

Revolution and Counter-revolution in Poland

Theses agreed by

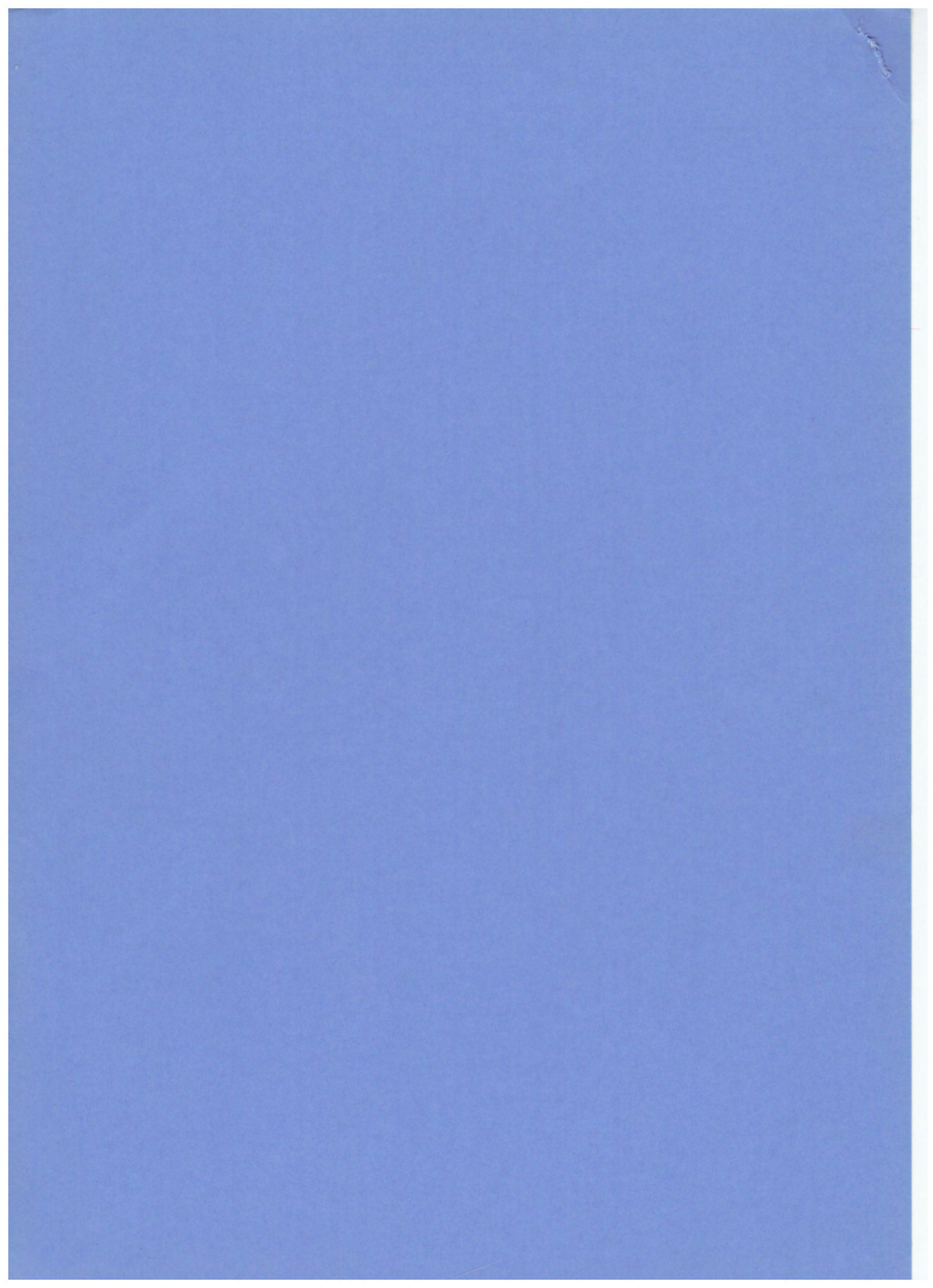
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① The bureaucratic caste that usurps political power in the Workers States and parasitically lives off the planned property relations cannot coexist with independent organisations of the working class. Neither can it tolerate the erosion of its privileges, its political power or the destabilisation of the repressive internal security apparatus upon which its power ultimately depends. For these reasons it was inevitable that the Stalinists would launch a bid to recoup the gains made by the Polish workers since August 1980. This is the objective of the military coup. It could only have been prevented or resisted by the working class taking political power directly into the hands of its own workers councils (soviets) and workers militia. A failure to take political power - to make a Political Revolution - paved the way for the Stalinists' bloody counter attack.

②. But the bureaucracy's privileges, their inability to rationally plan and effectively organise the economy coupled with the political oppression of the working class all mean that open conflict periodically erupts between the working class and their bureaucratic overlords in the workers states. The specific political revolutionary situation that Poland has experienced since August 1980 had its roots in the following factors.

(a) Crisis of the Bureaucratically Planned Economy

The inability of the bureaucracy to sustain and develop the planned property form became increasingly evident during the 1960s. While national income increased by, on average, 8.6% between 1950 and 1955, this figure had dropped to 5% between 1966 and 1970. In 1970 the bureaucracy failed to force the working class to pay for the crisis of the stagnating bureaucratically planned economy with higher prices for essential foodstuffs.

