

nobody answered his questions or even attempted to polemize with him. It was generally thought that he stuck his nose into affairs that did not concern him.

Depending on the points discussed, the Politburo would sometimes invite people whose rank was never below that of Vice-Minister, Ambassador or Commercial Councillor. Compared to Government members who were 'well' acquainted with the matters discussed, other Politburo members were rather passive viewers and listeners. Moreover, they did not even try to hide their boredom with the things discussed.

Sometimes only, Władysław Kruczek, Chairman of the Central Council of the Trade Union, an old member of the Communist Party of Poland, a deeply pro-Soviet dogmatist and an unbelievable blockhead, would... 'speak up'. Suddenly, without any reference to anything or without any argument, he would ask :

'- And couldn't we raise the wages?' He never motivated his 'answers and pronouncements'. He probably knew that people were complaining about wages, so he thought that he, the representative of the 'Trade Union', took care of the working class... Well, after all, he did represent it in the Politburo! In principle, nobody would even bother to answer. His questions, by the way, were pronounced in a weeny voice and were addressed not to a particular person but to the surrounding space. And he, satisfied with having 'presented' the problem, would put a stupid smile on his face and remain silent until the end of the debate. I sometimes noticed that Józef Tejchma, just as silent, would sometimes have big problems with repressing ironic smiles after each one of Kruczek's 'interventions'. All the others also made queer faces or didn't even notice anything.

Only once, Gierek really exploded with anger after Kruczek broke in. When the latter, once again, 'presented' the question of wages, Gierek roared at him :

'- Władek /diminutive form of Kruczek's first name/, stop screwing up these wages! Do you want us to collapse?...' I have never seen Gierek as enraged as that. Kruczek became silent and his face was that of an admonished brat. Presently, he certainly goes around Warsaw, telling people that he had offered certain things for consideration during the Politburo debates and that he had even quarrelled over them with Gierek...

Sometimes only, some of the invited guests from the governmental organs took the floor shortly or gave additional explanations. Discussions, as such, were non-existent during the Politburo debates. Nobody went into any single one of the discussed matters, did not attempt to question anything and, as it was currently said in the PPP, the matters were rattled off.

Only Jagielski pronounced himself from time to time but he rather explained the matters. They were mostly 'bred' by him, so what was he to discuss?

After this queer discussion-debate would come to its end, the Prime Minister, Piotr Jaroszewicz, would speak. He did this with a lot of energy and his voice was that of a person accepting no opposition. Only once Szyd-lak intended to say something and Jaroszewicz reduced him like a simple whipper-snapper. He was known for his explosiveness. However, he calmed down after a while and said :

'- Forgive me, Janek' / Szyd-lak's first name/.

'- It's no deal,' answered the other.

It is worth mentioning that Jaroszewicz always came to the debates with the original edition of a manula written by some Soviet economist. I somehow never figured out the author, or even the title of the book. In order to confirm some theses of his, Jaroszewicz would sometimes cry out :

'-Wait! Wait! I will prove this to you right away!' and he would feverishly search his book for the suitable quotation. I do not recall his finding it even once...

After Jaroszewicz, it was always Gierek who took the floor. His speech was mostly reduced to the summary of the debate which he read from my paper. And then, everything was over. Nobody would speak after him. The resolution projects were not discussed, either. They were approved by circulation or they found their way to the following debate. The approval took place without any discussion or reading of documents.

So, these were the famous Politburo 'debates' which, according to Gierek, and others, kept the whole Nation waiting breathlessly. I cannot say that the intentions were bad. No, they were even good. If somebody would have invented some sort of machine that would have changed good intentions of the Politburo into actions, people in the PPR would have maybe even led quite a good life. But such a machine has never been invented and never shall be. It is the people who are this machine. In the PPR, however, as in all Communist countries, nobody asks their opinion and, therefore, various resolutions cannot be realized or they simply complicate peoples' lives.

I often told at home and to some of our friends, that these Politburo 'works' made me think of children playing bakery. It cannot be said that the kiddies do not work a lot, in their bakery, when they make bread out of sand. Only that this bread cannot be eaten,...

I also mentioned that I listened to deliberations concerning other, non economic, agenda items. Once, I even assisted a discussion concerned with the state of 'national security'. The matter was related by Franci-

szek Szlachcic, the then Minister of Interior./of Internal Affairs, as we say in Polish/. Everything in this field was 'good', although the perpetrators and the reasons of the blowing up of a library room in Opole still remained unknown. The then present Deputy Minister of Interior, Stachura, added only that two brothers, probably the culprits were arrested, but that the investigation was still going on /it was later confirmed that they were guilty/. Besides that, the country was 'calm', everything was under the surveillance of the vigilant eye of the Militia and the Security Police.

Szlachcic praised the chemical industry for supplying the Militia with disabling gas sprays. He also demanded death penalty for group rapists and announced that, 'together with the Z-II Military Intelligence, we are reinforcing intelligence activities in the West.' There was practically no discussion over this agenda point. Gierek only praised Szlachcic and the Ministry of Interior for their 'hard and responsible' work and that was it.

Questions of Poland's defensiveness have never been discussed at the Politburo. They were agreed upon in a tight circle composed mainly of Gierek, Jaroszewicz, Jaruzelski and Kania. Some people maintained that these questions were practically settled by Jaruzelski alone, directly with Moscow. They would then add that 'Wojciech /Jaruzelski/ has an antenna tuned in to Moscow and that he listens only to that'.

In the course of the debates, or after them, there was a break for the so-called second-breakfast snack. No alcohol was served and the choice of foods was rich. There was a wide variety of butcher's products, hot black pudding, pastries, fruit, coffee, tea, juices and mineral water. The waitresses collected the dishes and poured the hot drinks. It was then, during these snacks that the interesting discussions took place. They were much more engaging than the ones held during the Politburo debates. Even though there was a certain discipline, they were rather free. Gierek and Jaroszewicz were the ones who spoke the most and the latter even more than the former. Others also broke in. These discussions mostly consisted of caping one another's stories concerning the knowledge of various details. These people knew everything, or at least, they thought they did. On that occasion it was possible to learn many interesting things. Yet, details dominated. Some of the guests were also invited for these breakfasts. I remember how Franciszek Kaim, then Vice Premier, who was one of the invited guests, argued very seriously that it was impossible to make good tiles in Poland. Nobody polemized with him everybody accepting this as a sad truth. Since Kaim was sitting opposite me, I asked him whether pre-war Poland pro-

duced good tiles /as a matter of fact, they were excellent and are still a very much sought for article after all these years; unfortunately there are not too many that remain/.

'- Everything that was produced then was good'' seriously replied Kaim.

