

## Poland and the Politics of the Two Superpowers

Both the Soviet Union and the United States are having a field day with political confusion about "communism" and the Polish struggle.

Moscow brands ten million Solidarity members from the working class as dupes of so-called anti-socialist elements. The Soviet Union's propaganda marches along on the assumption that the Soviet Union represents socialism and communism. When the Kremlin calls someone anti-socialist, it simply means that person or group opposes Soviet oppression. China has socialism, but the Soviet Union would love to crush China (a wild ambition). Poland is dominated in colonial fashion by the Soviet Union and ruled by a local capitalist class, so workers who oppose this setup are labeled anti-socialist. Soviet "socialism" obviously has nothing to do with a better life for working people. No matter whether one agrees with or disagrees with the socialist vision, it is pretty clear that Moscow's empire does not embody it.

The Western press and politicians are happy to accept the Soviet definition. Time magazine enjoys talking about the revolt against communism. The Western press likes to confuse the situation because it props up their built-in assumption that the only alternative to Soviet communism is so-called Western democracy and capitalism.

No one has proved, however, that the Polish people want capitalism. Solidarity never demanded that the country be handed over to the Rockefellers and Morgans. The Polish workers were never quoted as saying they like anti-

labor governments, nor have they exulted over the opportunity to accept wage cuts from their employers while corporations like Chrysler get government handouts.

The Polish people want a better life for themselves; they oppose privileges for the government elite; they are angry about income based on connections and high posts instead of one's own labor. These are what count, not the shared Soviet-Western confusion over socialism.

Western societies and the Soviet world are both capitalist, with all the exploitive features of capitalism. The inevitable result in political life is hypocrisy.

It is hypocrisy when Reagan demands worker rights in Poland while the federal government tells the air traffic controllers of PATCO to submit without negotiation or be blacklisted, fined and jailed. How is it that the Polish workers should be allowed to have their Solidarity union while the air traffic controllers' PATCO is smashed?

It is even hypocritical when Reagan protests martial law in Poland. His sanctions against the Soviet Union had the no more strength than a wet noodle. As a representative of big businessmen and bankers, the Reagan administration is of two minds about Poland. On the one hand they would like to pry Poland out of the Soviet orbit and draw it into the clutches of the West. On the other hand, they already have \$27 billion of loans outstanding, and they want the Polish workers to labor hard and pay the debt. Right after martial law was declared, a banker based in Frankfurt, Germany spoke for the international financiers by saying, "The situation may now get better sooner." (Oakland Tribune, Dec. 15, 1981) To know what the capitalists of the West really think, this banker's remark is far more revealing than the actor's rhetoric of a Reagan dinner-time speech on

television.

The working people do not rule in the Soviet Union or the West. Capitalist bosses rule. Neither the Soviet nor the Western economies operate for the benefit of working people. They are engines of profit for the big guys. The vision of overturning this situation is the working-class vision. It is the labor republic. It can be called socialism. Whatever the name, the substance is what counts.

A government can wear whatever label it chooses. But people know when they are starving. People know when a narrow class at the top enjoys it all. In the United States and the Soviet bloc, that is capitalism, the effective ownership of a potentially great economy by a circle of death-dealing exploiters.■