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*Between ether and paper. «Solidarność» Radia i Telewizji –
the Radiokomitet journalists' magazine*

KEY WORDS

journalist verification, radio, television, Radiokomitet, The Independent and Self-Governing Trade Union “Solidarność”, propaganda, clandestine circulation

ABSTRACT

“Solidarność Radia i Telewizji”, a magazine published between 1985–1989, was a creation somewhere in between press and electronic media. On the one hand, it was a printed magazine but, on the other, the majority of its authors were journalists who once used to work for Radiokomitet (Radio and Television Committee). These journalists were, after the introduction of martial law in Poland, expelled from their positions, without further possibility to find work in the profession. They did not, however, lose their journalist spirit and heart. Many continued their work, writing for clandestine press, others established periodicals on their own. This was the case with “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji”. Content analysis of this periodical shows readers a subjective view of events from the end of the Communist era in Poland. The articles attempted to counterbalance radio and television’s propaganda activity from the late 1980s. Presented were also various bitter recollections from that period of time. The authors did not conceal the fact that journalists verification during the martial law period was a traumatic experience for them.

The history of “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji” can be divided into two separate periods. The first is considered to be the period of time when it was published legally, during “Solidarity’s” high time as an information bulletin printed by the Enterprise Commission of the Independent and Self-Governing Trade Union “Solidarity” (Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy “Solidarność”) of Radio and Television in Warsaw (NSZZ “S” RTV). The second is a period after marital law was instated. In 1985, a group of people began publishing an underground periodical for NSZZ “Solidarity” of Radio and Television members. Since the first period of the periodical’s activity (1980–1981) in Committee for Radio and Television (Radiokomitet)

in Warsaw has already been written about¹, this article will focus on the second, underground period.

Between 1985–1989 30 issues of “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji” were printed. The first came out in October 1985 and the last – in July 1989. Initially, a dual numbering system² was used, taking into consideration the number of legally printed issues. Later on, only underground issues were counted. Several times, double issues were printed³. Also, not every time was the month of publication indicated⁴, but in the footnote there was always the date of closing a given issue⁵. The circulation was 500 copies⁶, in A-5 format with the exception of issue 12/13 from 1986 which was smaller, printed on A-6 page. The paper’s volume also fluctuated, between 16 and 40 pages⁷. The paper was not free of charge, profits from its sale were donated to the illegal Enterprise Commission of NSZZ “S” RTV. It cost 40 zł⁸ in 1985 and 200 zł⁹ in 1989. As indicated in the footnote, several issues were printed by Wydawnictwo Prasowe „Myśl”¹⁰. The masthead included a black sign “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji”, and a motto: *Search for and propagate the truth.*

In 1985, the editorial team consisted of four people: Jan Franczak, Małgorzata Taczanowska, Alicja Maciejowska and Barbara Kościuszko. Additionally, it was supported by Czesław Dygant from the illegal Enterprise Commission of NSZZ “S” RTV who was an intermediary between the editorial team and Radiokomitet employees. Later on, the paper was edited without Barbara Kościuszko. Among its key journalists there was Jarosław Szymkiewicz, formerly an editor-in-chief at TV regional centre in Wrocław, Władysław Daniszewski, head of Polish Radio and TV regional centre in Szczecin, Alicja Maciejowska from Polish Radio Warsaw, Andrzej Roman, sport journalist at “Kurier Polski”, Aleksander Wieczorkowski, press and radio journalist, Alina Głowacka from Polish Radio and TV regional centre in Szczecin and Andrzej Matynia, a radio and TV journalist, and an art critic,

¹ G. Majchrzak, *Polskie Radio w czasach „Solidarności”*, „Z Dziejów Polskiej Radiofonii” 2004/2005, No. 1, p. 113–134.

² Up to issue 5/6 (39/40).

³ No. 3/4 (37/38) of December 1985 and January 1986, No. 5/6 (39/40) of February–March 1986, No. 7/8 of 1986, No. 10/11 of 1986, No. 12/13 of 1986, No. 14/15 of 1987, No. 18/19 of 1987, No. 20/21 of 1987.

⁴ No. 1 (35) of October 1985, No. 2 (36) of November 1985, No. 3/4 (37/38) of December 1985 and January 1986 and No. 5/6 (39/40) of February–March 1986.

