

Anna Machcewicz

Civility in Uncivil Times

Kazimierz Moczarski's Quiet Battle for Truth,
from the Polish Underground
to Stalinist Prison



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Kazimierz Moczarski (1907–1975) was a journalist, soldier, and political prisoner. His life exemplifies a Central European biography under Nazism and Communism. The addictive and moving *Civility in Uncivil Times* reveals the story of a man who defended law and democracy all his life. Moczarski fought for it in the authoritarian Poland of the 1930s. During the Second World War, he partook in the resistance movement. After the war, he spent eleven years in a Stalinist prison, including nine months in one cell with the Nazi Jürgen Stroop, who commanded the brutal pacification of the Warsaw Ghetto. The communists imprisoned Moczarski's wife. After release, he rebuilt the broken marriage, rejoined social life, and wrote a work about meeting Stroop. Translated into many languages, *Conversations with the Executioner* is a thorough study of totalitarianism.

The Author

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Civility in Uncivil Times

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Translated by Maja Łatyńska



PETER LANG

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Introduction

On 2 March 1949, Kazimierz Moczarski, one of the thousands of Poland's political prisoners, was moved into a new cell in a prison in Warsaw's Mokotów district. He found himself face to face with SS General Jürgen Stroop. During the war Moczarski had served in the anti-German underground, the Home Army.

Stroop had been responsible for the bloody liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto in April–May 1943. For Moczarski, facing a criminal and an enemy with whose system he had engaged in a life-or-death struggle for six years, this was a situation straight out of Shakespeare. They would spend nine months together, and every day Moczarski listened to Stroop talk. The fact that each man had reasons to believe that he would not come out of prison alive made Stroop extremely candid.

However, things turned out differently. Or, rather, justice was served.

Stroop was hanged in Warsaw in 1951. The Polish media did not cover his trial or his execution very extensively. Moczarski was sentenced to death, pardoned and released after Poland emerged from Stalinism in 1956, and later rehabilitated.

Moczarski would never forget his time with Stroop. He understood that the prison discussions taught him something important. Stroop's was not only a crime story but, more importantly, an account of the evolution of a criminal. Moczarski told it dispassionately, with detachment and, despite the ostensibly casual form of reportage he chose, he gave us a profound vivisection of a killer. His book *Conversations with an Executioner* appeared more than twenty years after he was released.

The whole world watched Adolf Eichmann's trial in 1961. Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* appeared in 1963. Unlike Moczarski, Arendt did not meet the executioner she wrote about, but only observed his trial. Still, this eminent philosopher gave us an astute portrait of the dutiful Nazi. Her reflections on "ordinary" men's readiness to commit crimes, the law's shortcomings and the limited opportunities to settle scores for crimes have entered the canons of learning and of literature.

Poland was cut off from the world by the Iron Curtain, and so Moczarski did not have an opportunity to read Arendt's book. It is all the more astounding to juxtapose the books, as the two portraits intertwine to confirm her thesis about the "banality of evil."

Neither Eichmann nor Stroop questioned the Nazi system of order and obedience to power, and both repeated with conviction clichés about the “humiliation brought on by the Versailles Treaty,” about the Weimar Republic as a stale puddle, about the imperative to put an end to parliamentary democracy, about restoring Germany’s greatness and acquiring living space for the Germans. Until the very end, they both believed that Germany had lost the war because the Nazis had not acted decisively enough. Indeed, both obediently executed orders, suspending their personal moral judgement. They were perfect cogs in the bureaucratic machine of a totalitarian state.

However, there was something in Moczarski’s narrative that Arendt’s story did not have. This Polish political prisoner’s time of sharing a prison cell with a Nazi general symbolised the history of the part of Europe that was subjected to Communist rule in the wake of the Second World War. Moczarski landed at the very centre of his country’s and his nation’s history.

After five years of working for the Polish Underground State, where he risked his life and sacrificed his personal affairs, as soon as the war was over, Moczarski was locked up as the new regime’s political enemy. He would spend nearly eleven years in a prison that held both Poles and Nazis, which was run by Poles serving the Stalinist regime. “Then, prison offered the privilege of a straightforward and simple and clearly defined situation (basically, only a ‘no’ or a ‘yes’). Such an existence favours stubbornly adhering to principles instead of giving in to the circumstances of the need to manoeuvre, which can so easily transform into scheming,” Moczarski writes in his conclusion to *Conversations with an Executioner*. It is important to listen to what a political prisoner of many years has to say.

Kazimierz Moczarski did not come from nowhere. He was an heir to a time-honoured tradition held up in his homeland and by his family, and very much a child of his time. Still, everyone chooses his traditions.

Born in Warsaw in 1907, he was eleven when the Great War ended, making it possible for many nation-states to form in East-Central Europe. The Polish Republic was reborn after 123 years of partitions by its three imperial neighbours. Moczarski’s was the first generation to start its adult life in it.

He was born in a teachers’ home, which was driven by a tradition of engagement in pro-independence activity, and he became active in public life already as a university student. He joined the Youth Legion, which adhered closely to Józef Piłsudski, for many Poles a legendary leader who was instrumental in Poland’s rebirth in 1918. However, Piłsudski’s people gradually turned to authoritarian ways. Moczarski left the Youth Legion in mid-1934 and travelled in France, where he came close to the left and observed the growing Fascist and National Socialist threats. Searching for his own ideology after returning to Poland, he

finally opted for the Democratic Club movement of the liberal-democratic and secular intelligentsia, which attracted a range of people, from the anti-Fascist left all the way to Communist sympathisers. However, as a promoter of compromise and discussions in which ideas clashed, Moczarski fundamentally opposed all radicalism. While he was sensitive to social injustice, he was also wholly resistant to the era's revolutionary enthusiasts who wanted to change the world. He respected the law and the social contract. He viewed the world critically and fought for principles rooted not in utopian ideals but in Positivist work that would change public ethics. His ideological choices were rooted in the late-nineteenth-century ethical tradition of radical intelligentsia. This thinking, very characteristic of a large part of the pre-war Polish intelligentsia, lay in the best traditions of civic engagement.

In September 1939, Poland became the first target of Nazi aggression. Under the German occupation, Moczarski became active in several organisations: as an analyst of the vibrant politics of the underground in the Office of Information and Propaganda (Biuro Informacji i Propagandy, BIP); as a member of the underground Democratic Party (Stronnictwo Demokratyczne, SD); and as a representative of the Polish Underground State in the Directorate of Underground Resistance (Kierownictwo Walki Podziemnej, KWP), where he pursued collaborators, informers, and blackmailers of Jews, the *szmalcowniks*. KWP was especially important to him, as he helped to protect the persecuted citizens of his country within the confines of Polish law.

In the last months of the German occupation, Moczarski rose fortuitously from a relatively low level in the military hierarchy to head the Office of Information and Propaganda of the Home Army's Main Command. He continued in that position after the Red Army invaded the Polish lands without bringing Poland freedom.

At the Yalta Conference of February 1945, the Allies agreed to sponsor democratic elections in Poland. Moczarski, like most of his compatriots, looked forward to working legally to rebuild his country and engage in his passion of politics. However, in violation of all international agreements, secret police jails filled with people loyal to Poland who supported non-Communist parties, but also former Home Army fighters. Loyal to his superiors and feeling responsible for those serving under him, Moczarski remained underground until the summer of 1945. He believed that staying on any longer would not bring the long-awaited freedom to his homeland. This lay at the source of the enormous dilemma he faced and the reason behind his attempt to seek an opening for the Communists and the underground to talk. However, the former had no interest in such talks, nor in a compromise.

Paradoxically, it was Moczarski who spent eleven years in prison, one of the longest terms served in Communist Poland. Tortured during the investigations to give false testimony against his underground comrades, he did not crack; consequently, he was made to share a cell with a Nazi war criminal. He survived to denounce the Stalinist system in his rehabilitation trial, on behalf of himself and others. He had the strength and the skills to write about his encounter with Stroop to give evidence about a dark era.

After leaving prison, Moczarski was marginalised, like others whose mouths and career paths had been closed. However, he considered even this non-sovereign Polish state his, and he did not want to go into internal exile. He found a place for himself that fit in with his socially conscious temperament.

Moczarski spent the last years of his life working rigorously on the life and career of General Jürgen Stroop, whom he had got to know so well. After writing several hundred pages of notes right after leaving prison, for years he continued to add to his knowledge and weighed the best form to tell the story. The text of his future book, *Conversations with an Executioner*, appeared in instalments in the low-circulation monthly *Odra* in 1972–74. He did not live to see it come out as a book, because the authorities resisted publishing this provocative work, which begged the question of how it could have happened that its author was locked in a prison cell with a war criminal. *Conversations with an Executioner*, delayed by the censorship office, appeared two years after Moczarski's death, almost simultaneously in Poland and West Germany (as *Gespräche mit dem Henker: Das Leben des SS-Generals Jürgen Stroop. Aufgezeichnet im Mokotów-Gefängnis zu Warschau* [Conversations with an executioner: The life of SS General Jürgen Stroop. Recorded in Warsaw's Mokotów prison]).

The book became well-known both in Poland and abroad in translations into more than a dozen languages, including English, and most recently Italian, Greek and Russian.

It might seem that Kazimierz Moczarski's life story tells us about a world that is long gone. It might seem that the Second World War should have cured people once and for all of inflicting any form of persecution based on nationality, ethnicity, religion or beliefs. And yet racism, xenophobia and a fascination with violence are doing quite well, even if they have different foundations from those on which German Fascism was constructed in the 1920s. However, the thoughts and actions of those who adhere to such beliefs have not changed: they believe that they can impose their ideas by force and trample others' dignity with impunity. The stories of Stroop and Eichmann tell us about the banality of evil, the weakness that worships violence and the vanity that so easily transforms humans into beasts. However, is there such a thing as the banality of good?

Moczarski gives us some optimism. He was not the heroic type. There was no grandiloquence in him. “I don’t like platitudes and big words because I always suspect that they are covering up a scam,” he wrote to his friend Marta Rajchman. A slight man, he had his eccentricities and his flaws. During the war, he did not take up arms. His heroism lay in his sense of duty, but he did not spend much time talking about it. He had firm convictions. He sided with an open and tolerant world against nationalism, hypocrisy and dogmatism. He took part in actions that, he believed, would give people the freedom to think, act and create. So much and so little.

This biography of Kazimierz Moczarski is based on written materials and discussions with people who knew him. In his daughter’s home archive, I found his notes, his wealth of correspondence with his wife, Zofia, nearly twenty years’ worth of letters to friends after his release from prison, and photographs, the most moving of which were taken in his first months of freedom, the summer of 1956.

Documents kept in drawers helped to give Zofia Moczarska an important place in this book.

An especially important set of letters are those written by Zofia and Kazimierz in their eleven years apart. They give unique testimony to what two people who were extremely close lived through, felt and thought. Their marriage bore the fierce scar of a totalitarian state’s harsh deeds. They were not unique, and we must remember the personal price paid by all the victims of Stalinist oppression.

The archive of the Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, IPN) holds extensive documentation about Moczarski collected by the Polish People’s Republic’s Ministry of Public Security (Ministerstwo Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego), later the Security Service (Służba Bezpieczeństwa, SB). It includes protocols of interrogations, trial documents, but also reports submitted secretly by a person Moczarski trusted, which reveal his unmasking and arrest in 1945. After his release from prison in 1956, Moczarski, like most former Home Army people, continued to attract secret police attention. He was observed until his death. After he died, as his legend began to grow, his wife was harassed by the Security Service, which tried to discredit his name.

Learning about a person’s life is a long journey. On my journey, I met many individuals whom I would like to thank for their time and help. The following people told me their stories: Zbigniew Baucz, Leon Janowicz, Professor Jacek Kochanowicz, Professor Marcin Kula, Zbigniew Łenka, Irena Rakowska-Bartel, Małgorzata Szejnert, Teresa Szydłowska, Janina Szczuka, Andrzej Wajda. Professor Władysław Bartoszewski answered my questions by letter.

I received valuable advice and help from several Polish historians: Professor Andrzej Friszke, Dr Janusz Marszalec, Dr hab. Andrzej Kunert, Professor Grzegorz Mazur and Professor Tomasz Szarota. I wish to thank Dr Marek Ney-Krwawicz for alerting me to some important documents.

My work was made possible by Elżbieta Moczarska, who gave me access to her documents, so I thank her profusely. I want to thank my husband, Paweł, this book's first assiduous reader, for his unwavering support.

Chapter One: A Dream of Poland

His was the first generation to grow up in the newly sovereign Poland. Kazimierz Moczarski was eleven in 1918, when it regained its independence after 123 years of being dismembered by its three neighbours, Russia, Prussia and Austria-Hungary. What could he remember from those early days? Had he watched his father disarm Germans in their hometown of Lipno, a small Kuyavian town in the north in November 1918? If he had, images of this kind usually stay with a person for life. What would he have overheard at home? He certainly understood his family's pro-independence tradition, which included forebears serving in Napoleon's army and fighting in the nineteenth-century anti-Russian uprisings. Born in Warsaw on 21 July 1907 as his parents' third child, he was given the first and middle names, Kazimierz Damazy, after his grandfather, a combatant in the January 1863 uprising.

It is easy to see in our mind's eye little Kazimierz, Kazik or Kazio, listening to his father's stories of exile to Siberia as punishment for belonging to a pro-independence club in secondary school. There were also family stories about organising school strikes, Scout troops and underground education under Russian rule. It was then that his father, Jan, met Michalina Skarbek-Wodzinowska, who would become his wife. Would all this talk have been enough to infect Kazimierz with "the Poland virus?" Indeed, Jan and Michalina's four children passed their patriotism test with flying colours. When the Second World War broke out, the three of them dove into underground activism.

Theirs was a teacher's family. Jan, a graduate of the University of Warsaw's Natural Sciences Department, championed the Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, PPS) and ardently admired the charismatic Marshal Józef Piłsudski, one of the fathers of Polish sovereignty. Jan served as headmaster of several secondary schools in various towns. In Lipno, people remembered him with respect. A plaque on the school's wall survives to this day. Throughout her career, Michalina taught Polish literature in the schools her husband headed.¹

The Jan Kreczmar Secondary School in Warsaw, from which Kazimierz Moczarski graduated, was known for its teachers' leftist leanings. The many Jewish boys were treated kindly, and it must have been there that Kazimierz learned tolerance, a value he would always adhere to. Just as he was becoming an adult, in May 1926 he observed Józef Piłsudski's military coup. By aiming

1 Andrzej K. Kunert, *Oskarżony Kazimierz Moczarski* (Warsaw, 2006), 10–16.

to purify Polish politics, the new *Sanacja* (cleansing) regime undermined the young democracy.

The Moczarskis saw to it that their children were well educated for a life in independent Poland: their oldest son and daughter studied medicine, while the youngest, a boy who would be shot to death by a Gestapo functionary, held great promise as a painter. Kazimierz chose to study law at the University of Warsaw, and also enrolled in its School of Journalism. Beginning in the late 1920s students were increasingly coming under the sway of the radical-right Camp for a Greater Poland (Obóz Wielkiej Polski, OWP), which instigated anti-Jewish violence and instituted ghetto benches in universities. In 1930, other students created the Youth Legion (Legion Młodych) as an antidote to these radical nationalists and adopted a pro-state and non-nationalist ideology. Moczarski made his first political choice then. “The Youth Legion attracted young people who were perturbed by the [Camp for a Greater Poland’s] terror. Young people who were enchanted with Marshal Piłsudski flocked to it, but as they could remember the state’s rebirth, the state idea was also attractive to them,” Tadeusz Kochanowicz, Moczarski’s university friend, described the Legion.²

Kochanowicz continued,

Moczarski was brimming with energy. A short time after its launch, the Legion made its first public appearance at a university. There was a rally, I can’t remember on what occasion, but in any event an uncontroversial one. It was held in the entrance hall of Warsaw Polytechnic, and was fully under the control of the [Camp for a Greater Poland]. Our group of thirty or forty stood off to the side, under the wall. Without warning, we unfurled a banner reading ‘Youth Legion’ and sang [the pro-Piłsudski] ‘We are the first brigade.’ The [Camp for a Greater Poland] responded at lightning speed, in ten minutes managed to push us out of the building and inflicted some light bruises. Over time, skirmishes like these took place more and more often and became more and more rough. It became customary in anticipation of large skirmishes to spend the organisation’s money on dozens of bamboo canes. I saw the canes right after one such skirmish, their bottoms had turned into bunches of drooping bamboo stems, some looked like overused carpet beaters. It made me think how resilient human skulls can be. Members of the Legion who suffered wounds that required dressing would later strut around its office showing off their bandaged heads and shoulders.

The injured included Moczarski, one of the people who stood up for their convictions.

2 Tadeusz Kochanowicz, unpublished memoir in author’s collection, 38.



Kazimierz Moczarski, 1920s, Warsaw. Photogr. Archive of Elżbieta Moczarska / FOTONOVA.

As the Great Depression descended on Poland and the rest of Europe, mass unemployment and destitution spread. It was not only the Communists, but also Socialists, members of the People's Party, Christian Democrats and Nationalists who offered predictions that the crisis would mean the beginning of the end of capitalism. Both the left and the right came up with radical programmes of social and economic reforms. The generation that had grown up in the sovereign state, especially sensitive to the effects of the crisis, was speaking up on social and political issues in an increasingly loud voice.

The economic crisis sharpened Moczarski's already keen social sensitivity. In 1932, the so-called Żyrardów Affair agitated Poland, revealing not only corruption but also the nasty working conditions in the town's factories, operated by a

French textile conglomerate. The Youth Legion joined a campaign opposing the influx of foreign capital and defending workers' rights. In the autumn of 1932, it demanded waiving university fees for poor students and introducing tuition for the rich. However, these demands did not make it a leftist organisation. The Youth Legion's ideology was not cohesive, as its membership included conservatives and Socialists, and even Communist sympathisers. Its leader was Zbigniew Zapasiewicz, a politician closely affiliated with the Polish Socialist Party.

"During a stay in Paris, Zapasiewicz became involved with the Jeunesse Laïque et Républicaine," recounted Kochanowicz. "As he worked to strengthen the Legion's left wing, he was advised by Halina Krahelska and Wincenty Rzymowski."³ The sociologist and writer Krahelska and the prominent journalist and Freemason Rzymowski exemplified the socially engaged leftist intelligentsia. It was most likely under their influence that a left wing of the Legion gelled in the 1930s. Another wing identified fully with the *Sanacja*, which governed Poland after the May 1926 coup and became increasingly authoritarian and nationalistic. "Moczarski and I were on the left wing of this organisation led by Zbigniew Zapasiewicz. It was he who arranged a Foreign Ministry grant for Moczarski to study at the Institut des Hautes Études Internationales," remembered Kochanowicz.⁴

Moczarski arrived in Paris, at the time Europe's unchallenged capital, in December 1932. What a time! In January 1933, Hitler would become Germany's chancellor, and fear of a war was growing. In France, the Socialists and Communists were becoming increasingly popular, and leftist opinion leaders included Frédéric Joliot-Curie, Marie's son-in-law. Every new arrival from Poland hoped to be invited to the Joliot-Curie salon. "I was not honoured by an invitation, rue de Médicis, I think. However, my closest friends frequented Mrs Irène's and her husband Frédéric's home. I could be seen around the Quartier Latin with these friends," Moczarski writes years later to his lawyer Władysław Winawer.⁵ Moczarski also discusses the attempts to form a Romantic, somewhat utopian commune of Polish students by the Paris cell of the Youth Legion to be modelled on the idealistic retreat of the Désert de Bièvres that Georges Duhamel had written about. Its members would contribute their earnings to a kitty to run their household communally. This time marked the beginning of Moczarski's

3 Kochanowicz, unpublished memoir in author's collection, 39.

4 Kochanowicz, unpublished memoir in author's collection, 39.

5 Letter to Władysław Winawer, December 1954, Elżbieta Moczarska's archive, National Library, Warsaw.

friendship with Marta Rajchman, daughter of the famous bacteriologist who in 1946 would become one of the founders of UNICEF, Ludwik Rajchman. Marta was known for her radical-left beliefs; as a student in Zurich she had been nicknamed “Bolshevik.”

Probably thanks to being “seen around the Quartier Latin,” Moczarski returned to Poland with a “red” reputation. At least this is what was whispered in the hallways of the Ministry of Social Welfare, where he became a legal counsel after a months-long job search. Tadeusz Kochanowicz, who was already working there, helped him get the position. Moczarski specialised in labour law and, beginning in 1936, went to Geneva as a member of the Polish government delegation for the annual International Labour Organisation conferences.

Kazimierz found office life neither boring nor monotonous. Irena Rakowska-Bartel was the deputy minister’s head secretary. They met shortly after Moczarski started there. At the age of 90, she could still vividly remember their first meeting:

On my way back from the minister’s office, I heard my office mate Tadeusz Paczkowski say on the phone: ‘We have a new girl, her legs just keep on going, do you want to meet her?’ A split second later, two young men, Kazimierz Moczarski and Tadeusz Kochanowicz, rushed down from the floor above. We became fast friends. Later, Lula Hołówkówna, daughter of [the politician] Tadeusz Hołówko, who had been murdered by the Ukrainians [in 1931], joined our pack. We were young. We would spend entire afternoons together. When it was time to leave the ministry, which was in Długa Street in the so-called Windy Palace, we would walk down Bielańska, cross Theatre Square, and head to a Jewish restaurant for a bite. We would then all run home to change and meet again to go to the cinema or theatre. We would sometimes wrap the night up in a dance hall. We would then take showers and. . . back to work.⁶

For all the flamboyance of her account, Moczarski was certainly no lightweight. His friends saw him as modest, focused and at times even stiff. He treated life very seriously. “He often kept his distance as we hooted and joked around, observing us closely,” added Rakowska-Bartel.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, as remembered by Zbigniew Baucz who started his first job as a lawyer there in 1937, was

run in a modern way, thematically, not very bureaucratically. I was very young and came from the provinces to boot—indeed by comparison to Warsaw, Lublin remained provincial—and was quite overwhelmed as I landed abruptly amid the ministry’s intellectual cadre. The kind of people who worked there were open, not in the least bigoted, and they all expressed their political views freely.⁷

6 Author’s interview with Irena Rakowska-Bartel, April 2007.

7 Author’s interview with Zbigniew Baucz, December 2006.

Baucz had read law at the Catholic University of Lublin.

But what was going on at the University of Warsaw, in Krakowskie Przedmieście Avenue, the assaults against Jews, the National Radical Camp (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny, ONR) hit squads, all this came as a shock to me. There were no such tensions in Lublin. My university was Catholic, and nothing of this kind took place there. There were many Jews working in our ministry, and this never caused any problems. We were simply disgusted by the goings-on in the streets of Warsaw, and Moczarski was especially outspoken.

By now, Moczarski had become deeply involved in politics. Right after returning from France in 1934, he and a group of friends followed Zapasiewicz out of the Youth Legion. They started an independent journal, *Płóć*, whose opinion pieces were so extremely critical of the government that *Sanacja*'s pre-emptive censorship confiscated several issues, so that after a few months the group had to abandon this publishing project. Moczarski, trying to find a place for himself, became involved in the union activities of the administrative intelligentsia and joined the Association of Government Employees (Stowarzyszenie Urzędników Państwowych, SUP), whose leaders had leftist, even Communist, sympathies. He became editor of the association's journal, but also became involved in other projects. According to Tadeusz Kochanowicz, "Together we looked for people with views similar to ours and organised neverending political discussions. They would take place in private homes, often at Moczarski's in Hoża Street."⁸ They were informal, a tad conspiratorial. They covered everything, world politics and, more critically, *Sanacja*-era Poland and the political changes they deemed necessary. Because they adopted Maurycy Mochnacki, a commentator and pro-independence political activist of the first half of the nineteenth century, as their patron, they called their meetings "maurycówki." Indeed, one of Moczarski's wartime noms de guerre would be "Maurycy." The left-leaning intelligentsia met there; they tended not to shut themselves off inside dogmas but were open and inquisitive.

"What did we have in common? What was it that brought most of us together for long stretches of time?" Moczarski would discuss the meetings of the Maurycy Mochnacki Club years later in the journal *Tygodnik Demokratyczny*.

This will not be a superficial answer: we were not fixed in any ideological way or methods of action it entailed. We believed in Cyprian Kamil Norwid's idea of the unity of content (attitude) and form (method). Our ideological standpoint was . . . rationalist, materialistic, humanistic and progressive thought with roots both in our nation's democratic

8 Kochanowicz, unpublished memoir in author's collection, 39.

traditions and in the teachings of Marx, Engels and their successors. We also shared methods of action, which consisted of respecting the political and organisational principles we shared. We certainly believed in promoting progress not through terror, diktat or leadership but through good work, the culture of political deeds, structured debate, persuasion, free expression of views and opinions, tolerance—all this within the bounds of reason, moderation, without excessive, unnecessary stress on the brain, the tongue and time. The thirty-year-olds of the M. M. Club had another platform in common, the years of daily engagement in the white-collar trade unions. This kept us down to earth, stopped us from floating in cheap idealisation or demagoguery. It illustrated the visible problems of poverty, underdevelopment, exploitation, class struggle, the mechanism of capitalist management . . . We spent long months at the M.M. Club talking about the need for a political party which would, at least to some degree, serve as the legal equivalent of the worker movement. And we worked on it. We held hundreds of discussions, conferences, consultations, disputes, even quarrels.⁹

They met with people from all sorts of leftist groups: the Union of Polish Democratic Youth (Związek Polskiej Młodzieży Demokratycznej, ZPMD), young peasant party activists and even activists of the Communist Union of Polish Youth (Komunistyczny Związek Młodzieży Polskiej, KZMP). They were fascinated by Henryk Dembiński, a charismatic figure in the Communist-leaning academic circles in Vilna. The Warsaw authorities refused to register their informal group as an association. Following Marshal Piłsudski's death in May 1935, the discussions among Warsaw's politically aware leftist intelligentsia were taking place in a new political atmosphere. The Polish parliament elected by the new 1935 electoral law no longer reflected real political or social cleavages, as all political groups critical of the government found themselves outside the Sejm. The *Sanacja's* ideology was clearly morphing into authoritarianism. The newly centralised Camp of National Unity (Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego, OZN) adopted some of the National Democrats' catchphrases. Policies curbing the cultural rights of the Ukrainian minority were making headway. The Camp of National Unity spoke out in favour of waging an economic war against the Jews and promoted their emigration to Palestine.

Piłsudski's old guard, people who had fought for Poland's independence and many of whom retained their left-liberal beliefs, did not thrive in this atmosphere. In October 1937, the first Democratic Club was founded in Warsaw by senators of *Sanacja's* left wing, Regina Fleszarowa and Mieczysław Michałowicz, the historian Marcei Handelsman, architect Jerzy Makowiecki and writer Halina Krahelska. The group included the diplomat Tytus Filipowicz, a pre-1914

9 Kazimierz Moczarski, *Zapiski* (Warsaw, 1990), 117–8.

Polish Socialist Party leader who had worked closely with Piłsudski before the First World War. Democratic Clubs were also created in Krakow, Lwów (Lviv), Wilno (Vilnius) and Białystok. Their members came from the intelligentsia and included especially progressive intellectuals, who were joined by politicians, military men and social activists from trade unions with an affinity for the Polish Socialist Party or the Peasant Party (Stronnictwo Ludowe, SL) and student radicals. Also involved in creating the Democratic Clubs were members of the illegal Communist Party of Poland (Komunistyczna Partia Polski, KPP) who sought out people of the left, but not Communists, as the milieu for their activities.

The clubs opposed the *Sanacja* government, nationalism and anti-Semitism, and promoted radical social reforms. Most members of the Maurycy Mochnacki Club also naturally found a home in the Democratic Clubs. Moczarski became involved in creating one in Warsaw. In discussions about its mission statement, he staunchly promoted the declaration that the club would oppose all political and economic ideas based on ethnic prejudice.

Princess of Masovia Building. First floor. Room occupied by the Society of Amateur Historians. At the time, the ceiling was supported by wooden pillars. A creaky floor. Rows of chairs, every last one taken. Many people are standing. Professors, writers, members of the academic and creative intelligentsia, the free professions, social and political activists, trade unionists, representatives of the progressive bourgeoisie, academic youth, this is how twenty years later Moczarski would describe his first impression of the inaugural meeting of the Warsaw Democratic Club, in Old Town Square.¹⁰

Following in Warsaw's footsteps, Democratic Clubs mushroomed across Poland, so that in June 1938, fifty-five of their representatives took part in the congress of Democratic Clubs in Lvov. In April 1939 they joined together to form the Democratic Party (Stronnictwo Demokratyczne, SD). Its membership was not large, but its intellectual potential gave it weight. By joining the party, Moczarski became an insider among prominent members of the intelligentsia. Another special characteristic of the Club did not leave bystanders indifferent. Moczarski found himself among influential Polish Freemasons, many of whom held important positions in the state administration and took advantage of the club's activities to play an influential role among the intelligentsia as a whole. Professor Mieczysław Michałowicz, a senator and a member of the National Grand Lodge, a believer in perfecting of the individual, used to say: "Clubs are armchairs, and

¹⁰ Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 125.

armchairs make for good discussion.”¹¹ Moczarski did not join the Freemasons, or at least there is no evidence of it.

Spring of 1939 was also important for Moczarski for an entirely different reason. In March a twenty-year-old journalism student, Zofia Płoska, began to work at the ministry. Irena Rakowska-Bartel, her cousin and friend, remembered: “I was offered a promotion. I would head the new deputy minister’s secretariat and needed to find someone to replace me in my old job presently. I phoned Zosia, with whom we’d been friends since we were little. And this is how Zosia and Kazik met. Thanks to me.”

They seem so different in photographs from that time. She is tall, slender, trim, has large eyes brimming with intelligence and a joy of life. He is not very tall, but has a good figure, dark hair and serious deep-set eyes. There is a twelve-year age difference between them, a big one. According to Tadeusz Kochanowicz, Zosia “was an intelligent, very attractive girl. Both Moczarski and I flirted with her. Moczarski won.”¹²

They would both remember 6 June 1939. They arranged a rendez-vous in a Warsaw café, there was a stroll that stretched late into the night. That day their love was born. Then, things moved at great speed. Moczarski spent a month in Geneva. He returned, certain that war was coming. This swayed Zosia’s father, Aleksander Płoski, to allow them to marry, despite the fact that they had only known each other and been engaged for a short time. The wedding caught their families and friends by surprise. “We were a tight pack, we went everywhere together, and out of the blue they announce that they are getting married,” Irena Rakowska-Bartel says with some disbelief, even decades later. “And, sure enough, a month later they were married.”¹³

The wedding took place in the Carmelite church in Krakowskie Przedmieście Avenue on 31 July 1939. Even with all their wartime troubles, a handful of photographs survive in the family archive. Zosia wore low-heeled shoes and a dress made to order by the seamstress Mrs Myszkorowska. Only their closest family members attended the wedding lunch at the stylish Bristol Hotel, also in Krakowskie Przedmieście. Because of the recent death of Kazimierz’s father, the wedding was low-key. That evening the families accompanied the newlyweds to a train that took them on their honeymoon in the mountain resort of Krynica, a trip which would need to last them as a memory of their short-lived bliss for

11 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 126.

12 Kochanowicz, unpublished memoir in author’s collection, 41.

13 Author’s interview with Irena Rakowska-Bartel, 2007.

several years. They returned a few days before war broke out. "A mood of anticipation hung over Warsaw, at the ministry we spent a lot of time reading the papers and dissecting the significance of their every single word all the way until the last day of August," remembered Zbigniew Baucz.¹⁴ Moczarski spent one day in reserve training in Różany, but returned to Warsaw without a commission.

In the early morning of 1 September, the first German bombs were dropped on Warsaw. News of mobilisation and political analyses in that day's morning papers were already out of date. From that moment on, the Moczarskis' lives, much like the lives of hundreds of thousands of Varsovians, were turned upside down. German tanks reached the outskirts of Warsaw on the evening of 6 September. Government officials and their offices were evacuated that same day. Employees of the Ministry of Social Welfare received their evacuation orders in the night of 4–5 September. They boarded buses heading east, carrying sacks of ministry cash, documents and official rubber stamps. It took them a week to reach Dubno in Polish western Ukraine, where they attempted to set up an office, which only existed for a few days. They slept on schoolroom floors, and their colleagues set up the young Moczarskis, the only couple, in a narrow corridor between two classrooms.

The town was quiet, except for the occasional noise of German airplanes overhead. The idleness tormented Moczarski, and he searched for a military unit to take him, in vain. For lack of anything better to do, using scraps of radio news, with his wife and a handful of ministry colleagues, they put out a local newspaper. Hearing the news of the Soviet invasion of Poland on 17 September, the ministry's leadership and a large number of rank-and-file employees decided to continue in the direction of the Romanian border. Their departure was so rushed that someone who stayed behind found a ministry rubber stamp on a desk in the mess of abandoned documents. They burned documents, and deputy Minister Kokoszkiewicz, who had been put in charge of the cash reserves, divided up the remaining money.

After a discussion with their colleagues, the Moczarskis took the bus that remained at their disposal to Równe (Rivne). On 19 September they watched the Soviet troops arrive. Crossing the town and heading west were Soviet cannons, to the east captive Polish officers. The ministry staff traded the remaining ministry cash before it would lose all its value for civilian clothing, which they smuggled to the officers with the help of railway workers. To their surprise, their ministry identification cards kept them safe vis-à-vis the Soviet administration. In early

14 Author's interview with Zbigniew Baucz, 2006.

October came news of the creation in France of a Polish government in exile headed by General Władysław Sikorski and of the formation of a Polish army in the West. The dilemma of whether to leave Poland in the hope of joining the army or to return to Warsaw engendered heated discussions. Tadeusz Kochanowicz, one of the Moczarskis' closest friends, decided to go west. Moczarski escorted him to the train station in Lvov and gave him some of his money.

Kochanowicz reached England through Hungary and France and found a job with the Świt radio station in Bletchley Park outside London. This radio station, which pretended to broadcast from occupied Poland, obtained its information from inside Poland from the Home Army Main Command's Office of Information and Propaganda (Biuro Informacji i Propagandy Komendy Głównej Armii Krajowej, BIP KG AK), which Moczarski would soon join. The two friends would not meet again until 1956, in Warsaw, after both were released from Stalinist prisons.

For now, the Moczarskis were in a group that decided to return to Warsaw, making their way towards the Bug River. A bridge in the small town of Uściług was blocked, and Germans were stationed on the other side. Moczarski made friends with the Soviet soldiers guarding what was especially valuable booty, a column of broken-down cars that had been requisitioned from or abandoned by refugees. The soldiers did not know how to make the cars work, but the ministry staff included an engineer. In exchange for having the cars repaired, the soldiers would help the Poles cross the frontier. Irena Rakowska-Bartel recalls:

And they did help us. We climbed on board the peasant trucks and got to the river. It was a moonlit night, the nearby hills cast a dark shadow on the water, and a boat waited for us at the water's edge. We were transported across in smaller groups, and the Russians even ran a tractor to drown out the sound of splashing water. When we reached the other bank, it turned out that the carter who had brought us to the river had vanished with most of our baggage. Just as well, since who would have had the strength to carry all those suitcases!¹⁵

They managed to reach Hrubieszów on foot without any further mishaps, and found trains travelling west. They reached Warsaw at the beginning of the first winter of the German occupation. It was 1 December 1939.

15 Author's interview with Irena Rakowska-Bartel, 2007.

Chapter Two: The German Occupation

After a few months away, the Moczarskis must have found German-occupied Warsaw depressing. Nazi flags and emblems now decorated public buildings, propaganda posters and notices appeared everywhere, shop signs were in both German and Polish, and in all announcements and directives the large-print German text preceded the Polish. The terror targeting Polish citizens was only just beginning: there were the first street round-ups and the first home searches, and even though the ghetto had not yet been marked out, the Jews, stigmatised by having to sew Stars of David onto their clothes, had to slink down streets. As the curfew approached in the unlit city, life died down. Reports were reaching Warsaw about murders of the intelligentsia and expulsions in the areas of Poland incorporated into the Reich: Silesia, Greater Poland and Pomerania. Already in the autumn the Germans issued a decree outlawing the private ownership of radios and listening to foreign stations became a crime. Everyone hungered for information, as the only legal source of news from the front were newspapers published under German oversight to serve as propaganda, which the Poles called *gadzinówki*, reptile press.

Still, after three months on the road, this was a homecoming for the Moczarskis. They moved into a flat at 4 Jerozolimskie Avenue, now called Bahnhofstrasse, with a restaurant designated for Germans, Café Club, downstairs.

The money they had received in Dubno quickly ran out, and like virtually all government employees, they were now jobless and faced the question of how to make a living. The Windy Palace in Miodowa Street, once the Ministry of Social Welfare, was now the German Hauptamt, the occupation authorities' head office. Moczarski bumped into a handful of work colleagues still employed there, including Zbigniew Baucz, one of the few civil servants who knew German very well. Baucz would later become the Polish underground's source of forged employment documents, which could protect a person from being taken to perform forced labour and be used to obtain food stamps. However, now, in December 1939, the friends continued to meet at the Moczarskis' to discuss what could be done. As they analysed scenarios of developments at the front, it appeared that the German occupation would not last long. They all believed that the British and the French would go on the offensive in the spring, and then the war would be over.

Moczarski decided to wait it out and joined the family business of running the *Marywil* antique shop in Ossolińskich Street in central Warsaw, together

with Zofia's uncle Stanisław Rakowski and cousin Wanda Biedrzyńska. Many Varsovians made a living by selling family assets and serving as intermediaries in such sales. *Marywil* dealt in furniture, paintings and jewellery.

However, addressing material concerns and making a home in Warsaw after their absence did not occupy all of Kazimierz Moczarski's time. Rumours circulated that a conspiratorial organisation was forming. He first came in contact with it in early January 1940 after bumping into Jerzy Szurig, whom he knew from the pre-war meetings of the Democratic Club. This chance encounter was a breakthrough, as Szurig arranged for Moczarski to meet Jerzy Makowiecki, a key player in the rapidly forming underground. Makowiecki was a member of the leadership of the Democratic Party, which in the first weeks of the war had a much larger role than could have been predicted from the pre-September distribution of political forces. The Democratic Party's chairman, Professor Mieczysław Michałowicz, became a member of the Main Political Council (Główna Rada Polityczna), which was affiliated with the political-military organisation Service for Poland's Victory (Służba Zwycięstwu Polski, SZP) created by General Michał Karaszewicz-Tokarzewski. Beginning in the first weeks of the occupation, the underground leadership decided to run their own information and propaganda service and formed the political department, which was headed, on the recommendation of Professor Michałowicz, by Jerzy Makowiecki using the pseudonym "Tomasz."

The Service for Poland's Victory did not last long. General Władysław Sikorski, prime minister of the Polish government in exile in France and commander in chief, dissolved it, and in November created the Union for Armed Combat (Związek Walki Zbrojnej, ZWZ), which, in contrast, was to serve as a purely military, apolitical, organisation. Sikorski named General Stefan Rowecki (pseud. "Grot") its commander. In fact, the Union for Armed Combat was more or less the heir to the Service for Poland's Victory in terms of both organisation and cadres. Jerzy Makowiecki continued to head the political department, which continued with the same tasks and over time would be transformed into the department of information of the Home Army Main Command's Office of Information and Propaganda. In 1942, the Union for Armed Combat was renamed the Home Army (Armia Krajowa, AK).

The first months of the war also saw changes in the underground's political line-up. The Main Political Council ceased to exist, and General Rowecki opened talks with the leaders of the largest political parties which in exile supported Sikorski's government: representatives of the Peasant Party, National Party (Stronnictwo Narodowe) and the Polish Socialist Party. In February 1940, these three parties formed the Political Consultative Committee (Polityczny Komitet

Porozumiewawczy), which was attached to the Union for Armed Combat. These large parties did not consider the newish Democratic Party a partner. As the Germans searched for the Democratic Party's leader and authority figure Professor Michałowicz, its younger members gained importance. Jerzy Makowiecki became the party's deputy chairman.

Moczarski met with Makowiecki at the beginning of January 1940. Makowiecki sketched out his political plan. According to Moczarski, it was based on the assumption that no one questioned that Poland would regain its sovereignty, but sooner or later there would be a discussion about what this new Poland should look like. The political parties would decide who would become its leader and, therefore, the small Democratic Party was already creating an underground organisation and seeking to influence the largest social groups, primarily the intelligentsia. After the war, Moczarski would name dozens of people who were active in the Democratic Party underground or who supported it. The majority were involved in the information department and other branches of the Office of Information and Propaganda.¹ The historian Andrzej Friszke noted the Democratic Party's unofficial but obvious influence on the Office of Information and Propaganda: the fact alone that the Party and the Office worked together increased the Party's impact: its "most important underground publication, *Biuletyn Informacyjny*, was how democratic ideals and values reached hundreds of thousands of people within the Home Army's sphere of influence."²

The hope of influencing life in Poland wiped out Moczarski's initial hesitation about joining the Office, at the time when he considered instead joining the armed struggle against the Germans. He became active in the underground Democratic Party, and a few weeks later in the Office of Information and Propaganda, taking the nom de guerre "Rafał." He became involved in the work of the information department, a focal place in the underground. Under Makowiecki's leadership it assembled the Polish intellectual elite—university scholars, sociologists, historians, economists and lawyers. It served as an underground cell gathering open-source intelligence, and for the authorities both in Poland and abroad the reports it produced became the most reliable source of information about the opinions and goals of dozens of political groups and milieux, the public mood and even economic topics affecting life in the occupied country. The information department team read newspapers and underground publications, and it analysed them and the information received from underground networks of

1 Moczarski, *Zapiski* (Warsaw, 1990), 131.

2 W. Borodziej et al., *Polska Podziemna 1939–1945* (Warsaw, 1991), 149.

political parties and directly from their representatives. Colonel Jan Rzepecki, who headed the Office of Information and Propaganda from mid-1940, reminisced that there was no topic he could not ask for a report on and not receive analysis that included conclusions and prognoses. And each time it was a “first-class product.” Aleksander Gieysztor, Makowiecki’s deputy, called its information department a “conspiratorial think tank.”³

Moczarski was a prize win for the Office of Information and Propaganda. He was assigned to the domestic politics section not only because he was passionate about politics and experienced as a social activist, but also because his many pre-war connections enabled him to navigate the underground universe. He followed Office of Information and Propaganda instructions to present himself as an information department representative in conversations with his informants. He based his reports on conversations with politicians to give his bosses an understanding of numerous organisations’ goals and programmes for the future.

Information obtained by Moczarski and the others were used in the studies prepared for Home Army Commander General Stefan “Grot” Rowecki. He read them carefully and personally saw to it that they were relayed to London. Head of the Office of Information and Propaganda Colonel Rzepecki explained Rowecki’s extreme attention to detail in his memoirs. Four parties that had not stood in the last pre-war parliamentary elections to protest the *Sanacja* rule, the Polish Socialist Party, the National Party, the Peasant Party and the Labour Party, now dominated both the émigré and underground leaderships. They continued to fear the growing power of the *Sanacja*. General Władysław Sikorski shared their views as he dissolved the Service for Poland’s Victory, whose founder General Karaszewicz-Tokarzewski was believed to represent *Sanacja*’s political views. The pre-war political disputes and mutual suspicions continued to influence the underground army. Home Army Commander General Rowecki was accused of sympathising with the *Sanacja*, and Rzepecki described the non-stop intrigues around Rowecki:

The right and the left suspected him of paving the way to power for the *Sanacja*, of wanting to become the dictator himself or to make it possible for Sikorski or of going soft on the left. This clearly echoed the nonsensical gossip of 1918 when the National Democrats insistently propagated the sensational rumour that Piłsudski had a direct line from the Belvedere Palace, his residence, to the Kremlin to receive Moscow’s orders. Now, people insisted that Rowecki was a mere figurehead and that in a forest near Warsaw the Camp of National Unity (Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego, OZN) Marshal

3 Grzegorz Mazur, *Biuro Informacji i Propagandy SZP-ZWZ-AK 1939–1945* (Warsaw, 1987), 90.

of the Senate [Bogusław] Miedziński was bringing the Union of Armed Struggle out of hiding, transforming it into the Home Army.⁴

The order to monitor the doings of the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces in 1939, Marshal Edward Rydz-Śmigły, which Jerzy Makowiecki assigned to Moczarski in 1941, was a consequence of rumours of this kind.

Moczarski revealed the background of this order in the testimony he gave in 1947. Marshal Rydz-Śmigły escaped to Hungary from internment in Romania, and the Union of Armed Struggle got word that he was planning to return to occupied Poland. Since this news was deemed unreliable, the Office of Information and Propaganda sought out its own information channels.

In 1940 Major Makowiecki introduced me to the wife of General [Włodzimierz] Maxymowicz-Raczyński and recommended that she introduce me to Śmigły's envoy. I met Colonel Zaleski, who was using the alias 'Marcin'. He was not sophisticated. . . and not politically savvy. But he had courage and personal integrity. He was a typical 'frontline soldier', oblivious to the big picture of the struggle. I learned a lot about what was going on inside the Śmigły group through 'Marcin': its mood, organisational development, etc. In response to my reservations that I felt bad to be taking advantage of the benevolent Colonel 'Marcin', Major Makowiecki stated that my reports and clarifications were of great value to General 'Grot' [Rowecki], who is watching lest Śmigły or the *Sanacja* types in Hungary try to sabotage him.⁵

Moczarski interrupted these promising contacts even before the marshal's planned homecoming, because he caught a flu.⁶ General Rowecki's fears proved highly exaggerated. Marshal Rydz-Śmigły returned to Warsaw and asked to become a member of the Union of Armed Struggle as a private. He died of a heart attack a month and a half later, in December 1941.

Moczarski's sociability helped him to move freely in the underground world of politics. He had spent virtually his whole life in Warsaw, graduated from the University of Warsaw, and had many friends in various social circles. Both he and Zosia were very hospitable, and friends could always drop by their flat in central Warsaw. "Everyone knows Kazio," allegedly exclaimed Jan Karski, the Home Army's emissary from Warsaw when Tadeusz Kochanowicz asked him in London about his friend Moczarski. Kochanowicz recalled becoming very

4 Jan Rzepecki, "Rowecki jakim go znałem," in: *Stefan Rowecki w relacjach*, ed. Tomasz Szarota (Warsaw, 1988).

5 AIPN, IPN BU XI/40, B.10.

6 AIPN, IPN BU XI/40, B.10.

anxious about Moczarski's popularity in the theoretically secretive underground world.⁷

The very young Władysław Bartoszewski, who met Moczarski in mid-1942, was struck by his un-conspiratorial openness. For almost a year, they were a two-man team in the same department of the Office of Information and Propaganda. Despite the fact that he was fifteen years younger, Bartoszewski remembered Moczarski as very gracious and chatty. "I saw him as a handsome and, in the wartime conditions, quite elegant man. He was known for his mobility and many social contacts. To me, he was open and very warm. I learned his real name only some weeks after we met."⁸

However, Moczarski's sociability was not out of the ordinary, since the conspiracy had drawn in many people from the same social groups who were connected in multiple ways, professionally, politically and/or socially. He had initially made contacts with former activists of the Youth Legion for his work in the Office of Information and Propaganda, but he quickly realised that their political significance was now negligible. They invited him to the founding meeting of a new group, the Convention of Pro-Independence Organisations (Konwent Organizacji Niepodległościowych, KON), organised by the Piłsudskites Zygmunt Hempel and Colonel Waław Lipiński. Moczarski met with them regularly up until the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising on 1 August 1944. He was connected to "Pobudka" formed by activists of the National-Radical Camp, whose beliefs he came nowhere to sharing, through a family connection, since their commander, the lawyer Witold Rothenburg-Rościszewski, was his brother-in-law, and the younger brother Jan belonged to its armed wing. Moczarski was able to connect to some in the nationalist camp through his acquaintance, head of the Warsaw branch of Home Army counterintelligence Bolesław Kozubowski "Mocarz." They had met in civilian circumstances, drinking a glass of vodka at a friend's name day party. Their first meeting ended in a quarrel over Chinese politics, but they eventually became close friends on first-name terms.

Kozubowski had been a member of the National Party before the war and knew the ins and outs of the politics inside it. He introduced Moczarski to its members Zbigniew Stypułkowski and Władysław Jaworski. As a representative of the Office of Information and Propaganda, Moczarski had several earnest conversations with them about their party's programme and ideas for action. Jan Lilpop, a journalist affiliated with the right-wing military National Armed

7 Kochanowicz, unpublished memoir in author's collection, 60.

8 Władysław Bartoszewski, *Życie trudne lecz nie nudne* (Cracow, 2010), 161.

Forces (Narodowe Siły Zbrojne, NSZ), which remained outside the Union of Armed Struggle-Home Army, also talked with him in a similar official capacity. Moczarski also carefully read all these groups' underground publications. Their contacts were not frequent, over time becoming increasingly difficult because of the deepening ideological differences between the men, but his analyses of the right, including the furthest radical-right National Armed Forces, became Moczarski's specialty. The reports were signed with the code name of his underground cell and not by him, but we know of at least one that he definitely wrote.

This report, dated 1 November 1943, discusses the liquidation of the *szmalcownik* and Gestapo agent Leon "Lolek" Skosowski, whose anti-Jewish actions included the Hotel Polski affair. Skosowski sold certificates of foreign citizenship to Jewish residents of the Hotel Polski in Długa Street in Warsaw, which were to allow them to travel to countries occupied by the Third Reich. About 2,500 persons sought his help, but the operation turned out to be a Gestapo trap, and almost all the Jews who came to Hotel Polski for assistance ended up in extermination camps.

The Underground State issued a death sentence for Skosowski, which was executed by Janusz Cywiński "Puchała" of a Home Army's sabotage unit. However, the case was sensitive since Skosowski was closely connected to people working in the Government Delegate's Office and the conspiratorial administrative structure of the Underground State.⁹ Moczarski observed the entire incident and his report described its evolution and analysed the pros and cons of the execution:

The liquidation of Skosowski and his people has certainly engendered harsh criticism and accusations against the PZP [a code name for the Union of Armed Struggle-Home Army] in the security organisation of the Delegate's Office. Many believe that Skosowski should not be liquidated because of his important role in gathering information from the Gestapo, obtaining the release of arrestees, combatting Communism, etc. As we know, the D[elegate's Office] had been working with Skos[owski] for a long time, and mostly in its anti-Communist operations Their connections . . . were becoming increasingly well-known in the pro-independence circles, they smelled of unhealthy sensationalism and no doubt compromised the Delegate's Office policies (by exposing them) in terms of cooperating with the occupier's trusted people in fighting Communist agents. Indeed, the Skosowski affair disoriented many underground activists. Some politicised social circles came to believe that <<it was possible to cooperate with the

9 The mission of the Government Delegate's Office, created in 1940, was to maintain the continuity of state institutions, to keep records of the occupying power's actions, to document war crimes and to protect endangered cultural property. See Waldemar Grabowski, *Polska Tajna Administracja Cywilna 1940-1945* (Warsaw, 2003).

Gestapo against Communists because the Delegate's Office had long been acting that way through Skosowski>>.¹⁰

Moczarski's report indicates the standards of the Polish Underground State, of which the underground army and, therefore, the Office of Information and Propaganda were a component. The Office not only guarded the legality and continuity of the Polish state, but under the brutal occupation also promoted plain decency. Moczarski's report exposes the limitations of the political struggle. While absolute hostility vis-à-vis the Third Reich was a given throughout the occupation, the underground's stance towards the Soviet Union was much more complicated. Grzegorz Mazur, the author of a monograph on the Office of Information and Propaganda, analysed the meanderings of the Polish underground's propaganda guidelines. As soon as the Soviet Union invaded Poland on 17 September 1939, a note from the Kremlin to the Polish ambassador in Moscow officially declared that the Polish state had ceased to exist. Until the beginning of the German-Soviet war in June 1941, the Poles treated the Soviet Union as the second occupier and the Third Reich's ally. This changed in July 1941 after Poland and the Soviet Union restored diplomatic relations by signing the Sikorski-Mayski agreement. As long as the agreement was in force, the Soviet Union was Poland's ally, and the Poles avoided criticising it openly. Diplomatic relations were again severed after mass graves of about 22,000 Polish officers were discovered at Katyn in April 1943 and it became clear that they had been executed on Stalin's orders. The USSR was now merely "our allies' ally."

The Polish Underground State's attitude towards "native" Communists was somewhat different. *Biuletyn Informacyjny* openly called the Polish Workers' Party (Polska Partia Robotnicza, PPR) "agents of a foreign hostile power," reminding its readers that it had assented to Moscow's invasion of 1939 and its 1939–41 occupation of Poland's eastern provinces. The evolution of the Polish Workers' Party's propaganda against the underground in Poland and the government in exile, boosted by the Moscow-based Kościuszko radio station, made the underground authorities react with greater conviction. In late 1943, they created the Social Anti-Communist Committee (Społeczny Komitet Antykomunistyczny, SKA), made up of representatives of the main parties. The committee's publications were to be printed in Office of Information and Propaganda facilities, although historian Grzegorz Mazur writes that this happened over the objections of Colonel Jan Rzepecki and other key Office of Information and Propaganda figures, Jerzy Makowiecki, Aleksander Gieysztor and head of its printing operation

¹⁰ Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 152–3.

Jerzy Rutkowski. Rzepecki, who eventually went along with the creation of a special committee in charge of anti-Communist propaganda (to be called Antyk) within the Office of Information and Propaganda, remembered:

As I could not deny the Committee assistance with our technology, my only caveat was that they would not direct it against the social meaning of Communism, but only use it in the purely political battle We cautioned that our publications must contain nothing vulgar, that they operate solely with facts and that they express constructive views about regime and social matters: one needn't be a Communist to demand and plan a radical reconstruction of the system.¹¹

From the moment he met Moczarski, Władysław Bartoszewski clearly understood his political sympathies. "They agreed absolutely with the Democratic Party's programme, and Moczarski did not conceal his membership in the Democratic Party."¹²

Moczarski's involvement in the Democratic Party in the first war years included taking part in self-education meetings and political discussions. The discussions, very intelligentsia-oriented, served to formulate the party's programme. The party recognised the government in exile in London as soon as it was formed, and remained loyal to it throughout the war, even as it became critical of it after Peasant Party leader Stanisław Mikołajczyk took over as prime minister following the death of Władysław Sikorski in July 1943. The Democratic Party went through a grave crisis in mid-1943 when some of its leaders (as it later turned out, Communist agents of the Polish Workers' Party) sought to weaken the pro-London Makowiecki group. The party split into two, with the secessionists founding the Party of Polish Democracy (Stronnictwo Polskiej Demokracji, SPD).

The Democratic Party attempted to join the Political Consultative Committee, and then its successor the Council of National Unity (Rada Jedności Narodowej, RJN), the underground parliament. In mid-1942, the Democratic Party and the groups and parties that remained outside of the Political Consultative Committee created the Social Self-Defence Organisation (Społeczna Organizacja Samoobrony, SOS); they included the Camp of Fighting Poland (Obóz Polski Walczącej, OPW), the pre-war Nationalist "Pobudka" and even single socialists e.g Leszek Raabe, a friend of Moczarski's. The Democratic Party's plans to ally itself with other groups were pragmatic, aiming to strengthen its position vis-à-vis

11 Jan Rzepecki, *Wspomnienia*, 1957, Chapter XXIII, "Zamęt," typescript with handwritten notes in author's possession.

12 Bartoszewski, *Życie trudne*, 162.

the Political Consultative Council and the Government Delegate's Office. It joined the Main Commission of Civil Warfare (Główna Komisja Walki Cywilnej, KWC), a unique underground institution watching over the population's ethics under German rule by formulating a code of rights and duties, established Special Civil Courts, and planned and supported sabotage operations.

Many Democratic Party members became involved in Żegota (Council to Aid Jews, Rada Pomocy Żydom), funded by the Underground State. Władysław Bartoszewski, a member of the Council, recalled that Makowiecki was an ardent proponent of its creation.¹³ The information department of the Office of Information and Propaganda included a cell, led by Henryk Woliński, which collected data about the persecutions of Jews. In this social activism, the lines between the military and political undergrounds blurred. The Democratic Party was especially active here, as many of its Jewish members were forced to go into hiding, and it knew exactly where to direct the assistance.

In July 1944, the Democratic Party and a few smaller political groups with similar programmes joined to create the Democratic Union (Zjednoczenie Demokratyczne, ZD). Kazimierz Moczarski took part in their founding talks and was elected to its board. The Democratic Union's chairman, Eugeniusz Czarnowski (incidentally, Moczarski's former supervisor in the Office of Information and Propaganda), was its representative on the Council of National Unity. The head of the Office of Information and Propaganda's "Antyk" sub-unit, charged with anti-Communist propaganda, and chairman of the Union for the Reconstruction of the Republic (Związek Odbudowy Rzeczypospolitej, ZOR) was Tadeusz Żenczykowski, also a member of the Democratic Union.

