

Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party

The second and third days of the Fourth Congress of the PUWP were taken up by discussions on the report delivered on the opening day by Gomulka. Nineteen delegates spoke each day; on June 16 the Soviet and Italian, and on June 17 the Czechoslovak, East German, Hungarian and French delegates also addressed the Congress. The speeches of the foreign delegates were of interest mainly for their approach to the Sino-Soviet rift, though only Gomulka had anything new to say on the subject. The foreign delegates all merely restated the stand made known earlier by their respective Parties.

As for the speeches of Polish delegates, attention should be drawn to that made on the first day of discussion by Edward Gierek, who was in the chair when Gomulka began his report, and was the first speaker in the discussion on it. Another speech which should be singled out is that by Ryszard Strzelecki, who of late has been constantly talking about socialist legality. Not long ago he granted an interview to "Trybuna Ludu" (June 6) in which he discussed the subject, and he returned to it at the Congress. In his speech he laid more stress on the ideological aspects of the problem, which he treated in "Trybuna Ludu" more from a legalistic position.

Two delegates touched upon the crucial question of the internal situation of the Party. Walenty Titkow, First Secretary of the City of Warsaw Party Committee, admitted that "we have recently had to deal with an attempt to publish and distribute an anti-Party squib" prepared by a sectarian-dogmatic group with pro-Chinese leanings. This is the first official admission of the well-known fact that such a pamphlet exists. In a very veiled form, Titkow also admitted the existence of corruption in what is known as the "meat affair" in Warsaw.

(more)

18 JUNE 1964

But the greatest attention was paid by both Titkow and Jozef Lenart to the problem of the attitude of the writers, especially those among them who belong to the Warsaw Party cell. The Warsaw branch of the Polish Writers' Union includes about half of the writers of Poland -- and the more important and prominent half, at that. In the case of the Warsaw writers' Party cell the situation is undoubtedly the same, with the one difference being that it probably includes an even greater number of really talented writers. In addition to attacking the 34 signatories of the letter to Cyrankiewicz as well as RFE, both speakers expressly criticized the Warsaw cell membership, charging that "the process of ideological and organizational consolidation is experiencing the most difficulties in the writers' Party cell" (Titkow) and that "the dividing line in the attitude towards the ideological and political principles defining the policy of our Party" does not run along the lines of Party vs. non-Party writers (Lenart). "Certain Party comrades, rejecting in practice the principle of Party discipline, on occasion breaking it ostentatiously, are inclined to see rather the principle of solidarity in cooperation within a framework of something that is called the 'intellectual left'" (Lenart).

These speeches are most revealing as far as the real difficulties encountered by the Party leadership in subordinating Polish culture are concerned and explain why Polish intellectuals can resist so successfully all the pressure and ignore the threats. Apparently the Party cells have not been strong enough to apply discipline.