

## I. Was there a left tendency in Solidarnosc?

### A. The crisis of the CP and Solidarnosc

In the fusion conference, one of the main arguments of the ex-SLers was "Where was the Left?". The more I seriously studied the Polish revolution, the more puzzled I became about this question. Either the Comrades are unacquainted with the basic facts of what happened, or their method of thinking cannot grasp the basic elements of what a revolutionary process (in the specific case of Poland, a political revolutionary process) is.

So where was the Left? The events in Poland were so magnificent and earth-shaking that not a single person remained untouched.

The most crucial element in any revolutionary situation is winning over the vanguard. In a degenerated (or deformed) workers' state, when there is an uprising against the Stalinist bureaucracy, the first question that a Bolshevik has to ask is who is the vanguard within the working class that can be won to the perspective of the political revolution. If the vanguard (the most conscious sector, which is always a minority) is won over, the revolutionary party can always win the hesitating elements. Trotsky once said that a revolution is basically made by a conscious minority which manages to keep the majority of the masses either sympathetic or at least neutral.

Beginning with Trotsky himself, the Trotskyist movement always understood that in the deformed (and degenerated) workers' states, the vast majority of such a vanguard consists of the rank-and-file members of the CP. The contradictions between Stalinist theory and practise and the tradition of the October Revolution always lead eventually to a violent display manifested by a revolt of the CP rank-and-file against the bureaucratic control of the Stalinists. *SUCH A STRUGGLE IS A HEALTHY PULSE THAT IS THE BEST INDICATION THAT THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION IS KICKING AND DEVELOPING.* East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956, and to some extent Czechoslovakia in 1968, illustrated very clearly who was the locomotive of the revolution (i.e., the members of the CP).

The uprising in Poland against the Stalinist bureaucracy had the deepest effect on the CP. Never before in the entire 50 years of Stalinist history was the Communist Party so shaken and torn by the rank-and-file, *WHO DENOUNCED THE BUREAUCRACY AND FOUGHT TO RESTORE WORKERS' DEMOCRACY, IN A CLOSE ALLIANCE WITH THE REST OF THE WORKING CLASS, WHICH WAS IN MOTION AGAINST THE STALINIST BUREAUCRACY AS WELL.* And the ex-SLers ask us—where was the Left?

The first thing to look at is the statistics. During the Polish events, the majority of the CP rank-and-file revolted against the bureaucracy. According to conservative estimates, at least 1 million out of the nearly 3 million Polish CP members belonged to Solidarnosc. According to conservative official figures, between October 1980 and March 1981 the CP lost 216,000 members out of a membership that was somewhat below 3 million (The Polish Revolution: Solidarity, page 170). During this period of time, the majority of those who left joined the one million CPers who were already in Solidarnosc. After the extraordinary CP congress in July of 1981, half a million additional members left in a period of 6 months. (These figures also come from very conservative official sources.) (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Spr. 1982, page 1.)

Thus, even if we ignore the unknown figures between March 1981 and July 1981, and stay within very conservative estimates, we can say with certainty that at least three quarters of a million left the CP (out of a membership of 3 million). Moreover, of the 2 and a quarter million members who stayed in the CP, 1 million belonged to Solidarnosc! If we combine those Solidarnosc members who stayed in the CP with those who left and became members of Solidarnosc, we will come up with a conservative figure of roughly 1 and a half to 1 and three quarter million people—i.e., *AT LEAST HALF OF THE TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE CP!* These CPers and ex-CPers constituted 1 out of 8 or 9 members of Solidarnosc—*A QUITE SIZABLE MINORITY—WHO CONSIDERED THEMSELVES TO BE COMMUNISTS AND EVEN REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISTS!!*

The figures above were provided by the CP. Just to give the comrades a flavor of how conservative they actually are, consider the following quote from Jan Labecki, the first secretary of the CP in the Gdansk Shipyard. He reported that "In our shipyard Solidarity and the party are organically intertwined. *EIGHTY PER CENT OF THE PARTY'S MEMBERS ALSO BELONG TO SOLIDARITY*" (Guardian, May 8, 1981, quoted in Barker & Weber, Solidarnosc: From Gdansk to Military Repression, page 48; emphasis added). And Gdansk Shipyard was the most important center of Solidarnosc, where everything started.

By March 1981, the CP was in total chaos and the party membership in total revolt. When Solidarnosc went on strike to protest over the beating of its members in Bydgoszcz (which was, by the way,

at the height of the Union's strength), it did so with the massive participation of the CP members. Their participation in the strike gave an enormous impetus to the horizontal movement which raised the questions of *WORKERS' DEMOCRACY INSIDE THE CP AND IN THE FACTORIES*. Timothy Garton Ash describes very accurately how the strike and the experience of the CP members inside Solidarnosc gave them more confidence to carry on the struggle against the bureaucracy for workers' democracy.

