

**The Political Programmes of the  
Polish Opposition, 1976-1980**

A Thesis Submitted to  
The Department of Political Studies  
Faculty of Graduate Studies  
University of Manitoba  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirement for the Degree  
of Master of Arts

by

Mirosław Kokot  
6029147

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POLISH OPPOSITION, 1976-1980

BY

MIROSLAW KOKOT

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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## ABSTRACT

The development of the opposition movement in Poland in 1976-1980 was one of the most interesting phenomena in the political history of Eastern Europe. Although Poles never recognized the communist government installed by the Soviet Union as a legitimate power, their protest against it had a sporadic and unorganized character. This was so, even though these spontaneous actions always forced changes in the policy of the government and initiated internal struggle in the communist party, consequently exposing the vulnerability of the system.

The creation of the Workers' Defence Committee in 1976 gave a new dimension to the Polish opposition, which for the first time took the form of an organized structure. The KOR was very successful in its short-term objective of securing the release of the workers who had been imprisoned for their part in the June 1976 anti-government demonstration. This success had crucial consequences for the development of the opposition. New dissident groups began to appear. They represented all shades of political thinking and were active among all strata of Polish society. They included intellectuals, workers, peasants, and students.

Along with its organizational growth, the opposition was engaged in formulating more and more demanding political programmes. While at the beginning the government was pressed to guarantee basic human and civil rights, in 1979-1980 the opposition's political platform called for independence for Poland

and the elimination of the communist government.

During the process of developing its political programmes, the opposition created a new alternative culture, which existed parallel to the "official" one. The new culture included independent social associations, educational systems and publishing houses, and led to the formation of a new national consciousness.

This essay both documents the process of development of the opposition and establishes the thesis that new democratic Poland began to emerge long before "Solidarity" was created and that the foundations for this process had been laid as early as 1976.

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Mirek Kokot

No...absolutely not. Communism does not fit the Poles. They are too individualistic, too nationalistic. Poland's future economy should be based on private enterprise. Poland will be a capitalistic state.

Joseph Stalin<sup>1</sup>

#### INTRODUCTION

When in September 1980, after a few weeks of strikes which spread all over Poland, the Free Independent Trade Union "Solidarity" was established, many commentators in the West saw it as a success of Western policies which for many years advocated independent trade unions as one of the key elements in the third section on "Cooperation in Humanitarian and other Fields" (better known as "Basket Three") of the Final Act of the Helsinki conference.

In Poland, the excitement of "Solidarity" was caused by the fact that it was the first ever mass organization absolutely independent of the communist authorities, who until

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<sup>1</sup>Op. cit. Keith John Lepak, Prelude to Solidarity. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 1.



then had controlled every aspect of political, social and cultural life. The fact that in the country of thirty-six million people, ten million joined "Solidarity" did not mean that suddenly Poles had become so union-minded or so conscious of social issues.

Most Poles perceived "Solidarity" as the organization which could stand against the communist government on any political or social front. In fact for many young activists (like myself) the political issues were the most important ones. These people saw the creation of "Solidarity" as a beginning of the end of communism in Poland, and many of them already had a clear political alternative to communism.

Those alternative programmes were not born ad hoc, but rather were results of years of struggle of Polish intellectuals, students, workers and peasants against communism. As one of the researchers on Polish issues put it: "...whether one chooses to call it attachment to freedom, rugged individualism, lack of discipline, or proclivity to anarchy, the Polish people steadfastly refused to accept the communist system as legitimate. This had been true not only for the educated classes--traditionally the bastion of independent thought and action--but also for the peasants and workers, for years assumed to be much more malleable, and obedient."<sup>2</sup> The emergence of independently conceived

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<sup>2</sup>Jane Leftwich Curry, ed., Dissent in Eastern Europe. (New York: Praeger, 1983), p. 29.

alternatives to official policies was one of the most important features of the Polish experience. They distinctly differed from the objectives of the Czechoslovak, Soviet or East German opposition, which did not completely exclude "revisionist" possibilities.<sup>3</sup>

It may be argued that the first dozen or so years of communist rule in Poland (1944-1956) witnessed relatively little dissent as it was defined in the 1970's. Certainly, there was considerable opposition to the communist seizure of power and some resistance within the Communist Party to the imposition of the Stalinist model but this dissent was qualitatively different from the dissent of the 1970's.

In contrast, the period, 1976-1980, experienced a rapid and dynamic growth of dissent at various levels. Dozens of different organizations were created. Some had very limited goals, while others declared themselves as opposition political parties, willing to challenge the communist monopoly of power. The emergence of this surge of dissent introduced a new element of strife into East European politics and influenced, directly or indirectly, official decision making. In the process, it exposed the vulnerability of the existing political systems to pressures from outside and furnished an example for less active and critical social groups of ways to increase their participation in public life.

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<sup>3</sup>See: Rudolf L. Tokes, ed., Opposition in Eastern Europe. (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1979).

This was true in spite of the fact that dissidents were forced to endure persistent attempts by the authorities to intimidate, persecute, and prevent them from carrying out their activities. Indeed, the necessity to overcome obstacles and deal with constant official hostility gave their activities a certain momentum and distinctive logic of their own. Their reaction to regime opposition was expressed differently than before. Among the new forms of reaction was the proliferation of autonomous forms of dissent, the openness of its conduct, and the universalization of its appeal. Taken together they provided a contrast with past experiences of protest and criticism of official policies, that did not bring any lasting results.

Development of the opposition was, at least partly, due to the emerging crisis of participation in the relations between the regime and the masses. To put it differently, having succeeded in the early "revolutionary" period in harnessing the population to accomplish a variety of tasks associated with the process of building the foundations of a socialist order, the Polish communists failed, by and large, to provide adequate outlets for the masses to express their preferences and articulate their demands. As a result, large segments of the population were left virtually without a voice in any decision making.

Both the Gomulka and Gierek regimes missed an opportunity to expand the scope of popular participation. For example,

Gomulka's return to power in October 1956 was accompanied by a collapse of the Stalinist type "transmission belts" and their spontaneous replacement by bona fide representative bodies such as workers councils, youth associations and other organizations. None of these represented a serious challenge to the ruling party and the existing political system as a whole and yet they were perceived as a threat by Gomulka, who soon insisted on emasculating them by bringing them once again under strict party control. Gierek emulated that policy despite the growing signs that workers, students, peasants and other groups were becoming increasingly impatient and frustrated with the lack of channels for any participation.

This "arrogance of power" became the characteristic feature of the Gierek regime. It resulted in a virtual destruction of linkages between the ruling oligarchy and the masses, leaving the government isolated and largely unaware of the rapidly growing popular discontent. Neither the party, nor the official interest groups, nor the media performed their task of providing correct and unbiased information for the decision makers. All of them were either totally corrupt (the party and the groups) or unable to speak the truth (the media). The outcome was that the government operated in a vacuum, and the gap between the rulers and the ruled continued to widen.

Moreover, the "open door" recruitment policy, which doubled the size of the party membership between 1956 and 1970

succeeded in attracting primarily corrupt, opportunistic, and careerist elements who had few contacts with Polish reality and who, more often than not, were not representative of the population at large. Hence, the creation of the Workers Defense Committee [Komitet Obrony Robotnikow (KOR)] and other opposition groups in the wake of the strikes of June 1976 was not particularly surprising. It was the logical consequence of a fundamental reappraisal of the political climate in Poland reached by a handful of intellectuals who believed that the Gierek regime was vulnerable and amenable to concessions it faced with a united front of workers and intellectuals. While the policy of "building bridges" to the working class initially showed few gains, there was no doubt that some important individual contacts were established that proved invaluable in the summer of 1980.

Among all of the opposition groups KOR was the most active and influential both in Poland and abroad, and therefore literature about it is quite substantial. In spite of that, most researchers did not focus on the political programmes of KOR. KOR was created only a year after the Final Act of the Helsinki conference was signed. This document had important consequences for the situation in Eastern Europe. On the one hand it brought both the recognition of the post-Yalta status quo in Europe and the recognition of the legitimacy of the communist governments in Eastern Europe. On the other hand the Helsinki Act forced the

communist government to follow a more liberal internal policy and consequently gave the opposition a chance to organize themselves on a quasi-legal basis. At the beginning most observers of the East European scene underestimated the role of the dissident movement. Even the most anti-communist politicians did not believe that the opposition could constitute any challenge for the communist government and therefore it seemed unimportant if the opposition had a political programme or not.

In fact as in other East European countries, the Polish opposition initially was reluctant to act as a political opposition and concentrated on demanding observance of constitutionally guaranteed human rights. However, the unparalleled level of oppositional activity involving different social groups, different cultural and intellectual milieux, brought with it also an intense preoccupation with questions of political programmes, strategy and tactics which was reflected in a wide spectrum of oppositional writing on these subjects.

In spite of burgeoning opposition activity, most western publications concentrated rather on violations of legal or human rights which were exposed by the opposition and the repressions suffered by the opposition itself. These seemed particularly useful in the propaganda war against communism.

This thesis is one of the few treatments of the Polish opposition which deals systematically and thoroughly with the

evolution of KOR. It is the only extended treatment of the other prominent opposition groups which emerged between 1976-1980.

In analyzing KOR's political platform I relied both on Polish and Western sources. Polish sources were crucial for this study since not all of the relevant materials are available in English.

Except for KOR, other opposition groups were much less familiar to the western public and scholars. Two reasons could be given for that. Firstly there is no doubt that none of the opposition groups was so influential and so active as KOR, both in Poland and abroad. Secondly, most of those organizations were established in the late 1970's, just a year or two before "Solidarity" was created and consequently their activities were overshadowed by the events in Poland in 1980-1981.

In presenting a case for these opposition groups I chose the ones which in my judgement were the most known and influential in Poland. They were: the Polish League for Independence [Polskie Porozumienie Niepodleglosciowe (PPN)], the Movement for the Defence of Human and Civil Rights [Ruch Obrony Praw Czlowieka i Obywatela (ROPCiO)], the Confederation of Independent Poland [Konfederacja Polski Niepodleglej (KPN)] and the Young Poland Movement [Ruch Mlodej Polski (RMP)].

I classified all of them as representatives of the right wing of the Polish opposition, in contrast to KOR which I

consider a Left part of the opposition. In one of his articles Leszek Kolakowski wrote: "If to loathe Soviet imperialism and dream of Poland's national self determination is to be "rightist", then almost all Poles are rightist."<sup>4</sup> This undoubtedly was true. Indeed, all opposition groups advocated independence for Poland. However, this is also a big oversimplification since there was a significant division of political views in the opposition with regard to questions such as the ways to the sovereignty of Poland, the optimal political system, and the interpretation of history.

In general terms, KOR's ideology took its inspirations from socialist and socialdemocratic movements, while most other prominent opposition groups declared themselves as successors of rightist parties of prewar Poland (National Democracy, Christian Democracy, "The Pilsudski Movement"). In the case of the Young Poland Movement, its leaders simply adapted the programme of its prewar predecessor (National Democracy) to the new reality.

The development of the opposition was accompanied by tremendous increases in underground publications. The content of these "samizdat" papers showed a variety of topics that were of interest to the opposition. There was discussion of police harassment, of illegal activity by the state, of political trials, of the economy, of the philosophy of the opposition, of the need to maintain a high level of

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<sup>4</sup>Leszek Kolakowski; "Introduction" Survey 24, (109), 4.



consciousness, of education and youth policies, of social conditions and of the world outside Poland. There was no single philosophy or policy line dominant in these writings; they reflected the pluralism which had been a part of the Polish opposition during the 1970's.

Through analyzing various publications of different organizations, I have compared their programmes, and pointed out similarities and differences. At the same time I tried to present an insight into the division and rivalry among the Polish opposition forces. As anywhere, there was not only matter-of-fact discussion on important political issues, but also a lot of pettiness, jockeying for position and influence, and even unsubstantiated accusations and slander.

When comparing publications from both ends of the (left and right) spectrum of the opposition it becomes clear that the programme of the Right was more radical and more comprehensive than that of KOR. (KPN, for example, went as far in details as proposing new state holidays, instead of old communist ones.) In the late 1970's, when these programmes were developed they seemed unrealistic, but when ten years later communism started to collapse in Eastern Europe it was these programmes that were implemented in Poland.

Because of limited western sources on the subject of the right-wing opposition, in analyzing their programmes, I relied intensively on Polish literature and in the case of the Confederation for Independent Poland almost exclusively on

Polish publications.

When I started to write my thesis, Poland was still governed by the communists and harsh measures of the martial law were just being lifted. At that time I asked myself a question: Since the majority of Poles were against the communist form of government, was the opposition able to present the society with any alternative to this form of government and if so, what kind of programme was that? My thesis tries to answer this question.

I have decided to analyze the period of 1976-1980 because it was the most active time of Polish opposition in Poland, as well as because it was the period which directly led to the creation of "Solidarity" in 1980. After the proclamation of martial law in December 1981, some opposition groups were dissolved, some went deep underground and their leaders were jailed. In spite of the persecution, the main political orientations of the opposition stayed the same during the 1980's and therefore the organizations which were analyzed in the thesis remained accurate representations of the Polish opposition movement.

My thesis is only a preliminary examination of the subject, since I narrow a focus to only five opposition groups and analyzed their programmes from only certain perspectives. Clearly, there is more room for future, more detailed studies.

Nevertheless, I believe that I have established that the opposition in Poland was well organized, represented all

spectrums of political thinking and was able to present the society with various alternative political programmes. In fact, these programmes became the base for democratic changes presently taking place in Poland. This, I submit, may well be the most important accomplishment of the Polish opposition, whose lasting value can be fully appreciated only by future generations.

## CHAPTER I

### POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN POLAND 1945-1976; TOWARD THE FOUNDING OF THE WORKERS' DEFENCE COMMITTEE

The note of discord in Poland began in 1945 with the struggle for power between the small and unpopular Polish Workers' Party (the Communist Party) on the one hand, and the two major political parties (the chief opponents of the communists), the Polish Socialist Party and the Polish Peasant Party, on the other. The Polish Workers' Party did not enjoy either the sympathy or the support of the overwhelming majority of the Polish people; the Party was regarded as an agent of the Soviet Union, which in fact it was. There is no doubt that in a free election, the Socialist Party and the Peasants' Party, who certainly together held the confidence of the entire nation, would have formed the postwar government in Poland. Thus, in order to come to power, the Polish communists, with Soviet assistance, had to pacify and liquidate their opponents. It took them nearly two years first to carry out their usurpation, and then to establish their monopoly in the exercise of political power in Warsaw.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, not only non-violent political struggle took place in those years. Fifty thousand Poles lost their lives

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Raina, Political Opposition in Poland 1947-1977 (London: Poets and Painters Press, 1978), p. 15. [Hereafter Raina I]

in the bloody civil war which accompanied the communist conquest of power.<sup>2</sup>

During 1948 there appeared another form of opposition in the political life of the country, this time, however, from within the ruling Communist Party itself. These oppositionists in the Party were denounced as right-wing deviationists and revisionists by the Party oligarchies, and were disowned, overthrown, and finally suppressed.

After Stalin's death in March 1953, criticism of his reign of terror became apparent in the Soviet Union as well as in the Soviet-dominated countries of Eastern Europe. Although the Party oligarchy in these countries first took the initiative in attacking the "cult of personality", it was actually intellectuals who seized the opportunity to publicly oppose the totalitarian ideology of the Stalinist period. The leading role of intellectuals did not mean that the working class observed silence or exhibited indifference. On the contrary, the Polish proletariat has, more than once, displayed the will and determination to defend its rights and to struggle against the arbitrary policies of the Party (June and October 1956, December 1970, June 1976, August 1980). In fact it was the demonstration of this will of the Polish working class that caused the damage to Party leadership in October 1956, December 1970, and August 1980. However, this

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<sup>2</sup> Roman Bratny, Pamiętnik Moich Książek (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1978), p. 71.

achievement can not be attributed to the working class alone. The intellectuals played a very important part in this struggle.

Polish intellectual life has never been static. This is chiefly because there has always been a group of people that stand in opposition to the ruling powers. These dissidents were rationalists and stood for "independence of mind on all occasions" and for "thought free from obligation to any authority save the authority of reason".<sup>3</sup> The Stalinist period was perhaps the most difficult to preserve these ideas. The story of how the Polish intelligentsia was subjected to ruthless oppression was first revealed to the world by the renowned Polish poet and a Nobel Prize winner, Czeslaw Milosz. In his classic study "The Captive Mind" ("Zniewolony Umysl") (1952), he described the oppression of the Stalinist era in Poland.<sup>4</sup>

In Poland the process of de-Stalinisation began in October 1953 when the Party leader, Boleslaw Bierut, confessed to the members of the Central Committee of the United Polish Workers' Party that the Party leadership had committed policy blunders in the past. Also in January 1955, a young

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<sup>3</sup> As cited in Raina I, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Czeslaw Milosz (b. 1911), novelist, poet, and literature critic. Defected to the West in 1951. Since 1960 lives in the United States. Professor of Slavic languages and literature at the University of California, Berkeley. His verse "You Damaged Common Man..." is written on the monument of fallen workers in Gdansk.

philosopher at Warsaw University, Leszek Kolakowski, who later became the most popular "revisionist" in Eastern Europe, addressed criticism to those who had reduced Marxism to sheer nonsense. Pure absurdity, he wrote, could not influence the mind. Marxist dogmatism was caused by restricting the categories of perception, by limiting the prescription of scientific cognition necessary to uncover new problems. One of the characteristic features of this dogmatism was the belief that the Marxist classics contained potential answers to all philosophical questions<sup>5</sup>.

While the intellectuals were arguing with each other over how the beautiful ideas of socialism turned so ugly during the Stalinist era, the average Pole wanted action. High-minded talk alone was not enough for him. In Poznan, the workers in some factories decided to exercise their right to demand higher wages. The demands were rejected by the government so on June 28, 1956, a peaceful demonstration, led by the workers, marched toward the local Party headquarters. When the demonstration reached the centre of the city, it received an enthusiastic welcome by the local population. The demonstration then turned into a riot which lasted for two days. Party offices were set on fire, the police and the security officers engaged in a gun battle with the demonstrators: more than fifty people died and a couple of hundred were treated for injuries. Prime Minister Jozef

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<sup>5</sup> Op. cit., Raina I, p. 33.

Cyrankiewicz responded with a broadcast blaming "imperialists" for this provocation and he warned the "provocateurs" that he would have their hands "chopped off". In a few days, however, he regretted what he had said. The Politburo could not escape from the fact that the working class, having felt cheated by their leaders, had risen up against the party bureaucracy. During the October plenum of the Central Committee Wladyslaw Gomulka was elected as the first Secretary of Party, promising a better future for everyone in the Socialist Poland.<sup>6</sup>

Within the young generation of 1956, a number of people were immediately sceptical of the regime and very quickly realized that the regime was not going to reform itself. The liberal journals of the revisionist intellectuals were suppressed. ("Po Prostu" in 1957, "Nowa Kultura" and "Przeglad Tygodniowy" in 1963.) At the same time the leaders of the liberal factions in the party and the government had been removed from the leadership (Bienkowski, Morawski and Zambrowski).<sup>7</sup> Among those who were disillusioned was Karol Modzelewski, the son of a communist minister by then deceased. He was one of the leaders of Warsaw's student youth during the

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<sup>6</sup> For more information about Gomulka (1905-1982) and his policy see: N. Bethell, Gomulka, His Poland and His Communism, (London: 1969); A. Bromke, "Beyond the Gomulka Era" in Foreign Affairs (New York: April 1971), and Z. A. Pelczynski, "The Downfall of Gomulka" in Canadian Slavonic Papers (Ottawa: No. 1-2, 1973).

<sup>7</sup> Rudolf L. Tokes, ed., Opposition in Eastern Europe, (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1979), p. 64.



October days. He started a discussion group in the University and began to express opinions that were openly critical in regard to the State and the Party. There was also the young Jacek Kuron, the son of an old Party cadre. Kuron was 22 years old and he had already been expelled from the Communist Party in 1953. Readmitted in 1955, he took an active part in the discussions centering on reform and was also involved in running a young people's organization, the "Red Scouts" ("Czerwone Harcerstwo"). This young generation of communists provided the base for the founding, in December 1956, of a Union of Revolutionary Youth, to replace the Union of Polish Youth [Zwiazek Mlodziezy Polskiej, (ZMP)], the old official organisation which had died in the October convulsions. The manifesto of the Union aimed to 'revive the ethical rules of socialist humanism'. Gomulka considered it too radical, and in January 1957 merged it with the remains of the preceding organisation to form the Union of Socialist Youth [Zwiazek Mlodziezy Socjalistycznej, (ZMS)].<sup>8</sup>

A number of groupings tried to perpetuate the spirit of the October failed revolution and were persecuted by the regime. For example, there was the "Crazy Group" ("Zwariowana Grupa") of Leszek Kolakowski which had emerged from the 1956 movement and was dissolved in 1962. Another small group initiated by a 15-year-old boy, Adam Michnik, operated in

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<sup>8</sup> Jean-Yves Potel, The promise of Solidarity: Inside the Polish Workers' Struggle, 1980-1982, (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 101.

Warsaw schools and was called the Club for Seekers of Contradictions (Klub Poszukiwaczy Sprzeczności). Its aim was to debate all subjects that had become, or were about to become, taboo. The oldest precursor of the Workers' Defence Committee (Komitet Obrony Robotników, KOR) was a group of activists connected with the Club of the Crooked Circle (Klub Krzywego Kola) between 1956 and 1962. This club functioned for several years as a discussion forum for independent thought in Warsaw, and occasionally it undertook other kinds of initiatives as well, such as, for example, approaching worker-activists of the workers' council movement that emerged in 1956 and was suppressed a short time later. The Club of the Crooked Circle was organized (probably in early 1956) in a private apartment; it was dominated by a group of academics, former members of a scientific-discussion club that had been disbanded by the Security Office in 1953. The Club of the Crooked Circle played an important role in the formation of attitudes and ideologies, and in the exchange of ideas among the large and influential milieu of Warsaw intellectuals, and an even greater role in the integration of this milieu. Among the members and sympathizers of the club were initiators of various kinds of protest actions during the Gomułka and Gierek eras. Active in the club were Ludwik Cohn, Edward Lipiński, Jan Józef Lipski, Aniela Steinsbergowa, and Wojciech Ziemiński, all of whom were later among the founding members of KOR. Jan Olszewski, one of the attorneys defending

the workers after June 1976, was also a club member.<sup>9</sup>

The July 1963 plenum of the Central Committee marked the end of the process of liberalisation in Poland. The powers of the censors were radically increased, Party control over cultural affairs was drastically tightened. Correspondence from abroad and social contacts with foreigners were carefully scrutinised. From then on, permission to travel abroad was left entirely to the discretion of the public security offices. Gomulka justified the Party's renewed and rigorous policy of censorship in the following words:

Ever more sociologists were falling under the influence of bourgeois neopositivists, who claimed that ideology could not be identified with scholarship, and that the criteria of truth and falsehood were not to be applied to ideology. This would mean negation of the scientific character of Marxism, leading to the theories of James Burnham and Milovan Djilas. The main danger was revisionism. Nihilism, pessimism, and existentialism were dominating Polish creative art. Cinematography could not be exclusively experimental and accessible to a limited artistic milieu alone. Many artists did not understand the essence of ideological and social struggle in the nation. They had been corrupted by bourgeois ideology. It had become fashionable to work on the so-called antifilm and antinovel. The philosophy of hopelessness, despair, loneliness, and the absurdity of life was being widely proclaimed. The Party would never permit the propagation of antisocialist views uncritically imported from the capitalist world. Certain editors had betrayed a lack of responsibility and an uninhibited desire for sensationalism. The Party did not need them.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Jan Jozef Lipski, KOR: a History of the Workers' Defense Committee in Poland, 1976-1981, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 9-10.

<sup>10</sup> As cited in Raina I, pp. 72-73.

The general dissatisfaction with this policy was expressed in a letter signed by thirty-four prominent Polish intellectuals.<sup>11</sup> The letter was personally delivered by Antoni Slonimski to the office of the Prime Minister. The text of the letter of thirty-four was as follows:

To Premier Jozef Cyrankiewicz  
Warsaw

The limited allotment of paper of printing books and periodicals, as well as severe press censorship is creating a situation that threatens the development of national culture. The signatories below, recognising the existence of public opinion, of the right to criticism, of free discussions and of honest information as indispensable elements of progress, and motivated by civic concern, call for a change in the Polish cultural policies in the spirit of the rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the Polish State and in harmony with the welfare of the nation.<sup>12</sup>

The repressions that followed that letter consisted mainly of bans against publications, public readings, and the like. In spite of the repressive measures, the "Letter of 34" served as a model for other similar protests and it played an important role in the realization that some forms of resistance were possible despite everything.

If the Party hierarchy assumed that with its new policy it had frightened and silenced the opposition it was grossly mistaken. The protest remained and its prime movers were two young Marxists, research scholars at Warsaw University, Jacek

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<sup>11</sup> Gustaw Herling-Grudzinski. "Memorial Trzydziestu Czterech" (The Letter of Thirty Four) Kultura, No 5 (199) May 1964, pp. 4-7.

<sup>12</sup> As cited in Raina I, p. 75.

