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III. SOME OVERT POLISH COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE

A. Background and Development of Present Repatriation-Rede- fection Program

In the years following the liberation of France, the Polish Government began a vigorous propaganda campaign to persuade all Poles in France to return to Poland. Official recognition of the Warsaw regime aided their campaign as well as the favorable status of all Communist enterprises in France.

Political events in 1947-48 such as the French Communist ministers being forced out of the French Government and the collapse within Poland of collaboration by Mikolajczyk with the Warsaw Government represented a change in trend. Unfavorable letters from Poland to Polish friends in France concerning conditions under the Communist system and liquidation of the repatriation bureau also contributed to a decreasing emphasis on the campaign.

From 1948 until early 1954, the organized repatriation campaign waned until the Polish diplomatic representative ordered the functionaires of the "consulates," "volunteer" workers of the Polish Red Cross and militants of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) to resume the repatriation program. 1/ This move by the Warsaw regime conformed to the Soviet-Satellite pattern of increased interest in early 1954 in refugees of Western Europe. Two complementary elements are considered basic to Soviet-Satellite strategy in this regard:

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the attempt to "popularize" the regime internally and the encouragement of "coexistence" externally--both on Communist terms.

To gain good-will among refugees in France, a change in propaganda emphasis occurred during 1954, when political polemics were replaced by a program of social contact and cultural development.

Two recent offers by the Warsaw regime have proved significant in developing an increasing interest in the repatriation program. The first was a speech on 23 July 1955 by Boleslaw Bierut, ex-President of the Polish Peoples Republic and present First Secretary of the Party's Central Committee, who affirmed that Poland forgave the crimes of emigre oppositionists and that they would be welcomed on their return to Poland with the aid and protection of the Government. 2/ The second was the announcement on 21 September 1955 by the Polish Government of an offer of extensive assistance to all Polish emigres wishing to return home--payment of returnees' traveling expenses, providing professional training, pensions, etc. 3/

At the present time the Polish regime is reported to be exerting its greatest effort in France, where it is spending an estimated \$8,500.00 (3 million francs) per day to incite subversion, redefection and repatriation, by using every means at its disposition, including politics, education, sports, dancing, movies, theater, art, music and literature. 4/

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Of all the Satellites, the Warsaw Government is reportedly the most completely engaged in influencing the emigres notwithstanding the fact that Poland entered the Soviet Bloc redefection campaign later and with less acclaim than the other Satellites. 5/

B. Propaganda Appeals of the Warsaw Government 6/

To achieve maximum impact upon Polish emigres in France, the Warsaw regime stresses the following major propaganda appeals in its repatriation-redefection program:

1. Cultural heritage and national consciousness

The appeal to cultural heritage and national consciousness stresses the longing for homeland and families, and recognition and encouragement of patriotism as a natural right belonging to the Polish emigre heritage and national aspirations. This appeal also exploits emigre disillusionment and disappointment in failing to achieve security and status. The long separation from homeland and family ties makes the emigre Poles especially vulnerable to this form of propaganda. Unsuccessful Poles in France are urged to return to Poland while those who remain are assured of Communist support in their cultural and social needs. Furthermore the latter are encouraged to become naturalized citizens of France, the desired end of which, from the Warsaw Government standpoint, is the

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creation of a bloc of pro-Warsaw Poles whose full citizenship might give them more power in promoting Communist interests in Europe.

2. Advantages of repatriation

The appeal to the advantages of repatriation stresses professional security, the guarantee of employment and the return of property. Emigres are "guaranteed" the right to practice their professions and skills. Warsaw propaganda attempts to show how miserable life in the West is and exploits the fact that many professional and skilled Poles in France are faced with vocational dislocations caused by exile. It promises them opportunities and openings in their respective professions. Training is also promised to the non-skilled to prepare them for professions or skills.

3. Post-war Changes in Poland

This appeal emphasizes the "great changes" which have taken place in Poland--the mythical economic and educational advantages of life in the homeland and the extraordinary recovery from war devastation. A fervent plea is made to the emigre to return and participate in Polish reconstruction. Warsaw propaganda contrasts the present freedom and opportunity in Poland with the class stratification, struggle and feudal system of the pre-war

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period. Poland is represented as a country where the former exploitation of peasants and workers by the "landlords" has been abolished and where everyone is happily building a better future under the Communist aegis.

