

New Evidence on Poland in the Early Cold War

Editor's Note: This Bulletin section features essays and documents which emerged as part of CWIHP's "Stalin Project," an international effort, inaugurated last year, that aims at a comprehensive (inasmuch as that is possible) compilation of archival and other materials on Josef Stalin's personal views in and impact on Soviet foreign relations during the early Cold War. Following a workshop in Budapest (3-4 October 1997) on "European Archival Evidence on 'Stalin and the Cold War'" (co-sponsored and hosted by the Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution), and a 19-20 March 1998 workshop in Moscow on "Stalin and the Cold War" (co-sponsored and hosted by the Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Sciences), CWIHP is currently seeking to establish a website database of all known and documented conversations between Stalin and foreign leaders. CWIHP is also planning further conferences on the subject. Key documents will be published in this and future issues of the Bulletin as well as on the CWIHP website (cwihp.si.edu). The following contributions by Andrzej

part of the conversation. These included the question of receiving loans from Western countries, the dispute with Czechoslovakia over Cieszyn [T•ór•n], reparations from Germany, and the stationing of Soviet troops in Poland. Interestingly enough, the PPR leadership did not heed all of Stalin's "advice" and apparently did not treat his suggestions as obligatory. For example, against Stalin's suggestion, parliamentary elections were postponed until January 1947. The change of premier did not take place either: Edward Os•óbka-Morawski stayed on until the election. Contrary to Stalin's advice, Gomu•ka took the post of Minister of Regained [Western] Territories. The fact that this question was brought up proves that the conversation in question had to take place in the fourth quarter of 1945, since the plan to create a Ministry of Regained Territories emerged only in October.

Gomu•ka's memo and Stalin's letter are published without any changes, in the same exact form as the originals. The footnotes to Gomu•ka's memo were written by A. Werblan.

Document No. 1

Gomu•ka's memorandum of a conversation with Stalin

1.

cooperatives.

The issue of the election. Why do you think that the election should be postponed as much as possible? It will not be better, but worse. The economic situation will not be better, people will drift back from England, they (the opponents) will organize better and they may even bring you down. Because they know that, the PPS is suggesting that the election be in a year. The election should take place in the spring of 1946. Your Congress should start the election campaign. The fact that the PPS is not responding to your suggestion of creating a bloc should be treated as a refusal. You should address them in writing in an [official] document and say that if you receive no concrete reply you will consider it a refusal. He [Stalin] was not against the [idea of the] bloc but he expressed doubts as to the possibility of forming it and suggested entering the election alone. He said that with good agitation and a proper attitude the party may win a considerable number of votes. You have to stop being diffident.

The issue of the Party Congress. It is necessary to break clearly with the past of the KPP, and state that the PPR is a new party formed in the heat of the battle against the German invaders. The KPP was lead by [Marshall Józef] Piłsudski's¹³ spies, who forced upon the party an unpopular policy, which isolated the party from the nation. He [Stalin] said he could show documents to prove it. [Those were] the testimony of Sosnowski,¹⁴ a close associate of [Feliks] Dzierzynski¹⁵ and a testimony of Dabal.¹⁶ Do not invite any foreign parties to the Congress. If somebody were to come from the CPSU, there would be a completely unnecessary ovation. The congress should be a starting point for an offensive [election] campaign of the party. The knot of the question of independence can be untied beginning with the Congress.

Relations between the Soviet Union and the Anglo-Saxons. Do not believe in divergences between the English and the Americans. They are closely connected to each other. Their intelligence conducts lively operations against us in all countries. In Poland, in the Balkans, and in China, everywhere their agents spread the information that the war with us will break out any day now. I am completely certain that there will be no war, it is rubbish. They are not capable of waging war against us. Their armies have been disarmed by agitation for peace and will not raise their weapons against us. Not atomic bombs, but armies decide the war. The goals of the intelligence activities are the following. First of all, they are trying to intimidate us and force us to yield in contentious issues concerning Japan, the Balkans, and the reparations. Secondly, [they want] to push us away from our allies—Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. I asked them directly when they were starting the war against us. And they said “What are you saying? What are you saying?” [Russian: “*Shto vy? Shto vy?*”]. Whether in thirty years or so they want to have another war is another issue. This would bring them great profit, particularly in the case of

America, which is beyond the oceans and couldn't care less about the effects of the war. Their policy of sparing Germany testifies to that. He who spares the aggressor wants another war. To the statement that there are rumors in America that soon there will be an agreement between America and the Soviet Union, he said, “It is possible.”