Generally speaking, the atmosphere of these breakfasts was that of great optimism. Everything in the country was calm and what was done ''at the top'' was intelligent... there was a rapid increase in the production, the market supplies were improving, foreign credits and technology began flowing in and even the harvests were good. In the State Planning Commission it was being said that '' we have a boom and we have to keep it going...'' /These were the words of the Commission's Deputy Chairman, H.Kisiel, who pronounced them when talking with me./

And so, they told jokes, burst out laughing for no reason and everybody worshiped Gierk. The fact that first symptoms of tensions began showing did not seem to matter. Why! Everything was going forward!

One of the first symptoms was that, the production of industrial articles of consumption, for example, was growing much too slowly, whereas the population's income was rapidly increasing. All this, combined with the freeze of food prices, was becoming more than problematic. Things were no better with many industrial products whose prices were also frozen. I therefore provoked a discussion on this issue with Gierk. He said that he knew it all very well and that he had already... taken care of it. Astonished how he could have managed such a thing, I outrightly asked him about it.

'- Well, together with Piotr /Jaroszewicz/, we wrote a letter to the workers in order to urge them to give an additional production of industrial market products for 25 billion zlotys...' Gierk answered the most seriously in the world.

I was dumbfounded. I knew about the so-called ''Party deeds'' and ''production commitments'' since years. Well, I even participated in them. People were well aware of the hipocrisy involved. Ministries, factories, national councils and different organisms were informed beforehand that these deeds will be undertaken on various occasions. The same concerned ''commitments''. Foreseeing this eventuality, the concerned organisms always left a maneuverable margin in their production plans and their yearly assignments. Lowered earlier, the production targets were later caught up with. The net effect was then nil, or rather negative, due to the fact that things were done pompously, in big haste, not in the right time and with greater expenditure. The same thing was then obtained at a much higher cost. But the state and the Party leadership were extremely fond of these ''commitments'' and ''deeds''. They were all frantic when their appeals were echoed by

responses from the 'bottom' or when the masses came out, on their own, with the initiative of 'helping' the leadership.

And, above all, such a "workers" approach to the question, such a 'Party economy' demented various learned theories. They showed that 'workers' hands' could do miracles, contrary to the demands of work organization, technology, qualifications, etc.

By the same token, television and radio publicity of the Party and the State leadership, and even of their wives, was massively launched. The patterns of this advertising were fixed and the people could see that the leadership did not shun the shovel! Therefore, when hearing Gierek mention the 'letter to the crews', I really felt disheartened. I had no wish to answer or even to argue with such a dictum of Gierek. The fact that he believed in the efficiency of such actions, closed, all by itself, any road to a reasonable discussion.

Since I presently touch upon the subject of my various discussions with Gierek, I must illustrate them with some other examples. I had once directed one of our discussions on the subject of investment policies, a ghastly figure in all 'Socialist economies'. In the PPR, it was a particularly ghastly one. As known, the so-called technique of "hitching on to the plan" was being widely employed. In reality, this meant the lowering of cost calculations with the goal of entering the plan. And then, it was supposed that things will 'somehow go on' by themselves. And they did. In the very midst of the 5 or 6 year plan, investments were revised, frozen or simply cancelled. Billions of zlotys were irrevocably lost. 'Corrections' of investment plans repeated themselves regularly. The quinquennial investment plan for the years 1971-1975 took, of course, exactly the same tracks. Yet, the problem was that much ^{more} complicated that these investments were increasingly dependent on foreign credits. That was, more or less, how I presented the problem to Gierek. He listened to me and then, suddenly, said :

'- Have an eye on Piotr /Jaroszewicz/...' And he did not further enlighten me.

'- How?' I asked.

'- Well, do it somehow.' He ended the whole affair.

I had a hard time trusting my own ears. But I was forced to end here because the subject visibly bored him. I didn't even intend to begin any 'keeping of my eye on Piotr'. The absurdity of the proposition was so enormous that it didn't even deserve a moment of thought.

Gierek didn't understand a thing about the functioning of economy and sincerely believed that his 'field visits', appeals and other letters would act like a magician's wand. I could not cure this habit and he visibly didn't

care about being cured.

In any case, he believed that he had everything under care, that he understood everything and that there was no reason to be anxious. That was my impression although his words, 'if only we were alone', still rang in my ears. On the other hand, he did not let anything show that this problem tormented him in any way. And I did not want to provoke a discussion on this subject in his office. He himself has never come out with such a proposition.

It is worth mentioning some other discussions we had. It was a fact that the shortage of buses was estimated at some 20 thousand vehicles and this made life very difficult for millions of people in the PPR. Domestic production of 'San' and 'Jelcz' buses was not only far from being sufficient, but it was also obsolete. Something had to be done and the idea of a foreign licence came to mind. The Ministry of Engineering Industry was receiving different foreign bids, the most interesting of which were, according to me, those of the West German KPD and the Hungarian 'Ikarus'.

As far as the first of these propositions was concerned, Fabarin, Minister Councillor of the Soviet Embassy in Warsaw, was persuading me that this would be the best bus for Poland, since it had a very modern engine being part of NATO armament. The USSR would be, he continued, very interested in buying any number of these engines from the PPR. He even mentioned that they would be ready to import approximately... 500 thousand of those engines and of their spare parts! This number was shocking to me, but it was the one he put forward.

Personally, the Hungarian offer was more to my liking. 'Ikarus' was a well known trade mark throughout the world and Hungary was, at that time already, probably the world's biggest bus exporter. The bus was solid, with a MAN engine and, besides, the Hungarians had plans for modernizing the buses and the plants producing them. And, moreover, Hungarians counted on deeper ties with the PPR for other reasons. The 'father' of the Hungarian economic reform, Economic Affairs Secretary of the Hungarian Central Committee, Nyers, paid a visit to Poland in order to discuss this question with the authorities of the PPR. Our embassy in Budapest also supported the idea of a deeper cooperation with Hungary. A very good report on that case, prepared by Kłosiewicz Junior, was enough to harm the case /the author of the report was the son of former Chairman of the Trade Union, Zygmunt Kłosiewicz, with whom Gierek had bad relations/. official,

On the other hand, I knew that Gierek was to pay a visit to France and that it was his intention to buy the Berliet bus. As it was the custom, important economic agreements and contracts had to crown such official visits

abroad or the visits of foreigners in the PPR. Wrzaszyk, the then Minister of Engineering Industry, got wind of this and, in order to attract Gierek's sympathy, became an ardent supporter of Berliet. A "Berliet lobby" was even created.

I raised the whole subject during discussions I had with Gierek. He then confirmed that, yes, he was going to France and that he intended to buy the Berliet. My reply was that there was no need to make gifts on the occasion of official visits, but he didn't even listen. So, he did "buy" Berliet. And presently, the PPR imports... "Ikarus". It is interesting to mention that there were supposed to be 5 thousand Berliets produced yearly. In 1982, there were only ... 1 thousand of them produced after the introduction of over 140 alterations in the construction! The entire production is threatened with disruption. As a detail, I should like to add that, when Gierek visited the Berliet production plant in a bus of their production, the vehicle broke down. But Gierek was not superstitious.

