

# RADIO FREE EUROPE *Research*

## EAST EUROPE

Poland/32  
11 April 1968

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#### Resignation of Ochab -- Spychalski to Replace Him

State Council Chairman Edward Ochab resigned because his "health had been deteriorating," which prevented him from carrying out his duties, PAP reported on April 8. In a letter to the Sejm, Ochab asked to be relieved from his post. His request was granted on April 10, and the next day the Sejm was expected to elect to this nominally highest state position Marshal Marian Spychalski, former Defense Minister. Spychalski's candidacy was put forward by the deputies of the Front of National Unity and was not contested.

Ochab has been known to suffer from an eye ailment for some years but this not prevent him from either making several official trips abroad or performing his normal functions at home. However, the eye ailment may have become a face saving device now when the political climate has changed radically within the last month and Ochab had become a target of criticism (cf. Polish Situation Report/31, Radio Free Europe Research, April 8). A pre-war Communist, he spent the war in the Soviet Union, returned to Poland as an army politruk and climbed fast to high Party positions, including first secretaryship for a short period in 1956. The present campaign of the Partisan faction against "Moscow" Communists -- and Ochab is one -- might have played a role in Ochab's decision. He may have also been under pressure because one of his daughters -- as reported by Angela Nacken in the Frankfurter Zeitung on April 10 -- was rumored to have taken part in the student demonstrations a month ago. However, it seems that the main reason for his stepping out of public life (his resignation from the Politburo membership may well follow) is his disagreement with Party policy on the issue of Zionism. As early as June 1957, he was quoted as saying, during a CC Plenum:

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"Comrades, enough of this nonsense about Zionist agents and Israel! Do you not realize that nothing has harmed the good name of the Soviet Union and the entire Communist movement more than the follies committed in the case of the Soviets' anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist campaign."

In June 1967, Ochab was reported to have objected to First Party Secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka's reference to Polish Jews as a "fifth column" (cf. Polish SR, RFER, 22 June 1967), a reference which was deleted from the printed text of the speech. Next month, in July 1967, Ochab reportedly tendered his resignation because he did not agree with the Party line on the Middle East, according to Bernard Margueritte in Le Monde of April 10. According to this source, Ochab was then asked to stay for some time and, with his usual devotion to Party discipline, he complied. But he might have become disgusted with the present brutal anti-Semitic outburst and preferred to resign rather than to support what he once described as "nonsense."

Spychalski who, like Ochab, has a Jewish wife, has been under pressure from various quarters, particularly since the Middle East conflict. At least twice, in October and December last, Radio Tirana reported that his wife had been in Israel on a visit to her family when the war took place (cf. Polish SR, RFER, 16 October and 14 December 1967). He must also have been blamed, not only by Radio Tirana, for the ideological dissension within the officers' corps over the Middle East conflict last year and for the more recent "crisis" resulting in the reshuffle of a number of generals (cf. Polish SR/30, RFER, April 4). Criticism on this account might have come as well from Gomulka as from other Party quarters. However, belonging to a close circle of Gomulka supporters in the Politburo, Spychalski has been saved from any major political disaster by being kicked upstairs to the post of the Chairman of State Council, in which capacity he will probably be as much a figurehead as he was as Defense Minister. This state position presumably assures his continued Politburo membership, an asset to Gomulka who these days seems to be in need of every single vote in that Party body.

#### The Sejm Session (First Day) -- New Penal Code

The spring session of the Sejm was formally opened on April 1 but the first plenary meeting (of the session) began on April 9 and was still going on on April 11. The original agenda contained four items: 1) the first reading, and the discussion on, the draft of the new Penal Code; "attendance" to the following bills: 2) on permissions to carry on, in public, artistic, entertainment and sports activities, 3) on libraries, and 4) on making entries in mortgage and deed records for the benefit of the state treasury on the basis of international agreements on the regulation of financial claims. When the Sejm meeting opened on the afternoon of April 9 three items were added to the agenda: 5) the reply of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers to the interpellation of the deputies' "circle" (group) "Znak" (cf. Polish SR/23, RFER, March 22); 6) election of the Chairman of the State Council; 7) changes in the composition of the Council of Ministers. The first day of the meeting was devoted to the bills, while the remaining items of the agenda were dealt with on April 10 and 11.



