

Jan Czekański

Musings of a Rebellious Emigrant

All Illustrations

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Introduction

Jan Czekajewski was born in Poland in 1934. In his book author recalls some stories from his life in three countries where he lived, communistic Poland, Sweden and US. This book is not a diary, although he tried to keep stories related to advancing time. Because it is not a diary, stories are told as remembered. Some are hilarious some other sad. In fact the last story in his book was not his own. It was written by his friend, a Polish Jew, Stefan Ehrlich, who survived the holocaust in Lvov ghetto and who gave Jan, his own unpublished stories, before his death. One could say that this book is an assembly of vignettes which give readers an opportunity to see life of an enterprising rebel, as Jan always was, in different systems and in different countries. He is not hiding his shortcomings and occasionally his personal life was turbulent, at best. He tell about setbacks too without a bitterness and with a degree of humor. The one thing for sure this book is not pompous attempt to glorify himself. He is open about his own shortcomings which is a rare phenomenon in autobiographical sketches. It is a kind of Horatio Alger's story of poor emigrant, although educated, who comes to US and builds, facing unemployment, a successful company, Columbus Instruments, located in Columbus, Ohio. All his life he relied on his own resources. This lack of debt makes Columbus Instruments outstanding company in American business, which is now drowning in the debt ridden crises. When asked how he would describe his strength, he gives following advice to young people:

“If you like to advance from poverty and mediocrity, never allow others to convince you that your ideas are foolish. Try them yourself. Change them if needed. When looking at my own strength, I must admit that it was not a great memory, nor precision or tenacity, but an imagination. On the dreams I built my carrier.”

The title of this book tells that Jan Czekajewski was through all his life a rebellious individual. This individualistic attitude, entrepreneurial spirit let him survive in many difficult conditions in communistic Poland and in US. Now he tells how benefited from it.

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Musings of a rebellious emigrant

Where I come from

It's only fair to provide some information about where I come from to help put the following stories in their proper place and time.



1979 - My father Franciszek Czekajewski with my son, Richard. The home where I grew up is on the left.

I was born in 1934 in the medium-sized town of Czestochowa, located on the western border of pre-war Poland and Germany. The distinct feature of this town is its famous monastery—Jasna Gora (Light Mountain) with its famous picture of the Black Madonna. The population was around 140,000. Before WWII, 30% of its population was Jewish. Most were killed by German Nazis during the war. My father was working as a technician for the telephone company and my mother was a secretary in a textile factory, Peltzery. My father was already 45 years old when I was born and spent his youth as a Russian soldier drafted into the army. He served a total of eight years in the

cavalry as a veterinarian's assistant. At the time, this part of Poland was part of the Russian Empire and therefore my father automatically became a Russian citizen and therefore eventually, a Russian soldier. He had no chance to finish high school before being drafted into the army. He completed the needed courses after the war to obtain his G.E.D.

He was a cultural man, attending theater and reading a lot. He also played guitar and mandolin. He never belonged to any political party and for sure, he did

not have a spirit for business. I would venture the opinion that his character was defined by the 19th century as he had a high respect for class structure and obedience to superiors. He survived the First World War and miraculously, the second—probably because he was too old to be a soldier and didn't risk joining the underground resistance against Germany. My mother was much younger than he, and had a different character. She studied bookkeeping in high school.

For 14 years I was the only child, before my brother Adam and then sister Anna were born. After finishing high school I moved to the larger town of Wroclaw (before the war it was known as Breslau), where my Aunt Otylia Woyczynska was living with her husband and two children Wojbor and Zofia. My aunt was a high school math teacher and fortunately recognized my potential as a future engineer. For two summers, she tutored me in math with the aim of passing the competitive entrance exam to the Polytechnic Institute. In 1952 I was admitted to the university and



The coal stove in my kitchen where I grew up in Poland.

studied electronic instrumentation. In my third year I started working as an assistant at the Institute of Radio Broadcasting (by wire), chaired by Professor Stefan Bincer. I graduated from the Polytechnic Institute in 1958 with a master's degree in Electronic Engineering. In 1960 I went to Uppsala, Sweden for the first time as an exchange student. While there, I obtained a position as an assistant in the Electronics Department at the Institute of Physics at Uppsala University. I went to Sweden twice more in 1962 and in 1965, also working for Uppsala University while there. Shortly before my departure to the U.S., I received a Ph.D. for my contributions to the electronic measurements of non-electrical phenomena.

At that time traveling abroad, especially to so-called capitalist countries, was wrought with troubles. I describe these troubles in the following pages of this book. Younger generations of readers as well as those living in the Western Democracies may have difficulty understanding these situations.

In Uppsala I started a one-person company, Uppsala Instruments. In 1968 I received an invitation to visit Alaska University in Fairbanks and obtained an immigrant status in the U.S. Unfortunately, the living conditions in Alaska and meager pay forced me to leave—first to Canada and then to Columbus, Ohio where I got a job in a small company—Brun Sensor Systems. After this company went bankrupt I decided to start another one-person company called Columbus Instruments. Now, in 2012, Columbus Instruments will be 42 years old, much larger and still prosperous.

The story of my personal life is also complicated. Shortly after graduating from college I was married to Elisabeth, my girlfriend during my studies. This marriage did not last long. In fact, it ended before it began. My second wife Zofia Krolikowska was a physician who emigrated with me to Sweden and later to the U.S. We have two children, Richard and Tina, who were both born in the U.S. Unfortunately, Zofia became ill with a serious mental disorder, schizophrenia. We divorced before her disease became obvious. Nevertheless, I have supported her for the last 30 years. For the last 20 years I've been living with Laura. Our marriage provides me with needed stability and fulfillment. Now that you know the outline of my life, let's get to my stories. I hope these are not boring.

Why did I write this book?

As time went by, some events of my life resisted fading memory. In some instances, I changed the names of the living people, whenever I considered them less important than the situations in which they were involved. Maybe these were events that left a lasting impression on my subconscious, or maybe I repeated these stories a few times to other people and are therefore still vivid in my memory? I'm writing to pass the stories of my adventurous life to the next generation. I write it now in English as neither my employees nor my children are fluent in Polish. Maybe it is too late. It could be that the next generation will have difficulty identifying with my life and my adventures.

The next generation may not understand the difficulties I encountered to escape the grip of Communism where each man was considered the property of the state and nothing could be done without permission from the bureaucratic state. This book is not a memoir that keeps rigor of the dates, as I did not keep a journal of my life. Therefore, it can be read in random order. Each chapter is a story in and of itself. For English-speaking readers it may be interesting how I achieved relative financial success without money or startup capital. I was not a hero fighting the oppressive Communist regime, as many did. I just tried, as the majority of Poles at that time did, to live in it without joining it. I despised the Communist system for its stifling bureaucracy, but I was not going to die fighting it. When I realized that I could not prevail, I decided to leave, "to escape" as Communist bureaucrats called it, without wasting my life for the mediocrity of existence. The decision to leave Poland did not come easy for me, as I felt deeply patriotic to work for the benefit of Poland, regardless of who was in charge. I went to Sweden three times and returned to Poland twice, trying to adjust to the Communist system without compromising my basic principles and without joining the Communist party or becoming an informant for the Secret Police. I would have returned a third time but the Secret Police, while exercising its heavy hand, denied the extension of my passport and permission to come to work in the U.S. I then realized that I had no option but to make my life in the West.

After the initial euphoria of being in the U.S., 17 years later I was accused by another bureaucratic system of being a Soviet high-tech spy smuggling super computers to the Soviet Union. It was then that I realized the degree of similarity between both countries. Bureaucrats within the Secret Police are always looking for spies and if they cannot find them they are eager to create them. It was true in Poland and later was true in the U.S. Fortunately, in both cases I avoided ending up in prison. In due time, I was exonerated and even named *Entrepreneur of the Year in Central Ohio* in 1989. The difference in the U.S. was that I could start and run an inventive business; this was impossible in Communist Poland. When I left Poland, I worried about the two most important things needed for my existence: food and shelter. In reality, I was never hungry or cold.

What I missed most was the Polish language which I had mastered and in which I could express a sense of humor. It took me many years to convey my ideas in English. I always liked my profession of being an electrical engineer. I never had to resort to working a menial job after my emigration as many of my compatriots did, cleaning offices or washing dishes in a restaurant. It may be of interest to the others that I did not come from a family of intellectuals or wealth. My mother was a bookkeeper and my father worked as a technician for the telephone company. After WWII they hardly made a living. Nevertheless, they valued an education. In the beginning, I didn't excel in high school. In fact, I repeated the ninth grade. I gained admission to Polytechnic Institute in Wroclaw, Poland because of my Aunt Otylia Woyczynska, who tutored me and provided with me a shelter and meals when my parents couldn't. If I ever had to describe my qualities, I would say that Jan Czekajewski is lacking patience and precision, but has a rich imagination. On this imagination, I built the rest of my life. Sometimes my imagination has been troublesome and wandered off down its own path; but, in the end, it has mostly served me well.

Early in life, while still in Poland, I became an inventor and entrepreneur, which I continued in Sweden and in the U.S. Now many years later, I have become relatively wealthy following my "old country" principle: never borrow money. In a time when the world is on the verge of economic collapse due to mounting debt, I

am one of the few who can boast that I do not know what a loan or debt fully means. In my book I try to convey to the ambitious reader that it is possible to make money without capital. The most valuable capital you have is in your head. You have to like what you are doing and you should dream a lot. Do not make money your primary objective. If you do, you will make the wrong choices. Financial success comes with excellence of your job. It is nothing more than a byproduct of your work. Money must not be the goal itself.

My next lesson for the future generation would be how to make money without being enslaved to it. During my work at Uppsala University I had a South Korean friend who was a physicist. He mentioned something about money to me. He said, “If you like to make a lot of money, then go into the banking industry, not physics or electronics. In the banking industry a lot of cash will float through your hands. It will not take a lot of effort to skim a fraction of a percent of this money to make you rich.” He did not follow his own advice. He liked physics. He became a professor at Seoul University in South Korea. It was too late for me to change my career into banking either. I liked building electronic instrumentation. Making a comfortable living was also on my mind, as I remembered starving as a child during the war and living very modestly as a family after the war. The money was never my main priority though.

How could I marry two distant elements, electronics and financial prosperity? It would never be possible in a Communist system; but, in the Capitalist Western World, surely there was a way to start my own company with profits directly correlated to my ability.

In the following chapters you can find that elements of private entrepreneurship existed even within Communism. The seed of Capitalism was planted in me by my mentor Professor Stefan Bincer, at Polytechnic. Even before that though, in high school, I was experimenting with a few entrepreneurial ideas of my own. In due time I started a one-person company—Uppsala Instruments in Sweden and transplanted it to the U.S. as Columbus Instruments. Over the last 40 years my company has grown and what is more important—it’s never lost money. I am old-fashioned in my approach to running my business—without debt and without

investors. I have demonstrated that it is possible to enjoy my own inventiveness and make a comfortable living along the way. If you have a propensity for both, you should try. Along the way, a few hundred people—past and current employees and their families—made a good living. It was never a fast and easy path. It was an uphill struggle which I thoroughly enjoyed. Therefore, I titled this book *Musings of a Rebellious Emigrant*.

Toying with my own life

During the war, when my parents were working to sustain our meager way of life, the schools were closed for weeks and months and were then converted to military hospitals. Consequently, this left me with nothing better to do than wander the neighborhood with friends looking for trouble. I lived on Sniadeckich Street surrounded by fields that were either planted with potatoes or rye. Two kilometers from my house was a new frontier—Germany. The next village already in German Proper was Gnaszyn. The border was patrolled by guards and dogs. I occasionally slipped through this border to glimpse life in “Germany” which was in fact, a pre-war Polish village. Polish farmers from this village were often crossing this border with sacks of bread to sell in the General Government, a special zone created in Poland where it was still permissible to speak the Polish language.

I remember often seeing an ice-cream man pushing a two-wheeled cart across the border. Apparently, there was more milk to make ice cream in Germany than in G.G. (General Government), but the market was in the large General Government city of Czestochowa. The last railway station in G.G. was close to my home. Since the war with the Soviet Union, the Germans decided to enlarge this station to allow for the transport of military material to the East. They decided to dig out and level neighborhoods to install the new side railways and ramps for transports waiting to be assembled into trains sent to the East. Surprisingly, this work lasted for the duration of the German-Soviet war, up to the moment the German Army was collapsing. Apparently, somebody in German bureaucracy forgot that such a large project was underway and could later serve the Soviets to supply their own army fighting

Germans on the Oder line and in Berlin.

During the enlargement of the Stradom railway station, Germany imported a number of large earth-moving machines and installed a system of narrow-gauged railroads to move the excavated earth. Work on the railway station took place most of the day, but tapered off and eventually stopped in the evenings. The kids from the neighborhood, myself included, roamed this area and enjoyed riding the narrow gauge carts, from the top of the hill to the bottom. Just for the fun of it, we rearranged the rails at the bottom of the hill so that the carts derailed and landed in deep pools of water. In order to remove them, the Germans had to use heavy lifts which were not available at this location. One day while we were enjoying this mindless pursuit, we noticed that the German guard was watching us and started chasing two of us. We ran to the west, to the German border, to throw him off the trail of where we really lived. The guard had a gun in his hand, but didn't shoot. Now, I wonder why he didn't shoot at us. Perhaps he realized that we were only 8- or 9-year-old boys and didn't want to kill a child. We were able to shake him after a short pursuit. Close to the German border we dove into the high wheat. Apparently the guard had lost his bearings. After 67 years, my friend, Hubert Swiac admitted to being chased by the German guard. We lived on the same street as kids and he recounted the same story all those years later as I visited him in his home still nestled in Czestochowa.

Some other times, out of boredom, I engaged in the anti-German activity of shooting out the glass isolators supporting the telegraph lines along the railway tracks to Germany with my slingshot. Back then, telegraph wires hung aimlessly from the telephone poles disrupting German communication. This activity was done far away from any guards and I never noticed any pursuits and therefore considered this to be a relatively safer venture than launching small gauge carts into the deep water pools. The fact that I lived through the Second World War was almost accidental. People around me were dying, but I had very little knowledge of it. The first time I really saw death was the day when the Germans fled and the Soviets appeared on the streets in my town. There were corpses of German soldiers. One, which moved me the most, was an elderly bald man, looking very much like my

father, who had been traveling in his horse-driven supply truck. He was dead, lying next to his dead horse. He was probably a farmer, too old to fight, but still of use to Germany as a delivery man. He was probably machine-gunned by the Soviet tank. His body just laid there next to the Cathedral of Holy Family, where a battle had taken place with advancing Soviet tanks. There were also burnt out Soviet tanks with entirely burned bodies inside of them. I saw the naked body of a German soldier, probably taken from the nearby hospital and thrown into an anti-aircraft trench. They didn't even try to bury him. These were strangers, somehow caught up in this war. At the time, I didn't know that millions of them died a similar death, their graves completely unmarked, scattered and strewn all across Europe. Looking back on my childhood now, I can't believe how stupid I was to put myself in danger by antagonizing the foreign armies and their abandoned artillery shells.

My Demjanjuk: Memories from my early childhood

It was November 1942. I was 8 years old, walking to the underground school in Czestochowa, Poland. Czestochowa had already been under the oppressive German yoke for three years. School was illegal, because the Nazis prohibited unsupervised, private teaching. Nevertheless, my parents decided to send me to illegal courses run in a private apartment. My schooling didn't last long. The following year the clandestine school was raided by the Gestapo and the teachers were sent to Auschwitz. Nazi Germany decided that the Poles should become slave laborers and consequently wouldn't need a high school diploma or knowledge of history.

Here is Heinrich Himmler of the SS on the four years of elementary school which was to be the only education of the Polish Reich's new subjects:

“The sole goal of this schooling is to teach them (Poles) simple arithmetic, nothing above the number 500, writing one's name and the doctrine that it is divine law to obey the Germans...I don't think that reading is desirable.”

Courses for the underground school were held about two miles

(3.2 km) walking distance from my home. Along the way, on Handlowa Ulica (Commerce Street), I noticed a group of nearly one hundred Russian POWs walking under an escort of two German soldiers. On the left side of the street there was a field of cabbages planted earlier that year, with cabbage heads already harvested, but from the frozen soil there were remnants of the cabbage stems sticking up. The prisoners asked the German guards for permission to explore this field, and when a compassionate German soldier agreed, they ran into the field, devouring these stems as if they were a rare delicacy.

One Russian, or maybe a Ukrainian, POW begged me for something to eat. My parents gave me two slices of bread with margarine for my school lunch. I could not resist this man's misery and I gave him my lunch bread. In exchange he gave me a toy, a hand carved alligator, which he made at the POW camp. At school lunch time my teacher asked me where my lunch was. I had no choice but to tell the truth, that I gave it to the starving Soviet soldier (POW). To my surprise, the teacher took me in the front of the class and said that in spite of the Soviets being our enemies



Toy alligator identical to one received from Soviet POW in exchange for a piece of bread in 1942

(they invaded Poland as allies of Hitler in 1939), it was the Christian way to help a starving human being, enemy or friend. That was the only time I ever received praise from a teacher in my school years.

After the war we learned that in the small POW camp in my home town of Czestochowa, many thousands of Soviet POWs starved to death. There were hundreds of camps on Polish and German territory where millions of Soviet POWs were sentenced to death by starvation. The chances of a Soviet POW surviving imprisonment were equivalent to the chances that a Jew would survive a concentration camp in Auschwitz. They did not gas them. They were just starved to death.

Many years later, in the 1980s, a friend from Poland came for a visit to Columbus, Ohio and brought with him a present for my daughter, a wooden alligator. It was an alligator of the same size and look which I got from the starving Soviet soldier. I did not pass this alligator to my daughter, I kept it for myself. It was too dear for me to part with it. I do not know what happened to the original gift that I got from the Soviet POW, as I have changed my residence many times in several countries since I was eight years old.

On April 14, 2009—67years later—I saw on American TV Ivan Demjanjuk: former Soviet soldier, German POW, 89 years old. He was being taken on a stretcher to the detention center where he would be deported to Germany to be tried for his alleged WWII crimes as a Concentration Camp guard. Maybe it was Ivan Demjanjuk who gave me the wooden alligator in exchange for two slices of bread. Maybe it was he, who when confronted with the possibility of death by starvation decided to become a Nazi guard. Some of these people guarded fuel or food depots and some were assigned to guard concentration camps. I do not know if Ivan Demjanjuk from Cleveland, Ohio was a guard in a concentration camp, because he denies such involvement. But if he was, who of us would have behaved differently if confronted with imminent death by starvation? We may have chosen to extend our life for a few more months or weeks. We do not blame Jewish Policemen in the Jewish Ghettos, who herded their own people to the trains taking them to the concentration camps of Auschwitz or Treblinka. I cannot resist the thought that this affair with Ivan Demjanjuk has

nothing to do with justice, his guilt or even his identity. It is a propaganda tool which serves a particular group desperate to prove that their office is still needed.

They have a “pressing problem.” People like Demjanjuk are just dying off. Who will they hunt if all the Nazi henchmen die? In fact, there is not a single living witness who could testify that Demjanjuk committed the crimes that the German government had accused him of. In January 2012, bedridden Demjanjuk was still waiting for his final sentence by the German Court. The situation is now nothing else, but distasteful. On March 17, 2012 John Demjanjuk, age 91, died in a German prison nursing home. According to Israelis Haaretz’ news report on March 23, 2012, the German Munich District Court made an announcement that Demjanjuk was deemed innocent because his appeal had not been heard or decided upon by the higher court. Under German law, innocence is presumed until the appeal process is concluded and the Appellate Court rules. It was confirmed by the court that Demjanjuk had no criminal record and that the previous verdict was invalidated.

By Thomas J. Sheeran

ASSOCIATED PRESS Friday June 29, 2012 6:35 AM

CLEVELAND —A federal appeals court rejected yesterday a request to restore the U.S. citizenship of a recently deceased Ohio autoworker convicted of Nazi war crimes. The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati ruled that John Demjanjuk cannot regain his citizenship posthumously. The court said in its ruling that his death made the case moot. Demjanjuk died on March 17 in Germany at age 91. His defense attorneys had asked the appeals court to restore the former suburban Cleveland resident’s citizenship, saying the American government withheld potentially helpful material. The defense team had asked in its filing in April that the court either restore the citizenship or order a hearing on the case. “Nothing in Demjanjuk’s current appeal warrants relief,” the appeals court said in a two-page opinion. The decision upheld a

ruling last year by a Cleveland judge who refused to reopen the citizenship case. Demjanjuk's attorneys said U.S. District Judge Dan Polster in Cleveland erred in his refusal. The Ukraine-born Demjanjuk lived for decades in Seven Hills in suburban Cleveland before he was convicted by a Munich court last May on 28,060 counts of being an accessory to murder at the Sobibor death camp in occupied Poland. Demjanjuk, who maintained that he had been mistaken for someone else, died while his conviction was under appeal.

The defense team alleged that Polster violated basic fairness by ruling against Demjanjuk's citizenship appeal without holding a hearing on a 1985 secret FBI report uncovered recently by the Associated Press. The document indicates that the FBI believed a Nazi ID card purportedly showing that Demjanjuk served as a death camp guard was a Soviet-made fake.

It looks like, if we live long enough, then our mortal enemies (Soviet KGB) will become our (U.S.) friends.

Robbing the Soviet trains

Once the Germans were gone the Soviets immediately took over the Stradom train station in my neighborhood. This time they transported supplies to the still-fighting troops somewhere on the Oder River and on the way back they were returning surplus front line supplies and whatever they could harvest from the German factories. Most of the stuff in these trains heading east was rusting in the open box cars exposed to the snow and rain. Surprisingly, they were even bringing back old ball bearings of different sizes held together by a common string. For the boys in the neighborhood it was a challenging experience to explore these transports. Usually at the end of each train, there was a guard car with Soviet soldiers equipped with machine guns. They were bored by this routine function of guarding useless cargo and very often got drunk. We snuck on these trains and stole whatever looked appealing, usually useless stuff of no value to anyone. One week there was an interesting train, which had cars roofed and sealed

with lead seals.

At the top of the railway car there was round ventilation opening. At that time, if I was able to squeeze my head through an opening I could squeeze the rest of my body through it. On this operation, I was accompanied by a friend who was waiting outside and collecting whatever I would throw to him through the ventilation opening. Inside the car I discovered a number of pine boxes which I was able to pry open to harvest what was inside. Inside was a wealth of aircraft navigational equipment, aircraft radios and machine guns. While I was harvesting a wealth of newly-discovered Soviet aircraft accessories, I heard voices speaking Russian outside of the car. My friend apparently ran away without telling me that my presence inside of the car was compromised. I froze with fear. Soon there was more than one voice and they started to open the large sliding door to the car. Moreover, somebody was trying to open the second sliding door from the other side of the car. To this day I think about this situation and what would have happened to me and my parents if I were caught. Then one door opened wide and I could see a Polish railway policeman looking at my meager posture of 11 years old as he whispered, "You run, you son of a bitch because the Soviets will shoot you." I ran under another train as I heard shouting in the distance. This son of a bitch has run away.

It must have been my second trip to this train, because I remember a number of very interesting precision instruments, including a radio which I never could get to work that I had in my basement. I took these instruments apart and marveled at their precision. I was never able to reassemble them again. Apparently, any constructor must first pass through a period of deconstruction. Now I feel sorry for the Soviet guards who were probably severely punished for my mischief. I didn't even profit financially from my actions either. I endangered my own life and my parents' lives. Fortunately I was not caught; otherwise, I wouldn't be able to write this book. Today, I am not proud of my actions.

Experiments with tank shells

Another favorite activity of 11- and 12-year-old Johnnies just after the war was disassembling the tank shells and using the variety of extracted powders for pyrotechnic experiments. On the side rail lines of the Czestochowa Cargo railway station the Soviets kept trains with defective Soviet and German tanks. These trains were waiting for permission to roll eastward through the otherwise clogged train lines. Some of these trains lingered there for weeks. Since schools were not yet operating my colleagues and I inspected these tanks looking for interesting parts to steal. Besides a lot of tank ammunition, there was nothing we could use. The tank shells were laying in large quantities on the floor of each tank. To get to the powder in the cartridge we had to separate the projectile, loaded with high explosives, from the cartridge. It took two people to do this, one holding the projectile and the other holding the cartridge. By tapping the area around the place where the projectile was attached to the cartridge we could loosen the projectile and remove it. Inside the cartridge, there were several kinds of powder—some in the form of spaghetti. This was the most interesting and valuable to us. When ignited it shot off like a rocket. Fortunately, our operation was precise and we avoided tapping too roughly on the projectile itself, which would have caused an explosion and certain death to all the curious friends, including myself. Again, it was a stupid thing to do. The fact that I am alive today is more chance than fate. I was not using my head at the time.

Compared to other cities, my hometown town Czestochowa was not severely damaged during the German retreat and the number of civilian casualties was low. Nevertheless, many children died—not during military action, but during stupid experiments with explosives.

Luckily, I still have my eyes.

While disarming tanks shells to extract the “spaghetti” powder, we also realized that next to the ignition was a pillow of cotton with black powder. Now, I know that the science of the artillery shell is complex. After initial ignition it requires a controlled burning of powder—the “spaghetti” powder. The pillow with black powder gave an initial start and then slower burning, nitrate powder took over, providing gradual pressure build up for the projectile to travel through the barrel of the gun. One evening we decided to ignite the pillow with black powder. Usually, gun powder in the open air burns slowly; but, not black powder especially when compressed in the cotton pillow. Four of us were sitting around this pillow, about 15 cm in diameter and 1 cm thick, trying to ignite it. Suddenly, we succeeded. I remember a flash and I closed my eyelids. Immediately after I experienced a terrible burning sensation in my eyes, but fortunately, I could still see. Apparently, I closed my eyes before particles of black powder could penetrate my eyeballs. None of us lost his sight, but some had badly burned hands and faces. I remember running around that night with a burning pain in my face, where particles of black powder had lodged themselves. I learned my lesson. I never again experimented with explosives.

My first commercial transaction

My first commercial transaction took place in February 1945, just one month after Czestochowa was liberated by the Red Army. I was 11 and my business counterpart was an 18-year-old Soviet soldier. He was assigned to guard the storage of a few sacks of sugar lying under the tarp in the courtyard of our home. It was a military storage of food for some small unit fighting Germans to the West. As the war was still going on and I was sugar-deprived for five long years, I watched the Soviet sugar with envy and temptation. I also started to learn rudimentary Russian and could convey my ideas to the Russian soldier, who somehow understood me. Maybe he was Ukrainian; their language is more similar to Polish. I impressed him with my four-color flash light, manufactured during the war by the local factory. It had three

filters, red, green and blue in addition to the clear filter which produced normal white light. It was meant to send color-coded signals by the German soldiers. Apparently, four-color-flash lights did not help the Germans to win the war, because they were losing battles and abandoning the flashlights in a hurry. For whatever reason, this flashlight was of interest to the Soviet soldier and he asked me if I would be willing to part with it. Looking at the wealth of sugar sacks I said yes, imagining the substantial amount of this sweet commodity I would be able to barter for. I entered into a verbal agreement with the soldier, which specified that in the middle of the night, I would leave my four-color flashlight under the sink in the next house and he would deposit my sugar in the same place. The next day I went to our secret place only to realize that he left there a small cotton bag with about 100g of sugar, his daily ration, mixed with remnants of tobacco. Apparently, he originally used the cotton bag to store tobacco. My four-color flashlight was gone. I was deeply disappointed. I expected to receive at least 1kg (about 2lbs) of sugar. It was too late to complain, because the agreement was not precise and I underestimated the Soviet soldier's honesty. I was expecting him to steal sugar from the sugar sacks he was guarding. That didn't happen. Instead, the soldier gave me his daily ration. Besides that, it was already too late to modify the contract as the front was moving westward and my counterpart was already sitting on the sacks of sugar loaded on the track. I realized my error and I was not angry with him. Unfortunately, later in life I made a few similar errors in entering into agreements where the outcome was not precisely described and resulted in erroneous expectations.

Imagination

When I was 14, my beloved father sat me in front of him and told me: “Johnny, I am worried about your future.” He loved me very much and at that time I was his only child. My brother and sister were born shortly thereafter. He was worried because of my unruly character and trouble at school. Besides my poor grades, there were reports of behavioral problems. I asked my teachers difficult questions, ridiculed them and had already been expelled from a number of schools. Czestochowa was not a large town, probably about 140,000 people and the number of high schools available was limited. I ended up in the High School of Traugutta where a friend of my mother was a secretary to the school director. Without her intervention I had no chance of getting into this esteemed school. My education was delayed due to the closure of schools during the German occupation. Most of the time grade schools were converted into German military hospitals and students wandered with nothing to do. After the war I was faced with a rigorous high school curriculum, and found I couldn’t cope with it. The teachers were less than helpful. In ninth grade I failed in multiple subjects, including mathematics. I think that the teachers assumed I was just an idiot not worthy of their attention. People like me, according to them, should become apprentices of shoemakers rather than waste space in high school classrooms. Rejected by the teachers, I gave up on studying obligatory subjects and withdrew into reading a variety of books. Each day on the way home from school, I stopped at the library of the County Office where my mother was working and picked up randomly selected books. I read them at home and read them at school instead of paying attention to the teachers. The result was obvious. I failed in five subjects, including mathematics and physics and had to repeat the ninth grade. Fortunately, at the same time I advanced my knowledge in another way that benefitted me the rest of my life. I was ahead of my peers in word classics which were not on the obligatory subject list. I also acquired a rich vocabulary and affinity for storytelling.

My problem, according to the school, was also a lack of respect for the teachers. At the time, teachers were called professors and wielded absolute authority. I was late to school

every day. I lived about two km (1.25 miles) from the school and I had to walk there every morning. It was a boring trip. I developed a method to battle the boredom. When I left my house on Sniadeckich Street I imagined that I was living in an artificial world and my dream lasted for the length of my walk. On the way back my imagination picked up and continued the same story. I didn't notice passage of time, nor rain or snow. I was walking in the dream. I didn't realize that I was using my imagination to cope with the boring commute to school. Later I learned to use it to design new equipment, imagining different versions of it without prototyping.

So far so good, but one day in Sweden, when I was about 29 my imagination went haywire. I imagined being persecuted by the Soviet Secret Police and fear took over my conscious. I had to be hospitalized. The cause was, as I realize now, both mental and environmental. The Polish Embassy confiscated my passport and Zofia, the girlfriend that I helped to escape Poland, started flirting with other men. I lost my job at the Institute of Physics. The culmination of all of these events caused my nervous breakdown and I had to be hospitalized. I do not know how long I was in the open ward of the mental clinic at the University Hospital in Uppsala, probably two or three months. Fortunately I made a full recovery and never suffered another incident. My imagination was in check and I learned to keep it in such a state for the rest of my life. Surprisingly, Zofia, who later became my wife,

ŚWIADECTWO
GIMNAZJUM OGÓLNOKSZTAŁCĄCEGO

Dehajewski Jan
(nazwisko i imię)

urodzon 4 dnia *16 grudnia* 19 *34* r. w *Kielce* *dzielnice*
powiatu *miejskiego*, województwa *kieleckiego*
uczeszczał do klasy *drugiej a* i otrzymał za pierwsze półrocze
roku szkolnego 19 *34/35*

oceny następujące:

sprawowanie	<i>bardzo dobry</i>
religia	<i>dobry</i>
język polski	<i>dostateczny</i>
język łaciński	<i>nie dostateczny</i>
język francuski <i>francuski</i>	<i>nie dostateczny</i>
historia	<i>dostateczny</i>
geografia	<i>nie dostateczny</i>
matematyka <i>fizyka</i>	<i>nie dostateczny</i>
matematyka	<i>nie dostateczny</i>
przygotowanie wojskowe	<i>dostateczny</i>
zajęcia praktyczne	<i>dostateczny</i>
ćwiczenia cieleśne	<i>dostateczny</i>
<i>rysunek</i>	<i>dostateczny</i>

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Bad grades- Jan's report card during 9th grade.

suffered a mental collapse of her own many years later in the U.S. Unfortunately, her condition was much more serious and longer lasting. It turned out to be schizophrenia. I divorced Zofia before it happened, but I've been taking care of her for the last 30 years. One thing for which I am grateful to Zofia is that during my mental breakdown she visited me in the mental clinic every day. This perhaps helped my recovery. I am repaying her now for her early consideration.

Pornographic deviant

It was nothing short of a miracle that I was not expelled from high school for spreading pornography. I was repeating the ninth grade for the first time (I had to repeat it twice due to the poor performance and multiple failing grades). Now my grades slightly improved, mostly because of the fear that I could be drafted to the army if I failed to attend university. Being a soldier in the army was a nightmare of a possibility for the rest of my life. Apparently I was born a pacifist. In addition, an army that fights in the mornings or at night was against my deep moral convictions. I would have accepted an army that enlists members on a voluntary basis and conducts its fighting in the afternoon as well as guaranteed my wellbeing.

I was of small stature—much smaller than the rest of my class and I did not have any experience with the girls. It troubled me as my colleagues were bragging about their own erotic successes. I decided to show them that I was just as popular with the ladies and concocted a plan. This would be challenging as my school, at that time, was strictly male: no girls allowed.

I looked over my family photo albums where I noticed a number of pictures of my mother and aunts from the early 1930s. I selected their pictures which were taken on vacation, on the river bank or sea side. I chose pictures showing ladies scantily dressed in bathing suits. I brought these pictures to school and showed them to my colleagues as my erotic conquests. My picture collection became immediately popular and a crowd of colleagues gathered around my desk to admire the “nearly naked” females. My class was so engrossed in this sinful pursuit that they didn't notice our physics professor enter the room. He approached my

desk and became hysterical upon seeing young ladies in swim suits. He confiscated the entire collection of pictures as damning documentation of my pornographic crime and expelled me from the class, asking for my father to come to see him. Terrified, I went home and explained to my father that I was expelled from high school and he needed to go to see Professor Bernatek, who would explain to him my crime. Being expelled from this high school was a serious situation, as it was the last high school in town left to expel me. I had run out of schools that would accept me. This particular high school was my last chance. When my father got to the school Professor Bernatek showed him the handful of pictures of my mother and my aunt. Professor Bernatek was so irritated by my behavior that he exclaimed to my father: "Your son. . . will not die a natural death. . . He will be hanged. . ." Seeing my mother in the pictures, my father calmly disagreed with Professor Bernatek's verdict and explained to the champion of high school morals that he was wrong. Professor Bernatek recanted and I was allowed to return to school and even graduate with grades respectable enough to be admitted to the prestigious Polytechnic Institute in Wroclaw. Professor Bernatek's hysterical reaction to the pictures of my mother in her swim suit had another explanation. Apparently, he had plans for me and my colleagues. He was homosexual and didn't like spreading heterosexual ideas which could corrupt our gullible, young minds. Additionally, he was an imposter in science. He pretended to be a physicist, but his university diploma was somehow lost in the turmoil of the war. For me, the moment of truth came when Professor Bernatek was teaching us about lenses and photographic cameras. He mentioned that the first photographic camera was invented by a medieval monk named Father Obscur; therefore his invention was called the "Camera Obscura." When I questioned the validity of his statement, he became very angry. How could I, with my failing grade in Latin, understand the invention of the medieval monk, Obscur? Despite his outrage, I insisted that "Camera Obscura" means nothing more than "dark box." For sure, he was not happy with my opinion, but after his debacle with my "pornographic pictures" he retreated without an elevated level of torment.

In the attic of our school Professor Bernatek constructed his own physical laboratory equipped with a dark room. Students who

failed physics were later invited to his laboratory for dedicated tutoring. One of them was my friend Reniek Odulinski who also loved photography. Reniek was invited to Professor Bernatek's dark room where he was given the task of developing very sensitive film, which supposedly would have been damaged even by the faint red light. At least this was the opinion of Professor Bernatek. Reniek's function was to hold the film with both hands and smoothly move it through the developing mixture. While Reniek was busy with the assigned task, Professor Bernatek attempted to open Reniek's zipper and grab him. Somehow Reniek turned to the wall and the professor's attempts were thwarted. I escaped Professor Bernatek's attention mostly because he knew how outspoken I was. He knew that I would be unmoved by receiving a failing grade and even less moved by an invitation to receive personal tutoring to improve my grade. Finally the professor was expelled from the school. I don't know what happened to him after I left for study in Wroclaw Polytechnic.

Radio-telegraph operator

Around the same time as my adventures with Professor Bernatek, the local paper in Czestochowa, announced that the paramilitary organization "Service for Poland" was offering courses to become a radio operator. The courses were free so I applied, not realizing that this decision could lead to me being sent to the front lines if another war broke out. There was plenty of tension due to the Korean War. The Polish Army was under Soviet command and needed radio operators fluent in sending and



Jan at the school for radio telegraph operators.

receiving messages in Morse code. At that time I was only 14 and I doubted that I would be accepted. The age requirement was 16; but, apparently there was a shortage of candidates and I was accepted as the youngest participant. The course took nine months during which we learned how to send and receive messages in Morse code. At the end of the course I was able to send and receive messages with a speed of 25 words (each word with five letters) per minute. The local paper announced that I was the youngest course participant as well as the only one to graduate with honors. It was the first public announcement where I was mentioned positively in the local paper. Two years later this course helped me to get into Polytechnic. Fortunately, the Third World War did not materialize and my Morse code skills were not tested as an advance artillery spotter. The picture on the front cover of this book was taken during this telegraphic course.

Johnny as a publisher

My entrepreneurial spirit was lingering long in my conscious and finally emerged in my last year of high school when I was preparing for the final examination known as the “maturity examination” otherwise known as “Matura.” All high school students were required to pass examinations from two subjects: Polish language and mathematics. The subject of mathematics was most troublesome to most of the students. Few could memorize the lengthy mathematical formulas needed to solve the equations on the Matura. I was no exception. I have never been able to rely on my own memory. Use of mathematical tables or manuals was forbidden during the examination. To remedy this situation many of us prepared cheat sheets with formulas written in small hand writing. The cheat sheets had to be small enough to be hidden in the palm of our hands. At that time I had a friend named Joseph Kasprzycki who was a draftsman at the local water plant in Czestochowa. He had an exceptionally stable hand and a sharp eye. He could draw miniature lettering of the mathematical formulas using Chinese ink on the transparent paper used to copy blue prints. I employed him in my publishing enterprise to make a cheat sheet for myself, as well as another hundred copies for other students at two prominent high schools in town, Lice of Traugutt,

where I was a student and neighboring Lice of Sienkiewicz which claims to be even more affluent. The mathematical formulas were drawn by Joseph on the transparent, vinyl paper, called “kalka” and transferred to the photosensitive paper for the blueprint.

To develop the print to a stable, visible form ammonia was used. This method was also common in the U.S. when I arrived in Columbus, and some of my first schematics were developed this way. Soon we could make a few hundred copies on the large photocopying paper, which were subsequently cut and folded into a small booklet that could be hidden in the palm of your hand. I realize now that all the copying was done on materials provided by the water supply company where Joseph worked. Nowadays I would never tolerate such a project in my own company. Once we had a sufficient number of booklets I distributed them, for money, to the multitude of high school students preparing for the Matura examination. I shared the monetary proceeds with Joseph to keep him happy and silent.

Soon I passed my maturity examination and went to Polytechnic to study electronics. Joseph Kasprzycki somehow followed me to Wroclaw. I don't remember where he worked, but he told me that since he wasn't enrolled in college he was drafted to the army for the border defense guard, where he was wounded by some kind of Ukrainian bandit. He recovered, but later developed anemia and quickly died from complications of his condition.

Maryssa, my first love



Jan (left) in love with Maryssa, pictured with friend Romuald Odulinski

This book mentions my first, second and third wives. I would be remiss if I didn't mention also my first love. Maryssa's story is a bit unusual. I was 15 when I met her and had just awakened to the dangerous and exciting world of boy-girl relations. At that time, reproduction was not on my mind, but sex certainly was. I met Maryssa in southeastern Poland in the Carpathian Mountains in the rural town of Zmigrod nestled between two larger towns of Jaslo and Krosno. I was there for summer camp after 9th grade with a group of students from my high school. The camp was organized by our geography teacher, Professor Kusiba and we slept in the local high school which was vacant during the summer vacation. My close friend, Romuald Odulinski was also there.

Considering myself a unique individual, I refused to participate in the organized camp excursions, preferring to venture alone and explore the mountains by myself. During one such lonely excursion I came across a girl of exceptional beauty. She had a dark complexion and reminded me of a Gypsy or Hungarian. She was tending two cows. Her name was Maryssa. In the U.S., I would have called her a cowgirl. I sat next to her and struck up a

conversation. She was a high school student vacationing for the summer with her parents, farmers in Zmigrod. The next day I was again drawn to the same spot and met her again. I noticed that my interest in this girl was growing and with time and I felt that I should tell her about it. Unfortunately being afraid of rejection I couldn't verbalize my feelings. Over the next two weeks I met her every day in the mountain slope and sensed that she noticed my interest in her. This still didn't help me to overcome my shyness. Her vacation as well as my summer camp was over at the end of August leaving us to return to our separate schools. I left Zmigrod, and expected never to see Maryssa again.

Two years later I had graduated high school and was accepted to the Polytechnic Institute in Wroclaw. Wroclaw was a large town and before WWII belonged to Germany under the name of Breslau. It was about 450 km away from Zmigrod. During my first year of study I would take the street car to Polytechnic. One day I sat next to a girl who reminded me of Maryssa, the girl I met on the mountain slope tending cows. To my surprise, she recognized me immediately and we started talking about what had happened in our lives over the last two years. She was a first year student at the Agriculture Academy and rented a room in the distant suburb of Ciazyn. Later Ciazyn's name was changed to Ksiezce Male. She invited me to visit her any time I liked. She mentioned that the No. 5 tram to Ciazyn would take about 40 minutes from Wroclaw to reach her apartment.

The next day or so I went to see Maryssa. She was renting a small one room from an older landlady. When I visited Maryssa, the landlady insisted that Maryssa keep her door open so that she could make sure that nothing "immoral" was taking place with a male visitor inside. As time went by I was visiting Maryssa more often and I was now much less timid than I was two years ago in Zmigrod. She allowed me to undress her and we enjoyed caressing, but she was steadfast that our interaction stopped short of intercourse. Occasionally, I ran into a competitor, another young student from her school who was also calling on her. I was already mature, approaching the elderly age of 18 and I felt that I needed a real sex life, which Maryssa denied me. I now suspect that she was either afraid to get pregnant or afraid to lose her physical virginity.

One evening during the student dance I was seduced by another girl who had no objections to having intercourse with me on the table in the darkened class room located next to the dance hall. She later became my first wife, Elisabeth. Once I felt empowered by a regular sex life with Ella, the importance of a sex life with Maryssa became less pressing. I told Maryssa that we had to part because of her insistence on virginity. Time went by and I was regularly fucking Ella, mostly on Thursdays. Who fucked her on the other days is still mystery to me. Five years later I finished my studies and rented a room from Ms. Zelewska, a middle-aged single woman of German origin who was trying to seduce me without success. I knew that if I succumbed to her sinister and amoral scheming, the possibility for visits from other girls to my room would be terminated. In the meantime my relationship with Ella became strained as she insisted that we should exchange marital vows. In the end she prevailed, claiming to be pregnant and became my first wife with dreadful consequences for both of us.

The apartment of Ms. Zelewska was in the old building on Powstancow Slaskich (Silesian Uprising Street), now just across from the Hotel Wroclaw. I rented one room. The second room was Ms. Zelewska's. In between our rooms were two narrow rooms a bathroom and a kitchen. Usually I took tram No. 17 to get home from Polytechnic. One day I was standing on the tram next to a girl who to my surprise, once again turned out to be Maryssa. We were both happy to see each other and had to exchange information about our lives for the last five years. As the tram was approaching my stop, I invited Maryssa to follow me to my room as we had so much to say to each other. After she took off her coat, I realized that she was probably at least five months or more pregnant. I congratulated her, and asked her who the happy father was. She had married her boyfriend from Agricultural Academy, the same who was visiting her when I was making unsuccessful approaches to deflower her five years ago.

She proceeded to undress and mentioned that now she could be more agreeable than before. I felt a bit uneasy about the whole situation, but took her offer at face value. I relaxed after our first act of sexual consummation. Maryssa was apparently disappointed with my short-lived performance. She expected more from me. I told her that she had to wait, until I gathered more

strength. Unfortunately she could not wait, as her husband was waiting for her in the nutria breeding farm they were running together outside the city. Then she had one more pressing issue. She needed to pee, because her fetus was pressing on her bladder. I told her that she couldn't walk naked to the restroom, because she would have to pass in front of the kitchen where my landlady was cooking. She desperately insisted on relieving herself immediately. I ran to the kitchen and grabbed a large aluminum pot in which I used to boil potatoes. She peed in the pot and then she dressed herself, kissed me goodbye and left. I went to the restroom and emptied the pot, but had no time to rinse it with water. Immediately after, there was a ring at my door—it was my friend Andrzej Witkowski.

He said that he was passing by and decided to drop in. He had in his hand a large paper bag filled with strawberries. The bag was already wet and strawberries were ready to spill onto the floor. He grabbed the aluminum pot which, moments ago, was used by Maryssa and emptied strawberries into it. Then he proceeded to eat them and invited me to share this delicious dessert. I didn't tell him what was in the pot a few minutes before, as he apparently enjoyed these delicious strawberries very much and had already eaten half of them. For many years, I couldn't tell Andrzej the truth about his strawberries. He was an important director in Electrim International Trading Company; but, now that he's retired and happily married to his second wife, I'll let this book tell the secret of the strawberries. I haven't seen Maryssa since that day. Summarizing, I consummated my first love, with five year's delay. Was Maryssa worth my attention? Should I have married her, as did my competitor, to deflower her? You never know what life has in store for you. I think for Maryssa, it's best not to speculate, but to enjoy her story as a fond memory from my youth.

Year 1953: Revelation on Swidnicka Street

History has documented multiple revelations of transcendental nature. Moses experienced one such revelation on Mount Sinai—we all know the consequences of that. Since that fateful day people have stopped killing each other and ceased to commit adultery...or have they? In ancient Greece, while soaking in his bath Archimedes observed that his body weight decreased the amount of water spilled from his tub, thus the science of hydrostatics was observed. Newton discovered Newtonian mechanics after the apple fell from the tree and struck his head.

For me, the revelation which changed my life happened when I was walking just before lunch in Wroclaw on Swidnicka Street. To be more specific, my revelation was related to the world of finance. I'll admit: this revelation was vastly important to me; but, to a certain extent, my revelation had at least minute implications for mankind. My revelation cannot be compared to Nicolaus Copernicus' treatise on the value of money "*Monetae Cudendae Ratio*" or his monumental work regarding a heliocentric universe. I only mention this for those who may accuse me of intellectual megalomania.

It was winter of 1952-53. The newspapers were filled with stories about the so-called "Jewish Doctors' Plot" in Moscow. The Jewish doctors in Moscow were accused of planning to assassinate *The Leader of All Nations*, Joseph Stalin. Meanwhile, *The Supreme Leader* was busy in a heated linguistic discourse with Professor Nicolai Marr, who incidentally died 13 years prior to said-discourse. My associates and I were all impressed that Stalin would spend his valuable time engaged in an argument with the professor about the origins of human language. While it was true that any disagreeable discourse with *The Leader of All Nations* was very unhealthy and usually ended in the violent death of the disputant, I don't think Professor Marr was intimidated by Stalin's argument. That day, my thoughts were prosaic and focused on a forthcoming lunch at a charitable Catholic organization, "Caritas."

I was contemplating if my meager resources would be sufficient for the main course. In Caritas' lunchroom one could have soup and bread for free, but the main course required a coupon, which cost money. Soup was usually a cabbage soup with,

occasionally, small chunks of meat. Otherwise it was barley or bean soup.

I walked aimlessly on Swidnicka Street toward General Swierczewski Street (now renamed Marshal Pilsudski Street). I passed on the left a large state department store, P.D.T., which housed an exclusive eatery “Delicatessen” on the ground floor. I usually entered this store for a minute or two just long enough to breathe in the robust, salty fragrance of the smoked Kabanosy sausage links. It was purely an illusionary exercise since I couldn’t imagine ever being able to afford anything more than the vapors with my meager stipend. Nevertheless, it sparked my imagination. Maybe one day I would be rich—rich enough that I could purchase so many sausages and eat until I made myself sick.

As I was walking on Swidnicka Street, the water from the recent rain sloshed in my hollow shoes. The weather was precarious and could be described as neither wintry nor vernal, with melting snow in between. I can’t recall what time of the day it was because as I look back in my memory the sky was grey and overcast, blocking out the sun for much of the daylight hours. I definitely didn’t own such a luxury as a watch to be able to have some sense of what hour of the day my revelation would take hold of me and turn many of my impossibilities into possibilities. I felt a jab of pain in my decaying tooth. I decided not to go to the dentist since I was counting on a short life. Death by tooth decay is usually a slow process and visits to the dentist involve a considerable amount of pain. I have to mention, that at that time in Poland ultrasonic, water-cooled dental drilling machines were not known and dentists usually did not anesthetize patients’ mouths during the repairing procedures. My expectation for a short life resulted from the pain in my right lung. An X-ray showed a spot size of the quarter, the result of childhood tuberculosis. I was convinced that TB would resolve my dental problems. Neither good teeth nor stainless steel dentures would keep me out of the coffin.

While wandering aimlessly and approaching Kosciuszko square, I turned to the right and started gazing through the large crystal windows at the elegantly dressed people inside. They were sitting at coffee tables drinking their coffee and tea, sampling cream pastries on porcelain dishes with silver spoons. It was the

window of a luxurious café, known as Stylowa (In Style). The men and ladies behind the window were above average citizens—in the parking lot in front of the café I could see three Soviet-made “Pobieda” limousines (each equipped with a 4 cylinder, 2040cc motors, much like cars made by Ford in the early 1930s). The party behind the window was engaged in a vivid conversation characterized by the appropriately explicit gestures. On the wrists of these elegant, rich people I could see foreign, stainless steel watches: “Doxa” and “Atlantic.” I had never seen such an abundance of riches before in my home town of Czestochowa. Suddenly, I became enlightened! In spite of all the propaganda on equality, money still existed in the Communist Polish Peoples’ Republic. The people behind the café window were obvious, vivid proof of it. In my analytical mind I had made an easy connection: if the money existed, then I only needed time and effort to find it and get my deserved share. To my surprise, I didn’t feel envious of these people. I was grateful to them. They were my beacons of light to my future economic success.

This revelation turned my attention away from contemplating my death in the prime of my life. I did not realize that it was a moment of such great change. Maybe death could be postponed? The turn in my economical life was not far away. It was waiting for me on the same street, 150 meters away, in the monumental Wroclaw Opera House. It may interest readers that the opera house was designed by German architect, Carl Gotthard Langhans, who also designed the Brandenburg Gate, Berlin’s most famous landmark.

I got my first job as an extra, the guy without any lines whose only function is to take up space on the stage, in the Wroclaw Opera. My function was neither intellectually nor physically demanding. I was assigned to form the crowd or sit passively at a café table. With my first paycheck I purchased a watch and new soles in my shoes. For a new pair of shoes altogether I had to wait another year. The watch though--it was essential, not only for arriving to classes on time, but also to rendezvous with future girlfriends. I had to be there on time. At that time, I didn’t have a girlfriend, but with such a sharp and accurate wristwatch and newly soled shoes, I was prepared for any challenge served up to me by the opposite sex, be it on a date or on

the dance floor. My performing artist talents shined beautifully during two performances. One role infected with western ideas on class required me to play a ruthless capitalist. It happened during the performance of the Russian ballet *Red Poppy Flower* composed by Reingold Moricewicz Glier in 1927.

My role was to sit in the café sipping champagne while outside the widow the police were swinging nightsticks on striking workers. I was relieved that they choose me for the role of a capitalist-imperialist and not the policemen or striking workers. Those roles demanded physical effort, which caused sweating. The champagne I was sipping with all the dignity of an upper-class connoisseur was not real. It was slightly colored water. But the goblets were made of sparkling crystal. I was dressed in a tuxedo, white shirt and bow tie. The shoes were mine, but invisible to the public. I kept them under the table. During the performances I completely immersed myself in the décor as well as the psyche of the American Imperialist. Damages sustained to my socialist psyche were severe and I never fully recovered. Somehow, I felt no compassion for the oppressed working class, and consequently played my role well. Later in life I realized that the décor of an imperialist dressed in tuxedo was laughable, or maybe the times had changed since Moricewicz Glier composed his ballet. Now, being a capitalist, for more than 40 years I usually dress in sweaters and never wear a tie.

Another spectacle in which I played a prominent part during my short-lived career as a performing artist was again in a Russian ballet named *The Fountain of Bakhchisaray* based on the poem by Alexander Pushkin about the kidnapping of a young girl—the daughter of Polish aristocrat, Maria Potocki—at the hands of the Crimean Tatars. After her capture she was sold to the harem located in Bakhchisaray, Crimea—now part of the Ukraine. My assigned role was to perform as a “regular” Tatar, dressed in rags, but skilled in the art of fencing. I received minimal training so that I could handle a saber and pretend that I knew what I was doing without really cutting my stage enemy’s ear or throat. I didn’t like the role, but beggars can’t be choosers. I could have landed worse. The next available role was to be a eunuch, guarding the wives of Khan in the Harem. Somehow I just couldn’t see myself in the role of eunuch and feared that it would permanently

damage my interpersonal relations with the opposite sex. Setting aside any possible psychological damage, I also feared that the name eunuch could subsequently leak out of the Opera House into a wider student community. Such an event could damage my reputation and prematurely sabotage any future opportunities for the duration of my studies in Wroclaw.

At that time I didn't pay much attention to the underlying story of *The Fountain of Bakhchisaray*. Now looking into the libretto of this ballet, I realize that in spite of being written and composed by a Russian, it had much to do with Poland and its function as a bulwark against Muslim Tatar hordes pushing on Europe from southwest Russia, then in the hands of the Ottoman Empire. Unfortunately, the Great Russian Poet, Alexander Pushkin was not sympathetic to Poles when they tried to liberate themselves from Russian yoke in 1830. He recommended ruthless ethnic cleansing of the Polish population. Apparently he felt that the Poles' struggle for independence from the Russian Empire was insulting to the benevolent idea of unity of Slavs under Russian guidance and dominance.

My time on the stage at the Wroclaw Opera soon came to an end due to scheduling conflicts. My studies at Polytechnic began to demand much more attention and after late night opera performances I couldn't wake up the next morning to attend my early classes. Also I acquired a girlfriend, or maybe it was the other way around—that she acquired me? In order to keep her satisfied I needed my evenings to be open for suggestions. Saturdays and Sundays were also problematic, because those were the nights when student dances took place—and I had to be there, with my newly soled shoes, to represent mankind. Over the next few months the deadly symptoms of tuberculosis in my lungs started to disappear. I attributed the progress to my new diet which included smoked Kabanosy sausage links.