The Gierek regime after 1970 hoped to finance a new round of industrialisation by massive borrowing from Western banks and governments which was to be repaid by the exports of Polish

manufactured goods to the West. By late 1981 Poland, in relation to the size of its population, was the second most indebted country in the world. But the bureaucracy proved incapable of raising the productivity of the working class to which it denied elementary rights of organisation and self-expression. (Between 1976 and 1979 labour productivity grew by only 3.8%.) Recession in the Western capitalist economies definitively removed the hoped for markets of the Polish bureaucracy and further undermined their entire economic strategy.

(b) The Militant Tradition Of The Polish Working Class

The working class in 1970 and 1976 had forced the bureaucracy to carry an enormous subsidy on prices of essential foodstuffs. Bureaucratic mismanagement and corruption ensured continued scarcities of essential goods. In the face of mounting foreign debts the Gierek regime sought to push down the living standards of the working class through the price rises of the summer of 1980.

(c) The Crisis of Agriculture

Approximately 75% of Polish agricultural land is in the hands of the small-holding peasantry (the average size of holdings being around 12.6 acres). The Stalinist regime tolerates this anachronistic agricultural system for fear of conflict with the peasantry and the Catholic church whose roots lie in rural village Poland. But the shortage of needed manufactured goods, and the small peasantry's control of essential food supplies provoked a 'scissors crisis' in Polish agriculture. The peasantry refused to sell their products to state agencies because the state could not in exchange provide goods required for agricultural production. Hence the tendency of the peasantry to hoard and to sell goods on the more lucrative private market. Food shortages in the state shops, escalating prices on the private market served to further impoverish the living standards of Poland's industrial working class.

(d) The Continued Reneging by the Stalinist Bureaucracy on the Deals and Compromises Struck With the Working Class After Previous Conflicts

After 1956, 1970 and 1976 the bureaucracy promised the redress of grievances and the extension of workers' rights. On each occasion the Stalinists, having secured the demobilisation of the working class, ripped up the agreements and attempted to re-institute repression. This meant that by 1980 there existed a definite layer of workers ready to fight in their own defence but deeply distrustful of the official unions as a direct result of their own experience.

(e) The flagrant corruption of the leading beneficiaries of the Gierk Regime.

The special rations, fine houses and fat salaries of the bureaucracy stood in sharp and visible contrast to the hardships and privations of working class life. The inability of these privileged parasites to organise production and distribution effectively, further sharpened Polish working class hatred of inequality.

(f) The National Question in Poland

The social and political regime that has existed in Poland since the end of the second imperialist war was imposed on Poland by the Soviet armed forces counter to the immediate rhythms of its class struggle. Since that time the army of the Soviet bureaucracy has served as the ultimate sanction against political change in Poland. Hence all struggles against the bureaucratic caste, against political oppression and inequality are necessarily interwoven with the sense of national oppression bolstered by the very existence of the Stalinist regime in Poland.

3. The crisis of the summer of 1980 was sparked initially by a struggle against food price rises but was dramatically intensified by a struggle in defence of victimised militants in Gdansk. It passed through a stage of immediate local economic demands on

work conditions and wages to the formation of the national Solidarnosc and the demand for free independent Trade Unions. In the face of a mass exodus out of the Stalinist official unions, mass recruitment to Solidarnosc among rank and file Party members and universal hatred and contempt for the corrupt and discredited Gierk regime, the Stalinists had no immediate alternative to the official recognition and registration of Solidarnosc.

But the concessions wrung from the regime - on pay, on union recognition, on Saturday working - and the new self confidence of the working class could only have been defended and extended by the working class finally destroying the political power, repressive apparatus and economic privileges of the bureaucracy - by POLITICAL REVOLUTION. Having taken power into the hands of its own workers councils and militia the working class would proceed to re-organise the plan from top to bottom under workers' management.

The potential for such a political-revolutionary resolution to Poland's crisis was always present in the dynamic of the workers' struggles from August 1980. The inter-factory strike committees could have laid the basis for soviet type organisation and at a number of stages workers were forced to form their own rudimentary workers defence squads. The working class base of Solidarnosc has consistently given voice to demands for an end to privilege, for democracy in the factories and for the extension of workers control and management in the plants and in the economy as a whole. None of these demands was realisable short of the revolutionary overthrow of the bureaucratic rulers.

4. Neither could Solidarnosc hope to achieve a permanent status as a trade union representing the Polish working class in negotiations and bargaining with the Bureaucracy. The limited programme of establishing a Trade Union in a bureaucratically degenerate workers state is a utopian one. Under capitalism Trade Unions represent workers against individual capitalists in a market over which neither employer nor workers has control. The very dynamics of the market economy keep alive trade unionism as a form of representation of the working class within bourgeois society. Within a healthy workers state trade unions would initially continue to represent the interests of sections of workers within a state that was under the direct control of the working class as a whole. They would be essential training grounds for workers to learn to control and manage the economy, 'schools for socialism', as Lenin liked to call them. But in a bureaucratically degenerate workers state such as Poland neither the market mechanisms through which workers bargain with individual employers nor the prerequisites of the functions of Trade Unions in a healthy workers state are in existence. Every major demand of the workers - on the length of the working week, the sacking of an individual manager, the allocation of goods or wages - inevitably pits the working class against the central bureaucracy which monopolises the central planning mechanism. And lasting success for the workers cannot be secured by bargaining with the central bureaucracy. The nature of its power and privileges is such that it cannot for long co-exist with independent organisations of those that it oppresses. The centralisation of its power and the scale of its privileges make it too tempting an object of revolutionary overthrow unless the masses themselves are forcibly deprived of the right to organise.

