

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNIST THOUGHT IN POLAND

JANUARY 1947 TO OCTOBER 1956

A THESIS
PRESENTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF ARTS



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APRIL 1961

PREFACE

Since October 1956 when Poland effected a bloodless but significant revolt against Stalinism and Soviet domination, there has been a growing interest in the subject of Polish Communism. The large number of books dealing with this topic which have recently appeared are evidence of the wide search for an understanding of those social and political forces which led to the Polish uprising of 1956. Unfortunately, because of the lack of reliable sources, it has not always been easy to determine the exact nature of these forces.

It is my hope that a study of Polish Communist ideology between the years 1947 to 1956 may, in some way, contribute to the proper understanding of one of the most important events of the post-war era. This thesis, therefore, is not simply an exercise in philosophical thought but represents an attempt to throw light on political events by examining their ideological motivations.

This is a study of official Communist theory in Poland but, for obvious reasons, I have devoted space to unofficial pronouncements and writings during the period of the "thaw" and after. The thesis is based almost exclusively on primary sources. The most important among these has been the Polish United Workers' (Communist) Party's theoretical organ, Nowe Drogi (New Roads). This periodical has provided a wealth of material and has served as the basis for the thesis. I have also relied heavily upon two Polish literary journals, Nowa Kultura (New Culture) and Przegląd Kulturalny (Cultural Review). Both these publications were

particularly valuable as sources of information for the post-Stalinist period. During that time they exhibited a degree of independence that is rarely found among Communist publications.

My gratitude to Dr. C. R. Hiscocks goes beyond the limits of this thesis but I am indebted to him for the guidance, ideas, and valuable criticisms which he so generously provided during its preparation. Perhaps even more so, I am grateful to Professor Hiscocks for his trust and encouragement and for the inspiration which he aroused in me. Whatever merits this thesis may have must be attributed to his advice and assistance.

I wish also to express my appreciation to Professor I. Avakumovic for useful suggestions and for a post-graduate seminar in International Communism which provided the opportunity to view the subject of this thesis in the perspective of its larger setting.

My thanks also to Miss Kathleen Coddington, deputy chief librarian at the University of Manitoba, for her patience and help with sources.

Brian Knapheis,
Winnipeg,
April, 1961.

ABSTRACT

Of the M.A. Thesis

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Communism in Poland evolved out of the socialist movements of the early 19th Century. From the outset, Polish Communism was characterized by two distinct ideological tendencies. The first, most forcibly espoused by Rosa Luxemburg, adhered to classical Marxism with its accompanying doctrinaire internationalism. The second ideological wing was intensely patriotic and regarded the national liberation of Poland as a precondition for a social revolution. This ideological split in the Polish communist movement existed until 1918 when the Communist Party of Poland was founded upon Luxemburgist principles. During the inter-war period, however, the party was not always successful in keeping nationalism out of its ranks and this was probably the reason for its dissolution by Stalin in 1938. It reappeared in 1942 under the name of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR) and played a part in the national resistance movement. The PPR's main goals, however, were to prepare for the take-over of Poland after the war. This it was able to do through a combination of terrorist activities against all opposition and falsification of elections. Thus, in January 1947, Communism was triumphant in Poland.

Under the guidance of Wladyslaw Gomulka, Polish Communist ideology between 1947 and late 1948 was extremely deviationist due to its nationalism. Gomulka, head of the PPR, insisted on a "Polish road to socialism" and claimed that there were distinct historical and traditional differences between Poland and the USSR which precluded an identical evolution toward Communism by the two countries. Gomulka believed that Marxism-Leninism had to be adjusted to the specific conditions prevailing in Poland. This meant, for instance, that collectivization could not be effected as rapidly as it was in the Soviet Union during the 1930's. The Polish leader's insistence upon a different road to socialism betrayed a deep patriotism in his thinking and this was also evident in his campaign ^{utterances} for a merger between the PPR and the Polish Socialist Party.

The expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform in June 1948 initiated a wave of purges throughout the Communist world, including Poland. Gomulka was accused of "nationalist deviationism" in September 1948 and dropped from the party's hierarchy. In December of the same year the PPR merged with the Socialists creating the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP). The new party's ideological platform signalled the beginning of a new epoch in Polish Communist thought. The platform was extremely orthodox and dispelled any notions of a specifically Polish development toward socialism. It negated all of Gomulka's views and adopted an ideological foundation almost identical to that of Soviet Communism. This doctrinaire approach was particularly rigid on the subject of the national economy and agriculture.

In 1950 the PUPP reached an agreement with the Church in Poland without compromising its ideological attitude toward religion. It recognized the Pope as supreme in matters of "faith and ecclesiastic jurisdiction" but subservient to the state in all other matters. Apart from reiterating its dogmatic interpretations of economic progress, the party's theorists also adopted the Stalinist concept of a national constitution. The party's Secretary-General, Boleslaw Bierut, viewed the constitution, adopted in 1952, as a document whose purpose it was merely to embody the socialist achievements of the past and not to serve as a formulator of the future. Between 1950 and 1953, Polish Communist thought paid increasing attention to the concept of "socialist realism" as the foundation of Polish culture and literature. According to this concept, Polish artistic endeavours were to be carried out in the service of socialism and were to depict its revolutionary character.

Stalin's death and the subsequent reorganization of the Polish security police ushered in a new atmosphere in Poland. The youth and the intellectuals began to criticize the Stalinist period and to attack some fundamental tenets of Polish Communism. An example of this revolt was the publication of the "Poem for Adults" by the poet Adam Wazyk. Unable to control the growing opposition in the country, the PUPP agreed to certain ideological concessions but this did not stem the tide of criticism.

Following the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, the Polish Communists joined in the attack upon the "personality cult". But at the same time there began to be a wider questioning of basic

theoretical assumptions. This very quickly led to the adoption of an ideology that represented a marked departure from Stalinism but far short of a return to Gomulkaism. During this transformation, there began to evolve two factions within the party: one, led by Zenon Nowak and Marshal Rokossowski, believed in a rigid adherence to Stalinist principles and decried all deviations from it; the other, ~~holding~~ ^{supported by} a definite majority, proposed greater flexibility in the interpretation of Marxism-Leninism and paid more attention to the specific conditions of Poland. Not even this latter group, however, was able to placate the demands of the populace and the situation in Poland soon became revolutionary. At this time the party fully rehabilitated Gomulka and was about to oust the Stalinists when a Soviet delegation, led by Khrushchev, arrived in Warsaw. Soviet armed intervention was evaded, however, and Poland was able to effect a bloodless revolt under the leadership of Gomulka.

Upon assuming this leadership, Gomulka divulged his ideological views and promised to clean the party of all Stalinist inclinations. His ideas were generally a return to those he expounded while in power before 1949 and they once more laid stress on the need for a "Polish road to socialism". Thus the reappearance of Gomulka marked the resurrection of Polish "national Communism".

Communist thought in Poland may be viewed as a classic example of "deviationism" in the Communist world. It is also symptomatic of the nationalistic problem which Communism everywhere faces and has not yet

been able to resolve. Since ideology is so much a part of the Communist concept of power, the Soviet Union has recognized the need for a monopolistic interpretation of Marxism-Leninism. But because nationalism has been so consistently a part of its ideology, Polish Communism has threatened the Soviet Union's exclusive control over Marxism-Leninism.

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INTRODUCTION

THE ROOTS OF POLISH COMMUNIST THOUGHT

The outstanding characteristic of Polish Communist thought has been its nationalism. However true to the tenets of Marxism, however cognizant of the universal nature of their movement, Polish Communists have not been able to rid themselves of the tendency to identify their ideology with nationalism. If anything this has given Polish Communism a wider mass appeal; but it has also, quite naturally, complicated its tasks and confused its goals. It has not been easy to reconcile nationalism with what purports to be an international movement; it has not been easy to substitute "Polish" for "proletarian" as the most popular adjective in Communist jargon.

Nevertheless, the nationalistic ~~character of~~ ^{element in} Polish Communism is not surprising in the light of Polish history. The Poles have been ardent patriots since they faced their first recorded border incident a millenium ago.¹ From that day history was to be unduly harsh with Poland, and her people came to suffer their share of abuse at the hands of foreign powers using the country as a bridge between the two worlds of Eastern and Western Europe. Too often, from the time of the Teutonic Knights to Hitler, Poland was regarded as a piece of intruding territory to be walked across in search of greater riches.

That the Poles have managed to survive as a nation is a testament

to their unbounded heroism and determination in the face of monstrous, unfavorable odds. This national determination, in fact, has exhibited itself only in times of great crisis. During periods of relative tranquility the Poles have suffered from a serious lack of civic responsibility. In times of peril they have stood united to a man.

That unity was absolutely essential for survival. Frontier struggles aside, there was a period of some 120 years in Poland's history when the country literally did not exist. But not even this prolonged attempt between 1795 and 1914 by the then three Great Powers, Russia, Prussia, and Austria, to end the country's life in any way diminished its Polish identity. It only served to uphold what was then becoming a widely recognized observation--that political statehood was a much less potent force than national consciousness.

Polish nationalism, then, grew out of the tragic history of the country. The greater the threat to the nation, the stronger was the patriotism of the people. The vast and rich literature of Poland reflected how very much a part of national life, the struggle for survival had become. Often it manifested itself in romantic, mystical terms that could find justification only in lyric poetry. And Polish poetry and literature does sing of this heroic struggle; it glories in what can only be called the sometime foolhardy actions of Poles in the face of insurmountable obstacles. "It now turns out," ~~he~~ wrote, for instance, one Polish author in 1922, "that the policy of craft trying to outwit the foe was a

false course, while that of struggle against hopeless odds was perfect."² Romantic, foolish, unrealistic--though it has been all these things, Polish nationalism has yet managed to vindicate one of its celebrated dictums: "To be defeated but unconquered, that is a victory."³

Polish Communism inherited this very nationalism and more.

It embraced Poland's Western outlook, her ties with the civilization of Rome, and her richly developed culture. In spite of her geographical position--between two worlds whose only access to each other is across her prostrate land--Poland has never seriously been a part of the East European orbit. Ethnically, she is naturally identified with that region since East Europe is usually considered the cradle of the Slavic world, while Western Europe is looked upon as a community of Latin and Germanic nations. But that is the extent of her ties with the East; all others are with the Western world. In this context, religion, perhaps, has been the most influential factor. Poland's ^{written} history, in fact, does not begin until her Christianization. ~~since no prior records are in existence.~~ However distant Rome may have been, it was never too far away to bring its immense influence to bear upon the Polish nation. The fact that Poland adopted the Latin alphabet was in itself sufficient to assure her of contact with Western ideas. It is not surprising, therefore, that the writings of such men as Locke and Rousseau were widely read, and more widely admired in Poland, while they remained relatively unknown for some time to her eastern neighbor, Russia. The Polish intelligentsia, refined by any standards, was not only in contact with but also creatively a part

of the Western tradition. This, combined with her religious ties, assured that Poland would always remain a part of Western, not Eastern, Europe.

The Communists in Poland inherited the country's nationalism with its accompanying Western liberal traditions partly because they were themselves a product of it and partly because they had no other choice. But the ensuing struggle between nationalism and internationalism, between Western ethics and Communist political expediency, was not to be easily resolved by the Polish Communist movement. It was to be a struggle similar to the one which for many years plagued the Polish Socialists.

. . .

Socialism in Poland grew out of the unsuccessful insurrection against Russia in 1830-31 when groups of emigres formed radical movements as a means of combatting repression of their native land. Among the first of these was the Democratic Society, strongly influenced by French utopian socialism, and the belief in an agrarian revolution. This latter tenet apparently gained for them the support of Marx and Engels for in the Communist Manifesto the two had written: "The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims ... In Poland they support the party that insists on an agrarian revolution as the prime condition for national emancipation ..."⁴ Marx and Engels in fact made numerous statements in support of the restoration of a free Polish state and this increased immensely the appeal of socialism to the Poles. But the patriotic and

agrarian demands of the socialists were often marred by mystical overtones which prevented a clear expression of their ideas.

A more "scientific" approach to socialism, however, began to evolve as large-scale industry developed in the Russian part of Poland, known as Congress Poland, in which lived nine of the country's 15 million Poles. Following the insurrection of 1863-64, the Russians placed more emphasis on economic growth and by the end of the 19th Century industrial progress in the region reached a high stage of development. Lodz, once a small town, became a thriving industrial center, a "Polish Manchester". As mines, foundries, and factories increased steadily, the industrial proletariat grew proportionately until in 1897 the workers with their families numbered over a million.⁵ This industrial "revolution", however, brought with it the common ills of all such movements: low wages, poor working conditions and equally primitive hygienic precautions.

