STUDENT POLITICS IN COMMUNIST POLAND

GENERATIONS OF CONSENT AND DISSENT

TOM JUNES

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LEXINGTON BOOKS
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

Published by Lexington Books
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

Unit A, Whitacre Mews, 26-34 Stannary Street, London SE11 4AB

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Junes, Tom, 1978-
Student politics in Communist Poland : generations of consent and dissent / Tom Junes.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-7391-8030-3 (cloth : alkaline paper) -- ISBN 978-0-7391-8031-0 (ebook)
1. Student movements–Poland–History–20th century. 2. College students–Political activity–Poland–History–20th century. 3. Education, Higher–Political aspects–Poland–History–20th century. 4. Political activists–Poland–History–20th century. 5. Dissenters–Poland–History–20th century. 6. Communism–Poland–History–20th century. 7. Social change–Poland–History–20th century. 8. Poland–Social conditions–20th century. 9. Poland–Politics and government–1945-1980. 10. Poland–Politics and government–1980-1989. I. Title.
LA843.7.J86 2015
378.1'98109438–dc23
2014041119

™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

“Give me just one generation of youth, and
I’ll transform the whole world.”
Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

Contents

Acknowledgments

Although a monograph is the ultimate fruit of an author's work and the responsibility for its contents is one's own, this endeavor could not have been completed successfully without the support of others. Therefore, I would like to express my gratitude to all those who either academically or otherwise contributed in some way along the road to the research and writing process. First of all, I would like to thank Louis Vos, my erstwhile supervisor at the KU Leuven's history department, for his endorsement and continuous support for my research when it was the topic of a PhD project. His expertise on student movements proved pivotal towards outlining the basic framework of my research while he simultaneously encouraged me to take up the generational approach upon which the narrative in this book is based. I would also like to thank the readers of my dissertation, Dariusz Stola, Georgi Verbeeck, Peter Van Kemseke, and Idesbald Goddeeris for their comments and suggestions to rework the dissertation into this book.

During the years that I spent researching and preparing the manuscript in Poland, I was lucky and privileged to have met many Polish academics, archivists, and former student activists without whose support, guidance, and stories this book would have not seen the light of day. For their practical support during my research stays there, I wish to thank Marcin Kula, Zdzisław Zblewski, and Marek Andrzejewski, my supervisors at the University of Warsaw, the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, and Gdańsk University. In particular, I owe Marcin Kula my sincere gratitude for his perpetual support of my research endeavors in which he, in the role of a true Polish mentor, constantly challenged me to rethink my own presumptions and angles to my research. Furthermore, my thanks also go to Jerzy Eisler, Andrzej Paczkowski, Andrzej Friszke, Marek Wierzbicki, Joanna Sadowska, Krzysztof Koseła, Henryk Głębocki, and Tomasz Kozłowski, who aided me not only with advice but also shared their insights in what at times were lengthy discussions on the history of Communist Poland and the role of youth and students in it. I would also like to thank the staff at all the archives and libraries where I worked. Here, a special word of thanks is in order to Grzegorz Sołtysiak, Adam Roliński, and Szczepan Świątek for their dedicated help during my queries. Moreover, I would like to thank all my interlocutors and interviewees for sharing their stories and shedding more light on the source material I worked with thereby bringing alive again many of the

feats and the climate described in this book from a personal angle. I would also like to thank Padraic Kenney and Gerd-Rainer Horn, whose work was a source of inspiration and whose advice early on in my research helped chart out the course I pursued in my own queries. Finally, there were colleagues beyond Poland like Karol Holly, Piotr Kosicki, Pia Koivunen, Riikka Palonkorpi, Suvi Kansikas, and Dina Fainberg, with whom mutual exchanges of ideas over the years contributed in a fruitful manner towards the completion of my own research.

Family and friends in and outside of Poland have provided a support base or a useful source of distraction from the academic endeavors when needed. I would like to thank my relatives in Poland, my grandmother Teresa, my aunt Maria, and my uncle Stanisław, for providing practical assistance when needed as well as enabling the occasional retreat at Poland's Baltic coast from the usual buzz of Warsaw. A special word of thanks, for their friendship and support during the past years as well as their help during some rough patches along the way, is reserved for Pasquale Monfreda and Mieke Keeven, my close friends from my native city of Antwerp. In recent years, I have also been able to enjoy the warm hospitality of Maya Grekova and Kolyo Koev in Bulgaria while working on the final manuscript in periods between other academic engagements.

Most recently, there were two events connected to student political activity that added to the experience of finalizing the manuscript. The first was the emergence of a student protest movement in Bulgaria, which included a university occupation strike. The contacts with the protesting students allowed me to observe firsthand some of the intricacies and dynamics of student political activism and gauge them against my expertise on Poland. The second event, in more or less the same period, was the outbreak of the Euromaidan protests and Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine, which in fact had been spearheaded by students. Together with my colleagues William Risch and Hugo Lane we followed and analyzed the evolution of the situation in Ukraine while exchanging ideas that proved quite useful in the final phase of reworking the manuscript.

While I am currently based in Germany, as a visiting fellow at the Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung in Potsdam and the Imre Kertész Kolleg in Jena, the various institutions besides the history department at the KU Leuven that have funded or accommodated me and my research at different times in the past played an important role towards the successful completion of this book: the Flemish Ministry of Education and the Research Foundation Flanders in Belgium; the Institute of History at the University of Warsaw; the Institute of History at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków; the Institute of History at the University of Gdańsk; the College of Europe in Natolin; the Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen in Vienna; the Open Society Archives in Budapest; the Aleksanteri Institute in Helsinki; and the German Historical Institute in Warsaw.