5. Solidarnosc could therefore only be a force for political conflict with the bureaucracy. Either it could have laid the basis for the revolutionary overthrow of the bureaucracy that we have outlined above, or it could have developed a programme of collaboration

with, and reform of, the stalinist regime. Thirdly, it could have moved in the direction of a counter-revolutionary overthrow of the regime which would have paved the way for the restoration of capitalism in Poland, and whatever the nationalist slogans it was fought under, this would mean the turning of Poland once again into a semi-colony of Western Imperialism.

The leadership of Solidarity, and its conferences and national commission were overwhelmingly under the influence of tendencies supporting the latter two political programmes.

6. THE TENDENCIES IN SOLIDARNOSC

(i) The Walesa Group which was tied particularly closely to the Catholic hierarchy of Wyczynski and Glemp who in their turn were the active agents of, and in regular contact with, the reactionary Pope John Paul II.

On a world scale the Catholic church is inevitably committed to the maintenance of the exploitative order of capitalism and to the destruction of those 'Godless' states that have overthrown the private property that the Church sees as sacred. For that reason the Catholic hierarchy is a force ultimately fighting for capitalist restoration in the workers states.

In the immediate situation of Poland's political-revolutionary crisis it fought to use the mobilisations of the working class and its hold over large sections of the working class to strengthen its own bargaining position with the regime. Its hold over large sections of Polish workers flows from: (a) the rural background of a large proportion of the workforce, particularly the first generation workers of Gierk's "industrial boom"; (b) the Church's ability to pose as a force representing national independence in the eyes of the masses;

(c) the fact that in conditions of Stalinist repression, and of its oppressive and stultifying cultural life the Catholic Church was able to appear as what Marx termed 'the heart of the heartless world. The soul of soulless conditions'.

It sought to be a broker between the regime and the workers - before and after martial law - in order to guarantee both the preservation and extension of rural capitalism and church control over 'social bodies'. Notably the Church wants to use its bargaining strength to erode crucial rights secured for women in Poland (including abortion rights and contraception facilities). It aims to drive women back into family life as child rearers and unpaid child minders. In this way it hopes to tighten its own grip on the minds of the young by eroding the need for nursery and child care facilities in the hands of the 'Godless state'.

It also intends to wring from the bureaucracy concessions in the field of education, media time for religious sermonising, of family life and even food distribution. The Stalinists were prepared to concede to the Church in these spheres - including Ministerial responsibility for 'family life' - in exchange for Church calls for order and calm.

While significant sectors of the working class looked to the Catholic hierarchy for a lead, celebrated Mass in occupation strikes and decked out their demonstrations in religious symbols, the Catholic Church was not always able to force the ranks of Solidarnosc to obey its bidding. On many occasions the same workers who would abase themselves before the cassock and cross would refuse to heed Church calls for a return to work. Similarly the Church, in Poland and Rome, has been set on doing a deal to find a Polish 'Tito' - a patriotic decentralising authoritarian leader who would make concessions to the private farmers, to small businessmen and to the Church itself.

This programme, that led Glemp to ultimately plump for Jaruzelski rather than for the struggle to overthrow martial law, runs objectively counter to the democratic aspirations of the base of Solidarnosc.

The Catholic hierarchy, which supported the anti-semitic Great Polish dictatorship of Pilsudski after the first imperialist war, has not changed its spots. Better a Stalinist Pilsudski figure and order, than the uncertainties and disorder of a political-revolutionary crisis. That is the reasoning of the Catholic hierarchy in the face of a working class striking for its own emancipation. Until the threat of a working class thus mobilised is removed the Catholic Church is willing to temporarily hold back in its long term goal of restoring capitalism.

Walesa - until December 1981 as his project crumbled before his eyes and the eyes of millions of Solidarnosc supporters too - sought to strike a compromise deal with the authorities that would guarantee joint participation in a National Front for the Church, for Solidarnosc appointees and the Stalinists. His programme included the distribution of state farm land to the private peasantry, self management committees in the factories and 'social Council' control of the economy by which he meant tripartite administration of the plan and the bolstering of the Church's role in all aspects of social and political life.

In order to secure that deal Walesa attempted to hold back the unofficial strikes of October and November which involved 250,000 workers. In order to prevent bureaucratic reprisals against strikers and the passage of anti-strike legislation he counselled Solidarnosc itself to outlaw unofficial strikes and to build a disciplinary machinery that could put such a ban into effect. (In late October and early November the Solidarnosc Praesidium called for an end to strikes.) At the bidding of Archbishop Glemp Walesa unilaterally left the Gdansk meeting of the Solidarity National Commission to

meet with Jaruzelski and Glomp to set up talks "aimed at specifying the general principles to which the construction of national agreement in our motherland should be subjected". Not until the Stalinists braced themselves for hard line action against Solidarnosc did Walesa break from this perspective of collaboration with the Stalinists.

(ii) The Social Democratic KOR grouping - most notably represented by Kuron and Michnik. The programme of this grouping - re-constituted in late November as the 'clubs of the self-governing republic' - was the reform of Poland on the road to its 'Findlandisation'. By this they mean the establishment, by stealth and encroachment, of a Parliamentary democracy accepting the limitation of foreign policy alliance with the USSR, and decisive repressive machinery and foreign policy matters remaining in the grip of the Stalinists. Kuron explicitly calls for the replacement of centralised planning with a decentralised economic order.

