

I. WAS SELF-MANAGEMENT AN EXPRESSION OF THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION OR JUST A TOOL OF THE RESTORATIONIST LEADERSHIP?

We have already seen that the self-management bodies were not 'seemingly' contradictory bodies. But the adopted theses made it very clear that self-management bodies were 'seemingly' contradictory before the September congress. And after the congress? Well—if the union became restorationist without contradiction, we assume that the same characterization would apply to the self-management bodies.

But, of course, the SL's conception of life had nothing to do with reality. In reality, the self-management bodies developed according to the same pattern as the rest of the union—with the exception that they were the bodies through which the workers confronted the Stalinists most directly and in the most political manner. Through the bodies of self-management, the workers brought up the *MOST FUNDAMENTAL ASPECT OF THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION: WHO WILL CONTROL SOCIETY? THE WORKING CLASS, THROUGH ITS DEMOCRATIC BODIES, OR THE BUREAUCRACY?*

The fact that the theses don't deal with this question is amazing. Since the SL did not see any political revolution developing, it is not surprising that it ignored the self-management bodies. The fusion theses claim that self-management bodies were just seemingly democratic bodies of the working class against the bureaucracy. But since the Left and millions of workers did not agree with that conception, it was the duty of the fusion theses to explain why those million of workers in the self-management bodies were wrong. But no—the theses did not say a word on the subject!

Since the self-management bodies were among the principal tools with which the workers asserted their demands against the Stalinist bureaucracy, there was a conflict between the self-management bodies and the leadership of Solidarnosc (including the leadership of the self-management bodies). This conflict developed beginning early in 1981, and continued throughout the year.

The conflict between the self-management bodies and the Solidarnosc leadership can be understood only by those who grasp the contradictory nature of the union. By giving the workers the right to control the operation of the factories, choose production outputs and pricing, elect and recall all managers, and decide by the methods of workers' democracy the day-to-day policies in the factories, the self-management bodies were the biggest threat to the Stalinists. *THE SELF-MANAGEMENT BODIES DID NOT JUST PRINT THEIR PROGRAM—THEY IMPLEMENTED IT BY KICKING THE BUREAUCRATS OUT OF THE FACTORIES AND REPLACING THEM WITH WORKERS' DEMOCRATIC BODIES.* The workers were not merely talking about the slogans of the political revolution—they were trying to implement them. And that scared both the restorationist leadership of Solidarnosc and the reformist. As a result, both rushed to the arms of the Stalinists for cover! The bureaucrats are better than the political revolution of the masses, they were saying (as we'll see on the chapter on the leadership)!

The masses, who remembered the past experiences of bogus self-management in 1956, 1970, and 1976, did not rush to create self-management bodies in 1980. Only in March 1981, when the masses were at the height of their self-confidence, did the self-management bodies spread throughout Poland. Once this occurred, since direct action against the Stalinists threatened their reformist perspective, the leadership of Solidarnosc was at first very reluctant to accept self-management bodies, and even tried to stop them. When they couldn't, they tried to muzzle them with a conservative leadership.

Here is how Timothy Garton Ash describes the relationship between the spontaneous movement and the Solidarnosc leadership:

"So self-government was not an initiative 'from above', and certainly not from the National Commission. The first draft of the union's program, published in April, emphasised that self-government and union organisations 'must be clearly separated'. At the end of May the National Commission rather grudgingly accepted the 'Network' as a 'consultative body'. On 19 June the Presidium (the National Commission's cabinet) issued a communique objecting to the government's draft Bill on self-government; but it elaborated no alternative proposals. It was only after the July debates that the National Commission finally adopted the demand" (The Polish Revolution: Solidarity, pp. 188-89)

A. Network

'Network' was the best known self-management group. Its leadership was definitely conservative, and in favor of market economy. The problem with Network, as an exclusively proletariat-based organization, was that its base consisted of the most progressive sections of the working class, which were moving in the direction of the political revolution. Every time the leadership tried to tighten the valve, the steam would only burst into the air. This was expressed not only by the workers, but also in the debate within the leadership of Solidarnosc. We have already seen it in the sharp criticisms expressed by Ryszard Bugaj against Jerzy Milewski, the leader of Network, who favored 'flexible' market economy.