In preparing the manuscript for publication I am indebted to the anonymous reviewer for the comments, as well as the criticisms and constructive suggestions to revise and improve the text. Similarly, I would like to extend my thanks to Erin Walpole, my editor at Lexington Books, for her advice and patience, as well as Brian Hill, Brighid Klick, and Megan DeLancey, in bringing the book project to its successful end. Last but not least, the book manuscript would not have seen its final form without the comments, help, support, and advice of Elitza Stanoeva for whose input, always as my first and last reader, I am truly grateful.

Abbreviations

ABI—*Akademickie Biuro Interwencji* (Academic Intervention Bureau)
AK—*Armia Krajowa* (Home Army)
ARO (1)—*Akademicki Ruch Odnowy* (Academic Movement for Renewal)
ARO (2)—*Akademicki Ruch Oporu* (Academic Resistance Movement)
AZS—*Akademicki Związek Sportowy* (Academic Sports Union)
AZWM "Życie"—*Akademicki Związek Walki Młodych "Życie"* (Academic Union of Youth Struggle "Life")
CPSU—Communist Party of the Soviet Union
ČSM—Československý Svaz Mládeže (Czechoslovak Youth Union)
DISZ—*Dolgozó Ifjúság Szövetsége* (Union of Working Youth)
FPOS—*Federacja Polskich Organizacji Studenckich* (Federation of Polish Student Organisations)
KIK—*Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej* (Catholic Intelligentsia Club)
KKW—*Krakowska Komisja Wykonawcza NZS* (Kraków Executive Committee of the NZS)
KOR—*Komitet Obrony Robotników* (Workers Defense Committee)
KPN—*Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej* (Confederation for an Independent Poland)
KSS KOR—*Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej KOR* (Social Self-defense Committee KOR)
KUL—*Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski* (Catholic University in Lublin)
KZMP—*Komunistyczny Związek Młodzieży Polskiej* (Communist Union of Polish Youth)
LND—*Liga Narodowo-Demokratyczna* (National-Democratic League)
NZS—*Niezależne Zrzeszenie Studentów* (Independent Students' Association)
OKSMW "Wici"—*Ogólnopolski Komitet Studiującej Młodzieży Wiejskiej "Wici"* (All-Polish Committee of Rural Studying Youth "Wici")
OKZ—*Ogólnopolski Komitet Założycielski* (All-Polish Founding Committee)
PAPSS—*Podziemna Agencja Prasowa Studentów i Solidarności* (Underground Press Agencja of Students and Solidarność)
PPR—*Polska Partia Robotnicza* (Polish Workers' Party)
PPS—*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna* (PPS—Polish Socialist Party)
PSL—*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe* (Polish People's Party)
PZA—*Polski Związek Akademicki* (Polish Academic Union)

PZPR—*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza* (Polish United Workers Party)
RMP—*Ruch Młodej Polski* (Young Poland Movement)
RO NZS—*Ruch Oporu NZS* (Resistance Movement of the NZS)
ROPCiO—*Ruch Obrony Praw Czlowieka i Obywatela* (Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights)
RSA—*Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego* (Movement for an Alternative Society)
RZM—*Rewolucyjny Związek Młodzieży* (Revolutionary Youth Union)
SD—*Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* (Democratic Party)
SKJ—*Studencki Komitet Jedności* (Student Unity Committee)
SKOD—*Studencki Komitet Obrony Demokracji* (Student Committee for the Defense of Democracy)
SKR—*Studencki Komitet Rewolucyjny* (Student Revolutionary Committee)
SKS—*Studencki Komitet Solidarności* (Student Solidarity Committee)
SL—*Stronnictwo Ludowe* (People's Party)
SOD—*Studenckie Ośrodki Dyskusyjne* (Student Discussion Circles)
SP—*Stronnictwo Pracy* (Labor Party)
STS—*Studencki Teatr Satyryków* (Student Satirical Theatre)
SZSP—*Socjalistyczny Związek Studentów Polskich* (Socialist Union of Polish Students)
TKN—*Towarzystwo Kursów Naukowych* (Society of Scholarly Courses)
UL—*Uniwersytet Latający* (Flying University)
UNEF-ID—*Union Nationale des Etudiants de France - Indépendante et Démocratique* (National Union of French Students - Independent and Democratic)
WiP—*Ruch Wolność i Pokój* (Freedom and Peace Movement)
WZZ—*Wolne Związki Zawodowe* (Free Trade Unions)
ZAMD—*Zjednoczenie Akademickiej Młodzieży Demokratycznej* (Union of Democratic Academic Youth)
ZAMP—*Związek Akademickiej Młodzieży Polskiej* (Union of Polish Academic Youth)
ZMD (2)—*Związek Młodych Demokratów* (Union of Young Democrats)
ZMD (1)—*Związek Młodzieży Demokratycznej* (Union of Democratic Youth)
ZMP—*Związek Młodzieży Polskiej* (Union of Polish Youth)
ZMR—*Związek Młodieży Robotniczej* (Union of Worker Youth)
ZMS (1)—*Związek Młodzieży Socjalistycznej* (Union of Socialist Youth)
ZMS (2)—*Związek Młodzieży Socjalistycznej* (Union of Socialist Youth)
ZMW—*Związek Młodzieży Wiejskiej* (Union of Rural Youth)
ZNMS—*Związek Niezależnej Młodzieży Socjalistycznej* (Union of Independent Socialist Youth)
ZSL—*Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe* (United People's Party)

ZSMP—*Związek Socjalistycznej Młodzieży Polskiej* (Union of Socialist Youth)
ZSP—*Zrzeszenie Studentów Polskich* (Association of Polish Students)
ZWM—*Związek Walki Młodych* (Union of Youth Struggle)

