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**WHAT IS PUBLISHED BY THE CATHOLIC PRESS IN POLAND
DURING THE PERIOD OF MARTIAL LAW?**

On December 13, 1981, the day of the declaration of martial law, the Polish press market practically ceased to exist. Street newsstands were selling only one paper--the daily of the army Zołnierz Wolności; there were no weeklies; the monthlies ceased to appear. Editors had to apply to get a new license for publishing activity. The restrictions also did not spare the religious press, both ecclesiastical and lay Christian publications. It was necessary to wait a long time for the re-institution of individual titles. The first to be re-instituted from the large-circulation ecclesiastical press, was the Poznan Przewodnik Katolicki on March 7, 1982; two weeks later the Częstochowa Niedziela and the Katowice Gość Niedzielny appeared. The first periodical to be published by lay Catholics, the weekly Za i Przeciw, the press organ of the Christian Social Association, appeared on January 31, 1982. Other well-known periodicals of lay Catholics--the weekly Kierunki, organ of the Pax Association, the weekly Lad, published by the Polish Catholic-Social Union, and Tygodnik Powszechny, edited by a group linked with the Cracow Club of Catholic Intelligentsia--waited for re-institution even longer. The first issue of Kierunki was published on April 11, 1982, Lad on April 10, and Tygodnik Powszechny as late as May 23. During the same period the remaining titles of the religious press were reinstated; by the end of May the reconstruction of the religious press was completed. All of the known titles returned to the newsstands. Apart from that, several periodicals appeared which had not been published since the beginning of the 1950s, i.e. Królowa Apostołów, a monthly published by the Pallotins, and the Przegląd Powszechny a monthly published by the Jesuits.

The break in the publication of the religious press lasted on the average for three months. This is quite a long time in view of the surprising and unusual situation experienced by Poland. The possibility of a public exchange of views was lacking, the channels of social communication were cut. After all, the religious press had for a long

time occupied a place of importance in the Polish system of public communication. A return to the readers' market after a prolonged absence always involves a danger of failing to meet the current expectations of the readers. The complicated situation of martial law in Poland aggravated this danger. How are the readers' expectations to be met if the majority of the provisions of the new law on censorship were suspended? What attitude is to be assumed towards the Polish reality under strict regulations of martial law? In what way are program lines of periodicals to be continued in a situation totally differing from the previous one, when the new situation imposed numerous restrictions and limitations? These are only some questions which had to be answered by the men of letters. Their answers should be sought in the recently published issues of the periodicals.

What problems have been recently dealt with by the religious press? It turns out that in spite of difficulties and restrictions stemming from the specific situation prevailing now in Poland, the scope of subjects tackled in the publications discussed is relatively broad. Apart from purely religious problems, texts of a pastoral nature, the religious press does not evade social subjects--difficult, controversial, not always possible to be assessed unequivocally. They include analyses of phenomena from the borderland of national culture and history, reflections on the Catholic social thought linked in many ways with the social situation of Poland over the past two years, remarks on the role of the church towards the social conflicts in Poland after World War II; or finally, discussion of the difficult road of the Roman-Catholic Church in Poland over the past 40 years. These problems are certainly not devoid of controversial elements and the fact that they have found room in religious periodicals in spite of, let us repeat, the present difficult situation to Poland, should be assessed positively.

Let us begin with examples from the borderland of Polish culture and history. Rev. Józef Majka, rector of the Higher Metropolitan Seminary in Wrocław, entitled one of the parts of a longer series "Social Catechism" simply, "Culture" (Gość Niedzielny no. 8 of May 9, 1982). The main idea of the article written by the Wrocław professor can

be summed up in a statement that national culture is a fundamental element of national existence. There is only one step from such an opinion to a conclusion that:

A threat to national culture is a threat to the very existence of a nation, a threat of our personality development, to our mode of life worthy of man, to our society.

