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/// Keston College (1969–1989) and the evaluation of its activities by the Polish communist intelligence

During the Cold War, people split in two camps would not only enter into political, military and economic arguments, but also clash in a strong ideological conflict. In this period, when the Western slogan: ‘Better dead than red’ was on everyone’s lips, ruling leaders in the East were trying to defend their own ideological *status quo*, by, among other things, battling against so-called Western centres of ideological subversion. As it emerges from preserved documents of Department I of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the People’s Republic of Poland, the Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism, founded in 1969 in Great Britain,¹ later to be colloquially known as Keston College² was regarded as such a centre. This paper aims to present the activities of Keston College and verify its classification by Polish communist intelligence as a Western centre of ideological subversion. Looking for an answer to the question: ‘why was Keston College treated by officers of the Polish communist intelligence as a centre of ideological subversion?’ I will use the analysis of archival sources and references to the opinions of Keston College researchers

1 = = The investigation regarding Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism was initiated in 1979 in Division XI of Department I of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the People’s Republic of Poland. At the beginning of 1988, it was transferred to Division III of Department I of the Ministry of Internal Affairs as a result of establishing the object-based investigation with the cryptonym ‘Circus’, registration number 17888. It was completed in November 1989. Teczka Rozpracowania Obiektowego dot. Keston College—ośrodka Studiów nad Religią i Komunizmem w Wielkiej Brytanii. [Object Research File for Keston College—Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism in Great Britain], 1979–1989, AIPN, 02071/27, The Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, Poland.

2 = = The centre was named ‘Keston College’ after transferring its registered office in 1974 from Chislehurst to Keston Common on the outskirts of London.

and historical literature. In the article, I refer mainly to the archival materials of the Ministry of the Interior of the People's Republic of Poland. However, it should be borne in mind, that intelligence officers from countries remaining in the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union also spoke in a similar tone about the activities of Keston College. I will carry out comparative research in this area in the forthcoming publication *Keston College and the Polish Affairs*.

== Foundation and activities of Keston College

Despite the passage of more than fifty years since the foundation of Keston College, still no definitive monograph exists on this organisation. The following works contributed to writing its story: Jenny Robertson's popular book *Be Our Voice. The Story of Michael Bourdeaux and Keston College*,³ a chapter in Mark Hurst's book analysing the relationships of British organisations defending human rights and reporting on Soviet dissidents in 1965–1985,⁴ as well as a collection of essays by people active at Keston College in the past, archivists and scholars, published by Baylor University Press in 2019 and entitled *Voices of the Voiceless*.⁵ The diary of Michael Bourdeaux,⁶ the founder of Keston College, was published in 2019. It has become an important source of information about the organisation. Keston's Archive and Library located at the Keston Center for Religion Politics and Society at Baylor University in the USA is also a mine of information.⁷

Among authoritative sovietologists who supported the idea of establishing Keston College as a centre analysing the situation relevant to the status of religious freedom in the Eastern-Bloc countries were Sir John Lawrence, Leonard Schapiro and Peter Reddaway. In addition to the founders' personalities, the development of Keston College was influenced by geopolitical conditions and coincidence. Due to a combination of these factors, the linguistically gifted Michael Bourdeaux did not take a course in German during his compulsory military service⁸ but took up Russian instead. Subsequently, he continued to explore the mysteries of the Russian language and culture during his philological studies at the University of Oxford in 1954–1959, and during a one-year internship in Moscow, where he was sent by the British Council in 1959–1960 on a student exchange programme. His stay in Moscow inspired him spiritually, as at the time he met many believers of the Orthodox Church and became personally aware of the truth that religion and belie-

3 == Robertson, *Be Our Voice*.

4 == Hurst, *British Human Rights Organizations*, 115–146.

5 == Graffenried and Knox, *Voices of the Voiceless*.

6 == Bourdeaux, *One Word of Truth*.

7 == Keston Center for Religion Politics and Society, Baylor University, <https://www.baylor.edu/kestoncenter>. (Access on 1 September 2022).

8 == Hurst, *British Human Rights Organizations*, 115–116.

vers were persecuted in the USSR, a circumstance not known to the British public of the time. In 1960, Bourdeaux was ordained a priest in the Anglican Church and this opened up new prospects of professional advancement and an academic career. However, in 1964, there was an event in Moscow, which over time became a founding myth of sorts about Keston College. Near the ruins of the Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, destroyed by communists, he met two women, Feodosia Varavva and Anastasia Pronina. They asked him this: ‘Be our voice and speak for us’,⁹ which spurred his further activity.

