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We wait expectantly for this to occur, but our ultimate joy will be when those uprisings reach our shores and we participate in them.

refusing the "belt-tightening" demands of the state bureaucracy and its Western creditors. The economic decisions made after the Polish worker rebellions of 1970 have resulted in the sharp re-integration of Poland into Western capital; thus it is now in hock to West German, Swiss and American bankers to the tune of $20 billion. The decision ten years ago to raise the country's standard of living by importing Western technology and the subsidizing of its inefficient agricultural system initially delighted Western banks. They saw the prospect of reaping huge profits from loans to a Poland they saw as a fairly inexhaustible market, relatively independent of the business cycle. Silly boys.

After a wave of modernization which brought the country up to the status of 10th most industrialized nation in the world, Poland became caught in the same economic down-turn which plagued Western capital in the mid-1970's. Poland now competes with Zaire as to which nation will be the first to default on its loans and, like giving heroin to a junkie hoping he'll reform, the banks are forced to give more and more loans to Poland, just so it will be able to pay its debt service, which at this point takes 90% of its export earnings.

The current crisis was forced in the first place by the Western banks which demanded an austerity program before any more money would be forthcoming. The bureaucrats in Poland simply sat down with a calculator and devised where the austerity measures would be effected and of course it was from the workers' standard of living. But just as in 1970 and 1976, the workers refused and took on international capital.

As we print this paper, it does not appear as though the matter is settled by any means. The Independent Trade Union has already charged that the Polish government has not met its end of the bargain and sponsored a one hour work stoppage which planned carefully "not to injure the Polish economy." Also, reports of wildcat strikes continue to appear in the media.

The future is unclear. The workers of the entire Eastern bloc (see accompanying article) are restive and as the crisis of capital sweeps that sector of the world, one can certainly expect a similar combativeness on the part of workers from Bucharest to Moscow.

On September 1, Lech Walesa, the worker who negotiated the end of the recent Polish strike wave, climbed two flights of wooden stairs to the temporary offices of the new Independent Trade Union which he heads. Walesa carried a two-foot crucifix, a bunch of gladiolas and a pennant from a bicycle club, all to adorn the headquarters of what he and the Western press have hailed as a "triumph" for the strikers — the right to organize a labor organization independent of the government-controlled, official union federations.

The events of the previous 18 days, which had given Walesa the keys to his new office, saw a courageous revolt of hundreds of thousands of Polish workers, which, although it had the proportions of a general strike, stopped short of an uprising against the state capitalist bureaucracy. The shaken Polish communist party apparatus, facing its third major confrontation with the country's working class in ten years was finally forced to give into many of the strikers' demands rather than see an expansion of the strike movement,

In the process, the Catholic Church stood fully exposed as willing to prefer even the authority of an "atheist" government over the threat contained in worker rebellion. The Church's thoroughly duplicitous role included the taking of confessions at Gdansk's Lenin Shipyards from striking workers as a show of "support," to Cardinal Wyszynski's (curiously, the cousin of Stalin's chief inquisitor during the 1930's Moscow purge trials) urging a return to work by the strikers, thereby hoping to get a little larger piece of the action if he performed well for the state bureaucrats.

All of this received such full and extensive coverage in the world media that its details hardly need recounting here, but perhaps a few observations can be made:

Combat A Totalitarian Police State

All observors (and certainly the participants) knew that the potential consequence of the revolt was a Czech-style Soviet invasion and a repression of the strike movement (Polish Prime Minister Babiuch warned at the height of the strikes, "Our faithful friends are worried"). And it is precisely this ominous threat which gave the strikes

their heroic character. Huge numbers of Poles simply-refused to continue to have their lives manipulated by the anonymous forces of the world market and tried as forcefully as possible to revolt against those administering their oppression. And this was their triumph — the willingness to combat a totalitarian police state, their inventive forms of self-organization, the attempts to link together the struggle throughout Poland, and their vitality as humans stemming from a sense of what true freedom is.

Their defeat was signaled by their return to wage work and the fact that the Polish state was left intact, but this occurred because the Polish workers were restricted to confronting only those who exercised direct dominion over them. For the situation to have had any other outcome than the wage hikes, a few promised civil liberties, and Walesa's "independent" union — a larger and generalized assault on the international system of capital was necessary. The Spanish experience of the 1930's demonstrated aptly that none of the nation states — capitalist or socialist — are going to allow a truly libertarian revolution to survive without a vicious assault.

To have assured a victory in Poland — a victory outside of the terms of capital — Russian workers, German workers, and American workers at a minimum would have had to undertaken the same acts as the strikers of Gdansk and Szczecin to protect them from invasion. However, with the struggle failing to be generalized, it was only the Walesas and the recuperation of the strike movement which could follow. As soon as Walesa sat down as representative of the workers with the government bureaucrats, all was lost. As French theorist Jacques Camatte noted in regards to a student strike, "No-dialogue can take place between the social order and those who are to overthrow it. If dialogue is still seen as a possibility, then this would be an indication that the movement is failing."

Polite and Officially Approved Union

In many ways, Walesa's polite and officially approved "independent" union barely rates as a recuperation given the Polish CP's history of successful assaults on even authentically independent

worker formations. During the 1956 working class uprisings, the Polish Party had to contend with 5,000 workers' councils which had sprung up in opposition to the party, yet after less than two years of skillful maneuvering, the party had completely destroyed the power of the councils and had effectively regained its absolute authority. It is dubious whether Walesa's charade will last the year.

What underscores the movement's defeat is that a solution was even thought of in union terms-a desire for a greater selling price of human labor. These demands-written by social democratic dissidents, but supported by many of the striking workers-would create a situation where a labor federation modeled on something akin to the UAW would represent Polish workers to their employers-the state. This may appear as an improvement over the reigning union model-that of the Soviet Union's which is currently headed by an ex-Minister of the Interior (secret police) and is charged in its constitution with the responsibility of meeting government production quotas — but these are simply separate ways of controlling the sale of labor within differing national capitals (See "Poland 1970–71," FE April 1977). An authentic independent union (one not confined to "economic" matters such as is Welesa's) would immediately find itself back on the path of confrontation that the new union was supposed to be deflected from.

The Polish state bureaucracy's decision to employ a soft approach this time spared the workers the casualties and deaths at the hands of the state security forces and the Party the humiliation of having its headquarters attacked and burned as in previous strike waves, but its capitulation to the workers' demands will not solve the country's underlying problems. The London Economist of August 23, 1980 expressed it this way: "Past remedies — import-led growth — to create the illusion of prosperity-directly produced the present crisis and have been discredited. But printing money to finance the 15–20% pay rises conceded this time round will only fuel inflation without putting more goods in the shops. It will therefore depress living standards still further, and leave the party leadership juggling with even fewer ideas to stem the next crisis.-

It is recognized in all sectors of capital that Poland is the "sick man" of Europe and can only sink deeper into its economic problems by