The London School of Economics and Political Science

Playing "second fiddle"? Poland in the Global Cold War – 1956-1970

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Declaration

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Contents

List of abbreviations:

BERINI - Beirut-Riyadh-Nigeria (Bank)

CIA - Central Intelligence Agency

CKKP - Centralna Komisja Kontroli Partyjnej – Central Commission for Party Control

CKR – Centralna Komisja Rewizyjna – Central Auditing Commission

CoCom - Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Control

COMECON - Council of Mutual Economic Assistance

CPCz - Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

CPSU - Communist Party of the Soviet Union

CSSR - Czechoslovak Socialist Republic

CZPMH – Centralny Zarząd Polskiej Marynarki Handlowej – Central Administration of the Polish Merchant Marine

DM - Deutsche Mark

DRV - Democratic Republic of Vietnam

DSR - Deutsche Seerderei - German Shipping Lines

DWT - Dead Weight Tonnage

ECOSOC - United Nations Economic and Social Council

EEC - European Economic Community

EFTA - European Free Trade Agreement

ENCD – Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament

FMG - Federal Military Government (of Nigeria)

FRG - Federal Republic of Germany

GATT - General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs

GDR - German Democratic Republic

IBEC - International Bank of Economic Cooperation

ICSC - International Commission of Supervision and Contro (for Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam)

ICT - International Computers and Tabulators Ltd

KPP - Komunistyczna Partia Polski - Communist Party of Poland

KPRM - Komisja Planowania Przy Radzie Ministrów - Council of Ministers' Planning Commission

KRN – Krajowa Rada Narodowa – State National Council

MFN – Most Favoured Nation

MLF - Multilateral (Nuclear) Forces

MSW - Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych - Ministry of Interior

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

OTN - Observer Team Nigeria

PCC – Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact

PKPG - Państwowa Komisja Planowania Gospodarczego - State Council for Economic Planning

PLO - Polskie Linie Oceaniczne - Polish Ocean Lines

PPR - Polska Partia Robotnicza - Polish Workers' Party

PPS - Polska Partia Socjalistyczna - Polish Socialist Party

PRC - People's Republic of China

PZPR - Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza - Polish United Workers' Party

PŻM - Polska Żegluga Morska - Polish Steamship Company

SDKPiL - Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy - Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania

StB - Státní bezpečnost - State Security (Czechoslovakia)

UN - United Nations

USSR - Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WALCON - Western African Lines Conference

WSW - Wojskowa Służba Wewnętrzna - Internal Military Security Services

Historiographical essay

Twenty years ago**,** Antoni Czubiński called the period between 1944 and 1989 a "black hole" in Polish history.[1] Since then, substantial progress has been made. However, the historiography often offers only fragmentary analysis. The Gomułka years of 1956-1970 fell into even more significant and undeserved obscurity. Western and Polish scholarly efforts have focused on the historical extremities. Western historians also tend to focus on the tumultuous period when Polish communists rose to power and initiated a campaign of ethnic cleansing.[2] Equally, there are great studies on the decade that preceded the fall of communism in Poland.[3] The period between only recently began to be explored. However, in 1956, Polish communists launched a project to transform almost every aspect of Poland's political, social, cultural and economic life. The Polish leadership wanted to transform Poland into the second most economically dynamic, militarily powerful and diplomatically active country of the Soviet Bloc. In the mind of Polish communist leaders, achieving those goals would also allow Poland to be the "freest" country in the Soviet Bloc. Although limited and fragmentary, the current historiography of the events and developments that occurred between 1956 and 1970 still provides a good analytical framework and a starting point for further analysis. By charting the existing literature, this project hopes to identify the most important contexts crucial to understanding what motivated the Polish communist leadership and the immediate contexts in which they operated.

Crisis - the beginning and the end

The significance of 1956 events in the Soviet Bloc

Having established the role ideology played for Polish, we can now move towards analysing the events that made launching the so-called "Polish road to socialism" possible – the tumultuous events of 1956. The crisis of 1956 in the Soviet Bloc marked a critical milestone in the events of the Cold War. In February 1956, Nikita Khrushchev delivered a speech at the 20th Congress of the CPSU. In that speech, Khrushchev denounced Stalin as a ruthless dictator. This marked the official start of the de-Stalinisation process. The impact of Khrushchev's speech was enormous in the USSR itself, as well as in Poland and Hungary.

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[1] Czubiński, Antoni, *Historia Polski XX Wieku* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2000)., p.4

[2] See for example Kemp-Welch, Anthony. *Stalinism in Poland, 1944–56.* (London: Plagrave McMillan, 1999); Curp, David. *A Clean Sweep? The Politics of Ethnic Cleansing in Western Poland, 1945-1960*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006.

[3] Friszke, Andrzej, ed. *Solidarność Podziemna 1981–1989*. (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Studiow Politycznych PAN, 2006); Domber, Gregory F. *Empowering Revolution: America, Poland, and the End of the Cold War*. (Chapel Hill, NC: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2014).

The year 1956 is so important that it is almost universally analysed in broader monographs on the Cold War. It was only in Poland and Hungary that a genuine change occurred. However, here, this turn of events could be described as an open revolt. The year 1956 is thus presented as a year that changed the internal dynamics of the entire Soviet Bloc.

In his seminal work, Paweł Machcewicz analysed the events in Poland between February 1956 and January 1957 by looking at reports delivered by the security apparatus.[4] This book offers an excellent analysis of the social mobilisation process that occurred in Poland at that time. His book seems to hark back to the earlier considerations of Western political scientists, such as those gathered by Chalmers Johnson, in a volume entitled "Change in Communist Systems". While Machcewicz focused on the societal demands for prosperity and freedom, Richard Lowenthal focused on the desire of the communist elites to balance the needs of the society and maintain party monopoly.[5] Johanna Granville offered a nuanced and comparative analysis in her study of Polish and Hungarian revolutions. She analysed the character differences of both Polish and Hungarian leaders. Johanna Granville concluded that the Polish communists could use Polish anti-Soviet sentiments to prevent Soviet intervention. In contrast, she argued that the events in Hungary were an "invasion by invitation."[6] These interpretations, although innovative, still tend to focus on the Soviet drive for expansion or maintenance of power. Włodzimierz Borodziej offers a nuanced perspective. He suggested that the revolution was not only a grassroots movement. The revolution also occurred at the state and top party levels. Polish leaders could claim autonomy, which was in line with popular sentiments that rejected Soviet interference. Furthermore, after 1956, Polish communists successfully defended their newly acquired autonomy.[7] Małgorzata Mazurek presented a similar perspective regarding Polish-Indian relations, where she argued that the year 1956 was not only a genuine turning point for Polish thinking but was also a necessary step forward in the global Cold War.[8] This thesis will broaden the perspective used by

[4] Machcewicz, Paweł. *Rebellious Satellite : Poland 1956.* (Washington, D.C. : Stanford: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford University Press, 2009).
[5] Richard Lowenthal in Johnson, Chalmers, and American Council of Learned Societies. Planning Committee for Comparative Communist Studies. (*Change in Communist Systems*. Stanford, 1970).
[6] Granville, Johanna. "1956 Reconsidered: Why Hungary and Not Poland?" The Slavonic and East European Review 80, no. 4 (2002): 656-687, p. 668
[7] Włodzimierz Borodziej, "1956 as a Turning Point in Poland's Foreign Policy," in The Polish October 1956, 328–29
[8] Mazurek, Małgorzata. "Polish Economists in Nehru's India: Making Science for the Third World in an Era of De-Stalinization and Decolonization." Slavic Review 77, no. 3 (2018): 588–610. doi:10.1017/slr.2018.201.

Mazurek and apply it to other countries that Poland engaged with – Vietnam and China, for example.

The events of 1956 had long-term effects. There was a noticeable shift in Soviet policy towards détente. Moreover, from 1956 onwards, the Soviet Bloc was more amenable to cooperation with non-socialist countries, which changed the course of relations between the two blocs. The literature concerning the events of 1956, although not directly relevant to this project, offers the necessary background. Without such background, which demonstrated how substantial were the changes in the Soviet Bloc dynamics and that these enabled the Poles to launch their bid launch their efforts to make Poland the second most important Soviet Bloc country.

The events of 1970

Just as the crisis of 1956 created a favourable condition for the new Polish project to take place, the crisis of 1970 marked the end of it and signalled a new policy under Edward Gierek. The literature on this particular crisis in Polish history, almost unexpectedly, is truly abundant. There are approximately 50 scholarly attempts that analyse the background and consequences of the crisis that unfolded in Poland in December 1970 and effectively led to Gomułka's ouster from power, recently summarised by Jerzy Eisler.[9] Jerzy Eisler, Balbus and Kamiński, Edward Nalepa, Sławomir Cenckiewicz, and Michał Paziewski have presented the most notable examples, although this list is by no means exhaustive.[10] The depth of analysis can be used to understand various contexts in which the crisis occurred, as well as understand both internal and external players that acted during the crisis and effectively led to Gomułka's downfall. All historians agree that the political crisis was much more complex issue, where several political struggles overlapped.

Given such an abundance of scholarly material, it is highly doubtful that this project can contribute anything original to the debate surrounding these events, but these detailed monographs will provide an excellent starting point. This project aims not to challenge but to

[9] Jerzy Eisler, "December 1970 – Half a Century Later: Current State of Research and New Perspectives," *Zapiski Historyczne* LXXXV, no. 4 (January 20, 2021): 5, https://doi.org/10.15762/zh.2020.33.

[10] Tomasz Balbus and Łukasz Kamiński, *Grudzień '70 Poza Wybrzeżem W Dokumentach Aparatu Władzy. Wrocław: IPN, 2000* (Wrocław: IPN, 2000); Sławomir Cenckiewicz, *Gdański Grudzień '70. Rekonstrukcja – Dokumentacja – Walka Z Pamięcią* (Gdańsk; Warszawa: IPN, 2009); Jerzy Eisler, *Grudzień 1970. Geneza, Przebieg, Konsekwencje.* (Gdańsk: DJ, 2000); Edward Nalepa, *Wojsko Polskie W Grudniu 1970* (Warszawa: Bellona, 1990); Michał Paziewski, *Grudzień 1970 W Szczecinie.* (Szczecin: IPN, 2013).

synthesise the conclusions of the most important historians who have analysed the December 1970 crisis in Poland.

The Warsaw Pact

The Soviet Bloc was the primary setting in which Poland operated; therefore, it is crucial to understand it. In the period discussed, the chief political and military organisation of the Soviet Bloc was the Warsaw Pact Organisation. The signing of the Warsaw Treaty on 14 May 1955 was an important Cold War milestone. From that moment on, the two opposing blocs were formalised. Their competition lasted until the end of the Cold War, with the Warsaw Pact's dissolution only slightly preceding the fall of the Soviet Union.[11] The dominating narrative focuses on the hegemonic role of the USSR in the Warsaw Pact and the organisation's role as a transmission belt for Soviet interests. In the anglophone scholarly world, Mark Kramer is one example of this orthodox approach. Kramer argued that the ultimate goal of the Warsaw Pact was to "uphold communist regimes in Eastern Europe."[12] A collaborative effort edited by Heiss and Papacosma, is an important step a more nuanced analysis. This work argued that both NATO and the Warsaw Pact, were not monolithic, centralised institutions. On both political and military levels, the countries that formed part of NATO and took part in the Warsaw Pact constantly disagreed over policy and strategy.[13] Mastny and Byrne take an even bolder step. They present a carefully-selected collection of documents from the Warsaw Pact and demonstrate that it was not a static institution. It went through crises and eventually matured into a genuine alliance.[14] Benefiting from a framework provided by Mastny and Byrne, Laurien Crump ultimately breaks with the orthodox school of thought. Crump argues that, following its establishment, the Warsaw Pact gradually evolved into an alliance with a multilateralist decision-making process.[15] Crump's innovative approach, however, focused primarily on the role that Romania played in the Warsaw Pact. Romania is indeed a tempting example. Its obstructionism certainly attracts attention. Crump also pointed out that the Romanians wanted to play the role of mediators in the Sino-Soviet split. Unfortunately, Crump did not mention how other Eastern European states reacted to the

[11] Warsaw Pact was dissolved on 1 July 1991. The USSR was formally dissolved on 26 December 1991.
[12] Mark Kramer, "NATO, Warsaw Pact and the nature of international alliances", *Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe*, VI(3), 2009, p. 117
[13] Heiss, Mary Ann, and S. Victor Papacosma, eds. *NATO and Warsaw Pact. Intrabloc Conflicts*. (Kent, Ohio, 2008).
[14] Vojtech Mastny and Malcolm Byrne, eds., *A Cardboard Castle? : An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991* (New York: Central European University Press, 2005).
[15] Laurien Crump, *The Warsaw Pact*, 2015

Sino-Soviet split. Sadly, the general Cold War debate on this issue, follows a similar pattern.[16] Eventually, Romania's obstructionist policies, led to its exclusion from the decision-making process.[17] Crump only indicates how collaborative decision-making went on without Romania, which leaves a significant portion of the inner workings of the Warsaw Pact unexplored.

The most contentious issue in the historiography of the Warsaw Pact is the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Western historians tend to emphasise the imperialist drive within the USSR while presenting the leaders of Poland, GDR and Bulgaria as ideological hard-liners.[18] On the other hand, Eastern European historians, such as Oldrich Tůma and Mikhail Prozumenschikov, argued that the invasion was not an imperialist drive but a careful political calculation. Manfred Wilke attempted to re-evaluate the motives of the GDR leadership but ultimately failed to provide any new arguments.[19] Thus, he concluded that GDR's involvement was purely ideological. Zhivkov's and Gomułka's stances still await re-evaluation. The perception of Gomułka's, Ulbricht's, and Zhivkov's hard-line ideological stance is so entrenched that it found its way to academic textbooks.[20] Regarding those three Eastern European leaders and their stance on the Czechoslovak issue, the scholars are unanimous. Ulbricht, Gomułka and Zhivkov were staunch communists who believed in the leading role of the USSR. They abhorred reforms and were more than willing to submit themselves to the Soviet hegemony to crush the Prague Spring.[21]

In Polish historiography, the most damning account of the Warsaw Pact's history is presented by Ryszard Kałużny. He emphasised the USSR's military, political and economic hegemony in the Warsaw Pact. Kałużny argued that other WP countries could not exercise any real influence on its forum, citing the predominance of Soviet officers within the Unified Allied Command. [22] There are, however, attempts to go beyond this narrative. The earliest appeared in Polish historiography in 2008. Wanda Jarząbek argued that the Warsaw Pact could be a forum where Eastern European countries, such as Poland, could assert their national

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[16] Odd Arne Westad, ed., *The Cold War: A World History* (2017; repr., London: Penguin, 2019)..
[17] Ibid. p. 233
[18] Bischof, Günter, Stefan Karner, and Peter Ruggenthaler, eds., *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2009)., p. 54
[19] Mafred Wilke in Bischof, Kramer, Ruggenthaler eds., *The Prague Spring*, p. 344
[20] J. P. D. Dunbabin, *The Cold War : The Great Powers and Their Allies* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014)., p. 567 and 569.
[21] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. 217
[22] Out of 523 staff, only 173 were non-Soviet; Kałużny, Ryszard "Układ Warszawski 1955-1991," *Naukowe WSOWL* 1, no. 147 (2008): 190--198., p. 191

interests. However, according to Jarząbek, the imbalance between the USSR's and Eastern Europe's economic and military potentials ultimately prevented non-Soviet Warsaw Pact members from exercising any degree of control over the institution.[23] In Western historiography, Laurien Crump was the most successful in establishing a new analytical framework. By presenting the Warsaw Pact was a platform on which non-Soviet members could assert and pursue their national interests.[24]

Despite some limitations and an obvious omission of Poland's role within the Warsaw Pact, the existing literature provides a good analytical framework. This project will utilise a framework provided by Crump to analyse how the Poles saw the Warsaw Pact as the place where they could gain and wield the political influence necessary to make Poland the most senior ally of the Soviet Union. This understanding is critical for further analysis of Poland's actions both within and outside of the Soviet Bloc.

COMECON and beyond: economy, trade and shipping

To accomplish their goal of transforming Poland into the second most influential and the most independent Soviet Bloc country, the Poles also needed an economy that would enable them to fulfil those ambitions. Revenue generated by the nationalised economy could be used by the PZPR not only to raise living standards and overcome economic backwardness. but also to raise and maintain the second-largest Warsaw Pact army. All these aspects could later be used as levers to extend the degree of Polish autonomy and manoeuvrability within and outside of the Soviet Bloc. Unfortunately, the economic history of Poland and the wider Soviet Bloc revolves around mainly outlining the shortcomings of the centrally planned economic model.

Polish economy

When discussing economic issues, the discussion either focuses on shortages and inadequacies or the period of transformation from a socialist to a free-market economy.[25] Regarding the broad historical background, one monograph analyses the economic history of Eastern Europe as a whole between the 16th and 20th centuries.[26] It traces the historical developments and circumstances that led Poland (or rather the Polish-Lithuanian

[23] Wanda Jarząbek, *PRL w strukturach Układu Warszawskiego*, 2008.
[24] Laurien Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. iii
[25] Kienzler, Iwona. *Kronika PRL 1944–1989. T. 33: Gospodarka i Pieniądze*. (Warszawa: Edipresse, 2017);Slay, Ben. *The Polish Economy : Crisis, Reform, and Transformation*(Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1998).
[26] Kochanowicz, Jacek. *Backwardness and Modernisation: Poland and Eastern Europe in the 16th-20th Centuries*. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006).

Commonwealth), to develop a mostly agrarian economy, which did not demand as much technological progress.[27] It also evaluates the impact of an even more crippling legacy of the partitions. Particular emphasis is paid to the Russian Empire.[28] Another useful resource is a comparative study of the Polish and Hungarian socialist economies. This study compares the two economies, looking at previously neglected aspects, such as the relationship between education and working conditions.[29] However, although very informative, this study falls short of historians' expectations by providing a largely statistical comparison rather than any narrative analysis of the driving forces behind particular policies and how they were tailored to specific circumstances in a given country. Janusz Kaliński delivers a functional analysis of all aspects of the Polish socialist economy: military expenditure, foreign trade, living standards, and even Poland's foreign debt.[30] However, apart from the overall statistical analysis and a conclusion that "socialism doesn't work", his work does not offer much insight into the motivations, obstacles and goals the Polish leaders tried to achieve.

Jacek Tittenbrun analysed the background of Poland's economic collapse in the 1980s and only briefly dealt with the period between 1956 and 1970.[31] Again, this study is more quantitative than qualitative. Aside from providing the public debate on the shortcomings of a centrally planned economy, it also provides some fascinating insights. For example, the 1960s period of stagnation is criticised, but statistical data shows that the only country experiencing economic growth in the whole of the Soviet Bloc, was Poland.[32] This project does not intend to argue about the economic success of the Polish economic model, although there were some accomplishments in this field. The gap this project will fill, however, is that the Polish leadership used the economy and foreign trade as the material means for their political ends.

Comecon

The ultimate economic failure of the Soviet Bloc in the late 1980s and early 1990s cantered the scholarly debate on the issue of explaining why the Bloc collapsed and why economic difficulties primarily triggered this collapse. Thus, historians and economic historians compete in presenting the shortcomings of centrally planned economies and provide, often convincing, explanations regarding the failure of communist or socialist economies across the

[27] Ibid. p. 95-96
[28] Ibid. p. 131-135
[29] Kolosi, Tamas, and Edmund Wnuk-Lipiński, eds. *Equality and Inequality Under Socialism. Poland and Hungary Compared*. (London: SAGE Publications, 1983), p. 182-183.
[30] Kalinski, Janusz. *Economy in Communist Poland.* 2014, p. 78; 100-1 and 110
[31] Tittenburn, Jacek. *The Collapse of "Real Socialism" in Poland*. (London: Janus Publishing Company, 1993).
[32] Ibid, p. 232.

globe. In Polish historiography, Janusz Kaliński demonstrated that the intensive push for industrialisation between 1948 and 1955 caused Poland's economy to become excessively reliant on exporting natural resources, which focused on Poland's economic development on heavy industry. That, in turn, pushed Poland to rely on technological imports and disincentivised modernisation. All internal inadequacies and major global crises ultimately led to Poland's bankruptcy in the 1980s.[33] Poland's economist, Jerzy Osiatyński, also outlined the shortcomings of the Polish economy. However, he argued that the political pressures largely distorted the sound economic planning that followed the thaw of 1956.[34] The Soviet Bloc and COMECON, its chief economic organisation, were also criticised. As one of the first, Antoni Marszałek argued that COMECON was the primary example of failed economic integration.[35] Western scholarship later mirrored Marszałek's conclusions. Western scholars, such as Steiner and Petrak-Jones, argued that COMECON, which aspired to be an alternative to the Western market, failed because planned economies could not push beyond certain limits of economic exchange. The trade was primarily bilateral rather than multilateral, which left the COMECON countries unwilling to abandon 'national egotisms'. Bureaucratisation and failure to reform led to the decline and dissolution of the Soviet Bloc as an economic system in the 1990s.[36] Both Eastern and Western historians confirmed these arguments.[37]

However, although some historians acknowledge the shortcomings of the centrally planned economic model, they offer a more nuanced analysis. Ben Fowkes, for example, argued that by 1969, the development gap between the East and the West was significantly narrowed. The failure, Fowkes argued, ultimately came not only because the Soviet Bloc countries focused too much on the heavy and military industries but also because the West limited access to more

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[33] Kaliński, Janusz. *Gospodarka w PRL*. (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2012); Kaliński, Janusz. *Gospodarka Polski w latach 1944-1989: Przemiany strukturalne. Warszawa* (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, 1995); Kaliński, Janusz,and Zbigniew Landau. *Gospodarka Polski w XX wieku*. (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne); Kaliński, Janusz. "Transformacja" Do Gospodarki Centralnie Planowanej w Polsce (1944-1950)." *Optimum studia ekonomiczne* 95, no. 1 (2019): 32–45.

[34] Osiatyński, Jerzy. *Michał Kalecki on a Socialist Economy*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988).

[35] Marszałek, Antoni. "Planowanie i rynek w RWPG: Geneza niepowodzenia." *Acta Unicersitas Lodziensis, Folia Oeconomica* 133, (1993): 3-144.

[36] Steiner, André, and Kirsten Petrak-Jones. "The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance — An Example of Failed Economic Integration?" *Geschichte und Gesellschaft (Göttingen)* 39, no. 2 (2013): 240–25,. p.257-8

[37] Vardomskiy, L. B. "Forgotten Integration: The Failure and Lessons of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance." *Outlines of global transformations: politics, economics, law* 13, no. 3 (2020): 176–195; Metcalf, Lee Kendall. *The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance : the Failure of Reform*. (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1997); Gerocs, Tamás, and András Pinkasz. "Conflicting Interests in the Comecon Integration: State Socialist Debates on East-West-South Relations." *East Central Europe (Pittsburgh)* 45, no. 2-3 (2018): 336–365; Radisch, Erik "The Struggle of the Soviet Conception of Comecon, 1953–1975," *Comparativ* 27, no. 5-6 (March 20, 2017): 26–47, https://doi.org/10.26014/j.comp.2017.05/06.02.

advanced technologies.[38] There is an attempt to re-evaluate COMECON as an organisation. Crump and Godard argued that COMECON was another forum, alongside the Warsaw Pact, where the Eastern European countries could 'resist Soviet concepts and shift the balance of power in their favour.'[39] These scholarly attempts, however, tend to focus only on intra-Bloc relations. There are notable attempts to provide a global context by Sanchez-Sibony, Mark and Paul. However, these tend to focus on the Bloc and its relations with the so-called Global South or, like in Sanchez-Sibony's case, primarily on the USSR.[40]

Shipping

The issue of shipping as a means of economic competition has attracted no academic scrutiny, at least among historians. As is often the case, the research focused predominantly on the Soviet Union. The Soviet "threat" was first observed by Philip Hanson, and further analysis was offered by Simon Bergstrand, who explored how the Soviet merchant navy, by undercutting freight rates, posed a serious threat to Western, but mainly British, shipping operations.[41] John Harbron wrote an analysis of the Polish shipping and shipbuilding industry. His perspective proves very useful, since it was an eyewitness account of the emerging Polish shipping and shipbuilding industry.[42] Other attempts to explore the role of shipping are scarce and offer only the Western perspective.[43] The Soviet Bloc and Polish shipping operations might not have garnered much attention from Cold War historians, but they have garnered significant attention from maritime logistics specialists. Michael Roe is the most prominent scholar investigating Eastern European shipping operations. His work offers excellent statistical analysis. Unfortunately, the historical aspect is non-existent, given the nature of his

[38] Fowkes, Ben. *Eastern Europe 1945-1969: From Stalinism to Stagnation*. (Routeledge, 2014), p. 90-1. See also: Libbey, James. "CoCom, Comecon, and the Economic Cold War." *Russian History (Pittsburgh)* 37, no. 2 (2010): 133–152.

[39] Crump Laurien, and Simon Godard. "Reassessing Communist International Organisations: A Comparative Analysis of COMECON and the Warsaw Pact in Relation to Their Cold War Competitors." *Contemporary European History* 27, no. 1 (2018): 85–109, p.95.

[40] Mark, James and Paul Betts, *Socialism Goes Global : The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonisation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).; Sanchez-Sibony, Oscar. Oscar Sanchez-Sibony, *Red Globalization : The Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[41] Hanson, Philip. "The Soviet Union and World Shipping." *Soviet studies* 22, no. 1 (1970): 44–60; Bergstrand, Simon, and Rigas Doganis. *The Impact of Soviet Shipping*. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987).

[42] Harbron, John D. *Communist Ships and Shipping*. (London: Adlard Coles, 1962.)

[43] Gordon Jackson and David M. Williams (eds), *Shipping Technology and Imperialism: Papers Presented to the Third British-Dutch Maritime History Conference,* (Glasgow, Scholar Press, 1996)

work. Nevertheless, his works prove that Poland was a major maritime power connected closely to the global economy through its global network of liner services.[44]

Global Outreach and Cold War Contexts

The less immediate context in which the Poles operated was the broader Cold War setting. Understanding how and why the Poles operated in this broader context is vital to understanding how they used their political position within the Soviet Bloc to gain more leeway on the global stage.

Foreign policy

In three volumes, Andrzej Skrzypek attempted to reconstruct the dynamics of Polish-Soviet relations between 1944 and 1989. The first volume focused on the initial subjugation of Poland in the decade after the war.[45] In his second volume on the subject, Skrzypek analysed Polish attempts to improve Poland's stance vis-a-vis the USSR.[46] He claimed that, although Poland did attempt to improve its position, Poland's leader – Gomułka - was only acting as "Moscow's plenipotentiary."[47] In his last volume, Skrzypek analysed Poland's transformation into a client state, ultimately arguing that it was only after the fall of the Soviet Union that Poland could improve its standing on the international stage. He drew similar conclusions with respect to Poland's post-1956 foreign policy.[48] The only historian so far who argues that Poles could negotiate whilst maintaining a degree of autonomy is Anita Prażmowska[49]. It is also vital to notice that inter-bloc relations are often left unexplored. Work in this field has only been attempted by Robert Skobelski, who produced an excellent factual presentation but entirely failed to identify the motives driving Polish policies. [50]

The issue of the Oder-Neisse line and non-proliferation

The Oder-Neisse line and the non-proliferation were closely connected contexts, especially for Poland. The Poles tried to use their nuclear-free zone proposal in

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[44] Roe, Michael, ed., *Shipping in the Baltic Region* (Routledge, 1997); Roe, Michael, *Polish Shipping under Communism* (Routledge, 2001)

[45] Skrzypek, Andrzej Mechanizmy Uzależnienia. Stosunki Polsko-Radzieckie 1944-1957 (Pułtusk: Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna im. A. Gieysztora, 2002).

[46] Andrzej Skrzypek, Mechanizmy Autonomii: Stosunki Polsko-Radzieckie 1956–1965 (Pułtusk: Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna im. A. Gieysztora, 2005)..

[47] Ibid. p. 309

[48] Skrzypek, Andrzej *Mechanizmy Klientelizmu: Stosunki Polsko-Radzieckie 1965-1989* (Pułtusk: Akademia Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztora, 2008).; Skrzypek, Andrzej. *Dyplomatyczne Dzieje PRL W Latach 1956-1989* (Pułtusk: Akademia Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztora, 2010).

[49] Prażmowska, Anita J. *Władysław Gomułka* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016).

[50] Skobelski, Robert. *Polityka PRL Wobec Państw Socjalistycznych W Latach 1956-1970* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2010).

Central/Eastern Europe not only to minimise the risk of a nuclear conflict but also to formalise the Oder-Neisse line as Poland's Western border. One such proposal - the Rapacki Plan – was analysed by James Ozinga. Even though it was written in the last year of the Cold War, Ozinga distanced himself from the traditional Cold War divide. Ozinga argued for the plan's feasibility and attempted to demonstrate that Moscow's and Washington's short-sightedness prevented détente and disarmament in the early 1960s. Ozinga is also the only scholar who emphasised the global significance of the Rapacki Plan.[51] His approach can serve as a useful starting point. However, it may benefit from a more internationalist approach. Polish analyses of the Rapacki Plan still follow the orthodox paradigm of Soviet Bloc expansionism.[52] The analysis of the Gomułka Plan – a later and more modest Polish disarmament proposal – is absent from scholarly debates. Throughout the 1960s, the Polish proposal was transformed from a narrow concern over national security into a global, transnational initiative. The more recent analysis was provided by Piotr Długołęcki, who better contextualised the issue and argued that the roots of the Rapacki plan dated back to 1955 and that the initiative was discussed with the Soviet leaders more than a year before the plan was announced.[53] The Canadian attempts to limit nuclear sharing in response to the Polish proposal were outlined by Ryan Musto.[54] A more significant contribution was made by Piotr Wandycz, who summarised the entirety of Poland's denuclearisation and collective security proposals in the late 1950s and 1960s.[55] The scarcity of scholarly analysis of Poland's role in various and very often significant Cold War disarmament initiatives would suggest that the archival evidence for Poland's role is equally scarce, and the role Poland played in those initiatives was relatively insignificant. This project, however, will demonstrate that Poland, in pursuit of its national interest, significantly contributed to the global discussion about nuclear non-proliferation.

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[51] Ozinga, James. *The Rapacki Plan. The 1957 Proposal to Denuclearise Central Europe and Analysis of Its Rejection*. (Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1989)

[52] Długołęcki, Piotr. "Diplomatic File. An Unknown Context of the Rapacki Plan." *The Polish Quarterly of Intermational Affairs*, no. 1 (2011): 59–71; Pasztor, Maria. "A CIRCLE OF IMPOSSIBILITY . THE PROBLEM OF DISARMAMENT , DÉTENTE AND SECURITY IN POLISH-ITALIAN RELATIONS (1958–1969)." *Kwartalnik Historyczny* CXXV, no. 2 (2018): 39–67.

[53] Dlugolecki, Piotr. "An Unknown Context of the Rapacki Plan." *The Polish quarterly of international affairs* 20, no. 1 (2011): 59–.

[54] Musto, Ryan A. "'A Question of Survival': Canada and the Rapacki Plan for the Denuclearisation of Central Europe, 1957-59." *Cold War History* 21, no. 4 (2021): 509–531.

[55] Wandycz, Piotr. "ADAM RAPACKI AND THE SEARCH FOR EUROPEAN SECURITY." In The Diplomats, 1939-1979, 5256:289–318. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019.

The German question gave rise to the Cold War. The German reunification and the fall of the Berlin Wall are lauded as the end of the global Cold War. This global issue was closely linked to Polish security concerns. Following the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, Poland received the German territories of Silesia, Pomerania and part of East Prussia (the USSR annexed the former city of Konigsberg and the surrounding territories). These German territories were supposed to compensate for former Polish territories annexed by the USSR in 1939. The rise of Cold War tensions over Germany led to the establishment of the two rival German states – the FRG and the GDR. Mounting tensions prevented any lasting solution to the German question. Additionally, formal recognition of the new Polish border on the Oder-Neisse line was blocked.

Debra J. Allen highlights the significance of the Oder-Neisse during the Cold War. Her book promised to be a truly international history of the Oder-Neisse line. However, the book fails to deliver on that promise. Allen's work is solely based on American sources. Polish, German and Soviet sources are absent. Therefore, the picture that emerges is clearly one-sided. Allen argues that the Oder-Neisse line was ill-conceived. But, as the Cold War persisted, the Oder-Neisse line became acceptable by default and was formalised in 1990.[56] I am not convinced that the development was so clear-cut. Many international interests converged on the Oder-Neisse line. The formalisation of the post-1945 Polish-German border took decades and was an important milestone in the long process of German reunification. The border was not accepted by "default". It was a conscious political bargain. Poland secured its Western possessions, while Western Germany obtained tacit approval for future reunification.

The Berlin Crisis was, likewise, an important milestone in the Cold War. Therefore, it has attracted considerable attention from various academics. Jack Schlick convincingly argues that, during this crisis, the GDR forced Khrushchev into a standoff.[57] Frederic Gloariant and Cyril Buffet claim that French and British concerns equally influenced the response on the other side of the Iron Curtain. In addition, Paris and London wanted to use the crisis to challenge the solidifying bipolar global Cold War order.[58] Schlick argues that the GDR could

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[56] Allen, Debra J. *The Oder-Neisse Line. The United States, Poland, and Germany in the Cold War* (Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2003).

[57] Schick, Jack M. *The Berlin Crisis, 1958-1962*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971).

[58] Buffet, Cyril. "La Politique Nucléaire De La France Et La Seconde Crise De Berlin 1958-1962." *Relations Internationales*, no. 59 (1989): 347-58; Gloriant, Frédéric. "To Adapt to the Cold War Bipolar Order? Or to Challenge It? Macmillan and De Gaulle's Rift in the Face of the Second Berlin Crisis." *Cold War History* 18, no. 4 (2018): 465-83.

influence Soviet decision-making during the crisis and mentions Eastern German diplomatic-propaganda campaigns. However, he fails to name the channel through which the GDR disseminated its propaganda. The GDR was only recognised by the Soviet Bloc countries, while the West had no diplomatic representatives in East Berlin. Thus, the East German leaders had to have a go-between – a Soviet Bloc country that was universally recognised. The USSR would have been an obvious choice, but an apparent conflict of interest excluded Moscow as a diplomatic channel for the GDR. All diplomatic notes, demarches and memoranda were delivered from East Berlin to the West via Warsaw. In this situation, Poland was a mediator between the Soviet Bloc and the West. The GDR's lack of diplomatic ties with the West gave Warsaw considerable leverage over its Western neighbour. The failure to account for this factor leaves us with an incomplete picture of the Berlin crisis. How Warsaw filtered or altered messages from East Berlin is an unresolved debate around the Berlin Crisis.

Vietnam War

Vietnam was a crucial theatre of the Global Cold War. The Geneva Accords of 1954 established the ICC in the former French Indochina. Non-aligned India chaired the ICC. Representatives of NATO (Canada) and the Warsaw Pact (Poland) joined India in this peacekeeping endeavour. In his pioneering research, Ramesh Thakur explored the power struggle that ensued within the ICC. Thakur oscillates between an orthodox and post-revisionist school of thought. Therefore, some inconsistencies are observable in his arguments. For example, the Soviet Bloc is portrayed as a centralised empire governed by Moscow.[59] However, when Polish relations with the West are concerned, the same centralised empire follows the principle of "socialist polycentrism."[60] It would serve no purpose to blame Thakur for such inconsistencies. His work was published as the Cold War was still taking place. The inconsistencies are, therefore, likely due to the mindset of the Cold War, which would still have been present in the 1980s. Despite his suspicions of communist intentions (mainly regarding Poland), Thakur argued that the ICC, during its initial years, played an essential role as an international peacekeeping instrument.

James Hershberg's work offers an international approach to the Vietnam War and Operation Marigold[61]. He draws from the Soviet Bloc, American and other Western archives

[59] Thakur, Ramesh. *Peacekeeping in Vietnam : Canada, India, Poland and the International Commission*. (Edmonton, University of Alberta Press, 1984), p. 26

[60] Ibid. p. 27

[61] Hershberg, James, *Marigold : The Lost Chance for Peace in Vietnam* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012).

to create a detailed account of global, regional and national diplomatic manoeuvring to end the hostilities in Vietnam. Such an international approach, which looks at the full context of the Vietnam War, is still absent in debates on the Cold War. Soviet Bloc archives offer a more in-depth insight into North Vietnam, just as American sources provide unique access to the developments in the South. Both Thakur and Westad describe the mediation carried out by North Vietnam between China and the USSR following the Sino-Soviet split. Polish archives unveil inadequacies of economic assistance provided by the Soviet Union that explain DRV's closer alliance with Beijing in 1958-68. Unlike Thakur, Hershberg focused on multilateral diplomacy outside the ICC. Despite providing a very detailed account, Hershberg did not analyse the motives behind Poland's involvement or describe how this involvement could have been beneficial for Warsaw. The work of Thakur and Hershberg provides a good starting point to move the debate forward and to expand the analysis of Polish motives and considerations throughout the Indochina Wars.

Africa

The role of Poland and Eastern European states in the African theatre of the Cold War is still developing. Most of the focus is still on the Soviet Union. The most recent examples of historians attempting to analyse the role of the USSR are offered by Alessandro Iandolo, who explored the Soviet involvement in Guinea, Ghana and Mali, and Natalia Telepneva, who investigated the role the Soviet Union played in the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire.[62] African scholars, such as Ayumoboh, Ifidion and Osarumwense, also predominantly focus on the USSR's role. However, they concluded that in the case of Nigeria, Soviet involvement failed to produce any substantial political or commercial relations.[63] More broadly, the analysis of the role of Poland and other Eastern European countries in Africa and the Global South can mostly be found in edited volumes. The most notable examples include the volume edited by Telepneva and Muehlenbeck and a collection edited by James Mark and Paul Betts.[64] Despite providing new and interesting perspectives, these volumes only present

[62] Iandolo, Alessandro, *Arrested Development* (Cornell University Press, 2022).; Natalia Telepneva, . *Cold War Liberation: The Soviet Union and the Collapse of the Portuguese Empire in Africa, 1961–1975* (UNC Press , 2022).

[63] Edgar Ayubomoh, Nigeria-Russia Relations: After and Now, *European Scientific Journal,* vol. 10(14), 2014; Ehmika Ifidon, Charles Osarumwense, Politics without commerce? Explaining the discontinuity in Soviet-Nigerian Relations, 1971-1979, *African and Asian Studies,* 2015, vol. 14(4)

[64] Philip Muehlenbeck and Natalia Telepneva (eds.), *Warsaw Pact intervention in the Third World: Aid and Influence in the Cold War,* (London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2020); James Mark and Paul Betts (eds.), *Socialism Goes Global: The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonisation,* (Oxfrod, Oxford University Press, 2022)

an incidental analysis of Poland's and Eastern European involvement in Africa. The Polish historiography is also rather scarce. The Polish-African relations are often tackled from an international relations perspective and tend to focus on post-Cold War developments.[65] Jacek Knopek offered the most comprehensive analysis of Polish-West African relations. Given the nature of the monograph and the broad perspective it adopted, Knopek's attempt provided a very detailed and factual account of how Poland's relations with West African developed but offered very little analysis of Polish motives behind involvement in the region.[66] A volume edited by Stanisław Plaszewicz offers a very detailed account of the Polish presence in Nigeria. It is a mixture of historical analysis and accounts of Poles who lived and worked in Nigeria during the Cold War. The perspective offered by Plaszewicz is unique, but yet again, by focusing on personal accounts, it fails to provide a more concrete analysis of Polish motivations and the role Poland played in the region.[67]

People and mechanisms of power

Mechanisms of power

The mechanisms of power in Poland between 1944 and 1989 proved hard to define. The general expectation was that these power structures were rigidly hierarchical. At least three edited volumes discuss how the PPR/PZPR functioned and how it wielded power in the country. It is agreed that the Party controlled all the key positions of the government and local administration, as well as all state enterprises of the nationalised economy. Thus, one ought to look at the decision-making within the Party as a centralised machine of power to trace back the policy formulation and implementation process. With this assumption, several historians associated with the Institute of National Remembrance (pol. Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – IPN), a conservative institution responsible for scholarship deeply rooted in anticommunism and anti-Soviet sentiment, started their work. To their credit, they all concluded that the mechanisms of power and decision-making were much less rigid and, thus, much harder to retrace. To this date, the question of how exactly decisions were made, communicated and implemented remains only partially answered.[68] According to the PZPR statute, the party's

[65] Żukowski Arkadiusz, ed., *Kontakty Polsko-Afrykańskie* (Instytut Nauk Politycznych Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego w Olsztynie, 2005).
[66] Jacek Knopek, *Stosunki Polsko-Zachodnioafrykanskie,* (Warszawa, Adam Marszalek, 2013)
[67] Stanislaw Plaszewicz ed. *Polacy w Nigerii vol. 1,2,3,4 and 5,* (Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Akademickie DIALOG, 2014)
[68] See Konrad Rokicki and Robert Spałek, eds., *Władza W PRL. Ludzie I Mechanizmy* (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2011); Dariusz Stola and Krzysztof Persak, eds., *PZPR Jako Machina Władzy* (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2012) and Mirosław Szumiło and Marcin Żukowski, eds., *Elity Komunistyczne W Polsce* (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2015).

highest authority was the Party Congress, which set the direction of main party policies. In between Party Congresses, the Central Committee (pol. Komitet Centralny – KC) was responsible for policy formulation and implementation.[69] Mirosław Szumiło has offered the most convincing representation of how the PZPR operated. He identified the three key executive organs of the Party – the KC headed by the top Party officials in the Politburo, Central Commission for Party Control (pol. Centralna Komisja Kontroli Partyjnej - CKKP) and the Central Auditing Commission (pol. Centralna Komisja Rewizyjna – CKR). However, the sheer number of people – approximately 500 – did not automatically mean that membership in one of them meant a real influence on state affairs. The KC would meet annually and be attended by Ministerial Undersecretaries, so that would at least explain how some discussions and their result were communicated to the government. However, these meetings were too infrequent for effective state governance. The Politburo met more frequently but often did not formulate policies; it merely approved them or addressed a pressing issue.[70]

The existing literature is inconclusive as far as the mechanisms of power go. However, it allows deducing a model that, for the purposes of this project, should be sufficient. The general outline was established at the Party Congress and communicated to all party and government levels and state enterprises and institutions. The Ministries, state companies and other institutions would then concretise these general guidelines for their own purposes and implement them. Various state agents could then present drafts, decisions, and policies to the KC or the Politburo for approval. Annual KC meetings could be used to modify and readjust existing policies, and since they were attended by representatives of the government and state enterprises, the decisions would then be disseminated easily, albeit informally. This model is, however, by no means exhaustive. Without rigid and formal structure, it often appears that various state agents operated as if in a vacuum or even in competition with one another. Which also could have been the case. As Szumiło argued, the PZPR was not a monolith but had various "cliques" and "interest groups" within itself. They often competed with each

[69] Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, *Statut Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1964); the Party Congresses were rather infrequent and between 1956 and 1970 were only called in 1959, 1964 and 1968.

[70] Mirosław Szumiło, "Elita PPR I PZPR W Latach 1944–1970 – Próba Zdefiniowania," in *Elity Komunistyczne W Polsce*, ed. Mirosław Szumiło and Marcin Żakowski (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2015), p. 40-42; see also Mirosław Szumiło, "Kierownictwo Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej W Latach 1956–1970. Portret Zbiorowy," *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 127, no. 2 (July 1, 2020): 273–314, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4866-8611.

other for power and influence or to get more resources for the economic sector they represented.[71]

Biographies of Gomułka

Biographies are often very good background literature. They can provide much useful information regarding a particular figure and their motivations. Unfortunately, the historiography does not offer abundant material in this regard. The only person who seems to have attracted historical scrutiny is Władysław Gomułka, who was the leader of the Polish communists between 1944 and 1948 and again between 1956 and 1970. Peter Raina and Nicholas Bethell made the earliest biographical attempts.[72] Both biographies focus mostly on the pre-war and WWII periods in Gomułka's life.

Given that they were published while Gomułka was still in power, they could not cover the entire period of his rule or his life. Additionally, both Raina and Bethell, in their writings, imply a somewhat personal disappointment in Gomułka, who seemed to have betrayed the liberal ideals that had brought him to power in 1956 and eventually slumped to a dictatorial style of governing.[73] Bethell gives a more balanced analysis of Gomułka's policies and emphasised that he allowed freedom of speech. Bethell has considered both internal and external pressures on Gomułka's regime and acknowledged his ability to maintain the balance between the two.[74] These biographies are of great historical value, not necessarily as scholarly works, but as historical accounts of the events as they unfolded. Andrzej Werblan's biography provides a more balanced approach but only covers the period before 1956.[75] Anita Prażmowska, in her recent biography of Gomułka, successfully grapples with the complexities of his attitudes and actions. It is the only biography of Gomułka that acknowledges his initiative and presents his vision vis-a-vis the USSR. Unfortunately, Prażmowska's analysis is confined to the pre-1956 period and does not extend to the later period, which is only summarised. [76] Although many issues are highlighted, they are not treated in such a comprehensive manner. Another recent attempt is not a typical biography but more of a collective biography of the key figures in the regime, with Gomułka being the focal point of the analysis. This attempt, however, does not bring anything new to the

[71] Mirosław Szumiło, "Kierownictwo Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej", 2020, p. 277
[72] Bethell, Nicholas. *Gomułka His Poland and His Communism*. (Harlow: Longmans, 1969).
[73] Raina, Peter. *Wladyslaw Gomulka: Zyciorys Polityczny* (London: Polonia Book Fund, 1969).
[74] Bethell, *Gomułka,* p. 273
[75] Werblan, Andrzej. *Władysław Gomułka. Sekretarz Generalny PPR*. (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza), 1988.
[76] Prażmowska, *Władysław Gomułka*.

historiographical debate. It lacks depth and complexity. It stipulates that Gomułka was not necessarily impressed by the Palace of Culture and Science, which had been built while he was imprisoned. However, according to Gajdziński, he remained a dogmatic and authoritarian Communist.[77] Additionally, Gomułka figures in Jerzy Eisler's work on all the First Secretaries of the Polish United Workers Party. However, this is a rather short biographical essay, and due to the nature of Eisler's work in this particular case, the work thus lacks any depth of analysis. It ends up simply reiterating the conclusions of previous scholarly attempts.[78]

Biographies of the regime's key figures

There is even more scarcity of historical biographies regarding other key political figures of the Gomułka regime. There are only two notable biographies of Józef Cyrankiewicz - who served as the Prime Minister of Poland in 1947-1952 and 1954-1970 – and only one of Mieczysław Moczar, who served as the Minister of Internal affairs between 1964 and 1968. Lipiński's attempt is deeply grounded in orthodox thinking. [79] Thus, Cyrankiewicz is portrayed as a cynical opportunist, who blindly followed orders. Syzdeks' work is much more balanced and thorough. It not only draws on archival sources, but also examines Cyrankiewicz's family and acquaintances. Their account of Cyrankiewicz's life is a sound historical analysis, but it is possible to feel Sydzeks' sympathy towards the "eternal Prime Minister". Despite this, these writers do not provide a rash judgement of his political career.[80] The analysis of Moczar by Lesiak is quite thorough. He presented an accurate and balanced image of Moczar. At the same time, this work tangentially explores a rather complicated and delicate matter of anti-Semitism, both concerning Moczar, and the regime as a whole. Notably, the scholarly biographies of such influential people as Marian Spychalski (Defence Minister), Adam Rapacki (Foreign Minister), Zenon Kliszko (Gomułka's closest associate), have not yet been published. Unfortunately, the biographies of key regime figures are rare and cannot be effectively used to for deeper historical analysis or for background of key Polish communist leaders.

[77] Gajdziński, Piotr. *Gomułka. Dyktatura Ciemniaków*. (Warszawa: Zysk & S-ka, 2017).
[78] Eisler, Jerzy. *Siedmiu Wspaniałych: Poczet Pierwszych Sekretarzy KC PZPR*. Warszawa: Czerwone i Czarne, 2014.
[79] Lipiński, Piotr. *Cyrankiewicz. Wieczny Premier*. (Warszawa: Czarne, 2016); Syzdek, Bronisław, and Eleonora Syzdek. *Cyrankiewicz. Zanim Zostanie Zapomniany*. (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Projekt, 1996); Lesiakowski, Krzysztof. *Mieczysław Moczar "Mietek": Biografia Polityczna*. (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Rytm, 1998).
[80] Syzdek, Bronisław and Eleonora, *Cyrankiewicz,* p. 324

Memoirs, interviews and document collections

Document collections

Document collections can be a good supplement to original archival research. Carefully selected by experienced historians, they can point one's research in the right direction. Polish historiography shows an unusual tendency to publish a collection of archival material demonstrating Poland's ability to maintain a considerable degree of independence, with little or no historical commentary – leaving all the conclusions to the reader.[81] Similarly, a collection of very carefully selected documents illustrates the events of December 1970, ultimately bringing down the Gomułka regime. [82]Additionally, there is a collection of documents regarding only Gomułka and his close associates.[83] The documents found in these collections allow for a historical reconstruction of events on an almost day-by-day basis. However, no analysis, apart from a short introduction, is provided.

Memoirs

Several memoirs may allow for a closer analysis of this period.[84] Most notably, there are political diaries by Mieczysław Rakowski, which span the period between 1958 and 1990 and provide a detailed account of political developments in Poland on an almost day-by-day basis. [85]Additionally, there are two volumes of Gomułka's memoirs.[86] These do not cover the period in question. However, they do provide historical context and explain the causes of the Polish-Soviet tensions after 1956. The war memoirs of General Spychalski are slightly different but give an analogous account of the communist anti-German resistance.[87] Despite their potential usefulness, memoirs concerning the period discussed are rather scarce. They can be used as background and allow a deeper understanding of only some, and often very personal, issues.

Interviews

Since the fall of communism is a relatively recent event, the key figures and members of the communist party were – until recently – still alive. Many journalists and historians seized this opportunity to obtain a first-hand account of Polish communist history. The first

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[81] Paczkowski, Andrzej, ed. *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego : PRL-ZSRR 1956-1970*. (London: Aneks, 1998).
[82] Domański, Paweł, ed. *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego. Grudzień 1970*. (Warszawa: Aneks, 1991).
[83] Andrzejewski, Jakub, ed. *Gomułka i Inni. Dokumenty z Archiwum KC 1948-1982*. (London: Aneks, 1987).
[84] Winiewicz, Józef. *Co Pamiętam z Długiej Drogi Życia*. (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1985).
[85] Rakowski, Mieczysław. *Dzienniki Polityczne*. Vol. I-X. (Warszawa: Iskry, 2001).
[86] Gomułka, Władysław. *Pamiętniki. Tom I I II*. Edited by Andrzej Werblan. (Warszawa: Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza BGW, 1994).
[87] Spychalski, Marian. *Początek Walki: Fragmenty Wspomnień*. (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1983).

such series of interviews was conducted by Teresa Torańska in the mid-1980s, with the key "Polish Stalinists", such as Jakub Berman – the infamous party secretary in charge of the repression apparatus and Edward Ochab – Gomułka's direct predecessor as First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party.[88] Torańska took her chance to interview General Jaruzelski – the last leader of communist Poland, on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the declaration of martial law in Poland.[89] She then carried out interviews with crucial communist leaders in the early 2000s.[90] Despite the openly accusatory tone of these interviews, they provide a somewhat surprising perspective. The interviews illustrate their fears and dilemmas, their concern for the country and the nation they ruled. Despite Torańska's effort to demonise them, they indeed appear more human. In this series of interviews, a new picture emerges, not one of the high and mighty autocrats, by the grace of Moscow, but of people who desperately tried to make the best of the circumstances they found themselves in. In a similar vein, the memoirs of Ryszard Strzelecki, Gomułka's son, are gathered by Eleonora Syzdek.[91] An even earlier effort to collect and organise the memoirs of Gomułka's close associates was carried out by Bronisław Sydzek in the late 1980s.[92] The most recent endeavour is the extended interview with Andrzej Werblan, which sheds additional light on intra-party conflicts and developments.[93] Despite their usefulness, these interviews provide a limited number of personal perspectives on the events in Poland between 1956 and 1970 since only very few important leaders have survived.

Summary/justification

Between 1944 and 1990, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe engaged in a new relationship, one that should have been uniquely familiar to all the communist leaders. It was a Marxist dynamic between the oppressor and the oppressed – or between the leader and the follower, to be more general. The irony of such a state of affairs may have been lost on the Soviet leadership, but as historical events of 1956 and 1968 show, it was most certainly not lost on the leaders of the so-called "satellite states". The scholarly debate slowly moved toward acknowledging that the Soviet Bloc was not a monolith and that Eastern European states, in the period post-1956, gained more leeway. Yet this increased freedom for political

[88] Torańska, Teresa. *Oni*. (Warszawa: Przedświt, 1985).
[89] Zmarz-Koczanowicz, Maria, and Teresa Torańska. "Noc z Generałem." Poland: TVP1, 2001.
[90] Torańska, Teresa. *Byli*. (Warszawa: Świat Książki, 2006).
[91] Strzelecki, Ryszard and Eleonora Syzdek. *Między Realizmem a Utopia: Władysław Gomułka We Wspomnieniach Syna*. (Studio Emka, 2003).
[92] Syzdek, Bronisław. *Władysław Gomułka We Wspomnieniach*. (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 1989).
[93] Walenciak, Robert, and Andrzej Werblan *Polska Ludowa. Postscriptum*. (Warszawa: Iskry, 2019).

manipulation was not merely bestowed on Poland, Hungary, Romania and other Eastern European states by the USSR. Countries in Eastern Europe also fought for it, not from a military stance, but from a political one. Discovering the motivation behind that struggle will allow for a better understanding not only of Polish history but also how it relates to Cold War developments. Nevertheless, the literature rarely provides concrete examples of how the Eastern Europeans used their newly acquired autonomy. It is time to push the debate forward and show that not only did the Poles and other Eastern Europeans have considerable leeway, but they also could fully benefit from it. The Stalinist period created a long-lasting legacy the Eastern Europeans had to grapple with. But, their newly acquired autonomy warranted that each state would grapple with the Stalinist legacy differently. The Poles would focus on overcoming the economic shortcomings of the Stalinist model. That attempt would lead to Poland's truly global outreach. Economic contacts often created political entanglements and thus, the Poles were involved, at least to some degree, politically and economically on all continents by 1970. It is time to acknowledge that Poland was not only more autonomous and free to pursue policies deviating, often significantly, from the Soviet model but that Poland was an important Cold War actor, in many cases capable of influencing Cold War events and Soviet Bloc policies.

Moreover, the motivations underlying Polish policy between 1956 and 1970 were much more complex than currently acknowledged. Ideological considerations were undoubtedly present in many cases. However, post-1956, ideology was hardly ever the dominant factor. With a degree of certainty, it can be claimed that national and economic considerations were also important if not primary, factors influencing Polish policy. Sometimes, they were more open; in other cases, it was more subsumed and implicit. Nevertheless, that sense of narrowly defined national interest stemming from Poland's long history pushed the Poles to pursue a particular path. The planned path was to lead them to independence. To achieve this, they needed to create a state that was modern, cohesive and secure. Paradoxically, this rather narrow nationalist concern pushed Polish communist leaders to engage with the most critical global issues concerning the Cold War, as it was here that they could assert autonomy and independence on an international stage.

The historiography concerning Poland between 1956 and 1970 provides a solid base for further discussion. However, the analysis offered is often fragmentary and incidental. The historiography lacks a synthesis or a monograph of this period, which could analyse the Polish motivations and goals. A monograph that could use the framework provided by the recent

scholarly efforts and cast a new light on Poland's role in the Cold War. That is the main, albeit rather ambitious, purpose of this project. This dissertation will serve not only to enhance the debate on Poland but on the Cold War in general. It will show that Poland's motivations were underpinned by national interest and economic considerations. In their attempt to make their country the second most influential Soviet Bloc country, the Poles had to reach out globally. Such global economic entanglements, in many cases, like the case of Nigeria and the DRV, resulted in important political and diplomatic involvement. This thesis will demonstrate that Poland, and Eastern Europe more broadly, in its attempt to overcome its satellite status, influenced many important Cold War developments.

Introduction

Background

After World War II, Poland found itself in the Soviet sphere of influence. Due to its geographic location (the Polish plains were the easiest and shortest way of reaching Soviet Western borderlands), the country was of "crucial importance" to Stalin. As Norman Naimark argued, the Soviet dictator was unwilling to compromise on Poland. The Finnish or Austrian models could not be granted to the Poles.[94] A Soviet-backed communist regime was installed in Poland as the Soviet troops were advancing westward through Polish territories on their way to Berlin. Despite Poland's importance and Stalin's determination, in the immediate post-war years, Poland and its leader, Władysław Gomułka, enjoyed a significant degree of autonomy.[95] As Mark Kramer argued, anti-Soviet sentiment was prevalent throughout Eastern Europe. Moreover, local nationalisms constantly undermined the power of Soviet-backed communist regimes.[96] Despite these factors, the process of Stalinisation in Poland was comparably longer than elsewhere in Eastern Europe.[97] Most likely because Polish nationalism was stronger, and the ethnic cleansing campaign, which made Poland a homogenous nation-state, further galvanised the nationalist sentiment.[98] It is difficult to ascertain when Stalin forced the Soviet model onto Eastern European regimes. Khlevniuk argued that such a decision was a response to Soviet setbacks in the West, such as the Berlin Airlift and the establishment of NATO. In response to a perceived threat from the West, the Soviet dictator chose to speed up the process of consolidating his empire.[99] The process reached its peak in the early 1950s, as illustrated by Stalin personally editing the draft of Poland's constitution in 1952.[100] However, shortly after the brutal consolidation of his empire, Stalin died.

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[94] Naimark, Norman M. Stalin and the Fate of Europe: The Postwar Struggle for Sovereignty (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press Of Harvard University Press, 2019), p. 209 and 230.
[95] Ibid. P.208-209
[96] Kramer, Mark. "Stalin, Soviet Policy, and the Consolidation of a Communist Bloc," in *Stalinism Revisited: the Establishment of Communist Regimes in East-Central Europe*, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu (New York: Central European University Press, 2009), p. 70
[97] Kaminski, Antoni Z. and Bartłomiej Kaminski, "Road to 'People's Poland': Stalin's Conquest Revisited," in *Stalinism Revisited: the Establishment of Communist Regimes in East-Central Europe*, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu (Central European University Press: New York, 2009), p. 226
[98] Prażmowska, Anita. *Civil War in Poland 1942-1948.* (Houndmills, Basingstock, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 190
[99] Khlevniuk, Oleg V. *Stalin - New Biography of a Dictator.* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2016), p. 281
[100] Babiracki, Patryk. *Soviet Soft Power in Poland: Culture and the Making of Stalin's New Empire, 1943-1957*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), p. 100

The death of Joseph Stalin in 1953 triggered a process of change throughout the Soviet Empire. The political situation in Poland between 1954 and 1956 was in a state of flux The Politburo no longer set the tone or gave instructions. The state had to still run somehow, therefore, in a vacuum created by an escalating power struggle, and autonomous decision-making centres sprung up into being. Ministries, among them the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (pol. Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych - MSZ), would play such a role. These decision-making centres were not coordinated in any way; various bodies made many contradicting decisions. Thus, it was almost impossible to present the state of affairs in Poland coherently at that time. The disintegration of the security apparatus following Józef Światło's defection to the West was coupled with a prolonged power struggle at the Kremlin. These two factors produced a power vacuum in Poland. Moscow, for the time being, no longer set the political line. Polish party officials did not know how to act, so they decided to do nothing. At that time, there were two most commonly known political factions in Poland – Natolin and Puławy. The former was supposedly constituted of hard-line, pro-Moscow communists who followed a nationalist and anti-Semitic policy. The latter were those who played a critical role in establishing the Stalinist model in Poland post-1945 but advocated the most far-reaching reforms, arguably to divert attention from their past. The 20th Congress of the CPSU, held in February 1956, sent shock waves throughout the global Communist movement. In Poland, it intensified the factional struggles at the top of the political hierarchy. The deepening chaos made various independent decision-making centres, such as the MSZ, more important.

A special meeting was called in the MSZ to address the implications of the 20th Congress of the CPSU. The significance of this meeting is highlighted by the fact that not only Heads of Departments were called in, but also all ambassadors from Europe and North America. Franciszek Mazur, a Politburo member, gave a speech at the meeting. He explained at great length that in the post-war period, Poland "did not fully use its potential to pursue an active and independent foreign policy."[101] As the debate progressed, Józef Winiewicz remarked, "many people are stopping here, on their way to Moscow. We must take it upon ourselves so the guests come directly to us. We should not be a waiting room [for Moscow]."[102] In light of Mazur's speech and the following debate, the MSZ staff concluded that an opportunity presented itself for Poland. China was not interested in worldwide affairs and focused mainly on Asia. In such circumstances, Poland could play "the second fiddle" in

[101] AMSZ Z-26W-54T-458, Protokół narady kierowników placówek dyplomatycznych odbytej 7 kwietnia 1956, p. 3
[102] Ibid. p. 29

the Soviet Bloc. At the meeting held on 30 October 1956, the MSZ concluded that Władysław Gomułka, who regained power slightly more than a week earlier, agreed to the objectives formulated by the MSZ in April 1956.[103] Gomułka's agreement, in this case, hardly comes as a surprise. The MSZ has not discovered anything new. The original proponent of the "second fiddle" concept was Gomułka, although he phrased it differently. When he led the PPR in 1947, he announced his plan to "make Poland, politically and economically, the most active and dynamic state, exclusive of the USSR" in the Soviet Bloc.[104] This suggests a continuity of Poland's policies and ambitions. They were subsumed in 1948, with Gomułka's ouster and Stalinisation, but spontaneously reemerged once the Soviet grip on Poland was weakened in 1956.

Hypothesis and research questions

"Playing second fiddle" is commonly believed to be a pejorative term. Regarding Poland, such a policy goal was a sign of remarkable political realism by Gomułka and the Polish leadership. As a comparatively small country, Poland could never match the Soviet Union's economic, military and political potential. But, given China's absence in European affairs, it could play the role of the second most important country of the Soviet Bloc. In this respect, the period of 1956-70 was nothing short of extraordinary for Poland: it arose not only from the position of the most senior Soviet ally but also from a country that could influence Cold War events. In 1956, Gomułka and the Polish leadership launched, or rather, re-launched, a project to make Poland the country with the second-largest economy, army and most dynamic diplomacy in the Soviet Bloc. Yet, this project was only a means to an end, not the goal on its own. The Polish United Workers' Party leaders aimed, first and foremost, to safeguard Poland's national interest. For that purpose, Poland needed its own model of socialism. Gomułka first presented the new Polish model in his speech in October 1956. By 1959, it was fully developed and announced at the III Congress of the PZPR. It was then implemented during the 1960s. In 1970, riots caused by increased food prices led to a change of party leadership. Edward Gierek replaced Gomułka as the new party secretary. Under the new leadership, previous policies were replaced by new concepts of the Polish road to socialism

The 1956-1970 governance model was structured around a centrally planned economy and strict social discipline; however, it allowed for ideological flexibility. Collectivisation was

[103] AMSZ, Z-26W-57T-458 – Narada 30.IX, no page number.
[104] CIA-15275863, Poland - Political Parties, 24 September 1947, p. 1

abandoned, and elements of private enterprise were permitted (coexisted with state-controlled enterprises). When socialist methods clashed with nationalist goals, ideology was replaced by more pragmatic approaches. First, Polish leaders believed that to play an important role in the Soviet Bloc, they had to develop diplomatic contacts to break Poland's Cold War isolation. Therefore, from the outset in 1956, they sought to establish closer ties with non-communist countries. Secondly, the Polish economy needed to produce globally desired goods not only to reduce Poland's dependence on the USSR but also to assure further economic development. Entering the global stage allowed Poland to use the economy as a foreign policy tool. Finally, the post-1956 modus vivendi did not clearly define the limits of Polish independence. This meant that Poland would push specific policies until it met Soviet resistance. However, Polish leaders were able to re-align Poland's interests, so they rarely clashed with the security concerns of the USSR. This way, Poland could pursue some policies unilaterally without consulting the Soviet Union. This ability enabled Poland to play an important role on a global stage and ensured that Poland never met Soviet resistance or intervention as Czechoslovakia did in 1968. To achieve these objectives, this dissertation will be guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent did national and economic considerations underpin Polish policies between 1956 and 1970?
2. To what extent in that period Poland began to act independently within the Soviet Bloc and on a global stage?
3. To what extent could Poland influence the Cold War events in various theatres of conflict?
4. To what extent was Poland's rise to sovereignty a unique case in the Soviet Bloc context?
5. To what extent was the Polish project launched between 1956-1970 successful?

Answering those questions will allow a greater understanding of Polish motivation and Poland's role in the Global Cold War between 1956 and 1970.

Ideology

The role that ideology played throughout the Cold War is crucial. It could be argued that ideology fuelled the global conflict from the late 1940s to the 1980s. Communism, in its 20th-century application, always warranted state control over the economy and many other aspects of social and political life. In the Soviet Union, communism was primarily to

consolidate the "might of the Soviet state" and expand its influence beyond its borders.[105] Similarly, assessing the post-1945 Polish history without understanding the ideological context would not be feasible. Given that Marxism, in its various interpretations, such as Leninism or Stalinism, was such a momentous force in shaping Poland and Eastern Europe, there is remarkably little written on the subject. In most cases, historians assume a rather rigid and dogmatic ideological commitment.[106] Unfortunately, the debates on how the PZPR defined its ideology and how its members adhered to it are rarely analysed. Nevertheless, the PZPR had a unique historical background, which certainly influenced its approach to the Marxist/Communist doctrine. The roots of the Polish communist and socialist parties can be found in the late 19th century. These parties operated after the Polish statehood had been extinguished in the late 18th century, and many of them tied the cause of socialism/communism with the cause of national liberation. The Polish Socialist Party (pol. Polska Partia Socjalistyczna – PPS) would be the main representative of the independence struggle on the Polish Left, which actively joined the efforts to reconstruct the Polish state in the 1920s.[107] However, the immediate predecessors of the party that would rule Poland after WWII were the two movements which opposed Polish independence. The Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (pol. Socialdemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy – SDKPiL) and the more radical fraction of the PPS – PPS-Left (pol. PPS-Lewica), which united in December 1918 to form the Communist Party of Poland (pol. Komunistyczna Partia Polski – KPP), in response to Poland regaining independence.[108] The KPP was completely dependent on Moscow. Yet still, the national aspirations shaped by Poland's 19th-century experience caused a break in the party in the 1930s, when a nationalist and pro-independence group broke away from the KPP.[109] The Communists assembled in the KPP remained on the margins of the Polish political scene despite, or maybe because of, Moscow's direct and open

[105] John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 31. However, the Western superpower - the United States – made anticommunism a quasi-state ideology. For more see for example: Ceplair, Larry. *Anti-Communism in Twentieth-Century America: A Critical History* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2011).

[106] Anthony Kemp-Welch and Joanna Gilewicz, *Polska Pod Rządami Komunistów : 1944-1989* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersyteu Jagiellońskiego, 2010). Similar arguments echoed in Jakub Karpiński, *Wykres Gorączki. Polska Pod Rządami Komunistycznymi* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2001) and Andrzej Paczkowski, *Trzy Twarze Józefa Światły : Przyczynek Do Historii Komunizmu W Polsce* (Warszawa: Prószyński I S-Ka, Cop, 2009).