The initial activity of Keston College met with the disapproval of both the employees of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to whom Bourdeaux communicated his observations from his time in the USSR, and influential opinion-forming groups. After publishing a book entitled *Opium of the People*,¹⁰ in which he decided for the first time to take up the role of ‘the voice of the persecuted’, he was dismissed as untrustworthy. The British public’s perception of communism and life in the USSR and its satellite states were at complete odds with Bourdeaux’s impressions. Testimony given by Grażyna Sikorska, who worked at Keston College in 1978–1989 is an interesting illustration of this situation. Referring to previous experience as an assistant at the University of London, she stated that ‘English researchers, to their surprise, learned from me that the communist system had been imposed on Poland by a powerful neighbour. I was asked: “Don’t the Polish people vote for the communist party in free elections?”. Even more interesting discussions were held on the realities of life in Poland. I was often accused of lying or exaggerating when I talked about the total dependence of the citizen on the state which had a monopoly on providing livelihood, accommodation and education as well as the mere function of the nationalised mass media to act as a communist propaganda tool, the preponderance of socialist ideas in culture, the falsification of history and the struggle against religion and the Church. I was also disbelieved quite frequently when pointing out that permission to obtain a passport and travel abroad required the permission of the Communist Party, faced numerous attempts to convince me that the socialist system was vastly superior to the capitalist’.¹¹

The *Opium of the People*’s frosty reception did not discourage Michael Bourdeaux, but rather, it convinced him that he would accomplish his mission by continuing to collect, correct and then publicise information about the ongoing persecution of believers in the USSR. He also decided to establish a foundation that would provide help to the followers of different persecuted religions in the USSR. The charity *Aid to Russian Christians* was an independent sister organisation of Keston College, headed by Jane Ellis, who coordinated sending parcels of food and medicine

9 = = Bourdeaux, *One Word of Truth*, 87.

10 = = Bourdeaux, *Opium of the People*.

11 = = Interview with Grażyna Sikorska.

to the 'gulags' and families of prisoners of conscience, as well as assisting the travel of volunteers to the USSR. When mentioning one such trip to Moscow, Andrew Lenox-Cunningham said, 'I was carrying a bag full of clothes and wearing a fur for a woman whose husband was imprisoned. I do not need to mention that I was nervous, especially because I could not speak Russian and I had never been to the USSR. However, everything went well thanks to the guidelines and preparation of the whole expedition by Jane Ellis'.¹²

The circumstances surrounding the establishment of Keston College meant that the first period of its activity focused primarily on the situation of religion, churches and religious associations in the USSR. Apart from the above-mentioned Jane Ellis, the situation in the USSR was closely monitored by specialist researchers Xenia Howard-Johnston (née Dennen) and Michael Rowe. The staff of Keston College gradually continued to grow. In the mid-1980s, when Keston College was in its heyday, there were 25 researchers reviewing hundreds of magazines, papers and samizdat documents every month¹³ in 19 languages and publishing the most important excerpts. The Research department at that time was headed by Michael Rowe, the Information department by Alyona Kojevnikov and the whole organisation was led by Philip Walters as Executive Director. The situation of believers in Central and Eastern Europe was reported by Arvan Gordon (GDR), Bob Hoare (Bulgaria), Alan Scarfe and Paul Booth (Romania), John Eibner (Hungary), Stella Alexander (Yugoslavia), Alexander Tomský (Czechoslovakia and Poland) and Grażyna Sikorska (Poland), among others. Keston College's main principle was to confirm through other sources the information that the researchers from the centre obtained from samizdat publications, phone calls or the official press of socialist countries. Sandra Oestreich, who worked in the Keston College administration and served as an assistant to the editor of the *Keston News Service* (KNS) emphasises that 'each report received, whether by phone or in writing, was verified before publication. We followed the journalists' principle of obtaining several confirmations of the information before publishing it'.¹⁴ Published every two weeks, the *Keston News Service* was subscribed to by most leading news agencies (Reuters, UPI, Associated Press etc.) and other media of the time. It was divided into several sections, which presented an overview of the most important events, documents and updated the list of persecuted religious activists and dissidents.

