



May 31, 1962
**Summary of Ambassador Wang Binnan's Report to the
Department Party Committee**

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Summary:

Wang Binnan reports extensively on social, political, religious, and economic conditions within Poland, as well as Poland's foreign relations with the US, the Soviet Union, and China.

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Summary of Ambassador Wang Binnan’s Report to the Department Party Committee

(Not Yet Approved)

31 May 1962

Today, I am preparing to discuss domestic issues within Poland. After that, I will discuss Poland’s foreign relations. Lastly I will discuss some other topics.

Part I: Poland’s domestic situation

1. Agricultural issues

This is Poland’s most essential domestic concern.

A) The question of line: they are not creating a cooperative society. They already faced clashes during the establishment of cooperatives in the past, due to the Soviets implementing collective farms. After Czechoslovakia’s establishment of cooperatives, grain yields were too low. Now, there is no mention whatsoever of establishing cooperatives. They will not be put in place until at least 1965. This is connected to Gomułka’s personal beliefs. In 1948, was capable of saying that Poland would not follow the USSR’s collectivization road. After taking office in 1956, Gomułka instantaneously blew away 8,000 cooperatives. Presently, Poland only has upwards of 1600 collectives. This includes 600 so-called “bad cooperatives,” which are prepared to dissolve. Out of Poland’s peasant families, only 0.6% are currently involved in cooperatives. The land area in cooperative hands is only 1.1% of the country’s arable land. The number of peasant families per cooperative has gone down from 18 in 1956 to 13. If there are fewer than 10 the cooperative cannot be organized. Since the leaders’ thinking is against cooperatives, their development has stopped, and seems have lost its steam. At present, they do not dare to completely dissolve the cooperatives; since they have to allow foreign delegations to visit, they have made some embellishments. This year they have held a meeting for representatives from the cooperatives. At the meeting, the delegates criticized their leaders for not caring about the cooperatives.

Concerning class relations within the villages, some new theories have been advanced. 1) Saying that Poland’s villages are reaching middle-income and that poverty does not exist. They call the rich peasants “well-off,” so there are “well-off,” middle-income and low-income farmers. 2) Poland’s villages, without undergoing the establishment of cooperatives, will cross over directly into state farms. This follows the belief that state farms are socialist bodies, and that cooperatives are a phase in the development between capitalism and socialism. The method of direct crossover into state farms is for them to take in bankrupt farmers and forcibly relocate other farmers, who live the areas in the north and west regions where there are many state farms. If they refuse to move, they are inserted onto state farms. Now there are 5,820 state farms, taking up 12% of the arable land in Poland. In Olsztyn, 28% of arable land, 25% of forests, 10% of lake territory are taken up by state farms, with individual farms only taking up 37% of land. There are plans to remove all individual economy from Olsztyn. “State farm-ization” was proposed last year; the head of the Central Committee’s Ministry of Agriculture has also spoken on this topic. This is a plan to destroy the low-income farmer, and moreover it is not realistic. 3) Poland’s theory of the fundamentality of agriculture has been met with various responses. Some support it and write articles. Some oppose it. Gomułka does not agree that agriculture is the foundation of the national economy; he believes that industry is the foundation. Yet he cannot say that they do not take agriculture seriously. He says that developing agricultural production while lowering costs is the foremost responsibility of the national economy. The budget for the five-year plan between 1961-1965 is 560 billion, of which

140 billion is allocated to agriculture.

Right now Poland is developing small agriculture organizations. The state has sold out its obligation to the peasants and made a contract with free market competitive pricing. Every year 22 billion is allocated to the small groups to purchase machinery, which is then publicly owned. This is owing to the fact that the agriculture groups rest in the hands of rich and well-to-do peasants (the management committees for small agriculture groups are made up of 58-60% rich and well-to-do peasants). This policy directly benefits the rich peasants. In order to stimulate production, Poland has decreased taxes on wealthy peasants.

It is clear from the above that Poland's agricultural policy is beneficial to the wealthy peasants. The line being followed is that of the rich peasants.

