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Catholic Higher Education in Poland 1948–1956 (an outline of the research issues)

In recent times there has been considerable interest in the recent history of the Catholic Church in Poland among historians. After years of "forced" silence, these issues have been reappearing more and more often in monographs as well as source texts.¹ However, though it must be admitted

¹ See, for example, Kaździela, *Kościół a państwo w Polsce 1945-1989* (Church and State in Poland 1945-1989), Wrocław 1990; M. Jasiukiewicz, *Kościół katolicki w polskim życiu politycznym 1945-1989. Podstawowe uwarunkowania* (The Catholic Church in Polish Political Life 1945-1989: Basic Assumptions), Wrocław 1993; J. Krukowski, *Kościół i państwo. Podstawy regulacji prawnych* (The Church and the State: Basic Legal Regulations), Lublin 1993; A. and A. Anusz, *Samotnie wśród wiernych. Kościół wobec przemian politycznych w Polsce (1944-1994)* (Alone Among the Believers: The Church In Relation To the Political Transformations in Poland (1944-1994)), Warszawa 1994; A. Micewski, "Kościół-Państwo 1945-1989" ("Church / State 1945-1989"), Warszawa 1994 (series "Dzieje PRL" ("History of PRL")); Kościół w PRL, "Chrześcijanin w świecie" 24 ("The Christian in the World" 24) (1994), issue 1 (special issue); A. Dudek, "Kościół i Państwo w Polsce 1945-1970" ("The Church and the State in Poland 1945-1970"), Kraków 1995; A. Lesiński, "Służba wojskowa kleryków w PRL (1959-1980)" ("The Military Service of the Clergy in PRL (1959-1980)", Olsztyn 1995; S. Wójcik, "Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego na przykładzie administracji apostołskiej Dolnego Śląska w latach 1945-1961" ("Catechisation within the Totalitarian System - An Analysis on the basis of the Holy See Administration in Lower Silesia 1945-1961"), Wrocław 1995; K. Dullak, "Podstawy prawno-organizacyjne diecezji koszalińsko-kołobrzeskiej" ("The Basics of Law and Organization in the Koszalin-Kołobrzeg Diocese"), Koszalin 1996; A. Kopiczko, "Kościół Warmiński a polityka wyznaniowa po II wojnie światowej" ("The Church in Warmia in the context of Religion Politics After the Second World War"), Olsztyn 1996; W. Żurek, "Salezjańskie szkolnictwo ponadpodstawowe w Polsce 1900-1963. Rozwój i organizacja" (Silesian Secondary and Higher Education in Poland 1900-1963: Development and Organization"), Lublin 1996;

that during the last decade there have been significant developments in this field, our historiography lacks an exhaustive account of the history of the Polish Church during the last fifty years.² A close analysis of the literature on the subject demonstrates that one of the crucial research trends in this sphere has been the study of the history of church education in PRL. What is interesting, however, is that the majority of works dealing with these issues refer to the teaching of religion (catechism), while less attention has been paid by historians to church educational institutions, not to mention Catholic higher education. Yet it is the organization and the level of higher education that determined to a large extent the condition of Catholic education in general (referring mainly to the education of the candidates for the clergy, as well as those employed by Catholic educational institutions). One of the primary aims of this system was to spread Christian culture in Polish society and to create an image of the Polish Catholic intelligentsia, a social group that played quite a significant role in the post-war history of Poland, worthy of analysis in and of itself. It appears, therefore, that there is an urgent need to examine more closely Catholic higher education in Poland.