[107] Jan Alfred Reguła, *Historia Komunistycznej Partii Polski* (Warszawa: Drukprasa, 1934), p. 12-16; also see: Leon Wasilewski, *Zarys Dziejów Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej W Związku Z Historją Socjalizmu Polskiego W Trzech Zaborach I Na Emigracji* (Warszawa: Nowe Życie, 1925).

[108] Reguła, *Historia Komunistycznej Partii Polski* p. 30

[109] Jarosław Tomasiewicz, *"Faszyzm Lewicy" Czy "Ludowy Patriotyzm"? Tendencje Antyliberalne I Nacjonalistyczne W Polskiej Lewicowej Myśli Politycznej Lat Trzydziestych* (Warszawa: PIW, 2020), p. 240

support. In 1938, the KPP was disbanded, and its leadership executed, which deeply traumatised those members who survived (among them Władysław Gomułka, who was only saved because he was serving time in Polish prison) and possibly filled them with distrust towards Stalin and the Soviet leadership.[110]

The immediate successor of the KPP, the Polish Workers' Party (pol. Polska Partia Robotnicza – PPR), was established in Warsaw in January 1942.[111] In November 1943, the leadership of the PPR was arrested, and Władysław Gomułka became the General Secretary of the PPR. Shortly after becoming the leader of the PPR, Gomułka established the National Council (pol. Krajowa Rada Narodowa – KRN) without the approval of Stalin or the Comintern, which shows he was willing to act independently and was not subservient to Stalin at all times.[112] Gomułka also believed that the PPR should gain broad support and began negotiations with other left-wing Polish parties, like the PPS, to convince them to join the KRN. This immediately started a conflict between Gomułka and Bolesław Bierut, who was also a leading member of the PPR. Unlike Gomułka, Bierut was more pro-Soviet and believed that the future dominance of the PPR could only be secured with the support of the Red Army.[113] With the fall of Germany in 1945, the Polish state re-emerged. This time, it was led by the PPR, with the Soviet Union's backing. Between 1945 and 1947, a certain degree of political pluralism existed in Poland while the country enjoyed relative autonomy. Nevertheless 1948, the so-called "Stalinisation" process began in Poland and Eastern Europe. Gomułka was ousted from power and replaced by more pro-Soviet Bolesław Bierut. The PPS and the PPR were merged to form the PZPR. In this process, the PPR absorbed the PPS with all its members and its traditions of fighting for Polish independence. Some key Polish leaders, like Józef Cyrankiewicz, Poland's Prime Minister in 1947-1952 and again in 1956-1970, or Adam Rapacki – the Minster of Foreign Affairs, were PPS members.[114] To successfully wield power, the PZPR needed to become a mass movement. It needed to appeal to larger portions of Polish society. The PZPR chose a nationalist appeal, which proved quite

[110] See: Jarema Maciszewski, *Tragedia Komunistycznej Partii Polski* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1989).
[111] Ryszard Nazarewicz, *Armii Ludowej Dylematy I Dramaty* (Warszawa: Oficyna Drukarska, 1998), p. 45
[112] Andrzej Werblan, *Władysław Gomułka, Sekretarz Generalny PPR* (Warszawa: Ksiazka I Wiedza, 1988), p. 175-176
[113] Krystyna Kersten, *Narodziny Systemu Wladzy : Polska 1943 - 1948* (Warszawa: Kantor Wydawniczy SAWW, 1986), p. 41
[114] Biuletyn Informacji Publicznej Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej poz. 654 – Józef Cyrankiewicz and poz. 669 – Adam Rapacki; accessed from https://katalog.bip.ipn.gov.pl/.

successful. However, an appeal to nationalism and the admission of thousands of new members significantly diluted the PZPR's ideological commitment.[115]

More recently, a new side emerged in the scholarly debate. It focuses on presenting the Polish United Workers' Party not as a group of ideologues but as corrupt technocrats desperately clinging to power. Zbigniew Siemiątkowski argued that de-Stalinisation provided an intellectual stimulus and pushed the PZPR to search for new solutions and models. But that change was short-lived. The liberalisation, Siemiątkowski argued, was a tactical manoeuvre. Eventually, all the reforms would have been halted or overturned. Yet the "conservatives" were not powerful enough to restore the pre-1956 regime fully. This, in turn, forced the Polish leadership to search for a new formula for socialism in Poland. A formula that would replace the Stalinist order that collapsed in 1956. In this attempt, the PZPR attempted to create a "national communism". The marriage between communism and nationalism was, according to Siemiątkowski, ultimately unsuccessful. In 1968, it led to an antisemitic campaign that further undermined the leadership and was ultimately discarded. Between 1968 and 1970, the Polish party turned to technocracy as a governance model. With that turn, Gomułka, who failed to reform the regime, was replaced by the ultimate technocrat, Edward Gierek, in 1970.[116] Furthermore, Antoni Dudek argued that Poland's allegiance to Moscow was primarily geopolitical, albeit somewhat flavoured by ideological commitment. Moscow's dominance in the region was seen as a permanent fixture. Moreover, it warranted a certain political and economic model.

Finally, the Soviet Union was the only guarantor of Polish post-1945 territory, which proved crucial since, throughout the 1950s and the 1960s, Poland's border on the Oder-Neisse line was either not universally recognised or, as in the case of Western Germany, openly contested. The Polish leaders were deeply critical of the Soviet Union. Gomułka even claimed that "the former Russian chauvinism, like a chameleon, adapted to the new Soviet reality and became the general line of the CPSU". However, for pragmatic reasons, none of the Polish leaders dared to start an open conflict with Moscow since it was the Soviet Union that

[115] For more see Marcin Zaremba, *Komunizm, Legitymizacja, Nacjonalizm* (Warszawa: ISP PAN, 2001) and Piotr Osęka, *Rytuały Stalinizmu:oficjalne Święta I Uroczystości Rocznicowe W Polsce 1944–1956* (Warszawa: Trio/ISP PAN, 2007).

[116] Zbigniew Siemiątkowski, *Między Złudzeniem a Rzeczywistością. Oblicze Ideowe PZPR Pod Rządami Władysława Gomułki* (Warszawa: Adam Marszałek, 2019). p.231-268 and 322. For a similar perspective, see Mirosław Karwat, *Sami Swoi: Rzecz O Rozkładzie Partii Rządzącej* (Warszawa: FiKK, 1991).

guaranteed Poland's territorial integrity.[117] Even though the literature on PZPR's official ideology is not often debated in historiography, it allows the conclusion that the commonly assumed ideological rigidity of the PZPR is a myth. The party's troubled relations with the VKP(b)/CPSU warranted at least some distrust towards Moscow by Gomułka and other Polish leaders. The absorption of the PPS in 1948 warranted that the PZPR would inherit at least some of the PPS' independence struggle traditions. Making the PZPR a mass movement and appealing to nationalism further weakened its ideological cohesion. It is safe to assume that the PZPR accepted some of the communist tenets – the leading role of the party and its control over all aspects of Poland's political, economic and cultural life. But, as Dudek argued, these were dictated by Soviet regional dominance. Thus, ultimately, we are left with a party which openly praised the Soviet communist doctrine while secretly criticising it. As this project will demonstrate, the official lip service paid to Communism cannot be taken at face value. It was part of a ritual. While openly declaring Communist orthodoxy, the PZPR showed a much less rigid and more pragmatic approach to its actions.

Similarly to the Polish rather relaxed attitude towards communist orthodoxy, one also cannot find a rigid government structure. The power structures created by the PZPR seemed to have been more dispersed and less centralised than commonly believed.

National Interest

This dissertation intends to argue that Poland, in the period 1956-1970, wanted to secure its autonomy and national interest. Recent scholarly attempts also emphasise that Poland, alongside other Eastern European states, focused on its national interests, even in relations with its ideological allies.[118] However, these attempts do not explain what the Poles understood as their "national interest" at that time. Even the Central Intelligence Agency observed that "the development of the Marxist movement in Poland was influenced by nationalism" and "preoccupation with Poland's national peculiarities". Those "peculiarities" were the loss of independence and the destruction of Poland as a separate polity between 1795 and 1918. Thus, the Poles were very sensitive about national sovereignty and independence.[119] This popular sentiment influenced the Polish post-1945 leadership, which, although not always able to safeguard "sovereignty", was keen to maintain Poland as a

[117] As cited in Antoni Dudek, "Wybrane Czynniki Historyczne Wpływające Na Politykę Władz PRL," in *Polityka Czy Propaganda. PRL Wobec Historii*, ed. Tomasz Wiścicki (Warszawa: Muzeum Hisorii Polski, 2009), p. 19
[118] Christopher Lash, "Taking Third World Solidarity with a Pinch of Salt: Socialist Poland's Policies towards 1960s Mali," *Cold War History*, December 27, 2023, 1–22, https://doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2023.2269850.
[119] CIA-RDP81-01043R001900120003-1, Gomułka and Polish Communism, 28 February 1958, p.1

separate polity. The Yalta and Potsdam Conferences warranted significant territorial changes for Poland. Its Eastern borderlands – Vilnius, Hrodna, Luck and Lviv provinces – were ceded to the USSR. As compensation, Poland received German provinces of Warmia and Masuria, Pomerania, West Pomerania, and Upper and Lower Silesia. Poland's new frontier came to be known as the Oder-Neisse line. The Oder-Neisse line was not universally recognised as Poland's border in the West, especially in West Germany. The Soviet Union was the only major power that recognised Poland's post-1945 borders and the sole guarantor of a third of Poland's territory.[120] Such geopolitical circumstances warranted that one of the key foundations of Poland's post-1945 foreign policy would be an alliance with the Soviet Union and other Soviet Bloc states not only for ideological but also for geopolitical reasons.[121]

To safeguard their "autonomy" and "national interests", the Poles believed they needed to make Poland have the second largest Soviet Bloc army, second best technology, infrastructure and production base that could finance those needs. All these were costly goals. Gomułka described one of the core tenants of his policies as "security and material and economic development of the country".[122] To put it simply, the Poles needed money to finance a large army and the modernisation of the economy. Thus, the economic relations they favoured were ones where they could obtain tangible benefits to the national economy. The aforementioned aspects allow us to identify the following core tenets of how the leadership of the PZPR understood Poland's national interest:

1. Preserving Poland's status as a separate territorial and political entity.
2. Maintaining Poland's territorial integrity and security through an alliance with the Soviet Union until the country's post-war borders become universally recognised.
3. Obtaining maximum economic benefits through trade relations with other states, regardless of their ideological affiliation.
4. Using economically beneficial relations to finance Poland's economic and military development.

[120] R. Gerald Hughes, "Unfinished Business from Potsdam: Britain, West Germany, and the Oder-Neisse Line, 1945–1962," *The International History Review* 27, no. 2 (June 2005): 259–94, https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2005.9641060.
[121] Antoni Dudek, "Wybrane Czynniki Historyczne Wpływające Na Politykę Władz PRL," in *Polityka Czy Propaganda. PRL Wobec Historii*, ed. Tomasz Wiścicki (Warszawa: Muzeum Hisorii Polski, 2009), p. 19
[122] "Przemówienie Końcowe Tow. Władysława Gomułki Wygłoszone W Dziewiątym Dniu Obrad III Zjazdu PZPR," *Gazeta Białostocka*, March 20, 1959.

5. Translating Poland's economic, military and political position to influence within the Soviet Bloc to ensure as much autonomy as possible.

The above five principles seemed to have guided Polish decision-making in the period of 1956-1970. These were the main Polish objectives, and these are what this dissertation will mean whenever using the term "national interests" in relation to Poland. The archival research conducted as a part of this project uncovered new archival evidence that supports the existence of such objectives.

Methodology

Archival materials

This exploratory study adopts a mix of qualitative research approaches. Being concerned with political events that occurred between 1956 and 1970 and their impacts on later developments, this research project also adopts a historical approach. After reading appropriate literature concerning the topic and formulating research questions, it moves towards the selection of appropriate primary historical sources found in archives (both in digital and hard copy form) and national libraries. The primary research can be divided into two categories – hard copy *in situ* resources found in archives and, secondly, their digitalised form. The *in situ* archival resources were accessed during numerous research trips to Poland between September 2019 and January 2023. The *in situ* archival materials were gathered at the Archive of Modern Records (pol. Archiwum Akt Nowych – AAN), the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (pol. Archiwum Minsterstwa Spraw Zagranicznych – AMSZ), the Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance (pol. Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej – AIPN), State Archives in Katowice, Kielce, Szczecin and Wrocław, and finally the National Archives in Kew.

The in situ research was supplemented by archival material available online in digital form. The digitised material was gathered from the CIA Freedom of Information Act Reading Room, Lyndon Bines Johnson Library, the Digitised Collection of the National Australian Archives, the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes (cz. Ústav pro Studium Totalitních Režimů) and the digital collection of the Federal Archive (de. Bundesarchiv). These to the best extent served to illustrate the developments in Poland and their external assessments. There is a notable absence of Russian archives, which would have provided definitive confirmation. However, the linguistic barrier and the fact that the majority of this research was conducted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic made the archival research

difficult. With the escalation of conflict in Europe in 2022, the access to archives was further limited. Despite these limitations, the author believes that external assessments of the events gathered in Western archives is a sufficient confirmation of evidence discovered in Polish archives.

Structure

To prove the central argument, this dissertation will provide several test cases to demonstrate the validity of the hypothesis. Firstly, Poland's role in the Warsaw Pact will be analysed. The Soviet Bloc and its chief political and military organisation were the primary contexts in which the Poles operated. Understanding how the Poles negotiated their role within the Bloc is crucial to understanding how Poles could then interact with non-communist actors on the global stage. Then, this dissertation will present the economic motives that underpinned Poland's policies within the Warsaw Pact and on a global stage. After that, it will move towards analysing Poland's interactions with the Western Bloc, through diplomacy and trade. Having analysed Poland's objectives in its interaction with Western powers, this dissertation will analyse what motivated the Poles in major Global Cold War conflicts. The first such major conflict was the Vietnam War. The second was the Civil War in Nigeria. Finally, it will present an overall analysis of the test cases presented throughout the dissertation.

Chapter I will discuss how Poland operated within its primary geopolitical context – the Warsaw Pact. It will analyse how the Poles were able to use the Warsaw Pact structures to negotiate greater autonomy and how this newly negotiated role allowed them to improve their standing not only within the Soviet Bloc but also in the West and the Global South. Chapter II will analyse the economic underpinnings of Poland's foreign policy within the Bloc and globally. Chapter III will focus predominantly on Poland's relations with the West and will focus on Polish non-proliferation initiatives. Chapter IV will analyse Poland's role in the Indochina conflict and will explore how purely ideological relations gradually gave way to Poland's economic concerns and how these concerns motivated the Poles to increase their engagement in the Vietnam War. Chapter V will analyse how Poland's initially purely economic entanglements evolved into political involvement in the Nigerian Civil War.

The test cases selected here are believed to be sufficient, but the list presented here is by no means exhaustive. Poland's relations with South America, India and China have not been included. The reason why Polish interaction with Latin American states and India has not been selected to support the central hypothesis stems from the fact that these relations

were purely economic. In contrast, interactions presented here are often a mix of economic and political entanglements, which most clearly demonstrate Poland's role in the Bloc, in Europe, and in the Global Cold War. They were important, but the constraints placed on this project made it impossible to include them. The case of Polish-Chinese relations seems to be similar. However, these relations were more subtle and complex, and this complexity warrants a separate and in-depth analysis.

Chapter I - Poland in the Warsaw Pact

The signing of the Warsaw Treaty on 14 May 1955 was an important Cold War milestone. As the Soviets had to start recognising the "sovereignty" of their Eastern European and Asian satellites and allies. From that moment on, the two opposing blocs were formalised. Their competition lasted until the end of the Cold War itself, with the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact only slightly preceding the fall of the Soviet Union.[123] The ongoing scholarly debate is still dominated by the orthodox approach to Cold War studies. The dominating narrative focuses on the hegemonic role of the USSR in the Warsaw Pact and the organisation's role as a transmission belt for Soviet interests. In the anglophone scholarly world, Mark Kramer is one example of this orthodox approach. Kramer argued that the ultimate goal of the Warsaw Pact was to "uphold communist regimes in Eastern Europe."[124] In Polish historiography, the most damning account of the Warsaw Pact's history is presented by Ryszard Kałużny. He emphasised the military, political and economic hegemony of the USSR in the Warsaw Pact. Kałużny argued that other WP countries could not exercise any real influence on its forum, citing the predominance of Soviet officers within the Unified Allied Command.[125] There are, however, attempts to go beyond the orthodox narrative. The earliest appeared in Polish historiography in 2008. Wanda Jarząbek argued that the Warsaw Pact could be a forum where Eastern European countries, such as Poland, could assert their national interests. Unfortunately, in her conclusion, Jarząbek reverted to the orthodox school. The imbalance between the USSR's and Eastern Europe's economic and military potentials, according to Jarząbek, ultimately prevented non-Soviet Warsaw Pact members from exercising any degree of control over the institution, although they did have some leeway within its framework.[126] In Western historiography, Laurien Crump was the most successful in challenging the orthodox school of thought. Crump argued that the Warsaw Pact was a platform on which non-Soviet members could assert and pursue their national interests.[127]

[123] Warsaw Pact was dissolved on 1 July 1991. The USSR was formally dissolved on 26 December 1991.
[124] Kramer, Mark, "NATO, the Warsaw Pact, and the Nature of International Alliances: Theoretical Expectations and the Empirical Record," *Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe : [Czasopismo Krakowskiej Szkoły Wyższej Im. Andrzeja Frycza Modrzewskiego]* 6, no. 3 (January 1, 2009): 115–23., p. 117
[125] Out of 523 staff, only 173 were non-Soviet; Ryszard Kałużny, "Układ Warszawski 1955-1991," *Naukowe WSOWL* 1, no. 147 (2008): 190--198. p. 191
[126] Jarząbek, Wanda, *PRL W Politycznych Strukturach Układu Warszawskiego W Latach 1955-1980* (Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2008).
[127] Crump, Laurien, *The Warsaw Pact Reconsidered: International Relations in Eastern Europe, 1955-1969* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015)., p. iii

The most contentious issue in the historiography of the Warsaw Pact is the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. The orthodox/revisionist divide, in this case, mimics the former Cold War East/West divide. Western historians tend to emphasise the imperialist drive within the USSR while presenting the leaders of Poland, GDR and Bulgaria as ideological hard-liners.[128] On the other hand, Eastern European historians, such as Oldrich Tůma and Mikhail Prozumenschikov, argued that the invasion was not an imperialist drive but a careful political calculation. Manfred Wilke attempted to re-evaluate the motives of the GDR leadership but ultimately failed to provide any new arguments.[129] Thus, he concluded that GDR's involvement was purely ideological. Zhivkov's and Gomułka's stances still await re-evaluation. The perception of Gomułka's, Ulbricht's, and Zhivkov's hard-line ideological stance is so entrenched that it found its way to academic textbooks.[130] As far as those three Eastern European leaders and their stance on the Czechoslovak issue is concerned, the scholars are unanimous. Ulbricht, Gomułka and Zhivkov were staunch communists who believed in the leading role of the USSR. They abhorred reforms and were more than willing to submit themselves to the Soviet hegemony to crush the Prague Spring.[131] This chapter will demonstrate that their concerns were more nuanced and that pragmatic, security-focused considerations played an important role in the decision-making process.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to analyse Poland's role in the Warsaw Pact. This dissertation has argued that Poland wanted to play "second fiddle" (see Introduction) in the Soviet Bloc. We need to bear in mind that it was the primary political and economic milieu for Poland. The Poles did not need diplomatic offensives to secure trade with the USSR and other Eastern European states. More than 60% of Poland's total trade in the 1950s and the 1960s occurred within the Bloc.[132] There was no need for Warsaw to woo its allies to obtain goods Poland needed to develop its economy. The intra-Bloc trade guaranteed Poland access to the resources it needed. If something was not produced in the East or was scarce, the Poles could relatively easily get the goods in the West or the Global South. As this thesis will demonstrate (see Chapter II – Going Global), the COMECON was not an organisation that exerted significant influence over the national policies of the Soviet Bloc states. Contrary to

[128] Mark Kramer in Bischof, Günter , Stefan Karner, and Peter Ruggenthaler, eds., *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2009), p. 54
[129] ibid. p. 344
[130] J. P. D. Dunbabin, *The Cold War : The Great Powers and Their Allies* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014)., p. 567 and 569.
[131] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. 217
[132] Rocznik Statystyczny 1970, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo GUS, 1970, p. 2-4

the COMECON, the Warsaw Pact was such an institution and, as such, was an ideal forum to assert and formalise Poland's role as the USSR's most important ally. The Poles attempted to use the Warsaw Pact as a means to convert Poland's economically advantageous position as the Bloc's major transit hub to political influence within the Bloc. The Polish leadership methodically and persistently pursued this goal within the structures of the Warsaw Pact. The chapter will prove that they were successful in this endeavour. It will also challenge the reductive and contradictory narrative that presents Gomułka as an ideological hard-liner over the issue of Czechoslovakia. The chapter will argue that Gomułka's decision to send troops to the CSSR was not based on ideological concerns but sober geopolitical calculation. Moreover, the decision to intervene was not handing back control to the Soviet Union.[133] It was the exact opposite. By pushing to intervene militarily, Poland pursued its national security interest. The invasion allowed Warsaw to once again assert its role as USSR's most important ally and co-decider within the Warsaw Pact framework. Poland's endeavours to use the alliance to its political advantage were not unique. Romania, Czechoslovakia and even the GDR attempted to use the organisation to pursue their national interests. The Poles might not have been unique in attempting to do so, but their strategy was markedly different from other approaches. To emphasise how unique and successful the Polish strategy was, this chapter will attempt to compare it to other strategies employed by Eastern European states. The most notable example in this regard was Romania in the 1960s and, to a lesser extent, Czechoslovakia for a brief period during the Prague Spring of 1968. The Romanian and Czechoslovak strategy was to publicly voice opposition to the USSR to court potential allies from the West or even China. On the other hand, the Polish leadership sought to transform Poland from a satellite into a strategic ally. As a result, Polish-Soviet differences were sorted out behind closed doors, while Poland always asserted loyalty to the USSR in public. These opposed tactics yielded very different results for Eastern European leaders. By 1968 Czechoslovakia was under occupation by Warsaw Pact forces, while Romania found itself isolated within the alliance. On the other hand, Poland could pursue more independent policies and had more extensive trade and diplomatic links with the West than Romania and Czechoslovakia, while Poland's position within the alliance was never threatened.

To analyse the issues mentioned above, the chapter will be divided into three sections. The first will cover the years 1955-1963, which were the Warsaw Pact's formative years. It will analyse how Poland successfully formalised its military relations with the USSR to gain

[133] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. 240

greater autonomy. In this period, the Polish leadership also successfully sought to modernise and reorganise the Polish Armed forces, thus making them the second largest and most modern military force in the Warsaw Pact. The second section will focus on 1964-67, when the first attempts to reform the Warsaw Pact were undertaken. The third section will analyse the period of 1968-1970. There Gomułka and Ulbricht's motives behind their decision to push for intervention will be analysed. Next, the chapter will present an analysis of the situation in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and will demonstrate that the crisis began to draw increasing Western involvement – mostly West German and American. Then the chapter will focus on the Polish concerns and preparations for the invasion. Finally, it will analyse the post-invasion political manoeuvring – both in Czechoslovakia and in a global arena and the subsequent formalisation of the Unified Allied Command and the significance of the 1970 Warsaw Treaty. In its conclusion, it will demonstrate that Polish attempts to become Soviet Union's strategic ally were successful and explain the failure of Czechoslovak and Romanian approaches.

The signatories of the Warsaw Pact Treaty agreed that each member state would commit a proportion of its armed forces to the Unified Armed Forces. Political leaders further agreed that the chief decision-making body would be the Political Consultative Committee (hereafter the PCC).[134] The PCC would be a gathering of all party/state leaders of all member states. The first meeting of the newly created Warsaw Pact was held in Prague on 27-28 January 1956. There all Warsaw Pact leaders agreed to the statute of Unified Armed Forces and agreed to incorporate the GDR into the military structure of the pact.[135] All members also agreed that the PCC should meet as needed but no less than twice a year. They discussed the issue of European security and expressed a desire to resolve the conflict between NATO and the Warsaw Pact peacefully.[136] Given the systemic crisis that engulfed the Soviet bloc in 1956, the PCC would not reconvene until 1958. Since this dissertation already discusses the events of 1956 and their significance for Poland and other Eastern European countries (see Introduction), this chapter will focus only on the aftermath of the October 1956 crisis.

The concept of Poland playing "second fiddle" was formulated in late 1955, although the Polish leadership did not use this very expression, and the Polish leadership attempted to

[134] There were eight signatories: the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the GDR, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania.
[135] Parallel History Project (hereafter – PHP), PCC Meetings, Prague – January 1956, Communique on the session of the PCC of the Warsaw Treaty Powers, 28.01.1956, p. 149-150
[136] PHP, PCC Meetings, Prague – January 1956, Minutes of the decisions made by the PCC, 27-28.01.1956, p.143-144

pursue it at the earliest opportunity. Emboldened by their newly broadened autonomy, Poles put forward their first proposal to reform the Warsaw Pact. On 11 November 1956, the Chief of Operational Staff, General Jan Drzewiecki, presented a memorandum in which he called for a "thorough analysis and revision" of the Warsaw Pact Treaty.[137] The memorandum was not aimed at dismantling the Warsaw Pact. Eastern European leaders saw the need for the Warsaw Pact but wanted reform to safeguard their national interests. Poland, was leading the way in this effort.[138] Drzewiecki's memorandum argued for collective decision-making within the Unified Armed Forces. Drzewiecki understood well that Poland was "the main communication hub" of the Warsaw Pact. He was aware that Poland was strategically the most important for the USSR and that this resulted in a heavier military load for Poland. The Polish Army and political leadership did not want to alter the situation but wanted to use it to their advantage.[139] The memorandum called for the revision of the bilateral Polish-Soviet military agreement and called for an agreement formalising the legal status of the Soviet Armed forces in Poland. [140] Drzewiecki wanted also to reduce the number of Soviet military advisers and strove to assert Poland's independence within the Warsaw Pact structure.[141] In the course of Polish-Soviet negotiations in November 1956, Drzewiecki's main proposal for collective decision-making was rejected by the Soviet leadership. However, the Soviets agreed to Poland's demands for formalising the legal status of Soviet troops in Poland. The agreement itself, signed in November 1956, was modelled on Western solutions, such as the US-Libyan defence treaty signed in 1954.[142] In negotiations, the Poles were successful in reducing the number of Soviet advisors and gained approval for establishing a Permanent Commission for Cooperation in the Defence Industry.[143] All these efforts were undertaken because "state sovereignty demanded it."[144] Polish leadership was attempting to position their country as a sovereign entity, with which the USSR had to negotiate and obtain formal approval. The initial Polish attempts to reform the Warsaw Pact were not successful, but it did not mean they were abandoned altogether. For the time being, Poland had to focus on re-establishing itself as a sovereign state in the context of Polish-Soviet military relations.

[137] AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/102, p. 54
[138] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. 31
[139] AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/102, p. 137-138
[140] It was the only supplementary agreement to the Warsaw Treaty of 1955, signed in September 1955. It stipulated extensive Polish military involvement in the Warsaw Pact structure.
[141] AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/102, p. 71-72; 139
[142] Ibid. p. 124
[143] From 41 to 5, ibid. p. 139
[144] Ibid. p. 71

Before the signing of the Agreement on the Legal Status of Soviet Armed Forces Temporarily Stationed in Poland in November 1956, the Soviet troops proved problematic for Polish authorities. In the first place, Soviet military authorities did not want to disclose the location of Soviet units. The Ministry of Interior devised a scheme to trick the Soviet army into doing so in the late 1940s. Every Soviet unit had a radio station, which had to be registered under Polish law. Citing these regulations, Polish customs officers would then obtain addresses, but still, Polish authorities would only have a rough idea about the location of Soviet troops on Polish territory.[145] Polish fishing industry suffered since Soviet soldiers' favourite practice for fishing was throwing grenades in water and then collecting the stunned fish.[146] Soviet soldiers training on proving grounds were often responsible for widespread fires. Additionally, any claims for damages caused by Soviet troops made by Polish civilians were adjudicated by Soviet military authorities, which rarely found themselves at fault for causing damages.[147]

The agreement signed on 18 November 1956 was a revolutionary act on its own. By signing it, the Soviets obliged themselves not to violate Polish sovereignty. Furthermore, all troop movements had to be approved by Polish authorities on a case-by-case basis. Soviet military and civilian personnel were subject to Polish laws and regulations. Polish Military Prosecutors and Courts were granted jurisdiction over Soviet soldiers on Polish territory. The only instance when Polish authorities had no jurisdiction over Soviet troops was if they committed “an act against the Soviet Union.” Lastly, the Soviet authorities were obliged to compensate all damages caused by Soviet troops, including retrospective claims dating back to 1945. The agreement established a Bilateral Commission, which would handle all matters on the stationing of Soviet troops in Poland.[148] Immediately after the agreement was signed, the Polish Ministry of Finance informed the MSZ that it had filed a compensation claim. The claim concerned the failed military intervention that occurred in Poland in October 1956. The Soviet troops marched on Warsaw, but as Gomułka and Khrushchev managed to find a political solution, they were halted and ordered to return to their bases. In the process, they damaged numerous roads and bridges all across Poland. On 19 March 1957, the Soviets accepted the claim and agreed to pay 35 818 582 złotys for their own failed military

[145] AMSZ, Z-7W-7T-53, p. 13
[146] Ibid, p. 42
[147] Ibid, p. 52
[148] AMSZ. Z-7W-7T-54, p. 50-54.

intervention, which was an equivalent of 2,5% of Poland's total expenditure budget of 158 billion złotys approved for 1958.[149]

Throughout 1957, the negotiations were held on additional agreements that would supplement the principal agreement from 18 November 1956. All infrastructure used by Soviet troops, such as telephone lines, municipal waste disposal, water and electricity supplies, train tracks and railway transportation, was strictly regulated. In all instances, special charges were levied on Soviet troops using them.[150] Until early 1957 Polish authorities had only a vague idea of where Soviet troops were located, what buildings and the land they occupied and utilised. Under the new agreement, Soviet troops became leaseholders of all buildings and lands they occupied.[151] That meant all property used by the Soviets was carefully inventoried. In 195, Soviet troops rented 4891 buildings, 3409 linear meters of waterfronts and a total area of 2 599 173 square meters. All this cost the Soviet troops approximately 210 million złotys annually.[152] The final agreement was signed on 23 October 1957 and warranted that the maximum number of troops stationing in Poland at any given time could not exceed 66 000 soldiers and personnel, most of them located in western parts of the country.[153] These concessions were, of course, not always welcomed by the Soviets, who consistently paralysed the proceedings of the Bilateral Commission. By February 19, the Commission hadas not met even once. Thanks to incessant Polish interventions in Moscow, the Commission started its work on 18 March 1958.[154]

The formalisation of Polish-Soviet military relations and numerous compensation claims of Polish authorities served two purposes. Firstly, Poland formalised the Soviet military presence. All signed agreements served to enshrine Polish sovereignty in binding agreements between both states. More importantly, these agreements were not a dead letter. They provided real instruments for controlling Soviet troops on Polish territory. The practice of "fishing" that so infuriated Polish authorities was completely eradicated by 1959, while fires started on Soviet proving grounds ceased by 1957.[155] Polish civilians were compensated for all damages resulting from Soviet presence in Poland. But the whole formalisation process had another very important meaning. It was an exercise that showed both sides how much

[149] AMSZ, Z-7W-6T-51, p. 124-126; Ustawa budżetowa z dnia 27 marca 1958, Dz. U. 1958 nr 16 poz. 69
[150] AMSZ, Z-7W-7T-55, p. 31-39
[151] Ibid, p. 41
[152] AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/104, p. 106-107
[153] AMSZ, Z-7W-7T-55, p. 220
[154] AMSZ, Z-7W-7T-59, p. 63
[155] AMSZ, Z-7W-7T-53, p. 49 and 57

Poland was worth to the Soviet Union. Drzewiecki rightly identified Poland as the main communication hub of the Warsaw Pact. Thus, the Poles were also testing their geostrategic significance, which could, later on, be used (and often was) as leverage in Polish-Soviet negotiations. The Polish leadership was willing to lend Poland's territory to the Soviets with all risks it carried, but they expected to be fully compensated for those risks. On the other hand, the Soviet leadership learned the lesson from October 1956. They realised that it was more beneficial to yield to some Polish demands rather than risk any unrest in Poland. Since that unrest would cut off vital supplies to Soviet troops stationing in the GDR, leaving them dangerously exposed. Having normalised Polish-Soviet military relations, the Polish leadership could now turn to transform Poland into USSR strategic ally by expanding Poland's diplomatic outreach while at the same time modernising and strengthening Polish Armed Forces.

The proposition for a de-nuclearized zone in Central Europe originated in the Polish MSZ in late 1955. Before it could be officially announced, it was interrupted by the unrest of October 1956. The post-October need for stabilisation meant that the plan had to be set aside. The project was back on the MSZ agenda in early 1957. Polish-Soviet negotiations concerning the final version of the plan took several months, and the plan was officially announced in October 1957 (see Chapter III). Laurien Crump argued that the plan was indicative of a "Polish propensity to put forward proposals that were both in their interests and the interests of the Soviet bloc at large."[156] In this case, Crump misjudged Polish intentions. It was not a "propensity" but a conscious and consistent action. The Polish leadership aspired to make Poland the second most important and influential Soviet Bloc country. To achieve their goals, they needed to re-define Polish national interests so they would be fully congruent with the interests of the Soviet Union and the rest of the Bloc. This task was easier than it appeared. Traditionally Poland was West-oriented, but after 1945 , it was forced to accept Soviet dominance. After the Warsaw Pact was established and Poland's situation vis-à-vis the USSR also improved, Poland was probably more secure than ever in its history. The country was surrounded by its allies from the East, South and West. In the North, Poland had largely neutral and peaceful Scandinavian states as neighbours. For the Polish leadership, the solution was a simple one – advancing the interests of the Soviet Bloc, while at the same time improving Poland's standing within the alliance.

[156] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p.40

This strategy yielded concrete results relatively quickly, given how responsive Kremlin was to Warsaw's tactics. A new dynamic began to emerge for the very first time. We can observe it in the example of the Rapacki Plan. The plan itself concerned the territory of Poland, CSSR, the GDR and the FRG. Although the plan implicated two other Warsaw Pact states, only Poland and the USSR conducted the negotiations. Once an agreement was reached, Poland and the Soviet Union passed on instructions to other Warsaw Pact countries on how to pursue disengagement.[157] In his drive to ease the Cold War tensions, Khrushchev wanted to combine the Polish proposal with troop number reduction of the Warsaw Pact itself and every Warsaw Pact member individually. The tactic was approved by the PCC, which convened in Moscow on 24 May 1958. Additionally, the PCC approved a decision to withdraw Soviet troops from Romania.[158] Party and state leaders discussed Moscow Soviet proposal for a non-aggression pact between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The PCC failed to reach any binding decision in this matter because of Polish criticism of the Soviet proposal. Rapacki used the PCC forum to obtain an official Warsaw Pact approval for his de-nuclearization plan.[159] The PCC approval was only a rubber stamp since the actual diplomatic initiative was launched in February, and by May 1958, Poland was already conducting negotiations with all major Western powers. This move can only be described as an official display of Polish influence within the Warsaw Pact structures. However, it was a very meaningful display. Rapacki showed all other non-Soviet leaders that a new hierarchy was emerging within the alliance. One with the USSR and Poland at the top. Additionally, the Polish delegation used the PCC meeting to push for greater cooperation in the area of the military industry within COMECON. The conference was held between 27 October and 5 November 1958 by economic planners and Ministers of Defence. At this conference, Poland secured key concessions, such as the Soviet agreement to launch T-55 tanks production in Poland, as well as air-to-air missiles and P-35M radio locators.[160] Such an agreement meant a huge transfer of military technology from the Soviet Union to Poland; it also meant that Poland was considered by the Kremlin as a strategic ally. Granting licences to produce the newest Soviet military technology was a sign of trust and partnership.

[157] AMSZ, Z-10W-42T-380, p. 114
[158] PHP, PCC Meetings, Moscow – May 1958, Minutes of the Decisions of the PCC, p.3
[159] PHP, PCC Meetings, Moscow – May 1958, Information on the meeting of the PCC for the Politburo of the CPCz, 7 June 1958, p. 2
[160] AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/102, p. 143

A newly established Polish-Soviet partnership was soon to be tested by the events unfolding in the international arena. Soon after the conference that established close Polish-Soviet military cooperation, Khrushchev abandoned his policy of peaceful coexistence and issued an ultimatum over Berlin in December 1958. On top of mounting Cold War tensions, the still-new Warsaw Pact showed first cracks. The tensions began mounting between Tirana and Moscow. Hoxa never accepted the de-Stalinisation process launched by Khrushchev in 1956. In 1957 the Albanian leadership was still assuring all socialist leaders "of fraternal love" between Albania and the Soviet Union.[161] However, by 1959, the Polish ambassador in Tirana reported that the Kremlin not only had to compete for influence in Albania with Beijing but that Khrushchev was losing that competition. These developments, coupled with Khrushchev's failure to achieve his goals in the Berlin crisis of 1958-59, demanded that the Soviet bloc reformulate its foreign policy.

The third PCC meeting was held in Moscow on 4 February 1960. Warsaw Pact leaders discussed the "important" international problems, which included the Soviet draft peace treaty with Germany.[162] Warsaw Pact leaders also discussed the possibility of withdrawing Soviet troops from Poland and Hungary, but given the uncertainty regarding the tensions over Berlin, the issue was neither discussed thoroughly nor adopted.[163] Coincidentally, the solidifying Cold War stalemate pushed the Warsaw Pact leaders to expand their political and economic outreach. The PCC passed a resolution that called for increased assistance to underdeveloped countries.[164] The PCC summit was yet again an excuse for the Polish delegation to push for increased military cooperation with the Soviet Union. The initial talks that started in Moscow were resumed in October 1960 and concluded in January 1961. The Soviets agreed to a comprehensive reorganisation and modernisation of the Polish Army. Poland was given access to the newest Soviet military equipment including missiles, fighter and transport planes, and warships.[165] Thus with the new five-year plan of 1961-1965, Poland embarked on a mission to make the Polish army the second largest, best equipped and organised army of the Warsaw Pact. This endeavour was indeed a costly one and the Polish leadership had to sacrifice wage and living standards increases to achieve this. However, the Poles believed that it was a

[161] AMSZ, Z-7W-17T-154, p. 3
[162] PHP, PCC Meetings, Moscow 4 February 1960, The Plenum of the CC of the Bulgarian Communist Party
[163] PHP, PCC Meetings, Moscow 4 February 1960, Politburo of the CC of the CPCz information on the Meeting of the PCC, p. 4
[164] Ibid. p. 12
[165] AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/102, p. 218-219

sacrifice worth making. Having the second strongest army could easily be translated into military and political influence within the Warsaw Pact structures.[166]

While Poland was beginning to solidify its position within the Warsaw Pact, thus adopting a very pro-Soviet stance, other Warsaw Pact states, like Albania, attempted to pressure the Soviet Union, using the Sino-Soviet split as leverage. The Albanians were the first ones to use the split to advance their national interests.[167] The Soviet-Albanian conflict erupted in full force just before the PCC summit was scheduled in March 1961. On 23 March 1961, both sides issued their accounts of events at a Soviet-built naval base at Vlorë. The Soviets cited numerous accusations about the unilateral actions of the Albanians, accusing them of unilaterally withdrawing the mixed crew (Soviet-Albanian) submarines from the command of Soviet advisors. The Soviet letter outlined instances where Albanian actions led to submarine collisions and subsequent damages. On 19 February 1961, the naval base radar located a group of unidentified ships near the Straight of Otranto. According to the Soviet account, the Albanians did not raise the alarm or make any attempts to initiate reconnaissance. Instead, the duty officer unilaterally ordered auxiliary rafts and motorboats to advance. According to the Soviet advisors, such practices could have resulted in an accidental eruption of a large-scale conflict.[168]

The Albanians in turn blamed Soviet advisors and government for not adhering to agreements, while vehemently asserting that all actions were undertaken in cooperation with Soviet command stationed at the Vlorë naval base.[169] When the PCC meeting finally convened, the Warsaw Pact leaders hoped to resolve the matters. They were surprised to learn that to a meeting that customarily consisted of first secretaries and prime ministers, the Albanians sent one of the junior secretaries. Junior secretaries could not make any binding decisions, thus the other Warsaw Pact leaders unanimously voted to exclude the Albanian delegation from the summit.[170] Understandably, the summit dealt with the Albanian issue and on 29 March 1961 passed a resolution on Albania. The resolution criticised Albanian actions and Hoxha's speech at the 4th Albanian Party of Labour Congress. In this speech, Hoxa alleged that Albania would imminently be attacked by Greece, Yugoslavia and the Sixth Fleet

[166] Ibid. p. 283
[167] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. 60
[168] PHP, PCC Meetings, Moscow – 28-29 March 1961, Soviet report on incidents at Vlorë, p. 1
[169] PHP, PCC Meetings, Moscow – 28-29 March 1961, Albanian memorandum on incidents in Vlorë, p. 2 and 15-16
[170] AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/102, p. 323

of the US. Warsaw Pact leaders condemned the Albanians who failed to notify the Supreme Commander of the Unified Allied Forces of the Warsaw Pact of this alleged danger. Thus, Albania violated Articles 3 and 5 of the Warsaw Pact. Eastern European leaders issued a stern demand that Albania should substantiate its claims.[171] The exclusion of Albania and condemnation of its actions resulted in further repercussions. Khrushchev was convinced that Albanian actions were supported by the Chinese. This deepened the Sino-Soviet rift and resulted in the removal of Asian observers from PCC meetings from 1961 onward.[172] In the Soviet-Albanian conflict, Khrushchev was able to rally all his allies behind him. To a large extent, it was not his success and ability to persuade. Eastern European leaders believed that Albanian unpredictable actions undermined their security. Thus, persuading them to strip the Albanians of any influence over the Vlorë naval base was an easy task. The submarines at Vlorë, the PCC ruled, were to be manned and operated exclusively by Soviet personnel[173]. The Albanians refused to execute the PCC orders and after a prolonged and bitter quarrel, the Soviets decided to evacuate their submarines from Albania on 26 April 1961.[174] Thus, the Warsaw Pact lost its only naval base in the Mediterranean. Although it seemed like a strategic setback, it was received with relief among other Warsaw Pact members. The pact might have lost a naval base, but it also minimised the risk of being accidentally dragged into a global conflict. But the incident allowed non-Soviet Warsaw Pact leaders to use the Soviet-Albanian fallout to advance their national agendas.[175] In this particular event, they rallied behind Moscow. This was caused not by Khrushchev's diplomatic skills. Eastern European leaders saw a real threat in Albania's unpredictable actions and presented a united front. Moreover, they were motivated by other factors such as the prolonging conflict over Berlin, that Khrushchev failed to resolve. The deepening Sino-Soviet split did not affect Eastern Europe directly, but by 1961 the Warsaw Pact found itself wedged between two hostile forces – the PRC in the Far East and NATO in the West. In such circumstances, the Eastern Europeans needed to pick a side. Moscow proved much more reliable ally, moreover it was Eastern Europe's largest trading partner, so undermining that would not have been considered in Bucharest, Pankow, Sofia or Warsaw. During the Sino-Albanian tensions the Poles, and other Eastern European leaders, supported the Soviet Union. The mounting Cold War tensions also

[171] PHP, PCC Meetings, Moscow – 28-29 March 1961, Secret Resolution on Albania, 29 March 1961,p.1
[172] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. 71
[173] AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/102, p. 324
[174] Ibid, p. 330
[175] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*2015, p. 72

encouraged, Warsaw Pact leaders to restructure and modernise their armed forces and tighten military production cooperation.[176]

In 1961/62 the Warsaw Pact faced two major international crises – over Berlin and Cuba. Berlin involved the Warsaw Pact directly, thus it required a more hands-on approach from the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact members. In 1960 both Poland and the GDR felt threatened by ongoing encirclement. Warsaw was even willing to assist Berlin in forcing a more fervent Soviet action to resolve the issue (see more in Chapter III). But, , Ulbricht "overplayed his hand in the Berlin crisis."[177] A separate peace treaty and handing over access routes to West Berlin to the GDR would provoke West German economic retaliation. This in turn would require increased economic assistance to prevent GDR's collapse. This of course met with Gomułka's vehement veto. Other Eastern European leaders rallied behind Gomułka. The separate peace treaty concept was abandoned. A compromise solution to stabilise the GDR and stop an exodus of its citizens to West Berlin was found – West Berlin was sealed, while the status quo was maintained.[178]

In 1962 the world was closely following the developments in Cuba. But in this case, the crisis did not directly involve non-Soviet Warsaw Pact members. Just as in Berlin, all differences were settled exclusively by direct Soviet-American negotiations. That of course did not mean that Eastern European leaders did not closely monitor the situation. Rapacki offered mediation (see Chapter III), but the Polish leadership was increasingly frustrated by Khrushchev's brinkmanship and Soviet unilateralism. Other European communist leaders found themselves increasingly worried by Soviet unilateralism. The mounting international tensions pushed Poland to seek to supplement Soviet military technology, to strengthen Polish military security. Such attempts started in 1958 with an order from the Minister of National Defence issued on 29 April. In this order, the Minister asked all relevant institutions to develop technologies with military applications.[179] One of such institution was the Military Institute of Communications, which cooperated with Elwro.[180] They began developing the first Polish military IT systems. In 1962 first military programme codenamed "Pancerz" ("Armor") was implemented.[181] This software catalogued all Polish tanks and monitored their

[176] PHP, PCC Meetings, Moscow – 28-29 March 1961, Secret Resolution on Restructuring and Modernisation of the Warsaw Pact Armed Forces in 1961-1965, p. 1-2
[177] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. 104
[178] Ibid, p. 106
[179] AWO, 2099/10/1, p. 12
[180] State-owned computer manufacturer
[181] Armour

combat readiness and produced monthly reports on needed maintenance. By 1963 all three Polish military districts possessed a Station of Computing-Analytical Machines.[182] These stations' main task was to gather and process military data supplied from all military units. Data collected was used to improve the combat readiness of all Polish armed forces.[183] Military preparations were not sufficient enough. Both Polish and other Eastern European leaders saw the Warsaw Pact as a forum where their concerns should be taken into account. Gomułka sought to use the Warsaw Pact as a tool to moderate Khrushchev's increasingly erratic and unilateral policy.[184]

The first instance where Gomułka could temper Khrushchev's increasingly antagonistic foreign policy occurred in 1963. On 15 July 1963 Mongolia, nudged by Khrushchev, formally applied to join the Warsaw Pact Treaty. The letter of application was sent to Warsaw since Poland was Warsaw Pact Treaty's depositary. In his letter, the first secretary of the Mongolian party, Tsedenbal, asked the Polish Prime Minister to request the consent of other signatories formally.[185] Shortly after, Rapacki presented the Polish leadership with reasons why Poland should be against Mongolia's accession. Rapacki saw through Khrushchev's ploy and warned that accepting Mongolia would antagonise the PRC. In Rapacki's estimation, for such a move to yield concrete results, Warsaw Pact membership should also be extended to North Vietnam and North Korea.[186] Rapacki warned about further splits within the Pact that might result from MPR's accession and ultimately concluded that Mongolian security is guaranteed by a bilateral agreement signed with the Soviet Union in 1946.[187]

At first sight, the Polish opposition seems only an attempt to moderate Khrushchev's irresponsible foreign policy. But a Polish opposition had a more concrete motive. Rapacki rightly saw the application as an openly hostile act against China. Poland remained pro-Soviet and owed its position as the second most important Warsaw Pact country to the Sino-Soviet split. On every other occasion, Poland, before 1963, gladly supported moves to antagonise China. Sustaining Sino-Soviet antagonism was one of the key objectives of Polish foreign

[182] Silesian, Pomeranian and Warsaw
[183] AWO, 2099/10/1, p. 49; these computer systems were consistently developed and improved until 1989. To this day, there is no mention of this uniquely Polish technology in any scholarly work.
[184] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. 112
[185] PHP, PCC Meetings, Moscow – 26 July 1963, Mongolian Request for admission to the Warsaw Pact, p. 1
[186] PHP, PCC Meetings, Moscow – 26 July 1963, Memorandum by Rapacki, p.1-2
[187] Ibid, p.3

policy.[188] Yet this time, Rapacki was resolutely opposed to any move that could antagonise China. Within the framework of the Warsaw Pact alone, such a decision made little sense. Any possibility of Sino-Soviet rapprochement meant that Poland would lose its status almost immediately. But such a conciliatory gesture makes more sense if we note that Poland was slowly escaping the confines of regional Warsaw Pact politics and was entering a global stage with its foreign policy. In 1959 the combined Colleges of the MSZ and the Ministry of Foreign Trade identified Vietnam as Poland's springboard to global politics. Vietnam was deemed ideal because of the Sino-Soviet split. Both the USSR and China would never agree for Vietnam to become either a Soviet or Chinese sphere of influence.[189] There Poles saw an opportunity for themselves. By acting as a Soviet proxy, they could count on Soviet support. Poland was also acceptable to the PRC. Although the Poles did everything in their power to sustain the Sino-Soviet conflict, they maintain cordial relations with the PRC. Both countries even had a joint venture enterprise – Chipolbrok established in 1951. That shipping company might have been jointly operated, but all ships were owned by Poland.[190] Since the Poles aimed to monopolise all trade between the Soviet bloc and Vietnam, they needed Chinese assistance and were willing to share some of the profit with the PRC.[191] Therefore, Polish opposition to the admission of Mongolia would not only showcase Polish independence but would send a clear signal to Beijing.[192] And thus, we can clearly see that Poland was also using the Sino-Soviet split to advance its national interest.

The year 1963 was also the first time that Romania began to assert its independence, and, tellingly, also by courting the Chinese. The Romanians also opposed admitting Mongolia to the Warsaw Pact and wanted to place themselves as mediators between the Chinese and the Soviets.[193] When met with initial opposition from Romania, Khrushchev withdrew the item from the agenda, and it was never raised again.[194]. The Soviet volte-face on the Mongolian admission issue was mainly pre-empting Polish criticism.[195] Such a move demonstrated that Polish opinion mattered to the Soviet leadership, thus confirming the hypothesis that Poland was the key ally and had an influence on the overall bloc policy. Since Poland did not choose

[188] AMSZ Z-26W-54T-458, p.3
[189] AMSZ Z-12W-46T-1129, p. 33
[190] AMSZ Z-11W-6T-83, p. 3
[191] AMSZ Z-12W-46T-1129, p. 33
[192] For more details see the chapter on Vietnam War
[193] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. 81
[194] PHP, PCC Meetings, Moscow – 26 July 1963, Report of the PCC meeting by Janos Kadar to the Hungarian Politburo, p. 1
[195] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. 77

to inform the Soviet Union of its opinion on the Mongolian question, the Soviets must have judged the Polish opinion from the reaction of the Polish delegation when the issue was raised at the PCC. [196] Khrushchev could have dealt with Romania, but opposition from both Romania and Poland effectively blocked Mongolia's admission. At the 1963 summit, Khrushchev finally faced the consequences of his unilateral policies. That PCC marked a milestone in the development of the Warsaw Pact as an organisation. Soviet unilateralism or even informal Polish-Soviet bilateralism was no longer sufficient. The Warsaw Pact began moving toward a more formalised and multilateral structure. The fact that the Soviets had to remove the issue of Mongolia's admission from the agenda signifies the loss of the USSR's hegemonic status. July 1963 saw a new player use the Warsaw Pact forum to advance its interests. The era of unilateral or bilateral moves was gone. Now, the Warsaw Pact countries could focus on formalising the multilateral structure of the alliance.

By October 1964, Gomułka's frustrations over Khrushchev's foreign policy were incited once again.[197] Alexei Adzubei's – Khrushchev's son in law – visit to the FRG was received in Warsaw with a mixture of panic and fury. Gomułka feared that Poland might fall victim to Soviet-German negotiations, just as it did in 1939. Fortunately for Poland, the Soviet leadership was also tired of Khrushchev. Crump emphasised that Poland played a role in the ouster of Khrushchev. Polish intelligence services in the FRG recorded Adzubei's compromising conversations in the FRG and delivered them to KGB Chief Yuri Andropov. These tapes provided damning evidence and served an important role in Khrushchev's fall from power.[198]

Although Khrushchev did not have time to change his policy, he too realised that Soviet unilateralism was no longer sufficient and acceptable. Thus, in early October, Khrushchev informed Gomułka he intended to carry out talks that would lead to more "frequent consultations" among the Warsaw Pact members while also proposing to institutionalise the consultation process.[199] A few days later, Khrushchev was forced to resign his position, but his successor would continue on this path. The MLF issue also galvanised the GDR. Walter Ulbricht wanted to use the issue to improve his position within the Warsaw Pact.[200] However, the GDR was out of touch with the developments in NATO and ultimately

[196] AMSZ Z-26W-48T-414, p. 1-2
[197] AMSZ, Z-17W-30T-33, p. 14
[198] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. 116
[199] AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/103, p. 7
[200] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. 117

failed to "cast its national interests into a wider network."[201] In late 1964 Brezhnev was busy consolidating his position as the Soviet leader, while Gomułka remained assured that the MLF would be effectively torpedoed by France and the UK. Unlike Ulbricht, neither Gomułka nor Brezhnev were in a rush to attend a PCC summit. The PCC eventually convened in Warsaw on 19 January 1965.

Ulbricht decided to continue playing the MLF card to elevate his position within the Warsaw Pact. A day before the summit was due to begin, the GDR submitted its draft non-proliferation treaty and insisted it became an item on the agenda. This move antagonised the Romanian delegation, which voiced its complaint to the host – Gomułka. Gomułka informed both Dej and his foreign minister Ion Gheorghe Maurer, that all parties were allowed to submit their proposals about issues they found worthy of discussion, and that Warsaw Pact reform will constitute "the theme of our session."[202] By 1965, the Romanian leadership adopted a pro-Chinese stance. They believed that a non-proliferation treaty would be considered an anti-Chinese move, given the ongoing Chinese nuclear programme. Despite Romanian reservation, Gomułka included non-proliferation as one of the items in the agenda. Other items under PCC consideration were a resolution calling for a conference of Foreign Ministers, which would discuss global issues and formulate Warsaw Pact responses to those issues. The final item was the creation of the Warsaw Pact General Command and Staff.[203] With the issue of non-proliferation, Dej almost immediately noted that the issue should not be used against the PRC. Gomułka countered by noting that the PRC had already become a nuclear power, thus non-proliferation would not undermine the Chinese position. The Romanians attempted to play the role of mediators in the Sino-Soviet conflict. Thus, they attempted to elevate themselves above other Warsaw Pact members, but also to present themselves as the only nation capable of exerting some influence in Beijing. Gomułka was acutely aware of the Romanian game and noted that he knew the Romanians feared antagonising Beijing. He also added that "we [the Poles] can also influence the views of Chinese comrades."[204] Despite heavy criticism from all other leaders, Dej and Maurer stood their ground, thus effectively blocking any further discussion of the non-proliferation issue.

[201] Ibid. p. 120-122
[202] PHP, PCC Meetings, Warsaw – 19-20 January 1965, Memorandum of Conversation between Gomułka, Cyrankiewicz, Dej and Maurer, 18.01.1965, p. 2
[203] AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/103, p. 152
[204] Ibid, p. 158-163

The next issue the PCC discussed was the resolution to order Foreign Ministers to meet regularly to discuss foreign policy issues. In this case, Gomułka apologised for Poland's unilateral move in making a call for European conference security. This was not a real apology but an opportunity to showcase Poland's ability to act unilaterally and with impunity.[205] In his call for multilateralism, Gomułka was convinced that Poland's concerns would always be taken into account. The modernisation of the Polish army into the second most powerful military force in the Warsaw Pact was nearly completed. Polish diplomacy and trade links were global in their reach. The informal Polish standing, Gomułka believed, needed to be formalised. If all foreign policy issues were to be discussed with all Warsaw Pact members, Poland could always secure its interests. Romanian strategy in obtaining influence within the Pact was different. Romania relied on external powers, such as the PRC to elevate its position and cast itself into the role of a mediator. In such circumstances, the Romanians wanted to avoid any binding foreign policy decisions. Romanian strategy relied on external perceptions of Romanian manoeuvrability. Any formal bodies and binding decisions would shatter the image of Romanian independence, thus Dej and Maurer vetoed that the initiative for a standing committee on foreign policy.[206] Similar motives were behind Romanian objections against the initiative of establishing the Warsaw Pact General Command and Staff. The only issue the Romanian delegation agreed with was the resolution on Albanian non-participation in the PCC summit.[207]

The erosion of Soviet hegemony proceeded further in 1963. By 1965, the process of multilateralization had advanced. Apart from Poland and Romania, the GDR also entered a bid to use the PCC forum to advance its national interests. But Ulbricht's bid was unsuccessful. Gomułka might have been able to showcase Poland's independence to other Warsaw Pact members, but the Romanians were the real victors at the January 1965 PCC session. Dej and Maurer managed to achieve their objectives could limit perceptions of Romanian sovereignty. The Polish-Romanian disputes at the PCC were, in fact, a clash of two competing visions for the alliance itself. Poland chose to build up its economic and military potential, which could then be recast into a political influence within the Warsaw Pact framework. Romania, on the other hand, was not as populous, and its economy could hardly match that of Poland. Thus, the Romanians focused on external factors and allies to bolster their independence and elevate their position within the Warsaw Pact. Romania needed to

[205] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. 139
[206] AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/103, p.189
[207] Ibid, p.190

appear independent so its external allies – namely China – would continue to lend their support. Therefore, unlike Gomułka, who wanted to formalise the structure, Dej and later Ceausescu opposed any binding decisions and organisations. The fact that the future modus operandi of the alliance was predominantly playing out through Polish-Romanian disputes signified that by 1965, Poland and Romania had become the most influential non-Soviet Warsaw Pact members.[208]

Despite the Romanian opposition, other Warsaw pact countries continued to refine their ideas for the reform of the Warsaw Pact. The ideas on how to improve the functioning and structure of the Pact was this time delegated to Foreign and Defence Ministers, who met on several occasions in the first half of 1966 to fine-tune the reform proposals. In February 1966, the Soviet Ministry of Defence put forward proposals for a new Warsaw Pact budget structure and the project for the Statute of the Unified Allied Command. The Soviets were willing to give up a considerable amount of control over the Warsaw Pact forces in exchange for greater financial participation from Eastern European countries. For example, the Soviets would relinquish any control over national troops assigned to the Unified Armed Forces. The proposed Warsaw Pact General Staff, in the time of peace, was to coordinate military preparations and issue recommendations. In the time of war, the Unified Allied Command would assume fool control over the Unified Armed Forces and would additionally coordinate efforts of national armies. Finally, the Unified Allied Command and General Staff would be formally extracted from the structures of the Soviet armed forces.[209] In exchange, the Soviets wanted a large financial contribution from Eastern European countries. The Soviet proposal for a financial contribution is summarised by the table below:

Country	Financial contribution currently	Proposed financial contribution
Bulgaria	7%	9%
CSSR	13%	13.5%
GDR	6%	10%
Poland	13.5%	16.5%

[208] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. 122
[209] AMSZ, Z-26W-10T-10, p. 18

Romania	10%	11%
Hungary	6%	9%
USSR	44.5%	31%[210]

It is possible to see that the largest increase was proposed for the GDR (4%), Poland and Hungary (3%). The Polish proposals to the reform included the establishment of a Permanent Secretariat and a Standing Committee on Foreign Policy. Additionally, the Poles wanted the PCC to convene 2-3 times a year to assert that the Warsaw Pact as a whole could swiftly respond to international crises.[211]

The Soviet proposals concerning financial contribution met with a categoric Polish veto at the meeting of Foreign Ministers in Moscow on 27-28 May 1966. The Soviets had to yield in one more aspect of their proposal. The proposed Warsaw Pact General Staff would not issue "recommendations" to national armies, but "only make suggestions."[212] We can observe an interesting dynamic here. The USSR was preoccupied with the military and financial aspects of the WP, while Poland was interested in purely political matters. This chapter has already mentioned that by 1965 Poland indisputably had the second-largest army and economy of the Warsaw Pact. The Poles were interested in converting their military/economic power into political influence within the alliance. Poland was not keen to increase its input into the Warsaw Pact. As such, the Poles were not even interested in most military matters and were quite willing to cede most military matters to the Soviets. As far as the proposed Warsaw Pact General Staff, the Poles believed it should be manned by approximately 500 people and should consist of no less than 50% of Soviet military personnel.[213] This completely undermines Kałużny's argument that Soviet overrepresentation in the Warsaw Pact General Staff was signifying its hegemony. By engaging in reform Poland wanted to solidify and formalise its position as the second most powerful Pact country and was not seeking any additional cost to strengthen its position. Ultimately, the Soviets yielded to Polish demands and the levels of financial contribution were maintained at their pre-1966 levels.

[210] Ibid, p. 9-10
[211] Ibid. p. 45
[212] AMSZ, Z-26 W10 T-76, p. 3-4
[213] AMSZ, Z-26 W-10 T-10, p. 23

The meeting of Foreign Ministers truly reflected the internal dynamic of the Warsaw Pact. The Soviet Union and Poland were the driving force for reform. All major negotiations occurred between those two countries. Other members like Hungary, the GDR and Czechoslovakia followed the Polish-Soviet lead and approved all proposals previously negotiated by Polish and Soviet delegations.[214] The Romanians continued their obstructionism, which surprised their Soviet hosts. Before the meeting, the Soviets had conducted talks with the Romanians and were not expecting so many objections from the Romanian delegation.[215] The Polish-Soviet tandem that was yet again dominating all Warsaw Pact proceedings was exactly what the Romanians wanted to avoid. In 1965 Romanian obstructionism was aimed to obtain Chinese approval. By 1966 the Romanians began courting the FRG to boost their economy, therefore they had to avoid any openly anti-German course of action.[216] Poland sought to steer the Warsaw Pact to adopt an openly anti-FRG rhetoric in an attempt to force the FRG to recognise the Polish border on the Oder-Neisse line.[217] Polish resolve was motivated by the change in the West German foreign policy. In early 1966 Todor Zhivkov reported that the FRG began courting Sofia, promising economic support in exchange for the establishment of diplomatic relations.[218] Zhivkov declined the offer, but Gomułka was determined to keep all Warsaw Pact members from establishing diplomatic contacts with the FRG. He feared that Poland's bargaining position in the Oder-Neisse would be compromised if other Warsaw Pact members did establish diplomatic relations with the FRG.

The PCC Bucharest summit of July 1966 would revolve around three major issues: Warsaw Pact reform, Vietnam and FRG's new Ostpolitik. The first order of business was the issue of Vietnam, where the Americans recently scaled up their military operations. The draft declaration on Vietnam was initially tabled by Romania. Only a night before the summit, Poland presented its draft. Gomułka was highly critical of the Romanian draft and likened it to "a rally resolution" or a "journal article" and claimed that a declaration of such importance should have carried more substance. In retaliation, Ceausescu accused the Polish delegation of "capitulating under the American aggression."[219] Brezhnev tried to reconcile the Poles and Romanians but quickly lost control of the situation. Ceausescu asked if the Polish project was

[214] AMSZ, Z-26 W-10 T-76, p. 3
[215] Ibid, p. 4
[216] AMSZ, Z-26W-10T-75, p. 124
[217] AMSZ, Z-26W-10T-76, p. 120
[218] AAN, KC PZPR XIA/104, p. 161-162
[219]Ibid. p. 283-4

consulted with all Warsaw Pact members except Romania. Gomułka called Naszkowski to explain. Naszkowski informed that nobody was consulted. The Polish project was delivered to all delegations with a letter explaining its objectives.[220] The GDR and Bulgaria supported the Polish draft. Ulbricht proposed that was where the discussion should end. At this point, Brezhnev momentarily regained his resolve and objected to Ulbricht's proposal. The Soviet leader pointed out that discussion could not be stopped since so far it had not achieved anything. After Brezhnev's remark, Ceausescu suggested the Polish project should be carefully analysed since the Romanians had many amendments. Kadar seconded Ceausescu. At this point, Brezhnev was completely lost and asked: "Do we accept this project [as a basis for our work]?" To which Ceausescu yelled: "No! We will work on the old one!". At this point, Brezhnev lost his temper and threatened that only six countries could sign the declaration. Ceausescu accused Brezhnev of blackmail. Unexpectedly, Antonin Novotny successfully diffused the tense situation. Romanians accepted the Polish draft as a basis, but Foreign Ministers were ordered to study every word of it and make changes.[221] Novotny suggested the Ministers could work on till 4 pm.[222]

Once all differences were sorted out, all delegations could sign the declaration at 5 pm. As it turned out the meeting of Ministers lasted till 7 pm. Romanian Minister Manescu proposed 20 amendments. He was forced to withdraw ten, under pressure from others. Over the other ten, a compromise was reached. As a result of the discussion, Ceausescu withdrew his objections and the declaration on Vietnam was signed at 9 pm.[223] The other order of business – the Declaration on the Strengthening of Peace and Security in Europe proved only slightly less controversial. The Romanians wanted not to antagonise the West Germans to secure a possibility of expanding bilateral relations. Gomułka and Ulbricht saw the new West German initiative as a vital threat to their interests. Unlike Ceausescu, Gomułka and Ulbricht were able to rally their allies. According to the Bulgarian account, the Romanian draft was swiftly rejected. In this case, the other six Warsaw Pact members presented a united front and Ceausescu had to concede. The document known as the Bucharest Declaration stipulated that

[220] Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; AAN, KC PZPR XIA/104, p. 304
[221] Ibid. p.305
[222] The session on 5.07.66 started at 9 am
[223] AAN, KC PZPR XIA/104, p. 306-7

unless the Federal Republic recognised the post-1945 Polish and Czechoslovak borders, the Warsaw Pact countries would not establish diplomatic relations with Bonn.[224]

In 1966 the Warsaw Pact countries successfully countered Romanian obstructionism. Just like Ceausescu in 1965, in 1966 Gomułka was victorious. The Polish perspective was adopted in both key PCC declarations. Vietnam proved to be a very contentious issue. Both Poland and Romania had high stakes in Vietnam and wanted to control the narrative.[225] Crump claimed that by 1967 Romania became the third-largest aid supplier to North Vietnam, being surpassed only by China and USSR.[226] Crump got that information from Eliza Georghe, who cited Romanian sources.[227] Unfortunately, neither Crump nor Georghe provide any figures that would allow us to confirm their claim. The Poles, as those responsible for all Eastern European supply shipments to Vietnam, could provide credible numbers (See Chapter IV). According to the MSZ, by 1970, the cumulative (economic, military aid and loans) assistance by Warsaw Pact members was as follows: USSR – 614 million Rbl; Poland – 94.4 million Rbl; GDR - 84.6 million Rbl; Hungary – 58.6 million Rbl; Bulgaria – 26.2 million Rbl; CSSR – 24.7 million Rbl and Romania with a total of 12.9 million Rbl.[228] The stakes could have been high for both parties, but Romanian assistance was the least significant of all Warsaw Pact countries. Romanian policy was about appearances and courting external allies by avoiding any binding decisions within the Warsaw Pact structure. In the Vietnam question, the Romanians followed a similar tactic.