The Democratic Party wrote its political platform in 1943. Post-war Poland was to adhere to democratic procedures, back far-reaching reforms to curb the power of big capital and promote social advancement. Writing in the party's paper *Nowe Drogi*, Chairman Jerzy Makowiecki presented its radical vision of reforms. According to Moczarski, it was he who coined the saying, which general Rowecki would later repeat, that "after the war, Poland must be red."

In the party's programme, post-war Poland would become a country, where both the ideas of freedom, equality and human and civil rights, and the political and social gains of modern democracy would operate Because of the path of its wartime struggle, Poland has found itself in a sphere of friction between two political-regime currents, the neo-democratic as represented by the Anglo-Saxons and the totalitarian of the Communist and Nazi systems. In this situation,

13 Bartoszewski, *Życie trudne*, 108–9.

Polish democracy must make an effort in its deeds and will to guarantee the arrival of a new order that agrees with the chief demands of human liberation.¹⁴

In the spring of 1944, when it was becoming clear that the Red Army would occupy Poland, an article appeared in the Democratic Party's *Nowe Drogi* analysing Poland's situation. It promoted reassessing attitudes towards the Soviet Union. Makowiecki was thought to have written the unsigned article, which was indeed the case. He favoured reaching an agreement with Russia, to give the Poles "a feeling of security and guarantee its independence from Russia." The Red Army's entry into Poland would threaten Polish sovereignty.

A tad of honesty and wisdom does not allow putting to sleep the Poles' vigilance about the threat of Russian greed. It is not analogies to the past but present Soviet policies that show clearly that unrestrained freedom of movement for Russia would decide Poland's fate as the seventeenth republic of the union! Defending the eastern lands, but also Lithuania, is not 'Polish imperialism' but fear, lest the Curzon Line become the prologue to Poland's total loss of independence.¹⁵

For some in the underground, the very mention of potential territorial losses in the east and of a deal with Russia were irrefutable evidence of betrayal of Polish interests. The National Party had long focused on Makowiecki and other leftist Democratic Party activists who were also involved in the Office of Information and Propaganda. Zbigniew Stypułkowski, a leader of the underground National Party, wrote in the memoir he published abroad after the war that already in 1943 he had warned General Tadeusz Komorowski "Bór," the Home Army commander after the arrest of General Rowecki, about the "clandestine Communist cells" inside the Office of Information and Propaganda.¹⁶

Tadeusz Kochanowicz wrote in his unpublished memoir that London had also received news that Professor Marcei Handelsman of the Democratic Party, who was also connected to the Office of Information and Propaganda favoured the Communists. The fanatically anti-Communist National Armed Forces were thought to be the source.

In the Underground State, the main political and ideological dividing line was a magnified continuation of the pre-war relations. For some, including Makowiecki and Moczarski, the Nationalists, especially the National-Radical Camp, were as

14 Waldemar Żebrowski, *Z dziejów Stronnictwa Demokratycznego w Polsce* (Bydgoszcz, 1999), 38–9.

15 Żebrowski, *Z dziejów Stronnictwa Demokratycznego*, 39.

16 Zbigniew Stypułkowski, *W zawierusze dziejowej: wspomnienia 1939–1945* (London, 1958), 322–3.

great a threat to future Poland as the Communists. For the radical nationalists, on the other hand, the democratic left was as great an enemy as the Communists. As he was interrogated in prison in 1947, Moczarski would describe this climate as stemming from the radicalisation of the nationalist groups. He talked about the unease brought on in his circles by the suggestive racist and antidemocratic solutions offered in the nationalist underground publications during the war, which included assigning citizens categories of not only religion and nationality, but also included political leanings: “The nature of the [National Armed Forces], and especially their radical wing, ‘Szaniec,’ which would eventually take over the nature of the whole organisation, was obvious: they were pure Fascists.”¹⁷

The Communist propaganda and espionage operations, which were stepped up markedly with the Red Army’s approach, exacerbated conflicts and distrust inside the underground organisation, of which the Home Army’s counterintelligence, responsible for the safety of the Underground State’s military organisations, was aware. Counterintelligence reports in the spring of 1944 revealed fears that the underground was being infiltrated by Communist agents and leftists, present in large numbers in the Office of Information and Propaganda.

The historian Janusz Marszałec found a copy of one such counterintelligence report in the Institute of National Remembrance archive. Its anonymous author names his informant (No. 3) and writes:

On the Home Army staff itself, on different levels of the organisation, there are un-cleared and suspect persons, not so much of serving the Gestapo as of favouring or outright serving Sov[iet] intell[igence] or our native Communists. No. 3 explained it by saying that he knows for a fact that in the Office of Information and Propaganda there are many people of Jewish origin or those related to Jews whose sociopolitical views and confirmed contacts with Communists or the Gestapo predispose him to consider them suspect and unworthy of trust in the positions they hold. He is absolutely convinced that valuable information leaks out of that office either to Sov[iet] intell[igence] or to the Gestapo.¹⁸

The report’s numerous insinuations illustrate well both the phobias and the dirty political rivalries of the era. Indeed, there were leaks, but people looked for their sources elsewhere than from the actual threat. Examining the intelligence and counterintelligence operations of the Polish Workers’ Party and its military agencies, the People’s Guard (Gwardia Ludowa, GL) and People’s Army

17 AIPN, IPN BU XI/40, B. 7.

18 Janusz Marszałec, “Morderstwo na Makowieckich i Widderszalu: stara sprawa, nowe pytania, nowe wątpliwości,” *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały* 2/2006, 23–53.

(Armia Ludowa, AL), vis-à-vis the Home Army and the Government Delegate's Office, shows that the contacts between the pro-independence groups and the Communists often went back to their many informal connections predating the war. These connections were born among young people who were not deeply involved in politics, who were able to use their friendships with members of the Home Army or other groups to serve the Workers' Party. They were young members of the intelligentsia who belonged to Polish society, knew its flaws and lived its life. They easily acquired information from their friends and acquaintances or became agents of influence.¹⁹

Lists of outlaws began to circulate among the Home Army leadership in the airless underground. Several such lists can be found in the archives of the Government Delegate's Office; they include people suspected of Communist activity and/or of Jewish ancestry, some of them merely leftist sympathizers. The lists were composed in the offices of so-called Start, and each name had "IV C" pencilled in next to it. "Start" was the code name of the External Office of the Investigations Office of the National Security Corps (Ekspozytura Urzędu Śledczego Państwowego Korpusu Bezpieczeństwa), the Underground State's police, accountable to the Government Delegate's Office. IV C denoted information coming from the counterintelligence of the nationalist National Armed Forces.²⁰ One of the lists, titled "At work," begins with No. 1, Ludwik Widerszal, who is labelled a "Jew, Handelsman's student, historian, Comm[unist], living in Asfaltowa Street in Warsaw, nearly busted." Ludwik Widerszal headed the international affairs office of the information department, and this accusation was pure insult since he had nothing to do with the Communists.

In his prison statement after the war, Moczarski wrote about the menace looming over the Office of Information and Propaganda:

It wasn't only the Home Army of Warsaw Region counterintelligence that received instructions to expose the Office of Information and Propaganda people but a nasty whisper campaign launched in the Underground State, both against the Home Army's left wing, mostly made up of the people in the Office of Information and Propaganda, and against the left wing of the Government Delegate's Office."

To illustrate this, he quoted a National Party pamphlet titled "Reborn Poland," which suggested that "the entire pre-September army was made up of Jews, Commies and Masons." Moczarski believed that

19 Marszałec, "Morderstwo na Makowieckich i Widerszalu."

20 Tomasz Szarota "Listy nienawiści," in: Tomasz Szarota, *Karuzela na Placu Krasińskich. Studia i szkice z lat wojny i okupacji* (Warsaw, 2007), 185–90.

by targeting some activists, [it] directly attacked all the people of the underground. . . . Therefore, the Office of Information and Propaganda intended to recommend that the [underground] Special Tribunal punish the book's authors. . . .for exposing underground activists to the occupying force, which must have had access to this book. But the uprising prevented it from making this recommendation.²¹

The second half of 1943 saw a series of dramatic events in Moczarski's life: the Gestapo arrested his brother-in-law, Witold Rothenburg-Rościszewski. The whole Moczarski family left Warsaw for a time to be safe, and Zofia and Kazimierz stayed in Świder, some twenty-five kilometres away. In the autumn, the Gestapo also arrested Jan, Kazimierz's younger brother by eleven years, possibly as a result of a series of slip-ups in "Pobudka," an underground nationalist organisation. Moczarski desperately tried to find out what was happening to his brother. Using Kozubowski's spies, he attempted to reach the Gestapo, perhaps hoping to bribe one of them, but achieved nothing. Then he heard that his brother had been executed in the Gęsia Street prison. This personal tragedy may have played a role in an important decision Kazimierz would soon make.

In December 1943, Moczarski went to the Piętowski factory in the Praga district, his fictional employer, to renew his work papers. He bumped into Włodzimierz Lechowicz, a pre-war colleague from the publication of the Association of Government Employees on which they worked together.

This was not the first time that the two met during the war. Lechowicz had invited Moczarski to several parties in different homes. Apart from Lechowicz's friends, they were frequented by Democratic Party people such as Jerzy Makowiecki, Stefan Czarnowski, Professor Antoni Łaskiewicz and Witold Pajor (these two were involved in the State Security Corps [Państwowy Korpus Bezpieczeństwa]), Stanisław Mierzeński from the counterintelligence of the Home Army's Warsaw District, and Dr. Franciszek Chmielewski, who worked in the Ujazdowski hospital. Lectures were followed by debates about ideology and politics; for example, Witold Pajor spoke about constitutional issues. The discussions tended to be theoretical, general and semi-academic, and included the history of national uprisings, economic and social issues.

The party guests were not aware that among them were some of Lechowicz's friends from the conspiratorial network of agents of the Information Department of the People's Guard, placed strategically in the Government Delegate's Office. One of them, Alfred Jaroszewicz, would confess during his post-war interrogation that the reason for the meetings was to learn about "the political views

21 AIPN, IPN BU XI/40, B. 3.

dominant in various parts of the Home Army and the Government Delegate's Office and to get personally close to these activists."²² Another member of Lechowicz's group, Stanisław Nieniałowski, admitted in his memoirs that both Lechowicz and he painstakingly covered up their Communist views and their ties to the People's Guard.²³

Before the war, Lechowicz had been employed by the Independent Information Office of the Warsaw District Command (Samodzielny Referat Informacyjny Dowództwa Okręgu Korpusu Warszawa), counterintelligence. He had also been a member of the illegal Communist Party, something that Moczarski could not have known. In his short post-war memoir, Lechowicz admitted that in 1933–38, as he worked in various state institutions, he had been a Polish Communist Party agent. The network delivered the information it collected to Samuel Ferszt, a member of the Foreign Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Sekretariat Zagraniczny KC KPP). "Ferszt was interested in the methods employed to combat Communism, the network of agents-provocateurs, operations planned, political campaigns and evaluations of the Communist Party. Ferszt was based in Prague and communicated in code by post."²⁴ He explained the background of his intelligence-gathering for the People's Guard:

As far as I was concerned, it was obvious that because of my pre-war work in the civil service and my pre-war connections, it was easier for me than for others to make contact with the secret service of the London underground, such as the Home Army's intelligence sources or the Government Delegate's Office. Thus, I was pushed in that direction, assigned tasks to organise protection . . . of the ranks of the People's Guard. This was to consist of actively gathering and acquiring information from German sources (but also organising a reactionary underground) about everything that could threaten the People's Guard people and units . . . The circles I had been close to before the war were the union of the movement of white-collar workers, and especially that part of it which before the war had moved close to the Democratic Clubs, and later to the Democratic Party.²⁵

During the German occupation, Lechowicz was active in several areas of the underground. He became head of the investigations department of the State Security Corps, the underground police. This gave People's Guard intelligence steady access to the internal reports about the Corps' activities. The opportunity to infiltrate the Home Army was so attractive that Lechowicz, not wanting to

22 AIPN, IPN BU XI/40, B. 3.

23 Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN), sig. 2/1536/0/8/99.

24 Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN), sig. 2/1582/15797.

25 Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN), sig. 2/1582/15797.

risk accidental exposure, stopped communicating directly with his bosses in the People's Guard. The State Security Corps people must have thought highly of him, since in late 1943 they made him an offer to form an investigation cell inside another underground organisation, the Directorate of Underground Resistance (Kierownictwie Walki Podziemnej, KWP). It had been created in the summer of 1943 by merging two organisations, the Directorate of Civilian Resistance (Kierownictwa Walki Cywilnej) in the Government Delegate's Office with the Directorate of Conspiratorial Resistance (Kierownictwo Walki Konspiracyjnej) directed by the Home Army commander. It was expected to play a special role. It developed codes of conduct for people in different types of jobs under German rule and operated an underground justice system—the first in occupied Europe—whose task was to uncover and stamp out war crimes such as collaboration, treason, spying, provocation and extracting payoffs. It was charged with overseeing Judging Commissions (Komisje Sądzące) and Civilian Special Courts (Cywilne Sądy Specjalne) and their penal procedures, which needed to take into account the conditions of operating underground but were nonetheless based on pre-war Polish law.

Initially, Lechowicz directed a cell charged with spying on individuals suspected of maintaining contacts with the Gestapo. Next, a three-part sabotage section was formed: investigation, observation and liquidation. Lechowicz continued to be promoted and became deputy head of the Directorate of Underground Resistance. With his workload growing, he asked Moczarski to take over as head of the investigations section.

Shortly after their chance meeting in Piętowski's factory, Lechowski showed up at the Moczarskis' home. Zofia recognised him as the man she had met just before the war in a Warsaw café in an aura of secrecy and remembered others' subtle hints that he was a Polish intelligence Division Two agent charged with spying on Germans. Now, he was a high-up in an important Underground State institution. She saw no reason to trust him.

Lechowicz's offer sounded interesting, all the more so since Kazimierz was growing tired of the underground political world and its intrigues, ambitions and rivalries, which he observed from close up. He was suffocating in the stifling atmosphere surrounding the Office of Information and Propaganda, with the allegations that its people favoured the Communists. Working for the Directorate of Underground Resistance appeared as a challenge of a different kind, a transition to waging an active struggle against the Germans. It was around this time that Moczarski met, only once, Eustachy Krak, head of the Warsaw branch of the Directorate of Underground Resistance, who wanted to get to know this new

hire. The two men would only learn each other's real names a few years after the war as they sat in the dock at their show trial.

The investigations cell Moczarski took over was the bottom rung of the sabotage section of the Directorate of Underground Resistance, responsible for collecting evidence against collaborators, informants and *szmalcowniki*. Moczarski's took on the nom de guerre "Maurycy." He began by learning about existing cases and, with Zofia's help, organised the crime files Lechowicz handed over to him. There was so much work that Zofia overruled her husband's wish to keep her out of his underground activity, and became a messenger and a keeper of records, taking the name "Malina."²⁶

The investigations required adhering strictly to legal procedures: witnesses testified under oath and information was gathered about them to ascertain their credibility. Court case protocols, signed by code name, were made. As section head, Moczarski took full responsibility for the records' accuracy. The protocols, with his comments added, were passed on to the prosecutor of a Special Court. Moczarski's legal education and experience as a civil servant proved invaluable, and the quality of these investigation materials was valued by the prosecutors and judges.

Some aspects of the functioning of the Directorate of Underground Resistance remain a mystery to this day. Only fragmentary materials survive, and many of its staff who spent time in prison after the war were unwilling to talk. In his pre-trial testimony after the war, Moczarski said that his section had only a handful of staff. He involved his sister, Anna Rothenburg-Rościszewska, to assist Zofia with record-keeping. The agents included pre-war theatre specialist and literary critic Jerzy Macierakowski and the lawyer Jerzy Donda. The navy-blue police, which included Directorate of Underground Resistance informers, were an important source of information about informers, collaborators and *szmalcowniki*, while the Home Army's Warsaw Region counterintelligence reports were an important resource on crime. Moczarski himself picked them up weekly from Kozubowski's dead drop in Twarda Street. Because the prosecutor as well as the underground court could supplement documentation, the role of the investigations cell was crucial in the chain of the underground justice system. For this reason, the investigations cells were required to provide clear and convincing evidence—something that was extremely difficult in wartime conditions. Thus, what were the circumstances of their work? When a person was attacked or blackmailed, which usually happened in the street or in the entrance of a building, his report

26 AIPN, IPN GK 317/711, B. 17.

was usually not backed by evidence, since there were no witnesses and it was difficult to reconstruct the appearance of the assailant. The investigations cell could do virtually nothing, and the investigator needed to have an exceptional instinct to avoid accusing an innocent person. Despite the hard work of the handful of people in the cell, it pursued only a few cases at a time. Thus, in a six-month period, the cell went through sixty carefully researched and documented cases, which were used as the bases of indictments. The Warsaw directorate had the particular achievement of providing extensive documentation on both German agents and common crime. It became especially valuable after the war for recognising offenders and building cases. It landed in the archives of the post-war Communist Ministry of Public Security and was used in investigations--of former Directorate of Underground Resistance people.²⁷

Lechowicz left the Directorate of Underground Resistance in the spring of 1944 and handed the Personal Sabotage Department (Wydział Dywersji Osobowej) over to Moczarski. Moczarski involved Zbigniew Baucz in his work. "We were strolling in Skorupki Street. Moczarski needed someone to keep the files and offered me the job," remembered Baucz.

We worked in Mokotowska Street. Actually, it was I who worked there, with a secretary, under a mountain of documents. Moczarski's dynamism carried him onward, he left me with this paperwork and himself worked on the most interesting cases, meeting with informers; he would show up in Mokotowska once in a while and excitedly tell me about his findings. He would catch the big fish and leave smaller cases to others.²⁸

Moczarski gave a comprehensive account in prison after the war:

As I worked on this, I began to specialize in 'Jew hunters.' I had to lay bare the whole command of the Kripo including Hauptmann Richter's anti-Jewish band, another band of the agent Wawrzyniec Sybilski. My work progressed so far that, for example, in the case of Wawrzyniec Sybilski of the Kripo I found evidence that he had delivered about fifty-eight persons (victims' names and addresses) to the Gestapo with detailed witness testimony, which clearly described Sybilski's anti-Jewish affairs. Death sentences were issued and executed in these cases.²⁹

When an underground court condemned a person to death, the case returned to the Personal Sabotage Department, in which members of its observation cell worked on determining the time and place for the execution. They learned about

27 AIPN, IPN BU01251/70, *Zeznania Zbigniewa Baucz, Jacka Baya, Jerzego Dondy, Kazimierza Moczarskiego.*

28 Author's interview with Zbigniew Baucz, December 2006.

29 AIPN, IPN BU XI/40.

the convict's routines, residence and other details of their life, and passed this information to the liquidation cell of the Directorate of Underground Resistance directed by Stanisław Sękowski.

The only aspect of the proceedings which made it very different from peacetime was the execution, which was complex and dangerous to the executioners. Zofia Kuligowska, a Polish Jew who survived the whole German occupation hiding outside the ghetto, talked about this danger. Kazimierz Moczarski collected evidence for the crimes of the blackmailer Freindl, who extracted money from Jews living in hiding; Kuligowska became one of his victims. She was able to reach Moczarski through her friend Antoni Szymanowski, who also worked in the information department of the Office of Information and Propaganda. Kuligowska's testimony was used as evidence, and Freindl was sentenced to death.

Kuligowska and Moczarski met in a café in Warsaw in the spring of 1944, where she recognised and pointed out Freindl, who was sitting with a group a few tables away. The sentence was executed in broad daylight in a café at a corner of Wilcza and Koszykowa Streets in central Warsaw. When Moczarski was imprisoned and charged with anti-Communist activity, Kuligowska, who joined the Polish Workers' Party after the war, tried to save him, but the prosecutor's office and the court did not take her testimony seriously.³⁰

Work at the Directorate of Underground Resistance, as risky and psychologically difficult as it was, made Moczarski very proud. Here, he felt that he was following clear rules and helping to bring justice to those who took advantage of the occupation to commit lowly acts and crimes. Almost a dozen years later he would be accused—on the basis of doctored evidence and other prisoners' testimony extracted through torture—that he had collaborated with the Germans in destroying activists of the Communist underground. In the winter of 1955 in Sztum prison, Kazimierz Moczarski wrote an account of the events as he remembered them in a letter to his lawyer Władysław Winawer:

My archive burned down during the Warsaw Uprising in some building somewhere near the Poniatowski Bridge. But two copies probably survived somewhere. Maybe someone found them at the home of [Directorate of Underground Resistance Warsaw district] Krak? Maybe at the home of [Judge of a Civilian Special Court] Sakowicz? Or maybe at the central court of Directorate of Underground Resistance. Or that court's prosecutor Koziolkiewicz? In any case, the originals of my reports or copies were saved somewhere and, as far as I know, the former Ministry of Public Security knew their contents. These analyses can prove irrefutably my efforts to take part in protecting society somewhat (apolitical people, people of Jewish origin, Home Army people, People's Army people,

30 AIPN, IPN 871/791, Zeznanie Zofii Kuligowskiej, B. 108.

National Democrats, Socialists, Communists, Catholics and so on), despite our limited capacity then. You would learn directly from them about my exposure of the 'Bak and Malewska's gang,' Antoni Freindl, Willy Leitgeber's gang, Maas from Bagatela Street, Latoszek and Ciemniewski from the Arbeitsamt. The notorious Jew hunter Sybilski from the Kripo, the well-known merchant from Podkowa Leśna (Geber, I think). As for Sakowicz, whose name I only learned in January of this year [1955], he is the last of the many links in the chain of the Directorate of Underground Resistance Warsaw district, which completes the organisational structure I was placed in.³¹

Eleventh June 1944 was a Sunday. A crowd headed to the Brothers Hospitallers church for an afternoon mass. Fighters of the Directorate of Underground Resistance liquidation unit led by Stanisław Sękowski "Rugia" hid among the faithful.

Kazimierz Moczarski was in charge of this Directorate of Underground Resistance military action whose goal was to free the Gestapo's prisoners under guard in the nearby Jan Boży (John of God) Hospital in Bonifraterska Street. A group of lightly wounded prisoners armed with weapons that had been smuggled into the hospital killed their guards. The action was made possible thanks to a detailed floor plan of the hospital, which Zbigniew Baucz had stolen from a municipal office. After a dozen or so prisoners, shielded by a Directorate of Underground Resistance unit, forced open gates on two sides of the hospital, they successfully hid in flats made available to the underground in the nearby Old Town. None of the attackers was killed, and some of the liberated prisoners joined the Directorate of Underground Resistance. This is the balance sheet of the operation, one that Kazimierz Moczarski, its brain, must have been very proud of.³²

A unit of fighters from outside the Home Army supported the thin ranks of "Rugia." It has been created by Andrzej Popławski "Sudeczko," a Warsaw con-dottiere who recruited dozens of people from Warsaw's working-class districts. Their specialty was expropriating raids, after which they shared the booty. Everyone in the underground knew that "Sudeczko" did favours for a wide range of underground organisations and political groups.³³ He worked with the head of Warsaw counterintelligence Bolesław Kozubowski, bringing him intelligence and, it seems, some of the money taken in the raids. He hoped in return to be included with his unit in the Home Army. However, Kozubowski treated him as

31 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 294–5.

32 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 156–66; author's interview with Zbigniew Baucz, 2006.

33 AIPN, mf 01255/134, Wyciąg z protokołu przesłuchania świadka Kazimierza Moczarskiego dotyczącego "Sudeczki," 31 X 1950 r., B. 57.

an informer and could not imagine having a formal relationship with a group whose organisation and activities made them resemble a criminal gang more than a regular army unit.

Moczarski knew who “Sudeczko” was but did not oppose the Directorate of Underground Resistance using the warlord’s services. He must have made a calculation of the small size of his own forces vis-à-vis the usefulness of such cooperation and the potential danger. The gang conducted several executions of informers and took part in the freeing of the prisoners from the hospital. Moczarski believed, or wanted to believe, that “Sudeczko” was an “idealistic criminal.”³⁴

This murky story helps to explain the existence of an informal network of contacts and interests between the underground and the anti-German criminal world, and the thin line between them. This line would soon be crossed, something that Moczarski himself learned about in dramatic circumstances.³⁵

Two days later, news of fratricidal killings shook up the underground. On 13 June 1944 a group of people invaded the home of Ludwik Widerszal “Pisarczyk,” an employee of the Office of Information and Propaganda’s information department and the author of an underground white book about the extermination of the Jews. They shot him fatally as his pregnant wife and daughter watched. Makowiecki’s deputy, Aleksander Gieysztor “Walda,” was immediately notified, and arrived in time to witness Pisarczyk’s death. He shortly also learned about the kidnapping of Jerzy Makowiecki and his wife.

That very day, Office of Information and Propaganda colleagues Eugeniusz Czarnowski, Aleksander Gieysztor, Zygmunt Kapitaniak, Erazm Kulesza and Kazimierz Moczarski met in a conspiratorial flat. All five of them were members of the Democratic Party and had served for many years under Major Makowiecki, and most were also his close friends. Knowing that they needed to help Widerszal’s wife and daughter, they frantically discussed how to find out what had happened. They were afraid that Widerszal’s death and the disappearance of the head of the information department were the beginning of an operation aimed at the Office of Information and Propaganda, and they attempted to assess the threat.

34 AIPN, mf 01255/134.

35 Janusz Marszałec, “Grupa ekspropriacyjno-likwidacyjna Andrzeja Popławskiego ‘Andrzeja Sudeczki’ w podziemnej Warszawie 1943–1944. Między kondotierstwem, walką o niepodległość a mordem,” in: *Porządek publiczny i bezpieczeństwo okupacyjnej Warszawy. Studia historyczne/seria: Warszawa niepokonana*, ed. Robert Spalek (Warsaw, 2018), 323–84.

As they met at Gieysztor's home, the men decided that an investigation must be conducted and, since his work at the Directorate of Underground Resistance gave him a substantial intelligence capacity, Moczarski was put in charge. He would convey the information he gathered to Gieysztor. Moczarski wrote down in detail the progress of his investigation. He later wrote that immediately after the meeting he went to the Widerszals' flat in Asfaltowa Street. Widerszal's body, covered with a sheet, lay on a bed, a gunshot wound on his forehead. Mrs Widerszal told Moczarski about the incident and described the appearance of the attackers. "Pisarczyk's little girl, her eyes terrified, fixed on her mother's conversation with me," he noted.³⁶ A Directorate of Underground Resistance associate directly arranged an official permit to bury the murdered man and discreetly oversaw the funeral and the safety of Mrs Widerszal's home. In the meantime, Moczarski launched a semiformal investigation: "I registered statements, news, rumours and opinions that illustrated the atmosphere in the underground and so forth. I made use of my whole capacity to gather information, as did our colleagues from the Office of Information and Propaganda and the Democratic Party."

At the same time, Moczarski was trying to learn what had happened to the Makowieckis. He heard the next day that both bodies had been found and were now in the hospital in Oczeni Street. Moczarski arranged a meeting with Witold Bieńkowski, an internal affairs staffer in the Government Delegate's Office. They strolled in the streets of central Warsaw and talked for a long time, as Bieńkowski, a high-level Underground State employee who seemed trustworthy, told Moczarski that he knew for certain that the Makowieckis' bodies had been found in the vicinity of their home. Moczarski was losing time and energy for his investigation. He questioned the Makowieckis' neighbours about the time the men who took their bodies away came, what they looked like and how they behaved. He learned what type of a car they drove. In the meantime, the news about their bodies being found turned out to be fake.

Moczarski arrived at the next meeting with his Office of Information and Propaganda colleagues to tell them what he had learned. They could add little and were only able to guess the killers' motives. Gieysztor brought in Moczarski to see the head of the Office of Information and Propaganda to recount what had been learned so far. This was how Moczarski met Colonel Jan Rzepecki. "I reported on the information we had collected, our assessments and conclusions, and asked him to press the investigation cells of the Home Army High Command,

36 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 168.

to hurry the investigation. 'Prezes' heard my report and generally agreed with my reasoning," Moczarski wrote.³⁷

Outside, after leaving the clandestine meeting, Moczarski and Gieysztor again analysed the information they had gathered, which did not form a cohesive whole, and they both had the impression that their efforts were in vain. Just then, at the corner of Wspólna Street near Saint Barbara's Church, they come across a man Moczarski recognised as a fighter from "Sudeczko's" group, who a few days earlier had taken part in the rescue operation in John of God Hospital. "All he knows about me is that I'm one of us, a conspirator. We talk in the doorway of a building in Wspólna Street, just the two of us. And here was the young 'Sudeczko' fighter telling us that his mates had recently liquidated some professor, a freemason from Asfaltowa Street."³⁸ Moczarski tried to hide his shock and asked for more details. After they parted, Moczarski and Gieysztor instantaneously made a plan of action. The young fighter's information seemed reliable, but Moczarski decided that it needed to be confirmed. He met with Stanisław Sękowski "Rugia," who had made the connection with "Sudeczko's" group on behalf of the Directorate of Underground Resistance ahead of the hospital operation, who was very likely to know more. Moczarski made Sękowski swear that he would keep the secret and told him about his discovery. Sękowski confirmed that he had known that "Sudeczko's" people had liquidated "a Nazi agent, some professor, a freemason or a Jew, in a building near Rakowiecka Street," and that they had even tried to sell him a briefcase and a ring they had taken from their victim. It all clicked, including even the appearance and the colour of the car. Moczarski guessed that "Sudeczko" was only following orders, and wanted to find out who was behind the operation. He made a plan to kidnap the condottiere, telling Rzepecki about it via Gieysztor. Waiting for a decision, he continued to collect information about the circumstances of the crime. He seemed close to solving the puzzle, but "Rugia" advised him to act quickly, since "'Sudeczko' and his boys are now quite distrustful and agitated."³⁹

When the Office of Information and Propaganda chief's response finally arrived, Moczarski could not believe his ears. Rzepecki was ordering him to abandon all further investigation and the planned kidnapping. "His reasons are more or less these: the Home Army High Command's cells responsible for this

37 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 169.

38 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 170.

39 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 172.

are conducting an investigation, and they must not be disrupted. I respected this order, even though, inside, I was against it,”⁴⁰ Moczarski wrote years later. However, in the summer of 1944, he was still hoping to learn where the Makowieckis had been murdered. He used existing Directorate of Underground Resistance informers, Poles working for the German criminal police, but also continued on his own with Gieysztor. Their intelligence pointed to Warsaw’s western suburbs. They went there. “It’s a sunny day. The wheat is tall. Little meadows, bumpy terrain, bushes here and there. We spend over three hours wandering through the fields, combing through corn, rye, potatoes. We are pretending to be on a Sunday outing.”⁴¹ All in vain. New information comes from the Kripo (Criminal Police) people that the murders definitely took place in Warsaw. He again reported to Rzepecki that he wanted to kidnap “Sudeczko” and capture his archives—and again was told not to.

Years later, Moczarski explained in his notes:

[Rzepecki] ‘Prezes’ didn’t know me well, the first time he had set eyes on me was 15 June 1944. He did not know enough about ‘Rugia’s’ and my capabilities, he may simply have underestimated us. He may also have adopted the position of upholding rigour, order and division of responsibilities among the different cells of the army, i.e., the Home Army. Or he may have received an order to this effect from his superiors. I regret today that I obeyed those orders. But at the time I fully respected the principle of actively complying with a military order. [Rzepecki had written on this note:] He was right. Disobey an order and it’s a bullet in the head.⁴²

In the summer of 1944, the intelligence cell of the Home Army’s High Command was charged with conducting a formal investigation of the Makowieckis’ murder. Until the Warsaw Uprising of 1 August, it managed to show only that “Sudeczko’s” people had been the killers. Their commander was killed just before the uprising in Powązki cemetery inside the tomb he used as his hiding place, during an attempt to capture him for the Home Army’s High Command investigation authorities.⁴³

It was only after the uprising that Moczarski received information about the murders from policemen of a suburban station: “‘Sudeczko’s’ people had driven the Makowieckis . . . into a field somewhere outside Boernerowo, they read a

40 Moczarski, *Zapiski*.

41 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 173.

42 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 174.

43 Janusz Marszałec, “Grupa ekspropriacyjna...”, 326–84.

paper (a 'sentence?') and murdered them with a Schmeiser bullet," he wrote after the war. "More than a dozen shots (about seventeen) were fired. Mrs. Makowiecka wore two different, albeit similar, shoes when she was murdered. It is likely that since she was tense as she was being 'arrested' she put on unmatching shoes."⁴⁴ Moczarski attempted to resume the investigation shortly after the uprising, and reported to his new Home Army commander, General Leopold Okulicki, that the bodies had been found. However, the chaos in the wake of the uprising did not lend itself to revisiting old issues.

Zofia and Jerzy Makowieckis' bodies were dug up after the war was over, in July 1945. One of Moczarski's last decisions before his arrest in August was to set aside tens of thousands of zlotys of the underground funds for their burial.

The National Armed Forces were considered responsible for this fratricidal murder during the war and for a long time after. Moczarski's April 1947 statement made in Rakowiecka Street prison argued that "a band working for the young-national mafia is behind the deaths of Makowiecki and Widerszal. I believe that it is most likely that the 'secret political council' of the Polish Organisation (Organizacja Polska) was this mafia."⁴⁵ It led this part of the national-radical underground, which never recognised the leadership of the Home Army command.

The former Office of Information and Propaganda people spent many years after the war fretting about the fratricidal murders. In the 1960s, they formed an informal group, which found refuge in Professor Stanisław Płoski's study group at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. Apart from Moczarski, the group included Władysław Bartoszewski, Aleksander Gieysztor, Zygmunt Kapitaniak and Jan Rzepecki. They re-examined all the facts and events but did not manage to come up with any new conclusions. However, one day Bartoszewski unexpectedly learned something new. At a social gathering of Home Army veterans, he met a former officer of Home Army counterintelligence, Władysław Jamontt. As they reminisced about the old days, Jamontt suddenly declared that Witold Bieńkowski had ordered him to shoot the Makowieckis and Widerszal. Bartoszewski knew this ambitious and influential employee of the Internal Affairs Department of the Government Delegate's Office well from their Żegota activities to save Jews. Bartoszewski, agitated, invited Jamontt to tea at his place and asked him to retell his story. Moczarski sat

44 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 173.

45 See Krzysztof Komorowski, *Polityka i walka. Konspiracja zbrojna ruchu narodowego 1939–1945* (Warsaw, 2001).

in an adjacent room, eavesdropping. According to Jamontt, Witold Bieńkowski and a Home Army inspector, a colonel “Karol,” whose real name Jamontt did not know, had ordered “Sudeczko” to execute them. This new information fit into the events of 1944. It had been Bieńkowski who delayed Moczarski’s investigation when he gave Moczarski the false information that the bodies had been found in the hospital in Oczki Street. However, without any documents, the former Office of Information and Propaganda colleagues’ further efforts to uncover the connections between these people and to establish their motivations for the crimes amounted to nothing.⁴⁶

Historians remained puzzled by the Makowieckis’ and Widerszal’s murders for many years. Andrzej Krzysztof Kunert hypothesised that there was an underground “mafia group, which used a handful of people inside the counterintelligence of the Home Army’s High Command and the Government Delegate’s Office, who succeeded at concealing their involvement in it from their superiors.” Moczarski hinted at this “mafia-like” nature of the crime in his prison report but attributed it to the National Armed Forces. However, Kunert eventually rejected this theory. “The very aggressive propaganda campaign of the National Armed Forces had a huge impact on the atmosphere in the underground. However, the question is much more complicated.” He recalled his astonishing discovery, which showed the deep mutual distrust even in the core structures of the Polish Underground State: “I found some attacks in underground publications against the ‘Communist agents’ within the High Command. And this wasn’t even any radical right, but only an underground publication of the Workers’ Party.”⁴⁷

The truth about the tragic murders emerged slowly as archives were opened. The idea of murdering them most likely came from Witold Bieńkowski and two High Command counterintelligence officers, Władysław Niedenthal and Władysław Jamontt. Andrzej Popławski “Sudeczko” was only the executioner, a tool. Władysław Jamontt was arrested in 1950 and charged with post-war anti-Communist conspiracy. His role in the murders was revealed in the investigation by accident. He demanded in vain that Witold Bieńkowski serve as a witness, claiming that he had ordered the murders, but the authorities did not want to involve Bieńkowski, who supported the regime and was a deputy to the Sejm.

The historian Janusz Marszałec has synthesised all the hypotheses and documents available today, analysing the biographies and connections between the actors, and reached some interesting conclusions. Thus, only Jamontt was

46 Robert Jarocki, *Opowieść o Aleksandrze Gieysztorze* (Warsaw, 2001), 105–20.

47 Author’s interview with Andrzej Kunert, 2007.

linked to the radical wing of the nationalist camp. Bieńkowski had been active in the Christian movement before the war, and in the underground was a member of the Catholic Front of Poland's Rebirth, which was not radical. The third possible architect of the crime, Władysław Niedenthal, had been a syndicalist during the war. Marszałec found that the three had not known each other before the war, and only came together underground over being very critical of the political realities in the underground.

After the war Witold Bieńkowski . . . testified that the relations between the Office of Information and Propaganda and the Government Delegate's Office had been 'full of misunderstandings' over the Office of Information and Propaganda being dominated by leftist, mainly Communist, ideas. The charge that this cell of the Home Army's High Command had been 'Jewified' was also significant. Bieńkowski . . . was extremely irritated by Jerzy Makowiecki, whom, incidentally, he had known personally Thus, the crime may have been a component of Bieńkowski's and Jamontt's, perhaps also Niedenthal's, political plan as they saw Makowiecki and Widerszal as Soviet agents who endangered Polish interests. Thus, the deaths of Jerzy Makowiecki and Ludwik Widerszal were a vain attempt by people who found a non-existent threat to commit to this rivalry. [Marszałec calls it a tragic misunderstanding set off by ideological passions:] The real enemy, Moscow's intelligence, which was in deep cover in the ranks of the Government Delegate's Office and the Home Army, remained unexposed as it waited patiently for the arrival of the Soviet army.⁴⁸

The historian Stefan Kieniewicz, who had worked for the Office of Information and Propaganda, wrote after the war in his unpublished memoir: "Of course I was aware that proscription lists which included names of people I knew were circulating, but I didn't take them seriously. . . . What a despicable story, and so pointless from the point of view of the instigators themselves. Widerszal and Makowiecki came nowhere near being Communist sympathisers."⁴⁹

Kazimierz Moczarski testified in 1947 that a few days after the murders, two people he did not know knocked on his door at dawn. Moczarski called his Directorate of Underground Resistance associates embedded in the Kripo for help, and they spooked the assailants. They drove off in a car identical to the one that had been used to kidnap the Makowieckis. The ongoing war of words was beginning to take on a dangerous new turn, and Moczarski wrote about feeling extremely threatened. Meanwhile, the Warsaw Uprising, which began a few weeks later, overshadowed this underground drama.

48 Marszałec, "Morderstwo na Makowieckich i Widerszalu," 59.

49 Jarocki, *Opowieść o Aleksandrze Gieysztorze*, 107–20.

Chapter Three: The Warsaw Uprising

“Distraught by [the murders], we went into the time of the uprising feeling personally somewhat relieved,” is how Moczarski remembered early August 1944. “The situation had become more straightforward when fighting the Nazi invaders directly stopped us from thinking about anything other than being soldiers.”¹ In July 1944 Moczarski, having been ordered by Rzepecki to abandon the investigation of the murders, returned to conspiratorial work, as the mood in Warsaw grew increasingly tense at the palpable signs of German withdrawal; throngs of fleeing *Volksdeutsche* and columns of retreating troops filled the streets. Artillery cannonade heard from across the Vistula was evidence that the Red Army was near.

The people of Warsaw were getting ready to rise up against the Germans, as soon as the Russians launched their offensive nearby. The Home Army leadership’s political plan assumed that attacking the Germans would speed up the city’s liberation and that the Russians would be welcomed by its rightful Polish hosts. This meant that the underground organisation had to reveal itself straight away. After years of harsh occupation, the young people of the underground waited for the order with growing impatience.

After Makowiecki’s death, Aleksander Gieysztor became the head of the information department of the Office of Information and Propaganda. He supervised the launch of four information centres with short-wave radio communications systems for the uprising, two in central Warsaw and one each in the Praga and Żoliborz districts. Kazimierz Moczarski was the ideas man behind this project. Władysław Bartoszewski remembered: “A few days before the Warsaw Uprising, ‘Rafał’ was bursting with ideas and energy. He came to see the head of the Office of Information and Propaganda with the idea of organising an internal radio communications network with inexpensive and easy-to-use Polish-made two-way radios, the so-called UKFs operating on ultra-short waves.”²

Moczarski came up with the UKF idea, initially a private undertaking, together with the radio operator Jerzy Wolniewicz, one of the men sprung from the hospital in Bonifraterska Street. Moczarski and the two young men (he recruited a second radio operator, Tadeusz Korwin-Piotrowski) worked on it for several weeks in a workshop they set up in the cellar of a block of flats at 61 Filtrowa

1 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 198.

2 Bartoszewski, *Życie trudne*, 162.

Street, assembling two-way radios. They spent their own money on lamps, antennas and batteries they bought on the black market. The microphones were “captured” by the Moczarskis as they surreptitiously cut off the receivers from telephones in various German institutions. Moczarski presented his idea to Rzepecki after a few successful tests of short-wave connections. The head of the Office of Information and Propaganda not only approved it, but also agreed to appropriate some money out of the underground’s funds. Now the production of the radios could move full steam ahead. Moczarski engaged his Directorate of Underground Resistance team to help acquire the materials needed to construct the two-way radios. Now, the work carried on in hardly conspiratorial conditions, as the people who lived in the building looked on, discreetly and approvingly. A few days before the uprising, in a secret Office of Information and Propaganda meeting at 18 Mokotowska Street, Moczarski put on a demonstration. Gieysztor, impressed, decided to install radio stations for the uprising in all four information centres.

On July 31, Moczarski handed an eviction order signed by Rzepecki to the owner of a flat on the fifth floor of the building at 9 Kredytowa Street, where the station directed by Moczarski was to be located. Moczarski recorded in his diary that,

We began to bring in our equipment straight away. But we did not succeed in getting it all there by the appointed hour. The next day, as I was moving the next-to-last shipment of our ‘wares’ by a motor-electric rickshaw, shots rang out from the direction of the Home Army meeting point between 11 Mazowiecka Street and Dąbrowski Square [nearby]. They were triggered by a random German airmen’s patrol.³

However, this did not halt the work on the communications contraption. For the best reception, the radio station was placed on the building’s top floor.

On the third day of the uprising, Moczarski witnessed the death of one of the people working for him. A very young uprising fighter, “Kamiński,” died after being hit by an aerial projectile. “As we carried his body to a bier deep inside the building, my heart froze,” he wrote in his memoir, “when, as I held up the head of the fallen man, I could feel his brain splashing inside his cracked skull.”⁴ They found themselves on the frontline unexpectedly. Only a few streets away, the Germans had barricaded themselves inside the tall building of the PASTa telegraph company in Zielna Street. There is powerful shelling from Wola district. The loud explosions are making the whole building shake, the fighters’ clothing

3 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 202.

4 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 203.

is white, covered with the omnipresent dust. During pauses in broadcasts, Moczarski visited the unit commanded by Captain Bolesław Kontrym “Żmudzin” stationed nearby in Kredytowa Street. From there, you could see the Germans in the palm of your hand. “Rafał” took a gun and, for the first time, confronted the enemy directly.

However, the realities of the uprising changed the Office of Information and Propaganda plans. In the end, only three of its centres were operational, all of them in central Warsaw. Sienna Street was the home of the “Kowal” centre run by Adam Dobrowolski, Moczarski directed the “Rafał” centre and “Anna” was situated in Marszałkowska Street. Each one was equipped with an ultra-short-wave transmitter, and Moczarski coordinated their operations.

On the first days of the uprising, the radio stations of the “Anna” and “Rafał” posts on the two sides of Jerozolimskie Avenue, which the Germans controlled, played a crucial role. The “Rafał” post was located near the headquarters of uprising commander General Antoni Chruściel “Monter.” Before the military communications network was launched, which took a few days, it was the Office of Information and Propaganda short-wave radios that were used to relay nearly half of the reports and orders from the commanders of units fighting in both parts of central Warsaw. Another advantage of this unprofessional network became clear: operating on the ultra-short waves, they could not be intercepted by the Germans. As Moczarski remembered, “for several days ‘Anna’ relayed the night-time watchwords and appeals to ‘Anna’ from ‘Monter’ for all the units in central Warsaw to hear.”⁵

The post commanded by Moczarski did not survive long in its original venue. From the start, the group’s space was under fierce German fire from the PASTa building, but also from Wola to the west. To optimise their reach, ultra-short-wave broadcasters needed to be located high up and without walls to block them. Already on 5 August the building was wiped out by an aerial bomb, and the fifth-floor quarters ceased to exist. Four of the crew were wounded, including Zofia Moczarska.

The team moved to an air-raid shelter inside the PKO bank building in Świętokrzyska Street. Zofia, wounded in the chest and legs, spent a brief time in hospital, then returned to her unit. The shards that could not be removed then would always bother her. The stuffy room in which the radio crew were stationed was also a workshop. The crew made a new antenna for the radio station, which allowed them to go down to the cellars and leave the transmitter on the top floor,

5 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 202–3.

so that they were able to broadcast even under heavy shelling. “The contraption was positioned on the top floor of the PKO bank on the Marszałkowska Street side. At night, we had an unforgettable view of burning Warsaw. I can still see this city on the pyre and hear our radio operator’s voice whispering into the microphone: ‘Hello, Anna! Rafał here. Can you hear me?’” Moczarski mused thirteen years after the uprising.⁶ They failed to make radio contact with the Old Town, which was cut off, and they went on patrol in northern central Warsaw and Powiśle. The news they collected was relayed daily to Gieysztor, chief of Rzepecki’s secretariat. The post reported on the population’s and fighters’ moods, which fluctuated more and more dramatically after the euphoria of the early days of the uprising, and of their attempts to overcome the growing bitterness. “We were able to improve the quite depressed mood of the Home Army units inside the Ministry of Justice as part of our propaganda action,” reported the “Rafał” post on 3 August. “The boys became enthusiastic at the news that a captured German tank was busy fighting.”

In late August, the “Rafał” station crew handed over their rooms in the shelter to the staff of Komorowski “Bór” and moved into the Adria restaurant. In early September Adria burned down, together with their press and radio archives. Only the equipment and most recent reports and telegrams could be saved. They moved to Widok Street, but a large fire made them move again, to Café Bodo in Foksal Street. “Our retreat from Foksal was rushed. Very difficult transport conditions. When ‘Megohn’ [Jerzy Wójtowicz] and I ran to get the rest of the equipment for the third time, white flags were already flowing over the buildings,” remembered Moczarski.

In the middle of September, both the civilians’ and fighters’ mood in blazing north-central Warsaw, where they were cut off from all news, worsened significantly. In an attempt to counteract their panic, some of Moczarski’s people put out an afternoon paper, which they printed on a duplicator. Moczarski and Tadeusz Wardejn-Zagórski took turns editing and writing texts, Rzepecki’s liaison officer Janina Przeździecka “Rysia” supervised the secretariat, and Zofia Moczarska was the copyeditor. Until the uprising capitulated, *Wiadomości Powstańcze* covered the situation in Warsaw, the Western front and the wait for a Soviet offensive. The post continued to monitor other radio stations, stayed in contact with the southern part of central Warsaw on the other side of Jerozolimskie Avenue, which remained under German control, and gathered reports about fighting there.

6 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 205.

On one of his ventures outside, Moczarski witnessed a military court in the PKO Bank building sentencing German prisoners. There was only one kind of verdict for Gestapo agents, SS men and Security Police: capital punishment. Stanisław Twardo, a well-known figure, a pre-war governor of Warsaw Province, approached the head of the execution squad asking if he could shoot the condemned man, explaining that the Germans had killed his son. Years later Moczarski painted the scene: "T. is pale, austere, mentally focused. They allow him to perform the execution. Afterwards he is calm and at peace. I will never understand all the ways of the human soul. Even though I can understand the circumstances justifying this decision, I would not have allowed it."⁷

Already in September, as the possibility of capitulation became real, people also began to talk about whether and how to avoid being captured by the Germans. The Moczarskis decided to flee. "I countered the argument that if the commander of the uprising were to order us to allow ourselves to be captured with the belief I took from the Polish Army that a soldier must avoid capture at any price," he reminisced after the war.⁸ Rzepecki concurred. Eugeniusz Lokajski took photographs for the Moczarskis' new forged identity cards. They were among the last taken by this famed photographer of the uprising. News of his death came the next day.

The Moczarskis prepared to leave Warsaw a few days before surrender. Moczarski was unexpectedly summoned by Rzepecki. Their conversation would be decisive in the life of Moczarski, who so far had remained in the shadows of momentous events.

Rzepecki. . . declared that if I was not planning to go into an Oflag, I should gather the Office of Information and Propaganda people, watch them carefully, organise a departure from Warsaw for some of them and to report later, via Hallerowo [code name of the western Warsaw sub-region of the Home Army] to General [Leopold Okulicki] 'Niedźwiadek' Tell 'Niedźwiadek' that . . . I'm suggesting that he take you.⁹

Thus, Moczarski was caught by surprise with this order to continue fighting: to restore the Office of Information and Propaganda within the Home Army High Command under General Okulicki's command, which meant nothing other than taking over Colonel Rzepecki's position. Moczarski's assignment came as a result of the High Command's plans, which were changed by the defeat of the uprising. While it had initially intended to reveal the underground organisation of the

7 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 215.

8 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 230.

9 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 231.

Home Army and the Polish Underground State at the beginning of the uprising, a back-up plan was also secretly prepared for a possible Soviet occupation to create a skeletal new underground, "Independence" [Niepodległość, "NIE"]. This plan, of course, reflected a lack of faith in Stalin's intentions as Poland was being liberated. It began to germinate in autumn of 1943 under the leadership of General August Fieldorf "Nil."

However, the fall of the uprising radically changed all plans and calculations. According to the capitulation agreement, the whole leadership of the Home Army was to go into German captivity. Since the German occupation continued, a High Command needed to be recreated from scratch, virtually unable to communicate with the government in exile in London. Going into captivity, the current commander in chief of the Home Army, General Tadeusz Komorowski "Bór," named General Leopold Okulicki his successor, despite the fact that Okulicki had until now been lined up to lead the anti-Soviet underground, something that would soon create much confusion.¹⁰

Naming Moczarski to head the Office of Information and Propaganda was Rzepecki's deliberate calculation. Moczarski was placed outside "Independence," and even remained unaware of its existence, so as to keep the underground networks separate. Rzepecki may also have been guided by ideological considerations, as Moczarski had been a close associate of Jerzy Makowiecki's. Moczarski may also have been trusted for his perseverance in solving the murders within the Office of Information and Propaganda. He had proven himself a good organiser during the two months of the uprising. His appointment was clearly an outcome of the new situation brought on by the defeat of the uprising.

10 Chmielarz Andrzej, "Od 'Nie' do WiN," in: *Polskie Państwo Podziemne i Wojsko Polskie w latach 1944–1945*, ed. Stefan Zwoliński (Warsaw, 1991), 66–81.



Zofia Moczarska, September 1944. Photogr. Eugeniusz Lokajski. Archive of Elżbieta Moczarska / FOTONOVA.



Kazimierz Moczarski, September 1944. Photogr. Eugeniusz Lokajski. Archive of Elżbieta Moczarska /FOTONOVA.

In any case, Moczarski's appointment came as a surprise to others within the office, and for some higher-ups was probably difficult to accept. Nevertheless, orders were followed. "Entrusting our affable and dynamic colleague Moczarski with this mission, which was in fact, albeit in changed circumstances and with a diminished role, a command position for a well-educated colonel, which Jan Rzepecki had been, came as a surprise to us," recalled Władysław Bartoszewski. "Rafał's" commitment and bravery during the uprising made us all like him. And now he was to be our boss, which was not to be questioned in this service of ours."¹¹

For now, Moczarski was to lead the Office of Information and Propaganda unit of a dozen or so people, which included his former superiors Kazimierz Ostrowski and Adam Dobrowolski, but also Władysław Bartoszewski, Rzepecki's liaison officer Janina Przędziecka and, of course, Zofia Moczarska. Joining this group of underground fighters evading captivity was Wincenty Kwiecieński, head of the Warsaw branch of Home Army counterintelligence, who remained under the extreme threat of being captured by the Germans.

On 4 October, at a barricade in Śniadeckich Street, wearing civilian clothing, they said farewell to the others in the Office of Information and Propaganda unit led by Colonel Rzepecki who were going into captivity. At the last minute, Moczarski noticed that Rzepecki had on shoes that were literally falling apart. He pulled his commander out of the prisoners' column and handed the stunned Rzepecki a pair of brand-new dress shoes he had bought in a pop-up street market at Krucza Street, and explained to him, as if he were a child: "Let politics be politics, difficulties be difficulties, the tragedy of surrender a tragedy, but today the most important thing are new shoes without holes, and only a madman would refuse to take them."¹²

As he wordlessly watched the column of people heading into internment, Moczarski felt the burden of responsibility for the unknown challenges that lay ahead. "I felt like an aching gum after a tooth was pulled out," he reminisced, "They were leaving in ranks, with a sense of some moral and organisational order, of shared duty. Our group, although it avoided the moral and physical fetters of incarceration, was facing a greater unknown."¹³

However, he forgot these dark thoughts as soon as he was sucked into preparations for leaving the city safely. Two days later, Moczarski's little team

11 Bartoszewski, *Życie trudne*, 161.

12 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 232.

13 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 235.

equipped with fake Polish Red Cross work papers arrived at the Wehrmacht headquarters in the Polonia Hotel. They must have been a motley crew. Władysław Bartoszewski remembered that Moczarski looked exceptionally impressive in a hat and a pre-war overcoat with an astrakhan collar. He was carrying a stretcher loaded according to the principle that what is on top arouses the least suspicion: Office of Information and Propaganda money and archive. Bartoszewski looked much humbler in his seemingly outgrown jacket.¹⁴ Even with the official evacuation deadline past, a column of Warsaw residents carrying their modest possessions continued to move down Jerozolimskie Avenue. Set on fire by groups of uniformed Germans, nearby houses burned. It took several hours for the transport that was to take them out of the city to arrive, and their tension grew with the possibility that their alleged Red Cross crew could be exposed.

Thanks to Adam Dobrowolski's excellent German, boosted by a hefty tip in dollars, they were finally able to take off on a lorry belonging to the Wehrmacht. The driver took them to Pruszków, west of Warsaw. According to Moczarski, "instead of turning right to the expellees' camp in Żbików as they approached the town, the driver headed straight into the centre, where we were safe. He took twenty dollars for this favour."¹⁵ Not bad, considering that each of them had been given a soldier's pay of ten dollars for the road.

Exhausted by the two months of fighting in a city that was being reduced to rubble, they were stunned to see the calm of a provincial town, its shops operating as if nothing had happened and its well-stocked restaurants open. Only twenty or so kilometres away from the capital's slaughter. . .

However, there was no time to rest, nor to reminisce about what had happened in the previous few weeks. Moczarski decided to find Home Army commander General Leopold Okulicki "Niedźwiadek" as quickly as possible. He began by getting in touch with the commander of the Warsaw-suburb branch of the Home Army, Colonel Franciszek Jachieć "Roman." Their first meeting threw cold water on Moczarski and made him realise the enormity of the problem created by Rzepecki's appointment, issued in such different circumstances. Moczarski remembered:

'Roman' received us not too kindly. The very form of his conversation with the two younger Home Army officers alone was not too pleasant. However, this was not what mattered then. Most important were two statements by Lieutenant Colonel 'Roman:' first, he knows nothing about some General [Okulicki] 'Niedźwiadek' being the Home

14 Bartoszewski, *Życie trudne*, 162.

15 Bartoszewski, *Życie trudne*, 242.

Army's top commander and, second, he has no idea where to look for him. After a brief and polite exchange, we reported our departure. I later learned from 'Niedźwiadek' that 'Roman' did not know then and that he believed too much those who were not too happy that 'Niedźwiadek' was the post-uprising leader of the Home Army.¹⁶

This was Moczarski's roundabout way of discussing in his post-war memoir the tensions that came in the wake of the uprising about the selection of General Tadeusz Komorowski "Bór" to lead the Home Army. On 1 October 1944, the day before Warsaw surrendered, he had sent a telegram to the chief of staff in London. "I have designated as my successor 'Termit', to lead the whole future underground operation in the territories occupied by the Germans and to head the information network in the remainder of the territory."¹⁷ London took almost three months to sign off on his nomination. It did not name Okulicki commander of the Armed Forces in Poland until 21 December—an illustration of the exceptionally difficult conditions in which the underground was operating.

