

Events in Poland since the Pope's Visit (Summer 1983)

The 196th Plenary Conference of the Polish episcopate which took place on 20-21 September 1983 strongly protested against the frequent removal of crucifixes from classrooms, factories and offices installed there during Solidarity times in response to popular demand. The Conference's communique stated that the removal of crucifixes was "contrary not only to the rights of believers but also to assurances from the highest state authorities that crucifixes would not be removed from where they were hung."

On 26 September a meeting of the joint Government Episcopal Commission was held and according to the communique published by Polish Press Agency PAP both sides agreed that "on fundamental issues Church-State relations have developed favourably."

On 27 September Jerzy Urban, the government spokesman, responded to the bishops' protest, stating that "though the government does not seek the war on crucifixes [...] any attempt at clericalisation of state institutions will be opposed with firm resolve." He described putting up crucifixes in schools as "inducing situations of conflict" and endangering "practical cooperation between the Church and State for the purpose of national accord, in the name of great reforms."

On 13-14 October the 13th ideological Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party was held. This was the first ideological Plenum since 1963. The Plenum was preceded by a vigorous anti-Church campaign in the press. For the first time since the 1960s ideological attacks on the Church have overspilled into the national press. Articles called for "barring the Church from any involvement in public life and limiting the Church to the strictly religious sphere of activity" (*Polityka*, 24 September 1983; *Perspektywy*, 23 September 1983). They also called for an "ideological offensive against the Church" (*Życie Partii*, 17 August 1983). The most prestigious Catholic weekly closely linked with the Kraków curia was accused by *Gazeta Robotnicza* of expressing anti-socialist attitudes.

It came then as no surprise that the Plenum called for confrontation with the

Catholic Church in Poland, stressing the need to "define tasks designed to consolidate the Party and its leading role" and to "exert an active impact on social consciousness and overcome hostile and alien orientations." The Church was offered "cooperation" with the Party but was also warned that the Party will not tolerate "aggressive clericalism" as manifested by some priests, nor their "political statements which have nothing to do with religion". It was clear that while trying to use the Church for their own purposes (upholding internal peace, improving the working ethos and so on), the authorities were determined not only to undermine the authority of the Church in Polish society but also to split the hierarchy, the clergy and the Polish people into "good" and "bad" and set the groups against each other. A number of events prove this.

First came the permission granted to Cardinal Glemp to form a diocesan publishing house in Warsaw and to publish a new Catholic Weekly *Przegląd Powszechny* to be distributed in both the Cardinal's dioceses, Warsaw and Gniezno. The authorities had offered Cardinal Glemp a circulation of 100,000 but he declined as this would have surpassed the circulation of the most prestigious national Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* published in Kraków. A circulation of 30,000 was finally agreed upon. At the same time the authorities reaffirmed their refusal to allow Bishop Ignacy Tokarczuk of Przemyśl — an outspoken bishop and a great supporter of Rural Solidarity — to publish his diocesan weekly *Rola Katolicka*. Bishop Tokarczuk's support for "illegal groupings" was given as the main reason.

Then on 9 October *Tygodnik Powszechny* reported that of 46 Catholic Intellectuals' Clubs (KIKs) in existence before the imposition of Martial Law, only 33 have been given permission to resume their activities. Out of 13 KIKs closed down by the authorities 12 were relatively new clubs founded during the Solidarity period (1980-81). However the KIK in Toruń, also closed down, was one of the five original clubs which appeared after the "Polish October" unrest in 1956 and was most active, influential and prestigious. In a letter to the Toruń KIK board three reasons were given for the

club's closure; participation of members in illegal activities; allowing the club's premises to be used by "illegal associations"; and organising illegal groups. The Toruń board appealed against the authorities' decision and the appeal was supported by Bishop Marian Przykucki of Chełmno.

The biggest trial of the Church's unity, and the biggest problem for Cardinal Glemp, was the attempt made by the authorities to single out "extremist elements among the clergy and the hierarchy" and to pressure the Cardinal to pacify them himself.

In October 1983, the Polish Press Agency PAP announced that Fr Henryk Jankowski and Fr Jerzy Popiełuszko were under investigation on three possible criminal charges — abuse of religious freedom, slandering the Polish People's Republic and dissemination of false information (Articles 194, 270, 271 of the Criminal Code). Fr Jankowski is a priest in the St Brygidz parish of Gdańsk. It was he who said Mass for the striking workers at the Lenin shipyard in August 1980. He is a close friend and spiritual adviser to Lech Wałęsa. Fr Popiełuszko has been under close police surveillance since February 1982, when he organised his first "Mass for the country" in which he prayed for the imprisoned and their families. Since then these Masses have become a regular monthly feature and attract congregations of several thousand people from all over Poland.* Despite countless interrogations the priests were not charged, but they continue to suffer intimidations. According to *Kathpress*, Fr Jankowski has been receiving threatening letters and phone calls. Fr Popiełuszko has been detained on a number of occasions and his house broken into and vandalised. In December large quantities of weapons and leaflets calling for national and armed uprising were planted by the police and then "found" in his house amidst great publicity.

Another Warsaw priest, Fr Stanisław Małkowski, also an outspoken supporter of Solidarity, had his flat raided twice within five months and all books and periodicals confiscated.

