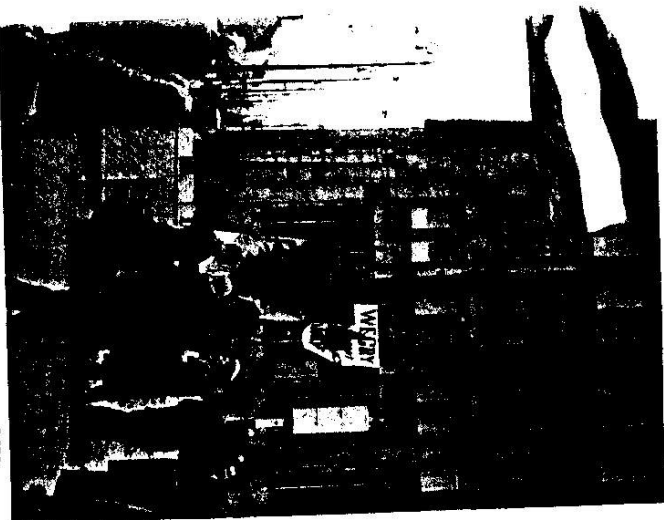


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Hungarian flag is blown in the center of Warsaw.  
The legend: "The Hungarians call for help."  
Photo by Andrzej Zborski.

János Tischler

## POLAND AND HUNGARY IN 1956

It is well known that the Budapest demonstration of October 23, 1956, was organized initially to express solidarity with the Polish events of October. This was symbolized by the Petőfi and Bem statues as sites of the demonstration as well as by the characteristic watchword that concisely summarized the basic demand of the Hungarians: "Poland gives us an example, but let us follow the

Hungarian road!"<sup>1</sup> Events in the two countries were interrelated in a real sense on October 24 in the Warsaw mass meeting of several hundred thousand people, which was the high point of the Polish events. Two dramatic actions symbolized the Polish-Hungarian relationship. First, several university student groups, who were informed of the Budapest demonstrations of the previous day, marched to the square with Hungarian flags, receiving the full approval of the crowd.<sup>2</sup> Second, more than two thousand people joined by several thousand on the way, "marched to the Hungarian Embassy" at the end of the meeting "to express their solidarity with the Hungarian nation." Finally, one of the demonstrating groups "convened a short meeting with the watchword 'Warsaw-Budapest-Belgrade!'"<sup>3</sup>

### The Polish and the Hungarian October: Identities and Differences

Let us follow the course of events. On June 28, 1956, a workers' uprising took place in Poznań, in which the crowd of 100,000 demanded "bread and freedom." To suppress the uprising, 10,000 soldiers, 400 tanks, hundreds of armored military vehicles and even aircraft were put into action against the unarmed crowd and several hundred insurgents with handguns and petrol bombs. In the course of the battle more than 70 people were killed, of whom 8 were members of the "forces of order." The average age of those killed was 26. About one thousand were wounded. 247 persons were arrested for participation, of whom 196 were workers, 14 "working intellectuals," 32 pupils and 5 university students. 567 persons were investigated; 94 of these were suspected of "armed activity," and 58 were charged, but following the events of October all of them were soon released.

Polish public opinion initially obtained information concerning these events from reports of the official PAP news agency

stating that in Poznań "disturbances were caused by Western imperialist agencies and domestic reaction." In the evening of June 29 Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz made his infamous speech, which Poles still remember: "Each provocateur or madman who dares to raise a hand against the people's power can be certain that the people's power will cut off that hand with an ax."

The Poznań events gave rise to an interesting reaction in Hungary. At the extraordinary session of the Central Leadership of the Hungarian Workers' Party on June 30 there was a joint agenda item on the press debates of the Petöfi Circle, which had taken place several days earlier, and the Poznań demonstrations. First Secretary Mátyás Rákosi summarized the two events: "Two unexpected events took place recently, the Poznań event and the press debate." The commentary of Rákosi at the closed session did not differ from the tone of the "cutting hands off" speech of Cyrankiewicz: "The Poznań provocation demonstrates that the enemy now uses every means to damage the results of the Twentieth Congress [the Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union of February 1956], in order to sow confusion between the Party and the working masses. According to the most recent information received, the Poznań provocation was connected with the presence of many foreigners at the international fair, and several days earlier the Americans had parachuted several armed diversionary groups into the border district."<sup>4</sup> At this session a resolution was passed closing the Petöfi Circle for the summer. Less than three weeks later the Soviet leaders decided to dismiss Rákosi, since not only was he unable to handle the Hungarian crisis, but he intensified it by his presence. He was "offered" an opportunity to depart to the Soviet Union, which he "accepted." He was replaced by Ernő Gerő, who was just as responsible for the past years' policies as the dismissed Party leader. It was a "change without a change." Poznań and the Petöfi Circle were cited not only by Rákosi, but also by Anastas Mikoyan, who came to Budapest to

dismiss Rákosi. At the meeting of the Central Leadership on July 17-18 Mikoyan spoke of the Petöfi Circle as an "ideological Poznań."<sup>5</sup>

The Poznań workers' uprising sent a bloody message to the Polish Party leadership. The grievances had expanded to such an extent that the street demonstrations chanting only social slogans at the beginning had the potential to become a national movement repudiating the regime as a whole. The unambiguous message of Poznań indicating the necessity of change, coupled with the violent expression of social dissatisfaction, accelerated the ongoing process of disintegration within the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP). The potential explosion created by the Poznań "black Thursday" and the threat of anarchy "from the point of view of the Party," strengthened and made persuasive the position of those scattered voices who demanded the return of Władysław Gomułka to power. Even those agreed with this step who had actively participated in his earlier removal and condemnation.

In contrast to Imre Nagy, no Party opposition emerged around Gomułka. There were many reasons for this. An important one was the character of the two men. It was difficult to relate to Gomułka and to maintain confidential and personal relations with him. At that time the most important factor in the formation of a Party opposition, aside from related principles, was the personal element.<sup>6</sup> Other reasons were to be found in the similar yet essentially different situation in Poland and Hungary. Gomułka was expelled from the Party in 1951, although he had fallen from grace in 1948. Party leaders or bureaucrats who sympathized with him openly shared his fate very soon. In 1956 he and his sympathizers expected to be rehabilitated. After 1951 Gomułka had no "secret" Party supporters, and he was excluded for years from the political arena. His popularity among Party members and especially in Polish society was not based upon his attempt to humanize the system or eliminate its most flagrant abuses, but upon his refusal, for

tactical reasons, to accept the Stalinist Soviet model automatically at the time of the Communist takeover. It should be remarked, however, that prior to 1948, when he was still in power, he was not very keen on humanizing the emerging Communist regime.

