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"Kultura" and Socialist Culture

Three recent documents seem to be indicative of the path on which the Party would like in the end to put the whole cultural life. They also indicate the nature of the issue for the forthcoming CC Plenum (to start July 4).

First, there is a sort of untitled and unsigned manifesto published by the first issue of the weekly "Kultura" (June 16). The new "social cultural" weekly intends to avoid the errors of its predecessors ("Przegląd Kulturalny" and "Nowa Kultura") by addressing itself to "tens of thousands" of "recipients of culture" instead to the restricted audience of those in the know. In other words culture must be in the service of the man. What man? The one who lives between the Bug and the Oder rivers, the one who constructs socialism, but who is still far from socialism, from the new society and its new morals, psyche and mores. There is a fight going on between "reactionary ideology which still finds its rebirth on our own soil" on the one hand and which flows into the country from abroad. Peaceful coexistence does not mitigate the fight; on the contrary, it makes it sharper. The frontline runs across culture as well. In this fight one has to see one's own ideological reason: socialist, patriotic and internationalist one. In practical terms "Kultura" will discuss and popularize the cultural activities of the countries building socialism and communism, will oppose and expose bourgeois contents, and will present and support such creativeness which is "actively engaged in the cause of building socialism". In this latter respect, it will exercise criticism of the negative phenomena which exist in the life of the nation but, parallel to it, the weekly will affirm these basic social changes which are taking place in Poland. (For the full English text of the manifesto cf. Polish Press Survey No. 1544 of June 21).

The second document is the speech of CC Secretary Ryszard Strzelecki delivered June 21 at a meeting of the Warsaw Voivodship Party Committee. Culture and education, Strzelecki stated, take an important place in the ideological work of the Party, and are a subject of "lively discussion" in the daily work of the Party. Culture and education are as important in socialist construction as industrial production. Their purpose is to bring up a new man, the builder of socialism. Particular attention should be paid to selection of the content for such mass information media like books, radio, TV, film, press and theater. The problem is the more important as "enemy imperialist centers" do not spare any financial means to "poison our life and delay the ripening of our society". There are high values in the world culture, Strzelecki said, which should be seen and

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appreciated. "But one has to differentiate between the concept of socialist culture and bourgeois culture", and only through such differentiation will it be possible to shape "the conscience of all the citizens who are building socialism." There is no coexistence on the ideological sector; there is and there will be "a sharp struggle till the complete victory of the socialist idea and of the socialist conditions in the world", Strzelecki concluded.

The third document is an interview by Radio Warsaw with Minister of Culture and Arts Tadeusz Galinski on June 26. "Our cultural policy", Galinski stated, "is based on the principle of selection of works for mass distribution". The task of the new weekly "Kultura" will be "full and good information" and "literary review", both based on "Marxist criteria", of cultural works. Literary criticism should stop concentrating on the form, on "pure objectivism", snobism, etc., for all this leads to the limiting of cultural events almost exclusively to avantgarde works. Cultural criticism should concentrate on the content, on the works which are "politically engaged in the building of socialism and most communicative". We are not so much concerned, Galinski stressed, with the development of general culture, we are concerned with the "development of socialist culture, the one which adopts the best and the most progressive in world culture, and the one which at the same time must pursue its own educational social purposes and tasks of the society which builds socialism".

These three documents are not the only ones to reveal the trend (and, incidentally, the groupings around the trend). More on the subject can be read in Polish Press Survey No. 1549 of June 29 (excerpts from "Kultura" No. 2 of June 23).

Speaking of "Kultura", it is worthwhile to mention that "Polityka" June 22 presented to its readers three "newly won" contributors: Edmund Osmanczyk ("Trybuna Ludu" and Radio Warsaw correspondent in Latin America), Marian Podkowinski ("Trybuna Ludu" correspondent in West Germany), and Jerzy Putrament. "Till recently, they were permanent collaborators of 'Przegląd Kulturalny'", "Polityka" explained. In this connection, it should be pointed up that "Polityka" may have more than one reason to be concerned about the winding up of "Przegląd Kulturalny" and "Nowa Kultura". With "Kultura" being a mouthpiece of the hardliners, the only weekly trying to retain its liberal appearances remains "Polityka", and as such -- and also because of the person of its editor-in-chief Mieczyslaw F. Rakowski -- is much more exposed to criticism and possible attacks.



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Sejm Legislation

The Sejm passed a number of important laws on June 28 and 29. On agriculture three laws were passed, of which the most important is one limiting and/or preventing the further split of small farms. Although the law leaves it to the Minister of Agriculture to set the limit, it was revealed earlier by Zenon Nowak that the limit would be eight hectares. That means that a farm of that or smaller size cannot be divided further after the death of the owner. The law also restricts the choice of the inheritor of such a farm to one person who actually tilled the land at least one year before inheriting it, i.e. to an experienced farmer. Possible other inheritors will either be compensated or simply expropriated. To the last category belong these persons who can support themselves by work in industry or in any other branch of economy. They simply have no title to inheritance. Those who live on the farm at the moment of the death of its owner and are not entitled to inheritance may remain on the farm, but not for longer than five years, which time limit does not apply to those unable to work, or to minors who may remain on the farm till they become adults. Students will be compensated. In order to ease up the burden of the inheritors who have to compensate their co-inheritors, bank credits will be granted. In his speech supporting the law, Agriculture Minister Mieczyslaw Jagielski stressed that 40 percent of farms are those below two hectares. If the limit of 8 hectares is adopted, the new law will affect over 50 percent of Polish individual farms.

The other two laws on agriculture pertain to the so-called land communities (owned collectively by the whole village) and to amelioration and drainage. In both cases, the new laws are aimed at better agricultural production and more rational use of resources and facilities.

A Committee of Science and Technics was set up by a new law, and the Sejm appointed as chairman of the new Committee Eugeniusz Szyr. The creation of the Committee was decided upon by the 11th CC Plenum last December (cf. Sit. Rep. 20 December 1962). The names of the three deputy chairmen of the Committee were revealed by Radio Warsaw July 1. They are: Prof. Dionizy Smolenski, former Chairman of the (now defunct) Committee for Technical Matters, Wacław Czachorski, till now undersecretary in the Ministry of Heavy Industry, and Jan Chylinski, till now Director of the Aviation Institute. The latter name is interesting, if only because Chylinski is the son of the late Bolesław Bierut. He started as a student of the Aviation Institute in Moscow in 1952 and became director of the Polish Aviation Institute nine years later.

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Customs and foreign currency offenses will be punished by up to 15 years imprisonment, instead of up to five years as heretofore, according to an amendment to the penal finance law passed by the Sejm on June 28.