Moczarski returned to Warsaw's ruins in the first half of October. He had an important mission, to help Government Delegate Jan Stanisław Jankowski who had been trapped in Warsaw. Moczarski drove a lorry with the Polish Red Cross logo together with Dr Mazurek, deputy director of the Central Welfare Council (Rada Główna Opiekuńcza), sanctioned by the Germans, carrying forged "director's" documents for Jankowski. This time, they passed through German checkpoints without a problem. Moczarski wrote after the war that,

In the car's boot, with the Red Cross flag hanging over it, rode: a German gendarme (escort) and I. The gendarme was a retired German order policeman who had been mobilised towards the end of the war. He was older, thin, unflappable, a violinist. . . . The German escort was determined to acquire a violin. . . . despite the fact that according to German law, looting was punishable by death. He fancied a violin, and I wanted to win his favour because we were close to reaching our goal. So I kept the German company when he set out to search for an instrument in the abandoned houses we passed. I stood guard in doorways ([the German] was afraid of German patrols), and he searched. He was an expert in violins. . . . What an unusual situation: dead houses, ruins, a wasteland, street cats and pieces of Beethoven, Brahms, Ravel being played by an enemy. I felt strange when I heard him play Chopin. I became 'a total outsider' as [the poet Leopold] Staff called it. The German finally chose two violins in black cases. I had to forget about Chopin, and we were on our way.¹⁸

16 Bartoszewski, *Życie trudne*, 244.

17 *Armia Krajowa w dokumentach 1939–1945*, vol V (Wrocław–Warsaw–Cracow, 1991), 199.

18 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 247.

In the meantime, someone they did not know joined the group as a loader. The modestly dressed man wore bright yellowish-brown shoes, and he was Jan Stanisław Jankowski, deputy prime minister of the Polish government in exile. After going back to Pruszków, Moczarski took Jankowski with him and first persuaded him to paint his very conspicuous yellow shoes black. Next day, he led the deputy prime minister down a path by the Pruszków brickyard to nearby Komorów, to a new clandestine flat, thereby completing his mission.

Moczarski made his first organisational decisions in Pruszków. The area was full of uprising veterans in need of medical assistance, documents and money. Moczarski decided on his own to use some of the Office of Information and Propaganda cash he was bringing out of Warsaw to help them, and he handed it over to the local Home Army leaders. The interrogation report he would write in prison in April 1947 described the post-uprising mood of embitterment, something that also appears in many diaries and notes from that time. "At the risk of sounding pathetic, let me say that this misery never lets us forget the tragedy of the Warsaw Uprising and our responsibility for it. Luckily, my own role in the uprising was that of a player. On the Home Army chess board."¹⁹ However, by 1958, in Moczarski's memoir, the uprising is transformed into a myth that is both heroic and tragic:

1–3 August. The neighbourhood resounds with the triumph of army cadet 'Garbaty'. A very young student, slender, tall, probably suffering from TB. Amazing courage and incredibly cold blood. He had played a heroic role in the Kiliński battalion's capture of the Prudential building. When I saw him few days later, he was humble, taciturn and withdrawn . . . / 20 August. They are escorting the Germans who surrendered in PASTa in Zielna Street. They are walking down Świętokrzyska Street amid a multitude of victorious uprising fighters. Hostile shouting. The heroic boys are wild with the desire to liquidate them on the spot. Right here, in the street. The guards defend their prisoners. They, who grabbed guns on 1 August in the fifth year of the occupation, were carrying a huge solidified cartridge of hate. [And Moczarski recapped:] In the cell I commanded in the uprising, 31 % of the fighters were dead, 31 % wounded. A commander remembers figures of this kind for the rest of his life.²⁰

Moczarski appointed Adam Dobrowolski, who had been his immediate boss before the uprising, as his deputy. Dobrowolski, originally from Krakow, and the rest of the group which included Kazimierz Ostrowski and Władysław Bartoszewski, left for Krakow. They planned to recreate the Office of Information and Propaganda and start a new publishing operation, most importantly

19 AIPN, IPB BU XI/40, B. 15.

20 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 216.

Biuletyn Informacyjny. This was also the first time since the outbreak of the war that Moczarski was separated from his wife. Zofia, exhausted by the uprising and nursing an unhealed wound, needed rest and convalescence.

Moczarski continued with the unclear plan to find General Okulicki even with the network of connections from the time of the uprising shredded. He spent three weeks traveling back and forth between Krakow, Kielce and Piotrków Trybunalski. With every train journey, with inspectors roaming the trains, this escapee from Warsaw risked arrest. One time, he came close to being caught. "The train stopped in Włoszczowa," remembered Moczarski, "and Ukrainian units were herding all of the younger men out of the cars and taking them to work camps nearby. I was one of them." He failed to convince the soldier guards that he was a representative of the Red Cross. Moczarski noticed an officer, a captain with a trident on his cap. "I went up to him and explained what it was about. He inspected my documents and said in Polish: yes, you're right, go back to your car straight away because the train is leaving."²¹

Finally, in late October Moczarski reached Częstochowa. General Okulicki, after landing in a civilian camp for people from Warsaw in Pruszków after the surrender of the uprising and fleeing from a transport headed for the Reich, had set up his headquarters and was assembling a staff here. The Home Army commander, carrying flawed documents and without money or a place to stay, was operating in a town that overflowed with refugees.²² "I reported on all my actions to date, and asked that my expenditures and the orders I had issued be approved," Moczarski recorded in his notes. He awaited further instructions. And, to his great surprise, he heard "Niedźwiadek," whom he was meeting for the first time, back up Rzepecki's orders. He assigned this brand-new lieutenant head of Section VI of the Home Army High Command.²³

Okulicki's decision catapulted Moczarski into a wholly unexpected role. In the next few months he would become completely involved in attempting to help the military underground survive and witness the tragic demise of the Polish Underground State.

21 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 249.

22 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 250.

23 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 251.

Chapter Four: The End of the Underground State

Complying with Okulicki's order, Kazimierz Moczarski remained on the general's staff in Częstochowa. Zofia joined him from Krakow. It was difficult to find a place to stay among the hordes of refugees from Warsaw, but they did finally manage to sublet a room. The others settled nearby, close to the Jasna Góra monastery, violating all the principles of conspiracy.

"As for contacts with members of the Home Army High Command in Częstochowa, I remained constantly in touch with General [Okulicki] 'Niedźwiadek,'" Moczarski recorded in his notes in 1969, "since he was my only boss now."¹ As a member of Okulicki's staff, he also stayed in touch with officers in charge of intelligence and counterintelligence, communications, and with various Home Army district commanders. He focused on maintaining good relations with the commanders of the Kielce and Krakow districts, his main areas of responsibility.

Initially, the challenges Moczarski faced surpassed him. Printers and radio transmitters had been lost in the rubble of Warsaw, while their crews, apart from the group of a dozen or so who had left Warsaw together, were dispersed or had been captured by the Germans. Zofia took over the three-person, all-female staff in Częstochowa, and served as her husband's secretary and messenger retaining her code name "Malina."

Moczarski used the code name "Borsuk" in official communications but remained "Rafał" for his wartime pre-uprising contacts. Having no experience in running a complex propaganda operation, he let his common sense be his guide, using his predecessor's methods. He recreated the conspiratorial network with anyone he could find who had ever worked for the Office of Information and Propaganda. About once a week he dropped by Krakow, where the team was led by Adam Dorowolski. In the meantime, messengers guaranteed day-to-day communications. It was the priority and a matter of honour for both Okulicki and Moczarski to start putting out their most important publication, *Biuletyn Informacyjny*, as soon as possible. This was made more difficult by the departure from the underground of its wartime editor, Aleksander Kamiński. The executive editor, Maria Straszewska, was being held in a German camp, as were

1 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 252.

several regular contributors. Therefore, the team had to be recreated not only in a new location but also with new people. In Krakow, the new editorial team was led by philology professor Kazimierz Kumaniecki, who had worked for the Office of Information and Propaganda since 1942, and the executive editor was Władysław Bartoszewski from Warsaw. They published six issues by the end of January 1945.²

Following the pre-uprising model, the team created the Press Agency, which published the government's official speeches and declarations, but also information about German and Russian troop movements, monitored radio stations, and prepared a digest of underground and official newspapers. They rebuilt an information department, which was initially headed by Major Stanisław Długocki from the Office of Information and Propaganda of the Krakow District Home Army and later by Moczarski and Zygmunt Kapitaniak, a lawyer and Moczarski's friend and an analyst in the Warsaw Office of Information and Propaganda information department prior to the uprising, mostly in charge of studying the Communist underground.³

There were not enough workers in the decimated Office of Information and Propaganda, and Moczarski hired colleagues from the Directorate of Underground Resistance, Zbigniew Baucz and Jerzy Macierakowski, but also Włodzimierz Lechowicz, whom he found in a village near Radom, brought to Krakow and put in charge of the propaganda department. The decision to hire Lechowicz proved lethal to the post-uprising underground, as Lechowicz was now able to learn first-hand everything he needed to know about the organisation, easily gaining access to the Office of Information and Propaganda archive in Krakow. He would later write in his memoirs that he penetrated Home Army documents much like he had during the German occupation, passing them straight to chief of People's Army intelligence Marian Spychalski already in the autumn of 1944. In 1945, Lechowicz played a key role in exposing the underground. Having worked in the State Security Corps during the war, he had good connections in the Home Army, and as a member of the Democratic Party could relay to his principals information about the underground political parties and the activities of the Council of National Unity. Information coming from Lechowicz was extremely valuable at a time when the intelligence of the Communist power taking over in Poland was still weak. Lechowicz provided

2 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 256.

3 Aniela Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z ławy obrończej* (Warsaw, 2016), 19–20.

copies of internal documents, reports, telegrams sent to the government in exile in London and the Home Army leadership's orders.

In Częstochowa, the scattered Office of Information and Propaganda members reported to Moczarski. In November, Colonel Adam Borkiewicz appeared and paid homage to Moczarski, embarrassing him since he was his subordinate in rank, and began by explaining that he fully supported Moczarski's current role and set out right away to recreate the Military History Office (*Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne*). Leon Marszałek, the Grey Ranks leader, plotted to continue operation "N" of misinformation aimed at the Germans.

During the last months of the German occupation, the issue that especially preoccupied the new head of the Office of Information and Propaganda was financial and medical assistance to the thousands of dispersed uprising fighters and their families. Okulicki, swayed by Moczarski's reports, ordered the mandate of the Assistance to Soldiers (*Pomoc Żołnierzowi, PŻ*) broadened and significantly increased its budget. However, this was still a drop in the ocean of needs. "The privation of the Home Army's wounded soldiers and their families was vast, a bottomless pit for money," remembered Moczarski, "and we worked miracles with [its head Hanna Łukaszewicz] to come up with funds."⁴ In his post-war notes he recounted with great satisfaction the assistance to the families of arrested Office of Information and Propaganda people.

I remember giving some money to the wife of our friend, Office of Information and Propaganda officer Aleksander Gieysztor, in Zakopane. We (our messenger girls, not I alone) had a hard time finding the young son of another Office of Information and Propaganda man, Witold Kula . . . The son was living with his nanny somewhere in the vicinity of Włochy near Warsaw.⁵

Kazimierz and Zofia reached the outskirts of Warsaw on Christmas Eve 1944 and went to see Moczarski's mother:

It was afternoon, . . . 'Malina' and I walked along a path in the snow from Piaseczno to Zalesie Dolne. The weather was fantastic, it was sunny. The air was crystal-clear. The two of us were the only black spot on the path. I suddenly noticed a lonely figure emerging from the forest. The absolute calm that had descended on us from being out in nature evaporated. Who the hell is this? Maybe an agent hunting for people from Warsaw? The figure came closer. We recognised a woman . . . I saw that it was Lucyna, the wife of 'Bruno,' Antek Szymanowski. A hectic conversation, hundreds of questions and trading news. We ask what she is doing there. She said that her Mother is ill, and she is going

4 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 257.

5 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 265.

to Piaseczno to get medicine. 'Have you got money?' I ask. She says that she only has a little. She is emaciated, blue, uprooted. Because I always carried some 500-zloty notes to potentially help people, I bumped into just such a person who needed help . . . I took a hefty wad from my pocket and gave it to her on behalf of the Home Army. She was stunned. And we said: you probably didn't think when you were leaving your house that a few hours before Christmas Eve you would get not a Christmas gift but what has been owed you as the wife of 'Bruno,' who was imprisoned in a German officer camp.⁶

In December Moczarski accompanied General Okulicki on an expedition to Milanówek near Warsaw to meet with Government Delegate Jan Stanisław Jankowski and some members of the Council of National Unity. Moczarski's panache was revealed when it turned out that he had talked Okulicki into just the two of them travelling, with Moczarski responsible for the general's safety, and even the general's Home Army security not in on it. In the tiny town of Milanówek, where thousands of homeless people from Warsaw were staying and it was nearly impossible to find a place to sleep. Moczarski arranged for "Niedźwiadek" to be put up in a bedroom in the home of his pre-war friend Władysław Minkiewicz.

Next day Moczarski escorted the general to the top-level conspiratorial meeting. On their way, they passed Wehrmacht soldiers playing football. They stopped to relax for a moment, and someone might have thought that they were two civilians bundled in thick overcoats watching and commenting on a match. Moczarski came to first and reminded the general about the duties awaiting them.⁷

Despite their professional distance, their shared experiences created some familiarity between the two men. Later in 1945, not long before he was arrested by the NKVD, Okulicki explained why he had given such an important function on his staff to someone he knew nothing about. He confessed that he was impressed not only by the authority given Moczarski by Rzepecki, but also by the large amount of cash Moczarski had brought out of Warsaw and by his team who worked so well together and was eager to continue at a time when the post-uprising underground appeared to have been utterly crushed.

Moczarski delivered the Office of Information and Propaganda radio monitoring bulletin, analyses of Polish underground and of German papers and of the political situation to Okulicki and his staff. He must have felt ill at ease in the company of high-ranking professional military men. Complicating his position

6 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 257.

7 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 270.

further for many weeks was General Okulicki himself, who had to wait until December 1944 for the government in exile in London to confirm Moczarski's appointment. The Home Army's commander in chief, under pressure from politicians, agreed to reduce the Office of Information and Propaganda activities to educational and cultural operations and military education. This happened at a 7 November 1944 joint meeting of the Home Council of Ministers (Krajowa Rada Ministrów, which the Government Delegate's Office was transformed into in May 1944) and the Soviet-supported Council of National Unity. From now on, a civilian organisation would be responsible for the publications and information produced by the Office of Information and Propaganda. This meant that propaganda directed at the Polish population would be under the newly created Department of National Defence of the Government Delegate's Office (Departament Obrony Narodowej Delegatury Rządu): the underground's civilian organisations had reached the goal they had been striving for throughout the German occupation. However, their success was derisory since with Moczarski waiting for propaganda guidelines, the Department of National Defence did not take off. In January 1945, Moczarski met for the first time with the director of the civilian military department of the Government Delegate's Office Jerzy Michalewski "Heller" in Krakow. They parted without making any decisions, only with "Heller's" promise that he would be in touch soon. In fact, during the last months of the German occupation, it was Okulicki himself who supervised the propaganda and *Biuletyn Informacyjny*.⁸

In mid-January 1945, in freezing weather, Moczarski and his wife returned to Częstochowa. "Our train was very late, we had to change numerous times and arrived at Częstochowa station around midnight, well after curfew," he wrote in his memoir. "What to do? Should we remain at the station or walk to Jasna Góra, risking arrest? I couldn't afford the risk. But I go outside to suss out the situation. I see an elegant carriage with shiny varnish, a splendid horse pulling it. A dapper liveried coachman sat on the box and, as it turned out, was waiting for some dignitary of a German economic institution." The dignitary did not arrive, and Moczarski had no problem convincing the coachman to take them home for a small tip. The ride was becoming romantic as they journeyed in the night through Częstochowa's snowy streets when, out of the blue, a German soldier vaulted onto the carriage step. The Moczarskis froze. But not for long. The soldier had had too much to drink and wanted to get home quickly. They dropped him off at the barracks and reached their home safely. Three days later, on 17 January,

8 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 269.

Russian troops marched into Częstochowa. The fast approach of the frontline surprised Okulicki in Krakow. The war was quickly coming to an end, and two days later, on 19 January 1945, Okulicki announced the dissolution of the Home Army. He wrote:

The quickly progressing Soviet offensive may soon result in the occupation by the Red Army of all Poland. But this is not a victory of the right cause for which we have been fighting since 1939. Indeed, despite the pretence of freedom, it means trading one occupation for another one, which is taking place under the disguise of the Provisional Lublin Government, a passive tool in Russian hands . . . According to the Russian recipe, this is not the Poland for which we have been fighting the Germans for six years, and for which a sea of Polish blood has been spilled, and the country has suffered enormous pain and destruction. We do not want to fight the Soviets, but we will never agree to live any other way than in a fully sovereign, independent and justly governed Polish State . . . Soldiers of the Home Army! I am giving you your last order. You should continue to work and act with the goal of winning the State's fullest sovereignty and protecting the Polish people from extermination. Do your utmost to be the Nation's leaders and to work to create a sovereign Polish State. In this, each one of you must be your own commander. Persuaded that you will obey my order, that you will always be loyal solely to Poland, and in order to make your future work easier, given the authority of the President of the Polish Republic, I hereby release you from your oath and dissolve the ranks of the Home Army.

Okulicki's order appeared on the same day in the last issue of *Biuletyn Informacyjny*. Staffers of the Office of Information and Propaganda—Kazimierz Moczarski, head of the Crakow team Adam Dobrowolski, editors of the post-uprising *Biuletyn Informacyjny* Professor Kazimierz Kumaniecki and Władysław Bartoszewski, and Zygmunt Kapitaniak and Włodzimierz Lechowicz—met a few days later in Krakow. Bartoszewski recalled the meeting and the problems that surfaced immediately: “Moczarski gave a presentation. He said that underground work is over, that we have been released from our oath. . . . Very well, I've been released from the Home Army's oath, become my own boss, and the commander's order is clear: to keep working with the goal of winning back full sovereignty for the Polish state.”⁹ The epic of the war was ending, and the great unknown beginning.

“It's impossible to pull down even a small house in a single day,” Moczarski wrote in his post-war memoir. For him, the order to dissolve the Home Army began a period of weeks of formally liquidating the Office of Information and Propaganda. He wrote recommendations for decorations for his subordinates

9 Bartoszewski, *Życie trudne*, 175.

and made sure that redundancy payments were being issued to those leaving service. In early March he reported to Okulicki that he had fulfilled his orders.¹⁰ Moczarski could consider his mission officially accomplished and do what most of the Office of Information and Propaganda team were doing, finding a place for himself in civilian life. However, his loyalty to Okulicki and Rzepecki (who had returned from German captivity in late January) overrode this goal. It was not easy to become a civilian again in the chaos caused by the Red Army's arrival and by the July 1944 establishment in Lublin of Stalin's puppet government, the Polish Committee of National Liberation (Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego, PKWN), which engaged in taking power. Then, the Communist-dominated Provisional Government was set up in December as a rival to the government in exile.

The final days of the German occupation gave way to a new, equally ominous reality. There were reports about the NKVD arresting Home Army fighters and the Lublin government's aggressive propaganda targeting them and the government in exile. Since the Red Army's entry into Poland, things were becoming dangerous in Częstochowa, and both the government delegate and General Okulicki with his staff moved closer to Warsaw, near Milanówek and Grodzisk.

Declarations about the outcomes of the Allied conference at Yalta in February 1945 left no illusions. The Soviets had scored a political victory, and border changes were unavoidable. However, some Poles held onto the assurances that a Government of National Unity would include leaders of the democratic parties both in Poland and in exile and the promise that parliamentary elections would take place under Allied oversight. They hoped that not all was lost and that the Soviet occupation and Communist domination would be temporary.

The political groups that were part of the underground Government of National Unity leaned towards trying to reach a compromise with the Polish Workers' Party. The leadership of the formally dissolved Home Army now faced the dilemma of whether and in what form to continue fighting underground. These were the beginnings of the struggle for leadership of the anti-Communist "Independence" [Niepodległość, "NIE"] underground between Generals Okulicki and August Emil Fieldorf "Nil," which ended with the NKVD's accidental arrest of "Nil" in early March 1945. Those who arrested him did not recognise him and he was taken, still using a pseudonym, to a labour camp in the USSR; he would only return to Poland in 1947.

10 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 270.

Now, a series of dramatic events came in quick succession. In March 1945, letters to Government Delegate Jan Stanisław Jankowski and General Okulicki signed by Soviet General Pimenov arrived, inviting them for talks with General-Colonel Ivanov (in fact, it was General Ivan Serov, deputy head of the NKVD and adviser to the Polish Ministry of Public Security). For all the Polish fears about Moscow's intentions, the invitation was accepted, and it was decided that representatives of the parties of the underground parliament, the Council of National Unity, would go, as would the commander of the disbanded Home Army. The government in exile was notified, and it advised that the talks serve primarily to stop the terror and the deportations of Poles to the USSR.¹¹

In his unpublished memoir, Colonel Jan Rzepecki described the dominant atmosphere in the underground circles as one of uncertainty and nerves about how things would develop: "Our fate would be determined by the extent, course and outcomes of the talks with the Soviet military authorities. Our internal concerns were put on the back burner, as we could only do as we were told and dodge attacks." He described the situation on Okulicki's staff in the spring of 1945 as "pandemonium." Fearing that they might be deceived and arrested by the Soviets, just before he left for the talks Okulicki, even though he was no longer calling himself the Home Army commander, named Rzepecki his successor. "He did not want to appear as the commander of the dissolved Home Army, which indeed had no formal authority over 'Independence,'" asserted Rzepecki in the memoir he wrote in 1957. "Everything is looking very complicated and is evidence of the chaos in the underground leadership."¹² However, Rzepecki admitted that he and Okulicki had talked for two days and agreed that the underground must go on and were planning to staff it. "We didn't talk about sabotage but about what he should ask for to guarantee that the Home Army fighters would be able to participate in uniting the armed forces after the war," remembered Rzepecki. "Moczarski tirelessly took care of everything for Okulicki as a sort of secretary-adjutant to guarantee a connection to the outside world, fully cognisant of the gravity of the moment." Thus, on the morning of 27 March, as Okulicki prepared for the meeting in Pruszków, "Rafał" made sure that Okulicki's lone pair of trousers was ironed for what they expected to be a formal meeting.

At this time, Moczarski, not a key decision-maker, remained an exceptionally close observer. The group that assembled to attend the meeting with

11 See Eugeniusz Duraczyński, *Generał Iwanow zaprasza. Przywódcy podziemnego państwa polskiego przed sądem moskiewskim* (Warsaw, 1989).

12 Rzepecki, *Wspomnienia*, 1957, Chapter XXIII, "Zamęt."

Ivanov-Serov the next day included the chairman of the Democratic Assembly (Zjednoczenie Demokratyczne) and member of the Council of National Unity Eugeniusz Czarnowski. The day before the talks he had called a secret meeting of representatives of the democratic parties in Milanówek outside Warsaw. Moczarski was there as a member of the board of the Democratic Assembly. He would write in a prison statement two years later about the hopes that were being pinned on the Pruszków meeting:

We thought that there would finally be a compromise, so Czarnowski (our representative on the Council of National Unity) wanted to learn the opinions of the others in the parties. We agreed on our ideological, democratic theses, which were radical in promoting far-reaching social restructuring, expelling the National Democrats from the Democratic Assembly and so forth, which would form the foundation of a future 'Centrolew' [centre-left opposition coalition in 1929].

We prepared a resolution, which included holding free elections and creating a Camp of Polish Democracy to serve as a counterbalance to the Polish Workers' Party. The resolution treated the situation in Poland unequivocally as a foreign occupation and anticipated the creation of a government that could guarantee Poland real political sovereignty.¹³

The invitation to the talks turned out to be an NKVD trap intended to paralyse any future Polish pro-sovereignty underground. The politicians and General Okulicki arrived in Pruszków only to be arrested, transported to Moscow and imprisoned in the Lubyanka prison. A show trial of the sixteen Polish underground leaders was held in June 1945, and the Soviet Supreme Court gave them prison sentences ranging from a few months to ten years. General Okulicki got the longest term. He never returned from Russia, as he died or was murdered in prison in 1946. He did not divulge Moczarski's name during either the investigation or the trial, claiming that he was not familiar with that name.

The arrest of the Sixteen meant the destruction of the leadership of the existing Polish underground. This naturally led to questions about the purpose of carrying on. Remembering March 1945 in his memoir, Rzepecki described his state of mind:

Every commander, every staff should plan operations based on the worst-case scenario . . . Thus, you need to prepare yourself for the Sixteen being captured and not coming back, and by chance I found myself at the helm of the post-Home Army underground, which was formally accountable to the legal London government, which had long stopped understanding what was going on in Poland. The situation here changes from

13 AIPN, IPN BU XI/40, B. 21.

one hour to the next, and [London's] reactions always arrive weeks late . . . Still, a Home Army underground continues to exist, it is being brutally wiped out, it is desperately defending itself, sometimes counterattacking. Someone must take over to avert a general state of armed anarchy.¹⁴

In April 1945 Rzepecki reported to the government in exile that he had assumed command. He recommended formally dissolving the “Independence” organisation and creating an Armed Forces Delegation for Poland (Delegatura Sił Zbrojnych, DSZ). After the Polish Armed Forces command in London approved it, Rzepecki began to put together the new organisation, which was based on the Home Army underground. He named Lieutenant Colonel Wojciech Borzobohaty, former commander of the Home Army’s Kielce Region, his chief of staff and Major Franciszek Kamiński, commander of the Peasant Battalions during the war, his deputy. Rzepecki’s deputy was Lieutenant Colonel Janusz Bokszczanin, Okulicki’s chief of staff. The organisation was divided into three regions, western, southern and central, which only covered the lands to the east of the Curzon Line, not those east of the Bug River, which had been annexed by the USSR. Most of the regional commanders were officers previously in the Home Army’s High Command.¹⁵ Even though he had decided that the underground should persist, Rzepecki had no intention of continuing the armed struggle. In late May 1945, together with Stefan Korboński of the Polish Peasant Party who had replaced Jan Stanisław Jankowski as government delegate after the latter’s arrest in Pruszków, he issued an appeal to the soldiers of the forest units. The appeal promoted “work on rebuilding Poland” to supplant the armed struggle.¹⁶

Moczarski continued on Rzepecki’s staff as one of his most trusted partners. “I worked together with the head of information and propaganda of our delegate’s office, Kazimierz Moczarski on nearly all texts for publication . . . Those days it took enormous energy and enterprise to publish anything: there were spies in all the printing shops! However, Moczarski overcame all obstacles,” Rzepecki wrote in his post-war memoir.¹⁷ He and Zofia, still using their assumed name Sankowski, were living in Podkowa Leśna. They collected reports about the situation in Poland, newspapers and radio monitoring from their network of contacts.

14 Rzepecki, *Wspomnienia*, 1957, Chapter XXVIII, “Zamęt.”

15 Rzepecki, *Wspomnienia*.

16 Stefan Korboński, *W imieniu Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw, 2009), 420.

17 Rzepecki, *Wspomnienia*, 1957, Chapter XXVIII, “Zamęt.”

Rzepecki and Borzobohaty listened to Moczarski's report in a conspiratorial flat in Polna Street in Warsaw. All around them life was being reborn among the ruins, despite all the difficulties, deepening their deep feeling of hopelessness about the current situation. "I felt too much solidarity with my old comrades at arms but did not have enough moral strength to break with them," Moczarski would later write, and there is no reason not to believe him.

Despite his limited faith in the point of their work, he plunged into it selflessly, organising the underground publishing and overseeing the construction of a radio station to communicate with London. He failed in Krakow. Once again, Moczarski decided to use his experience from the uprising, and using ultra-short-wave radio the crew managed to air a programme from Katowice in south-western Poland. Zbigniew Baucz took part in it:

Kazik acquired a short-wave radio and told me to broadcast the programme. A radio man he found served as the announcer. We transmitted from some house on the outskirts of Katowice, a very short programme, we talked about a camp where Home Army people were being interned, about the moods across the country. It could be heard somewhere in Czechoslovakia. I can remember that we had a pistol, and this was absolutely unheard-of since I had had no gun in my hand the whole time I was in the underground. Then, Kazik told me that the programme had been heard. But there would be no more.¹⁸

Rzepecki stopped them because of the huge risk of losing cover. "Moczarski's vibrant ingenuity had surpassed the limit of realism," Rzepecki remembered after the war. "He was able to organise a phonic radio station in Silesia, to assemble a crew. In late May a short programme was aired, but it was difficult to hear in London. I ordered this daring enterprise ended."¹⁹

In late June 1945 the Provisional Government of National Unity, which had been agreed to at the Yalta Conference, was created. The Polish Workers' Party took control of it, but Stanisław Mikołajczyk, former prime minister of the government in exile and Peasant Party leader, was appointed deputy premier and agriculture minister. This led to the dissolution of the underground Council of National Unity on 1 July 1945. The council's chairman, Jerzy Braun, explained the decision in a telegram to the prime minister of the government in exile, Tomasz Arciszewski: "The parties decided that they would stop working with the Council of National Unity and start their own struggle to reorganise their democratic ideology and state sovereignty, to go their own way." The document, called the Last Will of Underground Poland, contained twelve demands whose

18 Author's interview with Zbigniew Baucz, 2006.

19 Rzepecki, *Wspomnienia*, 1957, Chapter XXVIII, "Zamęt."

implementation would guarantee a democratic and sovereign Poland. It firmly requested the pull-out of Soviet troops, a cessation of political persecution and free elections.

The creation of the Provisional Government of National Unity immediately changed Poland's international position. Mere days after the announcement of its makeup, France, Britain and the United States withdrew their recognition of the Government of the Republic of Poland in Exile and recognised the Warsaw government.

The presence in the Provisional Government of a democratic opposition gave the illusion of political improvement and, with the free elections in sight, it did not seem a foregone conclusion that the Communists would take over. Stanisław Mikołajczyk's return to Poland and his visits to Krakow and Poznań brought out huge rallies which voiced their hopes for a democratic, sovereign Poland and an aversion to the Communists. The Peasant Party led by Mikołajczyk had been transformed into a mass party openly opposed to the government imposed by Stalin.

Colonel Jan Rzepecki and his people initially counted very much on Mikołajczyk to help former Home Army people come out of the underground safely. Because of this hope, Moczarski persuaded his friend Władysław Minkiewicz to abandon his plan to flee abroad. Minkiewicz, a civilian employee of the department of the Government Delegate's Office charged with developing the guidelines for a post-war foreign policy, started being pursued by the NKVD as soon as the Soviets entered Poland. From Krakow he tried to cross the border illegally, but encountered Moczarski, who convinced him to wait it out underground, and that very evening gave him counterfeit documents with a false name.²⁰

Regrettably, the hope that Mikołajczyk would acquire power and influence was futile. The enthusiasm with which he was greeted alerted the Communists to how much they were despised by the public, and Mikołajczyk became a target of their coarse propaganda attacks. At the July 1945 Polish Workers' Party plenum, Secretary Władysław Gomułka called Mikołajczyk the spokesman of the ownership classes' interests, those who shared responsibility for the "tragedy of the Warsaw Uprising." Gomułka pledged to use terror vis-à-vis the underground instead of reaching an understanding: "We have entered a new stage of the struggle to continue democratising our country, and our goal is to liquidate

20 Władysław Minkiewicz, *Mokotów, Rawicz, Wronki. Wspomnienia 1939–1954* (Warsaw, 1990), 31.

the remaining reactionary forces. Note the strengthening of the Public Security apparatus.”²¹

With reports from the different regions coming in, Moczarski was better informed than just about anyone about the scale of resistance and of the mass repressions. Manhunts of Home Army people and countless arrests failed to break society’s resistance, augmenting it instead. Some underground fighters who had earlier decided to return to normal life now feared Security Office and NKVD prisons and deportations to the Soviet Union, and they went back to the forest hoping to wait it out before returning to their homes, schools or jobs. The ten-day reports compiled for Rzepecki included plenty of information about the proliferating partisan forest units, arrests, operations to spring people from NKVD and Security Office prisons and jails, the population’s hostile attitude towards the People’s Army. There was also a lot of information about raids by ordinary bandits pretending to be underground fighters. The Government Delegate’s Office was troubled by reports of rivalries between units of the Armed Forces Delegation, who saw themselves as the continuation of the Home Army, and the nationalist underground—which at times ended in armed skirmishes. The Government Delegate’s Office and the leadership of the National Armed Forces wrangled over the underground’s leadership, and the vision of Poland for which the National Armed Forces were fighting had nothing in common with the political ideas of the Home Army and its heir, the Armed Forces Delegation. In his book about the Lublin region underground in 1944–47, the historian Rafał Wnuk discusses some of the directives of the Delegate’s Office, which were open about treating the National Armed Forces as an enemy force. In June 1945, the head of the Zamość Armed Forces Delegation, Marian Gołębiowski “Ster,” forbade his people to remain in contact or work together with the National Armed Forces: “If such cooperation is already happening, it must end instantly. Cases of robbery by the abovementioned must be treated as banditry.”²²

After Stanisław Mikołajczyk returned from exile, Colonel Rzepecki wrote a confidential letter to him about the domestic situation. He pointed out three key problems in need of resolution: “putting an end to the ‘security’ organs’ uncontrolled practices and lawlessness; resolving the question of the Home Army fairly and including it in the merger of the various units of the Polish army; and conducting honest elections.” As Rzepecki wrote in his memoir,

21 See “Protokoły Posiedzeń Plenarnych KC PPR 11–12 lipca 1945” in: *Archiwum Ruchu Robotniczego*, vol. VII (Warsaw, 1982).

22 See Rafał Wnuk, *Okręg Lublin AK-DSZ-WiN 1944–1947* (Warsaw, 2000), 154.

in my letter I didn't go so far as to place the burden of responsibility for our situation clearly on him since he was 'our' premier, whose instructions the Home Army had followed. But it did cross my mind to place the responsibility on him on behalf of the public and to 'spur him on' with an anonymous flier. . . . Two documents dated 15 July were generated by discussion with 'Rafał,' a printed flier written by me and a copied so-called 'Materials for the regions' planned out by Moczarski, instructions for our scattered units about how they were to explain this issue.²³

Rzepecki's letter to Mikołajczyk went unanswered. In July 1945 the Armed Forces Delegation issued a directive for the commanders of three regions, "Ceasing operations of forest units." It discussed the erosion of "forest life," and it ordered the commanders to rein in the forest groups' lawlessness and antics "of the real social-reaction type." The document denounced the forest fighters' attacks on Polish and Soviet soldiers and Security Office functionaries that were not in self-defence. The commanders were to fight efforts to convince men to desert from the Polish army under the Provisional Government. They were to stop citing non-existent Home Army orders, as this disoriented the public and gave their enemies a reason to make "intimations and accusations against the leadership of the pro-sovereignty movement."²⁴

Rzepecki and his people understood the difficulty of winding down the underground operations, and the provocative actions of the security apparatus as it persecuted those who were coming out of the underground and trying to return to civilian life. It was difficult to implement the instructions presented in the fliers, such as what was and what not permitted or the appeals to the fighters to come out of the forest; their authors themselves had few illusions about their effectiveness. Throughout the summer of 1945, instead of shrinking, the number of units grew. Wincenty Kwieciński, head of counterintelligence in the central region of the Delegate's Office, described the atmosphere in 1945 in an interview with the historians Krystyna Kersten and Andrzej Friszke: "We could not tell a unit in, let's say, Grójec, to go to hell. Something had to be done with them. We tried to make the transition to normal life easier by helping these people financially. It was all extremely difficult. In Białystok region, when we tried to sway 'Lis' to unload his units, he just shot the messenger."²⁵

At the same time, "in accordance with the role we had adopted of serving as an entity answerable to the government in exile, we attacked the Provisional

23 Rzepecki, *Wspomnienia*, 1957, Chapter XXVIII, "Zamęt."

24 Rzepecki, *Wspomnienia*, 1957, Chapter XXVIII, "Zamęt."

25 Unpublished interview with Wincenty Kwieciński by Andrzej Friszke and Krystyna Kersten, A. Friszke's archive.

Government on substance,” Rzepecki remembered. “We took turns writing aggressive fliers with Moczarski and ‘Andrzej’ [Roman] Goldman, who joined us.”²⁶

In the second half of July 1945 Włodzimierz Lechowicz and Zygmunt Kapitaniak, who had been chosen to serve as the chairman of the Democratic Party after Eugeniusz Czarnowski’s arrest by the NKVD, showed up in Rzepecki’s hiding place. The meeting had been arranged by Moczarski, who fully trusted Lechowicz, to discuss the future of the underground. Rzepecki asked them to put their position down on paper. The document, a political manifesto, was signed by Lechowicz and Kapitaniak, but also by Moczarski. It presented the political situation as unalterable and argued for a firm decision to give up on conspiracy.

The Anglo-Saxon countries’ shifting of recognition to the Warsaw government fully destroyed the authority of the émigré government, and hence of its external representatives. The democratic political parties have already acted on this by attempting to play a role in legal life. Indeed, they decided that this was the only realistic platform for waging the battle for the existence and sovereignty of our state.

It continued that persisting underground would weaken the Home Army’s democratic traditions and strengthen extreme-right groups who claimed to have a monopoly on fighting for sovereignty and used radical methods. “Today already the most active partisan units are the National Armed Forces, over which the Home Army has no control, but which are legitimated, like it or not, by Wierchowina,” they wrote.²⁷ In the village of Wierchowina in Sub-Carpathia, the setting for the Polish-Ukrainian conflict, a unit of the nationalist National Armed Forces had murdered 194 Ukrainian villagers. This crime was used in Communist publications as a pretext for new propaganda assaults against the armed underground as a whole.

The document also included a demand for a clear statement from the command that the anti-Communist stance of the post-Home Army remaining underground did not mean that it would abandon the planned social and economic reforms the pro-democracy parties supported.

An anti-Soviet stance must not be seen as anti-democratic, opposing radical change in the economic and social system. The democratic soldiers are horrified by the social and political content of the current partisan battles, for instance in Białystok region, which consists of opposing land reform, combatting some forms of local self-government, savage anti-Semitism, mindless killing of Soviet soldiers who happen by, and so

26 Rzepecki, *Wspomnienia*, 1957, Chapter XXVIII, “Zamęt.”

27 “Memoriał Z. Kapitaniaka, W. Lechowicza i B. Moczarskiego z 18 lipca 1945 r.,” in: Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 279–86.

on If the entire nation is to retain historic ownership of the Home Army, . . . the Home Army must not risk creating the impression that it intends to introduce the reactionary camp into political life.

The authors brought up the fratricidal murder of Makowiecki as an outcome of the National Armed Forces' political campaign. "The death of this soldier-democrat has been passed over in ignominious silence, which continues to this day and which the Home Army itself must someday stop."²⁸

Today, readers may be struck by the language describing the political reality of that time. However, we must remember that the wartime political divisions endured and people like Moczarski still believed that three camps existed. One was Communist, with the weight of the Soviet armies and the NKVD backing them, a real threat. At the other end of the spectrum was the radical right affiliated with the National Armed Forces, which the democrats and the leftists were unable to accept, associating it with pre-war and wartime Fascist ideology, and which they feared as much as Communism. It had no power but remained outside the post-Home Army underground represented by the Government Delegate's Office. Between these Scylla and Charybdis lay groups that believed that Mikołajczyk's return would open up possibilities of existing legally, and that subsequently Communist rule would weaken, and politics would gradually normalise.

Hence the plans to reach a political understanding to build the broadest possible coalition of the democratic left. They appeared already in the spring of 1945. For Moczarski and his party, this memorandum was the outcome of such thinking. While Rzepecki agreed with its basic premises, he deemed it unrealistic. "The authors of the memo did not take into account that even the most legitimate demands made by the staff have any value only if the 'units', in this case the people in the field, are able to implement them."²⁹

Lechowicz and Kapitaniak returned to Rzepecki's quarters a few days later asking for his reaction to the memorandum. Rzepecki and Moczarski showed them the latest dispatch to the soldiers of the former Home Army on which they were just working. "I took care of 'severance' from the National Armed Forces which they demanded without mentioning it by name," wrote Rzepecki in his memoir, "but only as a warning to the Home Army people to resist 'anyone's propaganda', to withstand the reactionary political groups' calls for a boycott of the work of rebuilding Poland nor 'gratuitous parasitism.'" Neither Lechowicz nor

28 Moczarski, *Zapiski*.

29 Rzepecki, *Wspomnienia*, 1957, Chapter XXVIII, "Zamęt."

Kapitaniak was satisfied with this dispatch. Both soon abandoned the underground. Perhaps the meeting with Rzepecki had a different tangible outcome for Lechowicz's bosses, since one of his reports included a description of Rzepecki with his pseudonym and his real name.³⁰

The memorandum would have been insignificant were it not for the fact that it served as an element in the game the Communists were using Lechowicz to play. He wrote in an unpublished memoir (which can be found in the Central Archives of Modern Records, Archiwum Akt Nowych in Warsaw) that he had initiated the dialogue with Rzepecki and written the memorandum, but that the text itself had been edited with Marian Spsychalski, one of Władysław Gomułka's most trusted associates. According to Lechowicz, Kapitaniak and Moczarski were mere intermediaries who had given him credibility for the chief of the Armed Forces Delegation. "Moczarski and Kapitaniak honestly believed that not coming out would be disastrous," wrote Lechowicz, "as it would lead to civil war. Kapitaniak 100 per cent and Moczarski 50 per cent believed that people should come out unconditionally. People were tired of war and of living underground, so calls to come out of the forest and take up work to rebuild Poland appealed to them." Evidently, Lechowicz's goal was to play a true "agent of influence."³¹

The Democratic Party who remained underground were in a difficult situation as a party using their name had been operating in Lublin since 1944; its self-appointed chairman, Leon Chajn, even became a deputy minister of justice in the Polish Committee of National Liberation. After the Council of National Unity disbanded on 1 July 1945, the Democratic Party, fearing arrest, decided not to come out but instead to suspend their activities. It was only then that some activists individually decided to join the "Lublin" Democratic Party, counting on its ability to retain some autonomy.³²

At this time, all parties, including the Polish Socialist Party, Labour Party and National Party, were trying to find a place for themselves in public life. Like the Democrats, they struggled with the break-off groups supported by the Polish Workers' Party. The eminent Socialist activist Zygmunt Zaremba wrote in his memoir titled *Wojna i konspiracja* (The war and the underground) about the

30 "Komunistyczny agent w sercu podziemia. Meldunki Włodzimierza Lechowicza w 1945 roku," ed. W. Frazik, *Zeszyty historyczne WIN-u* 26–27 (2007); Robert Spalek, *Komuniści przeciwko komunistom* (Warsaw, 2014), 81–4.

31 AAN, sygn. 2/1582/15797, Teczka osobowa W. Lechowicza.

32 Waldemar Żebrowski, *Z dziejów Stronnictwa Demokratycznego w Polsce* (Warsaw, 1999), 39–40.

widespread belief in the summer of 1945 that the time of the underground was over:

The underground has turned into an anachronism, an era that was over in the nation's history. A meaningful era which gave reasons to be proud, but one that was over once and for all For us, facing reality, there was no question that [hopes for a new armed conflict] were an illusion and could bring incalculable harm to those groups that could not or did not want to know what was going on in the world. All the more reason to draw a neat and clear line to the closed-off past so as to take up work and struggle in the new situation in public life.³³

In this group, Moczarski also favoured coming out and acting in the open, despite the rules imposed by the Communists, which included cooperating with Chajń's group. This is the context for viewing the offer he got in mid-July to serve as counsellor for social issues in the Polish embassy in Paris. Having been recognised by the Western powers, the Provisional Government of National Unity was preparing to place its people in diplomatic posts. Stanisław Skrzyszewski, a Communist activist, was appointed ambassador in Paris, but the foreign ministry went to Wincenty Rzymowski, a pre-war leftist journalist who remembered Moczarski from the early meetings of the Democratic Clubs. Moczarski's thoughts about holding a legal job while at the same time conspiring show the quandary of his existence.³⁴

Moczarski described the atmosphere of the last weeks of the underground in his prison testimony:

New plans, new changes were constantly being made. Constant arrests. Constant new hopes and waves of depression. Constant yearning to work. Problems with quarters, communications and so on devoured loads of time and energy. Also—and most importantly—a lack (for me at least) of believing in this work. I was constantly waiting for an end, which would let me come out and live a normal life in Poland I had been yearning for, as it was being reconstructed.³⁵

The desire to rebuild one's life, one's home, to return to work after six years of war was natural, even though the political reality was unnerving, but there was the hope of parliamentary elections. Nevertheless, in the summer of 1945, Moczarski continued to place the slogan "How do you recognise a Pole? By his membership in the Home Army" on the Delegate's Office fliers, wanting to keep up spirits in such dismal times.

33 Zygmunt Zaremba, *Wojna i konspiracja* (Cracow, 1991), 442–3.

34 AIPN, IPN BU XI/40, B. 16.

35 AIPN, IPN BU XI/40, B. 17.

On 22 July 1945, Prime Minister Edward Osóbka-Morawski of the Provisional Government proclaimed an amnesty. It seemed like the long-awaited opportunity to “unload the forests,” release detainees and wrap up the work of the Delegate’s Office. The next day Rzepecki and Moczarski sat down in their secret quarters in Milanówek to write a new manifesto, which they would publish on 24 July, to prepare the public for the definitive dissolution of the underground. It recapped the ideological achievements of Underground Poland and the Home Army’s armed struggle for sovereignty.

It’s the sixth year, the year of the Home Army’s open struggle with the German invader, which brought you major blows and disappointments. The games being played by the great international forces made you dissolve your ranks and released you from service and resulted in the dissolution of the government and the centres of political leadership based in Poland, which led you in battle. The actual leadership in rebuilding our Homeland has been transferred to the Provisional Government of National Unity. To this day the image of your years of sacrifice and your intentions are being distorted by ill will, your efforts made repulsive and your will to take part openly in rebuilding the homeland without dishonourably renouncing your honest soldierly past are shut out . . . There is only one certain road to take in this difficult situation, the road of truth and loyalty to the declared ideals of human freedom and national sovereignty, ideals that are always worth a sacrifice. So ignore the words and seek actions and facts! Whatever concurs with your ideals is good, regardless of who it is coming from. Whatever impedes their realisation is bad and must be denounced . . . Don’t listen to those who try to persuade you to be worthless parasites, to form armed units, to engage in destructive political violence. Fight against the psychosis of desertion and agitation to desert . . . If you can, if your personal situation allows it, if the senseless persecution by so-called Security is not an obstacle on that road, take up open work in all spheres to rebuild Poland, while remaining loyal to the democratic ideals dear to every soldier of the former Home Army: Freedom for the citizen and sovereignty for the nation. It is your duty and your right to fight politically to make them reality, and no honest Pole who considers himself a democrat may deny them to you.³⁶

As he awaited an amnesty, Colonel Rzepecki prepared the groundwork for declaring the end of the military underground. On 28 July he sent a telegram to the commander in chief in London, General Tadeusz Komorowski “Bór” announcing the dissolution of the Armed Forces Delegation. He instructed Moczarski to write “Materials for the regions” for the commanders of the Delegate’s Office districts. They built on the ideas of the previous appeal. They were sent out and copied by underground channels. Moczarski also handed out copies to politicians he would meet with on behalf of the Government Delegate’s

36 Rzepecki, 1945: *wspomnienia i dokumenty* (Warszaw, 1983), 15–6.

Office. At the time of his arrest he had a copy of this last conspiratorial document, which became one of the pieces of evidence used against him.

As a result of exhaustion with the clandestine life and news of the amnesty, more and more people from the Armed Forces Delegation were coming out. By late July, Rzepecki's staff had shrunk to a handful of people. As he wrote in his memoir, "I could have been fundamentally pleased that they had left, but I still could not get rid of the impression that the rats are fleeing the sinking ship, and I must remain with this shrinking group. My only immediate male subordinates were 'Rafał' and 'Górnik' [Major Seweryn Lubowiecki]."

Rzepecki planned to dissolve the Delegate's Office officially in late August. His directive read:

On behalf of the service, I would like to thank soldiers of all ranks for fulfilling their duties commendably and selflessly, at times in extremely difficult moral circumstances. Today, as we disperse to our political, social and professional work, despite the defeats we have suffered, we look back with pride, which is justified by the six years of relentless fighting for a free and just Poland.³⁷

Having been arrested by the Security Office on 11 August, Moczarski could not take part in editing this document. The secret police had identified him much earlier. The archive of the Warsaw office of the Institute of National Remembrance has a file on Włodzimierz Lechowicz, which includes a dozen intelligence reports proving that "Rafał" had been fully exposed. In one of them, Lechowicz informed Szychalski about the new military organisation Rzepecki was forming. The report is undated, but it must have been written shortly after Rzepecki was officially named to the Armed Forces Delegation for Poland in May 1945. Lechowicz wrote that the new underground's tasks included relaying information from Poland to London, and he fully disclosed Moczarski's identity: "This information . . . lies completely in the sphere of responsibility of the Sixth Department [Office of Information and Propaganda] with its head, Moczarski Kazimierz, who uses the name Sankowski Kazimierz."

Why was Moczarski arrested so late? Because the Communists tried to get to Colonel Rzepecki, we may assume that they wanted to use Moczarski as a source but also an intermediary for reaching the leader of the underground. Indeed, Moczarski must have completely trusted Lechowicz to put him in direct contact with Rzepecki. Moczarski was not the only intermediary, but an unknowing one. Some officers Rzepecki knew who decided to go legal and join the Polish Army, also served as the Communists' emissaries. One of them, Władysław

³⁷ Rzepecki, 1945, 20–1.

Moykowski, attempted to reach Rzepecki, who did not respond, continuing to count on Mikołajczyk.

In their efforts to encircle and neutralise Rzepecki, the secret police apparently got to Moczarski himself. In late July 1945 Moczarski met with two Ministry of Public Security employees, Captain Józef Różański and Major Józef Czaplicki, and a Soviet colonel whose name he did not know. He would only talk about this meeting years later, after being released from prison, at his rehabilitation trial in December 1956. Then, he did not play diplomat: “I told them: we want to come out, and you’re doing everything to prevent it, to bleed out the Home Army. . . . You’re not letting us come out, work with you on rebuilding Poland, you’re pushing us back into the forest.”³⁸ There is missing information about the meeting, we do not know whether Moczarski realised that he had been exposed already and whether he already knew the names of the men he was talking to. Różański was his contemporary, also a graduate of the law department of the University of Warsaw and also once upon a time involved in creating the Democratic Clubs.³⁹ There is no evidence that they had met before, but they may have. Perhaps Moczarski was hoping that because his conversation partner wore a Polish uniform, for all their differences they would share the same basic values. However, reality quickly put an end to such illusions.

38 AIPN, IPN GK 317/700, B. 101.

39 Barbara Fijałkowska, *Borejsza i Różański* (Warsaw, 1995), 40–1.

Chapter Five: The First Trial

“I didn’t come out [of the underground] because I was afraid of being arrested,” Moczarski repeated during his investigation and trial before the Military District Court in Warsaw in 1946.¹ The amnesty decree was issued on 2 August. It covered those who had committed crimes prior to 22 August – which would become a state holiday to mark the proclamation of the Polish Committee of National Liberation manifesto – but included some significant restrictions, which put into question the government’s intentions. Excluded from the amnesty were those who had “held leadership positions” in the underground, those who had not revealed themselves or their subordinates to the authorities, or those who had not handed in their arms and ammunition. Underground leaders were in a bind. “It would be a moral suicide to encourage people to come out and not to do it oneself. But to do it in order to serve as an example and then go to prison would not only dissuade others from revealing themselves but also make oneself look like an idiot who deserved what he got,” was how Colonel Rzepecki described the bind.²

The arrests that preceded the enactment of the amnesty in late August also revealed the government’s intentions. In late July, the Ministry of Public Security captured Lieutenant Colonel Władysław Liniarski, commander of the Government Delegate’s Office for Białystok Region. Then, members of Rzepecki’s staff, head of technical communications Lieutenant Colonel Józef Srebrzyński and head of personnel department Lieutenant Colonel Jan Gorazdowski were also arrested. On 1 August, the commander of the Central Region of the Government Delegate’s Office, Colonel Jan Mazurkiewicz “Radosław” was seized in a street in Warsaw. Rzepecki recalled the gloomy meeting with the regional commanders of the Armed Forces Delegation for Poland, held on 5 August in Warsaw, which began with an exchange of news about the growing number of arrests. Józef Rybicki “Maciej,” who succeeded “Radosław” as commander of the Central Region, gave details of the Security Office trap to catch Gorazdowski. “According to ‘Maciej,’” wrote Rzepecki, “more traps were to be set. We could not figure out where this new security police offensive was coming from . . . In

1 AIPN, 871/791, B. 12.

2 Rzepecki, *Wspomnienia*, Chapter XXX, “Zamęt,” 145, copy of unpublished manuscript in the author’s possession.

any case, showing the amnesty carrot and the arrest stick at the same time was disgusting and could only make people distrust and hate the government.”³

Rzepecki told the meeting about the decision to shut down the Government Delegate’s Office:

We easily agreed that the folding should come from the bottom up, to begin with the dissolution of the armed units that were still living in the forests (at the same time counselling those who were in the greatest danger to move to the regained territories), that for technical reasons the dissolution would take up to three months, . . . that in view of the security office’s current practices and the unclear future of the amnesty, we are in no position to order or even recommend that people come out, but we must also not advocate against coming out But for us the risk of coming out was much greater, so the idea of remaining underground until the imminent elections seemed logical. They should put an end to the era of the security office’s wild lawlessness, and the newly elected Sejm should restore lawfulness and create conditions for the safe legalisation of everyone from the Home Army-London camp.⁴

The meeting believed that the elections, in agreement with what had been promised at Yalta, would take place in early 1946 and until then they must survive as a cohesive group, not as “dispersed castaways.”

Rzepecki remembered the swelling feeling of living under siege and fearing arrest. “As I analysed my closest circle, I concluded that ‘Rafał’ [Moczarski] must be the one who is being followed the most by the security service and the most in danger, since he had the largest number of contacts, throughout last year I decided that soon I would mention that he might want to stop.” However, Rzepecki ran out of time, and the news of Moczarski’s arrest found him in Krakow. He mentioned in his memoirs that “Rafał’s” arrest made him move up issuing the order to shut down the Government Delegate’s Office: “I predated it to 6 August, so that an earlier decision could be used.”⁵

Eleven August was a Saturday. “A car was waiting in Wilcza Street, with Różański inside. Inside was also some secret police guy, Romkowski, I think. Kazio was seized and taken to Rakowiecka Street [headquarters of the internal affairs ministry]. He would not go free until 1956,” remembered Moczarski’s sister, Anna Rothenburg-Rościszewska.⁶

Moczarski was arrested outdoors in Warsaw as he went from one secret meeting to another. Władysław Minkiewicz was waiting for him in Hoża Street

3 Rzepecki, *Wspomnienia*, Chapter XXX, “Zamęt,” 146.

4 Rzepecki, *Wspomnienia*, Chapter XXX, “Zamęt,” 147.

5 Rzepecki, *Wspomnienia*, Chapter XXX, “Zamęt,” 149.

6 Andrzej Kunert, *Oskarżony Kazimierz Moczarski* (Warsaw, 2006), 14.

near Three Crosses' Square in a pop-up café built with wooden planks. A half-hour later, two girl messengers rushed into the café bringing the woeful news that Moczarski was sitting in a secret police car parked fifteen metres away. He would only learn how his arrest came about many years later. "With all his meetings, Kazio wrote down the date and time in his notebook but only a vague address, corner of Hoża near Three Crosses Square. His notebook was found on him, and he was driven to the corner and told to point to the individual he had an appointment with," wrote Minkiewicz in his memoir *Mokotów–Rawicz–Wronki*.⁷

Moczarski did not reveal his friend's name, but the secret police still thought that they would be able to recognise easily a person who was waiting for someone. Minkiewicz, having been warned by the messengers, disappeared in the crowd. "After Kazimierz Moczarski was arrested, someone else took over as the head of Sixth Section, my direct boss, who came in as the liquidator." Minkiewicz did leave Poland this time but did not manage to avoid prison. Returning to Poland as an envoy of the London government in September 1947, he was captured two months later.⁸

When he was being arrested, Moczarski could not have known that Colonel Mazurkiewicz, having been captured ten days earlier, succumbed after a few hours of interrogation and sent a letter through an emissary in which he attempted to convince Rzepecki to put an end to the underground and negotiate with the Communists. Rzepecki did not respond as he continued to count on Mikołajczyk, even though he still had no answers to the letters he had written in July. "If [Mikołajczyk] were to talk with me, I couldn't say no," he wrote in a smuggled message to Mazurkiewicz. "But I don't trust any of the offers to talk I've received so far because of their form and the way they reached me, nor the absence of facts indicating good will to treat us fairly."⁹

With this in mind, Mazurkiewicz agreed to order his Home Army people to come out into the open. He himself was freed and soon, on 8 September 1945, the papers published his "Declaration of the Delegate of the Armed Forces of the Central Region about leaving the underground behind." In prison, Moczarski was also persuaded to sign a declaration supporting Mazurkiewicz's decision. So did Colonel Wojciech Borzobohaty, also of Rzepecki's staff, who had been arrested back in June.¹⁰ However, the security apparatus did not use their declarations

7 Minkiewicz, *Mokotów*, 38.

8 Minkiewicz, *Mokotów*, 69.

9 Rzepecki, *1945*, 20.

10 AIPN, 871/791, B. 33–39.

and continued to hold them. Józef Różański, who oversaw their investigations, explained this instrumental method during Borzobohaty's trial: "because the Ministry of Public Security had reservations concerning the sincerity and honesty of the initiative of the accused, because of his refusal to point out anyone from his organisation; therefore, after some time I informed the accused that the Ministry of Public Security has no intention to use his initiative."¹¹ Clearly, Rzepecki gauged the Communists' intentions and tactics correctly when he refused to negotiate with them.

