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INTRODUCTION

Since the workers' revolt of December 1970, there has been a dramatic change in the leadership of the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP). Although all 20 members of today's ruling elite served in some capacity under former party leader Wladyslaw Gomulka, the vast majority attained their present positions either on or since 20 December 1970, when Edward Gierek replaced Gomulka as First Secretary of the PUWP. This applies to eight of the eleven full members of the Politburo, all four of the candidates, seven of the eight CC Secretaries (including Gierek), and all three members of the CC Secretariat. The only "old-timers" are Gierek, a Politburo member since 1959, Jozef Tejchma and Wladyslaw Kruczek, Politburo members since 1968, and Jan Szydlak, a CC Secretary since 1968.

Leadership Patterns

As the following biographies reveal in greater detail, perhaps the most salient features of the present PUWP leaders are their ages and educations. Of the 20 men included in this study, 15 are in their 40s. The average age of the entire group is 48.3; the relevant figure for the Politburo (full and candidate members) is 49.7, and for the CC Secretariat (Secretaries and members) -- 46.4.

As regards education, five of the current leaders hold a Ph.D., eight have master's degrees, and three others have degrees from technical, teaching, and military academies, respectively. All four remaining members of the leadership have studied for at least two years at party schools. Although the academic legitimacy of a few of the above-mentioned degrees is questionable, the fact remains that the educational background of these men is unequalled in Eastern Europe. This distinction is particularly noteworthy in view of the fact that, broadly speaking, 14 of the 20 are from working-class or peasant families, and more than half were born in rather small communities.

The career patterns of these top-ranking PUWP officials are remarkably similar. Almost all joined the communist party between 1945 and 1953; only two (Gierek and Kruczek) were party members prior to World War II. Communist-dominated youth organizations, primarily the Polish Youth Union, provided the first executive or organizational assignment for 13 of the

present leaders. Most of them subsequently moved into important positions in the PUWP apparatus. The party has been the principal employer of two thirds of the current leadership; 14 of them have spent most or all of their careers in central and/or regional PUWP organizations, where their specialized skills have been utilized. For the other six members, advancement to the top echelons of the party has generally followed or been attributable to lengthy service in the government -- e.g., as in the cases of the long-time economic administrator Piotr Jaroszewicz, Defense Minister Wojciech Jaruzelski, and former security official Francisczek Szlachcic.

Within the context of these general remarks, two other aspects of the "make-up" of the present leadership should be mentioned. As is suggested by the age level of the ruling team, the majority were too young to take an active part in World War II resistance activities. Only two were so involved in Poland itself. Three others were members of the Polish (Berling) Army formed in the USSR, and another three reportedly participated in underground movements in Western Europe. At least 13 of the 20 spent the war years in Poland.

The second element to be noted consists of what might be termed the "exposure" of the current leaders to countries and systems other than their own. Gierek himself lived for more than 20 years in Western Europe. All the members of the ruling group have traveled abroad in the postwar period, and although a good deal of this travel was in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union, 17 of the 20 leaders have visited noncommunist countries, primarily in Western Europe, on one or more occasions. In most instances, they have either led or been members of delegations, representing either the party, the government, youth organizations, or the Sejm (in which each of the present leaders is a deputy).

Accession to the Leadership

The present leadership of the PUWP is unique in comparison with both its predecessors and other Eastern European elites.

Although the ruling team is headed by the 59-year old Gierek, it is dominated by a young generation of officials whose education and careers have differed greatly from those of earlier PUWP leaders. The elevation of this young group to high-level positions is, as noted above, a fairly recent phenomenon. The first breakthrough came in the late 1960s, as a result of factional struggles within the PUWP. In an effort to counter the Partisan challenge and to inject a dose of dynamism into a sterile regime, Gomulka sanctioned the promotion of several members of this younger generation (e.g., Tejchma, Szydlak, and Stefan Olszowski) to important leadership posts. These changes did in part serve to contain the Partisan bid for power, but, under Gomulka's autocratic rule, the political system remained incapable of meaningful innovation, and the socioeconomic situation continued to stagnate.

