

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

September 1, 1980

# Newsweek

## Showdown In Poland



Austria	25 Sch	Greece	50 Drs	Portugal	60.00 esc
Belgium	48 F	Iceland (incl. tax)	750 Jki	Spain	110 ptas
Denmark	9.00 Kr	Israel	7.50 IS	Sweden	7.00 Kr
Finland	6.00 Mk	Italy	1200 L	Switzerland	3.00 F
France	6.50 F	Luxembourg	48 LF	Yugoslavia	38 ND
Germany	3.50 DM	Netherlands	3.00 Fl	U.S. Forces	1.25 \$
Gibraltar	60 p	Norway	7.00 Kr		

Number 35



Strike leaders meet with shipyard director (right) at Lenin Shipyard: Would Edward Gierek's concessions end the turmoil?

## Poland's Race Against Time

Night was falling in Gdansk when the Polish Government extended its olive branch. Deputy Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Jagielski telephoned the Lenin Shipyard, the nerve center of the strikes that had paralyzed Poland's Baltic region. Quickly, three strike leaders drove to a brick villa outside town, where Jagielski gave them a hearty greeting and offered refreshments. For the next hour, the two sides probed each other on ways to settle the strike. "It was a talk about talks," Florian Wysznewsky, the leader of the workers' delegation, said later. But when he and his colleagues drove back to the rain-soaked shipyard, the horn of their car honked in jubilation, and a crowd of workers chanted "Victory! Victory!"

**Fragile Economy:** In fact, victory was not yet at hand. The government and the strikers were engaged in a desperate race against time. Both sides wanted to reach a settlement before the spreading wave of strikes crippled the fragile Polish economy or forced the Soviet Union to send in troops. Faced with a war in Afghanistan, and with East-West détente in tatters, the next-to-last thing the Russians wanted was to intervene in Poland. They would do so only if the workers' revolt threatened the fundamental principles of Communist rule in Poland with liberal reforms that could infect the rest of Eastern Europe—and even the Soviet Union itself. "There are limits beyond which we cannot go," Polish Communist Party leader Edward Gierek warned again last week. "We cannot tolerate demands against the basis of the Socialist state."

The workers' economic demands—in-

cluding steep pay raises to offset higher meat prices mandated by the financially strapped regime—would not be hard to solve. But the strikers also demanded completely free trade unions and other political concessions. Moving quickly to contain the crisis, the Gierek government followed up Jagielski's trip to Gdansk with a stunning announcement to the nation. Prime Minister Edward Babiuch, the man who instituted the meat-price hike, was fired, along with three other members of the Politburo. More important, Gierek promised new

---

### *The government and the strikers tried for a deal to head off trouble—and Soviet intervention.*

---

union elections which he said would be held by secret ballot. "Discussions have confirmed the errors and shortcomings in the form and methods of our work," Gierek told the Polish people on television.

The Communist Party leader clearly hoped his moves would pave the way for a speedy end to the spreading emergency when talks with the Gdansk workers resume early this week. The bargaining process had failed just a week before, when an agreement seemed to be near. Gdansk strike leader Lech Walensa had accepted a proposed settlement that included a \$50 monthly wage increase and a promise that

the government would take no reprisals against the strikers. But he was voted down by young militants who shouted: "Lech, you have sold us out!" As the strike spread along the Baltic coast (map), the government tried divide-and-conquer tactics, seeking settlements factory by factory. When that failed, the regime arrested more than a dozen prominent dissidents, including Jacek Kuron, a founder of the Committee for Social Self-Defense—KOR. But the strikers in Gdansk were not swayed. By then, the Baltic strikers had set up something like a state within a state. NEWSWEEK's Paul Martin visited the "Gdansk commune" and filed this report:

As I entered the vast assembly hall in the Lenin Shipyard, where all the strikes in the region were coordinated, there was a sudden roar and shouts of "Bravo! Bravo!" A bespectacled young man had just stepped forward with a cellophane envelope full of money. "The workers of Elblag are with you," he announced. "We are all one." The strikers had won the biggest engineering works in the region over to their side.

