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1. Polish-West German Relations

Foreign Trade Minister Janusz Burakiewicz arrived in Bonn on January 22. As stressed by an RFE Special from Bonn (January 22), the visit 'has no direct connection with the political talks which Bonn is trying to initiate with Warsaw,' but it is not without political significance. First of all, Burakiewicz is thus far the highest ranking Polish official to have had direct and official contact with the FRG within the last 30 years. Secondly, he is slated to talk, not only with FRG Economics Minister Karl Schiller, whose official guest he is, but also with Foreign Minister Walter Scheel. According to an official Bonn statement -- as quoted by the Special -- the discussions will cover 'the development and the future opportunities of German-Polish economic relations.'

On January 24, Burakiewicz will attend the opening of the 'Polish Economic Days' in Duesseldorf (cf. Polish Situation Report/5, Radio Free Europe Research, 21 January 1970). He is slated to end his visit on January 25.

Political talks will begin sometime in February. FRG Trade Mission chief Heinrich Boex met Polish Foreign Vice-Minister Jozef Winiewicz on January 20, but the two officials could not agree, 'for technical reasons,' on a date in early February suggested by Boex. However, February 11 or February 16 have been set as tentative dates for a start of the discussions, the Sueddeutsche Zeitung reported on January 22. The paper also revealed that Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, a secretary of state in the Bonn Foreign Office, will go to

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Warsaw for the opening of the talks. In this connection, the RFE Special explained that the assignment of Duckwitz is justified by the rank of his Polish partner (Winiewicz), while in a later stage of the talks, a West German diplomat of somewhat lower rank -- most likely ministerial director Hans Helmuth Ruete -- will take over.

In the meantime, the parliamentary state secretary in the Bonn Foreign Office, Ralf Dahrendorf, stated in an interview with the Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung (January 21) that 'there are signs' that, on the thorny problem of the Oder-Neisse frontier, 'a solution acceptable for both sides can be found.' He stressed though that a permanent recognition of this frontier was outside the jurisdiction of the FRG government. It would probably require a referendum, but the latter is not possible under the federal constitution. Dahrendorf stated optimistically: 'Positions that are being staked out at the beginning of negotiations often take on quite a different appearance by the end of negotiations.'

The Poles are a bit harder on this point. Unless he was misquoted by DPA (January 20), Foreign Vice-Minister Adam Willman -- in a talk with foreign journalists in Warsaw on January 19 -- stated that recognition of the Oder-Neisse frontier was, for the Poles, 'the starting point of an exchange of views (Meinungsaustausches) between Bonn and Warsaw' (emphasis supplied).

This statement by Willman is the more surprising as Trybuna Ludu (January 22) -- as quoted by Radio Warsaw -- stated subsequently and quite explicitly that the recognition of the frontier 'is not a pre-condition for this political exchange of views.' In order not to leave any doubt on this point, the paper explained that such recognition is a 'starting point for the opening of a process of normalization of relations' between the two countries (emphasis supplied).

Restrained criticism of Willy Brandt's report on the state of the nation prevailed in the article, but there were also positive accents; the mixture was reflected in the title: 'Realism and Illusions.' However, this time it was Walter Ulbricht who was given full credit for 'realism' (in his press conference on January 19), while Brandt was said to have stopped 'halfway (polowiczny) in his appraisal of the realities' and to entertain 'illusions' (with respect to the 'vision of national reunification').

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A similar mixture of praise and criticism was to be found in whatever excerpts have thus far become available of an article in the Moscow Pravda (January 22) by Polish Foreign Minister Stefan Jedrychowski. Brandt's statements, Jedrychowski said, 'undoubtedly contain new elements, which give evidence of the possibility of a more realistic approach by the new West German government to the situation in Europe and to questions of peace and a decrease of tension.' However, Jedrychowski found that the FRG government declaration and subsequent statements by West German government officials 'contain many reservations and stipulations which have a very important bearing on the normalization of West Germany's relations with the socialist countries.' The Polish Foreign Minister warned that 'these reservations and stipulations could act as some sort of loophole for forcing through old policies.'

While on the whole the Polish media preferred to refrain from adding their own comments on the Ulbricht press conference, Trybuna Ludu felt obliged to return to the subject on January 23. Here again Brandt was said to have made 'half a step forward in acknowledging the existence of the second German state,' but he did not have the courage to take a full step, i.e., 'the recognition of the GDR according to the principles of international law.' This full recognition of the GDR, Trybuna Ludu continued, is part and parcel of the recognition of the status quo, which in turn is a 'general premise for the regulation and actual normalization of relations of the GFR with all socialist states.'

