

Polish Proposals on Laos

Polish proposals for solving the problem of Laos (cf. Sit. Rep. June 2) met with a rather good reception in the West and the Soviet Union ~~and~~ but with a definite rejection on the part of the Chinese.

The first, as could be expected, to give full support to the Polish proposals, was the Soviet Union, who on June 5 notified the British ambassador in Moscow as announced by Tass (cf. Reuter June 5 and Radio Warsaw same date). Great Britain, next day, notified the Soviet Union that she accepted in principle the Polish proposals, subject to agreement on the wording of the invitation (cf. Reuter June 6 and RFE Special from London, June 8). Also, the US on June 5 termed the proposal interesting and a State Department spokesman of June 9 said that it might serve as the basis for further discussions (cf. Reuter, June 5, UPI, June 9 and USIS, June 10).

The Thai government was in as much of a hurry as the Soviet Union and on June 5 issued a formal statement criticising Poland's plan designed "to leave the United States and Thailand sitting outside the door" (UPI, June 5). Furthermore, the Laotian Communists, Neo Lao Haksat, "have indirectly rejected the Polish plan". A Party spokesman on June 6 stated that there should be convened another 14 nation Geneva conference to discuss the problem. Without mentioning the Polish plan directly he said that "any other meeting would solve nothing". (Hsinhua, June 8). A similar stand was taken by the Chinese government. In a statement published on June 9, China stated that she is a signatory of the Geneva Agreement, a near neighbor of Laos and, therefore, cannot but be anxious about the present situation in Laos. The Chinese government would discuss irrespective of who proposed them suggestions put forward for solving the problem. China, however, thinks that any partially attended consultations among the participants in the Geneva conference, even if both co-chairmen of the conference would participate, would be contrary to the Geneva agreement. China is of the opinion that the only way a peaceful solution of the problem can be found is by convening a full conference of the 14 participants in the 1954 Geneva conference (cf. Radio Warsaw, June 10).

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Anti-religious chicanery

Stephan Cardinal Wyszyński in his sermon delivered on June 8th at St. Anna University Church in Warsaw, complained about difficulties he has experienced in obtaining his own books. He said that he ordered some theological books from foreign publishers, exhibited during the recent international book fair in Warsaw. But when, after the fair, he went to collect the books he was told that they had already been sold to other buyers. He claimed this was nothing but sheer chicanery. More serious and more interesting is another point raised by the Cardinal. Only now have we learned from his sermon that the three volume set of his sermons published in France, sent to Poland, and confiscated by the regime, (cf. Sit. Rep. Nov. 8 & 14, 1963) were printed in France at the Cardinal's request, only because he was refused permission to print church books in Poland.

The Cardinal also said that the Catholic University of Lublin is taxed to the tune of 39 millions zlotys per annum. This is the first time that the yearly tax burden on the university has been revealed. (cf Reuter and UPI, June 9 and "Il Giornale d'Italia", June 10).

Polish-Italian Relations

The Italian Foreign Minister, Giuseppe Saragat will visit Poland early in July as a guest of the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adam Rapacki, reported Reuter and PAP of June 6 and an RFE Special from Rome of June 8.

This will be the first visit made by an Italian Foreign Minister to an East European country since the war, other than to Moscow and Belgrade.

The talks center around an extension of trade and cultural relations. There is no political discussion on the agenda, though the two statesmen will "review" the world situation.

It is also expected that the two ministers will sign a cultural accord between the two nations, which was initialled in Rome on June 6. (cf UPI, June 6).

In addition to this political visit, there is already in progress an equally high level visit of the Italian Minister of Foreign Trade, who arrived in Warsaw on June 10th at the invitation of his Polish counterpart, Witold Trampczyński. The well developing economic relations between the two countries will be reviewed during the visit. (cf Radio Warsaw June 10, 1964).

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Polish-Austrian Trade Talks

Dr. Fritz Bock, Austrian Minister for Trade and Reconstruction, who just left Rumania on June 9, will visit Poland between June 11 and 13, reported Reuter on June 9.

The purpose of his visit was not announced, but as he is coming on the heels of vice-chancellor Bruno Pitterman, and as he will meet in Warsaw three members of ^{an} Austrian delegation who arrived with Pitterman and stayed over in Poland to continue negotiating, the purpose seems pretty obvious (cf. RFE Special from Vienna of June 8).

No Visas Required in Polish East-German Frontier Traffic

From June 7th visas have not been required for Poles and East Germans ~~to~~ visiting each other's country, reported Radio Warsaw the same day.

One must, however, possess a valid passport or "passport enclosure" in one's identity card. To get these, one must apply to the Voivodship Militia headquarters enclosing a written invitation from the party being visited.

This appears to be an application to East Germany of an arrangement Poland has had with other East European countries (Bulgarian, since 1959, Czechoslovakia since 1960, Hungary since 1961). Also, transit visas for Poles travelling through East Germany or East Germans going through Poland are not needed. This last provision is fairly important for Poles going to the West.

Joint Metallurgical Project Formed

Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary have agreed to set up a joint ferrous metallurgy project called "Intermetall" to improve and develop production of metal products.

Ceteka reported today that the agreement was signed on June 6 (cf. Ceteka, June 9). It is significant that the GDR and no other country has accepted the invitation to join the original three organizers of the project.

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A. Bodnar's article, "Socialism in the Countryside" (Polityka, May 30, 1964), appearing in translation in the Polish Press Survey No. 1715 of June 6, 1964, is a further contribution to the discussion summarised in the Situation Report of May 22.