



TEATR ŚLĄSKI
im. St. Wyspiańskiego



text **ARTUR PAŁYGA**
direction **ROBERT TALARCZYK**
songs **THE BABOON SHOW**

world premiere **12 JANUARY 2024**

Big Stage

CO-PRODUCERS



KATOWICE
dla odmiany



KATOWICE
Miasto Ogrodów
Instytucja Kultury
im. Krystyny Bochowskiej



INSTYTUT
IM. WOJCIECHA
KORFANTEGO

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RADA
MECENASÓW
Teatru Śląskiego

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Teatr Śląski im. St. Wyspiańskiego w Katowicach jest instytucją kultury Samorządu Województwa Śląskiego

INDEX

ARTUR PAŁYGA

KORFANTY. REBELLION!

1136th premiere of the Theatre in Katowice
world premiere **12 JANUARY 2024** | Big Stage

ARTUR PAŁYGA

text

ROBERT TALARCZYK

direction

JUSTYNA ŁAGOWSKA

scenography and costumes

NATALIA DINGES

choreography

WOJCIECH DOROSZUK

video-art

**THE BABOON SHOW (HAAKAN KLAS
SOERLE, CECILIA MARIA BOSTROM,
FRIDA MARGARETHA STAAHL,
NICLAS LEIF SVENSSON)**

songs

KRZYSZTOF KUREK

arrangement and musical design

KRZYSZTOF KUREK (GUITAR)

BARTOSZ LICHOLAP (DRUMS)

WOJCIECH GRABARCZYK (BASS)

ARTUR RUMIŃSKI (GUITAR)

music band

EWA ZUG

vocal preparation

PIOTR ROSZCZENKO

lighting direction

ROBERT CIUPA

historical consultation

ZBIGNIEW WRÓBEL

assistant director

KAROLINA WIECZOREK

stage manager

DAGMARA HABRYKA-BIAŁAS

prompter

GRZEGORZ MAJ

OSKAR CICHON

MARCIN ŁYCZKOWSKI

MIROSŁAW WITEK

MACIEJ BARANOWSKI

sound design

MARIA MACHOWSKA

PIOTR ROSZCZENKO

lighting design

SZYMON SUCHOŃ

video production

MAŁGORZATA

DŁUGOWSKA-BŁACH

production management

MACIEJ ROKITA

technical production manager

DOROTA DAMEC

production assistant

CAST

**DARIUSZ
CHOJNACKI**
rebel Wojciech Korfanty

**CEZARY
STUDNIAK**
Mephisto, king of Hell

PIOTR BUŁKA
Dracula, straight from Hell

**KATERYNA
VASIUKOVA**
Wall arsenic

EWA KUTYNIA
rebel Elżbieta Korfantowa

**ALEKSANDRA
BERNATEK**
Jesus Christ / anonymous rebel
Ola

ANNA LEMIESZEK
Ignacy Paderewski / anonymous
rebel Aniela

**KARINA
GRABOWSKA**
mother, chairwoman of the
Mothers' Committee

**KATARZYNA
BŁASZCZYŃSKA**
mother, relentless guardian
of Hell

NATALIA DINGES
anonymous rebel Natalia

NINA BATOVSKA
anonymous rebel Nina

EMILIA KUBIAK
anonymous rebel Emilia

**ARKADIUSZ
MACHEL**
anonymous rebel Arkadiusz /
chief of police Waldemar /
insurgent Pień

**ANDRZEJ
OGŁOZA**
anonymous rebel Andrzej /
insurgent Krzaku

**DAWID
ŚCIUPIDRO**
anonymous rebel Dawid /
insurgent Liściu

PAWEŁ KEMPA
anonymous rebel Paweł /
insurgent Gałązka

**WIESŁAW
KUPCZAK**
conductor Rafał

**ZBIGNIEW
WRÓBEL**
chief of police Kazimierz

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WHO ARE YOU, KORFANTY?

Can we talk about you today as someone from our dreams and fantasies? Can we put your figurine next to Batman or Superman? Are you a superhero as we imagine you to be?

After all, we are more or less familiar with the story of your life. We remember your effective fight for the Polish Silesia and how disgracefully Józef Piłsudski's Poland thanked you. In the end, they erected a monument to you in Warsaw and put two sentences in the history books saying that you were the dictator of the Third Silesian Uprising. And that's it. Forgotten.

But we want to see you eternally alive. We want you to become our idol, our superhero, someone whose face on a poster we hang above our bed. We want you to be our Che Guevara, our Nelson Mandela or Michael Collins, whose life and deeds could be the subject of a ballad or even a punk show in which you, dressed in leather and wearing bovver boots, with one kick smash the system and change the world in your own fashion and in your own image.

Korfanty, make a revolution for us! Show your true face and your clenched fist! And we will follow you wherever you want to go. Let the rebellion begin!

Robert Talarczyk

WAKE

UP!

