

Institute of National Remembrance

<https://eng.ipn.gov.pl/en/news/348,Exhibit-Polish-Peoples-Republic-PPR-So-Far-Away-So-Close-PRL-tak-daleko-tak-blis.html>

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Exhibit “Polish Peoples’ Republic (PPR): So Far Away, So Close...” (“PRL – tak daleko, tak blisko...”) – New York, Columbia University, 2–31 March 2010.

Poland, which came under complete Soviet domination from 1944 to 1989 following the decisions of the Great Powers taken at Yalta, was popularly characterized as “the jolliest barrack in the Soviet camp”. The communists in Warsaw, with the support and direction of Moscow, ruled the dictatorial regime for forty-five years. Simultaneously, over these years, some 60 million people chanced to live in such a Poland. Some collaborated, and even helped build the regime, while others, in various ways and at different times, opposed it. Probably though the vast majority, without any sympathies for the system, authorities or Soviet Union, simply tried to adapt as best they could and lead their lives with dignity. The authors of the exhibit “Polish Peoples’ Republic (PPR): So Far Away, So Close...”, prepared by the Polish Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), have tried to capture and relate the complexity and contradictions of daily life in Poland under communist rule.

The authors sought to show both the pitched battles (armed in the

initial post-War period) against the new alien authorities, as well as political, economic, cultural, sporting and academic events that comprised the day-to-day lives of Polish society. Employing varied photographic materials the exhibit presents a kaleidoscope of the most important events of 45 years of contemporary Polish history. Photos depicting the break-up of the last of the post-War armed underground resistance, the reconstruction of the country following the devastation of the Second World War, the Stalinist terror and political changes following his death, the conflict between the Catholic Church and the atheist communist authorities, the pilgrimages of the Polish Pope John Paul II to his homeland, the pro-freedom outbursts of society that led to the rise of Solidarity and finally to independence and the fall of the communist system in East-Central Europe. The author's tried to convey the exhibit's essence primarily through images, with minimal accompanying descriptive texts.

The exhibit will be displayed at Columbia University's International Affairs Building, 420 West 118th St., Ground Floor Atrium, from 2 to 31 March 2010. The vernissage will be held 2 March at 6 p.m., on behalf of the Institute of National Remembrance a talk will be given by prof. Jerzy Eisler.

You are cordially invited.

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