

## Poland

The history of cultural opposition in Poland can be divided into specific periods which essentially overlap with the overall situation in the so-called “Eastern Bloc,” but at the same time, it was also shaped by local political and social contexts. However, it should be underlined that the dominant linear narrative about the oppositional milieu of workers and intelligentsia that crystalized at the time of the Lenin shipyard strike in 1980 does not cover all the trajectories and circles of cultural opposition in Poland. As Grzegorz Ekiert and Jan Kubik defined the main discourse on opposition under state socialism: “the preoccupation with elites, party systems, and the relationship between political and economic changes has resulted in considerable gap in democratization literature.”<sup>1</sup> A similar argument can be made about the gender balance among Polish opposition figures: the milieu was overwhelmingly male-dominated (Lech Wałęsa, Jacek Kuroń, Adam Michnik). In the field of art there was a degree of gender balance—in the domain of neo-avantgarde art, for example—but not so much in the punk movement or performance art.

COURAGE not only strives to describe the best known milieus of dissent, such as the democratic intelligentsia, labour unions, and Catholic groups, but also aims to grasp the more volatile environments of artists, punk rockers, and performance groups. However, even the countercultural milieus and organizations often used symbols, narrative tropes, and aesthetics from the Polish national imaginary, and they saw a distinction between Polish counterculture and the countercultures of Western and other Eastern-European societies.

From the outset, the core of cultural dissent in Poland consisted of writers, journalists, playwrights, poets, and other representatives of the “intelligentsia.” In post-war Poland, as was the case in other Central Eastern states, the principles of socialist realism functioned as official doctrine after being declared in 1949 at the meeting of the Association of Polish Artists in Nieborów. However, in the short period of the “Thaw,” which in Poland took place in October 1956, disillusionment with Stalinist policy could be articulated openly in newly-established magazines (i.e. *Po prostu* [Simply], in other newspapers (*Życie Warszawy* [Warsaw’s life] and *Express Ilustrowany* [The illustrated express]), and at party meetings. De-Stalinization in Poland did not

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1 Ekiert and Kubik, *Collective Protest and Democratic Consolidation in Poland*, 9.

bring about cultural or social liberalization, and after several months, dissent milieus had to retreat to underground publications to promote alternative visions of the state and society.

The new leader of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), Władysław Gomułka, dismantled Stalinism by making several concessions to the population, but without defying Poland's adherence to the Eastern Bloc. What was left from the Polish October was a compromise with the Catholic Church, whose role as the foundation for pluralism and freedom of thought led to the establishment of a vital Catholic dissident milieu. Before 1956, there were only three prominent oppositional groups: the *Klub Krzywego Koła* (Club of the Crooked Circle), *Po Prostu*, and *Pax-Fronda*. These groups existed independently of the party, but their existence was shaky. In 1956, *Tygodnik Powszechny* (The Catholic weekly) and *Znak* (The sign), the other two mainstream Catholic organizations and periodicals, were reactivated. Even when *Po prostu* was shut down in 1957 and Klub Krzywego Koła liquidated in 1962, Catholic milieus were able to assist opposition groups in naissance.<sup>2</sup>

The next stage in the history of Polish cultural opposition came with the events of March 1968. The events of the "Polish March" started as a protest against the banning of *Dziady* (Forefather's eve -Adam Mickiewicz's play from the era of Romanticism), as well as the call to reform socialism expressed in Jacek Kuroń's and Karol Modzelewski's (two researchers from the University of Warsaw) "Open Letter to the Party," and ended as an anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist witch-hunt in the communist party and in society as such, shamelessly resulting in the mass emigration of Polish Jews from the country. Disillusionment with communism started to grow not only among young people (so called "Commandos," put on trial in 1969), but also among former Marxist theoreticians (Zygmunt Bauman, Leszek Kołakowski) who withdrew from the Party and left Poland. "March 1968" was a crucial event for further developments in the strategies of the Polish opposition. First, Adam Michnik (one of the "Commandos") presented a vision of an alliance between the Left and the Catholic Church. Second, the discontent among members of the Polish intelligentsia reached a point at which the idea of, to use the Czechoslovak term, "socialism with a human face" became impossible to imagine.<sup>3</sup> New perspectives on state and society started to appear, in the beginning circulated only among small intelligentsia groups in the big cities.

