



Mieczysław Moczar



Władysław Gomułka

Exit Gomułka

FOR WLADYSLAW GOMULKA, the wheel of history may appear to have come full circle: The former boss of Poland and of its ruling party was swept to his exalted position, which he held for 14 years, on a wave of violence, demonstrations and street-fighting; another wave of riots and disorders has now swamped and engulfed him irredeemably. But here the parallel ends, for "violence has many faces."

On June 28, 1956, in Poznań, an industrial town in western Poland, workers spontaneously poured out of their factories into the streets, attacking with desperation and recklessness the forces of Stalinist "law and order." The workers' leaders, first branded as anarchists, hooligans and criminal ele-

ments, quite soon turned the tables on the "strong-arm" bureaucrats, who scattered in fright before the mounting anger which began to manifest itself in cities and towns all over the country. The workers, whose demands were soon declared justified, were joined by the intelligentsia—by students and professors, by teachers and doctors, lawyers and artists—and even by generals in the armed forces, all of whom loudly demanded the return of Gomułka to the leadership.

"Comrade Wiesław"—as he was then affectionately called—had spent the previous five or six years in detention and had regained his liberty, together with thousands upon thousands of other political prisoners, only a few months be-

fore. While he was in prison, his legend grew and expanded, and by the time he was brought to power, amid great enthusiasm and unbounded hopes, different people expected very different (and contradictory) things from him.

One must remember that 1956 was a year of great political tremors: Stalin was dead and Khrushchev had just delivered his not-so-secret speech denouncing the great tyrant, his misdeeds and crimes. A strong libertarian wind of change was blowing over Russia and over the whole of Eastern Europe, a wind, which, over Hungary, acquired the force of a hurricane. When, on October 21, 1956, Gomułka became the First Secretary of the Party, and his friends and comrades—fully rehabil-

by Tamara Deutscher

Wide World Photos

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Joe Cocker
MAD DOGS & ENGLISHMEN
(TWIN-PACK TAPE)
195685

CLOSE TO YOU
CARPENTERS
196444

Simon and Garfunkel
193623

OTIS REDDING
THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE
195487

Engelbert Humperdinck
We Made It Happen
193789

Barbra Streisand
On A Clear Day You Can See Forever
194548

JIM NABORS
EVERYTHING IS BEAUTIFUL
193821

SIMON & GARFUNKEL
Bridge Over Troubled Water
186809

TOM JONES
Without Love (There Is Nothing)
191734

Andy Williams
Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head
192187

SANTANA
181909

The Best of Peter, Paul and Mary
TEN YEARS TOGETHER
191809

Burt Bacharach
BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID
186114

CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG
DALLAS TAYLOR & GREG REEVES
188060

FRANK SINATRA'S GREATEST HITS
168989

MARTY ROBBINS
My Woman, My Woman, My Wife
190546

STEPPENWOLF
MONSTER
185017

THE BEST OF TOMMY JAMES & THE SHONEDILLS
185876

Blood, Sweat & Tears
3
191825

HELLO, I'M JOHNNY CASH
186270

THE 5th DIMENSION
PORTRAIT
191205

THREE DOG NIGHT
It Ain't Easy
188656

Dean Martin
My Woman, My Woman, My Wife
193615

TAMMY WYNETTE
TAMMY'S TOUCH
191270

IRON BUTTERFLY
LIVE
188227

TWIN-PACKS
Twice the music—yet each counts as one selection

Bob Dylan
Self Portrait
193110

RAY CONNIFF'S CONCERT IN STEREO
Live at The Sahara/Tahoe
191338

THE WORLD OF JOHNNY CASH
192179

itated—took over the Politbureau and the government, we were witnessing a rebirth of Poland, the “Spring of the People” who basked in its feeble but promising rays of sunshine. Now, in 1971, Poland is in the grip of a severe winter; a freezing wind is blowing from the East, and nothing so far portends an early thaw.

The disorders and riots which broke out in the Baltic towns and ports on the evening of December 15, 1970, and claimed 300 dead and wounded within a week, were sparked directly by the government’s high-handed and dictatorial announcement of a tremendous rise in prices of foodstuffs—a rise as high as 33 per cent on some items. Overnight, beef, pork, bread and flour went up by an average of nearly 20 per cent, and the housewife whose great ambition is to gather her family around an abundantly laid-out table on Christmas eve saw her purchasing power drastically cut. It must have been a very poor consolation to her that the cost of refrigerators went down by 15 per cent.