Even though the 1966 PCC session was Gomułka's success, he would soon find himself desperately trying to protect its outcomes. On 1 February 1967, Romania officially established diplomatic relations with the FRG.[229] Eight days later, six Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact met in Warsaw to devise a common policy towards the FRG. All Ministers were greeted by Gomułka, who not only warned of the dangers of disunity but effectively ordered the Ministers to follow the Polish political line. He claimed that establishing a diplomatic relationship with Bonn is not "an internal matter", but "our common cause" that required unity. The Ministers could, however, only unite around the Polish position.[230] In this case,

[224] PHP, PCC Meetings – Bucharest – 4-6 July 1966, Minutes of the Bulgarian CP Plenum, Report on the PCC meeting, 12 July 1966, p. 1-2
[225] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. 174
[226] Ibid., p. 183
[227] Eliza Georghe, Romania's nuclear negotiations, Working Paper I, 2012, p. 25
[228] AMSZ, 51/75 W-3-Wietnam, Notatka dot. Pomocy dla DRW, 10.05.1970, p. 5
[229] AMSZ, Z-26W-16T-104, p. 119
[230] AAN, KC PZPR XIA/104, p. 15-17

Gomułka yet again managed to rally his allies behind him. The West German tactic of attempting to isolate Poland and the GDR proved a failure. Instead, the Romanians became isolated within the Warsaw Pact. Crump points out the Romanian vulnerability, while also emphasising the Polish ability to force Poland's will on other Warsaw Pact members.[231] The Ministers approved Polish demands as the result of creating the so-called Warsaw Package – a list of terms and conditions the FRG had to fulfil to establish diplomatic relations with Eastern European states.

The period between 1965 and 1967 saw a drive for reform and multilateralization of decision making within the Warsaw Pact. The drive was however, yet again obstructed by Romania. That period also saw the competition between Romania and Poland to assume the position of the second most influential Pact member. Romanian strategy attracted much attention, but the Polish strategy proved successful. By 1967 Poland could restrict the foreign policy of its Warsaw Pact allies, while Romanian obstructionism left Ceausescu isolated. The remaining six, would simply bypass the pact structures and focused on cooperation, leaving Romania out of the decision-making process. By 1967 we can clearly distinguish that Gomułka was more successful than Ceausescu. While Ceausescu could only block certain Warsaw Pact initiatives, Gomułka could effectively impose his will on other leaders. Between 1965 and 1967, Poland was always at the table and could influence decisions made, while Romania would find itself isolated, unable to influence any decision of its allies.

The events that occurred in Czechoslovakia in 1968 had a profound impact on the Soviet Bloc. To understand the Prague Spring, we must move back to 1956 and its consequences for Czechoslovakia. After Khrushchev announced de-Stalinization, the stability of the Soviet Bloc was undermined. Countries like Hungary and Poland soon became engulfed by popular revolutions. Czechoslovakia also embarked on reforms, but these were soon abandoned. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCz) did revert to its old political course.[232] Lack of reforms, mainly economic ones, by 1963 resulted in an acute economic crisis. The Czechoslovak leadership, however, was not able to obtain Soviet loans to help them overcome the crisis.[233] These events sobered up the CPCz leadership, which

[231] Crump, Warsaw Pact, 2015, p. 159
[232] Ibid. p. 19
[233] LBJ Library, Box179/Fol.2/doc.85, p. 6

decided to embark on a course of gradual reforms.[234] Some overtures of closer economic cooperation with the West were initiated by March 1964.[235] By May 1964 changes in Czechoslovakia attracted American attention. State Department officials noted that the change was initiated later, and was slower in Czechoslovakia. But in their estimation, Czechoslovakia was more western-oriented, had a larger industrial potential and changes there could be more lasting and important for the US, than anywhere else in Eastern Europe.[236]

In October 1964 the Czechoslovak official newspaper Rude Pravo published a defence of Khrushchev. American officials rushed to a conclusion that Prague was "exploiting the turn of events to recast" its relationship with Moscow[237]. In November 1964, the State Department deemed the developments in Czechoslovakia as an excellent opportunity to extend their relations with Prague, and to attempt "extending US influence."[238] A direct opportunity to do so was presented to the Americans on 18 November 1964. In a conversation with Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Milos Vejvoda- Deputy Chief of CSSR Mission to the UN – expressed Czechoslovak disenchantment with the COMECON. Vejvoda claimed that the Czechoslovak economy was hard hit by the Sino-Soviet split and that the CPCz leadership was keen to expand economic ties with the West.[239] Indeed, Czechoslovakia began expanding its ties with the West. Negotiations started between the US and CSSR for a civil aviation agreement in 1966, the agreement was signed in February 1968.[240] Simultaneously, Czechoslovakia expanded its trade contacts with the FRG. Warsaw closely monitored socialist countries' moves toward the FRG and in this case was also aware that Czechoslovak-West German trade was steadily increasing from 1965. But in 1967, although closely monitoring the situation, Warsaw was not alarmed by CSSR-FRG economic ties. Gomułka believed that Czechoslovak foreign trade was CPCz's internal matter. The MSZ was instructed to monitor the situation but received no instructions to raise objections to these developments.[241]

By late 1967 Antonin Novotny, the President of CSSR and CPCz I Secretary, embarked on intensified reform and liberalisation process. The deep crisis that started in the early 1960s could not be overcome by cosmetic changes and a gradual increase of economic

[234] LBJ Library, Box179/Fol.1/doc.31, p. 1
[235] LBJ Library, Box179/Fol.1/doc.30, p. 1
[236] LBJ Library, Box179/Fol.1/doc.28, p. 1
[237] CPCz official newspaper; LBJ Library, Box179/Fol.1/doc.21
[238] LBJ Library, Box179/Fol.1/doc.19, p. 1-2
[239] LBJ Library, Box179/Fol.1/doc.50, p. 2
[240] LBJ Library, Box179/Fol.7/doc.5
[241] AMSZ, Z-17 W-40 T-177, p. 13

ties with the West. In January Novotny was forced to resign as CPCz I Secretary and was replaced by Alexander Dubček. The new leader launched a more comprehensive reform process. Dubček would become the symbol of liberalisation and democratisation opposed by such hardliners as Gomułka and Ulbricht. Despite that, as Mikhail Porozumenshchikov points out, in January and February Dubček's ascension to power and new reforms, were received with calm in all other Warsaw Pact capitals.[242] The only capital that almost immediately responded with great interest was Bonn. In February 1968 Werner Ruget departed to Prague to become the new Deputy Chief of West German Trade Mission. The Czechoslovak Statni Bezpečnost (Czechoslovak State Security Services, hereafter the StB) reported that Ruget was known to be an agent of the Bundesnachrichtendienst (West German intelligence services, hereafter the BND) and that he would most likely continue his work as a spy.[243]

The developments in Czechoslovakia attracted increasing attention from Warsaw Pact capitals, but the StB reported that the entire diplomatic corps in Prague was very interested in Czechoslovak developments.[244] The March 1968 incidents in Poland warranted that Gomułka was in a vulnerable position and feared that the Prague Spring could spill over to Poland. In a meeting of Eastern bloc leaders in Dresden, Gomułka was the most vociferous opponent, while Brezhnev remained undecided.[245] In April the CPCz announced its Action Plan and continued the reforms. Censorship was relaxed and the press and cultural institutions launched an anti-Soviet and anti-Polish campaign.[246] Liberalisation of the regime also weakened the StB's grip on the entire situation. Not only it could not control the Czechoslovak population, but apparently, it could not also prevent espionage. The StB reported that in April the deputies of the French Military Attaché – mjr. Servant and cpt. Vallat toured North Moravia and photographed military installations. At some point, the StB lost Vallat and Servant near Olomouc. That unobstructed tour encouraged the British and American attaches. Throughout April, military attaches of NATO countries (US, UK, France and even Italy) could freely collect intelligence on Czechoslovak soil.[247]

The deepening chaos in Czechoslovakia caused grave concern in Warsaw. Additionally, what aggrieved Gomułka the most was the fact that the CPCz leadership

[242] M. Porozumenshchikov in Bischof, Kramer, Ruggenthaler (eds.), The Prague Spring, 2009, p. 103
[243] StB – Czechoslovak state security services; BND – West German intelligence services; Ústav pro Studium Totalitních Režimů (hereafter UpSTR), Denní svodky a informace Hlavní správy Státní bezpečnosti, čis. 48, p. 2-4
[244] UpSTR, Denní svodky, čis. 57, p.1
[245] Crump, Warsaw Pact, 2015, p. 218-222
[246] AMSZ, 6/77 W-214 - Szyfrogramy Praga 1968, szyfr. Nr. 3556, 24.03.1968
[247] UpSTR, Denní svodky, čis. 15, p.2-8

informed the Polish ambassador in Prague that it no longer wished to fight for the recognition of the GDR and that Prague was openly considering establishing diplomatic relations with Bonn. Moreover, the MSZ reported that the CPCz was considering compensation to Sudeten Germans, who were forced to leave Czechoslovakia after 1945.[248] Not only was Prague openly defying the Warsaw Package, which would on its own deeply undermine Poland's position concerning the Oder-Neisse line. It would have created a dangerous precedent and expose Poland to a similar claim from West Germany, for expulsions of Germans from Silesia and Pomerania.[249] The Soviet ambassador -Aristov -reported to Moscow, that Gomułka was very concerned about the situation in Czechoslovakia and pushed for an intervention. According to Aristov, Gomułka established a "hotline" with Brezhnev, so they could frequently discuss possible responses.[250] By the end of April, the CPCz entered secret negotiations with the FRG. For the first time an offer of economic assistance was mentioned (200-300 million DM).[251] The situation attracted more attention and hitherto undecided Brezhnev decided to meet with Dubček. The meeting took place in Moscow on 4-5 May. Dubček informed Brezhnev that he received economic assistance from the FRG. Brezhnev warned Dubček that the FRG is looking to expand its influence and that other Warsaw Pact members are increasingly concerned about the developments in Czechoslovakia. The Soviet leader pointed out that Czechoslovakia's western border is open and that "tourists" who enter are not controlled and could engage in subversive activities. Dubček promised to handle the issue, but informed Brezhnev that he could not deal with it swiftly[252].

On 8 May 1968, the Warsaw Pact five met in Warsaw to discuss the Czechoslovak crisis. Notably, Romania was absent, since thanks to Gomułka's efforts, Ceausescu was isolated within the Warsaw Pact. To avoid Romania's obstructionism, the Warsaw Pact powers simply bypassed the institution. At the Warsaw Pact Five summits, two groups emerged – Gomułka, Ulbricht and Zhivkov, who pushed for intervention, while Kadar and Brezhnev opted for a political solution. Effectively, the Five decided in favour of a political solution. Both Brezhnev and Kadar believed that Dubček could restore order.[253] Gomułka was much less confident in Dubček's willingness and ability to control the situation. With Gomułka's

[248] AMSZ, Z-17W-40T-177, p.39-40
[249] 1/3 of Poland's territory was taken over from Germany, the inhabitants of these lands were forced to flee to Germany between 1945 and 1949.
[250] Navrátil, Jaromír. ed., *The Prague Spring 1968 : A National Security Archive Documents Reader* (New York: Central European University Press, 1998)., Doc. 24, p. 103
[251] Ibid, Doc. 25, p. 111
[252] Ibid. Doc. 28, p-117-123
[253] Ibid. Doc. 31, p. 137-139

full approval the Polish Internal Military Service began the preparation process for the invasion on 10 May 1968.[254] The WSW begun reconnaissance near the Polish-CSSR border and within the area of Hradec Kralove and Plisen. Polish officers began recruiting agents within the StB and the Czechoslovak Defence Ministry. Finally, they began preparations for dislocation of Soviet units through Polish territory.[255] Gomułka acted unilaterally since there is no mention of Polish-Soviet cooperation in this regard. But Gomułka's concerns were not caused by the issue of reform or even the maintenance of order in Czechoslovakia. Gomułka was aware of secret West German-Czechoslovak negotiations. If the situation in Czechoslovakia was uninterrupted, the best-case scenario that Gomułka could be faced with was Czechoslovakia ignoring the Warsaw Package. This could lead other Warsaw Pact states to establish diplomatic relations with the FRG, removing Polish leverage in negotiations over Oder-Neisse. In the worst-case scenario, Gomułka believed that if Czechoslovakia left the Warsaw pact or became neutral the Warsaw Pact could disintegrate. The GDR would fall, and Eastern Europe could once again fall victim to Soviet-German negotiation. In Gomułka's estimation, the Soviets could easily be pressed to evacuate from Eastern Europe, given Sino-Soviet tensions in the Far East. But, even if the Warsaw Pact survived and the Soviets were not pushed out, the remaining Warsaw Pact countries would have to severely heighten their defences, while Poland could be subject to an increased Soviet military presence. Additionally, any long-term destabilisation of Czechoslovakia, or any change of its relationship with the Warsaw Pact, could have serious consequences, even if Czechoslovakia "remained socialist". term destabilisation of Czechoslovakia, or any change of its relationship with the Warsaw Pact could have serious consequences, even if Czechoslovakia "remained socialist". Gomułka feared that the GDR would collapse or the Soviets would be forced to withdraw from it. In such a case, Poland would become a frontline state, bordering a state that repeatedly made territorial claims against Poland. It is clear that Gomułka's main concerns were not ideological but geopolitical. Poland's safety and territorial integrity were paramount to him, and he was willing to achieve them him and he was willing to achieve it by any means necessary.[256] It is worth noting that Gomułka's estimations in regard to Czechoslovak developments mimic CIA estimations. The Americans identified Poland as the main communication axis of the Warsaw Pact, and even a neutral Czechoslovakia would leave that axis dangerously exposed. In CIA estimations, the minimal increase of Soviet presence in

[254] Wojskowa Służba Wewnętrzna – Polish counterintelligence, hereafter WSW
[255] IPN BU 2386/18396, p. 159-165
[256] AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/37, p. 154-155

Czechoslovakia's neighbours (Poland, GDR, Hungary) would have to increase fourfold.[257] Gomułka was also aware that Czechoslovakia, due to its open western border, became an escape route for Eastern Germans.[258] If the situation remained unchecked, soon enough Poland would have to deal with instability and crisis in both the GDR and CSSR. The exodus of East Germans via CSSR could also explain Ulbricht's motives for demanding an intervention.

Between 10 May and 17 June 1968, preparations were conducted for Warsaw Pact military exercises. Polish counterintelligence services received a perfect cover for their preparations. But the Sumava military exercise served yet another purpose. A military show of strength was aimed to dissuade the Czechoslovaks from making any moves that could undermine Warsaw Pact security. The exercise was marked by Czechoslovak-Soviet tensions. Instead of dissuading the CPCz from pursuing a pro-Western course and to bolster "healthy forces" as Manfred Wilke argued, Sumava triggered an even greater resolve to align Czechoslovakia with the FRG. [259] In July 1968, further negotiations were conducted between Czechoslovakia and the FRG. West Germans offered loans; Czechoslovaks promised they would coordinate their industrial production with West German enterprises.[260] When Sumava failed to achieve its objective, the Warsaw Five convened again to discuss the Czechoslovak crisis. The meeting took place in Warsaw on 15 July 1968. In his opening speech, Gomułka warned his allies that the West Germans were attempting a takeover of Czechoslovakia and that these preparations were well advanced. 168 The Warsaw Pact Five issued a letter that expressed their concern over the developments in Czechoslovakia.attempting a takeover of Czechoslovakia and that these preparations were well advanced.[261]The Warsaw Pact five issued a letter that expressed their concern over the developments in Czechoslovakia. The letter failed to achieve anything substantial. Brezhnev was still determined to find a political solution rather than a military one. A Soviet-Czechoslovak summit was scheduled for 29 July 1968 at Čierna nad Tisou.

But under pressure from Gomułka, Brezhnev began preparing a military alternative. Shortly after the 15 July meeting, the WSW began the final stages of the preparation. Increased tensions served as an excuse to remove all suspicious foreigners and Western spies.

[257] LBJ Library, Box179/Fol.5/Doc. 14
[258] IPN BU 2386/18404, p. 69
[259] M. Wilke in Bischof, Kramer, Ruggenthaler (eds.), *The Prague Spring*, 2009, p. 348
[260] IPN BU 0236/123, t.2, p.5-6
[261] AAN, KC PZPR XIA/35, p. 164

Routes were prepared for Soviet troops to march from Poland to the GDR. WSW agents began to divert the attention of foreign diplomats from the areas where Soviet columns would march. On 24 July 1968, the Chief of the Hungarian Army General Staff was asked by Soviet generals to take part in "manoeuvres" on the Czechoslovak territory. The Soviets emphasised the need to prepare for "exercises", but hoped that it would not be necessary to go ahead with them. The very same day at the meeting of the Federal Cabinet in Bonn, Willy Brandt was assuring other members of the West German cabinet that the Soviet Union will not opt for military intervention. [262] Brandt warranted caution since West German meddling in Czechoslovakia was detected by Warsaw and East Berlin.[263] On July 25 1968, the Polish Minister of Defence, Wojciech Jaruzelski received a telegram from Marshal Jakubovsky with a formal request for the Polish army to assume the position on the Czechoslovak border.[264] Two days later Soviet general Kozmin issued an official request for Poland to approve the movements of Soviet columns through Poland.[265] Kozmin provided the routes and his request was formally approved. Just as Čierna nad Tisou negotiations begun, all Warsaw Pact forces were in combat-ready positions.[266] Just as the Warsaw Pact five was getting ready for the invasion, the CPCz leadership was exploring its options. Prime Minister Černik in his report to the party leadership pointed out Western willingness to economically assist Czechoslovakia. Based on his contacts, Černik reported that military intervention was "most unlikely."[267] Both sides, having considered and prepared their alternatives would now sit at the negotiating table. After Soviet-Czechoslovak negotiations were concluded, other Warsaw Pact leaders were summoned to Bratislava on 3 August 1968, to approve the results.

According to the Soviet ambassador in Warsaw, Gomułka was angry that Brezhnev agreed to yet another round of negotiations. The Polish leader did not believe that the Bratislava conference would resolve the issue. But the Ambassador assured the CPSU leadership that Gomułka might voice his discontent, but ultimately will accept the result of Soviet-Czechoslovak negotiations.[268] At Bratislava, Dubček promised to restore order and to re-introduce press censorship and remove anti-Soviet members from top party positions. Despite Brezhnev's high hopes, Gomułka was proved right. On 7 August 1968 Brezhnev was

[262] Then a Minister of Foreign Affairs
[263] Bundesarchiv, Kabinettprotokolle, 24 Juli 1968, [A] Lage in der CSSR
[264] Wilson Centre Digital Archive, Warsaw Pact, Cipher telegraph 2765-311/8 to Minister of National Defence, Division General Cde. W. Jaruzelski
[265] In this case, the Soviets were adhering to the agreement signed in November 1956
[266] Wilson Centre Digital Archive, Warsaw Pact, To Division General Cde. Chocha, 27 July 1968
[267] Navratil, *Prague Spring*, doc. 65, 1998, p. 282-283
[268] Ibid. doc. 70, p. 319

informed that Dubček had done nothing to implement the agreement.[269] Two days later Brezhnev called Dubček to inquire about progress made but also offered assistance. Dubček made several evasive answers and demanded more time to get the situation under control.[270] Brezhnev called Dubček again on 13 August, but only received evasive answers and demands for more time.[271] The ultimate warning to Dubček was issued by Kadar on 17 August but to no avail. On the same day, the Soviet Politburo decided in favour of military intervention and asked other Warsaw Pact five leaders to convene in Moscow the following day.[272] At the Moscow meeting, all Warsaw Pact five leaders agreed to proceed with the invasion. Gomułka even gave Brezhnev a list of acceptable CPCz leaders, to which Brezhnev promptly agreed.[273] The Warsaw Pact five troops crossed the Czechoslovak border at 1 am on 21 August 1968.[274]

The Prague Spring was a momentous period in the history of the Warsaw Pact. But, contrary to the common historical narrative, it was not caused by ideological reform. The danger was indeed real, the Czechoslovak chaos was pulling in increasing Western involvement.[275] The West was not ready to clash with the Warsaw Pact but was certainly offering assistance in economic terms. The Warsaw Pact leaders could not have been certain that Czechoslovakia would remain loyal if the situation remained unchecked. Crump and Kramer were equally wrong when they described Gomułka and Ulbricht's motives as purely ideological. Gomułka feared a domino effect might cause the Soviet Union to withdraw from Eastern Europe, thus depriving Poland of the only guarantees of its territorial integrity. Even if Czechoslovakia only wanted to undermine the Warsaw Package and establish diplomatic relations with the FRG, Poland's position would be threatened. Gomułka was determined to use all tools at his disposal to prevent that. Even Ulbricht had cause for concern. Czechoslovakia in the second half of 1968 was becoming another West Berlin. GDR could not allow another mass exodus of its citizens to the West. Ulbricht's vulnerable position most likely pushed him to demand radical solutions. Crump also argued that the Czechoslovak crisis re-established the Soviet hegemony in the Warsaw Pact. Her thesis does not hold under closer scrutiny. For Gomułka Poland's security was paramount. He was willing to begin the preparations for the invasion unilaterally and was constantly pressuring Brezhnev. Even with

[269] Ibid. doc. 76, p. 335
[270] Ibid. doc. 77, p. 337-338
[271] Ibid. doc. 81,p. 346-356
[272] Ibid. doc. 88, p. 377
[273] AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/36, p. 118
[274] Navratil, *Prague Spring*, doc. 87, 1998, p. 374
[275] In Bischof, Kramer, Ruggenthaler (eds.), *The Prague Spring*, 2009, p. 56

the case of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the traditional Warsaw Pact dynamic was maintained. Poland and the Soviet Union negotiated a move to launch preparations for the invasion. Once the Poles and Soviets agreed on a course of action, other Warsaw Pact members were brought on board. The meeting on 18 August was just a formality, the troops had been prepared in advance.

In their assessment of the Czechoslovak crisis, both Crump and Kramer emphasise that the Warsaw Pact five severely misjudged the situation. The five counted that a pro-Soviet government would emerge as a result of the invasion. This government never materialised. When Dubček and Černik were brought to Moscow it soon transpired that they could not be removed from their position. A Warsaw Pact summit was called to Moscow on 24 August 1968. Brezhnev had a difficult time explaining to Gomułka, Ulbricht and Zhivkov that both Dubček and Černik will have to remain on their posts. This announcement was met with a lengthy tirade by Gomułka. In his speech, Gomułka was very agitated and spoke of counterrevolution that destroyed everything in Czechoslovakia. The Polish leader frantically insisted that the flank of the Warsaw Pact cannot be exposed.[276] Eventually, Gomułka managed to calm down and showed his practical side. Gomułka concluded that if Dubček could not be ousted, he could be used. In Gomułka's estimation, Czechoslovakia's leaders should sign a document that would compromise them in the eyes of their nation. Once Dubček lost popular support, he could be the Secretary for as long as needed. Then he could easily be removed.[277] The summit followed the usual pattern of Gomułka fleshing out the details with Brezhnev, while Ulbricht, Kadar and Zhivkov making occasional and minor contributions. Brezhnev was more than keen to follow Gomułka's idea. He informed his allies he needed to conduct negotiations with the Czechoslovak delegation (on 24 August the Czechoslovak President Svoboda arrived in Moscow). The document that Gomułka spoke of, became known as the Moscow Protocol and was signed on 26 August 1968.

Polish intelligence reports quickly confirmed Gomułka's assumptions. Society in general, and local party leaders have lost faith in Dubček, soon after the signing of the Moscow Protocol was announced publicly. A CPCz party secretary called for the leadership to "distance itself from those who signed the document."[278] Gomułka made an additional safety precaution, to dissuade the CPCz from further resistance. As soon as the troops crossed the

[276] Bundesarchiv, SPAMO-BA, DY 30/3621, p. 227
[277] Ibid. p. 231
[278] IPN BU 2386/18396, p. 48-49

Czechoslovak border, Poland blocked all Czechoslovak trade from passing through Polish territory. Since Czechoslovakia was a landlocked state it relied on Polish ports to distribute most of its foreign trade. Soon Czechoslovakia was on its knees begging for the restrictions to be lifted. The embargo was lifted in early September, but it did provide a powerful warning against disobedience.[279] Dubček was in Prague but was unable to undertake any major political initiative. The Polish authorities announced their success in halting Bonn's Ostpolitik aimed at undermining Warsaw Pact unity and territorial integrity of the GDR and Poland.[280] By September 1968 the situation returned to normal. The Warsaw Pact leaders resumed their work on reforming the Warsaw Pact and establishing the Unified Allied Command and General Staff. On 24 September Gomułka met with Jakubovsky to discuss the draft statute of the Unified Allied Command. Romanian obstructionism was once again predominant in debates concerning the reform. But both Jakubovsky and Gomułka agreed that if Ceausescu will attempt to block the reform this time, the remaining Warsaw Pact members would proceed without Romania.[281]

As the reform negotiations progressed and the situation in Czechoslovakia stabilised, Polish and Soviet diplomacy coordinated their efforts to minimise the adverse consequences of the invasion. The MSZ reported by late September that joint diplomatic efforts were already yielding tangible results.[282] France, after initial consternation sustained its pro-Soviet course. Italy and the US believed the intervention to be an internal matter of the Warsaw Pact. No recourse was undertaken by the US government and Polish-American relations proceeded "without any disruption."[283] The only area that proved troublesome to Polish diplomacy was Africa. An overwhelming majority of African countries condemned the invasion. Poland's West African partners, Guinea and Nigeria, did not assume an official position on the matter. The MSZ was concerned, that the invasion could be condemned on the forum of the Organisation of African Unity. Africa was an important Cold War theatre and Warsaw Pact could not afford any setbacks there. Thankfully, Polish involvement in West Africa proved advantageous. Nigerian struggle over Biafra was attracting international attention, Nigerian government requested an international observer team from the UN. In exchange for Poland's

[279] AMSZ, 6/77 W-214 – Szyfrogramy Praga, Szyfrogram nr. 10561, 29.8.68
[280] IPN BU 2602/1428, p. 530
[281] AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/104, p. 531-533
[282] AMSZ, 9/73 W-3 – CSRS, Dyplomacja francuska wobec następstw kryzysu czechosłowackiego, p. 7-8
[283] Ibid. p. 5

favourable presence, Nigeria blocked discussion over the invasion at the Organisation of African Unity (for more, see Chapter V).[284]

A diplomatic catastrophe was abated. The Warsaw Pact survived a challenge to its integrity and security. At the Bucharest PCC summit in March 1969, the statute of the Unified Armed Forces and Unified Command was approved. The PCC also established a Military Council of the Pact, agreed on a unified air-defence system and created the Committee on Technology of the Unified Armed Forces[285]. The meeting also issued the so-called Budapest Declaration in which the Warsaw Pact members called for a European security conference. Gomułka managed to insert the Warsaw Package into the declaration but was forced to compromise on his anti-West German stance in light of Ceausescu's opposition.[286] By 1969 it was clear that the West German Ostpolitik had failed, the Cold War status quo was maintained.[287] Gomułka was quick to capitalise on this victory and in May 1969 announced that Poland was ready to enter negotiations with West Germany over the establishment of diplomatic relations. By December 1969 both Poland and the FRG entered the first phase of negotiations. The PCC meeting on 20 August 1970 was dominated by Polish and Soviet accounts of their negotiations with the FRG.[288] Poland concluded its negotiations and signed a treaty with the FRG in Warsaw on 7 December 1970. The FRG renounced its claims to Polish western territories and both countries established diplomatic relations. The conditions stipulated by the Warsaw Package were fulfilled and the other Eastern European countries soon followed Poland. The GDR signed the Basic Treaty on 21 December 1972[289], Czechoslovakia signed the Treaty of Prague on 11 December 1973[290]. Hungary and Bulgaria established their relations with the FRG in 1973. Faced with Warsaw Pact unity, Bonn abandoned its attempts to pick the Eastern European states one by one, in an attempt to isolate Poland and the GDR. Thanks to Gomułka's ability to use the Warsaw Pact as a transition belt for Polish national interests, Poland's territorial integrity was no longer solely dependent on the Soviet Union. Shortly after the Warsaw Treaty of 1970, Gomułka fell from power. His

[284] AMSZ, 9/73 W-3 – CSRS, Kraje Czarnej Afryki, p. 17
[285] PHP, PCC Meetings, Budapest – 17 March 1969, Secret resolution (including statutes of the Committee of Ministers of Defence, of the UAF and the Unified Command), p. 1
[286] PHP, PCC Meetings, Budapest – 17 March 1969, PCC meeting report at the Hungarian Politburo, p.2-3
[287] AAN, XIA/105, p. 280
[288] By then Moscow had already signed a treaty with Bonn – on 12 August 1970. Both countries renounced the use of force in their relations, PHP, PCC Meetings, Moscow – 20 August 1970, Report by the First Secretary to the Hungarian Politburo, p. 4
[289] CVCE.DE, Der Grundlagenvertag 21.12.1972
[290] CVCE.DE, Der Prager Vertag, 11.12.1973

successor, Edward Gierek, could benefit from Gomułka's success. The normalisation treaties of the early 1970s paved the wave for a security conference that Rapacki called for in 1964. In 1975 the Helsinki Accords were signed, and Polish borders became an integral part of the European security system.

Between 1955 and 1970 Poland pursued a consistent policy that allowed it to play an important role in the structures of the Warsaw Pact. The Polish march through that institution was a long one, and the Polish leadership had to overcome many obstacles. Firstly, in the initial period, Poland had to regulate the status of Soviet troops on Polish territory. The agreement signed in 1956 regulated the legal status of Soviet troops and handed the most important prerogatives to Polish authorities. Then Poland launched a costly modernisation of its armed forces, equipping them with the most modern Soviet military equipment. At the same time, Poland pioneered the application of IT technologies in the military. By 1965 Polish armed forces were the second most powerful military force of the Warsaw Pact. Polish efforts were then recast into political influence within the Warsaw Pact structure. Between 1967 and 1970, Poland was able to use the Warsaw Pact as an instrument of its foreign policy in its confrontation with West Germany. The Poles were a driving force behind the reform efforts and in preparation for the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. We also need to note that unlike in the West or the Global South, the economic considerations did not underpin the Polish action. The Soviet Bloc was responsible for the majority of Poland’s trade. The Cold War setting warranted that the Bloc countries mostly traded amongst themselves, while trade with the Global South and the West covered goods and technologies unavailable or scarce in the Soviet Bloc. Thus, in its dealings within the Warsaw Pact, the Polish leadership was primarily focusing on political outcomes. However, Poland’s advantageous position in other Cold War theatres such as Asia (see chapter IV) and Africa (see chapter V) greatly helped Warsaw in solidifying its position as the second most important Soviet Bloc member. The Poles pushed for multilateralization of the Warsaw Pact to formalise their position within the Bloc. Although the Poles engaged in a costly modernisation of the army between 1961 and 1965, they were not interested in taking on more responsibilities and sharing an increased share of costs linked to the military structure of the alliance. Warsaw just wanted political influence which it could establish within the PCC. The military expenses and running of the Unified Allied Forces were left to the Soviet Union.

Understanding Poland's role and tactics within the Warsaw Pact sheds some light on the efforts of other Warsaw Pact countries to assert their independence – namely Romania.

Czechoslovakia did not explicitly use the Warsaw Pact forum to pursue its national interests, but in some regards followed a similar pattern. Both tactics, however, were starkly different. In 1955 Poland decided to reevaluate its national interests and cast them into the framework of the Warsaw Pact itself. Thus, Polish attempts to advance the interests of the bloc would indirectly serve to improve Poland's position both within the Pact and on the global stage. This explained the Polish “propensity” to advance initiatives that served both the Pact as a whole, as well as Polish interests. These initiatives increased trust between Moscow and Warsaw, and subsequently, Poland became a strategic ally. As such Poland was allowed to conduct a more independent foreign policy and establish wider contacts with Western countries. Moscow was always certain of Warsaw's loyalty, thus, even Poland's unilateral moves did not carry negative consequences. Polish push for multilateralism was therefore a natural consequence of this policy. By formalising the collective decision-making process, Warsaw would always have a say in all policy issues. Poland's position as Warsaw Pact second most senior member would guarantee that Polish interests would be protected in all cases.

Romania could not follow a policy similar to the Polish one. It did not have the economic or military resources to compete with Poland over influence. Instead, Romania based its sovereignty on external allies and their support. To court such support from the West or China, Bucharest needed to maintain great manoeuvrability since, otherwise, external support could be directed to more economically and militarily powerful Warsaw Pact states. Multilateralism would severely limit Romania's manoeuvrability and could thus deprive it of external support. For that reason, Romania attempted to block all initiatives aimed at collective decision-making, thus becoming a champion of unilateralism. Unfortunately for Romania, other Warsaw Pact members believed that collective decision-making was the best way to secure their national interests. As the Pact moved closer and closer to formalising multilateralism, Romanian tactics of unilateral actions aimed at maintaining an aura of sovereignty became obsolete. By 1967, Romania became isolated within its only military, political, alliance. Other member states bypassed the formal structures out of necessity. Thus, Romania became unable to influence its allies’ policies or decisions.

Czechoslovakia behaved similarly in 1968. Its westward push was unilateral. Just like Romania, Czechoslovakia removed itself from the formal decision-making process. Despite numerous warnings, Prague chose to pursue its very narrowly defined national interest at the expense of its neighbours' security. The process of Czechoslovakia's isolation was much

quicker than Romania's. It took less than two months for Czechoslovakia to be excluded from the negotiating table. In March, Dubček could defend his position in Dresden, but in May he was absent at a Warsaw Pact five meeting. Of course, the situation was much more complex in Czechoslovakia. As Tůma argued, the Prague Spring was not a reform process but a systemic crisis.[291] Dubček's unilateralism, in this case, manifested in his unilateral decision not to carry out any agreements he signed with his allies. If Dubček was unable, but not unwilling, to carry out these agreements, he failed to inform his allies of this fact. As a result, his allies lost faith in him and decided to intervene. By 1968, unilateralism was obsolete. Thus, the Soviet Union could not invade on its own. It needed its allies. Gomułka, Ulbricht and Zhivkov were more than willing to offer their military support. They did not do so at the Soviet request. The evidence shows it was quite the contrary. It was Brezhnev who, for five months between March and August, resisted pressure from Poland, GDR and Bulgaria to intervene. By July 1968 he yielded and agreed to prepare military intervention as an alternative. When he finally lost confidence in Dubček, the approval for an invasion was just a formality. Allied armed forces for almost a month waited for that decision.

Despite the severe crisis of 1968, the Warsaw Pact survived and was consolidated. Military decision-making was collective, and policy consultations between member states, although still informal, became an unbreakable rule. By 1970 the alliance crystallised, and so did its internal hierarchy. The Soviet Union remained the most senior of the Warsaw Pact members. Poland emerged as the second most senior Warsaw Pact state. The Polish strategy, when compared with Romania's, proved more successful. Between 1956 and 1970, Poland was always at the negotiating table, capable of defending its interests. Moreover, on several occasions, Warsaw was able to force others to adhere to its political will. The Poles played their cards wisely. They wanted to play second fiddle in the Soviet bloc. The Warsaw Pact proved a forum they could use to do so.

[291] Oldrich Tůma in Bischof, Kramer, Ruggenthaler (eds.), *The Prague Spring*, p. 65

Chapter II - Going global: Poland’s economic outreach between 1956 and 1970

The ultimate economic failure of the Soviet Bloc in the late 1980s and early 1990s centred the scholarly debate on the issue of explaining why the Bloc collapsed and why economic difficulties primarily triggered this collapse. Thus, historians and economic historians compete in presenting the shortcomings of centrally planned economies and provide, often convincing, explanations regarding the failure of communist or socialist economies across the globe. In Polish historiography, Janusz Kaliński demonstrated that the intensive push for industrialisation between 1948 and 1955 caused Poland's economy to become excessively reliant on exporting natural resources, which focused on Poland's economic development on heavy industry. That, in turn, pushed Poland to rely on technological imports and disincentivised modernisation. All internal inadequacies and major global crises ultimately led to Poland's bankruptcy in the 1980s.[292] Poland's economist, Jerzy Osiatyński, also outlined the shortcomings of the Polish economy. However, he argued that the political pressures largely distorted the sound economic planning that followed the thaw of 1956.[293] The Soviet bloc and COMECON, its chief economic organisation, were also criticised. As one of the first, Antoni Marszałek argued that COMECON was the primary example of failed economic integration.[294] Western scholarship later mirrored Marszałek's conclusions. Western scholars, such as Steiner and Petrak-Jones, argued that COMECON, which aspired to be an alternative to the Western market, failed because planned economies could not push beyond certain limits of economic exchange. The trade was primarily bilateral rather than multilateral, which left the COMECON countries unwilling to abandon "national egotisms". Bureaucratisation and failure to reform led to the decline and dissolution of the Soviet bloc as an economic system in the 1990s.[295] Both Eastern and Western historians confirmed these arguments.[296]

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[292] Kaliński, Janusz. *Gospodarka w PRL. Warszawa*, (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2012); Kaliński, Janusz. *Gospodarka Polski w latach 1944-1989: Przemiany strukturalne*. (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, 1995); Kaliński, Janusz,and Zbigniew Landau. *Gospodarka Polski w XX wieku.* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, 2003); Kaliński, Janusz. "Transformacja" Do Gospodarki Centralnie Planowanej w Polsce (1944-1950)." *Optimum studia ekonomiczne* 95, no. 1 (2019): 32–45.

[293] Osiatyński, *Michał Kalecki*.

[294] Marszałek, Antoni. "Planowanie i rynek w RWPG: Geneza niepowodzenia." *Acta Unicersitas Lodziensis, Folia Oeconomica* 133, (1993): 3-144.

[295] Steiner, André, and Kirsten Petrak-Jones. "The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance — An Example of Failed Economic Integration?" Geschichte und Gesellschaft (Göttingen) 39, no. 2 (2013): 240–258. P.57-8

[296] Vardomskiy, L. B. "Forgotten Integration: The Failure and Lessons of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance." Outlines of global transformations: politics, economics, law 13, no. 3 (2020): 176–195; Metcalf, Lee Kendall. *The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance : the Failure of Reform*. (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1997); Gerocs, Tamás, and András Pinkasz. "Conflicting Interests in the Comecon Integration: State Socialist Debates on East-West-South Relations." *East Central Europe (Pittsburgh)* 45, no. 2-3 (2018): 336–365; Radisch, Erik. "The Struggle of the Soviet Conception of Comecon, 1953–1975". *Comparativ*, 27 no.5-6 017), 26–47. https://doi.org/10.26014/j.comp.2017.05/06.02

However, although some historians acknowledge the shortcomings of the centrally planned economic model, they offer a more nuanced analysis. Ben Fowkes, for example, argued that by 1969, the development gap between the East and the West was significantly narrowed. The failure, Fowkes argued, ultimately came not only because the Soviet Bloc countries focused too much on the heavy and military industries but also because the West limited access to more advanced technologies.[297] There is an attempt to re-evaluate COMECON as an organisation. Crump and Godard argued that COMECON was another forum, alongside the Warsaw Pact, where the Eastern European countries could "resist Soviet concepts and shift the balance of power in their favour."[298] These scholarly attempts, however, tend to focus only on intra-Bloc relations. There are notable attempts to provide a global context by Sanchez-Sibony, Mark and Paul. However, these tend to focus on the Bloc and its relations with the so-called Global South or, like in Sanchez-Sibony's case, primarily on the USSR.[299]

The economy, as means to achieving resources and financing the project launched is crucial. The economic reforms were being implemented at the same time Warsaw and Moscow were negotiating their new *modus vivendi.* The Polish success in safeguarding Poland's autonomy allowed the reform of the country's economic model and its rather significant deviation from the model promoted by the Soviet Union. Although focusing on Poland, this chapter will provide an even broader perspective and attempt to position Poland's economy globally since none of the Soviet Bloc countries operated solely in the context of COMECON. The other contexts were the developing world and the Western market economies. These three major contexts were, however, inseparable. The internal COMECON dynamics often pushed the Poles to seek increased contacts in the Global South or the West. In other cases, the developments in the Western markets made Poland pursue closer cooperation within the COMECON. Those three major contexts shaped Warsaw's policies and ultimately were the cause of Poland's global outreach. However, when attempting to find a new role for Poland in the Bloc post-1956, the Poles never envisaged a global outreach. In their attempt to make

[297] Fowkes, Ben. Eastern Europe 1945-1969: From Stalinism to Stagnation. Taylor and Francis, 2014, 90-1. See also: Libbey, James. "CoCom, Comecon, and the Economic Cold War." *Russian History (Pittsburgh)* 37, no. 2 (2010): 133–152.

[298] Crump Laurien, and Simon Godard. "Reassessing Communist International Organisations: A Comparative Analysis of COMECON and the Warsaw Pact in Relation to Their Cold War Competitors." *Contemporary European History* 27, no. 1 (2018): 85–109, p.95.

[299] Mark, James, and Paul Betts (eds). *Socialism Goes Global,* 2022; Mark, James, Artemy M. Kalinovsky, and Steffi Marung. *Alternative Globalizations : Eastern Europe and the Postcolonial World. Edited by James Mark, Artemy M. Kalinovsky, and Steffi Marung*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, Office of Scholarly Publishing, Herman B Wells Library, 2020); Sanchez-Sibony, Oscar. *Red Globalization: The Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Poland the second most powerful Soviet Bloc state, the Polish leadership believed Europe would be the primary theatre of Poland's efforts. The Poles hoped for close cooperation within COMECON, balanced by economic contacts with non-aligned states in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The shortcomings of the Polish economic model, such as an almost permanent negative trade balance, pushed Poland to reach beyond the Iron Curtain, not only to the South but also to the West. This chapter will demonstrate that many of Poland's Cold War entanglements in 1956-70 resulted from a rather mundane task of balancing payments. To offset the expenses, the Poles devised a model where the negative trade balance would be covered by revenue generated by the transit of goods through Polish territory and maritime shipping. In its attempt to offset the negative trade balance, the Poles built 30 905 km of roads, maintained the full capacity of 26 574 km of railroads, and increased their merchant fleet, whose operations spanned the whole globe, from 206 832 DWT to 1 843 173 DWT between 1949 and 1969.[300] Poland's merchant fleet operations encouraged economic contacts with non-aligned and Western countries. These economic contacts eventually transformed into political relations, resulting in Poland's political involvement in Asia (see Chapter IV), Africa (see Chapter V) and Latin America. Without a cohesive and overarching structure of COMECON, the Poles behaved exactly like Steiner and Petrak-Jones outlined. They focused on their national interests.[301] Even within COMECON, the Poles always seemed to advance their own agenda and attempted, alongside other Eastern European countries, to minimise Soviet influence.

The economy proved crucial in Poland's foreign policy. In an attempt to offset Poland's perpetually negative trade balance, the Poles built a large fleet and sizeable transit infrastructure. This allowed Poland not only to balance its payments. The fleet and transit infrastructure could be translated into political influence within COMECON and Europe more broadly and in Asia, Africa and Latin America, where Poland's economic interests often clashed with well-established Western influence. Apor argued that the "peripheries" of Western and Eastern empires attempted to overcome their peripherality. In these attempts, smaller Eastern European countries and newly independent countries of Asia and Africa managed to play a considerable role in the Global Cold War.[302] Poland's policies, in this regard, seem to confirm Apor's argument. In an attempt to improve its economic standing within COMECON, Poland

[300] DWT – Dead Weight Tonnage measures how much weight a ship can carry. Główny Urząd Statystyczny (GUS), Rocznik Statystyczny 1970, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo GUS, 1970, p.297 and 308.
[301] Steiner and Petrak-Jones. "The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance", 2013, p.57-8
[302] Peter Apor in James Mark and Paul Betts, Socialism Goes Global: *The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonisation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), p. 118, 135

reached out to the West and the Global South. The large transit infrastructure and merchant fleet gave Poland an upper hand against its non-Soviet COMECON allies. Political relations in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and even the West developed almost organically due to trade relations. These economic and political relations allowed Poland to play a considerable role in the Global Cold War, the role which historians previously ignored or downplayed.

Section I – COMECON

The first and primary context in which Poland functioned was the Soviet Bloc. The Warsaw Pact and COMECON undeniably influenced how Poland formulated and pursued its policies. The fact that Poland transitioned to a centrally planned economic model was caused by Poland becoming part of the Soviet sphere of influence post-1945. The legacy of that transition would weigh heavily on Poland's economic development in the latter half of the twentieth century. As Kaliński argued, Poland underwent Soviet-style rapid industrialisation (primarily heavy industry). Unlike the Soviet Union, however, Poland lacked the resources and technological base to sustain such an economic model. As a result, Poland was forced to run an excessively negative trade balance. The forceful industrialisation implemented in Poland's Six-Year Plan of 1950-55 resulted in significant economic hardship for Polish society. The events of 1956 saw some liberalisation, but the new leadership, according to Kaliński, did not formulate a new "economic strategy but focused on ad hoc" reforms.[303] Osiatyński emphasised that although the reform process was not far-reaching, some significant changes were made. The new "Polish model" relied more on economic incentives than administrative decisions. Economic planning post-1956 was based on Poland's real economic potential, and collectivisation was ultimately abandoned. Heavy industry remained the principal driving force of Polish economic growth, but more attention was paid to the light and service industries.[304]

Before proceeding any further, this chapter must address the issue of economic planning and decision-making. As mentioned, from 1956, Poland's economy was centrally administered rather than centrally planned. The reforms of 1956 introduced more liberal and flexible methods of actual economic planning. On 11 November 1956, the Council of Ministers issued a decree that allowed state-owned industrial enterprises a large degree of autonomy. Unlike before, state enterprises could now manage their internal budgets and development strategies and, most

[303] Janusz Kaliński, *Gospodarka Polski W Latach 1944-1989* (Warszawa: Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, 1995)., p.80-1
Jerzy Osiatynski, *Michal Kalecki on a Socialist Economy* (London: Macmillan, 1988)., 1988, p.35-9

importantly, freely enter contracts with other domestic and foreign enterprises as long as "such additional contractual obligations allowed for the fulfilment of the [economic] plan."[305] A few days later, the Soviet-style State Commission for Economic Planning (pol. Państwowa Komisja Planowania Gospodarczego – PKPG) was dissolved and replaced by the Council of Ministers' Planning Commission (pol. Komisja Planowania przy Radzie Ministrów – KPRM).[306] The KPRM was responsible for drafting the economic plans, which were subject to various pressures from the party leadership, which could demand revisions or amendments to any economic plan.[307] Once approved by the political leadership, the economic plan was submitted by the Council of Ministers to the Parliament (Sejm) for consideration. A considerable novelty in formalising Poland's economic planning was the fact that it was no longer passed as a bill but as a resolution.[308] The newly implemented Five-Year Plans provided a general direction for developing the economy and foreign trade. These general directions would be further specified in yearly National Economic Plans.[309] However, neither the Five-Year nor the annual National Economic Plans provided precise information on how a given economic indicator should be attained. The KPRM outlined the need for certain amounts of goods to be imported, for example, but the origin of those goods was not specified. The goods could have been imported from COMECON countries, the West or developing nations.[310] The vast autonomy granted to the state enterprises was quickly limited. The regime soon realised that the state enterprises over-relied on imports and foreign loans to avoid jeopardising their plan fulfilment. As a result, the Council of Ministers introduced a limit on foreign loans and forced all state-owned

[305] Monitor Polski (M.P.) 1956 nr 94 poz. 1047, 1094; later extended to all state enterprises: M.P. 1956 nr 104 poz. 1199.
[306] Dziennik Ustaw (Dz.U.) 1956 nr 54 poz. 244. KPRM was responsible for drafting o economic plans and assessing their implementation. The PKPG was a much more powerful institution controlling every aspect of Poland's economic life; it even had jurisdiction over all other Polish Ministries, Dz. U. 1949 nr 26 poz. 190.
[307] Kaliński, Janusz. Gospodarka Polski w latach 1944-1989, 1995, p.107
[308] A bill, after passing, becomes the law of the land, while a resolution is merely an 'expression of intent'. Such an approach made changing the plan much easier while removing potential consequences if a given institution fell short of fulfilling the plan. Polish MP Antoni Gładysz outlined this difference in 1957 at the session of the Sejm. Biblioteka Sejmowa, Sprawozdanie Stenograficzne z 8 posiedzenia Sejmu PRL w dniach od 11 do 13 lipca 1957, p.175.
[309] Ibid. p.11.
[310] For Five Year Plans see: Dz.U. 1957 nr 40 poz. 179, Plan Pięcioletni na lata 1956-1960; Dz. U. 1961 nr. 11 poz. 58, Plan Pięcioletni na lata 1961-1965; Dz. U. 1966 nr. 48 poz. 296, Plan Pięcioletni na lata 1966-1970. For annual National Economic Plans see: M.P. 1958 nr 28 poz. 164, Uchwała o Narodowym Planie Gospodarczym (NPG) na 1958 r.; M.P. 1959 nr 21 poz. 95, Uchwała o NPG na 1959r.; M.P. 1960 nr 97 poz. 429, Uchwała o NPG na 1961r.; M.P. 1961 nr 99 poz. 418, Uchwała o NPG na 1962r.; M.P 1963 nr 96 poz. 451, Uchwała o NPG na 1964r.; M.P. 1964 nr 87 poz. 415, Uchwała o NPG na 1965r.; M.P. 1965 nr 70 poz. 402, Uchwała o NPG na 1966r.; M.P. 1966, nr 73 poz. 338, Uchwała o NPG na 1967r.; M.P. 1967 nr 70 poz. 341, Uchwała o NPG na 1968r.; M.P. 1968 nr 54 poz. 3878, Uchwała o NPG na 1969r.; M.P. 1969 nr 53 poz. 480, Uchwała o NPG na 1970r.

enterprises to strictly follow the principle of "balancing the payments."[311] However, despite those apparent limitations, the state-owned enterprises still had much leeway in operating on domestic and foreign markets.

One would expect to see at least echoes of central decisions in the archives concerning state enterprises. This is, however, different. There is evidence of guidelines issued by the Ministry of Foreign Trade, which had to remind all state enterprises that if they sign any additional contracts in a country where Poland had an official Commercial Councillor, the Commercial Counsellor should be at least informed about a transaction taking place, in case some legal disputes occur. The Ministry should be informed if Poland did not keep a Commercial Councillor in a given country.[312] Henryk Szlajfer's opinion seems to confirm that the decision-making process in Poland was "dispersed."[313] External sources, such as the CIA, support these conclusions. In their assessment of Poland's economic development, CIA specialists concluded that political officials did not meddle excessively in economic affairs. All economic activity, such as economic planning, commerce and running of state-owned enterprises, was handled by "professionals" and not by party apparatchiks.[314]

The Poles did not abandon the centrally planned model, but the new Polish economic model broke with Stalinist practices of the early 1950s and granted state enterprises considerable autonomy. The planning was rational, based on sound data and Poland's real economic capabilities. For Western observers, the most shocking fact was that Poland abandoned any collectivisation efforts, leaving 86% of arable land in Poland in private hands. The new Gomułka regime seemed very pragmatic, while the economic planning was viewed as almost "conservative."[315] The government had instruments to exercise tight control over state-owned enterprises. Yet the Polish leadership allowed considerable autonomy. The economy was subject to Five-year and annual plans, but these were only outlines. The legal manoeuvre of changing the status of the plan from a bill to a parliamentary resolution allowed for greater flexibility. The economic plans could easily be adjusted and resources reallocated. The legacy of the Stalinist era did influence how Poland developed and would later pose significant

[311] M.P. 1957 nr 6 poz. 36, Uchwała Rady Ministrów z dnia 18 stycznia 1957 zmieniająca uchwałę nr 704 z dnia 10 listopada 1956.
[312] Additional meaning outside of contacts signed on behalf of the state in official inter-governmental contracts. APK, Metalexport, sygn. 617, Pismo Okólne Ministerstwa Handlu Zagranicznego, 21 January 1962, p.8.
[313] Unstructured interview with Professor Henryk Szlajfer, Warsaw, 30 January 2023.
[314] CIA-RDP79R01141A002600070001-4, Economic Intelligence Report - The Economic Policy of the Gomułka regime in Poland: Trends and Prospects, December 1962, p.3;18.
[315] Ibid. p.3; 11; 17-18.

challenges, which need to be acknowledged. However, in the late 1950s, the Poles seemed to have developed and implemented their own economic model. And that new model allowed Poland to improve its standing within the Soviet bloc, expand trade with the West, and reach out globally in pursuit of profit for Poland's national economy.

Having established how Poland's economic model functioned and where the decisions were made, this chapter can now discuss the importance of COMECON for the Polish economy and Poland's role within the organisation. Trade with COMECON countries constituted most of Poland's total trade turnover in the late 1950s and 1960s. At its lowest in 1958, the trade turnover with COMECON countries accounted for 50.8% of Poland's total trade turnover. At the highest point in 1969, trade with COMECON countries accounted for 62.4% of Poland's overall trade. In comparison, non-communist countries accounted for between 27-34%, with EEC being roughly 8.3-11.3% and EFTA accounting for 10.4-13.8%. Trade with developing countries oscillated between 5.4-8.7% of Poland's total trade.[316] Regardless of any ideological affiliation or ideology the Polish leadership might have had, these figures alone placed Poland firmly within the Bloc. Combined with political and military alliance within the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Bloc was thus the principal political and economic setting in which Poland operated. The instability brought about by rapid industrialisation between 1950 and 1955 and de-Stalinisation made it clear to the Polish leadership that policies and Poland's role within the Bloc needed re-evaluation. The Stalinist model relied on heavy industry, which in Polish circumstances, meant that the country would become a net importer of consumer goods. In fact, between 1950 and 1955, Poland's overall trade balance was negative, except for 1953. And it would remain negative between 1956 and 1970, except in 1964, when Poland managed to run a small trade surplus.[317] The issue of a negative trade balance proved to be substantial. Kaliński argued that Polish economists understood the overreliance on imports disturbed Poland's economic growth. However, the economic model Poland was forced into gave only very limited possibilities to address the situation.[318]

The systemic crisis that occurred in Poland relaxed the control of the Party not only over society but also over state institutions. These institutions often became centres of independent and original thinking in such circumstances. In mid-1956, one such institution was the Central Authority of Polish Merchant Marine. Its General Director, Marian Grancewicz, wrote a lengthy

[316] Rocznik Statystyczny Handlu Zagranicznego, 1970, p.22.
[317] Główny Urząd Statystyczny (GUS), Rocznik Statystyczny 1989, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo GUS, 1987, p.2-3.
[318] Kaliński, Janusz. ''Nierównowaga zewnętrzna gospodarki Polski Ludowej.'' *Kwartalnik Kolegium Ekonomiczno-Społecznego Studia i Prace* (2011). 41-58, p.42-5.

memorandum in July 1956 addressed to the First Secretary. In the memorandum, Grancewicz wrote scathingly of the state authorities for neglecting the Polish Merchant Marine. He outlined that hitherto practices aimed at increasing Poland's naval carrying capacity were reduced merely to "agitation for the fulfilment of the plan". And according to Grancewicz, these could achieve little since the Polish fleet was "small, old and poorly maintained". As a result, Poland and other socialist countries had to rely on capitalist ships to carry their goods, which further depleted the Polish exchequer. Grancewicz suggested that Poland could minimise its dependence on foreign carriers and possibly "accrue convertible currency" if the carrying capacity of Poland's merchant fleet would be such to carry not only Polish goods but also goods from other COMECON countries. Thus, Poland could earn considerable sums by shipping and transiting goods through its territory. Grancewicz received a that the Regional (Wojewódzki) PZPR Committee passed the message to Warsaw. [319] At a time of political turmoil and struggle for power, nobody in Warsaw had time to respond. There is no evidence that the highest party officials saw the memorandum. However, it is possible to observe that the new Five-Year Plan seemed to address Grancewicz's memo directly. The new plan allocated 36 billion PLN for the fleet to add 420 000 DWT (300 000 from domestic production and 120 000 purchased abroad) to Poland's fleet capacity. Resources were allocated to construct 2600 km of new roads. The plan also stipulated that "to minimise the strain of payment balance", additional resources such as "transit, shipping and tourism" should be used to their full extent.[320] Knowing it would be almost impossible to balance the trade, the Poles decided to balance the payments instead. Any potential surpluses could then be used to develop and modernise Poland's economy.

The Polish planners were, of course, not throwing all these resources in a vacuum. The plan stipulated that domestic production would account for 300 000 DWT. Before the Second World War, Poland's navy and shipbuilding industry were almost non-existent, and the origins of Poland's merchant fleet were closely connected with the Cold War. The Soviet Union initially supplied know-how and machinery.[321] The nascent Polish shipping and shipbuilding industries were allowed and encouraged by the Soviets to facilitate seaborne trade between the Soviet Bloc and the People's Republic of China. The Poles and the Chinese established a joint stock shipping company to bypass the American blockade of the Taiwan Strait. No ship sailing under

[319] APG oddział w Gdyni, Centralny Zarząd Polskiej Marynarki Handlowej, sygn.685/1, Pismo do tow. Ochaba dot. tonażu PMH, 14 July 1956, p.1-2.
[320] Dz.U. 1957 nr 40 poz. 179, p.474-476.
[321] CIA-RDP81-00280R001300190005-4, The Role of Maritime Transport in the Development of National Economy During the Five-Year Plan, 1 November 1956, p.9.

the Chinese flag was allowed to pass through the strait. Vessels sailing under other flags, such as Polish, were allowed to operate freely. The trade between the Bloc and the PRC could not rely on foreign ships, and thus, the Soviets encouraged Poland's capacity to build and repair its fleet.[322]

As the reform process was being implemented in 1956-1958, the Polish planners realised that their goal within the COMECON, and in the global context more broadly, was to transform Poland into a transit hub for the Soviet Bloc. These services would allow Poland to minimise the negative impact of negative trade balances on the Polish economy. The consecutive Five-Year Plans called for further development of Poland's transit and shipping capacity. The Plan for 1961-65 assumed an addition of 448 000 DWT to Poland's merchant marine. Resources were allocated to regulate the river flow in the Vistula, Poland's main river, so it could also increase the country's transit capacity.[323] The plan also pushed for an increase in a "positive balance on services" by expanding the fleet and Poland's land and rail transit capacity.[324] The Five-Year Plan envisaged expanding the fleet by 882 700 DWT. In its analysis section, the Five-Year Plan stipulated that in 1965 Poland managed to accrue a positive balance of 525 million convertible zlotys (złotych dewizowych).[325] Thus, by 1965 the Poles managed to balance their payments. The negative trade balance for 1965 was equivalent to 449.8 million convertible zlotys, meaning Poland ran a surplus of 75.2 million.[326] These figures are general and do not distinguish between revenue obtained within COMECON or outside. Still, they show an overall trend where Poland minimised the impact of its overreliance on imports.

These developments occurred largely within the COMECON framework, and we must note that Poland's increased shipping and transiting capacity initially remained unnoticed. In 1958, at the COMECON summit, the Polish delegation registered its intention to expand its "existing network of railways, roads" to increase transit capacity. The Polish delegation also called for the "development and cooperation in expanding seaborne freight services".[327] The COMECON countries voiced no objections and agreed to cooperate. Throughout the late 1950s

[322] AMSZ, Z-14 W-2 T-30 - Secret - Memorandum on establishing Sino-Polish Joint Shipping Company, n.d. p.16-17.
[323] Dz.U. 1961 Nr 11 poz. 58, p.131-132.
[324] Ibid. 149.
[325] Dz.U. 1966 nr 48 poz. 296, 466-70. Złoty dewizowy was an accounting unit rather than an actual convertible currency. Its value until 1970 was constant. 1 złoty dewizowy was an equivalent of $0.25 and 0.225 Rbl. Rocznik Statystyczny Handlu Zarganicznego, 1970, XX.
[326] Rbl. Rocznik Statystyczny Handlu Zagranicznego, 1987, p.3.
[327] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/90, Informacja o stanowisku strony polskiej na konferencję krajów RWPG n.d. (1958), p.25.

and early 1960s, COMECON transit through Polish territory continued to grow. In 1955, the overall rail transit through Polish territory was 7.071 million tonnes. In 1963 it amounted to 19.508 million tonnes.[328] The increase was sizeable and demonstrated that the Poles were successful to a large extent in capturing cargo transits between COMECON states. It must be noted that not all that success could be attributed to Polish policymaking and investments. Still, a large portion was caused by Poland's geographic location, which made it the main transiting state for economic exchange between the Soviet Union and the GDR. South, Poland had its landlocked allies of Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and Poland was their natural transit partner for seaborne trade. Nevertheless, the Poles could capitalise on their geographic location and increase the transit through their territory by 275% in 8 years.

Poland's geographic location and increasing role as COMECON's transit hub soon allowed the Poles to translate that role into political influence. In October 1963, at the IX session of COMECON's Executive Committee, the Polish delegation pushed for an increase in transit rates, given that an increased transit proved to be a considerable burden for Poland's infrastructure. Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the GDR objected. Given that these three countries relied the most on Polish territory to transit their goods, it was natural that they would object to any increases. The Polish delegation agreed to grant Poland's partners some time to work out an agreeable solution to the problem but promised to return to the matter at future COMECON summits.[329] At the IX session of the Executive Committee, the Poles faced a united front of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria, who demanded that Poland decrease its rates for transit. After a tumultuous exchange, no compromise was reached, and the matter would be debated at the following session.[330] In December 1964, at the XV summit of the COMECON Executive Committee, the Polish delegation announced that if Poland's transit partners would not agree to the proposed increases in transit rates, Poland would unilaterally introduce new rates, which would from then on be calculated in Western currencies. The importance of Poland as a transit country was demonstrated there. The mere threat caused all COMECON countries to agree to the Polish proposal. The head of the Polish delegation, Piotr Jaroszewicz, proudly

[328] The statistical yearbook did not provide information concerning transit on land through means other than rail. GUS, Rocznik Statystyczny 1965, Wydawnictwo GUS, Warszawa, 1965, p.304.
[329] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/97, Informacja o najważniejszych problemach omawianych na IX posiedzeniu KW RWPG, które odbyło się w Moskwie w danach 15-22.X.1963, p.161.
[330] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/97, Informacja o najważniejszych problemach omawianych na XIV posiedzeniu KW RWPG (Moskwa, 13-16.10.1964), p.268.

reported to Warsaw that because of the tough stance of the delegation, Poland would now increase its transit revenue by 35 million Rbl annually.[331]

Poland's role as a transit hub continued to grow throughout the 1960s. The development of Poland's shipping and transit infrastructure allowed Poland to maintain an upper hand against its Eastern European allies, especially in the case of Czechoslovakia. By the first half of 1967, Poland was responsible for transiting 51.8% of Czechoslovak foreign trade.[332] Poland primarily serviced the economic exchange between the GDR and the USSR but also serviced Soviet trade with the west coast of South America, Central America and the Far East since the Soviet merchant fleet had not established regular services to those destinations.[333] Poland cooperated with Bulgaria and Romania, but not in terms of transit. In the absence of sizeable fleets in both countries, Polish merchant ships called at Varna and Constanta to pick up cargo. Then they would carry the cargoes wherever Poland's southern European allies wanted.[334] In 1966, Austria joined as Poland's transit partner, and by 1969 Austria became PŻM's third largest transit partner.[335] An additional boost to Poland's position came with the conflict in the Middle East. The closure of the Suez Canal in 1967, as a result of the 6-day war, made Poland a transit hub of European, rather than only COMECON, significance. All goods hitherto shipped by sea by France and West Germany to the Middle East and Iran would now go by land, through Poland first and then via the Soviet Union to their final destination.[336] Poland's position in this regard was so strong that in 1968 during the Prague Spring, Poland was instrumental in resolving the situation in Czechoslovakia. Swift military action and Poland's refusal to transit goods to and from Czechoslovakia made the Czechoslovak leadership much more compliant with the Warsaw Pact Five demands.[337]

These developments, albeit within the context of COMECON, showed only Polish resilience and skill in using their geographic position to their advantage, political and economic. These developed independently of any COMECON institutions. COMECON session proved to

[331] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/97, Informacja o najważniejszych problemach omawianych na XV posiedzeniu KW RWPG (Moskwa, 2-3.12,1964), p.276-278.
[332] AAN, Ministerstwo Żeglugi, sygn., 41/3, Trend obrotów czechosłowackiego handlu zagranicznego przez porty poszczególnych państw w ostatnim 8-leciu, n.p.
[333] AAN, Ministerstwo Żeglugi, sygn., 41/3, Analiza realizacji tranzytu w 1967 w zakresie usług portowych i przewozowych, p.11.
[334] Ibid. p.14.
[335] Ibid. 1. The Poles mostly facilitated between Austria and its Scandinavian EFTA partners. AAN, Ministerstwo Żeglugi, sygn., 41/6, Analiza przeładunków i przewozu ładunków tranzytowych za rok 1969, p.6.
[336] AAN, Mnisterstwo Żeglugi, sygn., 41/3, Analiza wyników ekonomicznych przedsiębiorstw C. Hartwig w roku 1967, przy obsłudze tranzytu, p.2-3.
[337] AMSZ, 6/77 W-214 – Szyfrogramy Praga, Szyfrogram nr. 10561, 29.8.68.

be a good opportunity for the Poles to flex their muscles, but not much more. In reality, COMECON was a constant source of frustration to Warsaw. And from the mid-1960s, the Poles continually pushed for organisational reforms.