Kuron and Karol Modzelewski. In the summer of 1964, they drafted an "Open Letter" based upon Marxist foundations that analyzed the political and economic system prevalent in People's Poland. The "Open letter to the Party" was first published in the original in Paris in 1966. This text was welcomed by the Left in Europe as an exceptional document, the first revolutionary Marxist analysis to have come out of the Soviet block since the annihilation of the Trotskyist Left opposition. It not only presented an original Marxist analysis of the Gomulka regime, but also formed part of the renaissance of revolutionary thinking in the West. The "Open Letter" penetrated other "people's democracies", particularly Czechoslovakia, where in 1968 it was reprinted in several thousand copies.<sup>13</sup>

One could sum up the central idea of the Open Letter by this formula, which concluded one of its chapters: 'Revolution is inevitable'. At that time, its authors believed that bureaucratic society was characterised by an irreducible opposition between, on the one hand, a very restricted ruling class - the 'central political bureaucracy' - the owner of the social surplus product, and unrestrained by any social control; and, on the other hand, the working class and the peasantry. The bureaucracy was unable to relinquish even a fragment of its power, not even to the technocrats, because a 'general change of the system of management is impossible

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<sup>13</sup> Op. cit., J. Potel, pp. 107-108.

without a change in the relations of production'. During the phase when this new class was being created, it relied for its support in part on police terror, and in part on an emerging social base arising from the necessary industrialisation of the country. But it was soon to become isolated. It was to check the evolution of the productive forces which it had previously 'objectively' favoured in an earlier period. The system was thus afflicted by ongoing social and economic crisis. "Thus not only can the economic crisis not be overcome on the basis of present relations of production, but also the general social crisis cannot be overcome within the framework of present social relations, which merely aggravate the crisis whose solution will only be possible via the abolition of the present relations of production and social relations. This development can only take place through revolution," the authors stressed. This situation 'forces the working class to take a stand against the system and the bureaucracy', since the working class is the only class capable of carrying out the anti-bureaucratic revolution.<sup>14</sup>

In concluding their "Open Letter", Kuron and Modzelewski proposed that Workers' Councils be formed to enable the working class to participate in sharing and using the national income, that trade unions be made independent of the state, and that the political police be disbanded. Conditions must be created to "introduce full freedom of the press, of

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<sup>14</sup> Op. cit., J. Potel, p. 109.

scientific and cultural creativity, of formulating and propagating various trends of social thinking. In turn, these reforms will create, on the widest possible scale, conditions for the free fulfilment by the intelligentsia of its proper social function".<sup>15</sup>

On the morning of March 19, both Kuron and Modzelewski were arrested in their respective homes. Kuron and Modzelewski's chief "crime" seems to have been to come forward first as the theorists, and then as the advocates, of revolution in Poland. This charge was false. The truth (and it is this that the Party hierarchy objected to) was that the authors of the Open Letter had, with acute insight, disclosed the imperfections in the communist system. With ruthless logic, they revealed the evil of Party bureaucracy; with the assistance of data, prudently collected, they unveiled the plight of the working class; and, accordingly, with sturdy common sense they suggested ways to reform the corrupted system. If reason did not triumph, i.e., if the Party hierarchy went on pursuing the policy of dogmatism, then it was only violating Marxist principles, the worst yet awaited it. The only possible retort of the working class to such Party policies would then be revolution. What brilliant foresight, which very few, least of all the incompetent Party

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix I for a summary of this ninety-page document.

hierarchy, cared to note at the time!<sup>16</sup> It took only another five years to prove Kuron and Modzelewski right, when the workers of Gdansk, Gdynia, Szczecin, and Elblag rose against the bankrupt Gomulka leadership and caused the downfall of almost the entire antiquated Party oligarchy.

In 1965, however, one small sentence of just three words, "Revolution is inevitable," in this lengthy and valuable document of 90 pages became the basis of the malicious judgement of July 19, that sent Kuron to prison for three years and Modzelewski for three and a half years to prison.<sup>17</sup>

Even before Kuron and Modzelewski were released from jail, the students of the history faculty of Warsaw University had invited Professor Leszek Kolakowski to speak on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the events of October 1956 in Poland. Kolakowski left no illusions about how he felt:

In Poland, genuine democracy is lacking. There is little public choice concerning leaders, and the leadership (which is not really elected) became conceited and self-assured. There is no opposition, and hence there is no confrontation between those who are in power and those who are not. The Polish political system is governed by inefficiency and bureaucracy, and the government does not feel responsible to the nation. A system of privileges is prevalent. These privileges exist for a few outside the law. The phraseology of the Constitution can be interpreted in various ways and

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<sup>16</sup> Op. cit., J. Potel, p. 110.

<sup>17</sup> "Writers Accused of Slandering State." East Europe, 14, No. 9, September 1965, p. 49. See also: Zygmunt Jan "Cena myslenia" (The Price of Thinking) Kultura Nos 7(225) - 8(226), July-August 1966, p. 152.



arbitrarily. Public criticism is deficient, free assembly nonexistent, and censorship extremely severe. In literary criticism, modern sociology, and current history, the situation is even worse, and the consequences are fatal. There are no prospects, no hope. The State, the Party, the society have become victims of stagnation.<sup>18</sup>

The following day, Kolakowski was expelled from the Party and disciplinary actions were initiated against the most active discussants (among them Adam Michnik). Many academics from Warsaw University signed a letter of protest against the disciplinary proceedings which ended in temporary suspensions and reprimands.<sup>19</sup>

In the mid-1960's internal struggle for power in the Party led to the anti-zionist campaign and the accusation that Polish Jews were playing the role of a Fifth Column in Poland.<sup>20</sup> As an answer to that, a body of Jewish students of Warsaw University set out to prove that they were not Fifth Columnists but Polish patriots. They earned the imposing nickname "Commandos", although in the beginning they could be counted on the fingers of one hand. They first appeared on the political stage at Warsaw University, where they set the tone of student life politically and intellectually.

The "Commandos" were the main instigators of the 1968

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<sup>18</sup> As cited in Raina I, p. 97.

<sup>19</sup> Op. cit., J.J. Lipski, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> Jerzy Ptakowski, "Behind the Unrest in Poland", East Europe, 17, No. 4, April 1968, pp. 7-8. See also "Spor o wydarzenia marcowe". Zeszyty historyczne, 24, (Paris: 1973), pp. 3-30.

student protests. The catalyst for the upheaval was the banning, at the end of January, of "Forefathers' Eve" (Dziady), a play written by the greatest Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz after the suppression of the 1831 uprising against the Tsar. Since 1955 the play had been performed in Poland in seventeen different productions and the director Dejmek's new production prepared for the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian October Revolution, seemed initially to satisfy everyone, including the Politburo ideological expert, Zenon Kliszko. The fact that the predominantly youthful public enthusiastically applauded, especially the anti-Tsarist and anti-authoritarian passages, caused the authorities to ban the play.<sup>21</sup>

Following the decision by the censors to withdraw "Forefathers' Eve" from the stage at the National Theatre, the "Commandos" called for a demonstration, first inside the theatre and then in front of Mickiewicz's monument. This resulted in action by the police and Security Service, and a number of demonstrations were put on trial before the Disciplinary Commission at the university. The "Commandos" responded with a mass action: gathering signatures on petitions protesting the interference of the censor in the staging of a literary masterpiece. When the minister of Higher Education, Henryk Jablonski, exceeded his authority by

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<sup>21</sup> Op. cit., R.L. Tokes, Opposition in Eastern Europe.  
p. 65.

expelling two students from the university (Adam Michnik and Henryk Szlajfer), the "Commandos" responded by calling for a demonstration to be held on the university campus on March 8, 1968. The police and its reserve forces, the Reserve Organisation for the Citizens' Militia [Ochotnicza Rezerwa Milicji Obywatelskiej, (ORMO)] broke up the demonstration with a brutality that had not been seen in Warsaw for many years. Mass arrests and a campaign of slander against the "Commandos" in the mass media followed. In spite of all this, disturbances and strikes occurred in all Polish cities with institutions of higher learning and were also accompanied by mature and interesting attempts to formulate political programmes.

During the meetings at the universities across Poland, students passed several resolutions in which they accused authorities "of the violation of the basic democratic freedoms, of the breaking of elementary human laws and principles of community life". At the same time they also demanded:

1. consistent realisation of the principles of socialism;
2. institutional guarantees to observe the principles of freedom of research and of academic liberty;
3. legal guarantees which would recognize the autonomy of institutes of higher education;
4. establishment of full democracy as the only way to

cure Socialist economy; and

5. punishment of the police and compensation for physical and moral damage inflicted upon the victims of the March 1968 incidents.<sup>22</sup>

The movement of 1968 was brutally suppressed in the course of several weeks. Thousands of young people were detained, and an even larger number were expelled from the universities. The "Commandos" were among those imprisoned (their leadership already had been arrested on the morning of March 8).

March 1968 brought about an enormous change in consciousness, especially among the young people studying at the universities. The "Commando Movement" had developed within the sphere of influence of revisionist ideology; that is, it was governed by a desire for renewal, for the humanization and democratization of Marxism, and it was grounded in the belief that the political system created by Bolshevism could be reformed. This was not a typical attitude of the young people of the time, but it was an attitude one often encountered. In 1968 the clubs of the "forces of order" and the anti-Semitic propaganda dashed these illusions permanently. A large number of young people abandoned the

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<sup>22</sup> "Deklaracja ruchu studenckiego w Polsce" (The Declaration of Student Movement in Poland) Kultura No. 10(252) October 1968, pp. 87-91; cf. op. cit., Raina I, p. 141.

communism ideology once and for all.<sup>23</sup>

Why should these events have occurred in March 1968? The problem at issue in March was wider in scale than that raised by the Letter of the 34, or the imprisonment of Kuron and Modzelewski, or even the expulsion of Kolakowski from the Party. In March, the very essence of the system and Polish culture itself seemed to be at stake. When the authorities banned the Polish national epic from the stage, this unwise decision evoked patriotic feelings all over Poland. The Party leadership was simply flabbergasted. The response to the patriotic call had been unbelievably loud. The nation's youth, which the Party claimed to have indoctrinated in the spirit of Party loyalty, now outspokenly condemned the Party's authoritarian behaviour. Youth was united in demanding the observation of the civic rights guaranteed by the Polish Constitution.<sup>24</sup>

The Polish intellectuals had welcomed the reforms of January 1968 in Czechoslovakia. The successful role played by the Czechoslovak intellectuals in bringing about this change reminded the Poles of their own course of conduct during 1955-1956. It also reminded them of the defeat and hopelessness they had later suffered at the hands of the conservatives. In Prague the liberal faction of the Party had gained the upper hand and had proceeded to introduce the

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<sup>23</sup> Op. cit., J.J. Lipski, pp. 16-17.

<sup>24</sup> Op. cit., Raina I, p. 147.

promised reforms. The people behind this process were subsequently denounced by the Soviets as "forces of reaction" who were threatening to destroy communism in Czechoslovakia.<sup>25</sup>

Accordingly, on the night of August 20-21, the armies of Bulgaria, East Germany, Hungary, Poland and the Soviet Union marched into Czechoslovakia. The few protests that followed the invasion of Czechoslovakia constituted the last act of the March movement. The small scale of the protest can be explained by the lingering sense of defeat and the general disarray. There was a letter from Jerzy Andrzejewski to the chairman of the Writers' Union, and a letter from Zygmunt Mycielski to the chairman of the Composers' Union in Czechoslovakia. A group of students distributed leaflets, among them Boguslawa Blajfer, Eugeniusz Smolar, and Andrzej Seweryn. Eight years later, in 1976, all these young people--many of them still under 30--constituted the foundation of the KOR movement: commandos and noncommandos, participants in the 1968 strikes and demonstrations, often former political prisoners, experienced and aware of the mistakes made during the 1968 student protests.<sup>26</sup>

Gomulka's resignation on 20 December 1970 was welcomed with great satisfaction by the Polish nation. The 14 year

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<sup>25</sup> Gordon Skilling, "Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution" Canadian Slavonic Papers, 10, No. 4, Winter 1968, pp. 409-410.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Key "The Polish Opposition" Survey, 24, No. 4 (109), Autumn 1979, p. 9.

Gomulka era was a period of economic stagnation, for which Gomulka's ambivalent and often opportunistic style of leadership was primarily responsible.

Gomulka's downfall in 1970 now confirmed what the theoreticians Kuron and Modzelewski had argued in 1964: With the deterioration of the workers' material conditions, their social and cultural conditions would also deteriorate. And once the workers were deprived of the "chance to satisfy even their minimum desires within the framework of the present productive and social relationship," then crisis would ensue. Such a crisis would then force the workers to "stand up against the bureaucrats and the system, in order to defend the present level of their material and cultural existence". Only through a large-scale strike could the workers change their conditions.<sup>27</sup>

Political trials had been a common feature of the whole Gomulka period. With Gierek's arrival it was hoped that such trials would end. The manner in which the members of an organisation called "Ruch" (Movement) were tried on October 1971 proved that, basically, things had not changed since the days of Gomulka. In June 1970, up to 30 persons who were involved in the "Ruch" action had been arrested. Professionally, they belonged to different walks of life (engineers, biologists, Catholic priests, and former members of the Home Army), with an age-range of 25 to 60. The

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<sup>27</sup> Op. cit., Raina I, p. 199.

activities of this group, of which detailed history is not well known even now, centred chiefly around the cities of Lodz and Warsaw, and perhaps Lublin, presumably since 1968. It secretly distributed a mimeographed "Bulletin" which contained essays critical of the political system. The group also demanded the reestablishment of the Polish Socialist Party and the Peasant Party which, they believed, would truly represent the interests of the working class and the peasantry. Six issues of the "Bulletin" had appeared before the critics were arrested. The charges against the members of the "Ruch" group included anti-state acts, as well as criminal offenses.<sup>28</sup>

The District Court in Warsaw and Lodz handed down prison sentences, ranging from 1 to 7 years to all the members of "Ruch". Among those sentenced were Andrzej Czuma, one of the future founders of the Movement in Defense of Civil and Human Rights. Seventeen Polish writers sent a letter to the Ministry of Justice protesting against the harsh sentences. This, as well as another appeal by famous writer Jerzy Andrzejewski to the First Secretary Gierek, did not have any effect.

The protest against introducing changes in the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic (PRL) had farther reaching effects. The issue was somewhat paradoxical. In 1952, the Polish Sejm had adopted a new Constitution. Those

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<sup>28</sup> For details, see "Nowe procesy polityczne" (New Political Trials), Kultura, No. 12(291), December 1971, pp. 102-108.



were the days of the Stalinist terror: people were tortured and murdered, and they were condemned to death or to long prison terms on the basis of ridiculous and implausible documents or slanders; every aspect of life was under the control of the Security Service and of the Polish United Workers' Party [Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, (PZPR)]. The Constitution adopted at that time was simply a Stalinist document, which does not mean, however, that it sanctioned all these practices. Communist legislation, and especially documents such as the constitution, which were not linked directly to actual legal regulations, were stylized in a manner so as not to offend the world and to offer support for mendacious domestic propaganda. Thus these documents contained guarantees of freedom of conscience, assurances of freedom of association and assembly, declarations about freedom of speech, and the like. Obviously, no one operating within the Stalinist system ever expected that citizens would protest against the discrepancies between the Constitution and reality. As a result, the Constitutions adopted at that time functioned as rather elegant false fronts.<sup>29</sup>

But times had changed. Even in the USSR, the Brezhnev's era did not compare even approximately with the terror of the Stalinist period. Moreover, the Stalinist terror in Poland never reached the proportions it attained in the Soviet Union

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<sup>29</sup> Andrzej Stanislawski "Przeciw suwerennosci narodu" (Against the People's Sovereignty) Opinia, Nos. 3-4(23-24), March-April 1978, pp. 5-7.

(in 1936-1937). After 1956, its character changed fundamentally; political trials became rare, and sentences were still shocking, only when measured against the legal standards of Western Europe rather than the practices of the Soviet Union. The general atmosphere was also incomparably more liberal. As a result, people became more audacious and began appealing to the Constitution, which promised much better than the actual practice, even though the practice itself had improved.

In addition, to the changes in the country, the conclusion of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation had come, and the Final Act had also been signed, though only after much stalling, by the Polish People's Republic. The opposition in Poland feared Helsinki at first: they expected that the conference would result mainly, or even exclusively, in formal recognition of the division of Europe into two spheres of influence. However, they soon noticed--not just in Poland, but also in the USSR and in Czechoslovakia--that there existed an opportunity to appeal to the Final Act. In many instances, freedoms that, through the Helsinki agreements, were to be guaranteed by international accords had already long been "accorded" to the citizens of the Polish People's Republic by their own Constitution; and this fact intensified and facilitated their appeals to the Constitution. In this manner, the Constitution achieved the peculiar authority of a document which, while it

was not honoured by the state authorities, at least gave dissenting individuals a sense that the law was on their side. The appeal to abide by the Constitution became a subversive, antigovernment slogan. This was probably how the idea of "improving" the Constitution originated.

Late in 1975, politicians began to make references in their speeches to the need to amend the Constitution. Information was rationed out in small doses, but gradually, the public found out that these changes would concern three issues.

First, it was announced that the Constitution would contain an article stating that a citizen would be entitled to exercise his rights only if he fulfilled his obligations toward the state. This provision was to create a starting point for the exclusion from the law of entire categories of citizens, and for the implementation of the favourite idea of most totalitarian elements within PUWP: the introduction of forced labour.

The article in its first version stated that "the rights of citizens are conscientious fulfilling of duties to the fatherland". Under this provision anyone dissenting from the policies of the ruling Party could have been easily first, accused, and then condemned for having failed to fulfil thoroughly and conscientiously "his duties to the fatherland".<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Constitution of the PRL - The Basic Law, Polish

The idea of the creation of labour camps for those who failed to fulfil their duties was at that time widely discussed in the press.

Second, it was announced that an article would be introduced into the Constitution recognizing Poland's faithful alliance with the USSR; that is, there would be a constitutional limitation of Polish sovereignty.<sup>31</sup>

Third, it was announced that the leading role of the party in the state and in society would be recognized in the Constitution.<sup>32</sup>

These proposals stirred much discontent. It was clear that constitutional changes of this nature, even if they did not alter the actual state of affairs, were unfavourable for the society.<sup>33</sup> The proposal to introduce the alliance with the USSR into the Constitution was regarded as a particularly grievous insult. A significant part of Polish society accepted the existing state of affairs in this area, and there

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Interpress Agency, 1976, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Constitutions were amended in Czechoslovakia (1960), Rumania (1965), East Germany (1968), Bulgaria (1971), and Hungary (1972). The most servile obedience had been pledged by the East Germans. Their nation was "forever and irrevocably allied with the USSR". In the Soviet Union the changes to the constitution were introduced in 1978 and also stressed the leading role of the Communist Party in the Soviet society.

<sup>32</sup> Editorial, "Zmiany w Konstytucji" (Changes in the Constitution), Polityka, No. 6(988), February 7, 1976, p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> "Dalsze Protesty w Kraju (Further Protests in the Country), Kultura No. 3(342), March 1976, p. 29.

was a rather common feeling that any questioning of Polish participation in the Warsaw Pact would invite mortal danger. Under these conditions, the proposed constitutional amendment had a purely moral significance: it was only another humiliating slap in the face, while for those who lied to themselves by believing that they lived in a sovereign state, it was simply an acknowledgment of the existing state of affairs. In a word, it was a manifestation of political stupidity. But the statement about the leading role of the party-which explicitly reminded everyone that the citizens of the Polish People's Republic could be divided into those who were leading and those who were being led-also had the character of an equally gratuitous insult, which aroused frustration and aggression.<sup>34</sup>

It was the first issue, however, that posed the most serious danger. As opposed to the other proposals, this one could be expected to find a much deeper social resonance. Totalitarianism, which for years had been deforming the social psyche, had not generally succeeded in promoting love for the Soviet Union, the communist system or the Communist party, but was more successful in generating attitudes and the belief that the best remedy for social ills was the use of repression and compulsion. Often large segments of society approved of the brutal force used by the communists against long-haired or eccentrically-dressed young people, or believed that the

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<sup>34</sup> Op. cit., J.J. Lipski, p. 25.

only way to counteract increases in juvenile delinquency involved the application of Draconian measures. In this respect, the communists had a chance to gain some public support, and therefore also a chance to isolate the liberal opposition. It is important to mention at this point, that not everyone opposed the communist government in Poland. Although communism as a political system had not acquired popular acceptance, there was no doubt that some of the doctrinal principles had been internalized by large segments of the population. The most popular among them had been assertion of equality: equal opportunity, equal access, and equal treatment. There was also little doubt that a substantial percentage of the Polish population consisted of individuals who clearly benefitted from the system: transplanted peasants forming the first generation of the "new" industrial working class; members of the proletariat elevated from the margin of society to positions of authority and responsibility; and former children of workers and peasants joining the ranks of the communist intelligentsia. For all of them communism, along with its constitutional "freedoms" was an acceptable political system.<sup>35</sup>

On the issues raised by the constituents the opposition found an ally in the Church. The Church decided to use its authority to address the issue of citizens' obligations toward

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<sup>35</sup> Jane Leftwich Curry, ed., Dissent in Eastern Europe, (New York: Praeger, 1983), p. 40.

the state. In his third Holy Cross Sermon (i.e., in a series of sermons delivered in the Church of the Holy Cross in Warsaw), Primate Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski stated explicitly that even the drunkard lying against the fence, who seems at that moment to be devoid of all human features and who contributes nothing to social life, must have his full civil and human rights, if only because he is human. This was a decisive voice even for those who did not really understand what it all meant, or why the primate was saying such strange things.<sup>36</sup>

The proposed changes in the Constitution evoked nationwide protest in Poland. The most important among them was the one addressed by fifty-nine Polish essayists, poets, novelists, lawyers, priests, academics, and politicians to the Speaker of the Sejm.

The signatories of what came to be known as the "Letter of 59" authorised the 85-year-old Polish economist, Professor Edward Lipinski, to forward this Memorandum to the Sejm on 5 December 1975, copies of which were also deposited with the Episcopate and the Council of State.<sup>37</sup> In his covering letter, Professor Lipinski informed the Speaker of the Sejm that another letter, signed by over three hundred students and academics, would soon follow. Referring to the proposed

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<sup>36</sup> Op. cit., J.J. Lipski, p. 26.

<sup>37</sup> "The Letter of 59 Intellectuals to the Speaker of the Diet (Sejm) of the Polish People's Republic", The Polish Review, 21, Nos. 1 & 2, 1976, pp. 57-58.

amendments announced in the Guidelines for the Seventh Party Congress and to the Helsinki document signed by Poland, along with thirty-four other governments, confirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the signatories of the Memorandum believed that "implementation of these basic freedoms should now inaugurate a new period in the history of our nation and in the life of its citizens". Prompted by civic anxieties, the signatories deemed it necessary that the Constitution "ought, above all, to guarantee the following civic freedoms":

- freedom of conscience and religion,
- freedom to work,
- freedom of expression and information,
- freedom to knowledge.<sup>38</sup>

There were many more letters about the Constitution, and a full list of all the signatories would convey a sense of the formation of open opposition among intellectuals and artists. The "constitutional action" played an extremely important role in the crystallization of political opposition and social resistance in Poland. Voices were raised over this issue not only by groups of well-known people who formulated their demands openly and broadly in a manner that had not been seen in Poland for many years but also by the Church, an institution that enjoys even greater prestige and is of tremendous significance in Poland; and for this reason these

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<sup>38</sup> For the full text of the "Letter of 59" see Appendix II.



protests must be considered of historical importance. It is true that the Communist party did not retreat much before this wave of protest, but the scale of the discontent was a serious warning to the Polish leadership. The Party made some minor concessions. The amendments were slightly rephrased, so that their stylistic fangs and claws were somewhat dulled. All this gave the initiators of the protest a sense of success.<sup>39</sup>

The "Letter of 59" was the final act of opposition by intellectuals before the creation of KOR. This document as others before it became an important factor influencing the formation of a new social consciousness among the intelligentsia as well as in creating ideas for a future programme of Polish opposition.

Summarizing the period of 1945-1976 it can be stated that even though the first serious challenge to the existing regime was launched by the workers in Poznan in June 1956, only four months later one could witness the birth of a worker-intellectual coalition that provided highly visible support to Gomulka in the critical days of October 1956. The alliance proved short-lived, and the banner of dissent throughout most

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<sup>39</sup> The amendments were passed by the Sejm with only one abstention by Dr. Stanislaw Stomma. One of the founders of the semi-independent Roman Catholic group, Znak (Symbol). Dr. Stomma had been a Deputy of the Sejm for twenty years. Following his abstention on the proposed amendments, Dr. Stomma was informed that his candidacy for the Sejm next election had been dropped. Although punished by the authorities, in the public opinion he was perceived as a hero.

of the 1960's was carried by a handful of intellectuals with the workers remaining on the sidelines.

The intellectual ferment that had already existed prior to 1956 and that reached its peak in 1957 had to be suppressed by the Party, since it was concerned with the rapid growth of revisionist thinking. Dissent surfaced again a few years later in the well-known Kuron-Modzelewski letter, which can be seen as the precursor of similar declarations produced by the Polish dissidents of the late 1970's. Apart from that letter, which represented a comprehensive attack on the post-1956 Polish political system, Marxist philosophers such as Leszek Kolakowski and Adam Schaff challenged some fundamental assumptions of Marxist ideology during the 1960's. It is probably no exaggeration to say that most of the intellectual ferment of the 1960's was fuelled by Marxists increasingly alienated from the political reality of People's Poland.

The next major confrontation, in March 1968, involved only students and intellectuals and, as such, it represented a retreat back to the traditional form of antigovernment opposition in Poland, which has traditionally been spearheaded by the educated elites. There is no doubt that the breakup of the united front of workers and the intelligentsia succeeded in resurrecting old class antagonisms and weakening the spirit of dissent. As a result, intellectuals remained largely neutral during the bloody collision between the workers and the Gomulka regime in December 1970.

The first half of the 1970's resembled to some extent the situation of the early 1960's in that it was again the intelligentsia that assumed the chief role in criticizing and opposing the government, a process that reached its peak in the campaign against constitutional revisions in early 1976. During this period, however, there was a growing realization that the only hope of success lay in reestablishing the alliance with the workers.<sup>40</sup>

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Op. cit., J.L. Curry. Dissent in Eastern Europe. pp. 30-31.