B) Problems with the alliance of the workers and peasants. The working class has issues with the Party's agricultural line. Between 1955 and 1960, workers' salaries went up 29% and that of peasants went up 27%. The fact is that peasants have a higher standard of living than workers. The state gives aid to peasants, using the public's limited earnings to help individual farmers. Workers feel that this is unfair. Last year, amidst a record harvest, the state still imported grains, thus making it difficult to purchase from peasants. Judging by their output, the grain produced in Poland was plenty to eat. The imported grain was mainly used for feed. Poland currently has 2.8 million horses and one pig for every two people. There is no shortage of meat on the Polish markets. The provisions situation is likely better in Poland than any other Western European state.

C) Class separation. Between January and September 1960, workers hired in the villages went up from 1004 to 2000. Peasant houses were split up, with 70,000 new households added between 1957-60, the majority of which had two roofs or fewer. Each year, 30-40,000 houses are demolished, with half of these being of the "two roofs or fewer" variety. Land transactions increased tenfold between 1957 and 1960; land prices are rising accordingly. Crops have failed on 300-500,000 individual land holdings. Production workers—the peasants' housing scheme provides for 1,720,000 homes. This includes 1 million with primarily salary-based income. These individuals' reputations are not good: they are neither workers, nor peasants.

D) Grain. Grain importation has risen steadily over the past few years. Since Gomułka took office, 7.7 million tons of cereals have been imported, worth 500 million USD. Last year, they imported 3 million tons, and this year it was 2 million tons. Soviet provisions of grain totaled 700,000 tons, with surpluses being sold to the US and Canada. Gomułka has spoken in the past about achieving grain independence. [First Secretary of the KCP Edward] Ochab said it would take about 10 years. East Germany and Czechoslovakia's per acre production rate has reached 30 quintals; Poland's is a mere 16-17 quintals. Last year their per-acre production rate reached 18 quintals. At present, their national output is 16 million tons. If their per-acre production can reach 19 quintals, it will raise their cereal production by 1.5-1.6 million tons. They would be able to solve their importation problems. The Polish comrades have agreed that last year's large harvest was primarily a result of favorable weather conditions. Aside from this, production relations are stable. Another reason is that the government has spent lots of capital on providing fertilizer, feed, seeds and machinery.

2. Economic construction

A) Collectively owned enterprise is complicated. However, industry is essentially nationalized. Private enterprise accounts for 1%, and private commerce for 6-7%. The central leadership disagrees with Yugoslavia over how to implement the planned economy.

B) There are some theories regarding economic construction; "walking the Polish road" has been brought up. The so-called "Polish road" consists of the following: workers' autonomy, small agriculture organizations, and expanding the powers of the regional peoples congresses. As far as industrial management, a constituency of politburo members and economists has brought up the Poland's economic status. The Polish people like novelty. They claim to be different than the

Soviets.

C) Poland is presently fabricating a 20-year long-term plan. [Oskar] Lange has said that by 1980, Poland's industrial output will surpass West Germany's present levels by 75% and double that of the UK.

D) The economic community. Poland believes that small states should not compete with the West. Relying on Western states is not right; they should band together. Make a Czech-German-Polish economic community. Right now Poland and Czechoslovakia already collaborate on tractor production. They have opened communal mines in Poland for copper and sulfur. Poland and Germany collaborate on a lignite mine. In addition, they have raised the question of founding a government either by confederation or federation. Poland believes that the Western European common market is geared toward doing away with the socialist camp. They are panicking. The West has presently only agreed upon short-term contracts with Poland. They can also cancel sales to Poland for political reasons. Poland is weary of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, they think that abiding by the council's proposals is a waste of time, and that after they go along with them they have no control mechanism. There is no one in charge to facilitate; their hope is that a vice Premier level cadre would oversee this business. Gomułka says that socialist state cooperation doesn't compare with that of the other side.

