

An Analysis of
Packaging Design in Poland Today
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An Analysis of Packaging Design in Poland Today

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A nation cannot live without its own language
and neither can it live without its own visual expression
in all its possible manifestations. We never stop boasting of the
Western type of our culture....regrettably, we have not yet realised
that our position is ridiculous and damaging
to our national dignity.

This causes immeasurable moral and economic harm.....

Jozef Czajkowski, 1928.

INTRODUCTION

Poland is a country that has only recently been released from the grip of Communism. Now is a time of visible rapid change as the country is making a transition into a free market. Many of her neighbours are experiencing something similar as they too are being introduced to the Western World. This fascinating situation has caught my attention and I would like to take a closer look by examining the packaging of everyday supermarket goods and to determine how they echo the political situation in Poland.

Firstly, a historical background will introduce the country being dealt with. This will lead into the politics of Poland today and their effect on the economy. The second chapter looks at nationalism in Poland and how it is evident in the design area. It will look at the National emblem and the national colours and their part in creating the overall national style in design and its ability to evoke patriotism from the packaging of a product. Chapter 3 will consider shopping and the contrast between shopping in the West and shopping in the East, examining differences, from the psychology of marketing to window display. Once familiarized with the market, chapter 4 will deal with the actual packaging design of products, at first, on a general basis and then taking individual case studies as examples.

There is a very limited amount of written information on the subject of packaging design in Poland today, so I would ask the reader to bear in mind that most of my research was actually done by visiting Poland, shopping there, speaking to Polish people and making my own observations with what knowledge I have of packaging design. The changes going on in Poland are taking place so rapidly, that even in the space of a year, from the time I became

interested to when I began actual research, many of the packs that had caught my eye, have since been redesigned in a way that is not far from their Western counterparts. While a large number of Polish companies have been taken over by larger manufacturers from the West, there has also been an overwhelming influx of products from Western Europe, greedily taking over the market. How have the makers of Polish products reacted? The only way they can compete is to update their packaging design. They have had to move on from brown paper packages with a rubber stamp identifying them to designs using shape colour, typography, illustration, photography and, most importantly, individuality.

This thesis is based on my own observations made when I travelled around Poland. In-between my observations are stories from, and opinions of normal Polish people, because that is essentially what this paper is about - the effect of the political situation on normal people and how it is reflected in everything, even everyday consumer products.

CHAPTER 1

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

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This opening chapter will begin by giving a brief background of recent political history. Being aware of the facts, we can then look a little closer into the effects these had on the Polish people and consumerism. Once we have had some insights into what it was like in the recent past, we can better understand how drastically life is for the consumer now, after entering into the free market. The currency has had a face-lift, as have many shops. Designers face many difficulties as they begin their fight against incoming Western design. Local manufacturers also face problems in nationwide distribution and many products tend to be sold only in the region from which they are produced. Before we go any deeper into these subjects we need to know the historical facts behind this situation.

1.1 POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Poland is a country with a sad but proud history. She has spent many years fighting for her independence and has been under Soviet control since the Second World War. In 1980, after 35 years of Communist rule, a self-governing, nationwide trade-union was formed. *Solidarność*, which means *Solidarity*, began after a strike in a Gdansk shipyard. Within a year, the leader of the strike, shipyard worker Lech Wałęsa, was elected chair and by the end of 1981 the movement with its ten million members, was formally recognised by the Government (fig.1).

1.2 MARTIAL LAW

Less than a month later, Martial Law was imposed.

Tanks were immediately on the streets, army checkpoints were set up in every corner, phone conversations and post were subject to recording and censorship. Several thousand people, including most Solidarity leaders and Walesa himself were interned (Dydyński, 1993 p.22).

This terrifying military rule lasted until July 1983. After that, economic reforms were implemented, prices were increased and the cost of living rose by over 100%. Through the next six years the new reforms proved unsuccessful and in 1989, following round-table discussions, the first non-communist prime minister since before the War, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, was elected. This was the starting point for the collapse of Communism throughout the Soviet Bloc.

1.3 THE NEW CHANGES

In January 1990 the new Solidarity government introduced

a package of reforms to change the centrally planned communist system into a free-market economy. In a shock therapy transition, all prices were permitted to move freely, subsidies were abolished, the money supply was tightened and the currency was sharply devalued and made fully convertible with Western currencies (Dydyński, 1993 p.24).

The black market was no longer black. After a while the economy stabilised, inflation was stopped and shops began to fill up with goods. But during 1990, prices rose by 250% while real incomes dropped by 40%. The initial wave of optimism turned into uncertainty and discontent. Lech Wałęsa was elected president in December 1990, and his term of office has just finished at the time of writing. The new president, Aleksander Kwasniewski, an ex-communist, won the election by the skin of his teeth.

1.4 ECONOMY NOW

Even after all the changes in the economy, Poland is not out of the woods yet. Experts say the economic situation in Poland will get worse before it gets better. Poland is under constant change as it is trying to move away from Communism into Capitalist Europe. In

January 1995, the Polish currency, the złoty, had four zeros knocked off it because people had become very confused with the extra zeros that had mounted up due to inflation. Now both the old money and the new money is accepted. Prices are written in old and new and when asking how much something costs, it is up to you to guess whether the answer is in old or new złotych.

1.5 PEWEX

During Communist times, life was quite unimaginable for us comfortable Westerners. Only Polish products were available in the shops by law. All shops and companies were owned and run by the State. One of the only contacts with the outside world was PEWEX. This was a chain of stores throughout the country. In these stores the Poles could buy products produced for export from Poland and also products of foreign origin. The catch was that these goods could only be paid for in foreign currency. The Government was trying to show the Polish "Look! We have everything" when really they were showing the people what they were missing out on. People were confronted with sophisticated quality goods with beautiful colours and advanced designs. Everything was available in these shops, especially foreign cigarettes like *Marlboro*, alcohol, cans of drinks (a novelty), cosmetics from France, non-perishable foods (tins of preserves, chocolates, biscuits in tins) and Polish smoked ham produced for export but a scarcity in Poland. There also was a fashion department containing the best-seller throughout the shop - jeans. From 1978, toys were also available, such as *Sindy* and *Barbie*, *Matchbox* cars and also electrical goods of better quality than their Polish counterparts, tv.s, hi-fis, even cars. The prices of these goods were three to four times higher than in normal shops, yet apparently much lower than in their country of origin. So how did people shop in PEWEX if they couldn't use the Polish currency?

