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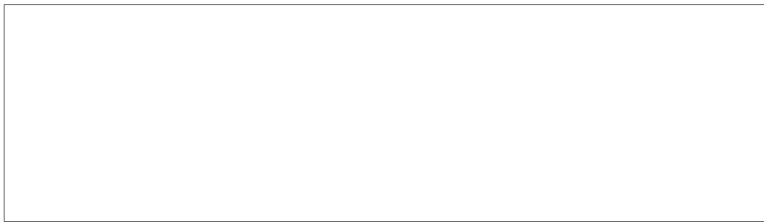
Gomulka and Polish Communism

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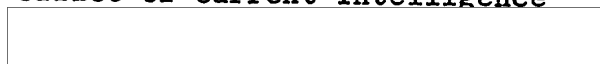
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Gomulka, and Polish Communism

This study is a working paper. It examines the early development of Polish Communism and the early career of Wladyslaw Gomulka with the aim of determining their influence and effect on the character and outlook of the present Gomulka regime. It is circulated to analysts of Soviet and satellite affairs as a contribution to the current interpretation of Soviet and Satellite policy.

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SUMMARY

The return of Gomulka to power in October 1956, and the emergence of a "National Communist" regime in Poland were the result of an unusual, perhaps unique combination of circumstances. Not a direct result of the factional dispute within the party at the time of Gomulka's ouster in 1948, it resulted, instead, from a struggle between new and different factions in the party which emerged in response to pressures from below, within the party and among the populace, which built up as a result of events after the death of Stalin. These pressures were greatly stimulated by three important developments in the Soviet bloc--the Soviet rapprochement with Tito with its implicit endorsement of "separate roads to socialism"; the 20th Soviet party congress in February 1956, where Khrushchev initiated the violent denigration of Stalin; and the Poznan riots in June 1956, which revealed the extent and the explosive force of popular discontent in Poland. In the course of these events, the Stalinist party leaders and their policies were completely discredited in the eyes of the rest of the party, and Gomulka emerged as the only uncompromised Polish party leader of stature who was capable of resolving the fast deteriorating economic and political situation in Poland without jeopardizing either the position of the party or of Communism in Poland. Gomulka was restored to the party leadership in conditions of great ferment, when nationalist and anti-Soviet feeling in the Communist party itself reflected similar but much stronger feelings among the populace. The internal significance of the Poznan riots made such a deep impression on the Polish central committee that the latter chose to defy Moscow and pursue a liberal course, rather than risk a chain reaction in Poland. Once committed to such a course, the "liberal" party leaders, spurred by intense pressures from below, brought Gomulka back into the party leadership on his own terms, which included the elimination of the Stalinists.

Confronted with this disturbing situation, the Soviet party leaders made a clumsy attempt to intimidate the Polish

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party into retaining the Stalinists by a colossal show of force. The attempt, however, resulted instead in Gomulka's assuming the status of a popular hero, who symbolized the intense nationwide nationalist bitterness against Moscow. The Polish central committee refused to be intimidated, and the Kremlin had to choose between accepting Gomulka or undertaking massive military action against a unified, nationalist Poland.

Part One

From its early origins, the Polish Communist movement was deeply influenced by a conflict between two opposing trends--the one nationalist and "particularist," and the other antinationalist, "cosmopolitan," and doctrinaire. The Communist Party of Poland (KPP) was characterized by the latter, whereas the former trend was dominant in the early development of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). As a result of its antinationalist, doctrinaire approach, pointed up especially by its traitorous role in the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1920, the Communist party attained almost no popular following in Poland, whereas the Socialist party, using the opposite approach, became a highly popular party, particularly after the emergence of Poland as an independent nation following World War I. Many leading Polish Communists recognized during and after its formation that the Communist Party of Poland was making a serious error in failing to make use of the force of Polish nationalism or to formulate a platform which took Poland's real situation into account.

Moreover, from the time of its organization in 1918, the Communist Party of Poland was torn by factional discord and was subject to the whims of the leaders of the Soviet party, some of whom were active participants in the Polish Communist movement. In the mid-30's virtually the entire central committee of the Polish party was summoned or enticed to Moscow and arbitrarily executed, and at the same time many other Polish Communist functionaries were imprisoned in the USSR. As a sequel, the Polish party was then officially dissolved by the Comintern in 1938. This immense, probably unique injustice to a Communist party caused deep-seated anti-Soviet bitterness among most of the surviving functionaries of the prewar Polish party.

A new Polish party was organized during World War II under conditions of exceptional difficulty. The deaths of

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several individuals earmarked by Moscow for the party leadership led to a situation where Wladyslaw Gomulka, a former minor party functionary who had never been properly trained or indoctrinated by Moscow for the position, became party leader. Gomulka shared the feelings of those Polish Communists who considered the prewar party to have made grave errors with respect to nationalism in Poland. He desired to construct a new party which would not be tainted by connections with the old, and which would attempt to secure a genuine popular base. Gomulka and the other "native" Communist leaders experienced certain differences during the war with the "foreigners," or "Muscovites" in the party, who had closer connections with Moscow. These differences, however, were submerged for the moment in the common effort to seize and consolidate Communist power in Poland.



GOMULKA (PRIOR TO 1948)

Gomulka and his fellow "natives" controlled the party leadership during the war; but with the arrival of Polish units attached to the Red Army, the "natives" were forced to share power with the "Muscovites" who were brought to Poland by the Red Army. Henceforth, power was almost evenly divided in Poland between the two factions, and, Gomulka did not have firm control over either the party, the army, or the security forces--the main pillars of power in a Communist state. Gomulka's position in Poland thus contrasted markedly with that of Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia.

During the period immediately following World War II, with the support of Moscow, Gomulka pursued pragmatic nationalist internal policies, minimizing any ties with prewar Polish Communism, or with Communism as it was currently practiced in the Soviet Union. He attempted to enlist popular support by repudiating collectivization as a Communist objective, stressing a permanent place for private enterprise in the economy, and playing down any conflict with religion. "People's Democracy" in Poland, he said at the time, was neither Soviet-type Communism nor bourgeois democracy, but something in between the two.

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Until about the middle of 1947, Gomulka's internal program did not deviate significantly from accepted Communist policy. Moderate in his approach to internal problems, but hard and uncompromising in his treatment of contestants for power, Gomulka was a decided asset to the party and to Moscow during this difficult period. The other party leaders, whether "natives" or "Muscovites," supported these policies unequivocally at the time. Whereas the latter, however, never forgot their tactical nature, Gomulka became so deeply involved with their implementation that he gradually developed a firm conviction that his program was the only effective way of building "socialism" in Poland. Sharing the resentment toward Moscow which the previous treatment of the Polish party had caused, Gomulka's mistrust of the Soviet Union was accentuated after World War II by the behavior of Soviet troops in Poland. Buttressed by a degree of popularity among the party rank and file and some personal authority in the party, he came to believe that his policies were correct for Poland, and that he, not Moscow, should be the one to determine when and if they should be changed.

Gomulka openly opposed the establishment of the Cominform in the fall of 1947, and assumed a stubborn attitude toward Moscow during and after the meeting which established it. Even after the shift in general Communist policy became crystal clear from the correspondence between Moscow and Belgrade in the spring of 1948, Gomulka continued stubbornly to stress his practical "Polish road to socialism." In addition, he showed clear tendencies toward ideological deviation in his conception of the basis of party ideology after its planned merger with the Socialists. Finally, during the course of the exchange between Moscow and Belgrade, he was openly sympathetic to Marshal Tito.

Although Moscow was aware of Gomulka's intransigence as early as the fall of 1947, action was not taken against him until June 1948. At that time, during a central committee plenum, his opponents in the Polish party leadership bitterly attacked his deviationist ideological views. Immediately following the plenum, the politburo officially censured Gomulka's views on ideology. At this point Gomulka's lack of actual power became apparent, since his control over the party leadership was not strong enough to enable him to make an effective stand against the "Muscovites." Gomulka stubbornly refused to recant. When he went on "sick

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leave" shortly afterwards, his opponents maneuvered in his absence to gain the approval of the central committee and then the entire party Aktiv to the politburo's position against Gomulka. By the time of the September plenum, Gomulka had agreed to make self-criticism before the party on most of the party's charges against him. For a time during the plenum he refused to accept one of the charges which concerned his activity during the war, but gave in in the end on all points for the sake of party unity. He was removed as party leader at the September 1948 plenum, but retained his other party and government posts. Gomulka then retreated into comparative silence, but his subsequent actions showed that, despite his self-criticism in September, he retained most of his heretical convictions.

The party leaders, displeased by his continued defiant behavior, but cautious because of his continued popularity among the party rank and file, gradually deprived Gomulka of his remaining posts during 1949. The political atmosphere, moreover, underwent a drastic change during that year with the advent of the Rajk trial in Hungary and anti-Tito and anti-Western spy hysteria within the bloc. One of Gomulka's close confederates, Marian Spsychalski, was removed from his posts and accused of treason in which Gomulka's collusion was implied, and at the same time new, more serious charges implying treason and "crimes against the party" were added to those previously made against Gomulka. On this ominous note Gomulka, Spsychalski, and Zenon Kliszko were expelled from the central committee in November 1949. Nevertheless, Gomulka made a courageous showing at the November plenum, refusing to accept the additional charges which had been made against him subsequent to September 1948.

Gomulka was arrested in mid-1951, and a serious attempt was made by the regime to prepare a show trial similar to those of Rajk and Kostov. The security authorities hoped to use Gomulka's cohort, Spsychalski, to center their case on. When neither Spsychalski, much less Gomulka, could be broken to their purposes, the Polish attempt to build up a case ended in utter failure despite strong Soviet pressure. Gomulka showed, moreover, that if a show trial were actually to be staged, he could make charges and reveal information which would embarrass not only the Polish party leaders but Moscow as well.

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Part Two

With the death of Stalin and the downfall of Beria, strong pressures for change built up throughout the Soviet bloc. The 20th Soviet party congress in February 1956 intensely stimulated these pressures, with the result that strong anti-Stalinist dissension came to the surface among the intellectuals and the Communist parties, especially in Poland and Hungary. In Poland itself, the destruction of secret police authority resulting from the Beria affair and the revelations of a high Polish security official who defected to the West caused a marked reduction in political terror. Largely because of this, Poland's literary "thaw," which was stimulated partly by an earlier literary "revolt" in the USSR and partly by regime encouragement, became especially intense. By 1955 the "thaw" in Poland had spread to all fields of intellectual activity, paralleled by increasingly serious dissension against the party leaders in the medium and lower echelons of the party. At the same time, Polish youth was in a state of confusion, reflecting its utter disenchantment with Communism.

Ferment among the intellectuals, the party, and Polish youth received an electrifying stimulus from the 20th Soviet party congress, followed by the death of party chief Bierut, which reduced the stability of the party leadership and increased the uncertainty and indecision of the party leaders. At the same time, the official rehabilitation of the prewar Polish party caused latent anti-Soviet feeling within the Polish party to come to the surface. As the crisis mounted, the hesitation of the party leadership increased. Instead of a decisive policy, which was badly needed, the leadership vacillated between encouragement of the "thaw" and attempts to restrain it. The party leaders were also forced by pressure from below to take a stand concerning the status of the newly rehabilitated Gomulka. This they did as late as May 1956, by reaffirming the party's original political charges against him for "nationalist deviation."

The Poznan riots were a great shock to the Polish party leaders, revealing the seriousness of the economic and political crisis throughout the country, as well as the workers' total estrangement from the party. The Soviet leaders drew different conclusions from Poznan, and attempted to pressure the Polish party into adopting a hard internal line. At its 7th plenum in July, however, the Polish central committee

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defied Moscow by adopting a liberal program. Henceforth, the party was torn by open factional warfare between the "liberal" majority of the central committee and the Stalinist "Natolin group," which was determined, with Soviet support, to obstruct the implementation of the liberal course!

In order to neutralize the increasing popular discontent and pressures within the party against the party leadership, the Stalinists attempted unsuccessfully, prior to the Poznan riots, to get Gomulka to accept a lesser post in the regime. After Poznan, however, the central committee voted to reinstate him in the party. During August and September, moreover, the leaders of the "liberal" majority negotiated with Gomulka as popular tension heightened and pressure rose within the party for his return to the party leadership. Under these circumstances Gomulka was able to impose his own conditions, which included the removal of the Stalinists, especially Marshal Rokossovsky, from the politburo. The Stalinist "Natolin group," when they became aware of their impending ouster, laid plans for a coup to seize power from the "liberals" in the party, which included extensive arrests of "liberals" and military action by the Polish army, under the command of Marshal Rokossovsky. The coup was forestalled, largely because the "liberals" were forewarned by alert and organized workers and students in Warsaw under the direction of the Warsaw city party organization, and because the militarized security forces, under the command of a rehabilitated purgee, supported the "liberals" against Rokossovsky's Polish army. For that matter, the Stalinists were counting on a Polish army whose loyalty to their cause was by no means assured.

With the failure of the "Natolin" coup, the Soviet leaders were confronted with the spectacle of the impending restoration of the defiant Gomulka as Polish party leader, together with the expulsion of the Stalinists from the politburo. Concerned with the possible effects of these developments within the bloc, and uncertain about the direction events might take in Poland, the Soviet leaders decided on a colossal attempt to intimidate the Polish party from its projected course. Khrushchev and several companions from the Soviet Presidium suddenly descended on Warsaw just as the 8th plenum of the Polish central committee had begun its deliberations, while Soviet forces within Poland and on its borders made menacing movements. When an entire day of browbeating failed to impress

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the Polish leaders, but served instead to arouse the populace, the Soviet leaders decided to retire as gracefully as possible and await developments. Meanwhile, the menacing movements of the Soviet armed forces continued, as the 8th plenum resumed its debates. The Polish party was not intimidated, however, and after an acrimonious debate the Stalinists were ousted from the politburo, and Gomulka was chosen unanimously as party First Secretary.

The Soviet attempt at intimidation continued throughout the central committee session, and it was only after the plenum had concluded that the Soviet armed forces ceased their threatening moves and the Soviet leaders, rather than risk the consequences of bloody intervention, accepted the fait accompli--the defiant Gomulka at the helm of a "National Communist" Poland.

Gomulka adopted as the basis for his policy almost the entire "liberal" platform of the 7th plenum, the implementation of which had been obstructed since July by the Stalinists. Only in the sphere of agriculture, a subject close to his heart, did Gomulka initiate an entirely new policy. Otherwise, Gomulka's "Polish road" consisted for the most part of practical palliatives and experimentation.



GOMULKA (AFTER OCTOBER 1956)

A year after his return to power, Gomulka continued to believe, as he had prior to his purge, that his "Polish road to socialism" was the only effective way of building "socialism" in Poland. Especially in agriculture, he felt that his pragmatic approach was the only one which had any long-range chance of success. Gomulka, however, failed during that year to produce an adequate general definition of policy, although he did say in November 1957 by way of explanation that the "October turning-point" constituted a break away from Stalinist methods of control and a turn toward greater "involvement of the masses in socialist construction." Gomulka showed that he was still distrustful of the Soviet Union, and to the extent possible in view of Poland's geopolitical position and economic dependence on the Soviet Union, he continued to defend Poland's independent status.

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Gomulka's ideological outlook, however, appeared to have undergone an appreciable change since 1948, which in itself tended to make him more acceptable in the eyes of Moscow. By the spring of 1957, reflection on the lessons of the Hungarian debacle, together with the increasing dangers of extreme liberalism in Poland, led Gomulka to reach agreement with Moscow on limitations to his experiment which provided the latter with some assurance that neither Communism nor Communist control would be threatened in Poland. Gomulka also demonstrated that he had rid himself of his previous tendencies toward ideological deviation. He had become, instead, a crusader against revisionism and a disciple of Leninist principles in the party. In view of the agreed limits to Gomulka's experiment, as well as his changes in ideological outlook, Gomulka and his program no longer appeared to constitute a serious danger to Soviet strategic aims or to Communism. This being the case, Gomulka's posture of independence will probably continue to be tolerated as long as the "Gomulka experiment" remains within the prescribed limits. Khrushchev may even agree with Gomulka that his "Polish road to socialism" is indeed the only effective way of building Communism in Poland.

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PART ONE

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE PARTY AND GOMULKA'S FIRST PERIOD IN POWER

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*SECRET*CHAPTER ISOCIALIST BEGINNINGS IN POLAND AND THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE PARTY

The development of the Marxist movement in Poland has been strongly influenced by the factors of nationalism and "particularism"--the preoccupation with Poland's own national peculiarities. These factors also influenced the views and activities of Wladyslaw Gomulka during both periods of his leadership over the Polish Communist party, and contributed to the growth of factionalism in the party after World War II.

Between the time of the formation of the earliest socialist groups in partitioned Poland in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the formation of the Communist Party of Poland in 1918, a schism developed in the movement between the groups favoring the nationalist, "particularist" approach and those favoring the antinationalist, cosmopolitan, or "economic" approach to socialism. The former groups eventually developed into the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) which used nationalism and particularism in the early twentieth century to develop strong support among the Polish working class and people. The latter groups, which eventually formed the nucleus of the Communist Party of Poland (KPP), neglected or repudiated these factors to their considerable disadvantage up to the eve of World War II.

In the early 1880's the two differing trends were already apparent in the character of the early socialist groups. The nationalist trend was represented by the "Lud Polski" (Polish people) organization, under the leadership of Boleslaw Limanowski. This group, probably the earliest precursor of Gomulka, stressed the practical approach that socialist doctrine should be adapted to the specific conditions and needs of the country. To this unit, the concrete grievances of the people appeared to be of more consequence than abstract doctrine. Their goal was the struggle for the liberation of all Poland from foreign domination, and they expressed a desire to cooperate with the Russian revolutionaries, but only on a basis of complete equality.

In contrast to this group, the antinational trend was represented by the early Polish socialist organization, the "Proletariat," under Ludwik Warynski. This group stressed the priority of economic over national problems, disregarding the issue of national independence in favor of the struggle for international proletarian revolution. It also urged the unqualified need for unified action with the Russian revolutionaries.

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Limanowski's organization ("Lud Polski") was the forerunner of the Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna--PPS), which was founded in 1892 in an unsuccessful attempt to unify the working-class movement in Russian Poland. For the sake of unity, the PPS attempted to combine in its program some elements from the two different approaches to Polish socialism. As it developed, however, most of the nationalist program of the "Lud Polski" organization was adopted by the PPS, and the antinational trend of the "Proletariat" group received only a gesture in the form of a statement that the "economic" approach was to be combined with the national approach. The PPS program, as it turned out, was a moderate socialist program which rejected the concept of a "dictatorship of the proletariat" and stressed complete equality with the Russian socialists.

The cosmopolitan groups favoring the antinational approach were intensely dissatisfied with the program of the PPS and as a result seceded from the organization in 1893 to form a new group called the "Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland" (SDKP), which embodied in its own program most of the principles of the old "Proletariat." One of the chief differences between the PPS and the new organization was apparent in the name of the new organization (SDKP), which indicated that its activity was to be limited to Russian-controlled (Congress) Poland (thus not embracing the other two partitioned areas of Austrian and German Poland), and also that it would probably work very closely with the Russian revolutionaries who were working for the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy in the entire Russian empire. The PPS, on the other hand, stressed the struggle for national liberation of all Polish territories under foreign occupation, and set as its goal the establishment of an independent, democratic Polish republic.

In 1900 the SDKP merged with a Lithuanian socialist group to form the SDKPiL (adding the words "and Lithuania" to its previous title). The group rejected the struggle for Polish independence as a utopian objective, and stressed close collaboration with their "Russian comrades." Rather than struggle for a reunified Polish state, the SDKPiL recommended that Polish socialists should become integrated into the respective Socialist movements of Austria, Germany, or Russia. As an example to the others, moreover, the SDKPiL entered into a federation in 1906 with the Russian Social Democratic Labor party (RSDLP). From this juncture, the SDKPiL was little more than a subdivision of the Russian party.

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The chief theoretician of the SDKPiL was Rosa Luxemburg, a profoundly original thinker whose book on the industrial development of Poland became the bible of the Polish Marxist movement. She was soon to enter into a historic series of ideological arguments with Lenin which were to exert a profound effect on the Communist Party of Poland, especially upon its attitude toward Moscow. In this controversy, Luxemburg strongly disagreed with Lenin's ideas on party organization, especially with the theory of the "dictatorship of the proletariat,"* and she became involved in the complex ideological disputes between the Russian revolutionaries. But of greater consequence for the Polish Communists was her bitter attack against Lenin's theory on national self-determination. Lenin felt strongly that in the future social democracy, nations such as Poland which were oppressed by tsarism should have the right to free secession from Russia. Luxemburg, however, refused from the beginning to accept national self-determination as a principle, especially in the case of Poland. Lenin's theories, of course, eventually won out, and the theories of Rosa Luxemburg later became branded as a deviation termed "Luxemburgism," the legacy of which was carried by the KPP up to the time of its dissolution by the Comintern in 1938. "Luxemburgism" was held by the Bolsheviks to consist essentially of the following:

- a) depreciation of the role of the party as the leader of the class-struggle;
- b) underestimation of the revolutionary role of the peasantry;
- c) misunderstanding of the potentialities of the national problem as a revolutionary factor.

While the first element was important in its later effect on relations between Polish Communists and the CPSU, the latter two attitudes, which were characteristic of many of the early leaders of the SDKPiL and the KPP, were the main reasons for

* Luxemburg disagreed with Lenin's ideas of a disciplined party elite as the vanguard of the working class. She also rejected his ideas on the authority which should be accorded to the central committee. She referred to his conception as "His majesty, the central committee."

In opposition to Lenin's views, Luxemburg stressed the spontaneous development of the class struggle. Her views were essentially determinist.

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the abject failure of Communism in Poland prior to World War II. As a result of these attitudes, the party failed to establish a popular base among the Polish peasantry and antagonized the strongly nationalist Polish populace.

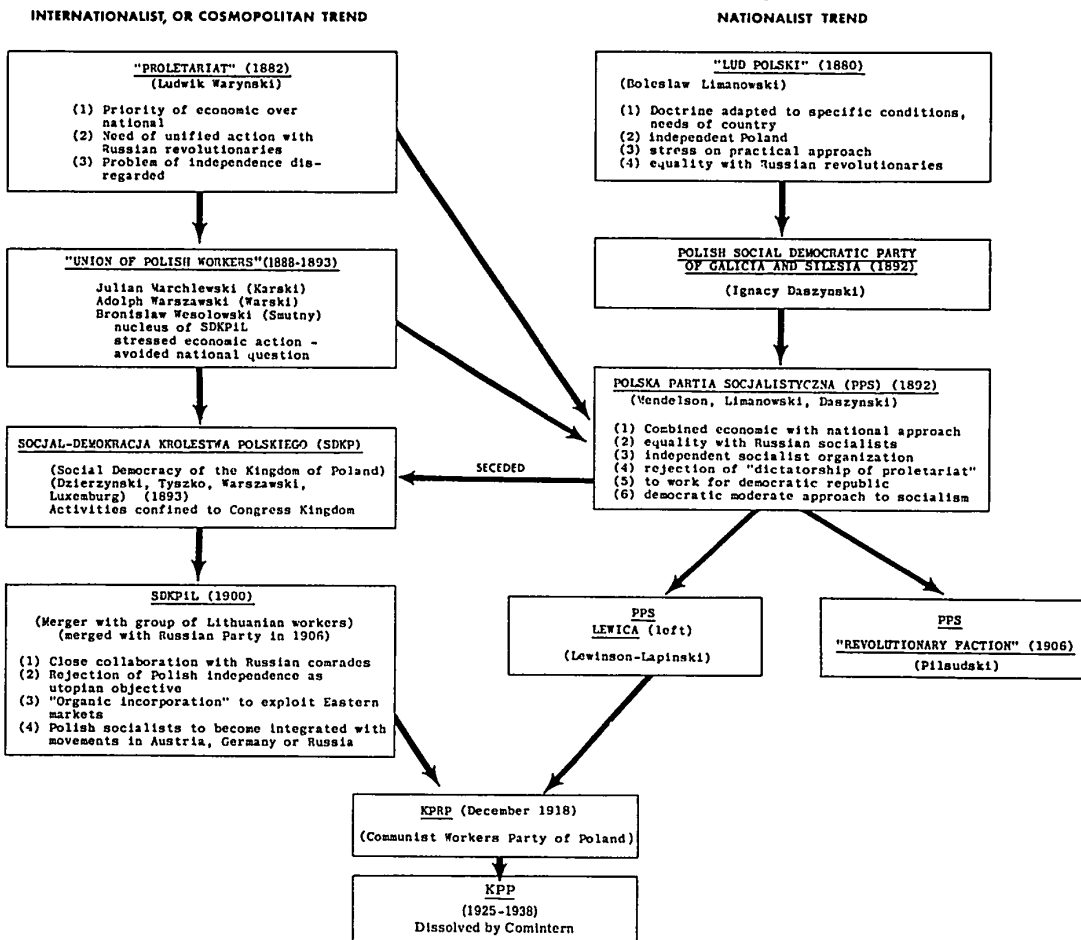
Partly as a result of the Constitutional Manifesto of 1905, which caused a decline in popular support for the PPS and other socialist groups in Russian Poland, the PPS itself split in 1906 into two factions--the PPS "Revolutionary Faction" under the leadership of Jozef Pilsudski, and the "PPS-Left," whose program became gradually more analogous to that of the SDKPiL. After this split, the PPS "revolutionary faction" under Pilsudski became more and more absorbed with the struggle for national liberation, and used the factor of nationalism to gain the support of the majority of the Polish working class. A key factor in its popularity was the role of Pilsudski and the PPS in the defense of Poland against the Red Army invasion in 1920, when the Soviet forces were stopped by the "Miracle of the Vistula." Here Pilsudski seized the leadership and rallied Polish nationalist feeling to his support. During and after the renaissance of the Polish nation, Pilsudski drifted further and further to the right, and had gradually less in common with the PPS. Nevertheless, the PPS retained its strong hold over the Polish working class during the inter-war period, not only by virtue of its role during the Polish-Soviet war, but because of its general identification with Polish nationalism.

Whereas the Pilsudski "Revolutionary" faction thus drifted away from socialism in its quest for national liberation, the "PPS-Left" began to move closer and closer to the SDKPiL. Both groups were engaged in similar pacifist activity during World War I, and eventually merged, in December 1918, to form the Communist Workers' Party of Poland (KPRP). At their "unification congress," however, the ideological program of the SDKPiL was adopted as the basis of party policy, thus making the new Communist Workers' Party of Poland the direct heir of the SDKPiL.

The new party program paralleled the Bolshevik program in many respects, and urged unity with the Bolsheviks in the struggle for world revolution. In certain important details, however, the new program of the KPRP was at variance with the Russian party. These differences had already been reflected in the disputes between Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg, one of the main subjects being the attitude toward the national question. The KPRP, like the SDKPiL before it, attacked national self-determination as a principle. This basic mistake of the

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POLISH COMMUNIST PARTY (ORIGINS)



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Polish Communists, which was at the root of their failure to attract any serious support in Poland prior to World War II, was recognized later by leading Polish Communists. Thus Feliks Dzierzynski said later:

Our mistake (that of the SDKPiL) was in repudiating Poland's independence, for which Lenin always rebuked us. We believed that there could be no transitional period between capitalism and socialism and consequently that there was no need of independent states, since there could be no state organization under socialism. We did not understand that there would be a rather long transition period between capitalism and socialism, during which, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, classes as well as a proletarian state supported by the peasantry will exist side by side....As a result of repudiating every independence, we lost our struggle for an independent Poland.

