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The work of Czesław Czapów – Based on His Activities in the “Krzywe Koło” Discussion Club

Abstract: In the presented work, the point of consideration became one of the areas of Czesław Czapów’s work, specifically his involvement in the activities of the “Krzywe Koło” Club. Czapów joined the club after a difficult period in his life, associated with over a year of hiding (following a previously staged suicide) from the Security Service (UB). This was a consequence of his active participation – in the years 1950–53 – in the meetings of the informal “Personalości” discussion group. The “Krzywe Koło” Club, active since 1956, brought together the intelligentsia: scientists, writers, artists, journalists, with very different socio-political views. The weekly discussions were attended by people with such extreme views as: Jerzy Braun, Jerzy Urban, Władysław Bartoszewski, Leszek Kołakowski, Paweł Jasienica, Jacek Kuroń, Antoni Stoniński, Jan Józef Lipski, Prof. Tadeusz Kotarbiński and Czesław Czapów. It quickly became a place for open intellectual discussions, constituting a unique “phenomenon” within the entire socialist camp. It is safe to say that it became one of the “symptoms” of the Thaw in Poland at the time, which began after the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953 and was completed by the disclosure of Nikita Khrushchev’s secret paper at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956.

Key word: discussion club, “Krzywe Koło” Club, Social Diagnostics Section.

Introduction

Over four decades ago, an eminent scientist, doc. dr hab. Czesław Czapów, passed away – a co-founder of the Institute of Prevention and Resocialization at the University of Warsaw, but above all, a co-creator of the foundations of Polish resocialization pedagogy. Today, for young enthusiasts of social sciences, he is known through numerous works he left behind. However, this remarkable personality cannot be confined solely within the realm of academia. Getting to know the Master only through the yellowed pages of several books or dozens of scientific articles is too „shallow.” Why? Because Czesław Czapów is an outstanding figure who has left an indelible mark on the spiritual, intellectual, and emotional formation of his generation, and whose contribution to Polish culture is worth emphasizing today. Czesław Czapów belonged to the generation of Polish intelligentsia for whom working in diverse areas of life, even those not yielding material benefits, was entirely natural. However, it provided something more – a sense of purpose in life and service to fellow human beings. Therefore, his activities cannot be encapsulated only in the formula of scientific work, as the scope and areas of his interests, all his activities, were so extensive that they led him on a path of constant seeking and serving truth, despite all adversities thrown by fate. One such area of activity, which has not been documented until now, is his involvement in the „Krzywe Koło” Club, which became a kind of continuation of the „Personalisci” discussion club after its ‘closure’. At the same time, it is an expression of his autonomy: independence, freedom, self-determination, but also responsibility for his own choices and actions.

Establishment and organization of the “Krzywe Koło” discussion club

According to W. Jedlicki – on 14 February 1962, „The New York Times” published a memo signed by the Warsaw correspondent, Arthur J. Olsen, indicating that the cultural association „Krzywe Koło” Club” ceased to exist. This was, of course, not true; nevertheless, the readers of that magazine learned that the Club was the “last place in the communist world where words were free” (Jedlicki, 1963, p. 7). At the time, the “Krzywe Koło” Club was functioning while facing a campaign of slander directed at the Club. Accusations included discrimination against members of the Polish United Workers’ Party (P.Z.P.R.) during the club’s discussion meetings. Consequently, its dissolution was deemed necessary by the communist authorities.

Before moving on to the characteristics of the “Krzywe Koło” Club, I would like to emphasize that it is not possible to present in one article the various initi-

atives undertaken by the Club’s members over the years. Therefore, I present only those that I feel are the most relevant and those that are related to C. Czapów. It is also worth noting at this point that the “Krzywe Koło” Club was not the only such discussion club in Poland at the time. The liberal atmosphere of the years 1955 and 1956 allowed for the creation of discussion clubs by young intellectuals, and moreover, the Polish Youth Union was dissolved during this period. These two initiatives emerged from the editorial team of “Po Prostu,” which was a group composed of both students from the Institute of Teacher Training of the Polish United Workers’ Party and people whose beliefs were never “dictated” by anyone.

