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Czasy Nowożytne Vol.I, 99-125

2000

Artykuł został zdigitalizowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez **Muzeum Historii Polski** w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Czasy Nowożytne (Modern Times), vol. 1/2000

A periodical devoted to Polish and world history
from the fifteenth to the twentieth century

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Political Repression of the Catholic Episcopate during the Period of Stalinism in Poland

After World War II, the higher ecclesiastical structures in the states of central-eastern Europe found themselves in a very difficult situation. Yet, from the beginning of the communist regime, the position of the Catholic Church fluctuated. This resulted from numerous factors, the most important of which was the role of this community in previous times.¹ The position of the church was considerably strengthened in Poland during the war. The communist government was forced to adhere to a careful policy towards unquestioned social-religious power and to postpone the main debate being a requisite for the organisation of the model Stalinist State. Polish bishops, bearing in mind the doctrinal differences between Christianity and Communism, were convinced that confrontation would be inevitable. From the earliest days of the new socio-political reality they engaged in dynamic clerical activity.²

The realisation of the ecclesiastical tasks required from the Church settlement of its own organisational structures. This was undertaken by Primate August Hlond who was granted special powers by Pope Pius XII. In western areas, the apostolic administrators assumed authority (9 August 1945) and the temporary character of the nomination resulted from the international situation. The TRJN (Provisional Government of National

¹ B. Cywiński, *Tried with Fire: From the Modern History of the Roman Catholic Church in Central-Eastern Europe. ...And you will be persecuted (Ogniem próbowane. Z dziejów najnowszych Kościoła katolickiego w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej. ...i was prześladować będą)*, vol. I, Warszawa 1994, 137-157.

² J. Żaryn, "The Church in Relation to the Communist Regime in Poland." ("Kościół wobec władzy komunistycznej w Polsce") in *Polish people facing violence 1944-1956. (Polacy wobec przemocy 1944-1956)* ed. By B. Otwinowska and J. Żaryn, Warszawa, 1996, p. 180-184.

Unity) did not accept this decision, cancelled the concordat, and accused the Pope of having German sympathies.³

The personal choice of administrators was the consequence of a thorough decision-making process. Primate August Hlond characterised the apostolic administrator in Gdańsk, Rev. dr. Andrzej Wronka in a report of 24th October 1946 addressed to the Secretary of State in the Vatican: "...a dignified and zealous prelate and good and careful administrator. He lives in Oliwa by the cathedral. Religious life under his leadership is gaining momentum. The priesthood is already working running almost normally and the teaching of religion in primary and secondary schools is carried out regularly. (...) Among other organisations the Apostolic Administrator has established and developed 'Caritas', assistance from which benefits both Poles and Germans."⁴

It was not until the conference of May 1946 that the rules regulating the attitude of members of the Episcopate towards current governmental policy were accepted. The Episcopate then consisted of two cardinals, three diocesan archbishops, thirteen titular bishops, five apostolic administrators, thirteen bishop suffragans and three bishops from the former eastern borders.⁵ The bishops could contact the local authorities only on matters regarding their dioceses. General issues concerning relations between the State and the Church fell within the remit of the Plenary Conference of the Episcopate and the Central Commission. One of the instructions indicated that bishops should avoid attitudes that could be perceived expressions of "approval of governmental policy or of collaboration with it."⁶ This apparently also referred to visits paid to the representatives of governmental authority and other undertakings.

The Episcopate frequently states clearly their position on the creation of the basis of the totalitarian state.⁷ For example, the proclamation issued in

³ Ibid., p. 184-185, J. Pietrzak, "Cardinal August Hlond's Activity as a Papal Emissary on the Regained Territories in 1945." ("Działalność kard. Augusta Hlonda jako wysłannika i apieskiego na ziemiach odzyskanych w 1945") in *Our Future (Nasza Przyszłość)*, XLII, 1974, p. 195-249.

⁴ Report of Cardinal A. Hlond, Primate of Poland, for the Secretary of State on the Ecclesiastical Administration in the Regained Territories in P. Raina, *The Catholic Church and the State in Documents from 1945-1989* (*Kościół katolicki a państwo w świetle dokumentów 1945-1989*), vol. I: Years 1945-1959. (*Lata 1945-1959*), Poznań, 1994, p. 52-53.

⁵ B. Cywiński, *Tried with Fire. (Ogniem próbowane)*, p. 31-34.

⁶ W. Kozub-Ciembroniewicz, J. M. Majchrowski, *Modern Political History of Poland: Sources. (Najnowsza historia polityczna Polski. Wybór źródeł)*, Part IV 1945-1958, Kraków 1993, p. 108.

⁷ B. Cywiński, *Tried with Fire. (Ogniem próbowane)*, p. 31-34.

September 1946 was addressed openly against the enemies of the church. Following the fixed election of January 1947, a proclamation postulating the organisation of the democratic state was printed. At the same time, there were protests against the human enslavement activities of the communist government. In a pastoral letter of 28th September 1947, bishops declared themselves against the continuous atheism of youth, and the censorship and blackmail imposed on practising Catholics. It brought about an attack on the governmental machinery following suggestions from the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Polish Workers' Party (BP KC PPR). The Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz threatened the Episcopate that all indications of hostility will be severely punished.⁸

The period of fluctuating policy towards the Catholic Church in Poland ended in autumn 1947. However, this did not mean that before then there were no tensions between the new authorities and the Episcopate. Yet they were not so evident from outside and did not carry any noteworthy features. From autumn 1947 bishops could notice that the secular authorities would be consistently aiming at the lowering of the position of church in Poland and would not refrain from using extreme methods in their battle to achieve this.

The case of the detention of Bishop Suffragan Stanisław Czajka from Częstochowa may be quoted as an example. At the end of 1945 and the beginning of 1946, troops of the independent underground who had been jeopardised by the bishop's arrest, concentrated around Częstochowa. The adjacent woods were the scene of fights between military forces, militia and the security service. The party authorities accused the ecclesiastical hierarchy of stirring anti-democratic sentiment among the public. There were even special conferences with the Częstochowa bishops: the diocesan Teodor Kubina and titular Stanisław Czajka. There was a crucial moment of tension during last days of April 1946. Militia from the security service (UB) blocked the retired priests' home on ul. 3 Maja, maintained by the Częstochowa Diocesan Curia. Bishop S. Czajka who was suspected of co-operation with the organisations considered illegal, was captured and subsequently put under house arrest.⁹ It is probably the first example of the house arrest of a Catholic bishop in Poland after World War II. Thus one cannot agree with the information of Henryk Dominiczak that the first imprisoned member of the Episcopate was the Chełmno bishop Kazimierz Kowalski.¹⁰ He was indeed

⁸ J. Żaryn, *The Church. (Kościół)*, p. 188-191.

⁹ Archive of Modern Files in Warsaw (Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie (AAN)), Central Committee of the Polish Workers' Party (KC PPR), no. 295/IX-152 p. 46; *Ibid.*, no. 295/VII-181, p. 121.

¹⁰ H. Dominiczak, *Security Services in the Fight against the Catholic Church. (Organy bezpieczeństwa w walce z Kościołem katolickim)*, p. 232-233.

taken into custody in 1950, but this kind of incident had already happened a few years earlier in Częstochowa.

On 2nd May 1946, Bishop S. Czajka addressed a protest to the president of KRN (National People's Council) B. Bierut: "On 26th April this year," wrote the bishop, "at 9.30, I was deprived of my liberty by the UB in Częstochowa. I was imprisoned for thirteen hours, together with a group consisting of several priests, nuns and lay people." Although he announced that he was a bishop, that his presence in the curia was necessary, and that the unjustified detention would be given publicity, he was not released. This happened only after the personal intervention of the diocesan bishop. According to the him, the security service had infringed articles 97 and 114 of the March Constitution. Bishop Czajka added also that his imprisonment by the UB "was not justified by high necessity and has given rise to an unfriendly attitude in Catholic society towards the state authorities, which does not seem to be in the interest of the Polish State."¹¹

The further vicissitudes of Bishop Czajka with reference to the arrest are not known. Nevertheless, other bishops did not have any doubts that the state authorities might apply similar methods also in relation to other members of the Episcopate.¹²

In the political circumstances following the creation of "Kominform", Colonel Julia Brystygierowa presented in the Ministry of Public Security (MBP) the strategy of a struggle against the Church in Poland. Its basic directions were valid not only during the period of classical Stalinism but also during the coming decades. Brystygierowa characterised in her presentation some members of the Episcopate:

"The main role in Polish Episcopate is played Cardinal Hlond, Primate of Poland. He represents the distinctly pro-German and pro-American policy of the Vatican. Hlond has been able to assemble the greater part of the bishops. Last year he appointed many of his own people to bishoprics (Wyszyński in Lublin, Klepacz in Łódź, etc.). Hlond as the head of the Episcopate, together with Choromański (the

¹¹ AAN, the Ministry of Public Administration (Ministerstwo Administracji Publicznej (MAP)), no. 993, p. 19.