Whereas a key factor in the popularity of the PPS was its role in the defense of Poland against the Red Army invasion in 1920, the role of the Polish Communists on the opposite side in this same invasion identified them in the popular mind as enemies of Poland.* Another leading Polish Communist leader, Adolph Warszawski-Warski, a member of the right wing of the KPRP leadership, referred to this cardinal mistake during a KPRP congress in 1923. He said:

He who does not yet understand the causes of our mistake does not understand the reasons of our defeat in 1918-1919, as well as our defeat during the Polish-Soviet war of 1920, and consequently, would not comprehend why the Communist Party of Poland lost then the struggle with the PPS and the "Wyzwolenie" (peasant organization). The peasant masses and the masses

* After Red Army occupation of Bialystok, a "Central Revolutionary Committee," intended as the Communist government of Poland, was set up under the leadership of Julian Marchlewski, and including such prominent Communists as Dzierzynski, Kon, Unszlicht, Prochniak, and others. The establishment of this puppet government on the enemy side discredited the Communist party in Poland more than any other single factor.

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of petty bourgeoisie (as well as a large part, even the majority, of the workers), did not follow the proletarian revolution, did not follow the Communist Party of Poland, because they saw in our party the opponent of the independence of Poland. They followed the PPS, the Wyzwolenie and the others, the parties which promised land to the peasants and fought under the banner of the Polish state....

The inter-war period

In the early years of its organization, the former heresies of the SDKPiL and "Luxemburgism" plagued the Communist Workers' Party of Poland (KPRP) and complicated its relations with the Russian party. As if this were not enough, several former leaders of the SDKPiL (i.e., Dzierzynski, Marchlewski, Unszlicht) had become prominent in the Russian party, but nevertheless continued to participate in the affairs of the KPRP.* The party outlawed itself in Poland in January 1919 by refusing to register with the Polish authorities, and from that time on its activity was almost entirely conspiratorial.** Party congresses,

* Some of the more prominent posts in revolutionary Russia held by Polish Communists were the leaderships of CHEKA and GPU, held by Dzierzynski, of TASS, held by Dolecki, and of the Red air force, held by Unszlicht (also deputy director of GPU). Karol Radek, prior to his unfortunate association with Trotsky, was variously a Soviet propagandist, a consultant for the Soviet Foreign Ministry, and a member of the central committee of the Russian party.

** The party occasionally established cover political groups which managed over the years to elect one or two representatives to the Sejm. In 1926 the party incurred the displeasure of Moscow by supporting the Pilsudski coup d'etat. This move was later condemned by the Comintern as a serious tactical mistake, and became known in Communist history as the "May error."

As a result of its political outlook and its behavior during the Soviet invasion of 1920, the KPP in the inter-war period obtained little support among the workers and almost none among the peasants, and its attempts to work with other political groups were abysmal failures.

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for example, had to be held on Russian soil. Thus the early history of the KPRP (its name was changed in 1925 to Communist party of Poland (KPP)) was heavily influenced by the early history of the CPSU, and the factional struggles of the Russian party were often reflected in parallel factional disputes in the Polish party. After Lenin's death in 1924, Stalin continually intervened in the affairs of the Polish party, supporting first one faction, then another in opposition to whatever group in the Polish party happened to correspond to the particular group in the Russian party he was at the moment attempting to destroy.*

During the inter-war period, the Communist Party of Poland (KPP) also became a helpless pawn in international Communist policy. Never a factor of importance to the movement as a whole, the KPP was forced to back and fill according to the changes in Soviet policy toward Germany and toward Europe in general. During the early 1920's, for example, when the Communists believed in the imminence of the revolution in Germany, the KPRP leaders were forced to support Moscow's intention to give all-out military aid to that revolution, regardless of the consequent fate of Poland. Because of the importance to Communism of Germany as an industrial power, the Soviet leaders regarded Poland merely as a bridge between the Russian and German revolutions. The Polish Communists were forced to support Soviet policy, even though they knew that all-out military aid to the German revolution would mean war with the Pilsudski regime, which would place them once again on the enemy side.

After the Seventh Comintern Congress in 1935, the utility of the KPP as a lever for use in international Communism ceased to exist, since the tactics of the Popular Front depended mainly on legal activity. In addition, the entire leadership of the KPP was distrusted, for one reason or another, by Stalin.** The right-wing leaders (Warski, Walecki, Wera-Kostrzewa, and Prochniak) were openly sympathetic in the early 1920's to the views and activities of Trotsky. On the other hand, the former leaders of the SDKPiL who had become closely associated with

* No less than three "Polish Commissions" were established by the Comintern between 1923 and 1930 to investigate conditions in the Polish party. Each one of them resulted in one or another manner of direct intervention.

** Stalin is said to have remarked that "a Polish Communist is like a radish; scratch the surface and underneath everything is white."

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the Bolshevik movement in Russia (Marchlewski, Lenski, Dzierzynski) were suspected because of the heretical legacy of the SDKPiL and the "Luxemburgist" deviation from Bolshevism. Perhaps it should not have been surprising, therefore, that almost the entire KPP leadership fell victim to the Yezhov purges during the late 1930's. Those Polish Communist leaders who were not already in the Soviet Union were summoned there on various pretexts in 1936-37 and with almost no exceptions, all of the KPP central committee members were physically liquidated. In addition to the top leadership, many party functionaries, as well as non-Communist Poles, were imprisoned in the Soviet Union or were otherwise victimized by the Yezhovshchina.*

The indiscriminate nature of these purges, which swept away all of the top leaders regardless of their political orientation, caused a sense of deep grievance to develop among the surviving KPP functionaries toward the crude, arbitrary treatment which had been accorded the party by Stalin throughout its entire existence. Especially bitter were those who formerly had been associated in party activity with the purged party leaders.

* A former employee of the Comintern, Alfred Burmeister says: "All members of the Polish section of the Comintern had been arrested by the end of 1937. All members and officials of the Polish Communist party who were in Poland or other countries beyond the Soviet borders were summoned to Moscow on any pretext that could be found and then arrested. Those who had fought in Spain were not exempt, nor were the members of the factions of the Polish Communist party.... The initial guess that the NKVD was proceeding against an opposition group within the Polish Communist party was thus proved to be unfounded. Another thing which dispelled such notions was the fact that the arrests were not confined to party members: all other Poles or Polish born citizens in the Soviet Union at that time were arrested and accused of "espionage for Pilsudski." From the beginning of 1938 until the dissolution of the Polish Communist party in the same year the widow of Feliks Dzierzynski sat all alone in the rooms of the Polish section of the Comintern." (Dissolution and Aftermath of the Comintern, NYC, 1955)

The Soviet suspicion of Polish Communists by no means disappeared after the Yezhov purges. Even during the early stages of the war, former KPP functionaries continued to be victimized when they fell into the hands of the Soviet authorities.

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As a sequel, almost an anticlimax, to the purges, the KPP itself was dissolved in 1938 by the "Polish Commission" of the Comintern. The purpose of the dissolution, as it was explained at the time, was to eliminate Trotskyites and planted agents provocateurs in the party.* Apparently, it was intended that the KPP was to be supplanted by a new Polish Communist party, which would be "Marxist-Leninist in outlook, purged of Pilsudskyite agents." The opportunity did not materialize (in view of the Nazi-Soviet pact) until after the German invasion of the USSR in June of 1941.

* In early 1956 a "special investigating commission" including members of the central committees from the USSR, Poland, Italy, Bulgaria and Finland (the same countries which had been signatory to the dissolution) declared that the 1938 dissolution took place on the basis of "fabricated evidence."

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EARLY POLISH COMMUNIST LEADERS
 VIRTUALLY ALL EXECUTED IN USSR DURING YEZHOV PURGES

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TRUE NAME	PSEUDONYM	"PROLETARIAT"	"LUD POLSKI"	UNION OF POLISH WORKERS	SDKPiL	PPS-LEFT	JEWISH "BUND"	COMMUNIST PARTY OF POLAND	MEMBER OF REVOLUTIONARY	CECHOWSKI	INDUSTRIE	LEFT WING KPP	BOLSHEVIK	REMARKS
Amsterdam, Saul	Henrykowski													
Bielecki														
Bobinski	Rafal													
Bortnowski	Bronikowski													
Brand, E.	Bionkowski													
Brun														
Ciszewski, Marian	Adamski													
Danowski														
Dombrowski														
Dzierzynski, Feliks	Josef													Originated "TCHEKA" in Russia. Old devoted Bolshevik.
Erlich, Henryk														
Czeszejko-Sochacki, Jerzy	Koarad, Bratkowski													Purged 1933 - arrested for espionage.
Falski														
Feinigsztejn	Dolecki													
Grossman, H. (Dr.)														
Grzelszczak, Franciszek	Grzegorzewski, Marcin													
Firstenberg, Jakob	Hanecki													
Heryng, Jerzy	Ryng													
Horwitz, Max	Henryk Maximilian Walecki													
Jogiches, Leon	Jan Tyzsko													With Rosa Luxemburg, became leader of Social Democratic Movement in Germany.
Kon, Feliks														
Koszutska, Maria	Wora Kostrzewa													Early right wing leader of KPP.
Kasprzak														
Landy, Adam	Witkowski, Gruby Karol													
Lampe, Alfred														
Lazosert	Roman													
Leszczynski, Julian	Lencki													Organizer of "Union of Polish Patriots" in USSR during P.W. II. Died in December 1943.
Lewinson	Lapinski													Militant left wing of KPP.
Limanowski, Boleslaw														
Luxemburg, Rosa														
Marchlewski, Julian	Jan Karcki													Earliest precursor of Gomulka (later PPS). Theoretical disputes with Lenin. Belonged simultaneously to legal German Social Democratic Movement.
Nowicki, Marcell														Parachuted into Poland 1942 to become First Secretary-General of PPR. Killed late 1942.
Osińska, Zofia														
Paszyn, Jan	Czarny													
Pröchniak, Jozef	Sewer (Weber)													
Przedocki	Marysia													
Rechniowski, Tadeusz	Karski													
Reicher, Gustav	Rwal													
Sachs (Dr.)														
Skutski	Stanislaw Martens													
Slawinski, Adam														
Slusarski, Grzegorz	Grzech-Kowalski													Purged by Moscow in twenties for extreme left wing deviation.
Sobieszko, Karl	Nadek													Doubled in brass between Polish Communism and Bolsheviks (in charge of German affairs). Spoke out against Red Army invasion in 1920.
Stein, Wladyslaw	Wioray, Bronislaw Krajewski													
Steln-Kaminski, Henryk	Donski													
Szaprow-Basaga, Bernard														
Strozecki, Jan														
Trusiewicz, Stanislaw	Zalowski													Right deviationist in SDKPiL. (ZALEWSZCZYNA)
Uaszlich, Josef	Jurowski, Janowicz													Doubled between Polish Communism and Bolshevik Movement.
Warszawski, Adolph	Warski													
Warszawski, Mieczyslaw	Bronski													Early right wing leader of KPP.
Warynski, Ludwik														Earliest precursor of Moscow group.
Wesolowski, Bronislaw	Smutny													
Zarski, Tadeusz														Purged for treason, provocation in early thirties.

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*SECRET*CHAPTER IIWORLD WAR II AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PPR

During the period of Nazi-Soviet collaboration (1939-41), Moscow did not encourage Communist activity in occupied Poland. Nevertheless, organizational activity proceeded in the German zone of occupation, although the local units were discouraged by the Comintern from engaging in resistance activity against the Germans. With the German invasion of the USSR in June, 1941, however, policies were reversed, and by late 1941 progress was well under way toward the amalgamation of various Communist groups into the nucleus of a party.* Toward the end of that year, several reliable, Moscow-trained Poles were parachuted into Poland with instructions to organize a new Communist party, which would be called the Polish Workers' Party (PPR), thus signifying a definite break with the discredited KPP. The new party was actually organized in January, 1942, under the leadership of Marcelli Nowotko, an experienced, former KPP party militant who had managed to survive the purges of the Yezhov period and had been in training for some time in the USSR.

It was thus intended by Moscow that the new Polish party would be organized and controlled by reliable, Moscow-trained men, and such was indeed the case for the first year and a half of its existence. But "Muscovites" of the caliber of Nowotko were few in number, and they were forced to work together with strong "native" Communist elements in the party leadership who were active in underground work. This was during a difficult period for the party, when organizational activity in Poland was inhibited by the unpopular heritage of the KPP and by the constant necessity to avoid being caught by the Gestapo. Late in 1942, Nowotko was killed mistakenly by a member of the party, and a year later his chief lieutenant and successor, Pawel Finder, was captured and subsequently shot by the Gestapo. This loss of the two leaders who had been sent in by Moscow to organize the PPR led to a situation in November 1943 (during a lapse in radio communication with Moscow), wherein one of the leading "native" Communists in the party, Wladyslaw Gomulka, was

* At the end of 1941, two Communist organizations existed in Warsaw: The "Union of Friends of the USSR" and the "Association of the Struggle for Liberation." They were later merged to form the PPR.

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chosen by the PPR central committee to become the new secretary general of the party.*

Gomulka, the man

Up to this moment, Gomulka had been a minor figure in the Polish Communist movement. Before the war, he was an active trade union organizer in the oil districts of southern Poland, and had been imprisoned several times for subversive activity. Not until the outbreak of the war, however, did his courage and natural organizational ability bring him to the fore of Communist party activity. He rose rapidly during the early days of the occupation, and under the leadership of Nowotko and Finder served first as organizer in his native district of Rzeszow, and later as party secretary for the Warsaw district. His sudden rise to the leadership of the party central committee was partly due to the fortuitous circumstances already described. But it was also due to his recognized ability which made him the logical choice of the central committee members.

The new secretary general, at the age of 38, was a man of keen intelligence, strong natural leadership ability, and organizational talents. He was a dedicated Communist with long experience as an agitator among industrial workers in Poland. During his periods of imprisonment before the war, he had acquired what Marxist theoretical background he possessed, as had other Polish Communists in similar circumstances.

There was only one qualification, albeit a vital one, which Gomulka lacked as a good party leader. As a "native" Communist, he had not received his party training in the Soviet Union. From Moscow's point of view, an important requisite for the head of a foreign Communist party was a long period of thorough political indoctrination and training in Moscow.** Without this, there would be no assurance of the absolute reliability of the man to the authority of Moscow. Nor would there be any certainty

* The break in communications with Moscow apparently occurred because the only two PPR leaders who possessed the code (Finder and Malgorzata Fornalska his wife and Deputy) were both captured by the Gestapo at the same time.

Boleslaw Bierut, a Moscow-trained Communist who had been sent into Poland that fall, might have been Moscow's choice for the new party leader, had communications with Moscow not been broken. Gomulka's experience on the scene, however, dating back several years, undoubtedly influenced the party's choice.

** Such, of course, was the case with Rakosi, Gottwald, Dimitrov, Ulbricht, and even Tito.

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-that his interpretation of Marxist-Leninist doctrine would in all cases run parallel to that of Moscow.

If Moscow had been in a position to influence the matter in November, 1943, therefore, it is doubtful whether Gomulka would have become the new secretary general. In any case, "Comrade Wieslaw" (Gomulka's pseudonym) soon showed that, because of his courage and leadership ability, he would be difficult to dislodge. In the meantime, he was proving an effective and, in most respects at least, a satisfactory party leader.

Polish Communist activity in the USSR

Polish Communist activity during this period was not confined to the underground in Poland. As far back as 1940, during the period of Soviet-German friendship and partition of Poland, a number of Polish Communists in the Soviet-occupied eastern areas of Poland were allowed to organize and publish newspapers in Lwow and Wilno.* When Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, however, most of these individuals fled into the USSR with the retreating Russian troops. The reversal in Soviet foreign policies brought about by the Nazi invasion also caused an abrupt switch in relations with the non-Communist Poles. Between June, 1941, and the beginning of 1943, the Soviet government found it expedient to cooperate, on the surface at least, with the Polish government in London. Nevertheless, even at the height of this cooperation, some Communist organizational activity was permitted among the Poles in the Soviet Union.** Not until 1943, however, after the break in relations between the Soviet Union and the Polish government-in-exile, did Moscow openly sanction organizational activity in the USSR by former Polish Communists. Thus,

* Two organizations, the "Alliance of Former Communists" and the "Union of Former Political Prisoners," were tolerated in Lwow, together with an "intellectual club," which published a literary and political monthly entitled "New Horizons." In addition to this activity, another group of Polish Communists headed by Stefan Jedrychowski was active in Wilno. Some of these organizations apparently were permitted to exist by the Soviet authorities so that the activities of those still-suspected prewar Polish Communists could be watched by Soviet agents.

** A conference of "pro-Soviet politicians" was held at Saratov on 1 December 1941. Delegates included W. Wasilewska, S. Skrzyszewski, S. Radkiewicz, J. Berman, and S. Jedrychowski.

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at a congress in June of that year, the Union of Polish Patriots was organized in Moscow. Although its presidium had a Communist majority, several non-Communists were also included, since its main purpose was to recruit a Soviet-commanded army from among the myriad Poles in the Soviet Union. The nucleus of this activity was the Kosciuszko Division of the Red Army, established in May, 1943.

After mid-1943, concerted attempts to recruit Poles who were left in the Soviet Union after the departure of General Anders' forces occurred simultaneously with Communist organizational activity in occupied Poland. The same "united front" policy which was used in the "Union of Polish Patriots" through the inclusion of non-Communists was also followed by the PPR in Poland. Certain individuals on the fringes of the established Polish political parties were wooed away from the parent organizations, with the result that at the beginning of 1944 the PPR leadership was able to use these persons to establish the underground National Council of the Homeland (KRN), intended to appear as a coalition of political groups cooperating with the Communists on a "united front" basis. The KRN was established as a Communist-sponsored alternative "parliament" to the London-led Council of National Unity.

The beginnings of factionalism in the underground

Not long after Gomulka was chosen to the party leadership in November, 1943, differences of view became apparent among the PPR leaders. The "Muscovites" in 1943, under the leadership of Boleslaw Bierut, were not enthusiastic about cooperating with bona fide Polish political groups after their rebuff at the hands of the left-wing Polish Socialist Workers' Party (RPPS) (a left-wing splinter group from the London-led Polish Socialist Party) and other groups at the end of 1943.* Although the Communist underground front parliament, the National Council of the Homeland (KRN), clearly represented little else but the PPR** (and a few groups of negligible

* In December, 1943, the PPR central committee made a proposal to the RPPS to "form a national committee together." The proposal was rejected by the RPPS party leadership. At this time, Osobka-Morawski defected and allowed the PPR to use him and the name of his former party in the Communist puppet parliament, the KRN.

** The fact that the Communists were forced to use the Comintern agent and known Communist, Bierut, as the chairman of the KRN shows how unrepresentative it was.

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following), the "Muscovites" preferred to rely on the forthcoming support of the Red Army rather than attempt cooperation with real political groups, especially those connected with the Polish government in London. The "natives" under Gomulka, on the other hand, favored collaboration with certain other political groups in order to broaden the popular base of the Communist-sponsored parliament, the KRN, and enable it to exercise genuine influence. The "natives" were aware of the almost complete lack of popular support for the PPR in Poland and desired to make some practical moves to improve it. During May, 1944, the PPR central committee meetings were the scene of frequent disputes between the two factions. The "natives" favored collaboration with various non-Communist political groups, including some of the political parties associated with the Polish government in London, provided the latter would take steps to eliminate "fascist elements" from their membership. On 1 July 1944, for example, the party's clandestine newspaper Trybuna Wolnosci under the editorship of Bienkowski, a close associate of Gomulka, made an appeal to the Peasant and Socialist parties associated with the Polish government-in-exile to purge their membership and collaborate in a broad national front.* The "Muscovites," meanwhile, were strongly against cooperation with any of the other political groups, preferring to stake their future on the advance of the Soviet forces.

In 1948, during the "national deviationist" purge, the Muscovites cited these differences of approach to show that the "natives" under Gomulka were already showing inclinations toward "national deviation." In fact, if a deviation existed at all it was on the side of Bierut and the "Muscovites," who were opposing collaboration with other political groups. In so doing, they were going against general wartime Communist policy in Eastern Europe which was keyed to an "anti-fascist

* This article was later used against the Gomulka group as evidence of factionalism and national deviation. The article, however, was probably in agreement with general Communist policy at the time, as approved by Moscow.

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front" of groups fighting the Axis forces. In advocating cooperation with such groups, on the other hand, Gomulka and the "natives" were following Moscow's policy to the letter.*

The "natives" in the party leadership apparently outnumbered the "Muscovites" during the wartime period.** The most important "Muscovite" Communists, aside from Bierut and Jozwiak-Witold, were not in Poland at all, but were in the "political officer" cadres of the Polish units in the Red Army.*** Some of them were simultaneously members of the "Union of Polish Patriots." All of them later joined the PPR leadership in 1944 when the Red Army arrived in Poland, but prior to that time the "natives" were predominant in numbers and influence.

Much was made, at a later stage, of the differences which existed between the two factions of the Polish Communist underground, and during the Gomulka purge in 1948-49, many

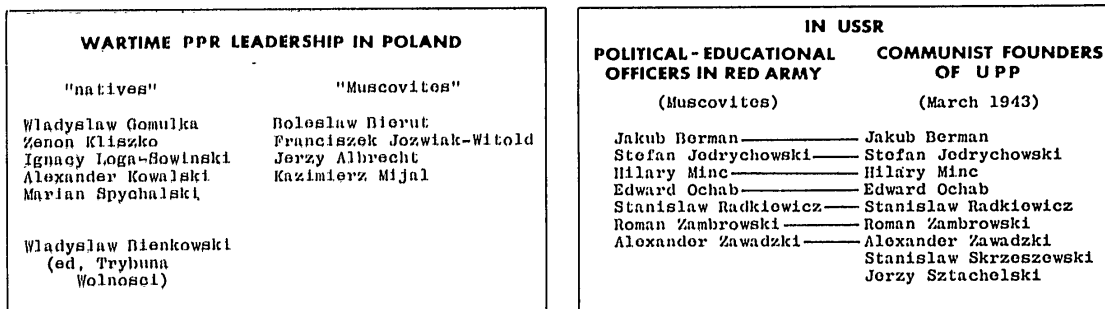
* Poland's case was complicated in view of Moscow's hostile attitude, after mid-1943, toward the Polish government-in-exile. Nevertheless, the PPR leadership was making overtures to the London-led political parties even before Gomulka became party leader. Furthermore, the policy favored by the "natives" in the PPR later, in 1944, was to subvert the main London-led political parties and attempt to win over significant portions from the rank and file to the support of a Communist-led regime. Thus, Gomulka and the "natives" were not out of line with Moscow on this score either.

** In addition to Gomulka, the main "natives" in the PPR leadership at this time were Zenon Kliszko, Ignacy Loga-Sowinski, and Alexander Kowalski. Outside the central committee they also included Wladyslaw Bienkowski, editor of the central party newspaper, Trybuna Wolnosci.

*** The following important Polish Communists were political officers in the Red Army at this time: Jakub Berman, Hilary Minc, Edward Ochab, Kazimierz Witaszewski, Roman Zambrowski, and Alexander Zawadzki.

Those veterans of the "Dabrowski Brigade" in the Spanish Civil War who had returned to the USSR during the course of World War II formed an important segment of the leadership of the Polish Red Army units.

**POLISH WORKERS' PARTY (PPR)
LEADERSHIP
WARTIME EVOLUTION**



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PPR LEADERSHIP IN 1945	
"natives"	"Muscovites"
Wladyslaw Gomulka	Boleslaw Bierut
Marian Spychalski	Jakub Berman
Wladyslaw Bionkowski	Stanislaw Radkiewicz
Alexander Kowalski	Franciszek Jozwiak-Witold
Ignacy Loga-Sowinski	Hilary Minc
Mieczyslaw Moczar	Edward Ochab
Ignacy Korczynski	Alexander Zawadzki
Marian Baryla	Roman Zambrowski
	Stefan Jodrychowski
	Jerzy Albrocht
	Kazimierz Mijal

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exaggerated charges concerning the former differences were made. As has been seen, differences between the factions did exist, but the "natives" were closer at the time to Moscow's approved line. The element of nationalism, or the lack of it, was not an issue at the time between Communists. Nor did such a phenomenon as a "national deviation" exist at the time. Nationalism was, in fact, then in approved tactical use in international Communist policy.

The build-up of the Communist regime--The PKWN

The stages in setting up a Communist regime for Poland proceeded apace during 1944. The necessity for this was immediate, since the Red Army had entered former Polish territory at the beginning of the year. Relations with the Polish government-in-exile having been "interrupted," the Soviet leaders were determined that the London-led underground should be prevented at all costs from seizing authority in liberated Poland. With the advance of the Red Army, therefore, all efforts were made to disarm and break up the units of the London-led underground "Home Army" in the eastern territories of Poland. Simultaneously, concerted efforts were made to strengthen the Communist underground and its puppet parliament, the KRN. A delegation of the latter body was summoned to Moscow in May, 1944 and the KRN was officially recognized by the USSR as the "sole and unique democratic organization and the most representative of the Polish nation." Two months later, as the Red Army had advanced as far as Lublin, representatives from the "Union of Polish Patriots" and from the Polish Communist underground assembled there to form a "provisional executive authority" called the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN), which was to become the nucleus of the subsequent Communist regime. The KRN remained its legislative arm.

Since only discredited or politically insignificant non-Communists were included in its make-up, the PKWN was not a truly representative group. It was of major importance, however, for the Polish Communist movement, since it represented the amalgamation of the two separate branches of war-time Polish Communist activity--the underground in occupied Poland and the Soviet-sponsored organizational activity in the USSR. Several members of the PPR underground movement, including Secretary General Gomulka, received portfolios in the PKWN. This was of tactical significance, since the PKWN was later to become the "Provisional Government of Poland."

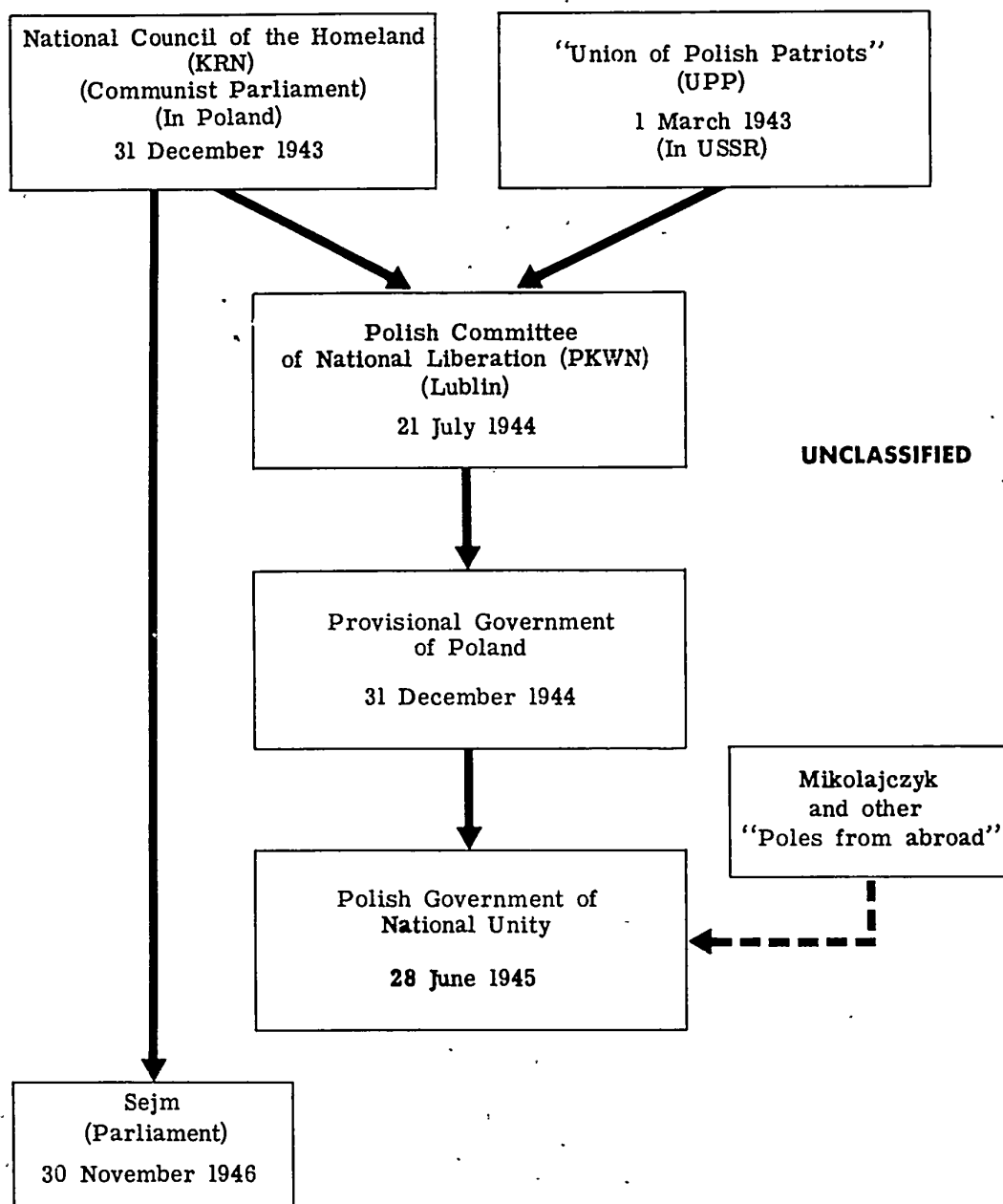
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With the arrival on Polish soil of the Polish units in the Red Army, together with the Communists in the "Union of Polish Patriots," the PPR experienced important changes in the composition of its leadership. The "Muscovites" who accompanied the Red Army took over important positions, thus acting to counterbalance the strength of the "native" group in the party, which had been built up during the war. In the politburo of the PPR immediately after the war, the two elements were almost evenly divided.

