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COMMUNISM IN EASTERN EUROPE

Post-Stalin Developments in the Satellites

CIA / SRS–7

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COMMUNISM IN EASTERN EUROPE:
Post-Stalin Developments in the Satellites

CIA/SRS-7

PART I — FROM THE DEATH OF STALIN TO THE 20th PARTY CONGRESS

PART II/A — POLAND

This is a speculative study which has been discussed with US Government intelligence officers but has not been formally coordinated. It is based on information available to SRS as of 8 October 1957.

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FOREWORD

1. The essential principle of a celestial satellite is its dependence on, and control by, the primary center around which it circles. The general acceptance of this astronomical term to describe the captive nations of Eastern Europe which have made up the Soviet "Orbit" since World War II, as well as their actual behavior for a number of years, had led to the widespread assumption that, like their heavenly counterparts, their course could but follow that of their primary center, the USSR.

2. The repercussions in the Satellite states of developments in the Soviet Union since the death of Stalin have, however, revealed that this analogy is subject to qualifications. The "monolithic" Soviet system or bloc has shown itself to be composed, not of inert bodies inexorably obeying the law of gravitation, but of living nations, differing considerably in national temperament, historic tradition, economic development, geopolitical interests, and the capacity of the men in power. Their reactions have therefore varied considerably.

3. It is the purpose of this paper to retrace the impact of post-Stalin developments in the USSR upon the Communist regimes in the Satellite countries, to endeavor to discern the reasons why some of the Satellites have docilely followed the Moscow line while others have rebelled and even revolted, and to draw conclusions as to possible future developments in the area.

4. The study will be divided into three parts. Part I briefly surveys the background, covering the period from the death of Stalin to the 20th Congress. Part II will deal with developments in each Satellite since the 20th Congress;

Poland is presented as the first section (A), to be followed in the near future by Hungary (Section B); and subsequently by the other Satellites. Part III will be devoted to an analysis of the divergences among the Satellites and to an estimate of the future of Communism in Eastern Europe.

PART I

FROM THE DEATH OF STALIN TO THE 20th PARTY CONGRESS

The Year 1953

1. In 1953, immediately after the death of Stalin, a "New Course" was initiated in the USSR and its European Satellites. Under the leadership of Georgii Malenkov, the New Course sought to correct certain aspects of the Stalinist system which had become increasingly oppressive and self-defeating in the last years of the dictator. The main features of this reorientation were a revival of the collective leadership tenets of Lenin, a renunciation of government by terror, a more "liberal" domestic policy and a less aggressive approach in foreign affairs.

2. In the Satellite countries the principle of collective leadership found its application mainly in the relinquishment of either the premiership or the first party secretaryship by those leaders who were holding both posts. In Czechoslovakia, after Gottwald's death in March 1953, the new president, Zapotocky, no longer occupied the positions of president and first party secretary, the latter going to Novotny. In Hungary, Rakosi gave up the premiership to Imre Nagy. According to Malenkov, as quoted by Nagy in his book on Communism (written in the latter part of 1955 and the beginning of 1956), Soviet comrades had discussed personnel questions with Rakosi in May. Rakosi was asked whom he "recommended" as his deputy, but he objected to every name mentioned. He claimed he did not want to be premier himself "but he wanted a premier who would have no voice in the making of decisions." However, the Soviet leaders were adamant. Khrushchev declared it undesirable that leadership of the Party and the state should be concentrated in the hands

of one man or even of a few men, and on July 4 it was announced that Imre Nagy, "recommended" by Malenkov, Molotov and Khrushchev, had been appointed premier. In Albania, Enver Hoxha, the party chief, relinquished the cabinet portfolios he had held; in Rumania, on the other hand, Gheorghiu-Dej retained the premiership. With the exception of Hungary, where the duality of leadership had serious consequences, the new principle made little difference, for in practice one-man rule continued. Criticism of higher level policies or personalities, although constantly stressed as an important element of party democracy, continued to be ruled out. The main effect of the new slogan was to reduce, for a time at least, local "bossism" and to make lower level party meetings somewhat more frequent. However, criticism of personal leadership in the abstract served the valuable purpose of providing scapegoats for the mistakes which had admittedly been committed in virtually every field.

3. One of the first acts of the new Soviet regime, following the traditional practice of new rulers, was to issue an amnesty decree (27 March 1953) which included a promise to abate the harshness of the Criminal Code, followed by an editorial in Pravda (6 April) promising that henceforth legality and the civil rights of citizens would be respected. Amnesties, actual or promised, followed in Rumania (4 April), Czechoslovakia (4 May), East Germany (10 June), and in Hungary (4 July), where the promise was coupled, as in the USSR, with assurances of a reform in police practices.

4. In the USSR economic concessions were officially announced on 8 August 1953 by Malenkov, who declared, "We must insure a more rapid increase in the material and cultural levels of the people, force by every means the development of our light industry." He admitted that greater incentives must be provided for the peasants and that, if the Communist regime did not produce greater abundance within two or three years, it would imperil itself. The lag in

Soviet agriculture was exposed with great frankness by Khrushchev (3 September 1953) who promised corrective measures, such as higher prices for agricultural products, lower compulsory deliveries, higher wages, etc. These developments fulfilled the general expectations already aroused by the larger than usual price reductions for food and consumer goods (31 March), the appearance in stores of unrationed wheat flour, and a hope-inspiring article in Pravda (11 June).

5. The Satellite regimes had their own special reasons for seeking to allay discontent and to increase material incentives for greater production. Long before the seizure of power by the Communists, everybody in East Central Europe was in agreement that the problem of rural overpopulation in all those countries except Czechoslovakia could be solved only by industrialization. But the only argument in favor of the excessive rate of industrialization advanced by the puppet regimes was Soviet interest. Soviet propaganda could perhaps succeed in convincing Russian Communists as well as non-Communists, at first, that they could only defend their country against enemy encirclement if they became a great industrial power, and later, after World War II, that they should aspire to be the leading industrial and political power in the world, an aim well worth heavy material sacrifices. But the first argument was obsolete and the second carried little weight in the Satellite countries. None but the most fanatic Communists could possibly be eager to endure privations for the glory of a foreign nation. Worse still, while the Russians derived material benefits from their preeminence in the Orbit, the Satellites had not only to suffer hardships for their own rapid industrialization but also to supply the USSR with numerous commodities, first as reparations or in return for their "liberation", and later through the exploitation of joint companies and under unfavorable trade agreements, as

exemplified by the recent revaluation of Polish coal deliveries, the agreement to refund transit dues, etc. Even if these agreements had not been unfavorable, the important fact is that the people in the Satellite countries were convinced they were being ruthlessly exploited by the Russians.

6. The Kremlin leadership, one may assume, was well aware of the disaffection among the Satellite peoples and authorized their governments to anticipate the formal announcement of the New Course in the USSR. The East German Communist leaders, possibly impressed by the serious riots which the currency reform had provoked in Czechoslovakia, made their announcement on 9-10 June 1953. The rebellion which broke out in the following week seemed to confirm the theory that half-hearted concessions are likely to be interpreted as signs of weakness and to backfire. But it also confirmed the suspicion that Moscow was fully prepared, if necessary, to support its puppets in the People's Democracies with its armed forces.

7. The most far-reaching changes took place in Hungary, at least on paper, for in practice their implementation was to a great extent to be nullified by Rakosi and the Party apparatus which he continued to control. If a somewhat disproportionate amount of space in the following pages is allocated to Hungary, this should find its justification in the Hungarian Revolution, in the fact that the revelations contained in Imre Nagy's apologia have supplied an unusual amount of seemingly authentic inside information on conditions and developments in Hungary and on Soviet-Hungarian relations up to the end of 1955 and in the fact that, with due allowance for local variations, these may be considered typical of conditions in the Soviet Orbit generally. "The shocking situation /in 1953/" writes Nagy, "was described /to a Hungarian delegation/ by the key members of the CPSU who declared that the mistakes and crimes of the four-member

Party leadership in Hungary, headed by Rakosi, drove the country to the verge of catastrophe, shaking the people's democratic system in its foundation; unless prompt and effective measures had been taken the people would have turned against them" and, quoting Khrushchev, "we would have been booted out summarily!"

8. Nagy claims that, in violation of Lenin's teaching that the people's welfare was the highest law of Communism, up to June 1953 the development of industry had been pushed beyond all reasonable limits and in Hungary furthest of all, although it was the poorest in industrial raw materials of all the Satellites.[1] But as a result of inefficiency, antiquated techniques and poor management, the goods exported to pay for imported raw materials were sold at a loss, leading to progressive impoverishment of the country. Although heavy industrial production had increased 500-700% since 1938 and the Rakosi regime had promised a 50% rise in the standard of living by 1954, the standard had actually been falling up to June 1953. Only 58% of the national income was spent for consumption, as against a "previous 78-80%!" As a result of forced collectivization and the refusal to help individual farmers, agricultural production was barely at prewar levels. Instead of the "promised abundance of consumer goods, the regime had created a scarcity unparalleled since Liberation!"

9. With regard to political conditions, Nagy writes that Rakosi had "made himself independent of the will and opinion of the Party membership and of the decisions of the

[1] "Industrial development amounted to 159% in Poland from 1949 to 1955, to 98% in Czechoslovakia, to 92.3% in the GDR from 1950 to 1955, to 144% in Rumania from 1951 to 1955, to 120% in Bulgaria from 1949 to 1955, and to 210% in Hungary from 1949 to 1953."

Party . . . with dictatorial methods, primarily with the aid of the AVH [the Secret Police] which became predominant over the Party, forced it to execute its wishes!" Moreover, Rakosi "violated the ethical and moral norms of socialism" and as a result "shattered the masses' faith in the Party!" Nagy provides, however, one excuse for Rakosi in the economic field:

> ". . . harmful influences [on our trade] were not only of an internal kind, there were also external forces and factors at play, especially in the field of foreign trade agreements . . . A considerable part of our foreign trade debts derive from expenditures and investments for security and defense . . . the June 1953 Resolution pointed out there were also excesses in this field."

In another chapter, on national defense, Nagy speaks of "Rakosi, who, as he used to say, had already burnt his hands once by fulfilling excessive demands!" Thus the conclusion is obvious that Soviet pressure had obliged Rakosi to accept this heavy burden on the Hungarian economy.

10. This did not prevent Mikoyan from rebuking the Hungarians who had been summoned to Moscow for a "conference" in June 1953, presumably after disorders had broken out in Csepel and other industrial centers "at the time of the June events in Berlin, Pilsen and Prague", as Nagy puts it. Mikoyan particularly criticized the "excessive development of the [Hungarian] iron smelting industry. Hungary has no iron ore, no coke . . . There is also extravagance in some fields of investment." Anticipating somewhat, it may be added here that, according to Nagy, these criticisms were repeated by Mikoyan early in 1954, when he blamed the Hungarian regime for having failed to correct the disproportion between heavy and light industry sufficiently. "You have wanted to build socialism - a task that has occupied us for 35 years - too rapidly. The situation in Russia is entirely different . . . "

11. In the agricultural field, the Soviet leaders also advised a retreat.

> "When", Nagy writes, "we expressed some anxiety, Comrade Molotov (and not Beria) reassured us as follows: 'The collectives must not be disbanded by fiat but, if they choose to disband voluntarily, they should not be hindered. No harm will come of it.'"

12. The Central Committee of the Hungarian Workers' Party met in Budapest on 27-28 June. The post of general secretary was abolished, Rakosi was appointed a member of a three-man secretariat, and a resolution was passed embodying a severe condemnation of past practices and setting forth the main principles of the New Course. Publication of the text of the resolution was, however, successfully prevented by Rakosi, who was to devote all his energies for the next two years to its nullification and to the destruction of Nagy, but its main lines can be inferred from Nagy's book and from the speech he made on 4 July.

13. In the first place, Nagy writes, the relations between Party and state were redefined "on the basis of the principles worked out at the [June 1953] Moscow conference." He does not make clear what the new relationship was to be, beyond the fact that the powers of the head of the government were to be considerably increased - in line with the increased stature of Malenkov in the USSR. But, Nagy writes, "the results achieved were soon defeated, because of the resistance on the part of Matyas Rakosi" - in line again with the rise of Khrushchev at Malenkov's expense.

14. With regard to economic problems, Nagy stated frankly in a speech on 4 July that

> ". . . the objectives of our augmented Five-Year Plan are beyond our strength. Its implementation is vastly overtaxing our resources . . . The develop-

> ment of a socialist heavy industry cannot be an end in itself . . . The general direction must be modified."

The new policy, Nagy said, would reduce the emphasis on farm collectivization as well as on heavy industry, members of collectives being allowed to withdraw after the harvest. It would provide greater assistance to private farmers and allow the restoration of private enterprise in retail trade and handicrafts. Amnesty for minor political offenders, the abolition of internment camps, greater religious tolerance and greater reliance on Parliament were also promised.

15. Under the impact of the immediate breakdown of labor discipline and withdrawals of collective farm members, Nagy and, much more sharply, Rakosi, were, however, obliged to warn the workers a week later that labor discipline had to be restored, that farm collectivization was still the ultimate aim and that withdrawals from collectives would not be tolerated now, nor would they be entirely painless even in October.

16. The Rumanian government began releasing stocks of food in the cities and granting a number of easements to the peasants in the first half of July. The New Course was formally launched by Gheorghiu-Dej on 22 August 1953, the eve of "National Liberation Day." He admitted that the proportion between the investment and consumption funds had been "unjust" and that "the rate of industrialization had been forced, especially as regards heavy industry", the result having been "an unsatisfactory increase in the living standard." He promised to reduce the share of the national income allocated to investments and to double the share allocated to agriculture and consumer goods. At the same time, Gheorghiu-Dej promised more state help to private farmers, who still produced 75% of the marketable food surplus, as well as an end to the persecution of kulaks and to coercion to join collective farms.

For the workers he promised higher buying power but he conceded this could only come as a result of higher labor productivity and lower production costs.

17. The Czechoslovak New Course was announced on 15 September 1953. Premier Siroky promised to reduce investments in industry, chiefly heavy industry, in favor of agriculture and housing and admitted the need of "an increase in consumption and the safeguarding of improved living standards!"

18. In Bulgaria the New Course, foreshadowed by a reduction in food and consumer goods prices on 1 August 1953, was formally introduced by Prime Minister Chervenkov on 8 September, the Bulgarian "Liberation Day!" He, too, promised greater stress on consumer goods and considerable help to agricultural collectives. Two months later this announcement was amended to include individual peasants.

19. The Poles apparently decided that their delay in following the Moscow line was sufficient to set them apart from the commonplace Satellites, especially after having deliberately flouted the liberalization policy by the trial of Bishop Kaczmarek and his associates and the arrest of Cardinal Wyszynski on 26 September 1953; Premier Bierut launched the "New Course" on 28 October 1953. Its main features were the usual ones of encouragement for agricultural production, both in the private and in the socialized sector - which was to be strengthened - and the allocation of a larger slice of the investment fund, which was not to be reduced, to consumer goods industries. Characteristically dissociating themselves from the Satellite mass, the Polish leaders were careful to point out that "a rise in the living standard . . . was made possible. . . by our achievements in the expansion of industry."

20. In Albania, Enver Hoxha promised a higher standard of living in August 1953.

21. The remaining months of the year were mainly devoted in the Soviet Bloc to implementation of the New Course economic principles. East Germany reduced taxes on wages and consumer goods prices; Poland also reduced prices; Rumania, Hungary and Bulgaria took steps to encourage production, chiefly of livestock, by decreeing higher prices for farm produce; Hungary and Bulgaria liberalized labor laws, granting greater freedom to workers to change jobs and other advantages; Rumania reduced taxes on wages by 30%, revised the wages of some categories of workers and took steps to make more consumer goods available to the peasants; Albania and Czechoslovakia made concessions to small private traders and artisans; and all Satellites reduced in varying degrees the compulsory delivery quotas of farm produce.

22. A fact worthy of note is that in the summer of 1953 a number of grandiose plans demanding huge investments, such as the Budapest subway, the Danube-Black Sea Canal, etc. were tacitly abandoned. The promised higher ratio of investment in consumer goods appears to have been achieved mainly by cutting down on unnecessary prestige investment. Moreover, Communist spokesmen as exemplified by Gheorghiu-Dej admitted frankly that, in the last analysis, the standard of living could rise only if prices could be reduced as a result of increased labor productivity. The alternative possibility, granting at least temporary priority to consumer goods, was not mentioned publicly.[1] Under the circumstances, a vicious circle was created; increased productivity could only be attained if the workers were offered greater material incentives, but these would only become available if labor productivity rose. What the governments obviously counted on to break the circle was constant hammering on the themes of

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[1] It is, however, strongly advocated by Imre Nagy in his apologia.

greater labor and management efficiency, better use of modern machinery, more intelligent planning, and more "scientific" piece-work rates, as well as on the fruits of previous investments. Bierut and Siroky even promised 15% increases in the 1954 standard of living.

23. In the field of foreign affairs all Satellite governments had, by the end of the year, normalized their diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia. They exchanged, or agreed to exchange, ambassadors, or, in the case of Albania, proceeded to resume diplomatic relations. Between Yugoslavia and her neighbors, negotiations were also begun for resumption of traffic and trade and settlement of border problems; mutual hostile propaganda practically ceased.

The Year 1954

24. In the USSR, the most notable event of 1954 was Khrushchev's gradual rise to the position of "most collective" among the collective leaders. Meanwhile, "liberalization" made little progress. It is true that the power of the Soviet police was reduced by dividing its authority and making it responsible to the Council of Ministers as a whole. But the change was undoubtedly motivated less by solicitude for the masses than by the leadership's collective opposition to the concentration of all police powers in one man's hands, as they had been in those of the recently executed Beria. Moreover, the press continued to mention periodically the duty of the police to respect "socialist legality" and the duty of the Party to keep an eye on the police.

25. In the economic sphere, February and March 1954 witnessed fresh promises to increase the availability of housing and consumer goods, particularly food. But both Khrushchev and Malenkov warned that attention to the further

development of heavy industry, "the foundation of Soviet economy", would not be "relaxed"; rather it would be developed "by every means." The chief satisfaction given the consumers was the reaffirmation by Party Secretary Pospelov of the 1953 promise to increase capital investment in light industry in 1954 by 84%. But the final figures for 1954 showed that not even the revised production goals set in 1953 had been attained in such branches as meat, fish, canned goods, cotton textiles, etc. As a matter of fact, by that time it was clear that increased "emphasis" on consumer goods had not meant, as many people had thought, that they would be given priority over the production industry, the basis of Communist power, but merely that the disproportion between the two would be somewhat reduced. In the meantime, the agricultural development of the "virgin lands" was being vigorously pushed by Khrushchev. As a precaution, however, additional incentives were given to farmers in June 1954 in the form of reduced delivery quotas for kolkhozes, higher prices for state purchases, and the cancellation of some obligatory deliveries from individual plots.

26. Political events in the Satellite countries in 1954 were practically routine. In Bulgaria, the ostensible aim of power decentralization was pursued by the creation, in February 1954, of the post of first party secretary, occuped by Todor Zhivkov. In the following month, Boleslaw Bierut relinquished the Polish premiership to the former Social Democrat, Jozef Cyrankiewicz, but remained as first party secretary. In April, Gheorghiu-Dej surrendered one of his positions in Rumania; he decided to keep the premiership. Apparently there was at that time no agreement in the Satellite Orbit as to whether Malenkov or Khrushchev was the top man in the USSR, although, if they had waited until May, the fate of a dispatch sent to the New York Times by its Moscow correspondent would have provided an unmistakeable clue to the impending solution. This dispatch, which included a statement that in a Communist country "the first secretaryship of the Communist Party is the biggest job in that country",

was first "killed" by the Moscow censors, then released unchanged two days later. Accordingly, in Albania, when Enver Hoxha had finally to choose, he kept the first party secretaryship and let Mehmet Shehu have the premiership (July 1954).

27. The more "civilized" aspect of the New Course was presumably reflected in the circumstance that, following the Soviet example in the case of Beria, trials of party traitors and deviators were no longer held in public and accompanied by abject confessions of guilt. However, in March, Gabor Peter, head of the Hungarian Security Police up to January 1953, was given a life sentence "for crimes against the state." In April, Lucretiu Patrascanu, one of the earliest and ablest Rumanian Communist leaders, who had been ejected from the government in 1948 on the charges of "nationalist deviationism" and of having been in the pay of the US, the only man in Rumania who might have played the role of a Gomulka or Imre Nagy, was tried and executed and six of his associates were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. In Czechoslovakia several Slovak Communist leaders received long prison terms. In Albania eight men were executed in April on the charge of plotting a revolt.

28. It is difficult to understand why the Rumanian Communists thought fit to mar the comparatively better record they (and the Polish Communists) had had so far in the matter of bloody intra-Party purges, by the execution of Patrascanu six years after his alleged crime. One hesitates to credit Gheorghiu-Dej with sufficient farsightedness to have planned to forestall the occurrence of a Rumanian October. It may well be, however, that Gheorghiu-Dej had good reasons to nip in the bud growing subversive tendencies by proving that he was not too "soft" to deal with them as the Czechs had with Slansky, the Bulgarians with Kostov, and the Hungarians with Rajk.

29. Presumably satisfied that the Patrascanu lesson had sunk in, the Rumanian Party leadership in August announced another amnesty which included minor political offenders. It was content to sentence former Finance Minister Vasile Luca - purged together with Ana Pauker and Teohari Georgescu in 1952 - to life imprisonment, although he was convicted on the serious charge of economic sabotage and was declared responsible for no less than all the country's economic woes. For the first time too, in Rumania, a number of general officers of the former Royal Army and of non-Communist intellectuals and politicians, who had not been heard of for years, reappeared at public functions.

