

*East-West*

X/230 P - GOMULKA'S REPORT ON THE MOSCOW CONGRESS

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MUNICH, November 24, 1961 (Research and Evaluation - Collins/Sterner) -- Wladyslaw Gomułka's report to the CC of the PUWP on the 22nd Congress of the CPSU contains one of the most scathing denunciations of the cult of personality (institutional Stalinism) to emerge in the reports of the various ruling Parties attending this crucial meeting in Moscow. Gomułka's description of the Stalinist years in the Soviet Union is a striking indictment of what can only be termed the impact of the perverse character of one man - Stalin - on policy and its implementation within the framework of Russian Communism.

Although offering as a partial apologia for the "cult of personality" the chaotic situation following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the difficulties the objective situation entailed for the "building of Socialism in one country", Gomułka nevertheless explicitly condemned Stalin for falling prey to despotic ambitions and sending innocent people and tried and true Party cadres to a "bloody death". In an obvious reference to his own imprisonment and the show trials of the immediate post-war period, as well as a specific mention of the destruction of Polish cadres during the years of the personality cult, Gomułka declared that distortions of the personality cult took place not only in the Soviet Union but were also to a greater or lesser extent "reflected in other Communist and Workers Parties, especially in socialist countries".

Gomułka went to great pains to explain why the CPSU was only now taking up the complex of problems connected with Stalin's personality cult. In doing so he broke a lance against the theories held by many Sovietologists that Khrushchev has been a captive of a Stalinist "pressure group" in the CPSU. He claimed that the 22nd Party Congress returned not to the anti-Party group because it constituted a danger to the ruling elite. By no means. He said that the strictures on this group should be considered in the "general context of a preventive immunization". In other words the whole evolution of the socialist camp, beginning with the 20th CPSU Congress, the expulsion of the anti-Party group, plus the 22nd CPSU Congress, could be viewed as a periodic inoculation of the CPSU and the Russian people against the viruses of sectarianism, dogmatism and Stalinist terror.

#### The CPSU and the World Communist Movement

The First Secretary of the PUWP offered carefully weighed formulations on the current state of inter-Party relations, especi-

ally those involving the CPSU and ruling Parties and other Communist Parties of the world. There appears to be a modification of Gomulka's views on the specific role of the CPSU within the socialist camp and the world Communist movement when he speaks of the "leading role of the Soviet Union". It will be recalled that Gomulka in the past has consistently avoided the formulation of the "socialist camp headed by the Soviet Union" or the "leading role of the CPSU". Under the impact of the Sino-Soviet dispute and the Albanian defection Gomulka seems to have become much more careful in his appreciation and recognition of the place of the Soviet Union and the CPSU in the scheme of world affairs. His appreciation is set forth as follows: There is nothing in the past of the Soviet Union which places it in a "special place". The Soviet Union deserves the respect of Communist Parties as the "main force of our times" because 1) (the Soviet Union) is the main factor in the security of socialist countries (internally and externally), 2) the main barrier of imperialist war design and 3) therefore the fundamental support of the socialist countries' historic mission of "preventing and eliminating war from the life of nations".

In fact the Soviet Union is not only the "first" socialist country but also the "main" socialist force of the contemporary era which is "by definition" heading toward socialism.

Having said the above Gomulka moves on to the more familiar Gomulka position on the relations between individual Communist Parties. Having denounced the cult of personality and all it implied for the relations between the CPSU and other ruling Parties, Gomulka claimed that the CPSU itself gave evidence of its own changed attitude toward other ruling Parties and the world Communist movement. Referring to the past character of the inter-Party relations as a "black page of the personality cult", Gomulka said that the CPSU viewed with "profound responsibility" the current role which the CPSU and the Soviet Union "objectively play in shaping the general line of the world Communist movement, and the foreign policy of the states of the socialist camp".

In order that there should be no confusion over the position of the PUWP as regards its attitude to inter-Party relations and the definition of the Soviet Union as a "leading force", as a "main force", Gomulka denied that there was any "center" which could arrogate to itself the right to "direct the activities of the various Communist and Worker Parties". Moreover, Gomulka doubted the need for any kind of "regional organization" which does not exclude, for example, meetings of Communist Parties for the exchange of mutual experiences. Underlining the profit derived from this type of meeting, Gomulka declared that the documents emerging from such meetings in fact "represent for each Party an international, central leader of its activity. In order not to leave any doubt as to where the PUWP stood, Gomulka said:

"Every Party is fully autonomous, independent and bears full responsibility for the country it rules, and for its policy in the country in the struggle for democracy, progress and socialism".