The academic journal *Religion in Communist Lands* (RCL) was first published at Keston College in 1973. For the first few years it was edited by Xenia Howard-Johnston (née Dennen), and then Jane Ellis. In the first issue of this jour-

12 = = Interview with Andrew Lenox-Cunningham.

13 = = Samizdat—Russian: self-publishing—illegal, underground publication of political, religious and literary dissidents in the Eastern Europe.

14 = = Interview with Sandy Oestreich.

nal, in determining its profile, Michael Bourdeaux indicated that it was not meant to be a register of persecution, but rather, a record and analysis shedding light on spiritual awakening in countries where militant atheism had become an official doctrine.¹⁵ This message also expressed Keston College's philosophy of not seeking to influence the overthrow of communism, but 'to study and document all aspects of religious life (both Christian and non-Christian) in those countries which are governed by Communist or Marxist regimes'.¹⁶ Over the years, the Archive and Library at Keston College were organised to form a unique collection of samizdat publications, as well as studies and material regarding the socio-political situation in the USSR and countries under its 'protectorate'. At Keston, the experts' opinions on the religious situation were prepared for governments and state delegations, groups of politicians and journalists visiting the countries of the Eastern Bloc.¹⁷

In the 1970s and 1980s, most people—even sovietologists—did not anticipate events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. The geopolitical scenarios, envisaging the disintegration of the USSR and its satellite countries, pointed to a distant time perspective of such hypothetical events also according to the Institute's staff. Malcolm Walker, who became the Librarian of Keston College in 1980, was also one who did not believe in the possibility of changing the situation in the Eastern Bloc. From today's perspective, as he observes, the activity of Keston College, and particularly the news services (KNS) published in this centre, seems to be completely different. Both "publishing these reports, as well as the colleagues' opinions expressed during various consultations with politicians and church leaders played its role in changes which occurred at the end of the eighties."¹⁸ Andrew Sorokowski, who spent three years at Keston College from November 1984 to November 1987 as a researcher, mentions that "although Keston College was trying to be apolitical, it was clear that we were sharing the faith in a political liberation of our nations from communist tyranny."¹⁹ In his opinion, the fact that people associated with Keston College, such as Sir John Lawrence, had access to government circles, must have had an impact on the development of political events. Access to the media also had an effect. Alexander Tomský, associated with Keston College in 1977–1986 as Manager of the Central Europe department among others, mentions that every week he was a guest on BBC Radio and less frequently on television. His articles were also published outside Great Britain, in France and Germany. Furthermore, he was running a Czech and Slovak chronicle for 'Kultura' and was sending messages to the French service about dissi-

15 = = Schapiro, 'Ten Years', 4.

16 = = Bourdeaux, *Land of Crosses*, XV.

17 = = Wójcik, 'Znaczenie infogeopolityki', 388.

18 = = Interview with Malcom Walker.

19 = = Interview with Andrew Sorokowski.

dents. He also emphasises that ‘he had a chance to recommend to Margaret Thatcher some materials and books for reading.’²⁰

In 1984, that is, in the period of the greatest impact of Keston College, Michael Bourdeaux received the prestigious Templeton Prize for his work and achievements. The money the prize came with allowed for, among other things, the renovation and extension of the organisation’s registered office and helped to temporarily overcome difficulties of constantly increasing running costs. Using grants from the Ford Foundation or Church in Need, Michael Bourdeaux strictly avoided accepting financial funds that would give rise to suspicion that Keston College was politically controlled. In fact, the organisation had to rely on funds received primarily from private donors and sales of the KNS by media, or sale of its other publications. Paradoxically, the biggest financial problems were caused by the fall of communism in Central Europe in 1989. The Keston College forming team was forced to specify its mission once again. One of the actions in this regard was a dramatic decrease of researchers employed in the centre from 25 to 5, the transfer of the centre’s registered office in 1991 to Oxford and the change of its name to the Keston Institute.²¹

== Was Keston College really a centre of ideological diversion?

Analyses on the extent and characteristics of actions described as ‘psychological warfare’ and ‘ideological subversion’ were conducted in both the West and the East. Also in Poland, apart from the internal materials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the People’s Republic of Poland, there was public literature devoted to the issue.²² In the internal studies of this ministry, classified as ‘confidential’ or ‘for internal use’, Janusz Kolczyński’s approach afforded a way to describe the relations between the above-mentioned activities. His argument was that both psychological warfare and ideological subversion were concepts subordinate to the overall concept of ideological struggle. In his opinion, imperialist countries were fighting an ideological battle with communism by means of (1) an ideological discussion—reduction to dialogue forms of competition at the levels of science and culture; (2) ideological subversion—in the form of ‘black’ propaganda and political provocation; (3) psychological warfare distinguished by an offensive activities targeted at military and political aims.²³ The Soviet literature concerning ideological subversion as-

20 == Interview with Alexander Tomský.