E) Foreign trade. The national economy relies upon trade to a significant extent. Trade with capitalist states accounts for 37-40% of their total volume. Domestic raw materials are in short supply. Trade is relied upon for 80% of their ironsand: in 1961, they imported 7,320,000 tons of it. One hundred percent of rare metals were imported, as well as 100% of cotton blossoms. Last year they imported 2.4 million tons of petroleum. Out of blue-collar workers there are 40% who rely on foreign goods to survive. Last year we administered wide-ranging cuts in our trade with Poland. Our "punishment" of Poland was severe. Poland has a trade deficit every year: last year it was 700 million zloty. Poland is in the midst of developing trade relations with the central region. Since the establishment of the "common market," changes to their import-export system have been proposed. They have scaled back their importation of machinery, eradicating their reliance on the West. In 1957, their overseas borrowing totaled 920 million zloty. In 1960, this escalated to 7 billion zloty. Due to hardships related to raw materials and exportations, they have promoted technological innovation, raised the efficiency of production, and stipulated that production must go up 83% by relying on increased labor efficiency.

3. *Intellectuals.*

A) Following the 22nd Congress of the CPSU, the intellectual community has demanded freedom and democracy. They demand freedom of speech and freedom of the press, they oppose censorship of printed materials, and they demand that the government acknowledge its mistaken restrictions of the past. They have even brought up their opposition towards slavery. The debate is extremely vast. There are occasional televised debates on these subjects, in which four people act out the roles of leading figures from the USSR, the US, France and England. They hold a meeting, and the result of the four leaders' debate is a loss for Khrushchev. It has been said that Gomułka was very annoyed after he found out. The intellectuals have claimed that socialism means freedom, and that it is human nature to demand freedom. The debate among the intellectuals reflects the KPC's internal struggles. [Edward] Ochab was unable to recover from the freedom debates of 1956 and ultimately he had to step down. At present, Gomułka is opposed to these kinds of debates. Journalist [Henryk] Holland sold the secrets of the 22nd Congress to the West and committed suicide to escape his guilt. This incident caused a serious disturbance in Poland; over 600 people attended his funeral procession, including Vice Chairman of the State Council [Oskar] Lange and the Mayor of Warsaw.^[1] There were some in Parliament who called for an investigation. The Police force is controlled by Zambrowski. They have passed the responsibility to the Central Committee, saying that the order to arrest Holland did not come from the police. The Party has shut down several intellectual organizations. At the moment there is no shortage of this kind of problem. Originally, the politburo's internal cultural management was assigned to [Edward Osóbka]

Morawski. Following his insubordination, oversight was reassigned to Ochab. Due to recent changes in Ochab's ideology, and his gravitation toward Zambrowski, it has been changed again to the head of the police, Si-chai-lai-ci-ji [sic]. The intellectuals feel deep resentment over this.

B) The church. The church is powerful, with 10,000 individual branches and 90% or more of the population being believers. There is sharp struggle between church and state. The Party has taken a hostile approach to dealing with the church, and their tactics have achieved remarkable results. The imperialist tactic is to utilize the church for legalized struggle and not expose it. The state has also gone with the option of legalized struggle.

i. The issuance of a law of education, which was announced in parliament, has been opposed by the church. The law stipulates that all schools will be secular, elementary and kindergarten classes will take a scientific worldview, and religion instruction must be optional, given outside of class, and furthermore that these classes must be taught at the church. Since the students feel that this is inconvenient, there will be steadily fewer students enrolled in religion classes. This way, they can ultimately eliminate these classes.

ii. The issuance of property laws, stipulating that immobile property owned by the church is now state property.

iii. The stipulation of assembly laws. In the past, close to a million people would make pilgrimages to "Częstochowa". Now there are more restrictions. Regulating assembly must not violate socialist rule. Some assemblies ought to be authorized.

iv. The stipulation of conscription for students in the monasteries. In the course of working to mobilize the monks, last year 200 out of the nation's 4000 monks were mobilized and withdrew.

v. Agitating the population to struggle against the churches. For example, when the people demand housing, the government tells them that the church is presently occupying too many houses, and allows the people to go to the church with their demands. As far as the Polish leadership is concerned, the church is clearly an enemy. The state's struggle against the church is comprehensive and strategic. It has met with undeniable results. There is unrest in the church establishment. His Eminence [Stefan] Wyszyński has claimed that atheism is extremely rash. "When faced with this manner of insult to God," he says, "shall we therefore be careless and accepting?" At present, the reactionaries are all contained within the sphere of the church.