Predictably outside every store there was an army of illegal kantors ready to sell you dollars, sterling or francs at a bargain price. Also, many of the customers in PEWEX were people who, after working abroad, would bring back foreign currency. Many people, especially older ones, would feel they were making a statement by not going there, saying it was daylight robbery. However, young people were too eager to make a fashion statement rather than a political one. Goods bought in PEWEX were often bought as presents, even if it was just tinned sardines, because the packaging was much more presentable using strong colours and quality paper. Even though the prices were barely affordable, people were encouraged to go to PEWEX. Politicians presented workers, especially miners, with vouchers or permission to use złotys instead of foreign currency.

1.6 EFFECTS OF COMMUNISM

Away from the bountiful shelves of PEWEX, shopping was a drag to say the least. If your child needed a new pair of shoes, your sister would queue outside the shop for the first two hours and you would do the next three. Even when it came to your turn, you would be lucky if they had the child's size, nevermind the desired style. Sometimes a local shop would put up a sign saying, for example that there would be bars of chocolate on sale at 2pm limited to two bars per person. By 12 noon there would be a large queue waiting complete with the pet dog in case he would count as one person for an extra two bars of chocolate (MacGowan, 31/10/95).

The only thing that was readily available at an affordable price was vodka. Children were given vodka to warm them up in the depths of winter. People would drink the vodka to forget their problems whilst what they were really doing was getting into a state where

they weren't able to question the system they were living under. This, according to many Poles, was the intention of the Communists and for many years they were successful. They have left behind them a nation, with alcoholism as a very great, unrealised problem.

1.7 THE DESIGN SITUATION

After 1989, half of the state companies were put up for sale and have since been privatised. There were not many enthusiastic buyers or investors wanting to involve themselves in "large, outdated and unprofitable enterprises" (Dydyński 1993, p25). A successful area has proved to be independent design studios and freelance designers that have been up and running since the early 'eighties, including *Mass*, *Idea* and *Partner*. With the constant opening (and almost as constant closing-down) of new businesses, these designers find themselves with more than enough work from small private manufacturers looking for packaging sophisticated enough to compete with the influx of Western products. "In the absence of competition they [manufacturers] could sell everything they produced at prices they themselves determined" (Stefanowski, 1990 p43). One of the newest consultancies is *Linea*. I spoke with Włodzimierz Moranski, a graphic designer in a branch of the company based in Łódź, which is Poland's largest urban centre after Warsaw. Their offices are hidden away at the top of an old building. However, business seems to be going very well for them. They mainly design corporate identities and offices for incoming joint ventures. But only a couple of years ago, *Linea* were having teething problems that designers in the West could not imagine nowadays. In 1991, Piotr Soszynski, a founder member of the company said "we lose 80% of our time because we lack such basic tools as photocopier" (Crowley, 1991 p.34). Their problems were not in the design process but in locating quality materials like

snow-white paper and card. Also, there were difficulties in having to oversee designs being executed, due to workers' disregard for quality and speed. Now the interests of Western companies in investing in Eastern Europe is on the up, due to financial incentives from Western governments. Sadly, many just see Poland as a source of cheap labour and raw materials (Stefanowski, 1990 p.42).

1.8 DISTRIBUTION OF PRODUCTS

Nationwide distribution also is a problem with many manufacturers. Products from small companies tend to be available only in the region and surrounding area where they are produced. Large manufacturers like *Fortuna* and *Wedel* enjoy popularity all over the country in most shops but not all of them consistently. The same applies to Western products like *Knorr* and *Maggi*.

All the large Polish companies have been around for years, previously run by the state. Most of them are now joint ventures between Poles and Westerners - the percentage of ownership usually being 51% - 49% to the Polish due to taxation incentives. These products have some sense of brand identification, not so much by appearance but by their name because they would have been the only product available in that field in years gone by. I often found on my travels around the country, that I could find a product that I really liked and would like to buy again. But, to do that, my best chance would be to go to the same shop where I bought it the first time. Chances of my finding it in another shop were quite low and once I was out of that town they were slim indeed. There has been an influx of Western goods, but there is no consistency in where they are to be found "After World War II Poland was cut off from the rest of Europe. Her natural development was interrupted" (Stefanowski, 1990 p.43). Now she is trying to catch up on fifty years of consumerism. The result is an exciting chaos. In some ways, being there is like being in a time warp, until you are confronted with the next McDonald's sign.

Now we are aware of the facts of the situation with which we are dealing, we can attempt to look in depth at the effects this situation is having on the different factors that influence packaging design itself.



CHAPTER 2

NATIONALISM IN ITS MANY FORMS

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When discussing design in a particular country, a subject that is very important is Nationalism and its effect on design in that country. This chapter will look at the major factors in the patriotism-design relationship in Poland and how it has recently become apparent in packaging. After that we will see how the Government is tapping on the manufacturers' patriotism through a scheme called *Teraz Polska*. We will end with an example of a product that has been designed specifically with patriotism in mind and will examine how successful it has been.

2.1 ATMOSPHERE OF NATIONALISM

"Poles have a profound reverence for their long and dramatic history and a keen awareness of their country's rich cultural heritage" (Kovacs, 1984 p.17). This is evident in many ways in Poland. The system of street-naming, for example, is that most streets are named after a historic character, although there is a street in Warsaw named after *Winnie the Pooh*. There are popular cars called the *Polonez* and *Warszawa*. The Polish people take immense pride in their national heroes and this has been magnified in hard times of the past. The greatest works of Polish poetry were produced while Poland formally did not exist. The three poets: Mickiewicz, Slowacki, and Krasinski were all working in exile, while creating works, strong in patriotic feelings and prophetic visions (Dydynski, 1993 p.38). Since then, every single Pole knows these works practically off by heart. During the period of Martial Law from 1981 to 1983 this strong patriotism was apparent in many ways.

- Chopin records were sold out almost everywhere.
Chopin is the very symbol of Polish music. his inspiration often derived from folk dances.
- The Opera House in Warsaw played to a full house every week.
- There were long queues of people waiting to see Andrzej Wajda's *Man of Marble*, a film dedicated to Polish bravery and the Solidarity movement
(Kovacs, 1984 p.17).

Wajda, along with Krzysztof Kieslowski, is a much respected ambassador of Polish cinema. Other heroes include Jan III Sobieski (one of the great kings), Tadeusz Kosciuszko (a household name when it comes to national heroes) and, of course, the current pride and joy - the Pope.

In Krakow, every hour on the hour, the Hejnał, a trumpet based on only five notes, is played from the high tower of St. Mary's church. It was a warning call, played by a heroic guard who, centuries ago, warned Krakow of invaders approaching. As he was sounding the alarm an arrow pierced his throat in midcall and so the tune always breaks off in midbar as a remembrance of all the brave Polish soldiers. The Hejnał is broadcast on national radio each day at noon throughout the country. Nationalism is a big thing in Polish society and, so, it is also reflected in design in similar ways.