In the author's opinion, the cultural system prevailing in Poland is inseparably linked with the tradition and the present day of religious life. Emphasizing that religion is not an element of culture, Majka writes, however, about a close relationship or--to use his own words--"tight connection" between these two spheres of human activity. For this reason he deems the attempts at depriving the Polish cultural system of the sphere of religion to be a regrettable thing, a serious emasculation of Polish national culture. He assumes an active attitude towards this problem, writing:

That is why defending culture we defend religion and that is why the culture of the Polish nation, its historical traditions, its religious experience are especially valuable for every Pole.

One does not have to be sagacious to find a reverberation of the social teaching of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński² in those statements. The first anniversary of his death provided an occasion for presenting various aspects of the social teaching of the "Primate of the Millennium," as Cardinal Wyszyński is now popularly called in Poland. "So that the young people may be proud of the past. "The Teaching of the Primate on National Community" is the title of an article written by Andrzej Kaflik ("Lad" no 8 of May 30, 1982). The text is an attempt at systematizing the views of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński on national community, which was shaped within the circle of Christian culture. The preservation of this culture, the saving of its rich Christian heritage, constitutes the basic task of the contemporary generation of Poles; this was the primary demand of Cardinal Wyszyński in his teaching. As Kaflik has it, only the awareness of continuity, the knowledge of one's own cultural roots will make it possible for the present and the future generation of Poles to create a healthy social organism. The defense of culture is at the same time the defence and confirmation of the identity of a nation.

The active attitude of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, a defender and protector of the national, cultural and religious tradition of Poland was presented by Andrzej Micewski in a long series of articles; "Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Defender of the Rights of the Church, Man and the Nation" (Niedziela nos. 10 to 18). The author, belonging to a circle of persons linked with the Primate, follows in his series the relentless struggle of Cardinal Wyszyński for maintaining the identity of the Church in Poland. He presents his efforts at the turning points in the post-war history of our country, analyses his speeches, presents facts. It is a genuine chronicle of the public activity of cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, covering the years before World War II, and the period immediately following the liberation of Poland from the Nazi occupation; the years of sharp conflicts between the Church and the State in the 1950s; the period of liberalization and democratization of public life after the breakthrough of 1956, and the periods of acute social conflicts in Poland in 1968, 1970 and 1976 up to 1980.

The "Diary" of Jerzy Zawieyski, a Catholic writer, member of the Council of State in the years 1957-1968, linked by personal ties with the Primate, published in the Kierunki weekly, is worth mentioning here. The "Diary" forms an excellent supplement to Micewski's publication. The fragments which have been published to date concern the period of the latter half of the 1960s and are outspoken on the serious aggravation of relations between the Church and the State in that period. This aggravation of relations was caused by a dispute between the two sides with regard to the character of the celebrations of the Millennium of the Polish state. Short, almost day-to-day notes of Zawieyski present this conflict vividly; the author makes no understatement, seeing the causes of the evil in the relentless attitude of both sides. At the same time he gives a direct assessment of the erroneous attitude of the leadership on religious policy.

The government decided not to allow further peregrination of the picture of the Holy Virgin Mary and it is ready to employ drastic measure, to respond with a demonstration of its people to demonstrations of cardinal's crowd, and it is also ready to run a grave risk of eliminating the Cardinal. Have they gone out of their minds? Who can predict how such "demonstrations" may develop? The situation is dangerous.

The celebrations of the Millennium of Polish state took place in 1966. Ten years later, in 1976, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński faced other difficult problems: amendments to the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic, and workers' protests in several industrial centers. Andrzej Micewski devoted a subsequent article to this period, entitled "The Primate in the Difficult Year 1976" (Tygodnik Powszechny, no 22 of May 30, 1982). We shall not present here the chronicle of those events recounted by Micewski, the successive speeches of Cardinal Wyszyński, and the letters and appeals of the Polish Episcopate. It should be regretted, however, that the issue of the amendments to the Constitution is presented by Micewski only in the context of the abstention of Professor Stanisław Stomma, while he writes practically nothing about the activities of Deputy Konstanty Lubieński from the "Znak" deputies' circle, who remained in touch with Primate Wyszyński, and who played at that difficult moment the role of an intermediary between the Church hierarchy and the State authorities. It is, however, worth remembering the words which are so frequently repeated in the text discussed. All the statements of the Primate and the Episcopate were very well weighted, even reticent. They called for conciliation, respecting others' views, and renouncing repressive actions. Nevertheless, those confidential actions did not exhaust the activity of the Episcopate:

The entire public opinion could see that Cardinal Wyszyński was prone to use the road of confidential memorials convenient for the authorities only to a certain point. When the government does not respond it has to reckon with a public statement of the whole Episcopate revealing the convergence of its line with the expectations of the whole society.