21 == Wójcik, ‘Keston College’, 117–127.

22 == Gabriel, *Imperialistyczna dywersja*. Łarski, *Ośrodki antykomunistyczne*. Szulczewski, *Propaganda polityczna*. Jaworski, *Pole bitwy*.

23 == *Dywersja ideologiczno-polityczna imperializmu*. [Ideological and political subversion of imperialism], Warszawa, 1967, AIPN, Rz. 00250/198: 159. The Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance in Rzeszów, Poland.

sumed an important role in Polish studies devoted to these issues. One such study described ideological subversion as ‘a system of activities, initiatives and operations in propaganda, agitation, as well as intelligence and organisation targeted against communist countries, aiming to undermine the ideological and world-view attitudes of citizens of these countries; having a hostile ideological and political impact, inspiring and stimulating antisocialist phenomena and tendencies, the intensified and subsequent use of which would allow the achievement of an intended counter-revolutionary aim—capitalism restored in these countries—in a camouflaged, evolutionary manner, and under favourable conditions in an open way.’²⁴

In the view of analysts supporting the authorities behind the ‘Iron Curtain’, an ideological pressure on communist countries had been systematically increasing since the end of the Second World War, reaching its peak in the mid-70s of the 20th century. ‘The creation and subsequent consistent implementation of the so-called Carter Doctrine, i.e. a defence of human and civil rights’ lent it special severity and importance.²⁵ From the perspective of the Soviet government, any initiatives taken in the West as part of this doctrine, e.g. under the pretext of defending political prisoners’ rights, were nothing else but ‘a carefully thought-out and coordinated subversive action’²⁶. Therefore, ideological subversion was regarded as one of ‘the most dangerous means of destructive penetration into the countries of the communist camp’²⁷. The officials of the Stasi expressed this opinion by means of a *bon-mot*: ‘there are no underground activities without political and ideological subversion’.²⁸

24 = = Dywersja ideologiczna państw kapitalistycznych przeciwko wspólnocie państw socjalistycznych ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem antypolskiej działalności Radia Wolna Europa w latach 1980–1982. Praca dyplomowa napisana pod kierunkiem mjr. dr. Henryka Szczerbińskiego. [Ideological subversion of capitalist countries against the community of socialist countries, with particular emphasis on the anti-Polish activities of Radio Free Europe in 1980–1982. Thesis written under the supervision of squadron-leader Dr Henryk Szczerbiński], Warszawa, 1988, AIPN, 001708/3401: 16, The Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, Poland.

25 = = Dywersja ideologiczno-polityczna prowadzona przeciwko PRL (zewnętrzna i wewnętrzna) oraz środki przeciwdziałania podejmowane przez SB MSW PRL. [Ideological and political subversion against the People’s Republic of Poland (external and internal) and countermeasures taken by the Security Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the People’s Republic of Poland], Warszawa, 1983, AIPN, 01210/23: 157, The Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, Poland.

26 = = Komitet Bezpieczeństwa Państwowego przy Radzie Ministrów ZSRR, Walka organów KBP z ideologiczną dywersją państw imperialistycznych w warunkach współczesnych. [The State Security Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers, The struggle of the KGB organs against the ideological subversion of the imperialist states in contemporary conditions], Moscow, 1976, AIPN, 0296/257 vol. 1: 98, The Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, Poland (hereafter cited as The struggle of the KGB organs).

27 = = The struggle of the KGB organs, 95.

28 = = Glaeser, *Secret Police*, 483.

The intelligence services of the communist countries dealing with the identification and neutralisation of the activities of ideological subversion centres, assumed that ideological subversion in capitalist countries was conducted by both governmental services (propaganda, diplomatic and intelligence) and organisations and institutions camouflaged as private or non-governmental associations. It was pointed out that reference to their status as 'private' and 'independent' was only a manoeuvre suggesting that the opinions expressed by them were objective, while their activities did not expose the governments of the Western countries to accusations of violation of the rules of international law.²⁹ Back in the 1960s, it was suggested that in the West, apart from university centres, there were about 600 independent institutes and centres carrying out research on communist countries. The reach of this research was extensive and covered problems concerning ideology, political parties, the issue of state and law, demographic, national and religious matters, education policy and relationships between countries and churches.