30. In all the Satellites, but especially in Poland, where, as a result of the Swiatlo revelations, the secret police were rendered almost powerless, a relaxation of police terrorism and arbitrariness was noticeable throughout the year.

31. Party congresses were held in March 1954 in Bulgaria, Poland and East Germany. Their main task was to approve revisions in the party statutes, as well as the organizational changes in the top leadership mentioned above, the chief characteristic of which was closer conformity with the Soviet model. The new Bulgarian Central Committee included a number of Kostov adherents purged in 1950.

32. A notable feature of the new Polish party statute was the belated institution of centralized control over village party organizations, state farms, MTS, etc., accompanied by a similar tightening of control in the field of local administration, together with the assurance that collectivization would henceforth be entirely voluntary.

33. The decisions of the 3rd Hungarian Party Congress, held at the end of May 1954, confirmed the New Course adopted by the June 1953 plenum and condemned those who

opposed it. They included revision of the Party statutes on the Soviet pattern - with emphasis on collective leadership as opposed to one-man rule - and reactivation of the long dormant Patriotic People's Front, a coalition of parties and mass organizations. The need for this front organization had been urged by Nagy as a means of enlisting the support of the masses for the Communist Party. In spite of the Congress's approval, however, the PPF was, Nagy writes in his book, consistently sabotaged by Rakosi and his men, who saw in it a potential rival of the Party and a powerful tool in the hands of Nagy against whom they continued a relentless but undeclared war.

34. Nagy, Rakosi, and Rakosi's right hand man Gerő, agreed at the Congress only on the fact that the economic situation continued to be bad. Gerő asserted that the value of per capita production had been 6.6% lower in the first quarter of 1954 than in the same period of 1953, while wages had risen 15.6% and costs had increased. Rakosi could not yet afford to attack Moscow's nominee openly, so he blamed the weakening of Party unity and effectiveness on rightist opportunism, meaning excessive liberalization, but, equitably, he also attributed part of the responsibility to leftist sectarianism, i.e. continued adherence to the old course which he admitted had caused much damage. In the economic field, Rakosi announced that the Second Five-Year Plan, to begin in 1956, would continue to follow New Course principles - "much greater emphasis on consumer goods and food a key feature!" Favorable results could also be expected from the integration of Orbit economies, which was to be actively pursued. In his book, Nagy, as was to be expected, places all the blame for the disappointing results of the New Course on its sabotage by the Rakosi forces. Nevertheless, at the October 1954 CC Plenum, Nagy once again succeeded in obtaining a reindorsement of the New Course.

35. All Satellite budgets for 1954, except the Polish, showed reductions in funds for investments and a shift in favor of consumer goods. The Rumanian budget showed the

most pronounced changes, the appropriations for agriculture and consumer goods increasing by 60 and 67.7% respectively, while defense outlays dropped from 18 to 11% of total expenditure. In Hungary, too, the share of defense outlays dropped from 14 to 11%, but in the other Satellites they were practically unchanged.

36. The effort to improve living standards included general price reductions in March and April in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Poland and wage and pension increases and a cut of meat and fat prices in Hungary - said to have been preceded by cattle purchases in Switzerland. In May, a Bulgarian decree, after a preamble repeating very much the same criticisms as those voiced at the Hungarian Party Congress, listed a number of consumer goods, the production of which "must" increase substantially by the end of 1955.

37. Rumania was the only Satellite that did not hold a Party Congress in 1954. In his customary 22 August Liberation Day speech, Gheorghiu-Dej claimed that "the rate of increase in the production of consumer goods exceeds the rate of increase for capital goods, in accordance with the August 1953 Party Plenum decision." By late fall, the Rumanian leaders were at long last able to follow the example of the other Orbit members and to abolish rationing. This, the December 1954 announcement said, had been made possible not only by the good corn harvest, but by the favorable prospects for consumer goods production as a result of the 27% increase in investment in light industry and the 40% increase in agricultural investment, which should soon bear fruit. The announcement promised a slight wage increase but again made it clear that a real reduction in the cost of living could only be achieved by more and better work at all levels. Two weeks later, in order to enhance the peasants' material interest in production, the government raised the prices of animal products, reduced grain delivery quotas and granted credits to individual farmers.

38. In September 1954, the Rumanian government announced the cession by the USSR, on what were claimed to be very favorable terms, of its shares in twelve of the fourteen joint Rumanian-Soviet enterprises; in October, the Bulgarian government made a similar announcement with regard to three out of the four Bulgarian-Soviet enterprises and in November Hungary announced the cession of all four joint enterprises in that country. The intent was to remove an all too obvious source of popular resentment but, as the allegedly favorable terms were not made public, it is doubtful whether that aim was achieved.

39. Hungary's economic troubles were underlined in September 1954 by the belated admission that some long-term capital investments had been abandoned and the completion of others, such as the Stalin Steel Works, postponed. The statement in the declaration issued at the end of the People's Patriotic Front Congress (October 23-24) that a "consistent fight must be waged against any distortion, departure or deviation" from the New Course policies was interpreted as a confirmation of the general belief that the Party continued to be sharply split on the subject. Even if the New Course did prevail, it was a paper victory, its actual implementation being successfully sabotaged by its opponents. Bela Szalai revealed, for example, that by the end of September actual agricultural investments had amounted to only half the sums allocated.

40. The result was to put Hungary at the bottom of the list when the final figures on industrial output in the Satellites for 1954 were published. The increase claimed over 1953 was barely 3.1% as against 4.4% by Czechoslovakia, 6.6% by Rumania, 8.7% by Bulgaria, 10% by East Germany, and 11% by Poland. In 1953, the first year of the New Course, increases had still ranged between 10% (Czechoslovakia) and 17% (Poland). Even more remarkable was the fact that Hungary admitted an actual decrease in

heavy industry output. The other Satellites claimed larger rates of increase for consumer than for capital goods, with the exception of Poland, which reported equal rates of increase. Czechoslovakia blamed its poor showing chiefly on the "declining tendency in the development of labor productivity."

41. In the land collectivization sector, only Poland reported any significant progress, although at a slower rate than in 1953. Hungary had not recouped the heavy losses of 1953 and Czechoslovakia admitted a reduction of about 10%. Rumania, after having pushed permanent agricultural associations rather than collectives during the first part of the year, shifted to encouragement of a still less advanced form of "socialist" agriculture, temporary "production associations", on the theory that if children were first encouraged to crawl they might be more easily persuaded to walk.

42. In the field of foreign relations, peaceful coexistence was furthered by a show of cordiality toward Western diplomats at official receptions in Warsaw in July and in Bucharest in August and by friendly gestures to Greece on the part of Hungary, Rumania, and, to a lesser extent, Bulgaria. Rumania and Czechoslovakia exchanged ambassadors with Yugoslavia, which left Poland as the only Orbit country not to have "normalized" diplomatic or trade relations with Tito.

The Year 1955

43. By this time, the majority, if not all, of the Communist leaders in the USSR had satisfied themselves that the critical period of transition after the death of the dictator had been successfully weathered and that there was, therefore, no more reason to pander to the popular wish for higher

standards of living at the price of retarding Russia's and their own achievement of world primacy. The ambiguities and pretenses in the matter of consumer goods priority were definitely abandoned on 25 January 1955, when Khrushchev in a speech to the Party Central Committee unequivocally reaffirmed the priority of heavy industry. The new line was to the effect that this was the correct long-term method of increasing the people's welfare. The shortages of food, the one element in the standard of living the regime could not disregard without impairing industrial production itself, and the shortages of equally indispensable agricultural raw materials, were to be solved by a further large expansion of the virgin land tillage program in the East and a great increase in corn planting for livestock feed. Khrushchev's speech was followed on 8 February by the "resignation" of Premier Malenkov. It was therefore hardly accidental that the final figures for 1955 revealed that production of consumer goods had increased one-third less than the four-year average, while that of heavy industry had increased at the same rate. At the same time, the increase in the people's purchasing power in 1953 and 1954 was nullified by doubling the amount of the annual loan "subscription" and by higher taxes.

44. In the Satellite countries, the only significant developments reflecting Communist Party troubles - and the fall of Malenkov - occurred in Hungary. According to Nagy's somewhat sketchy account, the fact that the Central Committee had in October 1954 "unanimously" decided to support the "June policy" and to eliminate opposition had convinced Rakosi and his adherents that, if the right wing were allowed to carry out the October resolutions, "there would be no hope of a return to the extreme left wing policy." They therefore "began openly attacking the October resolutions" and Nagy found it "impossible to break down the opposition through purely party methods, to which I had always adhered . . . without the help and support of the Party apparatus", which was controlled by Rakosi. Then, in the winter of 1954-1955,

Nagy fell sick. "/Rakosi/ used my absence enforced by illness to make the Political Committee accept a resolution condemning the policy of the New Course and putting the blame on me."

45. On 4 March 1955 - less than a month after Malenkov's demotion - the Hungarian Party's Central Committee adopted a resolution which claimed that its June 1953 decisions, taken to eliminate "the mistakes committed in the building of socialism", had been "entirely correct." Nevertheless, as the drop in industrial productivity, the rise in production costs, the laxity of work discipline, the decline in agricultural production and especially in agricultural deliveries, which had temporarily been masked by inroads in the state reserves and reductions in investments, could not be denied, the resolution asserted that the reasons were "primarily to be sought in the anti-Marxist, anti-Party and opportunist views which of late - since June 1953 - have spread in the Party, the state apparatus and other spheres. The result has been that industrial development has been halted, Socialist accumulation decreased and state and civic discipline have deteriorated." "These rightist views", the resolution continued, "were able to become so dangerous . . because Comrade Nagy supported /them/ in his speeches and articles. He advocated them in the first place." They had manifested themselves "first of all in the distortion of the correct policy of Socialist industrialization" and in the "spreading of an atmosphere of complacency in the working class."

46. Nagy was further accused specifically of having neglected "widespread political, economic and organizational work in the interests of the consolidation and enlargement of the kolkhoz movement", of failing to stress the importance of produce collection and of having tolerated right-wing tendencies "aimed at reducing the leading role and importance of the Party in order to make the Patriotic People's Front the

authority for controlling the State organizations and councils." The Resolution concluded with a reaffirmation of the Party's fundamental aim of raising the people's standard of living. To that end it directed the Political Committee to work out the principles of the Second Five-Year Plan, which were listed, presumably in the order of their importance, as "the priority of heavy industry and within it, that of the means of production, the further development and modernization of agriculture, the laying of the foundations of Socialism in agriculture and further increase in the production of consumer goods . . . " At the same time "an uncompromising ideological struggle must be waged against every deviation from the Party's policy - in the present case, primarily against right-wing deviation."

47. The Resolution prescribed for 1955 a 5.7% increase over 1954 in industrial production, a 7.3% increase in agricultural production and a "considerable increase in consumer goods production." During the succeeding weeks, Rakosi endeavored to "clarify" the revised agrarian policy in a number of speeches. The clarification boiled down to the conclusion that pending the achievement by "political enlightenment" of full collectivization by 1960, the regime would continue to assist the independent peasants who still farmed 70% of the land.

48. As was to be expected after the March resolution of the Central Committee, Imre Nagy was relieved of the premiership and also dismissed from the Political Bureau and Central Committee (14 April 1955). Nagy's successor in the premiership was his first deputy, Andres Hegedus, and Rakosi was once again the undisputed boss. Writing in the winter of 1955-1956, Nagy described the situation which developed after his ouster as one in which "terrorism and fear of reprisal killed the sincerity of Party members" and "the gravity of which has had no equal since the liberation."

Moreover, he charged that the Party was no longer under the leadership of the elected body, the Political Committee, but of the Party apparatus, and collective leadership was a myth.

49. In spite of the renewed emphasis on heavy industry, echoing the Moscow line, all Satellite plans for 1955 actually betrayed the physical and moral impossibility of persevering on the road of high pressure industrialization and disregard of consumer demands. Total investment plans were substantially reduced, while the shares of agriculture and light industry were increased. In Poland and Hungary the usual proportion between the rate of growth of light and heavy industry was allegedly reversed, the former being scheduled to grow twice as fast,[1] but a Warsaw broadcast of 18 February 1955 took pains to explain that this was an exceptional measure, "only warranted by the need to remove the disproportion created in the past." In Czechoslovakia and Albania, approximately equal rates of growth were scheduled. Only the GDR retained the old proportion.[2] The chief interest of these planned figures is to be found in the implicit admission by the Communist regimes themselves of the low prevailing standards of living and the consequent disaffection of the population. For promise and fulfillment are two different things. Gheorghiu-Dej's statement to the Rumanian Second Party Congress in December 1955 provides a good illustration:

> ". . . No proper attention was paid to the development of light and food industries. In recent years investment

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[1] In Hungary the allocation to agriculture was, according to Imre Nagy, reduced by 30% and only 8.7% of industrial investments went to light industry. In Poland also it has been calculated that the share of heavy industry would still be about eleven times as large.

[2] The Rumanian and Bulgarian figures did not reveal the relative shares of light and heavy industry.

funds allocated to consumer goods industries have been increased considerably and so have the achievements. Nevertheless, the allocated funds were not used."

50. Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania and Bulgaria announced further price reductions in April 1955, and Rumania repeated the performance in December. Czechoslovakia reduced farm delivery quotas, Bulgaria granted further concessions to collective farms but not to individual farmers, while Hungary issued a series of decrees embodying a return to a harsh policy toward individual farmers.

51. Throughout the area 1955 turned out to be a comparatively good year from the economic point of view, especially in the southern Satellites. Albania, Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary were favored by better than average weather and by the circumstance that the wet summer benefitted corn, which, in deference to Khrushchev, had been planted much more extensively than in the previous years. The Rumanian leaders could triumphantly announce that prewar grain production had at last not only been equalled but even surpassed.

52. As in the USSR, a notable feature of 1955 in the Satellites was the crescendo in Party propaganda emphasis on the need to decentralize controls, to increase management efficiency, labor productivity and the care and utilization of expensive machinery, to save raw materials, to stop paying unauthorized and exaggerated wages, etc., shortcomings which were growing increasingly serious instead of decreasing as time went on. The Party leaders realized that the pre-1953 rate of industrial investment in new machinery, buildings, etc. could not be restored without grave political danger and that even if it could, there was no advantage in producing machines which lay idle, raw materials which went to waste and shoddy goods which no one wanted to buy. On

the other hand, labor reserves were by now exhausted and could no longer be drawn upon to increase production.

53. Although none of the Satellites found it necessary to publish a breakdown of the industrial output figures for 1955, they all claimed a general improvement in the economic situation. The economic crisis which hit them in 1953, forcing them to adopt the New Course, and the slow recovery in 1954 and 1955, are clearly reflected even in the official rates of increase in total industrial production claimed for the period 1952-1955:

	1952	1953	1954	1955
Albania	20	22	10.7	14.9
Bulgaria	18	12	8.7	9.6
Czechoslovakia	18.3	10	4.4	10
E. Germany	15.6	12.5	10	10.6
Hungary	23.6	11.8	3.1	8.2
Poland	20	17.5	11	11
Rumania	23	14.4	6.6	14

54. The Satellite regimes showed reluctance to revive the collectivization drive in 1955, on the theory presumably that it was best to let well enough alone pending a consolidation of the situation. At the end of 1955, Hungary claimed that collective farms and permanent farming associations comprised 22.4% of the arable land, as against 26% in 1953 and 18% in 1954; Bulgaria claimed a slightly over 50% ratio of collectivization; Rumania about 15%; Albania about 13%; Czechoslovakia about 30% (as against 35% in 1953); East Germany about 20%; and Poland about 13%. An interesting development occurred in Hungary where a decree legalized the setting aside of 10% of the collective income to be distributed as land rent - a practice which Marx would hardly have approved. Shortly afterwards, the Rumanian regime went one step further and gave its blessing to the

practice, which had developed spontaneously, of forming farming associations on the basis of the members' own decision on the amount of joint income to be distributed as ground rent.

55. With the exception of Hungary, there were no political upsets in the Satellites in 1955. In October 1955, Gheorghiu-Dej decided to conform to the prevailing Orbit pattern and resumed the first secretaryship of the Rumanian Party, Chivu Stoica being appointed premier. The promotion of Josif Chisinevski, who had been in eclipse under the New Course, to the position of Party secretary, was widely interpreted as a victory of the Stalinist wing of the Party. This reshuffle was followed in December by the meeting of the long deferred Congress of the Rumanian Workers' Party, marking the demise, rather than the birth, as in the other Satellites, of the New Course. Gheorghiu-Dej gave no inkling of any intention to countenance greater freedom of expression or of nationalism in his satrapy. Rather, he signified that the threat to Party unity had to be combatted with unflagging vigilance, although he implied that the most dangerous elements, the right-wing deviationists Pauker, Luca, and Teohari Georgescu, had happily already been purged (in 1952). More specifically, Miron Constantinescu spoke of the "more damaging effect of the appearance in some books . . . of certain bourgeois nationalist manifestations which must be unmasked and unsparingly eliminated . . . ".

56. Similar strictures and warnings were voiced in Hungary by Rakosi, mainly referring to literary production during the Nagy premiership. Although Cardinal Mindszenty was "promoted" from prison to house arrest in July and another amnesty for "war criminals" was announced in Rumania in September, liberalization made but little headway in the Satellites in 1955 with the one exception of Poland. Publication in a literary magazine of Adam Waczyk's Poem for Adults, a bitter criticism of life under Communism, was

without precedent in a Communist country and what was almost even more sensational, the poet was not molested by the authorities. In September, the release of the Catholic priests held on political grounds was announced and the general relaxation in the accustomed atmosphere of coercion became so marked that it became known as the "Thaw".

57. Summing up the internal situation in the Satellite countries in 1955, it may be said that by the end of the year the same leaders who had held power under Stalin had once again consolidated their positions, Poland being the only country in which they manifested a new and puzzling spirit of tolerance. The Communist regimes had been greatly helped by the better harvest, which, together with lower prices, somewhat greater availability of consumer goods and higher wages, made possible by the reduced investments in heavy industry, accounted for a modest improvement in living standards. The country showing the least economic improvement was Hungary, chiefly as a result of the conflict between the Nagy and Rakosi factions. But Nagy, writing at the turn of the year 1955-1956, is authority for the view that the political tension was even more serious than the economic situation. It was caused by

> ". . . the fact that a leadership stratum, foreign to the Hungarian people, is opposing the ideals of national independence, sovereignty, equality, as well as national feelings and progressive traditions . . . The policy based on the March and April [1955] CC resolutions evoked passivity and resistance of the Party member . . . "

The policy, he concluded with remarkable foresight, was "driving the people into the arms of reaction and bringing the country to the brink of an unprecedentedly grave political and economic crisis."

58. It was in the field of international relations that the New Course went furthest in 1955. In May the USSR

submitted a disarmament plan embodying a number of Western demands, signed a treaty providing for the end of the Austrian occupation and sent a large delegation headed by Khrushchev to Belgrade, where an attempt was made to reestablish the former ties between the Soviet and Yugoslav Communist parties to prepare the return of Yugoslavia to the Communist Bloc. In this Khrushchev was unsuccessful, in spite of his sensational admission of Soviet responsibility for the rift, thinly disguised under a reference to the "provocative role" of Beria. Of unsuspected significance at the time was the mention in the joint communique of the admissibility of "different forms of Socialism!" In its 3 June 1955 issue, Pravda explained that "Soviet-Yugoslav consolidation would be facilitated by the condition, contained in the declaration, that questions of internal structure, differences in social systems and differences in the concrete forms of the development of socialism are exclusively a matter for the peoples of the respective countries!" On the other hand, the East-West rift was underlined by the conclusion on 14 May 1955 of the Warsaw Pact, which provided a convenient cover of legality for the maintenance of Soviet troops in Hungary and Rumania, after the evacuation of Austria, as well as in Poland.

59. The preliminaries of the Geneva "Summit" Conference had encouraged the belief among the Satellite peoples that it might bring about some sort of improvement of their status. However, the Soviet press quickly killed these hopes - and reassured the Satellite regimes - by declaring that the USSR would never admit a discussion of a "non-existent East European problem", and the conference ended in an atmosphere of general good will, without mention of the Satellites. Coupled with Molotov's boast in February of Soviet atomic superiority, the Geneva meetings were generally represented in the Orbit as proofs of the declining power of the West, and the Western proposals concerning Germany were cited as threats to Poland's and Czechoslovakia's territorial integrity. The admission in

December 1955 of Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Albania to UN membership without any visible improvement in their qualifications was a further asset to the Satellite regimes and a corresponding disappointment for their opponents.

60. In spite of the spectacular USSR-Yugoslav rapprochement, Satellite relations with Yugoslavia did not become perceptibly more cordial in 1955, being limited to the conclusion of technical and trade agreements. The main hurdle, but not the only one, was presumably Soviet lack of encouragement for closer relations between them before the future relationship between the Soviet and Yugoslav Communist parties had been clarified to Moscow's own satisfaction.

The 20th Congress of the CPSU

61. Although the main accomplishment of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, which met from February 14-25, 1956, consisted in approving measures and policies long since put into effect by the Party leaders, still the facts that a radical change in the methods of government applied for twenty years was solemnly sanctioned, that it was accompanied by Khrushchev's staggering denunciation of Stalin and followed by the first open rebellion among the captive nations, endow the Congress with peculiar importance. In the following pages, those aspects of the 20th Congress which may be considered to have particularly affected the Communist parties in the Satellite countries will be briefly reviewed.