¹² Soon after this event the Plenary Conference of the Episcopate of Poland took place in Jasna Góra from 22nd to 24th May 1946. In an official statement the bishops expressed their concern over the situation in Poland. They protested against abuse affecting whole families and challenges to the freedom of the individual, and against killing unsupported by a legal case. They appealed to those responsible for the state of affairs and the violations to "not bring misfortune on the harassed homeland with their cruel actions." *Pastoral Letters of the Episcopate of Poland 1945-1974. (Listy pasterskie Episkopatu Polski 1945-1974)*, Editions du dialogue, Paris 1975, p. 38-39.

Episcopate Secretary), has been conducting a very active and open campaign against the Polish government that has not been accepted by him so far."¹³

With regard to the intensification of the activities of the security service aimed at the infiltration of clerical circles, Brystygierowa postulated manipulation of the "anti-Episcopal and anti-Vatican attitude of many Polish priests" during the recruitment of agents.¹⁴ In this context it is worth emphasising the correct conclusion drawn by Andrzej Paczkowski who considered the year 1947 as the end of a stage in the relations between the State and the Church, writing, "the time of relative tolerance and certain symbolic gestures, always accompanied by attacks and vexations, is drawing to a close."¹⁵

Soon, on 11th January 1948, Jakub Berman used a phrase which was to become rather characteristic, in a paper delivered at the assembly of KC PPR: "The Vatican has been, and will continue to be, an agency of American imperialism."¹⁶ This kind of qualification was a typical element of the party's propaganda during the coming years. The beginning of 1948 was a time of change in the attitude of the Church. The crucial element diminishing its influence was the battle against the Episcopate in its support of the Holy See.

Before long a convenient pretext was found. It was the letter of 1st March 1948, written by Pope Pius XII to the German bishops. The imprecise parts of the letter put the Polish Episcopate in a difficult position and state and party authorities took this opportunity to weaken the social prestige of the bishops. At a meeting of the secretariat of KC PPR held on 7th May it was stated that "the proclamation of the Pope may play a role in the fight against Catholic reaction with regard to limiting its influence and creating internal divisions similar to those of the Byrnes' campaign in our battle against Mikołajczyk."¹⁷

¹³ Briefing from 13-15 October 1947 in: *The Security Service from 1944 to 1956: Tactics, Strategy, Methods. Part I: 1945-1947. (Aparat bezpieczeństwa w latach 1944-1956. Taktyka, strategia, metody. Część I. Lata 1945-1947)* ed. A. Paczkowski, Warszawa 1994, p. 127.

¹⁴ Briefing from 13-15 October 1947, p. 134.

¹⁵ A. Paczkowski, *Fifty years of the History of Poland (Pół wieku dziejów Polski 1939-1989)*, Warszawa 1995, p. 204-205.

¹⁶ AAN, KC PPR, no. 295/VII-216, k. 17. A similar statement may be found in J. Brystygierowa's paper "The Clergy's Attack and our Opinion" ("Ofensywa kleru a nasze zdanie"). See Briefing from 13-15 October 1947 in *Security Service part I*, p. 126.

¹⁷ Quoted after A. Dużek, *The State and the Church in Poland from 1945 to 1970 (Państwo i Kościół w Polsce 1945-1970)*, Kraków 1995, p.16. More about the campaign referring to the letter of Pius XII may be found in. J. Żaryn, *The Church*

With respect to the papal letter, different kinds of social support for the state authorities were organised. The secretariat of KC PPR prepared the details of the action. They were presented in a top-secret letter of May 1948 addressed to the First Secretaries of the KW PPR. The campaign which was organised was aimed mostly at "revealing Vatican policy to the whole society, especially devout Catholics, (...) undermining the social confidence towards the reactionary political attitude of the Polish Episcopate and persuasion of the society, and particularly its Catholic circles, of the mischief of *political Catholicism*."¹⁸

An edict of July 1949 issued by Pope Pius XII prohibiting, under pain of excommunication, affiliation and support for the communist party was used in the same way. Accusations against bishops were made in communist propaganda with a view to destroying them mentally. A division between good and bad bishops was to prepare the background for the subsequent talks with the Episcopate, this time within the framework of the Mixed Commission.¹⁹

In 1948, the MBP focused on the development of structures involved in the work of the clergy (this word being pejorative at that time) which was confirmed by the materials from the briefing of the heads of the WUBP and staff members from Department V (March 1948).²⁰ They were aimed at making sharp divisions among the clergy and breaking its unity with the Episcopate. During a briefing of 22nd December 1948, J. Brystygierowa claimed that the "low level priests bear a grudge against the bishops for their intense anti-governmental policy. Our task is to prevent the unification of the gaps among the clergy; we have to enhance the antagonisms."²¹

The course that was to be taken was confirmed by the words of minister Stanisław Radkiewicz at a meeting of the active members of the MBP that took place from 23rd to 25th March 1949: "With regard to the clergy we should consistently attempt to isolate their reactionary militant part from the rank and file and the low-level clergy, with a view to avoiding political

(*Kościół*), p. 200-201. From the government's position, the problem was analysed among others by W. Pomykała, *A Church of Silence? The Roman Catholic Church in the Polish People's Republic. (Kościół milczenia? Kościół rzymskokatolicki w Polsce Ludowej)*, Warszawa 1967, p. 58-64.

¹⁸ AAN, KC PPR. No. 295/VII-7, p. 296-298.

¹⁹ J. Żaryn, *The Church (Kościół)*, p. 202.

²⁰ *The Security Service from 1944 to 1956: Tactics, Strategy, Methods. Part II. Years 1948-1949. (Aparat bezpieczeństwa w latach 1944-1956. Taktyka, strategia, metody. Część II. Lata 1948-1949)* ed. A. Paczkowski, Warszawa 1996, p. 30-61.

²¹ Minutes from the briefing of December 22nd 1948, in: *The Security Service Part II (Aparat bezpieczeństwa Część II)*, p. 114.

contest between them and the government."²² Henryk Chmielewski, the deputy-head of Department V of the MBP then suggested that reconnaissance work of the UB should include the families of priests. This also included bishops: "In one of the offices a bishop's (Zygmunt Choromański's) nephew was working." Another example was that of a bishop whose name was not provided by Chmielewski and who was characterised in the following way: "We have a bishop, a man, who has become extremely active recently. We have started to search for his family and we find out some very interesting things. One brother, a German soldier, Stamdeutsh, has been somehow rehabilitated, a second brother is a German soldier and member of SA, and a third brother has been imprisoned by us."²³ For that reason the deputy-head suggested conceiving a network of agents reaching "the dispatching centres." He counted on the recruitment among the hierarchy of the Catholic Church also encompassing bishops.²⁴

Development of the programme of surveillance involving members of the Episcopate was soon undertaken by J. Brystygierowa. At a briefing of the MBP on 28th July 1949 concerning the examination of the bishop curia she said: "We have got only 38 bishops and all of them should be well known to us, not only when they leave for the inspections outlined in the reports, but also their private relations, real political allegiances, who rules, and whether the bishop is only a figurehead with real government being carried out by other chancellors dignitaries. Concerning the life of curia in general, only in a very few cases do we possess such information."²⁵ Moreover, the head of Department V stressed that "the unity of the clergy should be thoroughly examined. We have to know all the numbers of the telephones at the curia's disposal, the registration numbers of cars belonging to bishops and curia, we have to know where the bishop lives privately, where he leaves for the weekend, and we have to know the layouts of the curia's and the bishop's premises. These constitute important information that will be necessary someday...."²⁶

²² Materials from the council of the active members of MBP from 23rd to 25th March 1949 in: *The Security Service. Part II. (Aparat bezpieczeństwa. Część II.)*, p. 132. Following B. Cywiński one may pay attention to the tactics of "driving a wedge" between the secular people and the clergy, the clergy and the bishops, the whole Church in Poland and the Vatican. B. Cywiński, *Tried with Fire. (Ogniem próbowane)*. p. 61.