Among the clubs that were formed in that period (1955/56), four Warsaw clubs stood out, both in terms of organization and the seriousness of the tasks they set themselves: “Krzywe Koło”; “Klub im. Karola Marksa”; “Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej”; “Spalony Bezpiecznik” – Kraków’s “Czerwony Pomidor” club – Lublin’s “Akcenty,” and two Poznań clubs – “Wyboje” and “Zielony Semafor.” Their location shows that the fact that they were university cities was not without significance. This does not mean that these clubs were characterized by some intellectual exclusivity, as they also collaborated with workers’ communities. They all also presented social initiatives aiming at activating factory crews – while simultaneously playing a significant role in facilitating the life start and social advancement of young people. Moreover, these clubs created opportunities for the development and improvement of all kinds of individual creativity, taught constructive work, and gave a sense of social usefulness, thus preventing the spread of demoralization. Most importantly, they provided individuals with the opportunity to build broad social connections, often breaking their social isolation and the feeling that they were not solely dependent on themselves (Jedlicki 1963, pp. 61–68).

The “Krzywe Koło” Club was formed completely spontaneously. This happened during one of the meetings held in the apartment of Ewa and Juliusz Garztecki, who had just received the keys to it, in early spring 1955. During this meeting, one of the invited guests – Stefan Król – proposed organizing gatherings similar to the famous Thursday dinners held by King Stanisław August Ponia-towski. The idea was well-received, and these meetings were decided to be organized in the form of a club, which took its name from the meeting place – the Garztecki’s apartment at ul. Krzywe Koło 26 m 4 in Warsaw (Król 2008, p. 230).

Witold Jedlicki emphasized that „there are serious reasons to suspect that the “Krzywe Koło” Club was created in 1955 not against the authorities – namely the police authorities – but rather with their explicit encouragement. This by no means implies that the establishment of the Club was a provocation” (Jedlicki, 1963, p. 13). This perspective of W. Jedlicki probably resulted from what he thought of the Garztecki marriage; nevertheless, the Club was quickly dominated by a group of young intellectuals critical of the prevailing reality. W. Jedlicki, writing „in this restless period, the police wanted to have the opportunity to survey

the moods in certain environments and probably preferred that these moods be expressed openly, under the eye of agents, rather than secretly and uncontrollably. During this time, however, the police truly controlled the club, placing their people in its authorities and its activities” (Jedlicki, 1963, p. 13), undoubtedly had the Garztecki couple in mind (AIPN BUiAD 01322/192, memo „Tkaniny,” vol. 1). In her report prepared for the Security Service (SB), E. Garztecka mentions a group of friends who regularly participated in the Circle’s meetings: Stefan Król, Zbigniew Sufin, Janina Kłopocka, Marek Perlman and many others. She also lists the topics discussed at subsequent meetings and their participants. Most of them focused on specific issues: the political work of the Union of Polish Artists (12th May), artistic industrial design (26th May), theater in Poland and India (2nd June), progressive traditions in Polish culture (9th May), folk art (16th June), the popularization of music (23rd June), and books (30th June). In the summer of 1955, meetings did not take place due to the holiday season and the hosting of the 5th World Festival of Youth and Students in Warsaw (AIPN BUiAD 01322/192, k. 385-387). On 4 October 1955, seven founders of the Krzywe Koło Club sent a letter to the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party (KC PZPR), addressed to Jakub Berman and Jerzy Morawski, informing them about their activities and requesting permission to continue their work. The letter included a proposal for the establishment of a club movement on a national scale. This movement would enable systematic political work among the intelligentsia (AIPN 0236/175, vol. 1, Letter to the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party (KC PZPR), 04.10.1955, pp. 1–2). However, there is a slightly different narrative in the memoirs of S. Król, one of the co-organizers of the Club. He writes that such a letter was indeed drafted but was never delivered. In his recollections, he emphasizes that it was a response to the behavior of the Chairman of the Stare Miasto District Council, who requested J. Garztecki to provide a list of names of individuals participating in the Club’s meetings. Allegedly, as a result, this list was delivered to the Security Office. Therefore, the purpose of the letter was threefold: firstly, to legalize the Club; secondly, to protect the participants from arrest; and thirdly, to “open the gates” for freedom of speech, information about other socio-economic systems, and, above all, for new trends in culture and science (Król 2008, pp. 233–234).