Introduction

Poland, Students, and Communism

Andrzej Wajda's 1981 Oscar-nominated film, *Człowiek z żelaza [The Man of Iron]*, which portrays the story of the foundation of *Solidarność* (Solidarity), retells some of the pivotal events in Communist Poland's history through the eyes of a young student-turned-worker, Maciek Tomczyk. In March 1968, Maciek and his friend Dzidek, then still students, came running agitatedly into Maciek's home to tell his father, a shipyard worker, that "it's started." Around the country, security forces were beating protesting students, and Maciek had come home to urge his father to mobilize the workers in their support. His father instead pushed him into the next room, locked the door forbidding him to go anywhere while telling him to calm down for the workers were not going to come to the students' aid. After their attempts to persuade the father otherwise proved futile, he dismissed the youngsters' objections by telling them: "don't mix the workers in this. They'll move when the time is right." Later in the movie, Dzidek recalls why students did not come to stand in solidarity with the workers two years later, in 1970, when they in turn rose in protest against the regime. He stated that "then, we were hard and stayed away." These scenes depict part of the foundation myth of *Solidarność*, the supposed conflict between students and intelligentsia on the one hand and the working class on the other hand, symbolized by the crises of March 1968 and December 1970 which occurred a decade before the first independent trade union in the Soviet bloc was founded. However, the above-cited scenes also reverberate a moment of generational strife, the students with their utopian or unrealistic vision of revolution finding no ear with the working-class father who disciplines his son for his naiveté and lack of understanding of the political realities of the time.

Numerous works have been written about the foundation of *Solidarność* and how it marked the beginning of the demise of Communism. These and other historical works concerning Communist Poland do not mention much about the role of the students in Communist Poland apart from the 1968 protests. However, the 1968 protests were but an episode of Polish post-war student politics. Its origins stretch back to the publication of Jacek Kuroń and Karol Modzelewski's "Open Letter," the authors' student activity in turn dating back to the 1956 crisis and the preceding Stalinist era. Neither was 1968 an endpoint—students played

an important role in the later *Solidarność* era but their contribution is usually eclipsed in the historical narrative of the period by that of the working class, the oppositional intelligentsia and the church. However, in present-day Poland one does not have to look far to find former student activists at the forefront of society. Both the current president Bronisław Komorowski and longtime Prime Minister (and now President of the European Council) Donald Tusk started their political careers as students in opposition to the Communist regime. Not only students who acted in opposition to the regime seem to have benefitted from their activity during the Communist era. Former president—the longest-serving in the office since 1989—Aleksander Kwaśniewski laid the groundwork for his political walk of life as an activist in the official Communist student union. Komorowski, Tusk, and Kwaśniewski are no exceptions as the same can be said for many others among Poland's political elite. Moreover, many of Poland's leading figures in the media, academia, and the business world started their *métier* as student activists. In fact, student politics played a far greater role in forging people's life stories compared to the relatively minor place it occupies in the hitherto historiography of Communist Poland.

This book aims to partially rectify this situation by presenting a specific historical overview of student politics in Communist Poland. In this sense, it offers an alternative narrative to the commonly accepted historical account of political events in Poland in the period from 1944 to 1989. The story that the reader will encounter in this book in fact constitutes in many aspects a summary of prequels to more known episodes in the history of Communist Poland, partially because it involves the same protagonists though at an earlier stage of their life (i.e., during their student years). While it holds true that student activists would often become more renowned as individuals for their exploits in the later phases of their lives—as party activists, state officials, academics, journalists, dissidents, etc., one student activist later became Pope—much of whom they later became was determined by their youthful activity and choices made during their student years which in many cases was linked to a specific generational experience. These generational experiences of students were also influenced by the broader processes of political, economic, social, and cultural change that took place in Polish society from the end of World War II to the demise of Communism in 1989. Above all, students, due to their higher education, were expected to become members of the future elite in the political, social, economic, and cultural sphere. Once they graduated and left the student milieu, these individuals were therefore to be perceived as young members of the intelligentsia, a social group with its own historical traditions and dynamics in Poland.

STUDENTS AND THE INTELLIGENTSIA

The intelligentsia as it was understood in Poland refers to a somewhat different category of people than usually associated with the term in the West. Whereas in the latter context the term denotes people who adhere within a broad sense to an intellectual and educated elite, the notion of intelligentsia in Poland implies a certain missionary calling and aspiration towards leadership of the nation—hence, its members are characterized by a specific *Weltanschauung*. The intelligentsia as a specific social group in Polish society emerged in the early nineteenth century, at a time when the Polish state had ceased to exist following the final of three partitions by its neighboring powers, Prussia and the Russian and Habsburg Empires. Following the rebirth of an independent Polish state after World War I, the intelligentsia fulfilled the role of an elite, its members seeing themselves as the traditional guardians of the Polishness of the state. When Poland was invaded and occupied by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union on the outset of World War II, both occupying powers immediately enacted policies and undertook measures to physically eliminate this social group in order to break the backbone of the Polish nation.[1]

With the end of World War II and Poland's re-emergence within new geographical borders as a Soviet satellite state, the surviving segment of the Polish intelligentsia posed an immediate problem for the fledgling Communist regime. The surviving members of the intelligentsia constituted not only part of the pre-war elite upon which the new regime would have to rely for the post-war reconstruction, it was also predominantly anti-Communist, anti-Soviet, and even anti-Russian—an enmity stemming from the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland in 1939–1941, the Polish-Bolshevik war of 1920–1921 to as far back as the era of the partitions. From the outset the Communist regime strived to curb this social group and former elite while implementing policies and engineering conditions to facilitate the creation of a new and loyal "socialist" intelligentsia thereby drawing on the Soviet model. Though this concept of a new intelligentsia borrowed from a utopian vision of social engineering and the regime's policies experienced only limited success, the Communist years did effect further significant change within this social group. The main outcome, which was a direct result of the expansion of higher education combined with demographic change in the post-war era, was the growth of a "technical" or "working" intelligentsia consisting mainly of higher-educated white-collar professionals. This group stood apart from the so-called "cultural" or "creative" intelligentsia, a division based upon ideological prerogatives.[2]

