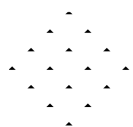


Apel Komitetu Obrony Robotników do społeczeństwa i władz PRL - Tekst angielski

Appeal to Society and the Authorities of the PRL The workers' protests against the excessive price increases, which was an expression of the opinion of virtually the entire society, were followed by brutal persecutions. In Ursus, Radom, and in other cities, demonstrators have been beaten, kicked, and arrested en masse. Dismissals from work have been the most widespread form of reprisal; along with arrests, they struck with particular severity at the families of the persecuted. As a rule, these reprisals have involved violations of the law on the part of government organs. The courts have issued verdicts without material evidence; and dismissals from work have violated the regulations of the Labor Code. Testimony has been extorted by means of force. Unfortunately, such procedures are not new in our country. It is enough to recall the illegal repressions used against the signatories of letters protesting against changes in the Constitution¹, when people were thrown out of work, expelled from schools, illegally interrogated, or blackmailed. But it has been a long while since the repressions have been as massive and as brutal as in recent times. For the first time in many years, arrests and interrogations are now accompanied by physical terror. The victims of the current repressions cannot count on any help or defense from those institutions whose mission it is to help and defend them, such as the trade unions², whose role has been pathetic. Social welfare agencies also refuse their help. Given this situation, this function must be assumed by the society in the interest of which those who are now being persecuted were protesting against the price increases. Society has no other means of defense against lawlessness than solidarity and mutual aid.

¹ In the autumn of 1975 the PRL authorities signaled that they were working on constitutional amendments stating the leadership role of the communist party (PZPR) in Poland and an alliance with the USSR. Those who voiced their protest included intellectuals and cultural and scientific personalities. They appealed not only for stopping the amendments, but also for safeguarding human rights in communist Poland. There was no official reaction to those protests on the part of communist authorities. The amendments were implemented.

² The PZPR, which controlled the economy, had also full control over trade unions in communist Poland. Thus, they were in fact an element used by employers to subjugate their employees. That practice did not change until the 1978 establishment of the illegal Free Trade Unions (Wolne Związki Zawodowe) and the 1980 formation of the Solidarity. But after the 1981 imposition of the martial law the trade unions' operation was suspended and then they were liquidated. In late 1982 their formation began anew but still under the full control of the authorities.

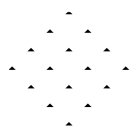


For this reason, the signatories of this Appeal are forming a Workers' Defense Committee which will initiate various forms of defense and help. Legal, financial, and medical aid is needed. Equally important is full information about the persecutions. We are convinced that only public presentations of the actions of the authorities can constitute an effective defense. This is why we are asking anyone who has been persecuted, or who knows about persecutions, to transmit this information to the members of the Committee. According to information in the possession of the members of the Committee, 160 000 zlotys¹ have thus far been collected and used for purposes of aid. But the needs are much greater. Only a broad social initiative will be able to meet these needs. Wherever the repressed live, throughout the country, it is the responsibility of society to organize itself in order to defend them. In every social group, in every work-place, courageous people should be initiating collective relief actions.

The repressions used against the workers constitute violations of fundamental human rights recognized both by international law and by Polish law: the right to work, the right to strike, the right to express one's opinions freely, and the right to participate in meetings and demonstrations. This is why the Committee is demanding amnesty for those arrested and convicted, and that all the persecuted be returned to their jobs. In making these demands, the Committee wishes to express its solidarity with the Resolution of the Conference of the Episcopate² of 9 September 1976.

¹ In late 1975 the average net pay in Poland was 3,783 zlotys.

² On 9 September 1976 Polish Catholic Bishops appealed for an end of the repressions against participants of the June protests.



The Committee calls on society to support these demands.

We are deeply convinced that by creating the Workers' Defense Committee and initiating its activities, we are fulfilling a human and a patriotic responsibility and serving well the Fatherland, the Nation, and Mankind.