Some of the 'expert' leaders of Network definitely had some very reactionary ideas, similar to Gorbachev's reforms. In May 1981, we were still being deluded with the idea of flexible market economy; they wrote that "planning should be reduced to essentials, leaving the rest to the natural mechanism of control" (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Summer 1982, page 27).

These ideas were opposed not only by the left wing centrists and the workers in the factories, but even by the reformist Bugajite wing of the leadership, which was afraid that with such a program it would lose control over the membership. One of the Bugajite leaders, K. Modzelewski, responded to the plans proposed by the right wing 'experts' of Network by stating that:

"Even Solidarity must be independent from self-management and this in order that the system of self-management, if there is to be one, if we succeed in winning it as we all desire, might avoid *THE DANGERS THAT NO ONE HAS KNOWN HOW TO AVOID IN YUGOSLAVIA*. And besides, these social dangers constitute the one and only rational argument put forward by the official propaganda against the Network's project. Their argument is based on the fact that the Network's proposals imply a new social equality. For the enterprises, benefiting from better investment and equipped with the most modern machines, would command a very strong, quasimonopolistic position in the market...to the detriment of enterprises and regions that were weaker" (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Summer 1982, page 27)

AND IT WAS THE PROGRAM OF MODZELEWSKI AND BUGAJ (THE MODERATES) THAT WON IN THE SEPTEMBER CONGRESS, AS WE ALREADY SAW. The debate within the movement, and—more importantly—the objections of the workers, brought Network to a crossroads around the September-October congress. The workers like Modzelewski did not want to see Yugoslavia (with a market economy that produces unemployment) happen in Poland!! No—that was not their idea of workers' democracy. The workers were much more perceptive than the isolated gentlemen in Warren Street imagine them to be, and they knew what the result of the Yugoslav 'experiment' had been to the working class. Thus, the program of Network, which came out in the middle of '81, had to concede to the pressure of the workers, and along with market economy, it had to talk clearly about the need for socialism, central planning, and workers' democracy to replace the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The Network program, which was called the 'Draft of a Bill on Social Enterprises', was explained by a union pamphlet which stated that:

"A socialized enterprise is one controlled by self-management. The central authority is a workers' council elected by the whole staff with the right to make decisions concerning the enterprise's most important business. A manager is appointed by the council in a contested election and is responsible to it alone. The enterprise is communal property managed by the workers' council. The influence of centralized state control on the enterprise's activities is exerted by means of economic instruments such as taxes, custom duties, credits and state agreements, as well as by general norms of law such as those concerning environmental protection, technological standards ... *THE STATE ALSO CONDUCTS THE CENTRAL INVESTMENT POLICY* Self-management is intended to be an instrument of economic rebirth. It is an institution based on the initiative of the workers without which it is impossible to overcome the economic depression. At the same time, *IN A SOCIALIST ECONOMY, IT IS THE ONLY POSSIBLE FORM OF ESTABLISHING MANAGING BODIES OF ENTERPRISES THAT ARE INDEPENDENT OF THE STATE ADMINISTRATION*. Thus, the phrase 'self-management reform' became the slogan of the second stage of the post-August social movement." (Solidarnosc Sourcebook, pp. 178-79 (emphasis added))

The interesting thing about this program is that it was written by the more conservative sector of the self-management group! When the 'experts' wrote 'in general' about the economy in fine magazines, they mentioned the idea of the 'free play' market economy. But when they wrote a document for the rank-and-file, they had to be much more careful, and talk about *CENTRAL PLANNING BY THE STATE*, workers' democracy, and socialism; all under the pressure of the political revolution, which was overloading the circuits to market economy, and blowing all the political fuses! And the comrades tell us that the contradictions within Solidarnosc were vanishing!!

On September 29, 1981 (in the middle of the Solidarnosc congress), after the SL announced that the entire working class had practically become dupes for reaction, Network released a response to various Stalinist charges against its proposals. Some of the responses were highly interesting, and worth reading:

"CHARGE: The Network draft is contradictory to the Polish constitution and deals a blow to the foundations of the country's political system.

"RESPONSE: Social ownership of the means of production is a basic principle of the political system in our country. The Network draft is in accordance with the principle.

"The concept of a social enterprise is fully compatible with the constitution which reads: 'Art. 5- The Polish People's Republic consolidates social ownership as the main basis of the economic strength of the country and the welfare of the nation'; 'Art.11- The foundations of the socio-economic system in the Polish People's Republic are provided by a socialist economic system based on socialized means of production and socialist production relations'

"CHARGE: The proposal [NETWORK's draft proposal for the Sejm] boils down to an abolition of social ownership in favor of group ownership.

