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POLAND IN 1969: A CHRONOLOGY

Introduction: Major events and developments in Polish internal affairs and foreign policy are included in this chronology for 1969. The individual items have been selected from the Radio Free Europe Research Situation Reports, in which a more detailed analysis is to be found. This compilation is intended to serve both as a guide in the utilization of this material and as a reference aid.

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- January 2 Two Warsaw University assistant lecturers, Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski, alleged to have been the "spiritual leaders" of the student troubles last March, went on trial, accused of belonging to a secret organization.
- January 15 The Voivodship Court for the City of Warsaw pronounced Kuron and Modzelewski guilty as charged and sentenced each to three and a half years in prison.
- January 17 Voivodship Party Committee reporting and electoral conferences began on schedule in at least two provincial towns, Gdansk and Poznan.
- January 28 Party First Secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka spoke during the reporting and electoral conference of the Katowice Voivodship Party Committee; he expressed satisfaction with over-all industrial production in the current five-year-plan period but complained about

January 28
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the poor profile of "the index of labor efficiency," and advocated a transition to an "intensive" economy and the "streamlining of investments."

February 8

Four former Warsaw University students convicted of belonging to an illegal association that engaged in anti-state activity were sentenced to prison terms by the Warsaw Voivodship Court; Adam Michnik was given three years in prison, Henryk Szlajfer and Barbara Torunczyk two years each, and Wiktor Gorecki 20 months. (All four were arrested last March after the student demonstrations.)

February 9

The 17th Congress of the Polish Writers' Union ended with the re-election of Chairman Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz and a change in the Union statutes.

February 10

The Seventh Congress of the Polish Student Association began in Warsaw; The most important speech was delivered by Politburo member Jozef Tejchma, who announced that the Party had decided to increase scholarships as of March 1 -- thus increasing the state contribution for this purpose from the present 480 million zloty to 640 million -- and discussed the problems of general and political education, saying that with respect to the latter the successful completion of studies and the passing of examinations is not the ultimate aim of a university education, which should prepare the student for life in a "socialist" society.

February 14

The Economic Commission attached to the Central Committee's Economic Division, established by a Politburo decision, met for the first time. (The Commission is composed of "men of learning" -- university professors and teachers at institutes of higher education, and research institute employees -- economic activists on various levels, and Party activists.)

February 17-21 Antoni Zambrowski, formerly employed at Warsaw University, was put on trial, accused of distributing "alien, tendentious publications and his own works, which presented a false picture of social and economic relations in People's Poland and the other socialist countries in the years 1963-1968, and of publicly vilifying the Polish nation." Zambrowski, of Jewish origin, is the son of one-time Politburo member Roman Zambrowski, who, after the March events, was dismissed from the vice-chairmanship of the Supreme State Control Commission and expelled from the Party. Antoni Zambrowski was named in the Polish press as one of the organizers of last year's student demonstrations; he was sentenced to two years in prison.

March 3 Party First Secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka, Premier Jozef Cyrankiewicz, and CC Secretary Boleslaw Jaszczuk arrived in Moscow on March 3 for a "friendly" visit, at the invitation from the CC of the CPSU.

March 22 A rare mention of unemployment benefits for those out of work -- officially referred to as "persons temporarily not working" -- appeared in the Polish press. The "Review of Legislature" column in the March 22 issue of the weekly Rada Narodowa commented on the new instructions from the Minister of Health and Social Welfare issued on 6 November 1968, addressed to the local departments of health and social welfare and concerning "social aid for persons who are temporarily without work."

March 29-31 The Fifth Congress of the United Peasant Party took place; the 918 delegates who gathered in Warsaw represented over 378,000 members of the UPP, including over 224,000 individual farmers and 77,000 "intelligentsia"; at least four Politburo members, Wladyslaw Gomulka, Jozef Cyrankiewicz, Zenon Kliszko, and Jozef Tejchma, attended the opening session, and Gomulka delivered a speech; the basic report was made by UPP Chairman Czeslaw Wycech.

