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Anniversary of Polish-Soviet Friendship Treaty

"We are glad when the PUWP, when its Central Committee, and when one of its most distinguished leaders, that loyal son of the Polish people, Comrade Wladyslaw Gomulka, with great care guard our friendship against all kinds of black reactionary forces which are trying to sow distrust between us," Soviet ambassador to Poland Averky Aristov declared in Warsaw on April 20. He was speaking on the eve of the 23rd anniversary of the signing of the Polish-Soviet Friendship and Mutual Assistance Treaty.

Although this rather warm reference to Gomulka might have been dictated by nothing more than diplomatic courtesy, in view of the present situation, there is a good possibility that it was a political statement clearly implying Soviet support for the Polish Party leader. This in spite of Aristov's emphatic assurance that the Soviets had never violated, "even to the slightest degree," the sovereignty and independence of the Polish state. Aristov also assured his Polish listeners that "there can be no question of exploiting this (economic) cooperation only in the interest of the Soviet Union, to the detriment of the Polish state and of the Polish people." Soviet help to Poland, Aristov continued, "is not motivated by the desire to force upon it surplus and outdated goods which are not needed in our country. We render aid to Poland only in those fields where it is essential, even when it involves goods which are in demand on our own internal market."

Among those present at the ceremony, Radio Warsaw (April 20) listed: Politburo members Zenon Kliszko and Franciszek Waniolka; Politburo deputy member Boleslaw Jaszczuk; CC Secretary

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Witold Jarosinski; United Peasant Party representative Jozef Ozga-Michalski; Democratic Party representative Eugenia Krassowska; Vice Premier Zenon Nowak; Deputy Foreign Minister Adam Kruczkowski; as well as the Warsaw "hosts": Municipal Party Committee First Secretary Jozef Kepa and Warsaw People's Council Chairman Jerzy Majewski. Also present was United Peasant Party Chairman and Sejm Speaker Czeslaw Wycech, who delivered a speech.

While the absence of at least five Politburo members may be explained either by other business or by illness (Premier Jozef Cyrankiewicz and Ignacy Loga-Sowinski were in Lodz, taking part in the so-called Textile Workers' Day, Eugeniusz Szyr was engaged in economic negotiations in East Berlin, Adam Rapacki and Edward Ochab were -- at least officially -- ill), it is rather intriguing to note that neither Gomulka nor the new State Council Chairman Marian Spychalski appeared at this rather important ceremony.

Gomulka and Spychalski were in Warsaw, since -- as reported by UPI on April 21 -- both had earlier received Marshal Ivan Yakubovsky, the Soviet Commander of the Warsaw Pact Forces, who spent two days in Warsaw (April 19 and 20) on business talks, some of which -- like those with Gomulka and Cyrankiewicz (on April 19) -- were described as "extensive." This last "extensive" talk was also attended by Defense Minister Wojciech Jaruzelski and by Aristov, Radio Warsaw reported. According to UPI, the Soviet marshal also paid a visit to Spychalski.

Anniversary of Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

The 25th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (which began on 19 April 1943) was made the occasion for sharp attacks against "Zionist perfidy," and the "cruel cynicism" of "capitalist" politicians who try to put part of the blame for the extermination of the Jews on the Polish nation, so as to divert public opinion either from the present "collaboration" between Israel and the FRG or from past passiveness vis-a-vis the Nazi crimes against Polish Jewry. These charges made on 18 April by Kazimierz Rusinek, secretary general of the Veterans' Association, ZBoWiD, who last year distinguished himself by frenzied charges against Israel (cf. Polish Situation Report, Radio Free Europe Research, 20 and 24 July 1967).

Rusinek spoke at a ceremony in the congress hall of the Warsaw Palace of Culture and Science, an almost exclusively ZBoWiD affair attended by the Association's Chairman, Mieczyslaw Moczar; Education and Higher Schools Minister Henryk Jablonski; Chairman of the Council for the Preservation of the Monuments to Struggle and Martyrology Janusz Wieczorek; as well as by "representatives of science and culture, officers and generals of the Polish Army" (Radio Warsaw, April 18).

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Much more restrained in his speech was Culture and Arts Minister Lucjan Motyka, who, on April 21, opened a memorial museum to the Jewish victims at the former Nazi extermination camp of Oswiecim (Auschwitz). He avoided any reference to Zionism in Poland, but did declare: "We stand on the side of the weaker and the attacked in the Far and Middle East." The Jewish memorial museum is the 15th of those already dedicated in Oswiecim to various nationalities.

With the exception of Argentina, foreign Jewish organizations boycotted this year's ceremony. Particularly bitter about the delay in establishing a Jewish memorial was Israel. According to Francis Ofner, writing from Jerusalem for Christian Science Monitor (April 20), Gideon Hausner (the chief prosecutor in the trial of SS Col. Adolf Eichmann) stated: "Anyone who attends the ceremonies which the Polish regime is now arranging at Auschwitz lends himself to the defiling of the memory of the dead." Another Jewish spokesman, Minister of Welfare Dr. Joseph Burg, stated that in the past the Poles used to "gloss over" the fact that most of the Auschwitz victims were Jews. The Jewish pavilion now erected was intended to rectify this to some extent.

East-West Contacts

The Rzeszow Song and Dance Ensemble left for Belgium at the invitation of the Belgian-Polish Friendship Society to tour the country and to perform mainly in the Polish centers in Belgium, Radio Warsaw reported on April 18.

Msgr. Antoni Pawlowski, the bishop of Wloclawek, arrived in Rome on April 19 to make his regular five-year report to the Pope and the Holy See, an RFE Special from Rome reported on April 19.

Poland's new head of state, Marshal Marian Spychalski, will pay an official visit to Iran May 8-14 at the invitation of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlevi, Reuter reported from Warsaw on April 20, quoting PAP. The marshal will be accompanied on the trip by his wife, according to the agency.

A delegation of the Alsatian Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Strasbourg arrived in Poland on April 21 for talks with representatives of Polish foreign trade and industry and to visit some leading Polish industrial centers, Radio Warsaw announced the same day.

Miscellaneous

On Jan Masaryk's Death. The discussion in Czechoslovakia on the circumstances of Jan Masaryk's death in 1948 has been virtually ignored in Polish information media thus far. As far as can be ascertained, only a very short reference to the current investigations was made in a dispatch by the PAP Prague correspondent Stanislaw Lewandowski (Trybuna Ludu of April 6, and Zycie Warszawy of the same date). Masaryk's death was presented as follows: "In the year 1948 -- according to the official communique (emphasis supplied) -- he (Masaryk) succumbed to a fit of mental depression and jumped from a window."

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Trybuna Ludu Censors Rude Pravo. When Frantisek Kriegel was appointed to the post of Chairman of the Czechoslovak National Front, Rude Pravo of April 5 carried a short biographical sketch which gave the year of his birth as 1908 and added that he was born "in Stanislawow in Poland" (although this second largest city in former Eastern Galicia was Austro-Hungarian at the time of Kriegel's birth and is now part of the so-called Eastern Territories, which were Polish until 1939 and are now in the USSR). Aniela Krupinska, Prague correspondent of Trybuna Ludu, repeated the biographical data on Frantisek Kriegel, but referred to his place of birth simply as Stanislawow, omitting the words "in Poland" (Trybuna Ludu, April 7). All references to the former Eastern Territories of Poland as "Poland" is taboo in the Polish People's Republic.