## CHAPTER II

### THE OPPOSITION OF THE LEFT, THE WORKERS' DEFENCE COMMITTEE

On 24 June 1976 Polish Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz announced in the Sejm substantial price rises for several foodstuffs. The increases were to be offset by certain wage increases but those would not be sufficient to offset the loss in the real standard of living.

There was a violent reaction. After disturbances at the Ursus plant in Warsaw where workers pulled up the railway truck and stopped international traffic, and at Radom, where a general strike and demonstration at the local party headquarters turned into a bloody riot, as well as unrest from several other major industrial centres, the price rises were rescinded.<sup>1</sup> But just after the government had withdrawn the controversial food price increases, the prosecutions of the Ursus and Radom workers began. At that stage, various discontented groups coalesced into a committee and started its activities in the court house at Radom in July 1976, where 18 relatives of accused workers were found to be in need of money, legal advice, and personal support. Money was collected - first for specific cases and then more generally.

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<sup>1</sup>George Schoplin, Poland: A Society in Crisis (London: The Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1979), p. 9.

Lawyers were found and advice offered. But, adhering strictly to legal provisions, the committee was publicly and openly set up in the middle of September, and has since then been known in Poland as the Worker's Defense Committee [Komitet Obrony Robotnikow (KOR)]. It was initially formed by fourteen Polish intellectuals. Widespread support came within a few weeks, not only from the workers, victims of repressive measures, but also from the students and significantly from the Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup>

The committee formulated four main objectives:

- 1) financial, legal, and medical aid, and moral support for imprisoned workers and their families;
- 2) amnesty for all workers arrested and sentenced;
- 3) reinstatement for all workers dismissed for taking part in strikes; and
- 4) official investigations by a special Sejm commission of alleged militia brutality - less during the actual demonstrations on June 25 than immediately afterward during interrogations and investigations and in the prisons.

The KOR proclaimed that it functioned openly and was ready to disband when these objectives were achieved and where institutions such as trade unions, social security, etc.

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<sup>2</sup>George Blazynski, Flashpoint Poland (Toronto: Pergamon Press, 1979), p. 275-276.

assumed their responsibilities.<sup>3</sup> The KOR in a letter to the Speaker of the Sejm, announced its existence and attached the text of an "Appeal to the Nation and to the Authorities".

The Appeal read in part:

The workers' protest against exorbitant price increases expressed the feeling of the whole nation. Brutal repression followed. The repressive measures broke the law. Courts passed their verdicts without adequate evidence. The labour code was infringed. For the first time in many years physical terror was applied during arrest and investigations. The whole of society must take responsibility since the workers acted in the interests of the nation. The repressive measures against the workers completely disregard the most basic rights of man guaranteed under international law and also in the Polish constitution. The KOR demands amnesty for all those sentenced and arrested and reinstatement of those dismissed. The committee is in full solidarity with these demands which were voiced by the communique of Polish Episcopate's conference of September 9, and appeals to the whole of society to support these demands.<sup>4</sup>

The letter was promptly returned by the speaker together with the appeal, "the text of which cannot be submitted for discussion owing to its contents and its formal and legal aspects".

In many statements and on many occasions, different members of KOR emphasized the non-political character of the organization and its limited aims. Speaking on BBC Radio 4, a member of the committee, the young writer Stanislaw Baranczak, summarized the aims and activities of the committee when he said:

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<sup>3</sup> Op. cit., G. Blazynski, p. 276.

<sup>4</sup> As cited in G. Blazynski, p. 275.

We are not a political party and we do not have any political programme. My aim is to fight the enormous lie which is our everyday reality. We are full of wrong ideas, of falsifications, of faked books, faked words - and the reprisals which took place in our country are only a part of this whole atmosphere of our life....The opposition in Poland claims to be trying to contribute to the country's well-being by pressing the government and the Party to live up to the socialist ideas they profess.<sup>5</sup>

Another member of KOR, Jan Jozef Lipski, wrote: "what was the basic idea of KOR: first, there was the idea of an action that would appeal above all to ethical values, to general moral standards rather than political attitudes," and then:

"Within the realm of its effectiveness the Workers' Defense Committee represented not only a specific idea of social action but also a certain style of action, which was refined gradually over the course of several years, although some of its characteristics were apparent from the very beginning: above all, KOR meant social and not political activity".<sup>6</sup>

In fact, the KOR never developed a full political programme, which would become a base for its activities. However, the lack of a clear, detailed, political platform shouldn't discourage us from analyzing the political legacy of KOR, and there are a few reasons for that. Firstly, some of the most prominent members of KOR such as Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, and Antoni Macarewicz were above all political

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<sup>5</sup> As cited in G. Blazynski, p. 277.

<sup>6</sup> Jan Jozef Lipski, KOR: A History of the Workers' Defense Committee in Poland, 1976-1981 (Barkley; University of California Press, 1985), p. 62.

activists, both in their temperament and interest. They were writing and publishing very extensively both in Poland and abroad. Obviously not all of the KOR members shared the same view on each and every point presented in political writings of Kuron or Michnik but nevertheless they all found enough common ground to work together for 5 years, united against the powerful state apparatus. It is not true that political differences among KOR members, as some KOR activists claim, did not play an important role in the actions of the committee. Too many people left the KOR because of political disagreement to allow us to accept the thesis about the apolitical character of the Workers' Defense Committee.

Secondly, as members of the KOR were aware, whoever takes a stand against a totalitarian state in any area of life is committing a political act. Jan Jozef Lipski wrote:

"...an artist who painted an abstract or surrealist picture in the quiet of his own private studio during the period of Zhdanov's cultural policy was committing a political act classified as hostile to the system and its ideology. Totalitarianism is defined precisely by the fact that, since the authorities aim to extend their control over every aspect of life, everything ultimately becomes political."<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, willingly or not, people involved in KOR activities were perceived both by the society and authorities as a domestic opposition, the term which was readily accepted by the KOR press.

At the beginning of the KOR's existence two important

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<sup>7</sup> Op. cit., J.J. Lipski, p. 44.



principles were introduced as the basis of its activities. First there was the notion that the committee's activities should be overt. Neither the existence of the committee nor its membership were to be kept secret. KOR issued a public announcement of the addresses and telephone numbers of its members. This was accompanied by fear of reprisals but it also made all the letters, declarations, and petitions published by the KOR more trustworthy. Overcoming the barrier of fear constituted not only a condition necessary for the success of KOR but also became one of the committee's basic goals, which had not only a political and social, but also a moral significance.<sup>8</sup> Besides that, the openness gave KOR's members some kind of protection since any action of the security forces aimed against KOR were exposed to Polish and international public opinion.

Second, there was the idea that activity should not only be overt but also legal. Opportunities for legal action were provided by the international agreements ratified by the People's Republic of Poland, including the Final Act of the Helsinki conference and the Polish Constitution as well as other laws. Even the very existence of KOR was not without legal justification. This was so despite the fact that the legality of KOR was questioned by the Security Service, since KOR never applied for official registration and thus for

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<sup>8</sup> Jane Leftwich Curry, ed., Dissent in Eastern Europe (New York: Praeger, 1983) pp. 159-160.

official permission to act - was not without legal justification. There was an old but still valid law from the 1930's which allowed for the formation of committees devoted to relief action (aid to flood or fire victims, for example) and such committees did not have to be registered. In addition, KOR had only one characteristic of an organization: members. It had no bylaws or statutes, no chairmen, no membership fees. There was also a legal loophole: any group attempting to register becomes illegal if it is denied registration and any further activity by such an organization is then subject to criminal sanctions. This is not the case for organizations that simply neglect to register and which are then subject only to administrative sanctions. In this and in similar cases, KOR knew very well that repression (or the lack of it) would depend solely on the degree of self-confidence felt by the authorities, and not on the law; but KOR wanted to have the law on its side as much as possible.<sup>9</sup>

The ethos of KOR was influenced by a variety of sources and traditions.<sup>10</sup> These traditions came along with members of KOR who had very different political backgrounds and experiences. The KOR was led by intellectuals from various walks of life - writers, actors, artists, literary critics, students, priests, historians, and economists - some of them

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<sup>9</sup> Op. cit., J.J. Lipski, p. 45.

<sup>10</sup> Jadwiga Staniszkis. Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution (Princeton, N.J.; Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 136.

expelled from the Party a long time before. The most prominent members of the committee were already well-known figures on the Polish political scene, engaged in the struggle for human rights and in various protests against the Party and government measures for several years past.<sup>11</sup> KOR could be divided into three main "generational groups". The eldest one traced its origin to the pre-war left-wing but non-communist parties, including the Polish Socialist Party, the Democratic Party, and various intellectual groups. Its best known representatives were Professor Edward Lipinski, a respected economist, a left-wing socialist in his youth, and Antoni Pajdak, one of the defendants in the trial of the Polish leaders in Moscow in 1945. Most of them had a glorious record of anti-Nazi resistance within the Home Army.

The middle group in part went through a short period of infatuation with Stalinism in their early youth, typical of so many post-war intellectuals all over Europe, and their via "revisionism" and "dissent" passed to intransigent anti-totalitarianism; a typical representative here would be Jacek Kuron, a dissident Marxist of a Trotskyite persuasion. Another part of this generation, Jan Jozef Lipski for instance, stemmed from the anti-Nazi resistance groups among Polish youth. Most of them went through several decades of political passivity but without seeking accommodation with the post-war regime.

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<sup>11</sup> Op. cit., G. Blazynski, p. 277.

Finally, there was the youngest group who, like Adam Michnik or Adam Macierewicz, were student activists of 1968.<sup>12</sup> Some of them had been members of Communist youth organizations or came from families with Communist ties. They considered themselves leftists or even Marxists but of a more Western Eurocommunist or social democratic brand. A relatively large group of the young activists were devoted Catholics who continued to participate in official lay activities of the Church.<sup>13</sup> KOR was, then, an interesting amalgamation of at least three identifiable generations which fused ideas of social democracy, christian democracy, and revisionism. Polish nationalism was also present since patriotism and its world of values together with the recent memory of World War II, the Home Army, and the Underground State played a large role in the formation of the ethos of the KOR milieu.

One of the ideas shared by the whole committee was that real reforms cannot emerge from within a Party which was dominated by technocrats and opportunists. Nor could the KOR claim any potential allies in the higher echelons of the Party. For this reason they saw no purpose in trying to overthrow the leadership. Their aim was to exert pressure for

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<sup>12</sup> Tadeusz Szafar, "Contemporary Political Opposition in Poland" Survey 24, No. 4(109), Autumn 1979, p. 49.

<sup>13</sup> Adam Bromke, "The Opposition in Poland" Problems of Communism, 27, No. 5, September-October 1978, p. 39. (Hereafter Bromke I).

specific and limited concessions.<sup>14</sup> The KOR was convinced that even without changing the basic promises of the regime, important gains could be made towards its relative liberalization by challenging the party and state monopoly, by introducing as many elements as possible of political pluralism, and by exerting incessant pressure from below.<sup>15</sup> The KOR didn't have any illusions that its aims could be achieved by appealing to the good will of the rulers or by playing one party faction against another. Nor did the KOR assume that the party leadership could be convinced to act in the interests of the country and the nation, unless those interests happened to coincide with their own. As Kuron put it in one of his articles "I don't believe in a liberal wing in the party, I believe in the pragmatism of the people in power".<sup>16</sup>

In the first stage of KOR's activity three issues could be outlined as the short-term aims which the committee tried to achieve. In the forefront was the human rights issue and the KOR's task lay in monitoring observance of human rights by the authorities, publicizing both inside the country and abroad any violations of these rights, and finally securing legal and financial aid for those deprived of their rights.

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<sup>14</sup> Op. cit., G. Blazynski, p. 277.

<sup>15</sup> Andizej Szczypiorski, "The Limits of Political Realism", Survey, 24, No. 4(109), Autumn 1979, pp. 24-25.

<sup>16</sup> Jacek Kuron, "Drogi i podzialy (Ways and Divisions) Kultura, Nos. 1(376) - 2(377), January-February 1979, p. 176.

The second opposition aim was to break the state's monopoly of information.<sup>17</sup> This was not only by the publishing activity outlined above but also by a strong campaign against censorship and by the generation of a social and political impetus to have it weakened in practice. At the same time the unofficial publications kept people informed about events in Poland and abroad, fighting against ignorance and for an informed public opinion. It was this fight which had been so dramatically supplemented by creating independent reading, study and educational facilities. Encouragement was given by the unofficial literary magazines to creative, artistic activity. "The Pulse" hammered out its message in precise terms:

Lack of freedom of speech and criticism paralyses the development of culture and destroys its wealth and variety. Enforced silence, or the forced expression of ideas contrary to personal conviction destroys the sense of personal dignity of man and of the writer. When the possibility of the public expression of thought and free discussion disappear, the inclination and desire to think in general also disappear.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The first regular independent monthly, publication of the Workers' Defence Committee ("KOR"), Biuletyn Informacyjny ("Information Bulletin") stated (no. 8, February 1977: Special Edition) that the aim of the bulletin was to "break the state monopoly over information, which is protected by the existence of censorship. The information it contains serves the cause of openness in public life and constitutes a chronicle of reprisals both against its culture and its heritage. By disseminating this bulletin, you are acting within your rights, and playing a part in their defence. Read it, copy it, and pass it on. Expose cases of violation of civil rights. Remember -- by destroying this bulletin, you are sealing your own lips, and those of others".

<sup>18</sup> As cited in G. Blazynski, p. 344.

The third KOR aim was to introduce a genuine system of political and social pluralism outside the official power structure since the Party refused even to tone down its so-called "leading" role. This meant the voluntary establishment of independent social institutions representing a wide spectrum of views, yet linked together by the basic identity of their general goals.<sup>19</sup>

Among these aims, the breaking of the state and party monopoly in information was largely achieved in a very short time. In the first year of the opposition activities there were about 50 samizdat publications, ranging from small broadsheets addressed to a limited audience to voluminous books and literary almanacs published in a large number of copies, sometimes using the most modern polygraphic techniques. All of them, of course, bypassed the official censorship and all of them analyzing every possible aspect of Polish social and political life. As one Polish writer commented, not since World War II "has there been a similar debate about the programme of action and the vision of a future Republic".<sup>20</sup>

The debate as a whole has been characterized by a remarkable degree of sobriety. In a political treatise written at the end of 1976, an author using the nom de plume Marek Turbacz set the tone. He observed that "thinking in

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<sup>19</sup> Op. cit., J. Kuron, "Drogi i podzialy", p. 124.

<sup>20</sup> As cited in A. Bromke I, p. 45.

clear political terms" had "been generally alien to the Polish intellectual tradition" and had not been encouraged by thirty years of totalitarian rule. He proceeded to put forward his own argument in a detached and precise, almost scientific fashion. His assessment of Poland's position vis-a-vis the USSR was characterized by cold realism:

We are not able to free ourselves from the domination of Russia...Poland, which is its most important satellite located on its road to Western Europe, cannot regain sovereignty as long as the Russian Empire exists. Neither will the Russian leaders permit Poland...to discard the Communist system. This would restrict their influence over us, and also set a dangerous example for the other satellites as well as for their own people.

The restoration of Poland's sovereignty and a basic change of the present system would be possible only if preceded by a fundamental change in Russia itself, or a drastic shift in the constellation of forces in the world at large. For this we may have to wait as long as a quarter of a century.<sup>21</sup>

Soviet domination of Poland, in Turbacz's opinion, determined the limits of viable change in the country. Moscow was likely to intervene should strong anti-Russian sentiments surface among the Polish people, should the PUWP be removed from power and a multiparty system be restored; or should a major reorientation in the country's foreign policy take place. Therefore, the opposition should not promote such developments.

At the same time, Turbacz maintained the fact that Poland could not free itself from the USSR's domination did not mean

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<sup>21</sup> Marek Turbacz. "Mozliwosci dzialania opozycji w Polsce". Aneks (London), Nos. 16-17, 1977, p. 20.



that the Poles should passively resign themselves to their fate and await changes in the international sphere. "There is an essential difference" he pointed out, "between compromise and blind submission, as there is a distinction between a realist policy and collaboration".<sup>22</sup> Within the existing framework, he argued, there still existed room for the Poles to try to improve their position. There were various domestic changes which the Polish Communist government could undertake without invoking the wrath of Moscow. It could carry out substantial economic reform, expand the role of self government, enhance the role of experts in the administration, improve the quality of information, and broaden the scope of cultural freedom. These measures would significantly reduce the gap between the Communist authorities and the Polish people, and in this way diminish the danger of repeated violent confrontations between them.

In Turbacz's judgment, however, the Gierek regime was not able to undertake such reforms; and the possibility that some other Communist leader would emerge in the near future who would be willing to do so is remote. Under such circumstances "changes must be extracted from the government through popular pressure". This pressure should not be exerted through sporadic outburst, but should take the form of a long-term systematic campaign. The opposition, in the author's words, should not incite "revolutionary upheavals, but rather promote

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid, p. 21.

everyday demonstrations of civic courage".<sup>23</sup>

The methods and objectives of the opposition were clearly set out by the other leading activists as well. Adam Michnik's essay "The New Evolutionism" contained a broad reformist programme implying slow, progressive changes in the system.<sup>24</sup> Specifically, he called on the party to accept changes in four areas, none of which would significantly undermine its leading role:

- 1) the establishment of independent trade unions;
- 2) the easing, but not necessarily the complete abolition, of press censorship (for example: ending of censorship for low circulation journals);
- 3) acceptance of the desire for pluralism among young people and abandonment of propaganda; and
- 4) ending of all religious discrimination.<sup>25</sup>

Michnik, too, felt quite strongly that popular pressure aimed at extracting reforms from the Communist government should be considerably intensified. He recognized that this might lead to Soviet intervention, but he dismissed the possibility as remote. Soviet military intervention, he argued, would be catastrophic for the present regime; consequently, the Polish communists would try to avoid it at any cost. Moreover, since

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<sup>23</sup>Op. cit., Turbacz, p. 23; cf: Bromke I, p. 45.

<sup>24</sup>Adam Michnik "The New Evolutionism" Survey 22, Nos. 3-4(100-101), Summer-Autumn 1976, pp. 267-277.

<sup>25</sup>Op. cit., G. Schoplin, p. 13.

it would be highly detrimental to East-West detente, Moscow would be extremely reluctant to take such a step. When asked to sum up opposition aims at a press conference in London, Michnik replied: "the Finlandisation of Poland".<sup>26</sup>

Kuron's argument was along similar lines but paid greater attention to the structures of society. In his essay "Reflections on a Programme of Action" which was published in October 1976, he first defined the global objective: "the political opposition consists of those individuals who resist, actively and consciously, the totalitarian system and who struggle towards national and state independence. I do not include in our number those who strive only for state independence without, however, opposing the totalitarian system."<sup>27</sup> Opposition could take various forms like illegal enterprise for personal gain or local administrative manipulations for the sake of increasing local power and wealth; Kuron rejected these methods as disruptive and proposed instead a third way, national self-defence based on solidarity.

"Open protest, synchronised in a number of centres, unites the country and becomes a social movement. A social movement is a joint form of action in which every participant realises his aims by acting in a

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<sup>26</sup>See also Michnik's interview with "La Monde" on December 16, 1976, translated into English in A. Ostoja-Ostoszowski (ed.) Dissent in Poland. Reports and Documents, December 1975-July 1977 (London: Veritos Press, 1977), p. 177-179.

<sup>27</sup>Jacek Kuron Zasady Ideowe (Ideological Principles) (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1978) p. 15.

small, independent group...[which] retains the right to act on its own initiative."<sup>28</sup>

Specifically, the kind of groups that Kuron had in mind - and his "Reflections" were composed in October 1976 - were peasants resisting creeping nationalisation of the land by boycotts, local strikes and workers' organizations, the activities of the faithful in defence of the church, and samizdat publications by intellectuals. Each of these forms of activity "in its own way restrict the power of the totalitarian state with considerable measure of success". His main argument against a totalitarian system was that it could not solve social crises, but indeed rendered a lasting solution of such crises virtually impossible. The authorities confronted with organized action of these small local or professional groups would then, as Kuron saw it, be forced to start a meaningful dialogue with the people. At the same time, Kuron also disavowed any intention on the part of KOR to seek a confrontation with the government. He claimed that the opposition, on the contrary, is striving to promote peace in Poland. Soviet intervention, he argued, was more likely to be brought about by popular upheaval over some drastic government measures than by moderate reforms which could be the most effective way to pacify the Polish people. Kuron clearly stated that full Polish sovereignty would be an unrealistic aim in the geopolitical situation of the country

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<sup>28</sup>Jacek Kuron "Reflection on Programme of Action". The Polish Review, 22, No. 3, 1977, p. 60.

at that time. But he insisted that idealistic aims should be spelled out because they are important for retaining and strengthening national identity.<sup>29</sup> Clearly, his perspective was a long one and he, too, looked to an eventual Finlandisation of Poland.

On February 3, 1977 the Council of State, on the initiative - as it was announced - of the first secretary of the Central Committee of PUPW "recommended that the Commission for Acts of Clemency, the Prosecutor's Office, and the organs of the justice system prepare petitions for the remission, reduction, temporary suspension, or interruption of the sentences of those convicted in connection with the events of June 25 who have shown repentance and given hope that they will not again enter upon the path of crime".<sup>30</sup>

In a comprehensive statement the KOR welcomed the decision of the Council of State to implement clemency but listed several objections and new charges. It regretted that the Council of State, by accepting the report of the prosecutor general and the minister of justice on the activities of their subordinate offices, had, by implication, sanctioned militia brutality and obvious abuse of the administration of justice. Making applications for clemency dependent upon the penitence of the convicted was humiliating to the imprisoned workers and excluded from any form of pardon

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid, p. 69.

<sup>30</sup>As cited in J.J. Lipski, p. 107.

those who defended workers' interests and their own human dignity. Excluded also, according to the KOR were those who did not admit their guilt and those beaten up and degraded.<sup>31</sup>

The KOR statement concluded with the following demands:

- 1) re-employment in work corresponding to their qualifications of all those dismissed;
- 2) unconditional amnesty for all accused and imprisoned;
- 3) making public the whole extent of the repressions;
- 4) disclosing the names of, and punishing the persons guilty of, violation of law, and the torturing and beating of workers; and
- 5) creation of a special parliamentary commission that would impartially investigate these burning problems which have so aroused social anxiety.<sup>32</sup>

"When these demands are met, the KOR will lose its *raison d'etre*", the statement concluded.

In fact, the act of clemency caused some confusion among KOR supporters and in the circles of the political opposition. For a time one would hear questions about whether KOR would now dissolve itself. The release of almost all (and in the course of several months, indeed all) of the workers, and the fact that the remainder had found jobs, became an argument for those who felt that KOR had done what it had to do and was no

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<sup>31</sup>Dissent in Poland: Reports and Documents in Translation; December 1975-July 1977. (London: Association of Polish Students and Graduates in Exile, 1977) pp. 123-137.

<sup>32</sup>Op. cit., G. Blazynski, p. 290.

longer necessary.<sup>33</sup> At the same time some tensions were exposed between the older and younger, more radical, members. The former were given the original KOR duties of helping workers and families, the latter, including Kuron, permanent dissenters' movement. On May 10 KOR announced the setting up of an intervention on official human rights violations and at the same time a Social Self-Defence Fund to give financial support to activists who had lost their jobs. The statement warned that only the activity of the whole of society can resist acts of repression and slow down the dangerous process of unpunished violations of human and civil rights.<sup>34</sup> Thus any official strategy based on fulfilling the KOR original demands in order to speed its dissolution was seriously undermined. The dissolution of KOR was supported only by a handful of members, the majority, on the contrary, wanted to broaden the committee's tasks and thus make some organizational changes.<sup>35</sup> On September 29, 1977 the KOR was transformed into the Social Self-Defence Committee "KOR" [Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej "KOR"; (KSS "KOR")]. In the resolution published on the same day the Committee justified its transformation and presented its aims:<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Op. cit., J.J. Lipski, p. 108.

<sup>34</sup>"Declarations of Opposition Groups" Survey 24, No. 4(109) Autumn 1979, p. 68-69.

<sup>35</sup>Jan B. de Weydenthal Poland. Communism Adrift. (London: SAGE Publications, 1979) p. 59.

<sup>36</sup>See Appendix III for the full text of the resolution.

- 1) To oppose reprisals made for political, ideological, religious or racial reasons, and to help those who are persecuted for such reasons;
- (2) To oppose violations of the rule of law, and to help victims of injustice;
- (3) To fight for institutional guarantees of civil rights and freedoms;
- (4) To support and protect all social initiatives made in the cause of human and civil rights.<sup>37</sup>

Following the transformation of KOR into KSS "KOR" and the broadening of its sphere of activities, a good many KOR activists began to feel the need for a more precise self-definition and for a sketch of the perspectives for a movement that was encompassing increasingly larger social circles.<sup>38</sup> This was the source of the "Declaration of the Democratic Movement". This text was not written by KOR, but it is one of the basic documents showing the ideological development of the milieu participating in KOR. In the intention of its creators, the Declaration of the Democratic Movement was meant to be much more; it was to serve as a basis for the formation of a broad new platform that should result in the creation of institutional structures. In other words, it was a step in the direction of initiating a genuine political life. At the same time, the Declaration would also be a starting point for further, more specific, programmatic works.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>"Uchwala KOR". Kultura, No. 11(362), November 1977, p. 145; cf: op. cit., "Declaration of Opposition Groups", pp. 69-70.

<sup>38</sup>George Schoplin. Poland, a Society in Crisis (London: Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1986) p. 11.

<sup>39</sup>Op. cit., J.J. Lipski, p. 201.