COMECON, in reality, resembled a discussion club rather than an institution that carried any weight in the Soviet Bloc. Officially, its primary function of COMECON was to facilitate trade between its members and promote its member states' technical development and coordination of economic plans. As Marszałek argued, the role of COMECON as an institution in facilitating trade or coordinating economic plans was minimal. In most cases, coordination, trade and exchange were based on bilateral agreements signed between member states. At least until the early 1960s, plan coordination was conducted *ex-post* and was limited to the "unbalanced margin of import or credit needs" of individual member states. From the early 1960s, the plan coordination was limited to only the most crucial sectors of the economy, and this coordination occurred *ex-ante.*[338]. As early as 1958, the Soviet delegation complained that COMECON recommendations were rarely followed.[339] The Poles believed that COMECON neglected economic specialisation. As a result, member states had to rely on increasing imports from the West, especially since COMECON countries produced only 70-80% of the types of machinery available worldwide. Thus, certain equipment or technology crucial to developing national economies had to be imported from the West.[340] The Poles also saw bilateralism as a major obstacle to further economic cooperation and integration.[341]

The first step towards integration was made in 1962 when the COMECON adopted the principle of "socialist international division of labour". In 1963 COMECON member states signed an agreement that regulated multilateral payments. The agreement also established the International Bank for Economic Co-operation (IBEC) and the transferrable Ruble as the international currency of the Soviet Bloc.[342] Despite the appearance of progress, little was achieved to overcome the cumbersome bilateralism. In 1966, Władysław Gomułka warned Soviet Bloc leaders that Western Europe was rapidly integrating, and that would severely impact Bloc economies. The Polish leader argued that if COMECON could not follow the path

[338] Marszałek, „Panowanie i rynek w RWPG", 1993, p.10-13.
[339] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/90, Informacja o stanowisku strony radzieckiej odnośnie punktów porządku obrad IX Sesji RWPG, 4.
[340] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/91, Aktualne problemy współpracy gospodarczej krajów RWPG, Warszawa, 5.6.62, p.22-3
[341] Ibid. p.38-9.
[342] Dz.U. 1966 nr 44 poz. 259 – Umowa o rozlczeniach wielostronnych, 22 October 1963. Like the convertible zloty, the transferrable ruble was not an actual currency. It merely served as a unit of measuring value in the IBEC spreadsheets.

of the EEC and create a socialist "counterbalance" to the integrated West, the consequences would be "dire".[343] Poland's sensitivity to the issue was not unique. Czechoslovakia and Hungary also favoured this direction. At the time, deepening integration within the EEC meant increasing protectionism. This meant that Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, who had the most extensive contacts with the West, would suffer the most. The push toward COMECON integration was aimed at minimising their vulnerability and dependence on technological imports from the West.[344] In 1967, in response to a Soviet probe, the Polish Ministry of Finance tabled a radical proposal. The Polish Ministry of Finance suggested that the transferrable Ruble should be fully convertible into local currencies and backed by a gold standard. This would allow other COMECON currencies to become convertible in time. At the same time, the Ministry criticised the Soviet proposals for their vagueness but, given the lack of alternatives, believed that the Polish delegation should support them.[345]

The growing difficulties of accessing the Western European market pushed the Poles to formulate a range of bold proposals aimed at strengthening the economic cooperation of the Soviet Bloc. At the same time, however, to bypass EEC protectionist mechanisms, Poland joined the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs in 1967 (see section II). Notwithstanding their increased economic cooperation with the West, the Poles were genuinely interested in facilitating COMECON integration. Firstly, the Polish proposals tackled the issue of bilateralism. Warsaw suggested that all COMECON members sign a multilateral agreement to liberalise trade between countries.[346] Then the Poles reiterated their recommendation of making the transferrable Ruble backed by gold and fully convertible. Moreover, the IBEC should purchase gold and hard currency reserves. If any member state accrued a surplus, it could be cashed in gold or hard currencies. The mechanism, the Poles admitted, was based on the mechanism of the European Payments Union. Moreover, the IBEC should not function merely as a "clearing house" but as a robust financial institution capable of issuing loans to finance investments in COMECON countries.[347] The Polish delegation to the COMECON summit in 1968 warned other members that "failing to provide an alternative" made its members more prone to expand economic cooperation with capitalist countries.[348] Polish proposals, however,

[343] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/97, Wystąpienie Władysława Gomułki na bukareszteńskim spotkaniu, 7.7.66, p. 468
[344] Gerocs, Pinkes „Conflicting interests", 2018, 343.
[345] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/98, Proponowane stanowisko strony polskiej do dokumentu radzieckiego, n.d. 317.
[346] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. 237/V/734, Koordynacja Planów i specjalizacja produkcji – polskie propozycje usprawnienia RWPG, p.6.
[347] Ibid. p.10-2.
[348] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. 237/V/734, Informacja z przebiegu XXXIII posiedzenia KW RWPG, 27.2 i 1.3.1968, p.26.

fell on deaf ears. The COMECON countries have slowly begun to notice the increasing role and impact of the EEC. In May 1968, the Hungarian delegation suggested that COMECON members develop a consistent line towards the EEC. In doing so, the Hungarian delegate criticised Poland for expanding its contacts with the EEC and joining GATT without having consulted the move with its allies.[349] However, yet again, no progress was made towards reforming COMECON as an institution.

In 1969, the Poles attempted to moderate their proposals and, for now, side-lined their recommendations regarding currency and the IBEC. The issue of timely deliveries of contracted goods was prominent within the COMECON. The Poles believed that introducing greater responsibility for timely deliveries and establishing an International Arbitrage Tribunal within the COMECON would be a step towards greater integration. To the surprise of the Polish delegation, the Soviets, Czechoslovaks, East Germans, Bulgarians, Romanians and Hungarians were against it, and effectively the topic fell off the agenda.[350] The Polish Finance Minister, Józef Trandota, when he tried to again push for monetary reform at the COMECON's working group for financial affairs, heard that the "transferrable ruble in its current form, can fulfil all the functions of international currency". Trandota noted that the Soviet delegation most vocally opposed Polish proposals for monetary reforms. He said that, most likely, the Soviets feared "political repercussions caused by a potential devaluation of the Ruble."[351] By 1970, the Polish delegation to COMECON showed frustration and fatigue with the organisation. Jaroszewicz reported from Moscow that the Soviets seemed "undecided". In case of controversies, the Soviets tended to pressure the Polish delegation or any delegation that asked for any reform for concessions. As a result, nothing substantive could ever be achieved.[352]

As an institution, the COMECON failed to play any major role. It served as a background to Poland's and other Soviet Bloc countries' activities. COMECON members accounted for the largest share of Poland's trade. Poland's ambition to be the second most powerful Soviet Bloc state demanded an economy to support that position. But the Polish economy was not as advanced as the economies of Czechoslovakia or the GDR. To gain the upper hand economically and eventually politically, the Poles used their geographic location to their advantage. By the early 1970s, even the CIA specialists admitted that Poland was

[349] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. 237/V/734, Informacja z przebiegu XXXIV posiedzenia KW RWPG, 14-16.5.1968, p.102.
[350] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/100, Informacja o przebiegu XXIII/specjalnej/Sesji Rady, April 1969. p.9-12.
[351] Poles suggested the real convertibility of the Ruble, which meant its exchange rate would have to be subject not to government fiat, but the principles of market economy. Ibid. p.47.
[352] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/100, Informacja z 46 posiedzenia KW RWPG (Moskwa, 7-10.04.1970), p.192.

significant for the "transit economic movement" not along the East-West but also the North-South axis.[353] Poland gained a political lever by controlling a large share of goods moving to and from COMECON countries, which it used successfully in 1964 and 1968. The Polish efforts to reform the COMECON, however, failed. Eventually, the disillusioned Poles decided to favour closer economic ties with the West. But these attempts show the Polish ability to go beyond the communist orthodoxy. The head of the Polish delegation, Piotr Jaroszewicz, was consistently tasked with advancing solutions that mimicked many Western mechanisms. The Poles showed pragmatism. They tried implementing tools they knew would work since they proved successful in the West. But Poland's attempts demonstrated a crucial aspect. The attempts to reform the COMECON failed mostly because the Soviets lacked a vision for the institution. Unable to decide which to follow, they decided against any substantive changes. Such failure meant that the COMECON, unlike the EEC, did not create an overarching structure. Without such a structure, each COMECON member state pursued its own particular national interests, exactly as Stainer and Petrak-Jones argued.

Section II – the West

Historically, the West was Poland's largest trading partner. Even after the war, the non-socialist countries, primarily Western European, were Poland's larger partners for imports and exports. Even in the late 1940s, Poland's total turnover with the Soviet bloc was significantly smaller than with the Western countries. This trend was reversed after the Six-Year Plan was introduced in 1950, and ever since Poland has been more closely bound with the Soviet Bloc.[354] Yet the developed West was still a significant partner for Poland and other Soviet Bloc countries. This chapter has already emphasised that COMECON countries did not produce all the equipment needed to develop national economies and that some more sophisticated technologies had to be imported from the West.

Poland's economic handicap, the chronic negative trade balance, initially discouraged the Poles from pursuing increased economic cooperation with the West. Western goods could only be purchased for convertible currency. Following the turmoil of the Six-Year Plan of 1950-1955, the Poles had no reserves to spare. The Five-Year Plan of 1956-60 was merely a transition phase and was aimed primarily at stabilising the economic situation in the country. Having stabilised the economy and his political position, Gomułka and his associates could implement

[353] CIA-RDP01-00707R000200070028-1 - National Intelligence Survey: Poland: Transportation and Telecommunications, 1973, p.1.
[354] Rocznik Statystyczny, 1987, p.2-3.

the new Polish economic model. Western observers, such as the CIA, recognised that the Polish model stood out among other COMECON countries. Moreover, the Poles visibly resisted Soviet pressure in 1958-9 for the further forceful and rapid growth of the industry as a means to maintain growth. The Poles, the CIA report argued, chose a more moderate expansion that would keep the domestic market in better balance.[355] Given Poland's consistent issues with accumulating hard currency reserves, the Poles initially favoured increased economic exchange with COMECON countries and developing nations.[356] However, objective economic circumstances prevented the Poles from pursuing that path. By 1961, it became apparent that Poland's moderation yielded tangible results. The Polish economy that year performed much better than expected. National income was predicted to rise by 5% but increased by 8%, which allowed the Poles to readjust the plan and set higher targets for growth in the following years.[357] The performance of the Polish economy was markedly better than the performance of other COMECON member states. This was a source of prestige for Gomułka and the Polish leadership.[358] However, as CIA analysts observed, this had real consequences for Polish policy. To maintain the momentum of their economic growth, the Poles needed to increase their commercial external trade. At the same time, other COMECON countries announced "shortfalls in deliveries" of goods crucial to the development of Poland's national economy. As a result, the Poles had no choice but to turn to the West for increased imports of goods and technologies. This trend is confirmed both by the CIA and by British observers.[359]

The increased demand for Western imports came at a time when the integration processes within the EEC became more pronounced. To maximise the commercial exchange between its members, the EEC turned increasingly towards protectionism and limits on imports of foreign goods. The British observed that in an attempt to "adjust" to the effects of EEC integration, the Poles planned to develop a separate sector of their economy devoted exclusively to exports.[360] In 1963, the Ministry of Foreign Trade commissioned a report analysing Poland's foreign trade structure and dynamics. The report concluded that intensifying trade with the

[355] CIA-RDP79R01141A00260007001-4 - Economic Intelligence Report, December 1962, p.29.
[356] CIA-RDP79T01003A001300020001-2 – Increased Polish concern for trade with the developed Western Countries, 9 August 1962, p.1.
[357] CIA-RDP79T01003A001200200001-5 – Current Support Brief. The Performance of Polish Economy in 1961, 13 April 1962, p.1.
[358] CIA-RDP79R01141A00260007001-4 - Economic Intelligence Report, December 1962, p.41.
[359] CIA-RDP79T01003A001300020001-2 – Increased Polish concern for trade with the developed Western Countries, 9 August 1962, p.1; FO 371/166126, Telegram from the British Embassy in Warsaw to the Foreign Office (FO), 6 February 1962.
[360] FO 371/166126, Research memorandum, 8 May 1962, p.1.

developing nations would not supply Poland with enough currency to finance Western purchases. The report found that the only feasible way to balance purchases of Western capital goods and technologies would be to intensify trade with Western nations. Given that Polish machinery could hardly ever compete with Western equipment and that the EEC heavily restricted imports of such, the report advised a temporary measure. Poland could finance its purchases by selling agricultural goods and natural resources (mainly coal) to the West. This would generate a favourable trade balance and allow Poland to accrue a surplus, which could be used to purchase Western technologies and equipment. The report also noted that the most promising source of such revenue would be the United Kingdom, by 1963, Poland's fourth largest commercial partner.[361]

The same year, the Poles held a Conference with the British in Jabłonna. The British delegation observed that the Poles feared the effect the Common Market might have on East/West trade relations. Fearing further limits on UK imports of Polish agricultural goods, the Poles wanted to press the British for assurances that limits would not be imposed if the UK joined the EEC.[362] The Ministry of Foreign Trade report advised that relying on exports of natural resources and agricultural products should be temporary. But by 1965, the CIA analysts observed that the trend solidified. Given further restrictions on imports by the EEC, the Poles became even more reliant on agricultural product exports. CIA reported that this trend "made Polish imports highly vulnerable to fluctuations in Polish agricultural production", which, as the CIA observed, stagnated at the end of 1965.[363] In 1966, the British noted that Poland was reaching out beyond its hitherto Western European trading partners. That year Poland signed a trade agreement with Australia. The Poles secured favourable terms and encouraged Australia to expand its purchases of Polish goods significantly. This would also mean an increased presence of the Polish merchant fleet in the Far East and Asia-Pacific region.[364] Increases in trade with non-European Western nations, which were not bound by EEC restrictions, did not seem enough for Warsaw. Simultaneously, the Poles launched negotiations to join the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) to bypass "discriminatory quantitative restrictions" on Polish goods in the West. The British observed notable differences in the Polish leadership in

[361] By then, commercial exchange with the UK amounted to 5.8% of Poland's trade. AAN, Ministerstwo Handlu Zagranicznego, sygn. 88/552, Rozwój Handlu Zagranicznego Polski, 1946-1963, p.18-27.
[362] FO 371/171847, Economic Cooperation in Europe. Request for briefing prior to attendance at Jabłonna Conference, p.1.
[363] CIA-RDP79T01003A00240013001-0 - Intelligence Brief: Industry booms and agriculture stagnates in Poland, October 1965, p.1-3.
[364] For more, see Section III of this chapter and Chapter on Vietnam. FO 371/188779, Telegram from the British Embassy in Warsaw to the FO, 30 June 1966.

this regard. The MSZ preferred a more active role in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, while the Ministry of Foreign Trade preferred the GATT. The policy promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Trade was deemed more beneficial, and Poland's negotiations to join the GATT went ahead.[365]

In March 1966, Poland's envoy to GATT organisation in Geneva, Laczkowski, outlined the increase in Poland's turnover with GATT countries and that its status would "finally be settled". The British noted that behind the scenes, the Poles pressured all GATT members to accept Poland as a full member state.[366] The Working Party on Relations with Poland was established and reviewed Poland's total turnover with the GATT member states. The figures show a consistent and sizeable increase. The trade turnover between Poland and GATT members rose from $1.675 billion in 1963 to $2.026 billion in 1965.[367] The figures also show that in 1965, Polish exports to GATT countries amounted to $1.039 billion, while imports were $987.2 million. Meaning that Poland was now running a trade surplus with GATT members.[368] This trend deeply concerned the British. In their assessments, UK officials warned that if Poland was granted full membership and, by extension, the Most Favoured Nation status, Poland could "build up a balance of trade with the UK more favourable to herself than it already is". Moreover, sterling accrued by Poland would be spent not in the UK but in the US, with no benefit to the British economy. Finally, "low-priced Polish imports could cause serious disruption" in the British market.[369] Ultimately, the Poles were allowed to join the GATT in 1967, mostly because of American support for their bid. Thus Poland became the first Soviet Bloc country to join the GATT.[370]

During the Five-Year Plan for 1966-70, the Polish economy, which previously outperformed all other COMECON countries, began showing signs of stagnation. In an attempt to balance their purchases in the West, the Poles became over-reliant on heavy industry and agriculture. Little was done to modernise Poland's economy, which, at least in its relations with the West, relied primarily upon raw materials and foodstuffs. Technical progress fell significantly, even in comparison with other COMECON countries. Gomułka's "conservative"

[365] Poland became an associated member of the GATT in 1960. FO 371/189618, Note of the meeting in Geneva on 1 February 1966 between Mr Laczkowski and Sir E. Melville, p.2.
[366] FO 371/189618, Working Party on Relations with Poland, 14 March 1966, p.1.
[367] FO 371/189618, Fourth Review under the Declaration on Relations with Poland – Repeat of the Working Party on Relations with Poland, 24 March 1966, p.1.
[368] Ibid. p.11.
[369] FO 371/189618, Polish accession to the GATT, point 6, np.
[370] Technically, Poland was second. Czechoslovakia, before communist takeover, was one of GATT's funding members. FO 371/189618, Poland and the GATT, 22 December 1966, p.1-2.

policies assured Poland's relatively low foreign debt. But when agricultural production stagnated in the late 1960s, the Poles found it increasingly difficult to fund their trade with the West.[371] This, alongside rising Cold War tensions resulting from the invasion of Czechoslovakia, most likely persuaded Gomułka to push for increased integration within COMECON. Like other Western countries, the British were surprised by Poland's "unexpected emphasis" on the need to deepen economic integration and cooperation within COMECON. The British Ambassador in Warsaw did not hide his confusion when he reported to London that Poland's Foreign Trade Minister, Trąmpczyński, informed him that Poland, from now on, would give preference to trade with those countries "which gave scope for the expansion of exports of finished industrial goods of Polish manufacture".[372]

The Polish eastward orientation, however, lasted only a short time. This chapter has already outlined that by the late 1960s, the Poles had become largely disillusioned with the prospects of COMECON reform and deeper economic integration. Gomułka's regime acknowledged its error in overreliance on heavy industry, mostly extracting raw materials and foodstuffs to finance its trade with the West. The Annual National Economic Plan for 1969 emphasised light industry and technological development. In the plan for 1970, the need for "technological progress" became even more pronounced. The plan was also readjusted to reflect the "actual potential" of the Polish economy.[373] Kaliński concluded that Gomułka's regime chose an easy option. EEC protectionism restricted access to Polish industrial goods. Instead of seeking new markets or modernising the economy, the government allocated most investments to Poland's capacity to extract and export raw materials. Consequently, Polish manufacturing failed to modernise at an adequate pace, and became uncompetitive. Readjustments and reforms announced at the Fifth Party Congress in 1968 were correct. However, they came too late. The failure to reform COMECON pushed Poland and Romania to pursue closer economic relations with the West. Crops failure in 1969/70 further exacerbated Poland's difficulties. Strikes caused by necessary price adjustments in December 1970 led to Gomułka's downfall.[374] The rise of Gierek, however, did not mean a break in Poland's westward orientation.

Another Polish strategy of cooperating with the West was direct contact between Polish state-owned and Western private enterprises. Such cooperation was often much easier and, in

[371] CIA-RDP85T00875R001700030069-2 – Intelligence memorandum: Gomulka's economy in Gierek's hands, April 1972, p.2-4.
[372] Foreign and Commonwealth Office 28/721, Summary of Warsaw despatch on 28 November 1968, p.1.
[373] M.P. 1968 nr 54 poz. 388, 736; M.P. 1969 nr 53 poz. 420, p.933.
[374] Kaliński, *Gospodarka Polski w latach 1944-1989*, 1995, p.127-42.

many cases, unconstrained by political considerations. In all cases, such contacts proved extremely beneficial. Given that Poland's approach towards direct connections between Polish companies and Western showed the evolution of Poland's relations with the West, they deserve to be analysed separately. Cooperation on the enterprise level was much easier to establish since it did not require an arduous process of inter-governmental negotiations or any official trade agreement. The Poles often used such contacts to test if a move to more formal economic relations or cooperation in a given field would be viable and beneficial. Sometimes, lower-level relations could encourage a Western state partner to move towards closer cooperation. In other cases, the Poles made overt political moves to encourage Western governments to allow their enterprises to cooperate with Polish state-owned businesses. These practices also show that Poland's state-owned enterprises had more leeway than is currently acknowledged in Polish and Western historiographies.

The first notable cooperation between a Polish state-owned enterprise and a Western firm occurred in the late 1950s. The growing Polish merchant fleet sought more destinations for its operations. Poland's increasing trade with Scandinavian countries proved to be one of the earliest examples of cooperation at an enterprise level. In 1959, the Polish Steamship Company (Polska Żegluga Morska, hereafter PŻM) and Danish shipbroker Scanship partnered to benefit from the growing commercial exchange between Scandinavia and the Soviet Bloc. Scanship would charter PŻM ships to carry Scandinavian goods in exchange for commissions. PŻM's good performance in carrying cargo resulted in Scanship preferential treatment of the PŻM. This mutually beneficial relationship allowed the Poles to launch a regular liner service between Poland and Scandinavian ports.[375] The cooperation between Scanship and PŻM continued. In 1963, the PŻM assisted Scanship in entering the West African markets. The Scandinavian company would, in return, again give preferential treatment to the PŻM. At the same time, its well-established contacts in the West allowed the PŻM to offer more destinations and capture more West African cargo.[376]

Poland's strong political standing in the developed world often attracted cooperation with unlikely partners. In 1964, Polish company CEKOP signed an agreement with the West German Krupp to cooperate in constructing sugar refineries in Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Egypt, Sudan and Libya. This allowed CEKOP access to West German technologies at no extra cost. At the same time, however, it produced political blowback, and the Poles were accused of

[375] APSz, PŻM, sygn. 681, Organizacja i eskploatacja linii skandynawskiej (Scanship).
[376] For more, see Chapter on Nigeria. APSz, PŻM, sygn. 653, F.O.B contracts from Scanship to PŻM, 18.10.1963

"undermining the socialist economy". The matter was serious enough for the Polish Politburo to consider its ramifications. The Polish leadership decided that Trybuna Ludu should launch a media campaign to the Polish move against "false accusations".[377] Another Western German company that benefited from Poland's political position in a given region was Metzen & Tim. The company got access to the Nigerian market through the service of Polish Ocean Lines (Polskie Linie Oceaniczne, hereafter PLO) and thus managed to bypass the British attempts to block their entrance into the Nigerian market. And at a sensitive time at the end of the civil war in Nigeria (Biafra) when the British were expecting commercial pay-back for having supported Nigeria in the war with Biafra.[378] Both examples are telling since Warsaw viewed Bonn as its chief Cold War opponent, but the Poles saw no obstacles to Polish-West German cooperation at the enterprise level.[379] In 1965 Poland signed a technical cooperation agreement with Italy and purchased licences for the production of the Polish Fiat 125.[380] The Poles, however, preferred direct contact with the Italian tyre manufacturer, which shared some of its technologies in exchange for access to high-quality rubber the Poles were buying cheaply in Ceylon and Ghana.[381]

The real breakthrough came in 1967 when the Polish computer manufacturer ELWRO signed an agreement with London-based International Computers and Tablatures Ltd. (ICT) to supply software for Polish-manufactured computers. Unlike previously, the Poles were not purchasing a licence but a ready product, which they could modify according to their needs. The ICT agreed to waive its copyright for the software. Thus, Poland became the only Soviet Bloc country that produced computers compatible with Western software and operating systems.[382] Cooperation between Polish and British enterprises, not limited to the example above, was quickly translated to more formal collaboration at a higher level. In 1969, the Poles turned to the West again and pushed for closer cooperation under the technical cooperation agreement signed between Poland and the UK in 1968. The events of the Prague Spring delayed its implementation. However, in 1969 the British Board of Trade memorandum pointed out

[377] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. V/79, Protokól posiedzenia Biura Politycznego nr 11, 16 February 1965, p.79-80.
[378] AMSZ, Szyfrogramy- Lagos 1970, szyfrogram z Warszawy do Lagos, no nr, 4 April 1970.
[379] Moreover, despite being the „enemy", West Germany was Poland's fifth-largest trade partner, leaving behind Poland's Eastern Europan allies such as Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. Rocznik Statystyczny Handlu Zarganicznego, 1970, p.IV.
[380] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. V/79, Protokól posiedzenia Biura Politycznego nr 11, 16 February 1965, p.80.
[381] APŁ, Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Gumowego, Wydział Współpracy z Zagranicą, sygn. 517, Współpraca z firmą Pirelli, p.271.
[382] Elwro.info/spis-dokumentow, Document 21, Agreement – umowa tzw. softwarowa z ICT (późniejsze ICL), Warszawa 20 July 1967 r., ze zbioru Eugeniusza Bilskiego. Accessed on 25 February 2023.

"that British firms take the Polish market seriously" and that the UK should develop closer ties with Poland. The memorandum concluded that if "the British fail to act, our main competitors would benefit."[383]

In 1970, the Poles went even further. There was a growing demand for crude oil in Poland. The Poles had, in vein, tried to secure more supplies from the Soviet Union. That prompted the Poles to try to find an alternative solution. In March 1970, the Deputy Minister of Chemical Industry, Edward Zawada, invited the representatives of British Petroleum (BP) to Warsaw. At the meeting, Zawada asked if there was any possibility the BP could provide crude oil to Poland in a package deal, which would involve minimal hard currency expenditures on Warsaw's part. The package deal suggested by Zawada included £25 million assistance to construct a refinery in Poland, a supply of 3 million tonnes of crude oil annually, ordering ships by BP to be built in Polish yards and finally the BP purchase of products of the Polish refinery. The British were shocked by Zawada's frankness. Nevertheless, both the BP officials and the UK embassy in Warsaw believed the offer to be feasible and beneficial for both sides, albeit preceded by prolong negotiations.[384] Despite Poland being the only country openly expressing interest in cooperation with BP, the British saw that the Soviet Union was "unable to meet Eastern Europe's need" for crude oil and that created an "opportunity for Western suppliers". There was a risk of the Soviet Union "regaining its monopoly" for supplying crude oil in Eastern Europe, but the BP were optimistic they could effectively dismantle Soviet monopoly there, if the negotiations with the Poles were to be successfully concluded.[385] There is evidence that the negotiations were still underway until 16 December 1970, but after that date there are no more mentions of any negotiations.[386] Given that just a few days later Gomułka was ousted from power, and replaced by more complacent Gierek, it can be assumed that the negotiations were terminated and the new Polish leadership chose to pursue a safer Soviet option. If concluded, the crude oil contract would have had a momentous effect on Polish-Soviet dynamics and would severely undermine USSR's economic dominance in Poland and Eastern Europe.

Having experimented with small-scale cooperation between Western and Polish enterprises, the Poles concluded that they were unlikely always to secure such favourable agreements as ELWRO reached with the ICT. In most cases, the Poles had to purchase licences

[383] FCO 34/33, Memorandum passed to Dr Ernest Davies, M.P. Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Technology, p.9-12.
[384] FCO, 67/405, BP Interest in Poland, 9 April 1970, no page number.
[385] Ibid. Aide memoire, BP in Eastern Europe, 28 April 1970, no page number.
[386] Ibid. Tel. No 460 from Warsaw to Foreign Office, 16 December 1970.

and pay for them dearly. Poland's economic situation did not favour such expensive purchases. Hopes for COMECON integration had evaporated by then, and the West seemed the only viable option. Unable to purchase technologies needed to modernise the Polish economy quickly, the Poles decided to favour joint venture companies. The Ministry of Foreign Trade established a group of experts tasked with developing a framework for allowing Polish enterprises to set up joint ventures with Western corporations and industries.[387] The Poles were mainly interested in cooperation with West Germany. There was some fear, and the Poles believed such cooperation should only be allowed "between enterprises". However, the Poles thought it would be beneficial to allow for the construction of West German production plants in Poland. Moreover, they believed that the West German companies could easily be persuaded since "labour costs in Poland were much lower than in the West".[388] These concepts, although fulfilled only after the fall of communism in Poland, are quite telling. Firstly, this was an early exercise in globalisation. Secondly, the Poles were willing to direct their attention to the state with which they had no diplomatic relations. However, the Polish leadership believed that West German technologies would be most beneficial to Poland's economy. It demonstrates poignantly that Polish national interest, rather than loyalty to the Soviet Bloc, was the primary concern. Socialist principles seemed to be secondary or disregarded completely in times of crisis. Finally, the discussion almost completely ignored Soviet interests in Poland, especially since such a significant West German economic presence would impact Soviet influence in Poland and other Eastern European states. Thus, Gomułka's outreach to Bonn in 1969 could have been partly motivated by economic reasons. Normalising the relations with Bonn would facilitate the entrance of West German firms to the Polish market. Gomułka's fall in 1970 prevented the implementation of these ideas. This, however, did not mean that with the rise of Gierek, they were completely abandoned. The Ministry of Foreign Trade returned to these concepts in 1972.[389]

Poland's economic relations with the West and policies the Poles pursued largely resulted from the situation within the Bloc. Poland's reach across the Iron Curtain was largely forced by the economic difficulties of its COMECON allies and the relative success of the Five-Year Plan of 1961-65. The EEC, and to some extent British protectionism, meant that the only

[387] AAN, Ministerstwo Handlu Zagranicznego, sygn. 88/164, Decyzja nr 4 MHZ z dnia 6.12.1969
[388] AAN, Ministerstwo Handlu Zagranicznego, sygn. 88/164, Formy organizacyjne możliwe dla realizacji kooperacji między Polską a NRF, p.1-6.
[389] AAN, Ministerstwo Handlu Zagranicznego, sygn. 88/164, Wykaz problemów do rozpatrzenia w sprawie powołania spółek „joint venture", August 1972.

Polish goods that could easily be sold in the West were raw materials and foodstuffs. Against its better judgement, expressed by the Ministry of Foreign Trade in 1963, the Polish leadership chose to rely only on raw materials and foodstuffs to finance its purchases in the West. In doing so, Gomułka, to a large extent, repeated the mistakes of the Six-Year Plan of 1950-55. The needs of society were neglected in favour of statistical economic growth. By choosing the easiest option, the Polish leadership ensured that Poland's economy did not adequately modernise and became uncompetitive. When economic growth slowed, and the agricultural output dropped, Poland struggled to finance its trade with the West. This caused the Poles to make an eastward turn that surprised the West. The turn, however, was very brief. The Polish party leadership, headed by ageing Gomułka, acknowledged the errors made in the mid-1960s. To correct them, they turned toward COMECON and pushed for more cooperation. The attempt was, however, entirely futile. Disillusioned and frustrated with COMECON, the Poles once again turned to the West. The necessary reforms and rapprochement with the West came too late. Gomułka could not avert a domestic crisis and was ousted. However, it is important to note that Gierek, by turning to the West, was only picking up the policy started by Gomułka.

Section III – The Global South

The developing countries were Poland's least important commercial partners in terms of volume and percentage of Poland's overall foreign trade. At the lowest point in 1956, they accounted only for 5.4% of total foreign trade turnover. The commercial exchange peaked in 1965 at 8.7%, then dropped and oscillated in the vicinity of 7% for the remainder of the 1960s.[390] Despite its relative commercial insignificance, the Global South was the theatre where Poland exerted the most influence over the events of the Cold War. It was also the area where the interests of Poland and COMECON, more broadly, clashed with well-established Western colonial and early post-colonial interests. These relations, although relatively modest, often proved very profitable to the Polish economy. Their character was initially purely commercial. In cases of more significant partners, purely economic contacts were often transformed into closer political cooperation. However, the shift from commercial contacts was often gradual and even organic. The Poles never seemed to have imposed or tried to obtain closer political cooperation. Pragmatism and the pursuit of beneficial relations seemed to be primary motivations for the Polish Global South policy.

[390] Rocznik Statystyczny Handlu Zagranicznego, 1970, p.22.

In most cases, except in Latin America, direct contact between developing countries and Poland and other Soviet Bloc countries was made possible by successive waves of decolonisation in the 1950s and 60s. The newly independent states of Asia and Africa would rely on their former colonial overlords to assist in the difficult early years of independence. The former colonial empires still viewed these areas as their sphere of influence and discouraged competition from the Soviet Bloc. As the Cold War in Europe developed into a stalemate, the Global South became the new and important theatre of the Cold War and came under much closer American scrutiny. The West immediately noticed the Soviet Bloc's outreach in the area. The CIA analysts observed that the Soviet Bloc "offensive" in the developing countries was launched in 1954. Still, because of internal instability caused by the struggle for power within the Soviet leadership, it accomplished nothing substantial.[391] As the situation within the Bloc stabilised following the tumultuous events of 1956, the Bloc launched its new "offensive" in 1957. The CIA analysts noted that the USSR might have led on the ideological front, but the "satellites" assumed a more prominent role in terms of commercial relations. And these relations proved beneficial for them.[392] The British also closely observed Eastern European advances in developing countries. The Embassy in Warsaw regularly informed the Foreign Office about Poland's contacts in Asia and Africa. In 1956, the Embassy estimated that the total value of Polish trade with developing countries amounted to $103 million. In 1958, the British noted that Poland began exporting ships to Brazil and Egypt and that the Poles discussed launching a shipping line between Poland and Indonesia.[393]

In 1960, Eastern Europeans also showed increasing interest in Latin America. Following the fall of the Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959, Latin America seemed a natural direction for the Soviet Bloc. However, as the CIA noted, the greatest focus was developing relations with Brazil, not Cuba. Moreover, the spike in trade turnover was mostly caused by agreements Brazil signed with Poland and the GDR, who, by then, "assumed a much more important role in the bloc economic efforts."[394] In 1962, Poland extended a loan of $70 million, which represented "an important innovation" since it was the first time Brazil accepted a loan from the Soviet Bloc country. Brazilians also expressed an interest in purchasing 60-100

[391] CIA-RDP92B01090R000400010006-7 – Sino-Soviet bloc economic activities in underdeveloped areas, p.1 January-30 June 1958, p.2.
[392] CIA-RDP92B0090R000100210007-0 – Sino-Soviet bloc economic activities in underdeveloped areas, 30 June 1957, p.2.
[393] FO 371/135067, Polish relations with underdeveloped countries, 27 December 1957; Polish penetration of underdeveloped countries, January-1 February 1958.
[394] CIA-RDP92B010R000400010011-1 - Sino-Soviet bloc economic activities in underdeveloped areas, 1 July-30 December 1960, p.1-5.

helicopters from Poland in the same year. Brazil struggled with accumulating enough hard currency to buy aviation equipment from the United States and was willing to offer a barter agreement. The Poles would receive a sizeable amount of Brazilian coffee in exchange for aviation equipment.[395] Despite considerable advances made by Poland, and the other Soviet Bloc countries, in Latin America, Africa saw the greatest increase in trade, which rose by 36% in 1962.[396] In 1963, the Poles and Bulgarians were responsible for "the greatest bloc initiatives" of economic assistance provided to Algeria.[397] The following year, the Poles signed a trade deal with Kenya that allowed them to ship coal Kenya imported from North Vietnam.[398] As this section already mentioned, 1965 saw the highest trade turnover between Poland and the developing countries. CIA analysts observed this to be the case for other Eastern European countries. Aid and trade between the USSR and the developing countries declined steeply that year. The Americans observed that Eastern Europeans were responsible for 80% of the total new assistance extended by the Bloc to the developing nations. Soviets significantly scaled down their contribution, while Soviet imports from Africa, Asia and Latin America plummeted.[399]

This occurrence is quite telling and coincided with the implementation of Kosygin reforms in the Soviet Union. As Sutela argued, after the period of overheating and ambitious goals, the reforms implemented in 1965 aimed at "rationalising" the Soviet economy.[400] The Soviets were backing out of their grandiose assistance schemes. In the following years, Poland's turnover with the developing world also declined. This reflected the economic difficulties Poland was facing between 1966 and 1970. Import from the developing nations dropped from 875.9 million convertible zlotys in 1965 to 605.2 million in 1967. In exports, only a slight decrease was noticeable in 1966, from 1967, the values continued to grow. The difference between the sharp turn of the Soviet Union and relatively small changes in Poland's turnover can most likely be explained by the fact that Poland and other Eastern European countries had

[395] AMSZ, 6/77 W-86 T-1316, szyfrogram nr 13680, 8 September 1962. Accessed from: https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/coded-message-no-13680-rio-de-janeiro
[396] CIA-RDP92B01090R000400010017-5 – Aid and trade activities of the Sino-Soviet bloc in underdeveloped areas, of the World, 1 July-31 December, p.12.
[397] CIA-RDP92B01090R000400010016-6 - Sino-Soviet bloc economic activities in underdeveloped areas 1 January-30 June 1963, p.1.
[398] CIA-RDP92B01090R000700020087-4 – Aid and trade activities of the Sino-Soviet bloc in the less developed areas of the Free World, 4 May 1964, p.i.
[399] CIA-RDP92B01090R000400010020-1 - Aid and trade activities of the Sino-Soviet bloc in the less developed areas of the Free World, 1; p.10.
[400] Sutela, Pekka. *Economic Thought and Economic Reform in the Soviet Union*. (Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.71

markedly different approaches to their involvement in the developing world. Unlike the Soviets, Eastern Europeans could never afford large-scale assistance programs. Although, in 1969, for example, out of the $940 million assistance offered by the bloc, Eastern Europe accounted for 48%, and the Soviet Union for 50%. The Eastern Europeans thus extended aid of $451.2 million. But this was distributed, although not equally, between 6 states. The Poles, and other Eastern Europeans, never had the means or the desire to implement large-scale assistance programs. The primary focus, for them, was mutually beneficial economic relations. That is why even changes in trade with developing countries caused by economic difficulties in Poland or elsewhere in Eastern Europe were relatively small. Even the CIA observed that this seemed to have been the primary goal of the Eastern Europeans. In 1968, a CIA report noted that Eastern Europe, at large, ran a favourable trade balance with the developing world. Exports totalled $1.099 billion, while imports were $887 million.[401]

After Gomułka's fall, the new Polish leadership assessed its relations with the developing world. They found them to be beneficial for Poland. A positive trade balance of approximately 100 million convertible zlotys allowed Poland to finance some of its purchases in the West.[402] In their assessment, the Poles concluded that commerce was the main factor determining their relations with the developing countries. In some cases, however, if the government was stable and the market was reasonably large, these commercial relations were transformed into a "deeper" form of cooperation. By the early 1970s, Poland had such partners in every part of the developing world. For Asia, it was India and Malaysia and Iran. In Africa, the Poles developed closer contact with Nigeria in sub-Saharan Africa and Egypt, Algeria, Marocco and Libya in North Africa. In Latin America, the Poles cooperated more closely with Brazil, Peru, Colombia and Chile. The Poles could count on these countries on the UN forum, and in return, Poland supported their initiatives. These relations were purely pragmatic. Their primary purpose was to facilitate Poland's economic development, and ideology was very clearly not a factor in those considerations.[403]

The favourable trade balance with the developing world countries was sizeable but insufficient to balance trade deficits that, at their lowest point in the 1960s, were 239 million

[401] CIA-RDP92B01090R00400010027-4 - Aid and trade activities of the Sino-Soviet bloc in the less developed areas of the Free World, 1 February 1969, p.22.
[402] AMSZ, 47/75 W-5 – Ogólne, Strategia Działania w krajach rozwijających się, 5; Rocznik Statystyczny Handlu Zagranicznego, 1970, p.21-2.
[403] AMSZ, 47/75 W-5 – Ogólne, Strategia Działania w krajach rozwijających się, p.7-11

convertible złotys, and at their highest, 957 million.[404] Failure to balance the overall trade deficit was not the only problem in Polish economic relations with the developing world. The other important question was how to get the goods to and from Poland since most developing countries were half a world away. With Poland's hard currency reserves being perpetually low, attempts to use Western shipping firms to carry all of Poland's trade there were, quite naturally, deemed unfeasible. Moreover, all sea routes were dominated by Western carriers in the so-called conference system. The conferences of shipping companies gave the West a monopoly on almost all seaborne trade worldwide. In particular, the former colonial empires jealously protected their commercial interests in their former colonies. To address this issue, the Poles needed a fleet of their own. The issue of its expansion has been discussed in **Section I** of this chapter. Here, the chapter will discuss how Poland's sizeable fleet was put into use and how it influenced worldwide Cold War dynamics.

Western observers learned very quickly about Poland's growing merchant marine. As early as 1958, CIA analysts reported that in 1957, the Polish merchant fleet tonnage experienced the largest single increase since the end of World War II, with 11 Vessels of 94 435 DWT officially added to Poland's merchant marine.[405] CIA noted that the growing Polish merchant fleet was in a rather advantageous position, controlling approximately 75% of eastbound Soviet Bloc cargoes to the People's Republic of China and 25% of westbound Chinese cargoes to the Soviet Bloc.[406] That direction saw the first major expansion of Poland's shipping services. From 1954, the service was extended to Vietnam and was a supply line for Soviet Bloc economic assistance to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In 1957, the line was split, and one of its branches serviced trips to India, the other providing service to the Far East with extended service to North Korea. From around 1959, the service was extended to trips from Gdynia and Western European ports to Malaysia, Thailand, Japan, North Korea, China, Japan and Australia.[407] The expansion of Polish services in the Far East undermined the monopoly of the Western-dominated shipping conferences. In 1960, the British sent Herbert McDavid, the Managing Director of the British-owned Glen Line from Shanghai, to meet Poland's Shipping Minister Stanisław Darski. McDavid threatened that if the Poles kept undercutting prices, the British might retaliate and impose restrictions on imports of Polish goods. However, McDavid

[404] Rocznik Statystyczny Handlu Zagranicznego, 1987, p.3.
[405] CIA-RDP79R011411A001300010002-3 – Polish Merchant Marine: Its Growth and Operations, December 1958, p.6.
[406] Ibid. 1.
[407] CIA-RDP85T00875R001700040028-6 – Poland's Global network of liner services, December 1973, p.7.

reported that the British were powerless to stop the Poles. Their position by 1960 was so strong that they could "inflict grievous losses" to their opponents "at a relatively low cost to themselves."[408] The position of the Polish and other Bloc fleets in the region was so strong that the CIA was alarmed by reports that the Soviets were "anxious to start a shipping cartel in Asia." However, American intelligence observed that Poland resisted such a move. The Poles were running a profitable shipping operation and were not convinced that monopolising shipping in the region would be commercially viable.[409] The profit was primarily based on shipping goods between Eastern Europe and Vietnam, which allowed the Poles to provide continuous service in the region. The CIA estimated that between 1964 and 1972, PLO shipped 323,000 tonnes of goods to Vietnam.[410] The Poles admitted that the shipments from Eastern Europe provided "the substance" of Poland's service in the Far East. By the mid-1960s, Poland had taken over almost all Eastern European shipments to the DRV. In exchange for Poland's continued assistance, Vietfracht – the leading Vietnamese freight company – chartered freights of all Eastern European goods from only three ports: Gdynia, Gdańsk and Szczecin. In addition to profiting on freight charges, Poland benefited from the transit of goods from all Eastern European countries bound for Vietnam.[411] Such a strong Polish position, coupled with political and economic cooperation with Vietnam, explains why Poland played a considerable role in attempting to broker a peace deal between the DRV and the Americans (see Chapter IV).

The next region where the Polish fleet got involved was Africa. In 1958, the PŻM launched its West African service. Originally, Polish operations focused on Ghana and Guinea, where the PŻM carried Bloc cargo on its route to Africa and African cargo to Western European and Bloc ports. Following establishment of commercial and diplomatic relations between Poland and Nigeria, Lagos became the principal port for Polish maritime operations. In 1961, the PŻM was joined by the East German Deutsche Seerderei (DSR), thus forming the United West Africa Service (UNIAFRICA). Those commercial contacts eventually led to closer Polish-Nigerian cooperation (for more details, see Chapter on Nigeria). UNIAFRICA broke up the West African Lines Conference (WALCON) monopoly in West Africa by 1964. The line consistently carried most non-Polish cargo (60%) and proved profitable for the Poles.[412]

[408] FO 371/151809, Talks between Herbert McDavid and Polish Shipping Minister Darski, 6 January 1960.
[409] CIA-RDP79T01003A001100270003-7 – Bloc merchant shipping cartel in Asia, 1 December 1961, p.iv.
[410] CIA-RDP85T00875R001700040028-6 – Poland's Global network of liner services, December 1973, p.9.
[411] AAN, Ministerstwo Żeglugi, sygn. 40/15, Notatka dla Ministra Żeglugi w sprawie przewozów do Wietnamu, 10 December 1970.
[412] CIA-RDP85T00875R001700040028-6 – Poland's Global network of liner services, December 1973, p.12.

PLO launched services to East Africa in 1962.[413] However, unlike its Far Eastern and West African counterparts, the line was not a commercial success. The mid-1960s and the developments in East Africa, such as the British withdrawal and the revolution in Zanzibar, did not bode well for stability, which was needed for commercial relations to flourish. In March 1964, the British Ambassador in Warsaw proudly reported that Poland's Deputy Foreign Minister Winiewicz agreed that the newly independent states in East Africa "were immature" and would need constant propping up by the British. The Director General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Michałowski, claimed that these states were "slipping into chaos and barbarism" and that Poland preferred relations with Nigeria, which seemed to be the only stable country in the region.[414] In 1964, the Poles just broke the monopoly of British shipping in West Africa, so London sought assurances that this would not be repeated on the East Coast. The political stability of East African regimes did not significantly change, but in 1967, the Six-Day War between Israel and Arab states caused the closure of the Suez Canal. Roundtrips around Africa became a necessity. The same year, PLO was joined by the DSR, and a joint service – BALTAFRICA – was established. Almost immediately, BALTAFRICA moved aggressively and undercut conference freight rates by 25%.[415] This allowed it in 1968 to sign a contract to capture all coffee trade between Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and the United Kingdom between April 1969 and April 1970.[416]

In January 1970, PLO began negotiations to extend the contract and asked the MSZ for assistance since the British-dominated East African shipping conference pressured East African governments to cease cooperating with BALTAFRICA.[417] PLO officials went to Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania to establish PLO's prospects of extending the contract. To their surprise, the British pressure achieved nothing. Governments in all three states were satisfied with BALTAFRICA's presence in the region mostly because Polish competition caused the conference lines to lower their freight rates, which allowed East African goods to maintain competitive prices. Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania were interested in continued Polish presence there. Despite such positive prospects, PLO officials called for compromise with the conference lines.[418] To keep the contract, PLO had to share it with the conference lines. The Poles would

[413] Ibid. p.12
[414] FO 371/177583, Poland's Opinions on Africa. Introductory note, 10 March 1964, p.1.
[415] [415] CIA-RDP85T00875R001700040028-6 – Poland's Global network of liner services, December 1973, p.12.
[416] AAN, Ministerstwo Żeglugi, sygn. 40/10, Notatka dot. Udziału polskiego armatora w przewozach kawy z Afryki Wsch. do Wielkiej Brytanii, p.1.
[417] AAN, Ministerstwo Żeglugi, sygn. 40/10, Notatka dot. kontraktu kawowego, 5 January 1970.
[418] AAN, Ministerstwo Żeglugi, sygn. 40/10, Sprawozdanie z podróży służbowej do Tanzanii, Kenii i Ugandy w dniach 14-27.01.1970, p.1; 22.

save 45%, and the conference lines would divide the remaining 55% among themselves.[419] BALTAFRICA's position seemed substantially weakened, and the British seemed to have prevented the break-up of their shipping monopoly in East Africa. Unfortunately for the British, the local coffee traders were not consulted. When the conference ships called at ports, the merchants refused to load the coffee. In this situation, the conference's Chairman was forced to withdraw the lines from the contract, which was supposed to expire in 1973. Thus, BALTAFRICA, once again, took over all the coffee shipments from East Africa to Great Britain.[420]

Other notable successes of Polish merchant marine included services to South America. In 1957, PLO inaugurated service to the east coast. With the growing South American-Soviet Bloc commercial exchange, the service kept growing. In 1968, PLO was joined by the Soviet Baltic Steamship Company. The joint service became known as BALTAMERICA. The service again undercut the prices to capture more cargo. However, BALTAMERICA, unlike its Western counterparts, did not pressure Brazil or Argentina to refrain from setting a cargo quota for their ships. In 1970, the Argentinians sponsored a conference establishing a cargo quota. 50% of all freight moving between Argentina to Europe and Europe to Argentina needed to be carried by Argentinian ships. Western lines initially boycotted the conference. However, BALTAFRICA joined, thus strengthening the Argentine conference. When Brazil announced a similar move, BALTAFRICA also accepted. The restrictive measures removed lines from countries with little or no cargo moving in the trade between Europe and the east coast of South America. These were mostly Western lines, that hitherto dominated shipping in the region. On the West Coast, PLO acted alone and used tactics that worked well in West Africa. By undercutting conference prices, PLO stimulated commercial exchange between Poland and the west coast of South America. Lower prices allowed PLO to pick up "cross-trade cargo" for its ships. Threats of retaliation by Western conference lines achieved nothing, and Poland was eventually allowed to join the conferences that regulated shipping on the west coast of South America.[421]

A unique arrangement occurred with India. In this case, in 1960, PLO entered into an agreement with the Shipping Corporation of India, Indian Steamship Corporation and India Shipping Company, thus forming a joint Polish-Indian service known as c. Under the terms of the agreement, the profit was divided 50/50 between the Polish and Indian sides of the contract.

[419] AAN, Ministerstwo Żeglugi, sygn. 40/10, Wniosek na wyjazd służbowy za granicę, 6 October 1970.
[420] AAN, Ministerstwo Żeglugi, sygn. 40/10, Notatka dot. stosunków z Konferencją Wschodnio-Afrykańską, 26 November 1970, p.1.
[421] CIA-RDP85T00875R001700040028-6 – Poland's Global network of liner services, December 1973, p.14-15.

INDOPOL also excluded third-party ships from servicing Polish-Indian trade. These provisions eventually allowed INDOPOL to capture the majority of trade between Eastern Europe and India, making it one of the most profitable regular services operated by PLO.[422]

By the early 1970s, the Poles created a global network of regular liner services. This section outlined only the most notable examples. In total, the Polish merchant fleet operated 30 regular service lines reaching all major commercial areas except the west coast of North America (see appendix). The enterprise was enormously profitable. It also proved immune to Poland's internal economic difficulties. In 1969, the shipping industry reported a net profit of 795 million convertible zlotys. In comparison, Poland's total imports from all developing nations were worth 812 million convertible zlotys. This allowed Poland to balance the payments for that year and left the country with a surplus exceeding 500 million convertible zlotys.[423] In their pursuit of profit, the Poles proved capable of outcompeting Western shipping companies. Polish presence in East and West Africa disrupted Western monopolies and kept freight prices down, which allowed the newly independent African states to keep competitive prices on their goods. In many cases, Poland did not achieve this on its own. It often cooperated with the GDR, and in South America, with the Soviet Union. But in each case, Poland spearheaded the initiatives. Only when the service proved commercially viable the GDR and USSR joined the enterprise. This showed that in shipping, Poland, not the Soviet Union, often led the way.

This chapter discussed how Poland operated within three distinct but often overlapping economic contexts. Poland became a major transit hub for its Bloc allies within COMECON. Moreover, it played a significant role in facilitating trade between Austria and Scandinavia. The economic difficulties of other COMECON countries in the early 1960s forced Poland's outreach to the West. In the Global South, the Poles focused on earning enough revenue to balance Poland's chronic trade deficit. All these endeavours had one common denominator – Polish national interest. Even Poland's efforts to reform the COMECON had this overarching goal in mind. The diagnosis of Steiner and Petrak-Jones proved true. In the absence of an overarching framework that allowed for economic integration in the fashion of the EEC, the COMECON countries pursued their own interests. But this chapter has demonstrated that the Poles showed remarkable ingenuity and flexibility in pursuing their national interests.

[422] CIA-RDP85T00875R001700040028-6 – Poland's Global network of liner services, December 1973, p.11.
[423] AAN, Ministerstwo Żeglugi, sygn. 40/14, Uchwała nr 67 Kolegium Ministerstwa Żeglugi w sprawie analizy ekonomicznej działalności resortu żeglug w 1969r. 14 April 1970, p.1; Rocznik Statystyczny Handlu Zagranicznego, 1970, p.22; 3.

To overcome the negative effects of Stalinist industrialisation in the early 1950s, they abandoned the Soviet doctrine of the rapid expansion of heavy industry as they key to industrialisation. In 1961-65, the Poles chose moderation. Indeed, in the second half of the 1960s, the Poles repeated the mistake of overinvesting in heavy industry, particularly the extraction of raw materials. But even then, they did not respond to a Soviet cue. They responded to Western European protectionism, which allowed only Polish raw materials and foodstuffs. Gomułka realised such a move was a mistake, but the reforms came too late. Necessary readjustments caused widespread discontent and led to Gomułka's downfall in 1970.

Economic outreach of Poland into the Third World had a significant impact on global developments. The Poles were the most successful in their relations with developing nations. Poland established beneficial commercial ties with many countries in Asia, Africa and South America. In Africa, they had to muscle their way in and compete with well-established Western interests of former colonial empires, who tried to prevent any relations with the Soviet Bloc countries. In an attempt to carry cargo between the Soviet Bloc and the developing nations, Poland, as the only Soviet Bloc nation, developed a global network of shipping services. However, the trade between Eastern Europe and the developing world needed to be more commercially viable. The Poles also intended their fleet to create a steady supply of convertible currency. This, alongside revenues gained through the transit of Eastern European goods, would allow Poland to balance its payments in foreign trade, and for this Polish merchant fleet needed more cargo. Remarkably, the allegedly communist state-owned enterprises engaged in aggressive free market practices. By undercutting prices, the Poles could capture loads formerly carried by Western shipping companies. These practices and Poland's rapidly expanding fleet and operations eventually precipitated Poland's major Cold War entanglements. The most notable was Vietnam, where Poland's role was transformed from being a mere representative of North Vietnamese interests in the International Commission of Control to an independent actor who protected its interests and, to this end, attempted to broker a peace deal between Washington and Hanoi. In Nigeria, Polish involvement coincided with the outbreak of the civil war in 1967. Poland's assistance in the breakup of the WALCON monopoly on shipping and diplomatic support offered to the government of Nigeria yielded very concrete political and economic benefits.

In their attempt to "balance the books", the Poles went beyond their original plan to play an important role in European affairs. Being constantly short of hard currency, Poland had to reach far beyond Europe. Poland's outreach in the 1960s was truly global. Poland lacked the

resources to make its outreach in a grandiose manner, just as the USSR did. The scarcity of resources made Polish and Eastern Europeans' involvement much more pragmatic. Their involvement focused on economic benefit and achieved more tangible results despite its often modest size. And thus, a relatively small country, such as Poland, with its relatively modest resources, exerted a substantial influence on the dynamics of the Cold War in the Global South. The Poles became mediators, in terms of economic exchange, not only between the East and the West but also between the Global South and the Global North. An influence that has never been acknowledged in contemporary historiography.

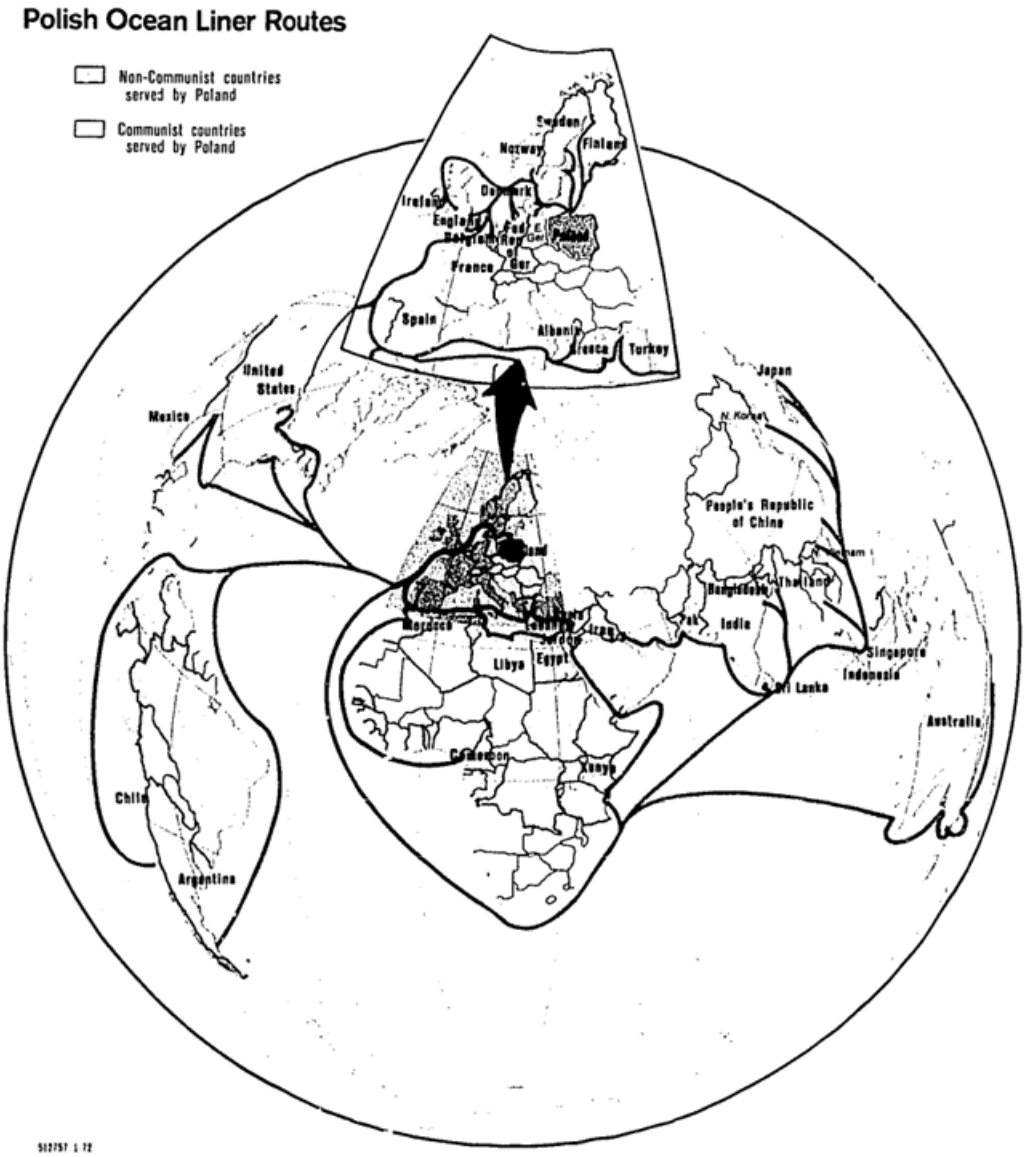
Finally, this chapter demonstrated that the Poles could act independently in economic and trade spheres. Yes, Poland was very firmly placed within the Soviet Bloc. The Soviet Union was Poland's largest economic, military and political partner. The Soviet Bloc and the "fraternal" alliance with the Soviet Union constrained Poland's freedom of choice. The fact is undeniable. But, what historians often fail to mention, all political or even economic alliances restrict a polity's sovereignty. The COMECON and EEC are primary examples. As Steiner and Petrak-Jones demonstrated, COMECON failed to create an overarching structure that could subdue "national egotisms". In contrast, the EEC did, and its members yielded parts of their sovereignty to a transnational organisation, the Common Market. James Libey argued that CoCom initially prevented trade between the Western countries and the Soviet Bloc. And it did so not because such commercial exchange would not have been commercially viable but for purely ideological reasons. That severely restricted Western European sovereignty. And in fact, all international agreements place restrictions on sovereignty. COMECON and the Warsaw Pact probably set more limits on Eastern European sovereignty than Western international and transnational bodies placed on their member states. The difference, however, was in scope, not in principle. The Western nations were less constrained in their actions, as members of the Western economic and military bloc, than the East Europeans were. And yet, within this constrictive Soviet Bloc setting, Poland, through its economic policies, managed to maintain a considerable degree of autonomy, even independence. Even the Americans, who always referred to the Eastern European states as "satellites", admitted that Poland's "independence, although limited, was unique within the Bloc."[424] The Poles negotiated their "limited independence" in 1956. In the 1960s, they skilfully maintained it, establishing a strong economic position within COMECON. Benefitting from their geographic location, they became

[424] CIA-RDP80500003A000100100001-8, Comments on the State Department's Paper "Review of Policy Factor Concerning Licensing Exports to Yugoslavia and Poland", 12 October 1961, p.2-3.

the transit hub for the COMECON. Any disturbances, especially external, could sever crucial economic or military transfers. The Polish leadership improved its position by mediating between the East, West and the non-aligned. This allowed Poland to maintain a significant degree of independence despite its economic difficulties in the late 1960s.

Appendix

Map of Polish liner services in the early 1970s



Chapter III - Poland's foreign policy in the West: disarmament, Oder-Neisse line and European collective security, 1955-1970

Having established the economic underpinnings of Polish policy-making we can now move to analyse how these considerations played out on the international stage and we should start the analysis with Poland's reach to the West in the late 1950s. The Polish proposal to establish a nuclear-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe, known as Rapacki, and later the Gomułka Plan, was officially announced in 1957. The proposal garnered significant attention worldwide at the time it was announced. Yet these proposals attracted almost no academic analysis. Overall, there are just four scholarly attempts at tackling the issue. Analyses offered by Ozinga and Stefancic provide helpful background, but both were published before the end of the Cold War and lacked access to Eastern European archives. As a result, both Ozinga and Stefancic offer only the Western perspective and only a speculative account of Polish motivation.[425] The more recent analysis was provided by Piotr Długołęcki, who convincingly argued that the roots of the Rapacki plan dated back to 1955 and that the initiative was discussed with the Soviet leaders more than a year before the plan was announced.[426] The Canadian attempts to limit nuclear sharing in response to the Polish proposal were outlined by Ryan Musto.[427] A more significant contribution was made by Piotr Wandycz, who summarised the entirety of Poland's denuclearisation and collective security proposals in the late 1950s and 1960s.[428] The scarcity of scholarly analysis of Poland's role in various and very often significant Cold War disarmament initiatives would suggest that the archival evidence for Poland's role is equally scarce, and the role Poland played in those initiatives was relatively insignificant.

This chapter will attempt to fill this gap and argue that Poland's role in those initiatives and crucial debates was substantial. Moreover, it will demonstrate that they had significant economic underpinnings. It has been shown (see Chapter II – Going Global) that Poland functioned within three distinct but often overlapping contexts: the Eastern Bloc, the West and the Global South. The Poles operated differently in each of those contexts or arenas of diplomatic and economic activity. In the case of the Global South, economic relations were paramount. The political framework was then superimposed on economic ties with Poland's

[425] Ozinga, James R. *The Rapacki Plan : the 1957 Proposal to Denuclearize Central Europe, and an Analysis of Its Rejection*. (Jefferson, N.C. ;: McFarland, 1989); Stefancic. (1987). The Rapacki plan - a case study of European diplomacy. *East European Quarterly*, XXI(4), 401–412.
[426] Dlugolecki, Piotr. "An Unknown Context of the Rapacki Plan." *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs* 20, no. 1 (2011): 59–.
[427] Musto, Ryan A. "'A Question of Survival': Canada and the Rapacki Plan for the Denuclearisation of Central Europe, 1957-59." *Cold War History* 21, no. 4 (2021): 509–531.
[428] Wandycz, Piotr. "ADAM RAPACKI AND THE SEARCH FOR EUROPEAN SECURITY." In *The Diplomats, 1939-1979*, 5256:289–318. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).

most significant commercial partners organically (see Chapter V – Polish-Nigerian relations). The Soviet Bloc was the primary setting of Poland's economic and political activity. The trade relations and shipping operations in the Global South served as Poland's source of convertible currency, which could be used to purchase Western technologies and goods unavailable in the Soviet bloc. Contrary to the relations with the newly established countries in the Global South, Poland's relations with the West were formalised in the 1940s. The economic relations and Poland's access to Western goods and technologies largely depended on the intensity of more general Cold War tensions.[429]

This chapter analyses how Poland used its relations with the West for its economic benefit and to improve its standing within the Soviet Bloc. It will demonstrate that Polish diplomatic initiatives coincide quite neatly with the cycles of Polish economic contacts with the West. The developments of 1956-1959 marked the transition phase to Poland's new economic model and the process of asserting Polish independence. Following the increasing tensions following the Polish and Hungarian revolts, the Rapacki plan was predominantly aimed at reducing the resultant Cold War tensions but also at breaking Poland's isolation following the period of 1948-1955. In 1959, Gomułka consolidated his position. The announcement of the Second Five-Year Plan for 1961-65 inaugurated the new Polish model, which initially assumed greater cooperation with the COMECON countries. And thus, in the period of 1959-61, the Poles were not opposed to increasing Cold War tensions. The Rapacki plan was effectively abandoned as the crises of Berlin and Cuba unfolded in the early 1960s. By 1962, however, the good performance of the Polish economy, coupled with significant economic issues of other COMECON countries, forced Warsaw to reach out to the West for goods and technologies to sustain Poland's economic growth. Poland's increasing contacts with the West coincided with new Polish initiatives to ease Cold War tensions between 1963 and 1966, including announcing the Gomułka plan in 1963 and Rapacki's proposal for a pan-European conference on security and economic cooperation in 1964. As Poland's growth slowed during the Second Five-Year Plan of 1966-70, the Poles turned increasingly toward COMECON. No new diplomatic "offensive" was launched by Warsaw in the period of 1967-68, while Poland was again willing to accept the risk of increasing Cold War tensions through its participation in the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. The failure to reform COMECON and the resulting Polish disillusionment with the organisation resulted in a growing economic crisis. In an attempt to revive the country's economy, the Polish leadership

[429] For how this access was limited see Libbey, James "CoCom, Comecon, and the Economic Cold War." 2010

turned again to the West. The initiative of a pan-European conference on security and cooperation was resumed. At the same time, Gomułka signalled his readiness to normalise relations with West Germany, mainly to gain access to West German technologies. Thus the economic considerations forced Poland to engage with global issues. Given that Poland's commercial relations with the West were already outlined in this dissertation, this chapter will focus on political developments that were informed by economic trends.

Before 1956, the MSZ mostly handled issues of post-war repatriation, visits of Soviet officials, or gathered materials to support Poland's new western border.[430] It is important to note that there have been no autonomous initiatives of the MSZ. More importantly, Poles were always asking the Soviet embassy for instructions on how to react to various international developments. The MSZ often asked what actions the USSR would take in various matters since the MSZ made its own decisions based on Soviet responses to international issues[431]. The Soviets would then give instructions, and the Poles acted accordingly. The de-Stalinisation process, however, wholly altered these relations. The factional struggles in Moscow and other Soviet Bloc capitals resulted in chaos. No coherent domestic and foreign policy was formulated or pursued.

The general paralysis resulting from a power struggle at Kremlin was interrupted by FRG's accession to NATO in 1955. In response, the Soviets created the Warsaw Pact. The pact was also intended to serve as an updated control mechanism over Eastern Europe. The German issue also mobilised the Poles. The fear of encroachment and a sense that Poland might fall victim to Soviet-German political bargaining pushed the MSZ to reassess Polish foreign policy. In the power vacuum, the Ministry slowly emerged as a decision-making centre. MSZ officials began to re-evaluate their political role within the state. Ministerial College began meeting to discuss a new way to tackle the German issue. Before proceeding, we must first demonstrate and explain what was the Ministerial College and who constituted it. In the mid-1950s, the MSZ was headed by the Minister and two of his deputies. The Minister was Stanisław Skrzeszewski, and his deputies were Marian Naszkowski and Józef Winiewicz. All three men were members of the PZPR, Naszkowski was also a former KPP member before the war, and Winiewicz served as a diplomatic advisor to the Polish Government in Exile during the war. [432] The General Directors were directly under the

[430] AMSZ, Z-7 W-10 T-79; AMSZ, Z-7 W-15 T-126; AMSZ, Z-18 W-22 T-345
[431] AMSZ, Z-7 W-2 T-13, p. 2-3
[432] A military man, between 1950 and 1952 Chief Political Officer of the Polish Army, served as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1952 and 1968, Katalog IPN poz. 23251

Minister and his deputies: Maria Wierna and Przemysław Ogrodziński.[433] General directors supervised all the departments within the Ministry.

For the first time, Poles showed their initiative. The first two meetings of the College were held on 3 and 4 December 1955. Department IV, responsible for German-speaking countries, was criticised for its inefficiency in these meetings.[434] A new role for Poland "within the coordinated socialist bloc policy" towards Germany was drawn up. [435] This role would be to neutralise, or at least counteract, any hostility toward Poland's western frontier and to normalise diplomatic relations.[436] The concept of normalisation was eventually rejected. The German threat was seen as useful. The regime could use the threat of German "revanchism" as a rallying call for the entire nation.[437] Since Poland did not establish normal diplomatic relations with the FRG, the diplomatic staff had almost no knowledge about what was happening west of the Elbe.