When the official central daily newspaper of the PUWP, *Tyżnika Ludu*, published a brief notice on August 5, 1956, concerning the readmittance of Gomułka to Party membership, two separate Party groups attempted to obtain his support. These loose Party alignments were exclusively interested in maintaining their influence in Party affairs; they were in effect interest groups and consisted for the most part of people who were quite prominent in the Stalinist period. Both groups, however, attempted to loosen the tight Polish dependence on Moscow. They were also both interested in some vague form of democratic change, and both saw in Gomułka the key solution to their efforts. The views of the two groups differed only as to the degree of loosening ties with Moscow and the limits of the democratic procedures to be introduced. Aside from their motivation, it is their historic merit that, unlike their Hungarian comrades, they realized that it was indispensable to make substantial changes, and they were committed to making those changes. Even though they did not like Gomułka, they recognized that there was no other alternative. Simultaneously Edward Ochab, the first secretary of the Central Committee, and Prime Minister Cyrankiewicz, who advocated the necessity of reforms at this time, were of the opinion that the power of the Communist Party could be preserved in Poland only by implementing changes through Gomułka. Since Gomułka was an active player in this game, he was well informed and he was the one who stipulated conditions.

When comparing the events of 1956 in Hungary and Poland, it is particularly striking that the conduct of Ochab and Ernő Gerő and that of Prime Ministers Cyrankiewicz and András Hegedűs were quite unlike each other, even though they faced very similar

situations. While in Poland it was primarily due to Ochab and Cyrankiewicz, along with Gomułka, that no lives were lost in the confrontation of October 1956, in Hungary Geró and Hegeđius were largely responsible for the explosion claiming human lives and destruction.

October 1956 arrived in an atmosphere filled with high tension and expectation. In early October the news spread that Ochab, with a precise understanding of the Polish crisis, was willing to resign as first secretary of the Central Committee in favor of Gomułka. The latter had made it known that he was willing to return only on the condition that he would receive the top Party position. This was the only episode in the history of East Central European Communism in which a Communist Party leader voluntarily resigned his position to allow another Party leader to take over.

Gomułka decided to support the Party alignment favoring more comprehensive democratic changes. He also stipulated as a condition of accepting the Party position that all members of the Political Committee and Secretariat, discredited in the pre-1956 regime, be replaced. This meant a complete personnel change in both Party organizations. These momentous changes were scheduled for the Eighth Plenary Session of the PUWP Central Committee. This was public knowledge. The conservative forces, the dogmatists, were ready to block these changes, with the support of Moscow and Soviet Marshal Rokossovski, the Polish minister of defense since 1949 and a member of the PUWP Political Committee.

As soon as the Soviet leaders were informed of these developments, they took immediate steps to prevent dismissals not previously cleared with the Soviet Communist Party or appearing to involve a veritable anti-Soviet coup. Therefore on the day of the opening of the Plenary Session a Soviet Party delegation, consisting of Khrushchev, Kaganovich, Molotov, Mikoyan, Minister of Defense Zhukov and Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw Pact

Armed Forces Konev, unexpectedly arrived in Warsaw. Khrushchev made threatening remarks on his arrival at the airport, stating that he did not exclude the possibility of armed intervention to prevent the intended changes in the Polish Party. These were not empty threats, as indicated by the activation of Soviet forces stationed in Poland and the movement of Polish forces under the command of Rokossovski towards Warsaw. As this news reached Warsaw, workers and university students in the capital mobilized, declaring that they would fight the Soviet troops. The Internal Security Corps declared its loyalty to the new Party leadership.<sup>7</sup> The commander of the Corps, General Wacław Komar, was rehabilitated in the spring of 1956 after being victimized in the Stalinist purges, and was appointed to his new post. It is therefore obvious why he declared his loyalty to Gomułka.

It should be added, furthermore, that a series of events in the course of 1956 had shaken the foundations of the state security system. These included the secret speech of Khrushchev in February, which was openly distributed in Poland, the death in March of Bolesław Bierut, the first secretary of the PUWP Central Committee, and the June workers' uprising in Poznań. These "blows" were intensified by a general political amnesty, which was regarded by the state security system as a "questioning and destruction" of their diligent efforts.<sup>8</sup> In the course of 1956 all political prisoners, including non-communists, aside from a few exceptional cases, received a general amnesty. Then in October 1956 charges were dismissed against all participants in the Poznań uprising.

In the light of the intensified conflict within the Party leadership after March 1956, state security leaders did not receive unequivocal signals regarding their continued political role. As a result, the morale of the organization declined considerably. The Poznań workers' uprising demonstrated an immense social hatred for the organization, whose representatives experienced severe physical reprisals, in part because their personnel's composition

had remained unchanged. Therefore the organization, with no other alternative available, remained loyal to the Party, led by Ochab, then Gomulka. At the time of the Eighth Plenary Session the organization was characterized by passivity, lack of orientation and restlessness. On hearing of state security agents being lynched in Budapest, its members were frightened. Consequently Gomulka faced little difficulty and no real opposition in reorganizing and restructuring the organization in November 1956. Since the Hungarian State Security Authority, the ÁVH, in contrast to its Polish equivalent, remained unchanged, it appeared out of the question that it would have supported Imre Nagy against the Soviets at the outbreak of revolution—either actively, as did General Komar, or passively, as did the Polish security apparatus.

Concerning the events related to the Eighth Plenary Session of the Central Committee, it can be stated definitely that Soviet forces would not have faced substantial resistance in Poland. It is also questionable whether the population of the capital and Polish society would have been capable of an armed confrontation with immense losses of life and destruction, given the memory of close to six million people killed in World War II, and only twelve years after the Warsaw uprising, which had resulted in the complete destruction of the city and the death of several hundred thousand people. Nevertheless, in the event of an armed intervention Khrushchev would have been in a highly unpleasant situation. He would have been a hostage in the capital of the country against which an intervention was underway. In the case of the Hungarian Revolution he did not commit such an error, and nor did his successors in the coming decades.

The Eighth Plenary Session convened as planned at 10:00 a.m. on October 19, and the Central Committee elected Gomulka to its membership. Then the session was adjourned. The original membership of the Political Committee, accompanied by Gomulka, then proceeded to the negotiations with Khrushchev. The negotiations

continued with intermissions until dawn on the following day. At that time the Soviet delegation decided to halt their troops marching towards Warsaw. This decision of the Soviet delegation to revise its original intention and to express its readiness for a compromise was due in part to the unified conduct of the Polish Party leadership, the commitment of Party supporters to democratic changes, and the overwhelming public support for Gomulka by the Polish people. In the morning of October 20 the Soviet delegation returned to Moscow and the Eighth Plenary Session continued. At this time Gomulka delivered an address that received worldwide attention and was published in full in the October 23 issue of *Szabad Nép*, the Hungarian Party daily newspaper. It had a significant impact on events in Budapest.<sup>9</sup> On the following day Gomulka was elected as first secretary of the Central Committee.

