

DIRECTIVE OF THE CPSU CC SECRETARIAT¹

On Instructions to the Soviet Ambassador in Italy Regarding Lech Walesa's Visit to Italy

1. To affirm the text of instructions to the Soviet ambassador in Italy (attached).²
2. To make a copy of the appeal to the Italian Communist Party leadership and send it to the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party.

CC SECRETARY

Cdes. Suslov, Kirilenko, Chernenko, Gorbachev, Ponomarev, Kapitonov,
Zimyanin, and Rusakov vote "yes" (see materials)

Distributed to Cdes. Gromyko, Ponomarev, and Rusakov³

231
14 January 1981

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¹ Translator's Note: Just below the "Top Secret" classification, the typed word "Draft" was crossed out by hand. The draft was going to be a "Directive of the CPSU Central Committee," but the word "Secretariat" was added by hand in the revised text. In the upper lefthand corner of the revised document, the decree number "246/1gs" was added by hand.

² Translator's Note: The Soviet ambassador in Italy at the time was Nikolai Lun'kov, who had been appointed only two months earlier.

³ Translator's Note: These two lists of names at the bottom were written in by hand.

R O M E

SOVIET AMBASSADOR

Meet with Cde. Berlinguer or one of his deputies, and say the following:

(For Warsaw — Transmit to Cde. Kania or a person designated by him the text of the following telegram, which was sent to Rome)

“In connection with the visit that is about to begin by Lech Walesa, the leader of the Polish trade union 'Solidarity,' the CPSU CC would like to share the following ideas.

“At present, the leaders of 'Solidarity' and those who back them are seeking to exacerbate the social situation in Poland and to step up their pressure on the PZPR leadership and government, having gained support for their platform from all those who are hoping to weaken the position of the Party and its leading role in the country. It is precisely in this connection that 'Solidarity' has been demanding the introduction of a five-day work week, seeking to use it as a way of openly confronting the position of the PZPR.⁵ This confirms our evaluation, which you already know from the CPSU CC's appeal to the ICP leadership, that the activity of 'Solidarity' is more and more focused on vigorously attacking the very foundations of socialism in the PPR.

⁴ Translator's Note: Just below these lines, the phrase "To pt. 1 of Dec. No. 246" was added by hand.

⁵ Translator's Note: This refers to a highly controversial issue at the time. For many years the average work week in Poland, as in most other Communist countries, had been 46 hours long, spread over 6 days: 8 hours a day Monday through Friday, and 6 hours on Saturday. In 1971, Edward Gierek had pledged to reduce the work week to five days (i.e., 40 hours), but this promise, like many others Gierek made, was never fulfilled. From the very start of the labor unrest in mid-1980, Polish workers had demanded "work-free Saturdays." (This, in particular, was one of the chief demands raised by striking railway workers in Lublin.) The Jastrzebie agreement, signed by the government and the Inter-Factory Strike Committee on 3 September 1980, had promised that "all Saturdays and Sundays will be free of work starting in January 1981." A five-day work week had already been introduced in Hungary and East Germany, but it would have been a major change for Poland at a time of great economic hardship. In the last few months of 1980, the government tried to back away from the Jastrzebie agreement, arguing (with some justification) that it should apply only to Silesian coal miners. The authorities maintained that Poland's economic crisis would permit no more than two free Saturdays a month. The government offered to adopt a five-day week if each workday were lengthened to 8.5 hours, but Solidarity rejected that proposal. In late December 1980 the authorities suddenly announced, without consulting Solidarity, that only two Saturdays a month would be work-free. The government's failure to take account of Solidarity's views caused the issue to become a focal point of discontent. Under Solidarity's auspices, hundreds of thousand of workers around the country refused to work on Saturdays in January 1981, and the government responded by threatening to withhold pay or exact other reprisals. Finally, on 30 January the two sides reached a compromise whereby one Saturday each month would be an 8-hour workday, making an average of 42 hours a week.

