

Juliusz Tyszka

Risky Hitchhiking, and Other Stories about the Theatre of the Eighth Day

Teatr Ósmego Dnia (the Theatre of the Eighth Day), established in Poznań in 1964, was a part of Polish student theatre. Between 1976 and 1981, it became one of the most important companies in the history of the Polish theatre, producing several masterpieces. It also became a legendary grouping of democratic, anti-communist opposition. The persecution it was subjected to was caused by censorship, the secret police, and the administration at all levels. However, the members of the group managed to overcome everyday fear, face the totalitarian authorities openly, and create unforgettable artistic works. Four of them, who belonged to the group from the early 1970s, still maintain the ethical principles and artistic strategies adopted at that time, and thus now clash with the ideology of the current ruling administration, which is the right-wing Law and Justice Party.

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ON A CLEAR afternoon on 9 June 1977, Marcin Kęszycki, an actor of the Theatre of the Eighth Day, stood on the side of Road 11, the Katowice–Poznań road, beyond the town of Kórnik, trying to hitchhike. He was in a rush. It was nearly 6.30 p.m. and he had missed his bus. He had to be in Poznań (about twelve and a half miles from Kórnik) by seven, where the post-premiere, official presentation of *Przecena dla wszystkich* (*Sale for Everyone*) was to begin at the Maski Theatre Centre of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Stalingradzka Street (Figures 1 and 2).

It was extremely important for Kęszycki to be at Maski Theatre on time: the battles with censorship for permission to put on the premiere had lasted from February. The group's leader, Lech Raczak, had spent hours in the building of the Poznań branch of the Central Office for the Control of the Press, Publications, and Performances (the official name of Polish communist censorship), arguing with the censor about almost every line of the text. This censor was, by the way, very liberal: he was a graduate of Polish philology studies

and wrote interesting articles for the local press about Soviet cinema – the valuable films (for example the works of Vasily Shukshin and Andrei Tarkovsky), rather than the ideologically correct stuff.

Back in March, when negotiations were very far from having reached a compromise, even a slight one, the censor had given consent to the 'closed rehearsals' of *Sale for Everyone*. The first took place on 22 March 1977. It was necessary, for each of these 'closed rehearsals', to obtain the consent of the censor, and then hand over the list of the audience with their signatures to the local headquarters of the secret political police (Służba Bezpieczeństwa, or SB).

The then head of the Culture Committee of the Regional Poznań Office of the Socialist Union of Polish Students (SZSP, the official sponsor of Theatre of the Eight Day), Grzegorz Gauden, who later became dissident and political emigrant, recalls:

The strength of this performance was overwhelming. I am convinced that the creators of *Sale for Everyone* knew that their opportunity would be



Figure 1. Logo of Theatre of the Eighth Day by Wojciech Wołyński. Photo and permission from the Archive of Theatre of the Eighth Day.

the artistic dimension of the performance, not just its message. After several 'closed rehearsals' . . . the whole of 'Theatrical Poland' knew that an outstanding performance, a real artistic event, was being performed in Poznań. Pilgrimages to Masks [i.e. the Maski Theatre] to see it had begun.¹

Leszek Długosz, a singer-bard from Cracow who watched one of these 'closed rehearsals', wrote in a letter to Theatre of the Eighth Day:

This performance forces a man from his 'well-carved stand of spirit and body'. It evokes anxiety, bitterness and tenderness. Your attitude . . . makes

one . . . jealous! – Because s/he thinks, 'Somebody did it for me! Only it wasn't me, and they did it! It hurts a bit, but no, no, it's better, cleaner'.²

It is worth mentioning that *Sale for Everyone* was provoking enthusiastic opinions not only among friends/artists but also among people belonging to the theatrical establishment (Figures 3 and 4). One of them was Jan Paweł Gawlik, the chairman of the jury at the 'Confrontations of Young Theatre' festival in Lublin in April 1978, who was a theatre critic and manager, and a very important person in official Polish theatre: he was the general and artistic manager of the Stary Teatr (Old Theatre) in Cracow, considered at the time to be the best drama-repertory theatre in the country; the general manager of State Television Theatre; and a high-ranking communist party official, a deputy member of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). Here is the report from Grzegorz Gauden:

I took Gawlik to *Sale for Everyone*. . . . He came out, came up to me and said, 'You know, I expected a lot, but not that the opposition in Poland had its own theatre!' Then he fell silent. We went back together and at one point he spoke again, unasked: 'What acting! What a vision! What theatre! Where are we with our theatre?!' He went to the performance once more. And when the proceedings of the festival's jury began, he immediately asked for the floor and suggested listing in first place, in the final announcement of the jury, the Theatre of the Eighth Day and the performance of *Sale for Everyone* for exceptional artistic and ideological values. We were stunned and nonplussed.³

Let us begin by explaining the combination of circumstances that influenced this enthusiastic perception by addressing the theme of the inner freedom of its creators. Above all, it is necessary to emphasize the consistency with which they treated the imperative of compliance to everyday life with artistic creation. In the programme leaflet for their previous performance, *We Have to Confine Ourselves to What Has Been Called [Here] Paradise on Earth* (1975),⁴ they declared: 'We consider it our duty to stand up for everyone's right to the self-determination of their own fate, for the right to fulfil our own will to live an active life. . . .



Figure 2. Adam Mickiewicz Square in Poznań. In the foreground is a poster for the performance of Theatre of the Eighth Day's *Oh, Have We Lived in Dignity* (12–13 December 1979). In the background is the Adam Mickiewicz University Auditorium with a banner about the Regional Reporting and Election Conference of the Polish United Workers' Party taking place there. On the road, centre, is a Fiat 126p, the same as Lieutenant Ziomek's car, who drove hitchhiker Marcin Kęszycki. Photo and permission from the Archive of Theatre of the Eighth Day.

The form of our activity in the theatre is for us the same as the way we live.⁵

At first glance, this demand for the abstract compliance of theatre creation with life consisted not only in scrupulously following the imperative of creative self-development, but also in the fact that, in January 1976, the members of the Theatre of the Eighth Day joined the action of collecting signatories to protest letters targeting the changes to the Constitution planned by the authorities of the Polish People's Republic (PRL).⁶ And when, in the summer of 1976, the *Milicja Obywatelska* (MO, or Citizens' Militia, the communist state police) tortured workers in the town of Radom who had

protested against the government-ordered increase in food prices, they began cooperating with the dissident Workers' Defence Committee (Komitet Obrony Robotników, or KOR), which was then being formed. Thus they clearly demonstrated the consistency between their ideals and their deeds, as well as their personal 'incarnations' in life and in the theatre. They also condemned themselves to increasing social isolation and repression, described later in this article.

