

# Solidarność: Polish Company Union for CIA and Bankers



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Cover photo:  
New York City, 24 September 1981,  
demonstration organized by the  
Spartacist League/U.S. protesting  
the opening of Solidarność office.

# Introduction

As Lech Walesa struts before the Solidarność conference displaying his Madonna lapel pin and boasting how he could easily have secured 90 percent of the vote, the U.S. imperialists see their revanchist appetites for capitalist restoration in Eastern Europe coming closer and closer to fruition. And the "crisis of proletarian leadership" described by Trotsky nearly a half-century ago is starkly illuminated in the response of those in Poland and abroad who claim the right to lead the working class.

Stalinism has squandered the socialist and internationalist historic legacy of the Polish workers movement, demoralizing the working class in the face of resurgent Pilsudskiite reaction. The Polish Stalinist bureaucracy, having already mortgaged Poland to the German bankers in the futile hope of buying off its own working class, now seems paralyzed by Solidarność' bid to sell the country to the imperialists outright. There has emerged in Poland no socialist opposition worthy of the name. And internationally the fake-lefts see in this mortal danger to socialized property in Poland a chance to earn their stars and stripes as a left cover for the social democrats and the pro-capitalist "labor statesmen" who long ago enlisted as junior partners in imperialism's war drive against the Soviet Union. In this the virulently anti-Communist chieftains of the American AFL-CIO show themselves not so different from the ruling Stalinist bureaucrats from Moscow to Peking, sellout heads of workers institutions which they are incapable of effectively defending against the class enemy.

Certainly it is not our job to apologize for the Stalinist rulers who have disorganized the Polish economy, capitulated to the church and the smallholding peasantry, lorded it over the working class with bureaucratic privileges which mimic the invidious inequities of capitalist society, alienated the intelligentsia and youth, fostered nationalism and every kind of backward ideology, not least anti-Semitism, and turned "Communism" into a curse word. There is a blood line—the blood of revolutionaries from Indochina to Spain—which separates us Trotskyists from Stalinism, that "great organizer of defeats." But it is very much our job to seek to rally the working class in Poland and internationally behind the defense of historical-

ly progressive socialized property in Poland, all the more so since the discredited Stalinists manifestly cannot. The call for "communist unity against imperialism through political revolution," first raised by the Spartacist tendency at the time of the Sino-Soviet split, acquires even greater urgency as the Polish crisis underlines the need for revolutionary unity of the Polish and Russian workers to defeat U.S. imperialism's bloody designs for bringing Poland into the "free world" as a club against the USSR, military/industrial powerhouse of the deformed workers states.

This pamphlet documents the Spartacist analysis of the unfolding events in Poland. Beginning in February, we recognized in the Polish upheavals both an opening for revolutionary agitation and an awesome potential for reactionary mobilization based on the Catholic church, the peasant "free market," a "dissident" movement which looks to the capitalist West to "democratize" Eastern Europe. As Solidarność consolidated around an anti-socialist program culminating in the adoption of the slogan of "free trade unions," one of the war cries of Cold War anti-Communism, we counterposed the call for trade unions independent of bureaucratic control and based on a program of defending socialized property. The demands raised in the articles in this pamphlet—for the strict separation of church and state, for the collectivization of agriculture, for the cancellation of Poland's debt to the imperialist bankers, for the military defense of the USSR against imperialism—constitute the programmatic core of the international vanguard party necessary to the revolutionary defense of the working masses of Poland against imperialism and capitalist restoration through political revolution in the deformed workers states and proletarian revolution throughout the capitalist world.

\* \* \* \* \*

We include as an appendix to this pamphlet extracts from *The Hungarian Revolution*, published by a forerunner of our tendency in 1959. The author, Shane Mage, was one of several left-Shachtmanite youth who became Trotskyists and fused with the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1958. "The YSL Right Wing and the 'Crisis of World Stalinism,'" included in the 1959



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260 Park Avenue South, New York—headquarters of “State Department socialist” Albert Shanker and his teachers’ union, now also houses his friends from *Solidarność*, Polish company union for the CIA and bankers.

pamphlet, was originally a factional document within the Young Socialist League (YSL), youth group of the tendency headed by Max Shachtman which had split in 1940 from the then-revolutionary SWP to reject the fundamental Trotskyist principle of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism. The Shachtmanite majority’s advocacy of “general democratic aims” in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution was an important step toward their liquidation into official American social democracy. It was the Shachtmanites’ course toward unification with Norman Thomas’ “Cold War socialist” party (which they soon came to dominate) which pushed the YSL left wing of Mage, James Robertson, the

wretched Wolforth and others toward Trotskyism and the SWP.

These young Trotskyists, who were an important section of the founding cadres of the SWP youth group, found themselves again in a rapidly rightward-moving party. Mage was among the comrades who emerged as the SWP’s left opposition, were expelled in 1964 and formed the Spartacist League. The Spartacist tendency embodies the Trotskyist program abandoned by the SWP, now a wretchedly reformist formation. Mage himself left revolutionary politics in the 1960s.

Analyzing the potential social bases for counterrevolution in Eastern Europe, Mage observes in “The YSL Right Wing...” that counterrevolutionary

parties need not call for nor immediately effect the denationalization of statified industry. Rather, they would subordinate the nationalized industry to the interests of the domestic petty bourgeoisie and international capital. In this Mage was not expressing some idiosyncratic view but was following Trotsky who wrote in 1937: “Should a bourgeois counterrevolution succeed in the USSR, the new government for a lengthy period would have to base itself upon the nationalized economy” (“Not a Workers’ and Not a Bourgeois State?”)

At the same time, Mage insisted that counterrevolution was not what was occurring in Hungary in October-November 1956. The effective organs of power were workers councils which expressed a confused *socialist* consciousness, albeit with syndicalist deviations and “neutralist” illusions, while the clerical-reactionary forces around Cardinal Mindszenty were relatively weak and counterposed. These were crucial considerations for revolutionists in mandating an orientation toward the 1956 Hungarian events as moving in the direction of proletarian political revolution. Mage’s polemic thus sharply highlights the Spartacist tendency’s line in the present Polish crisis, where the constellation of counterrevolutionary forces which were in Hungary a distinctly subordinate element today wield the upper hand behind the *Solidarność* “union.” That the analytical framework and programmatic criteria advanced by Mage for Hungary 1956 retain their validity in necessitating very different conclusions for Poland today illustrates the power of Trotskyism as the contemporary Leninist guide to revolutionary action.

Mage’s writings on Hungary are not without weaknesses. As a subjective revolutionist in transition from Shachtmanism, he at this point retained a softness toward undifferentiated “anti-Stalinism” and the “neutralism” espoused by some of the Hungarian dissidents. Moreover in ruling out support to a Russian intervention no matter what, Mage impermissibly elevated the bourgeois-democratic right of national self-determination above the class question of defense of proletarian state power against capitalist-imperialism.

We include in the appendix a shorter excerpt from “‘Truth’ and Hungary,” Mage’s reply to American Stalinist Herbert Aptheker, also taken from the 1959 pamphlet.

8 October 1981

# Wall Street Journal Loves Poland's Company Union

Western imperialism figures it has an unprecedented opening in Poland, a chance to strike a blow against the USSR deep in its own sphere. From the Pentagon to the Common Market Commission to the Vatican, the forces of reaction are egging on Solidarność in its recent call for "free trade unions" throughout Eastern Europe. In the mouths of these certified labor-haters, the call for "free trade unions," long the fighting slogan of Cold War anti-Communism, really means "free enterprise": the restoration of capitalist exploitation through bloody counterrevolution.

It is no surprise that the anti-Communist AFL-CIO bureaucracy, forged in the 1950s McCarthy period when "reds" and militants were forcibly purged from the labor movement, is deeply involved in this enterprise. With a zeal which recalls their ultra-hawk stance for U.S. imperialism's dirty war against Vietnam, the American union tops are up to their necks in the U.S. government's schemes to manipulate the Polish crisis as a spearhead of the imperialist drive to "roll back" Communism throughout the world.

In this context, the opening of a Solidarność office in New York at the headquarters of Albert Shanker's teach-

ers' union on September 24 was a graphic symbol of Polish Solidarity's application for membership in the "free world." And outside the press conference which celebrated this event, the Trotskyists of the Spartacist League demonstrated against Solidarność' counterrevolutionary course, demanding "No 'Rollback'!—No Capitalist Restoration in Eastern Europe!" Appealing to the socialist and internationalist traditions of the Polish workers movement of Rosa Luxemburg, the protesters exposed the "solidarity" between Solidarność and the AFL-CIO tops as brokered by the CIA. For example, Lech Walesa extended AFL-CIO chief Lane Kirkland an invitation to visit Poland in the company of the notorious Irving Brown, long-time creature of the CIA whose credentials as "AFL-CIO European representative" furnish the "labor" cover for his decades-long career of provocation and gangsterism against the European labor movement. The Spartacist demonstrators carried placards like "Reagan smashes PATCO American Union, Loves Solidarność" and chanted "Kirkland/Shanker/Brown—CIA Stooges."

The protest was covered by a couple of local TV stations but was blacked out by the networks and the newspapers.

Then the *Wall Street Journal* devoted the lead editorial in its 29 September issue to a sharp attack on those who dare to expose the common thread linking the American labor bureaucracy's political and financial support to Solidarność with the U.S. State Department/CIA appetites for counterrevolution in Poland. After several paragraphs dismissing an exposé of CIA involvement in AFL-CIO "aid" to unions internationally which appeared in *CounterSpy* magazine more than six months ago, the editorial says:

"Counterspy was not the last source to strike this theme. Just a little while ago, broadcasts from the Soviet Union could be heard denouncing Solidarity's American connection and cutely referring to Lane Kirkland as among the 'chief stockholders' in the Polish dissident movement. Over on this side of the ocean, when Solidarity recently opened an office in New York, a respectably-sized group of demonstrators was organized to picket the opening in protest against the American imperialism it allegedly represented."

The *Wall Street Journal* editorial which attacks our demonstration is more than a political statement. What this mouthpiece of the American ruling class has in mind is not an exchange of polemics on Poland, but a government assault on the right of communists in the labor movement to challenge the pro-capitalist line of the American labor bureaucracy. The article ends with an unmistakable threat: "Anyone seeking to delegitimize" the AFL-CIO's crusade for "political freedom" "should be aware of just how serious an attack he is launching."

The threat is no less ominous because it leaves implicit the mechanisms of repression envisioned by the editors. Is the editorial's title, "Communists and the AFL-CIO," intended to evoke an intensification of McCarthyite witch-hunting against communists in the trade unions? Nor should anyone miss the sinister import of the *Wall Street Journal's* suggestion that our demonstration was inspired by the Russian Stalinists. The notion of Trotskyists as some kind of Russian agents may be



"State Department socialists" flank Solidarność spokesman.

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## Communists and the AFL-CIO

Poland's Solidarity movement is holding the second stage of its national convention in Gdansk without the presence of one of its best known invited guests: Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO. Mr. Kirkland had prepared a speech to deliver to the Solidarity meeting, but at the last minute the Communist government of Poland refused to grant visas to him and his AFL-CIO delegation. This is no big surprise, really; American labor's support for Solidarity has gravely embarrassed Warsaw, and the Polish government keeps trying to discredit the effort. It is also sadly unsurprising that the Polish Communists are getting help here in the U.S.

You can get an idea of how the anti-AFL campaign is working by taking a look at a recent issue of *Counterspy*, a Washington-based magazine that proclaims itself devoted to exposing the nefarious work of the CIA and its agents of American imperialism wherever they roam in the world. An article in the magazine is straightforwardly titled "AFL-CIO: Trojan Horse in Polish Unions." A special editorial introduction to the article put the thesis just as straightforwardly: In country after country, "AFL-CIO aid has invariably had the ulterior motive of establishing, securing and expanding U.S. corporate and strategic interests."

How do we know this is true? For one thing, says *Counterspy*, we have before us the record of American labor's reactionary efforts in Latin America. In Guatemala, George Meany worked with CIA-connected organizations to undermine the properly

progressive, truly "labor-oriented" forces in the country. In the Dominican Republic, the AFL-CIO set up an organization that "ran propaganda units as well as goon squads against the legitimate unions."

And, comrades, this is no accident. Counterspy tells us that AFL-CIO officials have always denied working with the CIA or taking CIA money for their activities, but these denials "ring hollow." After all, do we not have the testimony of a former CIA official who says he actually handed over bucks to an AFL representative? Do we not know that the CIA read the mail of high labor personnel "in order to monitor their handling of CIA money"?

So when we see American labor at work in Poland, we should know that we're not viewing anything like an expression of genuine solidarity among the working classes. Instead, what we've got is just another variation on a decades-old American capitalist plot.

*Counterspy* was not the last source to strike this theme. Just a little while ago, broadcasts from the Soviet Union could be heard denouncing Solidarity's American connection and cutely referring to Lane Kirkland as among the "chief stockholders" in the Polish dissident movement. Over on this side of the ocean, when Solidarity recently opened an office in New York, a respectably-sized group of demonstrators was organized to picket the opening in protest against the American imperialism it allegedly represented.

American labor is indeed aiding the Solidarity movement, openly and unashamedly. It has a long history of

fighting Communist domination of labor movements. It learned early in the game that Communist parties and free unions are natural mortal enemies, more violently so because free unions, more than any other free institution, threaten Communist claims to legitimacy. When American labor goes head to head with Communists, the obvious counterattack for the Communists is to claim that American labor is an arm of the American government, manipulated by the CIA. How easy it is to make lists of the CIA connections: the parallel aims, the instances of collaboration, the communications and shared acquaintanceships. How easy to use the list to try to discredit the AFL-CIO enterprise in Poland, and more important, to try to expunge the colossal embarrassment Solidarity represents to world-wide communism.

This is a very dirty business we are dealing with. American labor has been active on the international scene in order to further its own perfectly legitimate purposes. One result of its activities has been to expose, time after time, the gulf between Communist interests and worker interests. This exposure has often worked to the benefit of an activist U.S. foreign policy, and opponents of such a policy have reason to want to tarnish the whole connection.

But they should not be allowed to do so easily. While the American labor movement has at times in recent years identified itself too closely with political parties and administrations for our liking, on the whole it remains a free and independent force pitting its weight against state power both in the U.S. and abroad. Its efforts on behalf of political freedom are thus significant. Anyone seeking to delegitimize its performance in this realm should be aware of just how serious an attack he is launching.

ludicrous, but you can be sure the social democrats will not be far behind the *Wall Street Journal* in painting us as sinister Stalinist spies, the better to cement their own united front with the CIA.

What is perhaps most interesting about the editorial is that it makes no attempt to claim that the accusations about the "AFL-CIA" are anything but true. "How easy it is," says the *Wall Street Journal*, "to make lists of the CIA connections: the parallel aims, the instances of collaboration, the commu-

nications and shared acquaintanceships." And how easy it is! Irving Brown was American imperialism's main man in Western Europe after World War II, where he used CIA dollars to plant agents, buy officials and hire goons to split, smash and subdue combative unions. And talk about "parallel aims"—Albert Shanker's outfit, "Social Democrats, USA," was an unashamed Vietnam hawk after even Nixon gave it up as a lost cause; Shanker now joins with Kirkland in the right-wing militarist "Committee on the Present

Danger," whose program is a nuclear first-strike against the USSR.

Simply put, the *Wall Street Journal's* line is: CIA? Sure, but so what? Albert Shanker, in his "Where We Stand" column in the October 4 Sunday *New York Times* "Week in Review" section, takes the same tack. Shanker quotes Radio Moscow's charge that Shanker's union "annually receives \$100,000 from the CIA for international contacts and activities." "Totally false," says Shanker, who goes on to boast of the money he gets from the Agency for International

## Spartacist slogans (some in Polish and Russian) at September 24 demonstration:

**No Rollback! No Capitalist Restoration in Eastern Europe!**  
**Polish Solidarność—Agents of Counterrevolution**  
**Social Democrats and the AFL-CIO Front for CIA in Poland, Too!**  
**Reagan Smashes PATCO American Union, Loves Solidarność!**  
**Reagan and Haig: Hands Off Poland!**  
**For Class Struggle Workers Parties—in Poland and America!**  
**Don't Sell Poland to the German Bankers!**  
**Polish Solidarność—Running Dog of Imperialism**  
**600,000 Red Army Soldiers Fell Liberating Poland from the German Nazis**  
**For Military Defense of the Soviet Bloc against Imperialism!**  
**Death to Pilsudskilite Anti-Semites!**  
**Waryński, Not Wojtyła!**  
**Long Live the Party of Luxemburg, Jogiches, Warski, Walecki & Wera Kostrzewa!**  
**Stalinism Undermines the Workers States—For Trotskyist Workers Parties to Power!**  
**For Rebirth of the Trotskyist Fourth International!**

Development, frequently a conduit for CIA "counterinsurgency" which has financed operations from Guatemala to Thailand. For Shanker, there's nothing unholy about an alliance between the American labor tops and the American government; it's a legitimate anti-Communist united front stretching from the UFT office to Langley, Virginia and blessed by the *Wall Street Journal* to boot.

American social democracy stands in the front line of a broad counterrevolutionary chorus of Solidarność fans. An intimate of Shanker's Social Democrats, USA, one Ben Wattenberg, hosted an October 2 public television special titled "Specter Haunting Communism: Polish Workers." The ad for the program in the October 2 *New York Times* gloated: "When Karl Marx urged workers to unite, he never dreamed they'd do it against communism." And who paid for the TV show? DuPont's Conoco oil company, product of the world's biggest capitalist merger. This friend of Solidarność is, among other things, one of America's big coal companies. A comparison of its safety record with that of the Polish coal mines should explode any idea that Solidarność and its American patrons are supporters of workers' rights!

The spectacle of the *Wall Street Journal*, a main ideological voice of the U.S. bourgeoisie, posturing as a partisan of a "free and independent" American labor movement is certainly obscene. But no more obscene than a Polish "union" which looks for salva-



WV Photo

The demonstration the bourgeois press blacked out.

tion to the U.S. imperialist-led "free world," the pope...and now even the International Monetary Fund! Is there a union leader anywhere else in the world who would dare to so openly make common cause with the international bankers' cartel? If the IMF ever gets a chance to implement its program for Poland, it will surely begin by starving most of the Polish population. American workers may not understand the toll in human suffering and death contained beneath those initials, but workers all over the globe know what the IMF means. Pinochet's bloody coup in Chile was for the purpose of making the country "safe" for the IMF. If Conoco and the IMF ever get their hands on Poland, Polish miners will be lucky to

live long enough to get black lung. Lech Walesa's affection for the IMF is the clearest possible demonstration of Solidarność' real role as a *company union* for the CIA and the bankers.

The Spartacist League's defense of the workers movement demands the most vigorous protest against the pro-capitalist American labor tops' witting collusion in Solidarność' imperialist-backed counterrevolutionary enterprise. Our aim is not merely to expose the unholy alliance between the U.S. government and the American labor officialdom, but to break that alliance through the forging of a class-struggle union leadership which will militantly oppose U.S. imperialism's sinister schemes to export counterrevolution. ■

## Time Runs Out in Poland

# Stop Solidarity's Counterrevolution!

The massive strike in the Baltic ports last August brought Polish workers before a historic choice: with the bankruptcy of Stalinist rule dramatically demonstrated, it would be either the path of bloody counterrevolution in league with imperialism, or the path of proletarian political revolution. The Gdansk accords and the emergence of Solidarity (Solidarność), the mass workers organization which issued out of last year's general strike, produced a situation of cold dual power. This precarious condition could not last long, we wrote. And now time has run out.

With its first national congress in early September, decisive elements of Solidarity are now pushing a program of open counterrevolution. The appeal for "free trade unions" within the Soviet bloc, long a fighting slogan for Cold War anti-Communism, was a deliberate provocation of Moscow. Behind the call for "free elections" to the Sejm (parliament) stands the program of "Western-style democracy," that is, *capitalist restoration under the guise of parliamentary government*. And now leading Polish "dissident" Jacek Kuron, an influential adviser of Solidarity, and a member of the Second International, has issued a call for a counterrevolutionary regime to take power.