But the ideas of Marx, Engels, and the romantic Ferdinand Lassalle, concurrently took firmer root in Polish soil. The increasing social injustices accompanying the new capitalism worsened until the workers finally broke from their politically passive stupor and began embracing to some degree the doctrines of these men. In 1882 was formed the Proletariat, the first tenacious socialist party which emphasized the need for economic justice. But almost from the start, the party was split into two factions: the original, cosmopolitan group which gave priority to economic problems, and a second which insisted on an amalgamation of socialism with nationalism and called for a more patriotic appeal. The first branch, however, remained

adamant and its terrorist actions soon made it notorious to the point of alarming the Russian government. The Proletariat's revolutionary aims were clearly enunciated by its leader Ludwik Warynski:

"Our aim has been to beget a worker's movement and to organize a workers' party in Poland ... We have organized the working class in its fight against the present order. We have not organized a revolution, but we have organized for a revolution. We know that the ever mounting social antagonism and the ever spreading wounds in the social organism will inevitably lead to cataclysm ... It is precisely for that reason that we consider it our duty to prepare the workers for the revolution, to make their rise a conscious one, tempered and disciplined by organization, and to give them a clear program of ends and means."⁶

In spite of this obvious determination, the party was seriously crippled by the ensuing arrests and, failing to attract the broad masses of the workers, it gradually subsided.

The socialist movement lay dormant for almost a decade until 1892 when the remnants of its nationalist wing gathered to form the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). Pledging itself to fight all economic exploitation, the party also placed great stress on a free and independent Poland as a precondition for the socialist state. This renewed emphasis on nationalism soon created a schism in the party and it was soon followed by an outright split. The result was the formation of a second party, called the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and which later united with a similar group in Lithuania and came to be known as the SDKPIL.⁷ The ensuing rivalry between the two parties, the one deeply patriotic, the other, faithfully devoted to the creed of Marx and Engels, became the outstanding characteristic of the Polish socialist movement.

The main protagonist in this struggle was to be Rosa Luxemburg,

a highly gifted intellectual who had channeled all her energies into ardent revolutionary movements. Under her leadership, the SKDP^{IL} promptly rejected the concept of national independence and gave all its attention to the international interests of the workers. Luxemburg considered a social revolution as the only salvation for Poland and its proletariat. This line of reasoning not only was contrary to the policy of Marx and Engels, but it soon got her into a prolonged fight with Lenin. The Luxemburg-Lenin controversy, however, involved two other issues. Sensing the absolute hold which Lenin had over the Bolsheviks, Luxemburg attacked his concept of the party, that is, that of a small elite acting as the vanguard of the working class. She further stressed the importance of the proletarians and their need to become fully aware of themselves as a class and as the most progressive element in society. Lenin promptly unleashed a full attack on "Luxemburgism" claiming it was heretical on three points. First, it denied the true role of the party in the revolutionary class struggle thus undermining the political effectiveness of the proletariat. Secondly, Lenin accused Luxemburg of underestimating the role of the peasants, particularly poor and middle-class farmers, as allies of the urban workers. Lastly, Lenin claimed Luxemburg had not given proper emphasis to the struggle for national emancipation and had overlooked its usefulness as an appeal to the revolutionary fervor of the masses.

This protracted, somewhat bitter controversy between Luxemburg and Lenin during the first years of the 20th Century in a way reflected the very differences which separated Poland's two socialist parties. The PPS, unresponsive to doctrinaire Marxism, looked forward to a revolution as

much for the national liberation it would bring about as the social injustices it would set aright. The SDKPiL, on the other hand, viewed the impending revolution in exclusively social terms.

The outbreak of the 1905 Revolution in St. Petersburg had a dramatic effect on the Poles. But aside from expressions of sympathy and minor demonstrations in Warsaw and Lodz, nothing on the same scale occurred in Poland. Still, sensing the national unrest, Czar Nicholas issued a Constitutional Manifesto which promised the Poles a bill of rights and a legislative assembly, provisions which, though far short of national independence, nevertheless appeased a wide segment of the Polish population. It also marked the beginning of a temporary socialist decline. The PPS membership split, one faction, led by Josef Pilsudski, remaining faithful to its nationalistic tenets, the other urging a gradual, evolutionary approach and a partial rapprochement with the Russian authorities. In a period of a few years, the whole movement, including the SDKPiL, was irrevocably atomized and Polish socialists, lacking both unity and guidance, sank into a seven-year period of deterioration.

The coming of the War may have saved it from a worse fate. The impending economic and political crises in the country once again inspired the workers to revolutionary goals. But it did little to unify the Socialists. The national and international factions reappeared again. The SDKPiL, for instance, took the following unequivocal stand:

"The development of the war has proved that the epoch of national states is over ... The Polish proletariat has never made national independence one of its aims. The proletariat has sought to destroy not the existing state boundaries but the character of the state as an

organ of class and national oppression. In the face of the experience of the war, the advancement of the slogan of independence as a means of struggle against national oppression would not only be a harmful utopia, but would constitute also a repudiation of the basic principles of socialism. ... The proletariat of Poland will fight neither for the unification of Poland ... nor for independence ... The Polish workers will struggle, in solidarity with the international proletariat, for a social revolution, which is the only possible solution of social and of national problems."⁸

To this Lenin vehemently answered that the Polish proletariat must seek nothing less than freedom, independence, and self-determination. Two years later, his Bolsheviks in power in St. Petersburg, Lenin unhesitatingly decided to give the Poles their freedom.

Meanwhile, with war drawing to an end and with political freedom imminent, the Poles were engulfed in the difficult task of organizing a government. The Socialists--the SDKPiL and the left wing of the PPS--unable to attract the support of the masses, were unsuccessful in gaining power and were left out of the national government. Nevertheless, their spirits undaunted and sensing that they ~~may~~ ^{might} yet duplicate Russia's example by overthrowing the relatively weak bourgeois government, the SDKPiL and the PPS-Left decided on December 15, 1918 to unite as the one working-class party. Thus was born the Communist Party of Poland (CPP).⁹

"In the epoch of international social revolution," said the new party's platform, "the Polish proletariat rejects every political solution that is to be connected with the evolution of a capitalistic world, solutions like autonomy, independence, and self-determination."¹⁰

It would appear then that Poland's Communists had embraced the old Luxemburgist line. It remains only to see how far, in the coming decades, the Communists actually adhered to this policy.

It took only some four years before serious nationalistic

undercurrents began to exert pressure upon the Communists. The first such influence came in the form of a book of essays published in 1924 by a young Communist writer, Juliusz Brun. Interpreting the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution as a "Russian, national revolution", Brun added that what was needed in Poland was a native upheaval, strongly suggesting that it need not follow strictly Bolshevik lines, but must, in fact, take into account the unique Polish situation. These ideas had only a moderate influence upon the CPP initially, but they were to reappear in one form or another in the years to come.

Nevertheless, toward the end of the 1920's and afterward it was getting more difficult to speak in nationalistic tones. As Stalin consolidated his power and the Soviet Union entered the period of "Socialism in one country", the Communist International (Comintern), of which the CPP was a member, became ever more rigid in its ideological demands on the Communist parties. More and more, the Comintern came to reflect the ways and wants of the Soviet party until all other Communists, including the Poles, were neglected and their problems sidetracked. In addition, for the Polish Communists themselves, the wide national popularity of Pilsudski, who had come to power by a coup d'etat in 1926, made the road to power immensely difficult.

The rise of Hitler in Germany in 1933, provided the Polish Communists with an opportunity for a wider national appeal. Turned down by Pilsudski and other social democratic groups when they suggested a united front against the "fascist threat", the Communists began issuing patriotic slogans of their own. In 1935 a party Plenum resolution read,

in part, as follows:

"We, the Communists, students of Lenin and Stalin, recognize the right of every nation to self-determination and national independence. We, the Communists, respect the independence of Poland ... We ... are the heirs of the best traditions of the Polish people's struggle for independence and democracy ... Our party defends ... our nation's independence..."¹¹

In part at least, such slogans undoubtedly led in 1938 to the perpetration of what still remains to this day an unsolved mystery. Sometime in that year--the exact date is not known--the CPP was dissolved and a large part of its leadership exterminated. The order for dissolution had obviously come from Stalin but the exact reasons for dismemberment are not at all clear. Nevertheless, it is fair to speculate that Stalin, foreseeing a possible agreement with Hitler, feared the outcry it might engender in what he must have considered a unreliable, patriotic Polish Communist Party.¹² Thus, a victim of nationalist inclinations, the first phase of Polish Communism ended.

Whatever Communists remained in Poland, found themselves in utter confusion during the period of the Hitler-Stalin pact, and simultaneously Polish Communism suffered irreparable damage as a result of this diabolical agreement. But as the war with Russia began, the Communists quickly started organizing resistance movements in both the German and Soviet sectors of Poland. It was in the former that the Polish Workers' Party (Polska Partia Robotnicza-PPR) was created in 1942 thus reconstituting a Communist party in Poland. Sensitive to the wounds suffered by the movement because of the Soviet-Nazi pact and Russian occupation of Eastern Poland, the PPR toned down its Communist terminology and relied instead on such phrases as

"national front" or "national unity".

Their status, however, was further aggravated in April 1943 when the Katyn massacre, in which thousands of Polish officers were apparently murdered by the Russians, was revealed. The PPR's only resort, like that of the Soviet Union, was to accuse the Germans of the crime. It then proceeded with preparations for taking over a post-war Poland. Its propaganda constantly harped on the party's patriotism and independence from Moscow, and emphasized the role of its "People's Army" in the resistance movement. All this nevertheless, met with little popularity. Non-Communist factions in the country were successful in branding the PPR as a pawn in Soviet hands and discrediting it in the eyes of the Poles.

Thus rejected, the PPR, with Moscow's direction, turned to clandestine, illegal means in order to assure itself of power at the end of the War. Through a combination of betrayals and military and political tactics which caused the deaths of thousands of politically active non-Communists, the PPR was able to realize that dream.

At the end of the War it emerged as one of the three strongest parties, the other two being the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) and the Peasant Party. Still universally rejected by the Polish people, the Communists followed a pattern of ascension to power that was soon to become well-known in other East European countries. The PPR made the jump in two quick stages: the first involved becoming a part of the coalition government, assuming control over the important ministries--such as that of Interior which had jurisdiction over the state police--and thus acquiring

control over the powers of the state. The second stage consisted of terrorist and persecution activities against the opposition, particularly the popular Peasant Party headed by Stanislaw Mikolajczyk. During this time as well, the Communists proceeded with the vast nationalization of industry and began a reorganization of agriculture. Thus, by the end of 1947, Polish Communism was triumphant.

In spite of its dependence on Moscow, in spite of its obvious Soviet ties, the PPR was not yet a puppet of the USSR. There was still, notwithstanding all its Soviet characteristics, something different about the Polish Communist party. In a manner, it was vaguely reminiscent of the difference that had always characterized the Polish Communist movement: its nationalism. The patriotic coat had been worn in the past and now, at the zenith of their power, the Communists were loathe to shed it. If the ideology of the past had clamored for a "Polish revolution", now in a position of authority, the Communists urged a "Polish way to socialism".

"We have chosen our own Polish road of development ... (which) is derived from the character of our Polish social and political organism ... Poland can proceed and is proceeding along her own road ..."13

These words, spoken by Wladyslaw Gomulka on the eve of the January 1947 election which was to mark the last formal step in the Communist take-over of Poland, previewed the nature of the Communist ideology that was to be prevalent in Poland in the initial days of the new regime. They also testified to the fact that the internal contradiction of Polish Communist

thought--nationalist as opposed to internationalist concepts--had not yet been resolved one way or another. And in the person of Gomulka, Secretary-General of the party, this very contradiction was reflected. So it remained for him, ardent Communist and no less fervent patriot, to reconcile these two opposing traits in Polish Communist thought.

CHAPTER I

GOMULKA AND THE POLISH ROAD TO SOCIALISM

Wladyslaw Gomulka, as far back as 1944 when the PPR was having difficulties in capturing a popular following, had already spoken out against the party's reticence to become associated with Polish patriotism.

"The fundamental error of the Communists", he wrote in that year, "was that, while fully appreciating the question of struggle for the social emancipation of the working masses, they did not sufficiently appreciate the question of independence ... The struggle for social emancipation cannot be separated from the struggle for national emancipation."¹

Then a member of the Communist People's Army and highest ranking official in the party, Gomulka had made for himself an honorable record as a resistance fighter during the war. There had been rumours that he had on more than one occasion stood up to Stalin when the latter treated Poland as the "seventeenth Soviet Republic". Gomulka's early life also was marked by a devotion to the fight against the social injustices of his native Poland.