²³ Materials from the council of the active members of MBP from 23 to 25 March 1949 in: *The Security Service. Part II. (Aparat bezpieczeństwa. Część II.)*, p. 137.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

²⁵ Briefing of 28 July 1949 in: *The Security Service. Part II. (Aparat bezpieczeństwa. Część II.)*, p. 159.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

One does not know what caused the discrepancy in the notes taken by Bolesław Bierut on the proceedings of the MBP from 28th to 29th October 1949. The extract concerning J. Brystygierowa's statement reads as follows: "The most important step forward with reference to the clergy, is that we have a serious spy ring among the higher structures."²⁷ In the draft of his speech delivered on the second day of the meeting, Bierut wrote "lack of a spy ring among the higher ecclesiastical hierarchy."²⁸

The clear-cut policy towards the church started in spring 1949 when the conflict with the opposition PSL and underground organisations ended and the PPS was abolished. By this stage Bishop Stefan Wyszyński had been made Primate of Poland.²⁹ The turn in the anti-clerical policy of the communist authorities involved an attempt to involve the whole society. At a meeting of the Organisational Office of KC PZPR on 7th May 1949, Brystygierowa noticed, "On the basis of the bishops' statements one may observe that they do not regret shutting down nurseries as much as the fact that for the first time the masses rise to speak."³⁰

Together with the discredit of the Church as a result of propaganda, the activities of the Common Commission (the state and the Episcopate) followed. Yet in spite of this, the state authorities continued the attack. The Church was deprived of the right to organise associations, to conduct charitable activity within *Caritas* and to possess non-hereditary properties. Constant pressure upon the Episcopate was then possible due to the appointment of the group of *priest-patriots* (November 1949). In the name of the so-called democratisation of the internal relations in the Polish Church and the idea of social equality, they aimed to take over the important ecclesiastical posts, the appointment of which depended on the primate and bishops. The Episcopate was forced to recognise the priest-patriots which, as Jan Żaryn notes, was a convenient base for the authorities, allowing them to penetrate the Church from within. In the long term, the bishops appeared to be under permanent pressure from the growing demands of these priest-patriots.³¹

As a result of the works of the Mixed Commission and the cardinal's strong support for the idea of finding a *modus vivendi*, an agreement was signed on the 14th of April 1950. It did not receive the support of the whole

²⁷ The council of the active members of MBP from 28th to 29th October 1949 in: *The Security Service. Part II. (Aparat bezpieczeństwa. Część II.)*, p. 205.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 211

²⁹ B. Cywiński, *Tried with Fire. (Ogniem próbowane)*. p. 56-59.

³⁰ AAN, KC PZPR, Political Bureau, no. 8, k. 58.

³¹ J. Żaryn, *The Church. (Kościół)*, p. 196-197.

Episcopate and was negatively received by the Vatican.³² The agreement did not avert further repression. Following the collection of signatures under the Stockholm appeal, arrests and trials of priests connected with the leaders of some dioceses took place. The trials were organised in such a way that the bishops were to answer for "the crimes". The accused were often either employees of the curia or those occupying crucial positions in dioceses. This action was the first step in initiating investigations against the diocesan bishops.

During the period of Stalinism, in the political struggle against the Episcopate, the issue of religion taught in schools was very important. One of the pretexts was the collection of signatures under the Stockholm Appeal (May-June 1950). The church authorities did not agree to support this communist initiative, which was consistent with the position of Pope Pius XII. The secretariat of KC PZPR laid the responsibility for the violation of the agreement on the Episcopate. *Trybuna Ludu* criticised Bishop Ignacy Świdorski from Siedlce and Bishop Jan Stępa from Tarnów. As a consequence of not signing the appeal, around five hundred of teachers of religion were dismissed from schools. The declaration made by Bishop Choromański on the Christian attitude of church concerning war and peace did not prevent it. Thus the Episcopate was once again humiliated.³³

In this situation, the Episcopate prepared the list of losses incurred by the Church in the post-war period and the state authorities started to organise plans presenting "the disloyal, two-faced policy of the Episcopate."³⁴ One such plan was Bishop Kaczmarek's detention (20th January 1951) and the withdrawal of the Apostolic Administrators from the regained territories.

Several days after Bishop Kaczmarek's arrest, the government issued a statement on "the termination of the state of emergency in the western lands by the liquidation of the apostolic administrative agencies." This decision was taken together with the arrest, removal from the diocesan areas and detention

³² B. Cywiński, *Tried with Fire. (Ogniem próbowane)*. p. 69-76. Extensive commentary on this subject has been recently published by J. Żaryn, see "An Unknown letter from Primate Stefan Wyszyński to the Vatican on the so-called agreement with the government of April 14 1950" ("Nieznany list prymasa Polski Stefana Wyszyńskiego do Stolicy Apostolskiej w sprawie tzw. porozumienia z rządem z 14 kwietnia 1950 roku"), ed. J. Żaryn, *The Church and the Authorities in Poland (1945-1950) (Kościół a władza w Polsce (1945-1950))*, Warszawa 1997, p. 332-349.

³³ H. Konopka, *Religion in Schools of the Polish People's Republic: Issue of Religious Education in State Policy (1945-1961)*. (*Religia w szkołach Polski Ludowej. Sprawa nauczania religii w polityce państwa (1945-1961)*), Białystok 1997, p. 90-103.

³⁴ H. Konopka, *Religion... (Religia...)*, p. 106-111.

in "isolated places" of five diocesan administrators from Gdańsk, Wrocław, Opole, Gorzów and Olsztyn. Hindering the lawful administrators from contacting the local clergy, the authorities, using pressure and intimidation, forced the chapters to appoint preferred priests for the position of so-called capitular curates. Contrary to expectations, these priests were their missions by the primate in order to protect five dioceses from impending schism. Primate Wyszyński's decisions taken together with those of Cardinal A. Sapieha and other members of the Episcopate, were accepted by Pius XII. At the same time, the Pope appointed the former administrators as titular bishops. However, this was not accepted by the authorities and the bishops were not permitted to assume their position. In fact they themselves restrained the possibility of normalisation of the ecclesiastical situation in the regained territories. They aimed exclusively at the preservation of the position of capitular curates and thus infringing the internal unity of priests in the huge area of the five western dioceses of Poland.³⁵

One of the capitular curates designated by the state authority, Rev. Kazimierz Lagosz, became Archpresbyter of the Wrocław decanat. Until the period of his imprisonment (October 1949 - February 1950) he was a person admired and entrusted by the church authorities. The head of the Provincial Office of the Public Security (WUBP) in Wrocław, Lieutenant-Colonel Jan Zabawski, decided to charge Rev. Lagosz and others with the theft of precious articles left by the Germans to cause their psychological breakdown. During the investigation, he was *prepared* to take on the power in diocese. Thus, he took over the post of the apostolic administrator Rev. Karol Milik and, in defiance of the law, used the title of the diocesan of the Wrocław archdiocese. Only at the end of 1956, was Rev. Lagosz forced by the released Cardinal Wyszyński to resign from his illegally obtained position.³⁶

³⁵ B. Cywiński, *Tried with Fire. (Ogniem próbowane)*. p. 79-80.

³⁶ S. Wójcik, *Religious Education under Totalitarianism: A Case Study of the Apostolic Administration in Lower Silesia from 1945 to 1961. (Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego. Na przykładzie Administracji Apostolskiej Dolnego Śląska w latach 1945-1961)*, Wrocław 1995, p. 38-44; by the same author "The Life and Work of Rev. Kazimierz Lagosz (1888-1961)." ("Życie i działalność księdza infułata Kazimierza Lagosza (1888-1961)") in: *The Catholic Church in Lower Silesia in the Fifty Years after World War II. (Kościół katolicki na Dolnym Śląsku w powojennym 50-leciu)* ed. I. Deca and K. Matwijowski, Wrocław 1996, p. 87-99; J. Żaryn, "The Security Machine in the Fight against the Catholic Clergy 1945-1949: An Outline." ("Aparat bezpieczeństwa w walce z duchowieństwem katolickim 1945-1949 (zarys problemu)") in *The Mysterious Face of the Communist System: Origins of an evil. (Skrzute oblicze systemu komunistycznego. U źródeł zła...)* ed. R. Bäcker and P. Hubner, Warszawa 1997, p. 117-118.

Rev. A. Wronka was also among the apostolic administrators of the regained territories who were dismissed summarily from their posts with the decision of 26th January 1951 issued by the communist authorities. The following day, the Gdańsk consultants under pressure from the UB elected as the capitular curate Rev. Jan Cymanowski.³⁷ Moreover, the primate provided the priests suggested by the diocesan consultants with canonical jurisdiction (Rev. Emil Kobierzycki in Opole, Rev. Tadeusz Załuczowski in Gorzów, Rev. Wojciech Zink in Olsztyn, and Rev. Jan Cymanowski in Gdańsk). He informed Bierut about this decision in a letter of 6th February 1951. At the same time he asked for "the issuing of a regulation ceasing the supervision and forced stay of the previous apostolic administrators of the western areas and their general vicars."³⁸ According to Hansjakob Stehle, the appointment of the priests chosen by the state officers as the capitular curates testified to the tentative change of "Wyszyński's compromise, from an historical example of good will into a tool in the battle against the Church."³⁹

The administrative pressure on the teaching of religion in schools was mostly initiated after the campaign concerning the Stockholm Appeal. At the beginning of the 1950s this caused considerable reduction in numbers of schools which provided religious education.⁴⁰ Against this policy the bishops from the Katowice diocese that particularly suffered from this action protested. On 27th October 1952, Bishop S. Adamski issued a proclamation objecting to the removal of religion from schools. He appealed to the worshippers to collect the signatures under a petition for the restoration of religion in schools.⁴¹ The undertaking was successful as about 70 000 signatures were gathered and delivered to Warsaw by Bishop J. Bieniek. In the meantime, on 3rd November, the security services invaded the Katowice curia searching for the letter. Bishop Herbert Bednorz was then arrested and held, as it later turned out, for almost a month on suspicion of having organised the petition. A further consequence was the decision of the Special Commission for Combating Corrupt Practises and Sabotage (*Komisja*

³⁷ S. Bogdanowicz, *The Bishop of Gdańsk Józef Kazimierz Kluz (Józef Kazimierz Kluz biskup sufragan gdański)*, Gdańsk 1996, p. 10-11.

