

British-Based 'Dissidents' Threaten Destabilization In Poland

The Polish dissident group known as the Workers Defense Committee (WDC) has divided into two sections, one of them christened the "Committee for Social-Political Self-Management." The new organization, created by individuals closely linked to the London controllers of the WDC, is gearing up to catalyze popular unrest.

Its existence was revealed last week to Western correspondents in Warsaw by dissident sources who simultaneously reported a rash of work stoppages by Silesian coal miners and Lodz textile workers protesting the short supply of food. A Polish government spokesman denied the strike stories.

The "Social-Political Self-Management" group has announced it will struggle for the independence of the trade union movement, as a "democratized" alternative to the present party-government administration. To peddle its "self-management" doctrine — the term is best known as applied to the Yugoslav "self-management" way to a decentralized and increasingly anarchistic economy — the group offers workers a newspaper called *Robotnik* (the Worker).

That this publication shares its name with that of the exiled Polish Socialist Party, now issued from London, is of little surprise; the "Self-Management" leaders include former Socialist Party member Edward Lipinski and Jacek Kuron, who both maintain close contact with the WDC's exiled godfathers Professors Leszek Kolakowski and Wlodimierz Brus of All Souls College at Oxford.

The other WDC splinter will concentrate on "human rights" issues, with a religious slant indicating coordination with the Catholic Church.

Rash of Incidents

Other reports from Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe augment the pattern of unrest instigated by British-based networks. *Der Spiegel* magazine in West Germany reported a proliferation of Polish dissident groups other than the WDC fractions, including a "Student Committee for Solidarity" intended to "fight the monopoly of the state student organization," and a "Polish Independence Movement" which will issue memoranda and programmatic statements "from time to time."

No sooner did the dissident-coordinating body Amnesty International receive the Nobel Peace Prize last week than it published a report alleging "thousands" were being held as political prisoners in East Germany. Then in East Berlin, during Oct. 9 national holiday celebrations, students attending a rock concert rioted. Western journalists present reported that the youths were intoxicated, but played up their alleged chants of

"Russians out, Russians out." An East German official in Bonn, however, would not discount the possibility that provocateurs from Maoist groups in West Berlin had sparked the demonstration.

Food Problem the Target

The Polish operations are designed to capitalize on trouble which may arise from a tight food supply there this fall and winter. A Central Committee plenum of the ruling Polish United Workers Party currently reviewing economic policy has just designated a special government committee to deal with "problems of the internal market."

Foremost among these will be maintaining food deliveries to urban areas, jeopardized by the fourth consecutive year of bad harvest in Poland. Severe floods which hit Poland this past summer dealt a two-year setback to food production expansion plans, according to Polish Premier Piotr Jaroszewicz. Coming on the heels of three years of drought and grain shortfall, severe slaughtering of livestock herds (which are now down to the levels of four years ago), and the necessity of importing 7 million tons of grain and fodder from the capitalist sector on short-term credit in 1976 alone, this year's weather damage is especially serious. The weekly *Polityka* reported in September, "We are having difficulties in supplying the population with meat and meat products... problems are being encountered in accomplishing the economic maneuvers." Poland is expected to be one of the world's biggest grain importers again this year.

Other austerity measures have been instituted this fall in Poland, including mandatory curtailment of heat consumption and electricity use.

Economic Maneuver

The adjustment known as the "economic maneuver" is a drastic reduction of heavy industry investments in Poland's current five-year economic plan for 1976-80. It aims to bring industrial investment to a zero growth-rate by 1980, for the sake of two alternative priorities: First, building production for export, to pay the country's convertible currency debt. Second, boosting consumer goods output in order to reduce the chance of political destabilization through popular unrest.

The altered five-year plan calls for an 80 percent increase in exports, and no growth of imports at all! The targets are unlikely; the collapse of Poland's export markets in the depressed West makes its success in raising cash more and more dubious. Already this year, Foreign Trade Minister Jerzy Olszewski announced that the 1977 goal of only 1 percent growth in imports is being

overrun, while exports have failed to rise at the planned 15 percent annual rate.

