

*Department of Humanities, Northumbria University*

**Honours Dissertation**

**Socialist Opposition in the Polish People's Republic,  
1964-1989**

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# Table of Contents

<b>List of Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Dissident socialism .....	7
<b>Chapter 1 – Young Intelligentsia: Kuroń and Modzelewski</b> .....	<b>9</b>
The Open Letter to the Party .....	9
The national and international response.....	11
After 1970 .....	15
<b>Chapter 2 – Left-wing Underground: Socialist Parties</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Polska Partia Socjalistyczna .....	18
Other socialist groups in opposition .....	23
Trotskyism.....	25
Conclusion.....	26
<b>Chapter 3 – (Anti-)Politics, Art and Culture</b> .....	<b>28</b>
Anarchism .....	28
Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego.....	29
Pomarańczowa Alternatywa .....	32
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>39</b>

## List of Abbreviations

**CPSU** - Коммунистическая партия Советского Союза (Communist Party of the Soviet Union)

**FA** - *Federacja Anarchistyczna* (Anarchist Federation)

**KOR, KSS "KOR"** - *Komitet Obrony Robotników* (Workers' Defence Committee), evolved into *Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej "KOR"* (Committee for Social Self-defence "KOR") in 1977

**KPRP, KPP** - *Komunistyczna Partia Robotnicza Polski* (Communist Worker's Party of Poland), renamed *Komunistyczna Partia Polski* (Communist Party of Poland) in 1925

**MA** - *Międzymiastówka Anarchistyczna* (Intercity Anarchist [Group])

**MKK** - *Międzyzakładowy Komitet Koordynacyjny* (Inter-factory Coordinating Committee)

**PA** - *Pomarańczowa Alternatywa* (Orange Alternative)

**PPS** - *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna* (Polish Socialist Party)

**PPS RD** - *PPS Rewolucja Demokratyczna* (PPS Democratic Revolution)

**PRL** - *Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa* (Polish People's Republic)

**PSPP** - *Polska Socjalistyczna Partia Pracy* (Polish Socialist Labour Party)

**PZPR** - *Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza* (Polish United Workers' Party)

**RNK** - *Ruch Nowej Kultury* (New Culture Movement)

**RSA** - *Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego* (Alternative Society Movement)

**SDKPiL** - *Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy* (Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania)

**SKS** - *Studencki Komitet Solidarności* (Student Committee of Solidarity)

**TUR** - *Towarzystwo Uniwersytetu Robotniczego* (Association of Workers' Universities)

## Introduction

This dissertation will look at a number of groups and individuals who opposed the Polish People's Republic (*Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa*, PRL) and could be, in one form or another, characterised as socialist. The three chapters will be comprised of case studies of such groups and individuals, focusing on their theory and practice, but also keeping in mind the context of the opposition in Poland and its transnational links. Within secondary literature the socialist opposition is an area that has been hinted at within a framework of the democratic opposition in the PRL – among others in the works of Friszke – but there are few works that specifically focus on a socialist opposition.<sup>1</sup> The primary sources used throughout include documents written by the groups and individuals examined – whether that is the *Open Letter to the Party*, brief manifestos from the 1980s or autobiographies – all of which will provide an understanding of where these people positioned themselves politically.

In the middle of the twentieth century Europe underwent a turbulent period in its history and Poland was not spared from this course of events. In a matter of years the country experienced mass killings and the destruction of infrastructure during the Second World War, an occupation by the Nazi and Soviet regimes, and after the war an ensuing struggle for power between different factions.<sup>2</sup> Eventually the Polish People's Republic was established, bringing with it a Stalinist period of repression. As a result of all this, the development of independent political groups became increasingly difficult. The socialist movement was likewise affected. In the interwar period socialists played a significant role in Polish politics, with a substantial influence over the working class movement and the trade unions, even if the movement was riddled with divisions. Some of the main organisations of those times included the Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna*, PPS), the Communist Party of Poland (*Komunistyczna Partia Polski*, KPP), the General Jewish Labour Bund in Poland (*Powszechny Żydowski Związek Robotniczy w Polsce Bund*) and the Anarchist Federation of Poland (*Anarchistyczna Federacja Polski*). However, by 1949 all of these organisations, for different reasons, ceased to exist. In 1948 the new Polish United Workers' Party (*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*, PZPR) became the official ruling party with an apparent hegemony over the word 'socialism'. Only in 1956, with the Polish October, a result of a working class uprising regarding

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<sup>1</sup> Much of Friszke's works focus on the democratic opposition and are a valuable source of information on the whole 1945-1989 period. Additionally, the topic of a socialist opposition has been looked at within the national contexts of some Eastern Bloc countries, see: Rudolf L. Tökes (ed.) *Opposition in Eastern Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979); Andrzej Friszke, *Anatomia Buntu* (Kraków: Znak, 2010); Friszke, *Czas KOR-u. Jacek Kuroń a geneza Solidarności* (Kraków: Znak, 2011); Friszke, *Opozycja polityczna w PRL 1945-1980* (Londyn: Aneks, 1994)

<sup>2</sup> Some historians characterise this period as a civil war, see: Anita J. Przymowska, *Civil War In Poland, 1942-1948* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004)

economic grievances and the wider process of de-Stalinisation in the Eastern Bloc, was there a relaxation of control and once again some space for alternative political ideas.<sup>3</sup> This made it possible to challenge the official interpretation of socialism without as much of a risk of losing one's life, and in 1964, where we start this examination of the socialist opposition, young activists within the PZPR not only began to question the hegemony of the Party but also, inspired by the events of 1956, threatened it with a worker's revolution.

A major issue we have to face when thinking about the topic of a socialist opposition in the PRL is how we define certain terms, as well as the relation between socialists and what is sometimes called the Socialist or Communist State. In the West, mainstream opinion dictated that the Eastern Bloc was socialist/communist in nature as opposed to the capitalist West. Similarly, the Eastern Bloc identified itself with the ideas of socialism and of constituting a people's or worker's state as opposed to the capitalist states of the West. The Polish constitution of 1952 mentions the term socialism a number of times. It states that people's power is based on an 'alliance between the working class and the working peasants', with the working class in a steering position as established by the gains of the Polish and international revolutionary movement, and the 'historic experience of victorious socialist building in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.'<sup>4</sup> This is an important statement as socialism is defined through a relation to the Soviet Union, and by what it believes to be the overwhelmingly positive example that it provided. However, the constitution defines the Polish system itself as a *państwo ludowe*, a people's state, and not a socialist state or a socialist republic. It is only the role of the Polish nation and the people's state, or the 'organs of authority of the Polish working people', to strive towards putting 'into effect the great ideals of Socialism.'<sup>5</sup> How then could socialists oppose a system which claimed, even if not to be socialist yet, to at least be in the process of building socialism?

One way of looking at this problem is to consider the degree to which the content of the constitution, or other ideological statements of the Party, was put into practice. For example, realising socialism was just one aspect of a whole list of aims that the constitution declares to be in favour of, some of the others being a deepening of patriotic feelings and ensuring the independence and sovereignty of the Polish nation. How do we reconcile this with the common held view of

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<sup>3</sup> See the section on the 'Poznań Revolt' in: Jan B. de Weydenthal, 'Polish Workers Commemorate Their Past Struggles', *Records of Radio Free Europe* (Budapest: Open Society Archives at Central European University, 1981) [available at: <http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:a38df2dc-3cac-4e80-8f95-61ff290727ee>] [accessed: 9/11/14]

<sup>4</sup> Constitution of the Polish People's Republic (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1953) [available at: <http://libr.sejm.gov.pl/tek01/txt/kpol/e1952a.html>] [accessed: 9/11/14]

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

historians such as Davies<sup>6</sup> or Michnik<sup>7</sup> that classify the Polish People's Republic as a puppet or satellite state of the Soviet Union? Clearly, the state could not be ensuring the independence and sovereignty of the nation if it had its origin in the transplantation of the economic and political system of the Soviet Union into Poland, by people who were trained and given specific orders by the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup> In this context one must understand references to alleged independence and sovereignty with a critical eye. Yet such a sceptical attitude is rarely extended to the conviction of the same state in building socialism.

Dissident socialists in the Eastern Bloc who did not approve of or even opposed the so called 'actually existing socialism' had two main ideological paths to choose from. Theoretically, they could either abandon socialist politics and criticise the system in which they lived from a different political standpoint or remain socialists and criticise it from a socialist standpoint. The second option would require one to distance themselves from the official interpretation of socialism, that is to take a sceptical attitude to the ways in which the system identified itself, maybe define it in different terms, and build some kind of political programme with what one perceived to be real socialist content instead. The consequence of this is that it is impossible to talk about a socialist opposition in a supposedly socialist country without engaging with the question of what socialism is. Within the socialist opposition itself there was a need to come to terms with what socialism means and how the current system was different from that. The individuals and groups we will look at, which took the latter path, in general dealt with this in one of the following three ways: 1) by arguing that 'actually existing socialism' was not actually socialism (e.g. Kuroń and Modzelewski in the 1960s); 2) by differentiating between socialism and communism and arguing that there is a conflict between the two (e.g. the Polish Socialist Party which continued a pre-war tradition); and 3) by identifying oneself with a political standpoint that, while it may have had roots in socialism, does not necessarily need the term socialism to define itself (e.g. some anarchists).

This dissertation will be divided into three chapters, each taking a different grouping as a case study. The case studies have been chosen in a way to illuminate certain aspects of the socialist opposition,

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<sup>6</sup> Prior to 1956 Davies identifies the Polish state as a 'puppet state' and after 1956, the Polish October and the process of de-Stalinisation, as a 'client state'; Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: The Past in Poland's Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 9

<sup>7</sup> Michnik calls it a 'satellite state ruled as a dictatorship'; Adam Michnik, *The Trouble with History: Morality, Revolution, and Counterrevolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), p.38

<sup>8</sup> Korbonski provides an account of the creation of the Initiative Group, the nucleus of the *Polska Partia Robotnicza*, or the Polish Workers' Party, how it drafted its manifesto with approval from the Soviet leadership and how it was parachuted from Moscow into Poland. It was manned by people who survived the Stalinist purges of the original KPP dissolved by Stalin around 1938. In 1948 the remnants of the PPS were merged with PPR to form the ruling Polish United Workers' Party. Andrzej Korbonski, 'The Polish Communist Party 1938-1942', *Slavic Review*, 26:3 (1967), pp. 430-444

and as such serve as an introduction, or a selective rather than comprehensive study of the socialist opposition. Indeed certain important subjects have been avoided or at best only alluded to, for instance the political content of working class rebellions of 1956, 1970, and 1981 or the early politics of *Solidarność*, as detailed analyses of these topics would require an altogether different approach. Having that in mind, the following structure has been adopted, which is to a degree chronological in nature. The first chapter will look at dissenting intelligentsia, especially Kuroń and Modzelewski. It will be argued that the *Open Letter to the Party* serves as a seminal text in trying to understand how socialists in the Eastern Bloc could have opposed the system of people's republics from a Marxist standpoint. We will then consider the national and international response towards these attempts at challenging the PZPR, and how the approach of the authors changed in the 1970s. The second chapter will look at the different organisations active in the opposition underground. Among these there will be the dissidents from the PPS, one of the oldest political parties in Poland, active in the opposition underground and abroad, and other small socialist groups that formed in the 1980s, including a section on Trotskyism. Lastly, the third chapter will provide some background on anarchism in Poland, and examine the groups that opposed authoritarianism and militarism while operating on the edges of the counter-culture and the opposition, among them the Alternative Society Movement (*Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego*) and the Orange Alternative (*Pomarańczowa Alternatywa*).

It should be stressed that examining how prominent or influential these groups and ideas were is not the aim of this particular work. Instead, we seek to bring to attention the existence of these in the first place, help to fill a gap that exists in English historiography of this period of Polish history and shed more light on dissenting forms of socialism in the broader context of the Eastern Bloc.

