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**The Dialectics of Pain:¹
The Interrogation Methods of the Communist Secret Police in Poland,
1944-1955**

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Find the man and we shall find a paragraph for him.
A Stalinist saying

*Our task is not only to destroy you physically, but also to smash you morally before the eyes of the society.*²
Major Wiktor Herer, a superior officer at the Office of Public Security, to a prisoner, 1948

*The duty of the public security is to beat the enemy; the duty of the prosecutor is to guard revolutionary legality. Each of those organs has its own methods of work.*³
Józef Różański, Director of the Investigative Department of the Ministry of Public Security, Warsaw, December 1950

*I believe that Christ will be victorious! Poland will regain her independence and human dignity will be restored.*⁴
Lieutenant Colonel Łukasz Ciepliński, a Polish underground leader, shortly before his execution, December 1950.

Throughout the ages, torture has been applied to extract information needed for a utilitarian purpose. With a few exceptions,⁵ the objective has been to find out the truth. According to a 3rd century legal authority, Ulpian, “By *quaestio* [torture] we are to understand the torment and suffering of the body in order to elicit the truth.” Writing in the 13th century the judicial

¹ This paper was written for the 61st Annual Meeting of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America (PIASA) at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, June 6-7, 2003.

² Quoted in Czesław Leopold and Krzysztof Lechicki, *Więźniowie polityczni w Polsce, 1945-1956* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo „Młoda Polska,” 1981), 6.

³ Materiały konferencji prokuratorów wojewódzkich z udziałem przedstawicieli MBP, 19 December 1950, Archiwum Akt Nowych [afterward AAN], Prokuratura, file 1555, 5, quoted in Antoni Kura, “Represje aparatu bezpieczeństwa publicznego w latach 1944-1956,” *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 6 (June 2002): 29-33.

⁴ This is a letter smuggled out of a Communist jail and delivered to his wife in December 1950. A Polish underground soldier of the Home Army, Ciepliński fought the Nazis and Communists. He was captured by the Communist secret police, tortured, and shot on March 1, 1951. “Gryps Łukasza Cieplińskiego do żony i syna z grudnia 1950 r.,” quoted in Zbigniew Lazarowicz, “Mord na Mokotowie,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 3 March 2003.

⁵ For example, Henry VIII of England had the relatives and friends of his second wife, Anne Boleyn, tortured to establish her marital infidelity, including incest. It is debatable whether the alleged infidelities took place at all or the king was looking for a convenient excuse to get rid of his consort. If the latter was the case, then the Boleyn affair falls outside the category of the mainstream application of torture.

expert Azo explained that “Torture is the inquiry after truth by means of torment.” Four hundred years later, the lawyer Bocer defined the phenomenon in the following way: “Torture is interrogation by torment of the body, concerning a crime known to have occurred, legitimately ordered by a judge for the purpose of eliciting the truth about the said crime.”⁶

The practice reflected the theory into the modern times. For example, the Nazi Gestapo tortured captured members of the underground to force them to reveal the whereabouts of their confederates. Once the interrogation was over, if the victim survived, he or she was disposed of, that is, either sent to a concentration camp or shot. A few of them were even given a brief trial and sentenced based upon the evidence the Gestapo provided.⁷

In essence, the Nazi secret police torturers were interested in learning the truth from their victims.⁸ Not so the functionaries of the Communist terror apparatus. The Communist interrogators also tortured members of the underground or, more broadly, their political opponents. However, the reason for inflicting pain was two-fold: to extract true information and to force the prisoner to confess to false charges which the interrogators themselves knew were untrue. The objective of the latter endeavor was to break the spirit of the individual under interrogation and then to destroy his image in the eyes of the public.⁹ Nonetheless, just like in the case of the Nazi police, the ruthless reputation of the Communist secret police, justly earned by its frequent application of torture, served to terrorize not only the immediate victims (and intended victims) but also the population at large.

This paper investigates the process within which torture was used and abused throughout various stages of the interrogation.

⁶ All these legal authorities are quoted in Edward Peters, *Torture* (Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 1 [afterward *Torture*].

⁷ A Polish underground fighter imprisoned by the Nazis secretly sent out a letter from jail describing the torture one had to endure. It included pouring water into a prisoner’s nose, beating him on the soles of his feet, and thrusting needles under his fingernails. See AAN, Delegatura Rządu, file 202/II-63, 151-52. For further information on the torture by the Nazi secret police and its cooperation with the Nazi judiciary against the Polish underground see also Leon Teresiński, “O działalności Sądu Wojennego Rzeszy w okresie II wojny światowej,” *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce*, vol. 25 (1972): 189-198; Juliusz Pollack, *Wywiad, sabotaż, dywersja: Polski ruch oporu w Berlinie, 1939-1945* (Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1991), 93-95.

⁸ Torture of Nazi concentration camp inmates is a separate issue, usually not connected to any police interrogation but, rather, undertaken to satisfy the sadistic urges of the camp personnel or to punish an infraction.

⁹ This aspect of Communist terror is best depicted in a literary form by Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon* (New York, Macmillan, 1941). For a detailed historical analysis see Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Communist Torture in Contemporary Sources

The use of torture by the Communists was ubiquitous. The secret policemen of the Public Security Office (*Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego* – UBP, or, colloquially, UB) tortured cruelly even a few of their own comrades accused of ideological “deviation,” including in a secret prison in Miedzeszyn.¹⁰ However, torture was applied primarily against the independentist camp. This entity encompassed all covert and overt forces from the extreme left to far right enrolled in the anti-Communist underground and the political opposition, originating in the war-time Polish Underground State and its Home Army (*Armia Krajowa* – AK). The most notable among them were the Freedom and Independence Union (*Zrzeszenie Wolność i Niezawisłość* – WiN); the National Military Union (Narodowe Zjednoczenie Wojskowe – NZW); the National Party (Stronnictwo Narodowe – SN); the Christian Democratic Labor Party (*Stronnictwo Pracy* – SP) and, last but not least, the Polish Peasant Party (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe* – PSL). Because of its scope, terror also affected the population at large.¹¹

According to an underground newspaper of July 1945

It has been established that the NKVD and RB [sic UB] torture their prisoners terribly at the Chopin Street [police headquarters] in Lublin, at the Strzelecka Street [facility] in Warsaw, and in

¹⁰ For example, whereas erstwhile secret policeman Colonel Grzegorz Kilanowicz aka Korczyński was severely beaten, former military intelligence supervisor General Mendel Kossoj aka Waclaw Komar was “merely” deprived of sleep. Accused of “right-nationalist deviation” Korczyński withstood the torture. Suspected of “cosmopolitanism,” Komar promptly broke down. See Jerzy Morawski, “Spacer dla wrogów partii,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 18 July 2002; George H. Hodos, *Show Trials: Stalinist Purges in Eastern Europe, 1948-1954* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1987), 135-154.

¹¹ On the independentist insurgency see *Zrzeszenie “Wolność i Niezawisłość” w dokumentach*, 6 vols. (Wrocław: Zarząd Główny WiN, 1997-2001); Jerzy Ślaski, *Żołnierze wyklęci* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Rytm, 1996); Grzegorz Wąsowski and Leszek Żebrowski, eds., *Żołnierze wyklęci: Antykomunistyczne podziemie zbrojne po 1944 roku* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Volumen and Liga Republikańska, 1999); Kazimierz Krajewski and Tomasz Łabuszewski, *Białostocki Okręg AK-AKO: VII 1944-VIII 1945* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Volumen and Dom Wydawniczy Bellona, 1997). The standard published work on the WiN is Zygmunt Woźniczka, *Zrzeszenie “Wolność i Niezawisłość” 1945-1952* (Warszawa: Instytut Prasy i Wydawnictw “Novum” – “Semex”, 1992). However, it was partly plagiarized from Tomasz Honkisz, “Opór cywilny czy walka zbrojna? Dylematy polskiego podziemia politycznego, 1945-1952,” (Ph.D. thesis, Warszawa, Akademia Nauk Społecznych przy Komitecie Centralnym Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej, 1990). On the overt independentist political opposition see Marek Latyński, *Nie paść na kolana: Szkice o opozycji lat czterdziestych* (London: Polonia Book Fund Ltd., 1985); Romuald Turkowski, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe w obronie demokracji 1945-1949* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1992); Andrzej Paczkowski, *Stanisław Mikołajczyk: Klęska realisty (Zarys biografii politycznej)* (Warszawa: Agencja Omnipress, 1991); Mirosław Piotrowski, *Pro fide et patriae: Stronnictwo Pracy i duchowieństwo Kościoła katolickiego na Lubelszczyźnie po II wojnie światowej* (Lublin: Ośrodek Studiów Polonijnych i Społecznych PZKS w Lublinie, 2001).

Włochy. The most popular methods of extracting confessions include ripping off fingernails slowly, applying “temple screws” [i.e., clamps that crush the victim’s skull], and putting on “American handcuffs.” The last named method causes the skin on one’s hands to burst and the blood to flow from underneath one’s fingernails. The torture is applied passionlessly in a premeditated manner. Those who faint are revived with a morphine shot. Before the torture session some receive booster shots [*zastrzyki wzmacniające*]. The torturers strictly observe the opinion of the chief interrogating officer whether it is acceptable to allow the interrogated to die....

At the infamous Lublin Castle [prison], because of the injuries inflicted during interrogation, mortality among the political prisoners reaches 20 persons per week.¹²

In a dramatic plea for help, smuggled out of a jail in Radomsko in April 1946, an imprisoned insurgent of the Conspiratorial Polish Army (*Konspiracyjne Wojsko Polskie – KWP*) begged his superior, Jan Rogólka (“Grot”):

Lieutenant, Sir, yesterday, meaning on Thursday, they gave it to me again. This time I was not electrocuted but just whipped on my back and buttocks. Next, they beat me on the soles of my bare feet. They used an iron rod and a whip on my bare legs. They kicked me so much that I barely dragged myself back to the cell. They torment me as if I were an animal, but I have not broken down. I am surprised myself because yesterday I was so sick. Despite that I withstood everything. Once they found out that I was sick, they immediately took me to be interrogated in the morning. Mercy, SOS, because they will murder all of us. Almost all of us in the cell are investigated in the same affair and all of us are tortured the same way.... It is very cold here. Lieutenant, Sir, half of me is gone but I’ve been observing everything nonetheless. Our infamous tormentors are: Lieutenant Wieczorek, a dark-haired young man, who lives on Krakowska Street, and Mr. Kowalski. I’d like a [food] package, because we suffer hunger. Please tell them at home to send me one; otherwise I shall succumb to tuberculosis.¹³

Secret police terror was so fierce that by 1948 quite a few insurgents preferred to die in battle rather than allow themselves to be taken alive. Some even committed suicide or, upon request, dispatched their seriously

¹² “O czym nie piszą szmatławce,” *Polska i Świat*, no. 3, vol. 7 (1 July 1945), Hoover Institution Archives, Polish Subject Collection [afterward HIA, PSC], Box 61, Folder *Polska i Świat*.

¹³ See a secret communication (*gryps*) from “Tygrys,” quoted by Marek Dereń, “‘Warszyc’ i jego żołnierze,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 23 April 2002.

wounded comrades to spare them from being captured.¹⁴ The insurgents wanted to avoid torture and the almost inevitable break-down, leading to the denunciations of one's own confederates and civilian supporters. Under the circumstances, at least on one occasion the underground press praised the suicide of a disabled insurgent as "heroic."¹⁵ The weak and wounded were considered a liability. On January 1, 1947, an insurgent commander, Captain Władysław Łukasiuk ("Młot"), admonished one of his underlings that

under no circumstances are you allowed to have any wounded [insurgents].... You must be aware that today each wounded is considered 80% lost.... Whoever leaves the unit gets caught right away and is forced to denounce us [*każdy sypie*].... The civilian population is quite aversely predisposed [*zrażona*] to us because we have caused them grief since [captured insurgents who broke down under torture] 'Burza' and 'Mewa' drive around with [the UB and KBW] and denounce everyone [*sypią wszystko*].¹⁶

¹⁴ The following prominent insurgent commanders chose that kind of death: AK-Wilno Land Self-Defense (*Samoobrona Ziemi Wileńskiej* – SZW) Staff Sergeant Anatol Urbanowicz "Laluś" (suicide, May 27, 1945), WiN Major Marian Bernaciak "Orlik" (suicide, June 21, 1946), WiN Second Lieutenant Zbigniew Sochacki "Zbyszek" (suicide, July 3, 1946), WiN Sergeant Antoni Kopaczewski "Lew" (suicide, September 8, 1946), WiN Lieutenant Jan Woś "Farys" (suicide, November 16, 1946), WiN Second Lieutenant Wiktor Zacheusz Nowowiejski "Jeź" (suicide, December 6, 1946), NZW Staff Sergeant Józef Zadziński "Wołyniak" (suicide, January 1, 1947), The "Thunder" Partisan Group Second Lieutenant Józef Kuraś "Ogień" (suicide, February 22, 1947), AK-SZW Sergeant Paweł Klikiewicz "Irena" (suicide, May 17, 1947), NZW Lieutenant Henryk Jastrzębski "Bohun" (suicide, April 13, 1948), WiN Second Lieutenant Waclaw Kuchnio "Spokojny" (suicide along with his wife Zofia, June 8, 1948), WiN Second Lieutenant Tadeusz Zieliński "Igła" (suicide, June 24, 1948), WiN Platoon Leader Władysław Sobczak "Czajka" (suicide, July 9, 1948), NZW Second Lieutenant Franciszek Majewski "Słony" (suicide, September 26, 1948), WiN Platoon Leader Antoni Suliga "Wicher" (suicide, October 23, 1948), WiN Captain Zdzisław Broński "Uskok" (suicide, May 21, 1949), NZW Platoon Leader Piotr Rzędzian "Szczupak" (suicide, January 15, 1949), the Conspiratorial Polish Army (*Konspiracyjne Wojsko Polskie* – KWP) Second Lieutenant Andrzej Jaworski "Marianek" (suicide, August 1949); NZW Lieutenant Kazimierz Żebrowski "Bąk" (suicide, after dispatching his wounded son Jerzy "Konar", December 3, 1949); WiN Lieutenant Mieczysław Pruszkiewicz "Kędziorek" (wounded and dispatched by an underling, Walerian Tyra "Zuch," who then committed suicide, May 14, 1951), WiN Platoon Leader Lucjan Niemyjski "Krakus" (suicide, August 22, 1952), WiN Major Jan Tabortowski "Bruzda" (wounded and dispatched by an underling, 23 August 1954). See Kazimierz Krajewski et al., *Żołnierze wyklęci: Antykomunistyczne podziemie zbrojne po 1944 r.*, 2nd expanded and corrected edition (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Volumen and Liga Republikańska, 2002), 79, 91, 112, 117, 120, 127, 129, 131, 138-40, 144, 147, 162-64, 195-96, 203, 228-29, 287, 292, 295, 309, 348 [afterward *Żołnierze wyklęci*].

¹⁵ For example, the underground paper of the NZW Przasnysz county command reported: "Ponownie nasze szeregi obarczone zostały smutkiem. Żołnierz z oddziału K.P. "Wiosna", chorując na silne osłabienia, dostrzelił się z własnego pistoletu. Bohaterskim wykazem swej śmierci zszedł z tego świata, rozumiejąc jakim ciężarem był dla kolegów." See "Wiadomości organizacyjne," *Głos o Wolność*, 12 December 1948, HIA, PSC, Box 58, Folder *Głos o Wolność*, in Marek Jan Chodakiewicz and Wojciech Jerzy Muszyński, eds., *"Polska dla Polaków!": Antologia podziemnej prasy narodowej, 1939-1949*, 2 vols. (forthcoming)

¹⁶ Kazimierz Krajewski and Tomasz Łabuszewski, „Łupaszka”, „Młot”, „Huzar”: *Działalność 5 i 6 Brygady Wileńskiej AK (1944-1952)* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Volumen, 2002), 648 [afterward „Łupaszka”, „Młot”, „Huzar”].

Although most broke down, a few exceptional individuals withstood the torture. In October 1945, the UB arrested Stefania Broniewska, a courier of the National Armed Forces. She was tortured mercilessly but remained defiant throughout. According to a secret police report,

on November 11, 1945, I, Szlek Kazimierz, a functionary of the UB in Będzin, would like to report that, during our interrogation, Kowalska aka Broniewska Stefania, the wife of General Bogucki [i.e. Colonel Zygmunt Broniewski, the Commander-in-Chief of the NSZ], refused to testify about the organization of the NSZ and other matters related to it. She behaved in an arrogant manner, wanting to show her superiority over us, the working class. She stated that she had been working in the NSZ since its inception, that she was devoted to its ideology, and that she would never recognize as correct the policies of the Government of National Unity [i.e. the Communist proxy regime of Soviet occupation]. Further, she expressed her negative feelings about the Polish-Soviet alliance calling the [Red] Army and the Soviet Nation [sic] her enemies. When questioned, she refused to give any information about the organization and people she is affiliated with. She said she would die and take the secrets to her grave but the current democratic system [i.e. Communist dictatorship] would not persevere. He who laughs last, wins, she said, believing fervently in the victory of the NSZ.¹⁷

Torture continued even when the factor of the fierceness of the battlefield was no longer applicable. A close analysis of the interrogation records allows us to ascertain the ubiquity of torture, additionally revealing the *modus operandi* of the Communist secret police. Let us look for example at the interrogation record of a Home Army (*Armia Krajowa* – AK) liaison from Wilno. She was captured and interrogated by the NKVD in Wilno. The record of the session of July 7, 1945, is contained on a single sheet of paper. The front was completely covered with a text of exceedingly large letters in undisciplined hand-writing. Only half of the reverse side was used. One third of the front page contained the data of the person under interrogation. Then the interrogating officer asked (and wrote down) two questions. First, he

¹⁷ Raport z przesłuchania Kowalskiej vel Boguckiej Stefanii, 11 November 1945, quoted in Sebastian Bojemski “Pisane krwią bohaterów,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 22 August 2000. Next, while interrogated by the secret policemen Jan Matejczuk and Antoni Trybus of the Warsaw UB, Stefania Broniewska provided similar answers, despite torture. On December 11, 1946, she was sentenced to 8 years in jail. Bojemski’s research is based, among other things, on Akta sprawy Antoniego Symonowicza i towarzyszy and Akta sprawy Mirosława Ostromeckiego, Archiwum Historyczne Miasta Stołecznego Warszawy, Wojskowy Sąd Rejonowy [afterward AHMSW, WSR], files Sr. 23/46 and Sr. 78/47. See also Krajewski, *Żołnierze wyklęci*, 352.

asked whether the woman realized that the allegations against her stem from Article 58-Ia of the Soviet criminal code: counter-revolutionary activities. She answered in the affirmative which, was written down. The second question concerned her activities in the underground. The interrogating officer wrote down three short answers she provided, containing mostly false information. Then, according to the rules, he read the contents of the document to the prisoner and had her sign it on both sides. Lastly, he appended his own name to the record. Apparently, this should have been a short procedure: no longer than ten minutes. However, at the top of the page, it was noted that the interrogation session started at 12:40 and ended at 14:00 (2:00pm). Meanwhile, according to her recollections, the AK liaison woman was tortured mercilessly for hours. Anytime the written interrogation record seems too short relative to the amount of time spent assembling it, we can safely assume the prisoner was tortured psychologically or physically or both to extract a confession from him or her.¹⁸

In fact, torture was routine even in cases of detention unrelated to any insurgent or political activity. In July 1951, a Soviet diplomat informed his superiors that

in the Province of Bydgoszcz during the peak season of grain purchase [i.e. forced grain seizure] many arrests of middle peasants [*średniacy*] took place by the militia organs. They were held in detention and beaten during interrogation. . . . In Bydgoszcz a peasant woman was tortured applying barbarian methods. She was interrogated and beaten and then before her very eyes the militiamen drank a shot glass of vodka each and thus ‘fortified’ the militiamen continued the beating.¹⁹

Frequent use of torture by the secret police throughout Poland eventually prompted the Minister of State Security to criticize his underlings in a secret speech:

The question of the qualification of a crime is an important issue to maintain a correct policy of repression. The qualification of the crime must strictly adhere to the reality of the crime, must be fully in harmony with the evidence, and completely tally with the

¹⁸ 12:40 could mean 0:40 am as well as 12:40 pm. Time keeping on various secret police documents available to us was not standardized. See Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, ed., *Ejszyszki: Kulisy zajść w Ejszyszkach: Epilog stosunków polsko-żydowskich na Kresach, 1944-45: Wspomnienia-dokumenty-publicystyka*, 2 vols. (Warsaw: Fronda, 2002), 2: 14 [afterward *Ejszyszki*].