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EVOLUTION OF COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED POLISH GOVERNMENT 1943-1946



*SECRET*CHAPTER IIITHE IMMEDIATE POSTWAR PERIODThe Polish road, as approved by Moscow

As early as 1943 the PPR was using nationalism as an essential element in its policy. During the war, it posed as a patriotic partisan movement in order to rally popular support. In so doing, the historical ties with the old SDKPiL and the KPP were minimized and the word "Communist" eliminated from the party's name. The party tried thus to disavow any connection with prewar Polish Communism, or, for that matter, with Communism as it was practiced in the Soviet Union. It pretended, moreover, to be not a hard-core party but a broad party embracing various elements of leftist inclination.*

This policy was continued into the postwar period, since it met the requirements of general Soviet strategy at the time and fitted the needs of internal policy in postwar Poland. The tasks of land reform, of assimilating the "recovered territories" in the West, and of basic industrialization went hand in hand with the PPR's use of the broad national-front tactic. In the postwar period of reconstruction, moderation in the achievement of socialist goals was vitally necessary in Poland in order not to alarm fellow travelers or to play into the hands of powerful democratic forces still existing in Poland. That the party leadership was well aware of this necessity is seen in a statement in the party newspaper in November, 1945 by Edward Ochab, one of the Moscow-oriented leaders of the PPR. Ochab warned against the danger of "leftist sectarianism." He expressed the fear that

certain impatient comrades will put forth slogans of proletarian democracy, which does not yet correspond to the degree of consciousness of the masses or to the relationship of forces. ...to strengthen the people's power, to increase the welfare of the masses, to rebuild the country, to strengthen relations with the USSR, to put an end to the disastrous effects of the

* In March 1943, in its first manifesto, the PPR went so far as to associate itself with the PPS fight for independence under Pilsudski in 1905.

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war and the occupation, and to assure full employment, the development of the recovered territories, and the development of the creative forces of the nation--that is the road which leads to complete victory.

The postwar program of the PPR stressed the subordination of socialist to national goals, repudiated collectivization in agriculture,* and maintained that private enterprise would enjoy a permanent role in the economy. It also played down any conflict with religion.

Between 1944 and 1947 the Soviet government encouraged this policy. In fact, certain statements by Stalin even lent it public support, by implying that Soviet institutions and methods would not be desirable or likely to succeed in Poland. In similar fashion, the "Muscovites" in the PPR, such men as Berman, Minc, and Zambrowski, openly supported this policy, which portrayed "People's Democracy" as a permanent political system, and set a course which amounted to a distinctive "Polish road to Socialism."

As secretary general of the party, Gomulka naturally became the chief exponent of this approach. At the first openly convened plenum of the PPR in May, 1945, he denied "reactionary rumors" that Poland was about to be sovietized. He said,

There are two reasons why Poland cannot be a Soviet Republic. First, the Polish people do not want it. Second, the Soviet Union does not want it....Poland is not going on the way of sovietization, but on the way of democratization.

* On May 4, 1945, the "Muscovite" Roman Zambrowski said, "The Polish Workers' Party never advanced the slogan of collectivization and does not have collectivization in its program. We are not aware that any democratic party should have collectivization in its program. However, it is a fact that the reactionaries have succeeded in deceiving a part of the peasants (concerning this).!" At the same meeting, Hilary Minc also denied that the regime envisaged collectivization in the future.

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As had been the case during the war, there were some elements in the party which tended to be more doctrinaire and inflexible in their approach to the new policy, but their attitude was attacked by Gomulka during party meetings as "leftist sectarian." Apart from occasional references to this attitude in his speeches, however, there is no indication that the majority of the party leadership, including the "Muscovites," did not support these policies enthusiastically at the time.

In a speech at the end of November, 1946, Gomulka made an official explanation of the system of "People's Democracy," as practiced in Poland, and of the "Polish way of development toward socialism." He stressed the basic differences between postwar conditions in Poland and those which had existed in the Soviet Union at the close of World War I which justified the violent revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. There was no necessity for either in Poland, he argued, and the development toward socialism would be made there through the system of people's democracy, in which a bloc of "democratic" parties would exercise the power of government. Whereas in the Soviet Union government was exercised through the soviets, which possessed both executive and legislative functions, in Poland the two functions were separated and the government was based on the system of parliamentary democracy. While in Russia the revolutionaries had to struggle against domestic and foreign counterrevolutionaries, all the Polish regime had to deal with at the close of World War II was the "reactionary underground." Communist Poland started with a larger industrial base than did Soviet Russia, and therefore there would be need for much less hardship for the Polish people. There was absolutely no necessity, he said, for Poland to follow the Soviet pattern in agriculture. "We have rejected collectivization, since in Polish conditions it would be harmful in the economic and political sense." Individual initiative and nonsocialized forms of production were recognized as useful in a "definite segment of industrial production." The type of democracy practiced in Poland was not similar to the "traditional democracies" in the West, according to Gomulka, since in the Western countries the big bankers and capitalists still had the deciding role in government. Nor was it similar to the Soviet system, where there was only one party in the absence of class antagonism. The Polish system was somewhere in between, exercising power through a multiparty parliamentary system. Gomulka concluded,

Our democracy has many elements of socialist democracy and also many elements of liberal-bourgeois democracy,

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just as our economic system has many features of socialist and capitalist economy. Our type of democracy and our social system we have designated "People's Democracy.

In keeping with this policy of "People's Democracy" and the "democratic bloc," the PPR pretended, between 1943 and 1947, to be a new type of party, not really a Communist party at all. As such, it encouraged indiscriminate large-scale recruitment of new members and, as a result, obtained during this period a large number of opportunists, many of whom did not consider themselves Communists. Gomulka was chief advocate of this policy. In December, 1945, in a party speech, he said:

We must admit into our party and into the school of our party all good workers and good democrats who fight for democracy, although they do not know what it is.... These men are coming to our party because they consider that what the party and its leaders say is right. They agree that the slogans of struggle against reaction, struggle for peace, and struggle for nationalization of industry are right. That is why they have come to us. We want a million such people to come into our party.

He was supported in this by the "Muscovites." Roman Zambrowski took up the secretary general's appeal in his pamphlet For a Million Members of the Party. As a result of this policy, the PPR increased its membership from less than 24,000 at the beginning of 1945 to 800,000 in the spring of 1947.

The leaders of the PPR realized that such an appeal for broad increase in membership would have little success if the party stressed continuity with the prewar Communist Party of Poland (KPP). Gomulka was fond during this period of criticizing the past mistakes of the SDKPiL and the KPP, and repeatedly claimed that the PPR was not a continuation of the KPP, but a new party. In September 1947 he said:

The Communist Party of Poland (KPP), burdened with the traditions of Luxemburgism, committed a number of errors in the past, especially on the national question... it was only during the Second World War...that the PPR, composed of members of former Communist parties disbanded as far back as 1938, and of other true democrats... came to the fore of the movement as a party fighting for us to spread the party's political influences over the working class and other sections of the people.

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A month later, following the meeting which established the Cominform, he said:

...it would not be proper to define the PPR as a Communist party. We are not a continuation of the erstwhile Communist Party of Poland (KKP). The first convention of our party established that the PPR is a new party, just as new as is the Poland which arose after the German occupation.'

Such statements prove that, during the period 1943 to 1947, Gomulka was not a "deviationist" from accepted Communist policy. On the contrary, he was extremely useful to the party during this period as the most ardent and effective exponent of the "national front" policy. His moderation in internal political and economic problems, moreover, was accompanied during this period by an uncompromising, open battle against serious contenders for power. The struggle against Mikolajczyk's Peasant party, for example, which was conducted under Gomulka's leadership, was a display of the most harsh and brutal Communist tactics. The same was true of the regime's postwar fight against the remnants of the non-Communist Polish underground. If an opponent posed a threat to the retention of power by the PPR, then Gomulka was militant and unrelenting in his methods of attack. Over the preservation of the party's power, therefore, Gomulka was little different from the most hardened, Moscow-trained party militants.

Gomulka becomes a Titoist

As the leader and chief advocate of the moderate internal policies of the postwar period, Gomulka became deeply involved in the local problems associated with reconstruction. In addition to his duties as party leader he was also deputy premier and minister for the recovered territories, and gradually became more and more preoccupied with the problems associated with the rebuilding and repopulation of these areas. His anti-Germanism, which was deeply ingrained from his experience under German occupation, was reflected in his supervision of the expulsion of the Germans from these lands. During this period Gomulka also built up some resentment against arbitrary Soviet actions in the area, especially looting and the removal of industrial installations. He clashed with the local Soviet commander, Marshal Rokossovsky, even issuing orders at one time for the Polish army to take measures to stop continued looting by Soviet troops in these territories.

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As he became more closely involved with local problems and the general Polish nationalist attitude of the populace, Gomulka appears to have lost perspective during these years with regard to the originating source of party policy. As the most enthusiastic implementer of the Communist policies of the postwar period, he began to identify himself more and more with these policies, and thus to forget that Moscow viewed them as temporary and tactical in nature. Whether consciously or subconsciously, Gomulka apparently began to feel that these policies were correct for Poland, and that, as the leader on the spot who understood the problem, he should be the one to determine when the changes should take place to the next phase of socialist development. In this respect Gomulka was similar to Tito.*

Gomulka also led the party's campaign to cultivate the members of the Socialist party (PPS) and prepare them for assimilation into the PPR. In his speeches to the Socialists during this period he often praised the traditions of the PPS and sometimes said that the new United Workers' Party would express a synthesis of old Polish Communism and old Polish Socialism with its patriotic traditions.

Gomulka was highly respected in the party for his courageous wartime leadership. During his first tenure as party leader, moreover, Gomulka built up a strong personal following in the party, especially among the large majority of the members who had joined for opportunist reasons. His personal dynamism was such that he won the confidence and respect of a large proportion of the rank and file of his own party, not to mention the Socialist party (PPS). He had also built up a personal staff among the "natives" in the party leadership, who reflected his outlook completely. That group by this time included Zenon Kliszko, Marian Spychalski, Wladyslaw Bienkowski, Alexander Kowalski, Ignacy Loga-Sowinski, Miecyslaw Moczar, Marian Baryla, Ignacy Korczynski, and others. Several of them had charge of important spheres of activity in the party-- Spychalski, for example, in the armed forces, Kliszko in party cadres, Kowalski in youth organization, Moczar in the police, and Bienkowski in the cultural sphere.

The extent of Gomulka's prestige both in and outside the party, to a man who had been only a minor Communist figure before the war, was doubtless a strong contributing factor

* See Tito's views on Communism in Yugoslavia, as expressed to the CPSU in The Soviet-Yugoslav Dispute (R.I.I.A.).

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affecting his loss of perspective about the real equation of power in the Communist world, and the relationship of the Polish Workers' party to Moscow.

Gomulka's power position--comparison with Tito

The almost even division of power in the PPR leadership between "natives" and "Muscovites" at the end of World War II constitutes one of the major differences between the PPR and the Communist party of Yugoslavia, the cradle of "nationalist deviation." Before considering the "Titoist" purge in the Polish party, it seems pertinent to examine the basic differences between the two parties, which were to affect the relative power positions, respectively, of Tito and Gomulka.

First of all, whereas the Yugoslav party leadership consisted of a solidly knit group of "native" Communists (except for Tito himself, who was not a "native") whose comradeship was welded in partisan warfare, the PPR leadership from the outset contained both "natives" and "Muscovites," which prevented the development of a similar spirit of cohesion. The Polish party itself was weak both in strength and in popular support at the end of the war, in contrast to Tito's party in Yugoslavia. The two parties also differed considerably in the extent of military force at their disposal. While Tito had developed his own strong military force during the war with material help from the Western powers, the PPR possessed no military force of importance which had not been created and controlled by the Red army. Control over the Polish security apparatus appears to have been divided during the war, but after the arrival of the Red army, the "Muscovites" gradually assumed control. Thus, after the war Gomulka and the "native" elements in the PPR had none of the three cornerstones of power which Tito possessed--control over the party, the army, and the security forces. Added to these disadvantages, moreover, was Poland's geographical position, which placed it at the mercy of the USSR.

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*SECRET*CHAPTER IVTHE PURGE OF THE POLISH NATIONAL DEVIATIONISTSGomulka's Hour of Decision

The establishment of the Cominform in September 1947 was a turning point in postwar Communist policy toward Eastern Europe. Up to that time, no serious disagreement had arisen between Moscow and Communist leaders in Eastern Europe over policy and tactics, which had been primarily designed to eliminate all political opposition and consolidate the positions of the Communist regimes. The scheme of "People's Democracy" had been adopted as a pattern throughout the area during the immediate postwar period. Whether Moscow's abrupt change in tactics was caused primarily by the necessity to consolidate the Communist world in answer to the Marshall Plan and other manifestations of non-Communist consolidation, or whether the various local leaders of Communist parties both in and out of power were showing too many signs of independence, in any event the establishment of the Cominform was symbolic of the change to increased control by Moscow and the tempering of individuality and independent action among local Communist leaders. From this point on, and especially following the dispute with Tito in the spring of 1948, Communist policy in the Eastern European countries ceased to stress local "particularism" and gradually placed increasing emphasis on Soviet experience and methods as the example to follow in the pursuit of socialist goals. From this time, and even up to the death of Stalin, Communist leaders in these countries continued to use Soviet experience in all fields (e.g., rapid industrialization, forced collectivization in agriculture, "socialist realism" in cultural policy) as the pattern for their own internal policies.

The Emerging Deviation

As secretary general of the party, Gomulka issued invitations and acted as host to the delegates who attended the founding session of the Cominform in western Poland in September 1947. He later admitted that he had been opposed to its creation and implied that, despite the fact that the Polish party had been the official host, the initiative for the meeting had come from another quarter.*

* The meeting was held in a small spa at Szklarska Poremba (Schreiberhau) on the Polish-Czech border. According to Vladimir Dedijer, Gomulka at this meeting openly opposed the establishment of the Cominform, but later yielded with the request that its establishment remain secret. He also clashed with Zhdanov at the meeting on the question of collectivization in Poland.

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Gomulka thus indicated his fear that the new organization signified a tightening of control by Moscow and a trend toward uniformity in internal policy, the implications of which did not augur well, as far as he was concerned, for Poland.

Only a month after the establishment of the Cominform, Gomulka told the PPR central committee that in the circumstances then prevailing in Poland, "it would not be proper to define the PPR as a Communist party." Despite membership in the Cominform, he said, the PPR would nevertheless preserve its unique ideological character. At party meetings during the period he continued to criticize the former SDKPiL and its leaders for their lack of understanding of the national problem, and accused the KPP of the same error. On the other hand, he praised the nationalistic traditions of the PPS, going so far as to say that the latter, "in regard to the independence of Poland, has shown a more realistic political sense than the SDKPiL." He carried this praise a step further by expressing his desire "to make the fine traditions of the PPS, devoted to national independence, the foundation of the unified party." He felt that the new PPR could unite the best of these "fine traditions" with the revolutionary spirit of the SDKPiL.

Even during the height of the Yugoslav dispute with Moscow, when letters were being exchanged between the two parties and simultaneously circulated to others, Gomulka continued to stress his views in public. As far as the future amalgamation with the Socialists was concerned, he repeatedly said that he desired an "organic merger" with the entire Socialist party without any prior large-scale purge. Gomulka's continued stress on this theme, even at a time when the contents of Moscow's letters charging Tito with such heresies as submerging the party in the People's Front were being widely circulated among Communist leaders, supports the conclusion that Gomulka at the time intended to stand firm.

Gomulka later indicated that he had, indeed, followed the course of the Soviet-Yugoslav dispute very closely. He was aware of its full implications. As he expressed it in November, 1949,

The conflict between the CPSU and the Communist party of Yugoslavia was to me like a bolt from the blue. I was frightened. I too had a certain distrust and criticism of the struggle begun by the CPSU.

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Gomulka knew that many of the charges which were being made against Tito could, without very much stretch of the imagination, be applied to him. Had he not been praising the nationalist traditions of the PPS? Had he not followed a similar policy to Tito's in respect to the Democratic Bloc and the peasants? Was he not opposed to collectivization in agriculture, believing it to be premature in Poland? Had he not expressed irritation toward certain Soviet practices and activities, as had Tito?

Gomulka's statement that he was "frightened" suggests that he saw the handwriting on the wall. As the chief and most effective proponent in Poland of the moderate internal policies of the postwar period, Gomulka had implemented them so well that he had lost cognizance of their tactical nature. But if the establishment of the Cominform had been a signal of events to come, the correspondence between Moscow and Belgrade in March, April, and May of 1948 provided unmistakable evidence for Gomulka that Moscow had decided that the time had come for a basic change in these policies. Communist leaders would now have to adjust to the new outlook, or suffer the consequences. Yet, though the evidence shows that he must have appreciated all this, Gomulka nevertheless persisted in his heretical policy pronouncements.

To the Soviet leaders it was clear by this time that he must go. As early as September 1947, at the founding session of the Cominform, Gomulka had made known, in the presence of Zhdanov and Malenkov, his distrust of the Soviet Union, his opposition to the Cominform, and his general stubborn streak toward accepting outside directives on internal policy. His continuing demonstration of these characteristics in early 1948, together with his tendencies toward ideological deviation, cannot have endeared him to the Soviet leaders. His open sympathy for Tito's position during the dispute with Moscow, moreover, would probably have impelled the Soviet leaders to remove him, whether or not the decision had already been taken. Whether by direct Soviet suggestion, as seems likely, or whether indirectly from the correspondence between Moscow and Belgrade, in any event the "Muscovite" leaders in the PPR concluded at this time that the Polish party must be made to alter its course in the new direction indicated by Moscow. If, to achieve this, Gomulka and his associates had to be broken, then that would be the necessary price. But, in any case, nothing must be allowed to stand in the way of bringing the Polish party into line. The decision to attack him, clearly, was made well before the June central committee plenum. The plenum, however, was the scene of the initial attack, which concentrated on the issue of his ideological deviation vis-a-vis the party.

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*SECRET*The June Central Committee Plenum (3 June 1948)

The "Muscovites" under the leadership of Berman seized the occasion of the June plenum to dispute Gomulka's views on the ideological basis to be adopted for the party when it merged with the Socialists. In his report to the plenum, Gomulka argued that the future United Workers' party should rest on a basis of "general socialism," that it should represent something purely Polish which might be expected to appeal in popular form to the Polish masses. He felt that it should not be treated as a successor to the KPP since the latter was unpopular in Poland. Nor should it be too closely connected with the Cominform. During the meeting, Berman rose to the attack, taking the position that the new party must be considered the final step in the evolution of Polish Communism, commencing with the SDKPiL, the KPRP, and the KPP. Furthermore, he said, it should be identified with the Cominform as an instrument of international Communism. The argument was prolonged and acrimonious. It was joined at various junctures by other individuals. In the beginning Gomulka was supported by his closest followers.* At a critical point in the argument, however, General Marian Spychalski, a key member of Gomulka's coterie, switched sides in the argument and attacked the Gomulka position.**

The June plenum, thus, was the turning point for Gomulka. No action was taken against him, but clear lines of demarcation were established between the opposing factions. Spychalski's action, furthermore, considerably strengthened the hand of the "Muscovites," although they apparently were afraid to bring the issue to a vote yet in the central committee. Instead, they waited until after the plenum to call a meeting of the politburo, where they held a clear majority.***

* Kliszko, Kowalski, Moczar, Baryla, Korczynski, and others.

** The former Polish security official, Jozef Swiatlo, has disclosed that the tactic used by the "Muscovites" to break the cohesiveness of the Gomulka supporters was to blackmail one of his closest associates, Marian Spychalski, into taking sides against him. Spychalski had occupied a key Communist post during the war as chief of People's Army Intelligence, and his infiltration of agents into the Polish underground subordinate to the Polish government-in-exile could easily be twisted against him. He also had a brother in the London-led underground movement. This information, according to Swiatlo, was used by the other members of the politburo in 1948 to force him into attacking Gomulka in June and also during the September plenum.

*** The full members of the politburo, who had voting rights, then consisted of Berman, Bierut, Gomulka, Jozwiak, Minc, Radkiewicz, Spychalski, Zambrowski, and Zawadzki.

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It was this politburo session, then, which first moved to censure Gomulka. As Bierut expressed it during the September central committee plenum:

The June report of Comrade Wieslaw was undoubtedly a conscious and premeditated revision of the Leninist analysis of the history of our movement. The resolution of the political bureau voted immediately after the June plenum contained a complete critique of the errors revealed in Comrade Wieslaw's report at the 3 June plenum of the central committee.

After the politburo had censured the Gomulka position, Berman went to Bucharest to represent the PPR at the Cominform meeting at the end of June which adopted the famous resolution condemning Tito. The politburo, meanwhile, held frequent meetings during June, imploring the stubborn secretary general to retract his views. He refused, however, to recant, and when Berman came back from Bucharest, Gomulka proceeded not only to express sympathy for Tito, but also to attack that part of the Cominform resolution dealing with the "socialist transformation of agriculture."* As Gomulka expressed it in November, 1949:

I felt that at that stage of our development, in view of the situation of our agriculture, industry, and technical and political cadres, and because of the incomplete repopulating and equipping of the recovered territories, the watchword of collectivization was not yet opportune and that it was erroneous from the tactical point of view, although correct from the point of view of the program...

The politburo having failed to bring him around, Gomulka went on "sick leave" at the end of June, reported by the party press to be suffering from "nervous exhaustion."

During July, the evidence indicates that he was in effect under house arrest. He had intended, apparently, to speak at a "recovered territories" exhibition on 21 July, but was prevented from doing so by the party leadership. During July and

* At one point, apparently, Gomulka offered to resign, but the other leaders knew they could not permit this without a retraction, since it would make him a public hero as well as reveal the extent of the split in the party leadership.

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August, when Gomulka was away from the scene, his name was rapidly becoming a symbol, among the peasantry, of opposition to collectivization and to the Cominform communiqué heralding the "sharpening of class-warfare" in the villages. There was even a question at one point whether his popularity and the strong support for his position in the country would force the party leadership to seek an accommodation with him.

During July, however, Berman continued to consolidate the case against Gomulka. In the absence of the secretary general he persuaded the PPR central committee in its plenum of 6-7 July to endorse the Cominform resolution condemning Tito. This was followed up on 12 July by a meeting of the PPR activists,* who also formally approved the resolution. Gomulka's isolation in the leading echelons of the party was now virtually complete.

The ground, thus, was well prepared for the central committee plenum scheduled for the end of August. Gomulka re-joined the politburo on 16 August, but then only engaged in arguments with the other members over the "self-criticism" which the politburo desired him to undertake. Not long afterward he was suspended from the post of secretary general, and toward the end of August was replaced in that office by the erstwhile President of the Republic, Boleslaw Bierut.

The question of the leadership of the party had thus been settled well before the central committee plenum convened on 31 August. The session, clearly, was intended to formalize the new situation by a theatrical display designed to convince the party membership of the correctness of the party's course, and also to deal a body-blow to Gomulka's great prestige in the party.

The September Plenum (31 August - 3 September, 1948)

In contrast to his isolation within the party leadership, Gomulka's strength and prestige in the party as a whole were never more apparent than at the September plenum. All of his transgressions were outlined in the draft resolution, as formulated by the politburo, and most of the proceedings were devoted to pleading with Gomulka to accept this version in entirety, imploring him to confess that he had done wrong as a Communist, and, as Berman put it, "all will be forgotten and forgiven." In

* This included the most reliable and responsible individuals from the entire party apparatus.

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his first speech, Gomulka admitted most of the charges in the resolution.* There was only one point which he stubbornly refused to accept. Point five of the resolution referred to the days of the wartime underground, accusing him of "hesitation" and desires to: "prostitute the concept of the National Council for the Homeland (KRN) and to form a bloc with the CKL and consequently to withdraw from a position of leadership over the working class in the struggle for authority over the State."

Gomulka refused to admit that he had done anything wrong during the wartime period, or that his behavior then had anything to do with the accusations against him now. Most of the remaining time of the plenum was spent by the central committee members urging Gomulka to accept the resolution as a whole. His followers, who had been conditioned previously by the party and the security authorities, made complete and extensive self-criticisms, and they too joined the other members in pleading with Gomulka to make full recantation. Eventually the members were successful. In the end, Gomulka accepted the entire resolution, and his third statement in self-criticism was judged by the party leadership to be "satisfactory." Gomulka explained the reasons for his capitulation a year later as follows:

It was clear to me that I might not make a single move which might disrupt or weaken the party... When this had impressed itself upon my mind, I offered my self-criticism and did so in all sincerity.

At the close of the plenum, Gomulka's resignation as secretary general of the party was officially accepted, although he remained a member of the central committee and also retained his government posts. His followers, Kliszko, Loga-Sowinski, Kowalski, Baryla, and Korczynski, were demoted from full to candidate members of the central committee. General Moczar was merely reprimanded.

Gomulka's "right national deviation" was now officially discredited in the party. The opportunity had also been taken to outline the new course of policy for the PPR, which would bring it into line with the Cominform resolution and the new wind from Moscow. The resolution called on party members to purge themselves of all errors similar to those exhibited by Gomulka and his followers, and to shift to the

* These charges will be considered in detail in the following chapter.

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new line which was in accordance with the "sharpening in the class struggle." Gomulka and his followers thus were made the scapegoats for the old policy, but their treatment at this stage was mild, and the accusations remained, for the most part, on the ideological plane. Nowhere at this time was there any mention of "crimes" or "treachery," and Gomulka's major sin, as in the case with Tito at this time, was in his alleged deviation from Marxism-Leninism.

The September plenum achieved more, however, than the official condemnation of the "right national deviation." It also achieved the victory of the "foreign" group over the "natives" who had dominated the party since 1943, on the basis that they had led the struggle against the Germans during the war. Now the "Muscovite" group under the leadership of Bierut, Berman, and Minc was in firm control, and the party was now prepared to close ranks with Moscow, and to adhere more closely to Moscow's desires in internal policy.*

The Merger Congress--Gomulka's Behavior

Gomulka retreated into silence after the September plenum. According to a later comment by Hilary Minc, Gomulka did not want to attend the Fusion Congress of the Communist and Socialist parties in December,**

* Minc's new agricultural policy, as outlined at the plenum, paid much lip service to collectivization, but actually amounted to little, if any, change from the previous Gomulka-sponsored policy.