The growth of the intelligentsia in the Communist period was preceded by a growth in student numbers in the decades after World War II. There was thus a relation between the student body and the intelligentsia

that was primarily based upon age differentiation. While membership to the former was limited to specific age-cohorts, this did not hold true for the latter which accumulated an increasing influx of age groups. In this sense students were to be perceived as young prospective members of the intelligentsia. Moreover, the largest segment of student youth came from an intelligentsia background, despite the efforts of the Communist regime to change the "class base" of the student body. However, there was a significant influx of youth from rural to urban areas during the early years of the Communist regime, a share of whom would attend university effectively becoming the first generation with higher education in their families. These youths would later in turn form the backbone of the clientele of the regime for the single fact that they owed their upward social mobility to it. As these youths entered the institutions of higher education from social backgrounds that did not hitherto provide a large amount of members of the student community, their mentality therefore did not necessarily fit in well with the traditional mores of the student milieu, which had an impact upon the dynamics therein. The same was to be said about the faculty at the institutions of higher education, a segment of the intelligentsia that traditionally interacted the most with the student milieu. While according to the regime academics supposedly adhered to the working intelligentsia, another traditional group that had close affinity with students were writers, who were perceived as part of the cultural intelligentsia. In the latter case the relation between intelligentsia and students had some significant age-related qualifications as different so-called literary generations influenced the thinking of specific age-groups of students. Such age-related qualifications which amount to generational differences within the intelligentsia as a group are even more expounded and evident for the student body.[3]

Apart from age as a criterion to distinguish between the student body and the intelligentsia, it is important to point out the impact of the demographic evolution after World War II on both students and intelligentsia.[4] The immediate post-war situation was one of a dramatic cataclysm. Poland has lost about 17 percent of its population while the intelligentsia had been decimated during the war. The constellation of the surviving populace had also changed significantly which reverberated even more in light of the changed geographical position of the country after the war. The Holocaust, the post-war ethnic cleansing, deportation, and resettlement of displaced persons had a tremendous impact on the composition of the student body which became more ethnically Polish than ever before. It represented a historical caesura that to a large extent impeded continuity with the pre-war era. While the surviving members of the intelligentsia still cultivated pre-war traditions, this could not be expected among the student body and the consecutive age-cohorts entering it. In time, this situation would inevitably affect not only the political values of students, but the intelligentsia as a whole.[5] Such changes, how-

ever, were initially felt among the young who were also targeted by the new regime as the pioneers of the new political and social order. In other words, aside from their youthful age, students and their political activity differed from the intelligentsia on the one hand by the specific conditions of the student milieu and on the other hand by the rapid succession of student generations. Therefore, a history of student politics in Communist Poland implies an understanding of both the milieu-specific and generational problems. There exists an abundance of studies on student organizations and movements in different countries and eras.[6] These, however, consist of a wide spectrum of methodological and conceptual approaches, necessitating a rethinking of a workable conceptualization of student politics under Communism in Poland for the period of 1944 to 1989.

STUDENT POLITICS AS A MILIEU-SPECIFIC PHENOMENON

The wide variety of available literature provides an inconsistent use of terminology and concepts regarding what student politics represents and therefore an initial definition is warranted. Student politics can be defined as struggles to influence a set of relations in the educational or broader national sphere.[7] These struggles—based on certain ideas and inspired by local, national, or even international developments—are moreover carried by students although not necessarily in an exclusive manner. Students as a social group hold a specific social position in society, since being a student is a "total" role which stands in opposition and can be mutually exclusive to other roles.[8] Moreover, students possess an intellectual disposition that enables to criticize their environment.[9] Both their social and intellectual status as well as their youthful inclination can provide them with a missionary calling towards society, thereby drawing on specific historical experiences and traditions.[10] The student body being the total number of students is divided both according to political affiliation and participation, but can at times be mobilized towards a specific political goal overcoming these divisions.[11] The overall majority of students as a rule—apart from times of crisis when broad protest movements can arise—remains aloof from the arena of student politics. Thus, student politics in general although engaged in collectively as a group is the activity of a minority of the student body.

This characteristic of collective action based upon a certain set of convergent ideas can imply both a form of social movement as well as a type of organization. A student organization on the one hand denotes a structured collective of students based on political, social, religious, or cultural affiliation. Such an organization can be official and legal, extra-curricular or unofficial and illegal thereby forced to operate clandestinely. A student movement on the other hand is a social movement based on collec-

tive action under student leadership aimed at influencing societal developments—be it in the educational or broader political sphere—and can operate in the framework of a broader social movement as its vanguard or in a supportive role and as an activist recruiting pool.[12] The two concepts are not the same and do not play a role in student politics to the same degree, but they are connected and it is possible that they can overlap at times. Only a student movement is inherently linked to student politics.

