

International Internal Discussion Bulletin

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Resolution adopted by the October 1983 meeting of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International

The paragraph that should be written is on page 81 of Vol. XIX, No. 1, December 1983, of the International Internal Discussion Bulletin. The English edition of the International Internal Discussion Bulletin of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International is published by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, 14 Charles Lane, New York, N.Y. 10014.

International Internal Discussion Bulletin

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Correction to Thesis on the International Situation

Resolution and Counter-revolution in Poland

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Correction to 'Theses on the International Situation'

DEC 23 RECD

From: USec Bureau

To : Sections and sympathising organisations (receiving English texts)

Subject: Error in the Theses on International Situation sent out 6.12.83

8.12.83

Dear cdes,

Due to a slip-up in the photocopies there is an error on page 57 of the Theses on International Situation sent out two days ago in English. Find enclosed (overleaf) the corrected page - the second paragraph beginning "within the antiwar movement . . ." had been removed by the editing commission.

Apologies for the mistake,

USec Bureau secretariat.

[The paragraph that should be omitted is on page 18 of *IIDB* Volume XIX, Number 4, December 1983, and reads as follows:

"Within the antiwar movement of the capitalist countries, we take a stand in favor of active solidarity with the independent pacifists of the USSR and other Eastern countries, and for setting up non-exclusive relations between the peace movements of the East and of the West."]

Revolution and Counter-revolution in Poland

[The following draft resolution was adopted in October 1983 by a majority of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International for submission to the pre-World Congress discussion bulletin. This resolution is based on an earlier resolution adopted by the May 1982 meeting of the International Executive Committee, published in *IIDB* Volume XVIII, Number 6, September 1982.]

I. The rise of political revolution

1. Of all the political revolutions in which workers have risen up against the totalitarian power of the bureaucracy in the bureaucratized workers states, the Polish revolution of August 1980-December 1981 is incontestably the most advanced. While we should not expect each new revolutionary rise in the workers states to represent a further step in a linear progression, it is nevertheless a fact that the latest one in Poland shows that they are following an ascending course and tend to pose in practice the question of a revolutionary overthrow of the bureaucratic regime.

In none of the previous cases, except perhaps that of Hungary in 1956, have the workers set themselves the task of assuming direct economic and political power. Never have the workers discussed the tactics so broadly or so extensively worked out the means for achieving this goal as consciously as they have this time. It is true they only have reached this stage of maturity in the most recent months, in the last weeks. Even in the last hours before the proclamation of a state of war, the national leadership of *Solidarnosc* did not reach the point of adopting a strategy for the seizure of power by the workers. Nevertheless, the workers and the leadership of the mass movement did openly recognize that the question of power was posed and opened a discussion aimed at finding the means to resolve it. This is an original feature of the Polish revolution which constitutes an event of historical importance and reflects a qualitative leap forward in the development of political revolutions as a whole. Thus, the Polish mass movement and its main organization — the independent self-managed *Solidarnosc* union — went far beyond the most advanced gains of the mass movements led by strike committees in East Germany in 1953, by workers councils in Hungary and Poland in 1956, or of Czechoslovakia in 1968-69.

The Polish antibureaucratic revolution of 1980-81 unfolded in a country characterized by a whole number of features some of which are specific and whose influence on the course of the revolution is undeniable:

a) The high level of industrial development and a correspondingly educated working class with a leading role and social weight based on the existence of several highly concentrated industrial zones (some firms employing several tens of thousands of workers). The massive movement of agricultural workers into industry has not, however, left the working class in a state of perpetual political "adolescence," contrary to the bureaucracy's intention, since they promoted this process in the hope that that would make it possible to neutralize the social power of the workers. On the contrary, the working class has not become diluted in an alien social milieu. Instead, society has assumed an ever more proletarian character, thereby digging the grave of the bureaucratic regime.

b) The traditions and experiences of the Polish working class in its uprisings against the bureaucratic regime. The explosions

of workers' protests in June 1956 (Poznan), December 1970 (Gdansk and Szczecin), and June 1976 (Radom and Ursus factory in Warsaw), made it possible for the Polish workers:

- to lose any confidence they might have had in the ability of the bureaucratic regime, or any fraction of the bureaucracy, to achieve the aspirations of the working class. The myth of the "providential man," embodied first by Gomulka and then by Gierek, no longer had any hold.

- to become convinced, on the basis of their own experience, of the limitations of spontaneous movements and of the necessity of self-organization.

- to move on to a new form of struggle: the mass strike with occupations. The experience of the workers self-management mobilizations of 1944-45 and 1956-57 had created a tradition of struggle for workers control over production and for workers management of factories; this legacy made it easier for the political revolution of 1981 to find the road to workers power in the factories as well as in the state.

c) The relative weakness of the power of a bureaucracy that had to confront not only a powerful and experienced working class, but that also had not been able to impose its total hegemony over society as a whole.

In Poland, forced collectivization did not succeed in cowering the peasantry into accepting the yoke of the bureaucracy. The main sector of agriculture remains in the hands of peasant family units, which give independent working farmers a considerable margin of maneuver and facilitate resistance to the state. Moreover, the strength and influence of the Catholic church have buttressed a constant resistance with which the bureaucracy has found itself obliged to seek a compromise, in the framework of an unstable but persistent equilibrium. This position of the Catholic church, which expressed the interests of the peasantry in particular, has favoured the existence of a plurality of conceptions of the world, and thus the development of more or less critical and independent thought in wide sectors of society. Yet, if this breach in the monolithic control of society favoured the rebirth of an autonomous mass movement, the fundamental conservative role of the Catholic hierarchy worked to hold back the revolutionary process.

d) The closer and closer association of the bureaucracy with certain capitalist forces. During the 1970s, the Polish economy became much more dependent on the imperialist countries, both on the financial and technological levels, which led sectors of the bureaucracy to establish links with foreign monopoly capital and to let itself be corrupted by it. Also sections of the bureaucracy forged links in Poland with certain sectors of a middle bourgeoisie that had accumulated substantial commercial capital from speculation.

The bureaucracy also encouraged the development of a capitalist sector in agriculture and built up close ties with it. It gained the right legally to pass on some of its privileges (in 1972

guaranteed resources and pension rights, transmittable to the third generation, were instituted for "people performing leadership tasks in the party and state"). It became more and more under the spell of the values of bourgeois society.

e) An economic crisis of a severity unprecedented in the history of bureaucratized workers states. This represented a crisis of the system of bureaucratic management of the economy that over several years transformed itself from a relative to an absolute brake on the development of productive forces for several years. On the one hand, the social character of production has been increasing uninterruptedly, and huge means of production are the property of the state. But on the other hand, a privileged minority enjoys a monopoly of power over the use of the means of production and the social surplus, and disposes of it in its own interests. After a period of frenetic growth in the early 1970s, these contradictions became explosive. A radical solution of the problem of economic management, and therefore of the question of power, had become necessary to save the country from a crisis.

f) The existence of oppositional groups whose activity within the working class the bureaucracy was forced to partly tolerate after the revolts of 1976. In addition to the KOR, which became the best known of these groups, we should mention the role of clandestine workers papers such as *The Worker* and *The Baltic Worker*, etc.

2. The Polish revolution is characterized and qualitatively distinguished from the beginnings of previous political revolutions in Eastern Europe by the following features:

- This was a mass movement of colossal dimension. Nearly 2 million workers directly participated in the strike wave of July-August 1980. Over 10 million workers — that is, over one-third of the entire Polish population — participated actively in the preparations for the general strike which was cancelled at the last minute in March 1981. Moreover, in the fall 1981, the campus strike movement encompassed the overwhelming majority of student youth. Although less sizeable and more dispersed over time and space, significant mass mobilizations also developed among the peasantry.

- Despite unavoidable fluctuations, the revolutionary wave lasted a long time. The bureaucratic regime only decided to resort to force and stage its counter-revolutionary military crackdown in the eighteenth month of the revolution. On December 13, 1981, the revolution was not defeated and was not in a phase of retreat. On the contrary, the mass movement had entered a new phase of quickening radicalization several weeks before, and the entire country was in the throes of a directly revolutionary political crisis. What happened in the days following the crackdown showed that the revolutionary potential of the mass movement was far from being exhausted. Workers resistance to the military dictatorship took on the dimensions of a near-general strike, despite the dismantling of the Solidarnosc organization and leadership structures in the wake of a powerful repressive operation. In many factories, and especially in the mines, the police and army had to resort to violence in order to break the strike.

- The social composition of the mass movement was predominantly working class. The working class was not only the main driving force of the Polish revolution; it was its directing force. This is an undeniable fact recognized by all the other sectors who participated in the revolution: the students in revolt, the democratic intellectuals, the urban petty-bourgeoisie, and the active sectors of the peasantry. The highly concentrated industrial zones were the centers of the mass movement and the large factories were the fortresses of the revolution. They set the tone insofar as forms of struggle, demands, forms of organization, and pace of mobilization of the workers were concerned, and thereby put an unquestionably working-class stamp on the unfolding revolution. All the nonworking-class sectors of the movement were

aware that their own chances of gaining success in the struggle depended entirely on the support of the large factories.

- The mass movement was distinctly organized even though it drew great strength from its spontaneous tendencies. The wage workers achieved the highest level of organization: 9.4 million out of 13 million were members of the Solidarnosc union. The best organized were the productive workers in heavy industry. In the other social layers, the level of organization was distinctly less. Only a minority of the peasantry and student youth were unionized, even though the students showed their organizational capacities on certain occasions, such as during strikes involving occupation of the universities.

- The mass movement was independent of the bureaucracy, whether state or party apparatus, and it uncompromisingly defended its independence. Evidence of this is the determination with which Solidarnosc opposed the attempt of the bureaucracy to intervene in the debate over its statutes by means of the courts. The high level of working-class independence was already obvious in the August 1980 strike. Instead of massively leaving their factories and rallying in front of the PUWP provincial committee headquarters, as they had done previously, the workers entrenched themselves in the factories they occupied, thereby forcing the representatives of the bureaucratic regime to come negotiate with them on their own grounds. This independence was subsequently confirmed at the time of the move to organize independent unions — the first and most important demand of the workers. It is true that for several months there were still illusions in the mass movement about the possibility of negotiating with the bureaucracy, of achieving a more or less lasting compromise based on the recognition of a series of democratic gains of the working class and society as a whole. It is obvious that there were still illusions about the good will of certain figures and factions in the bureaucracy. But the workers rejected any subordination to this or that sector of the bureaucratic apparatus, and likewise refused to grant it any kind of legitimacy.

3. In the course of the revolutionary rise, various forms of struggle and organization emerged that brought the workers closer to the conquest of power. The first was the movement of workers self-management that was concretized in the formation of workers councils in the factories; these tended to become centralized, first on a regional level, and then on a national level. Solidarnosc's experiment with supervising distribution and the system of rationing of essential products significantly contributed to developing workers control over the economy, even though it was limited to only one region. The challenge to bureaucratic power was sharpened by the emerging forms of citizens' self-management on a territorial basis which corresponded to the mass movement's demands for free elections to the Diet, as well as the provincial and municipal councils. In the last few days before December 13, all these movements were becoming intertwined with the preparations for the active strike. This was the angle from which the workers intended to challenge the bureaucracy's power, beginning with its economic power.

II. Why was the counter-revolution victorious?

4. The bureaucracy's response to the rise of the mass movement and the political radicalization of the workers was the December 13 crackdown. The political counterrevolution launched on that day was intended to shore up the crumbling power of the bureaucracy and preserve its privileges as a parasitic caste. The fact that it had to resort to the army and establish a military junta — an unprecedented move in the so-called "socialist countries" — reflected both the extent of the paralysis of the central administrative apparatus and the depth of the PUWP's crisis. The party had been shaken by violent internal struggles between rival factions, drained by the departure of 2 million members, especially

workers, and become clearly incapable of exercising its "leading role." Only the repressive apparatuses — the police and the army — were still in a position to reestablish bureaucratic order. This is the reason for the resort to tanks and guns. Arrests and internments by the thousands, the ban on travel inside the country, the disconnection of the communications network, the curfew, the massive firings, and the various other measures of intimidation, all were essential to decapitate the union and impose silence on a social movement embracing ten million people. The scale of the Polish proletariat's defeat was indicated by the loss of democratic and trade-union rights which the working class had wrested from the bureaucracy in the course of its fierce eighteen-month struggle. Overnight, the proletariat was deprived of the right to strike. The brutal lengthening of the workweek as well as the militarization of the key productive enterprises, the suspension of the Solidarnosc union — followed by that of the students and peasants organizations — and the abolition of all freedom of expression, clearly showed the ruling clique's determination to press its assault on the mass movement to the bitter end.

The abolition of the workers' right to organize freely in the union of their own choosing — undoubtedly the most significant political advance over previous revolutionary rises in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland itself — interrupted the development of a situation of dual power. Thus, it abruptly halted the revolutionary process in which the working class was demonstrating its capacity to run its own affairs.

