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The AFT, the CIA, and *Solidarność*

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In its issue of Sept. 29, 1981, the *Wall Street Journal*, not noted for being "pro-labor," published an interesting editorial in favor of the Polish *Solidarność* (Solidarity) union. The WSJ attacked those forces that, it said, questioned the connection between the AFL-CIO and Solidarity. It showed particular irritation over claims that, through the AFL-CIO, the U. S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as undertaking to manipulate Solidarity:

How easy it is to make lists of the CIA connections [with the AFL-CIO]; the parallel aims, the instances of collaboration, the communications and shared acquaintanceships. How easy to use the list to try to discredit the AFL-CIO enterprise in Poland, and more important, to try to expunge the colossal embarrassment Solidarity represents to worldwide communism.

The WSJ editorial does not, interestingly, deny the AFL-CIO/CIA /Solidarity connection at all. Rather, it warns that any publicity given this connection tends to "tarnish" or "delegitimize" Solidarity and the AFL-CIO, and so to play into the hands of the Soviet Union. Correct, no doubt; and *Counterspy* magazine, the one singled out for special criticism by the WSJ editorial, is ideologically allied with the Soviets, frequently publishing articles by members of the Communist Party USA. But, what is the truth of these charges?

Albert Shanker's column in the Oct. 4, 1981 issue of the New York Times (p. E9) also attacks the notion of a CIA connection with Solidarity. Shanker says he is taking issue with a report published in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, a Soviet newspaper, alleging ties between the AFT and the CIA. That article, by LG correspondent Anatolii Manakov (LG, Sept. 30, p.9) examines the Solidarity information office in New York, which was set up in a building owned by Shanker's AFT, at 260 Park Avenue. Manakov claims that the AFT is a member of the American institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), a CIA front, which gives the AFT \$100,000 a year for services such as the Solidarity office.

Shanker's response is interesting. While denying that the AFT gets money from the CIA, Shanker admits it does get funds from the Agency for International Development (AID). Nor does

Shanker deny the indisputable fact that the AFT is a member of the AIFLD. Philip Agee, former CIA agent and author of *Inside The Company* (published in 1975, long before the rise of Solidarity), writes this about AIFLD: “CIA-controlled labour, center financed through AID” (p. 620). *The New York Times* of January 15 1981 reported that two AIFLD employees murdered in El Salvador were exposed in error by a lawyer as CIA agents. According to A.J. Langguth in his book about US-sponsored terrorism and torture in Latin America, *Hidden Terrors* (1978):

AIFLD was a creature of the early sixties, a merger of talent and funds from the CIA, the AFL- CIO, and some sixty U. S. corporations...(p. 93).

Langguth quotes the Director of AIFLD as taking credit for training many of the right-wing union leaders who helped in the US-sponsored overthrow of the Goulart government in Brazil in 1964 and the establishment of the fascist military dictatorship (p. 115).

The September 1981 Solidarity Congress issued an invitation to Lane Kirkland, President of the AFL-CIO, and the AFL-CIO news release about the invitation added that Kirkland would be accompanied by “Irving Brown, AFL-CIO European representative.” Tom Braden, former head of the CIA's International division, revealed in 1967 that Brown was a CIA agent. Brown, he wrote, rallied ex-Nazis and Corsican Mafiosi (many of them, heavily into heroin smuggling, still work with the CIA today) to infiltrate Communist-led unions and terrorize the workers in post-war Europe; the CIA funded these efforts, along with the ILGWU (Braden, “I’m Glad the CIA Is 'Immoral'”, *Saturday Evening Post*, May 20. 1967). Agee merely writes that Brown was the “principal agent for control of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.” CIA-man Brown was also the featured invited speaker at the 1977 AFT Convention.

The AFL-CIO has already sent over \$160.000 to Solidarity (*New York Times*, January 7 1981). Agee notes that George Meany, late AFL-CIO President, helped with CIA work; Kirkland no doubt continues to do so. Kirkland's background resembles that of a CIA analyst more than of a worker: graduate of Georgetown University School of Foreign Service; member of the Rockefeller Commission to investigate the CIA; work with Nelson Rockefeller in the AIFLD and with brother David at the Trilateral Commission. President Gerald Ford, by the way, had forbidden the Rockefeller Commission to make any inquiry into CIA foreign operations because -- in Ford's words -- they were a “cesspool” which would “ruin the U. S. image around the world” (Harrison Salisbury, *New York Review of Books* 9/25/80, p.32).