When the Eighth Day members made the decision to join dissident activities in the autumn of 1975, they already knew what the consequences of this choice would be. As the actor Tadeusz Janiszewski stated: 'But of



Figure 3. 'Holy Family': scene from *Sale for Everyone* (1977), collective creation directed by Lech Raczak. From left: Tomasz Stachowski, Adam Borowski, Roman Radomski, Małgorzata Walas, Marcin Kęszycki, Lech Jankowski. Photo by Joanna Helander.

course we could not do otherwise. We made . . . this decision . . . together, knowing that everything would change from now on.⁷

Verification of this way of life was visible in the content of *Sale for Everyone*, and in the freedom-filled mode of existence adopted by the actresses and actors. The most drastic example at that time was the acutely up-to-date scene from this performance, which was described by the actress, Ewa Wójciak:

Here we have jokes, playing the fool, jests, gags . . . and all of a sudden begins a brutal 'outdoor gym', very realistically shown, simply 'a quotation from reality', obviously conveyed to spectators in the aesthetics of our theatre, not like in real life. Nevertheless, the scene was very literal. It took people's breath away.⁸

'Outdoor gym' (a direct translation from Polish would be 'path of health') is an ironic term for the form of torture used in communist Poland by the secret police (SB), state militia (MO), and riot police (ZOMO) against rebellious workers and opposition activists. It involved hitting the detainee, who was made to run the gauntlet between two rows of policemen who beat them with truncheons.

The one who was pushed through the 'outdoor gym' in *Sale for Everyone* was Waldemar Modestowicz, who in one of the previous scenes had played a boy who believed in the success of building a bright future. The 'final paradise' was pompously described in a song in the style of a socialist realism-like 'builders' anthem' sung by the entire ensemble. The boy



Figure 4. 'The Time of Mad People': scene from *Sale for Everyone* (1977). From left: Tomasz Stachowski, Lech Jankowski, Małgorzata Walas, Tadeusz Janiszewski. Photo by Joanna Helander.

was beaten, of course, not with police truncheons, but with ties and linen belts. Critic Tadeusz Nyczek wrote:

Sale for Everyone . . . is a performance 'after the final choice'. Perhaps the most difficult choice possible, but in the situation of this theatre the most honest one: telling the truth about oneself and the world without any concessions . . . regardless of the consequences.⁹

'Quotations from reality' were a consequence of the search that the previous group of the Theatre of the Eighth Day had already started in the productions *An Introduction to . . .* (1970)¹⁰ and *In One Breath* (1971).¹¹ The young artists, fascinated by Jerzy Grotowski's Polish Laboratory Theatre, discovered that the path to the deepest layers of emotions of the viewer may lead not only through the actor's 'total act', but also through the conscious violation of the political taboos about which the spectators, caught up in their daily

dealings with communist reality, were keen to forget. The next ensemble of the Theatre of the Eighth Day, formed in the years 1970–75 (with the same leader, Lech Raczak), continued to develop this strategy, giving its provocations an artistically mature shape.¹² This was a consequence of significant changes in thinking about art and the role of the artist and his/her mission and obligations. Thanks to these changes, in *Sale for Everyone* the company consciously switched between theatrical conventions, mixing the seriousness with the grotesque, also allowing the performers to maintain ironic distance towards themselves.

Tadeusz Nyczek aptly captured this change. For him, *Sale for Everyone* was 'a spectacle marked by a special kind of freedom':

The actors of the Theatre of the Eighth Day entered evil and ridiculousness, heroism and sacrifice, paradoxes and falsehoods, took them for their own. They are as defective as the world they are a part of. They can judge not only the world, but

also themselves; hence the wonderful, cleansing scenes of self-parody – sharp, bitter, penetrating . . . This courage, which crosses the vicious line between witnessing and participating, with all its consequences, impresses me the most in this production.¹³

The self-irony was felt most strongly in an improvised scene of ‘break–entr’acte in the show’, which was situated on the border between theatrical fiction and reality. Here are some of the texts often cited within it:

Adam Borowski [to the audience]: ‘And now, a pleasant moment: voluntary fundraising. Please, have banknotes ready to offer.’ Marcin Kęszycki: ‘The fundraising money will allow us to pay for medicines and lawyers.’ . . . Roman Radomski: ‘Theatre of the Eighth Day – fair and transcendent, everything is real. Relics: pieces of crumpled ribbon from the costume – still from the premiere – for sale.’ Tadeusz Janiszewski: ‘Dirty, sweaty, next to the floor, Teatr Ósmego Dnia came to you.’¹⁴

The unprecedented change of acting in this group (all the actresses and actors played several very different characters), as well as the self-irony and self-parody, were a consequence of a radical change in the understanding of the human condition that took place in this group during the presentations of the previous performance and while working on *Sale for Everyone*.

From the rehearsals for *An Introduction to . . .* (1970) to *We Have to Confine Ourselves . . .* (1975), the company’s actresses and actors were looking for a deep truth about themselves, confronted with situations of social oppression. While putting on the latter performance eighty-one times, they experienced a gap between, on the one hand, their deep emotional involvement and moments of ecstatic expression, and, on the other, the distant attitude of the audience. As group leader Lech Raczak recalled in 1992: ‘We knew that this path was important, but we were also aware that we were omitting something essential . . . that in this search for the truth we fell into some doctrinaire abyss.’¹⁵ Ewa Wójciak observes:

I think that the kind of tension we felt at *We Have to Confine Ourselves . . .* always corrodes. . . . And we were very distrustful, also towards ourselves. . . .

We had to be the first suspects. I remember it very well – I found my acting in this performance a funny experience.¹⁶

The ensemble of the Theatre of the Eighth Day found a way out of this crisis during a workshop-camp in Chojna (15 August–15 September 1976), when they did about a dozen collective improvisations that were to provide the starting material for the new performance.¹⁷ The whole group lived in the rehearsal room, making the space of everyday life a playing space. The actors and actresses of the company, first surprised then fascinated by this situation, integrated these spaces, incorporating fragments of their everyday behaviour into spontaneous improvisations. A few of these scenes were subsequently included in the scenario of *Sale for Everyone*. The group then came to the conclusion that everyday play – mimicry – is the essence of *conditio humana*, and therefore, as Lech Raczak summed it up:

You do not have to look for only the most hidden truth. One has to realize that there can be many parallel and equivalent truths, and they have to be shown all at once – side by side, in a clash. *Sale for Everyone* was a game played by the people who chose themselves to show their different faces, and who were fully aware that each of them could be both real and false. After all, the truth is never complete in the theatre. Here the real is always potential.¹⁸

The performance consisted of fourteen sequences, neither linked together nor in any logically arranged action. The whole was composed in accordance with the principle of collage: successive sequences were often contrasted with each other on the basis of counterpoint. The rhythm and mood of the individual fragments were emphasized by the evocative music of the Orchestra of the Eighth Day (Jan A. P. Kaczmarek played a ‘Fischer’s Fidola’ zither and the flute, Grzegorz Banaszak the guitar).¹⁹ *Sale for Everyone* was a very expressive statement of the company as a whole. It strongly opposed all forms of social oppression, as well as cultural stereotypes, distancing themselves from the various kinds of pressure brought to bear by mass society on a creative individual. It mockingly denied not only the communist march

towards an undefined 'bright future', but also the oppressive nature of traditional religious and family ties, combined with the 'religion of money', and the homogenizing, destructive nature of mass culture.