Polish embassies in countries with diplomatic relations with the FRG were ordered to fill the intelligence gap.[438] Another meeting of the Ministerial College took place on 27 February 1956. Deputy Minister Marian Naszkowski noted that at the X UN General Assembly Session, "the Socialist Bloc managed to overcome its isolation," and new opportunities are available for Polish diplomacy within the UN.[439] Manfred Lachs voiced an opinion that the Ministry should overcome "the routine' in its actions." [440] General Director Maria Wierna suggested that the UN could be a training ground for the new Polish diplomatic cadres.[441]

Additionally, it was agreed that Poland should assist in every way possible in "the renaissance of the UN."[442] For the first time, Poles were not thinking about training their cadres via Moscow. They thought independently. The most important stimulus for reforming Polish foreign policy came from the 20th Congress of the CPSU. A special meeting was called in the MSZ to address its implications. The significance of this meeting is highlighted by the fact that not only Heads of Departments were called in, but also all ambassadors from Europe

[433] Ogrodziński headed the Polish Delegation to the International Commission in Vietnam 1954-55, AMSZ, Z-12W-77T-1327, p. 1
[434] AMSZ, Z-26W-54T-453, Sprawozdanie z posiedzenia kolegium MSZ w dn. 3 i 4 grudnia 1955 p. 3
[435] Ibid. p. 3
[436] Ibid. p. 4
[437] AMSZ, Z-26 W-55 T-460, Notatka w sprawie stosunków między Polską a NRF, p. 4
[438] AMSZ, Z-26 W-54 T-453, Sprawozdanie z posiedzenia kolegium MSZ w dn. 3 i 4 grudnia 1955, p. 6
[439] AMSZ, Z-26 W-54 T-453, Protokół nr 4/56, p. 3
[440] Ibid, p. 5
[441] Ibid. p. 7
[442] Ibid. p. 6

and North America. Franciszek Mazur, a Politburo member, gave a speech at the meeting. He explained at great length that in the post-war period, Poland "did not fully use its potential to pursue an active and independent foreign policy."[443] This sparked a lively debate. MSZ officials saw it as an opportunity to establish themselves as coordinators of Poland's "all external efforts."[444] As the debate progressed, Józef Winiewicz remarked, "many people are stopping here, on their way to Moscow. We must take it upon ourselves, so the guests come directly to us. We should not be a waiting room [for Moscow]."[445] In light of Mazur's speech and the following debate, the MSZ staff concluded that an opportunity presented itself for Poland. In concordance with the newly outlined role of the MSZ and its aims, Stanisław Skrzeszewski, an accomplished pedagogue who served as the Minister for Foreign Affairs since 1951, was replaced by Adam Rapacki, an economist, on 27 April 1956. This charade on the ministerial post can be seen practically since Rapacki, an economist, would have a deeper understanding of how Poland could use diplomacy for economic gains.

By 16 August 1956, an outline of a new Polish initiative was roughly ready and was submitted to Politburo for approval.[446] The Polish memorandum was intended as an invitation to a diplomatic discussion.[447] The initial draft proposed an overall reduction of armaments, military budgets and, most importantly – a reduction of foreign military contingents.[448] Such measures were to be undertaken by "Germany and neighbouring countries, namely France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, Czechoslovakia and Poland."[449] Additionally, in the proposed zone, there should be no "stockpiles of nuclear, or other mass destruction weapons or equipment to carry such weapons." Signatories would allow both ground and aircraft inspections. These would be carried out by a commission selected from delegations of signatories and three neutral states such as Switzerland, Austria and Yugoslavia.[450] The main goal of the "diplomatic action" was also outlined to the Politburo. The plan was to be announced when "the public opinion is not distracted by the Suez Canal issue."[451] Additionally, it was agreed that USSR should be consulted beforehand. The initiative was to be announced by issuing memoranda to the states involved in the plan, with

[443] AMSZ Z-26 W-54 T-458, p. 3
[444] Ibid. p. 19
[445] Ibid. p. 29
[446] AMSZ, Z-26 W-54 T-453, Protokół nr 12/56, p. 1; AAN, KC PZPR, V/45
[447] Ibid. p. 9-10
[448] Ibid. p. 2
[449] Ibid. p. 1
[450] Ibid. p. 3
[451] Ibid. p. 9

Switzerland mediating between Poland and FRG and the four major powers. The plan was not to be put up at the XI UN General Assembly session up to a vote since there was a risk of it being rejected without any possibility of further discussion. The crisis of 1956, for the time being, prevented any Polish diplomatic initiatives from being launched.

Since October 1956, Polish-Soviet relations have been marked by deep mistrust and the Soviet tendency to isolate Poland within the bloc, by shying away from joint diplomatic actions, or by suspending the Soviet military technological transfers.[452] Parallel to that, the brutal crushing of the Hungarian revolt saw Cold War tensions increase. In response, the re-militarisation of the FRG was announced. The economic consolidation of Western Europe in the European Economic Community was launched with the Treaty of Rome signed in 1957. Including the FRG in the Western European integration was a cause for concern in Warsaw. The Polish leadership believed the West German conservative Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, successfully neutralised the restrictions placed on Germany at the Potsdam Conference. Warsaw feared that Bonn could now focus on addressing its grievances in relation to the East and Poland in particular.[453] The Poles feared encroachment and hostility from both the East and the West. The Ministerial College meeting held on 29 May 1957 tried to grapple with growing pressure. Manfred Lachs, the Director of Diplomatic Protocol, suggested a pan-European cultural exchange treaty.[454] Following the debate at that meeting, Naszkowski, Deputy Minster, concluded that a "broader Polish initiative" on the international arena was not feasible, and the College was against Lachs' motion.[455] The MSZ opted instead for a more limited measure that would have been more realistic. Thus, it turned its attention again to its 1956 disarmament proposal.

The Ministerial College agreed to proceed with the disarmament proposal, and shortly after it was met, bilateral Polish-Soviet negotiations started. The Czechoslovak Charge d'affaires tried to probe about the initiative and asked for Polish "disarmament project materials." Winiewicz believed that the information about secret negotiations must have been leaked to the Czechs.[456] This indicates that such negotiations were conducted only between Polandthe and USSR, and their results were to be communicated to other socialist states after they were concluded. This ndicates, that Poland was elevated above its other Eastern

[452] CIA-RDP81-01043R001900120003-1, Gomułka and Polish Communism, 28 Ferbuary 1958, p. 94
[453] AMSZ, Z-26 W-55 T-460, Notatka w sprawie stosunków między Polską a NRF, p. 2
[454] AMSZ, Z-26 W-55 T-460, Protokół nr 9/57, p, 1
[455] Ibid. p. 2
[456] AMSZ, Z-23 W-14 T-163, p, 8

European allies. Despite the fact that the Polish plan concerned the territories of Poland, Czechoslovakia and the GDR, these countries were not consulted at the initial stage. The Polish initiative allowed Moscow and Warsaw to find some common ground. The initial suspicion with which the Poles were treated in Moscow quickly gave way to cooperation. In such vein, the negotiations continued, and Naszkowski was in Moscow on 26 August, trying to get official Soviet support for the plan. After the initial discussion, Poles presented their assessment of developments in the FRG. Then, Naszkowski discussed a memorandum subject to consultations in September 1956 regarding disarmament in Central Europe. In doing so, he pointed out that "elements of it could be found in Soviet proposals at the London session of the Disarmament Commission" without any mention of Polish involvement. [457] But then he informed the Soviets that the previous concept outlined in the draft memorandum was no longer valid. Poland was considering simplifying the plan and reducing its scope to the production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons only.

Naszkowski argued that such a move might weaken Adenauer's position and supply "the supporters of coexistence [in the West] with an additional argument" in favour of the plan. Naszkowski's counterpart, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimir Semyonov, promptly expressed concern that such a move might undermine the perception of unity within the Soviet Bloc.[458] The Poles mitigated that concern by promising to officially announce that the plan had been discussed with all concerned parties within the Soviet Bloc. Such a move, the Polish report emphasised, seemed to have dispelled Semyonov's doubts, and he promised to bring the Polish initiative to Khrushchev's attention.[459]

The apparent isolation within the Bloc seemed to have been broken. The Poles and the Soviets could cooperate on diplomatic initiatives. In this case, on a more equal footing, more as partners. Poland was, of course, a junior partner of the USSR, but it was allowed to pursue a more independent course of action. Moscow did not greenlight the initiative in August 1957, but the Soviets seemed receptive.[460] The Polish predictions indeed came true, and the Soviets allowed the initiative to proceed. On 2 October 1957, at the 697th plenary meeting of the 12th Session of the UN General Assembly, Adam Rapacki took the podium to make his speech. The Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs claimed to be motivated by "the spirit of constructive

[457] AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/75, p. 250
[458] Ibid. p. 251
[459] Ibid. p. 252
[460] Ibid. p. 260-261

cooperation."[461] Regarding disarmament, he said, "the interests of Polish people converged with interests of other members of the UN." He emphasised that the rearmament of FRG was a threat to European and world peace and that the Polish border on Oder-Neisse could not be subject to any political bargaining.[462] Rapacki proposed that if the FRG would forbid the production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons on its territory, Poland would do the same.[463] It is essential to note that Poles pursued the same strategy as their previous thinking. Rapacki did not put this up to a vote – he made a rather vague declaration. It is also quite apparent that Rapacki spoke of only Poland and German states. At the next plenary meeting (approximately 2 hours after Rapacki's speech), Vaclav David, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia, took the podium and gave a supportive speech. David officially announced Czechoslovak support for the Polish initiative.[464] This way, a concept that came to be remembered as the Rapacki Plan, entered the international arena.

The Rapacki Plan gained much attention in the West. All went exactly according to plan. Since the initiative was only informally introduced, most talks were informal. Moreover, overall, the MSZ observed a keen interest in various Western governments.[465] The Poles would also closely monitor the NATO council session scheduled for December 1957 as it would bring forth a decision regarding equipping the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons.[466] No decision materialised at that point but Poles, through Israelis, found out that England viewed Polish proposals very positively.[467] Danish Charge d'Affaires also assured the Poles that the Rapacki Plan had been warmly received in Denmark and Scandinavia as a whole.[468] Rapacki's speech had repercussions even in India, and Prime Minister Nehru relayed his support for the plan.[469] The governments of Canada and Belgium could also give "moderately positive" responses[470]. In Italy, the "Rapacki plan was in the centre of attention" of the press with wild speculations about Khrushchev's resistance to the plan, while the Government remained neutral.[471] Negative responses were observed in the Netherlands and, of course, the

[461] Rapacki's speech, 00:58
[462] Ibid, 04:34-04:37
[463] Ibid 05:20-05:27
[464] A-PV698, p. 248
[465] AMSZ, Z-9 W-47 T-622, p. 15
[466] AMSZ, Z-8 W-71 T-981, p. 14
[467] AMSZ, Z-23 W-14 T-161, p. 11
[468] Ibid. p. 42
[469] Ibid. p. 70
[470] AMSZ, Z-8 W-71 T-981, p. 26
[471] AMSZ, Z-8 W-71 T-983, p. 32

FRG.[472] The US proved more perplexing for Poles. While the press received the plan positively, the Eisenhower administration refrained from expressing opinions. The only semi-official American statement was presented at a dinner organised by Albert Hart—the I Secretary of the Canadian Embassy in Belgrade, on 10 January 1958. The dinner was attended by Weiss – the Secretary of the American Embassy, Gelbart – the Secretary of the Polish Embassy and Misra – the Military Attache of the Indian embassy.[473] The American attitude on the issue is quite clear – the spheres of influence had been clearly defined, and the Americans made it clear that the US aimed, if not to expand, at least to keep their current hold in Western Europe. Overall, it is justified to say that the Rapacki plan caused quite a stir worldwide. The responses encouraged the Poles to formalise their plans.

At this point, it is vital to observe that the plan was announced at a time of increased tensions resulting from the invasion of Hungary. Such heightened tensions between the two blocs were not conducive to any heightened economic relations. In the transition period of 1956-59, the Poles needed more Western goods to improve their economic standing. The "disengagement" initiative aimed at the relaxation of Cold War tensions, at least in part, was motivated by Poland's economic interests. Reducing the tensions meant greater access to Western goods and technologies. Moreover, the Rapacki Plan allowed Warsaw to overcome its political isolation. Within the Bloc, the initiative proved to be an opportunity to cooperate with Poland's allies, such as the USSR, the GDR and Czechoslovakia, who viewed the post-1956 developments with suspicion. The Rapacki Plan could also be viewed as advancing strategic Bloc interests by pushing for the removal of nuclear weapons from West Germany, thus limiting the risk of conflict between the Blocs in Eastern Europe. The Plan also concerned other countries, so their consent was required. By inviting Prague and Pankow to provide input, Warsaw made the first step to improving relations with Czechoslovakia and the GDR, which cooled immediately after October 1956. The initiative also captured Western attention and provided an opportunity to translate increased diplomatic contacts with the West into much closer economic cooperation. In late January 1958, the MSZ was negotiating further Soviet support to transform a hitherto informal proposal into a tangible diplomatic initiative. In late January 1958, the MSZ delegation flew to Moscow to discuss further moves with the Soviets. On 28 January, Rapacki, Naszkowski, Lachs and Tadeusz Gede met with Andrey Gromyko, Nikolay Patolichev and other members of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign

[472] AMSZ, Z-8 W-71 T-984, p. 14
[473] AMSZ, Z-9 W-47 T-627, p. 8-10

Affairs[474]. Both delegations exchanged their views on Western responses so far, primarily focusing on the role of the Labour party in its position, as well as the general response of the British Government.[475] The following day negotiations moved towards more concrete measures to be taken to further the Polish agenda. Gromyko praised the plan as a reasonable and feasible platform for action and asked Poles about the role they anticipated for the GDR.[476] Indeed, the issue of GDR was a rather complicated matter. The GDR did not enjoy diplomatic recognition outside of the Soviet Bloc, and the issue of any formal recognition would have been most certainly used as an excuse to reject the plan point-blank. The Poles, in this case, showed ingenuity and proposed that each member of the proposed denuclearised zone would issue a unilateral declaration of accession. These declarations would be deposed jointly, while the four leading powers would issue either unilateral or joint declarations guaranteeing the withdrawal of their nuclear arsenal and servicing personnel from the zone.[477]

Polish proposals were then passed on to the Central Committee of the CPSU, which deliberated on the matter on 30 January. Negotiations were resumed the following day. Gromyko informed the Poles that the Soviet leadership approved the course of action outlined by the Polish delegation.[478] However, after this encouraging declaration, the first cracks began to show in the appearance of unity. The parties disagreed on the measures of inspection of airports. The Poles genuinely believed the Rapacki Plan should be implemented to its full extent, while the Soviets saw an excellent propaganda piece they could use to their advantage.[479] They thought the Polish plan to be just an element of a broader "peace offensive" of the Soviet bloc. Unbeknownst to the Poles, the Soviets instructed Bulgarians to draw up a similar plan concerning a nuclear-free zone in the Balkans. The intrigue fell apart on 30 January when the CC of CPSU deliberated on the Rapacki plan. The same day, the Bulgarian ambassador in Poland, Boyev, demanded an urgent meeting with Winiewicz, who stayed in Poland to coordinate the MSZ in Rapacki's absence. The Bulgarian Ambassador announced that his government intended to propose an agreement between Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Greece and Italy which would be to the same effect as the Rapacki Plan. [480] Boyev demanded a response about Poland's support for the plan either on the same day, or

[474] *Ministerstvo Inostranih Del* – hereafter MID. Tadeusz Gede was Poland's Ambassador in Moscow. Gromyko was the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Patolichev was his deputy
[475] Other members of the delegation that day were Carapkin and Turpitko – their functions were not listed
[476] AMSZ, Z-26 W-47 T-410, Notatka z rozmów w Moskwie w dniach od 28.I-1.II.58r. p. 1
[477] Ibid. p. 3
[478] Ibid. p. 5
[479] Ibid. p. 5
[480] AMSZ, Z-23 W-14 T-163, p. 49

early morning the following day (31 January 1958). From that, Winiewicz concluded that the Bulgarians were getting ready to announce their plan on 31 January or 1 February 1958 and immediately alarmed Rapacki in Moscow. Rapacki himself believed that the Bulgarians should immediately receive Poland's negative response. [481]

On 31 January, roughly at the same time that Winiewicz relayed the Polish response to Boyev, Rapacki confronted Gromyko about the Bulgarian initiative.[482] He scolded the Soviet Foreign Minister for failing to inform him about the Bulgarian initiative and warned that lack of coordination between the Bloc countries would lead to both proposals being dismissed as a propaganda campaign. The Polish Foreign Minister demanded that the Bulgarian proposal be suspended for the time being. Any additional proposals by other Bloc countries should only be considered after the Western diplomats had a chance to respond to Warsaw's proposals. Rapacki informed Gromyko that the Polish memorandum would include suggestions regarding the inspection of airports, and any Soviet guarantees regarding Inspections should be discussed after the Poles receive Western responses.[483] The Soviets yielded to Rapacki's demands, and only the Polish initiative would be officially announced. As Poles were leaving Moscow, Wierna communicated the result of Polish-Soviet negotiations to the Albanian ambassador, who "received it with understanding."[484] These developments allow observing that a new hierarchy was emerging within the Soviet Bloc. In this new hierarchy, Warsaw was emerging as Moscow's most senior partner and had a significant influence on the overall Bloc policy.

Benefitting from their newly established position as the Soviet Union's most senior partner, the Poles took it upon themselves to pass on the results of Moscow negotiations to the other states included in the plan: Czechoslovakia and GDR. While the East Germans, expressed their full support and even mentioned the fact that they believed "that the plan of the entire socialist bloc," the Czechs were more difficult.[485] Throughout the consultations, they continuously aired their grievances about playing only a passive in the Polish initiative.[486] Wierna noted that this could be caused by the fact the Czechs were not informed about the ongoing Polish-Soviet negotiations. Although "such grievances could not be

[481] Ibid. p. 49
[482] Ibid. p. 50
[483] AMSZ, Z-26 W-47 T-410, Notatka z rozmów w Moskwie w dniach od 28.I-1.II.58r. p. 6-8
[484] AMSZ, Z-23W-14 T-163, p. 49
[485] AMSZ, Z-10 W-42 T-380, p. 114
[486] AMSZ, Z-23W-14T-163, p. 78

addressed" Wierna suggested that Prague could be compensated by being updated more frequently about the results of the negotiations [487].

The diplomatic action regarding the Polish initiative started roughly two weeks after the MSZ delegation returned from Moscow. On 12 February 1958, Wierna passed an unofficial version of the memorandum to the Soviet ambassador, the following day Naszkowski passed the memorandum unofficially to GDR's ambassador. At the same time, Wierna handed it to the Czechoslovak ambassador, giving the interested parties some time to voice any concerns. Official delivery of the Polish memorandum concerning the nuclear-free zone in Central Europe took place on 14 February. At 10 am, Wierna officially handed the memorandum to the Albanian, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Hungarian and Yugoslav ambassadors. Moreover, it was simultaneously being handed to representatives of China, North Vietnam and North Korea. At noon, Rapacki officially passed the memorandum to ambassadors of the USSR, Czechoslovakia and GDR. At 1:30 pm, he invited the ambassadors of the US, UK, France, Canada, Belgium and Denmark and handed them the document. The following day memorandum was distributed among the Dutch, Finnish, Italian, Swiss and Greek Ambassadors. Representatives of India, Japan and Austria also received copies for their information. At the same time, the Polish Ambassador in Sweden handed in two copies, one for Swedes and one for FRG, which was to be delivered to Bonn via the Swedish ambassador since Poland and FRG had not yet established diplomatic relations. Two days later, copies of the memorandum were passed to Hammarskjöld and the Mexican Charge d'Affaires, and on 18 February the Polish press published the official version of the memorandum.[488]

The only thing Poles could do from then on was to wait and closely monitor the situation. In March 1958, there occurred an unforeseen complication – FRG's parliament passed a resolution that enabled the Government to equip the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons supplied by the US. Upon Polish suggestion, three countries included in the Rapacki plan held a conference in Prague on 10-12 April 1958. The Poles almost immediately issued a demarché demanding an explanation from the US, France and Great Britain, but wanted to make a joint declaration with Germans and Czechs to strengthen the message. To Naszkowski's dismay, both Germans and Czechs were able to whip up old Stalinist phrases of "resurrected German imperialism" and socialist resistance "led by the Soviet Union" [ze

[487] Ibid. p. 78
[488] AMSZ, Z-8 W-71 T-981, p. 34-36

Związkiem Radzieckim na czele].[489] Poles yet again took the initiative. They rejected Stalinist phraseology and drafted a joint declaration that was adopted "after a heated debate", but overall, Naszkowski believed the conference to be a success.

The Declaration unequivocally condemned German nuclear aspirations.[490] Similar to how things unfolded when the Soviets inspired an official declaration of socialist states, the joint Declaration was primarily ignored by the West. Instead, the Western diplomats focused on delivering the response to Warsaw, since it was Poland that was behind the Declaration. The responses to Polish demarché revealed the overall sense of uneasiness if not an embarrassment on account of FRG's aggressive move.[491] The Americans assured Poles that the Bundeswehr would not be in any way involved in the handling of nuclear weapons; these would remain under American control.[492] Such a move certainly did not ease international tension. To make matters even worse, the Americans begun flying their bombers over the Arctic region, dangerously close to the Soviet air space. On 18 April 1958 Soviets requested Poles to issue an official condemnation of such practice. The MSZ took it as yet another chance to assert Polish independence. After carefully analysing the matter the MSZ "saw no need for the government (…) to issue an official statement, since the issue has already been raised at the UN Security Council."[493] And the Polish Government issued no statement. Overall, the international situation was unfavourable for the Plan or any disarmament talks. To somehow mitigate an increasingly unfavourable situation, the Soviets began pushing for an international disarmament summit to partially resolve mounting tensions.[494] In a strained international atmosphere, it was no surprise that all addressees rejected the Polish proposal in the West by May 1958.[495]

The Poles anticipated the rejection of their memorandum two months earlier. On 10 March, the Ministerial College and all ambassadors from countries that received the Polish memorandum met to discuss recent developments. Poland's Ambassador in Paris, Gajewski, noted that the French unequivocally rejected the plan, although they treated it as the basis for a counterproposal. [496] The US initially did not make much of the plan, but under pressure from

[489] AMSZ, Z-23 W-14 T-161, p. 18
[490] Ibid. p. 19
[491] Ibid. p. 21
[492] Ibid. p. 15
[493] AMSZ, Z-23 W-14 T-16, p. 33
[494] AMSZ, Z-23 W-1 T-3, p. 98
[495] AMSZ, Z-9 W-47 T-626, p.1
[496] AMSZ, Z-26 W-47 T-412, Protokół z narady kierownictwa MSZ z kierownikami placówek zagranicznych w dn. 10-11. III. 1958, p.2

Western Europe began to take it more seriously, before ultimately rejecting it.[497] Despite serious reservations, the UK government expressed the opinion that Poland could play an increased role in the international arena.[498] Scandinavian countries were receptive but would fall in line with the key NATO players.[499] Interestingly enough ambassador to the GDR, Piotrowski, argued that GDR's support "might be dangerous" since its "incompetence" made the task incomparably harder while also "putting the SPD", which was the only party in FRG expressing support for the plan "in a very awkward position." The MSZ officials concluded that it was hard to observe any tangible result yet, but Poland could now position itself as a bridge between the East and the West.[500] Winiewicz noted that the MSZ would have to deal with a multitude of "often contradicting objections" and the task of addressing those would be difficult, but not impossible. Such arguments included an accusation that the plan did not effectively deal with German reunification. Additionally, it disrupted the balance of power in favour of the Soviets, did not include introducing it in stages, or was irrelevant since long-range missiles were now commonly used.[501] Naszkowski anticipated the rejection of the Polish plan but outlined that the main success of the plan was not any official diplomatic recognition but the fact that Poles had been recognised as sole authors of the plan and now held significant sway over international public opinion. Moreover, Poland was able to break away from the isolation it had found itself in since the war.[502]

The MSZ carefully analysed Western objections and decided to address them. On 14 November 1958 Rapacki, coming back from consultations in Oslo, announced the new version of the plan. It was to be divided into two stages; first, a freeze of nuclear weapons in the zone and then the negotiations regarding arms and troops reduction.[503] It was quite an apparent concession to the West, but notably, this time Poland did not issue an official memorandum. An official document could be rejected, while a press statement could not. Such a tactic would allow Poles to further engage in discussion with Western diplomats.[504] A lively debate and an even greater interest pushed Poles to hand in an aide-mémoire to interested parties, but this was only a semi-official measure, so Western diplomats could at

[497] Ibid. p. 4
[498] Ibid. p. 6
[499] Ibid. p. 8
[500] Ibid. p. 16
[501] Ibid. p. 19
[502] AMSZ, Z-26 W-47 T-412, Podsumowanie Ministra Naszkowskiego, p.1
[503] AMSZ, Z-9 W-59 T-701, p.4
[504] Ibid. p. 2

least have a basis for issuing a response. [505] The new version of the plan turned out to be equally unacceptable for the West as the first, but at this stage, even Poles were not solely aiming for its adoption. From that point onward, we can see that Poles couple the plan with another crucial issue – the Oder-Neisse line.[506] The West, particularly the US, knew that the uncertainty surrounding the post-war Polish border bound Poland "politically and militarily to USSR."[507] The first one to see through the Polish game was President de Gaulle. On 26 March 1959, he issued a declaration claiming that France recognised the new Polish borders as unchangeable, which was the first Declaration of such kind in the West.[508] By November 1959 the British ceased to use such formulas as "the Soviet zone of Germany" or "territories administered by Poland", but still made the formalisation of the status quo dependent on an official treaty.[509] The Americans were last to join the party in 1961. They began to consider revising their position seriously but refrained from making any official statements.[510] It is interesting to observe that Polish persistence, but also flexibility, yielded some tangible results. Poles did not stick to the original version of the plan and its initially envisaged outcomes – the reduction or removal of the Soviet military presence in Poland. They excellently adapted to changing circumstances by using the plan to negotiate support for their other vital objectives. Although changes in phraseology in British diplomacy were relatively minute, they signified the possibility of further improvement. Gradually growing contacts and support for Poland in the West removed the urgency of Poland's need to rid itself of Soviet troops. Another tangible result of the Rapacki plan that manifested itself from 1959 onward was increased prestige. Poles were able to establish themselves as important players on the international arena, at least in terms of disarmament talks. Poles were asked for their input on the Soviet-proposed treaty with Germany that Gromyko put forward. The Polish delegation was admitted to the proposed conference in Geneva, despite initial American objections[511]. At the same time, even the prospects of the West adopting the plan begun increasing. By late 1959 Rapacki reported to the Politburo that the Americans expressed the opinion that his plan "could be adopted, but under a different name. Maybe as 'Eisenhower plan' or 'Khrushchev plan.'"[512] Within the Soviet Bloc, Poles were charged with coordinating all measures aimed to

[505] Ibid. p. 69
[506] AMSZ, Z-8 W-75 T-1038, p. 20
[507] CIA-RDP80-01445R000100070001-0, p. 109
[508] AMSZ, Z-26 W-47 T-412, Stosunek krajów zachodnich do uznania granicy na Odrze I Nysie, p. 14
[509] AMSZ, Z-10 W-78 T-722, p. 281
[510] AMSZ, Z-26 W-47 T-412, Stosunek krajów, p. 1
[511] C-R(58)32, p. 5; AMSZ, Z-7 W-2 T-15, p. 26
[512] AMSZ. Z-8 W-75 T-1038, p.13

prevent the re-arming of Germany. Rapacki reported that Soviets were not even interested in any discussions and Gromyko said that "you [Rapacki] should do that."[513]

Despite promising prospects, the Rapacki Plan was ultimately rejected by all major Western powers. All Western diplomats went to great lengths to justify why the plan was unacceptable. The main issues mentioned concern inspection and armament control. Additionally, Western diplomats aimed to present the plan as pointless due to long-range missiles and aircraft being commonplace in armies of both blocs. Additionally, the West stressed that the plan would swing the scales in favour of the USSR and its superior conventional arsenal. Finally, the West accused the plan of "having no features looking towards German reunification."[514] To this day, scholars have only engaged with the officially stated motives. Still, as it will be demonstrated, the reasons for rejecting Rapacki's proposal were quite different from what had been stated officially. Politicians have widely discussed the Rapacki plan since its announcement in 1957. It came under NATO scrutiny in January 1958, while the US was officially still avoiding any engagement with the plan. The US delegation to NATO on 24 January 1958 expressed the opinion that the implementation of the plan would undermine the nuclear strategy of NATO countries.[515] The US officials saw the potential benefits of weakening the Soviet grip on Poland but judged it as insufficiently important to incur any risks. [516] NATO military discussed the Rapacki Plan again in July 1958. specialists agreed that the area of Poland, Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary would be a perfect testing ground for disarmament concepts. Still, such measures would eventually force NATO to revise its nuclear response strategy in the event of conflict in Europe.[517] The NATO specialists were also acutely aware of the sensitive nature of the Oder-Neisse line, yet were quite surprised that Poles reacted "violently" to any attempts that would undermine Poland's territorial integrity.[518] Nevertheless, they keenly observed Poland's growing "deviation" from the Soviet model and praised Poland's "shrewd" policy of expanding relations with the West, but drew no practical conclusions from this fact whatsoever. [519] On one occasion, NATO officials even, hard to discern if intentionally, misread the Polish intentions. They subsequently claimed that the plan would entail an explicit agreement between the two

[513] AMSZ, Z-23 W-14 T-161, p. 157
[514] CM(58)14, p. 1
[515] Ibid. p. 2
[516] Ibid. p. 3
[517] SGM-439-58, p 10-11
[518] AC/119-WP(59)117, p. 1-7
[519] Ibid, p. 3

German states, even though Poles came up with a method of unilateral declarations which would make such an agreement unnecessary. [520] The NATO council meeting on 5 May 1958 was dominated by German foreign Minister von Brentano, who voiced his concerns against the plan and pushed for the NATO members to put forward the issue of German reunification at the Geneva talks which would take place in 1959. Overall, the Council had decided that "the Rapacki plan and all other plans for military disengagement constituted a danger" and that the conventional forces should be expanded, not limited.[521]. The revised Rapacki plan of November 1958 received equally negative opinion, although NATO officials expressly noted that the plan was a wholly Polish initiative.[522] The NATO council meeting of 16 December 1958 saw an increased animosity towards the Polish initiative since, as Belgian Foreign Minister had put it gave a "terrible advantage to the Soviets."[523]

Oddly enough, such statements were not based on any analysis. Since the Rapacki plan had been announced, NATO military specialists failed to produce any military analysis of its implementation.[524] Such a report was produced and tabled in NATO on 14 January 1959. It concluded that the immediate threat of the Soviets launching a conventional attack would be greatly reduced. However, the threat of long-range nuclear weapons would not have been reduced. NATO military advisers found the notion of a withdrawal of any forces from West Germany unacceptable and detrimental to Western interests. [525] NATO and its political leader, the US, had no other plan than the use of nuclear weapons and was unlikely to develop one soon. In this light, proposals such as the Rapacki plan would only serve to straighten the American resolve to stick to concepts drawn up earlier. Second, already mentioned in this chapter and apparent in the NATO conclusions, was the fact the Americans were extremely hostile towards any proposals aimed at reducing their foothold in Western Europe.

The Rapacki Plan would not be implemented. At first glance, one might think the Poles were left empty-handed. And this would be far from the truth. The initiative allowed Warsaw to expand its diplomatic contacts with the West. Poland was re-emerging from the period of isolation it experienced since the early 1950s. The initiative signalled a qualitative change in Poland's foreign policy and indicated to the West that Warsaw was emerging as an

[520] RDC/58/21, p. 1
[521] C-R(58)32, p. 14-15
[522] RDC(58)405, p. 1; RDC(58)21-ADD, p. 2
[523] C-VR(58)61, p. 17
[524] LOSTAN2702, p. 2
[525] SG257, p. 3-4

independent actor on the Cold War stage. And that brought some tangible economic and political benefits. Just as the second version of the Rapacki Plan was being introduced, a Polish delegation lodged Poland's formal application to join the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs, at the organisation's Secretariat in Geneva.[526] The United States opposed the full membership but believed that Poland should be allowed to become an associated status and that the American National Security Policy stipulated treating Poland "differently", meaning more leniently, than other Soviet Bloc states.[527] At the same time the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Control (CoCom), that regulated Western export licences to Soviet Bloc countries, relaxed its policy only towards Poland and Yugoslavia. Benefitting from that, the West Germans applied, and were granted, a licence to export fish finding and shipyard equipment to Poland in March 1959.[528] Throughout 1959, various countries such as the UK, France and the Netherlands obtained CoCom's approval to issue export licences to Poland for hitherto restricted goods, such as electronics, copper wires, or marine radars.[529] Relaxation of export policies at the time applied only to Poland and Yugoslavia. The United States sold goods that contributed to the development of Polish chemical and coal mining industry.[530] The final triumph was Poland's successful bid for a seat at the UN Security Council, where Poles secured not only the Soviet but broad international support.[531] Moreover, the United States in late 1960 restored the Most Favoured Nation status to Poland, which had been rescinded in the early 1950s.[532] Poland's situation as compared to the one before 1956 was completely different. Poland was no longer isolated and reduced to the role of a Soviet proxy. Poles engaged in meaningful negotiations with the West. At the same time, they rose to the position of a partner in the Bloc – one who jointly shaped the Bloc's policies on the international arena. Polish accomplishments, from today's perspective, might seem minuscule, but given the circumstances, they were enormous progress on the way improving the country's standing

[526] CIA-RDP80T00246A048900140001-4 – Poland's efforts to join GATT, 3 June 1959
[527] FRUS, 1958-1960, Volume X, Part 2, Document 81, Memorandum of Conversation, 26 August 1959
[528] CIA-RDP62-006647A000100190031-8 – Memorandum by the German delegation on the export to Poland of 4 Fish Finding equipment – 23 March 1959
[529] CIA-RDP62-00647A000200040080-9 - Coordinating Committee record of discussion on a United Kingdom proposal to export electronic equipment to Poland, 1 October 1959; CIA-RDP61S00527A000100180081-9 – Netherland's request for CoCom exception to ship copper wire to Poland, 12 May 1959; CIA-RDP62-00647A000100170046-4 – Coordinating Committee record of discussion on a French proposed export of electronic tubes to Poland, 7 September 1959
[530] CIA-RDP80S0003A000100100002-7 – Background information for Yugoslav and Polish export policy review – 12 October 1962, p. 1-2
[531] AMSZ, Z-7 W-2 T-15, p. 89, 113
[532] FRUS, 1961-1963, Volume XVI, Document 62, Telegram from the Embassy in Poland to the Department of State, 6 July 1962

within the Bloc. Moreover, Poland used the diplomatic discussions on the Rapacki plan to begin negotiations, as the only Soviet bloc country, for accession to GATT. Poland became an associate member by 1959.[533] The only tangible result of the Rapacki plan was economic. Although the economic objectives of the Polish "nuclear initiative" were never expressly stated, we can observe that the Rapacki plan ultimately delivered only economic benefits. By becoming associated with GATT, which comprised mostly of Western countries, the Poles gained easier access to Western goods and technologies. As this chapter will demonstrate later, in fact all Polish diplomatic initiatives aimed at Western countries failed to deliver their stated objectives. In all cases however, Warsaw secured Western concessions regarding access to technologies and relaxation of trade restrictions that stymied Poland's trade with the West.

The Rapacki Plan was rejected in the atmosphere where mounting international tensions made any disarmament plan impossible. The resolution of the Bundestag allowing the Bundeswehr to be equipped with nuclear weapons in 1958 did not cause concern only in Warsaw, Prague and Pankow. It also caused panic in Moscow, which caused Khrushchev to issue his ultimatum over Germany.[534] Even the possibility of the Bundeswehr being equipped with nuclear warheads threatened the post-1945 status quo, which Soviets concerned vital to their security.[535] The reaction from the Kremlin was aimed at formalising the status quo through a process of negotiations. And although Khrushchev's actions did seem aggressive, they stemmed from purely defensive concerns.[536] The main aim of Khrushchev's actions was to secure the post-1945 Soviet acquisitions with a treaty. Khrushchev presented the draft peace treaty for the Allies and both German states in January 1959.[537] The mounting tensions over Berlin, coincided with the completion of Poland's First Five-Year Plan of 1956-1960. By the III Party Congress in 1959, Gomułka had secured his position. The transition period was over and the Poles would now begin the implementation of the new Polish economic model. The Second Five-Year Plan of 1960-1965 initially put greater emphasis on economic cooperation with the COMECON. Having obtained major Western economic concessions in

[533] AMSZ, Z-10 W-76 T-696, p. 1
[534] Zubok, Vladislav M. *Failed Empire : The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009)., p. 132. Check if there is more on this in Fursenko/Naftali's Khrushchev's Cold War
[535] Zubok, Vladislav and Constantine Pleshakov. Inside the Kremlin's Cold War from Stalin to Krushchev (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 195
[536] Harrison, Hope M. Driving the Soviets up the Wall Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 114
[537] Newman, Kitty. *Macmillan, Khrushchev and the Berlin Crisis, 1958-1960* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 33

1959, the Poles were ready to put more emphasis on their relations with their Warsaw Pact allies, and thus, were willing to risk escalating Cold War tensions.

The issue of Berlin proved to be a significant obstacle for Khrushchev. West Berlin was an enclave in which Western powers stationed their troops. Additionally, for the West, the maintenance of West Berlin was a matter of prestige. Thus, any deal involving Western withdrawal from West Berlin was bound to be rejected.[538] For the Soviets and the GDR West Berlin was a constant source of trouble. West Berlin was used as an operational centre for Western spies, served as a propaganda tool and, most importantly, as a gateway connecting the GDR and the FRG. Through that gateway, many thousands fled the GDR, which destabilised Ulbricht's regime. Thus, the issue of Berlin became a central focus of Soviet foreign policy. In his preoccupation with Berlin, Khrushchev seemed to have lost the bigger picture to the extent that caused him to miscalculate the GDR's ability to withstand economic retaliation from the West. The negotiations over a treaty, held at Geneva in 1959, failed to produce any results. In an attempt to bolster Ulbricht's position, Khrushchev threatened to sign a separate treaty with the GDR.[539] Such a move would allow Soviets to transfer all rights over access to West Berlin, in a bold attempt to force the West to recognise the GDR as a sovereign state.

There most prevalent narrative over the Berlin Crisis focused thus far on the American-Soviet relations.[540] There are historians, like Newman, who emphasised the role of British diplomacy. Others, like Harrison, argue that East Germans did influence Khrushchev's actions over Berlin. Selvage, factored in Polish influence throughout events in 1961. [541] The evidence from Polish archives and American sources seem to indicate that East Germany and Poland played an even more significant role and from an even earlier point than Harrison or Selvage were arguing. Moreover, Ulbricht's motivations were much more complicated. In the case of Berlin, both Poland and GDR had converging interests. Pankow wanted international recognition, while Poland wanted the recognition of the Oder-Neisse line. In the event of GDR being recognised as a sovereign state, the question of Poland's western frontier would

[538] Ibid.
[539] Harrison, *Driving the Soviets up the Wall,* 2003, p.117
[540] Lunák, Peter. "Khrushchev and the Berlin Crisis: Soviet Brinkmanship Seen from Inside," *Cold War History* 3, no. 2 (January 2003): 53–82, https://doi.org/10.1080/713999988.
[541] Selvage, Douglas. "Khrushchev's November 1958 Berlin Ultimatum: New Evidence from the Polish Archives," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 11 (1998): 200–203.

also be resolved. Thus, the Polish leadership was more than happy to support Ulbricht in the dispute over Berlin.

Polish motives in the Berlin Crisis were similar to Soviet ones, but they originated from a different perspective on the GDR and the status quo. The authorities in Warsaw were much more sensitive to the German issue than Khrushchev. From 1956 onward, the Polish embassy was noting a dangerous trend. The main concern for Poles was the fact that the GDR was becoming increasingly dependent on supplies from the West.[542] When in 1958-1959 Ulbricht decided to stop the flow of refugees via West Berlin by achieving "equal living standards" with the FRG, reports from the Polish ambassador in East Berlin, Roman Piotrowski, begun to sound the alarm. According to the ambassador's message, Ulbricht's drive to increase the living standard made the GDR even more economically dependent on the FRG for supplies of consumer goods and raw materials. Piotrowski stressed that in the event of any economic disruptions, the East German economy might collapse.[543]

In light of these developments, Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Poland and the GDR held official "consultations" between 4 and 6 August 1960. Both Rapacki and Lothar Bolz agreed that Khrushchev's crisis handling was unsatisfactory. A nexus of Western alliances surrounded the Warsaw Pact, and soon the West could increase its strategic and geopolitical advantage. Both Ministers agreed that Poland and GDR would have to pay the price – both economically and in terms of Soviet military presence – in case any significant setback occurred for the Warsaw Pact.[544] Bolz suggested that a more decisive action should be taken and that a "stand-off" between Warsaw Pact and NATO would produce the desired outcome. Rapacki agreed and offered Poland's diplomatic assistance. He pointed out that the chances for a favourable solution might be increased, especially in light of the upcoming presidential election. Nevertheless, Rapacki warned Bolz that regardless of "who wins the election, we will have to deal with young and unpredictable people, so there might be extremities in American policy." [545] Overall, Rapacki agreed to support GDR's diplomatic initiatives and pass on all necessary diplomatic communication on Pankow's behest.

Rapacki, and Polish leadership, believed that a "stand-off" between Khrushchev and the West that Ulbricht aimed to precipitate could bring a tangible solution. Rapacki was

[542] AMSZ Z10 W-41 T-371, p. 40
[543] AMSZ Z10 W-41 T-372, p. 27
[544] NATO, CENTO and SEATO; AMSZ Z-10 W-78 T-723, p. 26
[545] Ibid, p. 28

acutely aware of GDR's economic vulnerability but decided to wait and see how events unfolded. Additionally, the Polish analysis of the Berlin Crisis provides some new details on Ulbricht's motives. The destabilising factor of West Berlin is well known, but what is new is the fact that the GDR was not only trying to control and outflux of GDR citizens but an influx of poor West Germans seeking education. The GDR authorities notified the MSZ that in 1959 a total 63 070 West Germans, including 18 500 people aged 18-25, migrated to the GDR. Most of those were students who could not either afford to start or continue their education in the FRG.[546] They were granted residency in the GRD and could pursue education, but East Germans feared that the FRG might exploit this influx for intelligence purposes. Moreover, young West Germans would often promptly escape via West Berlin upon their graduation. The GDR was thus losing people who benefited from state-sponsored education. These young people were a drain on GDR's resources and could be used as Western spies – since, as Germans, they would perfectly blend in. Thus, Ulbricht's resolve to deal with the issue seems even more rational than ideological.

The MSZ viewed the clash over Berlin as a real chance of solidifying the status quo or even enshrining it in international law. In this, they not only offered diplomatic support but even suspended any diplomatic initiative to promote the Rapacki Plan. Soon after the Polish-East German consultations, Rapacki told the Hungarian Foreign Minister, Erik Molnar, that Poland was not promoting the plan intentionally and that the MSZ was comfortable with how things were unfolding over Berlin. Although Rapacki was willing to wait, he played a more complex game. He admitted that the MSZ is "emphasising the crisis over Germany would not have been as severe if the West adopted the Polish plan."[547] Thus, if the confrontation over Berlin produced favourable results for the GDR and Poland, Ulbricht would owe some of his success to Polish diplomatic assistance. If the crisis failed to produce anything decisive or were a failure for Soviet diplomacy, the Polish Government would still be in a position to present itself as the most reasonable and peaceful in the Soviet Bloc.

By September 1960, the danger that Piotrowski warned about in 1958 and 1959 finally materialised. On 30 September 1960, the Federal Government broke off the trade agreement with the GDR. All Western German supplies to the GDR were halted. This came in as a shock to Ulbricht, who did not anticipate such a turn of events. GDR's economy was on the brink of collapse. Shortages almost immediately occurred throughout the country. As a result, as the

[546] AMSZ, Z-17 W-45 T-245, p. 35
[547] AMSZ, Z-17 W-28 T-7, p. 14

MSZ estimated, almost 200 000 East Germans fled the country via West Berlin.[548] But this turn of events was a surprise not only in Pankow but also in Bonn. Since there were no diplomatic relations between the two German states, West German access to Berlin was regulated by trade agreements. In retaliation, Ulbricht refused all Western German transit to West Berlin, which in turn produced shortages and caused an increased outflux of West Berliners to the FRG proper. The crisis was short-lived, and an interim agreement was reached. In January 1961 a new trade agreement was signed.[549] The crisis, however, demonstrated to Ulbricht that the GDR could exert significant pressure on the FRG with access to West Berlin.

Moreover, Ulbricht launched a policy to minimise GDR's dependence on supplies from the West. The Polish authorities welcomed this development. But in the MSZ estimation, GDR's slow natural growth and ageing population ensured that the GDR would never be able to reach production levels comparable with those of the FRG. East Germany would inevitably face a collapse of its pension scheme, and its bold attempt to become independent of West German supplies would be a prolonged and costly process. The MSZ believed that the GDR would continue to burden Soviet Bloc economies. Thus, an aggressive action over Berlin might produce adverse economic consequences not only for the GDR but for Poland. In Piotrowski's estimation, any Polish involvement in the Berlin Crisis would be a costly venture, while success was somewhat uncertain.[550]

The MSZ still kept monitoring the situation in the GDR. The ambassador observed that Ulbricht adopted an increasingly "pro-Moscow" stance in an attempt to secure Soviet economic assistance. The ambassador noted that such a "servile" attitude was an attempt to appease Khrushchev and to win his support in the coming clash over Berlin. And indeed, at the Warsaw Pact summit on 3 August 1961 Khrushchev revealed his intentions to sign a separate treaty with the GDR and asked other Warsaw Pact countries for economic assistance. Gomulka promptly refused to carry any economic burden for the GDR, such as additional coal supplies or waving transit charges for goods shipped from the USSR to the GDR.[551] As Zubok and Pleshakov convincingly argue, Khrushchev overestimated the GDR's ability to

[548] AMSZ, 3-65 – NRD, p. 7
[549] Ibid, p. 6
[550] Ibid, p. 68
[551] Salvege, "Khrushchev's November 1958", 1998, p. 219

withstand any Western economic retaliation, mainly because he was focused too much on Berlin.[552] Due to a vociferous Polish veto, a separate treaty ceased to be a viable option.

Nevertheless, Khrushchev, Ulbricht and Gomulka wanted to stabilise the GDR. While Khrushchev wavered, Gomulka and Ulbricht pushed for the option of population control and proposed sealing West Berlin off.[553] Khrushchev consented and on 13 August 1961 the East German authorities begun erecting the Berlin Wall. By the end of 1961, both Gomulka and Rapacki lost confidence in Soviet ability to secure the status quo in Europe. The primary evidence for such thinking is the fact that on 28 March 1962 Rapacki, at the Eighteen Nation Committee for Disarmament, tabled another memorandum considering the Polish project for a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe. The Polish Government intentionally suspended a campaign promoting the Rapacki Plan in anticipation of tangible results stemming from the Berlin Crisis. A resumption of a campaign promoting the Polish plan was a clear indication that Poles did not believe that Soviets could deliver on Berlin. As Rapacki was losing confidence in Soviet ability to secure Polish territorial integrity in the long run, he began to seek alternative solutions. Unwittingly, such an alternative was presented to him by the Americans in March 1962. During the conversation between Rapacki and Rusk, the Minister quite frankly admitted that Poland would not agree for reunification, as envisaged by the Americans. He gave two reasons: firstly, he knew that the communists would lose; secondly, he feared an increasingly powerful and aggressive Germany. But when Rusk emphasised "the importance of integrating West Germany as a safeguard, Rapacki nodded agreement."[554]

By 1962 the issue of Berlin was still not formally resolved. Increasing international tensions that also began arising around Cuba meant that such a bold proposal as a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe would never be implemented. Thus, in 1962-63 the MSZ began working on a more modest proposal, which would be more acceptable to the West.

As tensions between the USSR and the US escalated, Rapacki became increasingly alarmed over Khrushchev's nuclear brinkmanship and its consequences for Polish security. Polish leadership knew that there was no chance of a conventional military conflict over Berlin. The Polish Military Mission in West Berlin was sending regular reports. Those reports informed the MSZ that the West drive to "strengthen the West Berlin" garrison was pure

[552] Zubok & Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War,* 1996. Confirmed later by Fursenko, Aleksander A. and Timothy J Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary* (New York: Norton, 2006), p. 154
[553] AAN, XIA/102, p. 362
[554] FRUS, 1961-63, vol. XVI, Document 54, p. 258

posturing and propaganda. By the end of 1961, the West Berlin garrison totalled 12 500 men. The reinforcements consisted of 1/8 of a battlegroup sent by the Americans, several military transporters sent by the British and 1000 additional men that the French "considered" deploying. Moreover, as the Mission stressed, these forces could not resist and were trained only to "contain potential riots."[555] Additionally, the Mission emphasised that West Berlin became the Western version of the GDR. By being sealed off from the GDR, West Berlin lost access to almost 50 000 workers for its factories. Such a significant labour force shortage forced the FRG to import workers from Italy and Spain at a much higher cost. West Berlin's ageing population placed an additional burden on FRG's economy. Tykociński, the Chief of the Polish Military Mission in West Berlin, estimated that the cost of maintaining prosperity in West Berlin cost 2 billion DM a year. Tykociński also argued that the West de facto recognised the status quo, which in time would help stabilise the GDR.[556]

Such developments were only partially satisfactory for Poland since the Oder-Neisse line was still not formally recognised. Even if Rapacki had some satisfaction over events in Berlin, it was relatively short-lived. At a meeting in Geneva on 27 March, 1962 Dean Rusk informed Rapacki that the US was prepared to "go to nuclear war" over Berlin. Rapacki was shocked and asked the interpreter to clarify Rusk's statement, but the Secretary reaffirmed his position.[557] After the Geneva talks of 1962, it became clear to Rapacki and the Polish leadership that Poland was not secure, and that Poles must try to alleviate the tensions. In 1962 a new Polish policy was not yet formalised. Evidence for this can be found in the proceedings of the ENDC, which began its sessions in March 1962. The Polish representative, deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Marian Naszkowski, did not table any new Polish proposals. But, he used almost every session of the ENDC to internationalise the issue of the Oder-Neisse line. He constantly warned other delegations of the danger posed by "German revanchists."[558]

With the escalation of a new conflict over Cuba, Poles felt increasingly threatened. The Ministry of Defence ordered military drills nationwide between 1962 and 1963. The goal for these drills was to achieve almost instantaneous full defence capability of the Polish army. The time frame for dislocation into combat positions was set to 45 minutes. Some military

[555] Battlegrouop is between 1000-1500 men, so the US would strengthen the garrison with 125-190 men. AMSZ, Z-26 W-21 T-155, p. 8-9
[556] Ibid. p. 13, 19, 28
[557] FRUS, 1961-63, vol. XVI, document 54, p. 257
[558] ENCD-PV-38-ENG, p. 37

units complained that it was impossible to achieve combat readiness in such a short time. Still, the Defence Minister, Marian Spychalski, only reissued his order and stressed that the time frame specified was not negotiable.[559] Additionally, Rapacki flew to New York in October 1962 to meet with Dean Rusk. At his meeting with the Secretary of State, Rapacki tried to persuade the Americans to negotiate and also offered himself as a mediator, but to no avail.[560] The Polish Foreign Minister even threatened to cease the payment of indemnities, if the Americans pursued a bellicose stance over Cuba. Rapacki's move was bold, and he knew that halting the payments of indemnities might threaten Polish-American trade relations, thus making Poland more dependent on the USSR. The Polish leadership must have considered this worth the risk, given the gravity of the situation. Thankfully, the Americans appreciated Rapacki's determination. Believing that Poland might be able to some extent contain Soviet brinkmanship, the Americans decided to maintain their trade with Poland.[561]

By 1963 the tensions between the US and the USSR were less severe. However, the Polish leadership believed that a nuclear war was still a possible scenario. In April 1963, the Polish Army conducted a military exercise codenamed "Mazowsze". This exercise was aimed to assess Poland's readiness to withstand a Western nuclear attack. In its report to the Government and the Politburo, the Ministry of Defence outlined the scenario. Over three days the army anticipated a total number of 150 nuclear strikes on Poland, with their total power of 19.51 Megatons. Western missiles would strike targets along Oder-Neisse, Vistula and Polish-Soviet border. The army anticipated 1.3 million dead and 3 million wounded. Polish economic capacity would be reduced by 50%, while 80% of the Polish territory would suffer from nuclear fallout.[562] The conclusions drawn from the "Mazowsze" exercise gave the Polish leadership increased motivation to renew their effort for a denuclearised zone in Central Europe. The signing of the Limited Test Ban Treaty on 5 August 1963 offered the MSZ additional encouragement.[563] Rapacki noted that the treaty signalled the end of international

[559] AWO, 2099-10-8, p. 7
[560] FRUS, 1961-63, vol. XVI, document 57, p. 303-304; the indemnities were Polish compensation payments for all American property nationalised in Poland post-1945.
[561] FRUS, 1961-63, vol. XVI, document 77, p. 335
[562] AAN, Doswiadczenia i wnioski z ćwiczenia „Mazowsze", p. 13-19
[563] The Test Ban Treaty was signed in Moscow on August 5, 1963. The Treaty prohibited nuclear weapons tests "or any other nuclear explosion" in the atmosphere, in outer space, and under water. While not banning tests underground, the treaty prohibited such explosions if they caused "radioactive debris to be present outside the territorial limits of the State under whose jurisdiction or control" the explosions were conducted. In accepting limitations on testing, the nuclear powers accepted as a common goal "an end to the contamination of man's environment by radioactive substances." Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, July 26, 1963;

tensions and created more favourable conditions for a new Polish initiative.[564] Additional motivation was provided by the economic conditions. The Polish economy in the early 1960s outperformed the initial assumption of the Second Five-Year Plan. Meanwhile, Poland's COMECON allies experienced economic difficulties. To maintain the economic momentum, Warsaw had to once again turn to the West. The tensions escalated to the point where the Americans threatened to rescind Poland's MFN status in 1962.[565] The Poles would again use their foreign policy activism to get better access to Western goods and credits.

On 23 December 1963, Wladyslaw Gomulka outlined the new Polish plan for a nuclear freeze in Central Europe.[566] Contrary to the Rapacki plan, the new Gomulka plan did not attract much media coverage. But many European governments expressed interest. The diplomatic stir caused by Gomulka's speech encouraged the MSZ to push the initiative further. By January 1964, the new plan was cleared with the USSR, GDR and Czechoslovakia. Western ambassadors showed "keen interest" and requested more information[567]. On 29 February 1964, Poland issued an official memorandum outlining the Gomulka plan to Western governments. Polish diplomats could yet again discuss and promote Poland's peace initiative. Almost simultaneously, the US began promoting the concept of Multilateral Nuclear Forces (hereafter MLF) within NATO. The MLF would allow the Americans to equip other NATO members, like Italy or the FRG, with American nuclear missiles. Although the MLF caused little concern in Moscow, it did raise the alarm in Warsaw.[568] In October 1964 the Polish ambassador in Washington handed the Americans a demarché. The Poles demanded an explanation as to why the American administration wanted to share nuclear missiles with the FRG and weather the Americans believed "such a move would advance the cause of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation."[569] Simultaneously, Polish diplomats attempted to assess Western European reactions to the American proposal.

In October 1964, the MSZ established that France, Belgium, Britain and Netherlands were against granting the FRG access to nuclear weapons. American assurances that the West

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Treaties and Other International Agreements Series #5433; General Records of the U.S. Government; Record Group 11; National Archives.

[564] AMSZ, Z-17W-30T-31, p. 2

[565] FRUS, 1961-1963, Volume XVI, Document 62, Telegram from the Embassy in Poland to the Department of State, 6 July 1962

[566] Ibid, p. 6

[567] Ibid, p. 67; 72

[568] Crump*The Warsaw Pact*, p. 113

[569] AMSZ, Z-17W-30T-33, p. 14

Germans would not directly control the use of missiles failed to dispel concerns.[570] Polish diplomacy identified a growing resentment of American hegemony over Western Europe. Belgian Foreign Minister, Paul-Henri Spaak, presented the most telling manifestation of an emergent "European identity" in his conversation with the Polish ambassador. The Minister claimed that Europe should not be divided into spheres of influence and should be a power "equal to the United Sates and the USSR". The Belgian believed that the Franco-German alliance would be a backbone of the newly emerging political and economic bloc. Spaak hoped that this "alliance" would be able to break through the Cold War divide and eventually "influence" Eastern European countries. [571] This message was marked as top secret and urgent and delivered directly to Rapacki, who saw that as an opportunity. Seeing Brezhnev's apathy concerning the MLF, Rapacki decided to act. On 14 December 1964 Rapacki delivered a speech at the UN. In his speech, he claimed that "the time has come to examine the problem of European security as a whole" and invited all European states for a conference.[572] Rapacki extended an invitation to the US and USSR, but the idea of a European-wide solution that transcended the Cold War division was bold, if not revolutionary.

Rapacki's call for a European conference was not only bold but a genuinely Polish initiative. Moreover, it was not consulted with the USSR. During the Warsaw Pact summit of January 1965, Gomulka had to submit his "self-criticism" for Poland's unilateral actions. However, the Polish leader excused himself with the fact that the invitation for a European security conference "was submitted in rather general terms". Gomulka also promised that all actions from then on would be consulted with all members of the Warsaw Pact.[573] Then the summit went on with the discussion on how to adequately prepare such a conference. What is surprising about how the events unfolded in this case, is the fact that the Polish leadership suffered no consequences of their unilateral actions. It might be explained, to some extent at least, by the fact that Brezhnev eventually understood the danger of introducing the MLF in NATO. The Soviet leader admitted wanting to "come up with an appropriate initiative against it", but Brezhnev's proposals would have to be connected with non-proliferation. This, in turn, would deepen the Sino-Soviet rift since the Chinese were in the early stages of rolling out their own nuclear program.[574] The Polish initiative might have aligned with Soviet interests,

[570] Ibid, p. 41
[571] Ibid, p. 84
[572] APV-1301-E, p. 8
[573] AAN, XIA/103, p. 187
[574] Ibid., p. 169

but Rapacki had to put considerable effort into smoothing things over with the Soviet leadership. Nevertheless, the Soviets finally agreed, and the initiative could go ahead for as long as the Soviets and other socialist countries were closely consulted.[575]

The Polish initiative almost immediately produced interesting reactions. Rapacki reported that by late December 1964, he received an offer from Dean Rusk. In exchange for American recognition of the Oder-Neisse line, Poland would refrain from providing any support for the GDR. Simultaneously, the West German Foreign Office approached Deputy Foreign Minister Winiewicz with a similar proposal. However, the German offer included some "minor revisions" of the Oder-Neisse line. Both Rapacki and Winiewicz were willing to entertain such negotiations. By May 1965, Rapacki decided that American-West German conditions were unacceptable for Poland and refused any further negotiations. Rapacki then decided to inform Ulbricht about such offers being made, and that he rejected them. He failed to inform his East German allies, however, that he did negotiate behind Ulbricht's back for approximately five months.[576] The fact that the authorities in Bonn and Washington saw fit to entertain recognising the Oder-Neisse line is quite important. Since Rapacki did not hide his intentions – stopping the MLF and curbing German military and economic power – the American and West Germans probably envisaged that they could derail the Polish initiative by making the offer. However, the Americans promised only "strongest guarantees", rather than a treaty. Rapacki's answer to such guarantees was that "Poland, after all, had strongest guarantees in 1939 and then lost six million people."[577]

It is interesting to see that in the mid-1960s, Polish diplomacy was pursuing multiple policies. There was the Gomulka Plan, the European security conference and secret negotiations. This indicates that Polish foreign policy was evolving and maturing. The Poles, having learned their lesson, were unwilling to focus all their efforts only on Gomulka Plan, given that it was unlikely to be adopted. Thus, they pursued three different options in an attempt to figure out which one might yield tangible results.

Additionally, Rapacki's unilateral actions suggest that the Minister and his Government felt confident to pursue such risky options. Polish confidence came from the fact that Poland asserted itself as USSR's strategic partner. Thus, it could pursue independent policies and force the Soviets into a particular initiative without fear of Soviet retaliation.

[575] AMSZ, Z-26 W11 T-150, p. 1
[576] Ibid. p. 2-5
[577] FRUS, 1964-68, vol. XVII, document 120, p. 729

Finally, the secret Polish-West German-American negotiations demonstrate that Poles treated the GDR instrumentally. It served as a buffer state, increasing Polish security. But, if the opportunity presented itself, Polish leaders were more than keen to abandon their East German allies. Moreover, as Crump argued, the Berlin and Cuban crises "illustrated the dangers of bipolarity to the junior allies within NATO and the WP alike."[578] In both NATO and Warsaw Pact, leaders grew increasingly frustrated over how the Soviets and Americans dictated the terms.

Although the Poles showed significant resolve with their European peace conference proposals, these, for the time being, produced only propaganda results. But as was the case in the late 1950s, Poland's increased diplomatic contacts with the Western nations produced very favourable economic results. In 1963, Poland and West Germany signed a protocol on trade and maritime transport cooperation. This granted Poland access to West German precision instruments, machinery, electronics and commercial and recreational aircraft. At the same time, both parties agreed to open their ports to their respective maritime shipping companies, which opened up the large West German market, to relatively cheaper Polish shipping, which would in turn allow Poland to accrue convertible currency on this market.[579] In 1964 the Poles signed a bilateral agreement with the Greeks. Both parties agreed to exempt each other's maritime shipping companies from taxes in their maritime ports.[580] The agreement had little effect for Greece, since Polish-Greek trade was not very extensive, with the total trade turnover amounting to roughly 75 million convertible zlotys, or $19 million.[581] However, the Polish merchant navy launched a Mediterranean and Black Sea routes. For both of these, Greek ports were important calling points for Polish ships servicing the area.[582] Being tax exempt in Greece, gave the Poles additional competitive advantage. 1967 saw the largest Polish success in economic relations with the West. Warsaw signed a technical cooperation agreement with the UK, gaining access to Western technologies.[583] By October 1967, Poland

[578] Crump, *Warsaw Pact*, 2015, p. 136
[579] Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, Internetowa Baza Traktatów, Protokół o wynikach rokowań pomiędzy Delegacją Rządu PRL i Delegacją Rządu Republiki Federalnej Niemiec w sprawie obrotu handlowego i transportu morskiego, 7 March 1963
[580] Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, Internetowa Baza Traktatów, Umowa między Rządem PRL a Rządem Królestwa Grecji dotycząca zwolnień od podatków przychodów pochodzących z wykonywania żeglugi morskiej i lotniczej, 21 January 1964.
[581] Główny Urząd Statystyczny (GUS), Rocznik Statystyczny 1970, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo GUS, 1970, p. 24; 29.
[582] CIA-RDP85T00875R001700040028-6 – Poland's Global network of liner services, December 1973, p. 12
[583] Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, Internetowa Baza Traktatów, Umowa o współpracy w dziedzinie nauk stosowanych i techniki pomiędzy Rządem PRL a Rządem Zjednoczonego Królestwa Wlk. Brytanii i Północnej Irlandii, 10 October 1967

had become a full member of GATT, thus gaining preferential access to Western markets.[584] Yet again, Poland's diplomatic initiatives in the West resulted in tangible economic benefits.

In the late 1960s, similarly as in the late 1950s, soon after achieving substantial benefits in its commercial relations with the West, Warsaw turned towards closer COMECON cooperation. Such an unexpected turn can be explained by two factors. Firstly, the economic issues resulting from overreliance on heavy industry began to manifest themselves by late 1967. Thus, Poland found it increasingly difficult to sustain increased commercial exchange with the West. The other factor that stimulated Warsaw's eastward turn was the situation in Czechoslovakia, which Warsaw believed were a threat to the stability of the entire Soviet Bloc (see Chapter I). Just as in the early 1960s, Warsaw was willing to escalate Cold War tensions and risk Western economic sanctions. And thus Poland became one of the most avid supporters of military intervention in Czechoslovakia. Quite predictably, the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 and its international repercussions threatened the idea of a European conference. Moreover, there was a risk that the USSR and the US might again dominate international talks. The tensions over Czechoslovakia quickly dissipated. The Warsaw Pact agreed to hold another summit in March 1969. In preparations for the March summit, Gomulka stressed the urgency of adopting "our [Polish] vision of pan-European collective security."[585] The question of territorial integrity was one of the chief Polish concerns. Gomułka wanted to embed the mechanism of assuring Polish territorial integrity into the project. The final communique of the Warsaw Pact summit was issued on 17 March 1969. It called for a European conference on security and suggested principle of peaceful conflict resolution, non-intervention as well as recognition of existing borders as starting points for negotiations[586]. The Declaration of Budapest allowed the diplomatic talks that ceased in 1968, to resume. Scandinavians and Belgians resumed negotiations with Poland by the end of March 1969. Willy Brandt issued a statement welcoming the Declaration.[587] The easing of tensions over Czechoslovakia coincided with Poland's disillusionment with COMECON. Warsaw yet again would turn to the West, this time in an attempt to revive Poland's sagging economy. The Polish proposals envisaged not only the formalisation and international recognition of the Oder-Neisse line. The Polish draft called for extensive

[584] Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, Internetowa Baza Traktatów, Układ ogólny w sprawie taryf celnych i handlu - GATT 47 (ONZ X.1.a), 18 October 1967.
[585] AAN, XIA/105, p. 118
[586] Ibid. p. 116
[587] AMSZ, Z-17W-31-T-46, p. 21

"economic and technical" cooperation among all European states. Most likely, to remove any restrictions for Eastern Europeans to access Western technologies and stimulate growth of the Polish economy. The Poles knew, however, that such a conference would not be possible before the end of 1970.[588] Throughout 1969, the Ministry of Foreign Trade worked on the concept of establishing joint-venture companies with mixed Polish and Western capital. The primary focus of these considerations was West German firms. The Poles wanted to use low labour costs to entice West German companies to build production facilities in Poland. This way, Poland could get relatively cheap and easy access to Western technologies and stimulate economic growth.

On 27 May 1969, Gomulka declared Polish readiness to negotiate the issue of the Oder-Neisse line and the establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and the FRG. This move was motivated not only by Gomułka's attempt to formalise the Oder-Neisse line, and secure Poland's territorial integrity. The establishment of diplomatic relations between Bonn and Warsaw was a key prerequisite to establish Polish-West German joint venture companies.[589] The Polish resolve to negotiate with Bonn was also determined by economic factors. By December 1969 preparations for Polish-West German negotiations were in full swing. Simultaneously, the new West German-Soviet treaty was being negotiated. In this regard, Gomulka pressed for multilateralism, and Brezhnev was persuaded to fill other socialist leaders in on how negotiations progressed.[590] Gomulka's insistence on close cooperation over the West German issue prevented the situation similar to one that occurred in 1939. In August 1970 Soviets signed their treaty with the FRG. The final treaty between Poland and the FRG was signed on 7 December 1970. In the treaty, both Poland and West Germany acknowledged their current territorial borders. Both parties renounced the use of force over any disputes. In Article III, both agreed to "pursue future normalisation and establishment of diplomatic relations."[591] The treaty was an essential step towards the European security conference, but it by no means could secure Poland's interests on its own. Diplomatic relations were not yet established, and the FRG was not quick to ratify the treaty.[592] Contrary to Skrzypek's argument, the Warsaw Treaty of 1970 was not Gomulka's end goal. It was a means to an end, in regard to Poland's security and economy. The gradual

[588] AAN, XIA/105, Dalsza nasza akcja wokół europejskiej konferencji bezpieczeństwa i współpracy, p. 117-8
[589] AAN, Ministerstwo Handlu Zagranicznego, sygn. 88/164, Formy organizacyjne możliwe dla realizacji kooperacji między Polską a NRF, p.1-6
[590] AAN, XIA/106, p. 57
[591] Dz.U. 1972, Nr. 24 poz. 168, p. 230
[592] It was ratified in 1972

normalisation of relations between Poland and the FRG meant that the results of the planned security conference would be binding to all members. Gomulka would not preside over the normalisation of Polish-West German relations, or Poland's participation in the Helsinki Conference of 1973-75. He was ousted from power on 20 December 1970, in consequence of economic crisis he failed to avert. And although the Warsaw Treaty was just a first step towards increasing Poland's security, it proved crucial. The Soviet Union ceased to be the sole guarantor of Polish territorial integrity.

