

Witold Jedynak

Institute of Sociology, University of Rzeszów

**THE POSITION OF THE EPISCOPATE
OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN POLAND TOWARDS
THE SOLIDARITY OPPOSITION MOVEMENT**

In 1989, Poland became the leader of political change in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, controlled and enslaved by the Soviet Union. Polish society, tired of the functioning of the totalitarian system, rejected communism and chose the path of democratic reforms. The peaceful protests of Poles not only led to the collapse of communism and political change in the country but also triggered a domino effect in the Eastern Bloc. Researchers studying Autumn of Nations agree that the breakthrough in Poland initiated a dynamic process of disintegration of communist rule in the Warsaw Pact countries.

The social and political power that moderated the system transformations in the Polish People's Republic to a large extent was the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union Solidarity. The first independent trade union within the entire Eastern Bloc was established in 1980 on the wave of social unrest, caused by the efforts of Poles to change the political system and build civil society. The years of its opposition activity were marked by a period of dynamic breakthrough, caused by the collapse of the economic system of the Polish People's Republic and the crisis of the state, moral degradation of the communist regime and national social protests¹.

A significant part of Polish society identified itself with the ideas of Solidarity. Solidarity postulated not only the overthrow of communism but also wanted to ensure real social security for all Poles. It demanded fundamental human rights,

¹ S. Marczuk, *Spoleczeństwo polskie lat osiemdziesiątych. Ciągłość i zmiana wartości*, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej w Rzeszowie, Rzeszów 1993, s. 5–6.

and the participation of citizens in the management of the State. Poles perceived the Solidarity social movement not only as a rebellion against the privileges of the communist nomenclature and unequal treatment of citizens but also as an initiator of the moral renewal of society². According to sociologist Jerzy Szacki, Solidarity became “a kind of ‘moral crusade’ but ,in this case, the subject of the crusade was not an individual: it was the group perceived as a collective subject trying to regain its rights, which appeared as absolutely unquestionable, precisely because they were the rights of the group”³.

The space in which the Solidarity social movement was born and developed was the space of opposition circles opposing the communist regime. They included the religious communities of the Catholic Church, which during the period of national enslavement became oases of freedom for people fighting for democratic change in Poland. In Catholic religious communities, citizens could freely express their beliefs, because the Catholic Church was the only autonomous institution in the Polish People’s Republic, independent of the communist authorities. The Church’s involvement in the defense of fundamental human rights made it the most trusted public institution in the Polish People’s Republic. Poles recognized the Church as the source of a national liberation movement and the center of national identity⁴. Many clergymen of the Catholic Church identified themselves with the ideals and ethos of Solidarity, and actively joined the activity supporting the social movement. Pope John Paul II also favored the activists of the independent trade union. The position of the Episcopate which, by virtue of its status and role in the Polish Church, was a leader and moral authority for priests and laypeople, was particularly important for the attitude of Catholics to Solidarity. The attitude and behavior of bishops related to the social movement were a factor that influenced many believers’ attitude towards Solidarity.

Assumptions of the conducted research

The Episcopate of the Catholic Church is a specific and unique social group due to the collegiate cooperation and decision-making role it plays in the hierarchical

² H. Świda-Ziemba, *Człowiek wewnątrz zniewolony. Mechanizmy i konsekwencje minionej formacji – analiza psychospołeczna*, Zakład Socjologii Moralności i Aksjologii Ogólnej Instytut Stosowanych Nauk Społecznych Uniwersytet Warszawski, Warszawa 1997, s. 346; See P. Pacuła, *Ruch związkowy w okresie transformacji systemowej w Polsce*, Lubaczów 2009, s. 265–266; A. Touraine et al., *Solidarność. Analiza ruchu społecznego 1980–1981*, transl. A. Krasieński, edition 2, Europejskie Centrum Solidarności, Gdańsk 2010, s. 84, 110; D. Porta della, M. Diani, *Ruchy społeczne. Wprowadzenie*, transl. A. Sadza, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2009, s. 152–153.

³ J. Szacki, *Liberalizm po komunizmie*, edition 1, Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego, Kraków 1994, s. 142.

⁴ P. Sztompka, *Zaufanie. Fundament społeczeństwa*, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 2007, s. 107.

structure of the Church community in Poland, accounting for about 90% of the total population. Ordinary bishops and subordinate suffragans functioning within the structure of the Episcopate make decisions that are usually announced to Catholics in the form of pastoral messages and letters. The position of the Episcopate is the result of collegial arrangements, discussions, and polemics, in which – especially in socio-political matters – different individual opinions and views expressed by individual hierarchs clash. Recipients of official documents of the Episcopate learn the group position of bishops, which is the effect of conciliatory findings and the resultant, sometimes different or contradictory opinions, presented during the meeting closed to external observers. Therefore, the average Catholic who reads the official social documents of the Episcopate is not able to learn about the individual attitudes or behaviors of individual bishops, especially in the face of controversial social and political problems.

On the basis of the foregoing, the author of this paper attempts to present not only the official group position of bishops towards Solidarity, expressed in official church documents, but also attempts to establish the individual attitude of individual hierarchs towards the Solidarity opposition movement. The subject of the research is the position of the Episcopate towards Solidarity which was born on the wave of anti-communist protests of workers, became an important socio-political strength in the Polish People's Republic. The aim of the research is to describe, analyze and explain the changes in bishops' attitudes towards the Solidarity opposition movement. It also shows the influence of the Episcopate – the religious institution – on social and political transformations in the last decade of the communist system in Poland. The main research problem is contained in the question: what attitudes and behaviors towards Solidarity were manifested by the members of the Polish Episcopate. However, the research hypothesis is that the attitude towards the Solidarity opposition among the members of the Episcopate was different and depended on the degree of acceptance of the ideals of the social movement, relations with the communist authorities and on the ideological and structural transformations of the opposition, caused by the dynamic transformations of the socio-political situation in Poland.

The qualitative method used in the research process, based on the analysis of the existing sources, allows one to learn, describe and explain the collegial position of the Episcopate towards Solidarity. It also identified the attitudes and behavior of individual hierarchs regarding the Solidarity opposition movement. Moreover, it gave the opportunity to discover the mechanisms governing the behavior of individuals and groups, allowing one to explain not only the open functions but also the hidden functions of social activities.

The Episcopate expressed its official position on religious and social matters in the form of pastoral messages and letters. These documents allowed one to

learn about the open functions of social activities. On the other hand, discovering hidden functions became possible through analyzing secret documents prepared by the 4th Department of the Ministry of the Interior.

According to the communist authorities, the main objective of the 4th Department of the Ministry of the Interior was to fight against the anti-state activity of the Church. As part of its operational activities, the Security Service conducted ongoing surveillance of clergy in order to obtain information on their attitudes and behaviors towards various social phenomena, including the anti-communist activity of the opposition⁵. The source of much valuable information was secret collaborators of the Security Service, especially informants in the cassocks conspired in church institutions and communities. The collected materials concerning the clergy were meticulously stored and processed⁶.

The analysis of *The Almanac of the bishops of the Catholic Church in Poland* in the form of a typescript, prepared by the Security Service, is of particular value for the implementation of the research⁷. The document prepared in March 1988 by the experts from the 4th Department of the Ministry of the Interior was marked with the reference number Ug-0818/88 and number 033. "Almanac" had a security classification marking and was prepared for use only by the highest authorities of the Polish People's Republic. The opinions, assessments and views of Security Service experts expressed in the document are essential for determining the attitudes and behaviors of individual bishops towards the Solidarity opposition movement. The extensive content of the document concerning the subject matter presented in this paper has not been analyzed and presented so far. The research process was also based on scientific studies of historians, political scientists and sociologists.

⁵ S. Cenckiewicz, *Śladami bezpieki i partii. Studia – źródła – publicystyka*, Wydawnictwo LTW, Łomianki 2009, s. 181–185; *Instrukcje, wytyczne, okólniki dyrektora Departamentu V MBP dotyczące działań przeciwko Kościołowi katolickiemu w latach 1945–1956*, red. A. Dziurek, J. Marecki, F. Musiał, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Kraków–Katowice 2012, s. 162–163; R. Terlecki, *Miecz i tarcza komunizmu. Historia aparatu bezpieczeństwa w Polsce 1944–1990*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2007, s. 157–158.

⁶ F. Musiał, *Metoda stopniowego werbunku duchownych (z podręczników SB)* [w:] *Agentura w akcji*, red. F. Musiał, J. Szarek, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, Kraków 2007, s. 49–58; J. Marecki, F. Musiał, *Wprowadzenie* [w:] *Niezłomni. Nigdy przeciw Bogu. Komunistyczna bezpieka wobec biskupów polskich*, red. J. Marecki, F. Musiał, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Wydawnictwo WAM, Warszawa–Kraków 2007, s. 29–36; B. Stanaszek, *Diecezja sandomierska w powojennej rzeczywistości politycznej w latach 1945–1967*, vol. 1: *Problematyka personalno-organizacyjna*, Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne i Drukarnia w Sandomierzu, Sandomierz 2006, s. 267–269.

⁷ Ministry of the Interior. 4th Department, *The Almanac of the Bishops of the Catholic Church in Poland* (March 1988) – typescript. One copy of this document was kept in the private archive of Archbishop Ignacy Tokarczuk in Przemyśl until 2012. The author of the paper carried out a scientific analysis of *Almanac*.

Changes in the attitude of the Episcopate towards the Solidarity opposition movement

The August Agreements concluded between the communist government and the striking workers enabled the establishment of a nationwide Independent Self-Governing Trade Union Solidarity on 17 September 1980. The trade union was registered by the Supreme Court in November 1980. In May of the following year – after the wave of peasant strikes – the authorities also legalized the Solidarity Trade Union of Individual Farmers representing the interests of the Polish countryside⁸. Independent unions of workers and farmers were supported by the Episcopate which believed that their primary objective was “to defend the rights of working people and to safeguard their working, living and cultural conditions”⁹.

