

Fighting Economic Abuses

The newly appointed Prosecutor General K. Kosztirko participated in the Lublin voievodship meeting called at the behest of the Executive Committee of the PUWP to discuss effective means of combating abuses in the purchasing and trading in agricultural products. The presence of Kosztirko, a tough apparatchik who replaced the more academic and somewhat more legal-minded Professor A. Burda (cf. Situation Report May 25), could connote a firmer course of penal action against the host of state trade employees who admittedly engage in the theft of public property.

Numerous reports and press articles have drawn a vivid picture of the rich repertoire of the manager of a state-run meat outlet, to cite one more important example. The state prescribes the weight of meat which can be written off as loss due to shrinkage and dressing. The manager and his assistants help themselves to all the meat, usually prime quality, which they can justify by deft juggling of books. This has led to the glaring shortages of certain cuts of meat in the early afternoon in many retail stores, although the chain of skillful embezzlement starts usually at the point of state purchasing centers.

Needless to add, this state of affairs periodically outrages the consumers, many of whom are women employed in shift work pressed for time.

The ultimate cause of economic abuses is not the weakened moral fiber of the society, but rather the grim struggle for survival, last year having witnessed a drop in real wages of the employees of the socialized sector below that in 1959 and the subsequent lowering of the general standard of living. As the index of the cost of living rises, the salaried state functionary, including party members, reaches for the most readily available source of extra income, thus further cementing the wide-spread belief among the masses that state property belongs to no one in particular.

Since state planners, led by S. Jedrychowski, have tailored the increase of consumption very closely to the rising index of production, the immediate economic future outlook offers no new prospects of significant improvement. The government is aiming at disciplining the society through legal procedures instead of easing the strict curbs on the wage fund. The meeting called yesterday in Lublin involved more than three hundred party and economic leaders as well as representatives of courts, prosecutor offices, militia, and control organs. The three groups which were made responsible for combating

economic abuses are:

(1) Directors of enterprises, who have been ordered to "create the conditions which would render economic crimes impossible and radically combat them." They were also asked to fight carelessness, waste, and excesses;

(2) The newly elected national councils, which were directed to strengthen their control of places of work;

(3) The workers councils, since 1957 reduced from the enhanced status once visualized for them by the revisionist elements in the PUWP to another organ underwriting government labor policies, and trade unions which were asked to play an important role in discovering and combating economic crime.

Pouched:

Zycie Warszawy 6.6.61 - ALBINOWSKI ST.: Among Allies (on the growth of the German danger)

Slowo Powszechne 6.6.61 - Cat: The Way I Read It (on the Vienna talks)

Sztandar Mlodych 6.6.61 - Albrecht A.: The Road Is Open Again (on the Vienna meeting)

Przeglad Kulturalny 8.6.61 - B.G.: Science as Seen Through the Week (on recent meetings devoted to scientific and economic problems)

Glos Pracy 1.6.61 - W.J.: Capital Repairs of Buildings Are the Weak Spot of the Municipal Economy.