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Contrary to Party Education: About the Catholic
„Anti-universities” in Poland (1944/45–1989)
on the Example of the Catholic University of Lublin.
Author’s Selection of Issues

W kontrze do kształcenia partyjnego: o „anty-uniwerytetach” katolickich w Polsce (1944/45–1989) na przykładzie Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego. Autorski wybór zagadnień

ABSTRACT

Because of its ideological roots, the Catholic University of Lublin immediately found itself on a different side from the communists who had ruled Poland since the end of the Second World War. By definition, the university’s staff did not participate in the process of building the „new man”, rejecting the Marxist paradigm of research. This does not mean, however, that they all remained „outside” the reality of the time. The state

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authorities, mainly through the action of the apparatus of violence, tried to control the Catholic „anti-university”. On the other hand, some of its representatives allowed themselves to be entangled in agent collaboration. This article is about these issues.

Key words: Catholic University of Lublin, apparatus of violence, Poland 1944/45–1989

STRESZCZENIE

Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski z racji na ideowe korzenie od razu znalazł się po innej stronie niż rządzący Polską od zakończenia II wojny światowej komuniści. Pracownicy uczelni z założenia nie uczestniczyli w procesie budowania „nowego człowieka”, odrzucając marksistowski paradygmat badań. Nie oznacza to jednak, że wszyscy pozostali „na zewnątrz” ówczesnej rzeczywistości. Władze państwowe, głównie dzięki działaniu aparatu przemocy, próbowały kontrolować katolicki „anty-universytet”. Natomiast niektórzy z jego przedstawiciele dali się uwikłać w agenturalną współpracę. O tych zagadnieniach jest niniejszy artykuł.

Słowa kluczowe: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, aparat przemocy, Polska 1944/45–1989

INTRODUCTION

A basic fact when reflecting on the human condition is that there is a relationship between oneself and the surrounding world. People develop thanks to and within these relationships. But what if the environment, which determines life and behaviour, is not only unfriendly but even hostile? Catholics in the communist Poland after 1944/1945 had to face such an influence¹, analogous to their centres of scientific and teaching activity, including the most important one, i.e., the Catholic University of Lublin, which had existed since 1918. Catholic University of Lublin (KUL)².

Karl Marx, the founder of the ideology which, colporteurized by the Soviet Union, took over Central and Eastern Europe for half a century, was unequivocal about his attitude to the question of religion. Still in the Communist Manifesto, we read, among other things, „The Communist Revolution [...] will bring about the most radical break with the ideas

¹ See, inter alia: A. Dudek, *Komuniści i Kościół w Polsce (1945–1989)*, Kraków 2006; R. Łatka, *Episkopat Polski wobec stosunków państwo – Kościół i rzeczywistości społeczno-politycznej PRL 1970–1989*, Warszawa 2019; J. Żaryn, *Dzieje Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce (1944–1989)*, Warszawa 2003.

² On the origins of the university and its fate until the end of the Second World War, refer to: A. Wojtkowski, *Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski 1918–1944*, w: *Księga jubileuszowa 50-lecia Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego*, Lublin 1969, s. 21–92; G. Karolewicz, *Ksiądz Idzi Benedykt Radziszewski i jego dzieło – Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski*, Lublin 2000.

handed down to us”, referring here to the problem of³ cited. Humanity without God, starting its history as if anew in 1917, was touched by an institutional effort to remodel mentality. This was followed by the separation of universities from the previous experience of culture, a loss of intellectual heritage from the Enlightenment and Positivist eras⁴, and finally an emphasis placed on the utilitarianism of cognition⁵. Thus, the intelligentsia, despised especially by Vladimir Lenin⁶, was becoming a social semi-finished product, instrumentalized within the framework of socialist construction, within the dialectical method of explaining the past; explaining everything⁷. The Party now demanded ideological obedience, allegiance to the Marxist spirituality, the abandonment of critical thinking and the centuries-old tradition of the original communitarian *universitas magistrorum et scholarium*, a move away from the „salvation of the spirit” combined with the „salvation of technology” as goals of teaching/science, without the search for truth, to the technocratism of vocational education. The communists moved away from the *signum* of man’s higher origins, while at the same time – obviously – moving away from the Christian vision of research, teaching, forming (educating) the young. Education, which had previously targeted not the average mass but a select group of the gifted, took on an anti-academic, egalitarian shape.

In the following, an exemplification of these phenomena (author’s choice) will be presented in a few paragraphs on the example of the Lublin Catholic University seen/understood by the communists as „anti”: anti-university, anti-elite, in conclusion: the anti-Socratic mission of the university. Karl Jaspers wrote: „Here (i.e., at the university – M.K.) the student and the teacher are on the same level. Both are, by definition, free people. There is no fixed knowledge, but there is a limitlessness of questions

³ K. Marks, F. Engels, *Dzieła wybrane*, t. 1, Warszawa 1949, s. 43.

