

RADIO FREE EUROPE

Research

FREE WORLD

*This material was prepared for the use of the  
editors and policy staff of Radio Free Europe.*

1225

NON RULING CPS  
POLAND

WCM  
(General)

7 December 1971

FOREIGN DELEGATIONS AT POLISH CONGRESS

Summary: The Polish party congress is being attended by 68 foreign delegations (plus two unnamed ones, to make up the total of 70 given by Gierek). Only three of them are non-Communist (left-socialist). This paper surveys the list, comparing it with attendance at the 24th Congress of the CPSU, and finding some significance in the absence of delegates from certain countries, notably Australia, India, Pakistan, the Netherlands and Iceland.

According to the list published early today by the PAP news agency, 68 foreign delegations (1) are attending the Sixth Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party -- an impressive total, well above the average for an East European congress, (2) which may reflect general interest in the fortunes of the Gierek regime and its effort to move ahead from the crisis which led to the fall of Gomulka one year ago. The list consists of 11 ruling parties (all except the Chinese and Albanian), 52 non-ruling Communist parties (or about two-thirds of the total if, ignoring the many splits, one allows only one party for each country), the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam

(which is as usual given a place of significant honor by being classified among the ruling parties), the New Zealand Socialist Unity Party (a special case to be discussed below) and, finally, three left-socialist parties (the PSI and PSIUP, both of Italy, and the Chilean Socialist Party).

If we compare this list with that of foreign delegations at the 24th Congress of the CPSU, convened at the end of March 1971, some interesting differences emerge, however. In the first place, there is a striking drop in the number of non-Communist delegations. Brezhnev was able to announce the presence of 21 such delegations (apart from the South Vietnamese NLF), the majority of which represented "liberation movements" of "anti-imperialist" regimes in the Third World. The number has now fallen very drastically to three -- one of which (the Italian Socialist Party) did not attend the Soviet congress. The absence of the Egyptian Arab Socialist Union is particularly noteworthy. But perhaps the comparison with the congress of the CPSU, with its global claims and ambitions, is in this respect misleading: like most other East European regimes, the PUWP is too preoccupied with its domestic problems to want to identify itself overmuch with Third-World liberation movements.

#### Missing Parties

This, however, certainly does not apply to the Communist parties; and, here again, there are some interesting differences between the Moscow and Warsaw congresses. Nine foreign Communist delegations present in Moscow are not (according to the PAP list) attending the Polish congress. These are the parties of Australia, Bolivia, Guyana, Haiti, India, East Pakistan, Paraguay, Puerto Rico and West Germany (KPD).

Some of these absences are understandable. Thus, the absence of that "ghost-organization," the KPD, accords with changed realities. Since the Moscow congress the effective replacement of the "clandestine" KPD by the legal DKP has become increasingly obvious -- to the point where the veteran leader of the KPD, Max Reimann, has "resigned" to become Honorary President of the DKP, and no successor has been named. Moreover, to invite a KPD delegation to the PUWP congress would be to invite undesirable and totally unnecessary friction with the West German government, in whose Ostpolitik Poland plays an important role. Similarly, distance and expense could well account for the absence of the Bolivian, Haitian, Paraguayan and Puerto Rican parties as well as Cheddi Jagan's People's Progressive Party of Guyana (which first proclaimed its Marxist-Leninist status at the Moscow Conference of June 1969); and it would be unwise to attach any particular significance to them.

The absence of some other parties, on the other hand, is clearly significant. First, there is the case of the Australian party (CPA). Since National Secretary Laurie Aarons attended the CPSU congress eight months ago (to find a pro-Soviet dissident from his own party seated among the Soviet delegates), the CPA's relations with the CPSU and its East European followers have deteriorated. The CPA has become even more independent

and has strengthened its criticism of Czechoslovak normalization in particular and of neo-Stalinism in general, undeterred by the rebellion of pro-Soviet malcontents -- some of whom are meeting in Sydney this week (4-5 December) to plan the formation of a secessionist party. More to the point, the CPA was extremely vigorous in its criticism of the Polish regime in connection with the December crisis. It is known that the CPA was not invited to the recent "normalization congress" of the Czechoslovak party; and it is entirely probable that it was not invited to the PUWP congress either.

Then there are the parties of India and (East) Pakistan. Their absence can perhaps be seen as the result of the recent, explosive developments on the sub-continent. The presence of either, at a time when open war is raging between India and Pakistan would inevitably have embarrassed the PUWP leadership by placing that complex and passion-laden subject on the agenda, beyond the passing references that could otherwise be expected. There is the further point that the Communist Party of East Pakistan now calls itself the Communist Party of Bangla Desh; and acceptance of a delegation under that title would have amounted to Polish recognition of Bangla Desh as an independent state -- which no Communist regime has yet done.

Then there are the Communist parties which did not attend, or were not invited to; either the Soviet or the Polish congress -- for a start, the pro-Chinese parties of South-east Asia and New Zealand (we are speaking, of course, of "official" Communist parties -- there was never any question of secessionist pro-Chinese parties being invited to either congress). Another inevitable absentee was MAKI, the original Israeli CP, with which the PUWP and the overwhelming majority of other Communist parties severed relations at the time of the June War in 1967, and which has sharply attacked the Polish regime for its treatment of Jews. (The rival Israeli CP, RAKACH, was, however, invited and sent Politburo member David Henin, a Jew.)

#### "Renegade" Welcomed

We have noted that the New Zealand CP is not represented in Warsaw (and may not have been invited). But a New Zealand delegate is present -- in the person of George Jackson, Secretary-General of the Socialist Unity Party. This is a small, pro-Soviet splinter-party formed in early February 1966 by defectors from the New Zealand CP. The CPSU, however clear its preference, could not grant the SUP official recognition as the national Communist party; but over the years links were developed in a number of ways short of such recognition, through interparty talks, etc. In February 1970 Jackson attended



the 19th Congress of the French CP as a fraternal delegate -- but not officially classified as such. In March 1971 he was welcomed in Moscow as a delegate to the 24th Congress of the CPSU; and this time Brezhnev did list him among the foreign Communist delegates. (3) Now he is at the Warsaw congress, and PAP puts him either at the end of the Communist or at the start of the non-Communist delegations -- it is not yet clear which. At any rate, whatever Jackson's precise status may be, the Poles have invited to their congress the man whom the official Communist Party of New Zealand has condemned as an "anti-party renegade."

Finally, we may note the absence of two independent West European Communist parties, both of which have for years made a practice of boycotting fraternal congresses -- those of the Netherlands and Iceland. It is perhaps a pity that the Icelanders at least could not come. The People's Alliance is at present the only Communist party in Western Europe that has achieved even a share of power as participant in a governing coalition -- and, furthermore, the only one that is helping to run a country that is a member of NATO. In its own way, that is solid success; and, even if its relevance to Polish problems is more than doubtful, this is certainly the time for all good foreign comrades to come to the aid of the Polish party.

Kevin Devlin.

- (1) In his opening speech Gierek said that "representatives of 70 Communist, workers' and socialist parties" of Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas were attending the congress, which means that PAP omitted two delegations. This, however, frequently occurs at Communist congresses: for various reasons, no public mention may be made of certain delegations -- for example, the Algerian party (to avoid trouble with the ruling FLN) or the party of East Pakistan (discussed in the course of this paper).
- (2) For example, the recent Hungarian party congress was attended by 32 foreign delegations, and the 5th PUWP congress by 39.
- (3) See Kevin Devlin, "'Renegades' Represent New Zealand Communism at Moscow Congress," CAA Research Report No. 0958, RFER, 30 March 1971.