

December 5, 1980

**Speech by Erich Honecker at the meeting of the
party and state leaders of the Warsaw Pact**

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Summary:

Honecker discusses the problems facing the Polish United Worker's Party and emphasizes that the "counter-revolutionary" forces must be stopped and punished.

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S P E E C H

of comrade Erich Honecker at the meeting of the party and state leaders of the states participating in the Warsaw Treaty

Moscow, 5 December 1980

Dear comrades,

On behalf of the Central Committee of the German United Socialist Party, I should like to express my most cordial thanks to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union for the invitation extended to me to take part in this meeting of the party and state leaders from the states participating in the Warsaw Treaty. This meeting was highly necessary as it [the situation] has become very tense.

The leadership of the German United Socialist Party, Communists, all of the citizens of the German Democratic Republic are very much concerned about the situation that appeared in Poland. I think nobody can remain indifferent to these events.

We followed with great attention the proceedings of the 7th Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, and today we have listened with special interest the exposé of comrade Stanislaw Kania. We fully understand the responsibility of the Polish United Workers' Party in connection with the events in Poland, but at the same time we are likewise responsible to our peoples, to our friends in the whole world for the situation that appeared. The peoples of our countries, the progressive forces throughout the world trust that we will help the Polish Communists to overcome the difficulties that arose in Poland.

In this difficult situation, we lent substantial material assistance to Poland. We delivered to the Polish comrades 100,000 tons of wheat, 1,000 tons of butter, and other goods amounting to a total value of 3 million marks, including free convertible currency, as a non-reimbursable aid. We know that the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and other socialist countries also granted important aid to Poland.

Nevertheless, a lot of problems still exist in Poland, and we do not see what positive changes took place in this country after the 7th Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. Workers and intellectuals in Poland demagogically assert that their expectations after the meeting between comrade Kania and comrade Brezhnev were not fulfilled. Comrade Kania assured us that the party and state leadership of Poland would not fall back a step further but the Supreme Court cancelled the decision of the court of justice in Warsaw. The consequence of this cancellation that was that the situation worsened even more, and was a blow to the expectations of positive changes being made in Poland's situation.

The situation existing in Poland at this moment is discussed in our party, within the ranks of our people, and these discussions are characterized by the increasing preoccupation with the fate of socialism in people's Poland. I think there are no differences of opinion among us regarding the fact that the setting up of the Strike Committees in Gdansk and Szczecin was a mistake. It is a reality that, after this capitulation, the enemies had the possibility of spreading the strikes in the whole country. A couple of weeks ago exaggerated claims were expressed, and now claims and slogans with a political character appeared. Although the Supreme Court was able to prevent the general strike, Walesa declared that this strike could be organized any time it was necessary to do so. This was used to blackmail the state organs. The arrested people were freed, which will undermine the party's and the state's

positions. These facts must concern all of those who are faithful to socialism.

While these issues were being analyzed at Poland's Supreme Court, I was in Austria. On that occasion, [Chancellor Bruno] Kreisky and other persons asked me about the issues in Poland. Despite the fact that our opinion about Poland being capable of solving the issues on its own was unanimous, I tell you in all sincerity that when I heard about the decision of the Supreme Court I was not even thinking about it any longer, I did not expect such a result.

The events that have taken place in Poland so far prove that "Solidarity" acts in keeping with a well-established counterrevolutionary scheme, in stages. [The counterrevolutionary forces] organize "Solidarity" and they practically have a legal party. The counterrevolutionary leaders do not hide any more the fact that their aim is to remove the PUWP from its position as leading force in the state and to change the socialist system, as comrade Kania said here. The organizers of the strikes did not launch slogans against socialism and the Soviet Union to start with. Now they directly attack the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and other brotherly socialist countries. They incite the nationalistic spirits in the ranks of the population.

Dear comrades,

We cannot help noticing that the events in Poland are, first of all a consequence of the attacks from the inside and the outside, intended to undermine the socialist system. It is important for us to understand that the PUWP has a bitter enemy.