Morale was astonishingly high. Liquor had been banned from the yard by the strike committee in order to avoid trouble, but an almost festive mood prevailed. Many of the strikers were passionately religious, none more so than Anna Walentinowicz, 51, the sturdy crane operator whose dismissal for union activism had helped to spark the strike. She said she was inspired by the example of the Polish-born Pope John Paul II. "The world had come to know the Poles as drunkards and sluggards," she told me. "But Cardinal Wojtyla restored our proud face and our proud heri-



Workers rally at Lenin Shipyard: More trouble than the regime ever expected

AP

tage. After he became Pope, every Pole held his head up high. Now we, the workers, are doing the same. Our pride will not be crushed ever again." •

There also was a heavy dose of politics in the lecture meetings that were held for young workers. "We have given the government the benefit of the doubt for 35 years," said one speaker. "Now it is time for them to realize that we have no more patience left." But the strike committee issued calls for caution. "Beware of taxi drivers," said one leader. "Remember they are supposed to be on strike, too. Those operating may work for the regime. Don't let them goad you into criticism of the authorities."

Strike leaders were constant-

*Gierek: 'There are limits beyond which we cannot go'*

Daniel Simon—Gamma-Liaison



ly on the lookout for informers. Everyone entering the shipyard was carefully checked in an effort to stop infiltration among the ranks of workers. Earlier, crop-dusters and helicopters had showered the Lenin yards with pro-government propaganda. The leaflets urged strikers to return to their jobs and, as an incentive, offered tempting vacation trips to the West. Among the material, workers found

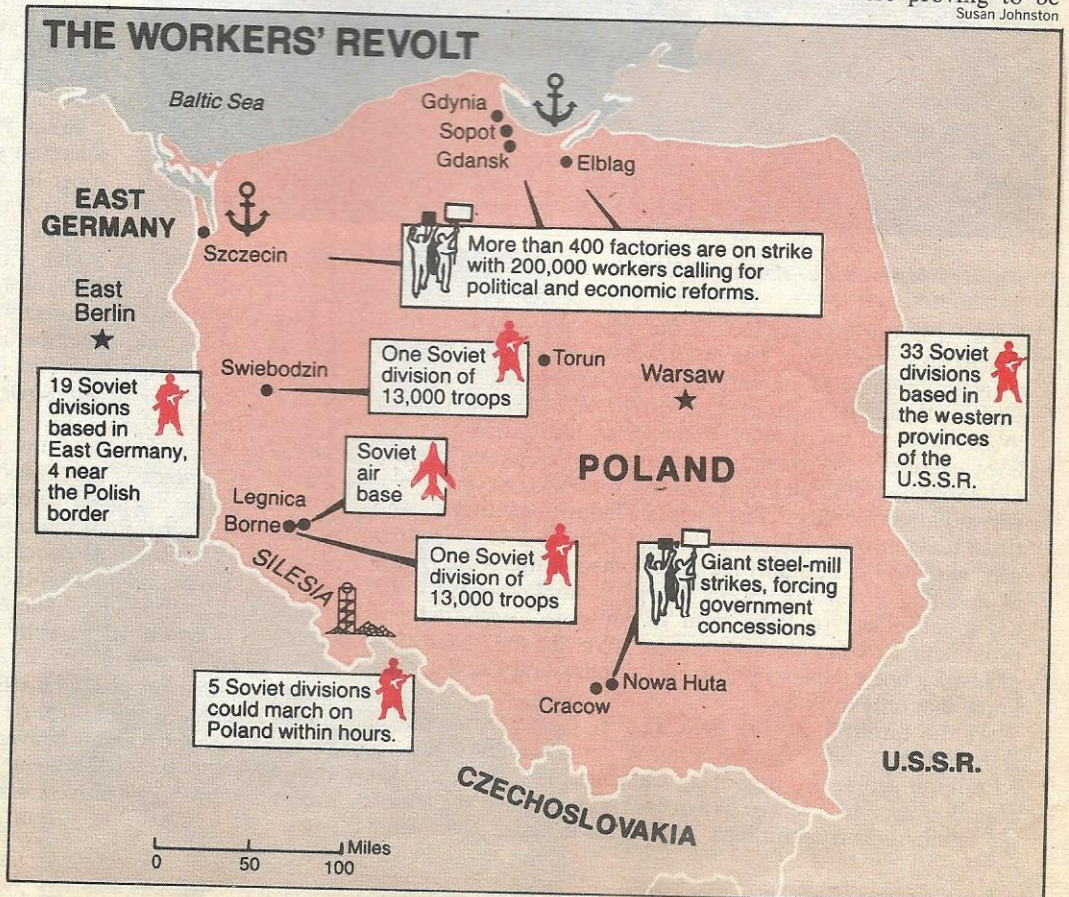
maps of imperial Poland—a not-so-subtle reminder of how tough times used to be. "There is no doubt that was meant to stir things up," said a young worker. But, he added, "we are keeping our cool."

