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The Episcopate's Defense from the Pulpit

As already suggested (cf. SR February 10), one of the reasons for the continuation as well as for the intensity of the regime's propaganda war against the Episcopate, might be the very strong effort of the Polish bishops to counter-attack through a series of sermons. That these sermons could have not gone unnoticed either by the faithful or by the regime seems to be reflected in the fact that a special publication by "Polonia" Publishing House of the documents pertaining to The Message of Polish Bishops to German Bishops included excerpts from some sermons of Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński and Bishop Zygmunt Choromanski (cf. SR January 24).

It is particularly the sermons of the Cardinal which are followed with attention and covered by Western correspondents stationed in Poland. Since the last review of these sermons (cf. SR December 27), the Cardinal has spoken even more frequently and has travelled extensively in order to give his opinion. He has also grown more confident, left his initial defensive position and passed over to the attack.

This is particularly evident in his approach to the charge, which he initially denied, of the letter to the German bishops being a political document. He no longer claims that the letter had no political content. On the contrary! In a sermon at St. Saviour's Church in Warsaw yesterday (his third sermon in three days, Reuter noted), the Cardinal reproached the Polish "statesmen" for failing to profit by the bishops' letter and for failing to treat it "as a sequel to many earlier declarations of the Polish bishops on the Oder-Neisse frontier question." He also reproached the Polish politicians about their presenting West Germany as a revenge-seeking nation. "It is not a policy worthy of the level of a raison d'etat to tell everybody how many enemies there are around."

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The people will be able to discern between "real problems and political tricks," the Polish Primate lectured the politicians. "A wise policy does not multiply enemies," he added.

Two days earlier, on February 12, in a sermon at St. Mary's of Loretto Church in Warsaw, Cardinal Wyszynski defended the right of the Church to take part in international affairs. The "United Nations, the ministers, are powerless facing the problems of the world," he declared. "When parliaments could not do anything, they asked the Church to help them."

With an obvious reference to a mighty socialist state, which he did not name, the Cardinal said: "How powerless are the rulers of this world. They talk about peace but still wars rage. A state which is proud of its successes buys wheat from Canada."

Previous sermons delivered by the Cardinal show an equally unrelenting attitude. "We shall continue, whenever and wherever it is necessary, to manifest our presence in the Christian and Catholic world as a bulwark of Christianity," he stated at Gniezno on January 3. (This statement was used on January 14 by Party First Secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka as an argument against the Cardinal.)

Three days later, on January 6, at St. Adalbert's Church, in a working class district of Warsaw, the Cardinal patiently explained the spirit and the significance of the Polish letter and of the German reply to it. "Much crime has been committed on behalf of the German nation in Poland, and this has been confessed by the German bishops," the Cardinal said. "The confession was not an easy thing, and our letter encouraged them to such a confession." Passing to the press propaganda, the Cardinal stressed that one could not "use the lie as an argument for long." Poles will in the end "learn that they have been misled by the press again," the Primate stated.

He was preaching again in a suburban Church in Warsaw, St. Lawrence's, on January 8, and at St. Charles Borromeo's Church in the same suburban district of Wola the next day. It was January 9, the day when the regime's refusal of passport to the Cardinal became known. The congregation of 2,000 people "jammed into the Church -- with a handful standing in the snow on the Church steps" -- included US Ambassador John A. Gronouski and his wife and two young daughters, UPI reported.

"In connection with the communique which appeared today in the newspapers, and in which I was charged with all those great crimes, I -- who have served my nation for 20 years -- I do not feel the necessity of replying and will not reply," the Cardinal said.

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He also did not argue with the charges Gomulka heaped on him on January 14. Speaking at St. Theresa's Church in Warsaw on January 15, the Cardinal stated quietly: "We think we have rendered a good service to Poland. This is the greatest achievement of these days for the Polish state interests." His only answer to Gomulka could be read in a passing reference to "narrow ideologists."

However, a day after, speaking at the Church of Christ the King in Warsaw, the Cardinal acknowledged Gomulka's speech by stating: "We have been charged with grave misdeeds. It seems now we are absolved of .. our greatest sin. Let us be patient ..and we will hear that the Polish bishops did a good service to their country." But he again refused to be drawn into discussion. With a reference which could be meant as one to Gomulka as well as to Zycie Warszawy's 18 questions (cf. SR January 24), the Cardinal said: "We do not have to justify or explain anything to anybody."

Wyszynski's first recent appeal for the Church's voice in the life of the society came on January 23, in a sermon in Warsaw: "It is the duty of the Church to be present in everyday life and to leave the walls of the churches," he said. "The people want the presence of the Church in all spheres of life -- in the economic, as well as social and political life," he explained again in Warsaw on January 27.

