

Workers' fight

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"Workers" State



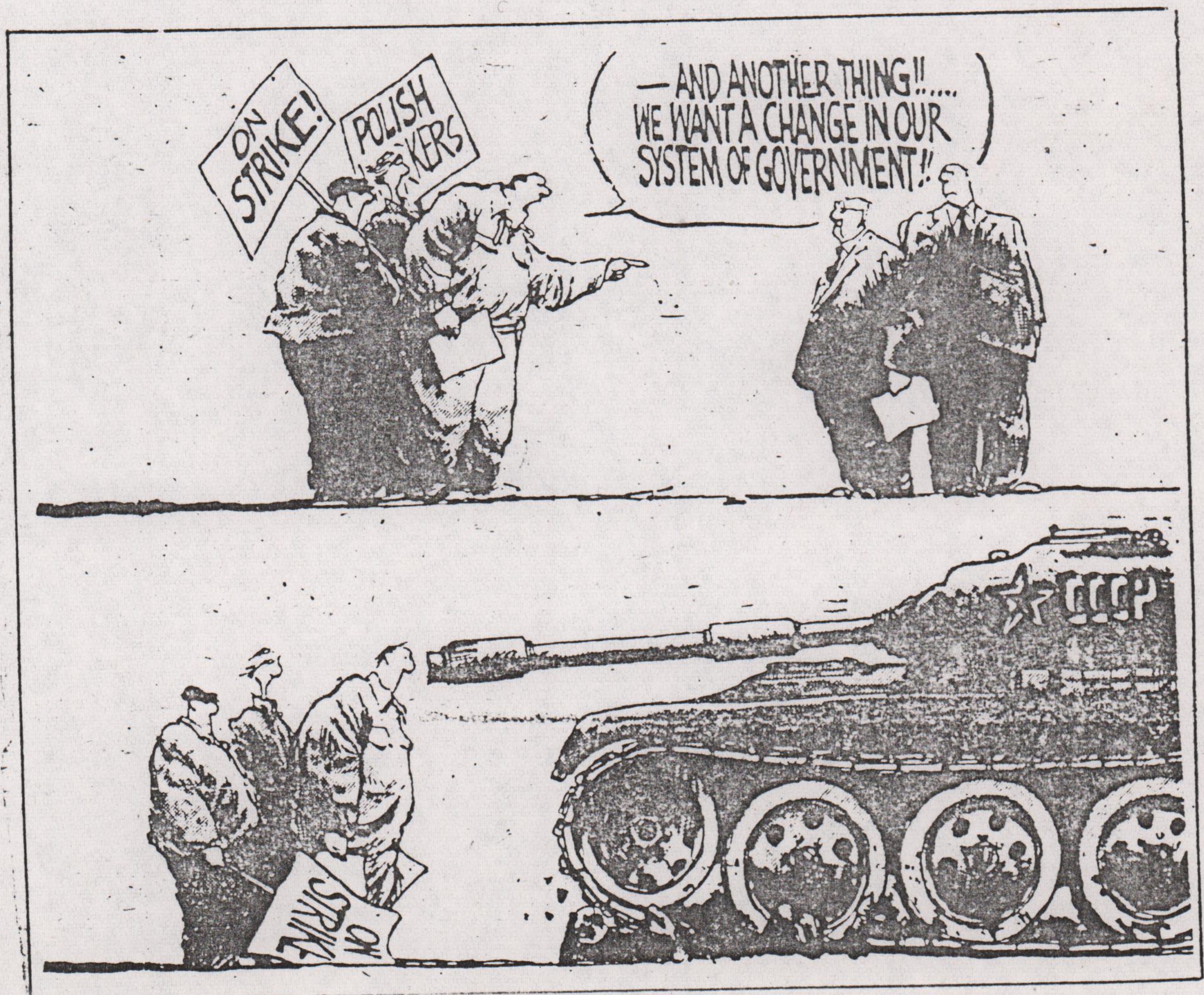
Gdansk workers snap up copies of their daily newspaper 'Solidarity' during the recent occupation of the Lenin shipyards.

Poland 1980: Won't get fooled again!