A locksmith by profession and the son of an oil miner, Gomulka had been involved in the Polish Communist movement since his teens. His work was mainly in the trade unions where he showed remarkable organizational talent. His subversive activities, however, resulted in his imprisonment first in 1932 and again in 1936. It is quite probable that jail saved him from a much worse fate in 1938 when Stalin liquidated the CPP. Released at the outbreak of war, Gomulka managed to make his way to the Soviet zone of Poland where he remained until the beginning of Russo-

German hostilities. Thereafter he became one of the founders of the PPR and in November 1943 its Secretary-General. His conduct during the war increased his stature and he soon assumed the role as the party's foremost spokesman on ideology. Gomulka had always exhibited intense patriotism and was one of the few top Communist leaders who did not go to the Soviet Union and who never underwent political training in Moscow. During the coalition period of 1945 to 1947 he became Deputy Premier and Minister of Poland's recovered Western territories. In these capacities he already exhibited his patriotic leanings. In 1947, when the Communists came to power, Gomulka rose to a position of ultimate authority from which he continued to expound a philosophy of national Communism.

Gomulka saw no incompatibility between Polish national interests and those of the international Communist movement. On the contrary, in his view, the Polish party committed a gross blunder in divorcing itself from patriotism since in the process it made itself appear as merely an agent of the Soviet Union. A large part of his attack was directed at former members of the Polish Communist Party--the one abolished in 1938 by Stalin--who, he said, "have not been able to feel themselves into the new situation, have not been able to understand it, have not ceased being narrow sectarians. It is necessary that they also begin to think with the categories of the nation, of the state ..."²

Out of this belief grew his conviction that the Communists must work for a "Polish way to socialism" based on the particular conditions

prevailing in Poland and the temperament of the people. In January 1947, in the very first issue of the PPR's theoretical journal Nowe Drogi (New Roads), Gomulka warned against following dogmatically the Soviet methods of socialization.³ He negated the advisability of such a course and pointed to three factors which made Poland different from the USSR.

First, political and economic changes in Poland were achieved by peaceful means while in the Soviet Union a bloody and ruthless revolution was necessary to overthrow the old capitalist system. Poland did not have to go through a revolution because the defeat of Germany in the War also meant the destruction of the most powerful forces of fascism and reaction, forces which had played such a large role in impeding a socialist upheaval in Poland. Thus in 1944-45, when the Poles embraced Marxism, those counter-revolutionary obstacles which existed in 1917, were no longer present.

This initial distinction between the Russian and Polish experiences, led, in Gomulka's opinion, to the second difference. As soon as the revolution in Russia had been carried out, it was necessary to establish, as Marx and Engels had predicted, a dictatorship of the proletariat. This dictatorship was essential so long as reactionary and counter-revolutionary forces existed and waged the civil war. But in Poland the forces of reaction had already been subdued in large part without a civil war ensuing. Furthermore, after the war, these same forces were being overcome and weakened throughout most of Europe.⁴

This combination of events, both internal and external, made it easier for Poland to adopt democratic institutions immediately. A dictatorship of the proletariat--which in any case is but a transitional instrument--was consequently not needed in Poland.

The final difference between the two countries, Gomulka concluded, was that Poland, in choosing its form of government, had opted for a national democratic parliament; the Russians, on the other hand, favored a federal system in which the member republics functioned as Soviets. Although he did not make the significance of this difference clear, Gomulka's implication appears to have been that the Polish system would make for greater national unity and prevent chronic fractional disputes.

Gomulka was emphatic in stressing that such differences were sufficient to compel Poland to find her own way to socialism. The Polish Communists must under no circumstances emulate the Soviet Union's example if it is to be in contradiction with the specific conditions of Poland. The Polish nation, he wrote, has developed along unique historical and cultural lines which have given Poland a social and political character of her own. The forces of tradition and environment must influence the manner in which Poland will build a socialist state. That manner, it is abundantly clear from Gomulka's words, must be gradual and evolutionary.

Gomulka's ideas quickly spread and were whole-heartedly embraced by other members of the PPR. One high-ranking party official wrote as follows:

"The specific character of the 'Polish road of development' depends on the fact that in Poland, conditions created by the war and its aftermath permitted the solution of the problem (what to do with the old bourgeoisie) in a way which was not and could not have been foreseen by classical Marxism."⁵

The writer suggested that the bourgeoisie was in fact destroyed by the war and its own ideological bankruptcy. It was the task of the Communists following the war to prevent the state apparatus from falling back into the hands of whatever bourgeoisie still remained. As Gomulka had already postulated, therefore, in the minds of the Polish Communists, the Second World War actually represented the Socialist "revolution" against a bourgeois-controlled capitalist system. Having consolidated its power, the PPR must now in earnest devote itself to building socialism.

The contribution of the Russians was not completely denied by the Polish Communists. They did not question the fact that without the USSR's aid there would never have been a Communist Poland. But from now on the evolution of Polish socialism must not be hampered by Soviet ideological orthodoxy.

"... the Polish road to socialism", wrote Jakub Berman, a member of the PPR Presidium, "is and will be the creative application of Marxism-Leninism to concrete and specific Polish conditions of the class struggle and historical development."⁶

In spite of this deviationist trend in their thinking, the Polish Communists at no time pictured themselves as betraying Marxism or being unfaithful to the principles of socialism. The PPR, said Berman, must rely on Marxism for guidance, strength and leadership.⁷ Without the "light that comes from revolutionary theory, practice is blind", he added, paraphrasing approvingly Stalin.⁸ In Gomulka's eyes

this is true so long as a further concept of Marxism is recognized. For him, Marxism has ceased to be an ideology only of the working class and has become a National ideology, reflecting the desires and interests of the whole people.⁹ As for the socialist society at which Marxism aims, Gomulka sings its praises without hesitation:

"Nothing can any longer alter our idea of socialism, an idea which constantly enlightens more deeply the self-consciousness of the labour class and the working people, an idea in which whole nations find for themselves the only salvation, the only road by which to leave the labyrinth of exploitation and slavery, crises and unemployment, betrayal and lies, war crimes and international quarrels."¹⁰

Nor did the Polish Communists harbor any illusions about a peaceful overthrow of capitalism. There is no departure whatsoever from the belief that the working class in capitalist countries can gain power only by revolution. This aspect of Marxism is vividly emphasized:

"A socialist revolution--which can be realized in many forms but always aiming at the destruction of the bourgeoisie--is the road to the realization of socialist democracy. Socialist democracy--that is the aim of the socialist revolution; a democracy in which the people, politically and economically liberated, can decide freely for themselves their destiny. This system cannot be reached by any other means but revolution. Democratic socialism and socialist revolution are ... in fact ... both scientific socialism, Marxism."¹¹

But if the tenets of Marxism and socialism had not been disturbed, what then did the Polish Communists mean when they spoke of a "different road to socialism"? They meant, firstly, that new concepts serving new needs would be incorporated into Marxism, without contradicting or conflicting with the theory, but merely adjusting it to the modern requirements of Poland. Consequently the first significant step along the "Polish way" was taken with the establishment of a "People's Democracy".

The People's Democracy, simply put, was the state. But for the Polish Communists, it was a unique type of state with its own special characteristics. It was, wrote Berman,

"... a new political system, which has grown up in countries liberated by the Red Army ... it is a new road to socialism ... that derives its ideology from Marxism-Leninism ... and represents the revolutionary triumph of the working class ..."12

Boleslaw Bierut, another member of the PPR hierarchy, also emphasized the originality of the People's Democracy:

"This specific order is not based on any existing model. It is not similar to the Soviet socialist order or to the classical economic system of the West."13

Within this state, various social and economic classes continue to exist including those which live by exploiting the work of others. Among these latter would be considered the various entrepreneurs, well-to-do merchants, factory owners employing a certain number of workers, rich peasants, and other "non-workers". Thus the People's Democracy represents the initial stage of Polish Communism in which not only have classes not vanished but the very forces of reaction and counter-revolution continue to exist side by side with the proletariat. Nevertheless, within this People's Democracy, this "revolutionary authority" as Bierut calls it, power is wielded by a coalition of the more progressive elements of the society. This coalition consists of the working class-- the leader in the group--the peasantry, the middle strata of the urban population,¹⁴ the working intelligentsia, and a portion of the bourgeoisie. All combine to do battle with the reactionary, anti-Marxist factions which, though appreciably decreased since the end of the War, are still numerous

enough to be a potent threat.

The People's Democracy is thus a transitional state which exists so long as all reactionary elements have not been eradicated. Its raison d'etre, in fact, is the very being of these elements since without them there would be no need for a state at all. Polish Communist theory, faithful therefore to Marxism-Leninism, views the state as an instrument of repression of one class against another. In a People's Democracy, however, this repression is being exercised by the proletariat and its allies, that is to say, the tables have been turned upon the bourgeoisie. And, consequently, the People's Democracy must continue to be strengthened and fortified so that it can better withstand the capitalist threat. The working class must be given "institutional guarantees against the forces of capitalism, of war, and of exploitation."¹⁵

There are liberties in a People's Democracy, but of a special nature:

"A People's Democracy guarantees freedom, guarantees political liberty, but it prevents fascism from exploiting such freedoms. Fascism's freedom is restricted at least to the extent that it cannot endanger the existing society."¹⁶

It is difficult to see, in view of the PPR's description of a People's Democracy, how it in fact differs from a dictatorship of the proletariat. Gomulka, Bierut, and others repeatedly stress that there is a difference, that Poland is avoiding altogether the dictatorship of the proletariat. None of them, however, makes a convincing distinction. It would appear, though, that the difference is one of degree, not kind.

Under a People's Democracy the struggle against the enemies of the workers is gradual, legal and parliamentary. The bourgeoisie is not denied its normal rights, much less its existence. The proletariat, though it controls the state's power, does not use it in a dictatorial manner; it seeks to uproot the remnants of the capitalist economic system but it does so by legitimate means. This is all in contrast, of course, to the dictatorship of the proletariat in which power is wielded ruthlessly by the workers, and the bourgeoisie is coercively, even brutally, destroyed so that the workers may be rid of their enemies all the more rapidly.

It would logically follow, in the spirit of Marxist doctrine, that in a society where more than one class exists, there would be a plurality of political parties. Marxism holds that parties are representatives of classes and consequently a multi-party system is the reflection of a multi-class society. Gomulka does not argue with this concept and he readily admits that in the Polish People's Democracy, its nature being what it is, more than one party must be recognized.

"There is nothing more false than accusing the Polish Workers' Party of monoparty tendencies, of the desire to subordinate other democratic parties", he said in a speech in 1947.¹⁷

And again, writing in Nowe Drogi, he states flatly that the "dictatorship of a single party is neither essential nor purposeful ..."¹⁸

Be this as it may, such references to a multi-party system are scarce. Neither Gomulka nor other members of the PPR were prone to over-emphasize or stress its importance. They were more concerned with

the nature of what they considered to be the most progressive and representative of all political parties--their own Communist party. As to the structure and role of the PPR, there was to be little deviation from the Leninist concept. It was, first and foremost, the party of the working class. Its task was to guide, instruct and enlighten the proletariat, to show it the way to progress and development. Members of the party had to be individuals who had recognized the historical role and destiny of the workers and were prepared to help them realize it. According to Gomulka, they were to master not only the practical tasks of politics but also the ideological fundamentals in order to "deepen their theoretical outlook."

It is here that the Polish party was to depart from the Soviet-Leninist model. For, in ^{the}view of Gomulka, the emphasis must be placed on the fact that it was the Polish Communist party, and consequently its ideological foundation must be influenced by Polish circumstances.

