

knowledge, and solves the knotty problems in scientific research work and informs the people about development trends in world science and technology.

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Alternatives in Poland

Martyn Lowe

I. The Clandestine Press in Poland

Introduction

There were two periods of non-violent resistance in Poland : during the Nazi occupation of World War Two ; and during the period of Martial Law in the 1980s. There are many myths about World War Two, particularly when it comes to the question of non-violent civilian defence. Yet throughout Europe during the Nazi occupation some circa 9,000 clandestine newspapers were produced. The figures are both impressive and a testament to the efforts that ordinary people will make to resist evil. The statistics are truly amazing when you take into account the number of clandestine newspapers that were produced within individual countries during that period. In Belgium, Norway, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia and all Nazi-occupied countries, the clandestine press flourished.

So what has this to do with Radical Librarianship and information workers ? Plenty, I would argue, because the clandestine press in Europe shows just what can be done by those of us who work with information in both opposing oppression and in making social change. Perhaps I should start by explaining that that the last book in English that covered this subject was published in 1943 : Brome, Vincent, *Europe's Free Press - The underground newspapers of occupied lands described as far as the censor permits*, Feature Books, London.

I started my research on this subject over a decade ago and I calculate that it might well take me another decade to complete. My research has taken me to many archives throughout Europe and I have corresponded with many others. This article is just a taster of the results of my research. I hope to be able to write more

upon the subject within future issues of this periodical.

It has never been my intention to complete a definitive account of the clandestine press in Europe during the Nazi occupation. I have only set out to produce an introduction to the subject and to the various sources of information that exist. I also indicate where more research upon the subject might be carried out. In other words, my study is an introduction to the archives, bibliographies and facts which I have discovered to date. I hope that this work will be of use to the reader and that anyone who might have any additional information will contact me via the editorial address.

Nazi-Occupied Poland

When people think about the Nazi occupation of Poland they tend to remember the Warsaw Ghetto, Auschwitz (Oswiecim in Polish), the Warsaw Uprising and the tragic subjugation of the people. Yet there is a different story as to what went on in Poland during this period. A story that is well documented, but little known. A story of resistance and imaginative action.

The Poles established an underground state with its own courts and its own educational system. Some 9,000 people went through underground institutes of higher education in Warsaw alone, while universities operated clandestinely throughout the country. In 2,000 underground secondary schools, circa 65,000 children received education. Soup kitchens and relief centres operated openly.

Clandestine publishing was a widespread and successful resistance activity. In Warsaw 18 clandestine newspapers were established in 1939 ; by 1944 this number had risen to 166. Altogether some 1,400 clandestine titles were produced throughout Poland under the occupation. During the Warsaw Uprising, the clandestine press played an important role in spreading news and information to the population. At that time, there were approximately 130 clandestine daily newspapers with print-runs that varied between 1,000 and 28,000 copies. Within the Warsaw Ghetto alone there existed 46 different titles.

Titles of clandestine newspapers included : **Glospolski** (Voice of Poland) , **Warts** (The Watch), **Sprawa** (The Cause), **Insurekcja** (Insurrection), **Robotnik Waice** (Workers struggle), **Ajencja Prasowa** (Press Agency), and **Radio Londyn** (Radio London). There were also Byelorussian, Jewish and Ukrainian publications. On one occasion, a fake version of the official Nazi newspaper was produced, which contained uncensored news.

Clandestine publishing was not restricted to newspapers. Pamphlets and books were also produced. One example of these was **The Squadron 303** by Arkady Fiedler, which had a print-run of 4,000 copies. This was an account of the Battle of Britain. Although most of these clandestine newspapers were duplicated, some were also produced upon letter - press machines.

One of the most successful clandestine publishing activities of the Polish resistance was conducted by the Bureau of Political Information attached to the resistance organisation ZWZ. This project, known as "Action N", produced leaflets, newspapers, and pamphlets which appeared to originate in Germany, but which in fact were published in Poland. These publications were distributed throughout Germany by a network of agents, consisting mainly of railway workers, who left the literature in public places or posted it to individuals.

This ploy led the Gestapo to believe that dissident activity in Germany was much more widespread than was actually the case. Indeed, the Gestapo became convinced that some of the leaflets had originated in Munich, presumably from the White Rose Group. (It should be noted that the White Rose Group were distributing leaflets against the war, but the story of clandestine publishing in Germany is one that I shall return to in another article]

"Action N" publications helped to spread discontent within the German Army. The distribution of such works was a dangerous activity, and some of the railway workers who were involved in this work lost their lives as a result.

Poland During Martial Law

The period of Martial Law in Poland during the 1980s saw an upsurge in clandestine publishing. As during the Nazi occupation, those who engaged upon such activities ran high risks, not so much to their lives, but to their freedom. As within the previous period, it was the

humble duplicator upon which much of the clandestine press was produced.