“The political intrigues and actions of 'Solidarity' are constantly felt, leading to a further deterioration of the economic situation in Poland and an erosion of the bases of socialist society. It is well known that Poland's economic situation is extremely grave. In these circumstances, a steady increase of demands that do not take account of the urgent state of the economy, and even more the work stoppages, can have only one result: the continued disintegration of economic life in the country. It is characteristic that government officials sought to explain to the leaders of 'Solidarity' that an immediate full transition to a five-day work week, instead of the government's plans for a gradual transition to such an arrangement, could lead to a reduction of living standards by 8-9 percent and could result in a significant decrease in industrial production, including the production of consumer goods.⁶ The fact that 'Solidarity' has ignored this warning and tried, on the contrary, to organize a general strike demanding the immediate introduction of a five-day week, indicates that the leaders of this organization are not seeking the improvement of the situation of the working class and of all laborers and the defense of their basic interests. Instead, they are seeking the further weakening of the Party's position and the emergence of a situation fraught with dangers of a stepped-up conflict.

“This union at present is a force to be reckoned with. Moreover, it is not a unified organization, either ideologically or politically. It encompasses serious disagreements among individual leaders and regional groups, a number of which have openly dissociated themselves from the activity of the antisocialist elements that have established a strong position in the central leadership of 'Solidarity.’⁷

“Walesa's delegation includes representatives of the so-called KOR ('Committee for Workers' Defense'), a patently antisocialist organization: Gwiazda, Walentynowicz, and Modzelewski, who are notorious for their openly anti-Communist and anti-Soviet sentiments.⁸ It is absolutely certain that these people are trying to use Walesa's trip to

⁶ Translator's Note: The first part of this sentence was amended by hand. The original sentence began: "It is characteristic that the leaders of 'Solidarity' were warned by government officials that a full transition to a five-day work week could lead to a reduction . . ."

⁷ Translator's Note: This statement indicates that Soviet leaders were aware of the broad spectrum of views within Solidarity. Although Soviet public commentators often depicted Solidarity as a uniform whole, Soviet officials were not oblivious to the diverse make-up of the trade union.

⁸ Translator's Note: The Committee for Workers' Defense (*Komitet Obrony Robotnikow*) was formed in September 1976 by a group of prominent intellectuals. They were protesting the arrest and harsh punishment of workers who had organized strikes and demonstrations in a number of Polish cities in June 1976 after the government suddenly announced increases in food prices. Over the next few years, KOR sought to forge an alliance of workers and intellectuals to press for greater political freedom. The success of KOR prompted the formation of a host of other dissident groups, including some calling for independent labor organizations. A valuable collection of KOR's documents was recently published: Andrzej Jastrzebski, ed., *Dokumenty Komitetu Obrony Robotnikow i Komitetu Samoobrony Społecznej "KOR"* (London: Aneks, 1994). For varying perspectives on KOR and its role in the emergence of Solidarity, see Michael H. Bernhard, *The Origins of Democratization in Poland: Workers, Intellectuals, and Oppositional Politics, 1976-1980* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Robert Zuzowski, *Political Dissent and Opposition in Poland: The Workers' Defense Committee "KOR"* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992); Roman Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity: A Political Sociology of Poland's Working-Class Democratization* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); and Lawrence Goodwyn, *Breaking the Barrier: The Rise of Solidarity in Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). Also indispensable is the first-

Italy not only to promote 'Solidarity' and its own views, but also to undertake new attacks against socialism in Poland, relying, so to speak, on 'international support.'

“We would like to draw your attention to the fact that the complexity of the ideological and political situation in Poland has been heightened, in particular, by the contrasting interpretations that the different forces have of the slogan 'renewal.’⁹ Some, notably the PZPR and its allies, understand this as a reaffirmation of the principles of socialism and the reestablishment of Leninist norms of Party life, whereas others understand it as the erosion and dissipation of the socialist order. These contrasting views of the nature of the slogan 'renewal' are being exploited by the enemies of the Party to conceal their underlying goals and schemes.

“Based on the above, it is obvious that the interests of the Polish people and the interests of the PZPR and its line of socialist renewal would be best served if you countered the attempts by Walesa and his entourage to exploit the trip to Italy for anti-Communist, antisocialist, and anti-Soviet purposes.

“Right now, support for the current political line of the leadership of the 'Solidarity' trade union, which is operating legally in Poland and, in the process, is seeking to disrupt the country's constitutional order, would be tantamount to support for its struggle against the PZPR.

“Taking account of these circumstances, we consider it our duty to inform the ICP leadership of this.”

Confirm by telegram.

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hand account and analysis by one of the founders of KOR, Jan Jozef Lipski, *Komitet Obrony Robotnikow KOR: Komitet Samoobrony Spolecznej*, 2 vols. (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo CDN, 1983).