62. Under the impact of Khrushchev's sensational charges and the implicit repudiation of Stalinist methods, it is frequently overlooked that the first act of the 20th Congress was to reaffirm Stalin's basic aim to achieve within the foreseeable future world hegemony for the USSR. To achieve this aim, the rapid expansion of the Orbit's heavy industry was an

indispensable condition which had been implicitly shelved during Malenkov's ascendency in 1953-54. For the New Course's strong emphasis on consumer goods ruled out the degree of austerity needed for rapid industrialization, which was limited only by human docility and capacity for heavy work. The formal re-adoption of Stalin's basic aim found its expression in the ratification by the Congress of the Sixth Five-Year Plan, which set even higher production targets for heavy industry by 1960 than Stalin himself had contemplated in his 1946 program and restored the 1950-55 capital and consumer goods output ratio,[1] merely increasing within the latter the share of agriculture and housing at the expense of other light industries. The final resolution of the Congress called for "an advanced growth of heavy industry" and added lamely, "At the same time, the Congress thinks that the level of production achieved at present makes possible a rapid development of the production not only of the means of production but also of consumer goods." This reaffirmation of Stalinism's essential aim, coupled with the repudiation of its methods, was further emphasized in the Resolution by the statement: "The Congress notes that the Central Committee opposed in good time the attempts to abandon the general line of the Party for the preferential development of heavy industry, as well as the confusion in the question of the building of socialism in our country . . . "

63. Prominent among the themes on the agenda

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[1] The failure of Soviet industry to fulfill the 1956 production plan forced the leadership in February 1957 to reduce the growth rate planned for the year from 11% to 7.1%, the lowest since the war. But the priority of producer over consumer goods was even slightly increased. The concomitant reorganization of the Soviet economy would indicate, however, that the setback is viewed merely as the result of growing pains which the reform is expected to cure.

affecting developments in the Satellites, either directly or indirectly, were the "cult of personality" and collective leadership, approval of the "strengthening of Communist legality," suppression of "arbitrariness" - somewhat counterbalanced, however, by the appeal to "high political vigilance" - and promises of higher wages and pensions, of improved living conditions and shorter work days, the need of improvements in the Soviet Party organization and decentralization of the economy.

64. The numerous passages in the Resolution devoted to foreign relations, in particular to peaceful coexistence, to the non-inevitability of war and to the allegedly novel possibility of Communist victories in capitalist countries by non-violent, parliamentary means, were of little concern to the Satellite countries. On the other hand, the paragraphs dealing with the subject of "different roads to socialism" certainly had strong repercussions. The Resolution quoted Lenin's dictum: "All nations will come to socialism but all of them will not arrive there in a similar way; each will make its own contribution to one or another form of democracy . . . ," which could be used as a justification of "national" Communism. However, there is no doubt that the framers of the Resolution had not meant it that way. For the next paragraph stated:

> "Now, parallel to the Soviet form of transformation of society onto socialist foundations, there is also the form of people's democracy. It has undergone an all-around testing during ten years and fully proved itself. In the people's democracies, there are quite a few nuances and differences in accordance with the conditions of each country . . . It is fully in accordance with the laws of development that the forms of transition of countries to socialism will in the future differ increasingly. At the same time it is not necessary that the . . . transition . . . should be connected with civil war."

The real intent of the paragraph was obviously to reassure squeamish near-Communists in capitalist countries but certainly not to signify advance approval of changes in the countries of people's democracy, a form which had "fully proved itself" and in which the differences called for by varying conditions had allegedly already been taken into account.[1]

65. In the light of subsequent Soviet actions in Poland and particularly in Hungary, Khrushchev's views on Stalin's reign of terror, as he expressed them in his "secret" speech, are of special interest.

a. Khrushchev accused Stalin of having, since 1935, "practiced brutal violence, not only toward everything which opposed him but also toward that which seemed, to his capricious and despotic character, contrary to his concepts" and of having "absolutely not tolerated collegiality in leadership and in work," instead of working through "persuasion, explanation and patient cooperation with people." Ignoring the French Revolution, Khrushchev alleged that Stalin had originated the "enemy of the people" concept which made it unnecessary to prove ideological error and had "made possible the usage of the most cruel repression, violating all norms of revolutionary legality against anyone who disagreed with Stalin . . ." "Arbitrary behavior by one person encouraged and permitted arbitrariness in others." The strictly practical reasons why Khrushchev con-

[1] Significantly, too, although the particular contributions of the remote Chinese People's Republic were mentioned in this context, those of Yugoslavia were not, although it had been in the joint Soviet-Yugoslav statement of June 1955 that Lenin's dictum on the subject had first been reaffirmed.

demned Stalin's brutal methods appear from the following statements: "Mass arrests and deportations" and "execution without trial and without normal investigation created conditions of insecurity, fear and even despair. This of course did not contribute toward unity of the Party ranks and of all strata of the working people but on the contrary, brought about annihilation and the expulsion from the Party of workers who were loyal but inconvenient to Stalin" and "who were wasted rather than being drawn to our side."

Contrasting Stalin's "brutal" with Lenin's "educational" method, Khrushchev defended the latter against any charge of softness:

"Vladimir Ilyich demanded uncompromising dealings with the enemies of the Revolution and of the working class and when necessary resorted ruthlessly to such methods . . . You will recall only Lenin's fight with the Socialist Revolutionary anti-Soviet uprising, with the counterrevolutionary kulaks in 1918 and with others . . . when he used the most extreme methods . . . However he used them only against actual class enemies and not against those who blunder, who err, and whom it was possible to lead through ideological influence."

Furthermore, Khrushchev pointed out, Lenin had used severe methods only "in the most necessary cases, when the exploiting classes were still in existence and were vigorously opposing the Revolution . . . " while Stalin had used them "when the Revolution was already victorious, when the Soviet state was strengthened . . . " and not only against actual enemies but also against "individuals who had not committed any crimes against the Party and the Soviet government. Here we see no wisdom, but only brutal force . . . "

b. Khrushchev's charges against Stalin included "grave perversion of party principles, party democracy and revolutionary legality . . . violation of the principles of collective leadership and the accumulation of immense and limitless power in the hands of one person, . . . cult of the individual, . . . " failure to consult even the members of the CC of the Political Bureau, mass deportations of whole nations, military errors, gross ignorance of the problems of agriculture and complete isolation from the people.

c. In the light of subsequent events, two further charges are of interest. Condemning Stalin's repression of an allegedly separatist organization in Georgia in 1951 and 1952, Khrushchev asked sarcastically: "Could it be possible . . . that nationalist tendencies grew so much that there was a danger of Georgia leaving the Soviet Union? . . . This was of course nonsense . . . Everybody knows how Georgia had developed economically and culturally under Soviet rule . . . "

d. Speaking of the break with Tito, Khrushchev charged that the Yugoslav leader's mistakes and shortcomings "were magnified in a monstrous manner by Stalin, which resulted in a breach of relations with a friendly country." There were "no problems which could not have been solved through Party discussions among comrades." Recalling Stalin's "delusions of grandeur" which led him to boast: "I will shake my little finger - and there will be no more Tito," Khrushchev commented that they had paid dearly for those delusions. For no matter what else Stalin shook, "Tito did not fall. Why? The reason was that . . . Tito had behind him a state and a people who had gone through a severe school of fighting for liberty and independence, a people which gave support to its leaders."

e. On the other hand, speaking of Stalin's crimes and errors which he had described, Khrushchev denied ". . . that these were the deeds of a giddy despot. He considered that this should be done in the interest of the Party, of the working masses, in the name of the defense of the revolution's gains. In this lies the whole tragedy!" In other words, Stalin had been animated by the best intentions. If he had made mistakes, it was mainly due to his lack of the modesty considered by Lenin essential "for a real Bolshevism." As a result, he had been corrupted by those who had "excessively extolled" him and resorted to excesses of cruelty which did more harm than good to the cause.

66. The conclusions to be drawn from Khrushchev's "secret" speech and the other proceedings of the Congress, insofar as they are relevant to the subject matter of this paper, can be briefly stated as follows: The Khrushchev "line" was neo-Stalinist, not anti-Stalinist. There was to be no change in the chief Party aim set by Stalin. His hard methods, too, had been basically correct but he had applied them without proper discrimination and carried them to extremes. "We must affirm," Khrushchev said, "that the Party fought a serious fight against the Trotskyites, the Rightists and Bourgeois Nationalists" - an allusion to the Georgian and Ukrainian "national committees," of the early twenties. "This ideological fight was carried out successfully . . . Here Stalin played a positive role." If in 1928-29, Khrushchev continued, the Rightists had prevailed "and we had been oriented toward 'cotton-dress' industrialization or the kulak, etc., we would not have now a powerful heavy industry or the kolkhozes, we would find ourselves disarmed . . . " It follows that he had no objection to the methods employed by Stalin against the peasants to impose collectivization, to forced labor, and in general to the sufferings imposed by forced industrialization, but he did reprove brutality and terror against Party members and workers -

unless they proved obdurate - because such methods weakened the Party and aroused hostility. Furthermore, while he objected to the concept of "enemy of the people," he approved the concept of "class enemy" and presumably when that term did not fit, of "traitor to the working class." Khrushchev was especially critical of Stalin's abuse of "extreme methods" when the Party's power was not threatened, but he approved of Lenin's "ruthless resort" to such methods when dealing with "the enemies of the Revolution." And these could obviously appear in the Satellite countries too.

67. Khrushchev himself justified his indictment of Stalin on the ground that "not all as yet fully realize the practical consequences resulting from the cult of the individual . . . " What he undoubtedly meant was that, as many top Communists - certainly Molotov for example - still did not agree that Communism would benefit from a less brutal policy and were not reconciled to the abandonment of terror as the surest and proven means of safeguarding the Soviet empire on the theory oderint, dum metuant,[1] the most ruthless revelation of the truth was needed to silence the opposition.

68. Among other reasons for Khrushchev's action was probably the fact that, in view of the nuclear stalemate, the safest way to extend Moscow's realm was for the Communists to seize power in other countries with the help of left-wing parties, and for that it seemed expedient to convince the voters that Communism did not necessarily imply bloody revolution and terror. Stalin's despotic excesses were a perversion, not a result of true Leninism, which prescribed collective leadership as a preventive. After all, no foolproof system of government had ever yet been devised. Khrushchev realized that the best way to persuade the world that the new regime really meant to turn over a new leaf was to hold a symbolic autodafé. In the West, some Communist eyebrows were indeed raised, when the full text was published in the New York Times of 4 June 1956, but they were soon dropped

[1] Let them hate, so long as they fear!

when the Central Committee of the CPSU issued on 30 June its additional objective "explanation." Even Togliatti seemed satisfied and made no further reference to "polycentrism." If anything, Moscow's leadership appeared to have emerged from the ordeal consolidated rather than weakened.

PART II

POLAND

Conditions in Poland at the Beginning of 1956

1. The economic situation in Poland at the beginning of 1956 appears to have been bad. This was revealed, inter alia, by the fact that in spite of the official claim that the industrial production plan for 1955 had been overfulfilled, the 1956 plan scheduled a reduction. As for the entire Six-Year Plan, Radio Warsaw broadcast a listener's letter which read in part: "Why gild reality with nice speeches if it is obvious that the Six-Year Plan failed? . . . And what about the much publicized increase in the living standard? Everyone can find that out best for himself." (22 January 1956).

2. In spite of good weather in 1955, it was officially admitted by the Central Statistical Bureau that the agricultural plan had been under-fulfilled (allegedly 97%) and that a shortage of meat, fats, flour, butter, etc. had developed. But there is no doubt that the economic situation in general, not only with regard to food, was worse than was officially admitted at the time. First party secretary Ochab himself, who had no reason to exaggerate his own responsibility, at the Eighth Plenum in October 1956 confessed with shame that after the Seventh Plenum in June 1956,

> "I spoke, thinking I had a right to speak thus, about the practicability of the outlines of the Five-Year plan decided upon at the Plenum. Now we know that the figures supplied by the ministries and the State Planning Commission were not checked well enough and that things were much worse than we thought . . . The deficit in our trade and payment balance is much bigger than we assumed."

3. The picture of the Polish economy drawn by Gomulka at the Eighth Plenum was equally gloomy:

> "Generally speaking, (he said) after the conclusion of the Six-Year Plan, which according to its promises was meant to raise high the standard of living of the working class and of the entire nation, we are faced today, in the first year of the Five-Year Plan, with immense difficulties which are growing from day to day . . . We found ourselves in the situation of an insolvent bankrupt."

Gomulka then proceeded to give a number of striking examples of short-sighted, piecemeal planning, fictitious accounting and incompetent economic management. The agricultural policy had resulted in the creation of collective farms which produced less per hectare than the individual farms and only subsisted thanks to state subsidies. Other examples were the management of the coal mines in which productivity per worker had dropped 36% since 1938, the utter neglect of housing, etc. In short, the Six-Year Plan, Gomulka declared, which had been

> "advertised in the past with great energy as a new stage of the high growth of the living standards, disappointed the hopes of the broad working masses. The juggling with figures which showed a 27% rise in real wages during the Six-Year Plan proved a failure. It only exasperated the people even more, and it was necessary to withdraw from the position taken by poor statisticians. The inflammable materials had been accumulating for years."

4. The political system prevailing at the time is described as one under which

> "party and state policy were mapped out by the supreme leading circle of the Party, within the bounds of subordination to the 'Supreme Cult' and that policy was implemented by a party and state

> apparatus not subject to the democratic control of the masses. This was bound to result in estrangement of the party and state apparatus from the peoples' masses . . . and in a loss of the masses' sense of responsibility for their local affairs. Nobody is infallible, and this also applies to a workers' party. But its mistakes really assume dangerous proportions when the masses of the members are excluded from influence and the masses of the working people cannot identify themselves with the Party's policy . . . What happened . . . was that the Party did not care about the reaction of the masses and became quite callous in the face of their essential needs." (Nowe Drogi, No. 1/1957).

5. Ochab too, in his self-critical speech to the October Plenum, spoke of the "errors and perversions in our policy . . . which led to a kind of rift between the leadership . . . and the broad Party aktiv,, which, generally speaking, seen in perspective today, rightly criticized the Party leadership." Ochab mentioned a Party meeting in November 1954, the Third Plenum, "when the leadership was practically isolated," and a crisis in the Politburo "when the so-called trial of Comrade Spychalski was under discussion." One of the reasons the crisis could not be solved was, according to Ochab, the death of Bierut. Another was the difficulty "even of the comrades who opposed the greatest stupidities and our continued entanglement in errors" - including himself, presumably - to revise "their old points of view . . . based on major mistakes in the assessment of the overall situation in the country."

6. Ochab thought that one of the chief causes of the major lags in political decisions was "the poor state of our ideological front" primarily resulting from "the leadership's weakness in this respect." And this, he explained, was due

to the fact "that for many years we had practically foregone any independent ideological work and depended on our being able to transfer creatively, as the saying went, all the experience of the USSR. However, of that creativeness there was not much evidence . . . "

7. So much for conditions within the Party. As for the masses, Gomulka in his speech to the Eighth Plenum on 20 October 1956 testified to the "profound dissatisfaction of the entire working class stemming largely from its living standards." The unpopularity of the Party among the peasantry can be gauged from the statement made on 23 March 1957 by Stefan Ignar, chairman of the Central Committee of the United Peasant Party and deputy premier:

> "Probably not everybody knows - although it was mentioned several times and particularly at the Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee - that, beginning in 1953, from the beginning of the breakdown of the worker-peasant alliance owing to Draconian methods of purchase and collectivization, a protest was felt [sic] even more strongly within our Party against the system of the alliance between town and country and against the ordering about of the peasants by the bureaucracy."

8. Another noteworthy fact - suspected, but hitherto undocumented - about Communist Party relations with the peasantry, was revealed by Politburo member Zambrowski. He admitted that they had miscalculated when they thought they could win over the poor peasants by pitting them against the kulaks. "On the contrary, we aroused the solidarity of the peasants. Often a small-holder said: 'Why do we ruin the kulak? He is a good farmer, is he not?'" (Zycie Partii 16 March 1957).

9. Two other major causes of resentment were shared by the vast majority of Poles, with the exception of some party stalwarts: the police terror, which had apparently persisted in a milder form, and Soviet domination, for

which in his 20 October 1956 speech Gomulka diplomatically blamed the "cult of personality". He began by describing the acknowledged principles of relations between socialist countries, which he asserted had been recognized but not always respected by Stalin, since they could not fit within the framework of the "cult of personality". This cult could not be confined solely to the person of Stalin; rather, it was a certain system which had prevailed in the Soviet Union and was grafted to "probably all Communist parties". Moreover, Gomulka clearly implied that the system had not died with Stalin. The essence of the system, as he described it, was "the fact that an individual, hierarchic ladder of cults was created," at the top of which in the bloc of socialist states stood Stalin, and at the bottom the first secretaries of Communist parties. Under this system which crushed every independent socialist thought, relations between parties and states clearly could not be based on equality. Under such conditions, no party leader could work normally even when he worked collectively. But the situation was worse, Gomulka continued, presumably alluding to Bierut, "when the honors of power . . . were seized by a mediocre man, an obtuse executive, or a rotten climber."

10. Another evil consequence of the system condemned by Gomulka was the violation of democratic principles and the rule of law.

> "The characters and consciences of men were broken, people were trampled under foot and their honor was besmirched . . . We have our own domestic variety of Beriaism . . . A page full of provocation, blood, prisons, and the sufferings of innocent people."

11. To complete the above sketch of the psychological background of the Polish October, the rebellion of the intelligentsia against intellectual conformism, which had been steadily growing since 1954, must be mentioned, particularly

as it reflected itself increasingly in the press, dominated though it was by the Communist Party. Curiously enough, it was mentioned by neither Gomulka nor Ochab.

Developments from the 20th CPSU Congress to the Seventh Plenum

12. Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin - parts of which were first published in Trybuna Ludu of 23 March 1956 - was foreshadowed in Poland by the rehabilitation on 19 February of the pre-war Polish Communist Party which had been officially dissolved in 1938 after the liquidation of its leaders by Stalin's security apparatus.

13. A fortuitous event, the death of the ailing Bierut on 12 March 1956, very soon gave the Poles an opportunity to test the sincerity of the 20th Congress principles of non-interference in the affairs of other countries and of de-Stalinization. Khrushchev, who had come to Warsaw for the funeral, stayed a week and happened to be still there when the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party designated, as Bierut's successor in the first party secretaryship, Edward Ochab, a man of whom Stalin himself had expressed complete approval.

14. The effect in Poland of the 20th Congress - and, one may add, of Khrushchev's secret speech, 100,000 copies of which were reportedly secretly printed and circulated in Poland - was described by Gomulka in his October speech as follows:

> "[It] stimulated a turn in the political life of the country. An animating, sound current went through the party masses, the working class, the entire society. People began to straighten their backs. The silent, enslaved minds began to shake off the poison of mendacity, falsehood and hypocrisy. The

> stiff clichés previously predominant . . . began to give place to creative, living words . . . There came a powerful wave of criticism of the past - the criticism of violence, distortions, and errors . . . Everywhere, above all at party and general meetings in work establishments, the demand was raised for an explanation of the causes of evil and for appropriate measures to be taken with regard to the people mainly responsible for the distortions in economic and political life. Above all, the working people wanted to know all the truth, without any embellishments and omissions . . . In the situation, . . . when it was necessary to act quickly and consistently, . . . to go to the masses with all frankness and to tell them the whole truth about the economic situation, the causes and sources of distortions in political life - the party leadership failed to work out quickly a line of concrete action. The fact that the Seventh Plenum was several times delayed is one proof of it."

15. The reason for this failure is not far to seek; it was supplied by Ochab in his apologetic speech to the October Plenum, mentioned above. "It is no easy matter," he said, "to cast off one's old spectacles through which one has been looking at things, believing in them . . . when afterwards one confronts one's views with the facts and seeks a way out of the emerging contradictions."

16. It must be said in Ochab's defense that the situation he had inherited and was expected to dominate was certainly difficult. Revisionism had already acquired such momentum, not only in the masses, but among Party members and intellectuals, that only by ruthless Stalinist methods could he have controlled it; but that was ruled out so soon after their repudiation by Moscow. By the end of March, it became widely known that Gomulka, General Spychalski, and General

Komar, arrested in 1951, had been free for some months. Meetings of intellectuals, artists, trade unions, factory workers, etc. and the press protested with increasing vigor against censorship, dogmatism, centralism, and inefficiency and demanded the speedy rehabilitation of the former members of the "Home Army". Ochab himself, perhaps hoping to control the movement by placing himself at its head, attacked the former leadership for its slowness in rehabilitating the victims of "Beriaism" (Trybuna Ludu, 4 April 1956). He condemned the arrest of Gomulka in 1949 as unjustified, although the latter had been guilty of "opportunistic and nationalistic deviation" in opposing too rapid industrialization and collectivization. A few days earlier, Jerzy Morawski, a new member of the Central Committee Secretariat, had also condemned the "Gomulka group." Their error consisted, not in advocating a "Polish road to socialism," but in failing to see that the true distinction between the Polish and the Soviet road was that in Poland such problems as state-church relations and farm collectivization were actually being solved differently, and in thus retarding in practice the necessary changes.

17. On 6 April Ochab found it necessary to draw the attention of a meeting of Party activists to the fact

> "that some comrades seem to be losing their senses of balance and proportion between justified criticism and actions from positions which cannot be of advantage to the Party . . . This shows an unhealthy anarchistic tendency, the loss of a feeling of Party responsibility, and a confusion of ideas."

Five days later, Ochab is reported to have even threatened, at a meeting of the Polish Literary Association, to bring tanks into the streets of Warsaw. Instead, there was a sudden reversal.

