

Books

Catholic Social Thought in Communist Poland

By Adam Bromke

TADEUSZ MAZOWIECKI: *Rozdroża i wartości* (Crossroads and Values). Warsaw, Biblioteka Wiezi, 1970.

JANUSZ ZABLOCKI: *Na polskim skrzyżowaniu dróg* (At the Polish Intersection). Warsaw, Wydawnictwo ODISS, 1972.

ANDRZEJ MICEWSKI: *Postawy i poglądy* (Attitudes and Viewpoints) Warsaw, Biblioteka ODISS, 1970.

ANDRZEJ WIELOWIEYSKI: *Przed trzecim przyspieszeniem* (Before the Third Acceleration). Warsaw Biblioteka Wiezi, 1968.

ONE OF THE distinctive features of the current scene in Communist Poland is the existence of a genuine Catholic political group known as "Znak." The group originated in the immediate postwar period when two Catholic periodicals—the weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* and the monthly *Znak*—were founded in Cracow under the sponsorship of Adam Cardinal Sapieha. From among their editors and contributors there soon emerged a closely-knit intellectual community which came to be identified by the name of the monthly.

At the climax of the Stalinist period in Poland, the Znak group

suffered an eclipse and during 1953–56 was suppressed altogether. However, after the political changes of 1956, which brought a measure of internal liberalization, the activities of the group were revived and in some respects even expanded. Some individuals who had previously belonged to the "progressivist" Catholic organization Pax switched over to Znak. So-called "Clubs of Catholic Intelligentsia" were established in several Polish cities and provided the group with a rudimentary organizational framework. In 1958, people linked with Znak in Warsaw launched another Catholic monthly, *Wież*.

The Znak group, of course, has had no participation in the Communist government. However, since 1957, it has been represented in the Sejm (Poland's Parliament) by five deputies, who have served primarily as a channel for conveying the sentiments of Polish Catholics to the Communist authorities. Despite this limited political role, the integrity and intellectual achievements of Znak's members have won their group high esteem in the country. They enjoy the full confidence of the Church hierarchy as well as broad support among lay Catholics. They have also won the un-

disputed, although at times grudging, respect of Poland's Communist leaders—Gomulka and Gierek alike.

Znak's activities have understandably aroused a good deal of interest in the West. Its role has been analyzed in many books and articles by Western observers of the Polish scene.¹ Moreover, the writings of some of its prominent early figures—notably Stanislaw Stomma, Stefan Kisielewski, and Jerzy Turowicz—have appeared in English either as articles or as chapters in collective volumes.²

Now, there is a new generation of Znak leaders, who have come to the fore in the three decades since the group's founding. The authors of the four books reviewed here are prominent representa-

¹ See Hansjakob Stehle, *The Independent Satellite*, New York, Praeger, 1965, pp. 102-08; H. Gordon Skilling, *The Governments of Communist East Europe*, New York, Crowell, 1966, pp. 129-30; Adam Bromke, *Poland's Politics*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1967, Ch. 12; Tadeusz N. Cieplak, Ed., *Poland Since 1956*, New York, Twayne, 1972, pp. 38-44, 183-204, 376-82; Adam Bromke and John W. Strong, Eds., *Gierek's Poland*, New York, Praeger, 1973, pp. 151-57, 176-91. A doctoral dissertation on the Znak group by Mrs. S. Miller is in progress at the University of Toronto.

² For example, see the writings by Stomma and Kisielewski in Cieplak, *op. cit.*, and articles by Turowicz and others in Bromke and Strong, *op. cit.*

tives of this already middle-aged group. They are virtual contemporaries: Andrzej Micewski and Janusz Zablocki were born in 1926, and Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Andrzej Wielowieyski in 1927. In their early youth they all participated in the wartime non-Communist underground, and in the immediate postwar years they were educated in the social sciences. As Micewski states in his book (p. 7), they belong to the generation of Poles which "... from the tragic experiences of war became convinced of the existence of a close link between political thought and life, and of the necessity of grounding political programs in the reality of world politics."

All four writers have been involved in political activity for close to thirty years. Mazowiecki, Micewski, and Zablocki belonged to Pax before they joined Znak. Mazowiecki has been Editor-in-Chief of *Wież* since its founding in

1958, and in 1961-71 he served as a Sejm deputy. Zablocki is the director of the Catholic Center of Documentation and Social Studies (ODISS), which published two of the present volumes, and he has been a Sejm deputy since 1965. Micewski was director of the Catholic publishing house "Verum" in 1971-73 and is a recognized authority on recent Polish political history.³ Wielowieyski is Secretary-General of the Warsaw Club of Catholic Intelligentsia.