In effect, only a handful of Mazurkiewicz's close collaborators regained their freedom. They organised a Liquidation Commission of the former Home Army, with offices in Warsaw and other cities. Thousands of fighters applied, providing their units, noms de guerre and proof of decorations. This created the impression that things were returning to normal.

Mazurkiewicz loyally attempted to stand up for the other prisoners. He asked for the release of all Home Army fighters being investigated, for pardons of all those who had been sentenced and for better treatment of political prisoners. None of these demands was met.

In early September, a secret meeting between Rzepecki and the regional commanders of the Government Delegate's Office, which was in the process of being dissolved, decided to create a civilian political organisation, Freedom and Independence Association (*Zrzeszenie "Wolność i Niezawisłość,"* WiN). Rzepecki became its chairman. Aleksander Gieysztor, who briefly replaced Moczarski after his arrest and who attended the meeting, believed that Rzepecki was hoping that this new organisation was the way to survive until the elections:

The short-term conclusion was more or less: the Provisional Government of National Unity, which was created under the patronage of the three powers, is, as its name indicates, a temporary solution. If Mikołajczyk joins it, there will be some hope, but the elections will settle everything. Mikołajczyk and his party may win if the elections are held soon and the Soviets don't hold sway over them. Mikołajczyk must be supported, but he must not officially admit that he has any ties to us, those who are still underground. However, the underground is still necessary, if only to lead the remaining large numbers of soldiers and officers calmly and honourably into civilian life. This must not happen helter-skelter and without negotiating the conditions and guarantees for all those who will at some point lay down their arms with the Warsaw government.¹²

11 AIPN, 871/791, B. 40.

12 Jarocki, *Opowieść o Aleksandrze Gieysztorze*, 165.

However, the security authorities saw no difference between Freedom and Independence and another armed conspiratorial organisation to be destroyed. Moczarski was often accused of being a member of this organisation, which he did not even know existed.

The first surviving record of Moczarski's investigation is dated 22 August 1945. Moczarski tested the patience of the functionary who was interrogating him. He described his meetings and conversations with Okulicki which had taken place half a year earlier in detail and tried to conceal his close ties to Rzepecki.¹³ It was only the confrontation with Wojciech Borzobohaty and Władysław Jaworski of the National Party who admitted to meeting secretly with Moczarski that made further denials pointless. In subsequent interrogations he was asked for details of his meetings with Rzepecki and his role in writing information and propaganda materials for the Government Delegate's Office.

"I wasn't the head of the Office of Information and Propaganda, but of an information cell within the Armed Forces Delegation for Poland," he reported and went on to explain that the reports he had written were not about intelligence but only about politics. "The briefings in which I took part were not Headquarters briefings but those between Rzepecki and me."¹⁴ His testimony is reticent, and the record of the investigation and the indictment indicate that the interrogators did not manage to learn any details of Moczarski's underground work or the personal data of any of his collaborators.

A message from Moczarski to his wife smuggled out of Rakowiecka Street prison reveals his strategy of minimising his role as Rzepecki's aide. Some short letters written on scraps of paper were probably intercepted by the prison guards. In them, Moczarski tried to describe his investigation and the prisoners' very difficult living conditions, their isolation and feelings of uncertainty about the future.¹⁵

In early October 1945 Moczarski wrote:

My dearest ones, please suss out the status of my case in light of the amnesty, whose contents we don't know. They suspended my interrogations a week ago. They wanted to make an [Intelligence Service] English agent out of me. I didn't admit to writing telegrams, blaming everything on the Chairman... I only saw the Chairman every Tuesday. From late June in the woods or in Podkowa Leśna or Komorów. They know nothing about the Office of Information and Propaganda. [To them] I'm the head of information and a sociopolitical expert.¹⁶

13 AIPN, 871/791, B. 43.

14 AIPN, 871/791, B. 60.

15 A copy in Andrzej Kunert's archive.

16 A copy in Andrzej Kunert's archive.

He attempted to pass on information he had acquired during the investigation about threats to the underground:

Tell Sławbor [Jan Szczurek-Cergowski, commander of the Western Region of the Government Delegate's Office] to watch out for priests. This is how they may get him. They're interested in Tytus [Colonel Bohdan Zieliński, in charge of operation Z, which aimed to influence Żymierski's army ideologically], Oskar [Bernard Zakrzewski, head of the Government Delegate's Office counterintelligence]. They claim that the 6 August '45 dissolution was a fraud. They're waiting for signs of the Chairman's renewed activity . . . Please copy out fragments of this letter for the Chairman. He should only deal with his closest people.

Moczarski described prison conditions: "We've gone 46 days without baths. Lice. However, that's only sections X and XI. The criminals and *Volksdeutsche* bathe once a week." He told her that "I'm made of steel. Nothing will break me." His next smuggled message tells his wife: "I've no illusions that they will release me anytime soon, even with minor charges and my minor role in the Home Army."¹⁷

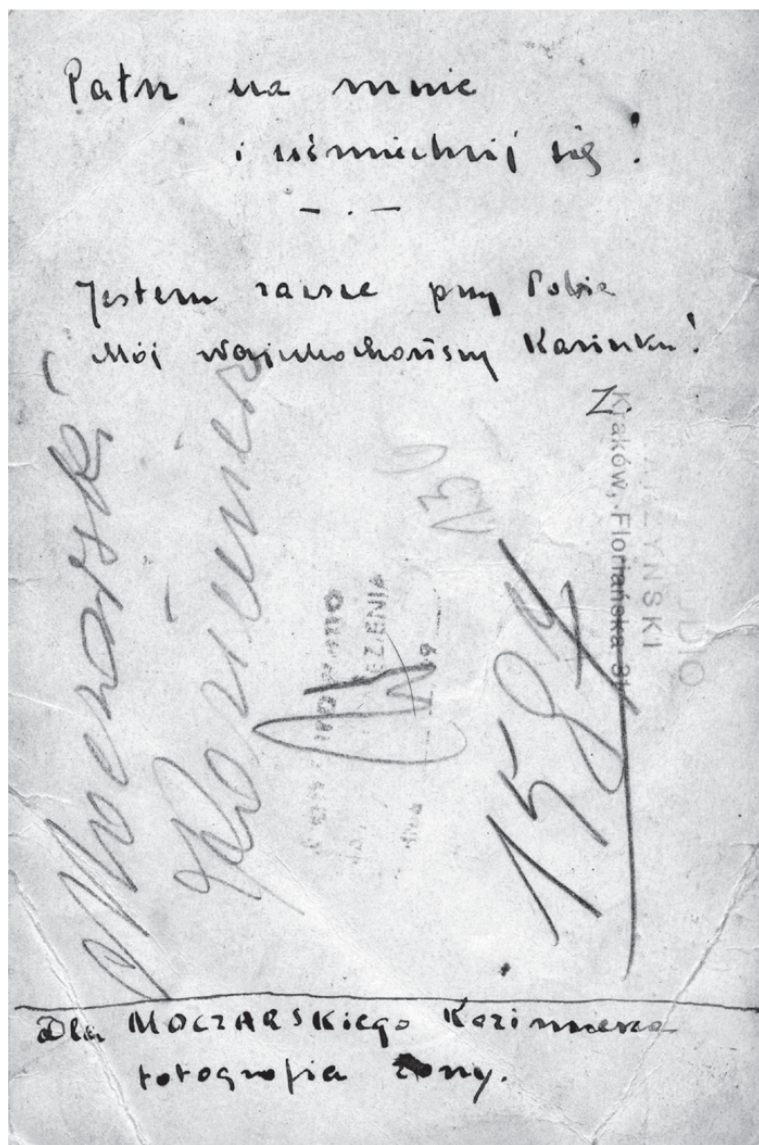
His friends kept news of Moczarski's arrests from his mother. He wrote to her from prison: "I'm totally healthy. I feel well. Sorry I missed your name day party. I will kiss Mum's hands soon. Your loving son." Signature and date: "Krakow 3.10.45."¹⁸

17 A copy in Andrzej Kunert's archive.

18 A copy in Andrzej Kunert's archive.



A photograph Zofia Moczarska sent to Kazimierz Moczarski from prison in autumn 1945. Photogr. Archive of Elżbieta Moczarska / FOTONOVA.



The reverse of the photograph Zofia Moczarska sent to Kazimierz Moczarski with a stamp of the prison censorship office and a handwritten dedication: "Look at me and smile. I am always with you my most beloved Kazinek." Photogr. Archive of Elżbieta Moczarska / FOTONOVA.

Zofia Moczarska was in Krakow when news of her husband's arrest reached her. She returned to Warsaw the next day. Zbigniew Baucz, who revealed himself to the "Radosław" Commission after Moczarski's arrest to have been Moczarski's subordinate, started a job in the Central Planning Office, remembered Zofia Moczarska's passionate resolve in fighting for her husband's release: "She even reached [Prime Minister] Edward Osóbka-Morawski's office and submitted a plea."¹⁹ She tenaciously tried to reach people whose voices had any chance of being heard in the new reality. She succeeded in persuading Jan Stańczyk, minister of social welfare, who had known the Moczarskis since they were colleagues before the war, to intervene. Stańczyk wrote to [the Minister of Public Security Stanisław] Radkiewicz and to Osóbka-Morawski, calling Moczarski a "radical social activist" and "true democrat." However, Stańczyk's arguments had no effect as the issue of Moczarski's leftist views was secondary to his role in the underground.²⁰ A reply arrived from Osóbka-Morawski's office that the case did not qualify Moczarski for release, and that it was currently in the domain of the Ministry of Public Security. Zofia Moczarska plunged into the lion's den. "I spoke with Różański, and when this yielded nothing I went to Radkiewicz, but he wouldn't receive me."²¹ Moczarska's cousin Irena Rakowska-Bartel remembered her friends' nervousness about what they thought was Zofia's excessive activity: "We warned her to calm down because they'll end up arresting her, too."²²

Moczarski asked Zofia in one of his smuggled messages to warn Mikołajczyk, told her that he was being pushed hard in his interrogations to serve as an intermediary in bringing Mikołajczyk together with Rzepecki. The message clearly reached her because Zofia subsequently met with Mikołajczyk, to whom she relayed the news and asked to intervene on her husband's behalf. She told Włodzimierz Lechowicz, whose political career was looking promising, about her visit. Indeed, in July he started to work in the state administration as head of department in the Ministry of Regained Territories, which was headed by Władysław Gomułka, and his importance in the authorised Democratic Party was also growing. Moczarska thought of Lechowicz as someone close and trusted him completely. However, she was not aware that he had been in charge of not only exposing Moczarski but also of keeping the secret police apprised of

19 Author's interview with Zbigniew Baucz, December 2006.

20 AIPN, 871/791, B. 94.

21 AIPN, GK 317/700, B. 264.

22 Author's interview with Irena Rakowska-Bartel, April 2007.

his conversations with her and about the secret messages passed back and forth between the couple.²³

In one of his reports, now in the archive of the former secret services of Communist Poland at the Institute of National Remembrance, Lechowicz related that Mikołajczyk had not promised to Moczarska because “Rzepecki, . . . announced that they would continue to fight until the elections,” and that Moczarski “had confessed to his contacts with [Rzepecki].”²⁴ Thus, Moczarski was taken hostage in the secret police plot against both the underground and the democratic opposition. Mikołajczyk did not want to try to save Moczarski since he was close to Rzepecki who remained in hiding, and Mikołajczyk’s own political game was to culminate in an electoral victory, which would end the Communist dominance and, in effect, the persecution of Home Army people.

The Communists rigged the January 1947 elections. With his plans failing and fearing arrest, Mikołajczyk fled the country. Moczarski was resentful of Mikołajczyk’s schemes, which resulted in thousands of Home Army fighters and their commanders being left high and dry. He wrote in his prison testimony:

My take on Mikołajczyk is this: the Home Army’s hopes for Mikołajczyk’s help in resolving the Home Army predicament were disappointed. Until the day I was arrested, Mikołajczyk acted as if there was no such thing as the Home Army problem Then, it would have been sufficient, in my opinion, for Mikołajczyk, ‘our prime minister’, not so much to order but unofficially to advise people to reveal themselves completely. Rzepecki would have done it immediately Mikołajczyk’s Sphinx-like silence encouraged people to remain underground and left Rzepecki in an ambiguous position. Mikołajczyk bears a heavy responsibility for the Home Army’s tragedy.²⁵

According to the historian Krystyna Kersten, the Communists’ moves targeting the underground in 1945 intended to slash all social ties and disarm the population morally. The intentions behind the Communists’ and Colonel Rzepecki’s goals to bring people out of the underground were diametrically opposed.

The authorities aimed at solving the <general national problem>, as Gomulka put it during a Plenum of the PPR Central Committee on October 3, 1945, in such a way, as to allow them at the same time to destroy all social bonds and morally disarm society. In inducing people to leave the underground, the intentions of Colonel. the Communists were not the same. As Rzepecki stated in his <Guiding Principles>, which were widely distributed, he wanted <to empty the forests> not to end resistance, but because the new task of the independence movement, <and therefore all society> should be <to

23 AIPN, 0330/260, Vol. 4, B. 270 and 287.

24 AIPN, 0330/260, Vol. 4, B. 270.

25 AIPN, BU XI/40, B. 26.

reveal its decisive superiority in the country's public life, both in the political contest with the tiny minority of supporters of the present regime and in the country's reconstruction>. Gomulka said more or less the same thing when he asserted that, in liquidating the post-Home Army underground, the opposition was not resigning from further struggle: <it will be transferred from an illegal to a legal level>...²⁶

When Zofia Moczarska was allowed to meet with Władysław Gomułka to convince him to free her husband, she heard this same merciless “political” answer, which rid her of all her earlier illusions. “Gomułka. . .received her very sternly, announcing that today he was the best-informed person in Poland and that he knows full well that her husband worked with Rzepecki until the end and that he belongs in the category of incurable conspirators.”²⁷ Hence, from Gomułka's perspective, releasing people like Moczarski, who were the new government's natural enemies regardless of their “progressive” beliefs, would strengthen the ranks of the proponents of democracy. People like him were best kept locked up.

The period of the mildest treatment of the Home Army people was the amnesty which lasted only a few weeks of the existence of the “Radosław” Commission. As soon as the Commission was disbanded, repressions of underground fighters spread across the whole country. Newspapers filled with reports of draconian sentences handed down to imprisoned Home Army people. In early 1946, Chairman of the Supreme Military Court Colonel Aleksander Michniewicz (a Red Army officer, a law graduate delegated to the Polish Army) issued a circular about lengthening sentences for underground activists and ordered an end to suspending or lightening sentences. Ownership of weapons or fliers alone would be considered an attempt to start a civil war.

The indictment of Kazimierz Moczarski, filed in the Military Court of Warsaw District on 25 October 1945, was a logical outcome of this. It was based on the totality of Moczarski's faintly documented underground activity from January 1945 to his arrest.²⁸

Zofia Moczarska asked Stefan Irlicht, a lawyer she trusted, to represent her husband. He advised her to find witnesses to testify in favour of Moczarski. In Lublin Zofia located Helena Kuligowska-Gadomska, a Polish Workers' Party activist, who wrote in her statement that Moczarski had saved her life. In the spring of 1944 the Underground Polish Army had collected evidence

26 Krystyna Kersten, *The Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland, 1943-1948*, (Berkeley, 1991), 224–5.

27 AIPN, 0330/260 Vol. 4, B. 287.

28 AIPN, 871/791, B. 98–99.

of the criminal activities of Warsaw *szmalcownik* Freindl, and Kuligowska had been one of the Jews Moczarski had protected from him.²⁹ Roman Szymanko, a Communist activist Moczarski had met before the war in the union movement, also agreed to vouch for him. Szymanko had joined the Polish Workers' Party during the war and knew Bierut personally. "My dear," he wrote to Zofia in December 1945, "I went to the Belvedere Palace this afternoon and presented the case to the president's secretary with my personal request to the president to have Kazik released as soon as possible."³⁰

The arrest of his pre-war friend shocked Tadeusz Kochanowicz, who had returned from London in late 1945.³¹ He used his contacts in the Polish Socialist Party, and during a meeting in a café described Moczarski's case to Julian Hochfeld, one of the Socialists who had decided to ally himself with the Polish Workers' Party during the war. He had become a deputy to the State National Council, the quasi-parliament of the "anti-Fascist forces" created by the Communists back in 1943–44, which operated until the 1947 elections. His intervention brought some hope as Hochfeld agreed to meet with Zofia, then wrote a confidential note to the prime minister of the provisional government, Osóbka-Morawski:

I explained broadly to Moczarski's wife who came to see me how both she and her husband should understand what Deputy Premier Gomułka had told her about her husband when he received her However, I think—if I may write this—that the workers' movement (I don't know today whether it is the [Polish Workers' Party] or the [Polish Socialist Party]) could use Moczarski in some capacity if he took his thinking process to a conclusion. Use better than [Bolesław] Piasecki because he is a better, more honest, more solid, even a wiser man. And, also, a democrat.³²

In other words, were Moczarski to submit a self-critique and join the camp of the new power, help would probably be possible. Hochfeld's contrast of the two people whose life stories were so radically different was also interesting. Before the war, Piasecki had been a leader of the radical-right National-Radical Camp Falanga, and during the war the commander of the nationalist Confederation of the Nation. After being arrested by the Russians near Warsaw in 1944, he managed to convince first the NKVD and then the Polish Communists that he could be useful to the new system. After a private chat with Gomułka, he was allowed

29 AIPN, 871/791, B. 94.

30 Tadeusz Szymanko's letter in Elżbieta Moczarska's archive, AIPN, 871/791, B. 89.

31 Tadeusz Kochanowicz, unpublished memoir, typescript in author's possession, 43.

32 AIPN, 871/791, B. 94.

to publish his own paper, even though this meant changing his political programme and recognising the new government.

Hochfeld's ambiguous offer was clearly not approved, but his note and the declarations by Szymanko and Kuligowska briefly created some chaos. The court transferred the indictment to a military prosecutor. Judicial independence proved a sham. The court's doubts were finished off by the arbitrary decision of Major Henryk Podlaski, head of the Chief Military Prosecutor's Office department of special cases, who declared that the defendant's guilt had been "sufficiently proven."³³

Moczarski tried to act rationally, according to the laws of the state governed by the rule of law. He asked for about a dozen witnesses, including Colonel Mazurkiewicz ("to testify that I was never a leader of either the Home Army or of the Armed Forces Delegation, but a simple member"), minister of social affairs in the Provisional Government of National Unity Jan Stańczyk ("as shown by my democratic stance and professional work—for the benefit of the working world—at home and abroad").³⁴

Moczarski's trial opened on 16 January 1946 and took two days. Of the more than dozen witnesses proposed by Moczarski, the court allowed only two: Roman Szymanko and Włodzimierz Lechowicz. The other witnesses, who were brought out of prison to testify, were Wojciech Borzobohaty and Władysław Jaworski. All the testimony favoured Moczarski insofar as the court took into consideration his "services from the time of the occupation in fighting elements acting to harm Polishness."³⁵

Moczarski was sentenced to ten years in prison, a modest term by comparison to the draconian ones given other members of the Armed Forces Delegation. Thus, Wojciech Borzobohaty and Władysław Liniarski were initially given the death penalty, which was later commuted to ten-year prison terms.

The court again tried to save the defendant. Following the defence attorney's plea, it reduced Moczarski's sentence to five years, suspended it for two years and ordered his immediate release. The fact that a juror wanted to declare Moczarski innocent manifested enormous courage.³⁶ Stańczyk and Osóbka-Morawski were notified about the verdict. Moczarski's fate seemed sealed, as he was to be released within twenty-four hours. However, the Main Military Prosecutor's

33 AIPN, 871/791, B. 107.

34 AIPN, 871/791, B. 109.

35 AIPN, 871/791, B. 111.

36 AIPN, 871/791, B. 116.

office appealed to the District Court. The Main Military Court upheld the original sentence.³⁷

Moczarski tried yet again, writing to Bierut to ask for clemency. He mentioned his political path since the interwar period and underscored his leftist beliefs. He examined the situation in the underground after the dissolution of the Home Army and his reasons for staying on. Even though his arguments were primarily pragmatic, they were used in good conscience.

I considered my joining the Armed Forces Delegation for Poland in April 1945 as my continuing duty to watch over the legacy of the Home Army to prevent the National-Radical Camp people from taking over, at least as far as information and politics were concerned, which seemed likely. I honestly intended for the Home Army masses, healthy and democratic to the core, to switch to the common democratic and progressive camp, headed by you, citizen president. The impasse into which the compromised London government had herded the democratic segment of the Home Army was so tragic for me that in the middle of July 1945 I decided to leave the Armed Forces Delegation for Poland . . . It was only by chance, so tragic for me, that an instant before I entered positive democratic work for the State I was arrested. I, the democrat, accused of being a reactionary. Could there be a more classic and tragic paradox! . . . Through me, Polish Democracy is punishing these democratic masses who were no doubt present in the Home Army and for whom entering into the orbit of positive work for the state should be facilitated.³⁸

Moczarski's harsh judgement of the government in exile may shock us today, but it need not mean that he was joining in the Communist propaganda of disavowing the London authorities. Loyalty to the émigré government did not preclude taking a critical look at the internal political conflicts in the underground, at the decision to launch the Warsaw Uprising and, after the Russians occupied Poland, at the upholding by at least some in the émigré community of the belief that the British and Americans would enter into a conflict with the Soviet Union, which would bring Poland freedom. Many in Poland thought much like Moczarski: without allying himself with the Communists. Rzepecki himself, who did not believe in a third world war and was counting on the elections promised at Yalta resolving the political crisis, was a realist. He wrote about the need to take a critical look at the totality of the politics of the government in exile throughout the war from a realistic point of view. Another realist, the political commentator Stefan Kisielewski wrote in *Tygodnik Warszawski* on

37 AIPN, 871/791, B. 125.

38 AIPN, 871/791, B. 131.

the second anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising that Poland needed to take a critical look at the politics of the London government throughout the war.

The plea for Moczarski's pardon landed on Bierut's desk, followed a couple of weeks later by his case documents. These include Colonel Aleksander Michniewicz's opinion that "the condemned does not deserve a pardon." In the corner of the sheet, appears in Bierut's writing: "give no consideration."³⁹

It may have been right then that the bold idea to break out of prison emerged. Zbigniew Baucz can remember it so long after the fact, but not the precise date.

Zosia let me know that a prison guard has been bribed and that Kazik would be breaking out. She said that Rózański had allowed her to speak with her husband in prison and that they made all the arrangements when they were left alone for an instant. I was to rent a flat with a view of a particular part of the prison building and then wait for the agreed-upon signal. I did what I was supposed to, waited in the flat for a while, but of course nothing happened, there was no signal. Later I realised that it was some sort of a mystification, but Zosia really believed in it. I wanted to help, I was doing it for Kazik. Even though it was insanity.⁴⁰

Baucz, even decades later, was moved as he told the story. "He was my commander," he added, meaning to explain why he was prepared to take the risk.

In August 1946 Moczarski was moved to a prison in Rawicz. His wife's petition to allow him to serve his term in Warsaw was denied. Now she had to travel several hundred kilometres to see him. "Yesterday I left at 4 p.m., got here at 4 a.m., today, a Saturday, I'm waiting outside the prison at 8.30 a.m. I'll spend the night in Poznań, and tomorrow night I'll be home," she wrote after her first visit.⁴¹ She had to forget about carrying on with her journalism studies, and Tadeusz Kochanowicz recommended her for a job with the Central Planning Office. She wrote to her husband: "It's hard to have you so far away, but I'm doing all I can to stop you from feeling lonely. My head is spinning, but I'm hanging in there just as you would like me to . . . As I've told you, right after 1 September, I'll go back to my endeavours. Believe me, darling, we can see the end of the tunnel."⁴²

It was only in the 1980s, towards the end of the Polish People's Republic, that narratives and memoirs by former Stalinist prisoners began to come out, at first only underground. A collection of narratives titled *Wielka edukacja* (Great

39 AIPN, 871/791, B. 160.

40 Author's interview with Zbigniew Baucz, December 2006.

41 Zofia and Kazimierz Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza. Listy więzienne 1946–1956*, ed. A. Machcewicz (Warsaw, 2015), 44.

42 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 42.

Education) was the first one.⁴³ It consists of twelve narratives from the harsh prisons in Rawicz and Wronki, most of whose authors decided to remain anonymous, even decades later. What awaited a prisoner after their investigation was over and their sentence had been announced? They would arrive at the penitentiary with their files, which the prison authorities would study closely, and the mark of an “anti-state” prisoner, who was to be supervised with extraordinary rigour. Very often they shared a cell with a snitch specially recruited to learn what the prisoner had not revealed during the investigation and to report on his wrong assertions. Snitches were recruited with threats, blackmail, promises and bribes.

Unsubordinated prisoners would be punished eagerly, for complaining about being ill-treated or for a single hostile glance. Their penalties included time in a dark cell, denied walks, confiscated parcels and cancelled family visit. At times, the prisoner functionaries were even worse than the guards. “Men like Łada, Lichota, Hoffman and Pisula were the devil incarnate, and even the guards were scared of them out of their wits. In those horrific years up to 1951 they did as they pleased. They tormented the prisoners and took away their parcels,” remembers the author of one of the accounts writing under the pseudonym “Ludwik.” Work was a privilege, and “apart from hunger and cold we suffered most from an absence of precise occupations, and hence pervasive boredom. It paralyzed our brains, made us apathetic, killing us slowly and steadily.”⁴⁴

Moczarski wrote about his six-month confinement in Rawicz only once, just after he was released in May 1956. The typed sheet listed the methods used to torture the prisoners: “the swan, a long stay in a dark cell inside a specially constructed wooden crate in which the prisoner could only squat or sit immersed in water, which was about five cm deep on the concrete floor.” And “being chained, naked, to the bed in the dark cell for seventy-two hours. The prisoner was made to stand on a concrete bed. His forearms passed through iron rings affixed to the wall, and the handcuffs on his wrists tightened with his every move. He would be uncuffed once a day, to eat.”⁴⁵

The prison was ruled by the psychopath Kazimierz Szymanowicz, who had previously served as the director of another dreaded prison at 11 November Street in Warsaw. His nickname in Rawicz, where he inflicted punishment for

43 See Danuta Suchorowska, *Wielka edukacja, Wspomnienia więźniów politycznych PRL (1945–1956)* (Warsaw, 1990).

44 Suchorowska, *Wielka edukacja*, 135.

45 Letter from B. Moczarski to W. Winawer, May 1956, Elżbieta Moczarska’s archive.

the most minor wrongdoing, was “gory Kazio.” Moczarski described him as “Talented, bright, an ignoramus. Jumpy and a fantasist, psychopathic traits. Suffered from insomnia. Alcoholic. Cruel, vindictive, pitiless . . . Exceptionally hated by the prisoners, to the very extremes of loathing.”⁴⁶ He was the one who assigned Moczarski to the cold cell for many weeks, from at least December 1946 to February 1947. In 1956 Moczarski related it:

One-ninth of the surface (I measured it) of the cell’s ceiling, concrete floor and walls was covered with rime. The prisoner wore his summer uniform: the thinnest underwear, denim jacket and trousers. He would get a new so-called silk mattress (very smooth and packed with straw; you couldn’t make a cut in it to get a bit of warmth when you were sleeping). There was only one blanket in the cell.⁴⁷

Moczarski stayed in this antechamber to hell until 26 March 1947. He was thirty-nine. With nearly eight years in prison ahead of him.

Two crucial events took place in Warsaw at this time. An amnesty was announced after the elections to the Legislative Sejm in January 1947, and Colonel Jan Rzepecki’s trial ended on 4 February. The chairman of the Freedom and Independence Association, who had been captured by the secret police in November 1945, much like his subordinates who had been arrested earlier, gave up. After being interrogated for a few hours, he revealed the names of his associates who were still at large in exchange for a guarantee that they would not be persecuted. He ordered them to come clear, hand over their equipment and money.⁴⁸ Historians judge Rzepecki’s actions in radically different ways, with some accusing him of disloyalty and others seeing his decisive action to end the conspiracy as rational and unavoidable.

Rzepecki’s trial took place literally on the eve of the January Sejm elections and was the first show trial in post-war Poland, used by Communist propaganda—of course in violation of the defendant’s wishes—to destroy the Home Army legend. Colonel Rzepecki himself made this easier, as he said in his final statement:

In 1945, a two-way battle was being waged in Poland. The government in exile, a thousand kilometres away, had no other weapon than to excite people’s minds, and so it did this all the more eagerly. The Home Army soldiers became the scapegoat. Nineteen-forty-five saw a major shift in the relationship between the Great Powers, which affected the social and political affairs in Poland. Two great systems, disappearing capitalism and the growing strength of the socialised economy. The year 1945 was a watershed in

46 Letter from B. Moczarski to W. Winawer, May 1956, Elżbieta Moczarska Archive.

47 Letter from B. Moczarski to W. Winawer, May 1956, Elżbieta Moczarska Archive.

48 See Piotr Lipiński, *Raport Rzepeckiego* (Warsaw, 2005), 73–9.

Poland's history. We were giving up on the gains of Polish colonialism in the East. At the same time, we were returning to the West . . . Hundreds and thousands of Home Army soldiers had to take a stand in this turbulence of ideas, political currents and facts and, therefore, hundreds and thousands of soldiers had to make mistakes.⁴⁹

Rzepecki was sentenced to eight years in prison and was almost immediately pardoned by Bierut.

Rzepecki's final statement and information about his sentence and the pardon were published in the official party newspaper, *Głos Ludu*, in February 1947. Moczarski would likely have agreed with Rzepecki's analysis of the events of 1945. At the same time, it fit the government's propaganda expectations. If prisoner Moczarski had access to any newspapers, which would have been the prison director's whim, his former commander's views must have given him reason to think bitter thoughts and ask himself difficult questions.

Once released, did Rzepecki try to fight for Moczarski? He allegedly talked with someone at the Ministry of Public Security about his release, as he told Zofia Moczarska giving her hope that amounted to nothing, or at least this is what she wrote after she was arrested in a statement, which today can be found at the Institute of National Remembrance. In the concluding section of his memoirs about the events of the dramatic year 1945, Rzepecki only talks about those who accompanied him in the last weeks of the underground in Freedom and Independence. However, he does not say much about his earlier subordinates from the Government Delegate's Office, who would pay a much higher price, long prison terms. Did he feel guilty that they had been abandoned?

There are thousands of pages of documents relating to Moczarski at the Institute of National Remembrance. The security apparatus collected volumes of interrogation transcripts, sentences, records of bugging devices and intelligence reports from 1945 on. Many were written long after Moczarski's death. Among the thousands of pages, there are two photocopies of short documents written by an unnamed functionary in the 1970s that someone inserted between the pages of Moczarski's bio. This is significant because it puts into question the authenticity of these documents written in Rawicz in 1947. The first one, dated 23 February, is a pledge from a cell agent:

In connection with the declaration by the prison authorities that the case of prisoner X is of pivotal importance to the state and requires exceptional scrutiny, I agree to interview prisoner 'X,' to work him out and to deliver the appropriate materials (within the capacity of the prison) to the prison authorities. I agree to keep the totality of this matter

49 Piotr Lipiński, *Raport Rzepeckiego*, 95.

confidential, both now and in the future. To perform the above tasks with total dutifulness, good will and an understanding of its importance to the benefit of the Democratic Polish State.⁵⁰

It is impossible to know so many years later who the mysterious prisoner X was and whether Moczarski fulfilled his mission. Perhaps it was an early stage of a game that Moczarski pulled out from without suffering any consequences, or perhaps he did cooperate deliberately in circumstances we are not familiar with, and in that case, there is a trail worth following. Not quite two years had passed since the end of the war. As Moczarski signed the pledge, the Polish government had been trying for a few months to extradite Nazi SS General Jürgen Stroop, who was awaiting trial before a US military court in a prison in Dachau. Stroop had been sentenced to death in March 1947 for executing US airmen in German captivity. Poland succeeded at having him extradited, and on 31 May 1947 Stroop was put in the Rakowiecka Street prison in Warsaw. Now he was to be tried for executing Poles in October 1939 in Poznań Province and for crimes committed during the pacification of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in spring 1943.⁵¹ A prosecutor of the Supreme National Tribunal (Najwyższy Trybunał Narodowy, NTN), created specially to try Nazi criminals, took on the investigation. In March 1947, it tried Rudolf Höss, commander of Auschwitz death camp, which all of Poland followed breathlessly. Even isolated political prisoners must have known about the Nazi trials taking place just then before Polish courts, and they must have been pleased.

Could Stroop have been the target of the “interview” planned in the cell agent’s pledge? Would Moczarski have agreed to collaborate with the Polish authorities to expose Nazi crimes? We know from Moczarski’s writings that he only met the Nazi criminal with whom he would share a cell in March 1949, and in totally different circumstances.⁵² In 1949, the Supreme National Tribunal no longer existed, and Stroop’s lengthy trial had been transferred to a prosecutor of the Ministry of Justice. Beginning in January 1949 the Ministry of Public Security investigators were entangling Moczarski in a brand-new investigation. Hence,

50 AIPN, BU MSW II 4795.

51 AIPN, GK 164/373 Vol. 1–3. Joanna Person, “Mówi Jürgen Stroop. Proces likwidatora powstania w getcie warszawskim przed Sądem Wojewódzkim w Warszawie,” *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 9/2013, 380–426.

52 Kazimierz Moczarski, *Rozmowy z katem* (Warsaw, 2002), 23; also AIPN, GK 317/700, B. 89.

should we connect the signed pledge and the cell shared with Stroop? Since there are no further clues, we must stop speculating.

The copy of the second document, in Moczarski's hand, is dated 17 March 1947 and was written in Rawicz prison. Moczarski agreed to "cooperate with the security authorities in uncovering hostile elements which would want to overthrow the democratic system of the Polish State."⁵³ It is likely that the author and the addressees of this document defined the term "democracy" differently. However, why would Moczarski join in this game when he had so many years left of his term? The secret may lie in the enigmatic words of prison director Kazimierz Symanowicz, who allegedly told Moczarski that he would be transferred to Warsaw in order "to be released."⁵⁴ Where did this promise come from?

A harmless note in the official party newspaper, *Głos Ludu*, about a group of Democratic Party activists visiting Bierut may be helpful. The party's secretary general, Leon Chajn, and Włodzimierz Lechowicz and Zygmunt Kapitaniak asked Bierut to release Moczarski, bringing up Rzepecki's case. A note written after the meeting of the party's Politburo in March 1947, after the Democratic Party activists' intervention, survives in the Polish Workers' Party archive. It is laconic: "Decided: use privilege of clemency if Moczarski talks about his underground activities."⁵⁵

Years later, Leon Chajn told the journalist Teresa Torańska his version of this story: "I went to see Bierut and explained to him that Moczarski, regardless of his work during the occupation, is a decent man. A progressive man. He is certainly no enemy of Socialism or of People's Poland . . . Bierut agreed with me and promised not only to take care of the problem and let Moczarski out but even to put an announcement in the paper that the secretary general of the Democratic Party had intervened in Moczarski's case."⁵⁶ Therefore, the pledge to collaborate forced on Moczarski in Rawicz prison may have been the price he would pay for his freedom. Thus, we should ask whether signing the pledge represented Moczarski's collapse or a ruse to get out of prison. And did Moczarski believe that he would avoid actual collaboration?

There is no clear answer, but there are analogies. Thus, Tadeusz Chciuk, a Home Army courier who travelled between London and occupied Poland

53 AIPN BU XI/40.

54 Letter from K. Moczarski to W. Winawer, May 1956, Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

55 *Dokumenty do dziejów PRL. Protokoły Posiedzeń Biura Politycznego PPR 1947–1948* (Warsaw, 2002), 24.

56 Teresa Torańska, *Oni* (Warsaw, 1989), 326.

during the war, signed a pledge that he would collaborate. In December 1945, he started on his last mission to Poland and was arrested, then released a few months later from a prison in Krakow. The Security Office remembered him after a few months and tried to force him to collaborate. Chciuk fled the country. He later went to work for the Polish section of Radio Free Europe in Germany and told his whole story then.⁵⁷

We also know about the signing of pledges that had no consequences from another Stalinist political prisoner, Wiesław Chrzanowski of the Labour Party and the Union of Christian Youth (*Chrześcijański Związek Młodzieży*). The secret police arrested Chrzanowski in May 1946 in Warsaw, on his way to work in a court. As he recalled,

The Security Office wanted to know about people who were still at large. I was finally told that I would be released if I agreed to cooperate with the Security Office. They promised to legalise the Union of Christian Youth and argued that I would have an opportunity to influence the political circles I was close to . . . They thought that the [activists] would try to get in touch with me, and then since I would be under surveillance, they would capture them. I saw that I had two ways out. To reject their offer and let them shut me up for a few or a dozen years or to sign the collaboration pledge, go free, inform those who needed to be informed and flee the country, to the West. I chose the second option, I had quite a bit of information from the investigation that I could use to help a few people.⁵⁸

Chrzanowski did not manage to escape abroad. He was rearrested two year later and sentenced to eight years in prison. A year later, after the Ministry of Internal Affairs archives were opened and his collaboration agreement was found, he was able to explain the situation in which he had signed it. However, we must be cautious about judging the actions of those who died before it became possible to discuss their past openly.

Despite the Democratic Party activists' intervention and Bierut's promise, Moczarski was not released. Instead, he was again questioned, this time about the ongoing investigation of the people of the Conciliatory Committee of the Democratic Organisations of Underground Poland (*Komitet Porozumiewawczy Organizacji Demokratycznych Polski Podziemnej*) who had been arrested in early 1947. The Committee was one of the most important organisations of the post-war pro-independence underground. The next investigation was of the arrested members of Freedom and Independence, which continued despite Rzepecki's

57 Paweł Machcewicz, *Poland's War on Radio Free Europe. 1950–1989* (Stanford and Washington, 2014), 121.

58 Wiesław Chrzanowski, *Pół wieku polityki* (Warsaw, 1997), 154–8.

calls to quit. One of the committee's founders, Colonel Waclaw Lipiński, and the chairman of the Third Directorate of Freedom and Independence Colonel Wincenty Kwieciński were held in the Rakowiecka Street prison.

The statements made by the two men were used against Moczarski. During the war, Lipiński had been a leader of the *Sanacja* government's Committee of Pro-Independence Organisations (Konwent Organizacji Niepodległościowych), and while being interrogated he claimed that Moczarski had belonged to the Committee.⁵⁹ This was evidence enough to accuse Moczarski of having given false testimony in spite of the fact that he had said that the only organisation he had been a member of was the Democratic Party. Kwieciński talked about his contacts with Moczarski in the spring and summer of 1945. He testified about matters he was not familiar with first-hand, and he mixed up facts and code names. "Lipiński told me that the idea of starting a Committee of Uniting Underground Organisations [Komitet Połączenia Organizacji Podziemnych, CKN] had come up already in 1945, and he himself had talked about it with Moczarski 'Rafał' as a member of the Freedom and Independence leadership."⁶⁰ This imprecision and verbosity were very dangerous for Moczarski, and entangled him in matters and events he knew nothing about because they had taken place after he was arrested.

This may have pushed Moczarski to write down his own confession explaining his role in the wartime underground. The typescript in the Institute of National Remembrance archive is dated 16 April, just one day later than the minutes of the interrogations being used against him. It took him 26 pages to discuss his work in the Home Army from 1940 to his arrest in August 1945.

Colonel Lipiński's statement that Moczarski had been a member of the Committee of Pro-Independence Organisations was a misunderstanding. There were humorous aspects to the story, a result of Moczarski's imagination. Having been instructed by the Office of Information and Propaganda to infiltrate Piłsudskiite groups, together with people he had known for a long time from the Youth League, he arrived at the founding meeting of a group he did not know. This story shows the importance of pre-war contacts and friendships for subsequent underground active. Moczarski wrote in his statement,

We met with [Zygmunt] Hempel and, as we talked, Colonel Lipiński showed up. Thus, I made the acquaintance of both Committee leaders at once. During our conversation I realised that poor Pawłowicz was trying to manipulate me to do the work as an alleged member of the Legion. I couldn't disown Pawłowicz. And I didn't want to break off the

59 AIPN, BU 872/791, B. 184.

60 AIPN, BU 872/791, B. 182.

contacts with Hempel and Lipiński, which were so valuable to the Office of Information and Propaganda Indeed, my presence in this discussion could have been interpreted as evidence of my interest in joining the Committee. However, since I did not want to join it, I told Hempel that I couldn't be a member of the Committeesince I was serving in the army, in the Office of Information and Propaganda Hempel took note of my declaration.⁶¹

Moczarski's statement also demonstrates the unhealthy suspiciousness of the investigative functionaries of the Ministry of Public Security, who treated the immaterial meeting from several years earlier with deadly seriousness.

Moczarski went on to describe Colonel Lipiński as a gifted politician, but in discussing the Committee itself, he did not hold back biting remarks about its leaders' overblown ambitions. Writing about his work in the Office of Information and Propaganda, Moczarski stressed the leftist views of the information department workers and described the atmosphere of suspicion about its workers, which was spread by rightist groups and which culminated in the tragedies of Jerzy Makowiecki's and Ludwik Widerszal's murders. The tone of his statements is subjective and emotional, but his opinions about the actions and ambitions of the right, which he especially disliked, are exceptionally sarcastic:

The National Party, as it tries to maintain its position of the sole representative of national movements in the Council of National Unity, has slalomed quite skilfully and agreed to a number of concessions, anything not to be thrown out of the saddle, to hold on to the positions of 'directors,' 'provincial governors,' 'ministers' in the London government, so long as they could protect the interests of their world of capital, clergy, landowners and bourgeoisie, to uphold the principles of pre-war structures in the life of Poland.⁶²

Moczarski's temperament and sharp tongue are clearest when he describes the people of the National Armed Forces and their most radical faction tied to the *Szaniec* publication. "They are pure fascists, who have grown up on capitalist-bourgeois soil. I wrote reports about this for my bosses. This is how all of the Office of Information and Propaganda thought and reported."⁶³

The dozen or so pages devoted to Moczarski's work in the information department of the Office of Information and Propaganda is a tangle of pseudonyms and events that require close familiarity with the underground, with all its political divisions, specifics of individual groups and leaders' ambitions. Moczarski, the experienced conspirator that he was, disclosed the pseudonyms of only those

61 AIPN, BU XI/40, B. 13.

62 AIPN, BU XI/40, B. 13.

63 AIPN, BU XI/40, B. 14.

people he knew to be dead or arrested or abroad. He was careful not to write anything that could harm anyone. In his opinion, the time of the Warsaw Uprising represented the ultimate downfall of the Underground State. He wrote about his appointment to head the Office of Information and Propaganda:

[Okulicki] 'Niedźwiadek', whom I saw for the first time then, appointed me, a brand-new lieutenant, to head Section VI (Office of Information and Propaganda) to succeed a highly trained colonel, Rzepecki... After a while I learned the reason for my advancement in the Home Army. The general staff were totally disorganised then... and 'Niedźwiadek', who had a handful of people and a million zlotys around, instantly named me head of Section VI... There were almost no newspapers then. The people and organisations were licking their wounds after the uprising. Hence a feeble little rivulet of reports from the countryside, from the district Offices of Information and Propaganda. Hence my information and political activities were almost non-existent, I don't know whether I wrote anything more than two analyses of the political situation and dozens of minor reports for 'Niedźwiadek.'⁶⁴

He similarly made light of the actions of the Armed Forces Delegation. He criticised Rzepecki for lacking a vision to organise the underground, unsteadiness and constant changes of plans. The Delegate's Office was a "jelly-like body, members of its staff having ill-defined responsibilities, imprecise ideological direction, lacking cohesiveness or influence on the grassroots which carried on as they wished." At times, he expressed personal dislikes and prejudices against people he believed to be rightists. For instance, he reproached Colonel Mazurkiewicz for being too friendly with the nationalist Bolesław Piasecki. He spoke negatively about all the people around Mazurkiewicz. He labelled Colonel Antoni Sanojca, one of Rzepecki's closest associates, who had been arrested with him in November 1945, a rightist, but "at least a moderate one." Moczarski must have felt like the ultimate outsider in the professional military circles, and now he was going all out. "Knowing my temperament and firm democratic views, Rzepecki forbade me to contact directly not only [Mazurkiewicz], but also the other Regional Commanders and all politicians."⁶⁵

Was Moczarski's testimony disloyal to his underground associates? With sophisticated investigation methods, it was impossible to avoid testifying and few of those who were interrogated were able to resist the investigators. Rafał Wnuk, a historian of the Polish underground under the Soviet occupation up to 1941, remarks on the NKVD's extraordinary effectiveness in extracting confessions. General Marian Januszajtis, an early leader of the Lvov underground, was not

64 AIPN, BU XI/40, B. 2–8.

65 AIPN, BU XI/40, B. 18–20.

tortured but only interrogated for many hours at a time. He was summoned to see NKVD chief Lavrentii Beria at least once a month for “conferences” with other Soviet VIPs and military men. “Beria’s skilful feeding of General Januszajtis’s ego made him take on the role of advisor to the occupiers. . . . The Pole was convinced that he had an advantage over the Soviets and failed to notice that he was being ‘softened’ step by step as he supplied them with new analyses and information,” writes Wnuk.⁶⁶ General Leopold Okulicki also discounted the NKVD, when after being arrested in Lvov in 1941, he sketched out the members of the High Command of the Armed Resistance of the Home Army operating during the German occupation. The Russians would find this information useful a few years later.

There was no strategy a prisoner could plan that stood a chance of succeeding when he came in contact with the Soviet interrogators’ methods and goals. Most likely, only a total refusal to testify would give him a chance of remaining uncompromised. However, very few opted for it. The story of one of the political prisoners (who I introduce as M.P.) illustrates how inmates’ testimony could be useful to the Security Office. In 1946–47, this partisan of the National Military Organisation operated as a messenger between Krakow and the western occupation zones of Germany, where he was in touch with prominent activists of the National Party. He transported people, money and instructions and was widely trusted. He was known as a radical anti-Communist and a tough man. He attended many meetings. When in 1947 he was arrested by the Security Office and tortured, he cracked and talked. Other arrests followed, including Adam Doboszyński, a radical nationalist activist who had entered Poland illegally. He planned to meet with the people of the National Democratic underground and to transform the armed conspiracy into a civilian one with highly secretive cells. M.P. was his guide in Poland. Doboszyński was sentenced to death in a highly publicised trial and executed. M.P. himself was also given the death sentence, but since he was a valuable cell agent, he was not executed. He reported on many of his cellmates and described the operation of the communications routes with Poland, exposing many colleagues.⁶⁷ This is an extreme example, of course. However, is it possible that the Security Office used all the facts, names and opinions about people whose names appeared in Moczarski’s testimony, even though he was very cautious?

66 Rafał Wnuk, *Za pierwszego Sowietą* (Warsaw, 2007), 39.

67 Andrzej Friszke, “Tajni współpracownicy UB/SB,” in: *Naznaczeni i napiętnowani. O wykluczeniu politycznym*, ed. Maria Jarosz (Warsaw, 2008), 101–2.

No one was arrested or convicted because of Moczarski, but we can presume that the fact that he testified at all motivated the secret police to use Moczarski as a witness in the trials being prepared. Writing about the connections with the Committee of Pro-Independence Organisations, he mentioned the rumours that had been circulating underground about Colonel Waclaw Lipiński's alleged collaboration with the Gestapo. These suspicions stemmed from the fact that Lipiński had been arrested and then released by the Gestapo. It was indeed been Moczarski who, on behalf of the Office of Information and Propaganda, was to verify the rumours about the colonel's betrayal. At that time, he reported to Colonel Rzepecki in detail about removing Lipiński from his work for the Committee and his departure from Warsaw. The secret police were clearly counting on Moczarski to serve as a useful witness for the prosecution.

Lipiński's trial opened on 3 December 1947 in Warsaw. "Sanacja–National Democratic mercenary gang of spies and terrorists in court" was one of the more telling headlines, which conveys the impact of the propaganda campaign on the defendants. Moczarski did indeed testify about Lipiński's reported collaboration with the Gestapo. His answer to the question about the colonel's loyalty to the underground left no doubt: "It seems to me that he was trying to save himself. As they say, he was fibbing the Germans, I saw no visible outcomes of his alleged negotiations As for his attitude towards the German authorities, I had no reservations about Lipiński's opinions." The Security Office must have been disappointed, but the regime's papers skewed the meaning of his testimony anyway. "Moczarski implied Lipiński's disloyalty vis-à-vis the underground," reported *Życie Warszawy* daily.⁶⁸

A few months later, in February 1948, began the trial of the post-war commander of the National Armed Forces, Stanisław Kasznica, and his people. Moczarski served as a witness then, too. He did not know the defendants and did not testify against them, but only talked about his June 1944 investigation confirming, in accordance with the widespread belief inside the Office of Information and Propaganda, that "hidden National Armed Forces groups" were responsible for murdering Makowiecki and Widerszal. He sketched out the situation in the underground, talked about the national Armed Forces intelligence cells, for whom "everyone who stood to the left of the National Armed Forces was called the same: Communists," spying on the underground. He also testified about some National Armed Forces units' collaboration with the Germans during

68 Marek Gałęzowski, *Wzór piłsudczyka. Waclaw Lipiński 1896–1949. Żołnierz, historyk, działacz polityczny* (Warsaw, 2001), 299–300.

the occupation and gave the well-known example of the Holy Cross Mountains Brigade, which, as it fled from the Red Army in spring 1945, retreated alongside the Wehrmacht through Silesia to the Czech lands. The Home Army command knew about the National Armed Forces' collaboration with the Germans from intelligence reports and informed the government in exile about it, which considered it treason.⁶⁹

Moczarski testified about what he knew and followed his conscience, perhaps hoping that the old crime would be cleared up, or at least publicly condemned. However, his testimony served primarily as a trump card for Communist propaganda in its mission to disgust people with the underground as a whole. In his more than three years of isolation in prison, Moczarski himself likely did not fully realise the scale of the rising terror, under which the old political divisions became irrelevant.

In late 1947, several thousand political prisoners were released following an amnesty, but not Moczarski. The court cut his sentence by half. Bierut did not keep his word to Chajń, who in his interview with Teresa Torańska said that he likely trusted the comrades from "security" more.⁷⁰ Now Moczarski would remain in jail until August 1950. However, he was not transferred back to Rawicz prison. He stayed in Rakowiecka Street Prison in Warsaw, where he was soon placed in an interrogation cell. His fate in prison was influenced by the mounting terror outside the prison gates. People who had been associated with Moczarski in the wartime underground were among the recently arrested and their testimony led to new charges against him.

In the first post-war years the government directed its power against the pro-sovereignty underground and the legal political opposition. Moczarski's involvement in fighting the Germans was marginal in his 1945 investigation, as the secret police was interested neither in his work for the Office of Information and Propaganda nor his role in the Underground Polish Army.

By 1948 the opposition had been pacified and the armed underground was virtually non-existent, but growing numbers of potential opponents of the regime were being arrested. Home Army fighters formed the largest share of political prisoners. Soon, dozens of people who had worked in the underground police units during the war—State Security Corps, Underground Polish Army, Internal Affairs Department of the Government Delegate's Office and the Underground State's counterintelligence were imprisoned. Judges and military prosecutors of

69 *Życie Warszawy*, 21 Feb. 1948.

70 Torańska, *Oni*, 326.

the underground Civilian and Military Special Courts were also captured. In October 1948 the secret police arrested the commander of the underground Warsaw police, Bolesław Kontrym "Żmudzin." Włodzimierz Lechowicz, whose ambiguous role in the underground was described earlier, was also under arrest. In November, Eustachy Krak, head of the Warsaw section of the Directorate of Underground Resistance went to jail in Warsaw's Mokotów district, and in the spring of 1949 the secret police arrested Alfred Kurczewski, who with Moczarski had taken part in breaking out prisoners from the Jana Bożego hospital in 1944. In the following months they all became protagonists in the same tragedy.

Chapter Six: The Investigation from Hell

Over the course of several days in December 1956, large crowds of spectators attended trials before the Provincial Court in Warsaw. Freedom briefly came to Poland after the October political breakthrough. Władysław Gomułka, who had himself only recently been released from prison, was appointed first secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party and other leaders of the Stalin era were also replaced. This was the mood at the rehabilitation trial of three leaders of the Warsaw section of the Directorate of Underground Resistance sentenced by a Stalinist court in 1952, Kazimierz Moczarski, Eustachy Krak and Alfred Kurczewski. The fourth defendant, Adam Dobrowolski, after living through an investigation and several years in confinement, was in hospital in grave condition and could not appear. Their trial became the most outspoken condemnation of the Stalinist judicial system, as the investigation, the prosecutors and the courts were branded for their dishonesty and misconduct. The famous French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, travelling to Moscow and Warsaw in 1956, was a courtroom observer. His photo essays of the trial would take up two columns of the January 1957 issue of the British monthly *Picture Post*. A commentary whose optimism reflected the hopes of that era accompanied the photographs.

From 1939 to 1945 the Poles went underground to fight the Nazis. When their country fell into Stalin's grip some of them, refusing to compromise with tyranny, fought the Communists, too. Those who did arrested, tortured and condemned. However, now the hope of a new freedom is dawning in Poland. Their leader, Gomułka, has found a compromise with the Soviet Union. And a series of special trials is rehabilitating the former 'traitor'.¹

The rehabilitation trial of the leaders of the Directorate of Underground Resistance was held after many months of battle waged by the lawyers Aniela Steinsbergowa and Władysław Winawer to restore the defendants' good name. Even though all of them went free following the amnesty of 1956, the four-year-old indictment, which brought them into disrepute, remained in force. It was read out loud in its entirety on the opening day of the trial. "The document which in 1952 filled us with terror now appeared both tragic and grotesque," Steinsbergowa wrote in her memoir.²

1 *Picture Post*, January 6, 1957.

2 Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z lawy*, 161.

The charges of 1952 were rooted in the idea generated by the Communists that the Home Army, the Government Delegate's Office and the Polish government in exile had had no intention of fighting the Germans, but instead focused the Underground State on preparing an administrative and police apparatus to restore "reactionary" power after the war. According to this logic, the wartime underground movement not only failed to direct its energies at fighting the Germans but actually cooperated with the Gestapo to destroy the Polish Workers' Party and the People's Guard, who alone fought for liberation. As arrests multiplied across the country, the totality of state propaganda was enlisted to present this version of Poland's most recent history.

The regime treated all sections of the Home Army and the Government Delegate's Office charged with security as criminal organisations. A decree of August 1944 about "sentences for Fascist criminals and traitors of the Polish nation" was used to discredit them publicly, to sentence those who had worked underground on assuring public order.

Kazimierz Moczarski, listed third in the indictment, spoke first during the December trial. He began:

I have never confessed, nor will I ever confess, to having committed the crimes I have been charged with. They marked my forehead with the sign of the Gestapo. I was imprisoned together with a Gestapo man to defame me and the entire Home Army movement and, when I protested, I was told that surely I was together with my Gestapo brothers, since I murdered and paralyzed the workers' movement during the occupation just like the Gestapo did.³

The other defendants and witnesses spoke next. Observers learned in the course of the trial about the circumstances of their arrests, details of their brutal investigation and trial methods characteristic of this time of unlawfulness.

When he was summoned for yet another interrogation on 30 November 1948, Moczarski had less than two years left of his first sentence. Waiting for him were Deputy Minister of Public Security Roman Romkowski and the director of its investigations department, Colonel Józef Różański. They demanded that he admit to having issued death sentences to Communist activists as an employee of the Warsaw section of the Directorate of Underground Resistance. Romkowski made it perfectly clear to him how this investigation was going to go. According to Moczarski, he said: "You, Mr. Moczarski, will go down in any event because you know very well that the court exists to serve us and that we are handing

3 AIPN GK 317/700, B. 183.

you over to it regardless of whether you're guilty or not.”⁴ Róžański echoed his words: “We can prove, with documents, that you were a Gestapo agent, since we have the originals of the right, clean documents, original stamps, seals and so on, and we are also holding the kind of former Gestapo guys who will now be happy to sign the kind of Gestapo agent's i.d. card we produce [for you].”⁵ They offered to trade his early release for cooperation. “In case of resistance, there will be the investigation from hell.”