Intelligence Service. This part of the conversation took place because I informed him that the English keep alluding to my going to London. He declared: “I assure you that they are not inviting you for a good purpose. Do not refuse directly, but don't go.” There is a group of complete rascals and ruthless murderers in the Intelligence Service, who will fulfill any order given to them. They are the ones who killed [General Władysław] Sikorski.¹⁷ He [the one who gave the order for Sikorski's assassination] was Governor of Gibraltar at the time, the former head of the English Military Mission in the USSR, and a ruthless murderer. He prepared the crash of Sikorski's plane. When Stalin asked Churchill what happened to Sikorski, Churchill answered “I gave them strict orders that nothing like that was to happen again,” as if you could kill the same man twice. They killed Sikorski probably because he threatened the English that [Poland would move] to the American side. They tried to kill Tito three times. Once they incited the Germans against him. Tito was with his staff and there were about two hundred English and American officers there who left him one day before the attempted attack. The Germans performed a landing operation on Tito's headquarters. Tito was saved by a Soviet pilot who took him away to an island. Not long ago they organized a train crash, but Tito took the train a day earlier and his car on the train was empty. In 1942 when Molotov was in London, the English invited the people accompanying Molotov for a ride on a four-engine plane. The English officers and Molotov's people all died. When the English really care about [killing] someone, they sacrifice their own people as well. When we go to England, we use our own planes, our own fuel, and have our own guards by the plane to make sure that they don't add anything to the fuel. The Soviet pilots explained Sikorski's crash [by saying] that powder must have been added to the fuel. The English usually invite you to their country to find out what your weak spots are through either drunkenness or women. Whenever they can, they blackmail the chosen victim and try to recruit people. Unszlicht¹⁸ was also recruited this way by the czarist police.

Loans. If America wants to give, you should take, but without any conditions. You need to reject the open door policy, since they use this policy only towards colonial countries. You can give the Americans most-privileged-nation status. You cannot reject the proposal to permit trade representatives in [the country] because you don't officially have a monopoly on foreign trade, and private capital exists in your country. You can agree to having particular projects built in your country, in ports, in Warsaw, or other places, but you cannot agree to

concessions. We want to receive from them six billion at 2.5% [interest] for forty years; the payments would start in nine years. At first they were telling us about the open door policy as well, but they had to back out and suggested that we ask them for loans. We don't want to ask until we are sure that we are going to receive. They are already backing out, because they gave us four hundred million from lend-lease¹⁹ on our conditions. You will have to establish some customs tariffs. It provides state income and there is no state without tariffs. You also have to guard well the frontiers on the USSR side.

Nationalization. You need to carry it out. It would be good if it were the act of a new premier. The National Council [Polish: *Krajowa Rada*] should pass it. You should not tie your hands with a clause about damages. You could for example call it a "fair compensation." Check how Mexico did it with their industry so that you will always be able to say that you follow Mexico's, not Russia's, example.

Quotas. It will be difficult for you to keep the quotas for two to three years. The best way is for the state to have reserves and force the farmers to lower their prices by interfering in the market. This is what we did in Latvia and Estonia by throwing one hundred thousand tons of crops [on the market] and lowering the price of bread five times.

Inflation. It is impossible to avoid it. You should not fall into the extreme inflation like after World War I, but you cannot economize on production credits.

Western Territories. He [Stalin] expressed surprise that [Soviet Marshal] Zhukov doesn't want to accept the Germans [living in Poland]. You should create such conditions for the Germans that they want to escape themselves. Keep only the ones you need. Wiesław [Gomułka] should not take the Ministry of Western Territories, he should concentrate on the party and the election campaign. Somebody else needs to be found for that post. He [Gomułka] should not even take formal responsibility for Western Territories. You should learn from our experience and have a few vice-premiers, each watching over several ministries. You should not be afraid . . . [illegible] . . . you have twenty people and keep shuffling them around. It is impossible that during all this time you did not educate many good people. You should not pump the people out of the party although you were right to have taken the responsibility for the country. If the party gets stronger it will be easier to do the state work as well.

State domains in the Western Territories.²⁰ The idea is correct, but where are you going to get the labor force from? Because of the agricultural reforms, for a few years in Poland there will be no influx of people from the countryside to the cities. We are starting to implement a different policy in Soviet communes [Russian: *sovkhos*]. We give the workers housing and some land, between half a hectare and one hectare for an accessory farm. We did the same with railroad workers. We have been attacked

Lange (the current Polish ambassador to the USA, a moderate PPS-ist, and well disposed, in the Poles' opinion, toward Communists). What can you suggest?