As one can see, my discussions with Gierek were numerous and concerned many different subjects. Their exhausting description would have no sense and would take too much place. I shall mention some more of them further in the text. The examples I quoted served only to show their profile.

All in all, these discussions did not bring about any results. Looking at them from the perspective of more than 10 years, I think that I was right when trying to persuade him in this or other matter, or when drawing his attention to certain matters or even attempting to dissuade him from undertaking certain steps. One of such actions that I undertook concerned the production of "Tarpan" /Polish version of a pick-up truck/. I had the occasion of seeing its prototype and admired the zeal of its constructors and producers. True, that such a vehicle lacked in Poland. But then, this one was quite an incredible little monster and did not augur any hopes of exploitation or of economic rentability or even affordability.

Gierek, though, did not want to talk about this matter finding it unworthy of attention.

We also took up the question of the Fiat 126p price. The production was just being launched. I shall not enter here into all the details of this story and shall not repeat all the revelations I heard on this subject. I was not there when it all happened and, anyway, I had no influence on the course of events. It all happened prior to my advisorship. All I can add is that I did not quite see the economic sense of purpose for a mass production of passenger cars in the PPR, at its stage of development. But

it happened. In any case, 1000 small Fiats were to leave the assembly line. I learned that Wrzaszczy persuaded Gierek that their price should be 68 thousand zlotys / nearly 30 monthly salaries constituted this sum/ and that they should be sold on coupons. The production was then to rise gradually, but it was still far from satisfying the demand. The interest the people had for the small Fiat was enormous.

To me, it appeared as obvious that the price, on the free domestic market will be much higher and that the coupons will become the object of bribes and of favouritism. So I proposed to Gierek, and I think that I even wrote a paper on this subject, that the small Fiat should be sold on the basis of auction, whether directly or by correspondence. This meant that the price would have depended on how much people were ready to pay. I was against the coupons.

But Gierek did not agree with this. The coupons were preserved and the price was increased to... 69 thousand zlotys. On the free market, the car cost over 100 thousand zlotys. And so, Wrzaszczy won. The coupons were the object of trade. According to accusations against Wrzaszczy, even he himself traded them.

Today, when I read that the official price of the small Fiat is 250 thousand zlotys and that on the free market it is 600 thousand, I cannot believe that the price had risen that much simultaneously with the rise in the production. But this may not last for too long. I learned that the production of the small Fiat may come to an end.

And yet, in spite of this not so encouraging experience with Gierek, I would be untrue if I said that I did not like him. I was persuaded that his intentions were good and that he did want to improve the living standards of the Nation. It is yet another thing that he did not know how to do it or that, he thought he did. Gierek is probably one of the most tragic figures in Polish post war history up to the Jaruzelski period. He did want a "Second Poland", even if it was to be "Socialist" and pro-Soviet. Despite of that, it was to be a wealthy one, with highways, better apartments, cars, motels and even foreign trips and some liberties unknown under his predecessors. He sincerely wanted the people to eat well and so, in 1974, he launched the "Feed the Nation" program.

When compared to Gomulka, or even Ochab and Kania, without mentioning Bierut, he was certainly the most positive of them all. Bierut carried out the stalinization of Poland and signed death sentences, even though he sometimes had some intervals of humaneness. Bierut's positive feelings did not only apply to Gomulka and his companions, but also to the ace of Polish aviation, Colonel Stanislaw Skalski, whose death sentence, Bierut

withheld. /Skalski himself told me about this./ Bierut did the same with Antoni Heda, hero of the Home Army who was known under the pseudonym of 'Szary' and others. Gomułka, despite some attempts to oppose Moscow, distinguished himself with primitivism, exaggerated ascetism and impudence. IN 1948, I refused to condemn him but, when in 1962, I had the occasion of spending 8 long hours in his company, I was deeply shocked by his unenlightenment. Ochab and Kania were at power for too short a period of time to permit a full evaluation.

Just as with Bierut, I had the occasion to see Ochab closely. I slo haerd him speak. I think that his and Bierut's intelligence outgrew that of Gierek, but their hands were not clean. Gomułka's intelligence, did not match that of Gierek, but his stubbornness was far greater. Kania, whom I met more closely, certainly had no character traits of a leader.

There is no use in comparing Gierek with Jaruzelski. The former had an entirely different character and was far more positive than the latter. I never noticed any bloodthirsty instincts in Gierek despite the 'breaking of bones' proclaimed by him in 1968 /I already mentioned this incident/. He was, of course, a Communist and a loyalist of Moscow, but at the same time, he was quite tolerant. He agreed to reconstruct the Royal Castle in Warsaw, a plan to which Gomułka was vehemently opposed. With Gierek at the head of the Party, Poland was more than ever opened towards the West. He appeased many conflicts with the Church and worthily welcomed Pope John Paul II. I know for sure that Primate Stefan Wyszyński had a good opinion of Gierek.

True, that his numerous trips around the world irritated many people in Poland, but not only did he so popularize the PPR in the world, but he also popularized Poland. These trips underlined a sort of independence from Moscow. This was the case of his confidential eyeball to eyeball 'talk on the boat' with Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, an incident which was far from the liking of Moscow. The world wanted to receive Gierek. Without mentioning France, even the USA invited him to Washington, D.C. and President Carter began his foreign visits, after becoming president, with the PPR.

If we advance in time, it must be said that Gierek adopted an enigmatic attitude towards the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. And when he saw, on the television news, Henryk Jaroszek, Polish Ambassador to the UN, defend the invasion and sharply attack the US, he became irritated and recalled him.

Probably the most important thing was that Gierek believed that all conflicts with the Nation could be resolved tahnks to 'political means'.

When, in June 1976, some struggles did take place in Radom and in Ursus, he forbade the use of firearms. It is true that the brutality of the MO /Militia/ and ZOMO /Mechanized Units of Militia/ was undeniable. The so-called 'health paths' and the two mortal victims did not constitute the best evidence for Gierek. But compared to his predecessors and to Jaruzelski, all this was nothing.

I saw these positive traits of Gierek's character, although some of them revealed themselves only after my departure. Therefore, I sincerely wanted to help him. I even think that he liked me and willingly undertook various discussions with me. True, that they did not lead to anything, but still, they did take place. Were it not for certain events, which I shall yet describe, I would have remained with him regardless of numerous disillusionments. Maybe, with time, it would have been possible to convince him of the goo of certain moves. He was becoming more and more haughty and this, in spite of all the accessibility, rendered contacts with him difficult. But even that would not have discouraged me.