¹⁹ See Konsul Generalny ZSRS w Gdańsku Michał Potapow do Ambasadora ZSRS w Warszawie Arkadija Sobolewa, 19 July 1951, in *Polska w dokumentach z archiwów rosyjskich 1949-1953*, ed. by Aleksander Kocharński et al. (Warszawa: ISP PAN, 2000), 112-13.

objective truth. Only then will our repression and punishment be correct. All instances of “cooking up the case” [*naciąganie sprawy*] during the investigation is harmful and unacceptable. However, this sin is not unknown to some of our operatives, the investigators in particular.

Based on its experiences, the Prosecutor’s Office in a letter to the leadership of the [Communist] party states that “we frequently encounter a lack of objectivity during interrogation, a complete disregard for the circumstances and evidence provided by the suspects, the practice of shaping the witness testimony in a manner convenient to construct accusations but not in congruence with reality... The interrogating officers often strive to make the investigative material (suspect and witness interrogations) tally ideally with the material supplied by the [secret] agents...”

An analysis of the Kielce case (Kozienice) and other similar cases shows that poor operational work very often leads our employees to resort to the means of physical persuasion on a detained person. The very fact that people are arrested without the appropriate justification, without checking and cross-checking information and denunciations, without any responsibility, and in incomprehensible and unnecessary haste somehow pushes the [security] employee to look for proof. On the one hand, his attitude is that, after all, he is dealing with a criminal. On the other hand, he therefore even more zealously attempts to find the proof by coercing a confession because he simultaneously attempts to justify his incorrect decision that led to the arrest of the suspect in the first place. At the same time, the security officer fails to notice that he himself goes down a wrong path and continues to make mistakes. Even if he has made a mistake by arresting a person without checking and justifying it with evidence, the mistake must be rectified as soon as possible. We must not persist in error and make further mistakes by “beating the evidence out” [*dobijanie się dowodów*] because that always turns out to be false in the subsequent investigation or during the trial.²⁰

The Scholars

Indeed, the UB frequently excelled in “cooking up the case” and “beating the evidence out.” According to Janusz Borowiec, who studies the secret police in the Province of Rzeszów, the proof of the widespread application of torture can be gathered from the court records between 1946

²⁰ “Przemówienie ministra BP Stanisława Radkiewicza (?) na temat zadań aparatu bezpieczeństwa publicznego w świetle uchwał VI Plenum KC PZPR (marzec 1951),” in *Aparat Bezpieczeństwa w Polsce w latach 1950-1952: Taktyka, Strategia, Metody*, ed. by Antoni Dudek and Andrzej Paczkowski (Warszawa: Dom Wydawniczy Bellona, 2000), 75, 77.

and 1955. However infrequently, at least some of the bravest of the torture victims complained openly to judges about the treatment they had received from the UB men. Borowiec discovered no less than 31 individual and group instances of physical torture that varied from beating, electrocuting, and hanging by the genitals, to killing during the interrogation. Incidentally, Borowiec learned that practically all the victims had confessed.²¹ Sebastian Bojemski arrived at a similar conclusion after studying the records of the police interrogations and court trials of soldiers of the National Armed Forces in Warsaw. Almost everyone confessed; a few truly exceptional individuals who refused to talk paid dearly for it with their health, if not with their lives.²²

In her valuable study of a provincial insurgent command, scholar Anna Grażyna Kister has shown that a single arrest of a suspect who was subsequently tortured by the secret police could and did trigger a veritable chain reaction of terror. For example, following the capture and torture of a few insurgents connected to the AK Lublin District Command, the NKVD and the UB seized “more than 440 persons” in Lublin between October 7 and November 11, 1944. The prisoners were tortured and forced to divulge the names and addresses of further 280 Home Army soldiers.²³

According to Kazimierz Krajewski, Tomasz Łabuszewski, Piotr Niwiński, and others torture was all pervasive and ubiquitous at every stage of the interrogation process. The secret police tortured captured insurgents right on the battlefield, mostly to extract information about their units but also to terrorize their civilian sympathizers. Members of the families of the insurgents were routinely tortured as well. Women, children, and the elderly were not spared. The Communists frequently despoiled their homes and sometimes even destroyed them.²⁴

²¹ Janusz Borowiec, “Metody śledcze stosowane podczas przesłuchań przez pracowników Urzędów Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego (na podstawie akt Wojskowej Prokuratury Rejonowej w Rzeszowie 1946-1955),” *Studia Rzeszowskie*, vol. 2 (1995): 45-58.

²² Bojemski’s research is based, among other things, on Akta sprawy Antoniego Symonowicza i towarzyszy and Akta sprawy Mirosława Ostromeckiego, AHMSW, WSR, files Sr. 23/46 and Sr. 78/47. See Sebastian Bojemski “Pisane krwią bohaterów,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 22 August 2000.

²³ Anna Grażyna Kister, *Komenda Okręgu Lublin Armii Krajowej w 1944 r.* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Rytm, 2000), 146-54 [afterward *Komenda Okręgu Lublin*].

²⁴ In one case in 1946, the UB tortured an 11-year-old girl to force her to incriminate Lieutenant Stanisław Karolkiewicz of the Home Army. The child refused to talk. See ros, “Rycerz niezłomny i uparty,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 7 May 2005. See also Krajewski and Łabuszewski, „*Lupaszka*”, „*Młot*”, „*Huzar*”, 225, 250, 476-78, 548 n. 8, 648, 736, 742, 745-46, 754, 756, 821, 865-67. See also Piotr Niwiński, *Okręg Wileński AK w latach 1944-1948* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Volumen, 1999); Rafał Wnuk, *Lubelski Okręg AK, DSZ i WiN, 1944-1947* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Volumen, 2000); Sławomir Poleszak and Adam Puławski, eds., *Podziemie zbrojne na Lubelszczyźnie wobec dwóch totalitaryzmów, 1939-1956* (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej and Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciw Narodowi Polskiemu, 2002); Maciej Korcuć, *Zostańcie wierni tylko Polsce: Niepodległościowe oddziały partyzanckie*

Regional historian Krystyna Pasiuk conducted a case study of a single independentist insurgent unit fighting the Communists in the Suwałki area between 1949 and 1954. She confirms that “contemporary interrogation offices were torture chambers... [and] the beating of the prisoners was the norm.” However, Pasiuk stresses that the secret police torture was the most ferocious during the initial arrests. Later, once every insurgent that was not killed on the battlefield was captured, “the beating ceased.” By that time, having eradicated the immediate threat, the secret police had enough evidence to secure convictions and, because of the hopelessness of their predicament, the insurgents were physically and psychologically exhausted enough to confess to anything.²⁵

However, in some cases torture was evidently applied even following a police provocation when the functionaries of the terror apparatus were intimately aware of all the details of a situation they themselves had set up. According to historian Ryszard Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki that was the case with the so-called Polish Organization of Anti-Jewish Youth (*Polska Organizacja Młodzieży Antyżydowskiej* – POMA) in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski. This creation of the secret police attracted a handful of conspirators, most of whom were likely UB agents. Nonetheless, the participants were forced to confess that the POMA enrolled 200 persons in its covert structures and 100 persons in a guerrilla unit. In reality, the POMA existed mainly in the interrogation records of the UB.²⁶

w *Krakowskiem (1944-1947)* (Kraków: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej and Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciw Narodowi Polskiemu, 2002); Ryszard Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Podziemie poakowskie na Kielecczyźnie w latach 1945-1948* (Kraków: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej and Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciw Narodowi Polskiemu, 2002) [afterward *Podziemie poakowskie na Kielecczyźnie*].

²⁵ The study concerns the post-WiN unit of Jan Sadowski (“Błady”) and Piotr Burdyn (“Poręba”). See Krystyna Pasiuk, *Ostatni “leśni” Suwalszczyzny* (Sejny: Pogranicze, 2002), 126 [afterward *Ostatni “leśni” Suwalszczyzny*]. The conduct of the secret police in Suwałki was consistently atrocious. The Polish authorities have recently concluded an investigation into the activities of Aleksander Omilianowicz, who first worked in the *Smersh* and then in the UB in Suwałki in 1946. He is accused of “tormenting the soldiers of the independentist underground by beating them with the rifle butt and grabbing them by the hair and smashing their heads against the wall.” The 82-year-old Omilianowicz was found guilty of 10 instances of torture and sentenced to four and a half years in jail. See Adam Białous, “Literat z UB,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 28 May 2002; Mateusz Wyrwich, “Od kata do literata,” *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 31 October 2003; AKA, “Prawomocny wyrok na kata Suwalszczyzny,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 12-13 February 2005. In July 1945 the NKVD and the UB conducted a massive sweep, arresting several thousands of suspects. At least 600 AK soldiers are still missing. See Tomasz Kaminski, prokurator Oddziałowej KSZpNP w Białymstoku, Referat omawiający ustalenia śledztwa w sprawie tzw. “obławy augustowskiej” ogłoszony w dniu 14 maja 2003r., na spotkaniu Klubu Historycznego im. gen. Stefana Roweckiego “Grota” w Instytucie Pamięci Narodowej w Warszawie, posted at <http://www.ipn.gov.pl/>; *Dziennik Polski*, 24 July 2001; Krzysztof Skłodowski, *Dzisiaj ziemia wasza jest wolna: O niepodległość Suwalszczyzny* (Suwałki: Muzeum Okręgowe w Suwałkach, 2000).

²⁶ Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Podziemie poakowskie na Kielecczyźnie*, 321-22.

At times, insurgents ostensibly tried for a particular crime were hardly interrogated concerning that charge. Instead, the secret policemen simply forced them to reveal the infrastructure of their organization, to divulge the whereabouts of their confederates, and to confess to general charges like “killing Jews” or “killing Communists.” According to several scholars, this was most notably the case with the so-called “Wierzchowiny trial” of 23 officers of the National Armed Forces (*Narodowe Siły Zbrojne – NSZ*) in Lublin in 1946.²⁷ Further, as Krzysztof Szwagrzyk has shown, the torture did not automatically stop when the interrogation was concluded. For example, military judge Major Feliks Aspis ordered his prisoners to be tortured if they retracted their confessions in court.²⁸ Also the research of John Micgiel confirms readily that the Communist legal system employed illegal means to extract confessions from its prisoners.²⁹

Jerzy Kułak focused on the interrogation methods of the functionaries of the Security Office (*Urząd Bezpieczeństwa – UB*) and concluded that “torture and killing of prisoners were typical features of their work.”³⁰ Next, he analyzed nine major show trials held at the central level and numerous other cases before lower Communist courts. The scholar has established that every prisoner was tortured either physically or psychologically or both. The secret police targeted the heroes of the anti-Nazi and anti-Soviet underground, opposition politicians, and Catholic priests. Almost all of them were forced to confess to untruths both during their interrogation and during their show trials, which were broadcast live on the Polish Radio. Besides securing guilty verdicts in almost all cases, the Communists pursued successfully also another goal: to compromise them morally and everything they stood for before the Polish society. False confessions disseminated by mendacious propaganda served to destroy, or at least to undermine, the

²⁷ The “Wierzchowiny trial” ostensibly concerned the slaughter, allegedly perpetrated by the NSZ, of the population of the Ukrainian village of Wierzchowiny. However, the UB hardly broached the subject during the interrogation. Further, no exhumation took place and practically no effort was made to interview any witnesses. See Marcin Zaborski, “Proces dowódców Narodowych Sił Zbrojnych Okręgu Lubelskiego z 1946 roku,” (MA thesis, Lublin, Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, 1993); Krzysztof Komorowski, *Polityka i walka: Konspiracja zbrojna ruchu narodowego, 1939-1945* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Rytm, 2000), 512-13 [afterward *Polityka i walka*]; Anna Grażyna Kister, “Wierzchowiny,” *Nasza Polska*, 5 February 2003; Rafał Drabik to Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, 15 January 2003.

²⁸ Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, *Zbrodnie w majestacie prawa, 1944-1955* (Warszawa: ABC, 2000), 45.

²⁹ John S. Micgiel, “Frenzy and Ferocity”: The Stalinist Judicial System in Poland, 1944-1947, and the Search for Redress,” *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian & East European Studies* [Pittsburgh], no. 1101 (February 1994): 1-48. For concurring opinions see: Krzysztof Lesiakowski and Grzegorz Majchrzak interviewed by Barbara Polak, “O Aparacie Bezpieczeństwa,” *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 6 (June 2002): 4-24; Barbara Polak, “O karach śmierci w latach 1944-1956,” *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 11 (November 2002): 4-29.

³⁰ Jerzy Kułak, “Zbrodnia zinstytucjonalizowana,” *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 6 (June 2002): 40-44, quote at p. 40.

traditional nationalistic symbols and to create new pseudo-nationalistic images depicting the Communists as the only decent and patriotic force in Poland. Torture was an indispensable tool to achieve this comprehensive goal. According to Kułak,

The main objective of the political trial was to change the consciousness of the people (unlike in a normal country, where the objective is to punish the criminals). The people were to be informed that hitherto they had lived in the morally tainted environment of pre-war Poland, where the ruling class had perfidiously lied to them. The Communists also aimed at destroying the legend of the war-time and post-war independentist underground. The *homo sovieticus* was to be persuaded that thanks to the media and newspapers, i.e. the propaganda of the Communist proxy regime, he knew the truth about the government of interwar Poland. The truth was presented to him as a conspiracy theory concocted by the Communist secret police. A denizen of the Polish People's Republic could learn that the leadership of the AK continued the criminal policy of [Polish pre-war Foreign Minister Józef] Beck and [Marshal Edward] Śmigły-Rydz who collaborated with Nazi Germany. One understood from the Communist propaganda that the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising had been coordinated with the Germans and that the Communists were the only true patriots, fighting for Poland's independence. Meanwhile, the AK and the Office of the Government Delegate unscrupulously denounced the Communists to the Gestapo in exchange for freeing members of the pro-London underground. The latter conspiracy was hence only apparent, because it feigned its struggle against the Germans in congruence with the theory of "passive struggle." Thus, the Communists changed the meaning of such words as honor, patriotism, and independence.

Once the Polish society learned that all of its heroes were really traitors, renegades, Nazi agents, murderers of democratic activists and peasants, the [Communist] *People's Tribune* and other newspapers were also able to announce that the [Catholic] priests are American and English intelligence agents and had earlier served the Gestapo.

If those were baseless allegations, their influence on the society would be nil. However, the charges against the greatest authorities of pre-war Poland and the heroes of the struggle for national independence, so eagerly preached by the Communist press, were levelled by pre-war political activists, government officials, soldiers of Underground Poland, oftentimes heroes of the Cross of Virtuti Militari [Poland's highest military decoration for valor], and persons enjoying universal respect.

Thus, the Communist system proved that every single human being could be broken. In exchange for the halt to the unimaginable torture and in the hope of escaping the death sentence, the prisoners, who had been interrogated for many months in the dungeons of the Ministry of Public Security on Koszykowa Street in Warsaw and who had been turned into the human wrecks, were ready to sign anything so that the secret policemen would desist beating them; so that the prisoners could sleep for a moment following a week-long, non-stop interrogation session, where only the interrogating officers rotated.

Most of the accused and witnesses acquiesced in playing the role assigned to them by the secret police officers and propaganda experts. During the show trial, the prisoners stuck strictly to the plan masterminded beforehand by the supervisors of the investigation. Even if the main accused in a case did not play well the role that had been imposed on him, there were plenty of witnesses who splendidly filled in the gaps. The audience at the show trial also influenced its atmosphere by angrily reacting to the testimonies of the accused and witnesses.³¹

Torture was also the norm when the unfortunates were already serving their jail sentences. According to Mateusz Wyrwich, it still has not been established how many thousands of prisoners, out of 500,000 people who were incarcerated by the Communists between 1944 and 1956, perished because of torture and other forms of maltreatment.³² For example, over 800 witnesses have appeared to testify about torture in the Wronki prison, where, between 1945 and 1956, about 15,500 people were incarcerated, mostly political prisoners. Victims were routinely made to strip and wait in the prison yard, winter time included. Then, they were chased between two rows of wardens who beat them with truncheons and keys. The functionaries most responsible for the torture were the prison head Jan Boguwola, and his underlings: Adam Serwata, Wiktor Urbaniak, Józef Mikołajczak, Marian Kraus, Jerzy Białas, Marian Dusik, Tomasz Nowicki, and Jan Szymczak.³³

³¹ Jerzy Kułak, "Inżynierowie dusz," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 10 (October 2002): 24-28, quote at p. 25.