³⁸ Primate S. Wyszyński's Letter of February 6th 1951 addressed to President Bierut on the ecclesiastical organisation in the regained territories in P. Raina *The Church (Kościół)*, p. 285. See also A. Kopiczko, *The Warmia Church and Religious Policy after World War II. (Kościół warmiński a polityka wyznaniowa po II wojnie światowej)*, Olsztyn 1996, p. 34-43.

³⁹ H. Stehle, *The Secret Diplomacy of the Vatican. The Papacy in the Face of Communism (1917-1991)*. (*Tajna dyplomacja Watykanu. Papiestwo wobec komunizmu (1917-1991)*), Warszawa 1993, p. 226-228.

⁴⁰ H. Konopka, "Religion." ("Religia"), p. 143-144.

⁴¹ A. Grajewski, *Exile. (Wygnanie)*, Katowice 1990, p. 64.

Specjalna do Walki z Nadużyciami i Szkodnictwem Gospodarczym) forbidding for next five years Bishop Adamski to remain on the Katowice diocese because, it was suggested, "in autumn of 1952 in the area of Katowice he participated in activity threatening the social interest of the Polish state."⁴² Also the titular bishops, Herbert Bednorz and Juliusz Bieniek, were given an order to leave their diocese. Bishop Adamski was taken to the institution led by the Ursuline nuns in Sipnica in the region of Szamotuły, Bishop Bieniek was put into a home for retired priests in Kielce and Bishop Bednorz into the house of nuns of St. Mary near Poznań. All of them were under UB surveillance. At the same time the authorities refused to recognise any of the four priests suggested by the church for the post of vicar general and annulled the election of Rev. Karol Skupin. Eventually, the position was taken up by the parish-priest from Syrynia, Rev. Filip Bednorz, the brother of the dismissed bishop and the deputy-head of the Main Board of the Priest Committee by ZBoWiD. The members of the chapter, who had earlier been investigated for many hours, took the formal decision on 25th November. Rev. F. Bednorz, not awaiting legal proceedings, took an optional oath in PWRN in Katowice. The primate accepted the decision of the capitular curate and again prevented the possibility of the subsequent schism.⁴³

One of the most spectacular events concerning the pressure imposed by the state authorities on the Episcopate, was the attack on the authorities of the Kraków archdiocese. In mid-November 1952 the security service searched a house belonging to the curia and found works of art taken over and stored after the war, together with several thousand dollars. The five priests working in the curia were arrested, as were Archbishop Eugeniusz Baziak and Titular Bishop Stanisław Rospond. Accusations were made of espionage in the curia and of illegal trade in foreign currencies.⁴⁴ On behalf of the Episcopate, on 12th December Bishop Choromański issued a statement in which he condemned the participation of the clergy in the underground activity and blamed the propaganda suggesting that this kind of anti-state action had been undertaken by the church. In this way, the appointment of a "priest-patriot" in another diocese was avoided. The state authorities accepted the nomination of the Episcopate and the Bishop Franciszek Jop became diocesan bishop.⁴⁵

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁴³ A. Dudek, *The State. (Państwo)*, p. 30-31; H. Konopka, *Religion. (Religia)*, p. 135-136; P. Raina, *Cardinal Wyszyński: Imprisonment. (Kardynał Wyszyński. Losy więzienne)*, vol. II, Warszawa 1993, p. 42-43.

⁴⁴ A. Dudek, *The State. (Państwo)*, p. 31.

⁴⁵ According to canonical law, Archbishop E. Baziak was still the Lwów Metropolitan. Since the death of Cardinal A. Sapięha, he had been an apostolic administrator in the Kraków archdiocese. Bishop Jop became there a capitular

The five priests from Kraków who were arrested in November 1952, were tried from 21st to 26th January 1953 and were finally charged with financial embezzlement and espionage for foreign service. The death and life sentences provoked the attacks against the Kraków curia and the whole Episcopate. Primate Wyszyński did not obtain his passport for the trip to Rome to receive his newly conferred title of cardinal. The "priest-patriots" from the Central Commission for Priests (*Główna Komisja Księży - GKK*) in ZBoWiD also became more active and demanded some personnel changes in curias.⁴⁶

What was referred to as "the trial of the priest Lelita and other agents of the American spying service" took place before the introduction of an edict issued by the state council on 9th February concerning the allocation of clerical positions. The rules applied formerly were to be legally ratified. As Antoni Dudek stressed, the imposed decree meant the end of the organisational independence of the church. The state authorities gained a free right to shape personal policy in dioceses. In a short time they started to call the bishops into the PWRN (Presidium of the People's Provincial Council) and demanded the promotion of the "priest-patriots."⁴⁷ The arduous talks should be also analysed in terms of the penalties imposed on the Episcopate.

One of the PAX pressure instruments against the church was to be the Commission of Ecclesiastical and Lay Catholic Members (*Komisja Duchownych i Świeckich Działaczy Katolickich - KDiŚDK*) created in October 1953 by the Polish Committee of the Popular Front (*Ogólnopolski Komitet Frontu Narodowego*). From 1953 to 1956 it assembled a certain percentage of the diocesan priests.⁴⁸ One cannot say that all the priests

curate, being at the same time the titular bishop in Sandomierz. H. Konopka, *Religion. (Religia)*, p. 135.

⁴⁶ J. Żaryn, *The Church. (Kościół)*, p. 208-209; P. Raina, *Cardinal. (Kardynał)*, p. 50-51.

⁴⁷ A. Dudek, *The State. (Państwo)*, p. 32, see R. Gryz, "Personnel Policy of the Stalinist Authorities towards the Clergy of the Kielce Diocese from 1953 to 1956." ("Polityka personalna władz stalinowskich wobec duchowieństwa diecezji kieleckiej w latach 1953-1956") in *The Kielce Diocesan Magazine (Kielecki Przegląd Diecezjalny)*, LXXI, 1995, no. 6, p. 598-662.

⁴⁸ A. Dudek, "Cassocks Serving the Polish People's Republic." ("Sutanny w służbie Peerelu") in *The Chart (Karta)*, 1998, no. 25, p. 111; K. Kowalczyk, "From History of Ecclesiastical Commissions and Secular Catholic Members in Koszalin (1953-1956)." ("Z dziejów Komisji Duchownych i Świeckich Działaczy Katolickich w Koszalinie (1953-1956) in *Przegląd Zachodniopomorski* vol. III (XLII), 1998, no. 3, p. 145; R. Gryz, "The Government Policy towards the Catholic Church in the Kielce Province (1945-1956)." (Polityka władz państwowych wobec Kościoła katolickiego w województwie kieleckim (1945-1956)) in *Modern History (Dzieje Najnowsze)*, XXX, 1998, no. 1, p. 170.

belonging to the organisation were at the disposal of the state authorities. It is worth emphasising that the initiative displayed by some "priest-patriots" was sometimes contradictory to the policy of the lay authorities. The most severe interference of KDiŚDK referred to the personnel changes. For instance, it was attempted to force Rev. Zygmunt Szelażek, considered by the authorities to be the diocesan bishop of the Gorzów diocese, to accept a candidate for the post of vicar general. This requirement exemplified the strongest personal pressure towards the Gorzów curia in the history of the Koszalin KDiŚDK.⁴⁹

An important part of the operational work executed by staff in the units for religious matters was the examination of clergy files. The materials collected made it possible to individualise the policy. In the archive of the former KC PZPR in Warsaw there was a file entitled "Profiles of the Episcopate members" (*Charakterystyki członków Episkopatu*). Among thousands of profiles of priests prepared by the local agendas of the Office for Religious Affairs there were also files describing certain bishops. In one of them the Bishop of Częstochowa (died 13.02.1951) with the identification card 138/Kiel. was described in the following way:

"(...) Work and activity:

Before the war - Bishop of Częstochowa. Active member and supporter of social nationalistic organisations.⁵⁰

During the war - Bishop of Częstochowa. Conciliatory towards the Germans (his sister and her husband were to be volksdeutsch).