After I left my advisorship to him, I heard various rumors about his attitude towards many questions. I believed them. This concerned, for example, the fact that he did not let himself be talked into the destruction of KOR /Committee of Workers' Defense/, of the ^{illegal} independent trade unions and even of KPN /Committee of Independent Poland/. It is difficult to imagine that if he would have wanted to destroy them, that he could not have done it. He was informed about everything in this matter. I can even report some of the details concerning this procedure. Once, as I was talking with Gierek, the then Minister of Interior, Ociepka, called him. He informed Gierek that Chełchowski /former Politburo member/ was once again organizing some shady meeting. Gierek ordered that the man should be further shadowed. If Gierek was informed about the activities of Chełchowski, so I cannot imagine that he was not informed about others. The affairs were "'under glass'". Not everything was probably known, but certainly a lot.

Some mysterious deaths, as for example, that of Pyjas /student of the University of Cracow/, may have been organized without Gierek's knowledge. The security services constitute a state inside the state. I am not even certain whether, after the death of Ociepka, the new Minister of Internal Affairs, Stanisław Kowalczyk, knew for himself what was going on behind his back. He was a friend of Gierek and a non-professional in this field.

One should know that, in the PPR, it is not only the security police which acts with impunity, but also the KGB and the GRU /Soviet Military Intelligence/. They conduct intelligence and counterintelligence actions, as well as other dirty jobs. Concerning Pyjas, it is worth adding, on this occasion,

that during his funeral and the ensuing demonstration, the Security Police was unable to count the participants. They were then helped by a ... Soviet satellite which, flying over Cracow, counted every single one of the participants...

After all, it was under Gierek that 'Solidarity' was created. Even though, he warned in his TV-radio appearance of August 18, 1980, that something like that was impossible, he finally did agree to its creation.

Gierek was, of course, not an intellect. However, he did not identify himself with dogmatics. Inside the Party, he did not introduce any 'ironclad discipline' which is now the dream of his successors. He did not pay attention to 'ideological education', although, at the end of his term, Jerzy Lukaszewicz, the rather stupid Secretary of Propaganda of the Central Committee, promoted various radio programs such as 'The One'. It was aimed at slandering the West. And, as far as I know, this was the result of accords inside the 'Socialist Community' framework.

Gierek himself did not attempt to pose as a "theoretician". It would be worthwhile illustrating this with an example.

In the course of preparations for the 6th PUPP Congress in December 1971, I was in the team elaborating Gierek's report. Seizing this opportunity, I wanted to talk Gierek into two things.

The first was an analysis of the international situation. The developing monetary crisis as well as other symptoms of tensions in the world economy and international trade, put, into my head, the idea that this was the occasion for saying something about the new chances for East West cooperation. A cooperation which would tend towards the solution of problems common to all of humanity. This was supposed to be in the context of a 'peaceful coexistence', apparently so, at least, for what I actually had on mind was a convergence.

Gierek reacted negatively to my persuasions. He answered that, for these things, there is the Communist Party of the USSR and not the PPR. He even added that he would not like to have any problems because of this. I understood his reasons and did not press.

The other problem concerned something else, that is, putting forward, before the PUPP, the task of building a 'socialist society of mass consumption'. Although Gierek talked about a 'life in plenty' of the society, consumption, as such, was still identified with 'consumerism' /one can presently not a return to this very term in the USSR/. Even the Soviet Communist Party and other Parties of the 'Community' began to suddenly proclaim the construction of a 'developed socialist society' /in the USSR, it was supposed to already have existed/.

Hence, it occurred to me that this was the occasion for wider treatment of the question as well as for rehabilitation of consumption as such. The production was to rise quickly, it seemed, but its goal was still not clear because of the obscure role of consumption in the Gross National Product. Consumption needs were incessantly identified with 'consumption attitudes' and this, in itself, had a pejorative meaning.

But Gierek did not accept even this proposition. He told me outright that he did not consider himself a theoretician of Marxism-Leninism and that he didn't even want to be one. If the question of consumption really necessitates a new outlook, he said, so let the other parties do it. He then added that it is better to do these things than to overtly proclaim them.

Inwardly, I even admitted that he was right. All that I managed to introduce into his report was a passage about the 'productivity of the GNP', which was to emphasize not only the percentage growth but also the quality of the growth itself. However, I did not manage to explain this matter more widely. But Gierek wanted to throw out even that.

What else can I say about Gierek?

I think that, in normal democratic conditions, he would have been a union activist, or even a political activist. But surely, he would not have become a leader, even though, he certainly had the traits of one.

Yet, in the satellite system of centralized power, he did grow into a leader and, as it happens, under these conditions, he remained at his post by the force of inertia.

I did not have the occasion of meeting Gierek on the basis of non-formal relations. For this reason, it is difficult for me to talk about other traits of his character. Only once, did I have the occasion for something that could resemble an informal contact. It was on the occasion of the preparation of the aforementioned report for the 6th Congress of the PZNP. Gierek proposed to me that, in order to give the text a final polish, I should join the other team members in Ikańsk. I went there in a special car.

Ikańsk is a rest center of the Bureau of the Cabinet and is situated in the Ramuck Forests in the Olsztyn province at the board of Lake Ikańsk. It served only some of the few chosen, that is, not lower than members and alternate members of the Politburo and Vice-Premiers. Important 'Soviet guests', especially K.Katushev, also came there quite often. That's why the area was 'militarily secure'. The center itself served, in the past, some German aims and was to be developed later. The place is charming, the center magnificent. There is an indoor swimming pool and other facilities.

The mentioned team was composed of Gierek, Olszowski, Jaruzelski, Szlachcic, Werblan, Frelek, Waszczuk and myself. Frelek was the main 'writer'.

We were all informally dressed. Only Jaruzelski wore some military trousers and a similar sweater.

Since I am presently touching upon the subject of the report, I must note that there had been practically no discussion about it. Only Werblan recalled that besides mentioning the USSR we must absolutely add "the great Soviet nation", because the Soviet comrades like this...

Olszowski also wanted to add something and he even called Szydlak on the phone, but the latter blew him up and, with tears in his eyes, Olszowski repeated everything. Gierek then advised him to call Tejchma.

Szlachcic, too, had some kind of rectification, but finally, he did not know which one and he dropped the whole thing.

When we had finished working on the text, Gierek proposed that we should celebrate this with some cognac. He even went somewhat to pieces. His wife Stanisława, whom I saw for the first time, came in dressed in a pair of pants.

But the reason for which Gierek went to pieces was ...Gonulka. He told us about some of the problems he had had with him in the past, especially on the occasion of the construction of the "highway" leading to the Katowice airport and the erection of the "Insurrectional Deed" monument. All this was a monologue. The others listened and nodded only. Suddenly, Gierek stood up and bid us farewell.

Hence, it is difficult for me to give a characteristic of Gierek from a personal perspective and it is now worth to repeat certain rumors.

What more can I add?