Robert Ciupa

THE MANY FACES OF WOJCIECH KORFANTY

Wojciech Korfanty – one of the ‘fathers of independence’, leader of the uprisings, people’s tribune, experienced politician, journalist, publicist and press tycoon. A multifaceted and ambitious figure in his public activities. It is extremely difficult to describe such a rich activity as Korfanty’s in a short historical essay. Let this be only an attempt to encourage one to reach for wider and richer biographical studies devoted to this politician. A figure that still awaits new researchers to grapple with the complex history of a great politician.

Wojciech Korfanty was born on 20 April 1873 in the settlement of Sadzawki, today’s district of Siemianowice Śląskie. Today in this place (at 3 Mysłowicka Street) there is a brick building built by Wojciech’s parents on the site of a small cottage. The period in which he was born was the time of the development of industry, especially heavy industry, in Upper Silesia. His family has peasant roots, but already his father Józef took up a job in a mine after graduating from folk school. In the baptismal register of the Parish of the Elevation of the Holy Cross we find an entry concerning the reception of the sacrament by Albert Korfanty, son of the miner Józef Korfanty and Karolina, née Klecha. This was the name under which the future dictator of the uprising was baptised and which he used in public, e.g. as a member of the German parliament. At home, he was allegedly called simply Adalbert, as the German name Albert, as a variant of the name Adalbert, was regarded as a Germanic variant of the Slavic name Wojciech. Polish was spoken in the family, or more precisely, the Upper Silesian ethnolect. The parents nurtured in their children the Catholic faith and Upper Silesian customs. According to family accounts, they also read the most popular Catholic magazine published by Karol Miarka – the “Catholic” (“Katolik”). Wojciech had four younger siblings: Rozalia, Andrzej, Julianna (Julia) and Jan.



In 1879, Wojciech started learning at a German folk school in Siemianowice. At that time, teaching there was almost exclusively in German – the authorities saw in the cultural assimilation of Upper Silesians the only way for them to advance socially and enter the Prussian elite. In 1888, Korfanty was enrolled in the Katowice Male Gymnasium, located in the building at 42 3 Maja Street (today the Maria Skłodowska-Curie High School No. 8 is located there). It was during the middle school period that Wojciech Korfanty's national transformation began. This is how he recalled it years later: "I have to attribute the merit of my national consciousness to my professors at the gymnasium in Katowice, associated with Hakata (the common Polish name of the German nationalist organization Deutscher Ostmarkenverein), who, by their vilification of everything Polish and Catholic, aroused in me a curiosity for the Polish book, from which I longed to find out what this vituperated and humiliated nation, whose language I spoke in my family, was". For the young Wojciech, his choice of Polishness was also an expression of his personal rebellion against the reality that surrounded him. Together with Konstanty Wolny, they were active in a clandestine self-education circle whose aim was to educate themselves in Polish culture and literature. Korfanty's rebellious nature and his involvement in pro-Polish organisations aroused the interest of the school management and even the Prussian police.

In 1895, just three months before his final exams, Korfanty was expelled from the gymnasium by a decision of the pedagogical council. He was helped by Count Józef Kościelski, a member of the Reichstag (the German Reich Parliament), where he was chairman of the Polish Circle. Thanks to him, Korfanty went to Berlin and, as an auditor, began his studies at the Charlottenburg Polytechnic. The following year he passed his matriculation examination at the St. Elisabeth's Gymnasium in Breslau, and then began to study at the Faculty of Philosophy at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in that city. For him, the period of study was a time of lively activity in Polish national organisations. He studied diligently, but also became increasingly visible in political circles. It was then that he was to attract the attention of the leaders of the National League: Zygmunt Balicki and Roman Dmowski, the future leaders of the nascent Endecja – the Polish branch of integral nationalism.

In December 1898, he participated in the unveiling of a monument to Adam Mickiewicz in Warsaw. In 1901, he moved from Wrocław to the University of Berlin, and there joined the National League (Liga Narodowa), with which he remained associated for the next seven years, writing the first journalistic texts in its organ, the "Berlin Journal".

In his texts he attacked the policy of the Prussian state, accusing it of being anti-Polish, and in the article "To the Germans", published in the Poznań magazine "Work", he wrote: "I suckled with milk that it is holy and beautiful to hate you, and this hatred is my whole good". As can be seen, he became a radical politician, with which he drew the attention of both the public and the Prussian law enforcement authorities. For the aforementioned article, treated as an incitement to national hatred, the Prussian prosecutor's office brought him to trial in 1902, which ended in a conviction and a four-month stay in prison in Wronki. This affair enabled Korfanty to better publicise his views, and his stay in prison earned him the legend of a martyr for the national cause.