The consequences of the Second World War, which were a painful experience for the Polish church, were also noticeable in the sphere of religious higher education. Apart from the casualties, as well as the emigration of some of the professors, the war also led to the liquidation of two theology departments: one at the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius, and the other at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lvov. An initiative to found a Theology Department at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań was abandoned, despite having reached quite an advanced stage during the

B. Kumor, "Historia Kościoła, cz. 8: Czasy współczesne 1914-1992" ("The History of the Church, part 8: Contemporary Times 1914-1992"), Lublin 1996, pp. 474-547 (chapter: "Kościół pod rządami komunistów 1944-1989. Era Prymasa Tysiąclecia" (The Church Under the Communist Regime 1944-1989: The Era of the Primate of the Millennium)); J. Żaryn, *Kościół a władza w Polsce 1945-1950* (*The Church and the Authorities in Poland 1945-1950*), Warszawa 1997; J. Doppke, *Katechizacja w Polsce 1945-1990* (*Catechisation in Poland 1945-1990*), Pelplin 1998. Reviews of the literature upon the subject have recently been done by, among others, J. Żaryn, "Państwo-Kościół u progu PRL (1944-1956). Przegląd najnowszej literatury przedmiotu" ("The Church-the State in the Early Days of PRL (1944-1956): A Survey of the Most Recent Literature on the Subject"), *Dzieje Najnowsze* 28 (1995), part 4, pp.119-125.

² c.f. A. Grajewski, review of P. Raina, *Kościół w PRL. Kościół katolicki w świetle dokumentów 1945-1989* (*The Church in PRL. The Catholic Church As Reflected In the Documents** 1945-1989*), v.1 - lata 1945-1959 (years 1945-1959), Poznań 1994, *Chrześcijańin w Świecie* 24 (1994), issue 1, p.208.

inter-war period³; nor did the authorities agree - in spite of the efforts on the part of the Holy See administrator, Rev. Karol Milik, and the professors in Lvov, including the Rev. Józef Umiński⁴ - to reactivate the Theology Department at Wrocław University. Meanwhile, in the area within the USSR, manifold seminaries were closed down or moved. Also, there were various difficulties in organizing the seminaries in the northern and western areas. Where it was possible, however, bishops and other superiors within the clergy, in spite of various problems (with equipment, accommodation, finances), and frequently also a reluctance on the part of local authorities, gradually managed to reactivate some seminaries and church faculties. It was largely owing to their efforts that in the years after the war the following institutions operated successfully: the Catholic University of Lublin, two theology faculties at national universities (the Jagiellonian University and Warsaw University), twenty-three higher diocesan seminaries, and thirty-five higher monastic seminaries, which was a unique phenomenon in comparison with the contemporary situation of the Church in other countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

Of course, this could not have escaped the attention of the contemporary Polish authorities, who, after stifling the legal opposition and crushing the conspiracy, went on to attack the Catholic Church, which had for a long time been considered by the majority of the Polish people to be the foundation of the national identity, and the shield against foreign domination.⁵ The need to confront the Church was stated explicitly by Władysław Gomułka, shortly after his return from a conference in Szklarska Poręba; on 11th October 1947, during the joint assembly of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, he said that *church issues will be a central political problem for us still for a long period of time*.⁶ The methods whereby this was to be confronted were specified by Col. Julia Brystygierowa, director of the Fifth Department of the Ministry of Public Security, in her paper "The Offensive of the Clergy

³ On this subject see A. Czubiński, *Dzieje Uniwersytetu Poznańskiego w latach 1918-1939* (The History of the University of Poznań in the period 1918-1839), in *Dzieje Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza 1919-1969* (The History of AM University 1919-1969), ed. Z. Got, Poznań 1972, pp.122-127.

⁴ See S. Wójcik, *Ksiądz Karol Milik i rozwój archidiecezji wrocławskiej (1945-1951)* (Rev. Karol Milik and the Development of Wrocław Archdiocese (1945-1951)), "Chrześcijanin w świecie"24 (1994) ("The Christian in the World"), issue 1, p.166.

⁵ A. Paczkowski, *Pół wieku dziejów Polski 1939-1989* (Half of the Century in the History of Poland 1939-1989), Warszawa 1996, p.273.