In this regard, the seriousness of the blow dealt the Polish working class on December 13, at a time when the revolutionary nature of the situation that emerged in the last few months had become clear, should not be underestimated. This was indeed the beginning of a political counter-revolution — a counter-revolution designed to crush the movement while there was still time.

5. The August 31, 1980, Gdansk Agreements that recognized the workers' right to build their own mass independent organizations represented a magnificent victory of the Polish workers. But they also represented a compromise, because while the power of the bureaucracy was weakened, it was not overthrown. The bureaucrats were able to force a formal recognition of their monopoly of power in a clause of the Agreements that stated that the union to be set up would recognize "the leading role of the party in the state."

Nevertheless, this type of formal recognition could not guarantee the bureaucracy's continued grip on power at a time when it was proving incapable of meeting the social needs of the working class and could not even keep production going at its previous level. The workers very rapidly moved to demand the removal of incompetent bureaucrats, which raised the spectre that more of these officials become "unemployed," that is might lose their status and privileges. Moreover, the fact that the protest movements spread to all layers of society while conflicts in the factories, both on economic and social issues, were increasing and workers councils were spreading throughout the country and beginning to unite in coordinating bodies, first on the regional, and then on the national levels, tended to bring the scattered struggles together and turn them into a central confrontation with the state. A struggle to the death had begun between the tottering regime of the bureaucracy and the emerging power of the workers. A confrontation was inevitable.

6. Far from ushering in a period of stability and peaceful coexistence, the Gdansk Agreements led to an increase in partial and local conflicts. The moderate wing of the trade union, backed up by the majority of the experts and strongly supported by the Catholic hierarchy, sought to direct the movement into safe channels and prevent a confrontation. In the first few months, this sector clearly had a strong influence on Solidarnosc. But in a society based on the nationalization of the means of production, all economic issues immediately take on a political dimen-

sion. All immediate demands raise problems involving the reorganization of production, revising the plan, economic reform, etc. . . . The question posed was: Who runs the economy and in whose interests? Who rules? The working class or the bureaucracy?

Faced with its obvious inability to confine the union to the field of material demands, the moderate currents put forward the strategy of "self-limitation" of the revolution. According to this strategy's supporters, it was possible to wrest a series of concessions from the Polish bureaucracy by adopting a set-by-step approach that would never exceed certain boundaries and especially not challenge the "geopolitical context" in which the country found itself so as to prevent a military intervention by the USSR. According to them, the main danger of a confrontation came from the Soviet bureaucracy and not from the Polish bureaucracy, which was split and weakened. A guarantee of Soviet interests, tolerating the appearance of bureaucratic power emptied of all meaningful content in Poland, would allow the country to avoid the confrontation. This assessment underestimated the Polish bureaucracy as an opponent and underestimated its fierce determination to defend its own interests. This was most obvious during the negotiations for a "National Accord" that the supporters of "self-limitation" presented as desirable for its own sake. Since the bureaucracy no longer had anything to concede in exchange for a compromise, it demanded nothing less than the total subordination of Solidarnosc within a body that it would completely control. Its determination to safeguard its privileges by any means necessary was also obvious in the December 13 crackdown, which produced surprise and disarray among those who expected the military intervention to come from the Soviets.

Along with the hope of escaping a confrontation, another illusion prevailed in Solidarnosc. It was rooted in the very history of the eighteen-month struggle in which the union had always found a way, despite hesitation, to wrest new concessions from the bureaucracy. Many activists also believed the movement could continue indefinitely feeding on its own victories, that the support it enjoyed from the overwhelming majority of the population and its strength — ten million workers poised for a general strike to defend their union — would be sufficient to force the government to retreat.

7. The illusions kept the movement from preparing for the confrontation. It is true that the revolutionary currents that favoured the development of control over production and distribution, initiated the idea of the active strike and understood the importance of coordinating the workers councils' activity, clearly perceived the need to create a more favourable relationship of forces that would allow for new advances. But they didn't have time to set up a national structure and had few spokespeople in the Solidarnosc national leadership chosen by the first congress of delegates. This is the reason why, in the decisive weeks of fall 1981, Solidarnosc lacked a coherent approach on the goal to be pursued and the means to achieve it. For lack of a correct evaluation of the enemy it confronted, the union leadership could not in time formulate an alternative strategy to that of "self-limitation." The decisions voted at the National Commission were often contradictory and could not be implemented. Faced with the question of power and an increasingly radical rank and file, the leadership hesitated and beat about the bush. The last meeting of the National Commission on the eve of the putsch gave a good picture of the contradictions that beset the organization. Alongside the programmatic advances that reflected a revolutionary viewpoint and were formulated by the Lodz, Cracow, and Warsaw leaders, came the hesitations of Lech Walesa and the Jan Rulewski proposal to hold free elections, which did not take into account the need to take the initiative in the confrontation with the bureaucracy. This is why the government was able to

paralyze the mass movement without itself suffering paralysis from a general strike. In revolution as well as in counter-revolution, whichever side takes the initiative gains a considerable advantage because it can use its own centralization against the scattered resistance of its opponent.

8. The December 13 setback was not a foregone conclusion. On the one hand, the bureaucracy had only unreliable troops at its disposal. The broad masses of the soldiers were not ready, of themselves, to let themselves be used in a civil war, while they were not ready either to go over to the side of the workers just like that. Fraternalization between the troops and the workers must be prepared a long time in advance by activities of the workers movement on behalf of the soldiers. It implies a relentless struggle for the democratic rights of soldiers, their right to organize independently of the military hierarchy, the defense of victims of repression inside the military institutions, and the development of links between union structures and the barracks. These are all tasks that, aside for a few rare exceptions, were not assumed by the leadership of Solidarnosc because of its illusions in the Polish army, which it saw as a natural ally against the Soviet enemy. Moreover, we should stress that before they will go over to the side of the workers, soldiers must be convinced that the struggle at hand is not a mere skirmish, that the workers are determined to go all the way and replace the power of the bureaucracy with their own. A national strike in which production was resumed under workers control could have created such conditions.

While some regional leaderships of Solidarnosc and the self-management movement had begun to undertake the elaboration of emergency plans in the last period, they were unable to complete their work before December 13, 1981.

Obviously, their work was obstructed by the reticence, and sometimes the fierce opposition, of the moderate currents in the leadership of Solidarnosc who correctly thought that the tactic of the active strike posed the question of power. Solidarnosc was the only structure on a national — and often the only one on a regional — level that could have initiated and led an active strike in the fall of 1981. Workers councils did not yet exist in all factories, or were only being set up at the time. Regional coordination of the councils did not exist in the whole country and was only beginning to get organized. The National Federation of Self-Management had not yet acquired full legitimacy in the eyes of the masses.

When it became clear that the initiative in this field would not come from the national leadership, some regions decided to begin preparations for the active strike without further delay (Lodz, Silesia, Warsaw, Stalowa, Wola), but they were unable to carry them through to completion for lack of time. The debate only surfaced on a national scale and with force within the leadership of Solidarnosc a few hours before the crackdown.

Because they did not understand what was brewing, in particular when the School of Firemen Cadets in Warsaw was forcibly evacuated ten days before December 13, the leadership of Solidarnosc did not call for the general strike that the workers were ready for — in several regions at least — and that would have allowed the union to regain the initiative.

III. The general political lessons about the political revolution that emerge from the Polish experience

9. The rise of the political revolution in Poland after the summer of 1980, and the December 13, 1981, counter-revolutionary crackdown, have shed new light on the postcapitalist nature of the society dominated by bureaucratic dictatorship that exists today in the USSR and the other bureaucratized workers states. The entire revolutionary dynamic, the nature of the political, economic, social and ideological conflicts that shook Polish society, were qualitatively different from those that distinguish the

revolutionary rise of workers in a capitalist country. The focus of the struggle was not the overthrow of bourgeois rule and the abolition of the capitalist mode of production. Rather it was the question of the abolition of the monopoly over the management of nationalized property and the state appropriated by a privileged bureaucracy under the ideological cover of the "leading role of the party." The central question posed by social and political struggles in Poland in 1980-81 was not "capitalism or socialism," but "bureaucratic power or workers power."

Neither the nature of the economic crisis nor the nature of the solutions proposed in various quarters had anything to do with any sort of capitalism, even be it some hypothetical "state capitalism." There was no crisis of overproduction of commodities. There was a crisis of under-production of use-values. There were no massive layoffs caused by the unprofitability or bankruptcy of firms. There was a shortage of raw materials, spare parts, and consumer goods accompanied by a relative surplus of means of payment.

All this is the result of an economic policy designed to satisfy the interests of a deeply divided parasitic caste whose internecine struggles for control of the social wealth were reflected in its anarchic decisions, catastrophic lack of foresight, leading to such a thorough breakdown of the plan that only a caricature of centralized planning was left standing. The workers tended more and more not only to demand the elimination of social injustices arising from the bourgeois norms of distribution, but also to impose social controls in order to prevent the bureaucracy from utilizing these norms to strengthen its privileges and divide the working class. They had understood, most of them instinctively but many also consciously, that the problems of distribution were directly connected with the problems of power and particularly with problems of organizing, orienting, and controlling production.

Despite all pressures, whether they emanated from the regime or from the technocratic wing of the movement for self-management, the workers counterposed elementary class behavior to the siren songs offering competition between firms and between individuals as the means of resolving the crisis. To the exaltation of so-called market economy values, they counterposed the cooperation of producers. To the project of competition between individual enterprises, they began to counterpose the cooperation of enterprise workers councils through a plan democratically elaborated and adopted.

They looked for salvation in solidarity, in the takeover by the workers themselves of the management and coordination of the enterprises, in the collective deciding of priorities concerning the use of resources, in challenges to excessive economic investments which often meant duplication of efforts, in the upgrading of social investments in the struggle against inequality and injustice in the field of distribution.

All these key values of a radical reorganization of planning, including its aims, methods, and organizational framework, are clearly proletarian and socialist in nature. They confirm the fact that, had the anti-bureaucratic political revolution triumphed, the social and economic foundations of the workers state would have been consolidated, not weakened, let alone destroyed.

10. Similarly, the rise of the political revolution in Poland, as well as the beginning of the counterrevolution of December 13, 1981, have confirmed that the bureaucracy is not a class like the bourgeoisie, the feudal nobility, or the slaveowners. The bureaucracy is not the agent of a specific mode of production. It doesn't have distinctive roots of its own in the process of production. Today like yesterday, its rule does not contribute to a further development of productive forces. It does not exercise any economically necessary function, not even in the process of accumulation. For all these reasons, it is led to deny its own existence and to hide its functions behind those of the proletariat and

its vanguard, to continue to lay claim to Marxism, perverting it and using this deformed version for its own ends.

But when the bureaucracy finds itself in a permanent situation of open conflict with 10 million workers, the absurdity of its claims becomes glaring. It becomes clear that the management functions that the bureaucracy usurped could be fulfilled instead by the working class; that far from insuring the reproduction of the existing social and economic system, even with its own contradictions, it acts to undermine the foundations of the system and to prevent the full potential of the system from being realized on accordance with the system's own internal logic. In none of the previous antibureaucratic revolutions had the essentially parasitic nature of the bureaucracy become so evident to the masses as during the rise of the political revolution in Poland.

This is reflected not only in the fierce disputes over the management of enterprises counterposing the bureaucracy and the workers who aspired to workers self-management. It was reflected even more clearly in the workers participation in the preparations for the active strike. "The enterprises will go on running during the strike. Production and exchanges will continue; only the government will have nothing to say," warned Stefan Bratkowski in a letter to the Central Committee of the PUWP in October 1981. He was voicing the more and more widespread attitude of the workers. The understanding of the superfluous nature of the bureaucracy as a ruling layer, and the workers ability to do without it in the management of the economy and the state, were its main features.

However, the fact that the bureaucracy is not a class does not imply that it has no resources of its own or that it automatically becomes powerless whenever the proletariat begins to turn against it. The power of the bureaucracy lies in its control over the use of both the means of production and the social surplus through its exclusive monopoly of power within the state apparatus.

Moreover, the bureaucracy is conscious of its collective material interests. It obstinately hangs on to power, displaying even desperate courage in the face of the worst temporary setbacks. It is capable of promoting diversions, of backing off temporarily, of making significant concessions, of giving in, even formally, on principles, as long as it continues to control the centers of power and remains in a position to prepare a repressive counter-attack.