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Among the members of the State Council, "First Party Secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka" was present, Radio Warsaw reported on April 9, as well as the "members of the government with Premier Jozef Cyrankiewicz." Radio Warsaw failed to report on the absence of Ochab and Rapacki but this information was broadcast by Radio Budapest a few hours later. In view of Ochab's resignation and Rapacki's illness, they could not be expected to attend. All the remaining members of the 12-man Politburo were present, Reuter (April 10) stressed.

While the three bills presented no particular problem and were passed by the Sejm without any reported opposition, far more important was the draft of the new Penal Code. It was presented by Justice Minister Stanislaw Walczak and supported by deputies: Jan Wasilkowski on behalf of the parliamentary club of the PUWP; Antoni Korzycki for the United Peasant Party; Rudolf Szura for the Democratic Party; and Ryszard Reiff representing the parliamentary "circle" of the pro-regime Catholic Association "Pax." (Radio Warsaw made no reference to "Znak".)

The new Penal Code, Walczak said, is the code of a "socialist country." It embodies the idea of "socialist humanism" which is expressed by such principles as nullum crimen sine lege and the presumption of innocence of the defendant until proven guilty. However, it is a "socialist law," the rapporteur continued, and as such it is severe regarding offenders against "peace and humanity," and the "basic political and economic interests of the Polish People's Republic." Penalties higher than in the previous Code have been introduced for offenses against "general security," and a new penal measure will be applied to the persons who carry on a "parasitic way of life." Life terms will be replaced by 25 years of "deprivation of liberty," while death sentences will be reserved for offenses against "basic political and economic interests" of the state, which include high treason, espionage, as well as "major" embezzlement cases to the detriment of "units of the socialist economy," including currency and customs offenses. The new Code also provides for new "penal measures," namely "limitation of liberty," such as prohibition of a change of the place of permanent residence, prohibition of notice on a dissolution of the work contract, prohibition of advance or of occupying positions in social organizations, and compulsory work according to the direction of the court. If such "educational" measures fail, obstinate offenders may be placed in a "center of social adaptation" (labor camps?) for a period of at least two years but not exceeding five years. This is an exceptional measure, Walczak stressed, reserved for particularly incorrigible offenders. The so-called Small Penal Code (under which several writers and Party "deviationists" have been sentenced to prison terms in the recent past) will be abolished and replaced by the respective regulations of the new Code. Walczak did not go into detail on this point, but his formulations on the subject seem to indicate that the essence of the Small Penal Code will be preserved. He said that the new regulations refer to the "spreading of false information which may be detrimental to the interests of the Polish People's Republic," and to information "smearing and debasing the Polish nation, the PPR or its system," etc.

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Regarding the constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech, the printed word, assembly, etc., the law will add the qualification that these freedoms be used within the "framework of the established order, in accordance with the interests of the working masses and with the purpose of strengthening the achievements of the socialist system," Walczak explained.

The draft of the new Penal Code will be debated by a number of Sejm committees, Radio Warsaw Sejm reporter Ewa Stocka stressed, and there will be a "broad public debate" on it. However, considering that all the political parties united in the so-called Front of National Unity have already supported the bill, and considering the political climate of the country, it is difficult to see any prospects for substantial amendments to this new Soviet-style Code. This in spite of the fact, stressed by Walczak, that the Code provides for a "broadly defined citizen's right of criticism," for which one cannot be punished if one acted "in good faith and in the interests of the society."