Workers' Defense Committee, with the workers being victims of the repressions after the 25 June 1976 events

Jerzy Andrzejewski¹

Stanisław Barańczak²

Ludwik Cohn³

Jacek Kuroń⁴

Edward Lipiński⁵

Jan Józef Lipski⁶

Antoni Macierewicz⁷ Piotr Naimski⁸ Antoni Pajdak⁹ Józef Rybicki¹⁰ Aniela Steinsbergowa¹¹ Adam Szczypiorski¹² Father Jan Zieja¹³ Wojciech Ziemiński¹⁴

Source: *Jan Józef Lipski, KOR — Workers' Defence Committee in Poland 1976–1981*, trans. Olga Amsterdamska and Gene M. More (Berkely, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1985).

¹ Jerzy Andrzejewski (1909–1983) — writer and social activist. Began his career as a writer before World War II. During the Nazi occupation active in the underground, for instance, engaged in the provision of help to Jews. After the end of the war supported the communist authorities; he was, for instance, an MP during 1952–1956. In 1948 published his most famous book, *Ashes and Diamonds*, filmed in 1958 by Andrzej Wajda. Since the late 1950s Andrzejewski had been increasingly critical of the communist reality. Printing of his books was banned by the communist censorship in the 1970s.

² Stanisław Barańczak (1946–2014) — poet and translator. Made his debut in 1965. Literary director of Ósmego Dnia Theater in Poznań — one of the most influential alternative theaters in the PRL. Lecturer at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, from which he was fired for political reasons. Printing of his books was banned by the communist censorship in the 1970s. Consequently, many of his works were printed in the underground. In 1981 emigrated to the USA. Barańczak translated, for instance, William Shakespeare's works.

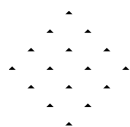
³ Ludwik Cohn (1902–1981) — attorney, political activist. Before World War II activist of the Polish Socialist Party. After the outbreak of the war taken captive by the Germans. After his release in 1945 he resumed his political activity. Arrested by the communist authorities in 1947 and sentenced to five years in prison. Released in 1948 as a result of an amnesty. Associated with the anti-communist opposition milieus.

⁴ Jacek Kuroń (1934–2004) — social and political activist, political prisoner for many years in communist Poland. In 1964 expelled from the PZPR for writing "List otwarty do członków partii" [open letter to party members], for which he was also sentenced to three years of prison. Shortly after his release he co-organized a student rally at the Warsaw University on 8 March 1968, for which he received another prison sentence (three and a half years). After the formation of the Solidarity an advisor to its management and one of its most famous activists. After the imposition of the martial law interned and then arrested. During the 1980s regarded one of the fiercest opponents of communism. In 1989 participated in the Oval Table talks. Minister of Labor and MP in independent Poland.

⁵ Edward Lipiński (1888–1986) — economist, social and political activist. Became a leftist activist before World War I. During the interwar period, for instance, a lecturer at the Warsaw Schools of Economic in Warsaw. During the Nazi occupation, when the Germans closed Polish higher education institutions, he was the director of the underground Warsaw School of Economics. After the war resumed his academic work. Even though he joined the PZPR he was critical of the party policy, becoming closer and closer to the opposition milieus. In the 1970s one of the most famous opposition activists.

⁶ Jan Józef Lipski (1926–1991) — literary historian and social activist. During World War II active in the anti-German underground, fought in the Warsaw Uprising. In the PRL one of the most famous anti-communist activists. Co-initiator of numerous protests and initiatives of the opposition milieus. Solidarity activist. Repeatedly imprisoned by the communist authorities. In 1989 became a senator.

⁷ Antoni Macierewicz (born in 1948) — historian and political activist. Became engaged in the anti-communist opposition activity in the 1960s. In 1976 co-organized a campaign to aid the repressed participants of the June protests. Co-initiator and participant of numerous protests and initiatives of the opposition



milieus. Solidarity activist. Repeatedly imprisoned by the communist authorities. Political activist, MP, and member of the government (1992–1993 and 2015–2018) the Third Republic of Poland.

