

POZNAN

1956

# PROTESTS



pamięć.pl





# CONTENTS

- 1** Foreword
- 2** A Timeline of the Poznan 1956 Protests
- 4** (Un)controlled Memory,  
a conversation with Piotr Grzelczak, PhD
- 9** Marta Szczesiak-Ślusarek “Away with such Freedom!”
- 12** Katarzyna Florczyk, The Price of Courage. Maria Kapturska, Helena Przybyłek,  
and Stanisława Sobańska
- 16** Łukasz Jastrząb, The Victims of the Poznan 1956 Protests
- 17** A List of the Victims of the Poznan 1956 Protests
- 18** The Case is Still Being Investigated, a conversation with prosecutor  
Mirosław Sławeta
- 22** Łukasz Jastrząb, He Knew... Fragments of Maj. Feliks Dwojak’s Account
- 26** Krzysztof Brzechczyn, Beyond the Poznan 1956 Protests – Social Protests in the  
Communist Bloc in 1953–1956
- 30** Agnieszka Kołodziejaska, A Story Seen from a Tram
- 32** The Program of the Anniversary Celebrations of the Office of Public Education of  
the Institute of National Remembrance Branch in Poznań

Illustration on the cover: The demonstration on Mickiewicz Square and Święty Marcin Street

POZNAŃSKI  
 CZERWIEC '56

a free extra to the “Pamięć.pl” monthly

prepared in cooperation with the Office of Public  
 Education of the Institute of National Remembrance  
 Branch in Poznań Publisher: The Institute of National  
 Remembrance – Chief Commission for the Prosecution  
 of Crimes against the Polish Nation

Editor: Andrzej Brzozowski  
 (editor-in-chief, tel. 22 581 87 98;  
 e-mail: andrzej.brzozowski@ipn.gov.pl)

Maciej Foks, Filip Gańczak, Jakub Gołębiowski,  
 Agnieszka Łuczak, Andrzej Sujka, Karolina Wichowska

Secretary’s office: Maria Wiśniewska  
 e-mail: maria.wisniewska@ipn.gov.pl  
 tel. 22 581 88 19

Proofreader: Magdalena Baj

Graphic design, typesetting, and page makeup:  
 Hubert Rabiński, Sylwia Szafrńska

Office: ul. Postępu 18b, Warsaw

Correspondence address:  
 ul. Wołoska 7, 02-675 Warszawa  
 www.ipn.gov.pl

Printing: “Legra” sp. z o.o.  
 ul. Albatrosów 10C, 30-716 Kraków  
 ISBN 978-83-8098-000-6

The editors do not return materials which have not  
 been ordered and reserve the right to change the texts  
 which have been submitted.

### ***Remembrance of the Poznan 1956 Protests***

The Poznan 1956 Protests are one of the major events in the contemporary history of Poland, which have been discussed on the covers of newspapers all over the world. It was another instance of a fight for freedom – after the East German rebellion of three years earlier – which awoke hope for changes. Its possible consequences were analyzed, especially in the context of the de-Stalinization following the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

A few months after the Poznan June, the attention of the world turned towards the dramatic Hungarian revolution. Poznań, however, remained a symbol of anti-communist rebellion. The June protests featured in nearly every analysis of the situation in the Eastern Bloc. Remembering the Poznan June was particularly important for Poles, especially in the context of the subsequent protests. It was a reference point. In the years that followed, people frequently called for action “just like in Poznań”.

The Poznan 1956 protests were remembered vividly again after the Gdansk 1980 protests. They constituted a basic element of the ‘genealogy’ of Solidarity and an important part of the historical legitimation of that movement. The power of remembrance, expressed in hundreds of articles published in union periodicals, was so great that it forced the authorities to make huge concessions. There appeared official publications about the 1956 protests and the party agreed to the construction of a monument.

The unveiling of the monument was a national event. Among the nearly two hundred thousand people who came to the place of the unveiling there were representatives of the structures of Solidarity from the whole country. The monument became a widely recognized symbol. That situation did not change with the introduction of martial law and the beginning of the last phase of the ‘battle for the memory’ about Poznań June. That battle was frequently fought at the foot of the Poznań Crosses.

Today we look at the Poznan 1956 protests from the perspective of the following 60 years. We analyze the course of the events, wonder about their meaning for the later fate of Poland and Europe, and pay tribute to the fallen as well as to the living heroes. On this occasion, it is also worth asking ourselves the question about the values which we can derive from that chapter of Polish history.

Łukasz Kamiński, PhD,  
the President of the Institute of National Remembrance

### ***The Poznan 1956 protests protests***

Sixty years ago, on June 28 1956, workers from Poznań factories rebelled against bad working conditions, poor earnings and low standards of living. They took to the streets and demonstrated against the communist dictatorship and the police methods of ruling the country where, according to the official propaganda, there was social justice and the rule of “the working people of cities and villages”.

Fights broke out in the city. They gradually assumed the character of a national insurrection. Just like the participants of the Warsaw Uprising, the demonstrators used molotov cocktails and captured firearms. The young girls with white and red bands on their sleeves, who helped the injured, called themselves ‘uprising medical care providers’.

When the forces of the Citizens' Militia, secret political police, and Internal Security Corps turned out to be insufficient, the authorities sent units of regular army to the streets of Poznań. Those forces comprised 10,000 soldiers and over 350 tanks which cracked down on the poorly armed civilians and quelled the uprising within two days.

The Poznan 1956 protests were the first great worker rebellion in the history of the Polish People's Republic. They were followed by new waves of protests, in 1970, 1976, and 1980. Unfortunately, the importance of that event is still marginalized and its status is reduced to that of a regional affair. For many years, communist propaganda referred to the protests as the “Poznań case” or “Poznań events”. Those terms were selected to diminish the importance of the Poznań June. Nevertheless, it ought to be remembered that the protests of the Poznan workers were one of the most important anti-totalitarian rebellions and fights for freedom in Eastern Europe in the 1950s. The Poznan workers paved the way for the political turning point of October 1956 and contributed to the de-Stalinization and the alleviation of the oppressive forms of dictatorship in the Polish People's Republic.

Agnieszka Łuczak, PhD,  
Head of the Office of Public Education of the Institute  
of National Remembrance Branch in Poznań



**THURSDAY, 28 JUNE 1956**

**06:00**

The team of department W 3 in Joseph Stalin Metal Works in Poznań did not start work. Instead, it gathered in the traverser hall. Next, the workers divided into groups and went to other departments.

**06:35**

The workers left the factory and went, along Dzierżyńskiego Street, towards the city centre.

**06:35–09:00**

They reached Stalin Square, in front of the Presidium of the City National Council. The procession was joined by workers from other factories and by city inhabitants..

**09:00–11:00**

The demonstrators gathered in the square in front of the Imperial Castle (the seat of the Presidium of the City National Council) and demanded that the representatives of the authorities come out. A delegation selected from the crowd went to talk with the Chairman of the City National Council, Franciszek Frąckowiak. The delegates demanded that Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz or the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party of the Polish United Workers' Party, Edward Ochab, come to the city. Next, the delegation went to the building of the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party where, in a conversation with Wincenty Kraśko, they once more demanded that Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz come to Poznań. Kraśko denied that Czesław Rutkowski had been arrested. The workers of ZNTK reacted negatively to that assertion and the news about the arrest transformed into a rumour about the detention of the delegates of the Joseph Stalin Metal Works in Poznań, said rumour was later repeated through megaphones from a previously seized patrol car of the Voivodeship Directorate for Communications.

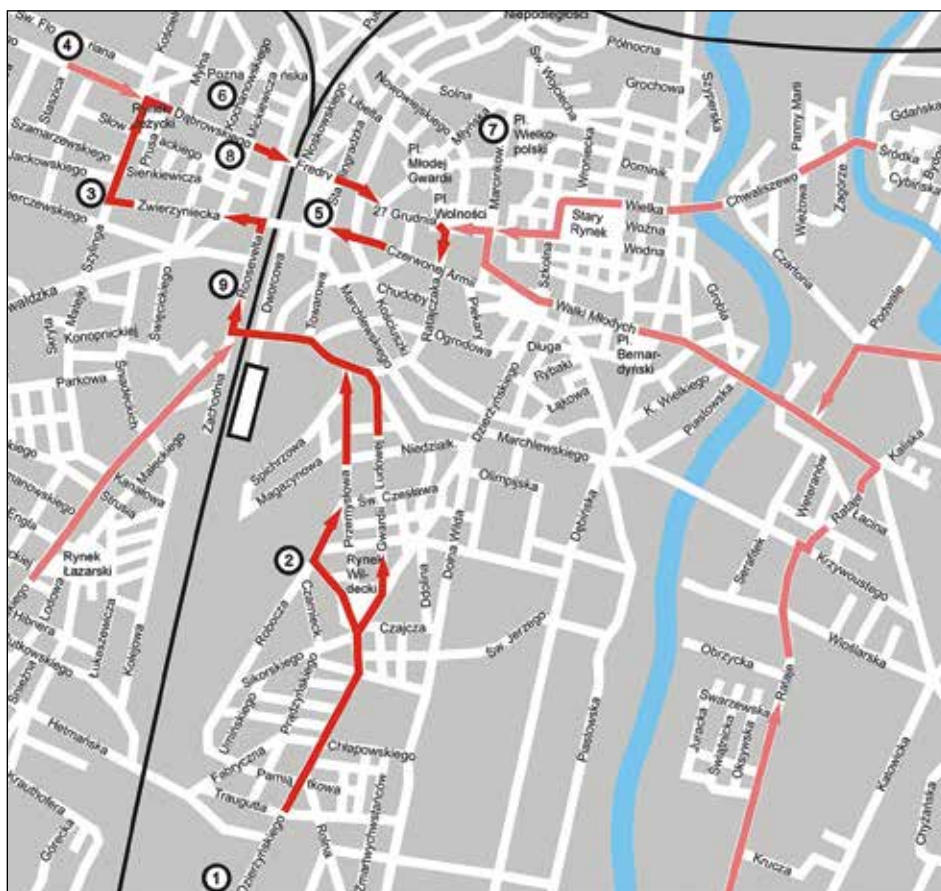
**godz. 10:00**

A group of protesters entered the building of the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party for the second time. They took off the red flags and hung tables with slogans. Another group entered the building of the Voivodeship Headquarters of the Citizens' Militia and urged the military officers to join the demonstration.

**After 10:00**

The crowd divided into two groups. One group, hearing the calls from the megaphones of the patrol car, went toward the prison on Młyńska Street. Another part went to the Voivodeship Office of Public Security building on Kochanowskiego Street. The protesters threw devices for jamming Western radio stations off the roof of the Social Insurance Institution. Some protesters went into the building of the City Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party on Mickiewiczza Street.

# ATIMELINE



Author: Piotr Orzechowski

- the main procession
- demonstrators from factories in other parts of the city
- ① Joseph Stalin 1. Metal Works in Poznań
- ② Railway Rolling Stock Repair Company
- ③ Paris Commune Clothing Factory "Modena"
- ④ Machine Tools Factory "PONAR-Wiepofama"

- ⑤ Stalin's Square (nearby, on Czerwonej Armii Street – The Presidium of the City National Council, the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party)
- ⑥ The Voivodeship Office of Public Security
- ⑦ Central Prison
- ⑧ Social Insurance Institution
- ⑨ Poznań International Fair

**10:50**

There was an assault at the prison gates. A few protesters climbed ladders, got over the wall, and opened the gate from inside. The protesters got into the prison and let out 252 prisoners.

**11:00**

On Kochanowskiego Street the functionaries of the secret political police directed water cannons (or) powerful jets of water at the protesters. Stones were thrown at the building of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security. Shots were fired from the building and the first injured people were taken to the Pawłow Hospital and to the Raszei Hospital.

**11:00–14:00**

The Commander of the Officers' Armored and Mechanized Infantry School sent about 300 cadets, 16 tanks, 2 armored personnel carriers and 30 cars to protect selected places. A few tanks going toward Kochanowskiego Street were set on fire with the use of molotov cocktails. Soldiers were forced to leave their vehicles. The protesters entered the building of the District Court and public prosecutor's office on Młyńska Street, threw files out on the street, and burned them. Around Kochanowskiego Street the exchanges of fire intensified. The siege on the building of the secret political police was imposed from over 20 positions.



# OF POZNAŃ

# 1956 PROTESTS

**11:30**

The crowd overtook the arsenal in the prison building, allowing them to seize 80 weapons and ammunition.

**12:00**

Another group of four tanks and two platoons of officer cadets was sent from the Officers' Armored and Mechanized Infantry School.

**12:30**

The protesters overwhelmed two tanks and disarmed their crews.

**13:00**

After a conversation with the Chief of the Polish General Staff, Gen. Jerzy Bordziłowski, the Commander of the Officers' Armored and Mechanized Infantry School ordered that five platoons of officer cadets and 13 tanks be called from the training camp in Biedrusko.

**14:00**

A group of people, headed by Gen. Stanisław Popławski, landed at the Ławica airport. Gen. Popławski took over command of the law enforcement officers in Poznań.

**15:00**

The Commander of the Officers' Armored and Mechanized Infantry School sent shock troops from Biedrusko, comprising 8 tanks and 120 officer cadets, to the building of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security. However, the subunits encountered strong opposition on the part of the protesters.

**17:30**

After about two hours the officer cadets managed to get through to the surrounded building and to form a closed inner ring around it.

**18:00**

Units of the 19<sup>th</sup> Armored Division of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Corps entered Poznań.

**18:00–21:00**

Armed groups of demonstrators disarmed the Prisoner Camp in Mrowino, the Military School at the Poznań University of Technology, and the Citizens' Militia station in Mosina.

**20:00**

Units of the 10<sup>th</sup> Armored Division of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Corps came to the city.

**20:10**

There was a shooting in Czempień, where the protesters tried, unsuccessfully, to disarm a Citizens' Militia station. In Poznań, especially in the region of the building of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security, there were fights with the security forces. In the afternoon and in the evening the inhabitants of Środa Wielkopolska gathered on the Old Market of that city (near the Poviatic Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party). A unit of the Internal Security Corps, on its way to Poznań, was stopped for some time. After 23:15 the Citizens' Militia dispersed the people who were gathering there.

**21:00**

A curfew was introduced in Poznań, until 04:00 next morning. In spite of that, there were fights in some places in Poznań, mainly near Kochanowskiego Street and the Imperial Castle.

**22:00**

4 units of the Infantry Division of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps came to Poznań from the training camp in Wędrzyn.

**1:30**

The authorities began to arrest people. The detained demonstrators were taken to a filtering point at the Ławica airport.