⁴ On these two traditions shaping the faces of universities, see: P. Pluciński, *Uniwersytet i duch epoki. Wątpliwości wokół starej idei w nowych kontekstach*, w: *Wiedza. Ideologia. Władza. O społecznej funkcji uniwersytetu w społeczeństwie rynkowym*, red. P. Żuk, Warszawa 2012, s. 199–203.

⁵ K.E. Bailes, *Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin. Origins of Soviet Technical Intelligentsia, 1917–1941*, Princeton 1978.

⁶ H. Palska, *Ideologia komunistyczna a problem inteligencji*, w: *Rzeczpospolita utracona. Następstwa nazizmu i komunizmu na ziemiach polskich*, red. J. Eisler, K. Rokicki, Warszawa 2010, s. 133.

⁷ On the implementation of Soviet patterns in the Polish and Central European academic world after the end of the Second World War: N. Grant, *Society, Schools and Progress in Eastern Europe*, Oxford 1969, s. 184 passim; J. Connelly, *Zniewolony uniwersytet. Sowietyzacja szkolnictwa wyższego w Niemczech Wschodnich, Czechach i Polsce 1945–1956*, Warszawa 2014.

and ignorance in an absolute sense”⁸. Meanwhile, those in power wanted exactly the opposite. So much so that the Catholic school throughout the communist period⁹ did not adapt to such formulated demands¹⁰, although there were also plenty of downfalls.

PRESENTATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The Church in Poland as such was well aware of the importance of the Catholic University of Lublin, whose staff returned to academic chairs in August 1944, i.e., immediately after the entry of Red Army soldiers into Lublin¹¹. The bishops saw the role of the Catholic university primarily in two temporal dimensions: historical and present. In the first one, it was a matter of upholding historically shaped values/canons such as family, upbringing, and traditional order. Alongside this, the idea was to continuously train personnel for the needs of the Church. At the same time, there was no doubt that the institution was to create an intellectual elite for society as a whole, not just for the institution, based on the tenets of Christian teaching, rooted in the Bible¹².

The communists, on the other hand, with their historical mission to „make up for the sins of the past”, had absolutely no need for the Catholic Church, since – as intended – they were correcting, not reproducing, the mistakes made by their forebearers. They wanted to change social consciousness, rebuild political culture, re-evaluate historical assessments and, finally, transform geopolitical conditions on the basis of the project to create a „new man”¹³. To this end, in Lublin itself, a „secular” university was established, in a way competing with the KUL, referred to in official documentation as a „state” university¹⁴. The Maria Curie-Skłodowska

⁸ K. Jaspers, *The Idea of the University*, <https://teologiapolityczna.pl/idea-universyte-tu-karl-jaspers> [dostęp: 12.04.2021].

⁹ People’s Republic of Poland.

¹⁰ M. Kruszyński, *Szkic o wyjątkowości Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego na tle polskiego świata akademickiego po 1944 r.*, „Roczniki Humanistyczne” 2018, 66, s. 181–195.

¹¹ Idem, *Szkolnictwo wyższe*, w: *Dzieje Lubelszczyzny 1944–1956. Aspekty społeczne, gospodarcze, oświatowe i kulturalne*, red. T. Osiński, M. Mazur, Lublin 2017, s. 451.

¹² A. Szostek, *Katolicki Uniwersytet w Kościele i społeczeństwie. Doświadczenia lubelskie*, w: *Przestrzeń wolności i prawdy. Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski w latach 1944–1989*, red. J. Fert, Lublin 2008, s. 18.

¹³ See: M. Mazur, *O człowieku tendencyjnym... Obraz nowego człowieka w propagandzie komunistycznej w okresie Polski Ludowej i PRL 1944–1956*, Lublin 2009.

¹⁴ More: D. Gałaszewska-Chilczuk, *„Wrogie” Uniwersytety. Polityka państwa wobec Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego i Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej (1944–1989)*, Warszawa 2013.

University (UMCS), as it is referred to¹⁵, although it never – fortunately – lived up to this task, in many dimensions remaining faithful to the academic *sacrum*, took over – even appropriated – the space of the university *imaginarium*. Willingly or unwillingly, it realized the need for „figures of memory” in the form of rituals or attitudes. Having originally four faculties: Agricultural, Veterinary, Medical, Mathematical and Natural Sciences, it gained an advantage in its orientation to its surroundings right from the start. For while the UMCS was expanding, the Catholic University of Lublin was steadily losing¹⁶. The authorities did not agree to the latter’s organisational addition of agricultural faculties. Moreover, between 1949 and 1952 the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Humanities were opened at UMCS, liquidating identical units at its „competitor”¹⁷. It got to the point that at the end of the 1940s, Professor Józef Parnas¹⁸, who was then the rector of UMCS, even demanded the liquidation of the Catholic university¹⁹. This scholar, being a Hongweibing of the constructed order – I cannot exclude the possibility that he was being opportunistic, as his later fate proves – was well aware of the perception of politics by those in power. These, in turn, viewed it not only in terms of rational effort but also in terms of the skilful management of affects, emotions and visions. K. Marx, after all, demanded the „creation of new value everywhere”²⁰. Only that reality did not always keep up with the expectations of the „classicist”. Guided so far by the imperative of the will and the specific precepts of Marxist morality, such a radical solution was abandoned, probably because of the strength of Catholicism in Poland.

