	1987
By publishers*	243,100,000 (94.4%)	262,320,600 (95.6%)
Other organisations	14,429,500 (5.6%)	12,004,400 (4.4%)
Total copies	257,529,500	274,325,000
Total editions	9,881	10,416

Source: Tables 1 & 44, *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach XXXIII: 1987*. There is a slight discrepancy in official figures: Table 44 gives 1986 - 249,446,000 copies, and 1987 - 267,611,000 copies.

TABLE TEN: TOTAL BOOKS PUBLISHED: 1945-85

Year	Titles	No. of Copies
1945	1,107	10,454,000
1946	3,254	38,931,000
1947	3,266	49,544,000
1948	4,791	67,977,000
1949	4,602	72,905,000
1950	4,611	118,860,000
1951	6,101	98,060,000
1952	6,237	95,450,000
1953	6,226	86,810,000
1954	6,293	91,110,000
1955	6,635	90,900,000
1956	6,461	86,720,000
1957	5,873	86,380,000
1958	5,667	83,308,000
1959	6,207	91,073,000
1960	6,879	92,290,000
1961	6,843	79,258,000
1962	7,082	76,465,000
1963	7,333	78,973,000
1964	8,260	89,319,000
1965	8,509	91,619,000
1966	8,233	98,523,000
1967	8,817	103,576,000
1968	9,361	116,128,000
1969	9,413	109,016,000
1970	10,038	112,245,000
1971	10,443	131,081,000
1972	10,760	137,648,000
1973	10,744	135,755,000
1974	10,749	139,529,000
1975	10,277	143,871,000
1976	11,418	159,533,000
1977	11,552	149,360,000
1978	11,849	143,674,000
1979	11,191	151,151,000
1980	11,919	147,138,000
1981	10,435	133,852,000
1982	9,814	178,050,000
1983	8,789	194,922,000
1984	9,195	229,755,000
1985	9,649	246,321,000

Sources: *Facts About Poland*, 'The Dissemination of Culture', Ref.PF.VI.1-1, Interpress, Warsaw, 1980: Table 44, *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach XXXIII: 1987*, Biblioteka Narodowa - Instytut Bibliograficzny.

TABLE ELEVEN: PUBLISHING HISTORIES: TITLES IN PRINT 1945-87

	'44-45	56/65	66/75	76/80	81/85	86	87
J.Andrzejewski (74)	19	23	14	7	7	1	3
M.Białoszewski (27)	---	5	4	10	5	-	-
T.Borowski (38)	15	5	10	4	3	-	1
W.Broniewski (98)	35	22	23	7	6	3	2
O.Budrewicz (98)	10	15	37	21	10	1	4
J.Czechowicz (39)	1	9	13	3	10	1	2
M.Dąbrowska (119)	25	32	40	11	8	-	3
J.Dobraczyński (210)	42	46	46	29	30	9	9
B.Drozdowski (38)	---	9	17	9	1	1	1
J.Ficowski (41)	4	11	19	-	5	-	2
K.Gałczyński (81)	11	22	22	9	11	1	5
A.Gołubiew (49)	16	7	10	2	7	5	2
S.Grochowiak (32)	---	11	10	8	1	1	1
J.Haraszynowicz (48)	---	9	15	8	12	3	1
T.Hołuż (52)	8	15	13	11	3	-	2
J.Iwaszkiewicz (178)	32	45	42	39	15	3	2
M.Jastrun (83)	34	17	18	6	6	1	1
A.Kamińska (63)	4	9	32	5	12	-	1
T.Konwicki (45)	12	10	11	5	5	1	1
Z.Kossak (102)	18	41	28	4	8	1	2
I.Krasicki (60)	24	7	7	7	10	3	2
J.Krzyszton (26)	2	5	8	5	5	-	1
M.Kunczewicz (69)	2	15	20	16	13	2	1
S.Lem (116)	10	26	45	14	16	3	2
W.Lysiak (27)	---	---	2	9	11	3	2
W.Machejek (69)	15	18	22	7	4	-	3
H.Malewska (30)	10	8	4	4	2	1	1
S.Mrozek (28)	2	11	6	2	2	-	1
Z.Nałkowska (103)	27	22	26	14	10	3	1
I.Newerly (71)	27	17	15	6	4	-	3
T.Nowak (48)	2	10	17	14	1	1	3
J.Parandowski (128)	34	40	30	14	6	1	3
T.Parnicki (57)	1	18	23	7	7	-	1
M.Pawlikowska (27)	1	3	9	4	5	3	2
J.Putrament (131)	21	37	41	20	8	1	3
K.Pruszyński (37)	10	13	7	2	2	2	1
T.Różewicz (67)	11	14	24	10	5	2	1
A.Słonimski (41)	5	15	14	1	3	1	2
W.Sokorski (29)	1	4	4	14	4	1	1
A.Stern (32)	2	13	13	2	-	1	1
J.J.Szczepański (43)	2	13	13	4	8	1	2
A.Świrszczyńska (109)	32	26	23	7	14	5	2
J.Tuwim (155)	37	37	28	14	29	5	5
M.Wankowicz (100)	---	23	46	15	13	1	2
W.Woroszyński (69)	18	19	23	1	6	-	2
J.Zawieyski (44)	8	17	10	2	4	1	2

Source: Table 48, *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach XXXIII: 1987*. Figures in brackets represent total number of editions.