The story of my revelation on Swidnicka Street is a story of the challenges I faced at the beginning of my adult life. There were many challenges. Some of them dealt with physical survival. As a child I was humiliated by my parents. During WWII they accepted a gift from one of my uncles, a veterinarian. It was a pig's liver wrapped in newspaper. Another uncle had a small farm, and one of his chickens had fallen victim to the chicken flu epidemic. As I

remember, the entire chicken including the feathers was embedded in clay to prevent rapid spoiling in the heat of the summer. There was no refrigeration then.

Looking back from my perspective of 70 years, I realize that I was a rebellious but proud child. I was angry with my parents for their inaptitude to make a proper living. I now I realize that I was too harsh in my judgment. They tried their best to provide for our family in devastating war conditions with a limited education. I then realized that it was time for me to improve my life. I did it. It took some time, as I did not take shortcuts, but ever since that day on Swidnicka Street I've never gone hungry. But after 50 years of a full stomach, I am faced with a different dilemma. Is it always better not to be hungry? An abundance of food readily available, plus delicious cream cakes and rhubarb pies, inevitably introduced me to diabetes. Fortunately, my diabetes is controlled without medication by relying on dark, coarse, grain bread, abstaining from cakes and pasta and consuming very few potatoes. Now it is too late to change my fate. I have to face my destiny. Would I have changed anything? Never!

My first job in Professor Bincer's department

Most people would ask me why I would write about such a mundane subject as moisture meters; but, this instrument and the problems associated with it heavily influenced my life—twice. The first time was in Wroclaw while I was repairing moisture meters for grain, a function that would later inspire me to design my own moisture meter—a product that converted me from a starving student, to a sometimes hungry student, to an affluent student by 1958 standards. The second time my expertise in measuring moisture in paper landed me a job in Columbus, Ohio where I live and prosper to this day.

I was already in my third year in the electronic department at Wroclaw Polytechnic, when it became obvious to me that I was lacking practical knowledge of electronics. A friend of mine, Karol Pelc, felt similarly. During the summer of 1954 we were sent to practice electronics at the Gdansk Post Office where we had out of boredom designed a device to monitor broadcasts from the

powerful amplifiers transmitting a program to thousands of home loudspeakers. At that time, following the example of the Soviet Union, Polish citizens could listen to a program from Warsaw in their homes via inexpensive speakers. There was only one program available; but, some more sophisticated units were equipped with not only an on/off switch but also with a volume knob. The Communist government regarded this medium as a very vital means of Socialist indoctrination. Occasionally all systems were kicked off the network, when one of the valves in the central amplifiers burned out and had to be replaced.

During our “student practice” we designed a timer that monitored the volume of the broadcast, and if there was a pause longer than 30 seconds an alarm sounded alerting the supervisors that one of the valves had burned out and needed to be replaced.

After we returned to Polytechnic the following fall, it was only natural for us to visit the department of broadcasting (by wire), headed by Professor Stefan Bincer, and ask him if he had anything for us to do. Professor Bincer received us warmly and told us that, unfortunately he himself would like to make some money in consulting, but the science of broadcasting by wire was dying fast and packing up its wires. Apparently, a factory in the mountains of Sudety, in the city of Dzierzoniow started producing radio receivers and wired speakers had become a thing of the past.

Professor Bincer informed us that his department had no manufacturing or research facilities, but had one element which had the potential for expansion, a “consulting enterprise” which was affiliated with Polytechnic but otherwise was operating more or less as a private venture which could contract and sell products and services to state companies. It’s important to explain here that in order to maintain tight control over the economy, the Communist government dictated that any time a state enterprise placed an order that was more than 99% industrial capacity, the order could not be placed with an individual or private company. This policy was a Soviet invention implemented in Poland by two Communists, Hillary Minc and Eugene Szyr, who came to Poland in 1945 with the Soviet army. By listing the title of “consulting enterprise” under the shield of Polytechnic, Professor Bincer (and later indirectly, I was able to conduct business with state enterprises. One has to say that Polytechnic had its own interest in

keeping this system alive as 50% of the money collected from any transaction was going into Polytechnic coffers, as overhead. Summarizing, Professor Bincer stated that he had nothing to offer us in the domain of getting some experience. Saying goodbye, the professor mentioned that if by chance we brought some consulting work to him he would get us in as consultants in his department. There was a glimmer of hope in his statement and I was thinking how I could exploit it.



Jan pretends to be American businessman at Wroclaw Polytechnic

Measuring moisture in paper

The last words of Professor Bincer were prophetic, but in our situation of business ignorance, totally useless. We had no business connections or knowledge of how to procure a consulting contract from the state. While randomly searching for an idea, I purchased a thick book with schematics of a variety of electronic instruments in a so-called International Bookstore, selling mostly Russian language literature. This book was compiled by two authors, Marcus and Zeiloff, and comprised descriptions of a variety of instruments published in a prominent American electronic paper, "Electronics." One of these instruments was a moisture meter for paper web, used in the paper industry. I read it a few times and came to the conclusion that I could build it; or

rather, I could duplicate what was written in the book. In retrospect, I know now how naïve I was and how difficult it is to duplicate an instrument from the raw description and schematics.

By chance, my father worked in a paper mill in the city of Czestochowa during the war and I knew where this mill was located. As Karol and I were traveling often to Czestochowa to visit our parents, we decided to visit the paper mill at Krakowska Street and offer them “our” invention. When we entered the mill property we stopped in at the guard house and demanded to see the technical manager of the plant. After a while a young man appeared and I proposed the idea of supplying his plant with our recently invented moisture meter for paper web. The manager told us that unfortunately he did not need such an instrument because he had a living, breathing moisture meter working at his plant. His shift manager had magic hands. When he placed his hand on the paper he could tell within an accuracy of one percent how much moisture it contained.

Measuring moisture in grain

Seeing our disappointment, he mentioned that in the nearby Warszawska Street there was another institution that may need our expertise. It was called State Grain Enterprises, which was authorized to purchase from farmers and store a variety of grains. They purchased five expensive grain moisture meters made by the Dr. Karl Weiss GmbH company out of Berlin. None of the meters worked anymore and they were in desperate need of help.

Immediately after visiting the paper mill we went to Warszawska Street to visit the grain purchasing organization. We introduced ourselves as researchers from Polytechnic in Wroclaw with expertise in grain moisture meters. We honestly informed management that we got a tip from the paper mill manager that they had grain moisture meters that were malfunctioning. The people at the grain purchasing organization were more than happy. They immediately brought all five German-made meters and wrote a purchasing order for repairs at the Polytechnic in Wroclaw. After that we packed up all of their instruments and went directly to the railway station to bring them to Polytechnic. It did not take us long before we realized that all five instruments had blown fuses.

Apparently German manufacturers equipped meters with highly sensitive fuses and no one in the grain purchasing organization was wise enough to replace these fuses with others able to accept a higher current.



Jan with his first design, grain moisture meter

We could not believe that such an esteemed organization as Karl Weiss GmbH would make such a mistake. Now it is easier for me to believe, as occasionally someone in my own company makes similar mistakes. To make sure that the fuses were indeed the main culprit of malfunction we went to the local grain laboratory to check the accuracy of the meters by comparing measurements with standard methods which involved drying the grain sample and comparing the weight with a wet sample. To our surprise the measurements with the German meters didn't match the standard method results. The moisture measurements obtained with the German meters were constantly changing and differed by more than 30%. At the time we didn't know that the principle behind the German meters was at fault and there was no amount of alterations to the meter that could help. The principle was based on measuring the conductivity of grounded grain samples placed in

the ceramic container with two electrodes. One electrode was on the bottom of container, while the other was in the form of a plunger pressing the grain with the help of a spring. It made sense that the readings were changing because the plunger was constantly pressing on the sample making it denser and therefore more conductive. After many failed attempts to adjust the meters to confirm the dry and wet methods, we had no choice but to give up. We sent the meters back to Czestochowa along with a bill for repair and calibration. In a short time we got paid and went to the home of Professor Bincer to share with him our earnings.

The professor magnanimously refused but rather offered us employment as technical assistants in his department with a monthly salary of 2000 zloty per month. Soon I started working on the marketing campaign, writing 50 letters to the local grain purchasing organizations whose addresses I found in the phone book. The marketing campaign became more successful after we visited the Central Grain Laboratory in Warsaw and met its head Dr. Jan Lysiak. He was sufficiently impressed with our knowledge of the moisture measurements and sent a letter to all the grain purchasing organizations in the country requesting that moisture meters be periodically validated by “scientists” from Polytechnic. Surprisingly, he did not request any money for this service.

Soon a flood of moisture meters, mostly made by German manufacturer Karl Weiss GmbH, started arriving at our laboratory. As expected, the instruments had burnt out fuses. After the fuses were replaced we kept the instruments for two or three weeks before returning them to their owners. What surprised me was the fact that, in many instances, the instruments were sent to us in the summer, before grain purchasing campaigns started and were not requested to be returned until December, when all the grain was already purchased and moisture meters were no longer needed. It took me some time to realize, that the grain purchasing managers preferred not to have any moisture meters when determining how much farmers had to be paid. They either increased moisture content of grain and paid farmers less, pocketing the difference, or more likely, “diagnosing” moisture content of grain at a lower percentage, paying the farmers more at the expense of the Socialist State.

Obviously, the farmers shared the profit with the purchasing managers. Once it became obvious to me what kind of shenanigans the purchasing managers pulled, I requested that the payment for meter repair and calibration be done in full privacy, bypassing the Polytechnic accounting system. I must admit that these operations were not the most honest, but it gave me an idea as to how the entire system was operating with endemic corruption at its base. In due time, I was living at a comfortable level, eating copious amount of Polish sausage and scrambled eggs. Life was better every day. I even started to design my own moisture meters for grain, which were improved copies of the Karl Weiss GmbH design, inherently having the same problems with poor accuracy. They sold well through our Polytechnic “consulting services.”

How I became an instrumentation engineer

Today I had a dream. I woke up with sweat on my back. I was dreaming that I got a job and from now on I would have to get up in the morning and be at work at 8 a.m. In addition, I misbehaved in the office of the company president in front of two of his managers. I burst in to the president’s office without being invited or announced and told him that “It will work!” I think the “it” issue was heart rate telemetry for mice which was supposed to work from the distance of a few miles. I noticed skepticism on the faces of the others in the president’s office. After I left I too started having doubts if my claim was premature. Maybe I made a mistake. . . and I would be taken for a fool? When I woke up I realized that it was just a bad dream. I am not employed by anybody. It is me who owns a company and the reason that I had to get up so early was to interview a new prospective employee. I dressed up and drove to the office for the interview. This dream summarizes the story of my professional life.

When I got to Polytechnic in Wroclaw I had a faint idea what electronics were about. The first two years at Polytechnic we studied basic science, mathematics, physics, drafting and some aspects of mechanical machining. After two years we supposed to choose a specialization, such as electronic technology, radio receivers, telephony, automation, measuring instrumentation, tele-transmission and so on. Our studies were in two parts. After four

years, we obtained the title of “engineer” and could go to work in the industry. A select few were given the opportunity to study for an additional two years and receive a degree of master engineer, M.S.E.E. I and my friend Karol Pelc decided to specialize in “electronic technology” which was taught by Professor Barwicz who commuted from Warsaw, where he was the technical and scientific director of a large electronic tube factory with a name of famous Jewish-German Communist--Rosa Luxemburg. After our third year of study we were sent to this factory to see what our future place of employment looked like. After one month of practice in the Warsaw factory I realized that my options for work after graduation were limited to this factory. I also knew that with my rebellious character, sooner or later, I would get in to trouble either with factory management or with the local party organization. The electronic technology that Karol and I had studied had more to do with metal-glass technology with a side of creating and maintaining vacuums in glass tubes. Very little electronic circuitry was needed. I also realized that my options to work in another field were very limited. Transistors were not yet known or manufactured in Poland.

I decided to change my specialization and study Electronic Measuring Instrumentation under the guidance of Professor Andrzej Jellonek. This new field offered unlimited job opportunities in a variety of fields ranging from the medical field, to the grain industry, to mining, to the food industry, textile and steel, just to name a few. I convinced my friend Karol Pelc to follow my steps and with the consensus of Professor Barwicz we moved to the Department of Measuring Instrumentation of Professor Jellonek. This was the best decision I made during my studies at Polytechnic. I still profit from this decision, now running a company that manufactures instrumentation for bio-medical research. Since I’m my own boss, I don’t have to worry about offending my supervisor or being dislike by my party secretary (as long as the U.S. stays on a capitalist pass).

Karol chose a slightly different path after receiving his Ph.D. from Uppsala University in Sweden and returned to Poland to realize that it was very difficult, if not impossible, to excel in the Communist system in the field of electronics. He changed his field of interest to economics, more specifically to the field of business

management and excelled in this new field. He is now teaching in American, Japanese and European universities methods of Management of Research and Development.

Workers revolution in Poznan and family connections

In June 1956 I was already 22. I was still working in Professor Bincer's department where I repaired moisture meters for grain. My life was better than a few years ago both materially and emotionally, due to the income from moisture meters and sexual relations with my first real girlfriend Ella. After the death of the *Supreme Leader of Mankind*, Comrade Stalin, in March 1953, life in Poland was better and more relaxed. Even before the war, Poznan hosted an international industrial exhibition. Karol and I decided to visit this exhibit to learn how famous western companies made their instruments and get a snapshot of "real life" westerners drinking Coca-Cola and whisky when peddling their wares to the visitors. While in Poznan we stayed in a private apartment decorated in a strange style with multiple pictures of ancestors, some faded, indicating that the ancestors died some time ago. I think the style was called "secession" and was different than what I would consider modern. At this time we young people were fascinated by French modernism—Picasso-style, with geometric designs and multiple colors. In spite of my inner conflict in artistic preferences, I liked the "old" apartment design. Apparently, I was learning to be tolerant.

The next day (June 28) we went to the international fair. After visiting a few exhibit pavilions, about noon, there was a rumor spreading that on the adjoining street there was a demonstration of workers. Nearly all of the fair attendees as well as journalists and exhibitors ran to see this unusual event. In a country supposedly run by workers there shouldn't be workers disgruntled enough to warrant a demonstration. Nevertheless, workers were walking, many hundreds of them from the local train and locomotive factory, known before the war, after its founder, as the "Cegielski Factory." Shortly after noon loudspeakers announced that the exhibitions were being closed and all visitors must leave immediately. Karol and I decided to walk to the center of town and see what was really going on. From a distance, we

could hear small gun fire. At the time we didn't know that the workers had surrounded the Communist Party and Secret Police Quarters demanding that arrested strike-leaders be freed. When walking toward the town center we suddenly encountered a crowd of people running from machine gun fire aimed at the houses' windows. Tanks appeared at the end of the street with machine guns blazing. Fearing for our lives, we hid in the portal of one of the houses.

We realized that it would be best for us to leave Poznan and return to Wroclaw. That was easier said than done. We decided to let the workers take care of the revolution and spare our own lives. Unfortunately, at the railway station we learned that the station was closed and no trains would be allowed to leave or arrive in Poznan. We were in a quandary because we had no money to stay any longer in Poznan. One of our options was to walk to the outskirts of the city where the highway to Wroclaw was passing and try to hitchhike. We were not alone. A number of other people had a similar idea. In the distance we saw a policeman walking with a rifle. He was approached by two young men who demanded his rifle, which he gladly surrendered. On the highway none of the trucks were eager to pick up hitchhikers. Drivers were afraid of armed revolting workers. I came up with an idea to entice drivers to stop. I grabbed a brick and made a gesture to indicate that if the truck didn't stop I would throw the brick through the windshield. It was more a bluff than a serious threat, but one of the truckers stopped and picked us up along with 19 others on the truck's bed. It was already early morning when we approached the city of Trzebnica, where our truck reached its final destination. Having no idea what to do next we went to the police station asking for help. The local policemen were equally as disoriented as we were. They were surprised that Poznan was in the middle of a workers' revolution.

Nevertheless, they helped us to stop another truck heading to Wroclaw. On the outskirts of Wroclaw we were stopped by a detachment of soldiers with submachine guns. They ordered us to disembark with our hands up. Karol had a very thin coat and he couldn't pull his hands out of the pockets. Maybe he had his palms curled into fists. For a moment I was scared that some of the soldiers thought that he had a gun or grenade in his pocket ready to

pull the pin, killing us all. Fortunately, Karol was able to pull his hands out and there was no gun or grenade. We were all searched for guns and released to go enter the city. While in Wroclaw, I was afraid that the “uprising” would spread to the rest of Poland and we would face a full scale domestic war with the army shooting people.

The next day I was supposed to travel with my university class to a distant military camp on the Oder River on the border with the German Democratic Republic. Our departure time to training camp was scheduled for July 1, 1956. I was caught in a dilemma about what to do. For sure, I didn’t intend to be a part of a military that would be pushed against a revolting Polish population. The political situation in Poland was murky. I was afraid that if I didn’t report to the drafting board they would send the military police to look after me. Therefore, I decided to stay temporarily with my girlfriend Ella. There was some problem with this solution, as Ella didn’t have her own apartment but was living with her uncle. Having no other choice I went to see Ella and knocked on her door at 4 a.m. Fortunately, it was Ella who opened the door. I spent the night with her without her uncle being aware of the “morally condemnable” situation. In the morning, her uncle went to work and I had a chance to see if the workers’ revolt was localized to Poznan or if it had spread to Wroclaw. When I was sure that Wroclaw was quiet I decided to join my colleagues and travel to the military training camp. Unfortunately, the train with my student detachment had already left Wroclaw and the military drafting office provided me with an individual ticket to travel to the final destination on the Oder River. This trip was uneventful. The next day I reported to the Engineering Brigade of the Polish Army where we were supposedly getting trained in building pontoon bridges.

As usual in military planning, the best builders of pontoon bridges would be electronic engineers, while radio communication during the war was left to be provided by civil engineering specialists. This didn’t make sense to me, but I had already learned not to argue with military logic. I arrived at my pontoon detachment just in time for rifle assignment. I’m not sure if they were equipping us with old Russian-made Mosin rifles or newer automatic models which were now popular under the inventor’s

name Kalashnikov. My beloved father, who survived many years in the Russian army before and during the First World War, told me that having a rifle is a soldier's curse. Any rifle, be it manual or automatic, requires constant maintenance and cleaning. If you don't keep it clean then you subjugate yourself to severe punishment. According to my father, it was best not to have a rifle. A rifle in your hand poses a threat to others. Without a rifle, you may have a better chance to end up as a POW. Remembering my father's advice I positioned myself at the end of the line of students who were aspiring to obtain a rifle. As I expected there weren't enough rifles for all of us, and I was the lucky one to end up, without a rifle.

The next task I had to resolve was morning rising, which happened at 6 a.m. My physical constitution is designed for sleeping late and my mental capacity comes to life in the afternoon. Somehow I couldn't find a safe way to convey this to my superior officers. Just after breakfast we all lined up for inspection by the colonel, who addressed us cheerfully: "Greetings to you students!" In return we replied: "Students ready to serve the Polish Peoples' Republic!" There was a man walking with the colonel, shorter in stature and of a lower rank, a lieutenant. I couldn't believe my eyes. It was my cousin, Kazik Muskalski, who was only four years older than me. Kazik was not only my cousin, but also my good friend from my home town of Czestochowa. He eluded high school—I doubt he even finished grade school. First he tried his talents as a barber, then enlisted in the air force and excelled as rear gunner on Russian-made ground attack planes, IL-2s. Then somebody in the political department of the Polish Army decided that he would be a good political officer. At that time I didn't know that he later worked as an intelligence officer, a kind of Communist Secret Police assigned to spy on and control personnel of the armed forces.

When the inspection ended, I approached my cousin and reminded him of the exciting times we had—when he was smuggling stolen fuses from the Air Force and we experimented with explosives left by Germans in the country side. Kazik was happy to see me. We remembered the solid limestone outhouse, located about 20 yards from my home which I tried to blow up with explosives. Unfortunately, or fortunately, Kazik didn't supply

me with the cord necessary to delay ignition and I had to improvise by wrapping the brick of explosive TNT material in newspaper. I ignited the newspaper and hoped that I would have sufficient time to escape before the explosion blew up the outhouse. After waiting a few minutes, accented by extreme silence, I approached my device which appeared intact, because the newspaper fire extinguished before it reached the fuse. In this moment I realized that my success would have ruined our outhouse as well as the house itself where I lived with my mother and father. I took this as a sign, a blessing from Heaven, which allowed me to live, prosper and get married and divorced multiple times.

I told Kazik that I was troubled with early rising. Kazik understood my dilemma and he had an answer. He told me that his miserably low rank of lieutenant did not correspond to the power he wielded in his division. He was more important than the colonel and some generals were afraid of him, as he could unfavorably report on their political convictions. Kazik told me that my talent in radio communication would be wasted building pontoon bridges and instead he suggested that I report every morning to the radio communication department and acquire two portable radio stations to be tested. He also asked me to choose a companion with whom I could exchange radio communications.

Each day after breakfast, my partner and I picked up two radio stations and went to a remote location where we spent time sitting in trenches on opposite sides of the road. Periodically we exchanged, important messages, like, "Johnny, can you hear me OK?" To which I would reply, "Yes, I can hear you splendidly." Then we would take a nice nap, as weather that year in July 1956 in that part of Poland was excellent. I don't know what my colleagues ended up doing on the remainder of the trip because the whole 30 days of our training I was busy "testing" radio stations. Recently, 55 years later, I talked about my cousin, Kazik Muskalski with one of my colleagues from class. He was in the same detachment and he remembers my cousin Kazik. Apparently Kazik also taught a history course on the Polish Armed Forces in the U.S.S.R. It seems there were two Polish armies under Soviet command. Polish Army No1 and Polish Army No 2. My colleague, Ryszard Pregiel accidentally confused the two and failed his final examination. Fortunately my cousin, Kazik was very benevolent

and instead of giving him an F, he gave him a B. Ryszard would go on to have a stellar career in Communist politics and even at the end of Communism in Poland became Minister of Science and Technology. Who knows if my cousin's positive "B" didn't help him to achieve such an important position. Later, after the system transformation, Ryszard was still active in Democratic politics and even advised the Polish President about technology issues within the European Union.

In the meantime Polish politics went through a number of dramatic changes including a return to Capitalism and Democracy. Kazik's service was no longer needed in the reformed military. Consequently, he retired and underwent a spiritual conversion. At the end of his life he was a bus driver transporting pensioners from the distant city of Szczecin to Holy Shrine of Czestochowa Monastery. At the unveiling of the miraculous Black Madonna icon at 6 a.m. every morning there was Kazik in the chapel. Apparently military training left some vestige in Kazik, mainly in his early rising habits. I met him some years later when I was traveling by ferry boat from Sweden to Poland. I was already an American citizen and had left my Communist experiences behind me. Kazik is an example of a basically good person who was trapped in the Soviet system because he was uneducated and half-orphaned. Communists gave him a chance in life and, at the time, he did not realize that it was loaded with sinister responsibilities. Many such people fell into the same trap. Without them, the Soviet system could not have functioned as long as it did.

Dental polishing machines

It was 1957 and I was finishing the twenty third year of my life. The last four years of my emotional life was in the hands, or rather between the legs of my girlfriend Elizabeth (Ella) Pienkowska. In fact, she was the first female to broaden the horizons of my heterosexual life and later, unfortunately, became my first wife in a marriage that was dead and over before it even started. At that time Ella was working as a dental technician at the Railway Health Service Center in Wroclaw and supplemented her meager income by moonlighting which consisted of making dental prosthetics at home. She could have more work, but at home she had no proper equipment to finish her work by polishing the dentures. Unfortunately, dental polishing machines were not available for private purchase, probably to make moonlighting by dentists and dental technicians difficult. Ella complained to me that her life would be better and more prosperous if she could have such a machine at home. I was thinking about how to help her.

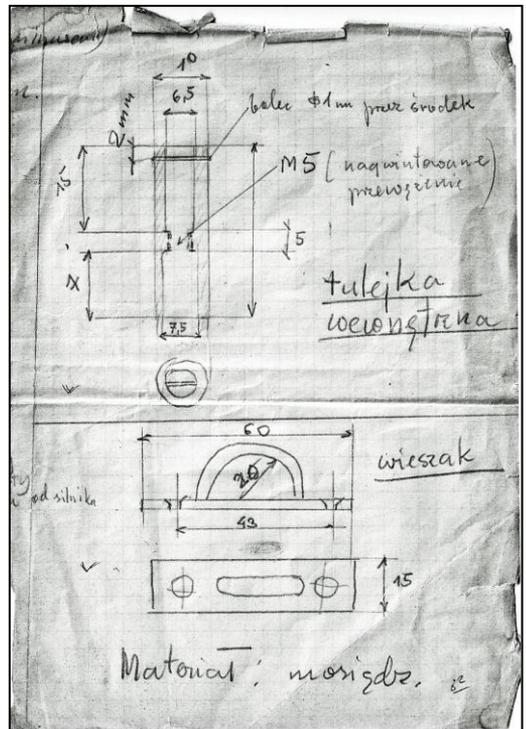
It is worth mentioning that the workers of the state railroad were covered for all medical expenses by state insurance. In the dental laboratory where Ella worked she soon learned, that to make a decent living, the customer had to be convinced to choose private dental services, instead of relying on the state's. When such clients showed up, nice girls from the dental clinic had a heart to heart discussion with the victim, explaining that the materials used in their work were made in the Soviet Union, which was not well known for products of high quality. In addition, to make such dentures during regular business hours, technicians had to rush and very often the dimensions differed from the dental requirements. Some of the patients who had chosen the dentures made under state regulations ended up carrying their dentures in their pockets instead of wearing them in their mouths. By contrast, privately-made dentures were made from material smuggled from West Germany which was of high quality and the dentures were made at home without a rush, but with a high attention to precision. After such an explanation it was no surprise that the majority of customers chose the private avenue and part of such work was allocated to Ella.

One day I was wandering aimlessly around town and looking in the window of the International Book Store where volumes of writings by Comrade Lenin were on display, all bound in nice leather. I was contemplating if this leather would have been better used to make nice gloves. The window next to the bookstore belonged to a hardware shop. In this window I noticed a small electric motor with a foot pedal for speed control. Intrigued, I entered the shop and asked about the application of this device. Apparently, it was made locally by Factory of Water and Gas Meters, and the motor was designed as a converter (attachment) to the old Singer sewing machines to convert them from foot power to electric power.

Its cost was only 600 zloty. I immediately purchased one and realized that it would only require minimal modifications to convert it into a polishing machine. It was lacking the flexible cord between the motor and the polishing stone, which somehow was still available in retail business at a cost of 700 zloty. Now all that was missing was a mechanical coupling between the motor and flexible shaft which I designed in one hour's time. Surprisingly, after 55 years I still have a sketch of the coupling I made that day. To manufacture a coupling, I went to the mechanical workshop at the Polytechnic and talked to the lathe operator. He agreed to make such a coupling of brass for 150 zloty plus 50 zloty for making it nickel plated. Within a week I presented Ella with a functioning dental polishing machine. In turn, she took it to her workplace and demonstrated it to her colleagues. They were all very much impressed. They all marveled about the quality of work and even noticed the four rivets which in the original motor were used to affix the metal plate stating in Polish: Made by Factory of Water and Gas Meters, Wroclaw, Poland. These labels I removed immediately after I purchased the motor so as not to reveal the whole trade secret of my operation. Nobody, even in Wroclaw, where the motors were made, connected these motors with dental polishing machines. One question Ella had to answer was the price of such a device. Ella replied 6,000 zloty. Her dental technician friends did not object to the price as they concluded that these machines were probably smuggled from West Germany and therefore to conceal their country of origin, tracks, the label with proper name was removed.

The gross profit for each machine was 4,500 zloty which was more than double what I made as a junior assistant at Polytechnic. After the first demonstration, Ella sold six such machines to her colleagues in the lab. Soon I developed a distribution network, employing my student colleagues who traveled to remote places in Poland by night trains to demonstrate dental polishing machines to district dental laboratories, all of course state-owned and all business was in cash. I even invested in a large map of Poland with colored pins indicating locations where my dental machines were sold and where there was still a potential for more sales.

Before I left the country for Finland and then Sweden, I captured 90% of Polish market for such machines. The pile of money I earned became embarrassing and bulging in the dresser where I kept money between the sheets of bedding. I must admit that the profit margin in this enterprise was my largest ever and the amount of work needed to manufacture machines was minimal. I left Poland not because I was starving, but because I wanted to make the same money legally and keep my money in a bank, not in the dresser between the sheets. It took me a while to achieve it, but I finally did it at Columbus Instruments.



“Documentation” of a conversion of an electric motor for Singer machine to dental polishing machine

Enchanted by glamour of British capitalism

On April 16th 1958, I graduated from Polytechnic with a master's degree in electronic engineering. I already had a job at the Institute of Radio Broadcasting at the same university. My financial situation was comfortable, due to a number of entrepreneurial endeavors, such as repairing and designing moisture meters for grain and "underground" production (conversion) of motors for sewing machines into denture polishing machines. These two endeavors were hardly related to my official position as a research assistant at the university, but handsomely paid for my comfortable life in the depressing mediocrity of Communist Poland. My sex life was stable, but under a degree of stress. Once I graduated from Polytechnic with a master's degree in electronic engineering my girlfriend, Elisabeth, started to apply pressure on me for a marital commitment. Later, under her pressure and deception (she claimed to be pregnant) I succumbed to her machination and she became my first wife. Apparently, her loyalty to me was questionable, because a year later she offered her services as an informant to the Secret Police, to get even with me, after I decided to move out. This was unknown to me, until in 2010 I received copies of documents from the Polish Secret Police archives, now open to the public.

After 1956 life in Poland became more bearable. Borders were opened to travel to visit family members in the West. Foreign tourists appeared to visit Polish towns as well. All of it stimulated my interest in how people lived in the forbidden Capitalist societies, while being geographically close, at the same time were hopelessly inaccessible. Passports were issued only for Polish citizens who had family in the West, guaranteeing that relatives cover travel and living expenses. Unfortunately I had no such relatives, but I had a close friend, Reniek Odulinski, who had an uncle in London and he was about to visit him. I asked Reniek if he could contact a student organization that could provide us with summer work to pick strawberries or plums during the summer. Reniek outperformed himself. He contacted the Polish Students' Organization in London, which comprised mostly children of Polish émigrés, all opposed to Communism. The leader of this group was Andrzej Stypulkowski, who also worked for Free

Europe Radio. Stypulkowski's father was one of the leaders of the resistance movement during the German occupation. After the war he was arrested by the Soviets and interrogated and eventually tried in Moscow. Fortunately, he survived and was sent back to Poland. He and his young son Andrzej were whisked away to England with the help of friends in the anti-Communist underground. At that time the local the Polish Secret Police (UB-Bureau of Security) was even more oppressive than their Soviet masters. It was very wise for Stypulkowski to leave Poland with his son as quickly as possible.

Andrzej through his contacts with the British Union of Students procured for Reniek an invitation to a summer camp, where 10 Polish students could pick strawberries, plums etc. in English orchards. Housing and minimal pay were also provided. Saying goodbye to Reniek, Stypulkowski mentioned that while in London he met the director of Polish Student Travel Office in Warsaw, who could facilitate passports for invited students. His name was Janusz Pelc. When Reniek returned to Wroclaw with invitations for the summer jobs he also mentioned the name of Janusz Pelc. Then my friend Karol Pelc recalled that he may be his cousin, who for a while was working as a journalist and was now delegated by the Communist party to supervise sensitive travels of Polish students to hostile western countries.

We selected seven friends who would like to travel to England to work in the orchards over the summer. Reniek, Karol and I invited Leszek Szlachcic and Andrzej Witkowski. The remaining four places we offered to managers in the Student Travel Office, to do with them whatever they saw fit. We included the Student Travel Office in our plans to try and afford ourselves some assurance that they wouldn't obstruct the bureaucratic process of applying for our passports. We had some concerns about the legality of our arrangement because all of us had already graduated from Polytechnic Institute except one person, Mr. Glazier, Reniek's cousin. Officially, we were no longer university students. Officials in the Student Travel Office quickly allocated the remaining four invitations to their own girlfriends. In July 1958 Reniek and I moved to Warsaw and stayed at the Student Hostel on the main street in Warsaw, Krakowskie Przedmieście (Krakow Suburb). The historical name of the hostel was and still is

“Dziekanka” (rectory). It was built in the 15th century as a rectory for the dean of St. John parish. We did not expect passport formalities to last long. Unfortunately, the Passport Office dragged its feet, probably investigating our political attitudes, and two more months passed before we got out passports allowing us to travel to England. It was already the middle of September. What surprised us was that the one person deemed ineligible to travel on a student invitation, was a student, Mr. Glazier. He was the only one to whom the Passport Office refused a passport. No explanation was given.

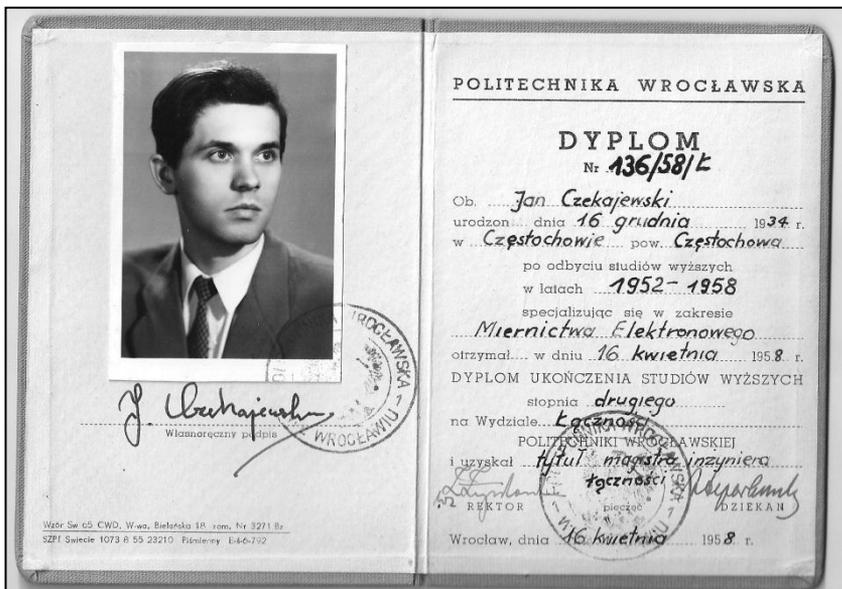
In 1958, Brussels hosted the World’s Fair, Expo 58. It was a showcase for culture and products from many countries. We decided to visit Expo 58 on the way to England. The Polish authorities allowed us to take only \$5 per person for travel expenses. Fortunately, we could purchase railway tickets with the local Polish currency which was not universally convertible. To survive a few days trip and stay in Brussels, during Expo 58, we equipped ourselves with imperishable food, such as hard, dark chocolate, dry Polish sausage called “hunter sausage” and a few large loaves of bread. The four girlfriends of the officials from the Travel Office were traveling with us. In Berlin we had to change trains. When we moved our belongings the sack with the loaves of bread came untied bread started rolling along the station platform to the amusement of passersby.

When in Brussels we pooled our meager hard currency resources and found a small hotel, in which we rented one room with a few beds. All of us crowded in to this room for three days, after which we were expelled by management, which did not find our presence sufficiently profitable. The lady in charge of the hotel occasionally inspected our room in the wee hours, checking to make sure we did not share beds with the girls. She was surprised that we did not. All three days in Brussels we ate chocolate, hunter sausage and bread. The result was constipation. After being kicked out of the hotel, we had no choice but to board a train to the resort town of Ostend where the train would be loaded onto the English Chanel ferry and continue to London.

We arrived in Ostend at 9 p.m. and found that the last ferry had already left. The next would depart in the morning. We had no choice but to sleep at the railway station. Here, unlike in Poland

where the railway stations served as overnight shelters for travelers, the buildings were locked at night. Sleeping on the street was not feasible in late September when cold wind from the English Chanel surely would have resulted in us freezing to death. We begged the Station Master to allow us to stay in the building. He agreed on the condition that he would lock us up in the building for the night. We were not alone in our misery. There were also three English students in the same situation. Once locked in the building we went to the station restaurant and opened our bottles of vodka that we had carried with us from Poland as a universal bartering currency. We didn't sleep much and in the morning we got on the ferry which took us to London. In London, on the railway platform was Andrzej Stypulkowski, disgusted, because he expected us two months ago. We were supposed to be in England in June and July, not in September and October. All the strawberries and plums were harvested already and Stypulkowski didn't know what to do with us.

Finally, he found a farm in Lincolnshire that needed seasonal workers to pick up potatoes. We traveled there by train while the girls traveling with us already had other contacts or relatives in London. They disappeared quickly and never reported



Polytechnic Diploma from Wrocław Polytechnic with a specialty of electronic measurements.

to pick up potatoes. Obviously they had better options.

Head-on collision with an English potato

Upon our arrival at the farm we were housed in the former barracks of the British Air force from WWII. It was a large building with a glass roof. We slept together with probably 50 other seasonal young workers from a dozen countries. We Poles were the minority. Most were from Yugoslavia, the only Communist country to allow its citizens free travel to Western Europe. That night was nightmarish. Cold rain drummed on the glass roof and thin, shabby blankets, probably never washed, did not protect us from the cold. There was no heating. In the morning, we had to be out of bed at 6 a.m. to indulge in a skimpy breakfast with black lukewarm coffee. Our small group of Poles, Andrzej, Leszek, Reniek and I were all assigned to different three person units. Each team had to pick up potatoes dug out by the mechanized device pulled by the tractor. I noticed that the Yugoslavians maneuvered themselves to the positions of authority. They were frequent visitors to this farm. They spoke better English than anyone else. In sharp contrast, I couldn't utter a single sentence in English—I might as well have been deaf and mute. The tractor was faster and more efficient than our ability to gather the potatoes. It made a full circle and was pushing us from behind. There was no option to pick up fewer potatoes than the others in the team. The team was paid by its number of baskets. My companions came here to make money. I came there more as a tourist. There was a short break at noon then we resumed our potato gathering again until sunset.

I couldn't stretch for eight hours. What irritated me the most was that the driver of the tractor, a Yugoslavian had with him a transistor radio blasting at full volume a very popular song in Italian, "Volare, Ho! ... Ho! ... Cantare, Ho! ... Ho! ...". At that time this song was performed by many American and European singers—one of them, Dean Martin. In the evening, I collapsed in my bunk. The next morning I was so stiff and exhausted that I couldn't get up for breakfast. I decided to desert this place before it killed me. When I announced my intentions to my Polish companions, they were outraged. Leszek was the most outraged

and scolded me saying that I was a disgrace to the Polish Nation by confirming to the English Masters the image of a lazy Polish worker.

My argument was that the potatoes in England looked the same as potatoes in Communist Poland, only in Poland I didn't have to work as hard. I would learn nothing about the Free World staying here, except that in England, there are two classes—Proletariats and blood suckers. What's more, I could start believing in it and I could be converted into a Communist. I felt that I had some options and resources for another two weeks to stay in England and then return to Poland and its Polish potatoes, friendlier on the diner plate than laying in the British soil. My optimistic attitude was based on the fact that when leaving Wroclaw I brought with me a British bill of 10 pounds, which I purchased from Mr. Januszkiwicz, my coworker at Polytechnic. Its value was equivalent to probably \$300 in 2012 money. In addition, I had with me a transistor radio to barter or sell. It was the first battery operated radio made in Poland. The name of this radio was "Szarotka" (Edelweiss). Through a combination of hitchhiking and train I arrived in London and found my way to the home of Boleslaw Odulinski, Reniek's uncle.

Mr. Odulinski was a former Polish soldier of General Ander's Army, who was fighting alongside the British in North Africa and at Monte Casino in Italy. He also knew my father, Franciszek Czekajewski, because both were working, before the war, in Czestochowa for the Post, Telegraph and Telephone Company. After the war, Odulinski refused to return to Communist Poland and settled in London. He invited me to stay in his home for two weeks. In exchange, I gave him my transistor radio, a novelty at that time. I also felt secure that I had as a last resort my 10 pound note. I needed to break my 10 pound note into smaller bills at the bank. The note I brought from Poland looked different than the other British currency I had seen while in London. It looked more like a private check than money. It had no picture on it. I had purchased my banknote from Mr. Januszkiwicz who supposedly parachuted from Great Britain into Poland during the war as a liaison officer with the Polish underground. I assumed that the British had given him this money for his clandestine operation. Since I couldn't speak two words of

English, I asked Mr. Odulinski's daughter to go with me to the bank to change my 10 pound note into one pound denominations. When we got to the bank, we decided that I would wait outside while she conducted the "banking business" since she was fluent in English. After a while, she emerged and asked me to scram immediately. The bank officials determined that the note was a forgery. They even produced a letter to this extent. They demanded to know who brought this money to England. She told the bank officials that a Polish visitor, who had already left the country, had given her the note. Her story saved me from a police investigation. Upon returning to Poland I confronted Mr. Januszkiewicz, who sold me the 10 pound note and requested that he return my Polish money. Fortunately, I had a letter from the bank certifying that his pound note was bogus. After some hesitation, Mr. Januszkiewicz returned my money.

To this day I am not sure who was telling the truth. Maybe the British gave him the bogus note when he parachuted to Poland during the war or the British cancelled the validity of old notes, because too many were forged. Regardless, I was left with no spending money and was forced to return to Poland. Before I left London I visited the British Library, the same where Carl Marx wrote *Das Kapital* and found a book on different methods of measuring moisture. It was very relevant to my work at the institute, where I designed and repaired moisture meters for grain. After my return to Poland I wrote my first paper and it was published in a technical monthly "Pomiary, Automatyka, Kontrola" (Measurements, Automation and Control). I used this book as the base for this article. Two years later, when I showed this paper to Professor P.A. Tove at Uppsala University in Sweden, he offered me a job as a research assistant which opened many doors to many events ending with my emigration to America and building a successful business here.

Before I left London, I also went around town visiting different luxurious hotels. At that time every luxury hotel had an adhesive luggage sticker with a picture and name of the hotel. These stickers were given freely by the doorman. I collected a bunch of these stickers. One I especially liked was from Grosvenor-Kensington Hotel, which exists to this day. I plastered my suitcase with these stickers. Even as a young man I had a sense

of advertising and understood that Polish girls were admiring western visitors. Each time I traveled by train I carried my suitcase decorated with these stickers. These stickers changed the attitude of many a young lady. The result was that they were very much open for conversation and persuasion, an art in which I happened to excel.

The first time I left Poland to travel to Finland and then Sweden my biggest concerns regarding travel were what I would be eating and where I would be sleeping. Ironically, these were the least of my worries once I arrived in Finland and Sweden. My biggest problem was actually my shortcomings in communicating in a foreign language. My humor did not translate well from my well-polished Polish wit to my broken, unintelligent English in foreign countries. My English at that time was rudimentary at best and my Swedish interlocutors did not speak it any better than I. In Sweden, the art of conversation (which I had mastered in Poland and with which could I impress young ladies) was completely useless. I had to rely on my dancing skills and on the desperation of a small pool of the Swedish female population dissatisfied with the sluggish behavior of their male counterparts. They needed two light beers just to build up the courage to ask a girl to dance.

I returned to Poland humiliated by my inability to communicate. The first thing I did was hire a private tutor, a former soldier in the Polish army that had fought Germans in the West. My friend, Andrzej Witkowski shared expanses of informal conversations with him in English. I'm not sure how well our tutor spoke English, but it was certainly better than Witkowski or I. My new tutor introduced us to the small books of English conversations written for foreign students by Charles Ewart Eckersley. It was his most important contribution, on which I built my English knowledge. After 50 years of speaking English at work and the last 20 at home, I still have trouble with articles and the American accent. To native English speakers, who wonder about my linguistic shortcomings, I offer this explanation: I perfected my English in Sweden during conversations with Swedish girls. Lessons took place in the dark and most often in a horizontal position. During such conversations both of my hands were busy with other friendly activities and I had no mind to worry about my

spelling. I was under the impression that they understood me in spite of my Slavic accent and missing articles.

Meeting an English millionaire farmer on QM2

As time wore on, my current wife Laura and I had more and more trouble, adjusting our biological clocks to the time changes while traveling overnight to Europe. Consequently, we decided to travel from the U.S. to Europe by boat and return by plane. Fortunately, since 2004 Cunard Line built and now operates a transatlantic liner, the Queen Mary 2, which covers the distance from N.Y. to Southampton in England in six days. Traveling this way we can slowly adjust to the time change, one hour per day, and arrive in England perfectly rested. From there we usually travel to other destinations by plane. Mostly to Warsaw, Poland where many of my university colleagues still live. Travel on this beautiful boat recaptures the glory of traveling on board such magnificent liners in the last century as the French S.S. Normandy, the German S.S. Bismarck, the French S.S. Ile de France and tragically, the unfortunate British RMS Titanic, which sank April 14th, 1912 on its maiden voyage from Southampton to New York. The Titanic was owned by Cunard, the same Ship line which now owns and operates QM2. I've actually had occasion to sail on the QM2 from N.Y. to Southampton and in April, no less. In fact, what's more interesting is that we actually passed over the grave site of the Titanic on the exact anniversary of its sinking. Our captain declared a minute of silence, stopped an engine and rang bell as a salute to the victims of the disaster.

In addition to a gradual acclimation to the international time difference, another benefit of traveling by transatlantic liner is the opportunity for unique social encounters. Occasionally we were able to dine with interesting people and other times our company at the dining table could be really challenging. Most of the people traveling on QM2 in the Princess Class cabins probably have substantial wealth, as traveling in style on QM2 is not cheap. Sometimes one can overhear older ladies, for sure widows of wealthy businessmen, outbidding each other to determine which one of them has more "dough." Such ladies are usually richly decorated in gold and diamonds. For an ambitious man aspiring to

get rich without much work, these ladies constitute a rare opportunity to wed them, permanently or temporarily. As for myself, being married and traveling under a close and watchful eye of my lovely wife, I had no opportunity to pinpoint which of my intrinsic and spiritual values would be most appreciated by these ladies. I could only speculate.

This particular night, we were sitting at the dinner table with two other couples. One couple had a large farm in England, growing spices and herbs, but mostly spinach. As the climate in England does not allow farming year round they leased large areas of farm land in Spain and Morocco. In England they had a packaging and distribution center in the county of Lincolnshire. When I introduced myself and said that I was born in Poland, the owner of the farm mentioned that he employed many seasonal Polish workers in his packaging company in England. He prized them for hard work and most likely little demands on pay. His comment rekindled my memory of Lincolnshire County, where I picked up potatoes behind the tractor 50 years ago in 1958. It was my first visit to the glamorous Western Europe. Maybe the farm where I was picking up potatoes was the same or in close proximity to the land now owned by my spinach millionaire?

In jest, I disclosed to my millionaire-farmer, that some time ago, 50 years to be exact, I worked for one day as a farm boy on a potato farm in Lincolnshire County. I told him how I was to pick up potatoes behind the tractor and that the work conditions were harsher then on the collective farms in Communist Poland. Work on the Lincolnshire farm was back breaking. I told the farmer on QM2 that I was traveling to England to file a law suit demanding compensation for damages to my health. Obviously my lower back pains could be traced back to these old injuries. The farmer didn't think my joke was very funny. Nevertheless, my memory drifted back 50 years to the time when a few friends and I were trying to get out of Poland to explore "glamorous" Western Europe.



Laura on the QM2

Vacation in Romania

Upon returning from imperialist Western Europe after my short-lived employment as a potato gatherer, I increased my efforts to learn simple English in case I should again find myself stranded in a nation of imperialists. After a year of occasional tutoring with a former soldier of the Polish army fighting during the Second World War alongside the British in North Africa and Italy, I could communicate in Pidgin English with others who understood some English, but scantily. As usual, while living in Wroclaw in Western Poland I experienced major life changes in the vicinity of Swidnicka Street. This particular day, in the summer of 1959, I was walking by the Polish Travel Agency “Orbis.” In their window they had a display advertising a two week summer vacation on the Romanian Black Sea Coast in the resort town of Mamaia. The price was listed as 2,000 Polish zloty, which was a bargain even for me. This curiously affordable opportunity just so happened to catch my attention at a time when my financial situation was much better than most citizens of the Polish Peoples’

Republic due to my enterprising spirit and underground activity manufacturing my dental polishing machines.

If I had to say why the trip was so affordable, I'd have to guess that it had something to do with the fact that very few Polish people would be excited to visit another Communist state. In addition, Romania was even more oppressive and underprivileged than Poland. Nevertheless, spending two week's wages to bask on the sunny beaches of the Black Sea looked attractive to me and I enlisted for this trip, paying 2,000 zloty in cash. Orbis also took care of obtaining the special permit authorizing me to travel in countries within the Socialist block, to which Romania was faithful.

At that time, traveling by plane was nearly unheard of leaving the only way to travel to Romania by train, which took two solid days and nights. Fortunately, a sleeping car was included in the total cost of my vacation. To reach the Romanian coast one had to travel through the town of Bratislava in Slovakia, which is located on the border with Austria, on the banks of the Danube River. Next was a leg through Hungary and Romania to the port town of Constanca. From there buses took us to Mamaia. The train that brought us to Constanca originated in Warsaw where it stopped for some passengers returning to Western Europe from Moscow. Our train had a short stop in Wroclaw, where I and a few other Polish tourists joined the Orbis travel tour. We Poles traveled in style in sleeping cars with coupons for dinner and drinks in the dining car. The rest of the travelers on the train had to sit on barren benches in second class cars which were overcrowded. Since it was a long trip I decided to walk along the train and visit different compartments to find some interesting girls to converse with, preferably in English.

Unfortunately such girls I did not find; but I found group of 10 American students, all male, who after visiting Moscow and Warsaw were returning home via Vienna in Austria. With hopes of polishing my English, I engaged them in conversation. Time was passing quickly in the Americans' company and shortly I noticed that the train stopped at the Czechoslovakian border town of Bratislava. Soon the border patrol officer opened a door and asked the Americans for passports. They gathered their passports and handed them to the officer. He disappeared for 15 minutes and

returned with their passports handing them over to one of the students for distribution to their owners. He did not ask me for a passport, assuming that I was one of the Americans. Apparently he didn't compare the number of passports with the number of people in the compartment. I escaped his scrutiny.

Shortly after the train started moving and by chance I looked through the window noticing that the train became much shorter. Only three cars in the front of the train were moving while my car, along with seven others, was still standing on the platform of the station. My suitcase and identity card I needed was in the sixth sleeping car. I panicked. I approached the conductor asking him where we were going. He replied that in a minute or two we would cross the border bridge on the Danube River and would be in "Capitalist" Austria. I rushed to the car's entrance trying to jump out of the still slow-moving train. Unfortunately, along the train were posted multiple sentries with submachine guns pushing me back inside the train. These soldiers were a border military unit posted to thwart any attempt by local Czech or Slovak people to escape via this train to Austria. They were ordered to shoot anyone attempting to desert their Socialist homeland.

My situation was different. I refused to go to Austria. My plans were set to have a nice vacation on the Black Sea in Romania not on the slopes of the Austrian Alps. Fortunately, the soldiers somehow comprehended the situation and did not shoot me. Luckily, they were ordered to shoot people jumping into this train not jumping out. The commanding officer noticed my struggle with the soldiers and ordered the train to stop and allow me to return to my sleeping car without penalty. In fact, in my opinion, I should have received a medal honoring me as a "Hero of Socialist Poland" for my exemplary behavior when faced with the opportunity to escape to the West. Over the years of Communist rule many people lost their lives being shot at this border trying to escape from Communism, while I voluntarily returned to my Socialist motherland. The reason was that that I like to choose my own moment and place to relocate or escape and will not be subjected to random chance such as I met in Bratislava. The moment when I decided to liberate myself from Communist pretension came five years later and that decision was on my terms.

In the meantime my sleeping car was pulled by another locomotive and was heading toward Romania via Hungary. In the front of my compartment door stood a couple of people, obviously students from Sweden. They could not afford a sleeping car and looked devastated from a lack of sleep. As with the previous American students, I struck up a conversation with these two Swedes. Feeling sorry for their miserable condition, I offered them my bed during the day as I decided to spend my days in the dining car sipping fine Hungarian red cabernet, Egri Bikaver (Bulls Blood).

The Swedish couple was very grateful for my generosity and asked how they could reciprocate. I mentioned to them that my dream was to visit Sweden, but due to the lack of convertible currency (Polish zloty at that time could not be converted to any other currency) I had to rely on some kind of exchange visit, meaning that I could host in Poland one Swedish student who in turn could invite me as a guest to Sweden. I gave my incidental friends my address and asked them to inquire if their friends would like to visit Poland for one month's time.

After arriving to the Black Sea resort of Mamaia I enjoyed a beautiful vacation in a hotel which was built and equipped to Western standards. Apparently, the Westerners failed to appear and the Romanians had to discount the rooms to brotherly Socialist comrades, like me. After my return to Poland, I got a letter from a student of mathematics from Uppsala University. His name was Lars Inge Hedberg who apparently read a little advertisement placed in student newspaper "Ergo" by my Swedish train acquaintances. In his letter Lars offered to come to Poland for one month and host me in Uppsala if I managed to come there. For a Swede to come to Poland was easy. For me, a visit to Sweden required serious justification and I risked that my application for a passport would be rejected under the suspicion that I would never return. Therefore, for the time being, I asked Lars Inge to come to Wroclaw and in the meantime I was thinking about my next move needed to get a foreign passport. Lars Inge came to Wroclaw by car, a SAAB. I took one month's vacation to travel with him around Poland. One thing I noticed was his voracious appetite. He could easily eat six scrambled eggs each morning and have full meals at noon and dinner. I was happy to see his appetite, because

I took it as an indicator how I would be eating in Sweden. In this case I was mistaken. Lars' appetite in Poland was not an indication that he ate similarly in Sweden. In fact in his home he ate four times less and when I finally arrived to Uppsala, I was permanently hungry. He commented that food in Sweden is expensive and by saving on meals he could afford such nice things as a car like his SAAB. Now, in 2012, after 67 years since its inception, the factory that manufactured these remarkable Swedish cars is bankrupt. Unfortunately, when inviting Lars to Poland I failed to negotiate minimum calories in food allocated to this exchange. It was my fault after all.

Fifty years later I learned from the documents obtained from the Polish Institute of (Historical) Remembrances, that Lars Inge Hedberg was mistaken with another Swede, Dr. Beckman who supposedly worked for British Intelligence. I also learned from the same source the long-forgotten name of a Swedish student who traveled with me on the train to Romania. His name was Rejdar Larson. Apparently, I mentioned his name to the Polish secret agent who interviewed me after my return to Poland from my first trip to Sweden.