Numerous factors contributed to the acceptance by the Soviet Party leader of personnel changes in the Polish Communist Party. While Ochab consistently supported Gomulka, the latter assured Khrushchev that he was a true friend of the Soviet Union and did not wish to leave the Warsaw Pact, and nor did he want the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Poland. He expressed his conviction that the Polish Party had a greater need of the Soviet Union than the reverse.<sup>10</sup> It is not known to what extent Khrushchev believed Gomulka. It is known that the Soviet leader did not favor the return to positions of power of rehabilitated Party members. It is certain, however, that when he finally accepted Gomulka, he did not realize how fortunate that selection was, and contrary to his initial intentions, he proved to be an excellent "crisis manager." As became evident several days later in connection with Hungary, the Soviets were not at all prepared to handle such crises in the satellite countries. In a very short time they had to face two such crises. The events of the Hungarian Revolution demonstrated for Khrushchev that the political management of the Polish crisis had spared the Soviet Union many unpleasant consequences.

Following the return of the delegation from Warsaw, the Presidium of the Soviet Communist Party met on October 20 to discuss the Polish crisis, and it became evident that the members had not definitely given up the idea of military intervention, in spite of their reluctant acceptance of the Polish proposals in Warsaw.<sup>11</sup> A decision was made not to return Soviet troops in Poland to their bases for the time being and to make preparations for the creation of a "Polish counter-government." The Soviet leaders believed that they could control the course of events in Poland if "Rokossowski would stay"—then, they thought, "we do not need to hurry." On October 21 the highly unpopular Rokossowski, the symbol of dependence on Moscow, and unacceptable to Gomulka and his associates, was not elected to the new Polish Party leadership. Nevertheless, at the meeting of the Soviet Presidium on the same day Khrushchev summarized the debate on the Polish situation as follows: "Considering the circumstances, we must reject armed intervention."<sup>12</sup> Possibly the most important such "circumstance" was the position of the Communist Party of China. On October 19 the latter was informed routinely of plans for military intervention in Poland, but the Chinese Party leadership forcefully objected to the Soviet plan. The Chinese Communists added an exposition of their position. They stated that China had to be treated as an equal partner by Moscow and the Chinese view had to be seriously considered. The Chinese opposed intervention in Poland not because they sympathized with democratic procedures, but as a result of political considerations pure and simple. They argued from the same point of view when the Hungarian issue was raised, but did not object to the second Soviet intervention. Their position was that the events in Poland did not involve a disruption of the "people's democracy," and therefore the crisis was manageable by domestic forces. In contrast, the prevailing system was rejected at an early stage in Hungary, and therefore intervention was unavoidable.

During negotiations in Moscow on October 23 the Chinese delegation led by Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping proposed to Khrushchev that he should cancel the intervention in Poland. This decision was finalized by the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution. At this point the Polish and Hungarian events were necessarily managed jointly by Moscow. Originally representatives of fraternal parties were invited to Moscow for a meeting on October 24 for the purpose of receiving information from Khrushchev on negotiations in Warsaw, but the agenda of that meeting included both the Polish crisis and the Hungarian crisis, with the Hungarian issue playing the leading role. On October 23 Khrushchev had agreed only reluctantly to send Soviet troops to Budapest, because he had not yet excluded the possibility of intervention in Poland.<sup>13</sup> The "Polish disturbance," which was resolved peacefully in spite of a potential explosion, was followed instantly by the events of the Hungarian Revolution. In the light of the revolutionary elements of the Polish October, it is not surprising that a special relationship evolved between Poland and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 as well as between Gomulka and Imre Nagy.

#### **The New Polish Leadership and the Hungarian Revolution**

The new Polish leadership and Gomulka personally followed events in Hungary with undivided attention, utilizing all available sources for obtaining accurate and authentic information.<sup>14</sup> Along with the stream of information arriving from Budapest, Polish public opinion was equally a source of pressure on the new leadership, since Poles regarded the Hungarian Revolution as fully identical in its objectives with the "Polish Revolution"; to demonstrate that conviction people in Poland in large numbers donated blood to support their "Hungarian brothers." At the same time Polish leaders committed to reforms were seeking allies and supporters among Soviet bloc countries, in most of which the "Stalinist line" was

dominant. They found this ally in Hungary. The Hungarian Revolution had another impact: the powerful political and partially military pressure of Moscow, previously focused exclusively on Poland, was now also directed at Hungary. This was an advantage to Poland, since Polish leaders could implement changes more easily, such as the dismissal of Rokossovski and the repatriation of Soviet officers and military advisers.<sup>15</sup>

The PUWP Political Committee resolved at its meeting of October 28 to issue an appeal to the Hungarian nation.<sup>16</sup> This was regarded as necessary, since the Polish leadership had observed silence in the days following October 23, due in part to the lack of accurate information on events in Budapest. But it could not remain silent any longer, since the press in Poland, Party organs such as the *Trybuna Ludu* and provincial equivalents, taking advantage of loose censorship procedures, generally welcomed the Hungarian uprising and expressed their support for it. Such an appeal was calculated to seek Hungarian support for the Polish leadership, while it was also hoped that it would benefit the Hungarian Revolution, and indirectly the stabilization of the Polish new course. In effect the new Polish leadership perceived common elements between the Polish and Hungarian movements and intended to strengthen the Hungarian-Polish relationship.

On October 28 the Polish ambassador in Budapest, Adam Willman, received instructions to have the appeal translated immediately, since it was to be published in the Hungarian press on the following day.<sup>17</sup> This was done. Willman then handed the Polish original and the Hungarian translation to János Kádár and Imre Nagy, who expressed their "deep gratitude" to the leaders of the Polish fraternal Party for the support provided to Hungary. They needed the support of Poland.<sup>18</sup> On October 29 all Polish dailies and the Hungarian Party daily *Szabad Nép* published the appeal of the PUWP Central Committee to the Hungarian nation, signed by Gomulka and Prime Minister Cyrankiewicz, both members of the

Political Committee. The appeal first expressed their sorrow over the loss of human lives and the destruction in Budapest, and then appealed to Hungarians to "terminate the fratricidal fight." Then the message continued:

We are well informed of the program of the Hungarian national government, of the program of socialist democracy, of the expansion of well-being, of the formation of workers' councils, of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary and of Soviet-Hungarian friendship based on the Leninist principles of equality. It is not our intention to intervene in your internal affairs. We are of the opinion, however, that this program is in full accord with the interests of the Hungarian people and of the peace camp as a whole... We think that those who reject the program of the Hungarian national government want to lead Hungary away from the road to socialism... You and we stand on the same side—on the side of freedom and socialism... Let peace be restored in Hungary, peace and the unity of the people, which is vitally necessary to realize the comprehensive program of democracy, progress and socialism, which your national government has made its objective.<sup>19</sup>

The sentence approving of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary by the Polish Party leadership contains a singular contradiction in the light of their position that this was impossible in the case of Poland. In response to emphatic demands to that effect in late October, Gomulka asserted that the geopolitical situation of Hungary differed significantly from that of Poland, and that those who made such demands were inadvertently assisting internal and external reaction, which would be prepared to exploit the situation of Poland.<sup>20</sup> Subsequently, following several political experiences concerning this matter, Gomulka was to utilize the formula "the state interests of Poland" as the basic explanation for his future policies.

