

Chodakiewicz from 9

Also in 1950, in Gdańsk the secret police arrested a number of members of the clandestine Polish Underground Battle Action (Polska Akcja Podziemna Bojowa). Led by Mieczysław J., the secret policemen tortured the captives. "They beat them with their hands, clubs, and ropes as well as kicked them all over their bodies. [The prisoners] were kept in solitary confinement and forced to exhaust themselves in physical exercises. They were compelled to sit on an upturned leg of a stool and threatened with death and violence against the members of their families." [139]

On January 20, 1951, UB Colonel Józef Światło arrested Bishop Czesław Kaczmarek of Kielce. His interrogation sessions, which lasted up to 40 hours at a stretch, were personally overseen by UB Colonel Jacek Różański. The bishop was tortured. He lost 19 of his teeth because of the beating. His tormentors also kept him in a tiny dark cell; deprived him of food and sleep. Kaczmarek was charged with collaborating with the Nazis and was accused of taking part in the post-war pogrom in Kielce in July 1946, even though the ecclesiast was absent from the town at the time. The bishop broke down and confessed the untruth. He was sentenced to jail but, after 1956, his sentence was overturned. [140]

In Lublin, in April 1951, secret policemen interrogated Lieutenant Kazimierz Poray-Wybranowski ("Kret") of the National Military Union (NZW) by breaking his teeth with a gun butt, pouring industrial alcohol down his nostrils, and shoving a chair leg into his rectum. At one point during a torture session, the presiding interrogator had sex with a female officer in front of the suspect. [141]

Captured in the field in the early 1950s, Mieczysław Dudanowicz ("Ponury") of the WiN was subjected to sleep deprivation, despite his injuries. He recalls that I had a head wound, but I was interrogated non-stop, even at night. When I was talking, I was falling asleep but they effectively woke me up. I was so tired that I did not know what I was signing.... They kept asking me about my connections to Western states and the source of the inspiration for our unit. [142]

In Przemyśl, the UB-man Jan S. interrogated Leszek W., a participant in the General Confederacy of Independent Poland (Generalna Konfederacja Niepodległej Polski – GKPN). [143] The secret policeman "beat Leszek W. with a wooden cane on his back near the kidneys. He forced him to sit for long periods of time on the leg of an upturned stool, shaking him so that the leg would enter the rectum of the interrogated man. Next, as the victim was screaming with pain, he [the secret policeman] forced onto his head a gas mask to increase the pain." [144]

In the Podlasie region the secret police pursued insurgent Captain Władysław Łukasiuk ("Młot"), who was handicapped: he had a lame left leg. Security men often arrested random persons with similar handicaps and tortured them in hopes of catching "Młot". [145]

In Zamość, UB Second Lieutenant Mieczysław Wybraniec tortured dozens of prisoners, including Waclaw Jałowicki, Leonard Kalmus, Aleksander Panas, Zygmunt Daniluk, and Edward Kudyk ("Prędk") of the AK-WiN. Aside from the customary beating and other similar "means of persuasion," Wybraniec applied electroshocks to at least four of his victims and burned out with hot irons the fingernails of at least one, Aleksander P. Wybraniec kicked many of his prisoners with jackboots and bludgeoned others (e.g. Stanisław J.) with a rifle butt. Wybraniec also beat to death a prisoner of Jewish origin, who was suspected of assisting the underground. That death was officially ruled as "heart failure." At least once Wybraniec presided over the execution of his prisoners. His underling in the secret police in Zamość, Tadeusz Galecki, not only tortured prisoners but also carried out several executions, including the shooting of eight AK soldiers in a single day. [146]

Between March and May 1951, Józef R. and other secret policemen tortured Witold T. and his friends of the underground

National Armed Forces of Young Poland (Narodowe Siły Zbrojne Młodej Polski). Aside from beating, Józef R. electrocuted, crushed the skull, and squeezed the genitals of at least one of his prisoners who consequently attempted to commit suicide. Between January and March 1954, in Koszalin UB, the very same officer Józef R. tortured several members of the underground KWP, including Henryk B. The UB man beat his victims with a truncheon, crushed their hands with his jackboots, and conducted marathon interrogation sessions during the night. [147]

Captured in May 1952, Witold Białowas ("Witold") of the WiN unit of Captain Kazimierz Kamiński ("Huzar") withstood the torture and refused to incriminate his confederates. [148]

Former pre-war minister and provincial governor, and a leader of the anti-Nazi and anti-Communist civilian underground, Henryk Józefski, upon his arrest in 1952, "was interrogated for twenty one months straight every day twelve hours per day." [149]

