

THE POLISH ELECTIONS

AN OVERWHELMING majority of the Polish people have endorsed the aims of the October upheaval in Poland. They rejected appeals of reactionaries to abstain in the elections or cross out Communist candidates.

The Polish people have thereby vindicated the democratic changes urged by the Communists headed by Gomulka in October. Perhaps the outstanding lesson of these elections is that socialism is strengthened by democracy, as this paper pointed out during the historic October events.

There were some in Poland who warned that an expansion of democratic rights, and stress on an independent path for Poland, would open the doors for reactionary foes of socialism to come back to power. But the Polish events proved that democracy is the best weapon against reaction. And by placing their reliance on their own working class the Polish Communists advanced the cause and good name of socialism.

Still another contention of the Polish Communists that has been supported is that Polish independence and security requires friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union and China.

An outstanding feature of the Polish elections was the cooperation between the Catholic Church and the Communists. This refutes the notion that socialism is a barrier to religious freedom. There are deep ideological differences between various religions and also between religious doctrine and socialist philosophy. But just as there can be coexistence among nations with different social systems, there can and must be coexistence between religion and socialism within a country.

Many commentators reporting the Polish elections indicated that the possibilities for friendship and cooperation between Poland and America have been increased. This is good for both countries. It is good for the cause of peace and friendship among different peoples and systems even with competing views.

Peace can be strengthened by expanded Polish-American trade. Credits to help lift the Polish living standards will also benefit American business. Economic cooperation is a two-way street with mutual benefits.