## FRIDAY, 29 JUNE 1956

Workers in most factories in Poznań went on strike. There were also strikes in some factories in Luboń, Swarzędz, and Kostrzyn.

**04:00–05:00**

Units of the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps entered Poznań. Their task was to, among other things, protect the building of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security, the barracks of the Internal Security Corps, and the Railway Rolling Stock Repair Company, as well as to patrol the streets and eliminate the hubs of resistance. A part of the units was directed to the Luboń factories which were on strike. Units of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division were directed to the Joseph Stalin Metal Works in Poznań, the buildings of the Poznań International Fair, and to Dąbrowskiego and Polna Streets. In the afternoon a few thousand protesters marching along Dąbrowskiego Street tried to get to the building of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security.

Seeing the tanks standing there, the crowd dispersed. In Swarzędz the army prevented the protesters from marching towards Poznań.

**19:30**

Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz made a speech on the radio, in which he spoke about chopping off the hands of the enemies of the people's government.

## SATURDAY, 30 JUNE 1956

Public transportation was restored. Workers were still on strike in some factories (e.g. in the Railway Rolling Stock Repair Company). In some other factories some of the workers did not come to work. An official funeral ceremony took place in Fort Winiary, attended by Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz and the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, Edward Gierek. In the afternoon the authorities began to withdraw the military units from Poznań. Shots were heard from various places in Poznań until late at night.

**Przemysław Zwiernik, PhD** – is a historian and an employee of the Office of Public Education of the Institute of National Remembrance Branch in Poznań. He conducts research on, among other things, the structures of the Independent Self-governing Trade Union "Solidarity" and of other organizations of the opposition in the Wielkopolskie voivodeship. He is the author of a book titled *Prasa podziemna opozycji politycznej w Poznaniu od wprowadzenia stanu wojennego do porozumień Okrągłego Stołu*. (English: *The Underground Press of the Political Opposition in Poznań, From the Introduction of Martial Law to the Round Table Agreement*).



# <UN> CONTROLLED MEMORY

An interview with **Piotr Grzelczak PhD**, the author of a book entitled *Poznański Czerwiec 1956. Walka o pamięć w latach 1956-1989* (English: *Poznań 1956 Protests. The Fight for Remembrance in 1956-1989*) and winner of an award in the **Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski 2015 Best Historical Debut Competition**. The interviewer: **Agnieszka Łuczak**.

■ Why has the memory of what happened in Poznań on 28 June 1956 been a focus of conflict between the Communist party and society?

The foundation of the conflict, which arose in relation to the Poznań 1956 protests and lasted from 1956 to 1989, was the indisputable evaluation of them by the authorities. As ear-

ly as the Summer of 1956, in strictly controlled mass media, a very brutal propaganda campaign was arranged in which the workers' protests were de facto reduced to a "provocation" and an "agents' conspiracy", the full responsibility for which lay on a more or less secret "enemy".

■ Did society perceive the events in a different light?

The propaganda campaign, of course, did not in any way reflect the social attitudes in Poznań and in the Wielkopolskie voivodeship at that time. June 1956 was a unique collective experience for at least one hundred thousand of its direct participants and their families. The propagandist evaluation of the protests was generally resisted. That propagandist violence was eventually questioned during the October breakthrough in 1956.

■ Władysław Gomułka, who gained power in October, 1956, rehabilitated the rebellion of Poznań workers to a certain degree, by evaluating it as a case of righteous anger at "errors and deviations". How, then, was the first anniversary of the Poznań 1956 protests celebrated?

That new evaluation was a useful tool for legitimizing "socialism without the deviations", purportedly represented by Gomułka's team, in the few months after its coming into power. However, in early Spring 1957, the rather ubiquitous presence of the

► Tanks of the Officers' Armored and Mechanized Infantry School in front of the building of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security on Kochanowskiego Street.





**Piotr Grzelczak, PhD** is a historian and the author of a doctoral thesis entitled *Poznański Czerwiec 1956. Walka o pamięć w latach 1956–1989* (English: *The Poznań 1956 Protests. The Fight for Remembrance in 1956–1989*), written under the supervision of Prof. Witold Molik and defended in the Faculty of History of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (2014), as well as of tens of scientific articles about the celebrations of anniversaries, the historical policies of the Polish United Workers' Party as regards the Poznań 1956 protests, and the history of Poznań in the Polish People's Republic published, for example, in the "Kronika Miasta Poznania", "Przeгляд Zachodni", and "Artium Quaestiones" journals. Piotr

Grzelczak also won the award of the City of Poznań in the Exceptional Doctoral Thesis Competition (2015) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> award in the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski 2015 Best Historical Debut Competition. He is a member of the Poznań Society of Friends of Sciences. He works as a secretary of the editorial team of "Kronika Miasta Poznania" in Wydawnictwo Miejskie Poznań in Poznań.

Poznań 1956 protests in the public discourse clearly began to trouble the upper echelons of the party. In Poznań alone almost all political decisions were then made 'in the shade' of the remembrance of those protests. Also in Poznań a grassroots worker's movement was born, the members of which wanted to cultivate the memory of the rebellion and of its victims. In order to counteract that, just before the first anniversary of the protests, at the beginning of June 1957, the authorities organized a visit of the still quite popular Władysław Gomułka in the place where the protests first arose, that is, in the Joseph Stalin Metal Works in Poznań. During the meeting, Gomułka appealed to the workers to draw a "curtain of mourning silence" over the "family tragedy". The curtain was immediately drawn by the representatives of the authorities at all levels, including the operational functionaries of the secret political police spying on the worker circles and threatening their leaders.

► An information note of the secret political police devoted to the workers' moods before the first anniversary of the Poznań 1956 protests, dated June 14, 1957

■ **Was it already forbidden to celebrate the Poznań 1956 Protests in 1958?**

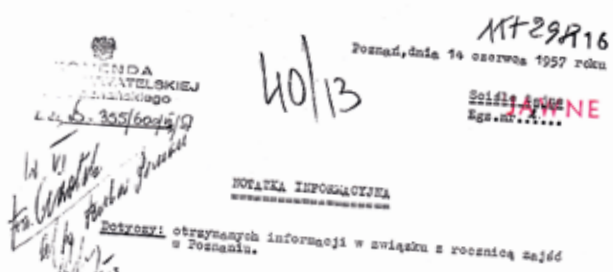
That topic was almost entirely removed from public discourse (except for in the Catholic Church). In Spring 1958 the members of the Polish United Workers' Party in Poznań felt much more secure than a year earlier. There were no strikes in solidarity with the spectacularly fired informal leader of the workers, Stanisław Matyja, and with the fired group of his cooperators. This meant the success of the two-year long pacification of the workers in Poznań. Still, the secret political police in Poznań undertook a series of actions to ensure the 'security' of the second anniversary of the protests and did not make light of any signal

concerning that issue. The scale of the engagement of the secret political police is evidenced by the fact that the whole available network of agents (nearly 100 people) and 149 so-called 'contacts' with the management of particular enterprises and with "influential people in the factory" were mobilized for the whole of June 1958. Workers in Poznań refrained from any activity similar to that of the year before because they had been successfully and persistently threatened, for many months. Obviously, the families and friends of the deceased remembered the second anniversary and usually requested a mass for them or visited the graves.

■ **In the light of your research, the remembrance of the Poznań 1956 protests had an influence on the behavior of local party authorities until the 1970s.**

The conscious repression of the social remembrance of the protests as undertaken by the authorities, was not immediately successful. The topic was also discussed by the widely understood state apparatus. For many years to come, until the end of the 1950s, the executive power in Poznań

devoted one May meeting to the 'security measures' to be undertaken in June in the city. Even if the subsequent anniversaries of the Poznań 1956 protests eventually stopped bothering the authorities and if the preparations for them finally disappeared from the minutes of those meetings, there remained the reports on the issue submitted to party members by the secret political police. The June protests were also the most important reason for not organizing May Day marches in Poznań for the first three years after the rebellion. During that time the "Black Thursday" was also perceived as the main reason ►



Z otrzymanych informacji drogą agenturalną i oficjalną z okresu I-go kwartału 1957 roku wynika, że na Zakładach "H. Gęgielaki" i Zakładach Naprawczych Taboru Kolejowego dominowały wypowiedzi odczuwające przerwania pracy i wyjścia na ulicę w okresie trwania XXVI M.T.P. z przyczyn ekonomicznych.

Były w tym okresie również lecz sporadyczne sygnały mówiące o przygotowaniu obchodu rocznicy zajść czerwcowych w kontekście poruszenia pracy i udania się masowo na omentarze. Ostatnio - jak wynika z uzyskiwanych informacji - notuje się nasilenie - szczególnie na Zakładach "H. Gęgielaki" wypowiedzi na temat obchodzenia rocznicy nie w taki sposób jak zyczą sobie Partia i Rząd. Oceniając ogólnie uzyskane dane na temat ten, to pewne wypowiedzi idą w kierunku poruszenia pracy w dniu 28.VI.57r. udania się z wiadomymi na ul. Kochanowskiego, Władką i pod radiostację. Poważna ilość sygnałów pochodzi od szefki Wydziału 3-3 Zakładów "H. Gęgielaki" i można uznać ten wydział jako punkt szpalny.

Posiadamy również sygnały, że na Zakładach Naprawczych Taboru Kolejowego w Poznaniu rozpowszechnia się wersje, że w dniu 28.VI.57r. spotkanie zorganizowane szefka pracowników wspomnianego zakładu na Ryнку Wileckiego celem udania się stamtąd na omentarze z wiadomymi i orkiestrą na omentarze. Nadmienić należy, że poważna część tych informacji jest bezosobną mówiąca ogólnie, że szefka Zakładów mają przerwania w dniu 28.VI.br. pracę i urządzić obchód -

Photography: AIPN





► Devices for jamming Western radio stations, thrown off the roof of the building of the Social Insurance Institution at the crossroads of Mickiewicza and Dąbrowskiego Streets.



► A tank of the Officers' Armored and Mechanized Infantry School, overtaken by the demonstrators.

Photography: AIPN

POZNAŃ  
1956  
PROTESTS

for the incessant problems plaguing the development of the party, which was exceptionally slow in Poznań. Finally, it ought to be noted that, whenever there were any social tensions in Poznań and in the region, in the party mentality there was a tendency toward blaming them on a secret 'enemy'.

■ **Were the moods and attitudes of the society in Greater Poland in the 1960s influenced by the remembrance of the Poznań 1956 protests?? Some people are of the opinion that the workers in Poznań were broken in 1956, for many years to come...**

The June protests were nearly always remembered in crisis situations. Let us think about the Autumn of 1959 and the deep crisis on the meat market. People in Poznań were nearly certain that "if things continue that way, there will be another such rebellion". Those rumors were confirmed by, among other things, the moods of the employees of the Railway Rolling Stock Repair Company, who seemed to be eagerly waiting for a sign from the Joseph Stalin Metal Works in Poznań to go on a mass strike. All in all, there was no strike then but, in the heated discussions in the building of the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Work-

ers' Party in Poznań, it was openly admitted that virtually "everybody expected" that the Joseph Stalin Metal Works in Poznań workers would protest on the streets. The memory of Poznań June also perturbed the Polish United Workers' Party in Poznań on the occasion of the 'price regulation' in March 1963. The workers' moods at that time were defined as "very bad" so all party resources were directed to the factories perceived as at risk of "timeouts". It is notable that on the occasion of almost all 'disturbances' of that kind, people discussed the attitudes of the employees of the Joseph Stalin Metal Works in Poznań who were considered to be a veritable litmus test for the level of social dissatisfaction, for many years after the Poznań 1956 protests. In 1963, not only the inhabitants of Poznań and the vicinity but also of other regions of the country, for example, Łódź, Gdańsk, or Legnica, expected the workers of the Joseph Stalin Metal Works in Poznań to start protests on the streets.

■ **The fear of a repeat of Poznań June also accompanied the actions of the authorities during the celebrations of the millennium of the Polish state in April 1966.**

At that time, the only environment – apart from families – in which one could talk about the Poznań 1956 protests with some openness was the Catholic Church. During the so-called millennium campaign the memory of June, 1956 was also revived in the discussions of the Polish United Workers' Party in Poznań. Remembering the June experiences, the functionaries of the secret political police conducted "committee inspections of the security of the storage of weapons in factories, institutions, and schools" during which "weapons were removed from some endangered objects and placed in the Voivodeship Headquarters of the Citizens' Militia".

■ **What about the December, 1970 massacre of workers on the Coast? Did it make the authorities afraid of what workers in Poznań could do?**

The atmosphere in Poznań was very tense in those December days because of the increasing threat of a strike, especially by the workers of the Joseph Stalin Metal Works in Poznań. According to Kazimierz Barcikowski, in the party building on Czerwonej Armii Street, where briefings for the secretaries of all Poznań district

committees of the Polish United Workers' Party took place every evening, there was extreme tension at the time, and the atmosphere was "dominated by one wish: not to allow a repetition of the events of 1956." Barcikowski, by the way, who had been the First Secretary of the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in the Wielkopolskie voivodeship since 1968, began his work by reading the files containing information on the reasons for and the course of the Poznań 1956 protests. He did not know the city, and for him, those files held the key to its uniqueness. The threat of a strike in Poznań in December, 1970 was finally avoided, with the help of the army. On December 17, at night, at the request of the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in Poznań, the 4<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Division from Krosno Odrzańskie was brought to the military training ground in Biedrusko near Poznań, in a state of high alert. The division consisted of 4,500 soldiers, armed with a large amount of heavy weapons (a few hundred tanks and armored personnel carriers). Additionally, from the Poznań military units alone 1,700 soldiers were delegated to "protect the public utility buildings".

■ **Were the participants of the Poznań rebellion treated in a special way by the apparatus of the Security Service?**

Almost 10 years after the "Black Thursday" the functionaries of the Department III of the Security Service in Poznań began wide operations against a few hundred of the most active participants of Poznań 1956 protests. The unprecedented group surveillance was conducted within the framework of a program of "operational-sociological studies", the final results of which were to be prepared with the use of a rather particular method of "survey studies". This was a result of a fashion for sociology which reached the leadership of the secret political police. The survey

was filled in by the functionaries of the secret political police, on the basis of materials collected with the use of operational methods. The most important and, at the same time, the widest part of that survey was devoted to the "social-political activity" of the surveyed people and contained detailed questions about, among other things, their political affiliations in the interwar period, conspiracy activity during World War II, or participation in the anti-communist conspiracy for independence after 1945. Just next to those topics there were questions about the Poznań 1956 protests, with special emphasis put on the circumstances in which the surveyed person may have obtained the weapons used during the "occurrences". The next part of the survey pertained to the activity of the surveyed person during the nearly 10 years after the Poznań 1956 protests and included, among other things, questions about his or her "political, social, and moral

attitude", "behavior during tensions in the international situation and during political actions in the country", living conditions, travels abroad, etc. At the end of the survey there was probably the most controversial question: about where the person was on December 22–23, 1964. Why did that date, in particular, interest the secret political police? On December 22, 1964, there was a famous bank robbery on Jasna Street. Today it is hard to guess why the participants of the Poznań 1956 protests would be considered suspects in the case, although it seems that the most important link between the two events were the weapons 'lost' by the authorities in June 1956.

