

Solidarność Counterrevolution Checked

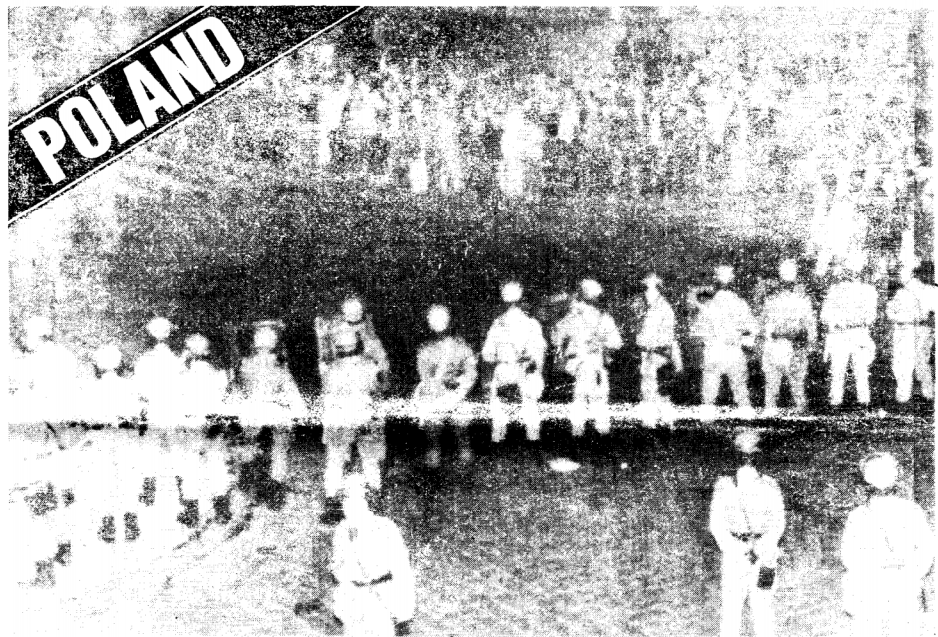
Power Bid Spiked

DECEMBER 15—With the imposition of a "state of war" in Poland, a counterrevolutionary grab for power has been checked. Just hours before the proclamation of military rule, the clerical-nationalist leadership of Solidarność announced it was organizing a national referendum on forming an anti-Communist government and breaking the military alliance with the Soviet Union against Western imperialism. The Warsaw regime was ready to take up the challenge. The actual steps taken go far beyond those usually described as martial law, and they seem to have made considerable preparations for the crackdown. So while Reagan and Haig were chasing their Qaddafi will-o'-the-wisp, the Polish government, at what appears to have been the last possible moment to make a move based on power, launched a final counter coup.

The Polish Stalinists managed to pull off an effective coup d'état in their own country. Contrary to every instinct and appetite of the ruling bureaucracy, constantly seeking accommodation with imperialism, they were forced to take measures defending historic gains of the proletariat. For it must be recognized that Lech Walesa's Solidarność was moving to overthrow not merely the corrupt and discredited Stalinist regime, but social gains inherited from the Bolshevik Revolution—centrally a collectivized planned economy—which were bureaucratically extended to Poland after the Red Army liberated the country from Nazi occupation. That is why this Polish "free trade union" is supported by the forces of imperialist reaction—from Wall Street to the Common Market and the Vatican—and why Ronald Reagan declared that the Polish crisis represented "the beginning of the end of Communism."

With such inflammatory statements, the U.S. imperialist chief sought to provoke a bloodbath in Poland, in order to fuel his anti-Soviet war drive to a white heat. It is in the interests of the working class, in Poland and internationally, that the present suppression of Solidarity's counterrevolution remain "cold"—that is, without bloodshed. The Polish workers must be warned that strikes, protests and other acts of defiance against the martial law would only play into the hands of reactionary adventurers. Massive violence would lead either to the reimposition of a Stalinist totalitarian police state, crushing the workers movement for years, or the victory of capitalist counterrevolution, a world-historic defeat for the socialist cause. Trotskyists seek above all to maintain a relatively open situation, so that a process of recrystallization can begin to take place to forge a proletarian and internationalist vanguard.