At the end of Sequence XIII, titled 'The Garden', the three representatives of the 'healthy majority' were extracting the gibberish of mass culture. As a summary, the second representative (Roman Radomski) quoted the famous fragment from Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* with full conviction of its rightness: 'The more stupid one is, the closer one is to reality. The more stupid one is, the clearer one is. Stupidity is brief and artless, while intelligence squirms and hides itself. Intelligence is unprincipled, but stupidity is honest and straightforward.' To which the first representative (Tadeusz Janiszewski) amply responded: 'We have to kill all those anarchists, those terrorists, those deviants, those mentally ill, those hypersensitive, those others. We must prepare the way for our successors, our sons: blood from blood, bone from bones, peace and health must reign again.'

The performance ended with a song devoted to those 'who are broken':

who have succumbed to despair / . . . who howl in helplessness, / . . . who lose their strength / who go crazy / who drink / who fell / who knew of themselves but not of others . . . / . . . Who can still be filled with a thick, bitter love. / . . . Who succumbed / Who go mad / Who howl / Who weakened / Who went blind, / Who will burst into flames / The number of whom is . . .²⁰

The artistic quality and the message of the performance, shocking in its truthfulness and topicality, did not result in the immediate surrender of the censor, who was liberal but constrained by detailed instructions from his superiors. Nevertheless, it must be said that numerous letters of support signed by over a hundred people, including many eminent artists, played an important role in finally forcing the censor to approve the official appearance of the performance.²¹ It happened after ten 'closed rehearsals'. The official premiere took place on 8 June 1977.

It is time to list the most important forms of persecution of the Poznań company by the secret police and other organizations, including the Socialist Union of Polish Students – an official institutional sponsor of the Theatre of the Eighth Day. The information regarding these harassments and persecutions is based on evidence from various sources. The most original of these are undoubtedly the operational material of the secret political police concerning the company and its individual members. The source of this material is the Poznań regional branch office of the Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (IPN, or Institute of National Remembrance).²²

Ewa Wójciak (a member of the Theatre since 1971) describes the strategy of the authorities as follows:

They tried to make us feel guilty and convince us that everything we were doing was against the law. . . . Because we were not accused of different views, but of disloyalty towards criminal law.²³ The criminal trials that were organized against us were mainly attempts to tarnish our reputation, to show that we were ordinary troublemakers. . . . Although, there were sometimes direct attacks. Once, before martial law, I was walking home at night.²⁴ A car stopped near me, some men got out and started to run after me. It was 2 a.m., in an empty housing development . . . I remember that after some arrests there . . . it seemed to me that this was the end of the theatre, that this was the end of my life. That I had nothing else and I would not build anything in this place.²⁵

The first confrontation between the members of the company with the Security Service occurred on 30 January 1976, when emissaries from the city of Łódź brought a protest-letter on the amendments to the constitution of Polish Peoples' Republic to Poznań.²⁶ Ewa Wójciak recalls:

At one point, we noticed that secret police (SB) sentries were positioned in front of Tadeusz Janiszewski's apartment, where we all were, watching us day and night. . . . Finally, in the evening we took our friends from Łódź to the railway station, fully aware that we were not only being watched, but even surrounded. And it was in the main hall of the station that we were arrested, and then transported to the police station where they interrogated us and searched us, but found nothing.²⁷

Tadeusz Janiszewski notes:

We were arrested and we spent the night at the station with a group of drunk SB agents who came in quite merry. I remember one of them going through all my notebooks and a large calendar for a long time. One page of this calendar had the words 'I love you' written in it. When I saw him open this page and touch it with his paws, I thought I would just murder him. I couldn't bear him just marching rudely into my intimate sphere. When he saw my face, he got a little scared.²⁸

The culmination of the story of this first drastic contact between the Poznań company and the Security Service (SB) officers comes in Tadeusz Janiszewski's recollection of an encounter that he and Ewa Wójciak had experienced:

Ewa and I bumped into the commander-in-chief of this operation many years later – on a bus. He was riding with two children on his lap. We had to sit side by side. He recognized us, we recognized him too. Ewa wanted to say or do something malicious, but I didn't react. I felt it wouldn't have made any sense. I have had several such random meetings. I was always indifferent then. I think a guy like him understands everything himself.²⁹

Janiszewski's answer to the question of how it was possible that the Security Service failed to set the group members against each other or infiltrate the group with a 'mole' is interesting:

We were pretty immune to it, because we had serious experience from our rehearsals of *We Have to Confine Ourselves to What Has Been Called [Here] Paradise on Earth* [1973–75]. While working on this show, we actually went all the way through the realm of quarrels and betrayals. The starting point was that a team of people can be provoked to do many different things – individual members can be directed against each other, one can enslave them. We went through a very deep experience through improvisations, discussions, and rehearsals. On this occasion, we read a lot about the possibilities of such manipulations – from Camus, through Falkiewicz,³⁰ to the entire works of Dostoevsky. . . . I think it helped us a lot.

It also helped us that the group always had a rule that we did not hide anything from each other, that we did not lie, that nobody was stifling anything somewhere in ourselves. Conflicts erupted, were discharged, and the atmosphere cleared.

We had no secrets from each other. And most of all, we exposed ourselves to the whole team, not only in normal life, but also in improvisations. There was nothing to hide.³¹

Here is another example of harassment and repression from 1976. On 30 January that year, the Regional Office in Poznań deprived the Theatre of the Eighth Day of the cellars at Śniadeckich Street, which the company had renovated for, amongst other things, workshop classes for the Student Theatre Academy.

On 1 November 1976, when the Theatre of the Eighth Day was crossing the border between Poland and the German Democratic Republic on its way to perform in Belgium and West Germany, customs officers seized \$350 dollars from Tadeusz Janiszewski, as well as some old coins from the collection he was going to sell in the West to get hard currency. Removal of hard currency or pre-war numismatic items was an illegal act, but smuggling was commonplace among citizens of the PRL going to the West, including artists and sportsmen. Almost every man or woman lucky enough to have been given the opportunity to go to the West was hiding some illegal products they could sell there, or hard currency, in order to have an opportunity to do some substantial shopping in the western countries, which seemed a 'welfare paradise' to Polish citizens. There was even a high-profile case of the foiled export of several thousand dollars by two football players of Legia Warsaw in April 1970, who were on their way to a match against Feyenoord Rotterdam in the semi-final of the European Champion Clubs' Cup.³²

After his return to Poland, Janiszewski was put on trial and, on 19 May 1977 (twenty days before the official premiere of *Sale for Everyone*), was sentenced by the court in the border town of Słubice to pay a 15,000-złoty³³ fine, and – more importantly – was handed an eighteen-month prison sentence, suspended for two years. He was also ordered to take up permanent employment and was to be supervised by a probation officer for three years. It was obvious that the trial was pre-arranged. Janiszewski recalls:

I pitied the prosecutor who wanted to make an accusatory speech; and the judge, sitting in slippers, because maybe she had an apartment next to the court – she was bored and pissed off, because she knew exactly what sentence she was going to hand out – and he just ranted on and on with his speech.³⁴

The probation officer's supervision allowed the authorities to persecute the 'disloyal' actor systematically. Janiszewski recalled years later that

