

PERMANENT DELEGATION OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS
TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

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OPPOSITION IN POLAND SINCE 1976

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Institutions and organisations

Dip	Doswiadczenie i Przyszlosc' ('Experience and the Future', a discussion group)
FSZMP	Federacja Socjalistycznych Zwiazkow Mlodziezy Polskiej (Federation of Socialist Unions of Polish Youth)
KIK	Kluby Inteligencji Katolickiej (Catholic Intelligentsia Club)
KOR	Komitet Obrony Robotnikow (Committee for the Defence of Workers, incorporated in September 1977 in KSS/KOR)
KFN	Konfederacja Polski Niepodleglej (Confederation for Independent Poland)
KSS/KOR	Komitet Samoobrony Spolecznej "KOR" (Committee for Social Self-Defence "KOR")
KUL	Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski (Catholic University of Lublin)
PPN	Polskie Porozumienie Niepodleglosciowe (Polish Coalition for Independence)
PZPR	Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (Polish United Workers' Party)
ROPCO	Ruch Obrony Praw Czlowieka i Obywatela (Movement for the Defence of Human and Civil Rights)
SKS	Studencki Komitet Solidarnosci (Students' Solidarity Committee)
SZSP	Socjalistyczny Zwiazek Studentow Polskich (Socialist Association of Polish Students)
TKN	Towarzystwo Kursow Naukowych (Society for Academic Courses)
UL	Uniwersytet Latajacy (Flying University)

SOURCES

Only readily accessible sources have been consulted for this article, such as reports from the international press agencies, like Reuter, UPI, AFP, DPA, etc., Dutch and foreign newspapers and periodicals, and the background and situation reports of Radio Free Europe. Where certain facts have been reported in more than one publication the source is not usually given.

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I INTRODUCTION

The wave of strikes shaking Poland during the summer of 1980 was not an unprecedented phenomenon. For the fourth time in twenty-five years the regime was once again being placed in an extremely awkward position by an outbreak of industrial unrest.

However, the strikes of 1980 are unique in the history not only of communist Poland but also of Eastern Europe: for the first time the consequences of the unrest were not limited to replacing a few people in key posts and some vague promises of reforms; this time the authorities entered into public negotiations with the strikers, which culminated in a number of agreements in which the regime made not only economic but also political concessions.

The struggle for the implementation of these agreements is still going on and at present it is highly uncertain to what extent the drastic changes in Polish national life implied in them will really come about.

One thing is clear: after 'Gdansk '80' life in Poland will never be the same again. A wave of democratic fervour has sprung up amongst the Polish people. It was expressed in the free trade unions and the free student organisations mushrooming all over the country. It also found expression in demands for abolishing censorship, dismissing unpopular local party bosses, for a scrutiny of (secret) police activities, etc.etc.

These recent events did not come out of the blue: ever since 1976 wide-spread opposition had been building up against the political and socio-economic strategies of the government. Even before 'Gdansk' and 'Solidarnosc' the opposition movement was, in its constituent parts, sometimes surprisingly well organized. It encompassed more or less all strata of society, and even found support within the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR).

This movement should not be seen as a single firmly structured opposition party, but rather as a disparate array of groups operating both in and outside the established socialist order: parties, organizations and individuals, each a separate entity; but often joining forces to achieve the objective which bound (and binds) them all together: to create a society in which the people have a real say in the administration, and in which human and civil rights* are genuinely respected.

The aim of this article is to present a picture of the way the Polish opposition movement came into being, of its most important elements, the way it operates and the regime's reactions to it. There will also be a brief discussion of its ties with opposition groups in other Eastern European countries. It should be borne in mind that so much has happened in Poland in recent years which could be labelled 'opposition' that this article, despite its length, can in no way pretend to be comprehensive.

* Expressions such as 'human rights', 'civil rights', 'civil liberties', 'human and civil rights', are used in this article without any sharp distinctions being intended. As a rule the expression used by the opposition groups themselves in their publications is retained here.

II Dissidents

The most important general groups*

The development of Polish dissident groups gathered momentum after the 1976 riots. Of course, even before then there had been what are now known as 'dissident actions', but they were mostly single acts of protest by individuals or groups directed against certain specific wrongs.** The striking aspect of developments since June 1976 is that the dissidents have now formed permanent groups with long-term objectives, and their activities span a wide range of social areas.

The three best known and most important groups are:

- i Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej 'KOR' (KSS/KOR), the Committee for Social Self-Defence;
- ii Ruch Obrony Praw Człowieka i Obywatela (ROPCO), the Movement for the Defence of Human and Civil Rights; and
- iii Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej (KPN), the Confederation for Independent Poland.

* The term 'dissidents' is used in this article to refer to those who have set up movements outside the officially recognised frameworks to demonstrate public opposition, in word or deed, to the way the country is run.

** For example the open letter of protest against the removal of Kolakowski from the PZPR in 1966, the open letter of December 1974 to the Minister of Culture drawing attention to the fate of the Polish minority in the Soviet Union and the petitions against the proposed constitutional amendments in December 1975 and January 1976.

KSS/KOR

KSS/KOR is the oldest, largest and by far the most important of the three organisations. The prelude to its inception was the violent riots which broke out in Radom, Ursus and a number of other Polish towns following sharp price increases in June 1976. The government hastily reversed the price increases, but it still took a hard line: police ended the strikes by force - which cost lives - and in the aftermath many workers were arrested on suspicion of involvement in the riots, forty-eight people were sentenced to over two years' imprisonment and some hundreds lost their jobs. In reaction to this repression, fourteen intellectuals, headed by the historian Jacek Kuron, founded the Committee for the Defence of the Workers KOR, on 23 September 1976. KOR presented itself at the time as an ad hoc body formed to provide financial and legal aid for the workers and their families where the official authorities had failed to provide it, and to expose the repressive action taken by the government.

KOR had almost a hundred per cent success on the first count. It stated in its communiqué no. 13 (31.8.77) that it had made contact with 981 workers and families in seven towns, had provided 92 people with legal aid, 40 with medical aid, and finally, 570 people or families with a total of 3,062,090 Zloty*.

* To give an idea of the actual value of this amount, it may be borne in mind that the average monthly income in Poland is around 5,000 Zloty.

Despite obstruction, threats, intimidation and other forms of government repression (see below), KOR managed to bring so much internal and foreign pressure to bear on the regime that after an amnesty on 22 July 1977 (the national holiday), all the imprisoned workers were set free, and many of them were even reinstated in their jobs.

KOR sought to achieve its second objective by means of numerous underground publications, open letters to various authorities* (printed in the same publications), and requests to the Sejm (Parliament), calling for an inquiry into police brutality after the June riots. (Such an inquiry was never actually held, however).

In the summer of 1977, having achieved practically all it had set out to do, KOR was faced with the choice of disbanding or embarking on new tasks. In the preceding months it had become clear that support for KOR was growing, particularly among students, and that it could count on considerable sympathy - sometimes tacit, sometimes explicit - from the Church, and from many Polish intellectuals holding a wide variety of positions in society. There was thus sufficient support for KOR to continue. Government action against the workers and their supporters after the June disturbances, together with the official bodies' systematic refusal to investigate any complaints about it, had convinced the KOR membership that there would be a continuing need for an independent body which could denounce government repression. They had also discovered a real need for social organisations which, unlike the official organisations (trade unions, youth movements, students' associations etc.), would represent the true interests of their members rather than those of the Party and State. KOR could find a new role in helping to set up such organisations.

* For example, the letter of 24.8.77 from Prof E. Lipinski to Prosecutor-General Czubinski giving a detailed account of violent police action against some 200 KOR members and sympathisers.

After an inquiry carried out at the request of KOR by an independent committee of three intellectuals* to determine whether KOR had properly acquitted itself of its duties, which was found to be the case, KOR was formally disbanded.

A document signed by twenty-three KOR members** on 29 September 1977 announced the establishment of the Committee for Social Self-Defence (KSS/KOR),*** whose aims were:

- a. to combat the repression of individuals on account of their political, ideological or religious convictions or of their race, and to help those so persecuted;
- b. to combat illegal (government) practices and help victims;
- c. to press for legal guarantees for civil rights and liberties;
- d. to support and defend all social initiatives that promote human and civil rights.

KSS/KOR has developed a wide range of activities to support these aims, which remain unchanged.

'Intervention offices' have been set up in several towns, to collect and publish information about specific cases of violations of human and civil rights, and to give advice and assistance to victims. Information evenings are held and a 'Social Self-defence Fund' gives financial aid to those who have lost

* The former PZPR ideologist and ex-Minister of Culture, Bienkowski, the Catholic writer and ex-member of Parliament Kisielewski and the literary figure, Kijowski.

** Of the original KOR membership, only three did not join the new organisation.

*** The name KOR was retained because it was so widely known.

their jobs through their association with KSS/KOR.*

KSS/KOR has played a particularly important role in drawing public attention to a great variety of matters which were, until recently systematically withheld from the official press by the censor.** It regularly issues underground publications*** and pamphlets containing declarations or appeals.**** KSS/KOR members maintain excellent contacts with Western correspondents, who invariably receive copies of the pamphlets, so that declarations and appeals get wide publicity in Poland by being broadcast on Western radio stations.

KSS/KOR is also closely associated with the clandestine publishing house, 'NOWA', which became widely known when an accusation was brought against its 'director', Chojecki, in court in the spring of 1980.

The underground press, which is of course used by other groups as well as KSS/KOR, will be discussed at greater length later.

Perhaps even more important than the publication of uncensored news and views is the stimulating role played by KSS members in the innumerable independent organisations which have proliferated in the past few years.

