

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. 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



Workers shake Stalinist regime, but kneel before Catholic church. AP

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 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,"

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American Absurdities

Great Sharks and Little Fishes

Reading the papers this summer was depressing enough, what with the turgid hoopla over which unpalatable right-wing personality is going to be president, the economic mess and related disasters. But as the dog days of August dragged on, in the midst of the usual sensational murder cases (the Scarsdale diet doc, the phantom of the opera), a rash of truly bizarre news items appeared which made you wonder whether government officials and wooly-minded liberals have taken leave of their senses altogether. For example:

The San Francisco city fathers enthusiastically welcomed a great white shark into their zoo for three days, to massive and excited press coverage. Then they let it go because it wasn't eating. Bay Area residents gave the shark a fond farewell as it was slipped back into the Pacific's blue water, while the *San Francisco Examiner* approvingly quoted the words of an ecologically minded young woman: "Good, now the shark won't die."

Good?! Didn't these people see the movie *Jaws*? Do you really need to be a Marxist to know that great whites are deadly dangerous? These sharks eat people.

Plenty of San Franciscans know this. They remember back in 1959 when a

great white shark right off Baker Beach attacked and killed a young swimmer. His girlfriend pulled his ripped-apart body out of the water, beating off the shark, and gave him last rites as he bled to death on the beach. *Life* magazine spread the horrible story nationwide.

Veterans of the Pacific war, too, know it. And for those who weren't around then, Robert Benchley's best-seller *Jaws* retold the true story of those hundreds of men thrown into the Pacific as their ship was sunk by a kamikaze pilot—only their heads, lifejackets and upper torsos were recovered, the rest cleanly scooped away by sharks.

The only life these ecofreaks aren't interested in protecting is human. The *San Francisco Examiner* even had the nerve to print one sentence—in the midst of the "sweetheart" shark saga—reporting that a San Diego fisherman had that very same week been attacked and killed by a shark! But screw the pain and suffering of that fisherman's family—all the liberal faddists care about is precious baby seals, baby whales, baby sharks....

Which brings us to baby alligators. The *Chicago Sun-Times* had an article that week about a man in Florida, Terry Ellsworth, who shot and killed a four-foot alligator that was creeping up,

jaws open, on his two-year-old baby daughter while she was playing in the front yard. But instead of praise for protecting his daughter, Ellsworth instead faces five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine—for killing an "endangered species." (Baby girls aren't an "endangered species," you see.)

In New York, the *New York Times* reported on the case of Ohio truck driver William Jordan, who now faces a mandatory one-year jail sentence for coming to the aid of a woman he thought was being mugged. Big cities can be dangerous, so naturally Jordan had his gun with him in his truck. When he saw a woman on the street struggling to get away from a burly guy who had grabbed her, Jordan pulled out his gun, pointed it the guy and yelled "Hey, let the girl go." Unfortunately for Jordan, the man turned out to be a plainclothes cop (who said he was trying to arrest a prostitute) who came back later and arrested him. Jordan is now one of the first test cases in New York's new "toughest handgun law in the nation," all because he came to the aid of a damsel in distress. Are they trying to tell us that Kitty Genovese's neighbors had the right idea after all?

Back on the ecology front, in June the California Highway Patrol sprang into action when a "mysterious white powder" was spilled on the Bay Bridge. They helicoptered in teams of heroic volunteer chemists in gas masks, shutting down the bridge for nine hours, and creating one of the worst traffic jams in San Francisco history. It turned out to be talcum powder (!) but no one could accuse the CHP of insensitivity to environmental dangers.

Meanwhile throughout the Bay Area, tobacco smoking has been banned in

many public places—bus depots, hotel lobbies, restaurants and so forth. But the arrogant proprietors of lotus-land get their just rewards: after bringing all the Vietnamese "boat people" here in the cause of "human rights," it turns out they are now hunting and cooking the squirrels and other "protected species" in Golden Gate Park!

The worst of it is, as actor Roy Scheider put it in a recent *Playboy* interview, "...in New York we know we're crazy, but in L.A. they think they're sane." The rad-libs want to take away people's guns and we're supposed to think it's a good thing the monopolies have driven up the gas costs so high we can't drive big cars any more. And now the "radical" National Lawyers Guild has come out against sex magazines. When the liberals are trying to take away gas, guns and girls (the very essence of America), it's no wonder that all forms of right-wing populism and reaction are flourishing.

In this country we don't have an ayatollah, but we do have right-to-lifers. And how come all the right-to-lifers are for capital punishment? Ronald Reagan recently announced that the theory of evolution had "great flaws" (what he really means is, only some people are descended from the apes). He thinks the "biblical story of creation" should be taught in the public schools, too. Here it is 1980 and communists are still fighting for the separation of church and state! Now it looks like we're going to have the Scopes "monkey trial" all over again. This isn't even Marxism—it's more like Mark Twain!

There is one bright spot though. We did read that Anita Bryant got a divorce and according to her mother is now "off men." ■



Stackpole/Life



"No, you may not have a cigarette. This is a no-smoking area!"

Hiroshima Day: To Remember Is Not Enough!

The following leaflet, calling for a Spartacist League demonstration on Hiroshima Day, August 6, at the downtown Los Angeles Federal Building, was distributed among the Japanese-American community in L.A. Among the signs carried by the demonstrators were "They said the camps couldn't happen here....," "American 'Human Rights'—Hiroshima/Nagasaki," "Yamashita or MacArthur—Who Was the Better Man?" and "Dresden, Rotterdam, Tokyo, Hiroshima—Down with Imperialist War!"

The American state loosed the world's first nuclear holocaust over Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6, 1945, even though the war was already over. The helpless citizens burnt alive in raging firestorms and deadly radioactive poisons died to help make the world safe for Ameri-

can "democracy," while Japanese-Americans in the USA were forced to go through living hell to prove their "loyalty" to the imperialist, racist American state. Branded "illegal aliens" and "Japs," rounded up like cattle in concentration camps, humiliating "loyalty oaths" shoved down their throats by the state that held them captive, still the Japanese-Americans produced some of the finest soldiers of World War II—the 442nd regimental combat team.