** The downfall of the Gomulka group in the PPR was accompanied by an abrupt shift in policy toward the PPS (Polish Socialist Party). Even before the meeting of the supreme council of the Socialist party on 18-21 September, its leadership had already undergone a drastic purge. The executive committee now contained only individuals considered reliable from the Communist point of view. Its leader, Jozef Cyrankiewicz, made a savage attack on the traditions and past activities of the PPS, the workers who supported it, and those Socialists who had demanded the limitation of the powers of the Ministry of Public Security. A further purge of the leadership took place during the September meeting, eliminating many former willing fellow travelers who heretofore had been used as instruments by the Communists. The Socialist party was thus "prepared" for its merger with the PPR-- but on Stalinist terms. The period prior to the merger congress saw a further purge of "rightist elements" from the party rank and file.

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The party leaders, however, according to Minc, were determined not only that Gomulka should attend the Fusion Congress, for otherwise "it would have meant for the world that he had withdrawn his self-criticism," but that he should also be elected to the central committee of the new United Workers' party, even though "we had to urge comrades to vote for him."

Gomulka's speech to the congress, however, proved to be anything but the sort of speech which the Communist leaders desired. According to subsequent statements by central committee members, it had a decidedly nationalist slant, and constituted not only an unrepentant reassertion of some of his previous views, but also an indirect attack on the party leaders, accusing them of failing to take Polish nationalism into account in the formulation of policy, and implying that they were puppets of Moscow. Evidently, Gomulka's basic outlook had remained unchanged despite his self-criticism in September.

Gomulka's astonishing performance evidently took the party leaders completely by surprise. They suddenly found it necessary to organize a "spontaneous demonstration" against him during the congress.

Subsequent to the "Fusion Congress," which elected him to the new central committee, Gomulka was gradually eliminated from his various responsible posts. In January 1949, he was removed as deputy prime minister and minister for the recovered territories (the ministry itself was abolished). He was made second deputy chairman of the supreme control commission, a post which exerted no authority and was under effective supervision.

The New Atmosphere in 1949--the Sychalski Affair

The atmosphere in Eastern Europe changed considerably between the autumns of 1948 and 1949. The beginning of the period was marked by charges of national deviation in the party and of mild accusations against those who were found to be obstructing the new shift in Soviet policy. But by the fall of 1949, several additional elements had been added to the picture. With the trial of Laszlo Rajk in September 1949, the element of spy hysteria was introduced.

Gomulka had been removed as party leader, but his influence had by no means been broken in the party. In order to do so, it became expedient to inject the implication of treason. A more natural tool for use in this maneuver could not be found than Marian Sychalski. The same intelligence background which was used so effectively to force him to turn on his comrades in June and September 1948 was now to be used to break Sychalski himself, in order to force him to testify in public that treason was committed and spies introduced into the Polish regime under the very nose of Gomulka.

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As early as April 1949 Spychalski was transferred from his key position in the Defense Ministry to the Ministry for Construction. In the early autumn, he was removed from the politburo. This provided ample time for Spychalski to be "prepared" for the forthcoming party plenum in November, when he could join the ranks of the accused associates of Gomulka. In the meantime, the trial of Rajk in Hungary was to establish the new theme of the accusations, which were no longer to confine themselves to deviation, but now were to include treason, plots, and espionage.

The November Plenum (11-13 November 1949): The Expulsion of Gomulka, Spychalski and Kliszko from the Central Committee

The charges this time against Gomulka and his associates were that during the period since the September plenum they had shown no inclination to right the wrongs they had committed, and, in the case of Gomulka particularly, had retained their deviationist views. Gomulka's silence after the plenum was cited to show that he had retired to "wait for better times." His behavior at the Fusion Congress in December was referred to as clear evidence that he had not changed his nationalistic attitude despite his recantation in September. In addition to this, as Minc charged during the November plenum, Gomulka had written only limp articles during the period, and when Djilas of Yugoslavia referred to Gomulka favorably, it took two months for the party to drag a reply out of him. It was Minc, indeed, who made the most savage attack, and who set the tone of the meeting. All three of the accused, Gomulka, Spychalski, and Kliszko, had received every chance; they did not take it; they must therefore be swept out.

The accusation against Spychalski was in accordance with the spirit of the Rajk trial. Spychalski was allegedly guilty of allowing agents of the prewar regime and the Gestapo to penetrate the underground during the war, and the government after the war.* He was also accused of nationalism, and, as Deputy Minister of Defense, he was accused of "permitting" Soviet specialists in the Polish armed forces to depart for the USSR "prematurely" and of general "lack of vigilance" in his position. Thus, the theme of tightened discipline and "vigilance" in the armed forces was introduced to accompany and justify the appointment of Marshal Rokossovsky in November as minister of national defense.

* The preparation of Spychalski's case by the security authorities is described in the next chapter.

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The speeches of Spychalski and Kliszko showed that both of them had been successfully "prepared." Both accepted all the accusations against them and criticized themselves to the point of utter servility. Kliszko's performance was so abject that few central committee members paid any attention to him. Spychalski's was on the same level but committee members attacked him for not having earlier revealed his sins and implied that he could reveal a great deal more treachery than was contained in the accusation if he so desired.

The charges against Gomulka were now expanded to imply treason. Thus it was implied that he had something to do WITH the deaths of his predecessors as leader of the party during the war. The charges of lack of vigilance in tolerating the situation connected with Spychalski were expanded to imply that it was not mere lack of vigilance on the part of Gomulka, but deliberate treachery. Gomulka was attacked for all the same things he had been attacked for a year before. In addition to his distrust of the USSR, the party leadership now brought in Gomulka's fierce hatred toward the Germans, which allegedly prevented his adjusting and adopting a friendly attitude toward Communist East Germany. The theme of his distrust for the East German Communists frequently recurred during the plenum.*

In contrast to the other two accused, Gomulka's performance was courageous. While he admitted most of the charges he had admitted at the September plenum, he indignantly denied that he had been guilty of new charges. He denied responsibility for penetrations of the Communist underground during the war, but, retracting part of his previous self-criticism, adamantly refused to admit responsibility for anything that occurred during the war. Besides, he said, he was not the only one who made mistakes. He heatedly denied any connection with the deaths of his predecessors, Nowotko and Finder, and expressed indignation that he was being dragged in the dirt and humiliated repeatedly when his entire life had been devoted to the party and to Communism. Finally, he added:

I considered it my party duty to tell you what I think, and as I think, and how I approach these problems--to admit honestly all blunders committed by me. And it is up to you to draw your own conclusions therefrom.

*Gomulka's hostility to the Germans, as a result of his wartime experience and as a result of his having supervised the expulsion of Germans from the "recovered territories" immediately after the war, was exceptionally strong even for a Pole. This quality made it difficult for him to become reconciled to any Germans--even Communists--and undoubtedly affected his relations with the East German Communists.

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Gomulka's courageous performance, while it later enhanced his "legendary" stature, was lost by this time on the members of the central committee. One by one they all attacked the former secretary general, this time sparing him nothing. All three of the defendants--Gomulka, Spychalski, and Kliszko--were then expelled from the central committee and "deprived of the right to participate in party activities of any sort."*

The plenum of November 1949 marked the end of this first Titoist crisis in the Polish Communist party. The crisis had begun with the establishment of the Cominform and had waxed with the development of the rift with Tito. The "Muscovite" leaders of the PPR then seized upon certain ideological views of Gomulka which were the most clear examples of deviation. His policies, meanwhile, in the spring of 1948 suddenly became out of tune with the times. The main inner-party dispute was resolved during the plenum of June, 1948, and after that it was merely a question of attempting to discredit the former secretary general in the party. The September plenum, which officially outlawed the "right national deviation" in the party, was staged as a theatrical affair to justify the change in party line and to discredit the Gomulka group among the party rank and file. The failure of this attempt was apparent in the necessity to stage additional theatrical displays, and in the necessity to add more serious charges to the roster through the indictment against his former colleague, Marian Spychalski. That, even as late as the November 1949 plenum the attempt to destroy Gomulka's influence in the party was still a failure was eloquently demonstrated by the subsequent attempts to build a case against him, the unusual caution exercised by the "Muscovite" party leadership throughout the unsuccessful interrogation of Gomulka, and afterwards.

* The same central committee plenum co-opted Marshal Rokossovsky to membership in the central committee. This was a further slap in the face of Gomulka, who as minister for the recovered territories was known to have clashed with the marshal over the removal of property from Poland by Soviet troops. Rokossovsky was still commander of Soviet forces in the area at the time. This gesture was symbolic of the iron hand of Moscow over Poland.

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*SECRET*CHAPTER VTHE GOMULKA DEVIATION IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHARGESTHE FAILURE OF THE ATTEMPT TO STAGE A TRIALI. The Charges

After examining the course of Gomulka's disgrace in the party, it seems pertinent to analyze the original charges against Gomulka, to see how they corresponded to fact, and to determine what, therefore, constituted his "right national deviation."

1. The Party

Gomulka was attacked for his conception of the ideological basis for the party. This included his expressed view that the PPR was a new party, and a new type of party, his criticism of the traditions of the SDKPiL and the KPP, his praise of the nationalist traditions of the Polish Socialist party (PPS), and his declared intention to make the ideological basis of the new unified party a combination of the traditions of the PPS and the revolutionary spirit of the SDKPiL. He was also attacked for his expressed plans for the forthcoming merger with the Socialists which included his intention to merge the PPR with "the entire Polish Socialist party" without first purging its right wing. In view of Gomulka's frequent public statements in 1947 and 1948 and in view of his self-criticism at the September plenum, this charge was undoubtedly correct and in the party's view constituted a serious ideological deviation.

2. Attitude Toward the Cominform and Toward Tito

Gomulka was accused of "reluctance in respect of the creation of the Cominform." This charge he later admitted. It was also charged that, during April and May 1948, when the Yugoslav crisis was in the ascendancy, Gomulka "revealed a conciliatory attitude toward the leadership of the Communist party of Yugoslavia." This charge was also admitted by Gomulka at the September 1948 plenum as follows:

I thought at first that the measures applied to deal with CPY were too severe. I thought one should have talked with the leadership of the CPY, sent a delegation (to Yugoslavia); one should have explained, and pleaded, and perhaps conceded something (to Tito).

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3. Attitude Toward the Cominform Resolution Condemning Tito, Especially Toward the Portion Concerned With Agricultural Collectivization.

It was charged that Gomulka, after the resolution was published on 28 June, "did not disguise his negative attitude" toward the part of the resolution concerning the collectivization of agriculture and the fight against the exploitation of the peasants by "capitalist elements." This charge was also later admitted by Gomulka, who considered that "at that stage of our development...the watchword of collectivization was not yet opportune." Tactically, he said, it was erroneous, although correct as a Communist objective.

4. Attitude Toward the USSR

Gomulka was charged with "lack of understanding of the actual ideological significance of the relation between the countries of the People's Democracy and the USSR and the leading role of the All-Union Communist party (Bolshevik) in the international front now combating imperialism." Gomulka's behavior in 1947 and 1948 demonstrated the correctness of this charge. He had frequently indicated his distrust of the Soviet Union and the leading role of the CPSU during the postwar period. This, in fact, was probably the most important reason for his removal. During the course of his interrogation, Gomulka continued to admit his distrust of the USSR.

5. Dictatorial Attitude

Gomulka was accused of having a dictatorial attitude "contrary to the precepts of united action leadership" and also was taken to task for "his irritating and non-party-like attitude toward criticism and his complete lack of all self-criticism." Gomulka's failure to obtain prior clearance from the politburo of his speech to the central committee plenum in June was indicative of the characteristics that justified the charge. Gomulka's dictatorial behavior was common knowledge in the party.

6. Sponsorship of an Opportunist or "Eclectic" Cultural Policy

Gomulka was charged with "sponsoring...the opportunist and eclectic cultural policy conducted by Comrade Bienkowski."

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This policy in the immediate postwar period was liberal in the sense of admitting non-Communist and Western views into regime publications. It had suited the "People's Democracy" era but was undoubtedly out of line after the Tito crisis, and Gomulka was in the end held responsible as party leader.

7. "Capitulationist Tendencies" During the Wartime Period

To prove that Gomulka's sins were not momentary or accidental, but were the result of a basic, long-term erroneous attitude, it was charged that as early as 1944, Gomulka and his associates revealed "tendencies toward capitulation" in seeking to form a bloc with non-Communist political parties, which actually meant seeking "to withdraw from a position of leadership over the working class." This charge, which was also made against Bienkowski, Kowalski and Loga-Sowinski, was the only one Gomulka refused to accept at the September plenum. He capitulated in the end, as he later said, only to preserve party unity. After the September plenum he repeatedly denied the charge, especially at the November 1949 plenum.

The Ingredients of the National Deviation

Gomulka himself agreed at the September plenum that all but one of the original charges were correct. His subsequent statements support his original self-criticism. Only with the charges concerning his behavior during World War II did Gomulka take exception. With the exception of those referring to the wartime period, the politburo's charges against Gomulka in 1948 were thus justified, especially in the light of the new direction of Moscow's policies. Aside from continuing to favor policies of the "People's Democracy" era, which were now out of date, Gomulka was originally condemned as a national deviationist, for (a) his mistrust of the Soviet Union, (b) his sympathy with Tito, (c) his desire for greater independence in internal matters, and (d) his ideological outlook toward the party. The latter outlook was seized on by the "Muscovites" as the immediate issue upon which to center their opening attack. The three former elements, however, constituted the real reasons for his removal as secretary general. In the atmosphere of mid-1948, these attributes could not be tolerated by Moscow in a satellite party leader.

*SECRET*II. The Attempt to Stage a Trial of Gomulka and Spychalski

After the November 1949 plenum, which forbade him any activity in connection with the party, Gomulka continued to work in a minor government capacity, first in the Supreme Control Chamber and later (in early 1951) in the Social Security Institute. He also continued to function as a member of the Sejm. According to Jozef Swiatlo, the Polish security official who was entrusted with the task. Gomulka was kept under extremely close surveillance by the security apparatus during this period. He continued to live in Warsaw and was permitted to retain his apartment.

The Party itself suffered severe effects from the Gomulka-Spychalski affair. As early as 1948, between the September plenum and the "Fusion Congress," a gradual but searching purge of "Gomulkaites" was initiated which, according to official Communist sources, removed 29,000 members from the party. Subsequent purges under the slogan of eradicating the "nationalist deviation" were carried out in the first and last quarters of 1949. Up to that time the purges resulting from the Gomulka case affected up to one fourth of the party.* In the party leadership, many of the "natives" were deprived of their key posts, scattered, and in some cases imprisoned.

Meanwhile, his successors in the party leadership began to build up a case against Gomulka. His case had now entered another phase which corresponded to the heightened tension in Eastern Europe accompanying the various show trials of satellite party leaders. Whereas in November 1949 treason had been merely implied, now it was to be charged directly, and Gomulka was to be accused of crimes against the party under imperialist orders.

* Total party membership was officially listed as over one million in December 1948.

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Under pressure from Moscow, the PPR leaders accordingly began to build up such a case against Gomulka and Spychalski in preparation for a show trial which would implicate them both in serious crimes and connect them with the web of plots and intrigue which was being exposed in the other satellite show trials. According to the Polish security official Jozef Swiatlo, who was closely connected with the affair, this attempt to build a case took the following form:

The Blackmail of Spychalski--His Arrest and Interrogation

The use by the PPR leaders of Spychalski's background as wartime Communist intelligence chief (together with his brother's membership in the London-led Home Army) in order to blackmail him into taking sides in party meetings against Gomulka has already been described. According to Swiatlo, several arrests were made even before September 1948 in order to establish a case against Spychalski to support this blackmail effort. The case was to show that Spychalski (a) maintained contact with pre-war Polish intelligence, and afterwards with the intelligence organization of the Polish government-in-exile; and (b) tolerated Gestapo agents in the postwar party. Several agents whom the PPR had used during the war as penetrations into the London-led underground organization or for contact with the Gestapo were produced and their activities twisted to support this case. In this initial blackmail effort, Spychalski proved to be a weak and pliable instrument in the hands of the PPR leaders. He was easily forced to follow their instructions in the various central committee plenums in 1948 and 1949. Following the expulsion of Gomulka, Spychalski, and Kliszko from the central

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committee, Spychalski was arrested in May 1950 and interrogated at length in order to force him to testify in public against Gomulka.* According to Swiatlo, Spychalski's behavior in prison was entirely different from his previous behavior. During the entire interrogation, the security officials were unable to force him to admit anything against Gomulka.

The Arrest and Interrogation of Witnesses to Establish a Case Against Gomulka and Spychalski

1) As early as 1948, two officials of the postwar Polish regime were arrested as part of the effort to force Spychalski into testifying against Gomulka. Both were accused of having been agents of the prewar Polish intelligence, of having penetrated the wartime Polish Communist intelligence (Spychalski was its chief), of collaborating, with Spychalski's knowledge, with the Gestapo, and of murdering Communists. According to Swiatlo, both officials had been active Soviet agents since the early 1930's and all of their other activities had been directed and supervised by Soviet intelligence. The Polish security authorities were unable to get either official to confess or to implicate Spychalski or Gomulka.**

2) Two wartime members of the party were arrested to prove that Spychalski had tolerated Gestapo agents in the PPR during the occupation. They were both charged with having been Gestapo agents when Spychalski supported them in their advance within the ranks of the PPR. According to Swiatlo, both had indeed been in contact with the Gestapo during the war, but on the express orders of PPR central committee member Jerzy Albrecht, a fact which was known at that time by other PPR leaders. Forced confessions from these two individuals*** were used in 1948 to force Spychalski into taking sides against Gomulka during party meetings.

3) Gomulka's former secretary, Wanda Podgorska, was arrested to prove Gomulka's postwar connection with the Polish government in London. She was accused of having penetrated the PPR as an agent of the wartime London-led Home Army (AK) and of having passed

* In his speech to the eighth PZPR central committee plenum in October 1956, Jakub Berman said that Spychalski was arrested in 1950 in connection with the investigation of the Tatar affair.

** One of them, Wlodzimierz Lechowicz, was tried, rather halfheartedly, in 1955, and was subsequently rehabilitated. In his October 1956 speech, Berman said the case had been fabricated and that the security authorities (Rozanski) had used impermissible methods of interrogation.

*** Mieczyslaw Walczak and Piotr Mankiewicz.

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reports to the AK concerning PPR activities. As Gomulka's post-war secretary, she was charged with continuing after the war to maintain contact between Gomulka and the Polish government in London. According to Swiatlo, she was indeed a member of the AK during the war, but at the time had been "recruited in place" by Gomulka's close associate, Loga-Sowinski, as a PPR penetration into the AK. Furthermore, she supplied the PPR with reports on AK activities which were considered highly valuable at the time. In order to fabricate a case against Gomulka, the security authorities twisted all this around.

4) Czeslaw Dubiel, who had been vice minister for the recovered territories under Gomulka, was arrested in the fall of 1949 and his case was later used to prove that Gomulka maintained contact with the Gestapo. It was charged that Dubiel had been arrested by the Gestapo for his Communist activities during the war, and during this arrest was "doubled" by the Gestapo. Thenceforth, Dubiel allegedly was a Gestapo agent in the PPR. Both Gomulka and Spsychalski were accused of knowingly placing Dubiel in responsible posts during and after the war. According to Swiatlo, the charge against Dubiel was essentially correct, but Bierut had known all about it for years. Only at this time did it become expedient to use it against Gomulka and Spsychalski, who probably were unaware of this during the war.

5) General Grzegorz Korczynski, an ardent and faithful supporter of Gomulka in the PPR central committee and a high official in the postwar security apparatus, was arrested. During the war, he was a Communist partisan leader in the Lublin area. He was accused of organizing the murder of Jewish partisans during the war on Gomulka's orders. According to Swiatlo, it was established during the interrogation that, although the Communists had indeed killed Jewish partisans in the Lublin area, the killings had occurred when Pawel Finder, not Gomulka, was secretary general of the party.

6) Two high-ranking officers in the Polish army were arrested to provide testimony that Gomulka was an enemy of the USSR. In the postwar period, when Gomulka was minister for the recovered territories, both had represented the general staff of the Polish army at Soviet army headquarters in Legnica.* They were alleged to have received orders from Gomulka to protect Poland's interests in the recovered territories from Soviet looting.** According to Swiatlo, the charge was correct, and Gomulka had given the order because the Soviet authorities (e.g. Marshal Rokossovsky) were violating their agreement to coordinate with him all items they desired to remove from the former German lands.

* At the time, Marshal Rokossovsky was still the commander of Soviet forces in this area, and this was his headquarters.

** The officers were Col. Wilkonski and Lt. Col. Wojnar.

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7) A wartime Soviet agent who had worked with the Gestapo* was interrogated by the Polish security authorities to establish Gomulka's wartime connection with the Gestapo. This man was used during the war by Soviet intelligence to give the Gestapo information concerning the London-led underground Home Army (AK). He was asked by the Polish security authorities to confess that he collaborated with the Gestapo on Gomulka's orders, and that, through him, Gomulka had allowed PPR records to fall into Gestapo hands. According to Swiatlo, the man confounded the interrogators by refusing to confess along the lines they desired, and insisted that he had acted only on Soviet orders.

8) The still unfulfilled desire of the PPR leadership to compromise Gomulka in the eyes of the party was evident in the attempts to force his former associates to testify against him.** Bierut attempted personally to force Alexander Kowalski, an outstanding member of the "native" group with an unblemished party record, to testify that Gomulka had engineered the liquidation of the wartime party chiefs, Nowotko and Finder. When Kowalski refused, Bierut turned Kowalski over to the security authorities, whose methods of interrogation eventually drove him insane. He was sent to an asylum, where he died. According to Swiatlo, this attempt by Bierut to strike a blow at Gomulka's influence in the party misfired and the treatment and death of Kowalski "caused tremendous indignation in the party ranks."

9) The Tatar trial: Spychalski was brought in during July-August 1951 as a witness in the trial of nine high-ranking officers in the Polish army who were accused of organizing a "right-nationalist coup d'etat" in the army. He was used as a witness in order to implicate himself in the conspiracy, and to establish Gomulka's responsibility for the affair.*** The three leading defendants, General Tatar, Colonel Utnik, and Colonel Nowicki, were connected with the Polish government-in-exile and during the postwar period smuggled several million dollars belonging to the latter organization into Poland. In the belief that the money was intended to be used against their interests, the Polish security authorities conducted an investigation and enticed all three of them back to Poland through the intermediary of the Communist intelligence chief, General Komar. During the preparation of the case, a squabble took place between the military and civilian security authorities concerning jurisdiction over the interrogation of Spychalski. The military intelligence authorities, under the direction of Colonel Skulbashevski, a Soviet officer, desired to try Spychalski along

* Hryniewicz

** In addition to General Korczynski, the victims included Alexander Kowalski, Ignacy Loga-Sowinski and Wladyslaw Bienkowski.

*** According to Berman, Spychalski was arrested a year previously in connection with the investigation of this case.

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with the Tatar group, but the PPR leadership decided that Spychalski should be tried separately, and that the civilian security organization should retain control of his case.* Spychalski actually appeared as a witness at their trial, to testify that in 1945 he had placed the defendants in high army positions, and that Gomulka had known of this and was therefore "morally responsible" for the affair. Spychalski's testimony at the Tatar trial showed that preparations for Gomulka's show trial were under way. According to Swiatlo, the defendants did not receive death sentences because they were intended to be used as witnesses at the planned trial of Gomulka.**

10. The Arrest and Interrogation of Gomulka

Gomulka was finally arrested in July 1951. According to Swiatlo, who made the arrest, Bierut indicated extreme concern at the time lest the arrest should generate any publicity in Poland. Gomulka was imprisoned in a special villa maintained by the security apparatus in a suburb of Warsaw, and during the period of his imprisonment (from July 1951 to December 1954) he was reasonably well treated. Little, if any, physical violence was used on him. None of the top party leaders had the courage to question him personally, and his case was placed in the hands of the security officials. Bierut issued directives to them to prove that Gomulka was a) an enemy of the USSR, b) in contact with the postwar Polish government in London, c) in contact with the Gestapo, d) an informer of the prewar Polish intelligence service, 3) the murderer of the previous party leaders, and f) responsible for the wartime murders of Jewish partisans. According to Swiatlo, Gomulka behaved with dignity during the entire interrogation. Occasionally he raised a row and demanded proof of his guilt. He refused to admit anything beyond his original self-criticism at the September 1948 plenum. Only in one sphere, that of his attitude toward the USSR, did he readily admit to the charges. He had not trusted the Soviet Union, he

*Berman, in October 1956, described the crude handling of the Tatar case by Col. Skulbashevski and the pressure to have the Spychalski case turned over to the military. Berman implied that in view of the fate of other people whose cases were handled by the "Military Information," Spychalski would probably have been liquidated if Berman had not resisted the pressure. Berman said that the military had "concocted" the Tatar case on the basis of "forged material and insinuations."

**Gomulka was arrested the day after the Tatar indictment was publicized and, according to Berman, in connection with the Tatar investigation.

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said, and therefore had demanded written guarantees on certain questions. Furthermore, he was resentful about the arbitrary behavior of the Soviet security authorities in staging the trial in 1945 of the 16 Polish underground leaders in Moscow. He felt that this was exclusively a Polish affair, and should have been handled by the Poles. Gomulka's admissions in this connection were clearly embarrassing to the Polish Communists, especially if they should be publicized in his show trial.

Gomulka, moreover, produced some countercharges of his own during the interrogation. He accused Bierut and his associates of collaboration with the Nazis and causing strife within the party during the occupation.* He also accused them of having sold out almost all the Polish Communists who had been arrested in the USSR during the 1930's.**

11. Soviet Pressure

Pressure was frequently applied by the Soviet Union at various levels upon the Polish regime to stage a trial of Gomulka and Spychalski and thus provide the Polish contribution to the series of purge trials (Rajk, Kostov, Xoxe, Slansky) taking place in the various satellites*** Swiatlo himself traveled to Budapest in 1949 to question the Fields' and other witnesses scheduled to appear at the Rajk trial, but was unable to acquire evidence which could be connected to Gomulka and Spychalski*** The first concrete opportunity to connect them with the intrigues played

*This was a serious charge. The party had certainly collaborated with the Gestapo during the war against the London-led underground, and since this very charge was being made against Gomulka and Spychalski, it could prove extremely embarrassing to Bierut and his associates in the party, who were equally involved.

** This charge could also prove embarrassing for the "Muscovites" who had been in charge of recruiting and organizational activity in the USSR during the war. During this period many former KPP members remained imprisoned in the USSR, and thus the "Muscovites" could effectively be accused in the party of having "sold them out" by not securing their release from imprisonment. According to Swiatlo, Gomulka was intensely interested in the fate of the KPP members who were still imprisoned in the USSR and left a complete correspondence on the subject at the time of his arrest.

***Swiatlo revealed that Soviet pressure was often exerted in the security apparatus during this period. Jakub Berman in October 1956 said that "acute" Soviet pressure was exerted "beginning from the central, highest links, through the intermediation of advisers, the Military Information, through police pressure organized on a large scale, and through trials in Budapest, Sofia, and Prague."

****Berman also cited Soviet pressure to connect the case with the Rajk and other show trials. He added: "This...was carried out in a brutal and provocative manner at the Slansky trial, to which representatives of our party had been unequivocally invited. Absurd testimonies, linking Comrade Gomulka with the fictitious Zilliacus diversion and with others, led to this. This was at the end of 1952."

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up in the "Titoist" trials in the other satellites occurred when Herman Field went to Eastern Europe in 1949 in search of his brother. When a friend of Field's asked Spychalski for help in getting him into Poland, the PPR leadership learned of it and decided to bring Field to Poland and arrest him in order to connect Spychalski and thence Gomulka, through Field, with the case of Noel and Herta Field in Hungary. According to Swiatlo, who was in charge of his interrogation, Herman Field proved to be a liability, since he could not be broken during the interrogation.

The failure to make a case

The attempt, between 1951 and 1953, to establish the basis for a show trial of Gomulka and Spychalski failed completely. Neither of the two chief performers could be forced into making the suitable testimony, and the various attempts to fabricate a case on the basis of forced confessions from "witnesses" also failed. A trial could always be staged, but the case, at best, was very weak* In view of his previous behavior, the PZPR leaders evidently had counted on Spychalski as the major show witness against Gomulka, and his refusal to testify against his former leader and comrade frustrated the entire plan.