Kuron, and the Social Democratic and lay Catholic intelligentsia, express a classic distrust (in reality a profound fear) of the self-organisation of the working class. At each key stage in the crisis after August 1980 they counselled against showdown and conflict with the Stalinists. But the credibility of the KOR grouping as defenders of workers' rights after 1976 and their links with the Catholic intelligentsia ensured for them an influential role in the counsels of Solidarnosc. It was Kuron for example who played a vital role in securing the agreed compromise deal between Solidarnosc and the regime on workers' management.

The Social Democratic intelligentsia in the workers states is a central conduit of bourgeois ideas and programmes into the ranks of the working class. Most vitally they foster illusions in Parliamentary Democracy (a form of government that can only take root in a stable imperialist country capable of maintaining a relative harmony of interest between the political representatives of Labour and Capital).

To workers who themselves are not consciously restorationist they offer as an alternative to their felt political oppression the chimera of Parliamentary Democracy, and the societies that can maintain it, as the means for realising political emancipation.

In the face of Stalinist totalitarian tyranny revolutionary Marxists must ceaselessly fight against the anti-working class programme and tactics of the Social Democratic intelligentsia. However in certain situations, and on specific issues, revolutionaries would find themselves (as an independent force) fighting alongside such groups as KOR to defend the rights of workers and militants to organise free of bureaucratic repression. In the wake of the 1976 riots, for example, communists would have found themselves alongside the KOR militants who were opposing the imprisonment of workers involved in the riots.

(iii) The consciously restorationist Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN).

The KPN explicitly aims at redrawing Poland's borders so that they correspond with those achieved after the first imperialist war. It explicitly aims at re-establishing capitalist property forms in Poland. In Poland after World War one, only 69.2% of the population were Polish (figures for 1921). The Poland of Pilsudski savagely oppressed the sizeable minority of 4.5 million Ukrainians who found themselves under Polish rule. Whatever the claims of the KPN leaders, a capitalist Poland would inevitably become a semi-colony of Western Capitalism. The effects of the crippling debts that the bureaucrats have taken on and the attacks on workers' living standards to pay for them, are just a hint of the future open to Poland and the masses should the KPN leaders successfully carry through their counter-revolution and deliver up Poland to the imperialists.

Revolutionary Marxists have no solidarity with these conscious agents of counter-revolution and would give them no defence. For the Polish workers movement, in the name of democracy, to have defended the KPN leaders as "political prisoners" along with the organisers of the trade unions arrested by the Stalinists, reflects the very real presence of counter-revolutionary forces within the Solidarnosc movement.

The drive for compromise and 'national agreement' advocated by the Walesa wing and those around KOR served to strengthen the hold of the KPN over sections of Solidarnosc's rank and file. They were able to pose as intransigent opponents of the bureaucratic tyranny without their reactionary and anti-working class programme being challenged by a revolutionary internationalist party.

(iv) The Solidarnosc 'Radicals'

We see no evidence that those elements who opposed Walesa's collaborationist leadership - Jurczyk, Rulewski, Gwiazda - differed qualitatively from Walesa in programme or perspective. All were committed to a programme that intended to prise control of the economy from the Stalinists and their chain of appointed managers, to take over local government through Solidarnosc candidates in 'free elections', and to guarantee the security interests of the Soviet bureaucracy in Poland while leaving the central repressive state apparatus intact. They differed with Walesa, and with each other, only over the pace at which to carry out this project. The inevitable refusal of the Stalinists to negotiate such an erosion of their power forced these elements into empty demagogic conflict with the regime. By early December (as evidenced by the Radom Tapes) Rulewski was urging that Solidarnosc itself form a Provisional Government of National Unity, given the failure of Jaruzelski-Walesa-Glomp negotiations to reach a National Agreement. Knowing the depths of popular support for Solidarnosc against the Stalinists, the National Commission in

Gdansk immediately prior to Jaruzelski's coup called for a referendum to back their claim for power sharing with the Church and, at least temporarily, with the Stalinists too. Rulewski's formula as announced in the Radom tapes was for power to be shared until 1984 elections on the basis of 30% to the Stalinists, 25% to the peasants organisations, 25% to Solidarnosc with the rest going to lay Catholic organisations and the counter-revolutionary KPN.

But for all the demagogic froth of Rulewski there is no evidence that he was urging, or that Solidarnosc was preparing an armed insurrection on the eve of Jaruzelski's coup. Jaruzelski had broken off negotiations with Glomp and Walesa. He was visibly preparing an offensive against Solidarnosc. But still "the radicals" expected a referendum to defend them and their notion of power sharing against the Stalinists. True, by December, leading militants were urging the formation of workers' defence guards (Bujak and Palka, for example). This call was strengthened after riot police broke up the Warsaw fire academy student sit-in in early December. But the sporadic nature of the resistance to Martial Law underlines that there were no concrete and developed plans for Solidarnosc to organise to seize political power from the Stalinist bureaucracy on the part of Walesa's famed 'Radical' opponents in the Solidarnosc leadership. The political programme of these figures underlines that they were not qualitatively different in political character to the dominant Walesa tendency on the Praesidium.