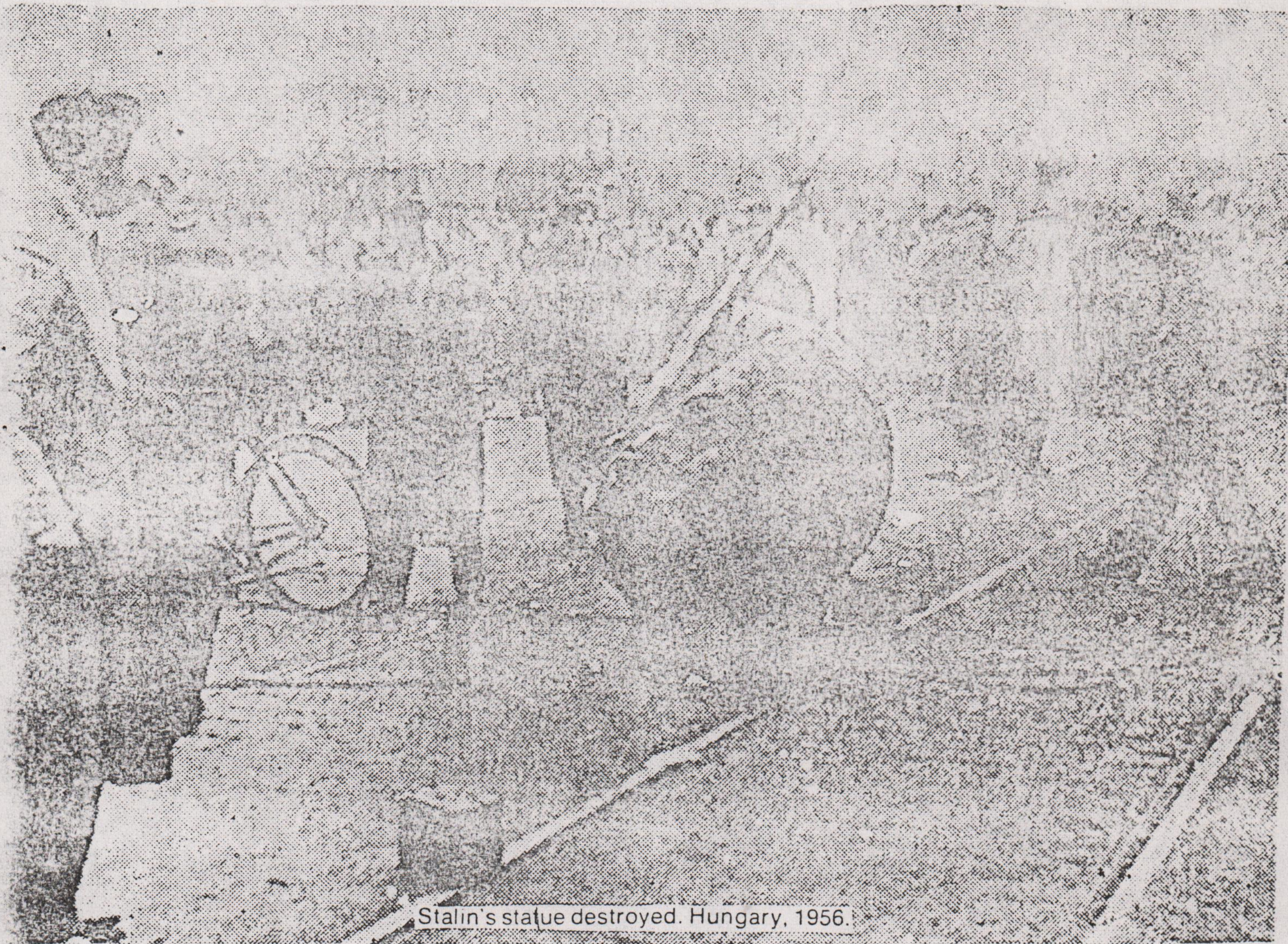
POLAND - AN ANARCHIST VIEW-POINT.