⁶ Idem, "'Izolacja' Prymasa Wyszyńskiego" ("The 'Isolation of Primate Wyszyński"), *Zeszyty Historyczne* 97 (1991), p. 207.

with regard to Our Tasks."⁷ In practice, the essence of this confrontation amounted to the realization of the so-called Soviet model, involving the separation of church and state, which consisted of two phases; the first one: the "nationalisation" of the Church (breaking connections with the Holy See, the state's supremacy over the church by means of legislative measures, sanctioning the separation of church and state in the constitution, attempts to establish a national church); and subsequently the second one: aiming at its total liquidation (arresting bishops, priests, monks, active secular Catholics, closing down Catholic schools, monasteries, taking over the Catholic press by the state, increased surveillance, etc.).⁸ In Poland the realization of these measures intensified during the period of so-called "classical Stalinism" (1948-1956), and one of their symptoms was the state took control over Catholic higher education and made attempts to gradually liquidate it.

The case of the Catholic University in Lublin - the only university of this kind in the countries behind the "iron curtain" - is particularly interesting. After only a couple of days following the liberation of Lublin, (2nd August 1944), a special meeting was held to discuss the reopening of the University, and the duties of the rector were entrusted to the Rev. prof. Antoni Słomkowski. This was not, however, a simple matter, for several reasons. First, part of the university buildings were occupied by the Soviet army, which caused serious organizational difficulties. Second, the delegates of the London government pressed the rector and the other professors not to open the university, for this would be interpreted as a symbol of acceptance on the part of the Catholic communities of the transformation of the political system and PKWN (the Polish Committee of National Liberation) authorities. Third, PKWN representatives

⁷ Briefing by the Ministry of Public Security 13th - 15th October 1947, Dokumenty do dziejow PRL (The Documents in the History of PRL), part 5: Aparat bezpieczeństwa w latach 1944-1956. Taktyka, strategia, metody (Secret Police in the period 1944-1956. Tactics, Strategy, Methods), part 1 (years 1945-1947), opr**., A. Paczkowski, Warszawa 1994, pp. 126-137 (The paper was presented 13th October 1947). See also H. Dominiczak, Organy bezpieczeństwa PRL 1944-1990. Rozwój i działalność w świetle dokumentów MSW (Secret Network in PRL 1944-1990. Development and Work in the light of the Documents of the Ministry of Home Office), Warszawa 1997, p. 98 onwards.

⁸ See J. Myszor, Sowiecki model rozdziału państwa od Kościoła (The Soviet Model for the Separation of the Church and the State), *Chrześcijanin w świecie* 24, (1994), issue 1, pp.43-53.

demanded that the university should be opened as soon as possible, and threatened to nationalize it.⁹

Finally, at the end of August 1944, the enlisting of candidates for the university was announced, and on 12th November 1944 the solemn inauguration of the academic year was held, during which state and church authorities, as well as representatives of the academic and cultural world, were present. It was the first inauguration of the academic year in post-war Poland. Moreover, because the primary aim of KUL's work was not so much to educate the clergy as the secular Catholic intelligentsia, it was for the sake of the latter that in 1946 the Department of Philosophy was established, the lower course was founded at the Theology Department, and new courses were organized at the Faculty of Humanities in the History of Art (1945) and German Philology (1946), while the pre-war School of English Philology was reopened (1946). In the academic year 1945/1946, the Faculty of Social and Economic Issues was also founded.

The authorities, however, were extremely anxious to dissuade the young from the influence of the church, defined in the party jargon as "the organized offensive of the clerical circles, hostile to the democratic camp." It is no accident that, in the previously mentioned paper by Colonel Julia Brystygierowa from 1947, KUL was considered to be one of the main centres of the ideological struggle against the democratic camp.¹⁰ It was inevitable, therefore, that the opposing interests would clash. In the beginning it was demanded that the rector of KUL (the Rev. prof. Antoni Słomkowski) should legalize ZMP (the Polish Youth Union) at the university. He refused, but students who were members of the association kept holding meetings in the university buildings. If the lecture halls were closed, they would blackmail the caretakers or get the keys in an illegal way. The Lublin newspaper *Sztandar Ludu* began to slander the rector, depicting him as a reactionary. In the issue of 24th October 1950 it was stated directly that prof. Stefan Kawyn had been expelled from KUL for establishing close relations with youth belonging to ZMP, while prof. Mieczysław Żywczyński (a member of the Intellectuals and Catholic Activists Commission, working in cooperation with the Peace Advocates