By one estimate, the strikes were costing Poland \$50 million a day. They had shut off Poland's two main earners of foreign currency: the Baltic ports and shipyards and the exports of Silesian coal. "Poland survives on ships and coal," said a foreign diplomat in Warsaw. "Turn off both and the country is kaput." That was the essence of the worker's strategy. In the Lenin facility alone, work was suspended on twenty ships—including a huge "fish factory" vessel ordered by the Soviet Union.

**Panic Buying:** The strike was felt most intensely along Poland's northern coast. As workers in bustling port cities joined the work stoppage, life seemed to come to a halt. There was little to do but line up outside grocery markets and try to stockpile supplies for the coming days. In the town of Szczecin, food-buying was so frantic that most goods were quickly swept off grocery store shelves. "The situation is serious," warned a local radio station. But strike committees allowed trucks with groceries to make fresh deliveries and the crisis quickly eased. Soon the most seriously "deprived" individuals were the German tourists who found liquor unavailable. Looking forlorn, many sat in their hotels sipping tea and fruit juices at boozeless bars.

Polish authorities were far more upset. Clearly, the strikers were proving to be

Susan Johnston



# The Poles Apart

Long before Polish workers began openly challenging their Soviet-sponsored government, the Poles had managed to fashion a special—and comparatively liberal—brand of Communism. Stubborn peasants kept more than 20 per cent of the country's farm land in private hands. Devout Polish Roman Catholics made their church the most fervent and best organized in Europe well before one of their most troublesome bishops became Pope. Under popular pressure, the government of party chief Edward Gierek used press censorship sparingly and the iron fist rarely in dealing with dissidents or union organizers. "After the first strike in Russia there would have been no second," said a Western diplomat in Warsaw. "Sure it's Communism here, but it's Communism with a Polish face."

Since taking power in 1970 after bloody strikes unseated his predecessor, Gierek has permitted Poland to become the most politically tolerant satellite in the Soviet orbit, with only Hungary more relaxed on economic grounds. That the

responded by stepping up its illegal chapel building—and the government backed down. In addition, the Catholics' progressive wing was responsible for setting up "flying universities" and "peasant universities" to provide Polish youth with a counterweight to Communist dogma.

The church's resolve undoubtedly hardened when one of its most ardently anti-Communist cardinals, Karol Wojtyla, became Pope John Paul II. During his triumphal return to his native country in June 1979, the Pontiff repeatedly nettled the regime by demanding that it support human rights and by describing the church as the true homeland of Catholics in Communist-dominated countries. The Poles were ecstatic. Entire villages turned out to chant "Hallelujah!" and, late one night, 10,000 people gathered under the Pope's window to sing the national anthem—"Poland is still ours forever"—and unfurl the old Polish banner of pre-Communist days. Government efforts to minimize the Pope's impact were to no avail. When he was barred from visiting the southern coal fields, the miners simply skipped work and marched to Cracow to see him.