All of these far-reaching plans failed for regrettable reasons. The group that wrote the "Declaration" decided to found a new periodical that would serve as an organ for gathering and organizing its adherents, and at the same time as a workshop for further programmatic work. The periodical was entitled "Glos" ["Voice"]. Antoni Macierewicz was to be its editor-in-chief. Immediately after the founding of the periodical however, its editorial board split and as the split widened it led later to very sharp conflicts and to polarization within the Committee.

The direct cause of the split was an article by Adam Michnik (who was a member of the editorial board) that was rejected by Macierewicz who saw in the article a tendency to "reach an agreement" with the authorities. Once again Michnik and Kuron were accused of wanting to appeal to one of the party factions.<sup>40</sup> As a result, Kuron and Michnik left "Glos" and those who supported Antek Macierewicz remained on the editorial board of "Glos".

"Glos" remained a serious periodical of the KOR milieu. But it was known that certain names would not be found there

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<sup>40</sup>Because of Kuron's and Michnik's previous membership in the communist party and their "revisionist" attempts to reform the party from inside, they were sometimes accused by their political opponents of being connected with some faction within Polish United Workers' Party (Communists) or even being crypto-communists opposed to Polish independence.

(such as Blumsztajn<sup>41</sup>, Litynski<sup>42</sup>, Michnik, and Kuron). All this resulted in the formation not only of an editorial board for "Glos" but also of a "Glos" group or faction within KOR. The most prominent members of the "Glos" group were Macierewicz<sup>43</sup>, Naimski<sup>44</sup>, L. Dorn<sup>45</sup>, Karpinski<sup>46</sup>, and an interesting phenomenon was the significant evolution of the milieu toward the right, which meant taking a more militant stand toward the government. Any tendency of compromise with the communists was seen as a betrayal of KOR's ideas. J. J. Lipski wrote in "History of KOR": "Toward the end of the committee's existence he (Macierewicz) used the words "the left" and "leftist" exclusively as insults".<sup>47</sup> It is

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<sup>41</sup>Seweryn Blumsztajn (b. 1946) arrested and expelled from the Warsaw University in 1968, sentenced to two years imprisonment. Founder and editor of "Biuletyn Informacyjny KOR".

<sup>42</sup>Jan Litynski (b. 1948), mathematician; co-organizer of students protest in 1968, member of the Editorial Board and later chief editor of "Robotnik" (Worker). Since 1980 member of "Solidarity".

<sup>43</sup>Antoni Macierewicz (b. 1948); historian and a scouting activist. In 1968 he participated in the student movement and spent several months in jail.

<sup>44</sup>Piotr Naimski; biochemist (he received his Ph.D. during the period of KOR activity). He was a friend of Macierewicz through their common scouting activities.

<sup>45</sup>Ludwik Dorn; member of the pre-war Polish Socialist Party.

<sup>46</sup>Jakub Karpinski (b. 1940), sociologist and writer (pen name Marek Tarniewski). For his oppositionist activities prohibited by the authorities from publishing in the official press.

<sup>47</sup>Op. cit., J.J. Lipski, p. 202-203.

important to point out that wide diversity among KOR's members was one of the reasons why KOR never produced a detailed political programme.

Let us examine now in more detailed form some of the political and social issues which were discussed in the KOR's press.

The problem of Polish independence was discussed one more time in great depth by Marek Turbacz in "Glos" No. 6,:

I do not approve of groundless expectations and I do not believe in an early or easy victory. Only a fundamental change in the USSR will make freedom and democracy attainable for us. However, the Soviet political system appears stable at the moment and we cannot expect a reversal in the near future. The stability extends to the whole Soviet empire of which we are a part. I share the view that political independence is not possible in the immediate future. Nonetheless, full independence is one of our goals to be reached as early as conditions permit. I think it important to declare this ultimate objective now as a natural national right which we wish to realize. Even if it is beyond our reach at present, it remains a cornerstone of our political thinking.<sup>48</sup>

Turbacz rejected the concept of "Finlandisation" as a possible step towards full independence. In his opinion, the Brezhnev doctrine would never allow this to come about. He continued:

During the nineteenth century the Poles had to build their hopes on a potential military conflict between European powers. Now, we have to await a radical change in the USSR. In the circumstances, some Western politicians advise us to drop plans for an independent democracy and some of our own countrymen advise us to keep such plans to ourselves: but we should do neither. Even if our objectives are not attainable in the immediate future our activity

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<sup>48</sup>As cited in Lidia Ciolkosz, "The Uncensored Press" Survey 24, No. 4(109) Autumn 1979, p. 57.

exerts a genuine influence in the dissident movement in the USSR and in the satellite countries.<sup>49</sup>

The topic of friendship with other nations and social groups fighting for human and civil rights throughout the Soviet empire was present during the entire history of KOR. An awareness of a common fate shared with other nations of the empire was an important aspect of KOR activities. On January 20 and 21, 1979, a representative of KSS "KOR", Zbigniew Romaszewski, met in Moscow with Professor Andrei Sakhorov and his associates from the Committee in Defense of Human Rights. Among the specific issues discussed was the participation of the defenders of human rights in the Soviet Union in the Polish dissident periodical "Krytyka" ["Critic"].

The relations with Czechs and Slovaks were even more active. For example, in August 1978 representatives of KSS "KOR" and of Charter 77 met on the Polish-Czechoslovakian border, informed one another about their activities, discussed forms of cooperation, and issued a joint statement on the anniversary of the invasion of Warsaw Pact troops into Czechoslovakia.<sup>50</sup>

On the whole KOR's members agreed that the future political system in Poland should take a form of a

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid, p. 58.

<sup>50</sup>For a joint Czechoslovak-Polish statement on the meeting as well as documents related to other forms of cooperation between the Polish dissidents and those from other East European countries, see "Poles, Russians and Czechoslovaks" Survey 25, No. 1(110) Winter 1980, pp. 204-211.

parliamentary democracy.<sup>51</sup> Jacek Kuron in his "Reflections on a Programme of Action" said:

Without doubt, parliamentary democracy as a system still leaves much to be desired. Nonetheless, as it provides conditions for common aspirations to be realized and a practical platform for voluntary cooperation, it is certainly the best of all political systems tried as yet.<sup>52</sup>

Kuron added, however, that under a parliamentary system he, himself, would join a movement for direct democracy, which, he admitted, can be introduced only under the aegis of parliament. Under any other system any attempts in this direction would be at the mercy of the state.<sup>53</sup> Kuron also believed that the development of self-government and self-discipline among Poles within the existing system would facilitate future change.<sup>54</sup>

Marek Tarniewski (pen name of J. Karpinski) examined problems of parliamentary systems and the possible pitfalls from a different angle in "Democracy, Initiative, Social Control" published in "Glos", No. 6:

Obviously, democracy has its own problems. In many cases, power tends to pass into the hands of

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<sup>51</sup>Jacek Kuron "W stronę demokracji" (Toward Democracy) Krytyka, No. 3, Winter 1978, pp. 3-15.

<sup>52</sup>Op. cit., J. Kuron "Reflection..." The Polish Review, p. 58.

<sup>53</sup>Kuron's ideas of direct democracy advocated self-management, cooperativism and trade unionism and were inspired both by Yugoslavian and Spanish models of the workers' commission co-managing their working places.

<sup>54</sup>Jacek Kuron. "Notatki o samorządzie" (Notes on Self-Government) Glos, No. 2, November 1977), pp. 10-11.

experts...Can then democracy be combined with an effective system of delegation? The answer is yes, but only if there exists a system of control by agencies independent of the government and representing directly the interest of the people.<sup>55</sup>

As examples of such agencies Tarniewski quoted the ombudsmen and the constitutional and administrative tribunals of democratic countries. Democracy should be strengthened in his view, by a wide measure of local self-government in political, administrative, and economic life. It was felt that this would be particularly appropriate in the rural areas.

Finally, we come to the coverage of the economy in the KOR press. It is difficult to discern a concerted approach: as was true with respect to a political programme, the KOR did not work out a common framework of economic principles or a plan of reform for the long or the short term.

The 1977 Declaration of the Democratic Movement stressed the importance of freedom of work. "At present there is no freedom of work since the government usurped the position of the sole employer and the trade unions are under party control."<sup>56</sup> The Democratic Movement demanded for the workers the right to strike and to form their own representative bodies independent of the government and the party apparatus. Further, the Declaration demanded legal safeguards for an

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<sup>55</sup>Op. cit., L. Ciolkosz, p. 60.

<sup>56</sup>"Deklaracja Ruchu Demokratycznego". Kultura, No. 12(363) December 1977, pp. 138-139.

independent and autonomous consumer movement.<sup>57</sup>

The Declaration bore the signatures of 110 leaders of the opposition movement, among them Professor B. Lipinski, the grand old man of Polish economics. Professor Lipinski discussed in more detail some of the problems set out in the Declaration in "Fiction and Reality" published in "Glos" No. 2, 1978: "Welfare economy is only possible in a pluralistic society...". Professor Lipinski examined the centralized planning system operating at that time in Poland and dismissed it as fiction; It was not planning that was centralized but the management, a bureaucratic machine, which ran the economy on dictatorial lines relying heavily on police support. There was a serious lack of reliable economic information, selection methods of the top management needed a complete overhaul, factory councils and consumer organizations should have been introduced, and competition encouraged.

In March 1978 Independent Publishing House "NOWA"<sup>58</sup> published "Reflections on the Polish Economic Situation". The work, prepared by an anonymous team of economists, was introduced by Professor Lipinski who emphasized the minimalist approach of the authors. The team tried to fit their ideas into the existing political framework and assumed in their consideration the continuing "directing role" of the party.

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Niezalezna Ofiryna Wydawnicza (NOWA) [Independent Publishing House (NOWA)] was directed by M. Chojecki, a chemist and KOR activist.

They hoped that this might influence the reaction of the authorities and assure some measure of official attention for the reforms they sought. The origins of the crisis and possible solutions were examined. There was some emphasis on the need to inform the country that earnings and consumption could not be allowed to grow rapidly because of heavy borrowing at the beginning of the 1970's, the decrease in the growth of the population affecting the productive age group, deterioration in the supply of raw materials for energy production, and the need to increase investment in agriculture in order to ensure further mechanization.

The short-term economies should have included cuts in the privileges and disproportionately high earnings of some groups and a reduction in the size of the unduly elaborate central bureaucracy. In the long run the team advised planning designed to create a welfare economy, equalization of incomes, and the creation of autonomous workers and consumer organizations. The suggestions did not go beyond those of the Democratic Movement and, because they were addressed to government and the party, they had to be less radical.

These views were representative for the leftist members of KOR, who believed that at least in the case of the economy, the authorities would compromise with the opposition. This position was criticized both by other opposition groups and other members of KOR. "Glos" No. 7, May 1978 suggested that a radical price reform should be promoted if free market



conditions were introduced. Production growth should be shifted from heavy industry to consumer goods and light industry; foreign trade should be redirected so as to make Poland independent of the USSR and a new agricultural policy established which would encourage the development of the private sector, as was suggested by the Independent Peasant Movement.

The author addressed his remarks to the nation as a whole and argued against the belief in the unlimited power of the USSR which had acquired a quasi-hypnotic quality. The USSR was the guarantor of the then-existing system and the party had succeeded in convincing the people that the Russian form of socialism was as inevitable as death itself. In fact, the article in "Glos" concluded that the system built by one group of people could well be overturned by another.<sup>59</sup>

There are at least two reasons which can explain the lack of a detailed economic programme by the opposition. In my view, many members of the opposition believed that only reprivatization of Polish industry could bring the real recovery to the country's economy. However, from the political point of view, the reprivatization could not be included in the programme of the opposition. Firstly, the government propaganda machine would portray the KOR as the advocates of "the past" who want to re-establish the class of "capitalists" in Poland. Secondly, it is also doubtful if the

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<sup>59</sup>Op. cit., L. Ciolkosz, p. 66-67.

society was at that time in favour of the reprivatization of the means of production. Fed so many years by communist propaganda, for some Poles capitalism meant first of all: unemployment, lack of social security, abuse of power by big corporations, corruption of politicians, etc. Therefore, to emphasize reprivatization could turn a part of the society away from the opposition.<sup>60</sup>

In analyzing KOR's activities and programmes it is impossible to omit its relations with the Catholic Church. Unique in Eastern Europe, the Polish Catholic Church had been the principle opposition to Communist party rule.<sup>61</sup> A symbol of Polish nationalism, the Church might best have been thought of as a political reality rather than as a specific actor with which the regime had to contend. The regime was reluctant to allow the Church a political role, but wherever and whenever it attempted to ignore or subvert the Church, it met with resistance from clergy and laity. Most paradoxically, the party was forced to rely on the Church for assistance in

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<sup>60</sup>Poland was not unusual in that respect. In all other countries of Eastern Europe, as the events of 1989-1991 proved, the transformation from the planned to free market economy could be politically very difficult for the governments and at the same time very painful for the societies.

<sup>61</sup>See: Anna Kaminska. "The Polish Pope and the Polish Catholic Church." Survey 24, No. 4(109) Autumn 1979, pp. 204-222.

keeping order at moments of political crisis.<sup>62</sup>

The success of KOR and other secular dissident groups in the late 1970's can partly be attributed to their emergence at a critical juncture of Church-state relations despite early indications in 1971 that this would be the case - specifically that "nonparty" citizens (Catholic) would be allowed to enter into significant decision-making positions. By 1974, with the Primate preaching assertively on religious and human rights, the episcopate had assumed a sharply critical stance, prior to the emergence of KOR, whose members not infrequently included priests. The mutual, if not always comfortable, embrace of the Church and secular dissidents was no accident, and worked to the benefit of oppositionists when Gierek opted for a new attempt at a Church-state alliance to prop up his ailing rule.<sup>63</sup>

The importance to the opposition of the Church was manifested in the uproar over the Constitution. Any intellectual protest directed at the regime was usually addressed first and foremost to the Primate's residence. The founding statements of dissident groups were also sent to

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<sup>62</sup>For example, at the peak of strikes in the summer of 1980, the government provided the television prime time for Cardinal Wyszyński's speech in which he pleaded (unsuccessfully, by the way) for restraint in the demands of striking workers.

<sup>63</sup>Gierek, Edward (b. 1913); 1976-1980 - First Secretary of PZPR. Expelled from PZPR in July 1981. Interned under Martial Law December 13, 1981. Deprived of Order of Builders of People's Poland and title of Merited Miner in July, 1981.

Wyszynski, an indication that the Church represented a special authority whose recognition would guarantee at least the truth of a group's existence and legitimate aspirations. KOR, while specifically concerned with worker grievances, invoked the communique of the episcopate after the events of June 1976 in one of its initial public statements. As KOR represented the old socialist and radical left - a fact not without problems for its historical relationship with the Church - the effort to explore points of agreement and understanding on the basis of a programme emphasizing the pursuit of truth and the protection of human rights was important. Adam Michnik's book "The Church, the Left - a Dialogue" was a conscious effort to extend the basis for cooperation between the Church and the Left.<sup>64</sup>

Michnik devoted his treatise to the complexities of the bitter division between supporters of the Polish Church and the members of the "Lay Left". The Lay Left comprised intellectuals who, disillusioned by their experience in the service of the system, sought an alternative that was closer to the ideals of democratic socialism. Most of the Catholic intelligentsia, on the other hand, disassociated itself entirely from the communist and socialist mode of politics, perceiving it as a fundamental threat to the religious ethos. According to Michnik, after many years of mutual distrust the

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<sup>64</sup>Keith John Lepak, Prelude to Solidarity, Poland and the Politics of the Gierk Regime (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 173-174.

two camps started, in the mid-1970's, to engage in a constructive dialogue.<sup>65</sup>

The resentment of the Lay Left toward the Catholic intelligentsia manifested itself in a suspicion that the proponents of Church policies desired to dispose of the postwar doctrine of the separation of church and state.<sup>66</sup> The Catholic thinkers, in turn, reminded the Lay Left that the latter's pro-Stalinist past was stained with acts condoning the persecution of the Church and of the Catholic intelligentsia. Michnik put forth a detailed criticism of the Lay Left for tacitly approving or, at best, failing to react to acts of pointless harassment against Church officials and followers.<sup>67</sup>

The rampant persecution of the clergy led the Catholic Church to sign an "agreement" with the state on April 14, 1950 that shaped the future of the Catholic public profile. The clergy was to give up all forms of political activity and focus on preserving the integrity of the Church as an expression of passive resistance. This attempt at finding a *modus vivendi* with the Polish government influenced the

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<sup>65</sup>Adam Michnik. Kosciol, lewica, dialog (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1977) pp. 138-139.

<sup>66</sup>This suspicion, as it turned out, was justified. Since the formation of the "Solidarity" government in 1989, the Catholic Church exercised big influence over the government, particularly in such issued as restricting abortions and divorce laws.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid*, pp. 131-137.

outlook of most religious Poles for years to come. People became apathetic and abandoned collective public means of political expression.

The Lay Left arrived at a comparable formula for political involvement: compromise and dialogue with the leadership. However, enthusiasts of the communist system, who had originally hoped to work with the regime toward social reform, were quickly discouraged from offering their critical views. All attempts at change were suppressed, proving that the totalitarian system could not tolerate feedback from the society.<sup>68</sup>

Showing how the experience of the Lay Left and the Catholic intelligentsia converge to some degree, Michnik went so far as to propose that the Catholic tradition holds new significance for Poland's secular thinkers. The Church, Michnik wrote, can provide a special spiritual dimension to human existence, one that allows the fullest development of the free individual. The communist regimes deliberately attempted to destroy this dimension, ultimately hurting all of society, including the Lay Left. Therefore, it was in the best interests of the Lay Left to defend the Church as an active force for spiritual freedom.<sup>69</sup>

Also other prominent KOR members recognized the role played by the Church in the campaign for freedom of

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid, pp. 145-149.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid, pp. 155-164.

conscience. As Jacek Kuron put it in his "Ideological Principles":

I place among the supreme values the common good, the sanctity of the individual and human creativity. During the past decade, I and many of my friends who took part in the October 1956 and the March 1968 movements, discovered for ourselves the Gospel as a code of ethics of universal significance. I believe that the Gospel should be read anew by each generation and I am convinced that the Left played a considerable part in creating the contemporary readership.<sup>70</sup>

The Pope's first visit to Poland was greeted with universal enthusiasm. KOR said in a statement:

The millions of Poles, whatever their religious views, listened to his words with understanding, enthusiasm and emotion. The unending applause has shown how much his words were heeded, how exactly his message about the supreme importance of the individual fitted the deep spiritual need of the people who reject the denial of human and national rights. The Pope's message created for many of us, in Poland and abroad, an obligation to undertake or else to intensify the campaign in defence of freedom. We in KOR accept this obligation.<sup>71</sup>

Biuletyn Informcyjny, No. 4/30 included Adam Michnik's article "A Lesson in Dignity" ("Lekcja Godnosci"): "...in Cracow, listening to the sermon by John Paul II, I felt that when the Pope asked professing Catholics never to deny Jesus he was also addressing me, a pagan."<sup>72</sup>

By mid-1979 the economic and social climate in Poland had deteriorated so much that Kuron was forced to modify some of

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<sup>70</sup>As cited in op. cit., L. Ciolkosz, p. 62.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

his earlier ideas. In a short essay "The situation in the country and the programme of the opposition - some notes" (which appeared in March 1979 in Poland) Kuron felt that the country was close to an explosion. Price rises were now inevitable, the mood of society was close to anarchy, respect for state administration had vanished and the authorities continued to behave as if everything was normal. Only a small spark was needed to set off a cataclysm like "a strike in a large enterprise where the authorities refuse to yield a scuffle in front of a shop, the first brutal intervention by the police".<sup>73</sup>

Implicitly accusing the government of gross culpable irresponsibility for its neglect of society, Kuron urged that as the party still refused to recognize the network of social movements that had developed and as the danger of the masses taking to the streets was so great, the autonomous bodies and individual activist should move into official organisations with the aim of taking them over. Whether or not successful, they would forcibly bring the extreme dangers of the situation to the attention of the authorities. The opposition should either limit itself to demands for the disclosure of information on the economy so that a real debate on remedies could take place, or in a broader set of demands concern itself also with independent economic activity by craftsmen,

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<sup>73</sup>Op. cit., G. Schoplin, Poland, a Society in Crisis. p. 13.



peasants, small businessmen, and the service trade, freedom of professional and industrial organization, and the observance of legality by the authorities. The cautious approach taken by Kuron in this programme could be explained by the fact that he believed that a full explosion could lead to Soviet military intervention.<sup>74</sup> Kuron wrote:

"...Such an explosion can very easily become a national tragedy (the probability of Soviet military intervention)...I do not doubt that all of us consider riots as an evil which we should try to prevent. Regardless of the threat of Soviet intervention, the Polish authorities - as was proven in December 1970 - will not recoil from homicide and they will surely still find the strength for that. The entire democratic opposition wants to realize its striving for parliamentary democracy and national sovereignty by peaceful means. I consider attempts to overthrow the system now - unless we are forced to do so - as irresponsible. The great costs of such an undertaking are certain; the national tragedy very probable; and any success doubtful."<sup>75</sup>

The article concluded: "In the event the suggested minimum programme of the opposition would become the programme of a revindication movement, this movement would have greater control over the faction that would like to gain its support, and greater chances of becoming independent."<sup>76</sup> Reading these texts, one must remember that Kuron believed that the explosion could come at any moment - probably by the summer of 1979. We know today that the events that led to the

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>As cited in J.J. Lipski, pp. 326-327.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

creation of Solidarity took place a year later and took a different course, probably because there was one more year during which independent social structures and their activities had a chance to develop.

Kuron's article accelerated the polarization within KSS "KOR". The "Glos" group, headed by Macierewicz, was especially firm in arguing for the continuation of KOR's existing programme of creating independent parallel structures, and thus somewhat changed emphasis in the tactics suggested by Kuron.

Also other members of KOR expressed their disagreement with Kuron's views. In the article "Notes About the Opposition and the Situation of the Country" Jan Jozef Lipski and Adam Michnik stated:

Kuron bases his reflections on the possibility of a violent explosion of social anger. We fully share his concern about the possible consequences, but we believe that the problem of the functioning of a democratic opposition in society is broader than, and partially independent of, the vision of an approaching explosion. An explosion might result from the blockage of normal means of putting social pressure on the authorities, but the organization of this pressure through official structures is a constant means of defending society against totalitarianism; it has constituted a part of this defense for very many years, also during those periods when the situation was not so tense as at present. Thus the contrast between the opposition and the so-called<sup>77</sup> revindication movement might appear misleading.

And further: "Should one work by creating an independent institution unrecognized by the authorities, or struggle for

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<sup>77</sup>Op. cit., J.J. Lipski, pp. 326-327.

renewal within official institutions? The answer is: both." According to the authors of the article, "independent institutions (that is, according to Kuron, the political opposition) are fragments of a broad movement for the revindication of civil rights, of a movement whose goal is the democratization and enfranchisement of our society". Lipski and Michnik also regarded as premature Kuron's remarks "about the relationship between the movement of revindication and political opposition, and the various groupings, factions, and coteries within the power apparatus" simply because nothing was known about the actual programmatic conflicts within the party, so that the problem was purely theoretical and irrelevant. The Polish October (of 1956) and the Prague Spring suggested the conclusion that "the opposition must guard its independence and distinctiveness as a fundamental value". The article contained also a very important statement about trade unions:

Trade unions, here and now--regardless of whether these will be unions created alongside the official ones, or official unions controlled by the employees from below--provide a means for coexistence with the authorities as they are, and for at least a temporary partnership, by means of which the totalitarian authorities could be forced gradually to make concessions. A trade union activist who says that he will not dirty himself by talking with the authorities...had better turn to other activities.<sup>78</sup>

The article ended with the following paragraph:

We must always remember not to indulge in the naive

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid, p. 328.

hope that the power of the PUWP, based ultimately on the military might of the USSR, will disappear any month now, or from one day to the next. The prospects for us are ultimately optimistic, but they involve a long period of coexistence alongside the rule of a single totalitarian party. What ideas this party will adopt about defending its monopoly of power and what conditions or reforms this party will be forced to accept under the pressure of society, are not matters of indifference. The scale of possibilities is enormous. In every situation, the opposition will have to protect its identity, but one cannot assume that there are no conditions under which the opposition would ever engage in a dialogue on a specific topic at a time when there would be a chance to broaden civil liberty in Poland.<sup>79</sup>

In practice everything went on as before, except for one thing: many issues and actions were undertaken under the pressure of this vision of a threatening explosion and the need to channel the accumulated energy in the direction of rational change. The opposition publication "Robotnik"<sup>80</sup> especially began to make serious preparations, which involved the promulgation of the principle that strikes should take place in the factories and not in the streets (after a time this was expressed in Kuron's bon mot: "Instead of burning the committees, form your own!") and in establishing channels of communications in the event of a wave of strikes.

The statement of KSS "KOR" of May 1979 "On the Dramatic Economic, Social, and Moral Situation in Poland" published in

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid, p. 329.

<sup>80</sup>"Robotnik" was a publication of the Free Trade Unions, but technically and financially was supported by KOR. "Robotnik" helped to create a national readership among workers by analyzing the success and failure of labour actions, including strikes, in Poland from 1977 to 1980.

"Communique" No. 30 of May/June 1979 was clearly a compromise among the strategic tendencies sketched out above.

We are convinced that at present, social self-defense must express itself by overcoming moods of passivity, by organizing society in defense of its own aspirations into independent institutions (Peasant Self-Defense Committees, Free Trade Union, Workers' Commissions, Student Solidarity Committees), and in the struggle to achieve an authentic self-government for union, associations, cooperatives, etc.<sup>81</sup>

As we know now, the wave of strikes which was predicted by Kuron and others did not occur in 1979, but in July and August of 1980. In the statement published on July 11, 1980 KOR presented another five-point programme of immediate actions necessary to save the country from the explosion of violence:

1. The initial work on changes in the economic system and in the methods of decision making, which is necessary in the nearest future must be preceded by a general public discussion. The governmental programme of reform must be clearly formulated and must include a time-table for its implementation.
2. The policy of destroying individual farming has to be changed. Private ownership of land and the freedom to buy and sell it must be guaranteed. Private family farming must be accorded the same rights as the state and cooperative agricultural enterprises.
3. For as long as changes in agricultural policy will not

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<sup>81</sup>As cited in J.J. Lipski, p. 329.

produce results, and if the state authorities are unable to assure an adequate supply of meat, a system of rationing must be introduced temporarily.