To underscore their ties to the "free world," Solidarity's leaders have invited Lane Kirkland, the hard-line Cold Warrior who heads up the American AFL-CIO, to attend the second session of the congress scheduled for late September. This top labor lieutenant of U.S. imperialism, a man deeply involved in Washington's anti-Soviet war drive, has announced he will be there to wave the "free world" banner in Poland. Accompanying Kirkland is Irving Brown, the sinister AFL-CIO "European representative" whose "labor" cover is an invaluable part of his years-long role as top CIA provocateur against the European labor movement.



Solidarność leaders bow to pope.

UPI

In turn Solidarity is opening a U.S. office in the premises of teachers' union leader Albert Shanker, a notorious right-wing social democrat whose party newspaper, *New America*, denounced George McGovern as little short of a "Commie dupe" and even condemned *Nixon* as soft on Russia!

Over and above the formal actions of the congress, the whole activity and spirit of Solidarity is that of an organization making a bid for power. A few weeks before the congress the top

leader, Lech Walesa, told printers who were striking government newspapers:

"I believe that confrontation is unavoidable. The next confrontation will be a total confrontation...."

"We see more clearly that without political solutions nothing can be achieved. The whole war will be won by us."

—*Los Angeles Times*, 21 August

When asked what would happen if the Sejm refused to act on Solidarity's program for self-managed enterprises, Bogdan Lis, regarded as the organiza-

tion's number two, replied smartly, "Maybe we'll dissolve it" (*New York Times*, 13 September). When the 900 delegates left the congress, they understood that the organization was moving to take over the basic economic and political aspects of Polish life. Now, writing in Solidarity's newsletter, *Niezależność*, Poland's most prominent social democrat, Jacek Kuron, has called for a new government based on a "council of national salvation" consisting of Solidarity, the Catholic church and "moderate" Communist officials. "The moment the council is formed, it would suspend operation of all authorities, including the government," Kuron added (UPI dispatch, 16 September 1981).

The sophisticated representatives of Western imperialism, such as the *New York Times*, and apparently the Kremlin Stalinists as well, understand that Solidarity has now crossed the Rubicon. Top American officials have been quoted in European papers saying that Poland today is the most exciting and important opportunity for the West since 1945. And this is from an administration that begins to salivate as soon as it hears the word "rollback." Moscow has issued its strongest warning to date, demanding that the beleaguered Warsaw regime "immediately take the determined and radical steps in order to cut short the malicious anti-Soviet propaganda and actions hostile toward the Soviet Union." In response the Polish government has announced it is preparing drastic actions. Everyone thinks this means declaring a state of emergency and preventing the second part of Solidarity's congress.

Solidarity's counterrevolutionary

course has also produced a powerful response from the anti-Moscow center, the Vatican. A week after the congress Pope Karol Wojtyla of Krakow issued his long-awaited encyclical on "the social question." This reaffirmed the church's traditional *defense of capitalist private property against socialism* and war against Marxism, while favoring unions as long as they are a "constructive factor of social order and solidarity." The Polish Conference of Bishops got the message and has thrown its support behind Solidarity's long-standing demand for greater access to the mass media. Does anyone doubt that "the new Poland" Solidarity's leaders say they are building conforms to the guidelines set down by the Catholic church to which they all profess deep allegiance? The pope's encyclical (written in Polish) could well become the manifesto of a counterrevolutionary mobilization in Poland.

It is the most damning indictment of Stalinism that after three decades of so-called "socialism" a majority of the Polish working class is so fed up with it as to embrace the slogans of the Cold War. It is the Stalinists with their crushing censorship and endless falsifications, their corruption and gross economic mismanagement, their suppression of democratic rights always accompanied by cynical promises of "democratization" who have driven the historically socialist Polish proletariat into the arms of the Vatican and "AFL-CIA."

It is also important to point out that a reported 15 to 20 percent of the Polish workers have *not* participated in Solidarity's mobilization, despite the enor-

mous social pressure on them do to so. Most of these workers probably retain some loyalty to the communist cause and are hostile to the clerical-nationalism of Walesa & Co. But today such workers are clearly a minority and on the defensive as the Solidarity leadership has the support of the active majority of the Polish proletariat. Thus, the threat of a counterrevolutionary thrust for power is now posed in Poland. That threat must be crushed at all costs and by any means necessary.

### Solidarity Under the Eagle and Cross

It is sheer cynicism that Solidarity's leaders still claim to adhere to the 31 August 1980 Gdansk Agreement, which stated that the new union movement would recognize the "leading role" of the Communist party (Polish United Workers Party, PUPW), would respect Poland's international alliances (i.e., the Warsaw Pact) and would not engage in political activity. Of course, Walesa and his colleagues were strongly opposed to all these conditions but regarded them as tactical concessions for the moment. The notion that the new union movement would not be political was an absurdity. As we stated when the Gdansk Agreement was signed, either the new union movement would become a vehicle for clerical-nationalist reaction or it would have to oppose it in the name of socialist principle. There was and is no "third way," much less a purely trade-unionist third way.

It was clear from the beginning that Walesa & Co. saw themselves leading the entire Polish nation under the

With its first congress Solidarity crosses over to pro-imperialist counter-revolution.



Der Spiegel



banner of eagle and cross in a crusade against "Russian-imposed Communism." Solidarity is no longer a trade union, but has come to include large sections of the intelligentsia, petty bureaucrats, priests, etc. Last winter/spring much of Solidarity's efforts were directed toward forcing the government to legally recognize the organization of peasant smallholders, Rural Solidarity, a potent social force for capitalist restoration. In late March Solidarity even threatened a nationwide general strike primarily on behalf of the rural petty capitalists, despite the fact that they were driving up food prices for urban consumers.

Local Solidarity organizations have kept up a barrage of anti-Soviet propaganda of the most vile right-wing sort. For example, the Solidarity newspaper at the Katowice steel mill, the largest in the country, reprinted chapters from Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* and ran cartoons that could have come straight out of the Western yellow press. At the same time, Solidarity's leaders have nothing but good things to say about the imperialist West.

Small wonder Ronald Reagan could declare that the Polish crisis signals the beginning of the end of Communism, the desperate dream of world imperialism ever since October 1917:

"...I think the things we're seeing not only in Poland but the reports that are beginning to come out of Russia itself ... are an indication that communism is an aberration—it's not a normal way of living for human beings, and I think we're seeing the first beginning cracks, the beginning of the end."

—*New York Times*, 17 June.

These were no mere philosophical musings. U.S. imperialism is deeply involved in fomenting anti-Communist reaction in Poland, especially through the AFL-CIO bureaucracy which has contributed \$300,000 and their first printing press to Solidarity.

While engaged in subverting Poland from within, the Reagan administration is also trying to *provoke* the Soviet Union into military intervention, in part through inflammatory statements like the above. Reagan/Haig *want to see* Polish workers hurling Molotov cocktails at Russian tanks in order to fuel their anti-Soviet war drive to white heat.

While the motion in the year-long Polish crisis has been toward pro-imperialist counterrevolution, the condition of cold dual power also created an *opening* for the crystallization of an authentically revolutionary workers party which could reverse this process *from within*. As Trotskyists, therefore, we oriented toward the potential for

development of a left opposition from among those Solidarity and Communist party militants who wanted a genuine "socialist renewal" by seeking to recover the internationalist traditions of Lenin and Luxemburg, perverted in the service of the Stalinist bureaucrats. A revolutionary vanguard in Poland would seek to *split* Solidarity, winning the mass of the workers away from the anti-Soviet nationalist leadership around Walesa. It would put forward a program centering on strict separation of church and state, unconditional military defense of the Soviet bloc against capitalism-imperialism, and a political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy and establishment of a democratically elected workers government based on soviets to carry out socialist economic planning (including the collectivization of agriculture). Yet we fully recognized that this program goes very much against the stream in Poland today and that the dominant tendency was for Solidarity to consolidate around a counterrevolutionary course in the name of nation, church and "the free world."

### Solidarity Calls for "Bourgeois-Democratic" Counterrevolution

For a year the Solidarity leadership stopped short of openly calling for the overthrow of the official "Communist" system (a bureaucratically ruled workers state) and its replacement by (bourgeois) "democracy" like in the West. Walesa in particular liked to posture as a simple trade unionist, as if Solidarity was the same as the AFL-CIO in the United States or the DGB in West Germany. But as the economy descended into chaos, everyone recognized that simple trade unionism was impossible. Industrial and agricultural production has collapsed, the stores are empty, people wait hours to buy food and other necessities. The head of Solidarity's Warsaw chapter likened the organization to a union of seamen aboard a sinking ship. The obvious helplessness of the Polish Stalinists and evident reluctance of the Kremlin to intervene militarily further emboldened Solidarity's so-called "militant" wing.

The organization made its first bid for power on the economic front. Last April Solidarity came out with a program for the abolition of centralized economic planning, the election of enterprise managers by the workers and enterprise autonomy on the basis of market composition. In the anarchic conditions of Poland such self-managed enterprises would quickly free themselves from all but nominal state control. If carried out,

Solidarity's economic program would lead to immediate mass unemployment, facilitate imperialist economic penetration and greatly strengthen the forces pushing toward capitalist restoration. (For a fuller discussion of this, see "Market Socialism' Is Anti-Socialist," *WV* No. 287, 14 August.) If the government does not agree to this program, Solidarity is threatening to conduct its own national referendum as the first step to taking over effective control of the economy.

But the actions of Solidarity's first congress go much further even than this. Its open appeal for "free trade unions" in the Soviet bloc is both an arrogant provocation of Moscow and a declaration of ideological solidarity with Western imperialism. While the demand for trade unions independent of bureaucratic control is integral to the Trotskyist program for proletarian political revolution in the Stalinist-ruled Soviet bloc, the *slogan* of "free trade unions" has long since been associated with NATO imperialism. At the start of the Cold War the fanatically anti-Communist Meanyite bureaucracy set up the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in closest collaboration with the Central Intelligence Agency. It is therefore quite fitting that accompanying Lane Kirkland to the Solidarity congress will be none other than Irving Brown, "Mr. AFL-CIA," whose disruption of the labor movement on behalf of U.S. imperialism spans three and a half decades. The Solidarity leadership is well aware of the anti-Communist meaning of the slogan, "free trade unions," as they have been dealing with the AFL-CIO tops for months.

Even more important than "free trade unions" in the ideological arsenal of imperialist anti-Sovietism is "democracy"—not workers democracy based on soviets as in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 but bourgeois parliamentary "democracy." Here also the Solidarity congress fully adhered to the "bourgeois-democratic" counterrevolution. The important Warsaw chapter put forward a motion calling for "free elections" to the Sejm, further stating that "the road to the nation's sovereignty is through democratic elections to representative bodies" (*New York Times*, 10 September). In the world of Solidarity everything, including democracy, is subordinate to Polish national sovereignty. (For a theoretical discussion of "bourgeois-democratic" counterrevolution in bureaucratically ruled workers states, see Shane Mage, "Pure

Counterrevolution is no joke. Polish university students wear "EA" ("anti-socialist element") T-shirts.



Rolke/Stern

Democracy' or Political Revolution in East Europe," *Spartacist* No. 30, Autumn 1980.)

Assuming the Warsaw regime was powerless to prevent it (as is probably the case) and that the Soviet army didn't intervene, what kind of government would emerge from free elections to a sovereign parliament in Poland today? A quarter to a third of the voters would be peasant smallholders, who will do what their local priest tells them to do. Their social attitude was summed up by British journalist Tim Garton Ash: "It is the conservative Catholic peasants of South-Eastern Poland who would overthrow communism at the drop of a Cardinal's hat" (*Spectator*, 14 February). Historically, Marxian socialism has been a powerful and at times dominant current within the Polish industrial proletariat. But 35 years of Stalinist bureaucratism has made much of the Polish working class sympathetic at this time to clerical-nationalism and pro-Western social democracy, while demoralizing the rest. The likely result of parliamentary democracy would be the victory of anti-Communist, nationalist forces seeking an alliance with NATO imperialism against the Soviet Union.

Such a government would mean the counterrevolution in power. In 1935 Trotsky observed that "the restoration to power of a Menshevik and Social Revolutionary bloc would suffice to obliterate the socialist construction" ("The Workers State, Thermidor and Bonapartism," *Writings [1934-35]*). And the parties that would win "free elections" in the Poland of Wojtyla and Walesa are far to the right of the Russian Mensheviks and Social Revo-

lutionaries. They would be closer to Pilsudskiite nationalism, hankering after the great Poland of the fascistic dictator of the interwar years.

And what would happen to any left opposition to such "bourgeois-democratic" counterrevolution? In his report to the Solidarity congress the organization's secretary, Andrzej Cielinski, declared that his Communist opponents "do not hesitate to enter the road of national treason" (UPI dispatch, 6 September). Given the mood of the delegates, the accusation of "national treason" is the most inflammatory political denunciation imaginable. As Solidarity moves to reassert national sovereignty, loyal members and supporters of the PUWP will become the victims of a white terror.

Fake-Trotskyists like Ernest Mandel of the European-centered United Secretariat and Jack Barnes of the American Socialist Workers Party, tailing anti-Soviet social democracy, argue that Solidarity's leaders have not explicitly called for the restoration of capitalism. But they clearly have called for the overthrow of the existing state and its replacement by a clerical-nationalist regime with close ties to NATO imperialism. And this would not be a peaceful process but a bloody counterrevolution. Trotsky debunked the notion of a peaceful, gradual transformation from proletarian to bourgeois state power as running the film of reformism in reverse.

As for the resulting economic transformation, Trotsky also pointed out that "Should a bourgeois counterrevolution succeed in the USSR, the new government for a lengthy period would have to base itself upon the nationalized economy" ("Not a Work-

ers' and Not a Bourgeois State?" *Writings [1937-38]*). State industry would be starved for new investment or even repairs, since this would divert resources from the rapidly growing private sector. At the same time, foreign capitalist investment would be invited in on a massive scale. Walesa openly calls for joint enterprises with Western capitalists as the salvation of the Polish economy. Wages would be kept low to compete on the world market. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of workers would be laid off as a "necessary" rationalization measure. Certainly the mass of deluded workers in Solidarity do not want this. But the restoration of capitalism in all its ruthlessness would follow, as the night follows the day, from Solidarity's program of "Western-style democracy."

### Tell Me Who Your Friends Are...

While proclaiming the need for "free trade unions" in the Soviet bloc, Solidarity has conspicuously *not* solidarized with workers' struggles in *capitalist* countries. When Ronald Reagan fired 12,000 striking air controllers, the entire national union membership, practically every trade-union federation in the Western world protested. But not the Polish Solidarity! Solidarity spokesman Zygmunt Przetakiewicz attended the New York City Labor Day demonstration in the company of Albert Shanker. At a time when even the most right-wing AFL-CIO bureaucrats were denouncing Reagan's massive union busting and savage cuts in social welfare programs, the Solidarity spokesman maintained a careful neutrality in the conflict between the American working class and the most reactionary government in half a

century. When asked what he thought of Reagan's policies, Przetakiewicz replied, "I would not like to be involved in this kind of thing" (*New York Times*, 8 September).

At the Labor Day demonstration Przetakiewicz announced Solidarity was opening its first foreign office in the New York headquarters of Shanker's United Federation of Teachers (UFT). The UFT is hardly a typical American business union. It is the main organizational base for the Social Democrats, U.S.A., otherwise known as "State Department socialists." Shanker's Socialist Party (which in 1972 changed its name to avoid the stigma of socialism!) were hawks in the Vietnam War till the bitter end, even after Nixon/Kissinger had given it up as a lost cause.

The Social Democrats are despised by mainstream liberals as crazed, anti-communist warmongers. In the film *Sleeper* by left-liberal humorist Woody Allen, the typical New York hero (or anti-hero) reawakens a few centuries in the future and learns that his civilization was wiped out in a nuclear war. He asks, how did this war begin? He's told: we really don't know, but we think a man by the name of Albert Shanker acquired the atomic bomb.

In the past decade the Social Democrats have developed the closest ties to the Meanyite machine which runs the national AFL-CIO. Kirkland/Shanker have done more than anyone else in the American labor movement to prepare the way for Reagan's massive arms buildup and anti-Soviet war drive. These two criminals are actively working for a nuclear first strike against the Soviet Union. Kirkland is a member of the Committee on the Present Danger, a right-wing militarist pressure group which attacked Carter for "selling out" to the Russians in the SALT negotiations. The *first point* in a recent resolution on global politics by the Social Democrats, U.S.A., states:

"The major priorities for the [Reagan] administration in the area of foreign policy should be:

"1) *Rebuilding American nuclear and conventional strength*: The correction of the imbalance, along the lines

suggested by such responsible defense analysts as those associated with the Committee on the Present Danger, must be undertaken as rapidly as possible." [italics in original]

—"The Global Vision of Social Democracy," *New America*, January/February

There's a saying: tell me who your friends are and I'll tell you who you are. Well, these are Solidarity's American friends.

### Soviet Russia and the Counterrevolutionary Danger in Poland

Faced with the counterrevolutionary danger in Poland, the Kremlin Stalinists have gone beyond denunciations in

**When  
Karl Marx  
urged workers to  
unite, he never  
dreamed they'd  
do it against  
communism.**

See "Specter Haunting Communism:  
Polish Workers" on  
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### Counterrevolutionary friends of Solidarność.

*Pravda* to mobilizing the Soviet workers against Solidarity. Mass meetings in the giant Zil auto and truck factory in Moscow and similar plants in Leningrad and elsewhere were held to approve a public answer to Solidarity's appeal to Soviet workers:

"They ask us to renounce ourselves, the results of our work, of our struggle, to betray millions of people who fell in battles against imperialism, to betray our Communist future."

—*New York Times*,  
12 September

These words and these meetings are not simply bureaucratic displays from above without support at the base. Doubtless the Kremlin Stalinists try to whip up Great Russian anti-Polish chauvinism. Furthermore, Soviet workers and collective farmers resent the fact

that for years Moscow has subsidized the Polish economy, although the standard of living in Warsaw and Gdansk is far higher than in Moscow or Kiev. Even Western bourgeois journalists report that the Russian man-in-the-street has no sympathy for Solidarity and what it stands for. Why? It is not primarily chauvinism or economic resentment.

The fundamental reason is that the Soviet working masses want to defend the collectivized social system born in the October Revolution, despite its subsequent Stalinist degeneration, against world imperialism. Unlike in Poland, where a deformed workers state was imposed from above by the Red Army, the Russian working class in 1917 took history into its own hands and will not lightly relinquish the social conquests of October. Moreover, Soviet working people keenly remember the 20 million lost fighting Hitler's Germany. 600,000 of these fell liberating Poland from the horror of the Nazi occupation. The Soviet working people know that the terrible nuclear arsenal of American imperialism, with the anti-Communist fanatics Reagan/Haig on the trigger finger, is aimed at them.

They fear the transformation of East Europe into imperialist-allied states extending NATO to their own border. The Kremlin bureaucrats cynically exploit this consciousness to rally support for their crushing of popular unrest and democratic aspirations in East Europe, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968. But the Poland of Wojtyla and Walesa is not the Czechoslovakia of Dubcek's "socialism with a human face." Now the counterrevolutionary danger is all too real. Any day Poland could explode into a 1921 Kronstadt-style counterrevolutionary rebellion on a massive scale.

But if Poland could become a giant Kronstadt, the bureaucratic regime of Brezhnev is separated by a political counterrevolution from the communist government of Lenin and Trotsky. As proletarian revolutionaries, it is not our task to advise the Kremlin Stalinists on how to deal with the counterrevolutionary situation in Poland for which they bear ultimate responsibility. They are not our saviours. We have no confidence the Russian Stalinists can or will defend the social gains of the October Revolution bureaucratically extended to Poland. In principle the Kremlin Stalinists are perfectly capable of selling Poland to the German bankers if they think they can preserve their own

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domestic power base. Remember the Stalin-Hitler pact. Ever since the Red Army drove out Hitler's forces at the end of World War II, the Western imperialist bourgeoisies have dreamed of "rolling back" the Soviets to the borders of the USSR (and beyond). However, given the implacable, insane hostility of the Reagan administration and the relative weight of American as against German imperialism, giving up Poland is not a very viable option for the Soviet bureaucracy today. This is especially the case as Poland lies across the main supply and communications routes between the Soviet Union and East Germany, the main state confronting Western imperialism.

Every class-conscious worker in the world, especially in the Soviet Union, Poland and the other East European countries, must understand that Solidarity is pursuing a straight-line policy threatening the gains of the October Revolution, the greatest victory for the working class in history. Solidarity's counterrevolutionary course must be stopped! *If the Kremlin Stalinists, in their necessarily brutal, stupid way, intervene militarily to stop it, we will support this.* And we take responsibility in advance for this; whatever the idiocies and atrocities they will commit, we do not flinch from defending the crushing of Solidarity's counterrevolution.

