

SOCIALIST VOICE

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Reconstruct
the Fourth International!

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Where Is Poland Going?



December 1981: Stalinist tanks crush gates of Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk, where the Interfactory Strike Committees and Polish Solidarity were born sixteen months before.

- How Solidarity Snatched Defeat
from the Jaws of Victory
- Marxism vs. Reformism — A Test of Theory
- West Exploits Polish Workers
- U.S. Left Marches Right

From Solidarity Day to Union Givebacks

United Automobile Workers president Doug Fraser's one billion dollar giveback deal with Ford Motor Company is the latest in a string of rotten sellouts by union bureaucrats. The scope of the concessions, including a wage freeze, deferment of cost of living increases, and the loss of six paid holidays and other benefits, along with the key role of the UAW as a pacesetter for other contracts mean that the entire working class will suffer a serious blow should the contract be ratified by the membership.

And what did the UAW get in return for such generosity? There are no guarantees against plant closings and layoffs in this deal. In fact, with its one billion Ford will be easily able to afford to introduce labor-saving devices like robots, which will mean a loss of more jobs. As to the so-called "guaranteed income program," a partial income will be given only to high-seniority workers (15 years and up) with not a cent going to the 55,000 workers already laid off. And given the past history of "guaranteed" benefits and the direction of the economy, even the high-seniority aristocrats of labor have only paper assurances.

While the Ford contract represents the most serious betrayal of the workers, similar deals have been made by the Teamsters, the Rubber Workers, Steelworkers and other union leaderships. Workers are seeing the gains of decades of struggle being handed back to the capitalist exploiters of their labor — without even a fight.

What makes these current capitulations even more despicable is the cowardly conduct of the unions, in sharp contrast to the workers' demonstration of sheer power less than
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El Salvador: What if Rebels Win?

The rebels are winning in El Salvador, and lots of people are worried. The ruling oligarchy's bloody junta, fighting the civil war by killing thousands of suspected opponents and ordinary workers and peasants per month, has been losing ground to the guerrilla forces of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). Were it not for U.S.-supplied guns and helicopters, the right-wing regime would be on its deathbed.

President Reagan is worried. That is why he is now planning to triple military aid to the Salvadorean butchers, why he would not rule out sending U.S. troops. He has just proposed a new "economic development" plan for the Caribbean and Central America, a desperate trickle-down scheme to swindle the insurgent masses throughout the region into believing that imperialism is really their friend.

The American people are worried. For the escalation of military hardware could be followed by U.S. troops, just as happened in Vietnam seventeen years ago. According to a *Newsweek* magazine poll (March 1), a clear majority of Americans believe that the U.S. government should "stay completely out" of El Salvador, and a whopping 89 percent oppose sending soldiers to fight Reagan's war. For a president so fond of "mandates," he certainly has one now.

The Salvadorean rebel leaders are also worried. They have been clamoring for a "political solution" — as opposed to a purely military one — for some time, meaning some sort of combined armed forces and a coalition government with "non-genocidal" elements in the junta. In recent weeks, as the rebels' military situation has improved, their diplomatic
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SOCIALIST VOICE



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Reconstruct the Fourth International

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Where Is Poland Going?

How Solidarity Snatched Defeat from the Jaws of Victory

On December 13, 1981, General Wojciech Jaruzelski's stormtroopers ambushed the Polish working class. Today his martial law regime holds Poland in an iron grip. But it would be a profound illusion to believe that the present government will long endure.

Poland's economy has been tumbling down a bottomless pit for years. Three times since 1970 workers rose up in protest against the state's sudden price hikes. Since the general strike in Gdansk of August 1980, the workers organized in the 10-million strong Solidarity movement had held a veto power over the government's actions. Governments and party leaders had been changing every few months, none of them finding a

the lessons of the trauma.

Jaruzelski has waved a big stick but has attempted to avoid mass bloodshed. The total number of Poles killed (17 according to the junta, considerably more by Solidarity's figures) is in any case smaller than the number murdered daily by the U.S.-backed Salvadorean junta. More to the point, the Polish figure is low by the normal standards of Stalinist thuggery. One obvious reason is that the Polish army would probably refuse to carry out more murderous orders; the brunt of the repression has been carried out by the regime's elite shock troops, the Internal Defense Forces (WOW) and the Motorized Division of the Citizen's Militia (ZOMO) rather than the reluctant conscript army.

The junta is compelled to temporize with the workers because it has no popular support. Without this it is impossible to rule for long in any modern country, much less decisively raise the quantity and quality of production in a crisis-wracked economy — which is the junta's task. Hence the military regime announced immediately that it accepted the Gdansk Accords and the gains won since August 1980 — a lie, of course, but a necessary effort to try to force compromise or at least the facade of one. It has constantly asserted that it will allow at least the shell of Solidarity to exist, in an as yet unspecified fashion. It has repeatedly tried to arrange negotiations with the interned Lech Walesa, and it maintains friendly relations with the Catholic Church. It has been quick to grant differential pay increases to workers in order to buy off key sectors of the working class. Given the tremendous mass hatred of the USSR, it has tried even to claim the mantle of Marshal Josef Pilsudski, the semi-fascist national hero who fought Russia when it was a workers' state. (The junta first raised Pilsudski's national flag when it proclaimed martial law, rather than the present Polish flag!) It has again raised the rotten banner of anti-Semitism, singling out Jews as being responsible for Solidarity's "extremism." And it has tried to blame the economic collapse (and hence the martial law) on extremists as opposed to healthy workers — all to divide the working class. Finally, it has imprisoned certain past leaders of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP; the ruling Communist Party) who are justly hated by the masses. All to achieve a modicum of popular support. All in vain.



Jaruzelski telecasting announcement of "state of war" against Polish workers. Their false friends united in urging workers to turn the other cheek.

solution to the crisis. The military regime has certainly been brutal and repressive, but it has not solved the crisis either. Despite its monopoly of force it too is unable to discipline the working class.

There have been the mass arrests, censorship, curfews, telephone shutdowns, loyalty oaths, layoffs and occasional killings by the junta, but it has been forced to admit that over two hundred strikes occurred since the coup. Everyone has heard of the heroic resistance of the miners, steelworkers and shipyard workers. As late as the last weekend in January, just before the regime's astronomical price hikes for (unavailable) food, it acknowledged that there were bloody street riots in Gdansk. In mid-February there were mass protests in Poznan.

As of this writing two months after the imposition of martial law, Jaruzelski has succeeded for the moment in defeating all strikes and protest demonstrations, but there is tangible evidence that underground working-class committees still function, protected by mass support. Work in the factories proceeds at a snail's pace as an indication of silent protest. The masses, in brief, are angry and contemptuous of their rulers but they are also confused and cautious, watchfully sorting out

Jaruzelski Hunts Mass Support

A number of leftists, in addition to the ultra-bourgeois *Wall Street Journal*, have denounced the military regime as "Bonapartist." This is nonsense. Bonapartism means an authoritarian regime which claims to stand above the struggle between classes and defends the ruling class's interests with some backing from the masses. The latter is what Marxists have called the plebiscitary aspect of Bonapartism, its reliance on at least some degree of popular fervor. Jaruzelski's regime enjoys little support and no fervor whatsoever. It has been able to rule solely because it has been propped up, warmly or grudgingly, by the USSR, the U.S., West Europe, the international banks, the Catholic Church and the leadership of Solidarity.

The leadership of Solidarity? Yes indeed. Its role was the

decisive one. The question which everyone should be asking after the military crackdown is, how is it that Solidarity, with its massive popular support could have been clobbered by a regime with none at all? The answer is to be found in the history of the Polish events and the forces that allowed Polish state capitalism to survive. It is also the answer to the question of what is to be done now in Poland.

Jaruzelski's regime (whether it be martial law or post-martial law) is doomed. Wavering between repressing the masses and playing for time can achieve small temporary delays but no real solution. Poland is at the point of no return; a decisive answer is needed, and the objective situation permits only two possible options. Either the proletariat overthrows the state capitalist ruling class and creates its own state, the revolutionary communist solution; or the rulers succeed in crushing every last vestige of working-class independence and compel the workers to produce far more for far less, the fascist solution.

How the Revolution Was Lost

The wave of strikes in the summer of 1980 culminated in the monumental Gdansk general strike of late August. The upheaval threw up at its helm the Inter-Factory Strike Committee (MKS in Polish), a workers' soviet that in effect shared power with the state in the Gdansk coastal region. While the depth of the action showed it to be a magnificent proletarian achievement, consciousness as usual lagged behind. The action reflected the Polish workers' yearning for an end to exploitation and the constant crises the country was subject to under Stalinist rule. These goals could be achieved only by launching a workers' revolution, but the workers' understanding was not at that level. In counterposition to its objectively revolutionary acts, the proletariat still retained illusions in a leadership determined to try to reform state capitalist rule in Poland.

With the aid of their friend and protege Lech Walesa, the secular social-democratic intellectuals around KOR (the Workers Defense Committee) led by Jacek Kuron penetrated the MKS as advisers, playing an increasing role. The Catholic Church, which held a strong ideological influence over the workers as a symbol of Polish nationalism and opposition to the regime, also achieved a position of importance. Although both the lay intellectuals and the Church opposed the regime in different ways, they did so only out of a deep fear that order would not survive unless the state reorganized itself sufficiently to mollify the mass movement which threatened always to get out of hand.

Under the persuasion of Walesa and his non-working class allies, the workers grudgingly accepted the Gdansk Accords and thereby retreated from the soviet form of organization to a trade union, Solidarity. Solidarity's subsequent wildfire growth was not a tribute to clever union organizing but an excited response by workers all over Poland to the power demonstrated in practice by the Gdansk general strike. The high and mighty Stalinist state had ignominiously been brought to its knees.

From the beginning it was clear that the regime had nothing to sustain it but the threat of a Russian invasion, so weakened and exposed had it become. While it desperately felt the need to grant concessions to the workers, it could not fulfill the economic agreements it had signed — its economic situation was too precarious. In its debilitated condition the Stalinist state had learned to coexist with the Church; under pressure it would have to tolerate an independent union structure. But it could not live with a powderkeg of a mass movement constantly threatening to light the fuse. Its only option was to play

for time and wait for the opportunity to reassert order.

From the beginning as well, Walesa, KOR and the Church all insisted on the need for social peace and a reasonable negotiated settlement with the regime. The leaders fed the fires of nationalism generated by sentiment against Russian imperialism; somehow a deal with the regime must be consummated as a deterrent to Russia, they argued, for after all, the Polish Stalinists are patriotic Poles too. Cardinal Wyszynski called for an end to strikes and referred to Christ as the symbol of "reconciliation, forgiveness and peace;" his successor Archbishop Glemp followed the same conciliationist course.

Walesa and Kuron were equally diligent, traipsing around Poland seeking to curtail strikes. For as the regime revealed its unwillingness to make any fundamental changes, rushes of strikes swept the country. Solidarity was in a bind: through its signed accords and through its leaders' convictions it was committed not to challenge the rule of the PUWP. Yet trade unionism was proving to be no answer to the crisis the workers faced, and a political challenge to the state power was clearly necessary.

Over time the workers cooled towards Walesa's inaction; "radical" leaders like Jan Rulewski, Seweryn Jaworski and Zbigniew Bujak rose to prominence, reflecting the militancy of the ranks. The role of the intelligentsia deepened as well; but as KOR's moderate reform road proved increasingly bumpy, more right-wing nationalist forces like the Confederation for Polish Independence (KPN), whose role during Gdansk had been puny, came to the fore by the time of Solidarity's national congress in September (see *Socialist Voice* No. 15). Increasingly, all sections of the Solidarity leadership, even Walesa, had to acknowledge that political power was the only solution. But they meant reform of the Stalinist state, not its overthrow. None stood for proletarian revolution.

Counterrevolution Looms

When the crisis deepened last fall and all the noble promises of Solidarity's September Congress proved to be empty in the hands of the leaders, the masses became more frustrated and even began to equate Solidarity with the hated Communist Party. Kuron told a Norwegian newspaper in late November that "Solidarity's leaders have already lost control of their members" and that "all the strikes and protest actions relating to the crisis-like food situation originate from the grass roots, and there is nothing that Solidarity's leaders can do but take note of them" (*Washington Post*, December 20). But the fall strike wave soon eased off when the workers found themselves stymied by government inaction and their leaders' sabotage.

The regime kept up the pretense of negotiations with the Church and Solidarity but offered no concessions; its economic straits, notably the food shortage (which the rulers probably exacerbated deliberately) and the immense debt to the West, were too narrow. Still Solidarity stuck to its utopian dreams of reform. "The program of moderation and reform will only be accepted by the rulers as a decoy: as soon as the workers are demoralized the bosses will strike back." So we wrote in the last issue of *Socialist Voice*, as we had warned repeatedly before; and when the workers' movement lost momentum, the rulers found their opportunity to move.

But first it was necessary to put the workers and their leaders to a test. General Jaruzelski tried a reconnoitering strategy in October. Army teams were sent to the countryside to "act against disturbances in food distribution" and to "solve local disputes." More precisely, the aim was to check on the soliders' loyalty and the workers' reaction. Typically, Walesa welcomed the move since he could offer nothing better. Thus

emboldened, the regime then handed Solidarity a major challenge in Warsaw. On December 2, heavily armed riot police stormed a week-long sit-in of 300 firefighter cadets. The strike was similar to many other student actions going on throughout Poland at the time except that it was being conducted by semi-military personnel; it was a delicate situation, well chosen for the first military provocation against a Solidarity-backed action.

Workers and students all over the country were infuriated. Calls for an immediate general strike to remind the regime of the power of the workers and their refusal to be forced back were widespread. But Walesa answered, "The union is a powerful weapon hanging over the authorities but it can't be triggered all the time. Our struggle is just beginning. We must go into the battle with much thought and reasoning, not in a fit of nerves." Jaruzelski had gone eyeball to eyeball with Walesa, and Walesa shut his eyes pretending nothing new had happened. At least he did so in public.

The Radom Tapes

Under the masses' bitter pressure for a response, Solidarity's leaders met in the city of Radom on December 3 and 4. Instead of moving decisively, the leadership evaded action in such a way as to play directly into Jaruzelski's hands. Two days after the Radom meeting, the government news media began issuing selected quotations from a secret tape made of Solidarity's discussions. Walesa, who had always called for national accord and had even promised to join the PUWP if that was necessary to retain the existing order, seemed to be caught in a bold-faced lie. The "Radomgate" tapes became the "proof" for Jaruzelski's claim that Solidarity was set on a violent "counterrevolutionary" course to overthrow the state, the propaganda justification for martial law.

According to the tapes, Walesa said, "Confrontation is inevitable and it will take place." Further, "...we are picking a road for a lightning-speed maneuver." The regime also quoted more radical leaders calling for a general strike, a workers' militia and a new provisional government — all of which was made to sound like plotting for a coup.

This was an arrant lie. Solidarity was preparing nothing — tragically. The proof was what ultimately occurred. When martial law was declared and the Solidarity leaders rounded up, they were caught by surprise; the only ones to escape were accidental absentees. Resistance was uncoordinated and obviously unplanned. Workers' militias were nowhere to be seen. Solidarity plainly was unready for action. It was Jaruzelski, not Walesa, who had plotted the "lightning-speed maneuver" well in advance. All the talk at Radom was just talk.

What Walesa and the radicals really wanted is starkly clear to anyone who reads the published tape excerpts with an eye for the leaders' relationship to their base. (The fullest collection we have seen was in the December 20 *Washington Post*.) All the references to general strikes and confrontation are posed for the future in case of a government declaration of a state of emergency or a possible future decision by the parliament to ban strikes. That is, the leaders at Radom talked tough for the future in order to avoid giving any answer to the previous day's provocation in Warsaw — where action was urgently needed. In fact, Walesa said "Obviously a general strike today would be a stupid act..." and added further sneers against responding to the attack on the firefighters. Walesa and two other delegates even voted against the declaration for general strike action in the case of a strike ban or repressions! This proclamation, the end result of

the discussions, was itself a total evasion of action by the entire Solidarity leadership.

If the Stalinist picture of Walesa as a revolutionary is absurd, the dominant assessment in the West is also erroneous. Virtually all sectors of bourgeois opinion have hailed Walesa for his moderation. After all, the thought of any workers' organization engaging in a violent overthrow of any state, even an enemy state, is anathema to the ruling classes, and Poland's sensitive position in the middle of Europe makes its stability essential in all bourgeois eyes. So the Radom tapes were conspicuously played down in this country and Walesa's comments lightly dismissed.

For example, the *Washington Post's* senior diplomatic correspondent, Murrey Marder, defended Walesa's reply (at a December 10 news conference) to the Polish government version of what the workers' leader had said:

"Solidarity, Walesa insisted, wanted 'national accord,' not 'confrontation.' He said 'confrontation' meant only 'strike' in union terminology, not an attempt to seize power by force. The record bears out that explanation. It was the threat of a nationwide strike that Solidarity counted on to thwart a government attempt to bring it to heel." (*Washington Post*, December 20.)

No, the record does not bear this out. Walesa had said at Radom not only that "confrontation is inevitable and it will take place," but also that "we would then overthrow this parliament, those councils and so forth." Further, "...let us realize that we are bringing this system down. Let us at last realize this. If we agree to have private storekeepers, buy up state farms and ensure complete self-management, this system will cease to exist."

So the talk was not just of an everyday sort of strike confrontation after all! It is clear that Walesa was not simply echoing his moderate reformist policies of the past, nor was he plotting a revolution. The real explanation of his comments can be understood by comparing them to what the radicals had to say. For example, the Warsaw militant Jaworski told Walesa, "If you go back one more step I personally will cut your head off. If I do not do this because I have been taken care of by them, someone else will do this."

Walesa was under extreme pressure from his left and was speaking to the radicals in ways he never spoke out in public, to conciliate them. But for all their threats, the radicals were no more ready to take action than Walesa. They too did nothing to prepare the masses for a struggle for power, but instead tried to reassure them that there was no danger. Bujak told a mass meeting in Poznan, "Neither the army nor the militia will march against us. ... A general strike would bring down the government."

Walesa's private tough talk was a response to the growing strength of the radicals, who in turn reflected mass pressure. This came from the two directions we have already spoken of: some of their base had been lost to demoralization, but others were following deeper revolutionary impulses. The tape quotes radical Solidarity adviser Karol Modzelewski:

"The trade union has not become stronger; it has become weaker. Much weaker, and all activists are aware of this. ... There are several reasons for this: weariness as a result of the crisis, weariness experienced by people waiting at the end of a line. Some people blame us for the prolongation of this state of affairs and want us to reach an agreement. And some other people are against us for the same reasons: crisis-weariness, lack of prospects and political radicalization. These people say: Let us opt for action, go the whole way, we have no longer anything to consider. ..."

Archbishop Glemp was also frightened of the mass pressure. On December 8 he wrote a letter to the parliament warning against strike bans and repression. These moves "would threaten unrest considering the great pressures from the union's base on the union leadership and the demands for a general strike. At this moment no widespread strike actions endanger the country's situation," he noted. However, "passing an antistrike law now could lead to a wave of strikes with unknown and unforeseeable range and consequences."

Failure of Solidarity's Reformism

Frantically seeking to avert the oncoming clash, the Solidarity leaders met again the next weekend in Gdansk. Here they came up with a device meant to try to gain time: following a suggestion made by Rulewski, they called for a national referendum in a few months to gauge public opinion on the Jaruzelski government, the question of establishing a new government with free elections and on defining Poland's military relationship with the USSR.

This was another bold attempt to avoid immediate action. Everyone in Poland from Jaruzelski to Rulewski knew without benefit of a poll what the people felt about the regime. Rulewski's idea, according to knowledgeable Western journalists, was to get plebiscitary approval of Poland's military alignment with the USSR so that the Russians would fear no danger and would presumably allow Poland to go its own way internally. He was counting on the masses' fear of a Russian attack to make them support Solidarity's reassurances to the Russians.