■ **The policies of the authorities in the 1960s, which consisted in remaining silent about or distorting the image of the Poznań 1956 protests, were more and more effective with each year. Because of the efforts of censorship and of subservient writers, for a long time the status of the protests** ▶

▶ Officers of the Citizens' Militia, greeted by the protesters with the words: "The Militia with us!".



Photography: AIPN



**was reduced to that of a rather insignificant local episode. Were there any artists who wrote the truth about the Poznan 1956 protests and, for that reason, were repressed by the authorities?**

One of the exceptional cases of actions undertaken against a person involved in the Poznań 1956 protests was the case of a journalist and poet from Poznań, Konrad Doberschütz, who wrote about the rebellion. He could not accept the changes in Poland after World War II and, in order to vent his frustration, he wrote poems, epigrams, humorous, and short prose in which he denounced the most shameful characteristics of the so-called people's rule. Initially most of the works were put at the bottom of his drawer. In time, however, they were collected and bound to form the only copy of a brochure of some tens of pages, titled *Zakazana pœzja* (English: *Forbidden Pœetry*). The secret political police found out about those literary 'dealings' and, in 1959, had the poet arrested for a breach of a few articles of the still valid small criminal code. The works in question concerned, among other things, the lies about Katyń, aspects of the cult of Stalin, and Soviet interventions in Hungary. There was also a poem-lullaby *Śpij spokojnie, mój mały chłopczyku*, (English: *Sleep Peacefully, my Small Boy*), in memory of the youngest victim of Poznań 1956 protests, Romek Strzałkowski. That was Doberschütz's most important and most popular poem; it was distributed in Poznań in oral form and in written copies for a long time.

**■ Did the oppositional circles remember the Poznan 1956 protests after 1976?**

As regards that issue, especially worth noting are the relatively unknown events from 1976, when a few people decided to oppose the authorities and organize independent celebrations of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the forgotten protests. However,

this did not happen in Poznań but in Warsaw. On Sunday 27 June 1976, that is, exactly two days after the dramatic protests of workers from factories in Radom and the Ursus district of Warsaw, hour glass-shaped posters were placed in tens of places in the capital city, with the following texts: "Remembering the workers from Poznań who were killed in June 1956. On the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their death, on June 29 1976 (Tuesday) there will be a mass in the Saint Jacek church in Warsaw, on Freta Street 10, 17:00. Compatriots". According to a report made by the functionaries of the secret political police, about 120 people participated in the mass, including the top leaders of the democratic opposition which was being formed at that time, such as Seweryn Blumsztajn, Ludwik Cohn, Jacek Kuroń, Antoni Macierewicz, Stefan Kawalec, Gen. Roman Abraham, Andrzej Grabiński, Leopold Kummant, Jan Józef Lipski, Jan Lityński, Marta Miklaszewska, Jan Olszewski, Wojciech Ostrowski, Władysław Siła-Nowicki, Aniela Steinsbergowa, Waław Zawadzki, and Wojciech Ziemiński.

**■ So the Poznan 1956 events only returned in 1980, when Solidarity was born?**

Solidarity unequivocally announced that the Poznan 1956 protests were one of the foundations of its young identity. The movement quite quickly included the protests in its narration, treating them as a part of a larger, long-term sequence of events. In that way, the conflict concerning the remembrance of the Poznan 1956 protests was brought to a new level. The most palpable proofs of that were the creation of a memorial monument – the so-called Poznań Crosses – and the gigantic celebration of its unveiling, the publication of the first monograph on the protests, and the wide presence, after a break of 25 years, of that subject

matter in national newspapers. It is also noteworthy that the suddenness of that call to remember the June protests did not only reveal the social need to commemorate them but was also key evidence of the fact that the official policy of suppressing the information about the rebellion, which had been conducted over nearly a quarter of a century, ultimately failed. The authorities, then, continued their attempts at organizing their own celebrations of the subsequent anniversaries of the "Poznań events", as they still called the protests, until the 1980s. The appropriation of the protests, however, was doomed to failure, especially as a worthy opponent had appeared in the fight for the memory of the rebellion. This was Solidarity which, although pushed to the underground, finally sealed its victory in the conflict, in June 1989.

**■ Was the communist power finally defeated?**

Yes, although at first there was little hope for it. After all, the battle for the (non-)remembrance of the protests was fought on many levels: that of social imagination – including historiography, literature, and media propaganda – and the strict repressive one – including the actions of the secret political police, the Citizens' Militia, the Office of the Public Prosecutor, and courts. Looking back, however, we can see that it was all doomed to lose to the invincible, living memory of the fight for 'freedom and bread', undertaken by thousands of average citizens. The way the memory of the Poznan 1956 protests was treated also reveals the behind-the-scenes functioning of the political system of the Polish People's Republic in which the state of social control, so much desired by the authorities, was not achievable without the control of memory, especially as regards the history of the 'people's' state. •

# "AWAY WITH SUCH FREEDOM!"



POZNAŃ  
1956  
PROTESTS

**Marta Szczesiak-Ślusarek**

**Looking at the slogans on the banners carried by the demonstrators in Poznań on 28 June 1956, one may have the impression that the main reasons for which tens of thousands of people protested on the streets on a hot Thursday were symbolic demands of bread and freedom. Over a decade has passed since the end of World War II and the 'better tomorrow' promised by the communist power had not come.**

**T**he society, incessantly exploited in the first half of the 1950s, was additionally forced to realize a six-year plan (1950–1955) of a primarily propagandist nature. As well as an increase in industrial production, the plan also presumed that citizens' income would grow. However, the latter goal did not seem to materialize. People worked longer and more efficiently but, instead of rewarding them, the authorities lowered their salaries and raised the demands.

### **'A difficult today' instead of 'a better tomorrow'**

It was difficult to satisfy basic needs on an everyday basis. The centrally managed, planned economy gradually eliminated the so-called private initiative in trade and services which was treated as

unwelcome in the new form of government. Citizens' expectations, however, were not met and their frustration kept growing. Greater Poland, so far considered to be an economically developed region with a strong work ethos, suffered much in that period. There was no coal, meat, or other products. Very soon the effects of the under-financing of health care and education were also felt. There were no funds for housing construction. In the end, the situation turned against the authorities. The hub of the 1956 rebellion was a factory of historical importance for Poznań people: the former Hipolit Cegielski factory, re-named by the communists to the Joseph Stalin Metal Industry Factory (Polish: Zakłady Przemysłu Metalowego im. Józefa Stalina, abbreviated to ZISPO). Although Stalin had been dead for three ➤



years at that time, the workers still felt the effects of his politics. Work norms were continuously raised which worried and frustrated the workers. Many years after the events they remembered shirts white with salt because of work which was too hard. The worsening situation of the workers, who were increasingly vocal about their tiredness and anxiety resulting from the bad organization of the factory and who felt cheated by the incorrect settlement of tax on remuneration, caused more and more protests. Mediation attempts undertaken by delegates from the Management Board of the Metal Workers' Association and in the Ministry of Metal Industry in Warsaw did not result in a solution to those problems. The representatives of both sides made one more, unsuccessful attempt at finding a compromise, at the central level, on June 26. The dissatisfaction spread to other factories in Poznań and it was decided that the workers would go on strike. In the atmosphere of the so-called Khrushchev's Thaw after Stalin's death, workers courageously fought for their rights.

Photography: AIPN



### Against 'the red bourgeoisie'

The demonstrators in Poznań fought against the "exploitation of the world of work". They demanded bread, lower prices, lower norms of work, and higher wages. Although the economic factor was extremely important, the representatives of various circles who appeared in large numbers on the streets on 28 June made references to widely understood democracy and opposed the communist rule. The importance of the motif of a demand for freedom increased with every hour of the protests. The protesters wrote on an overturned tram: "away with the dictatorship!" They called: "away with the communists!", "away with such freedom!". Also, specific demands were put forth. There were slogans: "We demand a pay rise" mixed with postulates of a free election under the supervision of the United Nations. The consciousness of political and economic dependence on the Soviet Un-

ion was expressed in slogans: "Away with the Russians, we demand a truly free Poland", "away with the Mosksals". Protests against the 'red bourgeoisie' were made. During the procession along the streets of Poznań the slogans escalated, with economic motifs mixed with patriotic and freedom-related ones. There were also demands concerning religion ("we want religion back in schools"), and the elevated atmosphere was augmented with political and religious songs.

It was the first time after the war that the embitterment and anger resulting from the situation in the country were expressed so clearly and on such a large scale. The scale and the nature of the protests also showed that the people had overcome their fear of the omnipresent 'arm of the party', that is, the apparatus of the Security Service. This time, nobody managed to stop the dissatisfied and desperate people. The route of the demonstrators led past the

centers of power. People from Poznań went to places where they could present their demands, where their emotions of embitterment, tiredness, and anger, but also their will to fight for their rights, focused. They started on foot, in the morning of 28 June 1956, from the Joseph Stalin Metal Works in Poznań, and went toward the city center where the Presidium of the City National Council and the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party were. Although they were able to talk with a few representatives of the authorities – most of the them had run away – the people were not appeased and their moods radicalized. On the Mickiewicz Square and the neighboring streets more and more people gathered. The crowd included the workers of the Railway Rolling Stock Repair Company, "Wiepofama" Wielkopolska Mechanical Devices Factory, and Paris Commune Clothing Factory "Modena" in Poznań. Also there were employees



Photography: AIPN



Photography: AIPN

► Most slogans carried by the demonstrators pertained to economic issues.

of the City Transport Company, including the tram drivers shown in the photograph. There were also printers from the Marcin Kaprzak Graphics Factory in Poznań and representatives of the Poznań Harvesting Machine Factory "Agromet". Soon that crowd of tens of thousands of people included people from various circles and professions, as well as the youth and children.

### Blood on the streets

The building of the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, so far inaccessible and scary, was seized by protesters who hang banners there, with the words "bread" and "freedom", and penetrated the office, demonstrating against the benefits enjoyed by party members, such as the privilege of access to products unavailable on the market. The demonstrators were losing hope that their demands would be fulfilled. They became tired of the long wait for a possible dialogue with the authorities, and were angered by the rumor

that the delegates had been arrested. They moved to other places in the city. Some of them went to Młyńska Street to free the delegates who were said to be kept there. The prison was overtaken, its files burned, prisoners let go, and, most importantly, for the first and last time in the Polish People's Republic, the demonstrators gained weapons. The Voivodeship Headquarters of the Citizens' Militia in Collegium Iuridicum was also seized. Looking for the delegates, the crowd then went on, to Kochanowskiego Street. There stood the awe-inspiring Voivodeship Office of Public Security. On the way the protesters threw the device used for jamming Western radio stations off the roof of the building of the Social Insurance Agency. That act was accompanied by shouting: "we want freedom", "we want to listen to foreign radio stations without distortions". It was on Kochanowskiego Street that the first shots were fired, at demonstrators, from a besieged building. A fight began and the rebellious society was

pacified with the use of the army and tanks. For the functionaries of the Office of Public Security every person on the streets at that time, including children and the young, was an enemy. A thirteen-year-old boy, Romek Strzałkowski, shot during the protests, became a symbolic victim of June, 1956. At least 50 protesters, including 15 teenagers, were shot. During court proceedings the criminal defense lawyer of the people accused of participating in the Poznań 1956 protests, Stanisław Hejnowski, expressed the hope that: "the victims' blood was not shed in vain". A Polish flag, stained with blood and carried by protesters on the premises of the Poznań International Fair, photographed by Western journalists, became a symbol which moved public opinion

around the world. Although the actions of the demonstrators extended beyond the boundaries of the city – Citizens' Militia stations were disarmed also in other locations – on June 29 the situation was already under the control of the authorities. Poznań was cut off from the rest of the country. Participants of the protests were being arrested.

For years to come the city bore the stigma attached to it by party dignitaries. Poles remembered Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz's threat about chopping off any hand raised against the people's government. Still, they also remembered the inhabitants of that 'hurt city' who dared to undertake the dangerous fight for their rights in those difficult times. •

**Marta Szczesiak-Ślusarek** is the head of the Historical Education Department in the Office of Public Education of the Institute of National Remembrance Branch in Poznań. She conducts training for teachers of modern history and does research on, among other topics, the history of the Holocaust, the soldiers of the Polish independence underground, and Polish-Ukrainian relations in 1939–1947.



# THE PRICE OF COURAGE

In the archive of the Institute of National Remembrance in Poznań dozens of files on women arrested for their participation in the Poznań 1956 protests are preserved. Especially noteworthy are the materials concerning the tram drivers of the City Transport Company: Stanisława Sobańska, Helena Przybytek, and Maria Kapturska.

## Maria Kapturska, Helena Przybytek, Stanisława Sobańska

Katarzyna Florczyk, PhD

**T**hursday, June 28 (later called “Black Thursday”) eighteen-year-old Stanisława Sobańska and twenty-year-old Helena Przybytek began work early, as usual. When trams stopped in response to the workers’ calls for joining the strike, the women joined the protesters and went towards the city center. That is why they are wearing uniforms in the photographs documenting those events. They were accompanied by twenty-one-year-old Maria Kapturska

who had worked as a tram driver a few months before.

The women did not fight on the streets of Poznań with weapons in their hands but their participation in the protests was remembered by the inhabitants of the city for many years to come. It was they who walked the streets carrying the national flag at the front of the workers’ procession. Marching towards the seat of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security on Kochanowskiego Street,

POZNAŃ  
1956  
PROTESTS

► Tram drivers Stanisława Sobańska and Helena Przybytek march in a procession, dressed in uniforms, with side caps on their heads and tram-driver bags carried over their shoulders

Przybytek was holding a banner on a flagstaff and Sobańska was holding the corner of the second flag, without a staff. The women walked the street three times, singing the national hymn, and then stopped in front of the seat of the secret political police. Meanwhile, more and more protesters gathered on Kochanowskiego Street, this may have emboldened Helena Przybytek who was quoted as saying: "Come on, shoot at me". In order to disperse the protesters, the functionaries directed a strong jet of water, from fire hoses connected to hydrants, at them. The reaction was opposite to the expected one: the protesters responded by throwing stones torn out of the pavement at the hated building.