Poland's diplomatic initiatives in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s officially aimed at easing the Cold War tensions. It cannot be denied that they were dictated by considerations regarding national security or even international prestige. It is undeniable that through these initiatives, Warsaw managed to elevate its position within the Soviet Bloc. A new hierarchy was developing post-1956, and Poland was quickly emerging as the second most important Soviet Bloc country. Yet, the intensification and lessening of Polish diplomatic efforts in the West correspond neatly with the cycles within Polish economy in the period between 1956 and 1970. And thus, the economic underpinnings of these diplomatic efforts cannot be dismissed.

We can observe that during the transition period of 1956-59, the Poles announced the Rapacki Plan. Politically, the initiative amounted to nothing. But Poland was capable using the extensive diplomatic contacts with Western powers, to its economic benefit. In the period of 1956-59, Poland was granted access to Western consumer goods and technologies, previously restricted by CoCom. By 1959, Poland was also allowed to become an associate member in GATT, which further eased access to Western goods, while also allowing Polish goods much easier access to Western markets. As the economic and political situation stabilised by the III Party Congress, the Poles formulated and implemented their new economic model. Initially the Second-Five Year Plan of 1960-65, envisaged closer economic cooperation with Soviet Bloc countries, mainly because the Poles struggled to accumulate enough convertible currency to finance their purchases in Western markets. In the period of 1960-62, the Poles suspended the diplomatic action surrounding the Rapacki Plan. Warsaw even supported escalating tensions over Berlin and putting its previous economic gains in the West in jeopardy. By 1962 the Polish economy outperformed the initial assumptions of the Second-Five Year Plan. However, Poland's Soviet Bloc allies were experiencing economic difficulties at the time. To sustain country's economic growth, Warsaw was forced to turn to the West. But the diplomatic relations with Western powers were strained following Berlin

and Cuban crises. To ease the tensions, Warsaw proposed a nuclear freeze in Central and Eastern Europe, known as Gomułka Plan, in 1963. The following year, Rapacki called for a pan-European conference on security and cooperation. Neither the Gomułka Plan, nor the idea for the conference were successful. But between 1963 and 1967, Warsaw signed a series of economically beneficial agreements with Western countries and became full GATT member. As the Polish economy began to experience economic difficulties at the beginning of the Third Five-Year Plan of 1966-1970, the Poles found it difficult to sustain higher levels of commercial exchange with the West. The Czechoslovak crisis provided an additional stimulus, and Poland yet again opted for closer cooperation within COMECON. However, Poland's eastward turn was short-lived. Disillusioned with cumbersome and ineffective economic cooperation with its Soviet Bloc allies, Warsaw would again turn to the West to revive its economy. The idea of pan-European conference was revived and even became Warsaw Pact agenda in the form of the Declaration of Bucharest. The reaching out to Bonn also had its economic underpinnings. Unlike the other Polish diplomatic initiatives of the late 1950s and 1960s, the final one launched in 1969 produced concrete political gains. However, the Gomułka regime would not last to see the economic benefits of its final diplomatic initiative. Soon after the Warsaw Treaty of December 1970 was signed, the economic crisis caused Gomułka's downfall.

In pursuit of economic objectives, however, Poland largely contributed to the Cold War debates taking place at the time. Although Rapacki and Gomułka Plans were never implemented, the Poles were the most successful in sustaining a debate on the issue for longer than any other country before them. Proposals formulated by Anthony Eden and Nikolay Bulganin in the mid-1950s were rather short lived and did not attract such international attention as Polish proposals.[593] The global debate it sparked led to the creation of Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament and later Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament in the early 1960s. The idea of a pan-European conference proposed by Rapacki in 1964 materialised ten years later with the signing of the Helsinki Accords in 1975. Warsaw's global Cold War entanglements resulted mostly from attempts to overcome the shortcomings of Poland's economic model. The commercial relations with the West were always dependent on the level of inter-Bloc tensions. To ease them, the Poles used diplomacy. These diplomatic efforts often yielded some immediate economic gains. The short-term effects of Polish diplomatic efforts often amounted to nothing or very little. But their long-term effects were

[593] Ozinga, *Rapacki Plan,* 1989

felt long after their initial proponents left the political stage. We cannot of course underestimate the long-term effects of intensified commercial relations with the West. The expansion of trade was also beneficial to political relations between the Blocs. Here the contribution of the Gomułka regime is often underestimated. By 1970, Poland had extensive diplomatic and commercial contacts with Western powers. Its territorial integrity was secured and groundwork for normalisation of economic and diplomatic relations with West Germany was laid. Gierek, who replaced Gomułka in 1970, as the First Secretary, by expanding commercial relations with the West was not radically breaking with policies of the previous regime.

Chapter IV – Peacekeeping or profit-making? Poland's involvement in the Vietnam War, 1950-1973

The conflict in Indochina raged for nearly two decades. The First Indochina War was fought between the Viet Minh and the French Republic between 1945 and 1954. The French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 brought both sides to the negotiating table. As a result, the Geneva Accords of 1954 were signed. The agreement reached stipulated the division of Vietnam. The North – where the Viet Minh forces dominated – would become the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The South – where the French troops had the upper hand – would become the Republic of Vietnam. Both states were granted independence. The other parts of the former French Indochina, namely Laos and Cambodia, also became independent states. The Geneva Accords created a supervisory body – the International Commission of Supervision and Control – which would supervise the implementation of the agreement reached by the French Republic, the Viet Minh, the USSR, China and the United Kingdom. The ICSC was tasked with supervising population transfers of communist sympathisers from the South to the North and the opponents of the Ho Chi Minh regime from the South to the DRV. The ICSC was composed of three delegations – the Indian, Polish and Canadian. The Indian representative, who also chaired the Commission, represented the non-aligned movement. Canada represented the West, while the Poles represented the Soviet Bloc. In Geneva, the signatories of the agreement agreed that the division of Vietnam would be temporary. Two years after the agreement was reached, i.e. in 1956, nationwide elections were to be held in Vietnam, and the leaders chosen by the Vietnamese nation would then unify the country. The only superpower which did not sign the Geneva Accords was the U.S. Although Washington claimed that it would not undermine the implementation of the agreement, the American subversion of the Geneva Accords of 1954 started soon after the agreement came into force on 21 July 1954.[594]

The Americans would soon replace the French as the leading power in Indochina. The elections envisaged for 1956 were not held. The division of Vietnam thus became more entrenched. Soon both the DRV – backed by the Soviet Bloc, and South Vietnam – backed by the U.S., began their attempts to unify the country by force. The American involvement grew in South Vietnam, while the Soviet Bloc became increasingly involved in the DRV. The stalemate prevailed until 1964 when the Americans launched their direct military involvement in South Vietnam using the Gulf of Tonkin incident as a pretext. The Second Indochina War was fought for more than a decade. Following the American withdrawal in 1973, the

[594] Young, Marilyn. *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990* (New York, N.Y. Harper Perennial, 1991), p. 45

communist North conquered the South in 1975, thus unifying Vietnam.[595]

The Vietnam War was an important Cold War conflict, attracting significant academic scrutiny. The scholarly debate concerning the Vietnam War includes almost the entire spectrum of the historical debate. The on one side we have the argument put forward by Michael Lind, who defended American involvement in Vietnam.[596] On the other side of the debate, is Marilin Young who explicitly argued that the American subversion of the Geneva accords of 1954 led to a prolonged and costly conflict.[597] A more recent scholarly effort by Mark Lawrence and John Dumbel suggests that the revisionist approach became more entrenched in the academic debate concerning the war in Vietnam.[598] Although the scholarly discussion on the issue is moving away from Cold War orthodoxy, the perspective of scholarly approaches remains firmly within the orthodox framework. Thus, the Vietnam War is primarily analysed from the so-called "great power perspective". More recently, Nguyen Lien-Hang presented the Vietnamese perspective.[599] Earlier non-Western perspectives, like an attempt by Guan Cheng, focus on Sino-Vietnamese relations.[600] The most notable analysis of the role the PRC played in the Vietnam War was offered by Zhai. [601] There is a noteworthy attempt to present an Australian perspective by Doyle, Gray and Pierce.[602] Britain was relatively less involved in the conflict, yet its policy towards Vietnam was comprehensively analysed by Sylvia Ellis.[603]

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[595] Logevall, Fredrik. *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 2013); Statler, Kathryn C. *Replacing France: The Origins of American Intervention in Vietnam* (Lexington: University Press Of Kentucky, 2009).

[596] Lind, Michael, *Vietnam, the Necessary War a Reinterpretation of America's Most Disastrous Military Conflict* (New York London Simon & Schuster, 1999).
[597] Young *The Vietnam Wars*, p. 45
[598] Lawrence, Mark A. *The Vietnam War : A Concise International History* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008).); Dumbrell, John *Rethinking the Vietnam War.* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)..
[599] Nguyen, Lien-Hang, *Hanoi's War,* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).
[600] Guan, Ang Cheng, *Vietnamese Communists' Relations with China and the second Indochina Conflict: 1956-1962,*(McFarland & Co., 1998)
[601] Zhai, Qiang, *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975.* (University of North Carolina Press, 2000).
[602] Grey, Jeffrey and Jeff Doyle, *Vietnam : War, Myth, and Memory : Comparative Perspectives on Australia's War in Vietnam* (St. Leonards, NSW, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1992).
[603]Ellis, Sylvia, *Britain, America, and the Vietnam War* (Westport; London: Praeger, 2004)..

The historical debate, although including lesser power' perspectives, is still dominated by Superpower perspectives. And yet, the Vietnam War was not only a proxy war between the superpowers. It was also a war between the opposing blocs. All countries of the Soviet Bloc were somehow involved in it. Yet, their involvement has not produced such a robust scholarly debate. Stanciu attempted to place Romanian participation in the context of the deepening Sino-Soviet rift.[604] The Polish, Hungarian and Yugoslav involvement was examined in the context of Eastern European solidarity with the North Vietnamese.[605] There are some notable attempts to explore the political role the Eastern Europeans played in the conflict. Szoko outlined the Hungarian contribution to secret diplomacy during the war.[606] The Polish perspective was presented by Gnoinska and, more recently, by Słowiak. [607]The analysis of Bulgarian and Yugoslav involvement, for example, is non-existent. Yet, there is evidence in Polish sources that all Eastern European states were involved in Vietnam.[608] Moreover, an analysis by the CIA proved that although Eastern European military assistance to North Vietnam was negligible, the total economic aid provided by those states between 1955 and 1973 was greater than the Chinese economic assistance.[609] Despite such significant input, the Eastern European perspectives are still largely absent from the broader Cold War debates concerning the Vietnam War.

This chapter aims to fill the significant knowledge gap in the current historiography. By analysing previously overlooked sources, it will demonstrate that Poland was one of the key players in the Vietnam War. Moreover, it will be shown that Poland's Vietnam policy was formulated independently and, in many cases, stood in sharp contrast with Moscow's goals. To support this hypothesis, this chapter will first focus on the initial period of Polish involvement between 1950 and 1956. Then it will analyse the formulation and implementation of Poland's Vietnam policy and its impacts between 1956 and 1964. Then this

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[604] Stanciu, Cezar. "Fragile Equilibrium." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 18, no. 1 (2016): 161-87.
[605] Mark, James, Péter Apor, Radina Vučetić, and Piotr Osęka. "'We Are with You, Vietnam': Transnational Solidarities in Socialist Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia." *Journal of Contemporary History* 50, no. 3 (2015): 439-64.
[606] Szoko, Zoltan, „Delusion or Reality? Secret Hungarian Diplomacy during the Vietnam War." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 12 no. 4 (2010): 119-180.
[607] Gnoinska, Margaret, "Poland and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1949-1965", PhD diss. (George Washington University, 2010); Słowiak, Jarema "Polska w Międzynarodowej Komisji Nadzoru i Kontroli w Wietnamie w latach 1954-1973", PhD diss. (Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 2019); Comradeship, friendship, wariness: the first decade of relations between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Polish Peoples' Republic (1954-1964), *The Twelfth International Convention of Asia Scholars,* 2022, p. 662-73
[608] IPN, BU 2602/7976, Notatka dot. działań artylerii przeciwpowietrznej na terytorium DRW, 8 December 1968, p. 657-662.
[609] The Eastern European aid totalled 1.255 billion USD, while PRC aid being 1.2 billion USD. CIA, FOIA, RDP85T0087R001900020114-0, Communist Aid to North Vietnam, 15 May 1974

chapter will move to investigate the impact of direct American involvement in Vietnam on Poland's interest in the region between 1965 and 1967. Finally, this chapter will examine how the Poles capitalised on their involvement between 1968 and 1973.

The origins of Polish-Vietnamese relations remain very obscure. Following Thakur's lead, James Hershberg does not discuss any developments before 1954.[610] However, contrary to the established narrative, Poland's involvement in Vietnam had begun four years earlier, in 1950. In January 1950, Ho Chi Minh issued a declaration of independence. In early February, the official note reached the MSZ via the Chinese Embassy in Moscow.[611] The MSZ noted that Poland had recognised the PRC in similar circumstances a year earlier and urged the Polish leadership to establish a formal diplomatic relationship with Vietnam. After a very brief period of consideration, on 8 February 1950, Poland and Vietnam established diplomatic relations.[612] As the First Indochina War raged, the Ambassadors could not assume their diplomatic posts, nor was either party pressing for their nomination. With the Geneva accords, the future of the DRV became more certain. Finally, in November 1954, the Polish Ambassador assumed his post in Hanoi, while his Vietnamese counterpart arrived in Warsaw. The Polish involvement, however modest, began in 1951. The Poles offered to supply medicines to the Viet Minh forces in January 1951 and continued medical supplies until 1954.[613]

Until 1954, Poland's involvement in Indochina was minimal. However, a chance for meaningful Polish participation occurred in 1954 when Poland was selected as an ICSC member. Marek Rutkowski argued that before becoming a member of the ICSC, Poland had almost no interest in the region. Moreover, he argued that the Poles did not actively seek to get involved in the ICSC.[614] Rutkowski's claim is very well supported by archival evidence. Before and during the Geneva Conference, the Poles showed no interest in participating in an international peacekeeping effort in Vietnam. Following the Soviet lead, however, Warsaw promptly agreed to join the ICSC. The Commission was formally established in August 1954. Przemysław Ogrodziński was the first person to head the Polish ICSC delegation.[615] In his

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[610] Thakur, *Peacekeeping in Vietnam,* 1984; Hershberg, James. *Marigold: The Lost Chance for Peace in Vietnam.* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012) – a groundbreaking monograph that was the first one to bring up the Polish connection in this story.
[611] AMSZ, Z-11 W-41 T-623, p. 1
[612] Ibid. p. 8
[613] AMSZ, Z-11 W-42 T-636, p. 1-3
[614] Rutkowski, Marek in, Muehlenbeck, Philip and Natalia Telepneva (eds.), *Warsaw Pact intervention in the Third World: Aid and Influence in the Cold War,* (London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2020).
[615] AMSZ, Z-12 W-62 T-1220, p. 31

first reports, Ogrodziński outlined the issues he faced from the start. He noted that the establishment of the ICSC was a surprise for the member and host states, and therefore they were all "improvising". Furthermore, Ogrodziński complained that the chief organisers – namely the French and the Indians – were not renowned for their organisational skills.[616] And thus, the very first months of the ICSC's activity was paralysed by chaos. The Polish role, as Orgodziński succinctly put it, was to facilitate any North Vietnamese requests. At least initially, there were two requests. The first was to prevent any ICSC action against the DRV. The Poles' second and more important task was facilitating economic cooperation between the DRV and France.

Despite the chaos that dominated the ICSC proceedings, Ogrodziński noticed that the Indians, contrary to the Poles or the Canadians, joined the ICSC with a very clear plan. The Polish Ambassador alerted Warsaw that India wanted to embark on a "great power mission" in Indochina. However, Ogrodziński was somewhat sceptical of New Delhi's ability to achieve this rather ambitious goal. As he noted, India insisted on sending many personnel to Indochina. Additionally, the Indians insisted on providing and operating all the planes used by ICSC for travel in Indochina. After just a few weeks, the ICSC Chairman – gen. Desai – was very busy reducing the size of the Indian delegation. It also quickly transpired that the Indian Airforce did not have enough planes to facilitate travel for ICSC officials.[617] Moreover, the Indians were vehemently anti-French, which would undermine Ogrodziński's task of promoting economic cooperation between Hanoi and Paris. Despite Ogrodziński's reservations, Warsaw decided to support Nehru's policy in Indochina. However, the support was relatively short-lived. In March 1955, Jerzy Grudziński – the Polish Ambassador in New Delhi – urged Warsaw to deliver all economic aid to North Vietnam through New Delhi since bypassing India could upset the Indians who "maintained their monopoly on political influence in the region."[618] On 24 June 1955, Nehru met with Bierut and Cyrankiewicz to discuss the developments in Indochina. It quickly transpired that India could not offer sufficient economic assistance to Cambodia. Consequently, by June 1955, the Cambodian government had signed a military-economic agreement with the U.S., thus undermining India's position in the region.[619] Cyrankiwicz and Bierut quickly realised that Nehru's objective was to obtain Polish approval to use the ICSC to condemn the Cambodian decision

[616] AMSZ, Z-12 W-77 T-1327, Raport Nr. 2, p. 8
[617] Ibid. Raport Nr. 1, p. 5-6
[618] AMSZ, Z-12 W-63 T-1235, p. 2
[619] AMSZ, Z-2 W-62 T-1228, p. 3

to adopt a pro-American course.[620] As a result, the Polish support for India extending its influence evaporated. Following Nehru's visit, there was no mention of any support for India's plans to establish itself as a dominant power in Indochina.

Simultaneously, the Poles were now directly involved in providing aid to Vietnam. Warsaw was in charge of a critical task, facilitating the population transfer between the South and the North. Thus, the Poles carried out the communist version of *Operation Passage to Freedom.*[621] The Poles had only one ship – the s/s Kiliński – which worked for almost a year between July 1954 and May 1955. It evacuated approximately 82 000 Ho Chi Minh supporters from the South.[622] The Poles were also sending more economic and humanitarian aid to Vietnam. Polish specialists increasingly assisted in repairing and reorganising Vietnamese ports, airports and hospitals.[623] The Poles also invited the North Vietnamese to the Poznań Fair of 1955. There, the Vietnamese delegation received a lucrative offer from a Swiss company interested in purchasing and distributing handmade, "oriental" handcrafts from the DRV.[624] Despite very cordial relations, the Polish-Vietnamese links followed a standard observed in North Vietnamese ties with other Soviet bloc states. The DRV presented the list of desired products or services, while the Soviet bloc countries were obliged to supply those. However, as early as 1955, the Poles felt the need to pursue a more independent policy toward Vietnam. That need was not yet motivated by Polish ambitions or considerations focusing on Poland's national interests. The impulse that motivated this was far more practical. Initially, all Polish shipments were transported overland via the USSR and China. By mid-1955, the Chinese would demand 22,000 Rubles for each shipment of goods to Vietnam. Shipments of goods occurred rather frequently, and Polish officials were outraged by Chinese attempts at profiteering. The Poles chose to use s/s Warszawa – a ship owned by the Polish Ocean Lines to carry the goods to minimise their costs.[625] Thus, Poland started the first regular seaborne shipping line to the Far East from the Soviet Bloc.

Throughout 1955-56, the Poles were busy supplying economic aid to the DRV and protecting its interests in the ICSC. The Polish policy followed a pattern similar to other

[620] Ibid, p. 7-8
[621] Frankum, Ronald. *Operation Passage to Freedom: The United States Navy In Vietnam, 1954-1955.* (Texas Tech University Press, 2007).
[622] AMSZ, Z-13 W-62 T-1164
[623] AMSZ, Z-12 W-26 T-614, p. 5
[624] AMSZ, Z-12 W-26 T-615, p. 6
[625] AMSZ, Z-12 W-26 T-614, p. 13

Eastern European states. It can be argued that ideological factors primarily drove this policy. Following a Soviet nudge, Warsaw accepted its role in the ICSC – they were to serve as the Soviet proxy. The Poles, however, used their role as USSR's proxy to observe the Americans forcefully pushing out both the French and the Indians from the region.[626] The Polish Ambassador noticed the large amounts of American cash flowing to South Vietnam. However, the American loans and grants were entirely spent in the U.S. The South Vietnamese were thus importing ready products, and such a practice did nothing to improve the condition of the South Vietnamese economy. Nor did it make the Americans more popular in South Vietnam. The Polish Ambassador suggested that Warsaw base its future economic ties with the DRV on mutual benefit. Moreover, the Poles should strive to strengthen the economy of their Vietnamese ally.[627] This suggestion would be remembered in Warsaw. For the time being, the Polish and Bloc assistance entered a rocky period.

The Polish-North Vietnamese relations grew steadily in the first half of 1956. The post-war reconstruction of the DRV demanded increasing Bloc involvement. In early 1956 the Poles signed an agreement to construct a hospital in Hanoi, which would cost the Polish Ministry of Health 22 million Polish złotys.[628] Polish scientists and engineers came to the DRV to help organise technical schools and conduct geological surveys.[629] In April, Poland and the DRV signed a freight cooperation agreement, which included Polish specialists training the North Vietnamese to organise and maintain sea ports.[630] The main Polish task – facilitating trade and political relations with the French – seemed to be going smoothly. In March 1956, the Polish Ambassador in Hanoi reported that DRV's trade with France was steadily increasing, and that Paris seemed keen on expanding its trade relations with the DRV.[631] Despite such successes, the Poles and the North Vietnamese faced an increasing threat of American expansion in the region. The Polish Ambassador in Hanoi alarmed Warsaw that by March 1956, the French had lost "almost all their positions in Indochina". Having been squeezed out of Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam, the French only maintained their ties with the DRV.[632] By the mid-1956, the Poles attempted to formulate an independent policy toward Indochina and the Far East region for the first time. Interestingly enough, it was

[626] AMSZ, Z-12 W-26 T-608, p. 80-81
[627] Ibid. 119-120
[628] AMSZ, Z-12 W-45 T-1121, p. 1-5.
[629] AMSZ, Z-12 W-45 T-1117, p. 5
[630] AMSZ, Z-12 W-26 T-622, p. 53; p. 71-72
[631] Ibid. p. 39-40
[632] Ibid. 8

not the government or the PZPR authorities which pushed for a new policy. It was the Central Administration of The Polish Merchant fleet.[633] The CZPMH, in its secret memorandum to the PZPR leadership, argued that Poland should use its new coastline access. By expanding the size and scope of operations of the Polish Merchant Fleet, the CZPMH hoped to bypass the Chinese and their increased shipping prices. Moreover, the Polish merchant fleet could monopolise the seaborne trade of landlocked Soviet Bloc countries, namely Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Finally, the CZPMH argued that Poland's global shipping operations could provide a steady stream of convertible currency and lessen the Polish dependence on economic assistance from the USSR. The Far East line, the CZPMH argued, should be the first step in building Poland's naval capacity.[634] The Far East was a logical step for the Poles to take since Poland already had its foot in the door there. In 1951 the Poles and the Chinese established a jointly owned vessel chartering agency – Chipolbrok, which mostly chartered vessels operated by PLO.[635] It seemed that Poland's direct involvement in Vietnam provided an excellent excuse to increase its merchant fleet operations.

The Polish plans and ambitions for an increased role in the Far East had to be put on hold in the second half of 1956. The events of October 1956 disrupted the entire Polish foreign and domestic policy. Gomułka's re-ascension to power caused Poland to focus on internal affairs temporarily. Gomułka's initial efforts were focused on creating a new modus vivendi with the Soviet Union. The events of Polish October were curiously observed in Hanoi. The Polish Ambassador was flooded with questions about the developments in Poland. Simultaneously, he warned Warsaw that he detected a serious concern among the North Vietnamese that Poland "might abandon the socialist mode".[636] The crisis, however, was relatively short-lived. In early 1957, Poland's Prime Minister, Józef Cyrankiewicz, visited India, Burma, North Vietnam, North Korea, China and Indonesia. His main objective was to facilitate Poland's greater economic involvement in the region. Cyrankiewicz also wanted to offer the services of the rapidly expanding Polish merchant fleet.[637] The CIA's analysis of Polish merchant fleet activity in the region confirmed that the policy outlined in the CZPMH

[633] Pol. Centralny Zarząd Polskiej Marynarki Handlowej, hereafter CZPMH.
[634] The memorandum was delivered, and accepted as policy basis by Edward Ochab in April 1956, thus several months before Gomułka's rise to power. APG/Oddział w Gdyni, Centralny Zarząd Polskiej Marynarki Handlowej w Gdyni, sygn. 1/1, p. 37-52
[635] AMSZ, Z-11 W-3 T-37, p. 5
[636] AMSZ, Z-12 W-26 T-622, p. 185
[637] AMSZ, Z-12 W-28 T-628, p. 10

memorandum was maintained. The CIA assessment of Polish goals reads almost precisely as the CZPMH memorandum of early 1956.[638]

In Hanoi, on 5 April 1957, Cyrankiewicz met with Polish ambassadors to Southeast Asian countries. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Poland's new foreign policy objectives in the Far East. Cyrankiewicz outlined that the Polish October created "new possibilities" for Polish foreign policy. From now on, Poland would aspire to be "the third" power in the region.[639] Rutkowski argued that Cyrnankiewicz's tour in the region aimed to "reassure" the allies and "court the non-aligned."[640] However, the leading communist powers in the region, namely China, North Korea, and the DRV, failed to be reassured. Ho Chi Minh, in particular, was incredibly underwhelmed by Cyrankiewicz's assurances. On 4 April 1957, Ho Chi Minh ruthlessly questioned Cyrankiewicz about Poland's internal situation. The Polish Prime Minister carefully but honestly answered all questions about Poland's agriculture and abandonment of collectivisation and the new Polish party leadership. Cyrankiewicz, in turn, asked the Vietnamese about their economic difficulties. Ho answered that the DRV was experiencing a significant shortage of consumer goods. Sensing an opportunity to increase Poland's economic involvement in Vietnam, which could, in turn, prop up Poland's operations in the region, Cyrankiewicz asked if the Poles could assist their Vietnamese allies in any way. The answer was brief and harsh. "Depends on what we both agree on", replied Ho Chi Minh. Cyrankiewicz once again assured the North Vietnamese that Poland was willing to help in any way possible, but Ho did not seem interested.[641] Cyrankiewicz's tour was not the resounding success the Poles hoped for.

The Vietnamese suspicions prevailed beyond 1956-57. In 1958, Józef Kratko, the Chargé d'Affairs of the Polish embassy in Hanoi, informed Warsaw that the North Vietnamese party activists believed Poland was ruled by "revisionists" and accused Warsaw of "focusing solely on national interests".[642] Nevertheless, the North Vietnamese treated the Poles amicably despite political and ideological reservations. According to Maria Mai Tan, unlike the Poles, other Bloc diplomats and specialists were not much liked in the DRV. [643] The Soviets were

[638] CIA, FOIA, CIA-RDP79R01141A001300010002-3, p. 52-62
[639] Most likely meaning the third most important power after the USSR and China. AMSZ, Z-12 W-28 T-673, p. 9
[640] Rutkowski in Philip E., Telepneva, Natalia eds. *Warsaw Pact Intervention in the Third World,* 2020, p. 53
[641] AMSZ, Z-12 W-26 T-628, p. 26
[642] AMSZ, Z-12 W-27 T-646, p. 9-10.
[643] Polish woman who married a North Vietnamese official. She worked for the Polish embassy in Hanoi.

initially treated as “omniscient geniuses”. Soon, however, the North Vietnamese realised that Soviet specialists often had “hardly any expertise in their respective fields” and were “extremely cocky” despite that. The Chinese were “bossy”, while the East Germans were mocked as “pedantic doctrinaires”. The Soviet economic assistance was often poorly planned and wasteful. Mai Tan gleefully reported that the fish cannery built by Soviet specialists had not canned any fish ever since it was opened. Instead, it rented its fridges during summer to get at least some cash. The reason for this debacle was the fact that the alleged experts had built the factory in the middle of nowhere, with no infrastructure to deliver any fish to the factory.[644] This apparent fiasco undermined the North Vietnamese confidence in Soviet economic assistance.

Trying to capitalise on the unpopularity of their Bloc counterparts, the Poles did their best to convince the North Vietnamese to overcome their ideological reservations. In 1958, Józef Kratko instructed the Polish diplomats in Hanoi not to be ostentatious in their contacts with Western diplomats in Indochina. Nevertheless, Kratko advised that such contacts should be maintained, while the North Vietnamese could be gently persuaded that such a practice would not “soil one's communist virtue”.[645] Yet, despite the unpopularity of the Soviets and the Chinese, the Poles could not dispel the ideological doubts their North Vietnamese allies harboured against them.[646] Despite Setbacks, the MSZ moved to formulate Poland's official foreign policy in the Far East in 1958. The MSZ instructed Polish diplomats in the region to “overcome potential reservations”, but for the time being, the efforts should be focused on China and Noth Korea.[647] According to the MSZ, Poland should strengthen its ties with India and establish diplomatic relations with Ceylon, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Indonesia while also striving to intensify Polish trade relations with the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore.[648] Meanwhile, the Polish merchant fleet made its first significant move in Asia. For the time being, in the Indian Ocean region. In 1958, PLO purchased 51% of shares of the Pakistan Ocean Shipping Limited and 10% of shares of the Ceylon Ocean Lines.[649] From there, PLO launched its Far Eastern Line, which reached as far as the Philipines and Japan.[650] Unfortunately, PLO's activities met fierce competition from Japanese shipping companies.

[644] AMSZ, Z-12 W-646, p. 21-22.
[645] Ibid. p. 46.
[646] Ibid, p. 79.
[647] AMSZ, Z-12 W-46 T-1129, p. 6
[648] Ibid. p. 13.
[649] AMSZ, Z-12 W-28 T-692, p. 1-2
[650] CIA, FOIA, CIA-RDP79R01141A001300010002-3, p. 52-62

The MSZ and PLO believed such competition could only be eliminated by extending the Far East Line to the DRV and North Korea.[651] The fiasco of Cyrankiewicz's visit convinced the Poles that overcoming Hanoi's ideological reservations was the only way to become more economically involved in North Vietnam.

The post-1956 Polish foreign policy in the Far East, and in general, faced a grave dilemma. As Jacek Tebinka argued, the post-October reforms and liberalisation enabled Warsaw to establish closer ties with the West. Poland's communist allies, however, were deeply suspicious of the new Polish course. Thus, while Poland could score some diplomatic victories in the West, Warsaw's initiatives within the Bloc were hindered by suspicions of nationalism and revisionism.[652] Having consolidated his power by 1959, Gomułka decided that Poland could not risk further deterioration in its relations with the Bloc countries. Thus, in 1959, Gomułka called the III PZPR Congress, which curbed some of the reformist rhetoric and made the official Polish stance more in tune with the broader expectations of the worldwide communist movement. The III PZPR Congress, despite making pronounced ideological statements, changed little in Poland's domestic or foreign policy. It served as a tool to placate Poland's communist allies. While Cyrankiewicz's tour was a fiasco, the Congress was a resounding success. The DRV, China and North Korea felt reassured that the Polish party overcame "revisionism". The North Vietnamese would now welcome an increased Polish involvement in the DRV.[653]

The MSZ and the MHZ swiftly moved to refine Polish policy objectives in the Far East. The officials agreed that Vietnam could quickly become a foothold for Polish influence and economic involvement in the region. China was increasingly focusing on internal affairs related to implementing the Great Leap Forward. In the meantime, the deepening Sino-Soviet split prevented the Soviet Union from dominating Vietnam politically and economically. Since the III PZPR Congress placated the leading communist powers in the region – China, North Korea and the DRV, Poland faced no obstacles to intensifying its influence in the region.[654] The expansion of PLO services to North Korea via Vietnam would allow the Polish

[651] AMSZ, Z-12 W-28 T-692, p. 3
[652] Tebinka, Jacek. *Uzależnienie czy suwerenność? Odwilż Popaździernikowa w Dyplomacji Polskiej Rzeczpospolitej Ludowej, 1956-1961.* (Warszawa Neriton, 2011)
[653] AMSZ, Z-12 W-45 T-1120, p. 101
[654] AMSZ, Z-12 W-46 T-1129, p. 4-6

merchant fleet to monopolise the trade between Eastern Europe, Korea, and Vietnam.[655] Such a monopoly would provide a steady PLO service in the region, thus eliminating any prospect of Japanese shipping competition that undermined the effectiveness of PLO's operations. [656] Furthermore, securing Vietnam would allow PLO to intensify services to Siam (Thailand), the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Japan.[657] Increased trading relations with Japan would provide an excellent opportunity for closer diplomatic cooperation. The Poles hoped to use Japan's desire to free itself from American domination.[658] The plan was indeed ambitious. Securing continued access to Vietnamese ports was crucial for this plan to succeed. It is also critical to emphasise that Poland's involvement in this region was not part of any larger Soviet goal. It was a Polish goal, and it could be pursued mainly because the Sino-Soviet split prevented the USSR from effectively extending its influence over this region. The evolution of Polish Far Eastern policy is genuinely remarkable. In the initial period of 1954-5, Poland lacked clear goals. As a representative of the Soviet Bloc in the ICSC, the Poles tried to fulfil any requests of the DRV. The role of the Soviet proxy completely satisfied Warsaw's ambitions. However, the internal struggles in the Kremlin left Poland without clear policy instructions. In its relations with the DRV, Warsaw limited its role to a provider of goods and services the North Vietnamese needed for the post-war reconstruction of their country. Politically, the Poles also proved unwilling to take the initiative. In 1955, Warsaw hoped India could take the leading role in Indochina. By 1956, however, the Poles realised they could independently play a role in the region. By 1957 Poland formulated its own more active, policy approach in the Far East. The initial fiasco of Cyrankiewicz's tour was caused by ideological suspicion on the part of the DRV. By 1959, the Poles convinced the North Vietnamese of Poland's firm and correct ideological stance. After more than two years of failed attempts, Poland could use Vietnam as a springboard to its economic and political involvement in the Far East.

Having secured Vietnamese support for a more significant Polish economic involvement, the Polish leadership moved to formulate its own policy toward Vietnam and the region as a whole. On 23 March 1959, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Trade met to discuss Poland’s objectives in Asia and Africa. The officials agreed

[655] Ibid. p. 7
[656] AMSZ, Z-12 W-28 T-692, p. 3
[657] AMSZ, Z-12 W-46 T-1129, p. 13
[658] Ibid. p. 14-22

that Vietnam could easily become a foothold for expanding Polish influence and economic involvement in the region. China was becoming increasingly focused on internal affairs related to implementing the Great Leap Forward.

Poland soon became more politically and economically involved. However, this was not without serious obstacles. The main tools for trade with Poland were the so-called Foreign Trade Enterprises, which the MHZ controlled. When the 1959 trade agreement was signed between Poland and the DRV, the MHZ issued import and export quotas to CHZs for trade with the DRV. [659] Most of them initially did not comply with export and export quotas. CEKOP and CENTROZAP preferred more profitable deals in the PRC or the USSR. [660] Only ROLIMPEX followed the instructions and quickly became the leading North Vietnamese agricultural goods distributor to Eastern Europe and the West, registering a profit of 386 568 Rbl.[661] The Poles were much more successful in cooperation with Vietnam in the area of natural resources. But such moves seem to confirm Słowiak's argument that the Poles pushed for normal economic relations with the DRV, meaning Poles wanted to move from a one-sided aid supply to a well-established commercial exchange.

From the late 1950s, Polish geologists conducted surveys and assisted the North Vietnamese in discovering large anthracite deposits.[662] In 1960, Edward Gierek, in his capacity as Party Secretary for the coal mining district of Katowice and himself an ex-miner, inspected several North Vietnamese coal mines. [663] Their poor organisation and effectiveness caused the regional party secretary to offer assistance. Gierek's plan impressed North Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong so much that he insisted Poland take over the organisation and expansion of the Vietnamese coal industry. Such an involvement carried additional costs but enormous benefits in compensation. Poland was allowed a "joint exploitation" privilege. At the same time, Polish merchant vessels had almost exclusive rights to ship the Vietnamese anthracite to whoever was willing to buy it, primarily Japan and France. It also meant that the Poles could sell some of the Vietnamese coal as their own

[659] Pol. Centrala/Przedsiębiorstwo Handlu Zagranicznego, hereafter CHZ. Each enterprise specialised in importing or exporting different types of goods.
[660] Centrala Exportu Kompletnych Obiektów Przemysłowych – Enterprise for Export of Complete Industrial Complexes. CENTROZAP dealt with construction of coal powered electric power plants.
[661] Rolniczy Import-Export – Agricultural Import-Export. AAN, URM, sygn.2/361, Sprawozdanie Ekonomiczne za 1959 rok, p. 17-23
[662] The purest form of coal, which is most energy efficient in combustion.
[663] Gomułka's future successor as the First Secretary

commodity.[664] The plan to use Vietnam as a springboard to increase Poland's economic and political involvement in the region proved successful. Coal shipments allowed PLO ships to make regular calls at Haiphong and Cam Pha ports. Maritime cooperation with the Chinese, through Chipolbrok, gave the Poles an upper hand against their Eastern European allies. CIA intelligence confirmed that in 1959, only Poland and the USSR provided regular services in the region. The Soviet, Chinese and Polish shipping operations in the region were so successful that in August 1961, the Soviets suggested that the Communist Bloc fleets jointly establish and operate a "shipping cartel" in Asia and service destinations regardless of the "lack of profitable cargo". According to CIA intelligence, the Poles resisted such a move since a cartel would undermine the profitability of Polish shipping operations in Southeast Asia.[665] While the Soviets focused on grand and politically motivated schemes, the Poles preferred smaller but profitable operations. Nevertheless, even an attempt to base a "shipping cartel" chiefly on Soviet, Chinese and Polish capacities indicated that the Bloc's position in shipping operations in Southeast Asia was strong while also highlighting Poland's position as one of the key players in the region. The shipping cartel, however, failed to materialise. Polish resistance was possibly one of the factors, but as the CIA report noted, the cartel failed mainly due to a lack of coordination between the Bloc countries.[666]

By the mid-1960s, PLO and Chipolbrok vessels provided almost the entire shipping trade capacity between Eastern Europe and China, Vietnam, and Korea.[667] Additionally, since the DRV did not have a merchant fleet, Poland increasingly stepped in to distribute North Vietnamese goods. In April 1964, Poland signed a trade agreement with Kenya, which primarily concerned coal supply from North Vietnam to be carried by Polish ships. The increasing Polish economic and political involvement coincided with an interesting development within the North Vietnamese leadership. In February 1964, the Polish Ambassador in Hanoi, Siedlecki, alerted Warsaw that the Vietnamese leadership should fill out a survey at the IX Plenum of the Vietnamese Workers' Party. This survey asked which line – pro-Chinese or pro-Soviet – the leadership should adopt. According to Siedlecki, 40% favoured the pro-Chinese stance, while only 10% wanted to pursue a pro-Soviet line.

[664] AAN, URM, sygn.2/361 Pobyt delegacji polskich górników w Wietnamie, 28 May 1960, p. 156-7; Sprawy Specjalne, 27 July 1961, p. 264-95
[665] CIA-RDP79T01003A001100270003-7 – Bloc merchant shipping cartel in Asia, 1 December 1961, p. iii-iv
[666] CIA-RDP79R01141A002600060001-5 - Merchant Shipping in the Sino-Soviet Bloc 1961, 1 December 1962, p. 5
[667] CIA, FOIA, CIA-RDP8250025R000100190011-2, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM DURING NOVEMBER 1970, p. 4

However, the largest group, 50%, remained undecided. Siedlecki informed the MSZ that Nguyen Giap, commander of North Vietnamese forces, was openly pro-Chinese. However, Ho Chi Minh, Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, and First Secretary Le Duan favoured closer cooperation with the USSR and other socialist countries. Despite the potential for persuading the undecided, Siedlecki noted that the pro-Chinese faction seemed to dominate the North Vietnamese leadership. That fact, Siedlecki emphasised, could not be ignored in Poland's policy towards Vietnam.[668]

The Tonkin Gulf incident in August 1964 led to direct American military involvement in Indochina. American invasion resulted in a reshuffling of the existing political order in Hanoi. The Poles were quick to observe that. In November 1964, the Polish leadership was informed that the political stances of Beijing and Hanoi were no longer as harmonious as before August 1964. The Chinese wanted to use the escalating conflict in Indochina to extend their sphere of influence while the North Vietnamese were fighting for their very existence. Poland, through the ICSC, had almost unlimited access to the most senior North Vietnamese leaders. Also, as a member of the ICSC, Poland had unparalleled opportunities to gather political and military intelligence in South Vietnam. Poland hoped to use its unique position to offer diplomatic and intelligence assistance to influence political decision-making in Hanoi in Poland's favour.[669]

American military intervention made the Sino-Soviet rift much more pronounced. In Early 1965, the USSR requested an air corridor over the PRC to carry all the necessary military equipment required by Hanoi in October 1964. However, the Chinese denied the Soviets the right to fly over PRC territory to supply the North Vietnamese. As a result, the transit had to be carried out through railways, which was much less effective and created logistic difficulties, which slowed down the delivery of military and economic aid.[670] In such circumstances, Warsaw also moved to reassess the situation. The MSZ submitted a report to the Polish Central Committee outlining the situation in Indochina and proposing a future course of action. The MSZ report predicted that the "conflict will be prolonged and determined by resources at the disposal of the belligerent parties". The MSZ noted that the increasing military and economic assistance to Hanoi had no influence on the North Vietnamese decision-making. The report suggested that Poland should focus its efforts on

[668] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/66, Tajne spec. znaczenia – Notatka amb. J. Siedleckiego, 25 February 1964, p.404-7
[669] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/66, Tajne specjalnego znaczenia – Ku pamięci, 24 November 1964.
[670] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/66, Informacja o pomocy Związku Radzieckiego dla DRW i FWN, no date, p.412

preventing the collapse of the DRV by shipping aid provided by the Soviet Bloc countries. Moreover, Poland should use all its diplomatic contacts in the UN and the West to prevent the conflict from spilling over to the neighbouring countries and to isolate the US on the international stage on the issue of Vietnam. Regarding Poland's position in North Vietnam and Indochina, Poland should primarily focus on preventing any attempts to use the ICSC to justify American aggression. Moreover, the Poles should use the ICSC to gather political and military intelligence, which would then be shared with Hanoi. Warsaw could use intelligence-sharing to "gain a significant influence" over the leadership of the Vietnamese Workers' Party.[671]

The direct American entry into Vietnam initially seemed to have also upset Sino-Polish maritime cooperation. The new military situation influenced the Sino-Polish shipping operations to Vietnam. In May 1965, the Polish Ministry of Shipping decided that all ships carrying cargo to Vietnam should subject themselves to controls carried out by military vessels, including American, operating in the Southeast Asia region if such a need would arise. The measure was undertaken in response to the escalation of hostilities, and the instruction was passed to captains of Chipolbrok ships since PLO was the owner of all Chipolbrok ships. Some ships had Chinese crews, but the captains were Polish, and the vessels operated under the Polish flag. The information was also communicated to the Polish director of Chiplbrok, Grembowicz, who in turn informed his Chinese counterpart Chen, who responded that the Chinese crews would not follow the order. In response, the Poles pointed out the financial losses such a move would bring on the company, but the Chinese were unmoved by such argumentation. They believed that arresting Chipolbrok's ship would demonstrate that the Americans were aggressors and "pirates". When reminded that all Chipolbrok ships were Polish state property, operating under Poland's flag and captains, the Chinese argued that Chipolbrok was a joint company and that one side could not dictate the terms. The Ministry of Shipping suggested a compromise. The Chipolbrok ships with Chinese crews should not sail to Haiphong, and PLO would offer additional tonnage to accommodate the increased need for shipments.[672] The Chinese disagreed, and the matter was referred to the Polish Politburo in early June 1965. The Polish politburo instructed the MSZ to demand from

[671] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/66, Pewne Elementy Sytuacji w Indochinach w Oparciu o Materiały Naszej Ambasady w Hanoi i Naszego Przedstawicielstwa w Komisji w Sajgonie, no date, p. 433-9
[672] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. V/79, Notatka w sprawie sytuacji na statkach Chipolbroku znajdujących się w rejsach do i z Wietnamu, 27 May 1965, p. 420-4

the Chinese to order their crews "to follow captains' orders unconditionally". If the Polish demand was not met, the Poles threatened to dissolve Chipolbrok.[673] The show of Polish determination to protect their profitable operation is remarkable. The Politburo did not return to the matter. Its absence suggests that the Chinese yielded to Polish demands.[674] Gnoinska's argument that the Poles "clung to" maritime relations with China as the Sino-Soviet split deepened is somewhat incorrect in the light of archival evidence. The Poles indeed cooperated with the PRC to improve their standing in Southeast Asia. Still, they were willing to go their own way if the Chinese bellicose attitude threatened their economic interests.[675]

The question arising from Polish actions is rather obvious. Why were the Poles willing to subject their ships to American inspections? The answer is relatively simple. Firstly the Polish and Eastern European, in general, military assistance to the DRV was negligible, and there was no need to transport it to the DRV urgently.[676] The cargo carried by Chipolbrok and PLO ships was primarily economic assistance and trade from Eastern Europe. Polish military shipments were brought through the trans-Siberian railway to China and the DRV. The practice was formalised in March 1966, when the two countries signed a convention to transit Polish military assistance through Chinese territory.[677] Since PLO and Chipolbrok ships carried cargo from all Eastern European countries to Southeast Asia, we can assume that other Eastern European states had similar arrangements with the Chinese.

Having established its strong position vis-à-vis Beijing, the Poles moved towards closer cooperation with the Vietnamese. On 12 June 1965, the members of the Polish Politburo met with the representatives of the DRV to discuss the issues arising from direct American involvement in Vietnam. The North Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister, Le Tranh Nghi, outlined the dire situation that the DRV faced in June 1965. He also informed Gomułka that if the conflict spilt over to North Vietnam, the DRV leadership would call for direct Chinese military assistance to prevent the regime's collapse. Le Tranh Nghi hoped that the Poles would assist the DRV in potential mediation efforts and that Warsaw should be a meeting place for the North Vietnamese and American ambassadors.[678]

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[673] AAN, KC PZPR, Protokoły Biura Poliytucznego, sygn. V/79 Protokoły Biura Poliytucznego, Protokól nr. 15. Posiedzenie Biura Politycznego 4 czerwca 1965, p. 378
[674] AAN, KC PZPR, Protokoły Biura Politycznego, sygn. 80-89, in their entirety.
[675] Gnoinska, "Poland and the Cold War in East and Southeast Asia, 1949-1965.", p. 642
[676] CIA, FOIA, RDP85T0087R001900020114-0, Communist Aid to North Vietnam, 15.05.1974
[677] AMSZ, 6/77 W-170 T-848, Szyfrogram nr. 3004, 11 March 1966
[678] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/66, Notatka z rozmowy delegacji partyjno-rządowej DRW z członkami Biura Politycznego KC PZPR, 12 June 1965, p. 74-7

The first opportunity for Poland to play the mediator role presented itself in December 1965. The Americans launched their "peace offensive". This peace offensive aimed to engage in negotiations with Hanoi, assuming that the North Vietnamese were unlikely to respond to American peace overtures. Then Washington could blame Hanoi for failing to respond to a gesture of goodwill and use this as justification to escalate American involvement in Vietnam further.[679] Thus, on 26 December 1965, Norman Cousins, quoting President Lyndon Bines Johnson's orders, asked Rapacki for assistance in opening a diplomatic channel between Hanoi and Washington via Warsaw. As members of the ICSC, the Poles had unlimited access to the North Vietnamese leadership.[680] Warsaw informed Moscow of this approach, but Gromyko only requested that the Poles inform the USSR about the developments. The Soviets effectively gave the Poles carte blanche to handle the negotiations. A few days later, on 30 December 1965, Averell Harriman arrived in Warsaw to present the American proposal and ask the Polish government to pass the message to Hanoi. In a meeting with Gomułka, Harriman expressed the Americans' willingness to negotiate with Hanoi and asked for Polish assistance. Gomułka responded to Harriman's request with a lengthy tirade, during which he expressed doubts that Harriman's visit might be just "an alibi for future war". Ultimately Gomułka agreed to facilitate Vietnamese-American negotiations.[681] Unfortunately for Gomułka, Harriman's visit did provide an alibi for the further intensification of the war. Such an interpretation aligns with Hershberg's findings and is supported by American archival sources. The 1965 American peace offensive was nothing more than a "dramatic peace gesture" which aimed to blame an escalation of the conflict on the North Vietnamese. The Americans wanted to "energetically" pursue the course of action outlined by General Westmoreland.[682] Gomułka was furious, thinking the Americans had made a fool of him, he even called Harriman's and "excuse for further escalation of the war".[683]Mounting American military pressure also unnerved the Chinese. Beijing began obstructing the transit of the Soviet Bloc to the DRV via Chinese territory to avoid further antagonism between China and the US. The first Polish mediation effort in the Vietnam War, Gomułka believed, proved to be

[679] FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. III,Vietnam, doc. 212, p. 1234
[680] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/62, Pilna notatka – Tajne spec. znaczenia, p. 134
[681] Ibid. Protokół z rozmowy I Sekretarza KC PZPR Władysława Gomułki z amb. USA w misji specjalnej Avarellem Harrimanem, 30 December 1965 p. 140-143
[682] FRUS, 1964-1968 vol. IV, Vietnam, Doc. 214, p. 1075; Hershberg, *Marigold,* 2012, p. 51
[683] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/66, Protokół z rozmowy I Sekretarza KC PZPR Władysława Gomułki z przedstawicielem delegacji rządowej DRW Le Thanh Nghi, 10 January 1966, p. 141

nothing more than an American scam. The Americans had no intentions of negotiating and wanted to use the failed peace talks to escalate their military operations. The threat to the DRV's very existence and Poland's economic gains in the region was in greater danger than ever before in 1965. A plan to avert the threat was needed for the DRV and Poland.

Gomułka met the Vietnamese delegation, headed by Le Tranh Nghi, in Warsaw on 10 January 1966 to discuss the course of future action in response to the escalating American aggression. The American peace offensive had been launched in December 1965 but was still not finished at this time. But Gomułka was convinced that he knew its purpose. The Americans tried to justify their military escalation. The failure of peace talks justified the American invasion in the eyes of public opinion.[684] Gomułka's plan was simple. First, play the same trick on the Americans that Harriman had played on him. Namely, to dangle an olive branch in front of Washington's eyes. Then, once the Americans had been lured to the negotiating table, the Vietnamese would issue unacceptable demands to Johnson's administration. Then, when the Americans had broken off negotiations, the story would be published to flip the image that Harriman's trip had created in Western public opinion in December 1965. This time, the Americans would be seen as responsible for the failure of a concrete peace proposal. Additionally, Gomułka believed the story should be widely publicised to have the most significant possible impact on American and international public opinion. Le Tranh Nghi agreed but proposed a simple division of labour – the Vietnamese would continue fighting for survival while the Poles handled diplomacy. Moreover, the negotiations would allow the Vietnamese a much-needed breathing space to regroup and send supplies to the South. Zhai argued that Le Duan also supported "tantalising Johnson with diplomatic leads" to use the ensuing bombing pause to regroup and resupply.[685]

In March 1966, the MSZ informed Siedlecki, the Polish Ambassador in Hanoi, about the possibility of Canadian mediation. Nevertheless, the MSZ believed the key objective of preventing an "invasion" of the DRV should be maintained, even if the mediation effort was handed to the Canadians.[686] The Canadian initiative, however, failed to materialise. In April 1966, Janusz Lewandowski arrived in Saigon as the new Polish Ambassador to the ICSC.[687]

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[684] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/66, Protokół z rozmowy I Sekretarza KC PZPR Władysława Gomułki z przewodniczącym delegacji rządowej DRW, wicepremierem Le Thanh Nghi, 10 January 1966, p. 140-3
[685] Ibid. p. 117-118; Zhai, 2000, *China and the Vietnam Wars,* p. 148-9
[686] AMSZ, 51/75 W-3 - Wietnam Szyfr. 2546, 14 March 1966
[687].Ibid.Chronologia wydarzeń dot. rozmów Lewandowski-Lodge w 1966 (Chronology of Lewandowski-Lodge talks in 1966).

And thus, Janusz Lewandowski, by the end of June 1966, approached Giovanni D'Orlandi, the Italian Ambassador in Saigon. The reason for Lewandowski coming to the Italians first was simple. D'Orlandi was Cabot-Lodge's friend. And Lewandowski did not risk an outright rejection by approaching the Italian diplomat. D'Orlandi dutifully passed the message to Cabot-Lodge, who in turn informed Washington. It was immediately recognised in Washington that failure to engage would demonstrate the American unwillingness to resolve the conflict peacefully. Washington proceeded sceptically but chose to engage. On the other hand, Washington "protested politely" in Rome since D'Orlandi did not test the viability of the Polish offer.[688] Such indirect approaches were a well-established practice of Polish diplomacy. An indirect approach minimised the risk of an outright rejection by its intended recipient, and Rapacki used that move, often with great success.[689] However, by the end of June 1966, the US government authorised the airstrikes campaign against the petroleum storage and transport facilities.[690] Hershberg argued that following this, Lewandowski "stepped up his game". The Polish Ambassador to the ICSC claimed that the North Vietnamese would not require immediate reunification, nor would they insist on neutralising South Vietnam. According to Lewandowski, Hanoi was also prepared for a staged US withdrawal. All of this caused Lodge to be suspicious. Hershberg argued that Lewandowski acted without authorisation from Warsaw and Hanoi but had a "licence to fish" from Rapacki.[691] Lewandowski's move most likely reflected the Vietnamese' uncertainty over the negotiations. The DRV, even before the POL strikes campaign, was desperately considering negotiations. On the one hand, the North Vietnamese feared missing an opportunity for talks. On the other, they feared that rushing to the negotiating table would risk accepting unfavourable peace terms. The Chinese further aggravated the situation in the DRV by obstructing the delivery of supplies to North Vietnam.[692]

However, despite the issues caused by the increased bombings carried out by the Americans, PLO and Chipolbrok managed to keep the steady flow of supplies, mainly because the bombing campaign proved to be ineffective. A CIA report noted with surprise that, despite previous military assurances, POL strikes would prompt PLO officials to halt the

[688] Ibid.; Gravel, Mike, ed. *The Pentagon Papers*, *Volume* IV, Boston, Beacon Press, 1972, p. 19
[689] The first successful indirect approach was announced in 1957. Rapacki outlined his idea of a nuclear-free zone in Eastern and Central Europe. Instead of issuing a formal diplomatic note to the US and its allies, Rapacki announced his plan in the press. A public debate eventually pressured the American government to engage with the Rapacki plan.
[690] In American nomenclature POL.
[691] Hershberg, *Marigold,* 2012, p. 122-40
[692] AMSZ, 51/75 W-3 Wietnam, Szyfr. 6397, 17 June 1966

services. However, Polish flagships still called at North Vietnamese ports, carrying goods from Eastern Europe and Japan.[693] The Polish intelligence report delivered to the Polish Politburo by Zdzisław Rurarz on 11 July 1966 stipulated that the Americans believed in a victory "without negotiations." The report's bluntness bordered on dissent since it claimed that the Soviet SAM missiles proved ineffective against American aircraft flying over the DRV. According to Rurarz, even the Americans seemed surprised by the ineffectiveness of the Soviet equipment and, thus, more confident in their ability to achieve a military victory.[694] Rurarz also claimed that the Vietnam war fuelled a boom in the American economy and that the conflict was not widely publicised in Western society. Thus, opposition to American involvement in Indochina was minimal. The report concluded that all these factors undermined America's willingness to enter meaningful negotiations. Rurarz warned the Polish Politburo that any American initiative to enter into talks would only serve as a propaganda move to justify a further escalation of the conflict. [695]

Although the DRV leadership was considering genuine negotiations, Warsaw was increasingly convinced that any talks with the Americans were futile. Despite that, the Poles decided to follow Hanoi's lead, hoping that their diplomatic assistance could later be translated into tangible economic benefits. The DRV insisted that the Polish diplomatic efforts provide a "breather" for the DRV and FNL forces to regroup and resupply. On the other hand, American peace initiatives should be publicly revealed as fraudulent.[696] Rapacki was also aware that Beijing would not allow Hanoi to reach an agreement with Washington. Since the American bombing campaign had proved ineffective, the Poles concluded in September 1966 that if they could keep the seaborn supply lines, the Vietnamese could stand their ground. Poland would thus focus its diplomatic efforts on discrediting America's involvement in Indochina.[697] The significance of Polish shipping to Vietnam was even acknowledged by Walt Rostow. He informed Johnson that the Poles constantly exaggerated their assistance to North Vietnam. Poland's grandiose public claims hardly ever represented reality. But Rostow drew Johnson's attention to the fact that Polish shipping could not be classified as aid. But the

[693] CIA, FOIA, CIARDP78T02095R00080070058-2, p. 8
[694] Economic attaché in the Polish embassy in Washington between 1962 and 1966, and a Military Intelligence Agent. The Americans, however, failed to observe that their bombing campaign also proved ineffective. By mid-1966, Washington received a report outlining the futility of American airstrikes against the DRV. *The Pentagon Papers*, *Volume* IV, 1972, p. 115–23
[695] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/62 Notatka informacyjna, 11 July 1966, p. 220-23
[696] AMSZ, 51-75 W-3, Wietnam. Szyfr. 10946/2, 23 August 1966
[697] AMSZ, 51-75 W-3 Wietnam, Szyfrogram 9234, 6 September 1966.

Polish seaborne supplies from Eastern Europe were "the one meaningful contribution." Walt Rostow even acknowledged the significance of Polish shipping and noted that the Poles were very quietly about this form of assistance to their Vietnamese allies.[698]

Soon after, the Vietnamese toughened the stance they had defined in August 1966. Supply lines reaching Vietnamese ports boosted the morale of North Vietnam. At a meeting with Gomułka on 17 October 1966, Le Tranh Nghi assured Gomułka that the distribution of supplies delivered from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union ran relatively smoothly, despite some setbacks. Nghi informed Gomułka that negotiations with the Americans were impossible in such circumstances.[699] Nevertheless, the Poles and the Vietnamese continued to pursue the diplomatic channel that had been established by Lewandowski. Given the Vietnamese and Polish positions both parties had defined by October 1966, it is hard to believe that the negotiation effort was genuine. But it is possible that Hanoi was playing both Warsaw and Washington for its own benefit. On 14 November 1966, Lodge asked Lewandowski if the Americans could count on Polish support in opening a negotiation channel with Hanoi. Lodge clarified the American proposals the following day.[700] A few days later, Rapacki informed Brezhnev for the first time of the secret negotiations, noting that the Soviet leader seemed surprised and had expressed his disappointment that the Vietnamese had not sought Soviet assistance.[701] On 25 November 1966, Pham Van Dong, the DRV's Prime Minister, authorised Polish mediation and requested that the negotiations be held in Warsaw. Having been informed of the Polish channel, Moscow decided to step aside and declined Gordon Brown's offer of British-Soviet consultations on Vietnam on 27 November 1966. The following day, the DRV's deputy Foreign Minister informed Lewandowski that he believed the Americans, by entering negotiations, only wanted to justify a further escalation of the war.[702] In this case, Hershberg's analysis proves crucial, as it helps to understand the complex diplomatic game that unfolded during Marigold. He argued that Pham Van Dong was one of the few, if not only, Vietnamese leaders genuinely hoping for a political solution to the

[698]Folder, "Walt Rostow, Vol. 17, December 14 - 31, 1966 [1 of 2]," Memos to the President, NSF, Box 12 [1 of 2], LBJ Presidential Library, Polish dilemma on Aid to N. Vietnam, 22 December 1966, accessed March 15, 2023, https://www.discoverlbj.org/item/nsf-memos-b12-1-f01

[699] AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. XIA/66, Protokól ze spotkania w KC PZPR z delegacją rządową DRW, 17 October 1966, p. 167-71

[700] AMSZ, 51/75 W-3 - Wietnam. Chronologia wydarzeń dot. rozmów Lewandowski-Lodge w 1966

[701] Ibid. Confirmed by Hershberg, *Marigold,* 2012, p. 320

[702] AMSZ, 51/75 W-3 - Wietnam. Chronologia wydarzeń dot. rozmów Lewandowski-Lodge w 1966

conflict.[703] Others, like deputy Foreign Minister Thak, were much more sceptical. This may explain the mixed messages received by Lewandowski from Hanoi in late November 1966.

The final act of Marigold mainly took place between Rapacki and John Gronouski, the American Ambassador in Warsaw. The first meeting occurred on 3 December 1966, just one day after American bombs fell on the outskirts of Hanoi. For the time being, both Rapacki and Pham Van Dong ignored the bombing and proceeded with negotiations. However, at the second meeting with Gronouski on 5 December 1966, Rapacki began questioning the so-called interpretation clause, which both the Poles and the Vietnamese had initially approved as a basis for talks.[704] Such a move on Rapacki's side indeed seems surprising. Creating additional obstacles just before negotiations can be interpreted as following Gomułka's plan, i.e., issuing Washington with unacceptable demands to prompt it to break off the talks. The other option, suggested by Hershberg, was that Rapacki was stalling to give Hanoi more time to reach a final decision.[705] If Rapacki was trying to break off the negotiations, he took a significant risk. Stalling was equally risky. Thankfully for Rapacki, the Americans provided him with the perfect gift. On 13 December 1966, American bombs again fell on Hanoi. Two prior bombing incidents on 2 and 4 December could be dismissed as accidental. The third prompted Pham Van Dong to inform the Polish Ambassador in Hanoi that the DRV was no longer interested in negotiations. On 14 December 1966, Rapacki furiously criticised Gronouski for America's efforts to undermine the talks with the interpretation clause. Moreover, just as a "real chance for peace" arose, the Americans decided to escalate their bombing campaign against the DRV.[706] By 16 December 1966, the diplomatic initiative, known as Marigold, was finally dead.

On 19 December, Gronouski met with Rapacki and delivered the American response to the collapse of the talks. Washington was placing all the blame on Poland. Rapacki angrily repudiated America's claims and abruptly ended the meeting with Gronouski. The very same day, Rapacki spoke with Brezhnev about the outcome of the Polish secret diplomacy. To

[703] Hershberg, *Marigold,* 2012
[704] AMSZ, 51/75 W-3 - Wietnam. Chronologia wydarzeń dot. rozmów Lewandowski-Lodge w 1966. The interpretation clause aimed to provide an easy way out for Washington if it deemed Hanoi as not complying with the agreement.
[705] Hershberg, *Marigold,* 2012, p. 360
[706] AMSZ, Z-26 W-29 T-277, Pilna notatk a z rozmowy z Amb. Gronouskim odbytej 14 XII 1966, 15 December 1966, p. 16

Rapacki's surprise, the Soviet leader seemed more interested in his upcoming hunting trip to Poland than in the negotiations regarding Vietnam. Rapacki saw that as a carte blanche for Poland to handle the fallout from Marigold.[707] As Hershberg convincingly argued, Washington soon realised that ending potential peace negotiations could place them in a very uncomfortable position. On 21 and 22 December 1966, Gronouski suggested to Rapacki a pause in bombing during the Vietnamese New Year (Tet), during which negotiations could be resumed. Another American proposal included resuming the talks via the American Ambassador to the UN, Goldberg. Rapacki rejected both suggestions.[708] The Americans unilaterally ceased the bombing campaign on 23 December 1966. However, by 30 December, Rapacki informed Gronouski that even such a move could not persuade Hanoi to resume talks.[709]

The Polish move to secure control over how the fallout from Marigold unfolded happened shortly after the initiative finally collapsed. The first "shot" in the "war of leaks" was fired in the UN.[710] On 24 December 1966, the Australian Ambassador to the UN informed Canberra about a strange occurrence. The Polish Ambassador to the UN, Bohdan Tomorowicz, in a conversation with the Swedish Ambassador to the UN, expressed an opinion that U Thant was the only person capable of halting the escalation of the Vietnam War. Tomorowicz's statement was accompanied by an "unusual expression of alarm at the danger of escalation." In conversation with the Australian ambassador, the Swedish Ambassador claimed he detected "a new and genuine fear that the war could get out of hand".[711] Rapacki was setting the stage for the upcoming war of leaks. He hoped to achieve his ultimate objective – isolation of the US on the international stage, which would make the American invasion of the DRV impossible. Shortly after, the Vietnamese followed Gomułka and Rurarz's advice and employed the Western media to publicise the American atrocities in the West.[712] The NLF used Gloria Stewart to promote the idea of multilateral and unconditional peace talks.[713] The DRV used Wilfred Burchett, an Australian journalist, to

[707] AMSZ, Z-26 W-29 T-277, Pilna notatk a z rozmowy z Amb. Gronouskim odbytej 19 XII 1966, 20 December 1966 p. 19-24
[708] AMSZ, Z-26 W-29 T-277, Pilna notatk a z rozmów z Amb. Gronouskim odbytych dnia 21 i 22 XII 1966, 22 December 1966. P. 29-31
[709] AMSZ, Z-26 W-29 T-277, Pilna notatk a z rozmów z Amb. Gronouskim odbytyej dnia 30 XII 1966, 31 December 1966, p. 3-36
[710] Hershberg, *Marigold,* 2012, p. 417
[711] NAA, A 1838, 3020/11/161/2 Part 18, Confidential from Moscow, Vietnam New Initiatives, 24 December 1966, p. 165
[712] NAA, A 1838, 3020/11/161/2 Part 18, Secret, From London to Wellington, Vietnam, 20 January 1967 p. 51
[713] NAA, A 1838, 3020/11/161/2 Part 18, Outward Cablegram to Embassy in Saigon, 26 January 1967, p. 39

promote its own "peace offensive" in early 1967.[714] By mid-January 1967, Washington received "an unusual" number of mediation efforts from across the globe.[715]

The Canadians suggested using the ICSC as a possible mediation channel. However, the Chairman of the ICSC, Rahman, demanded that ICSC involvement be conditional on a unanimous decision of all ICSC members. The Poles used this condition to express their support but blocked the initiative, claiming that the negotiation time was not "ripe".[716] By February, the Australians observed a rather strange occurrence, which they could not entirely explain. The ICSC Chairman Rahman noted a visible difference between the Polish and Soviet approaches to resolving the Vietnam conflict. While the USSR was anxious to resolve the conflict diplomatically as soon as possible, the Poles displayed far less enthusiasm for a diplomatic solution in early 1967.[717]

In an attempt to revive Marigold, the Americans ceased their bombing campaign for the duration of the Vietnamese New Year festivities. The Vietnamese decided to use that "breather" as a chance to regroup and resupply.[718] The Poles did their part to ship as many vital supplies to Vietnam as possible. In 1967, Polish intelligence officials employed the Chinese minority in Cambodia – primarily the smugglers – and corrupt provincial Cambodian officials to increase the transit of goods from the port of Sihanoukville to the FLN in the South.[719] In fact, Colonel Ryszard Iwańciów, whom Hershberg mistakenly identified as Lewandowski's assistant, was a highly skilled military intelligence officer.[720] His task was to obtain intelligence using the cover of the ICSC diplomat. Iwańciów then shared all the gathered intelligence – dislocation, number and strength, and tactics of American troops - with the FLN and the DRV military.[721] With the assurances of the Polish military attaché in Hanoi, the Poles continued to block all the ICSC peace initiatives. According to military estimates,

[714] NAA, A 1838, 3020/11/161/2 Part 19, Inward Savingram from Australian Embassy in Washington, North Vietnam, 10 February 1967, p. 237-8
[715] NAA, A 1838, 3020/11/161/2 Part 18, Inward Cablegram from Embassy in Washington, 10 January 1967 p. 110
[716] NAA, A 1838, 3020/11/161/2 Part 18, Inward Cablegram from Australian High Commission in Ottawa, 13 January 1967, p. 93-94
[717] NAA, A 1838, 3020/11/161/2 Part 19, Inward Cablegram from Australian Embassy in Saigon, Peace Feelers, 8 February 1967 p. 311
[718] NAA, A 1838, 3020/11/161/2 Part 19, Inward Cablegram from Australian Embassy in Saigon, Developments During Tet Truce, 13 February 1967, p. 234
[719] IPN BU2602/12754, Możlowości prowadzenia pracy operacyjnej oficera MKNiK w Kambodży, 21 August 1968 p. 105-16
[720] Hershberg, *Marigold*, 2012, p. 144
[721] AMSZ, Z-26 W-28 T-253, Ryszard Iwańciów, Notatka Służbowa, Tajne spec. znaczenia, 3 February 1967, p. 20

there were at least 50 000 American planes over the DRV in 1967. Out of 10 301 objects attacked in the DRV in 1967, only 1100 were damaged or destroyed.[722] Given that the considerable American effort yielded insignificant results, the Poles decided that the North Vietnamese could withstand even the most intense bombing campaign, so long as Poland maintained a continuity of supplies from Eastern Europe, which supplemented assistance provided by the USSR and the PRC.