The explosion of worker resentment in December 1970, which led to the removal of Gomulka (and several of his closest lieutenants) and the selection of Silesian party leader Gierek as First Secretary, facilitated the further advance of the younger elements. Those appointed earlier by Gomulka retained (or bettered) their positions, and several others (e.g., Edward Babiuch and Kazimierz Barcikowski), were brought in to fill the posts vacated by some of Gomulka's men. The new leadership as elected at the seventh plenum on 20 December 1970 was, however, hardly a homogeneous group. Indeed, in addition to the younger elements, it included such prominent associates of the former party leader as Jozef Cyrankiewicz, Ignacy Loga-Sowinski, and Stefan Jedrychowski, as well as the head of the Partisan faction, Mieczyslaw Moczar.

The inclusion of these major figures of the Gomulka era in the leadership -- a move undoubtedly linked with the political maneuvers that preceded Gierek's election to the top PUWP post -- was not to be of long duration, however. Despite his verbal emphasis on the importance of "collective leadership," Gierek quickly emerged as the dominant figure in the regime, while his fellow Silesians (e.g., Babiuch and Szydlak)

and other recent additions to the higher echelons (e.g., Tejchma and Olszowski) assumed key responsibilities in the party hierarchy. At the eighth CC plenum in February 1971 Loga-Sowinski was removed from the Politburo. Less than five months later, at the tenth plenum, both Moczar and Artur Starewicz, the last remaining party leader of Jewish origin, were dropped from the CC Secretariat. And then, at the Sixth Congress of the PUWP in December 1971, Moczar, Cyrankiewicz, and Jedrychowski all lost their positions on the Politburo.

As had earlier been the case, the political demise of these once-powerful figures opened additional room at the top for younger party elements. Advances were made by such apparatchiks as Stanislaw Kania and Jerzy Lukaszewicz, and economic specialist Mieczyslaw Jagielski. The Silesian contingent was strengthened by the addition to the leadership of Zdzislaw Grudzien, Gierek's successor as voivodship party leader, and Stanislaw Kowalczyk, an economic secretary of the Katowice PUWP committee from 1960 to 1968. In the Politburo, the military was represented by Jaruzelski and the security apparatus by Szlachcic, a former confidant of Moczar who apparently accommodated himself to the post-December 1970 changes.

Gierek's dominant position in the leadership has been evident not only in the deliberate manner in which discredited representatives of the former regime have been removed, but also in his ability to contain the more dynamic personalities in the youthful leadership over which he presides. Two cases in point are those of Olszowski and Tejchma, young (aged 40 and 44), well-educated, and ambitious apparatchiks. Although sitting at opposite ends of the conservative-liberal spectrum within the leadership, both share a stature and an influence among their respective followings. These were undoubtedly factors in the decisions (taken in December 1971 and March 1972) to check their party careers by transferring them from the CC Secretariat to important government positions. Another example is that of Jozef Kepa, reportedly the leader of a hardline neo-Partisan faction, who was made a candidate member

of the Politburo in December 1970 but failed to gain full membership a year later at the sixth party congress.

Implications for Policy

There are inevitable hazards in drawing general inferences about the collective nature of a ruling group from the assorted facts contained in a number of individual biographies. In the Polish case 20 men are involved, but the attempt at extrapolation is facilitated by the common elements in many of their backgrounds, as well as by the fact that most of them have only recently assumed their current positions. This in turn permits useful comparisons between the present and previous leaderships of the PUWP.

As was mentioned earlier, the Polish leadership is unique in several respects. Among the ruling groups in Eastern Europe today, it is the only one in which the post-war generation (in terms of education and career) has so dramatically come to the fore. Most of the present leaders of the PUWP are not products of the "revolutionary" school, the resistance movement, or Muscovite training, but rather of universities and academies in communist Poland. Few have been imprisoned or otherwise made to suffer for their political beliefs and activities or ideological "mistakes" (in the Stalinist and post-1956 periods). At the same time, the group has witnessed two major popular upheavals within the past 15 years; although the impact that the "Polish October" of 1956 had upon them is difficult to assess, there would seem little doubt that few have remained unaffected by developments of the past decade, during which time Poland found itself on a treadmill, owing in part to the "honest" but disastrous fundamentalism of Gomulka and the consequent immobilism of the leadership.