In attempting to classify ideological subversion centres in the Polish literature, reference has been made to both 'model' categories indicated in this regard by the Committee for State Security attached to the Council of Ministers (KGB) of the USSR, and to the fact that they were created by taking into account local specifics.³⁰ Classifying ideological subversion centres in the West 'acting against the Polish People's Republic,' one publication mentioned the following: the radio stations Radio Free Europe (RFE), Voice of America, BBC and France Internationale Radio; survey offices of RFE in Vienna and Copenhagen; and the publishing houses Kultura, Kontakt, Spotkania, Pogląd, Archipelag and Pomost.³¹ The same publication drew attention to ideological subversion centres established after 1981, whose 'per-

29 = = Antykomunistyczne ośrodki dywersji ideologicznej na Zachodzie. Zarys organizacji, metod i kierunków działalności. [Anti-communist centres of ideological subversion in the West. Outline of organisation, methods and directions of activity], Warszawa, 1980, AIPN, 01521/1826: 15, The Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, Poland.

30 = = Among centres of this type, conducting activities against the USSR, the following were mentioned: governmental and international centres of planning and coordinating ideological subversion activities, intelligence authorities, research institutions, special implementing authorities carrying out actions and operations of the ideological subversion, national and international anti-communist organisations, anti-Soviet organisations, nationalist organisations, Zionist organisations and reactive clergy centres. Sympozjum na temat zagrożenia kraju dywersją ideologiczno-polityczną i polityczno-operacyjnego systemu przeciwdziałania. [Symposium on the threat of ideological and political subversion to the country and the political and operational counteraction system], Warszawa, 1974, AIPN, 0296/73, vol. 2: 87–88, The Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, Poland (hereafter cited as Symposium on the threat of ideological and political subversion).

31 = = Rola i zadania wywiadu (z uwzględnieniem wywiadu PRL MSW). [The role and tasks of the intelligence service (including the intelligence of the Ministry of Internal

sonnel was recruited from the staff of activists of the [former] “Solidarity” forming “a new political emigration”.³²

Among the characteristic phenomena accompanying ideological subversion in the 1970s, USSR intelligence identified the increasing use of mail parcels and tourism. The first form refers to sending, among other things, religious literature to the USSR, which local authorities described as anti-Soviet. Tourism-related ideological subversion took forms such as ‘importing and distributing anti-Soviet religious and other harmful literature, collecting and exporting from the USSR tendentious materials intended for publication abroad, providing moral and financial help to nationalists or other individuals with a negative attitude, influencing individual citizens of the USSR with an anti-Soviet spirit, persuading some of them to go abroad, etc.’³³ In this context, the speech of the KGB representative at the meeting of communist state intelligence agency representatives, held in Budapest on 23–29 May 1978, directly emphasised the necessity of close and systematic cooperation between security bodies of communist states ‘in terms of combating the opponent’s ideological subversion’.³⁴

Another new trend noticed by the Soviet services in the 1970s was the creation of new ideological subversion centres by political defectors from the USSR and other communist countries. In the USSR, they were associated mainly with *Kontinent* magazine, RFE broadcasters and *Kronika-Press* publishing house. Vitaly Pavlov, head of the KGB’s ‘Narew’ Group in Warsaw, writing to Adam Krzysztowski, head of Department III of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the People’s Republic of Poland on 15 July 1978, emphasised that the KGB leadership ‘attributed considerable importance to work against defectors, by taking action together with sister services’.³⁵ He specified these basic activities as follows: ‘agency penetration into the opponent’s special services and ideological subversion centres of defector groups’; the disclosure and capture of communication channels of defectors in the

Affairs of the People’s Republic of Poland]], Legionowo, 1988, AIPN, 02220/268: 72, The Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, Poland (hereafter cited as The role and tasks of the intelligence service).³² = The role and tasks of the intelligence service, 73.

³² = The role and tasks of the intelligence service, 73.

³³ = Notatka o wykorzystaniu przez przeciwnika turystyki do celów dywersji ideologicznej w ZSRR. [Note on the enemy’s use of tourism for ideological subversion in the USSR], Moskwa, 1976, AIPN, 0296/257 vol. 1: 54, The Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, Poland.