With honor and discipline, the all-Nisei combat team pulled off incredible feats of bravery in both Italy and France. But what did Japanese-Americans ever get out of their heroic sacrifice? Where are the "human rights" and "justice" that Carter talks about for Japanese-Americans? It was "New Deal" liberal "savior" FDR who set up the concentration camps, his Democratic successor

Truman who dropped the atomic bombs. With racist calculation the already defeated Japanese were chosen as the human testing ground to prove to American imperialism's opponents—especially the USSR—that the USA will stop at nothing to maintain world dominion.

And if we don't stop it, it must and will happen again. Already American workers are encouraged by their masters into racist displays like smashing Japanese Toyotas while capitalism slides into depression. World War II pulled the U.S. out of the last depression—and the Japanese-Americans today will be among the first victims of American imperialism's World War III death throes tomorrow, unless these capitalist war-mongers are overthrown. It was the Trotskyists in Los Angeles during World War II who defended



WV Photo

and aided the Japanese-Americans in their agony. Not only Marxist principle, but simple human decency, demands that the agony of these victims of U.S. imperialism be avenged.

Canadian UAW Sitdown

TORONTO—"It's ours so we took it!" This was the comment of one of 200 auto workers who occupied the Houdaille bumper plant in Oshawa, Ontario August 8 to protest the bosses' plan to shut down the plant. With the bottom dropping out of the North American car market, the company decided to cut its losses and throw workers with 18 to 33 years seniority out on the street with nothing to show for a lifetime of work but a few dollars' severance pay.

For close to two weeks the Houdaille workers revived the fighting tradition that built the United Auto Workers (UAW)—the sit-down strike. They brought in sleeping bags and bedded down in the lunchroom; a kitchen was kept running and the plant perimeter was patrolled by workers with walkie-talkies. In front of the plant there were placed placards reading "Till Hell Freezes Over," listing each day of the occupation. The sitdown grabbed front-page coverage across Canada and even made it into the *Detroit News* under the headline: "Unions Use 30's Ploy: A Sit-Down." Telegrams and letters of support from unions and socialists poured into the offices of UAW Local 222—even the mayor of Oshawa felt constrained to promise the workers that their homes would not be seized if they fell behind in their taxes.

Auto workers in southern Ontario plants followed the Houdaille strike closely and stood ready to come to the sitdowners' aid if company or cops tried to get them out of the plant. The Houdaille plant, an independent parts supplier primarily to the Chrysler Corporation, is small and the demands were limited to pensions for workers with over 30 years seniority, better medical benefits and severance pay. But the Houdaille workers are casualties of the general economic crisis in auto which has thrown nearly 30,000 Canadian Big Three workers out of their jobs (in addition to half a million jobless auto and parts plant workers in the U.S.). This sit-down strike points the way forward for hundreds of thousands of UAW members facing mass layoffs and plant closings.

The call for factory occupations has been heard elsewhere in Canadian auto as well. At the Ford Oakville (Ontario) plant, where 1,400 workers lost their jobs when the company axed an entire shift this summer, union militants Gary Snider and Peter Hoult distributed a leaflet last May to a meeting of UAW Local 707 arguing:

"A plant occupation is very effective because it hits the bosses where they



Houdaille UAW sitdown showed power of class-struggle tactics.

Spartacist Canada

live—their private property which they claim gives them the 'right' to throw us out of work. The International should be organizing such militant actions in the scores of plants hit by mass layoffs and closings, fighting for our jobs and demanding unlimited unemployment benefits for laid-off workers, full recall rights and government/corporation financing of the bankrupt SUB funds. A determined battle could create jobs by winning a shorter workweek with no loss in pay."

Plant occupations and national strike action are what is needed to wage a real fight against the layoffs that have ripped through auto in the last year. But United Auto Worker tops kept this sit-down strike under wraps. At a UAW area council meeting in June, International vice president and Canadian director of the UAW Bob White threatened that he would respond to the mass layoffs with sit-down strikes and was just looking for the right opportunity. A week later a dozen union officials took White at his word and climbed a fence to occupy the Windsor Bendix plant that had been shut down. The UAW leadership rammed through a settlement in six hours!

Windsor, which has borne the brunt of the mass layoffs and where the sit-down tactic could spread like wildfire to angry auto workers across the river in

Detroit, just wasn't the "right opportunity." A plant occupation there would sound like Solidarity House meant business. Instead White chose the marginal Houdaille bumper production plant with its aging workforce, located in Oshawa where employment at the large GM plant has remained relatively stable.

From the start the sitdown was portrayed as a "peaceful occupation" by a loyal workforce that hadn't waged a strike in 32 years. So compelling was the plight of the workers, many of whom had put in over three decades and were to be thrown penniless onto the street, that editorialists of Toronto's *Globe and Mail*, one of Canada's major big business newspapers, shed crocodile tears over the plant closing. The strike demands were just and supportable, if limited. The 200 who occupied the factory were all that was left after the original workforce of 600 was systematically slashed over the past year. But the demand for jobs was never raised and the plant shutdown never challenged. UAW leaders argued like a condemned man pleading for the least painful form of execution.

The sitdown ended on August 21 with acceptance of an offer of pensions for the 30-year-and-over men when they

reach 55, and a meager increase in severance pay to \$250 for every year of service (less than half what white-collar employees will receive). The mood of the Houdaille workers, who accepted the settlement by a vote of 177 to 14, was not one of jubilation; everyone realized that although they would be getting a few dollars more, they would still be jobless.

But even the very limited gains from an isolated UAW sit-down strike is an indictment of UAW International president Doug Fraser, who has allowed a number of major auto plants to be shut down without a peep of organized resistance. Canadian UAW officials are no better—they simply tailor their betrayal to maple leaf social democracy, expressed by the reformist New Democratic Party (NDP). The NDP puts forward the classic social-democratic call for nationalization of certain industries by the bourgeois state as the "solution" to workers' problems.

Thus the NDP came out in support of the Houdaille sitdown, not to spark a powerful working-class fight to establish a workers government, but to channel workers' discontent into Canadian nationalism. NDP leader Ed Broadbent, member of Parliament from

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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No to ILA Anti-Communist Boycott!

