



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

You might like  
to see these  
three editorials  
from some  
unlikely quarters  
in today's press!

C D P

# DAILY STAR

## What a trip of triumph!

**IN A FIT of petulant pique, Labour MPs spit vitriol at the Prime Minister's highly successful visit to Poland.**

Shadow foreign affairs spokesman George Foulkes describes the Thatcher trip as "the most mistaken intervention" in Poland since Adolf Hitler.

**What an offensive insult—not to Maggie Thatcher, but to the freedom-seeking Poles.**

● In Poland Mrs Thatcher met General Jaruzelski and agreed closer links between the two countries.

### Consulted

● She met Solidarity leader Lech Walesa who afterwards agreed to resume talks between his banned union and the government that outlawed it.

● She met long-suffering Roman Catholic Primate Cardinal Glemp. And before flying out she consulted the Pope about how to advance civil liberties in his former homeland.

● She was welcomed in Warsaw and feted in Gdansk—by the government on one side and by Solidarity and the Church on the other.

Her call to both sides was: **FREEDOM.**

Her visit was a major act of **DIPLMACY.**

*Something that, thankfully, is never likely to be the role of the sour-faced Mr. Foulkes . . .*

**Because he's never likely to be asked.**

# Walesa gambles on call for nationwide strike

LECH WALESZA yesterday told a cheering crowd of 2,000 shipyard workers that he would propose a national strike alert at 9am tomorrow, and threatened to activate it a week later.

"I have no choice, I am myself being pressed. I can hardly keep the lid on the rising tension," the Solidarity leader told the rally after mass at St Brygida's Church in Gdansk.

"They call me a rabbit," Mr Walesa said. "I'm not a rabbit. I'm not afraid of the loudmouths here, nor of the demagogues sitting in their tanks."

Mr Walesa's speech took other Solidarity leaders by surprise. It was news to his deputy Bogdan Lis, and to national spokesman Janusz Onyszkiewicz: "A strike alert? I doubt that."

But later he told *The Independent* that Solidarity's National Executive Commission had issued a communiqué calling on union members to fight for jobs, a fight which should not exclude strikes.

Mr Walesa's move is a gamble. Solidarity's chances of provoking

From Edward Steen  
in Warsaw

an immediate strike in the Lenin yard — let alone nationwide — have aroused scepticism even among the opposition.

The prospect of starting talks between government and opposition now appears more remote than ever. Mr Walesa said on Saturday that a reprieve for the Lenin yard and reinstatement of more than 100 miners and steelworkers sacked after the August strikes were a precondition of the meeting sought by Interior Minister Czeslaw Kiszczak to prepare the ground for the talks.

But he continued: "In spite of the many disappointments, I trust that this time we shall manage to reach an agreement."

There are signs that the government is leaving a possible compromise open, despite government spokesman Jerzy Urban's statement that the closure was "irreversible".

The weekend edition of the

mass-circulation *Zycie Warszawy* said that the yard was to continue building ships, including new ones, through to 1990. There are current contracts for 18 Soviet ships.

The newspaper talks of "reorganisation" rather than liquidation, and the progressive involvement in the yard of joint stock companies and foreign capital. It also refers to the closure as a largely unprepared experiment and "the testing ground for working out solutions for other economic sectors".

The government is committed to closing 140 loss-making enterprises. An announcement of the closure of the Siechnice Steel Mill at Wroclaw, western Poland, went almost unnoticed on Friday because of the hullabaloo surrounding Margaret Thatcher's visit to Gdansk. It is, curiously, a popular decision: the mill is one of the main culprits for the town's horrendous pollution. A new, modern plant is to be built over the next three years.

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# Thatcher's blow for freedom

THE enormous success of Mrs Thatcher's visit to Poland has added to her reputation and, more importantly, to that excessively retiring entity, British foreign policy. No other British prime minister since Winston Churchill, with the possible exception of Harold Macmillan, could have hoped to receive so warm a welcome or to have had so marked an effect; and it is hard to envisage any contemporary West European leader matching her success. Strong though France's cultural ties with Poland have always been, President Mitterrand is too enigmatic in character and not sufficiently outward-going in temperament. He is also a socialist, which would limit the appeal of his ideas for most Poles. Chancellor Kohl is an uninspiring public speaker and no galvaniser of people. A latter-day Willy Brandt might have reached out to the Poles across the abyss of Germany's wartime atrocities in Poland, but Herr Kohl could not hope to do so.