The relative importance and influence of these various factors is difficult to quantify, but several observations seem warranted. In the first place, for these men communism is less an article of faith, born of opposition and dedicated to the overthrow of an existing system of rule, than an accepted concept

for organizing and governing a country in which the "revolution" has already taken place. Although by definition and also by virtue of their training and experience the present leaders are bound by the prerequisites of Marxist-Leninist ideology, the latter is no longer such a predominant guide to action as it was in the case of the previous generation. Many of them, including Gierek, have demonstrated a capacity to subordinate theoretical constructs to the more important task of getting the job done. More prone toward pragmatism and flexibility and willing to consult expert opinion, these men also have the broad experience (in terms of education, assignments, and travel) that makes them far better qualified to recognize and deal with Poland's problems than any former ruling group. Moreover, their familiarity with the consequences of Gomulka's policy of resorting to half measures undoubtedly has impressed upon them the need for thoroughness in the preparation of policies and consistency in carrying them out.

Such policies as are decided upon by the Polish elite should probably be judged within the broad context of "national communism." This is not to imply that the path chosen by Gierek and company is or might become deviationist, or that the leadership minimizes the importance of Soviet acceptance of (and material support for) any "renewal program" in Poland. Almost all the 20 leaders of the PUWP have visited the USSR, and many of them have dealt with Soviet party and/or government officials in the course of regular business. However, as a group, they could differ from some of the former leaders in the sense of being less influenced -- consciously or instinctively -- by Moscow, over the long term.

Despite its common characteristics and experience, the present leadership of the PUWP by no means represents an anonymous collective. It contains professional apparatchiks, of whom Babiuch and Szydlak are outstanding examples; economic specialists such as Jagielski; ideologues and academics; regional party leaders; and representatives of the forces of "law and order." Needless to say, not all are of one mind on questions of political rule and socioeconomic development. Divergent interest groups exist, as do differences in approach and attitudes, ranging from the hardline inclinations of a Kepa to the relatively

liberal tendencies of a Tejchma. The effect of such differences on the policy-making process is inevitably difficult to estimate. Although they may not be resolved within the Politburo or the Secretariat to the satisfaction of the individual(s) concerned, it is striking that such disagreements as may have occurred have not been aired in other forums or resulted in open factional strife.

Indeed, the aura of unity -- whether real or imaginary -- that surrounds the leadership in itself distinguishes the present ruling group from earlier, coterie-prone regimes. This may be explained in part by the crumbling or disappearance of the familiar battlefronts of past years. The polarization between the "home communists" and the "Muscovites," the generational conflicts, the gulf between economic rationalism and orthodox dogma, the Jewish element in the leadership, and the search for "the main ideological danger": the impact of these former forces of division has either become irrelevant today or has been greatly muted, and thus the potential grounds for conflict have been diminished. To the extent that other basic differences do separate the leadership, it would appear that the traumatic events of December 1970 and, in particular, the present power and influence of Gierek have combined to rule out any immediate possibility of highly personalized confrontations at the apex of the party structure. Most of the present leaders are either close associates of the First Secretary or owe their positions to him.

The Mechanism and Style of Leadership

One of the first charges lodged against the Gomulka regime by the new leadership concerned the interference of PUWP officials in the work of government agencies. In his dramatic meeting with striking shipyard workers in Szczecin in January 1971, Gierek laid down the dictum that party matters would be separated from those of the state. In actual practice, however, the "leading role" of the party has remained very much in evidence. Important meetings of the government or Sejm are generally called in order to ratify policies previously agreed upon at sessions of the Central Committee or the Politburo. As regards the implementation of decisions, much has

been said about the enhanced role of intermediate and lower administrative units, but entrenched party apparatchiks at every level continue to exercise a major influence on matters within their purview.

While Gierek himself has no official position in the government or parliamentary hierarchy, the principle of "separation of functions" is not observed. As has been true in the past, the CC Secretaries -- three of whom, in addition to Gierek, are also in the Politburo -- are primarily engaged in party activities. However, the remaining seven full members of the Politburo are all high-ranking state officials; Jaroszewicz is Prime Minister, Tejchma and Jagielski are Deputy Prime Ministers, Olszowski and Jaruzelski serve as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defense, respectively, Kruczek is Chairman of the Central Council of Trade Unions, and Jablonski is Chairman of the Council of State (Poland's president). As regards the members of the CC Secretariat -- a position created at the sixth congress -- Frelek and Zandarowski retain their positions within the CC apparatus, while Werblan is a Deputy Speaker of the Sejm.

Both the Politburo and the Secretariat now meet on a regular basis, in marked contrast to the latter years of the Gomulka era, when they were seldom convened. In the case of Politburo sessions, short communiqués are issued on the subjects discussed and decisions taken -- a novelty intended to keep the nation informed of the activities of the highest party authorities. Another innovation -- the inauguration of televised question-and-answer programs with party dignitaries -- has sought to emphasize the accessibility of the leadership to the public. This has also provided the rationale for the numerous appearances of the leaders throughout the country. Gierek visited almost all of the 17 voivodships within one year after taking office, and his associates have been dispatched to the provinces on numerous occasions.