On October 28 Gomułka sent a two-person delegation to Budapest for the purpose of gathering information and evaluating the Hungarian situation. They were also instructed to do their best, in the interests of the Polish Party leadership, to prevent a movement of the Hungarian Revolution to the right and to persuade Nagy and Kádár to terminate further changes. This was a good opportunity for the Polish leadership to assure the Hungarian leaders of their support and to condemn unequivocally the request of Gerő for Soviet military assistance "to restore public order." The delegation consisted of Marian Naszkowski, deputy foreign minister, and Artur Starewicz, substitute member of the Central Committee, later the director of the Press Office of the Central Committee. They met and spoke with the Hungarian leadership, primarily with Nagy and Kádár, on the day of their arrival. The Polish delegates sent a coded report to Gomułka and Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki (a member of the Political Committee). Their report included a narrative of the events of the previous days, and an analysis of possibilities for resolving the Hungarian crisis, as reported by their Hungarian partners. According to the Polish delegation, "no one in the Hungarian Party leadership could identify a single reactionary center, nor any facts concerning anti-communist or anti-socialist characteristics of the movement in the capital." At the same time, the Hungarian leaders agreed that "each day, each hour of prolonging the confrontation results unavoidably in the emergence of reactionary and anti-communist elements as leaders of the insurgent movement."<sup>21</sup>

The two Polish delegates learned at first hand during their Budapest visit that the peaceful resolution of the Polish crisis during the Eighth Plenary Session had saved Poland and the Polish Party from catastrophic events comparable to those in Budapest. They were fully aware of the potential consequences of a Soviet occupation of Warsaw, including a spontaneous uprising, which the PUWP would not have been able to control, as was the case in

Hungary.<sup>22</sup> An armed conflict in Poland would necessarily have involved a much larger conflict and would have revived the wounds and memories of war-torn Poland. Gomułka and his associates therefore frequently expressed their satisfaction with the political realism of the Polish people.

On October 29 Starewicz and Naszkowski, while stopping at the Soviet Embassy, met the Soviet leaders Mikoyan and Suslov, who did not respond specifically to their questions concerning Soviet intentions, except to state that the question was whether the Soviet government would be able to control events.<sup>23</sup> On October 30 the two delegates returned to Warsaw and reported their experiences at the meeting of the Political Committee that same day.<sup>24</sup> It is significant that they informed Polish public opinion of the results of their mission. Shortly after his return Starewicz responded to the question of a Polish radio reporter on what he had seen in Hungary. He stated that in his opinion the program of the Nagy government could be implemented following the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Budapest.<sup>25</sup>

In the morning hours of November 1, 1956, Khrushchev, Malenkov and Molotov met a three-member Polish delegation led by Gomułka in Brest, at the Soviet-Polish border. The Soviet delegation informed them of the imminent intervention in Hungary, which was definitively decided upon on October 31 in Moscow.<sup>26</sup> Although the Polish delegation expressed a "separate opinion," since they could not accept the principle of resolving an internal crisis by armed foreign intervention, they agreed that the danger of counter-revolution existed in Hungary.<sup>27</sup> They did bring up the not very persuasive argument that the Soviet forces would face an extended guerrilla war in Hungary.<sup>28</sup> They took note of the Soviet decision, since they had no other alternative, but they also considered it to be important to express their "separate opinion" in public. The Brest Soviet statement provided Gomułka with an important political advantage in the sense that he could then argue that it was



in "Polish state interests" to accept the presence of Soviet troops in Poland, which guaranteed membership in the Warsaw Pact and the permanence of the revised boundaries of 1945. He argued that dis-regarding this principle would involve the tragic fate of Hungary for Poland, and therefore it was important that people should trust and support the PUWP.

The November 1 meeting of the PUWP Central Committee issued a public appeal to the Polish nation in which this concept was formulated and the "separate opinion" of the Polish Party delegation to Khrushchev was also included. The PUWP Central Committee was convened several hours after the Brest meeting for the express purpose of discussing developments related to Hungary. The Committee reviewed the Hungarian political situation and the issue of Soviet intervention: "the Political Committee expressed a position condemning the armed intervention of the Soviet Union in Hungary." A resolution attached to the agenda stated that an appeal to the nation expressing the position of the Party must be issued according to which "in Hungary the people, not an external intervention, must defend and maintain socialist achievements."<sup>29</sup>

The drafting of the appeal was assigned to an editorial committee directed by Jerzy Morawski, a member of the Political Committee, and after approval by Gomulka it was published in the Polish press on the following day. Incidentally an additional objective of the appeal was to "pour cold water on excessively hot Polish heads."<sup>30</sup> The section on Hungary condemned the Hungarian Stalinist Party leadership, which pursued policies contrary to the will of the working class and the majority of the nation, and instead of introducing democratic changes called in Soviet troops for assistance. The appeal emphasized the growing reactionary and counter-revolutionary threat, and pointed out the chaotic situation in Hungary, including summary trials by "reactionary gangs" and the barbaric murder of Communists. It condemned reactionary forces sweeping Hungary towards catastrophe and expressed the hope

that the Hungarian working class and all working people would unite and thereby defeat the "reactionary attack." The appeal then stated the resolution of the Central Committee on the disapproval of foreign intervention, followed by the statement that Soviet forces were stationed in Poland on the basis of the Potsdam agreement, in order to ensure communications with their forces in East Germany. Therefore their withdrawal was impossible until a peace treaty was signed with Germany or all four Great Powers simultaneously withdrew their troops from German territory. The presence of Soviet troops in Poland protected the Western frontier of the country against German revisionist agitation. The conditions and circumstances of their presence would be set forth in legal documents to be concluded with the Soviet government. The document then stated that in the light of international conditions the demand to withdraw Soviet troops was contrary to the most fundamental Polish state interests. The present, it said, was not a time for demonstrations and assemblies, but for calmness, discipline and a sense of responsibility: "this is the most important command of the moment."<sup>31</sup>

In spite of the impending Soviet intervention, the Polish Foreign Ministry instructed Ambassador Willman, in a note signed by Naszkowski, to reply to the request of Imre Nagy for support. The reply was to state that the Polish leadership hoped that its official position on Hungary, expressed in the appeal of the PUWP Central Committee of November 1, would be of assistance to the Hungarian government. That statement expressed the view that "in Hungary only the internal forces of the nation, and not an external intervention, can preserve the people's power and socialism."<sup>32</sup>

In the evening of November 2 a coded telegram arrived from Ambassador Willman to Foreign Minister Rapacki, stating the request of the Hungarian government that the Polish government give its consent to the proposal that "Warsaw should be the location of negotiations between delegations of Hungary and the Soviet

Union for the purpose of reaching agreement on relations between the two governments and especially the question of the stationing of Soviet troops in Hungary."<sup>33</sup> It was obvious that the principal issue of discussion was the Hungarian demand for the withdrawal of the Soviet army, a demand that the leadership of the PUWP had completely rejected with regard to Poland less than a day earlier in an unequivocal manner. Nevertheless, within an hour and a half the Polish response was dispatched to Budapest. If both parties agreed, the Polish government was ready to grant the Hungarian request that negotiations be conducted in Warsaw. The Polish government intended to inform Polish public opinion of the proposed negotiations as soon as the date of negotiations was known.<sup>34</sup> Thus the PUWP Political Committee granted the Hungarian request and thereby it again expressed its "separate opinion of Brest."