The Reader may be mostly interested in Gierek's unofficial and official attitude towards the USSR. I have already touched upon this subject, but I should like to give one more detail.

When in February 1972, I visited Moscow /I shall describe this further in the text/, where I had a long discussion in the CC of the Soviet Communist Party, the Soviets mentioned the subject of the Kursk steel mill plant. I talked about it with Gierek upon my return to Warsaw.

I should say here that, in Moscow, I was asked when the leadership of the PPR was finally to decide about its participation in the construction of this plant and about its partial supply with coke. The plant was supposed to be a giant with a yearly production capability of 20 billion tons of crude steel.

Since I was absolutely not acquainted with the whole question, I somehow shifted my ground. But I raised the question in my subsequent discussion with Gierek.

Gierek explained to me that instead of participating in the construction

of the Kursk plant, we were to erect our own steel-mill 'Katowice'. He added that Silesian steel-mills were in need of modernization anyway. There was, however, a problem with the construction of the broad-gauge railway which was to supply the steel-mill with Soviet ore. And in this, he said, 'certain Soviet comrades were very interested.' I immediately understood Gierek and, inside, I agreed with him. It was better to have a steel-mill in Poland than in Kursk... Moreover, the way Gierek told me this, left me with the impression that he wanted others to know about this.

I only added, just in case, that it would be maybe better to construct several electric mini-steel-mills in the vicinity of metalurgic and machine industries where one can always find scrap-metal. But this was not his opinion.

I shall not enter here the question of the steel-mill's location or even the purposefulness of its construction in general. My impression is that Gierek wanted to shirk the Soviet pressures and 'bought' the Soviet general staff with the agreement for constructing a strategic Soviet railway. And the staff helped him get away with his attitude towards the Kursk plant.

The solution was not the best one, but maybe better than the Kursk one.

Some time later, I was at a reception in the Soviet Embassy, organized on the occasion of the signing of accords for the construction of the Katowice steel-mill. Skatchov, Chairman of the Committee for Economic Cooperation of the USSR with Abroad, who signed the accord on the Soviet side, said then that, while signing the accord his 'ruka zadrozhalo' /his hand trembled/... He did not overblow it in this very case.

In any case, Gierek certainly had various problems with his Soviet mandates. Soviet Ambassador, S. Pilotovich and even Minister-Councillor Babarin, often met with him. Still, Gierek has never revealed these problems to me and I could only guess them from bribes of conversations.

Afterwards, when I had already left him, I learned that, in 1974, while conducting talks with Zhivkov in Łańsk, he had categorically rejected the proposition of Zhivkov to begin the creation of a 'Communist Party of the Socialist Community'. He probably knew that this was not Zhivkov's conception. Even though, he did give in to Soviet pressures and, in 1975, introduced amendments to the Constitution of the PPR on the question of the 'leading role of the Party' and the 'Polono-Soviet friendship', it was still not enough for the Soviets. True, that Primate Stefan Wyszański played an important role here but, after all, the final word belonged to Gierek.

What happened during the 8th PUMP Congress in February 1980 and afterwards, I shall describe later on. But presently, I would like to end the previous

question with a more general reflection. I regretted that Gierek did not hint more than he did. I was also not very certain how much he really wanted to change the relations between the PPR and the USSR.

Had I felt that he was seeking some help or advice, I would have never presented my resignation from the advisorship post. Unfortunately, I had reasons to believe that he did not count on any help from me in this matter. We shall yet resume this subject.

Gierek liked to talk about details which astonished even me, by their importance. This, however, was a common character trait of all his predecessors and successors. They were the country's "managers" and it seemed to them that they must know absolutely everything and be experts in all matters. The fact that already then PPR's internal market disposed of some 200 thousand catalogue positions, a fact that in itself excluded the knowledge of all details, did not frighten anyone. They wanted to know everything and they thought they did...

I would like to give an example of this. Economists from the Institute of Foreign Trade of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Maritime Economy, calculated that the export of Polish Fiat 125p was not profitable. I pass over the methods used for calculating the profitability, but I did not agree with them. I reminded Gierek that if we would sell Fiat for bananas, we would get the equivalent of 400 thousand zlotys, whereas the car's official market price was 120 thousand zlotys. The Fiat, moreover, was inaccessible to many people, whereas bananas should have been accessible.

To my great astonishment, Gierek became vividly interested. With sadness almost, he conceded that he somehow did not know about this... He even promised to take care of the question. As far as I know, there was no result, but it is a fact that he tried to attend to such details. And all this took place when more essential questions escaped his attention. That, at least was my impression.

Despite this, I was loyal to Gierek. I did not mention our discussions to anybody, and, if I did, I spoke well of him. When doing so, I was not guided by hypocrisy. I was simply aware of the fact that I did not have enough information for profound judgements. Therefore, I was not in a hurry to share my remarks. What I thought was my own and I was careful with my pronouncements.

Concerning this loyalty, I will put forth an example.

I already mentioned that once, during a Politburo debate, one of the agenda points was reported by Szlachcic, the then Minister of Internal Affairs /otherwise, of Interior/. I had met Szlachcic earlier and when he saw me at the debate, he reproached me with not having paid him a visit. He even invited me to come and see him. All this happened prior to the 6th PUMP

Congress.

Wanting to be loyal towards Gierek, I asked him whether I should seize the opportunity of the invitation and pay a visit to Szlachcic. After all, this here was the Minister of Interior and I did not want Gierek to learn that I meet with such people behind his back. Contacts on this level were ones that were bound to be commented upon.

'- You can go. Comrade Szlachcic is a very good friend of mine. I can even tell confidentially that he will be chosen to the Politburo during the upcoming Congress. He will also be Secretary of the CC and something like my Deputy'', Gierek told me.

It happened as he said. After the Congress, Szlachcic came to work to the Central Committee. He immediately began creating, around himself, his own group. He often invited me for very queer discussions. Once, he even expressed himself depreciatingly about Gierek and added that we should 'get together and put order around here''. This surprised me. I was not certain whether He was not putting to test my loyalty to Gierek. Just in case, I did not undertake this subject with Szlachcic but I also did not run to Gierek with a denunciation.

This incident only heightened my frustration. If this was the reality, how was it possible to have a common front of even a fraction of the PUPP's leadership, in face of Moscow? Whom was it possible to trust? Instead of getting involved in some insidious group manoeuvres, I preferred to remain in the distance.

But, in the final count, this only hastened my decision of presenting my resignation to Gierek.

How exactly did this decision come about? I already refered to this incident when Gierek categorically gave me to understand that 'no reforms, please.' Still, that was not all. I presented my resignation after having returned from Moscow, but let us not be ahead of events. There was also other reasons for frustration and these were of a more general nature.

When mentioning the preparations for the 6th PUPP Congress, I did not say all about them. Let us then resume the question.

