Stalinists/Solidarnosc/IMF Attack Workers

Polish Powderkeg

On August 19, the Polish Stalinist regime handed over governmental responsibility to its avowed enemies in Solidarnosc, inaugurating the first non-Stalinist government in the Soviet bloc since the beginning of the Cold War. The event was hailed in all the imperialist capitals as the beginning of the end of "Communism" in Eastern Europe. In an August 22 interview with the Italian paper *Il Messaggero*, Lech Walesa candidly described the new government's main task as taking the country: "from a Communist system of ownership to capitalism. Nobody has previously taken the road that leads from socialism to capitalism. And we are setting out to do just that, to return to the prewar situation when Poland was a capitalist country" (*New York Times*, 24 August).

But the road to capitalist restoration will not be a smooth one. Polish workers got a taste of market "rationalization" in August when the Jaruzelski regime, in its last significant act before abdicating, lifted price controls on food. The cost of milk, meat and cheese immediately soared by as much as 500 percent. From Gdansk in the north to Krakow in the south, workers replied with warning strikes and strike alerts. Only the restraining hand of the Solidarnosc leadership, which still enjoys immense authority among the Polish workers, has so far prevented a social explosion. But the authority of an organization dedicated to imposing capitalist austerity cannot long endure.

Solidarnosc's advocacy of restoring capitalism in Poland is not new. At its national congress in 1981, it adopted a program which openly declared: "It is necessary to sweep away the bureaucratic barriers which make it impossible for the market to operate." What has changed in the Polish equation since 1981 is the Stalinist bureaucracy's embrace of the "free market" as the solution to Poland's seemingly intractable economic crisis. The Polish economy today is a disaster. The $39 billion foreign debt is five times as great as total annual hard-currency earnings. In the past decade, real income per capita has fallen by a quarter, and today inflation is edging up to 1000 percent.

The Soviet bureaucracy, which put the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) in power in the first place and stands as its ultimate guarantor, is itself enamored of "market miracles." Less willing than ever to underwrite the Polish economy, the Kremlin gave Jaruzelski the green light to privatize the means of production and abandon centralized economic planning. Yet everyone knows that Solidarnosc is far better situated to lead Po-land in a capitalist direction than the thoroughly discredited Stalinist regime. When Polish voters massively repudiated the PUWP in favor of Solidarnosc in the elections last June, the stage was set for a round of parliamentary jockeying, which concluded with the appointment of a long-time Catholic activist, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, as prime minister of a Solidarnosc-led coalition government.

Today Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, and other prominent Solidarnosc figures, imprisoned when the PUWP imposed martial law in 1981, sit beside their former jailers in parliament, while PUWP ministers sit in Solidarnosc's cabinet. But the Stalinist-Solidarnosc rapprochement is profoundly unstable, and is already exacerbating the tensions within and among every stratum of Polish society. In the PUWP, divisions between the leading Jaruzelski-Kiszczak-Rakowski "reform" wing and the more conservative or "hardline" elements of the bureaucracy are deepening. The conservatives, concentrated in the middle and lower echelons of the party bureaucracy, have their base in the tens of thousands of managers who hold patronage jobs in the smokestack industries slated to be shut down. They also enjoy considerable support within the state security apparatus.

Market "reforms" will necessarily pit workers in Solidarnosc against their erstwhile peasant allies in Rural Solidarnosc, who stand to gain at the workers' expense from the decontrol of agricultural prices. Most importantly, the price-hikes, unemployment, speed-up and cuts in social services which must accompany the introduction of a market-oriented economy, will drive a wedge between the Solidarnosc bigwigs around Lech Walesa and the organization's proletarian base. Despite their illusions about the Catholic Church and Western "democracy," Polish workers will soon discover that they are the main targets of the economic restructuring being advocated by the unholy trinity of the PUWP, Solidarnosc and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

For the Rebirth of Polish Marxism!