Workers' bread riot in Poznan in 1956: A long tradition of dissent and labor unrest

Kremlin has grudgingly looked the other way is due at least in part to geography. "The Soviets have surrounded Poland with iron clamps of stability in East Germany and Czechoslovakia," said Alois Mertes, a former West German envoy to Moscow. "That is why Poland has been allowed more liberalization." Moreover, the Soviets are apparently wary of tightening the screws on a country that harbors such deep-seated hatred for them. The Russians helped partition Poland three times in the eighteenth century, fought a bitter border war with the Poles in 1920 and joined Hitler's Germany in invading Poland in 1939. "Deep in our hearts we Poles are much closer to Paris than to Moscow," admitted one prominent Communist in Warsaw. "We are too much part of history not to make up our own minds. And the Russians know that only too well."

At the forefront of the fight against Communist control is the Polish Catholic Church. Some 90 per cent of the country's 35 million people are practicing Catholics, and they give the church enormous leverage. When the regime bridled at exempting seminarians from military service, for instance, the church

in Moscow—available, respectable and comparatively censor-free. For Poles, the more liberal press is only the beginning. They are allowed to hold rallies commemorating past victories over the Russians. In the Soviet Union, that sort of history is rewritten.

Clearly, the Gierek government's experiment with "creeping democracy" whetted the Poles' appetite for more sweeping reforms. Earlier this year before the strikes broke out, a government-sponsored think tank composed of party officials, labor leaders and intellectuals concluded that the only way for the regime to ensure its hold on the country was to become more democratic. "Otherwise," the committee said, "we face disaster" in the form of anarchy and revolution. Their advice went unheeded, and last week Gierek found himself struggling lamely to stave off just such trouble. "What the Communists hoped to achieve from all their liberalization is hard to say," said a prominent Warsaw University professor. "Sure it allowed the people to blow off steam. But there is so much damn steam that even a revolution would not exhaust it."

BOB LEVIN with PAUL MARTIN in Warsaw

## EUROPE

a much bigger problem than the regime had anticipated. Government officials were reduced to harassment tactics that, as it turned out, did little more than galvanize the workers' resolve. The regime cut communications along the northern coast only to find workers had set up an effective underground message system. Police forced workers to remove the emblem of their solidarity—the Polish flag—thereby making authorities seem less patriotic than the protestors. Workers said the government was treating them like hooligans—a serious miscalculation in the eyes of the strikers.

By far the most encouraging news from the government's point of view was that coal miners have thus far stayed on the job. If the miners walk out, Moscow might calculate that Gierek lacked enough armed force to put down the workers' revolt—and reluctantly decide to send Soviet troops into action. If so, a convenient opportunity was at hand. Next month, the Warsaw Pact plans to conduct "Brotherhood in Arms 1980," its biggest military maneuvers in a decade, and thousands of Soviet troops will be passing through Poland. In 1968, after similar exercises, Soviet and allied troops overthrew the liberal regime of Alexander Dubcek in Czechoslovakia.

**'Passionate':** But immediate Soviet intervention seemed unlikely. "All the evidence is that the Russians desperately want to stay out of this," said Prof. John Erickson, a Soviet affairs expert at Edinburgh University. "There's no doubt they will be pushing Gierek to find a solution, but they don't want to get involved for a number of reasons. The main one probably is that they know the Poles would fight. The Poles are the most passionate nationalists in Eastern Europe, and if they blow up, then the lid comes off everywhere, and we would get war in the whole of Eastern Europe."