During this time, there was also a change in the meeting place of the Club. The Old Town Cultural Center [original name: Staromiejski Dom Kultury] became its venue. By the end of 1955, the club already had 5 honorary guests, 60 regular members and 13 candidates. The Club’s activities also attracted the interest of individuals such as Jan Strzelecki, Jan Józef Lipski, Czesław Czapów, Stefan Nowak, or Stanisław Manturzewski. The evening meetings with prepared lectures on specific topics became immensely popular among intellectuals and young scientists. In the first months of 1956, the Club’s meetings attracted around 90 people (Ceranka 2007, pp. 91–92).

On 10 May 1956, a new Board of the “Krzywe Koło” Club was elected, with J. Strzelecki as Chairman, Ewa Garzcka as Vice-Chairman, Michał Stalski as Secretary and Danuta Kępczyńska as Treasurer. New members, including Zygmunt Skórzyński, Stefan Nowak, and Czesław Czapów, also joined the Board.

The beginning of 1956 was also a time to create social initiatives within the “Krzywe Koło” Club’s activities. Four sections were established, each dealing with specific issues and engaging in creative work in their respective areas. There were four sections. Andrzej Dobosz founded the theater section, which led to the successful establishment of the “Krzywe Koło” Theater. The art section, led by Marian Bogusz and Kajetan Sosnowski, organized a permanent gallery of modern art on the second floor of the Old Town Cultural Center. Over the years, the organized gallery became an autonomous unit. The architectural section, led by Henryk Sęczykowski, initiated design work related to the reconstruction of Podhale and the Marymont district in Warsaw.

Lastly, the social diagnostics section, led by Czesław Czapów, Waław Makarczyk, Stanisław Manturzewski, Aleksander Matejko, Andrzej Raźniewski, Andrzej Siciński, and Zygmunt Skórzyński, focused on social diagnostics, which will be further discussed in this work.

However, two initiatives of the Club were more important than the sections. Despite their failure, the attempts made were of great significance. The first initiative aimed to establish a wide network of contacts with factory workers. This action aimed to break the social isolation between the proletariat and the intelligentsia, which had existed for a long time but deepened significantly during the Stalinist terror. The second initiative was related to the electoral law of November 1956, under which elections to the Sejm were to be held in January 1957. According to this law, candidates for parliamentarians were nominated by workplaces, social organizations, and local associations. This meant that the only real chance for the population to influence the composition of the Sejm was not the electoral act itself, consisting of crossing out about 1/3 of the names from the presented single list of candidates, but precisely the act of nominating candidates by the assemblies of factory workers and social organizations. In this situation, the editorial staff of “Po Prostu”, together with the Clubs, including the “Krzywe Koło” Club, as well as certain workers’ councils of Warsaw factories, undertook an organizational campaign to hold workers’ meetings in Warsaw factories. The goal was, of course, to find their own candidates. However, pressures from the party quickly emerged, leading to the disruption of most planned meetings, and representatives of individual factories began to withdraw. In response, the organizers, seeing that the plan had failed, decided to exercise their right under the electoral law to nominate candidates by presenting their own list of candidates from the Warsaw district. Two representatives from this list: Jan Józef Lipski (“Krzywe Koło” Club) and Jerzy Płudowski (editorial board of “Po Prostu”) were proposed to hold only advisory roles in the meetings of the “consultative commission of political

parties and social organizations of the Warsaw district.” However, despite their strong firmness and determination in this situation, they were unable to achieve anything (Jedlicki 1963, pp. 83–84).

Thus, the existing Clubs – including the “Krzywe Koło” Club – became a significant element of the political situation in 1956, causing concern for a considerable part of the government power. In a memo from the Ministry of Public Security (MSW) on the club movement, we can read, among other things, that they (the clubs) constitute a very active and politically dynamic nationwide organization, emerging from social needs and the justified aspirations of the intelligentsia to find suitable forms of cultural and political „expression.” According to an anonymous author of the memo, the tactics of some club activists involved, through the National Front Committee, creating an organizational base for the „democratization” understood as political freedom for reactionary, (and) often „clerical elements.” The memo also presented the program of the clubs, outlined as follows:

- carry out a „revolution within a revolution”
- deepen democratization and treat it as a continuous process
- gain independence from the USSR
- break with the monopoly of the Marxist worldview
- prepare for electoral campaign (AIPN BUiAD 0236/175 vol. 2, pp. 7–8).

