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## The Last Days of the Security Service. Transformation of the State Security Services in Poland in 1989–1990<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction: The Political Situation

At the end of the eighties, Poland found itself on the brink of a new crisis: both economically and politically. The economy fell into a state of a long-term stagnation, the source of which was both the failure of its central management system and the obligation to repay giant loans taken out in the West. Communist authorities were unable to find a way out of this situation and they felt the growing threat of social dissatisfaction. Polish society was tired of the crumbling economy, relentless market shortages, and a worsening social situation. “Solidarity” – a social movement opposing the communist authorities – was gaining more and more public support.

The history of Independent Self-governing Labor Union “Solidarity”<sup>2</sup> (Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy – NSZZ “Solidarność”) began in the year 1980, when mass strikes led to the formation of a gigantic trade union, which at its peak had 10 million members. This organization became such a great threat to the authorities that they introduced martial law in December 1981. The army and militia pacified demonstrations; protesters were sentenced to prison and dismissed from their jobs. “Solidarity” was dissolved and its leading activists interned. Many oppositionists, however, began their “underground” activity – they secretly printed press and leaflets and organized demonstrations. According to the estimates of the authorities, in the mid-eighties about 13,000 people were involved in opposition activities. The Security Service (Służba Bezpieczeństwa, SB),<sup>3</sup> the secret political police, could not control

1 The presented topic has been discussed in the book KOZŁOWSKI, Tomasz: *Koniec imperium MSW. Transformacja organów bezpieczeństwa państwa 1989–1990* (The End of the Empire of the Ministry of the Interior. Transformation of State Security Bodies 1989–1990). IPN, Warsaw 2019. For the purposes of this work, selected issues have been adapted and supplemented for a foreign recipient. Not all the people mentioned in the article have a biographical note.

2 In recent years there have been many titles describing the history of “Solidarity”. There are several titles that stand out in particular. The strike in August 1980, which resulted in the creation of “Solidarity”, was described by MACHCEWICZ Anna: *Bunt. Strajki w Trójmieście. Sierpień 1980*. Europejskie Centrum Solidarności, Gdańsk 2015. A full synthesis of the history of “Solidarity” was published in a five-volume publication edited by KAMIŃSKI, Łukasz – WALIGÓRA, Grzegorz: *NSZZ „Solidarność” 1980–1989*. IPN, Warsaw 2010. The newest synthesis has been provided by FRISZKE, Andrzej: *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980–1981*. Znak Horyzont, Cracow 2014.

3 Literature on the security bodies of the People’s Republic of Poland, especially the history and activities of the Security Service, is quite rich. One of the pioneering studies was published by DOMINI

such a large social movement. Thus, it focused mainly on the surveillance and infiltration of leading “Solidarity” activists. However, it could not defend the authorities from a mass social uprising. And the harbinger of the arrival of the revolt became particularly evident in mid-1988.

In the spring and summer of 1988 two waves of strikes swept through Poland. They were much smaller than those which led to the birth of “Solidarity”. The authorities feared, however, that a great strike might soon take place, which would lead to crisis and a final confrontation. In this situation the Political Bureau of the Polish United Workers’ Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR), headed by Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski,<sup>4</sup> decided to enter into negotiations with the leaders of “Solidarity”. The plan was as follows: the authorities were ready to legalize the trade union and organize partially free elections in exchange for support of the opposition during the economic reforms. In other words, the communists were ready to hand over a small part of power to “Solidarity” but at the same time to carry out painful economic reforms that would also burden the opposition.

All this was possible thanks to a change in policy pursued by the Soviet Union. The new leader of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev, initiated changes in both domestic and international politics. As early as April 1985, during a meeting of the leaders of the Eastern Bloc countries in Warsaw, he explained that *each of the sister parties determines their own policy and is responsible for it to their nation*.<sup>5</sup> Historian Andrzej Paczkowski rightly noticed that *Gorbachev performed a kind of partial amputation of the “Brezhnev doctrine” which lost its ideological sense, becoming more and more a geopolitical principle. No later than 1987–1988, did Moscow’s former pressure on Warsaw give way*.<sup>6</sup>

Through secret negotiations in Magdalenka and the Round Table<sup>7</sup> discussions, the representatives of the authorities and “Solidarity” came to an agreement which

CZAK, Henryk: *Organy bezpieczeństwa PRL 1944–1990. Rozwój i działalność w świetle dokumentów MSW*. Wydawnictwo Bellona, Warsaw 1997. The history of Security Service has been described by TERLECKI, Ryszard: *Miecz i tarcza komunizmu. Historia aparatu bezpieczeństwa w Polsce 1944–1990*. Wydawnictwo Literackie, Cracow 2007. Information on the management of SB was collected and described by Krzysztof Szwagrzyk and Paweł Piotrowski – see SZWAGRZYK, Krzysztof (ed.): *Aparat bezpieczeństwa w Polsce. Kadra kierownicza*, Vol. 1 (1944–1956). IPN, Warsaw 2005; PIOTROWSKI, Paweł (ed.): *Aparat bezpieczeństwa w Polsce. Kadra kierownicza*, Vol. 2 (1956–1975). IPN, Warsaw 2006; PIOTROWSKI, Paweł (ed.): *Aparat bezpieczeństwa w Polsce. Kadra kierownicza*, Vol. 3 (1975–1990). IPN, Warsaw 2008.

4 Wojciech Jaruzelski (1923–2014), soldier and politician, Chief of General Staff of the Polish Army (1965–1968), Minister of National Defense (1968–1983), First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party (1981–1989), Prime Minister (1981–1985), President of the Polish People’s Republic / Polish Republic (1989–1990).

5 Cited from DUDEK, Antoni: *Zmierzch dyktatury. Polska lat 1986–1989 w świetle dokumentów*, Vol. 1 (July 1986 – May 1989). IPN, Warsaw 2009, p. 14.

6 PACZKOWSKI, Andrzej: *Boisko wielkich mocarstw: Polska 1980–1989. Widok od wewnątrz. Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, 2002, Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 197.

7 The backstage of preparations for the Round Table, the collapse of the communist system and the activity of “Solidarity” at the end of the 1980s were described by the following authors DUDEK, Antoni: *Reglamentowana rewolucja. Rozkład dyktatury komunistycznej w Polsce 1988–1990*. Arcana, Warsaw 2009, second edition: Warsaw 2014; KOWAL, Paweł: *Koniec systemu władzy. Polityka ekipy gen. Wojciecha Jaruzelskiego w latach 1986–1989*. IPN – Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN – Wydawnictwo TRIO, Warsaw 2012; SKÓRZYŃSKI, Jan: *Rewolucja Okrągłego Stołu*. Znak, Cracow 2009.

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resulted in partially free elections to the lower chamber of Parliament, the Sejm, in June 1989 (“Solidarity” would be able to win 35 % of the seats at best) and completely free elections to the upper chamber of the Senate. But it turned out that the election was a game changer. Contrary to all expectations, the elections became a great plebiscite in support of “Solidarity”, whose candidates filled all possible seats in parliament – 35 % in the Sejm and 99 % in the Senate! It was a great success for “Solidarity”, surprising everyone, even the democratic opposition activists. Communists from the Polish United Workers’ Party together with allied parties – the Democratic Party (Stronnictwo Demokratyczne) and the United People’s Party (Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe) – had a theoretical majority in the Sejm. According to informal arrangements, they could also fill the newly created position of president – Jaruzelski took it over. However, the communists did not manage to form their own government, and power was getting out of hand. But no one knew if they would give up without a fight.

The leaders of “Solidarity” were afraid that martial law might be reinstated. However, as we know today, this situation was very unlikely. The balance of power was completely different than in 1981, when the communist authorities could count on economic, political, and ultimately even military support from the Soviet Union. At the beginning of the 1980s, Polish communists could count on financial support – Moscow granted favorable loans and financial support from money gained from oil exports. The Polish authorities were also convinced that ultimately Moscow would be willing to defend its allies by providing military assistance. At the end of the eighties the situation looked different. Mikhail Gorbachev<sup>8</sup> declared that Moscow was withdrawing from the so-called Brezhnev doctrine.<sup>9</sup> The essence of this policy was the assumption that the Soviet Union and the satellite countries had the right to intervene with arms in the event of a “counter-revolution” in one of the Eastern Bloc countries. In December 1988, Gorbachev publicly announced the reduction of Soviet garrisons in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.