In 1952, the secret police arrested about 200 persons in the so-called "Berg affair." At least some of them were connected with an American-backed espionage network consisting of Polish underground members. One of the arrested couriers, Jan Szponder of the SN- NOW -AK, implicated under torture as his assistants several Catholic priests of the Cracow curia. The UB interrogators in charge of the case, Captains Florian Mederer, Leon Wilczyński, Władysław Zdanowicz, and Leon Midro, commenced arrests. At least 20 persons were apprehended and seven of them were eventually tried. Most of the prisoners broke down. For instance, Father Bolesław Przybyszewski confessed after he was interrogated non-stop day and night, deprived of sleep, and subjected to psychological torture. The interrogators delighted in yelling at the priest: "You whore!". Three persons were sentenced to death, including Father Józef Lelito, who confessed under duress. [150]

Three prisoners did not give in and, subsequently, two of them were released. Interrogated between December 1 and 24, 1952, Archbishop Eugeniusz Baziak refused to talk. He was not physically abused but "only" threatened despite his very serious heart condition. According to the interrogation records, the archbishop responded repeatedly: "I cannot answer this question because my conscience prevents me from revealing the name of this particular person." [151] Father Czesław Skowron persevered as well. He believes he succeeded because he was coached by his fellow prisoners who psychologically prepared him for the ordeal:

And indeed the investigative officer Kasza began yelling at me: "You prick," "You whore." He told me to talk because they know everything anyway. Officer Mederer hit me with his fist a couple of times. He also liked to spit directly at my face. But otherwise they did not torture me. [152]

Arguably, lay Catholic activist Stefania Rospond experienced the most ruthless treatment of all prisoners of the Cracow curia case for she refused to confess and held fast until the end. Nonetheless, she received six years in jail. Rospond recalls that I remember those three months that followed my arrest until the trial started as a single, long interrogation session.... I fell on the floor; sometimes they dragged me to my cell and at other times they woke me up by kicking and beating me. The first interrogation session took place still at the UB headquarters. It lasted from Friday to Sunday past midnight, when I collapsed. During the first night about 30 functionaries took turns interrogating me. They rotated. They were male only. However, a woman performed a full body search on me. I kept telling them that I did not know anything and anybody.... Hitting me on my face, sitting on a leg of a stool, standing at attention for 48 hours straight until one collapsed. Then I was taken to the solitary cell [karczer]. At times, I started hallucinating; some kind of visions appeared before my eyes. They extinguished their cigarettes on my hands and on my face.... I do not remember the names of the interrogators but I can still see their faces

today. They probably thought that if they took a simple peasant girl and threatened her, she would talk and implicate others. [153]

In an unrelated case, Second Lieutenant Julian Czerwiakowski ("Jerzy Tarnowski") of the NSZ and WiN was arrested by the UB and accused of "murdering Communist activists and collaborating with the Gestapo." After prolonged torture, Czerwiakowski broke down and confessed "partly" to some of the "crimes" alleged against him. He was sentenced to death and shot in January 1953 but five years later a Communist court cleared him completely of any wrongdoing. [154]

In Nowy Sącz, led by UB Lieutenants Stefkowski and Popiołek, the secret policemen suspended suspects on a hook and beat them with a whip. They inserted the fingers and genitals of their victims into desk drawers and slammed them. They also jammed pencils and needles under one's nails, according to one of the victims, Władysław Małek of the WiN. [155]

In December 1952, after the UB captured and tortured Kazimierz Radziszewski ("Marynarz") of the WiN unit of Captain Kazimierz Kamiński ("Huzar"), in the course of a single interrogation he revealed the names of 63 civilian supporters. "Marynarz" was sentenced to death and shot. Soon, the civilian supporters saw their property confiscated and children taken away to orphanages, while they were carted off to jail. [156]

In February 1953, a few teenagers founded the Underground Scouting Organization (Harcerska Organizacja Podziemna – HOP) in Osieczna near Leszno. The leadership included Stanisław Bućko, Andrzej Mateia, and Bronisław Gewert, who was the eldest at 19 and had served in the AK during the war. Having co-opted a few younger boys and girls, the HOP cut the phone link to their locality and expropriated a radio at a local "culture center" (świątlica) to stop propaganda broadcasts. The UB arrested everyone within a month. The youngsters were tortured mercilessly. Teresa Żybura recalls that the secret policemen Maksymilian S., Walenty B., and others called her names – "You whore, you bitch" – and hit her on her face with their fists. "They threatened me, if I did not confess, they would put me in a stove and burn me alive." Another teenager, Krystyn Tomaszewski, remembers that "they beat me with their fists, blinded me with a flashlight, and yelled. However, the beating with fists and sticks was the worst." Teresa Hope was "only" tortured psychologically. Most confessed and they were tried in December 1953. The sentences ranged from two to six years in jail. Some of their secret police tormentors are still around leading comfortable lives on generous state pensions. [157] That holds true for some of the other torturers described above.