(v) The Solidarnosc Left

There is evidence that a left current existed within Solidarnosc. This current was tied, however, to a utopian reformist programme for the working class. One well-known representative of a left current in Poland is Henryk Schlawjfer. A sympathiser of the USec, as early as 1977 he produced a materialist analysis of the Polish

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economy and the Stalinist party bureaucracy. His conclusions:- because the origin of the economic crisis lay in the bureaucratic planning which was grounded in the material interests of the bureaucracy and its base, the only solution to the economic crisis for the working class was to be found in social planning by the producers themselves. This was possible through the creation of council structures such as those that the working class had in the past repeatedly begun to build. The defeats of the working class could ultimately be traced back to the lack of centralisation of the councils.

After the Gdansk strikes and the establishment of the trade union organisation Solidarnosc, the "Forum August '80" was founded. This was made up of intellectuals and Solidarnosc militants, and Schljajfer worked with it. In November 1980 this forum published a document that dealt programmatically with the founding of workers' councils in Poland. In this they criticised the defensive conception of Solidarnosc and argued that at best they left the bureaucratic planning and administration to independent specialists. Against this they posed an all-embracing programme for how the planning and administration must be taken over by workers' councils. In this regard they started with the construction of a vertical system of self-management organs which would lead up to a second chamber of the Sejm. Kowalewski, an influential member of Solidarnosc's Lodz region took over this programme and brought it, as a delegate, to the October 1981 Solidarnosc congress. He was not able to carry through the essential content of this (such as centralisation and opposition to removal of price controls) against the Solidarnosc leadership's conception which basically was for decentralisation and National Agreement.

When in the course of the confrontation General Jaruzelski threatened martial law, the regional congress in Lodz agreed to the immediate institution of an Assembly of Councils and, in the case of martial law, for an active strike in which control of pro-

duction would be taken over and for this they wanted the support of the national commission of Solidarnosc. Martial law was imposed before this commission could be carried out.

To this extent these lefts differentiated themselves positively from the clerical and reformist leadership of Solidarnosc. However, they did not break with reformism. Their concept of a second chamber contained the illusion that one could achieve economic power without the destruction of the bureaucratic state apparatus. Although they rejected a 'National Agreement', in their demand for a second chamber they began from a position of power sharing. The power was to be shared by it - (a) with the bureaucracy, without the destruction of their apparatus of repression (which takes a bourgeois form); or (b) the theoretical but unrealistic variant - with freely elected national and local parliaments in which the Catholic clergy would have a decisive influence. In this they capitulated before the clerical influence in the movement. It is not accidental that the aim of building a revolutionary party was robbed of any real revolutionary content for these lefts; since they held a position, effectively equivalent to that of USec's, of building such a party in the form of an organised group that builds itself together with other existing tendencies on a programme of minimum demands. And they still held until the putsch, that a reform of the party was possible.

7. THE SELF-MANAGEMENT MOVEMENT

Against Walesa, Kuron and Rulewski, tendencies did emerge within Solidarnosc that, albeit in a highly contradictory manner, reflected the pressure for and possibility of the direct seizure of power by the working class.

Such a tendency is visible within the self-management movement. On the 14/15th April 1981 representatives of 17 key factories met on the initiative

of the Warski (Szczecin) and Lenin (Gdansk) shipyards to establish the 'network' (siec) and discuss the issue of self-management. By August 1981 over 3,000 plants were organised to struggle for self-management.

What did the self-management movement signify?

a) In the face of economic paralysis and desperate shortages it reflected the workers' distrust of the central planning apparatus and its appointees in the plants and their ability to overcome the mounting material problems confronting the working class. This is reflected in the initial demands of the Siec which focused on the rights of workers to elect and dismiss their directors. This constituted a direct challenge to the central bureaucracy's nomenklatura system of appointments.

b) It reflected a conviction amongst large sections of workers that they alone had the knowledge, experience and interest to manage the plants in conjunction with their chosen experts. It constituted a challenge to the corruption of the central bureaucracy's representatives in the plants.

c) It reflected also a mounting distrust amongst the ranks of Solidarnosc with the performance and achievements of the Solidarnosc leadership in negotiation and partnership with the central bureaucratic apparatus. This was to become particularly widespread amongst Polish workers in the autumn of 1981.

To this extent the movement reflected a struggle by the working class to emancipate itself and destroy the political power of the bureaucracy. However, there was more to the self-management movement than this. Over thirty years of Stalinist planning has served to discredit the very idea of centralised planning in the eyes of large numbers of Polish workers. A significant layer of managerial and technical intellectuals openly advocated a programme of dramatic decentralisation and the introduction of market mechanisms as a means of securing its own emancipation from the bureaucracy and the central planning mechanisms.

Taken together this explains the widespread belief in the plants that the workers could solve their immediate and historic problems through a programme of decentralisation, of breaking up of the central plan, and through local plant based initiatives.

Deep-rooted Polish nationalism served to strengthen the illusion amongst layers of worker militants that "all Poles" had a common interest in securing a "rational" and "expert" administration as opposed to the irrational, corrupt and inept nomenklatura system of key managerial appointments. The movement always contained within it the potential of the workers lending their muscle and self sacrifice to the attempt of the technical and managerial intelligentsia to settle its own accounts with the central state appointees in the enterprises.

In its own particular way the self-management movement also gave expression to a militant and bigplant centred tendency towards a strategy for crippling the central bureaucracy through achieving power in the plants and using the strength of the working class to declare the autonomy of the plants from the central bureaucracy. As with all the other reformist strategies this left the central armed power of the bureaucratic state intact and utilisable the moment the central apparatus resolved to break the independent organisations of the working class.