Responding to the Polish workers' strikes, American labor fakers predictably sought to whip up anti-Communism. The East Coast dock workers union, Teddy Gleason's ILA (already boycotting all trade with Russia), took the conservative line by imposing a boycott on goods to and from Poland. The more liberal line, generally reflecting State Department thinking, was taken by the UAW's Doug Fraser, who sent the strikers \$25,000. Both measures are designed to strengthen the U.S. cold war drive against the Soviet Union. Recall that former UAW president Leonard Woodcock is now ambassador to China, where anti-working-class repression is far greater than in Gierek's Poland. Why is there no talk of "free trade unions" in China? Because the Peking bureaucracy is allied to Uncle Sam against the Russians. The Frasers and Gleasons, labor lieutenants of Brzezinski and Wojtyla, are no friends of Polish workers.

Gosh Darn!

August 16, 1980

Dear Mr. Norden,

I bought the "Workers Vanguard" for the first time dated June 27, 1980 [July 25, 1980]. There was a four letter word in the headlines which I feel does not do the Socialist cause any good even though it may hit the nail on the head. I don't think Lenin or Marx would approve at all. The Socialist cause has been damaged enough without giving it anymore black eyes. How the Socialist will ever recover is beyond me. We have been knocked to our knees. I would have liked to have given that paper to a friend, but because of that word I couldn't. I even tore the word out because I didn't want anyone to see it. It isn't that I've never heard that word or used it but I feel that it just gives people one more thing to criticize us for. The Socialist have taken enough beatings.

I'd like to see our name vindicated. I almost didn't buy the paper because of that dirty word.

Please, if you truly believe in the Socialist cause change your approach.

In all sincerity and no mean thoughts, I am

Your friend
(Unsigned)

WV Replies: Oh Shit! (interj.) 1. A high-impact exclamation of extreme exasperation as in: "Carter, Reagan? Oh Shit!" (*WV* No. 262, 25 July 1980). In early use *shit* a contemptuous epithet applied to a man 1508 (Oxford English Dictionary). Now in common usage as the maximum verbal response to immediate disaster. In popular films: *Day of the Dolphin*, "oh shit" (the operatives being blown out of the water); *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, "oh shit" (as they go over the cliff). Inside cockpit of one of the two jumbo jets involved in Canary Islands airport disaster, 27 March 1977, pilot's final exclamation was, "oh shit!"

Thousands Fired, Scores Arrested

Army Crushes Sri Lanka General Strike

Over 100,000 workers in Sri Lanka joined in a general strike that was the greatest challenge to the Tory regime of President J.R. Jayawardena since his United National Party (UNP) took office three years ago. The political prelude to the strike was an anti-UNP protest held on June 5 by the Joint Trade Union Action Committee (JTUAC), a bureaucratic combine of unions mostly affiliated with the pro-Moscow Communist Party (CP), the ex-Trotskyist Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the bourgeois Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) of former prime minister Mrs. Bandaranaike. During the protest a CP trade-union organizer was killed by UNP thugs. A massive funeral procession four days later turned into an angry protest against the UNP.

Then, workers at the large Ratmalana railway workshop wildcatted after 12 union militants there were suspended for having participated in the June 5 protest. Ratmalana has a long tradition of militant class struggle; these railway workers were in the vanguard of the 1976-77 strike wave that sealed the fate of the bloody coalition government of

Mrs. Bandaranaike. When in early July the Ratmalana action committee adopted the JTUAC's standing demand for a 300 rupee (\$20) monthly wage increase plus a cost-of-living escalator, the strike spread, crippling the rail system.

With inflation running at 42 percent last year (75 percent for essential consumer goods) the wage issue has become explosive. Soaring prices coupled with the UNP's slashing of the rice ration and other subsidies have made life almost intolerable for working people. Half of the island's population, who have historically lived well by Asian standards, now exist on incomes that are below what even the government defines as subsistence level. Meanwhile, in the new "free trade zones," where there has been a tremendous influx of foreign capital over the last couple of years, virtually all union activities have been banned. Consequently, the strength of the organized labor movement is being eroded by the growth of a pool of non-union workers, many of them women, who toil in Singapore-style sweatshop conditions.

On July 11, as pressure for a general strike mounted daily, the JTUAC tops

met but decided to call out their unions only ten days later. But during the next week union after union jumped the gun. A major confrontation with the government was fast approaching. But the JTUAC refused even to set up a central strike committee that could coordinate and organize the struggle on a day-to-day basis. Nor was any effort made to draw in the doubly oppressed Tamil workers in the nationalized tea, rubber and coconut plantations, which have become economic disaster areas. What was worse, Bala Tampoe, head of the big Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU) and leader of the shadowy Sri Lankan section of the United Secretariat (USec), *opposed* calling a general strike and instructed his members to keep working even after it had begun!

Jayawardena understood quite clearly that the general strike posed the question of power. As one of his senior ministers put it, "We've got to crush it now, otherwise we are done for" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 1 August). So on July 16 Jayawardena declared a state of emergency, mobilizing the military, imposing press censorship and banning all strikes affecting "essential

services." Troops were used to prevent a planned JTUAC rally in Colombo's Hyde Park from taking place on July 18, although Tampoe was allowed to hold a CMU rally there. Union offices located in workplaces were closed down, and scores were arrested, many simply for handing out pro-strike leaflets.

But perhaps the greatest blow was Jayawardena's order that all striking workers in the government sector be sacked at once and replaced with scabs. Pro-UNP papers carried photos of the thousands of desperate job-seekers who flocked to government hiring offices. One queue stretched for more than a mile. At one point Jayawardena even threatened to seize striking unions' funds and use them for handouts to the families of sacked workers!

To protest these mass dismissals the JTUAC called a "satyagraha" (nonviolent civil disobedience) for August 8 in Colombo's central Fort area. Troops were deployed to seal off the area, leading to at least one confrontation near the Fort railway station. As crowds of angry demonstrators moved through the Fort area, windows of cars and buses were smashed and bricks were hurled at

SL Demos in NY, London

Stop Anti-Labor Repression in Sri Lanka!

Coordinated demonstrations protesting government repression against strikers in Sri Lanka were called late last month by the international Spartacist tendency (ist). On August 29 approximately 75 supporters of the Spartacist League/U.S. demonstrated outside the Sri Lankan mission to the United Nations in New York chanting, "Hands off the unions—For the right to strike" and "Stop reprisals against striking workers." The next day in London 25 people responded to the call of the Spartacist League/Britain for a demonstration outside the Ceylon Tea Centre.