What do revolutionaries do when the Marxist program stands counterposed to the overwhelming bulk of the working class, a situation we of course urgently seek to avoid? There can be no

doubt. The task of communists must be to defend at all costs the program and gains of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Today Trotskyists find themselves in such a position over Poland, and it is necessary to swim against a powerful current of counterrevolution.

But Soviet military intervention against Solidarity will have an entirely different character from its intervention against the Islamic reactionaries in Afghanistan, which opened the possibility of liberating the Afghan peoples from the wretched conditions of feudal and pre-feudal backwardness. There we said, "Hail Red Army!" In Poland it is the Stalinists themselves, through decades of capitulation to capitalist forces, who have produced the counterrevolutionary crisis.

If a Trotskyist leadership had to intervene against counterrevolution in Poland today the conflict might be no less violent. But it would seek to mobilize those sections of the Polish working class which stand on the historic social gains of liberation of Poland from Nazi enslavement and capitalist exploitation, who hate the bureaucracy for undermining those gains, and who would fight together with the Soviet Army to defend the material foundations of a socialist future. The crimes of Stalinism, not the least the present counterrevolutionary situation in Poland, mandate proletarian political revolution in the Soviet bloc, and these workers could well be its conscious vanguard in Poland, tempered in part through a revolutionary mobilization to crush the reactionary forces of Solidarity.

The European bourgeoisies, no less than Reagan and Haig, are trying to convince the working masses to focus their fears on a supposed menace of "red imperialism." But this is starkly contrary to the facts. In Afghanistan the CIA is arming feudalist tribesmen in an attempt to strike a blow at the southern border of the USSR, while Soviet troops act as social liberators. Vietnam is under constant menace of renewed attack from China, now overtly militarily allied with U.S. imperialism. And the racist apartheid South African regime is increasingly becoming a central part of the "free world," acting as an American surrogate in attacking Angola with Israeli supplied weapons. Or that other showplace of the "free world," El Salvador, where American war materiel and Green Berets are supplying and maintaining a kill-crazed junta busy exterminating large sections of its own population.

Fake-Trotskyists and fatuous opportunists like Jack Barnes and Ernest Mandel (who hailed Khomeini's "Islamic Revolution" as progressive even as the mullahs were slaughtering their followers) now claim a proletarian political revolution is going on in Poland and Solidarity is its instrument! On the contrary, Solidarity is the translucent Trojan Horse for Reagan/Haig's fanatical anti-Soviet war drive and what is going on in Poland is a pro-imperialist counterrevolutionary polarization. It is no accident that Solidarity has flourished under the gun of mounting anti-Soviet imperialist militarism of first Carter/Brzezinski and now Reagan/Haig, with their virulently anti-communist Polish pope in the Vatican. It is also no accident that in this period when defense of the Soviet Union is urgent, fake-Trotskyists led by Barnes/Mandel abandon all pretense of defense of the Soviet Union and embrace Solidarity.

The choices facing revolutionaries over Poland in the absence of a mass Trotskyist vanguard are not attractive even if they are clear. Abstentionism is not a choice; it is backhanded support to counterrevolution. No less a danger is abandoning the perspective of struggle for the conscious factor in history, for the *international proletarian vanguard*, which leads either to a social-democratic accommodation with the bourgeoisie or accommodation with the Stalinist bureaucracy (à la Marcy who defended Stalinist intervention against a nascent workers political revolution in Hungary). Of course the present Polish situation could only have come to fruition in a political vacuum reflecting the destruction of the important tradition of international communism in Poland through savage persecution, both capitalist and Stalinist. That tradition will only be reforged in a reborn Fourth International by revolutionaries who defended the gains of October when the danger was near, the situation complex and the need for programmatic clarity and backbone urgent.

We warn the Polish workers and the world proletariat that under the banner of nation, church and "the free world," the Solidarity leadership is organizing a bloody capitalist counterrevolution. The creation of a "democratic" Poland subservient to Reagan/Haig on the Western border of the USSR would bring much closer the dreadful prospect of anti-Soviet nuclear holocaust. Solidarity's counterrevolution must be stopped before it is too late! ■

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## Walesa Brings "Mr. AFL-CIA" to Poland

# Irving Brown: Cold War Criminal

"Tell me what company you keep,  
and I'll tell you what you are."

—Cervantes, Don Quixote

On August 27 the AFL-CIO quietly announced that the American labor federation's "President Lane Kirkland has accepted the invitation of President Lech Walesa to attend the first National Conference of Solidarność in Gdansk, Poland, Sept. 26-29." The terse press release added that Kirkland will be accompanied by one "Irving Brown, AFL-CIO European representative." Polish workers beware! Walesa's welcome to this pair can mean but one thing: openly embracing capitalist counterrevolution.

Lane Kirkland's connections with the U.S. imperialist state are well known—for example, his directorship of the CIA labor front, the "American Institute for Free Labor Development" (AIFLD), which sets up yellow "unions" and helps overthrow leftist governments in Latin America (Guatemala 1954, Brazil 1964, Chile 1973). But Irving Brown is in another category. His sinister record of anti-labor, anti-Communist subversion goes back more than three and a half decades. This long-term operative of the U.S. spy agencies is "Mr. AFL-CIA" himself.

Irving Brown was the man who used CIA dollars to plant agents, buy officials and hire goon squads to split, smash and subdue combative unions in Western Europe after World War II. Irving Brown has been identified by former Central Intelligence Agency official Philip Agee as the "principal CIA agent for control of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions." Irving Brown was dispatched to Portugal in 1975 to stop revolution by busting up the Communist-led union federation while CIA-funded mobs were burning CP offices. Now Irving Brown is being sent to Poland to organize counterrevolution.

Brown's notorious activities are carried out in secret, or publicly with a "labor" cover provided by the Meanyite Cold Warriors who control American unions. But the cover has been lifted enough times so that his true aims and employers are plain to see. Beginning in the mid-'30s he was the No. 1 sidekick of Jay Lovestone, once Stalin's hatchetman-leader of the U.S. Communist Party who became an anti-Communist witchhunter in the unions long before McCarthyism. When Lovestone was made head of the AFL's "Free Trade Union Committee" in 1944, Irving Brown became his main European operative. His mission: carry out a Red Purge of European labor.

Already in the McCarthy years Brown's activities were revealed in an exposé by Hal Draper entitled, "Cloak-and-Dollar Man: Mr. Irving Brown of the AFL in Europe," and published in *Labor Action* of 20 October 1952. Draper quoted articles in the French

newspaper *Le Monde* detailing Brown's operations in France, where with the aid of U.S. dollars, fascist collaborators and Corsican gangsters he engineered a split in the Communist-led CGT union federation:

"Being a realist, Mr. Irving Brown does not long hesitate, it is well known, about the choice of methods to struggle against communism.... In his speech on December 13, 1951 at the American Club of Brussels, he even gave France precise advice: abolish the CGT's right to trade-union representation; return to the ranks of free trade-unionism the activists who were purged for having given support to the [Nazi-allied] Vichy regime."

Draper comments on the methods of this apostle of "free trade-unionism":

"This frankly means 'anti-Communist terror,' and less frankly, terror backed by the benevolence of the government. The prime example in France... is that of the so-called Mediterranean Committee which is virtually a Brown creature. He had found his man, one

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Free Trade Union News

**Sinister Irving Brown: Promotes bloody counterrevolution in Poland with AFL-CIO Polish language issue of *Free Trade Union News*.**

Pierre Ferri-Pisani, among the Marseilles dockers—described flatteringly as a 'steely Corsican' by the [*Readers Digest*—and poured AFL money in to build it up."

Brown's "steely Corsican" put together goon squads in every French port to intimidate the CGT and unleashed a wave of terror that sent several CP leaders to the hospital.

It all cost a bundle, far more than the AFL could manage. Quite a few years later it was confirmed that Irving Brown's big bucks came from the CIA. Tom Braden, head of the Agency's International Organizations Division



from 1950 to 1954, explained how "With funds from Dubinsky's union [the ILGWU], they [Lovestone and Brown] organized Force Ouvrière, a non-Communist union. When they ran out of money they appealed to the CIA. Thus began the secret subsidy of free trade unions" ("I'm Glad the CIA is Immoral," *Saturday Evening Post*, 20 May 1967). In 1949 Ferri-Pisani's goon squads broke a French dockers strike: Braden said Brown needed the CIA money "to pay off his strong-arm squads in Mediterranean ports, so that American supplies could be unloaded against the opposition of Communist

dock workers." Meanwhile, following Brown's advice, the U.S. literally bought itself a union movement in the Western occupation zones of starving postwar Germany by feeding hundreds of functionaries with CARE packages and supplying free paper, printing presses and cars—and a ban on the Communists. The total cost of the Lovestone/Brown operations was estimated by Braden at \$2 million a year.

The whole post-WWII AFL-CIA operation would have had little success if it hadn't been for Stalinist betrayals, such as the French CP/CGT suppression of strikes as their ticket for staying in the government. And Lovestone first learned his gangster methods as Stalin's hack at the head of the CPUSA, where he silenced, expelled and beat up the Trotskyist Left Opposition (only to find himself expelled soon after). But make no mistake: these "labor" front men for U.S. imperialism are the front-line organizers of bloody counterrevolution. Remember how they helped prepare the 1973 Chile coup! Polish workers: do not let the crimes of Stalinism blind you to the fact that the AFL-CIO and its Solidarność friends represent a mortal threat to the collective property which is a historic conquest of the *world* proletariat. No to the "democracy" and "free trade unionism" of CIA assassins, Reaganite strikebreaking and racist terror! Defend the gains of October! Smash the counterrevolutionary threat! ■

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## Solidarity Leaders Against Planned Economy

# “Market Socialism” Is Anti-Socialist

While Solidarity leader Lech Walesa's favorite posture is that of a simple trade unionist, bread-and-butter trade unionism is impossible in Poland today. There is no bread and butter. At the time of the Gdansk agreement last summer we wrote: “The present large wage increases now being granted will lead either to wild inflation or even longer waiting lines” (“Polish Workers Move,” *WV* No. 263, 5 September 1980). By now practically every member of Solidarity must know that demanding and getting higher money wages and shorter hours only makes the economic condition worse. The *Solidarność* leadership is under pressure from their most responsible members, as well as sympathetic intellectuals and bureaucrats, to come up with some positive program to get out of the economic crisis.

Solidarity's numerous leftist lawyers in the West, like Ernest Mandel's fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat, keep arguing that its leaders have never actually called for the restoration of capitalism, though they almost never say anything good about a socialized economy. In point of fact, Walesa has praised American economic imperialism and called for its greater penetration into Poland. When asked by the liberal West German *Der Spiegel* (15 June) where would the investment funds come from to restructure the Polish economy, the Solidarity chief replied: “... perhaps from the West in the form of joint companies. I have seen for myself on my Japanese trip how strongly American capital has contributed to Japan's enormous economic ascent.”

Solidarity's most comprehensive and authoritative statement of economic program to date is a document, “The Course of Union Action in the Country's Present Situation,” published in the 17 April *Solidarity Weekly* (translated in *Intercontinental Press*, 22 and 29 June). This document advocates an extreme version of “the Yugoslav model,” calling for autonomous enter-

prises based on workers self-management:

“...they [the self-management bodies] should have the right to exercise control over the assets of the concern, to decide on the aims of production and sales, the choice of production methods, and investment goals. They should also decide on the distribution of the profits of the enterprise.”

The document further specifies that “concerns should be self-financing, that is, they should be able to cover their costs out of their own earnings.”

One doesn't know whether the Solidarity leadership is seriously committed to the Yugoslav model or is simply setting on paper the conventional formulae for liberal economic reform in East Europe. What is clear, however, is that if realized, the Solidarity program would be an even greater catastrophe for the Polish working class than that brought about by the Stalinists' incredible mismanagement and ever greater concessions to bourgeois forces.

With the Polish economy on the

downhill side of a roller coaster ride, free-market competition and self-financing would immediately bankrupt hundreds of enterprises throwing hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of workers into the streets. Significantly, the only group of Polish workers which actually seems to be pushing for self-management are the employees of the national airline, LOT, a state *monopoly*. The authors of the Solidarity program are realistic enough to know that theirs is a recipe for instant mass layoffs:

“The union recognizes that the enterprises will have the right to make changes in their employment levels as they need to. But the government authorities will still be responsible for carrying out a full employment policy.... The self-financing of enterprises may also result in some having to cut back or close down.”

So the self-managers are to be free to lay off workers at will and somehow the government has to find ways to reemploy them all! Just like it is supposed to



Walesa (center) in solidarity with reactionary Polish Catholic church.

Gamma

find food when there isn't any. Here Solidarity's scheme is far worse—more ruthlessly capitalistic—than Yugoslav practice. In Yugoslavia enterprises are prohibited from dismissing a worker for economic reasons without securing "equivalent substitute employment" for him. But under Solidarity's plan the majority of "self-managers" can get rid of the workers in an unprofitable or marginal department in order to bolster their own income. Solidarity indeed!

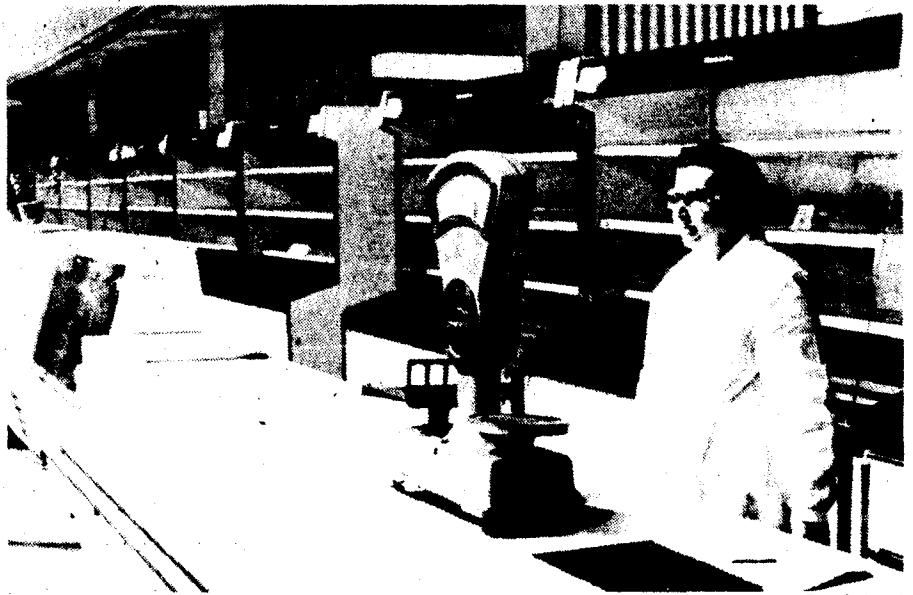
### Inequality and Unemployment

Socialism means a democratically administered, planned, egalitarian and internationally organized economy. Before the rise of Stalinism practically no one who considered himself a socialist disputed these basic principles. The program of "market socialism" has nothing in common with socialism. It is basically a product of liberal Stalinism.

The impetus for "market socialism" in East Europe does not come from the workers, but rather from a technocratic wing of the bureaucracy seeking in this way to overcome the rigidities and wastefulness of traditional Stalinist planning. When implemented, however, inter-enterprise competition, allowing enterprises to trade on the world market, etc., produces strong capitalistic tendencies. The leading advocates of "market socialism," like the Czech Ota Sik and the Pole Wlodzimierz Brus, are invariably on the far right of the Stalinist bureaucracies. The immediate effects of inter-enterprise competition, increased unemployment and greater wage differentials, are always resented by the workers as in Hungary and also in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

We can judge the effects of "market socialism" from life itself. Autonomous enterprises under workers self-management were introduced to the world by Tito's Yugoslavia shortly after the break with Stalin in 1948. Workers councils elect the management and control after-tax revenues. Enterprises are, however, subject to certain decisive restrictions which still define them as state, not group, property. Enterprises cannot liquidate themselves or sell off their physical plant without government approval. Workers have a share in enterprise profits only so long as they are employed there; they have no property rights *per se*. (For a perceptive, though now somewhat dated, analysis of the Yugoslav model and its contradictions, see Theo Schulze, "Yugoslavia's Way: the Workers' Council System," *International Socialist Review*, Summer 1962.)

Certain New Left Stalinist confu-



Der Spiegel

**Shopping in Poland: No meat, no soap, no cigarettes. In order to eat one must work.**

sionists like Paul Sweezy and Charles Bettelheim have praised workers self-management à la Yugoslavia, while deploring market competition between enterprises. In the real world such a separation is not possible. If workers are to be fully master in their own factory, they cannot lay claim to the state budget for additional wage or investment funds. Expenditure by a given enterprise for wages, bonuses, new facilities, etc. can be limited by the revenue from the sale of its product or limited by the decision of a centralized economic administration. But expenditures must be limited somehow. Socialist revolution does not abolish the economic home truth that there is no such thing as a free lunch.

"Market socialism" by its very nature generates increased income inequalities and unemployment. Moreover, the profitability or unprofitability of a concern is usually only marginally affected by the diligence of its workforce. In general the most important factor determining the difference between selling price and cost is the relative age of the plant. Under "market socialism" workers unfortunately stuck in older enterprises are penalized with lower incomes than their fellow workers employed in new or newly retooled plants. The second major factor governing enterprise profitability is supply and demand conditions on the domestic and/or world market, again something the workers have no control over. Under Solidarity's scheme Polish coal miners, for example, would benefit when OPEC pushed up the price of oil, thereby increasing demand for coal, and suffer when the world oil market was in glut

(as at present). "Market socialism" violates the elementary principle, shared by trade unionists as well as socialists, of equal pay for equal work.

### The Yugoslav Experience

In Yugoslavia we can see the full flowering to date of "market socialism." After three decades of workers self-management Yugoslavia suffers *the highest rate of inflation in Europe*, East or West, a 14 percent unemployment rate and gross inequalities throughout economic life. The unemployment rate would be far higher still except that the authorities routinely bail out enterprises in financial trouble at the cost of feeding an inflation rate which is now running 50 percent a year (*Economist*, 1 August)! And meanwhile they send their "surplus" sons and daughters to work in capitalist West Europe: remittances from Yugoslavs abroad amount to over half the total value of goods exported.

Inter-enterprise competition combined with federalism has in fact widened regional differences, thereby aggravating national conflicts which could rip the country apart. Yugoslavia's most advanced republic, Slovenia, enjoys economic conditions comparable to neighboring Austria's, while Albanian-populated Kosovo more closely resembles Turkey. Moreover, the gap between the richest and poorest regions has increased under "market socialism." In 1952 per capita income in Kosovo was 23 percent of that in Slovenia; by 1977 it was only 15 percent (Laura D'Andrea Tyson and Gabriel Eichler, "Continuity and Change in the Yugoslav Economy in the 1970's and



1980's," in *East European Economic Assessment*). The social surplus produced in Slovenia is largely reinvested in Slovenia. This is clearly seen in the unemployment picture. In 1977 for every vacancy in the socialized sector in Slovenia there were only 1.5 job seekers; in Kosovo there were 35 job seekers for every vacancy! Inequalities of this magnitude can easily fuel reactionary nationalistic movements and provide exploitable material for imperialist intrigues.

While the Soviet Union is far from free of national conflicts and Great Russian chauvinism, centralized planning has enabled it to appreciably narrow the once vast gulf between the wretchedly backward peoples of Central Asia and those of European Russia. The liberal British economist Alec Nove, no admirer of the Soviet economic system, acknowledges: "The wage rates in Central Asia are similar to those in Central Russia, the prices of cotton, citrus fruits, grapes, tobacco, have been relatively favourable, the social services provided in Central Asia have been on the standard 'Soviet' scale, and budget statistics show that additional sums are earmarked for the budgets of backward republics" (*The Soviet Economic System* [1977]). To be sure, a workers government in the Soviet Union would overcome the still great inequalities fostered by the parasitic Kremlin bureaucracy, for example, by encouraging migration from the over-populated Central Asian republics to the labor-short regions of Russia and Siberia.