After the war - Bishop of Częstochowa, lived at Al. NMP 54.

Report on his activity:

Does not participate in social life, does not belong to any organisation. Passive attitude towards the Municipal National Council (Miejska Rada Narodowa-MRN). Has considerable influence on society; however, might be described as inactive. In sermons not hostile; nevertheless, stresses the importance of faith in the life of a nation. Passive towards the government declaration of 20.03.1949. His withdrawal from active [political-R.G.] life might be explained by his poor health. This year he spent a few months undergoing treatment in Kraków and Międzyzdrój.

⁴⁹ K. Kowalczyk, "From History of Ecclesiastical Commissions." ("Z dziejów Komisji"), p. 140-141.

⁵⁰ Cf. K. Krasowski, *Catholic Bishops in the Second Republic: A Biographical Dictionary. (Biskupi katolicki II Rzeczypospolitej. Słownik biograficzny)*, Poznań 1996, p. 135-138.

With an instruction of 03.02.1950 he dissolved the Caritas Union of the Częstochowa Diocese (Związek Caritas Diecezji Częstochowskiej). He did not co-operate with it and did not support the collection of money for it, still he cancelled the public reading of the Episcopate letter on Caritas in his diocese. His attitude towards the 'Agreement' between the Polish State and the Episcopate is unknown. Did not sign the Peace Appeal."⁵¹

Some particular diocesan curias were under the special surveillance of Department V in WUBP (from January 1953 - Department XI, and from December 1954 - Department VI). Based on the information collected, the staff of these units sent monthly or current reports to the MBP (the Committee for Public Safety - *Komitet Spraw Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*). The subjects were diocesan curias and all of them had some special aliases. For example, the Kielce curia was called *Światło* (Light) and the one from Sandomierz was referred to as *Flora*.⁵² An excerpt from the report of 09.04.1953 written by the Department XI WUBP illustrates its context:

"(...) Bishop [*Franciszek-R.G.*] Sonik has recently [*i.e. March 1953 - R.G.*] changed his attitude. He has become more reluctant and insubordinate towards the authorities. Undoubtedly, as the informant 'Zosia' says, he is influenced by his surroundings and relations with the Kielce dean, Rev. [*Bogdan*] Kielb who stays in contact with Bishop [*Juliusz*] Bieniek located in this area. In connection with this the network created in this circles was provided with the task of examining connections between Rev. Kielb and Bishop Bieniek."⁵³

One might be puzzled by the choice of the Kielce bishop as an appropriate person to implement the strongest instruments at the disposal of the Stalinist authorities. The basic thing was the establishment of criteria of so-called reactionism that described the individual's behaviour not only after the end of the war but also during the period of the Second Republic and occupation. The diocesan bishops S. Adamski in Katowice,

⁵¹ Archive of the Department for Beliefs of Bureau of the Cabinet in Warsaw (ADW), Office for Beliefs (UdSW), files, no. 84/185-186, record of the Częstochowa Bishop Teodor Kubina.

⁵² Bureau of Records and Archive of the Bureau for the State Security in Warsaw (BeiA UOP), untitled, no. XXX/D/1, Reports of WUBP in Kielce from 1953 to 1956.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, no. XXX/D/1, Characteristic events and changes in specific surroundings in a subject called "Światło" (April 9th 1953).

Cz. Kaczmarek in Kielce, Jan Kanty Lorek in Sandomierz and I. Świrski in Siedlce⁵⁴ were considered loyal to the Nazi administration. All of the were repressed during the period of Stalinism.

In 1955 the party authorities decided to dismiss or to arrest Bishop J. Lorek.⁵⁵ The plan was undertaken because of the bishop's resistance to the personnel changes in the Sandomierz diocese following the edict of 9th February 1953. The whole case was also related to the reaction of the Sandomierz bishop (a reaction which had been very different to that expected by the authorities) to the statement issued by the members of KDiŚDK⁵⁶ demanding personnel changes in the curia and the Higher Theological Seminary in Sandomierz that as a result meant pressure towards the promotion of "priest-patriots". The security authorities were convinced that Bishop Lorek "carries out a policy of discrimination against the priests assembled in the commissions by the OKK and the National Front and uses spies to destroy the commission from within."⁵⁷ The plans for Bishop Lorek's detention resulted mostly from his consistent attitude towards the activity of KDiŚDK within the church. Additionally, they seem to have been prompted by the same factors as those influencing Bishop Kaczmarek's arrest in January 1951.

The case of the Diocesan Bishop of Kielce requires further analysis as he was under the strongest repression caused by his firm attitude towards the communist regime. Its representatives had at their disposal a whole catalogue of accusations, beginning with some small issues and finishing with very serious ones. As early as autumn 1945, Bishop Cz. Kaczmarek

⁵⁴ See Z. Fijałkowski, *The Catholic Church in Polish Areas during the Nazi Occupation*. (*Kościół katolicki na ziemiach polskich w latach okupacji hitlerowskiej*), Warszawa 1983, p. 116-121.

⁵⁵ Minutes from the discussion between the head of the Episcopate, Bishop M. Klepacz, and Prime Minister J. Cyrankiewicz on October 28th 1955 in: P. Raina, *The Church* (*Kościół*), p. 526-527; The Letter of the Head of the Episcopate, Bishop M. Klepacz to Prime Minister J. Cyrankiewicz on the attempt of dismissal of Bishop J. Lorek from his post on November 8th 1955 in: P. Raina, *The Church* (*Kościół*), p. 531-532.

⁵⁶ The Diocesan Archive in Kielce (ADK), Curia General Files (AKO), no. OA-12/4, p. 233-244. This declaration was addressed at the same time to Bishop I. Świrski, which shows the simultaneous action of the bishops remaining free and accused during the war of loyalty towards the Germans. See The Central Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration (CA MSWiA), the Ministry of the Public Security (MBP), no. 48, p. 1.

⁵⁷ CA MSWiA, MBP, no. 48, p. 7.

had begun to withdraw his support for actions of material obligation.⁵⁸ Since the first months after the end of the war Bishop Kaczmarek had protested against anti-clerical accidents occurring in his diocese. Those involving the participation of security service employees and militiamen were exceptional. The bishop's protests at that time reached the highest state authorities.⁵⁹

The conflict over the military church in Kielce, which actually touched upon the complex issue of the status of military priesthood in Poland, was very violent. The priest Rev. Major Michał Zawadzki turned out to be one of the army chaplains that was supported by the state and military authorities and involved in their undertakings. Such people endangered the unity of the clergy and in fact quickly became the background for the "priest patriots"⁶⁰ movement. In this context, Bishop Kaczmarek was seen as uncompromising and firm as law and ecclesiastical discipline were considered very important.

The state authorities undertook numerous brutal propaganda campaigns to discredit Bishop Kaczmarek. The first were related to the Kielce pogrom (*pogrom kielecki*) of 4th January 1946. In the party press the Kielce curia and its diocesan bishop undergoing treatment at a spa for a month were both considered co-responsible for these events. The authorities used this massacre as an opportunity for surveillance and repression against the church. According to Jan Śledzianowski, the pretext for the division and destruction of that unity was to be achieved by the "difference of attitudes" taken by Primate A. Hlond and the Częstochowa bishop T. Kubina.⁶¹ Thus,

⁵⁸ The State Archive in Kielce (APK), The Kielce Provincial Office II (UWK II), no. 1506, p. 1.

⁵⁹ AAN, MAP, no. 984, p. 11; ADK, AKO, no. OW-1/1, 48, 107; CA MSWiA, MAP, no. 61, 44.

⁶⁰ Names of the army chaplains in conflict with the diocesan authorities and canonical law may be found among the members of GKK at ZBoWiD. They included the following priests: R. Szemraj, M. Zawadzki, and S. Warchałowski. See J. Żaryn, "The 'Priests Patriots'-Genesis of the Catholic Clergy Units." ("Księża patrioci'-geneza powstawania formacji duchownych katolickich") in *Poland 1944/45-1989. Studies and Materials. (Polska 1944/45-1989. Studia i Materiały)*, vol. I, 1995, p. 128.