"For the Party leadership the most shattering feature of this national demonstration [the March '81 strikes and demonstrations] was the almost universal participation of Party members, against the explicit orders of the Politburo. ('The strikes that have been called are clearly political. Party members should not take part in them.')

By now the base of the party was in open revolt. The leadership was deluged with protest letters and resolutions against the hardliners' confrontation course." (The Polish Revolution: Solidarity, page 157)

The ex-SL comrades pointed to how democratic Solidarnosc was as a way of proving to us that the rank-and-file adhered to the counter-revolutionary course of the leadership. Although this was not really true when it came down to the conduct of the KK (National Commission) when they negotiated with the Stalinists, it definitely was true in the factories and the regions, where the masses elected and recalled many people, including factory directors, local leaders, and so on. The horizontal movement inside the CP, which also called itself the 'Anti-Apparatus' movement, was deeply influenced by the experience of democracy that Solidarnosc members went through in their factories. By early 1981, the horizontal movement had already spread to Radom, Katowice, Krakow, Gdansk, Szczecin, Pulawy, Poznan and Pabianice (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Winter-Spring '81, page 51). It is interesting to note here briefly that it was in most of these cities, that the anti-restorationist and pro-socialist sectors of Solidarnosc had the most influence, as we'll see later on.

By the end of 1980, the demands of the horizontal movement included "accountability of all officials to the organs that elected them; election of all secretaries from the shop floor; ... the recallability of officials; a free choice of candidates at all levels." The movement also demanded that "all persons holding high office must have been democratically elected and that there should be a right to hold no-confidence votes which, if carried, require the defeated official to resign" and "the right to form political tendencies" (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Winter-Spring '81, page 51).

If this program had been carried out, the CP would no longer have been bureaucratic. *BUT PRECISELY BECAUSE IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO REFORM STALINISM, THE OPEN REVOLT AGAINST THE BUREAUCRACY MOVED 2 MILLION COMMUNISTS AND AT LEAST 1 AND A HALF MILLION SOLIDARNOSC MEMBERS TOWARD THE PROGRAM OF LEON TROTSKY. WITHOUT NECESSARILY USING THE PROPER SCIENTIFIC NAMES, THEY DE FACTO RAISED THE TRANSITIONAL DEMANDS OF TROTSKY FOR THE DEFORMED WORKERS' STATES. WHAT WAS MISSING, OF COURSE, WAS A PARTY THAT COULD LEAD THEM FROM THEIR SPONTANEOUS DEMANDS AND EXPERIENCES TO THE LOGICAL POLITICAL CONCLUSION.*

The SL used to write that the members of the CP were moving toward social democracy (i.e., restoration), and therefore had to be smashed with the rest of Solidarnosc. Later on, in the Chapter on the SL, we'll show how removed from reality were the 'smart' idiots in Warren Street, who understood nothing about the basic elements of Trotskyism.

Just to give the comrades a flavor of the political direction and thinking that was going on inside the horizontal movement, here is a quote from a rank-and-file party member who was involved in the internal party struggle in Lodz:

"The events which have been taking place in Poland since mid-1980 have a revolutionary character. Workers in big industry are the initiators and chief driving force of the process. They have been joined by ever broader circles of society as a whole. The movement tends to reject once and for all the present system of exercising power and the methods of building socialism now in force. Its aim is that the dictatorship of the proletariat should no longer be a dictatorship over the proletariat, and that the right to expression should be guaranteed for the broad masses both in law and in reality. Up until now, the hypertrophied apparatus of state, party and economy has forced the nation to carry out its arbitrary and subjectivist decisions. But it is no longer possible to govern in that way, since it deprives people of their dignity and turns them into an instrument for achieving goals that have nothing in common with their class interests." (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Winter-Spring '81, page 53)

Perhaps this was not written with the scientific precision of Trotsky—we have to remember that it was written for internal consumption in the CP—but these are definitely not the words of a Social Democrat.

In the first half of 1981, the horizontal movement spread throughout Poland. Hundreds of meetings were held in which local CP bureaucrats were denounced and recalled. The CP was in complete turmoil. Nothing of this sort had ever developed so deeply in any deformed workers' state. In April 1981, the horizontal movement (which had about a million members) had its independent pre-congress forum in Torun. The party bureaucrats were forced to mobilize all their time and energy to contain the movement, and they called for an unscheduled extraordinary congress on July 14. Until the end of that congress, the party stopped functioning as a Stalinist party in a classic sense. Indeed, it stopped functioning as a party at all, and became a real mass organization, with different tendencies and programs fighting it out openly!

The bureaucracy reacted to the horizontal movement by forming right wing 'hard' Stalinist groups to break the rebellion. One of the 'anonymous Party groups' that the bureaucracy created was called the 'Katowice Forum'. This group published a statement in the CP youth daily, *Sztandar Mlodych*, threatening that "Trotskyite-Zionist views, nationalism, agrarianism, clericalism, and anti-Sovietism" were penetrating the Party. (The Polish Revolution: Solidarity, page 174). It is very interesting to note that on this list of threats to the party, Trotskyism appeared first!!! The specter of the political revolution was haunting the Stalinist bureaucracy. Trotskyism, which had been buried for decades, now appeared as the first item on their list of fears!!