This does not mean, however, that the academic field of Lublin focused only on a structural weakening of the Catholic University of Lublin. On top of this, exorbitant taxes were levied on the university²¹, with scru-

¹⁵ For a multifaceted discussion of the subject, see: M. Kruszyński, *Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej w latach 1944–1989. Zarys dziejów powstania i funkcjonowania uczelni w warunkach PRL*, Lublin 2015.

¹⁶ Before the outbreak of the Second World War, the Catholic University also had four faculties: theology, Canon Law, Humanities and Law and Social and Economic Sciences.

¹⁷ The Faculty of Law and Social and Economic Sciences was liquidated. M. Kruszyński, *Szkolnictwo*, s. 462.

¹⁸ About him: M. Kruszyński, *Józef Parnas czy Józef Parnes. Przyczynek do biografii*, „Rocznik Lubelski” 2012, 38, s. 84–96.

¹⁹ Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie, Komitet Wojewódzki Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej, sygn. 542, k. 26–27.

²⁰ K. Marks, F. Engels, *op. cit.*, s. 435.

²¹ In fact, the government subsidised – from the very beginning – mainly the UMCS. Archiwum Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Sekretariat Rektora, Protokoły posiedzeń Komisji Budżetowo-Finansowych UMCS z lat 1947–1952, k. 4–78.

pulous care taken to enforce them, which caused the staff to be justifiably worried about their future²². The goal was to limit the room in post-war Poland for people who shared a Christian world view. Hence – on a regular basis – low enrolment quotas were set in an attempt to close the university to its individual audience in the first place, i.e., to reduce this institution to the role of a school for the clergy²³. It even came to the point that in 1960 the communists forced a change in the name of one of the teaching units of the Catholic University of Lublin, establishing at that time the Faculty of Christian Philosophy, without the possibility of teaching lay people there²⁴.

When describing and explaining the mechanisms of the authorities' behavior towards the „anti-university”, several other phenomena must be taken into account. Firstly, the Catholic University of Lublin was born at the time of the creation of an independent state entity, after the end of the First World War. Thus, it carried with it a large part of the myths and symbols of the time, such as freedom, sovereignty, the tradition of pro-independence circles of various provenance, or the insurrectionist model of patriotism, consequently being inadequate after 1945 to the times dominated by revolutionary sentiments. Subsequently, a – one might say – homogeneously „white” legend grew around the university. After the collapse of the Second Republic, no one verified its content, as the opposite attitude automatically meant acceptance of the ruling party's doings.

Thirdly, the communists did not reason in terms of a constructivist vision of the so-called good order. They destroyed the cultural paradigms of the Second Republic and those – whom *a priori* they regarded as representatives of the *ancien régime*. Since history was seen as a constant rivalry, it was not only that there could be only one winner. The participants in the struggle achieved victory by carrying out consolidation and political concentration. It was not just a matter of material resources (economy) or geopolitical resources (mastery of national space), for example. Again, it was about the ability to build social emotions around one's own myths and symbols. These, in turn, were completely different from the set of primordial values respected by the KUL. The authorities, in relation to these values, did not intend to display tolerant attitudes but responded to their opponents with hostility.

²² Biblioteka Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego Jana Pawła II, Oddział Zbiorów Specjalnych, sygn. 1365, k. 1–3.

²³ K. Białycki, *Urząd do Spraw Wyznań wobec Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego. Wybrane zagadnienia*, „Roczniki Humanistyczne” 2018, 66, s. 20.

²⁴ A. Szostek, *op. cit.*, s. 15.

Opponents of communist myths and symbols, violating the orientation in the environment of the „new man” formed by the „new state”, became easy prey for the decision-makers, operating through the apparatus of violence. The risk was less about imprisonment. It was enough that the functionaries of the Security Office (UB)/Security Service (SB)²⁵ influenced, among other things, the personnel issues of the Catholic University. We know, for example, that in 1952 the UB selected scientists „who should not have been approved as lecturers”²⁶. The Ministry in charge of science acceded almost entirely to the proposal made²⁷.

