

direct and brutal attacks. When the activities of the "patriotic priests" came to be centred mainly on the Association, these open verbal assaults on the bishops ceased for a while, and the emphasis was placed on winning the priests over by playing on the Association's "social work". At the same time particular importance was attached to making priests dependent on the Association, and with this in view proposals were made concerning the use of the Association's residential property as holiday-homes etc. for the clergy. One of the latest attempts to win over priests, without openly involving them in the conflict with the Episcopate, is the creation of this Pension Fund for Priests. In addition to the above-mentioned new tactics, the Catholic Association, through its journal *Mysl Społeczna*, is also beginning to attack individual bishops and threaten the Episcopate just as it did during the Stalinist period.

The Catholic Association, bypassing the hierarchy, is trying to put pressure on the priests and harness them to a particular policy. This has now become evident because the Association itself, wishing to produce for its protectors evidence of its political activity amongst the clergy, simply acknowledges the fact in its own documents. Thus a report on a general assembly of the Catholic Association, held on 21 September 1976, disclosed that "there are 51 priests' 'circles' and nine laymen's 'circles' oper-

ating throughout the country". Of course there is a striking imbalance between the numbers of the priests' and laymen's "circles", from which it transpires that the Association is a political organization for priests. The "circles" do no charitable work at all; rather they are used to indoctrinate the priests in the spirit of advancing particular political aims.

8. The Association maintains that it had nothing to do with the seizing of the Church Association "Caritas", since it came into being only after the latter's liquidation. At the same time, however, the Association, in Art. 6 of its constitution, confesses itself the possessor of "all the effects and property, and all the title deeds, which on 28 January 1950, for one reason or another, belonged to the Church Association "Caritas" or to the institutions and establishments connected with it".

The Church has never relinquished its lawful right to ownership of the Church Association "Caritas".

After the liquidation of the Church Association "Caritas", the very same people who had been members of the Compulsory Council of Management – compromised individuals, laymen and clergy alike – were appointed to key posts in the organization known as the Catholic Association "Caritas". Many of them still belong to this organization. History will judge them.

## Cardinal Wyszyński Writes to Professor Kakol

*Professor Kakol is Poland's Minister for Religious Affairs and thus a key political figure as regards official policy towards the Church in Poland. The following letter from Cardinal Wyszyński, dated 10 June 1978, was published in Kultura (based in Paris) No. 1-2, 1979, pp. 221-4. It reveals some of the current areas of conflict between Church and State.*

Warsaw, 10 June 1978  
N. 1414/78/P

Professor Kazimierz Kakol,  
Minister for Religious Affairs,  
Warsaw.

Dear Professor Kakol,

Your letter of the 29 May 1978 (Ref. RK-540/8/78) could justifiably have been left unanswered in view of the tone and poor quality of its reproaches. However, I do not wish the correspondence between us to be maintained on this level.

Your opening "emphatic protest at the continuing misuse of sacred buildings etc." is a typical oversimplification and an unfounded generalization. It raises a few questions and calls for clarification of the following:

- 1 the scope of the Church's mission
- 2 the definition of political activity
- 3 hostility towards the socialist State.

Precise definition of these concepts would answer the question as to whether the accusations levelled at the University Chaplaincies are valid. Since you have created a problem from a few isolated cases and have drawn quite disproportionate conclusions, I am obliged, in answering these accusations directed at the Church, to treat them as a problem.

#### Part I

The boundaries of contemporary political life have been extended to include a vast area; they encompass all spheres of life, so that there is no room left for the individual's private concerns. The sphere of the individual's rights has shrunk almost to nothing. In addition to this limitation of his rights, the State demands that he should meet the obligations it has imposed on him. These obligations, which are mainly in the economic and professional field, are so extensive that the individual has barely any time (or place) for his private life.

As a result the concept of "political activity" has acquired a broader meaning, and anything not connected with the obligations imposed on the individual by the State is suspect. When the various methods of political infiltration into the private life of the individual are taken to an extreme, they become intolerable. It is no wonder that resistance takes root amongst people whose personal and social rights are so restricted. A person "has the right to defend his rights" (the Encyclical *Pacem in Terris*) and this is why attempts are occasionally made to "defend the minimum of these rights". However, the defence of rights is not a political activity *par excellence*; rather it is the duty of each individual. Still less can it be called "hostility towards the socialist State".

If therefore certain initiatives have been undertaken in this field, the question arises as to whether the State has trespassed too far into the sphere of human needs. The programming of education, particularly in schools, suggests that it has. Since these programmes so often give a distorted image – bordering on ignorance – of the truth about Polish history and our national culture, it

is small wonder that people try to correct this view of their country's past by their own efforts. By attending lectures and using factual information drawn from academic sources they are supplementing their incomplete knowledge of the last two centuries of Polish history, particularly the period which followed the re-birth of the State.

The damage caused by applying the method of dialectical materialism to our country's history and culture is so evident that even young students are aware of it. They can see the gaps in this interpretation and want to fill them. After all it is not possible to interpret political events or economic, social and moral trends which occurred centuries ago from a contemporary perspective and by this dialectical method. Conclusions drawn in such a way are obviously false.

The efforts of the "Flying University" are only modest attempts to supplement the public's incomplete education, to unearth facts about the past which had been buried in silence, to correct the glaring falsehoods which are often taught in our schools and universities. Every intelligent person has the right to do this, so there are no grounds here for accusations of hostility towards the State.