During the night of November 3-4 the telegram of Wilman reporting his conversation with Imre Nagy in the early afternoon of November 3 arrived in Warsaw. In spite of the hopeless situation the Hungarian prime minister attempted to utilize every possibility for stabilizing the political situation. Since he assumed that Cardinal József Mindszenty "might act in a reactionary manner," he requested the Polish government to intercede with Polish Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński in the interests of "influencing Mindszenty to calm the atmosphere of tension in Hungary."<sup>35</sup> The events of November 4, the next act of the "Hungarian tragedy," made this issue irrelevant.

Gomułka considered the secession of Hungary from the direct Soviet sphere of interest to be inadmissible. This was in his own interests. But initially he had difficulty approving of the second Soviet intervention, in part because Poland had faced an identical danger two weeks earlier. In addition, in its October 28 appeal the PUWP Political Committee unequivocally disapproved of the Soviet armed intervention that had started between four and five days earlier in Budapest. Therefore on November 4 Gomułka

declared that it was necessary to accept facts. The PUWP Political Committee, convened in the evening of November 4 to discuss the Hungarian issue, decided to vote against the US resolution in the United Nations condemning the Soviet intervention. The Polish delegate voted accordingly.<sup>36</sup>

The climax of the Polish crisis was the series of events at the time of the Eighth Plenary Session of the PUWP Central Committee. After that the new Party leadership attempted to stabilize political conditions, calm the tension and secure its own position. Gomułka, having experienced turmoil, was fully convinced of the realism of his statements to Khrushchev on October 19-20. It was quite clear to him that in spite of the genuine mass support that he received at that time, unprecedented in the Soviet bloc, the Polish Communist Party would be unable to preserve its dominant position without Soviet military presence. He planned to negotiate legal guarantees of the Soviet military presence with the Soviet Union in the form of a bilateral treaty, which was in fact signed in Moscow in mid-November 1956. He believed that only the Soviet Union guaranteed the western Polish borders approved in Potsdam in 1945. Aside from official propaganda, he considered German territorial revisionism to be a real threat to Poland. Gomułka utilized this threat as well as the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution in the stabilization of his system in 1956. His policy was to preserve and if possible to expand a degree of "independence" provided by his eastern neighbor, to terminate the vestiges of Stalinism and to develop socialism according to national characteristics ("the Polish road to socialism").

By December 1956 the Polish leaders had worked out an evaluation of the Hungarian Revolution, which they consistently maintained in the next year and a half. This evaluation had two elements. First, they considered the Soviet intervention of November 4 to have been necessary, but "deeply regretted it." Furthermore, they thought that the intervention was an unavoidable evil, which

was necessary to prevent the "reaction" from assuming power in Hungary, since this represented a powerful danger for all other socialist countries. Their "deep regret" also meant that they expressed their opinion rarely, because "they did not wish to speak of unpleasant matters."<sup>37</sup> The second element was a position directly opposed to that of other countries of the Soviet bloc. The Soviet bloc explained events in Hungary as the work of external and internal reaction. In the Polish view, however, the Hungarian explosion was precipitated by the criminal and distorted policies of Mátyás Rákosi, and the tension had built up over a period of several years. If others placed responsibility exclusively on the activity of external forces, they removed responsibility for internal errors from the misguided policies of the Party.<sup>38</sup>

Although Gomułka strongly disapproved of the political steps of Imre Nagy in the first few days of November, he resolutely objected to the kidnapping of the Hungarian prime minister and his associates on November 22. He expressed these views in public. In May 1957 he took a step that no other Communist Party leader attempted: he interceded in defense of Imre Nagy at a meeting with Khrushchev. His motive was not political agreement with Nagy, but his fear of restoring the practice of physical liquidation of opponents, used in the Stalinist period. He personally nearly became a victim of that practice. At the time that the Ninth Plenary Session of the PUWP Central Committee announced the fight against ideological revisionism, a secret coded telegram arrived from Budapest, signed by Willman, with the message that Nagy was brought back to Budapest and preparations for his trial were underway.<sup>39</sup> One week after receipt of the telegram a Polish delegation led by Gomułka and Cyrankiewicz traveled to Moscow to reach agreement on controversial issues related to the Soviet-Polish treaty of November 1956. In the course of the discussions the first secretary of the Polish Party brought up the topic of Imre Nagy. Although Gomułka considered Nagy to be a revisionist, he argued against the trial, pointed out the political damage that it would do, and the

anticipated international indignation, and stated that "Imre Nagy was certainly not an imperialist agent."<sup>40</sup> In response to the negative reaction of Khrushchev, Gomułka attempted to defend the Hungarian prime minister, stating that even if he had been a traitor, he would have been unable to direct all activities and make decisions. Cyrankiewicz commented that in the event of the victory of the counter-revolution Imre Nagy would have been hanged.<sup>41</sup> This intercession did not produce results. But Kádár was informed of it by Mikoyan, who had participated in the Soviet-Polish negotiations. Therefore he was quite aware of the position of the Polish leadership.<sup>42</sup> After Gomułka turned down Kádár's invitation to visit Hungary, Gomułka's intercession on behalf of Imre Nagy in Moscow must have increased Kádár's unfavorable attitude towards the Polish Party leader. This incident could also be interpreted as an indication of the Polish view of Kádár's "independence" from Moscow.

The official relationship of Poland with the Kádár government was somewhat different from the real Polish view. Polish foreign policy beginning in November 1956 pursued the objective of strengthening the position of the Kádár government by means of economic assistance and international support, while disregarding the issue of evaluating the Hungarian Revolution. Accordingly, at the request of the Hungarian government and in spite of difficult economic conditions, a decision was made on November 24, 1956, to provide economic aid in goods valued at 100 million zloty, without any obligation for repayment.<sup>43</sup> At the same time the PUWP was highly reserved in its relations with Hungary, thereby clearly indicating to the Kádár government that it disapproved of the merciless reprisals and terror of the restored Hungarian Communist Party. As a result, Kádár had to wait a year and a half, until May 1958, for the official visit of Gomułka, providing some form of legitimacy to the Kádár government. The visit was preceded by lengthy negotiations, including guarantees with regard to verdicts in the Imre Nagy trial.