Ten years of Solidarnosc's clerical-nationalist mislead-ership has left the Polish working class politically disarmed in the face of this attack. As the chaos deepens, and formerly fixed points on the Polish political map begin to dissolve, it will become increasingly clear to sections of the Polish proletariat that no organized force in the coun-try today represents its class interests. This presents an opening for revolutionaries to point out that there is a tradition in Polish history other than that of the venal and corrupt Stalinist bureaucracy, whose claim to the mantle of communism Polish workers now take at face value; or that of the fascistic interwar dictator, Josef Pilsudski, whose legacy workers embrace as the only alternative to the "communism" they have come to know and hate. The Polish revolutionary socialist tradition is represented by the heroic figures of Rosa Luxemburg and Leo Jogiches, who founded the Social Democratic Party of the King-dom of Poland and Lithuania (SDKPiL), and fought at the side of the Polish workers against Czarism during the revolution of 1905. The SDKPiL actively supported the Bolshevik workers revo-

lution of 1917, and formed the core of the original Polish section of the Communist International when Lenin and Trotsky stood at the helm of the Soviet state.

A party founded on the revolutionary tradition of the Polish proletariat would be prepared to repudiate the debt to the Western bankers, while unconditionally defending the collectivization of the means of production. It would stand for the abolition of the "right" to exploit labor in town or country. It would strive to link the struggles of Polish workers to those of their class brothers and sisters in the USSR, who recently shut down mines in western Siberia and the Ukraine to protest their own government's attempts to impose market discipline.

A Marxist organization in Poland would aggressively promote the struggle for women's liberation and condemn all attempts by the clerical hierarchy to restrict or prohibit abortion. It would also advocate crushing the fascistic anti-Semitic nationalists of the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN) and denounce the viciously anti-Semitic provocations of Cardinal Glemp. Such a party would necessarily adopt the name and the program of Leon Trotsky, who sought to rescue the revolutionary traditions of Bolshevism from their Stalinist falsifiers. The present plight of the Polish working class demon-strates that there can be no substitute for a Bolshevik-Leninist party.

1988 Strike Wave: Turning Point

The current chapter in the Polish drama began with two waves of strikes in the spring and summer of 1988. The summer eruption began in Poland's southern mining region of Upper Silesia and soon spread to the Baltic port cities of Szczecin and Gdansk, both major Solidarnosc strongholds. Government-decreed increases in retail prices provided the immediate spark for the walkouts; but it soon became clear that the leadership of Solidarnosc, with the support of a majority of the striking workers, intended to use the outbreak of discontent for political rather than simply economic aims. Walesa's strategy, which he announced from the outset of the strikes, was to pressure the Jaruzelski government into legalizing Solidarnosc, outlawed since 1981.

After a two-week standoff, the strategy produced re-sults. A series of indirect contacts between Solidarnosc leaders and Communist Party chiefs, brokered by the Catholic Church, quickly led to a meeting between Lech Walesa and General Czeslaw Kiszczak, Poland's interior minister and chief gendarme, who had personally signed the order for Walesa's arrest in 1981. Walesa obtained from Kiszczak a pledge to initiate a series of "round table" discussions between the regime and "all major social forces" (i.e., Solidarnosc) with a view to resolving Poland's political and economic crisis.

With this victory in his pocket, Walesa rushed to the docks and coalfields to persuade the strikers to return to work. He encountered bitter opposition from the more intransigent workers, who thought it foolish to call off the strikes in return for mere promises. But the Solidarnosc chairman prevailed. In exchange for Walesa's cooperation in ending the strikes, Jaruzelski and his cohorts demonstrated their ability to curb the PUWP hardliners who tried to sabotage the proposed parley.

When the talks concluded last April, Solidarnosc had regained legal status and had also won the right to run for parliament as the first *bona fide* opposition in the recent history of the Soviet bloc. In the Sejm (parliament), it was allowed to contest 161 of 460 seats. The remaining seats were reserved for PUWP and its suppos-ed allies. The regime also agreed to revive the long-defunct Senate and permit Soli-darnosc to field candidates for all of its 100 seats. The Senate has the right to veto legislation initiated in the Sejm. When the votes were counted after the June elections, Solidarnosc won an overwhelming mandate, tak-ing all the seats it contested in the Sejm and all but one in the Senate.

Solidarnosc Forms a Government

Events have since unfolded with a rapidity that surprised the winners as well as the losers. Until the govern-mental crisis of mid-August, Solidarnosc's leaders were pursuing a gradualist strategy. The round-table agreements of April were designed to allow Solidarnosc only a limited legislative role, while ensuring that a parlia-mentary majority, the government, and the presidency remained in the hands of the PUWP. Solidarnosc was not supposed to be able to win a parliamentary majority and form a government until the elections scheduled for 1993.

