



## **Interim Finding Aid for the Polish Underground collection (A)**

Collection processed by Tess Livesley-O'Neill and Sarah Richardson, 2021-2024.

Wende Museum

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URL: <https://wendemuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/PolishUndergroundAFindingAid.pdf>

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Description is in English.

Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: a Content Standard (version 2022.0.3.2).

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### **Repository:**

Wende Museum

Culver City, California

### **Local identifier:**

2020.010

### **Title:**

Polish Underground collection (A)

### **Date:**

1948, 1953, 1962, 1965-1968, 1970, 1973-1994, 1999, 2004, 2006, 2008, undated (inclusive dates)  
1980-1989 (bulk dates)

### **Extent:**

34 linear feet (14 archives boxes; 8 newspaper boxes; 4 specialty boxes; 1 document case)

**Creator(s) / Collector(s):**

Bogucka, Teresa  
Osinski, Tomas  
Anonymous

**Abstract:**

The Polish Underground collection is a unique archive of materials from Polish opposition to the control and leadership of the country during the Soviet era. Hundreds of periodicals and books were illicitly printed from 1968 to 1989. Gathered here are materials primarily created between 1980-1990. These materials illuminate the scope of underground activity among Polish dissidents, persons active with Solidarność (Solidarity) as well as the Catholic Church in Poland.

**Physical location:**

Stored onsite at the Wende Museum.

**Conditions governing access:**

The collection is open for access, however, items in this collection do not circulate and may be used in-house only.

**Language of material:**

Materials are predominately in Polish, with some materials in English, French and Russian (Cyrillic text).

**Physical characteristics and technical requirements:**

This collection includes audiovisual materials (cassette tapes and VHS) which have special technical requirements. If you have questions about these materials please email [collections@wendemuseum.org](mailto:collections@wendemuseum.org).

**Conditions governing use:**

Copyright restrictions may apply.

Property rights to the physical object belong to the Wende Museum. Literary rights, including copyright, are retained by the creators and their heirs. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine who holds the copyright and pursue the copyright owner or his or her heir for permission to publish where the Wende Museum does not hold the copyright.

**Rights statement for archival description:**

Pursuant to its open access policy, the Wende Museum makes the interim guide to the Polish Underground collection [A] and the metadata contained within available for public use.

**Immediate source of acquisition:**

Tomas Osinski, Teresa Bogucka, et Al., 2019/2020.

**Preferred citation:**

Polish Underground collection (A), 2020.010. Archive. Wende Museum.

**Processing information:**

The initial Polish Underground collection (A) was received by the Wende Museum in late 2019/early 2020. The collection has been intermittently processed over the years. Upon initial intake, the collection arrived in multiple suitcases. Materials were then roughly rehoused into boxes and separated by material type; an interim item inventory was drafted. The final arrangement is determined, but not yet physically imposed.

**Accruals:**

Accruals are expected on an irregular basis. Additional materials received will be treated as separate collections.

**Other finding aids:**

[Finding aid in Online Archive of California \(EAD\)](#)

[Finding aid in ArchivesSpace](#)

[Polish Underground collection \(A\) books \(PDF\)](#)

[Polish Underground collection \(A\) periodicals \(PDF\)](#)

**Related archival materials:**

[Polish Underground collection \(B\), 2022.046.001](#)

[Polish Underground collection \(C\), 2023.076.001](#)

[Tomas Osiński collection, 2019.072](#)

## Administrative & biographical history:

Teresa Bogucka (b. 1945) is a Polish journalist who was active in opposition against the PRL starting in the late 1960s until the fall of Communism across the Eastern Bloc. She studied at both the University of Warsaw and later at the University of Łódź, eventually earning a degree in Sociology. While at university, she began participating in opposition to the activities of the Polish government. Her activities related to the March events of 1968 led to her temporary arrest. In the 1970s, she ran a clandestine lending library of censored and independent publications. She eventually contributed to various underground publications as a journalist and editor. Bogucka collaborated with many underground groups and publishers. When "Solidarność" emerged in 1980 as the first labor union in post-WWII Poland, she became a member. Shortly thereafter, martial law was implemented in December 1981; "Solidarność" was deemed illegal and Bogucka was arrested (with many, many others) for a little over a year. After her release she continued to contribute to and distribute many underground publications. Since the official dissolution of the PRL in 1990, Bogucka has continued to work as a writer, both as a columnist for *Gazeta Wyborcza* and author of books. She aggregated the materials comprising this collection from former dissidents who wish to remain anonymous.