ALTHOUGH THE DECREE about the rise in prices came on suddenly, it was no secret to anyone that the Polish economy was limping badly and during the previous two years had been going from bad to worse. Two very poor harvests in a row left Poland with a deficit of four million tons of grain; the crop in 1970 was lower by 22 per cent than in 1969. Shortage of fodder reduced the cattle population; and even the number of pigs, which contentedly multiply on a rather less scientific diet, fell by one million—a major blow to the traditionally pork-eating country. Despite higher investment in industry, bungling and incompetence resulted in the production of goods which nobody wants or can afford to buy—especially since well over 50 per cent of a family’s budget goes for food.

No number of quacks with placebos seems to be able to cure Poland’s economy of its chronic sickness. But it is doubtful whether even the best doctors would find a quick and painless remedy. The focus of the illness lies in the perennial problem of the relation between the countryside and the towns. The Polish peasantry, which still accounts for over 40 per cent of the population (66 per cent before the war) is

still the most stubbornly conservative social class. It is highly paradoxical that precisely this class benefited most from the communist regime. The pre-war days of hunger and poverty in the countryside seem a century away. There are no more children in rags, with empty and swollen tummies; they all go to school and, unlike their fathers and grandfathers, they all wear shoes. The standard of living of the Polish peasantry is well over six times higher than before the war, while that of the workers and the intelligentsia has gone down.

The enriched and well-fed Polish peasant has not, however, become any more enlightened. The countryside is as obscurantist and priest-ridden as before, perhaps even more so. Before the war, the villager was, here and there, slightly touched by anti-clericalism, because he resented the high tariffs for mass, weddings, funerals and other unavoidable services the priest provided; now he pays him more cheerfully, because he knows that the clergy is allied with him in his hostility towards the towns and the rulers, and that it represents the only legally organized force of resistance vis-à-vis the regime. The churches are full every Sunday and the ranks of the many thousands of true believers—and bigots—who make their Ascension Day pilgrimage to the miraculous picture of the Holy Virgin in the Czestochowa shrine are swollen by a tremendous throng of those who, under the wings of the church, demonstrate against the government. Of course, the sharks of private enterprise enjoy a brisk and highly profitable trade in all manner of liturgical and holy objects. (They even managed to sell pictures of Karl Marx to the credulous: by skillfully painting over the hirsute head a large and shiny halo, they presented him as a new St. Joseph.)

If in the shops of Warsaw, Krácow, Wrocław or Łódz there was a superabundance of portraits of Marx, Engels and Lenin (and until now, of Gomulka), there were not many goods to tempt shoppers coming from the countryside, even though they may have had a considerable amount of money to spend. True, the governmental agencies to whom one is obliged to sell part of one’s produce at a fixed price (which has been periodically revised upwards) certainly do not pay as much as one might wish. But there is ample com-

pensation for this through selling on the free market. There is also Poland’s “other economy”—the grey and black markets where prices are charged according to what the trade will bear. What is not sold privately for good money is consumed by peasant families. And there is no incentive whatsoever to produce more: why should the peasants exert themselves? If production is increased, will not the hated, godless and ubiquitous State “take away” more? (It is characteristic that in the common parlance the State “takes away” while the private customer “buys”—though both pay for what they acquire!)

Thus, peasants do not see any point in investing in or improving the productivity of their land. Moreover, chopped as it is into minute holdings and small farmsteads, rural Poland does not seem to feel any need for modernization and mechanization. It may well be that if good quality and cheap agricultural machinery were freely available, and if the rural population were educated and made aware of its benefits, a few more enlightened peasants might band together, combine their efforts and set up some larger, more rational productive units.

Well over 85 per cent of Polish agriculture is in private hands, and there is no doubt that it will remain so for a long, long time to come—one is even tempted to say forever. No economist and no politician would dare to use the dirty word “collectivization” in any context other than to reassure his audience that it will never happen. And yet the idea that it may happen lingers on and helps to perpetuate that state of temporariness and uncertainty in which steady development and advance are well-nigh impossible. In the meantime, some of the sorely needed four million tons of grain will be supplied by the despised Soviet collective farms.