As for Lars Inge Hedberg, after I left Sweden I did not keep in contact with him. He became a prominent Swedish mathematician, professor at Linköping University in Central Sweden and President of the Swedish Society of Mathematicians. In 2005 during one of my visits to Sweden I called him from Uppsala, and we had a nice chat about his trip to Poland in 1959. Fifty years later while on the phone with Lars Inge I was tempted to remind him that during his visit to Poland in 1959 he stretched the limits of my hospitality when, in the movie theater in Wrocław, sitting next to my wife Elisabeth, he kept her right hand tenderly by his left hand. Where he kept his right hand I could only speculate, because the theater was dark. I could ask Lars about that situation, but I did not. Now it's too late. I will never know for sure where he kept his right hand, because Lars died a few months later after our conversation.

The more I think about the wandering hands of Lars Inge Hedberg, the more I suspect that such behavior is common with mathematicians. Since then I never take a chance sitting my wife next to a mathematician. The point of this chapter is that that while

traveling to Romania in 1959 I secured an invitation to Sweden which changed the rest of my life.

Cotton spinners of Bielawa

(Treatise on Socialist economy)

An article in Wroclaw's Communist Party Daily, *Workers' Gazette* inspired my voyage to Bielawa, a small town in the southwestern part of Poland. The paper revealed that in Bielawa, there was no shortage of ham or vodka; however, there was a shortage of heterosexual men. This was the main problem troubling the best brains of the Party. The challenge was unusual. The problem could not be dealt with by the repressive methods of the Secret Police or propaganda by roving speakers, known as "prelegents" (propaganda speakers). Officials of the Communist party could not find any advice on this subject in the volumes written by Marx, Engels or Lenin. As we know today, the Japanese during WWII set up special institutions to deal with the natural sexual instincts of their soldiers. They set up "comfort centers" staffed with mostly Korean females forced by Japanese occupiers to provide this service. Unfortunately, a decade later, the Communist government that owned all industry and citizens in Poland, could not directly copy the Japanese war-time "comfort" technology. The problem was reversed. In Poland, the "comfort women" were well known for a millennium, enjoying the art of their profession. Now they were the last bulwark of private enterprise which Communism left to be operated by individuals. Bielawa's problem was not in the shortage of women but in the shortage of heterosexual men, comforting or not. It had to be dealt with according to Polish tradition by an individual approach.

In Bielewa, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Germans built large textile factories, now inherited by Poland. They were staffed with 90% women. The pay in the textile industry was poor and able-bodied men were not eager to settle in the desolate town of Bielawa. They preferred the larger city of Wroclaw with a strong machining industry and better pay.

Perturbed deeply by this news, I decided to take personal remedial action and travel to Bielawa to assess the situation. For this purpose, I decided to combine my mission with official

business. I was hoping that while in Bielawa I could procure some orders for our Institute, which would pay my monthly salary. In addition, if my trip to Bielawa was for business reasons, the Institute could cover all travel expenses. I convinced the head of the Institute, Professor Bincer, that my trip would be beneficial to the Institute. After a few hours trip from Wroclaw on a dingy bus from PKS (Polish Bus Travel Company) I arrived in Bielawa. Immediately, I went to the local textile mill where a few hundred young women were working on three shifts, manufacturing textiles for home and export sales. My first stop was the office of the Vice President of Plant Operations, where the young engineer in charge cordially received me. Not losing any time, I presented him with the reason for my visit.

“Dear Comrade Director, I represent the Institute of Radio Broadcasting of Wroclaw Polytechnic. We specialize in a number of fields, which may benefit your factory. For example, we can measure noise and soundproof against it, we can measure humidity in the mill environment, and we can check to see if your lightning rods placed on the building’s roofs are properly grounded. Proper grounding will protect you and your building from lightening, which causes sudden death and fires. If you find any of our services beneficial to your enterprise, a combined team of our scientists is willing to extend to you a “personal gratification” equivalent to 10% of the value of an entire order placed with our Institute.”

The plant manager got up from behind his desk and disappeared to the next room. I was sitting there, worrying that he was calling the police to inform them of an attempted bribery of a state official. Every minute that passed seemed like an eternity. Then, suddenly, the director reappeared with a strange looking device in his hand. It was something like a twisted bicycle wheel. Such deformation happens to a bicycle wheel when one drives a bike straight into a wall. It was about 20 cm (8 inches) in diameter. It was very heavy and made of solid cast iron. Along the edge it had a very smooth groove milled with great precision. It was a guide for the cotton thread. The strange twisted shape of this guide was required for machines winding cotton bobbins. The delivery of cotton thread should be dense in the bobbin center and sparse toward the edges. The end product should look like a bobbin not as

a drum. This was accomplished by a twist in the wheel.

The director informed me that no one in Poland could supply such devices, especially when his order called for only 600 pieces. The whole production of Bielawa Textile Mill depended on the supply of these cast iron guides. Until now the factory relied on the stock of old German made guides. Unfortunately, these guides were cracking fast, and there were only a few spares left.

“Dear Comrade Engineer,” the director said. “If you could manufacture such guides the whole factory would bless you, and you could even be decorated with a medal: Hero of Socialist Work.”

Neither offer impressed me, but nevertheless, I hesitantly accepted this assignment. I knew from the start, that we couldn't make such devices because our meager resources consisted of two voltmeters, three soldering irons and one drill press for wood. These tools, for sure could not be useful for casting and machining iron. I packed the heavy cast iron guide in my briefcase and shook the hand of the technical director. The next steps I took led me to the employees' club-café, where I expected to glance at female employees longing for the company of a heterosexual man. To kill time before my evening departure I ordered a bottle of apple wine and a cup of dreadful coffee.

A multitude of young women were coming and going but none expressed any interest in my lonely persona. I was thinking that they did not realize that I was there with a special altruistic mission in mind from which they could benefit. The one attractive woman I approached dismissed me with scorn. This left me with the conviction that the journalist of *Workers' Gazette* exaggerated the whole situation. Disappointed, I checked the time table of the busses to Wroclaw and I found a bus leaving at 4 p.m. I paid for the wine and coffee and left for the bus station. When I arrived at the bus station, I faced a small crowd of people waiting for the same trip. When the bus arrived, I noticed that one man, elegantly dressed in a beige coat expressed special interest in me. I was sure that it was an agent of the Secret Police assigned to track me down and get information about my visit to the strategic center of the textile industry.

My suspicion was confirmed when the same individual maneuvered himself in such a way, that he ended up sitting next to me on the bus. He immediately started polite conversation, disclosing that he was a local doctor who lived in the next town. Unfortunately, in his area there was a scarcity of cultural entertainment. Therefore, once a week, he took a trip to Wroclaw since it was full of culture like theaters, opera, concerts etc. He also mentioned that if I ever came to this area again I was welcome in his home--he was even willing to share his bed with me. While talking to me his hand migrated slowly toward my knee. I managed to intercept his hand, before he reached my crotch. I told him that I was prone to enjoy the company of factory girls and female medical doctors, regardless of how poor or rich they might be. To alleviate his disappointment when the bus arrived to Wroclaw I invited him to join me for dinner at the club of the Engineers' Association. Unfortunately, this fellow was somehow very tense and could not finish his chicken soup with noodles, which is a well-known remedy for the flu or cold. He got up and left. I felt relieved, but at the same time puzzled, who exactly was he? Maybe he was, after all, a secret agent working under



Cotton mill in Bielawa, Poland

homosexual cover? Maybe my files in the Secret Police headquarters were mixed up with some other enemy of the state who had “alternative sexual orientation?”

The next day I presented to Professor Bincer the cast iron thread guide. The Professor took one look at this device and told me that if I would like to continue enjoying the status of junior assistant, I had to find somebody who could make such a thing, because he had no idea what to do with it. As a consolation, the Professor mentioned, that if by chance, I succeeded in finding a manufacturer for such a device who could fill an order of only 600 guides, then he would present this project to the University Project Review Committee as a Complex Audio System for the entire Bielawa textile factory.

At that time I still was living with my aunt and uncle on Smoluchowskiego Street. My uncle, Eugeniusz Woyczynski, after the war, had a small foundry that cast church bells from bronze obtained by melting statues of Adolf Hitler and Frederick the Great. Later his small church bell foundry was “nationalized” and he found work at a large state enterprise making earth-moving machinery. I asked him if he knew someone in his factory that could make such complex cast iron guides.

My uncle, while working at the state enterprise, still believed in the obsolete idea that everyone should do the best work he is able to do in whatever political system he lived. This made him rather unpopular with the Communist Party Organization, because it was up to the party organization to maintain workers’ discipline. Engineer Woyczynski, who had a tarnished past and suspicious intentions was the last person the Party would trust with such an assignment. In addition, plant workers considered him kind of a maniac, who organized workshop meetings enticing them with solid work in spite of meager pay. Finally, according to the principle that “No good deed will be left unpunished,” factory management relegated him to the technical library where he could not encourage much dissent among the books. He worked there until his retirement.

At the time of my problems with cast iron guides, he was still managing production and he was acquainted with the head engineer with an unusual name, Cesarz, which in Polish means “Cesar.” When Mr. Cesarz came to our home I presented him with

the cast iron guide from Bielawa. He said that in the factory's foundry there was a person of unmatched talents. He could make unusual forms to cast difficult products. He could apply his talents, but he would have to be paid extra in cash. He would cast our guides at night when no one would see what he was doing. Mr. Cesarz also found a factory machinist who could machine the smooth groove along the edge of the guide. Within a month I was presented with 600 guides for a price of 250 zloty each, payable in cash. How Mr. Cesarz divided this money between his co-conspirators remains to this day a mystery. The important thing is that no one ended up in prison and the factory in Bielawa was able to manufacture textiles for another decade, long after I left Socialist Poland for better pastures in the West.

Professor Bincer invoiced the factory in Bielawa for 950 zloty for each guide, which was sent to the university account. The university took 50% of the amount as statutory overhead. From the remaining amount of 285,000 zloty I had to cover manufacturing expenses and 10% commission for the director of the textile mill. Professor Bincer selflessly refused any additional share. He was already paid a statutory fee of 40 zloty per hour for project supervision. Since such a large sum could not be withdrawn from the university all at once, we had to split it into monthly installments.

Now we had another hurdle to cross. I troubled myself with the question of how we could get this money from the university account and into our pockets. All of us, junior assistants, were authorized to work only 40 hours per month on extra research projects at a pay rate of 15 zloty per hour. All engineers, including myself, had already met this limit. I needed more people who could be listed as participants in this project. In desperation, I decided to venture into the lion's lair or maybe more accurately, the viper's pit—the departments of Marxism and Leninism Philosophy and department of Political Economy. "Researchers" in these miserable departments had no extra work. They were neglected by the Communist system to which they were obedient servants. I felt pity for them. I approached them with a proposal of 10% commission if they would agree to be listed as coworkers on the Bielawa project. I explained to them that their only obligation was to drag themselves, once a month, to the

university cashier, collect payment for work they did not do and sign the payroll list.

Usually such a system is known to be used by United States politicians. At that time I was naively thinking that I invented this system. Overall, the Bielawa project worked well. Marxists-Leninists lived up to their Communist mentality. They always promptly and honestly returned 90% of the money to me with a word of appreciation for giving them an opportunity to correct the mistakes of the Communist system. They were Capitalists at heart. They were precursors of the same group which captured the steering wheel of Democratic government in Poland after the collapse of Communism. They were older colleagues of former President Alexander Kwasniewski and Solidarity Heroes, former Communists, who now became advocates of Democracy.

In the end the biggest benefactor of Bielawa Project was the director of the textile mill, he got 10% commission, cash, tax free from the top of the university invoice. Factory employees benefited as well as the factory continued operation for the next decade on guides made under this project. The Polytechnic in Wroclaw also benefited, because it received 50% of the total sum (285,000 zloty) in the form of overhead. Overhead contributed to necessary expenses, as libraries, maintenance and probably support for the useless Marxist-Leninist Departments. I just facilitated a generous transfer of funds from a wealthy industry to a cash-starved academic institution.

Mr. Cesarz and his artisan of cast iron molds got what they asked for. They became unusually productive and society benefited from their work. I tripled my income for a year. But under the Communist system we were all criminals. If the Communist government had enforced its laws regulating economy, we all would have ended up in prison. I knew that I couldn't operate for long under such a system. I had to go somewhere without all the finagling and bribery necessary to be an entrepreneur. Somewhere where I could set up my own business and operate it according to known principles. I left Communist Poland not because of hunger or persecution; but simply because the atmosphere of living a constant lie was unbearable for me.

How I built a TV station in the city of Radom

One day, probably in spring of 1959, Professor Stefan Bincer for whom I worked as a “technical assistant” making money by repairing moisture meters for grain, asked me if I knew something about television. I knew a little, but his question intrigued me. I asked why he was interested in television. He told me that now, in Poland, there was an explosion of TV stations. They built large ones in the large cities, but neglected the smaller provinces. For small communities located in the valleys or many miles from the main TV transmitters, the TV signal was weak and people were eager to have better reception. One such town, located near Warsaw was Radom. It was far enough away that the people had difficulty receiving signals from the newly built TV station in Warsaw.

Professor Bincer apparently recognized my budding commercial talents and asked me to travel to Radom to evaluate the situation locally. In the meantime he was told that one of the students in the same department of electronics knew how to build small TV relay stations. His name was Andrzej Drozd. He learned to build TV receivers and transmitters in his basement and even installed one on the highest peak of the Sudeten Mountains, Sniezka (Snowcap). His transmitter was picking up signals from TV stations in Prague, in the Czech Republic and transmitted it to Wroclaw. Anybody who had a TV receiver in Wroclaw could see Czech TV on his Russian built TV set. The TVs were Russian because there was no Polish production of television receivers and only occasionally were Soviet-built receivers available. At that time all TV was black and white. In fact I had one, purchased from a Polish farmer who repatriated from the Soviet Union and did not know what to do with it. This TV set was not sensitive enough to receive Andrzej’s signals, so I had to build a front stage amplifier to make it operational. I did not realize that my amplifier reversed the phase of the signal transposing the color display so that black was shown as white and in reverse. It was difficult to enjoy programs in negatives, but it proved that Andrzej’s repeater worked.

At the time when I was traveling to Radom to pitch the TV repeater for their city, Professor Bincer hired Andrzej as a chief

consultant who in turn was teaching all of us how to build such devices for sale. I traveled by train all night and when I arrived in Radom I was really tired. Not knowing where to start I went first to the county office. Walking down a long corridor, I noticed a door with a name: Security Services, Colonel Bieruta. I knocked on this door and a small man appeared asking what kind of business I came with. I told him that I represented a group of scientists from Wroclaw Polytechnic who built retransmission TV stations and we had heard that Radom was one of the cities that may benefit from our stations because the TV signal from Warsaw was extremely bad. If the citizens of Radom would like to enjoy the tribute to the Soviet Armed Forces in Moscow on the anniversary of the October Revolution, we in Wroclaw were eager to help show it on local TV.

Colonel Bieruta looked at me with interest and commented that he was ready to die for the Revolution but he was not sure that I was ready to make the same sacrifice as well. He asked me what kind of profit I personally expected to have from such an enterprise. Then I explained to him a plot which was thought out by Professor Bincer. First we would have to establish a citizen's committee to build the TV station in Radom. This committee would comprise prominent citizens or party secretaries, directors of local factories and municipal government. Then a bank account should be opened, not in the State Central Bank, but in the Local Savings Union. Each of the prominent citizens should invest the equivalent of \$10 to start the business. Then the rest of the money should come from the local factories, some of which were very rich, as Radom was for many years a center of the armaments industry. In the next stage, the citizen's committee should issue two purchase orders. One order should be submitted to the Wroclaw Polytechnic and should constitute 50% of the total cost. For this money we could purchase the needed components to build the relay station. Polytechnic Institute was needed because only state enterprises had availability to purchase needed electronic components. The second order, for the remaining 50% should be addressed and sent to the Group of Scientists under the guidance of Professor Bincer and should specify that the money is for the research and development of the retransmission TV station in Radom. After completion of the retransmission TV station all of

the “conspirators” including Andrzej and Professor Bincer would get paid. We could withdraw the money from the Local Savings Union. Apparently, in this strictly Communist society, there was still a window of opportunity to use the Savings Union to pay money to individuals.

Somewhere I also mentioned to colonel Bieruta that his personal interest in this enterprise, in form of “commission” would be appropriately taken care. Once the entire scheme became clear to Colonel Bieruta he invited me, naturally at my expense, to the local restaurant, “European.” Once at the restaurant he ordered 100 grams of vodka chased by marinated herring which was followed with a few more rounds of vodka. Once in good spirits, Colonel Bieruta started to address me as “Comrade Engineer” and started complaining that the central Communist government in Warsaw did not appreciate and value people like him, who 10 years ago were guarding Socialism and killing enemies of the state sent to Poland as saboteurs from London or America. Now our government had become soft and treacherous. It bent over to the demands of enemies of the state. One day good times would return to Poland and people like me and Colonel Bieruta would be again appreciated. I was avoiding this subject, not being sure if this was just a meaningless rant of a drunkard or a deliberate provocation. After the third time I was kicked out of the Communist Youth Organization for dancing the boogie-woogie and making inappropriate jokes about Communism and Comrade Stalin, I refined my threshold for interacting without endangering my freedom or even more importantly, my business.

After two or three hours of drinking our lunch, the waiter approached me with a bill which again enraged my interlocutor. “Look, Comrade Engineer, in my time, when I was responsible for the City of Radom Secret Police no waiter was brave enough to approach me with a bill. When I got to the coatroom, I always found few hundred zloty stashed in my coat pocket. It was a time of respect. Where is this country heading now?”

After exchanging customary kisses on both cheeks with Colonel Bieruta, I concluded that my business in Radom was successful and it was time to head to the railway station to board my third class car to return to Wroclaw and report my findings to Professor Bincer. In fact, my mission to Radom was fully

successful and soon we had received two orders, one for Polytechnic Institute covering the cost of the hardware and another order addressed to the Research and Development Group under the leadership of Professor Stefan Bincer for the design work of the hardware and antenna. In fact, the antenna was designed by another colleague of Andrzej--Mr. Daniel Bem, who later became the dean of the electronic department and a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Once we received the orders, Andrzej Drozd started building the TV repeater and Daniel Bem designed the appropriate antenna.

Choosing the antenna's location for the TV station

In a few months, the time had come for my next visit to Radom. This time the official reason was to choose the best place for the antenna and transmitter location. For this visit, two other people came with me to Radom, Mr. Vladek Krawiec, a technician, and Andrzej, the chief designer. My function was more of a political nature to make sure that these two didn't talk too much about finances.

My main contact, Colonel Bieruta, was no longer a colonel and was no longer in charge of the local militia. Instead, the Communist Party assigned him to another responsible position, the CEO of the local Branch of the National Bank. The President before Colonel Bieruta was not very happy with the colonel's new assignment. The colonel probably felt more comfortable using a policeman's nightstick than balancing bank accounts but one way or another as a member of the selective "nomenclature" trusted by the Communist Party, he could not work in a less prominent position than the executive position. For me, the most important thing was that he was still in charge of the citizens' committee which was responsible for financing the construction of the TV transmitter.



Mr. W. Krawiec. Technician who helped to build the TV station in Radom, Poland.

Privately, Director Bieruta admitted that there were some advantages of working for the bank. One of them was a large pool of young female employees, who would do anything for management to obtain a promotion or two weeks paid vacation in one of the workers' resorts. To support his opinion, he suggested that Andrzej and I visit his bank and look over the personnel. We should take note which young ladies were worthy of the attention of scientists from the Polytechnic Institute and report to him. He would make sure that such ladies would show up at our hotel to establish a friendly relationship, helping with the proper positioning of the transmitting antenna.

I had some problems with Andrzej who was either blinded by love for another female friend in our department, or overcome with objections resulting from his middle class, capitalist mentality. It took a lot of persuasion to overcome his objections and finally he agreed to participate in the party. At the agreed upon time two young ladies showed up with a bottle of homemade "visniovka" (cherry cordial) and two goblets, which were empty glass jars in which mustard was sold. We had to arrange a



Friends in Wrocław who built TV relay stations (from the left Eugeniuś Hajek, Jan Czekajewski, Jozef Smulkowski, Andrzej Drozd). Picture taken in 1980 during one of Jan's first visits to Poland

conspiracy with the help of our third resident Vladek Krawiec, who because of his young age (19) could not participate in such mature entertainment. At that time I was 25 and Andrzej was a year or two older than me. Vladek's duty was to divert the attention of an older lady who was guarding the entrance and distribute keys to the hotel rooms. His function was to make sure that our female guests could sneak in unnoticed. At that time the main focus of the Communist Party was to guard heterosexual morality. Homosexuals were supposedly becoming eradicated by the new Socialist system. One could say that it created a haven for gay individuals as no one paid any attention if they slept together.

Once our lady friends entered our hotel room, and after customary introductions were followed with shots of cherry vodka I had to explain to the ladies our precarious position. As scientists of TV we were exposed to high frequency radiation which in due time may cause irreparable damage to our sex drive. In the meantime, TV frequency radiation had a stimulating effect. Since science had yet to determine the longevity of this side effect we had no way of knowing how long it would last. In a fashion similar to Madame Curie-Sklodowska, we were sacrificing our health for science and for the city of Radom which desperately needed TV reception.

The two ladies listened with some interest to my elaboration, but were more down to earth than I expected them to be. They asked how well I knew President Bieruta, and if I could mention to him that they were interested in two weeks' vacation in the resort in Lower Silesia, preferably Kudowa Springs. I assured them that I had a cordial relationship with the bank principal and that there would be no problem with their vacation schedule. Then atmosphere then became more relaxed, supported by rounds of cherry vodka, while it lasted. When the clock struck 12 midnight, it was time for our ladies to dress up and go, because the next day we had to be sober for an official party with the entire nobility of the Radom municipality and the citizen's committee for the construction of the TV station.

Ball of the television committee

The next day as I already mentioned the citizen's committee decided to throw the biggest party with dancing at a prominent local restaurant, Polonia. For this fete, a large room was rented on the upper floor and a lavish collection of dishes for the enjoyment of participants was provided. We were served breaded pork cutlets with cabbage, potatoes and shredded red beets. Copious amounts of quality vodka were ordered. We had our choice of appetizers to select from including herring marinated in oil or herring potato salad. Incidentally, the marinated herring nearly led to a tragic, counter-revolutionary incident. The day before I also called my alternative love, Zofia in Lodz, to come and enjoy herself at the expense of the Radom TV committee. Now I do not remember how I was able to accommodate her in the same room as three male scientists, or paid for a separate room for her in the same hotel. The orchestra also provided for music for the dancing enjoyment of participants, numbering close to 50. I don't think that the members of the committee were numbered more than 10, but apparently they invited anybody they knew who would like to get drunk for free.

After the atmosphere became more relaxed, the dancing started. Obviously President Bieruta was the first to lead the dance to the tune of Tango-Milonga. He asked Zofia to be his dancing partner. I didn't object mostly due to the fact that the scene soon became farcical because of the discrepancy of the director's meager height and Zofia's tall stature. Zofia was much taller, I would say nearly twice. Besides, Zofia had a prominent bosom which during dancing resided on both ears of President Bieruta. It was difficult to maintain my composure and refrain from laughing. I abstained from dancing and instead observed the pirouettes of President Bieruta with Zofia.

At one moment our technician Vladek, who already had too much to drink, got up from his seat with a fork in his hand. On the top of the fork a piece of unfinished herring was dangling, dripping with oil. Vladek was aiming it directly at Bieruta and Zofia and I realized that he was about to hit the President in his back. The president was completely unaware of the situation with both his ears clogged by Zofia's bosom. He could not be warned. We had

no time to lose. Andrzej and I rapidly approached Vladek and grabbed his fork. The situation would have become tragic, if Vladek, besides inflicting a spinal injury, had also stained President Bieruta's jacket with herring oil. Once Vladek realized his inappropriate behavior he started crying and apologized to President Bieruta for his outburst. He was lucky. Bieruta was still trusted by the Communist party to wear a concealed pistol and could have shot Vladek in revenge.

I was also concerned about a good financial relationship between us, "scientists," Polytechnic itself and the Radom TV committee, which was holding all the money. Fortunately, this part of the business did not suffer and Bieruta sympathized with Vladek's drunken outburst. When both gentlemen exchanged wet kisses I knew we would get our money, which was my main function as a commercial commissar in Radom. I didn't know at the time, that all the parties the TV Committee organized for us during our stay in Radom were paid for with the money that should have been paid to Polytechnic. Shortly after, I returned to Wroclaw and left for my trip to Finland and Sweden. Professor Bincer died during my first month's stay in Finland and I was dismissed from Polytechnic as a result of departmental reorganization. Nevertheless, my colleagues finished the job of building the TV station in Radom which functioned uninterrupted for the next 25 years. Apparently, our group of design engineers, under the "leadership of Professor S. Bincer" had no difficulty collecting 50% of the promised pay. Unfortunately, the Radom TV committee ran short of money to be paid to Polytechnic. Apparently, the expense of lavish parties was higher than the cost of the components that Polytechnic had purchased for the equipment. How it was resolved, I don't know as I was already living in Sweden beyond the reach of Socialist authorities.

Twenty five years later, after I was already a U.S. citizen and owner of my own company I read in a Polish paper, that the citizens of the city of Radom were protesting the closing of the TV relay station that we built in 1959. Apparently the new, larger TV station located on the Mount of Holy Cross did not provide as strong a signal as our small transmitter did. In spite of trespassing many moral and Socialist laws, we did a good job of bringing two generations of Radom citizens to the world of black and white TV.

Passport to the “Nordic Haven”

In today’s political climate, younger generations do not understand the difficulties that Polish people had to travel abroad. Nowadays we all have passports at home and at a moment’s notice, we can leave the country and visit foreign lands. Other countries are more defensive of comers rather than goers. The U.S. is paranoid of immigrants who can supposedly take away jobs from Americans, even if there are no Americans that would take such jobs, like lettuce picking or removing asbestos from old houses. In Communist Poland where I spent my youth, the government had another approach. It was afraid of people leaving the country, especially educated people.

The government assumed that it owned all the people and told them what to do and how much they would be paid. It was by design modern-day slavery. To keep people inside the country passports were issued only after a person applied for such a document and only to such people who could be trusted to return. After returning, the Secret Police would debrief them about their foreign visit, questioning them about whom they met and if they were approached by foreign intelligence services. In the first years (1945-1956) after the Soviet style system was established in Poland traveling abroad was nearly impossible, except for a very few trusted people with connections to the government. After 1956, the system was slightly liberalized and visits to family members living abroad were allowed, providing that such family was paying for all travel costs and lodging. The first time I went to the Western Country was in 1958 officially, as a student to pick potatoes on the English farm. There was no danger that I would defect Polish Communist paradise. But this first visit outside the iron curtain wet my appetite for learning how people live in foreign lands.

Living and parting with my aunt in Wroclaw

I have to give credit to my aunt, Otylia Woyczynska who, during her visit to Czestochowa, somehow recognized my intellectual potential and deemed me worthy of an investment for further development. Since tenth grade she invited me to spend summer vacation at her home in Wroclaw and tutored me in mathematics. She was a mathematician herself, one of a few female students of mathematics who graduated from Warsaw University before the start of the Second World War. During the war she married Eugeniusz Woyczynski, a mechanical engineer who split his time during the war between his company in Warsaw, producing submachine guns for the Polish underground, and his family home in Czestochowa, about 200km south west of Warsaw. At the end of the war in January 1945 Czestochowa was “liberated” by the advancing tanks of the Soviet army and by unfortunate chance the apartment house where the Woyczynskis lived was burned down by escaping Germans. Having no place to live, the Woyczynski family relocated to Wroclaw, formally the German city of Breslau where Eugeniusz took over a small bronze foundry specializing in casting church bells. He hit the jackpot with his foundry.

In Poland the Germans had stolen all of the church bells for metals needed in military armaments. For a while there was a high demand for church bells and these bells were purchased by parish priests with cash. To obtain the metal needed to cast church bells the customer, most often a priest, had to provide his own bronze. My uncle’s customers did this by knocking down German statues, starting with Hitler and ending with Frederick the Great. Occasionally, parish priests brought to my uncle the beautiful statues of Greek goddesses which Eugeniusz saved for his private admiration. These were rarely melted.

Perhaps he was conscious of the danger that the pagan spirit imbedded in the indecent statues could transfer to the church bells and that the bells sound would not inspire prayer, but rather unleash a plague of hedonistic endeavors. My Aunt Otylia became a school teacher of mathematics. When my aunt invited me to her home in 1952, the Woyczynski family had already lived in Wroclaw for five years. Eugeniusz had already lost his business--

confiscated by the state, as Communists banned any private enterprise to exist. He was then working as an engineer for a large state factory making earth moving machinery, such as cranes, excavators, bulldozers, etc.

I must be grateful for them that they took me under their wings, because my parents could not afford to support me at Polytechnic University in such a remote location. In fact, during my first semester at school, my mother fell gravely ill with a mental disorder and my father's meager salary at the phone company could hardly support my younger siblings, Adam born in 1947 and Anna in 1949.

I should say that I had a great rapport with my Uncle Eugeniusz during the first four years of my residence in their home, until something unexpected happened, which forced me to look for independent housing in the form of a rented room from Ms. Zelewska. As usual in my life, the dramatic change was caused by a young woman. This time it was a girl from Czestochowa that I invited to Wroclaw in pursuit of happiness. For this purpose I negotiated with my cousin Marek Czekajewski, also a student in Wroclaw, to use his apartment to disclose my aforementioned honorable intentions toward said woman. Unfortunately either she did not understand my intentions or I did not make myself clear enough, she refused to be cooperative. The girl resisted my advances and my plan ended not only in fiasco, but in disaster.

One day I invited her along with my friend Andrzej to my uncle's apartment to negotiate plans before her return to Czestochowa. A bottle of apple wine (cider) was a prop to ease mutual distrust. Before I was able to uncork the bottle, my uncle Eugeniusz burst into my room, shouting rude and derogatory comments with the general idea that he was against me bringing hookers to his apartment and if I chose to do so I should take them (her) to a hotel. Apparently, he was out of touch with reality, as such hotels did not exist in a Socialist system. In addition, he was shouting derogatory Russian verbiage, "Poshol Von!" which means in English "Get Lost!" This forced me to take a defensive position for the sake of this virtuous young woman, who had resisted my advances for two days. We all left, and it became clear to me that I could no longer live in such a hostile atmosphere

where I was no longer welcomed.

Living with Ms. Zelewska

The next day I started looking for ads in the local paper for rooms to let and I found one on Powstancow Slaskich (Silesian Uprising Street). The land lady was Ms. Zelewska and her apartment was on the third floor. Ms. Zelewska's apartment consisted of two small bedrooms separated by a small galley-like kitchen and a similar sized bathroom. The bathroom had an old German flow through gas water heater. Because the pilot light was defective, one had to first light the match, put it inside the gas heater and then turn the water on. New and unaware visitors could make a fatal mistake by first turning the water on and then with some delay lighting the match. If one waited for a few seconds before igniting the match then the gas mixed with air exploded and could kill you. It nearly happened to my Swedish visitor Lars Inge Hedberg who was not killed, but his eyebrows and lashes were smoldered. I am thinking that if he had died my life would be different and I never would have gone to Sweden and eventually to the United States.

Due to Lars Inge's mistake, Ms. Zelewska also lost her bathroom window when it was blown out to the street. The room assigned to me had a dresser but no bed. Tenants were expected to provide their own bed or sofa. I chose to purchase a sofa that folded out into a bed. In due course (or intercourse) this sofa-bed lost its functionality, by caving in the center so I had to sleep in an unusual position with my head and feet up while my bottom sagged in the hole. There were some complaints from the occasional female visitors about my uncomfortable accommodations.

Ms. Zelewska was a moderately attractive lady in her late thirties, but at that time in my life, a woman of 22 was much too far over the hill. She was single and I did not encourage her to discuss her past. Occasionally, she hosted some gentleman who apparently worked with her in some architectural office on the weekends. One night Ms. Zelewska took a bath and entered my room dressed in loose nightgown with a bunch of old illustrated German pornographic magazines in her hand. I immediately

suspected that she was after my virginity and decided not to succumb to her Nazi provocation. I knew that once I gave up and lowered my moral standards my door would be closed for any other female visitors.

Ms. Zelewska was a German, probably of Polish extraction, judging by her obviously Polish name. She was a compassionate lady, who during some weekends brought to her apartment a lady, who by her own admission was a former prisoner in a German Concentration Camp in Rewensbruk, where German doctors performed medical experiments on women prisoners. This lady survived the concentration camp, but lost her mind. She was sleeping in the kitchen on a folding metal bed. With time she became more and more paranoid and started accusing Ms. Zelewska of being her German nemesis. As a result Ms. Zelewska could not invite her over any more.

Fateful meeting of Finnish delegates in “Palacyk”

My adventure started accidentally when I stopped one evening at the student club “Palacyk” (Little Palace) where I usually had a hotdog sandwich and sauerkraut stew, known in Poland as “bigos.” Fueled by such a meal I could dance until the club was closing at midnight. It was an interesting institution where students from a few different Wroclaw Universities could gather and dance until the wee hours to popular jazz bands. At this time dance music was provided by an American group calling itself The New York Jazz Quartet. It was a band composed of four black musicians sponsored probably by the U.S. Embassy, as I cannot imagine that a student club was wealthy enough to pay standard American salaries. The club was located halfway between Polytechnic Institute and my current residence at the apartment of Ms. Zelewska.

The following events happened at time when I already lived in Ms. Zelewska’s apartment for one year after my graduation in 1958. At that time I was working as a Technical Assistant at the Department of Radiophony headed by Professor Stefan Bincer In addition to my official university job, I was also manufacturing dental polishing machines using electric motors for Singer style sewing machines. This highly profitable

“underground” enterprise allowed me to accumulate substantial profits in non-convertible Polish currency. I faithfully deposited my earnings between my bed sheets in the dresser. Obviously, I couldn't keep them in the bank without revealing illegal (unregistered) income.

On this fateful day when I entered the “Palacyk” Student Club and reinforced my physique with the usual meal of sauerkraut stew and bratwurst (kielbasa) I noticed that there was a group of three foreign looking individuals looking different from the crowd of Polish students. Eager to get some exposure to the English language I approached them and struck up conversation. They were glad to hear somebody speaking English, because they felt dumb, mute and isolated in a purely Polish environment. At that time in Poland hardly anyone could speak English. They introduced themselves as representatives from the Finnish Union of Students traveling on behalf of their organization to different Polish cities to observe life and activities of ZSP (Association of Polish Students). Within the group was the President of Finnish Union of Students named Penta Mahlamäki, Treasurer of the same organization, Matti Hagman and a third official whose name escapes my memory. All of them were drunk already and they were focused on drinking even more. Unfortunately, they had exhausted their financial resources and were on the verge of depression. Here I came with an idea for a rescue.

“Gentlemen, if you need more vodka I am ready to help. I can provide you with money.” The Finns were surprised. What would I ask for in exchange, money? Finnish military defense secrets? They were already short on dollars. I told them that what I needed was an invitation to Finland. The invitation had to be on official letterhead from the Finnish Union of Students stating that The Union would cover my stay and board while I was in Helsinki for one month. The Finns speedily agreed and I ran to my apartment located about 2 km away to get a substantial amount of Polish currency to give them. In about 40 min I was back with a sum equivalent to my three month salary from Polytechnic Institute. I gave it to the Finnish official and they were surprised that I didn't even ask for a receipt. I only insisted that the future invitation must have a large official rubber stamp, because in Poland, then as well as today, stamps carried large respect. I took a

chance that I would never see the Finnish Officials or my money again, but life is full of risks anyhow. Loss of the money wouldn't change my lifestyle anyway.

About a month passed and unexpectedly I received an official looking envelope in which was my long awaited invitation to Finland with a large official stamp. The first step in my plan to go to Western Europe was then accomplished. The previous summer, I had already hosted a student of mathematics from Uppsala, Lars Inge Hedberg. I was afraid that my application for a passport stating a visit to a private person would end in denial. I also knew that once I was denied a passport, I would be blacklisted for future foreign travel scrutiny. Therefore the use of an official invitation from the Finnish Union of Students as a justification for passport presented a better chance of a positive outcome. I also correctly speculated that getting to Finland by train I would have to travel via Sweden. Then, on that occasion I could stop in Sweden and visit my exchange student contact, Lars.

On the Way to the “Nordic Haven”

With my Finnish invitation in hand I went to Warsaw to contact Karol's cousin, Janusz Pelc, who was the head of the Travel Office of the Polish Union of Students. I asked him for help in obtaining a passport as an official delegate of the Polish Union of Students. As in previous travel to the UK to pick potatoes on an English farm, Janusz was very helpful this time as well. Soon I was on the train and ferryboats via Berlin, Sasnitz to Stockholm, and then to Turku and Helsinki in Finland. In Berlin I had a few hours' wait changing trains at the port of Sasnitz. I used that time to walk around eastern Berlin. I also approached the demarcation line between the Soviet and U.S. occupied Zones and asked the Soviet guard if I could enter the American Zone. The soldier smiled and invited me to cross the border. This event took place a few months before erecting the Berlin Wall. On my way back to Poland in the spring of 1961 crossing from East Berlin to West Berlin was not so easy. The situation had dramatically changed. The next time I could cross easily from East Berlin to West Berlin was a day before the Berlin Wall collapsed. I was traveling by rental car from Poland to West Berlin in the autumn of

1990 and I was surprised that the notoriously fickle East German Security Guards waived me through without inspecting my car. The next day from the comfort of my living room in Columbus, Ohio I watched on TV as crowds of Berliners poured into West Berlin and chipped away concrete from the Berlin Wall.

Traveling from Warsaw to Helsinki, Finland took about two days by train. The main problem was how to sustain myself during the trip since I was only allowed to exchange \$5 worth of Polish zloty. I exhausted my currency on Coca Cola before I reached Berlin. I took with me a large loaf of bread, butter and some dry sausage—this was my nourishment for the entire train ride until I met my sponsors in Helsinki. Once in Finland, my sponsors provided me with coupons for the student cafeteria for my 30-day stay. I also had two bottles of Polish Vodka, considered the equivalent of foreign currency. My problem was how to find an interested party willing to purchase vodka at a moment's notice. When I arrived in Stockholm I had to wait several hours for a connecting ferry to Turku. It was a rainy autumn day at the harbor. I found shelter in the Swedish Post Office across the street from the dock where the ferry was mooring and made myself dinner. I sliced a piece of bread, covered it with butter and chased it with water from the faucet in the Post Office bathroom. It was delicious. Soon my ferry arrived and I was assigned a cabin along with a German student also heading to Helsinki. In the moments before departure, I noticed an attractive Finnish girl and I struck up a conversation. The trip from Stockholm to Turku was overnight and the night was young so I invited the young lady and German student to join me for a party hosted by my two bottles of vodka. The Finnish girl admitted that she had never in her life drunk vodka and was looking forward to this exciting, illegal experience. I still had some bread left that could be served as hors d'oeuvres and the party started. The German student and I drank in moderation, savoring every gulp of warm vodka like a vintage wine. The Finnish girl was eager to experience an exhilarating, drunken state of mind and consequently drank as quickly as possible. All of a sudden, to our terrified surprise, she slid under the table unconscious and our party was over. We tried to revive her, but it took some time before she opened her eyes again. It was the first time I had witnessed the

devastating effect of vodka on person unable or unaccustomed to metabolizing it. We carried her to her cabin and it was a month later when I saw her again as I was leaving Finland on my way to Uppsala.

In Helsinki

After arriving in Helsinki I called my sponsors who provided me with coupons to the student cafeteria and a room, which I shared with another German student, in the student dorm. I also insisted that the “High Office” of the Finnish Union of Students provide me with another important document that would allow me to enter any student dance in Helsinki free of charge. And so they did. Each time I showed this important looking document written in Finnish I was cordially invited to any student activity without an entrance fee. Attending student dances was my fool-proof plan to meet Finnish students of the female persuasion. Because of my religious orientation I do not dance with men, especially when dancing implies mutual embracing.

At one such dance I met an Italian girl who spoke English, apparently the daughter of an Italian consul in Helsinki. She mentioned that the wife of the Italian ambassador in Finland was Polish and she would like to meet me. Shortly thereafter I was invited to the ambassador’s residence and met a very attractive Polish lady, named Tyszkiewicz. Apparently she was of noble heritage from the well-known Polish-Lithuanian family of Tyszkiewicz. I spent a few hours with her drinking Chianti and telling her about life in Poland. As we exchanged goodbyes she told me that if I returned to Helsinki after my planned visit to Uppsala, she would arrange a party for me where I could meet some influential people of similar interests. Unfortunately I did not return to Helsinki from Sweden and I missed her diplomatic party.

In the middle of my stay in Helsinki I received a phone call from my friend Karol Pelc in Poland who informed me that my professor and sponsor, Stefan Bincer had died. He told me that I should not rush to return, because there was no job for me. Professor Bincer’s department, where I had worked for the last few years was going to be merged with another. Besides, I was not

considered by the majority of faculty as having any academic potential.

Having one month's time on my hands, I tried to visit different factories. At the local Polytechnic Institute I met Jari Jauhianinen, Dean of the Department of Telecommunications. He invited me to his home and assisted me in arranging still more visits to local industry. He also told me that if I decided to return to Finland he would arrange for me a paid practice with a large Helsinki manufacturer of electric cables, Finska Kabel Fabriken. As with the diplomatic party promise by Countess Tyszkiewicz, I did not take advantage of Professor Jauhianinen's offer. Employment at the Institute of Physics in Uppsala was more attractive and more along the line of my previous experiences.

At the end of September I decided to visit Uppsala and take advantage of my invitation from my exchange partner Lars Inge Hedberg, who was my guest the previous year in Poland. My way to Uppsala was along the previously visited track, via Turku and Stockholm. In Turku I was invited to visit my female acquaintance from the ferry boat a month earlier. Remembering her inability to handle her vodka, we selected a different, non-alcoholic beverage on this encounter.



Monument for professor Stefan Bincer founded by Jan Czekajewski and Eugeniusz Hajek in Wrocław

Uppsala, here I come!

After saying goodbye to the attractive Finnish girl in Turku, Finland I took the ferry to Stockholm and from there a one hour train ride to the university town of Uppsala, where I met Lars. He lived in an apartment with his sister and younger brother, Turbion, who was also a talented student of mathematics. When I arrived in Uppsala, I was starving from the long trip during which I could not afford to purchase meals on the ferryboat. I was looking forward to a scrumptious lunch with Lars, who, as I remember from Wroclaw, always had a hearty appetite. Lars could easily devour six scrambled eggs with bacon and ask for more—and that was just breakfast. To my surprise, in his hometown, Lars was a different person. For lunch he had one hardboiled egg, a slice of yellow cheese on crunchy bread, known as Wasa Bread and a glass of cold milk. At that time in Poland drinking cold milk was synonymous with committing suicide. Milk should be boiled and served hot. Now in Uppsala I was left with no choice but to drink the cold abomination served to me. Suspecting that Lars could have some stomach irregularities, I asked him delicately why he ate such meager food. Was it in some way connected to his Lutheran religion (his father was a Lutheran minister)? Lars explained to me that food in Sweden was expensive and if he ate as much as I ate in



Uppsala. Old royal castle

Poland, he could not afford gasoline for his SAAB car. It was a convincing explanation, as in Poland food was relatively cheap compared to motor vehicles. This first lunch with Lars in Uppsala convinced me that I would never fit into this culinary culture.

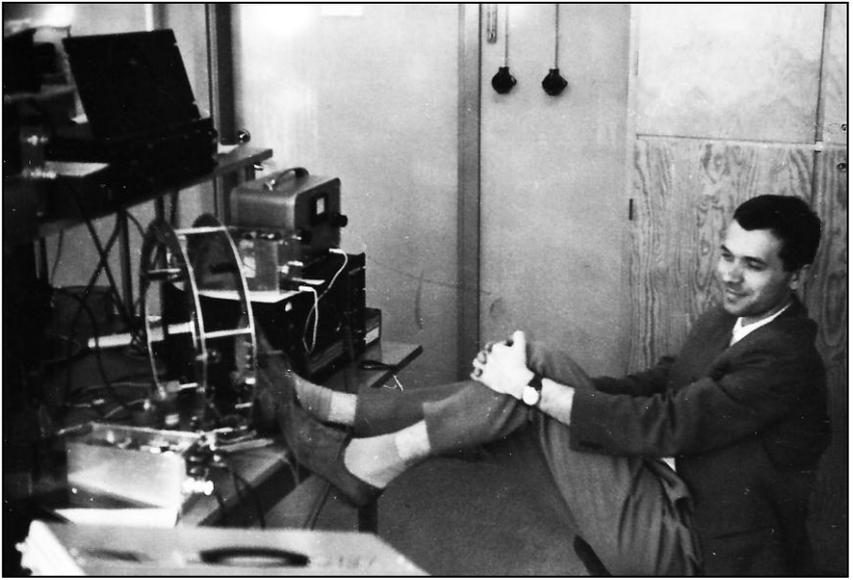
My decision to move to America was already made, although I was not yet fully aware of it. The apartment where Lars lived was not large enough for all of us so he rented a room for me with another family in another part of Uppsala. Accordingly to his meal plan, he issued me a meager allowance for food and for a bus ticket from the suburb of Eriksberg to the center of town where the university was located. Immediately I decided to visit the Institute of Physics to see what they were doing and what might interest me. Fortunately, while there I met a young professor named Per Arno Tove, who was head of the Department of Electronics. He was interested in the work I was doing in Wroclaw and showed me around his department, which was rather small but equipped with first-class American measuring equipment like I had never seen in Poland. I showed Professor Tove my first publication about measuring moisture in a variety of materials. He was impressed by my engineering enthusiasm asked me if I needed to return immediately to Poland or if I would like to work for some time in his department. Apparently his department provided consulting and designing services for other institutes at the same university,



Institute of Physics at Uppsala University

whenever commercial equipment was not available for purchase. It was a very interesting job and I excelled.

Medical doctors, musicians and astronomers were coming to Professor Tove with requests to design specialized equipment—then he would pass the work on to me. In fact, his specialty was in solid state electronics, designing transistors and solid state particle sensors—not in instrumentation, my area of expertise. I became very valuable to him in this regard. Usually money for such equipment came from individual grants and researchers were pressing for delivery in a short time, never longer than six months and usually only three. Available funds were only \$3,000-\$10,000. Therefore, projects imposed double constraints, both financially and in timing. When Professor Tove asked me how much I would like to earn. I told him modestly that I only needed to pay for a room and food. I did not come here to Sweden to get rich. He was impressed by my modesty and provided me with a correspondingly meager monthly income of 600 Swedish crowns, which allowed me to keep my standard of living on the border of starvation. During my work at the Institute of Physics I developed, or otherwise invented, a few instruments which later became the base for my future company Uppsala Instruments and later my American company, Columbus Instruments. For example, I developed equipment for monitoring and counting bats living in mountain caves 20 kilometers outside Uppsala. Information about bats entering and leaving the cave was provided to the Institute of Zoology via radio telemetry. It was the first instrument which I described with Professor Tove, as a coauthor in the world renowned magazine *Electronics*. Next was an instrument known as a cardio-tachometer that measured the heart rate and respiration rate of patients in intensive care units. This invention was different from other similar instruments, because it featured a fast response time in situations when the patient's heart rate or respiration changed suddenly. Still another instrument was the thermo dilution cardiac output computer which measured blood flow through the heart of newborn infants and very small animals. I also invented an instrument for automatic notation of music played by flute or other single pipe instrument. This instrument was ordered by the Institute of Musicology.



Jan with his invention of radio telemetry for counting bats in remote Swedish caves. (Uppsala, 1961)

But let's return to my life in Uppsala. After I started working at the Institute of Physics and became relatively independent I rented an efficiency apartment on the opposite side of town with a single room and bathroom. Living there was a dreadful experience. When I moved into this accommodation weather in Uppsala was already very cold and the heater in my bedroom was obviously defective. I could not convince my landlord to repair it. I was freezing in my bed. I decided to do something to increase the temperature in my room. The simple answer would have been to buy an electric heater, but I had no money for such extravagance. Improvising, I decided to build a heater myself. After all, I was an inventor and an engineer with a Master's Degree in Electronics. At the Institute I found a supply of nickel-chromium wire, which is used to make electric heaters. I "borrowed" a few meters of this wire and wound it around clay bricks I found at a neighboring construction site. I calculated the necessary length of the wire needed to assure a generation of five kilowatts of heat when both ends of the wire were attached to the 220 volt outlet. Such power was sufficient to keep the temperature in my room above freezing. My concept worked for a week or two,

until suddenly the landlord realized that his electric bill had jumped radically. He inspected my room in my absence, found the illegal “brick heater” and justifiably, the same day, kicked me out. I couldn’t blame him; besides the cost of the electricity, my primitive heater could have easily started a fire with dreadful consequences to the whole building.

Being suddenly homeless I went to the Student Union and begged for a room in the student dormitory. I must say that Swedish dormitories were luxurious by any standards. Each student had a room equipped with a bed, a table with a lamp, two chairs and a kitchen shared with residents in the adjoining sleeping room. The price was modest and even lower than my previous private accommodations. An official governing the distribution of rooms in the dormitories felt sorry for me as a “refugee” from a Communist country and granted me a room in the area of Studentstaden close to the Institute of Physics that was only a 15 minute commute on foot.

Social life in Uppsala in years 1960-1961

Since I didn’t speak Swedish, my social circle was limited to a group of Polish researchers on different scholarships working at the Institute of Physics or in other university institutions in Uppsala. One was a professor—Włodzimierz Zuk—from the University Maria Curie-Skłodowska in Lublin, Poland. My other companions were Dr. Zbigniew Grabowski from the Institute of Nuclear Research in Krakow, Dr. Julian Aulaitner from the Institute of Physics of Warsaw University and lecturer in Polish literature, Mr. Siudut from the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Once a week foreign students and researchers would meet in the Foreigners’ Club where they had a chance to intermingle with Swedish students of both genders interested in meeting foreigners. In this club I also met Dr. Henryk Ryzko, a researcher from Warsaw Polytechnic and specialist in the phenomena of high voltage. Three people in this group impacted my future life. Professor W. Zuk offered me a job at his institute in Lublin, Dr. H. Ryzko became my lifelong friend and encouraged me later to emigrate from Sweden and Dr. Z. Grabowski engaged me in the development of an instrument for measuring radiation in Aurora,

which led researchers in Alaska to sponsor my immigration to the United States.

Swedish winter blues

Winter in Uppsala is long and depressing. In December the sun, if you are lucky, appears at the horizon for about 4 hours and then a deep darkness engulfs the town for the remaining 20 hours of the day. Uppsala in December has temperatures below freezing, but not always. Most of the time temperature fluctuates between plus and minus 4° Celsius. When the temperature is zero and the snow mixes with salt dispensed abundantly on the roads, the snow turns into a slush which penetrates your shoes. One dark afternoon I was trudging down the sidewalk covered in slush, solitude and darkness. I was walking toward my apartment which was about 4 km away. Suddenly an elegant Mercedes transporting a very attractive young blond woman appeared at the curb. At first I had the impression that this woman felt sorry for such a lonely man, slowly and sadly making his way through the dirty snow. She lowered the car window and asked me something in Swedish. I responded in English. She hesitated for a moment and then she pressed on the gas and in a few seconds she was gone splattering me with mud. Apparently she had changed her mind. She did not offer me a lift. I speculated at the reason she stopped in the first place. Was she asking for directions or did she feel pity for the miserable figure I appeared to be on this late dark afternoon? Suddenly I felt humiliated, by my poverty, by my lack of language and in general, by my miserably low social status. In spite of this feeling I held on to my inner pride. I was sure that one day I would be equal to the girl in the Mercedes and maybe I would even drive a similar or better car of my own. I knew that it would happen. It did. It has been a long road to get here, but I never felt subservient to people with money or “higher class.” I held on to my own standards.

Dancing in Uppsala

During my first year in Uppsala I suffered from depression thanks to the gloomy winter and complete lack of Swedish language. My inability to communicate created a barrier for my social life. Fortunately, on the weekends, local student Fraternities, called “Nations” were organizing dances. The label of “Nation” comes from the origins of the fraternities, which gathered students coming from the same provinces of Sweden, be it from Norland, Smaland or Uppland etc. The dances were open to all students and the entrance fee was minimal. As my young social life was always depending on dancing, I eagerly took advantage of such opportunities. I was hoping that I could find some female to spend time with who could enrich my lonely life. During one such evening I was dancing with an attractive Swedish girl, who unfortunately did not speak a word of English. Most likely, she was not a student at the university, but a nurse from the local hospital. She came to the dance with a girlfriend who also did not speak English, but was dancing with a man, who was fluent in English. He offered to act as a translator.

It was obvious that my dancing partner was interested in me, but could not verbalize her desires. About 1 a.m. the dance ended and we all were going home. Then our ladies, after some conferencing, asked us to join them for a “cup of tea” at their apartment close by. It became obvious that young ladies had more elaborate plans for us than just tea. After we arrived at the girls’ apartment, I noticed that “my” girl was saying more to the English-speaking friend than he was translating to me. I asked him what they were talking about and he told me that the young lady was asking him, if I was “an intellectual” with a degree from a university or just a crude, uneducated immigrant who came to Sweden for manual labor. She told him that she could sleep with me if I was “an intellectual,” but never if I was a crude laborer. In that moment I felt depressed that my intellectual potential was not clearly visible to her while we were dancing. In spite of the fact that the lady was very attractive, I excused myself under some pretense of having indigestion and sulked back to my student dorm. This situation did not improve my spirits.

First return to Poland

My work at the Institute of Physics was satisfactory. The pay was miserable, but sufficient in sustaining my existence without hunger. My new accommodations in the student dormitory were very good and slowly I was also building up a social life inclusive of both sexes. Meanwhile, back in Poland I had left my first wife Elisabeth and a lover, Zofia. I imagined that Zofia would serve the future function as my lifetime companion. I must say that having such a duality of emotional arrangements troubled me and I felt a strong degree of guilt toward Elisabeth. I was idealistic in nature and these complexities in marital relations troubled me immensely. I knew that within a few months I would be returning to Poland and I would have to face the decision to become a monogamist or continue on with Zofia.

While I was weighing the injustice I did to Elisabeth, She already had a lover. Even more, her lover was a former officer in the dreaded Secret Police, UB. I had to wait 50 years to receive this information about Elisabeth's liaisons during my absence from Poland. It happened by accident when one of the journalists I met in Warsaw, offered me his assistance in searching the archives of the Polish Secret Police and Intelligence available for all interested parties from the Institute of National Remembrance. Apparently all of these reports were microfilmed and never destroyed after Communists were ousted from power in 1989. Unfortunately I learned these facts 50 years too late, all the while suffering from the guilt of my infidelity.