18. On 21 April, it was announced that the hated Radkiewicz, Minister of Public Security up to February 1955

and since then Minister of State Farms, had been dismissed; his two most notorious subordinates, Romkowski and Feygin, had been arrested, and the Ministers of Justice and Culture, the Prosecutor General, and others, relieved of their posts. At the opening session of the Sejm two days later, Premier Cyrankiewicz, after acknowledging "the unusually accelerated pulsation of political life in Poland," developed a comprehensive program of reforms. These included a greater role for the Sejm, strict observance of "socialist legality," a broad amnesty for political prisoners, greater availability of information, more freedom to criticize bureaucracy, decentralization of government, and streamlining of the government apparatus. In the economic field, he promised priority in the improvement of living standards by raising wages, abolition of overtime, reduction of grain deliveries, increased prices for cattle, substantial increases in agricultural and housing investments, to be offset by reduced industrial investment, and the encouragement of private enterprise by craftsmen and service establishments.

19. But the trouble lay deeper than the ruling clique had apparently suspected. No promise on their part could solve the crise de confiance which had developed, not least among the Party members, and which the top men seemed unwilling or unable to check either by resolute implementation of their promises or by drastic repression. Five days after the Premier's speech, at a meeting of the Writers' Association, chiefly composed of Party activists, Jerzy Putrament, the chairman, was shouted down. The writers demanded nothing less than the immediate resignation of the Central Committee and of the Politburo, new elections, an opportunity for Gomulka to present his present views and opinions, and the prompt improvement of the "dreadful" economic situation.

20. The trouble was, as Przeglad Kulturalny put it, "The evil isolation of many Communists has not yet been

overcome everywhere." Po Prostu declared: "People still do not believe in the sincerity of present reforms and changes." It is doubtful whether under the circumstances a placatory article by Ochab (published in the Moscow Pravda of 29 April, apparently in reply to that paper's invectives in its 5 April issue against those who were trying "under the guise of condemning the cult of the individual . . . to question the correctness of Party policy" and in which Ochab boasted that Poland knew how to deal with "slanderers and opportunists" and "certain groups" of Party members guilty of ideological instability), carried much conviction with the Russians. But as for the Poles, it served to confirm the opinion that Ochab was Khrushchev's puppet, which hardly increased his popularity. It was not until Berman, member of the Politburo and Bierut's grey eminence, who had been in charge of political, cultural and security matters, was dismissed on charges of "errors and distortions" (6 May), that the ferment abated somewhat, although Ochab's threats - carried out in the case of Roman Werfel, ousted as chief editor of Trybuna Ludu - probably had some effect too.

21. But this turned out to be merely the lull before the storm. Behind the scenes a struggle for supremacy was being waged in the Central Committee of the party between the "Stalinists" or Natolin group, as they were to be called in Poland, and the "anti-Stalinists" or Pulawy group. The most prominent members of the former group, led by Ochab, were said to be Zenon Nowak, Klosiewicz, Witaszewski, Mazur, Mijal and Albrecht; of the latter, under Cyrankiewicz's leadership, Zambrowski, Zawadski, Rapacki, Rybicki, and Szyr. A number of newer members elected in March, most prominent among whom were Morawski, Matwin, and Gierek, had not quite made up their minds. Negotiations with Gomulka for his reinstatement were said to be in progress during this period, but failed when he refused to agree to any restrictive conditions.

22. Opinions even within each of the two groups appear to have differed considerably. Ochab himself was believed to favor only such reforms as might be agreeable to Khrushchev, while some of his followers inclined to the view, attributed to Molotov, that Khrushchev himself had made the mistake of going too far on the road to relaxation. Within the Pulawy faction, Cyrankiewicz was thought to have favored a "Polish road to socialism" diverging moderately from the Moscow line, while others advocated more far-reaching changes, ranging from Gomulka's to Djilas's programs. The Pulawy faction also gained considerable strength from the accession of the majority of the Jewish Communists as a result of the anti-semitism of their rivals, who had, it is alleged, taken their cue from Khrushchev's jibe, uttered during his March visit to the Polish Central Committee, that it had "too many Abramowiczes."

23. The respite was not long. Hardly had the intellectual front quieted somewhat when signs of trouble began to appear on the labor front. Rumors of unrest and strike threats in a number of factories became increasingly persistent, presumably owing to the workers' disappointment with the inadequacy of the wage increases. On 18 June Ochab had to reveal that, as a result partly of larger coal allocations to private consumers, partly of a deterioration of labor discipline, the quantity of coal available for export, the principal source of foreign exchange, had dropped sharply. Ten days later, a street demonstration of metal workers in Poznan, demanding higher wages and lower taxes, soon turned into a political demonstration in which the population joined, shouting first "We want bread" and "We want freedom," and in the later stages, anti-Soviet and anti-security police, and pro-Western and pro-Catholic slogans. Many members of the security police were mobbed, and people were killed or wounded by the security troops brought up by the authorities to quell the riot.

24. The instinctive reflex of the Polish regime was to blame "the imperialist centers hostile to Poland and the reactionary underground" as Premier Cyrankiewicz declared over the radio the next day. "Let every provocateur or madman be certain that if he is bold enough to raise his hand against the people's authority, it will be cut off . . . " But, reversing their supposed roles, Ochab told the Seventh Plenum on 18 July that

> ". . . it would be erroneous to concentrate attention above all on the machinations of provocateurs and imperialist agents. It is necessary to look first for the evil roots of these incidents, which have become for the whole of our party a signal of warning, testifying to the existence of serious disturbances in the relations between the Party and various sections of the working class . . . The bureaucratic distortions . . . gave birth to a callous attitude toward the people and their often justified demands. "

But Moscow flatly contradicted its nominee: Bulganin, who happened to be visiting Warsaw on the eve of the Seventh Plenum, asserted on 21 July that "the recent events in Poznan, provoked by hostile agents, prove again that international reaction has not yet discarded its plans for the restoration of capitalism in the socialist countries." It had to be realized, he warned, that while each nation was building its own socialism, the enemy was endeavoring to weaken the ties of international socialism, using slogans of "national characteristics" and "extension of democracy."

25. Bulganin had also been commissioned "by the Soviet people . . . to convey their brotherly greetings to the people of the newly acquired Polish western provinces." Delivery of this message provided him with the opportunity to remind the Poles that the guarantee of the permanence of the frontier was "the friendship of the nations of the Socialist camp, the friendship of the Polish and Soviet nations."

26. The Ochab regime obviously staked all its hopes of allaying the continuing discontent among the people and party members on the Seventh Plenum which was to spell out and formalize the reforms outlined in April. In their addresses to the Plenum, which met from 18-28 July 1956, Ochab and Cyrankiewicz covered very much the same ground and did little more than offer variations on, and slight amplifications of, the program they had expounded in April, which were subsequently embodied in the final resolution. The main difference between the two was Ochab's warning that much of the recent criticism had gone too far, that "criticism from the position of the enemy" or outbursts against the Party in the press would not be tolerated. He further declared that in the future the Party should not exercise authority directly, but only give general political direction, thus eliminating bureaucracy; it should further collective leadership, and party democracy. The Party should also stop hampering the activities of other parties (the Democratic and the Peasant Parties) which were important allies. Both speakers once again freely conceded past errors, such as excessive investments in industry - which Cyrankiewicz, apparently forgetting peaceful coexistence and the Geneva spirit, blamed in part at least on "the necessity, stemming from the international situation, of building up the defense industry" - and false statements on the rise in living standards, which had actually hardly improved at all, especially for the lowest paid workers. There followed the usual list of panaceas and promises: Greater emphasis on consumer goods, more intelligent planning, better management, greater participation of workers in management, decentralization, socialist legality, etc. But, Cyrankiewicz emphasized,

> " . . . one of the main sources of our present difficulties, both economic and political, . . . is the still too weak participation of the political and social initiative of the broadest masses in our life . . . What is needed is an active and creative attitude, an attitude full of initiative

> and enthusiasm for his work on the part of the worker, the peasant, and the intellectual. We cannot achieve this through methods of ordering about, of pressure, of compulsion . . . but only when the masses are more active politically, when there is a strong increase in their active participation in governing the country and its economy . . . We must once and for all put an end to the period in which the worker, the peasant, or intellectual was often looked upon with suspicion, surrounded by thousands of regulations, his freedom was limited, his criticism stifled, when he was often exposed to illegality and abuse of power, when his wrongs and grievances, his needs and troubles, were treated lightly."

The people, especially the young, had to be molded into "political activeness" which, according to Cyrankiewicz, was to be achieved by further democratization. But, he added, "this process must be guided. This is precisely the mission of our party . . . "

27. Cyrankiewicz conceded that the task was not an easy one. On the one hand "the conservatism of a part of our Party and state apparatus is hampering the process of democratization;" on the other, "the class enemy is acting /and attempting/ to orient it in a direction advantageous for him." This was tantamount to an admission that part of the Party apparatus was firmly convinced that if the masses were indeed granted freedom and everything that was done "happened in accordance with their will," it would be the end of Communism. Cyrankiewicz made no attempt to argue that they were wrong.

28. Like everything else, self-criticism has its advantages and its disadvantages. When Cyrankiewicz confessed: "It is necessary to state that the rate and depth of the political changes effected by us and the efficacy of the measures employed did not fully correspond to the require-

ments of the situation," and when Ochab admitted that "the Poznan incidents prove how little we have done toward effectively overcoming bureaucratic deviations in our country and especially in socialist enterprises," they were inviting the obvious retort that they stood self-condemned for bad faith or incapacity to govern.

29. "It is easier to lead by command than to win over and persuade," Cyrankiewicz had also said. But both he and Ochab were apparently incapable of either. They had exhausted their credit, and, as Gomulka was to put it in his speech to the October Plenum: "The loss of the credit of the working class means the loss of the moral basis of power." There was no question as to who was to assume the Party leadership, for in the words of a veteran Polish Communist: "We are left with only one political change of clothes, and that is Gomulka." If complete freedom was an unattainable dream, the least the people wanted was a new man rather than a new program, for there was not much difference left between the programs of Gomulka and Ochab. There was, however, a great difference between the two personalities. Gomulka had remained in Poland during the German occupation, and he had openly opposed a slavish subservience to Moscow in such matters as the break with Tito, [1] forced industrialization, and rigid centralism. Possibly others had shared these opinions, but the difference was that Gomulka had had the courage to voice his convictions.

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[1] He recanted, indeed, in September 1949 after the break. But his article in Trybuna Ludu, in which he spoke of his recent "clear condemnation of the treacherous Tito" did not save him from expulsion from the Party in November 1949.

30. Whatever their reasons or motivations, the fact is that the Seventh Plenum reinstated Gomulka in his Party membership despite the fact that Pravda had just published two editorials (on 16 and 24 July 1956, that is, only a month after the announcement of the agreement with Tito) which were clearly aimed at him. They spoke of the existence within the Communist parties in the "camp of socialism" of "propagators of chaos, adventure, and opportunists" who threatened that ideological unity of the camp which must be the overriding consideration. What Pravda seemed to mean was that, while theoretically separate roads to socialism were conceivable and admissible, in practice, no country could do better than the USSR with its long experience. Countries of the "socialist camp" must therefore stop wasting time on the secondary matter of separateness and concentrate on the paramount question of unity, and strengthen their ties with fellow members, headed, of course, by the USSR.

31. On the surface, things seemed to quiet down in Poland while the liberalization program was being implemented. Gomulka's readmission to Party membership was followed by those of Generals Spychalski and Komar, the latter being appointed Chief of the Security Police, an appointment which turned out in October to have been of crucial importance. Ochab announced another substantial cut in the industrial investment program and in the strength of the Army; other decrees aiming at the improvement of economic conditions were set forth. The confidential letter sent by the CPSU to the Communist parties in the satellite countries on 3 September 1956, warning them that Yugoslavia was not the example to follow, seemed to make little impression in Poland. The heads of two delegations returning from a visit to Yugoslavia praised the "independence" of views shown by the Yugoslavs in their socialist experiment and the degree of economic, if not political, democratization they had achieved. Indeed, the impact of the Yugoslav example on other Satellite Com-

munist parties must have been stronger than appeared on the surface, judging from Khrushchev's sudden visit to Belgrade and Tito's return visit to Yalta at the end of September, an account of which was given by the latter in his Pula speech of 11 November 1956.

32. Everything appeared to be going smoothly in Poland. Rather unexpectedly, the trials of the Poznan rioters were conducted fairly. The Sejm heard for the first time in many years some genuinely critical speeches, and revision of the electoral law to allow greater freedom of choice was seriously discussed. But behind the scenes, the struggle for power between the Natolin and the Pulawy factions was growing in intensity. This struggle had far-reaching effects; sabotage of many of the liberal reforms by the paid Party apparatus, a majority of which favored the Natolin faction, led to a further deterioration of the economy and of administration in general.

33. Under the circumstances, the firm and purposeful leadership indispensable in a Communist state was completely lacking. The Politburo was too badly split to exercise collective leadership. Neither section seemed to be able to dominate the other and to impose Party discipline, each being backed by powerful forces - the Soviets on one side and the majority of Poles, both Party and non-Party, on the other. It is true that the Polish masses were overwhelmingly opposed to Communists of any shade, but for the time being the majority supported the liberal wing, perhaps not so much for fear of Russia as on account of the Polish raison d'état. For the public was being constantly reminded that Poland needed Soviet friendship if it were to keep the Oder-Neisse frontier, a friendship it could expect to enjoy only if it remained Communist, and one may assume that Moscow's comparatively mild reaction to developments between Bierut's death and the Eighth Plenum was mainly due to the fact that the Soviet

leaders were equally aware of this decisive limitation on Poland's freedom of action. The Poles might loosen their bonds more than the Kremlin would like but they could never sever them. It is also true that the Soviet leaders certainly never expected the Poles to dare disregard the warnings delivered by Bulganin in July and by Khrushchev in one of the speeches he made in Belgrade during his September visit.

34. Firm guidance by a leader, whether first secretary of the Party or prime minister, was also conspicuously lacking. Cyrankiewicz, it is true, was always considered a moderate, but Ochab, the man approved by Stalin and Khrushchev, was believed to be a conservative or Stalinist. What game he was actually playing, or why and when he switched to the liberals, is impossible to tell. The fact is, however, that the liberal faction and Cyrankiewicz carried on secret negotiations[1] with Gomulka all during the summer and Ochab did nothing to prevent them, and, according to well informed sources, he even participated in these from September onwards.

35. Very probably, judging from his self-condemnatory speech to the Eighth Plenum, Ochab gradually changed his mind and at the same time increasingly realized his own incapacity to dominate the situation, which might easily lead to a violent revolution against the Communist Party. Speaking of "the so-called trend of democratization," he said, inter alia,

> "It shows the concern of millions of people with People's Poland . . . which largely gathered strength spontaneously, not because there was resistance in

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[1] These negotiations were common knowledge, as proved by the resolution passed in September by the Warsaw Board of the Polish Youth Union, demanding publication of a recent interview between Party representatives and Gomulka.

> the Party leadership against new departures . . . but because we often sought to apply our old yardstick to that mighty, huge, and spontaneous surge . . . We saw a difficult situation, and we made efforts to master it, but were not equal to the job which life presented us. This is no doubt the fault of the whole leadership, but it goes without saying that a particular responsibility rests with me as the first secretary of the Central Committee . . . I submitted my resignation which the Politburo rightly accepted."

36. What exactly was being negotiated during September and the first half of October, between Cyrankiewicz and Ochab on one side and Gomulka on the other, is not known. Piecing together various accounts from local sources, one may assume that the former had fully made up their minds that Gomulka was the only man with a sufficiently strong personality and enough authority to control the warring factions within the Party and with enough popularity to quiet the people. Whether the Stalinist or the liberal extremists emerged victorious, the consequences could not but be disastrous for Poland, for the end could only be violence and a tightening of the Russian grip. Cyrankiewicz and Ochab were, however, endeavoring, but in vain, to induce Gomulka to agree in advance to collaborate with a number of leaders of the Natolin faction and to accept a step-by-step promotion in the Party hierarchy, in the hope, according to some observers, of effecting the transfer of power as smoothly as possible, according to others, of hobbling him.

37. In the meantime both factions were not idle. The tactics of the Natolin faction consisted in stirring up the anti-semitic feelings of the Poles, in inciting the workers against the intellectuals, and in trying to gain popularity by reckless promises of wage increases and other material benefits regardless of the catastrophic consequences for the Polish

economy. Gomulka and his followers were keeping in close contact with factory workers and student groups and listening sympathetically to their complaints and suggestions, while avoiding embarrassing commitments. In spite of Gomulka's refusal, during conversations with Cyrankiewicz and Ochab in the last days of September, to commit himself to keeping the Stalinists in the Politburo, an agreement was finally reached. Meetings between Gomulka and the liberal members of the Politburo, including Rapacki, Morawski, Albrecht, Jarosinski, Matvin, and Gierek, were held almost daily during the next two weeks and it was only then that the Natolin men learned what was in store for them. On 16 October 1956, a party communique announced that a meeting of the Politburo had taken place the day before, that Gomulka had participated, and that the Eighth Plenum of the Central Committee would convene on the 19th. It appears that Gomulka's elevation to the first secretaryship of the Party had also been decided but not made public yet.

The Eighth Plenum

38. To forestall the obvious outcome of the Plenum, Marshal Rokossowski and General Witaszewski, acting for the Natolin group, took steps, according to the account broadcast by radios Szczecin and Gdansk on 26 October, to organize a putsch. The army was alerted and a list of 700 prominent liberals who were to be arrested was handed to the UB (secret police). However, the UB refused to make the arrests and one of its chiefs, Alster, forwarded the list to Gomulka and Gozdzik, party secretary of the Zeran Works, who, with Stanislas Staszewski, first secretary of the Warsaw Party Committee, was one of the leaders of the liberal movement among the Warsaw workers. Armed combat groups of a few hundred men, composed of the plant Party aktivs, were formed in 16 of Warsaw's largest factories. The main force remained on the alert in the plants during the critical days, 19-21 October, while small detachments of workers and students,

together with KBW (Internal Security Force) detachments, on General Komar's orders, patrolled key points and protected the most prominent Gomulka followers.

39. On 19 October, Soviet Ambassador Ponomarenko returned from Moscow and delivered an invitation to the Politburo and Gomulka to come to Moscow for conversations but the invitation was politely declined in view of the proximity of the Plenum. At the same time Warsaw heard rumors of suspicious movements of Polish troops, followed by news that Soviet troops too were on the march.

40. Nevertheless, the Eighth Plenum met on schedule on Friday, 19 October, and listened to a motion by Ochab for the election of Gomulka and three of his principal lieutenants, Spychalski, Kliszko, and Loga-Sowinski, to the Central Committee, but not to the Politburo. They also heard the reading of a letter from Berman, disclaiming any responsibility of the secret police for Gomulka's arrest in 1951, and a letter from Minc, who claimed he had been forced by Moscow, under threat of death, to revise his 1950 Six-Year industrialization plan sharply upward and asserted that everything done in Poland had been ordered by Bierut. At that moment, to the surprise of the liberals at any rate, the arrival at the Warsaw airport of Khrushchev, Molotov, Mikoyan, Koniev and a group of generals, was announced and the Plenum was recessed.

41. The conversations between the Polish Politburo and the Russian "guests" were preceded by a sharp warning from Khrushchev to the effect that the Poles could not hope "to get away with this sort of treason," followed by a preliminary demand from Ochab that the Soviet troops be ordered to turn back. Khrushchev promised to give the order. He then proceeded to offer the Poles substantial economic aid, on condition they became reasonable and abandoned their current policy which would lead socialism toward a catastrophe.

An earnest of their good intentions would be the retention of Rokossowski and a number of other Politburo members, and a more moderate liberalization program. Gomulka, however, insisted upon the right of every Communist Party to select its Politburo, and when Khrushchev threatened to use force, he countered by the threat to reveal the Soviet demands to the Polish people over the radio. Khrushchev immediately changed his tone and thereafter listened to Gomulka's exposé of his program with outward signs of approval, although it included a 50% wage increase over the next five years, the money therefor to be obtained from a sharp reduction in military forces and from compensation by the USSR for undervalued coal deliveries and for the dismantling of plants in the western provinces; it also stipulated complete equality between Communist parties, further democratization, etc. On the other hand, Gomulka emphatically denied any anti-Soviet tendencies or personal resentment. However, no definite agreements were reached. Further negotiations were to be concluded in Moscow, mainly, it appears, because of rising public unrest at the news of further Soviet troop movements, including the crossing of the border by units from East Germany. The publication in Pravda of an editorial violently criticizing alleged "anti-national and anti-socialist declarations in the Polish press" did not help to allay resentment.

42. The Soviet delegation took the broad hints that its continued presence would only inflame Polish public opinion still more and departed in a friendly atmosphere. The Poles attributed their success to Khrushchev's failure to intimidate them by threats and to disrupt the solidarity of the Gomulka-Ochab-Cyrankiewicz triumvirate, as well as to the information he was receiving from the Soviet ambassador concerning the attitude of the Polish army, security troops, workers, and students, who were being rapidly mobilized.

43. However, the Natolin group was apparently not ready to concede defeat. On the following day, 20 October, Soviet troop movements continued, and naval units appeared before Gdansk; there were reports of clashes between Polish units, the great majority of which had sided with Gomulka. A tank column, advancing from Lodz, had to be intercepted at Sochaszew by Internal Security troops.