⁵ The exception was No. 3/4 (37/38) of December 1985 and January 1986.

⁶ There was no other information on circulation and witnesses do not know exactly. Alicja Maciejowska does not remember and Małgorzata Taczanowska is sure that it was no greater than that, although it could also be an overestimate.

⁷ No. 25 of 1988 and No. 18/19 of 1987.

⁸ No. 1 (35) of October 1985, No. 9 of 1986.

⁹ No. 29 of 1989.

¹⁰ No. 23 of 1988, No. 25 of 1988, No. 26 of 1988, No. 27 of 1989, No. 28 of 1989 and No. 30 of 1989.

and also another author by the pseudonym “Jan Krem”, probably a Radiokomitet employee whose personal details are difficult to determine¹¹.

As the paper analysis and witness accounts indicate, the periodical’s main goal was to be an antidote to the propaganda broadcasted on radio and television. According to Malgorzata Taczanowska, the paper considered itself a continuator of the union bulletin from 1981 and was to raise the spirits of those who were still working at Radiokomitet and sympathized with NSZZ „S” RTV activity¹². The periodical’s creators also wished to make public the inside story of journalist verification from 1982 as a result of which many people lost their jobs, were degraded or interned. The paper published those journalists’ stories and discussions over possibilities of returning to work or compensation for moral damage caused. Much attention was devoted to the “Letter 33” matter as well as correspondence between Radiokomitet management and Human Rights Defender on verification. The editors did not focus too much on current events except for in relation to Radiokomitet’s propaganda activity. Authors of texts were bitterly frank in their assessment of the skills, work and character of journalists presently employed at Radiokomitet who were carrying out orders of the Communist Party and Radiokomitet’s management.

The texts are full of frustration and resentment regarding journalist verification that took place during the martial law period. Their authors agree that experienced journalists were then eliminated from editorial teams and work, which resulted in radio and television level of programmes greatly decreasing in quality. In the periodical’s first issue, Polish Radio journalist, Literary Reports Editorial Office member and winner of Prix Italia for her report from the Gdansk Shipyard of August 1980¹³, Janina Jankowska states, “There is no doubt that I loved my and our radio. Radio by and of the people that listened to it. (It is still a Polish Radio and not a Communist Party radio. It is listened to by the entire society and not just the authorities, their allies or PRON members [...]. So I ask that those who came and took our places to remember that.)”¹⁴.

Alina Głowacka wrote about Christmas holidays in prison in Kamień Pomorski where she was initially interned, before she was transferred to an internment camp in Gołdap¹⁵. Alicja Maciejowska from Polish Radio described her last hours before the instatement of

¹¹ There were about 60 different names, pseudonyms and initials below the texts. However, there were never that many journalists, the same people used several different pseudonyms.

¹² From a telephone conversation with Malgorzata Taczanowska, June 2, 2009.

¹³ Report on a CD disc is included in the re-issued publication on reports from the Gdansk Shipyard strikes. See *Kto tu wpuścił dziennikarzy*, idea by M. Miller, *25 lat później*, idea by J. Jankowska, M. Miller, Warszawa 2005.

¹⁴ J. Jankowska, *Śni mi się radio po nocach*, “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji” 1985, No. 1 (35), p. 4.

¹⁵ A. Głowacka, *Więzienna wigilia*, *ibidem* 1985, No. 3/4 (37/38), p. 5–11.

martial law and her arrest¹⁶. She also published a letter she received from Władysław Loranc, the head of Radiokomitet¹⁷. There would not be anything unusual about it, had its date and content not been correlated. She had already been in the internment camp for two weeks as “an enemy of the socialist system” when she received a congratulations and best wishes letter for her 25th work anniversary dated December 28, 1981. There were also reminiscences by Piotr Mroczyk¹⁸, the head of the Enterprise Commission of NSZZ „S” RTV who was arrested by the authorities on December 15, 1981¹⁹.

In the same issue, a journalist by the pseudonym “Jug” wrote about how he was expelled from work and explained that regardless the political situation he would not work in television again. What he wrote about regarded many of his colleagues. Those who did not “pass” the verification, were expelled from positions without further possibility to find work in any official media. At the same time, it meant that they could no longer work in their profession. “Just like that, several or more years of their work and experience were just wiped out, work in order to master this profession. That is why I will not work for television and will probably never be a journalist since I feel like I have been professionally murdered”²⁰. Many other similar experiences, bitter memories and assessments of events that took place were also published.