Jaruzelski, now assured that Solidarity was incapable of resistance, seized on the dramatic-sounding referendum proposals as the final excuse to launch his attack. The regime undoubtedly timed its coup to catch the workers' movement at the low point of demoralization, frustration and leadership passivity. Ironically, it was the Solidarity radicals' tough talk designed to impress the militants in the ranks that gave Jaruzelski his cover.

The pressure toward irresistible confrontation which was pinning the wiggling Solidarity leaders to the wall came not only from the masses. The collapse of the Polish economy, the pressure of the USSR, and the consequent inability of the regime to yield any further concessions had set Jaruzelski's course for months. By now it had become obvious to all Solidarity's leaders that the negotiations were a fraud. Hence Walesa, who had always proclaimed that "Jaruzelski can be trusted," pleaded with his colleagues at Radom that he'd never trusted the man at all.

There was nothing unusual in the conduct of Walesa or the more radical leaders. Whenever the objective situation poses sharply the question of power, reformists have always either surrendered completely to the bosses or vacillated as centrists. In the latter case they remain reformists and compromisers in practice but, often sincerely, adopt revolutionary rhetoric in order to deceive both themselves and the masses under whose pressure they squirm. Fiery feelings combined with indecision in the face of the critical need for action is a hallmark of centrism in the heat of battle. It is an exact description of Solidarity's radical wing. Personal heroism could not replace political ambivalence.

It must be noted that even the most extreme of the radical leaders feared as much as did Walesa letting the masses make their own revolutionary destiny. In the Radom discussions, Rulewski made clear that he looked forward to future elections but was wary of holding them in an atmosphere of mass discontent. "We are fighting to set up a provisional government which would stabilize the country until elections are

held, because without stabilization no elections will go the way we want them to go. ..." Rulewski insisted that Solidarity needed six months for this stabilization; and even then the "way we want" the elections to go would have given, by prearrangement, the PUPW and its two puppet parties 55 percent of the parliamentary seats. It was a device to avoid placing rival political programs before the masses. Even the regime's commentary on the Radom tapes summed this up accurately: "In short, skillful manipulation."

Finally, we note that the published discussions are only excerpts. The hardline Stalinists in the regime, who are most dedicated to "exposing" Solidarity, were satisfied with this just as much as the Jaruzelski supporters. And the Solidarity leaders did not quarrel with the quotes attributed to them; they just claimed they were out of context. Significantly, they too avoided calling for releasing the full discussion. All sides thought it better that the masses not see the complete record — for that would have made it obvious that Solidarity was aiming not for confrontation but for deceiving the workers that confrontation could be avoided.

The quandary facing Solidarity's leadership is classic for reformism. In order to reform society and fulfill some of the masses' expectations and thereby effect a new stabilization, reformism depends upon the mass movement. Without it, the state has no reason to change, concede anything or share power. But the very existence of the movement is a threat to orderly transformation. So reformism always has the task of trying to curb the mass movement without completely killing it. Of course, if the movement is successfully halted, then the state shows its appreciation by trying to crush the masses and the reformist leaders with them. That is the history of the Polish events.

Imperialism Divided

The working class has many lessons to learn from its defeat. Only yesterday its movement seemed invincible, the government was feeble and scared, the world sang the praises of its leaders and their tactical wisdom and they had the support, it seemed, of some of the most powerful forces on earth. Now the class has to work through the question of what went wrong. Jaruzelski has presented it with powerful lessons confirming the old Marxist truths in practice.

The Polish state proved not to be neutral but the agency of the ruling class, the weapon of class violence against the proletariat. The crackdown proved that there can be no compromise between capitalism and the proletariat when the crisis so intensifies the class struggle; one class must be victorious over the other. Preaching an end to class war, promising stabilization in a world rent with crisis and social turmoil, means setting the workers up, not for peace but for repression and brutal exploitation. Moreover, the working class has no friends among the leaders of labor aristocrats and petty-bourgeois elements who use its struggle as a lever for reform. Lenin dealt his bitterest blows at the social pacifists, union bureaucrats and intellectual middle-class compromisers acting in reality as agents of the bourgeoisie — the Solidarity leaders of his time.

There is no guarantee that the workers will learn the necessary lessons in time. But there is one central reason for optimism. Their opponents are thoroughly divided among themselves, and as yet no wing of capitalism at home or abroad has any real strategy to save the Polish state.

The rulers of Washington, Moscow, Bonn and Warsaw (and their minions in the unions, churches, and left and right political organizations) all want to restore stability to Poland. Their problem is that each fears that the others' recipes for

stability will only exacerbate the disorder and arouse the proletariat. As well, given their rivalries over the spoils of surplus-value to be extracted, they expect the rival stabilization attempts to come at their own expense. It is truly a Hobbesian war of each against all.

Initially, the Reagan administration reacted to the crack-down with crocodile tears of concern and support for the workers. But right away, Secretary of State Haig expressed his most serious concern for "the potential instabilities in Poland which could arise from the imposition of martial law." This wait-and-see position at the outset was similar to the non-committal attitudes of the West German leaders. Most blatant in their indifference were the bankers who hold much of Poland's \$26 billion foreign debt and know that real stability and greater exploitation is needed for them to have any hope of getting even more interest back. There were quite a few public statements like that issued by Citibank's Thomas Theobald, who said, "The only test we care about

adjoining article "Cancel the Polish Debt!"). He has been under considerable pressure from a variety of domestic sources to take a harder line, including the imposition of default on the Polish debt. The "hardliners" want to compel the Russians to pay Poland's debts and thereby reduce their pace of arms expansion. Others wish to use the cold war build-up to force the West Germans and Japanese back into a closer dependence on the U.S. politically, loosen their ties to the Russian bloc and weaken their economies generally. The U.S. administration, however, dedicated to the defense of capitalism internationally, cannot accede to a policy which would shake the entire world financial structure and would further accelerate the already dangerous rifts in the North Atlantic Alliance (see "Reagan's Russian Dilemma" in the previous *Socialist Voice*).

Reagan has succeeded in getting rhetorical victories from Germany and France; Schmidt in particular was eager to help prop Reagan up against his hardline opponents and has therefore added his voice to the criticisms of Russia. France's



By changing "program" to "pogrom," Polish workers changed "The Program of the Party Is the Program of the People" to truthful "The Eradication of the Party Is the Program of the People." As well, the workers rejected the PUWP's attempted anti-Semitic pogroms.

is: can they pay their bills?" One British banker put it most bluntly: "If a few people get shot in the cause of getting the economy moving again, then it would be a small price to pay." (London *Sunday Times*, December 20.)

Accompanying such ruling-class bloodthirstiness, however, was a degree of nervousness that the military solution might not succeed if the workers didn't return to work as planned. The *Wall Street Journal* (December 16) summed up the bourgeois view:

"The imposition of military control in Poland could in the long run be reassuring to Western creditors, if it provides greater economic stability, an end to labor unrest and increased worker productivity — even at the point of a bayonet. But in the short run there isn't any guarantee this will happen, and the uncertainties could make all Western lenders more nervous about continuing to bail out the Poles."

Western politicians, nevertheless, had to appear to act more forcefully against Poland's rulers. By late December Reagan established economic sanctions against Poland and Russia which amount to loud talk and symbolic action (see the

Mitterrand was already outspoken. But their agreement on sanctions is empty: neither Germans nor French will give up their gas pipeline deal with Russia, any more than the U.S. wants to give up its profitable grain trade. The Polish upheaval has divided the Atlantic allies more than all the pacifistic parades and palaver ever did. The weakening of the imperialist NATO bloc as well as the Stalinists' Warsaw Pact is a small victory to the credit of the Polish workers' struggle.

The Russian side is obviously deeply troubled. Other East European countries are facing debt problems mild only in comparison to Poland's. They too have been hiking food prices and for the same reasons, hoping that their workers will hesitate to resist because of Solidarity's defeat. But the greatest fear of the Russian rulers is that of the mass workers' movement so recently suppressed. It has always had the potential to spread throughout the bloc and into the USSR itself.

The Russians predictably greeted the crushing of Solidarity with relief. Moscow had been unrelenting in its pressure on its Polish viceroys to take a hard line against the "counter-revolutionaries" and "anti-socialist elements." It kept its

profile low, however, wanting to give hardline Western forces as little justification as possible for deepening the cold war rift and undercutting German detentism. Its soft approach of leaving the dirty work to Jaruzelski enabled Reagan to take a more moderate stance than otherwise. But the Russians' greatest problem is that Jaruzelski has as yet come up with no defined course.

In his first public speech since the crackdown, on January 25, Jaruzelski gave no clue about what he planned to accomplish. He addressed chiefly the Western politicians and financiers, pointing out that more billions in aid are needed if Poland is to overcome the "habits that have set in over the years" of "wastage, indifference and downright ineptitude." As he told his fellow rulers: "We have stopped the threat of destabilization in Europe. We have contributed to maintaining peace." Such talk may bolster the Western conciliators against the hardliners, but it fundamentally solves nothing.

No Moderate Solution

What now to do with Poland? The moderate wing of the PUWP led by Jaruzelski has a program essentially similar to those adopted by the Hungarian, Yugoslav and Chinese rulers: nominal self-management, material incentives, more independence and some competition between industrial firms, and increasing privatization of the economy at the small business level. Such a scheme demands foreign investments and loans; it means turning Poland into an even greater source of cheap labor goods for the Western-dominated world market, but with an absolutely necessary improvement in the quantity and quality of production as demanded by the foreign buyers and banks.

This program runs along the same lines as Solidarity's, except that Solidarity could not have accepted some of its conclusions. For such a plan requires a sizeable reserve army of the unemployed to keep wages low, serious wage cutbacks and much higher prices for food so that the workers can't eat up what they produce. Accordingly, the workers' "self-management" would have to be purely cosmetic. This is not a program that can be carried out while a powerful working-class movement exists; that is why Solidarity as a movement had to be crushed. That is why the "pluralist" and "democratic" program raised by KOR and adopted in large part by Solidarity was an impossible utopia.

Workers do not produce by terror alone, so Jaruzelski, unable to offer strong material incentives, must try ideological suasion to win popular support or at least acquiescence. So he vacillates between crushing the workers and cajoling them. "It is to some extent a paradox, that in order to arrive at self-managing and independent enterprises, we must first go through the disciplining period of martial law." Thus spoke Wladyslaw Baka, the official in charge of economic reform, over Warsaw radio on January 11. The best instrument the Polish rulers have to win the workers to this scheme is the Catholic Church.

Up until the day of the military coup, Archbishop Glemp had been striving to get the regime to meet again with Walesa, to no avail. After the coup, he played an equally conciliationist role, begging "on my knees" for the workers not to resist the attack and to remain peaceful. He objected to the martial law, but opposed more forcefully the general strike call issued by sections of Solidarity. His plea for inaction was immediately endorsed by the Pope. And in the tense situation of the first few days of martial law, with the army wavering and the workers confused, it is probable that the Church's role was decisive in ensuring the Stalinists' victory over the workers.

Another key contribution of the Church was reported by the

New York Times' Warsaw correspondent, John Darnton, on January 5. According to a member of the PUWP central committee, Walesa had agreed to make an open appeal to Solidarity members to give up open resistance on the very first day of the crackdown. (This tallies with other reports, from Solidarity sources, that Walesa has urged the workers to concentrate on union activities protesting the price hikes and to avoid politics — in effect a call for passive resistance as opposed to the mass strike action urged by other Solidarity leaders.) But the Church urged the regime not to push for such a proclamation lest it end Walesa's credibility with the masses and his later usefulness. Whether or not these leaks are true, the Church will always be ready to play a back-up role to the regime. Even its criticism of martial law is couched in such terms. As Glemp said on Warsaw radio on January 25, continued martial law "is the road to protest, rebellion and may even lead to fratricidal strife." The Church stands above all for order and the preservation of the capitalist state.

To solve the problem of winning "national reconciliation" under conditions of repression and of offering workers material incentives during the depths of economic crisis, Jaruzelski has set up three groups, corresponding to the main factions within the PUWP, to formulate reform programs. One group favors Solidarity and wishes to dissolve the discredited PUWP and form a new popular front-style party including the PUWP reformers, the Church and Solidarity. The moderate group led by Deputy Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Rakowski represents Jaruzelski's base in the PUWP and probably has little to offer but his vague aim at economic reform. The third group is the most significant; it is the hardline Russian-backed faction led by Stefan Olszowski. According to Western press reports,

"Olszowski's group was said to be advocating decentralization of the economy, but within tight political limits. A key feature of any economic reform is likely to be more autonomy for factories and other enterprises, but it is not likely to include the degree of worker self-management advocated by Solidarity." (*Washington Post*, December 31).

That is certainly putting it mildly. Olszowski is a known opponent of any form of union autonomy. He was an associate of Mieczyslaw Moczar, a high party official who led the 1968 purge of intellectuals and spurred the anti-Semitic campaigns of that time. The regime's veiled anti-Jewish effort today is pushed by this wing. During 1980-81, a tiny outfit of hard-bitten anti-Semites called the Grunwald group emerged under party protection. Likewise the Katowice Forum, organized by the hardline faction of the party leadership, denounced "Zionism" (as well as Trotskyism) for being at the heart of the upheaval it wished openly to crush. "Zionism" in the Polish context had nothing to do with Israel — it means Jews.

Hardliners Favor Decentralized Economy

The Katowice Forum is linked to what has become a semi-fascist opposition to Jaruzelski's moderation in the PUWP. In the February 4 *New York Times*, Darnton cited a manifesto called the "Platform of the Left" which urged a purge of both moderate and liberal leaders in the party. It calls for a return to "orthodox Marxism-Leninism," by which it clearly means Stalinism. It is no accident that the hardliners express themselves as "leftists"; Hitler and his "National Socialists" also used radical rhetoric to win the angry masses looking desperately for answers.

In the previous issue of *Socialist Voice* we foresaw precisely this development: the seemingly contradictory phenomenon of Stalinist hardliners (in the case of the USSR) advocating

economic reform. When we wrote, our analysis was based solely on theoretical considerations, but its accuracy has now been confirmed by the reports of Olszowski's program.

"It is conceivable, of course, that Russia could radically overhaul its economy for a time and even rein in its recalcitrant allies. But not under the present regime. It would need a fascist-type takeover which in Russia would undoubtedly appear in the form of a 'back to Stalin' movement. ...

"The trend towards more pluralistic forms of capitalism, already apparent under Stalin's centralized rule, would be accelerated if a fascistic restoration occurred in today's world. The present 'moderates' cannot carry out their desired decentralization and market forms because doing so would endanger their faltering grip on power. But a centralized totalitarian regime might make the effort towards privatization of the economy — despite its radical pretensions of even better planning and true 'socialism'."

The fascist-like trend occurs among the ardent Polish Stalinist right-wingers in the party who have all along enjoyed Moscow's backing against the party leaderships that tolerated Solidarity. Circumstances even beyond Moscow's control are also pointing to a right-wing victory over Jaruzelski. According to a high source in the Warsaw regime (*New York Times*, December 28), if the West cuts off grain supplies and credits "we would be dominated by those advocating simple solutions. There would be no room left for reformist tendencies." And even if the West restores some aid eventually, the economic troubles of Poland are too deep for Western aid to rescue Polish reformism. The deepening crisis of the imperialist world market does not permit the Hungarian and Yugoslav "solutions," which were once possible under prosperity in the absence of a proletarian challenge. Even those countries are rotting below the surface in today's climate.

The neo-fascist "simple solution" might well win a popular base among intellectuals, peasants, backward workers and the increasing number of unemployed laborers driven to an extreme by the dead-end policies of Solidarity's leadership and the PUPP hierarchy. Moreover, the history of the Polish Church — its extreme nationalism, support for Pilsudski and toleration of anti-Semitism — show that it too would supply cadres for a fascist development if one occurs. The

KPN also would chip in; tinged with anti-Semitism, according to Western reports, and influential in Solidarity as the situation worsened, it too would also contribute.

The anti-Russian nationalism of these elements is a barrier to their development in the direction of Russian-backed semi-fascism but not, under extreme conditions, an insurmountable one. Poland lacks the capacity to be an independent power like Germany in the 1930's; Polish fascism could only maintain control if linked to a stronger force, like Quisling in Norway was to Hitler. The nationalists inside the PUPP have not trouble straddling this fence, and neither would Moscow. It could happen. Jaruzelski aimed at selling himself to the masses as a nationalist whose firm actions in Poland (as well as Russian backing) would keep the USSR's armies out. He failed

to achieve this bridge in the popular mind but did for a time confuse the masses. Under more extreme conditions, the bridge could with difficulty be built.

Nationalism is not the only obstacle to Polish fascism. The absence of Jews makes anti-Semitic propaganda utterly ineffective, according to all accounts. As well, fascism's rhetorical and demagogic attacks on the international bankers (to make the masses think it is confronting capitalism itself) would be very hard for Moscow to permit for long; the East European economies and increasingly the Russian as well are too dependent on Western credit.

By their nature, fascists are an inherently unstable collection of political adventurers and thugs with competing goals under the capitalism they protect. In the past it has been possible for very diverse fascistic elements to combine long enough to seize power, but the extreme situation in Poland makes this especially difficult. This is of course a source of real hope for the workers' movement.

Neo-fascism's best chance lies in the fact that the Polish rulers must increasingly come to see that they have no future without it. Its overall purpose would be to forcibly reform the economy, to develop and maintain productivity among the workers — and to smash every last vestige of the independent proletarian movement. If its likelihood of taking power is limited, its stay in power would be even more problematic, given Poland's essential weakness as a cog in the world capitalist machine. Only the imminent threat of a world war would allow fascism to keep the nation going.

The prospects for the Polish proletariat have been set back



Italian left youth march in Rome against Polish Stalinist crackdown. Mistrust of Eurocommunist bureaucrats at home and of Church misleaders in Poland cut workers' numbers at rallies.

but not destroyed by martial law. The indecisiveness of the regime is due to the fundamental inability of any national economy to survive; Poland is showing the way of the future to many other countries, East, West and South. The only real solution to the Polish crisis is the proletarian revolution; the world is a powderkeg just waiting for such a spark. That is why Reagan, Brezhnev and the Pope — and Walesa, Rulewski and the international "left" — all seek to stabilize Poland in their different ways and attain class peace. In contrast we stress the necessity for the Polish and world proletariat to learn the lessons of the recent events.

Return to the MKS's!

Build the Revolutionary Party!

Re-create the Fourth International!

Cancel the Debt!

West Exploits Polish Workers

Throughout the Polish crisis, the bourgeoisie of Europe and the U.S. has been agonizing over what to do about the \$26 billion debt to the West that Poland has accumulated over a decade. It is the result of the desperate investment policy of Poland's state capitalist rulers, who hoped to revive their sinking economy in order to buy off working-class unrest. They borrowed heavily on the financial markets to obtain factories and machinery in the West, expecting to pay back the loans through export earnings. Western financiers, both private banks and governments, greedily went along, salivating over the prospect of profits squeezed out of the ill-paid labor of Eastern Europe.

But the best-laid capitalist plans often run awry, and the "planned" Polish economy produced little but chaos. Factories were left half-built, production stagnated for lack of parts and materials and the world crisis of capitalism drove up oil prices and closed down many Western markets. The Polish rulers had little choice but to borrow more simply to pay back what they owed. In the summer of 1980, when they tried to raise food prices to squeeze a bit more out of the workers, they ran head-on into the mass upsurge that created the Inter-Factory Strike Committees, the Gdansk Accords, and finally Solidarity.