### Dissident socialism

The phenomena of dissident socialism can be traced back to the early years of the Soviet Union – the first place where, according to some, socialism was on the way to being realised on a mass scale. Socialist, communist and anarchist opposition to the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), existed both within and outside that party. Within there was a number of factions – left communists around the journal *Kommunist*, the Workers' Opposition, the Workers' Group, the Democratic Centralists, or Trotsky's Left Opposition.<sup>9</sup> Even if they disagreed with each

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<sup>9</sup> For more information on some of these less known currents see: Ian Hebbes, 'The Communist Left in Russia after 1920', in: International Communist Current, *The Russian Communist Left 1918-30: A Contribution to the History of the Revolutionary Movement* (ICC, 2005), pp. 13-32

other, in practice they constituted a visible current of dissident socialism, and all had to face repression, some already in 1921 with the ban on factions, others later during the Stalinist purges. Opposition outside of the party was sometimes more radical, even resulting in military conflicts. One can look at the Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine or the Socialist Revolutionaries, both of which were for a while allies of the Bolsheviks but in the end fought against them, or the famous Kronstadt rebellion and the plethora of socialist and anarchist currents expressed in its statements.<sup>10</sup>

Many of the theoretical approaches towards the Soviet Union, and the Eastern Bloc in general, that were taken up by socialists since the 1920s had their origin in the ideas of these early oppositionist groups. Their critiques of the realities of the Soviet Union – the concept of state capitalism or state socialism, the bureaucracy and the hegemonic party, the lack of worker’s democracy, the attacks on the power of the soviets (worker’s councils) by the Party – are all issues which can already be found within the statements of the likes of the Workers' Group or the Kronstadt sailors. Likewise, the kind of dualistic relationship of dissident socialists to the ruling Party, working both outside it and inside of it, was reproduced in other self-proclaimed socialist states. The following first chapter focuses on the opposition which had its origin within the Polish United Workers' Party, the Polish equivalent of the CPSU.

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<sup>10</sup> See for example section three ‘Struggles for the Real Social Revolution’ in Voline’s book, *The Unknown Revolution* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1990)



## Chapter 1 – Young Intelligentsia: Kuroń and Modzelewski

Jacek Kuroń was born in 1934 in Lwów (Lviv). Two elements prominently contributed to his later political development – on the one hand a family connection to the Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna*, PPS), a party dedicated to both socialism and national independence;<sup>11</sup> on the other, his position as a student at the University of Warsaw, and later his role as a member of the intelligentsia.<sup>12</sup> He joined the Union of Polish Youth (*Związek Młodzieży Polskiej*) in 1949 and the PZPR, the Polish United Workers' Party, in 1953, but was expelled in a matter of months for refusing to write a self-criticism, only to be readmitted in 1956.<sup>13</sup> His organisational skills were cultivated early on, by taking part in university discussion clubs and forming a communist scouting group called *Walterowcy* (which future opposition figures, such as Adam Michnik and Seweryn Blumsztajn, also went through).<sup>14</sup> Karol Modzelewski, born in 1937 in Moscow, likewise had socialist family connections. His grandfather was a Menshevik, who was sent to the gulags and died soon after being released, while his father-in-law, a communist activist, was tortured in the USSR in the years 1937-1938, but later became an important member of the PZPR.<sup>15</sup> By the late 1950s, both studying at the University of Warsaw, Kuroń and Modzelewski were questioning the political and economic system in Poland. Disillusioned by the lack of real changes after the initial potential of the workers' revolt in 1956, they began to work on an analysis of the system and how to oppose it.<sup>16</sup>

### The Open Letter to the Party

*List otwarty do Partii*, or the *Open Letter to the Party*, was the title of the political and economic document written around the year 1964 by Kuroń and Modzelewski. Its original title was longer: *List otwarty do członków Podstawowej Organizacji Partyjnej Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej i członków Uczelnianej Organizacji Związku Młodzieży Socjalistycznej przy Uniwersytecie Warszawskim*, or the Open Letter to the members of the Primary Party Organization of PZPR and the University Organisation of the Union of Socialist Youth at the University of Warsaw.<sup>17</sup> As the name suggests, the letter was meant for internal discussion amongst the more grassroots elements of Party affiliated organisations, that is, Warsaw university students belonging to the Union of Socialist

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<sup>11</sup> Jacek Kuroń, 'Wiara i wina', in: Kuroń, *Autobiografia*, (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2011), pp. 10, 38

<sup>12</sup> Piotr Wróbel, *Historical Dictionary of Poland 1945-1996* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 163

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Zuzowski, *Political Dissent and Opposition in Poland: The Workers' Defense Committee "Kor"* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1992), pp. 29, 55

<sup>15</sup> Michał Syska (ed.), '1964-2009. Modzelewski, Friszke and Koczanowicz on the Open letter to the party', written record of a conference held on December 14, 2009 [available at: <http://lassalle.org.pl/wp2/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/OSML-1964-2009-Modzelewski-Friszke-i-Koczanowicz.pdf>] [accessed: 29/1/15]

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Jacek Kuroń and Karol Modzelewski, 'An Open Letter to the Party', *New Politics*, 5:2 (1966)

Youth and the Primary Party Organization members, the base-level Party cell of the PZPR.<sup>18</sup> In the words of the authors, the letter had an ‘analytically-programmatic character’.<sup>19</sup> The influence of Marx’s method is evident by both the terminology used (class, means of production, capital, and so on) and by frequent references to Marxist theory. In the eleven chapters, social relations and material conditions present in Poland are examined, and a political programme is put forward for the abolition of the ‘central political bureaucracy’, in order to ‘create a system in which the organized working class will be master of its own labor.’<sup>20</sup>

The first chapter, ‘Rule of the Bureaucracy’, begins with an examination of the question of ownership over the means of production. The authors state that an element ‘fundamentally alien’ to Marxism has been introduced through official doctrine to the definition of ownership, one that is not based on class analysis but instead legalistic meanings – social ownership has been simply identified with state ownership, even though state ownership ‘can conceal various class meanings, depending on the class character of the state.’<sup>21</sup> Hence, they look at the nature of the state, a state that is dominated by a monopoly of the PZPR, the ruling party, which claims to be the sole representative of working class interests. From there, they look at the existing opportunities for workers to influence decisions of the state, which were non-existent both within and outside of the Party, since ‘factions, groups with different platforms, organized political currents’ were forbidden and elections were ‘fictitious’.<sup>22</sup> As such, if the state owns the means of production, and the state is controlled exclusively by the Party, it is the Party, the ‘central political bureaucracy’, which ‘decides on the distribution and utilization of the entire social product.’<sup>23</sup> As they put it, ‘the central political bureaucracy is the ruling class’ as it is them who the individual worker sells his labour-power to.<sup>24</sup> This kind of argumentation is extended and reinforced with data throughout the *Open Letter*. It is interwoven with historical analysis on the origins of the system, the history and the source of its economic crises (and the ‘impossibility of overcoming the crisis within the framework of the bureaucratic system’)<sup>25</sup>, an analysis of the class struggles of 1956-1957, the ‘first anti-bureaucratic revolution’, and, finally, the question of revolution in the near future. The last of these is posed in an international context with the following resolution:

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<sup>18</sup> Jacek Kuroń, *Dojrzewanie. Pisma polityczne 1964-1968* (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2009), p. 6

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7

<sup>20</sup> Kuron and Modzelewski, ‘An Open Letter to the Party’, p. 85

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15

<sup>25</sup> For the English translation of the whole document see: Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski, ‘An Open Letter to the Party II’, *New Politics*, 5:3 (1966), p. 79

Our ally against the intervention of Soviet tanks is the Russian, Ukrainian, Hungarian and Czech working class. Our ally against the pressures and threats of imperialism is the working class of the industrialized West and the developing colonial revolution in the backward countries. Against an eventual accord between the international bureaucracy and the international imperialist bourgeoisie, which maintain systems of anti-popular dictatorship in their spheres of influence, we utter the traditional working class slogan: "proletarians of all countries, unite!"<sup>26</sup>

The argument of Soviet intervention was used by the PZPR to argue that radical reform was not possible – in response, to show that they are not isolated in their aims, the authors reinstate Marx's famous declaration and link the struggle of workers and dissident socialists in the Eastern Bloc with the wider struggle against capitalism and imperialism. Overall, the *Open Letter* applies a Marxist critique to the social realities of a system proclaiming itself to be Marxist. In that respect, the analysis of the letter is not that unique. However, commentators have noted that the Kuroń-Modzelewski programme is a 'curious mixture' of different political ideas – traditional Marxism (inevitable proletarian revolution), Djilas-ism (the concept of a new class), Trotskyism (critique of the bureaucratic rule of the Party), anarcho-syndicalism (role of workers' delegates in shaping economic policies and ruling the country), and social democracy (role of trade unions, a multiparty system).<sup>27</sup> The importance put on workers' councils, also known as soviets, is a characteristic present in many communist traditions born out of the Russian Revolution (council communism, left communism, some Bolshevik factions).<sup>28</sup> The authors were certainly aware of some of these similarities, and since then have pointed towards a few other influences as well: self-management in Yugoslavia, the 1921 platform of Alexander Shliapnikov and the Workers' Opposition, or Lenin's *State and Revolution*; primarily however they saw the source of these concepts in the demands of the Polish 'October left' of 1956.<sup>29</sup>

### The national and international response

The reaction of the authorities to the Open Letter was hostile. In November 1964 both authors were arrested by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the text was confiscated. Kuroń, Modzelewski and three other Party members who were accused of sympathising with the content of the text had to

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.93

<sup>27</sup> Michael Gamarnikow, 'Poland: Political Pluralism in a One-Party State', *Problems of Communism*, 16:4 (1967), p. 5

<sup>28</sup> Communists who took anti-parliamentary or anti-trade union positions and were to the left of official Bolshevik policy became known as left communists. Council communists were originally part of this current, but with time they came to assign a more central revolutionary role to the workers' councils than anything else, hence their name. See: Mark Shipway, 'Council Communism', in: John Crump and Maximilien Rubel (eds.) *Non-market Socialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Macmillan, 1987), p. 104

<sup>29</sup> Michał Syska (ed.) '1964-2009. Modzelewski, Friszke and Koczanowicz...', p. 56-58; Kuroń, 'Wiara i wina', p. 39; Andrzej Friszke, *Anatomia Buntu* (Kraków: Znak, 2010), p. 640

face disciplinary measures. In consequence, the authors were expelled from the Party. This was the motive behind the public release of the, still unfinished, *Open Letter*, as being barred from public meetings of the Party and university organisations, the authors could not defend themselves from the accusations levelled at them by Party higher-ups.<sup>30</sup> The public release of the *Open Letter* contains a response to the fiasco, where the authors say the following concerning some of their critics: 'brought up under dogmatic Marxism, they have rejected Marxism but retained the dogma; they doubt the value of the Marxist theory of classes, but they have no doubt that there can be no factions in the Party and that the powers-that-be must be obeyed.'<sup>31</sup> After the public release of the letter, both authors were imprisoned.

While many historians such as Killingsworth or Kemp-Welch note that the document is calling for a system of 'worker's democracy' to replace a bureaucratic reality, and understand the document as 'representative of a growing disenchantment [...] with the Gomułka regime'<sup>32</sup>, or within the wider concept of revisionism<sup>33</sup>, others have been quite negative towards it. For example, the Polish writer Bikont argues that the *Open Letter* was a 'moment when some intellectuals, collaborators with Stalinism, began to speak the language of free men without having freed themselves from the language of slaves.'<sup>34</sup> The accusation of Stalinism or collaborationism is one that has been levelled at Kuroń and Modzelewski more than once, and its traces can be found within English historiography as well. Falk states that the *Open Letter* is written in 'fiery Leninist rhetoric' and demands the Party to 'uphold the true principles of Marxism-Leninism',<sup>35</sup> but while Marxism is not decried here as a 'language of slaves', it is still either a linguistic confusion or a misinterpretation of the politics of the text. Marxism-Leninism was a name chosen by Stalin for an ideology which 'consisted of Stalin's own doctrine plus quotations selected by him from the works of Marx, Lenin, and Engels.'<sup>36</sup> The *Open Letter*, however, in its hostility to the bureaucratic regimes of the Eastern Bloc, in its advocacy of workers' self-rule instead of party dictatorship, is a denunciation of this doctrine. Whether by joining the Party one is destined to be written off as a collaborationist is a different discussion, one owing much to personal attitudes. What cannot be denied is that the authors were, since the conclusion of

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<sup>30</sup> Kuroń, *Dojrzewanie...* p. 8

<sup>31</sup> Kuroń and Modzelewski, 'An Open Letter to the Party II', p. 99

<sup>32</sup> Matt Killingsworth, *Civil Society in Communist Eastern Europe: Opposition and Dissent in Totalitarian Regimes* (Wivenhoe Park: ECPR Press, 2012), p. 121

<sup>33</sup> Anthony Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 140

<sup>34</sup> Anna Bikont quoted in: Anat Plocker, 'Zionists to Dayan: The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, 1967-1968', Ph.D. Stanford University, publication no. 3351468 (Ann Arbor: ProQuest/UMI, 2009), p. 152

<sup>35</sup> Barbara J. Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe: Citizen Intellectuals and Philosopher Kings* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003), p. 17

<sup>36</sup> Leszek Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008), p. 792

the power struggles after the end of the war, some of the first to explicitly pose a political challenge to the Party's right to rule.