TABLE TWELVE: POPULAR CLASSICAL POLISH AUTHORS: 1944-87

	Editions	Copies
Józef I. Kraszewski (1812-1887)	546	22,191,000
Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916)	477	26,908,000
Bolesław Prus (1845-1912)	415	23,040,000
Stefan Żeromski (1864-1925)	358	18,814,000
Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855)	346	21,285,000
Juliusz Słowacki (1809-1849)	265	8,674,000
Aleksander Fredro (1793-1876)	124	5,805,000
Władysław Reymont (1867-1925)	102	2,977,000
Stanisław Wyspiański (1869-1907)	84	2,708,000

Source: Table 48, *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach XXXIII: 1987*.

TABLE THIRTEEN: WORLD LITERATURE IN POLISH TRANSLATION: 1950-80

	Editions	Copies
William Shakespeare	175 *	2,788,000
Jack London	132	5,894,000
Honoré de Balzac	128	2,946,000
Joseph Conrad	118	3,557,000
Lev Tolstoy	104	3,733,000
Hans Christian Anderson	103	7,424,000 *
Alexander Pushkin	104	2,323,000
Jules Verne	96	4,474,000
Anton Chekhov	78	2,769,000
Charles Dickens	79	2,421,000
Victor Hugo	67	2,653,000
Michail Sholokhov	56	2,804,000
Thomas Mann	54	2,010,000
William Faulkner	47	1,713,000
Nikolai Gogol	42	1,248,000
Ernest Hemingway	70	4,270,000
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry	31	1,455,000
Albert Camus	26	983,000

\* Highest number of editions or copies. Source: Table 49, *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach XXXIII: 1987*.

TABLE FOURTEEN: CREATIVE LITERATURE BY PUBLISHER: 1987

1987: Books published	55,545,500	
by publishers	55,081,100	<99.2%>
by other organisations	464,400	<00.8%>

Publishing Houses	Titles	Copies
1 RSW:		
KiW	41	4,530,400
KAW	128	10,894,800
MAW	29	1,258,500
2 Czytelnik	105	4,505,100
3 LSW	54	1,879,300
4 Epoka	2	8,000
5 PIW	119	4,213,700
6 Iskry	90	4,862,100
7 NK	7	320,900
8 WAiF	17	696,800
9 SiT	14	1,238,800
10 PWM	2	90,400
11 WL	106	4,156,100
12 Śląsk	24	500,700
13 W.Poznańskie	26	805,300
14 W.Łódzkie	35	1,043,100
15 W.Morskie	18	830,000
16 W.Lubelskie	13	315,500
17 Pomorze	9	73,000
18 Glob	21	706,000
19 PWN	1	2,200
20 Ossolineum	20	2,126,000
21 WsiP	2	65,000
22 W.Prawicze	2	220,000
23 W.Normalizac 'Alfa'	14	907,800
24 WRiT	14	130,900
25 W.Mon	56	5,189,600
26 Zresz Księgarzy	2	50,800
27 W.Związek	8	281,000
28 W.Spółdzielcze	9	334,000
29 Pojezierze	17	305,100
30 Współpraca	11	530,000
31 Pax	35	973,300
32 Ks. św.Wojciecha	1	3,300
33 W.Drodze	4	81,600
34 Znak	4	27,200
35 Org. młodz.	15	10,200
36 Org.spółl.-polit.	2	10,500
37 Org.zaw. i kult.	50	77,800
38 Inst.nauk.	1	30,300
39 Biblioteki	4	2,600
40 Muzea	2	2,700
41 AGH	1	500
42 ATK	1	2,000
42 P.Wr.	1	2,100
44 UW	1	400

45 U.Wr.	1	800
46 Inne szk. wyższe	2	5,600
47 Tow. naukowe	4	42,500
48 Ośr. postępu	1	500
49 Urzędy państ.	10	16,600
50 Przed. i inst. państ.	3	2,700
51 Domy kultury	18	34,300
52 Ośr. Inform. Turyst.	2	40,000
53 Inst. wyznaniowe	15	180,100
54 Niewymienione	5	2,200
55 Other publishers	18	924,800

'Creative Literature' includes: tales, novels and stories, plays, poetry, satires and fables, letters and memoirs, books in several parts and comics. Source: Table 1, *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach XXXIII: 1987*.

