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COUNTRY Poland

REPORT

SUBJECT Who Joins the Communist Party and Why in Present-Day Poland (Party lessons from Church History, Impact of *Grainywisz*)

DATE DISTR.

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The report is entitled Who Joins the Communist Party and Why in Present-Day Poland.

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REPORT

COUNTRY : Poland DATE DISTR. 20 July 1961

SUBJECT : Who Joins the Communist Party and Why NO. OF PAGES 8
 in Present-Day Poland (Party lessons
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DATE OF INFORMATION : [Redacted] REFERENCES:

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II. Factors Bearing on the Decision to Join Party

[redacted] the basic factor in the formation of a firm attitude towards communism among the mature and settled members of society in Poland today is the individual's own character which was shaped to a considerable extent during the person's childhood and youth. Depending on the age of the individual's

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[redacted] such development may have occurred in an extraordinary war situation or during any part of the post-war communist period. Under either of these circumstances various other influences also played an important role in shaping character. All of these factors had an effect on the individual's attitudes, since they tended to accentuate strength or weaknesses or a willingness to vacillate and compromise. Today the ultimate decision made by the Pole who is faced with the choice of whether or not to join the Party depends largely upon his ability to withstand the powerful material and psychological pressures which continue to be exerted on him. For many middle-aged or older Poles such a decision is further complicated by the realization that not only are they personally affected together with their entire families, but also at stake are the numerous material advantages which act as a powerful inducement for them to adapt their ideals and beliefs to the so-called "present day reality". In the final analysis, the intensity of the person's desire to adhere to his personal principles and his willingness to make sacrifices for these actually determine his ultimate course of action.

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In the case of the average Polish youth who had not been exposed to the pre-1939 religious or patriotic indoctrination, additional factors come into play because his character is still in the process of being formed. Here the question is what influences are actually brought into action in this process, and how they melt together. The family, the church, and the school all play an important part in the development of today's Polish youth. Anti-communist parents with strong principles instill many of their beliefs into their children. [redacted]

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[redacted] the church as a factor exerts its influence not only directly during church attendance and through the clergy, but also to a great extent through the child's mother. While the father is frequently fully engrossed in the basic problem of making a living, the mother is in a position and has the interest and active desire to pass on her religious beliefs.

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Regarding the schools, [redacted]

[redacted] the strongest practical influence of the schools comes not so much from the personality and approach of one teacher or another, but rather from the general orientation of the curriculum and the entire academic program. [redacted] the youth of Poland today as a somewhat uncontrolled element in society. Their attitudes and behavior are not based on orientation toward the East or West; they are simply a confused product of present Polish society and its materialistic realities. In the minds of young people, the communist education and environment, with their limited scope and perspective, are mixed with a desire for Western material goods and moral values, and a general longing for a better life. Young Poles know that people in the West, old and young, live better, but they do not understand why or how they achieved such higher standards. The idea that this is the result of industriousness and hard work is difficult for them to accept because they know that identical application in Poland does not produce similar results. In addition, the indoctrination which they received from their teachers tends to instill in each student a more or less predetermined attitude toward Western youth. As a result of lack of possibility for improvement, the young Poles have lost practically all initiative and ambition so that today they have reached a state in which they are unable to give of themselves in order to help themselves. At present the ultimate goal for the young Pole is to find a good "position" - not a job but literally a "position," from which, in addition to a nominal salary, the incumbent can obtain fringe benefits in the form of housing, prestige, and, above all, an opportunity to supplement his income through "private" transactions.

Lack of parental control is a strong factor in the development of the materialistic attitude of Polish youth. The relaxation of discipline is considerably more pronounced among the families of intellectuals than it is among those of workers. The latter tend to depend upon each other more closely and, as a consequence, parental influence as well as that of the Catholic church is more pronounced. In such an environment individual ideals and principles have a better opportunity to survive and develop. Beyond this limited family and religious influence, [redacted] no counter force which would tend to curb the wildness of present-day youth in Poland. Even though various church, party and other elements in Poland have their own ideas as to what should be done, [redacted] never [redacted] existence of any definite program directed towards an alleviation of the problem.