The diplomatic campaign launched by Poland and the DRV in early 1967 began to yield tangible results. By March 1967, the Canadians and the Indians urged the Americans to cease the bombing campaign unconditionally.[723] By October, the US had lost the support of all the neutral countries in the UN. Even its position in the Security Council had deteriorated.[724] Surprisingly, other NATO members, such as Denmark and the Netherlands, criticised the prolonged bombing campaign.[725] The US could only intensify the ineffective bombing campaign in such circumstances. Without international public support or even NATO allies, the US could not send troops to the DRV. The former presidential Security Advisor, McGeorge Bundy, was furious about the consequences of Marigold. He called Rapacki and Lewandowski "shysters" and accused them of misleading the US government.[726] But even Bundy acknowledged that Poland's actions differed from those of the other Eastern European countries active in the Vietnam conflict. According to Bundy, the Czechoslovaks and Hungarians were "completely in Moscow's pocket" regarding the Vietnam issue. Poland's motives were, however, different, but Bundy could not wholly define them.[727] It is hard to gauge if the Poles knowingly made the most of the Western perception of them as a satellite. However, it is clear that the Americans deemed the Polish initiative to be in line with Moscow's wishes. Washington was convinced that the USSR wanted to end the war but could not get directly involved in the negotiations. Thus, the Soviets chose the Poles to act as their proxy. However, contrary to Western perceptions, Warsaw was not serving as Moscow's

[722] IPN BU 2602/7976, Notatka informacyjna o charakterze i właściwościach działań lotnictwa amerykańskiego przeciw DRW w 1967 roku, 8 February 1967, p. 33
[723] NAA, A 1838, 3020/11/161/2 Part 19, Inward Cablegram from Australian High Commission in New Delhi, Vietnam: Indian Moves on the ICC, p. 105
[724] NAA, A 1838, 3020/11/161/2 Part 22, Inward Cablegram from Australian Mission to the United Nations, Vietnam, 6 October 1967. p. 198
[725] NAA, A 1838, 3020/11/161/2 Part 22, Inward Cablegram from Australian Mission to the United Nations, United States-United Nations, 27 September 1967 p. 235
[726] NAA, A 1838, 3020/11/161/2 Part 20, Inward Savingram from Embassy in Washington, Vietnam, 19 June 1967, p. 55
[727] Ibid. p. 57

proxy. In their assessment of Marigold, even the Americans acknowledged that the Soviets, at best, played only a "passive role".[728] Słowiak's argument that the Poles and the North Vietnamese were not mere pawns in the hands of Moscow and Beijing seems to be confirmed.[729] Rapacki and Pham Van Dong may have entertained the idea of genuine negotiations but ultimately decided against a diplomatic solution for the time being. The American bombing of Hanoi in mid-December 1966 gave Rapacki an excellent excuse to break off the negotiations. He could then blame the Americans for the Marigold fiasco, having the entire Western public opinion playing the role of a spectator.

Following the failure of Marigold, the Poles maintained their economic involvement simultaneously while also stepping up their hitherto negligible military involvement. In this, however, Poland was not unique. The CIA observed that all Eastern European countries, alongside Mongolia and North Korea, signed agreements for the first time explicitly mentioning military assistance.[730] For the first time in the war, the Eastern Europeans began to supply weapons directly to the Vietcong.[731] This greater Eastern European involvement could be explained by the escalation of Vietcong and North Vietnamese military activity during the Tet and May offensives of 1968. On the other side, encouraging increased Eastern European military involvement could have been an attempt by the Kremlin to break through its inability to translate its involvement in the Vietnam war into political gains.[732] For the time being, the Chinese had a monopoly on political influence in the DRV. Yet, despite the Chinese preponderance in the DRV, the Eastern Europeans increased their military assistance. In January 1968, Poland and China signed an agreement regulating the transit of Polish goods, including weapons, through Chinese territory. An agreement that closely resembled the Sino-Soviet transit agreement signed in 1967.[733] These agreements seemingly undermined Poland's role. With the free overland passage of goods and weapons via China, the Polish merchant fleet was no longer the main supply line to the DRV. Yet still, the Poles, alongside the Czechoslovaks, emerged as the leading Eastern European weapons and munitions suppliers by September 1968.[734] Despite being the Eastern European leaders of military suppliers, the

[728] Gravel, Mike, ed. *The Pentagon Papers,* Volume IV, p. 17
[729] Słowiak, Comradeship, friendship, wariness: the first decade of relations between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Polish Peoples' Republic (1954-1964), *The Twelfth International Convention of Asia Scholars,* 2022, p. 662-73
[730] CIA, FOIA, C00011747 – Internatioal Communist Aid to North Vietnam, 02.03.68, p. 5; CIA, FOIA,
[731] CIA, FOIA, RDP78T02095R000800020030-7 – Communist Aid to North Vietnam, 12.06.68, p.3
[732] CIA, FOIA, C00011747 – Internatioal Communist Aid to North Vietnam, 02.03.68, p. 5
[733] AMSZ, Z-26 W-30 T-290, p. 5
[734] CIA, FOIA, RDP78T02095R000800020037-0 – Communist Aid to North Vietnam, 26.09.68, p. 3

Poles, in fact, kept a lid on their military transfers. Every demand to increase the shipment of weapons and munitions to Vietnam was opposed by the Polish Ministry of Defence, which preferred more profitable sales to India.[735] Just as in many other cases, proletarian internationalism would be side-lined by more pragmatic considerations.

Although the Poles preferred more profitable deals, the Polish-Vietnamese military cooperation proved more fruitful than the Vietnamese cooperation with any other Soviet Bloc country. Unlike their Soviet and Eastern European counterparts, the Poles – as ICSC members – had almost unrestricted access to Western diplomats in Indochina. An ICSC pin allowed any Polish military or civilian official to travel freely around the whole of Indochina. And the Poles entirely used this advantage. In September 1967, Department I of the Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs[736], responsible for intelligence, registered a new secret informant, codenamed "Grace". The MSW managed to recruit Bernice Genevieve Lewandowski, who worked for the American Department of Defence, where she was one of the chief analysts of international military affairs of the United States. Moreover, the MSW already had two informants in the American embassy in Saigon. Lewandowski, in her part, provided the Polish intelligence with materials concerning the American plans in Vietnam, discussion papers of the National Security Council and various American analyses of the situation in Poland and within the Bloc.[737] The Poles were also able to obtain documents from the Joint United States Public Affairs Office concerning psychological warfare in Vietnam and daily reports of American military activity. One of the Polish military intelligence officers, Podstawski, would pose as an American journalist and pay daily visits to the U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam Information Bureau. There, Podstawski received analysed and communiques concerning the military activity of the South Vietnamese and the American armies. All the precious military intelligence was passed on, via the ICSC Liaison officer in Hanoi, to the DRV leadership and the Vietcong.[738] Other Polish military ICSC officials would travel around Vietnam and observe American military tactics. One such example was detailed drawings of American aircraft formations and manoeuvres, including those designed specifically to doge anti-aircraft artillery and missiles. The Polish military attaché, colonel Jan Kramela, briefed his North Vietnamese colleagues thoroughly on the issue. Then he travelled south and shared the

[735] AMSZ, Z-26 W-30 T-290, p. 37
[736] Pol. Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, hereafter the MSW.
[737] IPN, BU 003195/522, p. 7-20
[738] IPN, BU 2602/12754, p. 164-166

intelligence with the Viet Cong.[739] All the intelligence and Polish effort did not go to waste. Kramela proudly informed Warsaw that the American aerial warfare losses were nine times higher than the North Vietnamese.[740]

The Polish-North Vietnamese post-1959 cooperation in 1968 yielded the most spectacular results. All other Eastern European military attachés complained about the North Vietnamese unwillingness to share even their experience of fighting with the Americans.[741] The Soviet military attaché, Lebedev, lamented that the North Vietnamese would not "consult anything" with the USSR, would not share captured American equipment, and would remain pro-Chinese after the war.[742] By trying to force the DRV to the negotiating table in 1968, the Rumanians achieved little besides being increasingly side-lined by the North Vietnamese.[743] The Poles, on the contrary, were often consulted and had access to all the DRV's military secrets. Moreover, Poland was the only country to place specific orders concerning captured American equipment. All would be delivered under one condition that the Poles maintain secrecy, given the DRV's complicated relations with the USSR and China.[744]

Economically, the American escalation changed the Polish-Vietnamese trade relations completely. Until 1966, Poland was running a trade deficit with the DRV. At its highest, the deficit was approximately 12 million convertible zlotys. From 1966, however, Poland ran a favourable trade balance, which reached its peak at approximately 85 million convertible zlotys in 1968.[745] In comparison, the total indebtedness of the DRV to Poland by 1970 totalled around 99.2 million Rbl or 440.5 million convertible zlotys.[746] Of course, the war-torn DRV was primarily financed by loans from other socialist countries, Poland included, so the positive trade balance is not enough to demonstrate the point. Shipping itself was very profitable. It allowed Poland to extend the service and create a joint Polish-Korean shipbrokers company, Choploship, modelled on Chipolbrok, in 1966. The company serviced North Korea's trade with other Asian countries and Australia. The presence of Polish ships in

[739] IPN, BU 2602/7976, p. 650-662
[740] Ibid. p. 676
[741] Ibid. p. 623
[742] Ibid, p. 400
[743] Ibid. p. 600-1
[744] Ibid. p. 178-179
[745] Złoty dewizowy was an accounting unit rather than an actual convertible currency. Its value until 1970 was constant. 1 złoty dewizowy was an equivalent of $0.25 and 0.225 Rbl. Główny Urząd Statystyczny (GUS), Rocznik Statystyczny 1970, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo GUS, 1970, p. XX; 24-31
[746] AMSZ, AMSZ, 51/75 W-3 – Wietnam, Notaka w sprawie pomocu dla DRW, 10 May 1970, p. 4-5

the region allowed Poland to extend its trade relations with Australia in 1966 and pick up a portion of Australia's cargo bound for other Eastern European countries.[747]

Soon after the collapse of Marigold, the Vietnamese freight company, Vietfracht began chartering goods from all Eastern European countries from only three ports. These were Gdańsk, Gdynia and Szczecin.[748] Even though a significant amount was carried by Chipolbrok, the Poles would also benefit from transit charges on goods that PLO and Chipolbrok loaded on their ships in Polish ports. The Ministry of Shipping and the Statistical Yearbooks do not offer specific figures regarding the amount of transited cargo or the profit that this generated. However, some figures demonstrate the scale of Poland's shipping operations. The CIA reported that between 1964 and 1972, PLO ships carried 323 000 tonnes of cargo to Vietnam.[749] For 1968 alone, PLO made approximately 151 million zlotys moving Eastern European goods to Vietnam and Vietnamese goods back to Eastern Europe. This total also included charges for humanitarian aid picked up by PLO in Western European ports.[750] In 1969, the Ministry of Shipping moved to solidify Poland's position and successfully pressured Vietfracht into excluding tonnage other than PLO and Chipolbrok in shipping to and from Vietnam.[751] Vietfracht might have been reliable in terms of ordering cargo but not in terms of payments. It started accruing debt in 1966, and by 1970, the Vietnamese owed PLO and Chipolbrok 238 783 Rbl, £102 610 and $41 993. These separate figures demonstrate that some of the freight charges were payable in convertible currencies, and that the Poles, in this regard, were more interested in making a profit than assisting their communist allies. Yet, in the case of Vietfracht, the Poles showed remarkable leniency in collecting the debt. The reason was, yet again, not ideological. The Ministry of Shipping believed Poland should be lenient since "Poland cannot give up freight to Vietnam; they are the substance of our Australo-Indonesian Line". The Ministry feared that if the Poles pressed the Vietnamese too hard on payments, Vietfracht might have directed Eastern European goods to Rostock, Constanta or Varna. The Ministry of Shipping believed that East German goods being loaded on ships in East German ports was an unacceptable practice. It "undermined Poland's dominant position" in trade relations between Eastern Europeans and North Vietnamese.[752]

[747] CIA-RDP85T00875R001700040028-6 – Poland's Global network of liner services, December 1973, p. 9; FO 371/188779, Telegram from the British Embassy in Warsaw to the FO, 30 June 1966.
[748] AAN, Ministerstwo Żeglugi, sygn. 40/15, Notatka dla Ministra Żeglugi w sprawie przewozów do Wietnamu, 10 December 1970.
[749] CIA-RDP85T00875R001700040028-6 – Poland's Global network of liner services, December 1973, p. 9
[750] AAN, Ministerstwo Żeglugi, sygn. 40/15, Ładunki w relacji z Wietnamu, 11 February 1969
[751] AAN, Ministerstwo Żeglugi, sygn. 40/15, Ministerstwo Żeglugi do PLO, Linie Dalekowschodnie, 3 March 1969
[752] AAN, Ministerstwo Żeglugi, sygn. 40/15, Notatka dla Ob. Ministra Żeglugi, 10 December 1970.

The Poles, it seems, struck a bargain for their participation in secret talks that effectively collapsed.

Furthermore, as Kramela noted, Bloc diplomats in Hanoi were busy "sucking up to the Chinese". The Rumanians and the Czechoslovaks were the most blatant in their efforts. Kramela observed an ostentatious lack of reciprocity from the Chinese side. However, the Polish diplomats had not been instructed to kowtow to the Chinese, mainly because the Chinese tried to woo the Poles in 1968. [753] Overtures by the Chinese deputy military attaché, Vien Van Lau, genuinely surprised Kramela, especially since Lau in the past had been provoking feuds with other Soviet Bloc representatives.[754] These facts confirmed how much sway Warsaw had in Hanoi. Even the Chinese, dismissive of all other Bloc representatives, tried to placate the Poles. The Chinese move was most likely caused by something that Kramela's Eastern European and Soviet counterparts missed entirely. Kramela proved to be a better observer. Throughout 1968, he informed Warsaw that the Chinese influence in the DRV was decreasing, mainly because of how Mao's Cultural Revolution unfolded. The post-1968 period would thus prove crucial for the DRV's future loyalties.[755]

As the Vietnamese grew more confident in their ability to outlast the American involvement in the region, they increasingly focused on reconstruction and expansion of their economy. In 1969 they turned to their chief allies – the USSR, China and Poland – to propose designs and cost calculations for the coal mines in Yen Tu and Kha Tam, the largest anthracite deposits in Vietnam. All the allies soon came up with their initial proposals. The Polish proposal proved to be the most costly one. Moreover, it did come with substantial loans, as did the Chinese or Soviet proposals. Yet, despite all that, the North Vietnamese chose the Polish offer, to the surprise of the Polish Ministry of Mining and Energy.[756] The war was not yet over, and the negotiations stalled. Lacking funds, the North Vietnamese decided to scrap the Kha Tam project entirely, but Yen Tu was eventually approved in 1972.[757] In the meantime, the Poles continued their diplomatic support for the DRV. When the Nixon administration presented the U.N. with a draft resolution concerning the American POWs, Poland assured the DRV that the Bloc would oppose it and that Warsaw was working on the

[753] Ibid. p. 498
[754] Ibid. p. 496
[755] Ibid, p. 569
[756] APK, MGiE-Katowice, sygn.. 1/433, p. 144
[757] Ibid. p. 145

Arab countries to modify their position in line with the North Vietnamese interests.[758] In order to expand Poland's fleet operations in the region, the Poles drafted a charter of the joint Polish-Vietnamese shipping company.[759] The MSZ, with great joy, observed the complete collapse of Chinese influence in the DRV following the Sino-American rapprochement in 1970. But in the light of the sharp decrease in Chinese aid, the Polish Ambassador in Hanoi was instructed to investigate if the DRV would still maintain its war effort.[760] Warsaw sent the MSW intelligence specialists to train DRV officials to boost the North Vietnamese capability.[761] It seemed that the Poles were now vigorously pursuing their previously outlined goals in Vietnam and the region.

However, the leadership change in Poland in 1970 curbed Poland's increasing involvement in the region, at least for the time being. The new leadership, under Edward Gierek, would turn more to the West for loans and economic cooperation. This westward turn was very much in tune with the overall Bloc policy. It can be seen in the military and economic assistance numbers, although these numbers are a combined total for Eastern Europe as a whole. The Eastern European economic assistance to the DRV peaked at 205 million USD in 1970. The following year, it amounted to 195 million USD and then plummeted to 75 million USD in 1972.[762] However, the reduction in Poland's involvement was not only motivated by détente and increased cooperation with the West. It was also motivated by economic factors. In 1967 the USSR signed a transit agreement with China. The following year, Warsaw signed a similar agreement. This undermined PLO's role as the chief carrier of Bloc supplies to Vietnam. However, by 1968, PLO had established a solid position in the region. In 1971 it opened an express line to Japan and became a full member of the FEFC. The mining of the Haiphong Harbour in May 1972 caused PLO to suspend its service to the port.[763] In 1973 the Poles signed the final contract to construct the Yen Tu coal mine. The contract also granted Poland a joint exploitation privilege for the Vietnamese rare-earth elements.[764] Moreover, Poland had been investing in the DRV since 1959. By the early 1970s, Warsaw was seeking not to invest more but finally see some returns, 4.5 million rubles

[758] AMSZ, 6/77-Hanoi, 1970, szyfrogram nr. 8189, 10.11.1970
[759] Ibid. szyfrogram, 15.05.1970
[760] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 562, 23.01.1970
[761] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 660, 21.01.1970
[762] CIA, FOIA, RDP85T00875R001700050054-6 – Communist military aid deliveries in 1973, p. 7
[763] A shipping conference regulating east and westbound seaborne trade in the Far East. CIA, FOIA, RDP79T01098A000200060001-8, East European Merchant Fleets, 12.1973, p. 9
[764] APK, MGiE-Katowice, sygn.. 1/433, p. 123

annually, to be precise.[765] The Poles were no longer willing to invest more in Vietnam and, under Gierek's leadership, were increasingly turning their attention to the West. It is also possible that the Kremlin was nudging its Eastern European allies away from Vietnam. It was apparently evident in the Kremlin "that the principal benefits of the end of the war will occur outside Asia, mostly… in relations with the U.S. and Western Europe".[766] The circumstances have changed significantly since 1959. By 1973, India's main ICSC power had formally recognised the DRV. The Americans began their official withdrawal from Indochina. The dissolution of the ICSC, although dreaded by Polish military intelligence, was welcomed in Warsaw.[767]

This chapter has demonstrated the evolution of Polish policy and involvement in Vietnam. Poland and the DRV's relations significantly changed from their starting point in 1950. Initially, Poland's role in the Vietnam conflict was a relatively passive one. Warsaw did not seek active involvement in the Far East but agreed to represent the Bloc in the ICSC in 1954. The period of initial involvement proved crucial as well. Following Stalin's death in 1953, the Soviet Bloc plunged into a period of internal party struggles. Polish diplomats hitherto used to only voice vehement condemnation or vociferous support, at whatever moment the Kremlin instructed them to do so. When Poland was thrust into the most significant cold war conflict, the instructions from Moscow were no longer coming regularly. Warsaw was left to tackle the issue alone. Very quickly, the Poles realised they could pursue an independent course. Their first attempt to formulate an independent policy was fraught with past habits and outdated thinking. In 1955, Warsaw sought to cede all the power and responsibility to a much larger, seemingly more powerful nation than Poland – India. The Poles soon realised that India could not extend its influence into Indochina, especially when the main competitor was the U.S. With the gradual decomposition of the Stalinist system, new Polish thinking emerged. This thinking called for an independent Polish foreign policy. A policy that would focus on Polish national interest. Nevertheless, the example of American involvement warned against disregarding potential allies' benefits. After closely observing the Americans in South Vietnam, the Poles wanted a model of relations that would be mutually beneficial. The events of Polish October 1956 allowed Warsaw to formulate and pursue

[765] AAN, URM, sygn. 79/10, p. 4
[766] CIA, FOIA, RDP85t00875R001100160035-1 - Moscow's View of the Post-War Prospects in Indochina, 20.02.1973, p.
[767] IPN, BU 2602/12754, p.302

independent policies in Europe and worldwide. Vietnam was Poland's first attempt at an independent policy on a global stage.

The events of October 1956 allowed Poland to acquire an unprecedented, at least since 1945, degree of autonomy. Unfortunately, these developments also turned Poland's communist allies against it while attracting enormous support from the West. For nearly three years, Gomułka struggled with that conundrum. In 1959 he decided to abandon the reformist rhetoric and officially made the PZPR more in tune with the broader communist movement. However, this was only a propaganda move. Poland would never again follow the principles of "fraternal proletarian internationalism". Polish foreign policy would remain very pragmatic, focused on improving Poland's international stance and benefits to the national economy. While others, the Soviet Bloc and Western countries alike, were involved in Vietnam to defend their ideology, the Poles ran a very profitable business. Involvement in Vietnam allowed the Polish merchant fleet to upset the established trade and shipping in the region. Vietnam, for Warsaw, was not the ultimate goal. It served as a springboard to extend the Polish presence in the region. This goal, the Poles had largely achieved by 1964. However, the Polish assistance was dwarfed by the Soviet and Chinese involvement. But the Polish model assumed a mutual benefit for both the Poles and the Vietnamese. Thus, despite heavy reliance on Moscow and Beijing for supplies, Hanoi chose Warsaw to be the champion of its national interest on the global stage. It did so in 1962 and 1965-66.

That model, so profitable for Poland, was threatened by the direct American involvement in 1964. Faced with a real possibility of the DRV's collapse or Chinese takeover, Warsaw decided to use all the tools at its disposal to prevent that from happening. Gomułka and Rapacki were realists and very shrewd politicians. They knew that a military victory was not within their reach. But they did find a way to cripple the American military effort enough to remove the danger of the DRV's collapse. That way was diplomacy. The Poles lured the Americans to the negotiating table using vague but very tempting peace terms. Just as the Vietnamese-American negotiations were about to begin, Rapacki began to come up with obstacles. It was a risky strategy. The Americans could have easily spun the narrative and presented Rapacki as the man responsible for the fiasco of negotiations. Thankfully for Rapacki, the Americans bombed the residential districts of Hanoi in early and mid-December 1966. Rapacki, and Pham Van Dong, used this as a pretext to end the talks. Then Rapacki leaked the story to the Western press, while the Vietnamese used left-leaning journalists to

publicise the Vietnam War. Soon after, the Americans found themselves isolated from even their NATO allies on the issue of Vietnam. Moreover, they faced increasing internal opposition to the American involvement in Indochina. Rapacki managed to flip the story. Post-1966, the Vietnam War would never again be viewed as a righteous American crusade. It would be viewed as an American war of imperial aggression, against which Vietnam, a small and poor nation, was bravely defending itself. Hershberg and Gaiduk argued that Moscow was the decision-making centre, and nothing happened without Kremlin's tacit approval. But even the American Department of Defence analysts acknowledged that Moscow's role if there was any, was "passive" at best.[768] My evidence point to the conclusion that the Marigold initiative was purely bilateral Polish-Vietnamese operation, and Moscow had no control over it.

Moreover, throughout the whole year in 1967, the Poles torpedoed any, even Soviet, attempts to revive the negotiations. This confirms the claim that Poland pursued its own agenda. Notably, the Polish stance was in direct opposition to the Soviet goals. The Soviets wanted to be relieved of their need to support the DRV as soon as possible. They could not abandon Vietnam since that would be a fatal blow to Moscow's claim to the leadership of the worldwide communist movement. But, unlike the Poles, the Soviets and other Eastern European leaders did not have direct access to the Vietnamese motives or objectives. While Moscow believed it was possible to nudge Hanoi to the negotiating table, Warsaw was sure that it was not the case. Thus, the Poles were able to formulate more effective approaches towards Hanoi. Warsaw ensured it would never openly try to highjack the DRV's foreign policy and was not prone to making ill-timed approaches that could alienate the North Vietnamese. Thus, Poland never suffered the fate of Rumania, which was unceremoniously shut off from Vietnamese affairs after its poorly timed attempt to bring Hanoi to the negotiating table in 1968.

The ultimate proof of Polish influence in Vietnam were the events of 1968. The Chinese, sensing that their political sway in Hanoi might be crumbling, approached the Poles in an attempt to maintain Chinese dominance. The Chinese believed that Poland was the only power that could help them maintain their influence in Vietnam. The Chinese dismissed Soviet, Hungarian, Rumanian and other diplomats as irrelevant. Between 1968 and 1970,

[768] Pentagon Papers, vol. IV, p. 19

Poland's influence in Vietnam reached its peak. However, in 1970, Gomułka was ousted for the second and final time. The new Polish leader, Edward Gierek, decided to seek closer economic cooperation with the West. That new cooperation would be based on substantial Western loans. In order to achieve those loans, Gierek decided to moderate Poland's involvement in Vietnam. The Poles ensured they were still making profits there, but political influence was not the top priority. The Poles were never as influential as between 1968 and 1970, but Poland still played an essential role in preventing Hanoi from being permanently stuck in Beijing's political orbit.

Chapter V – Nigeria: A case study for Poland and decolonisation in the global Cold War

The role of Poland and Eastern Europe in Africa has not been a subject of a robust scholarly debate. The Polish scholarship offers only a few notable monographs, such as a scholarly analysis of Poland's relations with West Africa by Jacek Knopek.[769] Another notable scholarly example is five volumes presenting the history of the Poles in Nigeria.[770] Both relatively recent monographs offer a broad overview of Poland's historical relations with West Africa or Nigeria. Both offer an excellent and factual representation of how Poland's relations with the region unfolded. However, neither offers much analysis nor attempts to explain why Poland got involved in the region or Nigeria. Additionally, Knopek tends to minimise Poland's impact on the region. He also offers a standard orthodox argument that Poland's regional foreign policy was subject to Soviet global goals. Nevertheless, despite his orthodox stance, Knopek did observe that the overall Bloc policy towards West Africa was often negotiated. Furthermore, countries that discussed their moves in the region most often were the Soviet Union, Poland, and the GDR.[771]

The western scholarship also only recently discovered Eastern European involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa. The notable examples are, however, few. One such example is a collection edited by Muehlenbeck and Telepneva.[772] This edited collection, however, focuses not only on Africa but on the Third World in general, and analysis of Eastern European involvement in Africa is only incidental. Despite its novel approach, the collection still features some orthodox Cold War views. One of them is represented by an IPN historian, Przemyslaw Gasztołd, who argued that Poland's involvement in Africa was "inconsequential".[773] Gasztołd argued that Poland acted as a Soviet proxy and was not interested in improving its "modest contribution" to decolonisation.[774] However, even Gasztołd acknowledged that Poland's approach towards Africa was not ruled by ideology but by pragmatic considerations. Thus, according to Gasztołd, Poland preferred more profitable relations with Nigeria over purely ideological assistance offered to Ghana.[775] James Mark and Paul Betts compiled another edited volume that tackled Eastern European involvement in the

[769] Jacek Knopek, *Stosunki Polsko-Zachodnioafrykanskie,* (Warszawa, Adam Marszalek, 2013)
[770] Stanislaw Plaszewicz (ed.), *Polacy w Nigerii vol. 1,2,3,4 and 5,* (Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Akademickie DIALOG, 2014)
[771] Knopek, *Stosunki Polsko-Zachodnioafrykanskie*, p.122-3, 234
[772] Philip Muehlenbeck and Natalia Telepneva (eds.), *Warsaw Pact intervention in the Third World,* 2020
[773] IPN – Instytut Pamieci Narodowej; eng. Institute of National Remembrance remains a bastion of Cold War orthodox thinking. Przemyslaw Gasztold in Muehlenbeck and Telepneva, p. 198
[774] Ibid. p. 207, 213
[775] Ibid. p. 214

Third World.[776] This volume offers a unique perspective and challenges the established narrative. The historians who researched and compiled this volume argue convincingly that peripheries (of Eastern or Western empires) played a significant role in decolonisation.[777] Moreover, Burton, Mark and Marung argued that the Soviets were much slower in recognising the benefits of decolonisation. Thus, the Eastern Europeans retained a considerable advantage in reaping the economic benefits of decolonisation.[778] The authors claim that the Soviet system never subdued Eastern Europeans' national aspirations. Consequently, the Bloc effort in Africa was devoid of any economic coordination (and was, in fact, competitive), and the peripheral nations of Eastern Europe, to overcome their peripherality, pursued their national interests and exploited decolonisation as an opportunity to expand their trade with non-Bloc countries to minimise the Soviet influence.[779] Peter Apor attempted to dispel the common misconception about the marginal role of Eastern European nations in decolonisation and the global Cold War. He drew attention to the fact that Czechoslovakia was one of the most important arms suppliers of the Warsaw Pact armies and that Poland became the world's fifth largest arms exporter by the 1970s.[780] Apor also argued that the Poles and the Hungarians post-1956 refined their global diplomacy and "crafted themselves as experienced peacemakers".[781] The volume, however, still represents a rather broad overview and lacks case studies that could substantiate the claims made by all the historians that contributed to it.

Poland operated in four major overlapping contexts in Nigeria and broader West Africa. The first was Poland's economic model. The Stalinist-style rapid industrialisation of the late 1940s and early 1950s resulted in Poland's overreliance on imports and the need to balance the payments in Poland's national economy. The second was the immediate setting of newly independent post-colonial states, which still lacked the infrastructure and necessary know-how to exercise their independence economically or politically. The third was the absence of substantial Soviet involvement in Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa, more broadly in the late 1950s and 1960s. The fourth context emerged in 1967 when Nigeria's eastern province declared secession and thus started the civil war that would go on until January

[776] James Mark and Paul Betts (eds.), *Socialism Goes Global: The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonisation,* (Oxfrod, Oxford University Press, 2022)
[777] Eric Burton, James Mark, Steffi Marung in James Mark and Paul Betts (eds.), *Socialism Goes Global,* p. 75
[778] Ibid. p. 86
[779] Ibid. p. 78, 93
[780] Peter Apor in James Mark and Paul Betts (eds.), *Socialism Goes Global,* p. 118, 135
[781] Ibid. p. 123

1970. This chapter will focus on those four major threads. They provide the immediate context for Polish involvement in Nigeria and the region. Understanding what these immediate contexts were and how the Poles responded to them will be crucial to demonstrate the significance of Poland's role in the region in the late 1950s and 1960s.

The first immediate context was the Polish economic model (see Chapter II – Going Global). Poland's inability to overcome its negative trade balance proved to be a serious issue Poland's economists had to address. To minimise the disadvantages of running a continuous negative trade balance, the Poles needed to balance the payments. This, in turn, led to the emergence of a global network of Polish liner services, which allowed Warsaw to balance the payments in its foreign trade. The presence of Poland in West Africa was a direct consequence of Polish attempts to use shipping to accrue foreign exchange. Thus, the political aspect of relations with the newly independent African nations was not paramount. The Poles needed only trade relations, which would justify the presence of Polish ships in the region. Once the basis for operations was established, the Polish merchant navy could seek to expand its operations and acquire more cargo from other states in the region to earn more convertible currency. The case of Nigeria is an exception in the Polish modus operandi in the region. The political framework of cooperation was gradually superimposed on the economic framework. The process occurred organically and resulted from the growing trade relations. The Poles initially did not seek closer political cooperation with Nigeria. The secession of Biafra in 1967, however, changed the circumstances. It was the Nigerians who invited closer economic cooperation. The Poles accepted the invitation, but they used the political framework to facilitate their economic involvement in the region.

The second immediate context this chapter must address is the issues of colonial rule and control and how they were translated into the early post-colonial period. The Western scholarly efforts focus predominantly on roles played by former colonial metropoles and the two great superpowers. Historians, such as Henry Wilson, argue that the British believed the decolonisation process was inevitable but sought to "substitute influence for control" in their former colonies.[782] Sarah Stockwell emphasised British attempts to "entrench British training and personnel" in the newly independent African states.[783] As a result, at least initially, the new "national bureaucracies, banks, and armies were independent in little but name", and the

[782] Wilson, Henry . *African Decolonisation,* (London, E.Arnold, 1994), p. 204
[783] Sarah Stockwell, *Exporting Britishness: Decolonisation in Africa, the British State and Its Clients* in Miguell B. Jeronimo and Antonio C. Pinto (eds), *The Ends of European Colonial Empires – Cases and Comparisons,* (London, Palgrave McMillan, 2015), p. 149

British manned and directed those institutions.[784] The impact of Eastern European and Soviet involvement on the African continent, particularly in Nigeria, remained unnoticed. The British, and the West in general, had one more powerful mechanism of control they could use against the newly independent African states: shipping. This aspect, however, is largely neglected in modern historiography. It did spark academic interest shortly after the first wave of decolonisation in the 1960s, but relatively recent publications are tough to come by. The first such scholarly attempt was presented by Charlotte Leubuscher, who discussed the development and establishment of regional shipping conferences.[785] The shipping conference was a "combination of shipping companies that have been formed to regulate and restrict the carrying trade on a given route."[786] The description above is just a gallant description of a monopoly or a cartel. Leubuscher argued that this cartel was so powerful that it could not only determine "the rate, but also the direction" of the economic development of a given colony.[787] Peter N. Davis confirmed that the conference system established a monopoly over seaborne shipments in British West Africa. However, he defended the British imperial interests by arguing that the "fully competitive system would have been cheaper but irregular" and that the British monopoly was "advantageous to the consumer."[788] Davis does not specify which consumer exactly benefited from the British monopoly, but Marika Sherwood argued that African merchants suffered. Sherwood also blamed the monopoly for the underdevelopment of the region. To illustrate her point, she provides an example of the closure of Nigerian crushing mills in the early 1900s. British entrepreneurs opened such mills in Nigeria to produce palm oil. However, the most prominent West African conference line – Elder Dempster – owned crush mills that produced palm oil from Nigerian produce in Liverpool. As such, the line was not inclined to assist a potential competitor and refused to carry the palm oil back to Britain. The mills in Nigeria closed, the industry never developed, and the country was forced to structure its economy as a source of export for unprocessed agricultural or raw material goods to Britain.[789]

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[784] Ibid, p. 153
[785] Charlotte Leubuscher, *The West African Shipping Trade, 1909-1959,* (Leyden, W.A. Styhoff, 1963).
[786] Peter N. Davies, *Trade Makers: Elder Dempster in West Africa 1852-1972*, (London, Allen&Unwin, 1973), p.107
[787] Leubuscher, *The West African Shipping Trade,* p. 88
[788] Peter N. Davis, *Shipping and Imperialism: The case of British West Africa* in Gordon Jackson and David M. Williams, *Shipping Technology and Imperialism: Papers Presented to the Third British-Dutch Maritime History Conference,* (Glasgow, Scholar Press, 1996), p. 59
[789] Marika Sherwood, "Elder Dempster in West Africa, 1891-1940: The Genesis of Underdevelopment?" *The International Journal of African Historical Studies,* vol. 30(2), 1997, p. 262

The second issue that must be addressed is the apparent absence of the Soviet Union in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Nigeria, in the 1960s. Ehmika Ifidon and Charles Osarumwense argue that Soviet-Nigerian relations were almost hostile in the 1960s, with a brief period of "expediently friendly relations" between 1967 and 1970, during the Nigerian Civil war.[790] The article stipulated that although the Soviets did attempt to foster Nigerian dependence on Soviet arms deliveries. However, the Soviet Union could not offer more; thus, after the end of the war in 1970, the Nigerians somewhat returned to their more pro-Western stance. The lack of commercial relations led to discontinuity in political relations between Lagos and Moscow.[791] Another African scholar, Omotuyi, supports Ifidion and Osarumwense's argument. He argued that the West's initial reluctance to deliver arms to Nigeria was an opportunity for the Soviet Union, the only Bloc country capable of delivering meaningful quantities of arms to Nigeria. However, the circumstances created by the Nigerian Civil War were relatively short-lived. Thus, the political and economic involvement of the Soviet Union in Nigeria between 1967 and 1970 proved to be nothing more than "pipedreams."[792]

The final focal point this chapter will address is the issue of the Nigerian Civil War that raged after the secession of Nigeria's Eastern province of Biafra. Just like the Congolese Crisis of 1960-1965, the war had international implications. All major Cold War powers were involved to some extent. However, contrary to the case of Congo, the Nigerian crisis did not reproduce the standard Cold War divide. The Soviet Bloc found itself alongside the United Kingdom in its support of the Federal Military Government (hereafter the FMG), while the French, and to a lesser extent West Germans, found themselves alongside the Chinese in their support of Biafra. The attempt to decipher this intricate Cold War puzzle was offered in an edited volume, which presented the British, French and West German perspectives in the context of the accusations of genocide, levied against the FMG by the secessionists.[793] After initial reluctance, the British offered support to protect their interests and influence in Nigeria and the region.[794] The French supported Biafra to minimise the British influence in the region

[790] Ehmika Ifidon, Charles Osarumwense, Politics without commerce? Explaining the discontinuity in Soviet-Nigerian Relations, 1971-1979, *African and Asian Studies,* 2015, vol. 14(4), p. 290
[791] Ibid. p. 296, 307.
[792] Sunday Omotuyi, "Russo-Nigeran relations in the context of counterinsurgency operation in Nigeria", *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations,* vol. 23(1), 2018, p. 50
[793] Hasse Heertem, Dirk Moses (eds), *Postcolonial Conflict and the Question of Genocide: the Nigeria-Biafra War, 1967-1970,* (London, Routeledge, 2017)
[794] Karen E. Smith, *The UK and the "genocide" in Biafra;* in Hasse Heertem, Dirk Moses (eds), *Postcolonial Conflict and the Question of Genocide,* p. 161

and secure access to Nigerian oil fields in the Eastern provinces that declared secession.[795] Bonn's response to the Nigerian crisis was predominantly analysed through the prism of the alleged genocide. West German media campaigns, however, were ostensibly pro-Biafran. Unfortunately, the political motivations were not analysed.[796] It is apparent that the Soviet Bloc and its motivations and actions were wholly omitted. Christopher Griffin factored in the Soviet Bloc in his analysis of the French response to the Biafran Crisis. He believed the French involvement aimed to provide at least a "partial deterrent" to any greater Soviet involvement. He also pointed out that the Soviet Bloc support to the FMG was not as uniform since Czechoslovakia, until 1968, was also providing weapons to Biafra.[797] The omission of the Soviet Bloc perspective can be primarily attributed to the fact that a more significant Soviet presence in Nigeria was incidental and dissipated soon after the secessionist forces were defeated. Although Soviet support prevented the breakup of Nigeria, Moscow did not reap any significant economic or political benefits.[798] Unfortunately, the Eastern European presence is also assumed to be non-existent since the USSR was not involved in Nigeria. If the Eastern European presence is mentioned, it is done in passing and only tangentially. Łukasz Stanek, for example, claimed that in the post-1970 context, the Nigerians did encourage Eastern European state-owned enterprises, mainly to "offset the dominance of Western firms."[799] The claim is compelling; however, it lacks context. As this chapter will argue, such Eastern European presence post-1970 resulted from a sustained and gradually increasing Eastern European presence that started before the first wave of decolonisation in Africa.

Having established the immediate historical background and the broader Cold War context, this chapter can now discuss the Polish role in early post-colonial West Africa while focusing on Nigeria. This chapter will describe Poland's role in Nigeria and the region. It will argue that the Polish role was underestimated by both Polish and Western scholars, while the role and influence of the Soviet Union were vastly exaggerated. The chapter will first analyse

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[795] Christopher Griffin, *France and the Nigerian Civil War,* in Hasse Heertem, Dirk Moses (eds), *Postcolonial Conflict and the Question of Genocide,* p. 161-2

[796] Florian Hanning, *West German Sympathy for Biafra, 1967-1970: Actors, perceptions and motives,* Hasse Heertem, Dirk Moses (eds), *Postcolonial Conflict and the Question of Genocide*

[797] Christopher Griffin, "French Military Policy in the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970." *Small Wars and Insurgencies,* 2015, 26(1), p. 120-2

[798] Edgar Ayubomoh, Nigeria-Russia Relations: After and Now, *European Scientific Journal,* vol. 10(14), 2014, p. 196

[799] Łukasz Stanek, *Architecture in Global Socialism: Eastern Europe, West Africa, and the Middle East in the Cold War,* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2022), p. 99

the circumstances, Bloc policies and Polish objectives in Africa to demonstrate that the Poles acted in their national interests in Nigeria and Africa in general. Then the chapter will focus on Polish shipping, which eventually broke the Western (mainly British) monopoly in the carrying industry in the region. Then the chapter will describe what role the Poles played in the International Observer team in Nigeria between 1967 and 1970 and how the Poles used their presence in the group to expand the existing commercial relations and bolster their political influence in Nigeria. Having done that, this chapter will demonstrate the important role the Poles played in Africa. The Polish liner service to West Africa handled jointly with the GDR, provided an alternative to the British monopoly. Although the Poles and East Germans could never replace Western shipping, it undermined Britain's political influence in the region. The presence of Polish-East German shipping operations forced the freight prices down, which benefitted the economic development of newly independent African states. Finally, this chapter will prove that although Polish assistance to Nigeria, and other African States, was relatively small compared to other states, such as Czechoslovakia, Poland was the only state able to ship the goods to and from the Bloc. Moreover, without Polish shipping operations, the Bloc involvement would not have been possible on a large scale.

Before 1955 there were very few major Soviet and Bloc initiatives aimed at the non-aligned and developing nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. As the CIA analyst observed, one of the primary reasons for that was that the Soviets were focused on post-war reconstruction and integration of Eastern Europe into the newly emerged Soviet Empire.[800] Malenkov's dismissal and Khrushchev's ascension coincided with the Bandung Conference. In an attempt to exploit the anti-Western “Bandung spirit”, Moscow launched its first aid programmes and arms deliveries, which constituted a grave danger to the Western influence in the developing countries.[801] In 1956 the revolts in Poland and Hungary preoccupied the Kremlin. The following year was spent on “distracting the world opinion” from the 1956 events, particularly the ruthless crushing of the Hungarian revolt.[802] Despite some obstacles, the Soviets launched large-scale military and economic assistance programs in India, Afghanistan, Egypt, Syria, Indonesia, Burma and Cambodia. At the same time, the Sub-Saharan and Latin American countries rejected Soviet offers.[803] In 1958-1959 Moscow focused on its relations with the Middle East and North Africa while also establishing

[800] CIA-RDP79S00427A000600010001-2 – Soviet Policy Toward the Underdeveloped Countries, 28.04.1961, p.i
[801] Ibid. p. 28-9
[802] Ibid. p. 42
[803] Ibid. p. 48

relations with Ghana. For the time being, Moscow viewed the Sub-Saharan developments as "subject to unpredictable vicissitudes" and limited its involvement to mere propaganda support. By 1960, the Khrushchev line was approved at the Warsaw Pact summit, but the Soviets still focused on Asia and Latin America following the Cuban revolution.[804] The CIA registered the only "Soviet gambit"" in Congo, yet that involvement quickly collapsed following Patrice Lumumba's Government's fall.[805]

The post-1956 Polish foreign policy, although more independent than any time since 1945, still generally followed the Soviet lead. In 1957 the Poles focused on Asia, and Polish policies still needed a "green light" from Moscow.[806] Following the July 1958 revolution in Iraq, the Poles, following the Soviet lead, pushed for closer ties with Iraq.[807] Although the first sign of Polish autonomy, as Rutkowski argued, was the Rapacki Plan of 1957, the Polish foreign objectives in a broader, and particularly non-European context, had not yet been clearly formulated.[808] A substantial change occurred in 1959-1960. First, in 1959 the Poles formulated their objectives towards Vietnam (see Chapter IV). In late 1959 and 1960, Warsaw boldly and precisely formulated its objectives in Africa. Following the Warsaw Pact summit of 1960, the MSZ had identified the goals of Polish foreign policy. These formulations, although acknowledging the Soviet framework, rejected Moscow's direction. The meeting of the MSZ leadership acknowledged that Africa had become "the main front of anti-capitalist struggle". However, "regardless of these important considerations, Poland should seek to assure its own interests and seek to benefit from developing extensive relations with the newly independent African states".[809] To put it simply, Warsaw chose to ignore Moscow's instructions to undermine the capitalist system in Africa and focus on its own economic and national interests. In this case, the archival evidence fully supports the claims made by Burton, Mark and Marung.[810] Tellingly, the Ministry of Foreign Trade by 1960 had already identified the African Countries Poland should focus on. These were Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the South African Union and Tanganyika. The MHZ also believed Francophone Togo and Cameroon to be particularly interesting. The list is

[804] Ibid. p. 58-61, 92-6
[805] Ibid. p. 101-3
[806] Marek W. Rutkowski in Philip Muehlenbeck and Natalia Telepneva (eds.), *Warsaw Pact intervention in the Third World,* p. 68
[807] AMSZ, Z-16 W-22 T-371, p.1-2
[808] Marek W. Rutkowski in Philip Muehlenbeck and Natalia Telepneva (eds.), *Warsaw Pact intervention in the Third World,* p. 67
[809] AMSZ, Z-12 W-46 T-1136 – Materialy na Kolegium MSZ, p. 31
[810] Eric Burton, James Mark, Steffi Marung in James Mark and Paul Betts (eds.), *Socialism Goes Global,* p.93

quite telling since these were already freshly independent or soon-to-be independent countries. The MHZ gathered this information from the PŻM, which launched its operations in Africa at the end of 1958.[811] If one looks at the map, the proposed countries and their major city ports of Conakry, Accra, Lomé, Lagos, Douala, Cape Town, Durban, and Dar es Salaam could be used as call points to circumnavigate the African continent smoothly. The PŻM service in West Africa was quite extensive in 1959. The CIA experts counted 53 Soviet bloc ships calling in West African ports. Three of them were Soviet, and 50 were Polish.[812] The Poles clearly indicated their focus to benefit economically by announcing a new line to Antwerp for transhipment service to the Belgian Congo. Although the CIA saw an increase in the number of Soviet ships, it believed it was unlikely it could approach the same magnitude of operations as the Polish services.[813]

Thus, the commercial relations between Poland and West Africa, and Nigeria in particular, started even before the countries in the region gained independence. Initially, the relations between Poland and the region were purely economic. Almost immediately after the PŻM announced its Wester African liner service in December 1958, the Polish delegation began to prepare for a tour in Guinea, Ghana and Nigeria to explore the possibility of establishing economic relations. Not much was accomplished at that early stage, but it shows that Warsaw was very interested in being in the region. Moreover, it shows how quickly Poland responded to changing West African political climate. Ghana gained independence in 1957 and Guinea in October 1958.[814] Having accomplished little, mainly because Paris and London still handled all political relations of recently independent Guinea and Ghana, the Poles decided to bypass the metropoles, keen on maintaining their influence and turned directly to Western merchants operating in the region. In July 1959, the PŻM entered into an agreement with a shipbroker, Hoeks Agencies Ltd, based in Accra. In its capacity as PŻM's representative, the agency entered negotiations with Needlers in Hull for a shipping contract.[815] PŻM's penetration of the region was initially stymied by vigorous resistance of the Wester African Lines Conference (hereafter WALCON), which did not recognise or want to

[811] Emphasis in the origins - AMSZ, Z-12 W-46 T-1136, p. 32; CIA-RDP79T010003A000900470001-0 – Soviet bloc merchant shipping service to West Africa, 31.08.1961, p.1
[812] CIA-RDP79T010003A000900470001-0 – Soviet bloc merchant shipping service to West Africa, 31.08.1961, p.1
[813] Ibid. p.3
[814] AMSZ, Z-12 W-28 T-691, p. 1-7
[815] APSz, PŻM, sygn. 1443 – Telegram from Hoeks Agencies in Accra to Polsteam, 30.07.1959; Telegram from Needlers in Hull to Polsteam, 06.08.1959

tolerate any outsiders.[816] Regardless of such vigorous resistance provided by WALCON, PŻM soon began undermining its monopoly by securing increasing amounts of cargo to carry. In early 1959, the PZM emerged as the primary mediator between the landlocked countries of the Soviet bloc, namely Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the GDR, and West African countries. The initial shipments were arms and other "donations" from Hungary, the GDR and Czechoslovakia. These arms shipments caused a considerable uproar in the Western press. The Ministry of Foreign Trade intervention ensured that such "special transfers" would be carried out more discreetly from then on. Still, the PŻM firmly established itself as the leading facilitator of Eastern Europe-West African economic relations.[817] Although the military shipments from Eastern Europe provided enough justification for PŻM's presence in the region, the company pushed to secure more cargo. It did so by significantly undercutting the Conference freight rates. The strategy proved very successful since in 1960 Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board entered negotiations with the PŻM. The primary reason was that the Polish service was not only cheaper than the one provided by WALCON, but the Poles also gave the company access to the Baltic, the Mediterranean and Scandinavia directly. At the same time, WALCON carried the goods only to the British ports, where they then had to be transhipped to other destinations.[818]

The growth of Polish liner service presence in West Africa coincided with Nigerian independence. The initial Polish-Nigerian encounter could not occur under more auspicious circumstances. The same session of the UN Security Council on which Nigeria was accepted to the UN was chaired by the representative of Poland.[819] The Soviet bloc immediately extended diplomatic recognition to Nigeria. The Soviet Union, as a matter of prestige, was the first Bloc country to offer to establish diplomatic relations and exchange ambassadors. Khrushchev sent an official letter to Nigeria's first Prime Minister, Abubakar Balewa, informing him of Soviet intentions to establish diplomatic relations with Nigeria. The initial Nigerian response was evasive. After some consideration, Khrushchev's initial overtures were rejected, and Balewa demanded a formal "application." Such formal application was submitted, and in November 1960, official diplomatic relations were established between Moscow and Lagos. However, both the Soviets and Nigerians seemed very sceptical of each other. The Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jakov Malik, warned the Poles that Nigeria

[816] Ibid, Telegram from Hoeks Agencies in Accra to Polsteam, 30.07.1959
[817] Ibid, Dalekopis nr. 24222 – MHZ to Polsteam, 24.4.1959
[818] Ibid. Telegram from Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board to Polsteam, 28.7.1960
[819] Mieczysław Cielecki, *Stosunki Polski z Nigerią,* in Stanisław Płaszewicz (ed.), *Polacy w Nigerii,* p.51

"was not Congo" and very few political organisations there openly supported socialism.[820] Such warnings came too late and were entirely dismissed by Warsaw. In early October 1960, the Polish delegation was already in Lagos, negotiating the official trade agreement between Poland and Nigeria. The Poles spoke with Shohu Shagari – the Minister for Economic Development, and the Finance Minister – Okatie Eboh. Both officials welcomed Polish overtures and asked if Poland considered establishing diplomatic relations with Nigeria. The Poles confirmed. Shagari offered his personal assistance in removing any obstacles that would prevent the establishment of commercial and diplomatic relations between the two countries.[821] A response that was markedly different to the one received by the Soviet Union. Such difference can be explained by the fact that the Polish presence was much more significant and longer than the presence of the Soviet Union. The Poles focused on trade, while the Soviets tried to force the Nigerians to establish diplomatic relations.[822] The initial Polish overtures, although received rather positively by the Nigerians, did not result in an official trade agreement.

However, the lack of such an agreement did not hamper the increasing Polish presence in Nigeria and West Africa. PŻM's presence grew as it captured increasing cargo from Eastern European countries. PŻM officials noted with satisfaction that "neither the GDR nor Romania could compete [with us] for transit due to their insignificant shipping and transhipment capacity." For those reasons, the PŻM became the top carrier, while Poland became the primary transhipment hub for goods en route to and from West Africa.[823] The service was expanded, and the DSR joined the PŻM to form United West Africa Service (UNIAFRIKA) in the fall of 1961. Czechoslovakia was expected to join, and the CIA reported that local carriers were also invited to enter the joint service. The CIA reported that the Poles resisted East German incursion on their profitable enterprise.[824] There is no evidence in the Polish archives that the Poles resisted the DSR's participation. The PŻM viewed it as a benefit since it allowed a quick and costless expansion of carrying capacity, while Poland maintained the dominant position. This expansion in carrying capacity was then used to persuade the Polish

[820] AMSZ, Z-12 W-43 T-1059, p. 5-6
[821] AMSZ, Z-12 W-43 T-1060, p. 1-3
[822] AMSZ, Z-12 W-43 T-1059, p. 5
[823] APSz, PZM, sygn. 2025, Memorandum on Transhipment plan for 1961, p. 1-2
[824] DSR – Deutsche Seereederei Rostock – East German national shipping line; CIA-RDP79R01141A002600060001-5 – Economic Intelligence Report – Shipping in the Sino-Soviet bloc – 1961, December 1962, p. 6-7

state enterprises to finally abandon WALCON services, which was still a relatively common practice in 1961.[825]

The official trade and diplomatic relations had not been established yet. The Poles found a way to bypass that obstacle. The PŻM dealt with Western private companies already operating in the region. Such contacts allowed the Poles to sell their goods while also capturing increasing cargo to be unloaded in Western ports.[826] Despite such a prominent position in Eastern European-West African relations, the Poles identified yet another area where they could play an important part. Given the increasing commercial exchange between the bloc and the region, a need for financial infrastructure to handle this growing exchange became apparent. Given that the Polish presence in newly independent states of Western Africa, such as Nigeria, benefited the local traders, the Poles now found themselves on the receiving end of Nigerian economic overtures. The first overture came from African Continental Bank on 12 June 1961, which extended an offer of cooperation to the Polish Bank Handlowy. The Bank Handlowy welcomed such cooperation and deemed it appropriate, given that "hitherto all commercial exchange with Nigeria was mediated by Great Britain." The Nigerians lacked the necessary financial and distribution network but were keen to "become more economically independent" and regain control of their foreign commercial relations.[827] Although not capable of covering the entirety of Nigerian foreign trade, the Polish banks and the Polish merchant fleet proved to be a useful alternative for the early post-colonial system dominated by British firms and financial institutions. The second major bank that signed a cooperation agreement with the Bank Handlowy on 29 September 1961 was the Bank of the North.[828]

In this context of growing commercial relations and the increasing complexity of Polish-Nigerian relations, the second round of trade negotiations took place. By November 1961, an agreement was signed. The British High Commissioner in Lagos reported with concern that the two countries exchanged "m.f.n obligations" and that Nigeria gave up "her right to impose more stringent licensing on imports from Poland than from any Western

[825] APSz, PŻM, sygn. 1438, Memorandum on shipments to West Africa, 22.11.1961
[826] APSZ, PZM, sygn. 1443, West Africa Line stevedoring contract with UMARCO-Paris, 02.06.1960
[827] Bank of Trade a chief financial institution handling all Polish commercial transactions abroad. AAN, Bank Handlowy, sygn. 23/353, p. 1
[828] Ibid. p. 73

country."[829] The following year, in 1962, a joint Polish-Nigerian company, Daltrade, was established. It was a prerequisite for expanding the Polish presence in the Nigerian market. The joint enterprise would serve as the primary facilitator of Polish-Nigerian trade.[830] Diplomatic relations in such circumstances would be just a formality. A tedious formality that the Poles have tried to organise since early 1960. By April 1961, the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed to establish diplomatic relations. The process that lasted for a year involved parliamentary approval from British Commonwealth officials and the Queen herself. After more than a year, the People's Republic of Poland and the Federation of Nigeria established diplomatic relations on 3 May1962. For the time being, the Nigerians would not open an embassy in Poland, and the Nigerian Ambassador in Moscow would be accredited to all Eastern European countries.[831] The Poles chose to proceed with the opening of the Embassy since they were mainly concerned with supplementing it with a permanent trade representation and chose Bronislaw Musielak to be Poland's first ambassador in Lagos. On 13 November 1962, the Poles presented Musielak's candidacy to the Nigerians and were rather frankly informed that the application would first have to be approved in London.[832]

Meanwhile, with increasing concern, London observed the increased Polish and Eastern European presence in Nigeria and West Africa. The British High Commissioner in Lagos noted that by 1962 the Eastern European countries "moved from a nil position in Nigeria's trade to one they play a small but noticeable part" in just a few years. Furthermore, the High Commissioner warned London that Nigeria wanted to pursue a more independent course and "be seen to do so." Therefore, to counter British pressures for a common market, the Nigerian trade would move increasingly towards a "more easterly direction."[833] The British not only noticed the increasing Eastern European presence in Nigeria and West Africa but, in 1962, took active measures to discourage it and minimise its impact. The PŻM was at the forefront of that struggle. The company director informed that until the West African Line was launched, the Soviet bloc had to rely on "capitalist agents in London or Hamburg" to trade with Africa. The establishment of the Western African Line gave the Soviet Bloc direct access to the West African market. The British-dominated WALCON tried to discourage West

[829] M.f.n – Most Favoured Nation, DO 165/127, Federation of Nigeria: Communist influence – British High Commissioner in the Federation of Nigeria to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 09.02.1962, p. 4
[830] Mieczysław Cielecki, *Stosunki Polski z Nigerią,* in Stanisław Płaszewicz (ed.), *Polacy w Nigerii,* p.52
[831] AMSZ, Z-16 W-35 T-609, p. 1-3
[832] Ibid. p. 5
[833] DO 165/127, Federation of Nigeria: Communist influence, 09.02.1962, p. 4

African traders from using PŻM services by threatening to withdraw any future rebates from West African importers and exporters if such companies cooperated with the PŻM in any way. The move, however, did not produce the desired effect, given that WALCON's monopoly disadvantaged local traders. Although the Western firms largely stuck with the Conference lines, the local trade organisations formed new enterprises in 1962. These enterprises, so-called "outsiders", were not bound by contracts with the Conference lines, and the PŻM quickly signed contracts with many of them. The PŻM's director assured the MHZ that the punitive countermeasure by WALCON would not affect the Polish presence in the region since the PŻM signed enough contracts with the "outsiders" to secure more than an adequate amount of cargo to sustain its operations.[834] Such an arrangement immensely benefitted the local West African traders. The PŻM was so successful that even some companies that previously used WALCON services switched to the Polish service, despite being under immense pressure not to do so.[835] The Poles, responding to WALCON's hostile actions, announced a reduction of freight charges in September and further reductions in November 1962. As a result, the PŻM not only sustained its regional operations but had to expand them significantly.[836] The Poles, jointly with the East Germans, created a massive dent in the British-dominated WALCON's stranglehold on West Africa's seaborne trade. By January 1963, Musielak was approved by London and arrived in Lagos in March 1963 to commence his service. The Polish relations with Nigeria thus entered a new phase.

Despite remaining politically pro-Western, the newly independent Nigeria was increasingly pursuing a more open and independent economic policy. The Nigerian market was open to foreign capital. New banks began to emerge. One such new bank was the BERINI (Beirut-Riyadh-Nigeria) Bank. The creation of such new banks that serviced increasingly global Nigerian commercial exchange was a novelty. Even more, telling was the fact that BERINI, which serviced Nigeria's commercial transactions with the Middle East, chose the Polish Bank Handlowy as a source of additional capital and loans, but moreover decided to insure all its commercial activities, not in a British insurance company, but the Polish Mutual Reassurance Company Warta.[837] At this point, the alternative financial infrastructure provided by Poland, or any other Soviet Bloc country, would have never been

[834] APSz, PŻM, sygn. 1438, Memorandum on the Western African Line Conference (WALCON), 09.06.1962, p. 1-3
[835] APSz, PŻM, sygn. 962, Polsteam, dalekopis nr 24216, 16.06.1962, p. 1
[836] Ibid, dalekopis, 03.09.1962; dalekopis 07.11.1962
[837] AAN, Bank Handlowy, sygn. 23/353, p. 73-8

sufficient to cover all Nigerian needs or compete with well-established Western giants. Nevertheless, the fact that it was emerging competition to Western, although primarily British dominance, is worth observing. Even though the Bank Handlowy could never compete with British financial institutions, newly emerging Nigerian enterprises were not discouraged by that fact. The Polish Bank cooperated with every major Western bank, providing access to the global market. It did attract some significant clients in 1963, such as The Nigerian Engineering Corporation, which used the Polish Bank to handle its European account.[838]

With Poland's permanent diplomatic and commercial representation in the region, Polish shipping could further expand its operations. The first opportunity arose in Ghana. The Osco Shipping Agencies LTD informed the PŻM that it not only wanted to use Polish services to carry the goods to Eastern Europe but was also interested in using the PŻM to import goods from North America, Dutch East Indies, and Australia.[839] Allowing Nigeria direct access to global markets produced a positive response in Western countries hitherto not present in Nigeria. In 1963, the PŻM assisted in the entrance of the Danish shipbroker agency, Scanship, to the Nigerian market. In return, Scanship gave preferential treatment to the PŻM when shipping cargo. Soon, Scanship's earlier established contacts in the West opened a new possibility for the Poles and the Nigerians. Scanship entered into very close cooperation with the Nigerian Produce Marketing Corporation. In the fall of 1963, Scanship secured lucrative contracts for the PŻM. The Poles shipped Nigerian goods for such companies as the American General Cocoa and the British Cadbury.[840] PŻM's competitive prices attracted an increasing number of Western clients, one of them being a shipbroker company, Roeverchart, based in Hamburg. Cooperation between PŻM and the West German shipbroker gave the Nigerian Produce Marketing Corporation direct access to Switzerland via the port of Genoa, to the French market through the port in Bordeaux, and to the West German market via PŻM shipments to Hamburg.[841] By the fall of 1964, Roeverchart chartered PŻM ships to carry Nigerian goods to Barcelona, Bilbao and Lisbon.[842] The direct Nigerian trade with Western Europe, which bypassed London, continued to grow. At the same time, Eastern European commercial relations with Nigeria also grew substantially. By the time Poland appointed Wiktor Rux as a permanent Commercial Councillor by the Polish Embassy in Lagos to guard

[838] Ibid. p. 89
[839] APSz, PŻM, sygn. 1443, telegram from Osco Shipping Agencies LTD to Polsteam, 31.11.1963
[840] APSz, PŻM, sygn. 653, F.O.B contracts from Scanship to PŻM, 18.10.1963
[841] APSz, PŻM, sygn. 880, United West Africa Service – confirmation of telegram – 04.07.1963
[842] APSz, PŻM, sygn. 881, Dalekopis – Roeverchart Hamburg to Polsteam, 12.09.1964

Polish economic interests, Poland had become the second largest Eastern European exporter (£1,649,600 worth of goods) to Nigeria and the most prominent Soviet bloc recipient of Nigerian goods (£2,204,200 worth of goods). The largest exporter to Nigeria in the Soviet Bloc was Czechoslovakia, which in 1964 sold £2,535,000 worth of goods. However, Czechoslovak imports from Nigeria only amounted to £692,000. At this point, it is essential to note the relative absence of the Soviet Union in the picture. Between 1962 and 1963, Nigerian export to the USSR totalled a mere £12,000, while Nigerian imports from the USSR for the same period totalled £139,200, which left the USSR far behind its Eastern European allies. In 1964, the USSR's imports from Nigeria increased sharply to £1,617,200, but Nigerian imports from the USSR remained low at £50,400.[843] The overall trend of Nigerian-Bloc commercial exchange was increasing. So was the exchange with other Western countries.

