

No easy way out for Poland

Or for the factions in the U.S.S.R. and the West who valued Gierek's diplomacy, reports Rachel Douglas.

The ouster of Polish chief Edward Gierek came in the middle of a shift in several Soviet bloc countries into a new, tough posture on all ties with the West, a shift which is moving the international strategic situation closer to the threshold of war between the Soviet Union and NATO.

Gierek was uniquely valued by continental Western European leaders for his contributions to détente. In particular, a "hard line" faction in the East is putting the damper on cooperation with the West European governments—the last remaining element of Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev's strategy to avoid war through détente arrangements.

The disruption of Brezhnev's dialogue with West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing of France was one major goal of the destabilization of Poland, and it is well on the way to being achieved. The Polish crisis is evoking the classic Soviet response of a rock-hard foreign policy posture combined with internal crackdowns. The crisis has been conducted by its London-centered orchestrators in such a way as to give the upper hand in Moscow to this tendency in the Soviet leadership, to be augmented by the operations of London's own agents of influence in the U.S.S.R., who will now launch an array of "radical revolutionary" operations in diverse parts of the world.

East-West German summit off

The official East German press service ADN announced Sept. 5 that President Erich Honecker would not hold his planned meeting with West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, an East-West first that was to have been the occasion for concluding new economic deals as well as for political dialogue between the two Germanies, before the second half of 1981. The Schmidt-Honecker meeting had already been postponed because of the crisis in Poland.

Muted criticisms of Brezhnev's Europe-centered détente policy have previously been voiced in the East German media, but the East German and Czechoslovak

propaganda of the last week in August moved into a new phase. The East German paper *Neues Deutschland* carried charges of West German "revanchist" claims on the Polish provinces of Silesia and Pomerania (claims usually confined to the small organizations of West Germans who were born there). The attack was so sweeping it elicited a protest from Schmidt's government against "slanderous attacks" certain to damage Bonn-Warsaw relations.

The Soviet Union, too, stepped up official denunciations of Western attempts to interfere in Poland. *Pravda* charged Sept. 6 that funneling of money to Polish "anti-socialist groups"—the dissidents who fanned the Baltic seacoast strikes and pushed through the political demand for new, independent trade unions—was intended to exploit a difficult political situation. The Soviet news agency TASS obliquely warned against attempts to manipulate Poland through its hard-currency debt obligations.

According to published reports on the Aug. 24 PUWP Central Committee plenum that demoted several of Gierek's closest associates, Stanislaw Kania, who was to replace Gierek on Sept. 5, together with Defense Minister Wojciech Jaruzelski, took the lead in the party's upper echelon at that point. Kania, head of Poland's internal security forces, was involved in shaping the strike settlement in the port city of Gdansk, where he traveled Aug. 18. That was the day the regime's negotiating approach shifted from refusing to make concessions on the "political" demands of the strikers, to a give and take process with the Inter-factory Strike Committee that had been formed in the Lenin Shipyards.

Round two

The Polish situation will not be easy for Kania to control. The dissident groups, reported and applauded in the British and American press, have announced preparations for a second round of political demands and disorders. But Poland's dangerous instability is

most evident from the state of its economy.

The new planning chief, Henryk Kisiel, said Sept. 8 that having suffered at least \$1 billion in losses from the two weeks of strikes in August, Poland's chances of covering the increase in salaries granted with an equivalent increase of goods were like Hamlet's "To be or not to be. . . ." His account of how Poland will handle its debt schedule confirmed, as did Prime Minister Pinkowski's Sept. 5 speech to the Polish parliament, that Kania is fully collaborating with the economic liberalizers associated with recently reinstated Politburo member Stefan Olszowski.

Kisiel summarized the economic policy of the new authorities for decentralizing the economy, emphasizing consumer goods at the expense of heavy industry, giving more say to the small-scale peasants who make up Poland's chaotic and unproductive farm sector, and adopting more "market-oriented" prices. Kisiel vowed to correct the flaws of "economic voluntarism," a term which refers to the large, centrally mandated industrial projects of the early 1970s. Rumor has it that Poland's first nuclear power plant project will be scrapped.

Workers Defense Committee (KOR) dissidents and some Catholic intellectuals are predicting agitation for "free student associations" when Polish universities open on Oct. 1. Others, like Polish sociologist Jan Szczapanski, who is an associate of British intelligence's Tavistock Institute, have raised demands for open parliamentarianism to be the new model for Poland. In the Polish parliament Sept. 5, non-party delegate Szczepanski called for rotation of cadres in the PUWP and a revision of methods of choosing government officials. These are demands which specifically and drastically violate the condition which the strike leaders in Gdansk and other towns accepted: for their independent trade unions not to "challenge the leading role of the party" in Poland.

Szczepanski's idea of internal party reform arose again at a party session of the Polish Writers Union, according to PUWP sources cited by Bernard Marguerite in the Paris daily *Le Figaro*. The person to voice them, significantly, was Stefan Bratkowski, a PUWP member and a coordinator of the project called "Experience and the Future" (DiP) to which over 50 liberal PUWP members contributed before the crisis—PUWP members whose economic line is now dominant.

Gdansk strike leader Lech Walesa, on his part, told a BBC interviewer Sept. 9 that after consolidating new, independent trade unions as the second phase of his efforts, he would proceed to a "third and final state . . . [which] it would be dangerous for me to talk about."

If these projects for round two of the destabilization of Poland are launched both from the dissidents and from the DiP party liberals, the pressure from Moscow for ex-security chief Kania to crack down will be intense.



*Jozef Pinkowski,
the new Premier*



*Stefan Olszowski,
reinstated to
Poland's
Politburo*



*Henryk Kisiel,
new Vice-Premier
and economic
planning chief*

Photo: AP