In 1901, he challenged the Catholic Centre Party (Partia Centrum), which was the main political voice of the Catholics of Upper Silesia. In doing so, he came into conflict with the publisher of the powerful daily the "Catholic," the press magnate Adam Napieralski. The political struggle for a seat in the Reichstag had begun – until then, all twelve seats from the Opole region, i.e. Prussian Upper Silesia, had generally gone to candidates from the Centre Party. As editor-in-chief of the new "Upper Silesian" ("Górnoślązak") magazine, Korfanty threw himself into a political campaign, attacking socialists, but mainly "centrists" and Catholic priests, whom he accused of using the pulpit and confessional for electoral struggle. He organised dozens of rallies and spoke like a people's tribune, hitting back at his political rivals. Korfanty's pictures appeared on thousands of postcards.

#REBELLION

His political strategy, not shying away from populism and radicalism, was successful. In 1903, Wojciech Korfanty became a member of the Reichstag, defeating the Centre Party candidate, Paul Letocha, a native of Radzionków, in the second round. He was a member of Germany's most important parliament in the years 1903–1912 and in 1918, and also became a member of the Prussian state parliament, the Prussian Landtag (1904–1918). Everywhere there, he sat in the Polish Circle, which was a novelty, because until then Polish-speaking representatives from Upper Silesia had joined the parliamentary club of the German Centre Party. In his speeches in the Reichstag, Korfanty attacked the policies of the German industrial and political elite in the region. In them, he also referred to social elements, denouncing the low wages of workers, harsh working conditions and the trampling of their dignity – which won him the votes of the proletariat. He was controversial in his speeches, sometimes arrogant, but he always aroused interest and often outrage.

On October 5, 1903, Wojciech Korfanty married Elżbieta Sprott (Szprot), daughter of a foreman from Bytom. The wedding took place in the Church of the Holy Cross in Krakow. Due to criticism of the Catholic Church in the 1903 Reichstag election campaign, the ceremony could not take place in the bride's parish in Bytom. The clergy of Bytom and Katowice demanded an apology from Korfanty for the texts published in the pages of the "Upper Silesian" – otherwise the wedding was doomed to be a quiet one, without solemn ceremonies. Korfanty did not agree to the conditions. He protested unsuccessfully, appealing to the bishop of Wrocław, Cardinal Georg Kopp, and the papal legate in Munich. Initially, he was also refused permission to marry in Krakow, but over time the church side pointed out that the decision of the Upper Silesian diocese had no basis in canon law. The wedding took place, but this did not change the attitude of Cardinal Kopp, who demanded the annulment of the marriage during the proceedings in the Roman Curia – unsuccessfully. And Korfanty perfectly integrated his fight for the solemn wedding into the aforementioned Reichstag election campaign.

The Korfanty family settled in Bytom, then in Katowice. Four children were born of the marriage: Halżka, Zbigniew, Maria and Witold. Financial problems arose, all the more so as the representative's work was not paid (only in the Landtag did he receive a subsistence allowance), and Wojciech's frequent trips to Berlin strained the family budget. The salary at the "Upper Silesian" did not provide an adequate income either, so Korfanty tried to make some extra money by trading in wholesale coal and real estate. All of these businesses ended in failure and debts – in addition to the lack of funds, there were shareholders demanding a return of the invested money.

Several years of political activity caused Korfanty's star to burn out and he moved to more moderate positions, distancing himself from the nationalist movement. The strong influence of Napieralski, the Centre Party and attacks from political opponents weakened his position. In 1911, he resigned from running for the Reichstag, fearing that he had no chance of re-election. He was accused of financial embezzlement and betrayal of his ideals. Korfanty moved to Berlin, where he ran a small press agency for Napieralski, only to become independent in 1913 and set up his own post of this kind – the Polish Correspondence Bureau (Polskie Biuro Korespondencyjne). After the outbreak of World War I, Korfanty saw an opportunity for Polish military involvement against Russia on the side of the Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary) in exchange for a departure from the anti-Polish policy of the German authorities. The politician was soon disappointed – no political changes towards Poles took place, and the war began to take a turn unfavourable to the Reich.

He returned to the big political stage in 1918: in the first round, he won the by-election to the Reichstag in the Gliwice-Lubliniec constituency. On October 25, 1918, Korfanty delivered his most famous speech in the Reichstag. He demanded that the lands of the Prussian Partition and Upper Silesia be annexed to Poland. From that moment on, Polish representatives ceased to take part in German parliamentary sessions. In November 1918, Korfanty and his family left Berlin for Poznań, where he became a member of the Supreme People's Council (Naczelna Rada Ludowa), a substitute for the Polish authorities in Greater Poland. He again



KORIFANTY IS
NOT DEAD

began to speak at political rallies, arguing for the need to systematically take power from the Germans. He headed the Greater Poland delegation going to Warsaw, where he was to negotiate the entry of representatives from Poznań into the government of the reborn Republic of Poland. When they were denied three ministries, the Greater Poland representatives refused to participate in the government, leading to its collapse. Korfanty stayed at the Hotel Europejski in Warsaw. His presence aroused the enthusiasm of the street and national circles. At every step he was met with words of recognition and support. He then returned to work with the nationalist movement (Endecja) and enjoyed the support of this political milieu. The first meeting with Józef Piłsudski took place in Warsaw, during which Korfanty presented his dynamic, demagogic style. Wincenty Witos recalled that his speech was “very sharp and not very polite”. Perhaps it was this conversation that determined the mutual dislike that characterised Piłsudski and Korfanty in subsequent years. But it must be remembered that there was also a political controversy between them: Piłsudski represented socialist circles, while Korfanty represented nationalist ones. Korfanty’s mission to Warsaw ended in failure. Józef Piłsudski appointed Jędrzej Moraczewski’s government without the Greater Poland representatives in its composition.