On the same day (January 23), Zolnierz Wolnosci condemned what it called 'the violation of the status of West Berlin' by the FRG. The military daily referred to the meetings in West Berlin of a number of Bundestag committees. The same subject was raised the day before by Zycie Warszawy. 'West Berlin is not a part of the German Federal Republic,' the Warsaw daily stressed. The debates of the Bundestag committees in West Berlin 'are by no means a guarantee of the sincerity of the intentions which Chancellor Brandt propounds in his Eastern policy,' Zycie Warszawy concluded.

However, the Polish media did not take up and elaborate on the statement made by Paul Verner, SED Politburo member and CC Secretary, at a celebration in Warsaw of the 25th anniversary of the liberation of the Polish capital on January 16. Verner, who came to Warsaw as a representative of East Berlin, said:

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A recognition by the West German government of the existing frontiers, and among them of the frontier between the two German states, as well as of the Oder-Neisse border, and also an establishment by the Bonn government of normal relations with the GDR, by recognizing its equal status on the basis of international law, would serve best the interests of (all) nations as well as the interests of peace and of European security. However, instead of conducting a policy based on reality and recognizing the present status quo in Europe, the SPD-FDP government in Bonn continues -- as can be concluded from the speech Brandt, the Social-Democratic Federal Chancellor, delivered in the Bundestag -- to be guided by the same nationalistic concepts which guided Adenauer's and Kiesinger's policies. A policy which aims at driving a wedge between the socialist countries and attempts to sow discord among them has failed in the past and it is doomed to even greater failure in the future, when faced by the unity and cohesion of the community of the socialist nations.

It is interesting -- and possibly significant -- that the above text, as broadcast by Radio Warsaw on January 16, was slightly 'edited' by Trybuna Ludu the next day. The passage, 'nationalistic concepts which guided Adenauer's and Kiesinger's policies,' was replaced by 'old concepts.'

2. A Soviet Speech Censored

Not only did the Poles slightly doctor a speech by an East German representative to the Warsaw anniversary celebrations (see above); they also heavily censored a whole passage of the speech delivered on the same occasion by General Ivan Pavlovsky, Soviet First Deputy Minister of Defense. As is known, historians, and not only some in Poland, put in doubt Soviet explanations why the Red Army stopped at the eastern bank of the Vistula in 1944, while Warsaw rose in what was to become one of the most tragic incidents of World War II. Apparently concerned about good Polish-Soviet relations, Pavlovsky once again presented his, Soviet, version of the event. Radio Warsaw (January 16) quoted him as follows:

In the fall of 1944, we did not succeed in forcing the Vistula and liberating Warsaw. The Hitlerite command had resolved at all costs to hold the strategic defense line along the banks of the Vistula.

The Nazis considered the particularly well fortified region of Warsaw to be a main strongpoint of their Central European bulwark and a key to the gates of Berlin. All this made it necessary for the Red Army command to require

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sufficient time to arrange a concentration of new forces and carefully to prepare a new Vistula-Oder operation, whose strategic and political objective was to conclude liberating the Polish nation from the oppression of the fascist invaders and to help it in the creation of a strong, independent and democratic state.

Neither this passage nor a number of the preceding ones, dealing with the thorny problem of the Warsaw Uprising and Red Army operations in the summer of 1944, were suppressed by Trybuna Ludu and the daily press on January 17.

3. New Ambassador to Bulgaria

Jerzy Szyszko has been appointed ambassador to Bulgaria by the Council of State, Radio Warsaw announced on January 14.

According to a short biographical PAP note (Trybuna Ludu of the same date), the new ambassador was born in 1923 in the locality of Kamienica near (east of) Brzesc on the River Bug; he is of peasant origin. During the war, as an officer of the First Polish Army (formed in the USSR) he took part in the campaign which liberated Warsaw and Szczecin, and in the Battle of Berlin. He occupied several 'responsible' positions in state administration in the Recovered Territories. As regards his education, it was stated that he was an economist, but no details were given. He joined the foreign trade service in 1951, where one of his jobs was to act as an 'expert' in the Comecon secretariat in Moscow. Since 1962 he has been the director of a department in the Ministry of Foreign Trade. It was stressed that he is a member of the PUWP.

Szyszko replaces Ryszard Nieszporek who was appointed to Sofia in October, 1964 (see Polish SR, RFER, 13 October 1964).

Correction to Polish SR/5, RFER, 21 January 1970:

Page 2, last sentence should read: His attitude to the Dutch, or for that matter Belgian, dissidents can hardly be much different.