

= Józef ?wiat?o =

Józef ?wiat?o born Izaak Fleischfarb (1 January 1915 ? 2 September 1994) was a high @-@ ranking official of the Ministry of Public Security of Poland employed as deputy director of the 10th Department run by Anatol Fejgin . Known for supervising the torture of inmates , he was nicknamed the " Butcher " by the MBP prisoners . After the death of Stalin and the arrest of Lavrentiy Beria in 1953 , ?wiat?o travelled to East Germany on an official business trip . While on the Berlin subway with Fejgin , passing through the West Berlin sector of the city , he " slipped away " and defected to the West .

After his defection on 5 December in Berlin , he worked for the CIA and the Radio Free Europe (RFE) . ?wiat?o 's written and broadcast incriminations shook the Polish United Workers ' Party , and ultimately contributed to the reform of the Polish security apparatus at the end of the Stalinist period , as one of the factors leading to the political liberalisation of the socialist Polish October revolution .

= = Biography = =

Józef ?wiat?o was born on 1 January 1915 as Izaak Fleischfarb (also Fleichfarb , Licht , or Lichtstein , sources vary) , into a Jewish family in Medyn village near Zbarazh (now Ukraine) . In the Second Polish Republic he was first a Zionist and later , a communist activist . He was arrested twice for his illegal activities . Conscripted in 1939 , he served in the Polish Army (Polish 6th Infantry Division) during the Polish September Campaign that year . Taken prisoner by the Germans , he escaped , only to be taken prisoner by the Red Army , which invaded East Poland where his family lived and deported east along with hundred thousands of others . It was also in that period that , on 26 April 1943 , he married Justyna ?wiat?o , taking her more Polish @-@ sounding surname . He eventually joined the Polish Forces in the East (Polish 1st Tadeusz Ko?ciuszko Infantry Division , Berling 's Army) , becoming a political officer ; he was also promoted to junior lieutenant (podporucznik) and became involved in organising state administration in areas taken from the Germans .

In 1945 he was transferred to the newly formed Ministry of Public Security of Poland (MBP) . In his work , ?wiat?o , like many other communist secret police agents , used torture and forgery . He was involved in arresting hundreds of members of Polish underground organization , Armia Krajowa , its leadership (the Trial of the Sixteen) and falsifying of the 1946 Polish referendum . In time he was promoted to Lieutenant colonel (pol.Podpu?kownik) and served in various offices and departments , eventually in 1951 ending up in the 10th Department , where he was one of the leading officers . The 10th Department was responsible for handling the Party members themselves . He received orders personally from the First Secretary of the Polish United Workers ' Party Boles?aw Bierut , and arrested such notable people as politicians W?adys?aw Gomu?ka and Marian Spychalski , General Micha? Rola @-@ ?ymierski and Cardinal Stefan Wyszy?ski . He had access - sometimes unique - to many secret documents . He interrogated Noel Field on 27 August 1949 in Budapest as well as his brother , Herman Field (a US citizen who went to Poland to look for his brother) . Herman would be secretly imprisoned for five years , until the information on him was revealed - by ?wiat?o himself .

= = = Defection to the West = = =

In November 1953 , the First Secretary of the Polish United Workers ' Party Boles?aw Bierut asked Politburo member Jakub Berman to send MBP Lieutenant Colonel Józef ?wiat?o on an important mission to East Berlin . ?wiat?o , deputy head of MBP Department X , together with Colonel Anatol Fejgin , were asked to consult with Stasi chief Erich Mielke about eliminating pl : Wanda Bro?ska . ?wiat?o , however , after the death of Stalin in March 1953 and arrest of Lavrentiy Beria in June that year , became afraid for his own life . He suspected that Bierut in Poland might turn on him and other members of the Ministry , attempting to make them into scapegoats .

The two officers traveled to Berlin and spoke with Mielke . On 5 December 1953 , the day after meeting the Stasi chief , ?wiat?o defected to the U.S. military mission in West Berlin . He left family - wife and two children - in Poland . The next day , American military authorities transported ?wiat?o to Frankfurt and by Christmas ?wiat?o had been flown to Washington , D.C. , where he underwent an extensive debriefing . It has been reported that his interrogations were compiled into about fifty long reports . The United States gave him political asylum with the full knowledge that " he would have to be protected for the rest of his life because the number of his victims and relatives of victims sworn to exact retribution was so great . "

= = Aftermath = =

?wiat?o 's defection was revealed in Poland by the Polish Press Agency on 25 October 1954 , with ?wiat?o labelled a traitor and provocateur . It was , however , widely publicised in the United States and Europe by the US authorities , as well as in Poland via Radio Free Europe , embarrassing the Communist authorities in Warsaw - the first international press conference with ?wiat?o took place on 28 September 1954 . ?wiat?o had intimate knowledge of the internal politics of the Polish government , especially the activities of the various secret services . Over the course of the following months , US newspapers and Radio Free Europe (in the " Behind the scenes of the secret service and the party " cycle) reported extensively on political repression in Poland based on ?wiat?o 's revelations .

Capitalising on them , in what was known as " Operation Spotlight " , RFE broadcast some 140 interviews by ?wiat?o , and 30 programs on him . ?wiat?o 's RFE broadcasts were not only serialized but even distributed over Poland by special balloons . ?wiat?o detailed the torture of prisoners under interrogation and politically motivated executions and struggles inside the Polish United Workers ' Party . None of the Polish Communists intelligence , counterintelligence and public security agencies escaped unscathed and without some of their secrets being revealed .

The highly publicised defection of Colonel ?wiat?o , not to mention the general hatred of the Ministry of Public Security among Poles , led to changes in late 1954 , as first the 10th Department and soon afterwards , the entire Ministry , was broken up and reorganised ; many officials were arrested . ?wiat?o 's scandal contributed to the events of political liberalisation in Poland , known as the Polish October . For a long time , it was uncertain if ?wiat?o was dead or still alive . Information on him was protected by the US witness protection program ; there were rumours that he died in late 1960s , 1975 or 1985 . In 2010 , United States government stated that he had died on 2 September 1994 . Documents relating to him are still classified in the United States and not available to researchers .