44. The Plenum meeting on 20 October began with violent attacks on Rokossowski, who could find no better explanation than that the Soviet and Polish troops had been only carrying out their usual autumn maneuvers. Gomulka then addressed the gathering at great length; he was followed by a number of speakers for both factions, the Natolin group apparently still counting on the deterrent effect of the Soviet troop movements and on the propagandistic activities of its adherents in the Party apparatus to bolster its position. But whatever influence the overhanging threat of Soviet intervention might have had, it was far outweighed by the mass demonstrations and rallies of students and workers in continuous progress in the city of Warsaw, protesting against Rokossowski, the visit of the Soviet delegation, the Natolin faction, the interference by Polish troops which should rather turn their arms against the common enemy, etc. The scene of the biggest rally was the Warsaw Polytechnikum, from which over 50,000 demonstrators marched to the Council of State Building where the Eighth Plenum received a delegation of workers and students. One of its leaders, Eligiusz Lasota, chief editor of Po Prostu, the student newspaper which had been probably the most courageous critic of the regime, read Gomulka's program to the demonstrators, and conveyed his request that the people show coolness and restraint and his assurance that all was going well. Further appeals to refrain from violent actions which would give their opponents the opportunity to suppress them by force were made by the mayor of Warsaw, Zarzycki, and by Helena Yaworska; with the help of the

restraining influence of Staszewski and Grozdzik, they succeeded in preventing acts of violence. It is true that inviting targets were lacking. The seats of power were for all practical purposes already in the hands of the "liberals"; even the secret police, the greatest object of hatred in Communist-dominated countries, was on their side, and there were no Soviet troops in Warsaw. On the other hand, the Oder-Neisse problem was always invisibly present, and the Communist leaders of the movement had faith in Gomulka.

45. What might have happened, if the leadership crisis and the concomitant power vacuum had lasted a little longer, and if the Natolin faction had put up a more determined fight, may be inferred from the raid on the Soviet-Polish Friendship Society headquarters in Wroclaw on 22 October and the anti-Soviet and anti-Communist demonstrations in Warsaw and Legnica on the 24th. As it was, they were easily subdued, and the strong underlying anti-Communist feelings of the population were not allowed to gain momentum. The Eighth Plenum ended on 21 October with a complete victory for the liberals. To the Politburo, reduced to nine members, were elected Gomulka, Ochab, Cyrankiewicz, Loga-Sowinski, Morawski, Jedrychowski, Zambrowski, Rapacki, and Zawadski, the last named the only one whose position was still doubtful. The relative strength of the two factions may be gauged from the 74 votes received by Gomulka, compared with the 23 votes for a motion by Ruminski, spokesman for the Natolin faction, for the nomination of Rokossowski.

46. Gomulka was then elected by acclamation first secretary of the Communist Party. As mentioned above, the program Gomulka outlined to the Eighth Plenum on 20 October represented in the main a reiteration and amplification of the Seventh Plenum program. The only new points were his proposals to allow inefficient collective farms to disband while maintaining voluntary collectivization as the long-range goal,

to liquidate State Machine Stations, to abolish gradually the compulsory deliveries of farm produce, to free kulak farms from restrictions, and to introduce worker council management in some branches of industry, being careful however not to disrupt production.

47. In the political field, Gomulka advocated further democratization, but, echoing Ochab, he warned that criticism must remain within bounds, for "we shall not allow anyone to use the process of democratization to undermine socialism." He recommended that the Sejm be allowed to fulfill the role, assigned to it by the Constitution, of "supreme organ of state power," exercising the "highest legislative and controlling power," without prejudice, of course, to the Party, which would fulfill its role as guide all the better for being relieved of the task of governing. Finally, Gomulka endorsed the new electoral law which "allowed the people to elect, not only to vote."

48. With regard to "the problem . . . of development of inter-Party and interstate relations with our great fraternal neighbor," Gomulka said nothing that had not also been said by the Soviet spokesman, with the only difference that he meant what he said.

> "What is immutable in socialism can be reduced to the abolition of exploitation of man by man. The roads of achieving this goal can be, and are, different. They are determined by various circumstances of time and place. The model of socialism can also vary. It can be such as that created in the Soviet Union; it can be shaped in a manner as we see it in Yugoslavia; it can be different still."

With regard to inter-Party and interstate relations, Gomulka claimed that within the framework of international working class solidarity, mutual assistance, friendly criticism, if necessary, and rational solutions of controversial matters, "each country should have full independence, and the rights of each nation to a sovereign government in an independent country should be fully and mutually respected."

> "Stalin, /Gomulka continued/, formally recognized that all the principles enumerated above should characterize the relations between the countries of the camp of socialism. Not only did he recognize them, but he himself proclaimed them. In fact, however, these principles could not fit within the framework of what makes up the cult of personality."

49. Speaking only a few hours after the intervention in Polish affairs of the Soviet leaders, Gomulka - and, for that matter, Khrushchev - must have been well aware of the fact that all that was needed to make the last sentence fit present conditions was to substitute the words "the Presidium" for "Stalin," and "cult of proletarian internationalism" for "cult of personality." But the next move was up to the Kremlin. Gomulka, for his part, was determined to prevent "harm to the vital interests of the Polish state and the cause of building socialism in Poland /from/ anti-Soviet moves in Poland," and Khrushchev could not have forgotten his recent criticism of Stalin for having foolishly and unnecessarily broken with Tito. Both men were content to wait and see, and in the meantime to prevent any "provocations."

50. During the next few days, the situation was extremely delicate. As previously mentioned, anti-Soviet manifestations occurred in a number of cities. On 23 October, Gomulka had to appeal to the "Workers and Youth" to "resist with determination all attempts at provocation" of the USSR. On the next day, Trybuna Ludu crossed the t and dotted the i in an editorial stressing the fact that "Soviet-Polish arms had won the return of the oldest Polish lands," and that "the Polish-Soviet alliance is an iron shield which guards Poland . . . " On 24 October Gomulka reaffirmed before a crowd of demonstrators his conviction that the "Soviet Union . . . which constitutes the backbone of the alliance of all socialist states would respect the principle of equality." He further

revealed that he had received assurances from Khrushchev that all Soviet troops would be back in their bases "within the framework of the Warsaw pact," explaining that as long as Poland's frontiers were threatened by Western Germany, the "presence of the Soviet Army in Germany will correspond to our highest state interest"; this was of course closely connected with the presence of Soviet troops in Poland under the pact. Khrushchev had further assured him that "all concrete matters pertaining to our internal affairs would be solved in accordance with the estimate of the Party and the government" and that he accepted the principles adopted by the Eighth Plenum as a basis for their mutual relations. Reportedly, these assurances were given by Khrushchev by telephone on 23 October to Gomulka, who told the other Party leaders that Khrushchev had also apologized for his attitude on the 20th and had assured him that he now completely approved of his (Gomulka's) actions. Poland was to decide whether, or how long, Soviet specialists and advisers were needed.

51. A few days later it became known that Marshal Rokossowski had departed on leave, that a number of generals, most of them ethnically Poles but considered more Russian than Polish, had been dismissed; that a number of personnel changes had been made in the cabinet - among them the appointment of Stefan Ignar, leader of the United Peasant Party, to a deputy premiership, but also that of Zenon Nowak, one of the leaders of the Natolin faction - that a far-reaching turnover in Party apparatus personnel was being carried out, that Cardinal Wyszynski had been reinstated in his Warsaw see, and that the Poznan trials had been quashed.

52. The Polish regime certainly needed every ounce of the combination of that "decisively patriotic attitude with calmness, discipline, and a sense of Polish raison d'etat" which, according to Trybuna Ludu of 1 November, had characterized the Polish people during the recent events, when

the Hungarian revolt began to gather momentum, and students demonstrated on 29 October in Warsaw shouting anti-Soviet slogans. Ironically, the occasion for the Party organ's editorial was Moscow's statement of 30 October concerning the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Budapest and its willingness to discuss the question of Soviet troops and advisers with other people's democracies, which the paper seized upon as an added argument for Polish restraint. The editorial recognized the dilemma posed in the case of Poland by the conflict between the Polish national interest and the strong opposition to the continued presence of Soviet forces on Polish soil. It assured its readers that a satisfactory solution would be worked out on the basis of an agreement subordinating Soviet troop movements to Polish consent.

53. Somewhat less satisfactory to the Kremlin leaders must have been the 2 November appeal addressed by the Polish Central Party Committee to the people. Although its main purpose was to combat demands for the withdrawal of Soviet units from Poland, on the plea that this would be "contrary to the most vital interest of the nation and the Polish raison d'etat," it did state that "from the bottom of our hearts we have always been on the side of the Hungarian workers and of all those who fought together with them for socialist democratization, against the forces wanting at any price to maintain in Hungary the old manner of governing, hated by the people." It described as tragic the consequences of the decision of the former Communist leadership to call for the assistance of Soviet troops, "instead of entering immediately and consistently on the road of solutions in conformity with the interests of socialism, with the will of the working class and the majority of the nation." The Central Committee expressed its convictions that the Hungarian workers would "succeed in uniting and repelling the attacks of the reaction" and that the problems of the defense of socialism could "be solved by the forces of the Hungarian people . . . and not by intervention from without."

54. This did not prevent Gomulka from stating, in a programmatic address to Party activists on 4 November, that the Party leadership gave "first priority in political work to the problem of consolidating in the consciousness of the whole nation the importance of friendship between Poland and the Soviet Union." He even went so far as to declare his willingness to discuss matters with the political opponents of socialism, but not with those who opposed Polish-Soviet friendship. The latter "must be ruthlessly driven away /long ovation/ for they harm the interests of the Polish state and the Polish nation . . . Poland should never find herself in the situation in which Hungary found herself."

55. In general, Gomulka seemed inclined to deal much more sternly with nationalist and "hostile elements," apparently those who wanted to go still further in the direction of liberalization and who presumably favored what he described as "anti-Polish revisionist trends . . . sponsored by the forces of international reaction," than with the Stalinist or Natolin wing. The very terms "Natolin" and "Pulawy" group should, he declared, be eliminated from the Polish language, and Party members should be judged solely on the basis of their present, not their past attitude toward the policy adopted by the Eighth Plenum, for the Party must remain monolithic. He conceded, however, that those comrades who were as yet unable to understand that the struggle for democratization and sovereignty did not weaken, but on the contrary strengthened socialism and friendship with the CPSU, must "at present" be removed from influence on Party organs.

56. Gomulka described at some length the general principles which were to govern the forthcoming Sejm elections, featuring joint lists including Communist, United Peasant Party, Democratic Party, and Catholic group candidates. But he devoted even more space to a defense of the security apparatus, now cleansed of its evil elements, and

whose competence would be limited to "fighting espionage, terror, and other hostile actions aimed against the rule of the people and the interests of the state." They had proved that they were "ready to prevent any attempts aimed against the political line mapped out by the leadership of the Party." In other words, democratization was the watchword, but it had strict limitations.

57. Understandably, especially after the second Soviet intervention in Hungary, and on the eve of negotiations with Moscow, Gomulka's chief worry was the still threatening possibility of further anti-Soviet outbreaks. That this worry was not unjustified was later proved by the Bydgoszcz and Stettin riots on 28 November and 10 December, the latter culminating in an attack on the Soviet Consulate. On the other hand, there was no immediate danger of a Natolin counter-offensive, provided the activities of the extreme revisionists did not invite Soviet armed intervention.

58. Particularly after the Budapest experience, which had shown that the mere appearance of Soviet tanks was not sufficient to cow a nation into submission, the Russian leaders were prepared to concede a certain amount, provided a regime continued to bear the Communist label, remained within the Communist camp - specifically, the Warsaw pact - acknowledged, as Gomulka had, that the USSR was, if not the head, at least the "backbone" of the camp, and avoided the term "National Communism" which had become anathema since it had been approved by the West. After all, Moscow risked little, for the Polish raison d'etat guaranteed the continuation of its Satellite status de facto, if not de jure. Circumstances have changed greatly since the days of Brest-Litowsk when the leaders of proletarian internationalism considered national frontiers as of minor importance.

59. Formal Soviet recognition of the "Polish road to socialism" was effected by the conclusion of the Moscow

agreement of 18 November. On paper, the USSR made substantial financial concessions by the cancellation of virtually all Polish debts, but an uncollectible debt has no value, and, at any rate, the amount was less than the sums owed by the USSR on account of Poland's share in German reparations and the undervaluation of coal deliveries. What was of greater significance was the implicit admission of the charges that the USSR had been ruthlessly exploiting the Satellites. The clauses of the status of forces agreement, spelled out in greater detail a month later, giving Poland a say in the matter of Soviet troop locations and movements in the country, presumably soothed Polish amour propre, but were of little practical importance. The same can be said of the reaffirmation of the Oder-Neisse frontier. The most valuable concession made by Moscow was the supply on credit of 1.4 million tons of grain, but it hardly could have been refused if further Poznans were to be avoided.

60. The main victims of the October events in Poland were Soviet prestige, Soviet propaganda in neutral countries, and Communist doctrine. Soviet prestige suffered by the demonstration, sparked by the Poles and enhanced by the Hungarians, that Russia's might was not sufficient to cow nations into complete submission and to a certain extent could even be successfully challenged. Soviet propaganda suffered from the palpable demonstration that even the workers in Communist-ruled countries, far from welcoming, did not even acquiesce in Communism, and that it was rejected with particular decisiveness by the younger generation. Communist economic doctrine suffered by the admission that after 12 years of application, the standard of living of the people was, if anything, lower than before, and by the virtual abandonment of the forced industrialization program. Perhaps even more serious was the elevation to the realm of distant ideal of the agricultural collectivization program, the abolition of discriminatory taxation of kulaks and the legalization of private sales of land, in spite of the dogma

that a Communist state cannot be half socialist and half capitalist, and that individual ownership of land spontaneously generates capitalism.[1] Other deviations from the orthodox Party line which the new Polish leadership undertook to implement included the encouragement of small craftsmen, private stores and service enterprises, the granting of considerable powers to workers' councils in industrial enterprises, the sanctioning of private initiative in the production of building materials, etc.

62. Nevertheless, Gomulka, addressing on 23 November 1956 the meeting of first regional Party secretaries, called for the purpose of providing some guidance to the utterly confused Party apparatus, could argue that these decisions represented "a change in the methods of our work and a change in the model of socialism," but remained "within the framework of socialism."

63. The Party activists who thought that the revision of the Polish party line had gone too far, or that, after the settlement with the USSR, the standard of living could be improved overnight, were silenced by Gomulka with the crushing retort that under the old regime Poland had reached the point where in 1957 it faced a gap of 12 billion zloty worth of goods, while coal exports were expected to drop by 10 million tons, and that even then the Lodz textile industry would probably have to shut down for the winter to save coal and also for lack of cotton. The only exception he envisaged to the rule that no wage increases were possible in the immediate future was in favor of the coal miners.

64. Those who thought that the revisions did not go

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[1] By the end of 1956 it was estimated that 80% of the Polish collectives, even comparatively prosperous ones, had been disbanded.

far enough - the so-called enragés - or, as Gomulka admitted, those "reactionary elements" which were convinced that this was "only a stage on the way to something else," were silenced by the frank statement:

> "Any other program is not realistic and would lead only to recklessness . . . in one way or another to the Hungarian situation. This should be said boldly to our comrades; it should be said openly to the patriots who propose this or other theories; it should also be said to other enemies of ours who are opposing our Party organizations."

65. Gomulka laid part of the blame for the widespread disorientation in Party ranks on the false concepts of democratization voiced, alas, even by journalists and writers who were Party members. He warned them that they were not to imagine that they were above the Party leadership; unless they mended their ways, the Party would have to "draw organizational consequences," that is, to tighten the censorship. In this respect Gomulka was in an embarrassing position, for it was largely to the intellectuals that he owed his success - and they were as conscious of the fact as he was.

66. Gomulka's dilemma was perhaps even more apparent when he spoke of collaboration with other political parties. This he justified by the statement that he and his supporters were "creating a new form of cooperation"; they were building a "socialism as seen from the viewpoint of humanitarianism and freedom of broad masses of workers." Their aim was to form one front with other "real" parties, the Peasant Party and the Democratic Party. However, this did not mean, he said, that "the workers' class will lose its hegemony and that our Party will cease to be the chief leader." The solution he envisaged was to let the members of the other Parties occupy many posts in the economy, in the social organizations, and even in the government, "provided, how-

ever, they supported the common program and were technically qualified." But, he reassured the Party secretaries, he would be "much more cautious when it comes to the creation of the possibility for activity in the political sphere," for, he claimed, the truth was that the anti-Communist elements, the followers of Mikolajczik, were "not interested in the economic problems but only in the fight for power." Moreover,

> ". . . a wide wave has spread over the country, a wave to restore all sorts of organizations and forms, with the intent of using them . . . to undermine everything developing in Poland. One of them was the Union of Fighters, which included former Peasant Party leaders, who have in mind a bourgeois democracy."

The degree of cooperation, Gomulka concluded, would be determined by experience. And he candidly admitted that he expected no difficulties from the Peasant Party leaders, but rather "from below." These difficulties would have to be overcome by intensive party work, although he did not deny the truth of the comrades' statements that "it is in the villages that the situation of our Party organization is the worst." He thus inferentially admitted that it was bad in the cities also, and furthermore that the "leaders" of the allied Parties were actually stooges of the regime.

67. To bolster their sagging morale, Gomulka reminded the Party secretaries that all the accomplishments of the last few months were solely

> ". . . the result of the work of the Party. We initiated it and can be proud of it . . . We did it, and no one else . . . And why . . . are we incapable of utilizing the great gains of our Party before the Party organizations, before the workers, and before the whole nation? "

68. But when he became specific, the only achievement he mentioned was the solution of "the question of equality

of our relations with the Soviet Union, the question of sovereignty, etc., of the liquidation of all forms of interferences in our internal affairs . . . " Yet only a few moments earlier, speaking of the line "separating us as a Party and those elements of political and social groups which collaborate with us from those, on the other hand, who want to consider the present situation as a stage which will lead to the restoration of capitalism, " he admitted that "when it was a matter of our sovereignty and our independence . . . these reactionary elements did support us."

69. Whether the Party would have achieved what it did, or its liberal wing even have gained control of the Party without these "reactionary" elements, is a question Gomulka of course did not raise. On the other hand, one would have expected him to credit the Party for another achievement, the resurrection of the humanitarian viewpoint in socialism. For, as Przeglad Kulturalny, paraphrasing Marx, had written on 7 November 1956, it was no small matter: "A specter is now haunting Eastern Europe . . . the specter of humane socialism, and it frightens not only the capitalists, but the Stalinists too."

70. The need for the Party aktiv to "rid itself of a certain type of doubt or disorientation . . . to acquire more Party, militant, and Communist courage" - a remarkable admission after its alleged recent triumph - was all the greater since Gomulka was pledged to grant the people somewhat wider freedom of choice in the impending elections to the Sejm. And he seemed particularly worried about the situation in the industrial establishments. The chief task of the Party was now to strengthen its organization in the factories, he said. But the method he recommended seemed hardly the most likely to secure enthusiastic propagandists. Although he admitted that Party functionaries who were being dismissed under a ruling to reduce the Party apparatus

showed great reluctance to return to the factories, he appealed to them to do just that in order to prove their "understanding of the present situation."

71. After the achievement of an uneasy modus vivendi with the USSR, the next milestone on the "Polish road to socialism" was the elections to the Sejm. The problem was to reconcile the promise to give the people a greater voice in the affairs of the nation with the necessity of assuring the permanence of the decidedly shaky Party dictatorship. For this purpose a system was worked out under which a United Front, composed of the Communist Party (PZPR), the United Peasant Party (ZSL), the Democratic Party (SD) and Catholic Groups, was to agree on a common list in each constituency, with seven candidates for every four seats, in the order of their "official" preference - in other words, of their reliability as supporters of the regime - the voters having the right to cross out any names they rejected. Although the dice were heavily loaded in favor of the Communist Party and its stooges,[1] it still remained possible to vote only for the minority of unreliable but popular candidates which it had not been deemed advisable to reject,[2] or to abstain altogether. The indications that this might well happen were so strong that Gomulka made a desperate appeal to the voters on 19 Jan-

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[1] According to Warsaw Radio of 2 January 1957, the candidacies agreed upon were as follows:

PZPR	50 percent
ZSL	25 percent
SD	10 percent
Non party and Catholic	15 percent

[2] Osubka-Morawski, a Social Democrat and former premier, was rejected among others for his "discordant" attitude.

uary 1957 to vote "without deletions" for the "so-called central candidates, because they are the leaders of the government, our Party and the other political parties, and the mass workers and peasants associations." He particularly implored them not to delete PZPR candidates, because the Party was a "guarantor of neighborly, brotherly Polish-Soviet relations, which are the most vital interest of the Polish nation . . . The German Wehrmacht [is] threatening our territories . . . the deletion of PZPR candidates is synonymous with the deletion of Poland from the map of Europe."

72. This straightforward recognition of the geopolitical facts, together with the quiet but very effective assistance of the Catholic clergy, had the desired effect. The National Unity Front got 98% of the votes cast.[1] 51% of the elected deputies were Communists, although, with the exception of Gomulka and Spychalski, all the Communist leaders ran behind non-Communist candidates, and, among the Communists themselves, the liberals came consistently ahead of Stalinists, such as Pawlak, Titkow, Musialowa, etc.

73. The result of the elections was of course exceedingly satisfactory for the prestige of the Gomulka regime, although, as Trybuna Ludu of 20 February made clear, as long as the central candidates had not been deleted, the Party leadership would not have been endangered even if the Party had been in the minority, "because PZPR leadership cannot depend on a formal majority in the Sejm." It depended, the paper explained, on the fact that the Communist Party was "the most consistent Party of the Polish revolution" and on its ability "to persuade" other Sejm deputies. Although the other parties were indeed "independent political movements," they did "not constitute a structural opposition," but on the contrary were "also fostering socialist development."

[1] 94% of the electorate participated in the vote.

74. Gomulka's electoral success, however, was far from ending his difficulties. Some were inherent in political and economic changeovers such as had occurred in October, some were inheritances from the past, others were peculiar to his regime.