OVER ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, THE ANARCHIST, MIKHAIN BAKUNIN WAS WARNING MARX AND HIS FOLLOWERS THAT ACCEPTANCE OF THEIR IDEAS WOULD LEAD TO DICTATORSHIP BY A 'RED BUREAUCRACY'. SINCE THEN, WE HAVE SEEN LENIN EMPHASISE THE MORE AUTHORITARIAN ASPECTS OF MARXISM, (HIERARCHICLY - ORGANIZED VANGUARD PARTY ETC.) CULMINATING IN THE BOLSHEVIK SEIZURE OF THE RUSSIAN STATE IN 1917 AND, WITH THE CRUSHING OF THE KRONSTADT COMMUNE IN 1921, THE CREATION OF A TOTALITARIAN STATE. STALIN THEN, TURNED THIS STATE APPARATUS INTO A MACHINE OF UNPARALLED OPPRESSION AND MASS MURDER. SINCE WORLD WAR 2., ON THE FOUNDATIONS LAID BY LENIN, TROTSKY AND STALIN AND EXTENDED ITS CONTROL TO COUNTRIES WELL OUTSIDE ITS NATIONAL BOUNDARIES. THIS IS ESPECIALLY THE CASE WITH THE COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE.

MARXISM - LENINISM, THEREFORE, IS THE OFFICIAL DOGMA OF SOVIET IMPERIALISM. HOWEVER, IN EASTERN EUROPE, AT LEAST, IT DOES NOT HOLD THAT POSITION UNCHALLENGED. CHRISTIANITY AND ANTI-SOVIET NATIONALISM ARE ALSO VERY STRONG POLITICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES; BUT, MOST SIGNIFICANTLY FOR US AS ANARCHISTS, IS THE TRADITION OF LIBERTARIAN SOCIALISM OR COUNCIL-COMMUNISM. THIS TRADITION WHICH HAS ITS HISTORICAL ROOTS IN THE KRONSTADT UPRISING OF 1921 AND WHICH RE-EMERGED IN A NUMBER OF EASTERN EUROPE RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS AT THE END OF WORLD WAR 2., HAS FORMED THE BASIS OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD SINCE THE WORKERS OF HUNGARY SET UP WORKERS COUNCILS IN 1956, TO OVER-THROW THE HUNGARIAN STATE AND THEN, TRIED (UNSUCCESSFULLY) TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST THE RED ARMY. IN POLAND, IN THE SAME YEAR, WORKERS COUNCILS FORMED IN THE FACTORIES AND THE POLISH STATE WAS ON THE BRINK OF FALLING. THE WORKERS WERE APPEASED, HOWEVER, BY HAVING SOME OF THEIR DEMANDS MET, BY INCORPORATING THE WORKERS COUNCILS INTO THE OFFICIAL MANAGEMENT APPARATUS (WHERE THEY LOST ALL THEIR EFFECTIVENESS), AND SOME OLD PARTY HACKS IN THE HIERARCHY WERE REPLACED BY SOME NEW PARTY HACKS UNDER PARTY SECRETARY, GOMULKA WHO HAD VENEER OF POLISH NATIONALISM.