The failure to make a case, however, is not sufficient to explain why Poland was the exception in Eastern Europe during this period, and why Gomulka, alone of all the victims of the satellite purges, was spared a show trial. That this was contrary to the express wishes of Moscow has been seen in the continued pressure brought by Moscow on the Polish party to stage such a trial. The Moscow-oriented party leaders who succeeded Gomulka, moreover, had demonstrated their reliability on many occasions, as well as their willingness to carry out Moscow's orders.

The main reason, apparently, why Gomulka was never brought to public trial was his exceptionally strong character and personality. The security authorities were aware that he would be a difficult man to break. Thus the necessity for elaborate preparation of a case through the use of Spychalski, which would force Gomulka to testify exactly as the regime desired him to testify.** In addition to his character and personality, there was

*Berman contended in October 1956 that the party leaders several times rejected drafts of the indictment against Spychalski "since they were artificially devised." He also said that a Gomulka trial would have been "artificial, provocative, and strained."

**Apparently, they did not dare to liquidate him quietly, since Gomulka was a party leader of six-years' standing with considerable prestige, and his disappearance without explanation might cause considerable trouble in the party. There was no precedent in Eastern Europe for the removal of a top party leader without public explanation. Presumably, the regime was afraid to torture Gomulka for the same reason--i.e., the unfavorable effect it would have in the party.

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also the element of Gomulka's continued influence and prestige in the party. The awareness of the party leaders of Gomulka's influence has been seen in the two unsuccessful attempts during the plenums of September 1948 and November 1949 to discredit him in the party. That his influence was still strong after that was demonstrated by the extreme caution used by Bierut and the other party leaders in their treatment of Gomulka--their fears lest his arrest cause publicity--and the consideration and deference accorded the former secretary general throughout his entire period of imprisonment. It was demonstrated unmistakably by Bierut's desperate and unsuccessful attempt, in the case of Kowalski, to turn a reputable "native" Communist against Gomulka.

The PPR leaders were afraid of Gomulka personally. They could not kill him, since it would certainly make a martyr of him in the party. He was already becoming a legendary figure in the countryside. None of the "Muscovites," for that matter, had the courage to confront Gomulka in person during the entire period of his interrogation. His behavior, moreover, and the countercharges he was making, showed that if he were ever produced in a public show trial, there was considerable danger that Gomulka would turn the trial to his own advantage, and that far from crushing his influence in the party, the trial would probably increase that influence and seriously embarrass the "Muscovite" leaders. They had already seen him speak his mind audaciously at the "merger" congress in December 1948, and later, in his final speech to the November 1949 plenum. They were aware of the effect Gomulka, an excellent speaker, could make in such a trial. Furthermore, they had seen an example in Bulgaria, during the trial of Kostov, where the accused by no means undertook the expected self-criticism. Gomulka himself, during his interrogation, had hit on several very sensitive issues which, if aired during such a trial, could have serious repercussions on relations between the Polish and the Soviet Communist parties.

The latter, probably, was the decisive factor which in the end saved Gomulka from the logical fate of a purged satellite national deviationist leader. Gomulka's knowledge of sensitive information affecting the many delicate issues existing in relations between the Soviet and Polish Communist parties could have proved as embarrassing to Moscow as to the Polish party leaders. This potential embarrassment was much too great to make the risk worth taking. Gomulka's character, his prestige in the party, and his knowledge of potentially embarrassing facts were too great a combination to overcome.

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PART TWO

FACTORS AND EVENTS LEADING TO GOMULKA'S RETURN TO POWER

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*SECRET*CHAPTER VIDEVELOPMENTS AFTER THE DEATH OF STALIN

The death of Stalin was the second important turning point in postwar Communist policy in Europe. After the rift with Tito in the spring of 1948, Communist leaders in Eastern Europe were required to fashion their countries into pocket editions of the USSR in the political, economic, and military spheres, regardless of the effects on internal social and economic structures of their countries. In this connection, some of the satellites undertook overly ambitious economic plans beyond their capabilities. As a result, most of the satellites experienced in varying degrees a gradually mounting economic and political crisis during the years following the break with Tito.

What happened after the death of Stalin in March 1953 showed how serious these crises had become. Pressures which had been built up since 1948 were suddenly released throughout the bloc, resulting in a movement away from the methods of the past and toward "liberalization" of political and economic life. The movement became apparent first in the Soviet Union and gradually spread, in some degree, to the satellites. The new stress on "collective leadership," the reassertion of party authority over the security police after the purge of Beria, the intellectual "thaw," and the "new course" economic policies--all originated in the Soviet Union itself after the death of Stalin.

Pressures for Change in the Bloc

In the years following the death of Stalin, similar forces for change became apparent in most of the East European satellites. These forces reacted most strongly on two groups--the intellectuals and the Communist party. Some of the pressures eventually were felt by the mass of the population, whose bitterness against the regimes and against Communism was deeply ingrained.

Among the forces for change, the most basic, perhaps, was the resentment against Stalinist tyranny, which was common to all the groups involved. There was also a general reaction against the arbitrary methods of the security police, felt strongly not only by the Communist victims of Stalinist terror, but also by the populace in general, who had been tyrannized by

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the system over a long period of time. There was also a general reaction in the satellites against the "cult of the individual" which eventually resulted in the removal of several top satellite Communist leaders. Among the Communist and non-Communist intellectuals, a deep resentment was felt against the enforced harsh cultural conformity of the Stalin era, which stimulated their desires and demands for greater freedom of expression and for the "humanization" of literature and the arts. Also common to most of the satellites was a resentment against the unrealistic, harsh economic practices of the Stalinist era, which had produced negative results, especially in Hungary, and in most of the satellites had brought little if any improvement in the living standard.

Even the Soviet leaders were aware prior to the 20th party congress that Soviet policies and practices in the satellites had considerably exacerbated anti-Soviet feelings not only among the populace but also in most of the satellite Communist parties. This was most pronounced in those countries with traditions of hostility to Russia, but was present in varying degrees in most of the satellites. The most important cause of this hostility was the policy of economic exploitation which was implemented in all of the satellites following the war. Other causes were the harsh system of direct Soviet controls over the satellites, through the use of Soviet officials and "advisers" at all levels, and the arbitrary manner in which the Soviet Communist leaders often dealt with their satellite subordinates.

Poland's Apparent Stability

In the year following the death of Stalin, Poland of all the satellites presented probably the greatest appearance of stability. There had been no purge or shake-up in the leadership group since the ouster of Gomulka, and the group appeared to be united, militant, and reliable from Moscow's point of view. Moreover, the economy had not yet approached a crisis or suffered imbalances from the post-1948 period as serious as those Hungary had experienced. Poland was the last of the satellites to follow the Soviet lead in initiating "new course" economic policies; and when it did, its shift in emphasis to light industry and consumer goods was relatively slight.

The ouster of Beria in the summer of 1953, however, and his subsequent arrest and execution initiated a chain of events which revealed that Poland's stability was only a deceptive surface appearance. Along with the other satellites, Poland

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picked up the watchword of "socialist legality" adopted by Moscow to ensure that the crimes committed by Beria would not occur again. Also like Moscow, the satellites stressed the importance of party control over security affairs and, in the interests of political relaxation, decreed amnesties, more lenient court procedures, and the release and rehabilitation of certain victims of "Beriaism."

Measures to Root out "Beriaism" in Poland

By the fall of 1953, it was clear to the Polish party leadership that some changes in the security apparatus were imperative. The need became urgent in December with the defection of Jozef Swiatlo, a key Polish security official. In 1954, Western propaganda agencies circulated broadcasts and leaflets by Swiatlo in Poland, in which he revealed the crimes and abuses of the security apparatus. Toward the end of 1954, therefore, in line with the Soviet example, the functions of the Polish security apparatus were divided and the more sensitive activities and functions were placed under party control. Simultaneously, a sweeping investigation of the security apparatus was undertaken by the party, with the result that the entire security organization was reorganized in December, and many officials responsible for the previous excesses were ousted. Department X of the Ministry of Public Security, which had been responsible for activity directed against members of the party, was abolished. Partly because of the information revealed by Swiatlo and its effect inside Poland, the consequent destruction in the authority of the secret police was more extreme and far-reaching in Poland than was the case in the other satellites. As a result of these measures and of the new stress on "socialist legality," which made the party leadership less willing to make open use of its remaining secret police authority, police terror in Poland virtually disappeared by the end of 1954. Poles began to breathe more freely and were emboldened to discuss matters in public which previously were forbidden. As in the Soviet Union, the regime itself encouraged more forthright "criticism from below" and the discussion of controversial issues.

Changing Soviet Relationships With the Satellites

With the break-up of the power of Beria's security apparatus, a change in the Soviet control relationship with the satellites was discernible during 1953 and 1954. The Soviet Union began to take steps during this period to eliminate the more obvious forms of direct control, and to substitute a less obvious, if equally effective system. Reparations claims against the East European countries which had

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been allies of Hitler during the war were canceled. Most of the joint stock companies, which the Soviet Union had used after the war as a blatant means of direct control over strategic portions of the satellite economies, were dissolved. Many Soviet "advisers" attached to the satellite regimes were withdrawn. Control now, apparently, was to be exercised indirectly through party-type ambassadors to the satellites and through the coordination of the various satellite economies at the planning level. Simultaneously with the alteration in the system of control, the Soviet Union no longer advocated emulation of the Soviet example as it had prior to the death of Stalin. On the contrary, the satellite parties were encouraged once again to develop their own initiatives in internal policy. This new approach, moreover, was stimulated by the new Soviet policy of encouraging the "normalization of relations" with Yugoslavia, which culminated in Khrushchev's dramatic visit to Belgrade in May 1955. As far as the satellites were concerned, this visit was of great importance since it appeared to provide the first concrete evidence that the Soviet Union was prepared to tolerate "differing roads to socialism."

The Beginnings of the Polish Literary "Thaw"

Influenced by the Soviet writers' "revolt," which began under regime stimulation as early as November 1953, articles by Polish writers criticizing bureaucracy and "socialist realism" began to appear by the spring of 1954. At that time the Polish minister of culture and arts encouraged experiment, innovation, and a limited degree of criticism by Polish writers, providing they operated within the framework of "socialist realism." In response to this encouragement, Polish authors and critics began openly to criticize bureaucratic control and doctrinaire narrowness in literature. One critic declared in May that contemporary Polish literature was no more than mechanical rewriting and that the artist's chief function had become diplomacy. Another accused the theater of speaking the "language of ministerial circulars." By the summer of 1954, articles were becoming increasingly lively, and, at the Writers' Union Congress in June, bitter complaints were raised against the union itself for encroaching on writers' time and obstructing creative effort.

The regime, although it had encouraged the campaign, showed concern from the outset lest criticism stray beyond prescribed boundaries. Articles by regime spokesmen warned in May and June against a return to "naturalistic," nonpolitical art and warned that the party would never abandon its right to influence artistic development. At the Writers' Congress in June, Minister of Culture and Arts Sokorski said the party would take steps to remove bureaucratic abuses, but warned that no deviations from the party line on art would be permitted.

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Punctuated, but not impeded, by occasional regime criticism, the campaign gained momentum and, by the end of 1954 was no longer a mere reflection of the literary unrest in the USSR, but had acquired a character all its own. What had begun as an attack on bureaucratic party control over literature had expanded well into the political field. Factors such as the uniqueness of Polish Communism, for example, entered the controversy. Thus, the Polish writer Kaluzynski stressed in an article in September the differences between the historical circumstances of the Polish and Russian revolutions and the consequent absurdity of uncritical imitation of the Soviet example.

Leading Polish writers took heart from the Soviet Writers' Congress in December 1954, where a prominent Soviet literary figure, A. Surkov, stated that it was possible for "different literary streams" to exist within the trend of socialist realism. This line was reflected in Poland in a February article by Adam Wazyk, heretofore the most staunch party enforcer of the socialist realism party line, who now used Surkov's allusion to "different literary streams" to justify increased freedom in literature.

By early 1955 the campaign had expanded to the point that the adequacy of Marxist values in literature was in dispute. But with the increase in the tempo of criticism, the regime's counterattacks became more severe. A militant party spokesman, Wilhelm Mach, launched a violent diatribe in March, charging some of the critics of socialist realism with "contempt for People's Poland," and warning that though the party would not at the moment take direct action against them, it was in a position to do so, if necessary.

In the spring of 1955 the regime tried various approaches in its attempt to stem the rising tide. Regime spokesmen were drafted to defend socialist realism and to criticize the most forthright "thaw" writers and critics. Jerzy Putrament, one of the party's chief literary spokesmen, made a speech at the 6th plenum of the Polish Writers' Association in June distinguishing between those who desired to cure socialist realism of its ailments and those who desired to replace it with bourgeois concepts. Putrament said:

It is due to the inadequate political training, to the organizational impotence of the Polish Writers' Association, to personal dislike, etc., that the ideological confusion within our literary community has reached such alarming

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proportions.... To bring this chaos to an end, two operations must start immediately. First, bourgeois recidivism must be repulsed from our ideas concerning the development of art. Second, any weakness in the true understanding of socialist realism must be removed.

The question arises, since they were well aware by this time of the increasing dangers of the intellectual "thaw," why the Polish Communist leaders did not do more to suppress it. After all, the Soviet leaders had suppressed their own literary "thaw" in the fall of 1954. The answer was provided by politburo member Jakub Berman at a meeting with leading Polish writers in December 1955. The "thaw," he said, had been initiated in line with Soviet international policy, and would therefore be continued, although extremist articles and excesses of critical fervor would not be tolerated.

The regime's fears that the "thaw" would not be confined to the literary sphere were well justified. The controversy soon spread to other fields, including philosophy and sociology, and led to critical analysis even of the basis of Marxist dogma. This was illustrated by the prolonged and searching debate in 1955 between a leading Communist sociologist, Jozef Chalasinski, and one of the chief regime ideological spokesmen, Adam Schaff. In a series of articles, Chalasinski questioned the validity of Marxist doctrine as a basis for scientific analysis, and charged that Marxism alone was inadequate to answer important moral and cultural questions. Thus he said:

All of us have already understood that no science can be apolitical, but not all of us have understood that no science could have developed--either in the past or in the present--if politics penetrated every scientific thought, permeated the whole perception process. There would be no culture at all, if the decisive factor of its beginnings and development was exclusively the class struggle.

Schaff replied in a series of articles of his own, which, while agreeing with some of Chalasinski's arguments, defended Marxism from attack.

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Up to this point, the Polish "thaw," though permeating virtually all fields of intellectual effort, had been confined almost entirely to the intellectual sphere. With the publication in August 1955 of Adam Wazyk's "Poem for Adults," however, it entered the popular sphere. Wazyk's poem was concerned not only with theory; it was a trenchant and all-embracing attack on the reality of life under Communism expressing the utter disillusionment of a Communist fanatic with the aims and achievements of Communism. The entire 21 August issue of Nowa Kultura in which the poem appeared was sold out almost as soon as it reached the stands. The regime, however, did not take long to answer. The poem was soon subject to attack in the literary press, and an inquiry by politburo member Berman into the publication of the poem resulted in the dismissal of Hoffmann, editor in chief of Nowa Kultura.

"Differing Roads"

Khrushchev's "trip to Canossa" (i.e., Belgrade) in the summer of 1955 added an additional stimulant to the Polish "thaw." This demonstration of apparent readiness to tolerate "differing roads to socialism" aroused national and anti-Soviet currents throughout the East European countries. In view of this new direction in Soviet policy, and in view of the virulence of the Polish "thaw," which was reaching unmanageable proportions, the Polish regime clearly had to seek a way out of the ideological chaos. An authoritative political line needed to be established for the party which would not only answer internal criticism of past ideological policy but also would bring Poland into line with the new relationship between Belgrade and Moscow.

Such an attempt was made in October, in Nowe Drogi, the official theoretical journal of the party central committee. An unsigned article admitted for the first time that the deep chasm existing between theory and reality had resulted from a serious inadequacy in past party ideological guidance. While condemning "nihilistic" tendencies in the "thaw" as well as tendencies to "supplement Marxism," the article admitted that past ideological policy had not provided a deep enough analysis of difficulties and deficiencies from a "Leninist point of view." As a result, for example, capitalist economic development had been seriously underestimated. In the sphere of relations with the Soviet Union, the Nowe Drogi article attempted to define Poland's course in relation to the line laid down first by Khrushchev in Belgrade and later by the CPSU theoretical journal Kommunist in September which had encouraged the belief in the satellites that differing roads to socialism would be tolerated. Thus, Nowe Drogi said:

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We have paid too little attention to that which is innate in our movement, in our historical road, in our methods of construction, in our struggle and slogans, to that which arises from the specific conditions in the development of our country and from our historical past....

With the publication of this article in October 1955, the Polish regime initiated a policy which it subsequently implemented increasingly during the fall and winter of 1955--encouraging open emphasis on the specific Polish conditions of historical development and discouraging uncritical imitation of the Soviet model. An important regime official, Wiktor Grosz, said in a Radio Warsaw broadcast on 28 September, for example, that many people showed lack of good taste in "senselessly calling for imitation of Soviet examples even though we have our own pattern." True and deep friendship among people of various nations, he said, "is possible only among free people who have national pride and dignity."

A similar line was taken by the chief Warsaw daily on 15 October, which also attacked uncritical adulation of the Soviet Union. "True friendship between two nations," it said, "does not permit flattery."

The Rehabilitation of the KPP

Simultaneously with the new stress within Poland on "differing roads," an initiative came from the Soviet Union for the settlement of a delicate issue in relations between the Polish and Soviet parties. Polish Communist leaders had long been pressing for news of the former members of the prewar party leadership who had been victimized by the Soviet purges of the late 30's. The Soviet leaders, for their part, were generally preoccupied by this time with the mistakes of their arbitrary past treatment of the satellites. At the July 1955 CPSU central committee plenum, for example, the subject of past errors in relation with these countries was discussed at length. The behavior of Soviet ambassadors Lebedyev and Popov in Poland were singled out as an example of gross interference by Molotov's subordinates in the affairs of a satellite Communist party.

The first conciliatory sign by the CPSU came in the autumn of 1954 in reply to a Polish request for information on a limited list of former leaders. The reply stated that the Polish

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Communist leaders in question had been executed "mistakenly" on Beria's orders. The Polish politburo followed this up in early 1955 with another, longer list, and received Moscow's reply that these too had fallen victim to Beria. Moscow suggested that the victims receive posthumous honors and invited Warsaw to send a representative to Moscow to look into the question. The Polish party accordingly sent two representatives (Ostap-Dluski and Zachariasz) to Moscow in the spring of 1955. At about the same time, party leader Bierut announced at a top-level party meeting that Moscow had exonerated the former Polish Communist party (KPP) from the charges which the Comintern had made against it in 1938 (see above p. 9), and that Poland might now rehabilitate its past Communist leaders.

Accordingly, on 1 May 1955, the official party organ, Trybuna Ludu, included the pictures of a number of formerly discredited KPP leaders (Warszawski-Warski, Prochniak, Wera Kostrzewa) in places of honor alongside previously approved leaders of the prewar Communist movement in Poland (e.g., Feliks Dzierzynski). As a result of these developments, out of the enormous number of prewar party functionaries who had been victimized in the Soviet Union by the great purges, a few low-level survivors returned to Poland. None of them, however, had ever been in the party leadership--the leaders were long since dead. Meanwhile, the Polish party leadership ordered the revision of the entire official history of the Polish Communist movement. The result of the Soviet initiative to settle the Polish grievance, however, was only to bring to the surface latent anti-Soviet feeling.

Rising Discontent in the Party

Signs of discontent appeared in the party as early as 1953. The discontent was felt primarily in the upper cadre level of the party apparatus (the party aktiv) and did not extend, apparently, to the rank and file. It was caused by several factors, some of which were long-standing in nature. The increasing failure of the economic plans, for example, and the constant necessity to mislead the populace with falsified data on the economic picture had resulted in accumulated resentment in the party cadres on the level immediately below the central committee, especially those connected with internal propaganda. The gap between propaganda and reality had become so great over a period of years that these party cadres were becoming concerned lest it become impossible to bridge.

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Deep-seated antipathy in the party toward the security apparatus came rapidly to the surface after the purge of Beria, especially after the Swiatlo broadcasts which revealed the activities which had been directed against the party itself. Anger rose sharply in the party aktiv against security officials connected with antiparty and investigative activities, and also against those persons in the top party leadership who had been responsible for or involved in security affairs. Inner party pressure thus built up in 1955 and resulted in the summer in the unpublicized removal of the former security chief, Radkiewicz, from the politburo. The pressure was heightened, moreover, by the revulsion felt in the party and elsewhere against the sadistic treatment which had been accorded victims of the security authorities. As various victims of the Stalinist period were rehabilitated during 1955, the determination grew in the central party aktiv that something be done to prevent such arbitrary procedure in the future.

Party cadres, especially the party intelligentsia, some of whom were participants in it, were deeply influenced by the course of the intellectual "thaw." In addition to their desire to be able to use facts as a basis for propaganda, the general discussion of theory in the press led to a strong feeling in the party itself that Marxist doctrine was far too rigid and narrow and should be expanded or at least made more flexible to cope with real problems which demanded real answers. In addition, the party intellectuals supported the desire of the writers and artists to secure greater freedom for the press and the arts.

Finally, as a result of the increasingly obvious failures of the economic policies and the outrages of the security apparatus, a general resentment built up among higher party cadres against the party leadership itself. The increasing tendency toward self-assertion on the part of the central committee and the party apparatus was accompanied by a loss of authority by the politburo and its increasing isolation in the party. Members of the central committee became increasingly determined not to accept dictatorial orders from the politburo. This general reaction against the party leadership was accompanied by resentment against specific party leaders (e.g., Berman and Minc) who were associated with past, discredited policies. The latter pressure became especially pronounced after the 20th Soviet party congress.

The pressure of discontent in the party during this period did not take the form of factional activity since it was for the most part unorganized in nature. It manifested itself irregularly and more or less spontaneously in party meetings.

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In December 1954, for example, sharp criticism along the lines described above was expressed openly at a meeting of the central party aktiv in response to encouragement from the party leader, Bierut. When this criticism came to the surface at party meetings several times afterwards, the party leadership sought to ignore the criticism and attempted to intimidate the critics. As a result, the pressures within the party grew until by the end of 1955 the party leadership was reduced to desperate but ineffectual measures of intimidation. Some of the regime's ideological spokesmen even got into hot water when they attempted to answer the critics. According to the Polish defector Seweryn Bialer, Adam Schaff incurred the wrath of the party leadership during his dispute with Professor Chalasinski when he stated in one of his articles that Marxist sociological research had stopped with Lenin's publication of "The Development of Capitalism in Russia." As a result of various articles appearing in connection with the literary "thaw," politburo member Berman in the fall of 1955 removed the editors or reorganized the editorial staffs of three different regime publications. On the eve of the 20th party congress, the Polish party leadership, headed by Bierut, appeared unable to quell the rising dissension and lacked the means--or the will--to silence the critics.

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*SECRET*CHAPTER VIITHE EFFECT OF THE 20th SOVIET PARTY CONGRESS

When Khrushchev delivered his "secret" speech to the delegates at the 20th party congress, he apparently did not envision the effect it would have on Communists outside the USSR. His savage personal attack on Stalin, bringing into the picture accusations of major errors and serious crimes, results of the paranoia of his later periods of power, shook the loyalties of Communists throughout the world. It was not difficult to extend the attack against Stalin to his former associates, and from there to the Communist system as a whole.

In the satellites, the effect of Khrushchev's speech was little short of explosive. Especially the younger Communist party members in these countries who had been brought up to revere Stalin turned against those whom they held responsible for having misled them so flagrantly--the party leaders who were the creations and the most ardent followers of Stalin. In Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Bulgaria, dissatisfaction and ferment had been evident, especially in the lower levels of the party apparatus. Resentment and bitterness toward the party leadership were heightened in the period following the publication of Khrushchev's speech, when no clear directives were issued either by Moscow or by the Satellite party leaders. In some of the satellites, party meetings were the scenes of open attacks on the party leadership. In Hungary, demands for the removal of Rakosi and for radical changes in policy came into the open in central committee meetings.

As another result of Khrushchev's "secret" speech, many Communist intellectuals in the satellites who, following the lead of Soviet intellectuals, had been pressing for a relaxation of rigid, doctrinaire cultural policies since Stalin's death, considered the attack on Stalin a signal for the release of their pent-up critical feelings. The reaction was most severe in Poland and Hungary, where newspapers and periodicals fairly boiled with criticism of the regime, its past policies, and even the party itself and the basis of Communism. In Hungary, intellectual gatherings developed into open attacks against the regime. In Czechoslovakia, students took the lead in the summer in demonstrations against the regime and demands for a change. During the first half of 1956, demands were voiced in most of the satellites for changes in the top leadership, for liberalization of policies, and for increased freedom.

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Faced with these demands for change, the party leaders were forced to try to compromise. A number of important Stalinists (e.g., Cepicka in Czechoslovakia, Chervenkov in Bulgaria, and Rakosi in Hungary) were thus removed and thrown to the wolves. Simultaneously, prominent victims of the Stalinist era continued to be released. Gomulka, the chief Polish "Titoist," was released from imprisonment in December 1954, but was kept out of the public eye during 1955. Nevertheless, news of his release reached the party and the populace, and more than once his name was brought up in connection with the "democratization" movement. It was not until the spring of 1956, however, that the Polish regime announced that Gomulka and Spychalski had been released. Meanwhile, some of the victims of the Slansky affair were being quietly released in Czechoslovakia, and in Bulgaria and Hungary, Kostov and Rajk, the chief--deceased--victims of the Titoist purges were rehabilitated and the surviving victims of their trials released.

The Effect in Poland

Khrushchev's speech had an electrifying effect on Communists in Poland. The atmosphere of ferment within intellectual circles and within the party was greatly intensified. Writers who had been moderately forthright in their criticism lost their fears altogether, and what had begun as intellectual criticism now developed into open political dissension. Whether in meetings of the Writers' Association, in articles in Communist publications, or traveling outside Poland at this time, Communists and non-Communists alike were astonishingly fearless in the expression of their opinions. Criticism of the past Zhdanov-Stalin line on art had become open attack, and some intellectuals went so far as to assert that this erroneous cultural policy was only symptomatic of a disease which had affected the entire system. What was needed, they were saying more and more, was a free society.

The death of party leader Bierut, which occurred in Moscow shortly after the Soviet party congress, intensified the chaos that existed in the regime leadership. Intellectuals now felt that no subject was too sacred to discuss. Articles appeared which went further than ever before in Poland, and further than elsewhere in the bloc, in criticism of the Soviet Union. Frank discussions took place in the press of such explosive topics connected with Polish-Soviet relations as the Katyn Forest massacre of Polish officers, the brutal treatment accorded by the Soviet Union to members of the Polish Underground Home Army during the war, the seizure of the Eastern territories in 1939, and the persecution of Poles who were living there at the time.

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In an article in a literary newspaper in Krakow, for example, referring on April 8 to the Khrushchev speech, the writer said he could no longer say he had been unaware of Communist trumped-up purge trials, of mass deportations, of the execution of Polish Communist leaders at Soviet hands, of Soviet brutality toward the Polish Underground movement, and of the unjust treatment accorded Marshal Tito and such "old comrades" as Gomulka and Spychalski. An article the same month in the Writers' Association magazine *Nowa Kultura* placed the entire Polish-Soviet relationship under attack. The writer, Zbigniew Florczak, said that as a result of the 20th party congress, discussion of critical matters affecting this relationship was "a question of national self-respect" for Poland. "We should at last realize," he said, "we are living in an independent state. This will be the surest way of acquiring real independence."

It is not surprising that in such an atmosphere of charged nationalist emotion, the meeting of the Polish Writers' Association at the end of April was a chaotic spectacle. Regime spokesmen were shouted down and forced to leave the platform. Some of the assembled writers reportedly demanded the resignation of the party leadership and the election of new party leaders to replace them. They also demanded that immediate improvements be made to the "dreadful" economic situation and that Wladyslaw Gomulka be given an opportunity to present his views and opinions.