⁹ Translator's Note: The Polish word *odnowa* (renewal) was widely used in Poland during the events of October 1956, and it became a nearly ubiquitous slogan in 1980-81. Kania and other leaders of the PZPR sought to coopt the term by referring to "socialist renewal." (Hard-line PZPR officials generally tried to avoid using the term at all.) Solidarity and the Catholic Church preferred to talk about "national renewal" or "Polish renewal." The confusion surrounding these various terms tended, if anything, to increase in 1981, as one Soviet official noted in June 1981: "The term 'socialist renewal' encompasses many different political forces of a directly contradictory nature. . . . It often happens that the slogan of 'renewal' is used by those who are waging a struggle against the socialist order and are acting at the behest of the extremist wing of Solidarity." See "O polozhenii v Bydgoschskom voevodstve Pol'skoi narodnoi respubliki," Memorandum No. 4-2/370 (Secret), 16 June 1981 from I. Lutak, first secretary of the UkrCP's Cherkasy oblast committee, in TsDAHOU, f. 1, Op. 25, Spr. 2295, Ll. 54-60.

C P S U C C

On Instructions to the Soviet Ambassador in Italy Regarding Lech Walesa's Visit to Italy

A delegation from Solidarity (18 people), headed by L. Wałęsa, will be in Italy from 14 to 18 January 1981 at the invitation of local trade unions. The delegation also includes representatives of the antisocialist political opposition (Ciph. Tel. from Warsaw, Spec. No. 15, 7 January 1981).

According to available information, the bourgeois parties and mass media intend to make wide use of the trip by this delegation to discredit the socialist order in the Polish People's Republic (PPR) and to support the line of eroding and eventually eliminating socialist gains in Poland. To this end, plans are under way to organize a reception for the members of the delegation by high-level trade union and political figures. In addition to a meeting with the Pope in the Vatican, there are plans for L. Walesa and his delegation to be welcomed by the leadership of the United Trade Union Federation VIKT-IKPT-IST, and for meetings to be organized with workers' groups. Despite a preliminary decision to avoid meeting with L. Walesa, the ICP leadership so far has been wavering in its position and has not ruled out the possibility of some sort of contacts with him.

We believe it would be worthwhile to alert the leadership of the Italian Communist Party, which is well-positioned within the Italian trade union movement and has substantial influence on political circles in the country.¹¹

In this connection it would be best to give instructions to the Soviet ambassador in Italy to meet with E. Berlinguer or one of his deputies and to draw the attention of the ICP leadership to the necessity of taking all possible steps to ensure that L. Walesa's trip

¹⁰ Translator's Note: In the upper lefthand corner of this attachment, the words "To the Central Committee Secretariat" were written in by Mikhail Suslov. Suslov, Konstantin Rusakov, and Andrei Kirilenko signed the document just below Suslov's instruction. In the upper righthand corner (just above the "Secret" classification), Suslov wrote the word "Urgent" (*Srochnoe*).

¹¹ Translator's Note: It is not clear whose idea this was, but the Soviet leadership's hopes of enlisting the Italian Communist Party against Solidarity were probably doomed from the start. Enrico Berlinguer and other top ICP officials had been openly enthusiastic about Solidarity's efforts to promote "democracy and participation" in place of the "hierarchical and totalitarian" system created by the PZPR. Italian Communist leaders also had been warning, both publicly and privately, that "outside military intervention in Poland" would have "extremely grave consequences." Yet, despite the ICP's strong support for Solidarity, it was not until mid-February 1981—when Berlinguer indicated that he would not be attending the CPSU's 26th Congress—that Soviet leaders realized there was little point in trying to work with the Italian party on the Polish issue. For a Soviet evaluation of the ICP shortly before Walesa's visit, see G. P. Smirnov, "Ital'yanskaya Kommunisticheskaya Partiya: K 60-letiyu so dnya osnovaniya," *Voprosy istorii KPSS* (Moscow), No. 1 (February 1981), pp. 95-98.

to Italy does not result in support for the line of the antisocialist political opposition.

It would be worth transmitting to the PZPR CC a copy of the appeal to the ICP leadership.

A draft directive of the CPSU CC is attached.¹²

13 January 1981

18-S-62

[*Source: TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 49*]

¹² Translator's Note: The amended draft (see above) was issued in the name of the CPSU Central Committee Secretariat the following day, the same day that Walesa and his entourage arrived in Italy. The term "CPSU Central Committee " was almost always short-hand for either the Secretariat or the Politburo, which de facto were the supreme party organs.