In order to defeat the counterrevolution, the [PUWP] must have a firm conception, a precise line, and these must be known by all Communists. The endless discussions about the mistakes made in the past will yield no results. The prejudice caused by propaganda is much more important. Naturally, we cannot admit the fact that the public opinion does not know the truth. It goes without saying that we must draw a line between the dissatisfied workers and the antisocialist forces. We must point out, however, who the enemy is, and what the causes of the current situation in Poland are.

Socialism has to be built in accordance with general principles. Hence the leading role of the party in the society: the party is the vanguard of the working class, the exponent of its vital interests. Many difficulties are known to have existed in the history of the revolution. For example, after the Great October Revolution, the Mensheviks said they would build a new society without Bolsheviks. The facts have shown, however, that only the Communist party is in a position to build a new society essentially different from the other societies.

We take the view that the popular forces in Poland are capable of solving their problems to their advantage. It is inadmissible that strikes take place in socialist society. The strikes in socialist society are directed against socialism and are not useful to either the workers on strike or the working class in general. These demonstrations are directed against peace, security, and detente.

Leninism is said to be creatively applied in Poland. This is a pretext of the counterrevolutionary and antisocialist forces so that they may be able to succeed in diverting Poland from its course, in changing the Polish socialist system. Free elections are talked about more and more in Poland. What purpose is pursued by this? It is easy to understand. That is why, via the information mass media, all these issues must be well clarified. However, on November 7th a cartoon was published in Poland showing an executioner with an axe in his hand, bearing the following caption: services rendered to the population. There are lots of facts attesting to the fact that some Polish writers write material against the people's system in Poland.

What we say is also based on our experience. For example, a very serious situation arose in our country in 1953 as well. Then there still was an open border between the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic Germany. Imperialism bet its bottom dollar on counterrevolution. Under the circumstances, we combined political actions with administrative measures and, very shortly, we succeeded in isolating the counterrevolutionary forces from the working class.

It has been said, with good reason, that a revolution can take place peacefully or unpeacefully. Being Communists, we must be ready to consider both ways and, in certain moments, to act in accordance with the situation that was created, using various means. However, if the fate of the people's power is endangered, we will have no other choice but to have the organs of the popular power act decisively. We state this fact on the basis of our experience and of the conclusions we drew regarding the events in 1953. The same thing is apparent from the events in Hungary in 1956, and from the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

The representatives of various groups emerging in Poland now state at the top of their voices that the aim of their actions is to serve the renewal of Poland. It is quite obvious, however, that the purpose they pursue is precise, and that -- in attaining their goals -- they are backed by NATO and the Common Market, which make every effort to support them in all of the actions they under-take.

I recall that in 1968 I discussed for an hour with comrade [Alexander] Dubcek, who tried to convince me that the events in Czechoslovakia were not counter-revolutionary, but that "allegedly" a process of renewal of Czechoslovak society was under way there. You know what happened there very well. The Czechoslovak comrades, under the leadership of comrade [Gustav] Husak, drew up a document that was good for us, too.

That is why we think that the Polish United Workers' Party has enough force, and will be able to fulfill the tasks it has come up against under the present circumstances. To our knowledge, the Polish United Workers' Party enjoys authority, and it can rely on the backing of the security forces and of the armed forces. We are of the opinion, therefore, that these bodies will do their duty. Comrade Kania gave me to understand that in Poland there also was the possibility of arming a sizeable part of the working class.

We agree with what the other comrades said, namely that the Polish United Workers' Party should not allow itself any further steps backwards. We have a common boundary with the Federal Republic of Germany and we see how the enemy tries to transpose the counterrevolutionary events in Poland in our country. Never have the broadcasting stations transmitted so much news about the events in Poland as they do now, never have they made so much noise in relation to the goings-on in Polish enterprises. They have been saying for five months that Poland's example should also be followed by the German Democratic Republic. In a speech at the meeting of the party active I declared that counterrevolution, wherever it may take place, will not remain unpunished.

Comrades,

I have come to this meeting with the wish to help the Polish leadership find ways of coming out of the situation created. Our people, just like the peoples of the other fraternal socialist countries, as well as world progressive public opinion, have high hopes in relation to our meeting. Never in the past has our party and state leadership, the people of the German Democratic Republic felt so linked with the Polish United Workers' Party, with the Polish working class, as they are today. We are sure that the cause of socialism will be victorious in Poland.

Thank you for your attention.