This is why the idea that the bureaucracy can reform itself in the direction of democracy is an illusion. Equally deceptive are the proposals that bureaucratic power be subjected to social control or be forced to accept the participation of democratically elected workers representatives in the fundamental decision-making of the regime. These ideas — which the Solidarnosc mass movement gradually moved away from as a result of its own experiences in successive confrontations with the bureaucracy — underlay the strategies of self-limitation and national agreement, seen as a historic compromise, that were advocated by many experts of the leadership of Solidarnosc, and even, almost until the very end, by the majority tendencies in the leadership of the union. However, such ideas were alien to the bureaucracy, not for ideological reasons, but because it could only preserve its power and privileges if the proletariat remained atomized and passive. And, of course, such a situation ceases to exist as soon as the slightest genuine workers democracy is instituted.

11. In a transitional society where totalitarian power is exercised by the bureaucracy, the repressive machinery of the state and its different apparatuses are parasites on the body of society. The essential political task of the working class in an anti-bureaucratic political revolution consists of destroying these apparatuses of domination. The interests of the working class, the poor peasantry, and of all the other layers of society oppressed

by the bureaucracy coincide with this task. In a transitional society under bureaucratic dictatorship, all these layers are united by the fact that the bureaucratic machine oppresses them, crushes them, exploits them. To *smash* this machine, *demolish* it, is inevitably in the interest of the majority of the "people."

The bureaucracy, unlike the bourgeoisie, does not have deep roots in the socio-economic system. But this is precisely why it clings to the apparatuses that provide it both with its livelihood and monopoly over the exercise of power. During a political revolution, the bureaucracy is forced to resort to even more brutal than usual repression against the workers, and this leads it to reinforce the state machine.

What Trotsky defined as the tasks of the political revolution — "the violent overthrow of the political rule of a degenerated bureaucracy" — follows from the fact that: "There is no peaceful outcome for this crisis. No devil ever yet voluntarily cut off his own claws. The Soviet bureaucracy will not give up its positions without a fight. The development obviously leads to the road of revolution.

"With energetic pressure from the popular mass, and the disintegration inevitable in such circumstances of the government apparatus, the resistance of those in power may be much weaker than now appears. But as to this, only hypotheses are possible. In any case, the bureaucracy can be removed only by a revolutionary force. And, as always, there will be fewer victims the more bold and decisive is the attack." (*The Revolution Betrayed*, Pathfinder Press, p. 287.)

On the other hand, the political revolution by itself by no means puts an end to all the problems which arise in the transition from capitalism to socialism and the need for a workers state that derives from them. It must reconstruct the apparatus of a new type of state, much more integrated into the proletariat and under its control, notably in the military, juridical, administrative, economic, etc., fields. The Polish revolution has given useful information in both these regards.

For one, the first victory of the Polish workers over the bureaucracy was reflected in the destruction of one of the apparatuses of bureaucratic power. The strike committees' winning of the workers right to organize independent unions in August 1980, later, after the emergence of Solidarnosc, turned into a fight in which the state trade-union apparatus was largely dismantled and demolished (not completely through, since the bureaucracy remained in power). Even though the power of the bureaucracy was not challenged as such, the self-organization of the workers involved the destruction of one of the apparatuses that under bureaucratic rule make up the state machine.

As the movement for economic reform based on worker self-management developed, other state apparatuses — those that give the bureaucracy its economic power — were subjected to pressures tending to destroy them. An often fierce struggle broke out to prevent the nomination of enterprise directors on the basis of the PUWP "nomenklatura," and to get the compulsory enterprise associations and industrial ministries disbanded. The workers proposed various solutions to replace the bureaucratic apparatuses that they sought to destroy, including public competitions to be organized by the workers councils of the enterprises for the post of factory manager, restricting of the role of enterprise management to carrying out decisions subordinate to organs of workers self-management, and the formation of voluntary enterprise associations based on the workers councils.

On the other hand, the fundamental weakness of the Polish revolution was that it did not concentrate all its forces on destroying the repressive apparatus of bureaucratic rule. It is true that Solidarnosc did demand that a part of the police apparatus — especially its buildings — be returned to society and used to meet the needs of the majority. It supported the formation of the independent union of members of the civil police forces. And in the

last days before December 13, its revolutionary sectors called for the formation of workers guards. But no struggle was organized, inside or outside the army, to eliminate the bureaucratic apparatus in the armed forces. This was precisely the bureaucracy's last resource and the one it relied on to carry through its political counter-revolution.

12. The Polish revolution is the first antibureaucratic revolution in which the mass movement was able to find a solution to the problem of self-organization of the workers. In all previous political revolutions, like that in East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968, the working class created organs of power and dual power — workers councils, or strike committees tending to convert themselves into workers councils — but not permanent forms of self-organization. This is where the superiority of the Polish experience lies.

The interenterprise strike committees of August 1980 did not turn into workers councils but into organizing committees of the union. The overwhelming majority of wage earners, organized at the grass roots in enterprise union sections, joined this union. Solidarnosc did not organize on the lines of occupations or industries, but on a territorial basis (the regions). The horizontal structures completely outweighed the vertical structures — although they did exist, the sections based on industrial lines had a very small role. This method of organization insures the unity of all workers, regardless of their trades or the industry in which they are employed. The specificity of Solidarnosc as a trade union organization lay in the fact that it was not based on trades or industries. All the enterprise sections were united in a regional organization, and the regional organizations in a national organization.

Another particularity of Solidarnosc is the fact that its union democracy had many of the features of the democracy of workers councils.

Because of this, Solidarnosc was an organization representing the majority of workers whose leading organs also tended to assume the role of organs of a counter-power.

It is not by chance that the Polish workers are organized in the framework of a trade union that ensures the protection of their rights, their dignity, and their interests — material as much as spiritual — against the state; that they, moreover, call the state "boss." This reflects the situation of workers in a transitional society during the whole historic period in which the state and the bureaucracy, and the dangers bureaucratic deformation engender continue to exist. In the USSR and the Eastern European countries, the bureaucracy manages almost all the surplus product, thereby feeding its own privileges. It is naturally against this form of parasitic exploitation that the workers revolt, and organize themselves. Their work is reduced to being only the source of a wage necessary to procure the means of subsistence, often a poor one. From this point of view, trade unions have tasks similar to those that they have to assume when labor power is a commodity hired by capitalists — to struggle against the state-boss in an attempt to improve the conditions of work and the remuneration of labor power.

"The transfer of the factories to the state changed the situation of the workers only juridically. In reality, he is compelled to live in want and work a definite number of hours for a definite wage." (*Revolution Betrayed*, Pathfinder Press, p. 241.) From this fact, "Wage-labor does not lose its degrading character of slavery under the Soviet regime," said Trotsky. In a general manner, although there is no longer in these countries exploitation in the sense of class exploitation, there is still:

a) use of "forms of exploitation" (Trotsky) for the extortion of surplus product and to determine its extent and use without workers having the right of control or of veto. "The differences in income," said Trotsky about the transitional society under bureaucratic dictatorship, "are determined, in other words, not only by differences of individual productiveness, but also by a masked

appropriation of the products of the labor of others." (*Revolution Betrayed*, Pathfinder Press, p. 240.) These forms of exploitation will only disappear with a generalized system of self-management which allows the working class to decide itself the extent and the destination of its sacrifices.

b) parasitic exploitation in the sense in which Marx used the term, that is to say appropriation by the parasitic bureaucracy of part of the social product as the foundation of their privileges.

In addition, it is the bureaucracy which decides on the standard of living of the workers in the light of its specific caste interests, and it often brutally denies the material conditions needed to assure reproduction of the labor force.

This is the reason, along with the fact that labor power partially retains a commodity character, that the workers need a trade union.

At the same time, labor power no longer has strictly the status of a commodity. This essential difference is expressed notably in slower rate of work, and in setting wage rates in accordance with different criteria than those imposed by a labor market.

The defense of workers in the framework of new relations of production should preserve and reinforce the fact that they have the right to demand to be no longer mere wage earners. This logic should be reflected at the trade union level.

- by struggles against all attempts to reintroduce the right of factory managers to lay off workers for economic reasons: closure of an enterprise must not be because of the automatic function of the market, but the relevant decision of a competent territorial unit (district, regional, national) and its organs of self-management. This closure implies the simultaneous re-employment of all workers in another job at least at the same level of qualification.

- by demands tied up with the workers right to decide on the use of the total social surplus product. A variety of options could obviously develop with respect to this. Thus, the "wage" demands should not be separated from the others. This precisely reflects the fact that the functions taken over by the bureaucracy could be assumed by the workers. The workers must have the right to make the decisions after a debate on the following:

- the part of the surplus product allocated to productive and unproductive investment funds and the sectors to get priority.

- the share allocated for the collective consumption and extending free goods and services.

- the part distributable in the form of wages in accordance with criteria established nationally.

Here again, a public debate must make it possible to produce consistent criteria (adjusting them in accordance with experience and degree of development reached). At the same time, such public debate must serve as a means of combating the following:

- effects of the market on the incomes that aggravate inequalities with little regard to the effective work put in.

- income differentials based on the so-called "quality" of work, which are a hidden form of appropriating part of the surplus product to feed social privileges.

Beyond that, the essential effect of the antibureaucratic political revolution does not bear on the sphere of distribution, but on that of production. To break up the power monopoly of the bureaucracy in the economy does not mean only denying it the right to decide on the use of the social surplus product, but also the right to determine the scope and limits of the social surplus product. This is why the need for combative and self-managing trade unions throughout this historic period involves the need for such trade unions to have the right to share in determining the organization of work (tempo, ways of measuring work, etc.).

This does not mean that the trade union should be responsible for the management of the economy, which is a task that belongs to the organs of workers self-management.

13. One of the essential lessons of the Polish revolution was

the questioning by the working class of the concept of social property as it had been presented by the bureaucracy in power. The Polish workers rejected the identification of state property with social property. The slogan "Give us back our factories!" which was raised during the first meeting of delegates of the self-management movement on July 8 in Gdansk, expresses this reaction very concretely, just as did the emergence of the concept of "social property" counterposed to the concept of state enterprise, or the distinction that came to be made between legal ownership and *social* control of the means of production.

From this standpoint, revolutionary Marxists fully support the aspirations of the Polish workers expressed in their struggle for self-management, and agree with all those who say, "We demand a real socialization of the means of production; that is socialism."

The transformation into state property of the means of production expropriated from the bourgeoisie is evidently a formal juridical act that has major importance for the socialization of the means of production. But in the same way that in the workers state power can be exercised either by the workers or the bureaucracy, the power to control the means of production may be in the hands of the working class or in those of the bureaucratic apparatus of the state. That is what decides the real socio-economic content of the property forms.

The bureaucratic caste profits from the state-owned means of production as if it actually owned them, but it does not take on any of the responsibilities of ownership. This double nature is the basis for the very widespread feeling in the transitional societies under bureaucratic domination that state property does not in fact belong to anyone.

Revolutionary Marxists defend state property in the workers states against internal tendencies and external threats that seek to restore the system of private ownership of the major means of production. But, at the same time, they advocate the transformation of state property into social property. Undoubtedly, the *complete* socialization of the means of production will only be possible when social classes, commodity production, and the state have completely disappeared. But the experience of the Polish revolution, especially that of the self-management movement which developed under the leadership of Solidarnosc, helps to clarify the point at which the socialization of the *major* means of production *begins*. In his criticisms of the totalitarian regime of the bureaucracy, Trotsky clearly indicates that the socialization of the means of production can begin and advances only as the state begins to wither away, that is, begins to be absorbed by a self-managed society. He states that social property begins not at the point where private property stops, but where state property stops. This is precisely the view which gained currency in the Solidarnosc mass movement.

Certainly, the diversity of projects defended in Poland under the single name of self-management, as in the Yugoslav experience, indicates the dangers of a reductionist self-management orientation, according to which each work collective would manage its own means of work, with the market unifying the whole. In order for the process of socialization of the means of production to progress, a fight has to be waged from the start to keep it from being diverted by the state or by the market. We should not think that such an understanding is obvious.

In fact, the historic experience of Stalinism leads to rejecting all centralization and all mandatory planning. But practice proves that indicative plans, or social funds designed to reinforce great principles of solidarity are by no means sufficient to counter the growth of social and regional inequalities when it is the logic of decentralization and the market that essentially determine incomes and, above all, investments.

The market seems to offer a guarantee both for a certain economic rationality and for liberties that are trampled underfoot in

the framework of hypercentralized bureaucratic planning. These ideas represent not only illusions but projects to which we counterpose the possibility of another kind of rationality: that of workers democracy based on the power of workers councils. So long as this alternative has not been put into practice somewhere, pro-market conceptions will retain considerable force.

The resistance by the workers to the working of the market laws has been and will remain very great. But the idea that they can better control what they know better (their factory, their workplace) conflicts to a certain extent with integrated and coordinated self-management, and leads some to fall back on reliance on the market, experts and other "competent" managers. Then, when there is real decentralization, not even thousands of strikes can rebuild the unity of the working class.