- April 9 The Plenary Session of the All-Polish Committee of the Front of National Unity adopted the Front's Electoral Program, and thus launched the parliamentary electoral campaign.
- April 10 A delegation representing the Polish CC went to East Berlin "on a friendly visit" at the invitation of the East German CC; the delegation, led by Party First Secretary Wladyslaw Gomułka, included three other Politburo members: Premier Jozef Cyrankiewicz; Zenon Kliszko, CC Secretary in charge of ideology of relations with foreign Communist Parties; and Boleslaw Jaszczuk, CC Secretary in charge of economic affairs.
- April 22 A meeting of the recently established Ideological Commission of the Party CC took place; Chairman of the commission Jan Szydlak was the main speaker; the meeting was also attended by Politburo member and CC Secretary Jozef Tejchma and CC Secretaries Artur Starewicz and Stefan Olszowski.
- April 22 Three Warsaw University students, Irena Lasota, Irena Grudzinska, and Teresa Bogucka, were sentenced by the Warsaw regional court to 18 months in prison for their part in the student demonstrations of March, 1968, (the time they spent in jail between March and August of last year was included in their sentences).¹
- May 1-5 Five young people were sentenced in Warsaw to prison terms ranging from six to eighteen months and fines of 1,000 zloty each for distributing leaflets opposing last year's invasion of Czechoslovakia.
- May 7-8 "A major step in the economic education" of the nation was initiated by a two-day "seminar conference" in Warsaw; economic experts from the Party CC and the voivodship committees, as well as editors-in-chief of "some periodicals," took part in the debates, which were chaired by Politburo members and CC Secretary Boleslaw Jaszczuk. The subject of the conference was "the preparation of the new five-year plan in accordance with the

May 7-8
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directives of the Fifth Party Congress and of the Second Plenum." Planning Commission Chairman Jozef Kulesza and his deputy Jozef Pajestka delivered speeches which served as "a basis for the discussion."

May 17

During a meeting with the voters of his constituency in the Praga ward of Warsaw, Party First Secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka delivered a speech dealing with three major subjects: Polish-West German relations, the international Communist movement, and the internal economic situation; after reviewing all major West German pronouncements on the subject of Poland and the touchy problem of the Oder-Neisse border for the last 20 years, he admitted the existence, of "tendencies which seem to indicate the intention to set Bonn's Eastern policy in a slightly different direction."

May 19

FRG Foreign Minister Willy Brandt, during a press conference in Bonn, "once more" underlined West German "readiness officially to exchange statements with Poland on the renunciation of the use of force, and thereby to create a basis of confidence on which peaceful relations between the two states can be normalized."

May 19-20

A Rumanian delegation headed by Party and government leader Nicolae Ceausescu visited Warsaw.

June 2

The Electoral Commission released the results of the elections to the Sejm; out of a potential total electorate of 21,148,879, 20,642,449 (or 97.61 per cent) actually voted; 20,473,114 votes (99.22 per cent) were cast "for the Front of National Unity."

June 3

The Polish delegation to the Moscow summit conference, headed by Party First Secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka, left Warsaw for Moscow.

June 8

A communiqué was read in Roman Catholic churches in Poland in which the Polish Episcopate listed six long-standing grievances as "merely examples of the difficulties which beset the Church in our homeland," as follows: lack of new church buildings, obstacles

June 8
(cont'd.)

to the creation of new parishes, difficulties in conducting religious instruction classes, victimization of Catholics in their jobs because they attend religious ceremonies, the limitations on the Catholic press, and lack of Church representatives in public life; the episcopate also complained that, in the Western and Northern Territories, all property that had belonged to the, then German, Church bodies before the war was taken over by the state.

June 11

Premier Jozef Cyrankiewicz returned from a three-day official visit to Czechoslovakia; a joint communiqué stressed that, in the bilateral talks, "particular attention was devoted to problems of security and peace in Europe."

