

TODAY ABROAD

By A. B. Magil



Gomulka's Report On Polish Situation

THE SENTENCING of three former Polish secret police officials to long prison terms for brutal and terroristic crimes against Polish citizens underscores the many changes that have taken place in Poland in the past year.

Some of these changes were discussed by Wladyslaw Gomulka, first secretary of the United Workers Party, at the 10th plenary meeting of the party's Central Committee in Warsaw Oct. 24-26. A summary of Gomulka's report is now available in English translation.

Gomulka noted the fact that the Central Committee meeting in Oct. 1956 (the one at which he was elected first secretary) had changed the situation and the political atmosphere in the country.

"First of all," he said, "the community lost its feeling of apprehension because socialist legality was being rigorously observed."

He declared that "the attitude of the working class during the whole period of the crisis suffered by the party, and the results of the January (1957) elections to the Sejm (parliament) had shown that capitalism as a system of government had been rejected by the working masses. The masses demanded changes within socialism, the proper application of the principles of proletarian internationalism and not the replacement of socialism by capitalism."

The Polish Communist leader summarized some of the main changes as follows:

"Political life is open. The press enjoys the right to criticize the activities of the state authorities. In the life of the state and nation the Sejm was restored to its proper place, as provided for in the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic.

"Trade unions, cooperatives,

and social and cultural organizations are enjoying full democratic rights. They are self-governing. The executives of these organizations are elected by free ballots. Fundamental matters of state policy are decided through inter-party consultations and by agreement between our party, the United Peasant Party and the Democratic Party."

From Gomulka's report we also learn of the remarkable rise in real wages in socialist Poland: "... in comparison with 1955, for the average monthly wage of all employed in the first six months of 1957, one can buy 25.7 percent more bread and flour; 61 percent more lard (after the recent reduction in price); 24.3 percent more sausage; nearly the same amount of butter (since the recent rise in price); 61.8 percent more rice; 25.8 percent more sugar; 90.6 percent more beans; 21.5 percent more milk; 12 percent more eggs; and 25.5 percent more potatoes."

He also cited similar sharp increases in purchasing power in regard to various other consumer items.

However, he added: "The most dangerous threat to our economy is the fact that the wage increases are not coupled with a corresponding increase in output." He emphasized the seriousness of this situation despite the fact that in the first three quarters of this year the value of industrial production was 8.6 percent higher than in the same period last year.

"Workers' councils contributed to this increase in many factories," Gomulka said. "Workers' self government, introduced last November, can in spite of all unavoidable teething troubles, be said to have successfully passed the test. Up to Sept. 15 workers' councils had

been established in 4,316 enterprises out of a total of about 10,800 enterprises in which they can be established."

AT THE CENTRAL Committee meetings in October, 1956, and May, 1957, Gomulka directed the main fire at the sectarian and dogmatic elements in the party who were seeking to prevent change. At the latest meeting he emphasized the threat from the other direction. At the same time he called for eliminating from the party both its sectarian and revisionist wings.

"There is no doubt," Gomulka said, "that dogmatism and sectarianism were the breeding grounds which favored an impetuous growth of revisionism, as they always do. There were some in our ranks, and there are still some who, in the depth of their hearts very often believe that revisionism contributes to the liquidation of dogmatism."

"This view is utterly wrong. You cannot cure influenza, even in its most serious form, with tuberculosis. Dogmatism cannot be cured with revisionism. The alignment of forces in our party shows clearly that an effective struggle against revisionism will considerably facilitate our victory over dogmatism."

"In conducting a struggle for the recuperation of the party from both diseases, we have to strike first of all at the chief source of its weakness, at revisionism and liquidationism."

Gomulka also stated that the "dogmatic-sectarian attitude and the longing for a return to the old methods can only separate the party from the broad working masses, and are thus objectively playing into the hands of forces hostile to socialism."

Pointing out that the 1,300,000 members of the party represented a growth in quantity at the expense of quality, Gomulka called for ousting from its ranks all who were politically or morally unfit.

Gomulka didn't minimize the fact that socialism in Poland, for all the progress it has made, faces enormous problems. His realistic, critical report, based on the concrete conditions in that country, ought to help the Polish working class weather the storms ahead and steer the way into calmer waters.