Are these lectures concerned with politics or with the humanities? Do they constitute an illegal activity? Are they "hostile towards the socialist State?" I could find no trace of hostility in the transcripts of the lectures I was given. Why then brand so many people as guilty, making more and more enemies – the State has many already, both in this country and abroad, as a result of the mistakes which it persists in making. To make the police spend so much time and energy on the lecturers and those who listen to them, is merely adding to the number of these mistakes. It is similar to Goliath's battle against David.

Let us turn now to another problem of vital importance to the present situation in Poland, where internal peace must be maintained if the multiplying social and economic crises are to be overcome. Added to these internal problems is the threat to Poland's external peace, of which everyone is aware. If the governmental system persists in widening the gulf between the Party

and the Nation, this could create a dangerous division of society into "us" and "them".

Sir! This is a tragic situation. Some of those presently responsible for the State ought to be aware of this. They must take the floor even if they have to suffer for it. No one in Poland today is free from the obligation to speak the truth! Anyone who keeps silent about the situation is potentially harmful to the State and the system. It is here – among these cowards who keep silent – that we must look for "the enemies of the socialist State", and not among those who want to know the truth about Poland, which has been distorted by official teaching.

No, Sir, I cannot detect in the work of the "Flying University" any of the offences of which it is accused. This is the only means the people have left of defending their right to truth and their right to defend themselves. There are many similar cases throughout world history.

Real harm is inflicted on the democratic system by the increasingly powerful network of police, UB (Department of State Security), ORMÓ (Voluntary Reserve of the Civil Militia) and other secret agents, who interfere excessively in people's lives and smell threats to the system everywhere. They are not so much acting in the interests of the ruling class as working to strengthen their own position.

Sir, I have a duty to tell you this, for I am convinced that the duties which you perform as Minister place you in a key position between on the one hand, religious and socio-moral values, and on the other, the instruments of government. It might be said that your *ex officio* obligation is to understand this distinction and to bring this to the notice of the governing circles, irrespective of any police interference, for the sake of social peace and out of a sense of balance between civil rights and obligations.

## Part II

What I have said in the first part of my letter may be taken as a basis for assessing the problem of "Caritas". Mr Kakol, you know that the confiscation of several thousand charitable and educational institutions from the Church made the

state authorities very unpopular. Even today the credibility of this new government suffers as a result of the wrong done to the Catholic community by earlier governments. Those most affected by this wrong were Poland's many worthy religious orders, which as a result of their social work were deprived of their land and possessions and prevented from caring for the retired members of their communities.

The codicil to the Agreement concerning "Caritas" could not mitigate the wrongs inflicted on the Catholic community. We still see this problem in the light of the injustices inflicted. How many lives were wasted when "Caritas" was liquidated? I remember a colleague of mine, a diocesan director of "Caritas", who survived Dachau concentration camp only to die in a Polish prison, where he was sent for allegedly abusing his position as an administrator of "Caritas" – a charge which was never substantiated.

The fact that the Episcopate adopted a favourable stance towards the possible employment of some priests in the Catholic Association for Aid to the Poor and Needy – with the consent of their Ordinaries and in accordance with the principles and practice of the Catholic Church – does not mean that the problem was solved. Leaving aside the fact that the priests now working in "Caritas" never asked their bishops for permission to do so – our main complaint is that these priests have allowed themselves to be drawn more and more into the Association's subversive work against the hierarchy. Through their publications, *Kaplan-Obywatel* (Citizen Priest) and *Mysl Społeczna* (Social Thought), they carried on an incessant campaign against the Episcopate. They allowed themselves to become involved in various schemes to divide the clergy and the bishops. They waged a harmful propaganda campaign abroad against the Church in Poland.

They had no right whatsoever to take priests and involve them in this "Catholic Association", which was never intended to change from a lay Catholic charitable institution into an organization for priests. Further proof of this is the fact that the priests are utterly dependent on the Association for their social security.

It is not right therefore to equate the raising of this problem with a political act, thus "immediately attacking the whole church-state relationship". Quite the reverse, the question as to whether priests should belong to the Association ought to be one of the first matters to be settled during the normalization of church-state relations. Another issue to be settled early in the process of normalization is a redress of the wrongs inflicted on the Church in Poland during the Stalinist period. This should include, for example, the restoration of "Caritas" to the Episcopate, the re-establishing of the Catholic printing and publishing houses, the legal reinstatement of the Catholic charitable institutions and the return of the buildings which housed these institutions; the return of the junior theological seminaries and Catholic schools; the return of the various residences which are the property of the Church and which were taken away by the state authorities without just cause,

often as a result of erroneous or tendentious interpretation of the regulations. I am limiting myself to just these examples.

Our attempts to redress these wrongs are in no sense a political battle with the system. On the contrary, granting justice to the Catholic community would be a positive step towards creating social peace in Poland, and is essential to the establishment of good relations between the State and the Church.

I trust that you will interpret my candid approach to this matter as an indication of my confidence in the way in which you deal with all matters falling within your sphere of competence in public administration. I feel that correspondence between us on an objective level and free from unjust insinuations would be both beneficial and desirable.

I remain respectfully yours,

CARDINAL STEFAN WYSZYNSKI

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