It so happened that during my many-years-long affiliation to the Polish Workers' Party and then, the PUPP, I did not have the occasion of participating in any CC Plenum or Congress, although I did participate in various conventicles, from the lowest possible level on to the provincial one.

As far as Plenums were concerned, I participated in the first one, somewhere in November 1971, I think. This was the XIIth PUPP Plenum. Its stage management and boredom astounded me. It was as if something were going on in the PUPP, without absolutely being seen. The only attraction, here,

was provided by lobbying efforts and other lunchtime-meetings. That was when I met Z.Grudziń who was to enter the Politburo composition during the 6th PUMP Congress /he became alternate member/. My impression, after the discussion with him, was an unpleasant one. Such a 'strengthening' of PUMP's leadership was not to my liking.

In December 1971 already, I had the occasion to see the Congress of the PUMP. It took place in the Congress Hall of the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw. Although, I did not have any illusions concerning the progress of such a show, I must say that reality beat everything I imagined!

There were, of course, no sensations. The most important questions were that of protocol, that is, who will be the chairman of the plenary proceedings and who will be the first to speak on the tribune. In the end, after numerous disputes, they decided, if my memory is correct, that Grudziń was to be chairman and that J.Klasa, First Secretary of the Provincial Committee from Cracow, was to be the first speaker. So, these were the most important questions.

It is clear that foreign guests, with L.Brezhnev at their head, were yet another problem. That was probably the Congress' main attraction. For me, it certainly was. Everything was allegedly known, but certain people talked about the possibility of surprises as, whom will 'he' /Brezhnev/ 'chose' for the First Secretary of the Central Committee...

I saw Brezhnev at close range. At that time, he still looked very well. Those gathered in the hall prepared an authentic ovation for him. And when Gierk, after having presented his report, turned backwards toward Brezhnev, who was sitting behind an elevated table, the latter held out his arms visibly calling Gierk to him. And Gierk, the huge chap, was clasped against Brezhnev's chest like a tiny child... The Conference Hall went crazy. It was already known that Gierk had Brezhnev's blessing... All gossip ended abruptly.

It is maybe worth adding that, in the duty room one of Brezhnev's ^{security} men, after having drunk several glasses of brandy, said :

'- A vot nach Leonid Ilich Palak pa palavinie, namasha Natalia polskovo proiskhozhenia...'/And there, our Leonid Ilich is a half-Pole; his mother Natalia is of Polish origin/.

Is this allegation true? I don't know. But it is certainly worth of being mentioned.

The results of the Congress were known to me beforehand and the only surprise were the differences, in fractions of percent, between the received votes. That was the measure of popularity of the new authorities... I also knew that the most important of the candidatures were earlier coordinated

with Moscow.

Such a coordination did not, this is my supposition, take place during the 9th Congress and it was not the Central Committee which was instructed to 'put things straight' in the PPR.

The most important part of the 6th Congress took place, of course, in the corridors. It was there that people would meet and discuss certain matters. The bars were richly provided and various talks took place at the tables. And there, in the main hall and in the rooms, various delegates rattled off their stage-managed speeches and many of them believed that they are so significant...

Every human assembly of this sort has something of a circus to it. But congresses of ruling Communist Parties are the best drilled of all. And this concerns the actors as well as the viewers.

The 6th Congress took place one year after the Gdańsk events. Not a word was said about them. The same concerned Gomułka. And I still remembered the very same conference hall which, in November 1956, went crazy about Gomułka. Many of those who were then so delirious were once again present in 1971 and they forgot all about him.

Idols of the Communist Parties burn away very quickly...

After the Congress, I participated in several Central Committee Plenums. They were even more boring than the preceding ones. Even the lobbying was less interesting. Well, the 'normalization of life' was proceeding forward...

It was beyond any doubt to me that the PUMP, similarly to all ruling Communist parties was only a costly framework prepared for the presentation of a small theatrical troupe, that is the Politburo and its soloist, the First Secretary of the Central Committee. In point of fact, I knew all this earlier, but now, the insane dance of the noppets revealed itself to me in its entire Bantean reality. I was overcome with horror. Was this supposed to be the 'leading force of the nation'? How could something like this guide and control, especially in a system where the government was part of it?

Similar reflections tormented me more and more. The problem was becoming more general. It did not, anymore, concern Gierek or even the Politburo. It concerned the whole absurd creature which the PUMP was...

Since I mentioned the Government, I think it deserves a digression. As said, the Politburo was allegedly trying to control the Government.

Generally, speaking, I could somehow never figure out where, exactly, lies the demarcation line between the Party and the State apparatus. I worked in both and I still do not know for sure. Formal divisions and real ones are not the same thing. In any case, these problems are intertwined or rather

incredibly embroiled. But, since they are widely known, repeating them is not worthwhile.

During my advisorship, the Government was represented, in the 'new' Politburo, by Premier Piotr Jaroszewicz, Vice Premier M. Jagielski, Ministers W. Jaruzelski, S. Ciszowski, J. Tejchma /who was simultaneously Vice Premier/ and a personality such as H. Jabłoński who was suspended somewhere between the Party and the State apparatus.

The main representative of the Government was, of course, Piotr Jaroszewicz. As I write this words, he is already stripped of his Party membership and awaits a clearly undisclosed process.

I had, prior to my work in the Central Committee, heard a lot about Jaroszewicz. He had the opinion of a 'hard working' man. This, in the PPR, has a rather pejorative meaning, for it does not represent true work. Jaroszewicz was 'sharp' in his actions and language. Above all, it was being said that he had the confidence of the Kremlin. Some expressed even the opinion that he was a much more powerful man than Gierek himself and I must admit, to me, this seemed to be a well founded impression. This resulted also from the fact that Jaroszewicz worked for years with the central economic authorities and knew personally many high and low ranking officials of this administration and was acquainted with all problems. This definitely gave him advantage over Gierek.

In addition, Jaroszewicz was 'eager to work' whereas Gierek was not particularly attracted to it. And last, but not least, the whole economic apparatus which was bigger and professionally superior to the Party apparatus, was under Jaroszewicz.

Thus, it was Jaroszewicz and not Gierek who was virtually the 'economic tsar' of the Gierek era. Contrary to his predecessor, Józef Cyrankiewicz, who was not interested in economic problems, Jaroszewicz was absorbed in them. Everybody in the Government feared him, with some exceptions such as Jaruzelski, Cielepka /Minister of Interior/ Ciszowski /Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time/ and later, Kowalczyk / who replaced Cielepka after the latter's death/.