This go-slow approach, however, was out of sync with the political mood that swept the country following the elections. The vote was widely viewed as a resounding repudiation of Jaruzelski and the PUWP. With lengthening bread lines and a rash of strikes against price hikes, it soon became apparent that only a thoroughgoing gov-ernmental change could prevent a political upheaval. At that point the United Peasants' Party and the Democratic Party (traditionally PUWP "allies") switched sides, giv-ing Solidarnosc a majority in the Sejm. As part of the deal, Solidarnosc agreed to leave the coercive apparatus of the state (army and police) in the hands of the PUWP, and to permit General Jaruzelski to retain the office of president, with the power to veto legislation and dissolve parliament.

Several considerations figured in this "historic compromise" between the former antagonists. The experience of martial law had cooled Walesa's ardor for direct confrontation with the regime. This reluctance was shared by most Solidarnosc supporters who were old enough to remember the defeat of 1981. The 1988 strikes failed to attain the breadth of the struggles that led to Solidarnosc's birth eight years earlier because active participation was largely confined to workers in their late teens and early twenties who were unbruised by the earlier debacle.

But the 1988 strikes, conducted under the banner of "No Freedom Without Solidarnosc," demonstrated the workers' continued allegiance to Walesa, as well as their ability to disrupt the ailing economy. Solidarnosc was not strong enough to contest state power, but the PUWP could not make the economy work. This stalemate forced both sides toward an accommodation, as Jaruzel-

ski re-luctantly concluded that the country could no longer be effectively governed without the participation of the opposition.

Solidarnosc and the Kremlin

The Stalinist-Solidarnosc accord was also shaped by the political changes in the Soviet Union since the rise of Gorbachev. The PUWP regime was imposed upon Poland by Stalin after the Second World War in response to the U.S.-initiated Cold War. And it was as antagonists in the Cold War—with Solidarnosc as the champion of "democracy," "free trade unions" and Catholic anti-Communism, versus Jaruzelski as the defender of the political and economic status quo—that the two forces confronted each other in December 1981.

But today, the Kremlin is ruled by a proponent of class peace who has unilaterally declared that the Cold War is over, and has given proof of his sincerity by withdrawing support to third-world liberation struggles, pulling troops and missiles out of Eastern Europe, and promising to exempt the Russian-ruled Baltic republics from economic planning and the monopoly of foreign trade. Walesa was not entirely without justification in observing that the great misfortune of Solidarnosc was that "Brezhnev died two years too late."

U.S. imperialism and its allies have not foresworn their ambition of recovering Eastern Europe; but neither are they unwilling to take advantage of Gorbachev's outstretched hand. After some hesitation and internal wrangling, the Western powers, including the United States, now appear to be de-emphasizing the Reagan posture of maximum military pressure on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in favor of the West German strategy of *ostpolitik*—the reconquest of the lands east of the Elbe through gradual economic penetration. And it is not difficult to see why Poland, which has historically been the weakest link in Moscow's chain of Warsaw Pact buffer states, should recommend itself as a vulnerable entry point for this mark- and dollar led "drive to the east."

Stalin once quipped that imposing his brand of "communism" on Poland was like putting a saddle on a cow. Poland is the only country in the Soviet bloc where agriculture was never extensively collectivized. Moreover, the stridently anti-Communist Catholic Church retained a special status, with chaplains in the army and the right to conduct reli-gious instruction in the schools.

For almost twenty years the PUWP attempted to avoid the consequences of repeated economic failures by mortgaging the country to the loansharks of Wall Street and the Frankfurt borse. It is therefore hardly surprising that the Polish Stalinists today find themselves in the "vanguard" of Warsaw Pact rulers descending into free-market chaos.

PUWP: Courting Clerics, Kulaks and IMF

Notwithstanding the rapprochement between Polish Stalinism and Solidarnosc, the PUWP is still indispensable to the Kremlin as a guarantor of Poland's adherence to the Warsaw Pact. At least for the time being, the capitalist powers appear content to let Poland remain within the Russian military orbit, so long as the economic and political "reforms" proceed apace. Walesa has joined Bush, Kohl and Thatcher in assuring Gorbachev that he has no intention of exploiting the present crisis for mili-tary advantage. Gorbachev, whose credulity concerning imperialism's good intentions seems boundless, appears to accept these assurances at face value. With the question of Poland's military allegiance temporarily on the back burner, the political differences between the Stalin-ists and Solidarnosc have become more and more difficult to discern in recent years.