### The authorities shoot at the workers

Around 11:00 shots were fired from the windows of the office. The first bullets reached defenseless women, which became symbolic for the people. Przybytek was shot in the legs and fell down. The banner she had been carrying was stained with blood. Later during the investigation she testified that it was a woman that shot at her: "At the same time, I looked up at one of the windows of the building of the Office of Public Security. A woman looked out of the window. She shot at me, injuring me in both legs. That was about 11:00 or a few minutes after 11:00." The tram driver was taken to hospital where she was underwent several surgical operations. Sobańska was also injured but slightly; her wound was dressed in a hospital and she was sent home. Both women remember Kapturska as their companion in the march. She withdrew when the shooting started.

In his evidence, given before the court, a witness of those events, a well-known writer and critic from Poznań, Egon Naganowski, described the first shots from the building of the secret political police. "It was about 12:00. First, I saw that the crowd was forming a semicircle in front of the Office

of Public Security. People were shouting. Three tram drivers stood in front of the building. They were carrying a Polish flag. I observed the moment; it was when they were standing there that a series of shots from the building were fired. There is no doubt whatsoever that the shots came out of that building. In a moment, the flag was torn. This had a psychological impact on the crowd. Then one of the tram drivers fell down. She must have been shot. Another woman took her to a fence, leaned against it and also fell down. Only one was left with the flag. Then



Photography: AIPN

► Stanisława Sobańska; the photographs were taken by functionaries mixed in among the crowd. The photographs later served the purpose of identifying the most active participants of the protest.

she withdrew as well." The shots fired at defenseless women holding a national flag influenced the crowd: the enmity toward the secret political police turned into hatred and a desire for revenge. In his final speech during the trial in October 1956, the criminal defense lawyer in the Poznań trials, Michał Grzegorzewicz said that the event was "like gasoline being poured on a burning fire. The flame of feelings shot high up and the fire started anew."

After the shooting on Kochanowskiego Street, Maria Kapturska continued to participate in the demonstration. She was dressed in bright clothes which made it much easier for the

functionaries of the secret political police to identify and arrest her after the protests. A witness said: "I saw three women at the front of that group; one of them was wearing a tram driver uniform, one was older, and the third one was wearing a red sweater and a navy blue skirt." Those women were holding a red and white flag, stained with blood, and sang the national anthem, *Poland Is Not Yet Lost*.

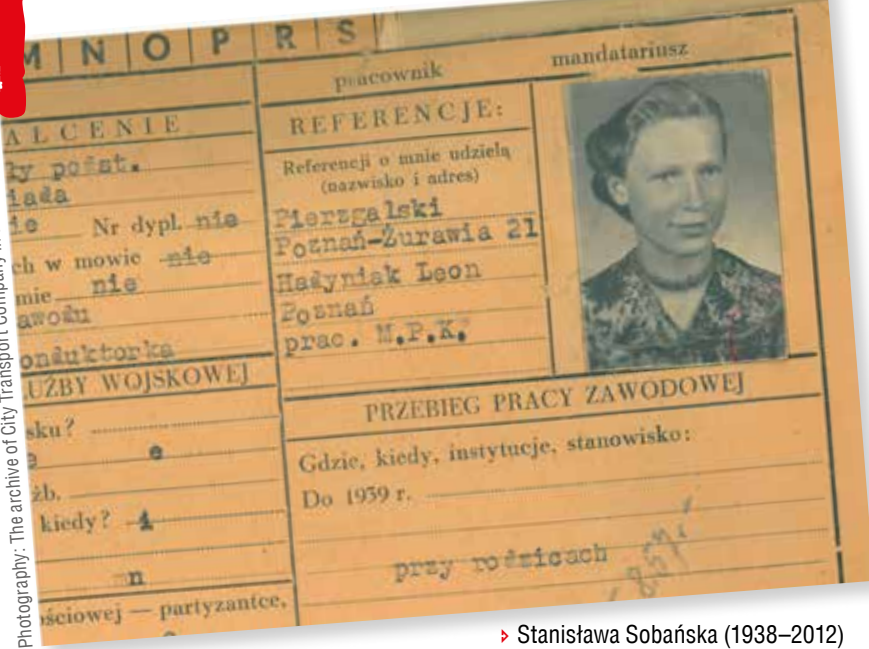
In order to pacify the rebellious city, the authorities decided to bring the army and tanks to the streets. Kapturska used her knowledge of tram driving to stop one tank. It was overturned and served as a barricade for the protesters. Together with other workers she also tried to capture one of the army vehicles. About 15:30, carrying the torn and bloodstained red and white flag, she climbed a tank climbed, with the torn and bloodstained white and red flag, a tank on Roosevelta Street, near Dąbrowskiego Street. "A woman was holding a flag in her hand. They stood on the top and formed a 'pyramid'. In a few moments I saw that tank, captured

by civilians, move and then stop again. A group of those people, including the woman, climbed on the tank again."

### The consequences of "Black Thursday"

Kapturska was arrested on July 1, 1956. She was accused of "having participated, on 28 June 1956, in a public gathering in Poznań which blocked the road at the crossroads of Roosevelta and Dąbrowskiego Streets, with the use of immobilized tram carriages. She also requested the teams of the tanks to stop fulfilling their tasks." After the arrest the woman was interrogated many times by the functionaries of the Citizens' Militia





➤ Stanisława Sobańska (1938–2012)

and she was brutally beaten by them. In her memory, the treatment she received at the Citizens' Militia station was worse than in prison: "God, how they tormented me. They showed me photographs. They wanted me to say I was guilty. Only after I had been beaten so much that it would have been hard to recognize me did they state, laughing-

ly, that that woman in the picture could not be Maria Kapturska." Many other participants of the protests were treated in a similar way. Violence was used against the arrested people by both the functionaries of the secret political police and of the Citizens' Militia. In the end, the investigation into the case of Maria Kapturska was terminated, in Oc-

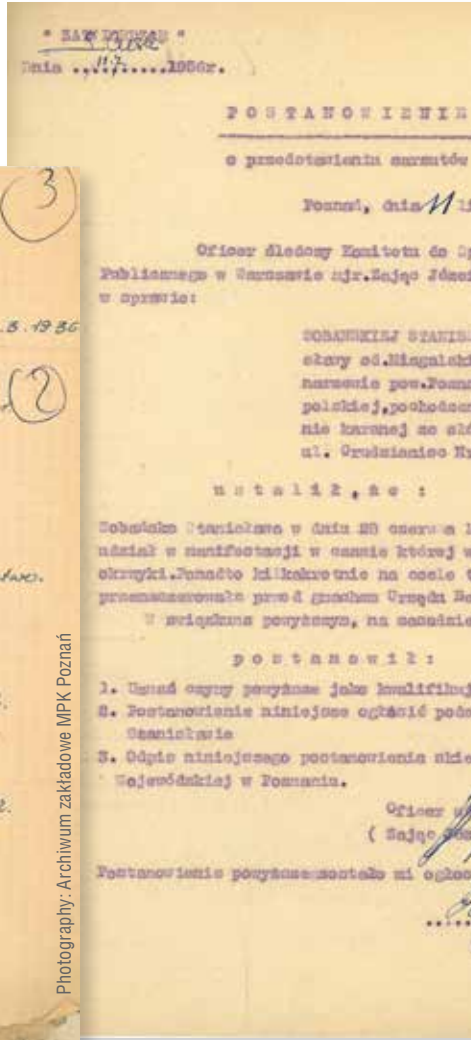
tober 1956, during Khrushchev's Thaw. Although the Office of the Public Prosecutor in Poznań did undertake an investigation into her case and came to the conclusion that the incident at the Citizens' Militia station involved inadmissible practices, the officers were never punished. The General Office of the Public Prosecutor dismissed the woman's complaint because of, among other things, the long and irreproachable service of the functionaries. The justification contained a statement that, since the authorities refrained from prosecuting the demonstrators, they could not apply harsher measures to the officers. Kapturska fell ill as a result of the beatings while still in prison. Having left the prison, she continued to feel strong pain. She was assigned the first disability class.

Because of her injuries, Helena Przybytek remained in hospital until November. There, she was repeatedly

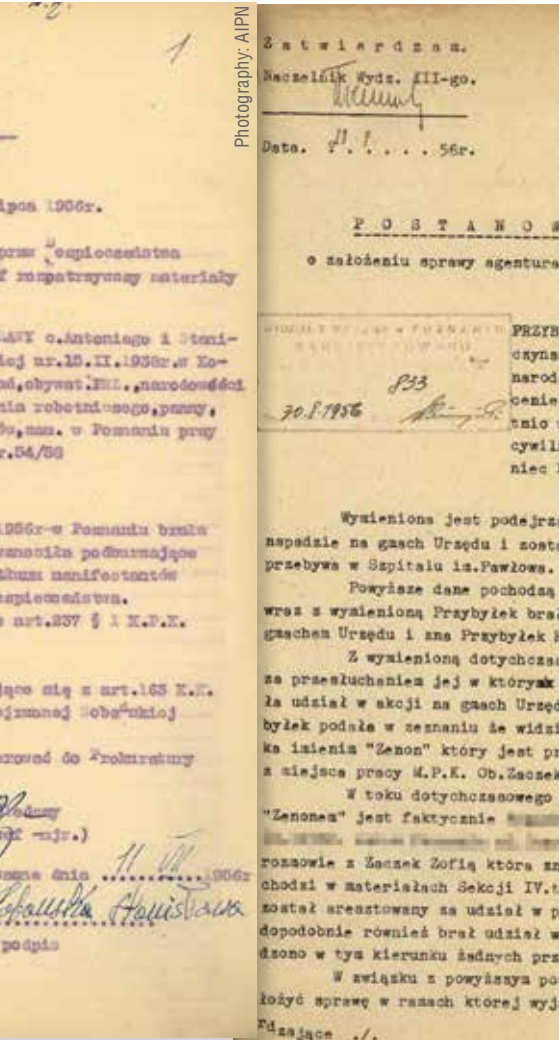
➤ Helena Przybytek's (1936–1993) job application



Photography: Archiwum zakładowe MPK Poznań



Photography: AIPN



Photography: AIPN



interrogated by the functionaries of the secret political police. She was accused of having participated in the demonstration, having shouted provocative slogans, and having marched, several times, at the front of a crowd in front of the building of the secret political police. The investigation was terminated after October 1956. Having left the hospital, she was not able to work. In the three years that followed she underwent six surgical operations. As the bones did not want to knit, her right leg was amputated and the left one remained disabled. When she applied for a disability pension in July 1957, she was assigned to the lowest, third group. Despite the permanent disability and systematically worsening health it was only in 1993, shortly before her death, that she received the first-group war-disabled person pension and a veteran's allowance.

On July 7, Stanisława Sobańska was arrested by functionaries of the

AŁCENIE		pracownik	mandatariusz
czy podstawowej		REFERENCJE:	
Nr dypl.		Referencji o mnie udział (nazwisko i adres)	
ch w mowie <u>nie</u>		Dziembor Wacław	
śmie <u>nie</u>		Szczecin	
konduktorka		Zbójnicka 4 m 6	
LUŻBY WOJSKOWEJ		Suchalski Henryk	
jsku? <u>nie</u>		Mekla Pow. Sroda	
użb. <u>nie</u>		PRZEBIEG PRACY ZAWODOWEJ	
e, kiedy? .....		Gdzie, kiedy, instytucje, stanowisko:	
kościowej — partyzantee,		Do 1939 r.	
		<u>nie pracowała</u>	
		<u>Zweol 27.1.1956</u>	

► Maria Kapturska (1935–2005)

secret political police. In the indictment she was accused of having participated in a “public gathering which destroyed a radio station device and violently attacked employees of the secret political police, whereby the accused, carrying a white and red banner, led the participants of the gathering to the front of the Office of Public Security.” Many years later the woman recalled

that she was brutally beaten by the functionaries during the interrogations: “I was half alive. I could not eat anything, I vomited all the time.” During the interrogations she was put against the wall, arms up, and beaten, especially on the kidneys. She lost all her teeth. Because of severe injuries she underwent four surgical operations. During her illness she lost a lot of weight: she only weighed thirty-five kilograms. She was assigned the first disability class.

**A symbol of courage**

The role of the women in the protests was best described by Aleksander Ziemkowski, the director of a documentary of the Poznan 1956 protests. He commented that the attitude of the tram drivers, especially in front of the building of the secret political police on Kochanowskiego Street, was the driving force behind further events. “That episode was a sacrilegious blow against an indisputable symbol in the shape of a young, defenseless woman with a flag, alone in front of that dragon’s den.”

In 2006, the of the Republic of Poland, Lech Kaczyński, awarded Stanisława Sobańska together with, post mortem, Helena Przybyłek and Maria Kapturska, Orders of Polonia Restituta, of Commander’s Cross class Polski. •

**Katarzyna Florczyk, PhD** is a historian and an employee of the Department Office of Historical Education of the Institute of National Remembrance in Poznań. She does research on, among other things, the history of women in post-war Poland.

Poznań, dnia 27 sierpnia 1956r.  
 ściśle tajne.

Y (3)

IERIE.

Innego sprawozdania na:

HELENA c. Josefa i Marii s.d. Styczeńka ur. 28.03.1936r. Niechanowo pow. Gniezno, obywatelstwa polskiego, wykształcenie powszechnie, bez zawodu, zatrudniona ostatnio w M.P.K. Poznań jako konduktorka, stanowiąca panną, zamieszkałą w Poznaniu Grudziądzka 54/59-Hotel Robotniczy M.P.K.

ona że w dniu 28.VI.56r. brała udział w demonstracji, która skończyła się raną w nogi, obecnie prawdopodobnie niezdolna do pracy.

s przesłuchania fig. Sobańskiej która brała udział w prowokacji i była przedmiotem przesłuchania w miejscu pracy M.P.K. Nie przeprowadzono żadnej rozmowy poproszono ją o wyjaśnienie. W dniu 28.VI.56r. brała udział w demonstracji. Ponadto fig. Przybyłek w trakcie napaści na Urząd osobniczy prawdopodobnie narzęczona jej koleżanki z Zofii.

ustalenie stwierdzono że wymieniona została w demonstracji i w związku z tym została raniona. Wyjaśnienie zostało przesłane do Urzędu, Wydz. III, brat wymienionego uczestnika demonstracji, natomiast brat przetrwał prowokacji, lecz dotychczas nie prowadził śledztwa.

stanowiono na wyznaczenie Heleny Przybyłek i sbrac odpowiednio dowody stwierdzające

POSTANOWIENIE  
 o przedstawieniu zarzutów

Zoznan dnia 27 VIII 1956 r.

