

"When the bureaucracy has freed itself from popular control, the military caste inevitably tries to free itself from the role of the civilian bureaucracy.

...Police rule over the people...enforced with the help of party secretaries, (can) be realised more simply and directly by one of the marshals through the military apparatus."

These words of Trotsky, written in 1937 on the logic of Bonapartism, describe with precision the proclamation of military rule in Poland by General Jaruzelski. When in a worker's state there is a shortage of bread, and workers are forced to queue for it, a policeman - the Stalinist state - is necessary to keep the queue in order. When the bread in short supply also rises in price by 200%, that state needs an army as well as police to keep the queues in order.

A country such as Poland has often been compared with a trade union - set up in the workers' interests, it has leaders parasitic on the workers who divert as much as possible of the workers' gains into their own pockets. The Polish state, whose leaders had embezzled so much workers' money the state was near bankruptcy, was opposed by a trade union whose leaders at every point sacrificed their members gains for deals with the Stalinist bureaucracy. Before the coup, Solidarity union leader Walesa had made concessions to Jaruzelski to keep his members working some Saturdays when a major strike had been fought to abolish all Saturday work. Jaruzelski, once his army was in control, forced Solidarity members to work on Saturdays at the point of a gun. The trade union bureaucracy and the Stalinist bureaucracy reinforced each other at every point. The rank and file Polish workers who organised massive strike action to bring their conditions into line with other countries were first betrayed then had their organisation smashed, and now face either working under anti-union no-strike loyalty oaths or military detention. Walesa placed them in the hands of Jaruzelski who then used the army to smash their union.

There has been an unending stream of vilification of the Polish worker - from the people who poured water into Polish mines to break sit-in strikes in the mines. The Polish worker has been accused of being a tool of the Catholic Church - though the Catholic Bishops told the workers to keep the peace while troops were breaking up sit-in strikes with rifle butts. The Polish worker has been accused of being nationalist - people who cheered on "patriotic" military interventions by the Polish army under the Polish national flag. The Polish worker has been accused of being counter revolutionary - for opposition to a government which overthrew communist party rule, smashed strikes, broke unions, militarised labour and increased prices of basic commodities to put them beyond the workers' power to buy. The Soviet Union and Poland apologise for martial law measures by announcing that the working class of a whole nation is counter-revolutionary and only a few state officials on good terms with the army are "progressive". These apologetics are preludes to a general revision of Marxism in which it is no longer workers who have nothing to lose but their chains but state officials who have nothing to lose but their tax receipts.

The charmed circle of cocktail parties and government receptions at which Jaruzelski and Walesa and their friends met American Bankers, Vatican Envoys and AFL-CIO officials, excluded only the Polish workers and their genuine representatives. The knowledge and understanding of this cocktail party circuit would have put the Polish working class on the road to political revolution. The Western bankers bankrolled the Polish Stalinist State, the AFL-CIO officials bankrolled the Solidarity bureaucracy while the Polish bishops blessed whoever came out on top - "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" - while trying to corner as much as possible of embezzled workers' money for the church. It was the Polish working class who paid for the inflation imported from Western capitalism via the international banking consortiums. Now, under Jaruzelski's military regime, the Polish army terrorises the workers while the USSR pays the bills due to the Western bankers. It is called 'peaceful co-existence'. The name would be more appropriate if it did not require armed dictatorship over the workers.

Any illusions about the West among Polish workers, resulting from the Helsinki agreement and the propaganda surrounding it, these are now shattered. As troops moved in on the Gdansk factories, the Western diplomats stood by and asked each other if Jaruzelski's nationalism might make him "another Tito". The strategy the State Department recommended to Walesa was to trade "democratic rights" for austerity (Le Monde 31st

December). But there was never any way Polish workers would have accepted austerity. The stratum which would win power in Poland was that which control the army and its guns. Jaruzelski understood this - Walesa did not. The still unpublished Radom tapes raise the question, if they are accurate, of how a union leadership which demonstrably had no plans for self-defence against military attack could have laid plans for "revolution". Talk of revolution by the likes of Walesa was designed to persuade workers who wanted action that various preparations were being made, when nothing was prepared at all and Walesa based all his calculations on the continuation of Jaruzelski's goodwill. The tapes, if printed, would show this clearly. This is why Warsaw has not printed them.