June 14-16

Governing Mayor of West Berlin Klaus Schuetz visited Poland, the most important of a number of West German government and trade officials who recently spent a day or two in Poland to visit the Poznan International Fair.

June 25

The third plenary session of the CC opened in Warsaw with only one point on the agenda: "a report from the PUWP delegation to the international conference of the Communist and workers' Parties in Moscow, which took place on June 5 to 17." The rapporteur: Wladyslaw Gomulka.

July 5

Wladyslaw Bienkowski, former high Party official and Education Minister, was expelled from the Party for having written an essay "strongly critical of the present Polish leadership," and particularly of Gomulka's policies in 1968, which he sent to various editorial offices; according to The Times (London, July 5), "Bienkowski was not so naive that he expected any editor to accept his piece, but it was a convenient way of making his views known among Poland's political and journalistic world."

July 15

After lengthy talks between Polish and Spanish diplomatic representatives in Paris, notes were exchanged in which both sides approved the establishment of consular trade offices in their respective capitals.

July 21 On the eve of the national holiday, the Sejm convened in a special solemn session intended to commemorate the 25th anniversary of People's Poland; in addition to Wladyslaw Gomulka, who spoke for over two hours, foreign Party and state leaders invited to Warsaw for the occasion spoke: Leonid I. Brezhnev of the USSR; Gustav Husak of the CSSR; and Willy Stoph of East Germany.

July 21 An amnesty law was passed by the Sejm; according to Deputy Jan Mroczek, the bill's rapporteur, "the political impact of a quarter century's existence of People's Poland," as well as the country's achievements in the last 25 years, fully justify the amnesty.

August 5 Of the 15 Warsaw University students and staff members sentenced to prison after the March, 1968, riots, 12 were released under the terms of the July 21 Amnesty.

August 7 Jozef Tejchma, Politburo member and CC secretary, left for Bucharest to represent Poland at the Rumanian 10th Party Congress (he was the highest-ranking Soviet bloc delegate).

August 29 Radio Warsaw announced that the Council of Ministers had decided to tighten the rules governing national employment and the national wage fund; one of the decisions concerns the so-called limitations on employment, which will be enforced by the end of the current year; on the same day, Ministry of Health and Public Welfare officials discussed measures designed to curb excessive absenteeism.

September 1 Czechoslovak President Ludvik Svoboda arrived in Warsaw for an official visit.

September 14 Increased prices for alcoholic beverages went into effect.

September 15 Wladyslaw Gomulka and Gustav Husak, the Czechoslovak Party leader, met for 10 hours in the Moravian town of Ostrava.

- September 19-20 The 4th Congress of ZBoWiD took place in Warsaw. General Mieczyslaw Moczar was re-elected chairman of the Main Board, Kazimierz Rusinek retained his position as secretary-general, and Premier Jozef Cyrankiewicz his post as chairman of the Supreme Council.
- September 24 The "Oder-Neisse 69" maneuvers were attended by at least 9 of the 18 members of the CC Politburo and Secretariat; in addition to Gomulka and Cyrankiewicz, State Council Chairman Marian Spychalski, the Katowice, Gdansk, and Rzeszow Voivodship Party leaders (Edward Gierek, Stanislaw Kociolek, and Wladyslaw Kruczek), trade union chief Ignacy Loga-Sowinski, Ryszard Strzelecki, and Mieczyslaw Moczar arrived in the war games area to watch a tank battle and later an air- and sea-borne operation; also attending the exercises were voivodship Party secretaries and voivodship local government leaders "from various areas of the country," as well as youth organization officials.
- September 26 It was announced that the two biggest Polish banks, the Bank Narodowy Polski (Polish National Bank) and the Bank Inwestycyjny (Investment Bank) will merge on 1 January 1970.
- September 30 Eight Polish students were sentenced to prison for up to three years for distributing leaflets protesting Poland's participation in the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia last year.
- September 30 Minister of Shipping Jerzy Szopa announced in a speech to the plenary session of the main board of the Trade Union of Sailors and Dockers in Gdynia that 28 directors of the Gdansk shipyards had been dismissed or reprimanded for concealing the true "reserves" (production potential) of their enterprises.
- October 1-2 A Polish Party and government delegation visited Moscow; in addition to Party leader Wladyslaw Gomulka and Premier Jozef Cyrankiewicz, the following officials were members of the delegation: Politburo member and CC Secretary Boleslaw Jaszczuk, Politburo member and Foreign Minister Stefan Jedrychowski,