At the same time, "March 68" was also an important point of reference for counter-movements emerging in the 1970s. In contrast with May 1968 in the West, the Polish March of 1968 was perceived by hippies, punks, and other artists as a rather reactionary, conservative, and nationalist phenomenon. Even though they rejected overtly dominant modes of rebellion and accommodation in Polish society, performance and neo-avantgarde artists did not

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2 Osa, *Solidarity and Contention Networks of Polish Opposition*.

3 Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe*.

draw inspiration from the Western culture of discontent. They tried rather to combine “Western” modes of art production with local meanings. The period of “détente” which began after the rise of Gomułka (who was ridiculed and weakened after March 1968 and the strikes in 1970) ended when Gomułka was replaced by Edward Gierek. Gierek’s liberalization consisted mainly of a laxer approach to contacts with the “Western world” and resulted in the growth of consumption and proliferation of popular culture in Poland.

After 1967, there was a growing number of hippie groups in Poland. In the official media, they were presented as dangerous outcasts (because of their alleged use of drugs). They rebelled against conformism, but their activities rarely had an open political agenda and the groups themselves did not form stable organizational structures.<sup>4</sup> Western styles of clothing and Western literary and musical inspirations were intertwined with Polish culture, which resulted in phenomena such as the hippie pilgrimage to Częstochowa (1971).

Subsequent events in the social history of Poland—the so-called “June events” from 1976 in Radom and Ursus—reinforced the discursive and practical division between “society” and “the state.” Labor unrest in industrial hubs was for the first time supported by the intellectuals. They formed *Komitet Obrony Robotników* (the Workers’ Defense Committee, KOR), the first proponent of a “civic” orientation. With KOR and its surrounding organizations, the notion of “civil society” was introduced to Polish rhetoric on democratic/political opposition. Soon after KOR’s support for workers persecuted in Radom, new publications emerged: *Komunikat* (The statement, official statements by KOR members), *Biuletyn Informacyjny* (The information bulletin), *Robotnik* (*The Worker* - a workers’ newsletter), *Głos* (The Voice), and *Krytyka* (The critique) (occasional brochures). KOR organized the first uncensored independent publishing house, *Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza NOWa* (The independent publishing), which published literature banned by the censorship office.<sup>5</sup>

In this period, cultural opposition, distinct from the engaged political, civil rights movement, was born. We could situate the naissance of the Polish alternative scene in 1978, when the International Artists’ Meeting (IAM), a big international performance, took place. Here, the British band *The Raincoats* performed. This performance is regarded as the first punk concert in Poland. From then on, Polish punk groups emerged in big cities such as Warsaw, Gdansk, and Wrocław. The spread of the culture of dissent, neither nationalistic nor intellectually-based, was eased by the proliferation of magnetic tapes at the end of the 1970s. On the tapes, one could find not only recordings of punk concerts and performances, but also protest-songs from the circle of the democratic opposition. Punk became a mass phenomenon and went further than the milieu of the youth intelligentsia, with forays in the world of the visual arts only in the early 1980s.

4 Tracz, *Hippiesi, kudłacze, chwasty*.

5 Olszerek, *Revolucja powielaczy*.

Another milieu of cultural dissent, however far from simple political engagement, was the circle of Polish neo-avantgarde art, for example in the visual arts (Kwiekulik, which was the artistic duo of Zofia Kulik and Przemysław Kwiek, Zbigniew Libera, and Gruppa from Warsaw) and in the theatre (Jerzy Grzegorzewski and Tadeusz Kantor). Members of these circles tried to navigate between the official and semi-official student galleries and underground circles of dissemination. In the late 1970s and in 1980, new art forms emerged in Art Academies, student clubs, and private galleries: conceptual and performative arts which used new means of expression, but were also filled with politically engaged message. One of the interesting aspects of these compositions was their focus on the life of the artist. The artists were very conscious about their biographies, trajectories, and experiences, and they tried to document artistic life under the socialist system.