None of these three priests has as yet been officially charged. Instead Cardinal Glemp has been sent a list of 69 "extremist priests" with a warning that unless he persuades them to stop all anti-state activities,

the authorities will take action themselves. Attached to the list was a detailed file on each of the clergymen, containing whole passages from their sermons. The letter made it clear that if brought to trial, the priests would face charges of abusing religious freedom, slandering the Polish People's Republic and disseminating false information.

There was no official response from the Church but Cardinal Glemp held at least three private meetings with three priests whose names appeared on the list — Fr Jankowski, Fr Popiełuszko and Fr Mieczysław Nowak, a vicar at St Joseph's Church in the Ursus district of Warsaw. Fr Nowak enjoyed great esteem among the workers of the Ursus plant, a strong base of support for Solidarity and the work-place of Zbigniew Bujak, an underground Solidarity leader, who has been in hiding since the introduction of martial law. Then on 14 February, just two days before the Cardinal's journey to South America, where he was to visit Polish émigré communities, he transferred Fr Nowak to Leki Kościelne, a rural parish 62 miles from Warsaw. The transfer gave rise to fierce protest from Ursus parishioners, including special services, vigils, petitions sent to Cardinal Franciszek Macharski of Kraków and even protest fasts which ended only on Fr Nowak's insistence. He himself was put under investigation in connection with his alleged ties with the Solidarity underground. Though Cardinal Glemp defended himself from South America stating that the transfer occurred on Fr Nowak's request his authority has been undoubtedly undermined and the issue has been very divisive.

March marked an escalation in the dispute over crucifixes. On 7 March 400 pupils from a school in Mietne near Garwolin (60 km south-east of Warsaw) organised a sit-in in protest against the order to remove crucifixes from their school. Zomo (riot) police were called in to disperse demonstrating pupils. The local bishop of Siedlce, Jan Mazur, sent a protest letter to the authorities and on 8 March over 2,000 pupils from four schools in Garwolin boycotted the lessons and gathered at a church for a special service. On 21 March 25 pilgrimages of young people, including a pilgrimage from Mietne, arrived at Częstochowa for a night vigil. It ended with a mass during which Bishop Musiel of Częstochowa preached a sermon encouraging the young people to remain faithful to the cross. The authorities

*See the article on pp. 149-56 of this issue of *RCL*.

then decided to resolve the matter once and for all. On 15 March Jerzy Urban, the government spokesman, announced that the Polish authorities would enforce their ban on crucifixes in Polish schools. On the same day the Main Council of the Polish Episcopate met in Warsaw to hear an account of the Garwolin incident by Bishop Mazur. In the communique issued at the end of the session the bishops stated that they were "deeply shocked by the recent events" and demanded that crucifixes remain in the classrooms "in accordance with the wishes of Catholic society including young people". The Church's pledge to defend the crucifixes was repeated by Cardinal Glemp himself on 16 March at St John's Cathedral in Warsaw, and over 700 pupils from nine secondary schools in Warsaw signed an open letter in which they upheld the decision that to remove crucifixes was contrary to the Polish Constitution which guarantees freedom of conscience; they accused the authorities of an attempt to "enslave the Polish people".

On the same day, in his opening address

to a national conference of the Communist Party in Warsaw, General Wojciech Jaruzelski claimed that the Polish authorities were genuinely committed to good relations and cooperation with the Catholic Church. The general omitted any direct reference to the dispute over crucifixes, speaking vaguely of "misunderstandings and frictions" that arise in church-state relations, "especially in the context of the principle of the separation of Church and State". The only sign that he considers the dispute politically dangerous came with a renewed threat of "irreparable losses" which conflict between Church and State would bring, which he has been issuing at all critical moments since the imposition of martial law. General Jaruzelski absolved the authorities from any blame for recent tension and instead accused "western centres" which "manipulated strain in church-state relations". He also attacked Catholic activists who "try to turn churches into show halls [...] with the support of those who have confused the pulpit with the Radio Free Europe microphone".

GRAŻYNA SIKORSKA

Leaders of Church and State in Hungary speak on Church-State Relations in their country

János Kádár

János Kádár, the First Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party, articulated the principles on which church-state relations are conducted in Hungary while visiting Poland in October 1983. The following text from his address to an audience of workers in Warsaw on 27 October appeared in *Informationsdienst für Lutherische Minderheitskirchen in Europa* — IDL, 12/1983, 28 November 1983; and an abridged text in *Népszabadság*, 28 October 1983.

"In our country, in which more churches are active than in Poland, the situation is somewhat different from yours. We have regulated relations between the Churches and the State. I am of the opinion that we have handled these matters with principle and honour. We have made our principles quite clear. We respect the autonomy of the Churches. But we wish that the Churches should similarly respect the laws and the constitution. The Churches should also — when it is possible — be in harmony with the fundamental endeavours of the people. On these points we have been in agree-

ment. There are written agreements and other forms of understandings between the Churches and the State. In the Patriotic People's Front Communists, non-Communists and representatives from different spheres of activity work together. Here the heads of all the Churches and confessions are represented on the Front's council which encompasses the whole nation. Thus there is unity, irrespective of world-view, with regard to the efforts of the people and to the building of a socialist society. I myself participated in the last Congress of the Patriotic People's Front, at which I listened to speakers including church leaders. Furthermore, I held up as an example to others the leader of the Catholic Church, because, while this Church insists on its creeds, it equally seizes opportunities for the construction of socialism among its own people. In the midst of this gathering I would also like to speak of my meeting with Pope Paul VI. During our conversation I said that church-state relations had been regulated in Hungary. I also mentioned that, in my opinion, this is very important,