Pope John Paul II supported Solidarity unambiguously. According to him, the establishment of an independent trade union representing various professions was a momentous event, because it indicated that the working people wanted to take joint responsibility for the work they did in the various workshops of their native land. The organizing of working people into trade unions proved to be a self-governing social initiative referring to the work being a fundamental value of social and state life¹⁰.

The Solidarity trade union expected from the government not only economic reforms and improvement of living conditions, but also postulated that the process of democratization of social life in Poland should begin. Its ideological message and identity are to a large extent based on Christian ethics and the social doctrine of the Catholic Church¹¹. Despite temporary and calculating concessions, the communist authorities never accepted the existence of an independent trade union organization. They were aware that the Solidarity social movement could become an important factor influencing social change¹².

⁸ W. Roszkowski (A. Albert), *Historia Polski 1914–1993*, edition 4, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1995, s. 363–369. See K. Kamiński, *Dni nadziei na godne życie. Początki Solidarności Rolników Indywidualnych na Podkarpaciu* [w:] *Z dziejów Solidarności podkarpackiej 1980–1990*, red. B. Adamski, Zarząd Regionu Podkarpacie NSZZ „Solidarność”, Krosno 1992, s. 52–53.

⁹ *Komunikat 178 Konferencji Plenarnej Episkopatu Polski (Warszawa, 13 marca 1981 r.)* [w:] *Komunikaty Konferencji Episkopatu Polski 1945–2000*, red. J. Żaryn, Sekretariat Konferencji Episkopatu Polski, Pallotinum, Warszawa 2006, s. 243. See *Komunikat z posiedzenia Rady Głównej Episkopatu Polski (Warszawa, 10 lutego 1981 r.)* [w:] *Komunikaty Konferencji Episkopatu Polski 1945–2000...*, s. 242.

¹⁰ *Przemówienie Papieża Jana Pawła II wygłoszone do delegacji NSZZ „Solidarność” w sali konsystorskiej (Watykan, 15 stycznia 1981 r.)* [w:] P. Raina, *Kościół w PRL. Kościół katolicki a państwo w świetle dokumentów 1945–1989*, vol. 3: *Lata 1975–1989*, Wydawnictwo „W drodze”, Bernardinum, Poznań–Pelpin 1996, s. 199.

¹¹ P. Pacuła, *op. cit.*, s. 265–266.

¹² See P. Sztompka, *Socjologia zmian społecznych*, transl. J. Konieczny, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 2005, s. 255.

The emergence of an independent socio-political force supported by the majority of Poles made the communists – as in the past during strikes and social unrest – feel threatened. Therefore, they wanted to find an agreement with the Church and sought its favor¹³. The political elites were aware that in a situation where the leading power of the nation was losing its strong position in the state, the Church, which remained an unquestionable moral authority, was benefiting from it¹⁴. The authorities wanted to improve their relationship with the church hierarchy. As part of the normalization of relations, the Joint Committee was reactivated and held its first meeting in September 1980 with representatives of the government and the Episcopate. The initiated contacts between the communist authorities and representatives of the Church were not caused by changes in the party's religious policy, but by a skillful play of the weakening regime aimed at reaching an agreement with the Episcopate on at least some disputed matters. Transformations of the relations between the Church and the authorities caused that for the communists, the Episcopate from a main ideological opponent became, above all, a useful mediator in the relations between the government and Solidarity¹⁵.

Solidarity activists noticed a turn in relations in which the victim became a partner of his persecutor. These changes raised concerns among Solidarity activists, especially at a regional level. Trade union activists were afraid that the rapprochement of the Episcopate and the authorities would adversely affect the impartiality and credibility of the Church as a social negotiator. In the opinion of Solidarity activists, the Episcopate in the new situation “seemed to be even more interested than before in maintaining good relations with the government and used its stabilizing influence on Solidarity as a bargaining chip in negotiations with the authorities”¹⁶.

The lawful activity of Solidarity was interrupted by martial law. The union was outlawed by the authorities, and many of its activists were interned and

¹³ P. Raina, *Rozmowy z władzami PRL. Arcybiskup Dąbrowski w służbie Kościoła i narodu*, vol. 1: 1970–1981, Wydawnictwo Książka Polska, Warszawa 1995, s. 363.

¹⁴ See J. Holzer, „Solidarność” 1980–1981. *Geneza i historia*, Instytut Literacki, Paryż 1984, s. 61–63; Z. Zieliński, *Kościół w Polsce 1944–2002*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, Radom 2003, s. 282.

¹⁵ J. Żaryn, *Kościół w PRL*, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Warszawa 2004, s. 129–133; A. Dudek, R. Gryz, *Komuniści i Kościół w Polsce (1945–1989)*, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 2006, s. 351–361; *List zastępcy Sekretarza Episkopatu ks. A. Orszulika do kierownika Urzędu ds. Wyznań J. Kuberskiego w sprawie problemów podejmowanych przez Komisję Wspólną przedstawicieli Rządu i Episkopatu (Warszawa, 13 listopada 1980 r.)* [w:] P. Raina, *Kościół w PRL...*, vol. 3: 188–189.

¹⁶ J. Staniszkis, *Samoograniczająca się rewolucja*, Europejskie Centrum Solidarności, Gdańsk 2010, s. 114–115; See M.F. Rakowski, *Dzienniki polityczne 1981–1983*, edition 1, Wydawnictwo Iskry, Warszawa 2004, s. 77.

imprisoned¹⁷. However, the clergymen were warned that if they maintained a negative attitude towards the authorities and martial law, they would be guilty of spilling Polish blood. In such an extreme situation, priests and bishops tried to tone down moods, calm down emotions and convince society to give up active resistance. Among the Solidarity activists, there were even some opinions that “the Church betrayed the union by succumbing to the authorities”¹⁸. These were judgments made under the influence of strong emotions and trauma caused by repression. They did not reflect the actual attitude of the Church towards the repressed members of the independent trade union. Many clergymen sharply criticized the introduction of martial law, provided shelter for Solidarity leaders and became initiators of opposition activities. Other representatives of the Church, at the same time, were engaged in dialogue with the authorities of the Polish People’s Republic¹⁹. Antoni Dudek believes that “the Church has become not only the most serious but also the only significant partner for communists in the process of pacifying social moods since the introduction of martial law”²⁰.

It seems that it would be a mistake to perceive the role of the Church as a social force supporting the opposition or to see it as a source of a mechanism enabling the regime to neutralize moods and pacify social resistance. In fact, some hierarchs actively supported opposition circles, while others considered the activity of Solidarity to be a closed chapter in contemporary Polish history²¹. Generalizing the attitudes and behaviors of bishops and categorizing them explicitly is not a proper and objective representation of the complex relationship between the opposition and the Catholic clergy. However, it can surely be assumed that the social teaching of the Episcopate positively influenced the process of the dynamic development of “the Solidarity revolution”, while at the same time limiting the confrontational aspirations of radical groups in the social movement, threatening the intervention of the Warsaw Pact troops on Polish territory²².

Shortly after the introduction of martial law, the Main Council of the Polish Episcopate appealed to all clergy in the country to focus on supporting martial law victims and demanded the authorities to release the internees and to provide

¹⁷ A. Dudek, *Wstęp [w:] Stan wojenny w Polsce 1981–1983*, red. A. Dudek, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni Przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Warszawa 2003, s. 18–21 (7–26).

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, s. 24.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, s. 25.

²⁰ A. Dudek, *Reglamentowana rewolucja. Rozkład dyktatury komunistycznej w Polsce 1988–1990*, edition 1, Wydawnictwo Arkana, Kraków 2004, s. 80.

²¹ A. Dudek, *Wstęp...*, s. 24–25.

²² J. Żaryn, *Wstęp [w:] Aparat represji wobec księdza Jerzego Popiełuszki 1982–1984*, vol. 1, red. J. Mysiakowska, wybór i oprac. J. Gołębiowski, J. Mysiakowska, A.K. Piekarska, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Warszawa 2009, s. 16.

emergency humanitarian aid to the victims and their families²³. The Episcopate also reacted to the actions of the authorities against Solidarity. In December 1982, the bishops expressed their opposition to the abolition of independent trade unions. They believed that the banning of the Independent Self-governing Labour Union Solidarity and the Solidarity Trade Union of Individual Farmers was a blow against Polish society and violated the fundamental right of workers of freedom of association and the establishment of independent trade unions²⁴.

The Communist authorities, under pressure from various forces, especially international opinion, were gradually relaxing the regime of martial law by releasing the internees. Some of the opponents, after leaving detention, started a conspiratorial activity. Making the Solidarity structures part of the underground movement was a difficult struggle to survive the union. In a dangerous situation, the support given by the people of the Church (clergy and laymen) to Solidarity seemed to be decisive. The party activists claimed that the authorities had dealt with Solidarity by introducing martial law, but had not taken firm action against the Church, which caused the opposition to shelter in Catholic communities²⁵. This is why the Security Services wanted to eliminate the involvement of priests supporting the opposition's conspiratorial activities, especially the attempts to reactivate Solidarity²⁶. The dramatic consequence of the implementation of this strategy was the tightening of the policy towards the clergy, including the murder of the Solidarity chaplain Fr Jerzy Popiełuszko by the Security Service²⁷.

Historians, sociologists and opposition activists unanimously emphasize the important role of the Catholic Church in the efforts to protect Solidarity during its struggle with the totalitarian regime under martial law, as well as in the following years of the illegal functioning of the trade union²⁸. In the independent church communities, the members of Solidarity found the moral and material support necessary to continue their opposition activities. The Church became an asylum for them, enabling them to seek freedom and truth during the period of common enslavement

²³ J. Żaryn, *Wstęp...*, s. 19–22.