He was supposed to make sure that I worked. He was an agent of the Security Service. His real role was to get me fired if I found a job. When I was working at the post office as a telegram distributor, the head of the department at one point said that he had to fire me because he was ordered to do so.³⁵

In the early morning of 16 March 1977, just six days before the first 'closed rehearsal' of *Sale for Everyone*, SB officers conducted searches in the apartments of the members of the Theatre of the Eighth Day: Adam Borowski, Tadeusz Janiszewski, Marcin Kęszycki, Waldemar Modestowicz, Jerzy Nowacki, Lech Raczak, Roman Radomski, and Tomasz Stachowski. The pretext was the collection of evidence for a case involving the extortion of 'money to the detriment of the Poznań Association of Water Companies', where four members of the group occasionally worked. During the search, no documents were found to prove the 'criminal activity' of any member of the Theatre working at Water Companies, but the communications of the dissident Workers' Defence Committee (KOR) were confiscated. So were several dozen books (mainly 'illegal' ones, published by the Literary Institute in Paris in exile), notes from the work on *Sale for Everyone*, a typewriter, and gold jewellery, bought with the money of the group's members, which were an investment from their joint savings.

Among the most intriguing items confiscated was a one-page script of the performance *Taniec śmierci i pomyślności* (*Dance of Death and Good Fortune*), written by Stanisław Barańczak, taken from Lech Raczak's apartment. *Dance of Death and Good Fortune* (1967) was Raczak's directorial debut at Theatre of

the Eighth Day. The main literary material here were the poems of the Russian futurist Velimir Khlebnikov. The 'aggravating circumstance' of this old, politically neutral text was the person of Barańczak, the author of the script – a dissident member of KOR.³⁶ Also taken were: 'an eighty-page notebook, numbered and stamped, containing the content of the lectures from the Army Department in the Faculty of History' (confiscated from Waldemar Modestowicz's apartment);³⁷ 'a propaganda leaflet of the Theatre of the Eighth Day written in English' (taken from Marcin Kęszycki); 'the text of the script titled *We Have to Confine Ourselves To What Has Been Called Here Paradise on Earth*', which was described as 'a typewritten poem with anti-socialist content, signed by A. Borowski'; and 'two brochures from the series *Bible and Theology* – 12 cards' (found in Adam Borowski's apartment);³⁸ and a copy of Umberto Silva's book *Ideologia e arte del fascismo* [*Ideology and the Art of Fascism*], taken from Roman Radomski. The latter's confiscation gives much food for thought about the parallels between the two types of totalitarian socio-political systems.³⁹

Thanks to the investigation of the case of the Poznań Association of Water Companies case, the SB obtained the opportunity to search the homes of members of Theatre of the Eighth Day and seize a number of books, magazines, and documents, the finding of which was used by the prosecution to bring charges against the members of the company for completely unrelated offences. At the same time, their daily work was to some extent disrupted.

Marcin Kęszycki was the member of the Theatre of the Eighth Day who was the most hated and harassed by the Security Service. In a service memo made in 1979, he was characterized as follows:

The target is a member of Theatre of the Eighth Day, known to us for many years for his anti-socialist views. He participates in all actions, such as leafleting, collecting signatures for petitions, etc., organized by KSS-KOR⁴⁰ or SKS.⁴¹ He maintains extensive contacts with anti-socialist circles in the country.⁴²

And this brings us back full circle. On 9 June 1977, less than three months after his house had been searched and the day after the official, censored premiere of *Sale for Everyone*, Marcin Kęszycki stood by the side of Road 11, hitchhiking and hoping for a miracle.

After a few minutes, a yellow Fiat 126p stopped next to him and gave him a lift. The driver, who was very nice, immediately started up a conversation. After the casual conversation had lasted for ten minutes or so, there was a very sudden, violent twist: the nice gentleman informed Kęszycki that he was a lieutenant of the Security Service (SB). The twist was revealed, as the lieutenant precisely describes it in his note for supervisors, 'about five miles from Poznań'. His name was Kazimierz Ziomek, and as the head of the 3rd Section of the 3rd Department (SB) of the Regional Citizens' Militia (MO) Headquarters in Poznań, he had directly supervised a series of actions against the Theatre of the Eighth Day.

It is not known whether the yellow Fiat 126p was on Road 11 entirely by accident, or whether the meeting of the SB officer with the important 'target' was intentional. The latter explanation is supported by the fact that, in the Plan of Operational Undertakings developed on 20 March 1977, code-named 'Hercules' ('Hercules' is Kęszycki), there was, among others, the recommendation to 'identify each time the target leaves Poznań'.⁴³ On the other hand, it is possible that the lieutenant (as he himself reported to his superiors in the aforementioned service note) was actually returning home in his private car after a holiday stay in the village of Błazejewko on 9 June. It was Corpus Christi, an official holiday, and, apparently, the lieutenant also had a day off from work (but then again maybe he didn't). From that note, it transpired that initially he had not recognized that the hitchhiker was one of his targets and only came to realize who he was dealing with after a few minutes.

We can imagine what Kęszycki felt at that moment. One month and two days earlier, on 7 May 1977, a student of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Stanisław Pyjas, an associate of KOR, had died. The official cause of death was a fall down the stairs – the unofficial

cause a fatal beating from SB officers. Thousands of Cracow students demonstrated for several days on the streets against authoritarian oppression, disrupting the official celebrations of the students' spring holiday known as Juwenalia. Soon they created an independent student union, the Students' Committee of Solidarity (SKS) and, in a few weeks, branches of this illegal organization were established in all the main academic centres in Poland. There were many indications that the SB was hardening its stance against activists and associates of KOR and SKS. Kęszycki, also a collaborator with KOR, in addition to being an actor of the 'dissident' theatre, could have been one of the next targets of the secret political police. Therefore, it is very unlikely that his encounter with Ziomek on Road 11 was accidental.

According to Ziomek, after he had revealed his identity, the actor 'changed a lot and got scared'.⁴⁴ The officer took mercy on him and reacted with humanity: 'I calmed him down and suggested that if he did not want to go any further, I would stop the car and he could get out.' Kęszycki replied no, and 'that we had met on somewhat neutral ground'.⁴⁵ All in all, however, he was not sure where they would end up. His thoughts continued to race in his head, and he was unable to focus on the conversation with the lieutenant. In any case, the conversation began to take on an increasingly strange character as the secret police officer, apparently in a cheerful mood, started playing a perverse game:

As we drove on, I directed the conversation to the matter of Pyjas's death, saying that if something happened to Kęszycki now, everyone would also think that the SB had killed him or caused his death, Radio Free Europe and KOR would find a perfect way to use it, and nobody would believe that it was a completely accidental meeting.

Kęszycki did not like this rather perverse turn of the conversation. According to Ziomek's report, 'He agreed that I was right, adding, however, that he would still search for the truth, and the circumstances of Pyjas's death were unclear to him'.⁴⁶ The conversation continued, focused now on the leading Polish dissident, Jacek Kuroń.⁴⁷ Lieutenant Ziomek

tried to convince his interlocutor that Kuroń was exploiting the students, hoping to see their 'blood flow', assisted by Kęszycki, and others like him: 'I also asked him whether he was convinced that he was working for the good of this country rather than against this country, and I added that it was difficult for him to judge that history and time would judge it best.'