An interesting aspect of the response to the *Open Letter* was the reaction of parts of the left in the West. The first English version of the text to be released in the United States was published by the journal *New Politics*, in 1966. *New Politics* was a self-proclaimed 'journal of socialist thought', published since 1961 and critical of totalitarianism.<sup>37</sup> The Editor's Note states how they felt about the letter: 'it is an exciting, extraordinary document, the work of intelligent, principled revolutionaries whose discussion of the new bureaucratic class is the most thoughtful we have seen from socialists in East Europe.'<sup>38</sup> The letter is described as containing 'particularly interesting statistical data and political analysis which conflict sharply with so much of the apologist pap about Poland, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Russia published in the bourgeois and pseudo-radical press' and while the authors are 'uncompromising in their opposition to the "Eastern central political bureaucracy"', they are no less firm in their opposition to Western capitalism.'<sup>39</sup> *Socialist Review*, a British socialist magazine strongly associated with Trotskyism, had the following to say in 1982: 'the Open Letter to the Party is by far the most impressive Marxist document produced from within Eastern Europe (or Russia for that matter) since the 1920s'; it is 'superior to its obvious rival, Leon Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*.'<sup>40</sup> The link between Trotskyism and Kuroń and Modzelewski was a matter of controversy. In 1963, Georges Dobbeleer, a Belgian Trotskyist, was visiting Poland on invitation from the Union of Polish Youth, and met with Kuroń, Modzelewski, as well as the Polish Trotskyist Ludwik Hass.<sup>41</sup> This was used by the authorities to accuse Kuroń and Modzelewski of breaking article 5 of the 'small penal code' (*mały kodeks karny*) – coming into contact with a person working in the interests of a foreign organisation in order to harm the Polish state (the organisation in question being the Fourth International).<sup>42</sup> In his defence, Kuroń argued in his prison notes that he had no formed opinion about Trotskyism at the time of the meeting and that, even in 1968, he still did not know whether Dobbeleer was actually a member of the Fourth International or not.<sup>43</sup> He did, however, say that he respected Trotsky as a leader of the Russian Revolution and a theoretician of the worker's movement and that he admired the Left Opposition for standing against the growing cult of personality around Stalin, but that he found modern Trotskyism dogmatic and stuck in the

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<sup>37</sup> 'Why We Publish', *New Politics*, 1:1 (1961), p. back and front cover

<sup>38</sup> Kuroń and Modzelewski, 'An Open Letter to the Party', p. 5

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Colin Barker, 'Books are weapons. Solidarnosc: the missing link', *Socialist Review*, 4 (1982), p. 14

<sup>41</sup> For more on Ludwik Hass and Polish Trotskyism see Chapter 2.

<sup>42</sup> Jacek Kuroń, 'Notatki więzienne', *Dojrzwanie. Pisma polityczne 1964-1968* (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2009), pp. 98-100

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

past.<sup>44</sup> In a 1987 interview, Kuroń reinstates the view that the Open Letter was not a Trotskyist text as it was in favour of market reforms, although the market would function through the mechanisms of economic planning, respecting the rule of workers' councils.<sup>45</sup>

Another positive reaction was to be found in France, where the Situationist International, a socialist group which was to play an influential role in the events of May 1968, stated in 1966 that 'in the Eastern bloc, bureaucratic totalitarianism is also beginning to produce its own forces of negation' and 'so far the most important act [of this negation] has been the publication of the Open Letter to the Polish Communist Party by the young Poles Kuron and Modzelewski.'<sup>46</sup> Unlike *New Politics* and *Socialist Review*, the Situationists were not only opposed to Stalinism, but also Trotskyism, and all forms of what they considered 'hierarchical groups and parties, who base the oppressive force of their delusory future class power on the organized passivity of their militants.'<sup>47</sup> In another episode, the student leader Daniel Cohn-Bendit was asked to identify himself at a court trial and simply responded 'Kuroń-Modzelewski', reinforcing a symbolic link between the 1968 student movements of France and Poland.<sup>48</sup>

In hindsight, the *Open Letter* was praised by the Marxist left that was critical of the realities of the Eastern Bloc, and its publication by Kuroń and Modzelewski was, in a way, a light at the end of the tunnel for Western socialists, a proof that truly socialist and revolutionary ideas were present within the Eastern Bloc as well. In Poland, the *Open Letter* 'radically pushed the boundaries a couple of steps further by describing certain aspects of the system that citizens were supposed to be unaware of', and the harsh response of the state, owing to which Kuroń and Modzelewski in total 'spent the longest time in jail when compared to other political prisoners after 1956', reveals how the regime felt about the dangers of their critiques.<sup>49</sup> In the crisis of 1968, the *Open Letter* played an influential role among the rebellious students, and according to Jedlicki, 'the immense majority of pamphlets

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 103-104

<sup>45</sup> Jacek Kuroń, 'The open letter' (video recording), interview on the webofstories.com website [available at: <http://www.webofstories.com/play/jacek.kuron/67>] [accessed: 29/1/15]

<sup>46</sup> Members of the Situationist International and students of Strasbourg University, 'On the Poverty of Student Life', in: Ken Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology* (Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006) [available at: <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/poverty.htm>] [accessed: 29/1/15]

<sup>47</sup> Italian Section of the Situationist International, 'In Short (Two Summaries of Situationist Perspectives)', in: Ken Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology* (Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006) [available at: <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/inshort.htm>] [accessed: 29/1/15]

<sup>48</sup> Jerzy Eisler, 'March 1968 in Poland', in: Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert and Detlef Junker (eds.) *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 243

<sup>49</sup> Michał Syska (ed.) '1964-2009. Modzelewski, Friszke and Koczanowicz...', pp. 40-41

and resolutions published by the students stress[ed] devotion to Communism, to *true* Communism.<sup>50</sup>

### After 1970

The March of 1968 became a watershed moment for the democratic opposition in Poland. The student movement mobilised by the ban of a performance of *Dziady*, a play by the national poet Adam Mickiewicz (written 1820-1832), ended with a drastic anti-Semitic campaign arranged by the state and repressions against student activists: beatings at the hands of security forces, university expulsions, and arrests of, among others, prominent members associated with the informal student activist group *Komandosi*.<sup>51</sup> By the 1970s, Modzelewski was gradually moving away from political activism, on one hand to dedicate his time to the historical study of the Medieval period and on the other due to his disillusionment in light of the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia and the consequences of the March crisis.<sup>52</sup> Kuroń and Michnik, and the student milieu around them, remained active however, and in 1976 were involved in the formation of *Komitet Obrony Robotników* (KOR), or the Workers' Defence Committee, which dedicated its activity to the defence of jailed or dismissed workers and opposition activists.

Although 'there were many people in the opposition [movement of the 1970s] with a socialist heritage who retained their socialist mindset' – 'the philosophy of class conflict was replaced with the philosophy of human rights.'<sup>53</sup> This is not only reflected in the activities of the group that evolved out of the original KOR in 1977, namely *Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej "KOR"* (KSS "KOR"), or the Social Self-Defense Committee "KOR", which, according to Jan Józef Lipski<sup>54</sup>, fought against all kinds of abuses of the rule of law.<sup>55</sup> It was also reflected in Kuroń's own post-1970 works, many of which have not been translated into English. In a text titled *Zasady Ideowe* (Principles), Kuroń proposes a system of parliamentary democracy, with a space for the self-governance of different social movements, in the realm of work, education and consumption.<sup>56</sup> This is in contrast to the *Open Letter* which opposed parliamentary democracy, on the premise that 'it carried no guarantee against

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<sup>50</sup> Witold Jedlicki, 'Disorder in Warsaw', in: Lyman H. Legters (ed.) *Eastern Europe: Transformation and Revolution, 1945-1991* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1992), p. 241

<sup>51</sup> The ideas of the mentors of the group, Kuroń and Modzelewski, influenced the leftist student activism of *Komandosi*. See chapter 'No Pasaran!' in: Tom Junes, *Student Politics in Communist Poland: Generations of Consent and Dissent* (London: Lexington Books, 2015)

<sup>52</sup> Andrzej Friszke, *Czas KOR-u. Jacek Kuroń a geneza Solidarności* (Kraków: Znak, 2011), pp. 39-41

<sup>53</sup> Michał Syska (ed.) '1964-2009. Modzelewski, Friszke and Koczanowicz...', p. 49

<sup>54</sup> Lipski was one of the founders of KOR, and KSS "KOR", as well as one of the people responsible for the re-establishment of the PPS in 1987. See Chapter 2 for more on Lipski and activists associated with the PPS.

<sup>55</sup> Jan Józef Lipski, 'Czym był KOR?', *Pisma Polityczne* (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2011), p. 395

<sup>56</sup> Jacek Kuroń, 'Zasady Ideowe', *Opozycja. Pisma polityczne 1969-1989* (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2010), p. 123

dictatorship and, even in its most perfect form, it is not a form of people's power.<sup>57</sup> In *Zasady Ideowe* Kuroń also calls for a consumer's market, a welfare state and the application of pluralism and federalism throughout society. On the national question, he stands in favour of national independence, and an inclusive form of patriotism. He rejects Marxism<sup>58</sup> (especially in its vulgar forms), as he believes that it ignores the plethora of other identities that a given member of society has, apart from either buying (as a capitalist) or selling (as a worker) labour-power. The focus of democratic change is no longer just the working class, but rather civil society. He warns of the dangers of the revolutionary left sliding into totalitarianism, but still embraces the values of social justice, autonomy, bottom-up initiative and humanism. In a way his vision is a utopian form of social democracy (which he admits in *Zasady Ideowe*).<sup>59</sup> Kuroń's obituary in *The Times* points out that it was likewise the experience of the tragic crushing of the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia and that of the student movement in Poland that convinced him it was 'impossible to reform communism from within.'<sup>60</sup> The popular perception of Kuroń remained that of someone strongly associated with the left, and even in 1986 one can find sources which still refer to him as a Marxist<sup>61</sup>, but in reality, while he remained politically on the left, his dedication to Marxism, one that is critical and not dogmatic, eventually waned in favour of other approaches.