The demonstrations were an expression of international labor solidarity, and as such put forward a program and perspective for working-class power in South Asia. Among the slogans chanted by the Spartacist demonstrators were "Popular front paved the way for repression in Ceylon today," and "Popular front with the bourgeoisie led to state of emergency." One of the signs proclaimed "Remember '71 JVP massacre—No popular frontist alliance!" Historically, in Spain, Chile and elsewhere, popular fronts have paved the way for bloody repression by the Francos and Pinochets through tying the workers to the "democratic" capitalists and generals. But in Ceylon it was the "progressive" coalition government of the now-hated Mrs. Bandaranaike which brutally put down the uprising by radicalized petty-bourgeois Sinhalese youth in 1971. The LSSP renegades from Trotskyism were an integral part of this murderous coalition government. As one SL sign

put it, "Rotting corpse of the LSSP—Tied to Bloody Mrs. B."

While the guerrillaist-Stalinist JVP had been in the forefront of the radical rebellion against the Bandaranaike regime in the early '70s, they have not transcended their Guevarist origins to take up the cause of workers revolution. This was graphically demonstrated by their failure to take part in the general strike which has shaken Sri Lanka in the past month. Another sign at the Spartacist demonstrations challenged these would-be revolutionists: "JVP—Embrace Proletarian Leninism!"

A Spartacist speaker at the New York demonstration stressed the need for a program of proletarian internationalism and the construction of an authentic Trotskyist party in Ceylon:

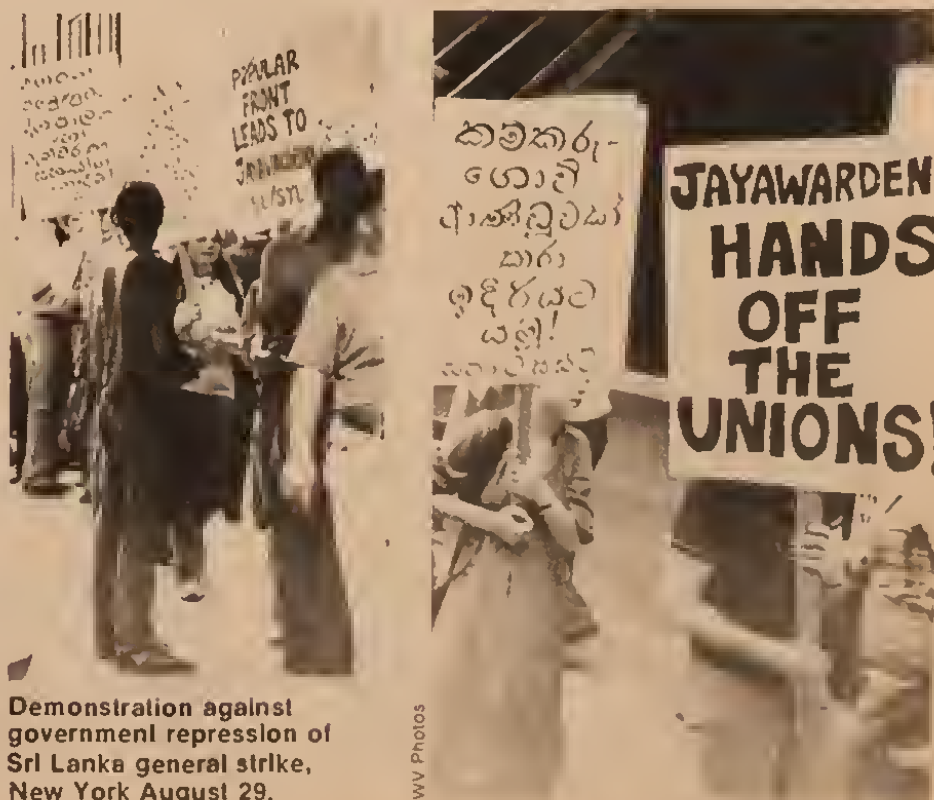
"Key to this struggle is the recognition that in Sri Lanka there will be no proletarian revolution without the oppressed Tamils. The Indians are not only 'stateless' in Sri Lanka, they also don't exist for the reformist workers misleaders who are thoroughly saturated with Sinhalese chauvinism. You will no more make a revolution in Sri Lanka without the Tamils than you will make one in the United States without the oppressed black people."

A communist strategy in Sri Lanka, he said, entails a perspective for proletarian revolution "not simply on this small island, but throughout the Indian subcontinent." In Gandhi's India also, he added, "one sees the tragic cycle of popular frontism followed by bourgeois reaction."

Finally, the SL speaker commented on the current strike movement in Poland. A spokesman for a tiny social-

democratic grouping, the Shachtmanite League for a Revolutionary Party (LRP), which took part in the New York demonstration, made an anti-Marxist equation between the general strike against the capitalists in Ceylon and the plant occupations by Baltic workers in the Polish deformed workers state. The Spartacist speaker pointed out that the Polish strike movement had a contradictory character, and that, at the same time as there were many just workers'

grievances, there was also an active danger of capitalist restoration under the sign of the church. Unlike the State Department Shachtmanites, he noted, Trotskyists "stand for the unconditional defense of the collectivized property forms of Poland. We seek to intervene in the Polish strikes to break the Polish working class from the Catholic church and from other pro-bourgeois forces and to turn them into a vanguard for a proletarian political revolution." ■



Demonstration against government repression of Sri Lanka general strike, New York August 29.



Seneviratne/Ceylon Daily Mirror

Armored cars patrol Colombo.

the President's House and at Parliament. A UNP Member of Parliament was hauled from his jeep and roughed up. Among the several dozen reported arrested were Vasudeva Nanayakkara, leader of the Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP), and Tulsiri Andradi, president of the Central Bank Employees Union and a leader of the centrist Revolutionary Workers Party (RWP) of Edmund Samarakkody.

