

The Letter of the 34 Was a "Domestic Affair", Professors Claim

Ten Polish professors who signed the letter from the 34 intellectuals sent a letter to the London "Times" claiming that the "problems raised by us in our letter to the Prime Minister of the Polish People's Republic on March 14 and then again during the meeting with him on April 8 had a strictly domestic character". The letter datelined Warsaw April 22 appeared in the "Times" on April 28 and was signed by the following ten professors: Aleksander Gieysztor, Konrad Gorski, Leopold Gorski, Leopold Infeld, Julian Krzyzanowski, Kazimierz Kumaniecki, Edward Lipinski, Wacław Wierpinski, Jan Szczepanski, Władysław Tatarkiewicz, and Kazimierz Wyka. The professors referred to a "Times" story of April 18, and expressed their regret that the matter (the letter of the 34) "has led to a campaign against our country, an action based on untrue information, spread especially by the West German press and Radio Free Europe". "We would like to state", the professors continued, "that it is not known to us that any of the persons who signed the letter to the Prime Minister have recently been deprived of the right to lecture or publish their books".

It is important to stress that the professors do not mention any other measures taken against the intellectuals, such as the radio and television ban and the deprivation of at least some of the signatories of the right to publish their articles (as distinct from books) in the press. (Thus, for instance, Antoni Slonimski's regular feature in the weekly "Szpilki" is still not appearing). However, it is probably true that none of the protesting professors have been suspended from the university. (Rumors to that effect caused Warsaw university students to demonstrate on April 14).

There seems to be little doubt that the regime is easing up in its attitude toward the signatories of the letter. Thus, a radio interview with Maria Dabrowska was broadcast by Radio Warsaw on April 28. (It was recorded in mid-February at her private apartment, and pertained to her work in the 20 years of post-war Poland.) Another signatory of the letter, Prof. Aleksander Gieysztor received permission to go to London to lecture at the School of Slavonic Studies (cf. RFE Special London April 29).

30 APRIL 1964

In addition to these overt signs of the regime's "favor", there have been indirect references to the letter of protest indicating that the writers and scholars had no reason to protest. Thus, Prime Minister Jozef Cyrankiewicz, speaking on April 10 to the nation's teachers, compared the pre-war circulation of a book written by Maria Dabrowska (30,000 copies) to the post-war figures pertaining to the same book (151,000 copies). He admitted, though, that there are still "difficulties" in the cultural sphere, that with the growing needs there are and there will be shortcomings, but "we will have to return to that subject again". Echoing the Prime Minister, "Zycie Warszawy" of April 21 published similar comparative statistics on the circulation of the books of certain writers before and after the war. Thus, after repeating the Dabrowska example, the paper went on to remind other signatories of the protest, that they owe much to People's Poland. In this connection, Jan Parandowski was mentioned (904,000 copies of his books), Jerzy Andrzejewski (465,000) and Melchior Wankowicz (346,000).

Recent documents, particularly the letter of the ten professors to the "Times" make it possible to reconstruct a calendar of events pertaining to the letter of the 34. It is as follows:

- March 14 - delivery of the letter to Cyrankiewicz.
- Sometime between March 14 and 26 reprisals against the signers by the regime.
- March 26 - first report (Reuter) on the letter and the reprisals
- March 27 - arrest and release of Jan Jozef Lipski.
- April 8 - meeting of some signatories with Cyrankiewicz.
- April 13 - European Writers' Congress (COMES) protest to Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz and the latter's subsequent visit to Rome.
- April 14 - students' demonstration in Warsaw
- April 18 - publication of British intellectuals' protest in the "Times". Regime's denial of reprisals (UPI and Reuter).
- April 25 - first official reaction to the letter ("Polityka").
- April 28 - letter of ten professors in the "Times".



30 APRIL 1964

Jaroszewicz on Comecon

Before leaving Moscow and upon arriving in Warsaw, Piotr Jaroszewicz who represented Poland at the last session of the Comecon Executive Committee (cf. Sit. Rep. April 24) gave two interviews to PAP and Radio Warsaw respectively, both broadcast on April 26. Regarding the results of the session, Jaroszewicz said that "cooperation was agreed upon in the important branch of chemical industry, namely in the branch working for the needs of agriculture", that in the field of transport "development of the technical basis and coordination of the work of transport" were "discussed", and that the common railway car pool will start its operation "in the beginning of the second half-year". In addition, Jaroszewicz stressed the importance of the setting up of the "organization for cooperation of the ball-bearing industry" in which the following countries will participate: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland and Hungary. The seat of the secretariat of the new organization will be Warsaw.

Regarding the operation of Comecon as a whole, Jaroszewicz expressed his misgivings about too slow a state of cooperation, which he explained by alluding to past practices tending toward economic autarchy. As to the present difficulties in this respect, Jaroszewicz stated that it would be difficult to expect eight countries to "always have a uniform opinion". There is no other method of convincing (the dissidents) than by "economic arguments" which -- Jaroszewicz admitted -- do not always "sound convincing at first glance". Each matter must be "thoroughly prepared" for discussion. In the end, "economic balance and logic" prevail. "This is the present nature of the work of Comecon", Jaroszewicz concluded.

Polish-East German Protocol on Trade Exchange

The Polish-East German mixed commission on foreign trade concluded its meeting in Warsaw, April 29, and signed a protocol for trade between the two countries in the current year. Additional items were included in the new protocol for East Germany: machines, industrial equipment, chemical raw materials, and a number of goods produced by the electro-technical industry; for Poland: lathes, building machines, electrical engines, potatoes and canned vegetables.

30 APRIL 1964

Polish-Finnish Trade Relations

A protocol on trade between Finland and Poland in the years 1964 through 1966 was initialled in Helsinki April 25, "Trybuna Ludu" reported the next day. The protocol relates to a trade agreement signed in 1948. The signing of the protocol will take place "in the very near future", "Trybuna Ludu" said. Polish information media recently referred to a long-term trade agreement being negotiated between the two countries, but the present protocol seems to indicate that at least till the end of 1966 there will be no new agreement. For previous information on the subject cf. Sit. Reps. of 6 and 12 December 1963 and 2 March 1964.

Trade Agreement with Uganda

Poland and Uganda signed an agreement designed to increase trade, Reuter reported from Kampala April 29. A special clause in the agreement allows for Polish re-export of Uganda cotton and coffee. On the Polish side the agreement was signed by Foreign Trade Ministry departmental director Stanislaw Stala who spent about a week in Uganda negotiating the deal. Earlier (cf. Sit.Rep. April 24), Stala negotiated and signed an agreement with Kenya.

Polish-Austrian Trade Talks

An Austrian industrial delegation headed by Dr. Maximilian Faehl from the Trade Ministry will open talks in Warsaw on May 3, an RFE Special from Vienna reported April 27. The purpose of the talks is to draw up new trade lists between the two countries. The principal topics on the agenda are agricultural, and for that reason Dr. Adolf Novotny, a representative of the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, will also participate.