Combined with certain concessions in the religious and cultural spheres and the emphasis accorded to improvements in the living standard, these changes in political style are part of the regime's concerted attempt to gain the confidence of the population and to restore the authority of the party. Although Gierek enjoys a considerable measure of popularity, it is perhaps too early to

judge the over-all success of this effort. However, should the present leadership espouse a more genuine "national communism" and offer a concrete program of economic modernization, it stands to win greater popular legitimacy than any previous regime has enjoyed since 1956.

CONDENSED BIOGRAPHIES, POLISH POLITBURO AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT (May 1972)

Name	Born	Family Background	Education	Joined CP	Full Member of CC	Politburo	CC Secretariat	Other Present Position(s)
Gierek, Edward	1913	Working class	3-yr. course at Central Party School; degree from Cracow Mining & Metallurgical Academy	1931	Mar. 1954 to date	July-Nov. 1956; Mar. 1959 to date	Mar. 1956-June 1964; Dec. 1970 to date	
Babiuch, Edward	1927	Working class	Central Party School; M.A. (economics), Main School of Planning & Statistics, Warsaw	1948	June 1964 to date	Dec. 1970 to date	Dec. 1970 to date	
Barcikowski, Kazimierz	1927	Peasant	Engineering-agronomics degree, Higher Agricultural School; Ph.D. (economics), CC Higher Schl. of Social Sciences	Unknown	Nov. 1968 to date	Candidate Dec. 1971 to date	Dec. 1970 to date	
Frelek, Ryszard	1929	Intelligentsia	Studied at Academy of Political Sciences & Main Schl. of Agricultural Economics; Ph.Ds. in history & humanities	1953	Dec. 1971 to date		Member, Dec. 1971 to date	Chairman, CC Foreign Department
Grudzien, Zdzislaw	1924	Working class	M.Sc. (engineering), Cracow Mining & Metallurgical Academy	1942	June 1964 to date	Candidate Dec. 1971 to date		First Secretary, Katowice Voivodship Party Committee
Jablonski, Henryk	1909	Working class	Ph.D. (history), Warsaw University	1948	Dec. 1948 to date	Candidate Dec. 1970-Dec. 1971; full Dec. 1971 to date		Chairman, Council of State

CONDENSED BIOGRAPHIES (continued)

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Name	Born	Family Background	Education	Joined CP	Full Member of CC	Politburo	CG Secretariat	Other Present Position(s)
Jagielski, Mieczyslaw	1924	Peasant	M.Sc. (agricultural economics), Warsaw Main Schl. of Planning & Statistics; Ph.D., CC Inst. for Training of Scientific Cadres.	1946	March 1959 to date	Candidate June 1964-Dec. 1971; full Dec. 1971 to date		Deputy Prime Minister; Chairman, Planning Commission
Jaroszewicz, Piotr	1909	Intelligentsia	Graduated from teachers' college; degree in education & science, Warsaw Free University	1944	Dec. 1948 to date	Candidate June 1964-Dec. 1970; full Dec. 1970 to date		Prime Minister
Jaruzelski, Wojciech	1923	Intelligentsia	Ryazan Officers' Training Schl.; Higher Infantry Schl. & Gen. Swierczewski Staff Academy	1947	Dec. 1964 to date	Candidate Dec. 1970-Dec. 1971; full Dec. 1971 to date		Minister of National Defense
Kania, Stanislaw	1927	Peasant	2-yr. party school; CC Higher School of Social Studies	1945	Nov. 1968 to date	Candidate Dec. 1971 to date	Apr. 1971 to date	
Kepa, Jozef	1928	Peasant	4 yrs. postgraduate study; no information on degree	1948	Nov. 1968 to date	Candidate Dec. 1970 to date		First Sec'y., Warsaw Municipal Party Committee
Kowalczyk, Stanislaw	1924	Working class	M.Sc., Cracow Mining & Metallurgical Academy	1948	Nov. 1968 to date		Dec. 1971 to date	
Kruczek, Wladyslaw	1910	Working class	Studied at Central Party School, Warsaw	1932	Mar. 1954 to date	Nov. 1968 to date		Chairman, Trade Union Central Council