

Father Jerzy Popiełuszko

Źródło:

<http://en.popieluszko.pl/xje/documents/surveillance/373,Surveillance-of-Father-Popieluszko-19821984.html>

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Surveillance of Father Popiełuszko (1982–1984)

“Continue to provide the primate with opinions which will discredit Father Popiełuszko” – recommended Colonel Adam Pietruszka to TW “Jankowski” (Father Michał Czajkowski) in September 1983.

Disintegration of clergymen and an attempt to discredit Father Popiełuszko in front of his superiors were only some of many repressions prepared and applied by the Security Service (SB) between 1982 and 1984. The source material collected as a result of an intensive enquiry in the Institute of National Remembrance indicates that SB had been actively involved in investigating “detrimental” activities of Father Popiełuszko, at least, since February 1982. Earlier, he had a special “folder for a priest” (TEOK) created, similarly as other clergymen. Since 1982, the 4th Division of the Warsaw Headquarters of the Civic Militia (KS MO) “had been actively interested in Father Popiełuszko”. As a result of his subsequent

speeches, and in particular the Mass for the Homeland, celebrated on 29 August 1982, the SB decided to start operational surveillance the following month (case under „Popiel” cryptonym)¹.

Since then, it seems likely that the Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with the Office of Religious Life started harassing and repressing the priest, thus surely acting under the orders of the Ministry and the authorities of martial law in Poland. Since August 26th 1982, the priest had his consent to leave Poland “to all countries of the world” withdrawn. Earlier, he often went abroad: to his family in the USA and to visit a friend – a priest working at a mission in Côte d'Ivoire in Africa. The authorities tried to justify this decision in the following way: “He keeps close contact with anti-socialist element and former members of the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union »Solidarity«. He also organises ecclesiastical celebrations without proper consent, which act detrimentally to the constitutional policy of the Polish People’s Republic”². Within the scope of these surveillance activities, the SB managed to obtain new personal sources of information, reaching people used in other cases, who were valuable due to their operational possibilities. Apart from TW “Jankowski”, the list of persons actively informing on Father Popiełuszko included e.g. TW “Marek”, TW “Marcin”, and above all TW “Kustosz”, TW “Miecz” (“Tarcza”; he also used other nicknames). Persons acting to the detriment of the priest in the Ministry of the Interior also included officers of 4th Division of KS MO (since 1983 – Warsaw Office of the Interior) as well as 3rd and 5th Divisions (Economic Affairs), officers of technical departments (including “B” Office)

and Study Office, together with officers of 4th Department of the Security Service.

During other operational cases, officers tried to obtain more information on Father Popiełuszko and other people actively engaged in activities of St. Stanisław Kostka's church. It was found out e.g. that some persons involved in case under "Mrowisko" cryptonym contacted the chaplain of the "Solidarity". In May 1983, 1st Division of the Study Office of the Ministry of the Interior initiated a new case under "Rentgen" cryptonym in close cooperation with 4th Department, concerning a doctor and friend of Father Popiełuszko - dr Barbara Janiszewska-Jarmużyńska. A similar case was also instituted e.g. Małgorzata Suska (under "Hekate" cryptonym) and other persons closest to the priest's environment.

Since 1983, operational materials from the SB were used by deputy prosecutor Anna Jackowska to prepare an indictment (which was brought to court on 12 July 1984; then at the end of August 1984 the case was withdrawn by pardon dated 21 July 1984).

However, the head of the Office of Religious Life was obliged to make representatives of the Polish Episcopate to tell Father Popiełuszko to refrain from engaging in "political" activities. The aim of these pressures, coming from many different sides, was to alienate him qualifying his pastoral activities as political ones, therefore impeding "constructive" relations between the State and the Church. This was especially noticeable during meetings between the Joint Commission of the Authorities and the Polish Episcopate. The main objectives were to put Father Popiełuszko at logger-heads with hierarchy of the Catholic Church

and to prepare the public before bringing him to the court. The denunciatory notes of the secret service, confidential and public searches of "Solidarity" members' apartments, who were Fr. Jerzy's friends at the same time, aimed at justifying the Communist authorities thesis that his activity was of a political nature.

All the collected material had to satisfy the legal criteria of the crime, specified in article 194 of the Polish Penal Code. A denunciatory note made by TW "Jankowski" provided us with the information that e.g. the SB sent a criminal to be hidden by Father Popiełuszko, and (surely) this criminal would be "uncovered" during the search.

The investigation was instituted in September 1983. The priest's apartment was searched publicly (with huge media hype). The discrediting materials were found, which had earlier been planted, by SB officers (this action was carried out by the late priest's murderer - Leszek Pękala). In December 1983 the priest was called for a hearing and placed in prison for 48 hours. During the process of collecting material evidence by the prosecutor's office, the SB confiscated a film recorded by Western TV in the church. Eventually, the SB managed to gain additional denunciators from among the residents of the capital city, while expert journalists publicly discussed about the "priest's apartment" within the stringent censorship rules.

In particular, since 1983, the communist secret service (I Department) and its residency in Rome tried to obtain information on Father Popiełuszko and feedback on his activities from within the environment of Pope John Paul II. During surveillance of Father Adam Boniecki (within the

scope of case under “Ero” cryptonym), it was stated with anxiety, that he had come to Poland (in September 1983) to give the Pope’s blessing to Father Popiełuszko: “Boniecki talked to Father Popiełuszko. He assured him that he would be able to work in Radio Free Europe if he was forced to leave Poland. Boniecki also met Father Popiełuszko in January [1984]”³.

The first massive media attack on Father Popiełuszko (featuring e.g. Jerzy Urban, Polish People’s Republic’s government spokesman at that time) took place at the end of December 1983 followed by another one in September 1984, which included the Soviet press. The aim was to threaten Father Popiełuszko and his relatives, also to make the bishops and Warsaw’s diocese put pressure on him to leave for Rome. However, neither bishops, nor Father Jerzy Popiełuszko yielded to this brutal and clear blackmail. Surveillance of Father Popiełuszko, operational case under “Popiel” cryptonym and preparation of an indictment – were a classical set of tools used by the SB and judicial authorities to eliminate political opponents. It seems the direct preparations for murdering the priest started in September 1984. Colonel Adam Pietruszka clearly instructed SB officers to use non-standard measures to “remove” the priest from Żoliborz.

The first assassination attempt on Father Popiełuszko on 13 October 1984 was unsuccessful. Whilst travelling from Gdańsk to Warsaw his driver avoided serious consequences during a skid caused by “unknown perpetrators” (later found to be a group of captain Grzegorz Piotrowski)

throwing things at his car. Another attempt of kidnapping the priest on the way from Bydgoszcz to Toruń, on 19 October 1984, ended with his martyr death.

The blame for this death was shifted to everyone involved, including the order givers of repressions applied against the priest since the start of 1982 and the executors.

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1 AIPN, EOK-6/63; EO-4/77.

2 AIPN, 1010/353149, k. 18.

3 AIPN, IPN Bu o1591/48, Report of 26 March 1984, Warsaw, k. 152.