4. Insincerity of Free World's concern for plight of Eastern European peoples

Warsaw explains to Poles at home that they can no longer expect help from the West. Political refugees returning from the West show that resistance is in vain-- they have lost all hope of aiding outside intervention by remaining in the West, consequently all hope of liberation is illusory. Its propaganda attempts to interpret the Geneva Conference as implying Western recognition of the status quo and utilizes the theme of co-existence to persuade exiles to that effect. Further resistance to the regime is futile and refugees are urged to avail themselves of the regime's favorable provisions and return to Poland.

5. Exploitation of French and Polish fears of a reunited Germany

Warsaw propaganda attempts to enlist French support of Polish rights to the Oder-Neisse area, and suggests that a Polish-French alliance would be a corner-stone of a truly

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peaceful Europe as a first step toward peaceful existence with the USSR. Warsaw broadcasts indirectly appeal to French sympathy by describing the happy experiences of repatriates and alleging that emigre leaders are lying about oppression in Poland. This appeal is further effected by strengthening ties between Poles at home and Poles in France, particularly the intellectuals who are influential among moulders of public opinion and policy-forming circles in France. The Polish Government, for example, has established friendship committees with naturalized Frenchmen as officers through which a coordinated program of social, cultural and propaganda events is presented at the same time to both French and Polish audiences.

C. Methods of Action

The Warsaw regime utilizes the following methods of action to achieve its objectives of repatriation, redefection and subversion of Polish emigres in France:

1. Polish Schools and Teachers in France

The Polish Ambassador in France has emphasized the importance of Polish school teachers and schools in France, because they are a means by which the Polish Government can win over emigre youth and exploit Polish teachers for

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repatriation propaganda purposes. 7/

The pre-war Polish-French agreement which gave the Polish Government the right to conduct cultural and educational activities among the Polish emigrants in France was renewed on 19 February 1947. It provided for the instruction of children of Polish origin residing in France, as well as for the teaching of Polish language, literature, history and geography. 8/ Thus Poles in France are permitted to have their own teachers and extra-curricular schools. Traditionally the teachers for these schools were supplied by the Polish Government. 9/

The Lycee Polonais in Paris, under the control of the Polish Ambassador, prepares young Poles of Western Europe for Polish baccalaureate examinations. Its 150 students come primarily from Northern French mining areas and scholarships are reportedly based on the devotion of their parents to the cause of "New Popular Poland." 10/

The Polish Embassy utilized Polish teachers in its pay to resume the repatriation campaign in early 1954. Despite the fact the French Government took over the payrolls of 60 Polish teachers and replaced a number of Communist teachers, the Warsaw regime still controls a system of educational posts employing 160 teachers. 11/ Although

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the French educational authorities feel that the schools are no longer a dangerous source of Communist influence, the Free Polish representatives state that considerable Communist influence remains and flourishes in these schools. 12/

2. The Youth Vacation Colonies

The Polish Communists regard the so-called vacation colonies as an effective means of influencing Polish emigres to return to Poland and of recruiting agents for operations in France. Polish youth aged 14 to 16 of emigre parents attend vacation camps in France and Poland where Komsomol courses are taught.

The Polish Red Cross and "Embassy" teachers sponsor the organization of these vacation colonies. In 1954 the Red Cross sent 4000-5000 "children" to these summer camps. About one thousand youth of Polish emigre parents in France went to Poland; the remainder attended Communist-organized camps in France. Upon returning to France, some of the children who went to Poland persuaded their families to go back to Poland. 13/

In 1955 a more intensive and selective drive for enrollment concentrated on children of the most impressionable ages (11-16) and from groups considered most sus-

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ceptible to Communist influence. In the mining areas of Nord and Pas de Calais, there were more enrollments than in 1954. Aided by posters and tracts, "Embassy" teachers and Polish Red Cross representatives carried on the organization of this campaign. 14/

3. Pardon and Assistance to Repatriates

One of the major actions to attract repatriates in France and Western Europe were two appeals made by the Polish regime, one on 23 July 1955 and the other on 21 September 1955.

