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POLAND'S TRADE UNIONS

A Report on What They are Thinking and Doing

INSTITUTE OF
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

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This is the second release on trade unions in Poland, issued by the Polish Research and Information Service. The first, released in August 1947, was a basic report about the structure of trade unions, their role and their activities. The present release brings the information up to date by focusing on the second post-war trade union convention in Poland.

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SECOND POST-WAR TRADE UNION CONVENTION IN POLAND

The second post-war convention of Polish trade unions opened in Warsaw on June 1, 1949. Despite the heat, Warsaw lived for and with that convention and the city streets in their Sunday best of flags and banners greeted the delegates. The 1803 delegates, 373 of them women, met in Polytechnic Hall. They were elected by Poland's textile mills and foundries, its mines and its universities, and they represented Poland's 31 unions and 3,600,000 organized workers. Also present were fraternal delegates from 18 other countries.

The agenda included a review of trade union accomplishments during the four years following liberation, discussion of a new constitution, the election of officers, and plans for future work. Proceedings of the convention indicate that it was not devoted to an exchange of compliments but rather to an evaluation of work accomplished and criticism of deficiencies and weaknesses which still exist. The advances made by the trade unions in improving workers' material and cultural conditions, in devising and proposing social legislation, and in rebuilding Poland, were reported. On the other hand, bureaucracy in every form received a verbal thrashing from almost all the delegates.

The convention defined the role of trade unions in a people's democracy such as Poland. The union movement is the largest non-party mass organization of the working class, representing the everyday interests of the workers and mobilizing them for the realization of socialism in Poland. Thus, today trade unions speak with a double authority, as guardians of the workers' welfare and as responsible partners in the job of building a society which serves the people.

Members of the Central Council were elected by secret ballot of the delegates. In turn the Council elected its president, vice-president and secretaries. The new president, Aleksander Zawadzki, is a former miner who began work in the pits at the age of thirteen. Long and untiring efforts in the labor movement resulted in his elevation after the war to the post of Governor of the Dabrowa district of Silesia. Subsequently he was chosen Vice Premier of new Poland. However on his election as president of the trade union organization, he resigned as Vice Premier.

THE PRESIDENT OF POLAND APPEARS BEFORE THE CONVENTION

Boleslaw Bierut, the President of Poland, in his address at the trade union convention, declared that the gathering was a triumphant affirmation of labor unity.

"I am greatly moved and happy to be here to greet this second post-war convention of Polish trade unions", President Bierut said. He went on to say: "This convention represents a triumph of organizational unity within the working class. It is an expression of the broadest unity of manual and white-collar workers. But the particular significance of this convention is expressed, not only in the membership figures of 3,600,000 (four times the pre-war number), but above all in the character of the tasks of the unions, in their new role in production, state and society, under the changed conditions of our political, social, and economic systems. This convention should further strengthen the ideological and organizational unity of the working people brought within the ranks of the trade unions. They are mostly made up of manual

and white collar workers without party affiliations. In the capitalist era, they joined unions to protect themselves against exploitation by employers and arbitrary dictation on the part of management, so as to be able to carry on the fight for fundamental rights, such as the eight-hour day, basic social security and prevention of wage cuts ... Now that the power of the capitalists and land-owners has been broken in Poland, the political, material and cultural conditions of the working masses are steadily and systematically improving despite the terrible devastation caused by the Nazi invasion. Today our working people are no longer threatened by unemployment or crises spelling ruin to our overall economy.

"Today no worker may be deprived of medical care for himself or his family. Today, old age or accidents do not condemn a man to death by starvation; legislation adopted by our people's democracy assures every worker adequate care and protection, the scope of which will continue to grow in proportion to our economic progress.

"The main power which kept the standard of living of the masses low, the capitalists who exploited labor, has been eliminated. That is why the rise of the standard of living of the masses today is solely dependent on their own efforts and increased productivity."