### The Trotskyist Answer to Bureaucratic Centralism

Solidarity's advocacy of enterprise self-management expresses the influence of liberal Stalinist and social-democratic intellectuals on the one hand and possibly primitive syndicalist impulses on the other. It also reflects nationalistic rejection of "Russian Communism." In the Yugoslav and Hungarian deformed workers states the tendency of enterprise autonomy to regenerate capitalistic economic relations is circumscribed and checked by a still strong governmental apparatus. But in the anarchic conditions of Poland, self-managed enterprises could free themselves from all but nominal state control.

If carried out, Solidarity's program would add mass unemployment to the miseries afflicting the Polish workers, would facilitate imperialist economic penetration and would strengthen the forces pushing for capitalist restoration. Capitalist restoration would mean

bloody counterrevolution, not a peaceful, gradual, purely economic process. But any market-oriented "reforms," further atomizing the Polish economy, can only increase the counterrevolutionary danger.

The advocates of "market socialism" like Brus and Sik argue that traditional Soviet-type planning wastes enormous resources, especially in the consumer goods sector. It produces frequently shoddy goods. Unwanted items pile up in warehouses, while other commodities are chronically in short supply. All this is true and comes as no news whatsoever to Trotskyists.

Even before Stalin drove down the living standards with his first five-year plan, the Left Opposition denounced bureaucratic arbitrariness in economic administration and indifference to consumer well-being. The 1927 Platform of the Joint Opposition called for "the lowering of prices [which] affects above all the objects of mass consumption among the workers and peasants." It further specifies a "price-lowering policy, more adapted to the conditions of the market, more individualized—that is, taking into greater consideration the market position of each kind of goods."

In 1932, at the height of Stalin's economic adventurism, Trotsky wrote:

"The participation of workers themselves in the leadership of the nation, of its policies and economy; an actual control over the bureaucracy; and the growth in the feeling of responsibility of those in charge to those under them—all these would doubtless react favorably on production itself: the friction would be reduced, the costly economic zigzags would likewise be reduced to a

minimum, a healthier distribution of forces and equipment would be assured, and ultimately the coefficients of growth would be raised. Soviet democracy is first of all the vital need of national economy itself."

—*What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat*

Obviously a workers government should produce the types of consumer goods people want with the most efficient use of resources. But this has nothing to do with atomized competition between enterprises. The central economic administration in close consultation with consumer cooperatives should continually adjust the output of different goods to satisfy market demand. Clearly it makes no sense—except to some deluded Gosplan apparatchik—to apply long-term targets to the number of shoes delivered to various department stores or wrenches supplied to various garages. The objects of the long-term plan are the construction of new factories, mines, railroads, airports, etc., major retooling operations, urban renewal and the like.

As Trotsky wrote a long time ago, only the interaction of workers democracy, the plan and the market can guide the economy through the transitional epoch from capitalism to communism. This is the goal of Trotskyists' call for proletarian political revolution in the bureaucratically degenerated/deformed workers states: not backward to the anarchy of the market with its inflation and unemployment, its national chauvinism and imperialist war, but forward to socialism through an international planned economy based on soviet democracy. ■

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# U.S. Imperialists Provoke Soviet Union Whose Poland?

## For Proletarian Political Revolution!

Poland is coming unstuck. The "Solidarity" union movement (*Solidarność*) is polarizing. The Polish Communist party is in chaos. The economy is in a shambles. And United States imperialism is wildly seeking to provoke a Russian intervention. Reagan and Haig have seized upon Poland as a pawn for their superheated Cold War drive against the Soviet Union. And their ultimate aim is to overthrow the remaining conquests of the October Revolution, the main bastion of proletarian state power. Revolutionaries and all class-conscious workers must oppose this imperialist provocation and unconditionally defend the Soviet bloc states against counterrevolutionary attack.

Washington hectors its West European "allies" to stiffen their anti-Soviet resolve with nuclear missiles aimed at the "Russian aggressor in Poland." General Haig tries to line up NATO governments to break off economic and diplomatic relations with the USSR. American secretary of war Weinberger threatens terrible reprisals if the Soviet Union intervenes. He even flashes the U.S.' menacing "China card," threatening to arm Peking, presumably with atomic weapons capable of reaching Soviet cities. And the Chinese are ready, even eager: they don't just want thermonuclear missiles, they want to use them!

Ever since World War II the American bourgeoisie has tried to talk itself into the idea that they can nuclear bomb the Soviet Union and live! This goal is now openly stated by the Reagan administration. White House Russia expert Richard Pipes says the Soviets face the choice of "changing their Communist system in the direction of the West or going to war." Reagan/Haig believe that Soviet intervention in Poland will remove all obstacles in their preparations for such a war.

Even if the Kremlin doesn't intervene, the U.S. has already made Poland a focal point of the Cold War with its endless talk of "invasion by osmosis," "indefinite extension of Warsaw Pact war games," etc. The U.S. "seem[s] to be playing some kind of game with a whole nation," exclaimed one Pole angered by Washington's constant alarms (*New York Times*, 6 April). Indeed, Reagan and Haig have made it clear they want full-scale Russian intervention, and they're doing their best to spark it. They want to see Polish workers under the eagle and the cross throwing Molotov cocktails at Soviet tanks. They want to provoke a bloodbath in Poland so that they can use the battle cry of "Russian aggression" to push forward on all fronts in their drive toward World War III.

Imperialist politicians and the Western press all speak of a Soviet "invasion of Poland." In fact the Soviet Army drove the Nazi German forces out of Poland and liberated the country in 1944-45. They have been there since, and today two Russian divisions guard the vital communications links to East Germany and the NATO front. To demand withdrawal of Soviet troops from Poland is to demand that Warsaw leave the Warsaw Pact—tantamount to calling for unilateral disarmament of the Soviet bloc. It is not an invasion that is posed, but a Russian military intervention into the civil life and class struggle in Poland. And those processes have undergone important developments during nine months at full boil.

The massive strike wave in the Baltic ports last August brought Polish workers before a historic choice: with the bankruptcy of Stalinist rule dramatically demonstrated, it would be either the path of bloody counterrevolution in league with Western imperialism, or the path of proletarian political revolution. With the clerical-nationalist influence in *Solidarność* and now the emergence of a mass organization of the landowning peasantry, the counterrevolutionary danger remains great. But a process of political differentiation has begun.

Above all, "Solidarity" has come to embrace the whole of the Polish working class, with all of its tensions and contradictions. One million Polish party members have joined the new unions, and the party is in deep trouble—hardliners isolated, the leadership weakened, the ranks in uproar. And the church has pulled back from Walesa & Co., hoping to maintain itself as a stable pole for counterrevolution in the face of Russian military intervention.

This political fluidity, by no means signifies a fundamental change in the relationship of forces, which is still distinctly unfavorable from a revolutionary standpoint. But if a genuine Leninist-Trotskyist opposition were precipitated, it could quickly grow and have a tremendous polarizing impact. Should the Kremlin, goaded by imperialist provocation, move to restore bureaucratic order in Poland, however, it would in the best case freeze that political differentiation necessary for the only progressive solution to the Polish crisis: workers political revolution. Thus genuine proletarian internationalists must bitterly protest a Russian military intervention, which would represent a defeat for the cause of socialism.

But far worse would be violent resistance by the Poles, which could produce a bloodbath. This would be a historic catastrophe. A "cold" suppression would only postpone the confrontation between the Polish workers and their Stalinist rulers. If there is a Soviet tank on every street corner and the Polish people walk by them hissing, what has really changed? But if there is a violent response, the resulting repression would crush the Polish working class into the ground politically and produce an explosion of anti-Russian nationalism that would take years, perhaps decades to overcome. It would also fuel U.S. imperialism's war drive to a white heat, which is why Reagan and Haig are pushing for such a bloodbath. *Proletarian revolutionaries must therefore emphatically oppose all violent resistance, whether mass action or*



Sipa

### Warsaw Pact tanks in Poland.

*individual terror, against such a Soviet military intervention in Poland.*

The present Polish situation is the product of decades of capitulation by the Stalinist bureaucrats to capitalist forces. It makes revolutionaries yearn for a Trotskyist leadership in the USSR which would make short shrift of the Polish crisis. Only a political revolution throughout Stalinist-ruled East Europe can open the road to socialism. And that requires internationalist Trotskyist parties which can reach out to the Soviet working class in defending the gains of the October Revolution.

### Stalinism Fuels Clerical-Nationalist Reaction

The Soviet armed forces entering German-occupied Poland in 1944 were greeted as liberators in a social as well as a national sense. The expropriation of the large landed estates and big capitalists in the mid/late-1940s was a broadly supported measure. Yet three decades of Stalinist bureaucratic rule have turned much of the population, and much of the industrial working class, against what they view as the "Russian-imposed Communist system." And this is not

simply a reaction to the police suppression of democratic rights and the gross privileges and corruption of the "socialist" officialdom. The present Polish crisis, especially the dangerous growth of clerical-nationalist sentiment, has its roots in the failures and broken promises of reform Stalinism.

When Wladyslaw Gomulka came to power in 1956 proclaiming the need for the widest workers democracy, he enjoyed enormous popular authority. Then he turned and suppressed the workers councils and dissident intellectual circles which had supported him against the hard-line Stalinists. When Edward Gierk replaced Gomulka in 1970 after the Baltic coast workers' uprising, many believed his promises of unparalleled economic prosperity. Then he ruinously mortgaged Poland's wealth to Western bankers and also ruinously subsidized the landowning peasants!

So when under the pressure of rising prices and food and other consumer goods shortages the workers exploded last summer, they looked to the powerful Catholic church as the recognized opposition to the discredited Communist regime. The *Internationale* was

replaced by the national hymn, "Oh God, Who Has Defended Poland," and the new workers' leader, Lech Walesa, declared himself at every opportunity to be a true son of the Polish church. Many of the "dissidents" who raised their heads are openly reactionary—virulently nationalist, anti-communist, anti-democratic and even anti-Semitic (despite the fact that there are almost no Jews left in Poland).

The upsurge of clerical nationalism is associated with pro-Western sympathies, often expressed in calls for "free trade unions" like in the U.S. and West Germany. Polish workers would do well to look at the blood-soaked American neo-colonies before buying the Radio Free Europe line. The Russians would have to kill something like 150,000 Poles to proportionately match the number of workers and peasants slaughtered during the last year by Carter/Reagan's junta in El Salvador. In Brazil, the popular union leader "Lula" has been sentenced to three and a half years in prison for far less than threatening to lead a political general strike every month or so. Even United Auto Workers observer John Christensen commented:

"It's incredible to me that in comparing Brazil and Poland, a Communist country, there seems to be more freedom there than here. Walesa is freer than Lula. Here the Government agreed to hold a dialogue with him, not here."

—*New York Times*, 3 April

A visit to El Salvador and Brazil by a "Solidarity" delegation might teach them a thing or two about the "free world"—if they got out alive.

With the strong clerical-nationalist influence over the new unions which became *Solidarność*, we have repeatedly warned of the danger of capitalist counterrevolution spearheaded by Pope Wojtyla's church. At the same time, we recognized that the emergence of a powerful workers movement fundamentally challenging Stalinist bureaucratic rule could also open the road to proletarian political revolution. We have therefore insisted that the key strategic task for a Trotskyist vanguard in Poland was to *split* the mass of workers from reactionary forces. This means fighting for a series of programmatic demands including strict separation of church and state, defense of collectivized property, defense of the Soviet bloc degenerated/deformed workers states against imperialism. A Trotskyist vanguard would seek to polarize the workers movement, attracting those who seek a genuinely socialist

solution and are hostile to the Vatican and Western capitalism.

### **Solidarność in Turmoil, Communist Party Polarized**

Today we see the beginnings of internal political differentiation within "Solidarity" and the Communist party. For the first time forces are opposing bureaucratic rule not in the name of the eagle and the cross but calling for "socialist renewal" and even a return to the principles of "Marxism-Leninism." The *New York Times* (12 April) now projects: "Barring Soviet military intervention, the likely next phase in the workers' revolution in Poland will not be a struggle against the Communist Party but a struggle within the party itself." This makes even more urgent the crystallization of a Trotskyist propaganda nucleus in Poland which alone can offer a way out of the desperate and seemingly endless crises which are wracking Poland.

The political landscape has changed considerably since the Gdansk-based general strike last summer. Walesa is under several-sided attack from within *Solidarność*. Meanwhile, many of the more than one million working-class members of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) now participating in "Solidarity" must find their socialist convictions (however deformed by Stalinist ideology) in conflict with the reactionary views of Walesa and his associates. The church hierarchy, on the other hand, has pulled back, fearing a Soviet military intervention. A few days before "Solidarity" had scheduled a general strike at the end of March, Cardinal Wyszynski issued a joint statement with Prime Minister Wojciech Jaruzelski urging that "strikes can be eliminated as extremely costly to the enfeebled national economy" (*Daily World*, 28 March).

Most striking is the impact which the workers struggles have had on the Stalinist apparatus of the PUWP. The recent Central Committee meeting at the end of March turned into a political brawl. "We must know that Solidarity is in the first place the working class itself," declared the party secretary of the Baltic port of Szczecin. Only the fear of the Kremlin's reaction prevented this meeting from throwing hardliners like Stefan Olszowski off the Politburo. A recent national conference in Torun of dissident groupings within the party called for full and adequate information, secret ballots, multiple candidates. One delegate protested: "The authorities should not present the changes

going on in our country as the work of antisocialist forces but as a proper restoration of Marxist-Leninist principles" (*New York Times*, 16 April).

However, overall the PUWP dissidents are *not* moving toward a rediscovery of authentic Leninism. They tend rather toward liberal Stalinism, "socialism with a human face," as the Czech Stalinist reformer Dubček called it during the Prague Spring of 1968, and they seek a favorable hearing from the present leaders of *Solidarność*. Moreover, they are quoted expressing anti-Russian prejudices and political sentiments common in Poland today. One delegate at the Torun conference remarked: "Our Soviet friends have a history that has accustomed them to absolutism in government. But the history of our nation is closely connected to democracy." And what of the national hero and fascist dictator Pilsudski, a former right-wing social democrat who defended Polish capitalism against the Red Army in 1920? As Trotsky pointed out, the Stalinist bureaucracy itself could generate a fascist wing—he called it the "Butenko faction"—which in Poland today would be imbued with virulent anti-Russian nationalism.

If the PUWP liberals are talking of a "socialist renewal" in Poland, the Kremlin is warning of "creeping counterrevolution." The Brezhnevite Stalinists dare not attack the real basis for counterrevolution, the powerful Catholic hierarchy, but instead target relatively small dissident groups, notably Jacek Kuron's Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR) and the Confederation of Independent Poland (KPN) of Leszek Moczulski. Of course, the Kremlin hacks would denounce *any* political opposition, including and especially Trotskyists, as "counterrevolutionary" and even "fascistic." But Stalinist slanders notwithstanding, KOR and the KPN are each in their own ways enemies of socialism.

The KPN is openly clerical-nationalist and anti-socialist. This is not the case, however, with Kuron's KOR. In the West Kuron is widely regarded as some kind of left radical, even a "Marxist"—a reflection of his stance in the 1960s. As we have pointed out in the face of his pseudo-Trotskyist cheerleaders, he has since moved far to the right. Tamara Deutscher confirms this in an important recent article in *New Left Review* ("Poland—Hopes and Fears," January-February, 1981). She recalls that when sentenced to prison in 1964, "Kuron and his comrade defiantly sang the Internationale in court. Such a

gesture on his part would be unthinkable today. He has moved towards social democracy, the Church and a nationalistic position."

### **Above All, A Revolutionary Internationalist Party**

Whether or not Moscow intervenes militarily in the near future, the Polish crisis is fast heading toward the explosion point. The economic chaos is assuming disastrous proportions. Food supplies are shrinking rapidly; hard currency exports have fallen 25 percent since last year, coal exports have dropped 50 percent. Politically the situation is anarchic. There must be a tremendous felt need for the working people of Poland to take control of society, of the economy, and direct it in their interests. Seeking to placate the masses, the Stalinist leaders are now talking about granting more powers to the parliament, the *Sejm*, nominally the highest governing body.

In Poland today the classic Bolshevik demand—*all power to the soviets*, the democratically elected workers councils—would have a broad appeal. A revolutionary vanguard might well demand that the supposed powers of the *Sejm* be vested in a congress of soviets as in the Russian October Revolution. But soviets in themselves do not guarantee the socialist direction of society. Especially under present Polish conditions, they could fall under the influence of reactionary nationalist forces seeking imperialist backing against the USSR. The crucial element is an authentically revolutionary workers party capable of organizing the socialist impulses among the working masses around a Marxist, *internationalist* program.

A communist vanguard must be militantly *anti-nationalist*. It would look back to the tradition of the pre-World War I socialist party of Rosa Luxemburg and Leo Jogiches. In contrast to Pilsudski's chauvinist Polish Socialist Party, they called their organization the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania. They maintained that the socialist transformation of Poland was inextricably bound up with the proletarian revolution in Russia.

One of the leaders of the Luxemburg/Jogiches SDKPiL was Felix Dzerzhinski, who later played a distinguished role in the Bolshevik Revolution as head of the Cheka, the police arm of the early Soviet power. Dzerzhinski, whose Polish accent in Russian became stronger when he was agitated, was chosen for this most sensitive post because he was a

revolutionist of outstanding moral integrity. On a far lesser historic scale, there was Konstanti Rokossovski, a young Polish socialist who joined the Soviet Red Army in 1919. Imprisoned in the Stalin purges of the late 1930s, he reemerged to become one of the greatest Soviet commanders of World War II. Marshal Rokossovski was not a revolutionist but a Stalinist military officer. But his service in defending the Soviet Union against imperialist attack does him honor—and he played a key role in liberating Poland in 1944-45 from nightmarish Nazi occupation.

In his great essay on "The Tragedy of the Polish Communist Party," Isaac Deutscher stressed as his main conclusion: "... if the history of the Polish CP and of Poland at large proves anything at all, it proves how indestructible is the link between the Polish and the Russian revolutions." Today it is necessary to revive the tradition of revolutionary unity of the Polish and Russian proletariat. Now it must be directed against the Stalinist bureaucracies, in defense of the collectivized economies and proletarian state powers against the threat of capitalist-imperialism.

The leadership of "Solidarity" stands directly opposed to these principles. Walesa and his colleagues see themselves leading the entire Polish nation against Russian "Communism." This is most strongly expressed in their active support to the peasant organization, Rural Solidarity. In fact, the recent near general strike was called primarily on behalf of the peasant organization. Expressing the acquisitive appetites of Poland's numerous landowning peasants, Rural Solidarity aims at the complete reestablishment of capitalist relations in the countryside. Its non-economic demands include the construction of more churches, no restriction of religious education and an end to compulsory teaching of Russian in the schools. Little wonder, then, that Pope Wojtyla himself demanded that the Warsaw regime recognize Rural Solidarity, a potent base for capitalist restoration. The fact that the Stalinist regime has just legitimized this peasant organization, reversing its earlier stand, marks a major concession to the forces of reaction.

The socialist answer to Rural Solidarity is not maintaining the status quo in the countryside. For that situation is disastrous. Poland's inefficient, aging smallholders are a major barrier to balanced economic development. The \$10 billion food subsidy—the difference between what the state pays the farmers and what it charges urban



SDKPIL

**Polish revolutionary Felix Dzerzhinski headed Bolshevik Cheka, security arm of early Soviet power.**

consumers—is by far the largest item in the government budget and accounts for a significant share of total national income. Russian and Ukrainian collective farms now supply Poland with food, even though the consumption level, especially of meat, is much higher in Warsaw and Gdansk than in Moscow and Kiev. An immediate key task for a revolutionary soviet government in Poland would be to *promote the collectivization of agriculture*. Cheap credit and generous social services should be given to those peasants who pool their land and labor. Those who want to remain petty agricultural capitalists should be subject to higher taxes and other forms of *economic discrimination*.

Along with the backward smallholding agriculture, an enormous foreign debt is at the root of the current Polish economic crisis. During the 1970s the Gierek regime tried to buy off the workers and peasants with massive loans contracted from the West. His successors have accelerated this disastrous policy. Poland's debt to the West has increased by one-third in the last seven months alone! Repaying the bankers of Frankfurt and Wall Street will absorb all of Poland's hard-currency export earnings for years to come. (And no small share of Soviet hard-currency exports are expended on repaying directly or indirectly Poland's Western capitalist creditors.) The demand to *cancel the imperialist debt* is crucial in breaking the capitalist stranglehold on the Polish economy.