75. Whatever its relative degree of liberalism, it is obvious that, for the time being at any rate, no Communist regime can function successfully, even within the limited possibilities of Communism, without a strong central authority, be it exercised individually or collectively. Gomulka was in the curious position of having been chosen on the basis of his personal mythos as the compromise candidate to lead the nation, yet being unable to play the role effectively. On the one hand, he could hardly exercise personal dictatorship so soon; on the other, he lacked a cohesive moderate group of his own within the Party Central Committee. As usual after violent political upheavals, most Party leaders seemed to be extremists, either extreme revisionists, or extreme conservatives (Stalinists). As Trybuna Ludu stated, what was needed was neither "the administrative monolith . . . or a discussion club or a coalition of mutually incessantly fighting trends, but a party rallied around a common program on the principles of democratic centralism." (5 April). And quoting Kolakowski, the article described as the chief weakness of the left (revisionist) wing "the fact that its negation only reached the level of a moral protest and not that of practical thought."

76. The confusion at the top Party levels was naturally compounded at the lower levels. Party officials not only were confused as to the correct Party line, still in the process of trial and error in many respects, but were demoralized owing to the uncertainty of their fate while the reduction

of the Party apparatus and the replacement of the unreliable were still in progress. [1]

77. Another inevitable consequence of the changes in the local party apparatus and of the emancipation of the state administration was a very general impairment of public administration and law enforcement. Most of the administrative officials and police officers had been mere rubber stamps and were helpless on their own, while many of the old apparatchiks had been efficient, whatever their other faults.

78. Willy-nilly, Gomulka had to rely increasingly on the old Party officials who were used to discipline, in order to restore the effectiveness of the Party machinery, with the hope, by splitting the Stalinist group, of being better able to control those occupying official positions.

79. A further revealing symptom of the disorganized state of the Polish Communist Party, considering the importance attached by Communists to the indoctrination of youth, is the weakness of the Socialist (Communist) Youth Union. It had acquired a membership of only 60, 000 by the end of April 1957, which practically leaves the field to its rivals, the recently created Rural Youth Union, the Polish Scouts' Union, and the Polish Students' Union. Marian Renke, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth Union, writing in Trybune Ludu of 7 August, complained that the Union was developing under very complex and difficult conditions "as the effects of past errors are very strongly felt by youth." If, as Renke admits, the union could only

[1] The Warsaw Radio announced on 7 August that 8, 669 members of the Party apparatus had been dismissed since 6 October and on 10 August that 12, 000 government employees would be dismissed.

develop by renouncing "its basic ideological and political principles" - something it obviously cannot do - its prospects would not appear bright.

80. Revisionism, spearheaded by writers and journalists, calling for greater freedom to voice opinions considered dangerous by the Kremlin, was of course particularly resented in Moscow. Setting a harmful example was bad enough, even if it had to be tolerated, but propagandizing was worse.[1] Although naturally reluctant to muzzle his early supporters among the intellectuals, Gomulka was obliged to do so in order to ward off Soviet retaliation. This could easily begin by taking the form of economic reprisals, as it did in the case of Yugoslavia. In the absence of the hoped-for substantial American credits, it could be well nigh catastrophic, since Poland depends almost entirely on the USSR for such indispensable raw materials as iron ore, cotton and oil, quite apart from the grain needed to make up the 1956 and possibly future deficits.[2]

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[1] Cf. the article appearing in the March 1957 issue of the Rumanian Party magazine Lupta de Clasa, stating, in a clear allusion to Polish writers, that "certain ideologists abroad have a tendency to negate the necessity of forming and developing the socialist masses under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat . . . They allege that once social ownership is established over the means of production, this process unfolds itself spontaneously." The Party periodical called this "a profoundly damaging revisionist thesis."

[2] Under the Polish-Soviet trade agreement concluded in April 1957, the USSR is to supply 96% of Poland's oil needs, 66% of her iron ore, 72% of her cotton, and 100% of her nickel needs. On the other hand, the USSR agreed to import far more Polish machinery and less raw materials than heretofore, according to a Warsaw broadcast of 22 April 1957.

81. Some time in February, a behind-the-scene agreement had reportedly been reached between Gomulka and Moscow to take steps toward ending the exchange of recrimination in the press. The editors of the principal party papers, Zycie Warszawy and Trybuna Ludu, were replaced, in the latter case by Leon Kasman, who had once held the position under Bierut. K. Draczkowski, an avowed Stalinist, was appointed assistant editor of Sztandar Ludu, and all Polish editors were strongly admonished by Gomulka to moderate their "irresponsible" campaign, for otherwise Moscow would be at his throat. Foreign Minister Rapacki's hurried trip to Moscow in March, ostensibly to sign a minor frontier treaty, was generally interpreted as proof that, as Education Minister Bienkowski privately stated, "the situation was very grave."

82. In a further attempt to placate the Kremlin, Gomulka agreed for the first time (in a statement to a Hungarian journalist on 15 March 1957) that "counter-revolutionary forces launched a mad attempt to overthrow the socialist system . . . just when Hungary had stepped onto the road of the correction of past mistakes." What Moscow wanted, however, was not an obviously opportunistic official statement but an end to the dangerous airing of unorthodox views in the Polish press. This was made perfectly clear in a Pravda article of 6 April, which quoted approvingly publications such as Zycie Partii, Nowe Drogi and Trybuna Robotnitza. These had criticized articles in Po Prostu, Sztandar Mlodych, and other papers for their "revisionist," "liquidationist" and "anti-Marxist" tendencies, specifically: "incorrect" evaluation of the Hungarian revolution, advocacy of greater freedom of expression and "renunciation of the leading role of the Party," criticism of the "apparatus of authority in general," incorrect views on the relationship between socialism and capitalism, and frequent manifestations of nationalism and attacks on Soviet practices. Pravda did not have to specify that it agreed with "certain papers and journals" which considered

> "that the struggle against forces hostile to socialism must at the present time become the main aspect of the ideologic struggle of Party organizations . . . Revisionism . . . has grown into liquidationism and has attempted to force the Party to capitulate in the face of the reactionary forces."

Less than a week later, on 12 April, Trybuna Ludu came out with a strong condemnation of revisionism which produced immediate results.

The Ninth Plenum, 15-18 May 1957

83. Having apparently realized that there was nothing to be gained by further postponement, Gomulka convened the overdue Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party on 15 May 1957. Its tasks, as stated by Gomulka in his opening speech, were to

> " tell the party and the working class what they must do and how they must proceed to build socialism in our country in accordance with the new directions mapped out by the Eighth Plenum . . . and to draw the appropriate conclusions from various phenomena we observe in our life . . . The essential meaning of the Eighth Plenum was that it broke away from the bad methods of socialist construction, from the bad ways and means of exercising power and that it corrected the party policy in such a way as to make socialist construction the living creative work of the working masses . . . "

84. Workers wanted socialism, Gomulka claimed, not only to feel free from exploitation but also because "they connect with socialism their hope for a speedy improvement of their existence." But he had to concede that this hope conflicted with the need to expand productive forces rapidly and that "the socialization of the means of production and the

transition to a planned economy alone" might not "in given conditions, exert any great influence on changes in the mode of thought of the working class." To achieve the necessary "socialist consciousness," one had to increase the workers' participation "in the every-day management of the national economy and the local administration of the state." As the chief factors influencing the consciousness of workers were "the specific, national conditions in the development of the proletariat in each country," Gomulka seemed to argue that in Poland at any rate this participation was necessary. Furthermore, it was perfectly permissible, inasmuch as, "although socialism is universal, the forms of its construction are shaped by the concrete conditions prevailing in a given time and place" . . . and it was necessary "on the basis of one's own and other nations' experiences . . . to look for new forms or to improve the old forms . . . "

85. The three new forms outlined by the Eighth Plenum "in order to unify the working class with socialism . . . and to bring the peasants closer to socialism" were: workers' councils, expansion of the powers of people's councils, and the development of various forms of peasant self-management. At this point Gomulka felt the need to define the meaning of the expression "national road to socialism." His involved explanation can be boiled down to the assertion that although the essence of socialism lay in its international character, its aims embracing all mankind, "the road - in other words, the ways of construction of socialism - in a given country and the road followed by the Soviet Union" could be different. To prove it, Gomulka, after covering himself by quoting the relevant thesis of the 20th Congress, repeated the familiar explanation that the historical conditions under which socialism had to be built in the USSR and Poland, as well as the national characteristics of the two peoples, were different. Mechanical imitation of the USSR might have been justified when other countries lacked direct experience and relations were unequal during the cult of personality period, but it was no longer so.

86. But, Gomulka continued,

> ". . . the stress on the national characteristics and on the historical differences in socialist construction must not mean the denial of the general regularity of the universal principles deduced from the experiences of socialist construction in the Soviet Union . . . The under-estimating or negating of the general regularities in socialist construction which have been experienced in the Soviet Union is nationalist revisionism. It must be combatted . . . for it has nothing in common with socialism."

87. It followed, according to Gomulka, that the "road to socialism" should be based on general fundamental and common principles, and in this sense was international, but it also presupposed a national understructure peculiar to each country, and in this sense was national. To justify this view, Gomulka recalled Lenin's oft-quoted dictum on the subject. For the misguided "contemporary scientific theorists" who parroted bourgeois politicians and called the Polish road to socialism "national Communism" Gomulka had nothing but scorn and sarcasm.

88. Gomulka then attempted to answer the obvious question: what were the general fundamental principles which had to be followed in every country in order to establish socialism? There were four:

> a. Organization of a Marxist-Leninist party of the working masses, observing the principles of democratic centralism and of alliance between the workers and peasants.
>
> b. After the overthrow of the bourgeois ruling class, the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship over the former exploiters.

c. Socialization of the capitalist means of production, gradual transformation of rural production relations, and central planning and management of the entire economy.

d. Observance of the principles of proletarian internationalism, of the equality and sovereignty of all states and nations, and of unity to oppose imperialist aggression.

A further essential condition was the direction of these processes by the Marxist-Leninist workers' party, which had therefore to be strengthened by every means.

89. Having thus disposed of his critics both on the right and on the left, Gomulka proceeded to discuss the "three important elements of the Polish road to socialism" he had already mentioned. Considering what Gomulka had to say with regard to the workers' councils, it seems difficult to consider them an important element of anything. For while he admitted that "the pattern of workers' councils had been developed in accordance with the will of the working class . . . as an instrument for the administration of its enterprises and the national economy," he contended that trade unions and works councils could serve just as well. In this he was undoubtedly correct, if the workers' councils are granted no more than the limited "rights" he enumerated, which practically boiled down to the right to do everything possible to increase production and reduce costs. In other words, the popular workers' councils were to act as pinch-hitters for the discredited trade unions. This was a far cry from the Yugoslav model from which he agreed the Polish concept had stemmed, but which had to be developed along a different line, for, he claimed, if the factories became cooperative enterprises of workers it would mean the adoption of a capitalist organization, with additional disadvantages.

90. Obviously realizing that it would be dangerous to discard the workers' councils altogether, Gomulka outlined a program which would in fact reduce them to mere auxiliaries of the trade unions. The councils were to take over many of the unions' duties and depend on them for their financial needs. Even then he stressed the requirement that the local party organization "point out to the workers . . . /those candidates/ whose election would be the best guarantee of successful work . . . " He practically admitted that the workers could not be trusted:

> "The working class is not monolithic . . . it partly consists of new workers, of youths who came to town from the villages . . . partly of people who were forced to leave other social strata. This variety of our working class, in the conditions of general weakening of its devotion to its ideals as a result of the upheavals recently experienced by the working movement, forms a favorable ground for the penetration into its ranks of alien, in the class sense, and frequently hostile influences, for the spreading of all kinds of demagogy . . . Among the members of the councils there are ideologically alien elements, brought up on the crest of the wave of October. These elements should be kept out . . . "

91. Having thus disposed of his fellow-riders on the October wave, Gomulka turned to the second important element in the Polish road to socialism, the powers of the local people's councils. In essence, what Gomulka recommended was the implementation of the decisions of 1950 and 1955 and their supplementation in the sense of increasing the powers and financial resources of the councils and reorganizing their administrative apparatus to make them more efficient. One of their important duties would be to manage some local industries which had previously been run - inefficiently - from the center. Precautions should be taken, however, "to insure that councils on the higher level have precedence over councils on the lower levels."

92. The third element of the Polish road to socialism, described by Gomulka as "the radical turning point in the policy of the Party" taken by the Eighth Plenum, and as "the most difficult task of socialist construction," was the "socialist reconstruction of the countryside" on new lines. The difficulty stemmed from the fact that the socialist form of agriculture, the producers' cooperatives, had for the most part "not withstood the tests of life." The solution Gomulka recommended was, besides continuing to encourage producers' cooperatives by granting them the cheapest rates for MTS services, the lowest taxes and the most favorable credit terms, to develop as extensively as possible lower forms of collective activity, such as producers' associations and agricultural circles, by offering them financial advantages denied to individual farmers.

93. The qualms of the Natolin critics who pointed to ZSL collaboration in the agricultural legislation and predicted the resurgence of capitalism in the form of rich peasants were allayed by the assurance that "the government not only can, but if need be, will, effectively counteract the excessive enrichment of a small stratum of exploiters in the countryside." Gomulka also reminded these critics that they had no other program, for the simple reason that no better one could be devised, and he assured them that they could safely trust the ZSL. In fact, he practically let the cat out of the bag by complaining that the former error of the Party in "dominating" instead of "leading" the ZSL had greatly reduced its influence among the peasants and had therefore harmed the Party. Now, Gomulka said, "we do not violate its party sovereignty . . . We consider /the ZSL/ an ally and therefore want its ranks to grow." But at the same time he uttered a stern warning: The Party was greatly worried by the "accidental penetration /of the ZSL/ by elements alien and even hostile to socialism" to which certain ZSL leaders showed tolerance and leniency. Adherents of the "bankrupt"

Mikolajczyk and other emigrès were "beginning to raise their heads ever more boldly . . . This cannot be tolerated . . ." The alliance between the Party and the ZSL and the SD, Gomulka stated emphatically, was based on the principle of strengthening and developing socialism in Poland. This made it perfectly clear that Gomulka's idea was to exploit the popularity of the old ZSL and SD party labels for the sole benefit of the Communists, while sternly repressing their authentic ideologies.

94. Toward the Church, Gomulka's attitude was realistic. He admitted that the Party's agreement with the Church was "not in accordance with its world outlook," but he claimed that it could not use "administrative pressure toward believers" and that the "old quarrel . . . pushed millions of believers away from socialism." The only solution was therefore coexistence: the state would not interfere with Church in matters of faith, and expected the Church to "recognize" the change in Poland's social system.

95. From a review of ways of improving the managment of the state and of the country's economy, Gomulka proceeded to the discussion of what he termed the most important problem: the Party, on whose "strength, stability, ideological position, and influence on the masses" everything else depended. To make a long, confused, and contradictory Marxist story short, the gist of what Gomulka had to say on the subject was that it was "impossible . . . to pretend that one cannot see the political influences of the bourgeoisie on the non-bourgeois strata of the population," that the Party was "the main obstacle preventing the bourgeoisie and reaction from abusing democratic freedoms" and that therefore "the greater the strength of the Party . . . the broader democratic freedoms will be."

96. The strength of the Party depended mainly, Gomulka continued, on the unity of its ranks, which could

only be based on "democratic centralism." Discussion and criticism were of course permissible and desirable, but they had to be "creative," and no Party member had the right "to express outside the Party his convictions not conforming to the convictions of the majority . . . , to the policy outlined by the Party organs . . . " Those who did not agree had to resign or be excluded.

97. To underline that necessity, Gomulka recalled that prior to the Eighth Plenum, the violation of the democratic centralism principle, combined with great policy mistakes, had produced "mistrust of Party organizations in the leadership, ideological chaos in the Party, the emergence of various mutually opposed groups - which in sum amounted to a split in Party unity." The crisis came about "to no small extent" as a result of an external event, the "exposure of the cult of the individual," intensified by the Poznan events. The Seventh Plenum's decisions were correct, in Gomulka's opinion, but did not succeed in improving the situation. "In the circumstances existing at that time it was impossible to overcome the political crisis except by means of internal struggle" between "forces striving for renascence of the Party" and the "real and sometimes imaginary representatives of conservative ossification." Apparently Gomulka considered this to have been a special case in which an exception to the rule of settling differences of opinion by a simple majority vote had been justified.

98. Fortunately, Gomulka continued, the Eighth Plenum put the Party back on the right road and the reorganized Politburo "is already acting as a monolith". But, he admitted, "the Party is still weak, like a convalescent after a grave illness," a weakness, he added cryptically, which "does not allow the Party to exploit fully the cause of socialism, internationalism, and the strengthening of Polish-Soviet friendship and the great and most important achievements of the Eighth Plenum which found their expression in the Polish-Soviet declaration of 18 November 1956."

99. The weakness of the Party, Gomulka said, encouraged the activity of reactionary, petit-bourgeois, and rebellious forces, which, under the cover of the Eighth Plenum, attacked the Party and "honest and active members under the false slogan of struggle against Stalinists." Unfortunately, in spite of the successful Sejm elections, the Party still was confronted with ideological confusion, "the efficiency of various false theories," i.e. revisionism, and a tendency to deny democratic centralism, by accepting democracy but rejecting centralism. There were even Party members who had lost socialism in the search for new roads to it and who even "unambiguously express their longing for capitalism."

100. To illustrate the extremes to which revisionism could go, Gomulka then launched into a violent diatribe against Kolakowski, who wanted "integral democracy," also now referred to as "the free play of political forces." But, he contended, Kolakowski could not deny that this would create the threat of a revival of capitalism and of civil war. Could anyone believe this would consolidate Poland's western frontiers? No responsible Pole, Gomulka concluded, could "subject the fate of Poland and the Polish nation to a lottery called internal democracy." There was no need to evaluate the theories of other revisionists like Zimand and Woroszylski. All derived "from the same bourgeois ideology under whose influence social democratic ideology was formed."

101. Here Gomulka felt himself obliged to define "revisionism." According to him, "revisionism is a distortion of Marxism by the introduction into its teachings of erroneous and false theses which do not correctly define social reality . . . " and "do not correspond to the laws governing the development of society . . . /Revisionists/ do not recognize the leading role of the Party, do not recognize democratic centralism, and dispute the essence of the class struggle." It was true, Gomulka agreed, that Lenin

had "revised and developed Marxism" and that "some principles of Marxism were also revised by the 20th CPSU Congress," but nobody called them revisionist "because amendments to Marxism reflecting actual life or a changed life do not constitute revisionism." Later on, when the bourgeois class forces became unable to threaten the socialist system, one might well imagine that there would be freedom for all political opinions. But that was not true today, and revisionism was "the ideology of capitulation before the difficulties of socialist construction, before the class enemy . . . " In its essence, revisionism aimed "at a return to the past while pretending to pave the way for the future."

102. The opposite errors which disarmed the Party "in the face of its class opponent" were, Gomulka continued, dogmatism and conservatism. Dogmatism was "a kind of collection of obdurate conceptions which were created under definite historic conditions" - in other words, dogmatism was the rejection of the revisions deemed desirable by Gomulka. There were, he said, quite a few "ideological dogmatists" in the Party, who created confusion but, even so, were not dangerous for Party life. Really dangerous for the Party, Gomulka asserted, were the conservatives. The conservative group included the dogmatists, but was chiefly made up of the "wide-scale party membership," which was unable "to make use of the political methods of work." The overwhelming majority of the Party aktiv was in complete agreement with the Eighth Plenum decisions, but still could not work in the new way, and sought refuge in passivity. What Gomulka feared was a "revival of tendencies to solve all kinds of conflicts by force instead of by persuasion . . . " Experience taught that a policy "divorced from reality, dogmatic and sectarian, can be pursued only by applying force and compulsion . . . including towards one's own class. [It] is a serious mistake . . . "

103. Gomulka conceded that "a considerable percentage" of the Party membership consisted of people who were "only formally members," took no part in Party work, failed to attend meetings or to pay their dues. If efforts to turn them into "real members" failed, they should be dropped, for quality was more important than quantity. He clearly implied, however, that the Party membership included too few workers and peasants. He demanded greater attention to its "social composition" and urged "greatest caution . . . in dealing with workers and peasants" when dropping "formal members," except in enterprises where they constituted a considerable percentage. It was apparently better to have "formal" worker and peasant members than none at all.

104. Party unity, although indispensable, was of course not enough, Gomulka continued, and he proceeded to enumerate the familiar requirements of a good and efficient party apparatus, closely tied to the masses. Gomulka demanded from the Party no less than that it should "convince the working people on every issue which causes them to have any doubts . . . " After that, it is difficult to blame the "conservatives" who either used "administrative work methods" or "remained passive."

105. Gomulka then made some brief remarks concerning the economic situation. He stressed the impossibility of further wage increases in the near future and the difficulties being experienced in balancing foreign trade as a result of the increased demand for consumer goods which had to be imported. With regard to strikes, he said that the Party was against them but would not use administrative methods against them. The differences were to be solved by discussions.

106. In the concluding part of his speech Gomulka reverted to the theme of inter-Party relations. He reaffirmed his contention that differences of opinion were natural and inevitable, but could be settled by friendly discussions "on a

platform of recognition of the common laws" which must be applied "in the struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist order." He promised to "place in the forefront everything which unites us . . . putting aside whatever divides us, and letting time furnish a solution."

107. Gomulka energetically repudiated any attempts to sow discord between Poland and the USSR.

> " Our Party most resolutely condemns everything directed against the unity of the camp of socialist states, everything that undermines Polish-Soviet friendship and alliance, or that violates the principles of /proletarian/ internationalism . . . The prospects for our country's /economic/ development are also based on the prospects of the development of the Soviet Union. "

108. Gomulka made another bow in the direction of Moscow, declaring that differences from other parties "in our appreciation of events in Hungary /did/ not change the common point of view /that the/ Soviet Army's help in suppressing counterrevolution was a regrettable but unavoidable necessity." Moscow may, however, have been less pleased with his reference to the development of the creative teaching of Marxism-Leninism by the Chinese Communist Party and "its profound link with the people . . . The thesis of the hundred blooming flowers also constitutes a bold step which had until now been unknown in the practice of the construction of socialism in other countries."