From the very beginning of my trip to Finland and later during my stay in Sweden, I never attempted to emigrate from Poland for good. I was thinking that I should return to Poland and contribute to the development of the country even if I didn't agree with the Communist system I considered to be stupid and wasteful. At the time I did not fully comprehend the severity of the atrocities committed by Communists in Poland during the first years after the war. After the death of Stalin I had a hope that the system would gradually become more liberal and more enlightened—that "intellectuals" would take charge of the country. It took me three visits to the West and two returns to Communist Poland to realize that if I stayed there any longer I would waste my life on

meaningless pursuits. With my loose tongue and sharp criticism I would have ended up in prison.

During my first stay in Uppsala I arranged a visit to a Swedish company—Elema-Schronander—located in Solna outside Stockholm. While touring the laboratories of this company they demonstrated their work on a cardio tachometer, a device used in intensive care units to monitor the frequency of heart rate and respiration. After my return to Uppsala I was thinking that I could improve on such a device, which in its original design was responding slowly to changes in heart rate. In a short time I built a better prototype and went back to Elema with a proposition to sell my new design. As usual, the “native” engineers were none too happy with somebody from the outside coming to them with new ideas and they consequently rejected my offer. Luckily, I met their senior researcher, inventor of the first ink jet printer, Dr. Elmquist. He supported me and overruled the local resistance. Elema offered to purchase my invention. I was afraid that the Polish “authorities” would not be happy with Polish citizens selling any intellectual property effectively bypassing state channels. Therefore I enlisted Professor Per Arno Tove to complete this transaction and we split the royalty. Later, this arrangement proved to be useful when I was accused, after my return to Poland, of committing foreign transactions without informing the Polish Government.

In Stockholm I also visited a small company—Ljungberg Company—that manufactured blood cell counters, marketed under the trade name Celluloscope. Because my return to Poland was scheduled at the end of May, I suggested that they should exhibit this instrument at the Poznan Intentional Fair in June and I would take care of the booth at the exhibit. I didn’t ask for any money for my services or even commission on future sales. I considered it an investment in my future. At the end of May to the surprise of Professor Tove, I decided to return to Poland to divorce Elisabeth and marry my beloved Zofia.

Professor Tove was apparently impressed with my engineering qualities, because he offered me an “in blanco” invitation to return to his department at my convenience. I asked that this invitation not be dated, so that I could write in the date after I was sure of the date of my return to Sweden. Planning ahead, I left part of my small savings with my friend Dr. Henryk

Ryzko for safe-keeping. Henryk decided to stay in Sweden and later married a Swedish woman—Asa Ivarson, a surgeon at the Uppsala Hospital. He also recommended me to his brother Professor Stanislaw Ryzko, a famous professor of electronics at Warsaw Polytechnic. After my return from Sweden I started the formalities of the doctoral procedure under his tutelage. My efforts never resulted in a degree because I didn't return to Poland to complete it after my last stay in Sweden in 1965-68. Instead I was granted a Swedish doctorate (PhD) by Professor Tove for total contributions to the development of scientific electronic instrumentation, before my immigration to the U.S. in the spring of 1968.



Jan's invention-Cardio Tachometer (Production model).

Recommendations for Karol Pelc

Before I left Uppsala, I approached Professor Tove with a suggestion that he invite in my place my friend Karol Pelc. During our studies in Wroclaw Karol and I became practically inseparable and to some extent, complementary in our abilities and characters. I was troubled with a rich imagination and impatience. Karol was highly organized and able to see projects through to completion. I was driven by ideas; Karol helped me to put these ideas into practice. He was always a much better student than I was, and as I remember he was even nominated one year as the “Most accomplished student in the Department of Electronics.” We got our first jobs together in Professor Bincer’s department and made our first money repairing moisture meters for grain.

Therefore, in continuation of this cooperation I suggested to Professor Tove that he hire Karol in my absence. I brought with me an official invitation for Karol from the Institute of Physics which he used to obtain a passport to come to Uppsala in September 1961.

Karol worked in Uppsala until March 1962 and then returned to Poland. If I am not mistaken, the Polish Passport Office refused to issue passports to his wife and son so that they could join him in Uppsala. I authorized that the money I had entrusted to Dr. Ryzko be given to Karol when he arrived and we jointly purchased another car. This time it was a Simca Etoile in pretty bad shape, rusty throughout just like my previous car, a Renault Dauphine. But it was drivable and Karol let me drive it, probably because most of the cost of the car was covered by my savings. Using this car I obtained a driver’s license while still working at the Institute of Physics in Lublin. Soon we sold this car, after the rust spots became painfully obvious, eating through the paint on the fenders. To be able to sell the car we had to repaint it to hide the alarming indications of metal decay. As I remember, we sold this car to a dentist who was ecstatic with his new investment. To our delight, he paid a princely sum for the car.

My car, the Renault Dauphine

Before my return to Poland in 1961 I purchased a small car, as most Poles returning from a foreign scholarship did. It was one of the worst transactions of my life. In Poland at that time cars manufactured in France were quite popular. Among the most popular was the Simca made by a subsidiary of General Motors and the Dauphine, made by Renault. Nowadays if one searches on the Internet under the name Renault Dauphine he will find it on the list of the 10 worst cars ever made. That fact was not apparent to me when I purchased my Dauphine. I was brainwashed by the mirage of French automobile technology. Because I had little money, my only option was to purchase a used car. After looking at the ads in the local paper *Uppsala Tidningen* I found one, a Renault Dauphine for 2000 Swedish crowns. I purchased it hastily not realizing that its thin body was completely infected with rust. Otherwise, it ran well and had a great fuel economy; but that was due to the very small, weak motor.

I had a small problem; I did not have a driver's license. Nonetheless, I drove this car for three months in Sweden. Somehow I was never stopped by the police who would have checked my driving credentials. I was anxious about driving this car to Poland because, more likely than not, at the Polish border they would ask to see my driver's license. Therefore I decided to send this car by sea from Stockholm to Gdansk. At the end of May I drove it to Stockholm where I had contracted the captain of a small Polish boat to load it on the deck, secure it with ropes and take it to Gdynia. My car was circled with ropes and lifted by crane. During the lifting I heard a strange cracking noise which I dismissed as being of no importance. Later, I realized that the car's body had cracked.



Her name was Brigita but car was Renault Dauphine, before accident

The next month I packed my meager belongings and left for Poland by train. I went straight to Poznan, where according to the agreement with Swedish businessman, Ljungberg, I was to exhibit his Celluloscope blood cell counter at the International Industrial Fair in Poznan. In the meantime my Dauphine had arrived in the sea port of Gdynia and was waiting at customs to be released to me. Not being able to leave my booth at the Exhibition, I met a friend from the Polytechnic Institute, who had a Polish driver's license to pick up my car and drive it to my parents' home in Czestochowa, a few hundred miles away from Gdynia. Unfortunately, when my friend was close to Czestochowa, about 40 miles away, my car somehow felt apart, successfully completing several end-over-end rolls and landing in a ditch, closely resembling a pancake. People who witnessed this accident were sure that whoever was in this car could not be alive.

Surprisingly, my friend, the driver, emerged from this car wreckage through the floor of the car, unscathed. Because the floor was so eaten up by rust, he was able to punch a hole in the floor with his head. He didn't have a scratch on his body. He was conscious enough to flag down a local farmer who pulled the wreckage to his barn using a horse.

After two weeks, at the end of exhibit, I arrived in the village of Strzelce Opolskie, where the accident took place. I paid the farmer for wreckage storage and carting it back to my parents' home in Czestochowa. There the wreckage was deposited in the courtyard of my parents' house and waited for my decision of what to do with it. When the news



Renault Dauphine after accident

spread in Czestochowa that the wreckage of a French limousine was for sale, a friend of my father, also working for the telephone company, came and bought what was left of this car. My father reported to me a year later, that he had seen this car after it was restored to driving condition and his friend was in it driving. Miracles do happen. The first miracle was that I wasn't the one driving it when it felt apart; the second was that the driver survived without damage; and the third was that this wreckage was sold and restored. It was one of many miracles I experienced in my life, which is still going strong at the mature age of 78. I have yet to be hanged from the gallows, as was predicted by Jan Bernatek my high school physics teacher insulted by me spreading heterosexual "porno" pictures of my mother in a swimming suit.

How I became the subject of a female duel

When describing the situation with my unfortunate car, the Renault Dauphine, I should mention another incident, which took place on the property of the International Fair in Poznan. Shortly after my arrival in Poland I asked my lover, and later second wife, Zofia to join me in Poznan. I was not aware that someone had seen me in Poznan, and informed my wife Elisabeth of my presence in Poland. Suddenly, one day Elisabeth arrived at the Fair and confronted Zofia, insisting that as my lawful wife, twice married—in church and in civil ceremony—I belonged exclusively to her.

Zofia had her own reasons for not giving me up. Both ladies were ready to damage each other by way of their umbrellas. Because a crowd of people started gathering around, Elisabeth gave up and left the fair. For 50 years I felt guilty for abandoning Elisabeth; but, recently received copies of documents from the Polish Archives of Secret Police which made it clear that Elisabeth was not worth my worry. She not only had a Secret Police lover, but also offered help to the Secret Police to deliver any information which they could use against me.

June 1961: Selling Swedish Cellulosopes at the Poznan Fair

After arriving in Poland in June 1961 I sped to Poznan to set up my exhibit for Ljungberg AB. At the beginning of the fair I had no trouble from the exhibition management due to the fact that they tried to monopolize the staffing of exhibits by Polish helpers. I assume many of them were informers of the Secret Police who supposedly had to report what foreign businessmen were saying and how they behaved. I entered the exhibition area showing my Polish passport and nobody asked me any questions. Then one day I was stopped at the entrance and my passport was confiscated. I was told to report to the office of Mr. Engelman, who apparently, at that time was the head of the State Consortium of Medical Equipment Manufacturers. They questioned me as to how I got this job with Ljungberg and how much I was being paid. I explained my situation and they assured me that they did not represent the Secret Police, which of course I did not take seriously. They gave me back my passport and I was allowed to continue my sales efforts demonstrating Celluloscope equipment to Polish medical doctors. Surprisingly, some of them came with ready-to-sign purchase contracts, which I was afraid to sign with my name, because it would imply to Polish authorities that I had more authority than I actually did. In such situations I went to a Swede representing Elema-Schronander AB (later purchased by German Siemens) to which I sold my design of cardio tachometers. His name was Guler. He agreed to sign the sales contracts instead of me.

Fifty years later, I learned that my work at the Poznan International Fair was of interest to the Polish Secret Service. They inquired about my function there and in the copies of reports which I received from Polish archives; they described my function at the International fair as a “translator” and my attitude in relation to the foreign principals as “subservient.” Apparently they were unable to invent anything more damaging to soil my records in their secret files.

Summer of 1961 in Wroclaw, Poland

After completing my duties as an exhibitor at the Poznan International Fair I returned to Wroclaw, the place where I had the most friends and most memories. I could not return to Elisabeth even though she was still living in my efficiency apartment so I asked my friend Romuald Odulinski (Reniek), a colleague from high school in Czestochowa, if I could stay with him at his room in the factory where he worked. Reniek was studying mechanical engineering at Czestochowa Polytechnic, but after graduation was sent to Wroclaw as part of a “work assignment program.” Under this program factories submitted requests to universities for engineers and universities assigned graduates to the factories. This system was overrun with corruption, as influential people were sent to better factories and larger towns, while graduates without connections were sent to mediocre factories. Reniek’s fate was a mediocre factory.

He was sent to a factory to manufacture equipment for the food industry. Luckily, that factory was located in the large, lovely city of Wroclaw, where I was living at the same time. I introduced Reniek into my circle of friends and he was not lonely in his misery. The room he was allotted was genuinely miserable. It was located on the property of the factory operating in a former brewery that was bombed-out during the war. His room was just above the public lavatory. During the summers a terrible stench of urine engulfed his entire room. His room had no bathroom, but had a sink with cold water. In this sink Reniek was washing his socks and underwear. Always unpretentious and friendly, Reniek readily agreed to share his room with me and procured for this purpose a second metal bed. He was aware of my predicament with Elisabeth.

One day Reniek came to me, embarrassed, asking for help. Apparently a Secret Police officer who interrogated him after his return from England, where we had been picking potatoes, asked him this time about me. According to Reniek the Polish secret “intelligence” agent was confused and worried why had I returned to Poland from rich and prosperous Sweden where I had a good job? Why had I returned to Poland with no strong family or

community ties as indicated by my troubled marriage with Ella? Maybe Reniek would enlighten them in this regard.

They asked Reniek to write a statement about my psyche in which he should describe what I liked and what I disliked and my political beliefs. Reniek came to me for help. I could not refuse my friend and over the course of a few hours I had written a pretty elaborate document about my psyche. I had a little bit of trouble identifying negative elements of my character which were necessary to make the narrative believable. By negative elements, I mean in the sense that they were critical of the Communist system. My negatives couldn't be too negative, qualifying me as an "enemy of the people," just mildly negative.

I thought it best to embellish my tendency to tell political jokes. I wrote that in my heart I was a Socialist, but my rebellious character was critical of sluggish bureaucracy. I told jokes critical of the "system" because I would like to improve it, not change it. Thanks to my straight forward attitude I made many enemies, and my jokes brought me many troubles. Nevertheless, I was a Polish patriot who believed in building a better future in Poland, not in Sweden or anywhere else.

Reniek rewrote my scribbling in his own character and delivered it to his "intelligence contact." From that moment I was sure that I was under constant observation. Before then I had only suspected it. In a few days Reniek was approached by his "contact" and praised for his "assessment of suspect Czekajewski." He was told that it was the best report they had ever received in their office. "Congratulations! Any time you need our help in obtaining a passport please give us a call and we will help you eagerly," they told Reniek. They did not suspect that in few years Reniek would get on his Czechoslovakian Jawa 350 motorcycle and drive to France, never to return.

After writing my own denunciation for the Secret Police I was waiting nervously for them to approach me directly. I didn't have to wait long. One rainy day, a young man in a long dirty trench coat, dressed in such a way apparently for camouflage, approached me at the tram stop in front of Reniek's factory. He informed me that an officer of Polish counter-intelligence wished to meet me at such and such an hour in a café in downtown Wroclaw. Obviously I agreed with reluctant enthusiasm. At first I

met him in the café, but then my interrogator suggested that we go to a more appropriate place, a room in the most luxurious hotel in town, “Monopol.” Apparently, he was trying to impress me with the splendor available to the Secret Police. The room was on the first floor, number 101.



Hotel “Monopol” where I was interrogated in 1961; in picture, Reniek Odulinski and Jan Czekajewski (2010).

He collected the room key, attached to a large wooden pear, which made it impossible for a guest to stuff the key in his pocket. It was a preventive measure to keep hotel guests from walking away with keys. I was informed that this room had special significance, because in the past, when Wroclaw was a German city (Breslau) whenever Hitler came to town he stayed in this room. Occasionally, he greeted the citizens of Breslau from the balcony of this room. I made a sincere effort to show my appreciation for the splendor extended to me by the Secret Police of my Polish People’s Republic. Then the interrogation started. I was asked if I was ever approached for recruitment by foreign intelligence agencies. Since I never had been approached by foreign intelligence agencies, I was actually able to answer truthfully. Then he asked what kind of interesting projects I was

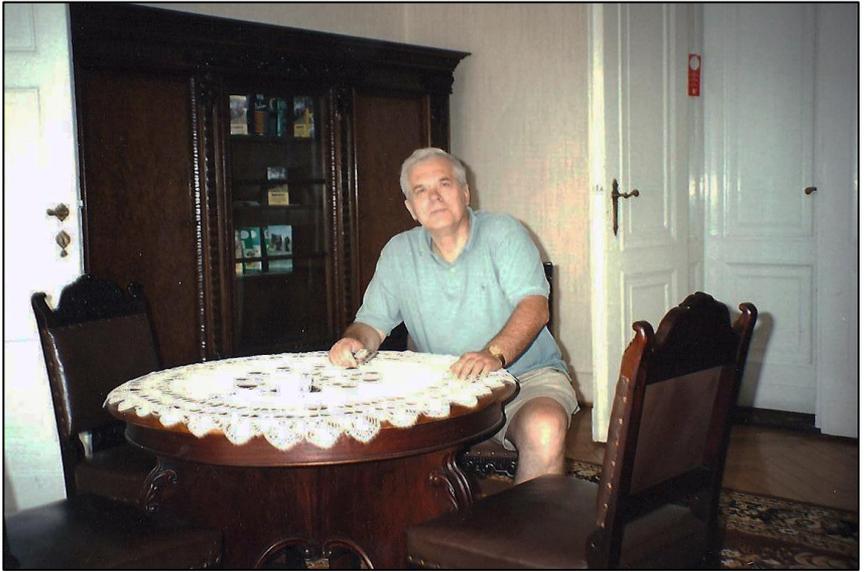
working on during my work at the Institute of Physics which was known for research in the field of nuclear physics.

I told him that I was counting the bats flying in and out of a cave located 20 km from Uppsala. I even had with me a copy of my publication in the American *Electronics* magazine describing my invention. Unfortunately the secret agent was not impressed with counting bats, but I insisted on telling him how interesting these animals were, using ultrasonic Radar (Sonar) for flying in the dark. Next he asked me who I met in Sweden. I told him that I met several Swedish girls and I must report that Swedish girls do not measure up to our Polish Socialist maidens. Their appearance, blue eyes and blond hair can be deceptive. They are users. They treat us men as objects to satisfy their animalistic sexual urges. They do not invest in long-term relations. Their cold-blooded sex could not match the tenderness and sensibility of our Polish girls. In the middle of my tirade, my officer interrupted me brutally by saying that, “we know all about Swedish girls.” He wanted to know specifically with whom I made acquaintance in the Polish community. He was mostly interested in the behavior of Polish scientists who went to Sweden on temporary scientific assignments and scholarships.

“What interests us,” he said, “is if they defame “our country” and if they are worthy to be sent abroad again. You may know that some people go to the foreign countries and behave similarly to despicable birds, who defecate in their own nests.” I told him that I kept mostly close, as they would allow me, to Swedish girls and I did not remember any Polish scientists who defecated in their own nests. I remembered some scientists who puked after getting drunk, but they didn’t defecate. I kept this information, as immaterial as it may have been, to myself and did not share it with my interrogator.

I did not know at the time, that this conversation would be described in detail by my interrogator and filed in a secret file under my code name by the Polish Homeland Security. In the same file I would find an exact copy of the elaborate assessment which I composed about myself and which was delivered by Reniek to the Secret Police in 1961. It was this information and much more spanning 200 pages of reports I received under the freedom of information act from the Polish Institute of Remembrance which

keeps archives of Communist Secret Police. Fifty years later I learned that instructions went out to different departments of security services to tap my telephone, which I did not have, to read and copy all my local and foreign correspondence and to burglarize Reniek's room with instructions to copy my notes and addresses.



Hotel "Monopol: Room 101 where Jan was interrogated

There were also instructions to procure for me an attractive female agent, as rumors indicated that I liked girls. In this respect, the Secret Services failed, because they did not send me any female agents. They probably tried, but at the time I was in a monogamist's state of mind and did not acknowledge any distractions. Nevertheless, from my notes obtained during penetration of my belongings, they learned the address of a fellow named Duda, who worked in Uppsala in the Geophysical Laboratory. Somehow they correlated this name with another Duda who was an American agent sent from West Germany to Bielorrussia and was arrested in Poland on the way back from a secret assignment. I did not realize that I had become a very important element of a spy network designed by American Imperialists to overthrow the Socialist system in Poland and destroy the friendly relations of the Polish Peoples' Republic with our brotherly Soviet Union. Fortunately, at that time I did not

know about it because I would have become really paranoid and made some stupid mistakes. I also learned that the same agent who visited my wife Elisabeth during my stay in Sweden visited her a second time. During this visit she offered the Secret Police her services to any extent needed to do me in. Her motivation was based on her strong moral convictions and belief in the sanctity of marriage, values which I was lacking. Fortunately my beloved wife Elisabeth knew nothing about my activities and was unable to produce any damning information. Besides, I was clean as a lily regarding any contact with any agents of any country. Innocence was no justification for sparing someone from even more in-depth and brutal interrogations or even prison. Even today, I can't say why or how I was able to escape both. After spending part of my time in Wroclaw and part in Czestochowa that summer I decided to travel to Lublin, located in eastern Poland, to accept a position as an electronic engineer at the Institute of Physics of Maria Curie-Sklodowska University. The department was chaired by Professor Włodzimierz Zuk who was still in Uppsala.

Reniek penetrates trade school secrets

With fifty years delay Reniek, now an esteemed breeder of colorful parrots in Montreal, Canada revealed the true reason for his influence with the inner workings of the Communist secret counter-intelligence in the 1960's and later. Reniek, after losing his internship at the factory, got a better job as a machine maintenance engineer at the trade school for electricians and mechanics. This secret was well known to his contact officer who one day approached Reniek with a proposal to be kept secret even from the Secret Police. The officer's nephew was aspiring to become an electrician, but nature did not provide him with sufficient smarts to pass the entry examination, which was conducted each year at the beginning of the school year. The officer suggested that Reniek penetrate secret files of the school and obtain the questions which all students had to answer during the exam.

Reniek who was always very popular with women asked the secretary of the school principal to steal the secret questions from the principal's safe, which she did. Information about what

kind of goods (*or services*) Reniek provided in exchange is still classified, because Reniek is now a happily married man. Reniek copied the questions and dutifully delivered them to the “contact officer” who in turn passed them to his nephew. Apparently a group of scholars on the payroll of the Secret Police worked up the answers to these questions and everybody was confident that the nephew would pass the exam, be accepted to the school and after four years become a proud electrician. Unfortunately, to the disappointment of all involved in this secret operation, students also had to pass an oral examination, where the questions were not strictly defined. The nephew failed the oral examination. Reniek was worried that the nephew’s failure would put an end to his influence in the Secret Police inner circles. Apparently however, the Secret Police had other methods of convincing the school admission committee, bypassing their examinations and the nephew was admitted. Because Reniek soon defected to the west, he never knew if the nephew graduated from this school or if his electrical talents were utilized.

1961 -1962: Lublin, Poland

I had never been to Lublin before. I was offered a job there by Professor W. Zuk who spent a year at the Uppsala Institute of Physics the same time I was there. He was there on a scholarship from the International Atomic Agency in Vienna, Austria. Lublin is located in the eastern part of Poland which was known as Poland B. It was less industrialized and less developed than the western part of the country. The University of Maria Curie-Sklodowska where I was supposed to work was named after the famous Polish physicist who discovered Radium and Polonium. She was the only physicist to receive the Nobel Prize twice, once for physics and then for chemistry. Professor Zuk told me that if I planned to return to Poland, he could offer me a position at the Institute of Physics where he was a chairman. After returning to Poland in June 1961 and completing my function as an exhibitor for the Swedish company Ljugnberg Inc. at the Poznan International Fair I started to look for a job. Any possibility of returning to my position at the Wroclaw Polytechnic was gone, because the only person who saw any potential in me, Professor Stefan Bincer, had

died a year earlier. Other members of faculty considered me a nuisance and a joker, undeserving of any attention. Employment at Professor Zuk's institute looked like my best option.



Professor W. Zuk of the Institute of Physics of University of Marie Curie-Sklodowska, Poland

When I arrived at the Institute of Physics nobody knew exactly what to do with me. I assumed that Professor Zuk had already conveyed to his deputies that his protégé Mr. Czekajewski would arrive in Lublin and they would arrange necessary accommodations for me. In Poland at that time work was plentiful but accommodations were scarce. Finally they found a guest room in the basement of a girls' dormitory with windows below the walkway. The guest apartment had two narrow rooms and one restroom/lavatory with a shower. One of the rooms was assigned to me. A middle-aged lady, probably a widow, and her 10-year-old son lived in the other room. In "my" bedroom there were two metal beds. Unfortunately the beds were placed side by side with only a narrow passage 20 cm wide in between them. To this room I invited my lover, Zofia, and we had to fold one bed to create more free space. In the beginning I assumed that this room was for my sole disposal; I soon found that I was mistaken. The fact that there were two metal beds was very significant. One bed was apparently assigned to me, while another had to be kept in reserve for future, incidental visitors to the university. I was surprised one rainy

winter night when I heard a knock at the door. I opened the door to find a rain-drenched man who introduced himself as a professor from Lodz University invited to Lublin as a guest lecturer. The university assured him that the second bed in my room was free and he would be sleeping on it.

He was not aware that “his” bed no longer existed and that I was sleeping with Zofia on one narrow bed which under no conditions could accommodate a third person. I tried to explain to the lecturer the precarious situation he put me in and gently suggested that he walk back to the railway station where he could doze off until morning classes. This poor individual facing my steel determination gave up and dragged himself to the railway station for well-deserved rest and recreation. This incident is a classic illustration of the conditions we faced in Poland 15 years after the war, building a Socialist paradise and educating new generations of engineers, doctors and agronomists.

Soon after Professor Zuk returned to Lublin from Sweden I was assigned a desk in the room of Dr. Mieczylaw Subotowicz, physicist and armchair astronaut. Dr. Subotowicz was a renaissance man, versed in advanced mathematics, and experimental physics with an avid interest in space travel. I would say that aeronautics was his life passion. He even wrote a voluminous book on this subject and was considered in Poland as one of the experts in this field. He was frequently asked to contribute articles on space travel to popular magazines and spoke on the subject on television. Dr. Subotowicz was eager to improve his English and therefore we made a pact that while in his office we would converse in English only. Dr. Subotowicz often traveled to the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. for scientific conferences on the subject of space travel. Many years later in the 1970’s he even visited me in Columbus, Ohio on the occasion of one of his conferences taking part in U.S.

Soon I started to think how I could improve my financial lot and engage in similar activity as I had at Wroclaw Polytechnic, before my first visit to Sweden. At that time the government was trying to help the researchers at the Polytechnic Universities by allowing them consulting work for industry. Such work had to be channeled by special institutions called “supporting enterprises.” The researchers were allowed a specific number of hours to work

on consulting projects for industry at a specific, government-dictated hourly rate. "Consulting" also encompassed construction of experimental devices and even small scale production.

In Wroclaw we were involved in building noise meters, moisture meters for grain and even more complex small TV repeater stations for small towns located large distances away from large TV transmitters. In Lublin I had to convince the president and treasurer of university of the need for such economical enterprises, from which the university would be able to benefit, charging 50% overhead for use of facilities and administrative services.

Soon my enterprise was functioning in full swing and I received my first order to build high voltage, precisely regulated, power supplies for medical testing of high-voltage (5000V) electrophoresis. As I remember, my innovative design utilized rather primitive, Polish-made low-voltage transistors. I also remember that my life very nearly came to an abrupt end in the middle of construction. One night I tried to move this rather heavy contraption after a long day's work. Exhausted and drowsy, I touched the output terminals with my bare palm and was the unsuspecting recipient of 5,000 volts of electricity. I lost consciousness for a while after standing still, paralyzed while an electric arc burned a hole in my right hand palm. I didn't even realize that I was screaming from pain. I was revived back to consciousness when the secretary working that night on the second floor burst into my room terrified by my screams. I was lucky that the electric current was a closed loop through only one palm. The situation would have certainly ended in my death if the current had traveled from my right hand to my left hand through my heart.

Around the same time in the early summer of 1962 my friend Karol Pelc, whom I had recommended to Professor Tove in Uppsala as my replacement, came back to Poland because his wife was not allowed to travel with him to Sweden. He brought with him another rusty French car, this time a Simca Etoile. I had 50% or more ownership in this car since Karol used some of the money I left in Sweden to purchase this vehicle. Karol let me use this car until we sold it and divided the proceeds.

Despite my near death experience, the university recognized my talent and agreed to place me on a waiting list for a

two bedroom apartment in the University Housing Cooperative. Having my own apartment would establish me as a trustworthy Polish citizen according to Secret Police standards. Apartments were a privilege in Poland at that time and the people occupying them rarely escaped to the west even if they had such opportunity.

Spring 1962: Second urge to visit Sweden

In the spring of 1962 I experienced a strong urge to return to Sweden to replenish my dollar resources, which allowed me to live at a higher than average standard of living in Poland. I approached Professor Zuk and asked what his opinion was on such an endeavor. I indicated that I had just received an invitation to go back to the Institute of Physics for one year for continued practice and enrichment of my experience in electronics. I also mentioned that while in Sweden I would pass along my very best recommendations for the Lublin Institute of Physics and open the door for a broader exchange of scientists. Professor Zuk obviously believed in my Swedish influence and asked what he could do to help. I told him that my travel had to be sponsored by the university and a passport this time should be issued by the Ministry of Higher Education. Applying privately to the Passport Office was out of the question and surely I would be denied the passport. An individual was allowed to travel on a private passport to his/her uncle or aunt, but not to a university. Professor Zuk knew all the bureaucratic tricks needed to make my travel possible. First of all, in a Socialist system, citizens are owned by the state. The state has to send citizens wherever they are needed and recall them once their tasks are accomplished. The country was guided by a general Five Year Plan, and it would be best if my travel somehow played a small part in this grandiose plan. Professor Zuk wrote to the Ministry of Higher Education that my travels were part of the Five Year Plan of Research which involved research on the angular correlation of nuclear particles. I did not have any experience in such research, but Professor Zuk asked me privately to look over how the equipment for measuring correlations was built in Uppsala. The letter with angular correlation justification went then to the president of the university, Professor Seigler with whom Professor Zuk was good friends. After attaching my invitation

from Professor Tove into which I typed the most recent date, all documents were sent to the Ministry of Higher Education in Warsaw for final approval and issuance of a passport.

Now all I had to do was wait for a positive reply from the Ministry, receive a passport in Warsaw and jump on the train to Sweden to start my work at Uppsala Institute of Physics at the beginning of the academic year 1962-1963. So I waited, month after month and late in August I became perturbed by the silence from the Ministry.

One rainy day something happened that changed my plans. As I was leaving my guest room for the Institute and just a few steps from the door I noticed a soldier with a large envelope approaching the same door. I stopped behind the corner to hear what he had to say. After knocking on the door my girlfriend Zofia appeared. The soldier told her that he had a letter from the Polish Army which he had to deliver personally to Mr. Czekajewski. Zofia realized that it was not an innocent visit but that the army intended to draft me. Zofia told the soldier that she would not take the letter to Czekajewski because she didn't talk to the son of a bitch anymore. She said that she knew that he lived in the next room, but she never talked to him. If the Polish Army had business with Mr. Czekajewski, then they needed to visit him in the evening. In the meantime he was probably at work at the Institute. After this exchange the soldier left and announced that he would return later. I immediately returned to my room and started conferring with Zofia what to do. I was suspecting that calling me to the army was a plot to deny me a foreign passport. Even if it was just an unfortunate coincidence, I would be drafted to the army. I would have to say goodbye to my plans to travel to Sweden.

We decided to pack up and immediately leave on the next train to Warsaw where I could wait for my passport issued by the Ministry of Higher Education. When we arrived at the railway station Warsaw-East one of our three suitcases, with all of my possessions was stolen in the crowd of people rushing out of the train—this was a great way to start our flight out of Poland. We hoped it was not a sign of things to come. As usual, we boarded at Uncle Krauze's villa on Olimpijska Street and just like every other morning; I made my way to the Ministry of Higher Education to inquire of the "Foreign Travel Department" if they had heard

anything about my passport. I assumed that my papers were sent to the Passport Office which was dragging its feet.

Warsaw 1962: Exchange value of a 4-color ballpoint pen

After arriving in Warsaw and multiple visits to the Ministry of Higher Education at Miodowa Street I was still in quandary as to when I would obtain my passport. After 10 days from the moment I escaped the clutches of the Polish Peoples' Army, I was worried that they would launch a search for me given my disappearance. I even called my friend, Dr. Mieczyslaw Suborowicz, with whom I shared a room at the Institute to ask if he had heard about any new developments regarding my person. I also asked him to tell Professor Zuk, that I was OK in Warsaw, waiting for my passport. During our phone conversation Subotowicz told me that I should return to Lublin, as the Polish Army was inquiring about me at the Institute and even posted a soldier at the building entrance to take me to the drafting office once I returned to the Institute. Observing all elements of conspiracy I told Subotowicz nothing that could be of use to the Polish Army for my "capture."

After our conversation my anxiety increased and I understood that I could not hide in Warsaw indefinitely. One day while walking back and forth on the red carpet covering the long hall in the Ministry of Higher Education I noticed a familiar face. It was a face of Mr. Soszynski, formerly of the Polish Student Association Foreign Travel Office. In 1958 I was able to travel to England to pick up potatoes thanks in large part to his help. To some extent, Mr. Soszynski was indebted to me, because my friends and I co-opted his girlfriend to our group. To this day I am not sure if she returned back to Communist Poland or if her travel to England to pick up potatoes was a ploy to escape.

Soszynski asked me what I was doing at the Ministry. I told him about my desperation of waiting for my passport, without mentioning the troubles I had with the Polish Peoples' Army. He offered to investigate the matter as he himself now worked for the Foreign Travel Department of the Ministry. He asked me to wait a few minutes and he disappeared to check the files. After a short

time he returned with bad news, that I would never travel abroad through the Ministry of Higher Education.

The Deputy Minister had written personally on my file: "Reject because invitation is personal." Minister Krasowska, an old Communist apparatchik, knew better who should travel to Sweden and any decision about selecting proper scientists should be left for her ministry. The Swedes should not impose on Poland their will. I was devastated. I nearly cried. All my machinations in Lublin now went to waste. Soszynski seeing my desperation told me that he could find some possibility of resolving my situation to my benefit, basically reversing Minister Krasowska's ruling. He told me that he was the one to write an overview on each file for a special foreign travel commission meeting every two weeks. They approved or disapproved candidates for travel based on his conspectus. Minister Krasowska sometimes did not attend this boring meeting as she may have more important Communist Party assignments. Even if she was there, she would not remember this specific case of Mr. Czekajewski. Soszynski offered to rewrite the brief, omit my name from the description of the invitation, and resubmit it for committee consideration which would take place in one week. I asked him what kind of honorarium he expected for such monumental help. I was ready to give him all the money I had. Instead Mr. Soszynski asked me for a very modest service. "You know my friend, when you find yourself in Sweden then you can purchase for me a cartridge (an insert) for a four-color ballpoint pen. I got such a pen last year as a present. With this pen I mark the importance of documents in different colors. It can write in black, blue, green and red. Unfortunately the ink in the cartridge colors has all been used. What is most troubling is that I am not able to use the color red—it hampers my work at the Ministry. Could you bring back, or send to me by mail such a cartridge?"

I was ready to send him a whole truck load of four-color pens. So as not to arouse suspicion that it could be a bribe, I agreed to send him a few four-color cartridges, each valued at less than a dollar. After I arrived in Sweden I kept my promise and sent Soszynski 10 color cartridges, so his ministerial work could prosper and he could advance in his ranks. Maybe in due time, before the fall of Communism, he advanced to be deputy minister himself. Who knows? After my last meeting I never saw Mr.

Soszynski again. Maybe he still is living in Warsaw as a ministerial retiree.

In a few days after my encounter with Soszynski I received my passport from the Ministry of Higher Education and instead of jumping on the train to Sweden, stupidly I decided to return to Lublin to clear my record with the Polish People's Army.



Ministry of Higher Education in Warsaw Poland

My passport and sexual potency of comrade Wycech

While scheming to obtain a passport to Sweden I visited my childhood friend Witek Paluchowski, whose father was a friend of my father's at the telephone company in Czestochowa before the war. After the war Witek's father moved to Warsaw to accept an important position in the Central Planning Committee headed by notable Communist, Hilary Minc who was responsible for the whole industrial investment in Poland. While visiting Witek, who at the time lived with his wife and father in the Mokotow suburb of Warsaw, I commiserated about the troubles I was having with my passport. Witek's wife mentioned that she may be able to help since she worked for the Central Committee of the United Peasant

Party, (ZSL). In fact she worked closely with a fellow who was the right hand to the Speaker of Parliament, Comrade Wycech. The United Peasant Party was established together with another party SD, (Democratic Alliance) to make an impression on naive westerners, that in Poland we had a multiparty system. In fact, all so called “parties” were subservient to the Communist party PZPR (United Polish Workers’ Party).

To make the scheme more believable the Communist party allocated some less important functions and positions to the subservient. In the case of the Peasant Party they were allowed to appoint the Speaker of Parliament, a position of an ambassador in some other Communist countries or even a Consul in Moscow itself. One of the positions allotted to the Peasant Party was Speaker of The Parliament, who happened to be Mr. Wycech. The risk of having named Wycech as Speaker of Parliament was minimal, because Parliament itself had no meaning and was always voting according to Communist party instructions. As my passport saga was developing, Comrade Wycech was out of Warsaw, in Switzerland actually. I was told in secrecy, that Mr. Wycech went there for hormonal therapy to receive injections of extract from bull testicles to invigorate his masculinity. I am not sure if this was true as I did not stay in Poland long enough to ask the young ladies working in his office. When Comrade Wycech was out of town all business was in the hands of Mr. Kaminski to whom I was introduced the next day thanks to Witek’s wife.

Mr. Kaminski was a friendly individual who was flattered by the fact that the young researcher asked him for help in such “minor” case as a passport to Sweden. He took me to the office of the Speaker of Parliament and dialed some number on a special w-cz (high frequency) line which was impossible to bug and which only a handful of top government officials were authorized to use. On the other end of the w-cz wire was the head of the Passport Office who happened to be a friend of Mr. Kaminski. As I could deduct from the conversation, Mr. Kaminski presented my travel to Sweden as an important issue to the United Peasant Party and would appreciate any help the Passport Office could offer to accelerate my passport application which was sent to them by the Ministry of Higher Education. The person in the Passport Office asked Mr. Kaminski to wait for a few minutes so they could check

to make sure they didn't have any "secret" objections to my travels.

When he came back on the line, he said everything was OK and that my passport would be sent to the Ministry of Higher Education the next day. I was ecstatic and asked Mr. Kaminski for another favor. I mentioned that I had a girlfriend, Zofia Krolikowska, who was finishing her medical studies in Lodz. I asked if it would be possible for her to join me in Sweden and receive some post graduate training at Uppsala University Medical Center. I assured him that I would arrange an official invitation from Uppsala Hospital and thereby costing the Polish government nothing. I secured Mr. Kaminski's help in her case as well.

As it was customary in Poland Mr. Kaminski's help needed to be "discussed with our bellies at the bar," in other words, our new friendship had to be celebrated with copious amounts of vodka. I invited Mr. Kaminski to the best Warsaw restaurant of his choice, but he refused. His motivation was simple and understandable. All high class restaurants in the city were under Secret Police surveillance and in the most expensive, like the one in Hotel Monopol on Karowa Street; customers' tables were bugged with installed microphones. Mr. Kaminski was an important person, but when he drank he sometimes expressed opinions in conflict with the prevailing party line. He would prefer a more private arrangement. It came to my mind to invite him to the villa of Zofia's uncle, Zygmunt Krauze where we could have a lavish party in complete privacy. His wife, also named Zofia was also cordially invited. To this alternative Mr. Kaminski readily agreed.

Misters K & K: Ideological confrontation

Mr. Zygmunt Krauze was the host of the drinking party to which I invited Mr. Kaminski and his wife, named similarly as my girlfriend, Zofia. Mr. Krauze was a wealthy man in Socialist Poland. Interestingly, as he admitted, he never finished high school, and according to some of his own stories, he was kicked out of 6th grade for selling vodka and cigarettes. I wonder to whom he was selling vodka—probably not his school colleagues because they would not have had any money. Today he would be classified a drug dealer, but in underdeveloped Poland, the only drugs available were cigarettes and vodka. At the time I met him he was living in an elegant suburb of Warsaw, called Mokotow on Olimpijska Street, number 39. The villa where he lived was built just before the Second World War and interestingly it had a three story subterranean basement. I imagine that the original owner anticipated the war, and the subterranean structure was nothing more than a bomb shelter. Zygmunt Krauze purchased his villa with the money he had made growing red carnations.

He admitted that he didn't know much about anything, but he knew how to find people who knew something when he needed them. Apparently, he found somebody who knew how to grow beautiful, fragrant and long-lasting carnations. He exported those carnations to the Soviet Union, as none of the Soviet agricultural cooperatives, known as Kolkhoz, could match Krauze's flowering products.

I should point out the importance of red carnations for Soviet politics. The red color symbolized the blood spilled by Communist workers in struggles to overthrow Capitalists. No Soviet leader, known as First Party Secretaries, could be inaugurated or buried without his coffin covered with red carnations. Also, visitors to Moscow from brotherly Communist parties were always greeted at the Moscow Airport by young girls with bouquets of his red carnations. At the time when the scheduled drinking party took place, Mr. Krauze had already divested himself from the carnation business while his daughter continued his business in the neighboring city of Lodz. Mr. Krauze considered himself partly retired and entertained himself in the mornings drinking vodka with a local policeman, known at the

time as a militiaman.

When I asked him why he was friendly with the policeman, he said that it was just habit. Over the years, he was always drinking with local policemen, even during the German occupation, and such friendships often saved his life. He told me he always knew ahead of time from the policeman when there was to be a planned search of his house for any illegal business activity. He was always warned in time to hide any compromising materials.

When Mr. Kaminski arrived it was with his wife by his side, in a “luxurious” chauffeured limousine, made in the Soviet Union under the name Volga. The trusty chauffeur was apparently not so trustworthy because for the duration of our party he was left outside to occasionally clasp his hands and stomp his feet to keep warm on the cold evening. Mr. Krauze, in spite his educational shortcomings, was well-equipped for an ideological skirmish with Mr. Kaminski, especially after the first liter of vodka. I was the lowest rank in this duel, as my capacity to alcohol, even now, is miserably deficient. In spite of my shortcomings during this party I drank so much vodka that it took several days for me to recover and return to my senses. The duration of this party was measured not in hours, but in bottles of vodka.

Somewhere between the first and second liter of vodka, Mr. Kaminski already wobbly on his feet, pulled out a shiny Belgian-made revolver and displayed it for us, as a symbol of power and trust the Communist party bestowed on the trustworthy and obedient party officials. He also tried to entice Mr. Krauze to join the party, which would offer him similar attributes of power and maybe even the same kind of revolver and Soviet-made Volga car. His offer brought tears to the eyes of Krauze, as never before had he been offered a job.

Usually it was he who hired other people. He was visibly unimpressed with the Belgian revolver. He decided that it was time to bring his own arguments to the ideological skirmish. He snapped his fingers and Mr. Johnny appeared, addressing Zygmunt Krauze as uncle. “Tell Mr. Kaminski of your obligations in this household. We are all friends, do not be afraid.”

“My obligations in the morning are to draw the bath for Uncle Krauze and to check that the temperature is just right, not

too hot nor too cold. The next duty I have is to boil the eggs. They should be not too soft and not too hard.” Then Mr. Krauze interrupted his long list of obligations and explained that in fact Johnny is not his nephew but a butler. Unfortunately in Socialist Poland the title of “butler” would be irritating, therefore he was adopted by the family as a “nephew.” Mr. Kaminski was trying to counter Mr. Krauze’s social position mentioning he had a party-assigned chauffer, which probably was also a Secret Police informer to keep an eye on Mr. Kaminski’s activities.

Concerning living accommodations, Mr. Kaminski couldn’t hope to compare to Mr. Krauze. He lived in very cramped apartment which in Communist nomenclature was listed as an M2 or M3, no larger than 60 square meters (645 square feet). While Mr. Krauze provided room and board for butler-Johnny, who had his own separate bedroom. Mr. Kaminski could not dare to accept his chauffer as a tenant in his own apartment because of two reasons, one that his chuffer was younger than him, and his wife Zofia was an attractive woman with prominent breasts, and secondly because in his small apartment there was no place for an additional bed.

You could see the increasing envy on the drunken face of Mr. Kaminski given Mr. Krauze’s financial status. The final nail in the coffin was struck when Mr. Krauze invited Mr. Kaminski to visit his garage where he parked two “splendid” limousines. One was a Chevrolet Impala in an antique gold color and a brand new Mercedes 220 shining like a silver dollar. A Chevrolet Impala of this color was probably the only one driven in Warsaw. I am not sure if U.S. Diplomats in the U.S. Embassy had anything similar. The Mercedes 220 was a special model and its color was a special edition. It was originally sent to Bishop Klepacz of Lodz as a gift from the former parishioners now living in Chicago. The Bishop, probably under the advice of the Vatican, declined to drive in such luxury; therefore, he sold his car to Mr. Krauze.

Upon their return from the garage both gentlemen settled back into the dining room as long lost friends and started reminding each other of the beauties of the Vilnius countryside from prewar time. Now of course Vilnius was a capital of Soviet Republic of Lithuania. As the last liter of vodka was poured in the 100gram glasses and chased with marinated herring, our party,

after only six hours, was due to close. Mr. Krauze helped Mrs. Zofia to bring Mr. Kaminski to his Volga car and they drove away. I knew then that the party was a great success and I had in Mr. Kaminski a long-lasting friend.

He had proved to be such in arranging a passport for my girlfriend Zofia to join me in Sweden. I saw Mr. Kaminski again, three years later, after my second return from Sweden, when he helped me arrange the duty-free import of an old rusty Mercedes 190. He also helped me (and later Zofia) to get passports for my third trip to Sweden from which I did not return to Poland, until I received U.S. citizenship.

When I came back to Poland after more than 10 years, I went back to the United Peasants Party to see Mr. Kaminski and thanked him for all of his services and goodwill. Mr. Kaminski's party was no longer in the same location, but Mr. Kaminski was still there. When he saw me, he panicked. He told me that I should not have risked coming back, because he had a lot of troubles after my defection. I knew that I irritated the Polish Secret Police (UB) with my defection to the west and emigration to the U.S., but I had no idea that I was so important a cog in the Socialist wheel to warrant arrest. I was not afraid to come back, because at that time the Communist system was disintegrating in Poland.

The Secret Policemen and I were on the same side of the barricades. We were both trying to earn as much money as we could. The only difference between us was that I already had some dollars while they aspired to earn them. I don't know what happened to Mr. Kaminski later. I hope that he transformed himself painlessly from a Socialist to a Capitalist, maybe even a landowner to keep up with his peasant party tradition. Who knows?

Foreign correspondent

I was so impressed with getting a passport that I forgot about the Polish People's Republic priorities. Instead of immediately traveling to Sweden, I decided to clear my position with the Polish Army, who still had no idea that I had another, more important assignment. I decided to return to Lublin and ask for a postponement of my military training until I returned from Sweden. When I appeared at the draft office of the Army, I was greeted by the jovial smile of the sergeant sitting behind the desk in the entrance hall. "Lieutenant Czekajewski, it's very good to have you here. We've been looking for you all over Poland. Here is the ticket to the engineering unit in the northwestern district in the village of Podjuchy. Also, you will be getting a military uniform to travel there on the next train." I tried to explain to the sergeant that I had been delegated to much more important duties in Sweden where I was being sent by the Ministry of Higher Education. My explanation caused paroxysms of laughter in the sergeant. He told me that he didn't know of any other Ministry except for the Ministry of Defense. His argument took me aback and I had only a split second to make a decision. I turned around and escaped from his office. I knew that it would be an hour or so before I would be accosted by the Military Police and charged with desertion.

As I was walking down the main road intensely contemplating my situation I met Professor Teske, a physicist who was the dean of the physics department at our university. He knew me well from our weekly "tea meetings" organized at our Institute. Seeing desperation on my face, Professor Teske asked me why I was so troubled. I explained to him my situation. He had an idea. "The only institution that can help you is the Communist Party. Go there and ask for help." I pleaded with him and told him that I didn't belong to the Party. "That's even better. They will try to be magnanimous for a non-Party citizen in need of help."

He gave me an idea. During my previous stay in Sweden I had written to the local party daily, *People's Banner*, a report about the miserable food Swedes eat. They sweetened everything, even adding sugar to herring. We in Poland ate much better and would never mix sugar with marinated hearing. The article was

printed as a convincing argument that the best country to eat in is Poland, and luxuries of the Capitalist west are just enemy propaganda. I went then to the same paper to remind them of my culinary piece of literature and ask for help. The editor of the paper was very sympathetic to my cause but he told me that he had no influence in the Polish People's Army. But he knew someone who did. The most influential person was the Second Secretary of the District Party Committee who during the Second World War was in the same partisan unit as the colonel now in charge of the drafting office. They went hunting and drank vodka together. He may be able to help. The Second Secretary's office was on the second floor in the same building as the office of the journal's publisher.

We went there immediately and I had occasion to explain to the Second Secretary the importance of my mission to Sweden. In the first place, I worked in the field of atomic physics. I was being sent to learn as much as possible and transfer this knowledge to Lublin. The local Institute of Physics where I worked had entrusted me with a special mission, which correlated and agreed with the Five Year Plan of Scientific Research. Unfortunately, the provincial drafting office disregarded the Ministry of Education's project and was drafting me to learn how to build pontoon bridges across rivers. It was a waste of my talents. Primarily, I was a communication specialist, a specialist in radio transmitting and they were trying to assign me to an engineering unit.

The Second Secretary agreed with me and cordially assured me that the Party was always ready to help a young scientist. He picked up the telephone and called the colonel in charge at the Drafting Office. He explained that a terrible mistake had been made and Comrade-Lieutenant Czekajewski was willing to undertake a needed upgrade to his military qualification, but after he returned back to Poland. The colonel on the other side of the telephone wire completely agreed with him and asked that I return to the drafting office and speak directly with him. I cordially said goodbye to the Second Secretary and assured the Editor of *People's Banner* that I would write a series of articles, not only on how terrible food is in the Capitalist west, but also how poorly the working class was treated.

I walked back to the military drafting office now assured that I had cleared the last obstacle. Much to my surprise, the same sergeant met me at the entrance with the same railway ticket in hand. He was immune to my argument from the Party. I noticed that I could force myself up the staircase leading to the upper floor where the colonel was residing. And so I did before the sergeant could stop me. I knocked on the door with the colonel's name on it and was invited in for a chat. I was asked for my military book where all my military training should have been recorded. Since I left Polytechnic ROTC, I had not attended any periodic military camps. In fact, I avoided them by any means necessary, including bribery. One thing which I will always hate is a military with its discipline and early morning alarms. Maybe I could be more sympathetic to an army which was not in brotherly love with the Soviet Army; however, such army should engage only in afternoon skirmishes and never in night fights. Furthermore, any army in which I participate should be protective of soldiers' lives. I told the colonel that I was sorry for my antiquated military knowledge, but anytime I was called for by the army some more important foreign assignment took me out of the country.

This time I promised I would report for training once I

LEGITYMACJA WOJSKOWA	
OFICERA REZERWY	
Seria: HE	Nr 0104203
	
	
<i>Jan Czekajewski</i> <small>Własnoręczny podpis</small>	
1.	<i>Czekajewski</i> <small>nazwisko</small>
2.	<i>Jan Andrzej</i> <small>Imiona</small>
3.	<i>Franciszek Honorata</i> <small>Imiona rodziców</small>
4.	Data i miejsce urodzenia <i>16 grudnia 1934</i> <i>Częstochowa</i> <i>woj. katowickie</i>
5.	Stopień oficerski w chwili wydania legitymacji wojskowej <i>podporucznik</i>
	Rozkaz personalny <i>MON</i>
Nr	<i>0647</i> z dnia <i>30.12.1958</i>

Jan Czekajewski, Polish Army Officer ID.

returned from Sweden. The colonel told me that this time I didn't need to be concerned about training and he made some note about my status in the file. I was happy as a lark. I went down and as I looked at the flabbergasted sergeant, I was tempted to show him a finger, but cautiously limited myself to a broad Slavic smile. The same day I traveled by train to Warsaw and the next day I left for Sweden.

Uppsala here I come again (Autumn 1962)

This time I left Poland via East Berlin. The Berlin Wall was already constructed and I could not easily pass into West Berlin with the same ease as was possible during my previous visit in 1960. As usual I was travelling by train. My train had already crossed the Polish border and was heading toward Communist East Berlin. The sleeping car compartment I shared with another young man, who was traveling to Sweden to get married to some girl of Polish origin. I was suspicious of anybody and I did not disclose to him the details of my trip. The Polish butler who tended the beds in this sleeping car came over with a bottle of vodka eager to chat. I knew that most probably his second function was to inform the Secret Police on Polish travelers. I made a serious mistake to join him in his compartment for a drink. I suspected that the reason was to gain some compromising information on me. I was sure that even drunk I could still be enthusiastic about the Socialist system. This was true, I was enthusiastic but I over estimated my stomach. I returned to my compartment deadly sick and vomited the entire contents of my stomach along the train's corridor.

In Berlin I stopped for a few hours to meet my friend Dr. Waclaw Kornaszewski, who according to his wife was on some kind of scholarship to famous Charite Hospital in East Berlin. I knew Dr. Kornaszewski from my years in Wroclaw, when I was constructing medical equipment for the Institute of Aviation Medicine, where he was director and Institute founder. Later Dr. Kornaszewski left for the Congo where he was teaching infectious tropical diseases at the university hospital in Kinshasa. While in Africa Dr. Kornaszewski was one of the first to diagnose AIDS. We exchanged correspondence during his stay in the Congo and

rekindled our friendship recently, in 2007 during my visit to Wrocław.

When I arrived in Uppsala I felt more secure, as I was familiar with this environment and had already established a few friendships. One of the most important was my friendship with Henryk Ryzko, whom I met year ago. He was working as a researcher at the Institute of High Voltage, which was located probably 7 km from downtown Uppsala. He refused to have a car and instead biked to town if needed. After my arrival the Student Union provided me with a one room apartment in a student dorm on the outskirts of Uppsala known as Eriksberg on Granitvagen Street and I resumed my job in Professor Tove's department.

In the meantime I was waiting for the arrival of my beloved Zofia, who was finishing her internship at Lodz Medical Academy. Month after month passed and Zofia could not come due to passport difficulties. Apparently the Secret Police in Wrocław requested from the Passport Office in Lodz a restriction on her foreign travels in connection with my person. They speculated that we were conspiring to escape to the west. After a few months separation Zofia obtained a passport and arrived in Uppsala. I wasn't sure what made the passport office change its mind, until very recently in 2010. Forty-eight years later I learned from my secret files of the Communist Secret Police, that the intelligence officer in Lublin intervened with a corresponding office in Lodz to allow Zofia to travel to join me in Uppsala. Apparently, they had long-term, serious plans to cultivate "friendly" relations with me hoping that I could become their secret agent in the west. At that time I was not aware of their plans.