The Prime Minister's success was a compound of her own record and the sensitive way in which she departed herself on the spot. She came to Poland as the longest serving leader of a major Western country and with a reputation as the "iron maiden" who stood up for freedom against communism. Additionally, Poland's economy was more terminally sick than usual, and a tough new prime minister, Mieczyslaw Rakowski, had been appointed to administer strong reforming medicine. Poland was in a state of expectation, albeit pessimistic. Mrs Thatcher was judged to have rescued the British economy from decades of decline. She therefore represented an idea whose time had come, even

though its application in a centrally controlled economy seems virtually impossible.

If Poles were ready to give her a warm welcome, the announcement of the closure of the home of Solidarity, the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk, raised the danger that anything she said would alienate either the government or Solidarity, whose leader, Lech Walesa, she saw on Friday. In the event, she made a brave speech at an official banquet, stressing that there could only be true economic growth when people had more personal and political liberty and the right to form free trade unions; and she contrived, remarkably, to emerge as the go-between for General Jaruzelski and Mr Walesa.

None of this would have been possible had Mrs Thatcher's own reputation and skills not been harnessed to the role of Prime Minister of Britain, a country associated in Polish minds with freedom and the fight against fascism and communism. Mrs Thatcher's success on this occasion was to have appreciated the wide and influential bounds which British foreign policy, in the right hands, can still have. The Labour Party's spokesmen Gerald Kaufman and George Foulkes have reacted to her success with inept gibes, calling her visit "a hypocritical ego trip" by "the playgirl of the Western world", "the most mistaken intervention" in Poland since Hitler's.

Such comments show a failure to understand the plight of Poland and implicitly insult the Poles. To her great credit, Mrs Thatcher has rediscovered the feasibility of an active British foreign policy in Eastern Europe. Perhaps it will be the seed of a coherent Thatcherite *Ostpolitik*.

# The Shining Beacon

**MRS THATCHER'S** tumultuous welcome in Poland was as Prime Minister of Great Britain, not as leader of the Conservative Party.

It does the Labour Party no credit to denounce her and to compare her with Hitler, as one foolish junior spokesman did.

Britain and France went to war in 1939 because Hitler invaded Poland.

Poland was crushed within three weeks between the jaws of Hitler's might and Stalin's greed.

That gallant country has never been free since.

## Yearning

I know Poland. I was born not far away in a village in Czechoslovakia which was long ago absorbed into the Soviet Union.

I know the yearning of the people of Central Europe to be free. I know, from my own personal experience, how they looked to Britain as the only hope when all others had fallen before Hitler.

In 1940, after the fall of France and as a Czech army private, I had the opportunity to go to peaceful,

## 'For Poles, Britain is still the symbol of freedom'

unthreatened America or to go to Britain and join the fight against Hitlerism.

I chose Britain, as did scores of thousands of other Czechs and Poles. Britain was the beacon which illuminated the free world.

It was because of the special relationship between Britain and Poland, forged in the bloodshed of 1939, that Warsaw and Gdansk turned out in force to greet the Prime Minister.

For the Poles, still oppressed, Britain remains the symbol of freedom.

Rather than turn Mrs Thatcher's visit into another round of unlikeable Party political warfare, the Labour Party ought to have used it to help educate her.

The long-term hope for Polish freedom and prosperity lies in a wider, united Europe. The heel of

failed Marxist economics has to be lifted from its industry.

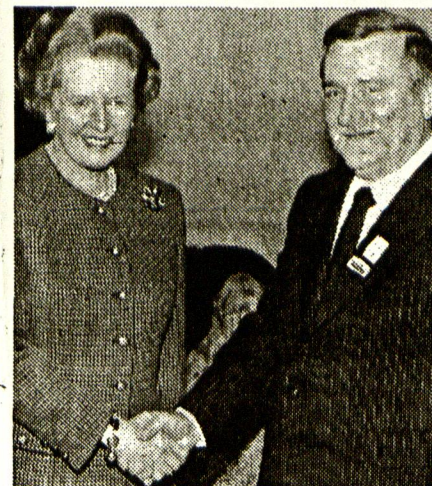
Polish workers are among the most industrious in the world, provided they have something to work for and to look forward to.

The British Labour Party could have pointed out to Mrs Thatcher her folly in even resisting a more narrowly united Europe.

## Mistake

It could have told her that her welcome demonstrated all that was good in working-class unity and solidarity. Instead, it made a crass mistake.

Britain fought not only for Poland but for the rest of the free world. It fought on after France collapsed, after Holland and Belgium were overrun. After Hitler's vassals, from Hungary to Italy, joined in to pick the bones



LESSON: Mrs Thatcher and Lech Walesa

of what they thought was the corpse of democracy and freedom. Those were heroic days for the whole of the world. To decry the first visit of a British Prime Minister to Poland in order to score a petty political point is to misunderstand and misjudge the importance of the event to those who still look to us with admiration and hope.

**Robert Maxwell**