#### Cyrankiewicz's Answer to "Znak" Deputies

By far the most important point on the agenda of the present Sejm meeting was the speech of Premier Cyrankiewicz delivered on April 10. Formally an answer to a letter of the five deputies of the Catholic group "Znak," it was a major policy statement, from which at least two political developments emerged: 1) Cyrankiewicz has been saved, at least for the time being, from being "kicked upstairs" to the post of State Council Chairman; and 2) the purge will continue on a broad scale. A third possible conclusion is that Cyrankiewicz -- a politician who is as brilliant as he is cynical -- has joined the "new wave," without -- at the same time -- making it clear whether he has shifted his loyalty.

The "Znak" interpellation, as read by Cyrankiewicz, contained two questions: "1) What does the government intend to do to check the brutal action of the militia and (its reserve) ORMO vis-a-vis the academic youth and to establish the responsibility for the brutal treatment of this youth? 2) What does the government intend to do to supply substantial answers to the burning questions of the youth, which are also worrying broad public opinion, and which pertain to democratic civic liberties and to the government's cultural policy?"

Charging that the authors of the interpellation had been well aware of the background of the student riots, Cyrankiewicz stated that their decision (to send the letter) had determined their place: they had put themselves "in the ranks of the inspirers of the events." They were also aware, Cyrankiewicz continued, of the "falsehood and hypocrisy" of their charge that Polish cultural life was threatened. By their interpellation, the "Znak" deputies had contributed to the activities of the "ringleaders and firebrands," the Premier said.

Where it had become inevitable, the use of force was necessary, Cyrankiewicz explained. On this occasion, he supplied figures on the number of persons arrested and tried in connection



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with the street riots in various cities of Poland. By April 8, a total of 2,739 persons had been arrested. Of this number, 1,850 had been released within a 48-hour period for lack of evidence of their guilt. (On March 19 Gomulka mentioned that 1,208 persons had been arrested by March 15, of whom 687 had been subsequently released. It would therefore follow that the number of those against whom proceedings had been instituted increased from 521 in mid-March to 889 by April 8, probably as a result of the student sit-in strikes which followed Gomulka's speech.)

In his attack on the "Znak" deputies, Cyrankiewicz was joined by a chorus of perhaps even stronger indignation on the part of other speakers, notably by the representatives of the three major political parties: Jozef Ozga-Michalski for the United Peasant Party, Zenon Kliszko for the PUWP, and Jan Karol Wende for the Democratic Party. Ozga-Michalski referred to an "alliance of certain Polish Catholic circles with Zionism." In reply to an earlier charge of Prof. Leszek Kolakowski that Polish theaters could not perform Ionesco, Ozga-Michalski claimed that "we are staging more Ionesco plays than we are reading Kolakowski's works." While this passage was broadcast by Radio Warsaw, Jonathan Randal (The New York Times, April 11) quoted Ozga-Michalski as also saying that "Polish culture needs Ionesco's plays as much as a cow needs a mirror." (Ozga-Michalski, incidentally, a political hard-liner of the Stalinist type, is himself not a bad versifier of the traditional school.) Kliszko stated that the "Znak" group had found itself in "deep political isolation," all other political groups, including the Catholic (pro-regime) "Pax" and Christian Social Association, sharing the "general patriotic opinion" on the "recent events."

At least two "Znak" deputies defended "the intention of the interpellation," Radio Warsaw reported: Jerzy Zawieyski and Stanislaw Stomma. These must have been resolute and courageous speeches, at least to judge by the fact that Zawieyski challenged the Sejm either to give him a vote of confidence as a deputy or to release him from his position as a member of the State Council.

All the speakers devoted much attention to the issue of Zionism, to the problem of education, and to the present internal political situation. Most outspoken was, of course, Cyrankiewicz, the main government spokesman. He did his best to defend Poland against the "Zionist" campaign abroad, which campaign -- according to Cyrankiewicz -- was "smearing" the Polish nation as one of anti-Semites. At least in these passages Cyrankiewicz sounded sincere and honest -- he has never been an anti-Semite. As to the subject of education, he pointed out what has already become known from countless press articles: lack of political education, the need for a new law pertaining to schools of higher learning, need for a continuous dialogue with the youth, etc. In this latter respect, Kliszko stressed that since the dissolution of the Polish Youth Union (in 1956), youth organizations at the universities had been deprived of their role. He thus implied that the Socialist Youth Union (the successor of the PYU) as well as other (Communist-controlled) youth organizations

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should have their say in university life.

