

Viceministerial Changes in the Security Apparatus

A number of transfers from and/or appointments to viceministerial posts of various resorts were announced on May 4. Among these the most significant seem to be the changes at the Ministry of Interior. Antoni Alster, Deputy Minister of the Interior, was transferred to the same post at the Ministry of Communal Economy.

Alster, born 55 years ago to a rich Jewish family, embraced Communism in the inter-war period. During the war he emerged as a "politruk" in the Polish Army organized by Polish Communists in Russia. Detailed to Party work just after the war he acted as provincial (voivodship) Party secretary, then as chief of the CC Organization Department. In April 1956 he became deputy chairman of the then newly created Committee of Public Security, late that year Deputy Minister of Interior with which the Committee had been integrated. His connection with the Secret Police (Bezpieka) dates as far back as his wartime job of "politruk". CC member since March 1954 he seems to have enjoyed full confidence of the Party leadership, and in the Ministry of Interior he was entrusted with security matters. In connection with the purge of Jews from the security apparatus, rumor was spread a year ago about Alster's defection to the West. It is possible that his present ouster from the service was contemplated at that time, but prestige considerations evoked by the rumor delayed the transfer to the insignificant Ministry of Communal Economy for at least a year. If this theory is sound, Alster's downgrading has been brought about by a powerful trio composed of a tough-minded CC Secretary Ryszard Strzelecki (cf. biographical note in Sit. Rep. March 8), another Deputy Minister of Interior Mieczyslaw Moczar and, officially Chief of Board of the General Staff, actually chief of Military Intelligence Gen. Grzegorz Korczynski.

The trio has been reported as waging an anti-Semitic campaign within the Party directed mainly against Politburo member Roman Zambrowski and to be advocating a policy of strong hand. Although all Gomulka followers and all "home" (as distinct from Moscow trained) Communists, they seem to believe that Gomulka's course is too mild, and that it is the highest time to boost not only the prestige but also actual power of the Party.

After the ouster of Alster, Moczar remains as the real boss of the security apparatus, and it remains to be seen what sort of "tougher policy" he will be applying.

(More on the subject will be sent tomorrow.)

De jure Recognition of Algeria

Poland has recognized the Algerian Provisional Government de jure, according to a joint Polish-Algerian communique issued in Tunis May 3, Reuter reported on the same date. Next day the agency reported that France does not contemplate any diplomatic sanctions against Poland following the recognition because, according to French diplomatic sources, Poland had to follow the Soviet example and thus was not responsible for the initiative (cf. Sit. Rep. March 22).

It follows from Radio Warsaw broadcast May 3 that the Polish diplomatic step was arranged by Deputy Prime Minister Eugeniusz Szyr who, after his trip to Morocco (cf. Sit. Rep. April 22), arrived in Tunis where he met the Prime Minister of the Algerian Provisional Government Youssef Ben Khedda. The two statesmen discussed the steps "necessary to the exchange of diplomatic representatives and to the determining of the forms of aid and economic cooperation".

Polish-Iranian Trade Protocol

Polish-Iranian trade protocol for 1962 was signed in Teheran on May 2, Radio Warsaw reported two days after the event. Last year's protocol provided for trade in each direction of £ 4,250,000. Janusz Burakiewicz, Viceminister of Foreign Trade, declared upon his return from Iran to Warsaw that this year's trade "has a chance of development and that the trend will also continue in the future". The main items of Polish imports from Iran are: cotton, raw hides, iron and other ores, dried fruit, etc. Poland exports complete industrial objects, lathes, agricultural machinery, cars, motorbicycles, sugar and other food articles.