However, the close connection between the process of socialization of the means of production and the process of the withering away of the state unveiled by revolutionary Marxism, began to be perceived by wide sections of the Polish workers who struggled at once to socialize the state sector of the economy and to socialize the state itself. The struggle for workers self-management of the enterprises rapidly took on a broader dimension. The mass movement wanted to replace the bureaucratic state institutions with different institutions that would insure the existence and the expansion of a genuine democracy of workers and citizens. The construction of a "self-managed republic," as advocated in Solidarnosc's program, would have tended to set up apparatuses suitable for a state in the process of socialization, that is to say that would be withering away as they merged with the masses, submitted to their direct control, and associating them to the direct exercise of power. The bureaucratic caricature of planning would have been replaced by a democratic elaboration of the plan through the broad participation of the organs representing the workers and the citizens and the possibility of submitting and discussing alternative proposals.

14. The Polish revolution once again confirms that in all workers revolutions, whether anticapitalist social revolutions or anti-bureaucratic political revolutions, the working class seeks to concretize its power in its own institutions of council democracy that combine the advantages of mass direct democracy with the advantages of representative democracy. The organs of struggle for power (or dual power organs) thrown up by the mass movements when they are led by the working class naturally tend to adopt the form of workers councils in the enterprises and the form of councils of workers delegates on the territorial level — two institutions whose historical precedents are the 1917 Russian revolution's factory committees and the soviets.

As previously stated, the leading organs of Solidarnosc in the enterprises, at the regional level, and at the national level, were in fact nascent organs of a democratic counterpower of the workers. The union democracy whose norms governed the functioning of these organs had the features of a council-type democracy. The workers councils, organs of workers control over production and of struggle for workers self-management of the enterprises, based on general assemblies of the workers (or of the delegates in the larger enterprises), corresponded exactly to this new type of institution. The regional coordinating bodies of workers councils pointed the way to workers power on a territorial basis, and the emergence of the organizing committee of the National Federation of Self-Management bodies (which was preparing to hold the first congress of delegates of councils) demonstrated the tendency toward centralization on a national scale. The independent peasant movement organized in the Solidarnosc private farmers union also called for the setting up of new forms of power in the rural zones, based on township general assemblies. The new organs of democratic management that appeared in the universities struggling for their autonomy also were close to the form of councils.

It is the working class that is the historic bearer of the tendency toward council democracy. The Polish revolution demonstrated that when the working class exercises its hegemony in the mass movement, the model of democracy and democratic institutions that it puts forward is also followed very closely — with some unavoidable variations — by the other oppressed social sectors involved in the revolution. This was the case in many other revolutions — think of the poor-peasant councils in the Russian revolution, of soldiers councils in the Russian, German, and Spanish revolutions.

This doesn't mean that the advance or even the triumph of the antibureaucratic revolution leads to the immediate disappearance of the institutions of parliamentary democracy and the complete rule of council democracy.

The traumatizing experiences of Stalinism and the bureaucratic dictatorship have unquestionably refurbished the image of parliaments in Eastern Europe, as tarnished as it had become. The idea of electing a parliament by universal suffrage, with several slates, the citizens having a genuine right to present candidates and choose among them, was very popular during the revolutionary rise in Poland. It is improper for revolutionary Marxists to oppose what emerges as a legitimate democratic demand of the broad masses. But they cannot therefore abandon their criticisms of parliamentary democracy; they must clearly indicate its limitations. The essential thing is to define the competence of parliamentary-type institutions in a workers state so that they do not undermine the power of the workers councils, whose democratic legitimacy is based on one decisive point — *Those who produce the material wealth must have the primary right to decide how it will be used.* This idea is a basic one in the history of the international working-class movement and was already put forward in Poland in 1956 by Oskar Lange, and later picked up by Solidarnosc as a means of resolving the problem at hand. It was the origin of the idea of a second chamber of the Diet, the Social and Economic or Self-Management Chamber which, according to the most advanced projects of Solidarnosc, was to be elected exclusively by the direct producers and to concentrate in its hands all the economic power of the state. Such an institution could be considered as a transitional form toward council democracy in a situation where the institutions of parliamentary democracy continued to exist. At the same time, it is no substitute for — and is not in contradiction to — a national congress of delegates of workers councils, or a permanent body originating in such a congress. In a transitional society in which various forms of ownership of the means of production survive, the system of workers self-management represents the power not of all the direct producers, but only the producers in the nationalized sector of the economy. The working class, even though hegemonic, must guarantee the democratic expression in the organs of economic power of all the direct producers, including the peasants and the other layers of small owners of the means of production.

In both capitalist society and the transitional society between capitalism and socialism, the working class is the most consistent bearer of the tendency toward political democracy. This is so because it is the representative of a new mode of production that, in its highest phase, will institute unrestricted democracy, that is, a democratic workers state in the process of withering away.

In attacking bureaucratic power, the working class does not aspire to replace the existing bureaucratic dictatorship by workers democracy, but to assure also democracy for all citizens. Workers democracy rests on the cooperation of producers and is founded essentially on the workers councils formed in the factories. The experience of the Polish revolution confirms that citizens democracy, as it emerges in the framework of a revolution led by the working class, is profoundly different from the distinctive forms of bourgeois democracy. Although it is not completely synonymous with workers democracy, it borrows the lat-

ter's features. This was obvious in the embryos of territorial self-management that appeared in Poland in the last phase of the revolutionary rise under the impetus of workers self-management. The newly emerging territorial self-management was a citizens democracy based not on the market but on cooperation and on mutual help of consumers, neighbors, or the solidarity of families.

15. Even during a revolution, the subjective maturing of workers is the outcome of a complex process, indeed a contradictory one in which the stages can be relatively prolonged. In the Polish political revolution, the workers had to go through almost a year and a half of sharp struggles in which they lost their illusions before they decided to take their destiny into their own hands. But this moment was preceded by an objective maturation which was reflected in their activity, and particularly in the forms of struggle. This is one of the great lessons of the Polish revolution.

Since August 1980, that is, since the very beginning of the revolutionary rise, the main form of struggle of the Polish workers, adopted as such by Solidarnosc in its subsequent struggles, was the mass (passive) strike combined with factory occupations. The significance of this form of struggle when it is generalized and becomes the main form of struggle, is much more important than appears at first sight. Here is what Trotsky says about it:

“Independently of the demands of the strikers, the temporary occupation of the factories deals a blow to the idol of capitalist property. All strikes with occupation raise in practice the question of who rules in the factory: the capitalist or the workers? While the strike with occupation raises this question episodically, the factory committee gives it an organized expression.”

Something very similar takes place under the rule of the bureaucracy. A strike involving occupations poses in practice the question of who should control the factories and their product — the working class or the bureaucracy? The form of the strike movements in Poland demonstrated that the workers were capable of putting the factories they occupied, as well as all the means of production concentrated in them to work for society as a whole and in the interest of all. Trotsky also noted that the emergence of factory committees as a result of strikes involving occupation created a situation of dual power in the factory. The enterprise committees, the regional leaderships, and the national leadership of Solidarnosc de facto have created dual power at all these levels, not only because they developed out of this type of strike, but because they also have taken the lead in carrying out new occupation strikes.

The transition from objective maturity to subjective maturity for the seizure of power is marked by an ever broader involvement of the working class in the preparation of a higher form of occupation strikes. We are referring to the active strike that was called for by the most revolutionary currents in Solidarnosc. According to the conception that evolved inside Solidarnosc, the active strike does not confine itself to raising the question of economic power in practice, but it must also move to resolve it through revolutionary mass action. Moving beyond the proclamation of occupation strikes, the workers were to resume production under the leadership of the strike committees, according to alternative plans drawn up by these committees. Such plans were to reflect the genuine social needs and priorities. The strike committees had to extend workers control to encompass distribution.

At the same time, they had to form workers self-defense guards. Through active strikes of regional scope, and then of national scope, coordinated and centralized by the leading organs of Solidarnosc, economic power was to be wrested from the bureaucracy. Once firmly in the hands of the workers, it would be turned over by the strike committees of Solidarnosc to the organs of workers self-management consolidated during the active

strike, and centralized on a national scale. The victory of the active strike would mean that the workers had succeeded in accumulating sufficient forces to wrest from the bureaucracy the remainder of its political power. Rooted in the natural tendencies of the workers movement and its own forms of struggle, the tactic of the active strike constitutes one of the most important contributions of Solidarnosc to the general strategy of the political revolution.

16. The subsequent development of the revolution, and especially its culmination in the seizure of power by the proletariat as a whole, inevitably would have sharpened differentiations based on social interests and conflicting political orientations that were already latent in the months before the December 13, 1981, crackdown. The material interests of the majority of the proletariat and those of the independent peasantry, the urban petty-bourgeoisie, and the materially privileged *intelligentsia* (especially its technocratic wing), are not identical, either in the immediate sense or in a historical sense. The debate on economic reform by itself was enough to bring out differences clearly rooted in different social interests. But all these layers had an interest in freeing themselves from the unbearable tutelage of the bureaucracy.

The working class cannot dilute its own historic interests nor the power that it conquers for the sake of some illusory general interest of a society in which the division into classes and the division between manual and intellectual labor survives. Being the builder of socialism, it must insure its supremacy through the democratic exercise of power. But at the same time, it must win over to this revolutionary undertaking the broadest possible layers, beginning with the peasantry and the other groups of independent producers, and maintain an alliance with them; this is the only way to advance toward socialism. The very broad social alliance forged around the working class in the heat of the common struggle against bureaucratic power in the course of the political revolution, is a solid starting point to move in this direction.

The hegemony of the working class within self-managed post-capitalist society will remain assured so long as, beyond these basic institutions of state power, the following factors exist:

- the overall predominance of collective ownership of the means of production, which does not exclude the existence, or even the prevalence, of private property in agriculture and petty trade, but which obviously excludes any dynamic of progressive expansion of private property to other economic sectors;

- the progressive limitation, on a strictly voluntary basis, of what remains of private property and of commodity production;

- the shielding — fundamentally by state monopoly of foreign trade — of the national economy from the pressures of the world capitalist market and growing coordination with other workers states free of bureaucratic oppression;

- the existence of other political and economic mechanisms that can keep a symbiosis from developing between the private commodity sector and international capital leading to a subordination of planning to market laws;

- the systematic limitation and reversal of all phenomena of social inequality;

- the predominance of the principle of solidarity over that of material interest in social investments, the functioning of the state, official education, and — progressively — in everyday economic life;

- the teaching and practice of genuine international workers solidarity without subordination of any nation or nationality to another, and with a systematic struggle against all xenophobic and racist prejudices to overcome the exaltation of an unhealthy nationalism.

For the antibureaucratic political revolution to be victorious in an Eastern European country that is a satellite of the Soviet bu-

reaucracy, the following are required:

- self-defense against pressures and threats of military intervention, or against aggression, whether it emanates from the ruling bureaucracies of other workers states or from imperialist powers;

- the protection of the national economy from the world capitalist market and increasing coordination with the economy of other workers states freed from bureaucratic oppression;

- internationalist aid to all the sectors of the world revolution, and in the first place to the most immediate ally of such a political revolution — the workers movement in workers states where the bureaucratic dictatorship still rules.

IV. The masses enduring resistance and its main lessons

17. When the bureaucratic dictatorship turned to open political counter-revolution and instituted a state of war on December 13, 1981, it dealt a severe blow to the political revolution in Poland, but it was not able to follow up on this advantage and totally crush and disperse the mass movement everywhere. Solidarnosc went underground and initiated a mass resistance that still goes on today and constitutes a political phenomenon without precedent in the history of the workers movement.

The length, tenacity and breadth of this resistance have already earned it a place among history's most glorious working class struggles. They confirm our earlier feeling that the 1980-81 Polish revolution was one of the deepest and most dynamic proletarian revolutions of this century and that the period of revolutionary rise was extremely prolonged: on December 13, far from having exhausted its dynamic and entering a downward trend, the revolution was still gaining momentum. This emerges clearly from the 1982 May Day demonstrations, May 13, fifteen minute strike and August 31, celebration of the Gdansk Accords anniversary when, answering the call of Solidarnosc's underground leadership, the masses took to the streets in over 80 cities and turned the country's main industrial and urban centers into the scene of fierce confrontations with the forces of repression.

18. The fact that the mass struggles continued after December 13, and gave birth to a broad resistance movement calls for an explanation. Simply recognizing that the Polish revolution was in full swing at the time of the counter-revolutionary coup is not enough. The qualitative aspects of this revolution must also be taken into account. There were of course serious shortcomings on the programmatic and political level since neither a revolutionary workers party nor even an organized revolutionary socialist nucleus existed, and since the political differentiation process was still embryonic. Nevertheless if one examines the level of class consciousness of the proletarian forces involved in the revolution, one notices that it was on the average very high. The explanation can be found in the distinctive features of the working class struggle in the workers states subject to the bureaucracy's totalitarian rule.