* The intervention offices and the Fund in fact date back to the latter days of the former KOR.

** In 1977 when the censor, T. Strzyzewski, defected to Sweden, taking with him documents containing official censorship guidelines, KOR activists smuggled the documents back into Poland and published them.

*** The best known of these are the newspaper 'Robotnik' (The Worker) and 'Biuletyn Informacyjny' (self-explanatory).

**** Subjects covered by pamphlets include: the critical economic situation (May '79), appeals to boycott the parliamentary elections (Feb. '80), calls for media reforms and opening up the media to views other than the communist line. (July '79), a call for the establishment of a Tribunal to pass judgement on Soviet war crimes against Poland (Oct. '79), a declaration on the scarcity of medicines (Dec. '78), etc..

KSS/KOR was closely associated with the establishment of the first free trade unions in Silesia and the coastal area (the full significance of these activities has only recently been realised), of independent farmers' organisations, the Students' Solidarity Committees (SKS), and not least, the Flying University (UL).

Formally, all these organisations are completely separate from KSS/KOR and have many members who do not belong to the Committee. However, KSS/KOR members usually number amongst the founder members and thus often occupy key positions.

The formal individuality of the organisations is moreover completely in keeping with KSS/KOR philosophy,* according to which the great evil of the present system lies mainly in the fact that groups of citizens have no organisations to represent their interests, since all the official organisations, in practice if not in theory, owe their first allegiance to the Party and the State. The first step therefore is to destroy the present State-Party omnipotence by creating a wide range of independent social organisations completely devoted to the interests of their members. At this early stage, ^{the} KSS/KOR leaders Kuron and Michnik maintain, there is no point in demanding free elections by secret ballot or in founding political parties,**

* set out in Jacek Kuron's article 'Reflections on a Programme of Action' (The Polish Review, vol. XXII, no. 3, 1977), Adam Michnik's 'The New Evolutionism' (Survey, Summer/Fall 1976) and elsewhere.

** Kuron recently reiterated his emphatic statement that KSS/KOR did not wish to be a political party but is a social organisation.

which would only be an unnecessary provocation of the regime and the Soviet Union, and an obstacle to attaining the ultimate goal of a social democratic parliamentary system. The short-term aim should be to focus on the real needs and desires of the workers, farmers and other groups. New organisations would have to translate these needs and desires into repeated demands for concrete reforms in the present - bankrupt - regime. In this way the regime can be gradually altered from the grass roots level.

The idea of doing things gradually is one of the key concepts in KSS/KOR. The other is legality. KSS/KOR repeatedly stresses that its actions are strictly legal, and it is the regime itself that contravenes the constitution, laws and international treaties to which Poland is a party. To emphasise the point, the Committee publishes the names and addresses of its members, and operates as openly as possible.

The label of 'dissident' is thus rejected by most KSS/KOR members, who see themselves not as dissidents, but as an independent group.

KSS/KOR has some 600 activists and several thousands of sympathisers. It has what might be called a 'Central Committee' of 33 members, and committees to deal with publications, farmers' problems, etc. It also has regional branches, usually based in cities, where the risks to members are fewer. Yet there is little formal organisation: communications depend largely on personal contacts, and only the 'Central Committee' and other committees hold meetings. The executive is not elected, nor are there any set decision-making procedures.

The Committee's financial resources come from collections and

* data from an interview with Kuron (25.9.79)

gifts from sympathisers both in Poland and abroad, particularly Polish emigré groups, and in France there is even said to be a special support fund.*

KSS encompasses three generations: the older members were affiliated during the pre-war years to the Polish Socialist Party, the Democratic Party or other, progressive non-communist parties - this group includes Professors Edward Lipinski and Jan Kielanowski and the lawyer Aniela Steinsbergowa; the second generation, aged 40 to 55, lived through Stalinism and passing by way of 'revisionism' and 'dissidence' has now become irreversibly anti-totalitarian - Jacek Kuron is typical of this group; and finally the younger generation, now in their thirties, whose members include Adam Michnik, Bogdan Borusewicz, Mirosław Chojecki and Stanisław Baranczak, many of whom were active in the student movement of 1968.

Up till now it has been largely the older members who have been in the limelight, which can be accounted for by their relative invulnerability: many of them are prominent people and have less to lose than the younger members now embarking on their careers.

The great majority of KSS/KOR members belong to the Polish intelligentsia: at the beginning of 1979 the Central Committee included two professors of the Polish Academy of Sciences, a number of authors, two R.C. priests and otherwise consisted largely of other academics.

In the early days of KOR the average Polish worker had little interest in politics. The disturbances of 1970 and 1976 were spontaneous outbreaks of unrest in reaction to the deepening economic crisis. It was not until the seventies were drawing to a close that political awareness began to grow - not least

* Adam Michnik spent a few months in the West in the spring of 1977 to make contacts and to mobilise support for KOR. For this he was goaled on his return to Poland for 'contacts with hostile foreign centres'.

as a result of KSS/KOR activities - culminating in the recent strikes. Although the Committee played an extremely important role in advising the various coordinating strike committees, it did not in fact have any direct links with the strikers.

Despite their appreciation of KSS/KOR's work in their behalf, many workers are still somewhat reserved towards the Committee. Not only the fact that the philosophies and ideals of intellectuals like Kuron and Michnik are still far removed from the day-to-day reality of the Polish worker, but also the Jewish descent,^{*} Marxist past and the atheism of many of the members arouse distrust. But, as I have already explained, KSS/KOR is not out to forge close organisational links with the 'target groups',^{**} it is satisfied with creating political awareness and setting the organisation of such groups in motion - and there the Committee can be said to have had almost complete success with the workers.

The Movement for the Defence of Human and Civil Rights (ROPCO)

Considerably less is known about this movement than about KSS/KOR. ROPCO was set up on 25 March 1977. Originally its relationship with KOR was somewhat ambiguous, for, although KOR at that time still saw itself as a temporary organisation with very specific objectives, both were fighting for human and civil rights.

* The regime's propaganda makes much of the 'un-Polishness' of the dissidents, and also frequently alludes to supposed links between the dissidents (Michnik, etc.) and the 'West German revanchists'.

** see p 12

The founders of ROPCO included a number of KOR members, two of whom, the priest Jan Zieja, and Antoni Pajdak, left ROPCO for no apparent reason shortly after it was set up, whilst two others, Stefan Kaczorowski and Wojciech Ziembinski, remained in ROPCO, and later left KOR. Confusion increased in early June 1977 when Halina Mikolajska, a KOR member, said that KOR wanted to cooperate with all democratic movements, with the exception of ROPCO, because KOR 'knew too little about ROPCO's activities to be able to assess the value of the movement', and another KOR member, Emil Morgiewicz, shortly afterwards denied that this was the official KOR view.

In the first issues of the ROPCO publication 'Opinia', the editors stated explicitly that they supported KOR's objectives, but when a 'Declaration of the Democratic Movement', signed by 110 people, appeared in the underground paper 'Glos' (Voice) on 20 October 1977, (presented as a "confession of faith" of all those engaged in the struggle for the recognition of human and civil rights), the signatures of ROPCO members were conspicuously absent and - unlike KSS/KOR - ROPCO was never mentioned.

Developments since these rather strained beginnings have shown that there is not in fact any strong rivalry between ROPCO and KSS/KOR: though they may have differences of opinion about ends and means, each shows a large measure of solidarity with the other, and they complement and support each others' activities. They write for each others' publications and sometimes mount joint campaigns*.

* For example, Kuron announced on 27 February 1978 that KSS/KOR and ROPCO together were going to collect signatures to support a protest against the violent disruptions of lectures of the 'Flying University'. In October 1979 eleven members of KSS/KOR and ROPCO went on hunger strike in protest against the imprisonment of human rights activists in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

The difference between KSS/KOR and ROPCO lies mainly in the philosophy of life of their members. Whilst, as I have already said, the majority of KSS/KOR members come from a socialist or Marxist background, which they have never quite renounced, ROPCO's following consists of Catholics with a more nationalist and traditionalist outlook. In contrast to KSS/KOR, ROPCO rejects Marxism on principle and seeks a return to the pre-war situation. ROPCO also spans several generations: some of the older supporters have their roots in the Christian Democrat and Peasants' Parties of the pre-communist era, others were Pilsudski supporters and national democrats. ROPCO documents even include the signatures of high-ranking army officers of pre-war Poland. However, the younger generation provides the driving force in ROPCO, the best-known leaders being Andrzej Czuma and Wojciech Ziembinski.

Organisation in ROPCO is, if anything, still less formal than in KSS/KOR, which increases the danger of infiltration by the secret police. Rumours which have yet to be proved have it that tensions have arisen within ROPCO in the past because one of the founders was suspected of having contacts with the secret police, which might go some way to explaining the initially wary attitude of KOR members to ROPCO.

ROPCO, like KSS/KOR, publishes underground papers, the best-known being 'Opinia'. It also regularly issues declarations and appeals.*

ROPCO has branches in at least twelve towns and cities where people can seek advice about violations of their human and civil rights by the authorities. Victims of political persecution are supported with money and legal aid.

* For instance ROPCO published an appeal on 21 November 1977 asking for signatures in support of the demand that international human rights conventions ratified by Poland be published in the Government Gazette. In May 1980 - in collaboration with KSS/KOR - it distributed pamphlets demanding the release of the director of 'NOWA', Chojecki.