Oficer dochodzeniowy Komendy Kielniczarg MO  
 w Zoznanii sior. Kossmann B.

rozpatrzący akta dochodzenia Nr 116/56 w sprawie występowania 10000  
dzien prowokacyjnych p-ko młodzieży

uznamy, że istnieją dostateczne podstawy do przedstawienia podejrzenia  
 zarzutów, na zasadzie art. 237, oraz art. 245 § 1 RPK

postanowili:  
 przedstawić Kapturska Maria

1) zarzut(ów), że w dniu 28.VI.56 r. w czasie demonstracji w Zoznanii narodziła nieładność do rozbijania i niszczenia urządzeń M.P. oraz funkcjonariuszy U.S. i M.O.

2) zachowała się flagą narodową na demonstracji zdobytym przez ludność cywilną i wziętym wziętym p-ko Zofii i Ludu P.R.

3) rozprowokowała młodzież wioda tłumów dzięki o mowy p-ko P.R.L.

\*) Niepotrzebne skreślić.  
 SW-29 (drukarka z 1. maj. 1956)

Photography: The archive of City Transport Company in Poznań



# THE VICTIMS OF THE POZNAŃ 1956 PROTESTS

Lukasz Jastrzab

The reasons for the workers' strike in Poznań on 28 June 1956 were purely economic. They were dissatisfied with their working conditions, strict work norms and dreadful social conditions. They took to the streets and formed a procession of a few thousand people. Later they demonstrated in the city center. At first, the authorities completely ignored the situation; hardly any action was undertaken in the morning. The demonstration got out of control: the protesters entered the prison by force and captured weapons. They went to the Office of Public Security. Then, the peaceful demonstration transformed into armed riots. Two armored divisions and two infantry divisions were called to the city to suppress them. In the afternoon the situation was virtually under control but there were tragic casualties. 57 people were killed or died because of injuries, including 49 civilians, 4 soldiers, 3 functionaries of the Office of Public Security, and 1 officer of the Citizens' Militia. Over 80% of the people who died were not active participants in the demonstration – their death was accidental, caused, among other things, by the haphazard, indiscriminate shooting. The number of the injured definitely

did not exceed 650 (most likely, there were fewer than 500 of them). According to the most recent estimates of the investigative division of the Institute of National Remembrance, though, there is a certainty that 239 people were injured. The disparity results from the fact that the investigation has not been closed yet and the number reflects the current state of knowledge. 500 is a hypothetical number which I have arrived at by studying scientific sources. The investigative division, however, has additional tools for verifying the scientific findings.

Only men were killed during the events. The youngest boy was 13, the oldest man – 57, 15 of the fatalities were below 18. In the case of 24 of those people it was not possible to determine if they had belonged to any party. 21 of them were members of the Association of the Polish Youth "Zet" and 5 – of the Polish United Workers' Party. There was also 1 member of the Volunteer Reserves of the Citizens' Militia.

As regards their professions, the majority of them were workers (31), including two apprentices. There were 14 students, including 6 from vocational and technical schools, 2 students who also worked, 2 extramural

students (also with jobs), a primary school student, a student of a cadet school, a fresh high-school graduate and a graduate of a tertiary-level educational institution. As well as the above, there were 4 white-collar workers, 3 functionaries of the secret political police, 2 artisans, an officer of the Citizens' Militia, an officer of the Polish Armed Forces, and a farmer. In total, 38 of those people were manual workers, while 19 did intellectual work (including students).

During the so-called trial of three, on 4 October 1956, attorney at law Gerard Kujanek, the criminal defense lawyer in the Poznań trials, said: "The victims of the Poznań events are divided into those who were buried in glory, their funerals attended by the representatives of the authorities of the Polish People's Republic, in a heroes' cemetery, and those who were buried quietly and modestly, without putting any emphasis on the tragedy of their death. However, there, before the Highest Tribunal, they all stood in one row, joined in an embrace." •

**Lukasz Jastrzab**, PhD a historian. He does research on the Poznań 1956 protests and is an author of several books (also about the victims of Poznań June) and dozens of scientific and popularizing articles.

# A List of the Victims of Poznań 1956 Protests

Item	Surname and first name	Age	Cause of death
1	Bentke Roman	18	gunshot wound of the skull and the brain
2	Błazejak Henryk	16	gunshot wound of the right thigh and lower leg
3	Boroń Sylwester	25	gunshot wound of the area of the right clavicle
4	Braun Zdzisław	26	gunshot wound of the right side of the chest
5	Cieślik Walenty	20	gunshot wound of the right side of the chest
6	Czekaj Jakub	21	gunshot wound of the abdomen (a soldier of the Internal Security Corps)
7	Dąbrowicz Michał	23	gunshot wound of the head
8	Dutkiewicz Kazimierz	17	gunshot wound of the head (skull and brain)
9	Falasa Bronisław	22	gunshot wound (a soldier of the Polish Armed Forces)
10	Ficek Ryszard	21	gunshot wound, lacerated wound, gunshot wound of the patella (a soldier of the Polish Armed Forces)
11	Franke Tadeusz	31	gunshot wound
12	Frankowski Bogdan	22	gunshot wound in the head (a functionary of the secret political police)
13	Gliński Andrzej	15	gunshot wound in the face and skull
14	Graja Kazimierz	31	gunshot wound in the head (a functionary of the secret political police)
15	Grześkowiak Henryk	24	gunshot wound
16	Hoppe Andrzej	18	gunshot wound of the left side of the chest
17	Izdebny Zygmunt	26	battery (a functionary of the secret political police)
18	Jackowski Czesław	41	fracture of the pelvis, due to a gunshot wound, lung abscess
19	Janczewski Zbigniew	20	gunshot wound of the area of the left shoulder blade
20	Jankowiak Jerzy	16	gunshot wound of the skull and the brain
21	Jankowski Roman	43	gunshot wound of the chest, bleeding
22	Joachimiak Zbigniew	28	gunshot wound of the chest
23	Kaczmarek Władysław	26	gunshot wound of the head
24	Kapitan Seweryn	18	gunshot wound of the head (skull and brain)
25	Kliche Zenon	17	gunshot wound
26	Klój Leon	16	run over by a tank
27	Kłos Czesław	46	gunshot wound of the chest
28	Kołodan Stanisław	24	gunshot wound of the head, rupture of brain tissue
29	Kowalczyk Jan	39	gunshot wound of the chest
30	Krystek Franciszek	31	spine and spinal cord injury, paraplegia (a functionary of the Citizens' Militia)
31	Kubiak Marian	19	gunshot wound of the abdomen, eventration, gunshot wound of the area of the elbow, numerous wounds of the intestines
32	Kuźnicki Wiesław	16	gunshot wound of the heart
33	Lipski Franciszek	53	gunshot wound of the abdomen
34	Makowski Roman	28	gunshot wound
35	Matwiejczuk Mikołaj	25	gunshot wound
36	Milanowski Czesław	26	gunshot wounds of the abdomen, damage to the liver and large intestine
37	Niemczewski Feliks	45	gunshot wound of the abdomen
38	Niemczyk Jan	49	gunshot wound of the abdomen
39	Nowak Bogdan	19	fracture of the left thigh, due to a gunshot wound
40	Nowicki Henryk	15	gunshot wound
41	Ochocki Leon	45	gunshot wound of the left side of the chest
42	Piskorski Zdzisław	58	gunshot wound of the chest and forearm, gunshot wound of the chest
43	Porolniczak Józef	28	gunshot wound of the chest, perforation of the aorta, gunshot wound of the chest
44	Przybylski Jerzy	29	gunshot wound
45	Pudys Józef	25	gunshot of the abdomen, damage to the spleen
46	Raś Leszek	26	gunshot to the left lower leg
47	Rau Alfred	16	gunshot wound of the skull
48	Sępkowski Marian	28	gunshot wound of the head (a soldier of the Polish Armed Forces)
49	Sikora Ireneusz	16	gunshot wound of the skull and the brain
50	Sobalak Marian	32	gunshot wound of the left side of the chest and of the right lumbar area
51	Strzałkowski Roman	13	gunshot wound of the left side of the chest
52	Toma Wacław	29	gunshot wound of the skull and the brain
53	Wasylik Paweł	47	gunshot wound of the head
54	Wieczorek Kazimierz	25	gunshot wound, perforation of the skull
55	Witkiewicz Jan	35	gunshot wound of the head and the chest
56	Wojewódzki Feliks	18	gunshot wound of the abdomen
57	Wysocki Mieczysław	24	two gunshot wounds of the chest



# THE CASE IS STILL BEING INVESTIGATED

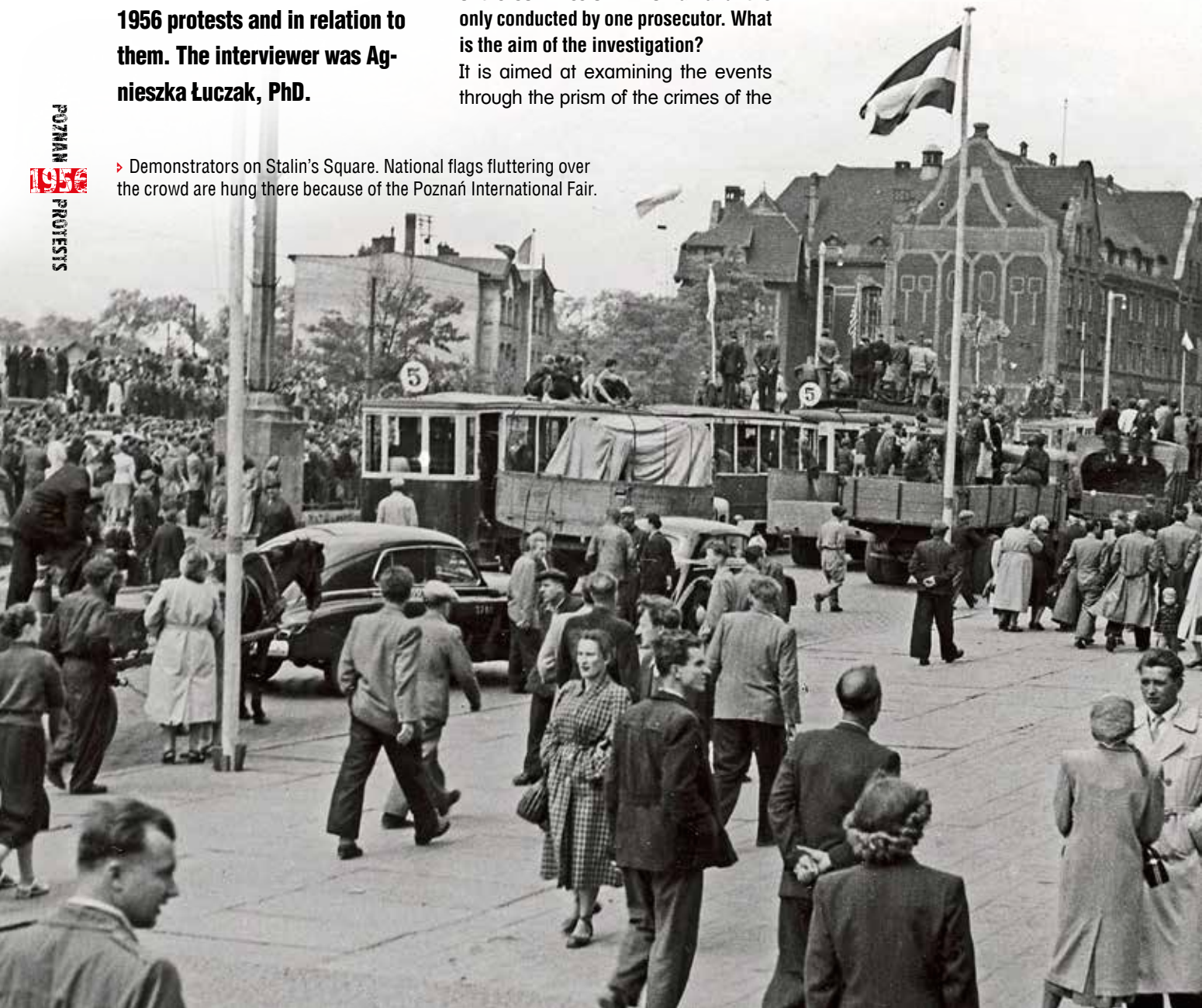
An interview with **Mirosław Sławeta**, prosecutor of the Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation of the Institute of National Remembrance in Poznań, which conducts the investigation into the criminal actions of the functionaries of the communist state during the so-called Poznań 1956 protests and in relation to them. The interviewer was **Agnieszka Łuczak, PhD.**

■ The Institute of National Remembrance has been conducting an investigation into the case of the Poznań 1956 protests for 15 years. Earlier (in 1991–1999) the investigation was conducted by a Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation in Poznań. This is the greatest investigation of the Commission in Poznań and it is only conducted by one prosecutor. What is the aim of the investigation?

It is aimed at examining the events through the prism of the crimes of the

functionaries of the communist state. I examine the circumstances of the Poznań rebellion and the scale of the repressions against its participants. In legal language that is called the determination of the criminal acts of functionaries of the communist state. I have collected evidence concerning the killed,

► Demonstrators on Stalin's Square. National flags fluttering over the crowd are hung there because of the Poznań International Fair.





Photography: Jan Kotodziejewski



**Mirosław Sławeta (b. 1964)** is a graduate of the Faculty of Law of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Since 1991 he has been a prosecutor in the Poznań Grunwald regional prosecutor's office where, among other activities, he conducted the investigation and later was a prosecutor in the case of the killing of singer Eleni's daughter. In 1997–2001 he was a prosecutor in the Department of Supervision over Preparatory Proceedings in the voivodeship and later district prosecutor's office in Poznań. Since September, 2001 he has been a prosecutor in the Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation in Poznań.

injured, and arrested people, as well as people beaten during the detention and investigations. There were at least 1400 such people, including 50 killed and 239 injured civilians, as well as 1113 detained and arrested people.