Little was changed in this respect by the so-called thaw of 1956²⁸. Loyalist positions (in terms of party affiliation) and materialist positions (in terms of ideology) continued to form the basis of membership in the communist imagined community. After all, the fundamental goals of „own intelligence” and the damaging destruction of historical social memory remained unchanged. The state (still) required the formation of an identity, since its absence – in the perception of the communists – caused an internal crisis. The People’s Republic of Poland had a duty to influence nation-building processes, but it could not do so through scholars known „for their attitudes and activities politically hostile to the Polish People’s Republic”. For example, at the inspiration of the SB, in 1964 alone, 11 habilitation applications were blocked at the Catholic University of Lublin, and the doctoral procedures of 18 people were stopped²⁹. Moreover, opportunities for foreign research internships were systematically restricted, cutting off scholars from contact with the outside world³⁰. The educational law did not make any obstacles in the implementation of these procedures³¹. In the case of the Catholic University of Lublin itself, it was top-down decided that all resolutions of the Academic Senate concerning professional promotions were approved in Warsaw.

²⁵ The change of naming nomenclature in Poland took place in the mid-1950s. On issues related to the functioning of the security apparatus in the People’s Republic of Poland see: above all: *Wokół teczek bezpieki – zagadnienia metodologiczno-źródłowe*, red. F. Musiał, Kraków 2006.

²⁶ A. Dziurok, *Działania aparatu bezpieczeństwa wobec Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego*, „Roczniki Humanistyczne” 2018, 66, s. 41.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ See, for example: *Rok 1956 w Polsce i jego rezonans w Europie*, red. J. Szymoniczek, C.E. Król, Warszawa 2009.

²⁹ A. Dziurok, *op. cit.*, s. 51.

³⁰ Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej [dalej: AIPN], Oddział w Warszawie, sygn. V14-18A/1, k. 43.

³¹ The law in question was the Higher Education Act of 5 November 1958, which allowed the party authorities to fully interfere in the internal affairs of the Catholic University.

The situation of the university – in terms of orientation in the environment – improved to a certain extent only in the 1970s, when the position of rector was held by Father Professor Mieczysław Krapiec³², Secret Collaborator (TW) of the SB in the years 1970–1983³³. At that time the institution received funds for the development of infrastructure. In the following decade, the organizational position of the Catholic University of Lublin was also gradually increased with the reactivation of the Faculty of Canon Law and Legal Sciences³⁴. Father Prof. M. Krapiec consciously rejected a simple choice: approval or negation in clergy-communist relations. Those in power, aiming to vassalize the Catholic university, used another effective tool in the form of people living through the historical drama of their generation's participation in the history of the People's Republic of Poland. Exploiting the frailties of human nature, they persuaded some of their opponents that if in totalitarian Poland the party filled every space of life, only broadly conceived systemic participation in that reality made it possible to survive or even to gain. Thus, the cultural code of the KUL was infected.

THE INSTITUTION AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN A SITUATION

The various components of man's environment, identically to himself, are subject to various changes, giving rise to new situations. The history of the Catholic University of Lublin proves this. The communists, fighting the „anti-university”, effectively changed the previous arrangement of mutual relations, once safe for the Catholic university. For many scholars, the dilemma became not only one of faithfulness or unfaithfulness to ideals. Participation in the Marxist propaganda of the deed made it possible to abandon the constraints of everyday life³⁵, so onerous for people outside the communist circle of trust/communist circle of identity. This is what the rulers had in mind: to sow doubt; to make an offer; to change identification; to spread relativism; to provoke behaviour

³² On him see: M. Rusecki, *Mieczysław Albert Krapiec OP – rektor KUL-u w latach 1970–1983*, w: *Księga pamiątkowa w 75-lecie KUL. Wkład w kulturę polską w latach 1968–1993*, red. M. Rusecki, Lublin 1994, s. 67–73.

³³ See: M. Sobieraj, *Między oporem a lojalnością. Działania SB wobec KUL na przykładzie rozpracowania prof. Jerzego Kłoczowskiego*, Lublin 2015, s. 138, 155–165.

³⁴ J. Ziółek, *Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski w latach 1944–1992*, w: *Księga pamiątkowa*, s. 52–53.

³⁵ On many aspects of everyday life in Poland after 1945, see: *Życie codzienne w PRL*, red. M. Choma-Jusińska, M. Kruszyński, T. Osiński, Lublin–Warszawa 2019.

positive to themselves; and finally, to pull to their side. The career of „party scientists” was to be a model for people striving to succeed, determined, and at the same time fighting against so-called objective factors. In the case of the Catholic University of Lublin, the latter was considered to be an attachment to religion and tradition. It has to be admitted that the authorities were successful in the aforementioned areas, which will be discussed in a moment.

The clandestine collaboration of the KUL staff with the apparatus of violence was one of the most important components of legitimizing communist rule within the walls of the university. In historical terms, it offered an opportunity for the reception of Marxism as a methodological ploy for describing the world, attempting to counterbalance the metatheories of Christian pedagogy. The lesser extent to which a similar expectation bordered on naivety (not everyone engaged in this kind of activity for so-called patriotic reasons). The important thing is that it occurred³⁶.