In conclusion, President Bierut said: "We say our trade unions should become schools for learning how to govern and how to build a new social system. How are the trade unions to put into practice these lofty social goals? The unions can realize these goals in their daily activities by collectively solving the concrete problems connected with production, community life and the needs and difficulties of every member. Care for the individual, his working conditions, his social education, his creative activity, his personal and family problems -- all these should characterize the daily relationships in trade unions between leaders and the membership."

POLAND'S NEW LABOR LAW

An unprecedented event in the history of Poland occurred when a draft of a labor bill was submitted by the Government to the Trade Union Convention for discussion and approval before it came before the Diet. This procedure, as well as the bill itself, reflect the attitude of the Government and the majority party toward trade unions. They recognize the trade union organization as the unquestioned representative of the working class and as the co-manager of the country's life, prepared to protect and fight for the welfare of the working class.

The new labor law expands the rights of labor and replaces pre-war legislation which limited those rights. It provides for the abolition of all "capitalist regulations still in force which restrict the right of manual and white collar workers to organize in trade unions, which subject union activities to capitalist state supervision, and which further the disruption of the trade union movement (Article 1, Section 2)." The law specifically repeals pre-war provisions which required the registration of unions and which hedged in the scope of trade union activities. The tasks, objectives and scope of trade union activity are now to be determined only by the unions themselves.

The new bill guarantees to "manual and white collar workers the right of association and of active participation in the people's government." The trade

unions are declared to be entitled to a voice in the fields of production, economic planning, industrial safety, housing, vocational education and social welfare. Article 6 gives the Polish Trade Union Federation "the right to appoint representatives to all government bodies and institutions which call for workers' representation" and Article 7 makes it mandatory for all national local and municipal governmental bodies to obtain the opinion of the trade unions before adoption of decisions affecting the interests of workers.

The labor law was passed by the Diet on June 8 and went into effect soon thereafter.

A NEW CONSTITUTION

Polish trade unions will continue to function as non-party organizations of workers in accordance with the new constitution adopted by the Trade Union Convention. This, however, should not be construed to mean that trade unions in Poland are non-political. Polish trade unions will continue to engage in political action, the purpose of which is the building of a socialist system without the exploitation of man by man.

The constitution also establishes other principles on which trade union organization is to be based. One such principle is democratic centralism, in accordance with which union officers are chosen by all members, decisions are made by majority vote, union officers are responsible to those elected to higher office, and all are responsible to the membership. Every member is entitled to take the floor at meetings and has the right to criticize and to demand explanations.

All unions in Poland are now organized on an industrial basis. Thus members employed in one establishment belong to the same union and each union unites workers employed in the same or related industries. The national unions are affiliated with the Trade Union Federation, whose executive organ is the Central Trade Union Council. The Convention of Trade Unions, held every three years, is the highest union authority. (A special convention may be called either by request of three-fourths of the national unions or by a decision of the Central Trade Union Council). Powers of the convention are delegated to the Central Trade Union Council, which consists of 99 members and 33 deputy members elected for three years by delegates using the secret ballot. The members of the Council elect an executive board of 21 members, including a president, three vice-presidents, and three to six secretaries. The Federation constitution also provides for district and county councils whose officers are elected by district and county conventions.

The constitution places great stress on voluntary membership and explicitly states that no one may be forced to belong to a union. Any worker may join or withdraw from a union, in accordance with his own desires. On the other hand, admission of a new member depends upon agreement of the group which the candidate wishes to join. Admission thereby assumes the nature of an approval by the members, rather than a mere formal act of registering and filling out application blanks.

The new constitution also outlines the obligations of union members, these being: (1) to increase the national wealth by disciplined and conscientious work; (2) to protect the national wealth, which is the property of all working people, and to combat waste; (3) to take an active part in union activities; (4) to pay dues regularly and to maintain union discipline.

In addition to this constitution each national union has its own special by-laws, which may be adapted to the needs of its members, but which must not violate the constitution of the Polish Trade Union Federation.

