

International VIEWPOINT

Issue 238

November 9, 1992

£1.50 ; \$2.75 ; C\$3 ; 16FF

The elections and American society

EDWIN MADUNAGU



PLUS:

BRITAIN

Crisis over pit
closure plan

ITALY

Ten million workers
fight government
plans

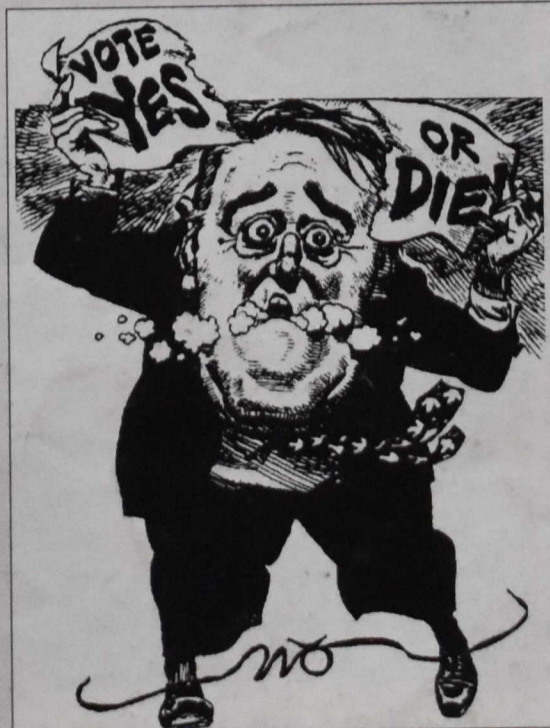
PALESTINE

Michel Warshawsky on
the hunger strike by
political prisoners

CANADA

Tories suffer
referendum defeat

AND MUCH MORE



Poland's public enemy number one

JOZEF Pinior, one of the historic leaders of the Polish worker-based democratic mass movement Solidarnosc has been denied a hearing by the minister of justice to appeal his conviction stemming from the 1988 strikes that were called to demand the legalisation of Solidarnosc. As a convicted criminal Pinior, a licensed lawyer, is effectively banned from exercising his profession.

JAN MALEWSKI

JOZEF Pinior was for a long time considered public enemy number one by the martial law regime of General Jaruzelski. As the Solidarnosc treasurer for the Lower Silesian region, he took the initiative on the eve of the December 13 coup d'état to withdraw union funds from the bank and use them to set up a war chest to enable Solidarnosc to reorganize itself underground.

He was president of the union's underground regional leadership and, from 1982 to 1987, a member of its national leadership. In March 1990, he gave a detailed report on union finances for the underground period at Solidarnosc's second congress in his region. The balance, which he returned, was \$50,000.

His activity cost him several criminal convictions. Arrested in April 1983, he was condemned to four years in prison in May 1984 though he was amnestied shortly afterward. Accused of "theft" of union funds, he lived for eight years under the constant threat of having his wages and property seized.

After the fall of the bureaucratic regime, he opposed the pro-capitalist course of its replacement. Pinior, now a member of the Fourth International, was one of the founding members of the Polish Socialist Party in 1984. In May 1988, he and his comrades organized a meeting at the Dolmel factory in Wroclaw during the strike wave that was called to demand the legalization of Solidarnosc. The police intervened and arrested the speakers.

Pinior was held for five months and then in October 1988 given a one year suspended prison sentence and, to absolve the government of its compensation responsibilities, a fine equivalent to the length of time he had already served.

Three years later, after futile attempts to

find work in his profession, Pinior has appealed to the minister of justice to demand a revision of his many trials. Other Solidarnosc activists have been able to win such rehabilitation and in some cases have received large financial compensation. For his part, Pinior has not demanded money, only that his convictions be lifted and his record cleared.

Official doubletalk

But this has been too much for the minister of justice Zbigniew Dyka of the reactionary National Catholic Union (ZChN) who told Pinior that he "was not in a position to consider his demand to intercede and conduct an extraordinary revision of his case." It is worth quoting the formal charges leveled against Pinior by the Stalinist regime and repeated by the new minister.

"It has been established that the accused J. Pinior, refused to leave the grounds of the factory where he was found without the permission of the management, and that he actively resisted the factory guards who intervened. As a result of the following scuffle and kicks by the accused, K. Woznica suffered a bruise on his right hand which prevented him from using it for seven days...Likewise, it is not possible to overturn the judgement that accused J. Pinior of having used insulting language against the people who arrested him."

Over and above a display of hostility towards a union leader, the "Pinior affair" reveals an attempt to threaten the right to strike. Twenty-eight Solidarnosc union commissions from the largest factories in Wroclaw, the Lower Silesian Solidarnosc women's commission and the Alternative Youth Committee have been amongst the

first to protest. They have been joined by all of the Wroclaw representatives of the Democratic Union, the party of the former premier Tadeusz Mazowiecki. The Social Democratic (SDRP — the former CP) parliamentary representatives have also protested and one of them, Marek Mazurkiewicz, explained the origins of the convictions against Pinior:

"The penal code was used in this case to isolate through imprisonment a representative of the democratic left opposition that threatened the authorities at the time."

Comparing the Pinior case with that of President Lech Walesa (who also took part in the May 1988 strike), the daily newspaper *Nie*, managed by Jerzy Urban, former spokesperson of the martial law governments, wrote that "the only difference is that Walesa has work and the other strikers are now likewise well placed dignitaries. But not Pinior who remains a left wing worker militant...Jozef Pinior is a marked man, condemned for activity that has enabled others to govern the state."

As a result of the pressure exerted by these forces the ministry of justice was forced to make a gesture to the pro-Pinior forces. On October 22, the Polish press reported that the minister of justice agreed to review his case. However, they have only agreed to review two of his four convictions. Pressure must therefore continue.★

SOLIDARITY NEEDED!

THE decision of the Polish minister of justice concerning the case of Jozef Pinior should outrage all those who oppose acts of injustice and defend human rights such as the right to strike.

Protests can be sent to Zbigniew Dyka, Minister of Justice, Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwosci, Al. Ujazdowskie 11, 00-950 Warszawa, Skr. Pocz. 33, Poland. Copies to: Jozef Pinior, c/o Pracowniczy Fundusz Przemyslowy, Rekordzielnicza 16, 50-991 Wroclaw, Skr. Pocz. 1442, Poland.

Jozef Pinior and his comrades are also in urgent need of funds to meet the exorbitant legal costs of obtaining a total rehabilitation. Financial donations can be sent to:

Jozef Pinior, Bank Zachodni, Wroclaw, Poland, account #389206-01020386-017879-152-1. ★