2.2 THE NATIONAL EMBLEM

The crowned eagle is the national emblem of Poland and is to be found on coinage, stamps and any legal document (fig.2a-2d).

The crown, a reminder of a more democratic life in the pre-Stalinist era and perhaps hope for the future, had become a symbol of defiance and was banned from the emblem since the fall of Poland five decades ago.(Kovacs,1984 p.18)

So, for a long time there was a bald-headed eagle with a flat head symbolising this proud country. On the new coins distributed in the

last few years, the eagle is happily sporting his regal head-dress again. It is used in the same way as our harp but more often on cigarettes and alcohol. The eagle is also found on newspapers, behind the title. It is a symbol that portrays pride and serenity and is used in products that want to show off their Polishness.

2.3 RED AND WHITE - THE NATIONAL COLOURS

Red and white are very often used together in Poland. Of course red alone means communism but red and white are the national colours. During communist times, colours in packaging were very weak and dull and now that there is a much greater availability of stronger colours, designers seem to have gone mad on the colour red. Many logos from manufacturers are red and white. This is very common in cigarettes but that may in part be due to the influence of the classic *Marlboro* box. When confronted with shelves of Polish packaging, the dominant colour is red. This is not solely due to manufacturers trying to evoke patriotism by using the national colours, rather, it is a combination of all the reasons why we use red. Some packets do want to incite patriotism while others have been inspired by the *Coca Cola* or *Levi's* logo. Then some are just trying to brighten up their appearance after the dullness of the last few decades.

2.4 TYPOGRAPHY

I will try to pinpoint what fonts portray Polishness in the same way that Gothic fonts say 'German' to us or the typefaces rooted in medieval calligraphy suggest Ireland. However instead of identifying particular typefaces I have only been able to draw attention to the characteristics of typography most commonly used in Poland. These characteristics do not relate directly to nationalism but they do have a degree of Polishness about them, perhaps due to their ongoing use in all forms of graphic design.

Hand lettering is a characteristic of Polish poster design - the national art form (fig.3a-3b). by now it has become the form of typography that is the epitome of Poland, a politically repressed society. There is something about the urgency of a hand-written text, that makes it seem like a personal statement of great importance calling for immediate attention. During the time that Solidarity was banned, its whole communication network remained very effective. Pamphlets, posters and leaflets were often in hand-written type and were distributed secretly at night. This system was so efficient that during Martial Law, the sale of paper was banned in order to prevent its possible anti-government use (Kovacs, 1984 p.19). Type resembling hand-writing can be found quite often on packaging (fig. 4 & fig. 38). It is usually used to describe the contents - what flavour or how you just add hot water. I think it makes it seem like a quick message from the manufacturer just for you. Hand-writing, like many fonts in lower case, is very friendly and familiar. The manufacturer seems to be on your side and so you, the consumer trust him.

Another characteristic of typography that is very common, especially on packaging, is outlines. Almost every packet has a typeface with an outline around it - usually in white but not always (fig. 5a-5b & Fig.38). The majority of the time it is the name of the product that has the emphasis on it. Often there is a need for this, due to the simultaneous use of a number of conflicting typefaces and unnecessary information cluttering the front of the pack. Typefaces used tend to be more sans-serif than serif. Individual packets and their design, including typography, will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter 4.

2.5 SOLIDARNOŚĆ

The Solidarity logo is an image that has become the supreme symbol of patriotism in Poland. It is an example of how capable Polish designers really are of producing very clever solutions (fig. 6). The characters in the word *Solidarność* appear to be a crowd of marchers. The letters join together to give the impression of unity in the same cause. They are representing the ten million protesters across the country. The use of blood-red type on a white background (Section 2.3) "not only adds a dynamic visual effect, but also displays the colours of the national flag. The overall effect is urgent, spontaneous, organised and patriotic" (Kovacs, 1984 p.19). The text is hand-written, re-emphasizing the ideas mentioned in section 2.4. I have noticed that this logo due to widespread influence has often been copied by designers. They have developed a font from these letters and so, produce different words made to look like the logo that always catch your attention (Fig. 6a).

2.6 NATIONAL DRESS

The Polish national dress sometimes pops up on labels. The costume varies from region to region but always has black, red and white along with an assortment of other colours. It obviously appears often on tourist products and a few export products also - especially alcohol. Recently, there has been a line of advertisements promoting a low-cholesterol margarine featuring two characters in traditional costumes (fig 7a-7b). They stand in front of a dramatic backdrop of the Polish mountains, each with idiotic grins and a tub of margarine under their arm. When products show the folk dress of Poland, it gives a lighthearted feeling of nationalism - not in the same way as the dignified eagle.

The national dress is about gaiety and festivity rather than the solemnity of the eagle, and so, it is less personal and a more popular image to be used to sell Polish products in other countries. When compared with our use of the Irish *coleen*, the costumed Pole is used a lot more often. They can be found on cheese, vodka, tea, milk and stamps, for example(fig 8a-8b).

2.7 TERAZ POLSKA

In 1993, a programme was organised by the Presidential Offices in co-operation with the Ministry for Economical Collaborations with Foreign Countries, Polish television, the Central Office for the Quality of Goods, the Institute of Consumers Association for Quality and the General Credit Bank. Together, they devised an open competition to find the best Polish products, with the prize being the use of the *Teraz Polska* logo. With this came reductions in advertising, financial help in export-gearred investment and access to international consulting programmes. Although it was an open competition, entrants had to be Polish enterprises that produce goods of world class quality. *Teraz Polska* means *Now Poland* and was introduced to encourage quality in the Polish products struggling on the market. The phrase *Made in Poland* has, for a long time, stigmatised products in Western Europe, but also now in Poland. People think that because a product is produced in the West, it is of a lot better quality. Arguably this is often true because of the resources available to the Western manufacturer. This programme is taking a different angle in trying to promote national character in Polish products. The result is similar to a combination of the *Buy Irish* campaign and the Irish Q mark for quality. The aim was to encourage the introduction of Polish products for export.

The *Teraz Polska* label is a very simple contemporary and attractive design (fig 9). Like the *Solidarność* logo, it derives from the Polish flag, uses handlettering and consists of only two colours - red and white. The logo was displayed on billboards, at bus stops, in magazines and newspapers so that everybody in Poland became familiar with it. After my trip in 1994, it was the one logo that stuck in my mind. I had seen it everywhere but didn't know what it was for until I saw it being proudly displayed on a packet. Now many packs sport the prestigious logo. At the moment in Poland, there is a scandal among the co-ordinators due to some fraudulent activities, so it is not known whether the programme will continue running. Many other competitions have been inspired by *Teraz Polska* and there are very similar logos to be found on packs, including *Polska Żywnosc 199-* which means Polish food awards, or *Product Polski*. Both of these logos are based on the national flag - like the *Teraz Polska* logo. Some also sport *Znak Jakości*, which is a quality stamp from the region in which the goods are produced. So Polish people are being persuaded to take pride in their national produce, and after that hurdle they can tackle the outside world.

