

# Walesa in Bonn: Time is short for Poland

by Birgit Vitt and Gabriele Liebig

Lech Walesa, the leader of Poland's Solidarnosc movement, visited West Germany on Sept. 4-8 at the invitation of the German Trade Union Federation (DGB), in order to sound out how the Bonn government and the leaders of German business are planning to act toward "the new Poland." Will they economically support the Solidarnosc-led new government despite, and against, the interests of the Washington-Moscow condominium; or will they, through inactivity and bad advice, help bring about a new Polish catastrophe?

One can only hope that the last word has not been spoken on this question, for Lech Walesa went home empty-handed as far as anything concrete was concerned.

The chairman of the Solidarnosc union has been invited to Germany by the DGB since 1981, but only after Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki took office last month could he undertake the trip, as the first envoy abroad of the first non-Communist regime Poland has had in 50 years.

Walesa used the visit in order to make it clear, with strong emphasis and never-failing humor, to his interlocutors from German industry and business right up to Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Economics Minister Haussmann, how much the further political progress of Poland and the success of the new regime is tied up with the solution of Poland's economic problems. At his final press conference on Sept. 8 in Bonn, Walesa likened Poland's government to a "house of cards, in which Premier Mazowiecki is sitting on the top floor," and the whole thing could soon tumble down. Walesa said, "Poland is on the brink of an economic catastrophe." The main problem, he said, is the high indebtedness, because "interest is gobbling up progress."

Along with significant easing of the debt burden, Poland needs at least \$10 billion in credit and investments in order to rebuild its economy. At his Sept. 6 press conference in Düsseldorf, Walesa said that President Bush's offer of \$100 million in economic aid was merely a symbolic act going in the right direction.

A similar symbolic function can be ascribed to the list of 16 concrete cooperation projects for the Gdansk area, which Walesa on the first day of his business proposed to German Labor Minister Norbert Blüm and the governor of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, Johannes Rau. This would involve Polish companies that want German capital investments. The list shows that Poland is literally lacking every-

thing—enterprises that make paint, housewares, gaskets, detergents, ships, gas bottles, and leather goods need from 200,000 to 60 million deutschmarks to modernize. The Polish government, for its part, wants to sell 85% of its share in these state-owned companies to private investors.

A meeting was hastily scheduled for the last day of the visit with German businessmen, the head of the German Chamber Industry and Commerce Schoser, and Minister Norbert Blüm, to discuss these projects. But the meeting achieved no concrete results. Walesa, at his Bonn press conference, once again stated that he can very well understand if German investors are fearful that they would be supporting state-owned business with their money, but that this is not the case: "If they buy 51% of the shares of a firm, they own it, and the state no longer owns it. And if they want their investments to be even safer, I say to them: Buy more than 51%!"

Walesa repeated an old Solidarnosc proposal, that West German banks should set up branches in Poland, in order to attract Polish private savings, when the people would otherwise be paying into the existing Communist-controlled banks.

## IMF prescriptions kill

In the meetings between Walesa and Otto Wolff von Amerongen, chairman of the Eastern Committee of German Economy, it became clear that the industries and banks are making any economic cooperation dependent on whether Poland subjects itself to the International Monetary Fund-World Bank-ordered "shock therapy." Reading between the lines of the rather understated description of the meeting, under such "restructuring," Poland's currency, the zloty would be devalued, and new drastic austerity measures imposed, more sacrifices demanded from a population which has been going hungry for many months and will also freeze in the coming winter.

Upon his arrival at the Düsseldorf Airport in West Germany, Solidarnosc leader Lech Walesa was greeted by a delegation of the Schiller Institute. A banner in Polish welcomed him and expressed support for a moratorium on the Polish debt. An Institute spokesman was briefly able to talk to the union leader, giving him an issue of the newspaper *Neue Solidarität* and the American statesman Lyndon LaRouche's recent statement on Poland (see *EIR*, Sept. 1, 1989). Walesa met the Schiller Institute at other points of his visit, including during his talks with German industry spokesman Otto Wolff von Amerongen, where the banner, this time in German, read "IMF and Moscow Ruin Poland—Debt Moratorium Now!" The Solidarnosc leader stopped and had the text translated for him.