Polish communists could no longer count on support from abroad, and when it turned out that they were unable to appoint their Prime Minister, they gave up the initiative. In August 1989, one of the leading advisors and activists of “Solidarity”, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, became Prime Minister.<sup>10</sup>

8 Michail Gorbaczow (born 1931), Soviet politician, last leader of the USSR. He was General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1985–1991. His reforming policy led to political and economic reforms in the Soviet Union and Central European satellite states, and ultimately to the end of the Cold War and the break-up of the USSR.

9 Leonid Brezhnev (1906–1982), Soviet politician. He was General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1964–1982. The political-military doctrine named after him assumed that the Soviet Union could intervene militarily in a situation where the “socialist brotherhood” would undertake too far-reaching reforms and try to abandon the communist system.

10 Tadeusz Mazowiecki (1927–2013), Catholic politician and activist. In 1980, he became head of the Expert Committee advising the Inter-factory Strike Committee in Gdańsk. In 1980–1981, he was one of the most important advisors to the management of “Solidarity” and chairman Lech Wałęsa. Prime Minister in 1989–1990.

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The communists were on the defensive, but they still maintained their undivided power over the pillars of the system: the Ministry of the Interior (Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, MSW), under the authority of which belonged, among others, the Security Service and the Citizens' Militia (Milicja Obywatelska, MO), which performed the functions of criminal police, and the Ministry of Defense (Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, MON). Since 1981, the first department was headed by Gen. Czesław Kiszczak, Jaruzelski's right hand man.<sup>11</sup> In the Mazowiecki's government, not only did he once again become Minister of the Interior, but he also took over as Deputy Prime Minister. However, he remained loyal to President Jaruzelski and not to the "Solidarity" Prime Minister. Kiszczak held the post of minister until July 1990. Around the same period – from August 1989 to May 1990 – was a time of the gradual transformation of the secret services. They culminated in the liquidation of the Security Service and the creation of the Office for State Protection (Urząd ochrony państwa, UOP), headed by a new boss of "Solidarity's" choosing.

The subject of this article is the latter period of the existence of the Security Service. The issue presented is important for several reasons. First of all, it is an important example illustrating the conditions and dynamics of changes in the period of political and systemic transformation. Secondly, the problem of the liquidation of the Security Service and the further fate of its former officers, secret associates, and archives is still a subject of public debate today. It has aroused a lot of controversy – many politicians and publicists are convinced that the shape of the transformation and the legacy of the Security Service have had a very negative impact on the shape of the Third Polish Republic created after 1989. Some of the processes described are difficult to grasp or fully describe. We have access to partly preserved documents produced by the security apparatus. Today, they are stored in the Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut pamięci narodowej, IPN) (here I have utilized the resources of its Central Archive). One should be aware, however, that part of this documentation was destroyed in the years 1989–1990, and in the final period of the Security Service's functioning, recording certain things on paper was probably deliberately avoided. This is why we must support ourselves with other sources, for example those created in the course of the work of the Sejm and Senate. Press articles from the 1990s, where the effects of journalistic investigations, valuable accounts, and even found documents were published are also very important.

### The Security Service in the 1980s

Since the beginning of its existence, the Security Service was one of the pillars of communist power in Poland. The seventies and eighties were a period of the extraordinary expansion of the secret police. Its role increased especially after the imposition

11 Czesław Kiszczak (1925–2015), soldier and politician, since 1973 head of military intelligence, since 1979 intelligence and military counterintelligence, 1981–1990 Minister of the Interior, 1989–1990 Deputy Prime Minister in Tadeusz Mazowiecki's government.

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of martial law in late 1981.<sup>12</sup> Between 1975 and 1985 the ranks of the Security Service grew by as much as 61 % – from 15,000 to 25,000 officers. In the same period, the Ministry of the Interior, of which SB was part, grew by only 22 %.<sup>13</sup> The 1980s also saw the growth of a network of sources of personal information, mainly paid informants referred to in jargon as Secret Associates (Tajni Współpracownicy, TW). The number increased by approximately 30 % a year. At the end of the eighties, nearly 90,000 of them remained at the SB's disposal.<sup>14</sup>

The Security Service was part of the empire of the Ministry of the Interior, which consisted of hundreds of thousands of uniformed officers working in numerous institutions. All of them were subordinate in the 1980s to Gen. Czesław Kiszczak, who recalled them immodestly: *For nine years I was head of the Ministry of the Interior. During that time, I was subordinate to the civilian intelligence and counter-intelligence services, the Security Service, the Border Protection Troops with their own intelligence, the Vistula Military Units with their own counter-intelligence, the Government Protection Bureau, over one hundred thousand officers of the Citizens' Militia, and the Motorized Reserves of the Citizens' Militia. I also supervised the Railway Protection Service, industrial guard, bank, and forest guards, etc.*<sup>15</sup> The Security Service was the most important part of this giant empire of the Ministry of the Interior.

In July 1983, the Sejm passed a law on the Ministry of the Interior. It stated that the Ministry was responsible for the protection of state security and public order, including human life and health and the material and cultural heritage of society. The law allowed the Security Service and the Citizens' Militia to engage in operational, reconnaissance, investigative, administrative, and legal activities.<sup>16</sup> In the face of a crime that undermined the political foundations, security, or defense of the People's Republic of Poland, the Minister, in consultation with the General Prosecutor, could apply technical measures to consolidate evidence; the rules for the use of these measures and their forms were determined by the Council of Ministers. The Security Service and the Citizens' Militia could also benefit from *the assistance of citi-*

12 The communist authorities saw "Solidarity" as such a great threat that they imposed martial law on December 13, 1981. Tanks were brought into the streets, many workplaces were militarized, layoffs in administration and offices began, and many trade unionists were interned. In 1982, "Solidarity" was also banned.

13 PIOTROWSKI, Paweł (ed.): *Aparat bezpieczeństwa w Polsce. Kadra kierownicza*, Vol. 3 (1975–1990), p. 17.

14 RUZIKOWSKI, Tadeusz: *Tajni współpracownicy pionów operacyjnych aparatu bezpieczeństwa 1950–1984. Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, 2003, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 116.

15 KISZCZAK, Czesław: 1988 rok. Prawda według generała Kiszczaka. Relacja byłego szefa MSW. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 23. 8. 2008.

16 Officers had the right to legitimize or otherwise confirm the identity of persons; to detain them in the manner and circumstances as specified in the provisions of the *Code of Penal Procedure*; to detain persons infringing or threatening public order and safety; search persons and premises in the manner and in circumstances specified in separate regulations; carry out personal inspections and review the contents of luggage, as well as checking cargo in ports and stations and in means of transport including air, road, rail, and water in the event of suspicion of a crime or an act that violates state security or public order; demand necessary assistance from managers of state institutions and state-owned businesses, housekeepers and administrators, and village leaders, as well as members of the Voluntary Citizens' Militia Reserve (branches of volunteers supporting regular criminal militia branches).