**"Let Us Help the Hungarians!"**

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 evoked an extraordinary response in Polish society. Poles were ready to help Hungary by donating blood and organizing a nationwide collection of money, food and medicine. The October 28 appeal of the PUWP to the Hungarian nation in effect facilitated this activity and was intended to calm Polish emotions and sympathy by authorizing actions of helpfulness and assistance.

The Polish Red Cross encountered an unexpectedly large number of blood donors. Blood donor stations were surprised as more and more people volunteered to give blood. The first volunteers appeared in smaller numbers on Friday October 26, they increased on the following day, and on October 28, when the Polish radio broadcast the call of the Hungarian Red Cross for assistance, people in all parts of the country volunteered in great numbers. Appeals for blood donations appeared continuously on the radio and in the press until November 4. The response was quickest in Warsaw, Cracow, Katowice (renamed from the City of Stalin), Wrocław, Poznań, Jelenia Góra, Łódź and Szczecin. One blood donation took 2.5-3 hours. In the light of the limited capacity of donor stations, blood could be drawn from fewer people than volunteered, even after additional stations were set up in large plants and army posts, and all donor stations functioned day and night. But even so it was necessary to schedule individual donors and assign priority numbers. University students were in the forefront, but every social class was represented, without regard to Party membership. The PUWP Party Committee of the Voivodeship (one of the basic administrative units in Poland, like counties in Hungary) started its meeting in Jelenia Góra on October 28 with blood donations.

A total of 10,000-12,000 Poles donated blood. About one half of the blood, 795 liters, was sent to Budapest. The Polish press and

radio reported the procedures in detail, with feature stories of blood donors, voluntary donations and the organizations involved. Polish physicians and nurses volunteered to go to Hungary and assist their colleagues. The blood donor program lasted a week and a half, and closed when the Hungarian Red Cross expressed its gratitude and announced that it had no need for additional blood donations, but would welcome food, medicine and clothing donations.

Along with blood donation, a nationwide collection of money, food and medicine was organized, lasting several weeks and continuing with renewed impetus after November 4. Polish authorities did not hinder this spontaneous social initiative. Polish shipments of blood and assistance were the first to arrive in Hungary and were the largest outside assistance during the Revolution. Workers' brigades, trade unions, youth and scout groups, and individuals contributed significant cash payments for medicine and food "for Hungarians fighting for their freedom and wounded Hungarians." Newspapers published lists of contributions daily. Industrial plants offered wood supplies, construction materials and other materials needed in Hungary. Trade unions and plant workers approved resolutions expressing solidarity with the Hungarian insurgents.

In response to the appeal, "Let Us Help the Hungarians!" published in the Polish press, a total of 20 million zloty was collected and transmitted to the Polish Red Cross in three weeks. The daily collection was one million zloty. The funds were used to purchase medicine, bandages and food, and transmitted to the Hungarian Red Cross. The average monthly salary at that time was 800-1,000 zloty. After November 4 the central and local press no longer covered this activity in detail, but reported the total collected and the shipment of goods.

The first Polish airplane landed in Budapest on October 26 with supplies available at the time, particularly army-owned goods. Subsequently, until November 3, 15 Polish airplanes landed in Budapest, with shipments of 795 liters of blood, 415 liters of blood

plasma, 16,500 kilograms of blood substitutes, serum, medicine and bandages, and 3,000 kilograms of food supplies.<sup>44</sup> Until the end of January 31 million zloty were collected in cash, and donations in kind were valued at 11 million zloty. As a result, the Polish Red Cross was able to Hungary 25.5 tons of blood substitutes, medicine, bandages and medical equipment, 331 tons of food, 32 tons of clothing, 10 tons of soap, and building materials, such as glass, using 42 trucks and 104 railway wagons.<sup>45</sup>

In the fall of 1956 Hungarian flags were displayed in Warsaw and other cities of the country. Warsaw university students served as honor guard in front of the Hungarian Cultural Institute. Containers were placed on busy urban streets for the collection of gifts. In several cities, such as Wroclaw and Warsaw, contributors received Hungarian tricolor ribbons. In Szczecin stamps with the illustration of two clasped hands and the inscription "Szczecin-Csepel" were distributed. (Csepel was the twin city of Szczecin.)<sup>46</sup>

Poles regarded the Hungarian Revolution as a genuine anti-Stalinist revolution, which pursued objectives similar to the Polish October, but resulted in a massacre as a result of the narrow-minded attitude and rigid power drive of the traditional leadership. The large-scale assistance program to help Hungarians served to reaffirm traditional Hungarian-Polish friendship in place of the meaningless phrases on the friendship of two people building socialism. The memory of the admittance of close to 100,000 Polish refugees to Hungary in 1939 was still alive, and many remembered that Hungarian troops stationed in Poland during World War II were friendly and helpful to the population. Most blood donors gave blood for the first time and possibly the last time in their lives. They felt that they had to help. There was a general sympathy towards Hungarians, even if many Poles had never seen a Hungarian in the flesh. Another factor was a strong anti-Soviet feeling and the feeling that Poland had avoided the tragedy of Hungary.

All over Poland meetings and in some cases demonstrations were held to express solidarity with the Hungarian Revolution. The largest demonstration in support of "the fighting Hungarian brothers" took place in Olsztyn on October 30, 1956, with close to 10,000 participants. Demonstrators carried signs reading "We demand the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary!" "Free Poland—Free Hungary" and "Soviet internationalism shows its true colors in Hungary." The local Red Army Square was renamed Square of the Hungarian Insurgents.<sup>47</sup> A compromise was agreed to with the local authorities and the square was named General Joseph Bem Square. It is still so named. Wroclaw and Cracow were the centers of other meetings and demonstrations. In the City Hall of Wroclaw on the main square a Hungarian flag with a black ribbon was displayed.<sup>48</sup> The same flag was displayed in the largest industrial plant, where "workers removed the red star and replaced it with the Polish and Hungarian flags."<sup>49</sup> In December 1956 in the same industrial plant a five-minute work stoppage, accompanied by the sound of the plant sirens, was held in protest against the suppression of the workers' councils in Hungary. Placards were displayed reading "Hands off Hungary!"<sup>50</sup> In the morning hours of November 5 silent demonstrations took place in Cracow and Poznań, with displayed Hungarian flags and several thousand participants in protest against the second Soviet intervention and in memory of the Hungarian insurgents who died in battle.

Gomułka was able to restrict the widespread social sympathy for "the fighting Hungarian brothers" relatively early, by emphasizing the danger of a tragic situation in Poland, similar to that in Hungary. Hundreds of "informative agitators" were mobilized all over the country for that purpose.<sup>51</sup> Simultaneously, after November 1956 he attempted to avoid domestic policies that would revive popular excitement. The Polish leadership was fully aware that it could not make Polish public opinion believe that a counter-revolution had taken place in Hungary; the leadership itself did not

believe it. A substantial proportion of Polish society in fact identified with the ideas of the Hungarian Revolution, and regarded events in Hungary as a repetition of those that had taken place in Poland several days earlier. Therefore Polish authorities did not insist on the mandatory use of the "Hungarian counter-revolution" theory even in official Party publications. The official view was that the issue should be mentioned as little as possible. This position explains the fact that in spite of the repeated initiative of the Warsaw Hungarian Embassy an exhibition on the "counter-revolution" never took place in Warsaw; nor were the Kádárist "White Books" published in Polish.