At the beginning of the 1980s, in different Polish cities a new wave of cultural opposition movements emerged. Anarchists created the Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego (Movement of Alternative Society) in 1983 in Gdansk. Artists associated with the Pomarańczowa Alternatywa (Orange Alternative) prepared happenings, street performances, street art, and graffiti in Wrocław, Łódź, Lublin, and Warsaw. From the outset, the Orange Alternative stood out amongst other groups, and its sign—dwarfs in different poses and situations—soon started to appear on the walls and leaflets. Movements such as the Orange Alternative served as a sphere of activities for those tired with the nationalist and pompous milieu of Solidarity Labor Union performances. In the meantime, rock music represented by groups such as Maanam, Perfect, Lady Pank, and TSA started to emerge as an important part of official radio broadcasts. In their shadow, a scene of alternative music blossomed: punk, new wave, reggae, and ska music by musicians and bands like Brygada Kryzys, Klaus Mithoff, Dezserter, Izrael, and Siekiera. Those groups functioned in the “third circuit”—outside official modes of communication and the “second circuit” (politically engaged pamphlets and philosophical feuilletons). The modalities of dissemination of the second and third circuit were similar: homemade magnetic tapes, printed materials, fanzines, and leaflets. One of most prominent events of Polish rock music was the Jarocin rock festival, the official name of which was Ogólnopolski Przegląd Muzyki Młodej Generacji w Jarocinie (All-Polish Review of Music of the Young Generation in Jarocin). The festival offers a good example of the entanglement of counterculture in the popular culture of late socialism. From one point of view, it was an occasion for thousands of fans to listen to live music that was rarely performed; at the same time, it was seen as a “safe outlet” for youngsters to express their rebellion and anger.

After the Lenin Shipyard Strike in 1980, which ended with the signing of the Gdansk Agreement, the hoped-for coalition between “workers” and the “intelligentsia” was finally established. Political and labor activism proliferated. Three underground publications circulated among the shipyard workers:

*Robotnik* (of KOR), *Robotnik Wybrzeża* (Coastal worker), and *Bratniak*. Moreover, homemade signs, pins, posters, banners and leaflets were widely distributed. They reinforced dissent against the socialist regime among different groups, especially during the Martial Law period, when short-lived liberation was violently suppressed.

August 1980 soon started to serve not only as the beginning of a national political awakening, but also a lieu de memoire and a reservoir of meanings used to construct the division between the “state” and “civil society.” The narrative tropes which had been repeated throughout the 1980s and reproduced in the 1990s by post-“Solidarity” elites are still visible in the narratives and representations of present-day cultural institutions, archives, and museums. The anarchist, punk, and alternative movements enumerated above also exert an influence on the modes of modern discontent, as they challenge the black and white vision of “state” and “society.”

### Polish Collections of Cultural Opposition

As argued above, the history of Polish opposition during the socialist period is dominated by one type of narrative that emphasizes the role of the democratic movement, the Catholic Church, and the intelligentsia. The discussion about the heritage of dissent is rather focused on political engagement, with an emphasis on “Solidarity” activities, including public protests, underground publications and posters, and—due to close relations between the “Solidarity” movement and the Catholic Church—expressions of religious conviction. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the institutions founded to commemorate Polish anti-communist activity are organized around the political actors with the strongest symbolic capital: in extreme cases of historical simplification, the museums are telling the story of resistance through the figures of “Solidarity’s” Lech Wałęsa, Andrzej Gwiazda, Anna Walentynowicz, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Adam Michnik, etc.

The strong political focus gives the impression that in terms of speaking about the heritage of dissent, there is little space left for oppositional activity of any other kind. However, this image is not quite accurate. First, there is of course a thin line between “the political” and “the cultural.” For example, the activists of the democratic movement used to exchange works of foreign literature, organize illegal lectures, concerts, and art exhibitions, and engage in film and photographic projects. Moreover, cultural activity in Poland remained very rich and diverse, and it included music, theatre, film, the fine arts, and modern artistic forms, like performance and experimental music and photography.

Covering the heritage of Polish cultural opposition means dealing with a very miscellaneous substance. Contemporary collections of cultural dissent differ significantly from one another, not only in terms of their content (the

subjects of time periods covered) but also in terms of their organization, archiving conditions, financial resources, and opportunities for public exposure. Despite much variety, the collections of cultural opposition in Poland can be grouped based on some shared characteristics. They can be divided by the type of ownership (private or public) and the thematic scope (democratic movement, the fine arts, music, film, theatre, lifestyles and subcultures, religion, minorities, etc.).