UNDoubtedly the Polish workers and the intelligentsia had many valid and legitimate reasons—apart from the economic ones—to be furious with the once-acclaimed Gomulka regime which, well before its fourteenth birthday, became insensitive, oppressive and thoroughly bureaucratized. However, the latest upheaval, unlike the March 1968 student protests in Warsaw and other cities, seems to have started as a strictly eco-



1968: Warsaw University Students

conomic struggle.

What is at first sight puzzling, yet throws some light on the ideological outlook of the new team of politicians in power, is the fact that the mutiny broke out in the hitherto rather placid Baltic towns of Gdansk, Elblag, Gdynia and Szczecin. These towns, with the exception of Gdynia, lie in formerly German territory and have a population of mixed national origins. Szczecin in particular, a German shipbuilding center, counts among its 350,000 inhabitants a number of Germans who after 1945 were reluctant to leave their homes and be "repatriated" into Germany: many people here are too pre-occupied with their daily lives to bother about the definition of their national allegiance. In this area there are also Poles who were "resettled" there after their native L'vov was incorporated into the Soviet Ukraine. These people still view Russia (and communism) with horror and detestation.

This typically borderline population has not in the past distinguished itself by any particular degree of class consciousness. Moreover, the standard of living of the dock workers in both Szczecin and Gdansk has always been just a little above the average. The wages in the shipyards rose within the last five years by 22.8 per cent (from 2477 zlotys to 3041 zlotys per month), while in other branches of industry they rose by 17.6 per cent. Why should the discontent and frustration felt acutely in the whole of Poland burst out with

such violence precisely in these more privileged districts?

THREE SUGGESTIONS, none of which by itself is wholly convincing, are currently put forward. In certain quarters it is pointed out that the western fringe of Poland, and indeed Poland as a whole, owes at least part of its cohesiveness to the ever-present fear of its western neighbor, and that the recent agreement with Germany, which fixes the Oder - Neisse lines as a frontier, removed that fear and the feeling of danger—and thereby also loosened some of the cohesiveness. This argument may have some validity, but it seems a little over-sophisticated.

The second suggestion is somewhat obliquely made by many foreign observers, who evidently report the official, as well as the unofficial (but no less weighty), information transmitted through the Polish grapevine: they hint that not for nothing were the Baltic provinces the stronghold of General Moczar and his "partisans," who in the last few years ferociously criticized Gomulka for his "liberalism" and made determined efforts to unseat him.

Promoted to general after the war, Moczar worked for the political police during the first years of the Stalinist regime. He did not, however, enjoy the complete confidence of those in power, was pushed aside into the Baltic provinces, and was replaced by Poles who had worked in Moscow during the war years. He re-emerged in October 1956

as a supporter of Gomulka. Over the years his sergeant-major's style, his wild nationalism bordering on xenophobia and his anti-intellectualism attracted quite a following. In 1964 he became Polish Minister of the Interior and once again had all the branches of the police under his orders. He also assumed the presidency of ZBOWiD—a motley union of combattants composed of those who had "fought for Poland," no matter for what kind of Poland. He lent his support to the most reactionary Catholic union, PAX, and opposed the more liberal organization, ZNAK. His faithful, extremely unpopular "popular militia" gave proof of its devotion by savage repression of student movements.

His field day came when, after the Israeli-Arab war of 1967, under the pretext of anti-Zionism he purged the army, the press, and the academic and literary life of Jews, liberals and all other elements he considered lacking in patriotism. In 1968, the much coveted membership of the Politbureau was at last within his reach. However, he had to content himself with becoming a candidate member only: After the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Brezhnev gave his full support to Gomulka and thus protected him—for a time—from his rivals.

Moczar must have realized that his reputation as a staunch enemy of the Soviet Union (which earns him popularity among wide circles of obdurate Polish nationalists) could hinder his career. Thus when Moczar's friend and

supporter Ptasiński was dispatched as ambassador to Moscow in 1967, he might have slipped in a kind word or two on behalf of his comrade Moczar, explaining perhaps that Moczar's "nationalism" was misunderstood, that it was nothing but a certain authoritarianism which could be useful in view of the restiveness of the Polish population.

It would certainly be wrong to make too much of foreign journalists' hints that "Moczar's people" might have engineered the bloody events in Gdansk and Szczecin, but it cannot be ruled out that they might have stirred a smoldering fire and added to it a couple of very dry twigs. As a result of the conflagration, Moczar's rival, Gomulka, lost power. He was replaced as First Secretary of the Party by Edward Gierek, a tough technocrat and organizer and, at least since 1967, Moczar's friend and ally. Moczar himself benefited directly from the change, becoming at last a full member of the Politbureau and a secretary of the Party's Central Committee—a position which will allow him effectively, if unspectacularly, to maneuver the life of the country.