If the present crackdown restores



Sipa/Black Star

Polish police surround Solidarność headquarters in Wrocław.

something like the tenuous social equilibrium which existed in Poland before the Gdansk strikes last August—a tacit understanding that if the people left the government alone, the government would leave the people alone—conditions will be opened again for the crystallization of a Leninist-Trotskyist party. Especially in a country as historically evolved as Poland, the proletariat has the capacity to recognize its own historic interests, given time and a relatively open political situation. There must be elements—outside Solidarność, within Solidarność, in the Communist party—with genuinely socialist impulses which have been smothered by the particular confrontation that has dominated Poland over the last year. They must be won to the program of defending proletarian state power against the kind of clerical-nationalist mobilization that brought Poland to the brink of counterrevolution, while fighting for a proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Solidarność Bids for Power

At its first national congress, held in Gdansk in September, Solidarność consolidated around a program of open counterrevolution. Its appeal for "free trade unions" in the Soviet bloc, long a central slogan for Cold War anti-Communism, was a deliberate provocation to Moscow. Behind its call for "free elections" to the Sejm (parliament) was

the program of "Western-style democracy"—that is, capitalist restoration under the guise of parliamentary government. To underscore their ties to the West, Solidarność even demanded that Poland join the world bankers' cartel, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and invited to its congress Lane Kirkland, the hardline Cold Warrior head of the American AFL-CIO, and notorious CIA operative Irving Brown, chief of the AFL-CIO's European operations.

Certainly the mass of deluded workers in Solidarność did not and do not consciously seek the chronic unemployment, wage gouging and deterioration of safety conditions that capitalism would bring. If the IMF ever got its hands firmly around the neck of the Polish economy, the workers would soon hanker after the "good old days" under Gomulka and Gierek. It would presage the reunification of Germany on a capitalist basis, and set the stage fairly directly for a nuclear Third World War, one way or another. In keeping with the Catholic spirit of Solidarność, one can say: "Forgive them father, for they know not what they do."

In their own way the Stalinists recognized that Solidarność was bent on a final confrontation, but nonetheless they temporized. Negotiations between Jaruzelski and Walesa finally broke down centrally over Solidarność's demand for free elections to local govern-

ment bodies. Under existing conditions in Poland, this would have meant placing governmental power at the base of society in the hands of anti-Communist nationalists such as the neo-Pilsudskiite and anti-Semitic Confederation for an Independent Poland.

The event which led directly to the crackdown was Solidarity's attempt to organize the firefighter cadets in Warsaw, a group whose legal status (as throughout Europe) is similar to that of the police. This was one remove away from organizing in the armed forces and militia. The night after police dispersed the cadets' sit-in on December 2, the Solidarność leadership met in Radom in a closed meeting where they made plans for a counterrevolutionary seizure of power. The head of the powerful Warsaw region, Zbigniew Bujak, declared that "the government should be finally overthrown" and proposed the organization of a Solidarność militia for that purpose. Someone turned the tapes of this meeting over to the government, which repeatedly played them on state radio (see "Solidarność Counterrevolutionary Plot Exposed" on page 10). Many Poles were no doubt shocked, especially at the duplicity of the "moderate" Walesa who told his colleagues to keep saying, "we love you socialism," while plotting the government's overthrow.

With their secret plans exposed, the
continued on page 10

Solidarność Counterrevolutionary Plans Exposed

If anyone doubted that the anti-Communist leadership of Poland's Solidarność was planning to seize power in the name of the eagle, the cross and "the free world," these doubts were certainly laid to rest when someone turned over to the government tapes of a secret Solidarność leadership meeting in Radom on December 3. The authenticity of the tapes, repeatedly broadcast over state radio, is not denied by the participants.

According to a December 7 UPI dispatch, Warsaw region Solidarność chief Zbigniew Bujak asserted: "The government should be finally overthrown, unmasked and deprived of any credibility." He then proposed the establishment of workers guards to counter the state police. Jan Rulewski demanded a "transitory government" to stabilize the situation before the election of a new parliament.