Feelings of injustice, emotional harm and helplessness were omnipresent in the texts published. The one thing left for many of these people was to observe what was going on at Radiokomitet, to comment and to counterbalance radio and television’s propaganda activity. This is what one Wrocław journalist, Jarosław Szymkiewicz, pseudonym “Seweryn Tatar”, focused on in his column, “The world in TVP’s eyes”. In mid 1986, he sarcastically exposed TVP’s activity which was supposedly undergoing change and becoming more objective. He wrote, “Kind to the working class, merciless to layabouts and public property thieves, lazy civil servants, negligent craftsmen and private business owners, public TV is starting to gain people’s trust.” Then he cited numerous examples of biased, subjective TV propaganda. He finished his article stating, “I am immune to the view of the world projected via TVP and I wish you viewers/readers all the same. As we know, the real world is much more complex

¹⁶ A. Maciejowska, *Tyle było do zrobienia*, ibidem, p. 2–3.

¹⁷ Władysław Loranc was the head between July 1981 and December 1982.

¹⁸ Piotr Mroczyk (1947–2007) – Polish Radio journalist, head of the Enterprise Commission of NSZZ „S” RTV, Internet during martial law, after a year made to leave the country, Voice of America employee, head of Polish section of Radio Free Europe between 1989–1994.

¹⁹ *Jak mnie aresztowano*, “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji” 1985, No. 3/4 (37/38), p. 4–5.

²⁰ Jug, *Wszystko nas dzieli*, ibidem, p. 23.

than that shown on the TV screen. And that they can comprehend”²¹. In the same issue, another author used even more radical words. Being aware of the power this medium has, she was embittered by the trust society had toward what was broadcasted, “They [viewers] believe pretty girls with silly smiles on their faces reading information which makes our blood boil [...]. What happens is vivisection on many people’s brains”²².

In another text on radio and TV propaganda manipulating people’s consciousness, the author not only expressed regret over the current situation and the quality of programmes but also offered a solution, “What can we do? It’s easy – if you already don’t have one, go and buy yourself a radio, the Soviet ones are cheapest, and listen to radio from Paris, London and Voice of America! [...] You can use our domestic radio and TV to listen or watch entertainment or education programmes, music or films. This is the only use which guarantees relative mental sanity”²³.

Another technique used was deriding specific programmes and their content. For example, Tadeusz Zakrzewski’s programmes were often ridiculed, as he was a close associate of general Wojciech Jaruzelski²⁴. Alicja Maciejowska prepared a mocking article about a propaganda programme with Jaruzelski playing the main role, describing his visit to the countryside, visiting a silos, the village shop and chastening TV for making reports about the difficult situation when it all looks so good. Then, “the general with his men enters the beach as if it was a military parade. Even though he’s not wearing a uniform, he looks magnificent in a suit just the same. He is surrounded by ladies in bikinis who tell him of the benefits of rest and sunbathing. One of them offers him a piece of bitten off cake but ensures him that as a teacher she has medical tests to prove she’s healthy. He’s tempted, takes a bite and then congratulates the baker on her ‘masterpiece’. Finally, he says, what we hope is a prophecy, »My dear, I have to go soon «”²⁵.

In mid 1986, TVP launched *Teleexpress*, a 15 minute news broadcast transmitted at 5:15 pm. It was a new and ‘fresh’ programme, technically with more liberties and new announcers, and it quickly gained popularity. Aleksander Wieczorkowski, however, considered it just the same as *Dziennik Telewizyjny* (DTV), the evening news cast. “It is the

²¹ P. Tatar [Jarosław Szymkiewicz], *Świat w oczach Telewizji Polskiej*, ibidem 1986, No. 7/8, p. 7–9.

²² Olga, *A u nas...*, ibidem p. 14.

²³ [A. Wieczorkowski] Dioda, *Woda z mózgu czyli zakręć kran*, ibidem 1986, No. 10/11, p. 9.