No one wanted that to happen. In Rome, the Pope expressed sympathy for his homeland, but carefully restricted himself to ostensibly neutral sentiments, including the prayer that "the Polish nation remain always at peace." And Bishop Lech Kaczmarek of Gdansk told the workers: "I am with you in your plight, but long stoppages that might lead to riots and bloodshed are against society."

The United States also tried to avoid stirring up trouble by limiting itself to a low-key expression of concern. Later, apparently in response to a mounting clamor from Polish Americans and other groups,



Passing the word: Despite cries of 'victory,' the real battle was yet to come

Action Press

Washington issued a personal statement by Secretary of State Edmund Muskie. He expressed a hope that Kuron and the other dissidents would be released soon, but he stressed "our view that internal problems in Poland are for the Polish people and the Polish authorities to resolve."

**Like Minds:** Probably no Western leader was more alarmed than Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany. The Polish troubles forced Schmidt to call off a summit meeting this week with East German leader Erich Honecker. The meeting was supposed to produce a promise from Honecker of freer travel between East and West Germany. Said a source close to Schmidt:

Inspiration: 'Our pride will not be crushed'



AP

"There is no way the Soviets would go along with any such liberalization plan in the middle of this Polish crisis."

Schmidt feels close to Gierek. "They are like minds," said one insider. "Schmidt sees Gierek as a blessing for the country, and we all feel it would be very sad if this man went." Under Gierek, Poland has had perhaps the most liberal regime in Eastern Europe. Warsaw tolerates the Roman Catholic Church and political opposition groups. Peasants continue to own much of the farmland, and private enterprise survives unofficially in a thriving "parallel economy."

But the 67-year-old Gierek, a former miner, seems to have little credibility with Poland's younger workers. "The ruling groups are from the first generation of industrialized Poland," says a well-informed party member. "What they are having to face now is that there is a generation gap. Their social policies were liberal in a Communist sense. But their economic policies—the root of the present crisis—have been dogmatic and rigid."

**Blame:** So far, Moscow—the ultimate arbiter of Polish affairs—seemed to be backing Gierek. But sources said there had been shouting matches in the Polish Politburo, with hard-liners pushing Gierek to act decisively and crush the strikers. Gierek argued for restraint, and he prevailed. He also emerged as the man who would be blamed if the strikes turn violent—or if the government loses too much face. It is too early to predict whether the firing of Prime Minister Babiuch and the Communist Party promise of union reforms will satisfy the workers, who have genuinely free trade unions in mind. If it does not, Poland may be in for further turmoil.

ANGUS DEMING with PAUL MARTIN in Warsaw and bureau reports

# Brezhnev's Last Crisis?

By FRED COLEMAN, Diplomatic Correspondent

For the aged and ailing Soviet leadership, the crisis in Poland could hardly have come at a worse time. With Afghanistan a quagmire, Soviet-American relations at a low point, the quarrel with China insoluble, the home economy failing and Prime Minister Aleksei Kosygin gravely ill, the Kremlin is in no mood to deal with more trouble. Nowhere is the Soviet empire more vulnerable than in Poland, long the most volatile of Moscow's client states. Western experts agree that the Soviets will try to buy off the Poles, with economic aid and perhaps with some political concessions unthinkable in Russia. But these

to double or triple the number of troops it has in Afghanistan if it wants to win that war. Reinforcements for Afghanistan have to come from somewhere, but with Poland boiling, 35 Soviet divisions in Eastern Europe are likely to stay put; so are 66 divisions in the western U.S.S.R. and 46 divisions defending the long border with China. Despite the massive size of its army, the Soviet Union seems to be stretched thin. ■ Soviet military intervention would not solve the economic mess that caused the unrest in Poland. "Tanks won't make meat appear," says a diplomat in Moscow. ■ Almost certainly, a Soviet invasion of Po-

