

TODAY ABROAD

by Joseph Clark

Democracy Advances In Poland

THE POLISH trade unions recognize it's not enough to be right on questions affecting relations with Western unions but they must also put across their position effectively. We refer, of course, to the tremendous impact of the Polish trade union reply to the UAW.

It's going to be very hard for the UAW to dodge the issue of free exchange of union delegations. We think the letter from Detroit which appeared in our paper on this question played an important part in getting such welcome clarification of the issues by the Polish unions.

We're impressed also with the continuous and most significant progress being made by the Polish government and Polish Communists in throwing off old dogmatism and in liberalizing and democratizing their country. Capitalist press correspondents in Poland have had to concede that the Polish press exemplifies free discussion, fair news coverage and lively differences of opinion.

SYDNEY GRUSON writes from Warsaw in the N. Y. Times yesterday that the Polish press "by any standards . . . is a lively, interesting, bold and controversial press."

Although I can't read Polish I realized something new had happened in the Polish press some time ago merely by scanning the columns of Trybuna Ludu, central newspaper of the Polish Workers (Communist) Party. For years Trybuna Ludu as well as the newspapers of Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and even little Albania all imitated Pravda.

They did so even down to the place where theater programs were listed.

The front page left hand column was the place for the editorial. Instead of news on page one there were appeals for fulfilling the grain harvest or results of the plan in one or another factory. The back page was reserved for foreign news items. Party affairs articles appeared on page two. Theater programs were listed on the last column of page four. Sports items were occasionally mentioned on page four above the theater listing.

That's how Pravda did it and that's how the papers in Prague, Budapest, Bucharest, Warsaw, Tirana also did it.

BUT SOME TIME ago I picked up Trybuna Ludu and everything seemed changed in make-up. There were news agency stories, including foreign news items on page one. The editorial was missing from its accustomed "Pravda position." And all in all it looked different. Now it's apparent that the Polish press doesn't only look different, it is different, and reflects Polish newspaper traditions rather than imitating those of Russia.

I realized also from conversations with visiting Polish newspapermen some time ago how much ferment and change was taking place there. One young and highly intelligent Polish journalist visited with our family last year. We took him to Coney Island and told him how in summer time some people slept right on the beach. And he beamed on us and said, oh yes, we know that and then

articles would appear in our press about how the homeless American working people have to sleep on the beaches. That kind of reporting has apparently disappeared from the Polish press.

THE CHANGES in Polish papers are only indicative of changes in all aspects of Polish life. Even more important is the change taking place in the role of parliament. Not only is there real, honest to goodness debate, dissent, controversy and solid work by legislative committees. But now there's a proposal to make parliamentary sessions last a good part of the year rather than convene for only a couple of weeks a year.

Polish Communists are working out a proper kind of relationship with Soviet Communists and the Soviet Union. Poland freed itself from the feudalism and reaction of its old regime through the defeat of Hitlerism by the Soviet Army. Polish security and its new boundaries rest on the solid foundation of Polish-Soviet friendship. This has become unbreakable because it rests on the principle of equality not on the interference of the Soviet Union in Polish internal affairs.

The Poles have shown that while maintaining this alliance with the Soviet Union they are adopting a posture in domestic and world affairs similar to that of Yugoslavia. Yugoslav Communists recently met with Polish Communists and the report (which I read in Pravda) shows that much more than a perfunctory exchange of experiences in building socialism took place. Among the features being taken over by the Poles is decentralization both in economic and political life.