⁹ J. Ziółek, "Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski w latach 1944-1992" (The Catholic University in Lublin in 1944-1992), in *Księga pamiątkowa w 75-lecie Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego (The Visitor's Book to memorise 75 Years of the Catholic University in Lublin)*, Lublin 1994, p. 32 onwards. See also S. Sawicki, "Katolicki uniwersytet w komunistycznym państwie" ("The Catholic University In the Communist Country"), *Więź* 35 (1992), issue 12, pp.45-53.

¹⁰ Briefing of the Ministry of Public Security 13th to 15th October 1947, p. 130.

Committee) was expelled from the Academic Senate for his work for the Peace Defence Committee.¹¹

At the same time, from 1948 onwards, the consistent politics of the state authorities was aimed at limiting the work of the secular departments at KUL. The first step was the gradual liquidation of the Department of Law and Social and Economic Sciences, according to laws passed by the Minister of Education on 23rd June 1949 (the last students of this department left the university in the academic year 1951/1952). Next, in the academic year 1950/1951, the College of National Social and Economic Issues was liquidated. In January 1953 KUL was subordinated to the Ministry of Higher Education and the Creed Office (which had existed since 1950). In the same year the Pedagogy course was liquidated, while the right to do PhD and postdoctoral qualification courses was refused to the other sections of the Humanities. These measures led to a reduction in the number of students at this department; moreover, many were forced to move to other universities.¹²

Tab.1. The number of students at the Department of Law and Social and Economic Sciences in KUL 1944-1952¹³

| Academic Year | Number of Students | Academic Year | Number of Students |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1944/45 | 514 | 1948/49 | 1312 |
| 1945/46 | 885 | 1949/50 | 773 |
| 1946/47 | 1062 | 1950/51 | 559 |
| 1947/48 | 1305 | 1951/52 | 311 |

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¹¹ J. Ziółek, op.cit., p.42; G. Karolewicz, Ks. Antoni Słomkowski (Rev. Antoni Słomkowski), in *Akademicy Nauczyciele Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego (Academic Teachers at the Catholic University of Lublin)*, vol. 2, Lublin 1994, pp. 196-198.

¹² On this subject see J. Ziółek, op. cit., p.43 onwards; Z. Papierkowski, *Kronika Wydziału Prawa i Nauk Społeczno-Ekonomicznych 1944-1952 (Chronicle of the Department of Law and Social-Economic Science 1944-1952)*, in *A Jubilee Book to Commemorate Fifty Years of The Catholic University of Lublin*, Lublin 1969, pp.203-212; Z. Sułowski, Cz. Bloch, *Kronika Wydziału Nauk Humanistycznych 1944-1968 (The Chronicle of the Humanity Department 1944-1968)*, in *A Jubilee Book...*, pp. 213-241; J. Turowski, *Studium Zagadnień Społecznych i Gospodarczych Wsi (Studium of National Social and Economic Issues)*, in *A Jubilee Book...*, pp. 249-252.

¹³ On the basis of Z. Papierkowski, op. cit., pp.203-204.

Tab.2. Numbers of students at the Department of Humanities in KUL 1944-1956¹⁴

| Academic Year | Number of Students | Academic Year | Number of Students |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1944/45 | 238 | 1950/51 | 1724 |
| 1945/46 | 257 | 1951/52 | 2246 |
| 1946/47 | 399 | 1952/53 | 1638 |
| 1947/48 | 544 | 1953/54 | 1260 |
| 1948/49 | 615 | 1954/55 | 1197 |
| 1949/50 | 996 | 1955/56 | 550 |

