

"Kesterson was our canary in the cave," says William Davoren, another ex-official of the FWS who runs the one-man San Francisco Bay Institute. "Now the canary is dead, and the question is: are we going to do something about it, or keep on with business as usual?" Every big interest in the area has a right to fresh water, Davoren says, but not the Bay.

Because it lacks a claim to "beneficial use" in California's complex water code, it could become a common dumping ground.

Davoren sees Kesterson as a symbol of all that has gone wrong in 30 years of aggressive land and water exploitation in California. He thinks that big-scale farming in the San Joaquin Valley has

reached a turning point from which it may not recover.

These are the terms of a water contest that will preoccupy California's resource managers for a decade or more as they try to resolve the competing claims of a powerful farm lobby and an increasingly effective environmental movement.

—ELIOT MARSHALL

Polish Universities Face Crackdown

Despite protests at home and from abroad, the Polish government's drive to take control of the country's 99 universities is proceeding at a rapid pace. On the verge of abolishment are broad self-governing powers that were wrung from the government in 1980 in negotiations with Solidarity, the Independent Students' Union, and the teachers' union.

The heart of the concessions that came out of the labor and social unrest of the early 1980's was a system of elected university senates, faculty councils, and student groups. The government aims to scrap these democratic forums as early as this summer, sources say. Tiers of appointed officials whose political views mirror those of government leaders would take the place of elected university leaders. What remains to be seen is how harsh the government will be in tightening its grip on the academic community.

Polish officials are justifying their actions on the grounds that the management freedoms allowed university community are being abused. The political activism that has been permitted is incompatible with the goals of the socialist state, officials charge.

Not only are academic freedoms slated to be curtailed but the futures of at least several thousand academics and university staff members are at risk. The proposed changes in the university management system were unveiled by the Socio-Political Committee of the Council of Ministers in January. These proposals, which the Sejm (Poland's parliament) likely will enact this month, appear to impose tougher restraints on academia than were in place during the 1970's.

The Main Council for Higher Education and Research, the highest self-governing academic body in Poland, is expected to be rendered ineffective in influencing Polish education policy and university operations. Although the government's Minister of Higher Education, Benon Miskiewicz, has held a voting position on the council comprised of elected university professors, he not been able to dominate its affairs. Now his ability to dictate university policy will be fundamentally strengthened under the proposed changes.

University rectors, vice rectors, deans, and department heads currently are elected and report to university senates and department councils. The new rules, which amend the 1982 Law of Higher Education, empower the minister of education to select management personnel throughout the university system. This expanded authority extends to the review of university research projects, teacher selection, retention of tenure, and student organizations that until now have had a say in university affairs.

With the Polish government being the sole employer in the university arena, the clear implication is that academics must buckle under or lose their jobs, notes Letitia Rydjeski, a spokeswoman for the New York-based Committee In Support of Solidarity. But for those faculty members that are identified as sympathizers of the Solidarity movement, or campus activists, falling in step with the Polish government's latest dictates may not save their careers.

Indeed, there are ominous signs that the government wants to purge campuses of faculty and student activists. For example, State Department officials note that since October 1984 the number of political internees has risen from 22 to an estimated 185. There are reports of increasing numbers of professors, researchers, and other university faculty members being detained by Polish police for questioning, or arrested. During the height of the state's crackdown on the Solidarity movement in 1982, as many as 2000 Poles were jailed for political offenses. By last summer, all but 22 had been released by the government.

The number of scientists and university faculty who fail to pass the Polish government's litmus test for loyalty could run into the thousands. This may be best measured by what happens at four larger universities that are strongholds of resistance to the clampdown on academic and civil freedoms in Poland: Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, the University of Warsaw, Jagielonian University in Krakow, and Boleslaw Beirut University in Wroclaw. A poll conducted by *Pygodnik Mazowsze*, an underground newspaper at Adam Mickiewicz University, indicates that only 20 percent of the faculty support the government's sweeping changes.

At this point there appears to be little chance of dissuading the Polish government from instituting its plan. The Main Council for Higher Education and Research has protested the changes, 2000 students in Warsaw have openly demonstrated against it, and 150 academics in the United States have written the Polish government. But there are no signs of any moderation in course. "The government does not seem to be taking the West's opinion into regard," says Rydjeski.

The prospect of the U.S. government having any influence on the outcome is even bleaker, State Department officials concede. "We don't really have very much leverage," says one official, noting that U.S.-Polish relations are at an all time low. In the meantime, should the coming crackdown on academic freedoms produce a flood of refugees from the Polish university community, State Department officials say they will try to adjust immigration ceilings to accommodate those who seek to come to the United States. —MARK CRAWFORD