²⁴ He wrote about his professional experiences and his memoirs in two books. For more see T. Zakrzewski, *Byłem reporterem Generała*, Warszawa 2002, *Dziennik Telewizyjny. Grzechy i grzeszki*, Warszawa 2003.

²⁵ [A. Maciejowska] Natalia, *Na co zasłużył redaktor Zakrzewski*, “»Solidarność« Radia i Telewizji” 1986, No. 10/11, p. 21.

same thing, only in a new studio and with new faces, starting with friendly Reszczyński”²⁶. Later on, in spring 1988, “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji” published a text regarding the celebrated 30th anniversary of DTV. Its author considered the supposedly ‘spontaneous’ enthusiastic comments of people interviewed in the streets the height of Radiokomitet management hypocrisy, “Even Urban, when asked by a reporter if he likes DTV, winced and said that there is too little journalism in it and too much government monitoring”. In summarizing the 30 years of its existence, the author wrote, “It was a distorted mirror of the epoch, purposely deformed so as to show viewers a caricature of this world”²⁷. A question arises whether the past tense used then, in 1988, to say that “it was a distorted mirror” was purposeful or not.

DTV was considered by the majority of society a channel of the most aggressive propaganda. When in spring of 1988 strikes broke out and when media were going on about resulting losses to the economy, including ships floating in roadstead with rotting lemons, Wieczorkowski pointed out that, “It is not DTV’s fault that propaganda is an ineffectual load of lies. It is not Urban’s nasty character that results in DTV’s arrogance and evident disdain for the truth. Both DTV and Urban are part of the system, links in a chain into which the Reds are trying to put society”. In the same article he noted that when society tries to make things difficult for the authorities, their journalists quickly become officers of the oppression apparatus. “The staff in charge of action against society quickly make a beating plan, determine the scope of unlawful activity and create a propaganda smoke screen. The difference between lies, slander and disinformation by Urban and the same means used by DTV or other radio news casts is that the government representative does it with pleasure while Radiokomitet employees – because they are made to”²⁸. It is hard to believe that Radiokomitet staff carrying out propaganda policy did it under constraint. “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji” pointed out many journalists who represented opportunistic attitudes and were loyal to party ideals. In one of the early issues, it was suggested that “continuators of lies and hatred propaganda” be awarded with Goebbels’ diplomas²⁹.

Some of the readers, including also those who were presently working at Radiokomitet were offended by such generalizations. In early 1987, the periodical published a letter by someone still working for TV in answer to the accusations printed as part of the series *Why I don't work for PR and TVP?* The author tried to justify why he was still working there and to

²⁶ [A. Wieczorkowski] Dioda, *Pegaz sieczką karmiony*, ibidem 1987, No. 16, p. 12.

²⁷ [J. Szymkiewicz] P. Tatar, *Świat w oczach Telewizji Polskiej*, ibidem 1988, No. 23, p. 2.

²⁸ [A. Wieczorkowski] Dioda, *Wkoło Macieju*, ibidem, No. 24, p. 21.

²⁹ *Dyplom im. Goebbelsa*, ibidem 1985/1986, No. 3/4 (37/38), p. 19.

convince people that it does not necessarily mean collaboration, “Why do I still work? Why do we? Mainly because of apathy, often because we do not know how to do anything else [...] We try to make right, often we give up higher salaries or chances to be promoted to set our consciousness at ease [...]. Our main goal is to wait this through [...] And waiting (it does not mean ‘do nothing’, it means to ‘stay active in the journalist profession until I am needed’) for you”³⁰.

Following, the editors also printed a journalist discussion in connection with the announced amnesty for political prisoners. It seems that their comments regarding the authorities’ decision were overly enthusiastic and somewhat naïve as some thought that it might be something of a breakthrough in the history of modern Poland. The journalist discussion also regarded what to do if there was a possibility to return to Radiokomitet, if there was such an offer made³¹, as many hoped there would. Should they accept or reject it in protest? In the published discussion, no names were mentioned, instead speakers were given numbers from I to VII. Someone noted that their return could be used as propaganda by the authorities as it would, in a way, legitimize their activity. Another person, in favour of returning to work, noted, “Perhaps the fact that we boycotted this institution entirely was to the advantage of the authorities”³². It was pondered if, perhaps, they should demand to be taken back to work or demand the right to come back to work. They emphasized that Radiokomitet’s activity should not be judged as a whole and that valuable people still work there. And, perhaps the return of those who were earlier expelled but who enjoy a good reputation would be an impulse to ground-breaking activity. On the other hand, it was noted that a return of a dozen or so journalists is not something that would be noticeable. Secondly, even if they were taken back to work, they still would not have any significant influence on the content of programmes broadcasted. Thirdly, they would be under strict surveillance which would result in others not so willing to work with them.