Kuroń was later to play an important role in the *Solidarność* movement, and a controversial one during the transformation as Minister of Labour, convincing workers to 'accept an austerity programme without resorting to strike action.'<sup>62</sup> Modzelewski came back to activism in the wake of *Solidarność*, where he functioned as the press spokesman, but resigned in response to what he felt was the undemocratic leadership of Lech Wałęsa.<sup>63</sup> The new emphasis that was put on defending basic human values by the secular left after the March 1968 crisis was, according to Michnik, the reason for the rapprochement with Christianity, and in some cases the Church.<sup>64</sup> Kuroń expressed a similar sentiment in 1975 – in the previous few years he began to accept Christianity, not as a

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<sup>57</sup> Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski, 'An Open Letter to the Party II', p. 87

<sup>58</sup> Leszek Kołakowski, a former Marxist philosopher and historian, went through a similar process, as he came to reject Marxism by the early 1970s (see the conclusion of *Main Currents of Marxism*). E.P. Thompson, a British Marxist historian, wrote an open letter to Kołakowski where he expressed his disappointment at Kołakowski's political shift, see: 'An Open Letter to Leszek Kolakowski', *The Socialist Register*, 10 (1973)

<sup>59</sup> Jacek Kuroń, 'Zasady Ideowe', pp. 119-120

<sup>60</sup> 'Jacek Kuron' *The Times*, 18 June 2004, p. 39

<sup>61</sup> Olga A. Narkiewicz, *Eastern Europe 1968-1984* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p. 184

<sup>62</sup> 'Jacek Kuron', *The Times*

<sup>63</sup> Michael R. Dobbs, K. S. Karol, Dossa Trevisan, *Poland, Solidarity, Walesa* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1981), pp. 122-123

<sup>64</sup> Adam Michnik and David Ost (ed.) *The Church and the Left* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p.



religion, but rather a system of values.<sup>65</sup> The evolution they and the whole opposition movement underwent, from dissident socialism to the struggle for human rights, meant that the *Open Letter* lost its relevance within the mainstream opposition. In a wider context, the Kuroń and Modzelewski of the 1960s were ‘only the extremist manifestation of a much broader and more significant political phenomenon—the revolt of Polish intellectuals’, who sought ‘the right to formulate viable political alternatives’ in the face of an absolute system, rather than necessarily struggle for truer forms of socialism.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Jacek Kuroń, ‘Chrześcijanizm bez Boga’, *Opozycja. Pisma polityczne 1969-1989* (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2010), p. 59

<sup>66</sup> Michael Gamarnikow, ‘Poland: Political Pluralism in a One-Party State’, p. 6

## Chapter 2 – Left-wing Underground: Socialist Parties

### Polska Partia Socjalistyczna

The Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna*, PPS) was founded in 1892. Its beginnings can be traced back to a Paris conference, attended by delegates from a number of Polish socialist, left-wing and patriotic organisations which agreed to form a new single party.<sup>67</sup> The PPS saw Marx as pertinent to their tradition, especially his stance on the importance of Polish independence to the workers' cause.<sup>68</sup> At the same time, from its early days in nineteenth century partitioned Poland, through the leadership of Piłsudski and the following interwar period, it was always strongly associated with the patriotic side of the socialist movement in Poland – socialism and national independence was part of one and the same programme. For this emphasis, the party was criticised by the more internationalist oriented socialists – Rosa Luxemburg, at the time a member of the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (*Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy*, SDKPiL), disapproved of this 'social-patriotic tendency' because it 'placed its hope for the fall of tsardom not in the political class struggle of [the] proletariat but in the national struggle of the Poles'.<sup>69</sup> The politics of individual party members were never homogenous however; in 1906 a major divide occurred on the question of what should come first, socialism or independence, with the left-wing faction, *PPS-Lewica*, following the Russian Revolution eventually joining together with SDKPiL to form the Communist Worker's Party of Poland (Komunistyczna Partia Robotnicza Polski, KPRP) in 1918.<sup>70</sup> The complex question of the relationship with the Soviet Union was made even more pressing by the Polish–Soviet War of 1919–1921. After Poland obtained independence, the KPRP was driven underground and outlawed while 'PPS became one of the driving forces and one of the most active political parties of the new Republic'<sup>71</sup> – it joined the national defence government of Wincenty Witos and prominent party members directly participated in the Polish–Soviet War on the Polish side. The PPS embraced a different conception of socialism, one that differentiated it from the

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<sup>67</sup> Marian Kamil Dziewanowski, 'Social Democrats Versus "Social Patriots": The Origins of the Split of the Marxist Movement in Poland', *American Slavic and East European Review*, 10:1 (1951), p. 14

<sup>68</sup> Adam Ciołkosz, *Karol Marks a powstanie styczniowe* (1963) [available at: [http://lewicowo.pl/karol\\_marks\\_a\\_powstanie\\_styczniowe/](http://lewicowo.pl/karol_marks_a_powstanie_styczniowe/)] [accessed: 25/2/15]

<sup>69</sup> Rosa Luxemburg, *Foreword to the Anthology: The Polish Question and the Socialist Movement* (1905) [available at: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1905/misc/polish-question.htm>] [accessed: 25/2/15]

<sup>70</sup> Dziewanowski has documented these divisions within the socialist movement in Poland in two articles, one starting from the point of the formation of PPS, and another within the context of the First World War. Dziewanowski, 'Social Democrats Versus "Social Patriots"...'; Dziewanowski, 'World War I and the Marxist Movement of Poland', *American Slavic and East European Review*, 12:1 (1953), p. 72

<sup>71</sup> Dziewanowski, 'The Foundation of the Communist Party of Poland', *American Slavic and East European Review*, 11:2 (1952), p. 121

Soviet example, and this conception was to remain centred around Polish independence all the way through the interwar period. In the aftermath of the Second World War and the creation of the PRL, dissident PPS members, such as Antoni Pajdak, Kazimierz Pużak or Ludwik Cohn, were arrested and sentenced in show trials, while the 'liquidation of the PPS, under the guise of unification' occurred in 1948.<sup>72</sup> However, many activists of the pre-war PPS were to remain dedicated to the cause of independence, especially at a time when it was felt that Poland had lost it once again.

One aspect of the oppositional activism of PPS members in the PRL was its transnational nature. During and after the Second World War a segment of PPS activists operated abroad, in the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, United States and Italy in a de facto exile.<sup>73</sup> In 1940 the *Komitet Zagraniczny PPS* (Foreign Committee of the PPS) was formed as an arm of PPS – *Wolność, Równość, Niepodległość* (PPS – Freedom, Equality, Independence), the reorganised clandestine PPS under Nazi occupation.<sup>74</sup> *Komitet Zagraniczny PPS* became the nucleus for the creation of PPS structures abroad.<sup>75</sup> In 1960 there was a split, resulting in the formation of *Centralny Komitet Zagraniczny PPS* (Central Foreign Committee of PPS) under the leadership of Adam Ciołkosz, an organisation which operated until the late 1980s. Adam Ciołkosz, along with Lidia Ciołkoszowa, were responsible for the publication and editing of *Robotnik Polski w Wielkiej Brytanii* (Polish Worker in Great Britain, later the name was changed to just *Robotnik*).<sup>76</sup> Although the official structures were abroad, the organisation did have links with activists at home: in the 1970s, the official representatives of Ciołkosz's PPS in Poland were Ludwik Cohn, Adam Szczypiorski and Antoni Pajdak.<sup>77</sup> Remarkably, all three were also members of KOR and KSS "KOR", another indication of the involvement of socialists in the democratic opposition movement. Likewise, the PPS can be linked to the wider revolt of the intelligentsia. A look at a number of high case protest letters sent to the authorities between years 1964-1976 reveals the input of former and current PPS activists as well as other socialists. The 1964

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<sup>72</sup> Jan Józef Lipski, 'Liquidation of the Polish Socialist Party' (video recording), interview on the webofstories.com website [available at: <http://www.webofstories.com/play/jj.lipski/24>] [accessed: 25/2/15]

<sup>73</sup> A compilation of articles by Lidia Ciołkoszowa on Polish journalism abroad in the period 1940-1960 has recently been published, albeit only in Polish. It is an overview of ideas promoted by publicists across the political spectrum, including a discussion on the political and social change they would like to see. Lidia Ciołkoszowa, Andrzej Friszke (ed.) *Publicystyka polska na emigracji 1940-1960* (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2013)

<sup>74</sup> George J. Lerski, 'WRN', *Historical Dictionary of Poland, 966-1945* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996), p. 665

<sup>75</sup> At the same time some PPS members were involved in the Polish government-in-exile – Prime Minister Tomasz Arciszewski (in office 1944-1947) being just one of them.

<sup>76</sup> There also existed a French equivalent, *Robotnik Polski we Francji*, and an Italian one, *Robotnik Polski w Italii*. The Polish Library in Paris has an archive of these newspapers. A list of the available issues can be found under the terms: '*Robotnik Polski w Wielkiej Brytanii* (1940 - 1949)', '*Robotnik Polski w Italii*', '*Robotnik we Francji*' or '*Robotnik w Walce*', and the primary '*Robotnik : centralny organ PPS (1950 - 1990)*'. Polish Library in Paris, 'Catalogue' (2003) [available at: <https://vtls.cyfronet.pl/cgi-bin/bpp/chameleon?lng=en>] [accessed: 25/2/15]

<sup>77</sup> Andrzej Friszke, *Czas KOR-u. Jacek Kuroń a geneza Solidarności* (Kraków: Znak, 2011), pp. 372-373

*List 34*, opposing censorship<sup>78</sup>, was signed by, among others, Edward Lipiński (former PPS-Lewica member, founding member of *Klub Krzywego Koła*<sup>79</sup>), Maria Dąbrowska (adherent of Edward Abramowski's ideas<sup>80</sup>), Antoni Słonimski (former PPS member) and Marian Falski (former PPS member, participant in *Klub Krzywego Koła*); the collection of signatures was organised by Słonimski and Jan Józef Lipski. The 1975 *List 59*, opposing changes in the Polish constitution<sup>81</sup>, was signed by PPS members and KOR activists Cohn, Szczypiorski, Pajdak and Aniela Steinsbergowa, as well as Michnik, Lipski, Kuroń, Kołakowski (all of whom either still considered themselves socialists or at least could trace their political development to socialism), while both Lidia Ciołkoszowa and Adam Ciołkosz signed a declaration in support of the letter from abroad. Other letters in the same time period (*List 14*, against the repression of strikes in 1976 or the 1976 *Memoriał 101*, another condemnation of changes in the constitution) were likewise signed by many of the same figures.

A 1969 interview with Adam Ciołkosz, given to the Polish section of Radio Free Europe, illustrates the position in which PPS saw itself – Ciołkosz states that it is the duty of democratic socialists to fight communism in its official Soviet form. What led him to this conclusion was the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939, when it became clear to him that communism was merely a renewed Russian imperialism, not unlike the Tsar's imperialism of the past, with the moral and political values equivalent of Hitlerism.<sup>82</sup> By 1927, Stalin himself defined 'internationalists' as those who were 'ready to defend the U.S.S.R. without reservation, without wavering, unconditionally; for the U.S.S.R. is the base of the world revolutionary movement, and this revolutionary movement cannot be defended and promoted unless the U.S.S.R. is defended'.<sup>83</sup> Unless one held the belief that by the late 1920s the Soviet Union was still a cradle of socialism, the spreading of socialism as advocated by Stalin in practice meant increasing the geopolitical influence of the Soviet Union. It was not only the PPS

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<sup>78</sup> 'Freedom Manifesto of 34 Polish Intellectuals', in: Tadeusz N. Cieplak (ed.), *Poland Since 1956* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972)

<sup>79</sup> *Klub Krzywego Koła* (Crooked Circle Club) was a discussion club that existed between 1955 and 1962 in Warsaw. Set up in the thaw of 1950s with the approval of authorities as a sphere for voicing out popular opinion among the intelligentsia, it sometimes functioned as a platform for discussions on more radical themes (in the spirit of the 1956 rebellion, debates included the economic system, workers' self-government and workers' councils, democracy, etc.). Among its participants were the socialists Michnik, Lipski, Kuroń, Kołakowski, Falski, Hass, Lipiński, Słonimski, Steinsbergowa and the co-operative activist Jan Wolski. Eventually shut down by the authorities. See Witold Jedlicki, 'Crooked Circle Club', in: Tadeusz N. Cieplak (ed.) *Poland Since 1956* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972)

<sup>80</sup> For more on Abramowski's political descendants see Chapter 3.