The four books, like their authors, have certain similarities. As is usual in the case of publications by Catholic writers in Poland, they were all permitted to appear only in limited numbers—no more than 5,000 copies—and hence are addressed primarily to the Catholic

³ His biographies of Pilsudski and Dmowski, especially, have won him broad acclaim. See *W cieniu Marszałka Piłsudskiego* (In the Shadow of Marshal Piłsudski), Warsaw, Czytelnik, 1969, and *Roman Dmowski*, Warsaw, Verum, 1971.

intellectual elite. There is also, as we shall see, a certain unity of theme among them: the volumes by Mazowiecki and Zablocki, especially, overlap in several respects. At the same time, each book expresses the special interests and concerns of its author. Taken together, they are undoubtedly reflective of the major trends in the social and political thought of Catholic circles in contemporary Poland.

THE BOOKS by Mazowiecki and Zablocki include materials written as far back as the early 1950's and even the late 1940's, thus providing interesting insight into the intellectual evolution of the newer generation of Znak leaders. The main preoccupation of this group, of course, has been with the confrontation in Poland between Catholicism and communism. Both Mazowiecki and Zablocki are acutely aware that they are living at a critical juncture in Poland's history—an awareness attested to by the very titles of their books, which translate into English as *Crossroads and Values* and *At the Polish Intersection*. Zablocki elaborates on the idea expressed in his title in these words:

After the Second World War, Poland found itself at a unique intersection. It was here, in our country, that two worlds which had hitherto existed separately met for the first time in history. These were: victorious socialism inspired by Marxism-Leninism and the example of Communist construction in the USSR, and the Catholicism that derives its strength in Poland both from its broad popular base and from its thousand-year-long presence in the history of our nation. (p. 5)

Reviewers in This Issue

ADAM BROMKE—Professor and Chairman, Department of Political Science, McMaster University (Hamilton, Ontario); author of *Poland's Politics, Idealism vs. Realism*, 1967, and editor of numerous works, including *Gierek's Poland*, 1973.

JOSEPH ROTHSCHILD—Professor and Chairman, Department of Political Science, Columbia University (New York); author of various books on East European politics, including *The Communist Party of Bulgaria*, 1959, and *East Central Europe Between the Two World Wars*, 1974.

PETER GROTHE—Instructor in Political Science, School of Continuing Education, San Jose State University (San Jose, California); former foreign relations adviser to Senator Hubert

Humphrey; author of *To Win the Minds of Men*, 1958, and a forthcoming book on Scandinavian attitudes toward the United States.

ROBERT F. DERNBERGER—Professor and Associate Chairman, Department of Economics, at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor); author of numerous papers on the economy of the People's Republic of China, the most recent appearing in Dwight H. Perkins, Ed., *China's Modern Economy in Historical Perspective*, 1975, and in the report of the Joint Economic Committee of the US Congress, *China's Economy: A Reassessment*, July 1975.

ALAN ABOUCHAR—Professor of Economics, University of Toronto; author of *Soviet Planning and Spatial Efficiency*, 1971; editor of and contributor to the forthcoming *Price Consistency and Efficiency in Soviet-Type Economies*.

The position of the Catholics, on the one hand wanting to remain faithful to their creed and on the other hand striving to take an active part in a national life dominated in every sphere by the Communists, has been difficult and at times even painful. "There are problems," observes Mazowiecki with philosophic detachment, "which are insoluble: one simply has to live through them" (p. 10). The response of the Polish Catholics to the new situation has been basically threefold. Some persisted in their conservative attitudes and prayed that the Communist system would disappear. Others offered the Communist authorities their limited cooperation out of necessity rather than choice—above all, out of acceptance of the harsh realities of Poland's geopolitical position. Still others, especially the younger ones, searched for some positive motivation—compatible with their faith—which would enable them to participate in the mainstream of national life side by side with the Communists. They adopted an open posture toward the new system and declared their readiness to enter into a dialogue with the Marxists. Both Zablocki and Mazowiecki belong to this last group.

