

# RADIO FREE EUROPE *Research*

## EAST EUROPE

● Poland  
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### S I T U A T I O N   R E P O R T

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A woman was elected chairman of the Warsaw Branch of the Polish Writers' Union at the last annual meeting of the Branch on January 31 and February 1, the press and radio reported. She is Wanda Zolkiewska, a 54 year old playwright, scenario writer and rather obscure novel writer, better known as former wife of Prof. Stefan Zolkiewski, former Minister of Higher Education.

Another woman, Halina Auderska, above 60 now, a successful and prolific playwright, was elected as deputy chairman along with the much younger (born November 1923) Jozef Hen, a prolific journalist, novelist, scenario writer and lately also a film producer.

Elections of a new Board at this time of the year are routine for the Warsaw Branch of the Writers' Union. The surprising element this year is the minor caliber of the new chairman; Mme. Zolkiewska becomes head of the Branch which has been known for setting the tone for the whole Union, a tone which has not always been too conformist. (Another factor which should be kept in mind is that the Warsaw Branch associates about 60 per cent of the total membership of the Union.)

During the past ten years three outstanding writers held the chairmanship of the Warsaw Branch: Jerzy Andrzejewski (December 1956 - January 1960), Stanislaw Wygodzki (February 1960 - January 1963), and Igor Neverly (February 1963 - January 1966).

There are some indications of a crisis within the Warsaw Branch recently. According to the well informed Wanda Pampuch-Bronska, writing in Sueddeutsche Zeitung on December 4, it was Neverly who -- with two more writers -- produced a memorandum on a previous meeting of the Warsaw Branch (cf. SR November 18) demanding the setting up of a new "independent" literary weekly. This problem

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was referred to at the Writers' Congress in Cracow (early December), but no promises were made and subsequent press reports on the Congress indicated that the representatives of the government did their best to avoid the issue. However -- rather unexpectedly -- in a broadcast on cultural problems on January 9, Wlodzimierz Sokorski revealed that it had been decided at the Congress to publish a new literary and social monthly whose first issue would appear at the turn of March and April next. A rather odd circumstance of Sokorski's announcement was the fact that he was talking to Poles abroad, i.e. on a wavelength not used for radio listening in Poland. But even so, the announcement shows that the regime intends to meet writers' demands at least part of the way. But, obviously, Neverly's plea for a new periodical could hardly have pleased the authorities.

Another sign pointing toward a rather tense atmosphere at the Warsaw Branch is the fact that the new chairman, Mme. Zolkiewska, has never shown signs of being popular among the membership. At least twice last year she failed to be either elected to the Branch's Board (in March) or as the Branch's delegate to the Congress (November). She became a member of the Board only through cooptation after the death of another member in September.

Of the motives behind the election of such a non-representative chairman, one seems to be most plausible: the regime's desire to have a malleable governing body of the Warsaw branch of the Writers' Union.

#### A Mysterious Trial

A former lawyer and secret police double agent came up for trial, from January 28 to February 1, at a Warsaw District Court. Cezary Ketling-Szemley was found guilty of "passing abroad to publishing houses, hostile to People's Poland, writings containing false information about social and political conditions" in Poland; he was sentenced to four years' imprisonment and three years' deprivation of civic rights. On the face of it, it would look as if another writer, or would-be writer, has been sentenced for contributing to either the monthly Kultura in Paris or to Wiadomosci in London. In fact, it is only partly so.

News about the arrest of Ketling-Szemley reached the West last autumn, and in this connection the Neue Zuercher Zeitung (September 20) revealed that he had been a German agent during the war and then, during the Stalinist period, a Communist police agent. Blackmailed for his wartime collaboration with the enemy, Ketling-Szemley became an easy tool of the secret police, which used him, among other things, as an agent-provocateur acting as an intermediary between certain oppositionist writers and Kultura and/or Wiadomosci.

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He obtained the confidence of such men as Stanislaw Cat-Mackiewicz, Jan Nepomucen Miller and January Grzedzinski whose manuscripts he conveyed to those emigre papers, not failing, however, to prepare photostatic copies for his real masters. (As known, these writers have either been tried or threatened by trial for their actual or attempted contributions to Polish emigre periodicals and/or foreign agencies.)

These revelations of the NZZ found at least some confirmation in the first official release on Ketling-Szemley's trial (Trybuna Ludu, January 29). "These slanderous writings," the PAF communique read, "in the form of his own articles or those written by other persons were sent by the defendant abroad to the publishing houses hostile to People's Poland for publication."

This passage clears at least one mystery. Since Stanislaw Cat-Mackiewicz was known to be contributing to the Paris Kultura under his pen name, Gaston De Cerizay (cf. SR July 19 and 29), attentive readers of his articles were struck by an article in the July/August issue of the monthly on "The Bar After a Year," i.e. on a subject which is hardly Cat-Mackiewicz's forte. When he later denied any knowledge of this particular contribution, the first suspicion fell upon the Polish secret police, which might have "contributed" the material in order to discredit Cat-Mackiewicz. It becomes clear now that -- for reasons known to him -- Ketling-Szemley, a former defense lawyer, aired his own grievances toward People's Poland and specifically toward his immediate masters under the guise of a pseudonym which he knew was known to the secret police as that of Cat-Mackiewicz. (In the article, the alleged Gaston de Cerizay complained about the maltreatment of the "known lawyer Ketling" in prison and about Ketling's attempt at suicide as a consequence of this maltreatment.)

It is possible that the secret police subsequently decided to put their double agent behind bars. But this was not the first time: in 1959 Ketling was sentenced to five years imprisonment, a sentence later commuted to three years. According to Trybuna Ludu (26 April 1960) Ketling was sentenced for "extortion of money from his clients under false pretenses." (It is probably because of this that Szemley was later barred from practising law.)

This new sentence of four years is not final; it is subject to appeal, the PAP communique stressed.

Note: A series of sermons delivered recently by the Polish Primate and a number of bishops will be discussed in the next Situation Report.