Of course, Moczarski denied everything, at first thinking that their conversation was a gruesome joke, and later that he had been captured by madmen. He did not know the names that were mentioned during the interrogation and did not understand what this bizarre story was all about: having spent several uninterrupted years in prison, he did not understand that the political police were now in charge of the terrorised country.

In 1948 persecution were intensifying, so that now it targeted not only political adversaries, pro-independence underground veterans, but also government insiders. For some time now, Władysław Gomułka, suspected by Moscow of thinking too independently, was falling out of favour. He was charged with “rightist-nationalist deviations” and eventually arrested in August 1951. A group of people the Kremlin trusted who obediently followed its orders took over. Prominent among them were Bolesław Bierut, Jakub Berman and Hilary Minc.

Beginning in the autumn of 1948, a special group within the Ministry of Public Security initially headed by Józef Róžański, a trusted NKVD and Ministry of Public Security functionary, was assigned the investigations of unreliable members of the Communist establishment. Its staff would grow, and within just over a year it would become a Special Bureau, then the Tenth Department, of the Ministry of Public Security. A load of the pre-war Ministry of Military Affairs documents had been found on a train siding in Gdańsk, abandoned by the Germans, and they served as the pretext for the purge. They included counterintelligence, Division Two, documents which included the names of people who now held important posts in the governing party and state. The discovery gave birth to an imagined anti-Communist plot by “*Sanacja's* agents,” allegedly concocted before 1939 and continued throughout the war and after.⁶

Włodzimierz Lechowicz was one of the suspects. He was arrested in October 1948, despite the fact that he was a minister and a Sejm deputy. Tortured from

4 AIPN GK 317/700, B. 192.

5 AIPN, GK 317/700, B. 152.

6 Spalek, *Komuniści przeciw komunistom*, 52–8.

the very beginning of the investigation, he confessed to having known Moczarski before the war and to having been hired by the Directorate of Underground Resistance. His testimony was factual and implicated no one, but for the Security Office functionaries the fact that the two men had worked together was in itself sufficient to put Moczarski's name on their list of alleged anti-Communist conspirators⁷ and to begin a new investigation of Moczarski. The investigation began with his work for the Directorate of Underground Resistance. The blackmailers and informers whom he had investigated during the war had by now risen in the ranks of the Polish Workers' Party and People's Guard. During one of the interrogations, he was shown a photograph of an alleged Union of Youth Struggle (Związek Walki Młodych, ZWM) activist, whom he recognised as Jan Łakiński, a *szmalcownik* who had helped the Germans track down a bunker in which a group of Jews were hiding, but did not admit to it after the war. Those of the group killed by the Germans included the historian Emanuel Ringelblum. The Ministry of Public Security functionaries accused Moczarski of sentencing Stanisława Kozyra, an alleged Soviet intelligence agent. In fact, Kozyra had been a Gestapo agent, who had been executed in May 1944 by Directorate of Underground Resistance fighters.⁸

In late 1948, at the beginning of the investigation, Moczarski's cell mate who was a secret police agent reported on his low morale: "M. declared that he would not bear the 'torture' of the investigation and will sign everything they ask for or commit suicide. He asked the others in the cell to remember this instant as the whole Home Army leadership would probably be accused of collaborating with the Gestapo."⁹ At the time he was in cell no. 3 of the Eleventh Pavilion of the Rakowiecka Street prison. If the Security Office were counting on crushing the prisoner's resistance, they would soon find out that the agent's report had nothing to do with the true state of Moczarski's mind.

In an era when beatings during interrogations were an everyday practice, neither official Ministry of Public Security documents nor surviving interrogation transcripts divulge any of the torture or threats the prisoners were subjected to. Moczarski was tortured during an interrogation in January. Witnessing this was Czesław Śmieciński, his cell mate since November. Śmieciński had fought in the Home Army and was arrested in 1948 but never indicted. He spent sixteen months in the Rakowiecka Street prison. He would serve as a witness in

7 AIPN, 0298/365, Vol. 2, B. 194.

8 AIPN, 0330/92, Vol. 4, k. 110–116.

9 AIPN, 0330/92, Vol. 1, B. 189–190.

Moczarski's rehabilitation trial, testifying about the harassment of political prisoners, which included not being given water and soap to wash, having the panes taken out of their cell windows in winter and being made to stand naked even in the freezing cold. Moczarski was unable to walk on his own after being interrogated, and the screws would hurl him into the cell like a sack of straw. His fingers were crushed, his hands burned and his face covered in bulges. To reduce his pain a little, Śmieciński would secretly apply water compresses. He remembered that one Sunday Róžański walked into their cell. He began by talking to Moczarski calmly but then, out of the blue, kicked him with such force that he knocked him down. He announced that this would be their last polite conversation.¹⁰

January 1949 to mid-1951 was the time of the harshest interrogations for Moczarski. The sessions that included torture alternated with periods of relative calm, following the rhythm of the cases in which Moczarski was being implicated. He said during his rehabilitation trial:

It wasn't ordinary policemen who jumped on us, furious and irritated. It took a champ to create an apparatus that was so well synchronised and well trained in the torturer's craft, from the colonel or even general to an ordinary corridor guard. What an artist in his craft was Colonel Józef Dusza: he could effortlessly strike the root of a person's nose with his rubber stick without breaking any bones.¹¹

Moczarski was cut off from all news about his family, deprived of books and walks and subjected to additional psychological pressure. He recalled how during an interrogation the very same Colonel Dusza wrote "gestapo" on his forehead and forbade Moczarski to wipe it off. In March 1949, Zofia Moczarska was interned in Rakowiecka Street prison. Her indictment concerned her wartime work for the Directorate of Underground Resistance, she was told, and she was also being arrested in connection with her husband's investigation. He only learned about her arrest during one of his interrogations. "As I lay on the concrete floor, having been beaten and roughed-up, semi-conscious, Róžański came up and showed me my wife's phony death certificate," he told the court during his rehabilitation trial.¹² Shortly after realise he talked to the writer Tadeusz Konwicki, and after years Konwicki included it in a novel:

10 AIPN GK 317/700, B. 189.

11 Letter from K. Moczarski to W. Winawer, May 1956, Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

12 AIPN, GK 317/700, B. 92.

“You see, they made a certain mistake,” he said, speaking unhurriedly. “They wanted to break my spirit and so they told me that my wife and daughter were both dead. Meanwhile, I realized that now I was all alone, no longer responsible for anyone else, I couldn’t jeopardize or burden anyone, I was utterly alone and therefore I was a free man. From that moment on, they didn’t stand a chance with me. I took it all the best I could. I was able to stand up to everything, but in other psychological circumstances I might not have been able to.” I was grateful to him for that human, wise, and beautiful element in his interpretation of his own vile and inhuman fate. And in his words I could also detect a certain forgiveness for my transgressions, my betrayals, my mortal sins.¹³

After the war, Konwicki was one of the leading advocates of socialist realism in literature. However, in mid-1950s he became disillusioned with the communist regime in Poland. His voice in this novel could be interpreted as a reflection of all the remorse felt by Poles who previously stood on the regime side when Moczarski was persecuted.

Moczarski was moved many times during the two-and-a-half-year investigation. He never knew whom he would find inside his newest residence. One day his cell mates turned out to be Germans charged with war crimes. One of them was a pre-war policeman from Hannover, who had joined the SS during the war. The other one’s name filled Moczarski with dread. SS General Jürgen Stroop had been posted to Warsaw from 19 April to 16 May 1943 to oversee the pacification of the ghetto uprising and the deportations of the surviving Jews to the Treblinka extermination camp. He was on trial for his subordinates’ ruthlessness and for the deaths of thousands of Jewish fighters and other inhabitants of the ghetto. The Polish underground had wanted to assassinate him, and Moczarski had taken part in planning the operation as a researcher of Stroop’s schedule and habits. However, the assassination was never attempted since Stroop left Warsaw. He was captured by the Americans in 1945, and two years later a US war tribunal in Dachau sentenced him to death for another crime, issuing an order to execute imprisoned Allied paratroopers. He was not executed then, however, so that he could stand trial in Poland. He awaited his trial for the crimes committed against the Polish and Jewish populations in a cell in the Rakowiecka Street prison.

The Germans and the officer of the underground who had fought for independence would spend 255 days together in a small cell, according to Moczarski from 2 March to 11 November 1949. Stroop took advantage of the special rights

13 Tadeusz Konwicki, *Moonrise, Moonset*, (New York, 1987), 103–4.

he was guaranteed as an extradited prisoner who was allowed to appeal to international opinion; he was able to receive letters and parcels from his family and have regular walks. The men did not talk about their trials, but they did talk to escape from the reality of prison. Their situation was extreme, they were unimaginably close for a sufficiently long time to get to know each other well and to tell each other their entire lives. However, it was Moczarski who was inquisitive and decided: "Since I am here together with war criminals, I'll get to know them, I'll dissect their lives and their personalities." It was Stroop, of course, who fascinated him:

I heard about Germans towns, valleys, and forests. I became familiar with their families and individuals. I came to know the smell of hallways and kitchens, dining rooms and drawing rooms, the scent of gardens, the stench of battle, a soldier's longing for the Heimat. As Stroop the Nazi retraced his life, I a former Home Army soldier, moved beside him, with him, yet against him.¹⁴

As they spent time in their cell together, Moczarski knew nothing about what the future would bring. He could not know that he still had years of life in prison and months in isolation, which would give him the opportunity to spend hours thinking about and memorising every last detail of his encounter with Stroop, that he would be released and that this encounter would give him the background to the most important work of his life, *Conversations with an Executioner*.

14 Kazimierz Moczarski, *Conversations with an Executioners* (Englewood Cliffs, 1981), 5.



Jürgen Stroop in a courtroom in Warsaw, July 1951. Photogr. Archive of Elżbieta Moczarska / FOTONOVA.

In 1951, Moczarski's case was shifted from the war context into the regime's fight against the "rightist-nationalist" deviation inside the Polish Workers' Party. The Tenth Department of the Ministry of Public Security assigned the key role in the conspiracy to the imprisoned Władysław Gomułka and one of his closest partners, Marian Spychalski. To discredit them, the investigators searched for connections to the Home Army. Włodzimierz Lechowicz and a group of his wartime colleagues from the People's Guard were to serve as the prosecution's principal witnesses. Lieutenant Colonel Józef Światło, deputy head of the Tenth Department who defected to the West in 1953, described the gist of the Lechowicz case:

In 1948, Włodzimierz Lechowicz is arrested and a year later Alfred Jaroszewicz. Arresting them is a special cell of the Ministry of [Public] Security, which will later be transformed into the tenth department. They are accused of having been agents of the pre-war Second Department [of the Polish General Staff] (Polish counterintelligence) and that as such they slipped into the People's Guard intelligence and collaborated with the Gestapo and murdered Communists as agents of the Second Department in the [National Security Corps] and 'Start' Lechowicz, Jaroszewicz and the others do not plead guilty to the crimes they are charged with. They did not implicate Spychalski or Gomułka The defendants did state that they worked in the [National Security Corps] and 'Start,' that they were in the pre-war Second Department, but that they were operating inside them as Soviet agents.¹⁵

Gomułka's and Spychalski's attempts to contact Colonel Rzepecki in the summer of 1945 via Lechowicz surfaced in the investigation in this context. The Tenth Department functionaries focused on a July 1945 memorandum from Lechowicz, Moczarski and Kapitanian to Rzepecki. Gomułka would remember years later that "the security organs made the memorandum into a platform of talks I intended to have with Rzepecki. We allegedly wanted to develop a plan together to bring underground people into the state apparatus, to let anti-Communist elements take over."¹⁶ Moczarski was interrogated for hours about his connections to the jailed Communists. Moczarski testified during his rehabilitation trial:

As head of the Office of Information and Propaganda, I was to have information about them and to become a future witness for the prosecution in their trials, and because I was the best-informed, the most trustworthy witness. When they told me that the Ministry of Public Security had already hit the [National Armed Forces], the National Party, the Labour Party, [the Polish Socialist Party-Freedom, Equality, Independence

15 Zbigniew Błażyński, *Mówi Józef Światło* (London, 1986), 136.

16 Ryszard Strzelecki-Gomułka and Eleonora Salwa-Syzdek, *Między realizmem a utopią. Władysław Gomułka we wspomnieniach syna* (Warsaw, 2003), 69.

(Polska Partia Socjalistyczna-Wolność, Równość, Niepodległość PPS-WRN) and the Home Army and Mikołajczyk, and would now be dealing with its own comrades, I thought that the Polish State is finished and that all that is left is some horrific criminal gang.¹⁷

It is important to remember that the investigation did not aim to bring to light actual crimes, but only to help to construct a Stalinist-style show trial. Self-denunciations and fellow defendants' testimony extracted with torture provided sufficient evidence. Tomasz Łabuszewski described this:

Political show trials in which the credibility of the charges was absolutely secondary was the rule at this time. What counted the most was to provide support for a notion that had been established ahead of time and the defendants' ability to confirm even the wildest fantasies and claptrap produced by the leadership of the Polish United Workers' Party, the Ministry of Public Security or the [Main Information Office, Główny Zarząd Informacji]. Often, the whole indictment was erected on total fiction, for which the sole evidence was the testimony of the defendants presented under the influence of so-called physical and psychological pressure, so typical of the Stalinist period.¹⁸

In Moczarski's trial, the prosecution used tested methods. A document illustrating this, to be found in the Institute of National Remembrance archive, was written by prosecution officer Stanisław Dereń. He began working for the Security Office in 1948 as a seventeen-year-old, at first as a guard in Jarosław. He advanced precipitously, as in 1949 he was already an employee of the Investigations Department of the Ministry of Public Security in Warsaw. He took part in Moczarski's interrogations, using not only a list of questions he compiled in accordance with his supervisors' suggestions but also a list of anticipated answers. Thus, Moczarski allegedly "told him about the wartime activities of the [National Security Corps] and [Main Commission of Civil Warfare] organisations," "describing the anti-Communist activity of these organisations, expose Moczarski's organisational position and his familiarity with other leading activists of the [National Security Corps] and [Main Commission of Civil Warfare]." He expected Moczarski's testimony to burden Alfred Kurczewski, "enhancing his exceptionally hostile attitude to leftist groups when he served as the commander of the [Assault Storm Battalion of the National Security Corps] and head of Department Three of the

17 AIPN, GK 317/700, B. 94.

18 Tomasz Łabuszewski, "Sprawa 'Radosława' – w kręgu urojonej konspiracji," in: *Walka o pamięć. Władze i społeczeństwo wobec Powstania Warszawskiego 1944-1989*, ed. Agnieszka Panecka (Warsaw, 2008), 91–106.

[Main Commission of Civil Warfare] charged with observation and liquidation. That in that position he used his group to liquidate Communist activists.”¹⁹

The prisoners' statements did not meet expectations and setting them up against each other also did not work, even though Kurczewski, broken by torture, confessed to having executed Communists. Moczarski bravely rejected claims that he had tried to destroy leftist activists. “At this stage of the investigation, Moczarski is not giving us explanations in accordance with the factual state, which could be used as materials to incriminate Kurczewski, Alfred,” wrote director of the Ministry of Public Security's Tenth Department, Colonel Anatol Fejgin, in an internal memorandum to the head of the Investigations Department, Adam Humer.

In fact, Moczarski's refusal to give false testimony made it impossible to stage a public trial of the entire leadership of the Warsaw branch of the Directorate of Underground Resistance. Such a trial would have been based on meticulous scripting that would absolutely require the defendant's public confession implicating his fellow defendants. The show trial of the underground police, the Agency of the Investigations Office [Ekspozytura Urzędu Śledczego of the National Security Corps], “Start,” did adhere to this prototype. During the war, it was charged with fighting common criminals, collaborators and blackmailers. Like the Directorate of Underground Resistance, “Start” conducted investigations and collected evidence of crimes, and if a sentence was issued by the judges of a Civilian Special Court, it oversaw its execution. Arrests of people affiliated with “Start” began in 1948. Some of the defendants did not resist torture and in their confessions attributed tasks to the underground security organisations it did not actually have and confessed to crimes they had not committed. Their testimony about their people allegedly informing the Gestapo about Communist activists and the underground justice system issuing death sentences for them became a part of the evidence used against many individuals. The Communist newspapers reported on the degenerate and premeditated criminals from the National Security Corps, who spied on and murdered Polish Workers' Party activists. Bronisław Chajęcki, who had organised and led the Warsaw section of the National Security Corps, was labelled a “bloodthirsty Fascist villain obsessed with hatred for all that was progressive.” Journalists were admitted to the trial of the “Start” leadership in December 1951, and they reported on it in accordance with the propaganda guidelines. The daily *Życie Warszawy* wrote after the trial that it proved that not only individuals had collaborated with the

19 AIPN, 0251/70 mf 25/3–13, B. 60.

Germans but also that the “leaderships of the entire bourgeois underground, the [National Armed Forces], but also the [Polish Socialist Party-Freedom, Equality, Independence] counterintelligence, the [Main Commission of Civil Warfare] and the [Agency of Investigations Office] organisations subordinated to the Government Delegate’s Office, and, finally, the central intelligence of the London Government Delegate’s Office itself.”²⁰

The trial of the Warsaw Directorate of Underground Resistance leaders, held in the Rakowiecka Street prison, was closed. In May 1952, Colonel Anatol Fejgin signed the indictments of Kazimierz Moczarski, Eustachy Krak, Alfred Kurczewski and Adam Dobrowolski. The trial was held in the main building, in a common room bedecked, ironically, with the portraits of nineteenth-century freedom fighters Tadeusz Kościuszko and Kazimierz Pułaski and the national poet Adam Mickiewicz. Marian Stępczyński of the so-called Clandestine Section of the Warsaw Province Court was the judge, a reliable judge. The audience was solely made up of Ministry of Public Security functionaries, the same ones who had interrogated and mistreated the prisoners.²¹

The trial began on 6 November 1952 and lasted several days. Years later, on the eve of the political thaw of 1956, Moczarski wrote a letter to his lawyer Władysław Winawer, telling him about the absence of a real defence, the violations of all court procedures and the atmosphere of terror in the pseudo-courtroom:

Throughout the proceedings, Kaskiewicz Jerzy was present, and Lieutenant Colonel Dusza, Lieutenant Adamuszek, Captain Czyż, while an inspection officer whom the prisoners called “Spaniard” or “Fatty” came frequently. Nowogródzki was my defence lawyer. I did not confess to the charges in the indictment at any point in the trial and argued that I had never kept leftist activists under surveillance and had never talked about the activities of the people of the anti-Fascist front. I also repeated my request to include evidence that had been presented earlier in writing to the Court. The court did not take into account any of my additional evidence, which I believed could have helped to clarify the case objectively. I also explained that I had been ill-treated during the investigation but, because the investigating security functionaries were present in the room in which the trial was being held, I gave no details of the physical and mental pressure they exerted on me, and I was afraid of their revenge. However, the court asked me no questions about my ill-treatment during the investigation and omitted this aspect altogether. Neither I nor my defence attorney nor the other defendants and their defence lawyers were given copies of the indictment at any point in the trial. The chairman of the

20 Andrzej Krzysztof Kunert, *Słownik biograficzny konspiracji warszawskiej 1939–1945*, Vol. 2 (Warsaw, 1987), 93–5; Spalek, *Komuniści przeciw komunistom*, 159–66.

21 AIPN, GK 317/700, B. 101.

team of judges did not acknowledge my two requests, nor the request for paper and a pencil to allow me to take notes, justifying it with prison regulations.²²

Moczarski's three co-defendants were used as the main prosecution witnesses in his trial. During their first interrogations, Krak, Dobrowolski and Kurczewski denied the charges against him, but after being tortured they began to accuse themselves and each other. Beginning in October 1943, Eustachy Krak had served as the Directorate of Underground Resistance plenipotentiary for Warsaw region, while the prominent Peasant Party activist Stefan Korboński was the Directorate of Underground Resistance national plenipotentiary. Krak testified that it was Korboński who had told him that the Directorate of Underground Resistance was to eliminate not only Nazi collaborators but also Communists. According to Krak's testimony, Moczarski collected evidence to charge the Communists and petitioned the prosecutor of the Civilian Special Court to investigate them. Alfred Kurczewski subsequently confirmed to the court that about half of all the death sentences were carried out on Communists. The next part of the show trial was Kurczewski's testimony that Moczarski's father had been a "big landowner" and had died during the October Revolution. Therefore, Moczarski's "criminal activity" was class-based, stemming from his yearning for personal revenge. Dobrowolski, too, confirmed in his testimony that the Directorate of Underground Resistance had fought Communists.

As the trial went on, more witnesses who had been tortured followed the script. Witold Pajor, head of "Start," who had been sentenced to death and then pardoned, testified that Moczarski had tracked Communists, which he knew from Lechowicz. Another witness, Stanisław Nienałtowski, who had also been sentenced to death and pardoned, said that Moczarski had ordered him to liquidate two Communists, Zofia Praussowa and Teofil Wojeński. In fact, Wojeński, actually a member of the Democratic Party, had survived the war, while Praussowa, a Polish Socialist Party activist who had been closely affiliated with Józef Piłsudski and served as a deputy to the Sejm before the war, had been arrested by the Germans in 1941 and died in Auschwitz.

Another witness, Jan Zborowski, who had worked for the Government Delegate's Office during the war, testified that Moczarski had given him a list of names and asked his help in investigating them. According to Zborowski, all were members of the Polish Workers' Party. Zborowski also offered his interpretation of the deaths of Widerszal and Makowiecki, testifying that they had been killed in accordance with Home Army counterintelligence instructions for

22 AIPN, GK 317/700, B. 69–70.

speaking up in favour of cooperation with the Soviet Union. Now, according to the persecution's twisted logic, Moczarski was involved in murdering his friends.

Towards the end of the trial, the question of Moczarski's work for Poland's pre-war intelligence during his stay in France in 1938 came up. Accusing him of concealing it, the prosecutor brought in two witnesses, Tadeusz Nowiński and Mieczysław Kurczewski. However, as they took the stand, it became obvious that they had never met Moczarski.

Despite the trial's increasingly obvious phoniness, Moczarski fought until the bitter end. He emphasised that in the Jan Boży (John of God) Hospital rescue operation in which he had taken part, all eighteen people who were liberated, including five People's Army fighters, were given a place to stay and false documents, regardless of their convictions. He protested the suggestion that he had been involved in murdering Widerszal and Makowiecki, affirming that he himself had conducted the investigation of the murders and hit upon the perpetrators. Moczarski explained that it had been Włodzimierz Lechowicz who had engaged him for the Directorate of Underground Resistance and given him instructions, and that he had never heard in its meetings that the Directorate had been created to fight the left. He demanded that Włodzimierz Lechowicz, but also Jan Rzepecki, Aleksander Gieysztor, Jerzy Macierakowski, Roman Szymanko and Helena Kuligowska, be called to testify. The court ignored his requests.²³

A note made by Colonel Fejgin during the trial serves as a further comment on Moczarski's fight:

[Moczarski's] extremely provocative behaviour has fully justified our fears about the stance he would adopt during the trial. The court was repeatedly forced to dismiss his questions and call him to order. He rejected documents which clearly prove his collaboration with the Second Department in French territory. He attempted to undermine all evidence of his criminal activity and the activities of his co-defendants, who in fact confirmed the charges against them, nonchalantly and provocatively.²⁴

In their last word, both Moczarski and Krak asked to be acquitted. Dobrowolski pleaded for a milder sentence, while Kurczewski repented and asked the court to release him. The judgements were harsh: Moczarski and Krak were sentenced to death, Alfred Kurczewski to life in prison and Dobrowolski to fifteen years in prison.

23 AIPN, GK 317/700, B. 75–80.

24 AIPN, 0298/991, B. 38.

In June 1953, the four prisoners were moved from the interrogations wing to a group cell. Only then was Moczarski given pencil and paper. He immediately wrote to Zofia, who was in prison in Inowrocław. Her reply arrived a month later, in the middle of July: "First time in five years, the first written sign that you are alive, the first letters written in your dearest hand, the first sign of your love."²⁵

Moczarski withdrew the power of attorney from the lawyer Henryk Nowogródzki who, against his will, though likely with good intentions, had pleaded for a milder sentence. From now on, Moczarski took up the fight himself not only for his life but to be cleared of all charges, writing lengthy letters to the Supreme Court and the Council of State. He wrote about the abuses and coercion he had been subjected to during the investigation. His forty-two points are simple and factual: the beating of especially sensitive places (base of the nose, chin, shoulder blades) with a rubber stick, the whipping of feet soles with a rubber-tipped whip, the pulling out of hair on temples and nape, the crushing of fingers, the burning of fingers, the forcing to stay awake for several days at a time by slapping the face, which led to hallucinations. Moczarski wrote,

I must state furthermore that I spent six years and three months in a cell without being allowed to walk, that I did not bathe for two years and ten months, that I was in such extreme isolation for about four and a half years that I did not have the least contact with the outside world (no news from my family, no letters, books or newspapers).²⁶

He asked the Supreme Court to overturn his sentence and acquit him. Moczarski's steadfastness in demanding his rights drove the Tenth Department functionaries wild. Even though he was in a post-sentencing prison, Colonel Dusza had Moczarski moved back to the section of the Rakowiecka Street prison operated by the Investigations Department. He would now spend several months in Pavilion A, in a windowless solitary cell.²⁷

At this time, the Ministry of Public Security took an interest in the Directorate of Underground Resistance trial, demanding an explanation of why it had been held behind closed doors. Fejgin's notes landed on Minister Radkiewicz's desk together with Moczarski's grievance to the Supreme Court. Fejgin admitted to the minister in writing that the "investigation methods" had failed and that a public trial may have given Moczarski an opportunity to reveal abuses:

On the basis of observation of Moczarski's behaviour, which featured elements of provocation, the justified concern was voiced that in case of a public trial the above-mentioned

25 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 54.

26 AIPN, GK 317/700, B. 148–150.

27 AIPN, GK 317/700, B. 153–154.

individual would not fail to take advantage of provocative forays in order to undermine the seriousness of the [Directorate's] substantially criminal activities and general anti-Communist activity of the [Government Delegate's] organisations . . . Throughout its course, Moczarski's attitude towards the investigation was invariably negative and rich in a number of provocative forays. He rejected the material evidence both in the form of witness testimony and confrontations, and archival documents as 'fabricated' by the investigative organs.²⁸

In addition, head of the Investigations Section of the Tenth Department, Colonel Józef Dusza, wrote a report about the progress of the investigation:

No coercion was used towards [Moczarski] in the investigation. During the interrogation, Moczarski behaved in a provocative and confrontational way, claiming that the investigation authorities had extracted his confession by force. There was an incident in which Moczarski attempted to hit an investigation officer with a chair. The attempt was averted, and Moczarski was overpowered. He was struck several times for offering resistance during the above-mentioned incident and sent to the dark cell.²⁹

Dusza, one of Moczarski's violent interrogators, had clearly lost his feeling of total impunity.

This startling turn of events over a year after the investigation had ended was likely a harbinger of the impending political thaw. In the spring of 1953, a power struggle took place over Stalin's legacy and eroded the system of terror. After Stalin's death, an announcement by the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs declared the accusations of a group of doctors planning to poison party, government and military officials unjustified; those responsible for producing the false accusations would be held responsible. *Pravda* daily reported on the arrest of the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Investigations Department Mikhail Ryumin. The Central Committee of the CPSU adopted a motion on "Law-breaking by the organ of state security" asserting that party control should be restored over the political police. The events of the following months must have triggered panic in every nook and cranny of the Ministry of Public Security in Warsaw. In June 1953, the head of the security apparatus Lavrentiy Beria was removed from both the party and his position of first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for his "criminal anti-party and anti-state activities." In December, he was sentenced to death and executed.

In the autumn of 1953, the Central Commission of Party Control of the Polish United Workers' Party in Warsaw received a complaint from Halina Siedlik.

28 AIPN, 0298/991, B. 39.

29 AIPN, 0298/991, B. 54.

A Communist who had been arrested in connection with the case of Lechowicz and Jaroszewicz, she had been released from prison in the summer. In her complaint, Siedlik wrote that Różański had beaten and kicked her as she was being interrogated. Changes were inevitable. The words “unacceptable investigation methods” continued to appear in speeches by top party officials, including Bolesław Bierut. Minister of Public Security Stanisław Radkiewicz brought up “the use of disallowed and forbidden methods” at a meeting of the investigations section of the Ministry of Public Security. Still, all these pronouncements were accompanied by the mantra of vigilantly fighting the enemy.³⁰

Things were heating up in connection with the Tenth Department of the Ministry of Public Security, something that its deputy director Lieutenant Colonel Józef Światło fully grasped. He crossed over to West Berlin in December 1953 and surrendered to US authorities. Next autumn, Radio Free Europe began to broadcast a series of his programmes titled “Behind the scenes in the security and party apparatuses,” which all Poland listened to breathlessly. Światło spoke about the circumstances surrounding Moczarski’s shortened sentence, which had been preceded by Moczarski’s statements that were problematic for the authorities. “A meeting was called in Bierut’s office, with Romkowski, Różański, the Prosecutor General Kalinowski and Podlaski, deputy prosecutor general. In order to preempt an appeal, which might expose all the details of the investigation, Moczarski was pardoned and his death sentence was commuted to life in prison.”³¹

Indeed, in the changing political situation, in October 1953 the Supreme Court ruled on the death sentences for Krak and Moczarski. The court stated that the evidence had been gathered properly and that there was no question that the defendants had engaged in criminal activities and, therefore, their sentences were commuted to life in prison. The decision reduced the defendants’ responsibility, presenting them as not having initiated but only executed the policies of the Government Delegate’s Office. Moczarski was informed about the change orally and would only receive the court’s decision in writing a year and a half later.

When Zofia Moczarska was arrested, Kazimierz’s sister, Anna Rothenburg-Rościszewska, began to look after him; she sent him parcels and waited for hours outside the prison gates for news. Shortly before the Supreme Court hearing, she heard that her brother would like Władysław Winawer to represent him. Now Anna would have someone with whom to share her concerns. Janina Szczuka,

30 Andrzej Paczkowski, *Pół wieku dziejów Polski 1939–1989* (Warsaw, 1998), 422.

31 Błażyński, *Mówi Józef Światło*, 220.

Winawer's daughter, remembers her frequent visits to their flat, which her father also used as his office. She remembered her father's decision to take on this client:

Mr Maślanko turned down the offer, so my father took him on. My father took on Moczarski's case without hesitation, even though since before the war he had specialised in civil cases and had never practised criminal law. I have no idea whether they had met earlier, but wartime friendships and connections must have been decisive. We had survived the war in hiding. Henryk Woliński 'Wacław,' head of the Jewish section of the [Office of Information and Propaganda], was a friend, a very close friend of my parents. Moczarski's case became one of the most important ones for my father.³²

He was lucky: had Stalin died a few months later, Moczarski may have been put to death.

Józef Światło exposed the system of repression in his Radio Free Europe programmes, as in Poland the search for scapegoats among security personnel continued. Halina Siedlik's report launched in "the Central Party Control Commission the case of Colonel Józef Róžański, director of the investigations department in the security [office]. Added to the indictment was Luna Brystygierowa, a colleague of Róžański's, director of the Fifth Department in the Ministry of Security," responsible for protecting the parties and social organisations from the influence of 'reactionaries' who also supervised all social and cultural organisations.³³

In March 1954 still, after Światło's defection, but before his radio revelations, the Ministry of Public Security leadership held a meeting of the top staff to discuss law-breaking inside the ministry. Róžański was let go almost immediately. However, it was only after Radio Free Europe began to air his programmes that a real storm exploded inside the ministry. In November 1954, several all-night meetings were held. Minister Radkiewicz arrived at one such meeting with the news about Róžański's arrest.

The Tenth Department was dissolved in late 1954, and the Ministry of Public Security shortly afterward. Adam Humer and Anatol Fejgin lost their jobs, and Róžański and Fejgin were put on trial later in the 1950s. However, Humer would be imprisoned for his Stalinist-era crimes only after the fall of Communism. Both Fejgin and Humer probably blamed Moczarski for their fall, since they continued to construct a "black legend" about him.

Humer was put in the dock in 1995 and confessed to nothing, even as he looked straight in the eyes of his victims, those who were still alive, Maria

32 Author's interview with Janina Szczuka, 2007.

33 Błażyński, *Mówi Józef Światło*, 261.

Hattowska, Barbara Sikorska and Stanisław Skalski, as they testified about his brutal interrogations. While in prison, he agreed to be interviewed by a young journalist, Piotr Lipiński. He said something memorable: “There is outraged writing that a Home Army activist was put in the same cell with a war criminal. However, Moczarski, a journalist, volunteered to be together with Stroop, so that he could write a book. He sat in his cell and occasionally read Stroop’s files in the prison office. We bent over backwards to help him. All the conversations were written down as our people watched.” Lipiński asked for witnesses to confirm these disclosures. Humer’s answer was enigmatic: “There are some, but I don’t want to say who.”³⁴

In the early 1990s, film director Krzysztof Lang planned to make a documentary about the Stalinist trial of Generals Stanisław Tatar, Marian Utnik and Stanisław Nowicki. He, too, interviewed Anatol Fejgin, who volunteered that Moczarski had manufactured the entire Stroop tale as it would have been out of the question for them to meet in a prison cell.³⁵ In the late 1980s, the reporter Małgorzata Szejnert, investigating the secret graves of Stalinist prisoners, heard a different version of these events. She found one Alojzy Grabicki, who in 1947–54 had served as the prison warden in the Rakowiecka Street prison. She quoted him in her book *Śród żywych duchów* (Among Living Ghosts):

I’m embarrassed to say, there has been so much natter and lies said and written about [the prison]. For example, Kazimierz Moczarski did not spend a single day in a cell with Stroop. Stroop spent the whole time in a cell by himself, until his sentence was executed. Moczarski did not talk with him at all, he wrote his whole book using documents. What a deceitful man this Moczarski was. He had access to everything in prison. . . . Lemons, bananas, oranges. He got it all because he sold people out.³⁶

It is important to know that the investigative prison in Mokotów lay outside Grabicki’s jurisdiction. It was in Fejgin’s empire, so the former warden was most likely only repeating what he had heard.

Obviously, the former security functionaries’ versions clash. Having Poles and Nazis sharing cells was not rare. Władysław Bartoszewski, a Home Army fighter, shared a cell with the Gestapo functionary Erich Engels for a few months and Directorate of Sabotage fighter Bogdan Deczkowski was imprisoned in a cell with SS man Paul Otto Geibel. There was only one reason for maligning Moczarski: he had won the unequal fight, so at least his name had to be smeared.

34 Piotr Lipiński, *Humer et al.* (Warsaw, 1997), 77–8.

35 Author’s interview with Krzysztof Lang, 2007.

36 Małgorzata Szejnert, *Śród żywych duchów* (London, 1990), 175.

In the autumn of 1954, prosecutors dispersed to prisons across Poland to investigate living conditions and abuses of inmates.³⁷ Moczarski repeated what he had written earlier in his letters to the authorities about the mistreatment and the interrogation methods used against him, and the prosecutor Kazimierz Kukawka wrote it down. In 1995, Kukawka appeared as a witness in Humer's trial and testified that "Moczarski said such horrific things about being tortured that my typist ran out of the room crying. At the end Moczarski fainted"³⁸

Moczarski's living conditions improved markedly after this interrogation: he was moved to a more comfortable cell and given paper, a pen, newspapers and his own books. His sister was allowed to see him for the first time. He read hungrily, binging after the long years of forced fasting: Balzac, Pascal, Pushkin, Romain Rolland, Tolstoy, Żeromski and the biographies of notable painters. He wrote to Zofia, who remained in prison in Inowrocław: "I can spend whole days spiritually disconnected from prison, living in a different, my own world, in which thinking, beauty, emotions, reasoning fill my time and in which you, my beloved beautiful Zofia, reign supreme."³⁹

He read the party monthly *Nowe Drogi* in December 1954 to learn about the changes underway in Poland and the discussions at the most recent Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party plenary meeting. A critique followed the ritual statement that the security apparatus had passed challenging tests in flying colours: "The Party and the Government have recently recorded cases of serious violations of the rule of law by individual cells in the security service. These cases are currently under investigation, . . . and those responsible for them will be held accountable."⁴⁰ An investigation by the prosecutor's office of functionaries of the Investigations Department was underway, and new names continued to surface. Prosecutor Kukawka, in charge of the investigation, recalled years later that when towards the end of the investigation he made a list of the people who should be investigated, he was told to narrow it down drastically: "[the head] prosecutor Kalinowski [a tram driver by trade] sketched out the outlines of the proceedings; they included a handful of people: General Romkowski, Colonels Fejgin and Różański, investigations

37 Arkadiusz Kutkowski, "Polityka karna władz w 1953 roku – jej wyznaczniki i konsekwencje," in: *Yesterday. Studia z historii najnowszej. Księga dedykowana Prof. J Eislerowi* (Warsaw, 2017), 210–1.

38 Lipiński, *Humer et al.*, 138.

39 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 56–60.

40 *Nowe Drogi*, XII/1954.

officers Dusza, Kaskiewicz, Kędziora and Misiurski, all those who were subsequently sentenced.⁴¹

The news he read in the papers gave Moczarski hope for justice and release. His daughter Elżbieta's archive includes a yellowed notebook filled with notes he made at that time. They include bits of comments on his readings and drafts of letters. "I asked for *Stolica* [weekly]: I need to learn about Poland." And: "I must not renounce my own dignity or expel my inborn sense of justice from my brain." The notebook also includes a draft of a letter to the Supreme Court:

I've been in the investigative prison for nearly ten years, in the infamous isolation bloc of Mokotów prison (Section X, Section XI, Pavilion A). My health has been strained during this time. I am unfamiliar with People's Poland since it certainly was neither Colonel Dusza nor my cell mate who represented it. My last smile of freedom came in the Ministry of Public Security car that transported me to Mokotów [prison] in 1945 over the mountains of rubble in what is today the [Marszałkowska Residential District]. Not even the pictures of the fantastic reconstruction of Warsaw (which I am seeing now) can wipe off completely this caveman's image, which my experiences in prison and investigation have strengthened, preserved on the focusing screen of my imagination. Still, I emphatically reject the meaning of the thirteenth-century pessimistic quotation from Saari, who cries out in despair: 'Either there is no more honesty in the world or no one is adhering to its principles.' I reject it because I believe that the axiom of reason has a greater chance of winning in our regime than anywhere and anytime else. And even though every day in prison continues to snatch a day out of my personal life, I believe that the Supreme Court, with the defence assistance of the honourable lawyers Władysław Winawer and Masłanko, will allow me finally to live in society without being branded deceitfully 'the tormentor of the left,' which the cheap triumphant people, my investigators and prosecutors of 1948–1953, have attempted to burden me spuriously, triumphing over the shackled innocent man.⁴²

This draft of a letter to the Supreme Court reveals the sources of the strength Moczarski had to resist the psychological and physical pressure. The charges of collaboration struck at his fundamental belief in the righteousness of the underground struggle and the purity of its intentions:

I was sentenced for those actions which were the most tender and precious accomplishment of my life, for the time in my underground activity that I have thought of and will continue to think of as the most valuable, that is, the most important and real struggle with collaborators, with Sicherheitspolizei informers and blackmailers of hiding Jews and of pro-independence activists. This brief period devoted to protecting our people is a source of personal pride for me. And I'm happier about the liquidation of the infamous

41 Lipiński, *Humer et al.*, 139.

42 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

Antoni Freindl, thanks to which quite a few people I don't even know are still alive, than with the outcomes of my 'career' in the Home Army, than with all those 'minor successes', which we all cherish in our hearts.⁴³

It was not positions or power but actual actions to save people that gave him satisfaction and self-respect, and the system tried to take them away from him.

In late 1954, Moczarski met with Władysław Winawer for the first time, even though the lawyer had been appointed his defence attorney over a year earlier. In February 1955, after nearly eight years, Moczarski was moved from Mokotów prison to Sztum. From there he wrote to Winawer:

You are asking how things are going. My answer is that I will feel fine anywhere other than the now luxurious Mokotów [prison]. I think that the best drug for the complaints you know about, which I acquired during the investigation, is a change in prison life. Of course, I don't know how I will feel in Sztum. However, I can say one thing: some special human atmosphere is palpable here in which, funny as this may sound, I am coming alive. How far has the particular Mokotów *déformation professionnelle* taken me in ten years that I am coming alive in Sztum prison.⁴⁴

Like every inmate, Moczarski dreamed about freedom, but most of all he wanted to be declared innocent and fully cleared of all charges. Once in Sztum prison, he wrote another letter to the prosecutor's office, attaching a copy to his letter to Winawer and explained:

You may ask, Esquire, why I'm writing to the Main Prosecutor . . . As the narrative of my experiences is scattered throughout my many letters to the Supreme Court and the Council of State, I thought it right to collect the sum total of my experiences in Mokotów prison and to send it to the Main Prosecutor's Office of the Polish Army. There was another reason why I wrote that letter: I wanted to spit up at last the psychological phlegm that had collected inside me over the long years of the investigation, harming me. I need it for my psychological well-being. I want to forget what I have lived through. I don't want to keep inside anything that might leave some unexplored mark on my psyche. I want to cure all the traumas I had and still continue to have somewhat in relation to this miserable case, morbid. By writing these two letters to the [Main Prosecutor's Office of the Polish Army], I want to erect an 'iron curtain' between the past and the future. I will try to write nothing more about these matters, to stop thinking and talking about them with anyone . . . You, Esquire, know that I'm innocent. I will say more: you can sense with your lawyer's instinct, which has been sharpened by many years of serving as a defence attorney, that I am innocent. And you also know what I know, namely that in this whole miserable case of mine there are so many different pieces of circumstantial evidence, there is a whole complex of coincidences and tangled-up circumstances,

43 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

44 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive, AIPN, GK 317/700, B. 139.

which can serve as a pretext or excuses to draw the most fantastic conclusions to those with superficial minds and to people who are used to remaining on the surface of life's truth. Life can create situations that are more film-like than the most film-like film. Life has created a situation for me with my whole [Directorate of Underground Resistance] case and my experiences under investigation that the average person would not believe. Few people would believe the whole and the details of this 'Moczarski business,' in which I'm an innocent but hurt passive actor.⁴⁵

Władysław Winawer became ill and asked the Warsaw attorney Aniela Steinsbergowa to work with him. His choice was no accident, as Steinsbergowa had already taken on the defence of several political prisoners. She wrote in her memoir: "Stalin was dead already, but it would be a long time before his rule would be considered an era of 'mistakes and deviations'. Światło had not yet begun to publicise his revelations, no one was talking publicly about interrogation methods, phony charges and fabricated trials. However, the campaign of overturning sentences was already beginning."⁴⁶ Steinsbergowa had been assigned her first case in 1954, of Stanisław Cybulski, a pre-war judge and associate of the Government Delegate's Office, who was sentenced to fifteen years in prison for allegedly denouncing Polish Workers' Party members to the Gestapo; she was also the defence attorney for Marceli Porowski, wartime mayor of Warsaw, and Jerzy Czekanowski of the security department of the Warsaw branch of the Government Delegate's Office. Moczarski's was just another case, and she took it on without hesitation. On 9 February 1955, she and Winawer submitted a petition for a special retrial. Their argument was based on the extraction of confessions with prohibited methods. However, there was no answer to their petition.

Moczarski's good mood brought on by being moved to a new prison, which he wrote about to Winawer, evaporated quickly. The long years of incarceration led to physical collapse. His condition was serious enough for his attorneys petitioned for temporary release. The prosecutor's response was a dark joke: "However, he was sentenced to life in prison." Another prosecutor commented on the charges of torture: "They did beat him, but they were beating the truth out of him!"⁴⁷

False accusations can stick, something Moczarski feared tremendously.

After the unsuccessful petitions for conditional release, Moczarski's attorneys decided to ask for a retrial because of new circumstances, the dramatic events of March 1955 in the Provincial Court in Warsaw during the public trial of

45 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 289–300.

46 Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z lawy*, 117.

47 Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z lawy*, 135.

Eugeniusz Ernst and Stanisław Koziółkiewicz, two judges of a wartime Civilian Special Court. Alfred Kurczewski was brought in and, instead of supporting the charges, he rebelled against serving as a false witness and retracted his earlier testimony, which had been extracted from him under torture; he fainted in the courtroom. The next witness, Eustachy Krak, similarly retracted his testimony. The scandal could not be covered up, and instead gave Moczarski's defence another piece of evidence that the main prosecution witnesses had been coerced to testify. Several more months passed.

Having been released from prison after serving her six-year sentence in March 1955, Zofia wrote to her husband in despair: "Were I able to smash the wall, I would have done it a long time ago, without a moment's hesitation." Moczarski remained behind bars for several more months. In his Christmas letter to his family, a feeling of helplessness mingled with a persistent determination to fight for his good name:

Two things distinguish Christmas in prison: the food is a little better on Christmas Day and the mind is crowded with thoughts of home, of the past and of close and beloved ones. The walls and the bars remain the same. Only the thoughts, swelled with longing, roil and at times, for me for example, they are soaked with rage and fury about the situation I've been waiting for all year to have my case considered by the Supreme Court (which is so clear now, after Różański, Dusza and Kaskiewicz have been sentenced).⁴⁸

The lawyers would remember 31 January 1956 well as the day on which the Supreme Court finally got around to considering the motion to reopen Moczarski's trial. Years later, Aniela Steinsbergowa described it in detail:

We were filled with hope, we believed that our arguments were 'waterproof'. . . Both of us spoke very excitedly. I spoke 'live,' without notes, I knew the case by heart. I remember how we both described the chronology of the investigation, the interrogation methods, the kangaroo court [rushed, with the prisoner being tried as he sat on the toilet in his cell], we spoke about the distortions of the justice system, the violations of all trial guarantees, the negligence in examining all circumstances, not only about misrepresenting the facts concerning the defendants, but about misrepresenting the history of one of the most tragic periods in our nation's history. After we made our statements, we were asked to leave the room, there would be a consultation. We were so drained that both Winawer and I literally fell on the bench and stayed in the darkened hallway of the Supreme Court without saying a word to each other.⁴⁹

48 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 137.

49 Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z ławy*, 144–5.

They were convinced that they had won. Winawer had even written a letter to Moczarski beforehand, telling him about the new trial. However, two days later news came that the defence's petition had been rejected. The twisted explanation stated that Krak and Kurczewski had indeed retracted the testimony they had given during the investigation—but not the one they had given during the trial.

“The Supreme Court was simply ordered to reject our motion,” Steinsbergowa commented directly with the well-known truth that court sentences were politically manipulated. Winawer wrote a letter to Moczarski, which emanates helplessness. “I wish I could give you some real news instead of the hazy old promises. My thoughts are always with you, my thoughts did not leave you even when I was ill, and now I am terribly worried that you may be cold and that your calm abandons you, especially since I have not written to you in such a long time, and you may have been possessed by doubt.”⁵⁰ The truth was—and Moczarski must also have realised this—that the attorneys had run out of procedural options.

With the increasingly clear signs that a thaw was coming, in desperation, the attorneys decided to move public opinion by asking some prominent intellectuals' help. Winawer invited the philosopher Professor Tadeusz Kotarbiński and his wife to tea to brainstorm about who to go to. Steinsbergowa wrote to the writer Maria Dąbrowska, whom she did not know personally but could use the name of her old friend Stefania Sempołowska, a journalist and social activist. Steinsbergowa, once Dąbrowska's pupil, was now her friend. Clearly deeming these ties important, the writer responded instantly and agreed to sign a letter to the authorities, Chairman of the Council of State Aleksander Zawadzki and Chairman of the Council of Ministers Józef Cyrankiewicz, asking for fair trials for political prisoners. Steinsbergowa drafted the letter:

The nation demands a just Poland, it demands respect for the law, morality and purity in the execution of state power, and it cannot abide by lawlessness that is legalised with legally binding court rulings. Since the legal means provided for in legislation have not yet resulted in the revocation of these sentences, we are writing to the highest state authorities asking them to issue the appropriate directives to the judicial authorities since they have not, as we can see, demonstrated sufficient independence and courage themselves to do what justice calls for.⁵¹

Nineteen more people, writers, composers and scientists, signed the letter. If it were not for the need to rush, more signatures would have been collected; and some of the signatories had tears in their eyes after being asked. The signatures

50 Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z lawy*, 147.

51 Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z lawy*, 150.

were collected in secret, one person at a time, and the case had to be explained again and again, which made it a time-consuming operation. ("Not like before the war when you would invite a few dozen people to one flat and do it all in one fell swoop," said Steinsbergowa.) The letter was submitted on 12 April 1956. Shortly, President Aleksander Zawadzki invited a few of the signatories to his office. He promised that not only Moczarski's case would be taken care of but also the cases of a dozen or so others who had been sentenced.

It turned out that the letter was delivered at the perfect moment. A lively national discussion was underway about Nikita Khrushchev's well-publicised speech at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1956. Khrushchev had criticised the system based on the "cult of personality" and Stalin's crimes, especially those targeting Communists. Subsequently, one of the most widely discussed issues in Poland was the harm done to former Home Army fighters. The Supreme Court changed its mind a few days after Zawadzki's meeting with the letter's signatories and ordered Moczarski and his co-defendants released.

In a letter to his wife, Moczarski promised to fight for full rehabilitation. "I care less about being free than about getting rid of those fantastic charges with which Róžański's regime has burdened me. Even if I were to vault out of prison as a result of an amnesty, I will still not stop fighting to straighten out the wrongful sentence."⁵²

Moczarski was transferred from Sztum to yet another prison, Wronki, for just one week, in which he had enough time to write to his wife. "I've already grown accustomed to the new conditions. This prison is like any other, only the walls are different from Rawicz, Mokotów and Sztum. They seem to have been shaped by a strict, unsmiling, coarse Prussian seriousness. In contrast to Sztum, it is governed by calm, quiet, order and regularity."⁵³ It was here, on 24 April 1956, that he received the news about his release.

Four days later, a sweeping amnesty was announced, which shortened sentences and, thus, included political prisoners. Thousands walked out of prisons. Moczarski's life term was changed to twelve years in prison, but the odium of being labelled a criminal remained. For many more months, procedural bargaining to dismiss his case carried on with the prosecutor's office. His defence attorneys asked whether it was worth fighting for rehabilitation, as Moczarski, in poor health, was now in a sanatorium for the mentally ill in

52 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 160.

53 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 161.

Wonieść. Winawer argued that he should be spared such powerful experiences, while Steinsbergowa could not be dissuaded that only an acquittal could provide redress for Moczarski. Their dispute was cut short by Moczarski's letter to the court stating that he would not accept the amnesty and demanded a new trial.

October 1956 came to the rescue. On 19 October the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party convened to elect a new Politburo without Soviet approval and with Władysław Gomułka present, freshly out of prison. Rumours spread about Soviet troop movements, and Khrushchev, anxious, flew to Warsaw to meet with Gomułka; an agreement was reached. Gomułka was chosen to lead the Party. He appeared at a rally in central Warsaw to be welcomed enthusiastically by thousands. He denounced Stalinism and promised "democratisation." "In this short period, the court was probably fully independent,"⁵⁴ Steinsbergowa remembered late 1956. Winawer demanded a public trial. He wrote to Moczarski: "We were not just focusing on your case but also on many other cases, and on breaking the ugly habit of the Prosecutor General's Office of rehabilitating harmed people quietly and silently."⁵⁵ Moczarski's trial was scheduled for 5 December. Steinsbergowa recalled:

The [film] director's job was now in our hands. We found more than a dozen witnesses, onetime stellar underground activists. The trial took a few days. The largest room, no. 17, of the courts in Leszno was packed with spectators. Whenever we went down to the court cafeteria for coffee with Moczarski, our table was besieged. Everyone, even strangers, wanted to shake his hand.⁵⁶

Warsaw was captivated by the trial. Radio Free Europe broadcast news about it, and Poland listened. Even the Polish Film Chronicle ran a report of the trial several minutes long, which was screened before every showing of every film across Poland.⁵⁷ Steinsbergowa recalled in her memoir cases of disinterested kindness coming from total strangers: a taxi driver refused his fare for driving her, a clerk in the Customs Office did not say a word as he released the Moczarskis from import duty on clothing sent by friends from New York.

While the dailies reported that the trial was on, the censorship office prohibited them from covering it in full. Moczarski did not only focus on his own case but spoke about judicial crimes committed in prisons, including the killing

54 Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z ławy*, 157.

55 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

56 Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z ławy*, 160.

57 Archiwum Wytwórci Filmów Dokumentalnych, KF/53/1956.

of General Emil Fieldorf “Nil,” head of the Directorate of Sabotage. Moczarski explained the topography of crimes to the court:

Interrogations with torture took place in the so-called little palace, a pavilion connected to the other buildings by a special tunnel. A wood-lined chamber in the cellar was used for executions. It was there that the head of the Directorate of Sabotage, General Fieldorf, was shot, as was the head of the State Security Corps, Bolesław Kontrym, and his men Bronisław Chajęcki and Zygmunt Ojrzyński.⁵⁸

More witnesses, some of them former Stalinist prisoners, appeared before the court: Colonel Jan Rzepecki, Władysław Bartoszewski, Aleksander Gieysztor and Jan Rosner, the judges Eugeniusz Ernst and Stanisław Koziółkiewicz. They testified about Moczarski’s work for the Directorate of Underground Resistance, the Office of Information and Propaganda, the Warsaw Uprising and the Armed Forces Delegation. Eustachy Krak and Alfred Kurczewski retracted their whole testimony, which had been coerced. Jan Zborowski admitted that he had been broken physically and psychologically with torture and had become “Dusza’s recording,” played repeatedly at many trials.⁵⁹

Steinsbergowa remembered:

Finally, there was a light moment. Zygmunt Antczak from Solna Street appeared in the courtroom as a witness who, according to the indictment had been murdered in a plot against the national liberation movement of the Polish Workers’ Party, he walked into the room in one piece. Kurczewski dictated to the investigation minutes that he had been killed for being a leftist through the joint efforts of the Directorate of Underground Resistance and the Special Court. He had found him after all these years and brought him into court. Antczak testified that, indeed, he had been a member of the Polish Workers’ Party during the war and that he had distributed underground publications. He was a railroad worker, and in 1942 had been arrested by German train guards, but they had let him escape on the same day. We were all very happy that Antczak had risen from the dead.

Ministry of Public Security functionaries had been aware all along that this was a tall tale. They had gone to Antczak’s home at the beginning of the investigation and learned the whole truth but were told to keep it to themselves.⁶⁰

The court declared Eustachy Krak, Alfred Kurczewski and Kazimierz Moczarski innocent. Judge Ziemia wrote in his statement of 11 December 1956:

⁵⁸ *Trybuna Ludu*, December 8, 1956.

⁵⁹ AIPN, GK 317/700, B. 212.

⁶⁰ Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z ławy*, 174.

The trial has proven that the good name of the Polish occupation-era underground, the majority of which did not dishonour itself with any collaboration on the scale of Quisling's, and which Kazimierz Moczarski defended in his areas of responsibility and in his many years in prison with persistence and strength worthy of respect, was rehabilitated by today's proceedings.⁶¹

61 Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z ławy*, 194.

Chapter Seven: Zofia, Zosia, Zofijka

Moczarski wrote to his imprisoned wife in the summer of 1953: “It will soon be fourteen years since we were married. I can remember the sunny day that launched us into our life together. We can’t complain that our union is not colourful or lacking in adventures or thrills, don’t you think? No one will ever say that our life was dull.”¹

Zofia was arrested in 1949. A new torment was added to what Kazimierz had been warned about during his first interrogation: his wife would be charged with working for the Directorate of Underground Resistance. From this moment on, both were aware that they were being blackmailed, and that every word one of them said to their interrogators would directly affect what would happen to their beloved.

While she was twelve years younger than her husband, Zosia was ambitious and independent. She had lost her mother unexpectedly, to heart disease, at a young age of fifteen. Her father, Aleksander Płoski, raised his children, Zosia and her older brother Andrzej, by himself. She graduated from the prestigious Klementyna Hoffmanowa High School in 1937 in Warsaw and began to study journalism. Her father, an industrialist and the co-owner of a thriving fire equipment factory and store, was not very happy with his daughter’s decision and only contributed a part of her university fees. For that reason, Zosia needed a part-time job and came to work in the Press Section of the Ministry of Social Welfare in February 1939, on her cousin Irena Rakowska-Bartel’s recommendation. She was dynamic and hard-working. “She made an impression on everyone with her slender, long-legged figure and refined beauty. And she was everywhere,” remembered Zbigniew Baucz.²

1 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 51.