Like many Catholics in Poland who saw their position under communism as similar in some respects to that of the French Catholics under the Third Republic, Zablocki and Mazowiecki turned for inspiration to the French Catholic thinkers. Substantial parts of the books of both are devoted to discussion of the philosophic and social thought of Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier. Mounier's distinction between spiritual order (*le christianisme*) and temporal order (*le chrétienté*) helped them to delineate two spheres of activi-

ties for Polish Catholics: the religious and the secular. Both Zablocki and Mazowiecki, however, were aware that the situations in France and Poland were by no means identical, and they warned against the danger of imitating the French example too closely. "The attitude of Polish Catholics toward foreign models must not be uncritical," writes Zablocki. "These [models] should be approached in a selective and creative fashion" (pp. 372-73).

From Mounier's personalism the Polish Catholics developed a coherent program of their own. It has been particularly closely identified with the group around *Wież*, for whom Mazowiecki and Zablocki were prominent spokesmen. The two authors view communism primarily as an instrument of economic and social advancement. Since these Communist goals are desirable *per se*, Catholics may and, in fact, should participate in their attainment. Both writers recognize that Poland under communism has made significant strides in the socioeconomic sphere—that it managed, in fact, to overcome its centuries-old backwardness in only 20 years. "It must not be ignored," observes Mazowiecki, "that civilizational progress in Poland became possible only under socialism and within the socialist structure" (p. 110).

Zablocki's and Mazowiecki's approval of the general socioeconomic objectives of communism, however, in no way implies their acceptance of its philosophic foundations. In this regard, on the contrary, both writers strongly reaffirm their commitment to Catholic doctrine. Above all, they categorically repudiate the Marxist tenet that, with the disappearance of capitalism, religion will also come to an end. In their opinion,

the search for transcendental values is a permanent manifestation of human nature and will continue under any circumstances. "Religious needs," argues Mazowiecki, "are not linked to one or another social system" (p. 59). The presence of the Catholic Church in Communist Poland, then, is not a dispensable residue of the past, but a natural phenomenon which will continue indefinitely into the future.

The two authors also refuse to accept all the political implications of communism, especially its restrictions on personal freedom. This is not only because of their concern with freedom of religious practices. They make it quite clear that their concerns are broader. Democracy in their eyes is closely related to the personalist ideals of respect for law and human rights. "To me," writes Mazowiecki, "religious freedom is a part of the general liberties of man" (p. 12). Moreover, the two writers also believe that democratization of the Communist system is indispensable to its continued socioeconomic progress. They see this as the only way that new human energies and initiatives can be released. For all these reasons, declares Zablocki, "the Polish Catholics are natural allies of democratic tendencies. They are interested in gradually implementing the program of democratization . . . in all spheres of national life" (p. 140).

Understandably, the Polish Catholics were greatly enheartened by the changes that took place in the Catholic Church in the 1960's. Large parts of the volumes by Mazowiecki and Zablocki are devoted to detailed discussions of the highlights of the Vatican Council and the contents of the various Papal encyclicals

of that period. They particularly welcomed Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum progressio*, which, in the spirit of Mounier, recognized the Catholics' moral commitment to socioeconomic progress. Likewise, the Polish Catholics warmly endorsed the Vatican's "opening to the East," which they felt should contribute to the improvement of relations between the Church and the Communist government in Poland. These hopes were well articulated in Zablocki's 1971 speech in the Sejm, which is included at the end of his book (p. 450):

Socialism in Poland, allied to the USSR, has proved to be more than a transitional phenomenon—a mere episode in history. By the same token Catholicism, which has recently demonstrated its vitality and its capability to adapt to changing historical circumstances, is also not a transitional phenomenon. The inescapable conclusion is . . . that there does not exist, nor in fact can there exist, any alternative to coexistence between them.

WIELOWIEYSKI'S book nicely complements those of Mazowiecki and Zablocki. Focused exclusively on the problem of socioeconomic progress, which Polish Catholics recognize as extremely important, the book is basically a sociological study of development viewed in both its global and its Polish dimensions. Wielowieyski distinguishes three major advances in man's history: first, the inception of human civilization some ten thousand years ago; second, the industrial revolution; and third, the entry into the technological age. He believes that at present mankind is on the threshold of this new era; hence the title of

his volume (in English translation), *Before the Third Acceleration*.

The author traces the relationship between technical changes and social organization throughout modern history. He offers detailed and, in many respects, original interpretations of the industrial revolutions in Britain and the Soviet Union. His analysis of the latter is remarkably objective considering its inclusion in a book published in a Communist country. Wielowieyski pays tribute to the success of the Soviet Communists in overcoming Russia's backwardness within a very short period, but at the same time he does not fail to point out that it involved great human costs.