In the winter of 1957 Hungarian Ambassador János Katona met with Arthur Starewicz, now the director of the Press Office of the Central Committee, and complained that a substantial part of Polish society was misinformed. He therefore suggested the publication of articles in the Polish press on "controversial issues." Starewicz replied that an open discussion of issues relating to Hungary would not benefit the Hungarian government. First, Poles still displayed a lively interest in the Hungarian events of the previous year. If the Hungarian viewpoint were to be expressed in the Polish press, this would weaken the credibility of the Polish leadership. Second, there still existed a radical difference of opinion between the two parties on this issue and, as a result, the Party leadership could not represent the viewpoint of the Hungarian government. He understood that this was a matter of great importance for Budapest, but it was not for Warsaw. It would, he said, require a long time for Polish society to change its views on the Hungarian issue.<sup>52</sup>

The changes of 1956 also had an impact on the press. Censorship became more liberal as compared with the post-1948 period. Forbidden issues still existed, but many censors became uncertain as to what materials to restrict or censor. This relative freedom continued until the spring of 1957. At that time the Party

leadership decided to censor the excessively free "unmuzzled" press. Prior to November 4, 1956, the Polish press faced practically no administrative rules concerning the publication of reports on events in Hungary, and therefore papers gave extensive and factual coverage to the Hungarian Revolution, based to a large extent on the activity of Polish correspondents in Budapest. Dozens of statements, appeals and viewpoints in agreement with the objectives of the Revolution were published.

Although the Polish leadership attempted to lessen the full freedom of the press and radio during the Revolution, this had little effect. After November 4 Gomułka initially used conciliatory language with journalists and attempted to persuade them personally to consider state interests. He argued that in the light of the economic and political conditions of the country, Poland was not in a position to advocate views on such an important issue as Hungary that were opposed to those of the Soviet Union. He appealed to journalists to moderate their views. There were certain topics, such as the Hungarian issue, on which it was not possible to write or speak with complete freedom.<sup>53</sup> All of this made little impact. Therefore the PUWP leadership restored full censorship, prohibited public speeches by Polish journalists who had returned from Budapest, and dismissed radio and press correspondents who did not accept the new rules.

The execution of Imre Nagy and his associates in June 1958 was completely unexpected and came as a major shock to the Polish Party and government leadership. Gomułka became furious on receiving the news. He thought that Kádár had deceived him. He considered the execution to have been a vile murder.<sup>54</sup> According to popular belief Gomułka had received a personal promise from Kádár that even if a trial were held, no death sentences would be imposed. Gomułka had been in Budapest on an official visit in May 1958, after having postponed that visit for a year and a half. It is believed that Gomułka received the promise personally from Kádár

during his visit. The PUWP did not agree with the Imre Nagy trial, and especially not with the manner in which it was conducted. They disapproved of it behind the scenes, but at the same time they did not want to argue with the other countries of the Soviet camp over this matter. The summer of 1958 was quite distinct from the fall of 1956. The June 28, 1958, speech of Gomułka in Gdańsk confirmed this public position. In the name of "political pragmatism" he fully accepted the official Hungarian position on the Imre Nagy trial.

Subsequently the PUWP leadership believed that with the Gdańsk speech the Imre Nagy issue, and in general the issue of the evaluation of the Hungarian Revolution, was closed from their point of view. They did not bring it up later, and expected that Polish public opinion would forget the whole matter. However, in October 1981 they revived the Hungarian events of 25 years ago for the purpose of intimidating the Solidarity movement and Polish society with the image of the bloody suppression of the Hungarian Revolution. But that is another story.

## Notes

1. This watchword emphasized also the point that Hungary should not copy the example of other countries, but each nation must chart its own way.
2. *Oral History Archive* (henceforth: OHA), No. 572. Interview with Emanuel Planer, former director of the information division of Polish Radio, prepared by János Tischler, 1993.
3. *Az 1956-os magyar forradalom lengyel dokumentumai* [The Polish Documents of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956], edited, translated and with an introduction by János Tischler (Budapest, 1996), pp. 203–204, III/5/157.
4. *Magyar Országos Levéltár* [Hungarian National Archives] (henceforth: MOL), *MDP és MSZMP Irtak Osztálya* [Division of MDP (Hungarian Workers' Party) and MSZMP (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) Papers], 276.f. 52/34.6.e.
5. MOL, 276.f. 52/35.6.e.
6. The key importance of the personality of Imre Nagy is consistently emphasized in historical studies and recollections.
7. The Internal Security Corps was an integral element of the Internal Defense Forces under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior.
8. Concerning the role of Polish "internal security" in 1956, see János Tischler, "A lengyel állambiztonság 1954–1964" [The Polish State Security 1954–1964], *Évkönyv VII, 1999* [Yearbook 7, 1999] (Budapest, 1999), pp. 154–164.
9. The central daily of the MDP (Hungarian Workers' Party) was the only newspaper in the Soviet bloc that published the speech of Gomułka in full. It was not published in the Soviet Union, according to the Soviet Party leadership, because "this would require commentary, which would give rise to further debates, and that is not desirable."
10. Khrushchev mentioned this comment of Gomułka a year and a half later to Polish journalists in Moscow. *Archiwum Akt Nowych* [Archive of Modern History] (henceforth: AAN), KC PZPR, paeczka 113, tom 28. Materiały do stosunków Partijných polsko–radzieckich z lat 1958–1960 [Materials on Polish–Soviet Party Relations 1958–1960].