4. It is necessary to publish data about the current state of the economy.
5. The authorities must understand that they will not be able to avoid negotiations with society, though to a large extent, whether these negotiations will take place in an atmosphere of peace or in an atmosphere of sharpening conflict depends on the authorities.

This was already a broad and realistic programme, not only for KOR, but for a new social movement that was to be born any moment.

Over the few years of its existence, KOR became not only the biggest opposition organization in the history of communist Poland but also an influential element of Polish politics.

KOR had never seen itself as a challenger for the power of the communist party and this explains why KOR never produced a fully developed political platform. The KOR strategy was designed not to overthrow the communist government but to put pressure from outside the existing system to transform the relations between the state and society in a one-party system.

One of the most significant achievements in the development of KOR had been the broadening of its social base,

fostered by the creation of new ties between the three main forces of the opposition: the intellectuals, the workers, and the powerful Roman Catholic Church. This mutual synchronisation of their respective activities very often brought unity of goals and unity of action.

Another big achievement of KOR was to inspire the development of an impressive variety of other independent social and political initiatives, which together with KOR challenged the unlimited power of the communist government. In the next chapter, I will analyze the programmes of other opposition groups, creations which were possible because of KOR's success.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE OPPOSITION OF THE RIGHT. THE POLISH LEAGUE FOR INDEPENDENCE

On the opposite extreme of the political spectrum there was an underground group which called itself the Polish League for Independence [Polskie Porozumienie Niepodleglosciowe (PPN)]. In Poland it was known under the initials PPN, and its name was variously translated also as the Polish Independence Compact (Accord) Coalition. Unlike other oppositional groups, the PPN chose to retain its anonymity because its programme went far beyond immediate or intermediate demands. Since its members called for the unconditional restoration of Poland's sovereignty, the authors of its programme would be liable to prosecution for anti-state propaganda. They preferred therefore to publish their controversial and thought-provoking analyses of political, economic, and social issues, as well as their alternative long-term political programmes, in a samizdat form but without revealing the identity of the authors. To avoid abuse of this self-imposed anonymity by police provocation, they empowered three prominent individuals in the West to vouch for the authenticity of their texts: Professor Leszek Kolakowski in Oxford, England; Professor Jerzy Lerski in California; and the writer Gustaw Herling-Grudzinski in Western Europe. But



even this kind of assurance was by no means foolproof. One of their declarations touching on a subject most sensitive to Polish public opinion, that of Polish-German relations and the need for reconciliation as a condition for liberating Poland from the Soviet "protectorate", had been denounced as an emigre concoction, or even as a product of an anonymous security official in the West German ministry of Gesamtdeutsche affairs. The charge was raised not only by Polish communist official sources but also by a considerable section of the Polish emigre community, namely those who trace their ideological origins to the pre-war National Democracy Party, a nationalistic party which traditionally advocated some kind of accommodation with Russia since they consider Germany as the Public Enemy Number One of the Polish nation.<sup>1</sup>

The Programme of the Polish League for Independence was published for the first time in London and Paris in 1976. It formulated a comprehensive range of long-term aims for the whole nation and justified itself on the ground that:

Many events indicate that there is a growing need in our country for a programme which would not only express the public discontentment but would also contain definite postulates and long-term aims...Our society consists of disconnected groupings and circles whose mutual intercourse and cooperation the Party strives to vitiate. We wish the programme by its very existence to focus our thinking and to allow a co-ordination of the actions of all those who, though lacking organizational unity, shall be

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<sup>1</sup>Tadeusz Szafar, "Contemporary Political Opposition in Poland" Survey 24, No. 4(109) Autumn 1979, pp. 47-48.

united by a vision of our common goal.<sup>2</sup>

The PPN issued a number of discussion documents, but the main points of the programme and their reasoned justification may be gleaned from a reading of the following abridgement:

Countries subordinate to Moscow, that is the so-called "socialist bloc" and the USSR itself, are in a state of permanent although concealed crisis. The latter is caused by growing internal tensions, the discontent of oppressed nations, the malfunctioning economy of the whole system and the failure to keep up with those countries that favour unrestricted technological, social, and cultural development...

It is impossible to foresee the moment when the crisis will erupt in all its severity... We must make every conceivable effort to act in concert and not leave the task of struggling for violated rights of the whole nation to a single social group.

Our programme is based on the following principles:

1. The nation... is sovereign and thus has the inalienable right to freely decide its own destiny.
2. All citizens are, without exception, equal before the law and should be given the same opportunity to lead their own lives.
3. The overwhelming majority of Poles profess religious beliefs, and most are Catholics. The prevailing political system in Poland cannot be based on discrimination against that majority.
4. The Polish state and nation have traditionally been distinguished by a continuous expansion in the realm of civil liberties, while new social groups have constantly been drawn into the government of the country and given joint responsibility for its fate. From the 16th century on, Polish political thought has made outstanding contributions to democratic ideas and the concept of liberty. The system of totalitarian autocracy imposed upon us is not only foreign to our national traditions, but also anachronistic and humiliating.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>A. Ostoja-Ostaszewski, ed., Dissent in Poland. Reports and Documents, December 1975-July 1977 (London: Veritos Press, 1977), p. 165.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid; p. 166.

A more specific programme for change (26 points) follows the declaration of goals.<sup>4</sup> It focuses closely on: the ruling apparatus, corruption of legal and administrative institutions; deterioration of Polish culture and science; consequences of repressive censorship; harassment of the Church; the Polish foreign policy toward the USSR, other socialist countries and Western Europe; civil liberties; the citizen-state relationship; the Polish economy and the responsibility of the intelligentsia for the future of Poland.

The league had a number of long term objectives. It was considered to be key for Poland to be "sovereign" and totally independent of the Soviet Union. They went so far as to advocate Poland's linking itself with the Common Market and "burying old animosities" with West Germany. At the same time, the Polish state they foresaw would have had the same basic structures as those proposed by the reformers of the Prague Spring for Czechoslovak communism. Freedom of information, research, education, and discussion was coupled with a proposal for "democratic relations between the authorities and the people." The Church was considered to be "a stabilizing influence" that should be allowed to function with "full freedom."

The economic programme of this group emphasized the development of "new principles for the division of labour."

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<sup>4</sup>For the full text of the Polish League for Independence's programme see Appendix IV.

Emphasis was placed on the consumer and service sector with the introduction of private capital into these areas and the transferral of underemployed bureaucrats and university graduates into these sectors. Workers were "to take part in all decision-making processes." At the same time, they stated that: "Modern economy needs highly qualified experts knowledgeable in their field at home and abroad, capable of making quick and bold decisions and not afraid of responsibility....Political and economic power should be separated." This meant that they advocated that managers should be demoted if they failed to "fulfil their social functions and make their institutions profitable." In the area of agriculture, this group advocated the free development of private farming with special state aid for modernization and development of rural areas.

This domestic programme was no more radical than other critiques of Polish society made in the second half of the 1970s.<sup>5</sup> But the positions of PPN on Polish foreign policy and on the Party were far more radical. They characterized the Party as seeking "people who are well fed and dull, obedient and forgetful of their own rights." In their view, the only release from the psychological oppression of the Party would be to install a multiparty system that would allow the intelligentsia, "historically responsible for the spiritual

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<sup>5</sup>Marek Brzost. Kilka uwag o programie PPN (Some remarks about the PPN programme.) Kultura, No. 11(350), November 1976, pp. 105-106.

life of the nation," to regain its leadership. All of this, according to PPN, depended not on low-level organization to push for gradual modifications in the existing system or on Western influence and pressure, but on the collapse of the Soviet Union and the resulting geopolitical liberation of Poland. As a result, their self-appointed role as a group was to prepare the intelligentsia with information so the they could "carry out the aspirations of the majority of our people whenever the opportunity presents itself."<sup>6</sup>

Besides the "Programme" there were at least eleven studies prepared by the "Problem-solving Committees" of the PPN which dealt with different fragments of the Polish reality of the time.<sup>7</sup> Together they formed a picture of a country whose political, social, and cultural traditions had been replaced by a foreign totalitarian system. Old concepts such as "patriotism" and "sovereignty" had been given new, hypocritical meanings justifying the conditions of Soviet hegemony. For years, the Catholic Church and its adherents had been harassed by the political leadership, which mortally feared competition from any other centres of authority. Although almost every Pole internally disapproved of the political regime imposed by the USSR, the fear of Soviet

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<sup>6</sup>J.L. Curry, ed., Dissent in Eastern Europe (New York: Praeger, 1983), p. 64-65.

<sup>7</sup>See: PPN. Opracowania Zespólów Problemowych (Studies by the Problem-solving Groups.) (Warsaw: NOWA 1978, p. 72; also in Kultura Nos. 9(360), 11(362), 12(387).

intervention prevented any strong opposition from forming. Nevertheless, the PPN suggested a consistent moral pressure might dissuade the ruling apparatus from abusing its power. Unfortunately it was not the case at that time. Poles were being slowly driven toward greater corruption, alcoholism, and detachment from social responsibility. The government skilfully incited anti-semitic and anti-German campaigns among the brainwashed Poles.<sup>8</sup> In "Poles and Jews", the PPN pointed out that for the first time in history, Poland pursued an official anti-Jewish policy known euphemistically as anti-Zionism and backed by Moscow. The Russians played a double game, feeding world opinion with stories of Polish anti-semitism while encouraging it to the hilt inside Poland. The PPN came to the conclusion that anti-semitism and its psychological motivations had ceased to be a real problem long ago and were a dead issue.<sup>9</sup>

In the case of Germany, the PPN warned that the Polish nation should take a completely different stand. It should recognize and admit that the so-called "Regained Territories" of West Poland do raise a question of some unjust territorial gains at the expense of Germany. While acknowledging this problem and supporting the German drive toward unification, Poland must nevertheless firmly defend its present borders and

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<sup>8</sup>Joanna Preibisz, ed., Polish Dissident Publications (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 289.

<sup>9</sup>Lidia Ciolkosz, "The Uncensored Press" Survey 24, No. 4(109) Autumn 1979, p. 60.

interests.<sup>10</sup>

The radical position which PPN took on so many different issues was reinforced in the spring of 1977 when it came out with an eloquent, but highly emotional, statement defending the anti-Russian insurrectionist tradition. "It is owing to the conspiracies, insurrections, and the resistance movements", it exclaimed, "that today we are a nation". Although calling on the Poles to rise to arms, it implored them to persist in the struggle for independence.<sup>11</sup>

The PPN's programme was criticized by a writer using the pseudonym of Marek Brzost. He characterized it as noble but utopian, since it did not point to a practical way of regaining the country's independence. Resistance without the chance of winning would only result in unnecessary losses. Dictatorships "can be overcome, but it takes more than moral and intellectual forces to accomplish this".<sup>12</sup> And in the situation of Poland in the late 1970's, Brzost concluded that "the time was not ripe to...resort to open resistance".<sup>13</sup>

I have devoted so much attention to the PPN group not because of their intrinsic weight but to illustrate their fundamental difference from the Workers Defense Committee and

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid, J. Preibisz, p. 289.

<sup>11</sup>Adam Bromke, "The Opposition in Poland," Problems of Communism, 27, No. 5, September-October 1978, p. 46.

<sup>12</sup>Op. cit., M. Brzost, pp. 105-106.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

to show how their radical programme inspired some other right-wing political opposition groups, namely the Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights (ROPCiO) and the Confederation of Independent Poland.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE MOVEMENT FOR THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS

On March 25, 1977, a new group called the Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights [Ruch Obrony Praw Czlowieka i Obywatela (ROPCiO)] was founded. Leszek Moczulski<sup>1</sup> announced the creation of ROPCiO during the illegal news conference which took place in Antoni Pajdak's apartment.<sup>2</sup> Information about the creation of ROPCiO was submitted to the Polish parliament (Sejm) and to the Episcopate in the form of an "Appeal to the society".<sup>3</sup> The creation of ROPCiO has to be viewed in the context of KOR activities, which in December 1976 had already analyzed the possibilities of broadening its activities and adopting a new name: the Committee for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights. Leszek Moczulski and Andrzej Czuma<sup>4</sup> took part in that

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<sup>1</sup>Leszek Moczulski (b. 1930), journalist, writer and historian, founder of ROPCiO, chief editor of Droga (The way), founding member of KPN. Arrested in July 1981 and sentenced to imprisonment for setting up an underground government in Poland.

<sup>2</sup>Dariusz Cecuda, Leksykon Opozycji Politycznej (Warsaw: Trust, 1989), p. 99.

<sup>3</sup>See Appendix V for the full text.

<sup>4</sup>Andrzej Czuma (b. 1938), jurist, lecturer at Warsaw University until March 1968, sentenced to seven years imprisonment at trial of "Ruch" group in 1971, released and arrested again in 1974, co-founder of ROPCiO.

discussion and they were later accused of stealing the concept of the new organization from KOR.

This was the beginning of a constant rivalry between KSS "KOR" and ROPCiO, who arose from two different ideological and political premises, the former having roots in the socialist tradition, the latter in nationalism. While the KSS "KOR" concept of opposition was to foster the development of independent social movements, ROPCiO's strategy was formulated in more traditional political categories. When L. Moczulski presented as a goal the "reinstatement of political pluralism in Poland" he meant explicitly pluralism of political parties. Discussion clubs and samizdat journals were understood as a means to achieve this goal. The revival of traditional political culture was watched by a political vision inspired from a somewhat idealised version of pre-war Poland. In contrast, the KSS "KOR" concept of promoting the self-organisation of the society vis-a-vis the state was seen as a means to extend the limits of tolerance and as the beginning of a long journey aimed at progressive transformation of relations between the state and society in Poland.

For the most part ROPCiO, like KOR, was composed of distinctly separate pre-war and post-war generations. Many members received their education in pre-war Poland and had belonged to the upper classes. Most of the activists had university educations and took their political inspiration from Western liberal ideology. Among the older members of

ROPCiO was a pre-war general, Mieczyslaw Boruta-Spiechowicz, and a leader of the former Christian Democratic party Stefan Kaczorowski. Others included agrarians from the Peasant Party, faithful Pilsudskiites, and even National Democrats. The younger members were mostly former participants in the clandestine group "Ruch".<sup>5</sup> The best known of the latter was Andrzej Czuma, who in the spring of 1978 pushed Moczulski aside and emerged as the leading personality in ROPCiO.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast to KOR, the Movement had no Marxist leanings; if anything it had reverted to pre-war centrist and centre-right political traditions. It might also be described as a movement overtly nationalistic and hostile to the communist regime of that time.<sup>7</sup>

The main objective of ROPCiO, as defined in its initial manifesto, was to fight for respect for human and civil rights through the national constitution.<sup>8</sup> In the most important part of ROPCiO's "Appeal to the Society" it said:

...Human and civil rights are inviolable and inalienable; they cannot be relinquished. No nation can be truly free if its members renounce the

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<sup>5</sup>Not connected with the present independent movement in Ukraine, which uses the same name.

<sup>6</sup>Adam Bromke, "The Opposition in Poland", Problems of Communism, 27, No. 5, September-October 1978, p. 42. (Hereafter: Bromke I)

<sup>7</sup>George Schoplin, Poland, A society in Crisis (London: Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1979), p. 11.

<sup>8</sup>Keith John Lepak, Prelude to Solidarity, Poland and the Politics of the Gierek Regime (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 168.

use and defense of their rights as historical experience, including that of the Poles, has shown.

And then defined Movement goals as:

- a) adhere to, and watch for, adherence to all human and civil rights and human dignity;
- b) make known to public opinion, and communicate to authorities, occurrences of human rights and liberties being infringed; and to provide victims with such aid and protection as lies within our scope;
- c) propagate among the public and propose to the state authorities changes in the law and regulations which would lead to a genuine and continuous assurance of the implementation of the rights and liberties defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Pact on Human Rights.<sup>9</sup>

The "Appeal" ended with the statement:

"We are not forming an organization of association. Our initiative is the result of urgent public need. A strong social current has already arisen in Poland - the Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights...Human and civil rights and the dignity of the individual can be preserved only when they are respected by all, and all actively demand that they be respected."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>The goals of the Movement were similar to those of the Soviet Cooperation Group for the Fulfilment of the Responsibilities of the Helsinki Conference for European Security (better known as the Helsinki Monitoring Groups), which also defended human rights in the USSR.

<sup>10</sup>Do Spoleczenstwa Polskiego (Appeal to the Polish Society) Kultura, No. 5(356) May 1977, p. 155; cf: Peter Raina, Political Opposition in Poland 1954-1977 (London: Poetry and Painters Press, 1978), p. 485-487. Leszek Moczulski "Krajowe Spotkanie Ruchu Obrony" (National

Initially the ROPCiO confined itself to issuing statements on matters of public concern (such as the temporary detention in mid-April of a number of KOR members, the death of Stanislaw Pyjas<sup>11</sup>, the longer-term arrests of KOR members and collaborators) and also to gathering further information on the abuses of human rights.

On 30 April, the Movement initiated the publication of a journal "Opinia" (Opinion) which has, for several years since then, appeared on an almost monthly basis. Issue No. 4, dated 1 August, stated on the first page that "2500 copies were run off and the combined effects of more than 100 people were responsible for this production". It contained information about the KOR, abuses of human rights, actions of the authorities not reported by the media, and a series of articles analyzing various aspects of the Polish economy and domestic and international events.<sup>12</sup> Besides "Opinia", other journals included "Gospodarz" (The Farmer), "Ruch Zwiaskowy" (Union Movement), and "Gazeta Polska" (Polish Newspaper).

To further promote its ends, the Movement had established offices in eleven Polish cities, where free advice was offered

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Meeting of the Movement) Opinia No. 6(1977), pp. 17-20.

<sup>11</sup>On May 7, 1977, Stanislaw Pyjas, student of the Jagellonian University and collaborator of KOR was found dead in an apartment building. The obscure circumstances strongly suggested political assassination (although it is doubtful that it was in fact a premeditated murder).

<sup>12</sup>A. Ostoja-Ostaszewski, ed., Dissent in Poland, Reports and Documents, December 1975-July 1977 (London: Veritos Press, 1977), p. 181.

to citizens aggrieved by the Communist authorities. This was done in an effort to create public access to information on citizens' rights, offer free legal assistance, intervene on behalf of victims of official harassment, and maintain a continuous flow of information to the Western media as a means of checking the repressive policies of the regime.<sup>13</sup> By the fall of 1977, they had a current docket of 43 such complaints and claimed to have well over 1500 activists.<sup>14</sup>

On June 5, 1977, ROPCiO sponsored the first reunion of former political prisoners and on August 6, it organized a patriotic demonstration by the grave of pre-war Polish Marshall Edward Ryck-Smigly. On December 30, an "Opinia" correspondent tried unsuccessfully to attend the Warsaw press conference of US President Jimmy Carter.<sup>15</sup>

ROPCiO never developed a full political programme although some elements of one could be found in the "Appeal to the Society", "The Programme Declaration", and in some articles published in "Opinia" and other journals.

The political platform of ROPCiO could best be described as nationalistic, supportive of human rights, pro-Catholic, anti-abortion, anti-capital punishment, anti-Soviet, and

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<sup>13</sup>M. Reniak KPN: Kulisy, fakty, dokumenty. (Warszawa: KiW, 1982), pp. 12-13.

<sup>14</sup>D. M. Simon, E. R. Kanet, Background to Crisis: Policy and Politics in Gierek's Poland (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1981), p. 10-11.

<sup>15</sup>Op. cit., Bromke I, p. 43.

dedicated to the Independent Farmer's Movement and Student Solidarity Committees which it frequently aided through its Consultation-Information Centres.<sup>16</sup> However, in spite of its rightist identity, ROPCiO's nationalism was purged of the chauvinism, anti-semitism, and anti-democratic conservatism of the inter-war era.

Although the issue of human rights then emerging on a national and international scale was central to ROPCiO's purpose, it also emphasized its political motivation and political aims. In the broadest sense, the aim was to change Poland's political system and gain political independence for Poland by breaking the alliance with the Soviet Union. The most detailed political platform of ROPCiO was adopted during its Second All-Polish Meeting in January, 1978. The declaration formulated ten points which were supposed to direct ROPCiO's activities. The most important among them were:

1. the demand to change the political system of Poland so that the government would become subject to legal, political, and moral control; and to put a limit on the power of the police and secret security forces, reorganize them, and put them under the control of society;
2. the demand for recognizing the human and civil rights such as freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, freedom of

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<sup>16</sup>Joanna Preibisz, ed., Polish Dissident Publications (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. XXVII.

assembly, and freedom of association;

3. the demand for free elections;

4. the demand for the right of workers to form independent trade unions and the right to strike;

5. the demand for equal rights for all minorities in Poland.

In its last point the declaration stated: "The only way to guarantee the realization of all the human and civil rights is to comply with the fundamental right of every nation, the right to self-determination, which includes the right of each nation to freely choose its political, economical, and social system."<sup>17</sup> In ROPCiO's view there was an obvious link between human and civil rights and independence. Without obtaining first, full independence, the Poles would be unable to win any civil liberties.

To promote this fundamental right ROPCiO called upon society to get involved into the passive and active resistance against the communist government, including strikes.

The issue of Poland's self-determination was discussed in ROPCiO's organ "Opinia". The article "The Chances for Independence, Then and Now" (Opinia No. 18-19, October-November, 1978) compared the outlook for independence during the years of the partitions with that of the late 1970's.<sup>18</sup> Four factors were listed as being primarily responsible for

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<sup>17</sup>Op. cit., M. Reniak, pp. 45-46.

<sup>18</sup>Wydawca (The Editors). "Szanse na niepodleglosc dawniej i dzis" (The Chances for Independence, Then and Now) Opinia. Nos. 10-11(18-19) October-November 1978, pp. 5-6.



Poland's winning independence in 1918:

1. Conflict between the partitioners.
2. The extremely weakened state of one of the partitioners that belonged to the victorious coalition - Russia.
3. The campaign for independence conducted by Poles.
4. The generally favourable attitude of the West.

As for the present (meaning late 1970's), as a result of Russia's confrontation with the West "the process of disintegration, loss of faith and rebellion is intensifying in Russia as is the rebellion in the Russian prison of nations".<sup>19</sup> (underline mine) The most basic difference between the chances for independence then and in the late 1970's was seen as the following: "regaining independence after the partitions was possible owing to a fortunate improbable coincidence. Today Poles need not rely on coincidence, since our independence is being hastened by the process of the retreat of the Soviet system as a result of its conflict with the West; and it is simply unlikely that anything will be able to interfere with that process".<sup>20</sup>

In another analysis of the Soviet system "Opinia" wrote: "The ideology of the Soviet system reminds one today of a religion without believers a religion which has lost its hold not only on ordinary believers but even on the apologists, and where the priesthood is not a matter of following the call but

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<sup>19</sup>Op. cit., J. Preibisz, p. 146.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

of making a career. Despite this, this peculiar church of non-believers proclaims that tomorrow its belief will conquer the world."<sup>21</sup>

The reasons given to explain the Soviets' incapability of seeing that they were in retreat were: first, Marxism was one of the most expansionist ideologies ever conceived; second, the Soviet system was the sum of two types of expansionisms (Marxist and Russian); and third, the Russians were standing with their backs to a vertical wall - their inability to function in a democratic system.

One of the issues of "Opinia" took as its point of departure the final order which the last Commander of the Home Army, General Leopold Okulicki who laid down his life on foreign soil-murdered in Moscow in 1946, issued on January 1945:

"Soldiers, I give you my final command. Carry on with your work and activity aimed at regaining full independence of the Polish State and at safeguarding the Polish population from the holocaust. Try to be the leaders of the people and to restore the independence for the Polish state. In this task, every one of you must be his own commander-in-chief."<sup>22</sup>

"Opinia" would support, therefore, any moves aimed at recapturing for the nation its own rights, above all the right to freedom. This increasingly militant stance was reinforced by the editorial article in "Opinia's" March 1978 issue which

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid, p. 130.

<sup>22</sup>"Declaration of Opposition Groups." Survey, 24, No. 4(109) Autumn 1979, p. 86.

held that either one is in favour of the Communist system and Poland's subordination to the USSR, or one stands for democracy and independence. "A middle ground", the article concluded, "no longer exists".<sup>23</sup>

Just as KOR attempted to establish links with the workers, ROPCiO, in addition to its basic activity of exposing human rights abuses, tried to forge an alliance with Polish farmers. It played a role in the creation of the Independent Peasant Movement, the Provisional Committee for the Independent Farmers' Trade Unions, and the independent periodicals Placowka (The Post) and Gospodarz (The Farmer), concerned chiefly with the problems of organizing individual farmers and with the agricultural policy of the state. Both KOR and ROPCiO offered to provide active support for the formation of Believers' Self-Defense Committees and Peasant Self-Defense Committees, which organized various effective grass roots actions in the interests of the local religious and farming communities.<sup>24</sup>

Osrodek Mysli Ludowej, a group of peasant politicians affiliated with ROPCiO, issued in June 1979 a detailed statement of policy centred on problems of the rural community. Its final paragraphs, however, were of more general import:

As long as we live, we have the responsibility for

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<sup>23</sup>Op. cit., Bromke I, p. 46.