■ **During the investigation, information about the fatalities was carefully checked. There were also rumors about soldiers shot for refusing to shoot at the participants in the rebellion...**

Firstly, I verified the data concerning the fatalities, in archival materials and in publications. I also analyzed numerous documents and interviewed the



Photography: AIPN

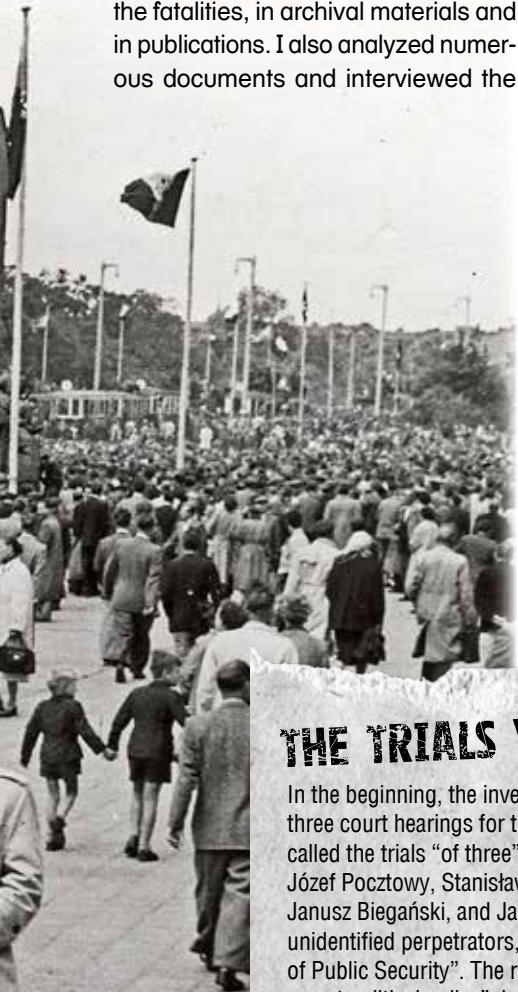
► Survey research conducted in September, 2006 near Biedrusko

families and friends of the participants killed during of the protests, as well as witnesses of those deaths. It turned out that the lists of the victims included people who died of natural causes (for example, Stanisław B. who died on July 30, 1956 and was diagnosed with uræmia), and even one person who committed suicide (Kazimierz S., injured during the Poznan 1956 protests, who died on 15 December

1959). I also verified the information concerning people who were believed to have been killed during the Poznań 1956 protests but did not feature in any official lists of the fatalities. In most cases, they were not soldiers. It turned out that most of them died as a result of events (often fortuitous) outside of Poznań, unrelated to the Poznań protests. I have examined 88 deaths. In the end I came to the conclusion that 58 people died in relation to the Poznan 1956 protests. Exhumations and surveys were also carried out in Leszków near Piła (in the war cemetery of Soviet and Polish soldiers from 1945) and in the forest in Biedrusko. They did not confirm the hypotheses – formed, among other things, on the basis of witness testimony – about the graves of unknown victims of June 1956 being there, especially of graves of soldiers who refused to shoot at the demonstrators. I have also finished examining the rumors of repressions against soldiers who refused to obey the orders to suppress the protests, or even directly acted on the side of the demonstrators. It turned out that no soldier was punished by a court decision for such behavior.

■ **Has it been explained how Romek Strzałkowski – a symbolic victim of Poznań 1956 protests – died?**

I have verified about a dozen versions of his death. He was probably shot to death about 15:00 in the garage premises of the secret political police, specifically, in the building they



Photography: AIPN

POZNAŃ 1956 PROTESTS

## THE TRIALS YEARS LATER

In the beginning, the investigators prepared 51 trials in which 135 people were to be accused. In the end there were three court hearings for those whose fault seemed unquestionable and easy to prove. Those hearings were colloquially called the trials “of three”, “nine”, and “ten”. The following people were defendants in the “trial of nine”: Zenon Urbaneck, Józef Pocztowy, Stanisław Jaworek, Ludwik Wierzbicki, Łukasz Piotrowski, Stanisław Kaufmann, Leon Olejniczak, Janusz Biegański, and Jan Suwart. The first four men in the list were accused of having made, “together with other, unidentified perpetrators, a violent attack on functionaries of the secret political police, in the building of the Office of Public Security”. The remaining three men were accused of complicity in a “violent attack on functionaries of the secret political police”, by providing weapons and ammunition. The indictment also included the case of the killing of Roman Strzałkowski and two other boys, although the material collected during the investigation did not allow for the formulation of charges against the accused.



called a **dispatch office** or in its near vicinity. It cannot, however, be unequivocally stated if he died because of an intentional shot or by accident. The key to the solution of this gloomy puzzle is the character of the already deceased Teresa S., who is named Teofila Kowal in literature on the subject. She probably knew how Romek died but, for some reason, never revealed the truth. The results of an examination of the shirt Strzałkowski was wearing when he was shot clearly show that the perpetrator, while shooting, must have been standing lower and to the right of the boy (judging from the direction of the shot), which allows us to exclude the official version, pushed, among other parties, by the prosecution in the "trial of nine", which was that Strzałkowski was shot by the demonstrators who were shooting at the area around Kochanowskiego Street from the building of the Social Insurance Institution.

■ **Each victim means an individual tragedy, for that person and for his or her relatives. Is there any family story which distinguishes itself from other stories?**

There was a very dramatic story of three brothers, one of whom was a prisoner freed by the demonstrators, the second one participated in the fights, and the third one, serving in the basic military service, was among those who were suppressing the rebellion. 26-year-old Zdzisław B. was freed by the demonstrators who entered the prison on Młyńska Street and opened its gates. After a short stay at home he went to the city where, as he told his mother, "a revolution was happening". Most likely he joined the demonstrators. He died on the same day – he was shot in unknown circumstances. The authorities were in such a hurry to remove his body that he was initially buried without identification, as an unidentified person.



► Roman Strzałkowski, the youngest victim of Poznań 1956 protests

Only after two weeks and an exhumation it was determined that he was Zdzisław B. When he was leaving the prison, his younger brother Henryk, having left work, went, out of curiosity, to the vicinity of the building of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security. When he arrived there, the shooting had started. He joined the people who were shooting at the building and handed ammunition to them. He managed to avoid being arrested and returned home unharmed. The third brother, Ryszard, had a very different role in the protests. The unit in which he served was sent to suppress the rebellion. Ryszard B. was a gun crew commander in one of the tanks. Like his brother Henryk, he did not suffer any injuries in the fights.

■ **The participants of the Poznan 1956 protests entered the premises of the Poznań International Fair. Do we know, then, anything about foreigners during Poznań June?** In the investigation I have explained the case of an "injured Israeli man" de-

scribed in the publications of the "Głos Wielkopolski" newspaper. It was found that the person who was entered in the main book of the Raszei hospital in Poznań as a foreigner and who was later, in a letter from the hospital to the Voivodeship Office of Public Security, called an "Israeli man" was a Polish citizen, Zdzisław C., whose identity was only determined in the hospital on Przybyszewskiego Street where he was moved on the same day. The mistake was possible because he did not have any documents with him and had sustained a serious head injury after which he spoke incoherent words in foreign languages. After long treatment and rehabilitation he was able to successfully continue academic work at one of Poznan's tertiary-level educational institutions. He died in 1992. So far we only know of one case of a foreigner who was shot during the Poznan 1956 protests – Witan N., a Bulgarian citizen who lived permanently in Poland at that time.





Photography: AIPN



Photography: AIPN

► Traces of fights on the building of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security.

■ **Do we know the surnames of the functionaries of the secret political police who, on 28 June 1956 were in the building on Kochanowskiego Street and were in a position from which they were able to shoot at the protesting workers?**

I am still trying to find out who all of them were, that is the functionaries and

civil employees of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security, the Poviats Office of Public Security in Poznań, and the 6<sup>th</sup> Branch of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security in Poznań, as of 28 June 1956. It was very surprising to find out that, officially, about 700 people had full employment in those institutions at the time! Also, at least 186 functionaries of the secret political police, of various ranks, were delegated to Poznań in the days after the protests. Their task was to assist the functionaries from Poznań in tracing, arresting, and interrogating the participants of the protests.

■ **What difficulties have surfaced during the sixteen years of the investigation?**

It has been made more difficult by, among other things, intentional misleading of the prosecutor of the Institute of National Remembrance and by the false testimonies of the former functionaries of the apparatus of repressions. One of the functionaries of the secret political police at that time, Konstanty A., consistently denied having fought against demonstrators in the building of the secret political police on Kochanowskiego Street. He was convicted by a judgment which has the force of res judicata (he was sentenced to a fine for giving false evidence and for concealment of the truth). So far, about 1400 witnesses have been examined. It also takes a lot of time to analyze and process the archival documents. In order to illustrate the scope of the work which has been done it ought to be said that, so far, evidence has been examined from over 200 volumes of the personal files of former functionaries of the communist state and over 220 volumes of other archival materials from, for example, the preparatory proceedings against the demonstrators in 1956. There are now about 156 prosecution files with 51 integral appendices, in the form of not only other important archival documents but also recordings and videos on VHS, CD, and DVD. As well as the investigation of the Poznań

1956 protests I also conduct other investigations, of which I have completed 123.

■ **Was it possible to convict any of the perpetrators after so many years?**

After 60 years it is very difficult to determine and prove who caused any particular victims' deaths. The situation is similar as regards the perpetrators of the injuries of over 239 injured civilians. So far I have filed a charge against Marian S., an ex-functionary of the Citizens' Militia, who, from 30 June to 4 July 1956, as a functionary of the District Headquarters of the Citizens' Militia Poznań-Jeżyce, physically and morally abused Marian K., then 21 years old, a football player from Poznań. He was detained in relation to his participation in the Poznań 1956 protests. The officer wanted to force him to admit to having committed the crimes he was accused of and, together with other, unidentified functionaries of the Citizens' Militia, beat him by hand and with the use of a club on the whole body, and, with a gun, on the head. Marian S. was indicted and, in the end, convicted by a judgment which has the force of res judicata, to 1.5 years in prison, conditionally suspended for 2 years. The results of the investigation show that the severe abuse of the detained people was a common practice. It took place not only at Citizens' Militia stations, where the functionaries, helpless with regards to the demonstrators while on the streets, could act out their frustration by tormenting the detained, but also in the Voivodeship Office of Public Security on Kochanowskiego Street. During the investigation we have collected evidence concerning nearly one hundred such events. However, only in one case have we managed to collect sufficient evidence to ultimately settle the matter in court. I did identify other perpetrators of such crimes but, unfortunately, they have died. Still, the issue of responsibility for the abuse of the detained is open. •



# HE KNEW...

## Fragments of Maj. Feliks Dwojak's Account

Lukasz Jastrzab



**FELIKS DWOJAK** (1924–2013) was a functionary of the secret political police, later of the Ministry of Interior and Administration; in the ministry in 1945–1990; he ended his service with the rank of colonel. In June 1956 he was the head of the Office of Public Security in Poznań (as a Major) and the commander of the defense of the building.

In June 1956, Maj. Feliks Dwojak and Col. Józef Lipiński, the commander of 10<sup>th</sup> Greater Poland Regiment of the Internal Security Corps, as the only ones in Poznań predicted that there might be a strike.

Col. Lipiński was the first person to inform the authorities, at 06:00, about the beginning of the strike. Both had been trying, unsuccessfully, to force their superiors to make decisions which might prevent the effects of the escalating workers' rebellion. In 1981 Feliks

Dwojak wrote a memoir titled *Mój czerwiec 1956 r.* (English: *My June 1956*) which was published in 150 copies and classified as 'confidential'. The publication is one of the few credible accounts of the Poznań 1956 protests given by a representative of the government side. In the text the author did not try to whitewash his own conduct in 1956 and his description of the course of events reflects our current state of knowledge.

The memoirs of Maj. Feliks Dwojak show that the Office of Public Se-

curity in Poznań had known for a long time about the disquieting situation in Poznań workplaces. Even the planned date of the demonstration, 28 June, was known. The first meeting of the city authorities concerning the threat of a strike in Poznań took place on 27 June 1956, at 13:00, in the building of the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polish abbreviation: KW PZPR). During the meeting the First Secretary of KW PZPR, Leon Stasiak, and the Head of the Presidium of the National Council in Poznań, Józef Pieprzyk, reported on their visit and conversations in the Railway Rolling Stock Repair Company (Polish: Zakłady Naprawcze Taboru Kolejowego). It was "alarming, simply surprising to the executive power, [...] it was emphasized that there might be a mass strike on 28 June in Poznań. That conviction was confirmed by the members of the executive power and by the department heads present at the meeting".

It is interesting to read Feliks Dwojak's accusations against the author-



► Tanks in front of the main railway station, 29 June 1956.

ities of that time, such as Edmund Pszczółkowski and Jan Ptasiński from the Committee for Public Security or the leadership of KW PZPR, of their passivity in the face of the unfolding situation in Poznań. In July, 1956 Feliks Dwojak passed his critical remarks to Edward Gierek who came to Poznań to a meeting of the party-government committee formed to investigate the circumstances of the Poznań 1956 protests. Dwojak's position was then supported only by the Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Citizens' Militia, Col. Teodor Duda.

Around 22:00, on 27 June 1956, Maj. Feliks Dwojak received a phone call from the Vice Chairman of the Committee for Public Security, Jan Ptasiński, who asked about the situation in Poznań. Ptasiński considered Maj. Dwojak's opinion

to be "exaggerated because, in his eyes, the situation in Poznań was good and there should not be a strike on 28 June". Later, Feliks Dwojak wrote that "even after 25 years he believed his antipathy toward Jan Ptasiński to be justified." At 06:00 on 28 June 1956, the members of the strict leadership of the Committee for Public Security: Edmund Pszczółkowski, Jan Ptasiński, and Antoni Alster flew to Moscow to a meeting of the National Committee for State Security of the USSR.

Late on 27 June 1956, Maj. Feliks Dwojak met with the First Secretary of the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in Poznań, Leon Stasiak, and with the Minister of the Machine Industry, Roman Fideliski who opined that "the Joseph Stalin Metal Works in Poznań would not go on strike on 28 June". On 28 June, Maj. Dwojak came to the building of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security



Photography: AIPN

► Demonstrators on Stalin's Square

at 07:00 but in his report he did not mention the briefing which supposedly had taken place early that morning, attended by the Chief of Staff of the 10<sup>th</sup> Greater Poland Regiment of the Internal Security Corps, Maj. Kazimierz Pocięgiel. During the briefing "a conviction was expressed that the workers' protests would not be that strong and [...] the whole course of events [...] would be restricted to a rally at which their demands would be publicly discussed. No decisions were made or guidance given with regard to the intervention of the army or to preventive measures". Alarming reports about the situation in the city flowed into the Voivodeship Office of Public Security all morning. Dwojak tried, unsuccessfully, to contact the highest, central authorities, including the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party by phone. He only managed to keep the phone connection open with

the Vice President of the Committee for Public Security, Witold Sienkiewicz. Between 08:00 and 08:30 about 80 functionaries were sent to the city to observe and photograph the demonstrators. A few groups of operational employees were also sent to 'protect' important facilities (power station, gasworks, water supply lines). By 10:00 Maj. Dwojak had asked the voivodeship Commander of the Citizens' Militia, Lt. Col. Tadeusz Pietrzak, to send officers to Kochanowskiego Street to block access to the building. About 09:30 the head of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security also asked the Commander of the Officers' Armored and Mechanized Infantry School, Col. Antoni Filipowicz, to send tanks. Filipowicz, however, not having received any orders, only contacted his supervisors. Feliks Dwojak claimed that Col. Filipowicz contacted the Chief of the General Staff and Vice Minister of National De- ►



fense, Lt. Gen. Jerzy Bordziłowski but, according to Col. Filipowicz, he was only able to contact Div. Gen. Kazimierz Witaszewski, the head of the Main Political Management Board of the Polish Armed Forces, who forbid the use of the army until an order was given by the Minister of National Defense. Tanks were only sent after 11:00 (the Chief of the General Staff, Vice Minister of National Defense, Lt. Gen. Jerzy Bordziłowski, only gave consent to the use of weapons to the third batch of the armed forces from the Officers' Armored and Mechanized Infantry School).

