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A Polish Report on the Moscow Meeting

"A short report on the Consultative Meeting which took place in Moscow" on March 1 to 5 was presented to the CC of the PUWP by Politburo member Zenon Kliszko (cf. SR March 18). According to the text of the speech broadcast by Radio Warsaw on March 17 and published by Trybuna Ludu the next day, Kliszko explained that the main purpose of the Consultative Meeting was an exchange of views on the subject of the convening of a conference of Communist and workers' Parties. Since the meeting had a consultative character, it was agreed that it should not pass binding resolutions, "but only express a joint opinion on those questions in which the views of participants were in agreement." There were "no polemical announcements addressed to Parties not participating in the meeting," Kliszko stressed. The 19 participants of the meeting were unanimous in passing two documents: 1) a declaration expressing solidarity with the "heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people against US aggression," and

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2) a final communiqué on the meeting. The Polish contribution to the meeting was summed up by Kliszko as follows:

"We stated that both the general course of events in the international arena and, above all, the development of the situation in the international Communist movement justify the need to prepare and to convene a new conference of all Communist Parties." The purpose of this conference would be to elaborate a joint attitude of these Parties toward new social and political phenomena and a joint strategy in the struggle "against imperialism" at the present stage. "There is the need for a closer definition of the essence of the non-capitalist road of development in the light of experiences, richer than four years ago, connected with the undoubted turn by many Arab, African and Asian states in the direction of social radicalism." The most important task of the conference, however, would be the "overcoming of the split" in the Communist movement so as to insure "unity and fundamental direction" in the foreign policy of socialist states.

The Polish delegation, Kliszko explained, realized that it would be difficult in a short period of time to evaluate the differences in ideological outlooks. The present task, however, is to elaborate, in spite of ideological differences, methods of joint action toward "imperialism." "The key to the maintenance of the political unity of the world Communist movement lies in the mutual relations between Parties which hold the helm of power in socialist states, and especially in the agreed international policy of these Parties and states," the Poles stated. They also stressed that the new leadership of the CPSU had given enough proof of good will and had made "great efforts for the unity of the socialist camp." In the period of preparations for the conference, the Communist Parties of socialist states should take special care to observe the principle of mutual consultations in all important problems of international policy, the Poles insisted.

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They "spoke in favor of a new method of preparations for the conference, which would correspond to present conditions and would insure to all Parties the possibility of participation in these preparations on the principles of full respect for the equal rights and independence of each Party." The meeting (of the 81 Parties which participated in previous conferences in 1957 and 1960) should be "prepared and agreed upon through bilateral and multilateral inter-Party consultations," the Poles recommended. "Our delegation came out resolutely for the cessation of brutal and offensive polemics in the international Communist movement," Kliszko reported.

In spite of rather negligible achievements of the Moscow meeting, Kliszko insisted that the Polish Party leadership was convinced that the meeting was "useful," although he admitted that it could not be viewed as a "panacea capable of removing, from one day to the next, the present difficulties" in the Communist world. Kliszko sounded most "polycentric" when he stated at the end of his report:

"In present conditions there does not exist and there cannot exist a uniform international organization of the Communist movement, with an international leading center. Only conferences of all the Parties, convened from time to time, constitute the correct and consistent forum for decisions about problems common to the whole movement, for agreeing on its strategy in the struggle against imperialism."

Needless to say, Kliszko's report as well as the preceding one by Gomulka were duly and "unanimously" approved by the Polish CC. The Plenum also approved the Politburo report on "The Elections to the Sejm and to the People's Councils, and the Tasks of Party Organizations" dealt with in SR, March 18.

The opinions of the Polish Party, as expressed by Kliszko, are a development and elaboration of the previous Polish statements on the subject of world Communist unity, the Sino-Soviet dispute, a world conference, etc. It should be noted how similar the Polish

view is to the Italian (and Rumanian) and, judging from what Kliszko now says, it is probable that the Polish delegation was a very influential force at the Moscow conference. Twenty eight speakers took part in the discussion which was wound up by Gomulka. While they concentrate mainly on economic tasks, at least two speakers, Stanislaw Hasiak, chairman of the Main Board of the Socialist Youth Union, and his opposite number from the Rural Youth Union, Kazimierz Barcikowski, stressed that in the forthcoming elections youth raised entirely in post-war (Communist) Poland will take part for the first time. Both these speakers warned that the "enemies of our system" would try to play on the inexperience of this youth, and both predicted that these efforts would fail. We shall demonstrate, Hasiak promised, the "superiority of socialist democracy over the formal liberal-bourgeois" one.