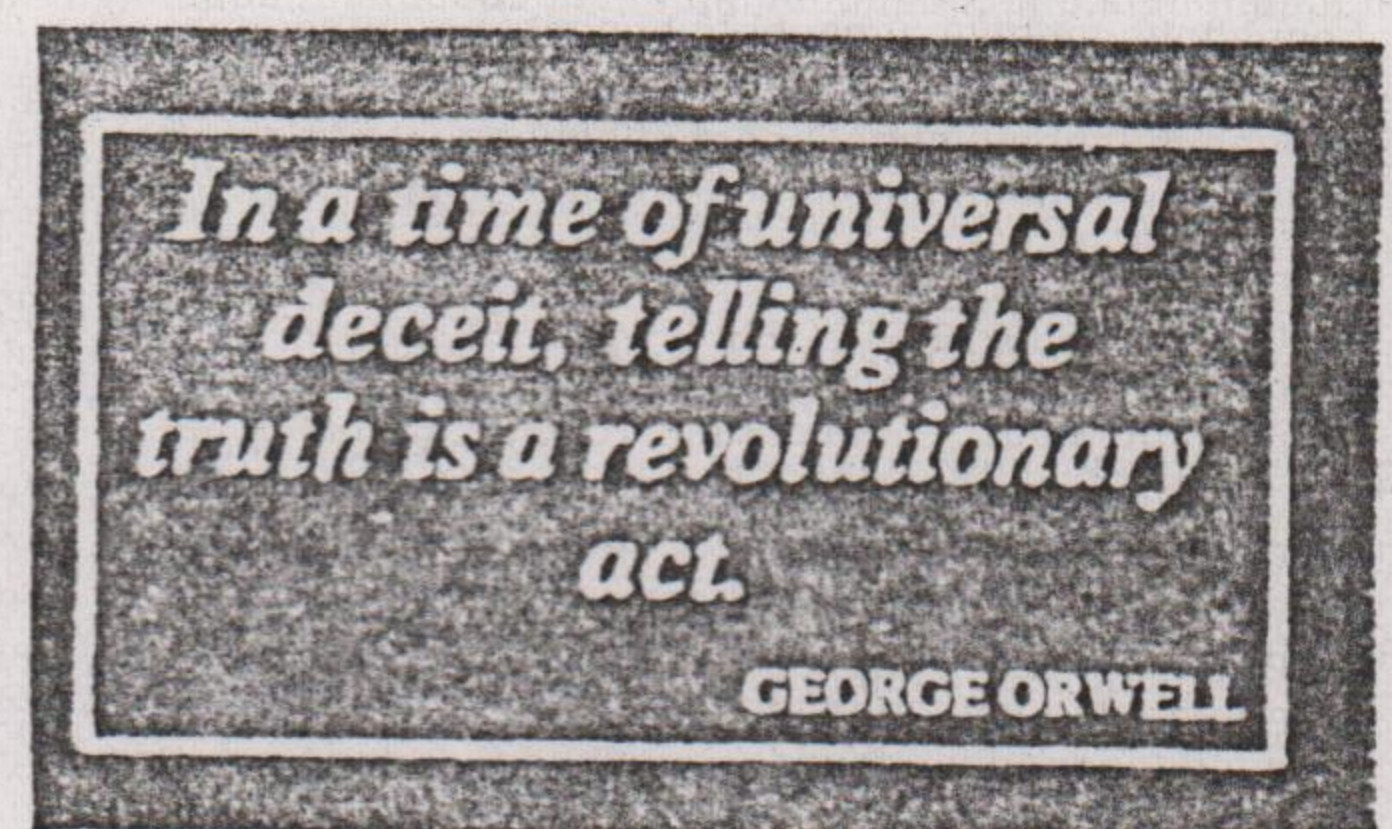
IN DECEMBER, 1970, THE POLISH STATE WAS AGAIN UNDER CHALLENGE FROM THE WORKERS. IN THE INTERVENING YEARS THERE HAS BEEN NO IMPROVEMENT IN THE ECONOMIC STATE OF THE COUNTRY OR IN THE DEGREE OF POLITICAL DEMOCRACY. ONE-PARTY RULE



Stalin's statue destroyed. Hungary, 1956.