"Party organizers and the party, as a whole", wrote Gomulka in Nowe Drogi, "can be trained in the Marxist spirit only through a close correlation of Marxism with our Polish realities, past as well as present ... We must teach Marxism in reference to the example of our country's history. To simplify the problem, one might say that the proper thing is to teach our party Polish Marxism."¹⁹

The PPR was thus no less a Polish party than a Communist one, no less reflective of the whole nation than of one class. Marxism, Gomulka said, could not be understood without interpreting it in the light of Polish history and that history itself can be properly analyzed only by the Marxist approach. Then it would become clear how, for instance, "Polish magnates placed their own narrow interests ahead of Poland and

her people, how they gave up independence so they could have their wealth."²⁰

And so, according to Gomulka, the party membership must be taught the history of Poland:

"Without knowledge of Polish history, it is difficult to understand the essence of today's socio-political changes, carried out in our country; it is difficult to understand the essence of the frontier changes of our nation; difficult it is generally to struggle against reaction."²¹

This patriotic, sometimes emotional definition of the Polish Communist party was not limited to its future activities only. The past history of the PPR, particularly during World War II, was also hailed in bold nationalistic terms. It was claimed that during the war, two forces alone preserved the independence and sovereignty of the Polish state: the working class and the Communist party. Both were said to have valiantly fought for the freedom of the country against reactionary powers that sought to destroy it. Thus the PPR was

"the main and most decisive defender of Polish independence and sovereignty ... the defense of Polish sovereignty is written in the uppermost place of (the) party's program. The defense of (Polish) sovereignty primarily influences the internal and external politics of the reborn state."²²

While the PPR continued to speak in the name of the working class, it also realized that another party threatened its right to do so. By the end of the general elections of January 1947, only the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) could conceivably endanger the monolithic powers of the PPR. During the elections, the Communists using tactics of terror and intimidation, combined with actual persecution, had managed to

literally drive from Poland the popular Peasant Party along with its leader Stanislaw Mikolajczyk. The obviously fraudulent elections, according to the "official" count, showed that the PPR had received approximately 80 per cent of the popular vote with the rest spread thinly among a number of parties. This, of course, did not truly reflect the will of the population--taking into account the large-scale rigging by the Communists. With the Peasant Party now gone, there could be little doubt that the Socialists might well have become, after the elections, the party with the greatest following, certainly greater than that of the PPR. The Communists were hardly blind to this fact and so they entered upon a campaign aimed at uniting the two parties.

Their ideological justification for such an action was basically simple. Since both the PPR and the PPS claimed to represent the working class, there was no reason why the two should continue to exist apart from each other. Oskar Lange, a high-ranking economist in the PPR, was impressed by the logic of this argument.

"In the past few weeks", he wrote, "many comrades have asked me: why should there be organic unity? I should like to reverse the question and ask: why shouldn't there be? For it is an altogether natural thing that since there is one working class, so organizationally there should be one party of the working class."²³

The strongest proponent of this union without a doubt was Gomulka himself. He had often found himself in agreement with many of the views of the Socialists and particularly approved of their patriotic leanings. He was, in fact, in many ways closer to the PPS than to his own party and this probably influenced his desire for unity. When writing or speaking on the subject, he never failed to pay special tribute to the patriotism

of the PPS.

"Both for the Polish Socialist Party and for the Polish Workers' Party", he said on one occasion, "the independence of Poland is a supreme consideration to which all others are subordinated."²⁴

When at one point certain members of the PPR had accused the Socialists of cultivating petty bourgeois ideas on civil rights and of showing reactionary tendencies, Gomulka jumped quickly to their defense by disassociating the main segment of the PPS from such weaknesses:

"The fight against the right-wing elements of the PPS cannot be a fight against the PPS as such. The postwar, reborn PPS ... has made and is making its positive contribution to the work of unifying the working-class movement."²⁵

Gomulka strongly believed that a union of the two parties could create a political body capable of overpowering the forces of reaction and hastening the development of socialism. He had no illusions, he said, about the bourgeoisie. The history of his own Poland since 1945 had shown conclusively that "reactionary forces never surrender voluntarily, never without a fight."²⁶ Nor did he deny that in a People's Democracy, allowance must be made for the political organizations of such forces. But, he claimed, the PPS was not among these enemies. It represented the working class as clearly as did the PPR. It was therefore incomprehensible that the two parties should continue to remain divided. The mutual rivalries engendered by this division, Gomulka said, served not only to misrepresent the actual similarities between the PPR and PPS but, which is worse, to split the working class. The unity of the latter movement, Gomulka claimed, was a fundamental necessity for Poland. Recent experience has taught, he said, that the working class can fulfil its

"historic mission" of rectifying the present unfavorable circumstances in a "spirit of freedom and justice" only when it is united and only when it is ideologically agreed.²⁷

Furthermore, the process of actual unification of the two parties, would serve as an opportunity for expelling from their ranks all forms of elements alien to the proletarian movement. And a precondition for this also was ideological conformity.

"In our concept and understanding", Gomulka wrote early in 1948, "organic unity can result only in the process of cleaning the workers' movement of bourgeois-liberal and other foreign elements, and basing both parties upon the fundamentals of Marxist ideology."²⁸

The PPR's campaign for unity was considerably aided by the support it received from one of the leaders of the PPS, Josef Cyrankiewicz. Either because he sensed the growing futility of the Socialists' attempts at avoiding unification or because he was honestly in agreement with the PPR--whatever the reason, Cyrankiewicz was extremely accommodating. His stand amounted to a repetition of the PPR arguments and his writings on the subject appeared regularly in Nowe Drogi.²⁹ Like Gomulka, Cyrankiewicz saw the aims of the PPS to be identical to those of the PPR and he unequivocally urged their forming one, working-class party.

"... for the good of the working people, for the good of independent People's Poland, for the good of socialism, for the strengthening of the struggle for peace ... our parties ... should realize the closest organic unity of the PPS and the PPR."³⁰

The PPR's ideological drive for union was carried ^{on} an immense scale. In one issue alone of Nowe Drogi, the first seven articles dealt with this question, among the authors being Gomulka, Cyrankiewicz, and

Lange.³¹ This was accompanied by a fostering of the belief among the Socialists that the only alternative to unification was the "return of reaction". Continued denials that the formation of one party would mean the "swallowing" of the PPS by the PPR also had their effect.

On March 17, 1948, the clique in control of the PPS, headed by Cyrankiewicz, presented the party membership with a manifesto announcing the proposed merger. Unable to oppose him since he controlled the party apparatus, the anti-Communist majority resolved to go along with Cyrankiewicz in the hope that a quick merger might allow them to swamp the PPR by the weight of their numbers. The Communists, however, foreseeing this danger, insisted on a lengthy period of preparation for the merger. In the course of this period, that is by December of 1948, they had succeeded in effectively purging a large number of the rightists and anti-communists in the PPS.

The intention of the Polish Communists to seek a "Polish road to Socialism" did not necessarily signify that they were totally clear as to what form it would take in certain specific spheres of the life of the country. The theorists--including Gomulka--were particularly uncertain of themselves, to the point of ambiguity and confusion, when dealing with questions concerning the economic development of Poland. And nothing seemed to give them more trouble than the topic of agriculture.

Prior to 1947, there had been repeated assurances by the PPR that following the initial land reform, there would be no collectivization for a long time to come, if at all. Large scale collectivization was not

even mentioned publicly until the summer of 1948 and Gomulka himself managed to avoid making any rigid policy statement on the subject. What he did say was merely that Poland would have to go slow on "socialization of the countryside" and this seemed to add to his popularity among the peasants. But he had already, as Minister for the recovered Western territories during the post-war coalition period, managed to begin experimenting with collectivization in these new areas. How quickly he intended to spread collectivization is not certain; all that can be said is that he was not in any particular hurry.

The first attempt at coming to grips with the question was made in July of 1948 by Hilary Minc, soon to become the virtual economic boss of Poland. In a speech before the Central Committee of the PPR-- later published in Nowe Drogi³² --Minc issued the party's strongest policy statement on collectivization yet, but by the use of ambiguous terms, avoided an outright commitment.

The speech began with a condemnation of "individualistic economy" in the countryside and warned that such an economy would lead to capitalism and a return of the bourgeoisie. As it is, Minc said, the majority of farms already are being exploited by capitalism due to the system of wages in existence. The only way to prevent a further growth of capitalism on the farms while at the same time aiding their development is through "co-operation". What exactly he means by the term he does not say but he uses it liberally and exclusively. In view of Poland's economic and social conditions, Minc stresses, "co-operation" is the only system of proper farm development.

"... farm co-operation presents the best form for (reconciling) the peasant's individual interests with the general interest, the interest of the state and the people generally."³³

The remainder of the speech is a prolonged polemic against capitalistic agriculture and while it would appear that Minc is urging collectivization, such a policy is nowhere actually enunciated. In a discussion that followed his address, Minc pointed out that the Polish and Soviet situations were not comparable. He claimed that in the USSR the "dictatorship of the proletariat" originally made it easier to rid the farms of capitalism; the absence of this dictatorship in Poland had made the task immeasurably more difficult although the need for socialist vigilance on the farms was no less essential. Minc cited another difference by pointing out that Poland had not chosen to embark on a wholesale nationalization of land as was done in the Soviet Union. Lastly he claimed that the USSR had recently become a socialist state by successfully completing collectivization of agriculture as well as transforming the economic character of its industry. Minc ended by predicting that the struggle against the rich peasant would in fact constitute a class struggle. If it is to be effectively waged, the rich peasant must be "limited" and the poor and middle peasants must be made aware of the danger to their existence which he represents.

Obviously, Minc's speech had not thrown much light on the PPR's stand on collectivization. In September of the same year, however, once again before the party's Central Committee, Minc made a more determined effort at defining his terms.³⁴

Dealing first with classes of peasants, Minc said a poor peasant

was one who, unable to support himself from his own land holdings, worked for others in order not to "die from hunger". He was thus a farmer being subjected to exploitation. Higher on the ladder was the middle or average peasant who managed to live off his own land, and by his own abilities and industries, without exploiting others. Nevertheless, he was one who was constantly threatened and did not possess the means by which to improve his lot. It is this middle peasant, in many ways so similar to the industrial worker, who must receive the greatest support in a People's Democracy according to Minc and who should be considered an ally of the working class, engaged with it in the class struggle.

Finally, there was the capitalist farmer--the equivalent of the Russian kulak--whose livelihood was made possible by exploitation of poor peasants. The state, Minc said, must control this peasant by legislation involving prices, wages, taxes and credit. It must further mobilize the mass of poor or middle peasants to end all forms of speculation and exploitation by the kulak.

Having said this much, Minc suddenly becomes less rigid. The definition of a kulak must be flexible and not every prosperous farmer is to be considered a class enemy. Furthermore, Minc adds, the criterion for determining the status of a peasant must not necessarily be his land holding. One who has many hectares may be poor; one who has few may be wealthy. The definition of a kulak, in other words, remains arbitrary.

But Minc, in this speech, is more concerned with the question

of co-operatives and collectives. He strongly encourages the growth of such establishments but insists on their voluntary character. The use of coercion is to be disallowed and anyone found contravening this regulation should be severely punished by the party, Minc adds. The role of the state is to be advisory and friendly, but under no circumstances is it to direct or control the operation of co-operatives. Nor should joining a co-operative make it mandatory for the member to lose his right to own land.

Whether or not he does own land will depend on the type of co-operative or kolkhoz that he joins. Minc describes three types. The main and loosest form he considers to be one in which a member's ^{cooperative} duties do not extend beyond that of sowing and harvesting. Distribution of profits on this collective will be in direct proportion to a member's land holdings. Organization and rules of quitting the group are to be determined by the whole membership. This form, thus, retains the principle of private property and individual reward. A more advanced type of collective is one in which the members take ^{together} part/in every aspect of production. Cattle, plus a modicum of land, are individually owned. The division of the products is determined--60 per cent on the basis of how much land one owns and 40 per cent on the amount of work contributed. The highest type of collective is characterized by a complete sharing of work. In addition, the division of products, since there is no private land ownership, is to depend entirely on the work put in. Ideally then, each member contributes an equal amount and derives an equal amount.

Minc's conclusion after this long treatise on collectives is not

what one would expect. He urges the poor and middle peasants to become members of these collectives and warns against capitalist infiltration which would try to undermine the establishments from within. But he then goes on to stipulate that the most advanced form of collective is not advisable and that the PPR is opposed to a system whereby everything-- including the peasant's cattle, fowl and house--is socialized. He thus rejects ultimate, Soviet-type, collectivization. Whether his theory was influenced by considerations of political expediency or whether he actually regarded the Soviet kolkhoz unfavorably is, of course, difficult to say. But viewed against his future orthodox pronouncements on the subject, the former seems like a more plausible explanation.³⁵

There was no question, however, as to the beliefs and intents of the PPR in the broader field of the national economy, and particularly in the industrial field. Industry was to be socialized, and socialized as quickly as possible. To do this, however, the Communists said, an all-encompassing national plan was needed. The whole economy had to be centrally integrated, fully controlled and efficiently directed.