109. Gomulka summed up his policy by reasserting Polish solidarity with the "entire revolutionary movement of the working class throughout the world . . . We reject . . . all attempts to distort our ideology with any form of nationalism or revisionism, or to distort it by stagnant dogmatism. We reject . . . all the absurd attempts to seek 'national Communism' in our party . . . "

110. Although Gomulka had made it abundantly clear that he would not go along with the revisionists, and it was generally expected that this would satisfy the conservatives, the next day's debates revealed that they actually wanted a return to the status quo ante. According to newspaper reports[1] the right-wing leaders Mijal, Klosiewicz, Lapot, Ruminski, Dworakowski,[2] etc. argued in effect that there could be no Polish road to socialism, that the agricultural policy was wrong, that Gomulka's "road is a return to capitalism /and/ capitulation to the Roman Catholic Church." They demanded, among other things, that the press be muzzled even more tightly than heretofore, that the final resolution contain a specific recognition of Soviet leadership of the Communist bloc and an outright condemnation of the Hungarian "counter-revolution," etc.

111. Apparently surprised and angered by the fierceness of the right-wing attack, Gomulka, supported by Zambrowski, Ochab, and others, counter-attacked strongly. Zambrowski suddenly discovered that the revisionists, although still representing the greatest overall danger, were only an ideological danger, while in practice the greatest present threat came from the "conservatives." Ochab defended the freedom of the press.

112. Gomulka is reported to have declared the debate had convinced him that dogmatism and revisionism were equal dangers, and proceeded to answer Mijal point by point. He appeared particularly aroused by Mijal's charge that his policy violated proletarian internationalism, meaning that it denied Soviet leadership. Gomulka asked whether true inter-

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[1] The full texts of the speeches, with the exception of Gomulka's opening speech, have not been published.

[2] To the general surprise, Mazur declared himself in favor of "October" and denied that he had ever supported the right wing.

nationalism consisted in blind obedience to the Soviet Union and whether the liquidation of the old Polish Communists in 1937, the devastation of the Western provinces, the lies spread about Yugoslavia, anti-semitism, etc. were the proper manifestations of internationalism. He even went so far as to remark that in Budapest the "leading" position had been occupied by Soviet tanks and to imply that the last thing he wanted to see in Poland was Communism fighting reaction with the support of Russian forces. Finally he defied Mijal to go to a factory and speak to the workers about "Soviet leadership in the Socialist camp." He would see the sort of reception he would get. Gomulka ended by threatening to publish the full record of the speeches. Thereupon Mijal capitulated, withdrawing all his charges and urging that his own speech be suppressed. One may ask, however, how Gomulka's threat could be reconciled with the rule he had laid down in his first speech, that all discussions between Communists should remain private.

113. Mijal's capitulation apparently mollified Gomulka and his followers, for the final resolution adopted by the Ninth Plenum stated inter alia:

> "In the present situation, revisionism constitutes the main ideological danger in the Party, for it undermine the ideological and political unity of the Party, and sows disbelief in the correctness and advisability of socialist construction among the party ranks and the working class. While continuing the struggle against manifestations of dogmatism and paving the road for creative Marxism, it is imperative to oppose with full strength any manifestations of departure from our own ideology; it is necessary to combat them in Party propaganda, in the press, at universities and at research institutions."

114. Although in the above passage, "revisionism" is declared the main danger, the rest of the resolution makes

it clear that revisionists and reactionaries are now interchangeable words. "Reactionary elements" are accused of having, after the Eighth Plenum, "let loose a witch-hunt against Party activists, under the slogan of the fight against so-called Stalinists," the aim of these attacks being "to slow up the framework [sic] of the people's democracy in order to go on to 'the next stage' - to undermine the socialist achievements of the working people, to change the direction of Poland's development back toward bourgeois power, toward capitalism." The Resolution also made it clear that "all attempts to reestablish bourgeois parties and organizations, as well as attempts by forces hostile to socialism to infiltrate into our allied parties" would be opposed.

115. With regard to relations with other members of the Bloc, the Resolution reaffirmed the "demand for full respect of the sovereignty of People's Poland, and choosing the road of the construction of a new socialist system corresponding to Polish conditions." However, it "linked up this attitude inseparably with proletarian internationalism" and "determinedly opposed the national interpretation of the idea of sovereignty, as being contrary to the international solidarity of socialist states and to the Polish-Soviet alliance."

116. Significant for conditions within the Party were the following passages:

> "The Party must overcome the organizational inertia that has crept into many Party organizations. It is impossible to condone a state of affairs in which they do not hold meetings for whole months at a time, in which their members are not executing any Party tasks, in which many Party bodies do not refer to these organizations or to their activists, in which they are given no guidance and no concrete directives, in which no ideological schooling is conducted and Party members are not encouraged to take part in political life.

"A situation cannot be tolerated in which the most valuable activists of the Party stand aloof from Party life. . . Only with the assistance of these activists . . . can the Party bodies and their apparatus establish close ties with the work establishments, with the workers - the principal base of the Party."

117. The Resolution warned

". . . all those who, against the appeal of the Party leadership, would choose any forms of group and factional activity, that sanctions will be taken against them, reaching as far as exclusion from Party ranks. The Party cannot tolerate its members publicly proclaiming views opposed to its political line, or appeals to public opinion against the resolutions of the Party."

118. The rest of the Resolution was a restatement, in slightly modified form, of the recommendations made by Gomulka in his initial speech. Noteworthy was the admission that speculation, corruption, bribery, thefts, and waste, which had spread recently "as a result of the relaxation of control and discipline, as well as because they can be done with impunity and are tolerated by the organs called upon to combat all kinds of abuses" - in other words, by the Party organizations too - had become "acute social plagues."

119. Two significant decisions were taken by the Plenum. Berman and Radkiewicz got off with a three-year exclusion from the Party. The special investigating committee found that "they were not aware of the system of criminal methods of investigation and of foreign evidences practiced in the 10th Department of the Ministry of Public Security" but that they had failed to discharge their duties "in the field of political supervision and guidance over the work of the security organs."

120. The other decision was to appoint Morawski and Kliszko, two of Gomulka's most devoted followers, to the Central Committee secretariat. Although Ochab was "released" from the secretariat, Gomulka's influence over the Party machinery was considerably strengthened.

Relations with other Communist Countries

121. The peaceful revolution in Poland affected not only the relations between that country and the USSR but relations with other Communist countries as well.

122. Tito, in his Pula speech on 11 November 1956, is authority for the statement that the Polish events were the cause of the untimely end of the second Soviet-Yugoslav honeymoon. "When the Poznan affair happened, there occurred among the Soviet people a sudden change of attitude toward us. They started to prove colder. They thought that we, the Yugoslavs, were to blame. Yes, we are to blame . . . because /Yugoslavia's/ acts reverberate even beyond our country. . . "

123. Conversely, Polish-Yugoslav relations had been extremely cordial although Gomulka was careful to avoid provoking Moscow by emphasizing them, and Tito of course understood his position. Any public manifestations which might have provoked suspicion in Moscow were carefully avoided until Gomulka's September 1957 visit to Belgrade. It was hardly a coincidence that it followed closely upon Tito's Bucharest meeting with Khrushchev and therefore no surprise that the speeches, particularly Gomulka's, betrayed an extreme anxiety to reassure the Kremlin that no anti-Moscow faction was being set up which would violate the agreement presumably reached in Bucharest.

124. As for Polish relations with the other Satellites, Tito was undoubtedly right when he declared at Pula that he could not say "that this positive development in Poland has

met with much joy in the remaining countries of the 'socialist camp'. No, they criticize it secretly, but to some extent openly as well." Tito was of course referring to the Communist leaders, not to the people of those countries.

125. Some students of Communist affairs believe that China played an important role in the Polish developments. The New York Times, in an editorial of 18 April 1957, went so far as to claim that

> "last September, the seeds of October's peaceful revolution were fertilized in Peiping when Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai told Edward Ochab they would support Polish independence of the Soviet Union. Without that support it is unlikely that Ochab and his colleagues would have dared to stand up to Khrushchev . . . "

The editorial then mentioned Chou En-lai's visit to Warsaw in January 1957 and the endorsement of the Polish changes given on 11 April to Premier Cyrankiewicz at the close of his visit to Peiping. It added that the Poles were assured they could count on Peiping's continued support but were asked only not to talk so much and to take care "to make obeisance before Moscow's verbal formulae." The editorial expressed doubt that the Soviet leaders were pleased by these developments, yet believed they had had to accept them to avoid destroying the public image of unity.

126. It may be pointed out, however, that on the very same day, Chou En-lai also expressed to a Nepszabadsag correspondent his "great satisfaction that . . . the Hungarian people have succeeded in defeating the insurrection led by the imperialist and counterrevolutionary forces." While the Polish-Chinese communique failed to mention Soviet leadership, Chou En-lai referred to "the solidarity of the socialist camp, guided by the USSR" in his interview with the Hungarian journalist. Furthermore, it is difficult to believe that the Chinese would have been prepared to break with Moscow for the sake of the liberalization of Poland, or that anything less would have been of decisive influence in Moscow or

Warsaw. It may also be noted that, while according to Philippe Ben in Le Monde of 2 March 1957 Chou En-lai encouraged the Poles to assert greater independence from Moscow and offered advice on the best way to proceed, he mentioned no promise of assistance, either direct or indirect, presumably for the very good reason that China could not supply either food, raw materials, or military assistance against Germany, and would have no reason to break with the USSR over Poland after having swallowed the repression in Hungary. But that does not mean that the Chinese leaders do not sympathize with the "different roads to socialism" principle, as implied by their statement of 1 November 1956 and Mao Tse-tung's "100 flowers" principle, nor that they do not exert themselves to mediate between Warsaw and Moscow, nor that their views do not carry considerable weight in Moscow. The Chinese appear to have influenced developments in Poland, chiefly by the fact that until June 1957 when the "counter-criticism" campaign started in earnest in China the Polish liberals derived great encouragement from their illusions as to the support they were getting and could expect to get from Peiping.

Analysis of the Polish Situation and Prospects after the Ninth Plenum of the PZPR

127. Three questions will be examined in the following pages:

a. The scope and significance of the "Polish road to socialism."

b. The political situation in the Party and the country after the Ninth Plenum,

c. The prospects of the Gomulka experiment.

a. The Polish Road to Socialism

The chief characteristics of the Polish road to socialism, as they emerge from Gomulka's speech of 15 May 1957 and other authoritative sources, can be listed as follows: respect for Polish sovereignty; peace with the Church; a new agricultural policy; greater freedom of expression; workers' councils; increased powers for local councils; legalization of small private trade and crafts - and, above all, humaneness.

With regard to Polish sovereignty, it is obvious that a nation which is not free to change its basic political and social institutions or its foreign policy, as Gomulka himself repeatedly admitted, enjoys only the trappings, but not the substance of sovereignty. What the Poles have gained since October 1956 is freedom from the cruder forms of Russian interference and toleration of a limited latitude in the interpretation of Marxist-Leninist principles. The change is undoubtedly a sop to Polish pride and susceptibilities, but it is the form of Russian domination which has changed, not the substance.

A more profound change has come about in the economic relations between the Soviet Union and Poland. Instead of being an object of exploitation, Poland has become a recipient of Soviet assistance However, this reversal was not peculiar to the relations of Poland with the Soviet Union; rather, it occurred in all the Satellites except relatively prosperous Czechoslovakia. The USSR would be compelled to do the same for any of its component republics if economic hardships produced a dangerous degree of disaffection. While it is of course more agreeable for a country to be assisted than to be exploited, nevertheless the net effect of Poland's reliance on Soviet raw materials, supplied on credit, increases its dependence on Moscow and may well outweigh the formal gains achieved in the matter of sovereignty.

In making peace with the Church, Gomulka could invoke a precedent set by the Kremlin itself when it gave up militant anticlericalism during the war. But, taking specific Polish conditions into account, notably the much stronger hold exercised over its faithful by the Catholic Church than the Orthodox, he carried the policy considerably further. Gomulka recognized, like many rulers before him, that one cannot eradicate strong religious beliefs by force, and that the fight against religion, instead of smoothing the path of Communism, had increased the hostility of the population and sapped the indispensable foundation of morality, which, as Nowe Drogi of May 1957 recognized, Communism was unable to supply. The periodical wisely agreed that Communism could hope to supplant religion only by making man happier:

> "The more man's life is secure from the economic angle and the less he has to fear from authorities whom he feels to be alien and un-understanding, the less he will turn to divine intercession . . . We must question religion from a scientific, rational, materialistic angle . . . The opposition of one fanaticism to another has never done any good."

The Catholic Church, on the other hand, has in modern times quite consistently followed the principle "Give unto Caesar . . . " So long as the state does not interfere with religion and the clergy, the Church has no cause to oppose the state actively. There is no reason for the Church to reject the coexistence offered by Gomulka, which seems to grant it a better situation than it enjoys in some non-Communist countries.

The new Polish agricultural policy is a serious deviation from the Soviet model, but not from Leninism. As a matter of fact, it does not differ as radically as might seem at first sight from the policy followed since Stalin's death in

other Communist countries (Rumania, for instance) which have never claimed to follow their own road to socialism. Favoring "simpler forms of peasants' association," as a stepping stone to the higher forms, and assisting individual peasants, have been official policy in Rumania since 1954; Poland goes a little further by encouraging the growth of individual farms and the private acquisition of farm machinery. On the other hand, the Polish government has so far only reduced compulsory deliveries while the Rumanian government, not to mention the Hungarian, actually abolished them in December 1956. The official policy of both governments remains to offer financial inducements to peasants joining collective farms, but it is true that the Poles have encouraged the dissolution of uneconomic collectives, while the Rumanians have made this exceedingly difficult. The Rumanian Communist press, however, has admitted that many farms classified as belonging to "the socialized sector of agriculture" are socialized on paper only, and it may well be that the proportion of real collective farms is not much greater today in Rumania than in Poland

It is true that private economy in agriculture does not fit very well into the Communist pattern, but Gomulka took his stand on Communist realism: coercion of the peasants failed to produce food, food was indispensable, and coercion had therefore to be abandoned. The regime would still encourage voluntary cooperation and collectivization, continue its educational work, and trust that in time most of the peasants would join. If not, it could not be helped, and the "dictatorship of the proletariat" would, if need be, "effectively counteract the excessive enrichment of a small stratum of exploiters in the countryside." In other words, even if the regime could not force Communism on the villages, it felt confident that it could keep capitalism within narrow limits.

Gomulka can argue that his farm policy does not run counter to any of Lenin's rules, and that besides, it continues to offer every inducement to collectivization. There is

nothing more he can be asked to do, for the abandonment of forcible collectivization in the Satellites had been sanctioned, in theory at any rate, by the Kremlin itself in 1953. The peasants, although they never will embrace Communism, can be expected in the foreseeable future to get along with its dominance in the cities, provided their economic interests are satisfied and they are otherwise left alone, free to farm cooperatively or individually at their choice.

As has been pointed out above, the workers' councils are, for the time being, at any rate, prevented from playing any important part in the economy. The increased powers for local councils are in line with the trend in other Satellite countries and are therefore not peculiar to Poland. The same is true of the legalization of small private trade, of small service enterprises, and of handicrafts. Poland seems to have gone further than most other Satellites with regard to private trade, but it still lags behind the GDR.

In spite of the recent limitation of the freedom of the press and of debate in the Sejm, the Poles certainly enjoy considerably greater freedom of expression, both in the press and in parliament, than any other satellite nation.

To sum up, the "Polish road to socialism" does not really deviate very sharply from the road followed by the other Satellites claiming no such originality. The greatest difference between them lies not in their policies, but in their spirit and in the assertion by Poland of the right to differ, and to be treated with the respect due to anybody enjoying that right.

b. The Political Situation after the Ninth Plenum

Gomulka's basic internal difficulties stem from the fact that events in Poland were not allowed to follow their natural course. Revolutions usually end either with the complete victory of one of the opposing factions or with the pendulum

coming to rest naturally somewhere in the middle. But in Poland in October 1956, the swing of the pendulum was artificially arrested by an external factor, the USSR, with the result that neither the right nor the left felt they had been beaten. Consequently, the struggle goes on. Gomulka's only asset, but a powerful one, is that he is the makeweight on the balance. Whatever his popularity in the summer and sutumn of 1956, there is no doubt that his followers are in a distinct minority today, both in the country at large and in the Party. The Gomulka group in the Central Committee of the Party, numbering about eighty members, is reportedly only fifteen-man strong, as against twenty-three members of the Natolin group and only four or five members of the revisionist left. The rest belong to the right or left center but they support Gomulka because they have no choice. The left center cannot support the revisionists for fear of a break with the USSR, and the right center cannot support the Natolin group for fear of a popular revolt. As a matter of fact, the Natolin bark seems to be worse than its bite, and judging by the tone of the Soviet press during these last months, coupled with the unexpected intervention of Mazur fresh from a trip to Moscow in Gomulka's support at the Ninth Plenum, the Kremlin appears to prefer to put up with the present situation in Poland for the time being, rather than to set off some more fireworks.

The Kremlin cannot but realize, as does the Polish leadership, "the true state . . . of the feelings of the population," now that they have rejected "the rose-colored glasses which we used to put on when assessing [them]," (Polityka No. 13, May 1957). "There are probably only a few Communists who are not aware nowadays," the periodical continued, "what tremendous political work is in store for them regarding the consolidation of Polish-Soviet friendship. We do not hide the fact anti-Soviet feelings exist in various centers . . . " As for the popularity of Communism in Poland, a striking testimonial was supplied by Piasecki, the chairman of the Pax Association, who declared on 7 May 1957: 'It is an objective statement to say that opinion in Poland shows signs of an anti-

socialist neurosis. It is also an objective statement to say that this neurosis has to be allowed for in practical politics." Nowa Kultura of 20 May 1957, while bitterly attacking Piasecki on a number of grounds, had to admit that he is of course right "where he refers to the harm done by the anti-socialist neurosis . . . " Particularly serious is the fact that disaffection seems strongest among the workers, disillusioned with Communism in general and Gomulkaism in particular, as evidenced by widespread unrest and strikes, any one of which is a potential Poznan. If Zambrowski found it necessary to appeal to the Party organizations to "develop the socialist consciousness and activeness of the working class . . . and to unite with their vanguard, the basic party organizations" (Trybuna Ludu, 26 May 1957), it was obviously because the workers and the Party are still "out of touch" with each other.

It is in vain that Gomulka can argue that, ever since October, he has consistently stressed the impossibility of raising wages further before productivity had risen considerably. Most workers apparently only remember that he promised a radical improvement of conditions which has not materialized, and find cold comfort in the fact that the wages of workers in key industries have been raised. "Things are hard for people in Poland," Warsaw Radio conceded on 15 August 1957 after the Lodz transport workers' strike. "There are many groups of workers whose salaries are inadequate." The next day, Warsaw Radio frankly explained absenteeism: The allegedly sick worker works two or three days a week in private workshops, where he earns 100 to 150 zloty daily, while drawing sickness benefits from the State. One worker admitted "with naive honesty" that it did not pay to work in the factory. The only reason he did not quit was not to lose his rights to family allowances, medical treatment, etc.

Naturally enough, especially in a Communist state, the people blame the government. And the government is Gomulka.

According to Trybuna Ludu[1], Party members have now been urged to launch a "persuasion campaign." But, as the paper also laments, the increasing apathy in Party ranks - whose membership is estimated to have dropped to a maximum of one-half the pre-October figure of 1.4 million - is such that Gomulka can hardly hope to regain much of his popularity by this method. This is particularly true in the light of the new and more severe labor regulations which Gomulka, apparently none too optimistic himself, found necessary to announce on 11 August 1957 in an effort to curb absenteeism and to enforce work discipline.

Under the circumstances it is understandable that Gomulka considers "revisionism" a greater danger than conservatism of recent memory. "Revisionism" is but a euphemism for "reaction," as he himself declared. As "reaction" is but another name for "anti-Communism," Gomulka himself, a sincere, albeit liberal, Communist, must fear anything that might fan the embers into flames. Besides, regardless of his own inclinations, he is convinced that the Kremlin would not tolerate a really free and non-Communist Poland. The Kremlin, on the other hand, has been able to convince itself since last October that the soup is not eaten as hot as it is cooked, as the German proverb has it, and has every reason to put up with the Gomulka regime rather than to have to repeat its Budapest exploit. After all, the Polish road to socialism remains well within the limits set down in Pravda of 2 June 1956 on the occasion of Tito's visit, and remote control can be just as effective as open interference. Moreover, today, for all we know, the Russians themselves would not advise the Polish Communists to collectivize agriculture by the same means Stalin used in the USSR in the 1930s for they cannot be anxious to go on feeding the Poles indefinitely nor can they let them starve. As for the Polish agreement with the Catholic Church, Marxism has always boasted of its realism and flexibility, and if the Kremlin can accept peaceful coexistence

[1] As quoted in the Christian Science Monitor, 12 August 1957.

with capitalism, it can equally well coexist peacefully with the Church - with the same mental reservations, of course.

But the fact that the Russians have decided to tolerate the present situation in Poland does not mean that they are reconciled with it, if for no better reason than the urge to efface the October setback and to gratify the human domineering instinct; or, as Lenin called it, "great nation chauvinism," of which the Russians have more than their fair share. Moscow presumably calculates that if only Gomulka is given enough rope, he will surely hang himself.