### *Types of Ownership. Public and Private Collections*

When it comes to the question of ownership, the collections fall into one of two categories: public and private. The distinction usually translates into having sufficient financial resources or not. Collections acquired by the state museums and galleries rarely experience funding problems, which brings the privileges of having exhibition space, opportunities for digitalization, conservation work, and networking. On the opposite end of the spectrum lie the private archives, which have no or little funding and sometimes minimal management by their owners, either because of a lack of available time or a lack of interest in sharing the collections with wider audiences. In the middle, one can find various successful practices: private owners who have been given some financial resources, some access to exhibition spaces, some opportunities for cooperation with state institutions, and networking opportunities with other private owners. This may well ultimately help keep the collections “alive” and preserve the memory of cultural opposition.

Public collections are owned (or operated) by institutions that are funded by the state or local governments. The heritage of cultural opposition can be found in institutions like museums, art galleries, archives, and theatres. One of the biggest public institutions to collect the documents and memorabilia on the modern history of Poland is the Archiwum Akt Nowych (Archive of Modern Files) under the General Direction of the Polish Archives. Archiwum Akt Nowych has bureaus and reading rooms all over Poland, and it makes accessible millions of official documents to the wider public, especially researchers and historians. However, the opposition is not the main subject of interest of Archiwum Akt Nowych, as the archive covers all of modern Polish history. An attentive reader can find a great deal of information about the grassroots movements in socialist Poland and the authorities’ reactions to any kind of opposition in it. Being a relatively big country, Poland represents all kinds of possible ways of dealing with collections in public organizations. From presenting their content in digitalized, modern museums (like the Modern Art Museum in Warsaw, the European Solidarity Centre in Gdansk, and the Silesian Museum in Katowice) to keeping them closed in the boxes of the maintenance room – while occasionally giving access to them for exhibitions or research (like the Archive of the Studio Theatre or the Archive of the National Commission of the “Solidarity” Labor Union). The minimal exposure of some

of the collections is not so much a funding problem as it is the effect of the minimal interest of the authorities—whether state, local or institutional—in presenting them. In consequence, no workforce has been assigned to deal with them and little or no time has been devoted to them. This clearly exemplifies a problem which arises in the case of holding collections in public institutions: whether the objects will be given proper attention depends on whether or not they harmonize with the interests of those in power at the given moment, which in the case of historical narratives often depends on the chosen politics of memory. This kind of use of historical objects in some cases causes reluctance among private owners to pass collections on to state establishments if the owners do not want to see their memorabilia be at the mercy of politicians.

As a vivid example of how the controversial use of the collections may serve the interests of a state institution, one can consider Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (The Institute of National Remembrance), which plays a very important role in preserving the heritage of Poland, but at the same time is a tool in the hands of political leaders and a dangerous instrument in shaping current political convictions.<sup>6</sup> The Institute of National Remembrance—Commission for the Prosecution of Offences against the Polish Nation (IPN) was created by an act of parliament in 1998 and is a state body authorized to carry out research, educational, archival, investigative, and vetting activities. What distinguishes the Institute of National Remembrance from other Polish institutions dealing with the politics of memory is its possession of the documents of the former communist secret service, its political legitimacy, and its stable funding, which is not grant dependent. The Institute does not have a monopoly on the politics of memory in Poland, but it is a very influential and strategic actor. The main narrative promoted by the Institute of National Remembrance in the first decade of its functioning was rather radical. It was based on a conservative historical politics that aimed at preventing collective amnesia, promoting special values and ideas, and openly criticizing the socialist past as a simplified period of oppression and suffering, concentrating on the Stalinist period. The narrative changed after the appointment of Łukasz Kamiński as the new president of IPN in 2010. Kamiński's politics led to a situation when, in 2015, we could say that the Institute of National Remembrance was a strong, unique hybrid institution situated on the borderland of science, education, law, and politics. Unfortunately, political changes in Poland influenced greatly the shape of IPN. The most recent laws discussed in the Polish parliament indicate that the authorities would like to restore IPN's prosecutorial role and its influence on the current politics of memory.

However, there are plenty of public institutions which focus on preserving and popularizing cultural heritage without politicizing the collections.

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<sup>6</sup> Stola, "Poland's Institute of National Remembrance"; Klich-Kluczevska, "Goodbye Communism."