"Response: Social enterprises are in charge of that part of the nation's property entrusted to them by appropriate founding organs. This means that society as a whole is the owner of the means of production while the founding organ, which acts on behalf of the state, entrusts a part of the nation's property to an enterprise which has a legal status. And thus, by virtue of the latter, the enterprise is vested with rights to the property entrusted to it while the workforce manages the enterprise by means of self-management bodies." (Solidarnosc Sourcebook, pp. 201-2)

Thus, when the Stalinists accused Network of wanting state capitalism (group ownership), the answer was a flat no! They wanted the state to keep central control. And they made it clear that a group of workers or bureaucrats cannot own a factory. The document continues: "If the enterprise goes into liquidation, the allocation of its property is subject to the decision by the state organ which founded it and is outside the authority of the workforce".

This document, which was issued together with other Solidarnosc releases from the September congress, showed how the contradictions within Solidarnosc were boiling. The Network statements from the congress, like the October program, had to contradict directly the call of the 'experts' for free market economy and unemployment. But while the October program was influenced by all segments of Solidarnosc, including rural Solidarnosc, the Network denial of market economy had to be sharper, because Network was based solely on the industrial working class. The same Network document continues as follows:

"CHARGE: Adoption of the draft law on social enterprises would shatter the national economy's management and incapacitate the socialist state as regards socio-economic policy.

"RESPONSE: The management system we have had hitherto, based on directives and centralized distribution, has repeatedly brought about economic and social crises in this country.

"Incapacitation of the state and shattering of the national economy results from this very system, not from the Network's proposal The state has to limit its interference in the internal matters of enterprises while retaining the right to set some prices, manage the system of financing and credits, make laws on binding contracts with social enterprises, fix taxes and customs, and wield administrative control over the economic infrastructure Not saddled with the necessity of making decisions for enterprises, the central administration will be able to devote due attention to the matter of the country's long-term development, to a strategy for the management of the nation's property as well as social policy, which has been shamefully neglected to date." (Solidarnosc Sourcebook, pp. 201-03)

The problem with this release is definitely not its support for capitalist restoration, but rather the leadership's attempt to stop the working class, as it was moving forward, by proposing reforms of the state. As far as 'socialism' and central planning are concerned, the above release is not bad. We ourselves definitely could have defended some of the statements.

Network was not officially part of Solidarnosc. It was independent and responsible only to the industrial working class. The problems faced by its 'experts' were the following. The workers were getting impatient. They were trying to implement the political revolution--kick the bureaucracy out of the factories, conduct democratic management over the daily affairs in the regions, etc. But as time passed, it was clear that this could be done only by a national coordinating effort to 'force' acceptance of the self-management program. And just when Network released its statements, the country was beset with wildcat strikes, and the authority of the 'experts' was undermined by the actions of the membership. The attempts by the 'experts' to restore their authority by putting more emphasis on workers' democracy than on market economy did not avert the splits within the self-management bodies after the congress. *THE INDUSTRIAL PROLETARIAT, WHICH WAS ON THE OFFENSIVE, SWEEPED AWAY ALL THE ABSTRACT FORMULATIONS AND DEMANDED CONCRETE ANSWERS TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION.*

Partial answers to the desires of millions of proletarians, who wanted to move further to the left, smash the Stalinist bureaucracy, and have the self-management bodies take power, were provided by the formation of the centrist National Federation of Self-Management Bodies (KZ-KFS), which has already been described. The origins of the KZ-KFS can be understood by examining the development of one of the earliest self-management groups, the one in Lublin.

B. The Lublin self-management group

We have now seen the contradictions within Network that exploded later on in the formation of new self-management groups. We want to emphasize that once again the SL and the ex-comrades of the SL have it all backward. The reformist and restorationist character of the leadership accelerated the contradictions within Solidarnosc, and did not reduce them.

The split within the self-management movement occurred as the crisis within Solidarnosc and Network accelerated. In the summer of 1981, the Lublin group was formed. This group, which influenced some of the crucial industrial areas, developed some important differences with Network. In the economic sphere, the differences were small, with one exception--Network was more bureaucratic and depended on the 'experts', while the Lublin group emphasized on the necessity to decide everything from 'below'. The greater dependence of the Lublin group on the rank-and-file workers in the factories led later to sharp *POLITICAL* differences, and to the fusion of a considerable number of workers from the Lublin group with the centrist KZ-KFS self-management organization.