Journalist verification and the resulting expulsions from work was, for many, a wound that would not heal. In mid 1987, Andrzej Bober, the host of a popular economic programme (*Listy o gospodarce*) from before the introduction of martial law, returned to work. His return

³⁰ Reader or readers’ letter to the editor of “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji”, signed „Gryzonie”, ibidem 1987, No. 14/15, p. 1–2.

³¹ That was the case in 1989, offer made by Andrzej Drawicz, head of Radiokomitet between 1989–1991. That is when many radio and TV journalists decided to go back to work. For more on Drawicz and his policy at Radiokomitet see: G. Majchrzak, „Rewolucja”. *Czyli radio i telewizja pod rządami Andrzeja Drawicza w świetle dokumentów SB (23 września – 15 grudnia 1989 r.)*, [in:] *Wolne media? Środowisko dziennikarskie w 1989 r. Studia*, ed. P. Szulc, T. Wolsza, Szczecin–Warszawa 2010, p. 16–28.

³² *Fragment dyskusji dziennikarzy radiowych i telewizyjnych, zwolnionych po 13 XII 1981*, “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji” 1987, No. 14/15, p. 4–5.

caused a great deal of commotion among the disavowed. Bober interviewed deputy prime minister Manfred Gorywoda with regard to present economic reform problems. Even though the programme was a success among viewers, the opinions among journalists were divided, with many very critical. Andrzej Roman attempted to defend him in an oblique way, “Yes, perhaps he lost face, but many more did a lot worse”³³. Others were much less enthusiastic. Supposedly, after the programme TVP headquarters received 16 000 support letters. Roman stated that for Radiokomitet management, Bober’s return was a symbol of change taking place, a living proof that their attitudes toward journalist verification were flexible. He restated a popular opinion that all in all, for the authorities, aware of committed infringement, journalist verification was an awkward issue. He concluded, “This is how another blank page is created in the history of modern Poland, unfortunately not without active involvement of some victims”³⁴.

In November 1988, on the roll of changes taking place, a group of 33 former radio and TV journalists who lost their jobs in martial law sent a letter to Janusz Roszkowski, the head of Radiokomitet³⁵. In the so called Letter 33, they demanded invalidation of journalist verification. In an article by “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji”, Aleksander Wieczorkowski, criticized the signatories for doing so little. He was of the opinion that the issue should be exposed in Western media as that could be the only way to achieve any change. Wieczorkowski, asked, whether they really thought that the authorities would confess to committing infringement knowing that it was done so as to eliminate independent thought from radio and TV and to settle any personal accounts. He stated, “Will Roszkowski agree that his predecessor in 1982 was a scumbag? Just because a few journalists wrote a letter?”³⁶.

In the following issue, Wieczorkowski listed “Letter 33” signatories’ arguments. They were of the opinion that exposing the issue in Polish language to Western media would most probably just result in “insulting and loutish comments by Urban”³⁷. They were waiting for an official reply from Radiokomitet in order to take up the entire matter with the ombudsman (RPO) Ewa Łętowska.

Wieczorkowski cited the entire correspondence between journalists and Radiokomitet – “Letter 33”, Radiokomitet personnel department’s responses to different signatories, journalists’ collective response to Roszkowski, another reply from the personnel department

³³ [A. Roman] R., *ibidem* 1987, No. 20/21, p. 17.

³⁴ L.K.B., *Red. Bober i listy*, *ibidem* 1987, No. 22, p. 23.

³⁵ Janusz Roszkowski was the head of July 1986 to April 1989.

³⁶ [A. Wieczorkowski] Dioda, *Dyskretnie czyli nieskutecznie*, “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji” 1988, No. 22, p. 21.