Although the state of emergency has been lifted, the government is taking reprisals with a vengeance. Information about the numbers of workers sacked and jailed is still scant. Supporters of the NSSP in London informed the Sparta-

cist League/Britain that four NSSP Central Committee members went on trial August 28 but were still being kept in jail. The left and labor movement must demand that all those arrested under the emergency regulations be immediately released, that charges against all victims of Jayawardena's repression be dropped, and that there be no reprisals.

In the aftermath the reformist CP and LSSP as well as their hangers-on like the NSSP will blame the strike's defeat on the fierce government repression. But that is just a self-serving rationalization. Their militant rhetoric aside, all these misleaders saw the general strike mainly as a means to forge a political alliance of "all anti-UNP forces"—a catchword for a new popular front with the bloody Mrs. B. whose popular-front government in 1971 massacred thousands of youth. When the JIUAC was first formed, the LSSP and CP understood that mass hatred for the old coalition made open association with the SLFP unwise. But a bloc was made on the trade-union front over the JIUAC's 23 demands. Thus, the JIUAC is a first step toward a new popular-front alliance. It should be recalled how, after the fall of the first popular-front government in 1965, the LSSP, CP and SLFP formed a Joint Committee of Trade Union Organizations based on 15 demands that was the precursor to the open electoral popular-front alliance.

Already the rotting LSSP has made what its leader Colvin R. de Silva publicly calls "a pact with the devil's grandmother" (guess who). The LSSP, badly demoralized and in total disarray, crawled into the SLFP's last May Day demonstration, marching at the tail, of course. And the LSSP and SLFP held a joint anti-UNP rally in Colombo June 24 with an eye already on the 1983 general elections. So far, the CP, NSSP and Tampoe have been more cautious.

Earlier this year the CP felt compelled to make a public "self-criticism" of its role in the Bandaranaike coalition, but that didn't stop the Stalinists from encouraging the SLFP to participate in the June 5 JIUAC protest. As for the NSSP, while it split from the LSSP over the coalition fiasco, it has never drawn a hard line against popular frontism. It tries to fudge the class character of the SLFP, dubbing it both bourgeois and "liberal reformist," "Social Democratic." And the NSSP has no qualms about making de facto political blocs with the SLFP, such as sharing the same platform with Mrs. B at a rally against the UNP's new constitution.

Then there's the thoroughly corrupted, reptilian Tampoe, who'll do business with just about anyone who can further his career as a big bureaucrat on a little, poor island. Suffice it to recall that in 1967 Tampoe accepted a CIA handout to come to the U.S., where he met with then "defense" secretary Robert McNamara at the height of the U.S.' bloody war on the Vietnamese workers and peasants (see "The Case of Bala Tampoe," *Spartacist* No. 21, Fall 1972). Recently, Tampoe has the left wondering about his close relations with SLFP union boss Alavi Maoulana. As the quite perceptive gadflies of the *Lanka Guardian* observed, Tampoe's last May Day speech was "unusually subdued" on the SLFP.

The RWP's role in the general strike only confirmed our characterization of the Samarakkody tendency as "the organic left wing of the old LSSP" ("Toward the International Trotskyist League," *Spartacist* No. 27-28, Winter 1979-80). For Trotskyists, what was urgently needed in the general strike was a hard, sharp struggle to break the unions from their misleaders and from the bourgeois SLFP. But the RWP's "mass leader" Andradi, acting as president of the Central Bank Employees

Union, issued a leaflet in Sinhala dated July 13 that didn't even mention the SLFP! It simply exhorts workers to force the JIUAC to take militant action. Just how is the JIUAC to wage an anti-capitalist struggle when it embraces the union flunkies of Mrs. B? Not surprisingly, Andradi's leaflet makes no mention of the vital Tamil question.

What's needed in Sri Lanka is the forging of an authentically Trotskyist vanguard party, steeled in the struggle against all varieties of popular frontism. That requires politically challenging the petty-bourgeois radical Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), which has become the largest left organization on the island. Thousands of subjectively revolutionary youth have turned to the JVP, the martyrs of 1971, attracted by its denunciations of the old parliament-oriented coalition parties and its aura of insurrectionary militancy. But the JVP has been unable to break from its eclectic, neo-Stalinist roots and find its way programmatically to authentic Leninism. It vacillates between electoral opportunism and sectarian abstentionism, striking a kind of Third Period Stalinist posture ("After Jayawardena, us"). Without a significant proletarian base, and with no Leninist program and tactics to split the workers from their reformist misleaders, the JVP was unable to intervene in the general strike.

Unless a Trotskyist party is built in Sri Lanka, mass disaffection with the UNP will only play into Mrs. B's hands. The working people must not go through another defeat of bringing a new popular front to power, which will simply perpetuate the austerity and repression of the UNP. The task of Trotskyists is to mobilize the workers and peasants to smash capitalism in Sri Lanka and spark proletarian revolution throughout South Asia. ■

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Polish Workers Move

(continued from page 1)

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 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 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 captured 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 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

Gierek & 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.

"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



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

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 opposition 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 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 democracy 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



Der Spiegel

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



Gorgoni/Contact

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

political revolution or Stalinist reestablishment. At the same time, it is not Afghanistan where the Soviet Red Army is playing a progressive role in 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 ZPSO 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 PZWP; 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

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 PZWP 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

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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/

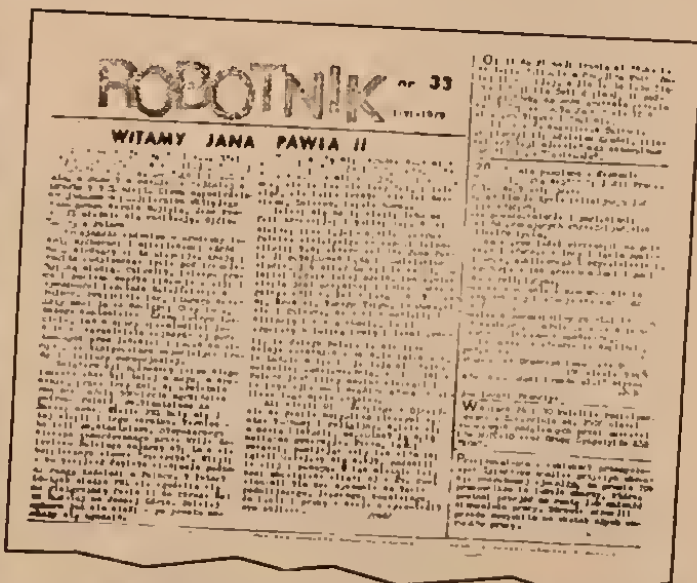


Oer Spiegel



Der Spiegel

KOR leaders Kuron (top) and Michnik (bottom) publish *Robotnik* (The Worker), which greets pope's visit to Poland.