In December 1918, Korfanty welcomed Ignacy Paderewski to Gdańsk. The world-famous composer’s arrival in Poznań became the spark for the outbreak of the Greater Poland Uprising (Powstanie Wielkopolskie). Korfanty believed that the uprising was not yet well prepared; he tried to cool down the mood by trying to prevent the conflict from escalating and by holding talks with the Allies and the Germans at the same time. His actions, combined with the progress of the Army of Greater Poland (Armia Wielkopolska), were successful. On February 16, 1919, an armistice was concluded in Trier, ending the fighting.

Korfanty did not lose sight of Upper Silesia, but he did not plan an armed uprising. He placed his hopes in the peace negotiations in Paris, where the Polish side demanded the inclusion of most of the Opole region within the borders of the Republic of Poland. He tried to suppress the insurrectionary sentiment that prevailed among some of the commanders of the underground paramilitary structure – the Polish Military Organisation of Upper Silesia (Polska Organizacja Wojskowa Górnego Śląska), controlled by the General Staff of the Polish Army. But the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, which ended the First World War, did not close the issue of Upper Silesia's nationality. The decision was to be taken only after a plebiscite had been held among the inhabitants of the disputed area, and the results of the plebiscite were not to be binding on the Allied Powers. By decision of the government of the Republic of Poland, Wojciech Korfanty was appointed as the head of the Polish Plebiscite Commissariat (Polski Komisariat Plebiscytowy). He chose the "Lomnitz" hotel in Bytom as his headquarters. On the opposite side, in the Plebiscite Commissariat for Germany, based in Katowice, the Centre politician Dr. Kurt Urbanek, mayor of Rozbark, was elected.

Korfanty managed in a short time to unite the strongly divided Polish political circles. He surprised with his decisiveness in action, his courage and his skilful action in organising propaganda (creation of activist networks, agitation strategy), as well as his diplomacy in talks with the Allies. Many criticised him for being despotic, arbitrary and unwilling to accept other people's reasons, apodictic and overconfident. At the same time, however, even his opponents agreed that only he was up to the task. The period of the plebiscite is also associated with the concept of autonomy of the Silesian Voivodeship, of which Korfanty was a pragmatic supporter, seeing it as a magnet attracting people to Poland. Here, in July 1920, Sejm (the lower house of the parliament) of the Republic of Poland adopted an Organic Statute of the Silesian Voivodeship (Statut Organiczny Województwa Śląskiego) which was to apply to Upper Silesia if it fell to Poland. The essence of the statute was wide-ranging autonomy (distinctiveness and administrative independence) for the postulated Silesian Voivodeship.



YOU

ARE

HISTORY

The plebiscite took place on March 20, 1921. It was attended by 97.5% of those eligible to vote. The vote was 59.6% in favour of Germany and 40.3% in favour of annexing the plebiscite area to Poland. The result of the plebiscite was a great disappointment to Korfanty, but he put on a brave face and publicly declared it a success for the Polish side. In a proclamation to the population of Upper Silesia, he proposed dividing the region along the so-called Korfanty Line, assuming that 59.1% of the plebiscite area, inhabited by 70.1% of the people, would go to the Polish side. Of course, Korfanty's proposal was not accepted by the Germans, who considered that the plebiscite had been won by the German option, and therefore the entire region should remain within the borders of the Reich. The division of Upper Silesia was to be decided by the Allied Council of Ambassadors in Paris. Korfanty was concerned that the decisions made there might not be to the Polish side's liking, because although France was sympathetic to Poland, the British took a rather pro-German stance. The politician did not intend to wait idly, so he began preparations for a general strike and an uprising.

The Third Silesian Uprising broke out on the night of May 2–3, 1921, and was not a spontaneous uprising of the local population, but a well-prepared military action. From the very beginning, the Republic of Poland supported and participated in the uprising, providing intelligence and organising supplies of weapons (guns and mortars, trains and armoured cars) and ammunition. Volunteers came from all over the country, as well as trained Polish army officers on leave. On May 2, Korfanty resigned from his position as plebiscite commissioner, and a day later declared himself dictator of the uprising. In a teletype sent to Wincenty Witos on May 2, 1921, he announced: "Right now I'm a slave to events. In this situation, I am forced to take responsibility... I am no longer the master of the situation... The most important thing is that no trace of suspicion should fall on Poland that it supports this movement".