"SMALL PEOPLE COME FIRST"

"The new style in union work means that we must know how to concern ourselves, not only with 'big politics', but also with everyday practice," Aleksander Zawadzki, president-elect of the Central Trade Union Council declared at the convention of Polish trade unions. He went on to say: "It is harder to see and understand so called 'small' problems and 'small' people. No other mass organization is able to see and understand small 'problems' and small 'people' as well as the trade unions. Problems which are small to others are important to those who are concerned with such problems. People who seem 'small' to great politicians are 'big people' as far as the people's government is concerned." Zawadzki then enumerated the names of a number of shockworkers, showing that these famous personalities of the new Poland are "not descendants of 'big' people; they became 'big' people in the people's Poland."

Zawadzki then went on to show what the political tasks of Polish organized labor are. "We must all deeply understand," he said, "that trade unions play a great role in political life by concerning themselves with the everyday problems and conditions of work of the working class ... The defense and protection of the everyday interests of the manual and white collar workers, the fight against injustice and its causes, the fight for the betterment of working and living conditions - these are the main goals and the purposes for which trade unions exist..."

The president-elect then proceeded to tell how working conditions can be improved. "In our system of people's democracy, the trade unions fight for the betterment of working conditions by increasing efficiency, by substituting machinery for heavy labor, by increasing industrial safety and hygiene, by increasing labor productivity, by organizing labor competition, by new methods of work, by organizing mutual exchanges of experience, by enforcing the obligation of management to live up to collective agreements, by fighting absenteeism, by organizing workers' vacations, medical care, maternity and child care, and by organizing industrial and political education for the outstanding members of the working class."

Mr. Zawadzki strongly condemned bureaucracy. "There is one sector in particular on which the trade unions must especially pursue a strong and uncompromising fight. This is the struggle against bureaucracy, against a heartless attitude toward the needs of the workers, against violation or non-observance of collective contracts, against ignorance, clumsiness, lack of class vigilance, conceit and delusions of grandeur, against waste, against violation and sabotage by hidden enemies..."

"We must ask ourselves one basic question: Can we fight the above mentioned menaces ... if we do not mobilize the whole working class for this fight, the non-party majority, if we do not observe union democracy, if we neglect trade union meetings, if we do not learn to reach each worthwhile person?"

After criticizing bureaucratic elements, the President of the CTUC outlined his views of the kind of leaders the labor movement needs. "A union official who does not keep contact with all the problems facing the worker, who has no

sympathy for the everyday concerns of the worker, who forgets that only yesterday he himself was a worker, is not a leader but a bureaucrat," he declared.

A union leader should be distinguished by the following, according to Mr. Zawadzki: "A full knowledge of the role, aims and goals of trade unions in a people's democracy, an ability to understand working and living conditions of trade union members, to listen to their problems and to help solve them, and the ability to learn constantly from party, as well as from non-party workers; the union leader should never take the attitude that because he took over a responsible position he knows it all; he should be guided by the principle that the higher the office, the greater the modesty. The leader should constantly work at self-improvement, should extend his knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, and his knowledge of the labor movement. This will help him to master situations and give him needed confidence when members come with their problems. He will learn not to make empty promises but to explain what can be done and what cannot be done -- what cannot be done now but will be possible later..."

Mr. Zawadzki concluded with the following words:

"Our unions have made a substantial contribution to the rebuilding of our country, to the rise of its economy, to the improvement of the material and cultural well-being of the working class and to its unity. But the failings in our work are still tremendous. However, the fact that we talk about these deficiencies openly is proof of our strength and our assurance that there are no obstacles which our trade unions will not overcome."

EIGHTY-THREE PERCENT OF POLISH LABOR IS ORGANIZED

Today's total trade union membership of 3,566,000 represents almost a four-fold increase over pre-war years. Only seventeen percent of the nation's total working force is still unorganized, with most of the unorganized employed in private enterprise, on farms, or on church estates. The trade union convention voted a new drive to organize the unorganized.

The organized workers belong to thirty-one national unions, as against 36 a year ago. On April 15, 1949, six unions merged into one. Theatrical workers, film workers, musicians, radio workers, and employees of Jewish theatres held a convention at which they decided to merge their groups into a single body. They formed the Union of Cultural and Art Workers.

