

(W/CN-56)

MUNICH, APRIL 3 - (TARA/POLISH UNIT) - THE DEMONSTRATION OF POLISH NURSES IN WARSAW YESTERDAY MAY BE TAKEN AS THE FIRST OPEN SIGN OF POPULATION'S DISCONTENT OVER THE REGIME'S DOUBLING OF PRICES OF COAL, ELECTRICITY AND GAS ANNOUNCED LAST WEEK.

THE DEMONSTRATION, FIRST REPORTED YESTERDAY BY UPI, HAS NOW BEEN CARRIED BY PAUL UNDERWOOD IN TODAY'S "NEW YORK TIMES." ACCORDING TO UNDERWOOD AND UPI, YESTERDAY'S WAS A LARGER REPEAT -- UPI ESTIMATED THAT 2,000 TOOK PART -- OF A SMALLER DEMONSTRATION WHICH TOOK PLACE LAST SATURDAY AND WHICH APPARENTLY WAS BROKEN UP.

IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT IT SHOULD BE THE NURSES, BOTH MALE AND FEMALE, WHO SHOULD MILITATE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S AUSTERITY PROGRAM. WITH AN AVERAGE WAGE OF SOME 1,000 ZLOTY A MONTH (ABOUT THREE FIFTHS THE AVERAGE WAGE), WITH BAD WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS, WHICH THEY SHARE WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS THE WORLD OVER, THEY ARE NOW FACED WITH A FURTHER DECREASE IN LIVING STANDARDS. THE FACT ALSO THAT MOST OF THEM LIVE COMMUNALLY FACILITATES JOINT ACTION AND THE TYPE OF SOLIDARITY WHICH THEY HAVE JUST SHOWN.

ANOTHER FACTOR ADDING TO THEIR DISCONTENT IS THE REGIME'S MOVE OF STEADILY CLOSING DOWN THE SMALLER HOSPITALS RUN BY NUNS. THIS NATURALLY MEANS MORE WORK FOR THE LAY MEMBERS OF A PROFESSION WHICH IS NOW TOO SMALL TO COPE WITH THE MANDS PLACED ON IT. AT THE END OF 1960 THERE WERE SOME 62,000 MALE AND FEMALE NURSES. THIS FIGURE IS OFFICIALLY ADMITTED AS BEING TOO LOW AND IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED THAT BY 1975 THERE WILL BE A SHORTAGE OF 50,000 NURSES IN POLAND. THUS, NOT ONLY DO THE NURSES HAVE SERIOUS GRIEVANCES BUT THEY MAY ALSO FEEL THAT THEY ARE IN A GOOD BARGAINING POSITION TO EXTRACT SOME CONCESSIONS FROM THE REGIME.

THIS DEMONSTRATION OF LABOR UNREST IS BY NO MEANS THE FIRST IN POLAND IN RECENT YEARS. SINCE THESE HAVE ALMOST ALWAYS OCCURRED IN THE PROVINCES OR HAVE BEEN IN THE NATURE OF SIT-DOWN STRIKES OR STOPPAGES ON THE WORK PREMISES THEMSELVES, THEY HAVE MOSTLY NOT BEEN REPORTED BY FOREIGN JOURNALISTS AND CERTAINLY HAVE NOT BEEN ADMITTED BY THE REGIME. BUT THERE HAVE BEEN RELIABLE UNOFFICIAL REPORTS, FOR EXAMPLE, OF A STOPPAGE ON THE PLOCK OIL REFINERY CONSTRUCTION STRIKE THIS FEBRUARY, AND IN LATE JANUARY THERE WAS APPARENTLY A STOPPAGE AT AN INSTRUMENT MEASUREMENT PLANT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF WARSAW. THESE ARE REPORTED TO HAVE HAPPENED ONLY IN RECENT MONTHS. PREVIOUS TO THIS THERE WERE MANY, PERHAPS THE MOST FAMOUS BEING A STOPPAGE IN THE RAIL REPAIR SHOP IN POZNAN IN 1960 WHICH WAS REPORTED WIDELY IN THE FOREIGN PRESS.

IN VIEW OF THE LEAN ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FORECAST BY PREMIER CYRANKIEWICZ IN HIS SEJM SPEECH AND THE PROSPECT OF MORE HIGHER PRICES IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THIS DEMONSTRATION BY THE NURSES WILL BE ONLY THE FIRST SIGN OF LABOR AND PROFESSIONAL DISCONTENT IN POLAND. UNDERWOOD BEARS OUT THIS PROBABILITY WHEN HE REFERS TO RUMORS OF UNREST AT SEVERAL OF THE CAPITAL'S FACTORIES.

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