On the one hand, in "normal" times, independent working class activity and self-organization are impossible; atomization is carried to extremes; the repressive apparatus can intervene quicker than is customary under capitalism; and partial gains are difficult to secure. All this prevents, or at least greatly hinders, the centralization of experiences gained in advancing immediate demands and in various working class actions. As a result, a generalized and prolonged struggle can only occur if broad sectors of the working class have somehow previously gone through the experience of struggles, assimilated their lessons, and attained both a relatively high and homogeneous average level of consciousness and an ability to give a concrete expression to the immediate aspirations of the masses.

This is precisely what had occurred in Poland by August 1980. The nationwide strike broke out at a time when the Polish work-

ing class, at least a major section, had learned to put forward demands that everybody could identify with and to struggle as a homogenous bloc.

On the other hand, the bureaucracy's structural weakness becomes fully visible as soon as its rule is challenged by a struggling working class and goes into crisis. The experience of the Polish revolution has shown that it can sometimes be quite difficult for the bureaucracy to overcome such a crisis by a "normalization" of its rule. In this respect, the Polish events have provided an excellent empirical verification of our traditional theory on the class nature of the state in the USSR and Eastern Europe. Not only is there no reason to reconsider this theory; to the contrary it should be defended as the only valid theory.

The level of consciousness the masses had reached in August 1980, was greatly enriched by eighteen months of bitter struggle, confrontations with the bureaucratic rulers and search for the means to resist the regime's attacks and run the country themselves. While the level of maturity — and corresponding organizational forms — they attained could not prevent the defeat of December 13, it did nevertheless lay a solid foundation for resistance to the bureaucratic counter-revolution.

It is undeniable that the experience of participating in a self-managed trade union rapidly gave birth to the desire to generalize this experience and to the idea of a self-managed republic. Then as now, the aspiration for a self-managed republic is not confined to those who fully understand the question of power and the need to settle it by revolutionary means. The feeling that no political decision, no measure taken by the state is legitimate unless it has been discussed and negotiated with Solidarnosc is extremely widespread and strong among Polish workers and has acquired its own dynamic. They consider their union not only as the sole repository of working class legitimacy but also as the sole source of legitimacy for the state itself. This conviction alone cannot carry the Polish revolution to victory, but it is capable of generating a broad and prolonged resistance. It was the key subjective factor of the resistance and was reflected in the Solidarnosc activists' favorite saying "We are subjects, not objects."

19. The tactic used by the mass movement during the general strike called by Solidarnosc in the first hours and days after the state of war was established, was a tactic of passive resistance and progressive retreat. This tactic contributed decisively to the subsequent ability to continue the struggle. Even in those workplaces where the workers had initially decided to actively defend themselves and were prepared, if necessary, to blow up the major factories and industrial facilities, a big majority was rapidly won over to a more realistic assessment of the relationship of forces and adopted a more correct tactic that made it possible to safeguard a substantial part of the mass movement's forces by avoiding unnecessary exposure to the blows of the repressive apparatus.

Solidarnosc was not prepared to effectively resist, let alone defeat, a general counter-revolutionary coup. December 13 was a moment of truth which revealed a relationship of forces unfavorable for the mass movement. Wherever the union leaders escaped the dragnet of the first few hours, led strikes inside the workplaces and kept losses to a minimum by organizing the retreat, the resistance subsequently developed fastest, most organically and most coherently. This was particularly the case in Lower Silesia. By contrast, in Upper Silesia, the Solidarnosc miners spontaneously organized resistance on the basis of active defense methods or of occupying the pits until the very limit of their physical endurance. But there came a time when thirst, hunger and general exhaustion compelled them to surrender. In those pits where they had been able to manufacture some rudimentary weapons, they waged often heroic battles against the ZOMO — thus, the "Wujek" miners gave the Polish working class new martyrs. Nevertheless, these forms of resistance con-

tributed to worsen Solidarnosc's defeat and considerably weakened the subsequent resistance in that region. The "Wujek" miners' exemplary action demonstrated once again that arming the workers and mass violence are effective tactics in clashes with the repressive apparatus. But given the existing circumstances, their struggle was doomed to failure. The outcome convinced many Polish workers that mass violence was useless and should be rejected. But the main Lower Silesian leaders correctly drew the opposite conclusion: they insisted that their own tactic of passive resistance had been the only possible one, but also recognized that if workers across the entire country had been as ready for active resistance as the "Wujek" miners, not only would this method of struggle have been justified, but it could have routed the counter-revolutionary coup. The fact was, only a few vanguard elements had come to that conclusion, not the broad masses.

20. The fact that the December 13, defeat was not decisive, that Solidarnosc's most active forces were able to go underground and that a mass resistance against the bureaucratic counter-revolution developed, has given rise to the idea of a "clandestine society" (sometimes also called "independent society"). This can be an ambiguous concept if it implies that an alternative society can develop spontaneously and if it encourages the illusion that the problem of a confrontation with bureaucratic rule can be avoided. The political value of the idea lies in its correct understanding that the resistance must rely on the activity of broad social layers to preserve and sustain an activist force within the masses.

Experience has demonstrated that the existence of an underground Solidarnosc union in the workplaces was not merely possible but could become the backbone of the "clandestine society." In fact, everything depends on rebuilding such organizations: the effectiveness of day-to-day resistance, the "front of refusal," the development of an independent social consciousness, the outcome of partial economic and political struggles and the preparation and success of a future general strike or other major battles. The dues collected by Solidarnosc in the workplaces where it was able to continue existing underground represent an extremely important material base for the resistance. They made it possible for the underground workplace committees to provide material assistance to their members, set up loan funds, dispense aid to the families of jailed or fired unionists and organize vacations for the workers' children and family. Solidarnosc's strength in the workplaces guaranteed the effectiveness of the boycott of the state's "new unions," made it possible to pressure the labor inspectors and forced the factory managers to take the workers' interests into account. In some cases, these activities could be carried on in the open, either formally through the workers councils, or informally through the workers' representatives in the workshops.

Solidarnosc's implantation as a union is noticeably stronger in workplaces of industrial centers where the regional leaderships best understood the potential for workplace organizing and the central role the union should play in the structures and activities of the "clandestine society." The existence of a conscious leadership proved to be crucial in this respect. The unions implantation was also closely connected to the ability of the rank-and-file bodies led by workplace committees to establish a coordination among themselves: first on a regional basis with delegates from all the major workplaces; then on a local basis, between neighboring workplaces. Wherever the regional Solidarnosc leaderships came out for extremely decentralized organization and activity and neglected the work of coordinating workplace union bodies, the results were very damaging for both Solidarnosc and the "clandestine society" as a whole.

"Clandestine society" refers to a variety of autonomous activities, initiatives and forms of organization that are carried on in a

secret manner in the most diverse walks of life. It aims to prevent the bureaucratic rulers and their repressive, political and ideological apparati from dispersing the social vanguard by atomizing, dividing and eroding the social consciousness of the working class and other oppressed layers. "Clandestine society" makes it possible to preserve the most active forces of the social movement and win new forces.

The underground press that has grown up in Poland represents an unprecedented phenomenon by its magnitude (number of titles and copies printed); it is supplemented by book publishing and regular underground radio broadcasts in some regions. All these activities have created an independent news network and a vital forum for discussion and exchange of experiences. The flying universities and self-education clubs represent another aspect of the "clandestine society." They are far more limited than the news-circulation activities but nevertheless make it possible to create a space where independent learning, education and culture can continue. They promote freedom of thought and dispense culture to sections of youth and many worker cadres. They make it possible to keep the alliance of the working class and the most active and devoted sectors of the democratic intelligentsia alive.

Wherever the policy was to focus the building of "clandestine society" mainly on rebuilding and activating the workplace bodies, it was possible to publish a large part of the underground press directly in the workplaces and to orient the self-education initiatives towards setting up workers' universities and workers' discussion clubs. But this was not the case everywhere; in general the "clandestine society" had a stronger base where it was solidly connected to the underground union, and weaker, especially in terms of its structures and roots in the working class, where the Solidarnosc leaderships had neglected directly trade union activities and where the learning, publishing and other independent activities were focused on the intelligentsia.

The very idea of building a "clandestine society" — insofar as it is focused on the working class — was one of Solidarnosc's main contributions to the general strategy of mass resistance in a counter-revolutionary situation.

21. The emergence of a nationwide Solidarnosc Provisional Coordinating Committee (TKK) in April 1982 created the conditions for the formation of a central leadership of the resistance movement. The need for such a leadership had been keenly felt by trade union militants. In fact, Solidarnosc had been embroiled in an almost permanent crisis of leadership since December 13, with negative effects on the entire mass movement. There are objective factors which make it difficult for a central leadership even to exist. Even after the TKK was formed, subjective problems erupted in its midst and prevented it from firmly taking over responsibility for leading Solidarnosc. In practice, it seemed more of a moral authority than a genuine leadership or coordinating body; but this, in turn, began to undermine that moral authority. In the fall 1982, political vacillations, inconsistencies, mistakes and sometimes extreme empiricism gave the leadership crisis a dangerous acuteness. The fact was, the TKK had failed to tap the enormous potential for militancy and radicalization that the tremendous August 31, mass actions had revealed. This naturally led to a demobilization, and to the fact that Solidarnosc was caught by surprise when the Diet outlawed it on October 8.

The leadership crisis was reflected in the inability to put forward an adequate fighting strategy and program for Solidarnosc. The old strategy of "self-limiting revolution" which had led Solidarnosc to the December 13, defeat, remained the prevalent political outlook in the TKK during the entire first year of the resistance. "Geopolitical fatalism" — the belief that any serious threat to bureaucratic rule would bring on an immediate response of the Soviet Union Warsaw Pact allies who would crush the movement militarily — had a paralyzing effect. It continued to foster the illusion that a compromise had to be struck with the

Polish bureaucracy which would allow for the coexistence of the independent mass movement and bureaucratic rule, and force the latter to liberalize. This fatalistic attitude led to the adoption of an extremely inconsistent line on the general strike strategy.

Under the pressure of the more radical currents more directly linked to the workers of large-scale industry — mainly represented in the TKK by the Lower Silesian leadership — a fragile compromise and unstable equilibrium was arrived at inside the TKK, and made possible the adoption of the January 1983 programmatic statement. The statement represents a real step forward in overcoming the crisis of strategy: in addition to systematizing some of the gains embodied in the "clandestine society," it was the first open renunciation of the quest for a "national reconciliation," recognized the need to overthrow the bureaucratic regime in its post-December 13, form, and indicated that preparing the general strike was one of the central axes of Solidarnosc's work and aimed not merely to resist but to "smash the dictatorship."

But the TKK's programmatic statement did not lead to a real political turn. The inability to concretize these advances in both an action and a transitional program, combined with the resistance of some TKK members to the new perspectives, restricted the potential political impact of the document; it found little support among the masses. Given that it had no concrete tasks to propose and did not lay out the organizational forms and actions that corresponded to the goals it advocated, it was likely to remain a piece of paper.

In considering all these political weaknesses of the leadership, it is important to emphasize a very important fact: the overwhelming majority of the tens of thousands of activists who emerged as Solidarnosc's cadres during the period of legality were completely new to political and trade union activity. As a result, the underground movement had to draw mainly on the gains made during that eighteen-month period; this goes a long way in explaining the difficulties they had in grappling with these obstacles.

22. Nevertheless, there already existed inside Solidarnosc, particularly among the most politically advanced sectors, a series of gains that could point the way out of this strategic orientation crisis. Some of these advanced elements for instance had mainly focused their efforts to create the "clandestine society" on rebuilding workplace union structures and succeeded in setting up genuine regional leaderships closely connected to the industrial strongholds through coordinating committees; these coordinations brought together representatives of strongholds and interenterprise committees and were in a position to make their main decisions on the basis of opinion polls taken in the workplaces. They had also clearly defined their strategic objective — the general strike — in the belief that, on the long run, the key question would be the relationship of forces between bureaucratic rulers unable to impose "normalization" and a social movement that would have accumulated an enormous potential. They foresaw that this uneasy balance could break down at any time, more or less suddenly, and generate a general strike dynamic if the break occurred in a way favorable to the mass movement.

Experience confirmed the validity of this analysis. After the mass demonstrations of August 31, 1982, 80 per cent of the workers of the large plants of Lower Silesia were ready to launch the general strike. The regional leadership also agreed on going ahead but was forced to back off when it realized how unevenly prepared the action was around the country, and how dangerous it could become. Barely a month later, on October 12, the Gdansk shipyard workers, responded to the outlawing of Solidarnosc by taking the initiative of calling a renewable strike which they conceived as the possible prelude to a national strike with occupation of worksites. Their initiative got a favorable response in many of the country's large factories where the workers appeared determined to follow the example of Gdansk. They

only gave up the plan in the end when they found out the TKK had called a national day of protest at a later date — a decision that was to lead to the fiasco of the November 11, 1982 strike. In a situation of exacerbated social tensions, any similar initiative could trigger a general strike.