The political difference that developed between Network and the Lublin group was centered around the question of the Sejm. *WHILE THE EXPERTS OF NETWORK WANTED THE SEJM TO BE OPEN TO PARTIES (INCLUDING BOURGEOIS PARTIES), THE LUBLIN GROUP INSISTED THAT THE SEJM WOULD BE OPEN ONLY TO SELF-MANAGEMENT AND WORKERS' COUNCIL GROUPS.* Thus, while both groups had the reformist idea of having both an upper (Stalinist) chamber of Sejm and a lower chamber, only the Network experts wanted to 'open' the 'upper' chamber to new forces. In contrast to the Network 'experts', the Lublin group wrote that :

"...co-operation between the workers' councils, Solidarity and all the authentic bodies of self-management is the condition for creating, side by side with the Sejm and the people's councils, a second economic chamber (the Chamber for self-management), which will decide on the orientations for socio-economic development for the country and its regions." (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Summer 1982, page 27)

The evolution of the Lublin group followed the evolution of the workers. The Lublin group started as a reformist alternative to the more openly right-wing Network. As the workers' actions developed in the fall of 1981, the Lublin group went through its own internal differentiation, and a large section from it joined the active strikes and the centrist KZ-KFS self-management body. Despite its overall reform Stalinist orientation, it was clearly a left split from Network. This was admitted by Jean-Yves Potel, the well-known French 'leftist' expert on Solidarnosc, who wrote that:

"For supporters of the Network's project, it was first of all necessary to end up with an agreement with the government and the Church, if needs be by means of a general strike, and *afterwards, on the basis of laws* and of the Network's project, to start the process of economic reform and the construction of a self-management system. For the others (the Lubin Group), self-management bodies were above all '*organizations of struggle for self-management and instances of control over production*'. One had to adopt a policy of *fait accompli* and if the administration or the PUWP were opposed to it then one would have to organise an *active strike*..." (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Summer 1982, page 28)"

What it all boils down to is that a large sector of the proletariat broke from Network, from its politics of conciliation toward the Stalinist bureaucracy (by means of negotiations that were used against strikes), and from the right wing 'market' politics of its leaders. Despite the reformist and centrist leadership of the proletariat, it was moving in the direction of confrontation with the state, by proposing that self-management bodies control the state.

When the active strikes started to form, the Stalinists did not wait until things were out of control; they moved immediately to crush the movement and to guarantee that the independent actions of the workers would be 'checked' (to use WV's favorite word). But once again, we come to the opposite conclusion from WV. What the Stalinists 'checked' was not capitalist restoration, but the spectre of the political revolution.

II. *The Elections to the Sejm: A Marxist versus Spartacist/Stalinist view.*

All right, the ex-SLers will respond, maybe Solidarnosc's economic program was no more dangerous than Gorbachev's. And maybe because Solidarnosc was based on the working class, there was some resistance to the restorationist economic plans of some of its leaders. But what about Free Elections to the Sejm? Isn't Solidarnosc's call for the establishment of a bourgeois parliament the best proof that it had a restorationist political program? And, the argument continues, since the October program adopted a counterrevolutionary political program, didn't Solidarnosc stop being a contradictory working class mass movement? Etc., etc., etc. In recent discussions with comrades, it is this argument that has been made most heavy-handedly.

The fusion theses cite "free elections" as a "proof" that Solidarnosc stopped being a contradictory movement. But once again, the reality was exactly the opposite.

The SL's understanding of what was going on was so pathetic that it was not even laughable. Those who took their information only from the C.I.A. and the capitalist propaganda machines cannot be taken seriously. The CIA's propaganda is usually directed to idiots and not Marxists. That does not mean that Marxists cannot use some of the CIA's information. But one must first sort out the 95% of it that is lies and distortions!!

The October program does call for pluralism. But since Solidarnosc was a dynamic, contradictory mass movement, the call for pluralism meant different things to its different components. Although the call in the program is vague, and has the flavor of social democracy more than anything else, there is no doubt that a section of the leadership (Walesa's wing in particular) did want to see bourgeois parties in the Sejm. And the right wing restorationist sector understood pluralism as means to restore capitalism. But the reformist wing of Solidarnosc did not want to restore capitalism any more than the Stalinists did. And did the MAJORITY in Solidarnosc want bourgeois parties in the Sejm? No way!!