11. The following note is found in the documents of this session: "There is only one solution, to terminate the situation in Poland." The note is published in *Döntés a Kremben, 1956. A szovjet pártelnökség vitái Magyarországról* [Decision in the Kremlin, 1956. The Soviet Party Presidium's Debates about Hungary], eds. Vyatcheslav Sereda and János M. Rainer (Budapest, 1996), p. 22.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 22 and 24.
13. Tibor Hajdu, "Az 1956. október 24-i moszkvai értekezlet" [The Moscow Consultation of October 24], *Évkönyv I, 1992* [Yearbook 1, 1992] 1 (Budapest, 1992), pp. 149-156.
14. Cf. note 2.
15. Initially the Chinese Party delegation arriving in Moscow attempted to persuade the Soviets not to authorize the dismissal of Rokossowski, but in the end the Kremlin agreed to terminate the role of the "Marshal of Two Nations" and to bring about his return to the Soviet Union. Khrushchev made the following comment in this connection at the October 30 session of the Soviet Party Presidium: "I told Gomułka, in connection with Rokossowski, that this is for you [the Poles] to decide." See *Döntés a Kremben, 1956*, eds. Sereda and Rainer, pp. 51-52.
16. *Az 1956-os magyar forradalom lengyel dokumentumai*, ed. Tischler, p. 152, II/1/133.
17. OHA, No. 571. Interview with Adam Willman, the former Polish ambassador to Hungary, prepared by János Tischler, 1991.
18. *Az 1956-os magyar forradalom lengyel dokumentumai*, ed. Tischler, p. 45, V/1/18.
19. Lajos Izsák and József Szabó, eds., *1956 a sajtó tükrében* [1956 as Reflected in the Press] (Budapest, 1989), p. 1. "A LEMP KB felhívása a magyar nemzethez" [The Appeal of the PUWP Central Committee to the Hungarian Nation], *Szabad Nép*, October 29, 1956. AAN, KC PZPR, 237V-840. Przemówienia Władysława Gomułki, 20.10-23.11.1956 [Speeches of Władisław Gomułka, October 20-November 23, 1956], pp. 47-48.
20. *Az 1956-os magyar forradalom lengyel dokumentumai*, ed. Tischler, pp. 45-47, V/1/19.
21. János Tischler, "Lengyel szemmel 1956-ról" [The Polish View of 1956]. Interview with Artur Starewicz, former director of the Press Office of the PUWP Central Committee, *Műltünk* 37 (1992) 2-3: 277-278.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 278-279.
24. *Az 1956-os magyar forradalom lengyel dokumentumai*, ed. Tischler, p. 153, II/1/134.
25. *Archiwum Polskiego Radia i Telewizji* [Archive of the Polish Radio and Television], *Polityczne Nagrania Archiwalne* [Archive of Political Records], 4351/3, Muzyka i Aktalnosci [Music and Current Affairs], 30.10.1956.
26. *Döntés a Kremben, 1956*, eds. Sereda and Rainer, pp. 62-65. A "Jelző-klasszisz". *Szovjet dokumentumok 1956-ról* [The Yeltsin File. Soviet Documents on 1956], eds. Éva Gál, Andras B. Hegedüs, György Litván and János M. Rainer (Budapest, 1993), pp. 70-73, II/12.
27. The Soviet delegation sent a telephone message to Moscow on the meeting, stating that "there is no complete agreement," and that the opinion of the Poles was that this was an internal Hungarian matter and there should be no intervention, but they agreed that some reaction was involved in Hungary. The Polish delegation added that in a free election the Communist Party would receive 8-10% and that in Hungary "the workers must be armed, they should retain their weapons." *Döntés a Kremben, 1956*, eds. Sereda and Rainer, p. 66.
28. *Az 1956-os magyar forradalom lengyel dokumentumai*, ed. Tischler, pp. 175-179, II/9/145.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 153-154, II/1/135.
30. OHA, No. 473. Interview with Jerzy Morawski, former member of the PUWP Political Committee, prepared by János Tischler, 1991.
31. *Az 1956-os magyar forradalom lengyel dokumentumai*, ed. Tischler, pp. 159-161, II/4/140.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 140, V/2/118.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 55, V/1/31.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 140, V/2/117.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58, V/1/34. Cardinal Wyszyński regained his freedom after several years of house arrest. In the fall of 1956 he demonstrated his ability to compromise and his pragmatism by supporting Gomułka in the interests of the country and social peace. In doing so he acted against confrontation between church and state. Gomułka also made efforts to come to terms with the head of the Polish Church, and consequently the earlier church-state conflict was ended. The two leaders reached a satisfactory agreement on



- church-state relations, which did not exclude subsequent conflicts. The parallel between Mindszenty and Wyszyński is striking. The Hungarian Church leader, characterized by dogmatism and an opposition to compromise solutions, made no efforts to support the program of Imre Nagy. In contrast, Cardinal Wyszyński was always ready to compromise with the Communist Party whenever their objectives were compatible or circumstances made such arrangements advisable, without giving up the principles and interests of the Polish Church. As a result of these flexible, but decisive and consistent policies, the Polish Church maintained its substantial influence in opposition to the leadership role of the PUWP.
36. *Az 1956-os magyar forradalom lengyel dokumentumai*, ed. Tischler, p. 154, II/1/136.
  37. Gomulka emphasized this point as well at the Party Conference of the PUWP in the Rzeszów Voivodeship in his comment on December 22, 1956. AAN, KC PZPR, 237/V-842. Przemówienia tow. Wł. Gomułki, 19-22. XII. 1956 [Speeches of Comrade W. Gomułka, December 19-22, 1956], pp. 282 and 306.
  38. Gomulka expressed this official Polish position, with minor modifications, at all Party activist meetings in Warsaw and the voivodeships in December, convoked after the Eighth Plenary Session of the PUWP Central Committee to discuss the new policies.
  39. János Tischler, "Egy 1957. májusi lengyel követjelentés Budapestről" [A Polish Embassy Report from Budapest in May 1957], *Népszabadság*, February 13, 1993.
  40. Cf. note 28.
  41. Cf. the previous note.
  42. *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt ideiglenes vezető testületének jegyzőkönyvei* [The Minutes of the Temporary Executive Organizations of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party], eds. Magdolna Baráth and Zoltán Ripp (Budapest, 1994), IV, May 21, 1957-June 24, 1957, p. 260.
  43. *Archiwum polskiego Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych* [Archive of the Polish Foreign Ministry] (henceforth: AMSZ), zespól 7, wiazka 69,teczka 571. Wegry, międzynarodowa pomoc społeczna, 1956-1957 [Hungary, International Social Aid, 1956-1957], pp. 35-37. *Az 1956-os magyar forradalom lengyel dokumentumai*, ed. Tischler, p. 155, II/1/137.
  44. *Zobierz Wołności*, November 28, 1956.
  45. AMSZ, zespól 7, wiazka 69,teczka 571, p. 69.
  46. Three original stamps are in the author's collection.
  47. *Az 1956-os magyar forradalom lengyel dokumentumai*, ed. Tischler, pp. 205-207, III/5/159.
  48. An authentic copy of the document confirming this action is in the possession of the author.
  49. *Az 1956-os magyar forradalom lengyel dokumentumai*, ed. Tischler, pp. 202-203, III/5/156.
  50. AAN, KC PZPR, 237/-v-295, pp. 191-193.
  51. MOL, *Külföldi iratok* [Foreign Papers] (henceforth: MOL KI), XIX-1-1-j, Lengyelország [Poland], 3. doboz 4j, 00783/1958.
  52. MOL KI, XIX-1-1-j, Lengyelország, 7. doboz 5/c, 005612/1957.
  53. AAN, KC PZPR, 237/V-324. Przemówienia, wystąpienia B. Bierut, W. Dworakowskiego i Wł. Gomułki, 1954, 1956-1957 [Speeches and Appearances of B. Bierut, W. Dworakowski and W. Gomułka, 1954, 1956-1957], pp. 60 and 70-71.
  54. Cf. note 2.