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*zens in carrying out their tasks.* In practice – the services were allowed to use secret collaborators and operational techniques enabling surveillance (wiretapping, secret surveillance). The law also changed the structure of the Ministry of the Interior – its local divisions were the offices of the interior at the voivodeship, district, city, and local levels).<sup>17</sup>

On the basis of this act and the executive regulations, the solutions inspired by the army and already introduced earlier were now consolidated – the Ministry of the Interior was divided into a number of divisions. Two of these were of the greatest importance. The first was the Intelligence and Counterintelligence Service, consisting of Department I (intelligence) and Department II (counterintelligence), and the Passport Office, among others. The second was the Security Service, consisting of Department III (dealing with combating anti-state activity headed by the political opposition), Department IV (dealing with the control and surveillance of the Catholic Church and other religious associations), Department V (protecting industry), Department VI (protecting agriculture), the Social and Administrative Department, the Chief Inspectorate of Industrial Protection, and the Bureau of Studies.<sup>18</sup>

The last division is the most interesting. The Bureau of Studies was formally involved in *developing strategies, tactics, as well as forms and methods of action* towards the democratic opposition. In fact, officers with experience in conducting operational activities were delegated to this structure, given special powers, and the most valuable agency at their disposal. It was done in order to achieve rapid and significant results in surveillance and fighting the democratic opposition. The Bureau dealt only with the most important political issues, as well as the management and key figures of the underground “Solidarity”: Lech Wałęsa,<sup>19</sup> Zbigniew Bujak,<sup>20</sup> Bogdan Borusewicz.<sup>21</sup>

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- 17 DOMINICZAK, Henryk: *Organy bezpieczeństwa PRL 1944–1990. Rozwój i działalność w świetle dokumentów MSW*. Bellona, Warsaw 1997, pp. 255–257.
- 18 JUSUPOVIĆ, Adrian: *Organy bezpieczeństwa państwa w dokumentach MSW. Próba systematyki*. In: JUSUPOVIĆ, Adrian – LEŚKIEWICZ, Rafał (eds.): *Historyczno-prawna analiza struktur organów bezpieczeństwa państwa w Polsce Ludowej (1944–1990). Zbiór studiów*. IPN, Warsaw 2013, pp. 29–30.
- 19 Lech Wałęsa (born 1943), leader of the strike in Gdansk Shipyard in 1980, co-founder and first chairman of NSZZ “Solidarity”. He was interned under martial law. In 1983, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In the 1980s, he remained a symbol of “Solidarity” and one of the most important opposition activists. In 1990, he was elected President of Poland in the first general election. In the 1970s, Wałęsa was a secret collaborator of the Security Service. The cooperation was ended before his involvement in the opposition and before the creation of “Solidarity”. In the 1990s, the fact of Wałęsa’s cooperation became widely known, but there was no direct evidence to support this claim. Czesław Kiszczak, who kept the documents proving Wałęsa’s cooperation in his house, tried to blackmail the then president Lech Wałęsa by revealing the truth about his past as early as the 1990s. In 2016, after Kiszczak’s death, documents concerning Lech Wałęsa’s cooperation were taken over by the Institute of National Remembrance.
- 20 Zbigniew Bujak (born 1954), since the seventies an activist of the democratic opposition, associate of the Committee for Social Self-Defense (Komitet Obrony Robotników, KOR). He was a co-founder and leader of “Solidarity” in the Mazovia Region and a member of the national authorities of the association. During martial law, he went into hiding and focused on creating structures for the illegal union.
- 21 Bogdan Borusewicz (born 1949), since the 1960s involved in opposition activities, since 1976 cooperated with the Workers’ Defense Committee (Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej, KOR), was the most important organizer of the strikes of August 1980 on the coast. He was active in the “Solidarity” movement, among other things as a member of the Gdańsk regional authorities. During martial law

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Until 1989, it was the most important weapon of the SB in the fight against “Solidarity” and an important source of information about the plans of its leaders.<sup>22</sup>

From the point of view of the authorities, the Bureau of Studies and other divisions of the SB were particularly important during the preparations for the “Solidarity” negotiations and Round Table talks which took place in 1989. The Security Service collected information either from its secret associates placed in the opposition structures or using technical surveillance means such as wiretapping. This allowed the PZPR authorities to receive analytical materials on the situation in the “Solidarity” leadership, internal divisions in the movement, and the strategy of action they adopted.

The Security Service was perceived by the democratic opposition activists as one of the greatest threats. The secret police did not stop only at carrying out the surveillance and infiltration of environments considered hostile to the communist system. In selected cases, it also conducted illegal operations: intimidation, blackmailing, threatening relatives, provoking false accusations, and even the execution of oppositionists and Catholic priests. Such illegal actions were called “disintegration actions” in the jargon of officers. Typically, traces of this type of operation never made it into the files or were removed from them. Only a few preserved exceptions can be found.<sup>23</sup> The overall scale of these operations is unknown; it is even difficult to determine the final number of opposition activists murdered in the 1980s by the so-called “unknown perpetrators.” This term was used in cases where the identity of the murderers had not been established, but the circumstantial evidence indicated that the Security Service had committed the crime.

Particularly infamous was the Department IV (for fighting the Church) Disintegration Tasks Operational Group, commonly known today as “Group D.” Its officers conducted illegal operations against Catholic priests, they carried out kidnappings and intimidation and even murders. At the beginning of 1983, its officers, headed by Captain Grzegorz Piotrowski, kidnapped the opposition activist Janusz Krupski, and burned him with acid. Their participation in the unexplained deaths of Fr. Antoni Kij, who died on August 12, 1984 after being beaten by “unknown perpetrators”, or Fr. Stanisław Palimąka, who died in circumstances that were not fully explained.<sup>24</sup>

What became symbolic was the murder of Fr. Jerzy Popiełuszko.<sup>25</sup> This clergyman was associated with the underground “Solidarity” movement, was extremely

he was in hiding, organizing illegal trade union structures. Since the 1990s he was an active parliamentary politician, and for 10 years he served as the Speaker of the Polish Senate.

22 PIOTROWSKI, Paweł: Biuro studiów szczególnych. *Rzeczpospolita*, 11. 6. 2005.

23 *Archiwum Instytutu pamięci narodowej (AIPN)*, 0236/263/DVD, Vol. 1, Sprawozdanie z działań nękających w stosunku do osób reprezentujących postawy wrogie i opozycyjne (Report on harassment of persons representing hostile and opposition attitudes), 7. 5. 1982, p. 278 and the following.

24 LASOTA, Marek: Informacja o działalności komórek „D” pionu IV byłej Służby Bezpieczeństwa. *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 2003, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 37–56.

25 Fr. Jerzy Popiełuszko (14. 9. 1947 – 19. 10. 1984), Roman Catholic clergyman, since 1980 supported “Solidarity”, mainly in the vicinity of Warsaw. During martial law he organized help for the persecuted and their families, celebrated the famous “Masses for the Homeland”, in which he intertwined spiritual and patriotic elements. For years, the Security Service monitored him before they went on to persecute him, and organize provocations against him. Finally, in 1984, officers kidnapped and murdered Popiełuszko. The case became so controversial that the authorities were unable to protect

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popular with worshippers, and he openly criticized the communist authorities in his sermons. The Security Service tried to intimidate the priest, proclaimed false accusations against him, and engaged in a smear campaign in the media. These actions were not very effective from the point of view of the Security Service, so finally Department IV officers murdered Fr. Popiełuszko. This was not only supposed to silence the rebellious priest forever, but also to be a warning to other clergy not to follow his example. However, the social reaction to this act of violence exceeded all expectations. The communist authorities could not cover up the crime, so they decided to present the guilty to the public. Security officers were brought to court: Grzegorz Piotrowski, Adam Pietruszka, Leszek Pękala, and Waldemar Chmielewski.<sup>26</sup> The process – known as the Toruń trial – went at an express pace. At the beginning of 1985, the officers were sentenced to imprisonment. Until today, it is not known for sure who gave the order to kill Fr. Popiełuszko and who was politically responsible for this crime. It would seem that the blame should be placed on Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, who was the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KC PZPR) and the Minister of the Interior cooperating with him, Gen. Czesław Kiszczak. However, this was not the case. Both generals, thanks to their political and social-engineering efforts, shifted the suspicions of the wrongdoing. They explained that it was an unapproved operation of renegades operating within the Security Service. Sentencing the perpetrators of Fr. Popiełuszko's murder, however, did not stop illegal actions against the clergy. The last, still unexplained act of lawlessness remains the mysterious deaths of priests – Stefan Niedzielak, Stanisław Suchowolec, and Sylwester Zych – on the threshold of political transformation in 1989.<sup>27</sup> The result of all these activities – surveillance, infiltration, aggressive persecution – was that the Security Service was perceived as an absolute arm of authoritarian power. In 1989–1990, during the political transformation, oppositionists and politicians from “Solidarity” started to demand its dissolution.