Part II: Poland's foreign relations.

1. *Poland-US relations.*

Poland-US relations are rather extraordinary within the context of the socialist camp. Since Eisenhower came to power America has started to undermine Poland, striving for peaceful evolution and making Poland a key work point. The US strategy is: a) Give Poland US dollars (480 million in loans), b) Give Poland most-favored-nation treatment (in the past, Poland-US trade stood above \$20 million; last year it passed \$100 million), 3) Personnel exchanges (Kennedy's little brother and sister both make visits to Poland. It is worth noting that each year, 13,000 Americans travel to Poland for tourism and to propagandize for America's culture and way of life. According to the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation, there are over 500 Polish exchange students in the US. The US publishes its "America" magazine in Poland. After it is published there is a frenzied rush to obtain it. Since the Polish leaders have an opportunist mindset, these American actions are made legal.

Poland has demanded unqualified coexistence with the US, but they cannot unduly provoke the US, since economically they must continue to rely on them. When Gomułka first took office, he believed that fostering relations with the US would lead later on to side effects, yet there was no helping it. Now it appears that the side effects are more severe than previously supposed. A) The

doctrine of Socialist neutralism has developed, particularly among the intellectuals. Last year, the situation in Berlin was tense. There were some who advocated for the USSR and the US to attack one another. Poland stayed neutral, seeing no reason to interfere. B) Inability to distinguish between friends and foes: in this regard, Poland has it even worse than the USSR. Last year, while Berlin's issues were still tense, panic buying swept the nation, much more so than other Eastern European states. C) The Western way of life is in style. The state has over 7,000 registered prostitutes, with many hailing from bankrupt family-farms. Their films compete with those of the West for levels of lewdness and nudity. Even serious movies include lewd shots ... What is astounding is that even the Premier's wife, an actress, appeared in a scene undressed. Incidents of theft increase every year. In 1960 there were 2664 incidents in Krakow, last year there were over 3100. Every year over 200 cars are stolen. Sometimes the circle of thieves includes cadres at the level of deputy secretary or bureau head. Couriers have absconded with gold and jewels: once a single individual smuggled 400 watches. There have been incidents of rape in Warsaw. This has also had an impact on the youth. The results of a survey given to 733 college students clearly demonstrate that only 28% support continued adherence to the Socialist road, while only 2.4% consider themselves Marxists. Responding to the question of whether or not to develop capitalism, those in favor of not restricting capitalism totaled 56%. How can such youths become the next generation of socialists?

2. Poland-USSR relations

Gomułka's thinking is completely aligned with Khrushchev's, except further to the right. Of course, in terms of influence, Khrushchev's is more prevalent. The USSR has some mistrust toward Poland's relationship with the US: they do not collaborate with Poland on agriculture, and they have some objections to Poland's lack of suppression toward Jews and intellectuals. Poland also has objections toward the USSR: they do not share their skills with Poland. They do not approve of the Soviets' intensity, nor do they support the USSR's resumption of nuclear tests. They are also mistrustful of the Soviets' baiting of West Germany. In the present debates, they do not support cutting off relations with Albania. They believe that the practice of cutting off relations is idiotic and of no advantage to the USSR, that it seems rather petty. There is a peculiar feature in Gomułka's way of doing things: he does not go to extremes, preferring instead to give ground. Concerning whether or not to move Stalin's grave, he did not support changing the name of Stalingrad, believing it to be too excessive. In his speeches, Gomułka continues to use the old name of Stalingrad; he does not say Volgograd. After the 22nd Congress, Poland has not advanced the Anti-Dogmatism movement. Aside from the name-changes in 1956, small streets named after Stalin in Warsaw and other provinces have not changed their names, nor has the [Joseph Stalin] Palace of Culture and Science. When the birth and death of [Bolesław] Bierut are celebrated, the KPC still makes a point of sending a bouquet. Schools and factories named after Bierut have not had their names changed.

