

September 1, 1945

**Jakub Berman's Letter to Stalin: A Report on the
Situation in Poland and Request for Advice and Help**

Citation:

"Jakub Berman's Letter to Stalin: A Report on the Situation in Poland and Request for Advice and Help", September 1, 1945, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Jakub Berman Collection, 325/33, pp. 22-26, Hoover Institution Archives.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/134357>

Summary:

Jakub Berman, leading Polish communist, writes to Stalin a detailed list of events occurring in Poland dealing with the stability of the Post-War communist government.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Transcript - English

Jakub Berman's Handwritten Notes of a
Conversation with Stalin or a Letter to Stalin:
a Report on the Situation in Poland and Request for Advice and Help,
1945 September (first half)

The situation in Poland within the last two weeks has been marked by numerous symptoms of rising political tension and growing pressures of reactionary forces under the influence of external and internal factors of a new configuration of political forces.

This situation is potent with serious dangers and calls for a fast breakthrough. That is why we are writing to you this letter with a request for advice and assistance.

1. There are signs of dissatisfaction among the working class, which already finds expression not only in strikes lasting an hour or a few hours (particularly in Lodz, the coal mining region, Zawiercie, on the railroads), counted already in scores, but even in the form of a general strike, as e.g. a 3-day strike of 7 thousand textile workers in Pabianice.

These strikes are being eliminated with the assistance of PPR with a very irregular assistance of PPS, which occasionally doesn't oppose them or even is in favor of them. Against the background of dissatisfaction one can notice an increase of PPS influences, which is drawing the votes of the most backward workers (concerns Lodz).

2. Among the peasants the action of Mikołajczyk's PSL enjoys popularity in the counties of the Kraków, Rzeszów, Poznań and the Pomeranian voivodships. There is a danger of capturing a number of Bańczyk's SL organizations in the Warsaw, Kielce and Lublin voivodships. One can notice attempts at breaking off contingent quotas and provoking anti-workers feelings, particularly against the PPR. A version and sometimes hostility toward the Red Army can also be noticed.

3. Among the intelligentsia one can notice a growing opposition toward the government, particularly among teachers and professors of universities (election of collaborationists to the Polish Academy of Science) and shifting part of the office-holders towards Mikołajczyk, with a simultaneous differentiation among the intelligentsia (positive resolutions of the Writers Union).

4. The Catholic clergy, particularly after the arrival of Cardinal Hlond with instructions from the Vatican, is displaying feverish organizational and propaganda activities (14 weeklies, 200,000 pilgrims in Częstochowa) directed against the government, using a decree on civil marriages as a pretext.

5. The terrorist action due to repression of the military and security forces, as well as exiting from the forests of numerous units (approximately...), has slowed down, but it still lasts (particularly in the Białystok area) and brings about scores of killings every week (mostly PPR members and UB [security] forces). Also a pogrom-anti-Semitic action despite that it has not reached such scope as in Kraków, still lasts.

6. Political diversion, which is causing hesitations in many SL circles, not excluding its supreme body (Bańczyk, Drzewiecki, Litwin), as well as in the PPS (particularly in Katowice, Kraków and Gdańsk), social diversion, which is the source of many difficulties on the railroads and in some factories, in cooperatives - all of this is intended to isolate the PPR, and at this moment is causing a slowdown in increasing PPR ranks or even a small exiting from some cells.

7. What are the sources for the activities of the reaction in Poland?

a) concentration of previously dispersed, due to the crisis, reactionary forces around Mikołajczyk, who is becoming a center for concentration of a new bloc of the Witos forces, WRN, Sanatsia, National Democrats and the clergy into a conglomerate of Christian-nationalist forces with large internal contradictions, but bounded by their anti-Soviet, anti-PPR and anti-democratic, Anglo-Saxon orientation.

b) an intensified activity of the Anglo-American provocateurs, with a weak activity of our counter-intelligence.

c) major food supply difficulties in cities, commodity shortages in the countryside, transportation difficulties with coal supply, a wild speculation, corruption of some state, industrial and commercial apparatus - besides unquestionable successes in the growth of production, labor productivity and a tendency of declining prices.

d) a decline in popularity of the Red Army [Cz.A.?] due to the demoralization of the behind the lines units spread all over Poland and units crossing over Poland, lack of security, particularly in the western territories, with numerous bands of marauders or Vlasov men, raging over those territories and hurting particularly the peasants and repatriates. Persisting inaction in this area lays the blame mainly for the PPR and weakens its authority among the masses.

e) weaknesses of state and party propaganda, which has not been able to reach to the broadest masses of peasants.

8. What kind of remedial measures is the party undertaking independently and through the government?

a) a counter-offensive against the terrorist gangs, political diversionists and destructionists of the democratic front, against speculators and grafters (new decrees against criminals threatening the state and favoring fascism, court proceedings and death sentences, a purge of the state apparatus, a decree on the duty to work and prosecuting speculators). An intensified press and propaganda campaign. Limitation of clergy privileges in public schools.

b) an increase in real wages for workers (elimination of insurance premiums and a tax reduction), rye bread instead of dark one (see the enclosed resolutions of the CKZZ - Trade Union Council). A purge and improvement of trade union councils, with a simultaneous increase of production and labor productivity. Nationalization of large industries (plants employing over 50 workers).

c) a better supply of industrial products for the peasants. Preferential treatment for the peasants in contingents and building material. Further expansion of agricultural reform through assigning the land to the peasants in the West. Establishing state properties in the West.

d) strengthening of workers unity through closer cooperation of the electoral bloc of the PPR and PPS in their daily work. Strengthening of the left wing of peasant leaders in the SL in a fight against Mikołajczyk. Strengthening of the workers-peasants unity against the reactionaries and the unity of the coalition of democratic parties (PPR, PPS, SL, SD, SP).

9. An indispensable condition of the effectiveness of the above mentioned measures is the elimination of very harmful political influence of marauding and hooliganism from the part of particularly demoralized behind the lines units, which despite Marshall Rokossowski's efforts are still occurring on a mass scale.

The announcement of Generalissimus Stalin's order, show trials and punishment of the guilty ones will undoubtedly put an end to this and will have a very positive impact on the whole situation, so much recently aggravated.

10. To achieve a breakthrough in the situation we are mobilizing all forces at the party's disposal and for this purpose we will hold a CC PPR plenary meeting on September 21.

Outlining to you the situation and our efforts, we ask you for assistance and advice.