Polish Loans Don't Aid Workers

Since the military crackdown of December 13, the Western capitalists have faced a difficult problem. General Jaruzelski has made it abundantly clear that the martial law crackdown was a promise to not only Moscow but also his Western creditors that he was going to be tough on the workers from now on. Indeed, the bankers, after a solicitous sob for Solidarity, reacted with approval. But they were also nervous: could the rulers really get away with suppressing a 10-million strong workers' movement without running into opposition? Wouldn't there be slowdowns, strikes, even rebellions? And no politician in the West could afford not to condemn the crackdown and the suppression of working class and democratic rights, given the massive support that the Polish struggle had won from working people everywhere.

For working people, it is most important to keep in mind the facts that the bankers and capitalist politicians did not loan money to Poland to aid the Polish people, and their concern today is not the human rights of Poles. Their disdain for such rights under pro-U.S. regimes in South Africa, Haiti, China, Chile, Argentina, El Salvador and dozens more is proof. In Poland, their political rivalry with the USSR has come into contradiction with the joint desire of the imperialists of both blocs for stability and profit-making off the working class.

Within the U.S. bourgeoisie the debate is between the minority "hardliners" who want to push Poland into default in order to force Russia to pay off the Polish debt, and the NATO-oriented dominant wing that fears such disruption lest it react on the world financial and political structures (see the lead article in this issue). Reagan imposed sanctions on Russia and Poland that are only "symbolic" (his term). His ban on high technology sales means little because the U.S. sells few such goods to the Stalinists. And he has reinstated the U.S. grain sales to Russia that Jimmy Carter had banned after the invasion of Afghanistan.

Reagan's big talk-little stick policy is more than just a fraud.

It is designed not just to curry popular favor but to protect the interests of the international bankers and other capitalists *at the expense of Polish workers and workers everywhere*. Reagan's sanctions and pressure to pay off the debt will force harder labor from the Polish workers, less food at higher prices and longer hours through a six-day week (eradicating the gains won by Solidarity).

Despite the rhetoric from both blocs, the Polish and Western governments are maintaining their discussions over Polish loans and Poland's current application to join the imperialists' International Monetary Fund. The IMF's notorious productivity and austerity requirements have squeezed workers of many countries in the interest of imperialist profits. This aids the ruling classes on both sides. Poland is economically intertwined with the West, and the Stalinists need billions of dollars more in hard currency just to keep up the present level of production. Many Western capitalists also have much to gain from the stabilization of their trade with East Europe and their exploitation of its cheap labor. So Reagan has already agreed that the U.S. government will cover unpaid Polish agricultural debts that it underwrote in the past.

Should workers then demand harsher sanctions from Reagan to cut off all commercial and financial links with Poland and Russia? Not at all. The capitalists' hardline talk is meant to tighten the conditions of exploitation in Eastern Europe, not eliminate them. If hardliners like Weinberger, Kissinger, etc. have their way, Russia would still have to turn to the West for capital, but under conditions that would mean even greater austerity, including levels of unemployment comparable to the depressed Western economies. The threats are also a maneuver by some U.S. capitalists with little invested in Poland to high-pressure their European competitors who would suffer the greatest financial losses from a Polish default. The working class has no interest in backing one capitalist sector over another.

A Real Working-Class Strategy

But the debt crisis does point to a genuine working-class strategy to aid the Polish workers: force the banks to cancel the debt. That would end Western profiteering off the backs of Poland; it would end the infusions of Western credit needed to keep Stalinist Poland afloat; and it would therefore spell the doom of Stalinist rule.

Such a campaign by class-conscious workers in the Western imperialist countries to aid their Polish comrades would be a great inspiration to workers not only in Poland and the Stalinist countries. The explosive working classes of every neo-colonial country in the "third world" slaving to pay off the massive debts to imperialism incurred by their rulers would take heed. Even workers in the imperialist states themselves are burdened by capitalist profiteering through deficit financing: about 15 percent of New York City's budget, for example, goes to pay off bank loans. This is to say nothing of the massive tax burden on all American workers fostered by federal deficits owed to the giant capitalists. The threat of an enforced debt cancellation would shake world capitalism and, by exposing the role of Western capital in their exploitation, show the Polish workers that their only alternative to Stalinism

is to fight to take state power into their own hands and build a truly socialist society.

Debt cancellation has been a powerful weapon of revolutionary governments in the past (notably the Russian Bolsheviks after 1917) who refused to take responsibility for the obligations of the old regimes but were perfectly willing to resume trade and international finance on their own behalf. In the case of Poland today, a revolutionary workers' government would certainly take such a step. An international working class campaign to force debt cancellation would be a step toward helping the Polish workers achieve a government of their own choosing.

In the absence of debt cancellation, other supposedly more practical steps to aid the Polish workers are ineffective. Humanitarian shipments of food and medical supplies to Poland have been undertaken. But Poland still exports food to the West to pay off its debt. (According to recent figures, debt payments in 1981 required an amount equal to 173 percent of annual export earnings!) So a lot of such aid simply replaces



Steve Benson/The Arizona Republic

Polish Stalinism exists by courtesy of Western credit. In return, Western imperialism milks Polish workers. U.S. "left" refuses to call for debt cancellation; tired of creeping to right, it boarded American express.

exports and therefore amounts to humanitarian aid for the banks.

What about labor boycotts of Polish imports and exports? Blocking exports would in effect tell the Stalinists to keep their food and coal at home to supply their own people. Moreover, it would prevent the Polish government from obtaining Western currency and would therefore cut payments to the Western banks; it would be a first step towards debt cancellation. As for goods imported into Poland, they will add to the total debt without any reason to believe that the Stalinist regime can use them productively any more than it could in the past ten years. But the Stalinists will complain that their inability to import parts and materials is the chief factor causing the economy to collapse. Blocking Polish imports, therefore, will not clarify the situation and would give the Polish rulers the argument that workers in the West are sabotaging their Polish comrades. So a trade union ban on exports from Poland is the appropriate tactic, although it loses much of its force in the absence of debt cancellation. Still, it

can become an immediate expression of class solidarity. According to press reports, longshoremen in Arhus, Denmark, have showed the way, conducting a four-day strike protesting the arrival of a Polish ship which had been loaded by workers under martial law.

Of course, banning Polish exports will deprive the Polish government of hard currency to buy goods to import with, so that a labor ban on exports and not imports appears to be contradictory. It is — but this is the contradiction inherent in any partial action by the working class under capitalism. As our lead article demonstrates, there is no solution for Poland within the limits of capitalism — only genuine socialist revolution offers a way out of the crisis. Our purpose in advocating a workers' action in defense of the Polish workers is not to restore an unrestorable status quo but to prove to workers on both sides of the Polish border, through the material lessons learned in the course of an active struggle against their bosses, that socialism is an absolute necessity.

The quest for a mythical stability will not solve the Polish crisis nor the world crisis it reflects. The spectacle of Ronald Reagan, — budget cutter and reactionary *extraordinaire*, spending tax dollars to fend off a Polish default and thereby ease the pressure on the USSR has stunned most people. It was no surprise to Marxists. Capitalism's fundamental enemy is the working class and its struggle, even though its politicians are forced to cloak their hostility to mass aspirations. Beating the cold war drums against Russia is a device to convince American workers to sacrifice blood and money in the interest of profits and in opposition to workers abroad. But the collapsing Stalinist economies constitute a greater threat to world capitalism than their military power.

In the deepening crisis the imperialists everywhere worry not only about the class struggle but about each other, as they relentlessly pursue their narrowing profits. In this fratricidal conflict the state capitalist Russians are less a rival than a source of plunder. This is one of the big "secrets" behind the differences within NATO, inside the U.S. ruling class and within the Eastern bloc — all brought to light by the Polish workers' unprecedented upheaval. The blocs for war and robbery are being reorganized, just as the organization of the proletarian revolution begins.

Many workers who wish to take action in defense of their Polish comrades will unfortunately be drawn to right-wing hardline solutions which will only hurt workers elsewhere. The marshmallow liberal (and left) pleads for aid to the Polish regime in the hope that it will trickle down to the masses below. This, like the Reaganite sanctions policy the liberals equivocally support, is only designed to safeguard the fragile imperialist stability in Europe.

A hard line *is* necessary but not the anti-proletarian one. Communists put forward their class war alternative as the only answer to the war being waged against the Polish workers by the capitalists united. An international campaign by workers to cancel the debt would attack the capitalist class in its entirety, everywhere. ■

How Not To Defend Polish Workers

The response by the anti-Stalinist left in the U.S. to the military crackdown in Poland has been generally miserable. At a time when the bourgeoisie has been having a propaganda field day over "Communist" villainy, the centrist groups have failed to take a clear independent working-class position. The LRP has found, through our interventions in New York and reports from elsewhere in the country, that the left has chosen more often than not either to tail Reagan's imperialist policies and the right-wing Polish nationalists, or even to capitulate to the Stalinist repression.

This reaction was prefigured by the "Solidarity with Solidarity" conference held in New York last November whose main speakers were Michael Harrington of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) and Tadeusz Kowalik, an economist and adviser to Polish Solidarity. Harrington celebrated the reformist attitudes of Solidarity's leadership, while Kowalik argued that only the introduction of market mechanisms and further integration into the world market would solve Poland's crisis — and none of the sponsoring "revolutionary" groups raised the slightest objection. Only the LRP, which did not sponsor the conference, openly attacked the dominant tone of the conference in our leaflet, "No Solidarity with Solidarity's Leadership." Instead of warning of the disaster that reformism leads to, the left arranged an event endorsing the reformist road.

The conference reflected the attitude that a broad united front has to be built based upon unity of political views. Such a scheme inevitably leads to agreement on bourgeois ideas, in contrast to the communist strategy of unity in action together with the competing expression of diverse political programs. This attitude set the tone for the left's reaction to the martial law crisis the next month.

On December 13, the day of the military coup in Poland, a number of leftist groups and individuals met in New York to set protest actions. An Ad Hoc Coalition to Support Solidarity was formed, and it planned a demonstration at the Polish Consulate for December 16. But the left's typical opportunism was already evident: there was no need to wait three days and leave the immediate initiative to the right-wingers. The groups involved could easily have notified several hundred supporters in time for a rapid protest; they delayed their call specifically to win support from middle-class pacifist and anti-nuclear groups, few of whom actually showed up despite the delay.

A "Marxist" Abomination

The right wing moved faster. A demonstration was called for the same afternoon as the coup and was dominated by the KPN, the Committee for Polish Independence, a pro-capitalist nationalist outfit whose affiliates in Poland have been linked to anti-Jewish incidents. The signs, banners and speeches from the KPN sound truck called on the U.S. government to intervene in Poland. Incredibly enough, two left groups decided to participate. One, Workers Power, whose placards identified its politics as left, was roughly thrown off the demonstration by marshals. The other, the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL), was allowed to stay in the march, undoubtedly because its placard, "Victory to the Polish Workers," was sufficiently bland to satisfy the KPN thugs.

Two days later, the New York Marxist School held a public forum on the Polish events and invited as its main speakers

representatives of the uncritically pro-Solidarity Workers Power, the critically pro-Solidarity *Guardian* newspaper — and, to make the party complete, the unrepentantly Stalinist and pro-martial law Line of March group. The scene should have enraged any Polish or class-conscious worker: a "debate" in the interest of "Marxist education" with a spokesman for the workers' class enemy at the moment when that enemy is engaged in a brutal repression. With rare exceptions, the audience of leftists reacted with academic interest to the discussion, while Steve Zeluck of Workers Power even called his Stalinist co-panelist "comrade." William Ryan of the *Guardian* thought that Solidarity had gone too far in its demands, while Bruce Ocena of Line of March considered the Stalinist state "socialist" and the workers' movement "counterrevolutionary." In Poland, workers might perfectly well have replied to such an argument with Marx's "criticism of arms."

Left Sanctions Sanctions

Needless to say, the only criticism of the Solidarity leadership from the left came from the LRP. We minced no words in attacking Ocena and other Stalinists in the hall — to the evident discomfort of the rest of the left gathered there to amiably discuss interesting ideas.

The clue to the left's conduct is that it regards all the participants as members of one big (unfortunately unhappy) family. No matter the fact that workers were facing storm-troopers over barricades; the differences reflected merely the "clash of ideas" to these middle-class idealists. Revolutionary workers will rightfully dispose of such rubbish when they re-create a genuinely proletarian communist movement.

The Ad Hoc Coalition's demonstration on December 16 was a modest success. Two hundred people participated, and the Coalition's slogans managed, although sloppily, to distinguish it from the rightist actions that placed their hopes in U.S. imperialism. They were: "Support Solidarity! Stop repression of Polish Workers! Against Soviet Intervention in Poland! No use of the Polish crisis for a U.S. military build-up or intervention! No U.S. military build-up in El Salvador or elsewhere in Latin America! Support the right to strike in Poland and the U.S.!"

The LRP joined in the demonstration, but unlike the other groups we did not attempt to hide our socialist politics behind the Coalition's purely democratic banners. Our slogans urged support to the Polish workers' resistance and the Solidarity militants' calls for a general strike and workers' militias. We stated that a socialist revolution in Poland was the only way out of the crisis, and condemned the leaders' policy of moderation that had left Solidarity unprepared for state repression. Other groups participating were DSOC, the RSL, News and Letters, the International Socialists (IS), the Socialist Party, the Libertarian Workers Group and the Solidarity Support Committee.

Noticeably absent was the Socialist Workers Party, which had participated in the planning meeting. The SWP attacked the demonstration in its press afterward, citing its disagreement over the nature of the Stalinist states:

"What the sponsoring groups had in common is their refusal to politically defend the workers states against imperialism. Rather, they place 'equal blame' on both imperialism and the workers states for the evils of the



Scene from film showing soldiers who went over to Russian workers' side during 1917 revolution. Uncompromising Bolshevik revolutionary line, including arming workers, won their support. Compromising Solidarity reformism kept soldiers with Jaruzelski.

world, placing themselves in what they call the 'third camp.' But in the context of the imperialists' campaign around Poland, this 'third camp' position, under the guise of 'fighting Stalinism,' becomes nothing but another voice in the anticommunist and anti-Soviet choir, lending left cover to the Reagan propaganda effort." (*Intercontinental Press*, February 1).

The SWP also argued that the news media refused to distinguish the left demonstration from right-wing actions. This is a feeble point, since the bourgeois media invariably distort the views and actions of socialists. The polemic against third campism, however, is not so absurd. Most of the groups involved did end up capitulating to Reagan, and quite possibly because they do consider Russian Stalinism an equal or even a greater evil than Western imperialism. (The LRP, we note, regards the state capitalist USSR as part of the same class camp as the U.S., even though the two powers are lined up in competing imperialist blocs; the Russian bloc, however is economically far weaker than and utterly dependent upon the Western economies, despite its military strength.)

Still, *this* demonstration was clearly anti-Reagan and anti-imperialist. This was one left-inspired demonstration that no right-wingers even tried to join. The very general antimilitarism and pro-PATCO slogans were enough at that stage to limit the participation to those hostile to both Reagan and Jaruzelski.

The SWP's real objection was somewhat different. In San Francisco, its members had joined a real pro-capitalist demonstration on December 14 dominated by the right-wing Libertarian Party, and its presence there had been publicized gleefully by the bourgeois papers. Compelled to issue a public self-criticism over this embarrassment, the SWP then had to explain itself to the Cuban Castroites and Nicaraguan San-

dinistas whose approval it seeks to win. These petty-bourgeois groups both took pro-Soviet positions on Poland, supporting the crackdown. The SWP now could not afford to distinguish between pro-working class opposition to the USSR and pro-Western anti-Sovietism, since Cuba and Nicaragua reject opposition of any kind. So it claimed that any demonstration over Poland, even an anti-Reagan one, was necessarily "objectively" pro-Reagan.

For its own reasons the SWP had nevertheless pointed to a real problem. LRPers had tried at the Coalition's initial meetings to head off the inevitable tendency of the groups involved to turn the united front into a reformist propaganda bloc. At that point, we decided on balance that the need for a united demonstration outweighed the danger, so far largely implicit. Provided we could make our own politics clear — which we did.

The third campists subsequently made their dangerous trend a fact by joining in several more openly pro-imperialist demonstrations. On December 19, the AFL-CIO leadership in New York held a rally attended by the KPN and several other far-right "captive nations" organizations and addressed by New York's notoriously anti-working class and racist Mayor Koch. The Ad Hoc Coalition decided not to attend, but several of its components went anyway. And on December 29, DSOC marched 50 people from its national youth conference to the Polish consulate to demonstrate. A KPN contingent had no trouble, politically or otherwise, in joining them.

The Ad Hoc Coalition itself decided to organize another demonstration for January 16. But now the world situation had changed; it was no longer simply a question of protesting the Stalinist crackdown. In Poland, Solidarity members were debating whether to compromise or resist, negotiate or strike. Reagan had issued his economic sanctions against Russia and

Poland. The Western bankers were maneuvering to exact their usury. Reagan's limited trade ban was more rhetoric than substance, but both aspects were aimed at undermining the Polish workers' struggle in the guise of aid. His whole policy was to step up the cold war for imperialist reasons, and the working class had to understand and vehemently oppose his moves.

So the LRP argued, but the Coalition decided to march under the same slogans as before. Some members, notably the News and Letters group, stated that they were neither for or against the imperialist sanctions; others preferred to remain publicly non-committed in order to attract liberals. Marxists, we stress, have always opposed sanctions and reparations; large or small, they always mean deepening the exploitation of the workers on whom their burden inevitably falls.

In addition, the LRP pointed out that the Coalition's claimed anti-imperialism could be made sharpest by attacking the role of the Western banks in Poland. We proposed the slogan "Cancel the Debt" to expose the banks' exploitation of Polish labor (see the adjoining article). Again the Coalition objected, some members arguing that this would only help Jaruzelski — as if he and not the workers had to sweat to pay off! As if he could go on without more credit!

The Coalition also rejected our "Down with Jaruzelski" slogan and declined to oppose any deals with the regime. This issue has been sharply posed in Poland itself; its equivocation placed the Coalition on the path of least resistance, compromise. The Coalition was no doubt influenced by the fact that Harrington and Bogdan Denitch of DSOC had taken the line that Solidarity had gone too far and were urging compromise. The other elements in the Coalition resisted anything that might prevent DSOC, its largest component by far, from participating and might also exclude support from pacifists. But this meant that the Coalition had now become a propaganda bloc for reformist ideas in both the U.S. and Poland, in effect an "external caucus" of DSOC, and the LRP withdrew from it.

Left Joins Rightist Rallies

Meanwhile, back at the Marxist School, the IS took the stage on January 22 in a forum co-sponsored with the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters, a pro-China group so demoralized by the collapse of Maoism that it hasn't published its press in at least a year. Carrying out its Chinese-derived pro-imperialist program, it naturally made a shambles of the class line over Poland: its spokesman, Michael Zweig, criticized Reagan's policy from the right. Unilateral sanctions by the U.S. are ridiculous, he stated, because they "undermine whatever unity there might be" — among the imperialist NATO countries, of course. Zweig also followed the "hard" line of calling on the Western banks to declare Poland in default to force Russia to pay up.

The *Guardian's* Ryan, willing to play straight man for every clown on the left, also spoke and, from his third-worldist view, dissented from Zweig's alliance with U.S. imperialism. Dave Finkel of the IS, happy to occupy a middle position, agreed that the sanctions were "unsupportable" but dismissed them as irrelevant. Calling for an end to the sanctions would be equally ridiculous, he added, because "everybody in Solidarity is delighted by them" and ending them would only strengthen the Polish junta. With similar logic he ridiculed the LRP's call for cancelling the debts: "Anybody in Poland knows that's stupid." Finkel's formula was exactly the method the IS had used before the crackdown: since the Polish workers don't see the danger coming, don't tell them.