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 lead-

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Poland...

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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 competent. 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,

tor 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

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 production, 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 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



Der Spiegel

Edward Gierek

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 PUPP general secretary Edward Ochab wrote:

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



Mosander

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

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 direc-

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.

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

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 bankrupts 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 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

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 Washington'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.



WV Photo

Anti-communist demonstration in Chicago: What is a Polish anti-communist? One who during strikes against Communist regimes calls on U.S. to grant credit to Communist regime.

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

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! ■

A New York Spartacist Forum A Workers Poland, Yes! The Pope's Poland, No!

Speaker: Joseph Seymour
Spartacist League
Central Committee

7.30 p.m., Friday, September 5
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Dissidents...

(continued from page 7)

ing 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 Pilsudskite 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 opportunisticly 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 con-

science 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, fascistic 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 Cardinal 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 Moezar faction of the PUWP at the time it ran the 1968 anti-Semitic purge and now heads the KPN. The journal comments that Moezulski 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, Gierk & Co. will be the first to go, *but they will be next*. ■

Phone Strike...

(continued from page 12)

meaning given the CWA's other "victories."

Having isolated the locals, sections of the bureaucracy decided a week later to have *another* Saturday night strike to settle so-called "local issues" such as job security. (With hundreds of thousands of jobs being downgraded or eliminated by automation, the reduction of job security to a "local issue" was a set-up for defeat.) At midnight on August 16-17, some 33,000 CWAers in the New York area and 70,000 on the West Coast went on strike over "local issues." In New York, workers at some locations enthusiastically set up picket lines, but the memory of 1971 was strong. (In 1971, Local 1101 fought an isolated seven-month strike and lost.) Within 30 hours the workers were sent back to work again for an undisclosed local settlement.

In California, the story was similar. tape-recorded strike calls, poorly organized picket lines which were quickly taken down and key issues such as job security shunted into "local issues." The

final local contract contains nothing about job security, and on other issues simply gives in openly to the company—e.g., the company reserves the right to return management people to the bargaining unit in any job; seniority for upgrade/transfer purposes applies only to those deemed "qualified" by the company, etc. One example captures the union's capitulation: in northern California, about 100 central office analysts, a top craft category, now make about \$100 per week *less* because the company instituted downgrades and the CWA failed to fight it. The official posture against the national contract taken by some local leaderships in the current mail balloting, such as Jim Imerzel & Co. in San Francisco's Local 9410, is just a "left" smokescreen to cover their sabotage of an effective strike.

It was, in short, a deliberately botched struggle. And the sub-reformists like the "Bell Wringer" group in New York raised not a peep of protest against the bureaucratic sabotage. It could not be clearer that the incumbent CWA leadership is a bunch of traitors who must be dumped. A good beginning would be a massive "no" vote in the mail ballot on the contract. But more deeply, it is the

political tie between the bureaucrats and the bosses' parties which paralyzes the CWA and the rest of the American union movement. As the Militant Action Caucus noted, "More than ever, labor needs its own political party, a workers party, to win a fight against these attacks." ■

Sitdown...

(continued from page 3)

Oshawa, told Houdaille workers that he would "support them to the end of this." Broadbent's prescription, however, turned out to be the poison of protectionism as he declared, "Trudeau and [Ontario premier] Davis have a responsibility to act in the interests of Canadian workers just as the American and Japanese governments act in the interests of their workers!"

Here Broadbent is merely following in the footsteps of Fraser, whose only answer to auto layoffs is to "demand" fewer Toyotas and more millions in tax dollars for the Chrysler bosses. Import quotas mean inflation, unemployment and ultimately war. Canadian national-

ism or any other kind of nationalism cannot save workers' jobs. Neither will the bureaucrats' schemes for government intervention. Even if implemented, such gimmicks would be paid for by the workers through wage controls, layoffs and speed-up. The Houdaille workers' plant occupation, in contrast, suggests a strategy for auto workers to wage a real fight for jobs.

It took the Flint sit-down strike of 1937 to establish the United Auto Workers (followed up by a 15-day strike against GM in Oshawa which launched the CIO in Canada). Today from Oakville to Mahwah to Detroit, UAW militants have fought for sitdowns and an industry-wide strike against mass layoffs and plant closures. This call, supported by the Trotskyist League of Canada and the Spartacist League/U.S., says that it is possible to fight against the boom-bust capitalist system and its never-ending cycle of speed-up and layoffs. But for that you need a new, combative leadership of the labor movement—not the helly-crawling class collaboration of the Frasers, Broadbents and Boh Whites, but some old-fashioned get-off-your-knees class struggle. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Fake Left Turns Against Unions:

S.F. Hotel Workers: "They Sold Us Like Pigs"

SAN FRANCISCO—"We were sold out! They sold us like pigs, like chickens, like goats!" said Natalia, who was one bitter hotel maid on August 12. This was the day International and Local 2 officials of the Hotel, Restaurant Employees and Bartenders Union forced strikers to vote on a settlement sight unseen, negotiated behind the backs of the Local's elected negotiating committee. Numerous union members denounced it as the same package originally rejected when they went out on strike 27 days earlier. The terms are especially insulting to the mostly immigrant maids whose fight for decent treatment and reduced workload became the symbol for the strike.

The hotel workers were told the agreement included "amnesty" against reprisals, including dropping charges against arrested strikers, and retroactive 7 to 13 percent pay and benefit increases, but within a day of the ratification vote, the Hotel Employers Association (HEA) reneged on both. Employer spokesman Douglas Cornford barred Local 2 members from returning to work unless they resigned from the union and threatened to replace them permanently with scabs on the technical grounds that the agreement had not yet actually been signed.