In 1978 ROPCO began organising informal discussion groups varying in size from 30 to 200 people. They met about twice a month, often in Church-owned buildings, to debate topics such as 'relations between Poland and her neighbours', 'Polish independence', 'the moral significance of the events of September 1939' and 'the problems of rural areas'.

ROPCO plays an important role in organising independent farmers' organisations (self-defence committees), and publicising their activities through the magazine 'Gospodarz' (The Farmer) and other channels.

Without there being any obvious explanation, it is true to say that KSS/KOR is particularly active amongst workers in the coastal region whilst ROPCO is on good terms with the Silesian miners; and it is thus mainly through ROPCO channels that strikes in the mining areas, such as those in 1977 and the recent ones, are reported.

As the topics for group discussion show, there is a strong nationalist element in ROPCO's activities, an aspect also expressed in the patriotic demonstrations organised by ROPCO in recent years - and since September 1979 often in collaboration with the Confederation for Independent Poland - on national days such as 11 November (the day celebrated as independence day before the Second World War) and 3 May (the date on which, before the Second World War, the signing of the 1791 constitution was commemorated^{*}). Thousands of people took part in the

^{*} On 11 November 1978, 1979 and 1980 such demonstrations were staged in Warsaw and elsewhere, and one was held in Gdansk on 3 May 1980. ROPCO also organised a mass rally on 31 July 1979 in remembrance of the Warsaw rising of 1944.

demonstrations, which were generally preceded by a Requiem mass. The police did not usually intervene, although the speeches were violently anti-communist and anti-Russian. (The organisers later received relatively light sentences for disturbing of public order).

The Confederation for Independent Poland (KPN)

KPN is the most recently formed and smallest of the general dissident movements, but at the same time it is also the most fanatically nationalist and anti-communist. The establishment of KPN was announced on 1 September 1979 in Warsaw during a mass meeting commemorating the German invasion of Poland.

KPN emphatically presents itself as a political party. (KSS/KOR and ROPCO regard themselves equally emphatically as social organisations rather than political parties). The ultimate aim of the party was described in an initial declaration as 'the removal of Soviet influence, by destroying the power of the PZPR

In a press conference for Western journalists on 3 September 1979 the KPN leader Leszek Moczulski, told reporters that KPN was an amalgamation of seven small dissident groups. Moczulski, a historian, was himself a founder-member of ROPCO, and for a time was editor-in-chief of the monthly 'Opinia'. Following a dispute with other ROPCO leaders about the management of 'Opinia', Moczulski broke with ROPCO and set up his own paper, 'Droga' (The Way). He set out his political philosophy in a manifesto called 'Revolution without revolution', which appeared in 'Droga' in June 1979. His view is that the Great Powers divided Europe during and after World War II without official peace treaties and without any representation of the Polish people. Consequently the Poles still have a basis in international law for their claim for true self-determination in Poland. Initiatives such as those

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taken by KSS/KOR have not been forceful enough, and have had insufficient popular support. This comes about, says Moczulski, because the KSS/KOR approach to Polish problems is far too socialist and secular, for the true strength of the Polish people lies in nationalism, and even more in Catholicism. The successful visit of Pope John Paul II to Poland had convinced Moczulski that the time was ripe to activate the emotions of the population against Soviet oppression and to make public declarations demanding that independence be restored to Poland.

Thus, whereas part of KPN consists of ex-ROPCO radicals^{*}, another part is probably drawn from the membership of the Polish Coalition for Independence (PPN), a secret and fairly obscure small organisation, set up in May 1976, which has consistently demanded the restoration of Polish sovereignty and the introduction of a multi-party system.

It is not possible to say exactly how KPN is organised. In the press conference already referred to, Moczulski said that KPN was led by a 'Provisional Political Council', whose most important task would be to prepare the first KPN congress which would elect a leadership and lay down statutes. However, the names of the council members and the date of the congress were not made known, and since then little or nothing had been heard. KPN's short-term plan was to set up a weekly newspaper with a circulation planned to reach 100,000 by the spring of 1980, the necessary funds for which were to be collected with the aid of 'permanent representatives' abroad. As far as is known, the paper has not yet appeared.

* Moczulski, however, points out that a lot of the members of the PPN also appear to belong to it.

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All this is not to say, however, that KPN has disappeared from public view since its foundation. On the contrary, it has organised a number of spectacular demonstrations, sometimes with ROPCO members. On 11 November 1979 (former independence day) a mass rally was held at the tomb of the unknown soldier in Warsaw, demanding freedom and independence for Poland, and expressing solidarity with the oppressed peoples of the Ukraine and the Baltic.

A demonstration was held on 1 August 1980 to mark the 36th anniversary of the Warsaw rising. Hundreds of candles and a wooden cross were placed in a military cemetery in Warsaw where there is a symbolic grave for the 4,500 victims of the Katyn massacre, and a red flag was pulled down in protest. Two weeks later KPN organised a mass meeting in Warsaw in remembrance of the Poles who fell in the Polish-Russian war of 1920.

In addition to the demonstrations, KPN, (together with ROPCO), last February appealed to Polish athletes to boycott the Moscow olympics 'because of Katyn and Afghanistan'. KPN also designated 1980 'Katyn Remembrance Year'.

It is as yet too early to be able to assess the influence and significance of KPN. It is a fact, however, that KPN activities arouse little enthusiasm in other opposition movements, with the exception of some ROPCO circles. People are afraid that KPN activities will endanger the opposition movement as a whole, and not without reason, given the way in which ^{recent} government propaganda repeatedly used Moczulski's declarations to 'demonstrate' that anti-socialist elements are undermining Polish society and trying to break the bonds with the Soviet Union*.

* This statement was made in a programme on Polish television on 10 September 1980 dealing with 'subversive elements'.

- Moczulski himself was arrested after granting an interview to the West-German magazine "Der Spiegel" in which he called for the overthrow of the PZPR-regime and the removal from Soviet influence from Poland.

III The uncensored press

As will no doubt be clear from the above description of the three most important dissident groups, there is a flourishing uncensored press in Poland. It is, as yet, unclear to what extent the greater openness in the official media during the last few months has affected the circulation of the underground press. Before 'Gdansk' it was estimated that there were some 30 to 40 papers which appeared fairly regularly. Exact circulation figures are not known, but according to Polish police sources 30,000 to 60,000 illegally printed and uncensored writings, books, papers and pamphlets appeared throughout the country every month, of which on average thirty per cent was intercepted by the authorities.

Other sources put the circulation of the biggest paper, 'Robotnik' at between 15,000 and 30,000, whilst the ROPCO paper, 'Opinia' was said to run to an average 8,000 copies. Circulation figures do not however give a true picture of the actual readership, as each copy passes through many hands. Jacek Kuron estimated in September 1979 that on average 'Robotnik' was read by 150,000 people. Many copies of uncensored publications also find their way to the West and are then read or discussed in Polish language broadcasts from stations such as Radio Free Europe.

Thus it is no overstatement to say that the regime's monopoly on information has been almost totally undermined.* This is a great success for the opposition, for such monopoly is one of the most important pillars of the regime, and indeed of any totalitarian regime.

Practically all the opposition groups issue underground publications,** which, incidentally, never voice exclusively the

*A state of affairs¹⁰ which the Church has partly contributed by having pastorals read after mass, etc.

**Printing and distributing underground publications is one of the few dissident activities which are carried out 'illegally' or underground, as the law requires that all printed publications be submitted to the censor.

opinions of one specific group: each group gives space to representatives of other groups and they report on each other's activities.

The chief publications include: 'Biuletyn Informacyjny' (KSS/KOR), 'Robotnik' (KSS/KOR - written for a predominantly worker readership), 'Opinia' (ROPCO), 'Droga' (ROPCO/KPN), 'Glos' (mainly KSS/KOR), 'Bratniak' (student paper, SKS), 'Gospodarz' (farmers' paper/ROPCO), 'Placówka' (Look-out Post, farmers' paper), 'Rolnik Niezależny' ('The Independent Farmer'), 'Spotkania' ('Encounters', Catholic youth publication), 'Zapis' ('Writings', independent Catholic publication), 'Puls' (literary paper), and 'Krytyka' (political paper including the Czech Vaclav Havel and the Hungarian Miklos Haraszti amongst its editors).

The ground covered by all these publications is extremely wide. They print the declarations, appeals and open letters of the various dissident groups, but also report on dissident activities, police action in Poland (and elsewhere in Eastern Europe) against certain groups or individuals, strikes, and national and international events. They also give background information on historical, economic or political issues.*

Nor is literature neglected. The periodical 'Puls' has already been mentioned, as has the 'NOWA' publishing house. In the three years of its existence 'NOWA' has published over 90 books in editions of several thousand copies, including works by J. Andrzejewski, C. Milosz, W. Gombrowicz, George Orwell, Osip Mandelstam, J.B. Singer, Günther Grass, and others.

Dissatisfaction with censorship among Polish writers, even including members of the Polish Writers' Association (see below), has reached such a pitch that today the majority of Polish literary output no longer appears through the official channels.

*Radio Free Europe publishes regular reviews of the Polish underground press.

IV The 'Flying University' (Uniwersytet Latajacy)

It is not only its monopoly on the press that the regime has lost in recent years: the state monopoly on education has also been breached, for which ROPCO's discussion groups and even more the discussion groups and catechism classes of the Church* have been largely responsible. However, the most spectacular organisation by far is the Flying University. The name is the same as that of the underground educational establishments which aimed to preserve Polish culture during the partitions of Poland and the Second World War.