But the rank-and-file CP workers were not frightened by the attacks against them. They simply deepened their resolution to fight the bureaucracy. Timothy Garton Ash writes that:

"In Katowice, for example, the conference was declining to elect its own Provincial First Secretary as a delegate [to the extraordinary congress]! The well-hated Andrzej Zabinski ... was blamed for tolerating the presence of the 'Katowice Forum' in his fief. Kania and Jaruzelski had to hurry down to Silesia in person—for all the world like Walesa dashing down to quell a Solidarity brushfire" (The Polish Revolution: Solidarity, page 177)

The result of all this was that less than a third of the Central Committee members made it to the extraordinary congress, and ninety percent of the delegates were there for the first time.

Unfortunately, Stalinist parties can not be reformed. The dissident CP members, who can be classified to some degree as 'Unconscious Pabloites', received a big disappointment at the July '81 congress, and the party 'chiefs' regained their control. The leadership that came out of the congress was 'middle of the road', but nevertheless was comprised of trustworthy Stalinists. And outside of promises, the millions of CP members gained nothing. It is interesting to note, however, that in the new emerging leadership of the CP, one Solidarnosc member, Zofia Grzyb, became a member of the politburo, and one out of five Central Committee members now were also members of Solidarnosc (The Polish August, Neal Ascherson, page 272).

After July, the movement to reform the CP declined. But a million and a half CP-ers and ex-CPers were still active within Solidarnosc. There is no doubt that if there had been a real Trotskyist party in Poland, it could have won them over. The millions of CP-ers, who had learned in a short period of about six months that the CP can not be reformed, kept up their political activities within or around Solidarnosc. *THEY WERE THE VANGUARD, AND A GOOD PORTION OF THE LEFT, THAT COULD HAVE BEEN WON OVER TO THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION, AND COULD HAVE CONVINCED THE MORE BACKWARD ELEMENTS IN SOLIDARNOSC TO MOVE IN THE SAME DIRECTION.* But there was no revolutionary party, and therefore it didn't happen.

There has been a tendency within the BT to claim that since there was not a Trotskyist party in Poland, the battle was hopeless, and therefore it wasn't necessary to defend Solidarnosc. I hope that such primitive arguments will not be repeated, and that we will not have to argue against them. I will just say in passing that the SL did support the East German and Hungarian revolutions, even though they did not have a revolutionary party to complete them.

It is also important to note that the CP members who were within Solidarnosc were quite conscious of the restorationist tendencies within the Union. Zbigniew Iwanow, who was one of the best known 'party radicals' and the CP secretary in a big machine tool factory in Torun, and who was ultimately expelled from the CP for being sympathetic to Solidarnosc, declared in an interview that "Our differences with Solidarity relate to international policy" (Solidarnosc Sourcebook, page 155). This indicates that he was

well aware that some of the leaders were seeking friends in the imperialist world.

We must put this question straightforwardly to the ex-SL comrades: What is your attitude toward the million and a half CP-ers and ex-CPers within Solidarnosc? After they found deaf ears within the CP, they still remained in the union with the hope that revolutionary changes could occur via the union struggle. I believe that they were a most conscious vanguard, considered themselves communists, and were moving in the direction of the political revolution. They obviously did not want to undermine the foundations of the workers' state. But on December 13, the Stalinist bureaucracy smashed the means by which they organized their opposition and activities to democratize the workers' state. One of the problems of your position on Solidarnosc is that by supporting the smashing of Solidarnosc, you come out against the right of the working class vanguard (the CPers) to organize against the bureaucracy. Do you still support this logical conclusion of your position?

The adopted fusion theses 'support' in general the right of workers to assemble and organize against the Stalinist bureaucracy. But you, comrades, support the particular case in Poland in which the Stalinist bureaucracy smashed the vanguard of the working class (along with the rest of the working class), via the smashing of the only organization that they had that could fight the bureaucracy. As a result of the Stalinists' crimes, the vanguard of the Polish working class remains smashed and demoralized, and in fact, the defeat of the Polish workers was a blow to the entire Eastern European working class.

Contrary to the crap that the SL taught you, Trotsky always taught us that the political revolution is the strategy and the best way to defend the workers' state. The defense of the deformed workers' state is only a tactic within the overall strategy of the political revolution:

"Although it is thus impermissible to deny in advance the possibility, in strictly defined instances, of a 'united front' with the Thermidorian section of the bureaucracy against open attack by capitalist counterrevolution, the chief political task in the USSR still remains the *OVERTHROW OF THIS SAME THERMIDORIAN BUREAUCRACY*. Each day added to its domination helps rot the foundations of the socialist elements of economy and increases the chances for capitalist restoration" (Transitional Program, Documents of the Fourth International, page 212 (emphasis in original)).