³² See Mateusz Wyrwich, "Zbrodnie nie tylko w celi śmierci," *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 17 May 2002; Mateusz Wyrwich, *Lagier Jaworzno: Z dziejów czerwonego terroru* (Warszawa: Editions Spotkania, 1995). See also Bogusław Kopka, *Obozy pracy w Polsce 1944-1950: Przewodnik encyklopedyczny* (Warszawa: Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza NOWA i Ośrodek Karta, 2002).

³³ See Wojciech Wybranowski, "Potrzebni świadkowie," *Nasz Dziennik*, 13 May 2002. It was similar in Nowogard and other Communist jails. See Piotr Szubarczyk, "Sprawa Józka Obacza: Młodzieżowa konspiracja antykomunistyczna 1945-56," *Nasz Dziennik*, 19-21 April 2003.

Torture was an integral part of Poland's totalitarian reality. It was fully harmonized with the "legal" system and reflected in the official propaganda.³⁴

The Legal Basis of Torture and the Communist Propaganda

No law explicitly permitted torturing anyone under Communism. However, between 1944 and 1956, the laws and regulations³⁵ commonly applied against political offenders were utterly dehumanizing and, hence, implicitly encouraged their abuse, including torture. Two types of distinct legal systems functioned at the time: the Soviet and the Polish. The former applied not only in Poland's eastern territories incorporated into the Soviet Union after the return of the Red Army in 1944, but also to the west of the so-called Curzon line, wherever the Soviet terror apparatus (and judiciary) happened to operate. While at the mercy of the NKVD, most commonly, the political offenders were charged under the infamous Article 58 of the Soviet penal code. According to Article 58, a Home Army soldier, who was ethnically Polish, born in pre-war Poland, and a life-long citizen of Poland could be sentenced as "traitor to the Soviet Motherland" in addition to being a "counter-revolutionary," "Hitlerite collaborator," and "fascist."³⁶

Simultaneously, although always deferring to the Soviet law, the local Communists in Poland introduced their own legal regulations. More precisely, they amended the existing pre-war laws with a bevy of their own decrees. Arguably, the most important of them was the infamous Decree of August 31, 1944, against "the fascist-Hitlerite criminals and traitors of the Polish Nation." The decree was promulgated by the Communist proxy regime and used mainly as a political and legal tool of repression against the independentists fighters and politicians, who were routinely branded as "Hitlerite collaborators," "fascists," and "reactionaries."³⁷ The August 31,

³⁴ Witold Kulesza and Andrzej Rzepliński, eds., *Przestępstwa sędziów i prokuratorów w Polsce lat 1944-1956* (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni Przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Uniwersytet Warszawski – Instytut Profilaktyki Społecznej i Resocjalizacji, 2000).

³⁵ A few "normative acts" (*akty normatywne*) of the Polish Communist secret police formally banned torture (e.g., the orders of June 11, 1949, February 24, 1951, March 3, 1954, and November 19, 1954). For a list of rules and regulations pertaining to the investigative process of the Communist secret police see Antoni Kura, "Represje aparatu bezpieczeństwa publicznego w latach 1944-1956," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 6 (June 2002): 29-33.

³⁶ See, e.g., cases 3710 and 3710/822, Special Archive of Lithuania, the Committee for State Security (KGB), The Council of Ministers of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania, in Chodakiewicz, *Ejszyszki*, 2: 49, 59, 62, 82, 94, 98, 114-22.

³⁷ See Dekret PKWN "o wymiarze kary dla faszystowsko-hitlerowskich zbrodniarzy winnych zabójstw i znęcania się nad ludnością cywilną i jeńcami oraz dla zdrajców Narodu Polskiego," 31 August 1944, *Dziennik Ustaw*, no. 4, poz. (item) 16 (1944); and its modified version in *Dziennik Ustaw*, no. 69, poz. 377

1944 Decree was also applied to real and alleged Nazi collaborators, including for instance persons accused of participating the massacre of Jews at Jedwabne, thus from a legal point of view making it a political rather than a criminal case.³⁸

The language of the August Decree was extremely violent. It reflected the language of contemporary Communist propaganda. And the Communists dubbed as “fascists” and “reactionaries” anybody who disagreed with them.³⁹ The independentist insurgents were of course the primary targets of the Stalinist vituperation. The guidelines for propaganda of the Central Board of Political Formatting of the Polish People’s Army aptly titled “Concerning the mobilization of hatred toward the reactionary thugs” instructed the political commissars to “brand with all your strength the criminal activities of the bastards of the NSZ and AK, Hitler’s emulators. Develop hatred among the soldiers and push them against the reactionaries.”⁴⁰

Accordingly, Communist military political commissars publicly preached that during the Warsaw ghetto uprising the following forces fought against the Jewish insurgents: “the German air force, the SS, and tanks as well as Polish hooligans, Polish reactionaries and, actually, the AK.”⁴¹

(1946). For the general background of the Stalinist legal system in Poland see Zdzisław Albin Zięba, *Prawo przeciw społeczeństwu* (Warszawa: Katedra Socjologii Moralności i Oksjologii Ogólnej, Instytut Stosowanych Nauk Społecznych, Uniwersytet Warszawski, 1997).

³⁸ The accused in the trial were charged specifically pursuant to article 1 paragraph 2 of the decree of August 31, 1944. See *Sentencja wyroku, Sprawa Bolesława Ramotowskiego i 21 innych*, 16 and 17 May 1949, Sąd Okręgowy w Łomży [afterward SOŁ], file Ksu 33/49, 225. Because the pre-war penal code still applied in Poland at the time, and it contained all of the appropriate provisions to deal with a riot that resulted in murder (in particular articles 23, 163, and 225 of the penal code, which included death penalty), non-political laws could have been used to prosecute the suspects in the Jedwabne case. See Juliusz Makarewicz, *Kodeks Karny z komentarzem* (Lwów: Wydawnictwo Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, 1932); *Kodeks Karny: Prawo o wykroczeniach* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Sprawiedliwości, 1939).

³⁹ This frame of mind is reflected fully in the most important internal circulation Communist secret police periodical. See Andrzej Krzysztof Kunert and Rafał E. Stolarski, eds., *“Bijące serce partii”: “Dzienniki personalne Ministerstwa Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego”*, vol. 1: 1945-1947 (Warszawa: Rada Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa and Oficyna Wydawnicza “Adiutor,” 2001), 352-55, 361-69, 393, 458-60, 484-86, 492-500, 524, 527-28, 536, 551-52, 577, 585, 589, 593, 633 [afterward “*Bijące serce partii*”]. In relation to the Poles in general, this sentiment was expressed best by Jakub Berman who supervised the secret police in Stalinist Poland. See Teresa Torańska, *Oni* (London: Aneks, 1985), 274, 290-91, 341, 354-58. Torańska’s book is published in English translation as *“Them”: Stalin’s Polish Puppets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987).

⁴⁰ See Wytoczne d/s propagandy, Główny Zarząd Pol.-Wych. LWP pt. „W sprawie mobilizacji nienawiści do zbirów reakcyjnych,” 10 May 1945, Kunert and Stolarski, *“Bijące serce partii”*, 388. (“Piętnować z całą siłą zbrodniczą robotę wyrodków z NSZ i AK – naśladowców Hitlera, rozwinąć w żołnierzu uczucie nienawiści i rozkołysać aktywność żołnierzy przeciwko reakcji.”)

⁴¹ The speech of Colonel Mieczysław Dąbrowski during “a gala academy on the second anniversary of the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto” on April 19, 1945, in Kunert and Stolarski, *“Bijące serce partii”*, 382. (“Podczas uroczystej akademii w drugą rocznicę powstania w getcie warszawskim przedstawiciel LWP płk

Therefore, “the criminals of the AK and NSZ work hand in glove with the Hitlerites. And they should be treated just like the Hitlerite murderers.”⁴² A Communist pundit editorialized that “during the [Nazi] occupation the NSZ formed an auxiliary formation of the SS and Gestapo.”⁴³ “Put on trial the AK and NSZ murderers, Hitler’s helpers!” screamed the official posters in unison.⁴⁴

As Professor Krystyna Kersten has noted perceptively, the independentist insurgents and the parliamentary opposition were the chief “reactionaries.” Significantly, “reactionary” was synonymous with “bandit,” “traitor,” “fascist,” “Hitlerite,” “anti-Semite,” and “Jew-killer.” Whoever killed Jews was not just a traitor, but also “an agent of Hitler.” Anybody who opposed the Communists was also a potential “Jew-killer,” or at least could be accused of such terrible anti-Semitic deeds, and hence, branded “a Nazi collaborator.” This was a convenient propaganda device commonly employed to dupe the West into believing that the opponents of the Communists were pro-Nazi and that the brutal crushing of the independentist insurrection and the parliamentary opposition in Poland was simply a mop-up operation which fittingly concluded the anti-German struggles of the Second World War. This was also a useful tool to rally the population behind the Communists in meting out justice to alleged Polish “Hitlerites.”⁴⁵ (The trick was further intended to endear the proxy regime to the Jewish community at home and abroad.)⁴⁶

Mieczysław Dąbrowski oświadcza: ‘Przeciwko powstańcom walczyli: lotnictwo, SS i czołgi niemieckie, chuliganeria polska, reakcjoniści polscy i faktycznie AK.’”)

⁴² See *Głos Ludu*, 21 April 1945, in Kunert and Stolarski, “*Bijące serce partii*”, 382. (“Zbrodniarze z AK i NSZ działają ręką w rękę z hitlerowcami. I tak też, jak hitlerowscy mordercy, powinni być potraktowani.”)

⁴³ See *Głos Ludu*, 19 October 1945, quoted in Kunert and Stolarski, “*Bijące serce partii*”, 457. (“NSZ w czasie okupacji stanowiły posiłkową formację SS i Gestapo.”)

⁴⁴ “Pod sąd morderców z AK i NSZ!” Reproduced in Komorowski, *Polityka i walka*, n.p.

⁴⁵ See Okólnik Ministerstwa Informacji i Propagandy nr 1, 21 April 1945, in *Pierwsza próba indoktrynacji: Działalność Ministerstwa Informacji i Propagandy w latach 1944-1947*, ed. by Andrzej Krawczyk (Warszawa: ISP PAN, 1994), 74-75; “PRESS CONFERENCE held by M. Bierut at the Polish Embassy in Moscow on April 23, 1945,” in *Soviet-Polish Relations: A Collection of Official Documents and Press Extracts, 1944-1946* (London: “Soviet News,” 1946), 30; Krystyna Kersten, “Polityczny i propagandowy obraz zbrojnego podziemia w latach 1945-1947 w świetle prasy komunistycznej,” *Wojna domowa czy nowa okupacja? Polska po roku 1944*, ed. by Andrzej Ajnenkiel (Wrocław, Warszawa, and Kraków: Wydawnictwo Zakładu Narodowego imienia Ossolińskich, 1998), 140-50 [afterward “Polityczny” in *Wojna domowa*]; Marek Michalik, “Wizerunek Zrzeszenia ‘Wolność i Niezawisłość’ w wybranych tytułach prasy centralnej z lat 1945-1947: Część I,” *Zeszyty Historyczne WiN-u* 12 (March 1999): 5-42.

⁴⁶ This propaganda ploy therefore required that the Communists effusively play the role of the sole protectors of the Jewish people. On April 17, 1949, the head of the proxy regime in Warsaw, Bolesław Bierut, cynically informed a visiting Jewish-American delegation that “killing a Jew is ten times more of a crime than ordinary killing” and vowed to punish severely anyone responsible for crimes against the Jews. See Joseph Tenenbaum, *In Search of A Lost People: The Old and the New Poland* (New York: The Beechurst Press, 1948), 227. Numerous other so-called “pro-Jewish” statements were routinely made to

Communist law was well-harmonized with the propaganda. It seems that the intention of the authors of the August Decree was to limit, if not outright preclude, the possibility of a fair investigation and a fair trial. The objective was to punish “Nazi collaborators,” whether real or alleged. In other words, the Communist policemen, prosecutors, lawyers, and judges involved in the cases pursued and tried on the basis of the August Decree were not interested in recreating the crimes, describing their details, identifying the victims, and finding the perpetrators. They were out to destroy the enemy: physically and morally. Numerous accounts of the victims of the Communist investigative and legal process seem to signal just that.

Case Studies: Ejszyszki and Jedwabne

Two separate case studies conducted by us strongly suggest that both the investigation and the court proceedings widely departed from the Western standards of justice. The most jarring abuses included the lack of professional meticulousness and the application of torture.

In the case of Ejszyszki, following the attack of the Home Army (AK) on that town on October 19/20, 1944, the Soviet secret police initially did not bother to collect any witness accounts. The NKVD policemen simply beat confessions out of most of the suspects. A few refused to give in; most confessed, gradually yielding to their tormentors. The confessions, of course, included killing Jews and collaborating with the Gestapo. Later, some of the victims retracted their confessions in court. Nonetheless, some were sentenced to death, while most were sent to the Gulag on the basis of Article 58.⁴⁷ In the case of Jedwabne, where a number of Polish inhabitants were accused of assisting the Nazis in murdering the local Jews, the police and the judiciary were concerned about establishing neither the sequence of the events nor even the date of the mass murder.⁴⁸ Using as a blue-print the

that effect by the Communist officials and the regime-controlled media. See also Simon Segal, “Eastern Europe,” *The American Jewish Yearbook*, 5705, vol. 46: *September 18, 1944 to September 7, 1945*, ed. by Harry Schneiderman (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1944), 240-44; Raphael Mahler, “Eastern Europe,” *The American Jewish Yearbook*, 5706, vol. 47: *1945-46*, ed. by Harry Schneiderman and Julius B. Maller (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1945), 391-408; Harry Schneiderman, “Eastern Europe,” *The American Jewish Yearbook*, 5707, vol. 48: *1946-47*, ed. by Harry Schneiderman and Julius B. Maller (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1946), 334-49; Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy, 1918-1955: Współistnienie, Zagłada, Komunizm* (Warszawa: Fronda, 2000), 535-38 [afterward *Żydzi i Polacy*].

⁴⁷ Chodakiewicz, *Ejszyszki*, 2: 15, 26, 123-34, 139-40, 144.

⁴⁸ For example, in the sentencing statement we read not only about “the mass crime against the defenseless people who numbered 1,500” at p. 229 of court records, but on p. 225 that the sentenced men were “accused that on June 25 [sic July 10], 1941, in Jedwabne aiding the authorities of the German state, they

imprecise and internally contradictory testimony of a second hand witness, they tortured the suspects into confessing to killing Jews and collaborating with the Nazis. Later, the accused were tried on the basis of the August 31, 1944, Decree.⁴⁹

In both the Ejszyszki and the Jedwabne cases the secret police seized a number of suspects, including completely innocent people, who confessed under duress to their complicity in the alleged crimes. On the other hand, at least a few prisoners customarily denied their culpability and blamed their confederates, in particular those who had been killed or were otherwise beyond the reach of the secret police.⁵⁰

The reality of the interrogation and the trial should not obscure the fact that some of the suspects did take part in the AK assault on Ejszyszki, while others did participate in the massacre at Jedwabne. The gruesome ruthlessness of the Communist secret police and the judiciary should give us cause to pause however, before we treat the Communist interrogation records at their face value. All documents should be checked and cross-checked against other sources. Initially at least, all accounts of torture should also be treated as raw data.

Raw Data

We have drawn our raw data on the topic of torture from the following sources: historical monographs, personal testimonies, legal records, and newspaper accounts. Legal records concern both the original cases from the 1940s and 1950s as well as contemporary cases generated by the investigative arm of the Institute of National Remembrance. Polish newspapers, ranging from the dynamic leftist *Gazeta Wyborcza* [Electoral Gazette] through the most respected centrist daily *Rzeczpospolita* [Republic] to the right-wing Catholic nationalist *Nasz Dziennik* [Our Daily], routinely report on court cases regarding the trials of both Communist secret police personnel and their political opponents. Further, the popular press periodically runs investigative historical stories on the anti-Communist insurgents and their tormentors. In all sources, the topic of torture is broached openly most of the time. The description is graphic and detailed.

participated in capturing about 1200 persons of Jewish nationality, who... were burned *en masse* by the Germans in the barn." See Sentencja wyroku and Uzasadnienie, Sprawa Bolesława Ramotowskiego i 21 innych, 16 and 17 May 1949, SOŁ, file Ksu 33/49, 225, 229.

⁴⁹ For a detailed analysis see Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *The Massacre in Jedwabne, July 10, 1941: Before, During, After* (New York and Boulder, CO.: Columbia University Press and East European Monographs, 2005) (forthcoming).

⁵⁰ This was a universal phenomenon evident also in other cases. See Chodakiewicz, *Ejszyszki*, 2: 15.

From these accounts we learn that, aside from beating, the secret policemen liked to tear the hair out of the victim's body, extinguish their cigarettes on him or her, and apply many other methods of torture. Pathological behavior of this sort was also prevalent in low profile cases. Arguably, secret policemen serving in remote provincial outposts tended to be even more cruel because they lacked immediate supervision. But even if their sadism reflected itself just in beating and not in sexual perversion, it still was the norm. There were no boundaries to the cruelty and no consideration was given to the status, sex, or health of the victim. In one instance socialist Irena Sendlerowa of the Home Army miscarried after she was abused by the UB.⁵¹ In another case, the UB-man Edmund Kwasek tortured Józefa Gradecka of the AK who was pregnant.⁵²

In our sample below we have documented more than 500 cases of torture. Almost all victims described below were ethnic Poles and Catholics, save for a single Jewish man. One hundred and fifty four victims are identified by name, including 21 women. Most of the victims of torture, except for some of the youngest ones, were involved in both the anti-Nazi and anti-Communist struggle from 1939. The victims were subjected at least to 49 types of torture. Twelve prisoners were tortured to death, while 8 were shot immediately after the torture sessions (usually following a sham trial). Eight prisoners, including three women, withstood the torture, refused to confess, and survived their ordeal. In 143 (out of 154) cases the prisoners broke down and confessed their real and alleged "crimes." Hence, our research strongly suggests that torture served its intended purpose,⁵³ a few exceptions notwithstanding.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Sendler is credited with saving about 2,500 Jewish children during the Nazi occupation. See Irena Sendlerowa ("Jolanta"), "Ci, którzy pomagali Żydom: Wspomnienia z czasów okupacji hitlerowskiej," *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* [afterward *BŻIH*] (Warszawa), no. 45-46 (January-June 1963): 234-47; Magdalena Grochowska, "Lista Sendlerowej," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 8 June 2001.