⁶¹ J. Śledzianowski, "Questions on the Kielce Pogrom" ("Pytania nad pogromem kieleckim"), Kielce 1998, p. 199. Despite the latest monograph by J. Śledzianowski, on the issue of the attitude of the Church towards the pogrom see Z. Wrona, "The Church and the Jewish Pogrom in Kielce in 1946" ("Kościoł wobec pogromu Żydów w Kielcach w 1946 r.") in: *Świętokrzyski Chronicle. Studies on Christian Culture (Pamiętnik Świętokrzyski. Studia z dziejów kultury chrześcijańskiej)*, Kielce 1991, p. 281-303; J. Śledzianowski, "The Kielce Bishop

it was a blow for the whole Catholic Episcopate in Poland. The oblique approval expressed by Bishop Kubina for the authorities' attitude towards the pogrom resulted in the commitment made by the bishops at the plenary conference "to refrain from expressing individual attitudes towards all events in the country so as not to create the kind of situation which followed the events at Kielce (...) where the bishop of one diocese participates in the preparation of proclamations and intentions which other diocesan bishops considered impossible to accept because of the mental and canonical foundations of the Catholic Church."⁶²

The fact that during his process Bishop Kaczmarek was not accused of the responsibility for the Kielce pogrom was very significant. However, there was a close connection between them. According to J. Śledzianowski, the process was a form of revenge for the report on the pogrom that was prepared by the commission established by Bishop Kaczmarek.⁶³

In 1949 the propaganda discredit of Bishop Kaczmarek in the press continued. The violent campaign was brought about by the publication in mid-March of a government statement concerning relations with the Church. The first part of the accusations referred to the anti-state and anti-governmental activities of "some clerical factions connected with a part of the higher ecclesiastical structure and attempting, through pastoral letters and confidential instructions, to initiate a state of dissatisfaction and excitement of minds because of the alleged jeopardy of the Church." The document continues, "It is not accidental that, in this confusing action against the people, such bishops as Bishop Kaczmarek and Bishop Adamski, who, during the occupation, were ingloriously marked by a

Czesław Kaczmarek 1895-1963" ("Ksiadz Czesław Kaczmarek Biskup Kielecki 1895-1963"), Kielce 1991, p. 102-116.

⁶² Quoted from Z. Wrona, *The Church. (Kościół)*, p.299. Referring to the then political situation and the position of the Church in Poland Cardinal A. Hlond emphasised, "Now in particular, the unified attitude of the Church is necessary. (...) No bishop should make any statements concerning the Church without previous arrangement with the Central Commission." W. Kozub-Ciembroniewicz, J. M. Majchrowski, *A Modern Political History of Poland: Sources. (Najnowsza historia polityczna Polski. Wybór źródeł)*, p. 132-133.

⁶³ The work of the commission was conducted by rev. Prof. Mieczysław Żywczyński. The text was delivered to the Department of State by the contemporary ambassador of the USA in Poland, Arthur Bliss Lane, and was not accessible to the public. J. Śledzianowski could in his publication make use of the text of this report-proclamation. J. Śledzianowski, *Questions (Pytania)*, p. 172-175, 181; by the same author *The Priest (Ksiądz)*, p. 111.

conciliatory or even servile attitude towards the Nazi occupant, come to the fore."⁶⁴

The declaration of the 14th of March resulted in strong attempts to divide the Episcopate and alienate the clergy from their congregations by humiliating the bishops. On 2nd April in *Trybuna Ludu* an article entitled "A Financier of Dirty Business - Governor Frank's Colleague" was printed. Its subtitle was "A Profile of Bishop Czesław Kaczmarek". The reaction of the accused bishop must have been immediate. He responded to the allegations made against him by the central party journal on 4th April in a letter addressed to Primate Wyszyński. According to the decision of the Episcopate Conference, a copy of the letter was to be sent to W. Wolski. Bishop Kaczmarek refuted all the allegations.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the printed slanders consequently influenced public opinion. At the meetings of the ZMP in Kielce, the youth demanded the bishop's arrest.⁶⁶ Much publicity was given to the case of taking over the secondary schools in Kielce (the *Gimnazjum* and *Liceum im. Św. Stanisława Kostki*) supervised by the diocesan bishop. The party authorities took unfair advantage of the youth associated with the ZMP, demanding the legalisation of a strongly atheistic organisation in this Catholic school.⁶⁷ Bishop Kaczmarek decided to close this institution and the authorities established a public secondary school in an occupied building.

A direct pretext for the decision to detain the Bishop of Kielce was the Wolbrom show trial from 14th to 17th of January 1951. Two priests from

⁶⁴ The Statement given by the Minister of Public Administration on the anti-State attitude of the Church hierarchy and on the regulation of relations between the State and the Church in: P. Raina *The Church (Kościół)*, p. 142. The surprising thing is that in the letter of March 12th 1949 sent by the head of the Russian information agency, Nikołaj Palgunow to Wiaczesław Mołotow the name of Bishop Kaczmarek was not mentioned among the "most reactionary bishops" in Poland. The following names were listed: Bishop Adamski, Bishop Kubina, and Bishop Choromański. See: *Poland-USSR: Structure of Independence. Documents WKP (b) 1944-1949 (Polska-ZSRR: struktury niepodległości. Dokumenty WKP (b) 1944-1949)*, Warszawa 1995, p. 232.

⁶⁵ J. Śledzianowski, *The Priest (Ksiądz)*, p. 118-119; Archive of the Military Chamber of the Highest Court in Warsaw (AISWSN), records of Bishop Cz. Kaczmarek's law-suit, vol. XVII, p. 30-31.

⁶⁶ J. Śledzianowski, *The Priest (Ksiądz)*, p. 120.

⁶⁷ J. Żaryn, *The Church. (Kościół)*, p. 198-199. For further information, see R. Gryz, "The Change in the Policy of the Authorities towards the Catholic Church in Poland in 1949 (A Study of the Kielce Province)" ("Zwrot w polityce władz wobec Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce w 1949 roku (na przykładzie województwa kieleckiego)") in *Kielce Historical Studies (Kieleckie Studia Historyczne)*, vol. XIV, 1996, p. 163. ¹

Wolbrom under the ecclesiastic supervision of Bishop Kaczmarek, were sentenced by WSR in Kraków to life imprisonment.⁶⁸

If one may believe an extract from "Information no. 4(60): On the Clergy" prepared by Department V MBP on 17th January 1951, there was at the time a strong conflict between the bishop's attitude and the primate's opinion on the priests from Wolbrom. As the operational materials of MBP illustrate, the meeting of the Plenary Conference of the Episcopate in Krakow on 15th January "was sometimes very stormy." One heard the bishops' raised voices, among others, that of Bishop Kaczmarek. Because of that fact and Bishop Kaczmarek's earlier departure from Krakow, as well as the visit announced by the primate to Bishop Kaczmarek in Kielce, we may say that the tempestuous debate resulted from dissent and the resistance of some bishops to Kaczmarek's opinion on the trial of Rev. Oborski and Rev. Gadomski.⁶⁹

According to Bishop Kaczmarek, an additional agreement specifying ecclesiastical regulations on point 8 of the obligations was to be made, or a unilateral proclamation concerning this issue to be presented. The bishop was anxious to avoid a precedent as a result of the first trial. He was afraid of exposing the Episcopate to "a painful conflict with the opinion of Polish society and even with the Vatican."⁷⁰

Because of his pressure on the case of the priests from Wolbrom, Bishop Kaczmarek became the first victim of point 8 of the agreement. The secular authorities demanded the implementation of that point and, in the event of its rejection, they could charge the Kielce diocesan bishop with breaking the resolutions of the agreement or even providing indirect support for priests found guilty of committing anti-state acts.

However, there was another motive of the utmost importance influencing the authorities. It is not known from the literature but it is evident from Bishop Kaczmarek's personal recollections passed to one of his close co-workers. Indeed it might lead one to claim that the Kielce bishop was "chosen" because he was the most decisive opponent of tolerating the movement of the "priest patriots".⁷¹

⁶⁸ J. Śledzianowski, "The Priest" ("Ksiądz"), p. 120-122; AIWSN, files, vol. XI, k. 334-335.

⁶⁹ AAN, KC PZPR, no. 237/V-158, p. 152.

⁷⁰ "Selected Documents from the Evidence of the law suit against Bishop Czesław Kaczmarek and others" (Wybrane dokumenty z dowodów rzeczowych procesu przeciwko biskupowi Czesławowi Kaczmarskiemu i innym"), part I, mps in ADW, p. 269-271.

⁷¹ Rev. Prof. Janusz Ihnatowicz's Report of 25th June 1994 (in R.G.'s possession), p. 3-4; ADW, UdSW, the Roman Catholic Department (WR-k), no. 37/37, p. 3.

Bishop Kaczmarek was of opinion that the movement of priests against the unity of the clergy should be immediately suppressed and tried to convince other members of the Episcopate of this. We may presume that he even suggested to Pope Pius XII to take drastic steps on the matter. He claimed that further silence on that issue might be taken for negligence of ecclesiastical duties. Bishop Kaczmarek was a co-author of the so-called Episcopate Admonition of 30th December 1950 against the "priest-patriots". One should note the fact that the Kielce bishop was arrested three weeks after this initiative.⁷²

Bishop Kaczmarek's detention took place on the evening of 20th January 1951. Earlier, the bishop curia was searched for the whole day by the UB under the leadership of Colonel Józef Światło. The issue of Bishop Kaczmarek's arrest was undertaken already on 21st January by Bishop Z. Choromański in his talk to Franciszek Mazur of the Polish parliament. The latter only confirmed that the matter was "serious."⁷³ On 9th February, the Krakow metropolitan A. Sapięha wrote a personal letter addressed to President Bierut. He asked for Bishop Kaczmarek's release, bearing in mind the injustice which had been done to him. The cardinal mentioned the disappointment of the Catholics, judging that action of the authorities as "a blow against freedom and rights of the Catholic Church in the Polish Republic."⁷⁴ Moreover, Primate Wyszyński referred to Bishop Kaczmarek's arrest in his letter of 31 March to Bierut, as did Bishop M. Klepacz in his talk to Mazur on 28th June.⁷⁵ These interventions did not bring any results.