As one foreign observer put it, the Polish "thaw" began to resemble not so much a "thaw" as a deluge. The party leaders were clearly confused about what to do about it. Party leader Ochab, for example, warned at the beginning of April against public statements criticizing party decisions, since they constituted, he said, attacks against the party. In contrast to Ochab's warnings, the regime nevertheless continued to encourage the "thaw," as exemplified by a speech by a regime spokesman on 26 April, who said:

...the entire nation is participating in a comprehensive and fully sincere discussion of life in Poland, the errors of the past, and the future tasks. The party highly values this new phenomenon.

In this great discussion...wrong opinions and false evaluations are naturally heard from time to time. But, on the whole, the discussion is sound and extremely useful.

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The question arises, why the ferment in intellectual circles and in the party reached a higher degree of intensity in Poland than in the other satellites where many of the same forces for change existed. As has already been seen, the changes in the security apparatus were especially pronounced in Poland, partly as a result of the revelations of Jozef Swiatlo. The reduction in power of the security authorities which resulted acted in turn as a stimulus to the dissatisfaction which already existed in the party cadres toward the party leadership. The sharp increase in ferment following the 20th party congress was encouraged by the death of Bierut, which removed one of the last stabilizing forces from the regime leadership. An additional stimulus was the rehabilitation of Gomulka and the simultaneous discrediting of the remaining two of the triumvirate (Bierut, Berman and Minc) which had ruled Poland since 1948. The ferment in Poland was also heightened by the signs of acute vacillation among the succeeding party leaders, the rapidly developing disillusion among Polish youth, and by the volatile nature of the Poles themselves. In addition, the peculiar history of relations between the Polish and Soviet Communist parties had resulted in deep-seated but repressed anti-Soviet feeling in the Polish party which contributed to the general ferment, especially after the rehabilitation of the party brought it out into the open. The general anti-Russian and anti-Communist feeling was even more deeply ingrained, of course, in the populace.

Youth in Ferment

Particularly after the 20th party congress in February, confusion and disorder among Polish youth increased almost to the point of revolt. It had been apparent long before that the vast majority of Polish youth was hostile to Communism, and that only a dedicated few retained the necessary faith with which to carry out orders from the Communist party. The Communist youth organization, the ZMP, was discredited, had failed to attract potential leaders, and managed to acquire its large membership only by virtue of the advantages which membership would bring in terms of higher education and the professions. The students, or "youthful intelligentsia," had taken part from the beginning in the literary "thaw." One of the Communist youth newspapers, *Po Prostu*, was in the forefront of the "liberalization" movement as a result of the lively, penetrating critical commentary it provided on all aspects of Polish life.

The effect on Polish youth of Khrushchev's speech was even stronger than its effect on the party, with the result that cynicism and disillusionment affected most of

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the few dedicated Communists who had been the party's reliable instruments within the youth organization. Increasingly, insistently, demands became more vocal for a change in the youth organization. Even the ZMP leaders recognized the need for a change. As one provincial Communist youth leader said prophetically in April, "If we don't change ourselves, we will be changed by others...." The demands among the youth for change took many forms. Some desired that the ZMP itself should remain, but independent of party control; others preferred a separate students' organization; and still others desired that a number of organizations should take its place representing different groups and outlooks among the youth.

Youth publications also contributed to the Polish "thaw." Rebelling against the total aridity of Marxist education, they bitterly criticized the isolation from the West which the Stalinist era had fostered. Po Prostu led the movement for "liberalization" of Polish life and subjected current and past "economic and political distortions" to prolonged and searching discussion. One of the views held by Po Prostu, for example, was that a major economic problem was the lack of worker participation in management and the continued administration of the economy by incompetent bureaucrats.

Po Prostu also took the leadership in the formation of a large number of intellectual "discussion clubs" throughout the country during this period, a development which contributed enormously to the intensification of the "thaw" in the Polish countryside. As admitted by the official Communist party organ, Trybuna Ludu, the reason for the popularity of the new intellectual clubs among Polish youth "lies in the fact that they do not recruit people who were ordered to do something, but people who want to be active."

Increased Ferment After the 20th Congress

The "thaw" in Poland began among the intellectuals in early 1954 as a reaction against harsh cultural conformity; but by the time of the 20th party congress, as has been seen, it had extended well into the sphere of political controversy, so that the entire basis of Communism in Poland was under critical examination. Within the party itself, past economic policy, now discredited, was subjected to continuous attack. Polish Communist writers were demanding increasingly that the rigidly controlled system of economic planning, which they held responsible for past economic errors, be fundamentally revised.

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In view of Poland's geographical position and the peculiar history of relations with the USSR, the relationship to Moscow was always especially sensitive. For many years, in order to preserve relations, the most delicate topics-- i.e., Katyn, the past treatment of Polish Communists, the past deportations of Poles from the eastern territories--were repressed from discussion. In addition, the deep Polish Communist grievance against the Soviet party was brought to the surface by the rehabilitation of the Polish party in 1955. Following the 20th party congress, the pent-up feeling caused by all these accumulated grievances flared to the surface, fanning anti-Soviet emotions among the populace. At the same time, as the "thaw" began to reach the general populace and to include discussion of the misery of current life in Poland, a new stimulus to anti-Soviet feeling was activated by the discussion of postwar Soviet arbitrary treatment and economic exploitation of Poland. Such matters as Poland's share of German reparations--the knowledge that Polish coal had long been bought by the Soviet Union at prices well below the world market level--that Poland had been prevented from trading with the West--all helped to intensify the general anti-Soviet emotions. Anti-Soviet feeling and Polish nationalism, both of them endemic, became the greatest forces for change in Poland after the 20th party congress. As the Communist writer Zbigniew Florczak had expressed it at the beginning of April 1956, the entire question, for Poles, "was a matter of national self-respect."

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*SECRET*CHAPTER VIIITHE DEVELOPING CRISIS IN THE PARTY LEADERSHIP

The death of Bierut on 12 March, 15 days after the end of the 20th Soviet party congress, found the Polish party leadership with no successor of comparable stature. Left to themselves, the Poles would probably not have made the choice they did.* Khrushchev, however, who attended the Sixth Plenum of the Polish central committee in March, in effect imposed the selection of Edward Ochab, Bierut's former party trouble-shooter, who apparently had no strong yearning for the position. Even in the beginning it was apparent that Ochab, though experienced and reliable as a party administrator and executor of its directives, did not possess the qualifications necessary for the top leadership position. But Ochab, in the circumstances, was probably not much better or worse than any of the other party leaders at the time, none of whom possessed sufficient stature or authority to resolve the critical situation with which they were faced.

Within the party itself, the politburo's authority had declined to an alarming degree. Opposition within the party had become so great that the fundamental basis of party discipline, the principle of "democratic centralism", was in danger. The politburo was faced with strong opposition from its former loyal arm, the party intelligentsia, which accentuated the politburo's isolation from the rest of the party, not to mention the populace. The central committee, which formerly had been a reliable subordinate organ of the politburo, was now refusing to accept the latter's authority, many of the central committee members having lost faith in the ability of the party leaders to resolve the increasingly critical situation.

With the situation deteriorating so rapidly in the party and in the organs affecting public opinion, the party leaders clearly needed a decisive program to resolve matters and restore order. At this stage it mattered little what sort of a program it was, whether liberal or repressive, as long as it was decisive. A hesitant program could only be expected to intensify the ferment. An indecisive policy, however, was exactly the course

* Reportedly, the Poles in the politburo would have chosen Roman Zambrowski, but neither he nor Bierut's chief lieutenant, Berman, were acceptable to Moscow since they were Jewish, and Berman was under strong criticism for his past activities in connection with the security apparatus.

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followed by the party leadership. On the one hand, the "thaw" was encouraged, even with some enthusiasm, by the party. On the other hand, excessive "liberalism" was discouraged, and the most extreme elements among the intelligentsia were warned that they might incur the party's wrath if they continued to criticize the party or party policy. Party Secretary Jerzy Morawski in March officially interpreted the 20th Soviet party congress, which he had attended, as signaling the beginning of a movement to overcome all obstacles to the "democratization" movement, both within and outside the party. He said:

It is necessary to start with the people a lively conversation about the problems touched by the 20th congress, to answer thousands of questions and doubts which people have in connection with the 20th congress.

A similar view was expressed by Premier Cyrankiewicz in April in a speech to the Sejm:

The reaction of the Polish nation to the proceedings and decisions of the 20th congress shows that it understood rightly the meaning of the event. The healthy wave of criticism, the increased volume and the basic direction of discussions at party and non-party meetings, the discussions in the press--the whole great debate, in which practically all of us are participating--proves that a never-ending, national conference of political activists on the problems of socialism is taking place.

Thus, some of the chief party and government spokesmen in the spring of 1956 continued enthusiastically to encourage the intensification of the "liberalization" campaign.

On the other hand, party leader Ochab and some of the other party chiefs were indicating concern at the intensification of the "thaw," and were attempting to dampen the fires. Thus Ochab wrote in Moscow's *Pravda* in April that there were indications of "ideological instability" in some sections of the party and that some party members were "abusing freedom of criticism" in order to disturb the party's unity of action and to attack the party's political line. Ochab added:

The party, of course, has sufficient strength to conquer these outbursts of instability and to oppose antiparty expressions, at the same time, unflinchingly, to bring about Lenin's rules of party life and to create proper conditions for the cultivation of constructive criticism from below.

*SECRET*The Question of Gomulka

The rehabilitation of the Titoists in the satellites inevitably implied the discrediting of the satellite leaders who had organized the Titoist purges. Khrushchev's attack on Stalin at the 20th party congress carried this trend a step further by giving license by implication to attacks on the satellite Communist leaders who had been most closely associated with Stalin and with Stalinist policies. The death of Bierut in March, however, removed the most loyal Stalinist in Poland before he himself became involved in this turn of events. His closest associates, Berman and Minc and the other chief Stalinists, thereupon became the targets of the intense criticism which had arisen in the medium and lower echelons of the party. As a result, the regime was forced in April and May to jettison some of the more objectionable Stalinists. A government shake-up in April, for example, eliminated the former security chief, Radkiewicz from his sinecure post as minister of state farms, as well as the unpopular minister of culture and arts, Sokorski. This was followed on 6 May by a Trybuna Ludu communiqué stating that Jakub Berman, one of the triumvirate which had ruled Poland during the Stalinist period, had resigned from the politburo and as deputy premier as a result of the politburo's "critical evaluation" of Berman's activities in his spheres of responsibility (ideological matters and security affairs).

Meanwhile, pressure began to mount within the party for clarification of Gomulka's status. Following his release and rehabilitation, the party members wanted to know whether the changes since the death of Stalin, especially the recent liberal policy trend, would alter the party's position on Gomulka. After all, weren't Gomulka's policies which he used to call the "Polish road to socialism" now in vogue, as a result of Khrushchev's trip to Belgrade and the revival of Lenin's dictum concerning national variations in the development of socialism?*

*The Lenin quotation now in approved use (e.g., at the 20th party congress) was his statement made prior to the Russian revolution, that "All nations will arrive at socialism--this is inevitable--but not all will do so in exactly the same way. Each will contribute something of its own in one or another form of democracy, one or another variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat, one or another rate at which socialist transformations will be effected in the various aspects of social life."

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The pressure was sufficiently strong to force the party leaders to attempt to clarify their attitude toward Gomulka. Party Secretary Morawski in late March attempted to differentiate between the correct "Polish road to socialism" now advocated by the regime and the former "erroneous" course of Gomulka. The Gomulka group, he said, opposed the party's program for revolutionary transformations in Poland, attempted to detach the party from the traditions of the KPP and the SDKPiL while praising the "reformist" traditions of the Polish Socialist party. Gomulka's "Polish road to socialism," he said, was not merely a variation of the Soviet road, which was now permissible, but was a contradiction of it, since it amounted to "freezing the alignment of class forces in the countryside" Party leader Ochab straddled the issue squarely in a speech to the party aktiv in April. Great injustice, he said, had been done to the former secretary general by his arrest and the unjust accusations of "diversionary activity" in the hysterical atmosphere of the Rajk trial. Nevertheless, the party's political charges against Gomulka were correct and remained unchanged. He added that the release and rehabilitation of Gomulka

does not in any way change the correct content of the political and ideological struggle which the party has conducted and continues to conduct against the ideological conceptions represented by Gomulka.

Thus, as late as April 1956, the party leadership remained firm in supporting the party's condemnation in 1948 of the "right nationalist deviation" of Wladyslaw Gomulka, although it was increasingly clear that such a stand was inadequate in the face of mounting pressures in the party and among the populace for an unequivocal explanation of Gomulka's status.

The Significance of Poznan

The Poznan riots at the end of June were a tremendous shock to the party. As one party intellectual later expressed it, "It was as though we had been hit over the head with a club." The Poznan riots suddenly demonstrated without doubt how greatly the authority of the state and the party had declined among the populace as a result of the badly conceived and executed policies of the Stalinist period and the pulling and hauling since Stalin's death. The party clearly had lost contact with the populace, as dramatically shown by the disintegration of the party organs in Poznan during the course of

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the riots. What was perhaps most alarming to the party, however, was the sudden realization that the ferment, which had heretofore affected primarily the party and the intellectuals, had spread to the workers, and with a vengeance. Furthermore, the justified grievances of the workers in Poznan were only symptomatic of a serious economic crisis which was known to exist throughout the country. Something, clearly, needed to be done to avert a chain reaction. The 7th plenum of the Polish central committee was convened in July to deal with this problem.

If the Poznan riots were a blow to the Polish party, to the Soviet party they were an alarm signal indicating that the forces encouraged by the 20th party congress had gone too far. The increased confusion in the ranks of Communist parties abroad had already indicated how greatly Soviet authority had been threatened, and the Poznan events only confirmed the necessity that order be restored. The immediate reaction of the Kremlin, as indicated by the CPSU resolution of 30 June, was to emphasize the necessity for vigilance against the attempts of the "enemy" to sow discord and confusion in Communist ranks, and to issue a call for Communist parties to rally together under the banner of "proletarian internationalism." Poznan, according to the declaration, was part of the pattern. The events there were obviously financed from "overseas funds," and this "foul provocation" was frustrated only by the resolute opposition of the working people of Poznan. Such was the Soviet version of the riots, and it was evidently expected that the Polish party would adopt it and would pursue policies which corresponded to the Soviet stand.

To emphasize this position, Premier Bulganin and Marshal Zhukov were dispatched to Poland in July on the occasion of the Polish National Day celebrations. The visit coincided with the 7th plenum of the Polish central committee, providing Bulganin with an opportunity to apply direct pressure on the Poles. In a speech on 21 July, he accused extreme exponents of the Polish "thaw" of "undermining the power of the people's democratic state" under the guise of "spreading democracy." He also alluded to the role of "enemy agents" in the riots, and added ominously that "to be easygoing under these conditions would be an unforgivable sin."

The Emergence of Factionalism

In the face of the Soviet demand for repression, the Polish central committee for the first time openly divided along factional lines at the plenum. The issue causing the division was the course to be followed as a result of the events at Poznan.

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Several politburo members, led by Zenon Nowak, and a number of Soviet-oriented central committee members, supported the Soviet version of the events and, encouraged by Bulganin's hint, were in favor of applying strong repressive measures to stop the "thaw." In order to divert the popular forces of discontent, this "Stalinist" group also favored taking a demagogic, anti-Semitic course already initiated by members of the group, who had made speeches to groups of workers attempting to incite them against the intellectuals and the Jews. The anti-Semitic program of this so-called "Natolin group"—named after a suburb of Warsaw where they occasionally met—had been indirectly encouraged by Khrushchev in March, when he observed that there were too many Jews in the Polish regime.

In opposition to the policies favored by the Natolin group was a majority of the Polish central committee, which, deeply impressed by the serious economic crisis which Poznan revealed, were in favor of further "liberalization" and concrete measures to alleviate the economic situation of the workers. Most of them, in addition, were influenced by demands from the medium and lower echelons of the party for sweeping reforms of the party and state apparatus.

The "liberal" faction won a majority at the 7th plenum. Demands of the Natolin faction were rejected and, instead, the resolutions of the plenum called for a program for democratization, decentralization, and improvement in the standard of living. By admitting that the workers in Poznan had had justified grievances, the central committee majority in effect refused either to accept the Soviet version of the Poznan events or to adopt its concomitant, a repressive policy. By following instead an easy going policy, which Bulganin had warned "would be an unforgivable sin," the Polish central committee thus defied Moscow and conceded, instead, to Polish popular feeling.

Despite an attempt to present the outward appearance of unity by passing the resolutions unanimously, the central committee remained deeply divided along factional lines. After the plenum, the Natolin faction concentrated its efforts on obstructing implementation of the new liberal policies, while on the other hand the liberals continued to encourage the "thaw" and tried unsuccessfully to implement the 7th plenum resolutions.

Party Approaches to Gomulka

The Poznan riots caused an important change in the attitude of the party leaders toward Gomulka. Prior to that time, in

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response to popular tensions and pressure within the party, "representatives" of the politburo met with Gomulka to ascertain the conditions under which he might return to public life. At that time the talks were conducted by Stalinist leaders whose aim was to place him in a position of little power where he would be under the control of the Stalinists in the politburo. Such a situation, of course, was intolerable for Gomulka, and when he refused the offer, the negotiations were broken off, on the eve of the Poznan events.

The Poznan riots strongly stimulated pressure within the party for Gomulka's return to a high position, and simultaneously brought home to the party leadership the dangerous state of popular feeling. Members of the leading party organs became increasingly aware that Gomulka had an attribute which was unique to the top party echelons--he was now, they knew, one of the most popular figures in the country. Accordingly, the subject of Gomulka's status assumed prominence at the 7th plenum. Requests were made during the debates to invite Gomulka to the plenum so that he might explain his position, but party leader Ochab refused to allow this, believing it would result in a renewal of the party controversy over his 1948 position, and would exacerbate mounting factionalism in the central committee.

As a compromise, the 7th plenum resolved not only to rehabilitate Gomulka and to clear him of "unjust and baseless charges," but also to annul that portion of the November 1949 central committee resolution which accused Gomulka, Spychalski, and Kliszko unjustly of "tolerating enemy agents." No action was taken, however, to revise the original political charges which were brought against him in September 1948, and the plenum emphasized that the general party line established in 1948 was correct and "should not be subject to revision." The plenum also instructed the politburo to conduct talks with Gomulka "in order to return his party membership card and to reinstate him in active party work on the platform of the present party policy."

Talks with Gomulka began soon after the close of the plenum, and as a result, the full rights of a party member were restored to Gomulka officially on 4 August. The new initiatives were made by representatives of the "liberal" cause in the politburo--Cyrankiewicz and party chief Ochab, who while still attempting to mediate between the factions, were beginning to come around to the liberal point of view.

Gomulka, it might be noted, was not directly engaged in political activity at all at this time. However, with the developing ferment among various groups in the country, he had

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become an important factor in the "thaw," through the fact that not only to important sections of the party but to the populace in general--the workers, the students, and the peasants--Gomulka stood for defiance to the USSR, revulsion against the evils of the Stalinist period, and opposition to the Stalinists in the PZPR leadership.

The Factions in the Party

As a result of the unresolved differences on policy apparent at the 7th plenum, the party was split into open factions. Opposition to the 7th plenum resolutions was led by die-hard Stalinists of the "Natolin group" who, although a minority in the central committee, had considerable potential support in the leadership of the provincial and district party organizations. The chief spokesmen for this faction included Zenon Nowak, Kazimierz Witaszewski, Wiktor Klosiewicz, Franciszek Jozwiak-Witold, and Marshal Rokossovsky.

At the 7th plenum, the anti-Semitic program of this group was proposed by its leader, Zenon Nowak. First of all, he proposed the adoption of a quota system for Jews in party and government positions. Secondly, the group, reportedly urged by Marshal Bulganin and other Soviet leaders, desired to blame all the errors and evils of the immediate past on the Jewish members of the politburo, thus making Berman and Minc, and possibly Zambrowski, the scapegoats for the mess which resulted from the Stalinist period, much as Beria, though not a Jew, was blamed for everything in the USSR, and Gabor Peter in Hungary.

The opposing faction was a combination of differently motivated supporters of the "liberalization" movement. For the moment, all of these "liberals" were united in their opposition to the policies advocated by the Natolin group, especially its anti-Semitic program. Their chief spokesman was Prime Minister Cyrankiewicz, who was a "moderate." Jerzy Morawski, Adam Rapacki, Jerzy Albrecht and Witold Jarosinski were also active "moderates." The moderates consisted for the most part of old party hands, many of whom had been closely associated in the past with Stalinist policies but who now recognized the dangerous mood of the populace and thus supported continued "liberalization." They believed that only with this program could a still greater catastrophe than Poznan be averted, and the party's position be preserved. The latter need was uppermost in the minds of this group, and it could therefore be expected that though anti-Stalinist in outlook, they would resolutely oppose any measures which appeared to threaten the position of the party. Their demands, accordingly, were for moderate changes in the direction of "liberalization" and

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independence from Moscow, but they by no means agreed with all the demands of the liberal extremists, or enragé group.

The enragé group went far beyond these party moderates and represented the real revolutionary element in the party. It had few adherents within the central committee, but was very strong among the party intelligentsia, in the Warsaw city party organization and among students and workers in Warsaw. Included among the group's radical demands were "independence" from the USSR, internal party democracy, individual freedoms, a more "humanitarian" form of socialism, as well as return of Gomulka to power. Its chief spokesmen were Stefan Staszewski, secretary of the Warsaw city party organization, and many party writers and journalists. This group controlled the chief organs of the party press and radio, with which it was able to publicize its demands. These demands gradually became more specific in nature. In addition to its demand for the return of Gomulka, the group promoted the removal of Marshal Rokossovsky, the symbol of Soviet domination, from his party and government posts. The group's hostility to the Natolin group, as well as the fact that many of the enragé group were Jewish, resulted in its demand for the condemnation of anti-Semitism. The Warsaw workers initiated the group's demands for the establishment of new Yugoslav-type workers' councils enabled to participate in plant management. The party intelligentsia, together with students, pressed the group's demand for full cultural freedom, and students pressed a demand for abolition of the Communist Youth Organization.

All of the liberal elements in the party, including the enragé liberals, were agreed on certain attitudes. All rejected the methods and practices of the Stalinist period, in agreement with the party cadres. All shared the general resentment of the lower party echelons toward the chief party leaders of the Stalinist period. In addition, as a result of the long history of maltreatment which the Polish Communists had received at Soviet hands--pointed up by the recent rehabilitation of the party and its Soviet-executed leaders--all were anti-Soviet, which seemed odd in a Communist party, even though a similar phenomenon existed in Hungary. Their aim was to put their own house in order--to formulate and carry out their own internal policies--within a Communist System. And in the last analysis, this aim was little different from that for which Wladyslaw Gomulka had been removed as party leader in 1948 and condemned for "rightist national deviation." In practice, if not in theory, the liberals were in essential agreement with Gomulka's former position on this matter. In addition, this anti-Soviet attitude of many elements in the Polish party coincided with the even stronger anti-Soviet sentiments of the Polish populace, especially among workers and among working and university

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youth. This peculiar, albeit temporary, identity of attitude in the party and among the people, which, again, had a close parallel in Hungary, was an abnormal situation in a Communist country. In contrast to the anti-Soviet feeling in the party, however, which was directed toward the preservation of the Communist system, the anti-Soviet feeling among the populace was essentially anti-Communist in nature, in favor of replacing the Communist system with a non-Communist political and economic order. This was a strange alliance of forces which only lacked an active leader who would symbolize this temporary identity of view.

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*SECRET*CHAPTER IXTHE OCTOBER CRISIS AND THE RETURN OF GOMULKA TO POWER

Ochab and Cyrankiewicz, as representatives of the politburo, continued talks with Gomulka during September, and arrived at an agreement with him toward the end of the month. Presumably Gomulka's conditions were his return to the politburo and the removal from that body of its chief Stalinists, including Marshal Rokossovsky. Whether Gomulka also presented conditions in respect to policy is not clear, although his return to the party in August had been conditioned on his acceptance of the platform of the 7th plenum. Nevertheless, Gomulka's known strong views toward relations with the USSR and toward the tempo of the movement to socialize agriculture must have made themselves apparent during the discussions.

The Abortive "Natolin" Coup d'Etat

Exactly when the Stalinists in the politburo got wind of the agreement and of Gomulka's insistence that they be removed from the politburo is not clear, although they undoubtedly knew by the second week in October, when the politburo began to meet daily with the participation of Gomulka. In any case, alarmed by the prospect of their removal, they laid plans for a coup designed to enable them to seize power from their "liberal" opponents in the party, and thus to take over control of the party, whence they could press forward on all fronts with repression. It would appear, at least in the beginning, that both they and their supporters in the Kremlin were confident that they could bring this off successfully. Their preparations included plans for the arrest of "liberals" throughout the party and government leadership. According to a subsequent broadcast by the Gdansk provincial party committee, the list which was presented to the security authorities totaled 700. The other aspect of the Natolin group's plans was based on the Polish Army, under the command of Marshal Rokossovsky. In early October alert orders were issued to the army, the justification being a "conspiracy." Whether "brotherly aid" from the Soviet Union was included in the plans at this stage is a question for speculation, although Khrushchev's reported invitation to the entire Polish politburo to visit Moscow prior to the 8th plenum suggests that this may have also entered into the Natolin group's plans. In any case the Soviet leaders undoubtedly hoped that the Natolin leaders could bring it off by themselves.

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*SECRET*The "Liberal" Mobilization

Concerned by the possibility that the Natolin group indeed might make a coup, suppress the "thaw," and initiate anti-Semitic policies, enraged liberals under the leadership of the Warsaw city party organization began after the 7th plenum to make careful preparations among the workers and students of Warsaw to defend themselves. Under Stefan Staszewski, secretary of the Warsaw city party organization, workers in Warsaw mobilized in opposition to the Stalinists. Staszewski was a prewar KPP functionary who was arrested in 1938 or 1939 and imprisoned in the Soviet Union until the end of the war. His experiences in Soviet prisons caused him to be strongly anti-Soviet in outlook after his release. Even before October, the "materials from the 20th party congress" which contained the criticism of Stalin were circulated not only among the party members but also among the workers at the Zeran Automobile Works in Warsaw. This, apparently, was one of the reasons why the workers in Warsaw, especially those from the Zeran plant, were so well organized and unified in advance of the 8th plenum. The workers thus were allowed to share indignation within the party over the Soviet Union and Stalinism in general. It was the workers of Warsaw, apparently, who first intercepted the Natolin group's order for the arrest of the liberal leaders. The same workers, well organized under Staszewski, were in close association with the "liberal" Communist leaders and with the students of Warsaw well before the events of mid-October. The same workers were used by the enraged liberal leaders to warn all those on the arrest list to leave their homes as a precautionary measure. Other workers from the Zeran plant acted as guards for some of the important "liberal" leaders. Prior to the middle of October, the party organizations in 16 large Warsaw factories were warned to expect "action." Not until 16 October, however, when the plans for a Natolin coup were known to the Warsaw party organization, were the party activists in these factories issued arms. At the same time, factory guards were reinforced and supplied additional weapons. The workers themselves were not armed as yet, but the tension in the capital was increasing.

The students at the University of Warsaw and other centers of learning in the capital city, who long had been in the forefront of the liberalization movement, held frequent mass meetings in the courtyard of the university and at the Warsaw Polytechnic, where the students were kept informed of events. Though not as well organized as the workers of Warsaw, the students were also in close association and under the virtual direction of the Warsaw city party organization.

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*SECRET*The 8th Plenum

Alerted to the danger of a Natolin coup, the Warsaw workers were well organized for any eventuality. Acting to forestall the arrest of the liberal leaders and to protect key individuals, they also sent emissaries to factories throughout the country and to soldiers in the armed forces, warning them of the Natolin group's plans. Scouts were sent out to warn of any military movements toward the capital. An additional and, as it proved, crucial element in the liberal effort was the support of Staszewski's group by the recently rehabilitated commander of the militarized security forces, General Wacław Komar.