That more dangerous internal adjustments are ahead is apparent. Party leader Edward Gierek currently has a special team of economic advisors working on three main topics: a plan to link wages to productivity in the construction industry, distribution of resources among the provinces, and decentralization of the steel industry. All three emulate the "Yugoslav way" of decentralizing the economy for the sake of the "flexibility" that Wall Street lenders want.

Gierek Acts On Bad Advice

Party chief Edward Gierek focused his address to the Polish United Workers Party's current plenum on agriculture and foreign trade. The main theme he struck,

however, was the "coresponsibility" of officials at all levels, as well as workers, for pulling through the austerity crunch. To "share" the crisis, the new government committee will include prominent trade-union representatives.

In putting out this "soft" approach, Gierek is clearly listening to advice from party central committee member Rakowski, editor of the weekly *Polityka* and often a conduit into Poland for what the rotten wing of the Western social democracies has to say. Rakowski, warning in a September editorial about "the edginess of the population," plugged as a solution "a system where employees feel themselves truly comanagers." The similarity with the dissident "Self-Management" committee's campaign is hard to miss.

Peasant Agriculture Drains Polish Economy

The production of food in Poland is a labor-intensive, historically retarded endeavor, whose uncertainties and failures underlie the country's current economic crisis and the strong potential for serious political unrest there.

A chronic "scissors crisis" between the nearly feudal agricultural sector and industry which in some technologies (such as mining) has made groundbreaking advances, has fed crisis after crisis in the past three decades, including the toppling of the Polish governments in 1956 and 1970. Now, new rounds of agricultural crisis compounded by the results of six years of heavy Polish borrowing in the West to push ahead the country's consumer and export sectors, have set in motion the destruction of Poland's industrial base.

Poland has often been extolled as the last bastion of private agriculture in Eastern Europe. A 1974 report to the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress called it "the most productive" in the area. Yet Poland is the one country in Eastern Europe where food shortages severe enough to send political shock waves to the top of the party and government have occurred. And the reason is not merely the diversion of Poland's hams to U.S. tables in the interest of raising cash.

Feudal Land Tenure

Over one-third of the Polish workforce is employed in farming, even more than the USSR's high 28.5 percent and the 14.2 percent and 10.9 percent, respectively, in neighboring Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic. Less than 5 percent of the United States' workforce is headed for agriculture. Eighty percent of the arable land is held by small farmers, in tiny strips inherited from the feudal land holding patterns of the last century. Two-thirds of the peasant farms are smaller than 12 acres, and half of those are smaller than five. The daily *Zycie Warszawy* reported earlier this year that fields measuring five meters by 10 kilometers were not unheard of in one district.

When most of Eastern Europe was collectivized under Soviet direction, in the period immediately after World War II, a mere 10 percent of Polish agricultural land undersent the transformation. Even this was undone a decade later, when the crisis of October 1956, fanned by the efforts of British and U.S. intelligence agencies, brought Wladislaw Gomulka to power. Gomulka had been a chief proponent of the Bukharin faction's policy against collectivization in the late 1940s (he was jailed at the time on other counts, but the policy prevailed). In 1957, the number of collective farms was slashed from 10,600 to 1,700 and the land reverted to peasant ownership.

Justifying the policy, Gomulka stated that his regime would not try to loosen the peasant's grip on Polish agriculture nor challenge the peasant's world outlook: "The road to setting up a vast network of cooperative farms in Poland's countryside is a long one, and quantitative development of producer cooperation cannot be planned because, on the basis of voluntary entry in a cooperative, this would amount to planning the growth of human consciousness — and that cannot be planned."

This established a pattern of government propitiation and coaxing of the peasants, a pattern that still holds. Boxed in by its bargain with the peasant, the government has reduced its agricultural reform policy to a series of gimmicks, always designed to win over the peasant to just a little bit more mechanization or collectivization, without breaking the pact — that is, without triggering peasant slaughter of livestock or refusal to deliver grain to the state for urban distribution. Gomulka tried to encourage "cooperativization" through the machine-sharing Agricultural Circles; or, as in a 1958 speech, hinted that the future of Polish agriculture lay in socialized (collectivized) farming after all. The prompt response of the peasants was to slaughter their animals, believing them about to be confiscated. The Gierek