As a result the potential always existed for this movement to become the vehicle for the realisation of a programme counterposed to the programme of proletarian political revolution unless revolutionary communists intervened and secured leadership within the struggles of the Polish workers. To the objectively restorationist social-democratic and Catholic intelligentsia it was a means of securing a decentralisation of the economy on the road to strengthening the laws and norms of the market economy. It was, for them, a means of tying the working class to "participation" in a restorationist programme.

But the movement, throughout, retained a contradictory character in that, at key moments in particular, it also contained the potential for the formation of workers' committees in the plants, for co-ordinating them in workers' council bodies struggling to take the statified economy into the hands of the working class - to the extent that it became led and directed by a revolutionary Trotskyist party.

The logic of self-management or workers' control which ignores the question of political power and control over the state is necessarily a concession to "market socialism" and decentralisation. Syndicalism in a degenerate workers state leads to a strengthening of the operation of the Law of Value and a disarming of the workers against Titoite or Kadarite wings of the bureaucracy.

The Network and its experts resisted calls to put themselves at the head of a factory council movement embracing all the plants in Poland. They exhibited a marked tendency to big-plant chauvinism and independence from the struggles of the smaller plants. Alongside the struggle to elect and dismiss their directors they advocated a programme of economic decentralisation and the breaking up of effective central planning. Their proposals made no mention of the plan and called for each of their enterprises to be "accorded all rights to the property apportioned to it".

The Solidarnosc programme drawn up for the conference with the advice of the network experts explicitly advocates self-management as a means of decentralising the economy and strengthening market forces.

"The central organs of economic administration should not limit enterprise activity or prescribe suppliers or buyers for its output. Enterprises shall be able to operate freely on the internal market, except in fields where a license is compulsory. International trade must be accessible to all enterprises."
and

"It is necessary to use surplus stocks of materials, machinery and

plant making it easier for them to be sold abroad and selling them to private enterprises within Poland. Present restrictions on the activity of such enterprises must be lifted."

In tendency this is a programme for the dismantling of the planned economy opening the road to the accumulation of private capital in Poland, and through the destruction of the monopoly of foreign trade open the floodgates to foreign capital.

On the other hand elements within Solidarnosc were attempting to develop the movement as a means of securing a degree of political power for the proletariat organised in workers' councils. The Lodz region of Solidarnosc - and those calling themselves the "Lublin group" - organised an October delegate conference which established a national federation of self-management bodies (KZNKPS) which set itself the task of organising a "national Congress of Workers Councils". They did so in opposition to Solidarnosc and the Network.

Around Schljajfer (who advised the Upper Silesia self-management movement) and Kowalewski of Lodz there were distinct elements within this movement who opposed the programme of introducing a market economy, who criticised the model of parliamentary democracy and advocated a struggle to take political power into the hands of the working class via the self-management councils. In the months before the coup the Lodz branch of Solidarnosc was advocating an "active strike" as a means of paralysing the bureaucracy and taking production and distribution into the hands of the masses. They advocated the formation of workers' defence guards to "defend industrial enterprises and distribution networks during the active strike". Their political programme envisaged a network of workers' councils linked together in a "second chamber" alongside a freely elected Sejm. Jaruzelski's coup prevented the convening of the National Congress of Workers' Councils.

The tasks of revolutionaries in relation to the self-management movement at those points at which it embraced and represented workers pitted against the bureaucracy at plant level were:

1) To struggle against all those who wished to develop the committees EITHER into participatory administrative bodies in plants and regions OR into vehicles for strengthening the operation of the law of value. Their task was to build FACTORY COMMITTEES elected by the workers themselves and formed as ORGANS OF STRUGGLE against the local and national bureaucracy. We would oppose them taking on any managerial function until the power of the central bureaucracy was destroyed.

2) To seek to extend those committees into a national workers council which set itself the explicit task of seizing political power for the working class. While we would work alongside all those militants who tried to build such a movement we oppose the programme of establishing a National Workers Council to rule alongside and in conjunction with a parliamentary based government.

However, the programme of the self-management movement and the domination of the experts within it meant that such an approach within the self-management bodies would only be applicable episodically. Therefore, within the plants revolutionaries would have to fight for independent factory committees - organs of struggle - at all times that the self-management bodies became dominated by integrationist or restorationist tendencies.

8. Taken as a contradictory whole, the dominant tendencies in Solidarnosc revealed the following characteristics.

a) Subordination to the Catholic hierarchy which fought to implement its own anti-working class programme throughout the crisis, on the backs of the workers' movement in collaboration with the Stalinists.

b) Illusions in the bankrupt policies of Polish nationalism.

We do not deny that Poland is nationally oppressed. But Polish nationalism itself, since the October Revolution of 1917 in particular, as an ideology and programme, binds and gags the working class, opposing any independent struggle for its own interests. Since 1917 when Poland achieved its independence because of the revolutionary workers in Russia, anti-Russian chauvinism in Poland has meant that Polish nationalism's content has been formed in counterposition to the October Revolution itself. Hence the character of Polish nationalist ideology has to be defined as overwhelmingly reactionary because:-
(i) It binds the working class to the capitalist, restorationist, clerical and even Stalinist elements in its society, in the name of the unity of the Polish nation.

(ii) Its historically stamped anti-Sovietism opens the road for restorationist illusions in Western Democracy and in the capitalist market economy among broad sections of the masses themselves.