ANSWER. If you have no other option and if it is impossible at present to put forth the candidacy of Bierut (the Poles believe this combination to be inexpedient), then you can make an attempt with Lange, with the goal of using Lange to dismantle the PPS. Consult with Wanda Lvovna, who is closely familiar with Lange.

The rest of the discussion dealt with questions regarding the shipment of 30 tons of seed grain from the Rokossowski reserves and fulfilling the Poles' request for railroad transport. But you already know about these matters.

STALIN

[Source: Archive of the President, Russian Federation (APRF), fond 45, opis 1, delo 355, listy 8-11; published in Vostochnaia Yevropa v dokumentakh rossiiskikh arkhivov [Eastern Europe in the Documents of the Russian Archives 1944-1953], vol. 1 (1944-48), ed. T.V. Volokitina et. al., (Moscow: Siberian Chronograph, 1997), pp. 301-303; translated by Daniel Rozas]

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The Polish Contribution to the Victory of the “Prague Coup” in February 1948

By Andrzej Paczkowski

In the last phase of World War II, and during the first years after the war, Polish–Czechoslovak relations were, to use the euphemistic language of diplomacy, cool and sometimes even tense. The source of this tension was a conflict which had started in 1918 over part of Tarnobrzeg (Cieszyn), Silesia (also known as Zaolzie) as well as the newly born territorial dispute over the division of German Lower Silesia, which eventually had fallen to Poland. The Polish and Czechoslovak Communists also became involved in these conflicts. Although both sides declared their internationalism, the communist parties were most unyielding in presenting their territorial demands; in part because of the necessity to strengthen their legitimacy as the defenders of national (or state) interests and in part to show themselves to be as good defenders as other political parties. This was particularly obvious in the case of the Polish Communists, who came to power by force. The Czechoslovak Communists, who traditionally had been quite influential, however also had to avoid being outmatched by the “Benešniks.” In the end, under pressure from Stalin, a compromise was reached and a treaty of “friendship and cooperation” was signed in March 1947.

Cool relations between the two countries did not mean that relations between the Communist parties were equally bad. Perhaps they lacked the spontaneous cordiality with which, for example, Yugoslav leader Josip Tito was treated in Poland, but Poles sincerely worried that Prague was “lagging behind” the rest of Central Europe in its march towards “people’s democracy.” They, of course, avoided public criticism of their Czech and Slovak comrades, but growing Polish impatience was expressed by some of the more orthodox activists in some internal documents. For example, the Polish consul in Moravská Ostrava stated with regret in a 1947 report that “the superstition of formal democracy is still deeply rooted in the heart of the [Czechoslovak] com-party [Communist Party].” However, he consoled himself by saying that “the growing consciousness and combative spirit of the working masses is producing more healthy trends.”¹ The fact that it was only in Czechoslovakia that the Communists had not yet gained full control over the situation was inconvenient for everybody, including Moscow.² However, Warsaw probably felt most directly what was happening on the other side of the Polish southern border. Among other reasons, this was because Czechoslovakia under President Edvard Beneš did not constitute a tight enough barrier between Poland and the West. Moreover, Polish Communists, who were more and more determined to achieve “organic unification” with, or,

in fact, absorption of, the Socialists, were concerned with the “bad example” being given by the Czechoslovak Social Democrats to their Polish counterparts. Particularly after the Brno congress of November 1947, activists who preferred to collaborate with non-Communist partners and President Beneš, rather than with Communist premier, Klement Gottwald, played an important role in the party leadership. In addition, Bohumil Laušman, the newly elected chairman of the Social Democratic Party, was allegedly a “centrist.” These trends could potentially have mobilized those Polish Socialists who were hesitant to fall into the open arms of Communist leaders Bolesław Bierut and Władysław Gomułka.