While these phenomena are being analyzed, other aspects can be pointed out. The successful recruitment of a particular university employee also meant – at least from the perspective of the communists – that the post-war order of things was officially recognized as legitimate. Nowhere did the question of betrayal of the state arise in the context of contacts with the UB/SB. It was always about helping its official bodies. The boundary between the „long duration” of the Second Republic, epitomized by the Polish government-in-exile³⁷, and the new order, created illegally and violently by envoys from Moscow after 1944/1945, was thus blurred. To this must be added the historiosophical dimension. The supporters of the Polish Workers’ Party (PPR)/Polish United Workers’ Party (PZPR)³⁸ introduced into social communication an evaluative judgment that their values were better than others; that the Bolshevik Revolution epitomized the highest stage of human development; and, finally, that everything had a deterministic character. Confirmation of this historical determinism was becoming the acquisition of a milieu as ontologically hostile to those in power as the scholars of the Catholic University of Lublin. In time (additionally), this could have provided an opportunity to create and strengthen the myth of communism emerging naturally from Polish

³⁶ E. Wójcik, *Aparat bezpieczeństwa PRL wobec duchowieństwa katolickiego w diecezji lubelskiej w latach 1945–1989*, k. 560, *passim*, typescript of a doctoral dissertation [in the author’s collection].

³⁷ After the German attack on Poland in September 1939, the country’s legal authorities went into exile. In various legal formulations, they lasted in the UK until the fall of communism in Poland (1989).

³⁸ The renaming of Poland’s ruling Communist Party after 1944/1945 took place in December 1948.

history, and collaboration with the „secret police” would then have borne the hallmark of an organisational personification of patriotism. And from there – given the eternal relationship in Poland between the throne and the altar – it was already close to a dialectical-materialist view of the substance of life, a sphere where God did not exist.

Finally, there remains a dimension that I will describe as creative. The communists, with the help of the secret police, created CVs. By overcoming the peculiar personality fate of individuals, by exploiting their ambitions to perform roles higher than those available in the sterile conditions of fair professional competition, they promoted/supported weak people, gaining influence over the functioning of the Catholic University of Lublin. When we add to this the fact that a large proportion of the lecturers belonged to the clergy, we understand much better the characteristics presented. Priests became the subject of UB/SB activity all the more easily and quickly because many of them were unable to cope with the restrictions imposed by the rules of celibacy. Loneliness, surrounded by a political reality that was hostile in all respects, encouraged them to escape into the amorous secrecy of relationships with women and to build bonds between non-heteronormative partners³⁹.

The institution – the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) – and the human being – the academic staff – were confronted with a situation of totalitarianism, i.e., presence in a formally non-alternative space with an ideologically homogeneous shape. This situation – as I have already pointed out – did not always or not for everyone bring a morally favourable resolution. After all, the Communist Party, of which there could be no doubt even then (especially at the Catholic University of Lublin), did not represent the end of some intergenerational vision of a good closure of history. The communists, using an array of ruthless means, elevated values alien to Poles and hostile to Western civilization in the broadest sense. They attempted to bring up society in a spirit completely opposite to the previous tradition, combining national dignity and pride with the qualities so fiercely criticized after 1944/1945. Cooperation with the UB/SB, for whatever immediate reason, also contradicted common decency, causing TWs to fall into an existential and behavioral dependence on their principals, now in possession of „evidence of the crime”.

The Catholic University of Lublin found itself in the orbit of the so-called operational interest of the Polish services from 1945. The cryptonym given to all activities of the apparatus of violence against Catholic scholars (the so-called object case – SO) is significant – originally „Olympus”⁴⁰, but

³⁹ Much about this in the work of E. Wójcik.

⁴⁰ A. Dziurok, *op. cit.*, s. 38.

from the early 1950s until 1989: „Ciemnogród”⁴¹. The latter name reflects well the undercurrent of the UB/SB’s aggressive attitude towards the „anti-university”, full of symbolic violence. There could not have been any ideological or emotional sensitivity or reactivity here. For the authorities of the time, the KUL meant an unnecessary effect of the Second Republic. Although it was formally only about the university as a set of specific rituals. However, for the communists, recognizing reality according to the schema „one’s own – foreign”, the nuanced categorization went beyond a set of basic mechanisms of functioning.

Against the employees of the „anti-university”, in addition to obtaining various compromising information from TWs, a multitude of other techniques of investigative work were used. Correspondence was controlled, wiretaps were installed in various places, and direct physical surveillance was carried out. The rulers were motivated by the idea of learning about the internal structures/relationships of a community foreign to them in order to bring about the mental immunosuppression of Catholic scholars, especially priests. Every piece of information was of value, both in terms of intimacy and professional relationships, as well as on the official side of the institution’s activities.

We are also aware of other object cases, including „Barak” – collecting data on the academic ministry of the Catholic University of Lublin. In addition, SO crypt. „Bracia” – the communists tried to identify relationships between academics and people from abroad, mainly from the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The attention of the SB also did not escape, for example, the hippie movement (SO crypt. „Jemioły”)⁴².