Interestingly, the institution which manages to do this very well is inseparably intertwined with political narrative. It is the European Solidarity Centre<sup>7</sup> in Gdansk, the institution devoted to the heritage of the “Solidarity” movement and the democratic opposition. It is funded both by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the local voivodship, and the city of Gdansk. It runs a modern museum, very popular with both Polish and international tourists, and presents a wide range of objects: memorabilia, personal documents, samizdat publications, art objects, graphics, photographs, and films, all connected to persecutions and the fight for democratic changes. The objects gathered in the European Solidarity Centre were acquired through collaboration with other museums and institutions, and many of them were donated by ordinary citizens of Gdańsk.

Instead of taking a stand in current political issues, the leaders of ESC manage to focus on sharing their knowledge about and vision of history with a wide public in an interesting way: via multimedia exhibitions, lectures, educational projects, film screening, etc. The European Solidarity Centre shows the everyday context of growing dissent movements and the mobilization of Polish society against the injustices of socialism, presenting the diversity of the opposition movements and their strategies.

Public institutions are often limited by the politics of history, but if they are run effectively, they enjoy certain privileges which are not available (or very hard to get) for private collectors. The problems that private stakeholders and non-governmental institutions experience are closely connected to the degree of professionalization in the management of the archives. Some owners are building their professional careers as collectors, and they manage to run their own institutions (organizations, foundations, associations), which are devoted to gathering, digitalizing, and sharing the heritage of cultural opposition. This is the case of Kwiekulik and Waldemar Fydrych. Others occasionally act in favor of displaying gathered objects or getting some funding, whereas the rest have no interest in sharing their collections with the world due to their conscious choice to keep the precious items to themselves or the fact that their activity as collectors is purely a hobby.

Waldemar Fydrych, a leader of the Orange Alternative<sup>8</sup> (a movement which in the 1980s gathered crowds for performances set to mock the socialist authorities by ridiculing official slogans and symbols, which were sang by people dressed as dwarfs or garbed in some satiric graffiti), offers a revealing example of a very professional attitude towards managing a collection. Fydrych, who was suspicious of public institutions and believed in his own abilities, started the Foundation of the Orange Alternative and later the virtual

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7 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “European Solidarity Centre”, by Barbara Tołłoczko-Suchańska, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

8 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Museum of the Orange Alternative”, by Xawery Stanczyk, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.



Museum of the Orange Alternative, which managed to get some financial support for organization and digitalization of the collection. Fydrych's will to devote his time and effort to preserving and promoting Orange Alternative's heritage is definitely impressive, but the example he has set does not stand alone. In fact, there are plenty of stakeholders who fully dedicate themselves to maintaining their collections and the memory of cultural phenomena in socialist Poland. For some, managing the archives is like a professional career. Many of them operate on a smaller scale than Fydrych, sometimes getting no funding at all, but they put the same amount of effort into maintaining the collections. As examples of individuals who exemplify these practices, one could mention Piotr "Pietia" Wierzbicki, a promoter of the alternative (especially punk) scene in Warsaw in the 1980s and the operator of a vast collection of original punk-zines<sup>9</sup>, or Zofia Łuczko, a co-founder of Łódź Kaliska and Pitch-in Culture<sup>10</sup> (Kultura Zrzuty, avantgarde, progressive art groups opposing both official culture and the culture produced by the democratic movement) and the initiator of the City of Culture Foundation, which gathers the heritage of the artistic ventures of Pitch-in Culture.

It seems to be true in most cases that the collections with the least exposure are those the stakeholders of which do not pursue a professional career in connection to their collecting activity. This is true of those who do not seek public attention, like Michał Guć, an owner of an impressive collection on "Solidarity's" underground postage stamps. Guć recognizes the importance and cultural worth of his collection, yet he realizes his numismatic passion in his private space and makes no effort to share it with a wider audience. Another symptomatic example is represented by Fr. Wiesław Niewęglowski, a retired priest who in the 1970s organized the first Tygodnie Kultury Chrześcijańskiej (Weeks of Christian Culture) and initiated the Duszpasterstwa Środowisk Twórczych (Artists' Priesthood). Thanks to Fr. Niewęglowski, a space for artistic expression and intellectual debate was created under the aegis of the Polish Catholic Church. He managed to gather a vast array of documentation on the movements' activity, which unfortunately has never been properly organized, digitalized, or presented publicly. It is kept without having been organized in any way in boxes in Fr. Niewęglowski's house. With no resources and no prospects for any staff to deal with the materials it contains, this collection may be easily forgotten. Unfortunately, it is not an isolated case.