2.8 JAN III SOBIESKI - CIGARETTES FOR THE PATRIOT

B.A.T., British American Tobacco, is a company that has been investing in Poland for a few years now. Quite recently they introduced *Lucky Strike* onto the market and they have become very popular. Their advertising campaign used Polish wit, quick one-liners that, when translated into English, don't make any sense, but are very much appreciated by the average Pole as they are very fond of clever words and phrases. *Lucky Strike* cigarettes symbolise America, land of quality cigarettes. They, like all imported cigarettes, are more expensive than Polish cigarettes and so are popular, especially with those who want to show they have money to spend. There is a very large number of different brands of Polish-made cigarettes (fig. 10) and prices range from the

equivalent of about 20p for twenty cigarettes upwards, with quality improving as the price increases. At the top of this bracket is *Jan III Sobieski*. These cigarettes were introduced a couple of years ago by B.A.T. in collaboration with a Polish company. They were designed to be the highest quality in the Polish market with the words *DE LUXE* on every pack. The aim was to give the Poles Polish-made cigarettes of good quality that they can afford. They are available in king size, lights and recently, ultra-lights. Within a year of being on the market, they became the most popular Polish cigarettes. Why? The packets (fig. 11) were designed by a Polish designer who has emigrated from Poland. The king size cigarettes are in a red box with a regal emblem, complete with eagles, a crown and the initials J III S. Above this, is the name of the cigarettes in white giving you the national colours, the bird from the national emblem, and, most importantly, the name. The next most popular cigarettes in the cheap market of Polish brands are named *Mars*. What is Mars? It's another planet! It's a chocolate bar! Whereas Jan III Sobieski was Poland's most celebrated and popular king and hero. The light cigarettes sport the same design only the box is white and the type red. All cigarette packets have the government warning saying *Smoke or be healthy, the choice is yours*. But this is always on the side of the pack in extremely small type along with the tar and nicotine information. The other legal requirements are the bar code and the name and address of the manufacturers. In Poland there is very little awareness of how unhealthy smoking is. The figures for smokers are very high compared to the anti-smoking West. Almost every billboard displays a handsome young man or woman enjoying a cigarette, telling you about the great taste. There is no set price on cigarettes that can be increased by the government every few months. Prices vary from kiosk to shop, resulting in competitive prices and ultimately, cheap cigarettes, even to the average wage.

So in *Jan III Sobieski* cigarettes we see how the formula for evoking patriotism works when the ingredients discussed in this chapter are used. This shows us how Poland, due to her long and proud history, thrives on nationalism and this, in turn, is used to sell products.



CHAPTER 3

SHOPPING IN POLAND

CHAPTER 3: SHOPPING IN POLAND

We should take a look at grocery shopping in Poland and how it differs from shopping as we know it nowadays. Before analysing packaging, it will be helpful to examine the kind of market we are dealing with, and what is available and how it is presented.

3.1 TYPES OF SHOPS

There are basically no grocery chainstores as we know them - like *Superquinn* or *Quinnsworth*. There are a few large supermarkets in the centre of Warsaw but even these are small in comparison to the hypermarkets of Western Europe.

Shopping in Poland today is a far cry from what it used to be but it still has a long way to go. There is more choice for the customer and international products are available to them, at a slightly more expensive price. Shops are on a human scale, which makes the shopping experience more pleasant and less confusing than the intimidating stores of the West. The types of shops can basically be split into three different categories:

- over the counter
- self-service
- kiosks

3.2 OVER THE COUNTER

In these shops, all the products are on display on and behind the counter (fig. 12). You buy what you came to buy and if the shop is going to tempt you to purchase anything extra, it's up to the shop assistant to do so. One of the main functions of packaging, to sell the product, is of no use here. Customers cannot spend too much time deciding what they want, and do not really have the chance to

hold the product and examine it unless they ask, which is usually too much trouble. If you don't know the name of the product you want, you are given a long rod to point it out. Another disadvantage is that if one customer is buying quite a few items, the shop assistant can be held up for quite a while, causing queues to form. But Polish people are very patient when it comes to queuing, which is no surprise. It is something they have been doing everyday for the past few decades.

3.3 SELF-SERVICE

These shops are just a step behind us. There are usually two doors beside each other with a ledge inbetween, holding baskets. the unsaid rule is that you must pick up a basket even if you are only buying a packet of cigarettes. The shop is divided into aisles and there is usually an alcohol counter and a meat counter, where there is over-the-counter service again (fig.13a-13b). There are mostly shelves of stacked produce ready to tempt the customer. In corners where there are no shelves there are usually stacks of goods like mineral water, for example, in the same crates that they were delivered in (fig.14).

A couple of years ago, I saw a documentary on the history of supermarkets in America. It told of how in America in 1936, the first trolleys were brought into the supermarkets. The reason they were introduced was because baskets could only carry a limited amount of items and so they were restricting the customer. At first, people were self-conscious about using them, so shopkeepers hired actors to walk around with trolleys making it look quite normal. However trolleys would not fit into the majority of shops in Poland. There's a fairly big supermarket in every big city that has the facility to have supermarket trolleys, but these trolleys are so small they are more like baskets with wheels.

3.4 KIOSKS

There is a kiosk on nearly every street corner (fig.15a-15b) and there is usually another one beside it. What it sells seems to be entirely up to the owner. They usually have newspapers, magazines and cigarettes. All that they are selling is stuck up on the windows of three sides of the kiosk, so you can't really see in - but they can see you. Kiosks vary in size, shape and prices. One of the reasons they are so popular is because of their competitive prices, so, a lot of time can be spent hopping from one kiosk to another, comparing prices.

3.5 RECYCLING

There are a few recycling routines that Poles have been doing for years, not to be environmentally friendly, but to be economical. If you buy a small bottle of *Pepsi* or *7up*, etc., you must drink it there and then, returning the bottle after the last gulp. You end up paying the equivalent of about ten pence because all you are really paying for is the drink - not the bottle. Also, other glass bottles for beer, mineral water, etc. are returned to the shop when you're buying more. The bottles aren't thrown in to a bottle bank to re-use the glass, they are returned to their companies to be refilled.

Also, grocery shops don't produce bags with their name on them. In fact if you want a plastic bag you usually have to buy it. These are very strong plastic bags that can be used again but the images printed on them are usually very dodgy looking, more like a page out of *Playboy* (fig.16). It's quite amusing to see the elderly people solemnly trodding down the street with a cheap blonde plastered all over the shopping. It is partly due to this recycling of bags that there is a noticeable lack of litter on the streets.