The direct access that Nigeria gained through Polish shipping operations facilitated Nigeria's exercise of its increasing economic independence. In early 1965, the Nigerians entered negotiations for association with the EEC in Geneva, which the British vigorously opposed. British officials feared that a successful conclusion of such an agreement would set a dangerous precedent "for the possible introduction by other Commonwealth countries of preferences in favour of other economic" at a time economic preferences extended to Britain across the entire Commonwealth were decreasing.[844] Unfortunately, the crumbling empire could match the "attractive power of the community [EEC]". The British feared voicing their opposition but were prepared to threaten the Nigerians with "really drastic" action, but despite vigorous British resistance in the light of a threat to broader British interests, the negotiations proceeded. [845] The negotiations were concluded in July 1965, and Nigeria was granted limited association with the EEC.[846] Nigeria's greater involvement with the EEC carried some risks. Such risks came from German companies' aggressive entrance into the Nigerian market in 1965. They often corrupted Nigerian officials in order to secure deals. Nigeria became heavily indebted to West Germany due to large-scale German industrial projects. However, these did more harm than good since the West German companies built large industrial complexes equipped with very sophisticated machinery but did not provide any training for the

[843] Mieczysław Cielecki, *Stosunki Polski z Nigerią,* in Stanisław Płaszewicz (ed.), *Polacy w Nigerii,* p.51; economic data from DO 195/327, Report on the economic activities in Nigeria of the Soviet bloc and China, p. 5
[844] FO 371/182421, Confidential – Negotiations for Nigeria's association with the EEC, 02,03.1965, p. 1-2
[845] Ibid, Confidential – The Commonwealth and the EEC, 02.03.1965; Confidential – Cyphered telegram from Brussels to the Foreign Office, 20.03.1965, p.1; Nigeria and the EEC, 20.03.1965, p.4-5
[846] Arnold Rivkin, Africa and the European Economic Community, *Finance and Development,* vol.3(2), 1966, p.120

Nigerians. As a result, the industrial output from West German-built glass mills was of inferior quality. Unfortunately, the West German aggressive and corruptive practices forced other firms from the UK, France and the Netherlands to adopt a similar strategy, at least to a certain extent.[847]

While the Nigerians tried to navigate their relations with the EEC, the economic relations between Poland and Nigeria kept growing. Poland's commercial councillor, Wiktor Rux, in late January 1965, reported to Warsaw that he had spoken with Nigeria's Minister for Mining, Majtama Sulel, who expressed concern that BP-Shell controlled the entirety of oil mining in Nigeria. At the time, Poland sought to expand and diversify its oil supply. Rux informed Warsaw that Sulel could facilitate Poland's entry into Nigerian oil drilling to undermine BP-Shell's monopoly in such circumstances.[848] For the time being, prospects of Poland's access to Nigerian oil reserves remained only theoretical, but the fact that the Poles considered it is pretty telling. Diversifying Polish oil supplies would severely undermine the USSR's, which was Poland's primary supplier of oil, economic influence. However, the breaking up of BP-Shell's monopoly on oil drilling and exports in Nigeria was only a distant and uncertain prospect for the time being. WALCON's shipping monopoly, on the contrary, was about to be broken. Between April and May 1965, the Conference lines raised their freight charges again. In some cases, they refused to carry Nigerian produce and goods to Western European ports. Minister for Planning asked the Poles for assistance. PŻM diverted some of its ships in the region to pick up the goods. Nigerian shipping company – Okafor Line – received from Poland one ship of 10,000 DWT free of charge. Okafor Line was given a loan to purchase Polish-built ships in the future, and it soon signed an agreement to purchase additional tonnage soon to be built in Polish shipyards. The Poles agreed that some of the loans would be repaid in goods such as groundnuts and cocoa. The additional tonnage diverted by the PŻM to the West Africa line effectively ended WALCON's monopoly on shipping in the region in May 1965.[849] The Poles were not merely posturing. By 1965, the PŻM was capable of carrying approximately 406 000 tonnes of outbound Nigerian cargo annually. With the overall outbound output of Nigerian being slightly over 2 000 000 tonnes,

[847] FO 371/183087 – The activities of German "machine peddlers" in Nigeria, p.1-10
[848] AMSZ, Szyfrogramy, Nigeria 1965, szyfrogram nr. 1010, 27.01.1965
[849] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 4995, 24.04.1965; szyfrogram nr. 5994, 03.05.1965

the Poles were responsible for approximately 20% of outbound Nigerian cargo. And the expanded capacity of the Okafor Line would suggest the number was even more significant.[850]

In August 1965, the Nigerians responding to aggressive tactics employed by West German investors, announced a series of measures directed against Western corporations. Musielak, Poland's Ambassador, pointed out that increased economic involvement of the state "usually opens better possibilities for us".[851] Benefiting from the fact that the Nigerian Government was keen to minimise the country's dependence on large Western corporations, the Poles gained even more ground in the Nigerian market. In September 1965, Daltrade branches were opened in northern and eastern Nigeria. Thus, the Polish economic activity was extended to all parts of Nigeria, and Polish state enterprises could now trade directly, through Daltrade, with Nigerian enterprises in northern and eastern provinces.[852] Polish shipyards also negotiated with the National Nigerian Shipping Line to increase Nigeria's carrying capacity.[853] By October 1965, the Polish Ambassador alarmed Warsaw about political turmoil caused by "excessive rigging" of Nigerian elections and warned that Balewa government was losing control of the internal situation.[854] Yet, despite uncertain political developments, the Poles soon entered into negotiations for coal supplies to Nigeria, through which Lagos hoped to improve its energy security.[855]

The Balewa government attempted to balance its pro-Western political orientation with increasing economic contact with the Soviet Bloc countries. Political corruption, however, proved to be Balewa's undoing. In January 1966, a military coup was staged, which toppled Balewa. A military government was established, led by general Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi. The Poles did not seem surprised by the coup, contrary to the British and the Americans. The Polish Ambassador and the Commercial Councillor immediately assured Warsaw that the new Government would "speed up the progressive change". The Embassy in Lagos urged the Polish Government to maintain all contracts and intensify negotiations for new economic agreements.[856] By May 1966, the Polish Ambassador informed Warsaw that Ironsi's Government meant a significant loss of British influence in Nigeria. A fact that both

[850] Eniola, Olaogbebikan et al., "Performance Evaluation of Nigerian Ports: Pre and Post Concession Eras," *Civil and Environmental Research* 6, no. 2 (January 1, 2014): 1–13, p. 6; APSz, PŻM, sygn. 1688, Materiały na posiedzenie Kolegium Ministerstwa, p. 6b (n.d)
[851] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 10159, 19.08.1965
[852] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 10948, 08.09.1965
[853] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 12078, 30.09.1965
[854] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 12901, 10.10.1965
[855] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 13807, 12.11.1965
[856] AMSZ, Szyfrogramy Lagos, 1966, szyfrogram nr. 940 and 942, 19.01.1966

London and Washington refused to accept. By June 1966, the Polish intelligence services reported that the British supplied "subversive" groups in the northern provinces with funds, while the Americans supplied these groups with weapons. The Americans were also reportedly very concerned by the economic decrees directed against Western corporations. While the political situation remained unstable, the Poles focused on the economic aspect but keenly observed American efforts to "discredit" the British High Commissioner in Lagos.[857] Tensions continued in Nigeria throughout June and July 1966, with another 29 July coup that toppled Ironsi. Yakubu Gowon became the second military leader of Nigeria on 1 August 1966. Concerned about the tense situation, the Polish Ambassador took all necessary precautions to ensure the safety of the "Polish colony" in Lagos but informed Warsaw that there was no immediate threat to Polish citizens.[858] A few days later, the Yugoslav Ambassador, who visited the East, met with colonel Chukwumeka Ojukwu, the military governor of the Eastern Province. According to the Yugoslav Ambassador, Ojukwu spoke of "independent socialism", informed the Yugoslavs about his intention to declare secession and asked about "potential arm deliveries" from the Soviet Bloc. The Yugoslav and the Polish Ambassador agreed that Ojukwu should not be supported and that any meddling in the internal affairs of Nigeria would only provide an excuse from "right-wing groups" to call for British intervention.[859]

By September 1966, all provinces, except the East, agreed to Gowon's federalist formula of Government. On 30 September 1966, the Embassy in Lagos informed Warsaw that the situation was heading towards a "final resolution".[860] By November 1966, Gowon appeared to have contained the political situation, and the Polish-Nigerian relations were back to normal. To minimise Nigeria's dependence on Western experts and technicians, the Nigerian Government turned to the Soviet Bloc countries for assistance. Both Rux and Musielak emphasised that the specialists requested by the Nigerians should be supplied immediately, especially "inspectors of mines and petroleum engineers, as they could facilitate our bids for future construction and equipment contracts".[861] The Poles supplied specialists to Nigeria from late 1965 and throughout 1966. All of them reported to the Commercial Councillor in the Embassy. Rux aptly demonstrated their usefulness in his ciphered telegram

[857] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 7010, 30.05.1966; szyfrogram nr. 7253, 05.06.1966
[858] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 9968, 01.08.1966
[859] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 10251, 06.08.1966
[860] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 12634, 30.09.1966
[861] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 14466, 11.11.1966

to the director of Elektrim, which dealt with electrical engineering. Through a Polish specialist working for the Electricity Corp of Nigeria, Rux was able to obtain "precise specifications" for a public bid for the Kano electric power plant. These specifications were sent to Elektrim a month before the bid was announced to ensure that the Polish offer would be most competitive and best suited for the Electricity Corp of Nigeria.[862] The Ambassador and the Commercial Councillor did everything in their power to dispel any doubt Warsaw might have had about further investments in Nigeria. According to the Embassy's assessment, the changes in Nigeria were overall favourable for Poland, and the Poles could use the tensions between Gowon and the British and the Americans to bolster their economic standing in Nigeria.[863]

In the first half of 1967, the situation in Nigeria remained relatively calm. The Nigerians intensified their attempts to minimise their dependence on Western cadres and invited Polish scientists to lecture at the University of Zaria in Northern Nigeria.[864]However, by early February 1967, the Poles observed increased British and American activities in the East.[865] The following month, Ojukwu reached out to the Czechoslovak Ambassador and informed him that the preparations for the secession were in full swing. Ojukwu again asked about the prospect of Soviet bloc arms deliveries. A question the Czechoslovaks "refused to entertain".[866] On 27 May 1967, the Constitutional Assembly of Eastern Nigeria passed a resolution calling for secession[867]. Three days later, the secession was officially declared, which created many problems for the Poles since Poland was the only Soviet Bloc country which had significant economic contacts with Eastern Nigeria and sent its specialists there. The Ambassador implemented all necessary precautions and advised that Polish specialists in the Eastern provinces should remain there since any attempt to travel to Lagos could prove very dangerous.[868] The Poles immediately moved to secure their interests in Nigeria. Wiktor Rux pointed out that political and military developments were "hard to predict", but regardless of the outcome, Poland would and should use the situation to its advantage. The Commercial Councillor also pointed out that in the event of secession becoming permanent,

[862] Ibid. szyfrorgam nr. 15223, 30.11.1966, p. 1-2
[863] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 15414 and 15416, 05.12.1966
[864] AMSZ, Szyfrogramy Lagos, 1967, szyfrogram nr.342, 07.01.1967
[865] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 1512, 06.02.1967
[866] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 2915, 07.03.1967
[867] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 6820, 27.05.1967
[868] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 6947 and 6948, 30.05.1967

Biafra would struggle to maintain an adequate food supply, which would have opened new economic opportunities for Poland.[869]

The Biafra conflict began in May 1967 and caused much confusion in the Western and Soviet bloc capitals. Warsaw would eventually find itself alongside London and Moscow in its support for Gowon. However, the initial Polish response was far from unequivocal support. The Commercial Councillor in Lagos seemed keen to explore the potential benefits of a successful secession for Poland, and his suggestions were not dismissed in Warsaw. In June 1967, Poland made a series of moves to protect its economic interests. Nevertheless, these moves left Poland open to shifting support from Gowon to Ojukwu quite easily, if the secession seemed successful and permanent. On 12 June 1967, the MHZ issued a formal instruction for the Embassy in Lagos to inform Warsaw if the "West respected the blockade of Biafra" and if the "embargo could be bypassed from Cameroon".[870] The response was that the Polish Embassy in Lagos informed Warsaw that all Western countries respected the blockade and that only oil shipping was allowed. Thus sending any ships to Port Harcourt would be "pointless", but Wiktor Rux assured the MHZ that Poland's commercial interests in the region were being protected and further Polish moves in the region would be dependent on how the situation would develop.[871] The option of bypassing the naval blockade through land via Cameroon was also being secured. By the end of June 1967, the Embassy in Lagos informed Warsaw that the Cameroonians had agreed to an improvised establishment of diplomatic relations. For the time being, Warsaw was to send a consul to Juande, who would "supervise commercial relations". While assuring Lagos of its neutrality, Warsaw kept its options open.[872] London initially issued "a non-committal" message, and Walt Rostow urged President Johnson to do the same.[873] The initial disruption caused by the secession seemed to have been contained by the end of June. The first Polish Ambassador, Musielak, thus finished his term and was recalled to Warsaw. By then, Poland had decided to support Gowon, and on 1 July 1967, Musielak was replaced by Mieczysław Dedo. Dedo's arrival was the first ambassadorial arrival (as many diplomats have been recalled) since the proclamation of the Biafran secession. A spectacular gesture secured Gowon's favourable attitude towards the

[869] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 7124, 02.06.1967
[870] Ibid. „O"TR.III.III/431/155/67/TJN – 12.06.1967; the naval blockade of Biafra was put in place by June 1967, Lasse Heerten, Dirk Moses, The Nigeria-Biafra war: postcolonial conflict and the question of genocide, *Journal of Genocide Research,* vol. 16(2-3), 2014, p. 174
[871] AMSZ, Szyfrogramy, Lagos 1967, szyfrogram nr. 8026, 19.06.1967
[872] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 8505, 24.06.1967
[873] FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. XXIV, Africa – Document 388, Memorandum from the President's Special Assistant to President Johnson, 06.06.1967

Poles.[874] Shortly after taking over as Ambassador, Dedo informed Warsaw that after initial hesitation, London greenlighted arms deliveries to Lagos as soon as Wilson found out that Gowon reached out to the USSR, Czechoslovakia and Poland.[875] Washington, in the meantime, remained neutral. The arms sales seemed "unavoidable" given London's initially hesitant position. However, the Americans did not believe the Soviet bloc was not mounting a campaign to gain any political influence. Moreover, he believed the Nigerian political "milieu" made it an "unlikely objective".[876] For the time being, Warsaw was waiting. The only active powers in Nigeria seemed to be the USSR and the United Kingdom. While Moscow pounced to exploit Wilson's initial hesitancy, London tried to mitigate its losses by expanding its assistance to Gowon. For example, Moscow agreed when Lagos approached the USSR about oil supplies, in connection to the shortage created by the secession. Immediately after, Shell-BP offered its services, despite the issues caused by the crises in Biafra and the Middle East.[877]

While Moscow expanded its relations with Nigeria, the British did their best to "present counteroffers" or to "disrupt any such transactions through their omnipresent advisors".[878] Unfortunately for London, its initial hesitant reaction made the Nigerians acutely aware of the need to balance out the Western predominance by more extensive contacts with the Soviet bloc. Soon after the first armament shipments, carried by the PŻM, arrived from Czechoslovakia, Lagos offered Warsaw an economic cooperation agreement.[879] Warsaw did not need any further encouragement. Given the increasing shortage of specialists, Dedo and Rux urged Warsaw to keep sending new ones and "preferably ones that would facilitate our entrance to new economic areas of cooperation".[880] While the Soviets and the Czechoslovaks supplied arms, the Poles only supplied technicians. The Nigerian army and economy lacked the necessary know-how. Gowon's army lacked trained pilots, and Lagos soon asked Moscow to supply pilots to fly the Soviet and Czechoslovak aircraft supplied to Nigeria. Moscow, however, denied the request. Therefore, Gowon was forced to recruit volunteers from other countries, such as Egypt and Ethiopia.[881] By September, the Poles observed an increasing

[874] AMSZ, Szyfrogramy, Lagos 1967, szyfrogram nr. 9737, 21.07.1967
[875] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 9220, 06.07.1967
[876] FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. XXIV, Africa – Document 390, Memorandum from Edward Hamilton of the NSC Staff to the President's Special Assistant (Rostow).
[877] AMSZ, Szyfrogramy, Lagos 1967, szyfrogram nr. 9742, 29.07.1967
[878] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 9830, 01.08.1967
[879] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 10006, 04.08.1967; szyfrogram nr. 10235, 10.08.1967
[880] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 10504, 17.08.1967
[881] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 10617, 20.08.1967; szyfrogram nr. 10928, 28.08.1967

concern in Paris. Dedo informed Warsaw that the French would soon move to secure their regional interests.[882] The Poles, hitherto, only supplied technicians. However, in early September, the Polish coal exporting company Węglokoks joined the bid to supply Nigeria with coal. The prolonged war created increasing shortages, and Gowon was forced to seek help. The success of the Polish bid seemed unlikely, given that the chief bidder was the West German Krupp.[883] However, Rux's network and economic spies scattered around Nigeria, combined with Gowon's scepticism of the West, allowed Węglokoks to secure a very prestigious and rather lucrative contract. Poland was to become Nigeria's chief coal supplier for the entire duration of the hostilities, with a possibility to extend the contract.[884] In November 1967, the FMG launched its first military offensive against Biafra. The offensive quickly collapsed, and it became apparent that the conflict would be prolonged and would draw increasing international involvement.[885]

As the Biafra-Nigeria war extended to 1968, it drew increasing international attention. London was increasingly aware that the outcome of the conflict would determine its future standing in the region. In early March 1968, Matthews, the American Ambassador in Lagos, called for a more active US involvement in the conflict, arguing that the initial refusal to sell weapons forced the Nigerians closer to the Soviet Bloc.[886] By May 1968, the Americans saw that the position of the Soviet Bloc was significantly improved due to prompt support offered to the FMG. The American intelligence report outlined that Nigeria was more likely to adopt a more non-aligned stance after the war, which would result in a significant loss of influence for the West in the West African region.[887] However, the increasingly friendly relations between the Soviet Bloc and the FMG would soon come under significant strain. The prolongation of the Biafran conflict coincided with the Prague Spring. The internal unrest soon translated into a series of erratic Czechoslovak moves on the international stage. In early May 1968, Czechoslovakia's Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kohut, made a public statement announcing the cessation of CSSR's arms deliveries to the FMG. Such an announcement was made during a radio interview. The Czechoslovak Ambassador delivered the formal diplomatic notification a few days later, on 7 May 1968. The Poles feared that such a move

[882] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 11135, 02.09.1967
[883] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 11181, 04.09.1967
[884] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 13279, 21.10.1967
[885] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 13818, 07.11.1967
[886] FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. XXIV, Document 395, Airgram form the Embassy in Nigeria to the Department of State, 07.03.1968
[887] Ibid. Document 397, National Intelligence Estimate, 02.05.1968

could negatively impact Nigerian-Soviet Bloc relations.[888] Thankfully for the Soviet Bloc, the British soon began pressuring the Nigerians to allow the British troops into the secessionist territories. Wilson even threatened that refusal to comply would cease British arms deliveries to the FMG. Awolowo, Gowon's assistant, informed the Polish Ambassador that the Federal Military Council did not yield to London's pressure and was resolved to increase its military purchases from the Soviet Bloc.[889]

Therefore, despite the erratic Czechoslovak move towards Nigeria, the relations between the Soviet Bloc continued to improve. The Nigerians were shocked by the pro-Biafran campaign launched in the Czechoslovak media. The Poles suspected that Prague was courting Bonn, which was openly pro-Biafran, by adopting a similar line. The Polish suspicions seemed to have been confirmed when the Nigerians informed Dedo that they intercepted a transhipment of arms en route to Biafra, which contained most modern arms of West German production.[890] Given the tensions between London and Lagos, even the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 did not hamper the relations between Lagos and the Warsaw Pact Five. While quietly expressing support, the FMG did not make any statement to either condemn or support the invasion.[891] By the end of August 1968, the FMG could no longer stave off the internationalisation of the Biafran conflict. Ojukwu levelled a powerful accusation of genocide being conducted on the Ibo population. All major capitals, led by London, were pressuring Gowon to allow Western observers, who could then investigate if genocide was indeed taking place. Gowon finally yielded to these pressures. The FMG formally invited the Polish Government to join Great Britain, Sweden, Canada, the UN and the Organisation of African Unity in forming the Observer Team to Nigeria (hereafter the OTN) to observe the conduct of Nigerian troops. The Soviets opposed the idea, believing the OTN could help the West regain lost influence in the region.[892]The OTN would have been another international body, like the ICSC in Vietnam, that Poland was to be a part of. However, unlike in Vietnam, the obligation was not thrust upon Warsaw this time. The Soviets voiced their objections, but Warsaw also probed Ottawa, London and Stockholm about their attitudes toward the Nigerian invitation.[893]Ultimately, the Poles agreed to subject their participation to the condition that the OTN would "not become an instrument of intervention"

[888] AMSZ, Szyfrogramy, Lagos 1968, szyfrogram nr. 5333, 02.05.1968; szyfrogram nr. 5473, 07.05.1968
[889] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 7839, 14.06.1968; szyfrogram nr. 8373, 08.07.1968
[890] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 10615, 20.08.1968; szyfrogram nr. 13588, 28.10.1968
[891] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 10616, 28.08.1968
[892] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 10548, 28.08.1968
[893] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 7823, 01.09.1968

in Nigerian “domestic affairs”. A blatant attempt to woo Gowon and create a basis for further and increased Nigerian cooperation.[894]

The OTN commenced its activities on 24 September 1968, with the initial mandate expiring at the end of 1968. The Polish delegation arrived on 1 October, a few days later than the Western delegations. Poland's first observer was Colonel Alfons Olkiewicz. The British delegation was headed by General major Henry Alexander, the Swedish by General Arthur Raab, and the Canadian by William Millroy. Despite his lower military rank, Olkiewicz had considerable diplomatic experience. Between 1946 and 1949, he was Poland's military attaché in Washington and later headed Poland's delegation to the ICSC in Laos. However, according to Olkiewicz's memoirs, the Western press was shocked that he never belonged to the PZPR or any other political party. [895] Olkiewicz chaired the OTN when it published the first report on its activities. The report conclusively stated that the OTN found no evidence of a genocide taking place.[896] After two months of activities, the OTN published another report, which concluded that an alleged genocide was not taking place. Olkeiwicz promised Gowon that Poland would publicise the report, and he sent a copy to Warsaw for wider distribution. In November 1968, there was still no end in sight to the Biafra-Nigeria war, which left the question of extending the mandate of the OTN. The Poles informed Gowon that they saw the matter as dependent on the FMG's decision, whatever it might be. The British, Canadians, Swedes and the UN representative pushed for an extension of the OTN's mandate.[897] The war operations and arms supplies, thus, continued. By the end of 1968, the Nigerians purchased £40.5 million worth of military equipment. The Soviets and the British each provided armament supplies worth £6 million. The third largest supplier was the CSSR, providing arms worth £2.5 million, followed by the United Arab Republic, which provided the equivalent of £2 million in arms. The remainder came from “other countries’. The Poles were still not part of the equation, with the Polish-Nigerian talks regarding arms purchases scheduled for December 1968.[898]

[894] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 7950, 04.09.1968
[895] Alfons Olkiewicz, *Polacy podczas wojny domowej w Nigerii,* in Stanisław Płaszewicz (ed.), *Polacy w Nigerii,* p.71
[896] AMSZ, Szyfrogramy, Lagos 1968, szyfrogram nr. 13478, 24.10.1968.
[897] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 14576, 26.11.1968
[898] DEF 3/27 – Arms for Nigeria, 18.11.1968, p.1; AMSZ, Szyfrogramy, Lagos 1968, szyfrogram nr. 14629, 27.11.1968

With the prolongation of the war, Gowon eventually agreed to extend the OTN's mandate, with all countries agreeing to keep their observers in Nigeria.[899] The Polish assistance provided to Gowon through the OTN soon yielded more tangible results. In early December 1968, the Nigerian Federal Executive Council decided to open the second Embassy, after Moscow, in the Soviet Bloc. The Nigerians chose Warsaw because Poland was Nigeria's "second most important partner" in the Bloc. Soon after, the Nigerian Ministry of Transport negotiated with Poland to purchase more ships for the Nigerian merchant fleet[900]. The Poles continued to support the Nigerians within the OTN. Another occasion, when Polish assistance proved invaluable to the Nigerians, unfolded in early 1969. In January, the British, in a rather thinly veiled attempt to gain more control of the situation in Nigeria, pushed for the provision of aircraft for the OTN, which the British believed would be "vital to discharge our duties".[901] Hitherto, the OTN relied on the FMG to provide aircraft or other means of transportation for the observers whenever they wanted or needed to visit a specific region. However, this would mean losing control over the OTN's movements for the FMG. When the Poles were approached by the British and Canadians about the matter, Olkiewicz asked Warsaw for instructions. The response that came was somewhat surprising. The MSZ, based on Olkiewicz's reports, saw the British and Canadian push to expand the OTN's activities to all of Nigeria. Having "unlimited and independent access' to means of transport could prove "harmful" to the Nigerian Government. Moreover, Poland could always be "outvoted" and thus unable to curb the British drive to expand the OTN's reach and scope of activities. The MSZ believed that the OTN acquiring such aircraft would be "undesirable". Olkiewicz was further instructed to discuss the matter with the Nigerians, who were to decide how to proceed.[902]The British, fearing accusations of meddling in Nigerian affairs, could not provide any aircraft for the OTN. Canadians, on the other hand, could, but the provision of an aircraft by Ottawa was contingent on all delegations' agreement and participation in service and maintenance costs.[903] When Poland refused to pay its share of the aircraft hire, the Canadians were still willing to provide aircraft, but under the condition that they would also provide a relief aircraft crewed by the Nigerian Red Cross. Given that the Nigerian Red Cross was not keen to join the operation, while Canadians were not prepared to press the matter with

[899] FCO 65/168, Telegram nr. 2176 to FCO, 06.12.1968, p. 1
[900] AMSZ, Szyfrogramy, Lagos, 1968, szyfrogram nr. 14870, 04.12.1968; szyfrogram nr.15405, 07.12.1968
[901] FCO 65/169, Telegram no. 84, 20.01.1969
[902] AMSZ, Szyfrogramy, Lagos 1969, szyfrogram nr. 977, 04.02.1969
[903] FCO 65/169, Cyphered telegram nr. 16, from Lagos to FCO, 03.02.1969

Gowon, the attempt to expand the scope of OTN's activities, and make its moves independent of the Nigerian Government providing transport, failed.[904]

In 1969, Richard Nixon assumed office. With the new administration in Washington, there came a time for a reassessment of American policy. Kissinger observed that in Nigeria, London had "no real negotiating leverage" in resolving the issue in Biafra. The French still supported the rebels, hoping the Federation would break up before it could defeat Biafra. The Soviets, despite "jumping in" as arms suppliers, had no "vital interests" in Nigeria.[905] By February 1969, the Americans saw two options. The first was to "become more involved in supporting Federal Nigeria", and the second was to focus on Biafra to mitigate the losses caused by the break with FMG. Neutrality was no longer sustainable.[906] Furthermore, American reports indicated that the Soviet influence in Nigeria decreased as the war dragged on.[907] Despite the changing international conditions and apparent tensions between Moscow and Lagos, the Polish-Nigerian commercial and political relations seemed to expand. In March 1969, the Poles secured an extension for the coal delivery contract. Additionally, the Polish manufacturer of rolling stock, Kolmex, secured a lucrative deal in Nigeria, despite competition from British, Japanese or Italian firms.[908] In August, the Nigerians agreed to support Poland's candidacy to the UN Security Council in exchange for Poland's support for the Nigerian candidacy to the ECOSOC.[909] By September, the Nigerians decided to expand their merchant fleet in cooperation with Poland. The Poles would eventually provide tankers and dry bulk carriers. In the meantime, the National Nigerian Shipping Line would "permanently" charter several Polish ships.[910] By December 1969, Nigeria's first ambassador arrived in Warsaw. He was also accredited in Prague, Budapest, Sofia, Belgrade and Bucharest. This move aggravated Belgrade but clearly showed the pecking order within the Warsaw Pact. Moreover, Poland would soon become Nigeria's most important partner in the Soviet Bloc. In addition to the official ambassadorial exchange, Rux reported to Warsaw that the situation is ripe for Poland to negotiate access to Nigerian oil reserves.[911]

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[904] FCO 65/170, Aide memoire for the Rt. Hon. Maurice Foley, Minister of State, 04.02.1969; cyphered telegram nr. 224, 13.02.1969
[905] FRUS. 1969-1976, vol. E-5, Part 1, Documents on Sub-Saharan Africa, 1969-1972, Doc. 25 Memorandum from the President's Assistant for National Security to President Nixon, 28.01.1969, p.4-5
[906] Ibid. Doc. 32
[907] Ibid. Doc. 53
[908] AMSZ, Szyfrogramy, Lagos 1969, szyfrogram nr.2962, 18.03.1969; szyfrogram nr. 13058, 20.03.1969
[909] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 9869, 09.08.1969
[910] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 1048, 15.09.1969
[911] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 14584, 28.12.1969, szyfrogram nr. 14584, 28.12.1969, szyfrogram nr. 14392, 19.12.1969

With the expanding relations, the Poles paid little attention to the activities of the OTN, so Ojukwu's escape and fall of Biafra in January 1970, took the Polish Embassy by surprise. The Poles were not the only ones surprised by such a turn of events. The FMG also did not anticipate Biafra's sudden collapse and had no plans to deal with the population and territory over which it suddenly regained control.[912] The ambassadors of Poland, the USSR, CSSR and Hungary held special consultations on how to deal with Nigeria. It was agreed that the Soviet Bloc countries should coordinate their efforts to maintain the gains in Nigeria.[913] With the end of hostilities, the focus was again on the activities of the OTN. It was supposed to issue a special report regarding the fall of Biafra and the subsequent federal takeover. The new Canadian observer, General Drewry, who replaced Milroy in the fall of 1969, according to the British, was a "quarrelsome, tactless, stupid man, usually drunk anytime from breakfast onwards".[914]So to all observers, it was a surprise that Drewry prepared a report that accused the federal army's 3rd Division of "lack of discipline and lawlessness" in their conduct on the former Biafran territory. The Canadian convinced the Brit and the Swede to sign the report. Colonel Biernacki, who replaced Olkiewicz in the fall of 1969, believed it to be a ploy designed to give the Western powers, but mainly Britain, grounds to interfere openly in Nigeria's affairs. Biernacki immediately consulted Dedo. After the consultation, the Polish delegation issued a minority report that cleared the 3rd Division from all accusations levied by the rest of the observers. Biernacki's vociferous objections persuaded the Briton and the Swede to withdraw their signatures from the Canadian draft special report. The Canadian High Commissioner in Lagos attempted to force Dedo to withdraw the Polish minority report. However, Dedo, who ordered Biernacki to block the Canadian draft, responded that he "could not interfere in any activities of the OTN". Neither Polish nor the Canadian draft was published, but Biernacki's move helped Poland score additional political points in Lagos.[915]

In February 1970, it was agreed that the OTN would cease its activity. Gowon thanked Dedo and Biernacki for their work and assistance extended by Poland during the Biafran crisis. The assistance proved only political since March 1970, when the OTN was officially disbanded, Poland had not sold Nigeria even a single piece of military equipment.[916] Despite

[912] AMSZ, Szyfrogramy, Lagos 1970, szyfrogram nr. 415, 13.01.1970.
[913] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 484, 14.01.1970 – this is a first mention in Polish documents of Soviet bloc ambassadors discussing or attempting to coordinate their actions since the Soviet bloc countries established diplomatic relations with Nigeria in the early 1960s.
[914] FCO 65/782, British High Commission in Lagos to FCO, 31.01.1970, p.1
[915] AMSZ, Szfrogramy, Lagos 1970, szyfrogram nr. 941, 26.01.1970
[916] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 2144, 25.02.1970; szyfrogram 2336, 03.03.1970

such a blatant lack of military assistance, Warsaw would now reap the rewards of its engagement in Nigeria. In June 1970, the coal contract was further extended and increased to 500,000 tonnes annually. Gowon intended to expand Nigeria's merchant fleet; in June 1970, a new director was appointed. Henryk Dehmel, a Pole, was selected from a pool of candidates supplied by Poland, the USSR, Britain and Canada.[917] Two months later, a joint Polish-Nigerian pharmaceutical company, Polfa Nigeria Ltd, was established. The cessation of hostilities allowed the two countries to finally establish the company, whose creation was negotiated in early 1968.[918] The Poles maintained the majority of 60% of the shares, the rest belonging to private Nigerian investors.[919]While Soviet involvement quickly dissipated following the fall of Biafra, Polish involvement continued to grow. In the 1960s and 1970s, several dozen joint Polish-Nigerian companies were established. The Polish export to Nigeria grew tenfold from $1.5 million in 1960 to $15 million in 1979/80.[920]The Poles, through their merchant navy, controlled most of the shipping between Nigeria and the Soviet Bloc. By 1970, Poland was not only Nigeria's most important commercial partner. Warsaw was now considered by Lagos as a political partner too. When the Nigerians finally decided to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC, the MSZ would broker the negotiations between the Nigerian and Chinese ambassadors in Warsaw.[921]

Poland's and Eastern Europe's role in Africa in the 1960s is greatly underestimated. Although some voices attempted to emphasise the role of the "peripheries' in the global Cold War, they lacked concrete examples.[922] This chapter has provided such an example. In the process, it explained that not only was the "periphery" much quicker to respond to opportunities presented by decolonisation, but it also outlined that Poland's involvement helped shape early post-colonial Nigeria and West Africa more broadly. In the early 1960s, newly independent West African states entirely depended on the crucial infrastructure their former colonial overlords built. If not for the Soviet bloc involvement, it was likely that such a state of affairs would only solidify with time. This very dependence of the region on Western shipping, capital and financial institutions, and finally technicians and specialists, paradoxically posed the most significant obstacle against Eastern European economic penetration. Nevertheless, it was the most significant opportunity for Poland and its Soviet

[917] Ibid. szyfrogram nr. 5974, 09.06.1970; szyfrogram nr. 6700, 30.06.1970
[918] AAN, MHZ, sygn. 2779, p. 201
[919] Ibid, p.8
[920] Zygmunt Łazowski, *Stosunki handlowe,* in Stanisław Płaszewicz (ed.), *Polacy w Nigerii,* p. 59-62
[921] AMSZ, Szyfrogramy, Lagos 1970, szyfrogram nr. 12183, 27.12.1970
[922] Eric Burton, James Mark, Steffi Marung in James Mark and Paul Betts (eds.), *Socialism Goes Global,* p. 75

Bloc allies. With such a Western dominance, the beginnings were modest, but the commercial and political relations continued to grow throughout the 1960s. The absence of an ideological aspect in Polish relations with Nigeria is quite telling. Both parties focused on mutually beneficial commercial relations. This was reflected by the order in such relations being established. First, the Poles entered into commercial relations with Western firms, then directly with Nigerians in 1961. The establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries was a natural extension of their already existing trade relations, and at least initially, diplomacy only facilitated trade. As Nigeria sought to free itself from Western dominance, the relations between Lagos and Warsaw gradually expanded into the political domain. The Biafran crisis of 1967-1970 and Poland's diplomatic assistance within the OTN helped establish closer ties between the two countries.

Poland's entry into West Africa was closely connected with its rapidly growing merchant navy. The expansion of the navy had two primary long-term goals – creating the capacity to carry all Polish seaborne trade on Polish ships and, even more importantly, creating a steady supply of convertible currency. Building ships proved relatively easy, while finding enough cargo to carry proved more challenging, but it was also accomplished. In their rather un-altruistic pursuit of profit, the Poles found themselves competing against Western shipping monopolies that strangled the West African economies. It cannot be said that Poland could carry all West African cargo and that the Western shipping lines were removed entirely from the picture in West Africa. Nevertheless, the Polish competition captured enough to bring the freight prices down. The Polish presence in the region mobilised native West African traders to form enterprises that were not bound by contracts with WALCON, and as such, Poland's merchant navy encouraged native West African commerce to develop, at least to some extent. Poland's extensive contacts with the West also facilitated direct West African contacts with markets other than Britain. Such direct access provided by the Polish merchant navy greatly facilitated the successful conclusion of the Nigeria-EEC association agreement in 1965.

Although in 1961, the PŻM was joined by the DSR, the Poles still played a dominant role in the shipping industry, given the small carrying and transhipment capacity of other Eastern European states.[923]Thus, Poland was a primary facilitator of Eastern European commercial contacts with Africa. Especially for landlocked CSSR and Hungary, which relied

[923] APSz, PZM, sygn. 2025, Memorandum on Transhipment plan for 1961, p. 1-2

almost exclusively on Polish ports to carry their goods by sea. It is worth noting that there was a distinct Soviet absence in the region, at least in the first half of the 1960s. The Soviet-Nigeria commercial exchange rose sharply in 1964, but Nigeria's commercial exchange was still significantly smaller than trade with the GDR, Poland or Czechoslovakia. The Soviet involvement rose sharply between 1967 and 1970 but proved incidental. The Soviet Union did not have any vital interests in Nigeria. The lack of commercial relations thus created a discontinuity in political relations between Lagos and Moscow.[924] Therefore, unlike the Soviets, the Poles managed to translate their commercial relations into closer political ties. However, the Poles had yet another advantage over the USSR. They were part of the international team of observers sent to investigate allegations of genocide. In the case of Nigeria, the Poles adopted a strategy they had already tested in the ICSC in Indochina. Namely, the Polish representative in an international body was not to pursue Poland's interests explicitly. Unlike the other members of the ICSC, or the OTN, who tried to use the organisation to their political end, the Poles focused on representing the interests of their ally, not their own. Such an approach was always warmly received by its beneficiary. Such a tactic created an atmosphere of trust and friendship, which could then be exchanged for political favours and preferential treatment. Out of all Soviet Bloc countries, Poland proved to be probably the most successful. By the 1970s, Warsaw became Lagos' chief commercial and political partner within the bloc, even though Poland's military input in the Biafran crisis was non-existent. From the beginning, the Poles focused on mutually beneficial commercial relations with West Africa. That strategy proved to be highly effective. In pursuing such relations, the Poles provided the Nigerians and other West Africans with alternative shipping and financial solutions. Contrary to Gasztołd's claim, the Polish involvement in Africa was not "inconsequential."[925] In fact, a medium size country, a periphery of the Soviet empire, in an attempt to secure profits for its national economy, largely influenced how the Cold War events unfolded in West Africa. Although a rather detailed case study, this chapter offers only a fraction of the whole picture since the Polish merchant fleet operated not only in West Africa but in the northern, southern and eastern parts of the continent, where it also challenged the well-established colonial order.

[924] Ehmika Ifidon, Charles Osarumwense, Politics without commerce? Explaining the discontinuity in Soviet-Nigerian Relations, 1971-1979, *African and Asian Studies,* 2015, vol. 14(4), p. 290
[925] Przemyslaw Gasztold in Muehlenbeck and Telepneva, p. 198

Conclusions

The ambition to "play second fiddle" in the Soviet Bloc was motivated by Polish desire for autonomy. The PZPR leadership believed that by making Poland the most senior partner of the USSR, they will be able to safeguard their country's autonomy. To this effect they transformed Polish economy, modernised the army and enhanced Poland's diplomacy. Having analysed the most important test cases, we can now move to the overall assessment of the Polish project that was launched in 1956.

Firstly, the events of 1956 allowed Poland to gain a significant amount of autonomy, but that newly acquired leeway was by no means formal. The first and most important task that Gomułka and the PZPR leadership faced was formalising the new *modus vivendi* with the Soviet Union. The Poles saw the Warsaw Pact, the chief political and military organisation of the Soviet Bloc, as the best platform to achieve this goal. The initial agreements, however, were bilateral and dealt with regulating the Soviet military presence on Polish territory. Having formalised the status of the Soviet troops, the Poles moved toward ascertaining their position within the Warsaw Pact. The first major move occurred in the early 1960s, when Poland launched an extensive program of expanding and modernising its army. The Second Five Year plan of 1961-1965 actually sacrificed the improvements of living standards in favour of modernising and expanding the army. But the Poles believed that sacrifice would help them safeguard their autonomy. The result was a sizeable force equipped with the most recent Soviet military technology and equipment. By 1965, when the modernisation and reorganisation programme were complete the Polish army totalled 291 000 men plus 45 000 men serving in Territorial Defence Forces.[926] In comparison, the other two largest armies were of Czechoslovakia, with the army of 203 000 and Romania with an army of 217 000 men.[927]

Having established themselves firmly as the second military power within the Warsaw Pact, the Poles then moved to secure their political position within the structures of the alliance. At this point it is important to remind that Poland adopted a different approach to some other members of the Soviet Bloc. Romania chose contestation, especially from 1965 onward. To some degree, we can observe similar tactic being adopted by Czechoslovakia in 1968. The Poles, however, chose a method of cooperation. Warsaw positioned itself as Moscow's most senior ally in the Pact. That warranted that Gomułka or other members of

[926] Territorial Defence forces were exclusively used for internal defence and security; CIA-RDP01-00707R000200070031-4, National Intelligence Survey – Poland – Armed Forces, December 1973, p. 5
[927] CIA-RDP01-00707R000200110033-7, National Intelligence Survey – Rumania – General Survey, July 1970, p. 158; CIA-RDP01-00707R000200110009-4, National Intelligence Survey – Czechoslovakia – Armed Forces, May 1974, p. 6

PZPR leadership were always at the negotiating table, able to use Poland's position as a negotiating tool. This approach seems much more successful than the method of contestation adopted by Romania, and to some extent, Czechoslovakia in the late 1960s. As Laurien Crump demonstrated, the Romanians and later Czechoslovaks, were left isolated and were not present at the summits where Bloc policy was discussed. In 1967, Gomułka was able to prevent his allies from establishing diplomatic relations with West Germany until Oder-Neisse was recognised. In 1968, Gomułka provided a significant input on how post-invasion political manoeuvrings in Czechoslovakia were to be conducted. By 1969, when the Warsaw Pact became a multilateral alliance, Poland proved to be the most senior ally of the Soviet Bloc, capable of influencing the overall Bloc policies.

The of process transformation of Poland from a satellite to a strategic ally within the Warsaw Pact had important ramifications, not only within, but also beyond the Soviet Bloc. As Poland's position of strategic ally was solidified, the Poles could act more freely outside the bloc. We can observe such a trend with Poland's economic and political relations with the West. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Poland tabled several proposal for nuclear disengagement in Central and Eastern Europe. These plans have been negotiated with and approved by Moscow. By 1964, when Polish position within the Warsaw Pact was relatively strong and secure, Poland acted unilaterally and called for a European security conference. In 1969, when Warsaw's position within the alliance was formalised, Gomułka announced, also without prior consultation with the Soviet leadership, his readiness to enter negotiations with West Germany, which eventually culminated in the signing of the Warsaw Treaty of 1970 and the universal recognition of the Oder-Neisse line. In the process, Warsaw was able not only to overcome its diplomatic isolation, but also significantly contribute to global debates on nuclear disarmament and collective security, which in turn strengthened Poland's position within the Warsaw Pact.

Outside of Europe, we can also observe that as Poland's importance within the Warsaw Pact grew, the Polish policy became bolder. However, the Polish "second fiddle" principle did not envisage Poland playing an important role outside of Europe. In the Global South, the Poles focused mostly on beneficial economic relations. And these relations in some cases were transformed into a more substantial political involvement. Such was the case of Poland's involvement in the Vietnam War. Initially, Warsaw was thrust into the conflict as a Soviet proxy, tasked only with safeguarding the interests of the Soviet Bloc and North Vietnam in the International Commission of Supervision and Control. But as Poland broadened its autonomy

within the Warsaw Pact, it could formulate and pursue more independent policies outside of the alliance. In relation to Vietnam, the Poles soon identified that their economic interests in relation to Indochina lie in shipping. The economic aid and trade carried on Polish ships to North Vietnamese ports proved as basis for expanding the operations of the Polish merchant fleet in the Far East and Australia. With the escalation of the Indochina conflict, the Poles found themselves protecting their economic interests. The mediation effort in 1966, although congruent with wider Soviet Bloc interests and undertaken with Moscow's tacit approval, aimed mostly at securing Poland's access to North Vietnamese ports, which served as a springboard for Polish shipping operations in the region. Although the Poles never envisaged playing an important role outside of Europe, in their attempt to protect their economic interests, Warsaw became a mediator in a major Cold War conflict. Despite the ultimate failure of Polish mediated North Vietnamese-American talks in 1966, the Poles were still able to benefit from their role. While lending its full diplomatic support in negotiations with Washington, Warsaw asked for economic favours from Hanoi. The North Vietnamese would grant such favours, and by 1969 Poland received a monopoly on shipping goods between Western and Eastern Europe and Vietnam.

Similarly, in the case of Nigeria, the initially modest economic involvement would, almost organically, be transformed into a substantial political involvement. The Polish-Nigerian relations were based purely on the economic exchange. The trade agreement, signed in the early 1960s, served only to justify the presence of Polish merchant fleet in the region. But as the Poles captured more cargo and expanded their commercial ties with Nigeria, the political involvement also grew. In 1964, the PŻM proved instrumental in breaking the British shipping monopoly in Nigeria and West Africa. Warsaw's emphasis on mutually beneficial commercial relations with Nigeria warranted that when the Nigerian Civil War erupted in 1967, Poland would eventually lend its unconditional support to the Lagos government. By 1968, the Nigerians clearly saw Poland as an ally and invited a Polish representative to the Observer Team to Nigeria, which was called to investigate the claims of genocide raised by the rulers of the secessionist province of Biafra. Just as they did in Vietnam, the Poles offered the Nigerians their full diplomatic support in exchange for preferential economic treatment for Polish enterprises operating in Nigeria. The Polish economic and political involvement in Nigeria assisted and sped up the process of decolonisation in Nigeria. In pursuit of profit for their national economy, Poles yet again, inadvertently played a significant role in the Cold War.

The economy was seen by Gomułka and the PZPR as a key instrument to safeguard Poland's autonomy within the Soviet Bloc. Poland's economic policies were conducted within three distinct contexts: the Soviet Bloc, the West and the Global South. Within the Soviet Bloc, the Poles focused on making Poland the main transit hub and attempting to reform the COMECON. Given Poland's strategic geographic location, the former task proved relatively easy to accomplish. The COMECON reform, effectively failed, and closer, multilateral economic cooperation within the Bloc never materialised. In their relations with the West, the Poles focused predominantly on gaining access to Western technologies, which could not be obtained within the Soviet Bloc. Initially, the Poles wanted to focus on economic relations within the Bloc, but the economic crisis of the early 1960, that spared Poland, but affected all of Poland's major Soviet Bloc partners, forced Warsaw to seek closer cooperation with the West. The relations with the Global South were chiefly aimed at securing the hard currency Poland needed to trade with the West. The chief instrument for Poland to get the hard currency was the Polish merchant fleet, in an attempt to overcome Poland's chronic shortage of convertible currency, disrupted several Western shipping monopolies in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Despite apparent success in this regard, it was the economic crisis that led to Gomułka's fall from power. A more sceptic reader might conclude that the Polish project of 1956-1970 was, after all, not very successful. And ass such the crisis and Gomułka's fall warrant closer scrutiny.

In 1970, Poland experienced a major economic crisis, which was the immediate cause of Gomułka's ouster. Given that the economic factors were the immediate cause of Gomułka's fall, at this point, it is essential to evaluate the Polish economic developments between 1956 and 1970. At first glance, the economic metrics seem to indicate that Poland performed well. When Gomułka came to power in 1956, Poland GDP stood at $794 million. In 1970, it was $1.4 billion. GDP per capita grew from $2864 to $4428.[928] Poland had established beneficial economic relations with non-communist countries. The country's merchant fleet and transit infrastructure were generating enough hard currency to balance Poland's chronic negative trade balance. It appears almost unseemly that a leader who presided over such a significant economic growth would fall from power over an announced increase in the price of meat.

However, as previously discussed, Gomułka and the PZPR leadership made several errors in their assessment of Polish economy, its capabilities and directions of its future

[928] Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics* (Paris: OECD, 2003), p. 99-100.

development. The initial trend was to moderate rapid industrialisation that occurred in 1948-1955. The results were significant, and the national economy exceeded the expectations envisaged in the First and Second Five Year Plans. The economic crisis in the Soviet Bloc the early 1960s caused the Poles to reach out to the West.[929] The West, and more precisely, Western Europe was undergoing a process of political and economic integration since 1957. This process meant that preference was given to trade within the European Economic Community, while trade with external partners was limited by systems of quotas and limits. The only goods that Poland could trade relatively freely with its Western European partners were raw materials and foodstuffs. This in turn, resulted in Poland's overinvestment in heavy industry in the mid-1960s. The majority of investments were again allocated to lengthy and costly industrial projects. The standards of living, housing and consumer goods were neglected. Thus, despite a significant economic growth, the Polish society was not significantly better off in 1970, than in 1956. The riots that erupted in December 1970 were not exactly a sign of economic ruin, but they were a sign of protest against the PZPR, which ignored, or even intentionally sacrificed, the aspirations and economic concerns of Polish people.[930]

The economic issues were also compounded by Poland's demographics. Unlike its other Eastern European counterparts, Poland experienced significant demographic growth between 1956 and 1970. In 1956 Poland had approximately 27.7 million citizens. Bulgaria had 7.5 million people, Czechoslovakia – 13.2 million, Hungary – 9.9 million and Romania – 17.5 million. In 1970, the situation was as follows: Bulgaria – 8.4 million, Czechoslovakia – 14.3 million, Hungary – 10.3 million and Romania – 20 million. The same year, Polish census recorded 32.5 million citizens.[931] While other Eastern European countries' populations grew by 400 000 to 2.5 million citizens, Poland's population grew by approximately 4.8 million people. That staggering number definitely altered the distribution of the economic growth achieved between 1956 and 1970. Unfortunately, that factor is always ignored by historians and economists alike. We can see that was a factor in Polish decision making and that the PZPR leadership was aware of that problem. When the Polish Parliament was discussing the First Five Year Plan of 1956-1960, Konstanty Łubieński, criticised the government for its

[929] Between 1962 and 1963, Poland's GDP grew from $1.01 billion to $1.07 billion, while the Czechoslovak GDP fell from $734 million to $721 million. The soviet GDP fell from $9.15 billion to $8.95 billion. Ibid, p.100
[930] Janusz Kaliński, *Gospodarka Polski W Latach 1944-1989* (Warszawa: Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, 1995), p. 81-84
[931] Angus Maddison, *The World Economy,* 2003, p. 97

tendency to favour "universal employment" rather than higher rates of modernisation of national economy.[932] Thus, in 1956 the PZPR leadership seemed to have made a conscious decision to sacrifice modernisation and higher economic output in favour of less modern and more labour intensive methods, which would guarantee employment for the additional millions of people born post-1945.

Overall, the economic crisis that toppled Gomułka in 1970 had a remarkably complex background. The PZPR leadership that emerged in 1956 was not able to overcome all of the legacies of the Stalinist system. Eventually, they ended up repeating the very same mistakes that led to riots in 1956. The economic crisis was ultimately the cause for Gomułka's fall, but as Kaliński noted, the country was not in economic ruin. His conclusions were supported by Jerzy Eisler, who emphasised in December 1970, the price increases were not indicative of a systemic crisis. They indicated hardship and affected the most disadvantaged in the Polish society. Moreover, the price increases were announced, rather unfortunately, 11 days before Christmas and at a time when people could no longer buy produce at the old price. This led to demonstrations. To gather a much attention, the protestors used excessively radical slogans, which in turn caused an excessively violent reaction on the part of authorities. The political crisis that effectively toppled Gomułka did not arise because of economic hardship, but because of numerous casualties among the protesting people.[933]

It must be said, that in their efforts to transform Poland's economy, Gomułka and the PZPR leadership made many errors and these errors led to a sequence of events that would effectively lead to Gomułka's fall. It also must be acknowledged that the PZPR leadership between 1956 and 1970 had to deal with significant obstacles. The economic objectives envisaged in 1956 had to take into account the significant demographic boom. To ensure social and political cohesion, the Polish leadership sacrificed more rapid modernisation of the national economy. The Poles were not also able to avoid the trap of overinvestment in heavy industry. This can partially be explained by the politicisation of the economic decision-making process. Partially, the Poles were also responding to external stimuli, such as the economic and political integration of Western European countries. Between 1956 and 1970, the PZPR chose an easy option and focused on raw materials and foodstuffs, to gain access to

[932] Łubieński is a testament to Polish uniqueness within the Soviet Bloc. He was an aristocrat and member of the Catholic associations „PAX" and "Znak". "Znak" was the organisation that formally represented the Catholic stance within the PZPR-dominated Parliament. Biblioteka Sejmowa, Sprawozdanie Stenograficzne z 8 posiedzenia Sejmu PRL w dniach od 11 do 13 lipca 1957, p. 78

[933] Jerzy Eisler, *"Polskie Miesiące" Czyli Kryzys(y) W PRL* (Warszawa: IPN, 2008), p. 31

Western markets. In doing so, the PZPR neglected the economic needs and aspirations of the Polish society, which eventually led to a crisis. However, the economic crisis of 1970 was not severe enough on its own to warrant a regime change, as Kaliński and Eisler confirm. The regime change of 1970 was also influenced by other factors.

There were also external and internal political factors that contributed to Gomułka's ouster. The economic crisis, it sparked and casualties it brought as a result from the government response, served more as an excuse, rather than the main cause. Firstly, Poland, Soviet Union and other Soviet Bloc states were non-democratic and authoritarian, if not totalitarian, regimes. In such circumstances the changes of ruling elites is not as frequent or as smooth as in democratic states. Polish sociologist Jadwiga Staniszkis observed that, in case of Poland, such changes were only possible when crisis occurred and thus the communist regime in Poland was "regulating through crises". The cycle she described, at least in relation to the period of 1948-1970 can be summarised in four steps:

1. New leadership announces the programme of economic and political transformation.
2. The implementation of the programme leads to social and political tensions.
3. Tensions erupt and the authorities react violently and crush dissent.
4. Controversy over ruthless reaction to crisis, leads to a regime change.
5. New regime is installed and announces new programme of economic and political transformation.[934]

As we can see the cycle described above quite aptly describe the events that occurred in 1948-1956 and 1956-1970. The framework provided by Staniszkis is useful, but not exhaustive and more factors need to be considered.

By 1970, the PPR/PZPR was ruled by a generation that entered politics before 1939. In the meantime, a new generation arose, and it also had aspirations. The lack of genuine elections meant that the elites of power within Poland, and elsewhere in the Soviet Bloc, had to be replaced by a coup. Szumiło observed that the generation of PZPR members that entered politics in the late 1940s and early 1950s displayed aspirations to replace the generation of leaders represented by Gomułka. They began challenging the status quo in the mid-1960s. When the economic crisis undermined the stability of Gomułka's leadership, they capitalised

[934] Jadwiga Staniszkis and Jan Tomasz Gross, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2019), p. 249-270.

on his weakness and ousted him and other members of the so called "KPP generation."[935] Thus, Gomułka's ultimate fall from power was also rooted in factional struggles within the PZPR itself. The economic crisis of 1970 was not the ultimate cause, but was used as a justification to challenge and replace the ruling party elites.

There were also external factors at play, as in any case of political crisis in Eastern Europe during the Cold War. Szumiło and Jarząbek noticed that Poland's position significantly changed with the signing of the Warsaw Treaty of 1970. With a stroke of a pen, the key pillar of Poland's allegiance was gone. The Soviet Union was no longer the sole guarantor of Poland's territorial integrity. Gomułka, who rose to power on the wave of anti-Soviet sentiments, was intransigent and vociferously objected to any measures that, in his eyes, would "subjugate" Poland's interest to the Soviet Union. While Edward Gierek was much more complacent, and therefore, much more suitable leader of Poland, for the Kremlin at least.[936] Eisler argued, that all the actions undertaken by Gierek and his associates were "done in secrecy, but with Kremlin's full support."[937] More recently, Szumiło discovered that Gierek began his attempts to discredit Gomułka as "anti-Soviet and pro-Western" in 1969 and that Kremlin did lend a sympathetic ear to the younger conspirators that wanted to challenge Gomułka. Kremlin's support was based on the opposition of Gomułka's excessive cooperation with the West and attempts to normalise the relations with West Germany.[938] Given that Gomułka was getting ready to allow West German enterprises to enter the Polish market, the Soviet interest could have been indeed threatened and Kremlin had motives to remove Gomułka from power in Poland. Gomułka himself, had no doubts about it and in a conversation with Andrzej Werblan, his Politburo colleague, he snapped: "I was taken down by Brezhnev, because I always said openly he knew nothing about politics."[939] The leader of the Polish section of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union, Petr Kostikov, confirmed that, although after initial hesitation, the Soviet leadership ultimately decided that Gierek was the preferable option for the post of the First Secretary in Warsaw.[940] Although direct

[935] Mirosław Szumiło, "Elita PPR I PZPR W Latach 1944–1970 – Próba Zdefiniowania", 2015, p. 34-35
[936] Mirosław Szumiło, "„Realizm" Polityczny W Kierownictwie PZPR – Płaszczyzny I Interpretacje," *Politeja* 10, no. 3(25) (July 1, 2013): 33–49, https://doi.org/10.12797/politeja.10.2013.25.03, p.40; Wanda Jarząbek, "Pozycja Peerelowskich Elit Władzy W Bloku Wschodnim – Wybrane Przykłady," in *Władza W PRL. Ludzie I Mechanizmy*, ed. Konrad Rokicki and Robert Spałek (Warszawa: IPN, 2011), p. 181
[937] Eisler, *Siedmiu wspaniałych,* 2014, p. 217
[938] Mirosław Szumiło, "Konflikty W Kierownictwie PZPR W Świetle Dokumentów Sowieckich Z 1969 Roku. Przyczynek Do Genezy Upadku Ekipy Władysława Gomułki," *Pamięć I Sprawiedliwość*, no. 30 (January 1, 2017): 466–81.
[939] Jerzy Eisler, *Polskie Miesiące,* 2008, p. 186
[940] Petr Kostikov, *Widziane Z Kremla* (Warszawa: BGW, 1992), p. 141

evidence is not clear, by 1970 Gomułka's and Poland's position seems to have reached an alarming degree of independence. Having secured the international recognition of Oder-Neisse line Gomułka gained even more leeway in his relations with Moscow. It is not clear if the Soviet leadership knew about Poland's secret negotiations with British Petroleum or Poland's plans to allow Western German capital access to the Polish markets. Such things could have alarmed Moscow and in the long run, if left unchecked, they could seriously undermine Soviet Union's position in Eastern Europe. In the light of the aforementioned circumstances, Gomułka's fall, paradoxically, served as a testament to his success. Under his rule, Poland became the second most powerful and influential Soviet Bloc country. In such circumstances, Moscow could not afford such an intransigent leader in Warsaw. When the regime's stability was undermined by economic crisis in December 1970, a more complacent, conciliatory and pro-Soviet Gierek ousted Gomułka. But even such a "complacent" leader, from 1970 onward, was free of some of the constraints that limited the Polish leadership in earlier decades. Poland's position as freest actor and the second most powerful military and economy in the Soviet Bloc endured beyond 1970.

The goal of transforming Poland into the second most politically influential, economically and militarily powerful Soviet Bloc country was believed to be the most effective way of broadening and securing Polish autonomy, both within and beyond the Bloc. These considerations underpinned every Polish diplomatic action and economic policy undertaken between 1956 and 1970. The motives and interests might often seem as contradicting. One such case was an apparently irreconcilable goal of making Poland the most senior and loyal partner of the Soviet Union, coupled with the desire to undermine the Soviet dominance over Poland. But the chief objectives was to make Poland the freest country in the Bloc. Making Poland USSR's strategic partner was a means to that end, since Gomułka and PZPR leadership rather correctly assumed that the status of the most senior partner would give them considerably more leeway in their actions within and beyond the Soviet sphere of influence. And indeed, as the Poland's status within the Warsaw Pact improved, its policies both within the Bloc and on a global stage became more independent. By the late 1960s, the Polish leadership was capable of making unilateral moves, that did not meet with Soviet resistance or retribution. In some cases, Poland was leading the way or even capable of imposing its view point on its Bloc allies. That increased leeway, albeit always coupled with economic entanglements, allowed Poland to influence certain major Cold War developments, with the Vietnam War and decolonisation being the primary examples. We can risk a

statement that Poland wielded much more influence that one would expect from a country of its size. At this point we also have to observe, that Poland's influence in the Global Cold War was a largely unintended consequence of Poland's global economic outreach. In pursuit of convertible currency, Poland expanded its economic ties with regions such as East Asia and West Africa. The Polish success in such endeavours, in turn, resulted in Poland's need to protect its economic interests in both cases. To secure the steady flow of cash to state coffers generated by shipping operations, Poland had to get politically involved in such major Cold War conflicts as the Vietnam War or the Nigerian Civil War. Moreover, we also have to note that the country that has never previously achieved maritime prowess, emerged as a major maritime power in the 1950s and the 1960s. Moreover, its foreign policy was significantly influenced by maritime considerations.

The Polish approach was already analysed in comparison to other Eastern European states, such as Romania and Czechoslovakia. In pursuit of rather narrowly defined national interests, Poland was not unique. Since the Soviet Bloc failed to provide a coherent multilateral structure and in consequence, all Eastern European states, to some degree, pursued national interests in their foreign and economic policies.[941] This dissertation focused on Poland and thus showcased examples of Polish success. One can, justifiably be under impression that the Poles were the most sophisticated, the most profit-oriented and the most successful members of the Soviet Bloc. A nation superior in many ways to Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and even the Soviet Union itself. To some extent this can result from the focus of this study and the bias of the archival material used here. All Eastern European states pursued their own goals within the framework of the Soviet Bloc. The only thing that differentiated Poland among them, was the degree of success. Yes, Romania could block certain Warsaw Pact developments, which it viewed as threat to its autonomy. But Poland was the only country which successfully imposed its perspective on policies regarding West Germany on its allies, including the Soviet Union. As such the Polish project can be deemed as successful, despite severe economic shortcomings. Poland was the most successful non-Soviet member of the Bloc. But the Polish superiority is not as clear cut when look at how Warsaw positioned itself in relation to Moscow. The term "second fiddle" was not used whimsically, but reflected Poland's ambitions, but also real capabilities. The Poles never believed they could play a more important role than the Soviet Union. They could

[941] Steiner, André, and Kirsten Petrak-Jones. "The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance", 2013, p. 257-258.

have been quicker in, for example, recognising Nigeria's economic potential and its receptiveness to economic relations with the Soviet Bloc. But when the Civil War broke out in Nigeria, Warsaw did not even try to compete with the Soviet Union in terms of military assistance. Gomułka and the PZPR leadership never wanted to challenge the hegemonic role of the Soviet Union. Instead, as Poland's global outreach expanded, the Poles used the Soviet empire as an umbrella for their operations. Their strong position allowed them to play a role of mediator or a go-between, for the Soviet Bloc, the West and the Global South, which to a large extent is also a testament of Polish success.

Poland could outperform all of its Eastern European counterparts, in large part because the Polish leadership, and especially Gomułka, were much more politically shrewd than Ulbricht or Zhivkov. But the Polish success can also be attributed to the fact that Poland was a natural candidate for the position of the second most powerful Soviet Bloc state. Poland was much larger than any other Eastern European state. Moreover, its strategic geopolitical location allowed Poland to play the role it did. The Gomułka and the PZPR leadership could have been astute, but that alone could not have been translated into tangible influence. Czechoslovakia was the most economically developed Soviet Bloc state. But being landlocked state with the population half the size of Poland, it simply did not have the same resources or manpower to compete with Warsaw. Just as Poland could never compete with the Soviet Union, with population eight times larger than its own. But the size of population and economy cannot be solely attributed to Poland's success. Romania, arguably the poorest and most backward economy, with the population roughly half that of Poland, was a serious contender for the position of the second most influential Soviet Bloc state.[942] Poland indeed was a natural candidate for the position of the "second fiddle", but Gomułka and the Polish leadership deserve credit for recognising that potential and not squandering it. Despite their ultimate failure to overcome the shortcomings of Poland's economic model, by 1970, they made Poland undeniably the most autonomous and the most influential non-Soviet member of the Eastern Bloc.

[942] Angus Maddison, *The World Economy,* 2003, p. 97-99; see also Crump, *Warsaw Pact,* 2015.

List of companies:

BALTAFRICA - Baltic-Africa Service - joint PŻM-DSR service to East Africa, operating between 1967 and 1990.[943]

BALTAMERICA - Baltic-America Service - joint Polish-Soviet-East German Service to South America, operating between 1968 and 1990.[944]

CEKOP - Established in 1954. In 1971, it was merged with the Polish Association of Import and Export of Machinery (Polimex) to form Polimex-CEKOP. In 1994 converted into a joint-stock company, currently trading as Polimex-Cekop-Mader Ltd.[945]

Chipolbrok - Sino-Polish shipbroker in continuous operation since 1951. It is the oldest Chinese shipping company, currently headquartered in Gdynia (Polish branch) and Shanghai (Chinese branch).[946]

Choploship - Joint Polish-North Korean shipping company mainly servicing trade between North Korea and Eastern Europe. It formally ceased to exist in 2018.[947]

DSR - East German Shipping Lines Established in 1952 in Rostock, currently operational and involved in real estate and hospitality business.[948]

ELWRO - Wrocławskie Zakłady Elektroniczne (Wrocław Electronics Factory) was established in 1959. The company designed and manufactured Polish computers, videogame consoles and calculators. In 1993, it was purchased by Siemens, which later sold the company to an American company - Telect. The company has acquired somewhat of a mythical status, and its former employees have created and curated an online archive of company documents and employee memoirs.[949]

ICT- International Computers and Tabulators was established in 1959. The company was one of the leading computer manufacturers in the United Kingdom. In 1968 it was merged with

[943] https://www.plo.com.pl/, n.d., accessed April 30, 2024.
[944] Ibid.
[945] https://www.imsig.pl/pozycja/2004/160/KRS/100462,POLIMEX_-_CEKOP_SP%C3%93%C5%81KA_AKCYJNA, n.d., accessed April 30, 2024.
[946] http://chipolbrok.com.pl/article/2/history, n.d., accessed April 30, 2024.
[947] https://www.imsig.pl/pozycja/2016/192/KRS/317219,KOREA%C5%83SKO-POLSKIE_TOWARZYSTWO_%C5%BBEGLUGOWE_ODDZIA%C5%81_PRZEDSI%C4%98BIORCY_ZAGRANICZNEGO, n.d., accessed April 30, 2024.
[948] https://www.deutsche-seereederei.de/, n.d., accessed April 30, 2024.
[949] https://elwro.info.pl/, n.d., accessed April 30, 2024.

two other British software and computer companies to form International Computers Limited. In 2002 it was acquired by Fujitsu.[950]

INDOPOL – joint Polish Indian shipping company established in 1960 and headquartered in Mumbai. The Polish-Indinan government agreement on shipping.[951]

PLO - The Polish Ocean Lines were established in 1951 and, throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, established a vast network of regular liner services to all major ports on all continents. With the sanctions resulting from the Marial Law of 1981, PLO entered a phase of decline. In the 1990s, it was converted into a joint stock company. Its fleet shrunk from 176 vessels in the 1970s to 6 in the 2000s. However, PLO still owns and operates such companies as Ceylon Ocean Lines (est. 1956) Karachi Ocean Shipping (est. 1951) and PSAL N.V. Antwerp (est. 1946).[952]

PŻM - The Polish Steamship Company was established in 1951 and, together with PLO, established a global network of liner services. Similarly to PLO, it entered a period of decline in the 1980s. In 1992, it converted into a joint stock company. Nowadays, PŻM owns and operates a fleet of 55 ships with 2.5 million DWT and owns and operates Eurafirca Lines (a direct descendant of UNIAFRICA) and Unity Line operating on the Baltic.[953]

Roeverchart - Polish documents use Roeverchart, in fact the company is known as H.C. Roeve GmBH. The company was established in 1856 and focused on carrying goods between German and British Ports.[954]

UNIAFRICA - Joint PŻM-DSR service carrying goods between Western African and Eastern and Western European ports. With the German reunification in 1990, it ceased to exist as a joint venture. Currently, it is known as Eurafrica Lines and it is operated solely by PŻM.[955]

Warta - One of the oldest Polish mutual reassurance companies, established in 1920. Between 1949 and 1990 it primarily focused on insurance for Polish ships and state owned enterprises. In 1990 transformed into a joint-stock company and still trading.[956]

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[950] https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/people/cp120969/international-computers-and-tabulators, n.d., accessed April 30, 2024.
[951] CIA-RDP85T00875R001700040028-6 – Poland's Global network of liner services, December 1973, p.11.
[952] https://www.plo.com.pl/, n.d., accessed April 30, 2024.
[953] https://www.polsteam.com/archiwum-floty/. Accessed April 30, 2024
[954] https://www.hcroever.de/, n.d., accessed April 30, 2024.
[955] https://www.polsteam.com/archiwum-floty/. Accessed April 30, 2024
[956] https://www.warta.pl/historia-warty/, n.d., accessed April 30, 2024.

Węglokoks - Węglokoks was established in 1951 and was one of the chief exporters of Polish coal abroad. Its name is a merger of two words: węgiel (coal) and koks (coke). In 1993 was converted in to a joint-stock company and is still currently trading under the same name.[957]

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