Albanian Rejection of Invitation to Warsaw Pact Meeting

Albania has rejected an invitation to a meeting of Communist and workers' parties of member countries of the Warsaw Pact and of the "socialist countries of Asia," the Albanian official agency ATA was authorized to reveal on February 12.

According to the release, the invitation had been sent by the CC of the Polish United Workers' Party, and the purpose of the meeting was to "discuss coordination of aid to the DRV" (Democratic Republic of Vietnam). The Polish letter of invitation was dated January 5, with no date of the meeting fixed. However, the Poles suggested that the meeting should be convoked "in the shortest possible time."

ATA published what is supposed to be a full text of two documents: 1) an extensive reply of the CC of the Albanian Workers' Party, 2) a short letter of the Polish invitation addressed to the Albanian comrades and signed by Wladyslaw Gomulka. A third document, the Polish letter of invitation addressed to the Chinese Party, a copy of which had been enclosed with the letter to the Albanians, has not been published. Thus the reader has been left without the knowledge of Polish arguments for the meeting. But the Albanian arguments in rejecting the Polish invitation are given at great length.

The main reason for the rejection is what the Albanians claim to be a Soviet-American conspiracy against the Chinese People's Republic and against those Communist and workers' parties which have remained true to Marxism-Leninism. "Life entirely proves that the Khrushchevite Soviet leadership endeavors to use the Vietnamese question to

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camouflage its principal strategic aims and to organize the general attack against the GPR," the Albanians say.

Regarding Vietnam itself, the Albanian letter reads, "the new Soviet leadership...began to show increasing interest in this question, not in order to help the Vietnamese people, but to sabotage its sacred struggle of liberation and to exert pressure on it and lead it -- by its own example -- to capitulate and to lay down arms before the U.S. imperialists."

Nor can Poland trust the Soviet Union, the Albanian comrades state bluntly. "The Khrushchevite revisionists, so as to assure to the imperialists the necessary calm (in Europe), are ready to sell not only the interests of the GDR, but equally those of sister Poland."

The Albanian letter reveals at least two Polish arguments: 1) "the lack of unity of the socialist countries" brings about an increase of US "aggression in Vietnam," 2) "no ideological and political divergence can justify the lack of this unity before the brutal aggression on the part of the principal common enemy."

To this the Albanians reply that it is true that "the split in the socialist camp is only to the advantage of imperialism," but, "who has provoked the split and who undermines unity?"

After an enumeration of all the harm done to Albania by the "Khrushchevite revisionists" and their successors, the Albanian Party CC declared "once more and in the clearest terms," that it would not participate in the proposed meeting "nor in any other meeting of parties from the European socialist countries as long as these parties have not publicly made amends for their tragic errors regarding the AWP and the Albanian people." In particular, the letter specified, the Albanians would not take part in any of these parties' meetings "as long as they are to be attended by the present perfidious Soviet revisionist leadership, which obstinately maintains anti-Marxist-Leninist, anti-socialist and pro-imperialist Khrushchevite positions."

It should be recalled that almost identical arguments were used a year ago, when the Albanian Party rejected a Polish letter of invitation, on 5 January 1965, to a meeting of the Warsaw Pact, which took place in Warsaw on 19 and 20 January 1965 (cf. SR 21 and 22 January 1965).

Congress of Engineers and Technicians

The Fifth Congress of Polish Engineers and Technicians took place at the industrial Silesian towns of Zabrze and Katowice on February 10 through 12. The Congress was attended by about 2,500 participants, including 1,887 delegates representing 230,000 diploma engineers and technicians.

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Numerous press articles and radio broadcasts published before and **during** the Congress stressed the importance of the event as well as of the organization associating Polish engineers and technicians, NOT (Naczelna Organizacja Techniczna). This importance was also evident in the caliber of officials attending the Congress: six Politburo members (Jozef Cyrankiewicz, Edward Gierek, Stefan Jedrychowski, Ignacy Loga-Sowinski, Marian Spychalski and Eugeniusz Szyr), two Politburo candidate members (Mieczyslaw Jagielski and Boleslaw Jaszczuk), Polish Academy of Sciences Chairman, Prof. Janusz Groszkowski, Chairman of the Presidium of the Voivodship People's Council at Katowice, Jerzy Zietek, and several officials from industrial ministries. Boleslaw Ruminski, chairman of NOT, played host.

Experts attending the Congress discussed their problems in at least 12 specialized sections. Among the chief problems under discussion, as reported by Radio Warsaw, were quality and modernization. Much time was also devoted to "economics and to modern organization of production," which "the participants did not hesitate to call the weakest link of the production process." Radio Warsaw reporters also stressed the matter of fact approach to the problems, the "strength of convictions" and even enthusiasm of many speakers.

A paper on the Congress and its significance is being prepared.