But this would be possible only under a revolutionary soviet regime which could counter imperialist economic retaliation by appealing to the workers of West Europe to become comrades in international socialist planning in a Socialist United States of Europe.

As important as appeals to the working class of the capitalist West are to a proletarian political revolution in Poland, still more important is the perspective toward such a revolution in the Soviet Union. Should the Kremlin intervene militarily, the immediate fate of the Polish workers would in large measure depend on their ability to influence and win over Soviet conscript soldiers—that is, young Russian, Ukrainian and Central Asian workers and peasants in uniform. Anti-Russian Polish nationalism, and especially violence directed at Soviet soldiers or officers, would sabotage the proletarian cause.

Here it is important to recognize that illusions about "good will" and peacefulness of the Western capitalist powers, common in East Europe and particularly in Poland, do not extend to the Soviet Union. After losing 20 million fighting Nazi Germany, the Soviet people understand full well that NATO's nuclear arsenal is targeted at them. This understanding is now heightened by Washington's open threats of a nuclear first strike. The Soviet people legitimately fear the transformation of East Europe into hostile, imperialist-allied states extending to their own border.

The Kremlin bureaucrats exploit this legitimate fear to crush popular unrest and democratic aspirations in East Europe, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968. But the situation in Poland today is significantly different from that during the "Prague Spring." Anti-Russian nationalism is far more virulent, while Washington and its NATO allies are being far more provocative and militarily threatening. For these reasons the question of defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism takes on far greater importance in the present Polish crisis. Revolutionary Polish workers cannot hope to appeal to Soviet soldiers unless they assure them that they will defend the social gains of the October Revolution against imperialist attack.

*Only by addressing their Soviet class brothers in the name of socialist internationalism can the Polish proletariat liberate itself from the chains of Stalinist oppression. With this perspective a Trotskyist vanguard in Poland could turn a looming catastrophe into a great victory for world socialism. ■*

## Kirkland, Fraser on Cold War Assignment

# AFL-CIO Tops— Hands Off Poland!

Throughout most of the 1960s-'70s, the Meanyite labor fakers attacked the State Department from the right, for being "soft on Communism." George Meany and his chief lieutenant, Lane Kirkland, were hawks on Vietnam even after Nixon and Kissinger had given it up as a lost cause. Now with Reagan in the White House, the AFL-CIO tops have a president whose foreign policy at least is more to their liking. Under the slogan "Solidarity with Solidarność" (the Polish union body), they are leading the charge on the Polish front of Cold War II.

Early last September, right after the Gdansk agreement recognizing independent unions, the AFL-CIO Executive Board announced it had established a "Polish Workers Aid Fund." At the same time, Doug Fraser of the more liberal UAW said the Auto Workers union had sent \$120,000 to the Polish strikers' families. By early this year the AFL-CIO fund had amassed \$160,000, which had been "used by the Paris office of the American labor federation to purchase office equipment and supplies to help the Polish union..." (*New York Times*, 7 January). Nobody could remember the AFL-CIO showing such encouragement to workers defying the *American* government—e.g., postal workers in 1970.

Seeking to give this anti-Communist and probably CIA-connected operation a thin cover of trade-union militancy, a special September issue of the federation's *Free Trade Union News* praised the Polish workers for demanding "the right to strike." The AFL-CIO Exec Board, champions of the right to strike? Tell that to the coal miners! Meany, Kirkland & Co. didn't lift a finger when Jimmy Carter tried to break the 1978 coal strike with a Taft-Hartley injunction. Supporters of a 40-hour workweek in Poland, these pro-capitalist bureaucrats go along with compulsory overtime throughout U.S. industry, often resulting in 50-60 hours of labor a week.

**Right-wing  
CIA-connected  
U.S. labor  
bureaucracy  
sends money to  
Lech Walesa's  
Polish  
Solidarity.**



So it is entirely appropriate that this same special "Solidarność" edition of the *AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News* (also published in Polish) has a picture of federation president Kirkland shaking hands with strikebreaker Carter. The "aid" fund was preceded, of course, by the reactionary ILA longshore boycott to cut off commerce with "Communist" Poland. Even the Machinists' "socialist" president Winpinger fell in behind conservative ILA chief Gleason by agreeing to cut off airline service to Warsaw. As we pointed out at the time, both the bucks and the boycott are "designed to strengthen the cold war drive against the Soviet Union" ("No to ILA Anti-Communist Boycott!" *WV* No. 263, 5 September 1980).

### In Latin America, It's Called "AFL-CIA"

The AFL-CIO dollar-laundering operation, mostly via European unions (such as the Swedish labor federation, which passed along a \$50,000 printing

press to Solidarność) was immediately denounced as a provocation by Warsaw and Moscow. Even Carter's "détente"-minded secretary of state Muskie first opposed it, though the State Department soon came around. When in December *Pravda* again protested U.S. financial support to the Polish unions, pointing out that the AFL-CIO frequently acts as a conduit for the CIA, Washington cried slander. Yet this is a well-established fact, ever since the post-World War II years when the AFL operative Irving Brown doled out hundreds of thousands of CIA dollars to split the West European labor movement and thus undermine Communist influence.

It is also a fact that the AFL-CIO has done little or nothing to support workers' organizations in savage capitalist police states friendly to U.S. imperialism—South Africa, El Salvador, Chile, South Korea, the list is endless. On the contrary, AFL-CIO largesse has been consistently directed against left-wing governments. The notorious "American Institute for Free

Labor Development" (AIFLD), a long-standing joint project with such blood-sucking multinationals as United Fruit and ITT, has been responsible for (and bragged about) "destabilizing" elected governments like the nationalist Goulart in Brazil in 1964 and "Marxist" Allende in Chile in 1973. (In his book, *Inside the Company*, ex-CIA agent Philip Agee describes the AIFLD as a "C.I.A.-controlled labor center financed through A.I.D. [the U.S. Agency for International Development].")

Significantly, the June 1980 *Free Trade Union News* ran a front-page article lauding the AIFLD's "land reform" in El Salvador (locally known as "reform by death") written by its architect, Ray Prosterman, whose previous credits include the "Phoenix Project" for mass assassination of leftists in Vietnam. And when two AIFLD men were recently killed by right-wing gunmen in San Salvador, one of them, Michael Hammer, was given a special "hero's burial" in Arlington National Cemetery. Shortly after, the U.S. solicitor general (attempting to justify the lifting of Agee's passport) revealed that the AIFLD pair were working "under cover" (*New York Times*, 15 January). It's no wonder that the AFL-CIO is known in Latin America as the "AFL-CIA."

Such "labor"-flavored imperialist subversion is not limited to Latin America. The AIFLD has since spawned the Africa-American Labor Center, the Asian-American Free Labor Centers and, since 1978, the Europe-based Free Trade Union Institute (FTUI). FTUI director is the same old Irving Brown. As for FTUI president Lane Kirkland, while George Meany used to boast he "never walked a picket line," his successor could brag that he was never even a worker. A graduate of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Washington, the long-time AFL-CIO *treasurer* served on the post-Watergate Rockefeller Commission on the CIA (which did not mention its labor ties), worked with Nelson Rockefeller in AIFLD and with brother David at the Trilateral Commission. He may have a friend at Chase Manhattan, but he's no friend of Polish workers.

### What Solidarity?

Some liberal and leftist trade unionists may oppose the AFL-CIO's notorious activities in Latin America, but still see nothing wrong with its supporting the Polish unions. Pseudo-leftist groups even call for such "aid"—

for example, the social-democratic International Socialists who write, "We hope the Polish workers will gratefully accept the western union leaders' money and courteously reject their advice" (*Changes*, December 1980/January 1981). Such illusions in "no strings attached" Western support are also spread by the German fake-Trotskyist Gruppe Internationale Marxisten, which has been campaigning for the DGB trade-union federation to show "Solidarity with Solidarność." Yet the DGB is led by the same Social Democrats who served as a funnel for CIA money to Portugal in 1975 and whose infamous Ostbüro was for years a vehicle for imperialist meddling in East Europe!

On the other hand, it's no accident that the Solidarność leaders have awakened such "disinterested" financial support from the West. This is no bread-and-butter trade union, simply fighting for better wages, hours and working conditions. And the wily old CIA-connected operators in AFL-CIO headquarters know this. They understand that the group around Lech Walesa and many of the local activists see themselves as leading a Catholic-nationalist-inspired revolt against Soviet-imposed "Communism." This is especially clear from their wholehearted support to "Rural Solidarity," even threatening a general strike on behalf of this peasant group whose demands point toward full restoration of capitalism in the countryside.

Solidarność leader Walesa's links to counterrevolutionary forces go above all through the Roman Catholic church. "I am a union man and not a socialist," he says, adding that "without my religion I would be a dangerous man" (*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 16 November 1980). And he doesn't just pray to the "Queen of Poland" (the Virgin Mary) for counsel; his advisers are largely drawn from the associates of Cardinal Wyszynski. When Walesa recently paid a triumphal visit to the Vatican, receiving honors usually reserved for heads of states, John Paul Wojtyla assured his disciple he had aided Solidarność "in every way discreetly possible." When the time is ripe, of course, the Polish pope could be a powerful rallying point for capitalist restoration—and then his intervention would be anything but discreet.

The Polish proletariat has historically had a strong Marxian socialist tradition. The forces of clericalism and nationalism were never predominant among industrial workers. It is a

devastating condemnation of Stalinism that after 30 years of so-called "socialism," much of the Polish working class now looks to the Vatican for salvation and to the "AFL-CIA" for financial support.

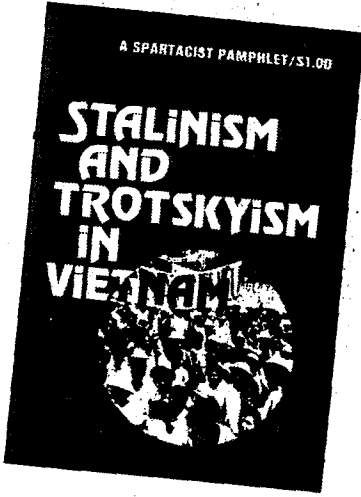
As Trotskyists, however, we do not write off the Polish proletariat, consigning it to the camp of clerical-nationalist reaction. The central task for a revolutionary communist vanguard in Poland today would be to *split* the new union movement politically, winning over the mass of workers from the Catholic church-led forces. Key elements for a revolutionary program in Poland are the strict separation of church and state, the promotion of agricultural collectivization, defense of the Soviet-bloc bureaucratically degenerated/deformed workers states against Western imperialism, and proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

In the intervention in Poland the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats of the U.S. and West Europe are essentially acting as instruments of their imperialist masters, whether or not the money comes directly from the CIA. Strengthening the connection between the clerical-nationalist Solidarność leadership and the AFL-CIO (or, for that matter, the social-democratic West German DGB) only increases the potential for counterrevolution. For these are the direct conduits of capitalism-imperialism into the Polish workers' movement. American trade unionists who want to serve the *real*, class interests of the Polish workers must demand: AFL-CIO Tops—Hands Off Poland! ■

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## STALINISM AND TROTSKYISM IN VIETNAM



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## Fight Clerical Reaction! For Proletarian Political Revolution!

# Polish Workers Move

Everyone predicted it was coming. A restive, combative working class, peasant strikes, massive foreign debt, chronic and widespread food shortages, a powerful and increasingly assertive Catholic church, the burgeoning of social-democratic and clerical-nationalist oppositional groupings. All the elements were there. Poland in the late '70s was locked in a deepening crisis heading toward explosion, *an explosion which could bring either proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy or capitalist counterrevolution led by Pope Wojtyla's church.*

And when it came it gripped world attention for two solid weeks. The Baltic coast general strike was the most powerful mobilization of the power of the working class since France May 1968. But was it a mobilization for working-class power? That is the decisive question.

Now there is a settlement *on paper*. The Polish workers have forced the bureaucracy to agree to "new self-governing trade unions" with the pledge that these recognize "the leading role" of the Communist party and do not engage in political activities. Insofar as the settlement enhances the Polish workers' power to struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy, revolutionaries can support the strike and its outcome. But only a blind man could fail to see the gross influence of the Catholic church and also pro-Western sentiments among the striking workers. If the settlement strengthens the working class organizationally, it also strengthens the forces of reaction. Poland stands today on a razor's edge.

The compromise creates an impossible situation economically and politically; it cannot last. In a country facing international bankruptcy, heavily subsidized by the Soviet Union, the strikers are demanding the biggest free lunch the world has ever seen. The Poles demand that they live like West Germans. There's a joke in Poland: we pretend to work and the government pretends to pay us. In West Germany one works.



UPI



Workers shake Stalinist regime, but kneel before Catholic church.

AP



Even the social-democratic dissidents recognize that the big money wage increases will only fuel the inflation.

Politically the Stalinist bureaucracy cannot live with this kind of independent working-class organization, a form of cold dual power. The bureaucracy is not a ruling class, whose social power is derived from ownership of the means of production, but a caste based on the *monopolization* of governmental power.

But it's a good thing someone in the Kremlin has a sense of humor. If Gierek in Warsaw is pushed to the wall, Brezhnev in Moscow stands behind him. The settlement was conditioned, on both sides, by the presence of forty Soviet divisions in East Germany. The Kremlin has already made disapproving noises about that settlement, and Soviet military intervention cannot be ruled out. The end of the strike is only the beginning of the crisis of Stalinist Poland.

### Workers Democracy or Clerical-Nationalist Reaction?

The present crisis was triggered once again by increases in the price of meat. On July 1 the Gierek regime took a gamble and it lost. To continue the price freeze was economically intolerable, especially to Poland's Western bankers (the food subsidy absorbed fully 8 percent of total national income!). To raise the price of food without a wage increase was to invite an immediate, nationwide mass strike/protest like in December 1970 and June 1976. The regime figured it could minimize the financial cost and social disruption by granting wage raises only to those groups of workers who made some trouble. The government indicated its willingness to negotiate with unofficial shop-floor spokesmen, not just representatives of the state-run trade unions. In this sense the Gierek regime encouraged small wage strikes as a lesser evil.

July saw a flurry of slowdowns and strikes—tractor builders near Warsaw, railwaymen in Lublin, steel workers near Krakow—which were quickly settled with significant wage raises. Predictably, the strikes had a cascade effect. Other workers went out demanding more. In early August there were stubborn strikes by Warsaw garbage-men and transit workers; one of the leaders was arrested.

But on August 14 when 17,000 workers seized the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk, the Stalinist regime was faced with a fundamentally different order of challenge. It was the Baltic shipbuilders



Der Spiegel

1970: Warski shipyard workers in Szczecin led struggle that toppled Gomulka regime; many had trust in Gierek.

who in 1970 toppled Gomulka and forced his successor Gierek to accept an independent workers committee for a time. One of the strikers' first demands was to build a monument to the workers killed when Gomulka called in tanks to restore order a decade ago. The regime quickly agreed to this.

Within a week 150,000 had downed tools, 200 factories were shut and the Baltic ports—Gdynia, Sopot, Szczecin, Elblag as well as Gdansk—were paralyzed. And it seemed as if every time the Interfactory Strike Committee (MKS) met, it raised five more, and more political, demands—"free" trade unions, end all censorship, free all political prisoners (there were only six). What had begun as a series of quickly ended wage struggles had become a *political* general strike.

What is the political character of the strike and the consciousness of the workers? Certainly the workers are reacting against bureaucratic mismanagement, privilege and abuse. The Polish workers' grievances are real and they are just. The firing of an old militant, Anna Walentynowicz, a few months before her retirement, which reportedly sparked the Lenin Shipyard takeover, should infuriate every honest worker. The existence of special shops exclusive to party members and cops, which the strikers demanded be abolished, is an abomination, a rejection of the most basic principles of socialism.

But if we know what the Baltic workers are against in an immediate sense, what are their positive allegiances

and general political outlook? Early in the strike there were reports of singing the Internationale, which indicates some element of socialist consciousness. Some of the strike committee members had been shop-floor leaders in the official trade-union apparatus who were victimized for trying to defend the workers' interests. They undoubtedly were and possibly still are members of the ruling Polish United Workers Party (PUWP, the official name of the Communist party). These advanced workers surely desire a real workers Poland and world socialism.

While the imperialist media always plays up any support for anti-communist ideology in the Soviet bloc, there is no question that to a considerable degree the strikers identify with the powerful Catholic church opposition. It is not just the external signs—the daily singing of the national hymn, "Oh God, Who Has Defended Poland," the hundreds of strikers kneeling for mass, the ubiquitous pictures of Wojtyla-John Paul II (talk about "the cult of personality"). The strike committee's outside advisers consist of a group of Catholic intellectuals headed up by Tadeusz Mazowiecki, editor of a leading Catholic journal.

The strike leaders flaunted their Catholic and Polish nationalist ideology. Anna Walentynowicz, asked if she were a socialist, replied that she was a believer. MKS leader Lech Walesa in the Gdansk shipyard started every day by "rush[ing] into the courtyard and at a trot began tossing pictures

of the Virgin Mary, Queen of Poland, into the air" (*New York Times*, 31 August). And at the signing of the strike settlement, Walesa ostentatiously wore a crucifix and used a foot-long red and white (the Polish national colors) ballpoint pen, a souvenir of Pope Wojtyla's visit to Poland last year. (To top it off, Walesa's father, who has emigrated to the U.S., posed with Ronald Reagan as the Republican reactionary officially kicked off his presidential campaign.)

Even more ominous was the demand for "access by all religious groups [read Roman Catholic church] to the mass

has become increasingly open and aggressive in its anti-Communism. Early last year the *Wall Street Journal* (2 January 1979) observed:

"Thus, the priesthood has become in effect an opposition party. The number of priests is at an all-time high of 19,500 and many openly defy the Communist Party by building churches without government approval."

This article also pointed out that a particular prelate was responsible for the greater oppositional stance of the church:

"In recent years, the church has taken a sharper anti-government turn under Krakow's Cardinal Wojtyla, who cap-

revealed in the present crisis. The day after the Lenin Shipyard seizure Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski led 150,000 "pilgrims" in a commemoration of the bourgeois-nationalist Pilsudski's victory over the Soviet Red Army in 1920, reminding them how Poles acted when "freedom of life was endangered" (UPI, 15 August). A week later Pope Wojtyla declared before 1,000 Poles in the Vatican that "we are united with our countrymen," a deliberately provocative act under the circumstances.

The Polish episcopate, fearing both Russian military intervention (the Warsaw Pact forces were maneuvering nearby in East Germany) and its own inability to control a workers' uprising, has taken a different, more cautious tack. It waited until the regime made public the seriousness of the Baltic general strike and then, while expressing sympathy for the workers' aims, warned against "prolonged stoppages." When the strike started spreading to other areas, the regime put Wyszynski on television to call for the workers to settle. Then a few days later the church hierarchy backed off from so fulsomely supporting the government.

But whatever the present tactical calculations of the Polish episcopate, in a power vacuum the church, well organized and with a mass base, will be a potent agency for social counterrevolution. One can appreciate the plight of Gierk & Co. Short of a political revolution, it would take a J.V. Stalin to clean out the church, packing 18,000 priests off to forced labor camps. But then Poland would get a lot of new public libraries with spires on top of them.



Parish priest Jankowskis later handed out color photos of himself with a prayer on back.

media," a prerogative for which the Polish episcopate has long campaigned. This is an *anti-democratic* demand which would legitimize the church in its present role as the recognized opposition to the Stalinist regime. Significantly, the strike committee did not even demand the right to such media access for itself or for the "free trade unions" it was fighting to set up. In effect the Baltic shipbuilders were asking for a state church in a deformed workers state.

But the church is not loyal to the workers state. Far from it! The Polish church (virulently anti-Semitic) has been a bastion of reaction even within the framework of world Catholicism. A typical Polish parish priest would regard American Catholics, from the hierarchy to the laity, as a bunch of freethinking "commies." Especially since the 1976 crisis the Polish church

tured the allegiance of university students by opening the city's churches to their anti-government discussion groups."

Just a few months earlier this cardinal from Krakow had become the "infallible" head of the Roman Catholic church, the first non-Italian successor to the throne of St. Peter in four centuries. Karol Wojtyla is a dangerous reactionary working hand in glove with U.S. imperialism (especially his fellow countryman Zbigniew Brzezinski) to roll back "atheistic Communism," beginning in his homeland. As we wrote when this Polish anti-Communist was made pope: "... he now stands at the head of many millions of practicing Catholics in East Europe, a tremendous force for counterrevolution" ("The President's Pope?" *WV* No. 217, 20 October 1978).