From a historical perspective, the Polish student movement fits the definition of the so-called "classical student movement" in which students saw themselves as having a particular role to play as a group in society. Such a student movement, be it social or political, was focused on the wider society. It did not necessarily need a political program, but could in its orientation be aligned with a broader social or political movement through which it could manifest itself for a longer period of time. Its national characteristics were in turn determined by the traditions within the student milieu. These elements—or rather the memory of them—would in some way or another influence student politics in the post-war period since students at different times would become inspired by the historical myth of previous generations of students. As such, the generational phenomenon of Polish student politics constitutes no less than a "narrative of consciousness" as the memory of the consecutive movements, conspiracies, and uprisings left their mark not only on the post-war student movement, but on Polish society at large. [13]

This national specificity against the backdrop of the historical context is not without importance in a society which like the Polish one is imbued with a strong historical consciousness at the core of its identity. Much of the characteristics of post-war student politics were influenced by historical traditions despite a changed political context. This is apparent in students' political actions, the political ideas that permeated the student milieu, and the way in which students mobilized and organized. Polish students had been politically active ever since the emergence of modern student movements in the early nineteenth century. Their actions usually centered around conspiratorial activity, which at times evolved into full-scale protest and strike movements and led to active participation in the insurrections of the era. Initially, a spirit of revolutionary liberalism held sway in the milieu, though this changed towards the late nineteenth century when socialist, anarchist, and nationalist ideas came to the fore. With the additional influence of Catholicism and the appearance of a specific ideology of agrarism Poland had an ideologically diverse student milieu at the dawn of the twentieth century. The early decades of student conspiratorial activism necessitated clandestine organization. This began to change in the latter half of the nineteenth century when students legally founded mutual-aid societies. This signaled the beginning of a tradition of student self-government (*samorządność*) in Polish academic centers.

With the re-emergence of an independent Polish state after World War I came the creation of sponsored organizations (i.e., student organizations that were affiliated and under patronage of political parties or the church). While student politics was determined by the structural political circumstances of an era, it was also characterized at times by the dynamics of generational conflict—a rebellion of the young generation of students versus the old ruling class. This was especially apparent during the Romantic period of the early nineteenth century when students filled the ranks of insurrectionaries, the final years of the nineteenth century with the coming of age of a generation of so-called *niepokorni* (defiant ones) from which the leaders of the Second Republic would emerge, and during the 1930s when the student milieu rebelled *en masse* against the then authoritarian *Sanacja* (Overhaul) regime though in the latter case this was overshadowed by anti-Semitic excesses.[14] The above elements and characteristics would reappear and influence student politics during the Communist era.

STUDENT POLITICS UNDER COMMUNISM

Student politics within the context of a totalitarian or authoritarian regime with totalitarian aspects—as was rather the case in Poland after 1956—is characterized by certain limitations. In Communist Poland, the top-down centralized monopoly of power implied that the party dictated higher education policy, engineered a youth policy to serve its interests and additionally applied various forms and degrees of repression via bureaucratic measures or, more directly, through the security apparatus. This ideological imperative of vertical control of the Communist regime aimed for the atomization of the individual—the Soviet *Komsomol* as a mass ideological youth organization served as the guiding example, although it was not exactly replicated in Poland—and conflicted with the traditions and mores of the student milieu.[15] It is this conflict that constituted the structural setting for student politics under Communism—one of regime control versus student conformism, pragmatism, and resistance.

The first and foremost way in which the regime strove to exert direct control over the student milieu was through sponsored organization. Different types of student organizations were set up to serve the regime's needs.[16] In comparison to the pre-war student organizations under political patronage, these organizations exceeded levels of penetration and control of Communist party activists. In Communist Poland three different categories of organization were to be observed, each with a respective level of regime control and sponsorship. Their common denominator was that they were legal under the Communist system. The first category was political organization, which took on various forms and changing roles at

different times corresponding to the contemporary needs of the regime. Depending on the situation there was either a degree of organizational pluralism or a single organizational structure, which had an avant-garde or mass character and represented an all-encompassing concept of youth or a milieu-specific student identity.

The second category was social organization, which represented and dealt with various aspects of student life that had been managed by the mutual-aid associations in earlier times. Such organization was perceived as constituting something in the likes of a student trade union.[17] Under the Communist regime these organizations were subjected to the authority of the party albeit to far lesser extent than the political organizations. Social organization involved a plethora of activities and responsibilities ranging from student representation at the universities to organizing purely recreational events. A special case was the *Akademicki Związek Sportowy* (AZS—Academic Sports Union) that enjoyed some autonomy within the social organizational structure.

The third and final category was represented by various institutions of self-government inasmuch as they did not coincide with or were not embodied by the social organization. This could entail the running of dormitories, canteens, clubs, and bars if they were managed to a certain extent from within the student body. In certain cases student self-government even amounted to student representation through a "parliament" at an institution of higher education.[18] Finally, even under Communism, the Polish academic milieu was still highly attached to the traditional notion of self-government. In this sense the institutions of higher education symbolized self-governing spheres—universities for example enjoyed extra-territoriality, a similar principle that applied to foreign legations and embassies—though this naturally varied depending on the period. What all these forms of self-government had in common was that they were legal—tolerated or sanctioned by the authorities. The above three categories of sponsored organization would in effect constitute the "official student movement."