The period of Martial Law lasted from December 1981 until December 1988. During that period many clandestine pamphlets, newspapers and books were published. According to the periodical **Voice of Solidarity**, by October 1986 the organisation "Solidarnosc" (Solidarity) had alone published some 920 newspapers.

What is really fascinating about the clandestine publishing which took place under Martial Law, is the way in which these works were produced. For example, one method of manufacturing ink involved mixing soot and washing up detergent. One can only speculate about the conservation problems that these works will present, especially as most were printed on paper which was very far from acid free.

Archives and Museums

Any visitor to Poland will find that they cannot go far without seeing memorials to the fallen of World War Two. The centre of Warsaw was flattened during the Uprising and rebuilt to match the old architecture. Many of the postcards in Warsaw show areas destroyed during the Uprising and how they look today. Warsaw has many monuments including : The Ghetto Heroes Monument ; The Monument of the Young Insurgent (a child soldier - whose helmet dwarfs it's head - holding an automatic rifle) ; and the monument which commemorates the Uprising itself. During 1994 (the 50th anniversary of the Uprising), Polish

telecom even produced commemorative phone cards.

Anyone who is interested in the history of the occupation should visit the Historical Museum of Warsaw, which is situated in Rynek Starego Miasta, the central square of the old town. Here one will find not only an exhibition on the history of the city, but several rooms which illustrate the occupation and Uprising. Many of the clandestine newspapers that were produced at this time are on display.

The Warsaw Ghetto

There are many images of the Warsaw Ghetto - from the sentimental to the tragic - yet there were events going on within the Ghetto which deserve our attention. These events are chronicled by the Jewish Historical Institute. Within this Institute's museum and library the history of Polish Jewry is both researched and displayed. When I visited the museum in February 1995 there was an exhibition about the history and daily life within the Warsaw Ghetto.

On display were some of the clandestine newspapers that were produced within the Ghetto. The titles of these are worth noting. They include : **Morgan Frajhait** (Morning Freedom), the journal of the Workers and Peasants Organisation in the Warsaw Ghetto ; **Yugnt Shtyme** (Voice of the Young), the journal of the Bund in the Warsaw Ghetto ; **Proletarisher Gedank** (Proletarian Thoughts). There is also a copy of **An Appeal** by Zotia Kossak, published in 1944.

The Jewish History Institute holds the archives of several underground organisations including The Jewish National Committee (Z K N) and the Bund of the Jewish Fighting Organisation. The most interesting holding is that which was collected by Dr Emanuel Ringelblum, who gathered a group of people around him and created a secret archive of daily life in the Warsaw Ghetto. The story of the Ringelblum Archive is an inspirational story of how to secretly collect and archive clandestine material. With the destruction of the Ghetto this archive was hidden and only came to light after World War Two.

The National Library in Warsaw

The Polish National Library has its origins in the year 1747, with the founding of the Zaluski Library. Following the unsuccessful uprising of 1794, the Zaluski Library was seized by the Tsarist occupiers and transported back to St Petersburg. The Polish National Library (Biblioteka Narodowa) was officially established in 1928. The history of the Library is very interesting as it reflects the history of the country itself.

Between 1940 - 1944 staff at the National Library were engaged in underground activities which included organising secret schools, preserving book collections endangered by confiscation or destruction, and making available books on military science to aid the armed fight against the Nazis. Other activities included acquisition of underground publications, registration of harms and losses incurred by Polish

libraries, and registration of collections carried away by the occupiers.

After the Warsaw Uprising in October 1944, Nazi troops set fire to the library and most of its rare books, maps and music collection were destroyed. Worse was to follow. Following a partial evacuation of 150,000 volumes in November 1944, yet more books were destroyed. Following the years of occupation, librarians began work within the National Library on January 18th 1945.

After the horrendous destruction of the national heritage that had taken place during World War Two, it was felt that in case such a calamity befell the nation again, the Library should place its - and other Polish library book treasures - on microfilm. This project was started in 1950. It now consists of over 140,000 items, which include more than 900 World War Two Resistance prints.

There are a number of books about the clandestine press which have been produced by the Polish National Library : Cieslakiewicz, J, Falkowska, H, and Paczkowski, A ; **Polska Prasa Konspiracyjna 1939 - 1945** (Polish Press Conspiracy 1939 - 1945). This is a catalogue of holdings in the National Library, published in 1984.

Grabski, Witold ; **Prasa Powstania Warszawskiego 1944** (Press Papers of the Warsaw uprising 1944). Published in 1994 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising, this is a very well illustrated book. It contains many photographs of interest, together with reproductions of the various clandestine

newspapers. Just to look at these reproductions gives a flavour of what they contain, even if one does not (like me) speak any Polish.