The above is but a re-statement of the Gomulka thesis of limited internal autonomy for the "socialist" countries as regards the pace and methods of building socialism in the light of "national peculiarities, as long as these countries present a united front in foreign policy to the foreign world of imperialism".

In this connection Gomulka cautioned against applying the thesis of internal autonomy and respect for "national peculiarities" to either Yugoslavia or Albania. In the former country, Gomulka said, "revisionism has come to rule". Albania, on the other hand, pursues a policy of "dogmatism, sectarianism and adventurism". According to Gomulka, neither of these policies are derived from "objective conditions" obtaining in the two countries, but rather constitute formidable ideological departures from the basic precepts of Leninism.

It is here that Gomulka is arguing by implication that Polish political eccentricities are merely economically structural in nature, while Albania and Yugoslavia are downright theoretical deviationists.

#### Peaceful Coexistence -- Berlin

Gomulka was at pains to emphasize that a major consequence of the 22nd Party Congress was that it brought "a considerable reduction in tension into the international situation, which has been intensified by the German problem". He echoed Khrushchev's assertion that the Communist bloc did not intend to formulate ultimatums or insist on deadlines with respect to a German peace treaty: "... the signing of a peace treaty with Germany is not important as long as the Western powers show a readiness to solve the German problem...". The most important problem of our time is the problem of war and peace".

The failure of the Albanian Party leadership to recognize the catastrophic consequences which could result from brinkmanship in foreign policy is the reason Gomulka gives for ignoring the Chinese appeal for discretion in intra-bloc disputes. If Hoxha insists on breaking with the accepted foreign policy line of the socialist camp, then the issue must be aired and Albania must be publicly condemned. The basis of socialist foreign policy, says Gomulka, lies in "the peaceful coexistence of all states, irrespective of their political and social systems". The Albanian deviation in this respect, if it were not brought out into the open, could raise serious doubts all over the world as to the peaceful intentions of the socialist camp.

While most Communist pronouncements on the subject of thermonuclear war maintain that the Communist bloc would arise victorious from a conflict of this order, Gomulka was less such strident in his speech to the ninth CC plenum. On the contrary, Gomulka's remarks in this connection had an almost Western ring to them:



"A thermonuclear war does not contain the element of victory, only the element of defeat, or to be more accurate, the element of disaster which would befall all mankind. Thermonuclear war would be the grave of hundreds of millions of people -- whole nations -- and would destroy the achievements of man over the course of the centuries."

### Collectivization, Soviet and Polish

In his recounting of the great problems which confronted the Soviet Party leadership in the early days of "socialism in one country", Gomulka noted that the collectivization of the Soviet countryside encountered stiff resistance, and he explained why it did. First of all the former landed peasants opposed efforts aimed at their expropriation, and along with this came an inevitable decline in agricultural production, causing discontent among both the peasants and the urban population. However, Gomulka justified the Soviet collectivization drive on purely economic grounds:

"... the Soviet Union first of all had to achieve rapid development of industry -- it had to accumulate from its own economy the means for this development. Since agriculture predominated, it was agriculture which had to provide the major part of the means for the industrialization of the country. This was impossible with small-scale peasant farming."

At first glance, it would seem remarkable that such a defense of the Soviet position on collectivization should come from Wladyslaw Gomulka, who has to this day allowed some 87 per cent of all Polish agriculture to remain in the hands of the private sector. However, the defense of Soviet collectives is at the same time a defense of Gomulka's own policy at home. The argument -- that the Soviet Union was forced by its predominantly agrarian economic structure to cause dire hardships to its population through socializing agriculture for the sake of a more speedy industrial development -- is not applicable to the situation in today's Poland. Poland has an annually burgeoning industrial basis, far healthier than that of the Soviet Union over forty years ago. In addition, agricultural production in Poland is making dramatic annual progress with only one per cent of the farmland in the hands of collective farms. This year, for example, the annual plan for farm production was fulfilled to over 200 per cent, a performance outdistancing any other member of the socialist bloc.

It seems moreover possible that, as events develop in Polish agriculture, a large-scale introduction of Soviet-type kolkhozes may in the end result be entirely avoided. Some sort of socialized organizational structure will indeed evolve from the loosely-knit Agricultural Circles which are currently operated on

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a private basis, but which are intended to serve as schools in socialized cooperation. If, Gomulka, however, can continue to show annual increases in farm production, there is a chance that collectivization will simply not be introduced, and that the socialist structure of large-scale farming will arrive at a form differing from that of the kolkhoz.

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