The anonymous donors of this collection are persons who actively opposed the Polish government under communist rule between the end of World War II and 1990. The Polish state under communism was known as the *Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa* (translation: *Polish People's Republic*; acronym: *PRL*) from 1952-1989. Hundreds of periodicals and books were illicitly printed from 1968 to 1989. The anonymous donors either contributed to or distributed materials primarily created during the 1980s.

## Scope and contents:

The Polish Underground collection (A) contains materials collected by Teresa Bogucka and others who wish to remain anonymous. These materials document underground activity during the 1980s in Poland, including: Solidarność activity, underground (illegal) publication, labor strikes and lockouts, implementation of martial law 1981, political activity combating martial law in Poland, and the influence of the Catholic Church. Types of materials include: illegally published newsletters, illegally printed documents, Solidarność ephemera (postcards, postage stamps, etc.), photographs (visits of state, funerals of dissidents, protests), illegally published books, political cartoons, newspapers, t-shirts and audiovisual materials. The museum also received a suitcase owned and hidden by Adam Michnik. It includes the aforementioned material types.

## System of arrangement:

Materials are generally separated out by type, as items were not in a specified or noticeable arrangement upon arrival. The series are as follows:

- I. Documents
- II. Underground serials / newsletters
- III. Underground books
- IV. Photographs
- V. Ephemera, works of art on paper and political art
- VI. Newspapers

## System of arrangement (continued):

VII. Audiovisual

VIII. Adam Michnik suitcase

Documents. Documents arrived loosely compiled in binders. Some materials that were stored together have an obvious relationship to one another and others do not. Materials will remain clustered together in subject files if they arrived that way. For other materials, they will be arranged chronologically.

Underground serials / newsletters. Serials and newsletters are arranged alphabetically by title and then chronologically within each title.

Underground books. Books are arranged by size of publication and then alphabetically by author.

Photographs. Photographs are divided into 2 subseries with these subseries signifying separate sources as one grouping of ephemera is known to originate with one of the donors contributing to this collection. Photographs are then arranged chronologically in event order.

Ephemera, works of art on paper and political art. Like photographs, ephemera is also divided into 2 subseries with these subseries signifying separate sources as one grouping of ephemera is known to originate with one of the anonymous donors contributing to this collection.

Newspapers. Newspapers are arranged chronologically by year and then by title.

Audiovisual. Audiovisual materials include cassette tapes and VHS. These materials are separated by format.

Adam Michnik suitcase. Materials are roughly going to be stored together, following the same series order in box(es) as the rest of the collection. Materials with special formats (photos, newspapers, etc.) will be separated out and housed with other like materials in the collection.

## Subject terms:

Bogucki, Janusz  
Church and state—Poland—History—20th century  
Civil rights—Poland  
Communism—Poland—History—20th century  
Fedorowicz, Jacek, 1937–  
Gdańsk (Poland)—History  
Jaruzelski, W. (Wojciech)  
John Paul II, Pope, 1920–2005  
KC PZPR  
Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej KOR  
Labor unions—Poland  
Labor unions—Political activity—Poland  
Martial law—Poland  
Michnik, Adam

**Subject terms (continued):**

Miłosz, Czesław  
NSZZ "Solidarność" (Labor organization)  
Papal visits—Poland  
Poland—History—1945-1980  
Poland—History—1980-1989  
Poland—Politics and government—1980-1989  
Poland—Social conditions—1980-1989  
Polish poetry  
Polish wit and humor, Pictorial  
Political persecution—Poland  
Political prisoners—Poland—Biography  
Political satire, Polish  
Pomarańczowa Alternatywa  
Popiełuszko, Jerzy, 1947-1984  
Propaganda, Polish  
Stocznia Gdańska im. Lenina Strike, Gdańsk, Poland, 1980  
Strikes and lockouts—Poland  
Strikes and lockouts—Shipbuilding industry—Poland  
Wałęsa, Lech, 1943-