The most recent revival of the Flying University came about in the autumn of 1977 on the initiative of the Students' Solidarity Committee (SKS) in Warsaw. Economists and historians organised lectures for small groups of students on the social and economic causes of the present Polish malaise. The lectures were very successful and initially left undisturbed by the authorities. Encouraged by this lack of intervention, students soon began organising lectures on controversial topics such as the origins of the Polish Peoples' Republic and non-Marxist economics, etc.

In order to protect themselves more effectively against Government repression and to attract the support of established academic institutions and the Church, the organisers set up an umbrella organisation called the Society for Academic Courses (TKN).**

On 22 January 1978 a manifesto signed by 59 people announced the establishment of the TKN. Its aim was to 'broaden, enrich and supplement the knowledge of students and young intellectuals,

*The Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) is a case apart, being the only Eastern European university whose courses are not based on Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

**This name also has a historical connotation, being the name of a continuation of the U.L. (which was active in the last two decades of the nineteenth century) in the period immediately preceding World War I.

particularly in the social sciences and culture.' Although the manifesto did not contain an explicit attack on the education system, the statement that 'the structure of political power in this country' made it even more essential to achieve the aim, illustrated clearly enough the signatories' views.

The TKN now has now some eighty members, approximately half of whom are lecturers at various educational institutions. There are nine professors and six members of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN), a number of writers (two of whom belong to the international writers' club, 'PEN'), journalists, (four of whom are editors-in-chief of officially recognised Catholic papers), artists, priests (some of whom are KUL lecturers), and well-known dissidents such as Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, Professor Edward Lipinski, and PAN member, Jan Kielanowski, who acts as "chancellor" of the UL. It is striking to note that most TKN members are prominent in their own field, and furthermore that they represent a broad cross-section of Polish intellectual life, which makes them less vulnerable to government repression. The TKN also stresses that it is strictly legal, and is even registered with the competent authorities. It has an executive, last elected in June 1980, and committees to deal with finance and planning.

In pursuance of the TKN objectives, the UL held some 120 lectures during the first two academic years for a total audience of about 5,000 people.* The lectures were given in private houses and church buildings in various towns, and admission was free to all comers. The major historical and socio-economic topics varied from 'social and political ideologies from the French Revolution to the Second World War', and 'Polish-Jewish relations since 1918' to 'great controversies of the first fifteen post-war years' and 'a general introduction to the social sciences'.

*Attendance figures varied between 10 and 150 people.

The UL's activities are not limited to lectures: it also has a small secret library which, through intermediaries, lends underground texts and books which have been smuggled in from the West. The UL also produces its own texts, almost all of which are published by 'NOWA'. A series published in 1979 under the title 'TKN Notebook', containing the texts of past or planned lectures on various aspects of modern history, has enjoyed great popularity, even outside UL circles.

At a TKN meeting in June 1980 it was decided to shift the emphasis in UL activities increasingly from lectures to this type of publication, because repressive action by the regime against UL lecturers and students had intensified steadily over the past two years. Initially the authorities confined themselves to checking students' identity cards and temporarily arresting lecturers (who had sometimes taken the precaution of pre-recording their talk so that it could still go ahead). However, it was not long before the police began to break up lectures by force (sometimes even using tear gas). Later agents provocateurs (often members of the official 'Socialist Association of Polish Students') infiltrated the lectures and started fights. In the spring of 1979 KSS/KOR members Kuron and Michnik even had to call a temporary halt to their lectures for reasons of personal security.

The government also began to prosecute lecturers and students who had made their homes available for lectures, for breaking the administrative regulations on the compulsory notification of 'public meetings', imposing fines of 5,000 Zloty (the average monthly salary). People living in such 'alternative' college accommodation were also threatened with expulsion orders for breaking 'housing regulations' (the reasoning being that if anyone can receive so many visitors in their flat, they evidently have more room than they need.

This kind of pressure forced the UL to alter its practice of open lectures, and they began to be organised in secret. However, it was still impossible to prevent infiltration, so that the violent disturbances continued.

In reaction to this provocation, the TKN held a press conference for Western reporters on 28 November 1979, in which it appealed to men of letters and intellectuals in Poland and the rest of the world to support the UL.

The appeal did not go unanswered: on the initiative of a Polish sociologist lecturing in England, Leslek Kolakowski, an 'International Rescue Committee for the TKN' was set up to provide the TKN with moral and financial support and currently has 65 members in Western Europe, the US, Canada, and Australia, including the writer Heinrich Böll and the economist Gunnar Myrdal. The TKN also received promises of support from the 'Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America' which is held in great esteem in the US.

In the spring of 1980 a new TKN publication, 'Kronika', appeared. The first issue devoted a great deal of space to the TKN's plans for the current academic year and the proposed new editions to supplement the officially prescribed books. This type of supplementary material was also going to be produced for primary and secondary school pupils.

The new political climate in Poland has led to a revival of the UL. A new series of lectures started on 7 November 1980, when about 700 people gathered to listen to professor Jedlicki who spoke on Poland's recent history. The venue was more suitable than on previous occasions: the lecture was held in the auditorium of Warsaw University!

V Independent organizations promoting the interests of certain groups

As already stated in the section devoted to it, one of the aims of KSS/KOR has been and is the establishment of independent, 'autonomous' organizations for the various groups which make up Polish society. Recent developments in Poland have demonstrated only too clearly the overwhelming need for such organisations, not only to represent workers, but also farmers, journalists, civil servants and academic staff, students and other groups.

I shall not go into recent events here as they are fairly well known and also because it is impossible to present a complete picture, given the speed with which new developments occur. I will, however, treat the first impulses to independent (trade) organizations, which have culminated in the present events.

Free trade unions

As already mentioned in the introduction, industrial unrest is nothing new in post-war Poland. There have been explosive outbursts in 1956, 1976 and 1980, but there have also been less serious ones during the intervening periods.* The reasons have been many and various: the tension created by low wages, which made regular overtime a necessity, food shortages (large enterprises such as mines and shipyards have their own shops), the unfair awarding of bonuses and premiums to party men, increased productivity norms, non-payment during stoppages caused by organisational errors (for example, when the requisite raw materials for a job are not delivered in time), and the frequent failure of managements to observe safety regulations.

*For example, in August 1977, 3000 workers at a light-bulb factory in Pabianice (near Lodz) twice downed tools in protest against pay cuts. In late September 1977 strikes broke out at five mines in Silesia because food supplies were short. The illegal paper 'Robotnik Wybrzeza' reports that in the first four months of 1979 work stopped six times in the Gdansk shipyards in protest against compulsory overtime.

Whenever industrial conflicts have arisen on account of grievances of this nature, the workers have received little support from the official trade unions leaders, who nearly always take the side of the management. Thus it is hardly surprising that informal workers' groups had already begun operating in Polish enterprises twenty years ago. They consisted of a small nucleus of workers who were trusted by their colleagues and acted as mediators in conflicts. The workers' groups came very much to the fore during the strikes of July/August 1980. Since the official trade union leaders were and are not recognized as proper representatives by their members, the regime was forced into a tacit acceptance of the informal workers' groups.

After the 1976 riots the struggle for free trade unions began to take more concrete shape. On 4 November 1977 a 'workers' cell' was set up in Radom by Leopold Gierak, one of the workers arrested after the disturbances and an editor of 'Robotnik', and others. The aim of the cell was to protect the rights of 'working people' independently of the official trade unions which it described as 'dead institutions', and to encourage the foundation of other independent bodies for worker-representation.

On 23 February 1978 the 'Organisation Committee for Free Trade Unions in Upper Silesia' was formed in Katowice, calling on workers to set up 'free national labour associations'. Godfathers to this committee included ROPCO member Kazimierz Switon, and 'Robotnik' editor Wladyslaw Suleki. Its manifesto contained a violent attack on the official unions which 'abandoned workers and made them powerless against exploitation by the State'. Labour activists in the coastal area were not long in responding: on 29 April 1978 the 'Free Trade Union of the coastal Area' was set up in Gdansk and Sopot, to ensure effective 'protection of the economic, legal and human rights' of all workers, and on 11 October 1979 a founding committee of eight people from Szczecin

and nearby Gryfino set up the 'Free Trade Union of West Pomerania'. Free trade unions also sprang up elsewhere in the country including Grudziadz, Lodz and Warsaw, but they received less publicity than the abovementioned four.

The membership of the new free unions was not very large initially,* and the regime persecuted members with a ferocity which had been absent in its actions against dissident intellectuals.

For the time being the main aim of the independent trade union movement was to foster political awareness among the workers, and to this end the trade unions, together with ROPCO and especially, KSS/KOR members, published and distribute papers such as 'Robotnik', 'Robotnik Wybrezeza' (The Coastal Worker), and 'Ruch Zwiaskowy' (The Trade Union Movement).

A climax was reached on 5 September 1979 with the publication of a 'Charter of Workers' Rights,' 10,000 copies of which were printed and distributed by 'Robotnik' and the free trade unions. It bore the signatures of sixty-five people from twenty-two different towns and cities, including those of 'Robotnik' editor Jan Litynski, and Anna Walentynowicz and Lech Walesa who later came to the fore during the 1980 strikes in Gdansk. The Charter opens with a summary of the problems facing Polish workers and other citizens, and accuses the official unions of not representing the interests of their members.

This is followed by six demands relating to wages (indexing), shorter working hours, industrial safety, the abolition of privileges for party members and officials (militia, army, party nomenclatura), the abolition of enforced collaboration with the

*The number was put at about 100 at the end of October 1979. The number of supporters was undoubtedly very much larger.

regime, and the revision of the Labour Act,^{*} including recognition of the right to strike. Most of these demands were to be repeated - and actually met - during the 1980 strikes.