Turning to Poland, Wielowieyski notes that in the 19th and even the first part of the 20th century, socioeconomic progress was very slow. Until 1914, the country was partitioned among foreign powers, which paid little attention to the development of their Polish provinces. In the interwar years, progress was made in unifying the country and strengthening the Poles' national consciousness, but socioeconomic changes were slow to come, with the result that on the eve of World War II Poland remained an underdeveloped country. In the postwar period, by contrast, the economy made rapid strides. In 1967, national income was five times as great, and industrial production twelve times as great, as in 1938. As a result, the gap separating Poland from the advanced modern countries has already narrowed sharply. Wielowieyski admits, however, that in the course of rapid industrialization based on a Soviet model which telescoped the various stages of social growth, serious mistakes were made and many

human reserves wasted. He also acknowledges that the intense efforts demanded by rapid industrialization have made the Poles "extremely weary" (p. 21).

Notwithstanding the progress already made, the author sees a new challenge ahead for the Polish nation. As he points out, Poland has only crossed the threshold of industrialization at a time when the most advanced countries of the world are already entering into the new technological era. Wielowieyski discusses various aspects of the technological revolution in the West and their relevance for Poland. In doing so, he demonstrates a broad familiarity with the Western literature on the subject, reviewing at length the ideas of Kenneth Boulding, Marshall McLuhan, Daniel Bell, and several other Western writers.

Wielowieyski's main concern is that Poland continue to progress into the technological age. He argues that to assure this, all possible incentives must be employed to overcome the weariness of the people, and he sees the key to success in a democratic evolution of social relations. Hence, like Zablocki and Mazowiecki, he views democratization as indispensable to Poland's continued economic development. Wielowieyski writes:

Socialism will become a stimulating ideal for the people only if it is closely identified in their consciousness with democratization. People are willing to undertake great efforts and accept new sacrifices only when social goals are determined with their active participation. (p. 391)

THE FINAL book reviewed here, Micewski's *Attitudes and Viewpoints*, is a collection of essays

covering a much broader range of topics—from basic issues of political philosophy to analysis of current international problems, always with an eye toward assessing Poland's position in the contemporary world. Two themes pervade his commentary: political realism and personalism.

In reviewing the world scene, Micewski reveals himself to be a political realist *par excellence*. What counts in international politics, he writes, "is close scrutiny and cold calculation" (p. 158). His analysis of Poland's position is marked by extreme sobriety. He believes that ever since World War II the supreme reality in Central Eastern Europe has been the dominant position of the Soviet Union:

The Europe of Versailles does not exist, nor will it ever be recreated. . . . The absence of any interest in our region on the part of the West—and this can hardly be overemphasized—is a permanent phenomenon. . . . What is of crucial significance to Poland is the course of developments in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. . . . It should be noted that the people who are opposed to our participation in the Eastern bloc can think only in negative terms, but they have nothing positive to say; indeed, it is clear that they have no real alternative to offer. . . . (p. 157-58)

According to Micewski, participation in the Communist bloc, although the result of *force majeure* rather than of choice, has proved advantageous to Poland in various ways. It has helped the Poles to maintain their Western boundary along the Oder and Neisse rivers, and it has also been of crucial significance

in Poland's rapid postwar economic advancement. Like other Catholic writers, Micewski is strongly committed to socioeconomic progress, but he views it less in moralistic and more in nationalistic terms—*i.e.*, primarily as a determinant of national power. It is power, he declares, ". . . not wishful thinking and romantic visions, but the real indices of technical, economic, and military progress, that determine the position of a country in the international sphere" (p. 171).

Yet Micewski, while approving of Poland's participation in the Eastern bloc, points out that the country's political culture remains basically Western and very much part of a common European heritage:

The Latin culture, the attachment to Christianity, the libertarian traditions in our history, and finally the pluralism of opinions in contemporary Poland—all these affirm humanist values in our country. (p. 136)

In line with this tradition, the author affirms his own belief in personalism. His ideal is a society where ". . . the main emphasis is on human initiative, the role of the individual, and respect for his dignity as a man" (p. 114).

The attachment of the Poles to freedom, argues Micewski, ought to be respected by the Communists. Otherwise the government will repeatedly encounter obstacles in carrying out its goals, and the country's progress will be hindered. Micewski's strong advocacy of democratization leads him to demand not only ". . . the right to criticize and to hold different opinions, but also an unequivocal acceptance of the pluralistic character of the society" (p. 132).