In this respect, the Lower Silesian Solidarnosc leaders have put forward several very important points on the subject of the general strike strategy:

First, they have pointed out the need for the workplace union organizations to wage partial struggles for immediate demands that can raise the workers' level of organization, social consciousness and preparedness to fight. The TKK's January 1983, programmatic statement had recognized that economic struggles and partial struggles in general constituted an essential axis for Solidarnosc's activity. Such struggles — most often brief strikes or warning strikes — had occurred in many workplaces to protest the awful, and sometimes inhuman, working conditions, the low wages imposed by the bureaucracy, to defend workers fired for their illegal union activities, etc. But their lack of coordination had made them weak. The "week of protest" organized by the main Wroclaw factories under the leadership of the regional strike committee showed such a coordination was possible and would elevate these partial struggles onto a qualitatively higher plane.

Second, they emphasized the importance of defending factories against the attacks of the repressive forces during a general strike. Over the summer 1982 some more advanced sectors had drawn the lessons of the December 13, defeat and discussed the concept of "a general strike with active defense of the factories." As for the Lower Silesian Solidarnosc leadership, it had already begun to concretize that idea by proposing that Workers Guards be set up in the main factories and centralized under the direct responsibility of the regional leaderships.

Thirdly, for the first time in Solidarnosc's history, they correctly posed the question of Soviet military intervention by demonstrating that it was linked to the current relationship of forces; the weaker the level of organization, mobilization and determination of the mass movement the greater the risk of such an intervention.

Fourth, they tried to define the necessary conditions for a victory of the general strike. They believed that it should not confine itself to reconquering trade union freedoms but rather lead to the workers taking over their plants and to workers control over production, or even to more advanced forms of control over the economy.

The weak point of the most advanced thinking on the strategy the Polish working class should adopt to promote a new rise of the political revolution concerns the question of the repressive apparatus — army and militia. It has no perspective for resolving this problem. Up to now, despite the glaring lessons of the December 13, counter-revolutionary coup, even the Solidarnosc sectors who have thought things out the furthest have not understood the crucial need to carry on propaganda and agitational work among the rank and file of the repressive apparatus and lay the groundwork for paralyzing and dividing it, in order to win the workers in uniform to the cause of the working class at the time of the showdown with the bureaucratic rulers.

Even the most lucid leaders still harbor illusions that the repressive apparatus can spontaneously disintegrate and become paralyzed without a prior political intervention in its midst of the most active and conscious forces of the social movement. It should also be emphasized that those who support the general strike strategy inside Solidarnosc are still a minority and are not without their own vacillations.

23. The December 13, defeat forced the mass movement into a partial retreat towards the Church. As the bureaucratic dictatorship repressed all independent social activities, the Church be-

came the only institution retaining at least some autonomy from the power of the state. It was only natural that the masses who were looking for free spaces and meeting places would turn towards it. The retreat had some ideological implications such as the increased religious fervor of the masses which, in turn, bolstered the "spiritual power" of the Church. John Paul II's pilgrimage merely confirmed the existing situation.

But this did not automatically imply that the masses politically support the Church as an institution. Solidarnosc has demonstrated the working class' real ability to preserve its political independence from the Church — even in very difficult circumstances and despite its attachment to christianity. The Catholic hierarchy's conciliatory policy mouthed by Cardinal Glemp was not followed by the masses. On the contrary, it drew often very harsh criticism from the underground press and more generally from broad sectors of the mass movement.

Compared to the previous period, the critical attitude towards the Church has considerably increased. At the same time, the masses, in retreating towards the Church, introduced into it deep contradictions which the hierarchy is having problems overcoming. Many parish priests have begun to collaborate with the mass movement and underground Solidarnosc and express the aspirations of the masses in their Sunday sermons. Rather violent political controversies have erupted between a section of the lower clergy and the hierarchy. Some bishops especially those closer to the peasantry, have adopted an attitude of severe condemnation of the bureaucratic dictatorship and proposed concrete initiatives towards a worker-peasant alliance.

In its haste to fully reestablish discipline inside the Church, the Catholic hierarchy gave in to the bureaucracy's pressures and demands that the lower clergy cease and desist from its "subversive activities." It has more and more insistently urged parishes and individual priests to abandon all contact with the underground and all statements of support for the mass movement. This seems to be the cause of the reaction of increasing disaffection towards the Church institutions seen among the masses and in Solidarnosc.

24. Both the development of the underground mass movement and the overall crisis of the bureaucracy have caused the failure of the "normalization" policy so vaunted by Jaruzelski and his clique at the time of the coup d'etat in December 1981. They have failed on the economic, social and political levels.

The "economic reform" which was broadly defined in Autumn 1981 involved above all giving greater autonomy to the workplaces and extending market mechanisms. It was gutted of its content even before it began to be applied.

A whole series of measures had to be taken which directly contradicted the declared intentions of the bureaucracy to decentralize economic management and planning:

- By the end of February 1982 the prices of most goods and services were set by the central authorities of the regime.

- Nearly 50% of industrial production came under the "operational programmes" — i.e., decrees laying down priorities of production in certain sectors and for certain products.

- The militarization of the main factories meant turning all decision making powers over to the central authorities of the bureaucracy and caused unprecedented disorder and wastage due to the incompetence of the military teams to whom the factory managers were supposed to be subordinated.

- A decision was taken to sharply cut back on imports in the two categories weighing most heavily in the foreign debt with the West (cereals, technology) and resulted in bottlenecks both in agriculture and industry.

The crisis in agriculture is continuing and the bureaucracy has not managed to improve the situation for the peasantry due to the continuing lack of machinery and infrastructure material which was already in extremely short supply in the previous period. Im-

ports of grain and feedstuffs — cutback drastically — are practically all distributed to state farms and collectives, excluding in this way the immense majority of agricultural producers. Peasants don't have the necessary machinery. The project of replacing imports by the development of maize cultivation has proved to be a fiasco. No efforts are being made to improve the transport of agricultural products, the storehouse facilities and other services needed by peasants although all are in a deplorable state.

In July 1983 the bureaucracy decided to try and neutralize the peasantry — certain sectors had organized strikes in deliveries of farm produce — by granting one of its key demands (which had been supported by Solidarnosc) — the establishment of constitutional guarantees on the perenity of private property.

One of the major failures of the bureaucratic dictatorship has been its inability for both subjective and objective reasons to reestablish work discipline in the productive process. The ever greater discontinuity of the productive process due to the difficulty factories have in getting raw materials and spare parts is increasingly pushing factory managers to carry out a labor intensive policy. That is, they minimize financial losses resulting from this situation by increasing production costs through increasing wages costs. This is just another way of ensuring the maintenance of subsidies and privileges which are indexed on a certain level of production costs.

Workers are taking advantage of the enormous demand for labor thus created with — conscious or unconscious — forms of resistance to the bureaucracy's policy. There is a clear increase in labor mobility, workers do not hesitate to leave jobs they consider too hard or badly paid for other lighter and better paid ones. The government's attempts to institutionalize certain limited forms of 'forced labor' (through limitations on the workers' rights to change jobs — a sort of partial assignment of a single workplace) has proved to have at least partially failed to the extent that workers refuse to take jobs in workplaces where this type of regulation is in force. More generally the bureaucracy's efforts to divide workers by using the weapon of widening differentials and distributing privileges, particularly with respect to wages, has had only quite limited success given the economic crisis and the resistance the working class has shown against this policy.

It is not at all surprising then, that two years after the beginning of the so-called "normalization process" and even according to the official press the Polish economy is mainly characterized by anarchy, incoherence and instability. Even all the authorities' specialists conclude that "the reforms have not had any effects."

The setting up of "new trade unions," which the bureaucracy wanted to use as a transmission belt permitting it to reestablish direct control over working people, has been a particularly striking fiasco. The call for a boycott made by the underground Solidarnosc leadership has been generally followed — particularly in the big factories, the Solidarnosc strongholds. In factories with several thousand workers — or even tens of thousands of workers — these official 'trade unions' have not been able to bring together more than a few hundred members. Furthermore official figures are artificially exaggerated.

The relative success of the regime in imposing the establishment of official "trade unions" in traditionally less organized sectors, in the smaller workplaces and the administration cannot cover up the fact that in 1983 only 45% of PUWP members had joined these trade unions — the fear of reprisals from militants of the underground movement being a significant dissuasive factor that is rather effective in the big workplaces.

Just as with the new trade unions the formation of the PRON (Patriotic Movement of National Rebirth) with an objective of rallying the "broad masses" was not able to create any illusions for very long. The inability of its official representatives to give precise membership figures and a breakdown of activity rapidly

led the bureaucracy to put a damper on its declarations about this "new step forward along the road of unity and socialism."

The main instrument permitting the government to make some gains is the use of direct and brutal repression. Secret police are out to track down militants of underground movement. Many Solidarnosc leaders are arrested, imprisoned and sentenced. But the factional struggles between the representatives of various apparati — army, militia, secret police, administration, party apparatus — and between various cliques inside the bureaucracy as well as the very different positions expressed by the 'hawks' and the so-called 'liberals' over the use of repression is evidence of the instability of the situation and of the fragility of the relationship of forces.

V. The international impact of the Polish events

25. The proclamation of the state of war dealt a severe blow not only to the Polish proletariat but also the international proletariat as a whole. The fight of the millions of workers of Solidarnosc had been one of the most advanced points of the struggle of the proletariat on a world scale, representing an experience without precedent in the history of the struggle against bureaucratic dictatorship and of the workers aspirations for the real socialization of the means of production and social wealth.

In this fight between a bureaucratic government and the masses, revolutionary Marxists were one hundred percent on the side of the masses. The workers state was not the target of any imperialist assault designed to restore capitalism. No coherent social force in Poland itself wished to, or could, reintroduce private appropriation of the means of production. What was under attack was the bureaucracy and its dictatorship, which had usurped power within the workers state. The proletariat tended to radically question the power of the privileged minority backed up by an entire repressive apparatus. The elimination of the bureaucratic caste could only strengthen the working class on the international level, not weaken it.

The liquidation of bureaucratic power would have demonstrated, in practice, in the eyes of the masses of the whole world, that the economy and society can be led by the workers as a whole. A giant step toward socialism would have been accomplished. It would have deeply influenced the behavior of workers both in the USSR and Eastern Europe and in the imperialist countries, and given a huge boost to both the antibureaucratic political revolution and the proletarian revolution. This is what explains the emergence of the Holy Alliance against the Polish revolution, from Wall Street to the Kremlin.

The Kremlin could rejoice that its "advice" was diligently applied without it being forced to participate directly and massively in the repression. The price of such involvement would have been very costly, both in political and material terms. General Jaruzelski and his group, when they tried to break the back of Solidarnosc, were not only defending their interests as a Polish bureaucracy; they were also defending those of all the bureaucratic regimes. The bureaucracy's self-defense reflex worked with a vengeance. Caste solidarity was complete: This is what they call "proletarian internationalism."

Those who, for whatever reason, aligned themselves with the position of Jaruzelski, were in fact defending the interests of these bureaucracies against those of the proletariat. On this score, the motives of the Cuban and Nicaraguan leaders were obviously quite different from those of the PCP leaders, not to mention the leaders of the DKP or the American CP. But the objective significance of the position they adopted was the same.

True proletarian internationalism called for active support and active solidarity with the Polish workers against the Polish and Soviet bureaucracies.

26. The fundamental interest of the international bourgeoisie

was a halt to the alarming rise of the antibureaucratic political revolution in Poland. This interest was all the stronger since the problem was not only the threat that the experiences of workers self-management might spread toward capitalist countries, but involved the settlement of the 27 billion dollar debt, and the ongoing servicing of this debt. This is why the most representative spokespeople of imperialism had taken a stand, before General Jaruzelski's crackdown, in favor of "restoring order" and "the workers returning to work" in Poland, as a condition for rescheduling the debt. On the day after the crackdown, newspapers that speak for big business such as *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, and *Le Figaro*, as well as the official spokespeople from the West German and British governments, again adopted similar stances: "Most bankers believe an authoritarian government is a good thing because it will impose discipline."

The cynicism of the imperialist bourgeoisie shows up glaringly in the way that it decided to link this basic orientation — which is in keeping with the anti-union and antiworking class stance of the imperialist bourgeoisie all over the world — to a demagogic propaganda campaign that pretends to condemn the crackdown and defend Solidarnosc. It is in fact a completely crooked operation undertaken to try to cash in on the natural revulsion aroused by the repression of trade unionists in Poland among broad layers of the international working class and to try to channel it in a procapitalist and anticommunist direction. This confusionist operation is designed to achieve specific ideological and political goals:

- On the pretext that it is necessary to resist "Soviet intervention" and "totalitarianism." Washington took advantage of this international situation to step up its aid to the bloody dictatorships in Central America, and to call for an end to all restrictions on its military aid to the Turkish dictatorship, a bastion of NATO.