Strangely enough, while you'll get a receipt the size of a newspaper if you are staying in a hotel or booking a ticket, grocery shops don't issue receipts. Some shops, especially kiosks, don't even have tills to produce receipts.

3.6 COMPETING THROUGH PSYCHOLOGY

There is a complex psychology behind shopping. In the West, this has advanced to an art as we, the consumers, have such a wide choice available to us.

- **Easy Access** : Supermarkets make access easy for customers, with large car-parks up to the door, special spaces for disabled people, automatic sliding doors and wide aisles.

- **Full Stock** : Western shops stack their shelves neatly until there is no more room, as this has been psychologically proven to make the customer buy more.

- **Handy** : Everything is available under one roof to save time and hassle for the beloved customer.

- **Own Brands** : Large Western supermarkets produce own brands like *Thrift* and *Yellow Packs*, the theory being that their products cost less because less was spent on packaging. These have been developed as a result of intense market research into the characteristics of potential customers (Sonsino, 1990 p.42).

- **Special Offers** : There are also special offers. Products partake in this game by having coupons, percentages more free, piggyback packs, and the *buy-one-get-one-free* offer. Customers are bombarded with promotional signs from every direction.

It is a lot more peaceful in the typical Polish shop. There is absolutely no psychology involved. There is no target marketing but

just two different categories - Polish products and non-Polish products. Polish products don't seem to compete with each other - because often, there is only one brand being sold in a shop due to poor distribution. Also, many Polish products are hard to distinguish from each other because they are lacking in a precise brand identity. The only way by which they compete with the Western products is price because they are always cheaper than non-Polish products. It is a completely different ball game to the complicated psychological methods of Western supermarkets. Supermarkets in Poland exist because they need to provide people with food and drink. People purchase these products because they need to, not because they want to. There is no effort made to make a shop more accessible to the customer. I've even been to a supermarket that had about fifteen stone steps up to it. Fortunately for customers there were no trolleys.

Shelves are not stocked to the ceiling and packaging calmly tells you what is inside without using promotional devices to persuade you to buy.

There is no such thing as own brands (at the time of writing). One reason for this could be, that so little is spent on existing packaging in general, at present, that manufacturers cannot *spend less on packaging* - the ethos of own brand products.

It is also quieter in the average Polish supermarket. There is no background *trolley* music nor an intercom to announce special offers. There is less pressure being forced on the customer to buy! Buy! Buy!

3.7 WINDOW DISPLAYS

Window display is the art form that has been forgotten in supermarkets in the West but is being practised in every window of shops in Poland. While we are attacked by promotional signs in

windows to catch our attention, in Poland they take pride in stacking packets into arrangements complimented by items such as a vase of peacock feathers or baskets (fig. 17a-17d). I have seen nothing more adventurous, like windows with a certain theme to them, but these window displays are very much different to the window displays of a couple of years before. It was quite normal then, and not unusual now, to see a window with a dusty cloth laid around a pot of dried flowers with a few sorry looking empty packets faded by the sun on certain sides. After such a long time of empty shelves, retailers have become excited by the fact that they have plenty of stock and choice and want to show everybody else. Products are stacked like blocks, creating a colourful window display. Not much attention is paid to what goes beside what - tinned peaches with cans of beer, pasta with packs of coffee. Some displays are made into towers of jars topped off with a bottle. Packets are sometimes placed on their sides which looks a little odd but I think it is done for balance. It's interesting to see the Polish products and the Western products together on display with their contrasting differences apparent.

Another characteristic of advertising goods is display cabinets that pop up between the odd shopfront (fig.18). These contain everything, all put together on glass shelves together with some plastic flowers. Basically they're showing how many different things are available in a certain shop. So, plastic laundry baskets are placed with aftershaves and wood polish, and toothpaste with washing up liquid. They're an interesting feature of polish window display and apparently go back a long way.

CHAPTER 4A

A LOOK AT PACKAGING IN POLAND

CHAPTER 4A: A LOOK AT PACKAGING IN POLAND

When it comes to packaging, Post-Communist Poland is comparable to Post-War Britain, not in actual design terms but in relation to the introduction of new developments to a society who, for so long has had empty shelves and rationing. As I have mentioned before, shoppers were not used to having to decide which brand to buy or which label appealed to them most they could only buy what was available and affordable. Before Poland's entrance into the free market, labels were not designed with legibility and immediate product or brand identification in mind but simply to supply information about the contents (Huddleston, 1990 p.25). Packaging, ten years ago was brown paper packages tied up with string.

This chapter looks at Polish packaging in general with a brief glance at type layout colour and illustration. Also, it examines the problems of maintaining a brand identity and looks at a widespread problem throughout the country - imitative design, where many products and their packaging designs are obviously derived from their Western counterparts. Then there are some other extremely original designs created for the export market. In the second part of this chapter, closer studies of examples will be made, taking all these factors into consideration.

4A.1 THE NEW LEGAL REQUIREMENTS BILL

In the Summer of 1994, a Bill was passed that demonstrated the Polish Government's acknowledgement of the progression of packaging. This Bill gives a list of all information legally required on all packaging put into circulation after the 31 July 1995. Some of the requirements were very important. One point stated that all

perishable goods must have a best-before-end date. The Bill also stated what was not allowed to be printed on packets - words like *zdrowy* and *bezpieczny* and other words and phrases that can be misleading. There was a greater emphasis on nutritional information and ingredients. But most importantly all imported products must have their information and description written in Polish. Although there was a temporary report produced in May of 1993, which became redundant after this Bill was released, this was the first Bill dealing with these issues since 1971.

These are very important points in accordance with customer satisfaction of a product. Before the introduction of this Bill, there were many packets with only English or German on them, which is simply not fair for a person shopping in their own country speaking their own language. Many of the large companies of Western Europe have factories in Poland and they produce their usual packaging, the only modification to their design being the language of the text on the label. but there were many products available that simply didn't bother to change the language on their product. This for me is a sign of how little respect the manufacturer holds for its customer. *Philips* is one example of an electrical goods company that sells its products all over Poland, but Polish is not one of the fourteen different languages to be found on their instructions for product usage.

4A.2 LAYOUT AND TYPE

The overall impression of Polish packaging is quite chaotic. A staggering amount of typefaces are often used on the one label. For example (fig.19), a label from the bottle of a popular cooking oil has seventeen different fonts on it - some san-serif, some serif, together with four different logos including the *Teraz Polska* logo, as well as

the manufacturer's logo and another logo of a cholesterol awareness group. This is an example chosen at random, there are many other packaging designs with the same problem of too many logos. A consistent characteristic of many packets is that the main fonts dealing with the name of the product are very often outlined or have underlying shadow or sometimes both (fig. 20a-20b). Another trait of Polish packaging design is the placement of a word of the text of a label on a diagonal. This can either look as if it is an urgent message, in which case it is effective, or it can look as if it was forgotten and added at the last moment.