Before 10:00 a command came from Warsaw to prepare the building of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security for defense although all events in Poznań were, at that time, taking place far from the building. Some functionaries of the secret political police gave in to the pressure and "left the building of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security in Poznań without leave". According to Maj. Feliks Dwojak, "the building was surveyed and the necessary security measures were undertaken; all external doors were barricaded". Once more, a list of all functionaries was made, together

with a plan for distributing them on the four floors of the building." Also, commanders-inspectors were selected for each floor and weapons with live ammunition were given to the functionaries. It is not known exactly how many people there were in the building. Dwojak mentioned that he sent 80 employees to the city in the morning for operational reconnaissance, some functionaries left the building without permission, while others did not return to it (intentionally or because it was no longer possible). An economic platoon of the Internal Security Corps, consisting of 19 people, was also sent to help. In total, about 60–80 people may have participated in the defense. Some families of the functionaries also took shelter inside. It has not been determined who started the shooting, yet, there are many indications that the first shots were fired by the demonstrators who had had weapons since the morning. The situation was so tense that regardless of which side fired the first shots, the outbreak was inevitable.

The initially peaceful strike, motivated mainly by economic reasons, transformed into armed riots. They were pacified by the 10<sup>th</sup> Armored Di-

vision "Sudecka", 19<sup>th</sup> Armored Division, Jan Kiliński 4<sup>th</sup> Armored Division "Pomorska", and 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division "Saska", all called to the city. There was no regular, organized attack on the building of the Office of Public Security. The fights were limited to an exchange of fire, shooting at the building from the roofs nearby, etc. It is also not true that there was any mass shooting of civilians, perpetrated by the functionaries of the secret political police. The statistics of the victims say that 5 people were killed in the vicinity of the buildings, 1 of whom was an armed civilian. There were 57 fatalities, on both sides, and definitely over 230 injured people (not more than 650). A decided majority of the people killed was shot away from the focal point of the protests (the building of the secret political police), mostly as a result of haphazard, uncontrolled shooting by civilians who had no experience with weapons. About 17:00 the building of the secret political police and a whole part of the district were cordoned off by the police which started to capture armed people. Single shots were fired toward the building until the morning of 29 June. There were 3 people killed and a few injured ones among the defenders.

► A unit of the the Citizens' Militia on Stalin's square. The functionaries of the Citizens' Militia were completely unprepared for suppressing the demonstration.



Maj Dwojak describes later events as follows:

"I was passing the incoming information and news about the situation in Poznań on an ongoing basis, to comrade" Stasiak [the First Secretary of the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in Poznań] and to the Committee for Public Security. They were received by comrade [Zbigniew] Paszkowski (secretary) or comrade [Michał] Drzewiecki (then probably the Head of the Office of the Chairman of the Committee for Public Security), acting on his behalf. I ended my reports with the question: 'when will the leadership of the party finally make a decision, when will the Prime Minister come to Poznań? because, after all, I knew that the Politburo was debating and that the fate of Poznań was being decided. I was conscious of that. I was chagrined by the situation. I did not know what to do. In one of the conversations, after my report, I heard that that there was a decision of the leadership of the party and of government, that the Office should be prepared for defense. That decision was surprising because all the events in Poznań were still taking place relatively far from the Voivodeship Office of Public Security. We were not in danger yet, after all.

Much earlier, when it was completely peaceful around the Office, we contacted the Poznań Aviation Unit [there was the 62<sup>nd</sup> Training Regiment in Krzesiny in 1956 – Ł.J.], asking them to organize a series of flights of army jets over the city. It was very sunny and warm. The aircraft flew over the city many times, for a long period of time, over the groups of workers and near the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. Unfortunately, that particular and, as it seemed, attractive maneuver turned

out to be unsuccessful. People did raise their heads for a moment but then they quickly turned their attention to the events on the square again.

KW PZPR in Poznań did not do much to prevent the conflict, before the tragic crisis. There were intelligent, well-educated people in the leadership of the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party but something nevertheless oppressed them, or even paralyzed them, it seems. This was also the case on 28 June. No effective steps were taken at that time. The secretaries, the heads of the departments of the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party did nothing to change the course of events. They just left the building. Later, legends were created about the mobilization of the party members, the defense of that building, the speeches made.

After some time I found out that on that day, 29 June, before coming to the Office, the Prime Minister with Gen. Popławski and Gen. Strażewski, and other people, walked the streets of Poznań and, near the Poznań opera building, shots were fired in their direction. One bullet reached Gen. Strażewski's leg. Gen. Strażewski was the Commander of the Military Circuit in Wrocław.

About 06:00 comrade Głowacki came to the Office with fresh bread. he brought the bread in a tank."

Feliks Dwojak's description of the decision-making process with regard to the use of weapons is very interesting: "I telephoned Warsaw. Comrade Paszkowski and comrade Drzewiecki quite easily gave their consent for warning shots and for shooting at shooters. I informed comrade Stasiak who also agreed. I telephoned (or maybe it was he who telephoned) the Of-

fice, comrade Pieprzyk, the Chairman of the Voivodeship National Council in Poznań, and talked with comrade Gierek, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, who was then in the seat of the Voivodeship National Council [...]. Comrade Gierek said that he had heard the shots and agreed to the use of arms. I contacted comrade Sienkiewicz, then participating in a meeting of the Political Office of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, and also obtained his consent. I telephoned the Attorney General of the Polish People's Republic, comrade Marian Rybicki and obtained his consent for warning shots and for shooting at shooters, I reported the decision to comrade Dmowski [the Vice Head of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security in Poznań], in the presence of comrade Wendrowski and comrade Żmijewski. [...] Shots were fired and, as I found out, comrade Graja was shot and died soon after that. Near the main entrance to the Office there stood, with a group of functionaries, comrade Dmowski. Judging the situation to be critical, he made the decision to fire warning shots."

Maj. Feliks Dwojak's account shows not only the immense chaos at all levels of decision-making but also the panic of the leadership of the Voivodeship Office of Public Security in Poznań. As regards Dwojak's psychological state, Jan Ptasieński wrote, after the protests, that "worried about the development of the situation, he reacted nervously to every phone call". On July 18, 1956 Feliks Dwojak was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel. •

**Łukasz Jastrząb**, PhD a historian. He does research on the Poznań 1956 protests, is an author of several books (also about the victims of Poznań June) and dozens of scientific and popularizing articles.

A complete text of the memoir was published in 2006 (Łukasz Jastrząb, *Poznański czerwiec w relacji pplk. Feliksa Dwojaka* (English: *The Poznań 1956 Protests. Lt. Col. Feliks Dwojak's Account*), "Przegląd Historyczno-Wojskowy" 2006, no. 4(214), pp. 134–162]; the account is also available on the website of the Institute of National Remembrance ([www.czerwiec56.ipn.gov.pl/c56/czytelnia/publikacje-pdf/9193,Poznan-ski-Czerwiec-1956-roku-w-relacji-pplk-Feliksa-Dwojaka.html](http://www.czerwiec56.ipn.gov.pl/c56/czytelnia/publikacje-pdf/9193,Poznan-ski-Czerwiec-1956-roku-w-relacji-pplk-Feliksa-Dwojaka.html)).



# BEYOND THE POZNAŃ 1956 PROTESTS

## – Social Protests in the Communist Bloc in 1953–1956

Krzysztof Brzechczyn

**A**fter world War II, communism was imposed on the whole of East-Central Europe. In Albania and Yugoslavia, communists gained power independently. In Bul-

garia, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland, Romania, and Hungary communism was brought by the Red Army marching towards Berlin. Communist systems began to transform

very fast. In the Soviet Union such changes began after Bolsheviks took over power in 1917. Totalitarian communism, built in particular countries of the bloc, led to the elimination of

POZNAŃ  
1956  
PROTESTS



political pluralism and of parliamentary democracy. The communist single party ruled with the use of mass terror and threats made by the omnipotent apparatus of the Security Service. As regards economy, private property was abolished, agriculture was collectivized, and intense industrialization significantly worsened the standard of living. As regards culture, Stalin's cult was imposed, Marxist ideology dominated, and Christian churches as well as other world views were combated.

► Demonstrators fighting Soviet tanks on the streets of Berlin, on 17 June 1953

### Transformations of the system

After the enslavement of society, the spiral of terror reached the upper echelons of party functionaries, accused by the apparatus of the Security Service either of "nationalism" or of conspiring with the "chain dog of imperialism", Josip Broz Tito. The first victim of the purges within the party was the ►

Photography: PAP/DPA



POZNAN  
1956  
PROTESTS



► Tanks on the streets of Berlin in June, 1953

Hungarian Minister of Interior and Administration **Laszko Rajk** who, in September 1949, was sentenced to death, together with three other functionaries. In December 1949, Traicho Kostov was sentenced to death and executed in Bulgaria. In November, 1952 **Rudolf Slánský** was sentenced to death in Czechoslovakia (ten death sentences were passed in that trial). In April 1954, in Romania, the Minister of Justice Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu's death sentence was carried out. In Poland, in the period 1951–1954 Władysław Gomułka was in prison, but the authorities did not manage to bring any action against him in a court of law. In the German Democratic Republic a member of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, Paul Merker, was sentenced to eight years in prison, in March 1955.

The transformations of communist systems happened both top-down and from the bottom up. The basis for grassroots anti-totalitarian movements was the slowly progressing reconstruction of the ties of



Photography: PAP

social solidarity. It led to open social rebellions, during which citizens demanded better living conditions and a democratization of political life. The top-down de-Stalinization, which was in line with the long-term interests of the party apparatus after the purges, boiled down to a condemnation of the cult of personality, an amnesty for political prisoners, a reorganization of the apparatus of the security service, and an introduction of reforms meant to protect against the “errors and deviations” of communism without, however, getting to the roots of the system.

The process of the reconstruction of the autonomous social relations had begun even before Stalin's death, in the Soviet labor camps. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn noticed that the first stage of that process was marked by the fact that bread was no longer stolen by prisoners from other prisoners. A subsequent stage was the physical elimination of informants, which increased prisoners' mutual trust and allowed them to organize protest actions. One of the first such actions was Retiunin's rebellion in January 1942. The prisoners escaped from the camp and began partisan actions. In July 1950, prisoners from camps located near Salekhard (a few hundred kilometers from Vorkuta), disarmed the guards and freed prisoners from other camps. Solzhenitsyn also mentions prisoner rebellions in the camps in Ekibastuz (January 1952), near Vorkuta (May–June 1953) and Kenggir (May–June 1954). Those rebellions ended in military pacifications, with rebellious prisoners transferred to other camps. In this way, however, the wave of rebellions spread over the whole Gulag.

The processes of top-down de-Stalinization were only initiated by Stalin's death on 5 March 1953. They culminated in the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, during which Nikita Khrushchev gave, on 25 February 1956, a secret speech denouncing the cult of personality. The speech, which was meant to be kept secret, was read at party meetings. In some countries of the bloc (for example, in Poland) it was openly copied and distributed.

In 1956 the political situation was still stable only in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and the German Democrat-



Photography: PAP



## Anti-totalitarian protests in the communist bloc

The processes of top-down de-Stalinization sped up and augmented the growth of grassroots anti-totalitarian movements. The Poznan 1956 protests were a local link in the chain of protests against the totalitarian rule. Below I outline the history of those protests.



**CZECHOSLOVAKIA.** After the decision about the unfavorable exchange of money and a price raise had been announced, 20,000 workers of Škoda and other workplaces took to the streets in Pilzno on 1 June 1953, demanding that the unpopular decisions be withdrawn and a free election be held. The demonstration was put down by force but already, at the beginning of June, 360,000 people from tens of workplaces were on strike. In a few cities there were mass demonstrations. About 200 people were injured in the brutally suppressed demonstrations. 2,000 were arrested.



**THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.** In the second half of May 1953, the party-government leadership decided to raise the production norms and prices. This led to a mass demonstration on 16 June, in East Berlin, of 40,000 people. A well as economic postulates, demands for a free election were made. On 17 June strikes broke out in 600 workplaces in about 250 locations. They were put down with the help of divisions of the Soviet Armed Forces. According to different estimates, the number of fatalities in those fights was a few hundred. A few thousand participants were repressed.



**POLAND.** On 24 October 1956, during a mass meeting on Defilad Square in Warsaw, Gomułka condemned the wrong policies of the Polish United Workers' Party and made an appeal for peace and return to work. Meetings were organized in the whole country, during which the policies of the party were criticized and support was expressed for Hungary. On 18 November the devices for jamming Western radio stations were destroyed in Bydgoszcz. On 10 December there was a demonstration in front of the Soviet consulate in Szczecin.



**HUNGARY.** In summer and fall the situation in Poland had a significant impact on the political moods of the Hungarian society. On 22 October 1956, during a mass meeting organized in Budapest, students from that city demanded, in a 16-point resolution, a free election, and a withdrawal of the Soviet Armed Forces from Hungary. The next day there was a demonstration of solidarity with Poland, at the foot of the monument of Gen. Józef Bem, attended by many thousands of people. Imre Nagy regained power. At the same time, Hungarian authorities introduced a state of emergency and asked the Soviet Armed Forces for intervention, which led to armed riots. Meanwhile, workers' councils and committees took over power in workplaces. In this situation Prime Minister Nagy demanded that foreign armies withdraw from the country. As his demand was only partially realized, on 1 November Nagy declared the neutrality of Hungary and formed a new, multi-party government. The Soviet army re-entered Budapest. From the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> of November they pacified the armed resistance. From the beginning of November the civil resistance against Kadar's government and the occupant's army was directed by the Central Workers' Council in Budapest. On 10 December the Council was delgalized and its leaders were arrested. Then, a general strike was proclaimed. It ended on 7 January 1957, after a decree of the death penalty for refusing to work was introduced. It is estimated that 2,500 people were killed in the Hungarian uprising and 200,000 emigrated.