²⁴ *Komunikat 189 Konferencji Plenarnej Episkopatu Polski (Warszawa, 2 grudnia 1982 r.)* [w:] *Komunikaty Konferencji Episkopatu Polski 1945–2000...*, s. 271.

²⁵ J. Żaryn, *Wstęp...*, s. 35–37.

²⁶ *Tajne instrukcje do walki z Kościołem (Instrukcje napisane w MSW 31.05 i 1.07.1982 r.)* [w:] A. Orszulik, *Czas przełomu. Notatki ks. Alojzego Orszulika z rozmów z władzami PRL w latach 1981–1989*, Obserwator, Apostolicum, Warszawa–Ząbki 2006, s. 48–49.

²⁷ A. Dudek, *Reglamentowana rewolucja...*, s. 83.

²⁸ See *Relacja Marka Kamińskiego* [w:] *Non omnis moriar. Abp Ignacy Tokarczuk we wspomnieniach*, red. M. Krzysztofiński, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu Oddział w Rzeszowie, Rzeszów–Lwów 2016, s. 187; A. Brożyniak, *Ks. bp Ignacy Tokarczuk a podziemny Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy „Solidarność” Regionu Południowo-Wschodniego*, „Nasz Przemysł”, special edition (24.06.2012), s. 33.

and communist nihilism. As the only independent institution and anti-totalitarian community, it supported the opposition and defended the culture and freedom of the nation and human rights²⁹. In the Church, Poles found safe shelter from the rules of the system and its problems, as well as a safe depository of symbols of resistance³⁰. The oppositionists, regardless of their ideological beliefs, perceived the Church as a spokesman for sovereignty and “Polish identity in the Soviet world”³¹.

The result of the strong position of the Church in the Polish People’s Republic, its clash with the communist regime and its commitment to liberate society from totalitarian enslavement was a victory over the ruling Marxist and atheistic party³². Poles expressed universal appreciation for the merits of the Church in the process of the struggle for regaining independence and changing the system. Social research has shown that the Church has enjoyed authority and trust incomparable to any other public institution³³. The merits of the Church in sustaining the spirit of the nation and overcoming the communist regime were widely emphasized³⁴.

Opinions about the role of the Church – as a religious community – in the survival of Solidarity are consistent among researchers. Priests engaged in pastoral activity in parishes joined the grass-roots actions organized by many of their parishioners, who advocated and supported the social movement in various ways³⁵. Meanwhile, disagreements emerge in the opinions on the involvement of bishops in supporting the independence opposition, especially during martial law. Jan Żaryn, a researcher of the contemporary history of Poland and the Church, draws attention to the internal tensions in the Episcopate caused by the differentiated, individual opinions of bishops on the position of the hierarchical Church in relation to the actions of Solidarity activists and the existence of a trade union as the underground resistance movement³⁶. The historian believes that Cardinal Józef Glemp, supported by the majority of the Episcopate members, did not identify “the welfare of the nation in a dogmatic way with the unconditional need to reactivate Solidarity”, although he did appreciate the freedom movement of 1980–1981 for the identity of the nation³⁷. This opinion is confirmed by the analysis of experts from the Ministry of the Interior. It shows that the officers of

²⁹ A. Michnik, *Kłopot i blazen*, Znak 41 (1989), nr 2–3, s. 15–16.

³⁰ H. Świda-Ziemba, *op. cit.*, s. 359.

³¹ A. Michnik, *Kościół – lewica – dialog*, Biblioteka Gazety Wyborczej, Warszawa 2009, s. 214.

³² H. Świda-Ziemba, *op. cit.*, s. 360.

³³ J. Gowin, *Kościół po komunizmie*, Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego, Kraków–Warszawa 1995, s. 27.

³⁴ A. Albert, *Najnowsza historia Polski 1914–1993*, vol. 2, Świat Książki, Warszawa 1995, s. 905.

³⁵ Z. Zieliński, *Kościół w Polsce 1944–2002...*, s. 362.

³⁶ J. Żaryn, *Wstęp...*, s. 22–24.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, s. 48.

the communist services assumed that Primate Glemp had already “crossed out” Solidarity, considering it unnecessary “for the current stage of the development of the Church’s interests in Poland”³⁸. The party community even formulated an opinion that the specific attitude and behavior of Glemp towards the government resulted in the fact that “the primate was accused of collaborating with the authorities by some priests”³⁹. Therefore, there was an influential group in the Episcopate headed by Cardinal Glemp, which, in order to maintain proper relations with the government, was not interested in reactivating the independent trade union. Żaryn suggests that after the liquidation of Solidarity by the Sejm in autumn 1982, and especially after John Paul II’s second pilgrimage to his homeland (1983), “most of the Catholic Church’s hierarchy in Poland (regardless of its positive attitude towards the heritage of Solidarity) did not identify the notion of ‘national understanding’ with the need to re-register the union”⁴⁰.

Historians highlight the clear tensions between the hierarchs supporting the primate Glemp’s conciliatory line and the bishops defending the right of Solidarity to exist, among whom Ignacy Tokarczuk, Henryk Gulbinowicz and Józef Rozwadowski stood out⁴¹. The speech of bishop Tokarczuk addressed to more than 300 thousand pilgrims gathered on Jasna Góra in Częstochowa became particularly famous during martial law. The bishop condemned the communist regime and its imposition of martial law and stood firmly in defense of Solidarity. He argued that the interest of the Polish nation and state required the restoration of independent trade unions under the leadership of Solidarity. In addition, he appealed to the authorities to release the interned together with Lech Walesa and to declare amnesty for those imprisoned for political reasons⁴². In response, the authorities accused the hierarchy of anti-state activity and the patronage of Solidarity. The authorities also underlined that the strong support for Solidarity expressed by the bishop was fundamentally different from the official enunciations of the Episcopate and the statements of the leading Polish hierarchs⁴³.

³⁸ A. Dudek, *Reglamentowana rewolucja...*, s. 81.

³⁹ *Tajne dokumenty Państwo – Kościół 1980–1989*, Wydawnictwo Aneks i Polityka, Londyn–Warszawa 1993, s. 340.

⁴⁰ J. Żaryn, *Wstęp...*, s. 27–28; R. Łatka, *Episkopat Polski wobec stosunków państwo–Kościół i rzeczywistości społeczno-politycznej PRL 1970–1989*, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Warszawa 2019, s. 110, 305–310; A. Friszke, *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980–1981*, Znak Horyzont, Instytut Studiów Politycznych PWN, Europejskie Centrum Solidarności, Kraków 2014, s. 208.

⁴¹ A. Dudek, R. Gryz, *op. cit.*, s. 385; A. Dudek, *Reglamentowana rewolucja...*, s. 80–81.

⁴² *Stenogram kazania wygłoszonego przez biskupa Ignacego Tokarczuka na Jasnej Górze, 5 września 1982 r.*, „Zagadnienia i Materiały” (Czasopismo Wydziału Ideologicznego KC PZPR przeznaczone dla aktywu partyjnego) 1982, nr 37, s. 45–46.

⁴³ *Dialog i jego przeciwieństwo*, „Zagadnienia i Materiały” (Czasopismo Wydziału Ideologicznego KC PZPR przeznaczone dla aktywu partyjnego) 1982, nr 37, s. 29; R. Łatka, *Episkopat Polski wobec*

The official statements of the Episcopate included balanced and subdued comments indicating the need to respect the right of workers to associate in independent unions in the Polish People's Republic. In their pastoral messages of June and September 1986, the bishops suggested to governments that they should create conditions in the country that would allow professional organizations to operate legally and independently from political parties. Meanwhile, the hierarchs did not mention Solidarity at all and avoided referring to the situation of the banned union⁴⁴. It seemed that this attitude of the clergy was the result of fears of irritating the communist authorities and worsening relations with them.

The fact that Solidarity was gradually coming out of the underground was of great importance for the social and political transformations in Poland. Despite the repressions of the Security Service, the union was conducting its opposition activity with the support of the Church communities at a grass-roots level. The communist authorities tried to convince the Church to support the government's social initiatives while maintaining a distance from the opposition. In the opinion of the Ministry of the Interior, these procedures proved to be quite satisfactory. In the 1987 document prepared by the Ministry of the Interior, it was written that "the Church is objectively an immediate allied force of the authorities"⁴⁵. Further in the document, attention is drawn to the ambivalent attitude of the Church hierarchy, which does not want to lose its influence on society and publicly criticizes the authorities, but on the other hand avoids exacerbating the situation in Poland in order not to devalue its "current strong position as a partner of the authorities"⁴⁶. It seemed that the backstage game of some hierarchs consisting in simultaneous talks with the authorities and discreet support for the opposition was a cause of confusion among both the representatives of the authorities and the Solidarity movement. Moreover, undoubtedly it had an impact on the social perception of bishops' credibility and confidence in them and triggered secularization tendencies within the Solidarity opposition⁴⁷.

współpracy duchowieństwa z opozycją solidarnościową 1980–1989 na tle relacji państwo–Kościół [w:] *Księża dla władzy groźni. Duchowni współpracujący z opozycją (1970–1989)*, red. R. Łatka, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Warszawa 2019, s. 16; J. Żaryn, *Dzieje Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce (1944–1989)*, edition 1, Wydawnictwo Neriton, Instytut Historii PAN, Warszawa 2003, s. 385–386.

⁴⁴ *Komunikat 214 Konferencji Plenarnej Episkopatu Polski (Gniezno, 28 czerwca 1986 r.)* [w:] *Komunikaty Konferencji Episkopatu Polski 1945–2000...*, s. 312. See *Komunikat 215 Konferencji Plenarnej Episkopatu Polski (Tarnów, 6 września 1986 r.)* [w:] *Komunikaty Konferencji Episkopatu Polski 1945–2000...*, s. 314.