Repressive measures against academics were also imposed. In autumn 1951 the rector, Rev. prof. Antoni Słomkowski was dismissed and banned from staying in Lublin (he left for Ołtarzewo near Warszawa); twelve other professors were also dismissed. During his stay in Ołtarzewo (1st April 1952), the Rev. A. Słomkowski was arrested; an object suit was brought against him, which was aimed at discrediting Catholic education. The key charge was that the Rev. A. Słomkowski was an enemy of the Polish People's Republic. Firstly, he had refused to take part in the First Polish Congress of Peace Advocates in 1950 (the authorities had been very anxious that KUL, the first university to be opened in Poland after the war, should have representatives at that congress). Secondly, he was believed to have come out against dialectical materialism in preaching the existence of God and hindering the functioning of progressive youth organizations (ZMP). Thirdly, he had been in contact with the USA and had, in accepting financial aid from abroad, acted illegally.¹⁵ As a result of these charges, he was imprisoned until 24th November 1954. However, he would never again return to his work at KUL.¹⁶ Similarly, repressive measures were inflicted on other academics. Some of them would wait years for approval of their postdoctoral lecturing qualifications (e.g. the Rev. Edward Kopeć, Bishop Walenty Wójcik, Rev. Bogusław Waczyński, Teofil Chodźdło) or professor's degree (e.g. Czesław Strzeszewski, Wit Klonowiecki, Rev. Stanisław Adamczyk, Rev. Jan Nowicki, Rev. Stanisław Styś, Rev. Józef Pastuszka). Some of them would not be allowed to work at the university for several years. Even letters from the Primate

¹⁴ On the basis of Z. Szułowski, Cz. Bloch, op. cit., p.218.

¹⁵ J. Ziółek, op. cit., p.42.

¹⁶ See D. Szumilas, J. Warzeszczak, Słomkowski Antoni, in *Słownik polskich teologów katolickich 1981-1993 (The Dictionary of the Polish Catholic Theologians 1981-1993)*, Warszawa 1995, p. 536.

Stefan Wyszyński did not have any effect in this matter.¹⁷ The academic community came under increased surveillance; there appeared among the students a special group of UB (secret police) agents, commonly called "joined brothers", who systematically provided the secret police with information about the situation at the university. It was also they who constituted the hard core of the university ZMP activists.

Despite manifold repressive measures, persecution, political blackmail (e.g. refusing to give passports to the academics), the limited number of students admitted to university (this did not apply to the clergy and nuns), and the problems that KUL graduates had with finding employment, the university survived. In spite of the situation which arose, the university authorities concentrated their efforts on the development of the church faculties, so that the number of students, especially clergymen and nuns, grew steadily.

Tab.3. The number of students at the Theology Faculty and the Faculty of Canon Law at KUL in 1944-1956¹⁸

| Academic Year | Number of Students at the Theology Department | Number of Students at the Canon Law Department | Number of Students at both departments |
|---------------|---|--|--|
| 1944/45 | 16 | 17 | 33 |
| 1945/46 | 37 | 17 | 54 |
| 1946/47 | 50 | 19 | 69 |
| 1947/48 | 71 | 21 | 92 |
| 1948/49 | 92 | 18 | 110 |
| 1949/50 | 107 | 22 | 129 |
| 1950/51 | 136 | 23 | 159 |
| 1951/52 | 184 | 24 | 208 |
| 1952/53 | 214 | 23 | 237 |
| 1953/54 | 229 | 28 | 257 |
| 1954/55 | 239 | 27 | 266 |
| 1955/56 | 252 | 36 | 288 |

¹⁷ See List S. Wyszyńskiego do Ministerstwa Szkolnictwa Wyższego z 17 VII 1952 (S. Wyszyński's Letter to the Ministry of Higher Education, 17. July 1952), in P. Raina, *Kościół katolicki a państwo w świetle dokumentów 1945-1989* (*The Catholic Church and the State in the light of the Documents 1945-1989*), v. 1 (1945-1959), Poznań 1994, pp. 357-358.

