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POLAND

At the central committee meeting it held this past weekend, the party again has sought to buy time for the domestic situation to quiet down by finding more scapegoats for past mistakes, making leadership changes, promising other political and economic changes, and permitting party members to sound off.

The plenum has, in effect, called for a process of far-reaching discussions on how the party should function internally and how it should rule Poland. The disenchantment this time of many party members and the existence of free trade unions and other groups in Polish society seeking change may force the party to implement some of the innovations it will be discussing. The leadership appears more interested in the process as a force to restore the party's vitality and to restore its public credibility than in the creation of new programs.

The Plenum

The main themes discussed during the marathon session were:

- The "undemocratic" nature of the Gierek regime, its failure to heed advice, and the corruption of some of its members.
- The need for changes in the party's internal operations and in its relationship with the government.
- A required "moral renewal" of the party.
- A demand for an extraordinary party congress.
- The need to fulfill the pledges made to striking workers in late August.

Party leader Kania touched on all these themes when he addressed the plenum on Saturday, but much less specifically than many of the speakers who followed. Kania

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agreed, for example, only that "consideration" would be given to limiting the terms of party leaders, and he implied that party statutes do not need to be revised.

On these important issues, the resolution issued by the meeting said that proposals for change would be studied "thoroughly." The extraordinary party congress to be held after the study may not take place for months; one central committee member who reportedly helped draft Kania's speech warned that little could be done within one year.

The men dismissed from the central committee had already been discredited, and many had been ousted from high-level positions by former party leader Gierek. By including "ordinary workers" among the 15 new members added to the body, the leadership no doubt intended to indicate that it was broadening its base and responding to urgings that leading party bodies should not be made up primarily of persons involved in the state or economic administrations.

Attitude Toward Trade Unions

The party resolved yesterday to support the strike settlement signed in August, but reiterated that the "main guarantee" of the accords is the speedy restoration of normal production. The resolutions did not mention the one-hour strike last Friday, but Kania, by suggesting that anarchy could result from such acts and revealing that union leaders had reneged on an agreement to call off the strike, was presumably attempting to divide union leaders further and to discredit them with the public.

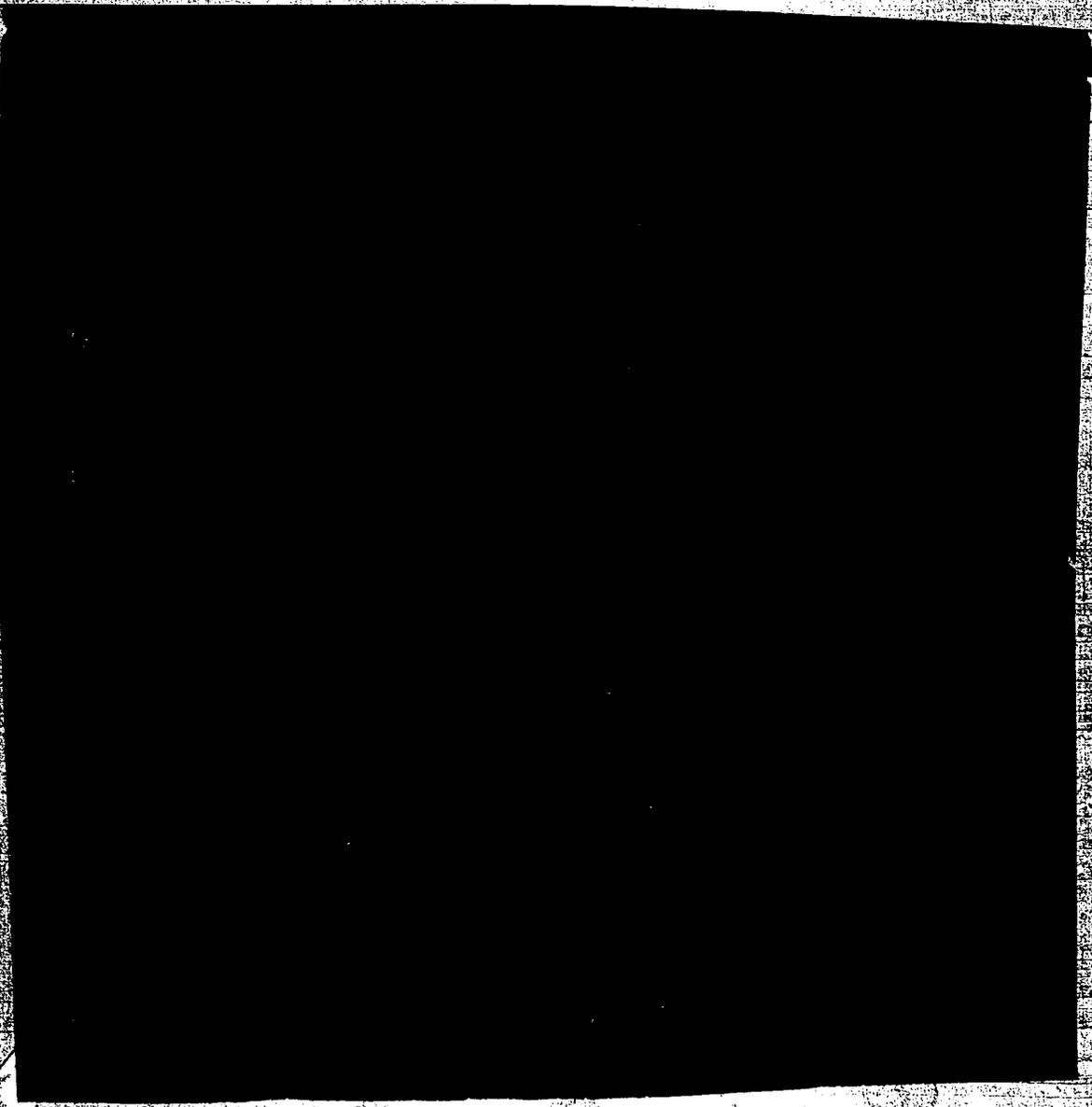
While expressing a willingness to cooperate with Western countries, Kania and other speakers reaffirmed Poland's alliance with the USSR and pledged to maintain strong relations with Poland's Communist allies. Only one speaker at the plenum raised the issue of Soviet and East European concern; politburo member Olszowski said that "fraternal parties are worried."

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Moscow's coverage of the plenum has suggested concern over the Kania regime's call for a degree of liberalization, even while highlighting those aspects of the plenum that point to a revitalization of the Polish party. The TASS report on Kania's speech glossed over the considerable detail the Polish leader provided on mistakes and abuses by the party, and it also failed to carry his remarks on the new independent unions--including his pledge to honor the Baltic agreements--and on the one-hour protest strike.



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