The investigation conducted against Bishop Kaczmarek arrested in Mokotów prison was very brutal. The examination was prolonged and Bishop Kaczmarek was physically exhausted with extensive interrogation. He was given psychotropic medicaments. The doses were increased during certain periods of the investigation and later during the legal case. They caused deviations manifested in disorientation. Apart from physical and mental exhaustion, blackmail was another reason for his breakdown. The bishop was faced with the real threat of a purge of the staff in his diocese.

⁷² AIWSN, files vol. XVII, p. 126. Cf. Rev. Prof. Janusz Ihnatowicz's Report..., p. 4; B. Bankowicz, "The Priest-Patriots' Movement 1949-1955, or The 'Trojan Horse' in the Polish Catholic Church" ("Ruch księży patriotów 1949-1955, czyli 'koń trojański' w polskim Kościele katolickim") in A. Dudek, *From Studies in the History of the Church and Catholicism in the Polish People's Republic* (A. Dudek, *Ze studiów nad dziejami Kościoła i katolicyzmu w PRL*), Kraków 1996, p. 22.

⁷³ A. Micewski, "The Cardinal" ("Kardynał"), p. 76.

⁷⁴ AAN, KC PZPR, no. 237/V-166, p. 63.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68, *Ibid.*, no. 237/V-155, p. 48.

Under these circumstances, after two years of imprisonment the bishop started to collapse.⁷⁶

The detention of the diocesan bishop, together with the vicar general Rev. J. Jaroszewicz, initiated further investigations and arrests of their co-workers and others. At that time there were around twenty priests from the Kielce diocese and elsewhere who were supposed to give evidence in the legal case of the diocesan bishop.⁷⁷ As a result of numerous detentions, the work in the curia was paralysed. The Kielce diocese was a "testing ground" for the clerical policy of opposition to the Episcopate. According to the party authorities, reactions of the local clergy influenced the means of fighting against the Church in other dioceses.⁷⁸

In the meantime, a conflict over the introduction of the February decree was growing. Primate Wyszyński could not recognise the actual "nationalisation" of the Church. Hence, he presented his own interpretation of each regulation of the decree. On 8th May 1953 the Episcopate addressed an extensive account to Bierut which included a characterisation of the situation of the Church in Poland as well as a clear statement: "We mustn't put God's things at Caesar's altar. NON POSSUMUS!"⁷⁹ The bishops' letter was a serious warning directed to the party authorities at the right moment. It was hoped that the policy towards the Church would be revised after Stalin's death.

The bishops' memorandum from 8th May triggered a sharp reaction from the KC PZPR (Central Committee of Polish United Workers' Party). Special points dealing with "the policy towards the Church" (16 April 1953) were put forward.⁸⁰ Their introduction was connected with increasing repression towards the Church. At that time the text of an accusation against Bishop Kaczmarek was carefully prepared. Its authors were the vice-prosecutor of the Chief Prosecutor's Office of Polish People's Republic, Henryk Chmielewski, Roman Werfel, the head of the

⁷⁶ Rev. Prof. Janusz Ihnatowicz's Report..., p. 7-8; ADW, UdSW, WR-k, no. 18/1708, k.1. It is difficult to understand now how the accused at that time could have pleaded guilty if they had not committed any crime. However, the security service had very effective methods that were applied towards the clergy from the Kielce diocese. For further information see J. Śledzianowski, *The Priest (Ksiądz)*, p. 139-151.

⁷⁷ J. Stępień, "Bishop Kaczmarek Facing the Stalinist Judges" ("Biskup Kaczmarek przed stalinowskimi sędziami") in: *Diary (Pamiętnik)*, p. 311; J. Śledzianowski, *The Priest (Ksiądz)*, p. 135-138.

⁷⁸ A. Micewski, *The Cardinal (Kardynał)*, p. 9 J. Stępień, *Bishop Kaczmarek (Biskup Kaczmarek)*, p. 311.

⁷⁹ P. Raina *The Church (Kościół)*, p. 413-427.

⁸⁰ A. Dudek *The State (Państwo)*, p. 33.

Investigation Department in the Ministry of Public Security, Józef Różański and the military prosecutor Stanisław Zarako-Zarakowski. The final version was accepted at a special consultative meeting in the MBP (Ministry of Public Security). Next, when the political situation after Stalin's death stabilised in the Soviet Union, consultations began with the Soviet authorities over the text of the accusation and it was decided to organise a show trial.⁸¹

The "properly prepared" bishop appeared before the Military District Court in Warsaw on Monday 14th September 1953. The other accused were Rev. Jan Daniłowicz, Rev. Józef Dąbrowski, Rev. Władysław Widłak and Sr. Waleria Niklewska. All of them allegedly belonged to an "anti-state and anti-people's centre", the head of which they made Bishop Kaczmarek. In the accusation Bishop Kaczmarek was called an enemy of the Polish people, a reactionary and a supporter of fascism, as well as a traitor of the most significant interests of the nation. To these expressions were added allegations concerning his connections with the "most dedicated enemies of the Polish people such as Mikołajczyk, and with the so-called 'London government'." Bishop Kaczmarek was charged with supporting fascist actions in the period 1918-1939, co-operation with the Germans during the war, and co-operation with "espionage centres working to the detriment of the Polish People's Republic." It was also said that, as one of the organisers of the anti-state centre, he had tried to overthrow the worker-peasant rule and the people's democratic system in Poland.⁸²

Analysis of the actual basis for each accusation is not necessary. Such a position comes from the mechanism that was used during the preparation and execution of Stalinist political trials. After all, they were not intended to prove the truth.

According to a previously agreed scenario, on the first day of the trial Bishop Kaczmarek "admitted" his guilt. He acted as the investigation officers of the Ministry of Public Security told him. He testified on the basis of "notes" that had been prepared earlier, and which took up 30 pages in printed form. On the second day of the trial Bishop Kaczmarek was questioned by prosecutors and defence lawyers. The aim was to prove the connection between the accused bishop, the Episcopate, and the Roman Curia. The presentation of the evidence concluded with the prosecutor S. Zarakowski's speech. The Roman Curia was labelled anti-Polish. The

⁸¹ P. Raina *The Church (Kościół)*, p. 439.

⁸² The Trial of Rev. Bishop Kaczmarek and other members of the anti-State and anti-People's Centre. Minutes from the law suit in the Military District Court in Warsaw from 14 to 21 September 1953, Warszawa, 1953, p. 28-30.

Catholic Church, in turn, was the force supporting Hitler that, after the end of the war, "served American imperialism." The prosecutor did not analyse obvious (according to him) evidence as the accused "admitted" their guilt. However, he did not spare his invective towards the main individual accused.⁸³

As a result of this show trial, which did not obey any basic rules of conduct, on 22nd September a sentence was passed. Bishop Kaczmarek was sentenced to twelve years in prison and a loss of civil rights for five years, as well as the confiscation of property for the benefit of the Treasury. The reasons given included, among others, an attempt to overthrow the system, espionage for the Vatican and the USA, and inciting a war.⁸⁴

Bishop Kaczmarek's trial was a kind of ultimatum for Cardinal Wyszyński and other bishops. An attempt to mediate between the authorities and the primate was then made by B. Piasecki. He tried to persuade Primate Wyszyński to issue a statement condemning the political activity of Bishop Kaczmarek.⁸⁵

However, the primate's fate was decided on 23rd of September at a meeting of the Political Bureau's Secretariat. In the minutes it was written, "In connection with the information given by comrade Tomasz [B. Bierut - R.G.] concerning the Episcopate's conduct after the trial of Bishop Kaczmarek and others, the Secretariat accepted a motion to forbid Archbishop Wyszyński (due to his overall hostility) to exercise functions connected with his position in the Church, and established incentives for further relations with the Episcopate."⁸⁶ Bierut was determined to intern the primate, who not only had not condemned the sentenced Bishop Kaczmarek but had also protested against the unlawfulness. As Andrzej Micewski said, it was the primate's greatest moral and political decision. Thus the trial of the Bishop of Kielce resulted in the arrest of Cardinal Wyszyński on 25th September. The primate was to be made leader of a massive anti-state conspiracy directed by the Vatican.

