

Economy -- Electric Power

The Day of Energetics (literally of workers in the power industry) was celebrated in Poland yesterday. Radio Warsaw (August 30) has given prominent play to the problem of supplying electric power to industry and private consumers during the second Five Year Plan (1961-1965). This will be a critical component of the ambitious drive to develop the Polish economy. Radio broadcasts devoted to the main celebrations in Wroclaw (Breslau), which were attended by one thousand "merited" workers, stressed the seven-fold increase of electric power since 1938, when less than four billion kilowatts were produced. This optimistic reporting was balanced by a review of the future shortages expected to occur during 1961-63.

Minister of Mining and Power J. Mitrega told a Radio Warsaw interviewer that the production of electric current (water and thermal) will be about 57 per cent higher in 1965 than today. The share of electric power stations utilizing brown coal will rise during the same period from 4.5% to 30%, reflecting the centrally approved decision to stick to coal as the prime source of energy during the next five years despite the world-wide switch to liquid fuels and planned utilization of atomic furnaces.

The radio commentator asked a specific question which the minister bravely faced up to.

Question: At the press conference in the Ministry of Power I heard that the coming peak during autumn and winter will pose difficulties. Due to the limitation of investments in the past years, energetics are threatened with a serious deficit of power. Would you be kind enough to say what steps have been taken by people in energy to soften (the effects) of this deficit?

Answer: The peak (demand) this winter will take place without more serious disturbances in industry. We do not anticipate difficulties in the supply to the population but during 1961-63 there will be shortage of power within a limit up to 300 mega (or million) watts due to the limiting of investments during the past years. The mastering of this deficit will be possible only thanks to a mobilization of every reserve of electric power, primarily in industry."

The radio interviewer concluded by citing commonly occurring drops in line current from 220 to 170 volts and even lower, and agreed with the minister that investments in the second Five Year Plan in electricity will be "very strained" due to augmented demands on the supply to private and industrial consumers.

Economy -- Steel

The government is stressing the need to save one million tons of steel during the next five years. In order to achieve this, a cryptogram has been coined, KOS, standing for Savings Bank of Steel. The campaign is aimed at emphasizing the contribution of steel saved by various industrial establishments and points to the rather critical quantitative planning which will be enforced during the second Five Year Plan (for discussion see Situation Report August 1).

COMECON -- Relations with Czechoslovakia

Preparatory to the arrival of a mixed party and government delegation from Czechoslovakia, Warsaw has expressed pleasure at the prospect of meeting friends from beyond the Carpathian Mountains. An assessment of the practical side of the friendship was given by Radio Warsaw (August 30) which dwelled on the industrial achievements of Czechoslovakia. A radio talk by J. Kujawski about Czechoslovakia did not, significantly enough, omit to mention the failure of its agriculture to keep pace with the needs of the society.

On the trade relations between the two countries within COMECON (a touchy point as explained in Situation Reports dated July 26, August 18 and 23), the commentator praised the ten-fold growth of the exchange of goods since 1947 and stated that the Polish experience gained in the Nowa Huta industrial combine and in the construction industry has been used by Czechoslovakia. Poland received from Czechoslovakia complete mining equipment, lathes, turbines, and cranes.

Another example of economic cooperation between the two countries was Czechoslovak aid in developing the Polish shoe industry and the considerable development of transit services for CS world trade through Polish ports (2.3 million tons in 1959). The commentary ended on a note

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of harmony by linking two countries in a common struggle for peace and against the danger of West German militarism. The top-ranking CS delegation headed by president and first secretary of the Party Novotny (his first official visit to Poland!) arriving in Warsaw within the next "several days" may be able to deal effectively with the causes of friction between the two COMECON partners, which might have prompted Gomulka to condemn the "every man for himself" attitude at the Fifth Plenum of the PUWP.

Agriculture -- Harvest

The estimated losses due to floods are about two billion zloty according to Dziennik Ludowy. The massive effort required to curb the Vistula alone will cost fifteen billion zloty, and peasants have been put on notice that they will have to share in a separate effort to protect their property (PAP, August 31).

The situation has been mastered in the sense that most of the main crops have been harvested and stored. The present concern is the sowing of wheat and rye which will commence two weeks from now and the timely autumn ploughing which has been delayed.

Harvest celebrations will be aimed this year at boosting agricultural circles. Their rational utilization of shared (as opposed to privately owned) farm machinery is stressed. Radio Warsaw (August 30) reported that the agricultural circles have purchased 5,500 tractors and attachments since last September. The tractors, said radio, have replaced some 30,000 peasant owned horses. For discussion of the tractor vs horse issue, please see Situation Report August 25, and Zycie Gospodarcze article pouched today.

West German Relations

The tension is being maintained, with Polish propaganda exploiting the Erhard speech in Duesseldorf to the full. German, British, French, and Italian press comment on the Oder and Neisse dispute (with an evaluation comment on the Zincone piece in the L'Europeo) is being forwarded.

Warsaw is attempting to involve RFE into a controversy regarding its use of reports on Poland by M. Rochette (Midi Libre) and Gellhorn (The Atlantic). According to Radio Warsaw (August 31), when faced with the choice of press-reviewing the "objective and to the point" reporting by Rochette

and the "anti-Polish" article by Gellhorn, RFE editors chose the latter. The broadcast (Music and Current Events) concluded that RFE preferred to pass in silence over the commentaries of the French press which condemn the Duesseldorf speech by Erhard. The attack will come as a surprise to readers of Gellhorn's sympathetic reporting on her re-visit to Poland and it is symptomatic of the quick and nervous response by Warsaw on a topic which has outgrown its strictly theoretical importance.

Pouched: (1) Zycie Gospodarcze (August 28), Z. Mikolajczyk on mechanization of farming (cf. today's situation report); (2) Tygodnik Powszechny (August 14), P. Zwilnian's report on the alleged religious indifference of the younger generation; Kisiel defending the press in connection with A. Starewicz's criticism of periodic literature; (3) Argumenty (August 21), S. Brodzki on the would-be pro-German sentiments of Vatican hierarchy and US scientist who attended the Eucharistic Congress in Munich.