Kęszycki was let out of the car in Stalin-gradzka Street,⁴⁸ and Ziomek told him not to try to remember the registration number of his car – to which, of course, Kęszycki eagerly consented.⁴⁹ When I asked Kęszycki about this 'eager consent' in 2014, he stated that he had treated Ziomek's wish quite dismissively. He was late for the performance, he said, and did not have time to pay attention to such things.

When Kęszycki arrived at the Adam Mickiewicz University Masks Theatre Centre and

told his friends from the company what had happened to him, they unanimously agreed that he was making things up, assuming he was just making an excuse for his late arrival at the performance. Only years later, in 2006, when the group received materials from their secret Security Service files and everyone read Lieutenant Ziomek's memo, did they finally realize that their friend had been telling the truth (Figures 5, 6, and 7).

To conclude the topic of Marcin Kęszycki's meetings with Lieutenant Kazimierz Ziomek, we have to jump a few years ahead. In 1982 (the year of martial law in the Polish People's Republic), the actor was arrested by MO officers and brought to the SB headquarters on Kochanowskiego Street. There, he had his second encounter with Ziomek, this time in a 'normal' police setting. The interlocutor was behind the desk, and a desk lamp was shining brightly into the face of the 'target'. The



Figure 5. Ewa Wójciak and Adam Borowski in *The Files* (2006), collective creation based on the documentary texts selected by Ewa Wójciak and Katarzyna Madoń-Mitzner. Most of the texts are taken from the secret files of the SB. Photocopies of the documents from the files of Adam Borowski (target code-named 'Adam') can be seen on the backstage screen. Photo by Jolanta Kilian.



Figure 6. *The Files* (2006). From left: Marcin Kęszycki, Tadeusz Janiszewski, Adam Borowski, and Ewa Wójciak. Photo by Jolanta Kilian.



Figure 7. *The Files* (2006). From left: Marcin Kęszycki, Tadeusz Janiszewski, and Adam Borowski in a re-enactment of the scene 'Politburo' from *Oh, Have We Lived in Dignity* (1979), collective creation directed by Lech Raczak. Photo by Jolanta Kilian.



Figure 8. The cast of *A Fable* (1982), collective creation based on the motifs of William Faulkner's novel, directed by Lech Raczak. Foreground: Marcin Kęszycki and Adam Borowski; left to right: Roman Radomski, Ewa Wójciak, Lech Jankowski, and Tadeusz Janiszewski. Photo by kind permission of the Archive of Theatre of the Eighth Day.

lieutenant first spoke warmly about some scenes from *Przypowieść (A Fable)*,⁵⁰ the latest performance of the Theatre of the Eighth Day (Figure 8), and, then, with evident satisfaction, he informed Kęszycki that he would be kept in custody for forty-eight hours. The 'target' was led out of the room, then directed not to the detention centre, but outside the building. As he descended the stairs and was beginning to taste freedom, two uniformed MO officers stopped him. The militiamen took him to the Municipal MO Headquarters on Marcinkowskiego Avenue and placed him in custody there.⁵¹

Martial law was used by the authorities of the Polish People's Republic for its final settling of scores with the Theatre of the Eighth Day: in July 1984, the company lost its

premises and all material support from public funds. Until 1986, the Theatre of the Eighth Day was active in the 'second circulation of culture', performing in churches, but it soon turned out that there were increasingly few priests brave enough to host dissident theatre. In addition, the messages of the performances turned out to be too ambiguous for the audience, who were hungry for simple, anti-communist messages.

In the summer of 1985, the members of the group who had obtained passports from the authorities left for the Edinburgh Arts Festival. They put on *Auto-da-Fé*, the performance specially prepared for this tour. After their success there (Fringe First Award), they were invited to many other places. The division of the team between those at home and those

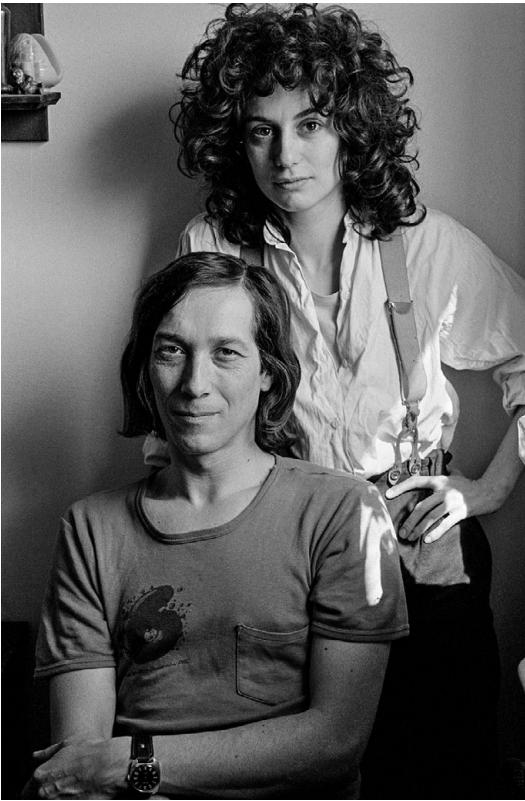


Figure 9. Lech Raczak and his wife Daria Anfell in the mid-1980s. Photo by Joanna Helander.



Figure 10. The ensemble of the Theatre of the Eighth Day in 1989 in West Berlin. Sitting from left: Lech Raczak and Adam Borowski; standing from left: Marcin Kęszycki, Ewa Wójciak, and Tadeusz Janiszewski. Photo by Joanna Helander.

abroad was prolonged, and therefore the group decided to move to the West, on condition they all received permission from the authorities to leave Poland. It was not easy. In the end, it was only in the summer of 1988 that the entire company found themselves abroad. Marcin Kęszycki was the last to join the group. His passport applications were refused twenty-four times by the authorities (Figures 9 and 10).

The ensemble of the Theatre of the Eighth Day returned to its homeland in 1990, personally invited by Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the first non-communist Prime Minister of Poland. In 1992, the company were granted premises in the centre of Poznań from the city municipality. To this day, it is one of the main centres of alternative culture in Poland. The existence of such centres has been particularly important since 2015, because the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice) party, which has been

governing in the Republic of Poland since then, is gradually taking over the public space, repeatedly violating the Constitution and the principle of the tripartite division of powers. All state media disseminate the party message of Law and Justice, which from the very beginning resembled the propagandist rhetoric, or newspeak, from the times of the People's Republic, and often surpasses it in its primitivism.

In 2017, the Theatre of the Eighth Day produced *Clause 196 of the Penal Code (Exercises in Terror)*, in which the company clearly presented the final consequences of the hate speech officially supported by the ruling party and right-wing extremists supported by Law and Justice. The script includes quotations from speeches by, among others, Stanisław Gądecki, Archbishop of the



Figure 11. Wojciech Wotyński, poster for *Oh, Have We Lived in Dignity* (1979), a collective creation directed by Lech Raczak. By kind permission of the Archive of Theatre of the Eighth Day.