Another Allegation of Bias in Chopin Competition

An outstanding Russian pianist, the 22 year old Tamara Koloss, became victim of anti-Russian bias which the seven Polish members of the jury developed after they had been charged with being too pro-Polish and too pro-Russian, David Halberstam reported in The New York Times on March 20. Halberstam did not mention the previous charge made by an American pianist who did not win through the first stage of the competition (cf. SR March 11), but he clearly implied that it was from that point on that the "Polish judges gave the Russian competitors low grades." Quoting a judge who "asked to remain anonymous," Halberstam explained that the Polish evaluations of the top Russian pianists "were markedly below those of other judges, including the Western ones" (there were seven Poles, seven citizens of the Communist states and seven representatives of the West on the 21 member jury). The Poles realized that they had "undermined the Russians too well" when they saw that there was no Russian among the six finalists of the competition (cf. SR March 15). According to the averages based on the jury's point evaluation, Tamara Koloss, the gifted Russian pianist was placed eighth.

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"Most of her colleagues in the contest and many Polish music lovers were stunned by her failure to reach the finals," Halberstam reported. Jan Hoffman, secretary to the jury, then proposed that the list of the finalists be expanded to eight, and Arthur Hedley, an Englishman and the vice-chairman of the jury insisted on such expansion, but the suggestion failed. According to one source, Halberstam continued, government officials were most upset by the "terrible botch," but they insisted that the list could not be expanded just for the benefit of a Russian, for that would be even more humiliating.

At least part of this story finds confirmation in official Polish sources. Interviewed by Zofia Jezewska, a Radio Warsaw reporter, on March 12, Hoffman expressed his disappointment about the limitation of finalists to six. "I feel there should be a place for a few more," he said. "Unfortunately, there is the regulation and all the jurors were defending the provisions of the regulation." Hence only six could be admitted, he complained.

The final verdict of the jury, announced on March 15, gave the first place and 40,000 zloty to Martha Argerich of Argentina ("a pianistic phenomenon" in the words of a Radio Warsaw expert). The second was Artur Moreira-Lima of Brazil, then followed Marta Sosinska of Poland, Hiroko Nakamura of Japan, Edward Auer of the USA and Elzbieta Glahowna of Poland. The remaining six semi-finalists received "distinctions." Among those awarded the distinctions (and 5,000 zloty each) was Tamara Koloss and another representative of the USSR, Victoria Postnikova, who received the second and third distinction respectively. A Canadian citizen of Polish origin, Marek Jablonski, received the first distinction, the fourth went to Blanca Uribe of Columbia, while the fifth was given ex aequo to Lois Carole Pachucki of USA and Ewa Maria Zuk of Venezuela, both of Polish origin.

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Whether these prizes and distinctions were awarded as a result of bias or not must remain a subject of speculation and gossip. The fact is that all the sources, including Angela Nacken in Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (March 20), agree that the artistic level of this year's participants of the competition was extremely high and so was the number of gifted entrants. The Polish musical critic Jerzy Waldorff, writing in Swiat (March 14), quoted the initiator of Chopin Competitions, Professor Jerzy Zurawlew, as saying that, since the start of these competitions in 1927, there had been no gathering of so many talented pianists as this year.

A Polish Film on Stalinist Period

Life Once Again, a Polish film on the "period of errors and deviations," has at long last been shown in Warsaw. Reporting on the event, Radio Warsaw and the press did not explain what sort of changes the film underwent between the date of its completion a year ago and its first public showing on March 13. The answer was supplied by David Halberstam in The New York Times (March 15). According to this source the movie "appears to have undergone editing to make the end sufficiently happy in Party terms." The terms, as set up by First Party Secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka at the Lublin meeting of writers last autumn (cf. SR September 23), were further explained by the official comment on the film. The point is that the Stalinist period should be looked at from a "distance," from a "historical perspective" which would allow one to see not only errors and distortions but also the "achievements of socialist construction" of the period.

A New Literary Monthly to Appear

A new literary monthly which will print works of contemporary poetry and "inform on poetry at home and abroad" is due to appear "in the near future" in Warsaw, Trybuna Ludu announced on March 13. The title of the monthly will be Poezja

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(Poetry) and its editor-in-chief will be Jan Zygmunt Jakubowski, professor of history of Polish literature at the Warsaw University. He is a member of the PUWP. The new monthly was promised by Gomulka last year (cf. SR May 20) as a token concession to the rebellious intellectual milieu. The choice of a professor as editor seems to indicate the Party's concern about balancing off of various poetical (and political) trends and "schools."

Embezzler Hanged

Stanislaw Wawrzecki, sentenced to death for embezzlement (cf. SR February 4), has been executed, Radio Warsaw announced on March 20. Reporting from Warsaw on the communiqué, Reuter explained that Wawrzecki was an official of the Warsaw Communist Party organization. During the trial he was severely criticized by the court for the strong pressure he applied against lowly-paid subordinates to force them to maintain the illicit operation of the meat ring. Neither the official communiqué nor Reuter said where and when the execution took place.