<sup>24</sup>Op. cit., K.J. Lepak, p. 194.

the past, the present and the future of our country. No one can make us relinquish it and no one can discharge it in our stead...the peasant movement and the country expect us to carry out the trust. The past achievements of the peasant movement, its patriotic stand, are and essential part of the national political heritage: we have to preserve them, against lies and oblivion.<sup>25</sup>

ROPCiO willingly proclaimed its Catholicism. It seems indeed (although probably not without exception) that the majority in ROPCiO were religious while KOR, for example was in this respect a coalition or conglomeration of people with a variety of philosophies. Therefore the issue of religion was often discussed in ROPCiO's press. After the first visit to Poland of John Paul II, ROPCiO issued the following statement:

We feel we must express a sense of joy, gratitude and reverence towards God and toward the successor of St. Peter, 'our own flesh and blood.' We are grateful to the Holy Father for speaking 'the language of faith and tradition,' for reminding us of the profound truth that to survive, a nation has to go back often to its roots. We are grateful, above all, for demonstrating the spiritual ties common to all humanity and in particular to those nations who shared our history. We are grateful for the words about the respect due to every individual and nation, our own included, who has earned its right to freedom and independence by hard endeavour.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time ROPCiO stated that the "abnormal relations between Church and State are one of the factors seriously limiting basic human rights in Poland" and demanded

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<sup>25</sup>As cited in Lidia Ciolkosz, "The Uncensored Press", Survey 24, No. 4(109), Autumn 1979, p. 58.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid, pp. 62-63.

the introduction of a constitutional principle guaranteeing the freedom of conscience, including conditions providing young people with free access to science and religion, and an end to the transformation of schools into an instrument for the propagation of atheist ideology. ROPCiO also called for religious freedom, entailing respect for the right to build sanctuaries and other necessary church facilities. As on previous occasions, ROPCiO also demanded abrogation of the "suicidal" abortion legislation. Finally, the Movement called for independent courts, civil control over the authorities and for a stop to all forms of discrimination and persecution for political and religious reasons.<sup>27</sup>

Leszek Moczulski, the leader of ROPCiO, considered the Church an intrinsic part of the national heritage. In his concept of moral priorities, patriotism and Christianity were principle motivations. The position of ROPCiO in this matter was further defined by Father Ludwik Wisniewski O. P. in "The Christians and the Struggle for Justice":

What are the social consequences of our belief in the Gospel? Is it our duty as Christians to take an active part in temporal affairs? Are we responsible for the eradication of evil and injustice? Should Christians enter actively into the struggle for human values and rights? In short, are we under an obligation to campaign for justice in this world? Among Polish Catholics, there certainly exists a consensus that they must not

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<sup>27</sup>Dariusz Cecuda Leksykon Opozycji Politycznej 1976-1989. (Warszawa: Biuro Informacji Studenckiej ZSP, 1989) p. 16.

stand by in the face of injustice.<sup>28</sup>

On the matter of the economy, one of the most interesting discussions was presented in one of the ROPCiO's publications in the summer of 1978 between economists W. Niedbala, K. Ostaniec, and A. Skrzetny (presumably pseudonyms), and the editorial team. Niedbala, Ostaniec, and Skrzetny (N. O. S. for short) criticized the minimalism of "Reflections on the Polish Economic Situation" published by KOR. N. O. S. considered the programme of "Reflections" as a tactical and psychological mistake: the party was bound to interpret it as a proof of weakness. Only under the kind of pressure which brings its own continuing position into question would the party agree to concessions. N. O. S. were against slowing down demands for higher pay and rejected the argument of national responsibility for foreign borrowing. In their view the debt should be repaid by the industry in which it was invested and pay demands should be maintained at high levels, as the standard of living of Polish workers was a great deal lower than in Western Europe. It was lower also than that in most of the countries of the Soviet block. N. O. S. pointed out that even the so called "economic manoeuvre"<sup>29</sup>, which

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<sup>28</sup>As cited in Ciolkosz, p. 65.

<sup>29</sup>In the mid-1970s after the economic crisis developed, the Party introduced a so-called "economic manoeuvre" which was supposed to change the course of the Polish economy. The plan called for lower investment spending, an increase in productivity, and the decentralization of business decision-making authorities. The plan was never fully implemented.

meant partial structural and administrative changes and "opening" of the plan, came about only under the pressure of the June 1976 strikes. In this context, N. O. S. considered that "...for the opposition to appeal for a stop to higher pay claims would amount to relinquishing the only argument capable of pressurizing the party into acquiescing to a measure of change".<sup>30</sup> N. O. S. were in agreement with some suggestions in "Reflections" but they felt that the force of the argument was vitiated by being addressed to the government and not to the people.

In the article "The Essence of the Socialist State", in an issue of "Droga", Stanislawski Andrzej discussed the basic problems of ownership and management in a socialist state. He assumed that true participation of society as a whole in the management of a socialist economy was impossible. For the workers to truly "own the means of production", the state would have to actually sell enterprises to the workers. This worker ownership would entail some kind of "reprivatization" of the economy through a system of shareholding. The other, more likely, form of ownership under socialism was the one in which the state controlled the means of production. The state served as the employer and the entire nation served as hired labour. The workers faced great obstacles to organization, since any organized protest against economic conditions could be constructed as an act against the state.

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<sup>30</sup>Op. cit., Bromke I, p. 43.

Stanislawski repeated a comparison previously made by Leszek Moczulski that the socialist state resembled a conglomerate corporation, for which social welfare meant only a cost of production that must be minimized. Carrying the parallel even further, he cited another author who claimed that the socialist state was ultimately capitalist, since the economic development of a socialist state was also limited by the scarcity of capital and resources.

Finally, Stanislawski stressed that the state was not some amorphous abstraction, but rather a powerful elite, a "relatively small group of people that disposed of the national wealth" and which "provided financial support only to the kind of activity that served to maintain its own position in society".<sup>31</sup> In the end, Stanislawski called for the abolishment of such a system.

Unfortunately, not very long after coming into existence, ROPCiO went through a series of splits which weakened it as a movement. Briefly, the chronology of events was as follows.

The Third National Meeting of ROPCiO took place on June 10, 1978. During this meeting the position of spokesman was eliminated (until then, it had been held by two people: Andrzej Czuma and Leszek Moczulski). Shortly afterward, in addition to "Opinia", a new periodical called "Droga" began to appear, edited by Leszek Moczulski. The two periodicals printed inconsistent reports of the meeting. It quickly

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<sup>31</sup>Op. cit., J. Preibisz, p. 150.



became common knowledge that there was deep dissension within ROPCiO, and that during this Third Meeting the most serious accusations had been levelled.<sup>32</sup>

The Fourth National Meeting of ROPCiO participants was called for November 18-19; a number of people connected with the periodical "Opinia" (that is, Czuma's group) did not participate. The Council of ROPCiO Spokesmen was formed (with Moczulski and Glogowski, signatories of the Founding Declaration of ROPCiO).

On November 21, 27 people, including eight signatories of the Founding Declaration of ROPCiO (among them Andrzej Czuma), signed a statement which concluded: "We regret to state that...two signers of the Founding Declaration of the Movement in Defense of Human and Civil Rights, Leszek Moczulski and Karol Glogowski,...have in the October 19 issue of a periodical edited by the Grupa Inicjatywy Społecznej (the Group of Social Initiatives) for the purpose of registering (initiatives) included the totalitarian PUWP within the democratic movement in Poland. We declare that Leszek Moczulski and Karol Glogowski have, by their own behaviour, excluded themselves from the Movement in Defense of Human and Civil Rights in Poland, and that we can no longer cooperate

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<sup>32</sup>Leszek Moczulski "Opozycji wizerunek własny. Część I. Wielki tygiel." (A Self Portrait of the Opposition. Part I. A Great Melting Pot.) Droga Nos. 3-4, 1978, pp. 22-23.

with them."<sup>33</sup>

And another statement issued on December 9, 1978 said: "the programmatically open character of ROPCiO allowed for the destructive activity of certain persons and groups who undermined the spirit of our ideological assumptions".<sup>34</sup> As an answer to that, Leszek Moczulski issued a statement in which he asserted that the group from the Consultative Group of "Opinia" does not have the right to speak in the name of the Movement in Defense of Human and Civil Rights in Poland.<sup>35</sup> This polemic completed the disintegration of ROPCiO. As a result of a series of battles, the following components emerged: ROPCiO proper, that is Czuma's group; the Confederation of Independent Poland (KPN), Moczulski's group; the Young Poland Movement (Bratniak's group, headed by Aleksander Hall); the Movement of Independent Democrats in Lodz (Karol Glogowski, Andrzej Mazur, Andrzej Ostoja-Owsiany, Adam Wojciechowski, and Andrzej Woznicki); and the Committee for National Self-Determination (Wojciech Ziembinski). Only two of them, the Confederation of Independent Poland and the Young Poland Movement, were active in 1979-1980 and their programmes will be a subject of more detailed analysis.

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<sup>33</sup>Jan Jozef Lipski, KOR: A History of the Workers' Defense Committee in Poland, 1976-1981 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 327.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CONFEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT POLAND

On September 2, 1979, it was announced that a number of opposition groups were combining to form, under the leadership of Leszek Moczulski, a new and autonomous political party, the Confederation of Independent Poland [Konfederacja Polski Niepodleglej (KPN)].<sup>1</sup> Its "Fundamental Statement" read:

The undersigned members and representatives of various independent, democratic, socialist, and national groups as well as those acting individually - who desire to regain Poland's independence and right to self-determination, who believe that only by its own efforts can Poland regain its due rights, and who respect the principles of collective responsibility, solidarity, tolerance, mutual respect, and democracy - join now their forces in this act of confederation to regain a sovereign Polish state whose authority and form will be defined by all citizens.<sup>2</sup>

"The Declaration of the KPN Principles" published along with the "Fundamental Statement" began with the following words: "For over 200 years the Polish state has been fighting for independence. Forty years ago, however, Poland 'fell under the blows of Nazi Germany and communist Russia.' Today, Poland is awakening and standing up for its rights. In order for Poland to become independent and democratic again it must

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<sup>1</sup>George Schoplin, Poland, A Society in Crisis (London: Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1979), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>As cited in Joanna Priebeisz, ed., Polish Dissident Publications (New York: Praeger), p. 315.

rid itself of the Soviet domination by eliminating the PUWP."<sup>3</sup> The KPN declaration was based on the following principles: Poles could fulfil their national and individual aspirations only in an independent Polish republic, the creation of which was possible only if the principle of national self-determination was put into action. National self-determination consists of national sovereignty and free debate over the desired form of social and political system. A democratic social system should be based on inalienable human and civil rights and the authorities of a democratic state should obtain a popular mandate.<sup>4</sup> Democratic Poland would require the participation of all working people in the administration of the national economy. A properly functioning republic would depend on the fulfilment of duties--equal for all--toward oneself and other people. Social strength would be multiplied by an awareness of Polish history and of traditional Polish values such as Christian ethics and the need for national sacrifice. Free Poland would have to take joint responsibility for the freedom and welfare of neighbouring peoples. The Polish republic would belong to its citizens only, who by serving the republic, would be serving mankind.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>See Appendix VI for the full text of the "Declaration".

<sup>4</sup>Leszek Moczulski "Rewolucja bez rewolucji" (Revolution without Revolution). Droga, No. 7, 1979, p. 38.

<sup>5</sup>Op. cit., J. Preibisz, p. 316.

Besides the "Declaration of the KPN Principles", Leszek Moczulski's book "Rewolucja bez rewolucja" (Revolution without a Revolution), and samizdat journal "Droga" were KPN's other sources of political programme. The most important values of this programme were: freedom, national independence, and tradition. Around these values KPN built its main objectives: to break Poland's dependence on the Soviet Union, to eliminate the communist party of Poland from its position as the dominating political force, and to establish a new political system based on the tradition of the Second Republic (1918-1939).

To realize these goals, KPN postulated all types of actions, including the formation of independent parties, labour unions, publishing houses and universities, which would lead to the creation of independent political, economic, and cultural infrastructures acting simultaneously with the official ones.<sup>6</sup> KPN counted also on changes on the international scene, predicting the collapse of the Soviet empire which would, in turn, speed up changes in Poland.

KPN declared itself a continuation of those Polish organizations which fought for independence during the First and Second World Wars, such as Jozef Pilsudski's Polish Legion, the Home Army, and "Freedom and Independence".<sup>7</sup> The

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<sup>6</sup>Leszek Moczulski "Konfederacja Polski Niepodleglej" Droga, No. 8, 1979, pp. 1-2.

<sup>7</sup>W. Rehan, Konfederacja Polski Niepodleglej (Warsaw: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1987), p. 46.

last of them, Freedom and Independence, was in fact an anti-communist underground group which fought the government in 1945-1950 in the civil war.

KPN laid a strong claim to the ideas of Jozef Pilsudski.<sup>8</sup> Moczulski even described himself as a "Pilsudski-man" and claimed that KPN was the only organization in Poland that sought independence although adhering to the principle of non-violence and to Pilsudski's concept of the "moral imperative".<sup>9</sup> In spite of these ideological connections with the past, history - in Moczulski's opinion - always develops against established patterns, and therefore the use of historical analogy could be false or even harmful.

In the KPN political programme, there is an obvious primacy of an individual over the society. The position could be explained by the fact that the entire KPN philosophical thinking was inspired by the Christian philosophy, particularly by the concept of personalism.<sup>10</sup>

As stated previously, an important part in KPN's values was assumed by the tradition which was supposed to preserve Polish national identity. Directly connected with this tradition was the Polish Catholic Church. Moczulski compared

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<sup>8</sup>Jan Jozef Lipski, KOR: A History of the Workers' Defence Committee in Poland 1976-1981 (Berkeley: University of California, 1985), p. 123.

<sup>9</sup>Norman Davis, Heart of Europe: A short history of Poland (Oxford: Clarendon Press, New York, Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 404.

<sup>10</sup>Op. cit., W. Rehan, p. 59.

the role of the Church during communist rule to the times when Poland was occupied by the foreign powers during the XIX century and during the Second World War.

In "Droga" (No. 7) Moczulski introduced the concept of moral priorities which included patriotism and Christianity as principle motivations. Moczulski considered the Church as an intrinsic part of the national heritage.<sup>11</sup>

Moczulski's view on the role of the Church in the struggle with the communist government was different than that of KOR and most other opposition groups. Moczulski denied the thesis about an alliance of the opposition and the Church. He believed that political dialogue with the Church in a Catholic country does not make much sense. It would seem like the opposition conducting dialogue with itself.<sup>12</sup> In reality, the whole society, including the opposition, originated from the "Polish spirit" which was mainly preserved by the Church. Therefore the Church's primary role is to function as the moral tower of strength for the nation, not as a political force.<sup>13</sup>

KPN believed that the resistance against the communist government had been growing in the society for the last three decades, although it had a spontaneous, unorganized character.

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<sup>11</sup>Lidia Ciolkosz, "The Uncensored Press", Survey 24, No. 4(109), Autumn 1979, p. 61.

<sup>12</sup>Op. cit., L. Moczulski, "Rewolucja...", p. 42.

<sup>13</sup>Op. cit., W. Rehan, p. 62.

In the KPN's view, the Polish nation was atomized, disorganized, seized by too many different inspirations, and lacking the self-government experience and therefore were easy to manipulate. In this situation, the KPN saw for itself the role as a political movement, which could inspire the nation, consolidate it and through "constructive revolution" lead to the creation of the Third Republic.<sup>14</sup>

The KPN claimed that it was the first organization in Poland to have emerged after more than 30 years that aimed at creating an independent and democratic Third Republic. The KPN strived to create the Third Republic which was to be a direct continuation and legal successor of the First and the Second Republics.

To realize this goal, KPN planned to create among the Poles "the revolutionary consciousness" by educating them about the programmes and the aims of the political opposition.

In Moczulski's view, in the socialist reality, the economic system was directly connected with the political structure which had the main task of guaranteeing the functionality of a "socialist conglomerate corporation" by enforcing discipline among all its employees (i.e. the whole nation). Because of the lack of efficiency in the work of the conglomerate corporation the only way to guarantee its existence was through the constant increase of the exploitation of its employees. In order to eliminate this

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid, p. 63.



basic contradiction of the socialist economy, KPN's programme called for: reprivatization of the Polish economy; creation of stock companies, and companies with mixed private-government capital; as well as abolition of central planning and most of the ministries connected with the economy.<sup>15</sup>

Government involvement in the economy would be limited only to intervention through monetary, credit and taxation policies. The state should also support competition among businesses and the unlimited development of the private sector of the economy. In the case of the remaining state-owned enterprises, they should be governed by a council, completely independent of the government.

In the process, which L. Moczulski called "a constructive revolution", KPN aimed to eliminate the old political and economic structures and replace them with new ones. While doing this, KPN would avoid explosive measures and would favour a slow process which could eventually lead to the creation of the Third Republic. In principle, KPN opposed military struggle believing that grassroots activities were more effective and could bring not only changes in the infrastructure but also, slowly, in people's consciousness.<sup>16</sup>

KPN saw the future political system of Poland as a pluralistic one, in which even the smallest political groups

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<sup>15</sup>Op. cit., W. Rehan, p. 75-77.

<sup>16</sup>M. Reniak KPN: Kulisy, fakty, dokumenty. (Warszawa: KiW, 1982), p. 113.

would participate. Political pluralism was, in the view of KPN, the only way that could move the whole society into action. To achieve that, L. Moczulski advocated a slow evolutionary process which would pass through 5 phases:

- 1) The organization of small political groups.
- 2) The formation of an independent political structure characterized by the development of political programmes. In this phase the old criteria dividing people along territorial, professional, etc. lines would lose its significance and would be replaced by the ideological and political ones. Based on this criteria, the political groups would start to cooperate with each other and then form embryos of political parties.
- 3) The formation of a political system. At this stage the most influential political groups would unite and form political parties with their activities taking a more organized character. Over the course of time these political parties would create an institution of a quasi-state character which would duplicate the official organs of the state.
- 4) In the fourth phase, the independent political movements would start to act openly and create the representation acting as a quasi-parliament.
- 5) This would be the phase of taking over the power (although without military struggle). This would be achieved by assuming power in separated, different parts of the country, and by taking control over different sectors of the economy

by the Worker's Committees.<sup>17</sup> After that, the Third Republic would be proclaimed along with the New Constitution, followed by free elections to the Sejm.<sup>18</sup>

The KPN's programme was, in some ways, similar to that of KOR's, but it had a more radical character; and while KOR saw a place for the communists in Poland's future political system, KPN called for a complete elimination of the PUWP and a complete break with the Soviet Union. Moczulski was very critical about KOR's programmes, accusing it of amicability toward the government. He wrote: "We reject the programme of evolution, because we do not change the existing system within the same structure, we want to destroy the old structure of power".<sup>19</sup> It is interesting that KPN's programme supported the unification of Germany, stating that "after becoming a part of United Europe, Germany will lose its aggressive character".<sup>20</sup>

In contrast, the approach toward the Soviet Union was uncompromised. KPN argued that the blame for all of Poland's misfortunes and especially for the denial of Poland national independence rested with Russia (the USSR) and therefore no compromise with the Soviet system was possible. The USSR was

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<sup>17</sup>Op. cit., L. Moczulski, "Revolucja...", pp. 33-35.

<sup>18</sup>Dariusz Cecuda, Leksykon Opozycji Politycznej 1976-1989 (Warszawa: Biuro Informacji Studenckiej ZSP, 1989), p. 92-93.

<sup>19</sup>Op. cit., L. Moczulski, p. 30.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, p. 43.

the last colonial empire in the world and like all the others, was doomed to collapse. Because the nationality problem was the Soviet Union's Achilles heel, Poland's struggle for independence, should be inseparably linked with the struggle of the non-Russian peoples in the USSR and especially those who have had historical ties with the ancient Polish Commonwealth. Finally, in KPN's view, Poland would fully attain its goals only when the Russian empire disintegrated.<sup>21</sup>

The Third Republic as projected in KPN's programme should be a country with strong presidential power (as exercised by the French president, for example). The project of the Constitution prepared by the KPN assumed that the President would have the following responsibilities and the authority to:

1. appoint the Prime Minister;
2. appoint ministers on the suggestion from the Prime Minister;
3. dismiss the government on the motion from the Parliament;
4. call for the election to the Sejm and Senate (Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament);
5. call for referendums;
6. decide about war and peace;
7. be responsible for the Army;
8. sign and ratify treaties with other countries;

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<sup>21</sup>Adam Bromke, The Meaning and Uses of Polish History (Boulder: East European Monographs, New York: Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 213.

9. decide about the state's policies;
10. represent the Polish state abroad;
11. receive representatives of foreign countries and appoint and recall the Polish representatives abroad; and
12. appoint to some government positions such as the judges in the Supreme Court and the General Prosecutor.<sup>22</sup>

The whole project of the Constitution was very similar to the so-called 1935 "April Constitution" of pre-war Poland, which also gave wide-ranging powers to the president.

KPN called itself "the first opposition party in Communist Poland", which distinguished it from other opposition groups, like KOR, which tried to avoid being labelled as an opposition party. Calling itself a party and openly presenting its programme and goals gave KPN some advantages. It gave KPN credibility as well as an argument about the legality of its existence since the creation of political parties was not officially prohibited in Poland.<sup>23</sup> At the same time KPN's ambitious political programme and desire to serve as a formal opposition party to the government caused direct repression by the communist Militia and Security Service toward KPN and its leadership. In July, 1980, the whole KPN leadership, including Leszek Moczulski, was arrested and accused of trying to overthrow the government of People's Poland. Only after the creation of "Solidarity" was their

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<sup>22</sup>Op. cit., W. Reham, pp. 91-92.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

release possible.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE YOUNG POLAND MOVEMENT

The origin of The Young Poland Movement [Ruch Młodej Polski (RMP)] can be traced to 1977 when the first issue of the samizdat student paper "Bratniak" ("Fellowship") was published. Yet, only at the beginning was "Bratniak" concerned with students' issues. Soon politics were of the most importance for the paper's editors. During the first years of its existence "Bratniak" was under the strong influence of ROPCiO and its leader Leszek Moczulski.<sup>1</sup> This close relationship ended in the middle of 1979 when Moczulski, steering toward the Pilsudski tradition, formed the Confederation of Independent Poland. The young people, centred around "Bratniak", decided to form their own opposition group, under the leadership of Aleksander Hall<sup>2</sup>, linked with the tradition of Nation Democracy.<sup>3</sup>

The editors of "Bratniak" invited students from various Polish cities to gather on 27, 28, and 29 July 1979 in Gdansk

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<sup>1</sup>Wladyslaw Rehan, Konfederacja Polski Niepodleglej (Warszawa: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1987), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>Aleksander Hall, member of ROPCiO and organizer of the Committee for Student Solidarity in 1977 (Gdansk branch), later leader of the Young Poland Movement; Minister in the first "Solidarity" government in 1990.

<sup>3</sup>National Democracy was the most influential right-wing political party in pre-war Poland.

for a religious retreat, prayer, and discussion. The meeting was also called for the purpose of founding an independent youth movement in Poland. The police, who had come to know of the intention of the planned assembly, began arresting the "suspected" participants as early as 26 July. Twenty-two people were arrested, although most were released after 48 hours.

The participants got together again in Gdansk right after their release and issued the following joint communique:

In spite of the police repressions and harassment, a meeting of the young people from Bydgoszcz, Gdansk, Gorzow, Lodz, Poznan, Szczecin, and Warsaw took place in Gdansk between 27 and 29 July and founded the Young Poland Movement. It is neither an organization, nor an association. The movement has no membership, no governing body, nor a statute. It is an independent movement based on the idea that it is necessary, for the independence of the Polish state, to undertake action to strengthen the national ties of the Poles, to respect the rights of human beings, to observe Christian ethical standards in public life, and to preserve our national culture.

The participants of the Young Poland Movement are united in the belief that one of the fundamental conditions of realising these aims is to create modern political thinking which, though rooted in tradition, meets the aspirations and is appropriate to the dignity of the Polish nation. Bratniak, the paper of the young people will be one of the instruments to serve this purpose.

The Young Poland Movement is prepared to cooperate with all people of good will in the realization of inalienable human and national rights. Commitment to our movement does not exclude participation in the work of other independent social initiatives.

On behalf of those assembled at the  
meeting  
Editorial board of Bratniak  
Jacek Bartyzel (Lodz)



Aleksander Hall (Gdansk)  
Wieslaw Parchimowicz (Szczecin)  
Arkadiusz Rybicki (Sopot)  
Gdansk, 29 July 1979<sup>4</sup>

On August 18, a few weeks after the formation of RMP, the "Ideological Declaration of the Young Poland Movement" was published. The "Declaration" stated that the most important value for a person is his free development and his well being. While underlying the fact that every person possesses a complex of natural rights and freedoms, the "Declaration" pointed out that all of those rights should be seen in connection with obligations toward other people, towards the nation, the state, and the whole world community. The nation was considered as one of the most important concepts among all existing social organizations and therefore the preservation of the national tradition was the Movement's main task.<sup>5</sup>

RMP accused Communism of neglecting the spiritual value of man and treating him only as a means of production. Communist ideology was perceived as a product of the East and therefore alien to the "Christian spirit of Europe".<sup>6</sup> RMP

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<sup>4</sup>"Powstanie Ruchu Mlodej Polski". Kultura, No. 9(384), September 1979, pp. 83-84; cf: Peter Raina, Independent Social Movement in Poland (London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 1981), p. 422-423.

<sup>5</sup>Deklaracja ideowa RMP (Ideological Declaration of the RMP.) (Gdansk: Mloda Polska, 1979), p. 2.

<sup>6</sup>For some politicians and historians, Poland for centuries stood as the last bastion of Christianity against the "barbaric" East. This view was reinforced after the 1921 victory of the Polish army over the Soviets, which effectively stopped the spread of the Bolshevik revolution to Germany and the rest of Europe. An argument about Poles being the

also believed in private ownership as an essential element of social order and as one of the most important among human rights.