Catholic Church,⁵² and Jarosław Kaczyński, President of Law and Justice, a *de facto* dictator in the party and the state. At the end of the performance:

four figures dressed in cloaks, field uniforms, and helmets adorned with a white-and-red rim [the Polish national colours] burst onto the stage and start to 'separate the sectors of the audience' . . . They attach a wire net to the edges of the landings, cutting off the performers from spectators, and spectators from each other. From now on we look to the stage action and other viewers through a transparent, yet clear fence evoking those that can still be seen in museums and memorial sites in Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Majdanek.⁵³ 53

In their latest performance, *Allegro Agitate*, which premiered just before the Covid-19 pandemic, the actress and three actors of the Theatre of the Eighth Day share with viewers

their (often self-ironic) reflection on the world and theatre.⁵⁴ The part of the performance which is especially worth remembering consists of 'four beautiful, well-written stories about various places visited, about the people encountered there and the stories heard there'; further, 'It is important that in each of them there is conflict, human harm, and a crime of authorities against citizens.'⁵⁵

The story that had the greatest impact on me was the one told by Ewa Wójciak about the martyrdom of the Argentinian *desaparecidos* (or 'disappeared'), the victims of the military junta of 1976–83. (According to today's calculations, there were over 30,000 of them.) Sitting in the audience, I thought that, if the Theatre of the Eighth Day had operated in Argentina then, its members would probably have also become *desaparecidos*. It is a very

interesting, inspiring, thought-provoking reflection for someone who survived martial law and the 1980s in Poland.

In its programme statement accompanying *Allegro Agitate* the ensemble states:

We try to share what we have experienced: humility towards the world, fascination and admiration for distant cultures, openness to other people and their tragedies. We feel brotherhood with the poor and unfairly treated citizens of this world – in the Caracas slums, in the streets of Hong Kong, in Russia or in Chile, no less than in Poland. We are theatre workers and citizens of the world.⁵⁶

I am happy that I have been able to admire the performances of the Theatre of the Eighth Day up to now, but sometimes I wonder what would have happened if Lieutenant Kazimierz Ziomek had taken Marcin Kęszycki not to Stalingradzka Street, but somewhere else. What if Ewa Wójciak had not managed to escape her persecutors at the housing development at around 2 a.m. that night? What if Tadeusz Janiszewski had been convicted of smuggling dollars and numismatic goods and served one and a half years in prison with no suspended sentence? Or if Roman Radomski and Tomasz Stachowski had been sent to prison in September 1978, when they were tried for beating up militiamen? (They were detained in Warsaw on their way to the Meetings of Youth Theatre in Lublin in April 1978).⁵⁷ Or if the trial of Water Companies in spring 1979 had ended with severe sentences being handed down to four members of the Theatre? (Some of the defendants in this trial were sentenced to eight years in prison.)

What if, in May 1980, the band of plain-clothes militia officers that had prevented the Theatre of the Eighth Day from performing *Oh, Have We Lived in Dignity* in Warsaw (Figure 11) had not withdrawn from the 'Stodoła' club but had used the police batons that its sixty-odd members already had in their hands?⁵⁸

Notes and References

1. Grzegorz Gauden, 'Wypowiedź w cyklu wspomnień pt. *Ósemki*' ['A Statement in the Series of Memories Titled *The Eights*'], *Teatr*, LX, Nos. 1–3 (2005), p. 41.

2. 'Leszek Długosz do Teatru Ósmego Dnia' ['Leszek Długosz to the Theatre of the Eighth Day'], in *Ósmego Dnia*

[*The Eighth Day*], ed. Zbigniew Gluza (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Karta, 1994), p. 41.

3. Gauden, 'Wypowiedź', p. 42. Not everyone in the political establishment was sensitive enough to approve the artistic values of this performance: in May 1978 there were abundant efforts by the authorities to minimize the political losses caused by the great success of *Sale for Everyone* at the Lublin festival. In that month, the editors of all official media in Poland received a censorship order regulating their decisions: 'This time, the order covers all positive reports and references to the performances of Theatre of the Eighth Day, which are to be eliminated from press, radio, and television materials.' Eventually, a few editors managed to smuggle in positive comments about *Sale for Everyone*, 'but it is worth remembering this prohibition order when reading reviews and discussions from the years 1978–80 devoted to the performances of Theatre of the Eighth Day': see Lech Raczak, 'Kronika Teatru Ósmego Dnia 1964–1992' ['The Chronicle of the Theatre of the Eighth Day 1964–1992'], in Raczak, *Więcej niż jedno życie: Kreacje zbiorowe Teatru Ósmego Dnia 1977–1985. Postzapisy* [More than One Life: Collective Creations of the Theatre of the Eighth Day 1977–1985. Postrecords] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Miejskie Poznań, 2012), p. 214.

4. *Musimy poprzestać na tym, co tu nazwano rajem na ziemi* [We Have to Confine Ourselves to What Has Been Called [Here] Paradise on Earth]. The work uses extracts from Fyodor Dostoevsky, Stanisław Brzozowski, William Faulkner, Søren Kierkegaard, and Alexandr Solzhenitzyn, along with fragments from poems by Stanisław Barańczak, Jarosław Markiewicz, Czesław Miłosz, Carl Sandburg, and Adam Zagajewski (collective creation; premiered 28 February 1975). Texts by the dissidents Miłosz and Solzhenitzyn were in the official, censored script, but were assigned to other authors. The censor did not check them thoroughly and allowed the script to be presented to the public. The title is a quotation from a speech by Shigalev in *The Demons* (or *The Possessed*) by Dostoevsky. The censor did not respect the classics and crossed out the word 'here' from the title and thus this performance was known, throughout its 'official life' in the Polish People's Republic by a title mutilated by the censor.

5. Theatre of the Eighth Day, programme leaflet for *Musimy poprzestać na tym* (Poznań, Ośrodek Kultury Studenckiej 'Od Nowa', 1975), p. 7–8.

6. Changes in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Poland officially sanctioned the political status quo, that is, the 'socialist character' of the state, the 'leading role' of the Communist Party (PZPR), and the 'permanent and inviolable alliance with the USSR'. Despite numerous protests, changes to the Constitution were passed by the parliament (*Sejm*) on 10 February 1976.

7. Tadeusz Janiszewski, 'Teatr – "bycie promieniujące": Z Tadeuszem Janiszewskim rozmawia Juliusz Tyszcza' ['Theatre – "Being Radiant": Juliusz Tyszcza in Conversation with Tadeusz Janiszewski'], *Odra*, XXXVIII, Nos. 7–8 (1998), p. 63.

8. Ewa Wójciak, quoted from an interview with Alina Maniszewska, in Maniszewska, 'The Road from Ethics to Aesthetics in Polish Alternative Theatre in 1968–1996', Master's thesis (Institute of Cultural Studies of Adam Mickiewicz University), under the supervision of Juliusz Tyszcza (1999).