Solidarnosc was inspired in part by the elevation of Krakow's own Cardinal Karol Wojtyla to the papacy, and has always worked closely with this itinerate apostle of reaction. But Jaruzelski and the Polish Stalinists have proven almost as anxious to ingratiate themselves with the Holy See. In October of last year, the Polish government offered the Vatican full freedom to operate in Po-land if the Pope would agree to make Warsaw the first regime in Eastern Europe officially recognized by the Church.

Since 1981, Solidarnosc has advocated joining the International Monetary Fund, the principal financial agency of world imperialism. In 1986, Poland, on Jaruzelski's initiative, did exactly that. Today both Solidarnosc and the Stalinists agree that the only way out of the country's current economic crisis is to borrow even more money from the West.

The PUWP has also joined Solidarnosc in promoting a wider role for rural capitalists. Poland's private peasant farmers, who control 75 percent of the arable land, have always been the bane of Stalinist economic planners. While the regime never seriously attempted to collectivize agriculture, it was able, in the early years, to shield the working class from the harsher effects of rural "free enterprise" by exercising state control over trade between the countryside and the cities. The state attempted to ensure that basic foodstuffs remained affordable by fixing the prices it would pay private farmers. But low prices provided no incentive for increased production. In an attempt to increase agricultural output without sparking resistance in the working class through price hikes, the Stalinist rulers began providing hefty subsidies to the peasants, paying farmers more for agricultural products than it charged consumers. The price subsidies were, in turn, financed by borrowing from Western banks.

This short-sighted accommodation to the requirements of the anti-socialist smallholders contributed significantly to the present economic impasse of the Polish economy. While rural living standards increased more rapidly than those of any other sector in Polish society, the peasants never accepted the Stalinist regime. Resenting their dependence on the state for supplies of seed, fertilizer and machinery, they showed their discontent by restricting production and refusing to invest in capital improvements.

The PUWP's attempts to reduce the food subsidies, by bringing prices into line with costs, was a major cause of the strike wave that brought Solidarnosc into being in 1980. In its 1981 program, Solidarnosc proposed to solve this problem by eliminating price controls altogether,

leaving the workers completely at the mercy of the rich peasants. In August of this year, the Jaruzelski regime adopted this plank from Solidarnosc's platform, lifting controls on food prices and allowing the farmers to charge whatever the traffic would bear.

There remains the question of Poland's industrial infrastructure: the coal mines, shipyards and factories which are still in the hands of the state. To make Poland a "going concern" for the international bourgeoisie, collectivized property must be put into private hands, something which Solidarnosc has long advocated. Today, the leading Stalinist faction appears to be prepared to countenance such a step.

Less than two weeks after the legalization of Solidarnosc, George Bush unveiled an economic aid package specifically designed to encourage private foreign investment in the Polish economy. Almost immediately, Barbara Piasecka Johnson, Polish-born heiress to the Johnson & Johnson pharmaceutical fortune, signed a letter of intent to purchase a 55 percent interest in the Lenin Shipyard for $100 million. She is currently in Poland with a legion of corporate lackeys to consummate the deal. This proposal for the outright sale of a major item of state property to a U.S. capitalist is being presented as the only hope for preventing the government from going ahead with plans to shut down the yard on 1 January 1990. This closure is in line with the PUWP's policy of phasing out heavy industry in favor of light, consumer-oriented enterprises such as electronics, banking services, food processing and tourism.

A story in the July 31 *New York Times* provides an indication of what form of ownership the Stalinists contemplate for these industries. It reports that Mieczyslaw Rakowski, the new PUWP chief:

> "appears to have persuaded General Jaruzelski, and through him Moscow, that to remain a viable force, the party must forge a fresh constituency among the managers and workers of industries with a promising future.... "Mr. Rakowski has been at the forefront of a movement within the party to *transfer ownership of state companies in these sectors to their party-nominated managers*, in what appears to be an effort to compensate them for a loss of security and perquisites and retain their loyalty in the coming struggle with Solidarity." (emphasis added)

The 'Enfranchisement of the Nomenklatura'

This policy of converting state enterprises into the private property of sections of the party elite, known as the "enfranchisement of the nomenklatura," did not be-gin on the morrow of Solidarnosc's electoral triumph; it has been pursued by the Polish Stalinists for the past several years, and is closely linked to the regime's attempts to create a wider role for "free enterprise." In 1986, Jaruzelski attempted to introduce his own version of perestroika under the label of "national renewal." Today, as a result, private companies in Poland are legally entitled to equal treatment with state enterprises. Restrictions on joint-stock ventures with foreign capital have been eliminated and individual entrepreneurs have the legal right to hire as much labor as they can use.

