

The American Left Comes After Saint John Paul II



A coordinated assault led by an American owned media conglomerate on the legacy and memory of former Pope John Paul II is currently underway, with media and leftist elements inside and outside of his native country of Poland suggesting that the Pope concealed sexual abuse allegations against three priests in his diocese when he was the Archbishop of Krakow. The allegations provide a case study in how far left-of-center corporate media will go to discredit Christian leaders otherwise held in high historical esteem.

Notably, many of the allegations against Pope John Paul II rely on documents and accounts from the Polish communist secret police which was in a constant state of war against the Catholic Church in Poland during the 44-year Cold War following World War II. These allegations are also being propagated by cultural elements in Polish society who have long been hostile to religion in general and the Church specifically.

The broadside against John Paul II, who was born as Karol Wojtyła in Wadowice, Poland, in 1920, began early last week with a television news report by Polish channel TVN24 – owned by Warner Bros. Discovery, an American company, which owns several media companies including CNN, HBO, and Discovery. The report concluded that then-Archbishop Wojtyła not only knew but treated the sexual abuse cases by three priests lightly and, even after his papal election, stayed in contact with one of the predators.

The allegations involve three priest abusers: Eugeniusz Sargent, Jozef Loranc, and Boleslaw Sadus, who committed indecent acts in the 1960s and 1970s. The TV report heavily focused on Sadus, an alleged abuser who Wojtyła transferred to Vienna following allegations against him.

For an American audience to have any hope of properly assessing the intellectual integrity of these sensationalized claims, historical context is absolutely necessary, and that begins with an understanding of the nature of the Polish communist system in the post-WWII period.

The political science departments in American universities have yet to teach that there is any other form of government aside from autocracy, oligarchy, and democracy. But following Vladimir Lenin's 1917 Bolshevik coup in Russia, history witnessed the emergence of a fourth form – government of the party, or "partocracy".

In a partocracy, political parties themselves are the rulers. While the party may have one leader, it is the party itself which gives that leader authority.

The Soviet Communist Party and its branches throughout Eastern and Central Europe formulated all policies for the regime, and they prioritized the destruction of their main enemy, the United States.

Next on their list was the Catholic Church – with the Pope as its leader. Because communists, with their failing and backward economy and atheistic mentality, could only dream about attacking America, they focused much of their effort on destroying the Catholic Church, targeting priests and bishops, as well as all faithful Catholic lay men and women.

As part of this effort, the Soviet regime utilized its departments of propaganda, education, and security to discredit and demonize the Church and its leaders. All religious teaching, but Christian teaching in particular, were seen as antithetical to communist ideology.

“In the case of Poland, the Catholic Church is the permanent reason for the increase in popularity of anti-socialist opinions and attitudes,” said Wladyslaw Ciaston, the then Lieutenant General of the secret police, at the Warsaw Pact conference in November 1983. He devoted nearly one third of his speech to waging war against the Catholic Church.

“Creating conviction that faith and the Church are alternatives and opposition to the socialist order and forms of life” complained Ciaston. “Pope John-Paul II’s teaching threatens the existence of progressive socialist and political movements.” Ciaston subsequently directed the secret police department to ruthlessly wage war against the Church, including murdering priests.

Ciaston’s speech is one of a few preserved documents proving that Polish communists, in collaboration with the rest of the Soviet bloc, waged that war. Among their targets was Archbishop and later Cardinal Wojtyła.

Unlike in a normal democratic state, during the Cold War neither the Polish judiciary nor the police acted according to a body of laws whose goal was to protect the people and serve the common good.

Instead, the courts and police in Poland served the interest of the world revolution and were directed by the organs of the Communist Party – the foundation of the partocracy. The goal of these institutions was then, by definition, to damage the chief foes of the Communist Party – i.e., the Catholic Church and its servant priests. Compelling historical evidence already unearthed about the Church and Archbishop Wojtyła has confirmed this to be the case.

In 1969, for instance, one of the three priests under investigation for indecent acts lied during an investigation, denying that he committed the crimes. The secret police knew this, but instead of informing the prosecutor, the communist police recruited him as a secret informant.

After a few months, the priest refused to cooperate, yet his secret police case officer continued to keep secret the information about his crime. According to the case officer’s report, it was determined that allowing the abuser priest to continue his crimes would do more harm to the image of the clergy, thus furthering the Communist Party’s goal of destroying the Church.