After changes in the Club’s management, two distinct groups became notably distinct: the first, moderate group centered around the founders, and the second, radical group supporting the radical direction of democratic transformations and avoiding contacts with the “party-professional establishment.” Prominent figures in this group included Czesław Czapów, Jan Józef Lipski, Witold Jedlicki and Mieczysław Sroka (AIPN BUiAD 0236/175, vol.1, pp. 393–394). It was also this group that was backed after a general meeting held on 10 February 1957. The Club’s board now included Jan Józef Lipski (who became its Chairman), Czesław Czapów, Ernest Bryll and Andrzej Lama (AIPN BUiAD 0236/175, vol. 1, pp. 121–127). From that moment on, the name “Krzywe Koło” became a kind of „mark of political and cultural quality” – the Club’s gallery was perceived as the best modern art, the Club’s theater admired for the most interesting interpretations of prose, and the “Thursday meetings” became the “Hyde Park” of the capital city.

As stated in another piece of information gathered about the Club, discussions during the meetings “are charged with hidden venom when it comes to political, social, and cultural and economic relations in our country. Praise for the West and hostile attitudes towards the USSR, China, and other countries of people’s democracy is reflected in them. Discussants are characterized by eloquence, drawing analogies when criticizing our system, and using allegories. Participants are well-prepared for any topic, operating with monographic and source data. (...) Some discussions, especially on historical and economic topics, are calm, high-quality, enriching the knowledge of the listener. The atmosphere in the Hall during meetings is sociable and café-like. Everyone feels comfortable and knows

each other. They are all united by being members of a club of opposition. They have a high opinion of the Club and themselves as a factor influencing creative and intellectual circles in the capital city. Club members consider themselves and the Club to be those who have contributed significantly to the transformations of October 1956. They believe that they are now playing a positive role as leaders of new trends in culture and art” (APW Otwock, ref. 618, pp. 3–4).

Over the next two years, the party and the Ministry of Public Security (MSW) closely monitored the activities of the Club, eventually leading to its closure in 1962. M. Jastrun believes that what ultimately determined its fate were the numerous contacts of the Club members with the “Kultura” community. In the early 1960s Jerzy Giedroyc was enemy number one for the authorities in Warsaw (Jastrun 2002, p. 336). Additionally, the situation was exacerbated by gatherings combined with lectures at the Club. The first took place on 18 January 1962, featuring a lecture by Prof. Tadeusz Kotarbiński, opened by Paweł Jasienica. The second, on 1 February 1962, included a presentation on “The Conflict of Humanisms” by Prof. Adam Schaff, which received rather strong criticism.

Social Diagnostics Section of the “Krzywe Koło” Club

The social diagnostics section of the “Krzywe Koło” Club was founded and led by seven graduates of the University of Warsaw: Czesław Czapów, Wacław Makarczyk, Stanisław Manturzewski, Aleksander Matejko, Andrzej Raźniewski, Andrzej Siciński, and Zygmunt Skórzyński – centered around Jan Strzelecki, and also collaborating with Prof. Stanisław Ossowski. The section was established to provide various services in the field of sociology for different institutions. The Club’s board was only familiar with the Section’s work through reports prepared for general discussion (AIPN BUiAD 01322/192, vol. 1, pp. 392).

The social issues presented mainly consisted of reports from conducted survey research. A number of meetings was devoted to various stages of research on the attitudes of Warsaw students, conducted by Zofia Józefowicz, Stefan Nowak, and Anna Pawełczyńska. Irena Nowakowska presented her research on the worldview of scientific workers, Julian Hochfeld on research regarding the composition of the Sejm, Zdzisław Szpakowski on research into national antagonisms, Adam Podgórecki on research into workers’ courts. In addition to presentations on social issues, reports from sociological research were also presented, including Aleksander Matejko’s work on industrial sociology, Jan Szczepański’s presentation on the intelligentsia, and Stanisław Manturzewski’s report on the problems of juvenile delinquency and youth crime, which was based on research conducted with Czesław Czapów (Jedlicki 1963, pp. 114–115).