"Economic planning", said Minc, "means setting up concrete directives and showing ways for their realization; it means systematically controlling each day the progress toward this realization; correcting eventual mistakes and overcoming obstacles; it means to fight for the plan, mobilize the masses whose creative energy and enthusiasm are the most important factors in the realization of the plan."³⁶

The PPR theorists claimed that planning is the basis of a socialist economy. In capitalist countries it was only possible to plan in limited degrees as, for example, during the 1930's when the New Deal was initiated

in the United States. But even then, said the Polish Communists, the state's intervention was not carried far enough. A total transformation of the fundamental economic principles had to occur in order that an over-all economic plan could both be initiated and realized.

What all this meant, in effect, was that the state had to take over the means of production. "Economic planning can develop only on the basis of the nationalization of production", an editorial in Nowe Drogi declared.³⁷ In the process, therefore, all forms of capitalist, non-Marxist economic methods had to be replaced by a socialist approach.

In Poland, as there were different social classes, so different forms of economic enterprise were still tolerated. Socialistic, capitalistic and "small-commodity" systems existed side by side, even though the first had begun to dominate the economy. Nevertheless, Communist economists warned, capitalism was constantly seeking to regain control so that it could return to exploiting the masses.

Poland's task now was to build and consolidate a socialist industry, that is one in which

"the means of production find themselves in non-capitalist hands and the attained supplementary products are passed on to the state for planned distribution in order that the lot of the working people may be improved ... for the benefit of medicine, of education, of culture, of defense, and for other aims of the non-capitalist state."³⁸

While the means of production had been socialized, Poland could not yet claim to fulfil the second part of this definition, according to the PPR. The necessity to conduct economic relations with capitalist states has prevented a "socialist" distribution of all supplementary Polish production.

Once the country becomes less dependent on these markets, she will be able to free herself of non-Marxist elements. Meanwhile, the class struggle must continue unabated.

Communist economic theory, while decrying the ills bred by capitalist competition, that is the free-enterprise system, did not rule out the need for competition in a socialist economy. Taking as their motto the slogan that "one cannot build a better tomorrow if today's work is worse than yesterday's",³⁹ the Communists insisted that friendly, co-operative competition is in fact the only way to build socialism. Socialist competition was described as the struggle of all producers--workers, technicians, engineers, administrators--for the betterment of social conditions. Competition among workers, said the theorists, was healthy because it both brought satisfaction to the individual and strengthened the state. Sometimes, in extolling the virtues of competition, the Communists reach lyric heights as in the following caption in Nowe Drogi, under a picture of a woman worker receiving a medal for above-quota production:

"... the movement of work competition is ... capable of moving mountains, of overcoming all obstacles which stand in its way ... It is a movement which will build a happy, democratic People's Poland."⁴⁰

However doctrinaire the PPR's interpretation of Marxist economics was, it chose to present them, nevertheless, in terms of Poland's own needs and experience. Thus a reconstruction of the economy was declared to be in the spirit of Poland's character and the manner of that reconstruction was to be based strictly on the country's own economic and social peculiarities.

"The Polish road to socialism", wrote one party member, "means that in our political, economic and cultural conditions we want in the fastest time possible ... to build a foundation of national economic elements, enlarge the base of state economy, limit private-capitalist elements and turn them into state elements ..."⁴¹

While it was denied that there could actually be a middle ground between capitalism and socialism, Polish Communist theory yet made allowance for a Polish economic development that would differ in methods and aims from the Soviet model. The aim of the Russian five year plans has been to build a pure socialist country, to eliminate or "liquidate" all classes; Poland's economic plan, however, was merely seeking to consolidate the present sectors of the economy with a view to reviewing the position of private enterprise as against state ownership. Since Poland was not yet ready for the disappearance of classes, she could not hope to emulate Soviet economic aims. Her most immediate goals were to protect the interests of the workers, industrialize the country, develop technology, and modernize the methods and means of production, transportation and communication.⁴² To this end, the PPR believed, Poland must embark upon a vast economic plan.

This stress on planning, although it was primarily meant in the context of the economy, nevertheless went so far among the Polish Communists as to be applied to the question of culture as well. The immediate post-war years, fraught with the problems of reconstructing a country that was left brutally assaulted by the ravages of war, permitted little time for attention to cultural matters. It was more urgent in those initial years to build homes rather than theatres. Though the Poles have historically

been a highly cultured and cultivated people, they realized that in the immediate post-war days, more important tasks than culture cried out for consideration.

Polish Communists, consequently, kept relatively quiet on the subject. But in 1948, there did start to appear an increasing number of articles in Nowe Drogi dealing with various aspects of culture. Though an ambitious theory was neither attempted nor developed, there was a unanimity of opinion expressed on the concept of cultural planning. Emphasizing the "mass" character of culture, the Communists pointed to the need for a cultural program geared to envelop the largest possible audiences. Libraries, schools, the theatre, the arts--all segments of cultural media--should be enlisted in reaching and enlightening the masses, the millions of workers in the cities and farms.⁴³

The first phase of Polish post-war culture was said to be aimed at cleansing the country of all fascist elements. Its aim now was to represent and reflect the new social developments in People's Poland. The new culture must draw on Poland's past, her achievements and traditions, but it must be primarily a product of the present. The concept of "art for art's sake" was quietly dispelled and the social character of all cultural endeavors was emphasized. In other words, the social aims of Polish life were to become incorporated into the new, evolving Polish culture.

. . .

The "Polish road to socialism", with the encouragement and direction of Gomulka, continued to evolve without any apparent disturbances until well into the summer of 1948. In June of that year, however, an event occurred outside of Poland which was rapidly to affect her own internal course of events and the person of Gomulka himself. This was the June 22 meeting in Bucharest of the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) at which Yugoslavia, accused of nationalist and deviationist tendencies, was expelled from among the ranks of the Bureau.⁴⁴ It was an unprecedented move, meant essentially to embarrass, cajole and threaten Tito and his followers, but also to initiate widespread purges throughout the Communist bloc against revisionists and nationalists, or anyone straying from the Moscow line.

It had an immediate effect upon Polish Communists. Almost overnight, the whole atmosphere in the PPR changed and in a matter of months the entire ideo-political situation in Poland was to undergo a drastic transformation.

CHAPTER II

THE ECLIPSE OF NATIONAL COMMUNISM

On July 6, 1948 the PPR's Central Committee met to consider the Cominform's expulsion of Yugoslavia. Gomulka was conspicuously absent. Just three weeks prior to the June 22 meeting of the Cominform, he had delivered an address before a plenary session of the PPR in which he reiterated his opposition to the Luxemburgist traditions of the party, reconfirmed his faith in Polish patriotism, and praised the PPS for its continued support of Polish independence. The speech was greeted with a mixed reaction and there were even some demands for his resignation. This sudden change in attitude toward Gomulka suggested that at least part of the PPR membership had already been forewarned about impending Soviet moves. Gomulka refused to resign but decided to take an indefinite leave on the grounds of ill health. Subsequently, in his absence, the Central Committee reconvened on July 6.

Approving the Cominform's resolution, the Central Committee denounced Yugoslavia's policies and launched into an attack upon all "conciliatory, compromising" tactics, and upon laxity and exaggerated flexibility in Communist principles. Berman and Minc, each in turn, condemned the reactionary elements within the PPR and called for more rapid farm collectivization. There were further demands for Gomulka's resignation.

Returning abruptly to party headquarters, Gomulka rejected the criticisms and declined to resign. He denied that approval of parts of the PPS tradition was unLeninist and defended his wartime activities as

an underground leader against new accusations that he had blundered through nationalist and rightist errors. But it was a futile struggle. The more unco-operative he remained, the more apparent it became that the long arm of the Kremlin was preparing to deal him a final blow.

The controversy erupted into the open between August 31 and September 3, when the Central Committee assembled for the third time in as many months. This time Gomulka's fate appeared to be sealed.

Initiating the accusations, Boleslaw Bierut, his impending successor, charged that Gomulka's speech before the party on June 3, made without a prior consultation of the Politburo, constituted "a precedent-breaking violation of organizational principles of a Marxist party."¹ He was then specifically accused of "rightist--nationalist" deviation; of having refused to support the struggle against the kulak; of a lukewarm approach to collectivization; of an inadequate understanding of the role of the USSR and particularly of the Soviet Communist party; of his objections to the formation of the Cominform in 1947 and of his doubt about the Cominform resolution against Yugoslavia.

The long line of speakers who rose to make these accusations denounced Gomulka in vehement terms. The words of Edward Ochab were representative:

"In your present position, Comrade (Gomulka), you will become the symbol for the bourgeoisie, for the rich peasants, for reaction ..."²

And finally Bierut himself summed up the total condemnation:

"We have characterized the errors of Comrade (Gomulka), which, as it is attested by the resolution submitted by the Politburo, are



neither isolated nor accidental but constitute, despite internal contradictions, a definite and systematic viewpoint which is rightist and nationalist in its character."³

Gomulka was given an opportunity to speak on three occasions with the intent that he would submit to a recantation and self-criticism. What he said in fact was a curious mixture of self-criticism and self-justification. He admitted that he had been wrong on many issues and accepted the party's resolution which accused him of "rightist, nationalist" deviations. Nor did he dispute the fact that the USSR was to be considered the leading member of the working class movement. But almost in the next breath, he betrayed his fundamentally unchanged attitude toward Soviet-Polish relations.

"It never entered my head", he said, "that Poland could progress along the way to socialism without being supported by the Soviet Union ... These things I understood, but ... it was ... difficult for me to shift my attitude as regards the Soviet Union to the ideological party plane."⁴

Gomulka thus believed that the two countries should have friendly relations but could not see that there should be a direct connection between their respective Communist parties.

Similarly, while admitting that nationalism was a social "disease", Gomulka could not hide his conviction that differences between Poland and the USSR had to be taken into account when building socialism:

"... conditions are different--we live in a different historical period now; collectivization was brought about in the Soviet Union in another time of history (and involved) different conditions, a different situation, in accordance with a different distribution of class strength--and we will bring about changes in the countryside in different conditions. Thus there must also be some elements of a Polish road to socialism."⁵

Gomulka's words fell on deaf ears. On September 5, 1948, he was officially relieved of his duties as Secretary-General of the Polish Workers' Party. A brief resolution to this effect, stating only that he had committed serious blunders, was unanimously adopted by the PPR's Central Committee, although his party membership was not revoked. With Gomulka went a number of other party members, all charged with "rightist, nationalist tendencies". Among them was Wladyslaw Bienkowski, one of the founders of the PPR and a leading member of the Central Committee, in charge of the party's educational department.

The same resolution which expelled Gomulka declared that Boleslaw Bierut would replace him as Secretary-General. In the person of Bierut, the party could point to a leader who since his high school days had been involved in revolutionary, left-wing activities. Bierut had been an ardent member of the left-wing of the Polish Socialist Party between 1912-1919 and was one of the first to join the Communist Party when it was formed in 1918. His subversive activities got him into trouble with the authorities and he spent a number of years in the Soviet Union during the inter-war period. He thus received intensive training in Moscow and later worked as an agent of the Comintern, carrying out missions in Vienna, Prague, Sofia and Berlin. During World War II he was a leading member of the Communist, self-appointed underground government and, next to Gomulka, became probably the most powerful figure in the PPR.

Almost immediately following his succession to Gomulka's post, Bierut revealed the profound ideological difference between himself and

his predecessor and the significant change that had occurred in Poland.

"We must not forget for a moment", he wrote in Nowe Drogi, "that ... Hitlerism and fascism, which threatened ... Poland, were destroyed only thanks to the existence of a socialist state, only thanks to the victorious and powerful strength of the armed USSR. Without the victory of the USSR neither the social nor national liberation of Poland would have been attained."⁶

With Bierut's appointment, the party prepared to consummate its long sought-after merger with the PPS. Since March there had been a systematic, vigilant weeding out of all possible rightist members among the Socialists. Now, between September 18 and 23, following the Gomulka purge, the PPS high command instituted its own "purge session". Those who still opposed a merger were quickly disciplined and the history of the PPS was revised and rewritten. By the time of the Unification Congress, held in Warsaw on December 15, the PPS had been thoroughly cleansed and the official merger was a mere formality.

Thus the new Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza) was no more than the PPR with a different name. Its Politburo and Central Committee were heavily loaded with PPR members and whatever posts went to former Socialists were held by such reliable men as, for instance, Cyrankiewicz. Bierut at this time was appointed Chairman of the Central Committee, the position of highest authority. It is, perhaps, symbolic that toward the end of the Congress, the new party dispatched a telegram of congratulations to Stalin on his sixty-ninth birthday and then, in assembly, burst into shouts of "Sta-lin, Sta-lin".