That Bujak and Rulewski said these

things isn't likely to surprise anyone since they have a reputation of being Solidarność hardliners. The leader who was really exposed by the Radom tape is the "moderate" Lech Walesa, who is shown up as a total dissembler. Walesa cultivates an image of a simple, honest workers leader, soft-hearted and even a bit soft-headed. The tapes show that this is an act to disguise his counterrevolutionary aims. "We should not speak loudly about confrontation," he advises his colleagues. "We have to say, 'We love you, we love socialism and the party and of course we love the Soviet Union.'" But all this love talk is just a stratagem to buy more time for a counterrevolutionary mobilization:

"The confrontation is unavoidable.... I wanted to reach the confrontation in a natural way, when almost all social groups were with us. But I made a mistake because I thought we would keep it up longer and then we would overthrow these parliaments and councils and so on."

becomes a central part of the "free world" in attacking Angola with Israeli-supplied weapons. In Afghanistan, the CIA arms Islamic reactionaries fighting along the southern border of the USSR to maintain feudal and pre-feudal slavery. Washington's ally China constantly menaces Vietnam, which heroically fought U.S. imperialist barbarism for decades. But it is in Poland that Reagan sees the best possibility to realize his counterrevolutionary designs against the Soviet Union by "rolling back" the postwar social and economic gains in East Europe. The seizure of power by Solidarność would mean a victory for Wall Street and the Pentagon, for the Common Market and the IMF, for bloody Latin American dictators and South African racists. The creation of a "free world" Poland on the western borders of the USSR would bring much closer the dreadful prospect of anti-Soviet nuclear holocaust.

If today much of the Polish working class looks to Western imperialism for salvation, this is not simply a response to the terror of the Stalin period which gradually trailed off into abuse and mismanagement under Gomulka and then Gierek. An earlier crime of Stalinism destroyed the important traditions of international communism in Poland. Thousands of Polish Communist militants who fled to the USSR from the fascist dictatorship of Pilsudski were killed in the purges of the late '30s. The Polish Communist Party itself was officially liquidated, and then Nazi occupation finished the job of beheading the Polish proletariat, especially its important Jewish component. The post-1945 ruling bureaucracy was, therefore, largely constructed from purely careerist elements who lacked even the degenerated Communist traditions of the old Stalinists.

The present crisis is, above all, a reaction to the bankruptcy of liberal Stalinism. When in 1956 Wladyslaw Gomulka came to power in the wake of the Poznan uprising, he promised the widest workers democracy. Then he turned and suppressed the workers councils and leftist intellectuals who had supported him against the hardline Stalinists, while at the same time strengthening the position of the Catholic church and the smallholding peasantry. When Gierek replaced Gomulka after the 1970 Baltic coast workers' uprising, he promised unparalleled

Right after the first part of the Solidarność congress in early September, we concluded that "decisive elements of Solidarity are now pushing a program of open counterrevolution" and that "the whole activity and spirit of Solidarity is that of an organization making a bid for power" ("Stop Solidarity's Counterrevolution!" *WV* No. 289, 25 September). We did not have nor need access to tapes of secret leadership meetings to recognize this. The actual goals and intent of Solidarność were readily available in Western sources for anyone not blind to reality.

Willfully blind to this reality are the fake-Trotskyist opportunist outfits, most of which simply call the pro-imperialist, counterrevolutionary mobilization of Solidarność a developing proletarian political revolution. Black is called white. A few fake-Trotskyist groups, however, notably Workers Power in Britain and Peter Sollenberger's Revolutionary Workers League (RWL) in the U.S., tried to cover up Solidarność' counterrevolution by maintaining the organization is *too conciliatory* to the Stalinist regime. *Workers Power* (October 1981) informs us that the dominant tendency in Solidarność, "articulated in nationalist and Trade Union colours," is "towards accommodation with the Stalinist bureaucracy."

Likewise, the Sollenberger outfit is, if anything, even more blatant in its whitewash. It held up publication of its "monthly" *Workers Struggle* for a

month and a half, reportedly in order to work out a line article on Poland (its first since over a year ago). And then it only mentions the danger of counterrevolution to deny that it exists:

"For their own reasons, the Western capitalist press, the Soviet bureaucratic press and some of the more crazed elements of the American left have seized upon these weaknesses, blown them out of all proportion, and deliberately lied about the Polish working class, making the absurd claim that it seeks the restoration of capitalism in Poland. A simple review of the actions of the Gdansk congress shows this to be a blatant lie.

"In fact, the *major* weakness of the Solidarity congress was that even the opposition was too conciliatory to the Polish bureaucracy and to the Walesa leadership." [emphasis in original]

—*Workers Struggle*, November 1981

The Radom tapes expose the sophistries of Workers Power and the RWL as clearly as they expose Walesa. The difference between the so-called Solidarność "moderates" and "radicals" is over timing and public posture, not final aims. As Walesa explained to his colleagues at the Radom meeting, he wanted to make the seizure of power *appear* as a gradual escalation rather than a confrontation forced by Solidarność. As defenders of the proletarian dictatorship, even if bureaucratically deformed as in Poland, we didn't need access to secret tapes to understand the reality and raise the battle cry: Stop Solidarność' Counterrevolution! ■

Poland...