The great majority of Solidarnosc's membership, and a sector of the leadership, understood the elections to the Sejm to be restricted (outside the Stalinist organizations) mainly to the self-management bodies and workers' councils, and NOT to be open to bourgeois parties. And (to repeat for the benefit of the ex-SLers) the majority in Solidarnosc opposed the creation of parties that could run in free elections. *THAT WAS ONE OF THE BIG FIGHTS BY THE REFORMIST/CENTRIST WING OF SOLIDARNOSC AGAINST THE 'EXPERT' RIGHT WINGERS.* The overwhelming majority, which wanted to reform Stalinism, was opposed tooth and nail to parties. (See the earlier chapter on the contradictions between the regions and the leadership, and in particular the passage on the conflict between Switon--the Solidarnosc leader in Katwice, who opposed parties--and Kuron.) As we said before, the reason for this was that *THE MEMBERSHIP UNDERSTOOD THAT SOLIDARNOSC AND THE SELF-MANAGEMENT BODIES WOULD FULFILL THE ROLE OF PARTIES BY TAKING OVER OR SHARING THE SEJM WITH THE STALINISTS.*

To dispel any doubts on this question, here once again is Bujak, who was an anti-communist and definitely in favor of parties, but who had to confess that:

"It was only when I told them [the workers] 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)

A VERY CLEAR DECLARATION. WHEN THE WORKERS TALKED ABOUT ELECTIONS TO THE SEJM, WHAT THEY MEANT WAS WORKERS' ORGANIZATIONS.

A. *Stalinism and the Sejm*

When the SL complained that Solidarnosc wanted to bring bourgeois parties to the Sejm, they should have issued their complaints, first of all, to their allies--the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The Stalinists maintained a 'dormant' popular front for years. The Sejm was really just a phantom popular front, while the Stalinists controlled the country through the organizations of the Party. But when the masses were set into motion and undermined the rule of the bureaucracy, the Catholics and bourgeois deputies in the Sejm did not hesitate to show their bourgeois teeth and link up with the

restorationist leadership of Solidarnosc.

The Polish Stalinists are hated so much that they cannot control the country by sheer brute force. Their mismanagement of the economy is so great that in order to keep the more backward elements of the population (the peasants, artisans and backward workers) in line, they formed a 'front' with the Catholic church and its minor bourgeois allies. And if anything fertilized the ground for the reactionary current within Solidarnosc, it was precisely this 'front'! The deal was that the Catholic Church would keep its long-range restorationist goals to itself, and the Stalinists would allow it to keep its privileges and sizable control over the masses. Part of that deal was the—yes, 'free'—elections to the Sejm. And as long as things were calm, the Catholic deputies always collaborated. But that was no longer the case in the turmoil years of 80-81.

When the battles between Solidarnosc and the Stalinists were taking place over economic reforms, the Catholic and bourgeois deputies in the Sejm sided, of course, with the free market current in defiance of the bureaucracy. Timothy Garton Ash described the situation toward the end of September 1981:

"...the members of the *sejm* started behaving like members of the other national parliament in Gdansk. On Wednesday evening, General Jaruzelski had the dubious pleasure of receiving an envoy representing the deputies of the Democratic Party, most of the United Peasant Party, the two regime-backed lay Catholic groups (Pax and 'neo-Znak'), and those 'without party'. They would not vote for the Party version, the Prime Minister was informed The Act which the *sejm* triumphantly passed on Friday 25 September was a compromise distinguished only by a few turns of phrase from that which the Solidarity cabinet had approved on Tuesday." (The Polish Revolution: Solidarity, pp. 213-14)

Later on, before the December 13 coup, when the Stalinists tried to pass Extraordinary Powers legislation in the Sejm, they met with similar resistance. So while some of the Solidarnosc leaders were talking about 'free' elections for the bourgeois and Catholic parties, the Stalinists were suffering from the implementation of 'free elections' by allowing Catholic and minor Bourgeois parties in the Sejm in the first place.