⁸ Piotr Naimski (born in 1951) — biochemist and political activist. Engaged in the anti-communist opposition activity since the 1968 student protests. In 1976 participated in a camping to aid the repressed participants of the June protests. Co-initiator and participant of numerous protests and initiatives of the opposition milieus. Repeatedly detained by the communist authorities. Solidarity activist. In 1981 left Poland to study in the USA. Returned in 1984 and became engaged in the underground activity. Political activist, MP, and public servant in the Third Republic of Poland.

⁹ Antoni Pajdak (1894–1988) — attorney, political activist. Became engaged in the pro-independence activity before World War I. During 1914–1917 fought in the Polish Legions and in 1920 in the Polish-Soviet War. In the Second Republic of Poland an activist of the Polish Socialist Party. During the occupation a member of the highest authorities of the Polish Underground State (Polskie Państwo Podziemne). Arrested in 1945 by the Soviet KNVD and imprisoned in the USSR until 1955. Released, he returned to Poland. During the 1970s and 1980s participated in numerous initiatives of the opposition milieus.

¹⁰ Józef Rybicki (1901–1986) — classical philologist, political activist. Fought in the 1920 Polish-Soviet War. A teacher in the Second Republic of Poland. During the Nazi occupation active in the underground, for instance, during 1943–1944 the head of the Directorate of Diversion (Kedyw) of the Warsaw Region of the Home Army (Armia Krajowa, AK) — an elite section of the armed Polish underground. Fought in the Warsaw Uprising. After the 1945 communist takeover of power in Poland continued his pro-independence activity, co-founded the underground Freedom and Independence organization (Zrzeszenie Wolność i Niezawisłość, WiN). Arrested in 1945 and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. In the 1970s and 1980s participated in numerous initiatives of the opposition milieus.

¹¹ Aniela Steinsbergowa (1896–1988) — attorney and political activist. In the Second Republic of Poland a defense attorney in political trials. During the occupation active in the underground (for instance, in the Żegota Council to Aid Jews [Rada Pomocy Żydom „Żegota”]). During the 1950s and 1960s defense attorney in political trials; disbarred in 1968. In the 1970s and 1980s participated in numerous initiatives of the opposition milieus and cooperated with the Solidarity.

¹² Adam Szczypiorski (1895–1979) — historian and political activist. In 1920 fought in the Polish-Soviet War. In the Second Republic of Poland associated with the socialist movement, for instance, an MP during 1928–1930. In September 1939 participated in the defense of Warsaw and then acted in the underground. In 1944 deported to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. After the liberation remained in the West, but in 1955 eventually returned to Poland.

¹³ Father Jan Zieja (1897–1991) — clergyman and social activist. Ordained in 1919, a year later he was a military chaplain during the Polish-Soviet War. During the 1939 defensive war a chaplain in the rank of a lieutenant colonel. During 1941–1944, for instance, the head chaplain of the underground Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego), the AK High Command, and Peasant Battalions (Bataliony Chłopskie). Also cooperated with the Żegota Council to Aid Jews. During the Warsaw Uprising the chaplain of the Baszta regiment of the AK. In the late 1940s returned to Warsaw, but in 1953 was expelled by the authorities from the capital as a ‘troublesome citizen’.

¹⁴ Wojciech Ziemiński (1925–2001) — social and political activist. During the occupation a member of the armed underground. Arrested by the Germans, he was deported to forced labor. During 1945–1947 a soldier of the Polish Armed Forces in the West (Polskie Siły Zbrojne na Zachodzie). Returned to the country. Since the 1950s engaged in the anti-communist activity, for which he was repressed, for instance, he was arrested and sentenced to prison. Co-initiator and participant of numerous protests and initiatives of the opposition milieus.