The insurgents, taking advantage of the German side's surprise and not encountering much resistance, reached the aforementioned Korfanty Line by May 10. However, the dictator was cautious, aware that a Polish-German war might eventually break out, so after the initial successes, in the face of a German counter-offensive, he

turned with a proposal for an armistice to the Allies. Meanwhile, on the night of May 20–21, the Germans launched a counterattack, directing their assault on St. Anne Mountain (Góra Świętej Anny). The biggest battle of the third uprising ended in a tactical defeat for the insurgents. However, the German Selbstschutz troops did not manage to break the front and enter the cities of the industrial district. Korfanty, fearing the imminent end of the uprising and the seizure of the main cities of Upper Silesia, sought an agreement and a ceasefire. The dictator tried to use the military successes achieved so far as a starting point for talks with the Allies. He was aware of who would decide on the territories' affiliation. Thanks to the support of the French, a treaty to end the uprising, confirmed by an agreement with the Germans two weeks later, was reached at Błotnica Strzelecka on June 11. The uprising was ended, which did not please part of the command staff, the so-called Eastern Group (Grupa Wschód), associated with the Piłsudski camp. Among the opponents was the future Silesian Voivode Michał Grażyński. An open conflict and rebellion against the dictator ensued, culminating in the arrest of the conspirators.

Korfanty left the region and went to Warsaw on July 7, and the insurgent units withdrew from the occupied areas, which were again taken over by the Allied forces of the Inter-Allied Commission (Komisja Międzysojusznicza). In the end, the decision to divide Upper Silesia, as Korfanty had envisaged, was the result of a compromise between the Allies, and the proposal for division was prepared by a special committee of the League of Nations. Poland was granted 29% of the area with 46% of the population – this was the core of the industrial district, the territory Poland cared about most. Within the borders of the Republic of Poland there were 53 out of 67 hard coal mines, 7 out of 10 ironworks, all of 18 zinc, lead and silver smelters. Economically, Wojciech Korfanty annexed an economically strong region to Poland, which became the heart of the restoration of the entire Republic. On June 20, 1922, Polish troops commanded by General Stanisław Szeptycki ceremonially entered here through the bridge on Brynica. Korfanty was present when he was welcomed at the Katowice market square.



But Wojciech Korfanty's political ambitions reached further than Upper Silesia. The political situation in Poland at the time was very unstable, with party conflicts, numerous changes in the position of prime minister, and demonstrations in the streets often ending in fights with the police. After only 10 days in office, Artur Sliwinski's government collapsed. The parliamentary majority, for the second time, put forward Wojciech Korfanty as its candidate for prime minister. In the Sejm vote, the former insurrectionist dictator received the support of 291 representatives against 206. In order to secure a Sejm majority, the only requirement was for the new Prime Minister to be approved by the Head of State, Józef Piłsudski. However, the latter opposed Korfanty's candidacy. He did not accept Korfanty as a politician associated with National Democrats (Endecja). The Marshal also remembered the conflict with Piłsudski's subordinates from the Eastern Group during the uprising. He was not persuaded to change his decision by Korfanty himself in conversation. Pressure on the Chief led to a situation where Piłsudski threatened to resign if Korfanty formed a government. The Upper Silesian politician – then at the peak of his career – lost out to Józef Piłsudski's stubbornness and vision. From then on, Korfanty concentrated on press, economic and parliamentary activity, often confining himself to the Silesian Voivodeship. Admittedly, in 1923 he became Deputy Prime Minister in Wincenty Witos's government, but this government lasted only a few months.

In 1922 Korfanty won a seat in the Silesian Sejm, the autonomous parliament of the Silesian Voivodeship, from the list of the National Bloc (Blok Narodowy) he led, which, as the strongest faction, began to govern in the Voivodeship, although the politician himself did not take any prominent positions. Thanks to his contacts with Silesian industrialists, in 1924 he launched his own periodical, the daily "Polonia", which became the main forum for his political struggle against his opponents and a platform for proclaiming his own views. For the first time, the press concern created by Korfanty achieved financial success. The dominant position of the politician in the region was changed by the May Coup of 1926 and the establishment of authoritarian rule by Piłsudski's political camp, the so-called Sanacja. Upon hearing of the coup, Korfanty called for a National Assembly to be convened outside Warsaw, which could have led to the outbreak of civil war, so

these plans were not realised. By publicly criticising the May Coup, he once again stood up against Piłsudski and his supporters.