¹⁸ On the basis of S. Łach, *Kronika Wydziału Teologicznego 1944-1968* (*The Chronicle of the Theology Department 1944-1968*), in *Księga Jubileuszowa* (*Jubilee Book*), p.147; J. Grzywacz, *Kronika Wydziału Prawa Kanonicznego 1944-1968* (*The Chronicle of the Department of Canon Law 1944-1968*), in *Księga Jubileuszowa*, p.162.

The situation in the Theology Faculties at the Jagiellonian University and Warsaw University was somewhat different, as it was only clergymen and candidates for priesthood who studied there. Thus, these faculties enjoyed – at least up to the end of 1947 – relative autonomy. Many bishops took advantage of the situation and sent as many priests to university as possible. The more they became aware that the faculties might be closed down, the more clergymen studied there. At the UJ theology faculty alone, from 1945 till its closing in 1953, as many as one hundred and eighty-eight PhD theses in theology were defended, which was an unprecedented number in the history of this faculty.¹⁹

Yet, the overwhelming influence of state measures was noticeable again, particularly when priests who sympathized with the authorities were nominated deans of these faculties: the Rev. Jan Czuj at the University of Warsaw (1948), and the Rev. Tadeusz Kruszyński at the Jagiellon University (1951).²⁰ The former became a leader of the Intellectuals and Catholic Activists Commission working in cooperation with the Polish Peace Defenders Committee, founded on 4th November 1950. Among the members of the Commission were virtually all the professors of the theology faculty in Warsaw, as well as such well-known scientists as the Rev. Eugeniusz Dąbrowski, Rev. Mieczysław Żywczyński, and Rev. Józef Keller.²¹

Still, in 1953, after tightening up on the politics towards the Church, it became clear that the work of theology faculties at the national universities was no longer possible. In the spring of 1954 the Ministry of Higher Education presented a proposal to merge both faculties into one theological national school, with its seat in the capital. The director of the

¹⁹ See S. Piech, *Doktorzy teologii Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w latach 1945-1954* (PhD Graduates in Theology at the Jagiellon University in 1945-1954), *Saeculum Christianum*, 5 (1998), issue 1, p.207.

²⁰ On this subject see W. Kania, Czuj Jan, in *Słownik polskich teologów katolickich 1918-1981* (A Dictionary of the Polish Catholic Theologians 1918-1981), v. 5, Warszawa 1983, pp. 271-273; *Wyrok na Uniwersytet Jagielloński 6 listopada 1939* (Jagiellonian University Sentenced 6th November 1939), ed.*L. Hajdukiewicz, Kraków 1989, p.48 (rev. Tadeusz Kruszyński). See also S. Owczarek, *Być zaangażowanym - być księdzem* (To Be Involved - To Be a Priest), Warszawa 1982, *passim*. (I would like to thank Prof. Ryszard Kozłowski for recommending this book to me).

²¹ A. Micewski, *Współrządzić czy nie kłamać PAX and Znak w Polsce 1945-1976* (Co-govern or not to lie? PAX (the name of the organization of secular Catholic activists sympathising with socialist ideas) and Znak (Catholic organization) in Poland 1945-1976), Warszawa 1981, pp.48-49.

University and Economics Studies Department, Jan Lech appointed Rev. Tadeusz Kruszyński and the Rev. Jan Czuj to take part in preliminary conferences on the subject. As early as 2nd August 1954 the Cabinet accepted a resolution according to which the Theology Faculty was to be separated from the University of Warsaw, and the Academy of Catholic Theology (ATK) was to be founded in Warsaw, while on 11th November it was decided that the Theology Faculty should be separated from the Jagiellonian University and incorporated into the ATK.²² The university consisted of three faculties: theology, canon law, and Christian philosophy, and the Rev. Jan Czuj was nominated its first rector. Soon afterwards, the monastic buildings in Bielany were taken away from the Marian priests and taken over by the ATK, and the solemn inauguration of the academic year took place on 22nd November 1954.²³