⁵² Tadeusz M. Płuzański, "Najnowsza historia humerowców," posted at <http://www.upr.org.pl/mazowsze/serwis/arch/publ1.html>.

⁵³ Hence, the knowledge of the NKVD and the UB about the independentist underground was quite extensive. See Tatiana Cariewskaja et al., eds., *Teczka specjalna J.W. Stalina: Raporty NKWD z Polski, 1944-1946* (Warszawa: ISP PAN, IH UW, Rytm and APFR, 1998); *Informator o nielegalnych antypaństwowych organizacjach i bandach zbrojnych działających w Polsce Ludowej w latach 1944-1956* (Warszawa: Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, Biuro "C", 1964, Reprint Lublin: Wydawnictwo Retro, 1993) [afterward *Informator*]; Piotr Mirski and Jakub Twardowski, eds., *Zrzeszenie Wolność i Niezawisłość na Lubelszczyźnie w latach 1944-1947 w opracowaniu funkcjonariuszy MSW* (Lublin: Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej, 2002).

⁵⁴ For a story of a Home Army, Government Delegate's Office (*Delegatura Rządu*), and Wilno Mobilization Center (*Wileński Ośrodek Mobilizacyjny*) liaison who withstood torture by the Gestapo (November 1943-April 1944), NKVD (May-August 1945), and UB (1947), although at a great cost to her health see Skhema podpolnoi polskoi natsionalisticheskoi antisovetskoi organizatsii imenem "Delegatura Rzhondu," State Archive Vilnius, ugot. Delo arkh. Nr. 7251/3 Dobrazhanskogo Iuria Antonovicha i drugikh; Spravka, sekretno, Khodakevich Irina Vitol'dovna, delo 5082, October 1954; Vopros, 7 July

As for the perpetrators, although the Soviets led the way,⁵⁵ they found many eager Polish collaborators. Although no thorough search has been undertaken in the secret police personal files nationwide, the evidence accumulated here suggests that most of the functionaries of the Communist terror apparatus were ethnic Poles of lower class origin. The witnesses mention but a few Jewish Communist perpetrators.⁵⁶ At times, the crimes were perpetrated jointly by the Soviets and Poles. For example, between 1945 and 1955 in a military restricted area of Biedrusk near Poznań, dozens of prisoners were tortured and summarily shot by Soviet and Polish Communist military intelligence officers. The executions took place in a church. The victims were lined up behind the altar and executed.⁵⁷

Of course not everyone was physically tortured. For example, Major Zygmunt Szendzielarz (“Łupaszko”) of the Wilno AK was only tormented psychologically.⁵⁸ However, preliminary research suggests that his case was an exception. His soldiers and other insurgents were tortured routinely.

We have discerned three types of situations under which torture occurred: preliminary interrogation, interrogation proper, and post-interrogation. First, while operating in the field, the Communist secret police routinely tortured captured insurgents and suspected sympathizers to extract information regarding the whereabouts of their confederates and arms stores.

1945; Postanowienie (pred'iavlenii obvineniia), 7 July 1945 Postanowienie (o prekrashenii sledstvia i osvobozhdenii iz-pod otrazhi), 18 August 1945 (copies in my collection); Irena i Jan Chodakiewicz, Biuro Ewidencji i Archiwizacji Urzędu Ochrony Państwa [BeiA UOP], file 10962/II; Mieczysław Potocki, *Wspomnienia żołnierza Armii Krajowej Ziemi Wileńskiej* (Warszawa: No publisher, 1981), 14, 17, 19; Marek Chodakiewicz, “Chodakiewiczowa Irena (1912-1979), pseud. ‘Irena’,” *Wileńskie Rozmaitości: Towarzystwo Miłośników Wilna i Ziemi Wileńskiej – Oddział w Bydgoszczy*, no. 6 (32) (November-December 1995): 50-51.

⁵⁵ Torture by the NKVD started already during the first Soviet occupation of Poland’s Eastern Borderlands. See Jan T. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland’s Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia*, Expanded Edition (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), 164-74.

⁵⁶ This seems to have been the case especially in the countryside but to a lesser extent on the central command level. See Chapter Six, “The Local Elite under Soviet Rule, 1944-1947,” and Chapter Eight, “Ethnic Minorities under Soviet Occupation, 1944-1947,” in Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets: A Case Study of Occupation Politics in Poland, 1939-1947* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003) (forthcoming); *Śłużba Bezpieczeństwa Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej w latach 1944-1978* ([Warszawa:] Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, Biuro “C” [1978?]); Mirosław Piotrowski, ed., *Ludzie Bezpieki w walce z narodem i Kościołem: Śłużba bezpieczeństwa w Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej w latach 1944-1978 – Centrala* (Lublin : Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej, 2000); Grzegorz Majchrzak, “Szefowie i podstawowe pionierzy operacyjne Ministerstwa Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego, Komitetu ds. Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego, Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych,” *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 6 (June 2002): 23-24; Andrzej Paczkowski, “Żydzi w UB: Próba weryfikacji stereotypu,” in *Komunizm: Ideologia, System, Ludzie*, ed. by Tomasz Szarota (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton and Instytut Historii PAN, 2001), 192-204 [afterward “Żydzi w UB” in *Komunizm*]; John Sack, *An Eye for an Eye* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

⁵⁷ See Mateusz Wyrwich, “Mord w kościele: Skrytobójcze mordy czasów stalinowskich,” *Przegląd Tygodniowy* [Toronto], 4 October 2002, 5-6.

⁵⁸ See Krajewski and Łabuszewski, „Łupaszka”, „Młot”, „Huzar”, 859.

Second, during the interrogation proper, the secret police applied torture to extract precise information about the insurgency, political opposition, and war-time activities as well as to force the victims to confess to trumped up charges, some of which were also morally damaging (e.g. the routine but false allegations about collaborating with the Nazi police and murdering Jews and Soviets). Third, during the post-interrogation the prisoners were sometimes tortured if they deviated from their forced confession in court or just for the sake of it as they were serving their sentences in jail. To put it plainly, whereas at the initial stage of an investigation the UB officers concerned themselves with finding out the truth, the desired outcome of the intermediate stage was a full confession which freely mixed truth with fiction.

The following examples, presented chronologically, concern mostly the interrogation proper. However, in general, the evidence presented below attests to the prevalence of torture at every stage of one's experience with the Communist secret police.

Case by Case

Between September 1944 and 1945, about 3,000 prisoners were incarcerated at a concentration camp run by the NKVD at Kąkolewica, near Łuków in the Province of Lublin. According to the estimates of the underground, up to 1,800 people were shot following a grueling interrogation. Cadet officer Antoni Sztolcman ("Mewa") was one of the 16 local NSZ-AK company soldiers seized between September 28 and October 6, 1944. He and his friends were beaten daily and held in a dugout partly filled with water. Because he refused to turn in his older brother, who was a Home Army fighter, the seventeen-year-old Czesław Pękała was kicked on his head until he fainted. His NKVD interrogators also shoved thin wooden splinters under his fingernails.⁵⁹

On October 30, 1944, Major Jakub Hałas ("Kuba") of the AK Lublin District Command fell into an NKVD trap. He died of blood infection after the blows of the torturers shattered his ribs and punctured his lungs on

⁵⁹ Although there is still no access to the NKVD files in Russia, it has been established that the Polish Communists alone passed 43 death sentences. Further, in a random exhumation in a forest nearby a mass grave was uncovered containing 12 bodies, apparently victims of a single execution. See Antoni Sztolcman, "Kąkolewica 1944 r.," in *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne na Podlasiu*, vol. 1: *Materiały posesyjne*, ed. by Mariusz Bechta and Leszek Żebrowski (Siedlce: Związek Żołnierzy Narodowych Sił Zbrojnych, 1997), 196-223; Anna Wasak, "Tajemnica kąkolewickich lasów," *Nasz Dziennik*, 13 June 2003.

December 30, 1944. His underling, Lieutenant Witold Engelking (“Prot”), was captured on November 7, 1944, and beaten to death shortly after.⁶⁰ In the fall of 1944, AK soldier Irena Antoszevska-Rembarzowa was interrogated by the NKVD in Lublin. Although pregnant, she was ordered to strip and when she refused, her Soviet interrogator beat her on her head until she fainted.⁶¹

In February 1940, Father Michał Pilipiec (“Michał”) volunteered for the underground Union of Armed Struggle (ZWZ), and later the AK. First, he was a chaplain of the Błazowa outpost and later he became the head chaplain for the Rzeszów sub-district (obwód). Father Pilipiec continued his underground activities under the Soviet occupation until he was arrested by the NKVD and Polish Communist secret police led by Zygmunt Bieszczanin on December 3, 1944. He was brutally tortured at the Lubomirski Zamek prison in Rzeszów. He shared his cell with AK soldiers Dominik Sobczyk, Stanisława Rybka (“Szpak”), Józef Bator, and Jan Szela. On December 7, Father Pilipiec was sentenced to death along with his cellmates. The prisoners were shot the same day, except for cadet officer Rybka who escaped from the place of the execution and left the following account of torture:

The priest was unable to stand on his own. We helped him to reach his straw mattress. Then we put him down on it. He was terribly massacred. His cassock was torn in many places. There were wounds all over his body. The skin on his head was broken and a stream of blood dripped from it. He writhed in pain. This must have been some incredible pain as the priest was unable to refrain from crying and moaning.⁶²

In March 1945 the Communist secret police boss of Radom, Jan Byk aka Czesław Borecki, arrested the wife of AK-WiN Captain Stefan Bembiński (“Harnaś”). To force the woman to reveal the whereabouts of her husband and his confederates, Byk “beat me with a flat of his hand on my face, breaking my teeth.”⁶³

On April 18, 1945, the NKVD and the UB seized a few soldiers of the NZW’s Emergency Special Action (*Pogotowie Akcji Specjalnej – PAS*) in Lubaczów, including Lieutenant Konstanty Kopf (“Zawisza”). After three

⁶⁰ Kister, *Komenda Okregu Lublin*, 150-51.

⁶¹ Adam Kruczek, “Bohaterki Lubelszczyzny,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 21 August 2002.

⁶² Zbigniew Lazarowicz, “Ksiądz Michał Pilipiec ps. “Ski” – Męczennik za Wiarę i Ojczyznę,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 5-6 April 2003.

⁶³ See Danuta Suchorowska, *Rozbić więzienie UB! Akcje zbrojne AK i WiN, 1945-1946* (Warszawa: Agencja Omnipress, 1991), 80, 82, 164-65.

days in local jail, the prisoners were transferred to the UB headquarters in Rzeszów. Tortured from April through October 1945, Kopf recalled that:

The interrogation sessions lasted 24 hours. The UB interrogators applied a variety of physical torture. That included hitting the prisoner, suspending him tied from a bar, tearing off his fingernails, beating him on the soles of his feet, applying electric shocks during questioning, and putting him in solitary confinement [*karcer*]. This was a closed cell two meters by two with a large, round hole in the middle leading to the septic tank down below which served as the main depository for refuse from the whole jail. The prisoner could only stand up in that cell and walk around that hole. The stench of feces and ammonia caused one's eyes to become infected. Standing caused one's legs to swell. If the prisoner was not able to withstand that kind of torture, he would fall into the hole and drown. There were also instances of the prisoner standing in that cell and they hosed him with water. The present writer was sentenced to 102 hours of solitary confinement.⁶⁴

In December 1944 and August 1946, in Nisko, the UB officer Stanisław Suproniuk arrested Lieutenant Skarbimir Socha (“Jaskółka”) of the NOW-AK-NZW. First in Nisko and then in Rzeszów, “Suproniuk beat me with a chain and his assistant Józef Orsa with the butt of his submachine gun.”⁶⁵ In April 1945 Suproniuk and his underlings arrested Janina Oleszkiewicz, the wife of the NOW-AK-NZW insurgent Major Franciszek Przysiężniak (“Ojciec Jan”). She was in an advanced stage of pregnancy. Oleszkiewicz was interrogated overnight and then taken out for a ride and summarily shot.⁶⁶ Other UB-men suspected of crimes at the Security Office in Nisko, include the Młynarskis, father and son.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Por. Konstanty Kopf ps. “Zawisza,” “Głowacki,” “Pewny,” “Więzienne echa,” *Szaniec Chrobrego* [Warszawa] vol. 19, no. 61-62 (227-28) (2002): 17-21, quote at p. 20. Lt. Kopf was sentenced to several years in jail in October 1945 but he was amnestied in 1947.

⁶⁵ See Wojciech Wybranowski, “Pan UB-ek chory,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 28 March 2001.

⁶⁶ In 1999 Suproniuk was decorated with the coveted Polonia Restituta Cross by the post-Communist President of Poland Aleksander Kwaśniewski. After a public outcry, the Cross was taken away from the UB man. Finally, in 2004 Suproniuk was charged with about 80 counts of torture of political prisoners in Nisko, Krosno, and Gdynia. See Krajewski, *Żołnierze wyklęci*, 225-26; Wojciech Wybranowski, “IPN skarży kata ziemi rzeszowskiej,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 9-10 March 2002; Wojciech Wybranowski, “Czy tarnobrzaska prokuratura chroniła pułkownika UB?” *Nasz Dziennik*, 19 March 2002; Wojciech Wybranowski, “Nazywali go – ‘Czerwona Śmierć,’” *Nasz Dziennik*, 23 October 2001; Maciej Walaszczyk, “Kat bez sądu,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 8 November 2001; Józef Matusz, “Podejrzany o torturowanie żołnierzy,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 27 April 2002; P.W.R., “Oficer UB bez orderu,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 25 October 2001; Mariusz Kamieniecki, “Odnaczony pod sąd,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 16 February 2004.

⁶⁷ Ryszard Młynarski eventually succeeded Suproniuk as the head of the office. His case is controversial because his daughter, Danuta Huebner nee Młynarska is Poland's European commissioner designated by

In August 1945 the secret police arrested Captain Kazimierz Moczarski, who served in the Home Army during the Nazi occupation and afterward in one of its clandestine successors, the Delegation of the Armed Forces (*Delegatura Sił Zbrojnych* – DSZ). Moczarski was also a liberal and a leader of the center-leftist Democratic Party (*Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* – SD). As Moczarski recalled, UB Colonel Józef Goldberg, aka Jacek Różański, “told me that... I would go through a ‘hellish interrogation’ – which really happened later.” Różański threatened the victim that he would receive the death penalty. He also explained that “we can always prove that you were a Gestapo agent because we have the blank originals of the official stationery of the Gestapo, their rubber stamps, and the like. We also are holding such former Gestapo members who will very gladly sign a post-dated file prepared by us that you were a Gestapo agent.” Although Moczarski was tortured horribly, he refused to confess his “crimes” but was nonetheless sentenced to death.

Subsequently, Moczarski enumerated forty-nine different types of torture he was subjected to by eight officers of the UB during the interrogation which lasted from November 30, 1948, to September 22, 1952. The torture included beating with a nightstick, a piece of wire, and a metal rod on Moczarski’s throat, nose, fingers, and feet; tearing out his hair (from his genitals, beard, head, and chest); burning him with cigarettes and candles (on his lips, eyes, and fingers); crushing his toes with jackboots; kicking his entire body; stabbing him with needles; injuring his rectum with a screw and a stool leg; forcing the prisoner to do sit-ups until he fainted; forcing the prisoner to run up and down the stairs for long periods of time; locking him naked in solitary confinement; depriving him of sleep for up to 9 days at a stretch and preventing him from falling asleep by periodically slapping his face; forcing him to stand at attention for hours with his hands raised; and depriving him of food and drink for days. Physical torture was accompanied by psychological torment. It included depriving Moczarski of any contact with his family; informing him alternately that his wife “whom...[he] loved very much” was either dead or cheating on him; writing on the forehead of this famous anti-Nazi fighter the word “Gestapo”; and, finally, locking him in a cell for almost a year with Gestapo men, including SS-General Jürgen Stroop, the executioner of the Warsaw ghetto. All these and other methods were employed to force Moczarski to talk.⁶⁸

the post-Communists. See Piotr Baran, “Ojciec Danuty Huebner nie chce wracać do Ubeckiej przeszłości,” *Super Express*, 27 October 2005.

⁶⁸ Moczarski’s chief tormentors were: Colonel Anatol Fejgin, Lieutenant Colonel Józef Dusza, Major Jerzy Kaskiewicz, Captain Eugeniusz Chimczak, Captain Adam Adamuszek, Second Lieutenant Tadeusz

In September 1945, the Communist secret police captured insurgent liaison Barbara Nagajewicz-Woś (“Krystyna”) of the AK-WiN unit led by Major Heronim Dekutowski (“Zapora”). Despite being tortured for three weeks, she refused to budge and was sentenced to 10 years in jail. According to an account of her torture in Lublin,

This was a terrible night. She was beaten. She screamed. . . . Investigating officer Maksymiuk beat her with a wire-tipped pole. He threw ‘Kryisia’ over a chair, pulled up her skirt, and whipped her. Then she was prostrated on the floor and the torturers poured cold water into her nose. She lost consciousness several times. ‘Will you talk?’ they asked her when she opened her eyes. She kept silent. ‘Whip her some more!’ Maksimiuk yelled. She was thrown back into her cell at 7:00am. She was completely covered in blood. . . . The beating and torture did not help. ‘Kryisia’ kept completely silent.⁶⁹

In September 1945 in Urzędów an UB expedition caught Mrs. Gajewska, whose son served in the AK-WiN “Zapora” unit. She was tortured in front of her other son, Stanisław, who was 15-years old at the time. UB Captain Pokrzywa attempted to force the boy to reveal the whereabouts of his brother: “Staś did not answer. The scream of his mother, who was being beaten, reverberated in his ears.”⁷⁰ The same expedition captured at the time several AK-WiN insurgents. They shot three, refused any medical help to two wounded guerrillas, and beat their three colleagues with wooden sticks in front of the villagers of Urzędów-Bęczyn who were forcibly herded to witness the execution.⁷¹

In September 1945, to discourage support for the insurgents, the UB men in Bielsk Podlaski beat a civilian suspect with a board studded with nails. Then they sent his bloody shirt to his wife as a warning, finally releasing her husband after a while. Consequently, the man told the insurgents: “Gentlemen, please do not stay at my farmstead! Forgive me! Or kill me! I can’t stand being arrested again.”⁷²

Szymański, Staff Sergeant Mazurkiewicz, and Sergeant Stanisław Wardyński. Sentenced to death in November 1952, Moczarski was held on death row for over a year. Only in January 1955 did he learn that his sentence had been commuted to life in October 1953. He was amnestied in April 1956 and exonerated in December 1956. Moczarski recalled his ordeal in a letter to his lawyer written at the time of his “rehabilitation” trial. See Kazimierz Moczarski, *Zapiski* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1990), 302-308.