The new authorities were quick to strike at Korfanty – he was dismissed from the supervisory boards of Bank Śląski (Silesian Bank) and Skarboferm (the company managing the state-owned mines), and Michał Grażyński, Korfanty's greatest opponent, was appointed Silesian Voivode. From this moment an attempt to marginalise Korfanty in the Silesian Voivodeship began. The Union of Silesian Insurgents (Związek Powstańców Śląskich), with thousands of members, joined the Sanacja side and ruthlessly fought the former insurgent dictator. In 1927, Korfanty was accused of bribery while holding a position on the board of the Bank Śląski. The verdict of the Marshal's Court appointed in this case was a compromise and favourable to Korfanty. In 1930, after the dissolution of the Silesian Sejm, Wojciech Korfanty was arrested and imprisoned in Brześć Litewski together with Wincenty Witos, Karol Popiel and Stanisław Dubois. Here he was beaten, tormented and tortured. After two months, he was transported to the Mokotów prison and then released. The detention took its toll on his health; he was unable to get out of the prison carriage on his own, and lost 25 kilos. His imprisonment was considered a major scandal and sparked numerous protests, not only from supporters of the politician. In subsequent elections, he was elected to the Sejm, the Senate and the Silesian Sejm for the third term. The authorities decided not to bring criminal charges against him: he appeared as a witness in the so-called Brest trials (Proces Brzeski). His activity in the Silesian Sejm did not diminish; he took a keen interest in the functioning of the Voivodship, its administrative structures and the financing of its institutions. This is evidenced, for example, by his speech on the financing of the Silesian Theatre, delivered in 1931, although it may not necessarily be regarded as favourable for this institution, but it does testify to his concern for its quality: "As far as the theatre as a source of culture is concerned, it is with all the pleasure, as far as the means allow, that each of us will decide on this expenditure. But if we look at the repertoire played by this subsidised theatre in recent months, these light operettas, these sometimes ludicrous farces, which are actually a negation of culture, it is difficult for public funds to pay for the upkeep of such a tabernacle of beauty and art. If someone has descended to the same level as the

...TIC AND INTERNATIONAL USE

#SMOK
WEED

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Katowice theatre, to sensationalism, to satisfying the needs and emotions of the indiscriminate crowd, I suppose they have found such sources of income that they can carry on their lives without our subsidy. This is why we have to think very seriously about the need for a theatre subsidy”.

In 1930, Wojciech Korfanty led the unification of the Silesian Christian Democracy with its national counterpart. A year later he became president of the main board. He became a leading Polish politician promoting Catholic social teaching, thus leaving the ranks of the National Democratic movement. In his writings from this period, he opposed totalitarian systems and advocated private property, although he also criticised capitalism in many aspects. He was still apodictic. Maximilian Thullie, removed from the party by Korfanty, described him as follows: “Korfanty is a powerful individual, he is a born dictator, so that even those who disagree with him sit quietly and vote as he pleases”. But his influence on the current government, both in the Silesian Voivodship and in the whole country, had almost completely melted away. Korfanty was already influential primarily as a columnist and press magnate, as “Polonia” was an influential newspaper, edited in a modern way and strongly opposed to Piłsudski’s supporters.

In 1935, fearing repression by the Sanacja authorities and remembering his imprisonment in the Brest Fortress, Korfanty went into exile in Czechoslovakia, where he became one of the main Sanacja oppositionists. He settled first in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm and then in Prague. He tried to return to Poland in 1938 to attend the funeral of his youngest son Witold, but the government refused to issue him with a letter of protection from arrest. After the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, he fled to France and returned to Poland in April 1939. He was arrested in Katowice and taken to the Pawiak prison in Warsaw. His detention sparked protests from many political circles. He was already seriously ill at the time. In prison, his health deteriorated drastically. The authorities, fearing that he might die, moved him to St Joseph's Hospital. The operation, which was carried out immediately, did not help. Before he died, he met with his colleague Juliusz Żuławski, to whom he is supposed to have said “Well, you see how Poland paid me”.

Wojciech Korfanty died on 17 August 1939. The funeral, which took place in Katowice, attracted tens of thousands of people. The monument to Wojciech Korfanty in Katowice bears the words of his message to future generations: "I utter a fervent plea to the Silesian people to remain faithful to Christian principles and to their attachment to Poland, to remain steadfast in their work and sacrifice in order to make of Poland such a Poland as is worthy of our dreams".

The politician's wife, Elżbieta Korfanty, stayed in Great Britain during the Second World War, where she became a member of the Circle of Silesians and the Second National Council of the Polish Government in Exile (II Rada Narodowa Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej Rządu Polskiego na Uchodźstwie). After the war she returned to Katowice alone, as the communist authorities did not allow other family members to come. There was no room for her in the famous "Korfantówka" – a villa on Powstańców Street in Katowice. She had to sell the villa for a low sum, which she did not receive in full anyway – monthly instalments were paid for some time. Her daughters and son Zbigniew remained abroad. Throughout her life she was an active social activist, although Korfanty himself believed that "the first and most honourable field of activity of a Catholic and Polish woman is and will always be the family."



KORFANTY
REBELLIONI

THE ANNI

VERSARY

OF THE

ANNIVERSARY

Wojciech Barczyński

THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED

Let's start with the basics, i.e. the theory. You will forgive a hint of didacticism, but for the sake of argument: since the dawn of time, music has been a powerful tool for expressing opposition to oppressive governments, injustice, slavery and war. Without looking far away, in the folk song anthologies of Oskar Kolberg or Julian Przyboś, we find not a few examples of rebellious songs of "work, harm, misery". In the oral tradition of peoples all over the world, melodies and words have been preserved that enable the oppressed to question social norms, secular and religious authorities, to inspire change.