⁴⁵ A. Dudek, *Reglamentowana rewolucja...*, s. 80.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ A. Dudek, *Reglamentowana rewolucja...*, s. 90. See J. Staniszkis, *Samoograniczająca się rewolucja...*, s. 114–115.

Meanwhile, tensions and divisions were manifesting themselves among the members of the Solidarity movement, caused by the increasingly visible ideological differences of its members. Primate Józef Glemp was concerned about the fact that Solidarity had lost its own identity and, in particular, about the abandonment of national, moral and religious values, which the movement referred to in 1980–1981 in order to gain the support of Polish society. The abandonment of the trade union ideals by an influential group of activists, which directly referred to the values and principles of Catholic social teaching, resulted in the fact that members with traditional national-catholic beliefs were marginalized in the structures of the trade union. These actions suggested that these people were attracted because they were needed by the leaders, and when they were no longer useful, they were soon disposed of or depreciated⁴⁸.

The tactics of governmental factors that, noting the slow agony of the totalitarian system, established contacts with part of the opposition with the support of church mediators, proved to be effective. The Chairman of the Council of State, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, was even supposed to say to the representative of the Episcopate that the party had “unchanged recognition and trust in the Church” and also counted on “the Church in bringing it to the round table”⁴⁹. Attempts to solve the crisis using political methods led the communists to undertake backstage activities aimed at engaging in talks with the opposition.

The outlawed Solidarity not only survived the period of the conspiracy, but at the end of the 1980s, it became a significant social and political force, representing Polish society during the Round Table Agreement. The representatives of the Catholic Church who were present at the talks, thanks to their mediation activity, supported the parties and made credible the sudden symbiosis of the opposition leaders, who had been oppressed until recently, with their persecutors⁵⁰. Among the members of the Episcopate, there were also strong opponents of the agreement with the communists. However, the vast majority of bishops saw this isolated objection “as a brake on the creation of a new reality”⁵¹.

The Round Table Agreement concluded in 1989 – under the patronage of the representatives of the church hierarchy – ended the opposition’s struggle with the communist authorities. The Episcopate was convinced that the compromise would enable the state, its structures and economy to be reformed. Moreover,

⁴⁸ M.F. Rakowski, *op. cit.*, s. 408.

⁴⁹ P. Raina, *Rozmowy z władzami PRL. Arcybiskup Dąbrowski w służbie Kościoła i narodu*, vol. 2: 1982–1989, Wydawnictwo Książka Polska, Warszawa 1995, s. 213.

⁵⁰ Z. Zieliński, *op. cit.*, s. 376.

⁵¹ *Relacja bp. Stanisława Stefanka TChr [w:] Non omnis moriar. Abp Ignacy Tokarczuk we wspomnieniach*, red. M. Krzysztofiński, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu Oddział w Rzeszowie, Rzeszów–Lwów 2016, s. 343.

it would contribute to the consolidation of society and strengthen the position of Poland in international relations⁵². The conciliatory attitude of Polish bishops and the system of Christian values accepted by the vast majority of society contributed significantly to the bloodless course of social change in Poland. Furthermore, the Christian idea of forgiveness and reconciliation between the persecutor and the victim, which was invoked by the clergy during the negotiations, did not fail to affect the impunity of the people from the Communist apparatus of repression, who were never punished for their crimes⁵³.

Opinions on the direct involvement of priests in the preparation and conclusion of an agreement vary. According to some people, the church mediators participating in the round table negotiations made a mistake. They allowed the Solidarity delegation taking part in the debate to be dominated by left-wing and liberal activists. However, the opposition activists who had contributed to the fight for independence and who had been imprisoned and persecuted by the communist regime were not taken into account⁵⁴. The unfavorable arrangement of forces at the round table was to decide about the defeat of “the real representatives of the nation”, because the direction of systemic changes at the round table did not take into account the good of the common society, but was aimed at safeguarding the interests of the communist nomenclature and the new power⁵⁵.

In the opinion of others, the representatives of the Episcopate fulfilled their role properly, by moderating and making the government’s debates with the opposition more credible. Their activity was decisive for reaching an agreement, as the clergy did not limit themselves to the role of an observer, but were active and experienced participants in negotiations. Thanks to their mediation, the Church gained a political position that it had never had before in the post-war period⁵⁶. The strong involvement of clergy in negotiating the agreement meant that the communist authorities could not only convince the public that the church hierarchy was co-responsible for the agreement but also had arguments to present the Church as a signatory and guarantor of the contract negotiated at the round table⁵⁷.

⁵² *Komunikat 230 Konferencji Plenarnej Episkopatu Polski (Warszawa, 6 października 1988 r.)* [w:] *Komunikaty Konferencji Episkopatu Polski 1945–2000...*, s. 337.

⁵³ See A. Dudek, R. Gryz, *op. cit.*, s. 441; J.M. Jackowski, *Bitwa o prawdę*, vol. 1: *Labirynt złudzeń*, Inicjatywa Wydawnicza Ad astra, Warszawa 1997, s. 40–41.

⁵⁴ P. Raina, *Droga do „Okrągłego Stołu”. Zakulisowe rozmowy przygotowawcze*, Wydawnictwo von borowiecky, Warszawa 1999, s. 235–236; S. Cenckiewicz, *Anna Solidarność. Życie i działalność Anny Walentynowicz na tle epoki (1929–2010)*, Wydawnictwo Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 2010, s. 391–394.

⁵⁵ P. Raina, *Droga do „Okrągłego stołu”...*, s. 236.

⁵⁶ A. Garlicki, *Karuzela. Rzecz o Okrągłym Stole*, edition 2, Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza Czytelnik, Warszawa 2004, s. 269, 305.

⁵⁷ A. Dudek, R. Gryz, *op. cit.*, s. 436, 441.

It seems that the authorities implemented their intricate plan, which the party activists mentioned already in 1987. The plan proposed that a policy should be pursued towards the Church that would bring its interests into line with the authorities and involve it “in partial co-responsibility and co-ownership”⁵⁸. At the same time, the authorities skillfully used the expertise of their experts, suggesting that “the Church misses the role of ‘the third power’ between the authorities and some form of opposition and ‘super-arbiter’ resolving disputes between them”⁵⁹.

The agreement was approved by Polish society, which was convinced that its interests at the round table were ensured by the representatives of the Church and the Solidarity opposition⁶⁰. The society’s support for Solidarity in 1989 was primarily a moral choice, resulting from the belief that the future Solidarity government would take better care of the needs of the average citizen than the communist nomenclature⁶¹. However, it soon became clear that very few ideals from the heritage of Solidarity could be achieved in the post-communist state. Its foundations were based on liberal democracy, abandoning the ethos of the social movement which, by transforming the political principles of a totalitarian state, led to systemic change⁶².

The new post-communist reality also included the heritage of communism deeply rooted in the Polish elites of the transformation period. The initiators and implementers of systemic change were people whose social personality was shaped by the system, different from what they intended to create in an independent state⁶³.

During the political transformations, the Solidarity team implemented economic liberalism, which did not refer at all to the idea of an anti-totalitarian social rebellion movement embodied in Solidarity. The common good was replaced by the highest value, and economic self-governance was replaced by absolute rules of economics. A surprising and radical turn in social axiology, so far recognized by the Solidarity movement, resulted in a break in its historical

⁵⁸ A. Dudek, *Reglamentowana rewolucja...*, s. 89.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, s. 90.

⁶⁰ See K. Pankowski, *Polacy o Magdalence, Okrągłym Stole i poczuciu zdrady*, BS/101/2010, CBOS, Warszawa 2010, s. 1–2, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2010/K_101_10.PDF [dostęp: 6.09.2019].

⁶¹ S. Marczuk, *op. cit.*, s. 120.

⁶² Z. Krasnodębski, *Demokracja peryferii*, Wydawnictwo Słowo/Obraz/Terytoria, Gdańsk 2003, s. 59, 227.

⁶³ J. Mariański, *Relatywizm moralny w okresie przemian społecznych w Polsce [w:] Religia w dobie przelomu w Polsce*, red. L. Adamczuk, Pallottinum, Warszawa 1991, s. 49–50; A. Podgórecki, *Spoleczeństwo polskie*, edition 1, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, Rzeszów 1995, s. 200–203.

continuity⁶⁴. During the transformation period, Solidarity was to end the hope of building the world according to the values underpinning the social movement, which was undoubtedly a global social phenomenon⁶⁵.

Bishops' attitudes and behavior towards the Solidarity opposition in the opinions of the officers of the 4th Department of the Ministry of the Interior

Security Service officers believed that the attitude of hierarchs towards Solidarity was the cause of internal tensions in the Episcopate. The bishops expressed different opinions about their position on the opposition and the role of the Solidarity movement in Polish society. The clergymen were aware that supporting the trade union, which was founded in 1980 on the wave of mass social protests against the ruling party, would be treated by the communist authorities as an activity aimed at the political foundations of the socialist state. Meanwhile, the hierarchs wanted to maintain proper relations with the authorities, so as not to complicate the difficult situation of the Church in the Polish People's Republic. The rapprochement to Solidarity resulted in a deterioration of relations between the Church and the government. It seems that some bishops, in their attitude to the independent relationship, were guided primarily by the interests of the church communities but sometimes their own reasons or individual benefits could prove to be a dominant factor.