In this atmosphere of increasing tension, the official party newspaper, Trybuna Ludu, suddenly announced on 16 October that the 8th plenum of the party central committee would meet on 19 October and also that Gomulka had attended a politburo meeting on 15 October. The announcement was filled with portent for the Polish people, who, reading between the lines, saw Gomulka about to emerge from the mist astride a white horse.

After his agreement with Ochab and Cyrankiewicz, Gomulka had, in fact, participated in daily meetings of the politburo between 8 October and 12 October where additional exchanges took place concerning his future party post, with Gomulka continuing to press the conditions which he demanded as the price of his return. At the 15 October meeting, so cryptically referred to in the party press, it was definitely decided that Gomulka would be chosen first secretary of the party at the forthcoming plenum.

A key role in these developments was played by party leader Ochab. Ever since the 7th plenum in July when he attempted to act as a mediator between the two party factions, Ochab had gradually swung over to the liberal view. As indicated by his abdication speech at the 8th plenum, this change in attitude was derived in part from the talks he had with Gomulka in the intervening period. He was also influenced, apparently, by talks he had with Chinese leaders during an official visit to Peiping in September on the occasion of the Chinese party congress. When he returned in mid-September, Ochab had clearly made up his mind to give active support to the development of a separate Polish road to socialism and, from that time on, he was in close association with Gomulka. It was Ochab, in fact, who is said to have received a telephone call from Khrushchev on 17 October, inviting the entire Polish politburo to come to Moscow for discussions. After consulting with Gomulka, Ochab apparently refused, saying that such a visit would have to wait until after the plenum.

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Rumors of the Soviet invitation soon spread in the Polish capital, contributing to the atmosphere of tension on the eve of the plenum, along with the attempted Natolin coup and the impending return of Gomulka. Furthermore, at some point after 16 October, General Komar of the Internal Security Corps left a large store of arms at the disposal of Warsaw Party Secretary Staszewski, supplementing the arms which already had been issued to the Warsaw party aktiv. Simultaneously, units of Komar's uniformed security forces began to patrol the main arterial routes leading out of Warsaw.

The 8th plenum began on schedule on the morning of 19 October. Its first items of business were to co-opt Gomulka and three of his former associates into the central committee and to hear a proposal by Ochab to reduce the politburo's membership to nine. Ochab also proposed that Gomulka be elected first secretary of the central committee.

The Kremlin Intervenes

No sooner had the plenum got under way, however, when a Soviet V.I.P. plane landed at Warsaw airport carrying CPSU First Secretary Khrushchev, Presidium members Molotov, Kaganovich, and Mikoyan, as well as Marshal Konev and a frightening array of Soviet officers. Their arrival, which was soon known in the capital, coincided with reports of the movement of Soviet troops from their bases in western Poland toward Warsaw, and the alert of Soviet forces in East Germany and the Western USSR.

It was clearly a tremendous show of force, intended to support the fast deteriorating Natolin position and to intimidate the liberal party leaders. The Soviet leaders arrived in a belligerent frame of mind. Khrushchev reportedly had barely alighted from the plane when he cried, "We have shed our blood to free this country and now you want to give it to the Americans; this will not take place, you will not succeed." Angry charges and threats were made to the Polish leaders during the subsequent discussions in Belvedere Palace, intended to give the impression that, if they didn't desist from the course they were following, the Soviet Union was prepared to intervene with full military force. In view of the movements of Soviet troops both within Poland and on Poland's eastern and western frontiers, it was difficult not to believe that the Soviet leaders really meant business.

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The Soviet leaders, however, may have left an important consideration out of their calculations. The effect of this massive attempt at intimidation was to galvanize the Polish party and people into militant nationalist unity on a wave of anti-Soviet emotion. The workers in Warsaw, on the alert in their places of work, were in a tense state of organized readiness under the leadership of the Warsaw city party organization. Students gathered in the courtyard of Warsaw University, where they, too, waited in a state of great anticipation. The Polish people were caught up suddenly in one of their traditional moods of revolutionary fervor, suffused with memories of past struggles against Russian oppression. It was soon clear that, if Moscow decided to employ military force in Poland, it would be faced with an uprising which would embrace the entire nation, and which, apart from the possible support of the Polish armed forces, would certainly include armed and organized Polish workers and students.

Talks between the Polish and Soviet party leaders continued all day in Belvedere Palace and into the evening on Friday, while the 8th plenum was temporarily adjourned. In addition to their attempt to intimidate the Polish politburo into reversing its decision to remove the Stalinists, the Soviet leaders indicated their concern about the intensity of intellectual ferment in the country and about conditions in the trade unions and among Polish youth. According to remarks made during the 8th plenum by Ochab, the Soviet leaders made "completely unfounded and unheard of accusations" against the Polish party--presumably that it was engaged in some sort of plot with the West to remove Poland from the Soviet bloc. When Gomulka replied in Polish to one of Khrushchev's threatening remarks, Khrushchev reportedly pointed his finger at him, asking in Russian, "Who is that?" Gomulka replied, according to the report, "I am Gomulka, whom you put in prison for three years." The Soviet leaders, at one point, apparently offered substantial economic aid to Poland, but only on the condition that the Poles become "reasonable and abandon a policy which would lead socialism toward a catastrophe." This implied that they should not expel the Stalinists from the politburo and also that they should put a stop to the "thaw." Gomulka reportedly retorted that, as far as the composition of the politburo was concerned, this was the business of the Polish central committee.

Gomulka and Ochab did almost all the talking for the Polish side, and apparently remained cool and collected through it all. Ochab several times expressed indignation about the movements of Soviet troops within Poland, and at one point reportedly threatened to arm the workers if the Soviet military

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moves did not cease. At a critical point in the discussions late Friday evening, in answer to an especially sharp threat by Khrushchev to use force, Gomulka reportedly replied, "Now I shall speak. Not here, but over the radio to the Polish nation, and I shall tell them the whole truth about what has been happening here."

It was at about this time, nearly midnight on Friday, that the Soviet leaders concluded that their efforts to intimidate the Polish liberal leaders were not producing the desired results and that the best course under the circumstances was to make a more or less graceful exit and wait to see what effect their visit had made on the central committee. They departed early on Saturday morning, 20 October, in a much more congenial manner than they had arrived. The communiqué issued on their departure was noncommittal, except to say that the Polish politburo would send representatives to Moscow in the indeterminate future.

The attempt at intimidation continued, however, as the 8th plenum resumed on Saturday morning. Menacing Soviet troop movements in Poland and East Germany continued, supported now by units of the Soviet fleet off the Baltic coast. There were also continued reports of the massing of Soviet troops on the eastern border of Poland and of Soviet air reconnaissance over Poland. On 20 October, the morning the plenum resumed, Pravda published an attack on Polish liberal writers. The same day, an incident occurred at Sochaszew between a unit of the Polish Army under Rokossovsky and General Komar's security forces. The reports, some of them wildly exaggerated, caused tremendous anger throughout the country. The workers and students remained mobilized and alert in the capital throughout Saturday and Sunday as the plenum continued, and hundreds of mass meetings were held throughout the country in which resolutions were passed urging the central committee to resist Soviet pressure and throw Rokossovsky and the other Stalinists out of the politburo. The workers in Warsaw, especially those of the Zeran plant, exerted considerable pressure on the plenum by broadcasting accounts of the plenum debates over Warsaw radio as they proceeded and telling the central committee that the workers would not tolerate any road but one of liberalization. Worker and student groups throughout the country, but especially in Warsaw, sent delegations to present resolutions directly to the central committee.

Gomulka Emerges as National Leader

When the plenum convened on Saturday, 20 October, all eyes in the nation were fixed on Gomulka. Although the central committee had not yet elected him to any post, there was no doubt in anyone's mind that he would replace Ochab as first

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secretary. The fact that he delivered the keynote speech to the plenum did not therefore appear surprising. But the party and the nation were in great suspense to see what he had to say.

This was an occasion of great personal satisfaction to Gomulka. As he said in his opening remarks, he had not expected to speak before the central committee again when he made his last speech to the November plenum in 1949. It must have been especially pleasant for him at this time, when the policies of his successors and persecutors had given rise to economic and political chaos and had laid the foundations for the Poznan riots, to be in a position to attack these policies with a vengeance, and by implication to say to the Polish party that he, Gomulka, had been right in his views all along.

Gomulka, perhaps wisely, did not refer to the accusations of "right nationalist deviation" which had been leveled against him in September 1948. Instead, he concentrated on criticizing the economic policies of the intervening period, with emphasis on the agricultural situation--a subject on which he had always possessed strong views. Between the lines of this criticism, apparent for every party member to see, were attacks on the Stalinist triumvirate who had conceived and carried out those policies--Bierut, Berman, and Minc.

The policy which Gomulka outlined for the future was not startlingly new, except in the sphere of agriculture. As Gomulka said himself, he considered most of the resolutions of the 7th plenum as constituting a "correct line of action." It was only with respect to agriculture and the appraisal of the past that he could find grounds for criticism of the 7th plenum resolutions. Rejecting the country's agricultural policy outright, Gomulka recommended a completely new approach to collectivization which, in effect, encouraged the dissolution of most of the existing collectives. As opposed to the agricultural policy of the past, as Gomulka expressed it, "diverse forms of production community is our Polish road to socialism in the countryside." Aside from agriculture, the main new course recommended by Gomulka in his opening speech was to tell the truth to the working class and to adopt a pragmatic approach to the economic crisis. The clumsy attempt to blame Poznan on "imperialist agents," he said, was politically naive. Poznan, he stressed, had been caused by the failure of the party to tell the truth to the working class.

Although Gomulka's speech, apart from agriculture, thus amounted largely to a reaffirmation of policies previously approved by the central committee, to many Polish Communists

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it implied much more. In view of his previous views and experiences, Gomulka's statements suggested a complete rejection of Stalinism. Furthermore, when Gomulka spoke about relations with the USSR based on equality and independence and about different roads to socialism, it didn't matter too much that he also spoke of close relations with the USSR and of "international working-class solidarity." Gomulka, the rehabilitated hero, the symbol of defiance to Soviet authority, seemed to be saying that Poland, for all intents and purposes, was now to become an independent Communist nation and would no longer tolerate exploitation or interference by the Soviet Union.

The Polish populace, which read much more than this into the speech, nevertheless remained alert and anxious all during the debates on Saturday and Sunday. The menace of possible Soviet military intervention still hung heavily in the air. It was still to be seen whether the party leadership would be able to withstand the pressure from the East.

The Natolin group put up determined opposition during the debates, although its abortive coup had cost it much prestige and support in the central committee. Marshal Rokossovsky was criticized by the plenum and forced to explain the recent movements of Polish troops, which he did unconvincingly and evasively. The Stalinists concentrated their fire on Gomulka's proposed agricultural policies, and on the activities of the Warsaw city party organization under Staszewski, which they accused of exerting unjustified "pressure from below" on the central committee. They also accused the "liberal" leaders of having brought chaos to the country, of having turned the heads of the workers, and of having encouraged elements hostile to socialism. Some of their group continued to oppose the projected changes in the politburo, especially the proposed ouster of Rokossovsky, which they said would cause unnecessary harm to Polish-Soviet relations.

Despite the dogged efforts of the Stalinists, by this time they were fighting a losing cause, and the liberals managed to carry the day, undoubtedly aided by the state of popular feeling and the pressure from workers and students in Warsaw. Gomulka's speech and program received majority support in the central committee, some of which was undoubtedly half-hearted and influenced by the fear of impending catastrophe. The politburo was duly reduced to nine members, and the new politburo elected by the 8th plenum consisted, with one exception, of supporters of the liberal Communist cause. All but two of the liberals were elected by over 90 percent of the vote. The

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two exceptions, Zambrowski and Morawski, were strongly opposed by the Stalinists in the central committee and received only 56 out of 75 votes. Zawadzki, the only Stalinist to remain, received 68 votes, apparently because his retention had been agreed upon in advance. Marshal Rokossovsky's name was presented from the floor in a last-ditch attempt by the Stalinists to force his retention. The attempt was defeated, however, when only 23 votes could be mustered in his support. The defeat of the Stalinists was accompanied by the return of the "natives" to the party leadership, symbolized by the election of Gomulka and one of his former associates, Loga-Sowinski, to the politburo. The final act of the plenum on Sunday, 21 October, was the unanimous election of Gomulka as first secretary of the party.

The Soviet Decision to Yield

It is difficult to say exactly when the Soviet leaders decided to accept the fait accompli in Poland. The continued threatening movements of Soviet troops and fleet units on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, however, suggest that the decision was not taken until after the conclusion of the plenum. Right up to the end, the Soviet leaders apparently were hoping that their show of force would save the day for the Stalinists or force the liberals to concede to their demands. Only when the Gomulka forces proved finally triumphant in the central committee and Gomulka emerged the leader of an aroused united nation did the Soviet leaders decide that acceptance of this new situation was preferable to the consequences of massive military intervention in Poland.

Reportedly, Gomulka received a telephone call from Khrushchev early on Tuesday, 23 October. Making excuses for his behavior on Friday, Khrushchev reportedly said that, having thought the matter over, he had decided that Gomulka was right and that he (Khrushchev) now completely approved of Gomulka's behavior and actions. As far as Soviet troops were concerned, he said, Soviet forces in Poland had been ordered to return to their bases forthwith. Khrushchev's assurance was soon confirmed. And it was indeed with the Soviet decision to end the show of force that the cause of national Communism under Gomulka achieved its major victory. Faced with the defiance of the Polish central committee, supported by an aroused and alerted nation, the Soviet leaders were forced to choose between an enormous blood bath and the acceptance of a national Communist regime.

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CHANGES IN POLISH PARTY LEADERSHIP**OCTOBER 1956****POLITBURO**

JULY 1956

Cyrankiewicz (M)
 Ochab (M)
 Rapacki (M)
 Zawadzki (S)
 Zambrowski (M)
 Mazur (S)
 Jozwiak-Witold (S)
 Dworakowski (S)
 Z. Nowak (S)
 R. Nowak (S)
 Rokossovsky (S)
 Gierek (M)

OCTOBER 1956

Cyrankiewicz (M)
 Ochab (M)
 Rapacki (M)
 Zawadzki (S)
 Zambrowski (M)
 Gomulka (G)
 Loga-Sowinski (G)
 Morawski (M)
 Jedrychowski (M)

Minc (S)

(REMOVED PRIOR TO OCT 1956)

M = Moderate

G = Gomulka Coterie

S = Stalinist

Berman (S)

*(REMOVED PRIOR TO JUL 1956)***SECRETARIAT**

JULY 1956

Ochab (M)
 Matwin (M)
 Albrecht (M)
 Gierek (M)
 Jarosinski (M)
 Morawski (M)
 Mazur (S)

OCTOBER 1956

Gomulka (G)
 Ochab (M)
 Matwin (M)
 Albrecht (M)
 Gierek (M)
 Jarosinski (M)
 Zambrowski (M)

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*SECRET*CHAPTER XGOMULKA'S POLICIES SINCE OCTOBER

Although Gomulka was carried to power in October under his old slogan of a "Polish road to socialism," in the year after his return to the party leadership he was unable to provide the party with an adequate theoretical basis for this alleged "Polish road." Instead, Gomulka's policies during that year consisted basically of attempts to deal with the various crisis situations which had developed largely as a result of the post-Stalin "thaw." After having been swept into power on a wave of anti-Soviet, nationalist emotion, Gomulka's chief problem for the moment was not his own position, but the position of Communism in Poland, whose potential fate was pointed up by the revolution in Hungary. Regardless of the force of Gomulka's convictions about the course to be pursued internally on the quest toward socialism, and his strong feelings about interference by the USSR, his time in prison had not weakened his basic loyalty to the Communist party. If it came to a question whether Communism were to continue or be replaced by a non-Communist system, Gomulka's attitude was little different from Khrushchev's, Molotov's, or Kadar's. The months immediately following Gomulka's return, therefore, were taken up largely with attempts to prevent seething popular emotion from erupting in a general upheaval which would almost certainly result in Communism's being swept out of Poland as quickly as it was in Hungary--thus necessitating Soviet military intervention. The party having largely disintegrated, and in the absence of an effective security arm, Gomulka was forced to draw on the limited reserves of his own popularity in order to calm the workers and the country in general. Since his own resources were inadequate, moreover, he turned to the one stable popular force in Poland, the Roman Catholic church, to enlist support to prevent catastrophe. The price of this support was termination of open warfare against the church, and an agreement to coexist on a peaceful basis and work together in the national interest. Within certain limits, beyond which neither Gomulka nor Moscow desired "national Communism" to proceed, Gomulka's internal policies in the year after his return consisted of a combination of common sense, pragmatism, and experimentation, rather than an organized program based on solid ideological premises. But, especially after the Hungarian revolution, it became necessary both to Moscow and to Gomulka for the limitations of "national Communism" to be clearly defined. Certain basic limitations were apparently agreed on in the spring of 1957 between Khrushchev and other bloc Communist leaders. Gomulka himself subscribed to these limits at the 9th central committee plenum in May. Although each country should be allowed to pursue

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its own path to socialism, taking into account its own specific conditions and historical circumstances, these varying approaches, he said, must be within the framework of certain "universal principles" of socialist development which had been derived from the experience of the Soviet Union. These principles he defined as:

1. The organization of a Marxist-Leninist party of the working class and the working masses, guided by the principles of democratic centralism and implementing the policy of alliance between the working class and the working peasantry;
2. After the overthrow of the bourgeois rule, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat over the exploiters and oppressors of the working people.
3. Socialization of the capitalist means of production, the gradual transformation of the production relations in the countryside, the placing of the entire national economy in a defined framework of central planning and management.
4. A policy line in accordance with the Leninist principles of proletarian internationalism, the observance of the equality and sovereignty of all states and nations, and the unity of socialist countries and forces to oppose imperialist aggression and to defend peace.*

Thus, Gomulka stated the limits beyond which the Polish "experiment" would not be allowed to proceed. No basic change would be tolerated in the ideological basis for the party or in party discipline, thus ensuring that the party would not evolve in the direction of a bourgeois party or relinquish the basis of power. Nor would anything be permitted--such as a genuine multiparty political system--which would endanger the dictatorial position of the party. The third principle guarded against too great an extension of non-Marxist innovations or decentralization in the economy; the fourth established the basis for following the Soviet line in important foreign policy matters.

Having thus defined what the "Polish road to socialism" was not and would not be allowed to become, Gomulka also attempted at the May plenum to define what the Polish experiment actually

*These principles were later expanded and adopted in somewhat modified form in the communiqué of bloc countries issued in Moscow in November 1957.

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amounted to. He said that the basis of the Polish road--that is, the resolutions of the 8th central committee plenum--were not new but had been the result of gradual evolution in the party. The meaning of the 8th plenum, he said, was that it broke away from the bad methods of socialist construction--"from the bad ways and means of exercising power"--correcting party policy to "make socialist construction the living, creative work of the working class and the working masses." With this "turning point," Gomulka continued, the 8th plenum had outlined three lines of development which constituted the specific Polish road to socialism. These were a) the establishment of workers' councils, b) the expansion of powers of the people's councils, and c) the development of various economic forms of peasant self-management.

In fact, however, Gomulka's definition of the Polish road was inadequate and misleading. At the 8th plenum in October, Gomulka had acknowledged that, except for agricultural policy, most of the party program had been taken directly from the 7th plenum the preceding July. At the 9th plenum Gomulka showed that, except for agriculture, there was no new general policy line which could be attributed specifically to the Gomulka regime. What there was in general policy was either the result of the evolution of previous policy or the unavoidable result of the "thaw" in Poland, the development of which, as has been seen, had little direct connection with Gomulka. Gomulka's chief contribution to policy seems to have been his pragmatic method and a more humanitarian approach to Communism, and the assurance that with him at the helm the liberal trend in internal policy would not be reversed.

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the October revolution, Gomulka did present a clearer definition of the significance of the "October turning point" in an article in Pravda:

The essence of this turning point was the rise and strengthening of socialism, the consolidation of wide and deep links between the party and the masses, the development of socialist democracy and the strengthening of the people's regime by the ever wider involvement of the masses in socialist construction and the management of the country. The essence of this turning point in the countryside lay in the break with sectarian methods of command and in the direction of the movement for socialist cooperation in agriculture onto a democratic road of peasant self-government via the development of various forms of cooperation.

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Despite Gomulka's failure to present an adequate theoretical basis for his policies, a number of trends became apparent soon after his return to power which became associated in the public mind with his "Polish road to socialism." These trends, while not in contradiction to his conception of the "Polish road," took shape not in response to basic policy but as a result of his realistic approach to the immense problems which he inherited when he returned to power--the crisis in the economy, the disintegration within the party and the worsening of party discipline, the unchecked popular indulgence in freedom of expression, the breakdown of the security apparatus as an effective arm of authority, and chaos among the youth.

1. The Party

In October 1956 Gomulka had become leader of a party which was in an advanced stage of decay. In the first months of his leadership his control extended only to the party's highest organs--the politburo and the secretariat, where Stalinist power had been effectively eliminated. In the central committee, which had voted him into power, his policies were opposed not only by the Stalinists, who represented approximately a third of the voting strength, but, in certain instances, by a larger group of old-party bureaucrats who, while generally in support of liberal policies, were concerned about the extent of Gomulka's concessions to the peasants and to the church and about the influence of the revisionist press on the party. Gomulka's loyal supporters in the central committee constituted only a small fraction of that body, and as a consequence Gomulka was forced to try to win the support of the old-party bureaucrats. Gomulka's support was even weaker in the party apparatus, where Stalinists held numerous important positions on the provincial level. During the first months after October, Gomulka made moves to improve his support in the apparatus, first of all by reducing its number by over one third, and secondly by attempting to replace Stalinists with his own men in some of the most important posts in the provinces. The Stalinists, for their part, attempted to rally their own supporters, but sometime after the January 1957 elections, they lost a vital asset, the direct support of the USSR, and subsequently lost ground in the leading party organs. Gomulka, on the other hand, gained stature in the party by his growing acceptability to Moscow, as well as by his proven ability to avert catastrophe. He emerged from a direct clash with the Stalinists at the 9th central committee plenum with a somewhat strengthened position in the central committee. His position remained weak in the apparatus, however, where the Stalinists staked their hopes for a possible showdown of strength at the scheduled third party congress. Furthermore, party discipline was almost nonexistent among the party rank and file, whose behavior and

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attitude since 1956 had become virtually indistinguishable from that of the non-Communist populace. At the 10th central committee plenum in October 1957, Gomulka made a move to cut the party's losses when he announced plans to purge the party rank and file of many of these members who had long been Communists in name only. He also initiated a program to reduce factionalism and corruption, and to rebuild the party's lost prestige and restore its shattered discipline. This program was only a first step in Gomulka's long-range aim to achieve strong control over the party. Although it promised to improve party discipline and help to "purify" the party's ranks, Gomulka's control of the party apparatus continued to be impeded by the strength of the Stalinists and the bureaucrats, on whom Gomulka had to depend for the implementation of party directives. Gomulka, however, improved his position not only with Moscow, but also with the apparatus by reversing his view on the party's role in implementing government directives. Whereas his view, as of October 1956, was that the party should be separated from the functions of the government administration, Gomulka changed during 1957 to the view that, while the party should not undertake detailed supervision on all levels, as was the practice in the Stalinist period, it nevertheless should assert firm control of government policy and policy decisions down to the provincial level. This reversal undoubtedly has met with the approval of the party bureaucrats, but Gomulka's serious weakness in the party apparatus remains. His opponents will probably continue to try to force alterations in his most liberal policies, but not to unseat Gomulka himself. His dependence on the Stalinists and bureaucrats in the apparatus for the implementation of his party directives, however, together with his firm commitment to an anti-Stalinist course of action, makes it extremely difficult for Gomulka to take the strong measures against his opponents in the apparatus which would appear to be necessary if he is to consolidate firm control over the party.

2. The Church

Gomulka had long appreciated the great strength of the Roman Catholic Church in the Polish countryside. The church, he felt, was one of the specifically Polish features which should be taken into account in the construction of socialism in Poland. This attitude was strengthened by the fact that the policies adopted toward the church by the Stalinists after his removal had antagonized not only the clergy but also the lay believers who made up some 96 percent of Poland's population. Finally, Gomulka was influenced in this regard in October 1956 by the important practical consideration that if the country were to be restrained from an outburst which would result either in the destruction of Communism or in Soviet military intervention, or both, Gomulka's popularity was not enough and he would need all the allies he

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could muster. In the circumstances, it was expedient for Gomulka to come to terms with the church. An agreement, therefore, was negotiated with the church. The anti-church propaganda campaign was called off, Cardinal Wyszynski was released together with imprisoned bishops and other clergy, some property was restored to the church, optional religious instruction was again introduced in state schools, the church was allowed more or less unhindered control of its own appointments, and it was permitted a weekly publication of its own. For its part, the church appointed resident bishops to dioceses in the former German territories, even gaining Vatican approval for the move, and the church agreed to work with the regime in the interests of Poland.

The clear community of interest between Gomulka and the church ensured the effectiveness of the agreement during the initial period of Gomulka's leadership. The church supported the regime by calming the populace in times of crisis and by publicly supporting certain regime policies, and the regime, in turn, respected the freedoms granted to the church. As early as the spring of 1957, however, the regime indicated that it was not disposed to expand on those freedoms. No further property was restored to the church, nor was the "Caritas" organization. The church was not permitted to publish a daily newspaper, and its weekly was subjected to increasing censorship. The entire field of lay activity, moreover, was denied to the church, and the excommunicated "Pax" Catholics were allowed to continue to function. Negotiations continued sporadically in a church-state commission established for the purpose. Toward the end of 1957, relations between the regime and the church appeared to be approaching stalemate on major issues, although minor concessions could still be made from time to time by the Gomulka regime. The Gomulka-church agreement nevertheless still appeared to be to the distinct advantage of both parties.

3. Agriculture

Gomulka's opposition to forced collectivization in Polish agriculture contributed largely to his purge in 1948. He felt then and continued to feel on his return to power in October 1956 that premature collectivization would be disastrous to the cause of socialism in Poland. The patent failure of agricultural policies under the Stalinists reinforced this belief and stimulated one of Gomulka's few original contributions to policy. His approach, as in other fields, was entirely pragmatic. Those collectives which had proved themselves should be encouraged, but the others should be allowed to dissolve. Compulsory deliveries should be reduced and eventually abolished. Great incentives, including the right to own, inherit, and sell land, should be given to the individual peasant to stimulate his effort to produce.

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The machine-tractor stations should be turned into repair shops for peasant-owned machinery. But this, to Gomulka, did not mean that socialism's cause was lost in the countryside. On the contrary, as he argued at the 9th plenum in May, it was a great step forward in the direction of socialism. Whereas previously the Stalinists had attempted to impose collective forms on the recalcitrant peasantry, now the peasants would be encouraged to undertake collective activities spontaneously and thus come to see their practical merit. Thus a faith in collective institutions was to be realistically developed among the peasants.

Despite frontal attacks by the Stalinists, who considered Gomulka's policy a definite step backward, Gomulka continued adamantly to defend his agricultural policies, which he believed to be the only way of effectively collectivizing the Polish countryside. He defended them at the 8th and 9th plenums, and again before the leaders of world Communism at the 40th anniversary celebrations in Moscow in November 1957. In the latter instance he had an impressive record to cite of improved agricultural production to back up his stand. Gomulka's strong convictions on agricultural policy, together with the fact that any reversal of this policy would stimulate overwhelming peasant opposition, makes it virtually certain that as long as Gomulka continues to be leader of the party, he will continue to follow his lenient pragmatic approach in Polish agriculture.