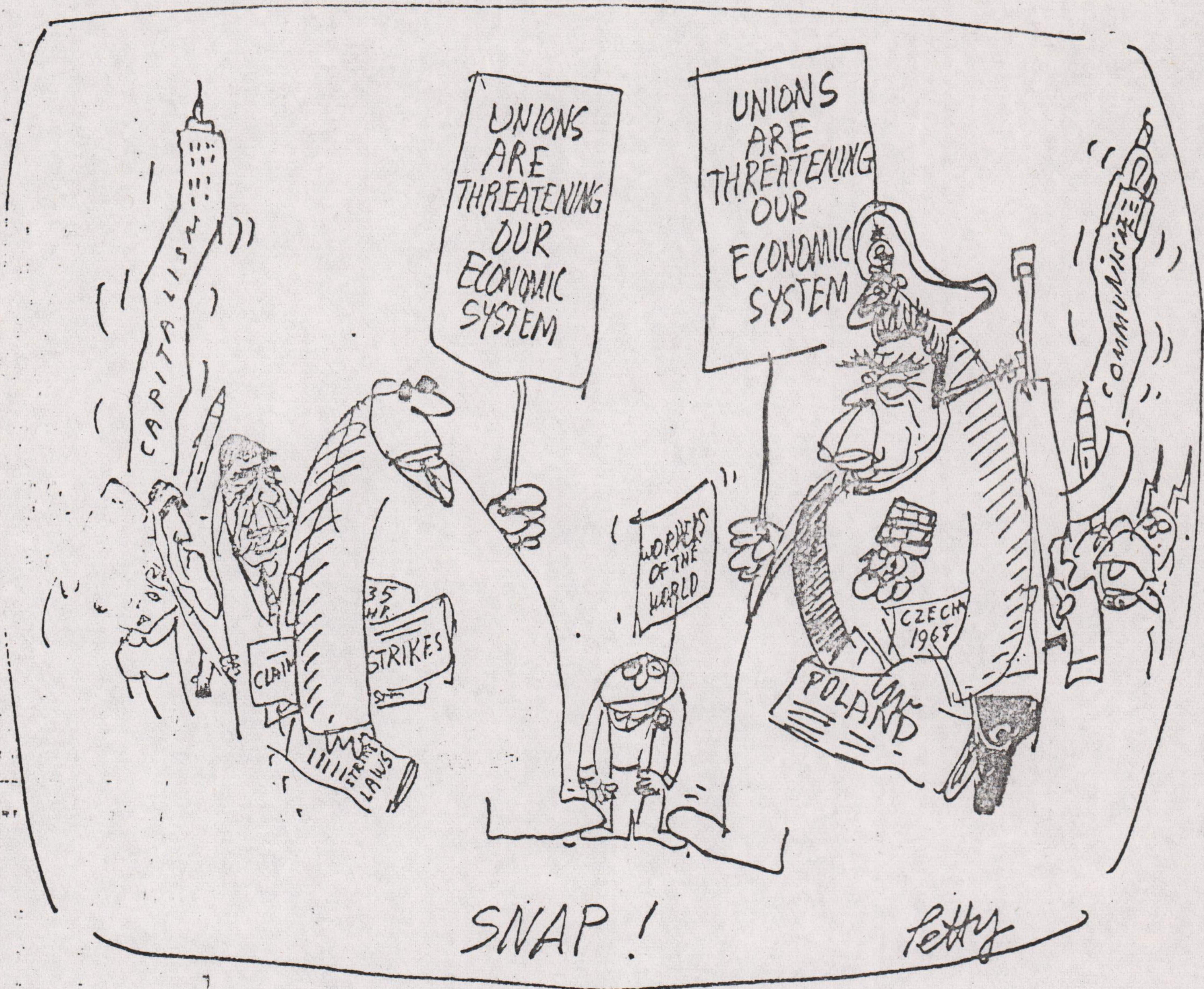
RULE, GOVERNMENT INEPTITUDE, RIGID CENSORSHIP AND SUPPRESSION OF DISSENT WERE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOMULKA REGIME, JUST AS THEY HAD BEEN OF HIS PREDECISSOR'S. PROBABLY SEVERAL HUNDRED PEOPLE WERE KILLED BY THE POLICE IN THESE DEMONSTRATIONS, THE COUNTRY WAS CLOSED DOWN BY A GENERAL STRIKE AND THE WORKERS COUNCILS RE-APPEARED. THE RULING-ELITE WONE THIS BATTLE AGAINST THE WORKERS BY GRANTING WAGE RISES, (AND THEN, TAKING THEM BACK SOME MONTHS LATER) AND REPLACING THE OLD PARTY BUREAUCRAT, GOMULKA WITH THE TECHNOCRAT, GIERAK, GIEREK'S CREDIBILITY LASTED NO LONGER THAN 1976, WHEN PRICE RISES LED TO FOOD RIOTSWHICH LED TO FIERCE REPRESSION.

IN AUGUST OF THIS YEAR, AN ATTEMPT BY THE POLISH BUREAUCRATS TO ONCE AGAIN RAISE THE PRICE OF FOOD PROVOKED A STRIKE MOVEMENT WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE LEARNED ITS LESSONS WELL ABOUT A WORTH-WHILE POLITICAL PROGRAMME AND AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY TO COMBAT BOTH THE POLISH AND SOVIET STATES. THEY ARE SETTING UP IN THE FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS, UNIVERSITIES AND EVEN, IT SEEMS IN THE FARMING AREAS, ORGANISATIONS AND ACCESS TO INDEPENDENT MEDIA OUTLTS. THEY WANT AN END TO CENSORSHIP, TO REPRISALS AGAINST STRIKES AND TO SPECIAL PRIVILEGES FOR PARTY BOSSES AND POLITICAL POLICE. VERY IMPORTANTLY, THEY HAVE LEARNED FROM THE UPRISINGS IN HUNGARY IN 1956, AND POLAND IN 1970 AND 1976, NOT TO TAKE ON THE MILITARY AND THE POLICE IN THE STREETS, BUT, TO TAKE OVER THEIR INSTITUTIONS AND USE THEM AS BASES IN THEIR NON-VIOLENT STRUGGLE WITH THE STATE.