But despite these sweeping juridical changes, little changed in practice. The managers of the powerful state monopolies and the planners in the central ministries remained strong enough to marginalize the new private companies (which accounted for less than five percent of the economy). Jaruzelski's version of perestroika proved to be a colossal failure. The creation of a handful of private enterprises in a bureaucratically regulated econ-omy, with a sullen and uncooperative proletariat, only contributed to the decline.

There are now about 100 private joint-stock enterprises with foreign capitalists in Poland, most of them fairly small-scale. Yet under the PUWP, it has been almost impossible for foreigners to do business in Poland without running into a mass of government restrictions. An account in the Autumn 1988 *East European Reporter* explains how some of the supposed guardians of state property used their positions to become fledgling entre-preneurs:

> "A Polonian firm is subject to blackmail from the moment it is founded. It only receives permission if the security service has no objections against the foreign owners or their Polish plenipotentiaries....Thus foreign owners often prefer to give the post of plenipotentiary or some other highly paid office to someone who is recommended by the police. In other words they employ people who have contacts in those institutions on which these firms are dependent."

Many retired members of the security apparatus, on full state pensions, initiated small businesses: "These people somehow do not have any problems with getting concessions on the use of premises and other affairs which for a normal Polish private businessman would take up more than half his energy and time."

The "enfranchisement" process acquired momentum in February 1989, as the round-table discussions with Solidarnosc began. The Stalinist-controlled Sejm passed the National Consolidation Plan permitting enterprise managements to "experiment" with private ownership. Typically, managers of state-owned companies, who often ended up as major shareholders of the new private firms, pass along lucrative orders from the "people's enterprise." In other cases, the new company "shares" space, tools and even personnel with the state enterprise. A variant is that the state company itself is privatized by offering shares, many of which are picked up by the existing management at a substantial discount.

PUWP: A Self-Liquidating Bureaucracy?

In the December 1981 showdown between Solidarnosc and the Polish state, we sided militarily with the Jaruzelski regime against the explicitly capitalist restorationist Solidarnosc leadership (see our pamphlet, "Solidarnosc: Acid Test for Trotskyists"). In this confrontation Jaruzelski acted as a defender of a status quo *which included state ownership of the means of production*. But the trajectory of the Polish Stalinists in the intervening eight years poses new and unavoidable questions: can a regime that has led the country into the IMF, allowed private farmers free reign in setting the prices of food, and which now proposes to sell whole sectors of state industry piecemeal to foreign capitalists while turning other enterprises into the private property of its own members, still be considered a defender of proletarian

property forms? Is it possible for a Stalinist bureaucracy, which has up to now based itself upon state ownership of the means of production, to gradually transform itself into a "new bourgeoisie," ruling in combination with elements of native and foreign capital? These questions are profoundly significant not only for Poland, but for the crisis now engulfing the entire non-capitalist world.

In addressing these questions, it is necessary first to consider the internal composition of the bureaucracy. Although the prospect of privatization may indeed be attractive to many factory managers and directors of the more successful state enterprises, this managerial layer does not comprise the top-most echelon of the bureaucracy. The core of the ruling Stalinist caste consists of a stratum of party apparatchiks who possess the power to direct the economy as a whole, including the appointment and dismissal of enterprise managers and lower-level bureaucrats. This control over economic decision making and personnel constitutes the principal source of the Stalinists' privileges, and hence their very identity as a ruling group. They cannot turn the economy over to private owners without relinquishing their ability to dispense patronage jobs and to (dis)organize production. It is highly unlikely that the Polish Stalinists, as a caste, will prove to be the first ruling group in history to willingly preside over its own liquidation.

The Stalinists have given ground to Solidarnosc as a defensive adaptation to mounting internal and external pressures. According to the *Economist* (12 August), "Mr. Rakowski, Poland's prime minister, told his party recently that it must give up 40% of its power in order to hold on to the other 60%." The PUWP leadership may imagine that by agreeing to power-sharing with Walesa and pri-vatizing the more viable state industries, it can somehow consolidate its position against both its own hardliners and Solidarnosc. But the attempt to maintain the PUWP's increasingly tenuous grip on power by beating Solidarnosc at its own restorationist game is doomed to fail.