### Enemy at the Gate. The Security Service from August 1989 to February 1990

After the elections of June 1989, which revealed the great scale of social support for “Solidarity”, the leadership of the Security Service realized the need to adapt to the new political situation. The matter became even more urgent after Tadeusz Mazowiecki became Prime Minister. The outgoing government of Prime Minister Mieczysław Rakowski<sup>28</sup> in the last days of his office issued a resolution which changed

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the murderers and decided to conduct a show trial (the so-called “Toruń trial”). The direct perpetrators were sentenced to prison, but both those who gave the order and all the background of the planned operation has still not been discovered.

26 ŻARYN, Jan et al.: *Aparat represji wobec księdza Jerzego Popiełuszki 1982–1984*, Vol. 1. IPN, Warsaw 2009; GOŁĘBIEWSKI, Jakub: *Aparat represji wobec księdza Jerzego Popiełuszki 1984*, Vol. 2 (Śledztwo w sprawie uprowadzenia i zabójstwa ks. Jerzego Popiełuszki). IPN, Warsaw 2014.

27 The most recent publication on the subject: PLESKOT, Patryk: *Zabić. Mordy polityczne w PRL*. Znak Horyzont, Cracow 2017.

28 Mieczysław Rakowski (1926–2008), long-time editor of the *Polityka* weekly magazine, considered the mouthpiece of the liberal part of the Communist Party. In 1981–1985 the Vice Prime Minister,



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the organizational statute of the Ministry of the Interior. The minister was allowed to introduce changes in the structure of the department without consulting the Prime Minister. The implementation of this provision gave Kiszczak an unrestricted opportunity to reorganize the ministry without prior consultation with the Prime Minister. In the following months, he used this opportunity to push through an extensive reorganization of the Security Service.

The management of the Ministry of the Interior was prepared for it, only waiting for the resolution of the Council of Ministers. Two days after its adoption, the first reforms were introduced. Kiszczak presented their justification during the meeting with the heads of voivodeship offices of the interior. He explained, at least officially, that Poland was being democratized and the militia and special services had to adapt to the rapid political transformations. The most important of these were the legalization of the political opposition, reforming the economy, and a new openness in relations between the state and the Church.<sup>29</sup> In this situation, the Security Service was to perform three types of tasks: it *identifies, prevents, and detects threats from individuals, groups, and organizations seeking to undermine the constitutional legal order and the system of parliamentary democracy; it prevents and reveals economic crime against the fundamental economic interests of the state, and undertakes, with strict respect for the law, to disclose events that seriously threaten the security of the state and undermine the constitutional rights of citizens.*<sup>30</sup> The structure of the SB was divided into these tasks – protecting the constitution and the economy.

On August 24, 1989 Kiszczak issued an order *on the liquidation and transformation of some organizational units of the Ministry of the Interior.*<sup>31</sup> The most affected by this order was the Security Service. Although the name itself remained unchanged, the internal structure was transformed. The former departments III, IV, V, and VI of the Ministry of the Interior and the Bureau of Studies of the Security Service and the Chief Inspectorate of Industrial Protection were transformed into three departments: Constitutional Order Protection, Economy Protection, and Studies and Analysis.<sup>32</sup> In fact, the reconstruction was cosmetic. At the turn of 1989/1990, similar treatments were also used by security authorities in other communist countries. For example, the KGB's Department V, dealing with the control of the democratic opposition, was transformed into Department Z – Protection of the Constitutional State Order.<sup>33</sup> The organizational change had little effect on the course of the activities of the Security

in 1988–1989 the Prime Minister, in 1989 became the final First Secretary of the Central Committee of the PZPR.

29 AIPN, 01627/1/DVD, Tezy do wystąpienia na spotkaniu z szefami WUSW, 27. 9. 1989, p. 148.

30 Ibid., 0726/76, Wystąpienie Czesława Kiszczaka na posiedzeniu Komisji Obrony Kraju, 1. 12. 1989, p. 83.

31 LEŚKIEWICZ, Rafał: Od Służby Bezpieczeństwa do Urzędu Ochrony Państwa. *Dzieje Najnowsze*, 2016, Vol. 48, No. 1, p. 168.

32 JUSUPOVIĆ, Adrian – LEŚKIEWICZ, Rafał (eds.): *Historyczno-prawna analiza struktur organów bezpieczeństwa państwa w Polsce Ludowej (1944–1990). Zbiór studiów*, p. 258.

33 ALBATS, Yevgenia: *KGB: State Within a State. The Secret Police and its Hold on Russia's Past, Present, and Future*. Farrar Straus & Giroux, London 1995, pp. 39–40; HORVATH, Robert: *The Legacy of Soviet Dissent. Dissidents, Democratization, and Radical Nationalism in Russia*. Routledge, New York 2012, p. 89; GRAJEWSKI, Andrzej: *Tarcza i miecz. Rosyjskie służby specjalne 1991–1998*. Biblioteka "Wieżi", Warsaw 1998, p. 14.

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Service – for example, the opposition activists were still under surveillance, even those who made it into parliament. The heads of the service sent each other recordings of a secret meeting of the Civic Parliamentary Club, which brought together “Solidarity” MPs and senators. This material was probably used to prepare information on the political strategy of “Solidarity” for the use of leading communist politicians.<sup>34</sup> One of the officers summed up the SB reform briefly: *They changed the names without even changing their desks.*<sup>35</sup>

The second element of the reform and the showcase of the transformations introduced by Kiszczak was the spectacular slimming down of the Security Service staff.<sup>36</sup> At the end of June 1989, on the eve of the reorganization, the Ministry of the Interior employed over 124,000 people, including about 78,000 in the Militia and over 24,000 in the Security Service.<sup>37</sup> Not all of the 24,000 SB men were operational officers. Some of the Security Service’s divisions performed tasks that could also fall within the responsibilities of the Militia or other ministry units. The Security Service included officers employed in the departments and divisions of the Security Service, intelligence, counterintelligence, operational and logistic security units (techniques, observations, communications), as well as in other organizational structures of the ministry, e.g. the Minister’s Office, Finance Department, Human Resources Department, or Training Department.<sup>38</sup> This gave room for creative transfers and reducing the SB’s staff, at least on paper.<sup>39</sup> Many of the SB’s components were liquidated, transferred, or merged with other divisions. For example, the Technical Department’s Observation and Communication Divisions now carried out fewer assignments for the SB and people employed by them moved to militia posts.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, there was an effort to send older workers into retirement and to reduce the number of individual divisions. After all these deductions and transfers, it was found that in February 1990 the SB’s workforce was just over 9,000.<sup>41</sup> On paper, about 15,000 officers were dismissed.

34 AIPN, 0296/98/DVD, Vol. 1, Pismo przewodnie, 27 7. 1989, p. 164.

35 JAKUBOWSKI, Jan: Milicjanci. *Tygodnik Gdański Solidarność*, 26. 11. 1989.

36 Describing this process is a complicated task. Firstly, administrative chaos was an important factor. Changes were introduced in haste, without proper preparations. Therefore, it is not always possible to determine, for example, the exact number of posts in a given department. Secondly, the situation developed dynamically. During the described period, SB departments underwent two major verifications and other processes, such as changes in the staffing levels of individual units. Thirdly, alongside the verifications and transfers, there was a wave of redundancies for retirement or other work in 1990. Due to the simultaneous occurrence of all these factors, there are discrepancies in the indicators provided by the Ministry of the Interior, which are sometimes difficult to resolve unequivocally.

37 AIPN, 01627/1/DVD, Stan etatowy resortu spraw wewnętrznych (The staff of the Ministry of the Interior), undated, p. 121.

38 Ibid., Notatka dotycząca stanu etatowego (Note on the staff), undated, p. 60.

39 LEŚKIEWICZ, Rafał: *Od Służby Bezpieczeństwa do Urzędu Ochrony Państwa*, pp. 171–172. On the artificial re-education at the management and staff level, see also: JUSUPOVIĆ, Adrian – LEŚKIEWICZ, Rafał (eds.): *Historyczno-prawna analiza struktur organów bezpieczeństwa państwa w Polsce Ludowej (1944–1990)*. *Zbiór studiów*, pp. 66–67.