3. China-Poland relations

Overall they rely on the USSR, but they do not want their verbiage to have been for naught in their dealings with us.

A) Gomułka acknowledged that the CCP is a great Party, an experienced Party, and that its problem-solving is prudent. He believes that Mao Zedong is the prestigious leader of the People's Movement. Of course, Bierut's appraisal of Chairman Mao is even higher, who calls him the great leader of the international People's Movement. Poland is presently in the middle of translating Chapter Four of the *Selected Works of Chairman Mao*. In order to bring this chapter forth as soon as possible, the Central Propaganda Ministry had initially requested that the publishing house separate Chapter Four into two volumes, so as to take them one at a time and publish the first half by the end of this year. Last year, we cut 70% of our trade with Poland, which left Poland feeling quite inconvenienced [a handwritten note amends this figure to 50%--trans.]. They do not understand how falling crop yields could impact the export of products and minerals. However, they have certainly not spoken ill of us like Czechoslovakia has. They frequently say how pleased they

are by China's successes.

B) Every region in the country has Sino-Polish friendship associations. Following the 22nd Congress, they all shut down, one after another. Now they have all resumed their activities. A "China Day" was held once every week at the Warsaw congress, during which Chinese films were projected and bulletins related to China were put up. The associations continue to publish the "China Monthly." When our northern inspection vessels needed to cross the Taiwanese strait, we asked the Soviets for assistance to use their boat flags and crew, but we were refused. We went to our Polish comrades and solved the problem with a phone call. Our northern fleet made inspections in the south, with Poland providing assistance, demonstrating that they are indeed our friends.

C) We have had good experiences, and Poland is willing to learn—not just from the USSR either. At a meeting of the Polish Central Committee in 1958, [Eugeniusz] Szyr (now the Deputy Prime Minister) expressed his desire to revise Poland's targets and goals in light of China's experience during the Great Leap Forward. "The rapidity of China's development," said Ochab in 1960, "into a powerful people under the leadership of the Party, can provide a very useful model for us." A few years ago, Poland's issued tons of propaganda about China. The commune system, the free supply system, mass construction of canteens, etc. all made their way into the Polish writings. In recent years, our voice has gone flat, such that they cannot order the finale. The events of the past two years have impacted the prestige of our Party. Poland does not take pleasure in our misfortunes; inside, they are sympathetic to us. Within the KPC, they still emphasize that the virtue of the CCP is its willingness to admit its mistakes. They show camaraderie and agreement toward the seriousness of our agricultural arrangements, and believe them to be correct. Poland took losses during their 6-year plan, so they believe our methods are reasonable.

C) Poland has demanded Sino-Soviet reconciliation. When Sino-Soviet relations are tense, Polish tension follows. They do not appear capable of not going along with Khrushchev's speeches, yet they are hesitant to overly condemn China. Since the 22nd Congress, Poland has not engaged in anti-Chinese demonstrations. They have been friendly towards us. In the foreign relations context, the Polish leaders have treated us warmly, making the Soviet ambassadors a little but jealous. Our delegation to the international summit in Poland did not hear any slander. The summit's podium placed our plans second only to the USSR's. Some delegates from certain Chinese science labs reported that Poland had provided them with extremely confidential materials. Whenever I asked to meet with Polish leaders to explain a situation, I was always given the opportunity to do so. Last year, when I went to Olsztyn for a meeting, the First Secretary and the Provincial Governor accompanied me. Last year when I attended a handoff ceremony aboard a steamship in Gdańsk, the provincial committee First Secretary and the Provincial Governor both attended on my account, breaking all earlier practice. Once I went to Zielona Góra to attend their grape festival. The provincial committee specifically called to ask what time the ambassador had left the embassy. The provincial leadership and a crowd of over 200 people welcomed us at the border. They even hung a temporary colored slogan banner saying, "Welcome to the Delegation of the People's Republic of China." This year, several counties celebrated an apple festival, inviting me to attend, along with representatives from the embassies of Bulgaria, Romania, etc. After I spoke at the banquet, more than 80 people called out "Long Live Mao Zedong!" and sang the song "Many Happy Returns." They treated me with deep and spontaneous affection. Generally, there were few supporters of either Albania or China; the majority supported us, but not Albania, since they believe that the Albanian leadership's leadership is not Party-like. Some people support both China and the USSR. They debate us, but with the spirit of comrades. There are some isolated cases of slander against us. There was one incident, which was the popular joke among Polish students directed to Chinese exchange students: "People say that when the Chinese delegation returned from the 22nd Congress, they brought with them a little puppy. I don't know what kind of puppy it was," to which another student replies, "It was Albania." Following the embassy's notice of this, the foreign exchange students replied: "If there were people calling Poland a dog, how would you feel?" The Polish students replied: "Poland has always been a dog!"