Professional interests of the various groups will be served by professional societies, but the amalgamated union will represent the economic interests of its membership.

THE CHECK-OFF IS ABOLISHED IN POLAND

The abolition of the check-off of union dues and the substitution of a system of voluntary payments has strengthened union democracy and weakened bureaucratic elements in labor leadership. When the Executive Board of the Trade Union organization recommended setting aside the checkoff system in 1948 it touched off a pro and con discussion. A majority favored the proposal, however. A year's experience has proven that voluntary payments make for a closer link between membership and leadership. The fact that members now pay their dues themselves encourages them to demand more from their unions. Thus the new form of dues payments stimulates trade union democracy and trade union consciousness.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SHOP COMMITTEES

Almost all the conferences held by the Executive Board of trade unions between the first and second post-war conventions have taken up the question of shop committees. This emphasis is tied to the conviction that strong shop committees are indispensable to trade union democracy. The functions of the shop committees include safeguarding the social legislation of the country from violations by management and enforcement of collective bargaining agreements. Managements may hire new employees only with the consent of the shop committees and must consult the committees on firings and layoffs. A new and important function assumed by shop committees since the end of the war is that of participating in the planning of production.

Surveys made by the Executive Board of the trade unions proved that the shop committees played a noteworthy part in improving the material and cultural well-being of the masses, in advancing production, and in developing among workers a socialist attitude toward their work. Such surveys have also revealed that a main shortcoming in the functioning of shop committees is a failure to take advantage of rights to which they are entitled. For example, committees have often neglected to participate sufficiently in the planning of production. Because it is realized that such failings possibly result from the fact that shop committees may be overburdened with other work, the trend is in the direction of developing auxiliary committees to deal with specific problems. Thus the shop committee in many factories is now being assisted by a number of sub-committees set up to handle questions such as production, safety and hygiene, social insurance, etc.

LABOR COMPETITION SPURS PRODUCTION

Labor competition was a major factor in lifting production above planned figures for 1948, according to the speech of Hilary Minc, Vice-Premier of Poland, before the First Congress of the United Polish Workers Party in December of that year.

The formal basis of labor competition is voluntary agreement between individual workers or between teams to enter into such competition. Starting as a rank and file movement, these competitions were transformed into a mass effort by the trade unions which saw in them the best means of bettering the living conditions of workers, the main function of trade unions. In capitalist Poland the most effective weapon for bettering conditions was the strike. Today, however, when trade unions are the co-managers of Poland's economy, it is unnecessary to resort to strike actions. Increased production resulting from labor competition is followed in higher wages and better social, cultural and educational services for workers.

The emphasis in the competitions is on inventiveness, on the use of new production methods and techniques which diminish physical effort and increase productivity. The working people of Poland know that labor competition does not mean the maximum use of the worker but the maximum use of the machine.

NO DIVISIONS ALONG RELIGIOUS LINES

Aleksander Zawadzki, the newly elected head of the Polish Trade Unions, was interviewed by the editor of the "Unionist", organ of the Central Trade Union Council, on the attitude of trade unions to the recent Vatican decree of ex-communication. Asked how the trade union membership would react to the decree, Mr. Zawadzki answered:

"First of all, we will not allow religious controversies to be brought into our trade union ranks. We will not allow our members to be divided into believers and non-believers. We trade unionists, workers and intellectuals, party and non-party people, believers and non-believers, act as brothers in our trade unions because we are united by the will to build a socialist Poland...

"The only difference between believers and non-believers in trade unions is the following: The believer, if he desires to do so, goes to church on Sundays and holidays, and in that way can convince himself that the government does not fight religion. The non-believer, on the other hand, will find other means of satisfying his spiritual needs. However, at work and in social responsibilities the believer and non-believer stand together..."

