

# RADIO FREE EUROPE *Research*

## EAST EUROPE

Poland  
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### S I T U A T I O N   R E P O R T

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#### Poland's New Attitude to Comecon

Recent statements by Polish economic leaders indicate that Poland's attitude regarding the extent and degree of cooperation within Comecon has changed. The new Polish attitude can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The usefulness of complete specialization of production is questioned. The principle of concentrating on a few defined areas for specialization is being supported.
- 2) The principle of specialization according to the final product is abandoned and the necessity for international coproduction is stressed (specialization in the production of sub-assemblies).
- 3) The downgrading of Comecon to a body which only recommends specialization of production in a given field, followed by binding bilateral agreements which carry out the recommendations.
- 4) The principle of there being a minimum of two producers for a given product within the Bloc, is advanced.
- 5) The importance of the purchase of Western licenses and the necessity for a fuller participation in the world division of labor is stressed.
- 6) It is clearly said that a more commercial approach should be applied to the problems of specialization and that the technical, quality and price characteristics should be subject to the test of Western markets.

These standpoints have been put forward in articles published almost simultaneously: one in the Warsaw popular daily Zycie Warszawy of March 12 and two in the March 13 issue of the

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economic weekly Zycie Gospodarcze. Both the Zycie Warszawy article and one in Zycie Gospodarcze were written by Artur Bodnar, Director of the Office for International Cooperation in the Planning Commission. The second Zycie Gospodarcze article is a summary of an article written by none less than deputy premier Piotr Jaroszewicz, Poland's chief Comecon delegate, in the February 16 edition of the Soviet weekly Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta. All three articles may, therefore, be taken as authoritative.

The most interesting of the statements made in the three articles pertain to the specialization of the production of the Comecon member countries. These contend that, when specializing in the production of a given product, the following considerations should be given priority:

- The introduction of the production of machines and installations which are not produced in the Comecon countries.
- The increase of the production of articles, the shortage of which has been disclosed during the process of coordinating plans. Hence the stress is put on specialization within the framework of an envisaged increase of production. Moreover, in an obvious effort to avoid specialization in the production of goods which consume much raw material (freight cars, ships, etc.) and which is, hence, not advantageous to Poland, the concept of specialization on the production of sub-assemblies, rather than of final products is stressed. Thus the concept of specialization through co-production is being put forward by the Poles. In this context, it is also noteworthy that the articles demand that specialization in given types of production should not be considered as being of indefinite duration. (It is stated that there is a difference of view between Poland and Hungary in this respect.)

The view is now publicly put forward that Comecon is not the only forum for specialization negotiations. It is necessary to create conditions conducive to a broader trade in machines with Western countries and promoting a deeper participation in the world division of labor (this idea of a world division of labor has been previously propagated by the Rumanians).

Regarding the evaluation of the economic effects of specialization, this must remain the internal concern of the given country. The basis on which evaluations should be made should be international market prices.

The deliberate downplaying of Comecon is seen in the proposal that Comecon should not be anything more than a recommending body with binding decisions being made only through bilateral agreements. The need to strengthen the role of such agreements is clearly stressed and, in this context, attention is drawn to the relationships between selected member countries of Comecon, for example, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the GDR.

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What these articles indicate is a basic change in Poland's attitude toward Comecon. She had always appeared to be one of the Comecon members urging a closer economic integration. Now, in pursuance of her own self-interest, she is evidently opting for a policy of "the looser, the better" with Comecon as a consulting and recommending body.

The volte-face, as indicated in the articles by Bodnar and Jaroszewicz is little short of sensational, and is the latest example of national interest at work in Eastern Europe.

Note: For the two article by Bodnar see Polish Press Survey (PPS) No. 1978. For the summary of the Jaroszewicz article see PPS No. 1979.

### The Pastoral Letter

In spite of "minor cuts" made in the text of the pastoral letter, dated February 10 and read in churches on March 6 (cf. SR March 17), the Trybuna Ludu version of the letter seems sufficient to confirm the initial impression that it was the regime rather than the Episcopate which decided to alter its position.

There is no sign of "repentance" on the part of the Episcopate for what had been said in the letter to the German bishops. There is, rather, a dignified explanation of certain aspects of that "message" and more criticism of the regime than admission of "guilt."

The bishops stated in their pastoral letter that they continue to regard their "message" to the German bishops as a continuation of their statements at Olsztyn and Wroclaw (during last year's celebrations of 20 years of Polish religious life in the Western and Northern Territories) and that the "message" has been thus interpreted "by highly skilled (wytrawny) statesmen in the whole world." Although implying that the Polish regime is lacking in skill, they go on to recognize an earlier regime modification of the anti-Church campaign:

"We express our satisfaction at the fact that, at a certain moment, common sense triumphed over prejudice and the responsible bodies stopped suspecting us of acting against the nation and against state interests."

This is a clear reference to Party First Secretary Gomulka, who in his impromptu speech of January 14 "absolved" the bishops of the sin of betraying the Oder-Neisse border.

Answering the question on whose behalf they sent the "message" to the German bishops, the Polish Church officials state that they had been acting as "representatives of the Catholic community in the Polish nation" and not of the nation as a whole.



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"For in spite of the fact that the Polish nation in its absolute majority is Catholic and manifests its membership in the Church, we, the bishops, do not, for this reason, regard ourselves as political leaders of the nation." It is not "political wisdom" with which the Polish bishops intend to serve the nation. They also do not want to engage in "building this or that system." Their task is to show the nation "the road to Christ," the pastoral letter states. For this reason "those who do not feel closely linked with the Catholic community" should understand that the bishops had not acted on their behalf. Trybuna Ludu, however, found "a new interpretation" in the letter.

Commenting on the Trybuna Ludu article, UPI from Warsaw (March 17) stated that "the Communists today called a ceasefire in the current Church-State strife." A similar interpretation was given by Alexander Korab in the Neue Zuercher Zeitung on March 20. Korab explained the Communist shift as a result of reports from local Party organizations on the negative effects which the anti-church campaign was having.

Developments subsequent to the Trybuna Ludu editorial do not permit definitive analysis of where Church-State relations will develop from here. Although the Trybuna Ludu article indicated that the water-shed had been passed and new regime tactics were emerging, the campaign against the bishops did not come to a halt. Perhaps the regime was trying to cover a retreat by making noises over its shoulder, or perhaps it was shifting the polemic to new grounds. Three days after the Trybuna Ludu article appeared, Politburo member and trade union leader, Igancy Loga-Sowinski, speaking on March 20 at a public meeting in Lodz, criticized the Polish bishops' letter to the German Episcopate, and in particular the passage about forgiveness. On March 22 Zycie Warszawy reprinted a letter written more than 30 years ago, on 30 May 1933, by a minister of the then not too democratic government of Poland, in which the minister complained about the Church hierarchy mixing in politics and about the Church hierarchy's statements "directed against the authority of the government and of state bodies."