

IU students learn underground press methods from Polish dissident

By Mike Leonard

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They huddled over tables in the musty basement of an old house near the Indiana University campus, invisible to the rest of the bustling world nearby.

Some quietly tapped nail points into wooden frames so that they could drive screw heads into hinges. Others helped line the frames up so an elastic band could work like a spring between the top and bottom of the homemade

silk-screen presses.

Fortunately, no one needed to monitor the doors and windows to protect them from the prying eyes of the police or military.

For about a dozen IU students, Saturday provided an opportunity to physically reenact what the Polish underground did more than 30 years ago to print the anti-government posters, pamphlets and newsletters that launched the Solidarity movement and ultimately the overthrow of the Communist government in

that country.

Their teacher for the practical skills in building their basement printing presses was Witold Luczywo, a 64-year-old Pole who was among the primary leaders of the underground movement.

"I'm very surprised they are so enthusiastic," Luczywo said during a pizza break. "This seems to be a great adventure for them."

The electrical engineer who became an underground journalist said he was arrested

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From left, Caroline Krozel, Maria Young, Jason Vincz and Witold Luczywo build a primitive printing press in the basement of a house near the Indiana University campus. Luczywo, a Polish journalist, showed the IU students how to make an underground press similar to those used by the Solidarity movement in the 1970s and '80s, when Poland was under Communist rule.