ANOTHER CENTER—as political as it pretends to be spiritual—which has already been promised a "better deal" is the Roman Catholic Church. Piotr Jaroszewicz began his term of office as the new Prime Minister (and successor to Cyrankiewicz) by a solemn political speech in which he proclaimed as one of the aims of his government the "full normalization" of State-Church relations. His administration, he said, wants to strengthen co-operation with all citizens, believers and non-believers alike. This was by far the most conciliatory approach of any "communist" hierarchy to the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church.

How did Mr. Edward Gierek present himself to the country in his capacity as supreme leader of the ruling party? He addressed himself to the working population as a whole and tried to appease it by promising that the present (increased) food prices will be frozen for two years and that the prices of some industrial goods will be reduced "as far as possible." To improve the lot of the poorest families, hardest hit by the recent price rises, the very lowest salaries will be revised upwards, with \$1.75 billion in special premiums given

from the State compensatory fund. This last charitable measure is reminiscent of the plan of Britain's Tory Prime Minister Edward Heath, but hardly benefits a Workers' State.

Be that as it may, in gathering his new team, Gierek used incomparably milder accents than he did only a couple of years ago. There are probably few Poles who have forgotten the bloody events of March 1968, when Polish students took to the streets to protest against the stifling and oppressive atmosphere of the country and the lack of intellectual freedom. It was around that time that Edward Gierek, the boss of the rich industrial basin of Silesia and the favorite of the "labor aristocracy" of well-paid miners, transferred his loyalty from Gomulka to Moczar (then Minister of the Interior). While the police were battering the students and inciting the workers to have a go at taking part in the hunt against "eggheads," Gierek enthusiastically approved the brutal treatment of the demonstrators; in his speech of March 14, he blamed "revisionists, Zionists and servants of imperialism" for all the troubles. He named some Jewish writers and political figures who had, according to him, "dirty, anti-national objectives" and were trying to sell out and destroy Poland. If some of them will "go on trying to turn back the current of our life from the direction chosen by the nation," continued Gierek, "then Silesia will break their bones."

To maintain his control over Poland, Gierek has adopted a more conciliatory tone: No longer able to console the survivors of the soldiers' riot with the admission that the trade union leadership "failed to respond to the workers' justified demands," Gierek stirred the national Trade Union Council into proclaiming a new era: there is to be re-organization, a shake-up, and probably some revengeful settling of accounts among the top bosses. But did they need so much blood to see what even a casual observer of the Polish scene has been able to sense for some time?

WHAT CAN POLAND expect from the new team? It is still too early to give a straight answer. For the time being, all is quiet: some workers even returned to their

jobs during the Christmas holidays, obeying the exhortation to "catch up on production." But how long this quiescence will last is uncertain.

The whole of Eastern Europe watched the events in Poland with baited breath for, consciously or unconsciously, the workers in the Baltic created a precedent dangerous to the fraternity of "communist" bureaucrats: a party leadership and a government were changed under the pressure of street demonstrations and riots so tumultuous that even the police, with the help of the army, were hard pressed to quell them.

Strikes, street demonstrations and riots in full view of foreign observers are a nightmare to the bosses in Moscow, East Berlin, Prague and elsewhere. Whether or not they liked Gierek, Moczar & Co., they thought it prudent, in the interests of stability, to lend them their support. Ulbricht sent a congratulatory telegram. Brezhnev could contemplate on the front pages of Soviet newspapers a portrait of Gierek and a rather friendly biography. Brezhnev declared that the Party of Polish Communists, "famed for its revolutionary tradition" (he might have added "which Stalin had trampled underfoot in the late Thirties") and "its militant vanguard" (he might have added "which Stalin had brutally exterminated") "will be able to overcome" many difficulties. A few days later, however, the Russians expressed some reservations, warning that "one should not expect that all will go smoothly."

Even if the new team runs the economy more efficiently, even if a few zlotys are added to the workers' pay packets, the new regime will be more authoritarian and less "humane" than the old one. Students and intellectuals, whose bones are threatened by the new First Secretary of the Party, can only sadly speculate on what might have been had they won the support of the workers in 1968. And as thousands of men and women clock past the gates of factories and shipyards, the "egghead" revolt of 1968 may take on the ominous patina of opportunity lost.