This official student movement was but one side of the coin since independent and oppositional student activity influenced the character of and set the scene for student politics in Communist Poland. Similarly, three distinctive types of activity were to be distinguished. The first was the political activity of radical students, though the term "radical" denotes the oppositional politicization of the students in question rather than the actual ideology. It epitomizes the contrast with the majority of the student body which tended to act in a conformist way out of "status anxiety."[19] In this sense, it also underlines the element of agency and political action which was conspiratorial or, conversely, public. What student radicals had in common was that they acted upon their convictions and in doing so paved the way for larger movements if and when they emerged. The second type of activity related to the role of the church

within the student community. Although this was severely limited during Communist times, its most significant and yet tolerated presence was embodied by the student parishes at the universities and colleges. Furthermore, students were attracted to various church-sponsored extra-curricular activities through which the latter exerted an influence on the student milieu. The third area of activity lay within the sphere of youth counter-culture. Counter-cultural trends fed non-conformist stances and rebellious inclinations among members of the student body.[20] Since they were often the result of transnational influences emanating from the West, they were regarded as negative and even hostile by the regime, but attractive for young people who wished to show their defiance in a less explicitly political manner.[21]

It is important to underscore that under the Communist regime all social activity was interpreted through an ideological prism in which nothing was void of a political dimension.[22] Thus, an apolitical stance implicitly signified a rejection of the system which paradoxically held a political connotation. Therefore, student politics under Communism not only implied the classical political activity of students, but also the apolitical activity that focused on the interests or situation of students as such.[23] Moreover, the degree of state repression to which the student milieu was subjected at various times throughout the Communist period played a significant role to curb or encourage certain types of activity. Another important element that influenced the nature of student politics under Communism was the effect of the regime's measures vis-à-vis the composition of the student body. As Communism in theory constituted a future utopian social order, in practice the Communists endeavored to change the structure of society through various forms of social engineering to which the student milieu was no exception. Students were not only regarded to represent incipient cohorts of exemplary "new men and women" but they were designated to become members of the new socialist intelligentsia.[24] To aid and accelerate this process in the meantime, the regime contemplated to change the class character of the student milieu by promoting working-class and rural youth to enroll into higher education institutions.[25] In its most extreme apparition, Communist policy aspired to eliminate the traditional notion of students as a social group by imposing a uniform youth model. This was apparent among others in how students were encouraged to spend their free time doing manual labor. This also meant that the so-called traditional divide between "town and gown" carried less weight under the Communist regime than it did in other societies. Student youth therefore had more in common with their working-class compatriots than elsewhere. In other words, age-peers among the generations of youth coming of age during Communist rule were more capable of understanding each other over and despite differences of milieu.[26]

THE PROBLEM OF STUDENT GENERATIONS

Apart from being determined by the contingencies of a specific milieu, student politics is inherently linked to the problem of youth since students as a social group are generally associated with a youthful life phase.[27] This youthfulness is not strictly biological since students as a rule are already young adults, but rather refers to their social and economic status. Due to their studies, students gain their independence as individuals in society after a more protracted period which has been prolonged in industrialized societies as training and education take longer and general life-expectancy increases. The years of being a student therefore represent a specific phase in life between adolescence and fully-fledged adulthood though in some cases there is an increased continuity when ex-students, part-time students, and young academics remain longer attached to the broader student community. Nevertheless, the student body changes quite rapidly over time as it is depleted and replenished with frequent regularity by successive age-cohorts, a process which induces the emergence and disappearance of student generations.[28]

This generational aspect has important implications for the understanding and perception of student politics.[29] Students as young people experience historical events differently than their elders thereby developing their political views in a distinct way. The collective binding customs, social usages, beliefs, and ideas that students acquire while coming of age at a certain time in history lead to a generation-specific mentality. A student generation's identity is moreover often determined politically by a decisive event, a "generational event," that was critical during its members' socialization. The more generational events, the more potential political student generations there can arise.[30] In turn, student movements and student politics are susceptible to change as a result of changing political generations within the student body.[31]

However, political generations are not necessarily composed of like-minded individuals as different trends can exist within a single generation. Generations can be divided into subgroups which respective common experiences differ from one another in specific ways although they share the same historical experience. Members of such "generational units" are united by a similar consciousness amounting to a particular common identity. Thus, differentiated and even antagonistic generational units are oriented toward each other and represent the same generation exactly because of this mutual orientation. Conversely, a generation often becomes identified though the values of a single generational unit because that respective subgroup's thinking and actions became the most influential as it appeared to be most in harmony with the prevailing historical experience of the generation as a whole. When small groups of students become politically active they can influence the wider student generation leading to the extent of an ideological convergence which can

be perceived as a specific "generational style." Generational styles can be discerned as intellectual trends that became polarized within a certain *Zeitgeist*.[32] This amounts to a generational perception of student politics through the generated political ideas and actions, and the represented ideology of student movements that arise. In contrast to the intelligentsia with its wider age group of members, the succession of relatively short generations of students implies that the latter's political consciousness was more directly influenced by processes of societal change as their political socialization was more prone to differentiation.

When it comes to students' political consciousness, some qualification of the milieu component in student politics under Communism in favor of the generational component is necessary.[33] Although political consciousness is often attributed to milieu, status group or class, it is important to distinguish between these concepts when referring to students in a Communist system. Class consciousness relates to an individual's perception of adherence to a certain social group and the then resulting identification with its collective values, something that was ironically less clear under Communism despite its class rhetoric and ideology. Political consciousness, in contrast, implies an understanding of social issues that transcends the level of opinion or attitude through which a set of values is developed for one to act on accordingly.[34] In other words, students do not achieve political consciousness simply by belonging to the student community. Under Communism, it was primarily their socialization from a generational point of view that affected their consciousness. Protest would be incited on generational grounds—young workers and students—rather than class-specific grounds. At most there was a difference between urban and rural youth since the latter were less in touch with their peers in the towns and cities. It was, however, the way in which young people acted upon their political consciousness that was determined by the milieu they resided in, because certain options for action were either available or necessary.