³⁴ = The struggle of the KGB organs, 89.

³⁵ = Pismo Witalija Pawłowa do Adama Krzysztowskiego. [Letter from Vitaly Pavlov to Adam Krzysztowski], Warszawa, 15 July 1978, AIPN, 0296/257 vol. 1: 139, The Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, Poland (hereafter cited as Letter from Vitaly Pavlov).

West with their supporters in the USSR and other communist countries; the disclosure of a group of publishing houses belonging to defectors (“Kontinent”, “Kronika bieżących wydarzeń”, “Kultura”, “xx wiek” and others) as being sources of disinformation and anti-Soviet propaganda financed by reactionary circles and in the service of capitalist states; disclosure and profound recognition of negative processes arising abroad in connection with anti-Soviet activity of defectors and employing measures for the purpose of their neutralisation; preventing opponents’ attempts to unite existing groups and movements in the defectors’ environment’.³⁶

One example of interaction between an organisation functioning (in the intelligence nomenclature of the Eastern-Bloc countries) as an ‘ideological subversion centre’ and domestic opposition, was a cooperation beginning at the end of the 1970s between Keston College researchers and editorial staff of the Lublin underground periodical entitled ‘Spotkania’. The fruits of their labours included, for example, reprints by ‘Spotkania’ of authors such as Frank Sysyn, Marite Sapiets and Alexander Tomský, which had been previously published by RCL,³⁷ as well as reports on the activity of young opposition figures in Poland in RCL.³⁸ When talking about his contacts with Keston College through Alexander Tomský and Grażyna Sikorska, Piotr Jegliński wrote that, ‘If I had any information which came from the country, I’d pass it on firstly to Keston College and of course Radio Free Europe. That information was particularly valuable from the point of view of their interests, as I’d have information from various church circles, bishops and laymen about what was happening in the East, in Soviet Russia. On another front, we were organising shipments of literature to Lviv and the Baltic Republics, sending various materials, including the ones published by Keston College. Later, a lot of materials and information were transferred directly by Alex. That was much easier because Keston was situated near London and getting there was an expedition’.³⁹

The essentials and assumptions of intelligence activities regarding ideological subversion, the ways intelligence was collected, and the centres covered by these activities have been specified in a number of documents of the functioning of Department I of the Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs.⁴⁰ One of them was *Instrukcja w sprawie pracy jednostek organizacyjnych resortu spraw wewnętrznych*

36 == Letter from Vitaly Pavlov, 139.

37 == Choma-Jusińska, ‘Współpraca środowisk’, 198–199.

38 == Jegliński and Tomský, ‘Spotkania’, 23–28.

39 == Interview with Piotr Jegliński.

40 == Bagiński, ‘Wydział XI’, 505–611.

na rzecz wywiadu [Instruction on the work of organisational units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for intelligence], introduced by Minister Stanisław Kowalczyk's Order No. 0061/73 of 1 June 1973. The implementation of the guidelines of this instruction was expected to contribute to the optimisation of operational activities of Department I, aiming to protect the country against 'espionage, economic, political and ideological subversion.'⁴¹ The following was attached to this instruction: *Wykaz obiektów, zagadnień, środowisk oraz kategorii osób i dokumentów będących w zainteresowaniu operacyjnym Departamentu I MSW* [A list of objects, issues, environments and categories of people and documents of operational interest of Department I of the Ministry of Internal Affairs]. In point III of the above-mentioned attachment, entitled *Rozpracowanie ośrodków dywersji ideologicznej* [Investigation of the ideological subversion centres], Keston College was identified as a model example of such a centre engaged in investigating the issues of religion and communism.⁴² In other departments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, these classifications would differ. In *Wykaz obiektów* [A list of objects] of Department IV of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, investigating the 'antinational' activities of churches and religious associations, Keston College—Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism, 'Keston News Service', 'Religion in Communist Lands', as well as Kultura and Aneks, were categorised as foreign centres, organisations and publishing houses associated with Polish religious environments.⁴³

Counteracting the impacts of ideological subversion centres, in accordance with the guidelines of Department I of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was primarily supposed to consist of penetrating them and identifying their plans and courses of action. In the case of Keston College, no such investigation occurred.⁴⁴ Due to the lack of possibility to apply the agency method, the officials of Department I had to content themselves with possibilities which the non-agency method, 'consisting of using other sources of information, operational contacts and service

41 == Zarządzenie Nr 0061/73 Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych z dnia 1 czerwca 1973 r. w sprawie pracy jednostek organizacyjnych resortu spraw wewnętrznych w zakresie wywiadu. Instrukcja w sprawie pracy jednostek organizacyjnych resortu spraw wewnętrznych na rzecz wywiadu. [Ordinance No. 0061/73 of the Minister of Internal Affairs of 1 June 1973 on the work of organisational units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the field of intelligence. Instruction on the work of organisational units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for intelligence], AIPN, 01756/2: 336, The Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, Poland (hereafter cited as Ordinance No. 0061/73).