Perhaps the revolt of the CP rank-and-file constituted 'open attack by capitalist counterrevolution'? We would like to know how millions of communists, who claim and swear and stand by the foundation of the workers' state, constitute such a threat. But as we'll see next, it was not only the CP members who didn't constitute such a threat. Many other workers within Solidarnosc stood by the foundation of the workers' state, and just wanted to overthrow the bureaucracy that had brought the threat of capitalist restoration in the first place. The 'open attack by capitalist counterrevolution' in Poland in 1981 was chiefly constituted in the heads of Jim Robertson and company.

### **B. Did the majority of the workers want to restore capitalism?**

The central argument of Spartacism is that the entire working class in Poland was following reaction, and therefore it had to be crushed. We have already shattered this rotten conception into pieces, but if the comrades will stay patient, they will see that we actually have only just begun to sharpen our knife. We will not leave Spartacism alone until we have penetrated with our knife deep into the heart, and Spartacism lies dead forever.

Before continuing with additional empirical evidence to show that a centrist left also developed due to the polarization within Solidarnosc, we'll deal a little blow with logic.

Comrade Smith ridiculed the letter that Workers Power sent us in the discussions we had in England. In the letter, they asked how it could be that the whole working class followed reaction? Comrade Smith obviously thinks that the entire working class in a workers' state CAN follow capitalist restoration. I believe that behind this conception lies deep cynicism, and a deep feeling that after all the working class is not a revolutionary class. This conception is, of course, not Comrade Smith's independent view, but one that he inherited from the SL.

But the Polish workers, despite all the severe distortions of 'socialism' that the Stalinist bureaucracy delivered to them, do not want to return to capitalism. In 1980-81, millions of Polish workers still remembered what life was like when the bosses owned the factories and sent them to starve on the dole from time to time. It was precisely because of those memories that attempts to introduce open market economy with unemployment were defeated in the October program. The workers also forced the leadership to call for a special fund to reduce the inequalities between different regions, through the

means of central planning.

It is true that the younger generation was more susceptible to restorationist propaganda (the KPN had influence mainly among young people), because it did not have the living experience of capitalism to compare to. But still, the majority of the young people did not want to see capitalism back. We still hold to Trotsky and Lenin's views that young workers are the most energetic leaders in a revolutionary situation. We'll see later on how true this is, when we deal with the self-management demands. In the largest factories, it was pro-socialist and anti-restorationist young workers who led the fight against the Stalinists with workers' control demands.

As Trotsky said, we 'cannot deny in advance' that a sector or even a significant sector of the working class may follow capitalist restoration due to the Stalinists' crimes. But it is complete rubbish to say that such a sector can constitute the entire working class or even the majority.

To prove the hard facts in Poland, let's start with warm-up exercises. Even a sector of the leadership that was closely associated with Walesa was so frightened by the prospect of the political revolution that their main energy was devoted to containing the fire, together with the Stalinists, and not to restoring capitalism. One of the 'semi left wingers' who admired Walesa was Stanislaw Starski, who wrote a book about the events from Poland as they were developing.

Starski, despite his reformist views, was intimately connected to the Polish workers as a Solidarnosc activist, and at the same time quite accurately represented the views of the reformist leadership. Interestingly, he wrote that:

"On the whole the capitalist world views Polish developments favorably, from a political point of view, since they mean trouble for the Soviets. But this does not mean that Polish workers look to western capital to save them from the jaws of the Polish ruling class.

"As a matter of fact, quite the contrary is true. Solidarity understands that there is a double bondage of capital and imperial dependence which makes the Polish situation so serious. However much they despise the Soviet imperial reign, they reveal no desire to return to a capitalist type of economy" (Class Struggle in Classless Poland, page 159).

What a wonderful quote!! A nice and accurate description of the view of the Polish 'Joes' (i.e., the more backward elements of the working class). While they may have identified 'socialism' with the Soviet Union, which they associated with the Stalinist bureaucracy in Poland, they did not want to see Western banks and capitalists return to Poland.

The SL, which elevated the tactic of defense of the Soviet Union to a supreme God, naturally identified the anti-Soviet feelings of the more backward Polish workers (who themselves identified the Soviet Union with the Stalinist bureaucracy) with their 'desire' to return to capitalism. But Starski, who participated directly in Solidarnosc, understood the reality in Poland a million times better than the declassé petty bourgeois in Warren Street, who derive their method of thinking from the drunken head of Jim Robertson. And Starski talks about the Joes, not the advanced sector of the Polish working class!

Even the Polish Stalinists were more careful and accurate than the crude 'thinkers' in Warren Street. Since the Stalinists had to deal with real living workers, who wanted to preserve the planned economy structure and would not believe that Solidarnosc was an 'anti-socialist' movement, they had to give a much more sophisticated picture when they addressed the workers than did the Warren Street 'journalists' when they addressed their own petty bourgeois social milieu thousands of miles away from the Polish workers.