⁶⁹ See Ewa Kurek, *Zaporczycy, 1943-1949* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Klio, 1995), 314 [afterward *Zaporczycy*]. This account is based upon Kurek’s interview with the victim.

⁷⁰ Kurek, *Zaporczycy*, 243. This account is based upon Kurek’s interview with the victim’s son.

⁷¹ See Kurek, *Zaporczycy*, 245-46. This account is based upon Kurek’s interview with the eye-witnesses.

⁷² Krajewski and Łabuszewski, „Lupaszka”, „Młot”, „Huzar”, 225.

In Łódź, the infamous security officer Major Adam Humer ordered his underlings to hold down the captured insurgent cryptographic expert, Second Lieutenant Maria Hattowska of the WiN. Then Humer stood on her chest and beat her on her crotch with a steel-tipped whip. Humer applied similar methods to another woman, the insurgent liaison Second Lieutenant Ruta Czaplńska of the NZW. Aside from torturing many suspects, he and his colleagues, including UB Second Lieutenant Tadeusz Szymański, beat to death at least one independentist, Tadeusz Łabędzki, whose “crime” was to have edited underground publications.⁷³

Between December 27, 1945, and January 26, 1946, the secret police launched an anti-insurgent expedition in the area of Drohiczyn. “Thirty-six persons were arrested. In many villages people were beaten and tortured on the spot. The secret police demanded the surrender of weapons by persons who often had none.”⁷⁴

From December 1945 through February 1946 the Communist counterintelligence officer Jerzy S. tortured Wincenty O., a Gulag survivor, in Koszalin. While serving under duress in Poland’s Communist military, Wincenty O. was denounced for spreading “enemy propaganda,” i.e. complaining about the system. Jerzy S. interrogated him at night, kicking his victim and beating him with a wooden club. The man confessed and was sentenced to 5 years in jail.⁷⁵

On January 13, 1946, uniformed secret police troops of the Internal Security Corps (*Korpus Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego* – KBW) raided Mężenin near Siedlce and Drohiczyn. They seized insurgent post commander Edward Gregorczyk (“Bonawentura”) and two of his soldiers, all of them seasoned anti-Nazi and anti-Communist fighters. Gregorczyk “was subjected to incredibly cruel torture. After he was terribly beaten, with his face massacred and his bones broken, the UBP and the KBW drove him around the area to force him to denounce members of the underground to

⁷³ Jan Ordyński, “Finał procesu stalinowskiego oficera,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 4 April 2002; Mikołaj Wójcik, “Był świadom swojej brutalności,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 4 April 2002; Jan Ordyński, “Dobra opinia od Różańskiego,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 5 March 2002; Jan Ordyński, “Był jeden Szymański,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 22 January 2002; Jan Ordyński, “Sąd Najwyższy nie zmienił wyroku,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 5 December 2001; AKA, “Zmarł Adam Humer,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 13 November 2001; Tadeusz M. Płużański, “Najnowsza historia humerowców,” posted at <http://www.upr.org.pl/mazowsze/serwis/arch/publ1.html>; “Już nie wyjaśni,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 14 November 2001; J.O., “Awans za zabijanie,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 13 October 2001; Agata Łukaszewicz, “Zła sława oprawcy,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 21 August 2001; Jan Ordyński, “Dręczył więźniów X pawilonu,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 24 April 2001; Krajewski, *Żołnierze wyklęci*, 221; Barbara Otwinowska and Teresa Drzał, eds., *Zawołać po imieniu. Księga kobiet – więźniów politycznych, 1944-1958*, vol. 1 (Nadarzyn: Vipart, 1999), 1: 111-113.

⁷⁴ Krajewski and Łabuszewski, „*Lupaszka*”, „*Młot*”, „*Huzar*”, 250.

⁷⁵ J.O. [Jan Ordyński], “Falszowali dowody i katowali,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 5 August 2003.

them. Gregorczyk refused to... [and] he was killed by functionaries the Communist terror apparatus... near Miężenin.”⁷⁶

In February 1946, in the county of Kraśnik, the NKVD and UB arrested several hundred independentist sympathizers in a massive sweep. They were then brought to the UB headquarters in Kraśnik. According to an underground dispatch,

Everyone is accused of [illegal] possession of weapons. However, because they do not have any weapons, no one confesses to possessing any. The UB tries to force an inculpatory confession. Namely, the detainee is laid out on a bench. Two UB-men or bolsheviks [i.e., NKVD] sit on him. One sits on his head and the other on his back. The third beats him on the heels of his feet with a walking stick. On average one receives 1,000 blows on the heels. After such an interrogation, the prisoner is unable either to walk or to stand because his bones are shattered. Another way [to extract confessions] is to pour water into one's nose. Apart from this they wave a gun before the prisoner's eyes and threaten to shoot him. In one instance, while issuing such threats, a shot was fired and shattered the knee of the person under interrogation.⁷⁷

In March 1946, following the assassination of a local Communist party apparatchik, the UB seized Albert Bil in Krzemień near Szczecin. Bil had been a Home Army soldier in the Wilno area but after mid-1945 he discontinued his insurgent activities and had nothing to do with the assassination. His arrest was an act of approximated terror, striking at a possible rather than actual culprit. Alfred Zimmerman supervised the interrogation of Bil. In the course of the interrogation of March 23, 1946, the AK soldier had six of his teeth crushed with a pair of pliers, needles jammed under his fingernails, and a chair leg jammed into his rectum. Finally, Zimmerman ordered that Bil be locked into “the barrel of truth,” a closed container half-filled with feces. After a while, the man confessed and was sentenced to 10 years.⁷⁸

On April 15, 1946, the secret police arrested Piotr Kosobudzki, an officer of the PAS NZW Łódź. He left the following account of his ordeal:

⁷⁶ See Krajewski and Łabuszewski, „Lupasza”, „Młot”, „Huzar”, 253.

⁷⁷ See “Meldunek sytuacyjny,” [no date, February 1946], in *Zbrodnie NKWD-UB*, ed. by Henryk Pająk (Lublin: n.p. [Retro], 1991), 242-44.

⁷⁸ Michał Stankiewicz, “Poszukiwani oprawcy i ofiary,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 25 March 2004.

The leading interrogator in our case was the Jewish officer Frenkel. His assistant was a muscular ape named Bocheński. Frankel sat behind the desk and asked questions. To stress his own seriousness, he played with a pistol. Meanwhile, Bocheński, foaming at the mouth, kept hitting me with a stick [*pała*] on my head, repeating one word over and over again: “talk, talk” or “sign it, sign it”.... One time Bocheński broke a police baton on my head, and then a massive chair. Finally, he beat me with a chair leg....

One of my tormentors, a Jew named Zajdel, had a magnificent way of proving false confessions right. He made me lay my hands down on the table and he hit me with a rod [*pręt*] on my nails. If I withdrew my hand, that meant to him that I was not telling the truth.

During that interrogation they often changed their tactics abruptly. They offered me a cigarette allegedly to calm my nerves. When I took a drag on it once, they would box me on my jaw so hard that the cigarette either was crushed between my lips or fell down. They dubbed this procedure, in the secret police swaggering jargon, “to let him smoke.”⁷⁹

Occasionally, Frenkel was capable of being perfidiously “kind.” While the tired executioner Bocheński rested on a chair, Frenkel “sympathized” with my plight: “Do you think it would be hard for us to announce that you died of blood infection?”⁸⁰

On May 14, 1946, the UB men of Łomża arrested the grade school teacher Halina Sawicka née Komorowska (“Jerychonka”) in Cwaliny Duże. At seventeen, the woman joined the independentist underground during the first Soviet occupation in 1939. She continued her clandestine activities against the Nazis. During the second Soviet occupation in 1945 she served as a local liaison of the National Military Union and as a distributor of the underground press. The search of her household failed to yield any incriminating material. Nonetheless, Sawicka was taken to Łomża where UB Lieutenant Elias Trokenheim and his men beat her on the soles of her feet and repeatedly hit her face, breaking two of her teeth. Then, the woman was summarily sentenced to death in a mock trial at the UB headquarters that lasted less than three minutes. Together with six other victims, Sawicka was stood against a wall to be shot. Unexpectedly, she and another prisoner, Domuratówna, were reprieved. However, the five men suspected of

⁷⁹ A play on words: “Dać mu popalić,” i.e. “kick the crap out of him.”

⁸⁰ Piotr Kosobudzki, *Przez druty, kraty i kajdany: Wspomnienia partyzanta NSZ* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo „Nortom,” 1997), 249-50. Kosobudzki was sentenced to two years in jail but escaped after 13 months. While being transported to another jail, he broke the window with his head and jumped out from a moving train. He hid until 1950. *Ibid.*, 251, 259, 296.

independentist activities were shot right then and there in front of the petrified Sawicka. Still, the woman refused to confess.⁸¹

In May 1946, the Resistance Movement of the Home Army [ROAK] unit of Wiktor Zacheusz Nowowiejski (“Jeź”) freed one of its soldiers, Edmund Morawski (“Lipa”), from a prison ward at the hospital in Przasnysz.⁸² The liberated insurgent was subsequently hidden at the farmstead of Kazimierz Chrzanowski. Morawski had his legs burned and smashed by the secret police and required urgent medical attention. His host recalled that the insurgent “had unhealed wounds on his feet and broken bones were protruding from his open wounds... Throughout his incarceration he was kept in a small cell. He was so exhausted by the interrogation that he was in a critical state both physically and psychologically.”⁸³

In Poznań, the Military Counterintelligence (*Informacja Wojskowa*) officers routinely tortured their prisoners. For example, between April and July 1946 Kazimierz S. was kept in a basement filled with cold water. His interrogators beat him with rifle butts and rubber truncheons and crushed his fingers in the door crack. The military counterintelligence also shot their prisoners summarily.⁸⁴

On June 18, 1946, the secret police caught Henryk Jarząbek (“Tolek”) of the Conspiratorial Polish Army (*Konspiracyjne Wojsko Polskie – KWP*). While making the arrest, the policemen killed his brother, Kazimierz. Subsequently,

I was taken to Kościszew and there at the manor house the so-called interrogation commenced. Among other things, they inserted my hand in the door crack, closing the door gradually on it and crushing my fingers. Then they pushed a needle under my

⁸¹ Sawicka was released shortly after but she was re-arrested on June 7, 1949. Again, she refused to confess and was let go. Meanwhile, the UB arrested her husband, who edited and disseminated an underground newsheet. He was subjected to torture and later sentenced to five years of forced labor in a coal mine. He served three years but upon his release he was denied employment as an “enemy of the people.” A dispatch by the Communist civilian authorities concerning her arrest misidentified Halina Sawicka-Komorowska as “Jadwiga Komorowska.” See UWB, WSP, do MAP, DP, 5 June 1945, APB, UWB, file 496, 103; Postanowienie, 2 September 1993, Sąd Wojewódzki w Łomży, file II Ko 250/93 (a copy in my collection); Halina Sawicka, interview by Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, Łomża, 19 July 2001.

⁸² In December 1945, Morawski led a successful rescue operation, freeing 14 insurgents from a militia outpost in Chorzele, and he participated in most operations of Lt. Nowowiejski’s unit. Captured by the UB and tortured, he withstood torture initially but when his tormentors threatened to kill him, Morawski feigned willingness to collaborate. He was therefore transferred to a prison ward of the local hospital to recuperate. However, Morawski secretly sent a message out for help to his confederates and was freed by them in a daring action. See Krajewski et al., *Żołnierze wyklęci*, 129.

⁸³ Ryszard Juskiewicz, *Ziemia Mławska w latach 1945-1953 (Walka o wolność i suwerenność)* (Mława: Stacja Naukowa w Mławie im. Prof. Dr. Stanisława Herbsta, 2002), 79.

⁸⁴ See Wojciech Wybranowski, “Mordercy w wojskowych mundurach,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 23 August 2002.

fingernails. Next, I was taken to Piotrków Trybunalski, where at the Military Intelligence headquarters I was interrogated and constantly beaten with a whip.⁸⁵

In July 1946 in Gdańsk, the UB captured Danuta Siedzikówna (“Inka”). This seventeen-year-old girl served as a medic with the insurgent unit of Major Zygmunt Szendzielarz (“Łupaszko”). The UB men stripped her naked during the interrogation sessions. She was “beaten and abused.” The teenager stubbornly refused to confess. Later, “Inka” refused to beg for clemency. She was promptly sentenced to death and shot on August 28, 1946.⁸⁶

Antoni Jędraszek (“Żuk”) of the KWP was arrested in August 1946 by the UB in Pabianice:

The so-called investigation was conducted by several thugs, usually drunk, who bragged that they were ‘the Polish Gestapo.’ They were sadists without any conscience or consideration. They beat me all over my body... They beat me with their fists, a whip, and a stick. They kicked me. When I lost consciousness, they poured water over me. The fate of the victim depended on the mood of the UB men. Often they beat and tortured me for fun and pleasure, and to fulfill their bestial desires. One time during an interrogation session they beat me so much that I lost consciousness. I was dragged out on the corridor and doused with a bucket of cold water. After I regained my senses, wobbling on my feet, I attempted to get a drink of water. Then one of the torturers, called Obierzalek, kicked me and said: ‘for you, you fascist, there is no water in people’s Poland.’ They dragged me by my legs back to my cell.... As a result of such methods of total terror, a human being slowly became an inert mass of meat incapable of controlling his feelings and thoughts... Therefore the confessions, prepared by a secret policeman, were full of contradictions. This caused more interrogation sessions and torture and so on. Finally, one signed anything that one was given, without any reading, or

⁸⁵ See Appendix 3, “Wspomnienia Henryka Jarząbka ‘Tolka’,” in Roman Peska, *Pójdę do nieba bo w piekle już byłem: Konspiracyjne Wojsko Polskie “Buki” Obwód Łask 1946 rok* (Szczerców: By the author, 1996), 183-184 [afterward “Wspomnienia Henryka” in *Pójdę do nieba*].

⁸⁶ Danuta Siedzikówna was shot together with one of her superiors, Lieutenant Feliks Selmanowicz (“Zagończyk”). See Jerzy Morawski, “Lepiej, że ja jedna zginę,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 3 November 2000; Marek Domagański, “Kara śmierci dla sanitariuszki była krzyżacją niesprawiedliwa,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 19 October 2001; Piotr Szubarczyk, “Aż do ofiary życia mego,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 24-26 December 2001; Wiesława Siedzik-Korzeniowa interviewed by Marzena Michalczyk, “Zemstę zostawcie Bogu,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 8 February 2002; Maciej Walaszczyk, “Gdzie pochowano ‘Inkę’,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 18 February 2003; Krajewski, *Żołnierze wyklęci*, 391, 407, 410. Krajewski and Łabuszewski, „Łupaszka”, „Młot”, „Huzar”, 415-417.

making any corrections. Every correction or objection meant a new round of beating and torture.⁸⁷

The superior officer of Jarzabek and Jędraszek, Lieutenant Jan Nowak (“Cis”) was arrested on September 14, 1946. Subjected to cruel torture, Nowak confessed on October 11, 1946, and was sentenced to death. This sentence was later commuted to 15 years.⁸⁸

In October 1946 the UB arrested 18-year old Tadeusz Sikorski and his sister Władysława Sikorska-Żórawska of Lipinki near Tuchola. Both had served in the Pomeranian Gryphon (*Gryf Pomorski*) and, later, the AK; Tadeusz had also survived torture by the Gestapo and imprisonment at the Stutthof concentration camp. After the war the siblings cooperated with the unit of Władysław Heliński (“Mały”) which was subordinated to the “Łupaszko” squadrons. One of the partisans was arrested by the secret police and broke down during the interrogation, implicating the Sikorski family. During an earlier raid of their farmstead on June 3, 1946, the UB shot their older brother Jan, who was an insurgent commander. Next, the secret police seized Tadeusz and Władysława. The UB “beat [us] more than the Gestapo.” Both siblings were tortured and sentenced to jail. He received eight years, and his sister nine.⁸⁹

Upon his arrest, Piotr Woźniak, an officer of the AK and NZW, was first forced to stand at attention non-stop for 24 hours. Next, he was interrogated continuously for 72 hours. According to his memoirs,

When on the second day various methods of psychological pressure failed, Capt. Gajda and his superior... attacked me. I was hit on the face..., and again. I briefly passed out and my legs buckled but I did not fall. Then I received dozens of blows to my head, face, chest, and the entire upper portion of my torso. After a while I could not hear anything but buzz in my ears, pain in my head, and the room floated and fell with me. I think I was on the floor.... After a brief rest..., Gajda began to kick me with his jackboot on my shin, systematically from my foot up to my knee.... His face reflected either sadism or drug addiction. He was hitting me and smiled with a satanic grin as if deriving pleasure from the torture. After many blows, the skin on my legs was completely torn off. Gaping and bleeding wounds formed, and after a score of hours my legs swelled enormously. I could not

⁸⁷ See Appendix 2, “Wspomnienia żołnierza Armii Krajowej Antoniego Jędraszka (“Żuk”),” in Peska, *Pójdę do nieba*, 179-81.

⁸⁸ See Peska, *Pójdę do nieba*, 79.