The analysis of the above mentioned *The Almanac of the bishops of the Catholic Church in Poland* made it possible – based on the opinions of the Security Service officers – to determine the position of the majority of bishops towards the Solidarity opposition (53 out of 98 of all the members of the Episcopate). According to the Security Service, the clearly negative attitude to Solidarity was presented by 5 bishops (including 3 ordinaries and 2 suffragans), while 23 hierarchs (7 ordinaries and 16 suffragans) were indifferent to this issue. Definitely, 25 bishops (10 ordinaries, 14 suffragans, 1 senior) spoke out in favor of Solidarity at various stages of its activity. Almost half of the bishops (45), including 6 ordinary bishops, 37 suffragan and 2 seniors, did not express their attitude towards the independent trade union and opposition structures. Therefore, the Security Service failed to establish the position of these clergymen in relation to the Solidarity opposition. It is significant that almost half of all bishops – to the knowledge

⁶⁴ H. Świda-Ziemba, *op. cit.*, s. 347.

⁶⁵ J. Staniszkis, *Ontologia socjalizmu*, Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, Wyższa Szkoła Biznesu – National-Louis University w Nowym Sączu, Wydawnictwo Dante, Kraków – Nowy Sącz 2006, s. 286.

of officials – did not express their opinion on the anti-communist opposition in a transparent way, nor did they maintain contact with its representatives.

Therefore, if the number of negative and indifferent hierarchs to the Solidarity opposition and the number of bishops who, in the opinion of the Security Service, did not express their attitude to Solidarity are counted, then it appears that the vast majority of the Polish Episcopate (i.e. 74%) did not show support for the Solidarity movement and the opposition. Most clergymen were also not interested in the Church's connection with socio-political organizations or the opposition underground.

The bishops' support for the independent union is, in the opinion of the Security Service officers, closely connected with the hierarchs' attitude towards the communist authorities. The 25 members of the Episcopate had a negative attitude towards the communist regime, while the others were positive or indifferent to it. Therefore, if the bishops' positive attitude towards the solidarity movement became a sign of a negative attitude towards the communist regime, the prevailing tendency in the entire Episcopate was to engage in dialogue with the authorities and to consent to the party's rule and to the socio-political situation in the country.

The above findings are necessary to verify the opinions expressed after 1989 by the various groups about the achievements of the Catholic hierarchy in the process of supporting the independence opposition and the overthrow of communism. In many circles, especially in the Church, there were opinions about the important merits of the Church hierarchy in supporting the activity of the anti-communist opposition. The social activity of hierarchs was to be a strong accelerator in bringing about a breakthrough in 1989. The words of appreciation for bishops came from various sides, which led them to celebrate victory over communism and to attribute merit to the Church in the overthrow of the totalitarian system⁶⁶.

There is no doubt that the contribution of the Church – as a community of religious people – in supporting the opposition and ensuring its survival during martial law and the continuity of underground activity was decisive. As for the merits of the hierarchy in supporting Solidarity, it should be stressed that the independent trade union was under the patronage of bishops who had a negative attitude towards the communist regime and who publicly criticized the political assumptions of the Polish People's Republic and its authorities. Among them, there was a group of so-called hawks, i.e. hierarchs whom the Security Services perceived as radical opponents of communism, and the ruling party considered them its intransigent enemies. Although they were a distinct minority in the Episcopate, they had social authority and respect among the clergy and lay Catholics,

⁶⁶ Krasnodębski, *op. cit.*, s. 35; J. Gowin, *op. cit.*, s. 27.

as well as a strong representation in the General Council⁶⁷. Therefore, they were able to influence other clergymen, especially when forcing through a common position of the Episcopate, e.g., when editing pastoral messages or letters concerning social and political issues important for the country. However, these hierarchs were not able to convince the other bishops to adopt their strong views. According to the then members of the Episcopate, anti-communist radicalism was “unique against the background of the Episcopate” as most bishops, led by Primate Glemp, avoided conflict with the authorities and believed that they should be contacted and talked to⁶⁸.

Security Service officials express a similar opinion. In their opinion, the most decisive and permanent support was given to Solidarity activists by a small group of bishops who were convinced by the idea of the movement. These hierarchs identified themselves with the program of the Solidarity opposition and met with opposition activists, both during the period when the union operated legally and after it was made illegal during martial law. Bishops who strongly supported Solidarity in the Polish People’s Republic were negatively disposed towards the socialist system and state authorities. They spoke out in public on social and political issues, criticizing the policy of the government, which they blamed for the lack of social justice and for the economic, social and moral crisis. They accused the regime of not respecting the constitutional principle of freedom of conscience and civil liberties, persecuting citizens for their political views and forcibly suppressing the aspirations of society for democratic transformation. Moreover, they defended religious freedom, believing that religious people are treated in the Polish People’s Republic as second-class citizens. They expressed a negative attitude towards contacts with representatives of the communist authorities.

Presenting the results of my own research, the author of this study does not disclose personal data of hierarchs, because they are not relevant to the social phenomenon being analyzed. On the other hand, it indicates the position of hierarchs in the structure of the Episcopate: The Ordinary of the Diocese (O), the Suffragan (S), the Senior (E). The bishops, whose attitude towards Solidarity was established and evaluated by the Security Service, were divided into three categories: positive towards the Solidarity opposition (P), negative towards (N) and indifferent towards (O). Each clergyman was assigned a current number in the category to which he was qualified (e.g., the abbreviation O-P-1 means a bishop with a positive attitude towards the opposition who, in the category of “positive” (P) was assigned number 1).

⁶⁷ Ministry of the Interior, 4th Department, *Almanac of the Bishops of the Catholic Church in Poland* (March 1988) – typescript; W. Jedynak, *Episkopat wobec władz komunistycznych (w ostatniej dekadzie PRL). Studium socjologiczne*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów 2016, s. 247.

⁶⁸ *Relacja abp. Alfonsa Nossola [w:] Non omnis moriar...*, s. 263.

In the minds of the Security Service officers, the activities of the Ordinary (O-P-23), who showed a clearly hostile and negative attitude towards the political foundations of the Polish People's Republic and the authorities, was particularly dangerous for the communist authorities. This bishop was known to the Security Service for his numerous and radical public speeches criticizing the state authorities. The communists knew about his involvement in supporting the opposition even before the Solidarity movement came into being. The political police believed that the hierarchy, who was a keen advocate of the extremism of Solidarity and the Workers' Defense Committee headed by Adam Michnik, met with extreme activists of the anti-communist opposition and inspired them to undertake various forms of protest and opposition to the authorities. He was the guardian of the establishment and activity of the Solidarity Trade Union of Individual Farmers, which developed its activity in the diocese he led. After the banning of the union by the authorities, he initiated the establishment of a pastoral ministry of farmers in the Episcopate, which, continuing the program of the destroyed Solidarity Trade Union of Individual Farmers, conducted regular meetings of its activists within the framework of training in the social teaching of the Church. Being opposed to maintaining conciliatory relations with the government and its representatives on the ground, he disagreed with the political line of the Primate Cardinal Józef Glemp, criticizing him for his amicability with the communist authorities⁶⁹.

A similarly strong commitment to the anti-communist opposition was shown by the Ordinary (O-P-9). In the opinion of the Security Service, he was in favor of maintaining a rigid political line towards the authorities. He was critical of the conciliatory attitude of Primate Józef Glemp, who maintained current contact with the authorities. During the period of the legal activity of the Solidarity movement, he gave it official support by participating in organized Field Holy Masses, consecrating trade union banners and premises. After the Solidarity movement became an underground organization, the clergyman, who headed the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Working People, created an opportunity for non-religious involvement of the opposition. According to the Security Service, this activity, which was a continuation of the idea of a banned union, was intended to be manifested within the framework of workers' pastoral activities⁷⁰.

The Ordinary (O-P-18) was also known for his public speeches in support of the Solidarity postulates. The clergyman was active in giving religious character to congregations in which Solidarity activists participated. He joined the celebrations of national holidays with the participation of the opposition, emphasizing

⁶⁹ Ministry..., s. 189–90.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, s. 77.

their religious character. He inspired the organization of special religious services, also outside churches, during which trade union banners, as well as crosses and statues of saints were blessed. The bishop accepted the contacts of the leadership of the Church with the authorities, primarily on the basis of the conviction that they could benefit the Church⁷¹.

In the case of the Ordinary (O-P-25), Security Service officers draw attention to a clear commitment to socio-political issues. In his first year as the Ordinary, he was cautious in expressing opinions and judgments relating to the situation in the country. According to the opinions of the Security Service, he became active in 1986, when, according to the Security Services, he gave his “political creed” during the diocesan pilgrimage of men. In his public speeches, he called on the authorities to allow trade unions, representing the interests of working people, to operate. He called for the release of political prisoners and for an end to the repression of religious people. In addition, he condemned the lay-style upbringing of children and youth promoted by the authorities within the framework of ideological indoctrination and criticized the government mass media. The Security Service was convinced that the hierarch created himself as a “bishop of workers”⁷².

Social protests and the so-called Solidarity carnival influenced the activity of the Suffragan (S-P-14). His hostile attitude towards the socio-political reality of the Polish People’s Republic intensified – in the opinion of the Security Service – after 1980, when the Solidarity social movement grew stronger and initiated attitudes of protest among the citizens towards the authorities. After the introduction of martial law, the hierarch continued to provide spiritual and material support to the activists of the banned union. He kept Solidarity banners and some documents relating to the union. The bishop remained an advocate and spokesperson of Solidarity and expressed this fact in public speeches⁷³.

The suffragan (S-P-24) publicly questioned the ideological foundations of the functioning of the socialist state. The Security Service knew that the clergyman identified himself with the ideals of Solidarity and maintained frequent contact with the activists of this movement. He strongly condemned the imposition of martial law by hanging a national flag decorated with a mortcloth in his residence⁷⁴. Permanent contact with Solidarity activists, both before and after the introduction of martial law, was maintained by the suffragan (S-P-13). Security Service officers believed that the bishop was critical regarding social and political

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, s. 138.

⁷² *Ibidem*, s. 210.