In a very interesting address by a Stalinist bureaucrat in a factory, speaking to CP members who had given their party cards away, he said:

"To the comrades who gave their party ID away!... I distinguish a number of tendencies in Solidarity:

1. The tendency of the inspired to go forward. They push Solidarity beyond the agreements signed in Gdansk, Szczecin and Jastrzebie...
2. Advisory bodies: a) the anti-socialist advisors who want to pull Poland out of the socialist commonwealth and to institute a capitalist system (activists of Moczulski's Confederation of Independent Poland); b) the advisers of KOR who do not want to pull Poland out of socialism, who want to reform it, and who are led by former members of the Party- Kuron, Michnik and Modzelewski. They do not attack socialism as such but they do want to destroy the party and to take over power in the state; c) the advisers of Cardinal Wyszyński,

with Mazowiecki, who exert a pacifying influence, and who have won a considerable influence upon Walesa;d)the group of leaders within Solidarity who want to take over power, and who see their own interest as a priority. They want to remove Lech Walesa.

3. There are also trade unionist activists and masses of [CP] members- but there is...a process of removing those who want Solidarity to be a trade union which cares for social conditions in the factories and for turning industrial potential to the advantage of the working people."(Class struggle in Classless Poland. Page 200-1)

Although this analysis is quite crude, it is almost 'scientific Marxism' compared to the SL analysis. Pay close attention to how careful the Stalinists were when they spoke directly to the workers. Only one out of six tendencies--i.e., a definite minority--is specified by the Stalinists as anti-socialist and restorationist. The Center and 'Left wing' of the KOR are displayed as what they were--reformists (with some exaggeration about the KOR's plans to take power from the party).

The Stalinists did not dare, when they talked to the workers, to mischaracterize the anti-Walesa radicals as 'anti-socialists' and pro-capitalists, because the workers, and in particular the ex-CPers, knew that a sizable portion of the radicals considered themselves socialist and even criticized the market economy and the restorationist program. (There was also, of course, a centrist Left, which will be dealt with later on).

The Stalinists described the great majority of Solidarnosc rank-and-file activists as the best 'socialists.'. Why? If we follow formal logic, it would make sense for the Stalinists, who wanted to put a wedge between the CP rank-and-file and Solidarnosc (and to use the CP-ers to destroy the union), to paint at least the majority of the leadership and a portion of the ranks as restorationists. But they could not do that, because they knew that the members of the CP in the factories, who were closely connected with the millions of workers in Solidarnosc, would not buy it. So they left the task of portraying the Union as a restorationist reactionary movement to their advisors abroad, i.e., to the 'boys' in Warren Street. Later on, after December 13, their advisors payed them a great tribute by supporting their crimes against the working class.

### C. *The radicals and the centrist left in Solidarnosc*

After the September-October congress, the polarization within Solidarnosc developed rapidly. The real programs of the different components were emerging as time was running out. Free market economy, and the reformist perspective of the majority of the leadership--compromise and negotiation--were losing ground with increasing numbers of rank-and-file workers. Bujak expressed the feelings of the majority of the rank-and-file quite accurately when he said:

"The members of our union do not understand the policy of their leaders. From the beginning, this policy was never explained to them. Protests, strikes, local struggles do not form a coherent whole... It was only when I told them that all these self-management initiatives were leading to taking control of the economy that people understood and approved. Moves to found political parties are different- people do not want them. Power over the economy-yes, but parties- no." (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Spr. '82, page 16)

How interesting! The rank-and-file were losing confidence in the leadership, who were seeking compromise with the Stalinist Bureaucracy. They wanted the self-management bodies to take power in their own hands!!! It is also interesting to note that the SL's argument that the working class was supporting free elections to the Sejm, with bourgeois parties, is rubbish. The masses did not care about formation of parties. As we'll see later on, they understood (sometimes in a confused and unclear manner) that free elections to the Sejm meant elections of working class self-management bodies, which was not a bad idea at all.

In any event, wildcat strikes and growing discontent did help the reactionary, openly restorationist forces to grow, but, as we will now describe, they also brought a significant centrist left wing tendency, whose support was mainly centered in the most industrial areas of Poland.

Up until the September-October congress, the dominating self-management body was the Network, whose leadership came from the KOR and even from some of the more open restorationist 'market economy' sector of Solidarnosc.