THE POLISH WORKERS' MOVEMENT HAS HAD REMARKABLE SUCCESS. THE POLISH GOVERNMENT HAS GIVEN IN TO MOST OF THEIR DEMANDS AND EVEN THOUGH IT HAS TRIED ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS TO SABOTAGE THE AGREEMENTS, THE WORKERS HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENTLY SCEPTICAL OF THE POLISH COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE POLISH STATE AND WELL-ORGANIZED ENOUGH TO DEFEAT THESE ATTEMPTS. HOWEVER, THERE ARE TWO MAIN CHALLENGES TO THIS MOVEMENT FOR DIRECT DEMOCRACY. THE FIRST IS A SUBTLE ONE, THE SECOND IS AS SUBTLE AS A MEAT CLEAVER. THE LATTER, OF COURSE, IS A SOVIET INVASION AND, GIVEN THE REACTIONARY NATURE OF THE SOVIET RULING-ELITE, THIS IS THE MOSTLY LIKELY SOURCE OF DANGER.

THE OTHER THREAT COMES FROM A POSSIBLE COALITION OF PROGRESSIVE FACTORY MANAGERS, ECONOMISTS AND ADMINISTRATORS, REFORMIST TRADE UNION LEADERS AND LIBERAL COMMUNIST PARTY POLITICIANS. THE POLICIES THEY WOULD URGE WOULD INCLUDE



INCREASED POLITICAL PLURALISM, FREE TRADE UNIONS, AND MORE DECENTRALIZED ECONOMIC PLANNING WITH MORE AUTONOMY TO MANAGERS AND WORKERS PARTICIPATION. THE OLD, CONSERVATIVE RULING ELITE MIGHT BE OUSTED, BUT, THE EXISTENCE OF A STATE APPARATUS AND OF HIERARCHICALLY-ORGANIZED INSTITUTIONS WOULD BE AFFIRMED. THE NOTION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEMOCRACY WOULD, OF COURSE, BE UNDERMINED WITH AS MUCH SPEED AS COULD PAY OFF THE HUGE DEBTS WHICH POLAND OWES TO THE WESTERN BANKS. ONE SUSPECTS THAT THIS IS THE COURSE WHICH MOST MARXIST AND SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC GROUPS WOULD PREFER BECAUSE IT DOES NOT EMBARRAS THEM WITH AWKWARD QUESTIONS ABOUT WHERE POLITICAL POWER SHOULD LIE.

HOWEVER, WE, AS ANARCHISTS AND UP-HOLDERS OF DIRECT DEMOCRACY, HAVE NO HESITATION IN DECLARING WHERE WE STAND. IN AUGUST, PREMIER GIEREK STATED; "ANARCHISTS ARE TRYING TO EXPLOIT THE STRIKES FOR THEIR OWN ENDS." THOSE ENDS FOR WHICH OUR POLISH COMRADES ARE STRIVING CONTAIN THE CREATION OF WORKERS' ORGANIZATIONS WHERE DECISIONS ARE MADE BY GENERAL ASSEMBLIES RATHER THAN EXECUTIVES AND WHERE CO-ORDINATION IS NECESSARY, THIS IS CARRIED OUT BY DELEGATES WHO CARRY A MANDATE FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLIES AND WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE TO THOSE ASSEMBLIES. THESE BECOME PARALLEL INSTITUTIONS TO THOSE OF THE STATE AND THE BASIS OF WORKERS DEFENCE AGAINST THE RULING ELITE. WHEN THESE ORGANIZATIONS ENJOY THE LOYALTY OF THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE, (WHICH THEY POSSIBLY DO NOW), THEY WILL BE THE MAIN BASES FOR THE OVERTHROW OF THE STATE AND FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GENUINE SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY WHERE DECISIONS ARE MADE BY ALL PEOPLE AND NOT BY AN ELITE-EVEN ONE WHICH CALLS ITSELF A "WORKERS" GOVERNMENT.

POISED OVER ALL THESE EVENTS, HOWEVER, IS THE SPECTRE OF A SOVIET INVASION. IT SEEMS THAT THE RUSSIANS HAVE HOLDING BACK WAITING FOR THEIR POLISH PUPPETS TO UNDERMINE THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT AND WOULD NOT EVEN BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT A POLITICAL SOLUTION SIMILAR TO THAT ATTEMPTED BY DUBCEK IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN 1968, (THE REFORMIST ALTERNATIVE.),

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EQUALPOWER

EQUAL WAGES