#### TABLE SIXTEEN: POLISH BESTSELLERS DECEMBER 1991 - JANUARY 1992

##### Polish Literature:

- 1 H.Sienkiewicz, *Potop* (Flood), Elipsa.
- 2 H.Sienkiewicz, *Krzyżacy* (Teutonic Knights), Elipsa.
- 3 M.Nurowska, *Panny i wdowy: Zniewolenie* (Maids and Widows: Rape), Nowa.
- 4 M.Nurowska, *Panny i wdowy: Poker* (Maids and Widows: Poker) Nowa.
- 5 J.Chmielewski, *2/3 sukcesu* (2/3 of success), Alfa.
- 6 H.Sienkiewicz, *Krzyżacy* (Teutonic Knights), Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza
- 7 H.Sienkiewicz, *Potop* (Flood), Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza.
- 8 B.Prus, *Lalka* (Doll), PIW.
- 9 A.Szczypiorski, *Początek* (The Beginning), SAWW.
- 10 K.Bunsch, *Wawelskie wzgórze* (Wawel Heights), Małopolska Oficyna Wydawnicza.

##### Foreign Literature

- 1 A.Ripley, *Scarlett*, Atlantis.
- 2 M.Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind*, Czytelnik.
- 3 C.McCullough, *The Thorn Birds*, Książka i Wiedza.
- 4 J.Krantz, *I'll Take Manhattan*, Almapress.
- 5 M.Korda, *Queenie*, Atlantis.
- 6 A.Ripley, *New Orleans Legacy*, Atlantis.
- 7 E.Jong, *Fear of Flying*, Litera.
- 8 B.T.Bradford, *To Be The Best*, Graf.
- 9 W.Styron, *Sophie's Choice*, Nowa.
- 10 J.Steinbeck, *East of Eden*, PIW.

Source: 'Ex Libris Bestsellers' in: *The Warsaw Voice: The Polish and Central European Review*, 1 March, 1992, no.9 (175), p.10.



TABLE SIXTEEN: MEMBERSHIP OF ZLP, 1945-67

1945	358
1946	563
1947	654
1961	862
1962	918
1963	937
1964	949
1965	997
1966	994
1967	1,025

Source: A.Siciński, *Literaci polski: przemiany zawodu na tle przemian kultury współczesnej*, Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolinskich Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Wrocław-Warsaw, 1971, Table 1.

Siciński's materials are based on the results of a survey of ZLP members conducted by J.J.Szczepański of the PAN Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii in July 1959; and on a second survey conducted by ZLP under president Iwaszkiewicz, initiated and organised by the ZLP Documentation Commission, led by Centkiewicz, Łopalewski and Kozikowski in January 1964. The results were compared with similar survey material dating from 1929. I estimate that by 1980 ZLP had about 1,300 members - perhaps 600 of these in Warsaw, the bulk of the remainder in Kraków - organised in 17 regional branches.

TABLE SEVENTEEN: MARITAL STATUS AND MALE/FEMALE RATIO IN ZLP, 1929-64 (% of membership)

	1929	1964
Male	74	70
Female	26	30
Unwed	21	8
Married	65	75
Widow/ers	7	9
Divorced	6	7
Unknown	1	1

Source: Siciński, Tables 2 & 8.

TABLE EIGHTEEN: AGE OF ZLP MEMBERSHIP 1929-64 (% of membership)

	1929	1959	1964
up to 30 years	14	4	3
31-40	31	28	17
41-50	27	32	26
51-60	15	22	27
61-70	--	9	16
71 +	10	4	9
Unknown	3	1	2

Source: Siciński, Table 4.

TABLE NINETEEN: SOCIAL ORIGINS OF ZLP MEMBERSHIP, 1929-64 (% of membership)

	1929	1964
agricultural	33	4
commercial, industrial, banking	5	6
intellectual, independent trades	56	64
factory worker, artisan	4	15
peasant	2	9
unknown	--	2

Source: Siciński, Table 9.

TABLE TWENTY: ZLP MEMBERSHIP BY REGION, 1964 (% of membership)

Bydgoszcz	1.7
Gdańsk	2.5
Katowice	2.7
Kraków	12.7
Lubelsk	1.6
Łódź	4.8
Olsztyn	1.8
Opole	1.8
Poznań	4.1
Szczecin	2.1
Wrocław	3.5
Zielona Góra	1.2
Warsaw	59.5

Source: Siciński, Table 14.

TABLE TWENTY ONE: TITLES PUBLISHED BY ZZLP-ZLP MEMBERS, 1929-64 (% of membership)

	1929	1964
1	9	8
2	10	11
3-4	13	16
5-7	15	18
8-10	15	11
11-15	10	11
15+	26	15
unpublished	2	10

Source: Siciński, Table 17.