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9 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Piotr 'Pietia' Wierzbicki Collection", by Xawery Stanczyk, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

10 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Pitch-In Culture Archive", by Xawery Stanczyk and Patrycja Kruczkowska, 2016. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

*The Contents of the Collections: Thematic Scope and Forms of Cultural Activities*

It is not easy to group the collections by their content, as the scope of subjects is extremely wide and touches on various spheres of life under socialism. Moreover, the issues seem to intertwine, as one theme develops into another (e.g. democratic engagement into art production, music production into zines' publishing, etc.). For the purpose of this chapter, the thematic contents of the Polish collections of cultural opposition will be grouped into the following categories:

Democratic opposition (samizdat, persecutions, internment, visual identification)

The fine arts (painting, performance, graphics, experimental music)

Music, lifestyles, subcultures

Theatre, film, photography

Minorities (ethnic, sexual)

Religion (the Catholic Church)

The subject of the democratic opposition is a very important topic of Polish cultural heritage, and it remains a palpable part of public and scholarly debates.<sup>11</sup> The issue is explored by large and modern cultural institutions (like the European Solidarity Centre, KARTA Center<sup>12</sup>, the History Meeting House—Dom Spotkań z Historią) and archives (the National Institute of Remembrance, the State Archives, the Archive of the National Commission of the "Solidarity" Labor Union), the collections of which very broadly deal with anti-communist, democratic movements and in most cases include objects connected to persecutions and underground activity. Smaller organizations tend to focus on certain forms of dissent, like the Museum of Free Speech, which is devoted to samizdat publications, or the "Free Europe" Association, which gathers the heritage of Polish broadcasts in this very important radio channel. Smaller foundations and private collectors tend to focus on individual histories. Assembled memorabilia are often closely connected to the personal experiences of the collectors, who themselves were opposition activists or "Solidarity" members.

The very important subject, to which, however, far less attention has been given in Poland than the persecutions themselves, is the visual identity of the democratic opposition, with the "Solidarity" movement as the central topic of artistic expression. Graphics, posters, graffiti (templates), pennants, flags, pins, and badges are found in every collection dealing with the heritage of democratic opposition. Some of them were created by professional artists and some by amateur sympathizers or the activists themselves. They were used to

11 Feliksiak, "Upadek komunizmu i geneza przemian w pamięci zbiorowej."

12 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "KARTA Center Foundation", by Macej Melon, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

show support for the democratic changes and thus were created, reproduced, and circulated illegally. Their content is very diverse, as the collections include representations of democratic leaders and religious manifestations, rather simple in form and exposition, as well as sophisticated expressions of Polish symbols and artistic variations of "Solidarity's" logo. Very interesting examples are represented by the collections of underground postage stamps. Some of them, especially those created in internment, are small masterpieces which comment on the persecutions and show the fighting spirit through symbolic representations of walls, prison bars, and clenched fists. They can be found, for instance, in the private collections of Michał Guć and Stanisław Tołłoczko, but also in big exhibitions in the state Museums.

The second big theme in the collections is connected with the fine arts (painting, sculpture, performance, graphics, artistic photography, experimental music, and mail art). Many artists, unhappy with official art standards and the limitations they imposed, very eagerly turned to the problem of freedom and individualism in their works, following e.g. the idea of an "open form" invented by Oskar Hansen,<sup>13</sup> a concept followed by the KwieKulik duo and Józef Robakowski, whose collections constitute a very important asset of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. It must be underlined that many artists did not engage in direct dialogue with the regime, yet, since they stood in the opposition to dull, well-known motifs of socialist art, their compositions brought novelty and fresh energy, which is perfectly visible in the collection of the Exchange Gallery (the most important neo-avantgarde group, established by Robakowski in the 1970s in Łódź). Fine arts objects connected to the cultural opposition are displayed in museums and galleries all over Poland, including big state institutions (which contain the collections of best-known artists, like Zbigniew Libera, Tadeusz Rolke, and Jerzy Ludwiński) and local ones (e.g. El Gallery in Elbląg). Moreover, some are presented only occasionally, in small exhibitions and events, which is true in the case of many private organizations, like Pitch-in Culture and Łódź Kaliska.