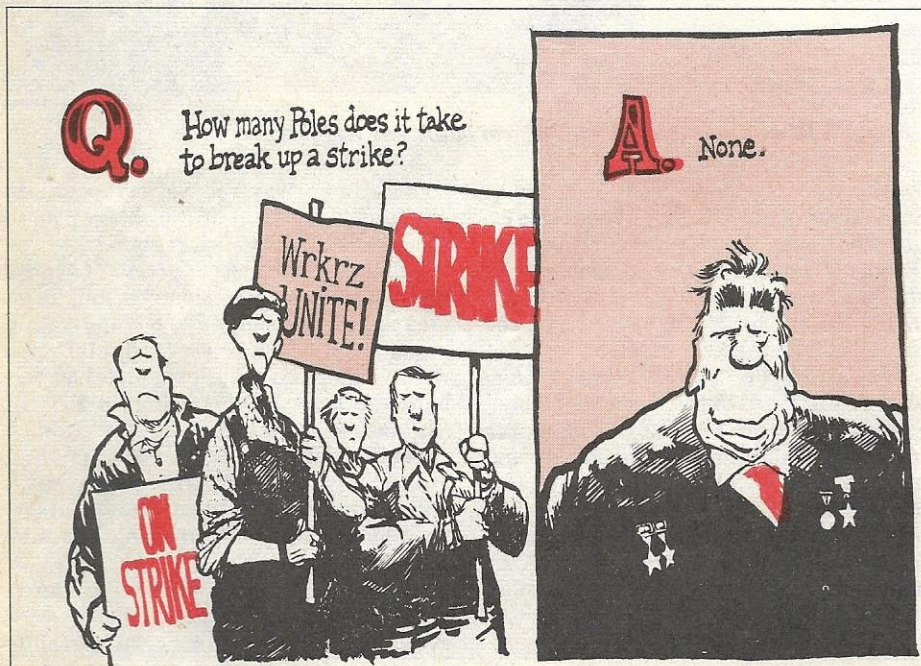
Gierek, Poland's Communist leader, is thought likely to offer cosmetic concessions, such as new elections within official trade unions, or a release of political prisoners. Moscow is expected to tolerate such reforms in Poland. But the line will be drawn at anything threatening the heart of the system, such as the workers' demand for free trade unions.

And yet there may not be time for Gierek to make a deal with the workers. The Soviets are already worried that the Polish unrest may spread through Poland to the Silesian coalfields in the south, or on to Russia. That is why Moscow is jamming foreign newscasts about the strikes. Fear of a spill-over into Russia was high on the list of reasons for invading Czechoslovakia and would be higher this time, since the economic problems that sparked the trouble in Poland are far worse in Russia.

**Economic Ills:** Furthermore, there are sharp limits to the economic aid Moscow can provide if Poland needs a long-term bailout. The current Soviet five-year economic plan, which ends in 1981, has failed to meet even reduced targets in both agriculture and industry. The 1980 Soviet grain crop is expected to be 210 million metric tons, against a target of 235 million metric tons, and the lack of feed grains is forcing the slaughter of livestock. In the Soviet Union, where often the only meat ration available on major national holidays is pork sausage, there is no surplus to help put more meat on Polish tables.

The Polish crisis could prove to be the watershed event for the Brezhnev leadership. The Politburo, dominated by men in their 70s, many in uncertain health, has long sought to avoid a generational change in the Kremlin leadership, at least until the 26th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, scheduled for next February. With Kosygin, 76, suffering from heart trouble, the betting in Moscow is on a stopgap replacement—such as First Deputy Prime Minister Nikolai Tikhonov, himself 75—to delay a wider reshuffle at least until the party congress. But some American Kremlinologists believe that if the Brezhnev regime proves to be weak and indecisive in handling the Polish crisis, younger challengers could force a leadership change before then. "There is no evidence anything like that is coming," says one expert. "But the possibility cannot be ruled out."