TABLE TWENTY TWO: TITLES PUBLISHED AND AGE OF ZLP MEMBERS, 1964. (% of membership)

	membs.	0	1	2-3	4-10	11+
to 30 years	18	--	22	56	22	--
31-40	96	3	15	49	29	4
41-50	117	10	13	16	32	29
51-60	131	13	3	15	44	25
61-70	93	13	3	16	28	40
70+	53	17	4	6	34	39

Source: Sicinski, Table 20.

TABLE TWENTY THREE: PUBLIC MEETINGS BETWEEN WRITERS AND READERS, 1963.

meetings	% of ZLP membership
1-5	25
6-10	16
11-15	8
16-20	7
21-30	5
30+	7
not reading	32

Source: Sicinski, Table 30.

TABLE TWENTY FOUR: PUBLIC MEETINGS BY REGION, 1963 (% of membership)

	membs.	0	1-5	6-15	16+
Bydgoszcz/Gdańsk	28	18	25	28.5	28.5
Katowice/Kraków	84	30	21	20	29
Lubelsk	10	10	40	40	10
Łódź	25	20	36	24	20
North and west	67	10	24	42	24
Poznań	24	25	29	33	13
Warsaw	274	42	25	17	16

Source: Sicinski, Table 31.

TABLE TWENTY FIVE: DEBUTS OF ZLP MEMBERSHIP (% of membership)

pre-1918	9
1918-29	18
1930-39	28
1940-48	30
1949-54	12
1955 and after	2
no information	1

Source: Sicinski, Table 32. Compared to the pre-war period, literary debuts were made substantially later in the post-war period. In 1929 only 7% of those making their first appearance in print were over 30, but by 1959 the figure was 18%. Sicinski, p.190.

TABLE TWENTY SIX: AGE OF ZLP MEMBERS AT DEBUT (% of membership)

	1929	1959
to 18 years	25	13
19-25	50	48
26-30	18	21
31-45	7	15
46+	--	3

Source: Siciński, Table 33.

TABLE TWENTY SEVEN: EDUCATION OF ZLP MEMBERSHIP (% of membership)

	1929	1964
domestic	5	1
lower than secondary	1	1
secondary school	11	18
incomplete tertiary	28	10
tertiary - graduate *	7	28
tertiary - masters	30	31
tertiary - doctorate	18	9
tertiary - <i>habilitacja</i>	--	1
no information	--	1

Source: Siciński, Table 34. \* The education of writers improved after the war, with the highest qualifications to be found among critics and essayists, the lowest among poets: 18% studied foreign languages, 17% Polish philology, 16% the humanities, 14% law, and 8% fine arts, theatre and music, 8% economic and political sciences, and 4% history. Of those who completed professional training before becoming writers by far the largest groups were teachers (11%), and journalists (10%). Siciński, p.90, Tables 37 & 40.

TABLE TWENTY EIGHT: AVERAGE MONTHLY EARNINGS OF ZLP MEMBERSHIP, 1959 (% of membership)

up to 500 zł	2
500-1,000 zł	4
1,000-1,500 zł	5
1,500-2,000 zł	8
2,000-2,500 zł	7
2,500-3,000 zł	11
3,000-4,000 zł	17
4,000-5,000 zł	10
5,000-7,000 zł	15
7,000-10,000 zł	9
10,000 zł +	6
no information	6

Source: Siciński, Table 47. On average, writers aged up to 35 earned 4,000 zł per month; aged 35-50 earned 5,700 zł; aged 50-60 earned 3,950 zł; and those over 60 earned 3,100 zł. Once they began to earn more than 2,500 zł per month almost all agreed that their material situation was good/improving, but even top earners agreed it was impossible to live from creative work alone. Most had another income - from teaching, radio, film, TV, journalism, editing. The only exceptions were the 300 or so ZLP members engaged full time in work for radio, film or TV. Siciński, Tables 48-53.

TABLE TWENTY NINE: PZPR MEMBERS OF ZLP (% of membership)

In 1964 Siciński asked ZLP members how they regarded writer members of PZPR. The replies were as follows:

A separate group within ZLP, forming its own circle:	5
Not as a separate group within ZLP:	39
Non artistic group, sharing ideology, world view and politics:	6
Non artistic group, formed on another basis, eg comradeship:	11
A group founded on other principles or another basis:	10
Don't know or did not reply:	29

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Source: Siciński, Table 62.

TABLE THIRTY: FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND ZLP, 1929-64 (% of membership)

	1929	1964
French	90	70
German	91	64
Russian	62	60
English	41	47
Italian	33	9
Czech	10	5
Spanish	6	4
Other Slav language		7
Other European language		8
Non European language		2
Classical Languages		6

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Source: Siciński, Table 38.

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- 12 TADEUSZ KONWICKI
- 13 INTERVIEWS

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