The Charter then proceeds to an elucidation of how workers may protect their rights more effectively against the regime. The proposed methods include strikes - or threats of strikes -, consistent internal solidarity, regular exchanges of information about abuses, cooperation with 'independent social organisations' and the editors of independent publications, active participation in factory councils^{**} and the creation - in secret if need be - of permanent workers' groups.

Once these permanent workers' groups were fully operational it would be possible to form free trade union committees. Free trade unions were the ultimate goal, as 'only independent trade unions which have the support of the workers they represent, can mount effective resistance to the authorities. They alone can represent a power which the regime cannot ignore, and will have to negotiate with on equal terms'. Prophetic words, indeed!

Finally, as a first practical measure, the Charter announced the establishment of a Mutual Assistance Fund (Kasa Pomocy) from which workers who lost their jobs as a result of their trade union activities could receive financial aid.

^{*}The movement was particularly keen to see the removal from the Act of the provision enabling striking workers to be dismissed: though the word 'strike' is never mentioned, the Act provides for action to be taken against those who, without being able to^{produc} an explanation within a reasonable period, 'stop work' or 'do not report for work'.

^{**}These are a type of industrial council introduced by Gomulka as a concession to the workers after the 1956 disturbances, but which were soon emasculated by the regime.

In an appendix to the Charter the legal nature of the free trade union movement is emphasised and demonstrated by texts from the I.L.O. Treaty and the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (both of which had been ratified by Poland).

A year ago the majority of members would probably scarcely have dared to dream that the preparatory work for the first free trade unions would bear fruit so soon. Only the regime seems to have estimated the extent of the risk with any degree of accuracy, as may be seen from the harsh measures taken against trade union activists in particular, but it was relatively powerless to do anything about it.

Farmers' organisations

Far less is known about farmers' than about workers' organisations which is probably partly due to the fact that the farming community in Poland has traditionally been relatively cut off from the mainstream of Polish socialised society. After the 1956 crisis Gomulka gave up plans for large-scale collectivisation and restored the farmers' lands to them, since when neither he nor his successors have ever again dared to tackle this 'ideological monstrosity'. Thus today almost eighty per cent of the agricultural land in Poland is still in the hands of some three million independent farmers, which may be a striking phenomenon under a communist regime, but is one which has scarcely any news value for the Western press, concerned as it is with the latest and most spectacular events.

However, that is not to say that farmer and regime coexist in Poland without any problems. Whilst it is true that government policy in recent years has been aimed at modernisation and economies of scale in agriculture, whether farms are privately

or publicly owned, the farmers complain that many local authorities do actually discriminate against independent farmers in the allocation of scarce commodities such as fuel, machine parts, animal feed and chemical fertilisers. They also accuse the authorities of obstructing young farmers who want to buy new land. It is difficult to establish the extent to which such complaints are justified, but since ^{the} past experience of most farmers has taught them to be highly suspicious of the regime, they are quick to assume that the State is out to undermine their interests

On 1 July 1978 an Act regulating farmers' pensions came into force. The essence of the Act is that farmers who, owing to their age, can no longer make optimal use of their land are given the opportunity of handing over the farm to a successor or to the State in exchange for a pension, the size of which depends on the quantity of agricultural produce delivered to the State over the preceding five years.

This method of calculation and the amount of the compulsory pension contribution* aroused protest from the farmers. In the Lublin region the farmers stopped delivery to the State and refused to pay the contributions. As a result of their action various ambiguities in the Act were removed to the advantage of the farmers. That did not however prevent the creation at the end of July 1978 of a 'Provisional Committee for Farmers' Self-defence', with members in sixteen villages in the Voivodship of Lublin, followed a few months later by the establishment of similar committees in the Grojec region (near Radom), in Lowisko (near Rzeszow), Zbrosza Duza (near Warsaw) and elsewhere.

*set at around 8.5% of the annual income of the average small farmer (N.Y. Times, 20 June 1980).

These 'Self-defence Committees' are still in existence* They not only campaign for specifically farming interests, but also distribute information on abuses in rural areas** and provide aid in cases where human or civil rights have been violated.

The committees work in close cooperation with groups such as ROPCO and KSS/KOR and publish a number of underground papers (see above). They also organise lectures on agricultural topics and have in the past called on the services of e.a. Professor Jan Kielanowski ("chancellor" of the Flying University)***.

Student organisations

Student unrest has also been a source of grave concern to the regime. In March 1968 university students rioted in Warsaw, Cracow and other cities, their anger provoked mainly by the fact that the social reforms promised by Gomułka and the expected cultural liberalisation had not come about. The student uprising, whilst it did arouse sympathy in some intellectual circles, received no support at all from workers or farmers. On the contrary, government propaganda about the 'anti-national, zionist elements' which were supposed to be behind the riots was accepted without question by many people, and thus the government had little difficulty in restoring the peace by forceful measures.

In April 1973 five existing student organisations were superseded by the "Socjalistyczny Związek Studentów Polskich" SZSP (Socialist Union of Polish Students) with the aim of streamlining the ideological education of Polish students, which was considered desirable. The SZSP, integrated in the FSZMP (Federation of

* It is not yet clear to what extent the Self-defence Committees have been 'swallowed' by the new Farmers' Union "Rural Solidarity"

** For example, a 'Gospodarz' article on 25.11.78 compared the amounts spent on policing and education respectively in the Grojéc region.

*** This is a continuation of a 'thirties tradition, the 'Farmers' University'. However the authorities deal just as harshly with this type of lecture as with those of the UL.

Socialist Unions of Polish Youth), has never been popular among students. One reason for its unpopularity is that students who are not confirmed Communists (the great majority in Poland) did not feel any affinity with it, and the other reason is that it always put the interests of the regime before those of the students.

The events of June 1976 and their aftermath revived student activity.

When petitions from all over the country were being sent to the Sejm calling for an inquiry into police misconduct many students* were among the signatories. Many students also became KOR activists and when one of their number, Stanislaw Pyjas of Cracow, died under suspicious circumstances (see also below), his funeral was made the occasion for mass demonstrations. On 15 February 1977 a manifesto was read out in Wawel Palace to a meeting of 5,000 students announcing the establishment of a 'students' solidarity committee (SKS) aimed at achieving 'authentic and independent student representation' in place of the SZSP. Similar committees were soon formed at nearly all the other universities.

The SKS have devised a wide range of activities: their part in the revival of the UL has already been mentioned. The SKS also publish papers ('Bratniak' and 'Indeks' are two in which both student affairs and general topics are discussed.

The committees of course campaign for general student interests,** but they also help individual students who are in difficulties with the authorities.***

Mainly* From the universities of Gdansk, Cracow, Warsaw and Lublin (KUL).

** For example, SKS Cracow sent a letter of protest to the university administration on 21 November 1977 about the increasing difficulty of obtaining certain books and periodicals from the university library.

*** SKS Poznan wrote to the authorities on 25 November 1977 protesting against the intimidation of students who had requested the Minister of Higher Education to invalidate the dismissal of a 'dissident' lecturer, S. Baranczak (KSS/KOR member).

DECLASSIFIED - PUBLIC DISCLOSURE / DÉCLASSIFIÉ - MISE EN LECTURE PUBLIQUE

The SKS frequently collaborate with KSS/KOR and ROPCO, and in some parts of Poland there are even said to be some regional cooperation associations called 'social self-defence clubs' for joint monitoring of human and civil rights.

The abolition of the SZSP has always been one of the foremost aims of the SKS. Over the past two years this demand has been brought up a number of times. During an SZSP meeting in Cracow in December 1979 some members, having voiced harsh criticism of the organisation, demanded its abolition. A month later a damning 'Report on the state of the SZSP' was published in 'Indeks', drawing the same conclusion. Even more significant than these was the petition signed by 900 students of the university and other higher education establishments in Cracow to the Eighth Party Congress of the PZPR (in February 1980), in which the students demanded the disbandment of the SZSP and its replacement by an organisation which 'would not impose any ideology, would represent the true interests of the student community and would be respected by the students'. As was to be expected, the petition was brushed aside by the Party Congress, but it received public support from a group of Catholic intellectuals, including the famous composer, Krzysztof Penderecki, and the Church, which condemned the practice of forcing upon Catholic youth 'an ideology which is contrary to the Christian beliefs of the great majority of Poles.'*

The recent victories achieved by the strikers have had repercussions in student circles. The establishment of an 'Independent Students Association', which is to have branches in other cities, was recently announced in Gdansk. It will be clear from the above that this initiative was not without precedent.

*Episcopal communiqué of 29 February 1980.

VI The Church

The Roman Catholic Church is the strongest force in the Polish opposition movement. That is not to say that the Church in any way regards itself as a political organisation, much less part of a political opposition movement, but as an opponent of the regime it does perhaps carry more weight than all the groups I have referred to put together, for it is the great counterweight to the PZPR and, unlike the Party, has the real and very devoted support of the great majority of the Polish population.*

The election of Cardinal Wojtyla as Pope and his successful visit to Poland in June 1979 have enormously bolstered the self-confidence of the Polish Church and its followers. In the meantime it has also become clear to everyone, partly through the events preceding and following the strikes on the Baltic coast, that after 35 years of PZPR rule, it is the Church, and not the Party, which constitutes the greatest ideological force in Poland.

Apart from these considerations, the Church, in contrast to the other opposition groups, has a tight and practically invulnerable organisational structure.** The Church has money, manpower and buildings at its disposal, and channels through which information can reach a large proportion of the population and over which the government has little control.***

* On estimate, roughly 90% of the population regard themselves as Catholics.