Far more important were the statements of Cyrankiewicz and Kliszko on the subject of purges. "General and justified demands" for a purge "are in line with the intentions and activities of the government," Cyrankiewicz stated. He promised "to purge systematically all the responsible posts of the state and economic administration from inefficient, dishonest, and alien people, from those playing the part of mighty chieftains and soulless bureaucrats" (emphasis supplied). While he did not refer to "Zionist elements," as the "new wave" would dictate, one can read "Zionist and cosmopolitan elements" (cf. Gomulka's definition of March 19) into the word "alien." He also seemed closer to Gomulka when he said that these purges should be preceded "in each case" by a "thorough investigation." Similar reservation was made by Kliszko: "each case should be investigated in a serious way, and its evaluation must be based on matter-of-fact premises."

#### Reaction to Czechoslovak Events

The Polish information media continue to report on events in neighboring Czechoslovakia in a rather reserved fashion, though more ample coverage of some topics has been given recently. Personnel changes are being reported without comment. The passages in various official Czechoslovak statements referring to the necessity of careful managing of the reforms, the primacy of the Party and the continuation of the Czechoslovak-Soviet friendship are in all cases being stressed.

Thus, reporting on Alexander Dubcek's Radio Prague interview, Radio Warsaw (April 8) cited the above three points. The following day, Radio Warsaw reported on Dubcek's statement to the Prague Party aktif. It quoted his remarks on the Constitution, "which should fix clearly the equality of the Czechs and the Slovaks," on the tasks of the new government, which should streamline its activities with special emphasis on economic problems, and on the Party, which should maintain its leading role.

The same day Radio Warsaw announced that the Polish Premier, and Foreign and Defense Ministers had sent telegrams of congratulations to their Czechoslovak counterparts.

Radio Warsaw's Prague correspondent, Czeslaw Berenda, dispatched a commentary (April 8) in which he reported briefly on the new Czechoslovak government and rather extensively on Alexander Dubcek's statement of the previous day on the leading role of the Party and on Czechoslovak-Soviet friendship.

Radio Warsaw (April 10) reported on the Slovak CC Plenum and on changes in the CPSL Presidium. The broadcast also announced, without any comment, that the Czechoslovak Party's Action Program has been published.

More ample comment has appeared of late in the Polish press, however. Thus, Trybuna Ludu's Prague correspondent made (April 4) a rather extensive comment on the proposed bill on Party rehabilitations, and in this connection gave a rather detailed account of the tragic death of the former vice-chairman of the Supreme Court, Dr. Jozef Brestansky.



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The Pax daily Slowo Powszechnie (April 6/7) printed an article from its Prague correspondent on the "Rebirth of the Church in Czechoslovakia." It started by saying that the latest developments in Czechoslovakia had found a direct and deep echo in Church life in Czechoslovakia and expressed the hope that an agreement between the Vatican and the Czechoslovak government, like those between the Vatican and Yugoslavia and Hungary, would be possible. The article ended with the assurance that the new team of Catholic activists in Czechoslovakia intended to carry through the revival within the framework of the existing socialist system (a not surprising evaluation, considering that it comes from the pro-regime Pax).

In its columns with short news items from the "socialist" countries, Polityka (April 6) referred to a commentary in the daily Rude Pravo which said that the article in the Soviet Pravda on the continued Czechoslovak-Soviet friendship had met with the satisfaction of the Czechoslovak population. The same column also contained a short biography of President Svoboda.

#### Polish-Chinese Trade and Payments Protocol

Poland and China signed on April 9 in Peking a trade and payments protocol for 1968, Radio Warsaw reported the same day.

As is usually the case with reference to China, no figures were given, nor was anything said about any expected increase in trade turnover between the two countries. As a matter of fact, since the all-time high reached in 1958, the volume of trade exchanges between Poland and China has been steadily decreasing (available statistics include 1966).