42 == Ordinance No. 0061/73, 351.

43 == Indeks obiektów. [Object index], MSW Departament IV, Marzec 1983, 0021/6: 214, The Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance in Rzeszów, Poland.

44 == Wójcik, 'Informacja', 251–264.

contacts'⁴⁵ afforded in this regard. In order to neutralise the impact of ideological subversion centres, methods such as 'breaking' attempts to rally Polish citizens, eliminating channels of shipments of hostile literature, disclosing and eliminating contacts of Polish citizens with subversion centres, disclosing and identifying any facts of Polish citizens' subversive warfare,⁴⁶ were additionally applied in the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

== Conclusion

Including Keston College in the group of ideological subversion centres in the internal instruction of the Ministry of Internal Affairs would not be possible without popularising the term itself by the USSR authorities at the beginning of the 1960s, or without subsequently repeating its opinions, analyses and classifications.⁴⁷ Most crucial were the assumptions connected with the vision of the world being an arena of the giant games of the USA and the USSR, in which everyone, more or less consciously, was involved.⁴⁸ From this perspective, independent research facilities, founda-

45 == A range of non-agentry methods provided for in the Instruction was very wide, covering all sources and possibilities within the scope of obtaining documents, information or other interesting data, such as: official contacts, private and social contacts, accidental contacts; printed sources: press, specialist publications and bulletins, official governmental publishers, biographical brochures, guidebooks, maps, leaflets, technical drawings, etc.; radio and televisions programmes, photographs, cassette tapes or video cassette tapes; samples or patterns of products, machines or devices; observation of the area, objects and people; intelligence, results of the interrogations of suspects; foreigners, prisoners of war, prisoners, refugees, etc.; interviews with the citizens of the Polish People's Republic going abroad and returning from capitalist countries of the intelligence interest; a set of measures of operational intelligence technique, secret photography, legalisation, long distance wiretap, radio monitoring, photoelectronic equipment; other technical and operational measures: room wiretap, telephone eavesdropping, preview, photographic documentation, correspondence and mail control, decryption, revisions of frontiers, secret searches, etc. Instrukcja o pracy wywiadowczej Departamentu I MSW. Załącznik do Zarządzenia Nr 0041/72 Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych z dnia 6 maja 1972 r. [Instruction on the intelligence work of Department I of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Attachment to Order No. 0041/72 of the Minister of the Internal Affairs of 6 May 1972], AIPN, 01756/2: 305, The Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, Poland.

46 == Symposium on the threat of ideological and political subversion, 74–75.

47 == Bagieński, 'Antykomunistyczna "dywersja ideologiczna"', 275.

48 == Pawłow, *Generał Pawłow*, 205. 'In the world divided into two camps, no important political force, especially in such a pivotal country as Poland and at a turning point in history, could remain neutral. Lofty slogans, great ideas and impulses, institutions, people who believed in those ideas—these were merely elements of a giant game in which everyone was involved regardless of their choices'.

tions and charities, such as Keston College and *Aid to Russian Christians*⁴⁹ also became ideological subversion centres. Inconsistencies of such generalisation can also be noticeable when comparing the interpretations of subversive warfare promoted at that time in Poland with in-depth knowledge on the Keston College. In keeping with the indicated standards, the subversive nature of certain activities was to be determined by the motives with which they were undertaken, such as achieving your own benefit or harming the recipient; measures used within the scope of such activities, such as falsified facts, insinuations and slanders; applied methodology, such as camouflage, masking real intentions and using demagoguery.⁵⁰ The activity of the people who set up Keston College was characterised by selflessness, willingness to help the oppressed, care in distributing only verified information and transparency of activities. Finally, it should be emphasised that the founders, researchers and people supporting Keston College intended to change Western communities' perception of the situation in the USSR and countries under its influence, and not to affect their internal socio-political situation.

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