³⁷ [A. Wieczorkowski], *Jeszcze o weryfikacji, której nie było*, *ibidem* 1988, No. 23, p. 6–7.

and, finally, journalists' letter to Ewa Łętowska. Journalists did not agree with Radiokomitet's stance which stated that "these are old and no longer current issues"³⁸. In the letter to journalists, it was stated that in 1988 Radiokomitet is driven by different considerations and the issue of returning to work is open to everybody, although possible employment will depend on qualifications and age. It was also emphasized that PR and TVP are looking for young staff, that the number of work places is limited and that management policy is geared toward staff reduction. Journalists replied that it is not about reinstating them but about invalidating journalist verification as compensation for incurred moral losses. Authors of the letter wished to know a legal base justification for the verification, members of the verification commissions and specific political accusations made against those expelled from work. The following Radiokomitet response was laconic and informed that in 1982 no legal infringement was made. The next letter, in which the entire issue was presented, including all correspondence with Radiokomitet, was sent to RPO.

Some time later, RPO's response was printed. It explained that journalist expulsions did not infringe the law in effect during martial law. Such a response was considered incomprehensible. In the following letter to RPO, it was explained that it is not about reinstatement to work but about stating that civic liberties were violated. Again, journalists asked to disclose the commissions member names and explain the legal base justification for the political verification. No further response was published.

The periodical, financed by the illegal Enterprise Commission of NSZZ "S" RTV, also presented current union and its members issues. Talks about the beginnings of the union movement at Radiokomitet and its employees attitudes to the propaganda in the 1970s were published. Data regarding members, circles and the number of postulates was cited. "Solidarity" time propaganda and the possibility of organizing a strike at Radiokomitet in 1981³⁹ was also mentioned. Based on data collected from Radiokomitet's "Solidarity" fans, the 1983 registration of a 'neounion' – NSZZ of Radio and Television Employees was described. Based on data by NSZZ "S" RTV, active in 1981, it was estimated that only about 16% Radiokomitet's staff belonged to the new union⁴⁰. In March 1988 a laconic (without data in numbers) financial report on NSZZ "S" RTV activity was published. According to it, the union helped those interned and their families, transferred packages from the West and

³⁸ *List z Departamentu Kadr i Szkolenia Komitetu do Spraw Radia i Telewizji do sygnatariuszy „Listu 33”*, ibidem, p. 10.

³⁹ *Rozmowa z przedstawicielami „Solidarności” Radia i Telewizji*, ibidem 1986, No. 7/8, p. 22–26; for more on the strike that did not happen see: M. Wójcik, *Szturm na telewizję*, „Przekrój” 23.03.2006.

⁴⁰ *Neozwiązki w PR i TV*, ibidem 1985, No. 1 (35), p. 13.

holiday packages for children, financed holidays and financially helped Radio “Solidarność”, printed holiday greetings and second circuit publications, bought May 3rd and November 11th celebration wreaths, organized concerts and video shows, and, finally, financed the periodical “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji”⁴¹. Its editors were actively involved in the Teresa Szop imprisonment matter. She was a radio journalist, active in the underground movement and Tadeusz Jedynek’s (member of Provisional Coordinating Committee in the Śląsko-Dąbrowski Region) liason. She was arrested in June 1985 and jailed for 10 months without a trial. The paper published Radiokomitet employee’s letters on the matter sent to “Życie Warszawy” and to “Tygodnik Mazowsze”. The latter was never printed as Szop was set free in the meantime.

The periodical additionally devoted attention to history matters. An author by the pseudonym “J” published a text with regard to August 1980 seventh anniversary. Speaking in the name of all journalists, he noted that too little was done to document and commemorate this crucial event in the history of Poland⁴². In another article, Władysław Daniszewski discussed the issue of the liquidation of Polish Journalists Association and establishment of Journalists Association of PRL. He was disappointed with the attitude of many journalists at a difficult time, “Journalists are different just as there are different types of cancer. Some are malicious and contrary. Others – purely vain, and others – just stupid even though they may be good at writing.” He summarized his text this way, “As a result of numerous humiliations, reflections and hotheadedness, it has transformed itself from a servile association to an ancillary one”⁴³.

In August 1987, via the periodical, Alicja Maciejowska launched a large scale search for inhabitants of Suwalszczyzna arrested by the NKVD and lost in July 1945. In every issue, presentations of these people with detailed mentions and tributes to them as well as appeals to anyone that knew anything about them were printed. Even though the appeals did not result in any breakthroughs, they did attract some attention to the issue as well as financial support for the cause⁴⁴.