<sup>81</sup> Andrzej Friszke, *Opozycja polityczna w PRL 1945-1980* (Londyn: Aneks, 1994), p. 327

<sup>82</sup> Polskie Radio, 'Adam Ciołkosz – socjalizm z ludzką twarzą' (voice recording) (2014) [available at: <http://www.polskieradio.pl/39/156/Artykul/1015206,Adam-Ciolkosz-%E2%80%93-socjalizm-z-ludzka-twarza>] [accessed: 25/2/15]

<sup>83</sup> Joachim C. Häberlen, 'Between global aspirations and local realities: the global dimensions of interwar communism', *Journal of Global History*, 7:3 (2012), p. 419

which opposed importing revolution from abroad, as between 1919 and 1921, during the Polish-Soviet war, at least one eminent KPRP member highlighted the problems with such an approach.<sup>84</sup>

Arguably the most prominent associate of PPS was Jan Józef Lipski. Born in 1926 to a family of intelligentsia, he joined *Armia Krajowa* (Home Army) during the Second World War and participated in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising.<sup>85</sup> As implied throughout, he was an active member of the opposition: involved in *Klub Krzywego Koła*, co-signer of a number of protest letters to the authorities, an influential member of KOR and later *Solidarność*. His English language book on KOR, as well as a number of shorter articles in Polish<sup>86</sup>, serve as useful sources on the development of the organisation – he describes the pre-history of KOR and its members, which can be traced back to initiatives such as *Klub Krzywego Koła*, the student activist group *Komandosi*, Kuroń's *Walterowcy*, patriotic scouts from *Czarna Jedyńka*, Catholic circles and the clandestine anti-Communist group *Ruch*.<sup>87</sup> Seweryn Blumsztajn, KOR activist from Kuroń's political milieu, highlights that KOR had three characteristics which made it appeal to such a wide range of people: it was anti-totalitarian, anti-ideological and moralist ('afraid to espouse absolute values').<sup>88</sup> At the same time, however, 'many of us [KOR activists] still considered ourselves people of the left, upholders of the leftist tradition of self-organised cooperatives and social movements, which had all in their various ways tried to answer to the world of work.'<sup>89</sup> This was likewise the background of Lipski who was a PPS sympathizer, and one of the main people behind the rebirth of the party in 1987 – its founding declaration reiterates the tradition in which PPS situates itself, and states that through its efforts it would reclaim the term socialism to its true meaning.<sup>90</sup> Even before its recreation, in the late 1970s and 1980s, one can notice a significant number of groups sprinkling around the country which associated themselves with the traditions of the PPS: *Polscy Socjaliści* and *Ruch Porozumienia Polskich Socjalistów* in 1979, *Polska Partia Socjaldemokratyczna* in 1981 or *Grupa Polityczna*

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<sup>84</sup> Henryk Stein-Domski (1883-1937), one of the leaders of KPRP and KPP, later executed in the Stalinist purges, warned in 1920 that it should be up to the proletariat in Poland to carry out the revolution, as otherwise, if it was exported from Russia, it could face greater resistance from the owning classes and less support among the working classes. See: Konrad Zieliński, 'Przyczynek do dziejów Polskiego Biura KC Rosyjskiej Komunistycznej Partii [bolszewików] i Tymczasowego Komitetu Rewolucyjnego Polski', *Facta Simonidis*, 4:1 (2011), p. 23

<sup>85</sup> Piotr Wróbel, *Historical Dictionary of Poland 1945-1996* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 172

<sup>86</sup> Jan Józef Lipski, *Pisma Polityczne* (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2011)

<sup>87</sup> Jan Józef Lipski, *KOR: A History of the Workers' Defense Committee in Poland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 9-29

<sup>88</sup> Jonathan Luxmoore and Jolanta Babiuch, 'In Search of Faith: the Metaphysical Dialogue Between Poland's Opposition Intellectuals in the 1970s', *Religion, State and Society*, 23:1 (1995), pp. 78-79

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Deklaracja polityczna Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej (1987) [available at: <http://lewicowo.pl/deklaracja-polityczna-polskiej-partii-socjalistycznej/>] [accessed: 25/2/15]

„Robotnik” in 1984.<sup>91</sup> In 1982 an informal group of socialists wrote a statement to the Polish public outlining the position of ‘democratic socialism’.<sup>92</sup> It appeared that socialism was once again fostering dissidence. For Lipski however socialism meant social-democracy more than anything else – his point of reference becomes Sweden with its mix of social welfare and a market economy rather than the legacy of the Paris Commune or the Russian Revolution.<sup>93</sup> In his writings from the 1970s onwards two currents are most reminiscent of Kuroń’s development – the positive attitude towards the Christian ethic and a left-wing standpoint that is wary of the danger of democratic left tendencies becoming totalitarian.<sup>94</sup> For Lipski, like most of the pre-1968 opposition in general, the ideas and discourse of human rights, pluralism, anti-totalitarianism and the civil society took precedence over classically socialist principles (defending the interests of the working class, drive towards a social revolution). In consequence, once some of the younger activists and trade unionists in PPS began to adopt more radical tactics in 1988 (earlier many of which were members of *Grupa Polityczna „Robotnik”*), Lipski decided to split and create his own PPS, while those that remained formed *PPS – Rewolucja Demokratyczna* (PPS RD, PPS - Democratic Revolution) and *Tymczasowy Komitet Krajowy Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej* (Provisional National Committee of the PPS). PPS RD backed the project of *Samorządna Rzeczpospolita*<sup>95</sup>, harkened back to the legacy of the Paris Commune, the 1956 workers’ councils in Budapest and the 1968/69 workers and students rebellions, and saw mass strikes, bottom-up self-organisation and powerful unions as appropriate tactics.<sup>96</sup> Once again PPS was divided into smaller groups which disagreed politically, and it was not until 1990 that the PPS abroad, Lipski’s PPS, PPS RD and other offshoots were once again reunited into one, with the approval of Lidia Ciołkoszowa who came back to Poland specifically for the occasion.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Piotr Ikonowicz, Grzegorz Ilka, Cezary Miżejewski, Krzysztof Markuszewski, Tomasz Truskawa and Iwona Różewicz from *Grupa Polityczna „Robotnik”* were present at the founding conference of the recreated PPS in 1987. Lipski, members of other PPS offshoots, trade unionists, youth from groups such as the pacifist *Ruch Wolność i Pokój* and members of worker’s council were also present. Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Grupa niezależnych socjalistów polskich, ‘Oświadczenie do społeczeństwa polskiego’ (1982) [available at: <http://lewicowo.pl/oswiadczenie-do-spolesczenstwa-polskiego/>] [accessed: 25/2/15]

<sup>93</sup> Jan Józef Lipski, ‘Dlaczego jestem w PPS?’, *Pisma Polityczne* (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2011), p. 350

<sup>94</sup> Jan Józef Lipski, ‘Lewica – prawica. Wypowiedź w ankiecie “Wezwania”’, *Pisma Polityczne* (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2011), p. 327

<sup>95</sup> The concept of *Samorządna Rzeczpospolita* (Self-governing Republic) came from the first congress of delegates of *Solidarność*. It found some appeal among sections of the socialist and anarchist opposition. Program NSZZ „Solidarność” uchwalony przez I Krajowy Zjazd Delegatów (1981), in: *Federalista (Federalistka)*, 1 (2010), pp. 83-124

<sup>96</sup> Program PPS-Rewolucja Demokratyczna (1989) [available at: <http://lewicowo.pl/program-pps-rewolucja-demokratyczna/>] [accessed: 25/2/15]

<sup>97</sup> Ciołkoszowa, Friszke (ed.) *Publicystyka polska na emigracji 1940-1960*, p.13

### Other socialist groups in opposition

Other groups, which did not necessarily see themselves as parties, were also influenced by the history of PPS and its cultural heritage. *Międzyzakładowy Komitet Koordynacyjny* (MKK, Inter-factory Coordinating Committee), a structure based in Warsaw which worked together with *Międzyzakładowy Robotniczy Komitet "Solidarności"* (Inter-factory Workers' Committee "Solidarity"), and published its own newspaper *Wola*, organised what they called *Towarzystwo Uniwersytetów Robotniczych* (TUR, Association of Workers' Universities), a form of a flying university meant to educate members and draw lessons from the short history of *Solidarność* and trade union tactics.<sup>98</sup> At the time, some MKK members had consciously left-wing ideas<sup>99</sup>, and the name TUR was no doubt a reference to the interwar organisation, an educational structure for workers with the same name, connected to the PPS. In late 1970s, Kuroń, through the structures of KOR, likewise helped organise TUR among the workers of Ursus and Radom, and tried to convince Lipiński to take a leading role in its running.<sup>100</sup> The legacy of PPS then had an imprint among some of the opposition and not only among direct party members. Its reputation as a patriotic organisation dedicated to social justice and independence meant its organisational culture appealed to activists with left-wing sensibilities who at the same time wanted to free Poland from the Soviet Union's sphere of influence.

The number of other socialist groups in opposition increased between late 1970s and early 1980s: *Polska Partia Pracy*, *Polska Partia Komunistyczna*, *Niezależna Partia Polskich Socjalistów*, *Niezależna Polska Partia Socjalistyczna* and *Polska Rewolucyjna Partia Socjalistyczna* all formed in 1981. Many of these groups were small and had a local character; information about their political activities and ideas is incredibly scarce even in the Polish language.<sup>101</sup> Additionally, with the introduction of martial law in 1981 they were further pushed underground, in some cases soon leading to disintegration. There are two other parties which it is worthwhile to mention in further detail due to their specificities. The first one is *Polska Socjalistyczna Partia Pracy* (PSPP, Polish Socialist Labour Party), formed in 1980. It was led by Edmund Bałuka, a merchant navy seaman and later shipyard worker born in 1933, and one of the leaders of the 1971 strike wave in the Szczecin Shipyard (during which he held a position on the strike committee and campaigned for free elections in worker's councils

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<sup>98</sup> Krystyna Zalewska (ed.), *Będzie Strajk* (Warszawa: Tres Piedras, 2012), p. 109

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Friszke, *Czas KOR-u...*, pp. 190-192

<sup>101</sup> Information regarding the organisations listed here can be found in a text on the political opposition written by Kossecki. This is however a dubious source – published by the Ministry of National Defence in 1983 it has a propagandist character. Józef Kossecki, *Geografia opozycji politycznej w Polsce w latach 1976-1981* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1983)

and trade unions).<sup>102</sup> In a bid to remove Bałuka from his position in the trade unions, as well as discredit him as abandoning his fellow workers, Bałuka was given a job as a sailor in 1973 and allegedly forced by the secret-police to flee while stationed abroad.<sup>103</sup> In years 1973-1981 he remained in quasi-exile, staying in Spain, Greece, Belgium, Great Britain and France at different periods and making links with political organisations such as the PPS in Great Britain, the French Trotskyist *Organisation Communiste Internationale*, the French trade union federation *Force Ouvrière*, as well as taking part in campaigns and conferences in solidarity with oppositionist activists in the Eastern Bloc or for the creation of independent trade unions.<sup>104</sup> In France he was also the editor-in-chief of a left-wing newspaper called *Szerszeń*, which was published in three languages: Polish, French (*Le Frelon*) and Danish (*Brombassen*).<sup>105</sup> *Szerszeń* and the 13 point programme it printed became the nucleus for the PSPP in 1980, calling for, among others, independence from the Kremlin and an end to PZPR monopoly, annulment of international treaties harming Poland in favour of the USSR (including Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam), dismantling of the interior ministry's organs of repression, freedom of speech, assembly and freedom to strike, as well as independent trade unions and the creation of worker's councils in all workplaces.<sup>106</sup> In 1981 Bałuka came back to Poland with a fake passport, took part in the *Solidarność* movement and disseminated the political project of the PSPP before being arrested and interned soon after.<sup>107</sup> Although the PSPP never gained much traction, except for the shipyards in which Bałuka worked, and the ideas it presented closely resemble those previously discussed (a mixture of values of working class autonomy, patriotism and socialism), it stands out as a project for a socialist transformation that was not conceptualised within intelligentsia circles, but rather by a group of workers directly involved in the class struggles of the 1970s and 1980s.