We end this chronicle with the January 30 demonstrations called across the country by the AFL-CIO top officialdom and Polish nationalist organizations in collaboration with Reagan's proclamation of "A Day in Solidarity with the People of Poland." The Kirkland-Shanker wing of the labor bureaucracy, despite its criticism of the administration's domestic policy, zealously supports his foreign policy, both his visceral anti-communism towards the Soviet bloc and his suppression of mass peasant and worker movements against regimes friendly to the U.S. Towards Poland, however, it has taken a more right-wing line than even the president. Speaking at the showcase rally in Chicago along with Secretary of State Haig, Kirkland criticized the Reagan administration for not being firm enough in escalating the cold war and called for enforcing a Polish default and ending the grain trade with Russia.

Why They Capitulate

At the much smaller rally in New York, the featured speakers (led by Albert Shanker) echoed Kirkland's line. But accompanying the many Polish nationalists, the contingents from several unions and even a squad of Moonies, was a small left delegation made up chiefly of Coalition members (including DSOC, the RSL, IS and Workers Power) carrying placards with the common slogan, "Solidarity with Workers in Poland and El Salvador." A separate UAW contingent bore signs saying "Solidarity with Poland, Chile, El Salvador, Turkey." These were feeble attempts to register dissent from Reagan's repressive foreign policy — which once again said nothing in protest against his intervention over Poland! And while speaker after speaker from the platform called for expanding Reagan's fraudulent, anti-worker sanctions, Victor Gotbaum, head of New York City's public workers union and a DSOC luminary, also spoke and said nothing to counter the general tone. DSOC members waving the "left" contingent's placards went along with the bulk of the crowd in heartily cheering the anti-Marxist and pro-imperialist pronouncements from the platform.

What on earth are "leftists" doing in a class-collaborationist anti-working class rally dominated by the right wing of the labor bureaucracy in cooperation with Alexander Haig and Ronald Reagan? And, to boot, in a contingent whose tone was set by the pro-imperialist DSOC both on the platform and off! According to the leftists themselves, their chief concern was to create a socialist presence at a major labor rally, to defend the right of all wings of the labor movement to participate in the defense of Solidarity. As the RSL put it, "If socialists do *not* publicize their support for the Polish workers as widely as possible, it will appear that *only* the right wing defends the Polish workers." (*Torch*, January 15).

The flaw in this reasoning is that the right wing is not defending the Polish workers at all, since it is trying to tie them to Western capitalism, whose chief interest is to exploit them further. Joining a right-wing rally without dissenting over Poland suggests that the right-wing "defense" of Solidarity is good enough. It is a disgusting capitulation to the right. And it was no isolated accident. Although the *Torch* piously notes that "we must explain why Reagan and the entire U.S. capitalist class are the enemies of U.S. workers, Polish workers and working people throughout the world," this paper (with 4½ pages devoted to Poland) says nothing about Reagan's sanctions — and it was published more than two weeks after the sanctions were announced.

What the right wing is doing, in contrast to the centrist left, is putting forward a seemingly hard line against the Polish regime. Many Polish nationalists, unlike the left Coalition, do

call for smashing Jaruzelski, to replace him with a Western-style bourgeois government, of course. They do call for economic action against the Stalinists — by the bourgeoisie; whereas the Coalition rejected the LRP's proposal for working-class action. (It is also interesting that not all the Polish nationalists are so militant: at the January 30 rally in New York, one of the KPN's slogans was "Dialogue, Yes; Confrontation, No.") It seems to be in close agreement with the moderate Walesa.) With no forceful action slogans coming from the left, slogans that can appeal to militant workers who want to fight in defense of their Polish comrades, such militants will be easy prey for the far right.

The explanation for this shameful record is not that the Coalition leftists want to capitulate to the right; no, they are merely substituting for the liberal-leftish labor bureaucrats who, like Gotbaum, refuse to play their assigned role them-

it has done for them. The very noticeable absence of black and Latin workers at the rallies is also significant: it betokens their perception that the AFL-CIO's impassioned concern for Poland when it ignores oppression in South Africa and El Salvador is evidence of racism.

In seeking respectability through identification with labor, the centrist leftists (with all their revolutionary pretensions) have subordinated themselves to DSOC, which is subordinated to the liberal bureaucrats, who are in turn subordinated to the reactionaries. The left's ambitions are probably foredoomed. For now the liberals have their own coalition, the Workers and Artists in Support of Solidarity, who sponsored a well-attended meeting in New York on February 6 featuring various cultural celebrities and liberal labor officials. Its politics were not different from the left's, but its ability to mobilize money, publicity and names is much greater.



Right-wing demonstrator at a New York rally on Poland. Banner equates communism with Nazism. U.S. marshmallow left both accommodated to Western reaction and refused to call for Jaruzelski's overthrow on its marches.

selves. So if no major left bureaucrat is willing to publicly dissent from Reagan and Kirkland on El Salvador at these rallies, the "left" will do that for them — and not a step more. If the left bureaucrats are willing to go along with Reagan's sanctions, then the "left" also will go along, despite whatever reservations it might have.

The upshot is that the centrist left, seeking above all to be part of the "labor movement," has increasingly identified with the labor bureaucracy. There was no "movement" at the January 30 rallies. They were far smaller than expected, everywhere. Even though American workers overwhelmingly sympathize with the Poles, they saw no hope that the U.S. labor bureaucracy would accomplish anything, any more than

The liberal conference also displaced the "socialists" in adapting to the right. Among its galaxy of speakers advocating moderation upon Washington (i.e., soft-smart imperialism) was Susan Sontag, who openly embraced right-wing anti-communism. At least some of the audience booed her.

Not to be outdone, the marshmallow left Coalition is soon to hold its mini-version of the same event. One of the major speakers is scheduled to be Andrew Arato of *Telos* magazine and DSOC. Arato is an open supporter of Reagan's sanctions and imperialist program toward Poland. If the past is any indication, Arato will not be booed. When it comes to hypocrisy the "left" outdoes liberalism. Revolutionary workers can have only contempt for these third camp-followers. ■

Polish Struggle – A Test of Theory

The Polish class struggle of 1980 and 1981 was the greatest proletarian upsurge anywhere since World War II. As such it has inspired interpretations by advocates of every political persuasion from Ronald Reagan to revolutionaries. Even among the various currents calling themselves Marxist, Poland has been claimed to justify every line from revolution to counterrevolution passing through myriad varieties of reform.

The key to the whole dispute is the most controversial question of Marxism, the class nature of the Stalinist societies: are they socialist, capitalist, transitional from one to the other, or something entirely different? The answer is of immense importance for revolutionary understanding and action in the world today, since it determines both how one assesses the role of the USSR, still the second world power, and many other vital issues of class struggle in every country. The violently opposed "Marxist" responses to the Polish military coup are a case in point.

No revolutionary party can be built without correct theory in general and on specific vital questions. The test of theory is practice. Does it provide a correct analysis of what has occurred? Of crucial importance for revolutionaries: does it enable us to predict the general course of events and act on them? In this article we draw up a political balance sheet of the "Russian question" as it applies to the year-and-a-half of Solidarity's experience and the counterrevolution that silenced it. We will contrast our own theoretical analysis, developed by the League for the Revolutionary Party over several years, with rival theories. We believe that this comparison is further evidence that our analysis is uniquely correct — that is, it is the only one that successfully accounts for the actual political events and demonstrates the road ahead for the working class.

Stalinism Is a Form of Capitalism

Our theory of Stalinism was presented in most detail in *Socialist Voice* No. 2; it was expanded in many subsequent articles and applied particularly to Poland after the Gdansk events of 1980 in issue No. 10 and those following. In outline, it says that the Stalinist states are capitalist, but of a distinct historical form. The workers' state created by the Bolshevik revolution in Russia was overthrown by the Stalinist counterrevolution in the 1930's, resulting in a state retaining the proletarian forms of nationalized property and economic planning but ruled by a class of state bureaucrats separated from the working class. Poland and the other Stalinist states were either created by the armies of the Russian state capitalist rulers in the course of World War II or specifically modeled after Stalinist Russia.

It follows from this that the workers' revolutionary leadership must have the perspective of destroying the ruling class and state apparatus, not simply reforming or modifying them. This goal distinguishes the Marxist analysis of Stalinism as a form of capitalism from the alternatives that consider it some form of socialist or transitional workers' state. (We shall see that other state capitalist or bureaucratic collectivist theories also lead to reformist rather than revolutionary conclusions.) The "workers' state" analyses that derive from a distortion of Trotskyism advocate a "political revolution," that is, one that ousts the ruling bureaucracy by revolutionary means but preserves what they think are the essential elements of the state, the nationalized property and planned economy.

It also follows that the state property stolen by the Stalinist bureaucracy has lost the essential economic advantages that made it an historic gain of the proletariat. The nominal centralization and planning only conceal industrial anarchy and are used against the workers' interests. The laws of motion of capitalist economy discovered by Marx, which inevitably produce inequality, oppression and imperialism, are again carried out under Stalinism — not by market forces alone but by bureaucratic administrators as well who act in the interests of the ruling class. As a result, Stalinism exhibits the crisis of capitalism in an even more devastating form than elsewhere; this fact is painfully obvious today for Poland especially. It results from the attempt, necessitated by Stalinism's history as the "inheritor" of the working class's achievements, to cram capitalist content into proletarian forms.

Thus Stalinism, a product of capitalism's decay, is forced to operate without two of capitalism's most powerful motivating forces, mass unemployment and generalized internal competition. Unemployment — the "reserve army of labor," in Marx's image, serves under traditional capitalism to discipline the working class by making clear to every worker holding a job that there are always others ready to take his place if he doesn't like the conditions and wages he works under. In crisis times there are also bosses willing to shut down production if the workers demand too much: witness the American unions' willingness to accept contract "givebacks" in the present period of collapsing corporations and increasing joblessness.

Stalinism functions in regions of the world where the capitalist fabric has been weakest and the danger of revolution greatest; it cannot rule by the gun alone. It officially guarantees its workers jobs, and replaces the economic discipline of the reserve army of labor by a police state — which also prevents workers from actively protesting their conditions. But job security inhibits the ruling class from using economic incentives and threats to discipline the workers; even such devices cannot compel quality or systematically speed up work. As a consequence labor productivity is notoriously low.

Stalinism also operates essentially without the mechanism of overt competition between firms. Contrary to the most common interpretations of Marxism, competition is not the driving force of capitalism, but it is a necessary mechanism for communicating to the various capitalists and enterprise managers the need for efficiency and modernization; it is the way that the internal compulsion towards accumulation is made evident to the bourgeoisie. To see competition as the motor of capitalism is to view the system from the storekeeper's vantage point; this opinion has been adopted by the petty-bourgeois epigones of Marxism but has nothing in common with Marx's views (see *Socialist Voice* No. 4, pages 19-20, for our explicit evidence that this point was crucial to Marx as well).

Not only does Stalinist state capitalism lack direct competition, but its planning procedures also operate in such a way that individual managers are discouraged from eliminating obsolete production methods and introducing the most modern ones. The Stalinist states still feel the pressure of the international market but are largely unable to enforce this

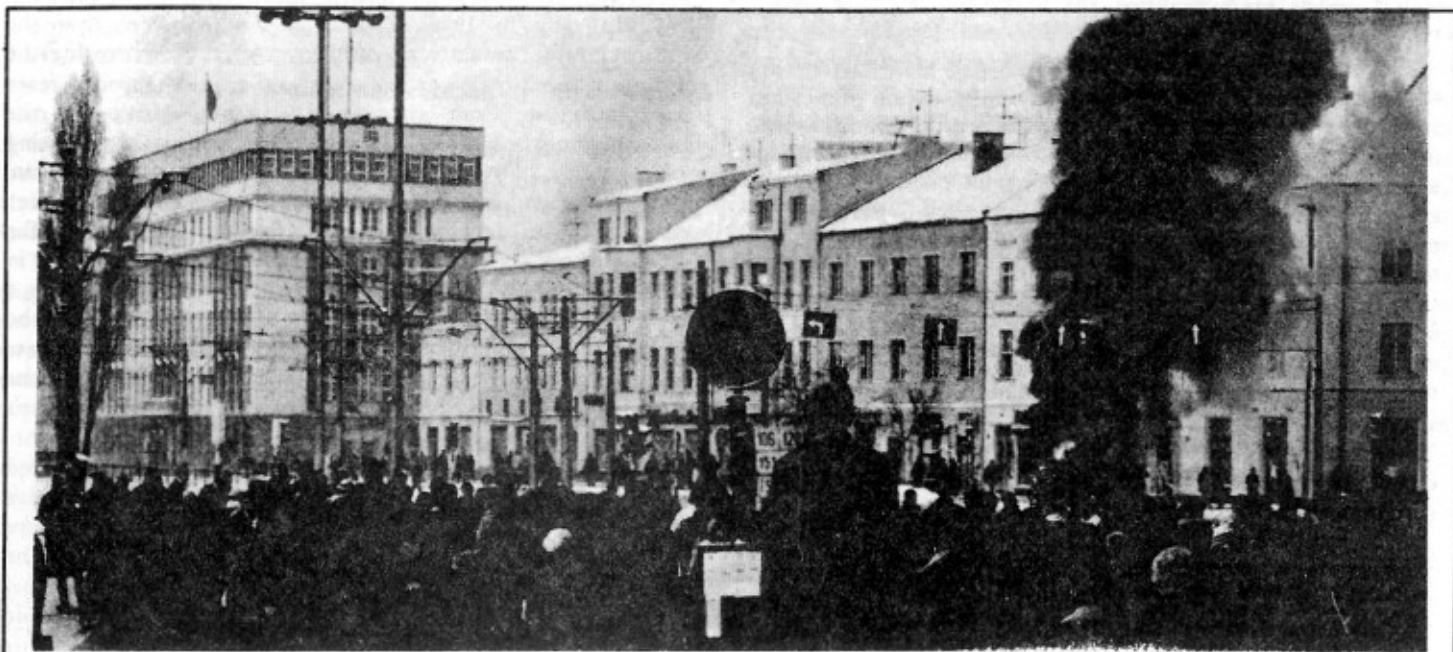
pressure on the directors of their own economy. It is no accident, consequently, that the Stalinist techniques of production remain obsolete by Western standards.

Because of the built-in structural weaknesses outlined here, the Stalinist rulers have attempted over the years to institute economic reforms — designed essentially to introduce elements of competition, or at least incentives for managers to operate as efficiently as possible. (The elimination of the full employment policy has been talked about throughout the state capitalist world but implemented so far only in Yugoslavia and China.) These reforms, further advanced in Hungary, have allowed individual firms to trade with foreigners, breaking down the state monopoly of foreign trade; have allowed firms to set their own prices (as is now taking place in Poland under Jaruzelski), and have encouraged the formation of privately owned businesses. But they have not solved the crisis, nor have they made the Stalinist economies competitive with the West. Nevertheless, the commitment to decentralization in the interest of capitalist efficiency is now widespread throughout the Stalinist world.

council of workers' delegates from the entire country. Solidarity's inability to raise such a program before the crack-down was part and parcel of its commitment to reform of the Stalinist state, not revolution. Its programs differed little from those of the liberal wing of the ruling bureaucracy.

On the far right of the spectrum of "socialist" opinion on the Polish events are the Stalinists and neo-Stalinists who back martial law and its repression of the workers' revolt. In the U.S. these include the Communist Party, the Workers World Party, the Line of March tendency and the pseudo-Trotskyist Spartacist League. The Spartacists, whose counterrevolutionary call for the smashing of Solidarity we analyzed in our last issue, heaved a sigh of relief when the deed was done and declared the situation ripe for the formation of a revolutionary party. The noteworthy irony of the Spartacists' call for peaceful acceptance of the coup is that it coincides with the position of the Catholic Church, a vastly larger but equally anti-communist outfit.

The Spartacists' claim to Trotskyism leads them to search for some theoretical justification for such a patently anti-



Crowds burning a police wagon. The Gdansk workers held out against the Stalinist crackdown for days. In spite of misleaders, Polish workers are set back but not crushed.

This sort of efficiency will be of no benefit to the working class; it will mean in fact attempting to solve the capitalist crisis at the workers' expense. It will lead, as it already has in Poland, to higher consumer prices and longer hours of work; and, if the reform is carried to the extent it has been in Stalinist Yugoslavia, it can lead to one of the highest inflation and unemployment rates in Europe. The fact that Solidarity's economic program adopted at its September 1981 national congress envisaged decentralization and market reforms along Yugoslav lines testifies to the petty-bourgeois composition and program of the union's leadership and chief advisers (as well as their supporters in the West). Justified hostility to the corruption, inefficiency and repression under Stalinism is no excuse for an alternative anti-proletarian program.

It follows from this analysis — and here is a crucial way in which our theory is sharply distinguished from the various "new class" or pseudo-state capitalist theories of Stalinism — that the revolutionary working-class movement must advocate, as the economic program of the workers' state it aims for, a strongly centralized economy directed by a central

working class position. This they find in the argument that "counterrevolutionary parties need not call for nor immediately effect the denationalization of statified industry. Rather, they would subordinate the nationalized industry to the interests of the domestic petty-bourgeoisie and international capital" (*Solidarnosc: Polish Company Union for CIA and Bankers*, page 3). And this conception they trace back to Trotsky: "Should a bourgeois counterrevolution succeed in the USSR, the new government for a lengthy period would have to base itself upon the nationalized economy" ("Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?", 1937).

This citation is meant to refute rival pseudo-Trotskyists who believe that since Solidarity never called for the return to private property ownership, its victory could not result in the restoration of Western-style capitalism. But Trotsky's point actually proves more than the Spartacists admit: it undermines their basic contention that the USSR is still a workers' state because nationalized property still exists! The Stalinist counterrevolution did preserve state property, and in fact World War II only intensified the state's economic role as

it did in every warring power; afterwards the devolutionary tendencies we mentioned above began to set in. Trotsky's argument was *against* the fetishization of property forms ahead of their actual social content.

The main bodies of pseudo-Trotskyism stood for Polish reformism rather than counterrevolution; these included the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (USec) and its U.S. affiliate, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The SWP in particular maintained all along an uncritical stance towards the Walesa leadership of Solidarity, arguing that the gradual accretion of reforms (as if that were possible under Stalinism in a period of crisis!) would lead to the "political revolution." This stems from the petty-bourgeois character of the USec, which long ago revised Trotsky's Transitional Program into a recipe for reforms, ignoring the Program's central purpose of convincing workers of the necessity of overthrowing the rulers' state power. (We analyzed the use and misuse of the Transitional Program in detail in *Socialist Voice* No. 8; the SWP is only adapting the same method to the supposed "workers' states.")

Does Weakness Prove It's a Workers' State?

The USec as a whole went along with this method of reasoning; thus it endorsed Solidarity's plan for a second chamber of the Polish parliament representing workers' self-management bodies so that the working class could share power with the Stalinists' first chamber. This scheme is a perfect reflection of the reformists' ideas for incorporating the workers' movement into the state in order to find a "joint" solution to the crisis (or a tripartite one among Church, state and union). It has nothing in common with the Trotskyist program for workers' soviets as *counterposed* organs of class power and revolution.

The USec also drew theoretical conclusions from the Polish movement:

"The Polish events confirm that the bureaucracy in power in the bureaucratized workers' states is not a new ruling class. There is no common measure between the resistance that the bourgeoisie is capable of putting up against the rise of the socialist revolution in capitalist countries as deeply industrialized as Poland, and the extreme weakness which the Polish bureaucracy has exhibited faced with the rise of the mass movement." (Resolution on Poland of the International Executive Committee, May 1981, in *Intercontinental Press*, December 21, 1981).