Solidarnosc *cannot* simply take over the existing state apparatus—particularly the "armed bodies of men" which remain under Jaruzelski's control—and use them to defend a system of private property in the means of production. To consolidate the social counterrevolution which they propose, Walesa et al must ensure that their own trusted people hold all the key levers of power, particularly in the army and police. Solidarnosc *must* break the power of the PUWP:

> "Solidarity has said a major legislative goal will be the dismantling of the so-called system of nomenklatura, under which the Communist Party has retained the right to fill virtually all of the nation's political, economic and social positions, from local government heads through army commanders to hospital and school directors.
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> "Mr. Geremek [Solidarity's parliamentary leader] said: 'The main problem is one of principles, and if there is to be the formation of an open government, there must be the end of the Communist monopoly.'"
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> —*New York Times*, 18 August

The Stalinists cannot simply negotiate away their power in the economy and state apparatus. There is no question that a large section of the bureaucracy, including most of the "enfranchisees," wish to see Solidarnosc's program implemented. Indeed, many individual PUWP members have already defected to Walesa. Other elements in the party and state apparatus, who stand to lose everything if the PUWP's political and economic mono-poly is broken, will, out of a desire to preserve their own privileges, at some point attempt to offer resistance to the proposed "reforms."

The task of defending proletarian property forms cannot be left to any wing of the corrupt and discredited PUWP bureaucracy. As Trotsky noted 50 years ago, the material interests of a parasite do not constitute a sufficient basis for the defense of the host (i.e., collectivized property). The Polish Stalinists are thoroughly demoralized and bereft of even the faintest spark of moral, political or social purpose. In the campaign leading up to the June elections, the traditional Communist red was re-placed on PUWP campaign posters by a pale and an-aemic blue; PUWP candidates did not run under their own party's name, but chose instead the more neutral-sounding designation of "National List." Even the hammer and sickle was replaced by a symbol more suited to the party's softer line: toilet paper—the scarce commodity with which candidates sought to bribe voters at the hustings.

In appeasing their foes, the Stalinist bureaucrats have become almost indistinguishable from them in terms of their social and economic agenda. This has undermined their own capacity for effective opposition in the future. Any resistance that elements of the PUWP may eventually offer to Solidarnosc will be motivated by fear of losing their bureaucratic privileges. But the capacity of the PUWP to influence events is shrinking as the demoralized apparatus disintegrates.

Solidarnosc: Enemy of Polish Workers

Yet in Poland today the Stalinists are not the only ones in trouble. As long as the PUWP monopolized political power, it was forced to shoulder the blame for the country's economic condition. In the eyes of the masses, Solidarnosc will henceforth share responsibility for the disastrous economic situation. Walesa and the rest of Solidarnosc's leadership know this and they also know that the new government's program for capitalist restoration is not going to be popular with the workers. During the election campaign last May, Solidarnosc candidates deliberately dodged all questions of economic policy.

To avoid personal responsibility for the anti-working class measures that lie along the road of capitalist restoration, Walesa turned away the coronet of office with the back of his hand. He knows that to have any chance of selling IMF-imposed austerity in the future, he must remain "clean" in the eyes of the workers. In refusing to assume direct responsibility for Solidarnosc in power, Walesa is wiser than the proponents of the various theories of "state capitalism" who hold that there is no essential difference between the societies west and east of the Elbe. The Lenin Shipyard electrician is well aware of the difference.

Despite his renown among pontiffs and presidents, and despite his Nobel Prize, Walesa knows that his

authority derives in the final analysis from the workers he led against the regime in 1980, who still comprise the core of Solidarnosc's social base. He also knows that the IMF-prescribed shock treatment which Mazowiecki's government proposes cannot be successfully imposed upon the working class solely through papal incantations or the bromides of "democratic" rhetoric. It means an assault on the workers' standard of living far more massive than anything they have suffered thus far at the hands of the bankrupt Stalinist regime, and this will require large-scale repression which could reach the level of white terror.