⁸⁹ See Piotr Szubarczyk, “O bandytach trzeba meldować,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 21 May 2002; Krajewski and Łabuszewski, „*Łupaszka*”, „*Młot*”, „*Huzar*”, 505-506.

stand up although they were forcing me with kicks to do just that.... When that did not work and I continued to refuse to confess, they turned to another, more effective type of torture. They used a metal rod covered with rubber to beat me on the soles of my feet... I felt at that time that my brain would explode under my skull.... I could not get up on my feet, so I was crawling on my hands and knees. And then the *ubowcy* [UB-men] kicked me anywhere they could as if I were an inanimate object.⁹⁰

In August 1946, the UB apprehended Lieutenant Edward Bzymek-Strzałkowski (“Swoboda”), who led the intelligence arm of Freedom and Independence (WiN). He was tortured cruelly and, consequently, attempted suicide by plunging headlong from a third floor window at the police headquarters. Bzymek-Strzałkowski survived, albeit completely crippled. While delirious at the prison hospital in Cracow, he was drugged and his interrogators successfully forced him to confess his “crimes.”⁹¹ His liaison, Stanisława Rachwał (“Zygmunt”), was seized in Warsaw on October 30, 1946, and tortured for eleven months before being sentenced to death.⁹²

On October 23, 1946, after a fire fight, the KBW and UBP captured two wounded insurgents hiding at a farmstead near Tuchola, Pommerania. One of them, Bolesław Pałubicki (“Zawisza”) broke down under torture and provided his captors with the names of 35 civilian supporters who were promptly arrested.⁹³

Between November 1946 and January 1947, in Krosno, the secret policeman Bronisław P. “in order to force the arrested Jan M., a former soldier of the AK and member of the WiN, to talk beat him many times during his interrogation, forced him to sit on the leg of a stool, inserted his

⁹⁰ Piotr Woźniak, *Zapluty karzeł reakcji: Wspomnienia AK-owca z więzienia PRL* (Paris: Spotkania, 1984), 14-15.

⁹¹ Bohdan Urbankowski, *Czerwona msza czyli uśmiech Stalina*, 2 vols., Second edition (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Alfa, 1998), 2: 484.

⁹² Rachwał was one of the most intrepid underground fighters. The wife of a military and later police commissioned officer and a Piłsudskite, she was first arrested by the NKVD in Stanisławów in October 1939. After escaping from the Soviet zone, she joined the Union for Armed Struggle (ZWZ) in Cracow in January 1940. Rachwał was then caught by the Gestapo in May 1941. She withstood the torture and was bought out of jail by the underground. She was re-arrested on October 13, 1942, and shipped off to Auschwitz on December 1, 1942. She continued her underground work in the camps, including Ravensbrück and Neustadt-Gleive. Liberated by the British in May 1945, Rachwał returned to Poland where she re-joined the underground (DSZ-WiN Intelligence Brigades). She was recognized in Warsaw by UB Colonel Leon Ajzen-Andrzejewski whose wife, Krystyna Żywulska, was her campmate in Auschwitz. On September 29, 1947, Rachwał was sentenced to life but during her next trial, on December 30, 1947, she received a death sentence, which was however changed to life by an act of clemency on February 14, 1948. On May 10, 1955, her sentence was reduced to 15 years but, finally, Rachwał was released during the amnesty on October 30, 1956. See Filip Musiał, “Stanisława Rachwał,” *Zeszyty do historii WiN-u*, vol. 11, no. 17 (June 2002): 301-305.

⁹³ Krajewski and Łabuszewski, „*Lupaszka*”, „*Młot*”, „*Huzar*”, 476-78.

fingers in a door crack and then he [the secret policeman] would slam the door.” In the case of the AK soldier Jan G., the security man “beat him with a cable until the man fainted, ... forced him to hop around while holding his ankles,” and forbade him “to use the toilet.” He also dragged his victim by the ankles down the stairs.⁹⁴

On December 21, 1946, the UB arrested the peasant Aleksander Florczuk of Kolonia Kamieńczyk. He was tortured and confessed that for one night, on December 12, 1946, he sheltered and fed a 12-man strong insurgent detachment of Captain Władysław Łukasiuk (“Młot”) of the AK-WiN. On December 23, 1946, Florczuk was formally charged and shot the following day, Christmas Eve, following a “trial” that lasted an hour.⁹⁵

Henryk Łoś (“Tur”) served in the AK-NOW-NZW units of Second Lieutenant Stanisław Pelczar (“Majka”) and Józef Zadzierski (“Wołyniak”). In January 1947,

I went into hiding. The militia and the NKVD observed my house and when I came by once they arrested me and took me to the [police] post in Krzeszów. They beat me there, mostly with an iron rod on the soles of my feet. I was only able to stand on my toes. They tied up my hands and legs and suspended me on a beam. They poured water into my nose and gagged my mouth.... The militiamen [Jan] Hasiak... and... [Jan] Tryka beat me the most.... I said to him [i.e. Tryka]: ‘I saved your life [by having freed him earlier from insurgent captivity], and you are beating me.’ It made no impression on him.⁹⁶

The secret police subjected Mirosław Ostromecki of the NSZ to sleep deprivation, starvation, psychological torture, and beating. After falling seriously ill, the victim was hospitalized only to be abruptly taken out of the infirmary and thrown into a tiny, freezing cell with a low-ceiling filled with excrement. Ostromecki soon confessed and was sentenced to death. His sentence was later commuted to life in prison.⁹⁷

For participating in the underground scouting movement of the AK, Marian Barcikowski was imprisoned by the Nazis in Pińczów in 1944. Two years later he was arrested by the UB and NKVD and incarcerated in the

⁹⁴ See mat, “Bił kablem do utraty tchu,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 31 October 2001; Józef Matusz, “Podsądny mówi o barbarzyństwie,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 25 April 2002; “Ubek przed sądem,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 25 April 2002; Akt oskarżenia przeciwko Bronisławowi P., posted at www.ipn.gov.pl.

⁹⁵ See Maciej Podgórski, “Sprawiedliwość stalinowskiego kancelisty,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 3 April 2002.

⁹⁶ See the account of Henryk Łoś in Danuta Wraga-Ruszkiewicz, *Czas lęku i nadziei* (Kraków: Fundacja Centrum Dokumentacji Czynu Niepodległościowego, Księgarnia Akademicka, 2000), 114.

⁹⁷ See Akta sprawy Mirosława Ostromeckiego i towarzyszy, AHMSW, WSR, file Sr 78/47; “Pamięci Mirosława Ostromeckiego,” *Szczerbiec* [Lublin], no. 10 (January 2000): 74-90.

same jail along with some friends. “The interrogation methods we were subjected to were more refined than those of the Gestapo. The ‘arguments’ used during the interrogation sessions included: the leg of a chair, a hard rubber truncheon, the rifle butt of a sub-machine gun, being kicked all over our bodies, and being beaten by fist. Each time we were tortured until we lost consciousness.”⁹⁸

Between 1946 and 1948 UB man Józef S. of Rzeszów tortured at least 20 insurgents of the AK-WiN and NOW-NZW. Beating and kicking his victims was the norm as was food and sleep deprivation. Józef S. further delighted in stripping his prisoners naked and exposing them to extreme winter conditions in an unheated solitary cell.⁹⁹

On May 8, 1947, Cavalry Captain Witold Pilecki was seized by the UB. Pilecki fought the Nazis in 1939 and joined the underground afterwards. In 1941 he volunteered to be arrested and sent to Auschwitz, so he could report to his superiors about the camp. Eventually, Pilecki escaped from the camp and fought the Germans as a Home Army officer. Taken prisoner, he survived a POW camp and joined the Free Polish Forces in the West. Dispatched back to Poland, he was promptly arrested and charged with espionage. The UB men not only tore off his fingernails but also beat him, starved him, and held him in solitary confinement. Following six months of brutal interrogation, on November 4, 1947, Pilecki confessed to being a “Gestapo agent” and a “spy for [General] Anders.” He was shot soon after.¹⁰⁰

In July 1947 the secret police arrested a prominent Nationalist politician, Adam Doboszyński. His only “crime” was that he returned from the West hoping to persuade the insurgents to cease their armed struggle. Instead, the Communists accused him of being an American and British spy and, of course, “collaborating with the Hitlerites,” an absurd charge in the light of Doboszyński’s anti-German ideology, exemplary anti-Nazi combat record, and the fact that between 1940 and 1945 he served with distinction in the Polish Armed Forces in France and England.¹⁰¹ Before he was shot for

⁹⁸ See Marian Barcikowski, “Katowani przez UB,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 4-5 August 2001.

⁹⁹ Dorota Angerman, “Ubek przed sądem,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 1-2 February 2003.

¹⁰⁰ The interrogators of Pilecki were: Colonel Józef Różański, Colonel Roman Romkowski, Lieutenant T. Słowianek, Lieutenant S. Alaborski, and Lieutenant E. Chimczak. See Krzysztof Pilecki, *Był sens walki i sens śmierci* (Bydgoszcz: Towarzystwo Miłośników Wilna i Ziemi Wileńskiej, 1998), 100; Krajewski, *Żołnierze wyklęci*, 114; Jan Ordyński, “Prokurator oskarżony o zbrodnię sądową: Śledztwo IPN w sprawie śmierci rotmistrza Pileckiego,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 24 September 2002; J.O., “Prokurator na ławie oskarżonych: Tragiczna historia rotmistrza Pileckiego,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 1 April 2003; Maciej Walaszczyk, “Zakwestionował skład sądu,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 13 May 2003.

¹⁰¹ See Jerzy Kułak, “Inżynierowie dusz,” *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 10 (October 2002): 26-28.

his “crimes,” the politician informed the court about his ordeal with the secret police:

The moment came when the interrogating authorities presented the charge of my [alleged] collaboration with the German intelligence service... I resisted for a long time and I did not want to confess to something that is not true... I continued to struggle. Then they applied physical pressure against me.... I was beaten and tortured for four days and nights non-stop... After four days and nights, seeing that at best the torment will ruin my health, and therefore even an acquittal would be worthless, I decided to confess to deeds that I had never committed and to withdraw my confession at the first opportune moment, i.e. during the first public trial.... The investigation lasted two more years. I had to continue incriminating myself because they threatened that the torture would start again.¹⁰²

Second Lieutenant Michał Biebrzyński (“Sep”) of the NZW Łomża surrendered to the Communists during the amnesty in April 1947. He was arrested on September 5, 1947, tortured, tried, and sentenced to death, but later had his sentence commuted to life. Bierzyński recalls his ordeal at the Security Office in Łomża

One night sometime in October or November the doors to my cell opened... “Get out,” they told me. They did not take me upstairs anymore but to an empty room downstairs. There were whips, sticks, chains, and handcuffs hanging on the wall. There were two wooden support beams [*kozły*] standing there, and a long log. They tied my hands. They pulled up a chair and made me sit on it. They placed my knees between my legs and inserted the log under my knees. There were four thugs.

“Up!” They shouted. They lifted me up and I immediately turned upside down. Then they rested each end of the log on the support beams. And I was dangling down on it. It started to hurt me so much that I asked them to kill me:

“Shoot me, gentlemen, do not murder me this way.” After a while I heard a noise and next thing I felt was that they were shoving a funnel into my nose. And they were pouring something into it. Well, I was convinced I was drowning. Water kept streaming out of my ears and everywhere. They were yelling but I could not hear exactly. I only heard: “Confess, confess, you bandit!” Then they kicked me a few times and threw me down on

¹⁰² Adam Doboszyński quoted in Wojciech Jerzy Muszyński, “Doboszyński Adam Władysław,” *Encyklopedia “Białych Plam”*, vol. 5: *Demokracji “kult” – Eutanazja* (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2001), 5: 87.

the floor. I was untied, dragged on the floor, and propped up against the wall. The rest of the water flew out of me and they asked me:

“OK, are you going to confess?” That’s how it’s going to be all day long. “You are to denounce everyone. Where is the county commander? Where is the district commander? Where is your contact place? Where are your hiding places? Tell us everything!” I did not tell them anything however because I knew that after I surrendered all contact spots and contact people were changed.

Because I did not tell them anything, they fell on me. They beat me almost unconscious right away. Even before I answered, they beat me, and then beat me some more. When I came to, regained some of my strength, they lifted me up and one of them said: “Get out,” and again, holding me under my arms, they dragged me to my cell.¹⁰³

In November 1947 in Cracow, the UB captured Captain Franciszek Błażej, the propaganda head of the WiN. “He was beaten for so long that his body started to rot and gangrene set in.” The victim broke down and confessed.¹⁰⁴

A Catholic priest recalled his ordeal with the UB, following a ten-day long torture session:

At one point... I still reflexively comprehended the situation because, crying like a child, I stressed that my mother had taught me to do right and brought me up to be an honest man. Finally, however, I broke down and testified that I was indeed a spy. I confessed to such nonsense that my confession reflects best that I was not of a right mind.¹⁰⁵

Secret police Captain Roman Laszkiewicz, dubbed the “white executioner of the Mokotów jail” (*biały kat Mokotowa*) by his prisoners, handled the case of Andrzej Leśniewski, who was an opposition PSL journalist and a former AK officer. Leśniewski was framed in a scheme involving a non-existent underground group, contrived in a classical secret police provocation in October 1947. Laszkiewicz interrogated Leśniewski and his father Wiktor. The son was beaten and kicked as well as forced to do hundreds of sit-ups and to stand naked at attention in sub-zero temperature.

¹⁰³ Michał Biebrzyński “Sep”, “Sfingowany wyrok,” *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 11 (November 2002): 65-66.

¹⁰⁴ Paweł Wroński, “Prawda o WiN-ie,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 15 June 2001.

¹⁰⁵ Father Rudolf Adamczyk quoted in Jan Żaryn, “Postawy duchowieństwa katolickiego wobec władzy państwowej w latach 1944-1956,” in Szarota, *Komunizm*, 294.

The father was interrogated non-stop for 100 hours. “The torturers broke his fingers and beat him with a baton and a steel rod.” Also, the AK-NOW officer and nationalist politician, Leon Mirecki, was beaten with sticks and wires and forced to stand naked at attention in a freezing cell without any windows by UB Lieutenant Colonel Józef Światło.¹⁰⁶

In Warsaw, in August 1947, the UB arrested Jan Radożycki of the AK and the SN, who had been active in Sanok. Radożycki was questioned by two security men:

they began to beat me on my back, face, and hit my head against the wall, while swearing at me horribly. Finally, I was made to sit on the leg of an upturned stool in such a manner that it jammed against my hind bone, which caused me great pain. After a short while, I fainted and fell on the floor. They poured cold water over me and sat me down once again on that leg. As before, I fell to the floor.... I decided to confess to belonging to the SN [but refused to name names]... Therefore they started to beat me all over the place.... and to stomp on my toes with jackboots. They also forced me to do sit-ups. Finally, they locked me up in the so-called nest [*dziupla*]. That was a small chest where one could not move for lack of space... I spent about 24 hours there which brought me to the edge of my sanity. I prayed, I thought about various things, but I was about to break down... The following day... they beat me again everywhere; they stood me at attention with my hands up until I fainted. They forced me to do sit-ups and, finally, they put me on the stool leg which, as before, caused me to faint and fall to the ground.¹⁰⁷

Arrested in the fall of 1947, after he had surrender during an amnesty, Major Zbigniew Kulesza (“Młot”), a leading NZW commander from Northern Mazovia, underwent mostly psychological torture. Marathon interrogation sessions and sleep deprivation were the norm. He was tortured physically only three times, including once almost fatally, which landed him in a prison hospital. However, to break down his resistance, the UB simultaneously interrogated and tortured his wife, Barbara, in an adjacent room. Kulesza was sentenced to life for “espionage.”¹⁰⁸

The secret police caught insurgent Major Hieronim Dekutowski (“Zapora”) in the fall of 1947. Dekutowski had been in the field since 1939.

¹⁰⁶ See Jan Ordyński, “Sto godzin przesłuchania bez przerwy,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 5 February 2002.

¹⁰⁷ See Jan Radożycki, “Przeżyłem by dać świadectwo prawdzie,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 14-16 April 2001. The victim confessed after a while.

¹⁰⁸ See Zbigniew Młot-Kulesza, *Śledztwo wyklętych* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Alfa, 1995), 18-26, 31-37, 43, 51-60, 67, 74-75, 99-106, 113-114, 124, 128, 134, 140-144, 152-154, 182, 226, 400.

He fought with the Free Polish Forces in the West and was parachuted as a commando into Nazi-occupied Poland in 1943. From 1944, he began fighting the Communists. Upon his capture by the UB, Dekutowski was tortured horribly and sentenced to death at a sham trial on November 15, 1948. The act of judicial murder was carried out half a year later. According to an account,

on the evening of March 7, 1949, the red executioners came to the cell in the Mokotów prison to get Major ‘Zapora,’ Hieronim Dekutowski, who was a commando [*cichociemny*] and a bearer of [Poland’s most coveted] *Virtuti Militari* cross. He was thirty years, five months, and eleven days old. He looked like an old man: grey hair, missing teeth that had been knocked out of his mouth [by the interrogators], broken nose, hands, and ribs. His fingernails had been torn off [during torture]. ‘We shall never surrender!’ he yelled sending his last message to his fellow prisoners. According to documents, the sentence was carried out by shooting.¹⁰⁹

Between January 1947 and December 1949 in Wieluń, UB officer Tadeusz R. tortured at least six persons connected to the insurgent Conspiratorial Polish Army (KWP), including Stefan Kaczmarek, Franciszek Gašior, Józef Musiał, and Antoni Teodorczyk. The prisoners were beaten with “a fist, a stick, a steel rod and other tools all over their bodies. Some of them were placed in a cellar, which was filled with water. Others were tied up and had water poured down their nostrils and throat until they fainted.”¹¹⁰

Father (Lieutenant Colonel) Józef Zator-Przytocki fought as a military chaplain in 1939. Later, he joined the independentist underground under the Soviet occupation in Stanisławów. He fled the NKVD in 1940 to the Nazi-occupied part of Poland, where he continued his clandestine activities in the Home Army in the Kraków area. After the return of the Soviets to Poland in 1945, Father Zator-Przytocki escaped to Gdańsk. He was arrested by the UB on September 5, 1948. Tortured horribly (including beating and isolation in a cell where the temperature was below the freezing point), he refused to break down. His faith guided him: “I’m a soldier of the Catholic Church. I must always and everywhere maintain an inner balance. I cannot give in to pessimism. I must endure everything with calm.” He survived his imprisonment albeit with greatly damaged health.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Kurek, *Zaporczycy*, 375.