40 AIPN, 01627/1/DVD, Note on the staff, SB, 23. 1. 1990, p. 54.

41 Ibid., Rozliczenie stanu etatowego SB, 20. 2. 1990, p. 39.

Both measures – the renaming of individual departments and staff reductions – were supposed to convince “Solidarity” politicians that the Security Service was no longer a threat, but a force defending a nascent democracy. It was even argued that this was the first step towards the complete dismantling of this institution. The Vice Minister of the Interior Gen. Zbigniew Pudysz<sup>42</sup> assured “Solidarity” politicians: *The posts and people are being transferred to the militia. And the concept of the further reduction of the tasks related to internal security – I stress – so far carried out by the Security Service has been adopted, which in consequence will cause the main problems to lie with intelligence and counterintelligence, which in fact will make the Security Service exist in a residual form. I'm not ruling it out. And that will mean the liquidation of this service.*<sup>43</sup> Such declarations made during the period of political change had one unforeseen effect – they initiated a wave of mass resignations of officers. The wave of layoffs grew from week to week. Many officers suspected that their achievements from the old times would be a burden for any career in the new Poland. Instead of fighting a battle doomed to failure, they preferred to leave on their own terms, with a pension and other social security measures in place. On one hand, the SB cleansed itself in this way. On the other hand, however, the uncontrolled dismantling of the institution caused many specialists to leave to the civilian population and start working on the free market.

At that time, in mid-1989, the Security Service began one of the most important operations of its existence. It began the mass destruction of archives. At the end of July 1989, during a teleconference with the heads of voivodeship offices of the interior, the then head of the Security Service, Gen. Henryk Dankowski<sup>44</sup> warned: *Since we have accumulated a lot of business and documents, we should slim down our wardrobes. Therefore, please consider and verify your operating materials. Secondly, destroy documents which do not possess operational or cognitive value and which are beyond the Security Service's scope of interest in the current social and political situation.*<sup>45</sup> Later, Dankowski defended himself, claiming that he did not give the order to destroy, but to set the legal framework for organizing the documentation, while every decision was made by the responsible officers.<sup>46</sup>

This process was further accelerated by the establishment of a special parliamentary committee, which was to examine the legality of the Security Service in the 1980s. Henryk Dankowski warned: *The committee may be interested in such events which*

42 Zbigniew Pudysz (1931–2010), since the 1950s an employee of the Ministry of the Interior, in 1983 he became director of the Office of Investigation of the Ministry of the Interior (Biuro Śledcze MSW), and then took up the post of Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of the Interior in 1985.

43 *Archiwum Senatu*, Stenogram posiedzenia Komisji Praw Człowieka i Praworządności (Timetable of the meeting of the Committee on Human Rights and the Rule of Law), 7. 2. 1990, pp. 215–216.

44 Henryk Dankowski (born 1929), a soldier, for years held managerial positions in counterintelligence and military intelligence. In 1982, the Minister of the Interior, Gen. Czesław Kiszczak placed him in the position of Director of Department III (dealing with, among others things, surveillance of the democratic opposition). In 1986, he became Deputy Minister of the Interior and Head of the Security Service, and remained in office until the middle of 1990.

45 Quoted from: KRUK, Marzena: Niszczenie materiałów archiwalnych w Wojewódzkim Urzędzie Spraw Wewnętrznych w Gdańsku w latach 1989–1990. *Przegląd Archiwalny Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 2011, No. 4, pp. 252–253.

46 DANKOWSKI, Henryk: System, rozm. GOLIMONT, Andrzej. *Trybuna*, 27–29. 12. 1991.

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*will be interpreted as constituting a violation of the law by officers during martial law and beyond. Any material related to it which is not useful in terms of operation, process, or cognitive or evaluative-analytic aspects should be destroyed, eliminated.*<sup>47</sup>

The destruction of documents spread throughout the country. Wherever possible, files were destroyed on the divisions' premises. In Piotrków Trybunalski, documentation was burned in the boiler room of the voivodship office of the interior. The stoker of the Siedlce Security Service claimed that he did not need any other fuel for central heating in the winter of 1989 to 1990.<sup>48</sup> In some places, open-air fires were organized: [...] *we would buy gasoline with our own money and take the documents out of town. We formed a circle within a radius of a few meters from the bonfire, making sure that not even the smallest piece of paper could get out of it* – recalled an anonymous officer from Cracow.<sup>49</sup> Most efficient was to use a paper mill. A large part of the materials from Warsaw was destroyed in the paper factory in Konstancin near Warsaw. Documents from Gdańsk saw their end in the paper factory in Świecie.<sup>50</sup> Two transports were destroyed there, over 23 tons in total. As another anonymous officer given this task mentions: *The car drove up the back before the entrance to the hall and then we carried the bags for about 6–7 meters and threw them into a spinning water drum. We did not open the bags, but threw them in completely. The drums had a certain capacity, they contained about 15 bags each, then we had to wait about 25 minutes and throw them in again.*<sup>51</sup>

However, operations on this scale could not be carried out in complete secrecy. Jan Rokita,<sup>52</sup> a member of parliament who headed a special committee to investigate the legality of the Security Service in the 1980s, received numerous signals that documents were being destroyed in the country. Such information also reached other politicians of "Solidarity". Finally, the chairman of the Civic Parliamentary Club (Obywatelski Klub Parlamentarny, OKP), Bronisław Geremek,<sup>53</sup> intervened with Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki. He called Kiszczak, the head of the Ministry of the Interior for a conversation, and told him to stop destroying documents.

47 Cited from: KRUK, Marzena: *Niszczenie materiałów archiwalnych w Wojewódzkim Urzędzie Spraw Wewnętrznych w Gdańsku w latach 1989–1990*, p. 253.

48 BOCHWIC, Teresa: *Nadludzie? Tygodnik Solidarność*, 12. 10. 1990.

49 KUCHARCZYŃSKA, Agnieszka: *Ministerstwo Strachu. Prawo i Życie*, 17. 1. 1998.

50 ROMANOWSKI, Czesław: *Powtórka z umorzenia. Życie*, 15. 2. 2000.

51 Quotation and information from: KRUK, Marzena: *Niszczenie materiałów archiwalnych w Wojewódzkim Urzędzie Spraw Wewnętrznych w Gdańsku w latach 1989–1990*, pp. 251–270.

52 Jan Rokita (born 1959), in the 1980s, he was active in the democratic opposition of, among others, the Independent Students' Association (Niezależne Zrzeszenie Studentów, NZS) and the Freedom and Peace Movement (Ruch Wolność i Pokój, WiP). In 1989, he became a "Solidarity" deputy and became famous as the chairman of the Sejm's Extraordinary Committee to investigate the activities of the Ministry of the Interior, whose members investigated cases of criminal activities of Security Service officers in the 1980s.

53 Bronisław Geremek (1932–2008), historian and politician. For years he was involved in research on medieval history. In the 1970s he became involved with the democratic opposition, especially the Society of Scientific Courses (Towarzystwo Kursów Naukowych). In 1980, he became one of the key experts at the Inter-factory Strike Committee at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk. Later on, he was an advisor to the "Solidarity" management. During the martial law, he was interned, after his release he advised Lech Wałęsa. After the elections of 1989, he became the chairman of the Civic Parliamentary Club, which brought together MPs and senators elected on behalf of "Solidarity".