4. The Economy

Compared with his views on agriculture, Gomulka's views on the economy have been much less clear-cut. When he assumed leadership in 1956, however, he felt strongly, as did most liberally inclined Polish economists, that the disproportionate development of heavy industry under the Stalinists at the expense of other sectors of the economy had led the economy to the verge of disaster. He also agreed with the economists that the imposition of Stalinist economic methods in general had been ruinous and wasteful to Poland's economy. In the absence of a generally accepted solution to the serious economic crisis, an economic advisory council was given the task in early 1957 of drafting recommendations to improve the structure of the economy. Its recommendations, known as "theses for a new economic model," were eventually accepted by the regime, after delays occasioned by serious opposition from influential government bureaucrats, in the fall of 1957. This model was to be characterized by decentralization of authority in government (giving increased powers to local councils), the organization of certain industries on a functional basis, the granting of authority to some enterprises to enter into foreign contracts; and it was also to include an automatic market mechanism in the consumer goods sector in place of centralized administrative

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direction--a device constituting a revision of traditional Marxist methods in the economy.

While the "theses" were being prepared, the only safe course appeared to be to shift investments to correct the "disproportions," putting renewed stress on consumer goods and export industries, to attempt to increase production and productivity in all branches of the economy, and to increase imports of consumer goods. In the meantime, the symptoms of the disorder could be brought under attack. Reductions were accordingly made in the gigantic government bureaucratic structure which had resulted in enormous waste and inefficiency, and an attempt was made to decentralize the economy, both in the planning and production stages. In addition, small-scale private enterprise was encouraged in handicrafts and related industry, with a view to further increasing the supply of consumer goods on the market.

Gomulka's economic policies, then, could be characterized in general as practical palliatives combined with experimentation, together with intensified efforts to secure economic aid from abroad. Except in agriculture, there has as yet been no concrete policy worked out which would apply to all branches of the economy. Depending on how the new "theses" are applied, the result might well be an improved economic structure. Non-Marxist innovations might well be tolerated in the economy, as long as they do not threaten central control over the general allocation of resources, or state control of the means of production, as Gomulka emphasized in May.

5. The Workers

Gomulka remarked in his initial speech to the 8th plenum that the greatest blow to the party, as revealed by the Poznan riots, was the loss of the confidence of the working class. The most serious threat to the Polish economy, from the time of the October "turning point," has been the general malaise among the workers, caused by a chronically low standard of living, especially with respect to low wages and poor housing. Gomulka was able in the beginning to use his popularity and the initial enthusiasm for the "October changes" to neutralize this malaise. His method was to adopt a frank approach and tell the workers that immediate wage increases and a rise in consumption would only ruin the economy.

Gomulka tried to mollify the workers by appearing to encourage the formation of workers' councils in industry. He was never particularly enthusiastic, however, about the concept of workers' councils. Since many of them had sprung up spontaneously before October, he could hardly ignore them, but, as he indicated in his

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speech in October 1956, he felt the whole approach should be a cautious one. Workers' councils were legalized throughout the country the following month, but the status of the worker vis-a-vis the factory manager was not clarified, and at the May plenum Gomulka told the workers that the activities and powers of the workers' councils would be strictly limited. No national organization of workers' councils would be permitted, nor would they be allowed to engage in large-scale investment of profits for the workers' welfare. Furthermore, the workers would not be permitted partial ownership of factories. Following the Gomulka-Tito meeting in September 1957, more official emphasis was placed on workers' councils in Poland. The regime also modified its stand somewhat by the December 1957 law on industrial management, which was influenced by the successes of some workers' council experiments. Nevertheless, the restrictions placed on the workers' councils prior to that time had dampened the initial wave of enthusiasm for them among the workers.

The low morale of the workers, manifested by absenteeism and the constant threat of strikes, has continued to be one of Gomulka's most serious chronic problems. He has become involved in a vicious circle in which greater productivity cannot be stimulated unless wage raises are granted and, on the other hand, wage raises will result in inflation unless productivity is first increased. Consequently, Gomulka continues to deal cautiously with the workers in the hope that worker dissatisfaction can be kept from erupting into demonstrations of serious proportions, while he endeavors to improve the economic situation to the point where wage raises can be made.

6. Youth

In the first flush of the October events, the discredited Communist youth organization disintegrated of itself, and there sprang up in its place a number of youth organizations representing various social and political groups among the youth. Since some of them, especially the "Democratic Youth Union," were demonstrably anti-Communist in nature, the situation was one of potential danger for Gomulka's regime. Reacting to this danger in characteristically Communist fashion, Gomulka has attempted since that time to discourage anti-Communist organizational tendencies among the youth, and at the same time rebuild a Communist youth organization under the firm control of the party. Two of the new youth organizations, the "Union of Workers' Youth" and the "Revolutionary Youth Union," were consequently amalgamated in January into a Union of Socialist Youth (ZMS), which was intended by the regime to become the successor of the previous Communist youth organization (ZMP). One of the other groups, the "Democratic Youth Union," was dissolved by the regime

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in the spring of 1957, showing Gomulka's determination to resist "bourgeois" political tendencies among the youth. Another group, the "Union of Rural Youth," was allowed to continue to function as an arm of the regime-controlled Peasant party. The regime demonstrated, however, in the first months of 1957 that it would deal firmly with any elements in the rural youth organization which attempted to propagate the ideas or organize on the basis of the old anti-Communist Peasant party.

In the year after the October crisis, Gomulka made little headway in stimulating support among the youth. More than in any other sector of the Polish populace, Communism was discredited among Polish youth, and it was clear that the regime would not succeed in stimulating political zeal except on a non-Communist basis. Gomulka's efforts to reassert party control over the new Communist youth organization, though to some extent effective, only weakened the organization and antagonized the youth. The situation in the rural areas, however, was less clear. The rural youth organization apparently had achieved some genuine popularity among peasant youth, many of the members evidently hoping that the organization could remain independent of Communist control.

Gomulka's blunt attempts to re-establish the new Communist youth organization on the basis of the old one antagonized many of the elements who had been his most ardent supporters during the October crisis. So far, at least, he has managed to prevent a reversion to organized non-Communist political activity among the youth. Polish youth, however, is far from being reduced to a state of subservience, and Gomulka has been unable to alter its deep-seated disaffection with the cause of Communism.

7. The Army

One of the chief irritants to anti-Soviet feeling in Poland immediately prior to the October events was the flagrant Soviet domination of the Polish armed forces. Dramatically symbolized by the imposition of Marshal Rokossovsky as commander in chief of the armed forces in November 1949, in the ensuing years it had developed to the point where a large proportion of the senior command and staff positions in the Polish armed forces were held by Soviet officers. When he came to power in October, one of Gomulka's first moves was to remove the most obvious symbols of Soviet domination. Marshal Rokossovsky was, of course, the first to go, followed shortly by some 120 of 150 senior Soviet officers. Rokossovsky was replaced by Gomulka's fellow purgee, Marian Spychalski, and numerous other Polish officers who had been victimized during the Stalinist era received high posts in the place of Russians.

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In removing the Soviet officers, Gomulka not only struck a satisfying blow at overt Soviet domination of the armed forces, but he also ensured that in the event of Soviet military intervention in Poland, the Polish armed forces would almost certainly be loyal to Poland. Despite the personal loyalty to Gomulka of many of its top officers, the Polish armed forces nevertheless retain strong ties to the Soviet bloc. For equipment and supplies they remain to a large extent dependent on the USSR, and Poland continues to be an active member of the Warsaw Pact. Despite the removal of the surface evidence of Soviet domination, the Polish armed forces still retain a strong anti-Soviet bias embarrassing to the regime, whose military ties with bloc forces are strong, as demonstrated by the joint maneuvers of Soviet and Polish forces in Poland last September.

Poland's armed forces thus constitute a threat to the Soviet Union only in the event that it becomes necessary for Soviet forces to intervene in Poland. Should this necessity not ever develop, the Polish armed forces will in all probability remain a loyal arm of the Warsaw Pact. Their loyalty to the Gomulka regime, however, would be highly doubtful should an attempt be made to use them in operations against the Polish people.

8. Foreign policy

The most important aspect of Gomulka's foreign policy after the October crisis was the new relationship with the USSR. Gomulka was spectacularly successful soon after the October events in securing what appeared to be a state and party relationship with the Soviet Union based on equality and independence. He also managed to secure Soviet concessions to Poland's chief grievances against the USSR-- economic exploitation, Soviet troops in Poland, Polish citizens still in the USSR --and, in addition, secured substantial Soviet credits and other economic aid. In this manner, Gomulka gained public recognition from Moscow of his independent Communist position. This independence, however, applied almost entirely to matters of internal policy. In the field of foreign affairs, various factors prevented Gomulka from asserting much of an independent line. First of all, Gomulka's Communist loyalties placed him basically in agreement with the most important Soviet objectives in foreign policy, especially with regard to the capitalist powers. Secondly, Gomulka realistically recognized that Poland's geographical location next to the USSR seriously inhibited Poland's taking an independent line in foreign policy. Poland, moreover, was politically dependent on the Soviet Union for supporting its Oder-Neisse frontier in the west against Germany, and was economically dependent on the USSR for the supply of many vital raw materials.

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Nevertheless, within these limitations, Gomulka's Poland made concerted attempts to establish broad contacts with Western countries, especially in attempts to secure Western economic aid. Some gestures were also made in the beginning toward asserting an independent line in certain foreign policy sectors--notably toward Hungary, Yugoslavia, and West Germany. Poland was also in an advantageous position to push certain phases of Soviet policy on its own, especially where they coincided with Polish interests.

Ever since Gomulka achieved power, for that matter, his regime has continued to indicate its desire to exert an independent line in foreign policy. Its ability to do this, however, has become increasingly restricted by Poland's economic, political, and military ties with the Soviet bloc, together with Gomulka's basic agreement with the other bloc Communist leaders that the most important joint goal is the preservation of Communist party control and the consolidation and expansion of the Communist system. To this end, they all agree, solidarity must be maintained on all important aspects of bloc foreign policy.

9. General freedoms

The most conspicuous characteristic of Poland under Gomulka has been the unusual atmosphere of freedom. Much of this developed before his return, during the period of the "thaw," especially the general freedom from fear of the security police, which gave Poles the courage to speak their minds in public and in private. Even toward the end of 1957, although many measures had been taken by that time to curb revisionism and "irresponsible" criticism by the press, the degree of freedom of expression permitted the Polish press and radio was still unusual for Eastern Europe, and political plays continued unmercifully to attack both Polish Communists and the USSR. Poles were allowed an astonishing amount of cultural contact with the West, to the point that such newspapers as the London Times and Le Monde were freely available in Warsaw. Poles were allowed to travel and study abroad, under Western scholarships, and Westerners traveled in great numbers to Poland. Poles were free to listen to Western radio broadcasts, which were no longer jammed, and cultural freedom was limited only by what was officially termed "reasons of state" (a euphemism for the delicate state of relations with the Soviet Union). The church, as has been seen, enjoyed a surprising degree of freedom, and nonpolitical groups such as intellectual discussion groups and Catholic groups were allowed virtual freedom of association. In the field of education, the tendency was to reduce the Marxist content of curricula.

As had been the policy prior to Gomulka's advent to power, the "allied" political parties were encouraged to exert greater

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initiative in political activity, and in the case of the Peasant party (ZSL), the response among the peasantry was stronger than the regime actually desired. In this field as well as with Polish youth, however, Gomulka made it clear that he would take any measures which might be necessary to prevent these groups from turning into independent, "bourgeois"-type political parties. As it had earlier in 1956, the Sejm was encouraged to play its constitutional role in Polish politics, and to exert its rightful control over government administration. In fact, legislative committees and the Sejm itself received a considerable increase in power compared with the previous period. The activities of the Sejm, however, were increasingly curtailed under Gomulka, and by late 1957, the Sejm was far from becoming a genuine parliamentary body, .

Toward the end of 1957 the Gomulka regime tended increasingly to clamp down on the "revisionist" press. Gomulka was never in sympathy with the party intellectuals, and his views on ideological revisionism (as opposed to his views prior to his purge) were in general agreement with those of Moscow.--i.e., that revisionist ideas, if they took their logical course, would lead to the appearance of bourgeois institutions and thence a return of capitalism. This, in turn, it was felt, would lead to civil war and "all the consequences." Consequently, Gomulka took measures, one by one, to curb the revisionist press and to subdue the party intellectuals. The most vocal revisionist publications were silenced, or brought into line. A number of important revisionists were expelled from the party. At the same time, however, Gomulka took pains to emphasize that the democratic freedoms which were apparent in Poland after October would not be reversed. Full freedom of criticism would continue, he said, as long as the criticism was constructive and it "facilitated the building of socialism."

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*SECRET*CONCLUSIONSThe Lessons of October

The return of Gomulka to power in October 1956 was not the result of a factional struggle within the party over the issues associated with his removal as party leader in 1948. It was the result, instead, of the legendary status he had acquired among the populace as a result of his disgrace and punishment in 1948 and afterwards for nationalist deviation. Thus, the Polish people saw Gomulka as the man who, as Gomulka put it in 1948, "defended Poland while others were selling out Poland." In the party itself, the purge of the "national deviationists" appears to have left Gomulka with little personal support within the apparatus, although he retained considerable popularity among the rank and file. As a result, after the death of Stalin there was no specific Gomulka faction within the higher councils of the party which was pressing for his return to power. In fact, there seems to have been general agreement within these higher councils that, although Gomulka was deeply wronged by his arrest and imprisonment, as well as by the fabricated criminal charges brought against him in the latter part of 1949, he nevertheless remained guilty of the political charges which originally led to his removal as party leader in September 1948. Thus, as late as May 1956, the official party position on these original charges was reaffirmed, and no group in the leading party circles seemed inclined to press for its revision.

Gomulka's return in 1956 resulted, instead, from the pressures for change which had built up in Poland since the death of Stalin--both within the party, and, especially after the 20th party congress, among the masses of the Polish populace. As has been seen, the most important of these pressures in Poland were basically anti-Stalinist and anti-Soviet in nature. Since all of the top party leaders were compromised by their Stalinist associations, Gomulka suddenly emerged as the one uncompromised party leader of stature who had any capability of resolving the situation. In the years since 1948, and especially after his release and rehabilitation, Gomulka had achieved considerable popularity among the populace, in whose eyes he had become the embodiment of their long-accumulated bitterness against the Communist leaders and against the Soviet Union. The higher councils of the party, who, despite the changes since Stalin's death, still considered Gomulka a right deviationist, first sought to return him to a lesser position in the party with a view to using his unique popularity in the country in order to neutralize popular and party pressures for change. Following the Poznan riots, this need acquired greater urgency and forced

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Ochab and the "liberal" party leaders, whose policies were approved at the 7th plenum in July, to concede to popular pressures and pressure from below within the party by agreeing to Gomulka's return to the party leadership on his own terms, in order to avert catastrophe.

Gomulka was swept to power in October 1956 on a wave of popular emotion, in which anti-Stalinist and anti-Soviet feeling within the Communist party were combined with similar, but much broader and more deeply ingrained attitudes among the populace. Indeed, except for this unusual combination of circumstances, it is very doubtful that Gomulka would have been returned to power at all.

At the time of his return, he was opposed only by a small but resolute minority in the party, whose power was simultaneously removed from the politburo and secretariat of the party, but retained in the central committee. Many of the more liberally inclined party leaders who supported him in October, moreover, did so because they considered him the only way out of a bad situation for the party, not because they enthusiastically approved of his views. Aside from his former companions in disgrace (e.g., Kliszko, Spychalski, Loga-Sowinski, and Bienkowski), Gomulka's most enthusiastic support in the party came from the ranks of the enraged liberals, whose main power lay outside the leading organs of the party. Gomulka's position in the party, therefore, even in the beginning, rested on unstable foundations, quite apart from the fact that he was faced with general political and economic chaos and highly inflamed anti-Soviet emotion throughout the country, which without much encouragement could have easily generated a national uprising.

Gomulka After His Rehabilitation

What sort of person was this Gomulka who had suddenly become the leader of a national Communist Poland? What was his previous outlook, and how was it likely to affect his actions with respect to the crisis he had inherited?

As secretary general of the party during the war and afterwards, Gomulka was conditioned by a firm conviction that the prewar Communist Party of Poland (KPP), and its predecessor, the SDKPiL, had made grave errors in respect to the force of nationalism in Poland. In view of these errors, and in view of the fact that the KPP had been officially dissolved by the Comintern, Gomulka was determined at the end of the war that

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the new Communist party, the Polish Workers' Party (PPR), should not be connected with the traditions of the other two organizations, and that it should make practical use of the strong force of nationalism in Poland. While Moscow was prepared to support this policy as a tactic, however, Gomulka believed in it as a long-term policy.* His belief in this regard was reflected in internal party policy. The Polish defector, Bialer, recalls for example, that during Gomulka's first period of party leadership, a student in a party school, when asked in an examination what he knew about the prewar Polish party, knew that it would be judicious for him to answer as follows: "The basic errors of the Communist party before the war consisted of..."

Gomulka was also motivated by a deep-seated distrust of the USSR, based largely on the shockingly capricious manner in which the Polish Communists had been treated by Moscow in the past, and a belief that the Soviet Communist leaders did not or would not understand the problems of the Poles. This distrust was heightened by the friction which occurred between the "natives" and the "foreigners" in the Polish party during, but especially after, the war. Gomulka always considered the "foreigners" puppets of Moscow. The distrust was increased by disputes Gomulka had after the war with Marshal Rokossovsky, then the local Soviet commander, over looting by Soviet troops and the removal of installations from the "recovered territories." It was also reflected in Gomulka's initial opposition to the establishment of the Cominform in 1947. These disputes had a dramatic sequel in November 1949, when Gomulka was expelled from the central committee and Marshal Rokossovsky, the symbol of Soviet domination, was imposed as commander in chief of the Polish armed forces and made a member of the politburo.

Gomulka's determination that the new Polish party should not make the errors of the prewar KPP influenced his attitude toward the Polish Socialist party, whose successful use of the forces of Polish nationalism he had always admired, and whose strength he sought to utilize for Communist purposes. As a result, Gomulka after the war openly advocated using a combination of Socialist and Communist traditions as an ideological

* Gomulka's attitude was partly influenced by the fact that the prewar party was officially discredited at the time within the international Communist movement. Thus, the new Communist party could hardly establish firm ties with the traditions of the old.

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basis for the projected merger of the two parties. He also advocated giving the Socialists a large representation in the new party, a desire which did not reach fruition, since his removal as party leader in 1948 was followed by the ruthless purge of the Socialist party ranks.

Another characteristic of Gomulka was his strong hatred of the Germans, influenced by his wartime experiences in Poland under German occupation, as well as by his postwar experience in charge of the "recovered territories," where he supervised the mass expulsion of the Germans. Gomulka's feelings on this subject were so strong that he made no distinction between Germans, regardless of their political view. In 1949, when Gomulka was expelled from the central committee, Hilary Minc declared that this characteristic of Gomulka's made it virtually impossible for him to work with the East German Communists, and made him distrust the permanence of East Germany's recognition of the Oder-Neisse line.

In the immediate postwar period Gomulka developed another characteristic which irritated the other party leaders. This was his tendency toward dictatorial habits--his inability to work with the group. Gomulka did not like opposition and he dealt with it summarily. He was, after all, convinced that his conception of how socialism should be built in Poland was correct, and he refused to tolerate obstruction by subordinates, or interference from outside authority.

Gomulka, as has been seen, was a man of exceptionally strong character, of whom the Peasant leader Mikolajczyk once said, "He is my most dangerous enemy. He has a strong personality, an iron will and fanatical courage. He knows the Polish people, especially the peasants; he is a good speaker; he has a plan and will carry it out." Gomulka essentially was a loyal Communist, but a realist. His desire was to see "socialism" constructed in Poland, but in pragmatic, rather than dogmatic terms. This realistic approach, Gomulka felt, was the only correct one to take in order to construct the basis for Communism in Poland. Everything that happened after 1948, moreover, supported his conviction that his conception of the "Polish road" was correct. The patent failure of the opposite course which had been followed by the Stalinists since his removal he believed further justified his policies, as did the fact that the party dramatically recalled him to power at the very time when the failure of the Stalinist course was most obvious to all.

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*SECRET*Changes in Gomulka's Views Since 1948

Of the deviationist views which Gomulka held prior to mid-1948, two at least changed appreciably in subsequent years. These were his conception of the ideological basis for the party and his attitude toward the "dictatorship of the proletariat." On two other important issues,--agriculture and the "Polish road to socialism"--Gomulka's views had not changed at all. On the contrary, their previous merits had been further justified in his mind by events since 1948. Gomulka's time in prison, however, exerted a sobering effect on his views. Previously a ruthless Communist fanatic, Gomulka emerged from prison nauseated by Stalinist methods and imbued with the belief that what had happened to him should not be allowed to happen to others in Communist Poland. Having been one of Stalinism's chief victims, and having returned to power on a wave of revulsion against the methods of Stalin, it thus seemed unlikely that Gomulka would employ Stalinist methods with as much disregard for the consequences as he had in the past. In fact, Gomulka's outlook in October appeared to agree in this respect with the views of the enrage' liberals, who favored a more humanitarian approach to socialism.

a) The Ideological Basis of the Party

In the eyes of the party one of Gomulka's most serious deviations prior to his disgrace in 1948-9 was his conception of the ideological basis of the party. Even after his rehabilitation in early 1956, party members continued to feel that, since Gomulka was clearly guilty in this respect of a clear-cut ideological deviation, the party's position in September 1948 was correct and should not be revised.

Since he made his original self-criticism in September 1948, Gomulka appears to have accepted the fact that, in ideological matters, he had transgressed in the party's eyes. His recognition that he had been guilty of ideological weakness was strengthened after the death of Stalin by another factor--the official rehabilitation of the entire prewar Communist Party of Poland (KPP), which established a new basis for establishing continuity between the PZPR and its predecessors.

Since Gomulka's return to power in October 1956, there has been no sign that Gomulka has retained his previous deviationist views on the ideological basis for the party. On the contrary, all available evidence suggests that in this respect Gomulka's outlook has undergone a fundamental change,

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and that, having once accepted the fact that he was guilty of an ideological deviation, he was able subsequently to rid himself of deviationist tendencies. In contrast to his previous attitude toward the prewar KPP, for example, Gomulka now expresses the view that the traditions and struggles of the prewar party were honorable and well conceived under the circumstances and should be taken into consideration in the postwar party. The party he now says, should establish itself on a basis of purely Leninist principles, and no tendency toward ideological revisionism should be tolerated. Gomulka, the former revisionist, thus has become a vehement antirevisionist and, in the eyes of Moscow, no longer constitutes the same danger as he did before.

b) Gomulka's Changed Views on the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat"

In the years immediately following the war Gomulka believed that in Poland, in contrast to the Soviet Union, the dictatorship of the proletariat could be avoided. The other party leaders were saying the same thing at the time, but considered it only a tactical phase. Gomulka, however, developed a strong belief that a phase of similar political terror was unnecessary in Poland, and he tolerated no opposition, even in private party meetings, to his view.* Following his return to power in October 1956, however, Gomulka no longer maintained his former view. Far from claiming that the dictatorship of the proletariat was unnecessary in Poland, Gomulka told the 9th plenum in May that one of the "universal principles" which must be accepted in all socialist countries was the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat after bourgeois rule.

c) Agricultural Policy

Gomulka's opposition to the forced collectivization of agriculture constituted another serious deviation in the party's eyes in 1948, since it obstructed the new Communist line concerning the "sharpening of class warfare" in the countryside. Thus, Party Secretary Morawski could make the

* The Polish defector Bialer says that party theoretician Adam Schaff ran into trouble with Gomulka in 1947 by stating in a party meeting that he disagreed with Gomulka's view that there would never be a dictatorship of the proletariat. Schaff added that this was only a temporary tactic. According to Bialer, Schaff was immediately summoned to Warsaw by Gomulka and forced to make a retraction before the party.

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accusation in early 1956, after Gomulka's rehabilitation, that Gomulka's agricultural views, which had not changed since 1948, would lead to the "freezing of the alignment of class forces in the countryside." Following Gomulka's return to power in October 1956, this belief had by no means died within the party leadership. The Stalinists still held strongly to the view that Gomulka's agricultural policy--not to mention his policy toward the church--constituted a step backward from "socialism." Especially after the spring of 1957, however, when Soviet support was withdrawn from the Stalinists, more and more of the party leaders came around to Gomulka's view that his policies actually amounted to a step forward toward "socialism," in contrast with the disastrous course which had been followed by the Stalinists. Since Gomulka's view appeared, moreover, to have at least the tacit approval of Moscow, the Stalinist position that it was a deviation from Marxism-Leninism appeared to be gradually losing ground within the party.

d) The Polish Road to Socialism

Gomulka's general view, which he held prior to his purge, was that the only effective way of constructing "socialism" in Poland was to take into account Polish historical traditions and attitudes, as well as the specific social and economic forces which existed in Poland. This attitude was strengthened during the period of his disgrace by the disastrous results of Stalinist policies, which had ignored and even flown in the face of specific Polish conditions. With Poznan as a background, Gomulka could assert a year after his return to power that the "distortions" caused by Stalinist policies launched after mid-1948 had "aroused dissatisfaction in the broad masses, undermined their trust in our party, and slowed down the building of socialism." All this was changed, he said, after the "October turning point," when concrete Polish conditions were once again taken into account. Gomulka thus defended his "Polish road to socialism" before the assembled Communist leaders at the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the October revolution in Moscow and established its continuity with his previous "Polish road." He could rest his position on the authority of Lenin, who had recognized the problems facing Polish Communists as early as March 1919:

The Polish proletarian movement is following the same road as ours, it is approaching the dictatorship of the proletariat, but not in the same way as in Russia.

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*SECRET*The Outlook

Gomulka is likely to continue his attempt to construct "socialism" in Poland according to his own conception of how it should be done. For some time after his return to power, it was not clear whether his version of the end goals of "socialism" coincided with those of Moscow. It still is not clear. His general statements of policy have amounted, more or less, to a rationalization of his pragmatic internal policies, and the end goals have so far been left to the nebulous future.

Nevertheless, the apparent agreement which he reached with Khrushchev, probably in the spring of 1957, established limits to the Gomulka experiment which Gomulka committed himself to defend. Some of these limits, moreover, (as in the case of the "dictatorship of the proletariat") were stronger than Gomulka would probably have agreed to prior to his purge. These agreed limits provided assurance to Moscow that "national Communism" in Poland would not be allowed to threaten the basis of Communist control or the achievements of "socialism" in Poland, nor would it be allowed to revert in the direction of a bourgeois political system. Within these limits, Moscow apparently was willing to let Gomulka proceed with his conception of how "socialism" should be built in Poland. Should anything occur, however, which would threaten to transgress these limits, Moscow might feel forced to intervene, just as had been the case in Hungary, when events showed that "national Communism" could not be contained within similar limits.

Gomulka, whose behavior has shown that he fully realizes all the dangers inherent in the situation, is thus likely to continue to attack any tendencies, such as revisionism, which might threaten to transgress these agreed limits. On the other hand, he continues to distrust the USSR and feels sufficiently strongly about the evils of past "dogmatist" policies, as well as the validity of his own pragmatic approach to internal policy, that he is likely to stand firm against the pressure from the Stalinists in the party to return to the harsh, short-sighted, unrealistic Stalinist policies which in his opinion perverted the development of "socialism" in Poland. As far as Moscow is concerned, Gomulka has shown by his actions that he has corrected his former deviationist views and thus has increased his acceptability. For that matter, he has dedicated himself to an all-out battle against any revision of Marxism-Leninism in order to preserve the ideological purity of the party.

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Thus, from Moscow's point of view, neither Gomulka himself nor the internal plans and goals of the Gomulka regime at present constitute a serious danger to Soviet strategic aims or to Communism in Poland. On the contrary, as a stabilizing force preventing an anti-Communist upheaval in Poland, Gomulka is a decided asset, for the time being, to Moscow. Within the limits to which he has agreed, Gomulka's show of independence, therefore, will probably continue to be tolerated. In fact, Khrushchev may even agree with Gomulka that his "Polish road to socialism" is indeed the only effective basis for the construction of "socialism" in Poland.

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