4A.3 COLOUR

The immediate impression created by a colour is very important, especially in Western design, because certain colours suggest the contents to us. Through the years we have conformed to a colour coding and we automatically respond to it. Now that Polish designers have an almost free reign on colour (not completely, due to bad printing facilities in many places) many are conforming to the same colour codes as the West due to the fact that Western packaging using those colour codes are available in Poland to set an example. So many packets have colours the same as the contents - like brown for coffee and orange for orange juice. This method is used in the West also as it is a very safe solution regarding colour. However, there are many other products that use a combination of colours that quite simply put you off your food. One is a carton of milk (fig.21) with bright yellow being the main colour, and the second example (fig.22) is a plastic tub of *sour slavonic style soup with dumplings* with a very sickly pink label. An equally sickening photograph of the ingredients adds to the clash. The name on the label is in black and red. My feeling when examining these labels is that many of them, knowing the market

they are in - where they don't have to persuade the customer to purchase, means they are not pushing themselves design-wise. Many packets have colour combinations that are very strange to us. Colours either complement each other or clash when put together. Obviously there are many successful designs with standard colour combinations but for every good one there's another with a puzzling combination. Take the logo for *Biofix* herbal teas (fig. 23). The actual design to me is very appealing, using yellow, red, green and a blue-purple. This is then placed on a hideous brown background with other parts of the box using orange, white, wine and lime green. More thought simply needs to be put into the colours used.

4A.4 PACKAGING *Au Naturel*

Many items are still presented in the same way as they have been for years. Shops still hold brown paper bags containing flour or sugar among their stock. Fresh meat, cheese, vegetables and fruit are only available loosely (fig. 24a-24b). Also eggs are seldom available in cartons. Bread is only available loose with an accompanying sheet of paper. Toilet paper is often in a basket beside the till, sometimes with no packaging at all. If you're buying more than one you can buy them in a plastic bag with *papier toaletowy* repeated all the way down, or sometimes they're available with a string running through the middle of each roll to keep them together. Unlike our toilet paper, theirs is often individually wrapped with a strip of paper. The information is stamped repeatedly on a large sheet of newsprint and cut into strips, regardless of where the information is. This method is quite logical, in my opinion, for something as unimportant yet necessary as toilet paper. There is really only ever one brand of toilet paper in a shop and all paper is the same - very similar to cardboard - and comes in all shades of grey. There are no different colours and patterns available and they are definitely not available 'quilted'.

4A.5 ILLUSTRATION

There is an aspect of packaging design in Poland that contrasts quite noticeably with the packets we're used to - illustration. This seems to be a very popular solution to design problems over there. It can be very attractive on packs, when appropriate. It can also appear very modern and contemporary, but unlike colour and type, it is more "susceptible to the whims of fashion and subjectivity" (Milton 1991 p.48). It can quickly become out of date and a hindrance to the overall design, requiring a redesign in order to keep up with accepted style. One reason why a product may use illustration is that when there is a tight budget, illustration is a lot cheaper than having stylised photography done. But these illustrations on the packs I am dealing with mostly seem to be aimed at children. Many use flat colours similar to animated cartoons. There is a line of milk products that features a boy on one side smiling while drinking through a straw, and on the other side there is a girl with the exact same smile, in the same position - the only thing different being her dress and her hair which has pink bows in it. (fig. 25a & 25b). There are similarly styled drawings on other milk products from this company, taking up whole sides of litre cartons. Judging by the style of these illustrations, they were traced from a photograph. Most milk products are available in *Tetra Pak* cartons as are most juices. Milk is also available in brown glass bottles and plastic bags (fig. 26). These litre sized bags are, in my opinion, the most impractical packaging in Poland, but Poles just say "There's a knack to it".

Although many illustrations are very childlike in style, the puzzling thing is they are not only on products aimed at children. They can be found on pasta packs, dessert sachets, biscuits and snack foods for example. Many of these products have a cartoon character on

each of their packs, be it a dancing cow or unidentifiable little creatures (fig.27). But most are so similar that they are unable to form an identity of their own. Then there is the line of fruit juices called *Donald Duck*. This is a very successful product and is one of the more popular of the many companies in this line. Each carton has Donald Duck's face beside the name but again, this is not just aimed at children. I have spotted it, for example, behind many a bar around the country. Another example of illustration is to be found on the lid of a yoghurt (fig.28). It is a close up view of a laughing girl in great detail that is painted in a style that is, for me, identical to the illustration style of *Ladybird* books in the 'sixties and the 'seventies. One illustration that definitely doesn't work is a bag of frozen chips supporting a giant chip almost leaping off the pack with a huge mouth and crossed eyes, looking as if he's about to eat you rather than the other way around (fig.29). It's very seldom you find a Polish packet with a photograph of the contents. There's nearly always an illustration although some of these are extremely realistic and appetising.

4A.6 BRAND IDENTITIES

As mentioned before, the Polish packaging design situation is pretty chaotic. This means it is very difficult for a brand to have an identity and maintain a place on the shelf. To begin with, there are the companies that have been salvaged from the State whose names have been around for many years, and so, are instantly recognisable for what they produce. These may not be known for their quality, but they are familiar, which means almost as much. Products strive for years, advertising, repeating their names again and again in order to have customer recognition. Once they enter that niche, their visual identity must remain constant in order to have immediate brand identification. However this just isn't happening

with many products. Some don't seem to have a logo, while others have more than one. There's a haphazard way of laying out all the design on a label or packet which often doesn't remain consistent. With no consistency, there can be no immediate brand identification. Packaging is the only tool with which a brand identity may be maintained. *Fortuna*, a drinks and fruit juice company, is just one example of an inconsistent company. Although their name is known throughout the country, they have two logos that are very different from each other, their only similarity being their common use of sans-serif typefaces in upper-case. There are two different logos featuring on two different cartons, although both cartons hold different flavoured drinks and are not the same size, they were produced at the same time for the same market. One logo has an accompanying symbol of a cube with a stalk, signifying fruit in a carton. While the other has no symbol, just the name in an eight sided shape. The first logo is a dark green colour, while the second is white type on a red background. The actual cartons have very different layouts resulting in no continuity whatsoever (fig.30).