An extremely important issue of Polish collections is linked to the youth subcultures and lifestyles, primarily connected to music: punk and rock. Polish punk is a well-represented topic of the collections based on the photographs, original zines, and cassettes. The aforementioned Piotr Wierzbicki is the owner of a vast archive of the "QQRYQ" punk fanzine, which he initiated himself in the mid-1980s. The collection of Anna Dąbrowska-Lyons includes not only music artefacts, but also a wonderful set of her original photographs, which vividly captures the punk environment. The rock collections are mostly connected to the Jarocin Festival, an event attended by members of alternative cultural groups from Poland and other socialist countries. In connection with youth lifestyles, one could also mention the collection of the Orange Alternative, the performances of which offered a new narrative of everyday life

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13 Ronduda, *Sztuka polska lat 70. Awangarda*.

based on irony and humor and aimed to ridicule the authorities and expose the absurd living conditions in the last years of the Polish People's Republic.

The collections of visual art, namely film and photography, for the most part are part of large archives—the National Film Archive, the Audiovisual Institute,<sup>14</sup> KARTA Center, the National Digital Archive, the European Solidarity Centre—where they are digitalized and preserved, but they are also willingly shared for festivals, publications, and research. Documentary films, original footage, and photo-journalistic materials cover a vast thematic scope. They portray official events and scenes of everyday life, as well as some strictly oppositional activities. Impressive collections of reportage photography have been gathered by the Association of the Documentalists “The Road”<sup>15</sup> and the Archaeology of Photography Foundation. Some smaller stakeholders focus on certain subjects or geographical areas, for instance the Video Studio Gdansk, which was one of the first independent production houses, covering e.g. the first conventions of the “Solidarity” leaders. Theatrical activity is mostly documented by the theatres which did not cease to work after the systemic transformation, such as the Studio Theatre<sup>16</sup> (with the archive of Jerzy Grzegorzewski's avantgarde plays), the National Theatre, and the experimental Centre for Theatre Practices Gardzienice. The legacy of the most prominent figures of alternative theatre (e.g. Tadeusz Kantor) is gathered by various cultural institutions, mostly in the form of play documentation and photographs.

Minorities and religion seem to be the subjects which have been given the least attention by the stakeholders, which is probably related to Poland's relatively high ethnic and religious homogeneity. Cultural opposition linked to religious movements is entirely covered by the activity of the Polish Catholic Church, expressed through the web of the Clubs of Catholic Intellectuals (Kluby Inteligencji Katolickiej) and the patriotic art practiced in the Artists' Priesthoods. There are very few ethnic minority collections, and they relate only to the nearest countries: Germany, Ukraine, and Belarus. Thanks to the queer activity of Ryszard Kisiel in the 1980s and the efforts of Karol Radziszewski to collect his photographic documentation, sexual minorities are present in the narrative about the culture of dissent.<sup>17</sup> Another source of materials concerning Polish culture of resistance is the archives gathered by members of the Polish diaspora, especially in Great Britain (the post-World War II wave of emigration), the United States (the Hoover Institution), and France (the *Kultu-*

14 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “National Film Archive - Audiovisual Institute Collection”, by Hanna Gospodarczyk, 2018. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

15 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Association of Documentalists ‘The Road’”, by Hanna Gospodarczyk, 2016. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

16 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Artistic Archive of the Studio Theater and Jerzy Grzegorzewski Section”, by Hanna Gospodarczyk, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

17 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Queer Archives Institute”, by Hanna Gospodarczyk, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

ra milieu). These institutions have in their archives a vast array of materials on Solidarity activists and dissidents (writers, creators, journalists) who contacted members of the Polish diaspora in the Western world or lived abroad (Romaszewscy, Joanna Szczęsna, Czesław Miłosz, Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, and Stanisław Barańczak, for instance). The Kluge Centre of the Library of Congress and Columbia University are also in possession of collections of materials from the Polish independent press.

On the basis of the number of exhibitions, lectures, festivals, conferences, and artistic events based on the legacy of dissent, this legacy is an important part of the Polish public sphere, and it is even used as a touristic product. Collections on cultural opposition in socialist Poland create a diverse assemblage, well-represented both by public institutions and private stakeholders. The attitudes of the stakeholders towards state institutions vary. They include eagerness to cooperate, reluctance based on the misuse (or fear of misuse) of the collections, and complete lack of awareness of any potential to interest a public institution in a private archive. While the topic of democratic opposition, especially in connection with the “Solidarity” movement, seems to be the dominant focus, the thematic scope of issues is much more varied and calls for a more meticulous and multi-vocal analysis.

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