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On January 31, 1990 the Minister issued an official order prohibiting the destruction of any documents in the Ministry. Kiszczak's<sup>54</sup> order probably did not end the procedure of removing documents but its scale became marginal.<sup>55</sup>

Persons who were suspected of starting a nationwide operation to destroy documents were investigated and soon afterwards the prosecutor brought the indictment to court. After several years, the trial ended in discontinuance even though many defendants and witnesses did not hide the truth about the destruction of documents. On the contrary, some, like Gen. Dankowski, proudly explained that their actions were in line with the honor of an SB officer: *I was approached by departmental directors asking if I accept their decisions to eliminate the traces of secret associates. I believed that for ethical, moral, and basic human reasons, the requests made by these secret associates were justified.*<sup>56</sup>

The issue of destroying documents at the turn of 1989 and 1990 is one of the most controversial elements of the political transformation that Poland experienced at that time. Critics accuse Tadeusz Mazowiecki of not having had enough vigorous influence on the Minister of Internal Affairs. It seems that the Prime Minister's surroundings knew about the destruction of documentation or at least had received some signals about it. However, as long as Kiszczak remained in the position of minister and exercised direct supervision over the Security Service, the Prime Minister's possibilities of action were limited. However, this does not change the fact that the Prime Minister had political responsibility for what happened. The key thing was that Mazowiecki did not want to enter into conflict with Kiszczak – he thought perhaps it was worth paying such a price to guarantee their peaceful coexistence. A significant role was probably played by the conviction that the archive of the Ministry of the Interior was a sort of Pandora's Box. Waldemar Kuczyński,<sup>57</sup> the Prime Minister

54 AIPN, 0550/15/DVD, Informacja dotycząca przebiegu odprawy krajowej, 2. 2. 1990, pp. 13–14.

55 The head of UOP Piotr Naimski claimed: *As far as the state of the archives is concerned, all I can say is that these archives have been very deeply depleted. From the year [19]89 to the beginning of [19]91, there was no doubt that the waves of destruction were multiple; the first one was in autumn of 1989, then the January of 1990, this wave was followed, you may remember, by the ban on destroying any archival resources, this ban was issued on January 31, 1990 and was not respected, it turns out that in the spring of 1990, an enormous amount of material, especially of Department I of the Ministry of the Interior, was destroyed. Not only did the intelligence officers destroy the materials, but they also later removed or falsified the destruction protocols – they entered the data of non-existent persons in the protocols instead of the data of those who were affected by the destroyed files (Archiwum Senatu, Stenogram posiedzenia zamkniętego Komisji Praw Człowieka i Praworządności, 15. 6. 1992, pp. 24, 28). In 1992, there were allegations that the destruction of important intelligence files continued even until early 1991. Ludzie SB mają się dobrze, rozm. ŻABICKI, Tadeusz. *Nowy Świat*, 29. 6. 1992; *Biblioteka Sejmowa*, Protokół posiedzenia Komisji Administracji i Spraw Wewnętrznych, 11. 7. 1992. Former SB high officer Henryk Jasik was specifically denounced; the case was even referred to the prosecutor's office, which, however, discontinued the proceedings.*

56 GERCZUK, Piotr: Z przesłuchań trzech generałów. *Czas*, 2. 1. 1991; MIZIAK, Marek – JACHOWICZ, Jerzy: Spalone, zmielone, zniszczone. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 22. 7. 1993.

57 Waldemar Kuczyński (born 1939), economist and journalist. In 1968 he took part in student protests. In the 1970s, he was associated with the democratic opposition and co-founded the Society of Scientific Courses. In August 1980, he was one of the main advisors (with Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Bronisław Geremek, among others) of the Inter-factory Strike Committee (Międzyzakładowy komitet strajkowy, MKS) at the Lenin Shipyard. He was an advisor to the "Solidarity" authorities. During martial law he was interned, then left for France. He returned to Poland in 1989 and became one of the closest advisors to Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki.

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ter's closest associate during his time in office, claims that in 1989 Mazowiecki and he considered the SB file to be *a toxic matter and for the climate in the country it would be best to put in concrete for decades, and if it was burned, nothing would go missing*.<sup>58</sup> Even assuming this perspective, the SB action had one serious flaw. Some of the documents that were considered destroyed were in fact privatized, or less euphemistically, stolen. Some officers, instead of destroying, preferred to treat operational documents as a security for the future. The best-known example is the fate of the files of TW "Bolek," which document contacts with the Security Service of Lech Wałęsa, the historical leader of "Solidarity" and president in 1990–1995. Czesław Kiszczak hid these documents in his private archive for nearly 30 years and their existence was not revealed until after his death. For obvious reasons, it is impossible to determine the scale of the "privatization" of other acts.

### From the Security Service to the State Protection Office (March – July 1990)

The political situation in Poland was influenced not only by national events but also by what was happening in the neighboring countries of the people's democracies. In the German Democratic Republic, the demonstrators targeted numerous secret police outposts. On January 15, 1990, a group of demonstrators broke into the Stasi headquarters in Berlin, which was the symbolic end of the security service in the GDR. In Hungary, having analyzed the situation in other Eastern Bloc countries, the secret services themselves began a process of "democratization." But they only sped up the inevitable. Officers became sources of leaks; among other things, evidence surfaced that the opposition was still being invigilated in November 1989. The case was handled by the military prosecutor's office, which decided that this action was anti-constitutional. Gen. József Horváth, the head of the Third Main Board dealing with the political opposition and clergy, resigned. Czechoslovak secret services were already dismantled in February 1990 as a result of reforms.<sup>59</sup> However, it was the events in Romania, where Nicolae Ceaușescu was executed on December 25, 1989, that made the strongest impression on the Polish communists. These events were a shock to, among others, Gen. Jaruzelski, who preferred to be gradually removed into the shadows rather than share the fate of his Romanian counterpart.

It became clear to the communist elite that they had lost the fight to maintain power. At the beginning of 1990, the PZPR, which had been the ruling monopoly since 1948, was officially dissolved. From the end of January, the communists fought

58 KUCZYŃSKI, Waldemar: Czuje się winny, że rządzi PiS, rozm. ELIZA. Olczyk. *Rzeczpospolita – Plus-Minus*, 5.–6. 12. 2015.

59 AIPN, 1585/15329, Informacja dotycząca niektórych aspektów sytuacji w resortach spraw wewnętrznych Czechosłowacji, Bułgarii, NRD i Węgier oraz zabezpieczenia dokumentów i informacji przesłanych tam przez nasze ministerstwo, 24. 1. 1990, pp. 12–14; *Ibid.*, Informacja dotycząca aktualnej sytuacji w MSW w Czechosłowacji, 3. 2. 1990, p. 9; AIPN, 1585/3877/DVD, Informacja dotycząca reorganizacji służby wywiadu NRD, 27. 12. 1989, p. 102; *Ibid.*, Informacja dotycząca zmian w bułgarskim MSZ, grudzień 1989, p. 112; *Ibid.*, Informacja dotycząca służb specjalnych NRD, 9. 1. 1990, p. 121.

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only to preserve the peaceful nature of the transformation process and to maintain their informal immunity, which they thought they deserved for bringing about the peaceful Round Table negotiations. Of course, “Solidarity” activists also saw what was happening in other Central and Eastern European countries. They believed that the time had come for more aggressive political action, including taking full control of the Ministry of the Interior and the liquidation of the Security Service. The Prime Minister agreed with his political background about the direction of action, but he wanted to apply an evolutionary tactic – he avoided violent changes.

The Prime Minister planned two steps. The first was that the Parliament should pass new laws regulating the activities of the police and secret services. The set of laws being prepared since the autumn of 1989 was to appoint the Police instead of the Militia, and the State Protection Office instead of the Security Service. Both new institutions were supposed to have fewer claims to power and authorization than before 1990. The problem was that the preparation and voting on the new laws was prolonged. Meanwhile, the Ministry of the Interior was still in the hands of Czesław Kiszczak and his proven companions. In this situation, the Prime Minister decided to refer to the Ministry of the Interior his trusted man – Krzysztof Kozłowski,<sup>60</sup> a senator of the OKP.

The Prime Minister trusted Kozłowski and wanted him to take up the post of deputy minister in the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of National Defense. Kozłowski said that at the end of February 1990 he received a call from the Prime Minister: *He didn't even require any declarations from me: Kozłowski later said, I told him that I would think about it but that but I'm certainly not going to the Ministry of Defense. Mazowiecki responded: And the Ministry of the Interior? Well, think it over. I'll call you in a couple of days.*<sup>61</sup> Kozłowski undertook the task, and in March he became the Vice Minister of the Ministry of the Interior, and in May he became the head of the newly established UOP. He held the office until July 1990, when, after Kiszczak's resignation, he replaced him as Minister of the Interior. Such a path of promotion was the implementation of Mazowiecki's plan – he probably expected from the very beginning that the newly appointed Vice Minister would first see from the inside how the ministry worked, in order to ultimately take full control over it.