2 Author’s interview with Zbigniew Baucz, December 2006.



Zofia and Kazimierz Moczarscy, summer 1940. Photogr. Archive of Elżbieta Moczarska / FOTONOVA.

The left-radical atmosphere of the ministry contrasted with the mood at the university, which was created by the extreme right, and it appealed to Zofia. She had earlier left an internship at the *Goniec Warszawski* newspaper because of its editors' open anti-Semitism and also turned down an offer to join the far-right National-Radical Camp. Instead, she became a member of the left-leaning Association of Civil Servants for both social and ideological reasons. Virtually all the young people she met at work were members of the Association.

The outbreak of the war interrupted both her work and her studies. After returning from his September 1939 travels, Kazimierz Moczarski jumped right into conspiratorial activity but for a long time tried to protect his wife from taking part in it. Dynamic and full of life, Zosia was nonetheless vulnerable, thought to be at risk of contracting tuberculosis, and so would spend summers in the healthy climate of Świder outside Warsaw. She began to study at the underground university, but since journalism was not offered, she opted for law. She revised in the mornings and attended tutorials in the evenings, and also worked part-time as a waitress. However, they could not keep the horrors of the German occupation at bay; one evening Moczarski stepped into a sticky pool of blood on the staircase of their building. He learned from his wife that there had been a Gestapo action on the floor above them and five people were killed. In their own flat, workers doing a renovation discovered their hiding place for underground publications and blackmailed the Moczarskis, leading them to move out and adopt a new name. From now on they were the Sankowskis.

Even without taking the official Home Army oath, Zosia knew all about her husband's work from typing copies of his reports for the Office of Information and Propaganda and meeting some of his associates, some of whom came to their flat. However, she felt side-lined. Her husband's fears began to weigh on her more and more. Moczarski, aware of his wife's frustration, drew her into the work of the Directorate of Underground Resistance investigation section, code name "Magiel." He must have believed that this would be the safest place for her.

In early 1944 Zosia was formally sworn in. She chose the nom de guerre "Malina" and served as a messenger for "Magiel's" and assisted her husband with organising the Directorate of Underground Resistance files on informers and blackmailers. In June 1944 she contributed to the background research for the operation to spring Gestapo prisoners from the John of God Hospital in Bonifraterska Street. She took part in "Magiel's" preparations for the uprising, planning short-wave radio communications.

At the start of the Warsaw Uprising, 5 p.m. on 1 August 1944, Zosia was in Jerolimskie Avenue. With the Germans retaining control of this major thoroughfare, Kazimierz was trapped on the other side. On the second day

of the uprising she managed to reach the “Rafał” radio station under fire. The Moczarskis would spend the whole uprising together, except for the ten days when Zosia, injured during a German bombardment of central Warsaw, was in hospital in the cellars of the PKO bank in Świętokrzyska Street.

During the uprising, Zosia served as a messenger between the “Rafał” unit and the head of the information section of the Office of Information and Propaganda, Aleksander Gieysztor. She was also involved in putting out two of the fighters’ publications. On 20 September 1944 General Antoni Chruściel “Monter,” commander of the underground forces, decorated her with the Silver Cross of Merit.³

At the beginning of October, after the defeat of the uprising, the Moczarskis left Warsaw together. Rzepecki did not object to Zofia coming along, and in his order to Moczarski to leave Warsaw he wrote that “I know that there is no way you would leave her behind.” After spending a few days in Pruszków, Zosia left for Krakow with the Office of Information and Propaganda group. Now the couple would be apart for almost a month, for the first time since they married. Zosia, weakened by her wounds and the trauma of the uprising, took a rest. Once her strength returned, she again began to act as a messenger in organising the Office of Information and Propaganda in Krakow. Kazimierz arrived in November and they went to Częstochowa together, where they found a room near the Jasna Góra monastery. Zosia immediately became immersed in conspiratorial work, running her husband’s secretariat, carrying publications and reports to Krakow. They rubbed shoulders at lunches in a local canteen with other Command Headquarters officers, Janusz Bokszczanin, Jan Gorazdowski and Franciszek Kamiński. Anna Rószkiewicz, earlier a messenger for the head of Warsaw counterintelligence Bolesław Kozubowski, also came to Częstochowa and was taken in by the Moczarskis.⁴ The two women would later share a prison cell.

When General Okulicki dissolved the Home Army in January 1945, “Malina” was promoted to second lieutenant and received the Cross of Valour. As Moczarski executed Okulicki’s final order of preparing decorations for his people, paying them redundancy payments and helping them to return to legal life, Zosia waited for him in Krakow. It was there that she learned about Okulicki’s arrest. Rzepecki took over the command of the underground in Warsaw, and Moczarski opted to remain with him.

3 IPN, GK 317/710, B. 127.

4 Moczarski, *Zapiski*, 230; also Rzepecki, *Wspomnienia*, Chapter on “Zamęt,” unpublished typescript in author’s possession.

In her testimony given after her arrest in March 1949, expressing her opposition to continuing the underground, Zofia Moczarska said that “I could feel that it would all start all over again and that we could only dream about calm and having a home. I told my husband sternly and firmly. . . . However, then I realised that Rzepecki was setting up meetings with him, that he was ‘plotting’ something. I thought it was absurd. I had already met people who were becoming active, starting to work for our country—and I envied them.”⁵ Her talk about being exhausted by the war, dreaming about returning to civilian life where she could learn and work, was unquestionably not a ruse. The Moczarskis were making plans for what they believed would be the not-too-distant future.

Despite her reservations, Zofia helped her husband loyally, preparing press reviews and reports from outlying regions. “Zosia was methodical, and it was she who kept a log of his many meetings,” remembered Zbigniew Baucz, who remained Moczarski’s subordinate until his arrest on 1 August 1945. “When I think of Moczarski, I always see Zosia by his side. They were inseparable.”⁶ Their companions from the wartime underground remember them as a pair. In his unpublished memoir, Rzepecki called her, tongue in cheek, “Rafaela” after her husband’s fighting name “Rafał.”

In early August 1945, while they were living just outside Warsaw in Podkowa Leśna, Zosia became involved in a dangerous incident. On her way home, she was stopped at the suburban train station in Warsaw by two Security Office undercover men who were waiting for her. She managed to destroy the piece of paper with a secret message she was carrying and, thus, their search revealed nothing. She put on a brave act, wailing like a street vendor, proclaiming her total innocence. The show worked, the undercover men were put off and let her go. When she got home, the Moczarskis decided to move immediately.⁷ A few days later Zosia went to Krakow with plans to resume the course in journalism she had interrupted six years earlier, at the Jagiellonian University. Moczarski would be leaving the underground for good any day now, when the dissolution of the Armed Forces Delegation for Poland was to be announced.

What did the Moczarskis daydream about then? Memories of their only holidays together, in August 1939, recurred in their secret messages from prison in the autumn of 1945. There is mention of a peaceful home, a first baby. Kazimierz

5 AIPN, 0363/165, B. 62.

6 Author’s interview with Zbigniew Baucz, December 2006.

7 AIPN, 0363/165, B. 34.

wrote, "I fantasise a lot. A lot about the mountains. In winter. Sleighs, stars. Frost. Kitty is next to me."⁸

The authorities at Rakowiecka Street prison accepted a parcel addressed to Kazimierz Moczarski Zosia sent three weeks after his arrest. This told her that the Security Office knew his real identity. Moczarski told her in a secret message, "let Zosia reveal herself to Radosław [Jan Mazurkiewicz]. May she take care of herself. Go to university."⁹

For now, since she needed to support herself, there was no way she could study. Some pre-war friends helped her get a job in the press office of the Central Planning Office. The place must have been fascinating. Czesław Bobrowski, a prominent economist and a member of the Polish Socialist Party was the boss. He had drawn up a three-year plan for rebuilding the country, a modern, rational plan very different from the Soviet model. However, the office was soon closed down and Bobrowski was marginalised. His three-year plan would turn out to have been the only effective economic programme written in post-war Poland. No wonder that already in 1946 Zosia wrote to her husband, who at the time was in prison in Rawicz, "Lots of important and interesting work, a whole section is resting on my shoulders; I organised the whole Polish trip of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration delegates. I earned extra money . . . I manage."¹⁰ She finally went back to studying journalism at the Social Sciences Academy in Warsaw in 1947. She was promoted at work, and in 1949 became the head of the seven-person press section.

Zofia did not stop fighting for her husband's freedom. Her friend and cousin Irena Rakowska-Bartel remembered this time: "Zosia was living on hopes of Kazio's release, incessantly meeting with people who would promise to intercede, and nothing would come of it. We feared for her. I would tell her to be quiet because they would arrest her, too."¹¹ After Moczarski got his ten-year prison sentence, they both wrote pleading letters to President Bolesław Bierut asking for a pardon. Zofia was counting on Kazimierz's political convictions and connections to people who had joined the government-sanctioned Democratic Party. In another letter she wrote to him in Rawicz, "even though your petition to the President has not reached Warsaw yet, your case is heading in the right direction. A fortune-teller told me that you'd be home in November. I believe deeply

8 Andrzej Kunert's archive.

9 Andrzej Kunert's archive.

10 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 43.

11 Author's interview with Irena Rakowska-Bartel, April 2007.

that with your positive attitude towards the new reality, your thinking and your education, you will be useful to our Country.”¹²

However, after Bierut refused to pardon Moczarski, it was all over. Only the amnesty announced in the wake of the January 1947 elections and the release from prison of Colonel Jan Rzepecki that brought new hope. Zosia joined the Democratic Party, which included many people they had known during the war, and she talked with Zygmunt Kapitaniak and Włodzimierz Lechowicz. She gave Kapitaniak the idea for Democratic Party activists to appeal officially on Moczarski's behalf.

As she learned about her husband's transfer from Rawicz to Warsaw, it seemed for a while that he would be released shortly. However, instead of release came a shortening of his term to five years, which would mean that he would be out in 1950. From now on, she divided her time between her studies, her work and visits to her husband. A solitary and attractive woman, she was surrounded by Security Office informers pretending to be her friends, and even admirers. Several of their reports can be found in her files at the Institute of National Remembrance. She must have treated one of them, code name “Wanda,” as someone close, since Zofia told him in detail about her adventure at the suburban train station in August 1945 and her months-long efforts to have Kazimierz released. However, her openness knew its limits, as habits acquired during the years underground made her cautious. This informer did not have much to say: “She is still not talking directly about her and her husband's underground activities, nor about the people involved in these activities.”¹³ There are also reports from undercover agents who observed her, giving her the code name “Klarysa.” The reports are concise:

At 17.45, ‘Klarysa’ left her place of employment and got into a parked car of the Citroën brand, and rode off in the direction of Nowy Świat Street, we couldn't conduct the observation because of an absence of means of transportation. For the aforementioned reason we made our way to the place of residence of ‘Klarysa.’ At 21.15, we noticed that K. returned to her place of residence and, up to 22.00, we did not observe K. leave.¹⁴

The decision to arrest her must have been made very abruptly since the undercover men learned about it not from their superiors but from the concierge of her building.¹⁵

12 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 46.

13 AIPN, 0363/165, B. 62.

14 AIPN, 0363/165, B. 63.

15 AIPN, 0363/165, B. 65.

On 26 March 1949 Zosia was swept off the street. Moczarski's "investigation from hell" had been going on for many weeks, with the prisoner refusing to collaborate. Arresting his wife was to serve as yet another form of pressure.

Zofia spent the first weeks in a cell in the cellars of the Ministry of Public Security in Koszykowa Street in central Warsaw. From there she was transferred to the prison in Rakowiecka Street. The investigation would last three years and only focus on her three months' stint in the Directorate of Underground Resistance. In June 1951 Lieutenant Colonel Serkowski reported in writing to Różański that the assembled materials failed to provide a basis for an indictment. "A further investigation gives no hope of obtaining positive outcomes, as the abovementioned woman does not admit to conducting anti-Communist activities during the occupation, and we do not possess materials of circumstantial nor of operational or investigative evidence."¹⁶ Unable to present any charges, Serkowski then asked in his report for further instructions, evidence of the only reason why Zofia was arrested.

She put up poorly with being locked up and unsure of what would happen to her both psychologically and physically. Towards the end of the investigation, she shared a cell with a woman she knew from the underground, Anna Rószkiewicz, who remembered: "We were both emaciated nervous wrecks."¹⁷ Rószkiewicz had already been handed her sentence and knew the shock of hearing an absurd indictment: "I prepared her for what a load of rubbish, lies and slander the charges presented in an indictment may be . . . Still, after the investigation was over, Zosia Moczarska came back from an interrogation session totally crushed. 'What does all this mean, they want to bump us off,' she said."¹⁸

Zosia's trial was held in April 1952. She was sentenced to six years in prison. The only person testifying against her was Alfred Kurczewski, who had been broken by his interrogators and said that he had seen Moczarska typing materials about the investigations of Communists. In its justification of the sentence, the court wrote that is convinced of her guilt, having, on the one hand, the testimony of the witness Kurczewski, "a person located organisationally close to Moczarski," and, on the other hand, statements made by the accused, an unreliable person because she is the wife of Kazimierz Moczarski. The fact that Moczarska's

16 AIPN, 0259/591, Vol. 1, B. 90–92.

17 Anna Rószkiewicz-Litwinowiczowa, *Trudne decyzje – kontrwywiad Okręgu Warszawa AK 1943–1944, więzienie 1949–1954* (Warsaw, 1991), 138.

18 Rószkiewicz-Litwinowiczowa, *Trudne decyzje*, 141.

activities lasted only three months was treated as mitigating circumstances. The court also took into account the fact that “she is not in good health.”¹⁹

More years in prison destroyed Zosia’s health completely. After she was released in 1955, she wrote a complaint to the prosecutor’s office, “My physical health was destroyed 100 per cent: 1. I lost 90% of my teeth . . . 2. I am suffering from chronic brain pain.” During the investigation, “apart from moral harassment, tooth- and headaches (on the verge of human endurance), I went through a period of being made to stand, swollen legs and face, losing complete control of my legs.”²⁰

After her trial was over, as she remained in prison, Zofia attempted to see her husband, even for a short time. None of her petitions was answered. We do not know whether she was aware that Kazimierz had been sentenced to death. She desperately protested being transferred to a post-sentencing prison without having seen him by refusing to leave her cell. Once in the women’s prison in Fordon, where she was moved in February 1953, she again staged a hunger strike demanding to be put in contact with her husband. “The court announces that in view of the current state of her husband’s case, it cannot allow a visit, and asks that prisoner Moczarska, Z., be treated according to prison regulations,” read a letter from the court dated 4 March 1953.²¹ Did the author of this laconic sentence, whose signature is illegible, realise what this decision meant for a woman who was desperate in her struggle? “During my hunger strike, my things were taken away from my cell, the lights were on twenty-four hours a day, a special guard was placed outside the cell door to observe me during the weeks of forced feeding,” she wrote in her grievance to the prosecutor’s office.²² Her protest was desperate, irrational, almost suicidal. In revenge she was put in a dark cell, then in a cell in the cellar, where prisoners with the harshest sentences were kept, and, despite her physical weakness, she was sent to perform physically strenuous work. Next, she was transferred to a women’s prison in Inowrocław with isolation cells and harsher treatment. The women did nothing and were often confined to one-person cells.²³

At last, letters began to arrive from her husband and her family. After being read by the prison censors, they were handed to her weeks late. Very many were

19 AIPN, 0259/591 Vol. 1 B. 108–110.

20 AIPN, GK 317/710, B. 107.

21 AIPN, GK 317/710, B. 60.

22 AIPN, 0259/591 Vol. 1, B. 109.

23 Mirosław Pietrzak, *Więzienie w Inowrocławiu w latach 1945–1956* (Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, 2014), 281–9.

confiscated. The surviving ones say nothing about what she was feeling or about her desperate attempts to be granted visits. A dozen or so of Zofia's and Kazmierz's letters written in crowded tiny letters do survive. The first one is dated 3 May 1953. It is heartbreaking. Kazimierz wrote from Mokotów prison to Zofia in Fordon:

My dearest Zosia, it's not long till the most beautiful day in the world, Zofia's name day will be here. I'm sending you many kisses and hugging you most tenderly. And stroking your cheek, which I kissed so many times and later, when I was in prison, kissed thousands more times in my thoughts. You remain my one and only beloved woman. My longing for you, my dear Wife, is my constant prison friend. May you be happy. The fact that we are both in prison is nothing compared to the feeling that connects us.²⁴

Stalinist-era prison letters were unique. Regulations allowed a sentenced prisoner to write one letter a month and to receive two. To know what the other was doing more often, Kazimierz and Zosia, like other inmates, would write news intended for each other in letters to family members, who would pass it on. Kazimierz repeatedly asked his correspondents to write regularly with precise dates, to let him know whether they had reached the addressee and, if not, to request the missing correspondence from the prison authorities. Letters were held up by the censors and, sometimes, when the functionaries came upon forbidden subjects, they confiscated whole letters or parts of them, tearing off pieces of the sheet. Inmates were not allowed to hold on to letters after reading them but had to hand them over for safekeeping; a letter concealed by a prisoner and found during a search could be confiscated and destroyed.

Moczarski waited for a month and a half for his wife's first letter:

On 15 July 1953, I received the first letter from you. My throat was gripped by emotion. The first written sign of your life in five years . . . Your second letter (dated 28 June of this year) disturbed me. This was no longer a restrained piece of news in a prison letter about a Wife's life to her husband. I opened a seashell, and a pearl was revealed. I've always believed that you were the person you are, that our life is one, that we are linked until death by the things that connect us. And what connects us is so powerful that no prison walls can sever this connection.²⁵

Even with the renewed written link, after so many years of separation, they knew little about what the other had been through. These intimate letters reveal the immense boost a prisoner would receive from merely knowing that someone close to them existed. In May 1954, Kazimierz wrote to Zofia who was in prison in Inowrocław:

24 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 48–9.

25 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 53.

Your thoughts are flowing in a turbulent stream, you are pining, you are sad. I know, I'm very familiar with this . . . However, you know the truth, and you are completely certain of it. And this truth is my love for you, Zofijka, the love that has been the same since 6 June 1939, always faithful, always tender, devoted, strong, manful, unchanging. You write that my love letters are holding you up. If this is so, you must make a firm harbour out of my honest feelings for you. I want you to make a granite shelter and a steel moral foundation out of my heart, my total devotion. My dearest! You are filled with the simple magic and delicate existence of a forest flower. Your spell flows down on me like a stream of happiness. You are indispensable to my life. Can you hear me: indispensable!²⁶

It was only in January 1955 that Moczarski was notified of the ruling that changed his death sentence to life in prison. He had no idea whether Zofia even knew about his death sentence. He nonetheless wrote to his lawyer Władysław Winawer: "After my Wife returns, we can tell her everything about me. However, when my Wife is in prison, we can 'honestly' lie to her about the things that may worry her. But my 'freedom' Wife must know everything."²⁷ From Sztum prison, he petitioned the court for Zosia's release. In vain. The prison authorities did not stop harassing her until the very last day of her confinement. She was punished for even the most minute violations of prison regulations by having her parcels taken away or by being prevented from buying food in the prison canteen. "I'm taking care of myself, although I've been eating little recently since I was punished for a month,"²⁸ she wrote to him.

On 6 February 1955, Zosia wrote from Inowrocław prison to Kazimierz in Sztum prison:

Your June letter did not get to me and I was notified . . . about it being confiscated on 23 September. I've been reading very little because I have a job in the cell now. I'm so happy that you're writing . . . My release date is approaching, it's simply incredible . . . I suffered horribly when I had to give up your December letter, according to prison instructions, after three days, even though it seemed like I was losing a piece of you. A person has become a little eccentric and gets upset about every little thing.²⁹

She left the prison in Inowrocław after six years to the day of her arrest. It was a beautiful March day. The writer Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz described it in his diary: "Spring came today, it's muggy, it's raining and the swish of spring is moving through the barren wood, *vesna idet, vesna idet*."³⁰

26 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 57.

27 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

28 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 62.

29 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 63

30 Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, *Dzienniki 1911–1955*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 2007), 438.



Zofia Moczarska after release from prison, March 1955. Photogr. Archive of Elżbieta Moczarska / FOTONOVA.

The day after her release Zosia wrote to Kazimierz from Podkowa Leśna, where she moved in with her father:

My dearest, I just ate breakfast with Dad . . . I left prison yesterday at midday . . . Daddy was waiting for me and we went through Toruń to Warsaw. In shock, disoriented, looking like a ghoul in my fur-lined coat and shoes that have been worn to shreds, I caused a sensation on the Inowrocław–Warsaw route . . . Father is not working now, and my brother is supervising stonework as a labourer . . . Father has sold off his allegedly unnecessary possessions and is looking for a position . . . I have to register with the militia today . . . They did not give me your letters written to me in Inowrocław . . . I have no plans right now. My mind is blank.³¹

Friends and relations come to visit in Podkowa Leśna. They were in shock: this prematurely aged and despondent woman had replaced the vibrant and delightful Zosia they knew. Her father, Aleksander Płoski, who had had his factory and shop confiscated by the government, had moved into a small rented room in a suburban villa. With great difficulty he had found a job in a warehouse. There was little money, so little that it was a problem for Zosia to travel to Sztum to visit her husband.

“You’re looking very interesting and youthful, and I can feel that you’re thinking about me and maybe worrying,” she wrote to Kazimierz after their first meeting.³² Kazimierz was in shock: “Zosia is in a bad shape,”³³ he fretted in a letter to his sister. “My dear cat, these are only the first weeks, you can be sure that Your Wife will regain her strength and her energy because she wants to live because she has you,” Zosia reassured him in a letter and asked: “Do you know this and do you believe in your and my future?”³⁴

Living in freedom was difficult. Zofia was among people who were close to her, who were full of positive emotions and good intentions, but who could not possibly understand the torment she had lived through in prison or her current state of mind. Anna Rothenburg-Rościszewska, practical and level-headed, wrote to her brother: “Zosia is planning to find work. I believe that this is a must for her, and because of her mood, I’d like it to happen as soon as possible. She can’t continue to torment herself and everyone around her. She can’t keep

31 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 69.

32 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 73.

33 Elżbieta Moczarska’s archive.

34 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 76.

living her fantasies. She can't make a victim of herself. It is difficult for me to write this."³⁵

Making light of Zosia's health problems, she most likely wanted to calm her brother down: "she hasn't mentioned her headaches for a few days now. She bought a pretty dress in Myszkorowska Street, grey, a suit in a darker grey, a sporty light-blue blouse, a small hat and some little things. She must be feeling well. She comes to Warsaw often."³⁶

Spring weather restored some of her spirits. "I remembered that you want me to have as normal a life as possible, I took a cab to visit the antiquities in Malbork," she wrote to Kazimierz. "Couns[el] Winawer has forbidden me to go anywhere or to try to do anything about your case. I'm obeying him for now (like you told me to), but will I last? I believe that what I'd say about you would move and shake the world in its foundations."³⁷

Walking around Warsaw after six years of being disconnected from normal life, she observed new behaviours and ladies' fashions, all the time feeling like an arrival from another planet. She wrote to him, unsure of herself: "Women are dressed like 'tarts,' with loads of make-up, their hair in little curls. Am I supposed to modernise?"³⁸ She wrote about meeting up with friends, drinking a cup of tea in a café in Krakowskie Przedmieście Avenue, a play at Teatr Polski, washing, cleaning, reading newspapers, taking walks with her father. She was trying to find inner peace and a feeling of regular free life. Lonely, she was waiting for her husband to be free, but his release, for all his attorneys' efforts, continued being delayed.

Out of the blue, both of them began to suffer from deteriorating health. Zosia's headaches returned. She wrote to Kazimierz about feeling lonely, "I cannot stop thinking about you and prison and my time in prison. Maybe one day I will wake up feeling rested and strong . . . Sorry that I'm writing on paper out of an old notebook, this is the kind of paper on which I used to take economics lecture notes, which I was just leafing through. I can still remember bits and pieces."³⁹

Moczarski was anxious about his wife, and this was probably the major reason for his worsening health. He landed in the prison hospital.

35 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

36 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

37 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 86.

38 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 88.

39 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 110.

“Zosia is looking unwell. So gaunt!” he wrote to his sister after Zofia’s visit. “Today she is a mass of scattered sparks, which glow irregularly, loosely, all over the place.” In a letter to her, he advised her about overcoming her depression; he tried to convince her to be more active, to start working:

My Zofijka, you must bring together your rich spectrum of talents more strongly. . . and make it into an active and rationally and wilfully controlled foundation of your attitude towards life. You mustn’t forget that any change in you also yields results in me . . . I’m writing this letter to you as if I was writing an operational order about life’s immediate tasks to myself. And I am making demands as if I was making demands of myself, for you to do absolutely everything to put an end to your psychological state, which also reflexively touches me and hurts me . . . I want you to be courageous, like before, and enterprising, like before. I am constantly with you in my thoughts, you who are loving, tender and small-minded, but as tough as granite and as real as our daily bread.⁴⁰

Zosia reacted angrily to this encouragement, clearly frustrated by how prison had interrupted her professional career and destroyed her health.

I am not in danger of becoming apathetic, as you write. Despite external appearances working against me, I am fully in control of myself. Not one day, not one month, not this year of ‘non-work’ will break my inner discipline or this ‘inner’ construction, i.e., my worldview that has been shaped by the 11 years of our separation, or diminish my life’s experiences which I gained through the greatest hardships of three years of work in the [Central Planning Office] in a responsible position, and now in a leadership position of socio-political work in the Dem[ocratic] Par[ty], nor will they diminish the wisdom about life and people I gained in the six years in prison. I think that I’m only writing this now because I’ve had the impression from a number of your letters that you are treating me like a child or a doll, who only has her trunk, while her arms and legs and head are floating separately, damaged and broken. This doll is speaking to you today, and she is asking you to smile and to believe that you will return.⁴¹

Zofia had a difficult time finding a common language with her nearest and dearest, as they did not understand what she had been through or what price she had paid for rebelling against prison regulations. She was bitter about their lack of understanding, about their expectations that she was different from before. “My dearest, I’ve been reprimanded by all the family tarts that it was high time I ‘get a grip,’” she wrote to her husband. “I, the famous shirker, needed to be herded to work. This, too, I survived, and I continue to live my bucolic country life, reading newspapers, magazines and a few books.”⁴²

40 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 126–8.

41 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 138–9.

42 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 142.

Only Kazimierz was able to understand what she was feeling, to realise that the trauma of prison could not but leave a mark. Uncertain about what would happen to him, he felt unable to help her and wrote:

I think that I can understand you and what your feelings are correctly and accurately. I imagine that the reason is primarily psychological. These are quite complex and sensitive issues, which can be defined in a free face-to-face conversation as we look into each other's eyes. Something that is impossible right now. Therefore, I will only 'feel into you' and attempt abstractly to trace any potential paths that your most secret thoughts and experiences follow or may follow, combining present and past experiences, your desires, ambitions and decisions. And I think that, in a way, I can understand you.⁴³

However, the prison experience they shared did not change the fact that their forced separation was lasting almost twice as long as their life together did, and that they were growing apart and changing. The idea of their future together must have made them happy but also fearful. "You could weave a covering for the mummy of the greatest of the pharaohs out of the tape of longing that has sprung up inside me over this whole time. I have many, very many, grey hairs. Still, my life is bearable in these spacious thinking chambers I have constructed in the small cells of my prisons," wrote Moczarski in his last letter from prison as he counted their years of separation. "In what street will we live, Zosia, after I come out? After [living in] Jasna [bright], Hoża [vigorous] and Słoneczna [sunny] Streets, the next one should be 'Radiant' or 'Luminous.'"⁴⁴

A few days before his release, Zofia wrote a letter to him in which she declared her devotion to him, her anxiety and her hopes for their future:

We're lucky that life is not as tragic and as arduous when you are pushing ahead with someone you love, who is very faithful. We're lucky that neither you nor I are the 'Hamlet-Socrates' types, even if someone tried to force us to be that way. We're lucky that after the rain the sun comes out, that there is something stupider than optimism: pessimism.⁴⁵

After the long journey, they met in the avenue leading from the Wronki prison gates to the train station. Kazimierz noted three months later:

There is no greater wave than the one that swept me as I missed her, when she was so close, at arm's length. Slender, wearing her shabby fur-lined coat, emaciated, with sunken cheeks, enveloped by a tiredness, her movements fragile. I instinctively held back my explosion of joy. I kissed her slender hands, embraced her, hugged her lightly and kissed her cheek even more lightly. Its perfume was the same.

43 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 150.

44 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 164.

45 Moczarscy, *Życie nas tak głupio rozłącza*, 157.

They were bursting with emotion and foreboding and fear about their future together.

Her eyes were different from eleven years ago. They were ill, tired, exhausted and nervous. I saw something in Zosia's eyes now that told of her prison experiences and all the consequences of our eleven years apart. Life brings people together. Prison is not life. So, there was no strong connection between us. A connection that would build togetherness. I noticed that the thread between us is as fragile as a decayed spider's web . . . Zosia is weak, her complexion pasty, dark circles under her opaque eyes. Her sunken jaw at times gives her a nasty expression and her eyes turn metal. There is no question that she is ill, her psyche has suffered traumatic changes. No happiness, no joy, no peace in her face. Her attitude towards me is both good and that of a stranger.⁴⁶

In their first months back together, they were overwhelmed by mundane problems: no place to live, no money, a shortage of the barest of necessities. The government aid barely covered medicines and their most basic needs, such as clothes and furniture. The lengthy battle for a rehabilitation trial delayed reaching an equilibrium. Zofia launched attempts to get back the flat that had been confiscated after her arrest. It took Kazimierz weeks to acquire a Warsaw residence permit. With the Communist state's discrimination of Warsaw natives, the authorities tried to prevent them from returning to their city, denying them the compulsory universal registration. They both spent time in health resorts. After being apart for eleven years, they struggled to go back to their old ways, they quarrelled, said hurtful words and reproached each other. Kazimierz noted his fears about their future together directly: "We are linked by our past, by our legal marriage licence and by my love. We are torn apart by the past. Her independent life, in which there were other influences, put a wall between us. Will I manage to tear down this wall? I doubt it, I doubt it very much."⁴⁷ Right after he came out of prison, Moczarski was bursting with energy, surprising everyone. However, a few weeks later his health collapsed. In early August he went to a sanatorium in Iwonicz. He convinced Zosia to spend some time at the seaside.

Elżbieta Moczarska's home archive includes a telegram dated 11 August 1956. Moczarski recalled the anniversary of what ruined their life: "Eleven years ago was also a Saturday." However, Zosia's reaction was caustic: she thought there was nothing to celebrate.

They spent this anniversary apart, at distant ends of Poland. This new separation did not help them to communicate, and their letters from this period

46 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

47 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

lack the affection present in those from prison. Affection has been replaced by practical information about health, living situation, progress of treatments, and worries about money or warm shoes. “I’m glad that you are pleased with your stay. Please don’t catch cold, and put on some weight,” Kazimierz urged his wife. He wrote extensively about the people he was meeting and the places he was visiting. In return came cheerful and laconic postcards, such as one in which Zosia describes a dance, and how the men admire her. This one made Kazimierz jealous. He felt belittled, his manly pride hurt. He reproached her,

I can see that you are not suffering there, that you have even been enjoying your rest and your holiday. . . . my longing has been sated with two postcards, duty fulfilled with one postcard and one express letter. . . . You know, I, too, cannot bear coercion (unless it’s someone forcing me to live, like I’m forcing you to live), so I’m not in favour of pressure. . . . Be well, ‘life’s companion,’ as you call yourself. Companion, tell me another one! It’s a grander word than throwing together lover and husband/wife.⁴⁸

Even though he was in rehabilitation, Kazimierz closely followed public affairs, including Colonel Rzepecki’s statements to the press and discussions about what happened to Home Army fighters. Here, too, they reacted differently. Kazimierz wrote a personal letter to his former commander, reproaching him for his indifference to the fate of his men, many of whom remained in prison with long sentences, despite the amnesty. He spent long weeks focusing on this question, letting wartime memories eclipse his experiences in prison, while Zosia, on the contrary, preferred to remain silent about the war. She would become irritated when he asked her how she remembered the Warsaw Uprising: “I’m annoyed that you’re inflicting the subject of the Home Army on me while I’m on holiday . . . the last thing I feel like doing is going back to the past and writing.”⁴⁹ In her next letter, Zosia reminisced about meeting with [Jan Mazurkiewicz] “Radosław:” “Irma, i.e., Hanka, his wife, told me all sorts of stories about women from Inowrocław, which I had not heard since leaving prison But I don’t know if you’d be interested since I’m not allowed to talk about prison and the past,” she wrote.⁵⁰ It is a striking impression that “past” means “prison” for her. Kazimierz deliberately wants to leave the time lost in prison behind, while Zofia dwells on the prison time. We can only guess why. Before imprisonment, she was very active and independent. After prison, she viewed freedom as too difficult a challenge to overcome. Having no money was a burden to her, as she tried to

48 Elżbieta Moczarska’s archive.

49 Elżbieta Moczarska’s archive.

50 Elżbieta Moczarska’s archive.

stress her independence, was disappointed that she could not find work and she did not want any advice. "I'm not going to ask Prime Minister Cyrankiewicz for work, because I have to find it when I want to and what I want and in place where I will live. I have no idea if it'll be Warsaw,"⁵¹ she wrote.

In Moczarski's absence from Warsaw, it was not Zofia who acted on his behalf with his lawyers fighting to have his sentence reviewed but his sister, Anna Rothenburg-Rościszewska, something that also led to tensions between the couple. No doubt Moczarski wanted to spare her the stress, but Zosia accused him of not trusting her.

Moczarski finally let fly his growing frustration at the accumulation of misunderstandings and blame in an emotional and harsh letter:

Your attitude towards me after those eleven years has been one that I could not call good . . . your thinking was diametrically opposed to mine, you didn't try to understand me or you did not actually understand me. On every issue, however major or minor, whether concerning principles or of daily life, your attitude was almost always, sometimes as if on purpose, different. Your whole attitude towards life and the majority of life questions was different. When I look soberly, calmly and coolly at the time after 24 April 1956, I have to say that you, consciously or not, have tried to destroy the living elements of this emotional, customary and intellectual spectrum that I presented to you right after coming out of prison . . . You have written to me about my irritability. This is not true. You are feeling it wrongly and judging it wrongly. You don't know me very well. There is not one bit in me today of anything that would come close to agitation, irritation. However, there is a cool perspective on reality. So much so that sometimes I'm afraid of this cool (analytical, then synthetic) approach to facts. All my reasoning here has no trace of reproaches or grudges or accusations. Absolutely none. I just want to see without an eye cover, to hear without cotton wool in my ears, to reason logically and not emotionally . . . and of course this honesty in speaking may only apply to someone who was my total friend for some time . . . I respect myself. I respect you . . . and so I think that—sadly—it is only the memory of the 'happy' period of our marriage that is telling you or should be telling you to stop avoiding discussions of the subject I have brought up . . . I can understand that the tensions in relations between a woman and a man go up and down. But I am also putting limits on this tension. You must agree that the pulse of our joint circulation is lower than a tortoise's. Strengthen this pulse. You have done nothing to strengthen it. You are right, from a psychological point of view. You have also turned me onto that path, I don't know why I have given in. Given in to whom? To circumstances or to my own reason or to you? I don't know. But it is a fact that I'm beginning to walk faster on this road. You may have been waiting for me to be ready to tell you that . . . If this is true, I am notifying you today about the changes that are taking place inside me. I'm wondering whether it's a good thing that I'm writing this.

51 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

But I think that it is. You are well, you write . . . I think that this news should make you happy. I know that you were worried about my potential reaction. Now you don't have to worry about me. Not at all.

This letter written in a sanatorium in Wonieść hints at a very intimate issue. Kazimierz met another woman there, and their affair would last ten years. She ended it. She was also his friend and confidante. However, Moczarski never left his wife for her. The question whether Zofia had any inkling that this woman existed is both sensitive and difficult to answer. After all, their romance was also a dramatic side-effect of their separation and the resulting difficulty in rebuilding their union.

These words in which Moczarski was preparing Zofia for the possibility that he might leave her, remained a rough draft. He never sent it. The next day, he wrote another letter, about big and small questions of everyday life, but he did not mention the doubts roiling him. Finally, Winawer reported on the successful outcome of the rehabilitation trial, something they had been waiting for so impatiently.

Moczarski returned to Warsaw shortly before the trials. They took place a week apart in December. The court restored their good names, but Zofia's time in prison turned out to be damaging. She left her youth and her dreams behind in the prison cell. Her career, which had initially begun to develop after the war, was interrupted forever by her arrest. Moreover, her damaged health would never allow her to return to work.

Chapter Eight: A Difficult Freedom

For many former prisoners who had been cut off from the world for a long time, the newfound freedom was both joyful and difficult as they set out to rebuild their lives. Ruta Czaplińska, who spent ten years in a Stalinist prison, almost as many as Moczarski, remembered how her dreams about freedom went hand in hand with fears. Of seeing her nearest and dearest, of feeling like strangers. Freedom was “a clash with a reality that in many ways was unknown and incomprehensible. . . finding one’s place in the family, among friends, in the community, continuing the studies one had interrupted or getting a place at university. In a word: starting a new life. And this clash with the longed-for freedom could be very violent.”¹

Three months after leaving prison, Moczarski wrote down his first day’s impressions:

I can see the tree-lined avenue from the gate of Wronki almost all the way to the train station. At the time, I felt as if I had been yanked out of a boundless calm into the depths of a foreign substance, whose colours and taste I had forgotten. Psychologically, I must have been like a paratrooper who is unexpectedly ejected from his aeroplane. Dazed and alienated. In the avenue I searched for my dearest who, I knew, had come to see me and to fetch me . . . envoys from a shattered, wounded life were welcoming me outside the Wronki gate. They, who had also been damaged by life, approached me, a cracked bell . . . In Warsaw and along the way, I was stupefied. Dazed. Lost. Like a bundle in the hands of a guiding passenger. In Warsaw’s West Station we transferred to the electric suburban train. I was assailed by the rushing, people hurrying somewhere. They appeared to be in a frenzy, chasing after something that absorbs them alone, which objectively isn’t worth the trouble. Frantic over pursuits that are not very important, it was incomprehensible to me why these people are rushing so . . . Why are they not experiencing life, the air, the light, liberty. Why aren’t they savouring the aroma of the streaks of wind, why aren’t they touching the green tree.²

Because the topography of central Warsaw had changed so dramatically during the years of his absence, he was seeing the city through a foreigner’s eyes. The ruins of the Main Train Station as he could remember it had been replaced by pavilions of the suburban train, instead of the tangle of streets and tenements damaged during the uprising was the colossal socialist realist Palace of Culture, Stalin’s gift to Warsaw. “Even with the spacious square and the dusk that embellished it, the

1 Ruta Czaplińska, *Z archiwum pamięci. 3653 więzienne dni* (Wrocław, 2002), 290.

2 Elżbieta Moczarska’s archive.

skyscraper I knew from photographs did not win me over,” he wrote. “My sister ran ahead to catch a . . . what! a shortage of taxis? in Warsaw? I only understood later that this is the new normal, a shortage of taxis.”³

He continued to survey the city through the car window. “For a fraction of an instant, the screech of our tyres on a curve brought back a memory from the South of France. This was the first time I felt that I was free, that I was living at full speed again.” Finally, they reached home: “In Marszałkowska Street: Mother. Nothing to say. Any word, any sentence would be insignificant, impaired. My mother. Eleven years apart.”⁴

Moczarski’s attorney Aniela Steinsbergowa recalled the drive with which he set out to order his affairs, amazing everyone. “He was depleted, but at peace, overjoyed, full of energy, he seemed quite well.”⁵

Moczarski slowly became acquainted with the world around him. He met with his old friends from the underground. Zbigniew Baucz remembered,

Zosia made the appointments, like before. I went to Podkowa [Leśna]. We sat, like we are sitting now, on the two sides of the desk. The room was lit by a lamp, Kazik was hidden a little in the semidarkness. He wanted to know what I thought about what was going on in Poland. I was not a fan, I didn’t believe much that any sort of change would come.⁶

However, in the late spring of 1956 a visible whiff of freedom arrived. Edward Ochab replaced Bolesław Bierut, who had died in March, as Polish United Workers’ Party General Secretary. Ochab publicly criticised the imprisonment of Władysław Gomułka. Mere months after the amnesty of 27 April, 35,000 people, including thousands of political prisoners, were released. Not everyone was out yet, but all their sentences were significantly reduced. Moczarski’s worst interrogators were arrested: former deputy minister of public security Roman Romkowski and former director of its Tenth Department Anatol Fejgin. The prosecutor general’s office petitioned the Supreme Court for a special appeal of the case of Józef Różański, who had been sentenced to five years in prison, which the public considered too lenient.

In an exposé to the Sejm, Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz encouraged critiques of the state authorities. The press followed his suggestion with growing audacity. *Po Prostu*, *Nowa Kultura*, and *Sztandar Młodych* ran articles about the government’s abuses and the system’s absurdities. However, the topic of the

3 Elżbieta Moczarska’s archive.

4 Elżbieta Moczarska’s archive.

5 Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z ławy*, 156.

6 Author’s interview with Zbigniew Baucz, 2006.

Home Army found the greatest resonance everywhere, and it could be measured by the numbers of letters people wrote to newspaper editors. In late June 1956, a workers' rebellion exploded in Poznań and was crushed brutally by the army. Shortly afterwards, to pacify the public mood, the Seventh Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party promised to rehabilitate former soldiers of Home Army and Polish Armed Forces in the West.

To Moczarski, preserving the memory of the Home Army was vital. He started with himself and those closest to him. He took notes about the noms de guerre, names and facts he could remember, wrote down his reminiscences about the Warsaw Uprising. He sought out his former subordinates and wrote down what they could remember. When the censors' ban on writing about the Home Army's struggle with the Germans was lifted and produced an avalanche of recollections, Moczarski looked for old comrades mentioned in the articles. He wrote to Władysław Bartoszewski, the author of a timeline of the Warsaw Uprising in *Świat* magazine who had been released in 1954: "I'm very impressed by your agility, persistence and vital force. You embody [the writer Bolesław] Prus's thesis that a man has a hundred ramparts throughout his life on which he can fight to attain his goals on a huge scale, despite setbacks." He carefully followed newspaper discussions about restoring the good name of non-Communist soldiers. Jerzy Piórkowski, a Home Army soldier and fighter in the Warsaw Uprising introduced the idea of building a monument to honour the fighters in an April 1956 article in *Nowa Kultura*. The idea appealed to the government, which appropriated it to suit its own purposes. In July 1956, the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party created the Committee for the Construction of the Heroes of Warsaw Monument. The word "Uprising" got lost on the way, but the authorities made an effort to keep up appearances that the committee was a grassroots initiative. The main party newspaper, *Trybuna Ludu*, reported on a meeting of the Warsaw section of the National Council, a poor substitute for self-government, which had allegedly created the committee. Home Army commanders Colonels Jan Mazurkiewicz and Jan Rzepecki were invited to serve on the committee.

In early July Moczarski's doctors dispatched him to a sanatorium in Iwonicz in southern Poland. The prison experience had left much deeper scars than anyone initially thought, and now he needed to be treated by neurologists. He wrote many letters, renewed old connections. "I am the guy they know best at the local post office," he wrote to Zosia. He followed his former commander's public activities with mixed feelings. Rzepecki, re-arrested in 1949, spent several years under investigation and was released in late 1955. He got a job at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences. *Po prostu* published his article, discussing

his March 1944 memorandum to then-commander of the Home Army General Komorowski. After describing the public mood, he asked Komorowski to “go left” but also warned him about both the extreme-right opposition and the Polish Workers’ Party, which “was under foreign control.” Now, Rzepecki was clearer, harshly criticising relations between the Home Army command and the government in exile, on the one hand, and the nationalist National Armed Forces, on the other hand.

Rzepecki explained in the popular daily *Życie Warszawy* why, despite the authorities’ duplicity, he had become involved in the planning of the Warsaw Heroes Monument and the official commemorations of the Uprising:

Our former political adversaries are showing an enormous amount of good will towards the Home Army in order to remove all that has divided us. For this reason, I have accepted their invitation to take part in the commemorations of the Warsaw Uprising and to honour the memory of our fallen, all the while noting that I do not consider this to be a sign of setting old issues straight, but trust for the future, starting to trust them, even though not all of our colleagues have been compensated for the harm done them, even though not all of them have regained their freedom.⁷

The underground fighters who had had their sentences reduced by the amnesty remained in prison. Moczarski judged that since Rzepecki had spoken up and the papers were printing his statements, he should stand up first of all for those who were still behind bars. He wrote to his wife,

Rzepecki wants to and can act politically. Hence my conclusion: in this situation, he should primarily act (openly, publicly, non-stop) on behalf of those who were raised by people including him in the Home Army and [Freedom and Independence], which he founded, remain in prison. . . . It drives me wild when Rzepecki writes about the future and [Jan Mazurkiewicz] “Radosław” about the past (Home Army graves) and no one about the present tragedy of former Home Army (or [Freedom and Independence]) people.⁸

Moczarski, fresh out of prison, expected something different from these men. He believed that much more important than commemorating feats and the dead is the basic principle of responsibility for one’s people who were still being persecuted, and in such matters, one should act openly and quickly take advantage of opportunities as they come up. He wrote to Rzepecki:

You have recently stepped under the bright lights of the political stage . . . your statements prove that you can and want to act politically. In this situation, I’m especially

7 *Życie Warszawy*, August 23, 1956.

8 Andrzej Krzysztof Kunert, *Oskarżony Kazimierz Moczarski* (Warsaw, 2006), 174–6.

interested in just one problem: the question of those whom you describe in passing in *Życie Warszawy* that ‘they haven’t all been released yet’ When a soldier is killed, no one, except in rare cases, reproaches his commander. However, when a soldier is lying seriously wounded on the battleground, then, when the heavy fire is over and the commander has not moved everything to bring the wounded into the hospital, that’s bad.⁹

Moczarski reminded Rzepecki that not only top commanders, such as Colonels Franciszek Niepokólczycki and Wincenty Kwieciński, remained in prison but also large numbers of Home Army privates, for instance the cobbler Toboła from Sieradz, who had been sentenced to twelve years in prison for allegedly spying for the Home Army and Freedom and Independence. Who other than Rzepecki had created Freedom and Independence?

No doubt you are thinking about these ‘injured’ and are trying to solve this burning issue in some helpful way. However, if I’m correct, the public has heard no loud interventions on behalf of the subordinates who didn’t ‘survive’ (as you wrote in *Życie Warszawy*) from you or our other former commanders who are free today, other than the curt mention in the *Życie Warszawy* article I just mentioned, but they are continuing to experience the ‘great tragedy’ of the Home Army tangibly, in prison.¹⁰

Moczarski sent copies of his letter to other Home Army commanders, Jan Gorazdowski, Jan Szczurek-Cergowski, Jan Mazurkiewicz, Józef Rybicki and Aleksander Gieysztor. He was hoping to start a public campaign with Rzepecki and Mazurkiewicz to free those who were in prison. “I cannot act alone since people don’t know my name and I am ill, in a sanatorium, where I’m staying for about three more months to lick my wounds,” he wrote sardonically to Zosia. “But I’m always ready to take part in moving the prisoners to the green pastures of freedom.”¹¹

Rzepecki’s answer came a few weeks later. He either did not understand what Moczarski was driving at or did not want to hear about it, and Rzepecki took Moczarski’s words personally. He was most upset that the letter had also been sent to the others. In an offended tone, he wrote,

You don’t know what went on in those years, nor what I was doing or what I’m doing now, and still you’re judging me and advising and giving instructions, on top of it sharing them with other people, which makes it a political campaign. After I came out of the prison the second time, I spent nearly a year asking questions, listening, reading and analysing, before I began to speak up and show my approach to people and to issues;

9 Elżbieta Moczarska’s archive.

10 Elżbieta Moczarska’s archive.

11 Elżbieta Moczarska’s archive.

and I did have a break in 'sitting in prison,' so my alienation from life was much smaller. I believe that you should act likewise.¹²

Moczarski, who was not in the least politically calculating and presented his thoughts earnestly, viewed Rzepecki's response as a personal disappointment. He wrote to Zosia:

Despite everything, I thought he was different. I refused to believe that the stories reaching me in prison were true. I never criticised Rzepecki to my colleagues in prison. I always defended him out of some innate loyalty. As I defended him, I was also defending my faith in humanity. It's very painful to me to be disappointed with someone. I try not to think about his statements. It's a great weakness of mine in practical life, especially in politics.¹³

The recipients of copies of the letter reacted in different ways to Moczarski's plea. Szczurek-Cergowski simply wrote that he was in solidarity with Moczarski's letter. Gieysztor was diplomatically reserved.

The matter is serious, and it deserves effective action. But it's not good that you didn't first find the time to talk to a few people. You might have understood the different proportions, which, I think, would come closer to the complex reality. I hear that you sent copies of your letter to Jan Rzepecki to a few others, and I don't know whether this will help the main cause or complicate a few others even more. But I totally understand your intentions and your correct idea that this basic issue remains valid.¹⁴

Gieysztor's words must have hurt Moczarski very much. A first draft of his response in which he bluntly explained his position survives. "You're right that I haven't a sense of other proportions, which are closer, it seems, to the complex reality," he wrote.

But it is not out of the question that in looking at this issue I may have a better perspective. I often oppose adhering to principles at times when it is contrary to the dialectics of the situation. Still, there are principles one should never abandon. Sincerity of action, which doesn't always go hand in hand with efficacy, is one of them. . . . As I read the few words of your letter, I can interpret its subtext. I don't know if I'm right to interpret it as your thinking that my words may complicate some things, spoil something, make something else impossible or more complicated somehow. I wonder what a former Home Army man who is now a prisoner would say if he learned that bringing up his tragic existence might be seen as complicating things which to him, in captivity, seem secondary. I fear that he might think that he and his family are going downhill, while

12 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

13 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

14 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

‘the gentlemen held discussions in the capital.’ Maybe as I assess the Polish resistance movement, which the Home Army unquestionably led, I was and still am a dreamer. I know something about the shadowy side of our underground, but I nonetheless believe that it was largely an expression of the nation’s conscience. The underground movement was guided by moral values. I would like them to survive By standing up loudly on behalf of the prisoners, his former subordinates and pupils, Rzepecki could help these moral values survive. I believe that it is necessary to tell his former colleagues about this. This is why I did it.¹⁵

Eventually, in December 1956, it may have been these letters that led to an attempted joint campaign to release all those who were still in prison with false indictments. Moczarski’s notes include drafts of two letters. The first one, addressed to Prime Minister Cyrankiewicz, discussed the release of former Home Army people. The second one argued for allowing General Antoni Chruściel, former commander of the Home Army’s Warsaw Region, who after being released from a German camp remained in the West, to come home. The Communist authorities had revoked his citizenship, making it impossible for him to return to Poland from exile where, like many other Polish soldiers, he lived the humiliating life of a refugee, an outsider, struggling to make a living.

Nothing came of the campaign to allow Chruściel to return. After the October 1956 “thaw,” the authorities quickly reasserted their control over public life, which culminated symbolically in the shutting down of *Po prostu* weekly in the autumn of 1957. The liberal treatment of former Home Army fighters also did not last long. At the 1957 Tenth Central Committee Plenum, Roman Werfel, the editor-in-chief of the party paper *Trybuna Ludu* admitted that the Communist authorities’ new attitude towards the Home Army people had been correct, but he also said that “this correct initiative had turned into the Home Army’s apotheosis.”¹⁶ While this meant the end of persecution and prison terms, there was no room in the official language of this Communist-ruled country to tell the story of the Home Army or to recognise its soldiers, let alone its commanders.

Moczarski watched the pre-thaw events and Gomułka’s rise to power from afar, the sanatoriums in Iwonicz and Wonieść. The attempts to have him rehabilitated were the litmus test of the short-lived “serving of freedom.”

After his release in July 1956, Moczarski demanded an open hearing to revisit the charges against him in 1952. However, the “thaw” did not cross the threshold of the prosecutor’s office, and defence attorneys spent weeks fighting for the right

15 Elżbieta Moczarska’s archive.

16 *X Plenum Komitetu Centralnego. Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (wyłącznie do użytku organizacji partyjnych)* (Warsaw, 1957), 98.

of their clients, political prisoners, to be rehabilitated. Moczarski was not the only one. Since they asked for public trials, the authorities' resistance was all the greater. "There were too many people in those positions who wanted to avoid publicly unmasking the mechanisms of the phony trials," argued one of their defence attorneys, Aniela Steinsbergowa.¹⁷

In August, Winawer informed Moczarski about the procedural obstacles and the exhaustion he was feeling from the burden of the cases he had taken on:

We are all, regardless of individual reasons, suffering from bouts of depression and exhaustion. I must confess that I sometimes feel a total surfeit and excess of experiences, which the documents for the cases I have taken on lately impose on me. In fact, despite all the changes, we need to wage a Homeric battle for every single wretch. I have become friends recently with the recently released [Ludomir] Sakowicz, who is decent, principled and steadfast. He spent a whole five years in prison and, like you, he came out unchanged. Please accept my wife's warmest and most respectful regards, and also expressions of my respect and my embarrassed confession that I'm beginning to suffer from your absence here in Warsaw.¹⁸

The battle for Moczarski's rehabilitation lasted until November. To avoid holding a public trial, the prosecutor's office attempted to have the case re-investigated, and then acquit for lack of evidence of guilt. Moczarski relentlessly pressed his lawyers not to give up. According to Steinsbergowa's memoir, "Still, Winawer at first did not want to fight it. He wanted to spare Moczarski a repetition of the torments, to end the case as quickly as possible and to receive compensation for the wrongful accusation, so that he could start a new life."¹⁹

Steinsbergowa's personal opinion was similar to Moczarski's. She believed that only an acquittal would compensate for his many years of suffering. She also had another reason, principles: "we may not condone another director's trick and the dealing with the case 'hush-hush.'"²⁰ In the end, each lawyer presented their position in a letter to Moczarski. He asked them to continue their efforts to make the trial happen and to be public.

17 Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z lawy*, 157.

18 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

19 Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z lawy*, 158.

20 Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z lawy*, 159.



Kazimierz Moczarski after release from prison, summer 1956. Photogr. Archive of Elżbieta Moczarska /FOTONOVA.

Moczarski's health gradually returned in Iwonicz. He was getting to know Poland again and observing it attentively. "My alien perspective on reality is receding. I may be wrong, but I think that gradually the prison substance I'm covered in is washing off,"²¹ he wrote to Władysław Bartoszewski.

Moczarski shared his discoveries and fascinations in his letters to Zosia:

There are workers and peasant women (old rheumatic housekeepers) and the working intelligentsia in the sanatorium. A handful of interesting people. Miners with medals on their grey uniforms. . . . All in all, it represents a cross-section of everyday life. You know that I'm interested in this. My ideas about young people are beginning to change thanks to the people I've met here. I hike with a twenty-year-old history M.A. First-generation intelligentsia. Peasantry. He's v[ery] talented (he will become a junior lecturer in the coming year), v. intelligent, v. sensitive, v. polite. Curious. He likes joking and 'monkeying around'. No poses. Drive to dig down to the core of truth about issues. Nothing

21 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

sacred that cannot be critiqued. But not an ounce of anarchist. An earnest Communist. An earnest Pole . . . The other person who is changing my ideas about young people is a girl, an art student from Łódź. She told me about the life of the prophet of modern Polish painting [Władysław] Strzemiński, about the renaissance of his thought about painting, about his posthumous influence, etc. A clever little lady and despite an appearance similar to [the actress Elżbieta] Barszczewska, intellectually sensible, sober and straightforward. And, also, sunny and nice. These two persons I've sketched out are v. promising representatives of the young generation, the *Po prostu* generation.²²

Moczarski made an enormous effort to cast aside his prison past and wrote about gradually restoring his psychological balance. He was impressively consistent and pragmatic, writing to Zosia: "I still have about five per cent of it left, and it overwhelms me at times."²³ He tried to find a recipe for restoring his health and freeing himself of the prison trauma in treatments and activity. "The doctor said that I would get my health back, but: 'little by little, Mr. Moczarski, little by little.' It's impossible to unbend what has been bent for so many years. I have been directing calisthenics every morning on behalf of the patients' self-government," he bragged in a letter to his wife. He took many pictures, explored the area around Iwonicz. He came to appreciate the beauty of the empty mountains, which had been abandoned by the Lemkos expelled from the region together with the Ukrainians right after the war in operation Vistula.²⁴ In his letter to Zofia he recorded his observations like a tourist, but with a touch of his unique pre-war maverick leftist's sarcasm and wicked detachment, which he had not lost in prison:

On 8 August, together with my assistant, I walked to the village of Iwonicz. A wooden church ringed by trees by the side of the road . . . Two stained-glass windows next to the main altar, Saints Clement and Casimir [Kazimierz]. This was the first time I'd seen my patron saint's image! The church is just having its roof restored. This loving effort to conserve the little church contrasts so starkly with the nearby ex-Brethren church, simple and bare but gracious in form, which has been neglected and is being used as a granary. . . . In this people's homeland, a country of progress, as we call it, a former Brethren church, 'the devil's' work, is safeguarding grain being forced into cooperatives and nationalised cement. It's realistically protecting material goods. Meanwhile, the church, which stands uphill from it, made smooth with conservation, stands guard over the local farmers' morality and worldview, watches over spiritual purity. The clergy's

22 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

23 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

24 Operation Vistula was a Polish government's action of expelling all non-Polish inhabitants from south-eastern Poland in order to eliminate the supply base for the Ukrainian Insurgent Army active in this area.

muscle beats powerfully, notwithstanding the stifling political moment, is keenly absorbed by the masses 'empathy for the oppressed.'²⁵

Neither his sense of humour nor his feeling of the absurd left Moczarski for an instant. He wrote in another letter:

À propos of history, there is a village close to Iwonicz in which someone overly zealous has (recently) chopped the crown off a statue of [King Władysław] Jagiełło because 'in People's Poland the crown is censured.' Long live the freedom of expression of Socialist feelings! What the hell is the point of reminding people that Wład of Grunwald held the king's office. This is how these days people out there belatedly dethroned a king."²⁶

In the autumn of 1956, Marta Rajchman received a letter from Moczarski in the sanatorium. As she had survived the war in Switzerland, then settled in France and never visited Poland after the war, they had not seen each other in over ten years. Their old friendship must have been deep, since despite the passage of time Moczarski shared his thoughts with her about his life recently, his observations about contemporary Poland, his joy at being released from prison very openly and with feeling. His letter recapitulates his experiences, but also his hopes for the future, giving the impression that he is trying to describe himself anew, standing tall again.