⁷³ *Ibidem*, s. 126.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, s. 192.

relations in the Polish People's Republic and avoided contact with representatives of the communist regime. Not worrying about the restrictions of martial law, in 1983 he celebrated a holy mass for the intention of Solidarity, and Grzegorz Przymyk, and other victims of martial law. In the opinion of the Security Service, the bishop's continued support for the union and its members was evidenced by unofficial meetings with underground activists⁷⁵.

In the opinion of the Security Service, other bishops were supposed to take similar actions against the opposition. The Suffragan (S-P-1) – considered by the Security Service to be an opponent of the socialist system – openly sympathized with the Solidarity social movement and supported its actions. The introduction of martial law did not change much in his activity, because he still remained a strong advocate of the opposition and the underground, celebrating members for their service to the Homeland⁷⁶. Active support for the Solidarity activists was also provided by the Suffragan (S-P-7)⁷⁷ and the Suffragan (S-P-17), which particularly supported the Solidarity Trade Union of Individual Farmers⁷⁸. On the other hand, the Ordinary (O-P-19), who took a moderate stance towards the authorities, expressed his sympathy for Solidarity, but his activity in this matter was limited primarily to moral support for its activists⁷⁹.

The survival of the social movement after its ban during martial law was possible mainly thanks to the protective shield spread over its activists by the people of the Church, including some bishops of the Catholic Church. Hierarchs who identified themselves with the aims of the Solidarity movement showed it support in public not only during the period of its dynamic and enthusiastic activity in 1980–1981 but also during the dramatic period of martial law. The humanitarian activity of the Church was inconvenient for the government, which accused the hierarchy of cooperating with the illegal opposition and siding with the solidarity extremism⁸⁰. Despite the objection of the authorities, the involvement of hierarchs in charity actions for the imprisoned and interned Solidarity activists became one of the priority projects supporting the union pacified by the communist regime.

Known for his negative attitude towards the social and political system of the Polish People's Republic, the Ordinary (O-P-22) maintained close contacts with the regional management of Solidarity and participated in events related to the consecration of state buildings and Solidarity banners. After the introduction

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, s. 110.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, s. 36.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, s. 64.

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, s. 132.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, s. 142.

⁸⁰ Z. Zieliński, *op. cit.*, s. 359.

of martial law, he communicated with the internees and gave financial assistance to their families. In order to provide a source of livelihood for the oppressed oppositionists, he employed some of them in the Bishop's Curia⁸¹.

The Security Service officers established a similar pattern in relations with the movement activists in the case of other clergymen. The Suffragan (S-P-21) during the period of legal activity of the Independent Self-governing Labour Union Solidarity was interested in the development of the trade union and was actively involved for its benefit, taking part in events organized by the opposition. After the introduction of martial law, he did not cease his activity, but provided moral and financial support to the internees and their families. The bishop in his public speeches expressed a strongly negative attitude towards martial law, especially its negative consequences for civil liberties and rights⁸². The attitude and behavior of the bishop (E-P-4) confirmed that the negative attitude to Marxist ideology and the opposition to the atheization and secularization of social life implemented by communists inspired the strengthening of opposition structures in the country. The hierarch met with the activists of the movement, and after the forced pacification of the union during martial law, he established in his diocese the Bishops' Committee of Aid to the Interned and Prisoned. He personally made an effort to release the internees and prisoners. He went to detention centers and prisons, where he gave pastoral services⁸³.

The Ordinary (O-P-20), who in the past tried to be friendly towards the authorities, joined the activity supporting the Solidarity social movement during the dynamic August events in the country, especially the popular social protests. After the introduction of martial law, the clergyman repeatedly defended those who had been interned and arrested. He went to detention centers, where he met with the internees, assuring them of moral and material support⁸⁴. The other bishops who supported the union behaved in the same way. The Suffragan ("S-P-6"), who criticized the authorities, met with Solidarity activists, and when the opponents had been interned and arrested, he visited them in detention centers and prisons⁸⁵. The Suffragan (S-P-5), known for his hostile attitude towards the political system of the Polish People's Republic, was a spokesman for the Independent Self-governing Labour Union Solidarity. In his public speeches, he called on the people to support the activities of the union, considering it as a defender of the oppressed and repressed Church in Poland. During martial law, the clergyman

⁸¹ Ministry..., s. 182.

⁸² *Ibidem*, s. 168.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, s. 43.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, s. 156.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, s. 60.

gave moral support to the interned Solidarity activists⁸⁶. Also, the suffragan (S-P-11), who maintained regular contact with the members of the regional board, did not cease his activity after the imposition of martial law, but continued his pastoral service among the internees⁸⁷.

In the opinion of the Security Service officers, the bishops' support for Solidarity had different degrees of intensity. Not all priests were involved in the official support of the Solidarity opposition, some of them were discreet and acted in a "backstage" manner. Therefore, the positive attitude of these hierarchs towards the social movement – manifested only in unofficial support – was communicated to the Security Service by their secret collaborators who had infiltrated the immediate vicinity of the invigilated clergy. The Security Service officers knew that the suffragan (S-P-16) – who criticized the principles of the political system of the Polish People's Republic and the religious policy pursued by the party – was favorably disposed towards Solidarity but in his public speeches he did not disclose it⁸⁸. Another suffragan (S-P-2), negatively disposed towards the politics of the communist authorities, presented his pro-Solidarity attitude only in informal talks, distancing himself from the official support of the union⁸⁹. The Suffragan (S-P-3) did not maintain contacts with the political and administrative authorities. Although his attitude towards Solidarity was positive, he avoided personal participation in all public events of a political nature⁹⁰.

The opinion of the officers of the 4th Department of the Ministry of Interior shows that the Ministry had extensive knowledge about the attitude of some bishops towards Solidarity, despite the fact that these clergy not only did not publicly express their beliefs, but also tried to hide them from unauthorized persons. If bishops decided to reveal their own sympathies or support for the social movement, they did it in a narrow circle of trusted co-workers. Accessing views expressed in closed church circles by the Security Service confirms that the Security Service was able to effectively spy on even the hermetic environment of the Church hierarchy through use of their secret collaborators⁹¹.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, s. 50.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, s. 85.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, s. 130.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, s. 38.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, s. 40–41.

⁹¹ See H. Dominiczak, *Organy bezpieczeństwa PRL w walce z Kościołem katolickim 1944–1990. W świetle dokumentów MSW*, Dom Wydawniczy Bellona, Warszawa 2000; 191–195; A. Grajewski, *Kompleks Judasza. Kościół zraniony. Chryścijanie w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej między oporem a kolaboracją*, Wydawnictwo „W drodze”, Poznań 1999, s. 206–213, 221–223; *Instrukcje, wytyczne, okólniki...*, s. 125–126, 159–162.

Some bishops tried at the same time to maintain good relations with the authorities and favored the opposition. The Ordinary (O-P-12) tried to maintain proper relations with the authorities while sympathizing with the opposition. However, in the opinion of the Security Service, he was critical of “its extreme orientations as harmful to the wider interests of the nation”⁹². According to the Security Service, a similar attitude was presented by an Ordinary (O-P-10) known for his anti-communist convictions. He believed that the period of Solidarity’s activity was not a period of fight for political power, but for respect of the will of the majority of society. In the opinion of the Security Service, this bishop was supposed to present the conviction that “it does not matter what trade unions will be like, because they will still consist mostly of Catholic members”. In his struggle for the solidarity opposition, he promoted the opinion that “there should be no friction between power and society”⁹³.

Other bishops, although they supported Solidarity, tried to play a game with the communists, which consisted of creating the impression of being friendly towards the authorities and at the same time sympathizing with the opposition, the Ordinary (O-P-8) officially tried to avoid open criticism of the authorities in order not to tighten relations with them. Meanwhile, he supported Solidarity secretly and propagated – in the opinion of the Security Service–subversive political messages. He also took up the spiritual care of Solidarity, especially of the family of the leader of Solidarity, Lech Wałęsa, and because he tried to fulfil this duty properly, he constantly observed this family’s situation and met with them in the bishop’s curia⁹⁴. The Security Service officers also accuse the Suffragan (S-P-15), whose behavior seemed to be inconsistent, of keeping up appearances⁹⁵. On the one hand, he “avoids political accents in public speeches” and “does not engage directly in political activity”, on the other hand, he “gives ‘quiet’ support to priests conducting non-religious activity”, connected with the patronage of the Solidarity opposition⁹⁶.

In the consciousness of the officers of the 4th Department of the Ministry of the Interior, there was a conviction that the vast majority of the members of the Polish Episcopate were cautious about the Solidarity social movement, exercising restraint, indecision or even a negative attitude towards it. The Security Service knew that the prejudice of some hierarchs towards the opposition was the result of the influence of the government apparatus, which used the carrot and

⁹² Ministry..., s. 89.

⁹³ *Ibidem*, s. 83.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, s. 72.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, s. 128.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*.

stick approach against the clergy. In the 1980s, General Wojciech Jaruzelski insisted on the services subordinate to him, so that they could punish and reward priests, showing them with clear actions what should be beneficial for them and what should not⁹⁷. Moreover, representatives of the communist regime tried to sow mistrust and prejudice towards some opposition activists. The head of the Ministry of the Interior, Czesław Kiszczak, warned bishops against opposition activists who used churches for political agitation: “Churches serve as stands for atheists and hardened sinners. They are allowed to enter the church because they spit on the authority and system. [...] You’ll see, the same people will soon be spitting on faith and protesting with your priests against the Church [...]. What the Church does will avenge itself”⁹⁸. The caution of the clergy in their relations with Solidarity was probably due to the different ideological preferences of the union members, among whom the influential group were activists with left-wing or liberal beliefs⁹⁹. The bishops were aware that the social movement, which according to various sources had between 9 and 10 million members, included representatives of many circles, including former party activists who had served the communist authorities in the past. Many of them joined the structures of the union so that the communist authorities could control it and politically dominate it.