**Facade:** If the Brezhnev leadership follows its usual pattern, there will be no more evidence of disagreement within the Politburo over Poland than there was over Afghanistan. The façade of unity will be maintained. But the infighting will continue in private and will come to a head in January during the final maneuvering to rig the party congress decisions on who fills the top leadership posts for the next five years. If Brezhnev's old guard decides to hang on, younger members of the Politburo could start plotting the Kremlin's next palace coup, no matter what happens in Poland.



MacNelly—Richmond News Leader

*Waiting in the wings: Russia's hard-pressed leaders hoped to avoid intervention*

same analysts concede that some unforeseen spark could force the hand of President Leonid Brezhnev, sending Soviet tanks into a blood bath unseen in Eastern Europe since Hungary 24 years ago. Should that happen, one of the victims could be the Brezhnev leadership itself.

There are four major reasons why the Kremlin desperately wants to resolve the Polish crisis short of Soviet military intervention:

■ Unlike the Czechoslovaks, who stood by passively in 1968 except for a few rock-throwers, the Poles will fight a Soviet invasion, and the Polish Army is likely to side with the resistance, Western scholars believe.

■ The Kremlin would be hard pressed to mount another military operation while 90,000 Soviet troops are bogged down in Afghanistan. One Western expert in Moscow believes that the U.S.S.R. will have

land would bury what is left of détente with the West—the hallmark of Brezhnev's years in power—and ensure a return to the cold-war atmosphere of the 1950s. It would kill any chance of reviving the SALT II treaty and other key arms-control projects. Equally distressing to the Kremlin, it would heal the Western split that followed Afghanistan. After a Russian move into Poland, no West European government could dismiss the Soviet threat as a problem for some distant region, or find it easy to defy the U.S. lead on trade and nuclear strategy toward Russia.

Moscow would be willing to run all those risks, if necessary, to keep Poland from slipping out of Communist control. But U.S. experts believe that the Kremlin's first strategy will be to give Poland economic aid, something well in excess of the \$8 million a day the Russians now shell out to keep Fidel Castro's Cuba afloat. Edward

# 'Poland's Leaders May Have to Go'

**INTERVIEW: ANATOL GOLDBERG**

Russian-born Anatol Goldberg, 70, is the BBC's chief commentator on East European and Soviet affairs. His Sunday commentaries in Russian beamed to the Soviet Union attract a wide following, and he is almost as well known to Soviet listeners as Alistair Cooke is to Britishers. Last week he spoke about the Polish workers' revolt with NEWSWEEK INTERNATIONAL's European editor Edward Behr. Excerpts:

**BEHR: What are the chances of Soviet intervention in Poland?**

**GOLDBERG:** You cannot exclude it completely, but it would be wrong to say it's inevitable. True, one of the Kremlin's most important priorities is to keep the Soviet bloc intact, as proved by Moscow's intervention in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. But Russia does not derive any pleasure from such interventions. Even Stalin—who executed "National Communists" in Hungary and Bulgaria—treated Poland as a special case. In 1956, when the Soviet leadership was extremely worried about the Polish situation, it allowed Wladyslaw Gomulka—a definite National Communist—to come to power. Even in 1970, when the situation in Poland was equally explosive, the Soviets did not intervene.

**Q. Would the Soviet Union be at all inhibited by the possible impact on détente?**

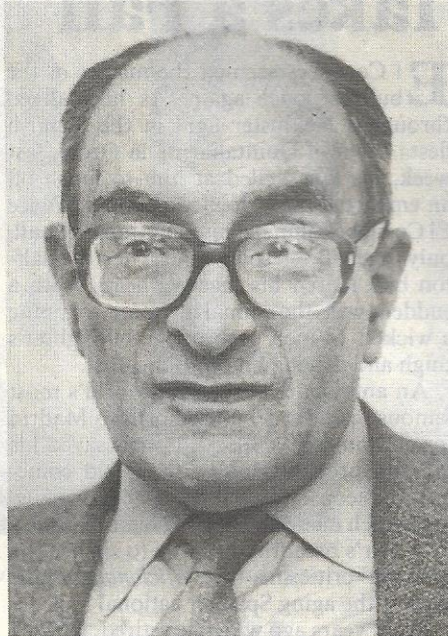
A. The Soviet Union may not be convinced of the genuineness of Western indignation over Afghanistan, but to march into Poland on top of Afghanistan would be a little too much. I think the Soviet leaders realize this.