9. Tadeusz Nyczek, 'Czarny polonez' ['Black Polonaise'], in *Teatr Ósmego Dnia: Wybór tekstów krytycznych* [Theatre of the Eighth Day: Selected Critical Texts] (Warsaw:

SZSP, 1979), p. 6 (bulletin 'for internal use', printed in 99 copies).

10. Theatre of the Eighth Day, *Wprowadzenie do . . .* [*An Introduction to . . .*], based on texts by Fyodor Dostoevsky, Bohdan Drozdowski, Vladimir Lenin, Nikolai Kononov, and others (ensemble creation; script and direction: Lech Raczak; conceptual stage design: Witold Wąsik; technical manager: Marek Raczak; premiere: 28 April 1970).

11. Theatre of the Eighth Day; *Jednym tchem* [*In One Breath*], based on the poetry of Stanisław Barańczak (collective creation; script and direction: Lech Raczak; conceptual stage design: Wojciech Wołyński; music: Marian Przybył; songs arranged by Michał Piotrowski and recorded by the group All' Antico; premiere: 26 September 1971, Zagreb, Yugoslavia; Polish premiere: 9 October 1971, Poznań).

12. Lech Raczak (1946–2020) left the group in 1993, starting his individual career as a director in both alternative and official drama repertory theatres in Poland and in Italy.

13. Nyczek, 'Czarny polonez', p. 7.

14. Lech Raczak, 'Przecena dla wszystkich. Postzapis', in Raczak, *Więcej niż jedno życie*, p. 40.

15. Lech Raczak, in an interview with Monika Mazurkiewicz, Poznań, 16 May 1992.

16. Ewa Wójciak, in an interview with Juliusz Tyszka, Poznań, 2 January 2002.

17. For a concise description of the method of work developed by the Theatre of the Eighth Day and successfully applied in the period 1976–92, see Juliusz Tyszka, 'Characters, Connections, Constructing an Action: Forty Years of Theatre of the Eighth Day', *New Theatre Quarterly*, XXIII, No. 4 [NTQ 92] (November 2007), p. 403–26.

18. Lech Raczak, in an interview with Monika Mazurkiewicz, Poznań, 16 May 1992.

19. Kaczmarek later emigrated to the USA, where he became famous as a film music composer (writing music for over seventy films). In 2005 he was awarded an Oscar for music for the film *Finding Neverland*, directed by Marc Forster.

20. Lech Raczak, 'Przecena dla wszystkich. Postzapis', p. 50 (text by Ewa Wójciak).

21. At this point, it is worth quoting another enthusiastic opinion about this outstanding spectacle – that of the theatre critic and cultural animator Lech Śliwonik: 'It must be stated that there has not been such a deeply implied issue of theatrical reality and theatricalization of reality for a long time – the changing and interchangeable game of the natural and the artificial, of demonstrating life and experiencing art. It is also a long time since the collective nature of the theatre reached such perfection that the banality about the unity of content and form gained a dazzling validation' (Lech Śliwonik, 'Przemiany, przeceny, zapowiedzi' ['Changes, Sales, Announcements'], *Tygodnik Kulturalny*, XVII, No. 21 (1978), p. 3).

22. The Institute of National Remembrance (Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation), a government institution established in 1998 which investigates Nazi and communist crimes committed between 1917 and 1990, documents its findings, and disseminates them to the public. The files of the Theatre of the Eighth Day were handed to the author of this article for research purposes in 2007. In 2006, Adam Borowski, Tadeusz Janiszewski, Marcin Kęszycki, and Ewa Wójciak, members of the group from the early 1970s, acquired access to the secret police files from the

archives of the Institute of National Remembrance. The files turned out to be sensational: their subjects were unaware of the detailed, scrupulous, and wide-ranging operational activity that had been undertaken by dozens of secret police functionaries and so-called 'Secret Associates' (informers) to follow the activities of a small experimental theatre group. It was hard to imagine how much public money had been spent on all these activities. In the scenario of the performance by the Theatre of the Eighth Day titled *Teczki* (*The Files*), premiered 3 December 2006, the official, secret reports of agents and informers of the Security Service are juxtaposed 'both with the actors' private letters at the times when the reports were written and with portions of the performances to which the reports referred': see Joanna Ostrowska, 'The Magic Years of Youth in Dreary Times, or Theatre of the Eighth Day's View of Itself, Again During Dreary Times', in *Dramaturgy of the Real on the World Stage*, ed. Carol Martin (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 164–7 (p. 164); the scenario of *The Files* (translated by Bill Johnston) can be found in *ibid.*, p. 168–94.

23. Polish dissidents were supported by the fact that the authorities of the Polish People's Republic signed the Helsinki Accords (the final document of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Helsinki, on 1 August 1975). One of its points obliged the authorities of European countries to respect fundamental human rights and freedoms, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and belief. Hence, political lawsuits became impossible, so dissidents were fought with criminal trials.

24. General Wojciech Jaruzelski (1923–2014), the First Secretary of the Communist party (PZPR), Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence, imposed martial law in Poland on 13 December 1981.

25. Ewa Wójciak, in an interview with Monika Mazurkiewicz, Poznań, 17 May 1992.

26. Written in the autumn of 1975, the letter was filed in the *Sejm* (Polish Parliament) on 5 December. This letter then circulated Poland, thanks to emissaries who collected the signatures of intellectuals and artists. Signatures of 101 people were collected and a letter with these signatures was handed over to the Marshal of the Sejm on 31 January 1976.

27. Ewa Wójciak, interview with Juliusz Tyszka, Poznań, 2 January 2002. The detention at Poznań Central railway station took place on 30 January 1976 at around 6.30 p.m.

28. Janiszewski, 'Teatr', p. 61.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Andrzej Falkiewicz (1929–2010), Polish philosopher, essayist, theatre and literary critic.

31. Janiszewski, 'Teatr', p. 63.

32. See Stefan Szczepłek, *Deyna* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Marginesy, 2012), p. 138–40. The European Champion Clubs' Cup (1955–92) was a predecessor of the Champions League.

33. The average monthly salary in the Polish People's Republic at the time was 4,596 złoty.

34. Janiszewski, interview with Monika Mazurkiewicz, Poznań, 17 May 1992. We can only suspect that the detailed search of the members of Theatre of the Eighth Day by customs officers on the border was 'inspired' by the Poznań Regional Headquarters of Security Service. However, no documents have survived at the IPN on this subject. Janiszewski himself did not hide such suspicions years later, nor his highly self-critical approach to the whole affair: 'It was my stupidity, because we could

already expect a campaign, a thorough customs control' (Janiszewski, 'Teatr', p. 60).

35. Janiszewski, 'Teatr', p. 61.

36. Stanisław Barańczak (1946–2014), co-founder of Theatre of the Eighth Day (1964), poet, translator, scholar, dissident, and one of the most important representatives of the New Wave (The Generation '68) in Polish literature. In summer 1976 he joined the Workers' Defence Committee (KOR). He was fired from the Department of Polish Philology, Adam Mickiewicz University at Poznań, as a result of SB provocation in 1977. He went to the USA in 1981, signing a three-year contract to work as a lecturer at Harvard University, but worked there for almost twenty years. He translated many masterpieces of English and American literature into Polish, including, among others, most of the plays of Shakespeare.

