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Conference of People's Councils' Chairmen

A two day conference of the chairmen of the Voivodship and District People's Councils took place in Warsaw on January 30-31.

For at least the last 10 years, the conference has been a yearly event presided over by Premier Jozef Cyrankiewicz. It differed this year in that the subject of the debates was narrowed to agricultural problems. In this connection, the chairmen of the Town People's Councils were not invited to participate.

As usual, First Party Secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka attended the conference, as did also several Politburo and CC Secretariat members. A conspicuous absentee was Edward Ochab, whose presence would be required -- or at least expected -- in view of his official position as Chairman of the State Council. He also did not appear at the Fourth Congress of the Socialist Youth Union (cf. Polish Situation Report, Radio Free Europe Research, January 22).

The "basic reports" were presented before the conference in a special issue of the monthly Gospodarka i Administracja Terenowa (Economy and Local Government) and they dealt with: 1) "Key Tasks and Problems of Local Government in 1968" -- by Stefan Jedrychowski; 2) "The Tasks of People's Councils in the Field of Agriculture in 1968" -- by Mieczyslaw Jagielski; and 3) "General Characteristics of the State Budget for 1968" -- by Andrzej Albrecht.

As stressed by Cyrankiewicz in a 15 minute introduction, these reports and the conference itself evolved from "the broad basis" of the resolutions of the Ninth CC Plenum and from the recent

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laws passed by the Sejm (cf. SR, RFER, January 22 and 29).

At the end of the conference, Gomulka delivered a rather paternal speech spiced with practical advice and criticism of specific instances of inefficiency. His main complaint was that "the means supplied by the state are in many agricultural areas far ahead of the level of know how."

Socialist Youth Union Congress Ends

The Fourth Congress of the Socialist Youth Union ended on January 31 with the re-election of the Main Board's officers: Andrzej Zabinski, chairman; Zygmunt Najdowski, deputy chairman; and three secretaries, Henryk Kanicki, Jan Maj, and Andrzej Majkowski.

The Congress also passed a resolution which stated, inter alia: "We are the Socialist Youth Union and act under ideological and political leadership of the Polish United Workers' Party. The future of each of us and ipso facto the future of the whole nation depends to a large degree on us, on how we manage to participate in the tasks of socialist construction as devised by the Party. For we are the generation for which the devotion to our fatherland is linked inseparably with socialism." The resolution stressed that "the leading task of the educational activity of the Union is the bringing up of the generation of Communists, of ardent patriots of the socialist fatherland."

The resolution expressed criticism of the development of the Union among the "working youth" and put forward a demand that "further, dynamic development of the SYU among young workers and among engineering and technical cadres is necessary." Regarding the immediate ideological activities of the SYU, Chairman Zabinski reminded the audience that 1968 is a year of several important anniversaries, including the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of Poland (officially reckoned from its First Congress on 16 December 1918); the 20th anniversary of the "unification of the workers' movement" (the unification congress, in December 1948, of the Polish Workers' Party and Polish Socialist Party into what is known now as Polish United Workers' Party), and the 25th anniversary of the creation of the Polish Army (in the summer of 1943 in the USSR). Zabinski also stressed that 1968 is the year of the Fifth Congress of the PUWP. (A similar official statement was made two days earlier by Ryszard Strzelecki.)

The SYU's close links with the dependence on the PUWP were repeatedly stressed during the Congress, the most outspoken statements coming from two main speakers, Zabinski and Strzelecki. "Our pledge to the Party is the preparation of active Communists, committed participants of the further socialist transformation in our country.

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We should spread Marxism-Leninism, a key to understanding social phenomena. It is a fundament on which SYU members can form their attitudes to the world which surrounds them and their world outlook," Zabinski stated on January 29. On the same day, Strzelecki complimented the SYU on their achievements in this respect. He said: "The improvement of the Union's total activity is shown by the fact that in the last three years 86,000 SYU activists have joined the ranks of the PUWP. It is of immense importance to the Party that its ranks be increased by activists from youth organizations, for they had their first and good school of social action there."

It should be noted that at the three previous Congresses of the SYU, Gomulka spoke for the PUWP. At the present Fourth Congress, Strzelecki, in charge of youth affairs, delivered the report on behalf of the Party.

Poland and Cuba Sign Trade Protocol

Poland and Cuba signed on January 29 in Warsaw a protocol on exchange of goods and payments in 1968, Radio Warsaw reported the following day. Besides listing some goods under the planned exchange of goods, the broadcast refrained from giving any details concerning the volume of trade between the two countries.

Correction to SR RFER, January 29, page 3, line 8 should read: "youth between 16 and 28 may join the SYU"