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Poland: Communique of the Emmanuel Goldstein Group

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Warszawa, 16 June, 1983

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Contents

Communique of Emanuel Goldstein Group 4

‘To realize our plans and to spread the libertarian ideas to a wider public in Poland we need urgently your political but also your practical solidarity.’

Thus ended an ‘Appeal to the libertarian movement in the West’ of Polish libertarians which has found since its first publication in December 1982 a remarkable resonance in the international anarchist press. Recently we received some new information from our comrades in Warszawa who have founded in June the Emanuel Goldstein Group and have sent us a first tape-recorded communique in which they explain today’s situation and their plans for the near future.

First some words about the results of the solidarity campaign for the support of the Polish comrades. The solidarity fund was closed in June with the result of 3,500 DM (about £685 UK) which was collected by the international libertarian movement. The money was given to the Polish libertarians in mid June. With the help of this money they will be now able to solve at least the fundamental financial and technical problems connected with publishing libertarian texts today in Poland.

Since last year the situation of our Polish comrades and the conditions for their activities have become worse. Because of a total lack of technical equipment and financial problems the group has so far not been able to publish their own underground paper and pamphlets as was planned. Instead they tried to spread their ideas by writing articles in undogmatic leftist underground papers as Rownosc, Mis and in the Solidarnosc underground press with left wing tendencies.

After Rownosc and Mis stopped their publications because of distribution problems caused mainly by right wing Solidarnosc leaders the group was able to publish only the “occasional article in underground Solidarnosc papers. Besides their difficulties with publishing libertarian literature the comrades in Warszawa were not able to get into contact with similar groups in Poland who are working all under strictly conspiratorial conditions.

Because of these problems they concentrated their activities mainly on translations of libertarian texts which they intend to publish hopefully already this year.

Some misunderstandings were caused by using the name Sigma in their first 'Appeal to the libertarian movement in the West' (see Iztok Communique No.5, 1983 and Die Aktion. Anarchistisches Magazin, No. 2, 1983, p.18). The decision to use this name was made out of security reasons; the confusion which was caused by it was not intended. Today Sigma which still exists in Warszawa as a legal student organisation, is dominated mainly by a trotskyist fraction. On the other hand Sigma is observed of course very carefully by the secret police who try to use Sigma for channeling the oppositional student movement in a legal frame which can be controlled easily.

Because of the dangers which are connected with contacts to Sigma most of the libertarians broke relations this year with this student circle and have formed in June the independent underground press Emanuel Goldstein Group. The name is a homage to George Orwell, whose novel "1984" is an underground bestseller especially among the Polish youth.

In its first communique the Emanuel Goldstein Group gives some general information about today's situation of underground Solidarnosc and the Polish left wing opposition followed by 'a description of their own specific problems, plans and perspectives.

– D.B., Hamburg

Communique of Emanuel Goldstein Group

Warszawa (transcription of the tape-recorded statement).

(music in the beginning: by a very popular Polish new wave group; the refrain which says "we want to be ourselves!" sounds in Polish similar to "we want to beat ZOMO!" which is a special police unit used for suppressing demonstrations.)

This is the first communique of Emanuel Goldstein Group.

short texts by Peter Kropotkin, an anthology of Polish anarchist poems, some old Polish libertarian texts by (Edward) Abramowski and (Josef) Zielinski and of course some satirical pieces dealing with today's situation. We shall also produce leaflets on different occasions for instance May 1. In a longer perspective we will try to publish a journal either monthly or quarterly as a platform for libertarian ideas.

And last but not least, we would like to express our great, great gratitude to all comrades from libertarian movements in the west – especially from Italy, Netherlands, United States and other countries – (Polish words:) thank you very much! Your help and practical solidarity is very important to us. We shall never forget it.

To pursue our libertarian ends we have come together to understand each other, to exchange information about the situation on both sides.

Your help is one of the first blows against the wall of etatism (the state-system) dividing us. Together we shall smash it!

Warszawa, 16 June, 1983.

Listen dear comrades from the West! On June 16th we have founded the Emanuel Goldstein Group. We are Polish libertarians and here is some information for our western friends.

