

# Polish institute publishes book showing police tracking of Wojtyla

WARSAW, Poland – Poland's National Remembrance Institute has published a book of documents detailing how the communist secret police kept the future Pope John Paul II under surveillance and sought material for blackmailing him.

"As a priest, lecturer and pastor, and later as a bishop and metropolitan of Krakow, Karol Wojtyla was seen by the government as an especially dangerous ideological opponent," the book's editor, Marek Lasota, said in an introduction. "This was proved by the use of a full range of operational methods and technical means against him, from telephone bugs and the opening of correspondence to direct observation through an agent network used for disintegration and disinformation activities."

The 687-page "Toward Truth and Freedom: The Communist Secret Police and Karol Wojtyla," opens with a police document from May 1946, when the future pontiff was a seminarian, investigating his links with a patriotic student group in Krakow.

The final document, a cryptogram to the Interior Ministry in Warsaw, dated May 24, 1978, cites a demand by then-Cardinal Wojtyla to be allowed to stage a Corpus Christi procession from the southern city's Wawel Cathedral and explains the reasons for official refusal.

The collection suggests that surveillance and harassment increased sharply after Father Wojtyla's appointment as a bishop in 1958, as the secret police sought more precise information about his life and work.

Among dozens of questions recommended for informants, the secret police asked about the bishop's clothing and shaving habits, as well as about his radio and typewriter and who helped him maintain them.

About 10 percent of Catholic clergy are believed to have acted as informants in communist-ruled Poland, although higher recruitment rates were recorded in some dioceses in the 1980s.

In April 2005, shortly after the pope's death, the National Remembrance Institute accused a Polish Dominican, Father Konrad Hejmo, of spying on him for two decades in Rome.

The book is the third published on the surveillance of communist-era church leaders by the Warsaw-based institute, whose president, Janusz Kurtyka, was among 96 people killed in an April 10 plane crash in western Russia.