

IVERSARY IN POLAND



DECEMBER 13, 1981



Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski
announces the introduction
of martial law on television



Queues to shops happened every day

no laughing matter. The first instinct of those who had phones was to pick up the receiver to call someone and say excitedly, „Are you watching TV?!” But the phone lines were dead, which made most Poles aware that something dangerous was happening, which caused fear and uncertainty about tomorrow.

Brothers and sisters

Silence in the receiver, the general on the screen, children who could not properly wake up without the usual Sunday „Cock-a-doodle-doo”. However, real fear rose to the fore that morning when the confused heard the announcement. „Citizens”, and later in the speech also „brothers and sisters”, and finally „compatriots”, learned with amazement that in their homeland, which found itself on the precipice, huge amounts of money

made sharks from the economic underworld, chaos and demoralization had grown to the brink, and the aggressiveness of „extremists” striving for the complete dissolution of Polish socialist statehood was increasing. General Jaruzelski lied that the leaders of Solidarity were planning a confrontation with the government. He said that rebels had to be controlled before they plunged their homeland into the abyss of a fratricidal struggle. „We will consistently purge Polish life of evil, no matter where it is born,” he threatened. His eyesight was tired from the late night consultations. The glasses didn't hide it. Soon he founded the dark ones, thanks to which he gained the nickname Spawacz (Welder).

Assurances without coverage

At the end of his speech, the general appealed to national pride. He said: „We want a great Poland with our achievements, culture, forms of social life, and position in Europe.” And he added humorously: „The only way to this is socialism.” And further: „A country of 36 million in the heart of Europe cannot remain indefinitely in the humiliating role of the petitioner.” The miners in the Wujek mine were to die in three days, but the TV screen was saying that „not a single drop of Polish blood would flow”. Jaruzelski, with the military banner in the background, spoke and spoke, as stiff as if he had swallowed a rifle. In the end, he assured, promised, and appealed for understanding.

But no one was listening to this part of the speech anymore. The first part of the general's campaign was enough for the more patriotic Poles to move away from the TV set: find out who the authorities had picked up, who they were chasing, warn, inform, hide, pass on. There was nothing interesting on the second TVP program. Cabbage disappeared from stores that Monday, as did everything that had been eaten during the war, and what had been consumed by those who had already survived it.

The crow cannot defeat the eagle

The Council of State, contrary to the constitution of the People's Republic of Poland, established the Military Council for National Salvation, or WRON („Crow”) for short. Hence the

Interned Karol Modzelewski, Henryk Wujec, Andrzej Gwiazda and Adam Michnik

foto TOMASZ MICHALAK/FOTONOVA/EAST NEWS

PRISON IN BIAŁOŁĘKA, 1982

VICTORY SQUARE. WARSAW, 1982

Water cannons were often used to disperse assemblies during the martial law

slogan of citizens in a militant state: „The crow will not defeat the eagle.” The power in the state was taken over by the military, oppositionists were arrested, pupils and students were given a break so that they would not think of protesting in front of schools and universities. The communications were controlled, as evidenced by clumsily glued envelopes and stamps with the inscription „censored”. The phones were silent before they spoke in a firm female voice that the conversation was under control. There were no cells or computers. What remained was word of mouth, a civic warning system operating from 6.00 am to 10.00 pm, including the curfew. By Monday, 9,736 people were in jail. It was believed that it was enough that

the workers would not organize without „enough support”. But it was a grave mistake. In less than a year after the introduction of martial law, over 10,000 activists of Solidarity and the underground were sent to internment camps. About 150 people died from bullets and punches of bats. Nine of them lost their lives during the pacification of the Wujek mine. Demonstrators were beaten to blood, chased with tear gas and water cannons. Militia cars and armored vehicles entered tight groups. They were forced into the barred nyssos, punched, and beaten unconscious with bats.

Nothing beats like a cop with a club

On December 14, the Department of Electronic Complexes „UNI-TRA-UNITECH” in Białogard was set up. Military troops surrounded the Gdańsk Shipyard. The sit-in strike at the Wujek mine in Katowice, in protest against the imposition of martial law, was good news for „Voice of America” and „Free Europe”. On Wednesday, December 16, they found out with horror about the pacification in Wujek, nine killed and many wounded. Grundig with the radio, reinforced with a piece of wire, had to suffice as a source of truthful information. Because another gentleman on the TV set, the announcer, also in a uniform, threatened or did not say anything. Soon it spread throughout the country that an expression of an attitude towards the authorities was turning the TV screen to the wall. Walk

demonstrations started in February during „Dziennik Telewizji”. People walked in pairs and with whole families around the block, looking for which neighbor had „blue TV windows”, which meant he was either a hideous opportunist or an even more hideous collaborator. People quickly got used to the soldiers in the streets. The militia and ZOMO (Motorized Reserves of the Citizens' Militia) were hated: for beatings, poundings, water cannons, and gas, for house searches and street searches, for picking up and convicting „from the weapon”, that was, in an ad hoc mode, to take away any hope.

EWA JABŁOŃSKA

WARSAW, MAY 19, 1983



Funeral of Grzegorz Przemyk, beaten to death by policemen in the police station in the Old Town

foto WOJTEK ŁASKI/EAST NEWS/EAST NEWS