The West helped Walesa's illusions by underwriting a perspective of peaceful pressure on the bureaucracy which, finally, they could not guarantee at all. Poland's road back to capitalism, for the West, depended on the transformation of the bureaucracy, not the seizure of power by the working class. Imperialism has never extended itself by workers' revolutions, which it has reason to fear. Now all Eastern Europe understands this very well.

Jaruzelski's army enforces on the one hand a "return to socialism" - through an overthrow of the Polish United Workers' Party - and the repayment of debts to the Western bankers. The contradictions of the Stalinist regime, now expressed through the army, reach a new pitch of intensity. Should martial law end in a month or so, the army would maintain effective rule. The United Workers' Party would remain purged Solidarity would remain banned, workers' loyalty oaths would continue, with change only possible through a direct challenge to army power. Whether the army, in its new situation of supreme power, would listen more to finance capital, especially West German finance capital, or to the USSR's power elite, then becomes the question. The army's patriotism its desire in December to pre-empt an invasion from the USSR will push it in the long term to acceptance of the Western financiers' plans for Poland's economic "recovery" - at the expense of the working class.

West Germany, in its opposition to Reagan, still places its hopes for capitalist restoration in Poland - and German capitalist class's profits on continued investment in Poland. When Reagan's boycotts fail, Schmidt's strategy will have the opportunity to prove itself.

Jaruzelski has converted the "dialogue" between Solidarity and the State bureaucracy into a regime of bureaucratic command over labor by machine-gun and bayonet. The dialogue cannot be restored. When the military confrontation of Solidarity which had for months been threatened finally arrived, Solidarity's leaders were found totally unprepared. Solidarity developed as an Trade Union which, like its western counterpart, could act as a pressure group on a liberal state bureaucracy. Jaruzelski has shown there is no place in a Stalinist system for such organisations. The relationship between the bureaucracy and the working class in Poland now rests totally on military force. So be it. The working class can only organise politically, underground, for a political revolution, by **building a party on the basis of the theories of Lenin and Trotsky**. Labor action for the abolition of martial law, or the legalization of Solidarity, is misconceived. There is no role for "economic pressure" in Poland. Only bullets speak there now. International labor solidarity with Poland must aid Polish and East European workers in the preparation for political revolution.

The use of Poland's army - or the Soviet Red Army or the combined armies of the Warsaw Pact - for the suppression of worker militancy weakens the capacity of those armies to defend the workers' and peasants' bloc against imperialism. Since Imre Nagy tried to repudiate the Warsaw Pact in 1956, the Pact's force has become less a means of self-defence for the USSR and Eastern Europe than a standing army for the repression of political revolution. Trotsky once argued that, if a Soviet invasion of new territory failed to overturn the new territory's economic structure, this by itself would mean the basic economic structure of the USSR itself was threatened. This is now the situation with the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan, where even the moderate reforms of the previous Amin regime have been dismantled to restore the "Islamic" regime of Karmal. Military adventures of, or adventures supported by, the USSR at every point increase its instability. Only the working classes of the USSR can halt this ruinous military policy. The solidarity of the USSR and Eastern Europe in the event of global war can be achieved only by a reversal of the ruinous policy of national oppression of Stalin and his heirs. This can only be achieved through working class overthrow of the bureaucracy throughout the Eastern Bloc with the support of the Western working class, that is, political revolution.

The Communist Left warned in May 1981 that Jaruzelski was threatening to smash the Polish working class. We warned then that Solidarity would not and could not defend the workers against Jaruzelski. We said then that the USSR would not invade. On all these issues we, a tiny Trotskyist organisation, were totally right when the rest of the left was wrong. Most importantly, though, we said that if the Polish workers did not move towards political revolution in the last six months of 1981, their organisations would be smashed by the bureaucracy. Jaruzelski, tragically, has proved us right. December 1981's bloody lesson in political reality, however, will not be wasted. It has not prevented political revolution in Poland and Eastern Europe, it has only delayed it, and by brutally destroying all illusions about legality and compromise with the bureaucracy, made the revolution more certain.

Issued by the Australian Communist Left, 17 Searl
Street,
Petersham. N.S.W.