

## THE STRIKE IN LODZ

THE NEW YORK TIMES, rarely a friend of American strikers, shed editorial tears yesterday for a group of strikers—in Poland. The newspaper which almost invariably opposed the legitimate demands of New York's transport workers is now deeply concerned about transport workers—in Lodz. The newspaper, which does not demand the repeal of the Condon-Wadlin law, depriving New York municipal transport workers of the right to strike, oozes sympathy for transport workers 4,000 miles away where, incidentally, there is no Condon-Wadlin law.

But ignoring for the moment the crude propaganda efforts of the Times and upper-crust circles for which it speaks, it is clear that the Lodz strike represented some real problems in Socialist Poland.

There is general agreement that a serious economic situation was at the bottom of the strike. With remarkable frankness, the Polish government and the local authorities agreed on the economic facts. (Contrast that with the monumental lying of our profit-swollen monopolies when faced with union demands).

Poland is faced with a series of grave economic problems that arise not out of the socialist system but as a legacy of the past 18 years. There is the devastation of World War II which, despite enormous reconstruction, has not yet been fully overcome; the wrong economic policies and wrong Soviet-Polish relationships in the pre-Gomulka period; the difficulties inherent in creating a giant new capital structure, principally from its own resources and with some aid from the Soviet Union, and the undoubted resistance of some elements in the country to socialist construction.

Under any circumstances the building of a vast productive machinery is a tremendously difficult process. Under Poland's special historic problems, it becomes unusually complex, involving heroic work and discipline by Poland's working people.

In this situation it is not to be wondered at—and certainly nothing to panic any socialist-minded worker—that sharp differences may develop, even to the point of strikes, about the apportioning of the national product. How much for wages? How much for re-investment in the productive system—to bear fruit later in higher living standards for all?

These are knotty questions, and the Gomulka government is addressing itself to them. But the context is totally different from what it is in capitalist nations. In Poland there are no duPonts, Rockefellers and Morgans raking in billions in profits. The nation as a whole owns the productive machinery and the government plans the allocation of the total product.

None of this is by way of condoning the use of force against strikers. But it should help to place the matter in its proper setting. On this point, too, there has been wilful distortion and an effort on the part of our commercial press to liken the Lodz strike to the tragic events of Poznan last year. This is completely false, as even John MacCormac, the Times Warsaw correspondent, indicated in his dispatch yesterday. Wrote MacCormac:

**"In this case, from the beginning, many of the older workers were not enthusiastic and the strike did not seem to command the sympathy of other Lodz workers . . . the people seemed nervous lest the situation get out of hand. This morning, when the street cars started running again, they seemed relieved.**

**"At no time was there any clash between strikers and Polish Army units. During the whole period of the strike not a shot was fired. There were two fights with the police, one Monday and another last night after a majority of strikers had decided to return to work and the minority tried to prevent their taking streetcars out of the barns."**

The Polish workingclass will, we are confident, find its way out of its difficulties and continue to march on the Polish road to socialism. It will undoubtedly continue to receive aid from the other Socialist countries and particularly from the Soviet Union, with whom its relations have been strengthened in the last year.

For American workers these Polish events are of the greatest significance. While the State Department, the CIA and the New York Times seek only to make political profit out of Poland's difficulties, it is to the interest of the American people to take a basically different view. The American people, who want peaceful co-existence should press for a policy of increased loans to the Polish government and for a widened system of mutually beneficial trade relationships.

Such a policy is in the interest of the American people and in the interest of world peace and comity.