Jastrzebski, Marek ; **Materialy do bibliografii drukow zwartych wydanych poza zasiegiem cenzury 13 XII 1981 - 31 XII 1988**. Bibliography of materials published during the period of censorship December 13th 1981 - December 31st 1988. Published in 1994 this is a bibliography which lists some 4,460 separate publications.

Further Reading

Acherson, Neal ; **Struggles for Poland** ; Michael Joseph ; 1987.

Garlinski, Jozef ; **Poland in the Second World War** ; Macmillan ; 1985.

Gebert, Konstanty ; **An Independent Society - Poland Under Martial Law** ; Alternatives XV ; 1990 ; pp 355 - 371. This periodical article gives a good overview of civilian resistance and clandestine publishing under Martial Law.

Hanson, Joanna ; **Civilian Population and the Warsaw Uprising of 1944** ; C.U.P. ; 1982.

Klossowski, Andrzej ; **The National Library in Warsaw - Collections and Programmes** ; Biblioteka Narodowa ; Warsaw ; 1991

Lukas, Richard ; **Forgotten Holocaust - The Poles under German Occupation 1939 - 1944** ; University of Kentucky ; Lexington ; 1986. This includes a short account of clandestine publishing in Nazi

- occupied Poland. It also contains an excellent bibliography and list of sources for further information about the Polish resistance movement.

Nowak, Jan ; **Courier from Warsaw** ; Collins / Harvill ; 1982

Salvaged from the Warsaw Ghetto - The Archives of E. Ringelblum ; Museum of the Jewish Historical Institute in Poland ; 1993.

Voice of Solidarity ; No 122 ; October 1986

II. Krakow And Other Ecological Initiatives In Poland

Just to the East of the second city of Poland, Krakow, is an area of some of the worst pollution in the whole of Europe - an area in which the air is so bad that it hurts. Just to go through the area on a bus is to experience an assault upon ones lungs. Ironically Krakow is one of the most beautiful medieval cities in Europe. Indeed, the city is a UNESCO heritage site, and well worth a visit.

For years, during the previous Communist regime, the ecological damage being done was just ignored. Since the country has been opened up to the West, there has been a major grass-roots interest in solving the ecological problems that face the country.

In 1994 I visited Krakow, and some of the grass-roots ecology bodies that operate there. I was very impressed with what I saw. The main centre for

ecological activities in the city is housed near to the medieval cloth market. Slawkowska 12 houses a number of ecological organisations, and has about twenty paid people working in it :

1. The Regional Environmental Educational Centre (EECK) was founded in 1993 and houses a library on ecological matters. The library is used by individuals, groups and schools. It should be noted that materials on the environment are very difficult to obtain in Polish schools and public libraries. The library is funded by voluntary donations and holds circa 2,500 books, 200 periodicals, 2,000 videos and many files upon the various aspects of pollution.

During 1994 the library lent out 1,000 books and 750 videos - mainly to teachers and local environmental groups and organisations. Data collected in the

library is used to produce a periodical that monitors air quality in the region.

2. The Zielone Brygady (Green Brigades), a networking and campaigning body which was founded in 1989, produces a periodical (which also comes out in an English edition).

3. The Krakow Group of the Green Federation has a number of projects which include : the 10% less waste in

Krakow campaign ; The Cycling City project ; and the Green City Project.

Another body worth noting is the Ecological Library Foundation which was set up in 1989.

The Foundations programmes include : an Ecological Library; distribution of books; publishing of books, films, and other activities (including seminars, lectures, etc.).

A Few Words About Akribie

Maria Kuhn-Ludewig

Who We Are

Akribie (which in German means the quality of exactness or accuracy), the Working Group of Critical Librarians, has been meeting since 1988. We work in libraries in West Germany, in all areas of specialisation. We have in common a desire to share experiences and an interest in the problems of our colleagues in other countries, especially since their problems are often not so different from our own.

So far, our curiosity and informality have made by-laws and boards of directors unnecessary. Accordingly, Akribie is not a registered, non - profit organisation, but rather a forum for candid discussion and joint action, with the goal of finding new forms and possibilities for library work. For this purpose the working group is open to everyone.

What We Want

The media - landscape, the inner structure of the library system, and consequently the picture of the profession is changing all the time. There are different approaches to finding a solution to the current situation in the library system. We think that libraries and their employees should reflect social changes, and make these the basis of their work.

We favour democratic internal structures, freedom of group action, and the greatest possible strengthening of individual responsibility. We support the participation of library users in all aspects of substantive decision - making in library work.

What We Do