Public activity of the Church in Poland in the periods of violent social unrest already has a long tradition. The Church has always formulated its postulates and objections towards the actions of the State authorities unequivocally and without understatements. Therefore, does the Church constitute the opposition in Poland? Can its public activity be considered as activity of the political opposition? An attempt to answer such questions is brought up in an article of Reverend Józef Majka "The Church as the Moral Opposition" (Chrześcijanin w Świecie, no. 103 of April 1982). Majka says that the entire public

activity of the Church should be the activity of moral opposition, since it is closely related with the prophetic function of the Church:

What we have in mind is a certain specific aspect of the prophetic function of the Church and its role in society, which is manifested by the fact that the Church always, in every situation, regardless of whether the cooperation between the Church and the State is easy or difficult, retain an attitude of "moral opposition" and it should continue to do so.

According to Majka's opinion, the Church is obliged to be the "moral opposition" regardless of the situation, even if it could lead to a confrontation with the state authority and put the Church in a grave danger. The Church should not seek this confrontation, but regardless of the circumstances it is obliged to spread the word of God and to sermonize all people--regardless of their attitude towards the Church, at any time and in any situation. The Wrocław clergyman-professor makes the following differentiation between political and moral opposition:

If the Church sought confrontation with the State in order to gain greater influence in society or to subordinate the state authority to itself, it would not be a manifestation of "moral opposition" but political opposition. In the case of "moral opposition" of the Church what is aimed at is not creation of a counterbalance for the state authority but to serve the people of God and every individual man.

Reverend Majka deems the rejection or inability to perform the function of moral opposition by the Church to be a grave danger. This particularly concerns those situations in which the Church becomes totally subordinated to the state authority. In this case there is no force capable of "defending the poor people against absolutism, totalitarianism and tyranny of the state." This brings harm both to the society and the Church, which may be rejected by the people as a socially useless institution. Departure from performing the function of the moral opposition means for the Church the loss of evangelical authenticity and leads to the imperiling of the foundations of its existence. In the light of the deliberations of Reverend Majka the Church in Poland is seen as moral, not political opposition. The fact that the Church in Poland managed to retain the role of the moral opposition guaranteed that its voice in public life is so distinct.

So much as regards the first signals from the Polish religious

press. If not for the three-months break and the restrictions of martial law, would they be more interesting and variegated? It is difficult to answer this question.

FOOTNOTES

¹The law on the control of publications and performances was passed by the Sejm of the Polish People's Republic on July 31, 1981. The decree on martial law of December 12, 1981, suspended some of its provisions. Among others, the article concerning church publications, which exempts official church documents from preliminary censorship was not suspended.

²Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Primate of Poland in the years 1948-1981.

³Reference to the peregrination of the replica of the picture of Our Lady from Jasna Góra across Poland in the years 1957-1981. Indeed in the period between November 1966 to June 1972 that great pastoral Marian campaign was interrupted at the order of state authorities.

⁴Reference to spontaneous demonstrations of the Polish people during the celebrations of the Millennium of the Polish state in support of cardinal Stefan Wyszyński and the Polish Episcopate.

Periodicals cited: (Editors)

Chrześcijan w Swiecie. Monthly, Published by Ośrodek Dokumentacji i Studiów Społecznych/ODISS/. Warsaw.

Gość Niedzielny. Weekly. Published by Diocesan Curia in Katowice.

Kierunki. Weekly. Published by Pax Association. Warsaw.