Because Poland lost its sovereignty after the Second World War, the Young Poland Movement declared to fight for the full independence of the country. To realize that task the Movement planned to struggle for the preservation of the moral principles of Polish society, to protect the identity of Polish culture, to universalize access to uncensored information, and to create new political thinking and political programmes. The future Poland was seen as a democratic country, with the political system based on the model of contemporary western countries and the tradition of pre-war Poland.<sup>7</sup>

"The Declaration" was a conglomerate of many political and philosophical concepts and doctrines. The most influential among them were ideas of Christian personalism taken from the papal encyclicals and from the political legacy of National Democracy. Some parts of the RMP's programme, particularly those concerning human rights, were influenced by the policy of the American president at that time, Jimmy

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defenders of Christianity against atheist communism was often used by the opposition in its fight for the soul of Poles.

<sup>7</sup>"Sierpniowe refleksje" (August's reflections) Bratniak, No. 25, 1980, p. 7.

Carter.<sup>8</sup>

Besides the "Ideological Declaration", elements of RMP's programme can be found in some articles written by the Movement's leader, Aleksander Hall, and other articles published in "Bratniak". In spite of the fact that RMP did not develop a full political platform comparable to those of the Polish League for Independence or the Confederation of Independent Poland, it was one of the most influential opposition groups, particularly among the students and particularly in Gdansk, where "Solidarity" was born.

Since RMP openly declared its affinity with the national democratic tradition and "undertook the task of defending the ideological heritage and the political thought of National Democracy", it is worth examining more closely this movement and its programme as seen in the eyes of the leader of RMP.

Aleksander Hall wrote:

We believe that National Democracy is a valuable part of the Polish heritage, and by ignoring it, or distorting it, we impoverish our knowledge of Poland, and, this way, also our knowledge of ourselves. [...]

Yet, the legacy of National Democracy is not just of historical significance. In both its ideology and political thought there are important elements which remain valid today. They could be usefully adopted to deal with contemporary Polish problems.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Dariusz Cecuda, Leksykon Opozycji Politycznej (Warszawa: Biuro Informacji Studenckiej ZSP, 1989), p. 15.

<sup>9</sup>Adam Bromke, The Meaning and Uses of Polish History (Boulder: East European Monographs; New York: distributed by Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 230. (Hereafter Bromke II)

The National Democrats saw the world through the prism of nations. They believed that the progress of mankind has been accomplished through the activities of different national communities, and also that service to mankind is realized first of all through one's work for one's own nation. And this should not be forsaken in the name of some universal human ideals, which, because they are so abstract, do not require tangible sacrifices; while, in contrast, the duties toward one's own nation are always concrete.<sup>10</sup> The National Democrats, then, opposed the uniform cosmopolitan ideas, believing that they threatened the very basis of European civilization by striking at its essence, which is a synthesis of the values elaborated by individual nations. For Europe is composed of nations.<sup>11</sup> RMP shared this conviction with the National Democrats. It believed that if European civilization was undergoing the crisis, it is because of the weakening of its own identity and its will to self-defense. The National Democrats also believed that Poland is an integral part of the Latin, Western European civilization, determined by the legacy of ancient Greece and Rome, and, above all, that of

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<sup>10</sup>The primacy of a nation, as opposed to the importance of the international community, was also a characteristic feature in the political writing of other East European oppositionists. Ukrainian dissident Valentyn Moroz wrote: "The most sacred is the nation. The nation is the synthesis of all the spiritual values acquired by a people." See: Valentyn Moroz. Report from the Beria Reserve (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Limited, 1974), p. 53-54.

<sup>11</sup>Op. cit., A. Bromke II, p. 230.

Christianity. Polishdom emerged within this civilization and an essential role in this process was played by the Catholic Church.<sup>12</sup>

It is useful here to quote from Dmowski's<sup>13</sup> pamphlet "The Church, the Nation and the State":

When we try to examine the elements in our souls which make us today a modern European nation, we can find their roots both in our ancient ethnic origin and the existence over centuries of the Polish state, as well as in our millennium-old Catholicism. Catholicism is not just an adjunct to Polishdom, colouring it in a special way, but is inherent in its very core and to a large extent constitutes its very essence. Any attempt to divide Catholicism and Polishdom, to separate the Nation from religion and the Church, then, strikes at the very essence of our Nation."<sup>14</sup>

RMP as well as the National Democrats believed that Christianity is the essence of Polish identity, and that the Church is not only the major institution in Polish national life, but also the leader of, and spokesman for, the Poles.<sup>15</sup> RMP believed that history proved the National Democrats' thesis about the union between the Polish nation and Catholic values.<sup>16</sup> After their coup in 1926 the Pilsudskiites accused

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Roman Dmowski (1864-1939) leader of the most influential, nationalistic party in pre-war Poland--National Democracy.  
See: Andrzej Micewski, Roman Dmowski (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo "Verum", 1971).

<sup>14</sup>As cited in Bromke II, p. 231.

<sup>15</sup>Od Redakcji (From the Editorial Board) Bratniak, Nos. 12-13, September-October 1978, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>See Interview with Jan Samsonowicz and Adam Slonimski (Activists of Young Poland Movement) in: Wladyslaw Majakowski. People's Poland. Patterns of Social Inequality and Conflict.

the National Democrats of not appreciating the importance of the state and of counterpoising it to the nation. This allegedly was due to their nationalist ideology. In fact in "The Foundations of Polish Policy" Dmowski wrote: "the national idea without the state is an absurdity". And elsewhere there he asserted:

"The nation is the indispensable essence of the state, as the state is an indispensable political form of the nation. A nation may lose its state, but it will remain a nation as long as it does not abandon the tradition of its state and its aspirations to regain it...It is obvious that a politician who saw the role of the state this way during the partitions of Poland, would have regarded it as the main goal of Polish policy."<sup>17</sup>

Since the activists of RMP did not regard People's Poland as a sovereign state, they believed that all their activities should be subordinated to the restoration of an independent Polish state, which could be achieved in the same way as outlined in the programme of the National Democracy.<sup>18</sup> In the political thought of the National Democrats, nothing was more alien than the view that independence and sovereignty could be attained through just a single upheaval. The National Democrats believed that for Poland's independence to be achieved two developments had to happen simultaneously: there must be a conscious development of national strength, and

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(Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985) p. 181.

<sup>17</sup>Op. cit., Bromke II, p. 232.

<sup>18</sup>Czeslaw Leopold. "O Ruchu Mlodej Polski" (About the Young Poland Movement.) Kultura, No. 10(385) October 1979, p. 83.

favourable changes must take place in the international sphere. It is worth reminding ourselves how the National Democrats envisaged that this would happen.

The Polish nation was to attain political power in its own right. Side by side with the masses entering into national life, there was to emerge a political elite which would assume leadership. The National Democrats, thus, strove to attain under foreign rule the nation's sovereignty through creating its own hierarchy of values, and its own social elites. It was to be an "active policy" and thus assumed the politicization of the broad masses of society and their acceptance of co-responsibility for the fate of the nation.

RMP believed that the concept of "active policy" was particularly useful in the struggle against the communist government, since the Poles were faced with a non-sovereign state which had at its disposal all of the means of a totalitarian state. In those circumstances not only the activities of even the most mature and sophisticated elites, but also the active participation of the broad masses of society was required. At the same time, Polish policy should follow international developments closely, trying to anticipate and wherever possible to influence them in line with Polish interests. Attitudes to Poland's neighbours should not be guided by emotions or animosities, but should be rational.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Op. cit., D. Cecuda, p. 57.

As the USSR had been perceived as the main obstacle to Poland's independence, it is necessary to analyze the view on the relationship with the Soviet Union.

The attitudes of the Poles toward the Soviet Union and the Russians were primarily characterized by enmity accompanied by a large dose of contempt. The reasons for this were natural and stem from the past pattern of Polish-Russian relations, during which, since the beginning of the 18th century, the Poles have been systematically hurt by the Russians.<sup>20</sup>

Differing types of civilization and patterns of communal life have been another element dividing the two nations. Yet, in the view of RMP, this has also performed a useful role for Poles, protecting them from russification and sovietization, as well as preserving a separate identity and the spiritual independence of the nation.

Another element of the Polish attitude toward the Soviet Union had been profound ignorance of the developments there. The most frequent error was the tendency to identify the Soviet Union with the old Russia, neglecting the multinational character and the strong ideological component of the Soviet state.

The Young Poland Movement opposed the strong, anti-Soviet elements in the programmes of such opposition groups

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<sup>20</sup>Aleksander Hull, "Polacy wobec Rosji" (Poles vs. Russia) Bratniak, No. 5(19), September-October 1979, pp. 12-13.



as the Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights and the Confederation of Independent Poland. It accused those groups of condemning Poles to a permanent antagonism with the Soviet Union, regardless of any changes there and excluding any accommodation with that country.

In the view of the activities of RMP, Polish society was not sufficiently equipped to engage in a political game with the Soviet Union and should rather perceive the USSR in a realistic and constructive fashion rather than just in emotional terms.

RMP believed, as almost all other opposition groups, that Soviet power would decline, or perhaps even that the Soviet state would collapse. The following arguments were given: economic difficulties and the growing technological gap with the West; an anachronistic political and economic system where the obsolete structures and mechanisms of power are hindering the adoption of indispensable reforms; the growth of autonomous aspirations among the non-Russian peoples in the USSR, accelerated by demographic trends adverse to the Russians and the aspirations toward greater freedom and independence among the various states in the Soviet sphere of influence.<sup>21</sup>

In spite of these problems, RMP believed that, at least in the near future, the Soviet Union would remain a great power influencing not only the fate of Poland but the whole

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<sup>21</sup>Op. cit., A. Hull, pp. 14-16.

of Europe. Regardless of the future of Communism, Russia and the Russian nation will stay, and Russia - white, red, or any other colour - will be a permanent element in the Eastern part of Europe. Based on this perception, RMP advocated the following principles for the Polish policy toward the USSR :

1) "Good-neighbour" relations with the Soviet Union along the existing boundary;

2) Poland would not interfere in Russia's internal problems and the way it might resolve its nationality problem, although this would not detract from the Poles' sympathy for the right of all nations to self-determination and for their efforts to preserve their national identities;

3) There are many problems in Europe where the Polish and Russian interest coincide. A genuine partnership between them, then, based upon real political, economic and cultural cooperation, should be mutually advantageous and more constructive than the type of relations which existed between them until now.<sup>22</sup>

The indispensable precondition for all of this was to develop respect for the Russian nation - to stop seeing it as composed of cunning and brutal Asian barbarians whose influence rests exclusively on force.

This should be facilitated if Poles would remember that by far the most numerous victims of Communism have been Russians. Many millions of people perished before the system

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid, p. 17.

became consolidated. Poles should also be cognizant of the great and diversified Russian culture and the Russians' exceptional readiness to sacrifice for their country and their nation.

The programme of the Young Poland Movement was strongly criticized by the Worker's Defence Committee. Kuron, for example, pointed out that the nationalistic tradition which RMP followed included also anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and chauvinism. He also objected to RMP's conviction that the nation is the highest form of social organization.<sup>23</sup> In turn RMP accused the Lay Left that it was its anti-nationalistic ideology which ultimately condoned the post-war destruction of Poland.<sup>24</sup> In RMP's literature KSS "KOR" was also pictured as a strongly leftist movement with former Stalinist ties and responsible for spreading anti-Polish schemes.<sup>25</sup>

There were, of course, more points of disagreement between RMP and KOR, for they represented two opposite ends of the spectrum of the Polish opposition, nevertheless both of them, along with other opposition groups, prepared the ground for the creation of the first independent mass movement

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<sup>23</sup>Jacek Kuron. List otwarty do Zespołu Redakcyjnego Pisma Młodych Bratniak. (An Open Letter to the Editorial Board of Bratniak - the Periodical of the Young) Bratniak, No. 2(16) March-April 1979, pp. 16-20.

<sup>24</sup>J. M. Preibisz (ed.), Polish Dissident Publications (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 13-14.

<sup>25</sup>Aleksander Hull. "Myśl polityczna opozycji" (The Political Thought of the Opposition) Bratniak, No. 2(16) March-April 1979, pp. 3-7.

in the history of communist countries - "Solidarity".

## CHAPTER VII

### THE OPPOSITION AND THE CREATION OF "SOLIDARITY"

Activities of the opposition groups during the July-August 1980 strikes in Poland, which led to the creation of "Solidarity", were differently interpreted by various observers. One of the extreme theories, "the conspiracy theory", claimed that the strikes were completely pre-planned and organized by the opposition. However, more realistic seems to be a view that the opposition (particularly KOR) participated rather in preparing the strike tactics and partly in preparing worker activists who were able to organize the strikes and become their leaders.<sup>1</sup>

During the duration of the strikes, the opposition involvement included providing uncensored information about the strikes, taking a direct part in some strikes as advisers to striking workers, and issuing statements supporting striking workers.<sup>2</sup>

Although the opposition was partly surprised by the scale of the strikes and the determination of the workers, it had predicted the eruption of public discontent in 1979-1980, and

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<sup>1</sup>Leszek Szymanski. Candle for Poland: 469 Days of Solidarity (San Bernardino, California: the Bongo Press, 1982), p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>K. Labedz, Opozycja Polityczna w Polsce, 1980-1983 (Warszawa: Zrzeszenie Studentow Polskich, 1989), p. 9.

for some time it had educated the public about strikes, how they should be organized, what should be emphasized, and what should be avoided.<sup>3</sup> KOR, in its publications, advised that in the case of strikes, workers should organize themselves, elect representatives, guarantee order in their workplace, stay inside factories and avoid any outside demonstration to protect themselves from provocation.<sup>4</sup>

Similar recommendations can be found in L. Moczulski's "Revolution without Revolution". This book, published in 1979, predicted the radicalization of workers and the outbreak of unrest in the next few months. L. Moczulski also formulated three rules of action in the case of widespread public action against the communist government:

1. transform any public protest into the stay-in strike and avoid confrontation with the security forces;
2. expand the strike action into a general strike all over the country; and
3. create the Resistance Councils which would take control over strikes.

Moczulski suggested that the strikes should be stopped only after the government released all those arrested for their involvement in strikes, withdrew the security forces to barracks, and recognized the Resistance Councils as the

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<sup>3</sup>M. Zielinski. Cienieza i dzialalnosc organizacji antysocjalistycznych w Polsce w latach 1976-1983 (Warszawa: INOP ANS KC PZPR, 1985), p. 278.

<sup>4</sup>Op. cit., K. Labedz, p. 10.

representatives of the society and guaranteed their permanent legal existence.<sup>5</sup>

Although KNP, ROPCIO, RMP, and other opposition groups took part in the summer of 1980 strikes, the Workers' Defense Committee can undoubtedly take credit for having the biggest impact for those strikes. On the Gdansk coast alone, between 100 and 200 people had gone through social self-education circles created by the systematic, antlike work of such people as KOR member Bogdan Borusewicz, Andrzej and Joanna Gwiazda,<sup>6</sup> and the entire Initiating Committee of the Free Trade Union: people such as Lech Walesa and Anna Walentynowicz. Besides being involved in the preparation of the workers' consciousness for the strikes, KOR also tried to assure the strikers that there was an information service available.<sup>7</sup> This was done by establishing information-gathering centres and providing independent publications and foreign press agencies accredited in Warsaw with the latest news, establishing contacts with striking workers all over the country in spite of the government's blockade of telephone lines, telex, etc., and publishing statements calling for negotiations with the workers' representatives and warning the

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid, pp. 10-11.

<sup>6</sup>Bogdan Borusewicz, Andrzej and Joanna Gwiazda initiated the creation of the Free Trade Union in April 1978.

<sup>7</sup>Op. cit., J.J. Lipski, p. 424.

government against provoking the public.<sup>8</sup> One of these statements warned workers against protests which the authorities might exploit in order to provoke riots. It also advised them to organize themselves and elect independent workers' representatives who would present demands in the name of workers, conduct negotiations with the authorities and lead the action of the workers in a responsible but decisive manner. At the end the statement appealed to the entire society to support the workers' demands with expressions of solidarity.<sup>9</sup>

Many members of the opposition were directly involved in the strikes, but people connected with KOR had a particularly strong influence on the formulation of the 21 demands which were presented to the government by the Gdansk striking workers and which later became the base to the "Social agreement" between Polish society and the communist government.<sup>10</sup> Some of the demands, like the call for free elections and the abolition of censorship, which were voiced by ROPCIO, were rejected by the workers as too far reaching and unacceptable for the government.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>L. Holzer, Solidarnosc 1980-1981, Geneza i historia (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1984), p. 56.

<sup>9</sup>Op. cit., J.J. Lipski, p. 427.

<sup>10</sup>Jacek Kuron. "An Open Letter to Shipyard Workers and All Coastal Workers" in Oliver McDonald, ed., The Polish August. (San Francisco: Ztangi Press, 1981) pp. 142-145.

<sup>11</sup>Op. cit., K. Labedz, p. 14.



On August 18, KOR, together with the editorial board of Robotnik, issued a statement announcing the formation of the Inter-Factory Strike Committee in Gdansk, which in the future, after the strike, was to transform itself into the Provincial Council of Free Trade Unions. The basic task for the present was the creation of free trade unions. The authorities had to recognize them if any understanding were to be possible. Written assurances of safety for all the strikers were also necessary. Further, the statement listed the most important issues that needed to be settled immediately through negotiations between the strikers and the government: an inflation supplement indexed according to changes in the rate of inflation (which should, above all, compensate those who earned the least), full information, not constrained by censorship, to be provided by the government about the economic situation and the creation of conditions for a discussion of the programme of reforms; the participation of free trade unions, peasant representatives, intellectuals, local self-government groups, and cultural and scientific associations in social life and in social control; guarantees of the inviolability of private land ownership and the accordance of equal rights to family farming; and an end to police discrimination against strikers, their families, and persons gathering information about the strikes.<sup>12</sup>

It is worth pointing out that many members of KOR,

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<sup>12</sup>Op. cit., J.J. Lipski, p. 427.

particularly those who acted outside the Baltic coast, thought that a demand for the establishment of a free trade union was unrealistic and should be dropped. J. Litynski said: "Absolutely none of us believed that the government would allow for the creation of free trade unions;" and J. Kuron joked that fortunately he and some other members of KOR were arrested at that time, because otherwise they would try to persuade workers to drop the issue of the Free Trade unions.<sup>13</sup> But after two weeks of negotiations, the government accepted almost every one of the workers' demands, including the permission to create free trade unions. On August 31 in Gdansk the two parties signed the successive points of the agreement.

When the Gdansk accords were signed the goals of dissidents and establishment figures became a reality, while the events themselves went against the theorists' sense of the feasible. Beginning in Gdansk, workers made it clear that they would not accept promises of economic improvement and leadership changes. Like their intellectual predecessors, they did not focus on making major changes in the state structure or the rulers. Party leaders were not sought as negotiators. Party and national policy changes were not even a part of the accord. In fact, specific economic reforms were not a factor in either the demands or the accords, and when leadership changes occurred, they had no impact whatsoever on

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<sup>13</sup>Op. cit., K. Labedz, p. 14.

the workers' willingness to compromise.

Instead, workers demonstrated that they could organize and control themselves to achieve political gains in order to protect their economic interests. The gains they sought were the same as those intellectual critics had said were paramount in the late 1970's: freedom to organize in representative unions; an informative, minimally censored mass media; and an end to the rampant inequality in society.

While many of these demands had been voiced before, the accords of August 1980 were unique because they were centred on institutional guarantees of the concessions. Thus, workers pressed for each provision to be made into law by the Polish Parliament. They also avoided using the Party as either a participant or a guarantor. At the same time, policies beyond those directly of interest to the workers were not raised.<sup>14</sup>

The signing of the 1980 social agreements with independent representatives of the workers initiated a new chapter in the history of Poland, but it did not end the activities of the opposition which in the new situation had to find for itself a new role, in such a dramatically changed political environment.

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<sup>14</sup>J. L. Curry, ed., Dissent in Eastern Europe (New York: Praeger, 1983), p. 166.

## CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Polish history has been the remarkable persistence of traditional values and attitudes, despite the massive socialization and resocialization campaigns conducted by successive regimes since the beginning of communist rule.

It is beyond doubt that Polish political culture played a major role in determining the degree of the country's resistance to the communist system of government. The remarkable staying power of traditional cultural traits--nationalism, religion, distrust of authority--had continued to shape and influence mass perceptions and attitudes toward the communist political and social system.

In the late 1970's this resistance took the form of the organized opposition. The issue of dissent in communist Poland during the 1970's has been rather thoroughly discussed and analyzed in the literature, particularly in the case of such legendary organizations as the Workers' Defence Committee, which was a predecessor of all dissent organizations in Eastern Europe. This impressive research effort brought important results. While some scholars concentrated on individual organizations studies<sup>1</sup>, others

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<sup>1</sup>For an example of individual organizations studies see: J.J. Lipski. KOR: a History of the Workers' Defence Committee in Poland 1976-1980.

developed typologies of dissent<sup>2</sup> and still others put their studies in a broader theoretical perspective<sup>3</sup>. However, not much work was done on the issue of political programmes of various groups of the Polish opposition (with the exception of some articles like that of Adam Bromke, "The Opposition in Poland" in Problems of Communism).

In this study I expanded the existing literature on the subject by examining the political programmes of the most influential Polish opposition groups in the years 1976-1980. The thesis began with a short examination of Polish history of 1945-1976 with the emphasis on struggles of different social groups with the communist government. During that time Poland went through a series of crises (1956, 1968, 1970, 1976), all of which had serious consequences and deepened mistrust between the Party and the population.

The opposition against policies of the Party was manifested in protest actions undertaken by all elements of Polish society. Although those protests took different forms and employed different methods, they had one common characteristic: they were not designed to overthrow the system but only to force changes in particular policies. While workers usually took their protest to the streets, burning

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<sup>2</sup>For an example of typologies of dissent see: Peter Raina. Independent Social Movements in Poland.

<sup>3</sup>For an example of studies of opposition in a theoretical perspective see: Rudolf L. Tokes, ed., Opposition in Eastern Europe.

buildings of the communist party, the intellectuals tried to influence the regime from inside by challenging some decisions or policies with "revisionist alternatives".

The successive communist regimes were unable to deal with the growing discontent. The decline in economic performance, accompanied by the nonfulfillment of promises made by the ruling elite, contributed to the growing alienation of the industrial working class and the peasants.

The professional and creative intelligentsia, including the students, although less than happy with the lack of significant progress on the economic front, have probably been even more frustrated with the absence of channels for meaningful participation and with the ineptness of the regime in general. As a result, they began to organize informal opposition groups in order to articulate their demands, questioning at the same time the legitimacy of the communist regime.

The Workers' Defence Committee, the most known dissident group in Eastern Europe, was established in June 1976 and at the beginning had very limited aims--namely to help workers jailed after the 1976 anti-government riots. In the course of its activities KOR expanded both its aims and its social base. KOR became active among intellectuals, students, workers, and peasants. It initiated the creation of independent movements in these circles, the most important among which was the Free Trade Union movement.

One of the main emphases in KOR's activities was on developing its own programmes and patterns of activity as well as maintaining full independence from the ruling party and established social organizations, such as trade unions and youth associations.

KOR did not consider itself as a challenger for the political power of the communist party. KOR's desire was to force the party towards liberalization by exerting pressure from below. Its activities, therefore, centred on presenting the system's deficiencies and, by proposing alternative solutions, stimulating popular pressure on the authorities for change and adjustment. In the most general terms "Finlandization" of Poland was seen by KOR as a possible alternative to existing arrangements. The status of Finland would include a parliamentary democracy, limited in its foreign and internal politics to the extent that these policies would adversely affect the interests of the Soviet Union.

The success that KOR achieved in surviving the repression by the powerful police apparatus and in breaking the government's monopoly for information, inspired the creation of dozens of other dissident groups. Some of these groups, like ROPCiO, KPN, RMP, declared themselves as political parties with clearly stated goals: to eliminate the communist government and to break Poland's dependence on the Soviet Union.

The aim of these dissidents was not to make a revolution in order to transform the existing system, but to demonstrate the necessity for an internal evolution that would make it possible to introduce structural changes within the established patterns of rule.

Almost none of the dissident organizations called for armed struggle to overthrow the government. Instead they called for the society to organize independent social, political, and professional organizations which would act in parallel to the official ones and through their activities force changes in the system. Strikes at the factories and universities were usually considered as a last resort and were supposed to take place only in favourable conditions.

By broadening and intensifying public participation in social and political affairs through groups operating outside the existing power structure, as well as by insisting that such activities merely represented the legitimate exercise of rights belonging to all citizens, the dissidents introduced an element of pluralization into East European politics.

This programme of action was accompanied by the rapid development of independent publishing houses, which were able to publish thousands of uncensored journals, magazines and books. This was unprecedented in Poland and in Eastern Europe generally.

The publications were designed, first of all, to inform the public about official abuses of power in all areas of



public life and to suggest ways the citizens could defend themselves and put pressure on the authorities to stop their abuses. Secondly, and more important in the long run, they broke the official monopoly over public communications. Many works of literature, poetry, history and scholarship became available through the "underground" press. All these activities were directed at providing Poles with experience and the ability to govern themselves by providing them with information to enable them to make their own judgements and, above all, to develop Polish political thought free from the influence of Communist ideology, which, in turn, led to the rise of new cultural and political elites.

An open discussion in the columns of the independent press inspired political activism, but at the same time showed divisions in the Polish opposition. On questions of the appropriate focus, the viable alternatives, the speed with which change could occur, the necessary tactics and other detailed issues, there was obvious disagreement among the many groups that appeared after the formation of KOR. Personal animosities also fueled internal battles between the groups. But, on the whole, even among the most radical groups, this was a movement clearly aware of the geopolitical reality of Poland's situation vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. At best, they saw Polish independence coming at a time when the Soviet Union had weakened significantly.