However, let me leave the quipu language and recordings on wax cylinders to students of ethnography and cultural anthropology. Let's focus on chronologically closer examples and consider where the boundaries between rebellion, revolt and revolution lie, and what role music played in recording and stimulating public sentiment at pivotal moments in recent history. One of the key ways in which popular music has served as a channel of rebellion is, of course, its ability to articulate the grievances of the younger generation. Song lyrics have often become vehicles for social commentary, addressing issues such as war, racial and economic inequality and political corruption. At the same time, it seems pertinent to ask whether songs expressing opposition to the existing reality in various ways have been, are and can be a catalyst for real change for the better, or whether they rather serve as a safety valve for the potentially explosive moods of marginalised sections of society.

A good example of expressing rebellion remaining, however, at a safe distance from revolutionary action was the fledgling Polish rap movement. Deprived of any illusions about the realities of life under the new Polish capitalism, young people from block housing estates resisted reality with the simplest means available to them. In their hands, the DIY (Do It Yourself) punk ideals were reborn in a digital, albeit still very primitive, version. All that was now needed to make music was

a computer with a sound card and a plastic microphone. Young artists did not have to rely on the fossilised structures of the existing music market, nor did they have to rely on media frontiersmen protecting their access to the general public. They did not have to look for a place for themselves in institutions that had been associated with the development of musical talent for generations, such as community centres and music schools. Poland had no expectations of the creators of the first homegrown rap productions. The generation left on the margins of the political and market transformation decided to fight for their self-esteem. Here we are, this is our life and our way of taming the realities of constant deprivation and inherited, systemic difficulties. Not surprisingly, the rap scene, very attached to its independence, was from the beginning suspicious of artists coming from environments of relative affluence, such as TeDe or Fisz. Thus, the generational rebellion so often associated with young Polish rap was an expression of economic and identity frustrations. However, by the time rap had grown up and crystallised any political ambitions, it had been completely commercialised and stripped of its economic and social credibility. Today's rap hits, in which artists wallow in worldly goods and demand that their plight be recognised, are grotesque on many levels.

The American political scientist and writer, University of Pennsylvania professor George Ciccariello-Maher, often emphasises in his commentaries how important the real-life flashpoints of social discontent, which he calls "moments of rebellion", are in the search for and implementation of theoretical social and economic solutions. Often, changes in consciousness leading to positive outcomes for the majority are unlikely to flourish sustainably in a peaceful atmosphere. To quote punk poet Ian Svenonius: "Politics is like a rabid dog – you only think you can ignore it. To achieve something in politics bricks have to fly". Nothing speeds up political discussions and decisions on weighty issues more than a crowd in the streets singing the same tune. The 1968 student protests are a prime example of this.

In Paris and Bonn, generational rebellion spilled into the streets. Students protested against the Vietnam War, intolerance towards immigrants and the rigid social norms imposed by their parents' generation. The young French were fed up with



the 'daddy' De Gaulle giving them good advice, the increasing commercialisation of social life and the inequalities that resulted from it. The unofficial anthem of the protests in France was a song that did not appear on record, was not on the airwaves and therefore became a folk song in a very traditional sense. "Crève salope" by 16-year-old Renaud Séchan only functioned in an a capella version from the beginning, which is also why it became so catchy. In simple words, it expressed youthful rebellion against parents, teachers and institutions. It became the anthem of the protests on the streets of Paris post factum, adopted by the exasperated crowd. The song about the hooligan crusade against all authority became a banner, an incendiary spark, an element uniting opposition to the multi-layered injustice of the repressive system under one slogan: "Die, bitch". But the spirit of the spring of 1968 remained in French music for longer. It found its way into the booming free jazz scene, propelling young rebels improvising without formal or aesthetic constraints. French singers were bolder in their take on political themes, such as Claude Nougaro in the song "Paris mai", or Leo Ferré recording the songs "L'Été 68" and "Amour Anarchie" with the prog-rock band Zoo. In the late 1970s, it was the youth singing "Crève salope" on the streets of the capital that formed the core of the punk scene in music, visual arts and poetry.

Not everywhere, however, the links between music and youthful rebellion were so direct. The student protesters in Bonn or London occupying university buildings at the time did not harness transgressive rock sounds for propaganda or morale-raising purposes. When 25,000 people protested against the escalation of hostilities in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos outside the American embassy in London in 1968, they were not accompanied by a song composed specifically for the occasion. The event did, however, inspire Mick Jagger to write new lyrics for "Did Everyone Pay Their Dues?" and change the title to "Street Fighting Man". Of course, in England, the 1968 movement also found its continuation in the punk scene, but this, as it is known, had from the beginning the character of an artistic happening, a legendary "rock'n'roll swindle", rather than channelling extreme emotions and leading to revolutionary music on the barricades.

