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New Developments in Church-State Conflict

A week after the two simultaneous (religious and lay) celebrations of Poland's Millennium in Poznan (cf. SR April 18), Radio Warsaw and other information media on April 24 resumed in full force their attacks on the Church, its hierarchy and on Cardinal Wyszynski personally. Two Politburo members (Zenon Kliszko and Eugeniusz Szyr) and the Chairman of the Polish Radio and Television Committee, Wlodzimierz Sokorski, took up the cudgels, while articles on the Church appeared in at least three important weeklies.

The most weighty attack was delivered by Kliszko at a ceremony on the site of the former concentration camp of Stutthof, near Gdansk. In a speech full of historical allusions, Kliszko argued that it was the "magnates and Church hierarchy" who caused the fall of Poland in the 18th century and then proceeded to establish the continuity of tradition between those old aristocratic prelates and Cardinal Wyszynski. The Cardinal he described as that "prince of the Church, whose mentality fits rather into the period of the counter-Reformation than to the last Ecumenical Council." Such an attitude was completely at variance, said Kliszko, with the suffering of the clergy during the last war, when 200 priests perished in Stutthof alone. Wyszynski's attitude was motivated by a "deep dislike for socialism. Finally, in an allusion to the Western orientation of the Church, Kliszko warned of the "tragic price paid by our nation for the weakness of the Polish state during the inter-war period, for its disastrous anti-Soviet foreign policy."

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None of the other speeches were particularly notable, although they were not quite so directly critical of Cardinal Wyszynski. Sokorski's was the most reasonable. In his radio-chat he referred to the "sensible words of Wladyslaw Gomulka, warning all inside and outside Poland, who still do not want to understand that certain decisions in our country are final and irreversible..."

Another notable development over the week-end in the Church-state struggle was the Papal Letter to Wyszynski, in which Paul VI expresses regret at his inability to attend May 3rd celebrations (cf. UPI, April 22). From Czechoslovakia came another blast from the suspended priest and Minister of Health, Dr Joseph Plojhar. This was Plojhar's third attack on the Polish bishops; this time he berated them for not asking government permission before issuing the invitations to the foreign episcopates (cf. Ceteka, April 24).

Finally, the Warsaw daily, Zycie Warszawy on April 22, wrote a sharp attack against Wyszynski on account of the publication in West Germany of a selection of Primate's sermons. The selection was, according to the paper's Bonn correspondent, "very one-sided."

Cooperation between Polish and German Writers?

The writers of Poland and West Germany should work for reconciliation between their two countries, said chairman of Poland's Writers' Union Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz in a letter to Munich author Peter Braun, reported the RFE German News Desk on April 23. The letter was sent in reply to one from Braun on 15 December 1965.

Iwaszkiewicz's letter, however, did not contain any suggestions as to the method of cooperation. Braun will answer it "in the near future."

New Polish ICC Official Arrives in Hanoi

The new head of the Polish delegation to the International Control Commission in Vietnam, Janusz Lewandowski, has met with the North Vietnamese Premier, Pham Van Dong, in Hanoi and held "cordial talks," Radio Warsaw reported on April 24.

The news of Lewandowski's arrival in Hanoi was reported on April 21 by the North Vietnamese News Agency.

Janusz Lewandowski was chargé d'affaires in Dar Es-Salaam in 1962 and in Burundi and Uganda in 1963. In December 1965 he took part in a UN special political committee meeting, in which he sharply attacked the apartheid policy of the government of South Africa.