October 1-2
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Planning Commission Chairman Jozef Kulesza, and the Polish ambassador to the USSR, Jan Ptasinski.

October 7

The Polish Press Agency, PAP, devoted an extensive report to Church-state relations in connection with the departure for Rome on that day of "a large group of Polish bishops and priests," including Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, Archbishop Antoni Baraniak of Poznan, Archbishop Boleslaw Kominek of Wroclaw, "and many others," to take part in the Second Synod of Bishops due to start at the Vatican on October 11.

October 16

The West German First Television Network broadcast an interview (taped in Warsaw) with Foreign Minister Stefan Jedrychowski, in which he discussed Polish-West German relations; according to the interviewer, Hansjakob Stehle, "the initiative had been Warsaw's, and the written text had been approved by "the highest Party body."

October 19

An airliner belonging to the Polish airlines, LOT en route from Warsaw to Brussels via Berlin, landed at the Tegel airport in the French sector of the divided city, instead of at Schoenefeld in East Berlin. Eight hours later, Radio Warsaw explained that the unplanned detour had been "forced upon the terrorized crew" by "two armed individuals" who "had identified themselves with GDR passports."

October 28

In his first statement on the subject of FRG-Polish relations since he became Chancellor, Willy Brandt said that the government of the FRG "will propose to the Polish People's Republic that talks should be started on the basis of Wladyslaw Gomułka's speech of 17 May 1969."

October 28

An agreement on "the legal problems of common borders and on co-operation and mutual assistance regarding border problems" was signed between Poland and the GDR; it replaces the agreement on co-operation and mutual assistance on border affairs signed in 1957.

November 9

Tribuna Ludu reported that in October the Council of Ministers had passed a resolution on the creation of industrial and building construction combines, marking the end of the preparatory stage in the reorganization of the system of administering industry as a whole and the construction industry in particular, first mentioned in the resolution passed by the Fifth PUWP Congress (in November 1968), and elaborated on in the resolution of the Second PUWP CC Plenum in April 1969.

November 14-16

The Fourth PUWP CC Plenum took place, at which stepping up the effectiveness of scientific research and technical and organizational progress were discussed at length.

November 25

The West German Trade Mission Chief in Warsaw, Heinrich Boex, delivered a note from his government to Polish Vice-Minister Jozef Winiewicz; according to PAP, the note contained a proposal that "political talks" be held between the two countries.

December 15

A memorandum "On the Further Stabilization of the Church Organization in the Western and Northern Territories" of Poland was handed to Pope Paul VI by Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski; the next day PAP -- quoting "an official communique of the Polish Episcopate published in Rome on December 15" -- explained that the memorandum had been "signed by all Polish bishops at a plenary conference in Warsaw" which had taken place before Wyszynski's departure for Rome to attend the synod of bishops.

December 20-22

The Sejm approved the economic plan and budget for 1970 and accepted the report on the execution of the plan and budget in 1968.

December 22

The Polish answer to the FRG note of November 24 was made in the form of a statement by Premier Cyrankiewicz, which was on the same day followed by delivery of a formal note to Bonn. Cyrankiewicz declared: The recognition by the German Federal Republic of Poland's western border on the Oder and Neisse Rivers as final and inviolable is the

December 22

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starting point for opening the process of normalization of relations between the GFR and Poland. There is not and there cannot be any other basis for the creation of conditions for true normalization of these relations between the two states. The friendly relations between Poland and the German Democratic Republic constitute an essential factor in this process of normalization.