There can be no independence for the Polish working class without the active assistance of the workers of the other states at present in the political grip of Stalinism. Only as the spearhead of an international political revolution against Stalinism could the Polish Workers' Political Revolution guarantee its own survival. But the anti-Soviet, Catholic totems of the Polish nationalists necessarily drive a wedge between the workers of Poland and the workers of the USSR - a wedge that can be exploited by the Stalinists of the Kremlin should they decide to use Warsaw Pact forces to finish the job for Jaruzelski.

c) It has a programme for the Polish economy that could strengthen the forces of capitalist restoration. Born of the collapse of the Polish plan and the continued existence of small peasant agriculture, the predominant tendency in the Solidarnosc leadership was towards the decentralisation of the economy, the strengthening of market mechanisms and the complete subordination of agricultural production to the law

of value. While elements of this programme could have been, and still can be, carried out alongside sections of the Polish bureaucracy (who look enviously at the market mechanisms of Hungary and Yugoslavia) it would inevitably strengthen the tendency towards, and the forces fighting for, the complete smashing of the planned property relations of Poland.

Our programme recognises that the centralised command planning of the Stalinists can never realise the POTENTIAL of the socialised property forms and has, through its shortcomings, necessarily blackened the very name of planning to the workers of Poland. We fight for a plan centralised in the hands of the organs of the working class itself. But behind the Solidarnosc leaders' talk of self-management - which itself reflects the workers' basic striving for control - lies a programme of 'market socialism' which would firstly introduce the Catholic Church, with its own anti-working class anti-socialist priorities, into the central 'social council' of the economy. Secondly it would, through decentralisation, prevent the Polish workers, AS A CLASS, from managing their economy, strengthen the law of the market and necessarily drive down the living standards of the Polish workers. The Solidarnosc leaders, no less than the Stalinists, accept that their programme for economic 'reform' will mean unemployment for Polish workers.

(d) Crippling illusions in Western Imperialism.

While Poland is politically oppressed by the Kremlin bureaucracy, the 1970s saw it becoming ever more economically exploited by the Western banks and governments, albeit as a result of the policies of the Stalinists themselves. While ultimately aiming to prise Poland loose from Comecon on the road to restoring Capitalist property relations, the Imperialists therefore had no interest in a victorious political revolution of the Polish working class. A victorious working class Political Revolution would jeopardise the debt and interest payments upon which the imperialists' exploitation of Poland

rests. Polish nationalism has served to blind large sections of the Polish workers to the root of much of their present miseries in the rapacious demands of the financial institutions of imperialism.

(e) Its strategy for advance left the central levers of Stalinist power intact, but hoped instead to encroach on that power through its points of least resistance. The Solidarnosc strategy for challenging managerial power in individual factories, for standing their own candidates against discredited party candidates in local elections and, eventually, a referendum appeal for power sharing over the heads of the Stalinists, AT EVERY STAGE avoided a direct challenge to the armed central power of the bureaucracy. As a result, the militia, the Internal Defence Force (WOW), the riot commandos (ZOMO police, used to break the Fire Academy sit-in) and the military high command remained intact to choose their moment to strike back. Once again the Polish workers learned the bloody lesson that Stalinism can only be overthrown by a movement that prepares an organised armed insurrection against its central political apparatus in order to pass power into the hands of the workers themselves.

9. In search of an illusory national agreement with the Stalinists and the Church, the Solidarnosc leaders demobilised the workers' organisations. They held off strikes and, with Glempl's blessing, appealed for calm. The Stalinists showed their gratitude with a bloody coup, with a declaration of war against the Polish workers.

But just because the programme of the Solidarnosc leadership could not lead the 10 million Polish workers who looked to them for final victory, it does not mean that we do not solidarise with Solidarnosc, as a movement of the Polish workers against their bureaucratic oppressors. The existence of a mass base, often raising demands in conflict with the aims and intentions of the Solidarnosc leaders, clearly reveals that, despite its leadership, Solidarnosc was not a counter-

revolutionary organisation per se. It was, and if it survives, could well continue to be, a dynamic movement, rife with contradictions but possessing the potential of resolving them in the direction of political revolution, given the intervention within it of revolutionaries.

As is usually the case when workers enter into struggles against their capitalist exploiters or their bureaucratic oppressors, they do so without a ready-made and fully-formed revolutionary leadership. The task of revolutionaries in Poland was to struggle within the mobilisations of the Polish masses:-

(a) to support and extend those mobilisations against the bureaucracy to their victorious conclusions, and
(b) in so doing, popularise the international programme of Trotskyism, fight to build the nucleus of a new revolutionary communist Party that could expose in practice, in the school of struggle itself, the bankruptcy of the programme and tactics of the clerics, nationalists and restorationists who took strength (as they did in Hungary in 1956) from the first shocks of the political-revolutionary crisis in Poland.

The central problem facing the workers of Poland is that such a revolutionary leadership was not built. Revolutionaries were not able to re-articulate the emancipatory programme of Marxism to the working class which was prepared to sacrifice and struggle but was at the same time blinded by Stalinist oppression and clerical obscurantism to the potential of workers' power, of a workers-managed planned economy, of SOCIALISM as the road to the equality and the workers' democracy that millions of Polish workers fought for.

10. The August 1980 crisis paralysed the Stalinist bureaucracy. Significant sections of the party, approximately one-third, joined Solidarnosc.