(continued from page 1)

Solidarność leadership made an open bid for power, announcing a national referendum for the establishment of a temporary government and "free elections." Hours later the regime struck back, declaring a "state of war" under a Military Council of National Salvation. A thousand Solidarność leaders were reportedly detained, and, as a sop, five former Communist party leaders arrested—ex-party leader Edward Gierek and his close associates. While General Jaruzelski, the prime minister and party leader, insists this is not an army takeover, there is here a disturbing element of military bonapartism. In this there is perhaps a concession to anti-Communist nationalism. While the Stalinist party is utterly discredited, the army retains a certain popular authority as the embodiment of the national state, supposedly above politics. The Stalinists only make hypocritical reference to socialist forms, the acknowledgment that vice gives to virtue. But compared to the naked armed fist, those forms are important.

Imperialism and "Liberal" Stalinism

"Free trade unions" and "free elections" for Poland have become key slogans in Reagan's Cold War II, and the imposition of martial law will certainly be used to fuel the anti-Soviet war drive, especially in West Europe. In France, in particular, mass pro-Solidarność demonstrations have been held, led by Socialist Party notables, producing a "holy union" running from the fascists, royalists and Gaullists to social democrats and Stalinophobic fake-Trotskyists like the OCI and LCR. In the U.S., imperialist war criminal Henry Kissinger, a man directly responsible for the murder of millions of defenseless Vietnamese, condemns the crackdown on Solidarność as "a very grave offense against human freedom." When Kissinger speaks of "freedom" he means freedom to exploit the workers and peasants of the world, a "freedom" maintained by mass terror.

In the name of countering "the export of revolution" to El Salvador, American war materiel and Green Berets are propping up a kill-crazed junta. The racist apartheid South African regime

prosperity. Then he ruinously mortgaged Poland's wealth to Western bankers and also ruinously subsidized the landowning peasants. So after this repeated experience, when the Polish workers rose again in the summer of 1980 they now looked to the powerful Catholic church opposition and nationalist dissidents, behind whom stands Western imperialism. For a year the clerical-reactionary leadership of Solidarność around Lech Walesa stopped short of calling for the overthrow of the official "Communist" system (a bureaucratically deformed workers state) and its replacement with (bourgeois) "democracy." Now the mask has fallen.

What Next in Poland?

The Warsaw regime's preventive coup is apparently effective. Solidarność activists at large are agitating for a nationwide general strike. While news reports from Poland are very scanty, reported strikes appear to be limited to particular Solidarność strongholds and there seems to be little serious active resistance to the martial law. It remains possible, especially given the desperate economic conditions, that anti-Communist agitators in and around Solidarność could provoke mass protests which could escalate into violence and even civil war. Under these conditions Soviet military intervention could well be the only available means to suppress counterrevolution. But it is by far in the best interests of the working class that Solidarity's counterrevolutionary bid for power be pushed aside as

quietly, quickly and bloodlessly as possible.

In the course of heading off the bid for power by capitalist-restorationist elements, a number of Solidarność leaders have been arrested. The right to strike and protest have been suspended, a curfew imposed, Poland's borders sealed, telephone and telegraph communications interrupted or cut off. As the immediate counterrevolutionary threat passes, these martial law measures must be ended, including release of the Solidarność leaders. A Trotskyist vanguard seeks to defeat them *politically*, by mobilizing the Polish working class in its true class interests.

For Trotskyists, the current Polish crisis powerfully reaffirms the need for proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies, particularly brittle in East Europe. In its scale and form, the social mobilization around Solidarność demonstrates the power of the working class to take control of society. Yet coming under the influence of the Catholic church and the leadership of neo-Pilsudskiite nationalists and pro-Western social democrats, the social content of Solidarność is profoundly anti-proletarian. A proletarian-internationalist workers movement in Poland can be rebuilt only under the leadership of a Trotskyist vanguard with a program of revolutionary unity between the Polish and Russian workers. This unity, necessarily directed against the Stalinist bureaucracies, is key to defense of the collectivized economies and the gains of October. ■

Order Now!

I enclose \$_____ for _____ copy(ies) of "Solidarność: Polish Company Union for CIA and Bankers" at \$1.00 each.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Make checks payable/mail to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.,
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