** The apartment of the KSS/KOR leader, Jacek Kuron has been searched on several occasions, whereas a police raid on the Episcopal offices remains unthinkable.

*** For example, the pastoral letters which are read from the pulpit throughout Poland.

The Church has many resources in its battle for the 'soul' of Polish youth, including the catechism, a youth movement (not formally institutionalised), the 'Life-Light Oases Movement' with an estimated 200,000 participants, discussion groups such as the KIK (Catholic Intelligentsia Clubs),* and the Catholic University of Lublin, already mentioned, at which most of the teaching staff are priests.

The Church's own view of its role in Polish society (apart from preaching the R.C. doctrine) was expressed by Cardinal Wyszynski,** who said that though the Church must protect fundamental human rights and ensure that social justice prevails, it is not caught up in a struggle against the regime.

The Church as such has always kept slightly aloof from the various dissident groups and has never publicly associated itself with their activities. The same cannot however be said of individual priests, some of whom maintain close ties with KSS/KOR, ROPCO, the independent farmers' organisations and the UL.***

One reason for this official reserve is that the delicate balance between Church and State rests on the fiction that the Church is an organisation with exclusively religious and moral objectives. If the Church was openly concerned with politics the balance would be upset and its position harmed. Another reason is the Church's fear that if the provocation of the regime is carried too far,****

*These groups have 2,000 to 2,500 active participants throughout the country. The Church provides the meeting places. Party members as well as dissidents are said to take part in the discussions. KSS/KOR member, Prof. J.J. Lipinski chairs a group in Warsaw on Culture and History.

**in a sermon in Warsaw on 25 December 1976.

***The decision to make Church buildings available to the UL is said to have been taken by Cardinal Wojtyla, now Pope John Paul II.

****The anti-Russian demonstrations staged by the KPN are a case in point, about which, according to remarks Episcopal Secretary Dabrowski is supposed to have made in Rome in June 1980, the Church is none too pleased.

the situation could get out of hand, with the possible consequence of armed intervention by the Soviet Union.

Such intervention would undoubtedly have serious repercussions for the Church's position, which at present, objectively speaking, leaves little to be desired. This consideration also explains why Cardinal Wyszynski called on the strikers on 26 August 1980 - in vain, as it turned out - to moderate their demands and return to work.*

However, that is not to say that the Church is not prepared to make public statements about specific evils, and draw the government's attention to them.

In July 1976 the Primate and Secretary of the Polish Episcopacy wrote to the government, following the June riots, demanding that the authorities respect human rights and enter into a real dialogue with the citizens of Poland, and put an end to the repression of the workers.**

In a pastoral letter of 24 April 1977 the bishops denounced the 'preferential treatment on political grounds' which has resulted in good jobs in Poland being dependent on membership of a particular political party instead of on aptitude and talent. The bishops called it 'a striking example of the exploitation of one man by another'.

The Episcopal communiqué of 29 February 1980, which protested against enforced membership of anti-Christian youth organisations, has already come up for discussion in the section on the SKS.

*The Church is also said to have been discreetly involved in collecting money for the victims of the 1976 and to have taken a consistently positive attitude towards the activities of KOR.

The Church has regularly spoken out against abuse of the mass media for ideological indoctrination.* Cardinal Wyszynski, in a letter to Kakol, former minister for religious affairs, of 10 June 1978, defended the activities of the Flying University.**

The Church has also been known to step into the breach for the dissidents. An Episcopal communiqué of 8 May this year made an urgent appeal to the government to refrain, 'in the interests of internal peace', from persecuting people with 'deviant views'. It went on to say, 'Holding political prisoners is not in the interests of the State'. It should also be mentioned, finally, that the government's economic policy has also come in for criticism from the Church on several occasions.***

It is not surprising therefore that not only dissident groups like ROPCO and KPN, which are explicitly Roman Catholic in inspiration, but also KSS/KOR, most of whose members have more secular leanings, rate the support of the Church in their opposition to the regime very highly. In the words of the Marxist, Adam Michnik, the Church ... 'promotes a non-conformist and dignified attitude (vis-à-vis the regime) and stimulates the struggle for civil liberties'.****

*See for example the pastoral letters of the Episcopacy of September 1977 and 21 September 1980. KSS/KOR also issued a declaration in July 1979 demanding access to the media for non-communist groups, and specifically the Church.

**

The text of this letter was published in 'Kultura' no. 1-2 1979 (published in Paris).

In a sermon preached by Cardinal Wyszynski on 25 December 1976, and in a letter of 2 September 1980 to the 'Chaplains of the Workers'

'The New Evolutionism' (Survey, Summer/Fall 1976)

VII Opposition within the established order

An interesting Polish phenomenon, virtually unknown in the rest of Eastern Europe, is the existence of an 'opposition within the system', over and above the dissidents. This type of opposition is not bound together by any permanent organisations, but rather rallies and manifests itself in reaction to specific events or problems, and is expressed in diverse ways.

It is mainly prominent intellectuals - professors, authors, journalists, musicians, members of Catholic lay organisations such as 'Znak'* , the KIK and even members of the PZPR - who make up the opposition within the established order. However, no sharp dividing line can be drawn between them and the dissidents and documents produced by this type of opposition often bear the signatures of KSS/KOR, ROPCO and SKS members.

The first notable display of opposition within the system came in 1975 in response to proposed constitutional amendments which would have entailed incorporating a clause stating that 'the Polish United Workers Party is the guiding force' in the Polish People's Republic, and a passage devoted to Poland's 'indestructible fraternal bonds with the USSR'. Fifty-nine leading intellectuals wrote a letter to the Sejm in protest, urging respect for the rights reaffirmed in the Helsinki Final Act: the right to freedom of conscience, freedom of opinion and expression and the right to work.** A few weeks later a second letter, bearing the

* 'Znak (The Sign) is represented in the Sejm, as is the other lay organisation, 'Pax', but whereas the former has the confidence of the Church, the latter has always worked closely with the regime. 'Znak' publishes the weekly, 'Tygodnik Powszechny', the severest critic of the regime amongst the officially recognised press, whilst 'Pax' publishes the considerably less critical 'Słowo Powszechne'.

** In the light of recent events it is interesting to note that the 'letter of the fifty-nine' said on the point of the right to work: 'For this reason the workers must be given the opportunity to elect their representatives, independently of State and Party bodies. Furthermore, the right to strike must be guaranteed.'

same message, and this time signed by 101 people, was sent to the Sejm. The Church, the editors-in-chief of the three foremost R.C. papers and a large number of students joined the protest. They had a measure^{of} success: the demands of the 'letter of the fifty-nine' were not met, but the offensive passages in the constitution were duly amended.*

The events of June 1976 and their aftermath once again brought the internal opposition up in arms. On 6 January 1977, 172 leading academics, authors, journalists and artists (including several PZPR members) sent an open letter to the Sejm demanding a parliamentary inquiry into police misconduct towards the workers since June 1976. As with the KOR petitions, the 'letter of the 172' produced no results.

The internal opposition has also given support to dissidents on many occasions. When, in May 1977, nine KOR members were arrested, seventeen authors and artists publicly appealed to the government for their release. In a church in Warsaw eleven people, including Bohdan Cywinski, editor-in-chief of the officially recognised R.C. periodical 'Znak', went on hunger strike. Tadeusz Mazowiecki, editor of 'Wiesz', a Catholic monthly, acted as spokesman for the hunger strikers. The Polish Writers' Association telephoned the Central Committee of the PZPR to request the immediate release of KOR member Jan Jozef Lipinski, the literary critic.**

*

The PZPR became 'the most important political force in the building of socialism' and the 'indestructable fraternal bonds with the USSR' had to give way to 'reinforcing the friendship with the USSR and other socialist states'.

**

The detained KOR members were released in an amnesty on 22 July 1977.

Writers have also come out in support of dissidents on more recent occasions. In the spring of 1980 115 prominent authors signed a petition pleading for the release of 'NOWA' director, Miroslaw Chojecki. Following a meeting of the Warsaw branch of the Writers' Association, a delegation of five writers held talks with the Prosecutor-General whilst one delegate approached Premier Barbiuch. In consequence of these interventions, and the activities of KSS/KOR and ROPCO (pamphlets and hunger strikes), and the Church, Chojecki was released on 10 May 1980.

Now that KSS/KOR has once again become the target of a fierce propaganda campaign by the regime since the wave of strikes, the organisation is defended not only by the union leader, Walesa, but also by the opposition within the system. The communist, Bratkowski, in a speech to the Warsaw branch of the Writers' Association, called the attacks on KSS/KOR 'inadmissible and disgraceful'.*

Opposition within the system has frequently come out in favour of initiatives aimed at destroying the omnipotence of PUWP-dominated social organisations. In my discussion of the SKS. I^{have} already mentioned the petition of a number of Catholic intellectuals in Cracow in support of the struggle for free student organisations. I have also referred to the role played by opposition within the system in the revival of the Flying University. When in the Spring of 1979 the government used increasing violence to break up UL lectures, forty intellectuals sent an open letter of protest to President Jablonski.

One of the targets most fiercely attacked by the opposition within the system is censorship, which has been a source of frustration to practically all authors and journalists: not only Catholic

*Neue Züricher Zeitung, 27.9.1980.