The paper’s editorial staff also widely commented on current domestic events and the way they were portrayed by Polish radio and TV. Much attention was devoted to the propaganda before the elections in 1985 and to Zbigniew Bujak’s arrest. With regard to Rev. Jerzy Popiełuszko’s murder and the resulting trial reported on by the media, Władysław

⁴¹ *Komunikat KZ NSZZ „Solidarność” PR i TV z działalności finansowej od XII 1981 do XII 1987 r.*, ibidem 1988, No. 23, p. 35–36.

⁴² J., *Rozważania na dzień 31 sierpnia 1987 roku*, ibidem 1987, No. 18/19, p. 1–4.

⁴³ W. Daniszewski, *Wszystko już było*, ibidem, p. 14–19.

⁴⁴ In 2010, the author’s long time search and research were published as a book. See: A. Maciejowska, *Przerwane życiorysy. Obława Augustowska – lipiec 1945 r.*, Białystok 2010.

Daniszewski commented that the entire 'trial show' was predominantly a message to "thousands of regular and secret officials and officers, those in service and not, as well as voluntary and forced collaborators" that they always have to behave in accordance with socialism rules and be obedient to gen. Jaruzelski or else they will end up all alone on trial in the dock. The paper also analysed TVP's reports on visits of John Paul II and Michail Gorbaczew to Poland. Additionally, the election of Mieczysław F. Rakowski for prime minister and Janusz Roszkowski and then Jerzy Urban as heads of Radiokomitet were commented. There were reports from 1988 strikes and interviews with their participants. Jarosław Szymkiewicz admired Lech Walesa after the TV debate with Alfred Miodowicz. He wrote, "He said what everyone would like to have said to the authorities and the world. He said it clearly, with passion but without growing hatred. Simply, in front of the largest audience, he was able to defend his opinions and indisputably continued on"⁴⁵.

The infamous Jerzy Urban, the 1980s symbol of propaganda, incited ambivalent attitudes in journalists. On the one hand, people were disgusted and despised him, on the other they admired and envied him. Many felt powerless attempting to take him on. At times, journalists used low level argumentation. Andrzej Roman wrote, [...] he has to make up for his ugly appearance with something else, either impudence, provocative behaviour, cynicism, or aggression". At the same time, Roman added, he had 'good background' as a feature column journalist in "Po Prostu", later to become 'the spokesman of red disinformation policy' and work for a government which manipulated information. Urban did this job perfectly⁴⁶.

Such harsh words were directed not only at Urban. There were others who were criticized as well, such as Waldemar Krajewski from TVP Sport Section. When he decided to run for parliament in 1985, he was described as, "an example of mediocrity, a traitor and scumbag greedy for power"⁴⁷. It was said that Wiktor Legowicz, the head of PR Channel III, "got his position because of family connections and that during his management, programmes were full of unoriginal themes and cheap stupidity"⁴⁸. About sport commentator Dariusz Szpakowski, they wrote, "he is too into himself to even learn the basics of sports that he comments on"⁴⁹. Grażyna Szcześniak, editor of *Pegaz* was considered a journalist who "got

⁴⁵ [J. Szymkiewicz] P. Tatar, *Świat w oczach Telewizji Polskiej*, ibidem 1989, No. 27, p. 5.

⁴⁶ [A. Roman] R., *Casus „Urban”*, ibidem 1988, No. 22, p. 7–9.

⁴⁷ „*Nasz*” kandydat, ibidem 1985, No. 1 (35), p. 11.

⁴⁸ [A. Matynia] A-Z, *Członek kierownictwa*, ibidem 1986, No. 7/8, p. 16.

⁴⁹ P. Mits, *Faule na spalonym*, ibidem 1986, No. 10/11, p. 22.

where she did not because of intellectual but other talent”⁵⁰. Ewa Pachowska is, “a primadonna of PR Channel II political programmes” who is “a typical grotesque idiot as if from cabaret”⁵¹. Such language did not go unnoticed by readers.