Economically, Poland has to rely on the USSR; politically, they are completely aligned with them. However, they also maintain a certain degree of independence. Therefore, we have to look to the Soviet influence upon Poland, as well as China's influence in Poland. Our influence in Poland reached its peak in 1956. If England can be said to be the center of the West, then Poland might be called the center of the socialist camp. Who she will ultimately side with is difficult to predict. Poland's leadership has surpassed the revisionist thought of the USSR on all accounts. However, this is not to say that the Polish leaders are revisionist on every issue. Revisionists are always the minority in a socialist state. Our targets must not be too broad.

Part III: Some questions.

1. There have been a great many international conferences held in Warsaw, which raises the question of whether or not China should attend. Last year, we declined to attend the vast majority of these. There were a few conferences that we declined on principle since Albania was not invited. Last year, the editorial boards of several health journals held conferences. We asked the Poles whether Albania had been invited. They responded that since Albania has never attended, they had not received an invitation. Our Health Department expressed that if Albania is not invited, we will attend. Later on, Poland invited Albania: Albania did not attend, neither did we. Aside from that, at the Socialist States' Hydraulic Coal Extraction conference, every Eastern European country told of their experiences. Outside the meeting, Poland conveniently solicited our opinion, asking whether or not we would discuss China's experience with hydraulic coal extraction. It had been decided domestically that we would not discuss. However, North Korea did make a presentation in the context of an inspection unit. Our Central Economic Communications Board expressly indicated that if the opposition repeatedly brought up this topic, we should leave the event. In these circumstances, it was better to not even send an inspection unit. This should demonstrate internationalism before our fraternal states, along with a certain spirit of collaboration. We must not make people feel as though China does not appreciate collaboration. That is just what Khrushchev would want.

2. The problem of replying to letters from fraternal states. Our reply to Poland did not say anything, only that we would let them read our reply to the USSR. Zambrowski said to me: "We are also an independent Party. We should be treated with fairness. We would be criticized if we were led toward a mistake. Don't just give us someone else's letters to read. We would not want to injure their race's characteristic egotism. The USSR's superpower mentality has led to danger."

3. The Albanian ambassador to Poland comes to us for an opinion on every single thing, like asking us whether certain Poles can be taken advantage of, to what degree they can be taken advantage of, whether or not they can be employed to disseminate documents, etc. etc. The Albanian and Mongolian ambassadors have sparred over [Khorloogiin] Choibalsan, making it so that the Mongolian ambassador cannot step down. The Albanian ambassador solicited ideas. How to respond to these and other Albanian tactics should be the subject of further research.

4. Last year, on April 17, America invaded Cuba. That day, Poland held a people's conference to protest. But we only organized a people's conference four days later, which seemed a little slow.

Our report will conclude here. We hope the departmental leadership will reply with any corrections.

^[1] This refers to the "Henryk Holland Affair," in which Holland distributed a speech on the 20th Congress of the CPSU and the fall of Stalinism to the Western press. He died in his apartment during a search conducted by the Polish secret police in 1961. I bring this up because Krzysztof Persak, Polish historian and Wilson Center fellow, has written a book on the subject called *The Henryk Holland Affair [Sprawa Henryka Hollanda]* (Warsaw, 2006)—trans.