

ITEM No 11397/53

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11 Nov.  
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POLAND

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH (2606)

Church Persecutions.

SOURCE STOCKHOLM: LATUSZAK Jozef, 39, a Polish fisherman and peasant from the village of SIANOZETY, close to USTRONIE MORSKIE, in direct interview.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: 29 September 1953

EVAL. COMMENT: This is interesting information, but unfortunately, none of the reported facts could be checked here. Therefore, caution is advised.

There are seventeen localities of the name MIELNO, and the report gives no clue to which MIELNO the event refers.

SPECIAL ATTENTION: Mr. Griffith,  
Mr. Nowak.

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"The news of Cardinal WYSZYNSKI's arrest, reported by radio WARSAW, was a terrible shock to the peasants of the village of SIANOZETY. They expected that the next move of the government would be to close all Polish churches. There was nobody among them who believed that the cardinal had been a spy. Neither was there anybody who believed that the government does not persecute the church. Most of the peasants thought that the Communists arrested WYSZYNSKI in order to plunder the diocese (Kuria biskupia) and to lay hands upon some money.

"And how can the government maintain that they do not persecute the church? It is a ridiculous statement and everybody knows it. Just think of the area around USTRONIE MORSKIE where there is not one single priest left and where all the churches have been closed.

"They took the priest from USTKA already in 1951 and since then the church has been closed.

"They took the priest from SMIECHOWO that same year and put him into prison in KOSZALIN. He is still there and it is reliably known, if you can call a UB-officer reliable, that he has been tortured and beaten.

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"They took the priest from MIELNO in 1952.

"They took the priest from SKARBINOWO in Summer 1952.

They took the two priests from USTRONIE MORSKIE in April 1953. Already long before they were arrested, they were forbidden to preach. As a protest they had the pulpit removed from the church.

"And then the government announces that they do not persecute the church:

"When I fled from Poland towards the end of September 1953, there was still one priest left in KOLOBRZEG, but it has been rumored for quite some time that even he would be removed and so I do not know whether he is still in office or has been deported already.

"When the real priests had been removed, so-called patriotic priests were installed. But nobody bothered about them, not even a lame dog went to church to listen to their Communist sermons and pretty soon they gave up and left. The most persistent of these new "priests" lasted, I think, about three months. Then he too went away and the churches are now all locked tightly and nobody can enter.

"But even before they removed our priests, the Communists did everything to make it hard for the people to go to church. They opened shops on Sundays only, they arranged for the youth to go out on excursions and to work on the PGR's on Sundays. They did anything to keep people away from the pews.

"There is the story of the SLOMCZYNSKA (fnu), girl, 22, from USTRONIE MORSKIE who in September 1952 was ordered to a PGR. Since they day they picked for her was a Sunday close to "Matka Boska Siewna," she joined a church procession instead. She was carrying one of the saints' banners and the UB arrested her right there while the procession was going on. They took her away to the PGR and put her to work. She was fined quite a considerable sum for her disobedience.

"How can they say that they do not persecute the church?"

"In November 1952 a UB-officer came to inspect the Sluzba Polsce office in SIANOZETY. As usual one wall was decorated with the pictures of ROKOSSOWSKI, STALIN and BIERUT. On the opposite wall there was a cross. The Ub-man took the cross and broke it. One peasant, who witnessed this, knocked the



UB-man down. A few days later at a Party meeting somebody got up to declare that there was full liberty of religion in Poland. The brother of the above-mentioned girl, SLOMCZYNSKI Jozef, got up and related what had happened in the SP-office. The Communist who acted chairman at the meeting promised that the UB-man would be punished. But, of course, he never was...

"Now, how can the government maintain that they do not persecute the church?"

End.