As Local 2 laid plans to set up picket lines at the hotels once again, it became apparent that the bosses had repudiated the two promises of amnesty and retroactivity because the union's International president Edward Hanley, architect of the deal, had failed to "get it in writing" and instead left it up to the good faith of the hotel owners! Hotel workers are now paying the price for this criminally misplaced faith. Strike

activists have been laid off by the dozens since the end of the strike.

Final settlement was further delayed because union president Hanley and hotel spokesman Cornford as well as mayor Dianne Feinstein had left for New York City where they were all delegates to the Democratic Party Convention!! In an unheard-of move to stop the picket lines from going up, Hanley promised that the International union itself would pick up the \$250,000 tab for retroactive pay!

Disastrously for the union, the hotels were able to stay open for business throughout the strike, and by August the scabbing particularly by other unions was reaching a decisive point. Nevertheless, the settlement also coincided with the hotels' loss of a convention of 10,000 to another city and the threatened loss of a second one due to the strike. These conventions almost certainly make the difference between profit and loss to the hotels. If the HEA was hardlining it, they were also paying through the nose to do so. For the hotel workers, their first strike in 40 years ended in a sellout, but judging from their demonstrated willingness to strike again rather than give up their union, they have not been definitively beaten down. No one who witnessed these hotel workers on the picket lines can doubt their willingness to fight—they only lack a leadership willing to lead that fight.

By their own reckoning the assorted leftists in Local 2 constituted a majority of the elected rank-and-file negotiating committee and were much in evidence as picket captains during the strike. Mainly assorted Maoists with some Shachtmanites and other types thrown in, these fake-radicals were completely con-



WV Photo

founded by the prospect of actually having to lead some class struggle—so they didn't.

Two years ago every one of them supported the MacDonald/Lamb "reform" slate which caved in or was coopted to the International as soon as the polls closed. When the International put the Local under trusteeship, they all supported suing the union in the bosses' courts to lift the trusteeship. In the middle of this strike, the majority-radical negotiating committee voted for the infamous back-to-work arbitration scheme of Dianne Feinstein! And in the end, when despairing hotel workers voted to end their misled strike, a dozen from the same negotiating committee mounted an attempt to sue the union to prevent the agreement from going into effect. The common assumption under-

lying each of these cynical anti-union acts is that workers can't be mobilized in a successful fight against the bosses, so it is necessary to turn to other forces (either the union bureaucracy's "lesser evil" wing or the bosses' government).

Two small groups lacking influence on the negotiating committee carried their reformist logic out to its anti-union end. At an August 8 labor support meeting, the lone supporter of the Socialist League, which is politically supported by the British Workers Socialist League of scab Alan Thornett, proposed picketing his own Local 39 of the Stationary Engineers union for scabbing on the hotel strike. This was deliberately counterposed to proposals from supporters of the Spartacist League for effective *mass labor pickets* prepared to stop all scabs at the scene of the crime, on those picket lines.

Meanwhile, the Communist Workers Party-supported caucus, the United Hotel and Restaurant Workers, whose very name denotes dual unionism, proposed instead to picket the union hall of the scabbing Teamsters Local 856 under the slogan, "The most treacherous scab is a union scab!" In short, having seen the MacDonald/Lamb "reform" slate fail utterly in Local 2, the "left" opportunists are now turning against the unions themselves!

There are valuable lessons to be learned even in the defeat of this strike—primarily that there is no shortcut around the necessary task of building a new class-struggle leadership in this union to defeat and replace the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats. By their determination and hard-fought strike, SF hotel workers have proved they deserve no less. ■

L.A. Cop Terror...

(continued from page 12)

government to come into the case, after things cooled down they simply dropped the case claiming there was no "specific intent to deprive Mrs. Love of her federally protected civil rights."

In the wake of the recent Miami ghetto upheaval there's been a lot of handwringing in the L.A. press over the possibilities of another Watts, a decade and a half later. With such blatant examples of racist injustice in the courts and cop terror on the streets, no wonder they're worried.

Various liberal and black groups, such as the Watts Labor Community Action Committee, the Campaign for a Citizens Police Review Board and a number of clergymen are seeking to channel black outrage into a campaign for removal of L.A. chief of police Daryl

Gates and establishment of a civilian police review board. This same call is echoed by the reformist Communist Party and Socialist Workers Party. This is only one more in a series of bogus schemes to "reform" the capitalist police, like earlier gimmicks such as "community control" of the police or hiring more black cops. But more black faces do not change the nature of the racist-capitalist state: one of the cops that gunned down Eulia Love was black, as is Mayor Bradley, a former LAPD lieutenant. And a police review board will be utterly powerless: the cops will undoubtedly respond as they did in 1976 when the Police Department shredded all their files of civilian complaints against the cops. As for the bourgeois courts, the cops in the Tatum case were the first to be indicted in Los Angeles in 28 years and they got off scot-free!

For all the reformists' touching faith in the bosses' government to control the LAPD, the cops know better—they will

continue to shoot at "shiny objects," "hands reaching for back pockets," at "bulges," at the Eulia Loves and Cornelius Tatums. With their SWAT teams, CRASH squads and helicopter gunships the Los Angeles police are the closest thing in the U.S. to the militarized national police of southern Europe and Latin America. They kill so often because they are trained to. The bourgeoisie certainly would like to avoid another Watts ghetto explosion and occasionally worries that LAPD bonapartism is getting out of hand. But the cops' job is not to protect the citizenry; all the cops in the LAPD couldn't even catch the Hillside strangler—it took a small-town sheriff in Washington to do that.

Rather, the cops exist to keep labor and minorities down, to act as the armed

fist of the capitalist state against the exploited and oppressed. The LAPD's notorious brutality is directly related to the fact that Los Angeles is the largest open-shop industrial center in the country. L.A. is a transplanted Southern city. A strong, militant labor movement and such a paramilitary police force could not exist together for long in the same town. And Los Angeles labor must take the lead in mobilizing Chicanos and blacks to demand that the cops be disarmed and to defend the people's right to self defense. But while conditions in Los Angeles may be more extreme, cop brutality is an every-day occurrence in all American big cities. To put an end to these crimes, to try the killer cops by a jury of *their victims*, will take a working-class revolution fighting in the cause of all the oppressed. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

The Great Weekend Phone Strike Sellout

As Jimmy Carter was preparing for the Democratic convention in New York City, the contract for 525,000 phone workers represented by the Communications Workers of America (CWA) expired August 9. This opened the possibility of a direct confrontation between the workers and the Democratic Party. After all, it was CWAers who were given the task of installing communications equipment at Madison Square Garden, where Carter, Mondale, Kennedy and their ilk would hash out plans for more Democratic wage freezes, social service cuts, unemployment, etc. Before the contract expired the CWA membership had voted 6 to 1 to authorize a strike. Now was a time when phone workers had some clout, and indeed CWA pickets did appear briefly at the convention area—but only a few dozen, on a Sunday, for an hour and a half, at the back door entrance!