At the same time, there was no shortage, one might say, of individualized approaches to scientists considered „ideologically harmful”; considered „insecure elements”. At the time, so-called „record questionnaires” were set up. Already at the very beginning (1948), as a result of the observation carried out within the framework of the SO „Olympus”, more than 40 people were selected who fitted the above-mentioned description⁴³. The most dangerous ones were worked out more closely. The scale and magnitude of service activity depended on the development of the agent network: on the effectiveness of breaking people’s characters, on the effectiveness of exploiting people’s negative inclinations. In July 1949, during a Warsaw meeting at the Ministry of Public Security (MBP), the deputy head of the ministry, Roman Romkowski, loudly expressed his dissatisfaction with the insufficient effectiveness of the Lublin UB

⁴¹ E. Wójcik, *op. cit.*, s. 567.

⁴² *Ibidem*, s. 568.

⁴³ AIPN, Oddział w Lublinie [dalej: Lu], sygn. 59/7, k. 380.

in this field. At the same time, the statistics relating to designated enemies increased by leaps and bounds to 70, with a rising rate of assumed registration questionnaires, from 8 in 1948 to 14 a year later⁴⁴.

We know that at the beginning of the decade of the 1960s, oppressive measures had already been taken against almost ninety university employees⁴⁵. Presumably, in the decades that followed, the statistical level of operative cases remained at least at the same level.

In 1982, a senior SB official wrote: „The Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) is a legitimate link in the opposition and that is why we have to take the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) under active crackdown as the only Catholic university among socialist countries”⁴⁶. This statement was made at a time when martial law was in force in Poland, introduced as a countermeasure against the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union (NSZZ) „Solidarity”. The Communists never recognized winning the Poles/voters as a necessary condition for governing. Power and its maintenance were legitimized otherwise. The principle of Marxist rightness and alleged historical rationale were considered paramount here. So much so that the KUL was always judged negatively, as being incapable of meeting the challenges of history.

While initially, at the turn of the 1940s and 1950s, only a few UB officers were in charge of operations against the Catholic University, thirty years later this task was already entrusted to over a dozen officers. This shows that the „kulów” milieu, which was publicly labeled as exclusive, cut off from modern science, accused of succumbing to „idealistic views” and deprived of the right to subjectivity, had – in reality – a much greater power of influence. This power, it seems, exceeded the repressive capabilities of communist Poland.

Therein lay the dilemma or frustration of those in power. The university and the Catholic Church had constructed an individual symbolic domain in public space. Catholics created their imaginary world alternative to political reality; much older than the Marxist one, based on tradition, on principles introduced into the cultural DNA of Poles. Because of its environment and its specificity, this domain was (at the time) agonistic in nature. It was it that, in a simple way visible to all, determined the division of society according to the model: „us” and „them”, and more so „us” versus „them”. In this context, it was functional to respect

⁴⁴ A. Dziurok, *op. cit.*, s. 40.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, s. 45.

⁴⁶ *Kościół i opozycja na Lubelszczyźnie w dokumentach SB 1971–1983*, wstęp, wybór, oprac. M. Sobieraj, Lublin 2009, s. 112.

or admire the clergy, the hierarchy, in opposition to the opinions that were formed about the authorities and their representatives.

From this perspective, the examples of people who embezzled from the Christian symbolic domain are particularly painful for the KUL. Finally, I am moving towards a brief look at (collective and individual) secret collaborators of the apparatus of violence.

Probably out of twelve rectors and pro-rectors of the Catholic University of Lublin after 1956, at least four of them decided to cross the moral Rubicon (the aforementioned Fr. Prof. M. Krąpiec, also Fr. Prof. Jan Śrutwa, Fr. Prof. Stanisław Wielgus and pro-rector Prof. Jan Czerkowski⁴⁷). At the same time, the communists started out much more modestly. In the first years, there were only a few agents at their disposal, and, in addition, most of them – maybe even all of them – were recruited from among the students⁴⁸. It was therefore a so-called peripheral agency. Why did this start to change in the following years? In addition to the issues described earlier, one has to add the perpetuating conviction among Poles that no one could reverse the geopolitical consequences of the Second World War. The further one got from 1945, the more durable the „Cold War” arrangement seemed, with the People’s Republic of Poland as the only homeland. Man is a social being and therefore determined by factors of the same nature. As time went on, it became increasingly difficult – if at all – to overlook the current day-to-day reality, hoping actually for what: the realisation of an optimal international order? The chance for a reinterpretation of the totalitarian living arrangement soon became vain. Hence the instinct of self-preservation came into play, with the obvious rule that one lives once/it is a pity not to make the most of one’s life. It is also possible that some university TWs, hyperbolising their own attitude or meaning, believed that by „selling their souls” they were doing so for some higher good, e.g., the continued existence of the Catholic University (partly the example of Fr M. Krąpiec⁴⁹). Besides, since it is not culture that „creates” people, but people create the culture in which they function, someone might have believed that they would positively influence the so-called „other side”, which, from today’s perspective, is particularly naïve. The communists, on the other hand, eagerly rewarded the „neophytes” from the Catholic University of Lublin.