After Zofia's arrival we both were slightly surprised by each other. On my side I could not believe that this graduate of medical school was not able to notice when the water was boiling. Apparently, Zofia lived a sheltered life and all the cooking was done by her mother. She simply did not need to know when water was boiling and that that was the moment to make tea. My modest room with a narrow bed did not impress her either. Apparently she expected much better accommodations. Shortly after arriving in Uppsala Zofia got a job at the university hospital and started working as an X-ray technician. Her immediate boss was Professor F. Knutsson, a well-known specialist in Swedish X-ray technology.

In 1962-63 I had developed some contacts with other departments in the university and began independently servicing their instruments. I also sold, together with Professor P.A. Tove, my invention for a cardio-tachometer to a Swedish company Elema-Schonander which was later purchased by Siemens from Germany.

At the time of my vacation in 1963 I had already "amassed" \$5,000, which was the sum needed to purchase my French Simca Etoile 1300. When our vacation time came in August 1963 Zofia and I decided to travel to Paris to purchase our dream car. It coincided with a post card from my friend Reniek Odulinski, who announced that he had escaped from Poland on a Jawa 350 motorcycle and was now residing at the Palace Villersexel in France. He mentioned that he was the guest of Countess de Grammon and that there were three ladies in the palace with more than 20 empty bedrooms. He eluded that I could be his guest and his companion if I came to France.

I did not know at that time that Zofia was having a love affair with another doctor, who was practicing at the same hospital. Apparently duality of relations did not bother her. At the same time my Polish passport expired and the Polish Consulate kept it without explanation. I became mentally perturbed and in the winter of 1963 suffered a full-fledged mental breakdown. I was admitted to the open ward in the psychiatric clinic at the university hospital with all the symptoms of a mental breakdown including hallucinations. I don't remember how long I stayed there, but my best guess is about three months, until the spring of 1964.

Reniek leaves behind “Polish People’s Republic”

August 15th is not registered in astronomical annals as a special phenomenon, except for the fact that on that day my friend Reniek Odulinski left the Polish People’s Republic. Our country was missing its most ardent supporter, the one who became famous among the Wroclaw Secret Police for his willingness to cooperate and even more importantly, the one who delivered a written description of the complexities of my sinister soul. They did not know that I was the coauthor of such documents, but Reniek was praised both for his cooperation and for his delivery.

He crossed the western border of Poland on his Jawa 350 while Polish customs officials, were busy steeping their Russian tea, and dividing between themselves confiscated Marlboro cigarettes from tourists. It was the middle of the afternoon and the western sun was shining in Reniek’s eyes. He was exhilarated by the prospect of living in the west and by the smell of high octane, leaded gasoline. His future was certainly better from a gastronomical point of view. He was already tired of chicken soup and cream puffs as the main staple of his diet. Early in his life in Wroclaw, Reniek discovered that from an economical point of view the combination of chicken soup with noodles and cream puffs made sense. It provided him with the maximum number of calories needed to satisfy a few young ladies competing for his attention. Some of them were sufficiently smart and practical, bringing sandwiches when they came to visit him. Reniek, a gentleman to this day, does not want to say that those sandwiches made any difference in the quality of his performance.

He had a personal grouch against the First Secretary of the United Party of Polish Workers who was responsible for the dismal condition of his living quarters, which consisted of one room, with only a faucet of cold water and no toilet. He got his room as a “guest room” when he was assigned by Czestochowa Technical University to practice mechanical engineering in the factory making equipment for the food industry.

He couldn’t open the windows in his room because the communal restrooms for the entire factory of more than 100 workers were located directly under his room. As usual, the drainage of urine was less than accurate and workers had to walk

on the compromised bricks to reach the urinals and then return back to work. During the summer the stink from this establishment was unbearable and Reniek had to keep his window closed.

Once Reniek crossed the Polish People's Republic border, he severed all his contacts with Polish authorities both secret and overt. His destination was France. In France he had a distant cousin with an aristocratic name—de Pomian—who defected to France after a short stint in Communist diplomacy. He invited Reniek to come and visit him.

Visiting Le Chateau Villersexel

It was at the time of Reniek's departure from Poland to France when I was planning to travel in the same direction to purchase my dream car, a Simca Etoile. I had already saved \$5,000 for this purpose and was thinking that I could find a bargain for a Simca costing about that much. Shortly after Reniek arrived to the home of his aristocratic cousin in France, he learned that his cousin and his wife had been offered summer jobs cataloging the large Châteaux library owned by the De Grammont family. As usual in aristocracy, the French and Polish did not allow each other to starve and they created such a job for Mr. de Pomian for the summer of 1963. As Reniek had just arrived with Mr. de Pomian, naturally he was invited as well. Once he got to the palace of Villersexel, he could not believe that the 20 plus bedrooms could stay unoccupied. He immediately, without consulting the owners, sent me a post card, stating shortly that he was there, in Villersexel, alone with three ladies: Mrs. de Grammont senior; her companion—a Polish “aristocrat”—Mademoiselle de Lulu; and her young daughter Jane Marie de Grammont. He was thinking that I would complement their company and he had obviously forgotten that I would arrive with Zofia.

In the meantime, we procured a lift from a Swedish couple driving south to Italy who took us to Paris. In Paris, before purchasing my dream car, we decided to sleep in a tent recommended to us by the Polish Consulate in Stockholm. It was a memorable mistake. The tent was first deployed in the camping grounds Boi de Boulogne, where it had its first rain test. Nobody told us that we needed a plastic sheet above the tent, as the roof

was completely transparent to water. One has to give credit to the designers: the floor was made of solid plastic and retained all the water which was dripping from the roof. We couldn't sleep all night and the next day I gave up and purchased the silver Simca Etoile on display in the Paris salon on Champ Elise's. I was thinking that we may be able to sleep in the car if the rain persisted.

The next day we traveled toward Villersexel where the comforts of luxury were waiting for us, as we expected from the short message from Reniek described in his post card. At that time I did not know, but Villersexel is located close to the Swiss border, maybe 100 km or less and we arrived there the next day. When we arrived at Villersexel the Chateau was still in its glory. The park was well kept by a few gardeners and the Chateau itself was cared for by uniformed butlers. In this front portal I noticed two 19th century canons, which during a subsequent visit, 30 years later, somehow disappeared, probably sold along with other "antique" items to keep the Chateaux operating.

We drove our new Simca to the main entrance and knocked on the large, ornamental door. A uniformed butler opened the door and asked whose arrival he should announce to the owner of the splendid property. I asked for Mr. Odulinski, my friend. Unfortunately instead of Reniek, a young woman in her middle 30's showed up and asked us to enter the salon. She spoke English very well and after a short conversation on meaningless subjects, told us that she wished us safe travels in France. There was no mention made of us remaining at the Chateaux as guests. Shortly thereafter, my friend Reniek showed up, embarrassed, probably realizing that I took for sure his invitation to stay at the Chateaux. He appeared very busy and told us that he only had a few moments to spend with us but that around four in the afternoon we could meet him in the garden. We left the Chateaux counting the hours until 4 p.m. when Reniek would appear to clarify the situation. When Reniek arrived in the garden, he was tense. He told us that at five o'clock in the palace they usually have a tea party. For each party they dress themselves in costumes from different époques. A collection of such dresses was in the attic. Some of the dresses were as old as the 16th century, others as recent as the 18th century. Since dressing in such attire was not an easy procedure for a

modern man, especially one from Socialist Poland, Reniek required the help of a butler. The butler would watch to make sure that such terrible mishaps would not happen, like mixing the 17th century rapier with an 18th century musketeer's uniform. Reniek was tense and told us that he didn't have much time for conversation because his butler was waiting to assist him with dressing.

I have to say that I was disappointed with Reniek, but Reniek is a person who had his shortcomings and it was also my fault that I didn't ask him more questions before coming to Villersexel, especially since Zofia was tagging along. Shortly after, his aristocratic cousin, Mr. de Pomian, had shown up and explained to us in plain Polish, that the problem was with my girlfriend Zofia. At the time she had a posture and bust of a model, and the three ladies who owned the Chateaux didn't look so good in comparison. Simply, if I had arrived alone, the situation would be different. After spending all of our savings on the new car, we had no money left to visit France and its splendor. We decided to drive back to Sweden, sleeping inside the Simca when it rained and using our tent on dry nights.



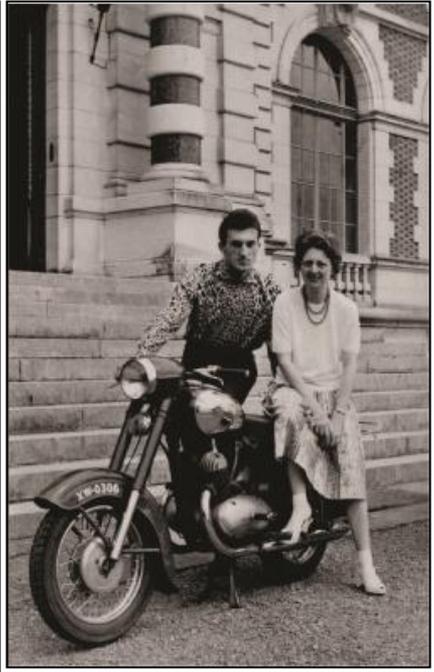
Palace Villersexel.



Zofia preparing lunch during the trip to Villersexel (1963).



Reniek Odulinski dressed as a French nobleman at the Palace of Villersexel (1963).



Reniek Odulinski with Jane Marie de Grammont. Please notice the “famous” Jawa 350 motorcycle on which Reniek came to France.

Villersexel revisited

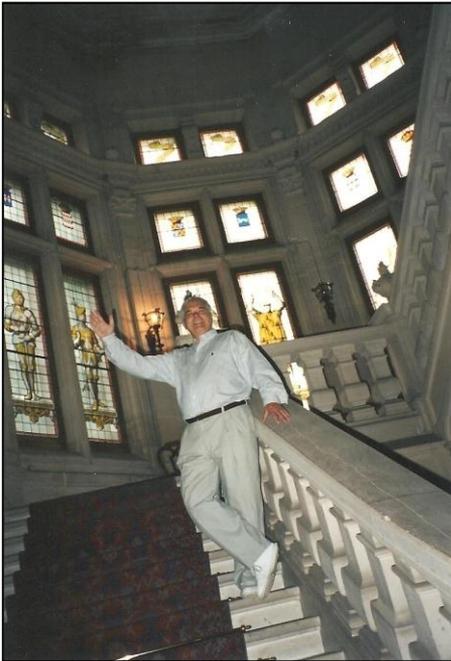
It was the year 2000, 37 years after my first visit to Villersexel. This time I was visiting Switzerland together with my wife, Laura. In Switzerland I had some business in the pharmaceutical industry in Basel which now and then purchased my equipment. After accomplishing what I had to do, we decided to spend the rest of our time as vacationers in France. Then my memory recalled Villersexel. I wasn't sure if I could find this place as perhaps there were a number of similar towns and villages having the same name. Fortunately, on the back page of a French automobile map I found one, and only one village named Villersexel. Additionally it was located close to Basel, about two hours' drive, straight west. Not thinking on it anymore, we decided to revisit Villersexel and see who owned the palace now. Soon we arrived at the small, picturesque town and I spotted on the hill Chateaux de Villersexel. When we approached the iron gates of the Chateaux it was closed, but a small plaque in three languages, French, German and English announced that the palace was open



PalaceVillerexel's interior.

to visitors from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. If somebody wished to stay for a night, rooms were available at \$90 per night. After pressing the bell, a small man appeared who according to Laura looked like Woody Allen, the famous American movie director. He introduced himself as the new owner of the palace and said that a room could be rented under the condition that we paid in cash. The room we rented was the bedroom of the Madam Marquise de Grammont, the previous owner of the palace. I had some satisfaction, because now 37 years later I could sleep in the bedroom of the former owner for only \$90. As it was already a late hour, we parked our car under the window of the master bedroom and went to sleep. Unfortunately it was not a very restful night. The whole night, every 15 minutes, we could hear clocks chiming. On each floor there were many musical clocks, none of which were synchronized with each other, so we could hear them practically continuously. In addition to all this the tower clock of a nearby church was adding its loud bells.

During the night we could also hear the squeaking of the wooden floor, which Laura interpreted as the steps of the ghost of the Marquise de Grammont, who was unhappy that we had taken over her bed. In the morning I realized, that it was not the ghost of the Marquise but the new owner himself who was worrying that we would steal some of the antique pictures adorning the halls. In the morning, devastated by a lack of sleep we were offered morning breakfast served by the wife of the new Marquise. I must say that the croissants were delicious.



Jan revisiting the Palace of Villersexel (year 2000).

The new Marquise offered us a tour of the palace's different rooms and mentioned that if I was interested he would sell the whole palace for \$400,000. He says that he didn't have the money to repair the extensive roof and replace the large number of wooden windows. I estimated that the needed repairs would cost over a million dollars. He also mentioned that if Americans were not interested then this historical property would be sold to the Japanese. It was a time when Japan was awash with money, and the Japanese were buying properties all over the globe. The argument of Japanese expansion to France did not make much of an impression on me. I couldn't find any justification to own such an expansive property in such a distant location without specific use.



Laura at breakfast at Chateaux Villersexel (2000)

What happened to Villersexel aristocrats?

After our return home, to Columbus, Ohio I called Reniek, who now lives in Montreal, Canada and asked him what he knew about the aristocratic women he met during his first visit to Chateaux Villersexel in 1964. Apparently, the original owner of the palace died, and passed all the property not to the daughter but to her companion, who described herself as a Polish aristocrat with the nickname “Lulu.” The daughter, Jean Marie de Grammont was left with only a small trust account. A few years later, she traveled to Montreal to visit Reniek, who in the meantime was married with two sons. She was completely impractical. She didn’t even have a credit card to purchase a return ticket to Paris. Reniek had to pay for her return trip. She died while she was still a young woman due to cancer. Mademoiselle “Lulu” died also and she is buried in the same cemetery as all of the de Grammont family members in Villersexel.

Christmas 1964: Second return to Poland

My position at the Institute of Physics was unsecure and unstable. I did not have a secure university position and my income was related to grants which were received by Professor Tove in the Department of Electronics. In addition I had mounting personal problems with Zofia and confusion with my status as an immigrant. I wasn’t sure if I would return to Poland or stay in the west. The Polish Consulate had confiscated my passport which made my travel to other countries impossible. One day I was told that Professor Tove had no more money and unemployment added to the stress I was already facing. I became delusional with the fear of persecution and ended up in the open psychiatric clinic at the university hospital in Uppsala, where I think I stayed for about three months until the spring of 1964. I must give credit to Zofia. During my stay in the hospital she visited me every day. In an ironic twist of fate, she would suffer from mental illness herself 10 years later. My disease was temporary, while hers devastated her for the rest of her life. Zofia’s illness presented itself in Columbus, Ohio after I had already divorced her. Remembering Zofia’s visit

to my psychiatric clinic, I take care of her daily needs to this day. Fortunately new medicines (Zeprexa) allow her to live independently with her sister, who also suffers from the same genetically related disease of schizophrenia.

When I was released I was healthy enough to work again. In the local paper I noticed an advertisement for an electronic engineer for a group of neurologists working at Wallenberg Laboratory. I went there and was hired. Two fellows, Jan Ekstedt and Erik Stalberk were studying electrical activity in single fiber potentials in the muscles. During the short time of one month I designed an electrical circuit which helped them record the electrical impulses from the muscles of myasthenia patients. The circuit was called the “window trigger” and was a great success. My coworkers have written a number of scientific papers in which they mentioned the use of this device. They were appreciative enough to place my name in these papers as a coauthor. One of the papers was published in the *Journal of Clinical Neurophysiology* under the title: “Oscilloscopic recording of muscle fiber action potentials: the window trigger and the delay unit.”

During the time of my nervous breakdown psychiatrists speculated that one reason for my mental health problems could be a so-called “prison psychosis” such as they saw frequently in the prisoners who were isolated from mainstream society. I spoke English at work and had no practical knowledge of Swedish, and was therefore isolated from mainstream Swedish social life. I felt constricted in everyday life, especially because in Poland I excelled in the nuances of the Polish language, including humor. Before I left the psychiatric clinic it was suggested that I return to Poland where my recovery would be faster once the language barrier was removed. I took this advice to heart and after a few months’ work at the Wallenberg Laboratory, Zofia and I returned to Poland, just before Christmas 1964. On our return trip we drove two cars, the new Simca Etoile 1300 which I had purchased in Paris and an old, rusty Mercedes 190 which we intended to sell in Poland.

Letter to Prime Minister, Eugene Szyr

After my second return from Sweden and recovery from the nervous breakdown I started to look for an opportunity to make some money by selling my inventions and ideas in the field of electronic instrumentation. To start, I went to the police headquarters Department of Highway Traffic and offered them a speedometer project, based on two pneumatic tubes stretched across the road at a known distance. I don't remember if I had seen such a concept in Sweden, or if it was my own idea. Cars driving on the road would produce two pressure pulses spaced by the time interval. This interval would be reversely proportional to vehicle speed and would be electronically measured. If the interval was sufficiently short it would indicate excessive speed of vehicle and alarm the police patrol down the road. Now I see these kinds of devices quite common on the roads in the U.S., but at that time in Poland this concept was nonexistent. Unfortunately even the police department, known at that time as the militia, could not pay for such an invention to a private person. Therefore I decided to look for another customer.

I turned my attention to the medical field. At that time my girlfriend, Zofia was finishing her studies at the Medical Academy in Lodz and through her I got in contact with Professor Dr. Jan Moll, a famous Polish cardiac surgeon. To him I offered a cardio tachometer which I designed in Sweden. He was very enthusiastic about it and mentioned how archaic the instruments were that he had to use in his practice. Unfortunately, as was the case of the Highway Police, the Medical Academy could not contract any project with a private person. Disappointed, I decided to write a letter to the Polish Deputy Prime Minister, Comrade Eugene Szyr. He was in charge of the State Committee for Science and Technology and I felt my appeal to him was very appropriate for the problem I was facing.

Surprisingly, many years later one of my friends from Wroclaw Polytechnic, Richard Pregiel, became his replacement. My letter, as I remember was labeled as bureaucratic idiocy, allowing state enterprises to import expensive instruments from Capitalist countries rather than pay local inventors to build them in Poland. In my naiveté I was thinking that it was a defect of the

system, while in fact “the system” worked perfectly well, forbidding the engineering class and entrepreneurs to earn more than the “prescribed by state” salaries. My letter and what followed next was just a process of learning my lesson, that if I liked to live and prosper, the Communist state was not designed for me or maybe I wasn’t suited for it. After I wrote my respectful letter and addressed it to Prime Minister Szyr and finished it with the sentence “I hope His Excellency can satisfactorily resolve this problem,” I dropped it in the mail box. I felt that I had defined my problem as the bureaucracy behind limiting the ability of the Medical Academy to pay me, a private person, for designing and building Cardio-tachometer.

In one month’s time, or so, I became perturbed by their lack of reply. I decided to drive to Warsaw to the office of the Committee for Research and Development and ask if any decision regarding my problem had been made. I knocked first on the door of the office of the Committee located on the most prominent street in Warsaw and revealed my name which was immediately recognized by one of the officials. He opened a folder with my name on it and inside was my letter with some scribbling, apparently by the Prime Minister himself. It read, “Make Czekajewski to see me immediately!” I was told to wait for another day and the Prime Minister would see me in his office.

As usual, I stayed overnight at the villa of Zofia’s uncle, Mr. Zygmunt Krauze, who was one of a few private entrepreneurs still active in Poland. At the time in his basement, which had three levels, he was producing cotton puffs used to apply powder to female faces to enhance their beauties. His villa on 39 Olimpijska Street was built just before the Second World War, and the old owners in anticipation of the coming war built a bomb shelter beneath their home. Therefore there were three levels of the basement, each deeper in the ground than the previous one. I shared with Uncle Krauze my excitement that I was being blessed with a personal audience with Prime Minister Szyr. Uncle Krauze who by his account was sitting in seven different prisons seven different times without conviction was unimpressed. He just told me, that if I went to see Comrade Szyr, I should wear warm underpants, as there was always a possibility that I would spend days, if not months, in prison. I laughed off his warning that night

but the next morning I dressed myself warmly to visit the minister. When I arrived I was directed to the second floor where I had to sit and wait. I was told that the Prime Minister was too busy, by his deputy, Minister Chylinski and would see me shortly. At this time I was not aware that Comrade Chylinski's proper name should have been Jan Bierut, as he was the son of the first Communist president of Poland, Soviet agent, Boleslaw Bierut. Chylinski decided to assume the name of his mother when advancing through the party hierarchy.

When I came to the committee it was 11a.m. and I was waiting patiently for another hour or more. Finally I became restless and was ready to leave when suddenly Comrade Chylinski appeared and barked an impersonal order at me: "Come in." He sat behind the office desk with two phones on it. One was the standard black; another was reddish-brown in color resembling red beets. From the start his attitude was negative toward me and he began with an accusation that I was trying to make money while the working class and peasants paid for my education. He was further outraged because I patented my invention in Sweden and was now trying to entrap the Polish State in costly litigation. Apparently his delay in arrival was due to a visit to some intelligence headquarters where he found out that I in fact patented this invention in Sweden. He even reached to the reddish phone telling me that it was connected to the Secret Police and at a moment's notice I may end up in handcuffs on my way to prison. This was already too much for me, so I told him that I was prepared for such an eventuality and that I was dressed warmly for just such an occasion. To this day I am happy to say that I've never seen the inside of a Communist prison, or any prison for that matter, although I might have been able to enrich myself with such an experience.

I was not surprised at his findings as I kept no secrets about patenting my invention. In addition, I could foresee such complications in Poland, and therefore I had approached Professor Per Arno Tove, to serve as a co-inventor. I told Comrade Chylinski that my invention fully belonged to me and no Polish workers' or peasants' money was spent on my research in Sweden. Comrade Chylinski temporarily calmed down and suggested that I should look for a job in the local medical instrumentation factory that

made X-ray equipment in the suburb of Warsaw, Wola. He told me that any possibility of private payment for my inventions was out of the question and that I should go to this factory and discuss the possibility of employment with a manager. On my request to reimburse me for a gas and mileage for driving from the city of Lodz, he mentioned that such reimbursement had no legal precedence. I was pissed, but I went to the X-ray machines factory to hear what they had to offer. When I arrived, apparently the director was alerted by Comrade Chylinski regarding my arrival, because he was waiting for me at the entrance. In his office he introduced himself as Engineer Wienckowski. He told me that he could employ me immediately with a standard salary for engineers, but he dismissed the possibility of an apartment. At that time in Warsaw there was a shortage of apartments and some people with families had to wait for 10 or more years to receive accommodations. The only readily affordable and available housing was the “workers’ barracks” in which a minimum of three people had to share one room. Besides being cramped, there was a high occurrence of people “embellishing themselves” with vodka, and hygiene was certainly not their strong point. There was also one communal bathroom for a large number of rooms and a shortage of warm water.

Seeing the disappointment on my face, Engineer Wienckowski asked me a personal question: “If you had been to Sweden, why did you come back? Your letter to the Prime Minister may have amused him, but don’t you realize that they are making a fool out of you. I cannot change the system. I cannot pay you for consultation. They have written a number of volumes painstakingly detailing what I can and cannot do. I am not able to fart without looking into such books first. If you still have an option to return to Sweden go there or stop making waves. If you write too much, or you talk too much they will lock you up and throw away the key. Goodbye and good luck.”

Engineer Wienckowski opened my eyes to the reality of life in a Socialist system. I left thinking that from now on I would have to go back where I came from, namely Sweden. My experience writing letters to vice Prime Minister Szyr was very, very educational.

The Mercedes 190

Why is this rusty old German car worthy of a full chapter in this book? If you follow my narrative you will out find why. When I purchased the car my primary motivation for the transaction was actually a money transfer. In simple terms, western cars, especially a Mercedes Benz, were in high demand in Poland. I didn't realize that I was about to be involved on many levels in many different idiotically corrupt schemes all orchestrated by the Polish government. Many of the situations were both scary and funny; but all's well that ends well and in the end nobody died or went to prison even if we were dangerously close to both.

In 1965 Zofia and I decided to return to Poland. Each of us could bring back a car without paying customs duties. We already had one car, a new Simca Etoile which I purchased in France a year before. Now I decided to purchase another one just for resale. Because I had already brought back one car when returning to Poland from Sweden in 1961 it was safer for me to bring a decrepit, rusty, 10-year-old Mercedes instead of a new Simca. As far as the customs clearance office was concerned Zofia was now the official owner of the Simca. To purchase the Mercedes 190 we went to the junk yard outside of Uppsala. The owner of the yard was a Gypsy, judging by his vocabulary and skin complexion. The price was right, about \$400—and I didn't mind the holes in the floor due to the extensive rust. This holed floor was immaterial during the summer, but in the winter it resulted in mud covered feet for the driver. Good, water proof rubber galoshes were advisable for driving this car in the winter.

After crossing the Polish border, Zofia's Simca was immediately declared customs free, but my Mercedes became subject to import tax. As I did not have an official residence with a garage in Poland, the neighbor of Zofia's uncle living in Warsaw on Olimpijska Street, offered his garage for my car's temporary storage. His name was Mr. Truchan. At his garage my Mercedes was sealed by the customs office pending my appeal for releasing it from customs duties. With the help of Mr. Kaminski from the Polish Peasants' Party my appeal for the free import of my Mercedes was soon successful.

The helpful attitude of Mr. Truchan didn't last long though. Within two weeks after my Mercedes was free to drive he declared that I had to remove my car from his garage, or if I was agreeable, he himself would purchase it from me. I was confused, but since this car's only purpose was resale, I agreed to sell it to Mr. Truchan for 90,000 Polish zloty. This was a fair price taking into account, that the black market conversion rate of dollars was 100 zloty per one dollar. My joy did not last long. Shortly after I got a call from Zofia's uncle that the deal should be void and I should return the money to Mrs. Truchan, because Mr. Truchan was now a fugitive from justice hiding in an unknown location. Apparently he escaped from his home in middle of the night while the police were knocking on his door. He was suspected to be part of the "meat affair" in which meat from privately raised pigs was sold in state-owned stores. The police were searching the premises when they found my car, still officially titled to me, but suspected to be owned by Mr. Truchan. They sealed it a second time until further notice. Now I had no money, because I returned it to Mrs. Truchan and no car. Mr. Truchan was apparently hiding in the nunnery in Lodz. His refuge was organized with the help of Mr. Krauze's adopted son, Witek D., who was also a priest and secretary of His Eminency, Bishop Klepacz.

The only thing left for me to do was to go to the police and claim that the car was mine and the police had made a gross mistake in assuming that it belonged to Mr. Truchan. There was a danger in my bluff, because I was afraid that during the police search of Mr. Truchan's home they had found a note from me stating that I transferred ownership of the Mercedes to Mr. Truchan for 90,000 zloty. Nevertheless, I decided to take the risk. After some wrangling, the police released the car and this time I was able to drive it from Warsaw to Lodz, where I temporarily resided at Zofia's mother's apartment. I was later told that Mr. Truchan, after some weeks of religious contemplations, decided to return to Warsaw in the middle of the night to visit his wife. To his surprise he found in his marital bed another man, this time a priest who had just returned from Rome where he was studying Gregorian Chants. Apparently the priest escaped to the garden through the same window from which Mr. Truchan had escaped the police.

The next weekend after arriving with my Mercedes in Lodz I decided to drive it to the used car market to assess its value. I didn't talk about selling my car. I just looked at other vehicles and compared prices. Then I went home. It didn't take more than 30 minutes for somebody to ring the doorbell. I opened the door to see two gentlemen who explained that they had seen me at the car market. They were asking if I would like to sell my Mercedes 190. Initially I was suspecting that it was a police setup since a car imported without customs duties shouldn't be sold for the next five years. The gentlemen who visited me were aware of my worries and explained that they were not from the police, but had a genuine interest in purchasing my old, rusty Mercedes 190 for any sum I asked. To support their position they opened their briefcase with a large amount of money in it. All would be paid in cash, they mentioned. I explained that this car was an old wreck and not worth much. It was driven in Sweden where they used copious amounts of salt on the roads and therefore it was rusted through. They could not be dissuaded. The older gentleman introduced himself as a trader in goose down. He explained that he purchased goose down from the farmers and delivered it to the state companies which make goose down pillows. This was a highly profitable profession in the Socialist country where every citizen should be equally poor.

He had a sufficient amount of money to buy a new Mercedes 190 or even newer model Mercedes 220, but this would alert authorities to his wealth. He preferred to drive an old car, like mine. When I tried to explain to him that this car was not really drivable, Mr. Kuphal commented that he would make it look like new. What he really needed was an old motor number. He would register this car as 10 years old, made in the year 1955, and replace all the parts in it with new parts he would bring from West Germany. I risked an extraordinary high price of 240,000 zloty which was more than double what I had received and returned to Mr. Truchan. Mr. Kuphal did not flinch a bit when he counted and handed to me the appropriate amount of money from his briefcase. He also asked me to accompany him to the Transportation Department in Lodz, where the director herself (it was a lady) would provide the proper documents for transferring the title from me to Mr. Kuphal. I was surprised how easy and "legal" such an

operation was for Mr. Kuphal. Apparently somewhere in the mentality of people, including government officials there still existed the concept of a free enterprise.

Regarding the above mentioned priests, including the secretary to Bishop Klepacz, Witold and his musically gifted friend who had a “religious” experience with Mrs. Truchan, they became my good clients. They purchased from me U.S. dollars and paid the high black market conversion rate. Reverend Witek was often traveling to Rome together with Bishop Klepacz. When in Rome, Reverend Witek purchased glossy pictures of martyred saints, which he smuggled back to Poland in the Bishop’s diplomatic luggage. These pictures were later traded with local parish priests, who passed them to farmers claiming that they were blessed by the Pope himself in Rome. In exchange for the glossy pictures of saints ecstatic farmers were enthusiastically sending monetary “offerings” to the parish priests. The more shine and color the pictures had, the more offerings they brought.

Nowadays I have mixed feelings about my participation in spreading religious faith in the Polish countryside during the time of an oppressive Atheist regime. Years later Reverend Witek immigrated to Austria and acquired the title of Monsignor. Once, when I was visiting Poland I was told that Monsignor Witek in Vienna cherished a relationship with another man on whom he bestowed not only affection, but also lavish gifts paid for from the funds entrusted to him by Zofia’s uncle, Mr. Krauze, who was also his adopted father. In a short time nothing was left for the grandchildren of Mr. Krauze, after he died. If I was religious, I would have some doubts.

Balaton Lake

Looking through the old photos, I run into a tattered, grainy, black and white photo of myself dressed like a prisoner in Auschwitz. The photo reminds me of a memorable trip to Hungary via Czechoslovakia. In the photograph, I'm dressed in pajamas that looked just like the striped uniforms clothing the masses at Auschwitz. As I remember, I decided to dress myself like this for the better part of our two-month-excursion as we traveled by car from Poland to the Balaton Lake in Hungary. Why had I chosen to dress in such a manner that caused many comments from the people we encountered on this trip? Some people were amused by my look. Others were rude and hostile. The main reason, I think, was that I was sick and tired of Communist doctrine, which demanded that the entire Polish population project a uniformity of dress and opinion. At the same time, wearing pajamas provided comfortable protection from the sun during such a long trip since we mostly slept in a tent, never in hotels. Voicing objections to the Communist system was a dangerous thing; but, nobody could object to my pajamas—a product of the socialist textile industry. I wore my pajamas just the same as I had purchased them without modification. The only downside was looking like I had recently escaped from the concentration camps—I could always say that



Jan dressed in pajamas resembling an outfit for inmates of Nazi concentration camp of Auschwitz. Picture taken in Czechoslovakia during the trip to Hungary.

such association was not in my mind but in the mind of critical, hostile observers.

In the summer of 1965 I had been in Poland seven months, following three years in Sweden. I was busy avoiding military service and steady employment, both of which would cramp my freewheeling lifestyle. Avoiding military service was a paramount task, as being drafted would make me ineligible for traveling to the “West.” Money I had. I left Sweden with money in my pocket and an old Mercedes 190 car; which, although very rusty, I sold for a huge profit to Mr. Kuphal, the black marketer trading in goose down. In the summer of 1965, Hungary began to attract Polish tourists. Hungary offered unlimited exchange of Polish currency into Hungarian forints, which was an unusual phenomenon in the countries of socialist persuasion. The motivation behind all of it though was for Hungary to capitalize on the negative trade balance with Poland.

In addition, there was no need for a passport. We had only to show our identification cards, which we were all required to have any way. It was a common practice for tourists to bring goods or merchandise with them to sell along their travel route while purchasing additional goods and merchandise to bring to Poland. Each transaction resulted in a large profit that made travel not only affordable, but also lucrative. I had no idea what the most desirable merchandise to take to Hungary could be, but I decided to find out once I got there. In the meantime, I had plenty of Polish currency to buy whatever caught my eye in Hungary or Czechoslovakia. We drove our Simca Etoile from Sweden. It was a four cylinder French sedan I purchased two years earlier in Paris. This would be the vehicle to take us to Hungary. The final destination was Balaton Lake—a body of shallow water, that for landlocked Hungarians and Czechs resembled something of a small sea.

Four of us set out on this trip: I and my future wife Zofia, my future mother-in-law Emilia and my future sister-in-law Wanda. To safely transport such a large amount of Polish bills, I decided to stash them in the ventilation system of my car. By selecting this particular location to hide the bills, I forced us to keep the windows open even while it rained. We took along the tent and enough canned goods to last until we reached Hungary. In

Hungary, we were prepared to use local currency (forints) after converting Polish zlotys.

I remember we took with us a large jar of pickled cucumbers, which we didn't end up eating so we brought it back to Poland after two months of traveling. On our way back, as we were crossing the Polish border in the middle of night, our cucumbers caught the gaze of the customs officers who couldn't figure out who in the hell would bring pickled cucumbers with them to Poland.

The four of us loaded ourselves, tent, pneumatic mattresses plus canned food to survive travel through Czechoslovakia into the Simca Etoile stuffed full of Polish zlotys in the ventilation system. Because Hungary was the only socialist country to exchange zlotys to forints without limit, we lived in style and ate like royalty while there.

I remember when we arrived in Prague, we had to stay in a private room since all of the hotels were sold out and there was nowhere to pitch a tent in the capital city. To my embarrassment, I did not realize that we were supposed to pay to the owners of the apartment for our stay.



Jan with prototype of spectrometer for measuring radiation causing Northern Lights (Aurora)

I assumed that they accepted us as guests. That same night Zofia's mother became very sick and was doubled over with pain. She was in no condition to travel anymore. Not realizing how sick she was, we purchased a train ticket for her and sent her back to Lodz (Poland). After our return, two months later, we learned that Emilia's pains were a result of cancer. She was treated in a local hospital with experimental chemotherapy as the cancer spread wildly, becoming inoperable. She lived five more years and was able to come to Sweden, where she died. Wanda came with Emilia to Sweden and later joined her sister and me in Columbus, Ohio.

Besides the commercial and touristic intentions of our trip, there was yet a third motivation. I had received a short letter from

a researcher in Fairbanks, Alaska. He was asking for a reprint of a paper I had written in Sweden with Dr. Zbigniew Grabowski titled *The Rocket Born Solid State Spectrometer for Measuring Radiation in Aurora*. It was printed in an internationally renowned publication *Nuclear Instruments and Methods*. Apparently, this paper was also read at Alaska University, where they conducted similar research. Being sure, that my correspondence in Poland was being closely checked by Secret Police, I did not answer the researcher while in Poland. Instead, I decided to write to him from Hungary—believing that the Hungarians did not have me on their list of suspected persons. When we arrived at Balaton Lake I wrote to this researcher that I would love to see such beautiful country as Alaska and sent him a copy of my paper. I had no idea that this would set a chain of events into motion that would include my emigration to the United States, starting my own company—Columbus Instruments—and settling down in Columbus, OH.

Once we arrived at Balaton Lake and pitched a tent on the beach, it rained and thundered during a summer storm that night. Tired from a long drive I didn't anticipate that the lake would swell and engulf the tents and cars that were parked on the beach. When water reached my butt, I woke up and alerted Zofia and Wanda to run to higher ground while I ran to rescue the car in the nick of time. Less lucky were two neighboring Germans traveling by small VW bus, a relic today. They were drunk when they fell asleep and because they slept on a higher level inside the bus, they didn't realize that the lake water had engulfed the motor as well. They had no chance of moving the vehicle. Unmoved, they relocated themselves to the roof of the bus and continued to sleep past noon. Apparently, they were from West Germany and they were wealthy. A car wasn't a big ticket item for them, or maybe they had good flood insurance?

Next to us there were a couple of Poles who also arrived by car and slept in tents. One of them, as I remember, was a colonel in the Polish Army and he loudly and visibly objected to my flamboyant, provocative pajamas: “a la Auschwitz?” He commented that I constituted a disgrace to the Polish Nation dressing like that. Additionally, he objected that I was shielding myself from the intense sun by a black umbrella. I anticipated intense sun in Hungary and therefore I purchased an umbrella, but

in socialist Poland all umbrellas were black and intended to use in the rain, not in the sun. I had little in common with these Polish people, but I overheard what they discussed with other Poles conservatively dressed, obviously not in pajamas. As they were passing through Czechoslovakia on their way to Hungary they noticed attractive East German photo cameras, mostly copies of West German cameras made by Leica and Zeiss. They wanted to purchase them but were short of Czechoslovakian money (crowns). They speculated to exchange Hungarian currency into Czechoslovakian and on the way back buy these desirable cameras. I had to laugh as I had a similar idea a few days before, and every morning I went by car traveling from one campground to the next looking for Czech tourists. I offered an attractive rate to purchase Hungarian forints in exchange for crowns. I was so successful that I cleaned out a whole neighborhood of Balaton Lake from Czechoslovakian crowns. Next day I could only laugh when my neighbors failed in their “conspiracy” to acquire forints, as there were none available in our camping neighborhood.

When traveling back to Poland, after nearly two months of vacation, I was looking for merchandise that would be desirable, but not available in Poland. I excluded cameras, but I noticed one kind of garment, velour shirts that were not available in Poland. We purchased 20 such shirts for resale in Poland. We waited until 4 am to cross the border to be sure that the customs officers were sleepy and would let us through without searching our belongings. It was our mistake. The customs officers were sleepy, but also angry and forced us to unload all of our belongings, including the large jar of Polish pickled cucumbers. They were so concentrated on these cucumbers that they didn’t pay any attention to the 20 velour shirts that we had unpacked from their factory wrappings, removed the manufacturer’s labels and mingled with our other garments.

After arriving in Lodz my first steps were to the consignment shop, known in Poland under name of “komis,” the only place where socialist citizens could place personal effects for sale. The komis shop took 15% commission from such transactions. I was sure that the velour shirts would be a big hit with the Poles. Unfortunately, I was wrong. After two weeks, none of my shirts had sold. I asked the manager of the shop why there

wasn't any interest in my merchandise? He told me that my shirts looked like they were made in Czechoslovakia, and you couldn't expect anything good to come from another socialist country. I took the shirts back and was ready to wear them myself, but an idea struck me that I should capitalize on the snobbery of Polish people and convert these shirts into products of Sweden, a country admired for its production of Volvo cars.

For Swedish conversion I only needed 20 labels that said "Made in Sweden." Apparently, Zofia in her penchant for collecting, brought from Sweden a number of labels from Swedish rye crackers, manufactured by Wasa Bread. Beside the name of the bakery, the precious phrase "Made in Sweden" was distinctively printed. Additionally, these labels were self-adhesive, triangular and fit perfectly on the shirts. I stuck the labels on the shirts and put them back for resale in the komis shop. I also doubled the price, which was more appropriate for the West European manufacture. The shirts sold within a week. The profit from the shirt sales paid for two months of my vacation plus a healthy profit.

Uppsala: The third and last approach to freedom

At the beginning of 1966 when I arrived again to Uppsala on the invitation of Dr. Jan Eksted, I was already weary from difficulties in obtaining a passport for foreign travel. After each visit to Sweden I was interviewed by the Secret Police and as I now know from the documents obtained under the freedom of information act, they recently had a plan to enlist me as a spy for them. From the other side I befriended Mr. Kaminski who was a secretary to Mr. Wycech, the Polish Parliament Speaker. Mr. Kaminski facilitated formalities needed for my passport, and I was sure that in the future I would have an "open gate" for my foreign travels. In the meantime my girlfriend Zofia stayed in Poland, finishing her medical degree and Mr. Kaminski promised her a passport to join me in Sweden. Later, after she arrived in Uppsala we started talking about the possibility of permanently staying in Sweden. In the meantime I finalized my application to work at the Institute of Arctic Biology in Fairbanks, Alaska and applied to the Polish consulate for an extension of validity of my passport to all

countries. The passport that was issued to me for traveling to Sweden was valid only for travels in Europe.

After a month of waiting I received a letter from the Polish Consulate in Stockholm stating that “country authorities” had refused my application and the Polish Consulate was instructed to issue me and Zofia Krolikowska one piece of paper, “a blanket permission,” for our immediate return to Poland. It crushed my expectations that my support from the United Peasant Party, namely Mr. Kaminski, was sufficient to overcome other forces firmly planted against me. Now, studying the documents from the Polish Secret Service I realized that they were more powerful than I thought, and they concluded (correctly) that I was short on “loyalty” toward them. When I made a telephone call to the Polish Consulate in Sweden asking for an explanation as to why my application for travel, for one year, to the U.S. was rejected, the consulate told me that apparently my justification was “too short.” I understood “too short” to mean too short in my commitments to the Secret Police or Polish Communist foreign intelligence. At that moment I knew that the return gate to Poland was shut and we would have to make our living in the west. To some extent, the rejection letter from the Polish Consulate made my decision for me. I had no hesitation in making my decision to return to my home country or stay in the west. I should be grateful to them for their decision. I chose the west.

Unemployment in Uppsala

Right after I received a negative response about the validity of my Polish passport, a second unexpected event occurred. My boss, Dr. Jan Eksted did not receive an extension of the grant which was financing his research and my presence in his laboratory. I was told that I was free to come and build whatever I liked, but I would no longer be on the payroll at the Institute of Pharmacology where I worked. Dr. Eksted was trying to make it easier for me and he introduced me to the local pharmaceutical company Pharmacia AB, which was later purchased by Johnson and Johnson and recently by the conglomerate Pfizer Corp. At Pharmacia AB I worked as a freelance designer who helped researchers in the physiological laboratory to build instruments that

they couldn't purchase on the open market. It was at Pharmacia AB that I met Dr. Richter, a German psycho-pharmacologist who was studying the effects of amphetamines on laboratory animals. He told me that he needed an instrument to selectively measure the movements of rats under the influence of amphetamines, while they were in close proximity to a group of other rats which were not under any treatment. Apparently it was observed, also in human application, that the amphetamine's effect was increased when an individual was placed in a social situation. Conversely, individual rats and humans exposed to amphetamines and left alone in a dark cage or room with no external stimulants tolerated higher doses of amphetamines without harmful effects.

I thought that a Q-meter might be the answer to his problem. Andrzej Jellonek my professor at Polytechnic in Wroclaw was obsessed with these instruments. Q-meters were designed to measure electrical losses of coils and capacitors in a resonant circuit. My idea was to position under the floor of the animal cage six coils connected in a series and tuned to a high frequency resonance. The animals injected with amphetamines had a platinum wire loop implanted. When the affected animals came close to the coil under the cage floor the wire loop implanted under their skin loaded the resonant circuit creating a voltage change which then registered as an event. The animals without implanted coils also triggered a voltage change in the resonant circuit, but of much lower amplitude. Using a two level discriminator I was able to distinguish the movements of the animals marked with a platinum loop from the animals without a loop. My invention worked well and became useful in Dr. Richter's research.

In the mean time I also received an order to build an instrument to measure the blood flow through the heart of a newborn baby. This order was from the department of pediatrics at Uppsala University Hospital. For this application I used a method of thermo-dilution, which I learned from another researcher at Pharmacia AB Company. He was from Czechoslovakia and his name was Karl Pavek. He worked together with another researcher, Karl Arfors. They pioneered this technique in dogs, but I made it more convenient to use in children. I built the only two such instruments for cardiac output measurements, one for Uppsala

University and a second for Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. Two years later, in Columbus, Ohio I started another company, Columbus Instruments, and I improved on this cardiac output computer which in addition to the Selective Animal Activity became the mainstay of my American business.

In Uppsala I was paid for both inventions but I couldn't make a living this way. I needed to market them and manufacture in some quantity. I decided to start a new, one person company which I named Uppsala Instruments. So as not to deplete my meager resources I decided to concentrate on one product, namely the Selective Activity Meters for measuring animal locomotion. Since I was living in the student dormitory, I could not list my dorm address for my company. It just so happened that my friend, from the same electronic department, Teoman Madakbas was returning to Turkey and he was vacating a post office box which he and another Jewish fellow from England were renting at a nearby Post Office. They used this box to receive orders (I think) for drug paraphernalia in the form of glass blown water pipes. Maybe these were used for smoking marijuana. Apparently, their business was not prosperous and Teoman decided to return to Istanbul, where he started an import-export company. A few years later he was selling my American made products in Turkey. I had to advertise my new, one person company with an address of PO Box 12007. Number 12 was the number of the Post Office in Uppsala and the number 007 was the actual box number within this particular post office. It just so happened that it was synonymous with the name of the well-known British agent, James Bond 007, starring in a number of movies.

The first commercial brochure

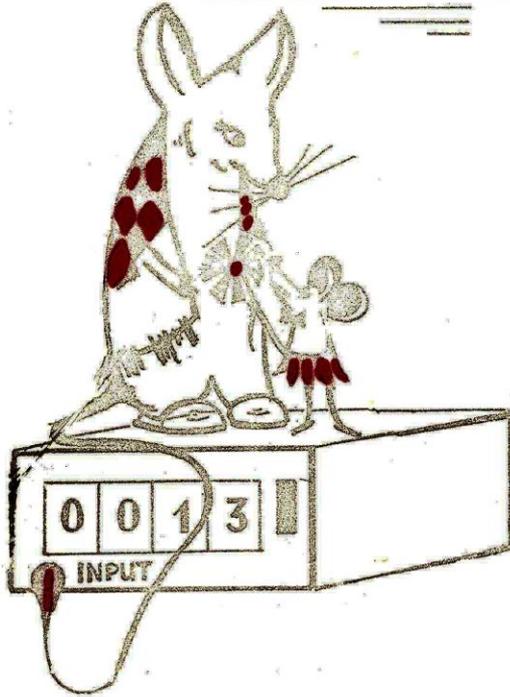
To sell my Selective Activity Meters on the wider market, I desperately needed a brochure describing its unique features. I had no money to print one or even to design one. I decided to write it myself. I still had a key to the Institute of Physics and they had a duplicating machine in their basement. It was occasionally used by the faculty to duplicate machine typed scripts. Please remember it was before Xerox duplicating machines became widely used. This duplicating machine used an aluminum sheet as a master wrapped around a large drum. I typed a description of my Selective Meter on the three aluminum sheets. The cover page I designed myself with a hand drawn picture of a rat standing on the mechanical counter. Using the duplicating machine at night when nobody could observe my illegal activity I made 300 brochures.

When I showed a copy of it to my American friend, Sven Johnson, he immediately criticized it for a mistake in the title. On my brochure the title was: *Selectiv Activity Meter*. “Where is the ‘e’ in the word *Selective*,” asked Sven. Surely I omitted the “e” because in my understanding of the English language, there was no “e.” I didn’t hear an “e.” “Because it is a silent ‘e,’” Sven insisted. I had no choice but to agree with Sven Johnson, especially after consulting an English dictionary. I could not scrap all 300 brochures, as it would ruin me completely.

Then I was struck with an ingenious idea. If I corrected these brochures by hand in black ink, it would be too obvious that I had made an orthographical error. Who would pay several thousand dollars for an instrument with such a glaring orthographical error? I decided to make it in red ink and shape the “e” like a mouse with a long swirling tail. Instantly the brochure turned into a color brochure with a touch of humor. Customers could not suspect that such a sharp brochure was the result of my ignorance of the English language. I still have the first copy of this brochure. I framed it and placed at the entrance of my Columbus Instruments. It symbolizes the primitive and desperate beginnings of my now successful enterprise.

/// "UPPSALA INSTRUMENTS"
UPPSALA-SWEDEN
box: 12007

SELECTIVE ACTIVITY METER



Uppsala Instruments first "commercial" brochure

Uppsala Instruments: Manufacturing and marketing

Now it was time to manufacture my invention en masse if I received orders. Besides having the company name and address, I needed manufacturing facilities. For this I contracted my colleagues from the Department of Electronics who later became professors there. After hours in the Institute of Physics they assembled Selective Activity Meters from components I delivered to them. In the meantime, Zofia's mother arrived with her second daughter Wanda as her caretaker. Zofia's mother was sick with cancer and Uppsala's university hospital allowed her to come for treatment. Surprisingly, the Communist authorities in Poland allowed her to travel to Sweden. In such an expanded family situation we could no longer live in the student dorm, instead we rented a two bedroom apartment for the handicap where all four of us lived. Zofia's mother helped to address envelopes to the European pharmaceutical companies which were listed in a book published by Merck Pharmaceutical. In a short time I started receiving orders from renowned pharmaceutical companies for my animal activity meters. Orders were addressed to the Post Office Box 12007. In return I sent them finished instruments using the post office parcel system. I got paid by checks which were addressed to Uppsala Instruments, a company which was not registered and practically unknown to anybody. To my surprise local banks cashed these checks with no questions asked. It lasted for a while, but it made me worry that one day I would get into trouble with the tax authorities or the bank would require proper company authorization.

To make things legal I went to the county office, asking them if I could register a company with the name of Uppsala Instruments. I was told that this was not possible if I was not a Swedish citizen. I had to have a board of directors with at least one Swedish member. I was hardly able to make a living for myself. How I could share my meager profits with another person just to satisfy government regulations? I went back home and decided to run Uppsala Instruments "illegally." Eventually, if business had increased, the tax authorities would have found out about my operation. Fortunately next year, in the spring of 1968, I left for the U.S. and that problem ceased to exist.

In the spring of 1968 I was approached by the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm pressing me for a decision to come to the U.S. Apparently, the University of Alaska was sending letters demanding an expedited decision on my visa application. In the meantime the University of Alaska suggested that instead applying for a visitor's visa I should apply for a permanent resident visa, which would alleviate the complexity of future extensions. As we had already said goodbye to our Polish passports, I had no objections to applying for immigrant status in the U.S. The only problem was my booming business in Uppsala Instruments and I didn't know what to do with it when I departed to the U.S. There was also the small, last minute problem of determining whether or not I belonged to a Communist organization.

Am I a Communist, or not?

One day I received a call from the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm to clarify some of my statements on the permanent resident application. When I faced the council, they showed me my statement, where I answered, "Yes," to the question: have you ever belonged to a Communist organization? What I meant by my affirmative answer was that I belonged to ZMP (Polish Youth Association) which to me was a Communist organization, but not a Communist party. In fact, I was kicked out of this organization twice in high school and nearly once in college for telling anti-Communist jokes, dancing the boogie-woogie and trying to prove that Lenin's statement: "Communism equals electricity plus government by the party," could be rewritten according to algebraic rules, as: "electricity equals Communism minus the party." I told the U.S. council, that if I did not belong to ZMP, I probably would not have been able to attend Polytechnic and without a degree I would be useless to the Americans. The council agreed and asked me to correct my visa application with a statement that I was forced to join ZMP, which was only partly true. I was forced by circumstances, but nobody held a gun to my head. One way or another I received permanent resident status in the U.S. while I was still in Sweden. My wife would also be extended permanent resident status. Given this information, I was left with no choice but to marry Zofia.

Closing Uppsala Instruments

During the translation of some official documents we encountered a Polish man, who served as an official translator for the county government in Uppsala. He asked me what I did and I explained to him that I had a business-Uppsala Instruments that I would have to abandon when I immigrated to the U.S. He mentioned that his brother-in-law, Mr. Gunar Wahlgren was a well-known international businessman in Sweden and Singapore and he might be interested in some business arrangements with me to assure the continuity of the manufacture of my Selective Activity Measurements. He arranged for me to meet with Mr. Gunar Wahlgren who presented himself as an honorary consult of Singapore in Sweden. He had a small factory of electrical capacitors in Stockholm and a second one in Singapore. His factories were named Farad. His business in capacitor manufacturing was winding down due to automation because his Stockholm and Singapore operations included manual labor.

He jumped on the idea of taking over my Selective Activity Meters and asked me to write up an agreement concerning mutual cooperation. In this agreement, which I still have, I dictated that his company, Farad AB would share profits from the manufacture of the Selective Activity Meters by ratio of 50/50 and that the agreement was valid for one year with the possibility of an extension if it was mutually agreeable. Naively, I thought that if I could make a living manufacturing the activity meters, then surely Farad AB would be able to net an even higher profit. This was my basic mistake. The only positive thing in my contract was its limitation of time. It was valid for one year. After I arrived in the U.S., I asked Mr. Wahlgren about the profits from making and selling the animal activity meters. He told me that his corporation profits were always close to zero and if the company made any profit he paid himself a higher salary or bonus. I could not blame Mr. Wahlgren for the defective contract since I was the one who had written it. Mr. Wahlgren did not turn my attention to my mistake, but forgot that I held a dominant factor in this relation. I had an expertise in making this instrument better while he had no experienced instrumentation engineers in his company. In due time, within a year I started manufacturing these instruments in the

U.S. and pushed Farad AB out of the U.S. market.

In time I learned more about Mr. Wahlgren's character. It happened when the U.S. Department of Commerce organized an exhibit in Stockholm for American-made medical equipment and my company, Columbus Instruments, was invited to participate. Suddenly I got a message from the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm, that I may be arrested while in Sweden. Apparently, they were told that I stole the design for the Animal Activity Meters from Mr. Wahlgren and his company Farad AB. I immediately asked the Swedish consulate in Chicago to clarify if I was the subject of a police investigation in Sweden. Within a week they told me that they knew nothing about the possibility of arrest and I should not consider it valid. When I went to Stockholm with Columbus Instruments equipment nothing happened and no one approached me. When I went to the U.S. Embassy to ask for clarification, I was told by the U.S. Consul that Mr. Gunar Wahlgren, introducing himself as an Honorary Consul of Singapore, came to the U.S. Embassy informing them of my criminal record. Apparently, he was afraid that similarly looking equipment would undermine his efforts to sell my designs to a larger Swedish manufacturer of laboratory equipment LKB. Apparently he succeeded, because 20 years later I received a letter from LKB asking me if I was interested in purchasing my own design. The latest Swedish manufacturer, LKB, was no longer interested in this product. I politely refused, explaining that I was no longer interested in purchasing my own, now obsolete design.