In total opposition to this, one may look at the *Komunistyczna Partia Polski* (not to be confused with the original pre-war KPP, this was a party that existed in years 1965-1996) of Kazimierz Mijal. Mijal was an ideological colleague of Bolesław Bierut, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the PZPR from 1948 up until his death in 1956. Mijal, a former member of the Central Committee himself, belonged to the group that was swept from positions of power during the events of the

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<sup>102</sup> Neal Ascherson, *The Polish August: The Self-limiting Revolution* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1981), pp. 242-244

<sup>103</sup> Jack M. Bloom, *Seeing Through the Eyes of the Polish Revolution: Solidarity and the Struggle Against Communism in Poland* (Leiden: Brill, 2013). p. 96

<sup>104</sup> Sylwia Wójcikowa and Mirosława Łątkowska, 'Edmund Bałuka', *Encyklopedia Solidarności* [available at: [http://www.encyklopedia-solidarnosci.pl/wiki/index.php?title=Edmund\\_Ba%C5%82uka](http://www.encyklopedia-solidarnosci.pl/wiki/index.php?title=Edmund_Ba%C5%82uka)] [accessed: 29/4/15]

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Paweł Miedziński, 'Polska Socjalistyczna Partia Pracy', *Encyklopedia Solidarności* [available at: [http://www.encyklopedia-solidarnosci.pl/wiki/index.php?title=T00746\\_Polska\\_Socjalistyczna\\_Partia\\_Pracy\\_Szczecin](http://www.encyklopedia-solidarnosci.pl/wiki/index.php?title=T00746_Polska_Socjalistyczna_Partia_Pracy_Szczecin)] [accessed: 29/4/15]

<sup>107</sup> Wójcikowa and Łątkowska, 'Edmund Bałuka'



Polish October, and soon after took Anti-Revisionist positions, opposing the process of de-Stalinisation. In 1966 he fled to Albania (ruled by Enver Hoxha, another Anti-Revisionist), where he took over the Polish-language section of an Albanian radio station to spread his party's ideas, albeit without any success.<sup>108</sup> It is difficult to label Mijal as a member of the socialist opposition, or a socialist dissident, as while he was a self-proclaimed socialist, his opposition stemmed from losing his place within the PZPR bureaucracy to the Gomułka faction, and as such is far better understood through the concept of Anti-Revisionism.

### Trotskyism

While Trotskyism may have played a role in influencing the politics of the likes of Kuroń, Michnik or Bakula, none of these people actually considered themselves part of that political tradition. In the 1980s there were some organisations which tried to make explicit links with Trotskyists abroad and the Fourth International, such as *Porozumienie Opozycji Robotniczej* (which existed only briefly, in years 1985-86<sup>109</sup>), or the party that grew out of it, *Robotnicza Partia Rzeczypospolitej Samorządnej*, but arguably the most important persona for Polish Trotskyism was Ludwik Hass. Born in 1918, by 1936 as a student in Lviv, he got involved in socialist politics through a youth organisation and briefly the KPP, soon turning towards Trotskyism. In 1939 he was arrested, exiled and sent to a labour camp by the invading Russian authorities, avoiding execution only thanks to an administrative error and surviving the camp due to being allocated to 'watching the camp accountant at work' rather than harsh manual labour.<sup>110</sup> Only in 1957 was Hass able to return to Poland on the wave of the occurring de-Stalinisation and rehabilitations; in Poland he went back to continue his academic career and decided to join the PZPR.<sup>111</sup> Hass took part in the *Klub Krzywego Koła* discussions, became acquainted with Kuroń and Modzelewski, and in 1965 was arrested for helping with the distribution of the *Open Letter* and for having contacts in foreign Trotskyist organisations.<sup>112</sup> After Kuroń and Modzelewski's sentences were settled in October 1965, it was the Trotskyists' turn, Hass, Badowski and Śmiech, to have their own trial at which Hass got sentenced to 3 years but was released early. A lot of the information regarding Trotskyist contacts and influences, some exaggerated, came from

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<sup>108</sup> Jerzy Ptakowski 'Gomułka and his Party', in: Cieplak (ed.) *Poland Since 1956...*, pp. 65-66

<sup>109</sup> Tomasz Szczepański, 'Porozumienie Opozycji Robotniczej', *Encyklopedia Solidarności* [available at: [http://www.encyklopedia-solidarnosci.pl/wiki/index.php?title=T01300\\_Porozumienie\\_Opozycji\\_Robotniczej\\_Warszawa](http://www.encyklopedia-solidarnosci.pl/wiki/index.php?title=T01300_Porozumienie_Opozycji_Robotniczej_Warszawa)] [accessed: 29/4/15]

<sup>110</sup> Witold Jedlicki, 'Ludwik Hass', *International Socialism*, 27, (1966/67), pp.23-25

<sup>111</sup> The reasoning behind joining the Party has been explored by Hass's friend, Jedlicki. Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Apart from Kuroń, Modzelewski and Hass the state also suspected a number of other individuals to belong to a Trotskyist conspiracy: Romuald Śmiech, Jerzy Robert Nowak, Jan Stodolniak, Jan Wyka, Kazimierz Badowski, Tadeusz Witwicki, Jerzy Jasiński and Zdzisław Szpakowski. The list later grew to include more academics. Some of these, like Badowski, were indeed dedicated Trotskyists, but others simply belonged to a similar social milieu. Andrzej Friszke, *Anatomia Buntu* (Kraków: Znak, 2010), p. 249-253

Hass's own testimonies, who for some time became a contact for the secret-police.<sup>113</sup> In his autobiography Kuroń, looking back on the court proceedings, wonders whether it was the gulags that broke Hass, but decides not to make judgements, never having to go through that experience himself.<sup>114</sup> Nevertheless, Hass continued to take part in oppositional activism, becoming the Polish contact of *Rewolucyjna Liga Robotnicza Polski* (Revolutionary Worker's League of Poland), a group formed around 1971 by Poles in France which had its own newspaper *Walka Klas*, and was explicitly Marxist and anti-clerical in tone.<sup>115</sup>

Upon Hass's death in 2008, a number of Trotskyist organisations published obituaries where their relation to Hass, and to the Polish opposition in general, was discussed. A number of interesting points can be glimpsed from these. The journal *Revolutionary History* is far more positive in its account of Hass and his politics, and the author knew Hass personally – it contains a short biography, a note on Hass's arrival in Poland when 'he stepped up on the soap-box provided, announced that he was coming back as a revolutionary to overthrow the bureaucracy and then sang the Internationale giving the clenched fist salute', and his decision to 'enter *Solidarność*, even if it was Catholic and opposed to Marxism, because that was where the workers in struggle were.'<sup>116</sup> It also mentions Hass' scholarly work on the working class movement in Poland and freemasonry. The other account, in the *Workers Vanguard*, is more negative – it states that Hass' 'articles appeared in *Revolutionary History* and other pseudo-Trotskyist papers in the West', that Hass did not understand the counterrevolutionary character of *Solidarność*, and accuses him of nationalism for expressing the type of sentiment that 'we here know better our own backyard.'<sup>117</sup> In the end, however, it does state that Hass helped to ensure the continuity of Trotskyist thought in Poland. From this one can see that the evaluation of his persona and political contributions did not escape the different ideological disagreements of Trotskyists in the West, sometimes not quite meeting their benchmarks for Trotskyism.

## Conclusion

After the Second World War, the approach of working within the PZPR to transform the system as some of the young intelligentsia did was never too viable for dissident socialists who did not situate

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Jacek Kuroń, 'Wiara i wina', in: Kuroń, *Autobiografia*, (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2011), p.245

<sup>115</sup> It argued against alliances with the Church, as it believed the Vatican did not share the interests of the striking workers and would be willing to go into compromise with the PZPR. Henryk Paszt, 'Kogo broni Kościół: robotników czy PZPR?', *Walka Klas*, 19 (1980)

<sup>116</sup> Ted Crawford, 'Obituary: Ludwik Hass (1918–2008)', *Revolutionary History*, 10:1 (2008) [available at: <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/revhist/backiss/vol10/no1/crawford.html>] [accessed: 29/4/15]

<sup>117</sup> 'In Memory of Polish Socialist Ludwik Hass', *Workers Vanguard*, 914 (2008) [available at: <http://www.icl-fi.org/english/wv/914/hass.html>] [accessed: 29/4/15]

themselves within the general communist tradition, or within the even more specific tradition of the PZPR. These socialists still saw the need for a party organisation, but instead tried to create their own or resurrect those of the recent past. This division between socialism and communism, as well as the divisions between different strands of communism, is an issue for the historiography of the early nineteenth and twentieth century, as at different times, and to different actors, all these terms had different connotations.<sup>118</sup> Sometimes the practicalities of these meant that socialism and communism were conceived as hostile to each other, which the following anecdote from Kuroń's youth illustrates: his father, a PPS member and veteran of the Polish-Soviet war, would sing around the house *'Poślał Trocki na Warszawę, bolszewiki swoje wszawę, jak ich dziadek wziął w uściski, bolszewikom spuchły pyski'* (Trotsky sent his lousy Bolsheviks to Warsaw, after granddad's strong embraces, they had swellings on their faces<sup>119</sup>). At other times it meant that the likes of Kuroń or Hass tried to bring forth what was in their view a truer form of communism. It would be a mistake to lump all these terms together – calling the PRL a socialist or communist system with no caveats could in practice obscure the contribution of dissident socialists, or even communists, within the democratic opposition.

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<sup>118</sup> Falk likewise highlights these complexities, opting to use the term 'authoritarian communism' (instead of the popular 'state socialism') to describe the regimes of the Eastern Bloc. Barbara J. Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe: Citizen Intellectuals and Philosopher Kings* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003), p. xxix

<sup>119</sup> Jacek Kuroń, 'My father' (video recording), interview on the webofstories.com website [available at: <http://www.webofstories.com/play/jacek.kuron/5>] [accessed: 25/2/15]

## Chapter 3 – (Anti-)Politics, Art and Culture

### Anarchism

The origins of anarchism in Poland can be traced back to the late nineteenth century, when Poland was still under Russian, Austrian and Prussian rule. At this time parts of the socialist movement embraced similar tactics and theoretical positions. Apart from obvious influences from outside (Proudhon, Kropotkin, Bakunin, et al.), the thinkers who shaped early Polish anarchism included the likes of Jan Waclaw Machajski (1866-1926) who came to believe that ‘the radical intelligentsia aimed not at the achievement of a classless society, but merely to establish itself as a privileged stratum’<sup>120</sup> and as such came to oppose the leading role of the intelligentsia within the workers movement, or Edward Abramowski (1868-1918), a stateless socialist who ‘advocated socialist reconstruction through voluntary cooperation associations.’<sup>121</sup> It was not until the turn of the century, however, that anarchism as a movement began to make inroads into the wider working class movement. Chwedoruk has written a brief outline of the development of anarchism in twentieth century Poland, with a specific focus on syndicalism, which serves as a useful introduction to the topic.<sup>122</sup> Early on, syndicalism in Poland was very much of the national variety, influenced by the likes of Georges Sorel, but with time a different and more internationalist perspective gained ground in the form of anarcho-syndicalism. In the late 1920s this second current found a degree of support in one of the biggest national trade union federations, *Związek Związków Zawodowych* (Union of Trade Unions), the youth movement *Zet*, and the smaller *Anarchistyczna Federacja Polski* (Anarchist Federation of Poland). Like with the socialist movement, within anarchist and syndicalist circles there was a tension between patriotism and internationalism.<sup>123</sup> With the coming of the Second World War, anarchists and syndicalists formed clandestine organisations, *Związek Syndylistów Polskich* and *Syndykalistyczna Organizacja Wolność*, which took part in the resistance movement, including the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. The organised anarchist movement, however, did not survive the war or the early years of Stalinist rule. Some anarchist veterans got involved in trade unions where they hoped to influence the situation in the country and others in co-operatives, such as the publishing

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<sup>120</sup> Paul Avrich, *Russian Anarchists* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 104

<sup>121</sup> George J. Lerski, ‘Edward Abramowski’, *Historical Dictionary of Poland, 966-1945* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996), p. 3

<sup>122</sup> Rafał Chwedoruk, ‘Polish Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism in the Twentieth Century’, in: Dave Berry and Constance Bantman (eds.) *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism: The Individual, the National and the Transnational* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010)

<sup>123</sup> Clearly demonstrated by the Piłsudski coup, when patriotic syndicalists initially took the side of the general, while ‘anarchists were the only left-wing formation not to support the overthrow.’ *Ibid.*, pp. 145-146

co-operative *Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza Słowo* which published a number of books by Kropotkin – these attempts however were short-lived as anarchists faced repression from the state.<sup>124</sup>

It was not until the 1980s that anarchist ideas, not always properly expressed, began to resurface. Small groups formed, often collected around underground publications. One of the earliest such groups was Sigma, formed around 1980 by students in Warsaw, with its own paper *Sprawa Robotnicza* (possibly harkening back in name to an early twentieth century anarcho-syndicalist newspaper set up by the eccentric Augustyn Wróblewski). With time members of Sigma allegedly abandoned anarchism in favour of revolutionary Marxism and Trotskyism<sup>125</sup> – before that happened however, their activities received an enthusiastic response from at least one publication in the West, which called Sigma's proclamation 'the most promising manifestation of revolutionary libertarian politics in Soviet-East Europe since the Second World War.'<sup>126</sup> A significant proportion of the anarchist press that flourished in the late 1980s seriously engaged with politics, while other parts took a more humorous tone or were more concerned with the underground music scene, especially the large Polish punk subculture.<sup>127</sup> The groups discussed in this chapter likewise had an uneven relationship with anarchism, but the influence of certain principles, such as grassroots democracy, anti-authoritarianism or anti-militarism were all common to their approaches.

### Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego

In 1983 a group of high school students in Gdańsk published a manifesto for an Alternative Society Movement (*Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego*, RSA). The students were the creators of the magazine *Gilotyna*, aimed at promoting independent political expression, as well as the organisers of a variety of cultural and social events for the youth – spectacles, cabarets, concerts, amateur cinema, and a discussion club.<sup>128</sup> Temporarily they were involved in *Solidarność* structures, but as they radicalised and clashed with local leadership they decided to embark on their own initiative. This is where the RSA originated. In the words of its co-founder Waluszko, it was an environment 'on

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 161

<sup>125</sup> Michał Blaut, 'Prasa anarchistyczna w PRL cz. 1', *Przegląd Anarchistyczny* [available at: <http://www.przegląd-anarchistyczny.org/historia/121-prasa-anarchistyczna-w-prl>] [accessed: 29/4/15]

<sup>126</sup> Brian Amesly, 'Poland: Return of the Anarchists', *Strike* (1983) [available at: <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/brian-amesly-poland-return-of-the-anarchists>] [accessed: 29/4/15]

<sup>127</sup> The more political anarchists translated texts by the likes of Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta as well as proclamations from anarchist organisations abroad. An article which provides an overview of the more prolific publications, both political and counter-cultural, is available on the website of the anarchist magazine *Przegląd Anarchistyczny*. Michał Blaut, 'Prasa anarchistyczna w PRL', *Przegląd Anarchistyczny* [available at: <http://www.przegląd-anarchistyczny.org/historia/121-prasa-anarchistyczna-w-prl> ; <http://www.przegląd-anarchistyczny.org/historia/123-prasa-anarchistyczna-w-prl-cz-2>] [accessed: 29/4/15]

<sup>128</sup> Janusz P. Waluszko, 'Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego', in: Damian Kaczmarek (ed.), *Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego 1983-1991* (Poznań: Oficyna Bractwa Trojka, 2009), p. 5

the borders of the political opposition and the youth subculture.<sup>129</sup> In 1984, after making links with other young activists and workers, the group began to take to the streets, originally around their home city Gdańsk. Common tactics included leafletting, mobile demonstrations against elections and solidarity with political prisoners. What actually put the RSA on the national scene and made them known was a demonstration they co-organised on May 1, 1985. It blocked the way of the official state march for half an hour and ended in a battle with the riot control units of ZOMO, during which two ZOMO functionaries were killed and many were injured.<sup>130</sup> The demonstration was attended not only by the RSA – it included other political organisations and had the support of some local football fans – but due to the characteristic appearance of RSA activists, the visibility of black flags and anarchist propaganda, they were assigned a primary role in the events by the media.<sup>131</sup> Thanks to this publicity the RSA grew and spread to other cities. Its members got involved in wider pacifist campaigns, moving them to the left, such as *Ruch Wolność i Pokój* (Freedom and Peace Movement) which supported conscientious objectors who refused the obligatory military service. Like most of the opposition in general, RSA members had to face arrests and persecution, sometimes additional accusations of terrorism as well.

In terms of ideas, the RSA was a diverse mixture. The 1981 *Solidarność* programme, *Samorządna Rzeczpospolita*, was at the time enthusiastically taken on by future RSA members as a potential ‘step towards a stateless society.’<sup>132</sup> This, as well as the fact that *Solidarność* was the mass opposition movement, incentivised coordination, but at the same time as RSA was materialising *Solidarność* began to abandon its programme, and so the relationship deteriorated. The movement certainly saw itself as more left-wing or more radical than the mainstream opposition, which was reflected in the principles at its forefront: an anti-clerical and anti-militarist stance, a fondness for direct action and hostility to any compromises with the authorities. The RSA promoted these principles among the youth, but not only; a 1986 article on the RSA from a regional *Solidarność* newspaper mentions leafletting actions at the alternative music festival *Jarocin* but also at the pilgrimage to Częstochowa.<sup>133</sup> What distinguished the group politically was a strong anti-authoritarian attitude – in a 1986 interview with an RSA activist, when asked what political orientation they identify with the most, the answer was ‘politics does not interest me [...] it is an activity for people who want to rule

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 7

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-8

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 17

<sup>133</sup> ‘Fizjologiczna niechęć do czerwonego, dystans do "Solidarności": z rozmowy z działaczem „Solidarności” z Wrocławia’, *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, 154 (1986), in: Kaczmarek (ed.) *Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego 1983-1991*, p. 82

over others.<sup>134</sup> Much of the group's politics stemmed from a deliberately anti-political standpoint, and the connection to anarchism as a political project was not immediate – only by 1985 would they actually march under the black flag and Waluszko admits that, unlike some of the other anarchist groups in 1980s Poland, they did not really read the classics, learning from practice instead.<sup>135</sup> In another interview with three RSA members, they distance themselves from the anarchist label – one suggests the term 'alternativism' instead, not wanting to have ideological roots in the nineteenth century.<sup>136</sup> Due to the attention that the RSA put on individualism there was little political uniformity, and as such the degree of acceptance of political anarchism varied from place to place and from individual to individual.

Whatever its theoretical background, in practice the RSA was part of the wave on which anarchist politics in Poland were reborn. Likewise, since the RSA preferred to work together with groups such as PPS RD, more radical offshoots of *Solidarność*, or workplace committees, it constituted part of the left-wing opposition, while at least its more class-struggle oriented elements could be also understood within the concept of dissident socialism.<sup>137</sup> Towards the end of the 1980s, members of the RSA would play a crucial role in the formation of *Międzymiastówka Anarchistyczna* (MA, Intercity Anarchist [Group]) in 1988, an attempt at uniting anarchists across the country and the end result of which was the foundation of *Federacja Anarchistyczna* (FA, Anarchist Federation) at a conference in 1989. The 1988 MA manifesto mentions the theoretician Abramowski and gives support to the ecology movement, as well as calling for bottom-up initiatives against militarisation, exploitation of workers, censorship and mass media lies.<sup>138</sup> Compared to the political programmes of the *Open Letter* or the dissident socialist parties, there is actually no mention here of industrial action or worker's councils, instead one can see the influence of the counter-culture's movement with a notion of artistic revolt through happenings, still popular rock concerts or theatre. The anarchists of the RSA and the FA opposed the Round Table Agreement as a compromise with the Party and condemned the economic transformation in the 1990s, including *Solidarność* and former communist

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<sup>134</sup> This newspaper was likewise an underground *Solidarność* publication. Such articles show that there was some interest in the activities and ideas of the RSA among the wider opposition. 'Ruch alternatywny', *Kontakty*, 31 (1986), in: Kaczmarek (ed.) *Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego 1983-1991*, p. 84

<sup>135</sup> Waluszko, 'Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego', p. 6

<sup>136</sup> 'Władza nie jest potrzebna...', *Przegląd Polityczny*, 6 (1985), in: Kaczmarek (ed.) *Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego 1983-1991*, p. 52

<sup>137</sup> Waluszko, 'Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego', p. 17

<sup>138</sup> 'Ruch anarchistyczny – Tak!', *Biuro Informacyjne Międzymiastówki Anarchistycznej* (1988), in: Kaczmarek (ed.) *Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego 1983-1991*, pp. 120-121

Kuroń's role in the whole process.<sup>139</sup> In a way the process went full circle – former oppositionists, who got into positions of power, were now facing opposition from younger radicals.

### Pomarańczowa Alternatywa

The notion of protest art is not novel – ‘artistic currents and social protest have long been intertwined.’<sup>140</sup> Art made by ‘politicized minority groups in democratic contexts’ shares common trends with art made in authoritarian regimes, but in the latter, where mainstream media are more or less tightly controlled or censored, any form of independent artistic expression has the potential to be a form of dissidence.<sup>141</sup> In Poland this was already the case after October 1956, when a ‘theatre of the absurd’ was able to grow, which often criticised the realities of the system in a roundabout way through metaphor and allusion.<sup>142</sup> From the 1960s there was a flamboyant tradition of intelligentsia or student cabarets and a relatively popular hippie movement. In 1970s and 1980s, other forms of artistic protest developed through alternative music festivals, street happenings or much more often television comedy which could indirectly bypass censorship – all of which allowed people to reclaim a space for freer expression.<sup>143</sup> Some forms of such protest art found a significant following among students and the youth and gave birth to the counter-culture reflected in the *Jarocin* festival or punk music.<sup>144</sup> The most widely applauded group that combined art and anti-politics in prominent ways was Orange Alternative (*Pomarańczowa Alternatywa*, PA), the brainchild of Waldemar Fydrych, alias Major.

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<sup>139</sup> In the political declarations of anarchists from 1989-1991 syndicalist content and industrial action makes a reappearance as does the concept of *Samorządna Rzeczpospolita*. Such arguments once more gained relevance in the movement against privatisation and free market reforms introduced during the transformation. See articles such as: ‘Reprywatyzacji Nie!’, ‘List otwarty do członków związków zawodowych, działaczy samorządu pracowniczego i członków Rad Pracowniczych, do ludzi i środowisk lewicy’, ‘Balcerowicz stop!’, in: Kaczmarek (ed.) *Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego 1983-1991*, pp. 133-144

<sup>140</sup> Lilian Mathieu and Justyne Balasinski, ‘Artistic Currents and Milieus and Social Movements’, in: David A. Snow et al. (eds.) *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), p. abstract

<sup>141</sup> Jacqueline Adams, ‘When Art Loses Its Sting: The Evolution of Protest Art in Authoritarian Contexts’, *Sociological Perspectives*, 48:4 (2005), pp. 531

<sup>142</sup> Kathleen Cioffi, *Alternative Theatre in Poland, 1954-1989* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999) pp. 56-59

<sup>143</sup> Dorota Ostrowska, ‘The Carnival of the Absurd: Stanisław Bareja's Alternatywy 4 and Polish Television in the 1980s’, in: Anikó Imre, Timothy Havens and Katalin Lustyik (eds.) *Popular Television in Eastern Europe During and Since Socialism* (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 65-80

<sup>144</sup> Pęczak has written a book outlining the main subcultures in the PRL, hooligans, skinheads, bohemians, punks and the like, as well as their relationship to the authorities. Mirosław Pęczak, *Subkultura w PRL. Opór, kreacja, imitacja* (Warszawa: Narodowe Centrum Kultury, 2013)



The history of the PA has been described by Major in his autobiography, but it itself reads like an PA ploy – an ‘official, lionising socialist realist biography of the heroes of the Orange Alternative.’<sup>145</sup> Major begins the story from the point of his youth and the origins of his rebellious nature. At the university in Toruń he founded a theatre group and soon ‘began presenting his views publicly on student radio, inundating listeners with anti-state ideology.’<sup>146</sup> He then changed universities and moved to Wrocław, where he furthered his interests in alternative theatre, met ‘the Engineer’ who was an ‘important figure among the flower children’, ‘one of the first Polish hippies’ and a ‘considerable influence on the first generation of dissidents in Poland.’<sup>147</sup> At this time Major himself became a hippie, while at the same time undergoing military training at the university. He got involved in a local *Studencki Komitet Solidarności* (SKS, Student Committee of Solidarity), associated with KOR, and went to his first protest in 1977 called in response to the mysterious death of Stanisław Pyjas, a student in Kraków. Major’s local SKS distributed the newspaper of the RSA-information, and later on the PA would collaborate with the RSA.<sup>148</sup> In 1980 Major took part in the formation of *Ruch Nowej Kultury* (RNK, New Culture Movement) which published *Manifest Surrealizmu Socjalistycznego* (Manifesto of Socialist Surrealism), promoted slogans such as ‘*wszyscy proletariusze, bądźcie piękni!*’ (all proletarians – be beautiful!) and began publishing a newspaper called *Pomarańczowa Alternatywa*. RNK disbanded with the introduction of martial law in 1981, but in the meantime Major and his associates began to draw dwarves over walls which had paint patches (the patches painted by state services which were intended to cover anti-government graffiti).<sup>149</sup> It was not until 1986 that the first action under the PA moniker would actually take place: ‘the middle of the 1980s were boring, apathetic times in Poland. Characters showing up with coloured tubes in the centre of town were sure to arouse interest. At a certain moment, the tubes were lit, causing great confusion.’<sup>150</sup> Over the next few years many other actions took place, and not only in Wrocław, at first attracting small groups but eventually drawing hundreds. On many occasions the personae of dwarves was taken on, with one demonstration requiring ‘several thousand dwarf hats [to be] made over a period of a few weeks.’<sup>151</sup> Other prominent actions included the handing out of free sanitary pads on International Women's Day (during which Major was arrested) or the celebration of the Eve of the October Revolution, in December 1987, where the battleship *Potemkin* and the cruiser *Aurora*, made out of cardboard and adhesive tape, together