It is therefore not surprising that Warsaw was seriously interested in the elections planned in Czechoslovakia for May 1948. At the end of January 1948, during one of the meetings of the Polish Workers’ Party (PPR) Politburo, “it was decided to propose to the CPCz [Czechoslovak Communist Party] a meeting during the coming two weeks to discuss the question of the election.”³ On February 11, that is, when the government crisis in Prague began, the same body decided on the “guidelines” for talks with the Czechoslovak Communists. These concerned “a) [the question of] taking a tougher stance against reactionary and collaborationist forces; b) the question of approach to the Social Democrats and tactics towards the Socialist Left in Czechoslovakia; and c) the question of potential political aid in organizational and technical spheres [in the election campaign].”⁴ On February 14, after the meeting, Gomułka presented a report to members of the Politburo. The recorder did not mention whether he had raised the question of “taking the tougher stance against reactionary forces,” but the topic must have been discussed. One way or another, the Polish Communists intended to offer help. On February 13, as the situation in Prague intensified, the embassy sent a coded message suggesting that “due to the projected internal and political changes . . . [it would be] desirable for a delegation from Poland to participate in the Congress of Trade Unions [which was to take place] on February 22.”⁵

⁵ kaCPCz [eks to d participa*170.0-1.reeT]rē

² E.g., in January 1948 in the Central Committee [f1]

Document

Report of the Special Action of the Polish Socialist Party in Prague, 21-25 February 1948

In accordance with the resolution of the Political Commission and General Secretariat of the Central Executive Committee (CKW) of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), made late on the night of 20 February 1948, Com. Kazimierz Rusinek, Adam Rapacki, Henryk Jabłoński, and Stefan Arski were delegated to go to Prague. This decision was made after a thorough analysis of the political situation in Czechoslovakia brought on by a cabinet crisis there. The goal of the delegation was to inform the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party („SD) about the basic stance of the PPS and possibly to influence the „SD Central Committee in the spirit of leftist-socialist and revolutionary politics. The motive behind the decision of the Political Commission and General Secretariat was the fear that, from the leftist-socialist point of view, the situation at the heart of „SD after the Brno Congress was taking an unfavorable shape. It was feared that the Czechoslovak Party, led by rightist elements, might easily be led astray during the present crisis to opportunism and be tempted to play the role of a

to the 6 political parties, trade unions, organizations of former political prisoners and former partisans, cultural associations, and social organizations;

d) Including in the future government representatives of some of those organizations, at least of trade unions;

e) Creation of NF Action Committees as its local executive organs and factors mobilizing the worker, peasant, and white-collar masses to direct political action;

f) Purging NF parties of reactionary and conservative elements by changing the leadership of those parties, and purging, too, the party structures and press;

g) Tightening collaboration with the „ SD, which was weakened after the Brno congress, rebuilding the practically non-existent unified front, expanding the participation of the „ SD in the new government under the condition of removing from the „

Laušman, Vilkn, and Bernard were present. During the second part, VilR



constitution, this new version was again revised by the

of the preamble and those sections of the constitution in which Stalin introduced his amendments. Seven articles of the constitution in which the amendments were so minor that in translation into English they would be negligible were omitted. Words deleted by Stalin are printed with strikethrough font and words added by Stalin in bold font.

Draft

Constitution of the Polish People's Republic

The Polish People's Republic **is a republic of the working people, carries on carrying on** the most glorious progressive traditions of the Polish Nation and **gives giving** effect to the liberation ideals of the Polish working **people masses**. The Polish working people, under the leadership of its heroic working class, and on the basis of the alliance between workers and peasants, fought for many years against the national enslavement **and oppression imposed by the Prussian, Austrian and Russian conquerors and colonizers** as well as, **just as** against exploitation by the **Polish** capitalists and landlords. During the occupation the Polish Nation waged an unflinching fight against the bloody Hitlerite captivity. The historic victory **of the USSR** over fascism, by liberating Polish soil, enabled the Polish working people to take power, and created conditions for the **national** re-birth of Poland within new and just frontiers. The Recovered Territories¹⁸ were restored to Poland forever.

By carrying out the memorable directives of the Manifesto of 22 July 1944,¹⁹ and by developing the principles laid down in the program of that Manifesto, the People's Authority—thanks to the selfless and creative efforts of the Polish working people in the fight against the bitter resistance of the remnants of the old capitalist-landlord system—has accomplished great social changes. As a result of revolutionary transformations the rule of the capitalists and landlords has been overthrown, a State of People's Democracy has been firmly established, and a new social system, in accord with the interests and aspirations of the great majority of the people, is taking shape and growing in strength.

The legal principles of this system are laid down by the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic.

The basis of the People's Authority **in Poland today** is the alliance between the working class and the working peasants. In this alliance, the leading role belongs to the working class – **as the most revolutionary class of the Polish society** – the class based on the revolutionary gains of the Polish and international working class movement, and on the historic experience of victorious socialist constructing in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic, the first State of workers and peasants.