**Q. Short of Soviet intervention, could the Polish authorities simply close down frontiers, ban reporters and engage in a kind of news blackout—with Poland totally cut off from the rest of the world?**

A. I don't believe a country like Poland can be closed up completely, at least not at this stage.

**Q. This week, for the first time since 1973, the Russians began once more to jam your Russian language broadcasts. Does that interference strike you as ominous?**

A. It certainly shows that the East European situation is regarded as the most sensitive issue of all at the moment. Jamming occurred in 1956 and 1968 because events in Hungary and Czechoslovakia could have been construed by the Soviet public as a challenge to Soviet authority.



Peter Marlow—Magnum

**Goldberg: 'The country can't be closed up'**

The other probable reason for the jamming is that strikes are forbidden in the Soviet Union and here you have a Polish Government actually negotiating with strikers. Remember that those in Russia who have demanded free trade unions have been treated very harshly indeed.

**Q. What other East European states might be tempted to follow the Polish example?**

A. Romania and East Germany. There have already been reports of industrial unrest in Romania, and of all the East Europeans, the East Germans are the best informed about what's taking place in Poland. The East Germans have reported on the Polish situation in great detail.

**Q. Is the issue of free trade unions in Poland negotiable? Wouldn't it bring down the regime?**

A. The Polish Government has not been negotiating with free trade unions but with free strike committees. As long as the strikes were sporadic it could do so. Apparently Poland's leaders felt this was all right; the absence of the official unions could be ignored. But with the strike committee in Gdansk becoming something like a free trade-unions council, the government refused to negotiate. The government could not acknowledge, even indirectly, the existence of such an independent and powerful body. Now Warsaw is trying to persuade the strikers that they are going to reform the official trade unions in such

a way that they will defend the work interests. Whether the strikers agree remains to be seen.

**Q. If the strikers do not agree to government's proposals, will a trade union undermine the Communist system in the long run?**

A. Yes. If you accept the principle of a really free trade union you will undermine the Communist system. That is why government is so anxious to achieve a compromise and why it promises to turn official trade unions into organizations defending the workers' interest. The problem is that such promises have been made before and not kept. What the government is really banking on is satisfying the workers' economic demands as far as it possibly can and hoping that other bigger, political demands will be dropped.

**Q. Can Communist Party leader Edward Gierek agree to a democratization process in Poland?**

A. There are degrees of democratization. Some members of the government are in favor of decentralization, and here again such promises have been made before but only on paper.

**Q. Will the Polish crisis affect the Madrid review meeting on the Helsinki Agreements later this year?**

A. As things stand it should not. The current crisis is an internal Polish affair and the West has no interest in internationalizing it.

**Q. Isn't it the Western view that Gierek's ouster or a violent change in leadership would undermine East-West détente?**

A. A violent change in Poland would certainly affect European stability. Gierek may have to go. There could be another change in leadership. After Gomulka went in 1970 and a similar pattern could occur this year. And of course the last resort you cannot entirely exclude is a Soviet intervention. Here one has to look to the past. In Czechoslovakia they intervened because National Communists "Eurocommunists" if you like—adopting an entirely independent line—there was any imminent danger of the existing Polish regime being violently overthrown, the Soviets would intervene again. But Polish workers, the church, and the dissidents know this. They know the risks involved. They don't want this to happen. Which is why, at the moment, I do not see a violent overthrow of the existing government in Poland.