4A.7 IMITATIVE DESIGN

A product that is definitely consistent but perhaps lacks originality, is the Polish version of *Jaffa Cakes*. The packet, like the contents, is very like the *McVitie's* version (fig.31). However, unlike *McVitie's* they come in a packet rather than a box. The main text is written in a loose handwritten type and the colours used are exactly the same. Even the logo of the manufacturer *E. Wedel*, is very similar to the *McVitie's* logo, because it has been slightly modified from the original *E. Wedel* logo, using white and yellow and by adding a symbol signifying wheat. This is a prime example of imitation of design from the West, not only for the actual product but in the complete design of the packaging. This situation is widespread

though some instances are more obvious than others. A less obvious example is soups produced by *Winiary* (fig.31a), or cornflakes (fig.38), or, also by *E. Wedel*, imitations of *Twix*, *Milky way*, etc.. *E. Wedel* have been going since the turn of the century and since then established itself as the most prosperous Polish chocolate and biscuit manufacturer. During Communist times it was taken over by the State and was renamed *Dwadziescia dwa lipca* which means *twenty second of July*, the date of the Communist Manifesto, with the *Wedel* signature underneath. After communist times they dropped this name and began using the old name again. They are still very successful, although some say their quality has disimproved greatly. *Cadbury's* and *Suchard* are, at the time of writing, interested in investing in either this company or one of its rivals (MacGowan, 31/10/95).

4A.8 PRODUCTS FOR EXPORT

There are quite a few Polish products that are manufactured primarily for export and the number is constantly increasing. Some of these can afford to be of very high quality because they will be sold for a higher price than normal products on the Polish market, especially when sold in other countries. Prices in Poland are a lot lower than prices in Western Europe, but are constantly inflating. Obviously most products for export are also available in Poland but are mostly bought by foreigners or those that are very well off. One of the most recent products to be introduced is *Królewska* vodka. The design of this bottle is not only nicer than all other bottles in Poland but also any I've seen in Western Europe (fig.32a-32b). It is a tall slender bottle of frosted glass except for a window shaped section made of clear glass. Through this can be seen a neo-gothic, colourful, stained glass depicting a crown, a castle and of course, the eagle. This stained glass is printed on the inside of the frosted

glass on the other side. The type on the bottle is minimal, putting all the focus on the window. The name is in a medieval font that complements the design. The result is beautiful. Other luxury vodkas for export include *Chopin* vodka and another with the same technique, but this time a famous palace in Poland can be seen through the clear glass. All of these are made of frosted glass which is the sign of expensive vodka in the Polish market. There are not many Polish products available on this side of Western Europe so those that are available, tend to represent the packaging design industry of Poland to the Westerners. *Królewska* vodka is a unique and well-designed ambassador for the country, that is well able to compete with any other bottles in the Western market. This example proves that the Polish are very capable of producing fabulous designs of a unique style, when they have the opportunity: the right materials, technology and budget.

So, Polish packaging design does have its own unique characteristics regarding colour, illustration, and typography. However elements of these styles echo the bygone 'sixties and 'seventies that manoeuvred around completely different technology. In Poland, there is a certain element of naivety about many packets, which is not necessarily a bad thing. All packaging nowadays is designed around intense market research and psychology and while this is very logical to a degree, many companies overstep the mark to a point where they are manipulating and misleading the consumer. That is why it is necessary for governments to release Bills similar to the Bill discussed earlier (4a.1). The state of packaging design in Poland is rapidly changing and becoming more and more like the ball game we know here in the west of Europe. Since entering the free market seven years ago, the Polish have been completely exposed to all the

characteristics of Western life and it is beginning to rub off in the packaging design area (4a.6). Polish packaging design is in danger of losing its identity. The second part of this chapter is taking a closer look at three examples of strong products that have been around for a long time and contain a lot of the afore-said naivety. Their designs have only been slightly modified, if even, in recent years.

CHAPTER 4B

CASE STUDIES

CHAPTER 4B: CASE STUDIES

4B.1 MLEKO

Mleko is the Polish word for milk. This product is evaporated, unsweetened milk used for adding to tea or coffee or in baking. This is a well known product throughout Poland and has been going for years. So has the packaging (fig.33). After asking a number of Polish people about this packet design, I found that it has more or less been the same for as long as they can remember. The typeface and logo are definitely the same. If there have been any modifications, they have been very slight. It is famous for the image on the label, of another can pouring into a cup of coffee and on the label of this can is another can pouring into another cup. So in the second can, we see the old design and how it has been modified because, for some reason they have used an old can in a newer image. I would say the reason may be to have the image that all are familiar with and have been buying for years. But surely this would only be necessary if the redesign was completely different to the original label. But the only change to the label has been the introduction of a cartoon character in the place of the symbol while the symbol has moved beside the name. The cup has also been changed as apparently has the nutritional information on the side. It says on the left as always, how it is made and how it is of the best quality. It also recommends how it can be used. Now on the right side, it gives nutritional information and ingredients. The main typeface used is a bulky, friendly font in lower case. The accompanying symbol is a milkmaid, illustrated minimalistically out of shapes. This is white on a red background outlined by a white uncentred circle. The colour in the background of the label is a 'sixties cobalt blue, while the symbol and the information boxes are a bright red. At the bottom right hand corner

of the label is a new symbol also set in a circle, this time in full colour. It is a fully dressed cow with an apron on, and with very good eyesight one can just make out the milkmaid logo on her apron. This symbol conflicts with the other symbol. It looks as though it doesn't belong on the label. The overall feel is 'fifties, with the strong blue and red with white type while this minute symbol consists of full colour and illustration. My guess is that they are introducing this cow as the character to replace the milkmaid symbol. This is a very bad idea because in the process of redesign they should keep the symbol that everybody has been seeing for years and modify it only slightly, while redesigning the whole label without changing the actual concept. Repetition plays a big part in this label with the main words and the name repeated vertically and horizontally around the red information boxes. While this label is quite out of date in comparison to the packaging we are used to its simple design is quite endearing and makes it seem pure and good.

4B.2 KAWA TUREK

Kawa Turek directly translates to be *coffee of the Turk*. It is described by Poles as "like real Turkish coffee only not real coffee" (MacGowan, 31/10/95). It was at its most popular in the 'sixties and 'seventies as a substitute for real coffee as it was ten times cheaper and always available. It is not instant. It is boiled for five minutes with water, seived and milk is added. So when *Nescafé* was introduced into Poland, *Kawa Turek's* popularity diminished. Even so, it was still used very much in large groups of people like hospitals or meetings. *Kawa Turek* has been a household name for decades. It has an aroma of its own which, for many Poles, apparently conjurs up many memories as its characteristic smell of the combination of chicory, barley, rye and of course, beetroot has