Tab. 4. Students of ATK in Warsaw in 1954-1960²⁴

| Academic Year | Number of Students | Academic Year | Number of Students |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1954/55 | 375 | 1957/58 | 263 |
| 1955/56 | 337 | 1958/59 | 115 |
| 1956/57 | 300 | 1959/60 | 95 |

The new university failed to gain the acceptance of the church authorities, and that is why its student enrolment - in contrast to that of KUL - decreased steadily until the early 1960s. The serious crisis which the University faced was evident from 1957 onwards; it was then that professors of the former UJ Theology Department left it, while the stance of the Primate of Poland on the canonicity of the ATK was not entirely clear. It was even decided to found an Academic Catholic Theology College in Warsaw, which was to be fully independent of the state.²⁵ The

²² See *Państwowe prawo wyznaniowe Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej. Wybór tekstów źródłowych (The National Religion Law in The Polish People's Republic: A Selection of the Source Texts)*, compiled by M. Fałga, Warszawa 1978, pp. 123-125.

²³ See H. E. Wyczawski, "Ogólny zarys dziejów Akademii Teologii Katolickiej" ("An Outline of the History of Catholic Theology Academy"), in *XX lat Akademii Teologii Katolickiej. Księga pamiątkowa 1954-1974 (Twenty Years of Catholic Theology Academy: A Visitor's Book 1954-1974)*, Warszawa 1976, p.13 onwards.

²⁴ On the basis of *Kościół katolicki w Polsce 1918-1990. Rocznik statystyczny (The Catholic Church in Poland: Statistical Yearbook)*, ed. L. Adamczuk, W. Zdaniewicz, Warszawa 1991, p. 249.

²⁵ On this subject see A. Gałka, *Historia Akademickiego Studium Teologii Katolickiej przy Metropolitalnym Seminarium Duchownym św. Jana Chrzciciela*

situation only became clear in 1960, during meetings between the academic senate and the Primate, who presented a document drawn up by Seminaries and the Catholic Universities Congregation, according to which he was delegated to exert the authority of the church over the ATK.²⁶ A long time was to pass, however, before the Polish clergy were convinced about the rightful objectives of the ATK.

As far as higher seminaries are concerned, they were traditionally closed communities which the authorities found difficult to control, and that is why it must be admitted that until 1947 they were relatively autonomous. Yet even during this period, it was impossible to escape various actions aimed at discouraging the young candidates from remaining in the seminary and joining priesthood. Such pressure escalated particularly after 1947, and it was then that the action was initiated with a view to depriving the individual seminaries of their agricultural property, in order to liquidate their supply base. For example, on 4th and 5th April 1949 the agricultural property of the Warmia seminary was seized.²⁷ Similar cases were also recorded in Płock, Pelplin and many monastic seminaries. From 1959 onwards, the UB encouraged many, or forced some by means of blackmail, to inform against their colleagues, others to leave the seminary, and still others to spread confusion and arouse the feeling of insecurity. Measures were introduced which made access to accommodation and food difficult. On 19th June 1952, for example, in Zduńska Wola the local authorities banned the sale of groceries for the Orion Higher Seminary, thus making about eighty people suffer hunger, and even appeals from the rector to the administrative authorities in Sieradz did not produce any result.²⁸ In other towns (e.g. in the Płock diocese), food items transported from the parish to the seminary were confiscated and given away in the local factories as the gifts for the proletariat.²⁹

However, the turning point of the politics towards the Church, and the escalation of the repressive measures against its institutions took place

w Warszawie (*A History of the Academic Catholic Theology College at the Metropolitan Seminary of St. John the Baptist in Warsaw*), *Warszawskie Studia Teologiczne*, 1 (1983), pp. 49-61.

²⁶ H. E. Wyczawski, op. cit., p. 23.

²⁷ A. Kopiczko, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

²⁸ J. Kowalik, "Polityka władz PRL wobec zakonów" ("The Politics of PRL Authorities in Relation to the Monasteries"), *Chrześcijanin w świecie* 24 (1994), issue 1, p. 149.