Another important generational aspect of student politics is the element of intergenerational conflict which had two manifestations under Communism. The first and most common was that of a young generation coming into conflict with a "gerontocracy."[35] Communism generated gerontocracies because of its inherent authoritarian character. When the policies of the gerontocratic elite were too much out-of-touch with the aspirations of the younger generations a "generation gap" would present itself that could prove fertile ground for rebellion.[36] The second type of intergenerational conflict was even more indigenous to the Communist system and was a direct result of its totalitarian-utopian characteristics. This type of intergenerational conflict was in fact generated or encouraged from above, incited by the regime's elite in order to use the younger generation to destroy the old order. Such a conflict of the young Communist and the reactionary elder during Stalinist times was eagerly por-

trayed in Soviet propaganda and symbolized by Pavlik Morozov.[37] The mobilization potential of youth and students against "reactionary" elders was furthermore amply demonstrated by the actions of the *Red Guards* in Maoist China.[38]

Generational conflict was but one of the possible motive forces that drove student politics. The history of student politics in Communist Poland is foremost a story of successive student generations with their own characteristics coming of age while faced with the changing realities of life. These generations' experience of growing up under Communism significantly influenced their political consciousness. During this period, from 1944 to 1989, various types of ideas emerged, developed, persisted, and disappeared that generated political actions by students within different types of organizational structures. Not only the regime's policies, but the activity of the church, and the appearance of transnational and counter-cultural trends also had an impact on the activity of Polish students. Polish students were not united in their political outlook, their choices, or their actions making student politics at times an area of dynamic historical interaction.

STRUCTURE AND OUTLINE

This book consists of four successive chronological parts covering the Communist period from 1944 to 1989, each respectively bundling three chapters which discuss student politics in Poland through a succession of generational units and generational events. Part I covers the period from 1944 to 1957 and discusses the situation of the Polish student movement during the first post-war period generally associated with the Sovietization of Poland, the Stalinist terror, and the ensuing destalinization process. Chapter 1 covers the post-war period up to 1950 when the Stalinist *Gleichschaltung* was completed. This period witnessed a limited form of enduring pluralism in student organizations as well as student contestation of the Communists' policies. Chapter 2 focuses on the high watermark of totalitarianism in Communist Poland. It examines the way the monolithic Stalinist model of higher education and youth organization was imposed and assesses the degree of its success and failure to penetrate the academic milieu. Chapter 3 discusses the end of Stalinism in Poland. This catharsis was symbolized by the implosion and dissolution of the Stalinist youth organization. Students played an important role in the drive for socio-political change that culminated in the "October Spring" of 1956. The chapter closes with a discussion of how the student movement's revolutionary impetus was curbed and brought back under the Communist leadership's control by 1957.

Part II examines Polish student politics during the period following the subduing of the student milieu in 1957 to the outbreak of nationwide

student protest in 1968. Chapter 4 discusses the years following the "October Spring" of 1956 which are usually referred to as the "small stabilization." It treats the student organizations that succeeded the imploded Stalinist youth organization, the *Związek Młodzieży Polskiej* (ZMP—Union of Polish Youth). This chapter ventures into the overall function of the organizations and their impact on the student milieu. Moreover, it also elaborates on the hearths of student opposition that arose during this period, the most prominent of which being the circle of Jacek Kuroń and Karol Modzelewski. Chapter 5 focuses further on the student opposition as it gained momentum from 1965 onwards. The chapter deals with the influence of the church, the nationalist conspiratorial organization *Ruch* (Movement) and the hippie movement on the student milieu. But the focal point is on the group of students who came to be called the *Komandosi* (Commandos), whose activity built upon that of Kuroń and Modzelewski's circle and would provide the impulse to the outbreak of nationwide student protest in 1968. This student revolt is the subject of chapter 6. It is regarded as the main political event concerning students in the history of Communist Poland and it gave rise to a specific "generation of '68." As the student protest movement in Poland coincided with student unrest in other countries, a discussion of the 1968 student revolt and its characteristics in an international comparative context concludes the chapter.

Part III explores the political situation in the student milieu and the evolution of student politics from the post-March period through the 1970s. Chapter 7 deals with the repression against students in the wake of the 1968 protests. It analyzes the regime's ideological offensive to bring the student community under increased control by unifying the official student organizations into one socialist organization, the *Socjalistyczny Związek Studentów Polskich* (SZSP—Socialist Union of Polish Students). Chapter 8 focuses on this organization, its role and its influence. It demonstrates that contrary to the regime's aims it produced a generation of activists whose political consciousness distinguished itself from earlier pro-regime activists not by its level of conformism or loyalty, but rather by its mere formal adherence to Marxist ideology. It epitomized a generation of pragmatic, reform-minded socialists. The chapter also treats the hearths of student opposition that persisted in the mid-1970s. Chapter 9 then turns to the re-emergence of organized student opposition in the latter half of the 1970s. Although this activity was limited in scale, it did represent some new trends, both in ideas and actions, and was influential in setting the scene for the activity of the subsequent student generations in the 1980s.

Part IV discusses the political activity of Polish students from the emergence of *Solidarność* in 1980 to the demise of the Communist regime in 1989. Chapter 10 deals with the developments within the student movement during the *Solidarność* period of 1980–1981. This crisis was a

dynamic period for the student movement similar to 1956. Even more so, as for the first time in the history of Communist Poland student protest gave rise to the creation and legalization of an independent mass student organization. Chapter 11 is concerned with the "normalization" period following the imposition of martial law until the middle of the decade. It focuses primarily on the consequences of martial law for the evolution of student politics as such. Chapter 12 discusses the last generation of students that became politically active under Communism. This generation's activity spearheaded the transformation process and represented the final act of the classical student movement in Polish history.

NOTES

1. See Aleksander Gella, "The Life and Death of the Old Polish Intelligentsia," *Slavic Review* 30, no. 1 (1971): 1–27; Jan T. Gross, *Polish Society under German Occupation: The General Gouvernement, 1939–1944* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Jan T. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad. The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Jerzy Jedlicki, ed., *Dzieje inteligencji polskiej do roku 1918, 3 Vols.* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2008); Jan Szczepanski, "The Polish Intelligentsia: Past and Present," *World Politics* 14, no. 3 (1962): 406–20.