Undoubtedly remembered was Czapów’s presentation delivered on 14 June 1956 entitled “Poglądy teoretyków socjaldemokracji zachodniej na strukturę

klasową Związku Radzieckiego” [Views of Western Social Democracy Theorists on the Class Structure of the Soviet Union]. Marta Fik (Fik 1989, p. 242) emphasizes that it was undoubtedly the first public presentation of the concept of the “new class,” later popularized by Milovan Djilas.¹

Czesław Czapów’s presentation was based on the following publications: “The Managerial Revolution” by James Burnham, “The Transition from Capitalism” by Anthony Crosland, and “Jenseits des Kapitalismus” by Paul Sering. While the presentation itself has not been preserved, its principles can be understood from Czesław Czapów’s article titled “Na szlaku zasadniczego sporu” [On the Path of Fundamental Dispute] published in “Po Prostu” in 1956, in which he presented the views of social democrats: Andre Philippe, Pierre Commin, Paul Sering, and Trotskyists like de Laforte and J. Burnham, focusing on the emerging new social classes – the “managerial class,” which marked the beginning (P. Sering) of a new democracy – the democracy of the administrator society or the “new upper layer” signifying (J. Burnham) the class rule of political bureaucrats, who, as a result of revolution or counter-revolution, took total political power.

At the same time, in the discussed text, it was emphasized that the considerations presented by the ideologues of social democracy are fragmentary and not based on any serious economic analysis. Moreover, their deliberations are dominated by superficial observation of the outer layer of life of communist countries, according to the author’s opinion, the creators of these theories did not truly understand. For him, these social democratic theories of the Soviet society did not constitute authentic, scientific hypotheses, demanding a substantive discussion about them (Czapów 1956, p. 6).

Furthermore, the members of the Section began engaging in interesting self-education work. The Section’s team also developed an analysis of social democratic theories of totalitarianism found in the writings of Burnham, Mannheim, Rauschning, Lasky, Crosland, Pivert, Bevan, and Moch. The resulting paper, comprising 70 pages of typescript, was titled “Socjaldemokratyczna „teoria totalizmu” w świetle faktów (pytania i wątpliwości)” [The Social Democratic „Theory of Totalism” in the Light of Facts (Questions and Doubts)]. The main authors were J. Strzelecki, C. Czapów, and Prof. S. Ossowski. It was intended as a basis for discussion at one of the “Krzywe Koło” Club meetings, but its value led to broader dissemination. However, no copy of it has survived to this day.

Among the interesting initiatives undertaken by the Section, it is worth mentioning actions that resulted in establishing contacts with the Passenger Car Factory (FSO) in Żerań, where the first workers’ council was being formed at that

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¹ Translated into Polish (by J. Mieroszewki) text by M. Djilas “The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System”, with Polish title “Nowa klasa wyzyskiwaczy (analiza systemu komunistycznego)” was published in Paris in 1958 in the Library of „Kultura,” volume 27.

time. A. Małachowski, the editor of the factory magazine “Fakty – M20” published by FSO, joined the “Krzywe Koło” club (AIPN BUiAD 0236/175 vol. 2, p. 97).

C. Czapów worked as a senior editor at the Bureau of Studies and Evaluation of the Program from 1955, and from 1956 to 1959 at Polish Radio, initially as the head of the Letters Bureau, and then, from 1958, in the already transformed Center for Public Opinion Research at Polish Radio (AUW, Employee Files, K. 13.068, knlb). The Center was established on his initiative. The experience gained while working at the Letters Bureau of Polish Radio, which involved receiving and analyzing thousands of letters from across the country, compiling reports on social issues based on them, resulted in the creation of the first-ever Center for Public Opinion Research [OBOP] at Polish Radio – an institution of great importance for the social and cultural life of the country. It is essential to emphasize that this was the first center in Poland and the Soviet bloc conducting professional public opinion research (Winclawski 2001, p. 108).

To implement this idea, Z. Skórzyński, A. Rażniewski, W. Makarczyk, and A. Podgórecki (Podgórecki 1995, pp. 38, 163) – members of the Personalists group initially joined to help implement the idea. It was an active group with significant contributions during October.² Its members also gradually took over the leadership at the Club, finally taking over in 1957 when Jan Józef Lipski was elected its chairman. Anna Pawełczyńska, a colleague from the academic circle of Prof. Stanisław Ossowski, assisted in obtaining approval from the then president of Polish Radio, Włodzimierz Skorowski, to place the Center at the Radio Committee (Podgórecki 1995, p. 38, 163). Stanisław Ossowski. She also gradually took over the leadership of OBOP, later sharing it with Andrzej Siciński. She co-founded and managed it until 1965 (Podgórecki 1995, pp. 38, 163).

The decision to establish the Center at Polish Radio provided the administrative and formal basis for launching a broad organizational campaign. About 200 voluntary interviewers engaged in the work of conducting surveys. This made it possible to start cooperation with the Warsaw and Łódź sociological community, allowing for the implementation of representative opinion surveys on a large scale, using classic opinion polling techniques.

