

Ryszard Strzelecki in the Limelight

In Situation Report of 5 March another report that Ryszard Strzelecki had taken supervision of cultural affairs on behalf of the Party was quoted.

Now comes confirmation in Reuter dispatch of March 5 to the effect that Gomulka has assumed personal direction of cultural matters and had "entrusted day to day cultural matters to a toughminded Party veteran, Mr. Ryszard Strzelecki". The report quoted "informed sources". Since division of work on this highest Party level is as a rule not officially announced one may assume that nothing more authoritative than the reports like this will be forthcoming.

This transfer of cultural supervision from the hands of Edward Ochab theoretically to Gomulka's and practically to "toughminded" Strzelecki does not augur well for intellectual freedom in Poland, and at the same time constitutes another important step in the interesting career of Strzelecki.

Born in 1907 he was a member of the pre-war Communist Party of Poland. During the war he was a member of the CC of Polish Workers' Party and a man close to Gomulka, then the Party's First Secretary. After the war he was i.a. in turn First Secretary in the two important voivodships of Cracow and Katowice, as well as a member of the CC. He participated in the discussion on the November 1949 Plenum, which demoted Gomulka, Zenon Kliszko and Marian Spychalski from the CC and deprived them of the right to hold any Party appointments. He must have then manifested his loyalty to the anti-Gomulka forces since he was able to preserve his seat in the CC which he has kept uninterruptedly.

In 1950 he became Deputy Minister and in 1951 Minister of Railways. In that position he remained for almost ten years, and only because of his more recent higher appointments was he recalled from it in February 1960. Not much can be said of his activities before the "thaw". He was reported to be a link between the Natolin group and Gomulka in 1956 (cf. Wetz in "Le Monde" 15 March 1960). Although he received the "Order of Labor" First Class as a mark of recognition on his 50th birthday (cf. Radio

Warsaw 31 January 1957) and was reappointed to his old ministry in the post-October reshuffle of government (cf. Radio Warsaw 26 February 1957) he also suffered two setbacks at that time: He was not elected to the Sejm in 1957 elections (the only Sejm in which he had no seat) and on his reappointment as minister two Sejm deputies protested against it (one of them Eligiusz Lasota was the leader of the revisionists). Only one other appointment at the time was objected to in this way.

Before October, as well as in first post-October years, at least according to available official data, he appears a busy professional, attending various internal and international meetings and conferences connected with transport. He also appears at that time as an efficient minister and good organizer. From unofficial and unconfirmed sources it seems that Strzelecki was a link between the Natolin group and Gomulka and that he was also able to form his own group within the Party which was supported by former members of the Natolin group. Strzelecki's group has been reportedly more influential with Gomulka even than the latter's personal friends Zenon Kliszko and Ignacy Loga-Sowinski.

The spectacular rise of Strzelecki started with his election to the Party Secretariat (cf. Radio Warsaw 22 January 1960). It occurred during the fairly farreaching reshuffle in the Party leadership which lasted several months and resulted in the demotion of Jerzy Morawski and Jerzy Albrecht to name the two most important, shook the position of Ochab, who however remained unscathed, and brought a host of rumors of the forthcoming demotion of Marian Spychalski and the disgrace of Roman Zambrowski. These however did not materialize.

Since that time Strzelecki appears to be the rising star of the regime. Member of CC and from January 1960 one of the Secretaries of the Party, he was reported to be in charge of security and military matters at the Secretariat-Politburo level. His officially reported participation in several meetings of the military "activ" tends to support that supposition (cf. "Trybuna Ludu" 12 June 1960, Radio Warsaw 10 July 1960, Radio Warsaw 29 November 1960 and Berliner Pressedienst 5 February 1961). His election to the Sejm in April 1961 and appointment to the Council of State in May of the same year further enhance his position.

The latter position while not bringing any real power carries with it the considerable prestige of the senior statesman. Another such prestige-rising gesture were birthday greetings sent to him by Gomulka on behalf of the Politburo and published along with a large photograph on the front page of "Trybuna Ludu" (cf. issue of 31 January 1962).

With the present appointment Strzelecki becomes one of the three or four most powerful and most influential personalities within the Party, leaving of course Gomulka as a class apart. While it could be argued that, e.g., Kliszko's word still carries more weight, it must be borne in mind that Kliszko has been at the top for years already, while Strzelecki is a newcomer to the Party's top leadership.

Poland Boosts GDR Prestige

Prime Minister Jozef Cyrankiewicz was the "guest of honor" at the present international Leipzig Fair from 3-6 March 1962.

Not only did Poland make an effort to stress the importance of the East German Fair. The Soviet Union sent a delegation headed by Deputy Prime Minister Mikoyan and the Czechoslovak delegation was also headed by the Deputy Prime Minister. But the presence of Poland's Prime Minister plus an extremely important delegation headed by Deputy Prime Minister Eugeniusz Szyr and composed of the First Deputy of the Planning Commission Tadeusz Gede, Chief of the Economic Department of the Party's CC, Jozef Olszewski and three cabinet ministers certainly made a most impressive show.

Radio Warsaw reported the visit pretty superficially, giving only a short summary of Cyrankiewicz's speech at the meeting with workers of the Kirow-Werke in Leipzig and dismissing altogether his interview given at the Warsaw airport on his return.

Cardinal Wyszynski Leaves Rome

Cardinal Wyszynski is leaving Rome today, according to a UPI dispatch. The Cardinal, whose visit was reported in

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Situation Reports of 19 and 26 February, according to the Vatican Secretariat of State "might stay in Rome for Consistory ceremonies in the Vatican on March 19" reported our own Rome correspondent on 17 February. The sudden departure is explained by the Vatican by pressure of work awaiting the Cardinal in Warsaw.

Without drawing any conclusions we would like to mention that recently the Chairman of the State Council, Aleksander Zawadzki criticized in a public speech the attitude of the Church to the regime priests (cf. Situation Report 5 March 1962) and even more recently Deputy Prime Minister Zenon Nowak, in a meeting with airmen, spoke of "certain problems regarding Church-state relations". (Cf. Radio Warsaw 7 March 1962.)

Foreign Visitors in Trouble

Mrs. Lucja Jordan-Rozwadowska, a British subject of Polish origin, was sentenced to six years imprisonment on charges of espionage (cf. Reuter 7 March 1962). She is reported to have been imprisoned on 16 September, being in possession of incriminating material.

An American businessman, Mr. William Louis Brett, arrested early last month on a charge of violating currency regulations, was released on bail on March 7. He is free to leave the country, but the Polish government "could not guarantee him a visa to return for the trial due in 3-4 weeks time". It would appear that the Polish regime wants Mr. Brett to forfeit his bail bond, which amounts to \$ 4,000.

Polish Delegations Abroad

Polish Minister of Transport Jozef Popielas has left for East Berlin to discuss current railway problems interesting for both countries (Radio Warsaw, 7 March 1962).

At the invitation of the East German Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Purchasing, a Polish delegation of activists of collective farming headed by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture Stefan Kuhl left for East Germany. They will participate in the East German congress of collective farm members which begins in Magdeburg on 9 March (cf. Radio Warsaw 7 March 1962).