Two weeks after the congress, another self-management group was formed--The National Federation of Self-Management Bodies (KZ-KFS). This group was formed by many activists of the Lubin

Group (see the later chapter on self-management), together with activists from Lodz and Upper Silesia and some activists who broke from the Network (see *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity*, page 254, and *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, Spr. '82, page 25). KZ-ZFS, which had a lot of influence inside some of the large industrial areas, called for a "National Congress of Workers' Councils" that would form "a self-management model of the economy and the state" (AS (Solidarity press agency, Warsaw-based) No. 45, Oct. 1981). *THIS SLOGAN WAS NOT ONLY PROGRESSIVE, BUT BASICALLY CORRECT. IT ADOPTED LENINIST-TROTSKYIST SLOGANS, AND COUNTERPOSED THE 'FREE ELECTION TO THE SEJM AND MARKET ECONOMY' WITH 'WORKERS' COUNCILS CONTROLLING THE ECONOMY AND THE STATE'.*

### 1. *The active strike committees*

The KZ-KFS not only criticized the right wing Solidarnosc leaders, but they did it with a definite left perspective. Zbigniew Kowalewski, who considers himself a Trotskyist and was one of the central leaders of Solidarnosc in Lodz, describes the KZ-KFS criticism of Network as follows:

"... the majority of the experts in the Network, and certain Solidarity militants under their influence, were partisans of a market economy and competition between enterprises. They were often hostile to the radical initiatives taken by the self-management movement. They were believers in parliamentary democracy rather than the democracy of workers' councils.... Nevertheless the working-class base of the union clearly aspired to more radical action." (*Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, Spr. '82, page 25)

Not a bad criticism at all! Even real Trotskyists would not not be ashamed of it.

The Left was thinking that the workers' councils and self-management bodies would seize power through active strike committees. The idea of active strike committees received quite a good response in the large industrial areas of Poland, including primarily Lodz, Krakow, and Warsaw, which were central areas where pro-socialist workers (including CP rank-and-filers) had considerable influence. (*Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, Spr. '82, pp. 27-29). The idea of active strike committees also spread rapidly to other areas. In Lubin, for example, which was the center for the second largest self-management group (the 'Lubin group'), Jan Bartczak, the chairperson of Solidarnosc, made similar appeals.

In Lodz, the region "considered that a victorious active strike should result in the formation of a Self-Government Chamber or Socio-economic Chamber within the Sejm and the regional councils. Such a body would have to be elected by all the producers--wage-earners, peasants and individual artisans--and concentrate all the economic powers of the state in its own hands." (*Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, Spr. '82, page 28).

These may not have been our proposals for a Soviet, but nevertheless this is almost an open call for the working class organizations to take power, and it was counterposed to 'free elections to the Sejm' (i.e., elections which would include bourgeois organizations).

And the KK (national commission) did not like it! In a meeting in Lubin, for example, one of the KK 'experts' accused the active strike committees of being "an idea launched by leftists and Trotskyists" (*Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, Spr. '82, page 27). Definitely an exaggeration! But the leadership of the active strike committees did use Leftist and Trotskyist terminology. It did stand (in a deformed and centrist way) for the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy by the working class, and for the defense of the workers state. AND THIS LEADERSHIP WAS FOLLOWED BY THE WORKERS IN THE MOST INDUSTRIAL AREAS OF POLAND.

Here is a vivid example from Andrzej Slowik, who was a Solidarnosc leader in Lodz, a central leader of the active strike committee idea, and a member of the KK:

"After the Bydgoszcz provocation in March we entered a revolutionary situation, but we did not know how to make use of it. We reached a compromise and gave up the idea of a general strike. The situation is now once again revolutionary. If we do not act accordingly, we shall betray the working class. It can wait no longer, because it realizes that the authorities are prepared to keep society in a state of crisis if only to save their privileges and defend their own interests. This is what the factory-workers told me today. I regard this as a mandate, and it is on this basis that I shall go to Gdansk. *THERE ARE ONLY TWO POSSIBILITIES: EITHER THE BUREAUCRATIC DICTATORSHIP WHICH IS CRUSHING SOCIETY, OR WORKING-CLASS,*

*SELF-MANAGEMENT SOCIALISM.*" (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Spr. '82, page 28 (emphasis added))

These words were not spoken by somebody who wanted to restore capitalism in the short run, or even in the long run, but by somebody who wanted to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy and establish workers' democracy over its dead body.

Who do you think was advocating Workers' Defense Guards? The conception of the ex-SLers, who unfortunately know very little about Solidarnosc, is that the Workers' Defense Guards were advocated by the 'radical' right wing, which, of course, wanted to restore capitalism. (What else can we expect? All roads lead to Wasington!). But the SL fooled you on this one too. Surprise, surprise!! The radical opponents to Walesa were to a great extent the centrist Left Wing—who were also the ones who advocated and built Workers' Defense Guards.

Kowaleski writes that "On 2 December the Lodz Presidium had put forward a 'proposal for union action: an active strike combined with the creation of workers' guards', whose function would be to 'defend industrial enterprises and distribution networks during the active strike'...On 4 December one of the Lubin union leaders explained: 'If solidarity does not prepare for this, we will be caught by surprise and unable to offer resistance. We must not only prepare for the active strike, but put everything in place to defend ourselves against attack and provocation by the authorities.'" (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Spr. '82, page 27)

Although the majority understood that the defense guards would be used to defend the strikes, not everyone understood it that way. And to your great surprise, comrades, if anyone was thinking about taking power, it was the Left wing of Solidarnosc, and not the restorationist right wing! As we'll prove further later on, you got everything in reverse in your 'education' in the SL. In any event, the active strikes and the workers' defense guards ultimately did not spread very much, partly because the great majority of the Solidarnosc membership was demoralized, and partly because the Stalinists struck first.