[redacted] western influence is definitely felt in Poland today. This is perhaps most strongly imparted through the increasing flow of travel and visitors in both directions, and through western participation in events such as the Poznan Fair. On the other hand, [redacted] radio because of its technical limitations. [redacted]

[redacted] Western broadcasts never came in clearly, and it was necessary to strain and devote full attention to hear them. [redacted]

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Basic and important changes occurred in Polish radio and television propaganda after October 1956. Up to the political upheaval, news and related programs had been dull, and it was easy to distinguish truth from falsehood. After 1956, however, the quality of news programs improved considerably. All facts presented over the air were accurate

[Redacted] much greater emphasis was placed on commentary, which was also made more interesting. The propaganda was injected into the comments on the news. Even though the interpretations were slanted and were subjective, this was done in such a clever and sophisticated way that it was almost unrecognizable to the average listener. In addition, new commentators appeared; well-known, experienced, topflight news analysts, with highly professional appearance and delivery. When they discussed a topic, it was difficult not to believe them implicitly. Propaganda of this type had not existed before in Poland, and it naturally had a strong influence - particularly on young people and those with little knowledge about the West or those who had no basis for making comparisons. [Redacted] analysts of this new group

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PODKOWINSKI, Marian: On television.

[Redacted]

WOJCICKI, fnu: On television.

[Redacted]

JASZUNSKI, Zbigniew: On television.

[Redacted]

BRONJAREK, fnu: On radio and television.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] all four of these analysts reported many true facts, and their commentary was so clever that it was impossible to tell where the truth ended and the lies began.

[Redacted]

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There is one additional factor which has a powerful psychological impact upon the attitude of Poles toward communism. Even though this concerns particularly the younger people, it does not exclude many of the older elements as well. This is the fact of the status quo, the fact that the present regime has been in the saddle for some 15 years and shows no signs of relinquishing its power. It is becoming more and more difficult to think of the present situation as being either extraordinary or temporary. People are settled in their jobs and they have become accustomed to their homes and apartments. Children go to school, they graduate, and as they mature they

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begin work, get married, and in turn have children, and they die - all in a natural way. At present there is a whole new generation of Poles who have known nothing but communism; they may not be happy with it, but they have no basis for comparison with other systems. In the face of this continued routine flow of life, any course but accommodation becomes difficult.

III. Effect of Joining the Party on Individual Attitude and on Personal and Social Relationships

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once a man joins the Party one can never feel free to talk with him again as one did before. He becomes a different person; irrespective of the closeness of former friendship or the motives for joining the Party, the relationship between the two individuals must undergo a change.

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at present it is rare for a person to volunteer for PZPR membership. Today such action would be regarded with considerable suspicion. In 1961 the normal way for a person to join PZPR is by invitation. Once the new member begins to attend party meetings, he is assigned specific tasks. For example, this may involve visiting a certain village once a month to explain to the peasants why they should join a collective. On the surface it appears that the invitation to join the Party is not a command, and the prospective candidate may refuse. Even though nothing specific actually occurs, the person who rejected the invitation is able to observe as time goes on that his career does not advance. When he compares his progress at work with the careers of his colleagues who accepted PZPR invitations, he finds that he is vegetating in his job.

IV. Who Joins the Party and Why

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Some Poles join the Party because they believe in communism; most of these come from the worker-class. Since they come from the lower educational and economic levels with a narrower outlook than the intelligentsia, these individuals are more inclined to believe communist propaganda and to follow party slogans. Most of the people in this category are young men, under 30, who can make comparisons

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between communism and other systems of government only on the basis of what they may have read. Most of these workers are impressed when in response to the party propaganda they have intensified their efforts and in return are rewarded with an invitation to join the PZPR. Since many are active people, and the Party provides an outlet for their energy, they are all the more inclined to accept the invitation. 50X1-HUM

before 1939 in the town of Koskie, in south-central Poland, there were three factories employing a total of some 2800 workers. Both living and working conditions in this area were such that they provided fertile ground for communism to spread, and many of the workers not only belonged to the Party, but they were also genuine ideological sympathizers. After 1945, however, 90% of these workers completely lost their interest in communism when they saw it in action. The present PZPR membership in this area is made up primarily of young men; most of the activists come from the ranks of former partisans or the employees of the Security Service (U.B.).