(Bratkowski was recently elected chairman of the Polish Association of Journalists)

writers like ex-Sejm-member Stefan Kisielewski, but also members of the Polish Writers' Association have repeatedly protested against censorship.*

At a meeting of the Warsaw branch of the Association in February 1977 various members condemned censorship. During the twentieth congress of the Association, which was held in Katowice in April 1978, the writers displayed increased militance. Of the 12 PZPR members who had until then sat on the 25-member board of the Association, only 9 were re-elected, and the congress even elected three members of staff of the Flying University and the editor of the underground paper, 'Zapis', to the board. A harsh attack by Andrzej Braun on censorship was warmly applauded, and even the Chairman, Iwaszkiewicz, complained about censorship and the limited opportunities for Polish writers to travel to the West. When a member of the town council started criticising Braun, numerous writers, including PZPR CC member, Jerzy Putrament, walked out.

The latest congress of the Association, which was held on 28 and 29 December 1980, witnessed a further strengthening of the non-conformist trend among Poland's writers. Several 'underground authors' were elected to the new 32-member board which now includes only 6 members of the PZPR.

One of the most recent attacks on censorship came from the newly elected Chairman of the Writers' Association, Jan-Jozef Szczepanski in an interview with the daily Zycie Warszawy on 2 January 1981. Szczepanski defended those who published their works underground in recent years ("an act of common sense and self-defence") and expressed the hope that the authorities would lose their "fear of the word" and that cultural life in Poland would gradually return to normal.

*In an article entitled 'Against censorship - by legal means' which appeared in the October 1977 issue of the underground paper 'Zapis' (the article was originally intended for publication in 'Tygodnik Powszechny', but did not pass the censor), Kisielewski describes his 30-year fight in books, articles and speeches in the Sejm against what he considers to be illegal censorship.

Internal opposition has long focussed its attention on the social and economic crisis which has become virtually chronic in Poland in recent years. At the beginning of 1978 fourteen former high-ranking party officials, including ex-president Edward Ochab, wrote to the party leader, Edward Gierek, deploring the absence of any attempt to open a dialogue with the people. 'Confidence in the PZPR is declining amongst the people,' ran the letter. 'The political and economic situation is grave.' This could be attributed to the lack of democratic practice and popular participation. They recommended the creation of a number of 'institutions of political and economic democracy', and a paring down of bureaucracy as a means to bring about internal democratisation of the PZPR. The regime failed to respond. On 20 January 1979 a long article by the political commentator Jerzy Wiatr appeared in the official party weekly, 'Polityka', making recommendations along much the same lines as the 'letter of the 14'.

The article did not bring about any changes, any more than had the discussion opened by Polityka's editor-in-chief, PZPR CC member Mieczyslaw Rakowski, at the end of 1977, with his arguments for decentralisation.

One of the most interesting phenomena on the Polish political scene in recent years has been the political debating club, 'Doświadczenie i Przyszlosc' (DiP) (Experience and the Future) which has met only once - in November 1978 - but which has nonetheless kicked up quite a lot of dust. Some hundred prominent academics, writers, economists and artists attended the meeting, including PZPR members, many intellectuals with no party affiliations, and also several well-known Catholic activists. The results of the first DiP meeting evidently did not meet with the approval of the regime, for the follow-up meeting planned for January 1979 was banned.

This did not deter the DiP in June 1979 from sending a 150-page report to Party Leader Gierek, Cardinal Wyszynski and a number of other prominent Poles.

The report criticised the omnipotence of the PZPR, the authoritarian government, bureaucracy, censorship, the government's ineffective economic policy, its arbitrariness, privileges, violations of human rights, the ideological disputes within the PZPR, social inequality, and the corruption and impoverishment of education and culture. It concluded: 'The crisis in numerous sectors of Polish society will lead the country irrevocably into the abyss. The situation is alarming, and radical political, economic and social reforms will have to be effected if a catastrophe is to be avoided.'

The regime paid no heed. A year later, a new document, entitled 'How to get out of it?' appeared. It was based on an opinion survey among 151 people (including 51 PZPR members), most of whom had taken part in the first DiP meeting.

If anything the second report was even more sombre about the situation in Poland than the first had been. It proposed radical reforms including democratisation within the Communist system, appointments to important positions on rotation, separation of party and government, the abolition of censorship, an end to all discrimination against the Church, a revision of the criminal code, closer supervision of the police, free trade unions, worker participation in economic policy-making, and fair treatment of independent farmers.

The second report also fell on deaf ears. No radical changes were discussed at the last PZPR congress in February. However, the turbulent summer of 1980 has unequivocally proved the DiP group right.

VIII Links with opposition movements elsewhere in Eastern Europe

A description of the opposition movement in Poland would not be complete without an indication of its 'foreign relations', and more specifically of its contacts with other opposition groups in Eastern Europe.

The Poles' closest links are with dissidents in Czechoslovakia. Little or nothing is known about relations with dissidents in other Soviet-bloc countries. In any case, even the contacts with the Czechs are far from intensive.

There are various reasons for this. First of all, there are strict controls on border-traffic in Eastern Europe, even for East Europeans, so that 'undesirable elements' can easily be refused entry. Even letters can be intercepted without much difficulty.

Secondly, the regimes in question are particularly ill-disposed towards international contacts among dissidents because of the risk of 'ideological contamination'. The fear of this 'contamination' led Czechoslovakia and the GDR to take measures aimed at limiting contacts between Poles and their own citizens as much as possible.

However, probably the most important reason is that the opposition movements in the various countries operate under widely divergent circumstances, so that apart from joint

declarations of principles, mutual assertions of solidarity and exchanges of information, there is little opportunity for combined activities. A closer look at the contacts observed to date will confirm this view.

In August and September 1978 two meetings took place between representatives of KSS/KOR and Charter 77, on the border near Karpacz.* The occasion of the first meeting was the tenth anniversary of the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw-Pact troops. A joint declaration was issued testifying allegiance to the ideals of the Prague Spring and expressing solidarity with human rights campaigners 'in the Soviet Union and elsewhere'. The two groups also exchanged information and discussed the possibility of future cooperation.

During the second meeting a working party was set up to facilitate rapid exchange of information, and a letter of invitation was drafted for an international conference of dissident groups. It was addressed to dissidents in Bulgaria, the GDR, Romania, Hungary and the Soviet Republics of Armenia, Georgia, Lithuania and the Ukraine.

(As far as we know, nothing came of this conference).

When a third meeting was to be held, shortly after the second, the authorities on either side of the border intervened and arrested the participants. The Poles were released after a short time, but the Czechs were detained. This provoked a series of protest letters from KSS/KOR to international human rights organisations, the Sejm and the Czechoslovak parliament.

* There is a 1-km-wide zone called the 'road of friendship', where Czechs and Poles can meet without having to go through the usual border formalities.

When ten VONS* activists were arrested scarcely a year later, KSS/KOR was again up in arms, demanding their release in several appeals and open letters. A joint hunger strike by Polish and Czech dissidents planned to take place in Warsaw could not go ahead as the Polish police arrested the Czechs and sent them back to Czechoslovakia. A few months later, in October 1979, KSS/KOR and ROPCO organised another hunger strike in protest against the 'imprisonment of human and civil rights activists in Czechoslovakia and Poland'.

It was not only the Polish dissident groups, but also the opposition within the system which stood up for the ten VONS members. On 5 July 1979 a group of 317 Catholic intellectuals sent an open letter to Cardinal Tomasek, Archbishop of Prague, making an urgent appeal to him to help the detainees and care for their families.

* 'Committee for wrongfully prosecuted people'

As well as these Polish actions on behalf of Czech dissidents there have also been cases where Czech dissidents have protested on behalf of Poles. At the end of January 1979 the VONS issued a declaration expressing solidarity with the arrested trade union activist, Kazimierz Switon.

Coverage is regularly given in Polish and Czech underground papers to the dissident and human rights situations in the other country^{*}. The Polish paper, 'Krytyka' has a Czech, Vaclav Havel, amongst its editors. Here again, cooperation is not limited to the dissidents. The independent (but legal) Catholic weekly 'Tygodnik Powszechny' ran an article on 4 November 1979 by a Czech priest, J.Zverina. The article, which discussed the encyclical, 'Redemptor Hominis' was not particularly striking in itself, but its publication was, as Fr. Zverina has spent many years in prison for 'illegal religious activities' and was one of the first signatories of Charter 77.

Contacts between Polish and Soviet dissidents are weaker than those between Poles and Czechs. Only one meeting is known to have taken place in the past few years between Polish and Soviet dissidents. That was in January 1979, when KSS/KOR member Zbigniew Romaszewski had a meeting in Moscow with Andrei Sakharov and other members of the 'Committee for the Defence of Human Rights'. They are said to have exchanged information about the observance and defence of human rights in the two countries and made some agreements-in-principle about cooperation^{**}. (Nothing is known about the results, if any, of these agreements).

* For instance, the second number of 'Krytyka' (Autumn 1978) includes translations of various Charter 77 documents.

** KSS/KOR communiqué, 26.1.'79.

Polish and Soviet dissidents have from time to time sent each other messages of solidarity. In 1975 Jacek Kuron and four others sent a message of congratulations to Andrei Sacharov when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In November 1976 Sacharov called for solidarity with KOR and cooperation between dissidents in Eastern Europe. In May 1978, KSS/KOR, ROPCO and SKS activists sent a telegram to Mrs. Orlov, proclaiming solidarity with her husband. And finally, a more recent example was provided by the messages of support which the Polish trade union campaigners received from the Soviet Union*.

There is little to report about Polish dissidents' contacts with Hungarians although they seem to be in touch fairly regularly. More is known about underground publications than any other aspects of their relations. As has already been mentioned, the Hungarian philosopher Miklos Haraszti is one of the editors of 'Krytyka'. It was announced in 1978 that an anthology of dissident literature by the Hungarian samizdat had been published at the request of KSS/KOR member Adam Michnik, which was to be translated into Polish in order to acquaint Polish readers with dissident thinking in Hungary.