Goodbye Sweden, salute to America

To obtain an American immigration status for Zofia we had to be married. There was not much enthusiasm from Zofia to this end, in spite of the fact that we lived together for a number of years. Maybe she was waiting for a better offer, which never materialized. For me, going to the distant country by myself was rather scary and having Zofia as a companion provided a degree of comfort. We got married in a civil ceremony with my friend Professor Henryk Ryzko and his wife Asa Ivarson-Ryzko as our witnesses. I remember that right up to the last moment Zofia was not sure if she would go through with the wedding, therefore we arrived at city hall an hour late.

After completing the defective contract with Mr. Wahlgren we were ready to leave for the United States. In the months before our departure it occurred to me that maybe I could still receive my Ph.D. from Uppsala University. I was thinking that it could be beneficial for me in the U.S. I was still listed at the university as a doctoral student, but neglected to complete any required courses or written dissertations. I no longer worked at the Institute of Physics or at the Institute of Pharmacology either. Nevertheless, I called Professor Per Arno Tove, my promoter at the Institute of Physics, and announced that I was going to the United States and he had one last chance to grant me a Ph.D. I must say, that Professor Tove was not happy with my approach and he voiced his dissatisfaction freely. Regardless, he had to agree that I was better than a number of other Ph.D. students in his department and I had a superior number of publications together with him, where he participated mostly in the capacity of an English language editor. Professor Tove and I had also patented a Cardio Tachometer together that I later sold to the Swedish company Elema. Professor Tove received 50% of the royalties from this transaction. His participation in this invention was negligible.

In April 1968 we left the Stockholm Airport, Arlanda to travel to Anchorage, Alaska on board an SAS Jetliner, Boeing 707 flying over the North Pole. At the last moment a Swedish–Jewish friend Gustav Levy Hunaberg—appeared at the airport to say goodbye to us. He had a gift for me. It was a small red book of Chairman Mao’s thoughts translated to English. I’m not sure if it

was a joke or somebody told him to select such a provocative, Communist gift. I did not take it to the U.S. and disposed of it in the garbage basket once I passed the passport control. As we flew over the North Pole I saw this region as nothing more than a pile of ice plates, otherwise nothing spectacular. Later flights over the North Pole were suspended because of radiation in the so-called Van Allen band. When we landed in Anchorage we had to wait a few hours for a small commuter flight to Fairbanks, which is located in the center of Alaska. Our visit was just a few years after a devastating earth quake in Alaska, and photographs of the damage were on display at the airport. We came to the U.S. at the peak of the Vietnam War with American soldiers flying back and forth to Vietnam via Japan. After refueling, our Swedish plane was destined to go to Tokyo.

Our flight to Fairbanks was on a small plane flown by Air Alaska, which to my surprise is still functioning today. After arriving in Fairbanks, right in the middle of Alaska's winter, we were relocated to a room in a student dormitory. It was probably built by the U.S. Army with a number of rooms along the long corridor, at the end of which there was a restroom. Apparently we had to look for an apartment ourselves. To our surprise, the university charged us \$70 per night to use the frugal accommodations at the student dormitory. I was surprised by the simplicity of the accommodations and the exorbitant price. Apparently I was spoiled after living for a few years in Sweden. When I inquired about the possibility of an apartment I was told that it was being rebuilt and might be ready in a month or two. It was located in the basement. It reminded me my first job and "university guest room" at Maria Curie-Sklodowska University in Lublin, Poland. The first two nights we were recovering from a time change of 11 hours between Uppsala and Anchorage. After that, I went to the university to get lunch at the student cafeteria. To my surprise, my rather modest lunch cost a substantial amount of money. When multiplied by 30 days it exceeded my monthly take home income. As an assistant professor I was paid \$1000 per month, but the university deducted \$300 for federal taxes. For \$700 we could not afford to eat in the student cafeteria. Lunch alone would consume more than my entire pay.

In addition, the vague promise of a job for Zofia in a local hospital never materialized. In fact, when visiting one doctor working there, he told her that he was of the opinion that women should not work because their menstrual periods took too much valuable time away from their working hours. After that I went to the director of the Institute of Arctic Biology, Dr. Morrisson and explained to him, that I was not able to live with a wife for such a meager salary. Professor Morrisson agreed with me that things were expensive in Alaska, and was disappointed that I did not investigate this situation before I arrived. He also gave me the advice, to purchase salami in a local store and make myself sandwiches which would be much cheaper than the “luxurious” lunch in the students’ cafeteria. He also said that in his institute there were some other scientists and full professors who earned a salary similar to mine and they didn’t complain. I knew then that I couldn’t stay in Alaska and that it was high time to seek better pastures, maybe somewhere on mainland America, below the Canadian frontier. Additionally, I became frightened and consumed with the looming Vietnam War, with the TV showing body bags with dead soldiers flown from Vietnam to the U.S. every day. I think the American administration learned its lesson and has not shown remnants of U.S. troops returning from Iraq or Afghanistan. Before we returned to Sweden, I wanted to see more of the U.S. In the meantime, I learned that small, provincial airlines (like Ozark Air and a few similar) were lacking passengers and offered European tourists bargain prices for airline tickets on any of their airlines valid for two weeks. We could travel wherever we wanted on such airlines within a two week window. We took full advantage of this and left Fairbanks for good. I returned there 40 years later as a tourist—just for a day, to see if much had changed. In the meantime the same Institute of Arctic Biology purchased some of my instruments to measure the respiration of bacteria cultures and algae. I remember that some months later the Institute of Arctic Biology sent me a bill for our stay in the student dorm. It was more than \$1000. I declined to pay this bill ever.

On our tour of the U.S. we went first to Seattle, then to Salt Lake City and Philadelphia. At the Philadelphia airport I was nearly shot by a policeman, who suspected us of stealing a car in the parking lot. We wandered out into the parking lot to look for

the car we had rented. I sat behind the wheel and suddenly two policemen appeared with the stern demand, "Driver's license." I reached into my side pocket and the policemen jumped and drew their pistols. I was really surprised because my intention was to show to them my passport and international driver's license. I did not know at the time, that in the U.S., when approached by the police and sitting in a car, one has to keep his hands on the steering wheel and not reach into his pockets. Fortunately, the policeman did not fire leaving me alive today to tell this story. In a Boston hotel we observed as riots erupted after Martin Luther King was shot. We could not visit the city at that time. It was not safe.

Shortly after our two week airline tickets expired and we had to make a decision about what to do next. We still had the option of returning to Sweden, but my high school friend, Reniek Odulinski who had come to Canada a year before, wrote to me that if I found myself in a tough spot I could come and stay with him. Canada was a wonderful place where one could eat ice cream with a tablespoon. Reniek knew a lot about good nutrition. Yet in Wroclaw Poland, he developed a famous diet for people with limited financial means. It consisted of chicken broth and sweet cream pastries. It provided the highest number of calories per dollar. Eating such a diet, he was able to keep up with the demands of several ladies who admired his physique.

Canadian adventure

We purchased tickets for a Grey Hound bus to Montreal where Reniek lived and left New York toward Canada. I assumed that visas were not needed for traveling between the U.S. and Canada. When we arrived at the border we were asked to show our passports. At the time we had Swedish Traveling Documents, but our Green Cards indicating permanent residence in the U.S. had not arrived yet. Canadian immigration officers asked us about our professions, and learning that I was an electronic engineer and Zofia was a physician issued visas to us at the border allowing us to stay and work in Canada. It was different times then. In spite of Communist tension, people's movements and immigration formalities were much more relaxed.

In Montreal Reniek lived in a three bedroom apartment with his Polish-French wife and his two-year-old son, Bogdan. He married his wife, Daniele, in France where he came to the conclusion that life there at the border with Germany in the Alsace region had no present and even less future. I remember visiting him once when traveling in a Volkswagen from Sweden to England. Daniele was born in France to Polish parents. She went to a Polish high school in Paris and spoke Polish as well as she spoke French. Shortly thereafter I tried to find a job as a biomedical engineer in several Montreal hospitals, but was told that there was no place for an Englishman. People who did not speak French were considered English.

Looking back on my stay in Montreal, I must say that I met one interesting person who became my longtime friend. His name was Engineer Henryk Toczyłowski and he worked for a Polish-run company in Montreal, making some electronic naval electronics. Apparently during WWII a group of Polish engineers were compiling research on British naval electronics and then immigrated to Canada. Unfortunately my expertise in biomedical engineering did not match their needs. After a month or so of staying with Reniek, I decided to move to Ottawa, Ontario where people speaking English were more welcomed. In Ottawa I got a job at a small company, Applicon Inc. At this company I was the only full-time engineer. Two of this company's principals were working in a larger computer manufacturing company, and were hoping that their startup would eventually make money. In the meantime they got a contract for a strange, innovative device from the Department of Psychology of Ottawa University. One of the researchers there, Dr. Ertel, invented an instrument measuring IQ, an indicator of intelligence. He needed a prototype to be made and I was the one to whom this job was assigned. His IQ Tester was supposed to measure intelligence by measuring the correlation between the left and right hemispheres of the brain. He was convinced by some U.S. "investors" that with the right promotion, this instrument could be sold to schools.

This was a crazy idea, because measuring IQ by instrument in schools has many political connotations, not to mention legal. I built part of this equipment but I couldn't finish the entire project because shortly thereafter I left for Columbus, Ohio. Interestingly,

three years later, when I was already in Columbus running Columbus Instruments, Dr. Ertel showed up and asked if I was still interested in building his invention. In the meantime he had lost his job at the university and was driving a taxi for a living. I felt sorry for him, but his invention was not in my business plans. I concentrated on two products which did not have any political implications. In the end, my decision proved to be the right one.

From Canada back to the U.S.

One day I read in an Ottawa newspaper that a businessman from the States was visiting Ottawa looking for engineers who would like to work on projects related to measuring moisture in paper. Canada was always a place where paper was made due to the large forests and abundance of wood as a prime material for the paper making industry. A number of paper mills are still located there. What this American businessman was looking for were service engineers for equipment made in Columbus, Ohio. I responded to this advertisement and met the man who was a comptroller of Brun Sensors Systems in Columbus, Ohio. After explaining to him my previous experience with measuring moisture in grain, he offered me a trip to Columbus to talk to the president of the company Dr. Brunton. I took advantage of his offer and after visiting Columbus was offered a job as an R&D engineer with at the time a very high salary of \$15,000 per year, which now in 2012 adjusted for inflation would amount to \$97,000. My salary was much better than what I was offered in Fairbanks, Alaska and prices in Columbus, Ohio were 50% or lower. I felt like a king. I resigned from my job at Applicon Corp. and flew with Zofia to Columbus, Ohio.

First days in Columbus, Ohio

After purchasing two tickets and paying one month's rent for an "efficiency apartment" (meaning one room) at North Star Rd. I was left with \$200. I had no car, so groceries I had to carry about a mile from the Kroger store. On the second day of my job at Brun Sensor Systems I was called to the office of Dr. Mario Overhoff, the Research and Development Director. He was straight forward with me. He started his friendly conversation with a statement: "You must know that I can fire you if I feel like it." I was flabbergasted, as I had done nothing wrong yet. In fact, I had no chance to do anything right, either. Having in mind my meager capital of \$200 I could not be boisterous. I just said, "Yes sir." In this moment, I realized that I could not work for this firm and this man for long.

I do not remember what was said after that statement in our conversation but, I went to the R&D Department to contemplate my future. The R&D Department was adjacent to the main building on West 3rd Ave, and formally constituted a large truck garage. As such, it had no windows, but it did have a large garage door for trucks to get in and out. Summer in Columbus, Ohio can be unbearably hot but we could open the garage door. The disadvantage was that the swirls of dust lifted by the wind entered the R&D room, choking us. The first lesson I learned from working for Brun Sensor Systems was that if you do not provide air-conditioning for your employees, they cannot work, more specifically, they cannot think. I was paid well, but this money was hardly worth it as I was suffering from heat exposure.

I also learned something about the company itself. Brun Sensor Systems was a relatively new company, probably three or four years old when I was hired and was manufacturing moisture meters for paper web. This moisture meters were sold to paper mills which had different requirements as to the dimensions of instruments which had be installed and operate on line. The concept of a moisture meter was not developed by the employees of Brun Sensor Systems. It was developed somewhere in California, and was based on infrared light absorption by the water. Unfortunately, it was still in the prototype stage and Brun Sensor Systems should have never put it into production before removing

all the errors associated with its operation with different kinds of papers. The head and founder of the company, Dr. Brunton, worked previously for a much larger company also located in Columbus—Industrial Nucleonic. After he received some financial backing, he quit his job with Industrial Nucleonic and started Brun Sensor Systems.

When working there I also learned the second principle of running my own business, (the air conditioning was the first). The second lesson was not to put an instrument on the market before all the bugs are removed from the prototype. The third principle which was violated by Brun Sensor Systems was not to sell instruments troubled with errors on a lease basis. This last lesson finally caused Brun Sensor to go bankrupt when the instruments made for specific paper mills were returned to the company and the leases were cancelled. Fortunately, I was fired from the company before it went belly up. Interestingly, two years after I already started my own company, Columbus Instruments, I had my small satisfaction with Dr. Overhoff. One day while eating lunch in the drug store (at that time you still could get hamburgers, coffee and fried eggs in drugstores) the visitor sitting next to me was Dr. Overhoff. He told me that he was fired by Brun Sensor Systems and now looking for a job. He asked me if I had anything for him to do. I told him that the only job I had was to solder components to printed circuit boards and he told me that he would take it in a moment. Obviously, I couldn't hire him remembering his attitude toward me at my first job at Brun Sensor Systems.

Columbus Instruments: First attempt

After my confrontation with the head of R&D, Dr. Mario Overhoff, I came to the conclusion that my job at Brun Sensor Systems could only be temporary. I had to look for alternatives. It occurred to me that I could resurrect my abandoned Swedish company, Uppsala Instruments. The American version should be called Columbus Instruments. As in Uppsala, Sweden I had no location for such a company, therefore I decided to rely on the telephone answering service located across the street from my employer, Brun Sensor Systems. I also decided to print attractive brochures and use pictures of instruments I made in Uppsala. In the mean timer Mr. Wahlgren sent me his brochure for the Selective Activity Meter. His brochure used a decent picture of the instrument so I used this picture in my brochure as well. Originally I intended to sell Farad AB's Selective Activity Meters in the U.S. A whole 2,000 brochures were printed by a small, one-man printing shop and I sent these brochures to universities and pharmaceutical companies in the U.S. and Canada. Unfortunately I did not receive any interest and no calls to my telephone answering service. I realized that I could not rely on the telephone answering service and would have to have a real person, who would answer the telephone during working hours. Also the address could not be a post office box. What worked in Sweden did not work in the U.S.

Columbus Instruments: Second attempt

One day reading the local paper, The Columbus Dispatch, I read an article about local company, Worldwide Development Corporation which just started its operation nearby at the Chesapeake Ave. The article mentioned that this company's primary products were Hyperbaric Chambers but they also planned to expand into the medical field. As Chesapeake Ave was walking distance from my apartment I decided to take a walk and talk to them about my instruments. Maybe I could find partners with a working telephone and address. I was received by two gentlemen, Mr. Dan Beck, vice president and Mr. Jack Erwin, company president. They both worked previously for Battelle Memorial Institute in Columbus, designing hyperbaric chambers, but quit

their jobs and started their own company offering the same services as their previous employer. In my opinion they were good engineers and designers, but had very little experience in business, which led them into bankruptcy two years later. When I appeared I apparently made a good impression on them and they asked me to write a proposed contract under which we can cooperate.

I went home and wrote a contract in which I listed following conditions:

1. I will form a division within Worldwide Corporation called, Columbus Instruments which will manufacture instruments of my own design, mostly Selective Activity Meters and Cardiac Output Computers
2. I will work for this division getting paid \$15 per hour
3. I will get 5% royalty from each instrument sold by Columbus Instruments
4. Worldwide Development Corporation will invest in manufacturing facilities and additional technical help
5. If in the future Columbus Instruments will prove to be financially sound it will be separated from the mother corporation and I will have a position of a president with 50% stock ownership
6. In the case that our relations “sour,” both parties can separate without legal entanglements. Each party will have equal rights to manufacture the same equipment without paying each other any licensing fees.

With all the points valid, the most important was point No.

6. This I will describe later.

In the mean time I was working for Brun Sensor Systems and in the evenings putting in an additional six to eight hours building instruments for Columbus Instruments, Division of Worldwide Corporation. In fact the first instrument I sold was my Animal Activity Meter to the University of Bristol, England. In the mean time my relation with Mr. Walhgren of Farad AB in Sweden soured. When inquiring about profits made by Farad AB from selling instruments which I licensed to them, Mr. Wahlgren replied that these were “zero.” He explained to me that his corporation, Farad AB never made any profit. Whenever his corporation made any profit Mr. Wahlgren paid himself a higher salary or premium. As my agreement was with Farad AB not with M. Gunar

Wahlgren, I had no claim to profits. It was my mistake as it was me who wrote the contract. I was naïve and inexperienced in this respect. But in my contract with Farad AB there was a remedial point. It was valid only for one year and required an extension, to which I did not agree. Also Mr. Wahlgren forgot that I had a knowledge which his company was lacking. I could make instruments better while he had no engineering staff in his company to improve on my original designs. The terms of our agreement enabled me to manufacture Selective Activity Meters in the U.S. and take over the market for this equipment. The second instrument which I was building in my new company, was a cardiac output computer based on thermo dilution and dye dilution principles.

Mr. Maurice Portman, an investor

The Worldwide Corporation was running short of cash. They did not sell hyperbaric chambers to the US Navy as they expected to do. These chambers allowed deep sea divers to rest and sleep in the depths of the ocean, without being brought back to the surface. Bringing divers to the surface took a long time, as rapid pressure changes would cause bubbles in their blood, leading to stroke and death.

Unfortunately Worldwide Corporation was undercapitalized and the U.S. Navy would not risk investment into the equipment which could not be serviced after delivery. My immediate bosses, Mr. Dan Beck and Jack Irvin got the idea to attract outside investors who would put more money into Columbus Instruments. This was Mr. Maurice Portman, known in Columbus as a stock broker and city council president. They brought him in to talk to me in person. When I met Mr. Portman, he looked me straight in the eye and said “I have to tell you I am a Jew.” I did not know what to say; therefore I preferred to pretend that I did not understand his comment. Then he repeated, “I am a Jew and if you are an anti-Semite, we cannot work together.” Then I knew that I could not work together with this man, and fortunately Mr. Portman did not invest any money into Columbus Instruments Division of Worldwide Corporation. It was the first time I met somebody who had fixed, preconceived ideas about

Poles. As time went by, I had many more similar examples of anti-Polish attitudes in the U.S., mostly from the American Jews. I received help from some technicians hired by Mr. Dan Beck, vice president of WDC. One of them was Mr. Wilburn Towns and later his son, Mark who was studying electronics in local college.

Mr. Wilburn Towns

As time went by Wilburn Towns became my friend. Therefore he deserves a chapter in this book. He was one of the older generations of Americans who without former education made a decent living. He started as a paper delivery boy of a local paper, The Columbus Dispatch. Later he advanced as the manager of a full group of delivery boys. When television became popular in the U.S. in the 50's he learned to repair television sets which at that time were quite unreliable and required frequent servicing. He was recommended as an assistant to me by Mr. Beck and he helped assemble instruments and attended exhibitions with me. He was very handy with mechanical work and had a fully equipped mechanical shop at home, which became pretty useful when I started my third version of Columbus Instruments. Later in life he invested his hard-earned money in the real-estate property around Buckeye Lake close to Columbus and spent a lot of time flying remote-controlled aircraft as a hobby. Hi died of a stroke, when Columbus Instruments was already a strong independent company.

The Finale of Columbus Instruments, Division of Worldwide Corp.

While the Columbus Instruments division was developing and sales increased exponentially, the mother corporation, WDC could not get sales. It was underfinanced and could not compete with the Battelle Memorial Institute which built similar hyperbaric chambers. I knew that the situation was critical and suggested to my principals that the time may be right to separate "my" Columbus Instruments division from the mother corporation. My proposal was not accepted. Instead, they suggested that I sign an employment contract for five years. Their proposal was suspicious

to me, as Worldwide Corporation was running short of money. Then one day I was presented with a final check for my services and an announcement that I was no longer needed. I went home shocked and worried. In the meantime Zofia and I had become parents, welcoming our son Richard into the world. Neither Zofia nor I were working at this moment, because I was previously fired from Brun Sensor Systems and Zofia quit her job at the University Hospital.

The next day I went back to WDC on Chesapeake Ave with the idea of marketing, independently, on a commission basis, instruments which were already built. I found the company closed with a small card attached to the front door stating that WDC is now bankrupt and any claims should be referred to Mr. Stip, an attorney assigned by municipal court as a receiver. I looked through the window to see what the people who closed the company had done with instruments and files with documentation. Most important to me were the files with recent correspondence with potential clients.

I noticed that the filing cabinets were empty; apparently, the bankruptcy officials did not consider papers of any value. It was a rainy day, as I remember. I went to the back of the building where large dumpsters were located and realized that all my files were dumped into the trash. I climbed inside the dumpster and collected most of the files including some with pending purchase orders. Most of the files were wet from the rain. I took them home, to my apartment and spread them on the carpet to dry. The next day I went to the court-appointed attorney, Mr. Stip to negotiate the purchase or release of some of the components, which were needed to build instruments. Mr. Stip, as I remember told me that he could sell to me the whole hardware left for \$50,000 cash. This sum was larger than what I could afford—I only had \$15,000 in my bank account. This was the money I saved while working two jobs. I should mention that after few months working for Brun Sensor Systems I was fired, as the company was losing money and was heading towards bankruptcy in a similar way as WDC. I offered Mr. Stip a deal, to loan me components from which I would build instruments. I would pay him for parts in installments. Apparently, such an arrangement was not possible. The only solution was to use my own “capital” which became

“seed money” for a new, independent Columbus Instruments. Interestingly, two years later, Mr. Stip had to close the bankruptcy proceedings and sold to me, then already obsolete parts, for \$2,500.

Columbus Instruments third attempt and final success

Facing unemployment for the second time in my life, I decided that I would start my own company without partners and if I failed it would be my own doing. I already had some experience at Wroclaw Polytechnic, at Uppsala Instruments in Sweden and now observing my partners in Worldwide Development Corporation. I decided to capitalize on the failure of WDC. Besides using discarded documents rescued from the dumpster, I went to the post office and changed the address of Columbus Instruments, Division of WDC to my own new post office box with only Columbus Instruments name. I was sure that any correspondence would be thrown to the waste basket if received by Mr. Stip or returned to sender with a note “address not known.” I printed a set of new brochures with my apartment’s address at Presidential Drive. This apartment had two bedrooms, a living room and a small kitchen. In one bedroom I located Columbus Instruments. I would have happily used the garage, but this apartment had no garage. In the second bedroom Richard, at the time already one year old, was sleeping. Using my own savings I purchased parts to build Selective Activity Meters. The spring of 1970 was quickly approaching and with it an exhibition of FASEB (Federation of American Societies of Experimental Biology) in an Atlantic City. I had no time to finish building entire instruments, but decided that attractive metal boxes with appropriate labels could serve as a sufficient exhibit. At first I wasn’t sure how to go about labeling names and functions on the instrument’s front panel. For this I used “letter press” stick-on lettering sold in the U.S. but made in Denmark.

Investment in the booth at the exhibition paid off handsomely. I received about 100 visitors expressing an interest in my instruments. Soon I realized that I needed an independent location with a telephone which would not interfere with my child's sleep. One room became available at 1620 West First Ave, in an old Medical Building. Previously this room was occupied by another engineer of Brun Sensor Systems, but its tenant died in Ottawa, Canada when a small plane piloted by the company founder, Dr. Brunton lost control and killing all passengers. Previously the building was used as a location for multiple doctor offices. After it became decrepit, rooms in this building were rented to a variety of small businesses. One of these was a dental technician and another was an "air brash artist" making drawings for brochures. Now this profession is obsolete as similar pictures are done by computer graphics. My one room's rent cost me \$55 per month and had no air conditioning. I immediately installed a window air conditioning unit, remembering the lesson about Ohio climate in the summer. I also employed the first technician Bill H. who asked me for a job after my previous employer Brun Sensor System went bankrupt. He worked in the same department as I did before I was fired.

Bill was an interesting person, who claimed to belong to the Ku-Klux-Klan. He did a good job assembling equipment, but it was very difficult to like him. He was obviously troubled that he had to work for a "foreigner," especially a dumb "Polack." He made no attempt to hide his animosity. One day he walked up to me and said, "Jan, I hate you!" I was flabbergasted and at first



Outside view of Columbus Instruments' first office, complete with air-conditioning.

didn't know how to answer. Then I realized that he was the only technician I had and he did a good job. So after a moment's silence, I composed myself and replied: "Bill I hate you too, but you do a good job and I hate to lose you. Go back to work." He worked for me for a few more months until I hired my first secretary, Marcela Long.

Mrs. Marcela Long

I have to devote space to Marcela Long who worked for me for next 20 years. One day I realized that I need an American secretary who could type my business correspondence with proper spelling. I took out an advertisement in the local community paper, Upper Arlington News. In my ad I stated that I had a part-time position open for a secretary who proficient in typing who could compose business correspondence. I got only one applicant, it was middle-aged lady about 50 dressed in a mink fur coat, who declared that she had five children, all practically grown, and was looking for a part-time job in the vicinity of her home. She lived on the next street in Grandview area, practically walking distance from the medical building where Columbus Instruments was located. Judging from her expensive fur coat she did not need money, but she looked for something to do.



Marcella Long, first office manager

In reality she really needed the money, but I misjudged her needs and intentions, being fooled by the mink fur coat. Soon she took over all office work including accounting. My letters to clients became real American, free from spelling errors. I purchased “Selectric” IBM typewriter for her, which also improved the look of the letters. Once she joined Columbus Instruments she had a confrontation with Bill H. who knew that Marcy loved children and had five of her own. He approached her and said: “Marcy, I hate children. I wish that all children after birth would be castrated.” This was too much for Marcy who told him not ever to cross the threshold of her room. Soon Bill H. resigned. After he left neither of us, especially Marcy, missed him.

Problem with Columbus Instruments’ name

To make sure that somebody else did not register Columbus Instruments’ name I decided to register it myself in the State of Ohio. When I submitted the application, to my surprise, the name was already taken. I called the “owner” and discovered that he was the one who visited our company and talked with me at Worldwide Development Corp. He clandestinely made Columbus Instruments name registration and was hoping to capitalize on it. As I remember he was trying to make devices for remote starting a car, but could not find clients or partners to pursue such an enterprise. Now, he had no business under this name, except that he paid \$5 to the Secretary of State of Ohio to keep the registration valid for five years. When talking with me he offered to sell the name of Columbus Instruments for \$5,000. I refused, as he practically stole it from me when he knew that I was using it. To circumvent the name problems I changed the name of the company and registered it as: “Columbus Instruments Division of International Instruments Company.” I was sold my instruments under this name for the next few years. I remember a case when some Polish consulate agent interested in my person, or maybe in connection with my Polish visa application asked what the International Instruments Company did. I explained that International Instruments Company was a large conglomerate which had operations in ship building and mining, but we at

Columbus Instruments manufactured bio-medical instruments and were a relatively small operation. After six years, just for curiosity I decided to call to the office of the Secretary of State and inquire if Columbus Instruments was still registered. They replied that Columbus Instruments was now free to take, providing I would pay the \$5 registration fee. Apparently the previous owner forgot to pay the \$5 before five years' period expired. I immediately applied and received exclusive rights to the Columbus Instruments name. Later I incorporated my company as Columbus Instruments International Corporation under which name it still operates.

Columbus Instruments new facilities

After five years at 1620 West First Ave. Columbus Instruments expanded to all rooms in the lower level of the medical building. In the meantime, I saved a sufficient amount of money to purchase a two acre lot at the corner of North Hague Ave and Interstate 70 highway. In 1970 I also had a sufficient amount of money, \$140,000, to build a metal building which had office and manufacturing facilities. Since then the building has expanded five times and I purchased an additional adjacent two acres in case of future needs.



First construction of Columbus Instruments (1975-76).

New engineers and “friends”

Before moving to new location at 950 N. Hague Ave, I realized that I need another engineer to help me with new designs. I do not remember how I got in contact with an Indian student from Ohio State University named Rant. He was already designing some equipment at the university monitoring the activity of fish. He proved to be quite capable and designed a number of new instruments for physiology and behavioral research. The only problem he had was his limited ability to come up with new ideas. While he was accomplished at building instruments, he was always coming to me asking, “What next?” I recognized his limitations, but it did not bother me.

A few years later, one of my Polish friends, Bogdanski and Rant “defected” from my company and started their own; they could not grow beyond copying ideas which they brought from their previous employers, namely Columbus Instruments. About this unpleasant encounter I will tell later.

After I moved to the new building I was thinking of bringing some of my friends to the U.S. One of them was an engineer, Bogdanski, who was studying together with me at Wroclaw Polytechnic. He specialized in radio receivers and worked in Poland for a research institute devoted to this subject. In school he was good and I would risk an opinion that he was better than I. I tried to help him get out of Poland and issued him an invitation to obtain an H-1 visa to the U.S. intended for high class specialists. I realized that I could not pay him an American level salary, but his position in Columbus Instruments was a stepping stone for another job closer to his specialty, namely radio receivers. Another person who also wanted to come to Columbus was suggested by my friend in Sweden. He was the son of a prominent Polish electronics professor from Warsaw Polytechnic. Hi name was Jankowski. From the very beginning some kind of animosity developed between the two Polish men and I had to intervene. Bogdanski intimidated Jankowski and every time Jankowski met him in the corridor he spat under his feet. Jankowski developed some kind of tremor when Bodganski was approaching him and it affected his work. I had to reprimand Bogdanski, because the atmosphere at work became tense. The situation lasted for a few months and then

suddenly changed. Jankowski and Bogdanski started playing tennis together. I was glad but I could not understand how they could overcome such mutual disgust.

When I started my company I had no managerial experience. I was thinking that company is like a family. Everyone should know everything about the business. Everything was open to everybody. All people had keys to the building and could work as long as they pleased, provided that they reported the length of the time they worked. I also neglected to use employment contracts clearly stipulating that all inventions and developments created by employees were owned by Columbus Instruments. In fact, the Polish engineers approached me with a proposition that they could work overtime at the usual hourly rate. I did not know at the time that such agreements about overtime in the U.S. are not possible and are not legal for people paid hourly. One day an inspector from the Department of Labor approached me with accusations that I did not pay the required 50% more for overtime over 40 hours per week. Apparently somebody reported this to the Department of Labor. What's more when I shared this news with Bogdanski, he was obviously happy with my precarious situation. He advised me to change the records of working hours. I did not know at the time that my Polish friends made copies of their hourly records and delivered them before to the Department of Labor investigators. While not paying overtime could result in monetary penalty and compensation to the employees, falsifying the records was a much more serious crime. Fortunately my attorney negotiated with the inspector payment to the employees the 50% overtime for the last four years, and I was not accused of any crime of record falsification.

Shortly after this incident Rant quit his job and I dismissed Bogdanski because of obvious displays of disloyalty; however, Jankowski still worked in the company for another two months. I knew that he was likely a part of the conspiracy to report me to the Department of Labor. I was unaware of another, more serious conspiracy to start another competing company making the same instruments. I allowed Jankowski to continue working in the company because I knew his father and was not sure of the full extent of his guilt. After two months Jankowski also left Columbus Instruments, this time voluntarily. Columbus Instruments was left

with no engineers. The people who remained with me were my devout secretary Marcela Long, and three students from a local technical school. One of them was Mr. Ken Kober and his wife Barbara. Ken Kober later became head designer, programmer and is now head of sales department.

Conspiracy and competition

Within a short time I noticed that I was losing some orders and customers told me that there was another company in Columbus, making the same instruments for less. Its name was XYZ Corporation. It was not difficult to find that the president of XYZ Corp. was Mr. Rant, originally from India and his partner, my Polish “friend” Bogdanski. Another surprise was still waiting for me. About a year later, Mr. Jankowski called me asking for a meeting in a nearby coffee house. I went there wondering what he had to say. Apparently, he was a part of conspiracy of three, which consisted of Rant, Bogdanski and himself, (Jankowski). When they worked for Columbus Instruments they plotted to destroy it and on its debris build their own company with three partners. Each of them was supposed to have 33% of stock in a new corporation. When a few months later, Jankowski terminated his employment at Columbus Instruments and went to see Mr. Rant and Mr. Bogdanski, they reneged on their promise of partnership. Mr. Bogdanski was even rude and told him to get lost as he did not have any written proof of any promises. Mr. Jankowski disappointed with his partners, came to me looking for support. I could not help him. He got what he deserved. Furthermore, looking later for some old correspondence I found a letter from my representative in India confirmed by the stamp of the U.S. Consulate, that our representative, while visiting our company in Columbus, Ohio was approached by Mr. Jankowski with an offer to build copies of Cardiac Output Computers in India. He was ready to deliver all needed (stolen) documentation to facilitate construction. He also offered to travel to India to help them build these instruments. Our representative found it dangerous to be involved in industrial espionage and chose to write a letter to me and pass such information to the U.S. Consular Offices in India. What happened to Mr. Jankowski now, I do not know. I only know

that he worked for a number of years in menial jobs selling and servicing computers in another local computer company.

What happened to XYZ Corp? Initially, XYZ Corp. was prosperous on the basis of ideas which its founders acquired when working at Columbus Instruments. They even built a nice building allowing for future expansions. As time went by, they did not grow. Apparently the initial idea of “making the same instruments for less” did not work. While we at Columbus Instruments hired more talented engineers and developed more products, XYZ Corp was lagging behind. Selling instruments for less cut into their profits and they had no money for expansion. When the situation became bad, a feud developed between the two partners, Mr. Rant and Mr. Bogdanski. Operation was paralyzed and court appointed attorneys had to mediate and supervise operations. Finally, the whole XYZ Corp. was put up for sale with bidding limited to two partners, Mr. Rant and Mr. Bogdanski. The bidding was initially won by Mr. Rant who could muster more finances to purchase corporation assets. Shortly after Mr. Bogdanski sued Mr. Rant for additional money, claiming that he did not understand the conditions of sale. He asked for additional money for trade names of instruments and XYZ Corp. This was too much for Mr. Rant who instead changed the name of company and all trade names of instruments. This naturally confused customers who were unable to determine who was in charge of equipment they purchased from the now non-existent XYZ Corp. The new company did not grow. In fact in 2012, the company filed for bankruptcy. I had a small satisfaction, as the demise of my competitors did not happen because of my doing. They destroyed themselves. It was a kind of justice by competitor’s mutual suicide.

Why I decided not to be a spy

Until I learned that I was already considered to be enmeshed in international spy intrigue, maybe as double or triple spy, I was thinking about choosing such carrier. My thinking was inspired by James Bond movies which I enjoyed as a young man, after I came to the West where such movies legal. After some thinking, I decided to abandon the pursuit of a career like James Bond 007, because I considered it subservient to the “higher” authority which sent him to distant countries to kill or be killed, without his knowledge why such decision was taken. In anything, I could consider to be head of such organization, be it KGB, CIA or MI5 (British). I could consider myself as the one who makes strategic decisions and sends his “James Bonds” on dangerous missions. The longer I lived and read about KGB experiences from people who were members of this organization I eliminated a career in the KGB as much too risky. Most of the heads of the KGB were murdered by Stalin, and devotion to the Communist cause was not valued much in the Soviet Union. Besides, Communism conflicted with my spirit of free enterprise. I could be the head of the CIA. When one day I decided to use the Freedom of Information Act and obtain my file from the CIA to be sure that they had correct information I was deeply disappointed. I received a one page document in which 80% of the text was blacked out as top secret. Later I tried to contact the CIA, begging them to take over my case and investigate me instead of bumblers from the Treasury Department Customs Office who accused me of being an extremely dangerous Soviet spy of high technology. To my disappointment the CIA did not return my many letters and finally these letters started coming back to me with a stamp “Address Unknown.” This was insulting, as I know precisely where CIA headquarters are and I have seen its offices many times from the highway each time I visited Washington DC. Being a British spy was not feasible since I did not know the address of MI5 headquarters. Besides, I found it too small potatoes to bother with. I decided to be an independent spy for myself and investigate my girlfriend who had illicit relation with a fellow waiter and who when confronted with my spy results, abandoned me and left me to my own devices. Now many years later I am glad that it has

happened, but the story may be of interest to younger generations not to repeat the same mistakes. Her name was Nina and her story is described in another chapter of this book.

How I became a British spy

When I first went to Finland and later to Sweden, I did not know that the extension of my stay, beyond one month specified on Finnish Students Organization invitation would become a concern of the Polish Communist Secret Police, known as UB (Bureau of Security). I arranged this invitation by “purchasing” it from officials of the Finnish Students Union, who visited the Wroclaw Student Club and ran short of money for vodka. In exchange for 4,000 zloty, a sum equivalent to my two months’ salary at Polytechnic Institute where I worked as a junior assistant, they promised to send me an invitation to Finland including one month’s lodging and food. I took a risk in this transaction, because I gave them money without receipt and in addition they were already drunk. I only hoped that that they would remember what they promised when they sobered. A month later to my pleasant surprise I received an official invitation which was as I insisted adorned with a large embossed seal. The seal was essential because I knew the Polish officials’ admiration with seals. Embossed seals were always more valuable than a mere ink imprinted seal but the most impressive was a seal impressed in wax, lead or lacquer.

This was a middle range seal, just embossed in paper. The invitation spelled out all the necessary conditions of my stay, but I did not take a risk to apply for the passport myself. The official invitation required an official organization to sponsor my trip. Who would be better than the Polish Student Union, ZSP, where I already had some friends and other connections. The travel office of the Polish Student Union was at the time headed by a cousin of Karol Pelc, my close friend then and now, if it really matters, retired professor of Michigan Technological University. Within a month or two I had obtained the dear-to-me Passport to travel to Finland as an official representative of the Polish Student Union. In the meantime, I also had another informal invitation from a student of mathematics at Uppsala University in Uppsala, Sweden

which I arranged during my previous year's (1969) train voyage for vacations in Romania. I asked a Swedish student to place a small advertisement in the local student paper that a Polish student from Wroclaw wished to exchange a stay with a Swedish student. The Swedish student who was traveling in the same train was standing with his girlfriend for two nights, because they had no money for a sleeper. I offered them my bed in the sleeper car during the day and for this they were very grateful. The exchange meant one month's lodging and food. As a result, I was hosted the following summer a young mathematician from Uppsala, named Lars Inge Hedberg, who later became quite famous and even became President of the Swedish Mathematical Society. I kept my relation with Lars to myself, except for my first wife Elisabeth, who had to know the details and who somehow became involved in my "spying" affair and later volunteered information about me to Secret Police. For sure I was not going to tell the Passport Office about my plans to visit also Sweden, as it would confuse them even more. So when a few months passed and I did not return to Poland, an agent of the Secret Police paid a visit to my former wife Elisabeth and following is his report in rough translation. Unfortunately one cannot translate the bureaucratic jargon of Communist Secret Police word for word to English, but perhaps our Home Land Security has similar slang, different from colloquial English. It is perhaps truth to any bureaucratic structure to invent its own language to enhance its own importance.

In my case I did not know that I was the subject of multiple investigations by Polish (Communist) Secret Services until I got copies of secret reports on myself, now freely available from the archives of the (Polish) Institute of National Remembrance. Unfortunately, the files are not complete and perhaps purged before Communism in Poland collapsed. I received about 200 pages of it, which is still better than one page, with most of the text blacked out that I received from the CIA under the Freedom of Information Act. My "spying" activities as documented in these files span a period from March 1961 through July 1982 in a file called "Jacket 5228" when my investigation was closed because of my defection to the U.S. Jacket 5228 documents 20 years of useless pursuits by overstuffed Communist intelligence agencies desperately trying to find a reason for its own existence by

identifying me either as an American “spy” or trying to recruit me as their own agent. One can draw the conclusion that this is not a unique situation with Polish-Communist organizations and can be extrapolated to similar U.S. operations of recent days. In fact it was duplicated in the U.S. in 1984 when I was accused by the U.S. Customs as a conduit for “super computers” used to design atom bombs which I supposedly smuggled to Moscow. In fact, my so-called “super computers” were made in Taiwan and poorly resembled IBM-PCs. They had a clock of less than 5MHz and no hard disk. I will write about this ridiculous incident later. It looks like when Communists gave up on me, U.S. spy agencies picked up.

From secret files of Polish Communist Secret Police

My entire file contains about 200 pages. Here are a few excerpts indicating what kind of surveillance I was under since my departure to Finland in 1960. Fortunately for me, they gave up on me and labeled me as “lacking loyalty” to their Communist causes.

Wroclaw, 27 March 1961

Secret

Information Note

Based on the information from Capt. “Czeslaw” indicating that Citizen Czekajewski Jan refused to return to the country from an official trip to Finland and is currently residing in Sweden, I have conducted today an investigation in which I come to the conclusion that the information previously provided is true. I have established that the Czekajewski Jan Andrzej married to Czekajewski, maiden name Pienkowska Elisabeth, etc. etc. . . .

As a result of the interview I established that citizen Czekajewski at this moment has a lover who resides with her. The neighbors have been told that this is her cousin. He is Citizen Blaszczyk Zbigniew, son of Stanislaw and Jadwiga, maiden name Pinilo. Born January 22, 1926 in the settlement of Kopyczynce, district of Tarnopol. Current address: Zelazna Street Nr. 37 apartment 10.

Citizen BLASZCZYK Zbigniew is working at the university and he is also managing a Motorist Club at the District Committee of ZMS (Association of Young Socialists). He is a former agent of (Communist) Security Services and he was working as such in the District of Katowice.

*Senior Operation Office, Dept II
Jan Krochmalczyk, Lieutenant*

The fact that Elisabeth had a lover did not surprise me, but that he was a former member of the Secret Police was a novelty. In spite of such an influential connection, my wife at the time, Elisabeth still did not get a passport to travel to Italy, as there was a suspicion that she may plan to join me in emigration. In the meantime, the following documents from the Secret Police indicated that my I had become a person of interest within different departments of Homeland Security. The next meaningful report was after my unexpected return from Sweden to Poland.

Wroclaw August 30, 1961

Information Note

From the conversation with citizen Czekajewski, Elisabeth (abbreviation)

As of today I have conducted interviews with Citizen Czekajewski Elisabeth about her husband Czekajewski, Jan. I have concluded from this conversation that the marital relations between Czekajewski, Elisabeth and Czekajewski, Jan no longer exist.

In 1959 in Wroclaw he was visiting a Swede named Beckman who came by his own car and had a photographic camera. Czekajewski was in his company most of the time and allocated him in his second apartment at Powstancow Slaskaich Street.

In November 1960 Czekajewski left Poland for Finland and later for a year resided in Sweden. According to her, Czekajewski intended to stay in Sweden for good, but something did not work out and he returned in the first days of June 1961.

After his return to Poland, Czekajewski was working with his lover, Zofia Krolikowska in a Swedish Pavilion during the Poznan International Fair. For his services he obtained payment in Sweden before his departure for Poland. He intends to obtain work in Poland in some scientific Institute which would excuse Czekajewski from military service. . .

He intends to return to Sweden after finishing his Ph.D. thesis and then organize departure of his lover Zofia Krolikowska to Sweden where they will both reunite.

In light of the above information it is my opinion that Czekajewski, Elisabeth was honest. She does not care about her husband she cannot forgive him his betrayal. She also declared her help for Security Services if she can be of any use in this case.

I thanked her for her willingness to help, and I do not exclude the possibility that in the future we can use her services.

Information:

Mentioned above BECKMAN as we derive from other information, cooperates with the centre of Polish Emigration namely Lisinski Michael from Free Europe Radio.

The fact that Czekajewski was working in the Swedish pavilion in Poznan International Fair is very new to us.

Actions

- 1. Check the fact that Czekajewski is being considered to be drafted by military services*
- 2. Send letter to Dept. XI to see if they have any information about Czekajewski working at the Poznan International Fair.*
- 3. Test possibilities to use citizen Odulinski to investigate Czekajewski. Review his application for passport.*

*Senior Officer Department II
J. Krochmalczyk
Lieutenant*

The most flabbergasting information is about some Swede, Beckman, and Michael Lisinski who works for Free Europe Radio in Stockholm, Sweden. My former wife should have known better that the name of the Swedish student was Lars Inge Hedberg, and I never met (nor did she) Mr. Beckman. This mistaken information started a long investigation of my person suspected to be an agent of foreign power.

Wroclaw, 13 September 1961

SECRET

To the Deputy Director of Department II
Security Services of District Command of Citizen Militia

Application for permission to open operational confirmation (text abbreviated)

I, Senior Officer of Operations Department II, KROCHMALCZYK Jan requesting for permission to start operational confirmation on Citizen Czekajewski Jan. . .

During the summer of 1960 in Wroclaw was visiting on invitation of Polish Student Union, activist of National Union of Students in Stockholm, Dr. Beckman. Because of unknown reasons Czekajewski Jan got in contact with Mr. Beckman whom he lodged in his own apartment. In May 1961 in Stockholm he was visiting captain "Czeslaw" who got in contact with Mr. Beckman where he discovered that Beckman was connected with the intelligence center of Szymaniak who in turn contacted him with Dr. Lisinski, Michal who is also the editor of Free Europe Radio.

Czekajewski, Jan has in his milieu bad moral opinions. He's known as a miser and cunning for money. Additionally he is considered to be a sly operator.

Justification about the case:

- 1. Contact with Dr. Beckman who is connected with the spy network of Major Szamaniak. There is no question that these people helped Czekajewski to obtain work in*

Sweden, and did it in exchange for information about Poland.

- 2. From the available material Czekajewski intended to refuse return to Poland. If he returned, he could do it on instructions of intelligence center.*
- 3. Czekajewski has assured possibility of returning to Sweden for habilitation of his doctor thesis. It could be a form of assuring his cooperation with foreign intelligence.*
- 4. After return to the country (Poland), Czekajewski conspicuously avoids Wroclaw, where he is known. It is possible that he makes it intentionally to avoid observation.*

Therefore I suggest:

Following are seven points leading to the surveillance of Czekajewski through the friends of Czekajewski K.P. (Karol Pelc) and R.O. (Romuald Odulinski), which are not worth mentioning. Except the final, hand written note dealing with a female agent which was supposed to be selected to establish my identity.

Senior Operation Officer Department II

J. Krochmalczyk- Lieutenant

At the end there was an interesting hand written note: "Czekajewski like girls. Therefore I suggest confronting him with a good female agent. To the Bureau we'll send samples of Czekajewski's hand writing and ask for collecting his correspondence which should be treated for chemical analysis."

15-09-61

(illegible signature)

Wroclaw, 10 October 1961

DZ-06696/0547/61

Secret

Head of Department VII

Division II

Special Report

I report that Group VII, Department II started “Operational Confirmation” of Jan Czekajewski, M.Sc. etc. etc

We are taking the following steps to clarify if Mr. Czekajewski was not recruited to cooperate with foreign spy agency.

On the day 29 September 1961, our secret collaborator code name “Oda” (my high school friend, Romuald Odulinski) penetrated with my help my note book and reported 13 addresses:

Between these 13 addresses was name of S. Duda, Seismological Laboratory. This name was underlined by somebody in the Ministry Of Internal Affairs as a person of interest and started spy hunts. Apparently, the name Duda, which is very common in Poland, was a British or U.S. Agent who was captured in Poland where he tried to cross the Polish border into Germany. He was sent to Belarus to spy there for Americans.

Deputy Head of Department II

Wl. Jaromin-Captain

One of the previous reports mentioned that their secret informer, code name “Oda,” would search my belongings and provide addresses of the people I met in Sweden. This “informer” happened to be my friend Romuald Odulinski, who asked me to provide the addresses that his contact in the Secret Police demanded. Oda got from me what he was asking, and this resulted in confusion regarding one name: Duda, an émigré from Poland. Apparently in the secret files of the Ministry of the Interior in Warsaw, Poland there was an agent named Duda, who was an American spy, arrested in Poland when he was trying to cross the Polish-German border. He was sent on a mission in Belarus. After serving a one year sentence for illegal border crossing, Agent Duda managed to escape with his friend to West Germany and according to information in the files now works for U.S. Intelligence. Now

the Polish Secret Police wanted to know me better. Apparently, I was an enigma to them. Why would I come back to Poland when I had a good job in Sweden? Why wouldn't I stay in my apartment with my wife? Instead I stayed in a one-room, decrepit apartment with my high school friend, Romuald Odulinski, who was considered a trusted informer—code name Oda—for the Secret Police? To clarify this dilemma, the Secret Police demanded that Oda provide a written characteristic of my psychological design. I had no choice but to help Oda with his task and wrote my own characteristic. The problem was that I had to include enough negative elements of my stellar character to make the report believable. Following is the transcript of my own report, written 50 years ago, which refreshes my memory. I knew that I wrote it, but didn't remember the details. Now it is clear. An original report was in the files preserved by the Institute of National Remembrance and available to anybody willing to pay the price of copying it. My friend Romuald, Oda, received congratulations from his contact officer for submitting one of the best reports ever delivered to the Department II, Security Services of Wroclaw.

Wroclaw, September 29, 1961

SECRET

Source: "Oda" (Odulinski, Romuald)

Received by: Kniaziuk J.

REPORT

RE: Czekajewski, Jan

My acquaintance with Mr. Czekajewski starts with High School in Czestochowa, where we both attended the 9th grade. One could say that he represents a type of extreme individualist. Even in high school he experienced conflict with teachers when he disagreed with them on subjects presented as truth. One could say that he has a special pleasure in questioning the opinion of established authorities. He has a tendency to question the opinion of the majority, even if it may be detrimental to his best interests. On the other hand, he has a very lively nature and shows innovative incentive in his pursuits. In spite of having many ideas and concepts he is not systematic and often changes his decisions. This

does not mean that he is irrational, as he pursues his main objectives and goals. In specific areas which interest him at the given moment he is able to exhibit a great intensity of work, but in other situations there is no force which can make him work on a subject in which he does not believe, or which belongs to his job obligations. In his own opinion, his character can be described from his relations with women. The relationship is always perfect until there's an expectation of responsibility or obligation. He is very nervous and nothing will stop him from telling somebody the truth, which causes him to have many enemies. He has a great sense of humor, but it may be more correctly described as malice.

He likes a comfortable style of life, but at the same time does not pay much attention to gathering wealth in spite of the fact that he is always well paid.

His travels start with his trip to Romania, two years ago. According to him, during his trip, he met some Swede with whom he spoke about the possibility of traveling to Sweden on the basis of exchange. This Swede promised to help him and after some time sent him a copy of a student paper, where he placed an advertisement that he, Jan Czekajewski, was interested on the basis of exchange to visit Sweden. As a result of this advertisement one Swede replied and his name was Lars Hedberg, student of mathematics. The Swede had to come first. Before the Swedish student arrived, Czekajewski had a discussion with a group of foreigners in the student club, Palacyk. At that time he never passed up any opportunity to perfect his English language having in mind his next trip to Sweden. The foreigners at Palacyk appeared to be a delegation of the Finnish Student Association. As a result of his conversation with this group, the Finns assured him that they would invite him to Finland to get acquainted with the Finnish student milieu. After some time these Finnish students sent him an invitation.

In the meantime he was hosting Mr. Lars Hedberg, who was visiting Poland for one month. He came to Poland by his own car and was supported by Czekajewski.

Additional Information:

Source Oda is a close acquaintance of Czekajewski, Jan, who is a subject of interest of Department II of the local Command of Police (Comrade Krochmalczyk). We enclose this information about Czekajewski as requested in the letter of Department II on this subject. The above information is only part of a larger, more elaborate description because Oda had no time to write it all. He will do it before October 5, 1961. Oda gave to us a number of addresses he found in Czekajewski's notebook (see enclosure).

Hand written note: "Data related to the character of Czekajewski confirms his second acquaintance, citizen Pelc who says, that: 'Czekajewski is too large a coward to undertake any kind of action contrary to our interests.'"

*Inspector of Independent Special Group of
District Command of Police
Joseph Kniaziuk*

At this point I was in Lublin, where I had taken the position offered to me by Professor Zuk when in Uppsala. Professor Zuk was still in Uppsala when I arrived in Lublin, in the September 1961. There was no apartment for me so the university offered me a "guest room" in the female student dormitory at the address: Langiewicza 17 Block A. To my surprise, this address was mentioned by me in the Passport Application now in the documents stored in the Interior Ministry files. The guest room was in the basement of a large concrete block, and the only light I could see came from the slot of a window well where I could observe the shoes of girls coming or leaving the dorm. Once news arrived from the Ministry of Interior Affairs to the local Secret Police that I was now "penetrating" the Lublin area, I was contacted by another officer for an interview. Here is the excerpt from that encounter:

Lublin January 13, 1962

SECRET

13/0100/62/PT

(excerpt)

*To the Head of the Department VI, Department II
Ministry of Interior Affairs in Warsaw*

...Since Department II Security Services in Wroclaw investigated the indirect relations of 'figurant' (Czekajewski) as a person working for British Intelligence-Szymaniak, materials on this subject were passed to Group II of this Department. In that case during the process of investigation we were not able to confirm the suspicion of him being involved in foreign espionage, we will try to use him (Czekajewski) for our own operational needs.

Please consider passing your materials to Department II,

*Department II.
Deputy Head of Department II
Security Services in Lublin
Major L. Gabski*

Lublin, 24 September 1962

SECRET

(excerpt)

Information noted from the interview with Czekajewski, Jan, son of Franciszek, employed as a scientific worker of University Maria Curie-Sklodowska in Lublin.

Reason for Interview:

Because "figurant" was delegated to Sweden for nine months of scholarship to Sweden, we did not object to his travel due to a lack of materials justifying refusal of his right to travel. We decided for an interview to clarify subjects of our interest.

Information:

As a result of an interview with "figurant" I confirm that he is intelligent, full of energy and possesses a lot of initiative. As an opponent he would be a dangerous combatant; however, I am

concluding that the situation is not so dangerous and that there exists the possibility of using his values in our work. Before making a final decision we must finalize investigative work on this subject.

Undertakings

- 1. Check who else from our services will travel to Sweden. Report about behavior of "figurant" while abroad.*
- 2. Institute monitoring of any correspondence of "figurant" as well as his contacts in the country.*

Lublin, 14 January 1963

B.094/63/PT

SECRET

To the Director of Department II B.P.Z. (Office of Foreign Passports)

Ministry of Interior in Warsaw

In the operational interest of Department II in Lublin: Scientific worker of local university (UMCS) Jan CZEKAJEWSKI currently remains in Sweden on scientific practice. While there he made inquiries and finalized an invitation for his friend Krolikowska, Zofia, living in Lodz, to have a similar practice in the medical field.