Viewed from the perspective of 1991 much of the analysis

of the political situation in Poland of Eastern Europe that was published by the opposition has been remarkably correct, almost prophetic. This is particularly true in the case of the evaluation of the situation in the Soviet Union. The collapse of the Soviet empire and the economic and ethnic problems inside the Soviet Union were in great detail forecasted in many opposition publications.

The development of the oppositions and its programmes in the late 1970's not only created new consciousness among the Poles but also presented them with possibilities to influence changes in their own country. These possibilities were put into a dramatically new contest as waves of strikes rolled across Poland in the wake of government attempts to increase prices in the summer of 1980. Dissent in Poland was no longer an interesting anomaly. Those who had authored articles and led the discussions were suddenly part of a movement for change that encompassed a larger portion of society than ever before in Eastern Europe and that ultimately affected the lives of the entire society. The dramatic success of strikes, the union movement that arose from it, and the demands for fundamental change it released were certainly not expected by either Western scholars or the Polish government.

The events of the summer of 1980 clearly showed that large segments of the Polish population wanted to be involved in the decision-making process, although it was clear that neither the workers nor the intelligentsia were interested in

being represented by the official organizations but greatly concerned with authentic participation in negotiations with the authorities. The existing structures and institutions--the Party, the unions, and other "transmission belts" did not possess the confidence of the Polish society.

Strikes in the summer of 1980 and the subsequent creation of "Solidarity" were results both of the growing alienation from the communist government and years of activity of the Polish opposition. Whereas the initial motivation behind the workers' actions in August 1980 was clearly economic and while the participation of the dissident intellectuals in these actions was limited, the striking change in the workers' attitudes as compared with the previous cases of mass protest was reflected in the highly political nature of their demands to the regime. The ultimate acceptance of these demands by the government was perhaps less important than the fact that for the first time the workers joined the intellectuals in demanding, among other things, the establishment of independent labour unions, the right to strike, and the end of censorship. This was of critical importance and clearly augured a new stage in the development of open dissent not only in Poland but also in the rest of Eastern Europe.

Although the creation of "Solidarity" could be considered as a revolutionary event in the history of Eastern Europe, it did not bring such profound changes as those outlined in the programmes of the radical opposition. In fact "Solidarity"

and the opposition were suppressed during the martial law declared on December 13, 1981.

The crack down of the martial law was, however, only a temporary setback for the opposition. In spite of the harsh repression, the opposition not only continued, but even expanded its activities. Underground publishing houses published books faster and quite often using better equipment than official ones. By further promoting independent cultural life and independent political and philosophical inquiry, the opposition united almost all levels of Polish society in alienation from communist rule.

When in 1989 communism started to crumble in Eastern Europe, the Polish opposition led by a resurfaced "Solidarity" was able, as the first in the communist block, to present society with organized structures and programmes to replace those of communism.

In June of 1989, during the first semi-free election to take place in Poland since 1945, the opposition won all the seats assigned to them in the Parliament while the Communists took only one. This result speaks for itself, particularly if we compare it with the situation in some other Eastern Europe countries. In Bulgaria, and Rumania, for example the communists (re-named as "socialist parties") stayed in power after free elections because they were not challenged by any sufficiently organized opposition.

Presently, in Poland, many elements of the programmes

which were developed by KOR, PPN, ROPCiO, KPN, RMP and others are being implemented on a full scale, in the difficult process in changing from a totalitarian to a democratic society. It is my hope that this thesis has contributed not only to an understanding of the history of Poland but also its present and its future.

## APPENDIX I

### "Open Letter to the Party" (excerpts)

The official doctrine implied that we live in a socialist country, but this reasoning is Marxist in appearance. In reality, an element fundamentally alien to Marxist theory has been introduced: the formal, legal meaning of ownership. The State ownership of the means of production is only a form of ownership. It is exercised by those groups to which the State belonged. In a nationalised economic system, it belongs to those who influenced the decisions on economic matters. Thus, political power is connected with power over the process of production and the distribution of the product. This led to the Power of the Bureaucracy. To whom does this power belong in Poland? To one, monolithic Party, the United Workers' Party in Poland. All essential decisions are made first in the Party, and only later in the offices of the official state power; no important decisions can be made and carried out without the approval of the Party authorities. This is the so-called leading role of the Party. But does the Party guarantee the interests of the working class? And what opportunities does the working class have to influence the decision of the state apparatus? Outside the Party - none. For the ruling Party is monopolistic. The monopoly of the Party in organising the working class is guarded by the entire state apparatus of power and force: administration, political police, the attorney general's office, the courts, and also the political organisations led by the Party, which unmask and nip in the bud all attempts to undermine the leading role of the Party: The Party is not only monopolistic, but is also organised along monolithic principles. The mass of rank and file members of the Party have no influence on the decisions of the "Top". The Party apparatus, like every apparatus, is organised hierarchically. The information flows upward, while decisions and orders are handed down from above. The apparatus is headed by the elite. The Party elite controls all the nationalised means of productions. It decides on the extent of accumulation and consumption, on the direction of the investment, on the share of various social groups in consumption and in the national income; in other words, it decides on the distribution and utilisation of the entire social product. The decisions of the elite are independent, free of any control on the part of the working class and of the other classes and social strata. The workers have no way of influencing them, nor have the Party members in general.

Election to the Sejm and National Councils become fictitious, with only one list of candidates drawn up by the top and a lack of any real differences in the programmes of the Party and the satellite parties - the United Peasant Party and the Democratic Party. The Party-State-Power elite, free of any social control to make all key economic and political decisions of nationwide importance, is the so-called Central Political Bureaucracy. Whoever opposed this bureaucracy was removed from the Party outside of which he has no right to organise and to act. Thus the working class is deprived of an organisation, of a programme, and of its means of self-defence.

Just as the economic crisis can not be overcome on the basis of the current production relationship, so also the general social crises can not be overcome within the framework of the prevailing social relationship. The only possible solution is the overthrow of the prevailing system. Revolution is a necessity for development. Since it is the working class that entered into direct conflict with the central political bureaucracy in the sphere of production relationships, it is the working class that has to be the chief and leading force of revolution. By the nature of things, the revolution that will overthrow the bureaucratic system is a proletarian revolution. However, this revolution does not necessarily mean that the working class would take up arms. Revolution is the act of an enormous majority of society directed against the rule of the minority. It is accompanied by a crisis of political power and by a weakening of the apparatus of coercion. That is why it does not have to be carried out by force of arms. A civil war can be avoided by limiting the state of chaos. If anything here is a crime against the internal peace of the country, then it is the policy of the ruling bureaucracy, which first tries to disorganise the masses and deprive them of political consciousness, and then tries to break the revolutionary movement of the masses by armed might. We remember Poznan and Budapest.

Jacek Kuron, Karol Modzelewski, Warsaw, 1964

Source: Peter Raina, Political Opposition in Poland, 1954-1977 (London: Poets and Painters Press, 1978), pp. 83-85.

APPENDIX II

PROTESTS TO CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

The Letter of 59 Intellectuals to the Speaker  
of the Diet of the Polish People's Republic

Warsaw, December 5, 1975

To the Speaker of the Diet,

Herewith, I transmit to you a copy of the letter with reference to the proposed changes in the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic. The letter has been signed by 59 persons. I hereby attest to the authenticity of these signatures.

I have been authorized to inform you, Mr. Speaker, that a separate letter concerning the same problem will be sent to you, signed by about 300 research workers, students and graduates of institutions of higher learning.

With expressions of the highest regard and respect,

Prof. Dr. Edward Lipinski

P.S. Copies of this letter are being sent to the Council of State of the Polish People's Republic, the Parliamentary clubs, and to the secretariat of the Primate of Poland.

The "Directives for the VII Congress of the Polish United Workers Party" contained an announcement of changes in the Constitution. After the conference at Helsinki at which the Polish government together with 34 governments of other states solemnly confirmed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we consider that the implementation of these basic freedoms should become a new stage in the history of the nation and in the lives of individuals. Motivated by civic concern, we consider that the Constitution and the legislation based on it should, above all else, guarantee the following civil liberties:

Freedom of conscience and religious practice. These freedoms do not exist when people adhering to religious beliefs or manifesting a conception of life differing from the one officially prevailing are not admitted to a considerable part of the executive posts in public offices and



institutions, social organizations and the national economy. Therefore all citizens, without reference to religion, conception of life and party political affiliation, should be assured equal rights to assume public office. The only determining factors should be individual qualifications and personal integrity. Also, all religious groups should be permitted free exercise of their religious practices as well as erection of places of worship.

Freedom of work. This freedom does not exist when the State is the sole employer and the trade unions are subordinate to Party agencies which, de facto, exercise state authority. Under these conditions--as the experiences of 1956 and 1970 indicate--attempts to defend the interests of labour threaten bloodshed and can lead to serious disturbances. For this reason, workers should be assured the possibility of a free choice of their own occupational representation, independent of State or Party organs. The right to strike should also be guaranteed.

Freedom of speech and information. If there is no freedom of speech, there is no free development of the national culture. When all publications are subject to State censorship before they appear, and publications and the mass media are controlled by the state--citizens are unable to take an informed stand on decisions of the State authority, while the authority does not know what is society's attitude toward its policies. The particularly dangerous consequences of the State monopoly on publications as well as the impact of preventive censorship, appear in literature and art which are not fulfilling their socially important functions. Therefore, trade unions, creative, religious, and other associations should be enabled to establish publications and periodicals independent of the State. For this reason, preventive censorship should be abolished, and in the event of violations of press regulations action is to be taken only by judicial process.

Freedom of learning. There is no freedom of learning when the criteria for selection of the academic cadre and the subjects of research are determined by the State authorities and have a political character. Consequently, the autonomy of the institutions of higher learning should be restored and the independence of the academic milieu should be assured.

The guarantee of these basic freedoms cannot be reconciled with the presently prepared official acknowledgement of the leading role of only one of the parties in the system of State authority. Such a Constitutional confirmation would give the political Party the role of a State organ, not responsible to the people, not controlled by the people. Under such conditions the Diet cannot be

considered the supreme executive organ, and the courts are not independent.

Implementation must be assured of the rights of all citizens to propose and elect their own representatives in five-adjectival elections. The independence of courts from executive authority needs to be assured, and the Diet must in fact be made the supreme legislative power. We consider that the non-observance of civil liberties can lead to the destruction of our collective effectiveness, to the disintegration of social bonds, to the gradual deprivation of society of its national consciousness, and to the breaking the continuity of the national tradition. It is a threat to the nation's existence.

The statements and postulates which we submit represent our conviction that responsibility for the fate of our society is collective. The recognition of these freedoms, which were reaffirmed by the Helsinki Conference, has at present acquired international importance since there is neither peace nor security where there is no freedom.

Source: Peter Raina, Political Opposition in Poland, 1957-1977 (London: Poets and Painters Press, 1978), pp. 212-214.

### APPENDIX III

#### **Resolution about transforming the Workers' Defence Committee into the Social Self-Defence Committee "KOR"**

The main aim of the Workers' Defence Committee was to provide legal, financial and medical aid for the victims of the post-June repressions. This campaign had, for the most part, been completed, although there are a certain number of cases where help is still necessary. At the same time, in the course of its activities the Workers' Defence Committee has received appeals from many people who, from political reasons, unconnected with the June events have also been suffering repressions and who are seeking aid in the fight for their rights. All sorts of problems have arisen connected with the unlawful activities of the Security Services and the Police, with the way in which justice is dispensed, with the way prisons are managed and so on. The Workers' Defence Committee could not refuse to ally itself with such important social problems; it found various ways of doing so, amongst others was the forming of a Bureau of Intervention and the announcement of the intention to create a Fund for Social Self-Defence.

In this situation we, the undersigned, consider it necessary to expand the tasks and the field of activities of the Committee. We have decided to reshape the Workers' Defence Committee into the Social Self-Defence Committee. The Social Self-Defence Committee, "KOR", will insist on the realisation of the Workers' Defence Committee's hitherto unrealised demands, it will give aid to those victims of the post-June repressions who are still in need of such aid.

Source: Peter Raina, Political Opposition in Poland, 1954-1977 (London: Poets and Painters Press, 1978), pp. 343-344.

#### APPENDIX IV

##### The Polish League for Independence A programme for Poland (excerpts)

1. ...We consider all post-war agreements...limiting the sovereignty of the Republic, to have been made under duress without consulting the will of the people and therefore to be invalid. The right to assume obligations which would be legally and morally binding on all Poles, can only be exercised by a freely-elected Polish Parliament whose activities are not subject to foreign pressure.

2. The confidence of society in the apparatus of state government has virtually been destroyed by the experience of the last 30 years. This has resulted in widespread cynicism and the threat of anarchy, which is dangerous for the nation as it is for every government...The post-war system of government is based on lies and secrecy of action...The principles of openness and confidence should be re-introduced into social and political life. Citizens have a right to know the truth about all matters in which they are involved.

7. ...The healthy development of the nation is prevented by the absence of a free exchange of ideas..freedom of speech is not just a luxury for intellectuals but a basic need for everyone. Reinstatement of the freedom of speech is one of our fundamental tasks.

8. ...The postulates of confidence between the public and the authorities, of total equality, and of public control cannot be realized without the freedom of association. ...

9. ...Education of children and youth in the Polish People's Republic is increasingly aimed not so much at cultivating the minds and characters but at bringing up obedient citizens...We demand that schools be free of deceit, terror and political and police pressures.

10. ...The Polish universities must regain their autonomy. Elections to the academic courts of government should be carried out without any political or police pressures.

11. ...The Catholic Church, whose enormous moral authority was consolidated by resistance to German occupation and communist persecution, should regain full freedom of action and be enabled to fulfil all its functions. ...

12. ...Our political significance is being squandered and compromised by our slavish role of an obedient satellite of the USSR. ...Polish foreign policy should be pursued in accordance with our current interests and with our traditions of liberty. Only then may we rebuild our international stature as an independent state...

13. The most vital factor governing Polish foreign policy is that of relations with Russia...A blanket of silence is thrown over the unprovoked attack on Poland in 1939 by the Soviet Union allied to Fascist Germany, the later deportations of millions of Polish citizens, their frightful sufferings, the death of many thousands, the murder in the Eastern territories of the greater part of Poland's intelligentsia, and the crime of Katyn. ...A genuine friendship between Poland and Russia could be achieved in the future but only if mutual relations are based on sincerity, on an open acknowledgement of the wrongs inflicted on Poland and on de facto genuine sovereign equality of rights.

14. Russia is not our neighbour. Our neighbours to the East are the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Lithuania...The Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Lithuanian, Estonian and Latvian nations are not independent today...and are subjected to a more severe political, ideological and religious discipline than Poland. We make no territorial claims on our eastern neighbours, though the loss of Lvov and Vilnius, despite their centuries-long links with Polish culture, is and will remain very painful. We demand, however,...that Poles living there should be guaranteed equal rights and allowed to preserve their language and national culture. We also demand that Poles from Poland should have unhindered access to those places which are connected with the history of our nation and our former common state.

15. Polish-German relations, overshadowed by the enormity of German crimes against Poland during the last war, are further complicated by another factor...Many facts tending to illustrate the spontaneous development within the German Federal Republic of views and feelings conducive to a far-reaching understanding between the two nations, are never allowed to become public knowledge. complete bilateral exchange of information, free exchange of thought and of people constitute the only possible method of closing our long-protracted disputes.

16. The European [Economic] Community, though ignored and ridiculed by communist propaganda, despite various difficulties is developing so well that it continues to attract new members...and new advocates (for example, the Italian Communist Party). This group of nations which, in

view of its economic characteristics, is our most important trade partner, is also our most natural ideological ally. ...The closest possible links with the Community will be our best guarantee against the resurgence of conflicts with Germany.

22. ...At all levels the Polish economy is subordinated to political aims, needs, and whims. The fact that the same people run the politico-governmental apparatus and the administrative machinery of the economy is unhealthy...ministries and other official bodies rivalize for investment credits and raw materials on the basis not of needs but of Party influence...Politics and economics should be consistently separated.

23. ...It is of absolute importance to involve the workers of all state-owned businesses in their co-management...For this the worker councils must become independent and have the right to oppose decisions from on high. Workers should directly and openly share in the profits, they should be allowed to become share-holders of the firms where they work.

24. ...The government should maintain its control of the key industries and in particular of the energy sector. However, advantage should be taken of existing private capital to form large-scale share-holdings...housing and consumer goods industries would then develop faster and more comprehensively.

25. ...The potential of Polish agriculture is pitifully underexploited...an outrage in view of the permanent scarcity of food on the home market. Farmers must be guaranteed ownership of the land which they till, thus removing the spectre of collectivization.

26. Marketing and services are an area of the economy which makes everyday life a misery particularly for women...Here the state monopoly is at its most senseless. Thousands of shops...run at a loss instead of profit. The state-run businesses and co-operatives should limit themselves to large-scale operations such as transportation, ware-houses and supermarkets. All the remaining networks of shops and services would operate more efficiently and profitably if left in private hands and to small, spontaneously formed, joint-stock companies.

...It is therefore the pressing duty of all who refuse to sanction the present situation and who disagree with Party policies, to take an active stand.

...This is primarily a task for the active Polish intelligentsia...and of the largest social group, the industrial workers who possess the greatest power. The

experience of the last 30 years has shown that power to be invincible.

Source: A. Ostoja-Ostaszewska (ed.), Dissent in Poland, Reports and Documents, December 1975-July 1977 (London: Veritos Press, 1977), pp. 167-170.

## APPENDIX V

### Movement for the Defence of Human and Civil Rights in Poland

On 10th December 1948 the United Nations General Assembly passed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This document codified the key provisions with regard to the defence, freedom and dignity of the individual. As a result, respect for fundamental human liberties became an intrinsic part of the contemporary and future order in the world. Consolidation of the principle in the world community was given expression on 16th December 1966, when the U.N. General Assembly passed the International Pacts on Human Rights, which have the stature of International Law, binding those states which ratified the pacts. They came into effect at the beginning of 1976, after ratification by the required number of 35 countries; in the Polish People's Republic they are binding from 3rd March 1977, i.e. from the moment of their ratification.

We accept with satisfaction the ratification of the Pacts on Human Rights by the council of State in Poland and believe it to be in agreement with the fundamental desires of the people of Poland.

It is one of the most valuable and ever-thriving traditions of the Polish nation that great importance is attached to the rights of man and of the citizen, to the dignity of the individual, to freedom and mutual tolerance. Over the centuries these fundamental principles have found expression in such documents as "Neminem Captivabimus, Nihil Novi", the Warsaw Confederacy, the Constitution of 3rd May, and in the historic motto "For Your Freedom and Ours"; having been for many generations a quintessential part of our national consciousness, they are generally accepted to be indispensable to our life as a society.

For this reason we affirm, together with other peoples of the world: -- that human and civil rights are inviolable and inalienable; they can not be relinquished. No nation can be truly free if its members renounce the use and defence of their own rights, as historical experience, including that of the Poles, has shown.

-- Whereas respect, and demand for respect, for human rights and dignity belongs to the most valuable traditions and achievements of Polish culture



-- whereas the fundamental guarantees of the freedom and dignity of the individual as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Pacts on Human Rights are generally accepted today to be one of the key attainments of our civilisation

-- whereas the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, signed on 31st July 1975 in Helsinki binds all the signatory states to act in accordance with the aims and principles of the Charters of the United Nations and the universal Declaration of Human Rights, raising respect for the rights and liberties of the individual, as there defined, to the status of a factor controlling international relations on our continent,

-- whereas the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic also affirms the implementation of the civil liberties contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, such as: freedom of conscience, of the spoken and written word, of demonstration, of meeting and association, and that the practical realisation of these provisions has become indispensable not only for the spiritual welfare of our country, but also because it is a "sine qua non" for the expansion of our economy and culture,

therefore, we, the undersigned, have decided to take up joint action in order to:

1. Adhere to, and watch for compliance with, all human and civil rights and the principle of human dignity;
2. Make known to public opinion and to the appropriate authorities any infringements on human rights and liberties, and to provide victims with such assistance and protection as lies within our scope;
3. Propagate among the public and propose to the State Authorities changes in the law and regulations which would lead to a genuine and continuous assurance of the implementation of the rights and liberties defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Pacts on Human Rights;
4. Propagate the need for all European countries to be party to the International Pacts on Human Rights, in order to create a common legal and political base for the development of genuine detente and understanding in Europe;
5. Co-operate with all international organisations which defend human rights, and with the U.N. Human Rights

Commission in particular, so that the principle of freedom may triumph in the world.

We are not forming an organisation or association. Our initiative is the result of urgent public need.

A strong social current is already manifest in Poland--a movement in defence of Human and Civil Rights.

We appeal to everyone in Poland for moral support, for co-operation and help, particularly in obtaining essential information concerning the infringement of human and civil rights; we appeal to everyone to take up and expand similar initiatives in all social, professional and regional milieux. Human and civil rights and the dignity of the individual can be preserved only when they are respected by all, and all actively demand that they be respected.

Source: A. Ostoja-Ostaszewska (ed.), Dissent in Poland, Reports and Documents, December 1975-July 1977 (London: Veritos Press, 1977), pp. 182-184.

## APPENDIX VI

### Declaration of Principle of the Confederation of Independent Poland

September 1979

We are yet another generation in the long march of history. For over 200 years, since the time of the partitions, the people of the millennial Republic have been fighting for independent statehood. Forty years ago the Polish state fell under the blows of Nazi Germany and Communist Russia. It will soon be 35 years since the infamous Yalta agreements, when the Western powers--despite their professed ideals of international justice and democracy--sanctioned the latest partition of the Republic as well as Soviet domination over Poland. The Polish People's Republic, governed in a totalitarian way by the Polish United Workers' Party, is a modern form of institutionalized Russian rule over Poland.

Today the Polish nation, bent in the yoke of slavery for so long, is awakening and standing up for its rights. We are now entering a new chapter in our history. It is to a large extent up to us when Poland will regain its independence and the Polish people will be able to decide their own fate. It has been a historical tradition in the life of the Republic that in moments of national need citizens formed confederations in order to defend their rights and their motherland. The formation of the confederation of Independent Poland is a Polish response to the challenge of the changing times. We must not waste the emerging opportunity to create an independent and democratic Third Republic. The only way to achieve this is to remove Soviet domination by eliminating the power of the Polish United Workers' Party.

The Confederation of Independent Poland unites actions and efforts of various groups which differ on matters of ideology and in their social and political convictions but all are faithful to the overriding cause of independence. The Confederation is a focal point for the present efforts towards independence and intends to unite all those who are convinced that:

1. An independent Polish Republic is the only form capable in the modern world of giving the Poles an opportunity to develop and fulfil national and individual aspirations.

2. The creation of the Republic is possible only if the principle of national self-determination is realized and it depends first and foremost on the will and action of the Poles themselves.
3. National self-determination consists in free expression of the will of the people on:
  - international sovereignty of the state,
  - social system and type of state,
  - state authorities.
4. Any democratic system is based on inalienable human and civic rights, mutual tolerance and respect for the rights of others. The democratic system finds expression in the formation of state authorities solely based on the social mandate of confidence. Such authorities act strictly within that mandate and only as long as they enjoy the confidence of the people.
5. In order to ensure social justice and real equality for all citizens, the cooperation of all working people in the administration of the national economy is necessary, as well as co-supervision of common property, acknowledging the functions of intervention and coordination of the state.
6. The condition of the proper functioning of the Republic, the welfare of her nation and of all individuals, in the fulfilment of duties--equal for all--towards oneself and other people, towards society and the nation, towards the neighbouring peoples with whom we share our history and our life on this planet, towards the Republic and humanity at large. A sense of duty is expressed in devotion to our high ideals and our motherland, and devoted service leads to generosity and readiness to make sacrifices.
7. Social strength is multiplied by the historical national community which contains all the past, present and future Polish generations. Within this community the individual aspiration of the people are realized. Polish national consciousness has been moulded by a process of over 1,000 years of social and national development, a process accompanied by the presence of the Catholic Church, both in good and in bad times. The irremovable values inherent in the Polish national consciousness are:
  - the awareness that the Republic belongs to all its citizens
  - an understanding of the need for national sacrifices in the name of higher aims common to all Poles
  - attachment to the world of values formed by Catholicism

and to the principles of Christian ethics.

8. Our history and our national tradition gives us a sense of joint responsibility for the freedom and welfare of our brotherly peoples whose history is linked with ours and who have the right to determine their own fate.
9. The honour of the Nation and of the Republic is a common good and a common duty of all citizens.
10. The Republic--which is a common good and common need of all citizens--can belong to them only; serving the Republic we are serving mankind.

The activities of the Confederation of Independent Poland, of its confederated groups and of all its members, are based on the above principles. Each of the confederated groups has its own programme regarding particular questions.

In forming the Confederation of Independent Poland we appeal to all Poles here and abroad to unite in actions for freedom and independence.

Source: Survey, 24, No.4(109), Autumn 1979, pp. 87-89.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

- AK (Armia Krajowa) - Home Army (the London-based Polish Underground during the Second World War.
- KPN (Konfederacja Polski Niepodleglej) - Confederation of Independent Poland.
- KSS "KOR" (Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej "KOR") - Social Self-Defence Committee "KOR".
- KOR (Komitet Obrony Robotników) - Workers Defence Committee.
- NOWA (Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza) - Independent Publishing House.
- PRL (Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa) - Polish People's Republic.
- PPN (Polskie Porozumienie Niepodległościowe) - Polish League for Independence.
- PZPR (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza) - Polish United Workers' Party.
- ROPCiO (Ruch Obrony Praw Człowieka i Obywatela) - Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights.
- RMP (Ruch Młodej Polski) - Young Poland Movement.