The defeat by Khrushchev of the Molotov-Malenkov-Kaganovich group should not have anything but a superficial effect on the political situation in Poland. Inasmuch as the June 1957 resolution of the CPSU Plenum represented a slap for the conservatives, it naturally gave great satisfaction to the revisionists, and inasmuch as it reduced the danger of forceful Soviet intervention in Polish affairs it gave equal satisfaction to the government and to all Poles except the conservatives. It is, however, difficult to see that the Moscow purge made much practical difference in Poland. There is no reason to assume that the Soviet attitude toward Poland had not always been the one decided upon by Khrushchev, nor did the policies for which his opponents were indicted have their counterpart in Poland. There is, therefore, no incompatibility between approval of the Natolin and condemnation of the Molotov factions. Nevertheless, the June Resolution can be effectively represented as a disavowal of Natolinism, and the net effect is likely to be a temporary chastening of Natolin truculence which would give Gomulka a freer hand to combat the revisionists. In the words of Sokorski, chairman of the Polish Radio Committee, broadcast over the Warsaw Radio on 5 July 1957, "we were always fully conscious of the fact that . . . the victorious repelling of revisionist tendencies must take place on the basis of overcoming dogmatism and sectarianism . . . "

Gomulka remains confronted with two serious problems: How to ensure efficient administration and a healthy economy? And the difficulty is compounded by the fact that the two problems are closely intertwined yet demand ideologically conflicting solutions. A firm administration helps the economy, and a materially satisfied population is easier to govern. Yet it is very doubtful whether a strongly anti-Communist population can be governed without the use, or the ever-overhanging threat, of force, i.e. without Stalinism minus its psychopathic excesses. On the other hand, the Polish and other satellite standards of living - with the possible exception of Czechoslovakia - can improve only if consumer goods are given a high priority over heavy industry and the economy is allowed much greater freedom, i.e. the opposite of Stalinism.

Gomulka's weakest point is not his failure to control the majority of the Central Committee of the Party. The fact that his group holds the balance of power and that both the left and the right have moderate wings prepared to go along with a middle of the road policy would enable him to secure in that body the necessary support for his policies and remain in power for a long time. The greater weakness of the Gomulka regime comes not from the 23 Natolin adherents in the Central Committee, but from the fact that the majority of the Party apparatus are conservatives, controlling all but three voivodships, even though most Party secretaries are Gomulka men.[1] And the explanation why most of the apparatchiki are conservatives is to be found in the speeches of the regime leaders themselves: they simply cannot see how they can impose their authority on a recalcitrant population without the use of "administrative," i.e. forcible, methods. One must agree that they have a strong case, for if the explanation and persuasion recommended by Gomulka fail and force is ruled out, passivity seems the only

[1] How this situation is possible under party "democracy" has never been explained.

solution left. The inevitable consequence is administrative anarchy and disrespect for authority as exemplified dramatically by the Jaroslaw riot in early May, and the defiance of the police in October by the Warsaw students protesting against the suppression of Po Prostu, who were joined by numerous "hooligans."

The breakdown of authority naturally has a bad effect on the country's already shaky economy. Whether the economic situation is actually worse in Poland than in the other Satellites - and in that case, why? - or whether the Poles simply have more freedom to grumble about it, is hard to tell. But the fact is that great discontent on that score is reported from Poland, even though the national income is claimed to have increased 7% in 1956 over 1955. As a result of the reduction of total industrial investments and their reallocation in favor of consumer goods and a sharp drop in military expenditures, the share of individual consumption has increased by almost 12%, according to a Warsaw broadcast of 18 February 1957. But this was the result, Leon Kasman admitted to an economic conference of the PZPR Central Committee on 17 April 1957, "not only of planned regulations but also of a loosening of wage discipline, spontaneity, and arbitrariness in this field." Warsaw Radio conceded that the wage increases "were necessary and justified . . . But for the development of the economy such a state of affairs is untenable." And, as of 2 June 1957, Warsaw Radio admitted further that the increases had been very uneven, that the general pay level was still low, and that it was difficult for the workers to make ends meet. Many prices, including food prices, had already risen, and although the major part of the raises obtained by the favored groups in basic industries had not yet been absorbed, "inflation threatens, and if it occurs it will eat up the new raises and produce lower standards of living."

Kasman conceded that even the limited success in holding prices down had only been achieved by dipping into reserves of goods and raw materials. The Minister of Foreign Trade admitted that the increased imports had been financed

by credits granted mainly by the USSR, but also by Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Britain and France, [1] which would leave a deficit of about a billion rubles in the 1957 balance of trade. Finally Gomulka completed the picture by his statement to the Ninth Plenum that the rapid pace in wage increases had been achieved "through the reduction of planned expenditure for national defence. We cannot repeat the operation."

The symptomatic increase in black market operations was described by Trybuna Ludu of 19 April 1957 as the result of "utter administrative confusion and the corruption existing in people's councils." Loga-Sowinski, chairman of the Trade Union Council, on 15 July complained of the further intensification of speculation - read inflation - and other economic abuses, and of the serious relaxation of wage discipline. Nowe Drogi for September 1957 explained the seriousness of the prevailing "social evils" by the circumstance that "many of the old principles of bourgeois morality have broken down, but the principles of socialist morality are by no means sufficiently consolidated . . . "

The Ninth Plenum Resolution of 18 May bluntly warned the people that "the limit of our possibilities to counterbalance the increased income of the population by an adequate volume of goods and services has now been reached, as proved by the manifestations of speculation, the rise of certain prices and the difficulties encountered in satisfying the demand for butter and some other articles." Yet, Yedrychowski, chairman of the Planning Commission, conceded in a Warsaw broadcast of 24 July that even in the last six months, "the increase in wages was greater than in labor productivity" and "absenteeism has reached frightful proportions, considerably higher than last year . . . A particularly tense situation prevails

[1] Poland has since obtained additional credits from the US, Canada, etc.

in foreign trade . . . and also on the house market . . . "

The one bright spot in the Polish economic picture is the success of the 1957 harvest, presumably as a result both of good weather and the new agricultural policy, under which grain deliveries have been reduced by one-third and the price doubled.

Bad as Poland's economic situation is, it would obviously be much worse but for the foreign credits she has obtained, chiefly from the USSR.[1] But, with the exception of some American coal mining machinery, the money goes to pay for consumable goods. Even if repayment of the credits is not due to start for some years, Polish productivity, especially in agriculture, will have to increase sharply indeed, if similar shortages are not to develop next year and further appeals to Moscow are to be avoided. The Russians would be superhuman if they did not seize the opportunity to exact a gradual and unobtrusive swing toward the Natolin line. Gomulka's switch in the matter of the interpretation of the Hungarian uprising and the severe limitation of the powers of workers' councils are signs pointing in that direction. The sharp curtailment of the freedom of the press is certainly in part at least also due to Russian pressure. It is, moreover, significant that although Moscow agreed to supply Poland a considerable amount of grain for 1957, the amount fell short of the quantity needed to form a reserve permitting complete abolition of forced deliveries, a step Moscow has made it possible for Rumania to take.

The ultimate success or failure of the Gomulka experiment in relative liberalism seems therefore to depend

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[1] Credits from the "socialist" countries totalled $450 million, according to Trybuna Robotnicza of 9 June 1957.

primarily on economic developments. If it provides sufficient incentives to raise management, labor, and farm productivity, as well as the means to enforce wage discipline and compulsory deliveries, the chances of the Gomulka regime maintaining itself in power and pursuing its present policy line seem good. However, its economic problems are formidable. The Polish peasants are probably fairly satisfied now - for all practical purposes they are hardly affected by Communism - but the politically active segment of the population is the city people, and if their standard of living fails to improve with reasonable speed, the most likely development in Poland is a reversion to neo-Stalinism. This might happen gradually as a result of the inner logic of Soviet style Communism coupled with Soviet economic pressure, or violently, if popular discontent erupts, for, in the words of a high Polish official, "a little flare-up in some small place can lead to a big explosion in a big place." Should the Gomulka regime prove unable to quell such disturbances unaided, the Russians would certainly intervene as in Hungary. This knowledge is actually Gomulka's greatest asset against both the Party extremists and the Polish people.

Theoretically, there could of course be another solution which would go far toward solving Poland's problems, over the next few years at any rate: massive economic assistance from the United States. This, however, is not considered likely, since the overriding fact is that Poland's possession of the former German territories binds her politically and militarily to the USSR and precludes the possibility of her alignment with the West or even of neutrality à la Tito. Giving anything but token or moral support to any Polish regime before the territorial problem is solved in a manner tolerable to both Poles and Germans could only mean strengthening an ally of the USSR.

c. Prospects

We have said above that the fate of the Gomulka experiment depends primarily on economic developments. The prospects do not seem favorable, and to achieve a real improvement a far more fundamental change may be required.

Probably the most penetrating and frank avowal of this problem yet made by a Communist in good standing is to be found in an address delivered to the Association of Polish Journalists by Wladyslaw Bienkowski, Minister of Education and reputedly one of the men closest to Gomulka.[1]

Taking as his text Mao Tse-tung's metaphor of the "hundred flowers," Bienkowski examined its applicability to "the Polish garden." He started by pointing out the great difference between Marx and Lenin's concept of the building of socialism and Stalin's: the former imagined that after the seizure of power by the workers, socialism would develop naturally in its new constitutional framework, while Stalin evolved the "concept of the artificial creation of a socialist society on purely fabricated, doctrinaire lines, without any regard for natural laws and objective reality." Poland rejected this Stalinist concept in October 1956 and the question now was: what were the flowers suited to the Polish garden? In plain language, the problem to be solved was "the pattern of social forces, of the ways and means, the meaning and the form of the class struggle and the way power is wielded by the working class after the victory of the revolution."

Assumption of power by the people, Bienkowski continued, could only mean democracy. Spurning the usual Com-

[1] Excerpts in Sztandar Mlodych of 4 June 1957.

munist arguments, Bienkowski claimed that the dictatorship of the proletariat was as compatible with democracy as was the curtailment of liberties effected automatically in a bourgeois society when "/it/ is rocked . . . by a sharp class struggle . . . " He was even willing to admit that those who would say: "This is how it always starts; democracy is curtailed because there happen to be some economic difficulties, some trouble, and there develops a dictatorship of a party, then of a clique, then of an individual, " were right, for history taught that the danger had not been eliminated in the socialist system.

> "The situation has changed now, /Bienkowski said/ but the tragedy of the past /pre-October/ period lay in the fact that we gradually paralyzed socialism . . . What we are up against /now that we are reverting to a broad social initiative/ is a universal paralysis which outwardly assumes the forms of anarchy, of extreme lack of discipline and economy. And we so want, after all, to render this society active somehow. We want the peasant to sow and plow as best he can . . . We want the craftsman or the worker to give of his best. We want the factory to have the best organization. We want everyone to feel responsible for his sector."

And here, Bienkowski admitted, the Party stumbled over the first big stone: The Party was the leading force and must remain so for an indefinite period. What method must it use to discharge its role? Stalinism had led to paralysis and had failed. Yet, he asked,

> "what will happen if somewhere in the countryside five peasants get together and decide jointly to buy a machine, or somewhere else a club is formed for some economic or cultural purpose, and as bad luck would have it, there is not a single party man among the initiators or else the party men are in a minority?

> "Then the party committees will raise a hue and cry, because something is happening outside the scope and control of the Party, and it assumes the semblance of some counterrevolutionary scheme in the eyes of people accustomed to vigilance. For you see, the day after tomorrow these people may come out with some political program, then they will ask for something else, and eventually they will demand the restoration of capitalism in Poland."

"To fear or not to fear the masses, because the masses, you see, are an awful force," that was the question, Bienkowski stated frankly.

> "And the main problem is the extent to which the Party can or should allow these initiatives, which are, above all, economic, but may also be anything else, to develop . . . Does party guidance mean that the Party decides on everything that happens in Poland through its executives and that there must be its initiative behind everything?"

Whether, as some people held, the counterrevolutionary forces in Poland were so large that extraordinary vigilance was needed to prevent the restoration of capitalism, what were the real chances of social forces threatening socialism making their appearance? These were questions requiring an unequivocal reply, Bienkowski conceded. On the answer, he implied, depended the solution of the "big issue at the present moment, the still insufficiently analyzed problem of the ways and means, the sort of internal-constitutional methods by which socialism is to be built."

Further confirmation of the serious consideration being given this problem was supplied by the visit to Yugoslavia of Finance Minister Tadeusz Dietrich, who made no secret of the fact that he had come "to make an all-round examination of

conditions under which social initiative in Yugoslavia finds expression, primarily in enterprises."[1]

Rarely, if ever, have the magnitude of the dilemma facing a Communist regime and its own ineptness been revealed with such frankness by its high officials. The facts that in a "liberated" society, the last thing to develop naturally and freely would be Communism, but that close "guidance" by the Party led to economic and every other kind of stagnation, have been obvious for some time. But this seems to be the first time that a high Party authority admits that they have no solution for this "antinomy," as Bienkowski called it, for the validity of the Khrushchev solutions, more collective leadership or decentralization, are rejected by preterition.

No wonder therefore that Warsaw Radio complained (6 June) that although the Party had the "support of a much greater part of the nation" than a year ago, the tendency to indecision and to the avoidance of responsibilities" in the Party was increasing rather than diminishing. Marian Naczkowski wrote that "threatening features such as passivity of the party branches, lack of unity and discipline in the Party and ideological laxity" had increased recently and that the "licentiousness of revisionist and liberal-bourgeois tendencies in many settings, including, unfortunately, also parts of the Party, has brought home to us how strong is the impact and pressure of bourgeois elements on the weaker links of the working masses, especially the youth, and partly even of the working class." (Nowe Drogi, June 1957).

It emerges from these and similar statements that the Polish Communist regime itself admits that it has not found the solution of the basic dilemma: coercion and eco-

[1] Reported over the Belgrade Radio on 15 July 1957.

nomic stagnation, accompanied by the constant threat of revolt, or adequate freedom of enterprise, possibly leading to the restoration of capitalism - and that the steps taken so far in the direction of liberalization have been insufficient.

The Gomulka regime is certainly more popular than its predecessor, but that is not saying very much, and it is noteworthy that even the official sources no longer enter the standard denial that the "counterrevolutionary" forces are in the majority. Silence means consent. All that one can say is that Gomulka has not yet exhausted the relative popularity he enjoyed as the lesser of two evils. But he is paying the price of not being able to fulfill the expectations he raised, or rather, which were raised by the revisionists, and he is expected to fulfill. Gomulka himself has asserted that leaders whose credit is exhausted have to go, and his capital seems to be dwindling rapidly; his attempted compromise, like many hybrid solutions, does not seem to work in practice.

It is, of course, possible that the economic situation will improve somewhat and that the Polish raison d'etat on one hand, and the Catholic Church on the other, will be sufficiently strong to keep the Polish people quiet and allow Gomulka to carry on along the present lines. But Natolinism, whether the result of repression of revolts, of covert Soviet pressure, or of the simple fact that an unpopular system can only be made to work by forceful methods, cannot be excluded. Gomulka himself has said that only a strong Party could grant extensive freedoms, and the PZPR is admittedly weak.

There is, however, another possibility, implied in Bienkowski's address, which cannot be ignored. Proceeding from the recognition that the key problem is stronger economic incentives, Gomulka could follow the Yugoslav example and even extend it to include ownership of the factories by the workers, a free market economy, and, of course, private

ownership of land, as was advocated by Roman Jurys. (Zycie Warszawy, 23 November 1956). That, in his opinion, would be real Marxism, for it would fulfill its essential postulate, social control of the means of production, and would satisfy the demands of the working people.

The fact that Gomulka in his speech to the Ninth Plenum found it necessary to marshal arguments against ownership of the factories by the workers would indicate that the idea does command support in Poland, and Bienkowski could hardly have spoken as he did if Gomulka absolutely ruled out any radical changes. His main objection is probably that such a step might set off a process which would be difficult to control and might end by depriving the Communist Party chiefs of their dictatorial powers - a very unattractive prospect for even the most loyal Marxist - or even end in something closer to a "bourgeois" welfare state than to a Communist society.

Even if Gomulka were to change his mind, there would still remain Moscow to be convinced. At first sight it would seem most unlikely that Moscow would countenance such a development going beyond Yugoslav lines, and quite certain that Gomulka is determined not to break with Moscow. But although a Polish initiative of that sort would obviously be highly distasteful to the Kremlin leaders, history shows that they have more than once surprised the world by their readiness to swallow their principles and pride whenever necessity or interest dictated such a course. Not to go too far back, one may mention the alliance with Hitler, the toleration of a western democratic regime in Finland since the Second World War, the repudiation of Stalin, the reconciliation with Tito in 1955, the "reinterpretation" of Marxism-Leninism by the 20th Congress, and last but not least, the acceptance of the Gomulka regime itself in October 1956. Furthermore, they must be already reconciled to the prospect of further deviations from the Soviet pattern in China, deviations which they will perforce have to accept.

Faced with a choice between the necessity of supporting Poland economically for an indefinite number of years - and such a Poland would be a poor advertisement for Communism and always a potential Hungary - and stretching the "different roads to socialism" concept further, the Kremlin could conceivably choose the lesser of the two evils. Indeed, it might be argued that on balance, Moscow would gain more than it would lose. As Poland is inextricably bound to Russia by an overriding raison d'etat, the problem of her Western frontiers, no ideological differences can affect their alliance, and the greater the economic prosperity of, and the better the relations with, an ally, the greater his value. We believe that the masters of the Kremlin are and will remain, in spite of Marx, first and foremost "Great Russian Chauvinists," and in case of conflict between Marxism and the Russian raison d'etat, would sacrifice the former.

If, in January 1957, the Soviet Kommunist could single out Yugoslavia, along with Poland, in an extensive denunciation of "national Communism," yet on 2 June 1957, the Moscow Radio could praise Yugoslavia's "contribution to socialist construction" and note her "concrete and original forms of management of the economy"; if, speaking of the Finns who have rejected Communism in toto and have refused to be allied to the Soviets, Bulganin could say after his visit to Finland in June 1957 that "the friendly relations between the USSR and Finland which have been established in recent years are developing on principles of equality, mutual respect of state sovereignty and independence, non-interference in internal affairs, and mutually profitable, peaceful collaboration"; if Pravda, in its 16 June 1957 editorial could write: "there can be no doubt that similar good-neighborly relations can exist between our state and all the countries without exception bordering on the Soviet Union," there is no reason why Moscow should not adopt the same tolerant attitude toward Poland, so long as the country gave lip service to

socialism and remained bound by the Warsaw Pact. That would be considerably more than Yugoslavia, not to mention Finland. Unless Moscow were prepared to face a further deterioration of conditions, with the likelihood of violent upheavals, it might have to choose between continued economic assistance coupled with a revival of "conservative" methods, and toleration of still greater "creativeness" in the building of socialism in Poland.

As it is safe to assume that the Russian Communists are not very eager to support instead of to exploit their Satellites in the future, the chances of their accepting the alternative solution depend on the answer to the question, what do they most want from Poland? It would seem that it is more important for them to have a valuable, because more prosperous and friendly, ally, than an expensive and hostile Satellite, even at the price of tolerating further variations from the Moscow pattern of socialism. If it be true that the reconciliation with Tito was somewhat less than sincere, the chief reason is undoubtedly Tito's political independence which, unlike his social innovations, was never described as a "valuable contribution" to socialism. And Poland happens to be the one Satellite which Moscow can politically trust. Nevertheless, Moscow would certainly draw the line at open repudiation of Communism in Poland, for it would obviously encourage similar movements in the other Satellite countries, which, with the possible exception of Czechoslovakia, can only be kept in the Russian camp through the medium of Moscow controlled Communist regimes.

Summary

128. The only firm conclusion to be reached from a study of the situation in Poland almost a year after the bloodless October revolution is that it is extremely labile. The Gomulka program has removed a number of serious griev-

ances of the population, notably in the spheres of religion, national susceptibilities, and agricultural collectivization, but has failed to reconcile the basic contradiction between Communist Party leadership and individual initiative, to establish, in Bienkowski's words, "the sort of internal-constitutional methods by which socialism is to be built."

129. The result is ideological confusion within the Party, administrative inefficiency, a critical economic situation, and general discontent. An anti-Communist and traditionally indocile population obviously cannot be made to submit to Communist regimentation otherwise than by coercion, yet Gomulka is attempting to perpetuate the basic features of the Soviet system without "administrative" constraint, allegedly relying on persuasion, but actually on the fear of Soviet intervention. The Party, which must at the very least be monolithic to carry out its difficult task with any degree of success, is notoriously split between the conservatives, enjoying the moral support of the USSR and the backing of the Party apparatus, and the revisionists backed by the masses and the intellectuals, and is practically paralyzed. In the meantime, the country is run on sufferance by a small group of middle-of-the-roaders gathered around Gomulka. He remains in power mainly because he is, aside from Cardinal Wyczinski, the only man in Poland enjoying a degree of personal popularity, even if he has disappointed the irrational hopes put in his ability to find a way out of the impasse in which history and geography have placed Poland.

130. Politically, the Gomulka minority government might last for some time, as have such governments in many other countries, but economic improvement cannot wait and palliatives cannot put off the day of reckoning indefinitely. Except in the case of a noticeable and early change for the better, it will be up to Moscow to choose between the burden of continued economic assistance, for which Poland would

have to pay with a revival of Natolin (conservative) influence, and toleration of more far-reaching deviations from the Soviet interpretation of Marxism. The Third Party Congress, scheduled for December 1957, was generally looked forward to as the opportunity for Gomulka to give some indications of his views on the course he proposed to steer. But as of October 1957, it seems more likely that the Congress will be postponed, thus deferring the date when Gomulka will have to give a formal account of his stewardship, face his critics from the right and the left, and perhaps be forced to commit himself prematurely to something more positive than the middle way, which so far has not proved a short cut to general well-being and contentment.

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