As emphasized many years after C. Czapów’s death by Z. Skórzyński, these studies, in terms of topics chosen or commissioned by the Center’s management, central or regional administration, various institutions, or collaborating colleagues from academic centers, often provided a completely new image of the analyzed issues, generally different from official party reports. Consequently, for many years, they constituted a unique factor in challenging the party’s monopoly on

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² See A. Skuza, Czesław Czapów – człowiek czynu – jako organizator opozycyjnego klubu dyskusyjnego Personalistów (1950–1953) [Czesław Czapów – Man of Action – as the Organizer of the Opposition Discussion Club ‘Personalists’ (1950–1953)], „Resocjalizacja Polska”, no. 24/2022, pp. 61–73.

knowledge about the state of public consciousness in the entire socialist camp (Skórzyński 2003, p. 69).

In February–November 1957, 120,929 letters were sent to the Polish Radio Letter Office. Their detailed analysis undoubtedly has paramount significance for understanding the evolution of public opinion in 1957. The document prepared by the team forming OBOP at Polish Radio titled “Polacy 57 – krajobraz po Październiku w świetle 120 tysięcy listów do Polskiego Radia” [Poles ‘57 – Landscape after October in Light of 120,000 Letters to Polish Radio] is probably the first extensive analysis of these letters. Although the document was not signed by the authors, it can be assumed that one of its creators was C. Czapów, who, in 1958, published an article in the monthly magazine “Antena” presenting the results of these studies.³ Admittedly, the text submitted by C. Czapów was significantly altered – some fragments were even removed. Such an information was contained in “Sygnały” bulletin issued by the General Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows [Polish name: Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk] for the party-state leadership. Information about alterations in this text can be found there, revealing what was still tolerated by the authorities in 1958 and what was already considered harmful. For example, from the summary of comments on letters evaluating the activities of the government, sentences mentioning the increase in the number of letters criticizing Party and Government leaders were removed. (AAN, GUKPPIW 594, “Sygnały,” 3.03.1958, p. 53). “This often seems to be the result of the exuberant or unfounded hopes that many people had for October. The number of accusations questioning the full sovereignty of the Polish state also increased” (AAN, GUKPPIW 594, “Sygnały,” 3.03.1958, p. 54). In an excerpt presenting a compilation of statements about other nationalities, the censors left a sentence stating: “the majority of letters discussing the issue of anti-Semitism are characterized by an anti-Semitic tone” while removing: “no motivation of a typically racist nature speaking of racial inferiority was noticed in these letters” (AAN, GUKPPIW 594, “Sygnały,” 3.03.1958, p. 55). C. Czapów also emphasized that there were few letters referring to religious motives. However, numerous accusations emerged regarding favoritism in occupying state positions and the issue of mass emigration to Israel. The conclusion formulated by C. Czapów, which had no chance of publication (although he demonstrated significant civil courage during that time), was a conclusion stating the dominant and growing disappointment resulting from the implementation of the October program (AAN, GUKPPIW 594, “Sygnały,” 3.03.1958, p. 56).

The aforementioned document “Polacy 57 – krajobraz po Październiku w świetle 120 tysięcy listów do Polskiego Radia” – compiled by the OBOP team, constituting the original version of the article, has also survived. It emphasized that the submitted letters constitute interesting sociological material because a variety

³ See C. Czapów, 120 tys. listów, “Antena”, No. 2/1958

of hypotheses about phenomena troubling society can be drawn from them. However, the analysis of these letters, as the document’s authors emphasized, was a challenging task. The authors of the letters imposed a very broad range of issues, making it difficult to organize. In this case, over 120,000 letters were submitted, expressing opinions on various topics. Thus, the team had to establish a scheme that allowed the classification of statements in a way that made them the subject of statistical analysis. The work lasted for a period of ten months, during which OBOP staff compiled metrics for each letter based on established symbols, indicating the main issues raised in the letter, data about the author, and information about the town from which the letter came (determined based on postal stamps). Subsequently, monthly summary tables were compiled on the basis of these metrics, which gave an idea of the issues raised in the letters.