Ląd. Weekly. Published by Ośrodek Dokumentacji i Studiów Społecznych /ODISS/. Warsaw.

Niedziela. Weekly. Published by Diocesan Curia in Częstochowa.

Tygodnik Powszechny. Weekly. Published by Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy "Znak". Cracow.

Note of the editor

This article was reproduced with minor stylistic corrections from the English edition of the Christian Social Association's Information Bulletin (Warsaw) No. 8, August, 1982, pp. 17-23.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

Thank you very much for the copy of Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe, Vol. III, No. 3 (April, 1983). I read it with much interest.

I noted with regret however that the Churches' Human Rights Programme, in its statement on "Albania and Religion," issued in Geneva, September 1982, commits a number of errors.

To begin with, the name of Albania's leader is misspelled. It is Hoxha (pronounced HO-dja), not Hoxcha. That is a minor point. More important are the following:

The opening paragraph (p. 7) says that Hoxha, after declaring Albania to be the world's first atheistic state, "has expressed the hope that the rest of the world would follow his example." I hold no brief for Hoxha or atheism, but I doubt the authenticity of the charge. I have followed developments in Albania for a long time, and I have never seen anything to that effect, though it can be assumed that privately Hoxha may indeed cherish such a hope. We have a right therefore to ask: What is the source for the charge?

In paragraph two (p. 7), it is said that Hoxha's anti-religious stand stems in part "from his own personal early memories of seeing Christian and Muslim communities in southern Albania engage in bloody family and clan vendettas in the name of religion." This too is an unsubstantiated charge. I have read half a dozen biographical accounts of Hoxha, and I have not found any data in support of such an allegation. In fact, the vendetta tradition in prewar Albania applied to northern, not southern Albania where Hoxha was born and grew up.

The claim on p. 8 that the Hoxha government declared in 1944 that "the existence of the different religious communities was a danger to national unity" is likewise unfounded. Again, what is the source for the charge? None is given. The fact is that the Albanian leadership was far too sensitive at the time to the religious sensibilities of the Albanian public to even consider such an impolitic declaration. Plainly, such a declaration would have amounted to political suicide, and the Hoxha government was not about to do away with itself right after having come into power.

In the same paragraph it is said that the Albanian Orthodox Church severed its relations with the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople in 1949. Not true. The Albanian Orthodox Church became an autocephalous church on April 12, 1937, by virtue of a decree issued by Patriarch Benjamin in Constantinople.

The Churches' statement errs again when it alleges that the Albanian government "makes no effort to preserve ancient Byzantine church buildings." The government, though atheistic in nature, has acknowledged the cultural and esthetic value of certain religious edifices, and has declared them to be monuments of national culture. To that end, much restoration work has been done on many old churches, including the Church of St. Triadha and the Church of St. Nikolla in the city of Berat, the Church of St. Mary in the village of Pojan, and churches in the town of Voskopoja.

It is clear that in issuing its statement on Albania and Religion, the leadership of the Churches' Human Rights Programme for the Implementation of the Helsinki Final Act did not act with a sense of responsibility and respect for truth.

The government of Albania is indeed open to criticism for its policy on religion. But any such criticism has to rest, it seems to me, on indisputable evidence, not only for the sake of truth, and not only to win the respect of the informed and the judicious, but in order to be effective, as well.

Respectfully yours,
Peter R. Prifti

University of California at San Diego
July 10, 1983

[Editor's response:

This is the first letter which we received on an issue of substance and we are gladly sharing it with our readers. The statement "Albania and Religion" of the Churches' Human Rights Programme for the Implementation of the Helsinki Final Act impressed me as moderate, balanced, and sympathetic toward Albanian national interests. This is why the statement was selected as a complement to the otherwise scarce literature on the religious situation in Albania. But we are equally eager to publish your correctives which will help the readers to get a more comprehensive insight into the situation. Your expression of concern is appreciated. Your letter has been forwarded to the World Council of Churches in Geneva. I hope that other readers will take the cue from you and write responses to our articles which will shed more light on a given subject-matter.]