Von Amerongen, who in past months has been noted for his "Gorbymania" and his reckless zeal regarding German investments into the Soviet Union, suddenly became a cold calculator when it came to Poland. He warned against too great impatience. German businessmen deal with hard figures, and it would be a great risk to invest in an unstable system, he said after his discussions with Solidarnosc. He therefore called upon the German federal government to expand the Hermes letters of credit, which would be predicated on "restructuring" through IMF recipes.

A spokesman for the foreign department of the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (DIHT) stated that one thing has to be clear: The healing of the Polish economy will proceed "only *within* the International Monetary Fund, and not *without* it. Other countries have already had to learn this." Once again, "austerity." But he did concede that this could be carried out by the Polish regime only with great difficulty—if at all.

In other words, it is already been pre-discounted that the austerity plan demanded by the IMF, the reduction of state subsidies, drastic budget cuts, harmonizing the interest rates with the market level, devaluation of the zloty, and the like, will necessarily further destabilize the Mazowiecki government. It has to be added that the identical IMF policy has already ruined all the developing sector economies wherever it has been imposed.

The overthrown Polish Communists and the Kremlin must be laughing up their sleeves over the attitude of the DIHT. All they have to do is sit back and wait, and the IMF prescriptions will so rapidly discredit both Solidarnosc ministers for economics and finance as well as the premier, that they will be easy to topple. The Communist unions in Poland have already announced they plan to constitute the "new opposition." The scenario of "social conflict" in Poland will be played like "ethnic conflict" in the Captive Nations of the Baltic and Moldavia, where the KGB supports Russian strikes and unrest with the goal of returning to power.

### A fateful question

Should we drive Poland to catastrophe, by making all cooperation dependent on brutal IMF-style austerity? This question has to be posed to every German industrial spokesman who wants to do something for the highly fragile "new Poland." The alternative is to help the Solidarnosc movement, to join us in building a unified Christian Europe, as Walesa said during the Mass in Essen with Bishop Hengsbach. This is different from Gorbachov's "common European home." It means a Europe to which America belongs, too, as Walesa stated in his Düsseldorf press conference.

There, he spoke out on the unity of Poland's destiny with Germany: Whenever the two nations have cooperated with one another, something good has come out of it; and whenever Poland and Germany have become divided, catastrophe has always followed.

## U.S. retreats from hands initiative to

*Mr. Abdallah Bouhabib, the Lebanese ambassador to the United States, was interviewed in Washington, D.C. by William Jones on Aug. 28.*

**EIR:** Since we last spoke some weeks ago, the Syrians have launched a major offensive on the Christian positions, and there were attacks on a variety of fronts, which clearly indicate that, in spite of the efforts of the Arab League and others to resolve the situation in Lebanon, the Syrians are going all out for the military extinction of the nation. What have the effects of the Syrian offensive been in Lebanon? What do you think are the overriding goals of these latest Syrian moves?

**Bouhabib:** There is no doubt that the intention of the Syrians toward Lebanon is to enforce Syrian hegemony. We are talking about ending any potential of Lebanon being a free and democratic country. This is the aim of the Syrians. I think in their attack on the enclave, they lost a lot of people, and we think that the attack taught them the lesson that the enclave is not easy to penetrate.

They continue their war of attrition. This war of attrition is worse than a penetration, worse than an invasion. In an invasion, even if they succeeded on one front, we know that they cannot stay in because the people would resist. But the war of attrition is a continuous war, killing people, destroying homes, destroying people's life savings. If you have 100 shells a day, it is a peaceful day. You are talking about big shells, 240 millimeters, the same size shells as are used in airplane bombardment. The intention of this is genocide, to finish off the last enclave of resistance against Syrian occupation in Lebanon. The occupation and fighting have exhausted the country, it has been ruthlessly exploited, the spirit of resistance has been weakened. And now we have this enclave which is still resisting. And they are now attempting to finish off the resistance there also.

**EIR:** There have been discussions that the Syrian military not only conducted an extraordinarily brutal military offensive, but that there were also atrocities against civilians of a