This is an absurd argument. A strong ruling class under any form of class rule puts up strong resistance, and a weak class resists weakly. When Stalinism was confident of its power it was perfectly capable of smashing workers' uprisings; the rise of the Soviet bureaucracy to the position of ruling class through the civil war of the late 1930's shows anything but "extreme weakness;" likewise its conquest of Eastern Europe in the wake of World War II. Conversely, a weak traditional capitalist class has little capacity to restrain the workers: witness the feebleness of the Russian bourgeoisie against the workers' soviets in 1917. There is a highly "common measure" between the Russian Kerenskys and the Polish Kania's; the difference is that the latter took advantage of the workers' capitulationist leadership and found the police strength to put down the movement when it sagged. In 1917, the revolutionary Bolsheviks enabled the workers' momentum to move forward and chose the opportune moment to oust the ruling class.

The USec's claim of the Polish bureaucracy's inability to resist looks somewhat sick in the light of the December crack-

down. Yet the Stalinists, as we have pointed out, do suffer from extreme weakness. Their weakness is that of a capitalist class in the extremity of decay, that of a cornered animal able to strike back only when its opponent falters. The depth of the crisis made Polish Stalinism even weaker, but the failings of Solidarity momentarily revived its capacity to fight.

Trotsky once argued that the inherent "extreme weakness" of state capitalism would prevent it from ever coming into existence:

"Theoretically, to be sure, it is possible to conceive a situation in which the bourgeoisie as a whole constitutes itself a stock company which, by means of its state, administers the whole national economy. ... Such a regime never existed, however, and, because of profound contradictions among the proprietors themselves, never will exist — the more so since, in its quality of universal repository of capitalist property, the state would be too tempting an object for social revolution." (*The Revolution Betrayed*, page 246; emphasis added.)

Writing this in 1936, Trotsky did not foresee that the Stalinist counterrevolution would succeed in overthrowing the vestiges of the Soviet workers state and would thereby create state capitalism, not through the consolidation of the bourgeois stockholders but through the smashing of a working class which had previously made itself the universal proprietor. But his fundamental point is perfectly accurate: state capitalism deprives the ruling class of the veil of the "class-neutral" state that blinds so many workers' struggles in traditional capitalist societies. Instead Stalinism maintains a fake proletarian ideology to fool the workers. But when the blinders are off and the workers' movement is on the rise, state capitalism is nakedly exposed to a conflict over not just the economy, but state power. The Polish events confirm Trotsky's insight to the letter.

This is not the first confirmation. When the Stalinists seized power in Eastern Europe after the war, they did not move immediately to statify all of the economy. Many firms were nationalized at the beginning; in fact, some sectors of the economy had been nationalized by the pre-war and Nazi governments. But the Stalinists maintained a sizeable "private" sector for several years, until the workers' movements liberated by the defeat of Nazism had been thoroughly defeated by the Soviet Army and the local Stalinist forces. Then, only then, could the Stalinists afford to create so "tempting an object" as a universal state proprietor and keep it out of the workers' hands.

Struggle for Democracy Not Enough

The USec resolution tries to take a similar tack. It goes on to argue that democratic rights which can be perfectly acceptable in a bourgeois state (such as independent unions, a free press, etc.) are impossible in a "bureaucratized workers' state" for any extended period. Since the economic institutions are state-owned, autonomous workers' organizations seeking a say over the conditions of production would automatically challenge state power and thereby the Stalinists' rule. The bureaucracy's lack of "real roots in the productive process," that is, the absence of private property in the means of production, give it no social base from which to fight back except for its monopoly of police power (no small thing!) and political rights.

This sort of reasoning leads the pseudo-Trotskyists to imagine that a struggle for democratic rights alone leads directly to a confrontation over who will rule the state. In a sense this did happen: the bureaucracy, in the depths of its

economic and political crisis, saw that its class rule was endangered — so it fought back with all the weapons of force and deceit at its command. But the workers, deprived of revolutionary leadership that would have made clear to them that the struggle could *not* be limited to democratic rights, did not see what was at stake and did not make the necessary political and military preparations. The placing of the question of power on the agenda “objectively” is no substitute for the open struggle for revolutionary consciousness. Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution never meant that democratic consciousness would automatically grow over into socialist consciousness. Rather it stipulated that the only way to achieve democratic gains was through the socialist revolution, which demands a consciously revolutionary party to lead it.

The USec’s assumptions are wrong from the start. Yugoslavia proves that state capitalist countries can afford to grant considerable leeway in democratic and working-class rights — as long as economic and political conditions are loose enough to make such rights affordable. When the Yugoslav Titoists turned to forms of workers’ “self-management” after the 1948 break with Stalin, world capitalism was sufficiently prosperous to aid the “experiment” along. Nor was there any major internal crisis in Yugoslavia that made political easing up dangerous for the ruling bureaucrats; in fact, Stalin’s contribution of a serious external threat enabled the Titoists to weld together a strong sentiment of national unity under the bureaucracy. Today, however, with the crisis deepening, even the Yugoslavs will be compelled to restrict the workers’ latitude.

The weakness of the Stalinist states, in sum, is not simply their vulnerability to democratic demands from a workers’ movement. It is the inherent instability of their bastardized capitalist structures, subject even more than the depression-prone traditional capitalist states to the corrosion of the world economy. Trotsky pointed to some of the reasons; we have added others. But together they prove that Stalinism hardly represents some form of advanced society that is progressive with respect to capitalism (in the Marxist sense of being capable of expanding the means of production beyond the limits of capitalism); those who insist that it is a different class system from capitalism would have no choice today but to assess it as a more backward one.

The USec, in asserting that Stalinism’s weakness in the face of the workers proves it to be non-capitalist, overlooks the underlying capitalist rot that makes it weak. Likewise it forgets to inform its readers that a workers’ state, however deformed or bureaucratized, must be demonstrably more progressive than capitalism. Neither point is compatible with the theory that Poland is a workers’ state. The days of Stalinist expansion, when every sycophant and pseudo-Trotskyist extolled the new “workers’ states” as the wave of the future, are indeed over. The workers’ state theory in the hands of its dominant proponents offers little but a covering excuse for reformism.

Pseudo-Trotskyists Back KPN

The workers’ state theory led to reformism in concrete practice in the hands of the Polish Socialist Labor Party (PSPP). This is a group of Polish militants in Poland and outside, significant despite its small numbers because it is closely identified with Edmund Baluka, a prominent leader of the Szczecin shipyard workers strike in 1970 who was subsequently exiled by the regime and was able to return to Poland last year; he is now among those interned. The PSPP is affiliated to the international pseudo-Trotskyist organization led by Pierre Lambert whose latest incarnation is the “Fourth International (International Center for

Reconstruction).”

But despite its supposedly Trotskyist connections the PSPP does not claim to be Trotskyist — nor, aside from its name, does it have anything to say for socialism. Its platform is nationalist, parliamentary-cretinist, pacifist and reformist to the core; its demands stay well within the confines of the Gdansk Accords signed in August 1980 between the Solidarity leadership and the ruling Polish United Workers Party (PUWP). Worse, what proves the program nationalist is a statement after the coup issued by the PSPP in Paris (*Tribune Internationale*, January 1982), solidarizes with the victims of Jaruzelski’s oppression but extends its “salute” to the leaders of the right-wing, Pilsudskiite Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN) “beside whom the PSPP struggles for political pluralism and freedom of the country.” This contemptible political alignment with the worst anti-proletarian elements is matched only by those pseudo-Trotskyists who line up with Stalinism itself.

“State Capitalists” Call Radicals Revolutionary

Avoiding the pitfalls of the workers’ state theory is not enough. Two socialist tendencies that call Stalinism state capitalism also believe that its bureaucratism is best overcome by an appeal to the militant instincts of the working class “rank and file.” The (British) Socialist Workers Party and the (American) Revolutionary Socialist League have, not surprisingly, offered similar lines on Poland. They do make some correct points about the class forces in Polish society and say that a revolutionary solution is the only possible one, but their state capitalist theories are as alien to revolutionary Marxism as the deformed workers’ state theories. Their rank and file-ism leads them to rely on the most militant wing of the reformist Solidarity leadership as the agent of revolution, so that their solution turns out, like the workers-statists’, to be a reformist one.

The RSL, referring to Solidarity’s “left-wing opposition” led by Jan Rulewski, states: “... it is not too late for the left to lead a successful revolution in Poland” (*Torch*, November 15, 1981). This, despite the admission that “we are not sure, however, that the left opposition in Poland has any clear strategy for how the workers can actually move forward in the current situation.” Similarly, the British SWP states that “the movement cannot go much further forward unless the radicals in Solidarity come to terms with the problem of power” (*Socialist Review*, November 15, 1981), after having noted that “the most significant thing at the moment, however, is the absence of a clear revolutionary current.”

Both tendencies even admit that the radical Solidarity wing is consciously not revolutionary, yet both raise no alternative other than relying on it to take the lead for the necessary revolution. That is a consequence of their rank and file-ism, the belief in tailing the militancy already expressed by the working class. It is foreign to the Leninist view that conscious working-class revolutionaries must struggle against the backward ideas of even the most advanced leftish leaders of the proletariat to create a revolutionary cadre.

The form of “support with criticisms” given to the Solidarity militant leaders is a dead giveaway. It is a hallmark of centrists that they qualify their support of other centrists by objecting to their vagueness. This is in keeping with the centrist characteristic of never tying themselves to anything concrete, not even their kin abroad; it leaves loopholes for future denials. Inevitably, these criticisms of their friends’ vagueness are equally vague, as are their own prescriptions for power.

There is a close connection between these strategies and the organizations’ theoretical views of Stalinism. The British

SWP's theory of "bureaucratic state capitalism" asserts that the bureaucracy forged itself into a ruling class by depriving the workers of all the elements of democracy at the local level. It dates this transformation to the start of the five-year plans in the late 1920's. Here is a key passage from *Russia: A Marxist Analysis* by the SWP's leader, Tony Cliff.

"It was now, for the first time, that the bureaucracy sought to realize the historical mission of the bourgeoisie as quickly as possible. A quick accumulation of capital on the basis of a low level of production, of a small national income per capita, must put a burdensome pressure on the consumption of the masses, on their standard of living. Under such conditions, the bureaucracy, transformed into a personification of capital, for whom the accumulation of capital is the be-all and the end-all, must get rid of all remnants of workers' control, must substitute conviction in the labor process by coercion, must atomize the working class, must force all social-political life into a totalitarian mold." (page 107)

Socialism Needs Centralized State

The bureaucracy certainly did all these things, and more. But the decisive destruction of a workers' state must occur at the center, with the final ouster of the last vestiges of proletarian political power. That is why we date the culmination of the counterrevolution ten years later than Cliff, when the great purges destroyed every surviving section of the Bolshevik party that had any connection to the October revolution and replaced it with a new party formed largely of the new layer of industrial managers and political bureaucrats created over the years under Stalin's direction. In the final analysis, a workers' state is determined by the political rule, however tenuous, of the working class, not by the transformations at the local level of workers' control and the labor process.

Similarly, the socialist revolution under Stalinism has to aim at the state: the destruction of the Stalinist one and the creation of a workers' state. That means concentrating political and economic power at the center. To do this the workers will need their independent class institutions at the base, but the entire orientation of the revolutionary struggle must be towards the center, towards state power. This lesson was indelibly taught for Marxists by the Bolsheviks in 1917, who denounced the bourgeois-social democratic provisional government for permitting economic life to collapse and fought for the workers' soviets to seize state power, grasp all the levers of the economy at the center and stem the catastrophe. Hence nationalization, the state monopoly of foreign trade, central control of credit and banking and a central plan.

Bolshevism always argued for democratic centralism and saw its central leadership and centralized state power as the highest expression of proletarian consciousness. This reflected the fact that Marx and the Marxists had always been centralists, conceiving of socialism as the culmination of the concentration, centralization and socialization of all the forces of production. Since the proletariat is the most significant force of production, it too must be readied for power through such centralizing processes. The opposite view, that the workers' task is to prevent the centralization and concentration of capitalism, was correctly castigated as petty-bourgeois, in the precise scientific meaning of the term.

The British SWP, faced with the tendency of all wings of Solidarity's leadership towards decentralization, had no choice

but to point out that local control was no answer. So it argued as follows for a revolutionary program:

"... it could not be implemented without a complete transformation of society. At the local level it would require the most thorough-going struggle for what the Solidarity radicals call 'self-management' — in each plant and office, the workers would have to seize power and impose tight controls on the operations of all levels of management. But it would also require something that the radicals have hardly spoken of yet — a struggle at the national level, to overturn the hierarchies of control in the police, the army and the ministries, replacing them with direct representatives of the workers' organizations." (*Socialist Review*, November 15, 1981.)

What this is, however, is not the Marxist counterposition of centralized power, the dictatorship of the proletariat, to the petty-bourgeois decentralization plans advocated by Solidarity — it is rather the addition of one to the other, making true centralization impossible. Accepting "what the Solidarity radicals call self-management" means accepting economic regulation by a market to the detriment of central planning. It excludes the Polish Stalinists' incompetent and corrupt bureaucratic pseudo-planning, but it also excludes genuine workers' power through a workers' state. Ousting the bureaucrats in the central ministries is only a step towards creating the centralized power of the proletariat. But this the SWP does not bring up; it never raises a central revolutionary program at home nor will it counterpose one to the misguided conceptions of the radical militants. The British SWP's method of adding to the ideas of the reformists and calling the product Marxism is exactly equivalent to the American SWP's notion that a series of reforms equals revolution.

Rank and file-ism means not only the acceptance of workers' backwardness but the notion that workers are basically limited to their immediate environs. Workers work in factories, and can and should control their working conditions — but for Leninists the apex of workers' power lies in their capacity to control the destiny of society at its centers. Control over the foreign trade monopoly in Warsaw is infinitely more decisive over the lives of workers in Katowice than is control over their shop floor, even more decisive over that very shop floor! The SWP's view is rehashed syndicalism plus government control to defend industrial democracy — not a Marxist program for a centralized workers' state.

The RSL's solution is even worse. Although at one time it had moved beyond the rank and file-ist conceptions typified by the British SWP and its U.S. affiliate, it has since abandoned its claim to Trotskyism and turned back towards the celebration of anti-programmatic militancy. This degeneration is encapsulated in the article "Lessons of the Polish Workers' Struggles" issued in the *Torch* of January 15, and widely distributed by the RSL in pamphlet form. This article argues in the most simplistic way that socialist revolution would be a good idea, but it puts forward *not one hint* of what the program of such a revolution might be. The revolution is defined exclusively in organizational terms:

"The only way that the workers and the rest of the Polish people could have permanently secured their gains and won control over their country was by overthrowing the Polish state apparatus — including and in particular the police and the army — and establishing their own class rule based on their own democratic organizations, first and foremost Solidarity itself, along with other formations such as community councils, cooperatives, associations of students and

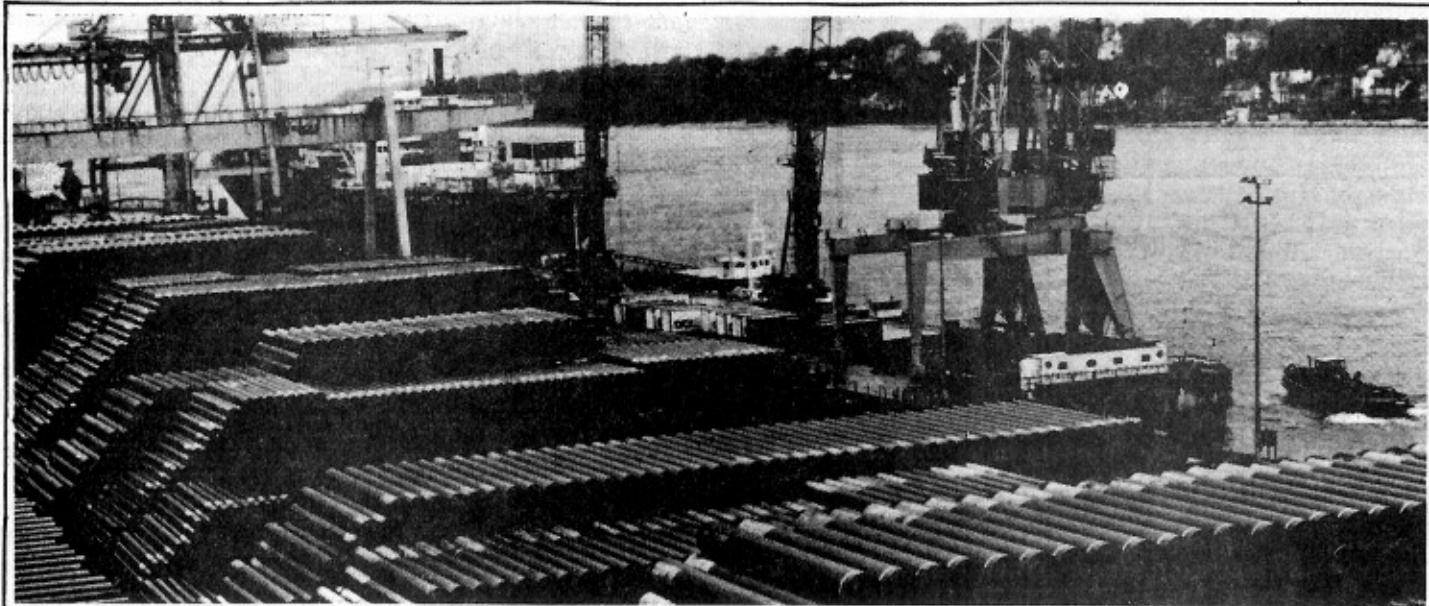
professionals, a workers' militia, etc. In short, a socialist revolution was needed."

The RSL article does expand a bit on tactical questions, but a program for solving the pressing economic crisis is not to be seen. Even the earlier article quoted above, which movingly described the economic chaos and suffering that Poles were facing last fall and criticized the Rulewski radicals for lacking "any clear strategy for how the workers can actually move forward," says nothing about what to do. The RSL does call for a revolutionary party, as does the British SWP, but again this is only an organizational task — which the RSL naturally assigns to the reformist radicals. ("The immediate task facing the left opposition is to organize its force into a disciplined faction that can fight for leadership within Solidarity.")

As to theory, the RSL has produced nothing since the articles on state capitalism that we dissected in the first issue of *Socialist Voice*; they have only been collected into a pamphlet. But even the minimal discussion of Marxist laws of capitalism in these articles has been forgotten. For the RSL of

Two of these are the Workers Power group in Britain and the Gruppo Operaio Rivoluzionario (GOR; Revolutionary Workers Group) of Italy. (We have previously polemicized against Workers Power in issue No. 9 of *Socialist Voice*.) In both cases, their concern to adhere to the revolutionary tradition of Trotsky enables them to see through the various forms of reformism that have arisen in the Polish struggle and commits them to revolutionary demands. But this concern also ties them to the workers' state theory of Stalinism, since Trotsky considered the USSR to be a degenerated workers' state until his murder in 1940.

Holding tight to Trotsky's theory poses a problem, however. Trotsky never anticipated Russia's imperialist expansion after World War II; he regarded Stalinism as a decaying bureaucratic power in a workers' state which would crumble in wartime under either a revived workers' revolution or a bourgeois counterrevolution. As well, he insisted that Stalinism had become a thoroughly counterrevolutionary force in world politics. His leading epigones, chiefly Michel Pablo, had to explain the reproduction of Stalinist states after



Shipment of oil pipe at the dock in Hamburg, West Germany, destined for the USSR, awaiting loading. Stalinist nations are dependent upon the West for technology, credits and grain. They furnish cheap labor goods and raw materials.

today, the name "state capitalism" signifies only that the Stalinists form a class that rules over the workers. How this system develops and decays, how its internal motion affects the class struggle, what strategies this implies for revolutionaries — on these matters the RSL offers nothing. The struggle for socialism has been reduced to the demand for democratic control from below. In effect, the RSL has retreated back to the "bureaucratic collectivism" of Max Shachtman, a theory that offered no laws of motion for Stalinist society but simply denied that it had anything in common with the laws of capitalism. For all his anti-Stalinism, Shachtman's cure for Russia, Poland, etc. was simply democracy — which in practice meant reformism.