The results of the statistical analysis of over 120,000 letters sent to OBOP allowed signaling to the party and government leadership important social issues:

1. Throughout the entire period under examination, existential matters remained at the forefront (on average 48.3% of all letters). The next issue raised was the evaluation of the institution’s activities (18.3% on average), followed by moral and ethical issues (10.6% on average). Attention was paid to problems related to personnel policy and employment issues (averaging 10%), as well as issues regarding social relations in rural areas (averaging 1.9%).
2. The results of the statistical analysis of anonymous letters provided a clear signal indicating a growing lack of trust in society. During the analysis of the anonymity of letters (February–October 1957), the percentage of anonymous letters increased from 7.6% to 11.1%. The issues that saw a significant increase were: relations in the workplace (increase by 15%), economic problems in the workplace (increase by 40.2%), assessment of the activities of the power apparatus (increase by 14%), assessment of the activities of the service apparatus (increase by 12%), assessment of the activities of the health service (increase by 8%). Meanwhile, in letters addressing the issues related to the October transformations, there was a 10% increase in the number of anonymous letters. A sharp decrease in anonymity (from 23% to 0%) was noted in letters addressing issues related to private enterprises.
3. The results of the statistical analysis also illustrated the situation in individual provinces. Attention was paid primarily to the situation in the Wrocław province, simultaneously emphasizing the need for further analysis by the government commission and in-depth sociological research. It turned out that the quantity of intervention letters on various topics regularly coming from this province indicated that the local authorities were struggling with several important issues such as the activities of national councils and the Citizens’ Militia, the matter of workplaces, healthcare, social care, social relations in rural areas, service apparatus, cultural and sports institutions, employment and repatriation issues, and moral matters. The number of intervention

letters on existential matters from specific social groups was also much higher compared to other provinces. The second province whose letter authors pointed out a range of diverse problems was the Warsaw province. It was also emphasized that a significant number of letters about the October changes came from the city of Warsaw (AAN, KC PZPR, Organizational Department, XII-3676, no pagination, original copy, typescript).

At OBOP, C. Czapów also initiated and conducted a nationwide survey in June 1958 on attitudes toward the new housing policy. The results of this survey were presented in the article “Ludzie chcą mieszkać” [People need housing] which appeared in the magazine “Przegląd Kulturalny” in 1958. The results of the survey presented in the article fully confirm the thesis of the high importance of the housing problem in public opinion. At that time, it was a pertinent issue among broad segments of Polish society, especially the working class and young people. The survey also revealed an assessment of the housing conditions at that time. It turned out that unskilled workers rated their housing situation the worst and, at the same time, had the least ability to save money for housing. On the other hand, among all socio-professional categories, those with liberal professions, craftsmen, and small shopkeepers rated their housing situation the best. At the same time, these groups of respondents had the greatest financial capabilities. Of course, the survey highlighted significant housing problems for young people (25–29 years old) who emphasized that starting a family did not come with an improvement in housing conditions (Czapów 1958, p. 7).

OBOP, over the period 1958–1964, conducted a number of surveys, the “uniqueness” of which is that the “sensitive” topic of social evaluations of politics is basically absent. They focused primarily on seemingly politically neutral topics related to work, industrial development, urban and rural life, agriculture, mass culture, youth social attitudes, legal awareness, consumption, opinions on international issues, and the military. However, in the early 1960s, sociological research carried out by OBOP raised objections from the authorities, expressed by Adam Schaff, Jerzy Wiatr, and Andrzej Werblan. This led to an attack on Polish sociology by Władysław Gomułka during the 13th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party on 4 July 1963, resulting in the restriction of OBOP’s activities almost exclusively to studies on the perception of radio and television and personnel changes (Jarosz 2004, pp. 74–76).

It is also crucial to quote the recollection of Oskar Chomicki: „In 1956, we wanted the world to know how a group of young politicians, led by Jan Józef Lipski, envisioned the development of political relations in Poland after Gomułka came to power. It happened that in January 1957, I went on a scientific internship to the Stockholm Oncology Center at Radiumhemmet. Before leaving, Czesław handed me the entire political report on the situation in Poland, asking me to pass it on abroad. While in Sweden, I contacted Radio Free Europe and handed over this material. In the 1980s, when I was in the United States, I met

Jan Nowak-Jeziorański at a lecture. After hearing my name, he pondered for a moment, and although nearly thirty years had passed since those times, he remembered that indeed, in 1957, he received a report prepared by Czesław. He stated that it had a significant impact on formulating Radio Free Europe’s policy regarding post-October transformations. As we recall, Radio Free Europe engaged in supporting these changes. (...) The news of his sudden death came as a shock to me. Czesław died the earliest among the members of this unique group of young people, who, in the late 1940s, engaged in opposition activities with full awareness from the very beginning of the deceit and criminal falsehoods of the communist regime in the People’s Republic of Poland” (Chomicki 2003, p. 72).