VACATIONS FOR WORKERS

New vacation facilities in Poland are now available, not only to workers, but also to their families. Vacation homes for workers have been developed on a large scale since the war, but because of lack of space, their families could not be provided for until this year. The first family project consists of three hundred bungalows, each bungalow designed to house a vacationing family. Co-operative stores sell foodstuffs and other commodities at low prices to those who wish to do their own housekeeping. Others eat at a central dining hall which serves low priced meals. The project also includes a child-care center where parents may leave their children for part of the day.

It is hoped that the Vacation Fund will be able to build more facilities of this type which are in great demand, especially among women workers. Meanwhile 624 rest homes located in Poland's best resorts serve 500,000 workers each year. The presence of workers in such places before the war was unimaginable. Zakopane, Krynica and other resorts were patronized only by the wealthy. Today they are filled with factory and office workers.

The worker who goes to a vacation home pays about one-sixth to one-tenth of the actual cost of his upkeep, the difference being covered by the Vacation Fund (maintained jointly by the trade unions and industry) and by his employer. In 1948 two rates were established: Workers earning up to 15,000 zloty monthly pay 54 zloty each day; that is, they pay as their share of vacation costs less than 14 cents per day at the official rate of exchange, while those whose salaries are above 15,000 pay 150 zloty, or about 38 cents.

The trade unions attempt to make the vacation places enjoyable as well as comfortable. One of the ways of accomplishing this is by offering prizes for those homes which provide the best food, entertainment, sports and cultural activities. The 1949 prize has not been announced as yet, but the 1948 prize went to the "Golden View" home in the Karpacz resort of Silesia.

POLAND GRANTS LONGEST MATERNITY LEAVES WITH PAY

Credit for Poland's practice of granting longer maternity leave with pay than any other country is shared by the Women's Division of the Polish Trade Union Federation and the government. It was the Women's Division which first approached the government with proposals to broaden social legislation covering women. The law of April 28, 1948 lengthened maternity leaves from 8 weeks to 12 weeks. Thus, pregnant women today are entitled to 12 weeks leave with full pay, 8 weeks of which must be taken after confinement.

The same law also makes it mandatory for a pregnant woman employed at exhausting work to be transferred to an easier job at the beginning of the sixth month of her pregnancy. However, her wages may not be lower than her average monthly earnings during the three months preceding her transfer. In addition, women may not be fired during pregnancy for any reason whatsoever.

The Women's Division is also responsible for the fact that municipal nurseries now give preference to children of working mothers. Working women who are employed in small establishments without nursery facilities use such facilities. However, the Women's Division has been heading a drive for separate nurseries in small enterprises employing less than 100 women. Such nurseries also accept children of mothers not employed in the plant, if vacancies exist. (Enterprises with more than 100 women workers are required by law to operate nurseries).

Besides pressing for advanced social legislation, the Women's Division, together with women's sections on lower levels of the trade union structure, has done a highly effective job in activating and educating women workers. More and more women are being elected to shop committees and other trade union bodies. As for the educational sector, great emphasis is put on eliminating illiteracy among working women since their illiteracy rate remains higher than that of the men.

There are about one million organized women in Poland. They predominate in the clothing industry, where they constitute 72% of all workers, in health services (60%), teaching (59.8%), and in the textile industry (58.8%).

WORKERS BELOW TWENTY ONE YEARS OF AGE WORK 28 HOURS AND ARE PAID FOR 46 HOURS

In nationalized industries, trade union youth sections have met with no difficulties in enforcing legislation protecting working youth. This was in contrast to private industry and small shops which still try to continue pre-war exploitation of youngsters.

The youth sections safeguard the right of workers below 21 years of age to receive 18 hours off for the purpose of attending school. Polish legislation requires that young workers may not be employed more than 28 hours per week for which they receive 46 hours pay. The youth sections have also been planning special programs for young people such as special vacation homes and weekend excursions.

EXHIBIT ON TRADE UNIONS IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WARSAW

An exhibit which would have been unimaginable in a leading museum of Poland during pre-war days recently opened in the National Museum of Warsaw. This exhibit, shown for the first time in May 1949, was devoted to the accomplishments of the Polish trade union movement. The rise of real wages in Poland, the growth of trade union maternal and child care services, and the progress made in organizing cultural programs for workers was effectively represented by means of graphs, charts, and photographs. On July 12 the exhibit left Warsaw to start on a tour of all Polish industrial centers.