Several times, the editors printed readers’ letters criticizing journalists for what they wrote. The editors were fair to publish such letters as they were not favourable. Readers generally commented on the style of language used by journalists. For example, “perhaps it is to the point but the language is too aggressive, we would not like to see people like this working for Polish Radio and TV”. Even though someone agreed with a criticism of a particular journalist and her programme, “the virulent language used or criticizing her speech impediment were unfair”. The reader concluded that, “I think that Solidarity journalists should differ from the regime ones not only in what they say (the truth) but also in how they say it and in their ethics”. The editors replied that they agree that some texts are too derisive but derision has to be aggressive and provocative, otherwise it would just be mild irony⁵².

Since 1987, journalists began to notice some changes taking place at PR and TVP. In late 1987, a more favourable text about *Panorama Dnia* on Chanel II, as well as new religious or cultural programmes “without stupid commentary”⁵³, and with people such as Daniel Olbrychski, Gustaw Holoubek and Krzysztof Kolberger, was published. On the other hand, they warned about being overly optimistic and drawing conclusions too fast. Just because the tone was less sharp and there was more criticism, it does not mean that the character of programmes has changed.

The propaganda on radio was much less intense than on television and that is why the periodical devoted less attention to it than to TV. However, the changes that were taking place were first noticed on radio rather than television. Alicja Maciejowska noted a very important and clear change in the themes discussed over Polish Radio. Themes which were taboo before, which the authorities did not wish to discuss, the so called missing pages in history. In 1988 and 1989, it turned out that it was possible to talk about Stalin’s crimes, exiles to Siberia, the fate of Polish people in the USSR and Home Army (Armia Krajowa) soldiers fighting with the new authorities.

The last issues of “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji” focused on reporting on the current events including Round Table talks, the election campaign, parliamentary elections and the

⁵⁰ [A. Wiczorkowski] Dioda, *W kierunku Kraju Rad?*, ibidem 1987, No. 14/15, p. 18.

⁵¹ K. Sękota, *Ta paskudna opozycja*, ibidem, p. 26.

⁵² Quotations from both letter taken from the 1987, No. 16, p. 18–20.

⁵³ [J. Szymkiewicz] P. Tatar, *Świat w oczach Telewizji Polskiej*, ibidem 1987, No. 20/21, p. 3–4.

role of media in a new political reality⁵⁴. At the Polish Culture Congress in April 1989 Janina Jankowska stated, “The election will be the first exam that our self organizing society is going to take, especially those who have been active in criticizing the authorities. The exam is all the more difficult since there is no possibility to have a re-take”⁵⁵. In April 1989, Marta Piszczatowska, member of the now legal Enterprise Commission of NSZZ „S” RTV, with great joy and satisfaction noted the launching of a new *Solidarni* programme, on PR Channel I. From then on, Solidarity could officially present their opinions, not through their underground Radio “Solidarność”.

All in all, “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji” cannot be considered a key second circuit periodical as it was not published during the martial law period. Its printing was resumed in late 1985, which is two years after martial law was abolished. It is now hard to say how it was re-established or who initiated it. Moreover, we do not know why it was re-launched so late. “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji” is definitely a professional periodical, edited by and targeting journalists. We could find out from it a lot about the activity of the journalist union NSZZ „S” RTV as well as journalist verification and drama during martial law. It was a good source of knowledge about the regime’s propaganda activity in the latter part of the 1980s. It can be said that it included detailed analyses of radio and TV programmes supporting official propaganda, putting aside the somewhat harsh language used by authors. Radiokomitet’s manipulations, implicit statements and twisting facts were frequently exposed by journalists working for the periodical. The question is – how effective was this activity? It was hard to compete against two TVP channels and four radio stations. The journalists were aware of the fact that any TV programme, even if broadcasted at an inconvenient time, reached a lot more people than any issue of an underground paper, with a circulation of several hundred copies distributed individually. Despite the difficulties, the editorial staff did not give up and had their input in the shaping of people’s opinions, including those journalists who were later engaged in the process of transforming the media system in Poland.

⁵⁴ For more on media and journalist attitudes in 1989 see *Wolne media?...*

⁵⁵ *Projekt wystąpienia Janiny Jankowskiej na Kongresie Kultury Polskiej w dniu 1 kwietnia 1989 r.*, “Solidarność Radia i Telewizji” 1989, No. 29, p. 5.