- A campaign was launched by various imperialist governments to justify their remilitarization effort and the cutbacks of social expenditures this implies. The Polish generals, the PUWP, and the Kremlin, have given reaction the ideal opportunity to try to beat back the anti-military mobilizations.

- Finally, trying to turn everything to its advantage, with the priceless help of the union bureaucracies and reformist and Stalinist forces, the imperialist bourgeoisie tried to lock the workers of capitalist countries into the dilemma: either austerity under "democracy," or the risk of a "totalitarian society" that would also impose austerity. The bourgeoisie used this latter argument to step up its general antisocialist and anti-Communist propaganda.

Imperialist forces harmonized their voices in an antiworking-class concert. But in a context characterized by economic crisis and new advances of the colonial revolution, the Polish crisis brought on a new worsening of interimperialist contradictions. The West German bourgeoisie took the lead of the European imperialist powers, resisting any escalation of retaliatory measures that would have imperiled its outlets in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. American imperialism, being less involved in East-West trade (except for agrobusiness), could afford the luxury of brandishing the threat of an economic embargo. Each partner of the imperialist alliance thereby combined its general defense of the system with the pursuit of its own particular interests.

27. The reactions of the Social Democratic and Communist parties to the defeat suffered by the Polish proletariat can only be understood in the context of the combined crisis of imperialism and Stalinism. Over and above the very different positions they took toward the imposition of the state of war, the reformist apparatuses always displayed either extreme reserve or more or less open hostility toward the fight of the workers. What type of ideological camouflage they used to disguise their opposition,

primitive anticlericalism for some, simplistic "campism" for others, was not very important. The fact is the *material*, social basis of their position lay in the threat that the dynamic of the struggle and self-organization of the Polish workers would, at least eventually, have an impact on and weaken the bureaucratic control that all these apparatuses exercise over their own organizations, especially at a time when they are involved in a policy of compromise and even systematic capitulation with respect to the austerity demands of the bourgeoisie. What has frightened these bureaucratic apparatuses in the rise of the Polish proletariat was first of all its fight for a *self-managed union movement, that is for trade union democracy*. In fact, their reserve and hostility toward Solidarnosc reflected an international solidarity of bureaucrats. Moreover, the reformist apparatuses used the Polish workers' defeat to warn against any central confrontation with the class enemy which, according to them, could only lead to a crackdown of the Jaruzelski type in the West too, that is to the establishment of a "strong state." They therefore took advantage of it to justify a collaborationist and capitulationist policy toward the bourgeoisie.

The Social Democratic parties of the German Federal Republic, Great Britain, and Austria fundamentally lined up behind the interests of their own imperialist bourgeoisies. While they rejected any cold war-type policy, they also rejected any mobilization of the workers on a class basis to defend the rights and liberties of the Polish workers that were trampled on by Jaruzelski. Their motives were the same as those of their bourgeoisies — holding onto the profits of the East-West trade. Even the official Social Democratic left (like the Benn tendency in Great Britain and the left of the German SPD) was most often silent and accepted the political framework imposed by the leading apparatuses.

In France, the pressure of the workers, the far left's capacity for initiative, the rivalry between the SP and the CP, and the impetus given by the leaderships of the SP and CFDT who had their own specific goals in mind, led the protest movement to assume more massively the character of a class mobilization in support of the Polish working people.

The rise of the political revolution in Poland, as well as the launching of the bureaucratic counterrevolution, have led to a new stage in the crisis of the communist parties, a crisis already fueled by internal developments of the class struggle in most countries. The centrifugal tendencies at work in all the CPs of capitalist countries redoubled. The contradiction between the identifications of these parties with the USSR and their insertion in the reality of their own country was exacerbated. The interplay of these various factors — in particular circumstances of each country, of each CP's historical trajectory, and each CP's relation to its respective Social Democratic party — was reflected in the adoption of a whole gamut of different positions by the various CPs.

At one end of the spectrum stood the positions of the French CP, the Portuguese CP, the CP of the German Federal Republic (DKP), and that of Denmark. Fundamentally, these parties supported the institution of the state of war which allegedly "made it possible for socialist Poland to escape the mortal danger of counterrevolution." Paradoxically, but in fact as a result of the convergence of their own interests with those of the Kremlin, some of these CPs presented the crackdown as a lesser evil compared to . . . a Soviet intervention. According to them, any mobilization in favor of Solidarnosc could only "add salt to the wound" and prevent the Military Council of National Salvation from keeping its promises to proceed toward a "liberalization" . . . by stages.

At the other end of the gamut were the positions of the Italian CP and the Spanish CP who condemned Jaruzelski's crackdown and demanded the release of the prisoners and the reestablish-

ment of trade union freedoms. They went very far in their conflict with Moscow; the PCI even went so far as to state that "the phase of development of socialism that was inaugurated by the October revolution has exhausted its potential." But the position on Poland advocated by the PCI implied a call for closer collaboration with the Church and petty-bourgeois forces, and not an orientation toward the democratic power of the workers. It was therefore a reflection of the class-collaborationist strategy pursued by this party in Italy itself. This position led to a quest for a more systematic rapprochement with French, German, and Scandinavian social democracy. This is the reason why a significant section of combative worker militants did not approve of the orientation of their leadership on Poland. It was not a question of militants nostalgic for Stalinism, but an instinctive reaction against what appeared as a new concession to the class enemy.

The positions of the British, Belgian, Dutch, and Swedish CPs fell in between these two poles, although they did include an explicit condemnation, at least on paper, of the December 13 crackdown.

The form and character of the rise of the masses in Poland, as well as the contradictions between the CPs and within the CPs, impelled similar differentiations within the trade union movement of several European countries.

Contrary to what occurred during the crushing of the East German workers revolt in 1953, the Hungarian revolution of 1956, and the "Prague spring" of 1968-69, opposition to bureaucratic repression within the international workers movement was not confined, this time, to the imperialist countries alone. For the first time, in a series of semicolonial countries, especially in Latin America (Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, etc.), not unimportant sectors of the workers movement demonstrated their solidarity with the victims of this repression and sometimes even called street demonstrations. The attempt by the lawyers of the bureaucracy to label all those who oppose the bureaucratic dictatorship, even when they are the majority of the working class of a country, as "objectively proimperialist" forces, is beginning to lose ground within the anti-imperialist movement. Each new rise of the world revolution can only deepen this profound resurgence of true proletarian internationalism.

To the militants of the CPs and national revolutionary movements critical of support for Solidarnosc, the Fourth International should explain that a strengthening of the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist forces in the West demands the application of a united front policy, including Catholic and socialist workers and their mass organizations. The realization of such a united front is gravely handicapped by the rejection of a campaign of solidarity with Solidarnosc for reasons of purely ideological opposition to the anti-Communism of the reformists. Evidently, the systematic campaign for the united front in solidarity with Solidarnosc, as in solidarity with the Central American revolution, etc., is always combined with defense of the revolutionary Marxist program, including the struggle against false and counterrevolutionary socialist ideas.

28. The repercussions of the Polish events on the rest of the bureaucratized workers states are still difficult to assess. Clearly, the rise of the Polish proletariat found no immediate mass response in any of these countries. This is not surprising in view of the uneven development of the economic and social crisis in the different countries and in view of the fact that vanguard sectors of the working class lagged behind the Poles in renewing their experience of waging a sustained struggle of their own.

Nevertheless, in several such countries, like Rumania and the USSR, a crisis in the supply of basic goods is ripening and causing broad discontent among the masses, not unlike what happened in Poland during the 1976-80 period. Moreover, in other countries, such as Hungary and the GDR, political opposition

tendencies are emerging among the youth and intellectuals and will gradually search out a way to link up with the workers. The bureaucrats are perfectly aware of these facts and are frightened by them. In all these countries, they are panic-stricken by the thought that the "Polish example," that is an explosion of anger by the workers leading to mass strikes and workers self-organization, could be repeated in their own country. This even applies to the People's Republic of China. There the leading faction of the bureaucracy did first extend discreet support to Solidarnosc in the belief the Soviets might intervene and a "national liberation struggle" against this superpower would ensue. But later, under the pressure of discontent and strikes in China itself, it decided to redirect its fire, accepting de facto Jaruzelski's coup.

The bureaucracy's reaction to this threat displays its lack of a clear orientation, a reflection of its disarray and crisis. While it very naturally leans toward harsher repression of "political dissidents," it hesitates to launch an all-out attack against workers actions, stating, not without good cause, that the blood spilled in the ports of the Baltic in 1970 was the origin of all that followed in Poland. Selective repression on the one hand, and an attempt to give the trade union organization new weight by granting it some elbow room in pursuing economic demands on the other — these seem to be the tactical lessons drawn from the Polish events by the bureaucracy of several bureaucratized workers states.

As for the better informed and more experienced section of the working class in these states, it followed the actions of its brothers and sisters in Poland with sympathy, even though it most often has not yet found a way to translate that sympathy into action. But the "Polish model" will undoubtedly have a profound influence on the development of the antibureaucratic political revolution in many bureaucratized workers states.

VI. The tasks of revolutionary Marxists

29. While the rise of the Polish revolution demonstrated once again the proletariat's capacity for initiative, action, and self-organization on a colossal scale once it moves in a collective and united mobilization, it also confirmed this other lesson of the history of the workers movement: the unsurmountable limitations of the spontaneous activity of the masses. Neither when what was needed was to define exactly the goals to be achieved by Solidarnosc — the economic reform project; that is, reorganization of the economy on a different basis than that proposed by the various factions of the bureaucracy and petty bourgeoisie — nor especially when the need was to elaborate a strategy and a precise tactic for defending Solidarnosc against the stalling maneuvers of the bureaucratic dictatorship which finally led to the December 13, 1981, crackdown (that is, a strategy for the seizure of power), did the spontaneous reactions of the rank and file, more or less expressed in the local and regional structures, suffice to bring out a clear, let alone a correct line. Thus, grave errors were committed that seem decisive after the fact, like the lack of an orientation toward the soldiers based on calling for democratic rights and the right to self-organization in the army.

More generally, in every revolution, the ability to seize the initiative in a centralized fashion is an essential advantage, an advantage which precisely can only be secured by a leadership acting as a vanguard. The lack of such an organized vanguard was cruelly felt in Poland.

Of course, the official bureaucratic propaganda's use ad nauseum of a vocabulary drawn from the revolutionary traditions of the workers — and the reinforcement of this identification of the bureaucratic rulers with Marxism and Leninism by Western bourgeois propaganda — led to a visceral rejection of concepts such as "revolutionary vanguard party" by a very large number of Polish union activists. This called, and still calls, for a great deal of careful educational work by revolutionary Marxists to

convince these activists of the need to build such a party. But this need can be demonstrated very concretely and very clearly by an analysis of the very events that shook Poland since the summer of 1980, or even since the workers revolt of 1976.

We are speaking of course of a party which clearly formulates its own role and its own goals in relation to those of the mass organization of the workers. The revolutionary vanguard party which revolutionary Marxists seek to build in Poland is not a substitute for the proletariat in the exercise of power. Power must be exercised by the institutions created by the workers at the state level after the overthrow of the bureaucratic dictatorship: workers councils democratically elected and federated on the local, regional, and national level.

Within these councils as well as within the organs of self-organization of the masses such as Solidarnosc, party militants will defend their political positions by political and not administrative means. They will try to win and hold the confidence of the workers solely on the basis of their dedication to the class and its movement, and of their spirit of class solidarity and sacrifice for the common cause, as well as the correctness of their program and political line. They will reject all material benefits, all economic privileges of any kind. But they will be a vanguard force insofar as they embody the collective memory of the Polish and international working class, all the lessons that emerged from the 150-years experience of struggle of the Polish and international proletariat. The existence of such a party corresponds also to the interests of the whole of the working class. Before December 13, 1981, it would have facilitated the accomplishment of many concrete tasks facing the mass movement.

30. To the fear expressed by some that a relatively small initial nucleus of revolutionary Marxist activists could do less effective work than the activists not set apart organizationally in any way whatsoever from the structures of Solidarnosc, we must answer that Polish history has already demonstrated the efficacy of small nuclei acting in a favorable context. The intervention of a few hundred activists, mainly from the KOR, beginning in 1976, played a decisive role in forging the links that connected activists of the various factories, links that greatly contributed to the success of the summer 1980 strikes, and to the emergence of Solidarnosc as a mass organization.

Moreover, by no means is the point to counterpose in mechanical fashion the formation of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard party to the emergence of a natural leadership of the class within the enterprises and organs of self-organization. The activists who first come together on a mainly programmatic and political basis are merely the initial nucleus of a party. They do not proclaim themselves the "leadership of the working class" by a voluntarist exercise lacking in any practical meaning. They attempt to win the confidence of the working class by their intervention, and in so doing, attract the best workers emerging from the very process of self-organization. They become the *actual* leadership (that is they earn this distinction in the eyes of the masses) only insofar as they succeed in fusing with the natural leaders of the class in the workplaces.