**ROMANIA.** Under the influence of the events in Hungary on 30 October 1956, over 2000 people gathered in a meeting with representatives of the authorities in Timișoara and demanded improvements in the standard of living, a removal of the Russian language and of Marxism from the program of studies, and a withdrawal of the Soviet Armed Forces. In November and December similar meetings, rallies, and student demonstrations took place in Cluj, Iași, and Bucharest. A few thousand students were arrested and expelled.

ic Republic. In those countries, the de-Stalinization processes were limited in scope. Generally speaking, 1956 was a resultant of the processes of top-down de-Stalinization and of grassroots anti-totalitarian protests which enforced the radicalization of reforms. That duality was the most visible in Poland. In October 1956, Gomułka agreed, in principle, to the existence of private farming and made many concessions to the Catholic church (Primate Wyszyński was freed, the "Tygodnik Powszechny" journal was published again, Catholic Intelligentsia Clubs were created, etc.). However, after the social situation had stabilized, party leadership began to restore their own order and regain the influence lost outside of the party. The process of putting things back in order in the Polish United Workers' Party manifested itself, among other things, by the closure of the "Po prostu" journal and by the restrictions imposed on revisionist intellectuals (for example, Leszek Kołakowski) who demanded deeper reforms than those allowed by the interest of the party apparatus. Another symptom of the authorities tightening the screws on society was their fight against the Catholic church and efforts made to limit its influence on social life. Nevertheless, in the history of the states comprising the Eastern Bloc, 1956 was a year of turning away, for good, from the Stalinist phase of the development of a communist system. •

**Prof. Krzysztof Brzechczyn** is an employee of the Office of Public Education of the Institute of National Remembrance Branch in Poznań, and of the Institute of Philosophy of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. He does research on the philosophy of history, the theory of totalitarianism, and the history of the political thought of the opposition in the period of the Polish People's Republic.





# HISTORY SEEN FROM

POZNAN  
1956  
PROTESTS

**Agnieszka Kołodziejska**

**“By tram through modern history” is a project within the framework of which, since June 2012, the Office of Public Education of the Institute of National Remembrance Branch in Poznań has been conducting unusual history lessons devoted to the Poznan 1956 protests.**

**T**hese are field lessons taught in the space related to that historical event. Their level is adapted to the needs and abilities of the young in various age groups. During the lessons we also work with archival sources and visit the archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Poznań as well as other places commemorating various events from the modern history of Poland.

Thanks to cooperation with Miejskie Przedsiębiorstwo Komunikacyjne (abbreviated to MPK, English: City Transport Company) in Poznań, during each field lesson we have at our disposal an old tram N+ND no. 602+456 and a tram driver. Trams of that type traveled streets in Poznań 60 years ago but this specimen has been renewed for the needs of contemporary transportation and modified to ensure security. It is the only working vehicle from that period in the possession of MPK. Apart from our project, it is also used on the “0” tourist line open in summer.

We usually start in the morning, from Dębiecka station, and go to the city center, on the way viewing the buildings of the Cegielski factory where the workers’ strike began in 1956, as well as tables commemorating the protests which happened after a period of silence enforced by the authorities of the Polish People’s Republic. The tables were put up and organi-

zed thanks to Solidarity after 1980. Going along the street which used to be Feliks Dzierżyński’s Street (currently 28 czerwca 1956 Street), we teach the youth the basic facts of the post-war history of the city and give them information about its post-war demographics. We also tell them about the specificity of the work ethos of Greater Poland and about the ideas of independence, cherished, among other people, by entrepreneur and patriot Hipolit Cegielski. The factory in the Dębiec district in Poznań bore Cegielski’s name for many years. During World War II the Germans renamed the factory to Deutsche Waffen und Munitionsfabriken. In 1949 communists changed the name again, to the Joseph Stalin Metal Works in Poznań. We remind students that the workers, nevertheless, always identified with the first name. Having left the Dębiec and Wilda districts, we go near the monument of the insurgents from the Greater Poland Uprising.



Photography: AIPN

# A TRAM

From there, we move toward the Poznań International Fair. In 1956 the fairs were organized for the 35th time. Exhibitors and journalists from behind the 'iron curtain' immediately informed people from Western Europe about what was happening in Poznań.

Through the streets of the Jeżyce district we reach Kochanowskiego Street where, in the 1950s, there was the Voivodeship Office of Public Security which was the most hated institution of the communist state. On 29 June 1956, it was on that street that the demonstrators threw the devices for jamming Western radio stations off the roof. Also, the most dramatic events of "Black Thursday" took place there: the beginning of the shooting by functionaries of the secret political police, and the injuring or killing of many people, including thirteen-year-old Romek Strzałkowski. Next, we go to Fredry Street and, from there, to Mickiewicza Square which used to be Stalin's Square, at the crossroads of

the Red Army and Stalingrad Streets (today Św. Marcin Street and Niepodległości Alley).

Near the monument to the Poznań 1956 protests we talk about its creation and meaning. It is the most important symbol of the events from 60 years ago but also of later ones, reminded by the big dates on the monument: 1968, 1970, 1976, 1980, and 1981. We also commemorate the victims of the Poznań 1956 protests by lighting a votive candle and with a moment of silence.

The last point of those lessons is a visit to the Muzeum Powstania Poznańskiego Czerwca 1956 (English: the Poznań 1956 Protests Museum), located near the monument. The museum is a branch of Wielkopolskie

Muzeum Niepodległości w Poznaniu (English: The Independence Museum of Greater Poland in Poznań). It was opened in autumn and, since then, has been attracting tourists to whom it presents historical facts, documents, photographs, and witness accounts, in modern forms. The museum space is systematically enriched and modified. After the curator's introduction, students independently view the exhibition and fill in work sheets prepared for them. These work sheets may then become the basis for conversations with teachers after the field lesson has finished or when the material is being revised before tests.

During the field lesson the youth learn about the history of Poznań from the city itself, looking at the buildings, monuments and tables. The tale of the Poznań 1956 protests and the accounts of the Greater Poland Uprising, often relatively unknown to students, sometimes become an impulse for independent searches in family histories which are, after all, usually linked to the history of Poznań and Greater Poland. •

**Agnieszka Kołodziejska** – is a philologist, an organizer of educational activity in the Poznań office of the Institute of National Remembrance, an author of scientific and popularizing texts about literature and history, and a co-author of an album titled *Zranione miasto* (English: *Hurt City*). Poznań in June, 1956 (2004).

So far there have been over 40 "By Tram through Modern History" field lessons. 20 are planned for 2016. A new cycle will start in spring, 2017.

Contact: Agnieszka Kołodziejska, OBEP IPN Poznań  
agnieszka.kolodziejska@ipn.gov.pl, tel. 61 835 69 53



# THE EVENTS PROGRAM OF ANNIVERSARY EDUCATION OF

The actions planned by the Office of Public Education of the Institute of National Remembrance Branch in Poznań, in relation to the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Poznan 1956 protests

## SATURDAY, 21 MAY 2016

- Noc Muzeów w Poznaniu – “Poznański Czerwiec 1956” (English: Long Night of Museums – “The Poznan 1956 protests”, in the seat of the Institute of National Remembrance in Poznań):
- the “Wolności! Chleba! Poznański Czerwiec 1956 w fotografii” (English: “Freedom! Bread! The Poznan 1956 protests in photography”) exhibition
  - an exhibition about the participation of Stanisława Sobańska, Helena Przybyłek, and Maria Kapturska (frequently called the tram drivers) in the Poznań 1956 protests
  - the “W obronie pamięci. Pomnik Poznańskiego Czerwca 1956” (English: “Defending Remembrance. The Monument to the Poznan 1956 Protests) exhibition
  - meetings with witnesses of history, the participants of the uprising
  - a screening of documentary movies about the Poznan 1956 protests
  - a jigsaw puzzle and a memory game about the Poznan 1956 protests, for children and adults
  - a quiz on the knowledge of the Poznań 1956 protests (awards: T-shirts with a print related to the event)
  - visiting the archives of the Institute of National Remembrance
  - a stand with publications of the Institute of National Remembrance

A ride to the office of the Institute of National Remembrance by ‘ogórek’ (old bus), from the Poznań 1956 Protests Museum (CK Zamek, on the side of al. Niepodległości), 17:00, 18:00, 19:00, 20:00, and 21:30, 22:30, 23:30, free tickets in CIM, ul. Ratajczaka 44, from May 13, 2016.

## WEDNESDAY, 15 JUNE 2016

A screening of *Paradoks o konduktorze* (English: *A Paradox about a Tram Driver*), director: Michał Dudzewicz. The screening will be preceded by a lecture on the Poznań 1956 protests on the occasion of the 60th anniversary, given by Elżbieta Wojcieszek, PhD.

Venue: Zielona Góra, Centrum Edukcyjne IPN “Przystanek Historia” w Bibliotece Raczyńskich (English: The Educational Center of the Institute of National Remembrance “Historical Stop”), in Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna im. Cypriana Norwida (English: the Voivodeship Cyprian Norwid Public City Library), Sala Dębowa, al. Wojska Polskiego 9, 17:00.

## WEDNESDAY, 22 JUNE 2016

A screening of documentaries about the Poznan 1956 protests, entitled “Śladami Poznańskiego Czerwca '56” (English: “On the Tracks of Poznań 1956 Protests”). The movies will be shown before midday (for schools) and in the afternoon (for the remaining audience). Free entrance. Venue: Poznań, the Rialto cinema, ul. Dąbrowskiego 38

### 10:00 and 16:00

*W dzień targowy* (English: *On a Fair Day*), director: Robert Kaczmarek, Poland, 2006, 57 min.

In the movie, the history from 60 years ago is interwoven with contemporary times. The authors of the movie are looking for an answer to the question

regarding how the Poznan 1956 protests are remembered by Poles, from the social and national points of view, and how the history of our country is perceived by foreigners.

### 11:15 and 17:10

*Paradoks o konduktorze* (English: *A Paradox about a Tram Driver*), director: Michał J. Dudzewicz, Poland, 1997, 49 min.

The narrator of the movie is a well-known actor, Zdzisław Wardejn, who joined the protesters on the streets of Poznań when he was sixteen years old. In the movie, tracing his way from 1956, he relates, in detail, the course of the events he participated in. At the same time he is trying to recreate the tragic fate of Kazimierz Wiczorek who is the tram driver from the title of the movie. Wardejn tries to solve the mystery of Wiczorek's death, at the same time explaining how his fate was joined with Wiczorek's during those protests.

### 12:20 and 18:10

*Ostatnie powstanie* (English: *The Last Uprising*) director: Grzegorz Braun, Poland, 1995, 52 min.

The directors of the movie allow the audience to view the Poznań 1956 protests from two perspectives. The story is told by witnesses and participants from both sides of that conflict. We listen to those who were shot at and to those who defended the ‘gains of socialism’.

### 13:30 and 18:10

*Maestro*, director: Agata Ławniczak, Poland 2008, 47 min.



# CELEBRATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC THE INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL REMEMBRANCE BRANCH IN POZNAŃ

The movie tells the story of attorney at law Stanisław Hejnowski, one of the criminal defense attorneys during the so-called Poznań trials. "Maestro" was a cryptonym of the operational case of the secret political police concerning Hejnowski. The attorney paid a high price for his invincible attitude. The director of the movie tells Hejnowski's story, focusing not only on his professional life but also on how the actions of the authorities influenced his family life.

## THURSDAY, 23 JUNE 2016

City game "On the Tracks of the Poznań 1956 protests" for students of gymnasia and higher schools. Students will take part in a lesson devoted to the Poznań 1956 protests, with the use of archival materials, and will visit the archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, and then begin the competition. The game will officially end in the Centrum Edukacyjne IPN "Przystanek Historia" w Bibliotece Raczyńskich (English: The Educational Center of the Institute of National Remembrance "Historical Stop" in Raczyński Library). It will begin in the office of the Institute of National Remembrance in Poznań, ul. Rolna 45a, 09:00.

Applications will be accepted until 13 June to the email address: agnieszka.kolodziejska@ipn.gov.pl

## FRIDAY, 24 JUNE 2016

Panel discussion "Wydarzenia 1956 roku w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej.

Próba spojrzenia transnarodowego" (English: "The 1956 Events in East-Central Europe. An Attempt at a Transnational Perspective")

The aim of the panel is to compare the course of the 1956 events (revolutions, protests, and social demonstrations, top-down reforms, the liberalization of power, etc.) in selected communist societies of East-Central Europe and to define the influence of those events on the further evolution of the communist system. The planned comparative and transnational research approach will make it possible to answer the following questions:

- to what degree were the 1956 social changes an effect of the liberalization brought about by Stalin's death in 1953 and to what degree did they result from the hidden emancipatory processes (rebellions in the Gulag)?; Were political changes in particular countries of East-Central Europe caused by the autonomous development of those societies or rather by the liberalization which had begun in the Soviet Union by the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union?; if and, if yes, to what degree the social-political situation of countries in East-Central Europe had an impact on intellectual history:
- the revisionism and the reform of the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council, and the secularization of social life.

Panel program:

Konrad Białecki (the Faculty of Historical Studies of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań / the Institute of

National Remembrance), *Poznański Czerwiec 1956 w perspektywie transnarodowej* (English: *The Poznań 1956 Protests in the Transnational Perspective*)

Janos Tischler (Instytut Węgierski, English: Hungarian Institute), *Rok 1956 na Węgrzech*, (English: *1956 in Hungary*);

Juraj Marusiak (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava), *Rok 1956 w Czechach i Słowacji* (English: *1956 in the Czech Republic and Slovakia*);

Dragos Petrescu (Romanian Academy), *Echa roku 1956 w Rumunii* (English: *The Echoes of 1956 in Romania*);

Krzysztof Brzechczyn (the Institute of Philosophy of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań / the Institute of National Remembrance), *Rewizjonizm w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej – niechciane dziecko przemian politycznych 1956 roku* (English: *Revisionism in East-Central Europe – the Unwanted Child of 1956 Political Changes*).

Venue: Poznań, Centrum Edukacyjne IPN "Przystanek Historia" w Bibliotece Raczyńskich (English: The Educational Center of the Institute of National Remembrance "Historical Stop" in Raczyński Library), plac Wolności 19, 11:00-13:00.

## MONDAY, 27 JUNE 2016

The opening of the "1956: Polska – Węgry. Historia i pamięć" (English: "1956: Poland – Hungary. History and Remembrance" exhibition Ogród Zamkowy im. Katynia i Sybiru, 16:30.