After being arrested, Cardinal Wyszyński was transported to an abandoned monastery in Rywałd near Lidzbark from where he was taken to Stoczek Warmiński on 12th October. He remained there almost a year. Only on 6th October 1954, due to a deterioration in the primate's health,

⁸³ *The Trial of the Priest (Proces księdza)*, p. 109-122, 122-165.

⁸⁴ J. Stępień, *Bishop Kaczmarek (Biskup Kaczmarek)*, p. 322.

⁸⁵ A. Micewski, *To Co-operate (Współprzódzić)*, p. 58.

⁸⁶ AAN, KC PZPR, BP, no. 33, Minutes no. 261 from the meeting of the Secretariat of BP on 23rd November 1953. The Primate's internment was formally decided in Resolution no. 700 undertaken by the Government Presidium on 24th of September. See: A. Kochański *Poland (Polska)*, p. 507.

was he moved to Prudnik Śląski. Finally, on 27th October 1955, Cardinal Wyszyński was moved to the convent of the Nazareth Sisters in Komańcza, where stayed until he was released.⁸⁷

The Episcopate, given the ultimatum, was forced to accept the dictate of the authorities and appoint Bishop M. Klepacz president. Moreover, it was made to issue a statement condemning Bishop Kaczmarek and to take an oath. This act, passed by Bishop Klepacz, was considered by the Vatican "objectively invalid."⁸⁸ The text of the Episcopate's declaration was a result of brutal pressure of the authorities, which managed to intimidate the bishops. After Bishop Kaczmarek's trial and the arrest of Primate Wyszyński, they were convinced that it was necessary to save the Church from repression. They were afraid of solutions that had been introduced in Hungary. Taking into consideration the above-mentioned facts, one can admit that Andrzej Garlicki was right in saying that in the year of Stalin's death there appeared the apogee of Stalinism in Poland, and "even the Church was tamed and subordinated to a great extent."⁸⁹

One of the direct results of the trial was the awarding of prizes to the most committed individuals involved in its preparation. The minister for public security decided in a special writ no. 046 from 30th October 1953, to give state medals to eleven officers and to award 24 officials of the party with some financial prizes for "active participation in tracking the anti-people's centre run by Bishop Kaczmarek, the competent and efficient carrying out of the investigation and a careful preparation of the public trial which allowed society to find out about the anti-Polish and anti-people's reactionary activity of a part of the Catholic clergy and the Vatican."⁹⁰ The prosecutor S. Zarako-Zarakowski received promotion too. One week after the trial he was nominated brigadier-general.⁹¹

⁸⁷ A. Dudek, *The State. (Państwo)*, p. 35.

⁸⁸ H. Stehle, "The Secret..." ("*Tajna...*"), p. 243. For more on the circumstances of the taking over of the leadership of the Episcopate by Bishop M. Klepacz see K. Gruczyński, *Bishop Michał Klepacz (Biskup Michał Klepacz)*, Łódź 1993, p. 275-276; P. Raina, *The Cardinal. (Kardynał)*, p. 87-98; J. Śledzianowski, *The Priest (Ksiądz)*, p. 165-169.

⁸⁹ A. Garlicki, *Stalinism (Stalinizm)*, p. 68.

⁹⁰ The vice-prosecutor in 1957 Jan Wasilewski blamed S. Zarakowski for the participation in show trials that enabled him to make a brilliant career. AAN, KC PZPR, BP, no. 671, vol. 2, S. Zarakowski's paper of June 11th 1957 to BP KC PZPR. See also: J. Poksiński, "TUN", p. 80. In the meantime, on September 25th the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs protested to the Embassy of the USA. It concerned the announcement of the American Department of State on Bishop Kaczmarek's trial. A. Kochański, *Poland (Polska)*, p. 507.

⁹¹ A. Kochański, *Poland (Polska)*, p. 510.

Due to bad health, Bishop Kaczmarek got a break in his sentence from February 1955 to February 1956. At that time, Rev. W. Radosz on behalf of PAX, offered to support him in his attempts to gain permission to return to the diocese. The bishop turned down the offer.⁹² Despite numerous interventions he was forced to return to prison in Warsaw. As a result of a decision of the People's State Council's on 14th May 1956, the bishop's sentence to imprisonment was suspended. From May to September 1956 he was interned in Rywałd, and from there he left for Warsaw illegally.⁹³ For political reasons Bishop Kaczmarek returned to Kielce only on 5th April 1957.⁹⁴

The release of Cardinal Wyszyński which was due in October 1956 led to many legal changes in defining the relations between the state and the church in a more compromising way. One of the changes was the repealing of the decree of 9th February 1953. It was replaced with a new decree of the People's State Council from 31st December 1956. One can notice that these regulations are much less restricted. The number of church positions that required the consent of the state authorities was limited too.⁹⁵ The trial, dangerous for the Church's autonomy, was stopped.

To sum up, it has to be stressed that there are reasons for stating that the beginnings of the political repression of the Catholic Church's Episcopate in Poland took place in the first years after the end of the war. The symptoms appeared during the referendum of 1946 (the case of the Bishop of Częstochowa, S. Czajka and the Kielce pogrom).

The escalation of repression in the times of classical Stalinism had been preceded by preparations lasting several years. They were made under the supervision of the communist party PPR and PZPR (Polish Workers' Party and Polish United Workers' Party), the Political Bureau of which decided on tactics for the rest of the party.

Having concluded the agreement, the party authorities continued their anti-church policy. The aim was a further restriction of the Church's property. It was best seen in obstacles that were created as far as the

⁹² BEiA UOP, no. XXX/D/1, the Kielce WUBP Report of February 5th 1955.

⁹³ J. Śledzianowski, *The Priest (Ksiądz)*, p. 189; APK, KW PZPR, no. 54/VI-18, Information of WUdSBP in Kielce on the activity of the clergy in the Kielce Province in July 1955; *ibid.*, no. 54/VI-21, the Kielce WUdSBP's memo on the activity of the clergy in the Kielce Province in January 1956.

⁹⁴ AAN, KC PZPR, BP, no. 59, p. 102. For more about the problems related to the Kielce bishop's return to his diocese see J. Śledzianowski, *The Priest (Ksiądz)*, p. 192-243.

⁹⁵ M. Pietrzak, *Law (Prawo)*, p. 194, P. Raina *The Church (Kościół)*, p. 577-578. The new decree was ratified at the BP meeting on November 21st 1956. See: AAN, KC PZPR, BP, no. 59, p. 99, 216.

church's teaching was concerned. However, the most important element was to maximise the divisions within the clergy resulting from supporting "priests-patriots" and the repression of "enemies." The case of Bishop Kaczmarek was very closely related to this concept. The decision to arrest him resulted from the nature of the Stalinist authorities' policy towards the Catholic Church's hierarchy.

The apogee of the repression was reached in 1953 when a decree concerning the appointment to ecclesiastical positions was introduced, the show trial of the Bishop of Kielce Cz. Kaczmarek was organised and Cardinal S. Wyszyński was arrested. In the years 1953-1956 there was a substantial restriction of the Church's autonomy. The principles of the normalisation of the mutual relations were defined only after the release of Cardinal Wyszyński.

Knowledge that authorities, regardless of their character, their historical period, and the area which they govern, generally endeavour to force culture into submission, making it an element of its own propaganda. The leading role in this enterprise is given to art.

The USSR was the essential totalitarian state and autocracy from the very beginning of its emergence and it turned at crossing artistic culture for its own purposes: its primary objective was for art to provide a kind of apologia for the leaders and glorification of the nation and its accomplishments that secured the happiness and welfare of the working people of the Bolshevik state. Art, being a crucial part of culture, became a serious weapon in ideological warfare, and the result was the monopolization of all spheres of life, including the denial of artistic freedom. Owing to the central, all-powerful administrative and supervisory apparatus, art played a vital part in the legitimization and strengthening of government. Out of the numerous artistic tendencies present at the time, the most controversial and the one that best fitted the establishment of the authorities' programme¹ was chosen and announced as the only obligatory tendency. As a result, a battleground was created for all other modes of expression, denying their artistic value, accusing them at the same time of reactionism and enmity towards ideals, nation, class, country, the party, mankind and social progress. It is no coincidence that the first decree on matters pertaining to art by the Council of People's Commissars on 18th April 1918 was entitled "On the Removal of Monuments Erected to Commemorate Tsars and Their Servants and on the Preparation of Projects

¹ A. Turowski, "Polish Ideology", in *Polish Art after 1945: Materials from the Session of Art Historians*, ("Polska Ideologia", w: *Sztuka polska po 1945 roku. Materiały Sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki*), Warsaw November 1984, Warsaw 1987, p.31-33.

² I. Golomazok, *Totalitarne iskusztwa*, Moscow 1994, p.10