Jaroszewicz ruled not only over the economy. He had, in his hands, all instruments necessary for enforcing obedience and even toadying, like in the case of Janusz Wieczorek, Chief of the Office of the Council of Ministers. This man, acting correspondingly to Jaroszewicz's wishes, distributed not only apartments, places in holiday resorts not only in Poland but also abroad, foreign currency, coupons for cars and other attractive articles. But, above all, he had the famed 'envelopes', special money bonuses. This specific form of payment was reserved for functionaries no lower than Vice-

Chairmen of the Planning Commission. Nobody knew how much and when he was to receive the 'envelope'. When the 'envelope' would come in regularly and contain a big amount of money, it was a good sign. If, on the contrary they were not well provided and, besides, came in rarely, the poor man was unable to sleep, trying hard to find out where it was that he has messed the things up... It may be worth adding that those receiving the bonuses never signed any receipt. This then, was a successful whip in the Premire's hands.

In that way, Jaroszewicz got a firm grip on his people. Since they were more numerous and better prepared for work than Gierek's people, one can say, and I would like to emphasize this, that it was not Gierek but Jaroszewicz who ruled over the economy. It is true that Gierek had his particular Central Committee Secretary for Economic Affairs, J.Szydlak, and that there were several economic departments in the Central Committee, but they were all far from being such old hands as the people from the Government apparatus. Many people in these divisions, and, to begin with, Szydlak, were simple diletantes and did not even have the data about the state of economy. Contrary to the generally accepted opinion, assuming that it was the Central Committee that controlled the Government, the truth proved to be quite the contrary. Jaroszewicz forbade to provide the Central Committee with data without his knowledge. One had to have relations in order to obtain the needed information and, moreover, it was necessary to know what was true and what was not. When working once in the Ministry of Foreign Trade, I myself was specialized in writibg papers which were intended to deceive the Central Committee...

Thus, people thought that it was Gierek who ruled, but it was not so. I even had the impression that Gierek did not like Jaroszewicz although, outwardly, they were like two Siamese brothers.

On the other hand, I must admit that I had the impression Jaroszewicz was more intelligent than Gierek. He was a professional teacher in the pre-war period and, at that time, that did mean a lot. He had gone through many hardships in the USSR and they were far less glorious than what his official curriculum stated. Moreover, at the end of the war, he was Deputy Commander of the First Polish Army, where he held the function of chief of political division. This must have also enriched his life experience. Later, already in the rank of general, he was Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Commission and administered the armaments' production in the PPR.

His second wife, Alicja Solska, was a gifted and intelligent person and worked as a journalist. Gierek's wife, Stanisława, was way behind her. It was moreover being said that Solska exercised a big influence on Jaroszewicz.

Formally, Jaroszewicz was even the second person after Gierek. When Gierek was absent, it was Jaroszewicz who replaced him in the treatment of Party questions. Even when Szlachcic, who was allegedly the second person after Gierek, came to the Central Committee and remained in Warsaw during Gierek's absences, it was Jaroszewicz who kept on taking over Gierek's role. It was not Szlachcic who presided over the Politburo debates, but Jaroszewicz. Szlachcic, at the most, presided over the debates of the Central Committee's Secretariat. And, anyway, the ambitions of Szlachcic, quickly came to an end and he became one of Jaroszewicz's Vice Premiers. I remember when I later paid him a visit in a quiet office, almost in the attic of the Bureau of the Cabinet, in the Ujazdowska Aleja in Warsaw...

Concerning Gierek's replacement by Jaroszewicz, I think it interesting to say several words on this subject.

I think somewhere in August 1972, Gierek went for a holiday in Bulgaria and, I, momentarily, replaced the Head of the Chancery of the Secretariat of the Central Committee. Due to the fact that several other Politburo members were also on their holidays, the debates of the Politburo and of the Presidium of the Government /the difference between the Presidium and the Council of Ministers is, that the former is composed of the Premier, his deputies and those ministers who, at the same time are members of the Politburo/ were held jointly. Jaroszewicz presided over them and they took place in the Building of the Bureau of the Cabinet in the Aleja Ujazdowska.

It was then that I met Jaroszewicz more closely, Before that I had only observed him. This was to be my first direct contact with him. Szlachcic was present in Warsaw, but it was Jaroszewicz who replaced Gierek.

My temporary function entitled me, as part of my duties, to prepare, jointly with Jaroszewicz, the Politburo and Presidium debates. I was, beforehand, instructed to handle Jaroszewicz with kid gloves, because of his explosiveness. The warning did not impress me very much. I called Jaroszewicz directly from Gierek's office and it has not happened that he would answer impolitely. On the contrary, he behaved with great courtesy.

The joint debates of the Politburo and the Government Presidium, presided by Jaroszewicz, differed greatly from those presided by Gierek. Jaroszewicz was far more demanding on everyone than was Gierek. And this, concerned mainly those whom he had invited.

I shall describe on of such debates. I think it is worthwhile.

It was full summer in the midst of the harvest season. In the PPR, as well as in other 'Socialist' countries, harvesting and sowing are not just normal tasks of the farmer. There are always 'harvesting campaigns' and 'sowing campaigns'. During those periods, all kinds of resolutions, appeals and

other decisions are made. Field inspections are on the rampage and the mass media are delirious about all these things.

I recall that during my nearly 4-year-long stay in the USA, between 1962 and 1966, I have never heard anything about sowing or harvesting. And somehow it happened that this country was not only able to excellently feed itself, but it did not know what to do with the surplus of agricultural products.

It was all different in the PPR. They just simply tortured people with these things, but the effects were somehow not to be seen. During sowing and harvesting periods, one could become sick. From all parts, appeals, resolutions, requests, supplications and hee only knows what, flooded the country. This was supposed to make the campaign a 'success'. The food, was, of course, more and more scarce...

But let us return to the joint debate of the Politburo and the Presidium, presided by Jaroszewicz. The developments of the current harvest campaign were being discussed. It was already a tradition that the members of the Politburo and the Government who were, at that time, present in Warsaw, made 'field inspections'. It was a habit to show off who knew more and saw more. M. Jagielski, then Chairman of the State Planning Commission, boasted that, the previous day, that is on Sunday, he had the time to visit four voivodeships /provinces/ ! /That was still under the old administrative structure./ Upon his return to Warsaw, he added with indignation, he had found, near Wilanów, a whole field of unmowed wheat. He then immediately sent for a harvester to have it mowed. As I later learned, this was an experimental field of the Warsaw Agricultural Academy. They were conducting a research to find out how long the seeds can stay in the ears after these have ripened... Well Jagielski did not know about it, but he still had to mingle with it! Just as the others did, always and everywhere during their so-called 'field inspections'.

Now, to resume the previous subject.

When on the day of the meeting, I called Jaroszewicz,, I had the feeling that someone was going to have it that day.

'- You must absolutely bring Wrzaszczyk to the debate!' He exclaimed categorically. Although Wrzaszczy had previously excused himself for not being able to assist the debate, I informed him that he was to attend the meeting. But he got seriously scared and asked me to put him right with Jaroszewicz and to accept his Vice Minister Kopeć at the debate.