Certainly, that "leader of genius" as the Communists now called

Stalin, must have been pleased with the ideological platform of the PUPP.

"Every tendency aimed at loosening collaboration with the Soviet Union", it declared, "endangers the very foundation of the People's Democracy in Poland and, at the same time, the independence of the country."⁷

The platform, a document of some fifteen printed pages, marked an unequivocal departure from the ideological line which had been followed by the PPR under Gomulka. Now, the PUPP, commenting on every aspect of political, social, and economic concern, returned to an ideology that bordered on the doctrinaire, orthodox, or, what can commonly be called "Stalinist".

The platform opened with a declaration of purpose:

"The Polish working class movement has been united ... on the basis of common battles, common future aspirations, common agreement in all contemporary problems, on the basis of a common ideology and a common aim--the realization of socialism."⁸

There followed a somewhat detailed discussion of the history of the socialist and Communist movements in Poland, condemning in the process those tendencies which betrayed the international character of the proletariat and collaborated with rightist, reactionary elements. It was acknowledged that Poland's first truly revolutionary party of the workers had been the Proletariat.⁹ The work of this party was later carried on by the SDKPił, the PPS-left, the Communist Party of Poland, and, finally, the PPR. But throughout, these parties had been threatened by nationalist and revisionist elements which sought to destroy the unity of the working class and very often succeeded in doing so. In this connection, the failure of the Polish proletariat to stage a revolution in 1905, which would have coincided with the Russian uprising, is cited as a case in point.

Finally, however, the platform continued, the working masses were aroused to the true nature of Polish patriotism and realized that it could not be separated from internationalism. This then culminated in the creation of the PUPP, a party descendent from the true revolutionary, proletarian movements of Polish history.

After this historical projection, a large section is devoted to a discussion of the nature and aims of a People's Democracy. There is no attempt to deny that the People's Democracy is geared to special Polish conditions, but unlike the approach adopted by Gomulka, the terms of description carry a singularly different tone. The People's Democracy is no longer the "Polish way to socialism" but "the way to socialism ... a new form of controlling power by the working masses, led by the working class, and brought into being thanks to the new historical situation and thanks to the assistance of the USSR."¹⁰ And while it is not a dictatorship of the proletariat, it nevertheless aims at accomplishing what the "dictatorship" did in the Soviet Union. "The system of People's Democracy can and should ... effectively realize the basic functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat."¹¹ Its raison d'etre is no longer the specific character of Polish conditions; rather it is the result of external forces such as the Second World War and the proximity of the Soviet Union.

The platform lists a number of achievements which, it says, have been made possible by the People's Democracy. The outstanding one, it claims, was the defence of the independence and frontiers of Poland, with obvious reference to the Western territories and the part played by the

USSR. Economically, Poland has managed to effect a rapid reconstruction after a war which left her brutally wounded. In addition a start has been made toward a planned economy, unemployment and economic crises have been liquidated, and the standard of living of the worker has been immensely improved. Among other achievements listed are progress in education, betterment of the lot of working women, and the opportunities provided for the youth from workers' and peasants' homes.

But the main emphasis is placed on those tasks still ahead of the People's Democracy. According to the platform, there are basically six aims which the People's Democracy must attain in the future.

1. The liquidation of large capital: this also involves expulsion of capitalist elements among the peasants.

2. The creation of a totally new state apparatus in place of the old bourgeois machinery--by this is meant that the state must be run by the workers and that its base must be widened, so that more people partake in, to use Marx's phrase, "the administration of things".

3. An alliance of workers and peasants: the "vanguard" of such an alliance would be the working class.

4. The defense of Polish sovereignty and security against imperialist aggression: here the platform stresses the significance of the ties with the Soviet Union:

"The cause of consolidating Poland's independence and her march towards socialism is indissolubly linked with the struggle for peace conducted under the leadership of the Soviet Union."¹²

5. The liquidation of all exploiting classes through an intensive class struggle in the cities and the countryside which will shorten

the coming of socialism.

6. The development of economic strength through economic planning: in this manner Poland is to be totally rebuilt and the material conditions of the workers greatly bettered.

The common denominator in all these aims, it becomes apparent, is the intensification of the class struggle. What this means, in non-Communist jargon, is that the PUP plans to increase the speed with which Poland is to be socialized.

A great deal of space in the platform is devoted to a detailed consideration of the economic steps which must be taken for Poland to evolve from the stage of People's Democracy to socialism. To this end the PUP pledges itself to strengthen the power of the working class; improve living standards through realistic wages and housing construction; develop work competition as a "socialist method of increasing work satisfaction"; root out all forms of economic nationalism and consolidate the worker-peasant alliance. To the peasants it promises freedom from exploitation and a relentless struggle against capitalism. Thus the platform states that the party will urge an increase of "cooperative production" in the countryside and will, in this connection, mobilize the support of poor and middle peasants.

The second most important area through which socialism may be fostered is considered to be that of culture. Illiteracy must be wiped out, schools built and teachers trained, cultural institutions must be encouraged and scientific and artistic development supported. Culture

and the arts generally must create bonds with the masses of the people. Most vitally, a program of ideological education must be embarked upon in the schools and Marxism-Leninism must become a part of every curriculum.

While the spreading of "socialist morality" is urged, the role of religion is not denied. The platform states without apparent reservation that

"the party supports freedom of conscience and religious confession, respects religious feelings of believing people, and does not mix in internal matters of the Church."¹³

But, the platform adds, absolute loyalty is demanded of all religious persons and their beliefs cannot be a reason for neglecting their responsibilities to the state. It is the policy of the PUPP to seek out all reactionary tendencies which exploit religious beliefs and to vehemently oppose any clerical acts which are in conflict with the progressive evolution of social and political life. Finally, it is stated that the PUPP believes in the

"separation of church and state, and supports secular schools and all other public institutions."¹⁴

The final portion of the platform deals with the role and nature of the new Communist party. The PUPP is

"the vanguard of the Polish working class ... the leading force of the Polish nation ... the party which will guide the Polish people to socialism ... the organizer for the building of the foundation of socialism in our land."¹⁵

The actual functioning of the party is to be based upon the concept of "democratic centralism" as formulated by Lenin. This means that once a

decision has been reached by the party, the whole membership must support it without question and all responsibilities of members are to be carried out in accordance with that decision. The PUWP will not tolerate factions or groups nor any opposition whatsoever to Marxism-Leninism. Criticism and particularly self-criticism are a fundamental aspect of party life, but they must be manifested only through strict adherence to Marxist-Leninist considerations. Under no circumstances must "internal democracy" be misused for purposes which are contrary to the interests of the party and the working class. In short, the party must aim at ideological unity and organizational discipline in its everyday activities. For its challenge is not limited, and its role is not modest. "The party", concludes the platform, "is the wisdom, honor, and conscience of the working class."¹⁶

The creation of the Polish United Workers' Party and the declaration of its ideology marked a new stage in the evolution of Polish Communism. The break with the ideas of Gomulka was sharp, clean and complete and the move in the direction of a Soviet, Stalinist interpretation of Marxism-Leninism was profound. That interpretation was not yet solidified, but the PUWP platform took the first major step toward the consolidation of orthodoxy.

Essentially, the platform can be said to have taken a new approach in five areas. ~~Woodcock~~, The most significant departure from the Gomulka era, is in the field of Polish-Soviet relations. The new importance given to the USSR and the Soviet Communist party, the recognition of its role as the most advanced of socialist countries, the emphasis placed on the

"Soviet example and experience", all this provides a clue to the change that has taken place and is a reflection of that characteristic which now begins to colour all Polish Communist thought.

A second ~~interesting~~ development is that part of the platform which urges a worker-peasant alliance. Strange though it may seem, Gomulka, who was extremely popular among the peasants, usually underestimated their role in building socialism. He depended almost exclusively on the workers, partly because this was good Marxism and partly because he understood the intransigent feelings of the peasantry toward Communism. The fact that the PUPP now gives almost equal priority to the peasants is thus an indication that socialization in the countryside is about to be seriously activated.

Thirdly, the renewed importance given to the concept of the class struggle is also an omen of change. There is not much difference in the theory of the People's Democracy as it was propounded by Gomulka, leaving aside the patriotic consideration, and as it is put forward by the PUPP except in the fact that the latter interpretation comes very close indeed to being that of a "dictatorship of the proletariat". The class struggle, therefore, signifies now that the liquidation of capitalist, reactionary and generally anti-Marxist forces will not only be hastened, but will be waged more strenuously and more bitterly.

Fourthly, the merger of the PPR and the PPS, which, in fact, initiates the single party system in Poland, is reason for the Communists to assign an even greater role to their new party. The PUPP is thus

described not only as the "vanguard" but the "conscience" as well, not only as the "organizer and leader" but the "wisdom" too of the working class. And the working class, through the party, is one and united.

Finally, of course, nationalism is completely absent from the platform of the new party. Internationalism is identified with the Soviet Union; nationalism is associated with imperialism and the forces of Polish reaction. It is this break with the Gomulka period that reflects the new development in Polish Communist thought; from it are to be derived all other changes.

These five areas received special treatment from Polish Communist theorists during the year 1949. The ideological journal Nowe Drogi incessantly returned to questions dealing with Poland's relationship with the Soviet Union, to the concept of the class struggle and its role within a People's Democracy, to the worker-peasant alliance, to the almost idolatrous position of the party, and finally, toward the end of the year, as the purge was being completed and Gomulka again brought to task, to the danger of nationalism. Much of this was repetition of what had already been made abundantly clear by the PUPP platform; but a good deal of it revealed the rigidity that was setting into Polish Communist thought. It is worth considering for this if for no other reason.

The first two topics were closely inter-related. To speak of the People's Democracy meant also to deal with the whole gamut of Soviet experience and its applicability to Poland. That the Soviet experience was valid for Poland's purpose was no longer questioned. And, said one

writer, the People's Democracy is a verification of this:

"The People's Democracy does not follow some new, different road from that which the Soviet Union took in reaching socialism. Although it is not a mechanical duplication of the USSR road, yet it is identical in the main points: its basis is a socialist and collectivized economy, a sharpening of the class struggle and the liquidation of exploiting classes, an alliance of the working class with the peasants, with the working class as the forefront and the Marxist-Leninist workers' party as the guiding strength."¹⁷

The same author admits that questions of method, form, and tempo of development are dependent upon specific conditions prevailing in the countries moving toward socialism. He acknowledges that Czechoslovakia's experience, for instance, cannot be identical to that of Albania. But he adamantly denies that this is an admission of the belief that there are as many roads to socialism as there are countries. On the contrary, the road is one; only the technical and mechanical details differ. If this were not true, then the example of the Soviet Union would have no meaning and the scientific character of Marxism would be voided.

Polish Communist theorists also advanced the view that the historic significance of the People's Democracy was its transitional nature as a stage between capitalism and socialism. In many ways, they claimed, a People's Democracy can already be called a socialist state. In Poland industrial production, transportation, communication and the banks have become the property of the state. In 1948 already 60.7 per cent of the national income was created by the socialist sector of the economy, and by the end of 1949, the figure would reach 65.9 per cent.¹⁸ The working class was clearly in possession of political power and had assumed the responsibility for the nation's economic and social development.

Furthermore, many of the functions of a socialist state were already being fulfilled in Poland no less than in the Soviet Union. All this made the Polish People's Democracy a socialist state in part. But until all private means of production were eliminated and the mixed economy liquidated and until all alien classes were weeded out, a fully socialist state could not be realized. Thus Poland remained somewhere between capitalism and socialism while the USSR was at the advanced stage between socialism and communism. To catch up Poland had to rely on winning the class struggle. Thus, wrote Bierut,

"there cannot be any question of a freezing of the existing economic relations, no question of the inviolability of the parallel positions of the various economic sectors ... the working class must carry on a ruthless struggle against capitalist elements, must aim at the complete elimination of all forms and sources of economic exploitation."¹⁹

Outside of the economic area, not even the Church would escape the vigilance of the workers during the class struggle. In one of the few comments on the Church, Cyrankiewicz said during a speech that

"all attempts to place the pulpit of the Church and the sacerdotal costume at the service of those who bring hatred against the popularity of the state or who help the clandestine reactionaries will be punished with all the severity which the law demands."²⁰

In this context, the USSR could be of immense aid to Poland both internally, in providing the knowledge and experience necessary for socialist evolution, and externally in protecting her from the "imperialist and antidemocratic forces" that threatened all socialist states. The Polish Communists believed that given the polarization of forces in the world between the imperialist and anti-imperialist camps, the test of true

internationalism and devotion to the cause of socialism would be the attitude toward the USSR. This attitude must be conditioned by the fact that Poland's sovereignty can only be guaranteed by the might of her Soviet neighbour.