In the opinion of the Security Service, the most frequent negative attitude towards Solidarity was expressed by bishops who expressed support for the communist authorities, accepted its policy and maintained current contact with party representatives. The suffragan (S-N-1), who maintained contact with the political and administrative authorities, presented a critical stance towards “Solidarity and the underground”¹⁰⁰. Also, the Ordinary (O-N-2), who in his speeches avoided social and political issues, strongly dissociated himself from supporting Solidarity. He only recommended that priests should support “the pastoral Catholic part of the members of Solidarity”¹⁰¹. A more radical stance was taken by the Ordinary (O-N-3), who spoke out against the involvement of priests in the illegal activities of Solidarity¹⁰². The bishop (O-N-4) also kept a clear distance from the pro-Solidarity circles. He was a supporter of proper relations between the Church and the state authorities and never engaged in activities contrary to the overriding

⁹⁷ A. Dudek, *Reglamentowana rewolucja...*, s. 80.

⁹⁸ *Sprawozdanie z rozmowy ks. arcybiskupa Bronisława Dąbrowskiego, Sekretarza Episkopatu, z generałem Czesławem Kiszczakiem, ministrem Spraw Wewnętrznych (Warszawa, 28 lutego 1985 r.)* [w:] P. Raina, *Droga do „Okrągłego Stołu”*. *Zakulisowe rozmowy przygotowawcze*, Wydawnictwo von borowiecky, Warszawa 1999, s. 80–81.

⁹⁹ See W. Kieżun, *Patologia transformacji*, Wydawnictwo Poltext, Warszawa 2012, s. 83.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, s. 62.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, s. 91.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*, s. 95.

interest of the Polish People's Republic.¹⁰³ The Suffragan (S-N-5), who, according to the Security Service, was “a strong opponent of political belligerence on the part of the opposition and underground Solidarity”, showed a reluctant attitude towards Solidarity. The hierarch was in favor of easing the conflict situations between the state and the Church because, as he said, a compromise can always be found¹⁰⁴.

More balanced attitudes towards the social movement were adopted by the hierarchs, who were not interested in the political solutions proposed by Solidarity. This group included priests who played an important role in the process of communication between the Catholic Church and the state authorities at the central level and who held important positions in the structure of the Polish Episcopate. Most often, the clergy presented a neutral attitude towards the social movement, explaining it with their fears of involving the Church in political matters. Some of these bishops were blackmailed by the Security Service, which wanted to force them to adopt certain attitudes and behaviors towards the opposition, in exchange for the implementation of certain demands made by church institutions. The hierarchs were also subjected to pressure in order not only to oppose the involvement of priests in supporting Solidarity, but also, for example, to be punished for their participation in non-religious activities¹⁰⁵.

The officers of the 4th Department of the Ministry of the Interior believed that the most dominant tendency among bishops in this category was an indifferent attitude towards Solidarity. These clergymen were passive towards the social movement and did not maintain any contact with its representatives or did so in an exceptionally cautious manner (S-O-21, S-O-3)¹⁰⁶. Some of them – in fear of consequences – tried not to express their views on current socio-political events (S-O-13)¹⁰⁷ or spoke critically about the state's policy towards the Church only in the presence of the most trusted persons (S-O-10, S-O-23)¹⁰⁸. These clergymen officially declared their loyalty to the authorities (S-O-9)¹⁰⁹, although sometimes, some clergymen on whose discretion the authorities believed they could rely, spoke unfavorably about Marxist doctrine or political principles of the Polish People's Republic (S-O-18, S-O-19)¹¹⁰.

The cautious attitude of some bishops towards the union was, in the opinion of the Security Service, caused by their fears of involving the Church in political

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*, s. 124.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, s. 180.

¹⁰⁵ J. Żaryn *Wstęp...*, 47.

¹⁰⁶ Ministry..., s. 52, 205.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibidem*, s. 147.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, s. 105, 212.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, s. 92.

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*, s. 185, 187.

games. Hierarchs, both in support of the Solidarity movement (S-O-2)¹¹¹ and those referring to the activities of the opposition with caution (S-O-16)¹¹², objected to the use of the Church for political purposes. Although these bishops were in favor of not associating the Church with organizations or socio-political views in the state, some of them showed full agreement and diplomacy in relations with representatives of the authorities and maintained contact with them (S-O-12).(S-O-12)¹¹³.

According to the Security Service, part of the hierarchs emphasized the validity of the social demands expressed by Solidarity. Recognizing the need to keep the fundamental ideological assumptions of the movement close to the social teaching of the Church, they saw in Solidarity the possibility of strengthening and reinforcing the position of the Church in Polish society. However, after the union was outlawed, they did not accept the continuation of conspiracy activities, considering them to be elements of destruction in the social consciousness (O-O-6)¹¹⁴. Therefore, they called for rationality and prudence in expressing social dissatisfaction. During martial law they urged priests to organize assistance for the interned and those who had been dismissed from work, but they did not personally maintain contact with opposition activists (S-O-15)¹¹⁵.

The Security Service expressed its appreciation for the actions of bishops who were arranged in relations with the authorities. The Security Service officers appreciated the activity of the suffragan (S-O-5)¹¹⁶, who – while maintaining regular contact with the authorities – repeatedly suggested to the management of the Solidarity movement that all disputed cases should be resolved by means of dialogue without violating social peace. The hierarch was personally involved in the resolution of some of the conflicts. The Security Service reported that the bishop “avoided contact with extremist elements from the anti-socialist opposition circles”¹¹⁷. The suffragan (S-O-22) was known for his more decisive reaction and he believed that martial law was a necessary evil. The bishop criticized priests who spoke negatively about the elections to national councils. Moreover, he threatened the clergy who supported the underground activity of the opposition with disciplinary consequences¹¹⁸.

The Security Services positively viewed bishops who were realistic and balanced in their relations with the authorities. One of them was the Ordinary (O-O-17),

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*, s. 39.

¹¹² *Ibidem*, s. 175.

¹¹³ *Ibidem*, s. 136.

¹¹⁴ *Ibidem*, s. 70.

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, s. 173.

¹¹⁶ *Ibidem*, s. 56.

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*, s. 56.

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*, s. 208.

whose behavior towards Solidarity was described by the Security Services in the following way:

In the period from August 1980 in the behavior [...] there was a dominant tendency not to associate the Church [...] with the political activity of the regional branches of the Independent Self-governing Labour Union Solidarity and the political groups of the opposition. He paid close attention to the fact that both himself, auxiliary bishops and priests were not treated and used instrumentally by the union activists for non-religious purposes. In his public speeches he persuasively warned against the escalation of social tensions and belligerence. He drew attention to the need for moderation and political prudence. The new socio-political situation created by the imposition of martial law did not significantly affect the strategic line of the behavior [...] Preferring definitely the need to pursue the interests of the Church – also in contacts with the state authorities – he maintained an attitude of not interfering in the development of political events. With regard to opposition activists, he is cautious and does not agree to their participation in church ceremonies¹¹⁹.

The help for the union activists from church institutions was of vital significance for the survival of Solidarity during martial law. Security Service officers scrupulously monitored the activity of hierarchs who, although they were not openly involved in supporting the union during its legal existence, supported the interned and prisoners during martial law for humanitarian reasons. The Security Service reports that the Ordinary (O-O-8), who did not support the radical actions of the opposition, agreed to appoint a committee in the curia to organize humanitarian aid for people deprived of their liberty. This bishop, who advocated a prudent policy of the Church in its relations with the state authorities, believed that the strengthening of relations with the ruling party by supporting the opposition was more damaging to the Church than beneficial¹²⁰. A similar attitude was presented by the Ordinary (O-O-1) who was a spokesman for maintaining contacts with the authorities. Although the hierarchy exercised restraint with regard to the activities of the Solidarity trade union, during martial law in contact with the authorities he acted on behalf of its members who had been detained for carrying out illegal activities and issued personal guarantees to them¹²¹. With the introduction of martial law, other bishops who did not maintain any official contact with Solidarity activists (S-O-4)¹²² or those who were cautious and prudent in their approach to social movements in the past (S-O-7)¹²³ joined in providing assistance to the interned. During martial law, both hierarchs undertook their humanitarian activities to support and defend the interned and their families.

¹¹⁹ *Ibidem*, s. 177.

¹²⁰ *Ibidem*, s. 87.

¹²¹ *Ibidem*, s. 34.

¹²² *Ibidem*, s. 53.

¹²³ *Ibidem*, s. 79.

The Security Service officers observed different behavior of the two hierarchs. Initially, they sympathized with the representatives of Solidarity. One of them, taking part in the information meeting, supported the aspirations and ideas of the independent union in a public speech (S-O-20)¹²⁴. The second, however, “during direct contact with representatives of strike committees, he suggested the need to observe social discipline” (O-O-11)¹²⁵. The introduction of martial law caused both of them to change their attitudes and behavior towards the union. The first of them was no longer active in supporting the opposition, and the second one not only limited contact with the local structures of Solidarity, but – as the Security Service states – was open to suggestions from the communist authorities, which demanded disciplining priests who undertook political engagement¹²⁶.

An example of such an attitude is undoubtedly the opinion expressed by the Security Service on the Ordinary (O-O-14) presenting a flexible position in direct conversations with representatives of local political and administrative authorities:

He took a cautious and wait-and-see stance towards Solidarity, without open declaration on one side, emphasizing at the same time loyalty to the authorities and sympathy for working people. He criticized the escalation of demands and strikes organized by the Solidarity movement, and especially the strikes at universities, especially in the Catholic University of Lublin, accusing the organizers and participants of the lack of realism in the assessment of the situation and the consequences of such behavior. He accepted the introduction of martial law as a sad necessity, subjecting himself to its rigors and declaring at the same time his loyalty to the authorities and his readiness to avoid social and political problems in his official speeches. However, during the period of martial law, he petitioned the authorities for help or the release of the internees. He submitted to the WRON [Military Council for National Salvation] a proposal for “an amnesty” for detainees, motivating the above with, inter alia, his contribution to the attempt to alleviate the tense social situation. After the abolition of martial law there were no facts about his direct contact with the activists of the former Solidarity and his interest in the initiatives of the anti-socialist underground and the political opposition¹²⁷.