The PZPR won (in this respect) the ideological rivalry with the Catholic academy on the basis of the „long duration” of the order it had installed. Defining Polishness in opposition to the official state required

⁴⁷ M. Sobieraj, *op. cit.*, s. 232–233.

⁴⁸ AIPN, Lu, sygn. 8/267, k. 191.

⁴⁹ See: D. Rosiak, *Wielka odmowa. Agent, filozof, antykomunista*, Wołowiec 2014.

great determination, exceptional qualities of character, resistance to the influence of the outside world, the negation of clientelism towards authority or – finally – the renunciation of individual ambitions in favour of the fight for the then illusory free homeland. All the more credit is due to those who remained true to their way of thinking.

In the following decades, the list of secret police collaborators coming from the Catholic University of Lublin, mainly priests and constantly students, amounted to several dozen (in the 1980s – on average about 50)⁵⁰. Considering that this group often included the top management of the institution, this is a statistically significant result. The question is, however, to what extent were the UB/SB's efforts to marginalise the university, take control of it, and finally turn the institution into an academic ghetto, really successful?

The issue remains debatable, although it is, after all, the end that always crowns the work, thus:

- reality was being tamed at the Catholic University, but (in the end) most of the staff chose neither to participate in the process of negotiating the identity of the Polish intelligentsia nor to join the „reality of compromise“;

- KUL, by virtue of its clear ideological background, never socialized with the „broad context of socialist culture“;

- for this reason, other Polish universities developed intensively after 1956, while the KUL struggled to survive;

- the agonising struggle for survival and institutional ostracism prompted the search for ways to resolve the situation – the cooperation with the secret police of representatives of the university's highest authorities might have helped (?);

- the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) and the Polish People's Republic (PRL) did not match; the Catholic University of Lublin was treated as a minor member of the PRL *academos*, but it was the PRL that collapsed, not the KUL⁵¹.

Of the most serious matters, one should certainly mention the long-standing efforts of the UB/SB to conflate successive rectors of the Catholic University of Lublin with the Bishop of Lublin (in this case, above all Bishop Piotr Kałwa)⁵². The latter customarily performed the function of the Grand Chancellor of the Catholic University of Lublin, i.e., he

⁵⁰ M. Sobieraj, *op. cit.*, s. 158, 159.

⁵¹ M. Kruszyński, *Szkic*, s. 193.

⁵² Bishop P. Kałwa headed the Lublin diocese from 1949 to 1974. See: Z. Tyburski, *Kałwa Piotr (1893–1974)*, w: *Słownik biograficzny katolicyzmu społecznego w Polsce*, t. 2, Lublin 1994, s. 14; E. Wójcik, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

represented the Holy See and other ecclesiastical authorities vis-à-vis the university or state bodies and, conversely, acted on behalf of the Catholic University of Lublin in its relations with external entities. It seems that above all, Fr M. Krąpiec allowed himself to be drawn into this kind of game, succumbing to ambition, a tendency to make his own person famous, and furthermore wanting to make himself a point of reference for others assessing his own status within the academic and ecclesiastical hierarchy. In these activities he did not hesitate to vilify the bishop even at the Vatican⁵³.

In the early days of communist rule in Poland, there were several important religious occurrences in Lublin in 1949. During the Corpus Christi celebrations, worshippers attacked the car of the head of the local „security police”. Among the participants in these incidents were also students of the Catholic University of Lublin, immediately afterwards subjected to UB operations. Some of them undertook agent collaboration with the secret police⁵⁴. There were constant attempts, through TWs, to quarrel with the academic staff or to create an atmosphere of distrust among young people towards clerics – academics. Finally, attempts were made, through the use of TWs, to influence the collegially elected positions of deans or pro-deans⁵⁵.

INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

Most of the UB/SB documentation is denunciations of priests against other priests. The moral autonomy of the „anti-university”, from such a perspective, is therefore broken. Only that one should be cautious with making similar judgements. At the same time, one has to realise that this basis is inherently flawed. Firstly, these TW denunciations – as individual issues – are multilaterally marked by their authors. Agents of the apparatus of violence were guided by various emotions and motivations. The modality of these emotions, as well as their type: curiosity, fear, revulsion, anger, hope and the associated different levels of involvement in „work” for the UB/SB, are today an obstacle for the researcher to give these Rankowski materials the primacy of truth that „this is how it was”. Prominent Polish historians warn of this. I will mention here

⁵³ AIPN, Lu, sygn. 00336/5, t. 2, s. 68.

⁵⁴ D. Galaszewska-Chilczuk, *Działania aparatu bezpieczeństwa wobec biskupa lubelskiego Piotra Kałwa w latach 1949–1974*, w: *Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec kurii biskupich w Polsce*, red. A. Dziurok, Warszawa 2009, s. 117.