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The Cleaning of America (Don't Hold Your Breath)

IT WAS MORE THAN A YEAR ago that Nixon announced he was a conservationist and promised reform. As it turned out, his administration worked behind the scenes to gut much of the decent conservation reform proposed; in other cases, it refused to enforce the laws already on the books. The overall result has been to sink the environmental programs into near chaos. Thus, the conservationist President supports the SST and his administration backs restricted, but continued, use of both DDT and 2,4,5-T herbicides. Former Secretary of Interior Hickel, now regarded as a "great conservationist," led the government in opposing any reform of the 1872 Mining Act. That law, which gives away public lands for five dollars an acre, has led to the wholesale destruction of much of the West by the mining companies. Despite repeated oil spills on the outercontinental shelf, the government went ahead and resumed issuing leases for oil- and gas-drilling on the shelf. Hickel delayed increasing the rates cattlemen pay for grazing their herds on public ranges, thereby reducing the amounts available for reseeding the miserably eroded public property. The Nixon government opposed the principle of "absolute liability" in the case of oil spills; that principle would have required an oil company to pay all the costs involved. It lobbied against a bill which would have established a cut-off date by which time automobile makers would have to reduce pollutants by 90 per cent. When, in the face of a conservationist lobby, the Congress refused to approve a bill ordering increased cutting in the national forests, Nixon circumvented the Congress and ordered the increased cuts by executive order.

In his appointment of Rogers C. B. Morton as Secretary of the Interior, Nixon picked a man who as a congressman had supported the SST and voted for billboards. Morton was a sponsor of the National Timber Supply Act, which sought to increase the cuts of public timber. He spoke in favor of protecting wetlands along the Chesapeake Bay but voted against a bill which would have allowed the Interior Department to preserve estuaries.

William Ruckelshaus, administrator of the new Environmental Protection Agency, recently invoked a section of the 1899 Rivers and Harbors Act which would require industries to obtain federal permits before dumping wastes into navigable waters. Unfortunately, many industries dump their wastes into city sewers, and in this case they are exempt from the Act. In order for an industry to obtain a federal permit it must demonstrate that its anti-pollution plans are in line with state water quality standards. The state stan-

dards, in turn, must be approved by the federal government. But the federal government has not yet passed on standards for nearly half the states, which gives the non-approved standards a dubious legal significance. More to the point, by employing this old Act, Ruckelshaus may throw a shield around polluting industries: so long as companies have filed their applications for permits, they probably are exempt from prosecution for pollution. Processing permit applications will take months, if not years, and will involve countless appeals, compromises and possible court challenges.

The air pollution law passed by the last Congress directs auto makers to eliminate 90 per cent of the pollutants from exhaust systems by 1975. But there is no certainty the auto companies can make a device which will effectively remove oxides of nitrogen by that time. If they are unable to do so, the law will probably become meaningless. In other respects the law represents a step backward. It perpetuates the concept of "ambient air standards"—a mumbo-jumbo technique for controlling air pollution dreamed up by Senator Jennings Randolph, the West Virginia coal stooge, and endorsed by Senator Edmund Muskie. Under the air pollution laws, the National Air Pollution Control Administration designates certain "air quality regions." A region is an imaginary line drawn around an urban area and its environs. The communities lying within the boundaries of the line generally share common topographical, meteorological and industrial patterns. The theory is that these common features will facilitate the eventual establishment of air pollution control standards. Unfortunately, since this "region" is not a unit of government, it is a meaningless designation. The Air Pollution Control Administration then issues "air quality criteria" and "control techniques." These documents assist the states in establishing "ambient air standards" for the different regions. Instead of measuring smoke from a stack to determine whether its sulphur dioxide content is above or below a national uniform emissions standard, pollution officials sample the ambient air throughout a region to find the sulphur dioxide levels. They then work out plans for dealing with sulphur dioxide. This procedure is obviously designed to drag along for an interminable time. Under the new act, the government is directed to determine emission levels for so-called hazardous substances coming from stationary sources. But sulphur, one of the major hazardous substances, is not included in the list of dangerous pollutants. This omission apparently was made in deference to Randolph and his West Virginia coal operator friends. The coal people fear a reduction in business if stringent air pollution con-

by James Ridgeway