Implementing the will of the Polish Nation, the Legislative Sejm²⁰ of the Republic of Poland,²¹ in accordance with its purpose, solemnly adopts the present

Constitution as the fundamental law by which the Polish Nation and all organs of authority of the Polish working

Article 82

Every ~~one~~ **citizen** who has the right to vote is eligible for the election to the People's Councils²⁵, and to the Sejm – after having reached the age of twenty-one.

Article 86

Candidates are nominated by political and social organizations, uniting ~~working people~~ **citizens** of town and country.

[Source: AAN (Archive of Modern Records), KC PZPR, 2774, pp. 1-27. Obtained and translated by Krzysztof Persak.]

Krzysztof Persak is a doctoral student and Junior Fellow at the Institute of Political Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences. In the Spring of 1999, he will spend several months on research in the U.S. as a CWIHP Fellow.

¹ Fortunately, Russian sources have started emerging in recent years. Among the most important documentary collections on Polish-Soviet relations in the Stalin years are: *Polska - ZSRR: struktury podleglosci. Dokumenty KC WKP(b) 1944-1949* [Poland-USSR: The Structures of Subjection. Documents of VKP(b), 1944-1949], edited by Giennadii A. Bordiugov, Aleksander Kochanski, Adam Koseski, Giennadii F. Matveev and Andrzej Paczkowski (Warsaw: Institute of Political Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, 1995. A Russian edition of this volume, published in Moscow, exists as well); *NKVD i polskoe podpol'e 1944-1945 (Po "osobiim papkam" I. V. Stalina)*, ed. A. F. Noskova et al. (Moscow: Institute of Slavonic and Balkan Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, 1994); *Vostochnaia Evropa v dokumentakh rossiiskikh arkhivov 1944-1953 gg*

of Eastern Poland.

¹⁹ The Manifesto of the Polish Committee of National Liberation was treated as the founding deed of the new communist authority in Poland, and the day of its proclamation, July 22, was celebrated as the national holiday until 1989.

²⁰ *Sejm* is the proper name of Polish Parliament. The Legislative Sejm was elected in January 1947, and its main purpose was to establish the new constitution of People's Poland.

²¹ Until the adoption of this constitution, the official name of the state was the Republic of Poland (*Rzeczpospolita Polska*).

²² Originally, in the Russian copy of the draft, Stalin replaced the word "private" with "personal" but Bierut translated it as "individual".

²³ This amendment was not introduced by Stalin directly into the text of the constitution. He wrote a suggestion "Healthcare free?" on the margin of the draft, and the word "free" was added to the text of the constitution by Bierut when he re-wrote Stalin's corrections.

²⁴ Like in article 60, this correction probably was not introduced directly by Stalin. He underlined the word "adult" and wrote the question "How many years?" above it. The words "who has reached the age of eighteen" were written in Russian, most probably with Bierut's hand.

²⁵ People's Councils were organs of local government (equivalent to *Soviets* in the Soviet Union).

THE COLD WAR INTERNATIONAL HISTORY PROJECT

WORKSHOP

"Recasting the International History of the Vietnam War"

26 March 1998

9:15-9:30 *Welcome and Introductions*

Christian F. Ostermann (CWIHP)

Mark Bradley (University of Chicago)

9:30-12:00 Session I "*New Perspectives on the Vietnam War from Russian, Chinese, Indian and Eastern European Archives*"

Chair: David Wolff (CWIHP)

Chen Jian (Southern Illinois University, Carbondale), "New Evidence from the Chinese Archives on the Vietnam War"

Qiang Zhai (Auburn University, Montgomery), "Local Chinese Sources on the Vietnam War"

Mari Olsen (Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies, Oslo), "New Russian Evidence on Vietnam"

Leszek Gluchowski (Toronto), "New Evidence from the Polish Archives on the Vietnam War"

Francine Frankel (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars), "Indian Archival Materials"

Comments: Ralph Smith (University of London) and Robert Boswell (Fellow, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars)

Discussion

1:30-4:30 Session II "*New Vietnamese Evidence on the War*" (Roundtable)

Chair: Mark Bradley (University of Chicago)

Oscar Salemink (Ford Foundation/Vietnam Program)

Ralph Smith (University of London)

Judy Stowe (London)

Jim Hershberg (George Washington University)

Comment: Chen Jian

Discussion

-For further information on the workshop, contact CWIHP at COLDWAR1@WWIC.SI.EDU-