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JACEK KUROŃ

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For immediate release

Saturday 5 May marks the anniversary of philosopher Karl Marx's birth in 1818. To commemorate this date, why not watch the extraordinary Web of Stories recordings of Polish political activist Jacek Kuroń as he reminisces about his life, including his involvement with Marxism and communism.

Jacek Kuroń (1934-2004) was born in Lvov (now Lviv, in Ukraine) and was a prominent Polish social and political figure, activist, educator and historian who helped transform Poland's political landscape. Considered by many to be the godfather of the Solidarity trade union movement in Poland, Kuroń attracted national attention in 1965 when he and Karol Modzelewski wrote their *Open Letter to the Party*, a Marxist analysis critiquing the Communist Party. He was imprisoned for three years and, following his release, he continued his opposition to the party and its policies and was imprisoned again in 1968 for his role in encouraging student protests against the government. Kuroń was later a co-founder of the Workers' Defence Committee and became a government Minister of Labour and Social Policy.

In his thought-provoking, fascinating series of clips, Kuroń opens up about the most pivotal moments in his life, for example as when he and Modzelewski wrote their *Open Letter* which led to their imprisonment: *'The text could be analysed from a very Marxist point of view and you could conclude that it could also lead to totalitarianism, but that's a sophisticated task... They managed to intercept the open letter*

before it was published and distributed, and so they restricted themselves to repression which was when we published it openly with our names... at the bottom it said: this is costing us three years, and that's exactly what we got and that's how we found ourselves in prison for the first time.'

He also recounts the moment he began to question Marxism when studying in prison: *'I said to myself right, this means that Marxism is a mistake, it is not true that social conditions shape our awareness... It's also not true that what Marxists refer to as a base is the same thing as what Marxists refer to as a superstructure. So Marxism was rejected.'*

All of Kuroń's insightful, compelling recordings can be watched as a number of short clips ranging in length between one and several minutes, with a fully searchable transcript. All Web of Stories videos are easy to share with friends and colleagues, and may be embedded into personal blogs and websites.

Find out more:
<http://www.webofstories.com/people/jacek.kuron/81>

NOTES FOR EDITORS ABOUT WEB OF STORIES

Everyone has a story to tell. Over time many stories become forgotten, but now Web of Stories offers members of the public the chance to tell their stories for future generations to enjoy. The project is built on the belief that we all have wonderful stories to share, and have family and friends whose tales we would like to hear.

Web of Stories began as an archive of life stories told by some of the great scientists, writers and artists of our time. As the number of stories grew, it became obvious that some were on related topics and that a web was slowly being created of connected stories.

We welcome anyone to come and talk about virtually anything they like. Just like our famous speakers, we hope you will record your stories for others to enjoy.

CONTACT

For more information on Web of Stories or any of our videos please contact the Press Desk on +44(0)20 7323 0323 or press@webofstories.com

Should you wish to refer to Web of Stories and our video interviews please ensure that a link to [Web of Stories](http://www.webofstories.com) is clearly viewable on your site.