Just as the pseudo-Trotskyist United Secretariat and the American SWP cover their reformist programs under the rhetoric of political revolution, so the British SWP and the RSL disguise their underlying reformism as a "socialist revolution" against capitalism. But there are other organizations internationally whose analyses of Poland make no concessions to either Western imperialism or Stalinism and do outline a revolutionary program for the Polish proletariat.

the war and did so by saying that Stalinism is both revolutionary in that it creates "workers' states" and counterrevolutionary in that they emerge deformed from birth. This is no theory at all but the absence of it; it has no analytic or predictive power and can say only that Stalinism can do both good and bad things. It is a rationalization.

Workers Power and the GOR have laudably retained Trotsky's understanding that Stalinism is counterrevolutionary. But in also retaining the notion that the Stalinist states are proletarian, they fail to account for the counterrevolutionary "socialist revolutions" that produced so many new "workers' states"; Workers Power has promised such an explanation for years. In effect, they have to end up with some notion that the bureaucracy is not quite, or not always, counterrevolutionary. In the Polish situation, their theoretical error leads them to emphasize the danger of "capitalist restoration" — that is, decentralization and free-market anarchy opening the country up to Western imperialism — as coming primarily not from the Stalinist bureaucracy but from the programs of the Solidarity leaders.

The GOR, for example, labels the factions led by Walesa

and Kuron in Solidarity as pro-capitalist — meaning pro-Western — not seeing that the thrust of their politics has been to strengthen the Polish ruling bureaucracy against the workers. One consequence was that on December 13, the day of the military crackdown, GOR took note of the initial reports that Walesa had not been arrested along with the other leaders of Solidarity and then listed among its slogans: "Down with Walesa, betrayer of the Polish workers, agent of the bourgeoisie!" In truth Walesa is both of these things, but at the moment of the crackdown he was (it turned out) seized by the regime, not as a bourgeois agent but as the leader of the workers. The Stalinists clearly hoped he would sell out to them and approve their coup, but since his arrest he has not done so. The GOR's slogan was a serious tactical mistake deriving from its difficulty in understanding that Walesa played a role perfectly comparable to that of any reformist workers' leader in the West: he held back the workers' struggles and was ready to sell them out the moment he thought he could get away with it, but despite his bourgeois ideas the base of his power was in the workers' movement and not any section of the bourgeoisie.

Workers Power now takes a similar view of Walesa. It published "Theses on the Polish Military Coup d'Etat" in its January 1982 paper, pointing out that the two overwhelmingly dominant tendencies in Solidarity's leadership and congresses were the reformists and those who favored a "counter-revolutionary overthrow of the regime which would have paved the way for the restoration of capitalism in Poland." The latter "would mean the turning of Poland once again into a semi-colony of Western imperialism." Walesa's faction, moreover, was tied to Church figures who "were the active agents of, and in regular contact with, the reactionary Pope John Paul II." And "the Catholic hierarchy is a force ultimately fighting for capitalist restoration in the workers states."

So Workers Power believes that Walesa's program was not reformist but counterrevolutionary in the sense of fighting for a pro-Western restoration. What then, we ask both Workers Power and GOR, if Walesa had come to power? Such an event was not impossible — for example if, in the first days of martial law, Jaruzelski had lost his gamble, the soldiers had refused to play their assigned role and Solidarity had made some minimal preparations for resistance. A Walesa government would surely have included Church-controlled figures, pro-Western social democrats, and possibly even the singlemindedly anti-Russian KPN nationalists. Should revolutionaries defend a Walesa government against Stalinism?

For us the question poses no difficulty. A Walesa government would certainly be class collaborationist in its policy, and would even have capitalist elements (including liberal bureaucrats) in its cabinet, so that political support to it is ruled out. And it would be no more or less capitalist than Jaruzelski's. But, like the Provisional Government in Russia in 1917, it would have been thrust into power by the force of the workers' movement which would enjoy considerable more freedom of action than under Stalinism. Revolutionaries would therefore join the bulk of the working class in defending it militarily, against either Stalinist restoration or a Russian attack, in order to defend the workers' movement beneath it.

Both Workers Power and GOR would have to face the fact that such a government would be, in their terms, bourgeois restorationist. Walesa in power is not the same thing as a Walesa-led workers movement, for his government threatens what they consider to be the foundations of the workers' state.

If the Stalinists attacked such a government by force, which side would they take? The pro-capitalist Walesa or the pro-"workers' state" Stalinists? Their instincts to defend the working class might lead them to the idea that Stalinism is just as restorationist (or even more so since it doesn't need to rely on even a semi-autonomous workers' movement), so that defense of Walesa would be possible. But their theory points in the opposite direction. If their proletarian instincts win out, it will be *despite* their theory's lack of predictability and its false guidance.

We therefore challenge the comrades of the GOR and Workers Power: the Polish crisis has sharply etched the class line between those who fight for a revolutionary defense of the workers' movement and those who advocate reform or open counterrevolution. *The major "Trotskyist" organizations that share your theory have chosen these latter courses.* How then can you fail to differentiate your theories from theirs or fail to have theories of your own? Not just different conclusions from common theories, which we know you have, but altogether different theories! The roots must be uncovered.

Serious revolutionaries know that theoretical slipshoddiness will doom even the most ardent subjectively revolutionary current. The Polish events should prove to you that the most dedicated open discussion of the theoretical questions is an absolute, immediate necessity. For our part we know that the gulf between our understanding of the tasks in Poland today and the left's reflects a totally different conception of Marxism. The fact that we have a different class line stems from the fact that we reflect different classes. Comrades like those in Workers Power and the GOR have to account for a world view shared with forces on the other side of the class line. ■

Stalinist Capitalism

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Concretely, here is the problem you face. Capitalism, East as well as West, has the need to advance productivity through various incorporative schemes such as co-determination. Since you have used Poland as an example, we should indicate that in a number of factories, representatives of the workers sit with management to discuss production, etc. Because we see a *class* difference between the controllers of industry and the workers, our position is as sharp in Poland as it is in the U.S.: Workers stay away! If you view Poland as a workers' state, you must advocate that workers join not only enterprise committees but state-wide co-determination committees. We favor smashing such committees because we seek to smash the whole state apparatus. We believe that you do too, but only *in spite of* your theory. Your contradictory theory reflects no longer the contradictions between the proletariat and the bureaucrats, in what Trotsky asserted was a workers' state in the extreme throes of contradiction. Instead it reflects your own contradiction between a healthy impulse to advance the proletarian cause and your failure to shed the dead skin of the past.

Comrades, Poland today is casting tremendous light. Marxists, as advocates of democratic centralism, must fight the Walesa's criminal reformist notions of adding anarchic pluralist nostrums to state capitalism. However, we must also reject the Stalinist "centralizers" who would crush the working class to achieve their goal. We maintain that only the proletariat can really centralize capital sufficiently to solve the problems of humanity and that only our theory unambiguously shows the way. ■

Haitians Fight

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U.S. dislikes is blatant; so is the racism that incarcerates black immigrants while welcoming and settling others. There is also a built-in class distinction between the economic and political categories. Working people generally choose their politics out of economic necessity, not for the intellectual "dissidence" that bourgeois propaganda celebrates in Russia. The race and class distinctions also explain the U.S.'s recently stiffened attitude towards the Cuban refugees: the earlier migrants were mainly middle- and upper-class whites, while the current ones are largely poor blacks, mulattoes and whites.

The government policy of jailing Haitians until they agree to return home has aroused some resistance. The most successful action was the demonstration in December at the Krome Avenue Detention Center in Miami. During a battle with police, demonstrators tore down the fence and more than a hundred prisoners got away. On the whole, though, demonstrations and other actions have been small and limited to Haitians and Haitian-Americans, with some participation by blacks from other Caribbean nations and U.S. black and white leftists and liberals.

When rank-and-file Haitians dominate the actions, the spirit can be very militant: the favorite chant at a January 2 demonstration in Brooklyn was "Only one solution — revolution!" But in general the leadership of the refugee defense movement has come from Haitian Catholic priests and bourgeois politicians, the latter exiled for falling out with the Duvaliers. The tone, especially from the clergy, has been "humanitarian" — that is, beseeching the imperialist oppressors to have pity on their victims. The bourgeois politicians, for their part, have no beef with U.S. imperialism. They wish only to replace Duvalier as recipients of U.S. aid.

The bourgeois strategies are losing credibility with the masses of Haitians in the U.S. The bourgeois oppositionists have traditionally looked down on the Haitian working classes; they prefer to address each other and bourgeois Haitians still linked to the Duvaliers, hoping to split them away. The Church, which has a real base among the Haitian masses, may likewise be losing credibility. One Haitian tried taking a hammer to the Rev. Jerard Jean-Juste of Miami, called by *Newsweek* a "leading Haitian-American spokesman." The Reverend thinks the hammer attack is "a sign that many Haitians are getting tired of my preaching passive protests."

To put forward a more militant face, a collection of mainly Haitian organizations with support from Latin American and U.S. left groups formed the January 2nd Coalition to sponsor the Brooklyn march referred to above. But it too bases its program on liberal humanitarian grounds despite its more leftist statements. Thus the Coalition denounced "the Reagan administration's reactionary policies towards the Haitian refugees in the context of its reactionary policies toward peoples nation-wide and worldwide," (*La Nouvelle Haiti Tribune*, December 29); it cited particularly Reagan's threats against Nicaragua, his support for the Salvadorean junta, his social service cuts and his crushing of the air traffic controllers' strike and union. Its statement concludes:

"We want to emphasize that freedom for the Haitian refugees is more than a moral issue. It is in the concrete interests of the American people to support the struggle of Haitians against the Duvalier regime in Haiti and for political asylum in the U.S. For the same aggressive and illegal tactics that are being used against the

Haitian refugees are also being used against the American people."

Unfortunately, not all Americans see their "concrete interests" in this way. Some "American people," notably the liberal bourgeoisie and trade union bureaucracy, are willing to oppose Reagan's policy in El Salvador as a losing effort for U.S. capitalism ("another Vietnam"), but are effectively silent on his Haitian policy as long as it appears to be working to "solve" the refugee problem.

Moreover, the Coalition avoids suggesting that the context in which reactionary Reaganism thrives is the world capitalist crisis. Like much of the U.S. left, the January 2nd Coalition opposes Reaganism and imperialism without opposing the capitalism that gives rise to them (see our articles in *Socialist Voice* Nos. 14 and 15 on the All-Peoples Congress, one of the Coalition's sponsors). It spreads the illusion that imperialism can be halted without destroying capitalism, or that the real problem is Reagan's imperialism — as if liberal imperialism would be basically better. We fully support united front actions to stop specific imperialist policies like its treatment of the Haitians or U.S. aid to Duvalier (the LRP marched in the January 2nd demonstration), but we refuse to endorse propaganda that misleads the working class in the United States and Haiti.

Similarly, the Coalition supports a hunger strike begun by the Krome Avenue detainees in Miami and other refugee prisoners as a "dramatic action" which will "bring major pressure to bear on the Reagan administration." A hunger strike, like that of the Irish militants against British imperialism last year, is a desperate action by people willing to undertake heroic sacrifices to shock public opinion; but an administration that sponsors the Duvaliers and Somozas is no more likely to be moved by even the deaths of poor, black "illegal migrants" than was Margaret Thatcher by the H-block strikers. At best it will turn the hearts of a few bourgeois liberals who will do nothing to alter imperialist relations with Haiti.

The struggle to free the Haitian refugees cannot be left to liberal bourgeois elements. It will get nowhere without help from the masses of U.S. workers and black people. The fact that there exists no independent anti-capitalist working class movement in the U.S. today is chiefly the responsibility of the entrenched labor bureaucracy, often aided by the petty-bourgeois leaders of black and left organizations. In orienting the Haitian struggle toward liberal public opinion, the petty-bourgeois Haitian organizations are helping to reinforce the isolation of the refugees and the backward consciousness of the American working class.

Unions' Chauvinism Must Be Fought

The leaders of the U.S. labor unions, even the "left" bureaucrats, have totally capitulated to the chauvinist and protectionist sentiment that the American bourgeoisie is whipping up in this period. The AFL-CIO has called for curbs on immigration to protect American jobs, but such protectionism will not stop U.S. capitalists from laying off American workers and setting up runaway shops in low-wage countries like Haiti. The unions, which should be taking the lead in the Haitian masses' fight, support the government exclusion policy and in some cases work to get refugees deported.

A struggle against the reactionary labor bureaucracy must be central to the fight for mass organized defense of the refugees. Haitian workers and all workers who understand the importance of the refugee question must wage a battle against the leaderships of the unions and minority organizations in this country. This battle is part of the struggle to convince

fellow workers of their true interests — which are not those of the anti-Reagan bourgeois liberals.

It is crucial to fight to get the unions and the major black organizations to build and join all demonstrations and actions for free entry to the U.S. for Haitian emigrants, for the release from detention of imprisoned refugees and for ending support to the Duvalier regime. The latter demand is not a plea to the U.S. imperialists not to be imperialists, but it does permit unity in action with workers and others who believe that support for Duvalier is an error rather than imperialist policy.

Leading Haitian and American workers in combatting the chauvinist course of the American trade unions is a task that can only be done by communists. Their revolutionary alternative must take the form of fighting for the creation of revolutionary parties in both countries, sections of a common communist international.

Their demands would not be restricted to simply socialist revolution, on the one hand, or to basic democratic rights, on the other. In their struggle against the petty-bourgeois misleaders of the black groups and the unions, they would begin to popularize demands for full employment and a sliding scale of wages and hours to divide up the necessary work among all available workers at no loss in pay; it is crucial to convince workers of all races that under socialism additional workers are a benefit to the working class, not a threat to their livelihood. Communists fight for such transitional demands and all democratic demands alongside other workers; while particular struggles can be won under capitalism, they would argue that all democratic rights are inevitably doomed unless imperialism is overthrown by socialist revolutions.

The Haitian Revolution

Just as class divisions determine the nature of revolutionary strategy for struggles in the U.S., so do they in Haiti. Haitian conditions, however — it is possibly the poorest country in the Western hemisphere with a small working class — have contributed to the disorientation of the left organizations working for a Haitian revolution. A brief look at Haiti's history is necessary to understand what strategy can free so backward a country from the imperialist grip.

Haiti occupies the western third of the Caribbean island of Hispaniola; the eastern part is the Dominican Republic. The Spanish colonialists originally conquered the island and exterminated the Indians. They then set up plantations and kidnapped African blacks to work on them as slaves. The French colonialists eventually conquered the western side of Hispaniola and continued and expanded the slave plantations. By the late 18th century, the black slaves were the vast majority of the population.

Despite the efforts of the French slave-owners to suppress any African cultural survivals, the slaves on the plantations and the runaway slaves in the interior were forged into a new nation with its own language, Creole, based on African languages and French, and its own religion, Voodoo. With the outbreak of the revolution in France in 1789, the French in Haiti fell out among themselves. The free blacks and mulattoes took advantage of the whites' disunity to fight against the racial oppression and restrictions they faced. This breakdown opened the way for a general uprising of blacks in Haiti. In 1791 the "maroons" or runaway slaves revolted, followed by the plantation slaves. The former slaves fought successive French governments for 13 years until they won independence in 1804 as the nation of Haiti — the only successful slave revolution in the history of the world.

In the process, however, the land was laid waste several times over. Large-scale agriculture broke down as the land was

divided and redivided. The former slaves, kept in ignorance and degradation by the slave-owners, could not get beyond this condition without aid. The defeated French, the other colonial powers and the United States, slave-owning nations all, did what they could to seal the new black nation off from the rest of the world. Of course, they had no objections to getting rich off Haiti's resources. This they did by dealing with Haiti's rulers, for the most part the mulattoes and originally free blacks and their descendants who were the only people with property and education.



January 2 demonstration in Brooklyn showed militant support for beleaguered Haitian refugees.

Using the state to enrich themselves, the Haitian bourgeoisie sold off much of Haiti's rich forests to European and American capitalists, leaving bare, eroded hillsides impossible to cultivate. The bourgeoisie seized the land from the poor peasants, reducing many smallholders to sharecropping under the *de moitié* or two-halves system. To this day, the rural people, the majority of the population, are divided mostly between smallholders farming tiny plots and sharecroppers. All the peasants are subject to occasional labor drafts by the government and large landowners.

The bourgeoisie of Haiti has remained tied to foreign capital, until recently mainly French. This is reflected in the fact that the official language of Haiti is French, which at most 20 percent of the population speaks. The bourgeoisie has depended on foreign loans to finance its government, enterprises and expensive life-style. Today the dominant imperialism is America, which sent the marines into Haiti as early as 1915 to collect debts owed to U.S. capitalists. More recently, the U.S. contributed to Haitian "modernization" as described at the beginning of this article, and the new opening up to imperialism is what led to the massive internal crisis and refugee exodus.

What then is the class nature of Haitian society? It is clearly a backward capitalist country exploited by imperialism. Pre-capitalist social forms like slavery were abolished by mass revolutionary struggle. The sharecropping that many peasants are forced into has nothing to do with feudalism or "semi-feudalism," as a prominent "Marxist-Leninist" view of Haiti would have it, but is rather an emanation of imperialism's stranglehold on the country that prevents even the economic expansion typical of nineteenth-century capitalism. Haiti is

typical of economically backward, ex-colonial countries in the epoch of imperialist decay: the surplus-value produced by peasants and wage workers is largely siphoned off by the world capitalist market and the direct imperialist owners.

Under these circumstances the Haitian revolution has the primary task of breaking out of the clutches of imperialism. This can be done only if the revolution is under the leadership of the proletariat, the only class whose fundamental interests can be realized only in opposition to imperialist dependence. It also requires a thoroughly internationalist revolutionary strategy, for economic independence for an isolated Haiti is inconceivable in an imperialist-dominated world. In sum, Haiti cries out for a socialist revolution to create a workers' state (or dictatorship of the proletariat); its tasks would be not only the expropriation of the large capitalist holdings to end imperialism's power, but also the accomplishment of the remaining democratic tasks like supporting peasant land seizures and, above all, spreading the revolution throughout the Caribbean. This is precisely the Trotskyist strategy of permanent revolution.

MHL Wants Bourgeois Revolution

The contrary view has been raised by the *Mouvement Haitien de Liberation*, a tendency that expresses a very left-wing version of Maoism but operates on the assumption that no socialist revolution is possible today.

"In a society like Haiti, semi-feudal and semi-colonial, the struggle must first of all be anti-feudal and anti-imperialist; it is in this sense that it is democratic and national; it is in this sense that it does not stand for the suppression of capitalism and that, while the great imperialist enterprises must be seized and nationalized, the feudal lands will be distributed among the peasants and we will even allow, in addition to small-scale cultivation, a rich-peasant economy. It is in this sense that it will be a bourgeois democratic revolution, because the target is large feudal property and not private property in general. Against the common enemy, imperialism and feudalism, an alliance is necessary among the proletariat, the great mass of the peasantry, and the different layers of the urban petty bourgeoisie." (*Haiti Liberation*, October 1981).

The MHL thus distinguishes itself from the comprador bourgeoisie that backs Jean-Claude Duvalier, which would be happy to eliminate the landowners in favor of capitalist farming for the imperialist market. The MHL insists that its entire strategy is dedicated to the achievement of the dictatorship of the proletariat — but at a later stage when capitalist relations will have developed independent of feudalism and imperialism and the working class will be allied in the class struggle to a rural proletariat arraigned against the rich peasantry. It also believes that this strategy was Lenin's — but it forgets that Lenin transcended his early "democratic dictatorship" formula during the socialist revolution of 1917.