* Twenty dissidents from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania congratulated union leader Lech Walesa on the 'beginning of democratic reforms in Poland which are of great importance for all socialist countries'. Even before the Gdansk agreement 10 dissidents in Moscow had sent a message of solidarity to the strikers.
(NRC/Handelsblad, 29-9-1980)

IX The regime's reaction to the opposition

There is no denying that a certain liberalisation of political and social life had taken place in Poland under Gierek. Long before the Gdansk agreement there was a degree of freedom in Poland which could not be found anywhere else in Eastern Europe (with the possible exception of Hungary). It is this relative tolerance which has enabled the Polish opposition movement to become the strongest in the Soviet bloc.

A number of factors can be said to have contributed to the regime's attitude. In the first place, 35 years after the Second World War the 'sovietisation' of Poland has still not been completed. Owing to the determination with which the patriotic and mainly devout Poles have clung to their social and religious traditions, - a determination which could only have been overcome by intimidation which would have been tactically inopportune so shortly after the horrors of war - there are still large 'areas' of Polish society - the religious life, the farming community and now 'Solidarity' - which do not fit into the Marxist-Leninist model, but which are nonetheless officially recognized. That is why the dividing line between dissident and officially acceptable behaviour is much less sharp in Poland than in the rest of Eastern Europe, thereby widening the scope for opposition. Secondly, the opposition had never until recently constituted a real threat to the regime. In 1968 the intellectuals stood alone as did the workers in 1970. As long as the two groups did not cooperate a politically strong opposition was not possible; the intellectuals had no power and the workers lacked the capacity to use their power in a politically effective manner. Only since 1976 has an alliance grown up between the two, finally reaching the point at which the full scope of the threat to the regime has now become universally apparent.

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Thirdly, Poland under Gierek had become economically fairly dependent on the West: certainly in the latter half of the seventies (the time of the rise of the opposition movement) when Poland needed credits and cereals from the West, the regime could not afford to sully its reputation on human rights questions.*

All that is of course not to say that constitutional rights are properly observed in Poland. It is true that in recent years there have been no show trials such as those held in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, but the regime's treatment of its opponents - particularly the less well-known ones - has been far from just.

First of all, in order to intimidate dissidents, the police has frequently made use of - and abused - their authority to carry out house searches, make arrests and question detainees.

Between September 1976 and October 1977 the houses of at least 318 dissidents were searched, and about 1,000 dissidents were arrested and questioned.**

One of the tactics most frequently deployed against dissidents is 48-hour detention. As in many other countries, the Polish police are empowered to hold people for 48 hours without charging them. This statutory regulation is regularly abused in Poland to prevent people from taking part in activities considered undesirable by the regime. In recent years victims of this abuse

* According to KSS/KOR member Professor Kielanowski, fear of incurring ^{the} wrath of the U.S. Congress is the most significant restraining influence on the regime. (International Herald Tribune, 7.7.78).

** source: an article entitled 'Ways to combat opposition in Poland' by Bogdan Borusewicz in 'Spotkania', quoted in Radio Free Europe research bulletin of 9.2.78.

have included lecturers of the Flying University and the organisers of demonstrations, where the police knew of them in advance.*

The lengths to which the authorities will go to preserve the fiction of legality were demonstrated during the Gdansk strikes, when a number of dissidents were picked up: every 48 hours they were released, only to be immediately rearrested.

Fines and short periods of detention for breaking administrative regulations are sanctions which have also been increasingly applied recently against those involved in the organisation of undesirable meetings or demonstrations.**

Opponents whom the regime wants out of the way for a longer period are often the victims of false charges. This weapon has been used against trade union campaigners, such as Kazimierz Switon, Edmund Zadrozynski and others.

Switon was accused of assaulting four policemen, whilst false accusations of theft were used to sentence Zadrozynski to a long term of imprisonment. Before that Switon's sons had spent 18 months in prison, supposedly having been found guilty of embezzlement. According to Switon the charges were trumped up to put pressure on him.

In the spring of 1980, NOWA director Chojecki was accused of stealing a duplicating machine (which had in fact been salvaged from a scrap heap), whilst another underground publisher, T. Michalak, was accused of 'preparing the falsification of bank notes.'

* NOWA director Chojecki estimates that he has spent an average of one day per week in jail since 1965, but never more than 48 hours in succession.

** After the memorial demonstration on 11 November 1979 in Warsaw, the organisers, Czuma and Ziembinski (ROPCO) were imprisoned for three months for 'disturbing public order'.

Trials on purely political charges have not taken place (as yet)^x since May 1977, when 11 KOR members were sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment for 'activities contrary to the interests of the state' and 'maintaining contacts with hostile foreign centres'. (They were however released in the amnesty of July 1977).^{**}

In its efforts to suppress opposition the regime does not only have recourse to legal or quasi-legal means; the relatively innocent but objectionable weapon of slander campaigns is also frequently used. For example, the media suggest that there are links between opponents of the regime and 'West German revanchists' whilst the Jewish descent and even the atheism (!) of some KSS/KOR members are readily seized upon in attempts to estrange the people from the dissidents.^{***}

Expulsion from school or university is a favourite means of applying pressure, used particularly against the less well-known and younger opponents of the regime (or their relatives)^{****}. It is for this reason that older people with an established reputation are often the ones in the foreground. To deal with the latter category, the regime deploys the 'passport weapon', for example, various signatories of the TKN manifesto, including Professor Kielanowski, are said to have been refused passports on several occasions.

^xThe charges brought against the seven dissidents who were arrested in September and November 1980 have not been made known thus far.

^{**} Recently political elements have again started to creep into the accusations. In the case referred to against Czuma and Ziembinski, for example, the charges, in addition to 'disturbing public order' also included 'openly flaunted disrespect for vital national interests and achievements'.

^{***} A little book has recently been circulating amongst PZPR members advising them to tar certain members of KSS/KOR with the brush of their Jewish descent or past professions of atheism. (Neue Züricher Zeitung, 27.9.1980).

^{****} In Wroclaw in 1979 fourteen SKS members were suspended for six months on trumped-up charges.

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The regime shows its blackest side in its use of violence against dissidents and their supporters. Large-scale violence occurred during and after the riots of June 1976. Not only were workers, and intellectuals who came to their aid, assaulted by uniformed policemen, but much use was made of agents provocateurs, who started fights and then made hospital cases of their victims. This intimidation technique has since become a standard weapon against the opposition, from which trade union activists, people attending UL lectures and others have suffered on several occasions.

Sometimes the use of physical violence degenerates into straightforward killing or attempted murder. According to KOR statements at least seven of the people arrested after the June riots died of injuries received while in police custody during the following eighteen months.

'Accidents' also happen: in May 1977 two KOR members were driven off the road by a lorry near Cracow - they maintain on purpose. They escaped with minor injuries*.

A well-known case is that of the student and KOR activist, Stanislaw Pyjas, who was found with a smashed skull in a house in Cracow on 7 May 1977. The police attributed his death to a fall down stairs, but the nature of his injuries, the fact that he had shortly before received anonymous threats, and the fact that he had neither friends nor relations in the house where he was found, led many people to believe that he had been murdered.

* UPI, 17.5.1977

The last known case of probable political murder concerned a member of the 'Initiative Committee of the Port Region Free Trade Union' Tadeusz Szczepanski, who disappeared on 16 January 1980, the day after he was dismissed for taking part in the laying of wreaths at the shipyard gate in Gdansk on the ninth anniversary of the massacre of workers during the 1970 strikes. His body was fished out of the river Motlawa a few weeks later with head injuries and severed feet. The police broke up the funeral ceremony and assaulted the mourners.*

Thus the relatively good reputation of the Polish regime for upholding human rights is indeed only very relative.

*KOR communiqués, 13.2.1980 and 25.3.1980

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X Conclusion

Since 1976 the Polish regime has been confronted with an opposition movement growing rapidly in strength and size.

Until the independent trade unions became the dominating factor in the struggle for social change the central role in the movement was played by dissident groups such as KSS/KOR, ROPCO and KPN. The ideologies and strategies of these groups differ considerably. In very broad terms, KSS/KOR is a social democratic movement, whereas ROPCO and KPN are more closely linked to the Roman Catholic and nationalist traditions of the Polish people. These differences do not, however, stand in the way of cooperation (especially between KSS/KOR and ROPCO) on essential points (the defence of human and civil rights).

KSS/KOR is by far the largest and most important dissident group and also the one that presents the greatest threat to the regime. It has attained this position largely through its strategy of promoting the establishment of independent organizations for the groups who, unlike the intellectuals, represent a major force in the country, namely the farmers and, even more, the workers. This strategy has recently proved very successful. It is this very alliance between workers and intellectuals which has put the regime under greater political pressure than ever before. It is no wonder, then, that the regime has mounted a vehement propaganda attack on dissidents in general and on KSS/KOR in particular. Should this prove insufficient to break up the links between workers and dissidents (and at present it seems that it will), the authorities might attempt to intimidate, and if possible eliminate, the dissident movement through a series of arrests and trials.

Leaving apart the question of what would be the reaction of the new trade unions to such a strategy, it is highly unlikely that it would produce the results hoped for. Intellectual freedom in Poland is no longer the privilege of dissidents (in a narrow sense of the word). As was shown above, the State has lost its monopoly in important areas - the press, education and social organization - through the actions of dissidents, supported by numerous intellectuals (the

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