

EURO -- POLES PREPARING STRIKE LAW, SPANISH COMMUNIST TOLD 7-59P

Munich, 26 August 1980 (RAD/Devlin).

A Spanish communist trade union leader has been told by Polish union leaders that a law on the right to strike is now being prepared.

A report (1) in the Italian Communist Party's newspaper says that Marcelino Camacho, Secretary-General of the communist-controlled Spanish labor federation, the Workers' Commissions, was told about the proposed law during a two-day visit to Poland, where he met Jan Szydlak, president of the Polish trade union organization, and other officials. The report said:

On his arrival /In Madrid/, Camacho said that the leaders of the Polish labor unions had assured him that no striker had been arrested, and that the government had no thought of using force against the workers. Camacho was also informed that there is being prepared a law on the right to strike, which represents a very important innovation, and that it could be approved on the occasion of the congress of Polish trade unions, to be held next month.

Camacho added that the Polish officials told him that "there is no fear of a Soviet intervention, and that if things develop normally, there exists no risk of any such thing."

Attributing the report to the Italian news agency Ansa, l'Unità noted that it did not say whether Camacho had also had contacts with representatives of the striking workers in Poland.

Camacho visited Poland on his way back to Spain from a vacation in Yugoslavia. The Workers' Commissions had earlier issued a statement of solidarity with "the Polish workers, who are demanding trade union freedom and the right to strike," and announced that it was sending an envoy on a fact-finding mission to Poland. (2) It is not clear whether Camacho's visit is to be regarded as a fulfillment of that pledge.

Italian Union Delegation

Meanwhile, l'Unità announced on August 23 that a six-man delegation representing the unitary leadership of the three Italian trade union federations -- the communist-dominated CGIL, the social-democratic UIL and the Catholic CISL -- would leave for Poland within a few days. During their visit, they "proposed to meet /representatives of/ the government, the trade unions, and the Polish workers."

(1) "Statements of Camacho on Return from Poland," l'Unità, 23 August 1980.

(2) Ibid., 20 August 1980.

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Commenting on the Polish situation, the communist Secretary-General of the CGIL, Luciano Lama, who had already expressed solidarity with the striking workers, said in a broadcast that it was necessary that changes come about in the Polish political system, "in the sense that it is necessary -- and I hold that it is possible -- that a socialist system, in which capitalism as private ownership of the means of production does not exist, should also allow the workers, as such, to organize themselves freely in trade unions and to administer economic and political power in an autonomous way." (3)

A later report, in l'Unità of August 26, said that the six delegates had had a "cordial" meeting the day before with the Polish Ambassador to Italy, Mr. Trepczynski, who had confirmed "the full readiness on the Polish side to receive the Italian trade union delegation in the next few days, so that it may, as requested, meet the workers carrying on their struggle, the trade unions, and the authorities." The delegates were expected to leave for Warsaw on Thursday.

The joint communiqué issued by the leaderships of the three Italian labor federations reconfirmed full support for the demands of the striking Polish workers, and expressed the expectation that the "the process of renewal" in Poland would be consolidated through a positive conclusion to the present negotiations. It added that "the decisions just adopted, together with the measures anticipated in Gierek's speech, represent a significant step forward toward the renewal of trade union life and workers' participation in Poland." (4)

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(3) Ibid., 23 August 1980.

(4) Ibid., 26 August 1980.