never changed. Neither have the colours; although the design of the pack has been changed quite dramatically, the redesigned pack does not seem to have been influenced by any of the incoming Western designs. On the contrary, the influence seems to be more from the Communist era and its simple packaging. The old pack had a Turk's head very simply drawn within a circle. The information beneath that was the description, that it was roasted coffee, in sans-serif neatly spaced upper-case. Beneath that again was the word *Turek* in a larger sized serif typeface. It was a neat little pack that was quite appealing. The redesigned pack (fig.34) still keeps the two colours red and yellow and uses a lot of black in the background of the front. This itself is very different from most packets containing food. The word *Kawa* is larger, as is the illustration. It is not contained in its circle anymore but now it even overlaps some of the type. The word *Turek* looks handwritten in Eastern style (although the *T* is very similar to an old Irish *T*). The Turk has now closed his eyes, grown a moustache, lost his big round chin and grown a big nose which he is using to inhale the aroma of the coffee cup before him. The redesign, in my opinion, is not an improvement on the old one. Perhaps it is the work of a confused designer not knowing in what direction style in packaging is going. But I think the old design was very unique and sophisticated in the market it was in. Strangely enough, the company now producing *Kawa Turek* also produces other teas and coffees in some very sophisticated, top of the market designs using graduated colour, sepia-toned photographs and well thought out use of type. Although this design has not been entirely successful, the concept of retaining the old characteristics of the simplistic designs of the Communist era, is an interesting one.

4B.3 POLMOS VODKA

Polmos are the largest producers of vodka in Poland. They produce different vodkas in different regions and distribute them evenly throughout the country. There are hundreds of different types of vodka in Poland with different volumes of alcohol in each. *Polmos* produce a lot of these, so each label works on its own, the only link to other *Polmos* products being the name featuring somewhere on the label, be it in the small type at the bottom or proudly introducing the vodka. *Polmos* vodka is very cheap, although prices differ for each different type. The labels are straight-forward, no-nonsense, information only. This is because most people going to buy vodka are going to buy *Polmos* vodka so there is no great effort to sell itself. Also, the only imported vodka would be Russian - but Poles would generally not buy Russian vodka over Polish vodka. *Smirnoff* is extremely expensive and where we use the common phrase *pigs will fly!* to say something in particular will not happen, the average Pole can be heard saying *The day that happens, I will buy a bottle of Smirnoff!* The vodkas produced by *Polmos* are known by their own names and each have their own identity, differing in price, taste and alcohol percentage.

Here we take a look at three labels from *Polmos*. The first is *Krakus* vodka (fig. 35). This label features a combination of black, yellow and red. It is a bad print job and the colours have smudged forming an orangey-pink in some spots. There is a blurred, historically dressed man on a skinny, unnatural looking horse. Up in the corner is a yellow and black castle. There is no link between the name and the illustration. The essential information is given on a black band at the top and the bottom of the label.

The next label is more sophisticated (fig.36). It still features the *Polmos* name which is always written in a script typeface. The main colour is silver with a metallic red band featuring the name of the vodka, *Żytnia*, also in silver. Behind this are grains of wheat beside ornate type accompanied by decorative swirls. The colours are simple and classy. The label is straight-forward and proud of what it contains.

The last vodka is *Cymes* (fig.37), which basically features the name in grey above an endearing illustration of a Jewish man giving you the *ok* signal with a smile on his face. The main background colour is graduated blue. On top of this blue are purple stripes that clash with the sepia-toned illustration.

The main reason these labels are so weak is because they don't have to sell themselves. They are similar to packets in communist times - they have no competition from Western products. People are very familiar with them and have been for a long time. Also, they are only sold over the counter so you can only have a close look at the label after you have bought the bottle.

These three different case studies all act as examples of the characteristics of Polish packaging design mentioned earlier on in this chapter. All of them have been in circulation for many years and although they have been modified, they retain the look of packaging design before the invasion of the West. Polish packaging designers need to carry on along this route, designing new innovative packets that still remember that they are Polish, containing factors of Polish packaging design of the past and getting away from the Western designs that have no national identity whatsoever. It is true, the Polish people can learn a lot from

Western design. We have been working for longer with more advanced technology. But they can learn from our mistakes as well as our positive experience. For example, in the past couple of years, Polish beer companies have begun producing beer in cans, while their more advanced neighbour, Germany, is going back to the more environmentally friendly production of beer in returnable glass bottles (Crowley, 1991 p.35).

CONCLUSION

The Western way of life is making its way to Poland. In many ways this is progress and the little luxuries of Capitalist life benefit the average Pole so that their quality of living improves everyday. But is it all good? There is a different way of life over there. Little things are appreciated, people don't moan as much the Polish people seem to have a greater joy of life in many ways. It is only a matter of time before that is lost. This is echoed in the packaging. Before it was simple designs telling you what was inside without any fuss. While packaging these days is shouting at you with loud colours and bold typefaces (ch. 3.6).

Only three years ago the first *McDonald's* was opened; now there is at least one in every city. *Coke* and *Pepsi* are essential drinks and go well with vodka. The English language appears everywhere. That is why it was necessary for the introduction of the Bill (ch.4a.1) making it illegal for a packet to have only a foreign language on it. All bars and night clubs have names in English; also, beer and cigarettes often have words in English. All young people learn English now because they have a better chance of getting a good job if they have English under their belt. Through satellite television and M.tv. they are exposed to the English language everyday.

The Polish people are very strong patriots as we learnt in chapter two. Their history is riddled with a myriad of heroes, writers, poets, artists and composers. It is rich in suffering, oppression, defeat, victory and glory. As we have seen, The Poles take pride in their country and this is echoed in some of their packaging design through colour, typography and the use of the national emblem. This combination has proved very successful with *Jan III Sobieski*

cigarettes (ch.2.8).

As we have seen, the shape of Polish packaging design is in accordance with the shops in which products are being sold. We have dealt with a completely different system of grocery shopping which is not as large and impersonal as the hypermarkets of the West. Even the window displays are very different to what we know. They represent Polish shopping calm, old-fashioned and straight-forward - what you see is what you get.

Polish designers and manufacturers do have a lot to learn in the field of packaging know-how and marketing (Packaging Today, 1991 p.15). Their ability to design with originality is there but it is being suffocated by the influx of sophisticated Western packaging. Many take the easy way out by copying those ideas, as we saw with the example featuring *Jaffa Cakes* (ch.4a.7). But I think this may be beginning to change. At this stage, Polish designers have been exposed reliable designs long enough to have acquired the knowledge to improve on their packaging design skills and develop their own ideas.

“For designers the immediate future will be a time of trial: will they blindly follow Western models or will they, while drawing on worldwide influences, provide elements of their own culture so that Polish design acquires its own identity?” (Stefanowski, 1990 p.43).

We can only wait and see. This paper is only a report of the current situation. In a couple of years, the situation will have dramatically changed again. Ideally, Polish design will have developed an identity of its own, admired throughout Europe for its ingenuity. But then again, perhaps the West will win.

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