First some words about all that Sigma confusion. Sigma is still a group of leftists but they are active only in the legal frames allowed by the Communist Party. We don't want to have contacts with those people anymore. Before December 13th the situation was different. Some possibilities of expressing libertarian ideas in print existed (in the magazine Nowa Gazeta Mazowiecka and in the pamphlet series Archiwum Lewicy). Now Sigma is a kind of security valve. It can be a great help for the secret police to have left wing people gathered in one place; it is easier to control them. By the way, now the total number of Sigma members is only seven. Before martial law it had a membership of 50.

And now something about the situation of the Polish left-radical opposition. Within the last months the situation here has become worse. The contacts to other groups have been broken, especially with well-equipped underground publishing houses and printing shops. They have wanted to get twice as much money for printing leftist underground literature. Solidarnosc leaders have been ordered not to distribute publications of this kind.

To give an example: the leaders of Solidarnosc several times stopped the distribution of a leftist journal called Mis (teddy bear) because of its revolutionary and anti-clerical position. So you can publish something and you will not know if you have a chance to distribute it by the network of Solidarnosc distributors. Another example has been Rownosc (equality). The underground printers took money from Rownosc and promised to produce 2,000 copies and actually they only produced (for the same price) 500 copies.

Right wing elements of Solidarnosc – we even can say it about all its top leadership – started a campaign against these publications, accusing them of national betrayal and political provocation. In this campaign the most active have been people connected with an underground catholic paper called Victoria, which has the holy

mother in it's masthead. In another paper called Niepodleglosc (Independence) — in it's 8th issue 1982 — they published an article in which they accused Rownosc of being a paper of the security police.

Besides, libertarian publications have been very popular among Polish workers even if they are roman-catholics. They are really interested in anarchist ideas, especially because official propaganda uses the word anarchy in a negative context as something anti-communist.

And now some words about the underground Solidarnosc movement. Solidarnosc is not a homogeneous organisation. Only a part of its former members — about 100,000 — are still active, for instance in the field of distribution of underground literature, especially journals. We can probably say that their total monthly numbers of copies is from about 3 to 8 million. The dissident Centre of Social Research of the Masurian region (a Solidarnosc organisation) has knowledge about more than 1200 different underground journals published all over the country, even in villages.

The most active members of underground Solidarnosc are workers, first of all workers from big factories in main industrial centres, college students and intellectuals. In general, the workers are not interested now in short, small strikes. Of course some strikes happen from time to time, but they are first of all of an economic character. The trend is to be prepared for the general strike in the future when circumstances are better.

There are two views of the aim of the general strike among top leaders of underground Solidarnosc: First is the tendency to come to a national agreement with the military junta under Jaruzelski, which would include the restoration of Solidarnosc as a legal trade union without any important changes of the political system in Poland. This tendency does not have great support of the people, but some leaders — for instance W. Hardek from Krakow — supports it. It is a kind of reformist strategy, very doubtful in it's results.

The second trend — the stronger one — also in the leadership of Solidarnosc, for instance in Wroclaw, Masurian region and also in

Nowa Huta, is to overthrow the political system using revolutionary means and perspectives.

Now the greatest chances have probably people standing for the social revolutionary party in the Russian-social democratic tradition, using revolutionary methods to reach political power in the future. Nationalistic-clerical forces may also have a great influence in the future.

And now listen to our views about the situation. First of all we need to say that the whole leftist and libertarian tradition has been destroyed by the communists. So we are to support those libertarian tendencies existing inside Solidarnosc; today the social revolutionary trend and tomorrow after its (Solidarnosc's) possible split the trends are close to anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism. These positions are for instance the aim for workers' autonomy, workers control and the very popular idea of a self-governed society. Reactionaries want to get total control of these tendencies and consequently our aim is to support libertarian elements and to attack clerical nationalists. In the case of a general conflict, for instance, a general strike, our place will be of course within Solidarnosc.

We shall spread libertarian ideas by publications and we will try to win more followers of anarchism among students, workers and intellectuals. This year we shall try to solve technical and distributing problems of publishing. First of all we are going to buy a printing machine which makes us independent of Solidarnosc and private printers. Contacts with such people (mainly with private printers) are always a source of great danger. Of course we have some problems with paper, printing ink and other printing equipment. We hope we shall solve all these problems. The other main problem is distribution. We try to gain different networks. First the Solidarnosc network, in a longer perspective to build up our own. Our plans include a series of pamphlets. In the first period translations of basic western and Russian anarchist texts and also our own translations. For instance these are translations of Nicolas Walter, 'About Anarchism', Murray Bookchin, 'Listen Marxist!', some