

TODAY ABROAD

by Joseph Clark

The Debate of French And Polish Communists

A DEBATE of far-reaching importance has been going on between the Polish and French Communists. Even before the events which brought Wladyslaw Gomulka back to leadership the French Communists were critical of the independent line being followed in Poland, especially the democratization process.

A high point was reached after the report by Gomulka to the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party on Oct. 20. This was the report which became the program of the Polish Communists in the fight to save socialism in their country.

Gomulka's report was widely republished all over the world. L'Unita in Rome devotes two full pages to the text. But l'Humanite did not publish it. When letters came to l'Humanite inquiring why this speech by Gomulka appeared elsewhere but not in l'Humanite, a reply appeared Nov. 3 in a speech by Party leader Etienne Fajon. Fajon wrote:

"L'Humanite did not publish the report of Comrade Gomulka because several passages in it contradicted the theses democratically worked out by our congress." (The French C.P. Congress.)

The passages in Gomulka's report to which the French Communist leaders took special ex-

ception concerned the Poznan events. They are worth quoting at length because they help explain, in my opinion, why the Polish Communists were successful in the fight to save socialism and the Hungarian Communists subsequently failed. Gomulka said:

"The working class recently gave a painful lesson to the Party leadership and the Government. In seizing the strike weapon and in demonstrating in the streets on the Black Thursday last June, the Poznan workers shouted in a powerful voice: Enough! This cannot go on any longer! Turn back from the false road. The working class has never resorted to the strike, as a weapon of struggle for its rights, in a thoughtless manner. Particularly now, in People's Poland, which is governed in its name and in the name of all working people, this step was not taken by the working class thoughtlessly. It is obvious that their cup was overflowing. And one can never exceed the measure with impunity.

The Poznan workers did not protest against People's Poland, against Socialism, when they went out into the streets of the city. They protested against the evil which was widespread in our social system and which was painfully felt also by them, against the distortions of the fundamental principles of Socialism which is their idea.

"THE WORKING class has connected the idea of Socialism with all its hopes for a better life. It has fought for Socialism from the first days of its conscious life. And when the course of history made it possible for its representatives to assume the reins of Government in Poland, the working class devoted all of its enthusiasm and all its forces to implementing the idea of Socialism. The working class is our class, our unflinching strength. The working class is ourselves. Without it, that is, without the confidence of the working class, each of us could not in fact represent anything more than this own person.

"The clumsy attempt to present the painful Poznan tragedy as the work of imperialist agents and provocateurs was very naive politically. There can always and everywhere be active agents and provocateurs. But never and nowhere can they determine the attitude of the working class. If agents and provocateurs were able to inspire the working class to action, the enemies of People's Poland, the enemies of Socialism would have a much easier task and could easily attain their goals. But the point is that this is not so.

"THERE was a time in Poland when forces hostile to Socialism, often directed by foreign centers serving non-Polish interests, had a really widespread underground organization. There was a time when the People's
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Government in Poland was attacked with arms and defended itself with arms, where hundreds and thousands of our Party members, soldiers and civil servants were killed. This was a time of severity whose traces have not yet until this day completely disappeared from human hearts and feelings. This was in the first years of the construction of Peoples Poland.

"But in those days, so difficult for the People's Poland, no agents and no underground organization, despite favorable conditions, succeeded or was able to make a breach in the ranks of the working class, to penetrate politically any section of the working class. For the working class could not be the leading and most progressive section of the nation if reactionary forces were able to find support in its ranks. Agents, provocateurs or reactionaries never have been the inspiration of the working class, they are not and never will be.

"THE causes of the Poznan tragedy and of the profound dissatisfaction of the entire working class are to be found in ourselves, in the leadership of the

Party, in the Government. The inflammable materials were accumulated for years. The six-year economic plan, advertised in the past with great energy as a new stage of the high growth in living standards, disappointed the hopes of the broad working masses. . . ."

In his reply to Gomulka, covering two pages in l'Humanite, Fajon said Gomulka is wrong when he calls it naive to blame the workers' revolt on "imperialist agents and provocateurs." Fajon says: "it is our opinion that these forces played the major role."

Gomulka, however, made a detailed analysis of what went wrong and how to prevent reactionaries from utilizing the difficulties in Poland. He noted: "It was necessary to tell the workers the truth about the past and the present. There is no escaping from the truth."

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