Because in the past Department II in Wroclaw was interested in Czekajewski, they restricted departure of Krolikowska to this country. Following the Office of Foreign Passports undertook a similar negative decision.

Our unit which is responsible for Czekajewski is planning for Czekajewski specific operational activities. Refusal of passport for Zofia Krolikowska is in conflict with our plans. Therefore we are asking to annul restrictions of her travel which were requested by Lodz and Wroclaw, and allow her to travel to this (Sweden) country.

Deputy Department II

Stanislaw Sobanski, Captain

Probably as a result of this intervention, Zofia got her passport and arrived to Uppsala, Sweden. I was not aware what kind of “operational plans” the Department II of Polish Secret Services had in mind for me. I was never approached for any secret activities.

Zofia started to work as a technician in the X-ray department of University Hospital in Uppsala. In fact, she was the one who X-rayed the broken hand of the future king of Sweden, now known as His Majesty Carl XVI Gustaf. I remember this event because I was sitting in the waiting room, waiting for Zofia when the future king arrived in his Swedish Air Force uniform assisted by two officers.

Lublin, 25th of January 1964

SECRET

13.011/64/PT

(excerpt)

To the Deputy Director of Department I MSW (Ministry of Interior Affairs)

Before his (Czekajewski) departure, our service conducted an interview with “figurant” during which he received instructions to commence orders of general nature, also in the field of your interest. We did not inform him of the details because we were not sure of his loyalty or intentions. In this situation we consider his recruitment by your office inadvisable.

Colonel J. Andrzejewski

Warsaw, 14th December 1965

Warszawa 21 December 1965

SECRET

Official Note (excerpt)

On December 20, 1965 I received a call from Eng. Czekajewski who mentioned that he was in Warsaw and could see me. As before, I met him in a café, Pod Arkadami (Under the Arcades). He came with his wife, who travelled with him to Warsaw. We talked about generalities and he was interested if I had any information relating to Mr. Pelc's passport. On my question if he (Czekajewski) had any information relating to his employment in Alaska, he replied with a smile, that letters in Poland can take up to a month to be delivered, and letters abroad, for sure, take longer. Apparently, Czekajewski feels that he is in control. Before departure Czekajewski asked me what my opinion was about his travel abroad. I replied that we would return to this issue when he got a reply about his job offer in Alaska. I would like to mention that Czekajewski refused my offer to cover the cafe bill, and paid it himself.

*Senior Operation Officer. Division VII, Department I
Ministry of Internal Affairs
J. Sawed, Captain*

In the spring of 1966, maybe March or April I left Poland for Sweden, on invitation of Dr. Jan Eksted of the Institute of Pharmacology, Uppsala University. The night I left, there was an urgent telephone call to my girlfriend Zofia asking when I left and how to contact me. Fortunately, I was already out of the country—probably in the German Democratic Republic. This time I had already decided that I would never return to Communist Poland. In February 25, 1967 my current passport expired. I decided to write to the Polish Consulate in Stockholm for issuance of a new passport valid for three years and covering travel in all countries. Zofia joined me in similar application for a new passport. I mentioned in my passport application that my intention was to take a job at the Institute of Arctic Biology in Alaska.

The Polish Consulate in its short letter dated February 1967 informed me that they could only issue a one page document authorizing me to return to Poland and that a new passport would not be issued. During my telephone call asking what the reason was for such a negative decision, the consul replied: “Your

application and justification were apparently too short.” The real reason for Polish Consulate refusing me a new passport, I found 44 years later in the following letter.

Warszawa, January 25, 1967

SECRET

*Head of Section I Dept. I MSW (Ministry of Interior Affairs)
Comrade Tolsdorf*

In reply to your letter of January 24, 1967, RE: Citizen Jan Czekajewski, son of Franciszek, I inform you that currently our department is against issuing a new passport with validity for all countries.

*Director of Department VII Division I
Ministry of Interior Affairs
A. KRZYSZTOPOLSKI, Lieutenant Colonel*

I was wondering what made me an enemy of the People's Republic, which was not a friend but at the same time I didn't actively oppose it. Apparently my passive acceptance of the Communist system was not sufficient. They wanted to drag me into their network against my will. The following note closes the chapter of interest in my person by the Secret Police. At the time this note was written I was already living for a year in the U.S. and Canada.

Warszawa, 21 of March, 1969

SECRET

Final Notice (excerpt)

*RE: Czekajewski Jan, son of Franciszek...etc
Living in Lodz, Glowna Street 9, apartment 13*

The above person was the subject of investigation No. 1263 by Department II, District Command of Militia in Lublin because of “figurant's” connections to foreigners living in Capitalist countries. It was decided that such contacts do not have symptoms of enemy activity. In 1965, citizen Czekajewski was the subject of interest in the Department I Ministry of Interior Affairs and the

subject of a few interviews related to his work. Notes from these conversations were deposited in the archives of the Department I Ministry of Interior Affairs under no. SSW 7, volume 24. These documents do not contribute much to the subject of the investigation.

At this moment Department I is no longer interested in Czekajewski, because of his lack of loyalty and cooperation.

*Composed by:
J. Nowaczyk,*

Scrambled eggs and paper horses

(Treatise on Entrepreneurship)

Next to my family's house on Sniadeckich Street in Czestochowa, Poland was a one story building owned by Mr. and Mrs. Mielczarek. Their son-in-law, Mr. Kosta, had an environmentally friendly workshop manufacturing caskets. I have heard that in better times, before the war, Mr. Kosta even had a horse driven hearse. In the front window he displayed one of his caskets as a reminder of our mortality and that consequently he was ready to take care of all the necessities and trivialities involved with death's aftermath. Even as a nine-year-old child, I was thinking that Mr. Kosta's display of the coffin during the German occupation was grossly inappropriate. The Germans already made a sincere effort to remind us all of this fact, not with the Latin verse of *Memento Mori* but with salvos of execution squads. It was just a reprehensible waste of Mr. Kosta's advertising resources, and an insult to the German occupying forces. Unfortunately, my opinions on this subject did not matter, as I was a child without credibility, which usually comes with senility.

Mrs. Mielczarek also had a garden, larger than ours, and chickens. For those city dwellers, I have to explain, that when a hen lays an egg, she announces this fact to the whole universe (nowadays probably via Internet) by cackling. For some reason, Mrs. Mielczarek's hens chose to lay eggs near the property's fence. On their signal I would run downstairs to the garden's fence with a wire hook, which I used to remove this egg (or eggs) from the

hostile environment of Mrs. Mielczarek's garden. Subsequently, the embryos ended up in my skillet as delicious scrambled eggs or a single egg meal. For a while I was benefiting from the productivity of Mrs. Mielczarek's chickens, until Mrs. Mielczarek became suspicious of the infertility of her hens. One day she set a trap. She waited hidden on the other side of the fence and then, when I was pulling one beautiful brown egg from her hostile side, she grabbed my wire hook. By pulling on it, she wrenched the wire hook from my hand. On short notice, she presented my ingenious invention (one of many I had) to my parents, threatening that she would report me to the German Gestapo (dreaded Secret Police), if I did not stop stealing her eggs. At that time we had to be nice to our neighbors, who when enraged, could report us to the Gestapo that we were either Jews or underground partisans. The fact that we were neither was no excuse. We would have ended up, at best, in a concentration camp with a lifespan scientifically shortened to about six months. I mention, scientifically, because German scientists developed a menu for the inmates, which assured rapid weight loss, which now, in the U.S., is the envy of many citizens fighting obesity. My childhood wartime culinary experiences with scrambled eggs became widely appreciated later in my life. I suspect that a few of my girlfriends, or even now my wife, God bless her heart, would not have stayed with me if it weren't for my omelet making talents.

In the basement of Mr. Mielczarek's home lived Mr. Czola who had two children. One of them was a boy close to my age and we became friends. Mr. Czola also had a 16-year-old daughter, who during the war, trespassed accepted morals and befriended a German soldier. Before the Soviet army "liberated" Czestochowa on January 16, 1945, she escaped from her home with her German lover. Fortunately, after a few days Mr. Czola's daughter returned home crying. Nobody in the neighborhood knew for sure if her lover sent her home, or if he was killed in the next battle with the Russians. The above story illustrates the cheerful, happy atmosphere of my home, courtyard and upbringing where I lived for 18 years, until I went to study at the Technical University in Wroclaw.

We all knew that Mr. Czola had no education or any specific skills. Otherwise he would not have lived in a dark

basement with small windows below street level. After the Germans retreated from Czestochowa, leaving behind quite a few of their own corpses, regrettably without appropriate coffins and burial instructions, everyone started to look for means to make a living. It was the next year or the year after, the summer 1946 or 1947, when I noticed fervent activity in the courtyard of Mr. Mielczarek's property. There I could see Mr. Czola with a friend who set up production of little paper mache horses. They sold these toys to the pilgrims visiting Czestochowa's shrine of Jasna Gora (Light Mountain), famous for the miraculous icon of the Black Madonna. Technology needed for the production of these toys was necessarily simple and inexpensive because at that time, Goldman Sachs did not extend offers of loans to the small businesses in the peripheral Polish municipality of Czestochowa. Therefore, Mr. Czola had to rely on dry, sunny, warm weather, a supply of old newspapers, paste made of rye flower mixed with water and machinery in the form of a few hand carved wooden horses (about 30cm high and 50 cm long). The procedure involved first wrapping the horses with newspaper, then applying an ample amount of rye flower paste all over, and then covering it with another layer of newspaper. This procedure was repeated about 10 times, until the layers of paper mixed with paste were about 1cm thick. Then the horses were exposed to the sun and dried for a few hours. In the final stage of production the paper shell was cut along the horse's back resulting in two complimentary half-horse shells. At this stage the wood "master horse" was removed. The remaining two complementary paper mache halves of the horse were glued together and painted with black and white oil paint. After attaching a small wooden platform with four wheels, the paper mache horse was ready to be sold to pilgrims, who felt obligated to bring toys to the children left back in the villages. I wouldn't be surprised if these toys were blessed and sprinkled with holy water at the Monastery making them not only enjoyable for children but also revered.

For whatever reason, my observation of Mr. Czola's "Above-Ground Enterprises Unincorporated" stuck in my mind for many years to come. Then of course, I reluctantly grew up, went to university, immigrated to Sweden and subsequently ended up as an entrepreneur and businessman in America. After five years of

residency in America I received American citizenship which allowed me to visit “The Old Country,” Poland. My American citizenship was essential for my personal security during the visit, because the Communist Secret Police were grossly disappointed by my treasonous choice of Capitalist freedom over a Socialist life and harbored much animosity against me. While in Warsaw I attended a party at a friend’s home. It had to be between 1979 and 1980.

During this party, a lady approached me describing the miserable conditions in which Polish people were living at the time. “I have a son, 15 years old and growing,” she told me. “He has a large appetite appropriate for a healthy young boy. I would like to provide him with nutritional food needed for his growing body. The best would be ham. Unfortunately, I cannot buy ham in the State shops. Yes, one can purchase it on the black market, but prices are horrific. I am working as an economist at the Industrial Planning Commission, and with my meager salary I cannot afford such a luxury as ham. I earn only 3000 zloty per month. Can you imagine that?”

From her insistence on feeding ham to her son, I concluded, that she obviously was not an observant Jew or Muslim. She pressed me to express a sign of compassion and promise that I would tell this to the American President when I saw him. Instead of promising her that, I told her the following: “Dear Madam, yesterday I was walking on the prominent Warsaw Street, Nowy Swiat (New World) and stopped by the state-run furniture store. There wasn’t much selection, just some sofas, china cabinets and simple varnished kitchen tables. One such table, made obviously of common wood, such as pine or oak, had a label with a price of 3000 zloty, equal to your entire monthly income. Why don’t you start manufacturing such tables? It is the simplest furniture you can imagine to make. It is simply a plank of wood or plywood on four legs. One can easily learn to make one such table in a week and sell them on the black market at a competitive price of 2000 zloty. If your husband joins you in such an enterprise, you could buy enough ham not only for your son, but for the entire family. You could be fully protein self-sufficient for the entire length of Communism in Poland!”

The lady looked at me with disgust. Her response was as follows: “Who do you think I am? You think that I am a carpenter or another low class laborer? I am an economist with a master’s degree from the best university in Poland. What you propose, is an insult! I was thinking that I had the pleasure to meet an American gentleman. What a disappointment,” she murmured to herself. She gulped a glass of Polish brandy, Winiak, and departed toward another gentleman, this time a local, in the ambience of cigarette smoke. He apparently shared her misery. At that time, on Polish TV and state radio stations, the secretary of Polish Communist Party (PZPR), Edward Gierek was promoting a slogan: “Polish men can do it!” His intention was to build confidence in Polish workers, that they can manufacture goods as good as their Western counterparts. Today I would paraphrase this slogan into following: “While one man can do it, another man does not care to try!” My new version of Comrade Gierek’s slogan is much more universal and also applies to today’s Americans.



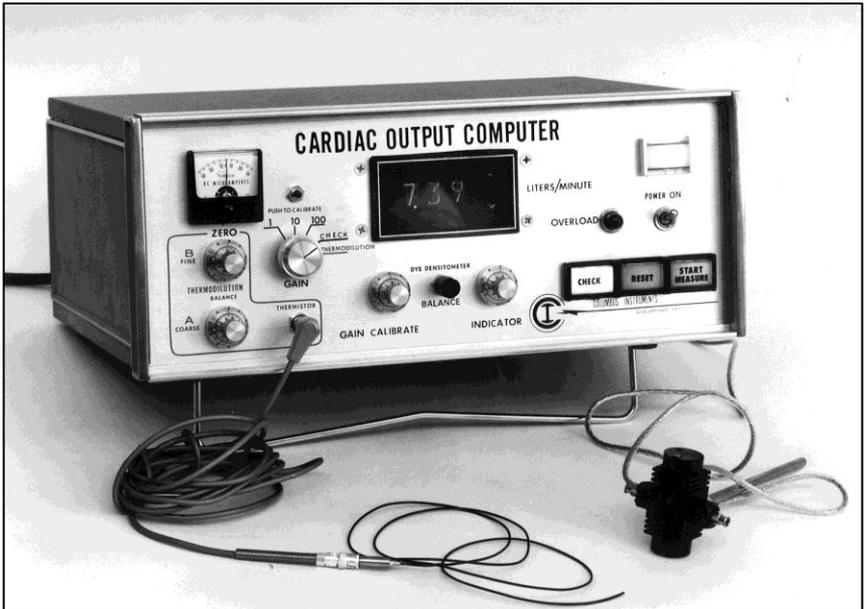
Jan, already a US citizen, visits his home town in Poland

Cardiac output of rats

The success of Columbus Instruments was based on my proper selection of a few products which sold well and were unique on the market. Historically, I had started my company based on the manufacture and sale of Animal Activity Meters for laboratory animals and Cardiac Output Computers for humans. In fact, I was considered the grandfather of animal activity measurements and a pioneer of computers for measuring cardiac output in humans. I could claim that it was me who introduced the U.S. to the measurement of cardiac output (blood flow through the heart) using thermo dilution. This method was based on injecting a cold saline or glucose in the main vein (vena cava) and subsequent measurement of temperature change in the pulmonary artery. I learned this method when living in Uppsala, Sweden from two researchers, Dr. Karl Pavek from Czechoslovakia and Karl Arfors, a native of Uppsala. They were both working at that time at Pharmacia Company now owned by Pfizer Co.

When I arrived in Columbus, Ohio the only method used in cardiology was based on injecting cardio green dye which later was found to be toxic. Cardiologists were stuck on this method of measurement using cardio green dye and resistant to thermo dilution which was considered a new and unproven method. I decided to make computers for both methods and let cardiologists compare the results. As time went on another researcher from Czechoslovakia, Dr. Gantz teamed up with Dr. Swan, at that time Chairman of the American Heart Association, and developed the Swan-Gantz catheter, which was also equipped with a balloon allowing the introduction of the tip of the catheter into the pulmonary artery with greater ease. The American Hospital Supply Corp. started manufacturing these catheters and offered computers as an accessory free of charge if the hospital purchased a minimum of 200 catheters per year. I couldn't compete with such methods especially when I wasn't able to make balloon catheters with required sterility. Selling such products also carried a large legal responsibility if the catheters were defective or malfunctioned inside the patient's heart. Overnight my business of Thermo Dilution Cardiac Output Computers disappeared with a whimper.

About the same time I got a large order from the Pediatric Institute in Moscow, USSR. My representative in Sweden, John Larson of Medata AB, who procured this order, forgot to mention that this instrument was intended for rats not humans. Unfortunately the instruments were ready for shipment and were made and tested for humans. My small company could not withstand losing this order, so I decided to try to make it work for rats. None of the current available temperature sensors (thermostats) needed to measure temperature in the pulmonary artery was small enough to slide it into a 200 gram rat. In fact, none of the physiologists were able to float a catheter into a rat's pulmonary artery. The rat's heart was just too small. In this moment I recalled an experiment done by Dr. Karl Pavek and Dr. Karl Arfors on dogs. They injected cold saline into the dog's main vein and measured the temperature change in the aortic arch, after the blood went through the lungs and left heart. Nobody believed that it would work because everybody assumed that the cold saline would be warmed up in the large surface of the lungs.

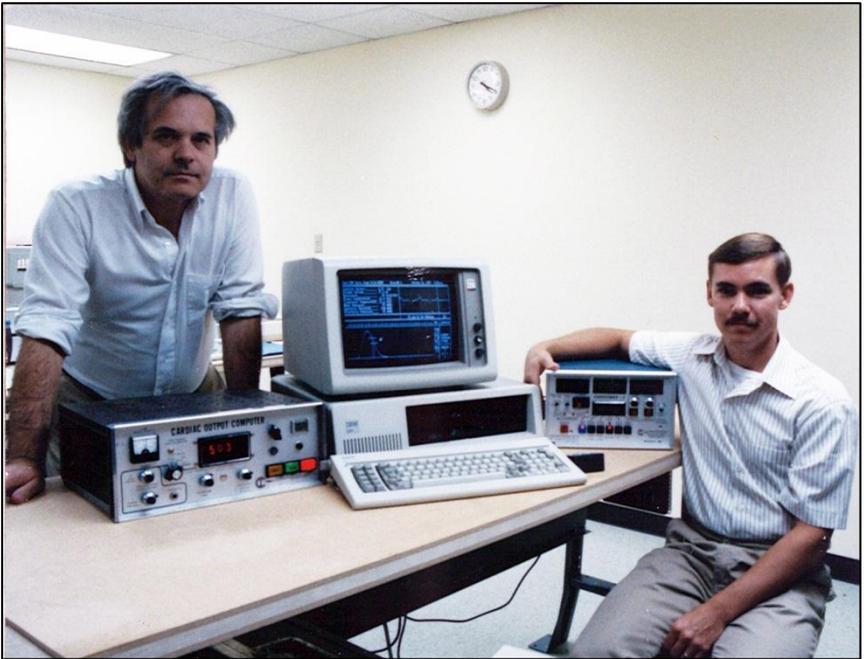


Columbus Instruments first Cardiac Output Computer for dye and thermo - dilution

This comparison research proved that the cold saline would not be warmed up after passing through the lungs and left heart. The dilution curve would change shape, but what was more important, the area after the temperature curve would be maintained. Pavék and Arfors proved that the cold saline would not be warmed up in the lungs, which provided a much easier method of measurement of Cardiac Output without catheterization of the pulmonary artery. I had an idea to apply it to the rats. Also, because there was no availability of very small temperature sensors needed for rats, I decided to use very small thermocouples. Measuring temperature with thermocouples required a very sensitive microvolt amplifier. Since at that time we did not have expertise in building such devices ourselves, I decided to purchase microvolt amplifiers from the same company which made small thermocouples. Now I had to interface both devices, thermocouple catheters and microvolt amplifiers, to my Cardiac Output Computer, what was accomplished in a day or two. My theory was first proven in a glass of warm water into which we injected 1mL of cold saline, but I still had doubts that it would work on a living animal, namely a rat. At that time we didn't have a physiologist on our staff and couldn't test to see if my concept worked in a real laboratory situation. Time was short; we could not delay delivery any longer. The customer was insisting on immediate delivery.

The instrument was packed and I dispatched it along with a young engineer, Mr. Ken Kober, to Moscow. I should mention that Mr. Kober over the years became an accomplished designer, programmer and now serves as marketing director for our company. While in Moscow, Ken with help of Dr. Pinelis of the Pediatric Institute would test my concept on real animals. Ken had never catheterized a rat and had to learn this procedure from Dr. Pinelis who was an expert in this field. They worked together until they obtained the correct measurements with the Cardiac Output from a number of rats. At this moment, Ken Kober with Dr. Pinelis proved that my concept was valid. We also realized that we had a new valuable product, because at the same time a new kind (breed) of rat was developed, "salt sensitive rats." These rats developed high blood pressure when fed a salty diet. The pharmaceutical companies around the world were rushing to develop medicines to treat high blood pressure and using salt sensitive rats as a test

model. Knowledge of cardiac output in salt sensitive rats became imperative for their research. Columbus Instruments' Rat Cardiac Output Computer was a blessing to them. We sold hundreds, if not thousands, of these computers to all the pharmaceutical companies in the world as well as many universities. We had no competition and we are still, 25 years later, the only company that manufactures Cardiac Output Computers for rats and mice. Now this particular research requiring measurement of cardiac output in rats has nearly vanished, but when it was booming it provided Columbus Instruments with the necessary cash flow for the development of new products in other fields. These new products were "Oxymax" Oxygen and Carbon Dioxide metabolic computers for rats and mice and more recently Oxymax-CLAMS, which measures multiple physiological parameters in genetically modified (knock out) mice and rats.



Jan Czekajewski and Ken Kober with Circulatory System Computer for rats

21.0

3651318



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME:

Whereas, THERE HAS BEEN PRESENTED TO THE
Commissioner of Patents

A PETITION PRAYING FOR THE GRANT OF **LETTERS PATENT** FOR AN ALLEGED NEW AND USEFUL INVENTION THE TITLE AND DESCRIPTION OF WHICH ARE CONTAINED IN THE SPECIFICATION OF WHICH A COPY IS HEREUNTO ANNEXED AND MADE A PART HEREOF, AND THE VARIOUS REQUIREMENTS OF **LAW** IN SUCH CASES MADE AND PROVIDED HAVE BEEN COMPLIED WITH, AND THE TITLE THERETO IS, FROM THE RECORDS OF THE **PATENT OFFICE** IN THE CLAIMANT(S) INDICATED IN THE SAID COPY, AND **WHEREAS**, UPON DUE EXAMINATION MADE, THE SAID CLAIMANT(S) IS (ARE) ADJUDGED TO BE ENTITLED TO A **PATENT** UNDER THE **LAW**.

NOW, THEREFORE, THESE **Letters Patent** ARE TO GRANT UNTO THE SAID CLAIMANT(S) AND THE SUCCESSORS, HEIRS OR ASSIGNS OF THE SAID CLAIMANT(S) FOR THE TERM OF **SEVENTEEN** YEARS FROM THE DATE OF THIS GRANT, SUBJECT TO THE PAYMENT OF **ISSUE FEES** AS PROVIDED BY **LAW**, THE RIGHT TO EXCLUDE OTHERS FROM MAKING, USING OR SELLING THE SAID **INVENTION** THROUGHOUT THE **UNITED STATES**.



In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Patent Office to be affixed, at the City of Washington this twenty-first day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seventy-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and ninety-sixth.

Attest:
McCoy M. Gibson, Jr.
Attesting Officer.

Robert B. Tuttle
Commissioner of Patents.

FORM PD 377A
1-10-83

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS

Patent on Cardiac Output Computer

SELECTIVE ACTIVITY METERS



U.S. Patent
No. 3,602,806

MEASURE TOTAL ACTIVITY OF A GROUP OF ANIMALS
OR ACTIVITY OF ONE OR MORE ANIMALS IN A GROUP
MEASURE MOVEMENT OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN SLEEP STUDIES
MEASURE ACTIVITY OF INSECTS

- Measure in natural environment
- Independent of room lighting
- Animals are not disturbed by measuring technique
- Ordinary standard animal cages are used for animal housing
- Can be equipped with printing counters or a computer paper punch

A useful experimental tool in pharmacological, physiological and psychological experiments



COLUMBUS INSTRUMENTS

Supplier of individual instruments and total measuring systems

MANUFACTURING PLANT:
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Columbus, Ohio 43212

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Division of International Instruments Co.
P.O. Box 5244, Columbus, Ohio 43212
USA

Phone: (614) 488-6176

1st Brochure for Selective Animal Activity Meter

United States Patent [10] 4,337,726
Czekajewski et al. [43] Jul. 6, 1982

[24] **ANIMAL ACTIVITY MONITOR AND BEHAVIOR PROCESOR**
[76] Inventors: Jan A. Czekajewski, 4348 Shire Cove, Columbus, Ohio 43220; Harold L. Hill, 425 Broad Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43205; Kenneth J. Kober, 595 S. James Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43211

[21] Appl. No. 166,306
[22] Filed Jul. 7, 1980
[51] Int. Cl. AHK 45-00
[52] U.S. Cl. 119/3; 119/29; 128/762
[58] Field of Search 128/762; 73/172; 119/1; 119/29; 340/341-367

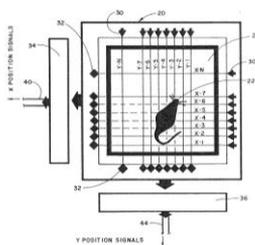
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Primary Examiner—Kyle L. Howell
Assistant Examiner—Priscilla J. Jaworski

ABSTRACT
An animal activity monitor and behavior processor for collecting data from an animal being tested in an observation area. The apparatus is adapted to separate animal activity data into two groups by differentiating ambulatory or refection movements from non-ambulatory movements such as grooming, scratching or body rotation.

20 Claims, 10 Drawing Figures



Patent for Infrared Sensors Animal Activity Meter

Once a spy, always a spy: The story of “Super Computer”

When I landed in the spring of 1968 in Fairbanks, Alaska and to this day, I was a “Flag-waving American.” I cherished my American freedom of expression and its hard stance against Communism in Eastern Europe. This did not include selling to customers in the Soviet Union. I never imagined that there was anything wrong with selling medical research equipment to the Soviets. I thought that these transactions would actually improve my new country’s balance of foreign trade. When I started Columbus Instruments, I was exporting medical research equipment, mostly used in laboratory



Poster of the “Exodus” organization

animal research, to many countries, including the Soviet Union. In the Soviet market I was represented by two companies, Medata AB in Stockholm, Sweden and Anitek OY in Helsinki, Finland. Anitek OY was making stainless steel laboratory equipment and offered to sell my equipment as well. In 1985 Anitek OY was participating in a medical exhibition in Moscow and asked me to provide a number of instruments having sales potential in the Soviet Union. Among them was an unfortunate rat respiration monitor which utilized an IBM-PC clone, made in Taiwan for data collection. It didn’t even have hard a disk which was at the time considered high technology. The total value of equipment sent to Anitek OY was \$228,000 and to secure the deal they opened a line of credit for this amount.

Their representative was sure that once the Soviets saw this equipment they would buy it. On June 1, 1985 the instruments were sent by air to Helsinki, Finland where our representative

would take them, by train, along with his own products, to Moscow. Unfortunately, my shipment was stopped in New York, at Kennedy Airport where the cartons were opened and customs officers realized that they had a trove of high-tech contraband.

Their focus was on the Taiwanese IBM-PC which featured a label on the back panel: “Super Computer.” As I remember, we chose this computer because it was cheap; its value was only \$400. Customs agents got very excited after they consulted the list of forbidden strategic products, and found “Super Computer” listed as a computer used to develop long-range ballistic missiles and atomic weapons. In the meantime, in Moscow, Chuck McKinniss, our engineer, was waiting for the shipment. He was supposed to demonstrate our rat respiration monitor to the Russians. Expedited delivery was crucial, as the exhibit was starting in just a few days. When I learned about the equipment stoppage in N.Y., I called the U.S. Customs in N.Y. and explained to them that this equipment should be dispatched immediately—otherwise we would miss the exhibit. The equipment was to be shipped to Helsinki, but its final destination was Moscow. The gentleman on other end of telephone line was congenial and promised to expedite merchandise as quickly as possible.

I didn’t know what he really meant. In a few hours, the same day a few cars full of agents of Operation “Exodus” descended on my company, blocking all entrances and barging inside with a search warrant for “Super Computers,” Apple II computers and Epson Dot Matrix printers. Behind them were crews from two local TV stations, Channel 4 and Channel 10. Here I came to understand what Operation “Exodus” was. It was formed as a part of the U.S. Department of Treasury, sponsored by the Pentagon to track and stop contraband of high tech materials to the Soviet Union. They had a district office in Cleveland and they were alerted by U.S. Customs at Kennedy Airport that a high-tech spying operation was based out of Columbus, Ohio headed by someone talking with a Russian accent. They probably took me for a Soviet “sleeper” agent pretending to escape from Communism, but in fact engaged in running a secret spy operation. They imagined that I was engaged in devious operations known as “trans-shipment” by sending forbidden materials to a neutral

country (Finland) where it could be sent to the forbidden final destination such as Moscow.

When agents burst through the front door it was early afternoon and they stayed late into the evening, probably 10 p.m. They searched through all the files and finally interviewed me, asking how long I had been trading with the Soviets. I told them that I had probably been trading with the Soviets for 17 years, since the beginning of my company. At one point, I decided to go to the kitchen to make some coffee. Two agents, a man and a young woman, jumped up on their feet and followed me to the kitchen, observing closely what I was doing. Then it dawned on me that they were there to prevent me from taking a cyanide pill or other poison. Obviously, if I was dead, their investigation would be much more difficult. At the end of the day, the Exodus agents took some files related to my trade with the Soviet Union and left. They didn't arrest me nor did they confiscate any "Super Computers" two of which were still at the company. I suspect that the reason for this omission was the fact that the "Super Computer" label was small and placed on the back of the computer's panel. They didn't look closely at the contraband treasure right in plain sight.

Ten days later the same Exodus agents came again to confiscate more files pertaining to my exports to the Soviet Union. Television crews were again alerted and on hand to document the incident. The same evening local and national television news casts ran a story about the deceptive measures Columbus Instruments was employing to bypass the vigilance of U.S. Customs officials. The "news" reports featured a graphic with a red line starting in Columbus, Ohio and extending all the way across the Atlantic Ocean to Helsinki, Finland and then on to Moscow. Surprisingly, I was never called to offer a statement or testify to explain my actions. Instead, my secretary, Marcela Long was called in front on the Federal Grand Jury to explain if the final destination—Helsinki, not Moscow, was a deception. "Was it Mr. Czekajewski who forced you to do so?" they asked. Fortunately, Marcy did not bend. She was the one who asked the airline how the export declaration should be filled out and she did exactly what they told her. In the meantime Chuck McKinniss had his own experience in Moscow.

Chuck McKinniss in Moscow

While I was being investigated as a possible Soviet spy of high technology, Chuck was already in Moscow. He was not aware of what was happening in Columbus. Before his departure to Moscow he was waiting for the return of his passport from the Soviet embassy. As the exhibition date drew closer and closer and his passport was still in Washington, D.C. he decided to travel to Moscow without it. The only small problem was his lack of his U.S. Passport and of course, Soviet visa. Finally, Chuck had enough waiting. He decided to travel to Moscow without a passport. In fact, he had a copy of his passport with him and he was thinking that it should be sufficient for the Soviets to admit him to the country. One has to know Chuck to realize what kind of man he was. At the end of the Second World War he volunteered for the U.S. Army trying to get out of the misery of life in Jacksonville in Southern Ohio. While he was in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, the war ended and he was sent to Korea. In Korea he soon faced real combat, fighting North Koreans and Chinese on the Yalu River. When he was discharged from the military he was flying small planes with his mother at the steering wheel and he entertained country folks with parachute jumps



Chuck McKinniss as a highway patrolman.
Visiting Columbus Instruments.

he volunteered for the U.S. Army trying to get out of the misery of life in Jacksonville in Southern Ohio. While he was in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, the war ended and he was sent to Korea. In Korea he soon faced real combat, fighting North Koreans and Chinese on the Yalu River. When he was discharged from the military he was flying small planes with his mother at the steering wheel and he entertained country folks with parachute jumps

during county fairs. He was proud of making over 1,000 parachute jumps in his life.

He didn't have much respect for Operation Exodus and he knew perfectly well that I was not guilty. He dressed like a cowboy with a large belt buckle, cowboy boots and a wide-rimmed cowboy hat. When he landed in Moscow and showed his copy of the passport with no visa in it he was immediately arrested. At the same time when I was featured on U.S. TV as a Soviet high-tech agent, Chuck was shown on Moscow TV as a crazy American cowboy who came to the U.S.S.R. with a copy of a passport. Fortunately the organizer of the medical conference was a former Soviet astronaut who had strong connections in the Kremlin. After a few days, Chuck was released, but the conference had already ended without our equipment, which was confiscated in NY. Chuck had no other option but to return to Columbus, where he was surprised to learn that Columbus Instruments had similar problems, only in reverse.

My mission in Moscow

While trying to convince US Customs and "Exodus" organizations that a \$400 Taiwanese IBM-PC clone, which we had sent to Moscow, was not a "Super Computer" I decided to travel to Moscow myself and document the computers that were available to the Soviets from Western sources. The availability of similar computers to the Soviets would exonerate me of the charge that I had sent advanced technology to the Soviets from which their space and nuclear research programs could benefit.

It just so happened that the Soviets organized a medical instruments exhibition in which our Swedish representative, Medata AB, would be participating in and would support my visa application. On the American side, I was afraid that my travel to Moscow would be construed as an attempt of escape from the US since I was still under a Federal Grand Jury Investigation. To remove any suspicion I called the Federal Judge in Columbus, who was in charge of my case and told him about my plans. To my surprise he encouraged me to go.

Equipped with the large, yellow TV camcorder I embarked on this trip. While at the exhibition in Moscow I approached a

variety of German, French and British companies asking them if they could provide IBM-PC computers or similar clones to Moscow, explaining that a special license was required in the U.S. and it was very difficult to obtain. I was instantly surprised by the availability of computer equipment much more powerful than the Taiwanese clone. I documented every conversation using my yellow Sony video camera making it clear to all parties that I was recording the conversation. Since I was suspicious that the Soviet KGB was observing the activities of all U.S. visitors, I was very careful to not hide any of my actions. In total, I made two hours of recordings on video tape (which I still have to recall my Moscow adventures). I was sure that my recordings would not escape KGB notice and a moment would come when they ask to inspect my video tapes and confiscate them.

To prevent such an occurrence I put one of the tapes in an envelope and delivered it with a personal note to the U.S. Ambassador, Mr. Arthur A. Hartman. Mr. Hartman was aware of my predicament with U.S. Customs and “Exodous.” To my surprise, nobody at the Moscow airport searched my baggage or asked me about my recordings. When I arrived in Columbus a few weeks later I received a hand written note from Mr. Hartman thanking me for the video tape of the available computers. He also mentioned that my case was the subject of much discussion at the highest levels within the U.S. Government with participation of the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. George Shultz, Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Malcolm Baldrige, and Secretary of Treasury, Mr. James Baker.

I never expected that my simple person would be the subject of discussion on such a high level. Hopefully the first and only time, as I was sure no good would come to me from their discussions. The U.S. Ambassador also mentioned that he requested an appropriate “intelligence” organization to document the kind of computers our western friends supply to the Soviets. While professional spies documented all this information, they apparently left their cameras and film in the hotel room and went to the bar downstairs to quench their thirst (either with whisky or the less expensive local vodka, “Stolichnaya”). When they returned their cameras and film were stolen and the U.S. Ambassador was left with my video tape as the only evidence.

After returning to Columbus with proof of the wide availability of computers to the Soviet Union, I was hoping that the U.S. Treasury and “Exodus” organization would drop my case. Unfortunately this did not happen, until The Wall Street Journal published an article about my case many months later.

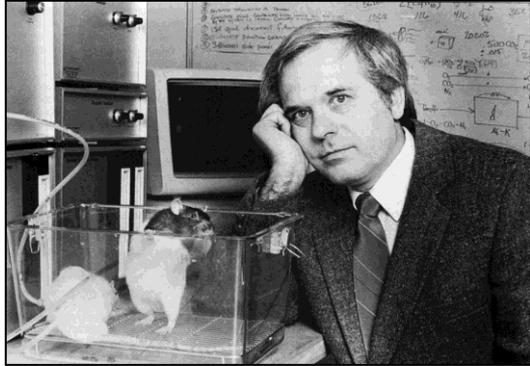
Fighting US bureaucracy

One person who took some interest in my case was Senator Metzenbaum from Cleveland. He was pressing U.S. Customs to

make up their mind: to charge me with a crime or release my equipment and admit their mistake. My attorneys commented that fast absolution was not possible because the Exodus organization would lose face. I should admit to some minor offence which would undoubtedly

allow Exodus to grant a suspended sentence. I refused such a ploy. In one letter sent to Senator Metzenbaum by U.S. Customs, they explained that I had committed a dangerous offence against state security. This made me really mad. I wrote a letter to the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) asking them to take charge of my case, because Operation Exodus was lacking sufficient expertise to deal with such an important criminal as I. In fact, I sent a number of such letters when the first letter remained unanswered. Finally, my CIA letters started coming back with a stamp: “Address unknown.”

Then I made a stamp, large in size which read: “Exporting Could be Dangerous to your Mental Health.” From now on, all my correspondence to the government offices I stamped in bold red ink with this stamp. I was trying to provoke a response. I also learned that when an assistant of Senator Metzenbaum went to the



Jan with two rat conspirators during the Exodus spy investigation.

allow Exodus to grant a suspended sentence. I refused such a ploy. In one letter sent to Senator Metzenbaum by U.S. Customs, they explained that I had committed a dangerous offence against state security. This made me really mad. I wrote a letter to the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) asking them to take charge of my case, because Operation Exodus was lacking sufficient expertise to deal with such an important criminal as I. In fact, I sent a number of such letters when the first letter remained unanswered. Finally, my CIA letters started coming back with a stamp: “Address unknown.”

Then I made a stamp, large in size which read: “Exporting Could be Dangerous to your Mental Health.” From now on, all my correspondence to the government offices I stamped in bold red ink with this stamp. I was trying to provoke a response. I also learned that when an assistant of Senator Metzenbaum went to the

Department of Treasury to inquire about my case, he had an interesting conversation in the legal department. The prosecuting attorney assigned to my case admitted: “In reality, I like this Czekajewski; he really believes that we have a democratic system here. Either he is crazy or uninformed. Doesn’t he know that we already made a decision about his case?” When I learned about this conversation, I recalled the conversation I had in the office of Committee of Science and Technology in Warsaw, Poland. Both officials—Polish Communist and U.S. Government Official—demonstrated disdain for a respected country citizen. Political systems can have different names, but bureaucratic practice remains the same.

On December 11, 1985 I attended a meeting at the Department of Commerce to specifically discuss the question of foreign availability of IBM-PC computers. I arrived there with a Bulgarian-made IBM PC/XT *clone* with a color monitor and hard disk. It performed exactly like the original IBM, and was even equipped with the original IBM BIOS. I speculated that Bulgaria, a staunch Soviet ally, would be considered sufficiently foreign, even by the zealots of export controls. All software for the IBM PC/XT was 100% compatible with my Bulgarian clone. After I had completed a thorough demonstration, the Foreign Availability Division offered to purchase the Bulgarian computer from me as “hard evidence,” a proposal to which I gladly agreed. My interests would be served as well. My criminal offense was in shipping a similar, Taiwanese-made IBM *clone* to Moscow. Common sense had me believing that the government would deregulate this computer on the basis of foreign availability, and that I would soon be returning to a normal life instead of lobbying for changes in export laws. After parting with my Bulgarian marvel in 1985, I waited a long time for



Rubber stamp: “Exporting can be dangerous to your mental health.”

the foreign-availability mandate to be applied to IBM-PC clones.

On February 10, 1987 the *Wall Street Journal* published an article about my tribulations with customs and about the general confusion within government agencies concerning IBM-PC-type computers. The day after the article appeared, a special technical advisory committee was formed with participating representatives from the Department of Defense, the Department of Commerce, the electronics industry, the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and more to make a ruling on the IBM-PC computers. They unanimously accepted the finding of a report by the National Bureau of Standards referring to the IBM-PC, (just what I had been trying to tell the government for the past two years). It stated that "incorporated into medical devices" IBM-PCs can be shipped to any country in the world without an export license. On March 19, Dr. Paul Freedenberg, Assistant Secretary for Trade Administration at the Commerce Department, wrote me a letter indicating IBM-PC and similar computers were now officially accepted license-free if incorporated into medical devices. I forwarded this document to the U.S. District Attorney in Columbus, and on April 8 the grand jury's 23-month investigation of my activities was dropped on the basis of "lack of evidence of a crime." I have been having persistent nightmares that I really made a mistake and equipped my Taiwanese PC clone with a 10-Mb hard disk, which would definitely have made it a license-requiring commodity. The threat of a prison term was not just in my imagination; people have been arrested and convicted for similar offenses. The Exodus organization was desperate to justify its existence and substantiate its continuous funding by providing a record of arrests and convictions. Anything that looked like a crossbreed between a TV and a typewriter must be a Super Computer on its way to Moscow.

The moral is that if a totalitarian system ever arrives in the United States, it will not be under the red banners of the workers' revolution; it will be announced in the Federal Register in complicated bureaucratic jargon. I am wondering why I ran so far from Communist oppression to find myself so close to it. Does it prove the earth is round? Now that the Soviets have all disappeared as our arch enemy, I am being searched and X-rayed at airports as a suspect of terrorist activity. I am grateful to my

parents that they baptized me as Jan (John) not as Abdul or Mohamed.

Epilog of Soviet spy story

Fast forward 20 years. It is now the year 2007. I am visiting my old friend, Bob Swain, who is now running Lane Avenue Travel agency. I am going to pick up my airline ticket. Bob has run this agency for the last 20 years and tells me that I just missed the Assistant Federal District Attorney, the one who went on TV in 1985 declaring that he would persecute Czekajewski to the full extent of the law. He told reporters that he would make sure I was sentenced to five years in prison for my high-tech espionage. When Bob told him to wait a few minutes as I was on the way and it may be interesting for both of us to discuss the old times, the District Attorney blurted out: “I was so close to putting that son of a bitch in the slammer. He is damn lucky that he wiggled out of the reaches of the law.” Apparently, I left a lasting impression not only on the Exodus organization but also on the Federal Justice Department.

This was the day I lost my political innocence.

Entrepreneur of the year

After two years of tribulations with the U.S Customs “Exodus” organization and Department of Justice who desperately were trying to make me a Soviet hi-tech spy, I finally was cleared of all absurd charges and able to resume my business making and selling bio-medical instrumentation. Then I was re-discovered as a valuable member of U.S. society and even rewarded with a trophy as Entrepreneur of the Year in central Ohio in the field of high technology. The reward was sponsored by Ernst Young Co and State of Ohio.

Apparently the absurd charges by U.S. Customs did not preclude them to bestow on me this esteemed award. Accolades from the Ohio Senate and Ohio General Assembly followed.

This occasion reminded me of an old film about the American Revolutionary War, titled “The Devil Disciple” made in 1959 with Burt Lancaster as the leading star. In this movie English

soldiers are bringing the American rebel to the gallows. In the last moment a galloping messenger brings an order to suspend all executions. Armistice between England and the Revolutionary Government was just signed. Disappointed English General Burgoyne, in charge of the execution, removes the noose from the neck of the rebel and comments: "Because I am forbidden to hang you, I invite you to my quarters for a cup of tea."

Following these events I was invited to participate with Ohio Governor Celleste on a trade mission to China and Egypt and invited to numerous parties at the Governor's Mansion serving mediocre Ohio vines. My life took another turn; I became a respected American again.



Oxymax-CLAMS

CLAMS has nothing to do with Clam Chowder made from shellfish which burrow in the bottom sea sediments. It's an abbreviation of the more elaborate name, Comprehensive Lab Animal Measuring System. The CLAMS is a system which comprises many individual instruments functioning in tandem under the control of the same software running on the same computer. This instrument wouldn't be possible if Columbus Instruments didn't have a long history of developing a variety of individual instruments for measuring animal physiology and behavior. The development of it started when one day, probably 10 years ago, we faced an inquiry from The Jackson Institute located in Bar Harbor, Maine. They needed a system which besides measuring oxygen consumption and carbon dioxide production also measured food and water consumption and animal activity. We at Columbus Instruments had built such individual instruments, now we just needed to integrate their functions into one system. We won our order and delivered close to a million dollars' worth of instruments to Jackson Laboratories. What's more important is that Jackson Laboratories is world famous in breeding genetically modified mice which are purchased by other researchers worldwide. Some of these animals are genetically obese and used to test drugs which counter obesity, others demonstrate human diseases like diabetes which are being used to test new drugs for diabetes. Once the word got out that Jackson Labs was using our instruments to test knock-out mice, other researchers, worldwide, tried to start their own research and Columbus Instruments was the obvious choice. CLAMS is not a simple electronic instrument. It has many mechanical features which years ago we would not have been able to make. Fortunately one of our engineers, Mr. Clark Williams developed mechanical design skills with the help of sophisticated software. Some of the elements required sophisticated laser cutting machinery and others computerized milling machines. I decided to invest in some of the machines and farm out work to other companies which specialize in lasers. Now, years later when I look at the mechanical complexity of CLAMS I am myself surprised at our progress over the last 10 years. Now CLAMS is a large part of our business. We

sell it worldwide to Australia, New Zealand, China and Canada. Some of these are delivered to pharmaceutical research companies in Sweden, Denmark and Finland. In the U.S. most of the research divisions of the largest pharmaceutical companies already have CLAMS and are buying more. At a time when the American manufacturing industry shrinks, we at Columbus Instruments consistently sell over 50% of our products to foreign countries. In Germany, the government helps to promote German products while in the U.S. we have to finance our R&D from our own profits. Apparently the U.S. pays more attention to the banks than to the local factories. This does not project a bright future for our country. In the meantime we try our best to do our share for improvement of U.S. balance of foreign trade.



Oxymax-CLAMS (Comprehensive Lab Animal Measuring System) in environmental chambers

Micro-Oxymax: Story of Spud's respiration

Micro-Oxymax came to life as an extension of work on Oxymax Oxygen Consumption Monitors used for measurement of metabolism (oxygen consumption) in rats and mice. "Micro" does not indicate that it was miniaturized, but that its sensitivity was increased to measure oxygen consumption of much smaller subjects, such as bacteria cultures or plants. It is interesting how this idea came to life.

One day I received a phone call from some researcher in Canada, who had seen a description of our Oxymax, asking if it could be used to measure oxygen consumption in potatoes. Apparently, as he explained to me, bruised potatoes consume more oxygen and if this increase could be measured then our instrument could be used to test if potatoes were "abused" during shipment and were bruised. Bruised potatoes would be prone to decay and could not be stored. I told the potential customer in Canada, that we had never had such a request and didn't know if the Oxymax had sufficient sensitivity to measure respiration in potatoes. Nevertheless, I went to the store and purchased 5 kg of potatoes for an experiment in Oxymax. When the potatoes were loaded into the rat cage, the measurements were sufficiently accurate. I could inform the Canadian researcher that yes we could provide an instrument for his application. The next day I called to give him the good news: "Yes, we can do it!" Then he asked how many potatoes were in the cage. I told him the exact number—I don't remember any more but perhaps 20 or 30.

He said that wasn't sufficient. "I need an instrument that will measure the respiration of a single potato," I was told. This was not possible with the current Oxymax setup. I told him that we would work on his problem and I would call him when we had a satisfactory solution. After some days of thinking, I came up with an idea that might work. Instead of measuring oxygen consumption in an open flow system, where air flows through the chamber with potatoes at a constant rate, I could fill the chamber with ambient air and measure the drop in the oxygen level after some time e.g. 30 min. In this setup, the oxygen drop would be much larger and our oxygen sensor could measure oxygen levels with a much higher accuracy.

I assigned the job of building a prototype of such an instrument to one of my self-styled engineers, Swedish born Leif Nenerfeld who, in spite of having a degree in geology, was a bright electronic designer. Over the course of three months, Leif built a prototype and according to my expectations, its sensitivity was high enough to measure a single potato. Yes, now we could measure the respiration of a single potato. We called it Micro-Oxymax. Excited, I placed a call to Canada and informed our concerned agricultural scientist that we had a solution to his problem. He could have an instrument that would measure the respiration of a single potato. In turn, he asked how much it would cost.

I calculated the cost of components which amounted to about \$5,000 and according to my business calculations; the instrument must cost a minimum of three times as much to break even. This price estimation did not take into account even the cost of development. I told the Canadian that we could deliver a potato respiration monitor for \$15,000. "It is 20 times too much. I expected that such an instrument should cost less than \$1,000. It should be available to the purchasing agents in the field and should be handheld." Our solution was too complicated for his application. It became apparent that we had an invention with no application. Nevertheless, I sent a news release to instrumentation tabloids with a picture and short description what my Micro-Oxymax could do. Articles about the Micro-Oxymax were printed and we got a call from the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) asking if we could build such an instrument for them.

They were just consulting for an oil company, Exxon, which was facing disaster in Alaska. One of their tankers, *Exxon Valdez*, spilled a large amount of oil in Prince William Sound, Alaska. The following information is available about this leak from Wiki Leaks Encyclopedia:

Exxon Valdez oil spill occurred in Prince William Sound, Alaska, on March 24, 1989, when the Exxon Valdez, an oil tanker bound for Long Beach, California, struck Prince William Sound's Bligh Reef and spilled 260,000 to 750,000 barrels (41,000 to 119,000 m³) of crude oil. It is considered to be one of the most devastating human-caused environmental disasters. The Valdez spill was the largest

ever in U.S. waters until the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, in terms of volume released. However, Prince William Sound's remote location, accessible only by helicopter, plane, and boat, made government and industry response efforts difficult and severely taxed existing plans for response. The region is a habitat for salmon, sea otters, seals and seabirds. The oil, originally extracted at the Prudhoe Bay oil field, eventually covered 1,300 miles (2,100 km) of coastline, and 11,000 square miles (28,000 km²) of ocean.

The EPA was testing a new method of removing oil residue, which covered the beaches of Alaska using bioremediation. Bioremediation is a method of clearing pollutants using indigenous bacteria to digest the contaminant (oil). To stimulate growth of these bacteria an additional supplement of nitrogen is needed, which usually is supplied by spreading the polluted area with nitrogen fertilizers. Micro-Oxymax looked like the ideal instrument to model the process of bioremediation in the laboratory before applying it in the field. The proper dose of nitrogen nutrients could be selected using laboratory tests before applying it to the Alaska beaches. It could save millions of dollars. We designed and constructed this instrument and the EPA purchased it. Now we knew the application and potential clients, which were mainly rich oil companies. Now knowing the value of this instrument I applied and received U.S., European and Japanese patents. Leif Nenerfelt and I are listed on this patent as co-inventors. Over the years we were demanded by our customers that Micro-Oxymax should have multiple channels for simultaneous measurement of multiple samples. Therefore the number of available channels grew to 80.

When Leif Nenerfelt, co-inventor of Micro-Oxymax, left our company for



Micro-Oxymax

“greener pastures” two other engineers—Ron Campbell and Timothy Hans—took his job. Micro-Oxymax had to be redesigned to make it more reliable and error proof. Leif was a good inventor, but lacked attention to details and reliability. Now that we had clients from large companies, we needed perfection in design and manufacturing. Ron did a good job improving both the design and the software, while Tim traveled to distant countries to teach customers how to use it. His escapades and adventures in Sri Lanka and Vietnam are worthy of a separate book. Tim even met and married a young researcher during one of his trips. She is Polish and now lives with Tim in Columbus, Ohio. Over the years, the Micro-Oxymax expanded its applications. Besides measuring two basic gases, oxygen and carbon dioxide, it was supplemented with additional sensors measuring hydrogen, methane, carbon monoxide, hydrogen sulfide, nitrogen dioxide and nitrous oxide.

Its sensitivity of 0.2 micro liters of oxygen/hour is still unmatched by any other instrument. The applications of the Micro-Oxymax range from bioremediation to measuring the respiration of algae, composting and bioleaching. Bioleaching is a biological process, using special bacteria to recover copper from copper ore. Other applications include measuring the respiration of cancer cell cultures, measurements of mold growth, degradation of polymers under ultraviolet radiation and many more. We have sold hundreds of such instruments to a variety of countries. The total sales of this instrument amount to many millions of dollars.

Her name could be Nina

I met Nina when I was seated at her table by the owner of a small Ukrainian restaurant on Lane Avenue in Columbus, Ohio. This place, as I remember served good blitzes and really tasty Ukrainian borsch. I’m not sure if the owner deliberately sat me at the same table as Nina or if it was just the last available table. She was a young girl of 19 and had a black eye. She claimed to be the victim of an unfortunate racquetball accident. In the following conversation, she admitted that she came to Columbus with her boyfriend, a cook, whom she met in the restaurant where she was a server. Her boyfriend worked there in kitchen and was apparently famous for his Béarnaise Souse. I suspected that the black eye was

the result of a heated argument with her boyfriend, maybe about ingredients for making a souse, and not because of foul play on the racquetball court.

At that time, I was more than twice as old as she, over 40, and about five years after my divorce from Zofia, my second wife. Any female companionship was for me very desirable. It didn't take us long to find common interests and the same day she shared my bed, and soon bedroom, kitchen and the rest of the house. She was at the time studying journalism and I offered to pay her tuition. Then she decided to study art. As with the journalism, I paid her tuition to attend Columbus Art Academy. Then she decided to move to New York and study art at the famous Pratt Institute. I think I paid for her studies there, as well as for her tickets flying home to Columbus on the weekends. Our relationship lasted more or less six years, but somehow, as time went by, it became tenuous. I was aware that I was becoming a "sugar daddy" infatuated with a young lover, who had no respect for me. I didn't mind paying for her tuition, car etc., but it was my conscious, deliberate choice—not because I was losing my mind over Nina.

What probably irritated her most was that in spite of the comfortable living I provided, she had little to say about my finances. At that time, my financial guardian and mental sanity was my secretary and bookkeeper, Marcella Long. She was a lady older than me, mother of five children, happily married who besides being "Girl Friday" in my company was also my emotional consultant. A few years later she also saved me from possible prison, when I was accused by U.S. Customs of shipping "Super Computers" to Moscow. Marcy gave me this advice regarding Nina: "Give her what you can afford, but never give her the right to sign your checks." Here comes the spying part of the story.