TRADE UNION LIBRARIES, LECTURES AND COURSES FLOURISH IN POLAND

The 5,000 trade union libraries form 26% of all libraries in Poland. Most of these libraries are located in trade union social and recreation halls, "swietlice", of which there are 7,000 spread throughout Poland.

The educational, cultural and recreational life of the workers is centered in these "swietlice" which offer reading facilities, lectures and courses. During 1947 and the first half of 1948 there were 59,000 lectures organized by trade unions, with an overall attendance of 4,548,000. The chief problem for those planning that mass lecturing project was not attendance but a shortage of lecturers.

Because they are the largest Polish mass organizations, it is generally recognized in Poland that the trade unions are best adapted to carry out programs for the eradication of illiteracy. Other courses sponsored by the unions include the history of Poland, the history of the labor movement, economics, and principles of Marxism and Leninism. In addition to courses of this type, there are special three-month leadership schools for active union workers.

Trade union education in Poland has its goals clearly defined: - a socialist education which brings the fruits of culture to the masses and which fosters among them feelings of international solidarity and pride in their people's Poland.

THEATRE AND MUSIC APPRECIATION IS FOSTERED BY TRADE UNIONS

Tickets at discounts for theatres, concerts, the opera and movies, which are made available to trade union members in Poland, have created a new audience. In contrast to pre-war Poland when workers were hardly seen in legitimate theatres and concert halls because tickets were too expensive for them, workers today constitute a substantial part of the general audience.

The availability of reduced-price tickets is one of the many ways in which cultural opportunities are opened to workers. Artistic creativeness is greatly encouraged by trade unions who have organized amateur theatre, dance groups and choruses. Since 1945, 120,000 workers comprising 4,800 amateur groups gave 71,000 performances, with an attendance of 16,200,000. Behind these figures is a tremendous nationwide effort by such amateur actors. They must read the plays, study them, learn about the authors and their works, and acquaint themselves with the period in which they were written. In this manner many thousands of people are brought under the influence of good literature.

Interest in good music is also rising among workers, thanks to the efforts of the unions, which have organized classes in instrumental music and music appreciation for workers and their families. Especially talented young people discovered in such classes are given scholarships to conservatories by the unions. And of course one must mention that there is a very fine workers' opera in Wroclaw which gives performances throughout the country.

TRADE UNIONS CONSULTED ON NEW SOCIAL LEGISLATION

The formation of a new commission of experts to reform and unify social insurance has been recently announced in Poland. Well represented on the Commission are the trade unions, which since liberation have had a growing voice in fashioning new social legislation.

Unions helped to introduce the law of October 28, 1947, which established a new type of social insurance, the family bonus. This bonus provided for money allotments to workers for each dependent in his family. Unions also conducted a campaign to free workers from the burden of paying social insurance taxes. As a result such taxes are now exclusively paid by the employer. This has meant an 8½% increase in the take-home pay of workers.

As for safety regulations, a joint effort is being made by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare and the trade unions to popularize such laws among the workers. A number of attractive popular pamphlets have been issued on the subject which are distributed by the Safety and Industrial Hygiene Committees functioning in all establishments with more than 50 workers. Such committees composed of representatives of management and labor now operate in 1,433 out of 1,618 nationalized enterprises.

WORKERS' HOUSING

In June 1949, the State Council of Poland appropriated eight billion zloty for workers' dwellings, slum clearance and the improvement of sanitation facilities in working sections. The State Council set up a special commission to plan and coordinate all such work and it nominated Aleksander Zawadzki, President of the Central Trade Union Council, as a representative of organized labor. In appropriating such large sums of money for improving the living conditions of workers, and in appointing Mr. Zawadzki, the Polish government once again showed that concern for workers' welfare and respect for the voice of the trade unions which has characterized so many of its actions.