Polish Solidarity, therefore, may credibly be tied to the CIA -- which, it should be noted, is an anti-worker organization. As Langguth shows, "anti-communism" is used as a convenient reason for pro-US regimes around the world, aided by the CIA, to suppress any and all movements that aim to better workers' standards of living. In the early '60's, "at least one U. S. embassy labor attaché, a veteran of the union movement in the United States, felt a pang in watching AIFLD disrupt Brazil's progress in labor organizing under the guise of protecting the workers from communism" (Langguth, p.115). Acting through AID, the CIA ran schools in the US in the late 1960s in which techniques in torture, terrorism, and death-squad tactics of assassination were taught to police from around Latin America. These tactics were put to use to crush unions, strikes, and labor movements. Similarly, the CIA used the Mafia and Cuban exile terrorists to prop up fascists like Somoza of Nicaragua and carry out terrorist attacks on Cuba, winking at their heroin smuggling (see W. Hinckle and W. Turner, *The Fish Is Red*. Harper & Row, 1981). These attacks included the importation of swine fever virus into Cuba in the spring of 1970 -- to date the only verified example of germ warfare by a major power (*Newsday* January 6 1977).

The CIA helped pro-US landlords smuggle opium out of Laos for the heroin trade during the Vietnam War (Alfred McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*, 1973). It now aids the anti-Soviet Afghan tribesmen in their opium trade (Hoag Levins, "The Kabul Connection," *Philadelphia Magazine*, August 1980). The same Corsican Mafiosi who beat up pro-communist French workers in the 1940's continue to work with the CIA today, still smuggling heroin (Hendrik Krüger, *The Great Heroin Coup*, 1980). This CIA-abetted trade kills tens of thousands of workers worldwide, many of them in the US, each year.

Why does the CIA support Solidarity? Because -- as the WSJ's nervous editorial shows -- the CIA, the AFL-CIO, the U.S. ruling class, in fact everyone but the public, from whom the truth has been withheld, knows that Solidarity is as reactionary as they come. It is a fascist organization, not unlike Hitler's, resembling nothing so much as the Moscow and Warsaw "communists" whom it opposes so bitterly.

Solidarity not only tolerates but also itself promotes anti-Semitism:

Unsigned leaflets at Solidarity's summer congress hinted darkly at Jewish figures in the union; questions were asked at some union meetings about the role or presence of Jews; in Solidarity's large Warsaw branch. a 'true Poles' faction grew up, a throwback to eruptions of bigotry in pre-World War II Poland. (V. Hamill, *Washington Post*, December 26 1981).

The WSJ's Frederick Kempe, who attended the Gdansk Congress of Solidarity (September-October 1981) wrote that about 100 of the 800-plus delegates were "at least sympathizers" of the KPN, a conservative, nationalist group "tainted with a history of anti-Semitism." Marian Jurczyk, Solidarity vice-president for Szczecin and presidential candidate, used anti-Semitism to attack the Polish government in an October speech (*New York Times*, January 9 1982). Solidarity has adopted Josef Pilsudski, prewar fascist dictator of Poland, as its hero, renaming the Gdansk shipyards after him on 11/11/81. Under Pilsudski unions were busted, workers shot down, opponents tortured, concentration camps set up (after a visit from Goebbels in 1934, accompanied by officially tolerated pogroms), and anti-Semitic laws enforced. Leaders of Solidarity include members of the prewar Polish Socialist Party and Home Army veterans; both groups were anti-Semitic.

The Polish Catholic Church, also powerful in Solidarity, has a disgusting history of anti-Semitism. In 1936 Cardinal Hlond, Primate (until 1948) of Poland, wrote in a pastoral letter, read aloud in all churches: "The Jewish influence upon morals is fatal." Jews, he continued, spread fraud, usury, white slavery, and pornography. Good Christians should boycott them.

In Poland as elsewhere racism is used to divert the workers' movement towards scapegoats, away from its real enemies, and into pro-capitalist directions. The same Solidarity Congress that invited Kirkland voted to urge Poland join the International Monetary Fund (i.e. an end to subsidies for workers in food, housing, etc.) and directly approved a price increase and renunciation of free Saturdays! As for Walesa, he is an enthusiastic supporter of Reagan (Evans and Novak, *New York Post*, December 8 1980) and of capitalism. Walesa met secretly with the presidents of Ford, General Dynamics, Westinghouse, and big shots from IBM, Heinz, TWA, etc. in Paris in October to discuss how he was going "to be able to control the workers' movement" (*Le Canard Enchaîné*, December 16 1981). For – as all good capitalists agree – the bankers must be paid.

It should perhaps sadden, certainly enrage, but not surprise us to see Shanker and the AFT promoting racist, anti-worker gangs like the CIA and Solidarity. Shanker supported the Vietnam War and calls himself a "certified hawk"; he holds office by corruption and the "unit rule" in NYC and NY State AFT. He and Walesa are birds of a feather, loyal supporters of big business, enemies of workers everywhere, clones of one another just as are the CIA and KGB, or Reagan and Brezhnev. A real workers' revolt, here as in Poland, would be directed first against these wolves in sheep's clothing, traitors who prey on the crying needs of workers and others for a better life.