So who was undermining the foundations of the workers' state with 'free' elections—the Stalinists, or Solidarnosc? If one takes the same narrow formal logic which the SL used in criticizing Solidarnosc, and applies it to the Stalinists, one would have to come to the conclusion that the Stalinists were just as guilty. But we know this is not so; and while the dangers of restoration due to the actions of the Stalinist bureaucracy were real, the bureaucracy still remained a contradictory caste that was based on the foundations of the workers' state, and not of Capital. Such a reactionary caste, however, can collaborate with bourgeois forces to keep its domination, with all the dangers that can result from such collaboration.

But—excuse us, comrades of the ex-SL—Solidarnosc was a contradictory movement too, and it was based on the class that constitutes the foundation for the workers' state to begin with. And while a sector of its leadership was moving toward the restoration of capitalism, a large sector of the membership was moving in the other direction. Such contradictory, complex phenomena are the heart of the material world, which only the Marxist (dialectic) method can comprehend.

B. The restorationist and reformist versus Marxist view

It is very interesting to note that the open advocates of bourgeois market economy and election of bourgeois parties to the Sejm ALSO OPPOSED THE CREATION OF THE SELF-MANAGEMENT MOVEMENT. The English state capitalists (IS) reported, for example, that one of the market economy advocates, Maciej Madeyski, was mocked by the workers for his conception of market economy. Even after being mocked, Madeyski "...got back into the discussion for long enough to mention the mixed economy, competition and buying capital and technology from the West." (Solidarnosc: From Gdansk to Military Repression, page 66)

When this same Madeyski counterposed the Sejm to self-management and workers' councils, he said that:

"Because you have to reshape the whole economy and create a system of connecting vessels and the circle has to be closed. And the circle unfortunately can only be closed by the representatives of the self-management councils, i.e., the national councils and the Sejm, the government and so on back again. THEN THE SELF-MANAGEMENT COUNCIL IS UNNECESSARY BECAUSE THE SEJM IS THE

SELF-MANAGEMENT. I WOULD REFRAIN FROM CALLING ON SELF-MANAGEMENT TO FORM." (Solidarnosc: From Gdansk to Military Repression, page 66)

The reason why Madeyski opposed the formation of self-management bodies was the restorationist fear of the independent mobilization of the proletariat. PROLETARIAT ORGANIZATIONS IN THE SEJm WOULD HAVE CONSTITUTED DUAL POWER, AND COULD NOT CO-EXIST WITH THE IDEA OF BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY.

This was understood not only by the workers, but also by their reformist leaders, who wanted, in the last analysis, to preserve Stalinist rule. Ryszard Bugaj, who wanted to reform the CP and was a central figure of the 'moderates' (those who wanted to combine central planning with more 'free market'), made that very clear in the debate just before the October program was adopted. He said:

"So, I'm in favor of political initiatives of a party kind--associations, leagues. And there is, I feel, a chance that society will take geopolitical factors into consideration, that it will acknowledge the leading role of the party [the CP] and accept a realistic model. One could imagine this as follows: at the elections to the Sejm the party may have its own list, for separate mandatory seats, and alongside, we could have a list for those social forces which are really independent, and yet respect a minimum of political principles specific to our system." (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Spr. 1982, page 18).

That was one of the popular lines within the Solidarnosc leadership: reform of the Stalinist system by giving the Stalinists the "leading role" in the 'upper' Sejm, while the workers and those who "respect a minimum of political principles specific to our [deformed workers' state] system" would sit in the lower Sejm and 'advise' the Stalinists. The same leadership later showed the Stalinists their loyalty by stopping the active strikes ("wildcats"), which were the means by which the workers were trying to force the Stalinists to implement control of the Sejm by the self-management bodies and workers' councils. *AND AS WE'LL SEE IN MORE DETAIL LATER ON, THE PROBLEM OF THIS LEADERSHIP WAS NOT THAT IT WANTED TO BRING CAPITALISM, BUT THAT IT WANTED TO KEEP THE DEFORMED WORKERS' STATE GOING AS A PROTECTION AGAINST THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION.*

Once again, it is only by the propaganda of the CIA and the SL that we are led to believe that the entire union wanted to bring bourgeois democracy into Poland. The more closely one reads the actual discussions and resolutions within the union--the more closely one reads what the workers discussed in the factories and the regions--the more clear it becomes that the rank-and-file viewed elections to the Sejm as elections *OF WORKERS' ORGANIZATIONS* to the Sejm.