Conclusion

The evidence presented here strongly suggests that torture was not only an acceptable but also a desirable method that allowed the Communist masters of Poland to project their power onto the conquered political opponents and the population at large. Torture was intended to weaken the victim physically and psychologically. The act of confession was an indispensable element of the process because it broke the spirit of the victim. Notwithstanding whether the prisoner was confessing the truth or not, by yielding to the interrogator the victim often became a mental slave who could now be made to obey most of the bidding of his Communist master.

The cases presented here are just the tip of the iceberg. For example, in November 2002, the Katowice Office of the Institute of National Remembrance announced that it was investigating 36 cases with multiple offenders and multiple victims of torture, as well as murder, perpetrated by the Communist secret police between 1944 and 1956. [158] These cases continue to multiply as historians discover new documents concerning the Communist crimes and newly emboldened victims and witnesses keep coming forth. [159]

So far the focus has been overwhelmingly on the Stalinist period. However, in time it will undoubtedly shift to more recent events, including the suppression of

"Solidarity." [160] For restoring the historical record is inexorably tied to a larger question of moral and legal responsibility for the atrocities of Communist totalitarianism. [161] If the Poles avoid addressing this and other ugly aspects of their past, they also will eschew debunking themselves from those practices in their public life. [162] After years of pseudo-nationalistic symbolism created by the Communists through ruthless torture, false confessions, and mendacious propaganda, the Poles need to restore the proper meaning of the words "honor, patriotism, and independence." Otherwise, they will cynically continue on the noxious path of false consciousness imposed on them by the Stalinists with dire consequences to their newly found freedom.

For as Edward Peters aptly put it... Societies that do not recognize the dignity of the human person, or profess to recognize it and fail to do so in practice, or recognize it only in highly selective circumstances, become, not simply societies with torture, but societies in which the presence of torture transforms human dignity itself, and therefore all individual and social life. And a society which voluntarily or indifferently includes among its members both victims and torturers ultimately leaves no conceptual or practical room for anyone who insists upon being neither. [163]

To build a new Poland in a new Europe entails first dealing with the nation's totalitarian past, including torture.

* * *

[113] See Mirosław Wąsik, "Stan zdrowia byłego ubeka oceni komisja," Rzeczpospolita, 16 February 2002; "Dwa lata dla śledczego," Rzeczpospolita, 8 July 2004; Akt oskarżenia przeciwko Marianowi N., posted at <http://www.ipn.gov.pl/>. [UP]

[114] See Franciszek Słowik quoted in Mariusz Krzysztofiński, "Historia Franciszka Słowika," Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej, no. 5 (May 2002): 77. [UP]

[115] Krajewski and Łabuszewski, "Łupaszka", "Młot", "Huzar", 736. [UP]

[116] Krajewski and Łabuszewski, "Łupaszka", "Młot", "Huzar", 742, 745-46, 754, 756. [UP]

[117] See Jerzy Morawski, "Teczki goryczy," Rzeczpospolita, 8 June 2002. [UP]

[118] Krajewski and Łabuszewski, "Łupaszka", "Młot", "Huzar", 865-67. [UP]

[119] See Witold Orczyk, "Rewizjapacyfikacja," Zeszyty historyczne WiN-u, vol. V, no. 8 (February 1996): 127-29. Orczyk's farmstead was completely dismantled. The WiN soldier was sentenced to several years in jail. [UP]

[120] See Akt oskarżenia przeciwko Wilhelm A., posted at <http://www.ipn.gov.pl/>. [UP]

[121] See Kurek, Zaporczycy, 372. [UP]

[122] See Tomasz Balbus, "Polski bandyta z Zamojszczyzny," Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej, no. 11 (December 2001). [UP]

[123] See Krajewski, Żołnierze wyklęci, 478; Danuta Suchorowska-Śliwińska, Postawcie mi krzyż brzozywy: Prawda o ks. Władysławie Gurgaczu SJ (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM Księży Jezucy, 1999), 96-102. [UP]

[124] See Wojciech Wybranowski, "IPN oskarża," Nasz Dziennik, 18 September 2002. [UP]

[125] See Akt oskarżenia przeciwko Adam G., posted at <http://www.ipn.gov.pl/>. [UP]

[126] See Tadeusz Kopański interviewed by Andrzej Kumor, "Co mi ich teraz nienawidzić," May 1998, posted at <http://members.rogers.com/kumor/jaworzno.htm>. [UP]

[127] See Piotr Adamowicz, "Kara po pół wieku," Rzeczpospolita, 15 November 2000. [UP]

[128] "IPN: Zbrodnia sądowa," Nasz Dziennik, 16 January 2003. [UP]

[129] Wojciech Wybranowski, "Dzieci 'wrogami PRL'," Nasz Dziennik, 7 January 2003. Jan S. was finally indicted in 2005. See "Znęcał się nad zatrzymanym," Nasz Dziennik, 18 May 2005. For the recollection of an MRO member see Edmund Radziszewski interviewed by Maciej Walaszczyk, "O działalności Młodzieżowego Ruchu Oporu," Nasz

Chodakiewicz to page 11