2. See Maria Hirszowicz, "Intelligentsia versus Bureaucracy? The Revival of a Myth in Poland," *Soviet Studies* 30, no. 3 (1978): 336–61.

3. See George Gőmőri, "The Cultural Intelligentsia," in *Social Groups in Polish Society*, eds. David Lane and George Kolankiewicz (London: Macmillan, 1973), 152–79; Ludwik Hass, *Inteligencji polskiej dole i niedole XIX i XX Wiek* (Łowicz: Mazowiecka Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczno-Pedagogiczna, 1999); On literary generations, see for example Kazimierz Wyka, *Pokolenia literackie* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1989).

4. For a more general background overview and discussion of the post-war history of Poland until 1989 see for example Anthony Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism. A Cold War History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Andrzej Paczkowski, *The Spring Will Be Ours: Poland and the Poles from Occupation to Freedom* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

5. David Lane, "Structural and Social Change in Poland," in *Social Groups in Polish Society*, eds. David Lane and George Kolankiewicz, 5–8 (London: Macmillan, 1973); For a comprehensive discussion of the consequences of the Holocaust and other ethnic cleansing campaigns, see Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

6. For an initial orientation see for example Philip G. Altbach, ed., *A Select Bibliography on Students, Politics, and Higher Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University, Center for international affairs, 1967); David F. Burg, *Encyclopedia of Student and Youth Movements* (New York: Facts on File, 1998); For a concise history of student politics in Europe see for example Lieve Gevers and Louis Vos, "Student Movements," in *A History of the University in Europe. 3: Universities in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries (1800–1945)*, ed. Walter Rüegg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Louis Vos, "Student Movements and Political Activism," in *A History of the University in Europe. 4: Universities since 1945*, ed. Walter Rüegg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); For a discussion of student protest movements around the world, see for example Mark Edelman Boren, *Student Resistance: A History of the Unruly Subject* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

7. Saleem M. Badat, *Black Student Politics, Higher Education and Apartheid. From SASO to SANSCO, 1968–1990* (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1999), 19–21.

8. Klaus Allerbeck and Leopold Rosenmayr, *Einfürung in die Jugendsoziologie* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1976), 162.

9. Alan Marsh, *Protest and Political Consciousness* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977), 199–214.

10. Vos, "Student Movements and Political Activism," 277.

11. James Max Fendrich and Robert W. Turner, "The Transition from Student to Adult Politics," *Social Forces* 67, no. 4 (1989): 1050; William L. Hamilton, "Venezuela," in *Students and Politics in Developing Nations*, ed. Donald K. Emmerson (London: Pall Mall Press, 1968), 352–53.

12. Philip G. Altbach, "Students and Politics," in *Student Politics*, ed. Seymour Martin Lipset (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1967), 82–87.

13. Susan K. Morrissey, *Heralds of Revolution. Russian Students and the Mythologies of Radicalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 7–8; Vos, "Student Movements and Political Activism," 277.

14. See Tom Junes, "A Century of Traditions. The Polish Student Movement, 1815–1918," *Central and Eastern European Review* 2, no. 1 (2008); Andrzej Pilch, *Studencki ruch polityczny w Polsce w latach 1932–1939* (Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1972); Andrzej Pilch, *"Rzeczpospolita akademicka" studenci i polityka 1918–1933* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 1997).

15. On the issue of the atomization of individuals under totalitarian regimes see Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, 1976).

16. Gianfranco Poggi, *Catholic Action in Italy. The Sociology of a Sponsored Organization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 51.

17. Ian Weinberg and Kenneth N. Walker, "Student Politics and Political Systems: Toward a Typology," *The American Journal of Sociology* 75, no. 1 (1969): 82–83.

18. See Ewa Nawrocka, "Historia uczelnianego parlamentu ZSP," in *Życie studenckie na Politechnice Gdańskiej*, ed. Marek Biziuk (Gdańsk: Stowarzyszenie Absolwentów Politechniki Gdańskiej, 2005).

19. Frank Parkin, "Adolescent Status and Student Politics," *Journal of Contemporary History* 5, no. 1 (1970): 152.

20. Allerbeck and Rosenmayr, *Einfürung in die Jugendsoziologie*, 99–101.

21. Krzysztof Kosiński, *Oficjalne i prywatne życie młodzieży w czasach PRL* (Warszawa: Rosner i Współnicy, 2006), 85–87.

22. Robert Service, *Comrades. A History of World Communism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 5; See for example the discussion of the political dimension of worker demands in Communist Poland in Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*, 188–89.

23. This holds true for totalitarian and authoritarian political systems in general, see Vos, "Student Movements and Political Activism," 283.

24. Lane, "Structural and Social Change," 22–23; Marek Wierzbicki, "PZPR a środowisko młodzieżowe (1948–1990)," in *PZPR jako machina władzy*, eds. Dariusz Stola and Krzysztof Persak, 287. (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2012). On the Stalinist project of creating a new intelligentsia see Hanna Palska, *Nowa inteligencja w Polsce Ludowej. Świat przedstawień i elementy rzeczywistości* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IFIS, 1994).

25. Although these social categories received preferential treatment, students from more traditional intelligentsia backgrounds stressed the fact that they came from the *inteligencja pracująca* (working intelligentsia). This was a third category that testified of some pragmatism on the part of the authorities. For examples of student cover letters and applications see AUJ, BP/25, *korespondencja wewnętrzna*, various pages; on this issue see also John Connelly, *Captive University. The Sovietization of East German, Czech and Polish Higher Education, 1945–1956* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 231–38.