I can already hear your arguments, comrades. You are going to say that: (a) the Left did not have Trotskyist perspectives; (b) they were soft and capitulated to the right wing restorationist leadership, and (c) since some of them were thinking of taking power without replacing the right wing leadership first, they de-facto helped the restoration. In fact, you may even say (Spartacist logic!) that they were really the left wing of the restorationist leadership and therefore not worth any critical support, and that they were rightly suppressed along with the rest of Solidarnosc, etc., etc., etc.

We will answer these arguments in advance. Yes, they did not have Trotskyist perspectives. Despite the fact that they criticized the right wing, their criticism suffered from typical centrist confusion. The same Andrzej Slowik quoted above—the chairperson of Solidarnosc in Lodz—called for "a second Chamber of Parliament and regional councils to serve as the organs of workers' economic power" (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Spr. '82, page 27). This is still a reformist 'left' perspective, which advocates sharing power with the Stalinists who will still control the First Chamber of Parliament. Trotskyists should advocate only one Chamber of workers' councils (i.e., Soviets), in which the right wing restorationists would have no right to be. And if possible, Trotskyists would have taken the advice of the Transitional Program and advocated kicking the Stalinist bureaucracy out of such a Chamber as well!!! But our discussion with you, comrades, is not how best to carry out the political revolution, because you don't see that there was any political revolution in Poland in the first place; and in fact the SL came out against it!

Trotskyists should have intervened in such mass movements, both after the October congress, and up to and after the December 13 coup. While many times the proposals of the Left centrists were confused and soft on the right wing, there is not a single doubt in my mind that within such a rapidly polarizing mass movement, there were significant centrist forces who were moving to the left, and who were learning something. That is, a significant portion of the masses in the active strikes were open to listening to the better proposals of Trotskyists.

You are going to say that they advocated taking power while the Solidarnosc right wing still had the dominant forces, and the dangers of this are ... etc., etc., etc. Yes, we would have warned against those dangers. But the discussion with you is on a much more elementary level. Their AIMS were not to restore capitalism, but to defend and extend the gains of October. The discussion with you is deals with whether, on December 13, you would have defended the radical centrist forces and the millions of workers who followed them. Would you have defended the million and a half CP-ers,



and the union's right to exist? Or would you have marched behind the Stalinists' tanks, crushing the vanguard (CP-ers, radical left) and with them the entire Polish working class? If this is your choice, there is an unbridgeable line of blood that separates us.

#### **D. The contradictions between the regions and the national leadership**

The contradictions between the members of Solidarnosc and the national leadership began to develop from the first day of Solidarnosc's existence. As we saw before, they didn't cease after October 1981, but sharpened. This was expressed in different ways in different regions. The general rule was that the more proletarianized and industrialized the region was, the clearer was the opposition to leadership moving in the direction of the political revolution. This is only a confirmation of the basic Marxist law that the industrial working class plays the most revolutionary role not only in capitalist states, but also in the deformed workers' states.

We have already examined areas like Lodz and Lubin, which were centers of left opposition to the KK leadership. This chapter examines what happened in some other important industrial areas in Poland.

#### Szczecin

Szczecin was the second main center of the August '80 strikes, and a central stronghold of Solidarnosc. Solidarnosc published a newspaper in Szczecin called Jednosc (unity), which was one of the most political papers produced within Solidarnosc. The paper was not only anti-Stalinist, but also clearly left wing; it stood firmly for socialism and the defense of its foundation, i.e. the workers' state. The pro-socialist thoughts of Solidarnosc adherents in Szczecin were not confined only to this newspaper. Some of the principal slogans that appeared in the strikes were "*PROGRESSIVE SOCIALISM--YES; DISTORTION--NO!*" and "*THE WORKING CLASS IS THE HEALTHY FOUNDATION OF SOCIALISM*".

Szczecin was also one of the places where Solidarnosc stood most clearly against market economy and for the defense of centralized planning carried out by democratic bodies. A contributor to Jednosc wrote that "There is the simply magical belief in the economic model that favours profit and bases its functioning upon it. In our view, gearing enterprises to profit, in other words to an exclusively economic result, will not improve either the economic or the social situation." The same article goes on to state that "Between the *apparatus* [the Polish bureaucracy] on one side and *labour* on the other, a deep class conflict exists which causes antagonisms and conflict in the social life of our country. There remains the class struggle of the Polish proletariat whose aim is social control over the nationalised means of production ...." (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Winter-Spring '81, page 31).