You see, CWA president Glenn Watts is a member of the Democratic National Committee, and Watts is so concerned about his career in the bosses' party that he does not want a strike in this election year, or any year for that matter. As the West Coast-based Militant Action Caucus (MAC) had warned in a leaflet of July 16:

"Instead of planning a strike, Watts told the [CWA] convention that CWA's main job this year is getting Jimmy ('Mr. Wage Freeze') Carter reelected. A strike would be a political hot potato for Carter, who already told CWA (in 1977) that he would issue a Taft-Hartley injunction against a national phone strike...."



Enthusiastic CWA pickets confront Ma Bell's security man in New York, August 16-17.

The workers are now paying for Watts' class treason with their very jobs.

The few strikes which did occur on August 9-10 when the contract expired were clearly designed to fail by the union bureaucracy. There was a criminal lack of strike preparations—unionists in the New York area discovered that just about their only source of information about the starting and ending of the strike was the local union telephone tape recording! (At the sound of the beep, you are on strike.) The key New York Local 1101 had a brief walkout but went

back 16 hours later because, according to executive vice president Joe Connolly, "We made our point!" With a local walkout on a Saturday night, when skeleton crews are in the buildings, it was a very small point indeed. When *WV* called Local 1150 (Long Lines) leader Gary Whaley to find out what picket lines, demonstrations or marches would mark the start of the strike, he responded, "Beats the hell out of me!" With leadership like this, the August 9-10 walkout was practically invisible.

The national contract was announced

"settled" by the news media, while the workers were left in the dark about the "settlement," and the only hard information came from a company bulletin. The so-called wage settlement was a cruel joke: the vast majority of workers will receive even less than the insulting paper deal of "up to" 10.2 percent the first year, and "up to" 3 percent in the second and third years. The lowest-paid category will get no raise at all, and pensioners will get no increase until a year from now. The *New York Times* asserted that "the national contract guaranteed that no individual with 15 years experience would be downgraded in any way," but many workers already know this is a bald lie.

Bob Barbarelli, vice president of Local 1101, in an interview with *WV*, called the ending of the Saturday night walkout of August 9-10 an act of "good faith" (blind faith, we would say). He even had the gall to be proud of getting a pay cut for at least one craft category—the loop testers, whose job is being displaced by clerical workers in a lower pay scale using computerized equipment. Barbarelli noted, "We were able to get this morning 85 percent" of their old pay scale! What Watts, Barbarelli & Co. were really interested in was preserving their own jobs by winning a "successorship clause," so that any new companies created by Ma Bell because of recent FCC anti-trust rulings will be "represented" by the CWA. While this is an elementary demand, it is robbed of

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Protest Racist L.A. Cop Terror!

LOS ANGELES—On August 12 two L.A. cops were acquitted of all charges in the shooting of Cornelius Tatum early last year. On 27 January 1979 Tatum had armed himself with a shotgun for his first night of work at a gas station in south-central Los Angeles. But as he was serving customers, six LAPD cops in the area, members of a "Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums" (CRASH) unit, all in civilian clothes and unmarked cars, suddenly pulled into the station. Without saying a word, according to Tatum and two eyewitnesses, the police fired 11 shots into the cashier's booth, leaving Cornelius Tatum paralyzed for life. The cops said they thought the 42-year-old black man was robbing the station.

It was the first time in eight years that criminal charges had been filed against any member of the Los Angeles Police Department. But besides acquitting the two cops, the jury split and a mistrial was declared in the case of the third, Norman Nelson, with three of the four black jurors voting guilty. Days afterward it was revealed that CRASH cop Nelson had in the same three-week period of January 1979 been involved in three separate shootings with no disci-

plinary action taken (*Los Angeles Times*, 19 August). He is also the target of a \$10 million lawsuit by a young woman who says she was picked up, blindfolded, held captive and raped by Nelson and three of his buddies in November 1978!

Despite the outrageous acquittal, the jurors, who complained about sloppiness in the prosecution's case and were prevented from visiting the scene of the crime, issued a unanimous statement expressing "grave concern" over the action of the police. The LAPD, which "protected" its trigger-happy thugs with a brutal flying wedge throughout the trial, cynically responded by requesting "advice" from the jury on how to improve training! Subsequently, District Attorney John Van de Kamp has decided to drop Nelson's case entirely, letting all three of the would-be killer cops go free.

So notorious is the Los Angeles police force that even a government-financed official study recently stated that a citizen "acts at his or her peril in a confrontation with [the LAPD]." (*Los Angeles Times*, 24 June). This was the conclusion of a 15-page report authorized by the federal Law Enforcement

Assistance Administration, made public only after the *Times* won access to it through a Freedom of Information Act request. Concern was heightened in the bourgeois press when it was revealed that the LAPD (which has always bugged leftists and black groups) had for years maintained a spy in the city council. But their main target is blacks and Chicanos. Recent statistics compiled by the liberal *Los Angeles Reader* show that of 71 people killed by L.A. cops since August 1977, 37, or more than half, were black.

The acquittal of the cops in the Tatum case was one more attack on the seething minority population of the Watts ghetto. Black anger flared again after the DA responded to sentiment for a retrial of Nelson, saying, "I am not going to be swayed by cheap politics." The murderers of Eulia Love, the black woman whose cold-blooded shooting by the cops last year enraged the black community, got off too (see "Cops Shoot Eulia Love, Go Free—Jail LAPD Killers," *WV* No. 232, 25 May 1979). Although the uproar over the broad-daylight police killing of a housewife over a gas bill forced the federal

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Watts 1965.

The Illustrated London News