The Warsaw region, for example, published an article stating that:

"Workers' self-management will not be in a position to carry out its role and put pressure on the administration, until the links between individual workplaces lead to coordination of their activities on a regional scale, and the regional self-management coordinates its activities on a national scale. Such co-ordination was lacking in 1956 between the Workers' councils which had been set up at the time. Today we must draw the lessons of that experience.

"Only the Sejm, as the highest organ of legislative and executive authority, can assure the necessary coordination of regional organs of self-management." (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Spring-Autumn 1980, page 58)

So the workers understood the elections to the Sejm mainly as *THE WAY FOR THE SELF-MANAGEMENT BODIES TO COORDINATE THEIR ACTIVITIES NATIONWIDE*. Such discussions and resolutions were usually mixed up with some concession to the Stalinists (the Stalinists should keep their own Sejm, etc.). But what can one expect, given the lack of a Trotskyist party? Nevertheless, the call to coordinate the self-management bodies through the Sejm was a de-facto call for the formation of a soviet--maybe in a deformed way, but if only organizations of workers and peasants were allowed to participate, it would have turned into a soviet.

The comrades should also bear in mind that toward the end of 1981, the active strike committees, which represented the most militant section of the proletariat, proposed similar solutions. Would the comrades of the ex-SL propose to crush them too, because they wanted the workers to be elected to the Sejm? We wonder. The problem with the SL was that they took the demands of the

restorationist section of Solidarnosc and treated them as if they belonged to the entire movement.

So what should Trotskyists have done? According to the SL, and probably the ex-SLers, Trotskyists should have stood behind the Stalinist tanks and helped to crush Solidarnosc and the self-management bodies. The SL's politics are so sick and rotten that its refusal even to participate in Solidarnosc (because it was 'counterrevolutionary!') cannot even be termed sectarian, but are more accurately termed 'reactionary sectarian'. The SL (and unfortunately the adopted fusion theses) termed the slogan "Free Trade Union" as a CIA slogan that came from Radio Free Europe, and in short, treated Solidarnosc as basically a CIA union.

According to the SL's Alice In Wonderland version of events, the CIA influenced Solidarnosc through its agents in the union bureaucracies in the U.S., via their relationship with Walesa etc. How ridiculous! Just from the factual point of view, Solidarnosc called for free trade unions from first day of the Gdansk strike, in August 1980; at that time, even the SL considered Solidarnosc to be contradictory! At that time, Walesa was just becoming Solidarnosc's leader, and he did not even have time to establish relationships with the union bureaucrats in the U.S!! But these facts are not important for the incurable sectarians. What is more important is to write off the entire working class!

What the Polish workers understood by the term 'free trade unions' was freedom from the Stalinist bureaucracy. And even if some of Solidarnosc's leaders interpreted the word 'free' as a connection to the 'free' capitalist world, what Trotskyists should have done in response was to show the workers the contradictions between the 'freedom' from Stalinist control and the 'freedom' of the restorationist leadership.

In this respect, there is a similarity between 'free' elections and 'free' trade unions. In both cases, there was a contradiction and a gap developing between the conceptions of the workers and the restorationist leadership. In the case of free trade unions, the workers understood this as freedom from Stalinist control; and the case of free elections to the Sejm, they understood this as freedom for the workers' organizations to control the Sejm.

When the industrial working class, via the self-management movement, started to break from the reformist and restorationist leadership, and demanded that the self-management bodies and workers' councils take power, Trotskyists should have been there to demand: *ELECTION TO THE SEJM OF SELF-MANAGEMENT BODIES AND WORKERS' COUNCILS ONLY! NO ROOM IN THE SEJM FOR THOSE WHO ADVOCATE CAPITALIST MARKET ECONOMY! NO TO THE TWO-CHAMBER SEJM (ONE STALINIST AND CATHOLIC, ONE FOR WORKERS)!*

In this way, Trotskyists could have exposed the reformists and centrists, who still wanted to work together with the Stalinists. And Trotskyists in effect would have proposed a *DE FACTO* soviet for all the genuine forces that were moving in the direction of the political revolution.

But Trotskyism has nothing in common with the 'reactionary sectarianism' of the SL, which does not understand what the political revolution is in a deformed workers' state. We hope that this document will help the comrades of the ex-SL to overcome the remains of this methodology.