

16th Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs  
Sopot, 11 - 16 September, 1966

OPENING CEREMONY

Address by the Deputy Prime Minister,

Mr. E. Szyr

In the second half of our century science has penetrated into all fields of human life. The scientific society has become more and more numerous than ever before in history and has been advancing at a so far unprecedented rate. The part of the national income assigned to scientific research - from basic investigations to development works - has also been rapidly growing. Science has become an instrument, and in future may even become a main instrument, in the development of the productive forces, upon which, after all, the satisfaction of the growing needs of human society depends as well as the elimination of the present tragic disparity in access of the various stratas of society and of different nations to the benefits of material and spiritual culture is concerned.

But once the fruits of human mind have come into existence, they are not only used for the sake of mankind; they may also bring disaster upon it. No one realizes better than scientists those possibilities of contemporary science which may bring to the world fulfilment of its possibilities, or annihilation. This is where their great responsibility arises. The awareness of such a responsibility has lain at the root of your movement - the Pugwash Movement, the activities of which we in Poland are watching with the utmost interest and to which we are giving our full support.

What is required, after all, is social and political responsibility of men of science in the contemporary world - that is, a service to science always and everywhere being a service to man, to the cause of peace and freedom.

We in Poland have chosen this road. Our scientists devote their efforts to peaceful work. Poland in the interwar period was a country economically backward, poor and scarcely vegetating. The national income per head was one of the lowest in the world. In the 20-year interwar period the industrial and agricultural production of Poland made no progress. Within the 20-year postwar period Poland, devastated entirely by war and occupation, with her Capital razed to the ground, has not only rebuilt her economy, but also increased her industrial production 9 times compared to the year 1937.



We could not have done it, if parallel to the growth of material resources our education and science had not also been advancing at a great speed. The following figure may illustrate this progress:

In the year 1938 we had 4,435 primary schools for a population then about 9% smaller than at present; now there are 19,227 primary schools with a compulsory 8-year training period. Before the war we had 32 establishments of higher learning with 49,000 students; now we have 76 higher education institutions and more than a quarter of a million students. The number of our scientists engaged in higher education and in scientific institutes has grown from 907 professors and 2,107 senior and junior assistants in the prewar period - to some 3,700 professors and associate professors and 17,000 scientific and research workers in the field of higher education. Moreover, there are about 7,000 workers in basic activity employed in the Polish Academy of Sciences and about 20,000 in departmental institutes. In the 20-year interwar period 83,000 graduate diplomas were issued, and in the 20-year period of People's Poland 327,000 diplomas have been granted.

It should be emphasized that this growth has not only concerned quantities. Testifying to this are the expressions of acknowledgement of the results of Polish scientists' contribution made in many fields, as well as the opinion of international scientists. The expression of an appreciation of the new role played by science in Poland is the great significance attached by the Polish government to paving a way for its unrestricted advancement and to a considerable intensification of all forms of international scientific collaboration.

Socialist Poland is a country in which the efforts of the working people - workers, peasants, and white collar professionals concentrate on creative and peaceful activities. After the devastation caused by the two world wars, after a dark night of the Nazi occupation, Poland, like most of the other countries in Europe, the continent most affected by the hostilities, has thrown all its growing might to the fight for peace and security, both for herself and for Europe, an inseparable and essential part of which she constitutes. We have, with the greatest effort of our people, rebuilt our country, which was bitterly afflicted by war, and we do not wish to have it again destroyed by a new conflagration. So much more painfully do we feel and react to every sign testifying to the recurrence of the phenomena which, formerly unrestrained, caused the outbreak of the World War II and its tragic course.

Poland's policy has always been opposed to the moves dividing Europe and making it a field of the cold war. If the thesis of indivisibility of peace is right - and we are profoundly convinced it is - for the past has proved it sufficiently and literally - so much more does it concern our continent. The Polish proposals aimed at halting the spread of nuclear weapons in Europe are well known, and particularly in Central Europe where only the thin ribbon of the Elbe divides the two most powerful **military** groupings in world history.



The implementation of the Rapacki Plan or of the Gomulka Plan would only ensure the creation of a sphere of freeze and of the reduction of nuclear armaments in the heart of the continent, but would also open a way for a gradual disarmament under a proper international control, would contribute to an increasing detente, and would create a ground for the solution of many difficult international problems. This is why we support our plans and would like them discussed.

The Polish foreign policy aims at tightening relations among the European countries irrespective of their systems, at creating conditions for a permanent peace on the basis of political reality, on the basis of territorial integrity and state independence of all the European countries. And it is with this idea in our minds that we have undertaken serious and sincere political dialogues with many countries. As a result of these dialogues, evaded only by one country of Central Europe, a concept of a multilateral European conference, put forward by Poland in December 1964, has been distinctly outlined. Such a conference would enable representatives of all the European States to establish the best means for guaranteeing a collective security as well as of strengthening and extending European co-operation in all fields.

The creation of a collective security system in Europe seems to be so much more urgent as there has risen an imminent danger of the regeneration of the aggressive nationalism, and remilitarization of the country, which has already twice in our generation brought about world wars.

It is clear that the development of events in that country should arouse, and actually arouses, anxiety not only on the part of its eastern neighbours. The more so because in the wake of remilitarization in the sphere of conventional weapons, politicians and generals of the FRG demand more and more loudly their growing share in nuclear arms control. We would very much like the participants of your Conference to listen attentively to the voice of the Polish people who are now commemorating the anniversary of the outbreak of the last war in September 1939 with a call: no more war, we are fighting for peace.

I have spoken about the indivisibility of peace. It refers not only to Europe, but also to the whole world. This is why the danger arising from the escalation of war in Vietnam cannot be overlooked. The situation in Vietnam arouses our deepest concern. It is necessary to secure a respect for elementary principles of international law, to put an end to the use of force, to leave to the Vietnamese people the right to decide about their own fate. The Vietnamese people, whose earth is being trodden by the iron feet of hundreds of thousands of foreign soldiers, have done nothing wrong by their willingness to strengthen their independence.



Just as peace is indivisible, so is the responsibility of the modern scientist as regards his research work, his nation, and as regards humanity and the cause of peace.

No one can understand this better than you, assembled in this hall. There is an important task before you, not only of preventing imminent consequences of a further armaments race and growth of international tension, but also of showing alternative possibilities for creating a peaceful world, a world of prosperity for all the inhabitants of our Earth.

Your voices will not remain without response, without impact on public opinion, on Governments. If the scientists of the world, if the scientists assembled here in our country, at the 16th Conference of the Pugwash Movement, and having already so rich a tradition, are able to achieve an agreement on important international problems of the contemporary world, this will undoubtedly constitute an important incentive which will set international development moving in the right direction, in the direction of consolidation of peace and international co-operation.

On behalf of the Polish Government I can assure you that it will give a proper consideration to the results of the 16th Pugwash Conference.

On behalf of the Polish Government I wish you successful debates, I wish that from this Baltic Coast, where 27 years ago Polish soldiers desperately resisted the genocide invasion, your voice, your opinion of scientists of world renown, will resound loud and effectively.

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