But if Poland was to reach socialism, even with the help of the Soviet Union, the class struggle would have to receive its most intensive support in agriculture. Here the Polish Communists seemed to be resurrecting Lenin's old dictum that the way to socialism passes through the countryside, and that until agriculture were collectivized a country could not become socialist. This was a principle as difficult to apply to Poland as it was in Lenin's time in Russia. In 1949, Poland was still predominantly an agricultural nation with approximately two-thirds of her population involved in agrarian work. Whatever industry existed was concentrated in comparatively few regions or cities which were not representative of the Polish economy. Furthermore, the Polish peasantry was little different in its attitude toward collectivization from the Russian farmers of the 1930's. The Polish peasants were highly individualistic, distrusted most forms of farm cooperation, and were certainly adamantly opposed to the Marxist concept of a collective countryside.

Thus to transform a nation with such a large agrarian population, almost unanimously opposed to farm socialism, into a collective society would be a gargantuan task. To do it at the speed which the Polish Communists now desired might very well be ~~an impossible task.~~

No one realized this better than the Communists themselves. But that did not dismay their ambitions. On the contrary, their reaction was to seek the most effective means possible by which the harshest difficulties could be alleviated. They saw, therefore, that by advocating an alliance between the working class and the peasants with small and middle-sized holdings, the battle against free enterprise in agriculture would be immeasurably aided.

It is an irony of the Communists' tactics that they always seek to aggrandize and entice those whom they intend to undermine. Under Gomulka, when the subject of collectivization tended to be evaded by the Polish Communists, little was said about the peasantry. Now that the drive toward socialization in the countryside had become an avowed policy, the Communists almost naturally began paying greater attention to the role of the peasant. Thus they called for an alliance between worker and peasant, an alliance which, said the theorists, would destroy the "last remnants" of flagrant capitalism in Poland. And no sooner did they mention the need for it than the alliance already came into existence.

"This movement (worker-peasant alliance)", said one writer, "arose because the working class perceived the face of the class enemy in the countryside, because it recognized more vividly yet its hegemonic role as the leader of the workers and peasants on the road to socialism."²¹

While this statement would indicate that the workers were being given a disproportionately important role in this alliance, the Communists stressed the benefits that would accrue to the peasants. It would, they said, raise the political consciousness of the peasant masses which they claimed had been deluded by the reactionary Mikolajczyk and his now non-existent Peasant

Party. It would make the peasants the beneficiaries of the best traditions of the working class, would mobilize their strengths against the common enemy, and would tie them to the most progressive class in Polish society.

In fact, said the Polish Communists, the worker-peasant alliance had already shown itself capable of a united struggle against reactionary elements. In this regard they pointed to the initial agricultural reform that had been undertaken in Poland, the defeat of Mikolajczyk, and the results of the elections to the Sejm (Parliament). All these successes, it was claimed, were the result of the alliance.

But the work ahead was to be more challenging yet. The Communists in particular urged the peasants to show more initiative and more enthusiasm for future goals. They were not to look upon the alliance as a philanthropic arrangement; they were to become more active and to "help themselves", while counting on the support of the workers. The Communist theorists, paying special attention to farm workers, urged a systematic mobilization of the great number of peasants against the capitalist minority. They pointed to the fact that only ten per cent of the peasantry was in the latter classification.

At the same time they stressed the need for an enlargement of peasant membership in the PUP. According to their figures, in 1949, of 1,359,012 members only 259,027 or 19.1 per cent, were peasants.²² This was taken to be a clear indication that the party had not made a sufficient impact on the countryside.

The emphasis given to the worker-peasant alliance by the Communists can be explained by three motives. The first and most overt, no doubt, was the propaganda value of the campaign: it would enhance the role of the peasants, associate them with "progressive" social forces, and, in the process, perhaps weaken their resistance to collectivization. Secondly, by allying the peasants with the workers, the Communists hoped in fact to make clear the common problems of exploitation which they face at the hands of capitalists. Such an awareness might conceivably encourage the peasants of low and average means to rebel against the relatively rich minority. Lastly, and most significantly, the alliance had the value of making it possible for the PUWP to speak on behalf of a greater mass of the population. Since the party was, in fact, synonymous with the workers, the alliance was actually between it and the peasants. And while the PUWP was still to remain the party of the working class, it now took upon itself the responsibility for the fate of the peasants. Put another way, the party could now consider itself as representing the interests of the peasants no less than those of the workers. Such a position would in theory, if not in practice, provide rational grounds for the policy of collectivization.

But the PUWP sought to make its appeal even wider. Realizing that its party membership represented only a small fraction of the total Polish population, the theorists discounted the view that non-members were to have only a minimal influence upon party policy. Quoting Stalin and Lenin in support, the Polish Communists declared that close relations between the PUWP and the masses of non-members were absolutely essential.

One contributor to Nowe Drogi wrote as follows:

"Ties with the masses who do not belong to the party, that is the factor which gives the party strength, elasticity, and the ability to struggle and win. The lack of ties with the non-affiliated creates the weakening of the party, its decomposition, its sickness."²³

In the same article, Bierut is quoted as saying that

"the strength of the party depends on the fact that not only its members, but also the many millions of non-member workers, peasants, intellectuals, women, youth--the great majority of working people--see the party as an (instrument) which blazes for the Polish nation the right and just road to development."²⁴

This understanding among the masses was stated to have been the strength of the PPR during the war when, according to the Communists, it was able to carry on effective resistance against the Germans because of its large popular support.

Now it was the task of the PUWP to attract all progressive elements of Polish society, proletarian and non-proletarian, in order to make use of the vast talents available in the country. Without the aid of the vast resources of the nation, which frequently lie outside the party membership, Poland could not fulfil her plans for post-war reconstruction much less attain socialism. The party cannot be expected to do everything by itself; it must organize non-party associations, must mobilize non-members and delegate tasks to all sectors of the population. The Communists placed particular emphasis on the need for organizations of such nature as the League of Women, the Union of Polish Youth, People's Councils, the Union of Peasant Self-Help, and the trade unions. Not all of these had their relationship to the party properly defined.

The PUPP membership was urged to recognize the value of association with these organizations. The League of Women must receive the party's every support because it is a body whose members can have vast influence over the youth of the country. In addition the party must aid, educate and train women in order to raise their whole social status. As for the youth themselves, there must be a concerted effort to make them acquainted with the party and its ideology, to prepare them for future responsibility in the interests of socialism. The youth must be taught "to love and respect the party, to see in it its teacher and guidance."²⁵

Similarly, the party must find approval among the nation's intelligentsia. It must exploit, in the interests of the country, the talents of intellectuals and professionals. Yet, at the same time, it should develop its own intelligentsia, one profoundly interested in the lot of the working class, and irrevocably attached to the party and its goals.

However, the most important and effective link between the party and the masses must be the trade unions. According to the Polish Communists, the trade unions are,

"in fact, that connection between (the two) which upholds the long ties of the party with the working masses, which keeps its hand on the pulse of their emotions, their hopes ..."²⁶

Since the trade unions are "independent" of the PUPP, most of their members not belonging to the party, they are in an excellent position to express and reflect the sentiments of the workers. This they must be relied upon to do; and to this use the party must put them.

It was thus, according to Communist theory, the task of every party member to make the widest possible contacts with that segment of the population which does not belong to the party. While admitting that their aim is not an easy one, the Communists nevertheless enjoin the party membership to pursue it from day to day and not only in critical times. This must go hand in hand with the party's ambition to better the standard of living for the workers. For

"the ties of the party with the masses can be defended, deepened, widened, and strengthened only by a daily struggle to improve their living conditions ... fulfilling their every-day needs, their medical requirements, and the liquidation of old-fashioned social, economic and cultural methods."²⁷

There is reason to believe in considering this attempt by the theorists for a mass appeal for the party, that they were seeking in a manner a substitute for the now condemned nationalism which had previously served as an effective cry for unity. Since they could or would not appeal to the Polish people on a patriotic base, there had to be another unifying force. The party provided this "substitute". It was a perfectly natural organ for the Communists to resort to in view of the role and meaning which the party had for them. Were the party to become a symbol of national unity, then the Communists in Poland might well have solved their most serious problem of the post-Gomulka era. This prospect explained the continued efforts of Polish Communist theory to present the party, not only in its narrow sense as the organ of the working class, but as a political organization interested in the welfare of all segments of the population, except those obviously reactionary and antagonistic toward socialism.

Combined with this attempt to popularize the party, the Communists

continued their attacks on nationalist deviation. Late in 1949 these condemnations were given a further impetus by the trial of Laszlo Rajk in Hungary for charges similar to those levied against Gomulka in 1948 and prior to that against Tito by the Cominform. The Polish Communists had been waging a steady word attack upon Yugoslavia consistently since Gomulka's demotion, but the polemic became especially sharp and bitter now that another major purge was in progress in a Communist state. In Nowe Drogi, Rajk was denounced as a Titoist, a nationalist, reactionary, an "enemy of the workers", and a "traitor".²⁸ Significantly, his trial was used as a pretext to reopen the case of Gomulka and, inevitably, to make comparisons. In the same issue of Nowe Drogi, Ochab accused Gomulka of practicing Titoism and branded his nationalist-rightist inclinations no less dangerous than those of Rajk.²⁹

In the following month, November, Gomulka was again formally brought to task at a plenary session of the party. He was charged with "lack of vigilance" against Trotskyites, the use of Polish patriotism as a factor in determining party appointments, and, finally, in the most trumped up charge of all, was accused of responsibility for the deaths during the war of his predecessors in the office of secretary-general of the PPR. The severity of these charges, coming during a period in which Stalinism was being consolidated in Poland, was so extreme as to amount to virtual treason. But the courageous Gomulka refused to grovel. Instead he unleashed a counter attack. He claimed that if he had erred ideologically then so had practically all members of the party who, he said, had once supported his views and agreed with them. He demanded to know why he alone was being prosecuted.

But the party was in no mood to answer such questions and, though lacking the satisfaction of a recantation from Gomulka, wasted no time in condemning him. It expelled him from the Central Committee and forbade him to participate in any party work, in effect annulling his party membership. Thus, when the plenary session ended on November 13, Gomulka and the "Polish road to socialism" had been disposed of. Exactly one week earlier, Konstantin Rokossowski, Polish-born Marshal of the Soviet Union, at the request of the Polish government, became Commander-in-Chief of the Polish armed forces, Minister of National Defence, and member of the PUPP Politburo.³⁰

The appointment of Rokossowski and the expulsion of Gomulka brought to an end the one-year interregnum during which "national Communism" went into eclipse. Since the end of 1948 the new Polish Communist hierarchy had been engaged in the task of consolidating the transition to Stalinism. Now it was prepared to embark upon an ideological route that was in keeping with the Luxemburgist tradition of Polish Communism. To that tradition would be added the goal of making a thing of the past the ethical consideration expressed by Gomulka, in the following words, as he faced his prosecutors: "For me, it is difficult not to say what I think."³¹

CHAPTER III

THE STALINIST PERIOD

The new year 1950 dawned bright for the orthodox wing of Polish Communism. Looking back upon the past five years, the "Stalinists" who now held power, may well have been proud of the record which enabled them to attain success. Nothing was left of Mikolajczyk and his Peasant Party, the Polish Socialists were either purged or swallowed up by the merger that was the PUPP, and Gomulka, Bienkowski, Marian Spychalski and other "rightists-nationalists" were in jail, disgraced and demoted, awaiting perhaps a worse fate. Not only were all remnants of "national communism" dispelled from within the PUPP but the party now prepared to put into full force its orthodox ideas: to speed up the production of heavy industry, to collectivize the countryside, to intensify the struggle against all opposition. Thus as 1950 opened, the future seemed to offer promising prospects for Bierut and his followers.

There was one outstanding problem, however, that had not been dealt with as yet. And to it, the Polish Communists, in those initial days of 1950, turned their attention. Since 1945 little time had been devoted to the question of religion, or, more specifically, the Roman Catholic Church. This is surprising in view of the Catholic Church's traditional opposition to Communism, but even more so when considering the extent of its influence in Poland. As a result of the war, and the consequent changes in the country's population, nearly 98 per cent of Poles were Roman Catholics in 1945. This meant that of the 50 million Catholics in Communist states, 23 million, or nearly half, lived in

Poland. In addition, the Catholic Church in Poland had a historical identification with Polish nationalism, the most recent instance of which had been expressed by its anti-German resistance record. The Church was thus not only influential but extremely popular among the masses.