Kozłowski did not have an easy task, and years later he repeatedly said that at the beginning he was the only civilian in the whole ministry, isolated and treated as a necessary evil. However, the situation was gradually changing, which to some extent was supported by the processes of internal decomposition of the Ministry of the Interior. The old officers who had not yet retired tried to find a thread of understanding with Kozłowski and sought a way to buy themselves into the graces of the

60 Krzysztof Kozłowski (1931–2013), journalist, long-term member of the *Tygodnik Powszechny* editorial team. In Tadeusz Mazowiecki's government he became Vice Minister, then Minister of the Interior. He was also the first head of the State Protection Office. In the years 1989–2001, he served in the Polish Senate.

61 BEREŚ, Witold – BURNETKO, Krzysztof: *Gliniarz z „Tygodnika”*. Rozmowa z byłym ministrem spraw wewnętrznych Krzysztofem Kozłowskim. Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza BGW, Warsaw 1991, pp. 25–26.

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new power. One of the officers recalled Gen. Krzysztof Majchrowski,<sup>62</sup> head of the Department for Constitutional Protection of the State Order (formerly Vice Head of Department III, fighting the opposition and “Solidarity”): *The General was really frightened. He didn’t want to be on bad terms with the new power. When Vice Minister Kozłowski took him to an official delegation to Prague, he even began to delude himself that he would be kept on.*<sup>63</sup> Another group that Kozłowski could count on was trade unionists working in the Ministry of the Interior, especially in the Militia. New independent trade unions were most often established by lower and middle-level officials. They hoped that the “Solidarity” authorities would introduce reforms in the Ministry of the Interior, cut down on the dysfunction and cronyism, and perhaps also allow the young staff to take the places of old and discredited bosses. These two groups of officers, the trade unionists and those hoping to stay in service, were important sources of knowledge about the functioning of the Ministry of the Interior. Kozłowski observed and waited for his moment.

This came in May 1990, when the long-awaited laws came into force, which constituted the legal basis for organizing the State Protection Office. On May 10, 1990, the Minister of the Interior, Gen. Czesław Kiszczak ordered the Security Service to cease its activities with the exception of intelligence and counter-intelligence operations *of vital importance to state security and activities against persons suspected of espionage or a terrorist attack.* The construction of a new institution, headed by Krzysztof Kozłowski, began.

From May to July 1990, the officers showed up at work, but in the vast majority of cases they did not perform any tasks, and only waited for the development of events.<sup>64</sup> At that time, the new management started the process of so-called verification. It was a process of evaluation of former Security Service employees and assessment of their usefulness for the newly created State Protection Office. The Central Qualification Commission (Centralna Komisja Kwalifikacyjna) and its subordinate bodies were responsible for the verification: the Central Personnel Qualification Committee and voivodship qualification committees. According to the Act on the UOP, all Security Service officers were automatically dismissed from work. They had a chance for new employment in the UOP after receiving a positive assessment from the commission. However, even a positive opinion did not guarantee a job, which depended only on the decision of the new management of the UOP. The procedure also covered those militia officers who had worked in the SB until July 31, 1989.<sup>65</sup> The idea was to prevent the discredited officers from “hiding” in the ranks of the new Police. The final list of all the positions and divisions that were subject to verification was presented in

62 Krzysztof Majchrowski (1929–2000), security officer, since the 1960s he was associated with Department III of the Ministry of the Interior (dealing with, among other things, surveillance of the democratic opposition and intelligentsia). In 1985, he became Vice Director; then in 1987 Director of Department III, in 1989–1990 he was the Director of the Department for the Protection of Constitutional State Order (Departament Ochrony Konstytucyjnego Porządku Państwa).

63 RYMANOWSKI, Bogdan: *Ubek. Wima i skerucha*. Wydawnictwo Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 2012, p. 207.

64 PIOTROWSKI, Paweł (ed.): *Aparat bezpieczeństwa w Polsce. Kadra kierownicza*, Vol. 3 (1975–1990), p. 20.

65 Section 131 of the Act on Office of State Protection (Ustawa o UOP).



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June 1990 by the head of the UOP Krzysztof Kozłowski.<sup>66</sup> The verification committees usually consisted of two deputies and a senator from a given province (about one hundred deputies and forty senators in total) and representatives of the UOP, the Police, and police trade union, and sometimes also people of public trust.

The committee members faced two challenges. First, they often acted under pressure from fear of possible revenge from the officers. Jerzy Wrzosek, the head of the committee in Jelenia Góra, described the doubts he had: *I only have one door to my own house and I don't want anyone to set it on fire. However, I couldn't avoid this work because someone had to do it.*<sup>67</sup> At the plenary session of the OKP, Radosław Gawlik spoke about the threats against his fellow members of verification committees: *They, as well as other people, quite often receive telephone threats from anonymous callers, threats of arson, for example.*<sup>68</sup> One of the members of the verification committee said that they were called with "good advice" – to watch over his children.<sup>69</sup> Zbigniew Fijak from the Cracow commission had a similar experience: *I've been getting various anonymous letters, and there were some calls. They were threatening that something would happen to the children, etc.*<sup>70</sup> None of these threats seem to have been carried out. However, some of them were probably successful and made some members of the committee withdraw or remain inactive during the work.

The second problem was that few members of the committee had any idea what the work of the Security Service was like. More often they only established basic facts about what a given SB division was dealing with, and then they read the files and tried to find some clues from them. The Secretary of the Warsaw Committee mentioned: *We chose the person who told us what a particular cell was doing. And we learned the rest mainly through personal files [...]. As a secretary, I read everything. Six hundred folders a week is almost a hundred a day. But I managed to do it by sleeping for two hours a day.*<sup>71</sup> To keep up the pace, the members of the committee had to follow general and simplified guidelines. First of all, employees of the divisions dealing with the opposition (Department III) and the Church (Department IV) were assessed negatively. An important indication was, of course, the disturbing entries in the personal files. According to Zbigniew Fijak, those who had a record of petty thefts, drunken incidents, giving false testimonies, and procuring documents were immediately expelled.<sup>72</sup> One of the committee members explained: *We were looking for psychopaths – guys who were clearly violating the law and all social norms during the investigations.*<sup>73</sup>

66 Instruction of the President of the Central Qualification Commission (the so-called Kozłowski directive) concerning verification of the suitability of former security officers for service in UOP, the Police, or the Ministry of the Interior. In: JUSUPOVIĆ, Adrian – LEŚKIEWICZ, Rafał (eds.): *Historyczno-prawna analiza struktur organów bezpieczeństwa państwa w Polsce Ludowej (1944–1990). Zbiór studiów*, pp. 303–304.

67 HENZLER, Marek: *Prześwietlanie SB. Polityka*, 18. 8. 1990.

68 *Archiwum Senatu*, Stenogram of the plenary session of OKP, 25. 7. 1990, p. 71.

69 BOCHWIC, Teresa: *Nadludzie?*

70 FIJAK, Zbigniew: „Biedny” esbek, rozm. LAZAR, Helena. *Gazeta Krakowska*, 23. 4. 1996.

71 CHLASTA, Grzegorz: *Czterech: Brochwicz, Miodowicz, Niemczyk, Sienkiewicz*. Wydawnictwo Czarna Owca, Warsaw 2014, p. 109.