Students in the German capital shied away from any musical extravagance, and the charts were dominated by cloying hits that were programmatically unlikely to evoke negative emotions or difficult memories. A few exceptions included left-wing authors of sung poetry, such as Franz Josef Degenhardt and his pacifist anthem “Lehrstück der vier Partisanen”. According to *Süddeutsche Zeitung* author Johannes Waechter, for the orthodox communists at the universities, rock was “thoroughly bourgeois”. They focused on revolutionary theory and practice according to a script written by Karl Marx, and even the most thorough analysis of his lyrics showed no trace of long hair or electric guitars. Another interesting case from this period is the music scene in Italy, where the years of neo-fascist terror and the actions of the left-wing militias resisting it did not live to see references as intense in content and texture in popular or niche music. “The Years of Lead” lived to have perhaps the only song celebrating these events that is still recognisable today, Adriano Celentano’s “Una carezza in un pugno”, and it is a song by all means suitable for the San Remo festival stage, rather than as a backdrop to street riots.

It is a natural process to borrow songs that grow out of a broad rebellion against drastic political realities. One example is “L’Estaca”, a song written by Louis Llach, a Catalan singer, anti-fascist and fighter for Catalan independence. The title stake is a symbol of the enslavement of Spaniards and Catalans under General Franco. The Polish lyrics to the song, from now on known to us as “Walls” (“Mury”), were written by Jacek Kaczmarski, and the song became the anthem of anti-government protests in communist Poland. In the last decade, “Walls” sung in Russian and Belarusian also gained popularity across our eastern border in the second circuit. The ability of repressive dictatorships to metamorphose and be reborn in another time and place means that songs of rebellion and revolt remain relevant. They appear with depressing regularity whenever a struggle for basic rights is necessary. The female workers clearing the rice fields of Northern Italy of weeds, bent in half in water up to their knees seven days a week, could not have known that 150 years later their song “Bella, ciao” would be sung in Persian by their oppressed – this time for religious reasons – colleagues in Tehran. Striking against racial segregation and outrageously low wages, cigar factory workers in

BRAVE

NEW

WORLD



Charleston, North Carolina in 1946 could not have foreseen that their song “We Shall Overcome”, borrowed from the Baptists, would one day be sung by student protesters in Belfast, and that later hundreds of thousands of people gathered during the Velvet Revolution in Prague’s Wenceslas Square would sing it together in English and Czech, particularly loudly shouting the last words of the refrain: “Ja vim!”

Where else to look for links between music and revolutionary movements? One of the last bastions of political content in music is hardcore-punk music, intentionally bringing together listeners with clearly progressive views on worldview issues. From the early days of the hardcore punk scene in the early 1980s, minorities and women could count on equal treatment – at least in theory. Songs often carry pro-environmental, anti-violence content, emphasising the importance of values such as equality, community and a positive attitude when confronting everyday difficulties. And although these ideas seem extremely revolutionary in today's world, their impact is very limited. If it were otherwise perhaps more than 1% of the planet’s population would enjoy the benefits of a vegan diet.

There is no doubt that music, in the form of songs sung by crowds, often acted as a lubricant to keep the wheels of history turning. Those days are over irrevocably. Revolutionary movements pop up every now and then in almost every corner of the world, but they often exhaust their potential – including their cultural potential – before they can fully develop. Of course, nation-states as we know them today have perfected methods of suppressing rebellion, allowing only a commercialised and fully controlled rebellion, rationed and under the watchful eye of the technology around us. It is worth asking ourselves how important freedom is to us if we give it away bit by bit to the megacorporations. Without the slightest resistance, they have imposed on us a new regime, which the Greek economist and philosopher Yanis Varoufakis calls techno-feudalism. The carrying power of a piece of music touching on important content and succinctly suggesting a course of action seems undeniable. But in which direction will the energy of rebellion of the next generations be directed, when the enemy is invisible and permeates all aspects

of our lives? Today's enemies of freedom and democracy operate in secret, driven by the power of capital stemming from its systemic decentralisation. Revolution in its most tangible, dangerous nature to the status quo seems impossible. The 2009 Wall Street protests or the Black Lives Matter movement showed this. According to the German philosopher Byung-Chul Han, we live in a "achievement society", a completely new social system in which economic competition has taken the form of self-aggression. Isolated by technology, individuals are unable to take collective action, focused on self-improvement, racing in a mad rush to the next goal, mainly financial, with no regard for cost. This rush brings us closer every day to climate catastrophe and is responsible for a global crisis of physical and mental health. The security of the capital responsible is overseen by a machine of permanent surveillance, the workings of which are accurately described by psychologist and philosopher Shoshana Zuboff. We are waging a hybrid war against ourselves. Cultural goods are consumed according to individually tailored options; formerly collective experiences, such as listening to music, are becoming increasingly atomised. Popular artists are avoiding political topics as much as possible, everyone is aware of the fleeting nature of a lucrative career in times of instant banishment from public life in response to even the slightest provocation. If we are to still have a chance for revolution, each of us must first carry it out in our own lives, humming our own tune.



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