This explains the cautiousness with which the Communists frequently approached the question of their relationship to the Church. Between 1945 to 1949 the matter was almost never publicly discussed by the party; the issues of Nowe Drogi from 1947 to the end of 1949 contain no attempt at an ideological consideration of Church-State relations and references to the subject are few and far between. The PUWP's platform of December 1948 had merely touched the problem when, in a short statement, it declared the independence of the Church while demanding of it loyalty in the affairs of State.¹ This official line was reiterated early in 1949 by Aleksander Zawadski, a member of the Politburo and later head of state when, in a speech, he said:

"The party does not fight against religion, but it does not tolerate the interference of the Church in political affairs. It demands that the clergy show proof of absolute loyalty."²

Thus for some time the party's official theoretical position clearly supported the coexistence of the Church and Marxism, each within its own specific sphere. The party consequently made no sustained effort at undermining the life of the Church. It limited its activities to making use of whatever anticlerical feelings existed in the country but without any large-scale mobilization and without any attempt at an all-out propaganda war. It even went so far as to exclude from the early agrarian

reform, land belonging to the Church.

For its part, the Church was also wary of becoming involved in an outright clash with the government. It could not very well hide its antipathy toward Communism's "atheistic and materialistic" philosophy but it did not choose to disagree with the party's economic and social policies. As it was, it saw the long overdue need for land reform and viewed with favor such programs as the nationalization of heavy industry. Thus in spite of relatively mild polemical exchanges, the Church and the party managed to avoid serious clashes. Sometimes the party even went out of its way to aid religion; it allowed Catholic publications, contributed to the reconstruction of Church buildings, and sent some of its dignitaries, among them Bierut, to religious ceremonies.

This obviously unnatural relationship, from the Marxist viewpoint, could not continue for long. The first serious rupture was instigated by the Church itself, although it originated in the Vatican, not Poland. On July 13, 1949 the Vatican issued a decree excommunicating those Catholics who belonged to the party or supported it. The party's reaction was immediate and vehement: it not only condemned the decree but warned that it would prosecute all attempts to carry it out. Simultaneously, it approved laws that would make it an offense, punishable by a prison term, to refuse sacraments to citizens for political opinions or activities. From this time onward, then, the Church-State controversy erupted into a sharp and bitter word battle.

Toward the end of the year, as Polish Communism adopted the "Stalinist" mantle, it felt itself in a stronger position to embark on a

frontal attack upon the Church. The motivation came not only from the increased opposition of the Primate of Poland, Archbishop Stefan Wyszynski, but also from the PUWP's annoyance at having to tolerate a rival source of power within the country. It was thus no less an ideological dissatisfaction with the position of the Church as a politically expedient one that prompted the party to take action.

On January 23, 1950 the party seized the Church's largest welfare organization, Caritas, claiming its funds had been used for political aims against the state. This action was immediately followed by a vitriolic, ~~hostile~~ attack upon the Church hierarchy and by the end of January culminated in the arrest of more than 500 priests, nuns, and monks. As it was, combined with a pending government proposal to seize all Church estates in excess of 250 acres, the Roman Catholic hierarchy had good reason to fear a disastrous fate.

It may thus have felt itself justified in acceding to a far-reaching agreement with the government on April 14, 1950, the first such agreement to be made between a Communist state and a Roman Catholic Church. The accord ranged over the entire field of Church-State relations and for this reason provided an insight into the ideological position of the Polish Communists in relation to religion and the Church's role in Poland.³

In part, the document amounted to a set of obligations to be fulfilled by the Church and meant to limit its scope of activities. It was specifically stated that the party would recognize the Pope as the supreme authority in matters of "faith and ecclesiastic jurisdiction" but

that in "other matters" the Episcopate was to be guided by the "Polish raison d'etat." Thus the Church was to instruct the clergy to inculcate respect for state law and state authority and cooperate fully with the government's programs for the reconstruction of Poland. The Church hierarchy was to "oppose the misuse of religious feelings for antistate activity" and punish all clergy guilty of associating with antigovernmental "criminal ... underground bands". Moreover the Episcopate was enjoined to ask the Vatican to give de facto recognition to Poland's post-war Western boundaries. The question of agricultural reorganization was more specifically dealt with:

"Accepting the concept", said the agreement, "that the Church's mission can be implemented within various socio-economic structures established by secular authority, the Episcopate will explain to the clergy that it should not oppose the development of cooperatives in rural areas because all cooperatives are essentially based on the ethical concept of human nature."⁴

In return for these obligations, the party made a number of concessions to the Church. Caritas was to be reestablished as the Association of Catholics, religious education was not to be restricted any further, public worship was to be free of interference, and consideration was to be given to land and institutional needs of the Church.

Neither side claimed that it had satisfied its ideological convictions nor did either admit to any ideological sacrifice. Both the Church and the party viewed the agreement as the only possible course under the circumstances. Negotiations, said an Episcopate communique, were "carried on amidst mounting difficulties caused by insurmountable ideological differences".⁵

Whether the Church had actually compromised its ideological position, depends, of course, on the view one takes of Roman Catholic doctrine. But since that doctrine usually looks askance at Church-State separation, which weakens its own position, it may be said that the Episcopate made the greater ideological concession. Insofar as its agreements were with a Communist state, the Church also may be considered to have gained a victory by being given recognition as supreme in matters of faith and morals.

Even if it did not fulfil its ultimate ideological ambition, the party went a long way towards doing so. The agreement accomplished--on paper at least--the separation of Church and State and this could only serve as the beginning of what the Polish Communists hoped would be the eventual subjugation of the Episcopate. The Communists had, as well, got the Church to agree to make no judgments on party policy in social and economic fields and to cleanse its ranks of antistate clergy. But even more significantly, the party was successful in mobilizing the support of the Church for its economic programs, including collectivization. The latter was certainly a major victory.

By this agreement, the Polish Communists, did not, of course, make any reconciliation between Marxism and religion. This they believed neither possible nor desirable. The ultimate aim to liquidate the Church remained a fundamental tenet of Polish Communist thought. The agreement, in fact, seemed permeated with the odour of political expediency and while the Church was recognized as having a social function to fulfil, the

theoretical commitment on the part of the Communists to the concept of co-existence seemed like a mild concession. In 1950 the party was in no mood to tolerate the continued prospect of the ~~e~~ternal existence of a body outside its authority and in a position of national rivalry. Consequently, according to Communist theorists, there was no room in the proletarian state for two sources of power. Religion continued to be considered a bourgeois institution with reactionary, anti-proletarian proclivities. The agreement of 1950, from the Communist point of view, was thus no more than a modus vivendi. The course of Church-State relations during the next three years, which culminated in September 1953 with the arrest of Cardinal Wyszynski, seemed to bear out this appraisal.

With the question of religion generally resolved in their favour, the Polish Communists, early in 1950, could turn their attention to implementing their orthodox economic and agricultural ideas. These were contained in the new Six-Year Plan, announced on July 15 at the Fifth Plenum of the party's Central Committee. None of the Plan's ideological foundations were actually new from the point of view of Soviet economic planning.

Minc, the Plan's chief architect and now Poland's virtual economic boss, said at the Plenum that the party had long failed to embrace Bolshevik methods in industry and agriculture and decried tendencies which deviated from the Soviet approach. He called for a "Bolshevik approach" in all spheres of economic life, in planning, management, production, and socialist competition. Specifically he rejected what he called the bourgeois theory of a "declining rate of growth in industry", a theory which would have

claimed that Poland's full potential could be realized only in critical periods, such as the immediate post-war years/ ~~and that~~ thereafter, a decline in growth had to follow necessarily. But socialist planning, according to Minc, would achieve the maximum results without any decline in production and even in times of relative prosperity. Quoting profusely from Stalin's writings, Minc also criticized the past tendency among Polish Communists to set low goals for fear that the ultimate could not be reached. A proper socialist economic plan, he said, must aim at the highest possible achievements taking it for granted that the people will respond entirely.⁶

Minc obviously meant what he said because the Six-Year Plan indeed envisioned a rate of industrial development that could only be termed meteoric. The average yearly increase in the nation's output was to be 11 to 12 per cent and industrial production was to grow by about 20 per cent annually. Machine building, for instance, was to increase by 364 per cent over the six-year period. There was no attempt at hiding the fact that output of producers' goods would be the cornerstone of the economy: by 1955 it was to reach 63.6 per cent of the total industrial output.

If Minc was out to make Poland an industrial nation in six short years, he also had intentions of finally ridding her of all capitalist elements. "The Six-Year Plan", he said, "is a general socialist offensive against capitalist elements in the cities and countryside."⁷ He pointed to the Plan as a systematic, categorical battle against the "class enemy":

"There can be no talk of building socialism in the cities and farms without a systematic weakening and in the end destruction of the still strong economic position which agrarian capitalists occupy. The existence of peasant capitalists ... endangers the economic development of agriculture and even of the whole national economy."⁸

The Six-Year Plan thus made provision for intensified collectivization. Investment in cooperative machine tractor stations was to be increased tenfold and by the end of 1955, 20 to 25 per cent of Poland's total cultivated area was to consist of "producers' cooperatives". This, combined with state farms, would mean that one-third of the country's agriculture would be in the "socialist sector".

Quite aptly, Minc ended his discussion of the Plan by stressing the importance of greater economic dependence upon the Soviet Union. At the same time he repeated that Poland had many lessons to learn from the USSR and would be wise to follow the Bolshevik road to economic progress.

"This and only this road", he said, "leads to the maximum growth of creative strength in all People's Democracies and to the construction of socialism in these countries. This and only this road is a guarantee of the development of these nations and their real independence."⁹

In 1952, Polish Communist ideology viewed the building of socialism as a dogmatic process not only in the field of the economy but in all spheres of national life. It is not surprising, therefore, that the need for a new, up-to-date constitution was soon realized. This was logically in step with the Stalinist construction of socialism. In 1936, when he had already turned the Soviet Union into a partially socialist state, Stalin decided that it was time for a new constitution. He explained its ideological justification in the following manner:

"The new constitution is a summary of the path that has been traversed, a summary of the gains already achieved. In other words, it is the registration and legislative embodiment of what has already been achieved and won in actual fact."¹⁰

Some 16 years later Bierut, speaking before the Polish parliament on the subject of a new constitution, echoed Stalin's words.

"A constitution should be the sum and balance of already realized social, political, and economic changes", the Polish leader said.¹¹

Bierut's entire address, in fact, amounted to no more than a paraphrasing of what Stalin had written in 1936. There was surely something symbolic in the fact that Bierut should use those theoretical arguments for a new constitution which Stalin had propounded for a similar document a quarter of a century ago in the Soviet Union.

Since 1947, Poland had had a provisional "Small" Constitution which had been retained only because the Communists had given little attention to drawing up a new one. Thus by 1952 it was not at all representative of Polish society and was closer to reflecting the Poland of pre-Communist days. In 1950 there had been an extensive reform in local administration and the Communists were thus prepared to approve a new national constitution which would reflect the tenor of Communist Poland.

In his speech, before the Sejm approved the constitution on July 22, Bierut stressed that the document would be an expression of the revolutionary achievements of Polish Communism. He pointed to the fact that since 1945, the Communists had been waging a consistent battle with capitalistic elements and it was now time to give written confirmation to

their successes. Furthermore, he claimed that Poland had now reached the stage where political freedoms could be accorded to all citizens since most reactionary elements had been eliminated from Polish life. Bierut implied that it was premature to speak of democratic rights before 1952 because economic freedom then was not yet a reality. Thus, he stated, there could be no political freedom without the freedom from unemployment, from economic crises, from exploitation. Countries like the United States, France, the United Kingdom could not boast of having democratic societies because they had not solved their economic problems. Poland, however, was now in a position to enact a democratic constitution based on the most profound of human liberties.

Bierut's concept of the Communist constitution was entirely Stalinist. He saw it as characterized by five specific features. The first, already mentioned, was that it came after the fact, after the society had been changed and was merely an expression of that transformation. Contrary then to the American constitution, the Communist document was a product of social forces, not their formulator. Its role was to record what had already been achieved, not to shape the future. Secondly, Bierut saw the Constitution as proceeding from the fact that the capitalist system was in the process of liquidation. Its foundations, therefore, were the "pillars of socialism" and the Constitution embodied those principles of freedom and rights which were an inherent part of the socialist system. Thirdly the Polish Communist constitution also differed from Western constitutions in that the latter placed the guidance of the state in the