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Poland/6

29 January 1968

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Agricultural Expropriation Bill

The 10 bills debated by the Sejm a week ago (cf. Polish Situation Report, Radio Free Europe Research, January 22), became laws, but one of them was not supported by the Catholic parliamentary "circle" Znak. (In contrast to the three political parties, the PUWP, the United Peasant Party, and the Democratic Party, whose deputies are organized in parliamentary clubs, the three Catholic groups deputies form parliamentary circles.)

Speaking on behalf of Znak, Deputy Konstanty Lubienski opposed the bill on compulsory sale of farms because "the decision on the expropriation of the farmer is placed with the administrative authority." Lubienski, whose speech was broadcast by Radio Warsaw January 24, explained that the whole procedure of, and the decision on, expropriation -- as envisaged by the bill -- rests with the District People's Council. He also argued that the number of the neglected farms is rather negligible, that the situation of such farms had already improved thanks to government measures introduced earlier, and that it would be better to wait for further improvements instead of rushing through a new bill. "One is tempted to ask whether this bill is needed at all," Lubienski ventured.

In the ensuing polemics, Agriculture Minister and Politburo deputy member Mieczyslaw Jagielski stressed "with great force" that the respective provision of the bill on "the taking over of the farm by the state" pertains to a "clearly defined category of the farmers" who cannot undertake on their own the "intensification" of production

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or who, in view of their old age and lack of successors "seek support in the pension plan."

Earlier, CC Secretary Jozef Tejchma, introducing the bill, explaining that it "will make it possible for the state to intervene in cases of farms with a low production level, particularly if this results from the misuse of the means that would otherwise increase this production."

The bill, Tejchma continued, is a "stimulus to owners of weak farms to take adequate precautionary measures, for otherwise state organs will press them to sell the land under the compulsion principle."

The polemics with the Catholic opposition to the bill did not end in the Sejm. In an indirect way they were carried on by Radio Warsaw's "Fala 56" program (January 28), which replied to a listener who was at least as critical about the bill as Lubieniski was. Radio Warsaw said that the bill is directed against "parasites" but compulsory sale of the farms will be applied as "the last recourse" only, i.e., when the "parasite" does not reform within a year. (The District People's Council may put a negligent farmer on probation for a year.)

The broadcast again quoted Jagielski as saying that "this last solution" (compulsory sale of the farm) is reserved for the few cases of "extreme negligence and waste on the part of persons who do not fulfill the elementary duties vis-a-vis the land, which is ... a social asset." "The way land is used ceases to be the private matter of its owner. It becomes a public matter which concerns all of us," Radio Warsaw concluded.

Socialist Youth Union Congress

The Fourth Congress of the Socialist Youth Union opened its three day session in Warsaw this morning.

The importance of the event was marked by the attendance at the opening ceremony of at least six Politburo members headed by First Party Secretary Wladyslaw Gomułka. The other Politburo members present were Jozef Cyrankiewicz, Stefan Jedrychowski, Ignacy Loga-Sowinski, Marshal Marian Spychalski, and Ryszard Strzelecki, who delivered a speech. CC Secretary Witold Jarosinski, in charge of ideology and education, also attended.

Several statements made by the SYU leaders before the Congress revealed that the 607 delegates represent 1,056,000 members;

that the membership increased to this number from 71,000, 10 years ago (after the almost total collapse of the Polish Youth Union in 1956, the SYU had to start organizing from scratch); that the school youth accounts for 490.5 thousand, followed by working youth, numbering 441.5 thousand, including 330 thousand industrial workers), while the number of students is 62,000; that 68 per cent of young people are under 20, while more than 25 per cent are under 26 (according to the statutes, youth between 16 and 28 may belong to the SYU); and that the major task of the SYU is to recruit more working youth.

Polish-Italian Trade Protocol

Polish-Italian trade exchanges are to increase by 20 per cent in 1968 as compared with 1967, according to a trade protocol signed in Rome between the two countries, Radio Warsaw reported on January 28. The protocol foresees further liberalization of Italian imports from Poland and also creates better possibilities for Italian exports to Poland, said the broadcast.

According to an RFE Special from Rome (January 11), during the negotiations Poland was expected to press for greater Italian purchases of her industrial goods, while Italy was interested in assuring that there would be no monetary imbalance to her disadvantage this year. While in 1966 the Italo-Polish trade was virtually balanced, during the first 10 months of 1967 the imbalance to Italy's disadvantage reached 11 million dollars.

Polish-Yugoslav Trade Protocol

Poland and Yugoslavia signed on January 22 in Belgrade a trade protocol for 1968 which provides for an increase in trade turnover between the two countries as compared with the results of 1967, Trybuna Ludu reported on January 23.

According to the paper, the protocol creates possibilities for a gradual re-establishing of a balance in payments between the two countries. In recent years Poland developed an unfavorable balance of payments with Yugoslavia, one of the reasons being Yugoslavia's reluctance to import Polish coal.

For more information on Polish-Yugoslav trade difficulties cf. SR RFER, 13 April, 5 June and 6 November 1967.

East-West Contacts

The giant English Electric Co. has sold its first System 4 computer to Poland, an RFE Special from London reported on

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January 24. A contract, worth \$ 828,000, has been signed in Warsaw.

The art exhibition "The Face of Mexico" was opened in Warsaw on January 23, Radio Warsaw reported.

A delegation of French scientists from "Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique" in Paris arrived in Warsaw on January 23, Radio Warsaw reported. On January 27, an agreement was signed between CNRS and the Polish Academy of Science about further, close scientific collaboration.

A three-man Polish governmental mission is expected in Tokyo on February 1 to inspect the motor vehicle industry, Reuter reported.

The Polish Party delegation headed by Politburo member and CC Secretary Zenon Kliszko, now in Tokyo at the invitation of Japanese Communist Party, visited one of the motor vehicle plants on January 27, Radio Warsaw reported.

A "Polish Week" is being held in Vienna from January 29 to February 2, an RFE Special from Vienna reported on January 24. The program of the "Polish Week" will include a speech of the chairman of the Christian-Social Association and deputy to the Sejm, Dr. Jan Frankowski, on "Economic and Socio-Political Aspects of Poland's Demographic Evolution."

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