The power and the danger of the Polish Catholic church are clearly

### "Free Trade Unions"?

Until a few days before the settlement the general strike was limited to the Baltic coast, a region whose modern history is very different from the rest of Poland. Before World War II the main Baltic cities—Danzig (Gdansk), Stettin (Szczecin)—were largely populated by Germans. With the consolidation of Stalinist Poland after the war, the Germans were driven out and the region resettled by Poles from the eastern territories annexed to the Soviet Ukraine. Thus, while the Baltic coast workers are highly volatile, they lack the socialist traditions common to the other main sections of the Polish proletariat—the heavy-industrial workers around Warsaw and Krakow, the Lodz textile workers, the Silesian miners. Had the general strike spread throughout Poland, its political axis could quite

possibly have shifted to the left and away from clericalism.

Gierek tried, but failed, to work the same deal to end the crisis that he did in 1970-71. Then he gave the rebellious workers Gomulka's head; now he gave them that of his chief lieutenant, Edward Babiuch, and three other Politburo members. In counter to their demand for a "free trade union," he offered them free elections to the official union. But in 1971 he promised the Baltic workers the same thing and took it back when the crisis atmosphere died away. The strike committee leader Lech Walesa no doubt had this experience in mind when he said, "We were promised that many times before."

Now, the workers' attitude is very different from say, ten years ago. The 1970-71 strikes were clearly economic. None of the eleven demands of the Warski Shipyard strike committee in Szczecin (the leading workers' organization at the time) went beyond prices, wage compensation and no reprisals. Today leading elements of the Gdansk-based Interfactory Strike Committee are associated with the Catholic church opposition and the social-democratic Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR). With the authority of the bureaucracy greatly weakened, the unions will strongly tend to break the paper prohibition on political oppositional activity.

The particular slogan of "free trade unions," pushed for years by the CIA-backed Radio Free Europe and the Catholic church, has acquired a definite anti-Communist and pro-Western connotation. Remember the 1921 Kronstadt mutiny's call for "free Soviets"—free from Communists, that is!

An integral part of the Trotskyist program for proletarian political revolution in the degenerated/deformed workers states is the struggle for trade unions independent of bureaucratic



Gorgoni/Contact

### Pope Wojtyla-John Paul II on pilgrimage for anti-communism in Poland in 1979.

control. Trade unions and the right to strike would be necessary even in a democratically governed workers state to guard against abuses and mistakes by administrators and managers. But it is far from clear that the "free trade unions" long envisioned by the dissidents would be free from the influence of the pro-Catholic, pro-NATO elements who represent a mortal danger to the working class. In any case, in the highly politicized situation in Poland today the "new, self-governing" trade unions cannot and will not limit themselves to questions of wage rates, working conditions, job security as was the case, for example, with the Szczecin workers committee in 1971. They will either be drawn into the powerful orbit of the Catholic church or have to oppose it in the name of socialist principle.

And in determining that outcome the presence of a revolutionary vanguard party would be critical. A central task for a Trotskyist organization in Poland would be to raise in these unions a series of demands that will *split* the clerical-nationalist forces from among the workers and separate them out. These unions must defend the socialized means of production and proletarian state power against Western imperialism. In Poland today the elementary democratic demand of the separation of church and state is a dividing line between the struggle for workers de-

mocracy and the deadly threat of capitalist restorationism.

The germs of a Leninist-Trotskyist opposition in Poland would have nothing to do with the present dissident groups. It would denounce them for trying to tie the strikers to imperialism, the pope and Pilsudskiite anti-Soviet nationalism. But among the rebellious workers there must be elements that are fed up with the bureaucracy and look back to the traditions of Polish communism, while having no truck with bogus "democracy" in priests' robes. It is among this layer above all that we must struggle to win the cadres to build a genuinely communist proletarian party that can defend and extend the collectivist economic gains, opening the road to socialism by ousting the Stalinist caste which falsely rules in the workers' name.

Poland presents the most combative working class in the Soviet bloc, with a history of struggling for independent organizations going back to the mid-1950s. It is also the one country in East Europe with a mass, potentially counterrevolutionary mobilization around the Catholic church. Thus, unlike Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968, the alternatives in the present crisis are not limited to proletarian political revolution or Stalinist restabilization. At the same time, it is not Afghanistan where the Soviet Red Army is playing a progressive role in

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crushing an imperialist-backed clerical-reactionary uprising. In a sense Poland stands somewhere between Hungary in 1956 and Afghanistan. How has this situation come about?

### The Bitter Fruits of the 1956 "Polish October"

Key to understanding the exceptional instability of Stalinist Poland is the compromise which staved off a workers revolution in 1956. As in other East European countries the post-Stalin "thaw" produced a deep crisis within the Polish bureaucracy which extended to other sections of Polish society. Promises of "socialist legality" and higher living standards led in 1953-56 to a rising line of intellectual dissidence and working-class unrest.

In June 1956 workers from the ZIPSO locomotive works in Poznan marched into the center of the city calling for higher wages and lower prices. When the militia failed to disperse them, they attacked the city hall, radio station and prison. The army and special security police were called in. Over 50 demonstrators were killed, hundreds wounded. Poland stood on the verge of civil war.

In August Wladyslaw Gomulka, with a reputation as a victimized "national-liberal" Communist and honest workers leader, was reinstated in the PUP; in October he was made head of it. A former general secretary of the Polish Communist Party, he was purged by Stalin in 1948 as a "Titoist" and placed under house arrest. Not sharing personal responsibility for the crimes of the Stalin years, Gomulka enjoyed considerable popular authority, especially among socialist workers.

In what would become the standard refrain of Polish Stalinism when under attack from below, Gomulka in an open letter "to the workers and youth" assured them that:

"...only by marching along the path of democratization and eradicating all the evil from the past period can we succeed in building the best model of socialism.... A decisive part on that road must be played by widening the workers' democracy, by increasing the direct participation of workers in the management of enterprises, by increasing the part played by the working masses in governing all sectors of the country's life."

—reproduced in Paul E. Zinner, ed., *National Communism and Popular Revolt in Eastern Europe* (1956)

Khrushchev and his Kremlin colleagues still feared Gomulka as the Polish Tito and seriously considered military intervention to oust him. One

**Inter-Factory Strike Committee meets at Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk: Liberation of Polish workers lies in Leninism, not clerical-nationalist reaction.**



Mosander

of the main factors which forestalled them was that in large factories throughout the country workers councils organized resistance to any attempt by the Russian Stalinists and their local agents to overturn "the Polish October revolution." In the giant Zeran auto factory in Warsaw, the Communists armed the workers. But it was not the Russians who overturned "the Polish October"—it was Gomulka. While granting large wage increases for a few years, Gomulka gradually bureaucratically strangled the workers councils, which had helped bring him to power. He also suppressed the dissident Marxoid intellectuals. At the same time, his policies permanently strengthened the potential social bases of counterrevolution—the peasants and the priests.

The abandonment in 1956 of agricultural collectivization (never very extensive) has had a profound effect on Poland economically, socially and politically. It has saddled the country with a backward, smallholding rural economy grossly inefficient even by East European standards. In the mid-1970s farm output per worker in Poland was less than two-fifths that of collectivized Czechoslovakia, for example! Many peasants still work divided-up strips, not even unitary farms. And the horse-drawn plow is a common sight in the Polish countryside to this day. The rural population is increasingly aged as the peasants' sons and daughters emigrate in droves to the cities, where the standard of living is appreciably higher.

Contrary to the imperialist propaganda line that 90 percent of Poland is Catholic, the Polish workers movement since the 1890s has adhered to Marxian socialism. The strength of the Polish church is based on the social weight of the rural petty bourgeoisie. And today over a third of the labor force still toils in the fields, while 80 percent of farmland

is privately owned. Only by eliminating their hideous poverty and rural isolation can the hold of religious obscurantism on the masses be broken.

An immediate, key task for a revolutionary workers government in Poland would be to promote the collectivization of agriculture. And this has nothing in common with Stalin's mass terror in the Russian countryside in 1929-31. Cheap credits and generous social services should be given those peasants who pool their land and labor, while higher taxes would be imposed on those who remained petty agricultural capitalists.

Polish Stalinism has strengthened the church not only by perpetuating a landowning peasantry, but also in a more direct way. Since 1956 the Catholic Znak group in the Sejm (parliament) has been the *only* legally recognized opposition in any East European country. And that opposition has in general been anti-democratic. Church spokesmen have denounced the public schools' "atheization" of Poland's youth and have called for state financial support for religious instruction. The Polish medical system provides safe abortions for a nominal fee. (Women from West Europe travel to Poland to have their abortions in order to save money.) Committed to the patriarchal family and with it the age-old oppression of women, the church has singled out safe, cheap abortions as one of the great "crimes" of the Communist government.

By the late 1960s the Gomulka regime had pretty much exhausted the moral capital of the 1956 "Polish October." The economy was stagnant, real wages were rising more slowly than in any other East European country. The 1968 "Prague spring" in neighboring Czechoslovakia panicked the Polish bureaucracy, which feared the unrest would

spread to its own more volatile and combative people.

At this point a faction in the bureaucracy around secret police chief Mieczyslaw Moczar sought to channel popular discontent into traditional anti-Semitic Polish chauvinism. Under the rubric of "anti-Zionism," the few tens of thousands of Jews who had survived Hitler's holocaust, many of them loyal PUWP cadre, were driven out of the country. (Almost none settled in Israel, but rather ended up teaching Slavic languages in Copenhagen or Stockholm.) Even Gomulka's Jewish wife wasn't safe from accusations of "cosmopolitanism" and lack of "Polish patriotism." The present political atmosphere in Poland, especially the growing authority of the church, is conditioned by the purging of Jews, a traditionally socialist and internationalist cultural elite in East Europe.

### Blood on the Baltic and Gierek's Maneuver

In 1970 the Gomulka regime decided to raise the agricultural procurement price in order to stimulate greater production from the peasants. A few weeks before Christmas—an unbelievably stupid piece of timing—the government announced food prices would be increased on the average 30 percent. The Baltic ports ignited. Led by the shipbuilders, thousands of workers, some singing the Internationale, attacked police and tried to burn down Party headquarters in Gdansk and Szczecin. Over the objections of the top generals, Gomulka ordered the army in, tanks and all. More than a hundred workers were reportedly killed, many times that number wounded. Once again Poland was seconds away from a revolutionary explosion.

And once again the bureaucracy presented to the workers a new face and a new deal. Edward Gierek, an ex-coal miner and party boss of the mining region of Silesia, had a reputation as unpretentious, pragmatic and compe-

tent. It is commonly believed that as soon as Gierek replaced Gomulka, he rescinded the price increase and the strikes ended. In fact, he did not and the strikes continued. While offering considerable economic concessions, Gierek insisted that returning to the old 1966 price level was impossible. He spent the first two months in power running from one strike committee to another trying to sell them this economic program. But the workers were not buying it. In mid-February a strike of largely women textile workers in Lodz finally caused the new regime to give up; it agreed to freeze prices at the 1966 level.

In the course of his negotiations with the strike committees in early 1971, Gierek was forced to defend his role as head of a workers state and justify his policies as being in the specific interests of the working class. In turn, the strike committee delegates addressed Gierek not as the representative of a hostile, exploitative class but as a labor leader (possibly an untrustworthy bureaucrat) who was supposed to serve the workers' interests and do his best to meet their demands. The extraordinary *nine-hour* session in January 1971 between Gierek and the strike committee at the Warski shipyards in Szczecin is a dramatic empirical refutation of all "new class" theories of the Sino-Soviet states. Interestingly, the present director of the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk was a member of the strike committee which bargained with Gierek in 1970.

Whereas in 1956 Gomulka had promised the workers democratization, in 1971 Gierek promised them prosperity. Judge me by the meat on your table, he told them. He promised huge wage increases for the workers, higher procurement prices and state pensions for the peasants plus the rapid modernization of Polish industry. And how was this economic miracle (the term was actually used in official propaganda) to be achieved? Through massive loans from the West and also the Soviet Union. The Polish Stalinist bureaucracy rode out the crisis of 1970-71, but only by mortgaging the country to West German bankers.

For the militant Baltic shipbuilders the new regime's promise of an economic miracle was not enough. Gierek had to concede an independent workers committee arising out of the strike committee, and free elections to the official trade union. In a year or so the bureaucracy regained control in part through firing some committee leaders and coopting others, but mainly because the exceptional increases in real wages

(running about 8 percent a year) quieted worker discontent and activism. A leader of the Szczecin workers committee, Edmund Baluka, now in exile, described the process in a 1977 interview:

"But, of course, Gierek did an about turn, and partly by bettering the material situation of the workers—and in the process massively indebting Poland to the West and the Soviet Union—the Party managed to rebuild its ranks and regain control.

"The rises in living standards gave the workers a false sense of security, but in the first 2 or 3 years of Gierek's rule people thought that things in Poland were really changing for the better."

—*Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, May-June 1977

### Gierek Runs Out of Economic Miracles

Gierek's economists projected transforming Poland into something like an East European Japan. They maintained that the rapid modernization of the country's industrial plant would enable Poland to flood world markets with cheap, quality goods and so repay the loans when they fell due. Whatever slim chance this economic maneuver had of working was dashed by the 1974-75 world depression. At a deeper level, Gierek's economic gamble failed because the Stalinist regime is incapable of mobilizing the enthusiasm and sense of sacrifice of the Polish working people. This incompetence is endemic in a bureaucracy, more due to lack of an effective corrective feedback than to material privilege.

Between 1970 and 1975 the value of Poland's imports from the West increased an incredible 40 percent a year (*East European Economics*, Fall 1979)! Exports could not possibly keep pace. By 1976 imports were twice exports, total foreign debt three times exports and debt service absorbed 25 percent of hard currency earnings (U.S. Congress, Joint Economic Committee, *East European Economics Post-Helsinki* [1977]). Moreover, things were bound to get worse as Poland's large loans came due in the late 1970s.

Gierek's Poland was heading toward the honor of being the first Communist country to declare international bankruptcy. In late 1975 the regime simultaneously tried to brake the economy and steer it into a U-turn. Wage increases were to be scaled back, new major investment projects practically frozen. The massive balance-of-payments deficit was to be reversed. The decision to raise food prices an average 60 percent in June 1976 was in part designed to spur agricultural produc-

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tion, but mainly to soak up domestic purchasing power, allowing more to be exported. Superficially June 1976 appeared to be a replay of 1970-71. The regime announced food price increases, the workers reacted with mass strikes and protests, the regime rescinded the increases. Yet the differences are perhaps more important than the similarities.

Six years earlier the regime stood up to a two-month strike wave before relenting. Now Gierek canceled the price



Der Spiegel

increase within 24 hours, at the first sign of worker resistance. In December 1970 Gomulka had ordered a massacre. In 1976 Gierek forbade the use of firearms, and serious violence was limited to the mammoth Ursus tractor factory near Warsaw and the small industrial city of Radom. The Radom workers were driven into a fury when, on seizing the Party headquarters, they discovered a cache of top-quality ham and other luxury goods unavailable on the domestic market. By late 1977 all the workers imprisoned for participating in the June events were amnestied and most of those fired were reinstated.

The church played a clever double game. It supported the price increase, which benefited its peasant base and gave it a bargaining counter with the regime. At the same time Cardinal Wyszynski called for amnesty for the imprisoned workers, a universally popular demand.

The June events were a devastating and lasting blow to the moral authority of the regime. Gierek's earlier promises of unparalleled prosperity were thrown back in his face. The popular attitude

was caught in the line: "The party decided to stuff the people's mouth with sausage so they would not talk back, and now there is no sausage." The government inspired neither fear nor respect. Corruption, black-marketeering and worker apathy became common, even normal. In a 1977 open letter to Gierek, a former head of state and PUPW general secretary Edward Ochab wrote:

"The conviction is spreading amongst the people that one achieves nothing

**Former Polish leader Edward Gierek (left) mortgaged economy to Helmut Schmidt's West Germany, attempting to buy off combative working class.**

through honesty: the tendency to corruption, cliquism and the dishonest earning of money increases constantly."

—*Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, March-April 1978

The government promised to leave the people alone; in return, it asked only that the people leave it alone. But the world economy wouldn't leave Poland alone.

### **For Workers Control of Production!**

Although the government promised to freeze food prices, it couldn't meet market demand at those prices, especially since money wages continued to rise. Raising the procurement price for the peasantry didn't encourage nearly enough additional output. And the government food subsidy—the difference between the price paid to the peasant and paid by the urban consumer—has been an enormous and increasing drain on the entire economy. In the past ten years the cost of food subsidies has multiplied *twenty* times (*Economist*, 12 January 1980)!

The regime tried to get around the

problem through an elaborate system of different classes of retail stores. The better class the shop, the higher the prices, the more likely the goods would actually be on the shelves. At the top of the line were the Pewex shops which sold luxury items for Western currency only.

Politically prevented from raising prices in line with market demand, the regime resorted to rationing by waiting line. And the waiting lines kept getting longer, especially after last year's bad harvest (in part caused by peasant strikes). Things have now reached such a pass it's reported even the Pewex shops have empty shelves. A typical Polish family spends a good part of its free time hunting for food and other consumer goods.

The present large wage increases now being granted will lead either to wild inflation or even longer waiting lines. And Polish workers know this. One of the Baltic strike committee's demands is the temporary rationing of meat to replace the present system of multiple prices and the maddening resort to ever-longer waiting lines. If Polish workers still strike for higher pay, it's because they have no control over economic policy and would suffer inflation and shortages in any case.

The social democrats of the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR) are opposing the present large wage hikes on the grounds that it will simply fuel the inflationary spiral. Kuron, Michnik & Co., very full of themselves, are in effect offering the Stalinist regime the following deal (which, of course, they can't deliver on): You give us "free trade unions," an end to censorship, etc.; in return, we will convince the workers to accept a few years of austerity. In an article in a current *Der Spiegel* (18 August) Michnik appeals to Gierek's noted pragmatism: "...whether he [Gierek] understands that a dialogue with the people is indispensable to carry through necessary, but unpopular, economic reforms cannot today be answered."

But the Polish workers must not pay for the gross mismanagement of Gierek's regime. Nor should they have the slightest confidence in the bureaucracy's "economic reforms." Egalitarian and rational socialist planning, capable of overcoming the mess the Stalinists have made of the Polish economy, is possible only under a government based on democratically elected workers councils (soviets). As a revolutionary, transitional step toward that, Polish workers must struggle against the bureaucracy for control over production, prices,

distribution and foreign trade.

The Polish Stalinist bureaucracy's economic mismanagement is today glaring. Nonetheless, the *historical superiority* of collectivized property and centralized economic planning, even when saddled with a parasitic bureaucracy, remains indisputable. Any Polish worker who takes Radio Free Europe as good coin and thinks he would be better off under "free enterprise" capitalism should consider these few statistics: between 1950 and 1976 the advanced capitalist economies grew at an average annual rate of 4.4 percent, the backward capitalist economies at 5 percent and the centrally planned East European economies at 7.7 percent (*Scientific American*, September 1980).

The Poles have contradictory economic aspirations. There is an overwhelming demand to abolish the special shops—an egalitarian socialist measure. Yet all those who get dollars from relatives in America would like to spend them on luxury goods imported from the West. For strike leaders who yearn for capitalism, we suggest a long vacation in Liverpool where they won't have to stand in line to buy anything. Of course, they will have a little difficulty finding a job, and even if they do their pay will be so low that they will have to cut back on their meat consumption. (The dissidents ought to be sent to Afghanistan where they can find out what Carter's "human rights" are all about by seeing what happens to them if they try to teach young girls to read and write.)

### Break the Imperialist Economic Stranglehold!

In 1978 over 50 percent of Poland's hard currency earnings were absorbed by debt service, in 1979 over 60 percent and today over 90 percent! Early last year Poland avoided becoming the world's biggest bankrupt only by a major rescheduling of its debts. But Poland's Western bankers are, in an opposite way, just as fed up with Gierek's economic mismanagement as Poland's workers. They demanded and got the right to monitor all aspects of economic policy and to have their recommendations taken very seriously—an unprecedented step for a deformed workers state. As an economist for Bankers Trust commented at the time: "This marks the first time a Communist government has embraced austerity—a purposeful cut in its planned rate of growth—for balance-of-payments reasons" (*New York Times*, 26 January 1979). This is the same kind of program the International Monetary Fund normally imposes on neo-colonial bank-

rupts like Turkey, Zaïre and Peru.