²⁹ The account of the Rev. Stanisław Kutniewski (to be found in the author's works).

only after 1953. During the PZPR joint assembly in Warsaw (16th June 1953) the following statement was made:

In the coming school year, clerical education in general, and especially that taking place in seminaries, shall, as far as teaching staff and curricula are concerned, be brought under the control of the state. Obligatory courses on knowledge about the Constitution shall be introduced. The legal force of the decree concerning delegating clerical posts will apply to the seminary professors, too, and will extend to them. It is necessary to be prepared for this enterprise, to learn more about these professors, work out the relevant conclusions, to make it possible for the progressive clergy to fill the posts at clerical universities.³⁰

Also, during the briefing of the managers of the Province Creed Offices, held in Warsaw on 19th December 1953, much attention was paid to the seminaries, and it was stated that

[...] [a]t the present stage, [it is necessary to] deal with the seminaries, because we have known very little about them so far. This must be done, because without our influence on the education of alumni, the graduates will be young priests with militaristic mentalities. [...] In the seminaries there prevails a reactionary spirit, e.g. in Opole Seminary no. 1, where the professors are those from the time of the Rev. Kominek's administration. Perhaps there will be some inspections on our part. Yet this will not solve the problem entirely - the most crucial issue is to put the education of the alumni in other hands.³¹

During the following years these decisions were put into practice. In the Warmia seminary, such as the Rev. Stefan Zajkowski in the autumn of 1954, who was relieved of his teaching responsibilities (on the grounds that "he worked as one of Anders's soldiers"), while Rev. Jan Jestadt was similarly punished for having "a negative attitude towards the USSR". Several alumni were forced to leave the seminary, and some of them were imprisoned as the result of a motion passed by the Military Prosecutor's Office in Olsztyn.³² Still, although the repressive measures escalated, more and more candidates were admitted, and this meant more and more noviciates. In 1951 the number of those admitted to the seminaries reached

³⁰ "PZPR wobec religii i Kościoła w 1953 r." ("PZPR In Relation to Religion and Church"), *Więź* 35 (1992), issue 10, p. 106.

³¹ Protocol from the briefing of the department managers for creed issues at a provincial level in the Creed Office in Warsaw (19th December 1953), in P. Raina, op. cit., vol. 1, p.452.

³² See A. Kopiczko, op. c'., p. 74.

a highpoint of 1200. In that year, 1176 alumni were admitted to the diocesan seminaries, and this number increased only in 1982, when 1210 candidates were admitted. The period of the most severe repressive measures during Stalin's reign caused a fall in the number of students admitted - there were 719 in 1956 - but it was only a year later that the number of noviciates (approximately 700) reached its post-war peak, and it increased further only in the mid-1980s; (in 1982 there were 775 noviciates in diocesan and monastic seminaries).

Tab. 5. Number of students admitted to diocesan seminaries in 1945-1956³³

| Year | Number of Students Accepted |
|------|-----------------------------|
| 1945 | 398 |
| 1946 | 451 |
| 1947 | 538 |
| 1948 | 757 |
| 1949 | 671 |
| 1950 | 891 |
| 1951 | 1176 |
| 1952 | 1026 |
| 1953 | 965 |
| 1954 | 875 |
| 1955 | 841 |
| 1956 | 719 |

If we add to these data the systematically increasing number of the students of KUL, we may conclude that, during the period of classical Stalinism, church educational institutions enjoyed extreme popularity among young people. This was because higher education in Poland became a symbol of the opposition to the omnipresent Stalinization, an enclave of independent thought, not just theological, while attempts to take over control of this educational system (ATK) were boycotted by the church authorities. Thus, while the West saw the start of a crisis in vocations for the clergy in the 1960s, in Poland there was never any shortage of priests; moreover, Catholic higher education retained considerable autonomy and exceptional authority in the academic communities in the country.

³³ On the basis of the statistical data of the Press Office of the Polish Episcopate. See *Kościół katolicki w Polsce 1945-1982*, compiled by W. Zdaniewicz, Poznań-Warszawa 1983, pp. 41-50.