Michael Mandelbaum, of the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations, bluntly summed up the new prime minister's dilemma, "First, he is going to have to stab his adversaries and then he is going to have to stab his supporters" (*New York Times*, 25 August). As well as going after the Stalinist *nomenklatura*, "he is going to have to shut down inefficient, overmanned state enterprises, such as the Gdansk shipyards, where Solidarity was born, or some mines and steel mills, and that is going to hurt his core constituency." If Solidarnosc successfully carries out the social counterrevolution it advocates, Polish workers will learn that collectivized property represents real gains—the right to full employment, education, low-cost housing and free medical care.

Walesa estimated that: "For half of Polish companies, nothing needs to be done. Just change the organization and you can make money instantly. One-fourth need the addition of some capital, and one-fourth have to be disbanded" (*New York Times*, 7 July). Everyone expects that those workers presently employed in the enterprises Walesa proposes to disband, as well as other working people whose living standards will plummet as they watch a handful of pirates get rich, are likely to explode in anger. After meeting with Bush in July, Walesa fretted: "'I am sitting on a powder keg, and I have doubts we will be able to do it.' Civil war could result, he said, if reforms demanded of Poland brought unemployment and reduc-ed incomes" (*New York Times*, 12 July). In any such future conflict, revolutionaries must militarily bloc with any combination of forces—including sections of the Stalinist apparatus—which resist the assault on the working class and the dismantling of the system of collectivized pro-perty.

Solidarnosc's imperialist well-wishers and pay-masters are quite conscious of the pitfalls which await any government seeking to reimpose capitalism upon the Polish working class. Since Solidarnosc obtained its governmental majority, there has been much talk in bourgeois political circles about massive Western economic aid, even a "new Marshall Plan," for Poland. George Bush started by offering a paltry $161 million—a mere drop in the bucket. Under pressure from Congressional Democrats, he is now talking about increasing U.S. assistance as well as funneling larger amounts of money to Poland through the International Monetary Fund. The European Economic Community has pledged an additional $660 million for Poland and Hungary, with the possibility of more in the future to soften the transition to a market economy. France has pledged a similar amount and West Germany has promised $1 billion. But the aid proffered so far falls far short of the $10 billion that Solidarnosc has been requesting.

The queasiness of Poland's prospective buyers is not unjustified. The international bourgeoisie know that a capitalist Poland is in their long-term interests, but they are not philanthropists. They have enough business sense to realize that any government which must take on the job of breaking up the Stalinist state apparatus and subduing the inevitable resistance of millions of workers is a risky short-term investment. In the words of an unnamed senior State Department official quoted in the 14 September *New York Times*: "The economic situation is still a swamp over there. Government unions are trying to be more militant than Solidarity, striking for large wage increases. It's still not clear that hardliners in the Communist Party are reconciled to the new government and want it to succeed."

The Polish proletariat is giving the imperialists good reason to be nervous. Strike activity has increased since the June elections and a mood of skepticism is growing in the working class toward their Solidarnosc leaders. While Walesa appeals for a six-month moratorium on strikes and the government tries to sell Polish workers on the need to work more and get paid less, the Stalinist unions, initially created by Jaruzelski to compete with Solidarnosc, have been taking a more militant line against government austerity measures and have thus gained some credibility. At the same time, "Fighting Solidarity," the rightist split from Solidarnosc which includes members of the fascistic KPN, is also growing.

In the final analysis, the only force capable of defending collectivized property against Solidarnosc, the Western bankers and a Stalinist bureaucracy intent on giving away the store, is the Polish proletariat, led by a conscious Bolshevik vanguard. Only by advocating a clear and decisive break with the reactionary clericalist ideology and leadership of Solidarnosc can Polish Marxists begin the necessary political reorientation of the working class. To coordinate the struggles against the IMF dictated assaults, Polish workers need to form councils of democratically-elected representatives from every factory, linked in a national network. Within such bodies revolutionists would seek to mobilize the proletariat for revolutionary struggle to defeat both the capitalist restorationists of Solidarnosc and the discredited Stalinist parasites. Only on this basis can the enthusiasm necessary to rejuvenate the centrally-planned economy under democratic workers control be generated.

But a revolutionary leadership committed to such a perspective cannot be constructed by the spineless pseudo-leftists who have spent most of the last ten years adapting to, apologizing for and tailing behind the openly pro-capitalists of Solidarnosc. Only those who stand for a clear and decisive break with the leadership and program of imperialism's favorite "union" have the political capacity to lead the workers in the struggle to ensure that the system of capitalist wage-slavery does not return to Poland. ■