¹¹⁰ See Akt oskarżenia przeciwko Tadeuszowi R., posted at www.ipn.gov.pl; and Anna Surowiec, “Oprawca z UB skazany,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 25 July 2002.

¹¹¹ Quoted in Anna Kołakowska, “Żołnierz Kościoła,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 26 September 2002.

Home Army soldier Waław Gluth-Nowowiejski joined an informal university student group called “Keep Smiling” in Warsaw. He discontinued armed struggle out of deference to his mother: Waław was the only surviving of four siblings, three of his brothers having been killed during the war. Further, he sustained a serious wound in his forearm during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. Gluth-Nowowiejski nonetheless maintained a loose contact with his comrades in the anti-Communist insurgency, caching weapons for Wojciech Kostkiewicz of the WiN “Orlik” unit in May 1948. Soon after, the UB captured Kostkiewicz and tortured him into revealing fifteen persons who had assisted him. Gluth-Nowowiejski was seized in November 1948. The secret police falsely assumed that “Keep Smiling” was a Western spy group. The UB men forced Wiesław to do sit-ups, kicked him, and beat him. When Gluth-Nowowiejski was unable to stand the torture anymore, he would shield his head with his wounded forearm. A blow to the wound invariably assured an immediate loss of consciousness. He was sentenced to eight years in a show trial.¹¹²

In 1948 in Starachowice UB Lieutenant Marian N. tied up and suspended naked from the ceiling more than a dozen AK and WiN soldiers whom he tortured. Aleksander W., Henryk K., Marian P., Tadeusz M., Zdzisław M., Paweł S., Zbigniew I., Jan T., Zygfryd K., Mieczysław T., Mieczysław W., Aleksander K., Jan M. and others were also beaten with a truncheon and a chair, deprived of food and sleep, forced to sit on a leg of an upturned chair, and tied with a wire to a window. The UB officer also jammed needles under their fingernails. As a result, some of them confessed to their crimes and were subsequently sentenced by a Communist court. At least four of them received the death penalty and were shot.¹¹³

In April 1948, the secret police seized AK-WiN post commander Franciszek Słowik (“Smoła”) of Chwałowice near Tarnobrzeg. Słowik, who was also a populist activist (PSL), recalled his experience as follows:

The prison cells of the Tarnobrzeg UB were simply moldy and damp basements and dungeons without any windows or beds. One slept on the cement. There was a barrel in the corner where one relieved oneself. It was emptied every few days. One had trouble breathing because of the stench and odor of the wet and unventilated prison cells as well as the smell of the decomposing feces. The screams and moans of the individuals tortured and

¹¹² Waław Gluth-Nowowiejski, “Na celowniku,” *Rzeczpospolita-Karta*, 1 March 2003, 12-14.

¹¹³ See Mirosław Wąsik, “Stan zdrowia byłego ubeka oceni komisja,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 16 February 2002; “Dwa lata dla śledczego,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 8 July 2004; Akt oskarżenia przeciwko Marianowi N., posted at www.ipn.gov.pl.

maltreated under interrogation caused us to cower in the corner stressfully awaiting our own turn to be tortured. Our daily allotment of food consisted of a piece of plain bread, half a liter of coffee, and a helping of rye kasha that we had to eat out of an old tin can.... We had no spoons at all. I spent five long weeks in the dungeons of the UB in Tarnobrzeg... I was subjected to brutal and even sadistic interrogation. Beating was a daily occurrence. Often the UB men applied an ingenious torture to me, for instance, the so-called ‘riding like Anders’ [*jazda na Andersa*]. It went as follows: the interrogated person was stripped naked and placed upon the leg of an upturned stool. So this was quite like in medieval times – one was impaled. Also, two or three secret policemen would get on me and beat the soles of my feet with a rubber truncheon or a wooden stick. The interrogators and their subordinates also specialized in beating the genitals..., tearing off fingernails, and crushing fingers. After each interrogation the victim was unable to return to the cell on his own. I still remember the names of some of the torturers: Sikora, Świdorski, Chudzik..., [and] Tworek.... After five weeks of relentless interrogation and torture, I confessed to everything they accused me of.¹¹⁴

Jan Wyszynski (“Jędrus”) fought in the insurgent “Huzar” unit. The secret police attempted to force Wyszynski’s brother Józef to reveal the whereabouts of the insurgents. According to him,

In 1948 I was arrested once again on account of the AK, because I knew where the partisans were hiding. The interrogation started. They stripped me naked, beat me unconscious with sticks, and kicked me. One of the Polish officers, or rather officers wearing Polish uniforms, sat on my head, and another on my legs.... On April 10, 1948, acting on the orders of [Russian] Lieutenant [Jan] Aleksiej, the KBW dismantled and destroyed our entire farmstead in Lubowicz: the house, shed, pigsty, granary, and barn.¹¹⁵

In April 1948, a secret police trooper forced a 12-year-old child to reveal the hiding place of his insurgent brother. On May 1, 1948, the KBW discovered weapons hidden at a farmstead in Radziszewo-Sieńczuchy. They tortured Mr. Komorowski. Although innocent, he was forced to denounce the owner of the secret cache. On May 22, 1948, following a fire fight, the police troops wounded and captured Tadeusz Domżański (“Rekrut”). He was

¹¹⁴ See Franciszek Słowik quoted in Mariusz Krzysztofiński, “Historia Franciszka Słowika,” *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 5 (May 2002): 77.

¹¹⁵ Krajewski and Łabuszewski, „*Lupasza*”, „*Młot*”, „*Huzar*”, 736.

tortured and denounced a number of insurgent supporters. Nonetheless, on July 15, 1948, he was sentenced to death and later shot.¹¹⁶

In 1948, the UB arrested Józef and Stanisław Naumiuk along with their father of Czeberaki near Parczew. All three had been AK soldiers during the war and later joined the WiN. The Naumiuks were tortured horribly at the UB headquarters in Radzyń Podlaski:

I even sat on an electric chair with some sort of an apparatus. They attached clamps to my hand and ear. Once they turned it on, blood flowed from every crevice in my body... They also pumped water into me. They suspended me upside down from a beam attached to the ceiling. They gagged my mouth and dunked my face in a bucket full of water. And I would freeze. They told me only to give them a sign that I had hidden weapons. When I did, they freed me and told me to sign my confession. I'd tear them up. So they continued to torture me. They poured kerosene into my brother's bucket [before they dunked his head in]. In comparison to that the beating all over one's body was pleasure.¹¹⁷

Józef Naumiuk persevered but his brother Stanisław broke down and confessed to having cached weapons for the insurgents. He was promptly tried and shot as a "bandit."

During several days in late July 1948 alone, the UB men interrogated Second Lieutenant Henryk Wieliczko ("Lufa") of the "Łupaszko" unit 22 times. Sometimes the torture sessions took place twice daily. After half a year of torture, the insurgent officer broke down, revealed at least 50 hiding places (*meliny*) of his civilian confederates, and confessed his own "crimes." However, Wieliczko refused to denounce any of his living comrades-in-arms. He was tried and sentenced to death on December 9, 1948. He was shot on March 14, 1949.¹¹⁸

At the end of 1948 the UB arrested Witold Orczyk ("Lipski") of the Union of Armed Struggle [*Związek Walki Zbrojnej – ZWZ*], Peasant Battalions [*Bataliony Chłopskie – BCh*], and, finally, WiN. He commanded the Słoszów post near Cracow. On January 19, 1949, Orczyk was brought back to his farmstead. According to his recollections,

my neighbors were forced at gunpoint to come to the farmstead. They were to tear off the roof from all the buildings. The pretext

¹¹⁶ Krajewski and Łabuszewski, „*Łupaszka*”, „*Młot*”, „*Huzar*”, 742, 745-46, 754, 756.

¹¹⁷ See Jerzy Morawski, "Teczki goryczy," *Rzeczpospolita*, 8 June 2002.

¹¹⁸ Krajewski and Łabuszewski, „*Łupaszka*”, „*Młot*”, „*Huzar*”, 865-67.

was to search for weapons and ammunition in the straw roofs.... The UB officer Siekiera smashed the floor in the kitchen and the living room and broke the windows and window frames with an ax. Another one climbed up to the attic and smashed the wooden ceiling with a hatchet.... At that point a provocation took place. The adjutant of Colonel [Teodor] Duda came up to me and showing me a piece of paper asked: ‘Do you know this?’ ‘I do not know what this is,’ I responded. ‘This is an identification card of a female Soviet parachutist, whom you murdered, and you hid her ID in your roof! Where did you bury the body? Talk!’ he commanded hitting my face. They threw me to the floor and began beating me with an iron fire-poker all over my body, on the soles of my feet in particular. After a while, they lifted me up, yelling: ‘Where did you bury her?’ When I regained my senses, I asked: ‘What kind of a parachutist carries an ID on her?...’ ‘You are so smart,’ he yelled, while hitting my face.¹¹⁹

Between April 1948 and April 1949, the secret police arrested 48 members of the underground Polish Military Organization (*Polska Organizacja Wojskowa* – POW). UB functionary Wilhelm A. tortured six of them in Sławno, Darłowo, and the adjacent localities. Torture included sleep deprivation, beating, and forcing the victims to sit on the upturned leg of a stool.¹²⁰

Izabella Kochanowska (“Iza”) served as a medic and liaison both in the AK-WiN “Zapora” unit and in the NSZ company under Captain Waclaw Piotrowski (“Cichy”) in the Lublin area. She was arrested on May 1, 1949. “Iza survived horrible interrogation sessions. She confessed nothing. She gave no one away.” Kochanowska was sentenced to six years.¹²¹

Between March and July 1949, two insurgents, Józef Olek and Stanisław Rydzewski, were beaten by the UB until they confessed to a murder they did not commit. This was done so that they and their commander, Roman Szczur (“Urszula”), could be tried as common bandits and executed in infamy.¹²²

In the summer of 1949, the UB captured Father Władysław Gurgacz and his underground soldiers. They were tortured horribly; most confessed to their “crimes.” Father Gurgacz chose to incriminate mostly himself to

¹¹⁹ See Witold Orczyk, “Rewizja-pacyfikacja,” *Zeszyty historyczne WiN-u*, vol. V, no. 8 (February 1996): 127-29. Orczyk’s farmstead was completely dismantled. The WiN soldier was sentenced to several years in jail.

¹²⁰ See Akt oskarżenia przeciwko Wilhelm A., posted at www.ipn.gov.pl.

¹²¹ See Kurek, *Zaporczycy*, 372.

¹²² See Tomasz Balbus, “‘Polski bandyta’ z Zamojszczyzny,” *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 11 (December 2001).

spare his followers. He was sentenced to death and shot on September 14, 1949.¹²³

From September 19 to December 19, 1949, secret police officer Janusz B. of Lębork tortured mercilessly teenage members of the Polish Underground Scouting organization (*Polski Skauting Podziemny*). “During multiple-hour night interrogation sessions he beat his victims all over their bodies, especially on their heads, while cursing them and threatening to kill them.” Likewise, secret police officer Jan L. meted out a similar treatment to the arrested members of the secret group “Lech” of the Home Army in Kłodzko near Wrocław.¹²⁴

Between October 1949 and April 1950, in Jarocin UB, Second Lieutenant Adam G. beat on the calves and soles of their feet Henryk A., Edward P., Marian B., and Wincenty J., who as members of the underground youth group White Rose (*Biała Róża*) had disseminated anti-Communist leaflets. The UB man also forced them to sit on the upturned leg of a stool.¹²⁵

In 1949, Tadeusz Kopański joined the underground Union of Active Struggle (*Związek Walki Czynnej*) in Cracow, which was a part of the Insurgent Army (*Armia Powstańcza*) in Wolbrom. He was arrested in 1950 and was subject to torture during numerous interrogation sessions at the UB headquarters at Monteluppi Street in Cracow, in Wronki prison, and in Jaworzno, a hard labor camp. According to Kopański, “they were beating me. I was forced to sit on an upturned stool. Its leg went straight into my rectum.... When they rushed into my cell, they beat me so much on my head and ears. I’m completely deaf on one ear and I use a hearing aid for the other. Blood kept flowing from my ears... I urinated blood.” To force him to talk, Kopański was also thrust naked into a bunker during the Christmas holidays. Later, having received a 10-year sentence, Kopański (along with other prisoners) was beaten upon his arrival in prison and frequently afterward “for fun” (*dla zabawy*) in the hard labor camp. The officers responsible for the torture were Krupa, the “Frenchman,” and Zieliński.¹²⁶

At the end of the 1940s and in the early 1950s, Major Mieczysław M. of the Military Intelligence in Gdynia tortured at least 22 sailors suspected of being “enemies of the people.” He beat them with his fist and a stick, crushed their fingers with a rifle rod, forced them to sit on an upturned stool

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

¹²⁴ See Wojciech Wybranowski, “IPN oskarża,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 18 September 2002.

¹²⁵ See Akt oskarżenia przeciwko Adam G., posted at www.ipn.gov.pl.

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

leg, doused them with water, and confined them to a tiny solitary cell where a prisoner was unable to stand up.¹²⁷

In Szczecin in 1949 and 1950, secret policeman Franciszek B. tortured at least two men suspected of underground activities: Waclaw B. and Marian D.¹²⁸ Also in Szczecin, between January 25 and February 4, 1951, the secret police arrested 15 members of the Youth Resistance Movement (Młodzieżowy Ruch Oporu – MRO), which had just barely begun functioning in Wolin, Rembertów, Ursus, and Warsaw. All suspects were tortured, forced to confess, and sentenced up to 10 years in jail. The most brutal secret police officer in the MRO case also dealt with a group of teenage scouts: The National Front of Polish Youth (*Narodowy Front Młodzieży Polskiej* – NFMP). Jan S. for instance “tore the hair out of Stanisław K.’s head, kicked him on the head, and broke his fingers.”¹²⁹

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, in Gdynia, the Communist military counterintelligence officer Mikołaj Kulik made sailor Franciszek Branecki stand on one leg for long periods of time. Further, Kulik beat petty officer Tadeusz Korba with a whip and forced sailor Kazimierz Sabadasz to sit on the stool leg and on an upturned bottle. He also beat sailors Janusz Kumik and Tadeusz Mosiej. (Both were later sentenced to 15 years for having listened to Radio Free Europe.) Tadeusz Rogoziński recalled that after Kulik deprived them of water he and his fellow prisoners were forced to drink their own urine. Mieczysław Albrychowicz testified that Kulik and Lieutenant Mieczysław Mocek suspended him from a beam with his hands tied behind his back.¹³⁰ According to Włodzimierz Sobański, who was arrested in May 1949, Kulik

immediately addressed me in a vulgar manner and then asked:
‘What band did you belong to?’ I responded that I belonged to

¹²⁷ See Piotr Adamowicz, “Kara po pół wieku,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 15 November 2000.

¹²⁸ “IPN: Zbrodnia sądowa,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 16 January 2003.

¹²⁹ Wojciech Wybranowski, “Dzieci ‘wrogami PRL’,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 7 January 2003. Jan S. was finally indicted in 2005. See “Znęcał się nad zatrzymanym,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 18 May 2005. For the recollection of an MRO member see Edmund Radziszewski interviewed by Maciej Walaszczyk, “O działalności Młodzieżowego Ruchu Oporu,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 7 January 2003. According to Radziszewski, the Mazovia branch of the MOR had about 30 members, mostly high-schoolers. They were active between 1948 and 1950, when the secret police destroyed their organizations. At least 4 managed to flee to Wolin, where they continued their activities, recruiting new members.

¹³⁰ See J.O. “Kulik: Dziennikarze to psy,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 2 February 2002; Agata Łukaszewicz, “Relacje prasowe w interesie społecznym,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 11 December 2001; J.O., “W informacji elegancji nie było,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 17 November 2001; J.O., “Świadek był wieszany pod sufitem za ręce,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 12 October 2001; Jan Ordyński, “Kielbasa dla ‘dobrze’ zeznających,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 29 September 2001; J.O., “Enkawudzista numer jeden,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 13 June 2001; J.O., “Chamstwo i choroba Kulika,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 2 February 2001; Maciej Walaszczyk, “Stalinowiec w areszcie,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 23-24 March 2002.

none. He told me that we would see and ordered me to approach him. I came up to his desk and he hit me with the flat of his hand on the ear. Then, he hit me again. So I kicked him. He kicked me back on my stomach. Then the guards led me down to the cell.¹³¹

Between September 1949 and May 1950, in Bielsk Podlaski, UB Second Lieutenant Paweł T. tortured Szczepan Jan C., who was suspected of supporting the underground. The prisoner was beaten all over his body, deprived of sleep, and forced to sit on the leg of an upturned stool.¹³²

Home Army Major Julian Krzewicki was arrested in January 1948 in Gorlice for having passed on to a friend a single anti-Communist leaflet. Released quickly at first, he was rearrested on February 2, 1950.

I was interrogated with the use of the most imaginative torture non-stop for 14 days and nights in the Gorlice prison of the UB. The interrogators changed in shifts. I remained sleepless and almost completely without any food. I was beaten on my face and kicked on my legs and my kidneys.... I was often beaten by several tormentors at once.... They wanted me to confess that I belonged to the WiN, collaborated with the Germans, murdered Jews and Soviet prisoners, and hid weapons and ammunition... After 14 days of such torture I was hallucinating and losing consciousness.... Despite the torture, I refused to confess to the crimes I did not commit. Therefore on April 29, 1951, I was released from jail for lack of guilt.¹³³

In March 1950 in Gdańsk, the secret police arrested at least a dozen boy scouts, members of the underground Young Poland (*Młoda Polska*) group. The boys were interrogated non-stop and tortured. For example, Janusz Gielb, whose father, a Home Army soldier, had perished in Auschwitz, was beaten and had his toes crushed with the jackboots of the interrogating officers. Headed by Lieutenant Colonel Jan Amons, the UB men involved in the interrogation were: Edward Solański, Zygmunt Czaja, Leon Kwak, Waław Chrustowski, Roman Płużyński, Kazimierz Jackiewicz, Hieronim Wiewióra, Józef Śladewski, and others.¹³⁴

¹³¹ See Jan Ordyński, "Przeczytał Rzeczpospolitą i został świadkiem," *Rzeczpospolita*, 23 October 2001.

¹³² See Akt oskarżenia przeciwko Pawłowi T., posted at www.ipn.gov.pl; E.P., "2,5 roku więzienia dla byłego funkcjonariusza UB," *Rzeczpospolita*, 12 February 2003; Adam Białous, "Skazany komunistyczny oprawca," *Nasz Dziennik*, 12 February 2003.