72 WASILENKO, Agata: *Strefa mroku. Dziennik Polski*, 12. 1. 1996.

73 NIEMCZYK, Piotr: *Krótką pamięć bezpieki. Gazeta Wyborcza*, 14. 11. 1994.

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There were cases where some officers were given a guarantee from “Solidarity” activists or clergy. An officer of the Poznań security service spoke – not without irony – about positive verification after the culprit provided *a certificate from the pastor*. Most often it was about ensuring that the officer in question was not too eager and did not break the law.<sup>74</sup> The committees were not able to screen the person issuing the guarantee for possible co-operation with the Security Service – it cannot be ruled out that there were cases of a secret co-worker being surety for his leading officer. Even without this, there were ordinary errors of assessment. The best known example is the oppositionist with an impeccable record – Jacek Kuroń, who vouched for the officer Jan Lesiak.<sup>75</sup> Lesiak transferred the methods of work known from the Security Service to the new special services, and already in the 1990s he became the main character of a huge political scandal – the team he led illegally spied on and fought right-wing parties members.<sup>76</sup>

The Central Qualification Commission for the matters of the former Security Service Officers ceased to operate on September 18, 1990.<sup>77</sup> More than 14,000 people were subjected to the procedure throughout the country. In the proceedings of the first instance, 8,685 of them (over 61 %) received a positive opinion, while 5,376 received a negative one. A vast majority of those negatively verified (89 %, or 4,771 persons) appealed against the decision, in 1,781 cases the appeal was accepted. Thus, in general over 10,000 people (almost 75 % of the applicants) passed the verification procedure, while 3,595 were verified negatively.<sup>78</sup>

Krzysztof Kozłowski believed that one real solution to the problem of the former escorts was to leave a relatively large part of them on duty. This was to be mutually beneficial for both the officers and the new institution: *You have to find professionals. I am not interested in the past of the employees. I am interested in who is to work in this institution*, Kozłowski explained.<sup>79</sup> He emphasized that it was necessary to ensure that the experience of the old staff is passed on to young officers.<sup>80</sup> As Konstantin Miodo-

74 ZIELENIEWSKI, Marek: Oczka w sieci. *Gazeta Poznańska*, 11. 1. 1991.

75 Jan Lesiak (born 1945), an official of state security bodies, since the 1970s associated with Department III, assigned to supervise members of the democratic opposition, in particular activists of the Workers’ Defense Committee (Jacek Kuroń, among others). In 1990, he found employment in the newly created Office of State Protection – Jacek Kuroń stood up for him, and claimed that Lesiak was not an ardent officer and had adhered to the letter of the law. During his work in the UOP Col. Lesiak became an officer for special movements; he was responsible for, among other things, conducting operations against selected politicians (both right-wing and post-communist). MARSZAŁEK, Anna – STANKIEWICZ, Andrzej: Szafarz IV RP. *Rzeczpospolita*, 25. 10. 2006.

76 Recently, it has been written about by CHMIELECKI, Adam: Na tropie „olszewików”, czyli inwigilacja prawicy przez Zespół Inspekcyjno-Operacyjny UOP płk. Jana Lesiaka. In: *Niepodległość ma jeden kształt. Antoniemu Macierewiczowi w 70. rocznicę urodzin*. Wydawnictwo LTW, Łomianki 2018, pp. 275–298.

77 AIPN, 3546/1/DVD, Wyciąg z materiałów przesłanych przez WKK do propozycji CKK, undated, p. 159; Co będzie z byłymi funkcjonariuszami. *Słowo Powszechne*, 30. 8. 1990; JACHOWICZ, Jerzy: Centrala zbyt łagodna? *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 29. 8. 1990; Wróć tylnymi drzwiami? *Gazeta Krakowska*, 23. 8. 1990.

78 Recently, on the topic: PIOTROWSKI, Paweł: Nowe służby na nowe czasy. Uwagi na temat likwidacji Służby Bezpieczeństwa, weryfikacji i utworzenia Urzędu Ochrony Państwa. In: *Niepodległość ma jeden kształt. Antoniemu Macierewiczowi w 70. rocznicę urodzin*, pp. 385–412.

79 *Biblioteka Sejmowa*, Protokół posiedzenia Komisji Administracji i Spraw Wewnętrznych, 10. 4. 1990, p. 2.

80 *Archiwum Senatu*, Stenogram of the plenary session of OKP, 25. 7. 1990, p. 87.

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wicz,<sup>81</sup> the head of counter-intelligence from the democratic opposition pompously put it: *The service is a service, and it is not the background of its officers that is important, but their dedication to the interest of an independent and democratic state.*<sup>82</sup> This was the dogma of the successive heads of the Ministry of the Interior and the UOP. Zbigniew Siemiątkowski,<sup>83</sup> Minister of the Interior and former member of the PZPR, explained in the mid-1990s: *The Ministry of the Interior is a fairly cohesive organism. It does not divide people into those who served earlier in various formations, or those who came from the Solidarity underground, or those who are completely new people.*<sup>84</sup>

The counterweight for the former officers left on duty was supposed to be their bosses from the new recruitment. Kozłowski tried to attract young people to the UOP, preferably with opposition experience, but this was not an easy task: *Please don't expect the State Protection Office to consist of completely new people, because there are no such people. I tried to persuade my friends and acquaintances, but I did not achieve the intended effect. I look with some suspicion at those who are willing to work in such an institution. I am afraid of them and I prefer those already "forced into it".*<sup>85</sup> The beginning of the changes in the headquarters of the UOP was the enlistment of democratic opposition activists, mainly from the Freedom and Peace Movement, but also from the Independent Students' Association, the Federation of Fighting Youth (Federacja Młodzieży Walczącej), and the Confederation of Independent Poland (Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej). All these young people were called the Fraggles<sup>86</sup> by the former officers because they came to work dressed in colorful clothes, in contrast to the old staff's affinity for suits and boring ties.<sup>87</sup> Wojciech Garstka, a former officer and spokesman for the Ministry of the Interior, recalled: *It has become overgrown with sorts that these walls have never seen before! Jackets with studs and chains, ripped jeans, hedgehog hairstyles or pony tails, earrings, unshaven faces, and expressions of vigilance and caution.*<sup>88</sup> These two incompatible groups formed the framework of the new special services in the following years.

To this day, there is an ongoing discussion in Poland on whether it was possible to carry out the so-called zero option in special services. This is a common name which the concept of complete reconstruction, including the release of all former officers,

81 Konstanty Miodowicz (1951–2013), in the 1980s an activist of the democratic opposition, first the Independent Students' Association and later the Freedom and Peace Movement. In the years 1990–1996, he worked for the UOP, he was, among other things, the head of counterintelligence.

82 W służbie czułem się dobrze. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 24. 2. 1996.

83 Zbigniew Siemiątkowski (born 1957), professor of political science and politician. Since 1978 in the Polish United Workers' Party, then the Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland (Socjaldemokracja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej), and the Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej). In the years 1991–2005, he was an MP. After 1996, he held, among others, the positions of Minister of the Interior and Minister-Coordinator of Special Services.

84 *Biblioteka Sejmowa*, Protokół 110. posiedzenia Komisji Administracji i Spraw Wewnętrznych, 10. 4. 1996, p. 57.

85 *Ibid.*, Protokół posiedzenia Komisji Administracji i Spraw Wewnętrznych, 10. 5. 1990, p. 2.

86 Characters from a puppet show for children aired on TV at the time. The Fraggles' puppets were very colorful and often wore lush, multicolored hairstyles.

87 KOCIEBA, Paweł: Milczanowski jak Bond. *Wprost*, 23. 6. 1991.

88 GARSTKA, Wojciech: Rola tajnych służb PRL w procesie zmiany ustroju, *cz. 2. Przegląd Socjalistyczny*, 2007, Vol. 12, No. 3, p. 96

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goes by. Many journalists, publicists, politicians, and historians have followed the example of the solution adopted at the turn of 1989/1990 in Czechoslovakia, where there was a much deeper reconstruction of the services. In Poland, however, another variant was chosen, the result of which the newly established State Protection Office consisted in 1991 of more than 90 % of former Security Service officers. In 1996, “the old” (SB) staff represented two thirds of all employees. To this day, this is a reason for the extremely varied evaluations. Some point out that these people had to be fired and account for their activities from before 1989. Their opponents indicate that the officers were in fact a tool in the hands of the authorities and that after 1989 they served the emerging democratic Poland.<sup>89</sup>

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89 This study was translated from Polish by Joanna Derdowska and Robert Wright.