

A history of 'Experience and the Future'

In the 1976-78 period, after a wave of strikes and protests over food price hikes, Polish leader Edward Gierek entrusted Stefan Olszowski with drafting an outline for economic reform. His conclusions led, even before Gierek fell in summer 1980, to the gradual dismantling of Gierek's industrial investment program, just at the point when Poland's British and American creditors had decided that Poland no longer merited development or balance-of-payments loans on favorable terms.

Today, Olszowski is cast as a "hardliner," a man who would guarantee on Moscow's behalf the integrity of Poland as a socialist entity. But it was from Olszowski's consultations on economic reform, according to sources who know his aides, that there emerged the project known as "Experience and the Future," or by its Polish initials, DiP.

One Western friend of Experience and the Future calls it the most "pivotal" group in Poland "because of its long-range and far-reaching liberal reform strategy, which does not pose itself as a direct threat to the Soviet System."

The first of DiP's studies and surveys on reform, "Report on the State of the Republic and Ways to Improve It," circulated in May 1979, after which DiP was banned from meeting. In 1980, its coordinators conducted a survey of 150 prominent Poles, one-third of them party members, and printed it under the title "How to Get Out of It." This was the manifesto of DiP's British-linked directors.

In addition to calling for changes in the "style of governing the state," DiP attacked "stultifying centralization" and, in the case of economic policy, specified the need for "a shift away from central control of the economy and toward greater autonomy of regional and smaller units" and reorganization to "enhance the role of individual enterprises." This became precisely the agenda followed since the August 1980 mass strike for erasing the vestiges of a capital-formation program of heavy industry in Poland.

DiP bridged the gap between communist party reformers and nonparty British and other foreign intelligence networks in Poland.

Its leading light was Stefan Bratkowski, a sociologist and a party member. Bratkowski became the first party member to thank the small Workers Defense Committee (KOR), a collection of ex-

Trotskyists whose efforts are directed from emigré member Leszek Kolakowski's headquarters at All Souls College in Oxford and funded by foreign sources, including the London Polish government-in-exile channels, for its role in shaping the strikes.

But no Polish sociologist avoids the influence of Jan Szczepanski, who runs the Polish Academy of Sciences social sciences division. Szczepanski worked with DiP. And Szczepanski is a recruit of the Tavistock Institute, the British intelligence center for international operations conducted through the sociology and anthropology professions, and sits on the board of its theoretical journal *Human Relations*.

In his capacity as Polish chairman of the Anglo-Polish Round Table, Szczepanski consults each year with such Britons as Mark Bonham Carter, an advisory board member of the Index on Censorship, a London-based platform for East European dissident writers. The Index is financed by the Arts Council, presided over by, among others, Anthony Quinton, a colleague of KOR's Kolakowski at Oxford.

One of the three Polish members of the Club of Rome, Jan Strzelecki, joined DiP. So did Bogdan Cywinski, who ran the Society for Academic Courses, or underground "flying university," whose curriculum encompassed "Christian existentialism," the logical positivism of Oxford Prof. A. J. Ayer, and the writings of KOR members Kolakowski and Adam Michnik.

One patron of DiP was Mieczyslaw Rakowski, now a deputy prime minister. As a party Central Committee member, Rakowski kept his association with DiP low key, but when he wrote an editorial in his weekly *Polityka* in July 1980, after the first small strikes occurred in Lublin, it was widely recognized as the DiP program coming into the public eye. Rakowski wrote, "Our vital national interest requires . . . a comprehensive program for structural changes involving the guidance and management of the national economy . . . thought-out decentralization. Our society has still not been psychologically conditioned to make sacrifices."

In May 1981, with many of its members in powerful positions, DiP reconstituted itself to issue a warning that if Soviet forces enter Poland, partisan warfare will begin.