And in general, comrades, the faster you leave the pages of the New York Times and Wall Street Journal, and the more closely you read the local Solidarnosc resolutions, the more difficult it will be to find references to the 'free' play of the market. The workers do not want to see unemployment, and have doubts that they will 'enjoy' the enterprise profits. This, of course, can be seen from the above quotation. The 'experts' who advocated 'state capitalism' often did not find willing ears in the industrial centers.

We must state categorically that those who do not see the contradictions between the factories, the regions, and the right wing course of the leadership, are not Marxists. The SL, which does not understand the most elementary rules of Marxist logic, saw 'the conflict of opposites' between the base and the leadership disappearing as time progressed, while, as we have already shown, in fact the exact opposite was happening.

We don't pretend that the workers in the regions were Marxists. Even in Szczecin their revolutionary aspirations were confused with left social democratic and even clerical illusions. But once again, this is not what we are discussing. The question is what would the ex-SLers have done when the tanks moved in--stand with the workers in Szczecin and defend their gains, or march behind the tanks?

#### Katowice and Krakow

Katowice was a 'typical' Solidarnosc center. It had a strong pro-socialist sector, together with a growing right wing. It is therefore important to dwell on it a little bit. Two out of the six members of the local leadership body (MKZ) were CP members. It was also a center of the 'anti-parties' feeling. The majority of the membership clearly opposed the formation of parties. This was partially due to fear of the Stalinists, but also because *THE MEMBERSHIP UNDERSTOOD THAT SOLIDARNOSC AND THE SELF-MANAGEMENT BODIES SHOULD FULFILL THE ROLE OF PARTIES BY TAKING OVER OR*

*SHARING THE SEJM WITH THE STALINISTS.* This, as we'll see later, had nothing to do with elections to the Sejm involving bourgeois parties.

The Solidarnosc secretary in Katowice, Kazimierz Switon, was the best known leader who wanted to kick the 'experts', including Kuron, out of Solidarnosc for their advocacy of parties. His attacks against Kuron brought on very bitter attacks against him from Walesa. And contrary to Walesa and company, who were ambiguous about their attitudes when asked if they preferred the capitalist or the socialist system (because they preferred the capitalist), the Katowice leaders of Solidarnosc made their attitude very clear. When the question was put to them point blank by the Stalinists, Switon said that "people do not want to change the socialist system, they only want to mend it. They want to participate in government ...." (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Winter-Spring '81, page 43).

The same leaders were not timid social democrats who were afraid of the word 'communism'. This can be seen clearly in their conflict with Kuron, and was most succinctly expressed by Cierniewski, another Solidarnosc leader, who said that "After all we also want to be governed by communists. Communists, but not pseudo-communists, who hide their own private interests behind the party banner." (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Winter-Spring '81, page 47).

Yes, comrades, they were most likely not Trotskyists, but reformed Stalinists. But do you think that they and their many thousands of followers should have been suppressed?

Krakow, which is adjacent to Katowice, is another typical industrial center that Solidarnosc controlled. Krakow is a good example of a locality where young people did not join the right wing nationalists, but instead became leaders of the self-management movement and pillars of pro-socialist, anti-Stalinist activism.

A typical example of this was Mieczyslaw Wiatkowski, the vice-president of a textile factory of over 1500 workers. When asked what kind of socialism he wanted, he answered:

"I want Poland to be a socialist society that governs itself. We don't know what socialism looks like because it doesn't exist here. However, I hope in the future we can achieve socialism. Of course when I say socialism, I mean that a small section of society should not govern. We, as workers, know best what to produce and how to distribute the wealth. We know best of all what we need. Every factory must have a say in the economy. The parliament should have the general plan." (Intercontinental Press, May 25 1981, page 556-557)

This is definitely not propaganda for market economy! But it is a good statement for workers' democracy with general guidance from central planning. And this from someone who probably never read the transitional program, but who confirmed the correctness of its method, i.e., that the workers in the deformed workers' state will move in the direction of workers' control and workers' democracy, and not against the foundation of the centralized economy.

Krakow is also the area where Lenin Steelworks (the largest factory in Poland, with 40,000 workers) is situated. The factory was known for its pro-socialist attitude. The young leader of the factory, Edward Nowak, was known for his left attitudes, and he may even have been sympathetic to USec. The steelworkers' committee of the Lenin Steelworks wrote in answer to the slanders of the Stalinists:

"We are the majority of the working people in Poland who believe that socialism is a system of social justice and that it is possible to restore the highest values .... Our activity does not impair the foundations of socialism in our country. We have only condemned those who distorted its basic tenets." (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Spring-Autumn '80, page 50).

We have given only a few examples to show that in the the most important industrial centers, the workers and a lot of their local leaders did not support capitalist restoration or even the Gorbechov type market economy. We could go on and on, and show the contradictions and emerging left wing tendencies before the September congress, which continued to increase after its conclusion. We only hope that we have planted at least the seeds of doubt and curiosity, and that the ex-SL comrades will at least take the time to investigate and think seriously about the possibility that they do not have the right empirical data, as well as about the logical consequences of their politics.