But then Gierek's Poland has become a West German client state economically, supplying it with substantial quantities of raw materials. This was noted by the *New York Times* (20 August) during the present crisis:

"West German banks, which have played an important role in providing Poland with credits, have pointed out that its deposits of coal, copper, silver, platinum and vanadium make it an intrinsically more promising client than either Hungary or Czechoslovakia."

One West German banker is now proposing that any new loans to Poland be secured by specific mines and factories.

Following the 1956 Polish crisis and Hungarian revolution Shane Mage, a founding leader of the Spartacist tendency (who has since abandoned Marxism), produced a theoretical consideration of the ways in which capitalism might be restored in East Europe. Should a petty-bourgeois clericalist party come to power in a "democratic revolution," he posited, it could restore capitalism by eliminating the state monopoly of foreign trade and reintegrating the country into the world economy without significant denationalization of the existing industrial plant:

"Another decisive aspect of the return to capitalism under petty-bourgeois democratic leadership would be the ties of Poland and Hungary with the capitalist world market....

"And what would become of the nationalized industries? Their fate would serve the interests of the peasants and petty-bourgeoisie and the needs for trade with the Western capitalists. Hungary and Poland can be capitalist without denationalizing a single large industrial plant; all that is necessary is to convert the industry...into an

appendage of the peasant economy and the world market."

—Shane Mage, *The Hungarian Revolution* (1959)

To a considerable degree Poland has become an appendage of the world capitalist economy not, as Mage projected, under a petty-bourgeois "democratic" party, but under a shaky Stalinist bureaucracy which tried to buy off a combative working class and a backward, smallholding peasantry by mortgaging the country's wealth to the imperialists.

Thus, the response of the world, especially West German, bourgeoisie to the Polish crisis is divided between short-term financial interests and a historic appetite to overturn proletarian state power in the Soviet bloc. Most German bankers want Gierek to win the best terms he can get. After all, they've been pushing him for years to do away with the food subsidy and impose other austerity measures. But the right-winger Franz-Josef Strauss called for a moratorium on loans to Poland to blackmail the regime into granting *all* the strike committee's demands.

One cannot, however, consider Poland's relations with Western capitalism without taking the Soviet Union very much into account. To do so is truly to play *Hamlet* without the Danish prince. The experiences of 1970 and 1976 convinced the Kremlin that if the Polish masses were pushed too hard to pay the foreign debts, there would be a popular explosion which, whatever way it went, could only hurt them. So the Russians are paying a good part of Poland's debt both directly and by shipping the Warsaw regime agricultural produce. In one sense Poland has become the intermediary through which Western

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Soviet soldiers greeted as liberators in Cracow, 1945.

Der Spiegel

finance capital sucks surplus out of the Soviet workers and peasants (whose living standards are substantially lower than those of the Poles). If Polish workers don't appreciate this, Western bankers are very much aware of the fact. That house organ of the international financial community, the London *Economist* (9 August), writes in the current crisis:

"In past Polish crises the Soviet Union has stepped in with cash and emergency grain sales. But the Poles may be wearing out their welcome on begging-bowl trips to Moscow. The Soviet Union has already lent Poland \$1 billion this spring to meet pressing debt-service requirements."

One international banker, who chose to remain anonymous, remarked that Soviet military intervention would enhance Poland's creditworthiness (*New York Times*, 31 August)!

A key task facing the Polish proletariat is to break the imperialist economic stranglehold. The Baltic strike committee is demanding "a full supply of food products for the domestic market, with exports limited to surpluses." (It is not, however, demanding limitations on imports.) Economic autarky is *not* what Poland needs. On the contrary, socialist economic planning should maximally utilize the international division of labor, exporting and importing as much as possible.

What a revolutionary workers government in Poland would do is *cancel the foreign debt*. Well, not quite. The workers might export comrade Edward Gierek to West Germany, where he can work off *his* obligations in some Ruhr coal mine. A very good idea, some Polish worker might say, but will

the bankers of Frankfurt write off \$20 billion with a shrug? What of imperialist retaliation, economic or military? Polish workers can counter such retaliation only by mobilizing the West European, centrally West German, working classes under the banner of a Socialist United States of Europe.

### For the Revolutionary Unity of the Polish and Russian Workers!

All organized forces in Polish political life—the Stalinist bureaucracy, the church and all wings of the dissident movement—inculcate hostility to Russia as *the enemy* of the Polish people. The Gomulka and Gierek regimes continually threatened that any mass struggle, even purely economic strikes, would bring in the Soviet Red Army. "Our fraternal allies are concerned" is the stock phrase. And, of course, Pope Wojtyla's church and the dissident movement grouped around it have as their ultimate goal "national independence" (like under Pilsudski?), though they differ amongst themselves how to achieve this.

A hallmark for a revolutionary party in Poland is a positive orientation to the Russian working class (which incidentally pays no small share of Poland's debt to the West). And this is not simply a matter of abstract proletarian internationalism. It is a matter of life and death.

Illusions about the good will of the Western capitalist powers common in East Europe do not extend to the Soviet Union. Having lost 20 million in fighting Nazi Germany, the Soviet people understand that NATO's nuclear arsenal is targeted at them. This understanding is now heightened by Washing-

ton's open threats of a nuclear first strike. The Soviet masses also know that the imperialist powers' war against their country, hot and cold, began with the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917. Russian working people see pro-Western "dissidents" like Sakharov for what they are—traitors to the socialist revolution.

If the Kremlin believes that the Soviet conscript army can be depended on to suppress any mass upheaval in Poland or Czechoslovakia, it is not simply out of mechanical discipline or Great Russian chauvinism. The Soviet people fear the transformation of East Europe into hostile, imperialist-allied states extending NATO to their own border. The Kremlin bureaucrats exploit this legitimate fear to crush popular unrest and democratic aspirations in East Europe, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968. There were numerous reports that Soviet soldiers were shaken when on occupying Prague they encountered not a bloody fascistic counterrevolution, as they had been told, but protests by Communist workers and left-wing students.

Revolutionary Polish workers cannot hope to appeal to Soviet soldiers unless they assure them that they will defend that part of the world against imperialist attack. A Polish workers government must be a military bastion against NATO. And a proletarian political revolution in Poland must extend itself to the Soviet Union or, one way or another, it will be crushed.

- For trade unions independent of bureaucratic control and based on a program of defending socialized property!

- For the strict separation of church and state! Fight clerical-nationalist reaction! Guard against capitalist restorationism!

- Promote the collectivization of agriculture!

- For workers control of production, prices, distribution and foreign trade!

- For proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy—For a government based on democratically elected workers councils (soviets)!

- Break the imperialist economic stranglehold—Cancel the foreign debt! Toward international socialist economic planning!

- For military defense of the USSR against imperialism! For the revolutionary unity of the Polish and Soviet working classes!

- For a Polish Trotskyist party, section of a reborn Fourth International! ■



## Polish Social Democrats Arm in Arm with Clerical Reaction

# All the Pope's Dissidents

"The strikes in Poland mark a significant turn in Eastern Europe because workers and dissident intellectuals have joined forces in a major conflict with the Government," noted a news analysis in the *New York Times* (23 August). As to the existence of the alliance there is no doubt. From the beginning of the Polish strike wave in early July and in the early stages of the shipyard occupations, dissident circles in Warsaw were the main source of information for the imperialist press. In addition, several of the key strike leaders have been publicly associated over the past several years with opposition defense groups, and they have drawn in prominent Catholic intellectuals as "expert advisers." So while the ruling bureaucracy has been reluctant to use force against workers in the Baltic ports, on August 20 police in the capital rounded up 14 well-known dissidents accused of illegal association.

Who are the Polish dissidents? Western commentators hail the appearance of a "worker-intellectual alliance." Yet the non-Stalinist left-wing press sounds the same theme. Thus we find favorable interviews with dissident leader Jacek Kuron being printed everywhere from the liberal *Le Monde* and *Der Spiegel* to publications of the ostensibly Trotskyist United Secretariat. Meanwhile, *New York Times* columnist Flora Lewis (whose articles often seem to reflect the views of the CIA) praises Kuron as "a responsible man, a moderate and a patriot." Is this the "new coalition" which sophisticated Western fomenters of counterrevolution in the Soviet bloc degenerated/deformed workers states have been looking for as their "captive nations" relics fade into oblivion? Or does it portend a movement for "socialist democracy," as some on the left would have us believe?

Certainly *none* of the prominent dissident groups and personalities has a good word to say about socialism, which is identified with the perversion of

proletarian rule represented by the present Stalinist bureaucracy. The dissidents' role as a conduit to the capitalist media is nothing new—Sakharov has been at it for years in the Soviet Union. Nor are appeals to the imperialists via the UN, the Helsinki Agreements, etc. What is particularly ominous about the Polish dissidents, who range from social democrats to openly Pilsudskiite reactionary nationalists, is their active (and largely successful) effort to form an alliance with the Catholic hierarchy. For it is the church together with the land-holding peasantry which form the social basis for counterrevolution in Poland.

### KSS-KOR: Social Democrats for Popery

The best-publicized Polish dissident group in the West is the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KSS), better known by its original name Workers Defense Committee (KOR). The leading spokesman for KSS-KOR is Jacek Kuron, and its newsletter *Robotnik* includes among its correspondents Lech Walesa, the leader of the Interfactory Strike Committee centered on the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk. The KOR was formed after the suppression of the June 1976 strikes at Radom and Ursus, and originally centered its activities on raising funds for and demanding release/reinstatement of the hundreds of workers arrested and fired at that time. After a general amnesty a year later it became the KSS and concentrated on building ties to key factories through *Robotnik*. Most of the pseudo-Trotskyist left in the West has come out in support of the KSS-KOR in varying degrees.

Because of its name and origins and the reputation of Kuron, KOR is sometimes referred to by superficial observers as "Marxist in orientation." Social-democratic is a far more accurate description, and even that does not do justice to some of the anti-Marxist elements around it. Of the original 24

founders of KOR, six are former members of the pre-war Polish Socialist Party (PSP), among them the prominent economist Edward Lipinski. (*Robotnik* was the name of the PSP paper as well.) The list also includes a former chairman of the Christian Democratic Party, a delegate of the World War II London exile government, various activists from the 1968 student movement (among them historian Adam Michnik), left Catholic writers (such as former party member Jerzy Andrzejewski, author of *Ashes and Diamonds*), several veterans of the 1944 Warsaw uprising and Rev. Jan Zieja, "Polish Army Chaplain in the 1920 and 1939 campaigns"—i.e., a died-in-the-wool Pilsudskiite priest who twice fought the Red Army.

Jacek Kuron was first known in the West for co-authoring (with Karol Modzelewski) an "Open Letter to Communist Party Members" in 1964; for this he became a victim of bureaucratic repression, spending six years in jail. The United Secretariat opportunistically hailed the Kuron-Modzelewski text with its syndicalist program and fuzzy analysis (which called Poland a "bureaucratic state") as the "first revolutionary Marxist document" to come out of the post-war Soviet bloc. Since then, however, Kuron has moved far to the right, now posing the struggle in East Europe as one of "pluralism vs. totalitarianism." In his "Thoughts on an Action Program" Kuron supports peasant struggles for private property, claims "the Catholic movement is fighting to defend freedom of conscience and human dignity," and concludes with a call for the "Finlandization" of Poland:

"We must strive for a status similar to Finland's: a parliamentary democracy with a limited independence in the field of foreign policy where it directly touches the interests of the USSR."

### The Clerical Opposition

Marxism it ain't. But this social-democratic program for a peaceful

restoration of capitalism represents the *left* wing of the dissident movement. The right wing is openly clerical-nationalist. There was a split in KOR in 1977 leading to the formation of ROPCIO, the Movement for the Defence of Human Rights. The latter is based on the founding declaration of the UN and the Helsinki accords and offers itself as an instrument to "cooperate with all international organizations which defend human rights..." Where KOR publishes *Robotnik*, ROPCIO puts out *Gospodarz* (The Peasant) and appeals to the Catholic rural population. And this is not the Catholicism of Vatican II, either. The *Economist* (9 September 1978) refers to this outfit as "the stronghold of more conservative, national and—with some of its members—traditional anti-semitic tendencies." To get ROPCIO's number, one only has to note that the first signer of its platform is General Borutz-Spiechowicz, the highest commanding officer of pre-World War II Poland, and that it distributes Pilsudski calendars.

ROPCIO, in turn, gave rise to an even more reactionary group, the Confederation of Independent Poland (KPN) whose stated goal is to "end Soviet domination by liquidating the power of the Polish United Workers Party." Then there comes the Polish League for Independence (PPN), a clandestine group, and remnants of the pre-war ultra-rightist, anti-Semitic, fascist National Democratic Party. All of them, of course, cover themselves with rhetoric about "democracy." This gives rise to the Polish dissident joke: "Question: What's a Polish nationalist? Answer: Someone who wants to drive the Jews out of Poland even though they aren't there any more." More respectable than these would-be pogromists is the liberal Catholic ZNAK movement, which has several representatives in parliament. While ZNAK leaves clandestine bravado for the fringe groups, their aims are no less counterrevolutionary: they are merely waiting until an explosion when they will step in as the only mass-based opposition.

### The Dissidents' Pope

The core of the clerical opposition, of course, is the Catholic hierarchy, a disciplined army extending from the village priest right up to the Vatican. Stalin's famous remark, "How many divisions does the pope have?" indicates military realism. But in Catholic Poland, probably the most religious European country today (even the men go to mass!), the church is a powerful political force. Unlike Hungary's Cardi-

nal Myndszenty, who was discredited by cooperation with the Horthy dictatorship, the Polish pope (who brags he once was a worker) could be an effective rallying point for counterrevolution. A revealing article by the former editor of the CIA's house organ, *Problems of Communism*, Abraham Brumberg, makes this crystal clear:

"The Catholic Church has been crucial in the growth of a political opposition in Poland. Had it not been for the support of the Church, even the new alliance between 'the intelligentsia, village; and workers' to which Kuron refers would probably have failed to survive the hatred of the authorities."

—*New York Review of Books*,  
8 February 1979

Brumberg points out that the original KOR demands for amnestying workers arrested and fired in the June 1976 strikes were almost identical to those of the episcopate. "Since then, the parallels between statements by the Church—and especially by Cardinal Wyszyński, whom Michnik strongly, if not uncritically, admires—and those of the opposition have become even more conspicuous." He points out that supporters of the ZNAK group have participated in the "flying university" circles sponsored by KOR, which in Krakow used churches for its classes with the permission of then-Archbishop Wojtyła. Michnik described the new pope as one of the two "co-founders of the anti-totalitarian policy of the Polish Episcopate" (*Der Spiegel*, 23 October 1978). Michnik, a Jew, is so enamored of the new, "enlightened" Catholic primate that he wrote of the pope's visit last year:

"It will be a powerful demonstration of the bond between the Polish people and the world of Christian culture, a demonstration of their solidarity with the Catholic Church, and a demonstration of their yearning for freedom, the champion of which they see as being their fellow countryman John Paul II, the defender of human rights."

### For Polish Trotskyism!

This paean to the standardbearer of capitalist restoration in Poland was printed without comment in *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* (July-August 1979), a joint publication of supporters of the USec and the "state-capitalist" British SWP of Tony Cliff. But these pseudo-Trotskyists are not satisfied with such a tepid brew. A subsequent issue of *Labour Focus* reprints an interview (by the French USec paper *Rouge*) with Leszek Moczulski, who was a member of the Moczar faction of the PUWP at the time it ran the 1968 anti-Semitic purge and now heads the KPN. The journal comments that

Moczulski is more militantly anti-government than KOR, and hails the formation of his clerical-reactionary party as "an event almost without precedent in the history of Eastern Europe since the late 1940s"! Meanwhile, USec leader Ernest Mandel laments that the Stalinist bureaucracy in Poland has not "permitted a democratic and intense political life, including a legal Catholic party..." ([SWP] *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, October 1979).

This pandering to clerical reaction is a far cry from the revolutionary social democracy of a Rosa Luxemburg, who wrote in 1905:

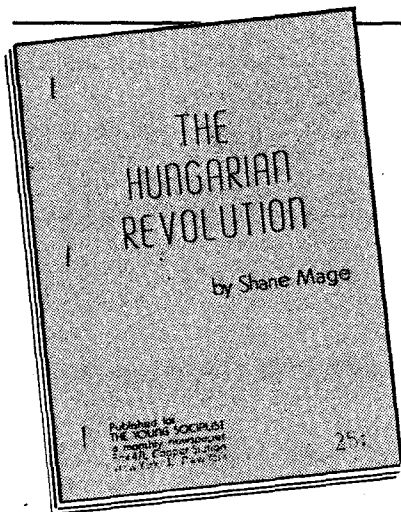
"The clergy, no less than the capitalist class, lives on the backs of the people, profits from the degradation, the ignorance and the oppression of the people. The clergy and the parasitic capitalists hate the organized working class, conscious of its rights, which fights for the conquest of its liberties."  
—"Socialism and the Churches"

In fact, in all the publications of the Polish dissidents which we have consulted, some hundreds of pages, there is *not one* reference to Luxemburg, Poland's greatest contribution to the Marxist movement. "Naturally," because she was a Jew and hardly a Polish nationalist. But neither is there a reference to other authentic Polish Communists, such as Julian Marchlewski, Leo Jogiches and Felix Dzerzhinsky. One of the greatest crimes of the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy is that it has discredited the name of communism among thinking workers.

The present crop of Polish dissidents are overwhelmingly *enemies* of the cause of proletarian socialism. They act as direct conduits to the church and the West. Today we do not see "dissident" Stalinists of the Titoist mold. On the contrary, the most left-wing are the East European equivalent of the "Eurocommunists." But where in the capitalist West this is but another variety of reformism, more closely tied to its "own" bourgeoisie, in the Soviet bloc countries passing from Stalinist to Eurocommunist means joining the camp of counterrevolution. Authentic Trotskyism stands not for the bogus "unity of all anti-Stalinist forces"—including disciples of Wojtyła and Brzezinski—but for a class-conscious communist opposition to the parasitic bureaucracy. And those would-be leftists who today follow the Kurons and Michniks should realize that if they are successful in bringing off a national revolt together with the clerical reactionaries, Gierak & Co. will be the first to go, *but they will be next.* ■

reprinted from *Spartacist* No. 30, Autumn 1980

## “Pure Democracy” or Political Revolution in East Europe



From  
*The YSL Right Wing  
and the  
“Crisis of World  
Stalinism”*  
(1957)

### The Right Wing and “Democracy”

It is no accident that the key phrase in the analysis of the Polish and Hungarian revolutions is “democracy”—not “bourgeois democracy”, not “workers democracy”, not even “peasant democracy”, but plain, unqualified “democracy”, “democracy” *in general*. There may be some younger members of the YSL who see nothing wrong with this procedure. I advise all such comrades to study very carefully the writings of Lenin on this subject, notably “State and Revolution” and “Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky.” The key thought, absolutely basic to the Marxist theory of the state, is that any form of government in a class society, including a democracy, essentially embodies the domination (“dictatorship”) of one class over the others. This is especially true of workers democracy because the proletariat, inherently a propertyless class, cannot rule except directly and politically, i.e., through its own class organizations of the “soviet” type. Any form of “pure” “classless” democracy “in general” can only express the domination of the economical-

ly strongest class, i.e., is necessarily bourgeois democracy.

These basic considerations are well known to the members of the NAC [National Action Committee], and presumably these comrades accept them, at least formally. What the resolution does is simply to declare them inapplicable to the revolution under Stalinism, in the following way:

“What must be remembered is that under Stalinism, the fight for democracy has a different social meaning than it does under capitalism, so long as it is limited to general democratic aims and demands no other change. Under capitalism, such a struggle represents a struggle for capitalist democracy. Under Stalinism, where the means of production are statified, the fight for democracy which calls for no other changes, and hence seeks the democratization of statified property, becomes the revolution for democratic socialism, even if it is not so consciously expressed.”

What we have here is a schematic formula, rigidified into a fetish, used as a substitute for a concrete historical analysis. The leaders of the YSL have for a long time relied on the formula that Stalinism is not socialist because its nationalized property is not accompanied by political democracy. The obvious corollary to this is that nationalized property plus political democracy *is socialism*. And this is the theoretical essence of the quoted paragraph.