You've asked me about my philosophy. Instead of writing a memorandum, I will answer your questions chaotically. What I like and what I don't like. I don't like Fascism and dictatorship, whatever form they may take. I don't like platitudes and big words because I always suspect that they are covering up a scam. I don't like apotheosis and ceremonies that are put on instead of explaining a challenging problem. I don't like prison, terror and coercion, the crushing of fingers and burning, pulling out of hair, mashing of a tied-up prisoner. I don't like contempt for human beings. I don't like candidates for angelhood because they eventually turn into brutes. I don't like putting up statues when a person retires. I don't like shallow official myths. I don't like a plethora of administrative intermediaries. I don't like blather and buttering people up. I don't like it when formulas controlled by newspapers are lodged in people's heads. I don't like it when words kill thoughts. I don't like it when a parliament is a radical misrepresentation of the people's will. I don't like an absence of social control. I don't like out-of-control economic disparities, but I also don't like it when a society is transformed into barracks with the same stew for all. I don't like it when old people have nothing to eat and, like once upon a time the Canadian Indians, they have to go to their deaths hungry. I don't like nationalisms and racisms, both the grand and small ones . . . I don't like military rule, even though a civilian colonel, a troublemaking politician possessed by the idea of bringing salvation

25 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

26 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

to others in order to benefit his own trough is worse than a professional soldier I don't like believing in luck, the fool's idol. I also don't like it when money changes the laws of optics. I don't like it when they use Stone Age tools and when an express letter from Wonieść to a summer resort outside Warsaw takes three days to arrive, and the telephone becomes a luxury, while a watch becomes a measure of extravagance, which the state confiscates when a court rules property seized. I don't like the cold, sweat, pork, uncomfortable armchairs, boring 'psychic' ladies and a dim-witted mob. Furthermore, because I respect the institution of guardians of the peace, I don't like Security Service functionaries. So what do I like? Freedom, democracy, Socialism, international and human solidarity, self-respect (which, apart from the love of the people, must be the hardest nut of lay ethics to crack), a clean flat, nutritious food, good clothes for everyone, the theatre, the cinema, a concert, athletics, a museum, learning, books for all, a car, a telephone the postal service, trains for all, public control, a free public opinion movement, haemorrhoid-less work, paintings, roses, poetry (don't tell anyone about this weakness of mine) and solitude, which is like a lump of amber. And the caring gesture of a kind hand. And slender hands. And a person's intellect. And, above all, when a person puts the principle that logic is his only idol first, and practices it.²⁷

In October 1956, Moczarski finally got a letter from Winawer that the thinking in the justice system in Warsaw had clearly changed. Taking advantage of it, the lawyers prepared a new motion for the court. They wrote:

To drop the case without a public hearing would deprive Moczarski of the rehabilitation to which he has a right. Having been sentenced in a well-publicised trial for the disgraceful crime of collaboration, which has repeatedly been covered in the papers and on the radio, Moczarski has the right to a public rehabilitation through acquittal in court.²⁸

This time the court did allow an open trial, scheduling it for 5 December 1956. The news reached Moczarski that two witnesses in the 1952 trial, Witold Pajor and Stanisław Nienaftowski, voluntarily contacted the court. They wanted to retract their statements and talk about how they had been forced to make them. It was time for Moczarski to return to Warsaw and prepare for his trial.

Moczarski's defence went over the list of witnesses with him. They decided to invite those underground activists – including Jan Rzepecki, Władysław Bartoszewski, Aleksander Gieysztor and the underground judges Eugeniusz Ernst and Stanisław Koziółkiewicz – who would not only testify on behalf of Moczarski but also discuss the big picture of the Polish Underground State. Moczarski wrote a letter to Władysław Bartoszewski, who for several months had been taking advantage of the “thaw” to publish a day-by-day chronology

27 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

28 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

of the Warsaw Uprising and collect documents about the underground, which included asking for materials about the Warsaw Directorate of Underground Resistance.

I believe that it would be good if [the trial] served, apart from my own interest, to tell the truth about the activities of [the Directorate of Underground Resistance] Let me emphasise that I want the data presented to the court to tell about the nature of this institution, its struggle with collaborators, etc. and not about the cases which I handled, of which there were very few (a total of c. fifty-four briefs about potential death sentences for the Civil Special Court) in the six-month period when I was a member of [the Directorate of Underground Resistance].²⁹

For several days in December, all the newspapers covered the rehabilitation trial of Moczarski, Krak and Dobrowolski. A large audience and numerous reporters attended Moczarski's hearing. To make sure that they were well informed, Moczarski's friends, Władysław Minkiewicz among them, distributed copies of his request for review to correspondents of Western newspapers. As a result, west European papers and Radio Free Europe covered the proceedings.

In her memoir, Aniela Steinsbergowa emphasised that this trial represented a milestone, making other trials possible in the short-lived "thaw." Stalinist

'Errors and deviations' were being denounced in both the Soviet Union and the other people's democracies, and numerous unlawfully sentenced individuals were being rehabilitated. But it was only in Poland that public trials were held and revealed the background of the political repressions. None of the defendants was able to cry 'J'accuse' in a public court. Nowhere else could families demand retrials in which bouquets tied with black crepe bands were placed in the dock. Things were different in Poland. The wave of trials that took place after October, led to a moral and political breakthrough. Kazimierz Moczarski must take credit for it, and we must not forget it.³⁰

Rehabilitated, Moczarski began to look for something to do. The most natural place, to which he was connected by ties of friendship and outlook, were the pre-war activists of the Democratic Clubs and the underground Democratic Party. People he knew well, Professor Mieczysław Michałowicz and former Office of Information and Propaganda people, Zygmunt Kapitaniak, Michał Kulesza, Zbigniew Baucz and Zofia Rudnicka, a "Żegota" activist, had joined the government-sanctioned Democratic Club right in 1945.

In the year or so after the war, the Democratic Party had grown dynamically, as its members, the pre-war progressive intelligentsia, hoped that the party

29 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

30 Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z ławy*, 177.

would remain democratic and that it would be a player. However, their hopes evaporated rapidly as already by the end of 1946 those of its members acting on behalf of the Polish Workers' Party set out to destroy every last bit of its sovereignty. Despite the fact that the governing Communists decided to keep it alive, the Democratic Party had no political significance in Stalinist Poland.

Following Khrushchev's speech at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and the political changes in Poland, ferment appeared inside the vassalised Democratic Party. Some voiced the opinion that it should become independent, even go into the opposition, to return to its pre-war programme, to publish. This discussion was so earnest and outspoken that at the peak of the "thaw" it led the party's Central Committee to prepare new "guidelines for political activity." They included "full adherence to the Sejm's constitutional prerogatives as the highest body of state power," making relations with the Soviet Union those of partners and rehabilitating those wrongly sentenced in the Stalinist period. The Democratic Party tried to revive its daily, *Kurier Codzienny*, which had been closed down a few years earlier. This was the first time the party spoke in its own voice but, as would quickly become clear, only for a short time.

After this short period of activity, the group striving for an independent Democratic Party was marginalised. Already in early 1957, much like ten years earlier, activists promoted by the Communists stepped into action and put the challengers back in their place. The decision to withdraw support from the student Union of Young Democrats, which had been created during the "thaw" and which challenged Communism and Marxism, was a measure of the Democratic Party's dependence on the Polish United Workers' Party.³¹

Moczarski's political temperament did not allow him to stay away from public life. In early December, a few days before his rehabilitation trial, a threesome of activists involved in the Democratic Clubs came to see him and invited him to rejoin the Democratic Party. The visit, especially by the elderly Professor Mieczysław Michałowicz, must have been a great honour to Moczarski. A few days later, he was a special guest at the plenary meeting of the party's leadership and was elected to the party's Central Committee. In the autumn of 1957, he was put in charge of organising the twentieth-anniversary celebration of the Democratic Clubs. To the activists of the "real" Democratic Party it was an opportunity to remember their progressive tradition that had nothing to do with Communism. Moczarski found his old Office of Information and Propaganda comrades in the

31 Waldemar Żebrowski, *Z dziejów Stronnictwa Demokratycznego w Polsce* (Warsaw, 1999), 62–3.

Democratic Party. For them, it was very important to remember the dramatic deaths of Widerszal and Makowski and to sort out this still-unexplained crime.

And he had to make a living. After the short period of liberalisation, Home Army soldiers, and especially former convicts, remained second-class citizens, “enemies of the system” who needed to be watched. Finding work, especially after such a long break, was not easy. Moczarski got help from Włodzimierz Lechowicz who had also returned to public life after a rehabilitation trial. In December 1956, he was ceremoniously brought into the Democratic Party leadership, like Moczarski. However, unlike Moczarski, he quickly began to be promoted in Gomułka’s Poland. In 1956, he became deputy chairman of the Democratic Party, in the spring of 1957 was named editor-in-chief of *Kurier Polski*, was elected to the Sejm, became a government minister and later ambassador to the Netherlands.³²

Upon his release from prison in May 1956, Lechowicz contacted Moczarski, and they shared defence attorneys. Treating him as a friend, Moczarski also invited the initially homeless Lechowicz to stay with him and advised him on sanatoriums. Interestingly, Moczarski did this despite what everyone knew about Lechowicz from the defector Józef Światło’s revelations aired by Radio Free Europe: how the People’s Guard intelligence had infiltrated the Government Delegate’s Office and the Home Army. Lechowicz and Moczarski must have had a stern exchange about this, of which traces survive in letters. Lechowicz explained his infiltration of the Directorate of Underground Resistance and the State Security Corps to Moczarski:

I have no reason to hide from you that I’m proud of my political role. Both before and during the war, when this role entailed risking my life for the sake of a public cause I realise that this role looks different to a non-revolutionary and a non-Socialist and that it may bring on moral questions When I headed for the London[-backed] underground, I was given these instructions by the then-authorities of the People’s Army: 1. Whenever the London underground conducts an honest action against the occupier, we must support and uphold it, act exemplarily. 2. Whenever there are actions leading directly or indirectly to fratricidal clashes, they must be opposed, and the People’s Army staff must be informed about it. 3. Whenever a direct threat to the People’s Army people or a site arises, it must be pre-empted. There was not a single instance throughout the occupation when I came across your attitude clashing with my organisational duties in the People’s Army.³³

32 Spalek, *Komuniści przeciw komunistom*, 111.

33 Elżbieta Moczarska’s archive.

We do not know what Moczarski thought about the twisted explanations of Lechowicz's spying, all the more so since they ignore the 1945 reports that sent Moczarski to prison. Moczarski must have learned about them from his trial documents, although he may not have known who had written them. But it does seem that he kept away from Lechowicz and did not trust him. In any event, he did not agree to renounce their joint 1945 memorandum to Rzepecki in the papers, "an example of the valuable tradition of Communist-Democrat cooperation."³⁴

Still, in July 1957, Lechowicz hired Moczarski for *Kurier Polski*, initially as a domestic commentator. Many other unemployed former Home Army people who had done time also found work there. After spending a few months in a sanatorium, Zofia regained her strength sufficiently to take a job at the Polish Press Agency. Their life was falling into place. In autumn, they learned that she was pregnant. Kazimierz was planning to write a book about his encounter with Stroop.

34 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

Chapter Nine: Life's Many Currents

Kurier Polski was launched after the summer holidays of 1957, in early September. Moczarski's first article appeared in its third issue and covered the Sejm's appointment of the chairman of the Supreme Chamber of Control (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli, NIK). The Chamber had been closed down in 1952, at the zenith of Stalinism, and restoring it had been a Democratic Party demand in 1956. Moczarski wrote infrequently. He was shortly made head of the relations with readers department.

Kurier Polski was a popular newspaper mostly featuring brief news articles and reports advocating for public and individual causes. Their titles were long and gripping. "A razor-sharp afternoon paper," the prominent commentator Stefan Kisielewski called it.

Jan Dąbrowski, a pre-war journalist of the Polish Socialist Party's *Robotnik*, was charged with building its staff. Most of the reporters were young, many had only just moved to Warsaw. Some had already spent time in Stalinist prisons. They were determined to create a good, dynamic daily.¹ The veteran reporter Małgorzata Szejnert had her start there. She reminisced, "*Kurier* was magical in its way. The old journalists felt a bit like it was the time before the war."² Its home was an old building in Huebnera, today's Zgody, Street. The print shop was on the ground floor, an old-fashioned glassed-in gallery with the editorial offices above it, so that every time the managing editor wanted to hand a text to a linotype operator, he would let the sheet of paper float down. City editor Wiesław Sachs took the utmost care to make the writing lively, in the wake of a period of ideological drivel and tedium. He came up with the idea, for instance, to have reporters riding around the city on motorcycles with the sign *Kurier* on their backs. Heralds, angels of information.³

Zbigniew Łenka, at the time a young reporter, remembered the paper's competition with *Ekspress Wieczorny*, also an afternoon paper:

We went to press a little bit later than they did, and when the Sejm was voting, wanting to be the first to write about it, we made a relay: someone wrote a note in the Sejm, someone else would grab it and carry it to the editorial office, someone else would 'work

1 *Kurier Polski. Gazety jak nóż portret własny*, eds. Paweł Deresz et al. (Warsaw, 2009), 37–9.

2 Author's interview with Małgorzata Szejnert, 2008.

3 *Kurier Polski. Gazety jak nóż*, 45.

it over' for printing. Of course, we had no Dictaphones, cell phones or laptops then. Our circulation was growing, which motivated us to work and inebriated us.⁴

Leon Janowicz, for many years head of the culture section of what its journalists called *Kurpol*, argued that the paper's popularity had other benefits: "We had nice salaries, and because we were the Democratic Party's official paper and the party lived off of us, they allowed us some independence: you don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs."⁵

The mood at the paper was also shaped by the fact that the former political prisoners gave it a public legitimacy. The names Lechowicz and Moczarski, the protagonists of illustrious rehabilitation trials, boosted its reputation. Managing editor Adam Obarski, a pre-war *Robotnik* reporter and Polish Socialist Party activist and a member of Freedom and Independence after the war, became one of the two managing editors. He had been sentenced to fifteen years in prison by a Communist court. Waclaw Gluth-Nowowiejski, a fighter in the Warsaw Uprising worked on the city desk. He had been wounded and virtually by miracle survived in a cellar in Warsaw for months until the arrival of the Russians, then spent the Stalinist years in prison. Stanislaw Krupa, a fighter of the legendary Home Army's "Zośka" Scout battalion, sentenced on false charges to five years in prison, worked on the domestic desk. He later wrote a memoir about his investigation in the infamous Tenth Pavilion of the Rakowiecka Street prison.

No one discussed their experiences in the office. During the war, Łenka had been a member of the Grey Ranks (*Szare Szeregi*) paramilitary Scout formation and fought in the Warsaw Uprising. He and Moczarski became friends, visited each other's homes. They shared a Home Army past, but never talked about Moczarski's time in prison. Leon Janowicz also noted Moczarski's reticence, a habit from the underground, and prison:

Kazio and I mostly talked about the ailment that bothered us: sleeplessness. We also shared a detail of our past: membership in the Home Army and, even though our ranks were quite different, this sleeplessness bothered us equally. The fact that we shared a neurologist (we were both on friendly terms with this charming lady doctor) gave us reason for lively discussions about our experiences with Dr N.'s famous sleeping powder. I realised at some point that Kazio knew everything about me, and I still knew nothing about him. Because this charming chatterbox was also exceptionally discreet and reserved when it came to talking about himself.⁶

4 Author's interview with Zbigniew Łenka, 2008.

5 *Kurier Polski. Gazety jak nóż*, 7.

6 Author's interview with Leon Janowicz, 2008.

Teresa Szydłowska, an editor at *Kurier Polski*, met Moczarski when they worked together at the paper, and then for many years for the monthly *Problemy Alkoholizmu*. She remembers that despite their generation-size age difference, he never felt remote to her. “He was very vivacious, warm and open. Perfectly ordinary. I had heard about his time in prison before I met him, as in my circles (my parents had been in the Home Army) people simply knew about it, just as earlier they knew what happened to those who were disappearing. His time in prison gradually became legendary, but he himself never spoke about it.”⁷ Małgorzata Szejnert has a similar image of Moczarski:

He did not need to appear as a fighter. Those who had also spent time in prison must have known who he was because they stuck together. But they didn't say anything. When I met him at *Kurier* he was running the relations with readers department very attentively. I met a pleasant, modest, smiling gentleman, who was different from the others precisely because of his discretion and reserve. When he tried to talk someone into something, he would almost whisper: ‘The little mouse sitting on my shoulder says that this is how things are.’ This saying made some people think of him as an eccentric. I couldn't imagine that he was such a . . . toughie. Years later, after reading *Conversations with an Executioner*, I thought: ‘Good Lord, and I worked with that man!’⁸

In the autumn of 1957 when *Kurier Polski* got under way, the “thaw” was fading, but people still believed that some of its aura would survive. People had settled down; a minor stabilisation was beginning. Szejnert reminisced:

The *Kurier* team was mostly young and cohesive. Across the street from our offices were two cafés, we would skip out to talk there. Both the young reporters and the serious older editors would go there. Our newspaper's *politruk* was Wiktor Kubar, a pleasant, educated Jew. He kept us in line, but in a cultured way. Everyone knew what his job was, we also went out for coffee with him, but then the conversations were cautious. Lechowicz was the only one who was not on the team. He had his own political business; he was involved in the Democratic Party and he had little to do with us. We would sometimes see him in meetings, where he was cool and concrete, he would share some information and leave.⁹

All accounts concur that Moczarski had a special position at the paper. He thrived in the relations with readers department. “Throngs of all sorts of wretches who had been treated unfairly by government offices or by their families made a pilgrimage to see him. He was most probably the first person who took the time to listen to them calmly, which was sometimes enough to send them on their

7 Author's interview with Teresa Szydłowska, 2008.

8 Author's interview with Małgorzata Szejnert, 2008.

9 Author's interview with Małgorzata Szejnert, 2008.

way to manage for themselves,” recalled Teresa Szydłowska.¹⁰ Moczarski saw this mediation as the essence of a journalist's work, which he explained in an article in *Kurier Polski*: “An editorial office is not the place to come for help, information, searches, directives or legal aid. It also cannot step in for the petitioner who is lazy or does not persevere, but personal troubles, which are often linked to the whole of public life, are an important part of *Kurier's* work. It is the tails (or heads, if you prefer) of this irrevocable value of civilisation and culture which is today's press.”¹¹

Radosław Ostrowicz, an investigative reporter who worked in Moczarski's department and in the '80s became the paper's editor-in-chief, learned what this looked like in practice. “I would travel frequently and, when I had problems, I'd phone Moczarski, and he would guide me: go there-and-there, talk to so-and-so. He had a phenomenal investigative instinct, he indicated trails, connected threads. And when I had problems, he'd defend me.” Ostrowicz's work partner was Gabriel Kowalczyk, and they usually went everywhere together because Moczarski believed that there should always be a witness to a conversation.

We worked on the principle that we should be in touch daily, but one day Gabryś disappeared. Moczarski phoned his wife, but she knew nothing. He ordered a search. I wanted to wait a bit, but then we remembered that there had been some mysterious phone calls and, also, we were to stick to our rule. We went out, stopping by all of Gabryś's regular joints. No sign of him. Finally, Moczarski decided that we should go to the Oczki Street mortuary. I really didn't want to go, I just didn't feel like going there, and I suggested we call his wife one more time. She answered and said that her husband had just come home and was sleeping. We went to his house straight away. Moczarski was furious. He talked with Gabryś man-to-man, I don't want to talk about it, but it took five minutes for Gabryś to sober up. He brought out some cognac then, so we would drink to getting along.¹²

One day Moczarski sent some of his people to the small town of D. (Even this many years later Ostrowicz did not want to provide details). Two reporters went, as usual. The case was criminal, local civil servants and party activists were involved. A series of articles was written about it. After they were published, Ostrowicz was summoned to the prosecutor's office. “When I entered the room, the lady prosecutor began to take down my information. The questions sent from D. were lying next to the typewriter.” Ostrowicz read them on the sly and

10 Author's interview with Teresa Szydłowska, 2008.

11 *Kurier Polski*, September 23, 1961.

12 Małgorzata Malanowska, *Kazimierz Moczarski, życie i twórczość* (Warsaw, 1989), typescript in author's possession, 204.

was stunned. He understood that the prosecutor in D. wanted to turn things upside down to prove that the journalist had been biased because of the informal deals he had made with the town. Ostrowicz left the room for a few minutes and phoned his boss to ask him what to do. Moczarski's answer was "Radek, run back to the office." Once back at *Kurier Polski*, he saw Moczarski sitting in the absent editor-in-chief's chair. He was on the phone with the deputy prosecutor general. "I listened. Moczarski asked harshly what gave the prosecutor's office the right to interrogate a journalist as a suspect. He went on to explain what journalism was all about and whom it served. I don't know if he managed to convince or to intimidate them, but this conversation ended the affair. I was never summoned again."¹³

Ostrowicz also remembered a lighter story. He was sitting alone in the editorial office one day, when a man walked in wearing a railroad worker's overcoat over his pyjamas. His expression was tense, he looked terrified and hounded. Ostrowicz talked to him. The man told him that he had escaped from hospital, where he had been taken because he had been "operated on" by a hometown "clique" who were trying to kill him. Ostrowicz heard the fantastical story and tried to pooh-pooh his guest's suspicions. As this did not help, he called Moczarski out of an editors' meeting.

He came out straight away, asked for tea, as I went over the story. He said, 'Sir, you were right to come here. There is only one thing that surprises me, why did you wait so long?' I understood nothing, but I listened to the whole conversation, which was not over till the evening. Moczarski began by carefully listening to the railroad worker's whole story again. I could see the man relax. Moczarski told him: 'And now you will go to the hospital. We, not only the others, have our people in this hospital, too. I will ask them to take care of you. I can guarantee 100% that you will be safe there. But if you guess who is helping you, don't let them know it.'

After the railroad worker left, Moczarski began to seek allies. According to Ostrowicz,

When in need, he could extend the large circle of people he knew. This time, he found a doctor he knew who worked in the hospital and phoned him right away. He was assured that they would take the patient back and would not penalise him for escaping. The editors got a letter a few months later. The railroad worker had the operation, returned home and was feeling much better. He claimed to have recognised the doctor but stuck to the agreement and did not betray it."¹⁴

13 Malanowska, *Kazimierz Moczarski*, 204.

14 Malanowska, *Kazimierz Moczarski*, 205.

The railroad worker's trust in *Kurier Polski* was not unfounded, as the paper was well-known for its social interventions. Leon Janowicz wrote in an unpublished memoir, "*Kurpol* stood out among all the People's Republic newspapers thanks to its editors' many actions. The city desk commanded by Wiesław Sachs and Waław Nowowiejski successfully overcame the unwritten ban on charitable activity, which the Communists considered 'capitalist exploitation.'"¹⁵ Using the motto "To make a child smile" the paper succeeded at encouraging its readers to donate toys, books and clothing for children and families with many children. This operation gave birth to the "Order of the Smile," which is awarded to people who help children to this day, although the name of its initiator has been forgotten.



Kazimierz Moczarski with a group of *Kurier Polski* employees on a Labour Day parade, Warsaw 1965. Photogr. Archive of Elżbieta Moczarska / FOTONOVA.

15 *Kurier Polski*, *Gazety jak nóż*, 120.

Kurier Polski journalists travelled to places mentioned in readers' letter to people in need of help, to see what they needed the most. They then collected various items to give to the children. They also enlisted manufacturers' donations. The journalists themselves distributed them, and before Christmas they would be busy twenty-four hours a day. Moczarski wrote to his friend, the editor-in-chief of *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* in Bydgoszcz, Witold Lassota: "I had loads of work up to 24 December with the 'To make a child smile' campaign . . . Everything is alright. The campaign turned out well. Over half a million zlotys."¹⁶

The beginnings of *Kurier Polski* coincided with the end of the era of relative freedom. Its symbol was the shutting down of the *Po prostu* weekly and the loud student protests that accompanied it. Now all publications would be overseen by the Press Office of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (Biuro Prasy Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej) headed by Artur Starewicz. He made matters clear on 12 October 1957 in a meeting of the editors of social and cultural publications:

The wickedness comes from the fact that they are mostly publishing materials which aim to make Socialism look bad, present situations as hopeless, charge the people's government with sins and neglect, which are actually the result of our country's historical developments or of other objective causes, disseminate a lack of faith, apathy and a defeatist mood. . . . Another issue is broadcasting views that are openly reactionary, views that rehabilitate the 'London' ideology, the *Sanacja's* ideology or the ideology of contemporary bourgeois propagandists.¹⁷

However, the paper was in a somewhat different situation by then. In the words of Leon Janowicz, "To be historically truthful, as historians and journalists should be, let me add that *Kurier Polski* was not as obliged as other newspapers to follow the [Central Committee's] Press Department's guidelines and orders. *Kurier's* editors had their own [Central Committee] in Chmielna Street at the Democratic Party headquarters."¹⁸ Zbigniew Łenka remembered an editors' meeting in the summer of 1959 when Lechowicz brought up the question of honouring the Warsaw Uprising and Moczarski suggested interviewing General Antoni Chruściel "Monter." To everyone's amazement, Lechowicz approved the idea. Moczarski found the phone number. "We booked an international call," Łenka remembered. "Moczarski was laughing that the whole security office would be bugging us. When 'Monter' answered the phone, Moczarski introduced

16 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

17 AAN, KC PZPR, 1354, 1685, B. 196

18 Author's interview with Leon Janowicz, 2008.

himself and asked for an interview for *Kurier*, assuring him that we wanted an honest conversation. 'Monter' was stunned. But he didn't want to give us the interview."¹⁹

The privilege of having the paper read by censors at the newspaper's office rather than the Censorship Office in Mysia Street just before it went to the printers showed this relative independence. This home advantage meant that it was easier to negotiate with the censor when replacing a word with another that the authorities would allow. However, there were limits to the newspaper's sovereignty that could not be dodged.

Elżbieta Otffinowska joined *Kurier Polski* in 1958. She was still a greenhorn when she wrote an article that very nearly put an end her career in journalism. One day two young people from the Young Democrats' Club at the University of Warsaw came to the office. They wanted the newspaper to give their point of view on the planned law to force students to work, which agitated them. Otffinowska talked with the two students, and her interview was published. The next day she received a phone call. The person at the other end of the line, an activist of the university council of the Polish Students' Association (*Rada Uczelniana Zrzeszenia Studentów Polskich, ZSP*), told her that the interview was being widely read and disseminated at many universities. A student rally was being planned; posters were being put up. She checked for the posters. They were there. And since it was a Polish Students' Association representative she was talking to, everything would be legal. She wrote about the rally. The issue came out a few hours before it was to start.

Otffinowska remembered:

All the phones started ringing, calls were coming in from so-called 'authorities' asking what *Kurier* was driving at, why it was 'spreading news' about the matter. The editor-in-chief summoned my boss. Next day I was fired on the spot. The managing editor called me in to explain. He said: 'Pray that those posters really are there.' I went to check, they were gone. No one from the [Polish Students' Union] people admitted to having talked to me. And I had not had time to ask for my informant's name. When I asked whether the rally would take place, people gave me elusive answers. I didn't know what to do. Then a colleague, Tadeusz Stępień, came to see me. He said: 'You saw those posters; they've got to be somewhere.' He snooped around the university until he found them. So, we could write that the rally really had been planned.²⁰

19 Author's interview with Zbigniew Łenka, 2008.

20 Małanowska, *Kazimierz Moczarski*, 211.

The odium was lifted from the paper. An editorial meeting was called, and one of the items on the agenda was the young journalist's case and her dismissal. After the item was read out loud, everyone fell silent. Otffinowska thought that her time at *Dziennik Polski* was over. Then Moczarski spoke, arguing that a beginning journalist could not be expected to be fully politically responsible and should be learning at work. What could be expected is professional honesty, not inventing facts, but if something was a fact, he or she ought to write about it. Now, it would be the editors' duty to decide what political repercussions the affair might have. He was of the opinion that she should stay. A colleague backed him up. Otffinowska's dismissal was revoked. "I feel to this day that Moczarski's stand decided my life situation. I remained in the profession," argued the now-retired journalist decades later.²¹

The Moczarskis gradually rebuilt their life. Guests began to fill their small flat again. There was some furniture that had survived the war and a dozen photographs, but they did not manage to find a pre-war portrait of Zofia, which had been stored in the cellars of the National Museum. Professor Jacek Kochanowicz, their friends' son who would often visit with his parents, remembered them this way: "Moczarski had a very lively way of talking, with irony and a love of paradox. Mrs Zofia was the opposite: quiet, as if she wasn't there."²² Teresa Szydłowska also noticed their differences. When she met Zofia Moczarska,

I knew about her difficult time in prison and imagined that she would be robust, exceptionally strong. And here I saw a willowy woman with delicate features, a subtle beauty, a tad old-fashioned in her brimmed hat. Her manner showed that she was very brittle and needed lots of support from her husband. And this is how it was. He helped out at home every day, did the shopping, when she was ill, he took care of her with devotion.²³

Their only daughter was born in May 1958. Kazimierz was the happiest father on earth, saying "Elżbieta is my triumph because not only did I survive but I also gave life to my daughter."²⁴

21 Malanowska, *Kazimierz Moczarski*, 212.

22 Author's interview with Jacek Kochanowicz, 2007.

23 Author's interview with Teresa Szydłowska, 2008.

24 Author's interview with Teresa Szydłowska, 2008.



Zofia and Kazimierz Moczarski with their daughter Elżbieta in their apartment. Warsaw, August 1958. Photogr. Tadeusz Zborowski / Archive of Elżbieta Moczarska / FOTONOVA.

Zofia gave up her job. Her prison-induced ailments had returned. A few years later she would have a major stomach operation and a chronic illness would not allow her to hold a regular job ever again. On top of it, the little girl was ill, too, making them worry themselves sick in the first year of her life. In 1964, they decided that she should have open-heart surgery, a risky operation then, one of the first in Poland. It was performed by Professor Jan Kossakowski, a pioneer in paediatric cardiology, and his team. Teresa Szydłowska recalled:

It was a terribly dangerous operation, no one knew how it would end. And you know what [Moczarski] did? He asked a professional photographer to document the whole operation. It was a success. Moczarski was ecstatic. He brought the photos to work and put them on my desk. To me, the whole idea with the photographs was very disturbing. I couldn't look at them.²⁵

25 Author's interview with Teresa Szydłowska, 2008.

All the women interviewed about Moczarski agreed: he emanated an inner elegance, was full of an old-fashioned gallantry towards the ladies. He always carried a briefcase bursting at the seams and wore a grey blazer made by his favourite tailor. He could be interested in fashion. He would notice an attractive thing, a purse or a small scarf, and buy it for his wife. Elżbieta Moczarska says:

He was supposedly old-school, but he liked it when I wore jeans, even though my Mum and aunts frowned on it. Another story shows his totally un-old-fashioned and probably atypical take on raising children in those days. I was fourteen, I came back from summer holidays madly in love and I insisted on going to see my intended. He lived in Silesia. And father, understanding the passions of youth, went with me to Gliwice, we stayed in a hotel just so I could meet my boyfriend. I quickly realised, of course, that it was nothing serious. Despite all his horrific experiences, he was a sunny person and an empathetic dad. We played restaurant: I would sit on a stool and he would put on a show before me, as both chef and waiter. I think it was a trick: I was supposed to feel like a grand lady and to finish my lunch or dinner at last. Both of them treated me as a partner, I had the right to my own opinions, I was there for all their discussions, even though of course I didn't understand much. I also think that my mum was somehow always in my father's shadow. She didn't work, she was constantly ill, spent a lot of time in hospital. And even though she gave me loads of time and affection, I can remember that she was often sad.²⁶

Elżbieta knew about her parents' time in prison, she matured alongside them. "Father wore clogs at home and complained that his heel hurt. Mum liked to remember Christmas Eve in prison, and on our walks past the Ministry of Justice she would point to a little barred cellar window and say that she had been held there. And to me it was something self-evident." Elżbieta only realised the horror of this prison at eleven when she heard a Radio Free Europe broadcast about her father's tortures. But she was too young to dwell on it, and her parents did not create a combatant atmosphere at home. She could not believe that the programme was about people she knew so well. Did it give her a new perspective on them? "No, to me they were still the same parents."²⁷

Jacek Kochanowicz, twelve years older than Elżbieta, recalled the adults' discussions among his parents' friends:

I listened to their never-ending conversations about politics. This generation had an oral narration they learned in the interwar period. Before the war they were on the margins of the *Sanacja* left, shaped by the Great Depression. They were ambivalent about Communism but did not preclude the possibility that something might come of

26 Author's interview with Elżbieta Moczarska, 2007.

27 Author's interview with Elżbieta Moczarska, 2007.

it, I can remember my father's stories from before the war about talking with Henryk Dembiński, a Communist sympathiser, whom he described as a fascinating man but a fanatic. History and a free Polish state were important to them. Moczarski was proud that the Polish Underground State had been ruled by law. Only the extreme left and extreme right didn't adhere to its principles. As an investigative judge of the [Directorate of Underground Resistance], he had to find evidence, to enforce the purity of proceedings, to make sure this work adhered to pre-war law. He said that his respect for the law came from feeling responsible for maintaining continuity, from looking into the future because the war would one day be over, we would have to live normally and so we may not corrupt people. These words stayed with me. My father returned to Poland right after the war from exile, even though he was risking arrest. There was a generation of free people. My father wanted to come back, so they locked him up. Moczarski wanted to fight, so they locked him up. They lived with the consequences of their choices. They believed that there was no point being annoyed with reality, just like there's no point being annoyed with the weather. Neither of them was the emigrating sort, and in the 1960s you could either retreat into your private life or do what you could within the system. The democratic opposition came later. They hoped a bit that Communism would become more civilised.²⁸

Teresa Szydłowska, who was also of the generation growing up in the Polish People's Republic, said that Moczarski was an exemplar of the Polish intelligentsia shaped before the war. "This generation, my parents' generation, had a sense of duty, it was solid somehow. Moczarski believed that no issue may be neglected, he discussed, stretched meetings into infinity, he would argue formulating every question precisely because maybe one day it could come in useful for a good cause."²⁹

Leon Janowicz recalled how Moczarski would drag editorial meetings out forever with his attention to detail and his lawyer's approach, which was exhausting. "He had an innate natural sense of justice, for which he was ready to fight anyone, anytime, anywhere."³⁰

They also remembered how Moczarski would become involved in all sorts of causes. He would literally glue himself to the phone. He would go from one meeting to the next. He was active in addressing social issues, but he was not a public person so as to draw attention to himself. He went to meetings of the Crooked Circle Club, where the Warsaw liberal intelligentsia gathered in the months of freedom following October 1956. He was active in the Polish Journalists' Association, the Democratic Party, the block of flats committee, the

28 Author's interview with Jacek Kochanowicz, 2007.

29 Author's interview with Teresa Szydłowska, 2008.

30 *Kurier Polski*, September 20, 1986.

parents' associations at his daughter's schools. When the Solidarity Trade Union was born in 1980, Szydłowska's first thought was: "Shame that Moczarski did not live to see this, this would have been just the place for him to show off his talents."³¹

One of the issues for which Moczarski "was always ready to fight" was legal protection for journalists. The January 1958 Democratic Party Congress gave him a chance to speak about it. He failed to win over the delegates' for the Democratic Party to take on the issue of press law and draft a new one. He argued: "The law is an objective guarantor of the freedom of the press. We cannot allow the press and the people of the press to rely on erroneous information, which today governs the Press Control Offices."³²

However, government policies did not favour such initiatives. The freedom of expression that exploded in October wilted as censorship became harsher. The government reduced the print runs of unruly publications, such as *Tygodnik Powszechny*. The party interfered so much in newspapers' policies that editors became afraid to publish controversial articles. Signed by academics and writers opposing interference by the Censorship Office, *Letter of 34* brought on a political tempest. The government began to persecute writers who, wanting to evade censorship, sent their texts to the émigré Paris monthly *Kultura*. January Grzędziński, the editor of the pre-war weekly *Czarno na białem*, was one of its victims. In September 1964, the Security Office searched his flat, confiscated typescripts and even his typewriter. The prosecutor's office launched an investigation. In the end, the government did not put Grzędziński on trial but deprived him of a means to make a living and even of his pension. Now seventy-four years old, he had known Moczarski since the pre-war Democratic Clubs, and wrote to him asking to place this classified in *Kurier Polski*: "Unemployed writer will take any work." Now-retired *Kurier Polski* reporters cannot remember whether the ad ever ran in the two daily columns of classifieds but know that a prank of this kind would have been to Moczarski's liking.

From the start, Moczarski wrote for *Kurier Polski* only sporadically. A subject he was particularly interested in was the history of the Democratic Clubs. He wrote on anniversaries in both Democratic Party publications, *Kurier Polski* daily and *Tygodnik Demokratyczny* weekly, about the early days of the clubs and the Democratic Party and about what happened to its people during the war in a tone that resembled a ceremony to commemorate the fallen. He discussed

31 Author's interview with Leon Janowicz, 2008.

32 Małanowska, *Kazimierz Moczarski*, 185.

the Polish intelligentsia's leftist traditions, which were different from what the Polish United Workers' Party was talking about. In 1958 he became involved in putting on a commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the clubs' creation. "Moczarski was a true [Democratic Party] patriot, he was one of the party's oldest militants. When we met, I saw him not so much as a journalist but as one of the party's key figures," remembered Ostrowicz.³³

Władysław Bartoszewski, uninvolved in politics and a generation younger than Moczarski, during the war had not discussed politics with him but never questioned whether Moczarski's political views overlapped with the Democratic Party's pre-war and wartime programme.

But after we came out of prison, especially beginning in 1957 we talked often. I was always a little surprised by his active involvement in the 'new' Democratic Party, but I never brought this up On the other hand, the wartime experiences (of the people of the former [Office of Information and Propaganda]) to some extent brought them together for good, but regardless of how much they liked each other, their differences and political choices no doubt made them diverge and make different political choices in the 1940s and also in the 1950s and 1960s. No wonder, if we think about how far the paths of the August 1980 Solidarity people diverged later, in a situation of total freedom which we did not have earlier.³⁴

Most people treated the Democratic Party with reserve. It was considered to be totally dependent on the Polish United Workers' Party whim. Even Polish United Workers' Party members spoke disdainfully about their coalition partners, "the party of the trembling," one of the gentler terms. However, Waldemar Żebrowski, who wrote a monograph about the Democratic Party, considers this opinion unfair. He believes that the party went through better times and worse times, but that its mere existence made it possible to maintain the continuity of democratic thought and ideas about economic freedom even with the Communists in power.³⁵

Even if Żebrowski's view is too generous, it is a fact that 1956 allowed the Democratic Party's pre-war ideas to be reborn. This golden age lasted a little over a year, from October 1956, when the Democratic Party attempted to win back the identity the Communists had taken away from it, to their Sixth Congress in January 1958, when a new programme was chosen. It allowed the party to adhere to some values, regardless of the precise nature of its vassal status. In its

33 Malanowska, *Kazimierz Moczarski*, 203.

34 Letter from Władysław Bartoszewski to the author, March 26, 2006.

35 Żebrowski, *Z dziejów Stronnictwa Demokratycznego w Polsce* 160.

programme, the Democratic Party declared its adherence to national symbols, anniversaries and traditions, in the Sejm its deputies stood up for the interests of tradespeople and individually- or cooperatively-owned small production enterprises. The party adhered to the Polish Positivist belief in stimulating the growth of small towns and valuing the intelligentsia. It promoted a greater role for the Sejm vis-à-vis the other branches of government and creating an Office of the President, a State Tribunal and a system of administrative courts. The party's only demand that was implemented in the post-October 1956 period was the creation of the Supreme Chamber of Control. Its other demands had to wait until the next period of liberalisation, which would come in 1980.

Chairing the Central Committee of the Democratic Party from 1956 was Professor Stanisław Kulczyński, an eminent biologist who during the war had served as the government in exile regional delegate in Lvov and been active in underground education. After the war he was a distinguished social activist involved in organising the University of Wrocław, who served as its first rector, and the National Ossoliński Institute, which had been moved from Lvov. However, Kulczyński fully obeyed the Communists. The Democratic Party's most important decision were made by the presidium of the party's Central Committee, which had been taken over by the Communists who had been placed there in 1945 and who closely guarded the Polish United Workers' Party's interests. When in 1964 the Democratic Party Congress made an attempt to write its own programme, the Communists saw it as opposing its policies and stopped it. Nonetheless, Democratic Party members were active in local government, and the party developed services and started regional associations. However, whenever it gained influence somewhere, the Polish United Workers' Party stepped in. This happened to the youth sections, which gained popularity and were simply dissolved in 1965 so as not to compete with the Polish United Workers' Party's youth organisations.

Janina Szczuka, defence lawyer Władysław Winawer's daughter, remembers Moczarski's frequent visits. Their friendship, begun in the dramatic circumstances of Moczarski's imprisonment, blossomed until Winawer's death in 1973.

People like my father and Moczarski believed that the Democratic Party was where you would belong to get the most done before the authorities realised what's going on: to see how far regulations could be altered, to get reimbursements, to write a handful of articles, to reach people. A bit like the children's game of sharks and minnows.³⁶

36 Author's interview with Janina Szczuka, 2006.

At the Democratic Party's Sixth Congress in January 1958, Moczarski was a delegate and a member of its Central Committee. He said that he saw the party's future in starting youth clubs among the intelligentsia and tradespeople, which the party would formally sponsor and gain members. He argued for making this a point in the final resolution of the Congress. Moczarski was decorated with the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta for his role in the pre-war and wartime Democratic Party at the Congress. At this time *Stolica* monthly ran his article about the origins of the Democratic Clubs in the broader setting of the political situation in Poland in the late 1930s.

The Democratic Clubs were a factor in the political consolidation of the Polish intelligentsia, a live patriotic factor in awakening and shaping resistance to the suppression of democratic thought, persecution of leftist organisations, and national and religious discrimination. The clubs fought for human and civil rights, for freedom of thought, for social justice in freeing the working man from the regime oppression of that time.

He concluded with thoughts that can be viewed as a reflection of October's hopes for the rebirth of the Democratic Party.

The Democratic Clubs were a preliminary stage of the Democratic Party which, today, after twenty years of struggle, is one of the parties that govern and are responsible for our country, for Socialism The Sixth Congress of the Democratic Party has recently ended. Let's recall the October of the interwar intelligentsia when the first political organisation of intellectual workers was created, the Democratic Club in Warsaw.³⁷

Over time, the voice of those who, like Moczarski, counted on their party acting as an independent entity diminished. At the next party congress in February 1961, Moczarski spoke as the advocate of the young intelligentsia inside the party. He argued that the party's Central Committee should include representatives of the Young Democrats' clubs. However, he was not re-elected to the Central Committee. He did become a member of the Party Central Court (Centralny Sąd Partyjny) and hence also the party's Main Council (Rada Naczelna). He was being ostracised, and in the summer of 1967 became a scapegoat in the internal rivalries, which also affected *Kurier Polski*.

The paper's former reporters are not eager to talk about the period between June 1967 and the summer of 1968. As it joined the anti-Semitic campaign, there is nothing for the paper to be proud of. "On the timeline of the 'Polish months,' March [1968] was the cloudiest. It fully soaked our newspaper, more than the others, and it is not surprising that we are the ones who are remembered in many

37 *Stolica* 6/1958.

serious histories of the Polish People's Republic," maintained Leon Janowicz. Even before the March tempest, another shady incident took place in the editorial offices. Henryk (Henio) Tycner was the editor-in-chief, and Janowicz portrayed him colourfully:

Henio adored awarding the cups to Book of the Year authors, and he did it with ever-greater skill, especially when the tv cameras were rolling. Once, as we drove to Poznań to give the prize to Arkady Fiedler, he told the driver to stop and invited us for a 'pig's wing', his beloved pig's trotter. I'd never had such a scrumptious one, with puréed peas and the most authentic Grodzisz beer. He could be a charming Amphitryon. However, sadly, as is quite often the case with Poznanians, he had the soul of an out-and-out National Democrat. He joined [ultranationalist Communist politician Mieczysław] Moczarski's people. It was his office that Ryszard Gontarz, the darkest of villains, practically moved into, where ministers' jobs were awarded and future ambassadors and provincial governors were appointed.³⁸

On 19 June 1967, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, Władysław Gomułka, gave a speech that focused mostly on the Six-Day War underway between Israel and the Arab countries. Millions heard him use the term "Fifth Column" to describe Poland's Jews. This term, until then applied by the Polish Communists exclusively to the pro-Nazi German minority in pre-war Poland, took on a new meaning. A witch-hunt began against people with Jewish roots and those who supported Israel. They were hunted and branded; the campaign was in equal parts alarming and grotesque. Regardless of the complex political infighting at the top levels of power, on the personal level, a person's views of Israel served as an opportunity to uncover old hatreds and settle personal scores.

At *Kurier Polski* under Tycner's leadership, the editors and writers remained vigilant about adhering to the ruling party's guidelines, which, in line with Soviet policy, presented support for the Egyptian side in the armed conflict as lying in the Polish national interest. However, Moczarski casually voiced his sympathy for victorious Israel to one or maybe more of his colleagues, something that is impossible to confirm so many years later. In any case, the editor-in-chief heard about it and reported on it to the Democratic Party authorities. A commission that included comrades from the Polish United Workers' Party was formed immediately to investigate what was going on at *Kurier Polski*.

The Commission began its work on 5 July. One of its members was Radosław Ostrowicz, who remembered,

³⁸ *Kurier Polski. Gazety jak nóż*. . . , 163.

I was told that it has been decided to set up a commission to explain what had happened. The commission was to include representatives of the [Democratic Party] club and the [Polish United Workers' Party], and me because I was the chairman of the works council. We spent several days interviewing the journalists, I can't remember any names so many years later. We asked what was being said about the Israeli-Arab war. Nothing came of it. But out of the blue one of the journalists confirmed the charges. His name was Kawka. The commission heard him out and went home. I only realised later that I had been taken advantage of in an ugly case. I felt awful, I went to see Moczarski and apologised. Zofia Zdanowska, his deputy in the relations with readers department, did the same.³⁹

Ostrowicz's story is puzzling. We can learn more about the mood inside the paper from the then-managing editor Zbigniew Łenka:

It was a disgusting story. The commission created for the occasion interrogated the journalists. We were expected to report on one another. Henryk Tycner was the editor-in-chief then, Wiktor Kubar his deputy. It was June, the summer holidays were starting, it so happened that both of them were out, and I, as managing editor, was in charge of the paper for a few days virtually alone. A few days later, they called from the [Democratic Party] Central Committee, and propaganda manager Piotr Stefański invited me in for a talk. When I arrived in his office, he announced that in a few days I'd be named deputy editor-in-chief for either domestic or foreign affairs. I was surprised, since Kubar was in charge of domestic affairs. As I was leaving, Stefański added that beginning tomorrow a commission would be operating at *Kurier*, as instructed by the [Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party], which will question me. And he added that it was about the Israeli-Arab war. *Kurier Polski* was reportedly being accused of taking an anti-state position. Indeed, a few days later I was called in. They asked me how some people on the newspaper had been acting. They asked about Lucjan Szulkin, Wiktor Kubar, Hanka Golde, in other words people of Jewish origin, whether I'd heard that they were supporting Israel's position. I got a whiff of the terror because I knew already that they were trying to buy me somehow, first with the offer of a job, then with this questioning. Then, Stefański called me again, reminding me about the carrot. Suddenly Moczarski walked into the office. He had been on holiday in Gdańsk with his wife and daughter and was ordered back by the same commission. I told him about my interrogation and asked what I should do. I was afraid of losing my job. And he said that this was a trial by fire, and that one should be honourable. 'Write a declaration that you know nothing about the Zionist plot, as the commission implied, and that's it.' This was what Łenka wrote, and he was thrown out of *Kurier* for it.⁴⁰

Moczarski openly challenged the witch-hunt. Łenka remembers him "tirelessly observing the law. He had this pre-war belief in the constitutional state, a democratic habit totally incomprehensible in the Communist reality." A few days after

39 Malanowska, *Kazimierz Moczarski*, 164–6.

40 Author's interview with Zbigniew Łenka, 2008.

he was questioned, he wrote a complaint to the Polish Journalists' Association [Stowarzyszenie Dziennikarzy Polskich] explaining that

On 7 July the employer for whom I have been working for 10 years, Epoka Publishers [*Kurier Polski's* publisher], telephoned me ordering me to interrupt my holiday and report immediately to the Publisher's office, to my colleague, the editor Witold Kulisiewicz. I immediately executed this order, returned to Warsaw where, as it turned out, I was to appear before a commission created by my employer, which was made up of my colleagues from Epoka, [Polish Journalists Association] members . . . The commission announced to me on that 7 July that it had been told to examine the circumstances of my private conversations with my journalist colleagues, conversations about the June conflict in the Middle East . . . This commission showed me and read out the written declaration by my colleague, editor Henryk Kawka, [Polish Journalists' Association] member, in which he describes—incidentally, inaccurately—the contents of a private conversation we once had. Because editor Henryk Kawka's actions violate the ethics of journalism and professional standards, I request that you take the appropriate steps derived from the self-governing rules of our professional and creative organisation.⁴¹

Moczarski also wrote an outraged personal letter about the commission to the chairman of the Association's central committee, Stanisław Kulczyński:

The false information originated from personal bones to pick and a belief in 'après moi le déluge.' Seven *Kurier Polski* reporters were charged with an anti-state attitude—there can be no other interpretation of the commission's charges and investigation. Numerous witnesses were called. Attempts were made to influence people (I know the method of gentle and friendly persuasion, which is at times interwoven with a threatening subtext) to testify against their colleagues.⁴²

Łenka remembers that Moczarski met with Kulczyński and asked him to intercede. Kulczyński spread his arms. And then Moczarski said that he would never shake his hand again.

In a closed meeting of the Epoka board in late July, after the commission had completed its work, Henryk Tycner and Piotr Stefański demanded that Moczarski be removed from his job in the relations with readers department. He was immediately suspended. Łenka remembered Tycner trying to prevent him from entering the newspaper's offices, "he ordered his chair taken away, how grotesque."⁴³ In August, Radio Free Europe reported on the commission's work, which was being discussed by journalists in Warsaw, and on Moczarski's expected dismissal. The authorities became concerned. Piotr Stefański consulted

41 Malanowska, *Kazimierz Moczarski*, 174.

42 Malanowska, *Kazimierz Moczarski*, 176.

43 Author's interview with Zbigniew Łenka, 2008.

“higher authority,” head of the Press Office of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party Stefan Olszowski. In that era’s internal party rivalries, Olszowski belonged to the “partisan” group, nationalists led by Interior Minister Mieczysław Moczar.

Stefański described the authorities’ predicament after the Radio Free Europe broadcast as:

In view of editor K. Moczarski’s persistent spreading of information that ‘he has been deprived of work and bread,’ which the Press Office knows about, and in light of the abovementioned programme, the discussants stressed that retaining ed. Moczarski at *Kurier Polski* will be judged, especially in journalistic circles, as the outcome and at the same time an expression of successful interference by Free Europe. After a lengthy discussion and the presentation of a full depiction of ed. Moczarski, they agreed that it would be legitimate to retain a working relationship with ed. Moczarski, seeing the propriety of his move after the lapse of some time to work outside journalism.⁴⁴

The decision was made to remove Moczarski from *Kurier Polski* step by step and without fanfare, and at the Democratic Party Congress in 1969 he was no longer nominated to the Party Central Court.

Henryk Kawka, the head of the foreign affairs department at *Kurier Polski*, became the anti-hero of this story. News of his role reached Radio Free Europe, which defended Moczarski. Kawka bore a grudge, and in 2006 recorded his perspective in a lengthy letter to the historian Antoni Dudek in which he expressed his dislike of Moczarski clearly.⁴⁵ A member of the Polish United Workers’ Party, Kawka looked down on Democratic Party members.

Kawka gave this author permission to quote from his letter, convinced that he was right. He described his role in the events of June and July 1967: “The unfortunate 6 June 1967 came. All of a sudden, at around 7 a.m., the news falls out of the telex: Israel is attacking Egypt! A few minutes later, the chief calls: the government will issue a statement denouncing Israeli aggression. We are to write a harshly critical commentary in this spirit.” Kawka claimed that he wrote two commentaries. The tone of the first one was deemed too gentle. “At about 9, our office censor summons me: ‘What’s all this blather about. Blood? Pain? Tears? Security? This is plain brutal Jewish aggression! Either you write the proper commentary or there won’t be one at all! I quickly wrote a new article tearing the Israeli aggressors apart . . . And this was the beginning of the March 1968 events at *Kurier*.”⁴⁶

44 Malanowska, *Kazimierz Moczarski*, 176.

45 Henryk Kawka’s letter to Antoni Dudek in the author’s possession.

46 Henryk Kawka’s letter to a historian Antoni Dudek in the author’s possession.

Kawka's letter sketches out with flair the domestic political situation and the ensuing clashes among the editors. Moczarski was now a key player:

There were quite a few Jews in the so-called superstructure, on the ideological front, until now comrades dedicated to the party. Virtually all of them spoke out against denouncing the Israeli aggression. They didn't conceal their joy about the Israeli army's victories. Wiktor Kubar, my party comrade, told everyone that Israel should occupy the lands from the Sinai to the West Bank. Moczarski echoed him eagerly. The mood in the newspaper's office was becoming more and more tense. The Kubar-Moczarski pair talked to anyone they could grab. They argued that we need to revoke the text condemning Israel, that Zambrowski should head the party. Moczarski became increasingly impertinent. He demanded that I publicly express my regrets and shame for writing anti-Israel commentaries, of which there have been several, at the next meeting of Epoka employees, which he is planning to put on together with the director of the publishing house. I was also supposed to ask the Jewish nation's forgiveness. I made conciliatory suggestions. He took cruel revenge. He told people, allegedly in confidence, that I had confessed to him that I had been forced to write the anti-Israel commentaries, that I favour replacing the ruling team, that Roman Zambrowski⁴⁷ is Poland's saviour . . . First, Zdanowska, in her role of first secretary of the Basic Party Organisation [Podstawowa Organizacja Partyjna, POP] asked if I had gone totally mad, I was saying such crazy things. I said no, but I got the impression that she didn't believe me much. Tycner was even more aggressive: 'Either you rebut what Moczarski is raving about or get out.' 'How can I rebut it, in what form?' 'I will instruct you in a few days. A new scandal is brewing.' Tycner called me in: 'I'll tell you in confidence, I went to see Olszowski, who is planning to f. . . Moczarski, but Moczar as chairman of the Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy [Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację, ZBoWiD] is opposing it. It's fine to hit him, but not too hard because he may come in useful in catching former Home Army people,' Moczar said to Olszowski, 'hasn't he been reliable so far?' In late June 1967 Jan Karol Wende's secretary called me at home. I was totally flabbergasted and surprised when she told me that he wants to see me. Straight away, at home. Until then I had only met Wende occasionally, as a reporter. He was the secretary general of the Central Committee of the Democratic Party. I went to his place . . . I'll try to reconstruct our conversation: 'I know what's going on in your office. I know what Tycner wants you to do. You may not know yet, but I already know it. He will demand that you contradict what Moczarski is asking you to do.' 'Mr Secretary, if I act on Tycner's request, such a declaration may be interpreted by the Epoka team as a denunciation!' 'Do you want to help us or not?' 'I do, but how?' 'Mr Editor, this matter has assumed dangerous political dimensions. I'm doing everything to avoid dragging *Kurier*, Epoka and the Democratic Party into the cogs of factional brawls inside the [Polish United

47 Roman Zambrowski, a Communist activist with Jewish roots, member of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. Critical of the Party's nationalist wing. Expelled from the party in the 1968 anti-Semitic campaign and forcibly retired.

