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Harriman-Gomulka Meeting

US Ambassador at large W. Averell Harriman was received by Party First Secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka on December 30, Radio Warsaw and agencies reported on the same day. According to the Polish communique, as broadcast by Radio Warsaw, Harriman was received "in connection with his visit to Poland." The agency added that Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki and US Ambassador John Gronouski took part in the meeting. The same source also reported Harriman's departure from Warsaw and his arrival in Belgrade. Western agencies supplemented the news about the Harriman-Gomulka meeting by adding that it lasted about two hours.

Unlike on the day before, when Polish official media exercised much discretion in commenting on the Harriman-Rapacki meeting (cf. SR December 30), the press and radio on December 30 carried reports and comments on the US peace offensive. Although the nature of Harriman's mission was not revealed, any intelligent reader and/or listener could link it with these peace moves. In subsequent coverage particular stress was laid on the absence of air raids on North Vietnam. Eleven days have gone by without such raids, Radio Warsaw pointed out today.

New Year's Speeches

State Council Chairman Edward Ochab and Party First secretary Gomulka summed up the achievements of 1965 and outlined some problems for 1966 in the speeches delivered on December 31. Ochab delivered his New Year's message over Radio Warsaw at 2000 hrs., speaking to the Poles at home and abroad. Gomulka spoke at midnight at CC headquarters.

The balance sheet for 1965 looks rather good, Ochab said, both in the cultural and industrial fields. Better than expected

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production results in 1964 and 1965 gave the country a sound basis for a good start to a new Five-Year Plan which will be one of modernization and high quality. This plan has been prepared with special emphasis on the problem of finding employment for more than three-million young people, a task not yet faced in the history of the nation. "We are successfully solving this difficult task," Ochab stated. He also promised "gradual and systematic improvement of the standard of living" in the next five years.

Regarding political problems, Ochab stressed that 1965 was a year of celebration of the 20th anniversary of the return to Poland of the territories on the Oder, Neisse and the Baltic, "regained after centuries" in what he called a "great act of historical justice." In this connection Ochab stressed that these territories "are not and will never be an object of any discussion." (He did not refer to the Polish bishops' letter to the German Episcopate, but, read against the background of the recent massive propaganda campaign against the Church hierarchy, this statement of Ochab clearly implied a reference to it. If this assumption is correct, Ochab's reference would be the first made by a high state official.)

It was not a peaceful year, this 1965, Ochab stated. "The imperialistic war unleashed by the United States against the heroic Vietnamese nation defending its independence poisoned the international atmosphere and created dangerous tensions not only in Asia." In Europe the atmosphere is being poisoned by the "revanchist policy of the German Federal Republic, the country of the dictatorship of big monopolies which are reconstructing rapacious German militarism."

The year 1966 will be a jubilee year, Ochab said, in which the nation will sum up, "with pride," the achievements of the 1,000 years of its history, crowned by "our return to the Oder and the Baltic" and by the introduction "onto Polish soil of the system of social justice."

Gomulka's speech, as a matter of fact a toast, was shorter than that of Ochab. The Party leader also stressed that 1965 was a good year. Poland enters 1966 with a population of 31,600,000 or 1,700,000 more than five years ago. Peace is the main wish for 1966, Gomulka said. But 1966 begins "darkened by the clouds of an aggressive war carried out in Vietnam by the imperialism of the USA." Peace and peaceful coexistence depend on whether in the United States "common sense takes upper hand and puts an end to one of the most shameful wars, the dirty war in Vietnam," the Polish Party leader concluded.

A New CC Department Head

Edward Babiuch, former deputy head of the CC Organization Department, who had been replaced in this capacity by Kazimierz Barcikowski (cf. SR December 20), became this department's head, Trybuna Ludu revealed on December 21. As usual in such cases, the paper did not comment on the new appointment; it simply referred to Babiuch as "head of the Organization Department of the CC." It would follow that Babiuch was made department head sometime between October

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15 (when he was last referred to as deputy head) and December 8 when it was revealed that he had been replaced by Barcikowski.

In this connection there arises the question of what happened to Mieczyslaw Marzec, the predecessor of Babiuch. Marzec is not 60 yet, hence it is doubtful that he has been pensioned off.

Babiuch seems to belong to the younger generation of Party apparatchiks. In 1952 he was with the Polish Youth Union (predecessor of the present Socialist Youth Union) as a department head of the Main Board. In 1959 he was transferred to work in the CP voivodship committee in Warsaw, then -- in 1963 -- to the Organization Department of the CC. He was elected full member of the CC in June 1964.