The picture the MHL paints of a "people's" dictatorship of three classes — workers, peasants and urban petty-bourgeoisie — is completely utopian and fundamentally reactionary. Since the economy will still be capitalist, how will it avoid a renewed imperialist penetration and domination? This is certainly what happened in Mao's China, whose revolution was made under a similar strategy and has since gone begging from Russian imperialism to Japanese and American for the capital and technology it needs to escape its historic backwardness. Likewise, the MHL's encouragement of a rich peasantry, which dates back to the disastrous Bukharin-Stalin "enrich yourselves" policy in the Soviet Union in the 1920's,

will lead just as it threatened to do then to an open door for imperialism.

The Nicaraguan revolution under the Sandinistas' petty-bourgeois domination in alliance with the anti-Somoza sector of the big bourgeoisie, shows the pitfalls of a non-proletarian "popular" leadership: the workers remain exploited by capital and the country's leaders incessantly maneuver from one imperialism to another. All the nationalist-led colonial revolutions have failed to free the new nations from imperialism. Even though the MHL criticizes the Sandinistas for basing themselves on the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie rather than the workers, in what way is their strategy for Haiti different from the Sandinistas' for Nicaragua? There is no fundamental (that is, class) difference between the Nicaraguans' bourgeois alliance and the MHL's insistence on maintaining capitalist economic relations and allowing a (non-petty) bourgeoisie to grow.

In fact, the only way to try to defend small-property capitalism, avoid imperialist penetration and do nothing about spreading the revolution internationally would be to restrict the economy to small-scale production for the internal market. That would be nothing but reactionary, and it too would fail to keep the imperialist powers at bay. Moreover, an isolated country as backward as Haiti will *never* become ripe for socialism through its own internal efforts alone, no matter how profoundly the class struggle develops. "Socialism in one country" is a fraud for the most advanced nations, let alone the least. The two-stage revolution formula of the MHL and other Maoist-derived tendencies is an impossibility. The Haitian revolution will be proletarian socialist — and above all internationalist — or it will lead, sooner rather than later, straight back into the lap of imperialism.

Only Socialism Can Stop Imperialism

In the final analysis the only hope for Haiti and other ex-colonial countries to escape from imperialism is the socialist revolution in the United States and other imperialist countries. Undeniably, revolutionary conditions have not matured here as they have in Central America and could equally well do in Haiti. The building of a proletarian revolutionary party in the U.S., a task the LRP is dedicated to fight for, is an inescapable necessity for revolution. This and other revolutionary developments in the U.S. would be greatly enhanced by a revolutionary workers' state in Haiti that proclaimed its socialist goals and appealed to the U.S. working class for support; and they would likewise be advanced by a campaign by Haitian-American workers for an internationalist policy by the U.S. working class and oppressed people. The tasks are not unrelated. A working-class strategy is the crucial element both for the immediate struggle in defense of the Haitian refugees and for the long-term goals of anti-imperialist and socialist victories.

Free All Haitian Refugees! Full Amnesty for All Undocumented Workers! Smash Racist Immigration Laws!

Down with Duvalier! For the Socialist Revolution and a Workers' State in Haiti! Land to the Peasants! For the Socialist Federation of the Caribbean!

End Imperialism, End Racism, Win Full Employment and Free Immigration through the U.S. Socialist Revolution!

Build the Revolutionary Party in Haiti and the U.S.! Re-create the Fourth International!

Union Givebacks

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six months ago. On Solidarity Day over 400,000 workers marched through the streets of Washington; Reagan's openly pro-business, racist and anti-working class administration brought together workers and the oppressed united in anger and looking to fight back. But while this tremendous outpouring and display of workers' unity set up the potential for a genuine class struggle against capitalism, the bureaucracy limited the action to a safety-valve rally which pointed to passive electoral solutions.

There weren't any massive defeats that reversed the momentum of Solidarity Day and wrung enormous concessions from powerful unions like the UAW and Teamsters. Lane Kirkland & Co. never intended to wage an industrial defense against the big corporations. Their solution September 19 and now is to elect capitalist Democratic politicians, and their "political" strategy is only an attempt to mask their real capitulations and retreats. Despite the fact that this year some 40 percent of all organized workers will have contracts negotiated, when speaker after speaker at Solidarity Day pointed to the "struggle" in 1982 they meant the Congressional elections and not these class battles.

Having abandoned industrial action for "politics" the bureaucracy helped pave the road to givebacks. While in the past unions have made concessions and lost past gains, what makes the current givebacks strategy unique is that it now defines the essence of the role of the unions. Unions are being asked to collaborate with the bosses to keep industries going. They will lose members, dues and power but will be allowed to stay in business, at least for now. Those unwilling to play ball, like PATCO, will be broken, while the vast bulk of workers — over 80 percent, including the most oppressed — will continue to remain without any union protection altogether.

Making Capitalists "Responsible"

Under these conditions the unions' entry into "politics" is for a pro-capitalist purpose — to pass the consequences of givebacks onto the state. The UAW uses its political clout to fight for direct government subsidization of Chrysler (tomorrow Ford?) and indirect subsidization of the auto industry as a whole through reactionary and jingoist protectionist schemes. This, coupled with enormous concessions, is supposed to save the industry, jobs and the union.

While accepting and assisting capitalist reorganization and rationalization forced by the conditions of the depressed international economy, the unions demand that the capitalists do their part. For example, the Steelworkers attacked U.S. Steel's merger with Marathon Oil. Unions want management promises to invest in and promote sagging industries like auto and steel in the U.S. That is why a key UAW demand was for a cut in car prices from money saved through concessions; lowering the price of American cars, it hopes, would boost sales at the expense of foreign models.

It is clear, however, that business has no intention of being "responsible." The giant corporations cannot invest in high employment. *Business Week* of March 1 echoes the auto industry's feeling that the givebacks are not enough; far more must be done to lower costs in order to better the industry's competitive position. One industrial expert is quoted as saying, "We've still got old plants and a manufacturing system that will take years to change."

More is needed besides further wage cuts: an investment policy aimed at rationalizing production and introducing new *labor-saving* technology. And even with that, the auto industry believes it may have to turn its U.S. plants into assembly lines for foreign-made components. If that is more profitable, then the money saved by givebacks will go there (or into speculative finance, or abroad).

The unions are also demanding maintenance of social programs. Solidarity Day focused opposition on Reagan's attacks. With no solution to the economic crisis except givebacks, the best the bureaucrats can do is to promote and defend welfare capitalism. Since being "responsible" and "practical" means that low seniority workers (particularly blacks, women and youth) will join the growing ranks of unemployed, the bureaucrats are prepared to wage a "militant" fight for unemployment insurance benefits and food stamps. These programs are defensible but only as stop-gaps to aid workers caught in the jaws of the bureaucrats' class collaborationist policies. They are not solutions.

The bureaucrats' efforts to maintain their position through influencing the capitalist state is a continuation of the tendency of the unions to become integrated into the state apparatus. Thus the fight against the big business offensive is to take place inside the government and the courts over the attempt to regulate capitalism. Reagan is pro-business and must be replaced by a pro-labor Democrat. For the bureaucracy, the lesson of the Carter debacle is that the unions must become more active in the Democratic Party. With one hand the bureaucracy sought to remind the Democrats and Reagan through Solidarity Day of the danger of workers getting out of control. That is why Kirkland publicized talk of general strike sentiment last fall. With the other hand the bureaucrats seek to show how responsible labor is, that they are willing to pay the price to regain their influence in government. Therefore the givebacks are an essential part of labor's political strategy.

It is no accident that the labor bureaucrats (and their socialistic tails) seek to identify the enemy as "Reaganomics." Reagan is certainly a vicious enemy of the workers, but he and his policies are not the cause of the problem, merely one rotten solution to it. The capitalist system, including its state and all its parties, is the root cause.

The idea that the capitalist state can be used as an instrument to defend the working class is basic to the outlook of the reformist bureaucracy. Leon Trotsky pointed to this development which was apparent even in the 1930's:

"In the eyes of the bureaucracy of the trade union movement, the chief task lies in 'freeing' the state from the embrace of capitalism, in weakening its dependence on trusts, in pulling it over to their side. This position is in complete harmony with the social position of the labor aristocracy and the labor bureaucracy, who fight for a crumb in the share of superprofits of imperialist capitalism. The labor bureaucrats do their level best in words and deeds to demonstrate to the "democratic" state how reliable and indispensable they are in peacetime and especially in time of war. By transforming the trade unions into organs of the state, fascism invents nothing new; it merely draws to their ultimate conclusion the tendencies inherent in capitalism." ("Trade Unions in the Transitional Epoch")

As workers learned in Chile in 1973 and are learning in Poland today, the capitalist state cannot be won over. It is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, which must be smashed and replaced by a workers' state, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Electoral politics is no solution, whether it means the Democratic Party efforts of the bureaucracy or the one-step-to-the-leftism of those who call for a labor party (which today can only be understood as a reformist demand, in contrast to Trotsky's use of the slogan). The power of the working class stems from its central role in production. Electoralism disarms workers by diverting the struggle from the real power they have in running industry. Genuine Leninists always explain this, even when using elections for propaganda purposes.

As the capitalist crisis has dried up the basis for reformist gains, the economist, militant rank and file strategies have collapsed as a real alternative to the existing bureaucracy. The number of strikes in 1981 fell to the lowest figure since 1942, a war year. This does not mean a lack of anger and underlying militancy among industrial workers. As Fraser remarked in explaining why his attempted givebacks deal with General Motors met with such heavy resistance, "A lot of people hate G.M." Solidarity Day showed that workers have no great love for the capitalists and their man in the White House, Ronald Reagan.

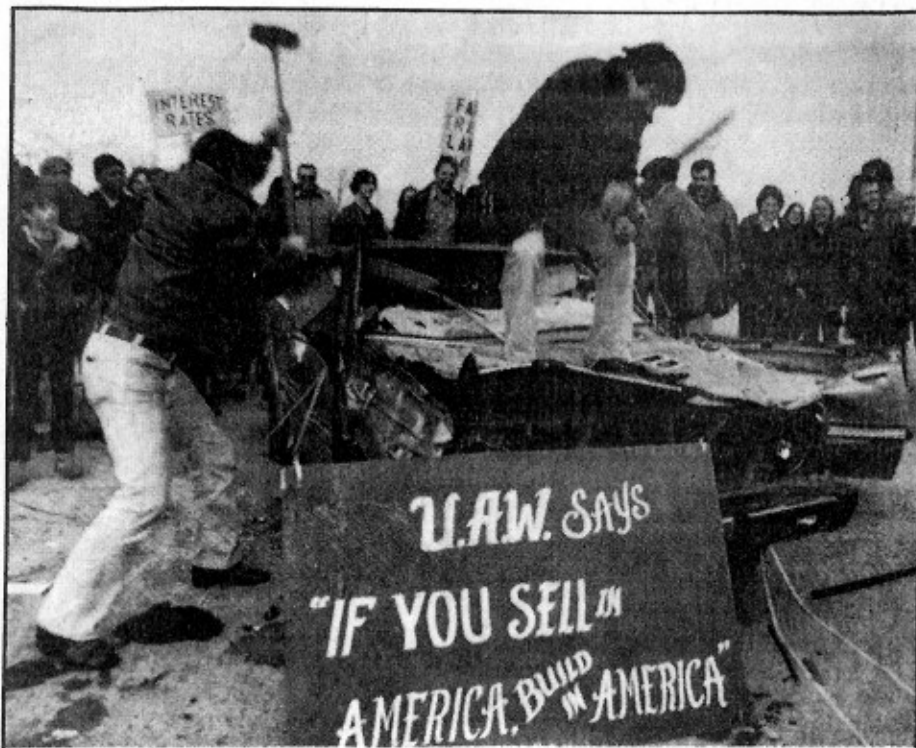
However, militant workers can hardly be expected to entertain illusions that the Lane Kirklands and Doug Frasers will lead a real fight. But if the current leadership must be defeated, who is there to replace it? The existing oppositions in the unions offer neither a program or strategy for victory. In auto, the opposition to Fraser over the givebacks is led by local officials, including local presidents afraid of the ranks' reaction, who form the backbone of Locals Opposed to Concessions (LOC). The leftist rank and file groups tail after this "opposition," which accepts protectionism and orients to the skilled and high seniority workers seeking to preserve their stake in a worsening situation.

"No givebacks" is correct. But it is no solution to the crisis. Militant tactics like sitdown strikes are necessary but by themselves insufficient. The task before the workers is how to prevent further economic collapse. Capitalism's answer is to squeeze more profits out of the workers. And as the Chrysler example shows, even with enormous concessions workers' militancy cannot save whole sections of industry.

The capitalists cannot be allowed to continue to ruin the economy. In auto alone, over 200,000 layoffs dramatically pose the danger of the ruin and decay of the proletariat itself. If the capitalists can't keep the plants open and fully operated, workers must demand that they be expropriated.

"No givebacks; expropriate the auto industry under workers control." This program should be extended to all industries in similar straits. If the capitalists can't run industry workers must demand the state take over vital production. Such a course raises the necessity to expropriate the banks which control the capital necessary to rebuild industry. Further, as long as the capitalists hold state power these measures either won't occur or will be taken in a distorted form, defending the interests of the capitalists and not the workers. It is necessary to connect the demand for expropriation with the fight for a workers' state which will reconstruct the economy on a socialist basis.

A workers' state would plan the economy in the interests of the working class. Through massive public works the cities will be rebuilt and made inhabitable. A sliding scale of wages and hours, dividing the necessary work among the available workers, would provide protection against inflation while reducing the work week. New technology and labor-saving devices would be a boon, not a disaster, for workers. These are some elements of a program for full employment, for raising productivity through elevating the political and cultural level of the working class. It stands in opposition to decaying capitalism which threatens to drag the proletariat down with it into ruin and despair. In the words of Leon Trotsky, writing in the Transitional Program: "The question is one of life or



Autoworkers destroy Japanese car at buy-American rally. Jingoist UAW "left" bureaucrats steer workers toward deadly end.

death of the only creative and progressive class, and by that token of the future of mankind."

But no program to defend the workers' immediate interests — much less one designed to conquer power — can occur unless the workers recognize that they have the strength to win. The bureaucrats' entry into politics is conditioned upon using workers' power as passively as possible, through electoralism. Revolutionaries, however, fight day after day in the workplaces and workers' organizations for a general strike. Such an action would unify a divided class and impose on it an enormous awareness of its real power. It would transform the industrial struggle against givebacks onto the political level. It would bring the entire class, including the unemployed and oppressed minorities, into a face-to-face clash with the whole bourgeoisie, stopping industry and government from functioning.

A general strike will first appeal to workers as a way to defend its immediate interests under attack. By its nature it is a genuine united front of all kinds of workers with all kinds of political views. Within it revolutionaries fight for the Marxist program. It is the very strength of the workers in action that places socialism on the agenda as a realistic solution for the proletariat as a whole. ■

On Stalinist Capitalism

The following document is part of a letter sent in April 1981 to two left organizations, the Spartacusbund of West Germany and the International Communist League (IKL) of Austria. The Spartacusbund is now defunct. Both organizations defended the pseudo-Trotskyist theory that the USSR and similar societies are workers' states. The letter, slightly edited for publication, was a continuation of our debate with them on this vital question.

We begin by repeating our position on the class nature of Stalinism and the economic forms of the workers' state. Communism means making production the responsibility of society as a whole. We are not anarchists; we know that the state cannot dissolve into civil society the day after the revolution. Even if we could re-create the Fourth International with optimum speed and evenness, the world revolution will not occur simultaneously in all countries. Nor will the bourgeoisies in individual countries cede quickly and gracefully to the workers' seizure of power. Further, in many countries production has developed yet less evenly than in West Germany or the USA. Production in these countries and, more importantly, on a world level has not reached and will not (under bourgeois rule) reach the level necessary to maintain abundance, a prerequisite for communism. The working class itself must fit itself, through continued struggle and growth of consciousness and culture, for its transformation into communist humanity. Thus production must be socialized initially, not through the dissolution of private property into a classless, stateless commune, but through the instrumentality of the workers' own state, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

These statements may seem like truisms. We recite them here to respond to a point of yours. "You (the LRP) maintain simultaneously that the 'proletarian property forms' are a 'hindrance to effective capitalist rule' and that the bureaucracy seeks to adapt the economy better to the law of value; on the other hand you suddenly write that the state property is already a 'capitalist form.'"

Comrades, there is no contradiction here, although there is an apparent misunderstanding of our position. The Stalin bureaucracy did *not* seek to adapt the economy better to the law of value in the sense of adjusting it to some outside force or idea. The law of value never ceased to operate in the Soviet Union. Its development in the early workers' state was controlled by a conscious working class which sought to overcome it (and all the related blind laws of scarcity) over time. Concomitant with the process of degeneration of the workers' state was the increasing reassertion of the dominance of the law of value as the chief economic regulator, as opposed to conscious direction by the proletariat. The law of value, operating through the "accumulation for accumulation's sake" of the thirties, forced the bureaucracy to formally adopt it in the 1940's as the point of departure for all succeeding five-year plans. Planning, which under the workers' state was the development and extension of working class consciousness, became instead an agency for the execution of the law of value, the mainspring of capitalist production.

Nationalized Property Is a Proletarian Form

State property is a proletarian or socialist property form — it is the possession of society as a whole, at least in name. More to the point, state property on the broad historical level is no more freely chosen than the law of value. In fact it is the consequence of the law of value as well as the negation (although

not the "final" negation) of the law of value. The productive forces strive toward centralization and concentration. The highest expression of this under capitalism is property in the hands of the national state. Statification is an inevitable drive of capitalism. Equally inevitable for capitalism is the nation. However, if the system is driven to statification, the national form also acts as a brake. The productive forces cannot stop at national boundaries, however; they seek international centralization. The only way to achieve this international centralization under capitalism in the last analysis is imperialist war, where the capital of the industrially powerful countries seeks to bring the rest of the world's productive forces under its control, with the consequent destruction of the working class and productive apparatus. An international centralization of production that would expand rather than destroy the productive forces is possible only under socialism. On the broad historical level (the most crucial level) internationalism leads to communism while nationalism seeks the survival of capitalism.

In a situation where this imperialist competition takes place between countries with highly statified property, we see how a "socialist form" with a capitalist content leads not to expanded forces of production but to its opposite. Traditional capitalist countries which are driven to extensive nationalizations to save failing industries (for example, by socializing their losses) may indeed arrest their decline for a while. In the long run, their situation becomes even more desperate. The rate of profit continues to decline. Technological innovation fails, accumulation dissipates and the state industry erodes. A failing state-owned industry drags down more of the rest of the economy with it than a non-state enterprise. Capitalism, whatever the subjective desires of its ruling class, driven inevitably toward adopting a form linked to the future socialist society, socialized means of production, ends up worse than before. The short-term solution is a long-term hindrance to effective capitalist rule, to return to one of the original points.

Trotsky pointed this out with respect to nationalized states as well as nationalized sectors long ago in his introduction to the German edition of *Permanent Revolution* written in 1930. "In respect of the technique of production socialist society must represent a stage higher than capitalism. To aim at building a *nationally isolated* socialist society means, in spite of all passing successes, to pull the productive forces backward even as compared with capitalism. To attempt, regardless of the geographical, cultural and historical conditions of the country's development, which constitutes a part of the world unity, to realize a shut-off proportionality of all the branches of economy within a national framework, means to pursue a reactionary utopia."

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Soviet Union, where the socialist forms once had a socialist content. That is, industry, banking, and trade were in the hands of workers' soviets, a state form less separated from civil society than any before. To the extent that advanced consciousness, embodied in the vanguard, ruled with flourishing soviets and that the revolution spread internationally (especially to the advanced industrial countries), to that extent internationally planned production for abundance would defeat the state and the law of value. To the extent that the revolution was isolated in one backward country, the law of value forced planning into its channel, and the state once more rose above society.