Workers' Party]. 'But what have I got to do with it?' 'Please, write a declaration that in your conversations Moczarski was only happy about Israel's military successes. With no statements about criticising the government, the [Polish United Workers' Party], etc. No reminiscences about Zambrowski . . . need for renewal, etc.' 'But that will be a half-truth.' 'But you will be helping us calm down the mood at *Kurier*, hushing Moczarski. Since he has a prominent position in the [Democratic] Party, we'll avoid misunderstandings with the [Polish United Workers' Party]. 'What about Kubar?' 'The [Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party] Central Commission of Party Control will take care of Kubar's case.' 'What about Moczarski?' 'Your statement will allow us to convince our [Polish United Workers' Party] coalition partners that we're cutting ourselves off from his statements. We'll dismiss him from *Kurier* without a major scandal. All right?' 'All right.' The [Central Committee] formed a commission to examine Moczarski's position on the Middle East conflict. It was made up of three [Democratic Party] members and one [Polish United Workers' Party] member. When the commission requested it, I made a declaration 'in the spirit of' Wende's wishes.⁴⁸

Kawka's account of the mood and the method of getting rid of Moczarski simplified it somewhat, but it was not out of the ordinary in those times. Similar incidents occurred in other publications. Barbara N. Łopieńska's article about the March purges of journalists explored the cases of Emanuel Planer, editor-in-chief of *Perspektywy Polskie* who tried to avoid taking a clear stand on Israel's attack, of Maria Włodarska of the Interpress agency, and of others: "You, comrade, a Polish officer's daughter, ought to understand the national interest," Jerzy Waszczuk, at the time secretary of a district committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, said to Wiesława Grochola when her case arrived in his desk. A total of sixty-two important personnel changes were made between 5 June 1967 and 21 May 1968 in newspaper and periodical offices, publishing houses and the Prasa publishing house.⁴⁹

The problem with Moczarski was that he could not be dispensed with "quietly." After the kangaroo court at *Kurier* in the summer of 1967, life was made unpleasant for him. He no longer headed the relations with readers department and now was a commentator who was not required to write. Even though he was still earning his salary to support the family, with Zosia ill and out of work, life was depressing. He confessed to his friend Władysław Minkiewicz that he did not like continuing to get the same salary for doing nothing.

Marginalised, Moczarski watched the anti-Semitic campaign in which, sadly, *Kurier Polski* was an important player. He wrote at night when he could not

48 Letter from Henryk Kawka to Antoni Dudek.

49 Jerzy Eisler, *Polski rok 1968* (Warsaw, 2006), 546.

sleep: "The cat woke me up. He relieved himself on *Życie Warszawy* and *Kurier Polski*. A good use of the papers at last." He was being crushed by the passage of time and the burden of responsibility for his family. "I can't sleep, while my two loved ones, Elżunia and Zosia, are fast asleep. Will we manage to raise her to adulthood? . . . It seems that all kinds of things are collapsing around me. But I have to stand there like a pillar, so that not too much crumbles, so that not too much crumbles in my family and inside me." He felt tired and alone after the brawl at his paper. He was being torn by doubt: "Am I positioning myself well enough vis-à-vis others? The English expression 'be a little more cooperative' seems wise. But I will survive these alleged difficulties, too!!!"⁵⁰

With time on his hands, he began to write about the war. In 1968 he wrote a long piece about his work as the head of the Office of Information and Propaganda after the Warsaw Uprising and gave copies to friends. The article did not appear in print until the 1980s, underground. Moczarski came by the *Kurier Polski* office less and less often, saving his energy for elsewhere. In the mid-1960s he became involved in the anti-alcoholism movement and edited *Problemy Alkoholizmu* monthly. He mentioned often that he had become interested in alcoholism as a social issue talking with Stroop, who told him about Hitler's plans to drive the people of Ukraine to drink. Moczarski's article on "The Story of Alcoholism and the Struggle Against It" (*Historia alkoholizmu i walki z nim*) discussed the hundred plus years of social initiatives in Poland launched by Catholic priests and Socialist and People's Party activists. He spotted a rule: regardless of what organisation or religious community sponsored them, the initiatives were guided by the same ethical principles and united people, also in the People's Republic. He lamented the decreasing engagement of the Social Anti-Alcohol Committee (*Spółeczny Komitet Przeciwalkoholowy*) to which he belonged: "The numbers of anti-alcoholism activists, social activists and real experts, are diminishing. This is a fact. Compared to the interwar period, when if you 'sounded the anti-alcohol horn,' tens of thousands of first-rate activists from all of Poland became involved. Times have changed," he wrote, troubled. The need to act was visible to the naked eye, as Poland turned into a country of universal drunkenness. In 1938 the average Pole drank 1.5 litre of alcohol, in the years immediately after the war it was 2.2 litres, and in 1956 3.3 litres. Throughout the 1970s the rate increased gradually and then dramatically, so that in 1970 the average Pole was drinking 5.1 litres per year, and in 1971 a whopping 5.5 litres of pure alcohol.⁵¹

50 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

51 *Alkohol w kulturze i obyczaju*, eds J. Górski, B. Moczarski (Warsaw, 1972), 12.

To Moczarski, fighting alcoholism as it destroyed public life was a great challenge that should be taken up by the intelligentsia, grassroots organisations and the Church, all the more so since no one could count on the government to do anything about it. Even with the fight against alcoholism—a favourite cause of state propaganda—the grassroots anti-alcoholism movement was likely to bump into obstacles erected by the authorities. The monthly *Problemy Alkoholizmu* suffered from chronic newsprint and ink shortages. Moczarski wrote: “Illiteracy in these issues is very typical of our country. I am talking about both those ‘at the top’ and those ‘at the bottom.’”⁵²

As he travelled to lectures and meetings and searched for allies, Moczarski gradually became an expert in disseminating knowledge about alcoholism prevention. “*Problemy Alkoholizmu* was a niche publication, edited by a small handful of people, but on an important mission,” said his colleague Teresa Szydłowska. Her involvement in it began under Moczarski’s wing and became one of the most important causes in her life. She fervently recounted the early days of the Alcoholics Anonymous (Ruch Anonimowych Alkoholików) movement of the 1970s.

Problemy Alkoholizmu had an unexpected dimension: it was elite. This becomes evident when we look at the list of names of its authors, prominent intellectuals in different fields: the philosopher Tadeusz Kotarbiński, the lexicographer and writer Władysław Kopaliński, the historians Aleksander Gieysztor and Dionizy Smoleński, the sociologists Witold Kula and Jan Szczepański, and the psychologist Antoni Kepiński. Their articles were compiled into a book, *Alkohol w kulturze i obyczaju* (Alcohol in culture and custom), which Moczarski co-edited. Szydłowska reminisced that

It was Moczarski who invited a large number of these authors to work with us. He had a talent for bringing people together, infecting them with his enthusiasm. Many interesting people dropped by the old building in Lwowska Street where our office was, mostly to chat with Moczarski; I can remember Józef Rybicki’s frequent visits, he too was very involved in the abstention movement, [the historian] Aleksander Gieysztor would also come, the writer Andrzej Szczypiorski would drop by.⁵³

Marcin Kula, a historian and Witolda Kula’s son, remembered:

My father never talked about Moczarski (he generally rarely talked about the war, and also wrote little about it), perhaps because their life paths were so different. Maybe Moczarski, who had spent so many years in prison, made him feel guilty. I don’t know,

52 *Kurier Polski*, February 16, 1970.

53 Author’s interview with Teresa Szydłowska, 2008.

I'm only speculating. I remember just one meeting with him, sometime in the second half of the 1960s he came to our place and I remember my surprise that someone who is a stranger to me is coming to see my father, and there is immediately a closeness between them. Moczarski talked my father into writing an article for a monthly about fighting alcoholism. The text was about the mechanisms that had contributed to the rise in alcoholism in the past and, at the end, after listing several obvious reasons, it said that since we know what the reason is, now we need to find it elsewhere. He didn't say where, but it was obvious that he believed that the system was responsible. To say this then was quite radical.⁵⁴

The connections between the Office of Information and Propaganda people resurfaced often. Władysław Bartoszewski mentioned the work of an informal historians' committee which met in Professor Stanisław Płoski's office at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Meeting in the office in Old Market Square were Moczarski and Bartoszewski, Aleksander Gieysztor, Zygmunt Kapitaniak and Jan Rzepecki. It was then that they agreed to reject the suspicion that the National Armed Forces had been responsible for the murders of the Makowieckis and Widerszal. Without documents they were not able to explain the background to the crimes, but they cared about their comrades' memory. On the thirtieth anniversary of the deaths, Moczarski organised a collection among Office of Information and Propaganda colleagues to fund a plaque to commemorate them. Security Office surveillance reports about Moczarski record it. His "case of operational disclosure" was assigned the same code name as his nom de guerre, "Rafał." The many documents in his files include a note about former Office of Information and Propaganda people attending an anniversary mass for the murders in June 1973 at Saint Martin's Church in Warsaw's Old Town en masse. A secret police informer reported:

The [Office of Information and Propaganda] is keeping its internal organisation untouched, its people meet and discuss the current political situation and use their connections to influence the opinions in various circles. The [Office of Information and Propaganda] people are in Poland and abroad, for example the notorious [Tadeusz] Żenczykowski from RFE.⁵⁵

This report paradoxically also reveals a fine truth about the unique power of the wartime ethos.

The Security Office had become interested in Moczarski already in 1959. Two secret police collaborators in the *Kurier Polski* office reported then on his

54 Author's interview with Marcin Kula, 2007.

55 AIPN, 0128/1003 mf: 5537/2-5.

uncharitable words about First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party Władysław Gomułka. The surveillance ended after a few months, as the secret police decided that Moczarski did not pose a sufficient threat to warrant regular observation. However, in 1964 it resumed surveillance of his contacts by letter with friends living in the West.

Moczarski became an important target of surveillance in the autumn of 1967. According to the Third Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs—in charge of the surveillance of so-called traditional circles—which included former Home Army people and those who had remained underground after the war, he had become radicalised in August 1968. He spoke disapprovingly of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. He complained to friends that the Democratic Party had become a vassal of the ruling party. He criticised Gomułka and studied political crisis scenarios. The Security Office believed that Moczarski was in touch with Radio Free Europe and political émigrés. “He did not relay information to [Radio Free Europe]. But he did of course stay in touch by letter with various pre-war friends in Paris and London,” believed Bartoszewski, who himself sent information to Radio Free Europe and created a network of informants in Poland.⁵⁶

Moczarski's colourful social life truly fascinated the Security Office. His day would begin with a phone call to one of his tested war friends, Józef Rybicki, Wincenty Kwieciński or Jan Rosner. Many friends and acquaintances from the pre-war and war eras would visit, as would journalists and anti-alcoholism activists. Elżbieta Moczarska remembers that

Father was very interested in my school friends, and this was mutual. I remember my seventeenth birthday well. There were only the two of us, mum was in hospital. We put all the furniture in his room, so that my guests would have space to have fun, and the party finished in his room anyway. We sat on the floor, and he was somewhere high up on a couch, which we had put on top of a mountain of furniture, and we talked late into the night.⁵⁷

In 1969 the secret police, unhappy with the quality of the information coming from its secret collaborators, placed a bug in the Moczarskis' flat. It paid some neighbours 500 zlotys for the time it took to install the listening devices from their flat. After compiling reports from secret collaborators and bugging records for three years, the Security Office made a long list of people Moczarski knew. The list reveals the crimes committed by his friends and acquaintances: Aleksander

⁵⁶ AIPN, 0128/1003 mf: 5537/2–5.

⁵⁷ Author's interview with Elżbieta Moczarska, 2007.

Kamiński sent name day wishes and invited the Moczarskis over. Jerzy Rutkowski and Moczarski together wrote the inscription for Jerzy Makowiecki's gravestone. Very typical of the Security Office were the occasional notes written by functionaries, which meticulously recorded derogatory statements about Moczarski.

Jan Józef Lipski appeared at the Moczarskis' regularly once a month. The secret police records tell about their political discussions, but the main reason for these visits were the small sums of money that Lipski handed to Moczarski. After the *Kurier* affair, acquaintances started a collection for the Moczarskis, who were now in financial difficulty. Lipski tirelessly served as the treasurer of the mutual aid fund for the persecuted and their families beginning in the mid-1960s.⁵⁸

The list of Moczarski's suspicious contacts includes two lawyers, Jan Olszewski and Aniela Steinsbergowa, who had been punished for defending students expelled from university in the wake of the anti-government protests of March 1968. Both were suspended from practicing law. "They share anti-Socialist interests," noted the Security Office. Aniela Steinsbergowa busied herself with writing a book about the 1950s political trials, in which Moczarski was one of the protagonists.

Official histories of this period carefully erased all information about the post-war political trials of Home Army fighters and their rehabilitation. Steinsbergowa's book was the first of its kind, seeking to preserve the truth about that era. Clearly, there was only one person who could put it out: Jerzy Giedroyc, the prominent émigré publisher in France. Her book came out in 1977.⁵⁹

Steinsbergowa wrote in her introduction,

There are court records, but the ordinary mortal has no access to them. They cannot tell the whole story of these cases, as they are dispersed in various archives: Warsaw Provincial Court, the Supreme Court [Sąd Najwyższy], the Interior Ministry, the Council of State [Rada Państwa], the [Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party]. They do not include the defendants' correspondence with their attorneys, there is no trace in them of the countless intercessions, none of the defence attorneys' work with intellectuals, they can in no way reflect the atmosphere of the trials or the protagonists' profiles. We also cannot be sure that they won't over time be 'recycled' to serve the higher goal of apologising for the history of the [Polish People's Republic]. Therefore, I believe that my account may make a contribution to the history of that period.⁶⁰

Indeed, even though Ministry of Public Security and Security Office archives are open now, Steinsbergowa's book has given us one-of-a-kind knowledge about

58 AIPN, 0128/1003, mf: 5537/2-5.

59 Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z lawy*.

60 Steinsbergowa, *Widziane z lawy*, 99.

the atmosphere of hypocrisy, the fear and the effort it took to get at the truth and attain justice in the years of the post-Stalinist thaw in Poland.

The list of Moczarski's contacts made by the secret police shows his place among the Warsaw intelligentsia, which after March 1968 evolved in the direction of open anti-government opposition. The historian Andrzej Friszke describes it thus:

Socialising was interwoven with discussing the 'situation' in politics and culture, swapping gossip, loaning books (also the 'illegal' ones published by the émigrés). The largest and most influential was the so-called Warsaw salon, which was a sort of federation of overlapping social circles of former commandos, former activists of the Crooked Circle Club, writers and academics cheering on the opposition, some former Home Army soldiers and former [Polish Socialist Party] activists opposed to the [Polish United Workers' Party] Jan Józef Lipski's name day parties were an occasion for 100–200 people from Warsaw's opposition circles to meet Apart from the host, this salon's political leaders were Jacek Kuroń, Adam Michnik and Jan Olszewski. This milieu was sometimes called the Warsaw Left, which was true insofar as it was ruled by a sensitivity to the Left's democratic values. The reference points were the [Polish Socialist Party] traditions, the October [1956] radical reform movement and March [1968], which they had lived through together. There was also a sensitivity about nationalism. There was no tolerance of anti-Semitism or of an anti-Ukrainian sentiment or of hostility towards Russian culture.⁶¹

The mood and ideals of this milieu bring back Moczarski's stories about the early days of the Democratic Clubs, the late 1930s. In September 1976, the Workers' Defence Committee [Komitet Obrony Robotników], whose founders included Aniela Steinsbergowa and Józef Rybicki, was born of the Democratic Club milieu. Had Kazimierz Moczarski lived to see it, he would certainly have been among them.

61 Andrzej Friszke, *Opozycja polityczna w PRL 1945–1980* (London, 1994), 300.

Chapter Ten: Conversations with an Executioner

“Moczarski was robbed of the readers relations department, which was very important to him. But it was thanks to this that he wrote *Conversations with an Executioner*,” reminisced Leon Janowicz after the terrible affair at *Kurier Polski*. This was not totally true, since Moczarski had been working on the book for years, writing down expressions and situations he could remember, researching missing information; later he would look for a publisher. The clatter of the typewriter coming from his room is one of his daughter’s most vivid childhood memories.

The book had sat inside his head from the time he shared a cell with Stroop in the Rakowiecka Street prison in 1949. He told the writer Andrzej Szczypiorski, “I’m suffering from some ailment. I can hear clearly everything Stroop said, even his intonations, as if I had a tape recorder running. I can also see him, his every gesture, every gaze, every facial expression, as if I was looking at a screen.”¹ Almost as soon as he was placed in a cell with Stroop and Schielke, Moczarski realised that theirs was a one-of-a-kind encounter. As he opened up to the Nazis’ confessions, his natural interest in the world and a reporter’s instincts did not fail him. He became both a cool analyst and a passionate participant in the events the three of them discussed. In 1973, he explained his odd state of his mind to *Odra* monthly editor Mieczysław Orski:

I was able to live simultaneously in two worlds then, the cell and my imagination. As I listened to Stroop, I almost became him, I could feel, see and live what he had felt, seen and lived. In my imagination, my experiences and memories became a layer of his story: when he spoke about Ukraine, I could see paintings by [Stanisław] Masłowski and Bodisco, and I could place Stroop in those lively landscapes. I noticed something else happening inside me: my senses and instincts became unimaginably sharp, while my mind was now tremendously good at connecting and associating, and focusing, as I’ve already told you. I was able to write in my head, I could see a page in front of me and later I could go back to a place I had marked on that page. Really, I constantly ‘flipped through’ these pages, went back to them even after Stroop and I had parted. It helped to be alone, without any external stimulation.²

1 Kazimierz Moczarski, *Rozmowy z katem* (Warsaw, 2002), 17.

2 Moczarski, *Rozmowy z katem*, 401.

Practically all political prisoners who spent months in isolation write about this unusual state of inner focus. In Moczarski's case, an additional factor were the recent memories of his wartime experiences, which were all the fresher since the post-war changes had not disrupted them. In his isolation from the world, Moczarski and Stroop were able to analyse the recent past and compare it to what they knew, what they had experienced and felt.

Moczarski took some hundreds pages of notes about key dates, facts and names immediately after his release. Then, he spent years comparing them to documents and checking details, which is why parts of his book cover facts he could not have known in prison. *Conversations with an Executioner* is not just a record of the conversations the men had in their cell, but Moczarski's candid re-examination of the "reporter's material," and this puts his book in the non-fiction category. Moczarski gained access to Stroop's files at the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland (Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich). With help from his friends in the United States, he obtained copies of documents from Stroop's trial before a US military court in Dachau in 1947. He found materials to confirm details of Stroop's activity in Greece. He located descriptions and maps of Detmold, Stroop's hometown. "I sought confirmation for what he had told me about his childhood and youth. Is there really a fountain called Donopbrunnen with sculptures of fawns and a nymph in the main square in Detmold? Is there a Mühlenstrasse? Does the castle look the way Stroop described it? Was the first kindergarten in Germany founded in Detmold in 1802?" he told Orski. "And everything Stroop said was right."³

Moczarski checked what Stroop had told him against what historians knew. One example was Stroop's account of the mysterious death of Field Marshal Günther Hans von Kluge, who was relieved of his command after a failed offensive on the Western Front in August 1944 and died shortly after being arrested. "I had the most difficult time verifying the story of the murder of Field Marshal von Kluge," Moczarski told his interviewer. "As readers of *Conversations with an Executioner* know, Stroop's version diverged from established views."⁴ Most history books have the field marshal committing suicide. Moczarski heard something different from Stroop, who had arrested and interrogated von Kluge in 1944, and implied that he was executed. Moczarski quoted Stroop because he believed him. He told Orski:

3 Moczarski, *Rozmowy z katem*, 402.

4 Moczarski, *Rozmowy z katem*, 403.

There was a lot of evidence to prove my interlocutor's honesty, and in this case, Stroop assured me that von Kluge was a freemason, and it turned out that this was probably true. Stroop told him that Himmler had sent him a telegram about von Kluge on a special telex machine, which coded texts as they were being sent out and decoded them as they arrived on the recipient's telex. It later turned out that the Nazis did indeed have such telex machines and Himmler may have encrypted messages to Stroop.⁵

Moczarski decided to write down the full version of Stroop's revelations and include the interesting details even though historians doubted them.

Moczarski's manuscript was almost ready in the autumn of 1961. The Iskry publishing house was interested in publishing it as a way to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising in April 1963. He wrote to his wife:

Dear Zosia, I've never worked as hard as I am now. I'm writing, writing, writing, dictating, correcting, editing. The typist, Mrs Elzbieta Borkowska from *Kurier*, has taken time off work and is practically living with us. We write till two or three or sometimes five a.m. She then catches a few hours of sleep on your couch. I sit in my room and prepare some new materials. She then types six copies, then I dictate a first draft, we eat bread with cold cuts, sometimes tinned goulash, drink some tea, lots of coffee, take pills and go back into battle. I sleep a bit in the meantime. I've lost weight, loads of it, but I'm feeling strong and active.⁶

It took Moczarski years to find the right format for his text. The conversations with the executioner are certainly not a faithful transcript of Moczarski's talks with Stroop. As it took him years to put together his story, Moczarski constructed it deliberately. He did not include everything they discussed. It will remain his secret how far he was constrained by the awareness that censorship lay in wait. He wrote to a friend in the United States in August 1962:

The book about Stroop is the most important affair in my life. I've written it (400 pages), but I need to redo it because I'm very ambitious about it, unfortunately. I believe that this thematic 'gem', which smacks of a document, should do a little to convince those who need to be convinced (i.e., not you, me and our friends and every Pole, Czech, Jew and Russian and hundreds of millions of people who know the Germans, who are the eternal revisionists). This book may shatter their 'German' ignorance. But it needs to be served on a 'wafer' that's easy to swallow. I want to transform this book into something simpler, less intellectual, sociological, historical, documentary, objective reportage from the cell, savage in content, a quick read, with an ounce of literature. Such a book will definitely catch on in a print run of 100,000, not 10.⁷

5 Moczarski, *Rozmowy z katem*, 403.

6 Elzbieta Moczarska's archive.

7 Elzbieta Moczarska's archive.

The writing of the book was accompanied by huge creative stress. Moczarski shared his anguish with his friend Witold Lassota. He wrote: "I must tell you that the book is turning out well somehow. Today I like it, but maybe tomorrow, like a few days ago, I'll pick at it or even despise this 'big-time drivel' I've written."⁸ Teresa Szydłowska remembered:

We were talking then about how he memorised his conversations with Stroop, how he trained his imagination, until he believed that he was taking notes inside his brain. I think that he could write *Conversations with an Executioner* because he had the unique skill of listening to another person, which I later observed at *Kurier Polski*.⁹

For reasons we do not know, Iskry did not publish the book, perhaps because censorship became a consideration. Its first instalment came out in April 1968 in *Polityka* weekly, thanks to the writer Andrzej Szczypiorski who brought the manuscript to its editors. They immediately recognised its worth. Szczypiorski had met Moczarski a short time earlier. Even though she was not even ten years old, Elżbieta Moczarska remembers that meeting well.

Father heard a programme hosted by Szczypiorski on the radio. It was about the problem of alcoholism, and he was always seeking allies for his cause. When the programme ended, father simply phoned Szczypiorski and they arranged to meet. He brought me along, which he often would, to various places, to the newspaper's offices, to lectures at the PEN Club.¹⁰

The two men's relationship, based on their strong feelings about a social cause, turned into a close friendship and a deep bond. They were equally repulsed by atmosphere of the anti-Semitic witch-hunt of 1968. "I cannot stand any nationalism. This conviction was at the core of our friendship with Moczarski," wrote Szczypiorski in 1978.¹¹

Nineteen-sixty-eight was a breakthrough year for Szczypiorski, in both his writing and his life. His was of the generation that had grown up during the war and under the German occupation. He had been taken with his parents to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp after the Warsaw Uprising. After the camp was liberated in 1945, he returned to Poland even though his family remained in Western Europe. He became a journalist. Beginning in 1952, he worked for Polish Radio, after 1956 as a political and cultural commentator, and was visibly associated with the government. He helped to convince his aging and hard-up

8 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

9 Author's interview with Teresa Szydłowska, 2008.

10 Author's interview with Elżbieta Moczarska, 2007.

11 Moczarski, *Rozmowy z katem*, 13.

parents to return from exile in London in 1955, something that has been controversial since the opening of the Ministry of Public Security archives after the fall of Communism.¹² Communist propaganda keenly exploited the return of his father, Adam Szczypiorski, a historian and prominent pre-war Polish Socialist Party activist. The archives of the Institute of National Remembrance also show Andrzej Szczypiorski's collaboration in the first half of the 1960s in West Germany with Department Five of the Interior Ministry, intelligence. Szczypiorski travelled there in his capacity as a Polish Radio reporter, and the secret police relied on him to report about West German "intellectual circles." His reports were not heartfelt, and the ministry decided after a year that they were of little use and formally dismissed him in 1968. His agreement to cooperate with Polish intelligence was the price he was willing to pay to travel to the West, which allowed him to build connections with journalists and writers, and to write about the complicated Polish-German relationship.

The events of 1968 were a turning point for Szczypiorski. He protested loudly against fellow writers' anti-Semitic pronouncements. Revolted by the nationalistic Moczar group's influence at Polish Radio, he stopped contributing to it. In 1969 he wrote his most important novel, *Msza za miasto Arras* (A Mass for Arras), an outstanding study of the birth of terror, in response to the anti-Semitic campaign.

Beginning in the mid-1970s Szczypiorski became increasingly involved in the democratic opposition. Already in 1968, the Security Office put his name on a list of the Communist system's challengers. In 1974, he was a signatory of a letter to the government from fifteen writers and artists demanding access for Poles living in the USSR to Polish culture and Polish-language education. In 1978, he became one of the dissidents who were under constant surveillance; incidentally, the surveillance only stopped after he won a Senate seat in the first, semi-free, elections of 4 June 1989. How much was Szczypiorski's decision to join the opposition influenced by his friendship with Moczarski and by Moczarski's experiences? Most likely quite a lot. In 1978, after Moczarski's death, Szczypiorski wrote a text which later became the introduction to the German edition of *Conversations with an Executioner*. Published underground, the piece pays homage to Moczarski and reflects on the two men's friendship.

Moczarski carried his conscience through tests that no one today can fathom. He did it because of his loyalty to the principles of humanism, his personal dignity and his idea of honour. I wrote once, probably under the influence of my friendship with this

12 Krzysztof Tarka, *Mackiewicz i inni. Wywiad PRL wobec emigrantów* (Łomianki, 2007).

book's author, that 'not only can a conscience not be bought or sold, but it also cannot be relinquished to a state, a nation or a class—otherwise we simply cease to exist as humans.'¹³

Moczarski gave Szczypiorski his friendship and his trust, which was expressed in a tangible decision. When both Kazimierz and Zofia became ill and were afraid that they would die, it was Szczypiorski they asked to take care of their daughter. After their deaths, Elżbieta lived with them for a time.

Szczypiorski was fascinated by *Conversations with an Executioner*, which he read as a manuscript. He observed Moczarski as he worked on it intensely, was impressed by his exhaustive analyses and comparisons of the two totalitarianisms, which he had also experienced.

He would often say that, in essence, Hitler was more straightforward than Stalin. Hitler was saturated with a primitive hatred. As he murdered Jews, he fanatically called them lice. He proclaimed that the Slavs were a tribe of slaves and treated them like slaves. As he killed, he did not care about being loved or having others see eye to eye, about justice or humanitarianism. Stalin killed and demanded that his victims love him and give him assurances that he was humanity's greatest friend.¹⁴

Szczypiorski tried to help Moczarski publish *Conversations with an Executioner*. The book's first instalment about the pacification of the Warsaw ghetto under Stroop's command appeared in April 1968 in *Polityka*. This text was authorised because it coincided with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the ghetto uprising. Afterwards, no one talked about it. The next opportunity came four years later.

In 1972, the authorities allowed parts of Moczarski's book to be published as long as it was in a low-circulation periodical outside Warsaw. He submitted the manuscript to *Odra* monthly in Wrocław, for which he had written before. This was no accident. *Odra* had been conceived in the early 1960s as a regional publication which would represent the culture of the "Western Territories, which belonged eternally to the Piasts" and ignore the hundreds of years of German presence there—as official propaganda would have it. However, it soon veered away from these expectations and took advantage of its niche nature to look for interesting materials to run, which made it a sovereign opinion leader. In 1965, *Odra* discovered the theatre director Jerzy Grotowski, in 1970, it awarded its annual prize to the poet Tadeusz Różewicz, who often published his poems there first. January 1972, when Zbigniew Kubikowski became its editor-in-chief,

13 Moczarski, *Rozmowy z katem*, 11.

14 Moczarski, *Rozmowy z katem*, 14.

launched one of *Odra*'s most splendid eras. The publication of *Conversations with an Executioner* was largely Kubikowski's accomplishment.¹⁵

In the mid-1990s, when the *Odra* archives were being organised ahead of a move to new offices, someone found the typescript of *Conversations with an Executioner* with Moczarski's handwritten editorial comments. Clearly, Moczarski had fine-tuned the text in red pencil until the very last minute.

The book's first instalment came out in April 1972 and the next ones appeared over the next two years. Still, the account of Moczarski's encounter with Stroop was virtually suspended in a historical vacuum: Why was Moczarski in prison? What was his investigation all about? What was the political context of his detention? Szczypiorski attempted to answer these questions in an article that accompanied the first instalment. He included an excerpt of the sentence passed in 1956 in the first paragraph, showing the biases of Stalinist charges and Moczarski's absolute innocence, but these dozen or so sentences were cut by the censors, despite the fact that Moczarski had already been rehabilitated.

The permission to publish the book's first instalment appeared to give the green light for the publication of the book as a whole. "*Conversations with an Executioner*, which is being run in instalments in *Odra* now will be published as a book by Ossolineum," Moczarski broadcast in a letter to Witold Lassota in June 1972. "I've signed a contract with them. Various translators have also asked for permission. A Łódź film producer has offered to make a film in the theatre of facts series."¹⁶ However, all these hopes were very quickly dashed. Ossolineum revoked the contract. While the authorities could bear to see the text in a niche monthly, publishing a whole book about the deceitful secret police practices vis-à-vis Home Army fighters was too much, and there was strong resistance high up. When Moczarski resolved to publish the book outside Poland and discussed it with friends, the authorities intervened by forbidding him to travel abroad, just in case, and the family was not issued passports.

For years, Moczarski's friends tried to use their contacts to get the book published. Szczypiorski asked the historian Franciszek Ryszka, a respected specialist in Fascism and National Socialism, to write a review. The review landed on the desk of Andrzej Werblan, the influential secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and deputy marshal of the Sejm. Asked about the case decades later, Werblan remembered nothing.¹⁷

15 Mariusz Urbanek, "Krótki kurs historii 'Odry,'" *Odra* 5 (2001), 10–3.

16 Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

17 Author's interview with Andrzej Werblan, 2008.

Władysław Bartoszewski believed that it was absolutely obvious why the book was being blocked. “Moczarski’s book simply disgraced the Communists who put a German war criminal and a Home Army fighter in one cell.”¹⁸ Bartoszewski remembered well the efforts that had gone into getting the book published, in which his wife, Zofia Bartoszevska, deputy editor-in-chief at the Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy publishing house, also became involved, trying to talk her boss, Andrzej Wasilewski, into bringing it out. However, Wasilewski made no decisions alone, always consulting with the Office of Propaganda, Press and Publications (Wydział Propagandy, Prasy i Wydawnictw) of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party. His way of explaining the decision not to publish the book sounded like a pretext: “Director Wasilewski received an answer from Comrade Gołębiowski of the Propaganda Department of the [Central Committee] that the book cannot be published as a book, and gave the non-worsening of the proper relations with the FRG by this as the justification.”¹⁹ There is also a memorandum written by a Security Office functionary, which presents the argument in curious language, but reveals fear of the consequences of publishing the book:

By publishing *Conversations with an Executioner* with his enclosed biography, Moczarski wants to represent himself as a ‘martyr’ of the people’s government, who stayed in the same cell as a general of the SS, which he had fought during the war. By presenting himself as a person sentenced to death by a court of People’s Poland, he wants to settle scores with the political direction the [Polish People’s Republic] took in the first years after liberation when the underground was being contended with. To show the SS general’s criminal actions in the form of published conversations conducted by a Pole who has been sentenced by a court not for collaboration is not recommended because of the social and moral harm that may be inflicted on some social groups.²⁰

Clearly, settling scores for Stalinist crimes was now seen as a political mistake.

Moczarski, who devoted so many years to his book, was not seeking fame for himself, but believed deeply that he could make a contribution with his unique testimony. Józef Rybicki, Home Army officer and a Freedom and Independence leader, spent nearly ten years in a Stalinist prison. He knew Moczarski from the underground, and after their release they became close friends. Moczarski gave him his last will.

18 Letter to the author from Władysław Bartoszewski, March 26, 2006.

19 AIPN, 0128/1003, B. 354.

20 AIPN, 0128/1003, B. 88.

We were very close then. I saw him in hospital only a few days before he died. He wrote: Dear Józio, remember *Conversations with an Executioner*, because it's not only my cause but also yours. This was the first time he signed a letter to me as Kazimierz Moczarski. I asked him: why don't you sign Kazik, he laughed: Because I want it to have the power of a document, and you're my representative."²¹

Moczarski did not live to see the first edition of his book, which would later appear in many languages worldwide in print runs of hundreds of thousands. However, he did own one copy: the *Odra* instalments, which he collected and had professionally bound in cloth.

21 Józef Rybicki's speech at Kazimierz Moczarski's funeral, Elżbieta Moczarska's archive.

Epilogue

He became ill, and then he was gone. His family and friends were shocked that he had cancer because he never complained about his health. “It was over in less than two months,” remembers Elżbieta Moczarska. Zofia Moczarska recorded in her pocket diary how his energy diminished daily.

He died on 27 September 1975. He was sixty-eight. Attending his burial were Democratic Party officials and hordes of friends, closely observed by Security Service functionaries. Józef Rybicki spoke:

Some of his friends came together to write his obituary, which would say something about him. We were stumped by the deficiencies of the Polish language. It took us a long time to find the right adjective for this man, this virtuous man. This pure-hearted knight. And we wrote his obituary, which unfortunately did not appear because we were not allowed to publish it. Briefly: he was a political prisoner for many years, he was a man of great courage, steadfast, honest, altruistic, an unfailing friend who fought for the truth and for the ideals of independence.

Józef Rybicki talked about Moczarski’s lawyer Władysław Winawer, who was “the first to believe in ‘Rafał’s’ innocence, truthfulness and honesty,” and he thanked Aniela Steinsbergowa for helping Moczarski, as “she accompanied him through this whole action, the most venerable of defence lawyers, a brilliant figure who stands out in our lawyers’ profession.” Rybicki wrapped up his speech at his friend’s grave: “I know of no more beautiful decision by a rehabilitation court that would honour this bravest of men more splendidly. Dear Rafał, you deserve the greatest glory that can accompany a life: a legend. You are already a legendary figure in Poland.”¹

For Moczarski’s friends, putting out his book, which had been submitted to the Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy publishing house, became as important as remembering its author. Appeals to all levels of authority would take almost two more years. “All those people were connected by their friendship with Moczarski and by the belief that his death should not be allowed to end his extraordinary story,”² wrote Andrzej Szczypiorski.

On the first anniversary of Kazimierz Moczarski’s death, two of his old Office of Information and Propaganda colleagues, Władysław Bartoszewski and Aleksander Gieysztor, wrote a tribute. They discussed his public role in the

1 Andrzej Krzysztof Kunert, *Oskarżony Kazimierz Moczarski* (Warsaw, 2006), 143–4.

2 Moczarski, *Rozmowy z katem*, 9.

interwar years, his service to the Polish Underground State, his work at *Kurier Polski*, in the Democratic Party and the anti-alcoholism movement after the war. They mentioned that he “was leaving behind a long, extremely interesting piece of writing, *Conversations with an Executioner*, which had appeared in instalments in *Odra* monthly.” Despite the fact that they mentioned his eleven years in prison cautiously in a single sentence, the censorship office vetoed the whole text.³ “I would like to thank you for your beautiful and pure tribute to Kazimierz,” Zofia Moczarska wrote to Władysław Bartoszewski. “I am deeply upset that it will not come out in print. His journey was never easy, and now it clearly cannot end well.”⁴ After a battle with the censorship office, the tribute did appear in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, a Catholic weekly doggedly harassed with paper rationing, which gave it a low circulation.

After Moczarski’s death, his unpublished manuscript took on a life of its own and became widely known. It grabbed the theatre director Zygmunt Hübner, who had only just taken over Teatr Powszechny in Warsaw. It took him months to adapt it for the stage. Elżbieta Moczarska remembers Hübner’s visits to their house and his long discussions with her mother.

3 Copy of letter from Z. Moczarska to W. Bartoszewski in author’s possession.

4 Aleksander Gieysztor, “Władysław Bartoszewski, ‘Rafał,’” *Tygodnik Powszechny* 41/1976.



Rehearsal of the play *Conversations with an Executioner* directed by Andrzej Wajda, Warsaw 1977. From the left: Andrzej Wajda and actors Kazimierz Kaczor (Schielke), Stanisław Zaczek (Stroop), Zygmunt Hübner (Moczarski). Photogr. Renata Pajchel. Archive of Elżbieta Moczarska / FOTONOVA.

The authorities were not thrilled about the spreading recognition of Moczarski's name, and the secret police continued to follow his widow and his friends. Moczarski's police file filled up with new notes about their "criminal" behaviours. Major Kijowski, the Security Service officer, who for several years was in charge of the "Rafał" case, reported to his bosses that "the group comprising Andrzej Szczypiorski, Aniela Steinsberg and Jan Józef Lipski is preparing to publish the book by the deceased Kazimierz Moczarski titled *Conversations with an Executioner* at PIW [publishers]." Another note warned that the editors of *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, the main biographical dictionary in Poland, were planning to include Moczarski's name and it has to be stopped.

Finally, the Security Service took up a game aiming to deal the final blow to the publication plans for the book. "A man I didn't know, a bouquet of carnations in hand, appeared shortly after Father's funeral. He came to see my mother," Elżbieta Moczarska did not know the reason for his visit. Major Kijowski, a Security Service functionary, was indeed coming to talk to Zofia Moczarska. There was a

background to his call. In 1974, at a parent-teacher meeting at Elżbieta's school, Kazimierz Moczarski casually met General Adam Krzysztowski, at the time head of the Third Department of the Interior Ministry, charged with anti-state activity. Moczarski mentioned his problems with publishing his book, which could make a contribution to the understanding of Nazism. Krzysztowski was pleasant and promised to help, and the men exchanged phone numbers. It may have been then that the general thought up a scheme where he would help Moczarski in exchange for recruiting him as an informer. He noted shortly after their meeting that Moczarski, with his widespread connections in "Home Army, journalist and Zionist circles," would be an ideal secret police collaborator. However, he was too hopeful. Moczarski told anyone who would listen about the promising meeting he had had with this influential general, blocking his recruitment.⁵ However, a few years later, Major Kijowski made a plan to talk with Zofia Moczarska a few days after Kazimierz's funeral. He had several objectives. The Security Service wanted to see Moczarski's home archive and to "neutralise" his widow, as "since her husband's death she is very active in matters of various texts on his subject." Here, the secret police jargon meant intimidation. The chance encounter with Krzysztowski would serve to make Moczarski's alleged collaboration with the secret police appear real.⁶ Kijowski wrote:

On 18 November at 12 p.m., I made my way to Zofia Moczarska's flat, which I entered with the concierge, as the abovementioned declared through her closed door that she would not open it to anyone she did not know. I stated to her in our conversation, according to plan, that the deceased had been in touch with the [Interior Ministry], had been working on some materials from the period of the occupation, of which he only gave us access to some, he was to prepare some other materials for us, something he had assured us of very recently over the telephone.⁷

During his visit, the major asked to see the archive. We do not know whether it was just a pretext or whether he expected to find some surprises in it.

The historian Andrzej Kunert speculates: "Moczarski had been in touch with people from different milieux since the war, so perhaps the [Security Service] was counting on finding some notes or reminiscences. He also had an archive of documents from the war, he had spent years investigating the murders of Jerzy Makowiecki and Ludwik Widerszal."⁸ However, the latter was not likely to

5 AIPN, 0128/1003, B. 74–76.

6 AIPN, 0128/1003, B. 321.

7 AIPN, 0128/1003, B. 348–349.

8 Author's interview with Andrzej Kunert, 2008.

have been the goal of the operation, since the Security Service did not engage in studying what were now historical investigations. It is more likely that it was attempting to discredit Moczarski. Major Kijowski demanded that Zofia Moczarska keep their conversation a secret, threatening that otherwise he would spread the word that her husband had collaborated with the Security Service. Moczarski's accidental meeting with General Krzysztoporski in their daughters' school and the general's telephone number written down in Moczarski's diary were to make this story credible.

A mere week later, Kijowski telephoned Moczarska. He wrote in a note:

I informed her that the decision has been made to publish the book and, for this reason, in order to wrap up the matter of signing a contract, next week she is to proceed to PIW [publishers] director Andrzej Wasilewski, who is expecting her. Furthermore, I informed her that the decision was made thanks to our efforts and that to some extent it is taking care of her husband's request with which he came to us . . . There is currently no need to involve others in this matter, as it has been taken care of.⁹

It is unlikely that Zofia Moczarska believed the functionary, even for an instant. We know from secret collaborator "Potocka," who regularly reported on Moczarski to the secret police beginning in the mid-1960s that Zofia did not give in to the blackmail and immediately told Józef Rybicki about it. Rybicki also thought that the case was a Security Service provocation. His former Home Army comrades shortly took Moczarski's whole archive away to prevent a search and seizure.

The Security Service retaliated for Zofia's telling her friends about the functionary's visit, and Major Kijowski acted on his threat. Before the book was published, in May 1976, he wrote to his bosses: "Further actions concerning the disinformation of the milieu about the person of Kazimierz Moczarski will aim to conduct a conversation with Józef Rybicki, during which will be used information acquired through a [room bug] 'Rafał' as allegedly coming directly from Kazimierz Moczarski."¹⁰

It is difficult to know whether word about the alleged collaboration went far. "It did not reach me," Bartoszewski said hastily. However, it certainly made the rounds in the Interior Ministry, in functionaries' deceptive notes about Moczarski, which remain in the files of the former secret police.¹¹ After Moczarski's book was published, the Security Service tried one more time to

9 AIPN, 0128/1003, B. 354.

10 AIPN, 0128/1003, B. 356.

11 AIPN, 0128/1003, B. 359.

crush its success by questioning its authenticity. It searched for documents that would prove that Moczarski had not shared a prison cell with Stroop at all. However, it had no home advantage. "It is difficult to find objective materials about Kazimierz Moczarski's imprisonment with a war criminal to permit us to confirm or deny this fact; documentation is not kept about who was confined with whom," read a document written by functionaries of the Third Department of the Interior Ministry. "If it really happened, it should be considered a highly irresponsible fact."¹² How could we dispute this?

Conversations with an Executioner appeared in July 1977, nearly two years after its author's death. Its first and subsequent editions disappeared from bookshops in a flash and were discussed far and wide. People became aware of how remarkable this book was, how complex its message. People asked discreetly why it had taken so long: "It is stunning how slowly one of the most interesting and valuable books in our writings about Germany or, if you prefer, about the war, was published and reached large numbers of readers. *Conversations with an Executioner* was written in skeletal form in 1956, a short time after its author left prison."¹³

It was probably Andrzej Szczypiorski's efforts to promote the book in West Germany that finally persuaded the Polish authorities to allow it to be published in Poland; having it see the light of day abroad and ignoring it at home would have been inconvenient to them. Andrzej Chilecki, a Polish journalist who had emigrated in the late 1950s and was a Radio Free Europe and Paris *Kultura* correspondent, and a member of the German PEN Centre helped to win over the Droste publishing house.

When *Conversations with an Executioner* finally appeared in the summer of 1977, the censorship office interfered only a little, but deprived it of the wider context. Readers were not told about the circumstances that had led to the meeting in a prison cell of a Polish Home Army officer and a German war criminal. Zofia Moczarska edited the text herself, even as she spent the last few months of her life in a hospital bed. She was lucky to live to experience the joy of the book's tremendous success. She died on 1 October 1977 and was buried next to her husband in Powązki Cemetery, not far from the mass graves of fighters in the Warsaw Uprising.

In December 1977, the play *Conversations with an Executioner* premiered at Teatr Powszechny in Warsaw. The instigator and author of the adaptation,

12 AIPN, 0128/1003, B. 370.

13 Marta Fik, *Kultura polska po Jałcie. Kronika lat 1944–1981* (London, 1989), 600.

Zygmunt Hübner, asked Andrzej Wajda to direct it. “Hübner was always looking for engaged plays, which is why he turned to *Conversations with an Executioner*. He believed that it was not just a performance, but also a cause. Which is why, even though he rarely appeared on stage, he now played Moczarski,”¹⁴ recalled Wajda. Stanisław Zaczek played Jürgen Stroop and Kazimierz Kaczor played Gustav Schielke, the German policeman who also shared their cell. Wajda remembered that the rehearsals were held in the theatre’s men’s room, so that the actors could experience prison-like overcrowding and physical closeness. The actors took turns washing the floor with a rag and talking. Allan Starski, the scenographer, visited the Rakowiecka Street prison to get an idea of what its cells looked like. To Wajda,

This show explained how Nazi ideology appealed to the Germans. To us, it was new. For example, the way Stroop talked about the vision of conquering Ukraine, which shocked us. Moczarski’s book opened a new universe to us. However, there was a problem with where to place Moczarski in this story: who he was, how he ended up in the same cell as a German criminal. I had the idea of introducing a prologue, which would be similar to an author’s presentation of his book. Hübner, who played Moczarski, came on stage, sat down in a chair and answered questions from theatre employees sitting in the audience, not even actors but technical staff, because they sounded more realistic. Hübner improvised his answers, but the questions lay within the bounds of what the censor’s office would allow. Hübner was excellent at this. We were working in the reality that existed then, not suspecting that Communism would collapse in Poland and that we would live to see a time when we could, like we can today, in 2008, talk freely about Moczarski.¹⁵

At the end of the question-and-answer sessions, as is the custom with author appearances, a lady would walk up to give the actors flowers. Then the lights went out, the stage, which was separated from the audience by black tulle, disappeared. To the side was an empty chair. It made a powerful impression, especially on those who had known Moczarski. “Our memory of the book’s author was still fresh, and Hübner somehow resembled him physically,” recalled Teresa Szydłowska.¹⁶

Stroop’s and Schielke’s distinct figures, and Moczarski living in their shadow, gave the book its power, but the play did not go far enough. The reviews made it clear: “It is the prologue, in which Hübner plays Moczarski talking about himself, that sets up the most dramatic situation imaginable,” wrote Jan Kłossowicz in *Literatura*, “and it’s also there in the first minutes, in the scene in the cell when

14 Author’s interview with Andrzej Wajda, 2008.

15 Author’s interview with Andrzej Wajda, 2008.

16 Author’s interview with Teresa Szydłowska.

Moczarski realises who his fellow inmates are. Afterwards, the actors have much more to say than to act.”¹⁷

Jacek Kochanowicz remembered the discussions and emotions stirred up by *Conversations with an Executioner*.

People talked about it a lot because it gave us a different view of Fascism. Moczarski's book must have been the first to show us the soul of Fascism. Moczarski, looking at Stroop, allowed us to empathise with his situation, to understand the reasons behind his decisions. He depicted Fascism not as a system, a distant monster, but as an individual case. But, on the other hand, for us, his readers, it was a book about totalitarianism. We interpreted it as a tool for understanding the world around us. There was no literature that analysed Communism then.¹⁸

Writing alternative history is usually futile, but we should ask ourselves what would have happened to *Conversations with an Executioner* had its significance been reduced to its story. If no one knew the story of the Home Army man, who spent several months in a cell in a Communist prison cell with a German criminal, escaped death virtually by miracle and then wrote about their encounter. The Polish writer Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, who lived in Italy after the war and wrote a Gulag memoir, *Inny świat (A World Apart)* answered this question:

Whoever doesn't know (many of this book's readers, as I have learned) that Moczarski was inhumanely tortured by Security Service executioners for his own 'case' as he lived in a cell in Mokotów prison for nine months with an SS general, whoever can see all of Stroop and only a tiny bit of Moczarski in the book, whoever has not heard about Moczarski's service in the Home Army and about the story of his 'case' from his arrest in 1945 to his rehabilitation in 1956, does not understand the significance of *Conversations with an Executioner*. Its significance is so enormous that I would not hesitate to include its author among the most important witnesses to the pinnacle of the totalitarian plague's intensity.¹⁹

The experience of double totalitarianism helps to understand the essence of the twentieth century's history of eastern Europe.

The book's Polish reviewers asked how much the story increased our knowledge about the Nazi system and compared it to the autobiography of Auschwitz commander Rudolf Höss. Their between-the-lines references to the author's experiences were enigmatic. Kazimierz Nowosielski wrote in *Twórczość* monthly:

17 Fik, *Kultura polska po Jałcie*, 608.

18 Author's interview with Jacek Kochanowicz, 2008.

19 Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, *Dziennik pisany nocą 1973–1979* (Warsaw, 1990), 261.

Kazimierz Moczarski's book can be read in different ways, and each one of these ways reveals something different. One reading may interpret it as a document about the activities of SS General Jürgen Stroop, the story of his career in the Nazi system, an account of his undertakings and his actions. Someone else may skip its purely documentary and historical value and focus on the war criminal's sociopsychology, which this book shows with exceptional clarity. A third reader may focus on the mechanism of how their relationship evolved, will read it as a horrible novel about the 'era of furnaces' . . . There are other ways to read *Conversations with an Executioner*, and the point is not to manufacture them here, but instead to show what this book may become in the hands of the careful reader already on the first page.²⁰

The harshest opinion appeared in *Trybuna Ludu*, the governing party's main paper. Literary critic Michał Misiorny wrote: "Those who once upon a time eagerly made sure that many Polish stories, such as Moczarski's, were endowed with a tragic tone, have been morally and politically judged and, if their memory has not failed them, they can remember it."²¹

This sentence outraged Ministry of Public Security's Adam Humer. He wrote a letter "in the name of truth, and also of current reasons of politics," in which he demanded that Polish United Workers' Party comrades take decisive steps. He sent his letter to two secretaries of the party's Central Committee, Stanisław Kania and Jerzy Łukaszewicz, and to Minister of Internal Affairs Stanisław Kowalczyk. He demanded that *Trybuna Ludu* reporters "earn their pay for unmasking reactionary lies and hypocritical games of various false workers' defenders and leave the spitting at fighters for a Socialist Poland to 'Free Europe,' the Paris *Kultura* and other anti-Communist rags." According to Humer, Moczarski had been sentenced twice, the first time for his post-war activities and the second time for his wartime deeds. He had been rehabilitated only in the latter case. Humer wrote:

I would presently like to note that Moczarski, contrived as a national hero, was in fact not only an organiser and ringleader of the blood-stained counterrevolution which followed Poland's liberation, was given a rightful sentence for it, which to this day has not been overturned, but also, previously, from his youngest days in the pre-war period and during the occupation, was an active anti-Communist activist.²²

Humer's letter was treated seriously, and his charges were analysed by the Interior Ministry.

20 Fik, *Kultura polska po Jalcie*, 600.

21 Fik, *Kultura polska po Jalcie*, 601.

22 Humer probably had in mind the 1946 sentence, which Moczarski finished serving in 1950. Lipiński, *Humer et al.*, 77.

One cannot but notice some of the circumstances which accompanied the publication and publicity of Moczarski's book. Especially the participation in them of A[niela] Steinsbergowa and A[ndrzej] Wajda, but also of foreign sabotage centres, and the distortion of facts that are of historical significance. It is not difficult to ascertain that Moczarski has never been rehabilitated for the criminal activities he engaged in after Poland's liberation. . . . In the second criminal case, Moczarski was actually rehabilitated, but this does not change the assessments of the activities of the [Home Army, Directorate of Underground Resistance]) groups in which he performed important functions. Juxtaposed with the above, Misiorny's comment about the activities of the sec[urity] organs is of particular political significance and differs from the assessments of the Party Leadership and, therefore, should not appear in an official press organ of the party.²³

This evaluation of Moczarski's wartime activities and of his imprisonment and sentencing was still *de rigueur* not only inside the Interior Ministry, but also in official propaganda. The censorship office limited the number of the play's performances to a few per month and prohibited its staging outside Warsaw.

In 1978, the book was published in West Germany. It included a preface by two writers, Erich Kuby (the author of the autobiographical novel *Mein Krieg* [My war]) and Andrzej Szczypiorski. A representative of the Polish embassy in Bonn attempted to pressure the publishers to withdraw Szczypiorski's preface, but they refused directly. In revenge, a wild campaign against Szczypiorski was launched in newspapers. Party journalist Ryszard Wojna spoke up at a meeting of Polish United Workers' Party activists in the Polish Writers' Union about "questions of the normalisation of relations between Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany," and called Szczypiorski's preface "treacherous and assaulting the Polish national interest."²⁴

In 1979, Szczypiorski's preface to *Conversations with an Executioner* appeared in the London émigré literary magazine *Puls*, and from there it made its way into underground publications in Poland. "Read *Conversations with an Executioner* carefully and think about the story of Kazimierz Moczarski, a man who did not capitulate and who was prepared to die so as to preserve others from vegetating under totalitarian rule."²⁵

The Polish authorities did not succeed at destroying the book which, after it was published in Germany, made a triumphant and long world tour. Next came readers in Yugoslavia, Israel, France, Japan, Finland, the United Kingdom,

23 AIPN, mf: 2512/3–6.

24 AIPN, mf: 2512/3–6.

25 Moczarski, *Rozmowy z katem*, 21.

Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and in the twenty-first century also in Italy, Greece, Russia and Ukraine.

* * *

Because it is based mostly on the accounts and reminiscences of third parties, the story I have tried to tell must inevitably leave its readers unfulfilled. Kazimierz Moczarski never kept a diary. The memoir he wrote only covers bits of his eventful life. I would have been happy to have notes he wrote himself. Nevertheless, there are two statements, which seem especially crucial to an understanding of his life, and for this reason I am including them here, where a book is usually wrapped up.

All the way until the end of the Polish People's Republic, the censorship office prohibited the publication of a fragment of the book's epilogue in which Moczarski wrote:

Friends and readers ask me often whether with hindsight I don't regret the time I 'lost' in prison. I will tell those who want to know: no. Yes, in those 'wasted' years I could have 'achieved' something for myself or for others. However, then I wouldn't have been able to learn about the essence of many big issues, both universal ones and ones that influence the fate of my nation. And also, and many don't realise this, in those years prison gave people the privilege of living in a clear-cut, simple, well-defined situation (with basically only a no or a yes). This life helps the stubborn person to hold onto principles instead of giving in to circumstances and to the need to slalom, which can so easily become scheming. I especially don't regret the 255 days in prison I spent talking with Jürgen Stroop and Gustav Schielke.²⁶

Indeed, in Stalinist Poland prison cells could be "salons" occupied by the best, for whom there was only one choice between physical and moral integrity. For a long time, I resisted these words of Moczarski's, in which he had the generosity to distance himself from what was done to him, I would have preferred to hear his robust accusations directed at his tormentors. It took me a long time to accept their meaning. To accept is not to understand totally, which is something that only someone who lived in those times and was one of those who were harshly tested by history can do. Moczarski never allowed despair to dominate him or nihilism to take possession of him. The eleven years in prison did not kill his optimism about life, his curiosity about the world. When he became free, he went back to trying to be useful and constructive. He shared these characteristics with many in his generation, people who grew up in the newly independent Poland, which to them represented a duty and a dream.

26 Moczarski, *Rozmowy z katem*, 399.

Kazimierz Moczarski, a man of slight posture and subtle personality, who appeared to be so ordinary, was actually a tough man. There was no pathos or cheap emotion in him. “I don’t like platitudes and big words because I always suspect that they are covering up a scam,” he wrote to his friend Marta Rajchman.²⁷ This pure thought of the man whose life I chose to write about stayed in the back of my mind as I tried to avoid all great quantifiers in writing his story.

27 Elżbieta Moczarska’s archive.

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