To conclude this paper, it is worth mentioning the friendship between Czesław Czapów and the previously mentioned Jan Józef Lipski, who was a well-known and highly significant figure in the Warsaw intellectual community. They first met in 1949 at the editorial office of the magazine “Razem,” where Czapów went with the intention of submitting a review for publication. It turned out that they had a lot in common, including being the soldiers of the Home Army (AK). In 1950–51, a confidential initiative of self-educational meetings unfolded, in which they both participated. „Personalists” – for they are the ones in question here – were under the strong influence of French personalism and its creators such as Jacques Maritain and Emanuel Mounier. This marked the initial period of their collaboration, which continued in the “Krzywe Koło” Club. In his Diaries, Jan Józef Lipski recalls Czesław Czapów almost daily, describing their mutual discussions, recounting their actions, and even detailing their “free time” together: “The table was richly set, with alcohol in moderation; no one got drunk or wasted (...). Right at the beginning, I read the outline of the book that Czesław [Czapów] is writing for the “Po Prostu” Library about the Home Army.⁴ It is intended to be something of a monograph on a Home Army from the perspective of its role as a democratic force. Czesław uses the term ‘third force’ there. I doubt if it will ever be published. Moreover, the outline has one fundamental flaw; the work will be more apologetic than objective. At the beginning of the evening, there was a lot of talk about partisan memories from the Kielce region. Czesław [Czapów] was the main contributor (...). Then the whole event became less interesting. Czesław [Czapów] presented himself as a joke teller. I know almost all of them, and enduring an entire evening filled with such jokes is quite challenging” (Lipski 2010, p. 216). Although their paths diverged after the closure of the „Krzywe Koło” Club, the records of their mutual work against the backdrop of the events of October 1956, the atmosphere, the content of their conversations, various dilemmas, hopes, and references to their professional activities during that period are a significant complement to any studies on this subject, which are worth exploring.

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⁴ The book was never published. A typescript copy of “Sprawy Armii Krajowej” [Affairs of the Home Army] by C. Czapów is in the possession of the author of this paper.

The responsibility of a person is inseparably linked to freedom, which determines their behavior. The experience of this freedom arises when an individual endeavors to pursue a self-defined goal. It is during these actions that the realization occurs that they are the ones making choices and achieving those goals. This autonomy, the ability to decide for oneself, is the domain of independence, indicating the right to independently resolve one's own affairs. Certainly, Czesław Czapów adopted a creative stance towards life. The question then arises – what more can be written about him when so much has already been said? He was a versatile personality – a soldier,⁵ politician, social activist, dissident, scientist, a “university man.” He was a pioneering researcher, a co-author of the first textbook on resocialization pedagogy in Poland, a co-organizer of the Institute of Social Prevention and Resocialization at the University of Warsaw. He was an undisputed authority, an expert in interdisciplinary resocialization pedagogy, and in related disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and social engineering (which he perceived as ethical social engineering).

His friend – Aleksander Matejko – wrote in his reminiscences: “He began his life as an underground army soldier and continued to view what he did as his kind of soldierly duty. In conversations with friends, he often revisited his wartime experiences, and it was evident how deeply rooted in him was the oath of patriotic loyalty. He remained true to himself, which made him benevolent and understanding towards others. It was hard not to like him. He was one of the noblest people I knew in my life. Despite the rush of daily activities, he never hesitated to dedicate his time and effort to friends, or even strangers; he willingly offered personal assistance. He radiated goodwill with his good humor and wit, and above all, with authentic kindness. He did not complain about his fate, even though it was often very difficult for him” (Matejko 2003, p. 60).

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⁵ See A. Skuza, *Działalność Czesława Czapówa w oddziałach partyzanckich na Kielecczyźnie w czasie drugiej wojny światowej (1939–1945)* [Czesław Czapów's Activity in Partisan Units in the Kielce Region During the Second World War (1939–1945)], “Biografistyka Pedagogiczna”, 2021, 6(2), pp. 451–474.

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