To the fear, likewise formulated by some, that the emergence of a party would divide the working class and deepen political cleavages within the organs of self-organization, we answer that such cleavages are inevitable among ten million workers, given the tremendous economic, social, political, cultural, and ideological problems which they must face, and the difficulty of finding correct answers.

In fact, such a differentiation did arise within Solidarnosc in the 17 months of its open existence. Moreover, it continues today in the resistance. The appearance of a vanguard party — one respecting the norms of workers democracy within the mass movement — would only mean that the fight would be waged more effectively to assure the adoption of positions best suited to

the class as a whole from among a welter of contending positions. Building the revolutionary vanguard party does not conflict with the struggle for unity in action and the broadest and most democratic united organization of workers. To the contrary: This is one of the central goals the party fights for under all circumstances, as dictated by its program.

To the fear, likewise formulated by some, that the building of a revolutionary vanguard party would allow a minority to manipulate the masses, we answer that the absence of such a party allows for far worse manipulations. Insofar as differentiations are inevitable within the bodies of self-rule over the answers that have to be provided at every stage of the struggle, the choice is not between an impossible unanimity and majorities "manipulated" by "active minorities." The choice is between, on the one hand, majorities manipulated by minorities which do not come out in the open — act behind closed doors, in the form of cliques without clear platforms or under the pressure of charismatic leaders or experts offering "scientific" credentials or simple demagogues — and on the other hand, majorities which are constituted on the basis of clear votes for coherent platforms, representing different orientations among which the mass of delegates *can choose* with a clear understanding of what is involved, on the basis of honest information circulated widely and democratically.

This is why the second solution is by far the more democratic and the less manipulative, the one which best keeps actual decision-making power in the hands of the working masses as a whole. This holds true on condition that the position of a revolutionary vanguard party not involve any privileges, and that the *right* to constitute parties, associations, currents, and tendencies of all kinds, be guaranteed to *all* workers within the institutions and bodies of self-organization. This is why revolutionary Marxists resolutely fight for the multi-party principle in the construction of socialism and have written this principle into their program.

31. a) Revolutionary Marxists consider that rebuilding and expanding Solidarnosc's underground workplace union organizations (especially in the large factories) is the key task of the mass movement and the central axis for the development of a "clandestine society." On the basis of their analysis of the situation, they are convinced that objective conditions are favorable for building these organizations and turning them into centers for resistance to the bureaucratic dictatorship's attempts at normalization and for the mass struggle of workers. Underground workplace union organization is decisive for initiating defensive and offensive partial struggles and preparing the struggles of more strategic import.

b) Revolutionary Marxists propagandize for launching struggles around partial or transitional demands — and intervene in them wherever they can:

- against inhuman working conditions, for better wage rates, for a sliding scale of wages; against the introduction of forced labor practices in work relations; against factory despotism, for the democratic election of labor inspectors and workers victimized by repression because of their political activity;

- for the general and unconditional amnesty of all unionists who have been prosecuted and of all political prisoners of conscience, for the right to independent trade union activity and trade union pluralism;

- for the restoration of Solidarnosc's legal activity, etc.

Partial struggles, both economic and political, constitute a decisive factor in the development of the workers self-organization, political awareness and fighting capacity.

c) Within the mass movement, and in particular within Solidarnosc's underground union organizations, revolutionary Marxists defend the strategic perspective of the revolutionary general strike with occupation and active defense of worksites.

The political, organizational and technical preparations for such a strike must be carried out in all workplaces and regions where the level of activity of the masses or social and political vanguards permit, independently of the general level of mass resistance to the dictatorship. They put forward an action program for the general strike whose central components are:

a) the reconquest of trade union freedom with a dynamic pointing in the direction of a struggle for political democracy;

b) social control over the economy, beginning with workers control over production, with a dynamic that tends to transform this struggle into a struggle for workers self-management.

Revolutionary Marxists believe that an unlimited national general strike will inevitably pose the question of power, but that it cannot resolve it on its own. Only the destruction of the repressive and other apparatus serving the bureaucratic dictatorship will make it possible to resolve the question of power in favor of the working class. The general strike can be victorious only if it leads to the emergence of a dual power situation based on more or less developed forms of social control over the economy. Only dual power can put the mass movement in a position to preserve the gains already won in a victorious general strike and at the same time accumulate the forces necessary for the overthrow of bureaucratic rule.

d) Revolutionary Marxists deem that one of the key tasks that will determine the outcome of a general strike or any direct confrontation with bureaucratic rule, is a direct and conscious intervention by Solidarnosc into the repressive apparatus with the aim of promoting — particularly among the soldiers — a collective awareness of the need to oppose any involvement of the troops in repressive actions against the workers, and of putting forward the elementary democratic demands related to the formation of independent unions or democratic committees of militia members and soldiers, allied to Solidarnosc. The destruction of the repressive apparatus serving the bureaucratic dictatorship must be prepared now and integrated into the strategy of the political revolution through immediate, partial and transitional tasks.

e) Revolutionary Marxists resolutely oppose “geopolitical fatalism” on the basis of their belief that the unbreakable unity and a high degree of both social and political organization of the masses combined with the fierce determination to defend the gains of the revolution are the best means to neutralize the danger of an intervention by the USSR and Warsaw Pact, as well as the best means to prepare to resist it. The eventual formation of a revolutionary workers government and a general arming of the masses would considerably increase the price the Soviet bureaucracy would have to pay for a direct military intervention and could even prevent such an intervention.

32. A victorious struggle against the bureaucracy calls — at least as much as the anticapitalist revolution — for a clear understanding of who are your enemies and your allies, both on the national and international fields. The Polish bureaucracy did demonstrate a clear sightedness about this. Despite its contradictions and the mediocrity of its functionaries, it always placed any compromises it was forced to accept in a clear strategic perspective. The accumulated experience of the international workers movement is an essential part of developing this sort of understanding. In order to be useful, this experience must be all inclusive: that is, it must reflect at once the struggles for the overthrow of capitalism and for the overthrow of bureaucratic dictatorships. The Fourth International is the only organization that embodies this dual struggle. With respect to Poland, in accordance with its resources, the Fourth International carried out the following work:

a) in the bureaucratized workers states, attempts to get out the truth about Poland;

b) in the advanced capitalist countries, giving impetus to the solidarity of the working class;

c) in the underdeveloped countries, while remaining at its post in the front ranks of the defense of the Cuban and Central American revolutions against U.S. imperialism, it did not hesitate to take a stand in favor of solidarity with the Polish workers against the leaders of these same revolutions.

In Poland itself, the circulation of the Polish *Inprecor* showed the great potential for the development of revolutionary Marxism as the revolution advanced.

We are aware that compared to what is needed to insure a victory, what the Fourth International did was small. But all those who agree that the tasks that we undertook are essential ones should join us.

Our international organization had something to contribute to the Polish revolution, but it also had a lot to learn. Its role is also to make sure that in future eruptions of the political revolution, the lessons of the extraordinary struggle of the Polish workers will in turn become a source of education. In this respect, the organization of Polish revolutionary Marxists has an importance far beyond Poland itself. The struggle for the overthrow of the bureaucracy will be a long one. For these comrades to succeed in maintaining ongoing activity regardless of the ups and downs of the mass mobilizations, would be a giant step forward for the next phase.

For revolutionary Marxists, the revolution and counterrevolution in Poland, besides reconfirming the validity of the program of the Fourth International on the nature of the bureaucratized workers states and the inevitability of an anti-bureaucratic political revolution, demonstrate the following:

- the growing centrality of the working class in the three sectors of the world revolution, and the increasing prevalence of classical proletarian forms of struggle and organization within it;

- the unity of the world revolution and the importance of the political revolution within it;

- the need, for historic as well as strategic and immediate reasons, to promote a turn of the organized workers movement and the daily practice of the class struggle back to the road of true proletarian internationalism, which defends unconditionally the rights and liberties of the working class everywhere in the world against whatever social force is attacking or suppressing them, and without subordinating the interests of the proletariat anywhere to the alleged “higher” or “priority” interests of any “bastion” or “camp” wherever it may be. Only on the basis of practicing such international class solidarity can the international proletariat succeed in accomplishing its historic tasks, including, in the case of an imperialist aggression, that of defending the USSR and all workers states;

- the need to build a revolutionary International and revolutionary Marxist parties, which are indispensable not only to give impetus to such international solidarity campaigns and such a return to true proletarian internationalism, but also and especially to insure the victory of the antibureaucratic political revolution itself.

The Fourth International will strive to intervene in the international debate around the Polish events by propagating all these key ideas that provide a political and organizational way forward to activists of the CPs, SPs, revolutionary nationalist organizations, trade unions, and centrist organizations who are worried, shaken, or disoriented by the Polish revolution and counterrevolution. But it holds that such a propaganda intervention can only be carried out in close connection with an action orientation aimed at organizing a broad class solidarity campaign with the Polish workers and unionists who are the victims of bureaucratic repression. In fact, revolutionary Marxist propaganda can be fully effective only if it is carried on in this framework.

33. Active solidarity of the workers of other countries with Solidarnosc will be decisive in convincing the Polish proletariat that it does not stand alone in its struggle.

The Fourth International will put all its strength into pushing the solidarity campaign with the Polish proletarian masses inside the international workers movement. All those inside the workers movement who today refuse to advance this mobilization are dividing the working masses — in their own country and internationally.

To mobilize against the outlawing of Solidarnosc means to simultaneously support the Polish workers and to defend the political and trade-union rights of all workers of Turkey, Brazil, El Salvador, the Spanish state, or Rumania. To call for the abrogation of repressive laws, a general and unconditional amnesty for all the prisoners, the restoration of all democratic rights, for the right to meet and organize is to defend these liberties against the attacks of imperialism and the totalitarian bureaucrats. To organize active solidarity with the Polish workers today is to facilitate and prepare the same active support of the international workers movement with the mighty struggle being fought by the Salvadoran people against the bourgeois dictatorship and U.S. imperialism! These are the most elementary lessons of proletarian internationalism!

All the links that have been forged over the past years between the independent and self-managed trade-union of the Polish workers and the workers movement of the capitalist countries must be used to break the isolation in which General Jaruzelski wants to confine the Polish masses. To send material food and medical aid remains an immediate task. That should make it possible to renew links, to pass on information, and to let the Polish workers know that their class brothers and sisters are their best supporters and not the imperialist bankers who welcomed the military crackdown with such relief.

This aid can facilitate the rebuilding of links between Solidarity militants and sectors of the population. By doing everything possible to send trade-union commissions of inquiry to find out about the repression meted out to Solidarnosc militants, the workers movement can unmask the hypocrisy of both the bureaucrats who speak of "respect for liberty" and the spokespersons of imperialism who shut their eyes to the fate of trade-union militants in Poland . . . just as they do for Turkey.

Within the workers movement itself, revolutionary Marxists must systematically explain the aims and actions of Solidarnosc.

The democratic way in which the trade union functioned, the broad and public way in which its main political positions were discussed, its debates on self-management, and the experiences of workers and social control must become the property of the international workers movement. This is the most effective way to undermine the sort of "bureaucratic solidarity" that we have seen operate so often since 1980, either in the form of calculated indifference from the trade-union leaderships, of open hostility, or in a way that deforms the workers objectives. The latter are presented as fitting into the framework of the class-collaborationist projects defended by these reformist apparatuses (co-management, "historic compromise").

By doing everything to build this working-class solidarity on the basis of class unity and independence, it will be possible to partly defeat the attempts of imperialism to use Polish events to reinforce its ideological and political positions.

The Fourth International closely links its solidarity campaign with Solidarnosc with its efforts to stimulate mobilizations against the remilitarization drive, against NATO's policy of aggression, and against the criminal initiatives of U.S. imperialism, the real warmonger, in Central America and the Caribbean.

Within this perspective, the unity of interest of the working class on a world scale is crystal clear. Any reticence in giving support to the Polish workers can only hold back and divide the mobilization against nuclear rearmament in Europe and against imperialist aggression in Central America. In the same way, any abstention or opposition — as we see among the Social Democratic parties — with regard to the mobilization against NATO or in support of the revolutionary struggle of the people of Nicaragua, Guatemala, or El Salvador can only weaken the unity and breadth of support for the resistance of the Polish masses.

Solidarity with Solidarnosc!

Down with the bureaucracy's military dictatorship!

Freedom for all political prisoners, release all trade unionists, intellectuals, and students!

Reestablish all political, trade-union, and civil rights!

Long live the international solidarity of the workers of all countries with all liberation struggles, in defense of all the exploited and oppressed, which form a single, united struggle for the socialist world of tomorrow!