FIRST PLACE IN NUMBER OF ILO CONVENTIONS RATIFIED

Poland has ratified more conventions relating to safety and working conditions than any other member of the ILO, according to a statement made by a representative of the ILO in January, 1949.

POLISH LABOR LOOKS AT THE WFTU

Boleslaw Gebert, Polish representative to the WFTU, at a conference of the Executive Committee of the WFTU following the withdrawal by the C.I.O., deplored the action taken by the American organization. "In the name of international solidarity we appeal to our brothers, the American and British workers, to guard working class unity," he said.

On another occasion Mr. Gebert elaborated on the attitude of Polish labor toward the WFTU. He pointed to "the feverish attempts of world reaction to bring about a split in the ranks of the working masses, to break up their fighting unity." He added: "Our enemies are well aware that unity of the working class makes capitalist exploitation more difficult. From where do the most furious attacks on the WFTU come? That country, where the law itself allows the government to stifle trade union liberties ... endeavors to pose as the 'champion of liberties'."

"The unity of the world trade union movement, of which our federation is the expression, is indispensable to the working class in the struggle to improve the material and cultural conditions of life. It is indispensable to each working class family ... The WFTU was created as an organization for the defense of the interests of the working class. That is what it is and that is the role which it fulfills."

TEACHERS OF TWENTY-TWO COUNTRIES MEET IN WARSAW

The Polish Teachers Union's great role in determining educational policy in Poland was emphasized by Henryk Jablonski, Vice-Minister of Education, at the Convention of the International Federation of Teachers which opened in Warsaw on August 12, 1949. Mr. Jablonski pointed to the fact that the Ministry of Education invariably consults the Teachers Union before making any important decisions. Joint conferences between the representatives of the Ministry and the teachers have kept the Ministry posted as to the problems and needs of the teaching profession.

One of the most important problems to which much discussion at the convention was devoted was that of building unity of the teachers' movement and cementing relations between the teaching profession and the working class.

Delegates of twenty-two countries were greeted in the name of the people of Warsaw by the Mayor, Stanislaw Tolwinski, who declared that the people of Warsaw see in the delegates "sincere fighters for peace".

CALL FOR A LIVELIER UNION PRESS

Trade union papers do not devote enough space to criticism of weak points in trade union work, according to the statement of Tadeusz Cwik, General Secretary of the Central Trade Union Council, at the recent Trade Union Convention. Mr. Cwik also called for more attractive papers, written in a livelier way and using additional illustrations.

There are today twenty trade union papers, including "Zwiaskowiec" (Unionist), the weekly published by the Central Trade Union Council. "Zwiaskowiec" now has a distribution of 160,000 per issue, as compared with 25,000 in 1946.

The Central Trade Union Council also publishes "Labor Economic Review", a monthly magazine devoted to labor-economic thought and a monthly bulletin in English, Russian and French for foreign distribution.

TRADE UNION SPORTS POPULAR IN POLAND

Sports organized by trade unions have won themselves an outstanding place in Polish activities. In 1947 the Central Trade Union Committee signed an agreement with the Ministry of Industry which provided that the Ministry would grant for sports activities of the unions an annual sum of money equivalent to 0.3% of the total payroll of nationalized industry. This served as a new material base for the development of workers' sports.

Three hundred and sixty-eight thousand persons, one-tenth of the membership, today participate in trade union sports designed to attract potentially good athletes and to give physical training to the large masses of workers.

Polish trade union sports teams have won outstanding successes in the field of international trade union sports. For example, the Polish team won almost all prizes in boxing at the International Sportsmeet which was held in Paris at the beginning of 1949 in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the French Gym and Sport Federation.

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October 20, 1949

Mr. Arthur M. Ross
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Dear Sir:

Enclosed herein you will find our release
containing the latest information on trade unions in
Poland. The release consists of a collection of
individual items. A list of the items may be found
within the table of contents.

Should you or your students require additional
copies, or any further information, please do not hesitate
to contact us.

Any comments you may care to submit will be
most welcome.

Sincerely yours,



Antoni Szymanowski
Director

Enc.