

## 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/de-

formed workers states have been looking for as their "captive nations" relics fade into oblivion? Or does it portend a movement for "socialist democracy," as some on the left would have us believe?

Certainly *none* of the prominent dissident groups and personalities has a good word to say about socialism, which is identified with the perversion of proletarian rule represented by the present Stalinist bureaucracy. The dissidents' role as a conduit to the capitalist media is nothing new—Sakharov has been at it for years in the Soviet Union. Nor are appeals to the imperialists via the UN, the Helsinki Agreements, etc. What is particularly ominous about the Polish dissidents, who range from social democrats to openly Pilsudskiite reactionary nationalists, is their active (and largely successful) effort to form an alliance with the Catholic hierarchy. For it is the church together with the land-holding peasantry which form the social basis for counterrevolution in Poland.

### KSS-KOR: Social Democrats for Popery

The best-publicized Polish dissident group in the West is the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KSS), better known by its original name Workers Defense Committee (KOR). The leading spokesman for KSS-KOR is Jacek Kuron, and its newsletter *Robotnik* includes among its correspondents Lech Walesa, the leader of the Interfactory

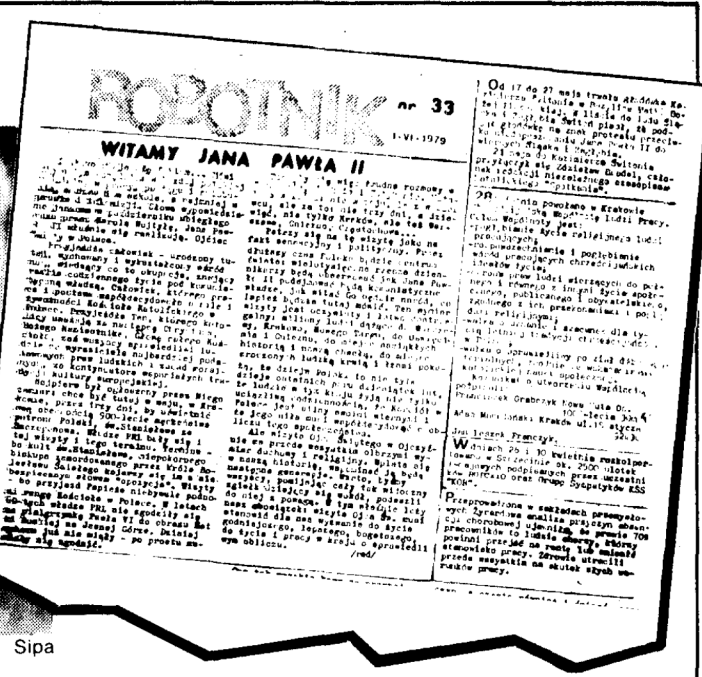
Social-democratic KOR's *Robotnik* hails Pope Wojtyla-John Paul II in 1979 as "the defender of human rights."



Adam Michnik



Sipa Jacek Kuron



Sipa

Strike Committee centered on the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk. The KOR was formed after the suppression of the June 1976 strikes at Radom and Ursus, and originally centered its activities on raising funds for and demanding release/reinstatement of the hundreds of workers arrested and fired at that time. After a general amnesty a year later it became the KSS and concentrated on building ties to key factories through *Robotnik*. Most of the pseudo-Trotskyist left in the West has come out in support of the KSS-KOR in varying degrees.

Because of its name and origins and the reputation of Kuron, KOR is sometimes referred to by superficial observers as "Marxist in orientation." Social-democratic is a far more accurate description, and even that does not do justice to some of the anti-Marxist elements around it. Of the original 24 founders of KOR, six are former members of the pre-war Polish Socialist Party (PSP), among them the prominent economist Edward Lipinski. (*Robotnik* was the name of the PSP paper as well.) The list also includes a former chairman of the Christian Democratic Party, a delegate of the World War II London exile government, various activists from the 1968 student movement (among them historian Adam Michnik), left Catholic writers (such as former party member Jerzy Andrzejewski, author of *Ashes and Diamonds*), several veterans of the 1944 Warsaw uprising and Rev. Jan Zieja ("Polish Army Chaplain in the 1920 and 1939 campaigns"—i.e., a died-in-the-wool Pilsudskiite priest who twice fought the Red Army).

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

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

## The Clerical Opposition

Marxism it ain't. But this social-democratic program for a peaceful restoration of capitalism represents the *left* wing of the dissident movement. The right wing is openly clerical-nationalist. There was a split in KOR in 1977 leading to the formation of ROPCIO, the Movement for the Defence of Human Rights. The latter is based on the founding declaration of the UN and the Helsinki accords and offers itself as an instrument to "cooperate with all international organizations which defend human rights..." Where KOR publishes *Robotnik*, ROPCIO puts out *Gospodarz* (The Peasant) and appeals to the Catholic rural population. And this is not the Catholicism

of Vatican II, either. The *Economist* (9 September 1978) refers to this outfit as "the stronghold of more conservative, national and—with some of its members—traditional anti-semitic tendencies." To get ROPCIO's number, one only has to note that the first signer of its platform is General Borutz-Spiechowicz, the highest commanding officer of pre-World War II Poland, and that it distributes Pilsudski calendars.

ROPCIO, in turn, gave rise to an even more reactionary group, the Confederation of Independent Poland (KPN), whose stated goal is to "end Soviet domination by liquidating the power of the Polish United Workers Party." Then there comes the Polish League for Independence (PPN), a clandestine group, and remnants of the pre-war ultra-rightist, anti-Semitic, 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

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## International Spartacist Tendency Directory

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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 Mindszenty, 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 Wysinski, 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 Wojtyla. Michnik described the new pope as one of the two "co-founders of the anti-totalitarian policy of the Polish Episcopate" (*Der Spiegel*, 23 October 1978). Michnik, a Jew, is so enamored of the new, "enlightened" Catholic primate that he wrote of the pope's visit last year:

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

## For Polish Trotskyism!

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

almost without precedent in the history of Eastern Europe since the late 1940s"! Meanwhile, USec leader Ernest Mandel laments that the Stalinist bureaucracy in Poland has not "permitted a democratic and intense political life, including a legal Catholic party..." ([SWP] *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, October 1979).

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

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

—"Socialism and the Churches"

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

Now the outcome of the strike has pushed the social-democratic dissidents further to the right, further toward clericism and toward the imperialists. A few days after the settlement KOR leader Jan Litynski waxed eloquent over the historic mission of the Polish church, in an interview with Brumberg:

"In general it seems to me that the Catholic Church over the past thirty years has displayed so much wisdom, common sense and realism, that we are fully entitled to trust it. I'm absolutely convinced that the Church will never do anything that might prove harmful to the interests of the nation."

—"After Gdansk: Two Interviews," *New York Review of Books*, 9 October

And writing in the prestigious West German *Der Spiegel* (15 September), Michnik calls for capitalist economic blackmail:

"...I would like to repeat my counsel to Western public opinion: economic help to the new leadership in Poland should be made dependent on respecting the provisions of the Gdansk settlement."

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 Wojtyla 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, Kania & Co. will be the first to go, *but they will be next.* ■