a. Pardon

In the first appeal made on 23 July 1955, Boleslaw Bierut, ex-President of Poland and present First Secretary of Party's Central Committee, told a delegation including Poles from abroad that Polish citizens were welcome to return and that Poland generously pardoned any of these who returned now. He stated further that the Polish nation does not desire to remember the offenses and errors of the past. 15/

b. Assistance to Repatriates 16/

The second appeal-- one of the most positive yet made to any Soviet Bloc emigres since the inception of the redefection campaign--was the resolution of 21 Septem-

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ber 1955 in which the Polish Government offered extensive assistance to all Polish emigres wishing to return home. Although relatively few Poles have been repatriated so far, this offer may attract some who lack security in the West or increase the disillusionment of other remaining abroad.

The resolution offers the following bait to potential returnees:

- (1) The Polish Government will assist repatriates in paying travel expenses incurred on the return journey; furnish free food and medical aid until employment is secured; assist repatriates in procuring housing; give them one lump-sum cash payment; and exempt from customs duties any possessions brought back to Poland.
- (2) The government promises to provide professional training if necessary; to give full educational opportunities to young people; and to provide farmers with buildings and help them to purchase livestock, or employ them on state farms.
- (3) The government commits itself to provide pensions for the aged and for invalids. Periods of employment outside Poland will be considered in

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computing pensions, and persons with physical disabilities arising from military service will receive pensions regardless of the state for which military service was performed. The promise to recognize service-connected disabilities as pensionable is considered by some to be almost the same as an amnesty.

(4) In addition, returnees may keep the rank they held in the Polish or Allied military units up to the end of the war with Germany.

4. Press

The Polish Communist language press aimed at Polish emigres in France originates both in Poland and in France. Redefection propaganda began to appear in the Polish Communist press in France at the end of March and early April 1955. 17/ The Polish-language Communist daily in Paris is now responsible for presenting new arguments to its readers to persuade them to return to Poland. The repatriation campaign dominated its news coverage in July and August 1955. Articles contained either official declarations, such as Poland's offer to pardon returnees, or the statements of "happy" returnees. Indirect propaganda described the "brilliant progress" of the Polish economy and the improved status of workers. 18/

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5. Letters from Poland

Another method which the Warsaw regime uses to implement its repatriation program is that of personal letters, which are mailed to Polish refugees in France inviting them to return to Poland. Some letters, written in the form of a manifesto, are sent from different Polish towns and are signed by forty persons, none of whom are Communists. Those signing are well-known pre-war university professors, writers, and prominent priests who cooperate with the regime. These letters are sent to emigre leaders, intellectuals, writers and politicians. 19/

D. Number of Repatriates

The returnees to Poland reportedly average about 30-50 each month. The number, a small fraction of the total number of Polish emigres in France, has been relatively insignificant in comparison to Communist efforts. The reasons for returning to Poland are usually personal and economic rather than political, i.e., unfavorable economic status, professional and language deficiencies, dismal prospects of emigration overseas, old age, reunion with family, and desire for land and security. No prominent individuals have redefected from France. Those who have redefected have been older people, the indigent, farm workers and ex-legionnaires. 20/

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However, there is always a danger of the redefection and subversion of the "elite," a primary target of the Warsaw regime.

Even a small number of repatriates to Poland constitutes a setback for the Free World because it is of immense propaganda value to the Soviets, it contributes to the creation of anti-Western sentiment within Poland, and it supports Warsaw's claims that the existence of the Iron Curtain is fictitious and that new conditions prevail which enable emigres to return.

Although about 36,000 emigres returned to Poland before 1947, and about 7,000 between 1947-49, only about 100 have emigrated to Poland in each subsequent year since 1949. The figure reportedly rose to 263 during the first half of 1955, two-thirds of whom were agricultural laborers. 22/ Because of the Polish Government's intensification of its repatriation program, the total figure for 1955 will probably reach 500. No "massive" returns are envisaged. Agricultural workers and older people motivated by nostalgia for Poland are reportedly the most susceptible to repatriation, 23/ but the total number of repatriates will probably remain at this general level unless a major economic disaster befalls France. 24/

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France ranks second after Belgium in the number of returnees to Poland. Sixty-five per cent of those who have returned to Poland thus far have come from Belgium. 25/