¹³³ See Julian Krzewicki, "Wspomnienia," *Zeszyt Historyczny: Fundacja Studium Okręgu AK Kraków*, no. 3 (September 1998): 43-86, and, especially, pp. 84-85.

¹³⁴ See Piotr Szubarczyk, "Zginą ludzie słabej wiary," *Nasz Dziennik*, 8-9 June 2002.

In July 1950, dissident poet Wojciech Bąk was locked up in a psychiatric hospital, where the secret police beat him on the head and, in particular, on the part of his skull wounded during the Second World War. Bąk was never formally charged with any crime. The torture was a punishment for his intended demonstration during a congress of Polish literati, where he threatened to make an anti-Communist and anti-Jewish statement.¹³⁵

For four days straight, between October 22 and 26, 1950, an officer of the Krosno UB, Władysław B., beat Antoni B., while forcing him to do sit-ups and jump up and down.¹³⁶

Between October 24 and 27, 1950, in Elk UB chief Paweł T. tortured Witold S., who was accused of “spreading gossip-propaganda and listening to an American radio program.” The man broke down and incriminated his wife, who was involved with the underground. Halina S. was arrested and also broke down under the interrogation which continued non-stop for two days until she either committed suicide or was killed by the UB.¹³⁷

In 1950 in Bochnia, the UB functionary Stanisław B. routinely tormented arrested ex-Home Army soldiers. The torture methods applied included “beating with a rubber truncheon, cable or a steel line on the soles of their feet and elsewhere all over their bodies, hitting them on their heads with the butt of his gun, and threatening death.”¹³⁸

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

On January 20, 1951, UB Colonel Józef Światło arrested Bishop Czesław Kaczmarek of Kielce. His interrogation sessions, which lasted up to 40 hours at a stretch, were personally overseen by UB Colonel Jacek

¹³⁵ See Krzysztof Masłoń, “Nic prócz rękopisów nie wezmę,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 20 April 2002.

¹³⁶ See mat, “Bił kablem do utraty tchu,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 31 October 2001; Józef Matusz, “Podsądny mówi o barbarzyństwie,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 25 April 2002; “Ubek przed sądem,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 25 April 2002; Akt oskarżenia przeciwko Bronisławowi P.; and Akt oskarżenia przeciwko Władysławowi G., posted at www.ipn.gov.pl.

¹³⁷ See Akt oskarżenia przeciwko Pawłowi T., posted at www.ipn.gov.pl; E.P., “2,5 roku więzienia dla byłego funkcjonariusza UB,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 12 February 2003; Adam Białous, “Skazany komunistyczny oprawca,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 12 February 2003.

¹³⁸ J. Sad., “Ubek skazany na trzy lata,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 17 February 2005.

¹³⁹ PAD, „Dwa lata dla byłego ubeka,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 13 January 2005.

Rózański. The bishop was tortured. He lost 19 of his teeth because of the beating. His tormentors also kept him in a tiny dark cell; deprived him of food and sleep. Kaczmarek was charged with collaborating with the Nazis and was accused of taking part in the post-war pogrom in Kielce in July 1946, even though the ecclesiast was absent from the town at the time. The bishop broke down and confessed the untruth. He was sentenced to jail but, after 1956, his sentence was overturned.¹⁴⁰

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

Captured in the field in the early 1950s, Mieczysław Dudanowicz (“Ponury”) of the WiN was subjected to sleep deprivation, despite his injuries. He recalls that

I had a head wound, but I was interrogated non-stop, even at night. When I was talking, I was falling asleep but they effectively woke me up. I was so tired that I did not know what I was signing.... They kept asking me about my connections to Western states and the source of the inspiration for our unit.¹⁴²

In Przemyśl, the UB-man Jan S. interrogated Leszek W., a participant in the General Confederacy of Independent Poland (*Generalna Konfederacja Niepodległej Polski* – GKPN).¹⁴³ The secret policeman “beat Leszek W. with a wooden cane on his back near the kidneys. He forced him to sit for long periods of time on the leg of an upturned stool, shaking him so that the leg would enter the rectum of the interrogated man. Next, as the

¹⁴⁰ Jan Śledzianowski, *Ksiądz Czesław Kaczmarek biskup kielecki 1895-1963* (Kielce: No publisher, 1991), 64-66; Jan Józef Kasprzyk, “Kaczmarek Czesław,” *Encyklopedia „Białych Plam”*, vol. 9 (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2002), 99-105.

¹⁴¹ The victim fought in September 1939 and later joined the ZWZ, NSZ, AK, and, finally, NZW. See Leonard Zub-Zdanowicz rozmawia z Kazimierzem Poray-Wybranowskim, TMs, no date [1979?], the Zub-Zdanowicz Family Collection, Oakville, CT; Kazimierz Poray-Wybranowski “Kret,” “Wspomnienia z UB,” *Szczerbiec* [Lublin], no. 11 (June 2002): 71-120 posted at <http://195.117.61.186/users/mail0070/nsh/nshw07.htm>; Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, “‘Kret’ a sprawa polska,” *Lad*, 5 December 1993, *Dodatek historyczny* 12 (December 1993): IV.

¹⁴² Pasiuk, *Ostatni “leśni” Suwalszczyzny*, 127.

¹⁴³ Mariusz Kamieniecki, “Skazali ubeka,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 25-26 January 2003. In 2003 the UB man was found guilty and sentenced to 1 ½ years (suspended for 2 years) and a \$220.00 fine.

victim was screaming with pain, he [the secret policeman] forced onto his head a gas mask to increase the pain.”¹⁴⁴

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

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

Between March and May 1951, Józef R. and other secret policemen tortured Witold T. and his friends of the underground National Armed Forces of Young Poland (*Narodowe Siły Zbrojne Młodej Polski*). Aside from beating, Józef R. electrocuted, crushed the skull, and squeezed the genitals of at least one of his prisoners who consequently attempted to commit suicide. Between January and March 1954, in Koszalin UB, the very same officer Józef R. tortured several members of the underground KWP, including Henryk B. The UB man beat his victims with a truncheon, crushed their hands with his jackboots, and conducted marathon interrogation sessions during the night.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ See Dorota Angerman, “Podejrzany funkcjonariusz UB,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 29 November 2001. For more information on the Security Office in Przemyśl see Dariusz Iwaneczko, *Urząd Bezpieczeństwa w Przemyślu* (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2004); and an interview with Dariusz Iwaneczko by Mariusz Kamieniecki, “Kaci przemyskiej bezpieki,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 5 November 2004.

¹⁴⁵ Krajewski and Łabuszewski, „Łupaszka”, „Młot”, „Huzar”, 548 n. 8.

¹⁴⁶ In 2004 Wybraniec was sentenced to 6 years but he remains free, pending an appeal. See Jerzy Morawski, “Kat Zamojszczyzny,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 20 February 2002; Robert Horbaczewski, “Kat Zamojszczyzny nie stawiał się w sądzie,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 22 February 2002; Robert Horbaczewski, “Zbyt chory, by stanąć przed sądem,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 9 May 2002; Adam Kruczek, “Kpiny z sądu,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 9 May 2002; Adam Kruczek, “Kat Zamojszczyzny doczekał się wyroku,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 11 June 2004; Akt oskarżenia przeciwko Mieczysław W., posted at www.ipn.gov.pl.

¹⁴⁷ See Akt oskarżenia przeciwko Józef R., posted at www.ipn.gov.pl.

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

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

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

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

And indeed the investigative officer Kasza began yelling at me: “You prick,” “You whore.” He told me to talk because they know everything anyway. Officer Mederer hit me with his fist a couple

¹⁴⁸ See Krajewski and Łabuszewski, „Łupaszka”, „Młot”, „Huzar”, 844-45.

¹⁴⁹ See Stefan Kisielewski, *Dzienniki* (Warszawa: Iskry, 1996), 551.

¹⁵⁰ Wojciech Czuchnowski, *Blizna: Proces Kurii Krakowskiej* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2003), 17-21, 26, 38-42, 52-53 [afterward *Blizna*]; Wojciech Czuchnowski, “Krakowscy księża przed sądem,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, (2 parts), 9-10 and 16-17 November 2002; Krzysztof Masłoń, “Sąd nad Kościołem,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 1 February 2003.

¹⁵¹ Czuchnowski, *Blizna*, 45.

of times. He also liked to spit directly at my face. But otherwise they did not torture me.¹⁵²

Arguably, lay Catholic activist Stefania Rospond experienced the most ruthless treatment of all prisoners of the Cracow curia case for she refused to confess and held fast until the end. Nonetheless, she received six years in jail. Rospond recalls that

I remember those three months that followed my arrest until the trial started as a single, long interrogation session.... I fell on the floor; sometimes they dragged me to my cell and at other times they woke me up by kicking and beating me. The first interrogation session took place still at the UB headquarters. It lasted from Friday to Sunday past midnight, when I collapsed. During the first night about 30 functionaries took turn interrogating me. They rotated. They were male only. However, a woman performed a full body search on me. I kept telling them that I did not know anything and anybody. ... Hitting me on my face, sitting on a leg of a stool, standing at attention for 48 hours straight until one collapsed. Then I was taken to the solitary cell [*karcer*]. At times, I started hallucinating; some kind of visions appeared before my eyes. They extinguished their cigarettes on my hands and on my face.... I do not remember the names of the interrogators but I can still see their faces today. They probably thought that if they took a simple peasant girl and threatened her, she would talk and implicate others.¹⁵³

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

In Nowy Sącz, led by UB Lieutenants Stefkowski and Popiołek, the secret policemen suspended suspects on a hook and beat them with a whip. They inserted the fingers and genitals of their victims into desk drawers and

¹⁵² Czuchnowski, *Blizna*, 44.

¹⁵³ Czuchnowski, *Blizna*, 43-45.

¹⁵⁴ Sebastian Bojemski, *Poszli w skier powodzi: Narodowe Siły Zbrojne w Powstaniu Warszawskim* (Warszawa: Glaukopis, 2002), 276-77.

slammed them. They also jammed pencils and needles under one's nails, according to one of the victims, Władysław Małek of the WiN.¹⁵⁵

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

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

Conclusion

The evidence presented here strongly suggests that torture was not only an acceptable but also a desirable method that allowed the Communist masters of Poland to project their power onto the conquered political opponents and the population at large. Torture was intended to weaken the victim physically and psychologically. The act of confession was an indispensable element of the process because it broke the spirit of the victim.

¹⁵⁵ See Marek Dereń, “Niemy krzyk murów,” (3 parts) *Nasz Dziennik*, 17-18 November 2001, 26-27 January, and 2-3 February 2002.

¹⁵⁶ Krajewski and Łabuszewski, „*Lupaszka*”, „*Młot*”, „*Huzar*”, 821.

¹⁵⁷ Wojciech Wybranowski, “Czeka ich sąd,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 25 February 2003.

Notwithstanding whether the prisoner was confessing the truth or not, by yielding to the interrogator the victim often became a mental slave who could now be made to obey most of the bidding of his Communist master.

The cases presented here are just the tip of the iceberg. For example, in November 2002, the Katowice Office of the Institute of National Remembrance announced that it was investigating 36 cases with multiple offenders and multiple victims of torture, as well as murder, perpetrated by the Communist secret police between 1944 and 1956.¹⁵⁸ These cases continue to multiply as historians discover new documents concerning the Communist crimes and newly emboldened victims and witnesses keep coming forth.¹⁵⁹

So far the focus has been overwhelmingly on the Stalinist period. However, in time it will undoubtedly shift to more recent events, including the suppression of “Solidarity.”¹⁶⁰ For restoring the historical record is inexorably tied to a larger question of moral and legal responsibility for the atrocities of Communist totalitarianism.¹⁶¹ If the Poles avoid addressing this

¹⁵⁸ See Ewa Koj, “Informacja o śledztwach w sprawach zbrodni komunistycznych,” *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 6 (June 2002): 26-28.

¹⁵⁹ Other investigations are under way as well. For instance, 29 prison guards have been identified who tortured Polish independentists in Rawicz prison near Poznań between 1945 and 1956. The most sadistic guards were the prison warden Kazimierz Szymanowicz, Jerzy Cymbalista, Bronisław Łukasiewicz, Bronisław Komar, Tadeusz Kulik, Jerzy Precel, Stanisław Bochenek, and Jerzy Utrata. Many of the 19,173 prisoners were abused, beaten, and tortured. Approximately 200 were killed through maltreatment, including most likely Kazimierz Pużak, Poland’s leading Socialist politician and a staunch anti-Communist. See Wojciech Wybranowski, “Dwudziestu dziewięciu oprawców: Śledztwo w sprawie tortur w więzieniu w Rawiczu,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 6 December 2004. Two secret policemen of Białogard (Mieczysław W. and Edward Ż.) have been indicted for torturing Sylwester D. at the local Security Office. See “Oskarżeni o zbrodnie,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 7-8 May 2005.

¹⁶⁰ The trial of secret policemen who tortured “Solidarity” activists in Konin during martial law in 1982 may be an early indication of such a trend. See Wojciech Wybranowski, “Tortury za ‘Solidarność’,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 13 March 2003; Wojciech Wybranowski, “Gra na zwłokę: Kolejne odroczenie w procesie funkcjonariuszy SB z Konina,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 16 May 2003. For as yet still unsuccessful attempts to hold Communist secret police accountable for various crimes committed during martial law see, Kazimierz Groblewski, “Winni są niewinni,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 13 December 2001; Grzegorz Majchrzak, “Jeden z filarów stanu wojennego,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 13 December 2001; “IPN: znęcał się nad zatrzymanym,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 16 March 2005; MA, “Zarzuty wobec byłego esbeka,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 29 April 2005; r.b., “IPN oskarża esbeków,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 5 May 2005; r.b., Michał Stankiewicz, “Internowali bezprawnie,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 11 May 2005; “Z powodu nieobecności obrońcy,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 10 May 2005; “Oskarżony nie przynaję się do winy: Proces Lubin ‘82,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 17 May 2005; “Śledztwo przeciw prokurator,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 25 May 2005; “Zarzuty dla esbeków,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 1 June 2005; “W obronie krzyży,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 8 June 2005; and on the lackluster prosecution of the policemen guilty of beating the protesters during the 1976 riots in Radom see “Proces ruszy od nowa,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 21 May 2003; as well as on similarly lenient handling of the perpetrators of the Baltic Coast massacre in 1970 see j.o., “Sąd usprawiedliwił Jaruzelskiego,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 10 May 2005.

¹⁶¹ In the case of torture of General Franciszek Skibiński of the Free Polish Armed Forces in the West, the authorities were “unable” to find a suspect, Colonel Władysław Kochan, for several months, even though he resides in a building literally next door to the court house and his address is listed. Kochan refuses to testify against the main accused in the case, Colonel Henryk O., and, instead, blames the practice of torture

and other ugly aspects of their past, they also will eschew debunking themselves from those practices in their public life.¹⁶² After years of pseudo-nationalistic symbolism created by the Communists through ruthless torture, false confessions, and mendacious propaganda, the Poles need to restore the proper meaning of the words “honor, patriotism, and independence.” Otherwise, they will cynically continue on the noxious path of false consciousness imposed on them by the Stalinists with dire consequences to their newly found freedom. For as Edward Peters aptly put it

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

on his own Soviet advisor, Colonel Anton Skulbashevskii, who left Poland for the USSR in 1956. See Jan Ordyński, “Naciskał aż przesłuchiwany chciał umrzeć,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 15 October 2003; Jan Ordyński, “Wiedział, że bito więźniów,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 12 February 2004. In a more complicated case, Poland’s authorities have been unable to prosecute several persons implicated in the judicial murder on trump-up charges of killing Jews, Communists, and Soviet POWs of General August Emil Fieldorf (“Nil”) of the Home Army. The persons involved in the sordid affair include Kazimierz Górski, Alicja Graff, and Witold Gatner, who reside in Poland, and Stefan Michnik and Fajga Mindla Danielak aka Helena Wolińska, who live abroad. A few participants in the murder lived unmolested until their recent deaths in independent Poland after 1989 (Igor Andrejew and Maria Zand-Górowska) or abroad (Beniamin Wajsblech, Emil Mertz, and Gustaw Auscaler). See “Investigation against Ms. Helena Wolińska-Brus,” posted at <http://www.ipn.gov.pl/index_eng.html>; Anne Applebaum, “The Three Lives of Helena Brus,” *The Sunday Telegraph*, 6 December 1998; Maria Fieldorf and Leszek Zachuta, *General “Nil”: August Fieldorf* (Warsaw: PAX, 1993); Andrzej Kaczyński, “Mord sądowy na szefie Kedywu,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 24 February 2003; Maria Fieldorf-Czarska interviewed by Małgorzata Rutkowska, “Liczyła się dla niego postawa moralna,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 22-23 February 2003; Anna Surowiec, “Nikt nie przeprosił,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 1-2 March 2003; Andrzej Kaczyński, “W szponach bezpieki,” *Rzeczpospolita-Karta*, 1 March 2003, 12-13; AKA, “Marcowe tematy,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 23 May 2003; Zenon Baranowski, “Zbrodniarze wyemigrowali,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 23 May 2003; Tadeusz M. Płużański, “Polski Pinochet: Czy dojdzie do ekstradycji Heleny Wolińskiej?” *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 15 June 2001; Tadeusz Kowalik, “Włodzimierz Brus: W czyścicu historii,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 24 August 2001; Tadeusz A. Płużański, “Prześladowczyni ‘Nila’ żyje w Anglii,” *Życie Warszawy*, 8 October 1998; Leszek Żebrowski, “Ludzie UB – Trzy pokolenia,” *Dekomunizacja i rzeczywistość* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Amarant, 1993), 51-60.

¹⁶² In a way, the ugly practices continue with impunity not only because of the lackluster effort to prosecute the torturers but also because they often enjoy state pensions and benefits far above anything that their surviving victims can dream of. Also, there is often no closure for the families of prisoners who were tortured to death or executed stealthily. Their bodies have not been found and the perpetrators steadfastly refuse to identify the secret burial grounds. See Wojciech Wybranowski, “Za umiłowanie Polski – kula w łeb!” *Nasz Dziennik*, 7 June 2005; Adam Białous, “Odnaleźć miejsca pochówku ofiar UB,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 8 June 2005.

¹⁶³ Peters, *Torture*, 187.

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