Incidents like these demonstrate both the tremendous hostility of Communist Party henchmen toward the Church and the utter disregard for victims of abuse.

Yet the Polish TVN24 report mentioned none of this context – instead taking at face value allegations against Pope John Paul II based upon records of this same secret police apparatus.

In the case of Jozef Loranc, Cardinal Wojtyła suspended him immediately when he was made aware of the allegations, ordering the priest to stay in a distant convent. According to Church law, Cardinal Wojtyła then filed a case for the Metropolitan Tribunal, the highest church court in Krakow.

The judge exercised his right of pardon and refrained from imposing punishment. According to the law, the pardoned priest could recommence performing public mass in a parish church.

Polish historians have suggested that when the secret police discovered this, they fabricated an anonymous letter to Cardinal Wojtyła stating that the priest continued to abuse young girls. Historians said they were not able to ascertain whether this information was true or a smear. “It is more likely, however, that it was a provocation by the secret police,” they concluded.

Regarding the second priest, Father Surgent, church authorities in Krakow summoned him, whereupon he was immediately suspended. Following another conversation between the priest, another Krakow bishop, and Cardinal Wojtyła, “there was an instant dismissal from work in the diocese and a ban on appearing” in the village where he abused boys.

The report’s coverage of the third priest, Boleslaw Sadus, is entirely based on documents from the Polish communist party archives. In a statement, the Polish Church has said that the accusations against him were “not presented on the basis of a fiscal or judicial investigation, but from the files of the Security Services of the People’s Republic of Poland. On the basis of the sources presented in the [TVN24] report, it’s impossible to establish the qualification of the acts attributed to Fr. Sadus.”

Other facts from the time period in question have also called into question the legitimacy of the secret police reports used to question the legacy of Pope John Paul II.

Polish historian Dr. Marek Lasota, the long-time director of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) in Krakow, the institution which hosts archives of the regional secret police, authored the scholarly book describing files that secret police collected on Karol Wojtyła.

Dr. Lasota has said that the selected documents from secret police and regular police archives were not sufficient to determine the truth of that time, especially since Pope John Paul II and the three priests are deceased, urging that professional researchers take into account a broader historical context.

Between the fall of 1989 and the spring of 1990, the communist secret police-headed Ministry of the Interior destroyed large portions of its archives, including documentation of the Communist war against the church. These files undoubtedly contained wicked schemes to discredit and smear church leaders.

Pope John Paul II in particular became a problem not just for the Polish Communist Party, but the Soviet regime in Moscow. According to Dr. Lasota, on October 17, 1978, the day after Karol Wojtyła was elected Pope, the Krakow secret police sent the Ministry of the Interior in Warsaw eighteen boxes of documentation. These boxes contained the complete secret police surveillance file on the priest, turned bishop, archbishop, and finally Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, now Pope of the universal Catholic Church.

The historian stated he could not find this collection in any archives, adding that it ended up in KGB headquarters in Moscow. “Karol Wojtyła – already known as Pope John-Paul II – became a problem not so much for the Polish security services, but for the entire security apparatus of the Soviet empire,” Lasota emphasized.

The Polish TVN24 frames its report as an honest inquiry into whether Wojtyła knew about the abuse, thus implying that, if the abuse allegations were true, he covered them up. It also promoted a controversial book, “Maxima Culpa,” by Dutch journalist Ekke Overbeek, who claims Archbishop Wojtyła “knew” about allegations of priests molesting children in his diocese and “covered up” the potential crimes.

But historical evidence has already shown that Wojtyła responded appropriately according to Church law to instances of priestly abuse that came before him. This effort then more than four decades later to characterize his actions as a cover-up of sexual abuse smacks of a present-day communist smear campaign designed to tarnish the legacy of Saint John Paul II, weaken the Catholic Church in Poland, and undermine religious belief itself.

In response to the report, the Prime Minister of Poland, Mateusz Morawiecki, has conveyed the most profound conviction of most Poles when he said, "I am defending our Pope because I know we owe a lot to John Paul II as a nation... Perhaps we owe him everything."

The Polish Parliament has similarly condemned the report in a special resolution, calling it a "shameful media campaign, based to a great extent on the materials of the Communist apparatus of violence, whose object is the Great Pope — Saint John Paul II, the greatest Pole in history."

"We will not allow the destruction of the image of a man whom the whole free world recognizes as a pillar of the victory over the Empire of Evil," they added.

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