THESE FOUR books do not, of course, constitute a single, coherent Catholic program. Zablocki and Micewski pay more attention to Polish nationalism than do Mazowiecki and Wielowieyski, while Zablocki and Wielowieyski seem more forthcoming in their acceptance of Communist socioeconomic goals than the other two writers. Moreover, these four authors tend to reflect the views of the Warsaw *Wież* group rather than those of the Cracow group centered around *Tygodnik Powszechny*, which is somewhat more conservative and, incidentally, more influential in the Catholic community. There is no doubt, however, that the ideas and the aspirations presented by the four writers are shared by a great many Catholics in Poland today.

So far, the efforts of Poland's Catholics to achieve genuine coexistence with the Communists do not appear to have been very successful. Real coexistence, as Mazowiecki rightly observes, would require a true dialogue "conducted in a spirit of mutual sincerity, respect and trust" (pp. 94-95). There is no doubt about the Catholics' readiness to enter into such a dialogue, but unfortunately there is less evidence of a similar attitude on the Communist side. The Communist authorities often give the impression that their tolerance of the *Znak* group stems—to borrow Mazowiecki's distinction—not from acceptance of "pluralism as a natural and permanent element of socialist civilization," but rather from "temporary expediency" (p. 143).

Since Gierek's ascent to power in 1970 the position of the *Znak* group has not improved and may, in some respects, actually have deteriorated. Requests for permission to increase the circulation

of *Tygodnik Powszechny* from 40,000 to 50,000 copies have been steadfastly refused. Censorship of Catholic papers and books has remained tight. The Catholics have been discriminated against in public service and at the universities, and Catholic intellectuals have been conspicuously absent from Polish delegations at various international gatherings. In 1972, the Communists crudely meddled in the selection of the Znak parliamentary candidates, preventing Mazowiecki from continuing as a deputy. In 1973, the Catholic publishing house "Verum," directed by Micewski, was closed down.

Yet, for the time being, even if the Communists' tolerance stems solely from expediency, there is no need for apprehension about

Znak's continued existence. As long as the group enjoys the support of the Catholic Church, it is unlikely that the Communists will attempt to attack it frontally. The regime, however, is likely to persist in its tug-of-war against the Catholic intellectuals and continue efforts to restrict their activities. Under such circumstances, the Znak group might unilaterally decide against participation in the next Sejm. The Polish Catholics, of course, would prefer to avoid taking such a drastic step; instead, they continue to hope that the Communists will show some signs of readiness to enter into a true dialogue with them.

The future of Znak has important implications extending beyond the fate of Poland's Catholics. Located at the crossroads of

different political and cultural systems, at the intersection of communism and Catholicism, the group serves as a sensitive barometer by which true Communist intentions can be gauged. As such, its fortunes are relevant not only to relations between the Communist countries and the Vatican, but also to East-West relations in general. The Polish Catholics are well aware of the significance of their role. As Mazowiecki puts it,

There can be no true opening of Christianity to the East, nor any true coexistence between communism and the Christian world, which excludes Poland; in this regard, we can either advance or hinder global solutions by confirming or disproving the prospects of coexistence. (p. 179)

Communism in Bulgaria

By Joseph Rothschild

NISSAN OREN: *Bulgarian Communism: The Road to Power: 1934-1944*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1971.

NISSAN OREN: *Revolution Administered: Agrarianism and Communism in Bulgaria*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.

BOGOSLAV DOBRIN: *Bulgarian Economic Development Since World War II*. New York, Praeger Publishers, 1973.

THE PUBLICATION of these three stimulating books provides a welcome incentive to speculate about

the unique as well as the universal features of Bulgarian communism—and indeed of Bulgarian political and socioeconomic development in general over the past half-century. Rather than recapitulate the contents of the three studies, the following essay will utilize them as springboards for the consideration of some interesting propositions which they either express or catalyze. Lest this treatment cause the high opinion in which the reviewer holds these books to be lost from view (though it is implicit throughout), he wishes to state it at the outset:

these are learned as well as provocative studies.

The Bulgarian experience punctures the conventional present-day academic myth that political violence and political radicalism (of both left and right varieties) are the outgrowth of socioeconomic inequality and/or ethnic tension. The society of independent Bulgaria has traditionally been highly egalitarian in terms both of property distribution and of status flexibility. It was unhampered by any historic nobility, and its easily accessible educational system was effective in facilitating occupa-