And indeed, Kopeć was severely rebuked. I think, Jaroszewicz had been on a visit to the Wrocław region, where he had observed the 'Bizon' combine at work. Unfortunately, some of the mechanical parts of the machine were breaking and falling apart and the combine was often broken. Jaroszewicz was

highly irritated.

:'- Listen, Comrade Kopeć! I invite you to provide good material for those spare parts! What kind of junk is it that you give?!' Shouted Jaroszewicz.

Kopeć, a huge, two-meter-tall guy, shrank and repeated only :

''- Yes, Comrade Premier... Yes, Comrade Premier...''

Jaroszewicz, of course, had forgotten which spare parts were needed. And how was Kopeć to know this? Jaroszewicz ''instructed'' him and Kopeć ''realized'' the instructions. Naturally, it did not occur to Jaroszewicz that, with a construction fault, certain parts, if made of a more solid material, were bound to break other parts. But then, who would remember such things? The guilty had to be found and thrown the book at. Thus, the problem would be solved. It was like this that he ''solved'' many other problems...

Those of the high state functionaries who were intelligent, never polemized. That would have meant suicide. They agreed with everything and then... they didn't do a thing, for there were other, new, problems... And, finally, the one who listened and reoriented was a ''good chap of the same flock''. Well, true that he did sometimes err, so it was necessary to chastise him, but still, he was of the same flock... After all, one day he would learn.

So, Kopeć would have been stupid, had he asked Jaroszewicz which spare parts were concerned. This was also true of any other type of polemics. He would have been lost once and for all. But, behaving as he did, he even managed to become Vice Premier and who knows where his ascension would have ended, were it not for 'Solidarity' and other events.

One day, just after one of these joint debates, we were having kunch in the Bureau of the Cabinet. Jaroszewicz seated me beside him. Opposite was Jagielski. Prices of family houses were discussed and Jagielski was quoting some laughingly low prices. He always had similar revelations.

However, he suddenly changed the theme of our discussion. He began shedding tears over the losses the PPR suffers because of the sales of raw meat. He proposed to make canned foods out of this meat. One could add some vegetables, spices, jelly and, oh, even some water and the metal for the can and such a product could be sold at higher prices, perorated Jagielski.

Jaroszewicz was visibly interested. I was horror stricken when thinking that they would be no more good meat to buy in the PPR, but just some lousy cans whose quality was easy to foresee. Very seriously, I then told Jaroszewicz, that the latests British research indicated that growth in the consumption of canned foods provoked hormonal disorders which could lead to .. homosexuality. In reality, I think that I did read something of the sort in 'The Economist' /the Central Committee received Western weeklies and monthlies./

Jaroszewicz reacted immediately. His voice, somewhat ironic and angry, he thundered over the table to Jagielski :

''- Hey, Mietek /Jagielski's first name/! Just don't you make faggots out of us!...'' Everybody burst out laughing.

Jagielski suddenly became bashful and the whole affair fell through, I felt relieved.

Today, Jaroszewicz, as well as Gierek, are not only waiting to be on trial, but are also deprived of their membership of the Polish United Workers' Party.

But are they more guilty than others? What about Jaruzelski, Olszowski, Barcikowski? Or how about those who are no more in the Politburo or even the Government but who remained in the PUWP, such as Jagielski or Jabłoński, who still fills the function of Chairman of the State Council? Did they ever oppose anything? Or, would they have been better if they were on the others' places? Did they have another work style? Other conceptions? No, they have never expressed anything of the sort or, at least, I have never heard anything that would have led me to believe the contrary.

The system in which Gierek and Jaroszewicz acted created a strictly defined framework inside of which they had to find their place. Especially that, it is a satellite system controlled from the exterior. A train rides on rails. It cannot leave them at its own will. It can move faster or slower, it can blow up or leave the rails, but it has a defined line and signalization signs. Of course, one can not notice a closed semaphore or a twinkling red light. For one can be completely blind or color blind, but as far as the route itself is concerned, there is no choice...

I think, therefore, that none of the high dignitaries, whom I then observed, would have behaved differently from Gierek and Jaroszewicz. Maybe, they would have even been worse. There was nobody who was better or more intelligent. Kruczek who had no education at all, was the same as Jabłoński, an authentic professor, or as Jagielski, also a professor, although less authentic. People with some knowledge were even worse than those without, for they created a mirage of ''normality'' and of a ''scientific character'' of this aborted system.

It was, as I said, a dance of puppets. I don't even know where some of the ideas originated. One of such was the administrative reform of the country. Let us consecrate some time to it.

The whole affair began while I was in the Central Committee, but I was not, at any stage, implicated in it. This was so, because of its non-economic character, I presume. It was rather later, when I was already in Geneva, that I had the opportunity of reading a lot about its genesis.

But it is true that I had assisted, probably the first Politburo debate which had ever discussed the question. To my great astonishment it was reported by the already mentioned Minister J. Wiczorek. He went in for everything, even for the erection of monuments. But it did not enter my mind that he would have taken up something like the administrative reform of the PPR!

From his report, I understood that, on the basis of communes, something like 'agro-towns' will be created. Each one was to be provided with secondary schools, a cinema, a health center and a series of other buildings and institutions. The smaller administrative districts composing the voivodeships / the so-called 'powiaty' / were to disappear, cities were to become 'urban' and there were to be twice as many voivodeships. As a passing remark, Wiczorek added, that the buildings for the new authorities, were to cost about 35 billion zlotys or more...

There was practically no discussion on the question. Babiuch only said that they were to watch out that the new apparatus of the communal departments should not be better paid than the communal PUWP Secretaries.

Jaruzelski, on the other hand, was worried about something else. He said that many officers who were to retire, would willingly accept the positions of heads of communes. But the position, in Polish, is called 'wójt', and this, has a pejorative meaning in the army... I think that it was even he who proposed the title of 'chief of commune' / 'naczelnik gminy' /.

And the affair ended there. I later tried to make Gierek talk about it, but, in this case, he did not even want to talk about it.

As I later learned, his behavior remained the same all along. Jabłoński tried to inquire somewhat about it, but Babiuch was to tell him that the entire question had already been decided for and that there was nothing to talk about.

I could not understand the sense of this reform. It brought about much confusion which, by the way, lasts to this very day. The costs were enormous and they have not yet reached their end. What for was it introduced? I don't know.

During the other Politburo debates, they toyed with all kinds of problems, quite often with completely bizarre ones.

For example, Vice Premier, Jan Mitreęa /former Minister of Coal Mining/, paid a visit to India. The Politburo decided to 'evaluate' this visit.

Mitreęa was no intellectual. He was an 'engineer' of Gierek's type. And so, he told incredible tales at the Politburo debate! He even said that if India shall not solve the problem of coal extraction she will not be able to move ahead.