These considerations may make clearer how state property

is capitalist, even under the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is, quite simply, because the state itself is a capitalist form. The separation of the Russian workers' state from society, and of the apparatus from the state, was a retreat or transition back toward capitalism. On the other hand, when in the future the property of workers' states will become more and more the property of the human race as a whole and the state will dissolve more and more into society, there will be no state and, indeed, no property — no capitalist forms of any kind.

You charge us with being contradictory while not understanding contradictions, but you do not prove your assertions. We return the charge to you. "Proletarian property forms" do "hinder effective capitalist rule," and "state property is already a 'capitalist form'." Comrades, one source of your difficulty is that you are mixing up parameters and seeking identities where there are contradictions. Marx in the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Lenin in *State and Revolution* and Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed* all pointed out that a proletarian state was a capitalist state — albeit without the bourgeoisie. Yes, proletarian property forms are still bourgeois property forms and further, yes, even the proletariat itself is a bourgeois class! The dictatorship of the proletariat is still part of capitalist society. Only with socialism, the beginning stage of communism, where the forms of capitalism (but not substantially the content) persist, does a new non-capitalist society come into being. The proletariat becomes humanity.

To suppose anything else is to believe that the Stalinist states are either already socialist or are some third form of society, neither communist nor capitalist. Your position offers you a choice: under the "workers' state" rhetoric you share either Shachtman's view that Russia is "bureaucratic collectivism" or Stalin's that it is socialist.

In reality the distinction between a workers' state and a Stalinist state does not lie in the technically descriptive term "state capitalism." A workers' state has a stratified, still bourgeois, economy which is moving toward socialism (allowing for setbacks and temporary degenerations), internationalism and production for use instead of accumulation of values. A Stalinist state has a stratified economy designed to maintain the nation-state and prop up world imperialism, and is driven to the production of values; production is not aimed at the creation of a storehouse of abundance and reproductive industry as the basis for socialism. In fact the system generates huge amounts of waste which divert value from the reproductive cycle.

Because the law of value still dominates and the class struggle persists, the stratified property under Stalinism has a different content from that of the original workers' state. While there is an ebb and flow of centralization and decentralization, the capitals tend to act in far more decentralized fashion than they would in a workers' state. Bureaucratic rules which are designed to recentralize compound the anarchy but do not eliminate it.

While the economies of a workers' state and Stalinist state are both state capitalist, the point is that Stalinism cannot maintain centralized state capital. But a workers' state would develop it through to the ultimate unification of one international capital. At that point capital and capitalism cease to exist and communism (at least its lower stage) is at hand. Stalinism not only checks and sets back the centralization of internal capitals but maintains divisions between international capitals to their utmost. "Socialism in one country" is the maintenance of bourgeois nationalism and the prevention of socialism.

We would like now to deal with two other points that you have raised. First, as to your demand that we "specify the

turning point: where and when did proletarian rule cease and that of the Stalinist bureaucracy (you should rather speak of the 'state bourgeoisie') begin?"

We date the victory of the counterrevolution in the Soviet Union to 1939. By that year the last remnants of workers' rule, the last Bolsheviks in the state apparatus, had been wiped out. The civilian elements were purged in the great trials, the commanders of the Red Army were shot (down to the rank of major), millions of rank-and-file party members who thought that the purpose of the Plan was to improve the life of the workers were arrested and sent to slave-labor camps. The last remnants of workers' consciousness and leadership still operating within the state were finally eliminated. The new class, able to transmit its legacy over generations, was finally in place. Confirmatory laws including the new constitution were in place and operating. At the same time, industrial production became more anarchic and its growth rate began a period of decline. Fees were instituted for secondary education, previously free. Maternity leaves were shortened; tardiness, absenteeism, and changing jobs without permission were made punishable by forced labor. In 1939, the recently purged Red Army invaded Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Eastern Poland, Finland and Bessarabia. The accord with Germany shows its imperialist ambitions, hardly solely defensive in nature. Later, the previously mentioned economic reform bringing planning into line with the law of value was instituted. What this means is that, having eliminated the last vestige of the workers' state, the state bourgeoisie immediately embarked on the only path that could save it — savage repression of the working class on the one hand, and imperialist conquests on the other.

Civil War Showed Stalinists' Triumph

1939 was the culmination of a long process of degeneration which had laid the material basis for the counterrevolution. Trotsky had already noted the marks of deepening degeneracy. By 1937 Spain proved that the Stalinist bureaucracy was thoroughly counterrevolutionary and a key bastion of support to world imperialism. The contradiction between the bureaucracy and socialized property was exquisite and sharp. Trotsky described the great purges of the late 1930's as a "defensive civil war," in which the Stalinists announced their weakness and their inability to maintain their "hollow shell" of control.

Trotsky was right in that it was a civil war. However, rather than a sign of imminent collapse, it proved to be a signal of class triumph. Trotsky's "hollow shell" prediction proved wrong, as Stalinist Russia survived the war strong enough to expand and defeat the proletariat at the end of World War II. Russia proved in practice how the incredibly contradictory society Trotsky so well described in *The Revolution Betrayed* "resolved" its contradictions.

The second point from your letter that we will deal with in regard to the Soviet Union is this: "You write that the bureaucracy cannot abolish state property. Why is this so impossible? ... The USSR is a bourgeois state whose economy is driven by capitalist-imperialist forces, which finds itself in imperialist encirclement, possesses proletarian property forms which are a hindrance to effective capitalist rule; nevertheless the USSR has a (state) capitalist character in which the bureaucracy cannot transform the state capitalist property into private capitalist property. Honestly speaking, we do not understand this."

We ourselves barely understand this apparent paraphrase (not a quotation) of our position. We will try nonetheless to explain it to you. A thoroughly nationalized economy under

capitalist control is very fragile. The whole working class faces one boss, in the USSR a thin layer of state bureaucrats. All economic decisions proceed from a single committee, which naturally gets all the blame for the workers' misery. In order to maintain their rule in such a situation of naked exploitation of the many by the few, the bureaucrats need a huge apparatus of repression, secret police and "militia." This is an evident drain on production. Likewise, the top bureaucrats need a vast layer of middle and petty bureaucrats to shield them from the working class — another drain on production and hindrance to the accumulation of capital, the basis of capitalist rule.

Further, despite the seeming ability of the bureaucrats to plan as they wish, no plan is ever fulfilled, especially in the consumer goods sector. Production of capital goods thus dominates production of consumer goods — a hallmark of capitalism. When production *does* run smoothly (more or less) it is often in spite of the plan, not because of it; enterprises acquire raw materials and machinery not through planned allocation, but through unofficial purchasing agents, the so-called "tolkachi" or pushers. Production in the USSR attains its ends as the result of blind economic forces, unforeseen and unwished by those who make production decisions, very much like the "invisible hand" of the capitalist market, and not at all like conscious socialist planning.

You assert in your letter that production is primarily for use rather than profit. Obviously this process has existed for decades under Stalinist rule in Russia and, from 1948 at least, elsewhere. This cannot be viewed as a fact frozen for decades but as a process related to a law of development. If it is true, then these states *under Stalinist rule* are predominantly socialist or at least *moving in that direction*. Or else they are "bureaucratic collectivist" economies, either progressive (Shachtman 1940) or reactionary (Shachtman post-1940).

You refer to Preobrazhenski's "law of socialist accumulation." We have made clear (*Socialist Voice* No. 2) that we reject any such "law." His dedication to such reification was undoubtedly one reason for his early capitulation to Stalin. He opposed Stalin when Stalin was allied with Bukharin; later, when Stalin moved toward rapid industrialization based upon nationalism, Preobrazhenski capitulated. The "economic laws" of a workers' state are those of capitalism; the counter-"law" is that of advanced proletarian consciousness, no "economic law" at all since it rests upon growing material abundance and the eradication of scarcity (and therefore of economics and its uncontrolled laws). To posit an economic law of socialism under the workers' state is to pose the workers' state as the new historical society.

No De-Stalinization without Revolution

The Stalinist bureaucrats have no alternative to the present form of society. Perhaps some of them would prefer a return to shareholding capitalism. We don't care to speculate, and at any rate it doesn't matter. A return to shareholding capitalism would entail a thoroughgoing reorganization and disruption of the whole society and of all production. This would provide big openings for the working class and for the imperialist rivals of the bureaucracy to do away with them altogether. No, the bureaucracy, whatever its subjective wishes, cannot go over into shareholding capitalism — such a thing could only happen through a *political revolution*. This, by the way, is also why shareholding capitalists never go over peacefully to complete state capitalism, even when their continued rule, as in Cuba or China, is obviously destroying society. Only statification can save decaying capitalism — for a while — and

it must be shoved down the capitalists' throats. Statification is an inevitable socializing process under capitalism. The capitalists must try to use it against competing capitals and the working class. They have no choice, despite the utopian reactionary attempts to recapture private enterprise and the 19th century. Many a Stalinist might dream of this too, but it is impossible. Instead the economy both strains toward centralization and is pulled away from it. In West Europe, the economic laws of motion force centralization. Before World War II Europe was unable to unify peacefully under capitalist nationalism; therefore the basis was set for unification under the Third Reich. This tendency toward unification collapsed too, because capitalism could not permit it. The process, however, was inexorable and the post-war Common Market-NATO alliance attempted to do what Hitler failed to do — now under the aegis of the U.S.; and this too is collapsing.

Should Workers Have Fought Stalinists?

Under Stalinism the alternation of centralization-decentralization exists as well, and one can mark out the periods of Russian domination of East Europe through bilateral treaties, COMECON, polycentrism, etc. The point is not that decentralization (or devolution) will win out as the dominant trend, but that the system is torn between the two tendencies as is capitalism everywhere. And, like capitalism everywhere, it can never fully centralize capital within its national borders or across them. In fact, in both the West and the East as the crisis continues the process of anarchy in production and the breakup of international combinations (political and economic) will accelerate. If capitalism continues it will have to resolve the crisis by recentralizing through increased bursts of statification coupled with a new defeat of the proletariat by means of depression, fascism and world war.

Symptomatic of the decentralizing tendency under Stalinism, which you underplay, is the pulling apart of the Eastern bloc. Already the monopoly of foreign trade has disappeared in Yugoslavia, Hungary, China and in reality in Poland. Internal economies show both increasing anarchy and lowering rates of accumulation despite the plans. The East German economy (which is better off and not typical as you claim) shows similar alternations, so far in less wildly gyrating ways. (One reason is East Germany's relatively good trade position with the West.) But even here we are certain that next year you will be able to cite 12 more centralizing regulations precisely because the decentralizing tendencies are becoming even more acute than in the past.

Such cycles of centralization-decentralization are obviously a feature of Western life. In the United States, the combat between the Reaganites and the liberal-reformist popular frontists has some of this character. But the capitalists' ability to take the next huge step toward centralization depends upon proletarian defeat, and even then they will not solve the problem. So too, a return to some idea of a strict centralized control, eradication of anarchy and polycentrism, and the restoration of production for the bureaucracy's use are Stalinist myths as long as the proletariat is undefeated. Only a victorious workers' state can so centralize capital, East and West.

We would like now to deal with one of *your* contradictions. To quote: "...Stalinism does not rest on capitalist property forms and nevertheless is not progressive but reactionary...Naturally there is a contradiction here, but this is a contradiction which is rooted in reality and can only be given expression through theory..." On the contrary, comrades — this contradiction can only really be expressed through

practice. We regret to say that when it comes to cases your theory gets pretty vague. In answer to our question: which side are you on when the USSR conquered Eastern Europe in the 1940's, you write, "We must obviously stand on the side of the working class." How? By "seizing the bureaucratic form of the property transformation from the Stalinists, but filling it with independent revolutionary class activity and turning it *against* the oppression of the Stalinist bureaucracy, that is, in destroying the bureaucracy." If you can draw concrete actions from this muddle, your grasp of dialectics is great indeed.

What we would say to the Polish workers in this case is: seize the factories, elect workers' councils with a central workers' council over all to run production and to organize the arming of the workers and the formation of a workers' militia;

Salvador Rebels

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offensive for a compromise has been stepped up. In late January, the five guerrilla commanders sent an open letter to Reagan, calling for negotiations without any preconditions and appealing to the "progressive and democratic vocation of the United States" and to a president whose "heart is anguished over oppression" (*New York Times*, January 28).

Similarly, Ruben Zamora, the Washington representative of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), the political arm of the FMLN (who, like several FDR leaders, is a former minister of the junta), told *Newsweek* (February 15) that "he is not hoping for a rebel military victory," which would face enmity from the U.S. and Central American capitalists. But as for a negotiated settlement,

"At least the U.S. would not be completely hostile to us. ... The private sector and (moderate politicians) would stay, in the possibility of a partition of seats (in the government). It seems to me a political settlement would strengthen the democratic process and strengthen pluralism."

Even the leftist rebel leaders based in working-class organizations are fake "Marxist-Leninists" at best, but they all know perfectly well that U.S. imperialism never stood for progress and democracy in its semi-colonial dependencies. Why then these pleadings? The FDR-FMLN is controlled by petty-bourgeois nationalists, whose only vision for an El Salvador free of the murderous junta is one under the economic wing of imperialism. A mass, proletarian-led socialist revolution that abolishes capitalist power and spreads its dynamic throughout the Caribbean and Latin America is the last thing they want. The FDR hopes to win over more "progressive businessmen" and run a "pluralist," that is, capitalist, government.

Is such a coalition regime possible? The FDR has three types it must win to achieve this goal: military officers who will break from the junta as a losing cause, Christian Democrats like president Jose Napoleon Duarte (who may be ousted in the forthcoming phony elections by a front-man more suitable to the oligarchs), and above all elements of the Catholic Church hierarchy, who have strong connections among U.S. Catholic officials backing the rebel cause. The FDR-FMLN's recent cries for negotiations reflect an inescapable commitment that even in victory their government can only be a coalition with capitalist representatives such as these.

The petty-bourgeois nationalists' need for "pluralist" backing among the imperialists has its tailists on the left. Accordingly, CISPES, the Committee in Support of the People of El Salvador, has forcibly barred from public meetings the only organization advocating socialist revolution in El

prepare to wage war without mercy against the Stalinist army; on no account let them near the mines, mills and factories; for in Stalinist hands the means of production are in no sense workers' property — they are *capitalist* property, over and against the working class.

In so-called normal times your analysis of the many contradictions of Stalinism may perhaps provide intellectuals with discussion material to while away the time. When classes clash and questions are posed sharply — this side or that? — you are left saying, "On the one hand, proletarian forms; on the other, proletarians;" then again, "bureaucratic oppression; however, remaining gains of October ..." Workers not only *will* not listen to such vacillation, they *ought* not to.

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Salvador, the LRP. And it has widened its policy of keeping the Spartacist League and its "Anti-Imperialist Contingent" off of public demonstrations.

The Spartacists share with Reagan and Haig the opinion that Salvador is a proxy war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Therefore the SL takes the "Soviet" side and raises the slogans, "Military victory to the leftist insurgents! For workers' revolution!" But the FDR-FMLN's military victory now clearly means a class-compromise popular front government, certainly not a workers' revolution. True, a leftist victory would greatly destabilize El Salvador and its neighbors, but the only way to ensure that this leads to a workers' victory is to fight to arm the workers and help organize them for power through workers' councils and a general strike. The Spartacists' own class compromise is to rely centrally on the guerrilla struggle instead of proletarian mobilization. This abets the workers' illusions in their petty-bourgeois misleaders and offers no alternative to the FDR's popular frontism.

The SL omits mobilization of the working class because it foresees only a Cuban or Vietnamese style of "deformed workers' state" (read: Stalinist state capitalism) under the domination of the nationalists whose flag it so proudly hails at demonstrations (see *Socialist Voice* No. 14 for our exchange with the Spartacists over the FMLN). That is no more possible in El Salvador than in Nicaragua, since in neither country is there a strong enough Stalinist cadre to keep the workers down. Without that (and the unobtainable Russian aid to back it up), the only potential for an FDR regime is to truckle to imperialism, or to fall.

Communists fight alongside the FMLN rebels against the junta. But we stand for a proletarian victory, not the "military victory" of the leftists, which in fact means the political triumph and state power of popular frontist capitulators to imperialism.

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Two Fronts, Not Two Stages

Haitians Fight for Freedom

Thousands of refugees who have fled Haiti for the U.S. are undergoing an intense, racist victimization here, continuing the oppression that forced them to leave their homeland. Having escaped the clutches of the Duvalier regime by risking their lives in small leaky boats, Haitian men and women arrive in the "freedom-loving" United States only to be imprisoned and brutalized in internment camps. Since the late 1970's, tens of thousands have attempted their desperate voyage. Some never make it here alive; of those who have done so, over 2000 are now in detention.

The U.S. government's treatment of the Haitian refugees is consistent with its open support of the gangster regime of President for Life Jean-Claude ("Baby Doc") Duvalier, heir to a family of semi-colonial dictators rivalled only by the recently ousted Somozas of Nicaragua. Duvalier earns his keep by his cooperation with imperialism: his policy of "free trade zones," for example, allows minimal taxes on foreign-owned companies; he has set up large agribusiness enterprises, encouraged big landowners to switch from share-cropping to wage labor — and dispossessed small peasants from their plots to force them into the army of unemployed job-seekers. Duvalier's private thug army, the Tontons Macoutes (bogeymen), sees to it that the workers remain docile.

U.S. businessmen are enjoying the Haitian state of affairs, for it allows them ample profits by exploiting the lowest-paid workers in the Americas. U.S. Ambassador to Haiti Ernest Preeg, speaking to the Haitian-American Chamber of Commerce in Haiti's capital of Port-au-Prince last October, exulted over business opportunities. Improvements in Haiti's infrastructure, he said, "were giving welcome impetus to a manufacturing industry that has grown from some 60 to over 230 firms since 1970, with a corresponding increase in jobs from less than 10,000 to upwards of 60,000 today. Government policies, including an open trading system and favorable tax treatment, greatly encourage new investment in the private sector." (*Haiti Patriote*, December 1981). What he didn't say is that the jobs increase is dwarfed by the number of peasants and artisans thrown out of work and forced to emigrate or starve.

Preeg also noted that "the country was experiencing its most severe financial crisis in decades. The percentage of imports covered by export receipts had dropped from 70 percent in 1980 to 54 percent in 1981. Tax receipts were down. Budget expenditures were substantially above planned levels. International reserves were nearly exhausted while the country faced a record balance of payments deficit." And so on — the catalog of ill effects is precisely the result of Duvalier's kowtowing to imperialism. If capital is invited to loot the country, the country will be devastated. And so it has been.

Preeg saw the problem somewhat differently. "I observe," he added, "something of a communications gap, often referred to as an image problem, between the positive realities of doing business in Haiti and the negative impressions as



viewed from abroad. ... The cruel exploitation of poor Haitians by international traffickers, the flagrant violation of laws in both countries, and the disruptive social and economic impact of this migration on certain areas of Florida cannot continue in any event. The large flow of illegal migrants ... has also had a negative impact on the business climate in Haiti, for industry and especially for tourism. Much of the current negative image of Haiti is directly related to the boat people problem."

Thus the spokesman of the biggest international trafficker, American imperialism, blames the misery the refugees are escaping from on the refugees themselves! How damnable of these people to let their starvation publicly sully the noble image of Haiti! Why don't they drop dead quietly someplace is what he really means. To combat this "negative image," the U.S. government set up joint coastal patrols with the Haitian rulers to dump the refugees back where they came from, hoping that the problem will go away. But this will not stop the terror and deprivation the Haitians live under, nor will it prevent resistance from growing in both Haiti and the U.S.

The hypocrisy of disallowing "economic refugees" from semi-colonial outposts of the U.S. like Haiti and El Salvador while boasting of "political refugees" from governments the

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