the overall percentage of PZPR members is highest among the intelligentsia, next come the workers, and finally the peasants. Of all the members of the intelligentsia who join the Party, less than one per cent do so for ideological reasons. All of the others are opportunists of one type or another; their primary inducement for joining the Party is material advantage. 50X1-HUM

such people as being at a relatively low intellectual and moral level, much below the national average. When faced with a choice of principle versus material advantage, such persons succumb to the latter because they lack moral strength, personal integrity or ethical standards. 50X1-HUM

the excessive use of alcohol, the drinking of which is encouraged by the low cost of vodka, also plays a role in this process of moral degeneration. 50X1-HUM

the percentage of habitual heavy drinkers is much higher among PZPR members than among non-party people, and observes that, in some respects, the excessive use of alcohol has almost become a way of life in Poland today. Among the intelligentsia, the most likely to join the Party are those who work in enterprises and institutes, as opposed to the more independent professional men like doctors and dentists. Lawyers partially fall into this latter category, although many work in cooperatives. Many people in the scientific and academic field joined the PZPR in the early 1950's because of the high demand for personnel to staff the increasing number of new and enlarged higher educational institutions. At that time the Party offered professorships and other senior academic positions to individuals whose actual training could never have qualified them for such posts. Engineers and technicians who were party members became heads of university departments. In more recent years, however, as these posts became filled, the number of scientists and academicians who were promoted through joining the PZPR has decreased considerably. 50X1-HUM

there are many reasons why an individual may join the PZPR, the following list effort to bring out those factors which most important. Today a Pole may become a communist because of: 50X1-HUM

A. The possibility for job and professional advancement. Although the non-party man can advance in his career, certain posts are not open to him and his progress in general is slower than that of the party member. In a factory, for example, the chief engineer can be a non-party man, but the director cannot.

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B. Possibility for advancement for the man with low or mediocre qualifications and ability. Whereas the non-party man of this type is distinctly limited, the party member can advance in position well beyond his professional ability. A mediocre engineer can attain a position netting him the same salary as a skilled non-party engineer. Such a man in academic life will be selected as director of a department in a university over a non-party man with better qualifications.

C. Privileges and perquisites that accompany party membership; better housing, educational opportunities for children, increased pension on retirement, etc.

D. A desire to participate and have a voice in the government. This is impossible from outside the Party. Some people who are genuinely interested in helping their countrymen actually join the Party because they feel that only as communists they can be in a position to help others.

E. Personal ambition and desire for status. This factor is most common with younger men.

F. (Valid principally up to 1953-54) A desire to conceal something in past life - class origin, profession, crime, pre-war political activities, wartime collaboration with the Germans.

G. (Applicable particularly to those who joined the Party in the immediate post-Stalin period) Coercion or fear of the future impelled many to seek the protection and security offered by party membership. many of these individuals are actually strongly anti-communist at heart.

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practically speaking, religion is not necessarily a deterrent for a man to join the Party.

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V. Party Lessons from Church History

contemporary communism has adopted and learned a great deal from the Catholic Church insofar as handling and dealing with people is concerned.

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the system, or at least its principles of control, are based on 2000 years of experience and are well tested and proven. These principles are the following:

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A. There can be but one basic truth with no variations permitted.

B. There is a special professional core (the clergy or the party professionals) who interpret this truth and who at the same time serve the interests of the ruling or controlling power.

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C. Basic questions are decided by elders, who in their earlier life have been thoroughly tried and proven.

D. The principle of a strong binding discipline obtains.

E. Women have no voice in major affairs. [redacted] after 40 years of socialism, there had to be at least one Furtseva for show purposes.) 50X1-HUM

F. The transmission mechanism connecting the church with the masses is the same as the one utilized by the communists to reach the people. In the former case this role is played by the various church organizations; in the latter, by the trade unions, youth organizations, the women's organizations and in Poland the Peasant and Democratic Parties. [redacted] specifically excluded the PAX organization and various technical organizations. 50X1-HUM

G. [redacted]

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[redacted] the political police must again increase because it is essential to the continuance of the communist system.

H. The universality of both church and communism, i.e., the fact that they are not limited to one or a few countries, but are world-wide in scope. [redacted]

I. The individual is insignificant compared with the idea.

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J. The concept of working for the future; in the church, for future salvation and future life; in communism, for future ideal socialist state.

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