This is a good example of the dangers inherent in an agitational over-simplification. It’s a lot easier and more effective for us to talk about “democracy” as a prerequisite



Classic symbol of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution: Stalin’s statue toppled and dragged through the streets of Budapest.

for socialism than to use that nasty term "dictatorship of the proletariat." In the case of the YSL right wing, this has gone past a mere tactical adaptation of language and has become an adaptation of thought. The struggle for socialism under Stalinism ceases to be a struggle for workers power, and becomes a struggle for "general democratic aims."

The false, abstract, undialectical character of the methodology of the NAC majority is exemplified by the proposition that the struggle against Stalinism is the struggle for socialism "so long as it is limited to general democratic aims and demands no other change." But of course the reality of the revolution in Eastern Europe is not that of pure democracy and "no other change." A huge number of economic and social changes which are not necessarily those flowing from "general democratic aims" are the inseparable accompaniment to the popular revolution against Stalinism: to cite only the one change referred to by the resolution, the peasants have spontaneously eliminated collectivized agriculture, and restored private property on the land. It is exactly these *changes* that determine the actual character of the revolution against Stalinism, not an abstract formula about the relation of "democracy" to "socialism."

The formula nationalized property in industry plus political democracy equals socialism is not even true on an abstract level, no matter how useful agitationaly. If it was true, Austria and Burma, both of whose industry is largely nationalized, and both of whom have relatively democratic political structures, would be socialist states. The essential prerequisite for development toward socialism is the raising of the working class to the position of a ruling class, or, in precise scientific terms, the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship.

Would the struggle for "general democratic aims" under Stalinism be sufficient to raise the working class to the level of a ruling class? The NAC resolution answers in the affirmative, on the basis of its formula. . . . A real answer, however, must rest on a concrete analysis of the Polish and Hungarian revolutions.

### "Democracy" and Capitalist Restoration

The key question is this: *theoretically*, was it possible for the Polish and Hungarian revolutions to result in the restoration of capitalism? The NAC draft resolution precludes this, since it states that "democracy" is sufficient to define "the revolution for democratic socialism." This view, in my opinion, is possible only on the basis of a singular ignorance of the actual social and economic forces determining the evolution of Poland and Hungary, and the world context in which these revolutions took place.

What would have been the development in Poland or Hungary if the revolution had in fact achieved the establishment of formal democracy, of the Western type, with "no other change?" We here must abstract from the actual level of socialist consciousness attained by the Polish and Hungarian workers, since this is not a determining factor in the argument of the NAC resolution. It should, however, be made clear that I believe this level of socialist consciousness was the decisive factor in the whole development, the key to the future of these countries.

The establishment of formal democracy, if it means anything at all, means free elections to a sovereign

parliament. Free elections, in turn would mean the establishment of a government reflecting the numerically largest section of the population. In Poland and Hungary this majority is *not* the working class. It is the petty-bourgeoisie of town and country, the peasants, small shopkeepers, artisans, and the old middle classes.

Could free elections in Poland or Hungary result in fact in a government representing this petty-bourgeois majority? A majority cannot express its rule unless it is organized. Could this majority have been organized?

Here we come to one of the most shocking features of the NAC draft resolution. The author's of the draft have made the most stupid omission possible in a resolution on Poland and Hungary: *there is no mention whatever of the Catholic Church*, either as a religious institution or as a social force!

Yet, in both Poland and Hungary the Church is the *one* institution to emerge full blown from the Stalinist regime, with a highly organized and stable apparatus, a long tradition of continuity, and a high degree of popular prestige. The actual power of the Catholic Church is shown by the enormous extent to which religious education was reintroduced into the schools in Poland and Hungary (particularly in Poland, there have been frequent reports of the persecution of atheist and Jewish children by Catholic majorities). The power of the Church was shown most dramatically by Cardinal Wysinski's intervention on behalf of Gomulka at the time of the recent Polish elections—an action which, according to all reports, played a major part in saving the Gomulka regime from what seemed likely to be a drastic setback. Can there be any doubt that in really free elections the candidates endorsed by the Church would have a huge advantage among the Catholic majority?

What role does the Church desire to play in these revolutions? The Draft Resolution states that in Poland and Hungary "forces which advocate capitalist restoration . . . were extremely small and carried no weight." It is true that neither in Poland nor in Hungary did the Church present an openly capitalist program. But it is not necessary for it to do so. The Catholic Church, by its very nature as an international body completely controlled from the Vatican, plays a certain role in world politics—the role of an important ally of U.S. imperialism and of capitalist reaction in all countries. *If it felt free to do so*, what reason is there to think that the Church headed by a Mindszenty would act differently than does the Church in Italy, Spain, or Austria? And if free elections should return a parliament with a Catholic majority, reflecting the Catholic majority in the countryside, wouldn't the Church feel free?

There seems to me to be a high degree of probability that really free elections in both Poland and Hungary would return a petty-bourgeois, clerical majority. Free elections were never held in Poland after the war, but if they had been held, few except the Stalinists have denied that they would have been won by the Peasant Party of Mikolajczyk. Free elections *were* held in Hungary, and they resulted in a substantial majority for the Smallholders Party, led by the clerical reactionaries Ferenc Nagy and Msgr. (!) Bela Varga.

Would a government of Mindszenty-Ferenc Nagy or Mikolajczyk-Wyszinski have been able to restore capitalism? It is here irrelevant to argue that no such governments could, in fact, have been formed—because they obviously

could have been *if the revolutions had remained within the bounds of formal parliamentary democracy* with full democratic rights for all parties and individuals, including clerics and emigrés. The question at issue is precisely the nature and role of such formal parliamentary democracy in East Europe—remember that the draft resolution considers this “democracy” *equivalent to socialism*.

I believe that a petty-bourgeois government in either Poland or Hungary, if allowed to stabilize itself and get a firm grip on the country, would be able to bring about a return to capitalism, and in very short order. The first step would be the absolutely necessary one, for any non-Stalinist government, of restoring capitalist relationships in agriculture and small production and retail trade. The NEP in Russia continually tended to develop restorationist tendencies, epitomized in the rise of the kulaks and Nepmen. Bukharin's policy of concessions to these capitalist elements would in fact have brought about this sort of capitalist restoration despite the subjective desire of the Bolshevik right wing to prevent it. NEP in a backward and exhausted country is a dangerous business at best—if placed in the hands of the political representatives of the kulaks and Nepmen (and the peasant and petty-bourgeois parties could be nothing else) it would certainly lead straight to capitalism.

Another decisive aspect of the return to capitalism under petty-bourgeois democratic leadership would be the ties of Poland and Hungary with the capitalist world market, most important, of course, with the gigantic economic strength of U.S. imperialism. It is no secret that the main positive political program of U.S. imperialism toward East Europe is based on massive economic aid, in the form of “loans” and outright gifts. This “aid” would have a dual effect: it would be a political ace of trumps in the hands of the bourgeois politicians who alone would have access to the American largess, and it would very rapidly serve to reorient the economies of Poland and Hungary back to their traditional dependence on Western capitalism. Lenin once remarked that he was far less afraid of the White Guard armies than of the cheap Western commodities they brought in their train. American commodities entering Eastern Europe under petty-bourgeois governments would not merely be *cheap*—they would be free!

And what would become of the nationalized industries? Their fate would serve the interests of the peasants and petty-bourgeoisie and the needs for trade with the Western capitalists. Hungary and Poland can be capitalist states without denationalizing a single large industrial plant; all that is necessary is to convert the industry, democratically of course, into an appendage of the peasant economy and the world economy.

And the consequences of this for the workers? Wages kept low, to keep down the cost of production. Workers councils would naturally not be allowed to interfere with the decisions of the democratic majority on questions concerning the management of the economy. The present grossly overexpanded work force would be sharply reduced as an obvious rationalization measure. And of course, the workers representatives would not hold power in the government and parliament; after all, in a democracy, doesn't the majority rule?

We should here re-emphasize that the above is *not* a picture of what I believe to have been the real perspective

before Hungary and Poland, the real class nature of these revolutions. It is a picture of a real possibility of the evolution of these countries, *if the workers had restricted themselves to “general democratic aims.”* The essential thing that it shows is that it is completely *false* to argue that the establishment of parliamentary democracy is sufficient to convert a Stalinist state into a Socialist one. Under Stalinism as under capitalism, there is no such thing as *democracy in general*; there is proletarian democracy, and there is bourgeois democracy. Nothing else. The “classless” parliamentary forms of democracy, in a country with a peasant and petty-bourgeois majority, *represent bourgeois democracy*.

## The Socialist Alternative

If a formal and parliamentary democracy was likely to lead to a petty-bourgeois government and the restoration of capitalism in Poland and Hungary, what should have been the socialist alternative to these “general democratic aims?” The answer was given by the Russian Revolution, which also took place in a backward country in which free parliamentary elections would have necessarily resulted in a restoration of capitalism. That answer is the establishment of the *state power of the working class*.

In Hungary this solution was indicated perfectly by the course of the revolution itself, in which the decisive organs of revolutionary struggle were the *workers councils*. These councils were created in the course of the struggle by the spontaneous action of the workers themselves, and quickly proved themselves to be the political leadership of the entire nation.

The *workers council* or *soviet* represents the indicated form for the establishment of workers power in Hungary and, with slight difference of form, in every other country. In a country like Hungary, the creation of councils of working peasants, peasant soviets, would provide a means whereby the peasant majority could be represented in the government while preserving the state power of the proletariat through its class institutions. In scientific terminology, the *state* emerging from the revolution would be a *workers state*; the government would be a *workers and farmers government*.

Of course the mere establishment of a republic of workers councils in Poland or Hungary does not guarantee these countries against capitalist restoration. The proletarian regimes in East Europe would immediately be faced by the same sort of problems which beset the first soviet republic under NEP, and, if the revolution should fail to extend itself to the advanced countries of Western Europe, these states too would degenerate and eventually collapse. What the workers republic *would* guarantee is the *opportunity* of the working class at every point to impose its own conscious socialist direction on the nation.

It may be that some comrades who have never read Lenin or forgotten what they once learned will claim that this is “undemocratic”, because a soviet type of state would mean the rule of a *minority*, the working class, over the majority of the population, mainly peasants. In reply to this objection, we point out the following basic facts:

1.) The peasantry, even where it is in the majority, is incapable of ruling in its own name. As a stratum of small commodity producers, i.e., a petty-bourgeois class, it tends to follow behind its natural leaders, the petty-bourgeois

and "middle class" elements in the cities. In East Europe, this has been and is concretely expressed in the allegiance of the peasantry to the Catholic hierarchy. A government "representing" the East European peasantry would be dominated by clerical and pro-capitalist forces, which not only are a much smaller minority than the proletariat, but are of course a reactionary, inherently anti-democratic minority as well.

2.) The state of a soviet type, in terms of the actual rights and powers enjoyed by the masses of the people, including the poor peasants, is infinitely more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic, freely-elected parliament and all.

3.) In the actual revolution, the working class was the undisputed leader of the entire nation, and was the sole social force capable of an all-out struggle to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy. This fact gives it the highest democratic right to establish its own state. Historical experience shows that the working class is able to win support from large sections of the petty-bourgeoisie and peasantry only when it shows them that it is capable of acting to solve the problems of the entire society in a revolutionary fashion on its own, trusting only to its own class forces.

The question naturally arises: if the Russian counter-revolutionary intervention had not taken place, would the Hungarian revolution have, in fact, resulted in a republic of workers councils? Of course, we cannot answer this question definitively. But certain clear facts about the objective and subjective aspects of the Hungarian revolution indicate that an affirmative answer was highly probable.

The first and decisive thing about the Hungarian revolution is that it was a *workers* revolution, and the leading role of the workers was institutionally formulated by the establishment of *workers councils*. Except for the Russian army, there was in Hungary not the shadow of a social force capable of preventing the assumption of state power by the workers councils. Thus the objective conditions for the formation of a soviet republic, in the event of revolutionary victory of course, were entirely favorable.

The actual level of consciousness of the Hungarian workers, however, was not at the level indicated by the objective possibilities of the revolution. In this the Hungarian workers were like the Russian proletariat after the February revolution. The general demand was *not* for all power to the workers councils, but for "free elections" to a sovereign parliament.

It would, however, be a disastrous mistake to take the level of consciousness corresponding to the struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy as the permanent and ultimate political program of the Hungarian proletariat. The Hungarian workers wanted "free elections," but they also wanted to preserve their own councils and extend their powers. They wanted to move forward to socialism, not backward to capitalism.

If the revolution had been successful, the workers councils would have emerged with the decisive aspects of state power, *de facto*, in their hands. They would not be likely to surrender this power to the petty-bourgeois and clerical government resulting from "free elections." A state of dual power between parliament and soviets would tend to emerge. In this the Hungarian workers would, in their

own way, be recapitulating the experience of the Russian working class. In Russia, as we all should know, the proletarian revolution was followed by free elections to a constituent assembly, the most democratic type of bourgeois parliament. Petty-bourgeois parties, of a far more "leftist" type than would be found in the Hungary of Mindszenty, dominated this constituent assembly. In Russia, it took only a day to make clear to the workers councils that they could not tolerate the existence of a bourgeois government by their side. The Russian workers acted in the right way; under the leadership of the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky they dispersed the parliament and made it clear to the entire world that the soviets were the only power in Russia. The Hungarian workers would eventually be faced with the same problem, and eventually would have to act in the same way, or see the conquests of their revolution seized from them by the restorationist elements.

### The Need for a Revolutionary Party

The Russian workers were able to act as they did only because of the presence of a revolutionary Marxist party, capable of anticipating events, drawing the lessons of the proletarian struggles, and taking resolute revolutionary action. In Hungary too, the establishment of the power of the workers councils would require such a party. The absence of a bolshevik party was one of the main causes for the strength of bourgeois-democratic and even pro-western illusions among the workers. These illusions were the inevitable product of the situation of the Hungarian working class, of its experiences under the Stalinist dictatorship. They could be overcome only in the course of open political struggle after the destruction of the Stalinist regime. To do this, to raise its consciousness to a higher level, the Hungarian working class would have had to absorb the experience of a century of revolutionary socialist struggles, and most of all the experience of the last half-century of Marxist political thought, the body of theory developed best of all by Lenin and Trotsky.

For the Hungarian working class to learn these lessons would have been, at the same time, for it to construct a revolutionary Marxist party capable of leading the proletariat to the consolidation of its own power. Failure to reach this new level of class consciousness, failure to create a bolshevik party, would have meant that the working class would, sooner or later, let the state power slip out of its fingers and into the hands of the "democratic" majority representing the petty-bourgeoisie and the Church.

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From  
*"Truth" and Hungary—A Reply  
 to Herbert Aptheker*

The Hungarian working class was the central actor in the Hungarian drama—and the working class is totally omitted from Aptheker's version of the "truth" about Hungary! More exactly, Aptheker mentions the workers only to *deny* that they played any role. He asserts: "the workers of Budapest by and large adopted an apathetic or passive or neutral attitude."

It is surely not necessary to recapitulate here the great number of eyewitness accounts proving that the main

fighting forces were made up of young workers, that the heaviest fighting took place in the working class districts (like Kobanya, Ujpest, —and “Red Csepel,” the proletarian stronghold of Hungarian Communism and the *last* center of resistance against the second Russian intervention). It should be enough to cite the curious manner the Hungarian workers chose to show their “neutrality”—a complete general strike and the formation of Workers Councils!

The sequel to the second Russian intervention showed the real nature and strength of the contending social forces in Hungary so clearly as to remove any possible doubt on this score. . . . The fascistic groups vanished into thin air (or rather, into Austria and thence other countries of the “free world,” to prepare for new adventures). Mindszenty hid in the United States embassy. [Smallholders Party leader] Bela Kovacs was invited to join the Kadar government, but refused and announced his “retirement” from politics. But the workers councils remained and carried on a fierce struggle against the Russian occupier and its Kadar puppet government. As late as December 12, all Hungary was gripped by a general strike. In the end, as we know, the Kadar government was able by the threat of starvation to break the strike. It proceeded to arrest the workers’ leaders and destroy the Workers Councils, on the pretext that the Councils “have preoccupied themselves with exclusively political questions with the objective of organizing a sort of second power, opposed to the State Power.” [*France-Observateur*, 3 January 1957]

The bitter irony of a self-styled “Revolutionary Workers and Peasants Government” outlawing the only representative organs of the Hungarian working class should not blind us to the fact that with this declaration the Kadar government has definitively posed the *real* choice in Hungary. On the one hand, the “State Power” of the discredited Stalinist bureaucracy resting on Russian bayonets; and on the other, the “second power,” the state power of the Hungarian working class exercised through its elected democratic bodies, the Workers Councils. The Hungarian Workers Councils of 1956 were the legitimate heirs of the Workers Councils (Soviets) of 1919. Aptheker thus is closer to the truth than he suspects when he claims that the heirs of Horthy played a decisive role in the Hungarian revolution!

The real spirit of the Hungarian workers revolution was eloquently expressed by Sandor Racz, a young worker 23 years old, who was elected chairman of the Budapest Central Workers Council. On December 8 Racz gave an interview to the correspondent of an Italian newspaper, to be published only if he was arrested. He declared:

“I have a tranquil conscience because I have been the unfortunate spokesman for the will of the workers and for all those who have fought for the ideal of a free, independent, and neutral Hungary and for a socialist state. . . . All that has been refused to us. The government knows that the country is against it, and since it knows today that the single organized force which truly made the Revolution is the working class, it wishes to destroy the workers united front.”

—[*Il Giorno*, 14 December 1956]

As he had anticipated, Racz was arrested the moment he went to meet representatives of the Kadar government, who had promised to negotiate with the workers. . . .

One of the most unfortunate aspects of Aptheker’s book is that its preoccupation with a fictitious “White Terror”

prevents us from coming to grips with the *real* restorationist danger. I earlier referred to the universally-held capitalist view that the Hungarian revolution was aimed at achieving “Western-style democracy.” A brief discussion of this is necessary here.

The claim that the Hungarian revolution oriented toward “Western-style democracy” was more than a *theory*; it was a *political program*. The leaders of the “West” knew as well as the Russians that it would be impossible to impose a new Horthy on the Hungarian people. Therefore, capitalism could be restored in Hungary *only* in “democratic” guise. Certain aspects of Hungarian society make this more than a utopian dream.

A majority of the population of Hungary is rural, attached to private property (Stalinist “collectivizations” did not exactly weaken this attachment), and economically drawn to the West. Furthermore, the religious majority in Hungary is Catholic. The planners of “Liberation” had good grounds to hope that the establishment of a Western-style parliamentary system would result in a government reflecting these majorities, under the leadership of emigré politicians and the Catholic hierarchy. Especially since they had powerful extra-democratic means of pressure, in the form of economic “aid” and the activities of the fascistic fringe we met earlier.

Could capitalism have been restored in this way? Certainly if the Hungarian revolution had been allowed to develop freely, there is a *possibility* that this would have happened. (Of course, even if this development were *certain*, which is not at all the case, the actual Russian intervention would still be an impermissible denial to the Hungarian people of the right to choose their own social system.)

The danger of capitalist restoration thus really existed. But nothing at all justifies the Western claim that the revolution was essentially a struggle for the “democratic” return of “peoples capitalism.” The Western version of the “counter-revolution” thesis, like the Stalinist one, is false because it ignores the key factor in the revolution—the working class.

The Hungarian working class, even though it may have been confused about many things, did not fight for “Western-style” democracy—it fought for *socialist* democracy. The workers of Gyor showed this when they suppressed the meeting in favor of [the right-wing emigré] Ferenc Nagy. The workers council of the 11th District of Budapest showed this when it demanded “free elections in which only those parties may participate that recognize and have always recognized the Socialist order, based on the principle that means of production belong to society.” [quoted in Free Europe Committee, *Revolt in Hungary—A Documentary Chronology of Events* (1956)]

But the decisive refutation of the idea that Hungary was returning to “Western-style democracy” is the simple fact that the workers all over Hungary, in the heat of the revolution, created their own *Workers Councils* as organs of the political rule of the working class. What has this to do with capitalist “democracy”? To smash the threat of capitalist restoration, the Hungarian workers would merely have had to exert the power that already lay in their hands, to give all power to the workers councils and not, as in so many past revolutions, give up their power to a capitalist parliament. ■

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