37. In the Polish People's Republic in the 1970s, male students were forced to undergo a year of military training during their studies at the Army Departments belonging to universities (eight hours per week). After graduation, they were required to undergo six-monthly training in military units, eventually receiving the rank of Officer of the Army Reserve. Female students were also obliged during their studies to undergo annual training in the Army Department to prepare them for service in the Civil Defence Service. The confiscation of Modestowicz's lecture notes in the Army Department could have formed the basis for an investigation into an espionage case. This was probably the intention of the SB agents.

38. 'Court Order, District Prosecutor's Office for the Districts of Grunwald and Jeżyce, Poznań, 23 March 1977', p. 4.

39. However, it did not necessarily prove that SB functionaries admitted the connection between communism and fascism, because, as Marcin Kęszycki claims, its officers 'usually took everything that was not printed in Poland or before the war. They were most interested in letters, notes, things where they could find a trace of something illegal. There were losses, but never such that it would be impossible to recover without it' (Kęszycki, interview with Monika Mazurkiewicz, Poznań, 17 May 1992).

40. The KSS-KOR (Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej [Social Self-Defence Committee] and Komitet Obrony Robotników [Committee for Social Self-Defence] was a dissident group created in 1977–8 from the KOR (Komitet Obrony Robotników [Workers' Defence Committee]), whose members openly campaigned to create an open, democratic society. Their goals were: to 'defend human and civil rights', 'oppose breaches of the law', 'safeguard civil liberties', 'fight political, religious, and ideological persecution', and to 'provide help for the persecuted'.

41. The SKS (Studencki Komitet Solidarności [Students' Committee of Solidarity]) was an informal student organization not recognized by the communist authorities, founded in Cracow in May 1977 as a result of the huge mass protests provoked by the death of the student Stanisław Pyjas, probably murdered by SB agents.

42. Cipher text no. 2867, from Major M. A. J. Siejek, Head of the 3rd Department of Regional MO Headquarters in Poznań, to the Head of the 3rd Department of Regional MO Headquarters in Łódź, sent on 18 December 1979 (classified 'Secret'; operational investigation code name 'Hercules'; reference no. IPN Po 08/1690).

43. 'Plan of Operational Undertakings, code name "Hercules", Poznań, 20 March 1977', prepared by Corporal J. Janów and Lieutenant K. Ziomek, head of the 3rd

section, 3rd Department (p. 2). The document is classified as 'Secret, special importance' (reference no. IPN 08/1690).

44. This is confirmed by Kęszycki, who remembers that, during the conversation with Ziomek, his thoughts were racing. He was in a hurry for the performance, but he did not know if he would get out of the yellow Fiat 126p near the Adam Mickiewicz University Masks Theatre Centre or somewhere else – and what would happen next (Kęszycki, interview with author, 27 October 2014).

45. Kęszycki recalls that he literally said, 'We are in one cart' (the English equivalent would be 'We are all in the same boat'), referring to this particular situation of going together by car.

46. Kęszycki remembers that he was really 'pissed off' at such a dictum and threw Ziomek some 'cheeky line'.

47. Jacek Kuroń (1934–2004), a leading activist of the democratic opposition in Poland, co-founder and informal leader of KOR, and arrested many times, interned during martial law (1981–3). He spent a total of eight and a half years in prisons and an internment centre. In independent Poland, he was an MP (1989–2001) and Minister of Labour and Social Policy, 1989–90 and 1992–3.

48. Stalingradzka Street, now Aleja Niepodległości (Avenue of Independence). Number 26 was a student dormitory housing the Maski (Masks) Theatre Centre of Adam Mickiewicz University, where Theatre of the Eighth Day rehearsed and performed in the years 1976–1985.

49. All relations and remarks by Lieutenant Kazimierz Ziomek are quoted from the 'Official Service memo, 17 June 1977, signed by the Head of 3rd Section, 3rd Department, Lieutenant K. Ziomek' (classified 'Secret'; operational investigation code name 'Hercules'; reference no. IPN 08/1690), p. 1–3. The date of the memo does not necessarily suggest that its author waited over a week before informing his superiors about his conversation with Kęszycki, since it ends: 'I reported the above fact to my superiors on the morning of the following day' (p. 3).

50. Theatre of the Eighth Day, *Przypowieść [A Fable]* (collective creation based on the motifs of the eponymous novel by William Faulkner; ensemble; direction: Lech Raczak; music: Lech Jankowski; premiered Poznań, 30 June 1982).

51. I received the information about this detention from Marcin Kęszycki during my interview with him on 27 October 2014.

52. Since 2014 the Chairman of the Polish Episcopal Conference, and Deputy Chairman of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences, 2016–21.

53. Joanna Ostrowska and Juliusz Tyszcza, 'Speaking Out', *European Stages*, XI, <<https://europeanstages.org/2018/06/11/speaking-out/>>, accessed 26 February 2022.

54. *Allegro agitate (utwór, który musi być wykonywany z niespokojną, udreconą miną)* [*Allegro Agitate (a piece that must be performed with a restless, tormented face)*] (collective creation of the Theatre of the Eighth Day: Ewa Wójciak, Adam Borowski, Jacek Chmaj, Tadeusz Janiszewski, and Marcin Kęszycki; music: Sebastian Dembski; with the assistance of: Iza Rudzka, Maciej Sierpień, Przemysław Mosiężny, Piotr Najrzał, Jacek Nowaczyk, and Jakub Staškowiak; premiered 20 December 2019). Extracts from poems by Zbigniew Herbert, and an extract from W. H. Auden's poem 'Atlantis', translated by Stanisław Barańczak, were used in the performance.

55. Juliusz Tyszka, *Notatki z podróży* [Travel Notes], <<https://teatralny.pl/recenzje/notatniki-z-podrozy,2991.html>>, accessed 26 February 2022.

56. <<http://teatrosmegodnia.pl/spektakle/232-allegro-agitate-utwor-ktory-musi-byc-wykonywany-z-niespokojna-udreczona-mina.html>>, accessed 26 February 2022.

57. When the people detained in Warsaw did not reach Lublin, the search began, and when it was finally discovered what had happened to them, negotiations with representatives of the student organization began on the festival's sidelines. First a decision was made to ban Theatre of the Eighth Day from performing at the Confrontations of Young Theatre. However, there was a fear

on the part of the activists of the student organization SZSP that an arbitrary decision could cause an uncontrolled reaction of festival participants and a boycott of events by several theatre companies. Under these circumstances, it was decided to allow them to present the performance at the festival. And so Gawlik was able to watch and admire *Sale for Everyone* in Lublin.

58. *Theatre of the Eighth Day, Ach, jakże godnie żyliśmy* [Oh, Have We Lived in Dignity]; collective creation; texts, script and scenography: the ensemble; conceptual stage design: Wojciech Wołyński; direction: Lech Raczak; music: fragments of *Requiem* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Premiered 5 May 1979.