⁵⁵ A. Dziurok, *op. cit.*, passim.

only professors: Andrzej Friszke⁵⁶, Krzysztof Brzechczyn⁵⁷ or Włodzimierz Suleja⁵⁸.

Losing vigilance and „process-oriented caution” in research, it is easy to succumb to – as the aforementioned Prof. W. Suleja put it – „the charm of files”. In this particular case, if we do not apply a scientific „looking glass” and if we do not use sensitivity, we may get a picture of an environment that is completely corrupted, extremely distant from the postulated ideals. It will then only be about the dark side of human nature: drives, excessive ambition, long-term inaction in the face of evil, the saturation of this evil, a specific emotional consumerism, motivational tensions, interpersonal relations measured by the level of utility, and finally, plain meanness. It seems that this was the description that the „security service” expected; this was the image it received. The assessment of probability approaches objective probability in those situations where the events are independent of the subject and the outcome itself does not affect the state of the subject. It is important to bear this in mind.

At the same time, it is not a matter of unreflective rejection of such information and an ethical „thick line”. However, it is necessary to be free of the „optics of the source” and to take into „epistemological brackets” the knowledge obtained; knowledge, after all, of homogeneous provenance.

The archival knowledge of the KUL should encourage an erudite broadening of the questions asked/expanding the research spaces. So, to conclude, some of my suggestions for the future:

– methodologically interesting is the question of the extent to which our value system determines our interest in and capacity for research into the past? Within its framework, one’s own sexual experiences or abuses are not talked about. Still much – perhaps too much – remains in the taboo space. I am also able to assume that an institution – a depository of certain materials – is able to recognize the abovementioned research problems of the historian as „unhealthy”;

– homosexuals as scapegoats and the discharge of aggression through transference; on the one hand, the destruction/stigmatization of such communities in the People’s Republic, while at the same time the Church as an enclave and a kind of comfort zone for non-heteronormative people;

⁵⁶ A. Friszke, *Pisanie historii czy gra historią. Polskie spory o najnowszą przeszłość*, „Więź” 2011, 8–9, s. 126–133.

⁵⁷ K. Brzechczyn, *Problem wiarygodności teczek i opartej na nich wiarygodności historycznej. Kilka uwag metodologicznych*, „Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość” 2012, 2, s. 53–75.

⁵⁸ W. Suleja, *Złudny czar teczek, czyli „teczkowe grzechy główne”*, w: *Od Piłsudskiego do Wałęsy. Studia z dziejów Polski w XX wieku*, red. K. Persak et al., Warszawa 2008, s. 512–516.

– which was the greater betrayal from the perspective of the church hierarchy and academia: the cooperation of the priest in question with the apparatus of violence or rather the priest's exploring and experiencing of his own feelings;

– whether, in this context, feelings were indeed treated as a gift from God, a gift that enables man to access the truth about his life;

– In the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) we read: „Our Lord points to the human heart as the source from which feelings flow. [...] The experience of a certain kind of feeling is therefore not a matter of chance. It depends on the heart, on the interiority of the person“ (CCC 1764). Moral evaluation, then, is not of feelings as such, but of our attitude to what happens in the emotional sphere. Is not the above description exclusive to the clergy?

– People are capable of distorting and narrowing their consciousness, that is, manipulating information that concerns them. Meanwhile, emotional information is much more spontaneous and thus remains to a much greater extent independent of our will, beliefs, expectations, or desires. Man has no direct power over emotions. He cannot, by the power of consciousness or willpower, simply command or prohibit them;

– It is interesting to note the obsession of the officers of the apparatus of violence with both priests and their intimacy; in both cases, can we not perhaps speak of certain similarities (this already sounds sacrilegious) when it comes to experiencing life in a „professional caste system“; is there not a connection here between the elements of the environment forming a more or less compact system?

– Is the obsessive interest in priests and their intimacy also a manifestation of the (perhaps not fully realized) cult of masculinity in the UB/SB?

– Since everything was supposed to be uniform under communism, to what extent were priests and their, for example, homosexuality treated as a stereotypical affliction of the „possessing classes“? And yet there were Catholics and – certainly – homosexuals among the employees of the secret police;

– whether clergymen complained to their relatives and lay acquaintances about the harassment they were facing and to what extent the society of the time, with its frequent grassroots rural anti-clericalism, could nevertheless accept certain „pokes in the nose“ inflicted by the authorities on priests;

– curious about how a totalitarian regime tried to control a wide range of human behavior, including sexual behavior;

– all the problems considered are intriguing because of the definition of humanity used by communism, when among the priests we find, after all, people of working-class and peasant origin;

– is selective pragmatism, therefore, the standard in an ideologized totalitarian regime?

– interesting for a historian is the question of the voluntariness of human actions *versus* actions under coercion in different social systems. Polish historians show how many priests from the Catholic University of Lublin voluntarily wanted to cooperate with the communists, with the UB/SB, at the same time how often coercion was used against them and how often situational coercion turned voluntariness into fiction.

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