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<sup>145</sup> Gavin Grindon (ed.) and Waldemar Fydrych, *Lives of the Orange Men* (New York: Minor Compositions, 2014), p. 2

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35; Waluszko, ‘Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego’, p. 18

<sup>149</sup> Grindon (ed.) and Fydrych, *Lives of the Orange Men*, pp. 90-91

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171

with Red Guards and anarchists tried to seize Barbara's Bar and proclaim a new revolutionary government.<sup>152</sup> Since many of the participants wore red and carried red flags, the authorities would issue commands such as 'Catch the Reds!' to the amusement of the participants.<sup>153</sup>

The kind of street theatre that the PA represented 'rejected professionalism, lyricism, irony, and Romanticism, and embraced amateurism, satire, defiance of the authorities, and above all, laughter.'<sup>154</sup> It not only parodied the realities of state socialism, but also the dogmas of the Church, of *Solidarność* (even though some participants were also members) or later the United States.<sup>155</sup> It has been argued that the movement's vision was 'outside and beyond the possibilities driven by two incapacitating visions of the future painted by church in Vatican yellow and state in Soviet red.'<sup>156</sup> Indeed the PA would continue its activities even after the fall of the Eastern Bloc, albeit it failed to find as much cultural relevance as it had in the past. In many ways then the PA was political as it did not accept a bleak reality or the similarly bleak alternative and instead sought something more, yet this more was never connected to any political project. Some members proclaimed anarchist sympathies – 'in the system of values generated by Major's brain, Peter Kropotkin stood at the top, with the [*Pomarańczowa Alternatywa*] newspaper's editorial team and Bob Marley a little lower' – others campaigned in the grassroots of *Solidarność*.<sup>157</sup> Indeed the whole conception of the group was itself born on the wave of a mass oppositionist movement, in which it played a very colourful part. It represented 'a novel reiteration of the Western countercultural, activist-art tendency of the 1960s that resituated Surrealist and Dadaist ideas and practices within social movements, from the Amsterdam Provos, San Francisco Diggers, Black Mask to Chicago Surrealists.'<sup>158</sup> And like those groups, it had radical political connections, but a better framework for its examination than the concept of dissident socialism would be the notion of *détournement*. In the same sense as was used by the Situationist International, the term meant 'first of all a negation of the value of the previous organization of expression', a tendency which 'arises and grows increasingly stronger in the historical period of the decomposition of artistic expression.'<sup>159</sup> And this is what Major and his

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., pp. 263-269; Wojciech Marchlewski and Anna Krajewska-Wieczorek, 'The Eve of the Great October Revolution: Chronicle of a Happening in Wrocław', *Performing Arts Journal*, 13:2 (1991), pp. 43-49

<sup>153</sup> Grindon (ed.) and Fydrych, *Lives of the Orange Men*, Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Cioffi, *Alternative Theatre in Poland...*, p. 174

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., pp. 177-178

<sup>156</sup> Lisiunia A. Romanienko, 'Antagonism, Absurdity, and the Avant-garde: Dismantling Soviet Oppression through the Use of Theatrical Devices by Poland's "Orange" Solidarity Movement', in: Marjolein 't Hart and Dennis Bos (eds.) *Humour and Social Protest* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 143

<sup>157</sup> Grindon (ed.) and Fydrych, *Lives of the Orange Men*, p. 74

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p.2

<sup>159</sup> Situationist International, 'Détournement as Negation and Prelude' (1959), in: Ken Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology* (Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006) [available at: <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/3.detourn.htm>] [accessed: 29/4/15]

friends did: they turned the symbols of the regime against the regime itself at a time when every militiaman on the street was a piece of art.

## Conclusion

In these three chapters we have looked at a number of case studies from the socialist opposition movement in Poland. There are several overarching themes common to many of the groups and individuals examined. One is the importance of history – in their propaganda many groups harkened back to pre-war political currents, whether that was the socialism of the PPS, communism of the KPP, Trotskyism or anarchism. Nearly all made an attempt to situate themselves within specific political traditions. The only exceptions to this were groups such as PA or parts of the RSA which, in many ways, rejected ideology or even politics in favour of specific, yet often left-wing, principles (anti-authoritarianism, anti-militarism, etc.). Another important aspect of this opposition was the role of contemporary events, specifically the working class movement and its struggle for better conditions. Dates such as 1956, 1970, 1976 or 1980 remained fresh in the consciousness of these groups, not only as symbols. The concepts of worker's councils, independent trade unions, or the *Samorządna Rzeczpospolita* programme, all of which were popular among socialist dissidents, can be traced back to the days when the working class gave life to these ideas through their activity. Of these dates, 1956 played a particularly special role as the first uprising against the government – it was 'the Poznan events [which] have remained in the public mind as symbolizing a major breakthrough, however temporary it might have been, in social aspirations toward a greater voice in politics as well as an indication of the vulnerability of the system to determined public protest.'<sup>160</sup> We have also observed how the early socialist dissidents, Kuroń and Modzelewski or old time PPS veterans, had unified on a more general platform in organisations such as KOR, and how over time they have been substituted by the younger generation. What all had in common was that by the 1970s and 1980s the language of Marxism was often put aside, and other frameworks were utilised to challenge the system. In the case of the older generation concepts such as human rights and civil society gained approval, while the youth dabbled in anarchism and the counter-culture. Not all groups abandoned class struggle politics however, and towards the end of the PRL era, when it was becoming clear that free market reforms were to be introduced, such ideas began to gain ground once again. Another common theme was the international aspect – the ideas and actions of socialist dissidents in Poland gained resonance in the West, even if at times critical. Likewise, there were attempts at making links with groups in the West, albeit often it did not amount to much practical effect.

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<sup>160</sup> Jan B. de Weydenthal , 'Polish Workers Commemorate Their Past Struggles', *Records of Radio Free Europe* (Budapest: Open Society Archives at Central European University, 1981) [available at: <http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:a38df2dc-3cac-4e80-8f95-61ff290727ee>] [accessed: 29/4/15]

While these trends have been sketched out and the general politics and background of the more prominent individuals and groups of the period have been outlined, there are many other questions which could be asked as to why the socialist opposition took the forms it did. One could consider the impact of international developments on the changing nature of the opposition in Poland: to what degree did the Helsinki Accords contribute to the turn towards human rights? To what degree did the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia destroy the opposition's belief in the possibility or desirability of reforming the people's state? Was the adoption of less radical approaches more likely to galvanise support for the opposition abroad? Two crucial topics that have been only referenced briefly throughout are *Solidarność* and the rebellions of 1956, 1970, 1976 and 1980. As indicated before, it is a far wider subject and would require a different approach. What has been shown however, is that all of these had considerable influence over the political direction of socialist dissidents, and in some cases, the converse was true as well.

Furthermore, we should point out the historiographical limitations of researching socialist opposition not only in Poland, but also in the whole of the Eastern Bloc. We should be careful not to exaggerate the importance of socialist and anarchist ideas in the wider opposition – the actual number of socialist or anarchist groups that existed at any time is unknown, nor is the reach of their ideas easy to estimate due to the lack of reliable quantitative data (certainly considering the resulting capitalist reconstruction, they did not change the qualitative tide of history). Some of the groups mentioned in chapters two and three, especially those from the 1980s, have only been dealt with in passing. The reason behind this is that information concerning their activities is difficult to unearth, and while this is less of an issue in Polish language sources, as ideological descendants of these groups have occasionally compiled the history of their predecessors in magazines or on the internet, a significant proportion of these are not necessarily reliable sources (here political and personal disagreements past and present are still pertinent). As such, further discussion of the politics and activities of small radical groups could be carried out, although whether such groups are notable enough is debatable. Not all manifestations of particular political groups had such characteristic publicity as the likes of PA or RSA, so many demonstrations and protests were treated by residents of Poland simply as more universal and broadly patriotic actions made by *Solidarność* adherents, often having moral support from oppositionist clergymen. Apart from a more in-depth analysis of the ideas of the more obscure dissidents examined here, there are other areas worth looking at. The influence of specific social circles is important. One of these would be freemasonry,

as many of the activists mentioned throughout were involved in the structures of masonic lodges.<sup>161</sup> Another would be the Church as a space for debate, and its relationship with the opposition.<sup>162</sup> An analysis of the literature and publications of the period, and not just political newspapers that were part of the opposition movement, could also unravel socialist content in different contexts – *Po Prostu*, *Colloquia Communia* or the *Paris Kultura* all expressed, or at least gave space, to radical left-wing ideas which could be used to challenge the official propaganda of the state. The final aspect of socialist dissent is of course what happened to its ideas and advocates after the transformation and the end of the PRL.

This dissertation has brought to the fore the existence of a dissident socialist current in the Polish opposition. The Polish historian Friszke has recently stated that that the ‘first substantial opposition movement in Poland grew out of communist circles’, specifically those around Kuroń and Modzelewski.<sup>163</sup> We have provided an outline of the extensive number of left-wing groups in existence from 1964 onwards. Any study of the opposition in the Eastern Bloc which neglects to at least mention this socialist current as part of the political scene of the time, and potentially as an influential part of the opposition, can hardly be considered complete. Perhaps this also provides a basis for contesting any narrative which reduces the opposition in Poland to just a pro-capitalist, pro-Western phenomenon. It also calls for a reconsideration of the term socialism – if in the so-called socialist camp socialists were some of the most active opponents, the term must not have had a homogenous meaning. In a way, this is nothing new in the history of the region as conflicting traditions calling themselves socialist have been gradually emerging since the nineteenth century. Different currents existed in interwar Poland, which already did not have much in common with the methods and models of Stalinist Russia. It would be a mistake to lump all such contradictory currents under just one moniker, or indeed to give the states of the Eastern Bloc the authority to define and appropriate words on its own terms.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Among them Lipski, Cohn, Lipiński and Słonimski. Hass has written extensively on the subject of freemasonry in Poland. See for example: Ludwik Hass, *Wolnomularze polscy w kraju i na świecie 1821–1999. Słownik biograficzny* (Warszawa: Rytm, 1999)

<sup>162</sup> Michnik has looked at this in one of his books. Adam Michnik, and David Ost (ed.), *The Church and the Left* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993)

<sup>163</sup> Andrzej Friszke, in: ‘Andrzej Friszke: polska opozycja wyrosła ze środowiska komunistów’, *Wirtualna Polska* [<http://ksiazki.wp.pl/tytul,Andrzej-Friszke-polska-opozycja-wyrosla-ze-srodowiska-komunistow,wid,15750,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=114c88>] [accessed: 29/4/15]

<sup>164</sup> Concerning the appropriation of socialism by the PRL, Lidia Ciołkoszowa once wrote that ‘Communists stole our symbols, banners and songs’. If one was to interpret the term ‘communists’ as ‘Stalinists’, not only socialists of the PPS variety would agree with the sentiment, but all kinds of communists who stood against the so-called degeneration of the ideals of the October revolution. Lidia Ciołkoszowa, *Spojrzenie wstecz* (Paris: Éditions du Dialogue, 1995), p. 383

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