Abstract

The position of the Polish Episcopate towards the Solidarity opposition evaluated, as did the situation of the independent union in the Polish People’s Republic and the attitude of some of its members towards the Church and Christian values. In the communiqués issued between 1980 and 1981, the Episcopate, as

¹²⁴ *Ibidem*, s. 203.

¹²⁵ *Ibidem*, s. 115.

¹²⁶ *Ibidem*, s. 115, 203.

¹²⁷ *Ibidem*, s. 158–159.

a collegial body, strongly supported the establishment and functioning of an independent trade union of workers and farmers. The hierarchs took the side of the majority of society, which supported the idea of Solidarity and demanded democratization of social life, especially respect for the rights and dignity of every citizen. Solidarity activists, however, noted that the entry of the church hierarchy into the role of mediator between the social movement and the government resulted in pacification of social moods and became the bargaining chip of the hierarchs in their relations with the authorities. The introduction of martial law and the criminalization of Solidarity clearly weakened the support of part of the Episcopate for the union operating in the underground. Many priests confined themselves to providing humanitarian assistance to interned and imprisoned people and their families. Officially, however, the Episcopate appreciated the social phenomenon of Solidarity, which had strong social support, and demanded in its public statements that independent trade unions should be reactivated. The emergence of Solidarity from the underground and the taking on of the role of the second political force in the country, which could negotiate with the government, strengthened its position. It met with the approval of the Episcopate, which took on the role of a social mediator in talks between the government and the union. Political parties were keenly interested in the stabilizing role of the Church in a situation of social unrest and inevitable social change. After all, they knew that the extreme forces in Solidarity, anticipating the inevitable collapse of communism in Poland, insisted on severe and exemplary punishment of the people responsible for the communist crimes in the totalitarian system.

The attitude of individual bishops towards an independent union revealed internal tensions and divisions as a result of the individual convictions of the hierarchs and the existence of different factions in the Episcopate, whose views on this issue were different. The group of hierarchs strongly supporting Solidarity and its social ideas was few in number, but strongly committed. The bishop did not hide his critical attitude towards the authorities, and in his public speeches he openly supported the social movement of Solidarity, which, in his opinion, expressed the aspirations and hopes of the vast majority of society, and drew its ideological inspirations from Catholic social teaching. The independent trade union was most often supported by hierarchs representing the older generation, appointed by the predecessors of John Paul II. They had a wide experience and knowledge that enabled them to thoroughly evaluate the functioning of the totalitarian system and the methods of its powerful and ideological expansion, especially in the period of Stalinist terror. Their opinions on the communist regime were relatively stable, despite the fact that the communist authorities – in the last decade of the Polish People’s Republic – engaged in the spread of propaganda aimed at giving the totalitarian system a more “human face”.

The officers of the 4th Department of the Ministry of the Interior suggested that the vast majority of the Episcopate consisted of hierarchs who were negative and indifferent to Solidarity, as well as those who, for various reasons, did not disclose their attitude towards the social movement at all. Their attitudes were influenced by personal beliefs, especially the caution with which they referred to the political activity of the union and to the system of values affirmed by some of its leaders. The bishops did not support the confrontational views and actions of the Solidarity extremism. They also did not trust some of the leading Solidarity activists who had been communist activists in the past, promoting Marxist ideology and the totalitarian system on Polish territory. They did not believe in the sudden conversion of people who had attacked the Church in the past and implemented Marxist ideology in society. The distance between some bishops and Solidarity was also a consequence of the policy of the communist authorities, which exerted strong pressure on the hierarchs and even went as far as blackmail. Communists used a strategy in which the loyal attitudes of the clergy towards the authorities were rewarded in different ways, while opposing the ruling party, including supporting the opposition, usually resulted in severe harassment.

The attitude of bishops towards an independent union was conditioned by values, norms and models recognized by the group (Episcopate) or by its influential members, especially leaders, who held managerial positions in the structure of the Episcopate (e.g. the Primate and the Chairman of the Polish Episcopal Conference). Bishops participated in the network of connections existing in the Church structures, and also participated in internal and external interactions, occurring in the social environment with which they maintained current contacts. The changes in the social and political situation in the country were also significant. Some hierarchs, influenced by social rebellion and the Solidarity uprising, transformed their attitude towards the opposition, and sometimes adjusted them to the expectations of the vast majority of society. A similar pattern was observed during martial law and the intensification of repression by the communist authorities, when Polish society – intimidated and pacified by the strength ministries of a totalitarian state – did not manifest its attitude towards the outlawed Solidarity or did so in a discreet and balanced manner. Analogical attitudes and behaviors were also observed in some bishops at that time.

Therefore, the position of the Polish Episcopate towards Solidarity cannot be established unequivocally, as it has changed under the influence of various internal and external factors. The Episcopate (like a social group) tried to represent externally the position resulting from the difficult, internal consensus of the various options existing in the group. The Episcopate officially supported the existence of independent trade unions in Poland and approved the ideas of the Solidarity social movement based on Christian values and Catholic social teaching.

On the other hand, the attitude of individual members of the Episcopate to the Solidarity opposition was diverse. Some hierarchs, by expressing their beliefs, supported the Solidarity opposition and its ideas, while others adopted negative, indifferent attitudes, or did not reveal their attitude towards the social movement at all. Despite the different attitudes and behaviors of the members of the Episcopate towards Solidarity, the religious institution of the Episcopate exerted a significant influence on social and political change in Poland.

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STANOWISKO EPISKOPATU KOŚCIOŁA KATOLICKIEGO W POLSCE WOBEC „SOLIDARNOŚCI”

Streszczenie

W artykule przeprowadzono analizę stanowiska episkopatu Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce wobec – opozycyjnego w stosunku do władz komunistycznych – Niezależnego Samorządnego Związku Zawodowego „Solidarność”. Celem badań było ustalenie postaw i zachowań członków episkopatu wobec idei związku oraz jego działaczy. Ukazano również wpływ instytucji religijnej, jaką jest episkopat, na przemiany społeczno-polityczne w Polsce. W badaniach wykorzystano niepublikowane dotychczas fragmenty tajnych dokumentów Służby Bezpieczeństwa, a także inne źródła zastane – z zakresu socjologii, politologii i historii – dotyczące analizowanej tematyki.

Ustalono, że nastawienie episkopatu do „Solidarności” ewaluowało, zależnie od przekształceń sytuacji społeczno-politycznej w Polsce. W latach 1980–1981 ruch społeczny – mający silne poparcie zdecydowanej większości Polaków – był również oficjalnie popierany przez episkopat. Po wprowadzeniu przez reżim komunistyczny stanu wojennego i zdelegalizowaniu „Solidarności” ustosunkowanie episkopatu do niezależnego związku uległo modyfikacji. Z tajnych dokumentów opracowanych przez komunistyczną Służbę Bezpieczeństwa wynika, iż nastawienie członków episkopatu do „Solidarności” nie było jednorodne. Na zdecydowaną i permanentną pomoc działacze „Solidarności” mogli liczyć tylko ze strony niewielkiej, ale aktywnej i zdeterminowanej grupy hierarchów (25 na 98 biskupów) identyfikujących się z ideami ruchu społecznego. Pozostali hierarchowie byli nastawieni do związku negatywnie, obojętnie lub wcale nie wyrażali swojego stanowiska w tej kwestii. Słabnięcie systemu totalitarnego i stopniowe łagodzenie przez komunistów

polityki wyznaniowej wobec Kościoła sprawiły, że przedstawiciele episkopatu aktywnie włączyli się w moderowanie porozumienia między rządem a opozycją, przyczyniając się do zawarcia układu przy Okrągłym Stole.

Słowa kluczowe: stosunki społeczne, episkopat Kościoła katolickiego, ruch społeczny, Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy „Solidarność”, władze komunistyczne

THE POSITION OF THE EPISCOPATE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN POLAND TOWARDS THE SOLIDARITY OPPOSITION MOVEMENT

Abstract

The article analyses the position of the Catholic Church in Poland towards the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union Solidarity – an organization which was opposed to the communist authorities. The aim of the research was to determine the attitudes and behaviors of the members of the Episcopate towards the idea of the union and its activists. The paper also shows the influence of the Episcopate – the religious institution – on social and political transformations in Poland. The research uses previously unpublished fragments of secret documents of the Security Service, as well as other existing sources – sociology, political science and history – related to the analyzed subject matter.

According to the research, the position of the Episcopate towards Solidarity was evolving, depending on the transformation of the social and political situation in Poland. In 1980–1981, the social movement, which had the strong support of the vast majority of Poles, was also officially supported by the Episcopate. After the communist regime introduced martial law and delegatized Solidarity, the position of the Episcopate towards the independent union was changed. According to secret documents prepared by the communist Security Service, the attitude of the members of the Episcopate towards Solidarity was not uniform. The Solidarity activists could only count on decisive and permanent help from a small but active and determined group of hierarchs (25 out of 98 bishops) who identified themselves with the ideas of the social movement. The other hierarchs were negative or neutral towards the trade union, or they did not express their position on the matter at all. The weakening of the totalitarian system and the gradual easing of the religious policy towards the Church by the communists caused the representatives of the Episcopate to become actively involved in moderating the agreement between the government and the opposition, contributing to the conclusion of the Round Table Agreement.

Keywords: social relations, the Episcopate of the Catholic Church, social movement, the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union “Solidarity”, communist authorities