At that time, in my home, I often had parties with many people attending. Kielbasa sausage and wine was in abundance. I also offered homemade lemon vodka which had the treacherous quality of making you drunk like a skunk without noticing it. In the back of the house I had a large porch and a wooded ravine. Nina served as a hostess at my parties and it looked like everyone was happy, including Nina. During one of the gatherings, about 11 p.m., Nina decided to step outside, apparently to cool herself off. I

didn't notice that she was gone until my guests started leaving. Then I started worrying about her—she disappeared without even taking a coat.

Nights passed by and Nina was gone. I was panicking that something terribly wrong had happened to her, and called her mother in Detroit, alarmed about Nina's disappearance. She was not much help, but told me that I shouldn't worry and that one day Nina would come back. Nearly two weeks went by and I was still in emotional shambles. In the meantime, the mailman brought to the company letters and bills to be paid. It was a Marcy's job to scrutinize these bills. Looking over a bill for gasoline, she noticed that purchases were from gas stations located in the Canadian Rocky Mountains. She asked me if I had been to Canada recently, which was completely absurd. Also on the bill there was a note that the purchaser was driving a Jeep Cherokee, which I didn't own. The license number of the car was listed on the bill as well.

Through an acquaintance in Highway Patrol, Marcy learned the ownership of the Jeep and found him to be another waiter, apparently a friend of Nina's. All I could do was wait for Nina to return from her trip to Canada which was financed by my gas card. A few days later, Nina came back, but didn't explain her disappearance. It became obvious to her that our relationship had come to an end. The next day she went to Connecticut—why there, I don't know. I was both glad and sorry, as I probably loved her. "Love after 40 is a very dangerous thing for a man," said a friend of mine, a psychiatrist, who knew me well. Nina returned to Columbus the next year. Apparently, whatever prospects she had in Connecticut didn't pan out. She called me asking to stay with me for a few nights, hoping perhaps that I might succumb to her charm. I refused, as it became clear that it would lead to my disaster. Instead, she shackled up with the same waiter she went to Canada with, who in the meantime was living with another girl. He explained to his girlfriend that Nina was just a friend who had no place to sleep. This time Nina got pregnant by him, but he refused to marry her.

I have to give her credit—she gave birth to the child and as a single mother obtained government help to finish her studies, including law school. I had a small revenge, when I learned that the waiter friend had to pay for many years her child support. She

was a bright girl who had a self-centered, egotistic, dangerous character. Subsequently, she got married to a divorcée or widower with five children. He probably expected her to be a mother to his children, which did not pan out. She speedily divorced him, but not before she was pregnant again. Now years later, she has two grown sons, but probably no husband. My relationship with her was a sobering experience for me. It was one of a few small victories, which I had to battle to survive emotionally and financially. It was Marcy Long, my long time secretary who saved my finances and my sanity. Last year Marcella Long passed away. She was a good friend and after leaving my company, she helped her husband to become a self-standing millionaire in the field of plastic injection molding. She learned from me how one can do it, without capital, by bootstrapping on a shoe string.

Nina cuts the maple tree

In 2009 I purchased a new home, 15 miles north and decided to sell the old home, where I lived since 1974 including nearly 6 years I lived there, on and off, with Nina. In front of the home there was an interesting maple tree which had 6 different trunks. It grew more like a bush than a tree. This tree has a symbolic value for me. It symbolizes the instinct of survival. For me it also symbolized my own victory over the destructive influence of Nina.

Towards the end of my love affair with Nina, apparently she became unsettled with our relationship. She wasn't satisfied with her position of a friend and lover, while at the same time she was apparently too comfortable living with all of her expenses paid. One night, she woke up, insisting that the maple tree, which I planted a few years ago, grew crooked, and should be cut down. In my opinion, the crooked tree had its own charm, and its leaning trunk did not bother me at all. After all it was me who planted this tree in my own yard, which I owned many years before I met Nina. I told Nina that I would not cut down this tree. Nina got out of bed, naked as the day she was born, grabbed a small saw, more suitable to cut metal pipes than trees, ran into the front yard and started to saw the tree to the amusement of neighbors woken up by our loud

argument. It took her a while but finally she succeeded and the tree fell.

Nina could celebrate her victory. She prevailed, but apparently, this was not enough. A few weeks later she diapered to Canada with her incidental lover and then our relationship ended. Our breakup was very difficult for me, but as time went by I realized that Nina's departure was best for both of us. In addition, the next year I noticed fresh sprouts growing from the old maple tree trunk. I did not cut them. I let them grow. As time went on these sprouts became trunks of a large tree. This tree, still healthy, became a symbol of my victory over the destructive intentions of Nina. What additional lessons have I learned from this tree? Now in my new home, living happily with a new wife, I completely surrender all management of trees and plants to her. I do not dare to argue with her which new trees to plant or to cut. This way we live happily ever after, as now I am too old to risk our marital bliss for just one crooked tree.



The maple tree after recovering from Nina's malice.

Marital blessing by civil ceremony

After living quite happily in sin for 13 years Laura and I decided to get married. The day of this ceremony was by itself prominent. According to my now wedded wife it was the first day of spring. The issue of marriage had never come to our minds before because of my allergic reaction to this institution. It happened that many years ago, probably in my adult age of 24, I was coerced to get married by a Polish girl name Elisabeth. She insisted that she was pregnant by me and that we needed a wedding ceremony to legitimize our relationship. Just one wedding wasn't good enough for Elisabeth—we had to have a double ceremony, meaning civil and religious. None of us was very religious at the time, but nonetheless, a ceremony in the Catholic Church suited Elisabeth better as it was irreversible. While I consented to a civil ceremony, the religious ceremony presented a problem for me. For one, I didn't attend church. Second, it required a prior confession.

Knowing that I had sexual relations with Elisabeth for the previous five years and that I had enjoyed it, I couldn't confess that it was a sin which I regretted. But Elisabeth insisted and I was getting more and more angry. So I decided, stupidly, as I later found out, to punish her for her insistence. I falsified a note from a priest in the parish in the remote city of Kluczbork (we were living then in Wroclaw) that I underwent confession, and we went to the church to wed. As I remember the only witnesses were my friend Karol Pelc and his wife Ryszarda. I had served the same function at their wedding two years earlier. After the ceremony I became more and more angry with myself that I wasn't able to stand up for myself and say, "NO! I don't want to get married!" When the evening approached I kissed my "beloved wedded wife" on the cheek and said goodbye to her. I didn't feel like making love to her anymore.

As time went on, her pregnancy never materialized and I considered that it was a hoax. Fifty years later I found a second reason why I shouldn't have married Elisabeth. It was a revelation from the secret documents of Communist Secret Police, that Elisabeth had a romance with a former agent of this institution and in revenge was offering her services to the despicable Secret Police to report on me.

This time was different. Laura and I had no differences of opinion and no certificate of confession was needed. We were concerned more about our decision-making abilities and benefits when legal issues with taxes and health would arise. This morning appropriately dressed in a dark suit (me) and respectful attire of Laura, my bride, we drove to the court to get our marriage license, which cost \$15. There was no line at the window issuing such licenses. The day's problems started as we stepped up to talk to the secretary of the Judge who performed the ceremonies. Apparently, the Judge was fully booked for the next two months and we would have to wait until our number came up. It was unbearable. I was already dressed in a dark suit and neck tie, and two months looked like an eternity to me. Seeing despair in our eyes, the secretary mentioned that she had a solution for desperados like us. She called to the local wedding chapel, located not more than half a mile away on South High Street and asked if they would perform the ceremony for us. The person on the other end of the wire responded, "Yes, absolutely, if the couple can be here before lunch." So we rushed to the wedding chapel, located strategically between Einstein Brothers Bagels and the office of



Wedding Chapel in Columbus, OH

two lawyers who could be helpful once a marriage goes sour. The doors of the wedding chapel were opened by a middle-aged lady, who asked the basic question: “What are you up to?”

“We are here to get married,” I answered.

“You want a religious wedding or a civil ceremony?” she asked.

“Which is cheaper?”

“Religious is more expensive. It costs \$150, while the civil costs only \$100.”

“Why is the religious more expensive?” I interrogated, still in the door of the wedding chapel.

“The religious wedding is performed by my husband, a licensed minister. It cost him more to go to seminary. We have to recoup the expenses. Therefore, the religious wedding is more expensive.”

“We’ll take the civil wedding,” I answered.

“Welcome then.” and she let us inside the chapel. She had some problem with the stack of papers, which listed the wordage of the ceremony. Finally when she located the right one, she asked if we needed flowers.

“How much?” I asked.

“\$25 for flowers (plastic, but looking very natural) and \$15 for a Polaroid picture.”

Due to the economy, we opted to get married without plastic flowers and a Polaroid. During the next five minutes the lady “minister” mumbled the wedding ceremony wordage and then voiced the unexpected sentence: “Now you can exchange the wedding rings.” We were terrified. We had completely forgotten about the wedding rings. We didn’t have them. Then I asked if the wedding was off, if we didn’t have wedding rings? “No, it would still be valid.” We relaxed then and the lady minister declared: “Now you are man and wife.”

I assured myself that the wedding was valid and that we would get the right papers from the municipal court in due time. We left the chapel. As we were leaving, we observed a mixed-race couple entering the chapel in the company of two children. One was probably two years old, and had a problem crossing the entrance threshold. They were properly dressed for a ceremony and

I am sure they had wedding rings prepared. We wished them all the best.

After the wedding we invited my two grown children for dinner. Our reception with my children was modest compared to lavish wedding parties for more than 100 people. I only hope that the marriages of my children will last as long as ours.



Jan and Laura as a wedding couple

Uncle Krauze

Some people you meet in your life, even briefly, leave in your memory a lasting impression. Such was “Uncle” Zygmunt Krauze. He was not my uncle. He was an uncle of my girlfriend, Zofia and I met him sporadically a few times in Warsaw. His niece, Zofia, told some stories of his life, other stories he told me himself. When I met him, I was 28 and he was more than double my age. He claimed to be retired from the business, because practically no legitimate business existed at that time in Poland—he was the quintessential black-marketer. This is his story.

When after the First World War the global flu epidemic decimated the population in the world, Poland was no exception. In one week, both his parents perished. He was at that time 15 years

old, the oldest of the family of five. To survive he was selling cigarettes at school. When this was discovered by the school principal he was expelled. He was in the 6th grade then. His parents, before they died, made a living by selling food in a small shop in suburb of Lodz, named Widzew. Now, after the parents' death all obligation to feed his sisters and brothers was on him. He had no choice but to travel to surrounding countries to buy food stuff from farmers to sell it in his parents' shop. During one such trip he met his future wife, Kazimiera who was twice his age. She was also a widow, 32 years old. He figured that it would be better to merge resources, move Kazimiera to Lodz to tend the shop and take care of his siblings while leaving him free to travel on business.

Soon he figured out that selling neckties and bowties was more profitable than selling food. He employed his family to make them. Business was booming. Soon he purchased one of the first cars in Poland, which he used to distribute his merchandise countrywide. He called his new business "Polish Necktie" (Polski Krawat). Such a trade name became popular in Poland. He also observed that Poles had a fascination with flowers and it was customary to bring a bouquet of flowers for every occasion, be it name day, birthdays, funerals or weddings. He diversified his business interests. He purchased farmland in another suburb of Lodz, Stoki, where he started to grow flowers. On the main street, called Piotrkowska, he opened a number of kiosks selling flowers to passersby.

Everything looked good for Zygmunt Krauze, until 1939 when the Germans declared war on Poland and incorporated Lodz into the German Reich. They discovered that Krauze not only had a German name, but also he was born in Düsseldorf, Germany and his father was a "real" German. They approached him with an offer to make him a Volksdeutsche, as in Germany they called a person of German ethnicity. Krauze asked German inspectors what exactly such a name represented and if he would become an instant German how he would benefit from it. Emissaries from the German Office of Racial Purity explained to him that not only would he receive additional rations of bread and washing powder, but he also would be entitled to defend Germany against American and British Imperialist and Soviet Communists. Zygmunt Krauze

was in a bind, as he did not intend to die for Germany, but at the same time, it was dangerous to refuse such a magnanimous offer. Then he came up with a brilliant idea: instead of refusing to sign up for Volksdeutsche, he would ask for full-fledged German citizenship, called Reichdeutsche.

Emissaries from the German Office of Racial Purity could not agree with his demand, because his mother was Polish and even if his father was German and his birthplace was in Germany, according to Nuremberg Laws, he was not entitled to such an esteemed rank. They left him alone for a few years, until a German army inspectorate discovered that he was in cahoots with another German officer, making nails from the wire stolen from the German army depot. Apparently, Zygmunt Krauze founded the nail factory in my home town of Czestochowa and made a good living of it, for some time, by selling nails to the Polish farmers. The outcome was disastrous for the German officer and for Zygmunt Krauze himself. The German officer was sent to the Russian front, where he probably perished along with many millions of Germans soldiers, while Zygmunt and his cousin, who was working with him, making nails, were sent to a German concentration camp in Mauthausen, Austria.

On May 5th, 1945 when the American army was liberating Mauthausen, Zygmunt and his cousin were lying stripped of their clothing on a pile of dead bodies ready to be burned in the camp crematory. They were starved to death. Americans had come to the camp just in time. They gave the men food. Zygmunt was too weak to eat, so he ate very little. His cousin who was stronger stuffed himself with food and died after liberation. He couldn't process the rich food. Zygmunt survived and returned to Poland.

In Communist Poland, Zygmunt Krauze found the business climate not only non-existent, but also dangerous to anybody with an entrepreneurial spirit. Krauze had no other alternative but to work in the underground economy. He decided to continue his flower and textile business. While flowers were safer, because he concentrated on growing and selling red carnations, the textile business was more dangerous because he could not purchase textiles on the free market. He had to rely on textiles "procured" or otherwise stolen from the state textile factories.

That was one incident when Krauze cooperated hand in hand with the Communists. In 1948 the Soviets who controlled Poland, decided that the time had come to finish the façade of a multi-party system and merge the two already existing parties, socialist and workers into a single party, called Polish United Workers Party (PZPR). For this event Communists needed two million red neck ties. Each new party member on this festive occasion had to wear the red necktie. This order also applied to affiliated youth organizations. Time was short. State industry could not meet the party demands. Then Zygmunt Krauze came with an irrefutable offer that he could provide a million red neckties at a competitive price, but he needed a supply of red cotton material, which was not available for him on the open market. Leaders of Government set aside all ideological principles and granted Zygmunt Krauze the material he needed. Krauze's specifications called for estimated surplus of material, because as he said, red neckties require much more material, probably three times as much, as blue neckties. To my question, how he could become the wealthiest person in Communist Poland, he answered: "from the surplus red cotton material he made thousands of encasings for goose down pillows sold to private individuals all over Poland." The money he made on the Communist red neckties he invested in expansion of his red carnation business.

In a Communist universe, red carnations were a symbol of Communism itself. There could be no funeral or installation of a new Party Secretary without bouquets of red carnations presented or adorning the grave or coffin. Each time a representative or Communist leader from Western Europe, such as Comrade Togliatti of Italy would visit Moscow, children with red carnations would greet him at the airport. These carnations were grown by Zygmunt Krauze, as none of the State Soviet Enterprises could grow such fragrant and long lasting red carnations as the Zygmunt Krauze plantation in Lodz. Apparently he was assured by the Soviet Communists that his "red carnation operation" was safe, since the whole Soviet system depended on it.

The textile enterprises Zygmunt Krauze created were nothing more than extensive cottage industries. As large numbers of employees would certainly bring attention to the authorities, he had in his principal location in Lodz at Glowna Street 9, only three

ladies sewing neckties using old Singer machines. Three employees was the limit he reported to tax authorities as a family enterprise, but this location was a center for material distribution and reception of end products. In his wisdom he employed also a wife of a high ranking officer in the Polish Army, who according to him was in reality a Russian spy in the Polish Army. Uncle Krauze was always in good standing with the local police who reported to him, whenever, there was a planned search of his premises by tax officials. In such situations, a Polish-Soviet officer was coming with a military truck to collect suspected materials to make sure that the inspectors would find nothing incriminating.

Zygmunt Krauze gave me the advice of a businessman who survived and prospered in different oppressive political systems. Once I came to visit him in Warsaw in 1962. At the time I was suspicious that the Secret Police were tracking my steps so I was especially paranoid to find that he was sitting at the kitchen table with a policeman drinking vodka. I was terrified that the policeman was waiting to arrest me. Zygmunt Krauze dismissed my fear, and told me that he always had a bottle of vodka waiting for a policeman in his home. It was just his tradition, since a long time ago. He followed this tradition during German occupation and he carried it over to the new Communist system. It was just second nature for him. He could not drink vodka without a policeman. The police always told him what was going on in the neighborhood and if there was any chance of his property being searched.

Zygmunt Krauze liked to show off his wealth, which at that time was evidenced by two luxurious cars. One was a new Mercedes 220 and the other a Chevrolet Impala with large impressive fins. Once he asked me and his niece Zofia to dinner at an expensive, international hotel, known as Grant Hotel. In the 1960's it was the only international hotel in Warsaw. When we pulled up to the front of the hotel the porter opened the door to his car greeting him as Mr. Director. In return, Uncle Krauze gave the doorman 500 zloty which was an extraordinarily high tip, taking into account that I, as an assistant professor at the university was making 2000 zloty per month. When we entered the restaurant, the headwaiter, the one who led us to the reserved table got 1,000 zloty. I was flabbergasted by such a waste of money. Then Uncle Krauze told me, that his tipping behavior had a deeper sense. First,

these are not tips but investments. The average, inexperienced person gives a bribe when he needs something to be done. It is illegal and already too late. A bribe has to be given ahead of your needs. Additionally, I should know that all the tables in this restaurant are wired with microphones. The Secret Police are listening to what is said and by whom. The head waiter will seat us at the table where the microphone is disconnected or defective. He is worth his 1000 zloty.

Another time Uncle Krauze gave me advice, when I was sure that I was the subject of a Secret Police investigation. "Remember young man, the police know only as much as you tell them." He himself was bragging that he was arrested seven times, but never convicted.

In 1965 I left Poland for good. Occasionally, after I came to the U.S., he wrote to me. Here is the last letter from him written from Austria. Apparently Uncle Krauze never gave up and this time, under the guise of making money for his granddaughter he went to Austria where he started another plantation, this time orchids.

Uncle Krauze is not giving up (1974)

This letter written by Zygmunt Krauze has specifics of a person who finished, or rather interrupted his education in 6th grade, but nevertheless conveys the reality of character of the writer. In translation, I tried to maintain his literary incorrect form.

Dear Zofia, Johnny and Descendant (*our son Richard*),

I have not written to you, I do not know how long time, because during last ten years I was unemployed and did not know what to do with myself therefore being useless I did not like to mess-up the other people minds.

It is possible that this helpless unemployment would last until today if not the fact that Beatrice (his granddaughter) decided to emigrate from Poland. Knowing how difficult it is for a young person to manage life in the own country, it is still more difficult to do it in the foreign land. Therefore, I decided to leave the country and get oriented if there are some possibilities for creating individual working condition (he meant her owning her own company). Leaving the country, I did not know where I would settle. I also considered overseas countries. Therefore 7th the March 1972 in the day of my birthday, I went by car to Czechoslovakia, Austria and to Italy, but I stopped in Vienna. When over here I started to talk to variety of Jews about the business. I had different propositions going to Lebanon, Libya and even to Israel. I could depart as I stood if I was willing to join the company of any sort, under condition that it will be company of my own invention. But I did not left Poland to make some business for myself, but to find something good for Beatrice. Because in the meantime this girl left medical studies and transferred to gardening, I started to look for some object in this field. I was giving newspaper announcements; I talked to intermediaries and concluded that in Austria there is much to do in the field of gardening (*horticulture*).

Here in Austria they did not sell land measured in acres or hectares, but in square meters because land here is very expensive, and there is no land cheaper than \$5 per square meter and in addition, this depends where such land is located. In some

situations, one square meter of land can cost up to \$100 per square meter. Many farms are abandoned and much land lay vested, therefore I started looking around for renting. Because majority of land in Austria belongs to Monasteries therefore there, I oriented my first steps. I was acquainted with the head manager of large monastery holdings, but I noticed that he did not trust me. Therefore, I proposed to him to travel to Poland, to Lodz, and look over my daughter, Teresa, farm. When he returned, he was now looking for me, not in reverse and he recalled that he has monastery owned farm next to the highway from Vienna to Innsbruck at the road of Linz-Salzburg on the way to Munich and Paris, in the place of Kemmelbach at the distance of 100 km from Vienna. I was taken by this double doctor, because of economy and agriculture, to Shift Melk, property of Benedictine Order. It was devastated farm with a piece of a river flowing through it.

He proposed to me a free renting for the first year and \$50 per months for following year, what amounted to \$600 per year. Proposal was so attractive that I agreed to it without much thinking. I rented this object for 15 years with extension of lease every year and started renovation. However, it became obvious that the renovation is not worth the money and it is better to demolish everything and built from scratch. This I did and in the beginning of June, being exact the Fifth of June, we loaded to the newly constructed greenhouse the first one thousands of orchards. Why orchids? Because in meantime has come to me (from Poland), Voitek Dziomdziora, who just finished horticulture academy and he just specializes in growing orchards. Today we have in this greenhouse two thousand five hundred of orchids in the flower pots each sells for \$12 per pot. Three more empty greenhouse were intended for more orchards , but in meantime in the same location was offered a castle for negligent sum of \$70,000 which had a living space of one thousand square meters (about 10,000 square feet) together with park of 8,000 square meters. This was a reason that we could not invest in next greenhouses. We paid the first \$40,000 intended for flowers to the castle owner as a first installment and the rest money we promised to pay after the one year. I was able to finalize this purchase, because of Victor who in mean time received Austrian citizenship.

From the July we are living in own castle, two of us together with Voitek, with own chapel for one hundred twenty seating places. From August in this castle also lives Teresa (daughter) and Beatrice (granddaughter). They are returning to Poland at the beginning next month. I am not sure if you know that Beatrice was admitted to the Agriculture Academy in Warsaw with highest grade, in spite of competition in which for one place were competing 12 people.

Because the health of my wife has improved, if I will be able to convince Irene whom you remember (caretaker of *Kazimiera, wife of Zygmunt*), I will bring them both here, about Christmas time. This girl takes care of my wife from the beginning of her sickness and without her my wife does not want to move anywhere. They advised me not to return to Poland, because they may not to let me out again and here we have more and more debt. Without me they were not able to manage and new heating system which we expect to be installed next week will cost us \$20,000 while the trading of flowers will take place next year.

If any of you will be passing through Europe, please stop by, because I am not able to move until about year 1975, when all business will be in the full motion.

My address: 3373 Kemmelbach, Austria, phone 07412-302

Yours Zygmunt

Nordic saga about Lena

The following adventure has its source in my affinity for the university town, Uppsala, where I spent my sexually formative years: 1960-1968. For many years after my emigration to the U.S., I was drawn to this town, to reminiscence and visit old friends and girlfriends. There was an additional element, less romantic but more political. Because for many years I could not visit Poland during the reign of Communism in Poland, Uppsala became a substitute for my real European hometown Czestochowa and later Wroclaw, both located in Poland.

This particular “pilgrimage” to Uppsala happened to be in 1987. As in the past I decided to visit a night club “Baldachin,”

proud of its “B” category with a dance floor frequented by young and not-so-young ladies seeking male companionship. Dancing couples had there a chance to exchange glances, like in the sentimental song by Frank Sinatra. . . If there were exchanges of pecuniary nature I did not know, because being parsimonious I always took advantage of free offers or “left-overs” from my dancing partners. At the entrance to Baldachin, gentlemen had to pay 10 crown, while ladies could get in for free. It was a very wise pricing decision, assuring a surplus of ladies which in turn made this place more attractive for paying male customers. To keep up the club’s esteemed status of category B, gentlemen were required to wear a jacket and necktie. If visitors arrived without such attire, they could always rent them, for a few crowns, from the coat room attendant. This evening, about 9 p.m., I arrived appropriately dressed to this club in a rental car, a Volkswagen Golf painted in non-descriptive, camouflaged color of yellowish-green.

Scanning the dimly lit club environment, I noticed two promising single ladies, sitting at a table, sipping cheap Swedish light beer. Without hesitation, as the party was already in full swing, I approached one of them asking for a dance. Her name was Lena. Dancing with her I hardly noticed the passage of time and soon, at 1a.m. we could hear the announcement that in 10 minutes the Club was closing and patrons should leave. Lena and her friend insisted on leaving immediately, as the last bus to the suburb where they lived was leaving in 15 min. Being a gentleman, as I always was at that time, I offered to drive the young ladies home—an offer they accepted without reservation. After a 20 minute drive we arrived to a housing development in the suburbs, which was completely new to me. It was recently built and remained to me a maze. It constituted a large number of wooden homes, all painted dark red, resembling the color of red beets borsch. The houses were built around grassy squares. Each square unit was connected to a similar one by short passage. How many such square units were in the development I do not know, but there were many. Each square had its own parking lot. One way or another all the houses were identical and could only be distinguished by house numbers, which were not visible at night.

My new acquaintances, grateful for a lift, invited me in for tea. I didn’t really know what they had in mind, but I kept all

options open. When I entered their kitchen and sat at the table, I realized that I was still dressed in the sweaty jacket and crumpled necktie. I didn't feel comfortable; therefore I excused myself with a need to return to my car where I had a much more comfortable cotton sweater. Leaving Lena's home I noticed that in the whole square, only one lamp was lit and it was the lamp on Lena's front door. It took me only 5 minutes to get my sweater but when I returned to the square where I assumed Lena's home was located, to my surprise I found not one but three homes illuminated by lights. I got confused. Did I miss the right address and enter the wrong square, or had some other residents turned lights on? I knocked on the door of one home with a light on, which I took for the home of Lena, but a rude male voice threatened me with police if I did not stop bothering him. In view of my obvious failure, I decided to give up on Lena's tea, find my car and drive back to my hotel. Unfortunately, finding my car was equally as difficult as finding Lena's home. I wandered from one parking lot to another to no avail. I started panicking that I would never find my car. I even forgot how it looked and what color it was. Finally at 4 a.m., after two hours of aimless wandering I stumbled across my car with my two friends standing next to it. They were worried that I was mugged or died, because I was gone for such a long time while the car was still here in the parking lot. I tried to explain to the young ladies all the confusion I went through was due to the obsession of Swedish architects with symmetry of looks. I felt that my explanation did not look believable and that they had suspicions that I may be gay and afraid of female company.

By this time we were all very tired and there was no time or temptation to prove that I was a heterosexual, who basically prefers relations in duality of souls, but in extreme situation would challenge myself to a threesome known otherwise in French as a "Ménage a Trois." I collected from Lena her mailing address and departed to my hotel to rest after the eventful night, or what was left of it. The next day I had a flight to Columbus. On the plane I was tormented by the recollections of this nightmarish night in Uppsala. After arriving home in Columbus I tried to rationalize my behavior in Uppsala to no avail. Finally, I decided to put thing straight and prove to Lena, that my intentions toward her were honorable and heterosexual. I called Lena on the phone and asked

her if she would consider visiting me in Columbus for two weeks to continue the process of deeper acquaintance including intimate relations. Lena was not against it, but insisted that I undergo AIDS testing, as apparently subversive anti-American propaganda portrayed Americans as especially prone to infection by this disease. My desertion from two willing females justified her suspicions that I could be, if not homosexual then maybe, bisexual.

In this situation, when both my male honor and Polish-American patriotism were at stake, I succumbed to her demands to undergo blood testing for AIDS. To obtain satisfactory documentation I went to the local "Urgent Care" facility with a request to obtain a clean bill of health. I have to mention that at that time, to get a reliable test one had to deliver 100mL of blood, which was then sent to a distant laboratory for analysis. The doctor who drained my blood asked me with a degree of curiosity of my sexual orientation, because in his experience he did not yet meet any heterosexual patients infected with AIDS. I assured him that I was heterosexual and I could produce a list of female witnesses to this effect. I had to explain to the doctor that I was just conforming to the specific demand of some Swedish blond-haired woman, who misinterpreted American health statistics. The doctor commented with a quip, that he hoped that my Swedish Blond was worthy of my 100 mL of blood.

After two weeks I received a clean bill of health and called Lena that I had the appropriate document and she was most welcome. We agreed to the date and I sent her a return ticket from Stockholm to Columbus. By the time Lena arrived a snowy winter had already descended on Columbus. I picked her up at the Columbus Airport and we arrived to my home, a medium-sized, two-story house with three bedrooms and a large living room. I purchased this home 10 years after the divorce from my second wife.

This particular day the snow was already piling up with snow flurries visible through the window. Lena decided to take a shower in the upstairs bathroom and shortly after promisingly dressed in a nightgown descended to the small library where I was watching TV, awaiting the expected challenges with Lena. To my surprise I noticed Lena's strange behavior. She was shaking all over with fear. I was flabbergasted. "What is wrong with you?" I

asked. "You don't need to fear me. I have the appropriate official document on which you insisted." Somehow Lena did not pay attention to my document certifying me as AIDS free. She exhibited symptoms of an unreasonable fear. Finally, she revealed that whenever she saw snow falling she got this way. I was surprised, because in Sweden snow falls most of the year and it is much deeper than in Columbus, Ohio. She followed with an explanation, that she was once married and is now divorced from her Swedish husband. When the snow fell, her husband grabbed the snow shovel and started hitting the furniture. I did not ask if his rage was concentrated only on furniture or if he also occasionally hit her. Lena explained that her husband was angry that he had to go outside and shovel the snow from the driveway. Apparently Lena made unfortunate association between snow and all males, married or not. I just became a victim of her past experiences with her neurotic husband, or probably more likely, a neurotic couple.

Immediately my sexual desire was put on hold and I lost desire to make love to a woman shaking with fear. I allocated her to the spare guest bedroom and for her sanity to return in the morning. In the morning Lena was no longer trembling but refused any physical approach. The following days were no better. My original plan to redeem myself sexually became an obvious failure. Platonic relations based on intellectual conversations were also not possible, because her English was very poor and my Swedish was equally as bad. I started counting the days to her departure. I was even thinking how to accelerate it by refusing to feed her. After some deliberation I decided to keep starvation in reserve in case she decide to extend her stay beyond two weeks airline ticket reservation dates. To kill time, and divert my attention I decided to take her to Florida and from there for a short cruise to the Bahamas. Unfortunately, the first day in the Bahamas I fell asleep on the beach and got severely sunburned with swollen lips and deep welts on my face.

I developed an aversion to light and started shaking similar to the way Lena did when confronted by a man and snow. When we returned to Columbus, it was time for Lena to depart. I took her to the airport three hours before her scheduled flight, kissed her cheek lightly with my swollen lips, and wished her all the best. I ran immediately to my car afraid that Lena may change her mind

and her attitude. I had a joy and relief that I got rid of Lena and learned the lesson that “One should not buy a Swedish Blond in a poke,” meaning that I should have gotten to know her a bit better before inviting her to my bed. As to the Clean Health Certificate the money was not completely wasted. I framed it and hung it next to my king-sized bed. It made a positive impact on subsequent, American and some Polish visitors (all female).

Interestingly, when Lena returned home to Uppsala, she wrote me a letter that she had made a mistake in being so resistive to my advances, and invited me to visit her when I was in Uppsala again. I didn't answer her letter nor did I take advantage of her invitation. One meeting with Lena was enough. Now after many years, I have become more philosophical. After all, Lena contributed a story to my memoirs.

Stan, European painter

Stan K. should rather be called Stasiak which in English translates as Stanley, but he decided to Americanize his first name and insisted on being called Stan. Stan was a recent immigrant from Poland, in fact he was from the province of Poznan and came to the U.S. sponsored by a Baptist Church from a Transient Camp in Austria, after Communist Poland, in short time of magnanimity, let such people like Stan leave the country and look for greener pastures in the west. At the time of his arrival to the U.S. he was not even 30 and had with him a young attractive wife and two small children. He posed as a political refugee, and the story of his religious persecution in Poland he purchased from another, more experienced “refugee” who had already obtained an American immigration visa.

His persecution story cost him just half a liter of Polish vodka, Czysza Wyborowa (Clear-Excellent) and it was sufficiently convincing to the American Consul, because he was speedily granted an American immigration visa. When he arrived in Columbus, Ohio he could not find employment in his profession, mostly because he had none. In Poland he worked some time as a guide and dance organizer for the Workers' Trade Union, which organized two weeks vacations for his members in the mountains. In Poland, he also went to school for agriculture, but didn't finish it

and devoted his time for dances and trips for the vacationing workers, where he was also able to benefit from better food and especially alcoholic beverages. He could sing too. Not too many songs, but the most attractive was a medieval student song, in Latin, *Gaudeamus Igitur*. He sang this song in Latin, but did not care nor did he understand its meaning. He realized that singing a student song, especially in Latin, implied that he had graduated from University.

In Columbus, at the time of booming economy, he found work as a helper in a small company making kitchen cabinets. Obviously, he was not happy with this menial work and had higher intellectual aspirations. He lived close to my company, on the same street, and knew that I was a successful businessman who could share with him methods how to get rich fast.

He had to make rapid decisions, because his wife had no desire to continue on as the wife of a low-paid laborer. I observed that she had some intellectual ambitions of her own, because she let another Polish man, this time a visiting professor of mathematics, to keep his hand between her legs, while at the same time she was engaged in a livid conversation with her husband, sitting just across from her, on the other side of the table. One way or another, under the pressure of the situation, he had to change professions for something more intellectual. Painting came to his mind, when he became inspired by visiting a gallery nearby on Lane Avenue. In fact, at the same location there were two galleries. One selling posters, another paintings—mostly new, but styled as 19th century English paintings. Posters were not of much interest to Stan, because these were sold for less than \$100. With oil paintings the situation looked more promising. They sold for \$300, if they were size 50 x 50 cm, and \$700 or more if they were larger. Most of the paintings were landscapes, people on horses, villages and peasants harvesting crops in the field.

So one day Stan came to my office with such knowledge, looking for advice, how to convert his brilliant idea into hard cash. “Howdy!” He said, sitting in the arm chair in front of my desk. “I know that you have “kiepele” (a mind for business) and you can advise me how to convert my idea into cash.”

“So, you intend to trade paintings?” I asked.

“No, I intend to paint myself.”

“Did you ever paint before?” I asked.

“Yes, when I was 14 I painted flowers for my grandma’s birthday, and she liked it. I assure you, I am a fast learner. I can learn anything, anytime, anywhere. Besides, on the Public Television I noticed that every Saturday, one fellow teaches people how to paint. I made a recording of 10 hours of his teachings. It takes him less than one hour to paint one picture, such 50cm x 50cm and he is an old man, nearly 60. I am young, I can paint faster. Maybe at the beginning it will take me two hours to paint one picture, but after some training, I can do one picture in 70 minutes.”

“Did you ask the owner of the gallery, if he is interested in your paintings?”

“Sure. I asked him if he was interested in European art, but I didn’t tell him that I would paint these pictures myself. I just told him that these would be the modern European paintings, because I decided that nobody likes old pictures, with horses and horse buggies, which look like used merchandise. I will paint pictures with cars and airplanes. I told the owner of the gallery that I would sell him European art, because I am European, which everybody can see, judging from my European (meaning Polish) accent.”

“So Stan, you already have a plan and I cannot add to it or subtract from it. How I can help you?”

“My problem is with the frames.”

“Frames?” I said.

“Yes. All the pictures in the gallery had frames. To be sellable my pictures must have frames. I went to the local K-mart store looking for appropriate, golden frames, and after close inspection I realized that they all had embossed on the back “Made in China” or “Made in Hong-Kong.” I couldn’t sell my “European” pictures with such frames. Nobody would believe that it is European art. They will think it is cheap Chinese counterfeit art.”

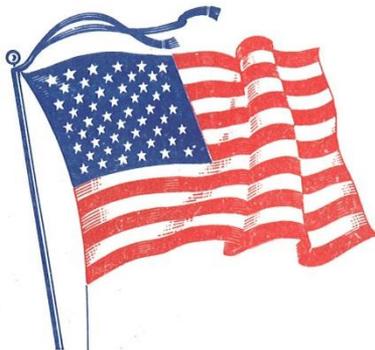
I had to help Stan with his dilemma, and help myself to get rid of him. So I said, “Stan, I am sure that the owner of the gallery has his own framing outfit and will be glad to get your picture without frames. You really have a good idea.”

“I can give him a 10% discount from regular prices if he purchases from me pictures without frames,” said Stan. I decided

to be magnanimous, and did not ask Stan for any commission from his sales or any money for my advice. Stan was very happy when he left my office. I haven't seen him since. I am not sure if he is still with his wife, or if he returned to Poland. In new Poland there are now a lot of opportunities, if not for modern painters then for business consultants. Maybe Stan made it big in Poland. Some people did.

Jews in Lvov, summer 1942

By Stefan Ehrlich in his own writing



American Citizenship Salute

—TO—

STEFAN EHRLICH

This is an important day in your life and we extend heartiest congratulations on the occasion of your formal admission to United States Citizenship.

Congratulations from local paper to Stefan for his US citizenship

It was high summer of 1942 and the certainty of an impending action (deportation to the gas chambers) was hanging, heavy and palpable, in the air of the Lvov ghetto. My little sister and I were temporarily exempted because we were engaged in landscaping the garden of the mansion of the Governor of Galicia, SS-Brigadefuehrer Otto Waechter.

However, my mother was scheduled to follow both my grandmothers to the gas chambers of Belzec. My grandmothers, in their turn, had followed my father, who was killed just after the Germans occupied Lvov and before the gas chambers were even constructed at Belzec.

When my grandmothers were killed, my mother received a temporary exemption as the homemaker for two workers employed by the Germans, but it was clear that this luxury could not be

extended much longer. Thus, I suggested to my mother that we try to obtain a set of Aryan papers - false identities - and try to save ourselves. Her reply was: "No, if we do nothing illegal, the whole burden of guilt will fall on 'Those Responsible.'"

"Those Responsible?"

She was not referring to the Nazis, but rather to those with the power to save us from disaster. Certainly the Nazis were like an arsonist who is responsible for every victim of the fire he sets, whatever the victim's behavior may be in response to the impending peril. But there were also those who had it in their power to quench the flames that were consuming the Jews of Europe, yet they failed to act. More accurately perhaps, we should say that they stoked the fire.

"Those Responsible."

Who were those fire fighters whom my mother wanted to hold responsible—even if it meant forfeiting a slim chance of survival which the Aryan papers could give? Why was it so important to hold them responsible? What could be more important than the preservation of life?

I did not dare to ask. The answers seemed unimportant since I also appeared to have no chance of living to help to make Those Responsible accountable for the death of my mother and my people. Having rejected the chance to survive we could only await death and hope that Those Responsible would be brought to reckoning by the ultimate victory of humanity in which my mother so firmly believed. She had not the slightest doubt that the truth would well up in due course and that the assignment of responsibility would prevent further massacres. To this end we were to be sure to do nothing illegal or unethical so as not to obscure the guilt of Those Responsible. We had merely to await our demise.

I recall clearly the day when death approached my mother. I had received a sure indication of its imminence. Every day, while walking to the Governor's mansion through the German quarters of Lvov, I passed by a sprawling high-school building where gendarmes [part of the German civil police, whose units were also termed Schutzpolizei (Protective Police) and Ordnungspolizei (Order Maintenance Police)] were billeted. In the mornings, most of them were still there. One day, in August 1942, the billet was

empty. Only a few gendarmes were inside, sweeping the floor among the bunks. This peaceful sight was desperately, even physiologically, oppressive to me. Only the pressure of a heart attack, experienced many years later, could compare with its burden. I said nothing to my little sister.

I still saw no gendarmes in the billet when passing by in the evening on the way back to the ghetto. My anxiety grew as I approached the ghetto gate. In a previous action (deportation to the gas chambers) against elderly people, a sweep that had taken both my grandmothers, the gendarmes had loaded their victims onto trucks at the gate, to transport them to the railway terminal. Wooden stairs were placed at the back of the truck. The old ladies lined up before the stairs and as they were stepping up, the gendarme would offer each lady his hand with a polite bow and help her to climb. Observing this scene I could not help recalling what my grandmother had told me once about the unusually courteous police of Imperial Berlin. Noticing a lady who might require assistance in boarding a streetcar, a policeman would approach, give her his hand with a polite bow, and help her up. Now Berlin had come to us, to Lvov, complete with the polite bow.

But this time there were no trucks at the gate. I felt a flicker of hope which was quenched as I entered the ghetto. The action was going on and this time the trucks had not been provided only because the homemakers for the workers were relatively young and they were able to walk to the distant railroad terminal. The gendarmes along with Ukrainian police were guarding little groups of housewives standing on the sidewalk by the sidewall of the house. More women were added to these groups as the gendarmes and the police led them out of the houses.

Approaching home I noticed that my mother was not standing by the wall. Hope flickered again. It burst into a flame as I entered the apartment. My mother was there. She was as collected as ever. She sat at the table with a gendarme. They were sipping vishniak, home-made cherry brandy, a bottle of which my mother had saved from my grandmother's farm, and were immersed in friendly conversation. My mother's behavior was so relaxed that I was sure that she had bribed the gendarme who

would no doubt leave her behind; surely they were “watering the deal,” as Poles say.

When the bottle was drained, the gendarme rose to leave, as I expected, but my mother was going with him. There was nothing in her behavior to indicate that she was going to her execution. There was nothing tense in her smile and nothing artificial in the friendly tone of her conversation with the policeman. She behaved just as she did every day. She looked as if she were merely stepping out to see her genial visitor off, to return in a moment.

She was also as aware of us, her children, as she always was. Seeing our shocked faces, my mother comforted us with a few parting words: “Remember, I taught you how to work.” And indeed we continued our landscaping work under the direction of Mr. Sommer, a former gardener at the Kaiser Wilhelm Gardens in Berlin. The Nazis expelled him to Poland, where he became the gardener of the Jewish Cemetery in Lvov. There the planting of rare and beautiful plants over graves had replaced the erection of monuments, forbidden to those of Jewish religion.

At this time the Jewish inmates of the Janowska Street camp in Lvov were busy removing gravestones, which were ground up for road construction, while we were transferring the most valuable plants from the cemetery to the Governor’s garden. The day after my mother went to her death I sowed grass on the new lawn and pressed the bed while tears flowed down my cheeks. The Governor passed by and looked straight through me.

Because this garden was watered with my tears, I remember well the plants placed there by my sister, the plants we discussed with Mr. Sommer. I came to cherish this garden. One of the first things I did upon returning to Lvov after the liberation in October, 1944, was to go and look at it. I was anxious. Anything might have happened. I was reassured to see that the mansion had become a center for the Young Naturalists, the Soviet equivalent of the 4-H Club, and everything was maintained in good order.

The work at the Governor’s mansion kept my little sister and me alive until the end of 1942. I tried to find Aryan papers, a false ID, for my sister, but it was hard to find a source. We had lived in Przemysl before the War and had no friends in Lvov, which was some 60 miles distant. The few acquaintances, who might know of a forger, would scarcely reveal his address to an

outsider. They were afraid that under torture we could betray not only the forger but also the person who recommended him. This was an awkward situation, because help and shelter could be forthcoming when one merely had a single piece of Aryan ID, even something lacking a photograph, such as a certificate of baptism on which the sex and age corresponded to the person carrying it.

Such an opportunity was once presented to me by an advertisement published by the management of a group of farms in the Lvov area, looking for laborers. This advertisement was clearly directed at Jews, because very few Aryans would exchange Lvov for a farm during that period of acute labor shortages, despite the promises of high wages and abundant food, presumably added to mislead the Gestapo.

I went to the Lvov office of this farm group and met a polite and cultivated lady who agreed to hire my sister and me on the spot, but she wanted to see our IDs. When I said we had none, she asked with anxiety and compassion: "Not a single piece of paper?" When I confessed our lack of documentation, the woman's eyes darkened sadly. By hiring us without any ID, she risked that both she and the farm manager, with their families, would be hanged beside us, should we ever be exposed. According to the pleasant custom of the times the manager would no doubt have a poster attached to his chest, reading "King of the Jews" or "Jewish Uncle."

Meanwhile, a new action against the ghetto approached. All was uncertainty. Speculations about whose IDs would be honored this time flew around. A neighbor asked me to show him my ID. He was concerned that the seal of the German Eagle was blue. Those working for war industries had red seals.

Mr. Sommer realized that our end was approaching. Despite this, or maybe because of it, he shared with me his cherished secret for growing lush and fragrant cyclamens, hoping that maybe I would survive. We had landscaped the mansion by December. Workers from the city parks came one day to ascertain where the tools were and to assess what remained to be done. They told us that they would maintain the garden: we were no longer needed.

Next morning, Jewish police knocked at our door, wanting to see our IDs. They looked at the blue seals and told us that we

had to go along with them. We went, my little sister, her friend (the daughter of neighbors who shared our apartment), and I. This girl had also worked in the Governor's garden, upon my recommendation, and she had lost her protection at the same time we did.

The police led us from hallway to hallway, and left us with one or two guards while the rest of them spread over the house. Our group grew very slowly and the policemen were getting anxious. Clearly, they were below their quota. When we stood in the hallway of a former post office building converted to apartments, another policeman caught up with us. He had an order from an officer of the Jewish police, a friend of our neighbors, to release their daughter. This policeman also told my little sister that an order would come later to release her. I knew well enough that this would not happen. The policeman guarding us became very anxious when he had to release the other girl: an officer was no less responsible for the quota than were his men. Our neighbors evidently paid a high price for this release order.

In an attempt to make up the deficit, the policeman guarding us peeked through a slit in the door to spot any victim who might cross the street looking for better shelter. As he turned his back on us, I noticed that in one wing of the swinging door behind us the large glass pane was missing. It was possible to pass this silently. I indicated the missing pane to my sister, intimating that she could go. She shrugged: no. She was right. There was no access from the hallway to any back door which would lead to the courtyard or an alley. The hallway of the post office opened only to the staircase, to the policemen. Moreover, my sister probably thought there was hope, however faint, that the order releasing her might come. Our neighbors had never lied before.

I passed through the missing windowpane. I could hear the police rummaging above, so I went downstairs, to the basement. I found myself in a little hallway, lit by a bare bulb. The only door led to a basement apartment and was closed and probably locked. A cupboard filled almost half of the basement. A galvanized tub for bathing children was on top of the cupboard, bottom up. This was the only object offering shelter. I lifted myself to the edge of the cupboard and slid under the tub.

After a time I heard a frantic rush of steps on the staircase above. Apparently, the police had concluded their search, come down to the hallway and discovered that I was missing. It seemed inevitable that in a moment they would be in the basement and discover my whereabouts. However, they searched only upstairs, up and down and up again, but they never entered the basement. Finally, their bustle ceased. The gate squeaked. I heard the shuffling of the victims leaving the hallway. This was the last I heard of my little sister. I stayed under the tub, half-stunned half-doing, oblivious of time.

Then the door of the basement apartment opened and a young woman appeared in the hallway. As I looked, she went to a little niche in the wall, half a foot above the concrete floor, and began to remove some of the usual bric-a-brac that is typically crammed onto basement shelves: an oil lamp, some bottles of household cleaners. When the shelves were empty, she removed them too. Then she removed the wall behind the shelves. One after another, middle-aged Jews began to appear through the opening. When they were all in the hallway I made my appearance. They were less than enthusiastic upon seeing me, complaining of how much they had paid for their shelter, but nevertheless they were forced to accept my presence.

It transpired that they were relatives of officers in the Jewish police force. They shared comfortable apartments in the modern post office building and they had been spared during previous actions. However, in this action designed to liquidate the ghetto, only the officers' wives and children received exemptions and the police paid for this favor with our blood. The young woman who opened the shelter was apparently one of the officers' wives. The folks sharing the shelter with me explained that the Jewish policemen knew of its existence and were ordered not to search in the basement. This is why they did not look for me there.

In subsequent searches of the week-long action, the Ukrainian police, gendarmes, and the SS went down to the basement but failed to find the shelter masked by the little shelves crammed with junk. The windows of the basement were covered over with brickwork, nominally to protect against bombing. The brick was cleverly raised a millimeter or two above the sidewalk on which it was supposed to rest. This was done for ventilation but

also it gave a glimpse of the nailed soles of the jackboots of our oppressors. When danger passed, a bulb was lit in daytime, when it could not betray us. During the week of deportation I spent the time reading.

Finally the sweep ended. I went outside and was dazzled by the light. On the walls, posters signed by the SS Brigadefuehrer and General Major der Polizei Katzmann, the commander of police in Galicia, proclaimed the liquidation of the ghetto. Exempted workers in war industries were ordered to resettle by a given date into their separate fenced compounds, arranged according to factories. Others would be mopped up before the ghetto buildings were converted to other uses.

Our neighbors were still in our apartment as I came back from my shelter, but they soon left with the Aryan papers which ultimately saved the family. I had nothing else to do during these last days of respite, but to continue looking for Aryan papers as I sold my family's clothing, in order to pay for the documents. I sold the clothes to Jewish merchants who resold them out of the ghetto.

At this time, when the ghetto was being liquidated, there were no police to enforce order: the police were against us. In spite of that nobody stole. This is a remarkable but seldom-emphasized fact about the ghettos. Stolen clothing could be sold. It was money. It was food. Sometimes, it was life. Yet there was none of the looting which blackouts and other dislocations incite in American cities. My quest for Aryan papers was as futile as ever. The responses were consistently negative and I slowly resigned myself to ending my days in the Janowska Street camp to which young men were assigned in the actions. Unexpectedly, a man who was barely known to me was compassionate enough to give me an address. By this time he could dare to do so, because the forgers would be gone before I would have the chance to be caught and tortured, and thus I could not betray anyone. Neither could I betray him, since he was also leaving. This was the end of the ghetto.

The forgers lived in a single family home with garden, belonging to a Polish street car worker, similar to a modest home in America. The owner had been forced to leave because the design of the ghetto fence so demanded and the forgers apparently

had enough clout and money to have this home assigned to them. They were two brothers with marked Jewish features. To survive they no doubt needed every cent of the stack of bank notes lying on the table as I entered. I had little to contribute to this hoard, but they told me that forging a Soviet internal passport (still used by Aryans) was 400 zloty. I did possess that much. Initially I wanted to have my own passport forged, because this would leave the photograph in place, but unfortunately, it was filled out with a very bold pen stroke. Erasing it would have visibly damaged the delicate fibers embedded in the paper designed to prevent forging. I found somebody else's passport abandoned on the floor in the hallway of our house and gave it to the forgers along with the payment, which had to be made in advance. I also had my old passport photograph copied; the photographer still functioned in the sinking ghetto. The forgers promptly altered the entries but the passport was delayed because of some problems in communication with the Aryan partner who applied the dry stamp to the photograph. He had apparently stolen it as the Soviet police were running away.

In the meantime I had my teeth repaired. The dentist did his job as carefully and quietly as ever. His hand did not tremble, although the date of his execution was posted outside on the wall: the last day by which the exempted workers had to be in their compounds. The help of these condemned people, their quiet courage in performing their job to the last moment was a revelation. They shared their last hours of respite with others. The money they received for their services was irrelevant. How much could they earn within these last days? They did not even raise their prices. The little I could afford could not save the photographer, the forgers, or the dentist. What they did was an offering, a sacrifice, which has never been properly honored. Few people would have the nerve to work, and work quietly and well, when condemned, and watching the hours ebb away like water flows into a sinking ship, like blood flows from a wound. Time was more than money in the sinking ghetto. Time was life, and they shared life. Their resistance gave a chance to all they served and it helped some of us survive.

The image of these nameless heroes was revived in my memory by Zionist and Jewish American effusions denouncing our

people as cowards; because they went to their execution like sheep; because they did not resist. Were these detractors so ignorant as not to realize what resistance meant in this context? Did they not hear Hitler's bellow that he would rid Europe of every last Jew? Did they not realize the magnitude of the resources that he diverted for this purpose? Might they not realize how important every hour of respite was to us? Nobody could have survived without being given time to prepare for eluding the Gestapo which pursued any Jew trying to survive as doggedly as it did the conspirators of the armed Resistance?

And do our detractors not realize that the thousands who survived by working for the Germans until the liberation would have been doomed by any useless demonstrations?

Dr. Stefan Ehrlich survived the German Holocaust and after the war was studying Agriculture Husbandry in Poland. He published well-known book in Poland book about Husbandry of Nutria. After the war he married Maria, an Orthodox - Christian woman and they had two children, who on her insistence were also brought in Christian faith. According to Stefan, Maria during the war, as a very young woman, sheltered and saved five Jewish women.

In the 1950s they emigrated to Israel, but apparent religious bias against Maria, who refused to convert herself and children to Judaism, made their life in Israel difficult. At the end they relocated to the U.S., first to Chicago and later to Columbus, Ohio where I met them in 1968. Dr. Ehrlich was working for many years in Chemical Abstracts and was fluent in many languages. He also knew a lot about Jewish, Polish and World history.

In his memoirs he refers, after his mother to "Those Responsible." Now it is too late to ask Stefan who "Those Responsible" were but he mentioned that his mother was waiting for some kind of invitation from a Zionist organization to travel to Palestine. The invitation never materialized and the whole Stefan family was killed by German-Nazis.

After retirement, Stefan developed an obsession with getting rich by making "great inventions." Surprisingly his inventions never dealt with small matters and never dealt with biology in which he excelled. Instead he intended to change the

technology on a global scale such as power transmission via fiber optics or converting deserts into gardens. He became gullible and prone to exploitation by fellow immigrants, both from Russia and Poland. He would pay them to promote his inventions. Often his wife, Maria called me asking for help to bring a common sense to Stefan, who otherwise would be cheated by imposters, preying on his gullibility. He died in August 2005 in Columbus, Ohio. I lost in him a good friend.

Jan Czekajewski

Where are we now?

The stories in this book are vignettes of my personal and business life for the last 70 years, including the 42 years since I formed Columbus Instruments International Corporation. Now, in 2012, we are living in turbulent times with never-ending crises which engulf more and more countries of the world. Its origin could be traced to unsustainable debt promoted by big banks, governments and even individuals. Fortunately I did not succumb to this temptation of borrowing money for business expansion or for living beyond my means. Therefore Columbus Instruments is still a small company but I can sleep without worry of bankruptcy. Lack of debt keeps Columbus Instruments reasonably healthy; although, being part of a world economy we depend on the needs and financial health of our customers. Fortunately, for many years, approximately 50% of our sales come from exports therefore we are less dependent on the health of the American economy. In this book I mention some of the employees who contributed to Columbus Instruments' success. I could not mention them all because over these 42 years there have been a few hundred of them, some living, others have passed away. I would like to thank all of them for their contributions toward the vitality of our company.

Jan Czekajewski.



Columbus Instruments aerial view



Jan with Polish President Lech Walesa (2012)