The Party (PUWP) is the key mobilising agent by which the central Stalinist bureaucracy ensures that its wishes are carried out at every level of the economic and political apparatus, and in every social organisation. For that reason it must remain, essentially, the property of the central bureaucracy itself. But in order to perform its function it has to organise layers of society outside of, and politically oppressed by the central bureaucracy. Hence any upheaval in the Stalinist states must necessarily send shockwaves throughout the Party itself serving to weaken the mobilising potential of the party leadership.

Successive Stalinist regimes in Poland as elsewhere have deliberately nurtured a layer of materially privileged labour aristocrats as an element of the base of the Bonapartist bureaucracy inside their specific working class. For the Gierek regime this had been most noticeably the miners and steel workers of Silesia. The defection of this group of workers to the ranks of Solidarnosc was decisive both in undermining a vital base of support for the Stalinist regime, and forcing a compromise recognition of Solidarnosc.

This was even reflected in a movement at the base of the Party for greater internal democracy, for the right to horizontal communication between Party units, and for contested elections of Party posts. While this movement represented a destabilisation of bureaucratic rule, it could never have become the means for replacing it. The Stalinist party is, by its nature, irreformable; it can only exist as the agency of the central Stalinist bureaucracy. If it ceases to perform this function it will be purged or even replaced as the immediate instrument of bureaucratic rule.

In the face of the Gdansk strike wave the central bureaucracy itself divided over the tactics for preserving their caste rule. A significant layer of that bureaucracy - security chief Kania for example - was prepared to jettison the discredited Gierek leadership and negotiate a compromise recognition of Solidarnosc. Only a

small minority of the central bureaucracy attempted to resist this tactical retreat by the Stalinist core of the party.

But the party itself fragmented under the impact of the developing crisis. There were significant defections from its ranks. At the last central Committee before the coup it was reported that PUWP, which was 3 million strong in August 1980, had in "recent months" lost 244,000 members, expelled 180,000 and accepted only 30,000 new recruits. Factory branches of the PUWP joined Solidarnosc wholesale. In the face of the Polish workers' movement the party withered as an effective instrument of bureaucratic rule.

11. The hardline defenders of bureaucratic rule - Jaruzelski for example - conducted a concerted strategy of attrition against Solidarnosc and the softs and compromisers in their own ranks. They did this by allowing economic chaos and food shortages to demoralise significant sections of workers and the population at large. It was hoped also to swing layers of workers behind the administration through blaming Solidarnosc for privations and supply breakdown.

They also provoked conflict with the Solidarnosc leaders so as to play on, expose and exacerbate their divisions and demagogy. In concert with Glomp, Jaruzelski was prepared to open negotiations with Solidarnosc on power sharing in exchange for their calling off strikes. Hard line anti-Solidarnosc bureaucratic militant Olzowski was the first to offer the carrot of a new National Front to the Walesa-Glomp axis.

Having lured Solidarnosc's leadership into negotiations, Jaruzelski proceeded to play on the divisions in Solidarnosc's ranks. While guaranteeing peasant property (to a doubtless unbelieving peasantry), promising electoral reform and attaching councils of "experts" to the Cabinet, Jaruzelski was not prepared to concede on a union veto on Stalinist representatives in the new National Front or on free

elections. Instead the Stalinists braced themselves to apply military force against Solidarnosc.

The late November break-up of the negotiations, the police raid on Kuron's meeting to establish his social democratic clubs, the late November Central Committee meeting at which Jaruzelski announced his intention to take out powers to ban strikes and the early December raid on the Fire Fighters Academy; all signified a stiffening of the Stalinists' resolve to break Solidarnosc. They represented a dress rehearsal for Jaruzelski's coup of December 13th.

Jaruzelski's provocation elicited squeals of protest from Walesa. "there is no national agreement, for there is no-one to agree with. The other side cheats", and at Radom: "They've been thumbing their noses at us from the very beginning", and at the last Gdansk National Commission: "The policy of small steps has produced no results". It placed him under great pressure within the Solidarnosc leadership, which he tried to placate with the

promises bugged by the Stalinists in their 'Radom Tapes': "Confrontation is inevitable, and will take place. I wanted to arrive at it by a natural way, when all sections of society were with us. But I have been mistaken in my calculations because I thought that we would be able to wait until the Sejm and councils would collapse by themselves. It has been proved that we can have no success with this tactic".

However, Jaruzelski knew that Solidarnosc was not prepared to resist a coup, that its leaders were long on words and short on preparations, and that Glomp would be continuing - until the very eve of the coup - to keep alive the hope of arbitration in negotiations between the two sides.

The army and security forces had been consciously groomed for a coup d'etat. The dramatic break up of the cohesion of the party made it imperative that the bureaucracy prepare to defend itself through the hated armed squads who themselves also had everything to lose from a triumphant

workers' political revolution - the militia, WOW, ZOMO, etc. Not only were these forces politically reliable, but the army could appear as an arbiter, as a patriotic force, as an agent of national salvation. The beleaguered Stalinists prepared to raise a new military dictator to power.

The intended Bonaparte - Jaruzelski - replaced Kania as party chief in October. In the same month "operational" units of troops were sent into the Polish country to supposedly deal with local problems and food bottlenecks. They were withdrawn at the end of November in order to report to the Council of Ministers!! The army had been practised, ZOMO was rehearsed to carry through the 18TH BRUMAIRE of General Jaruzelski.

12. The coup was carried through with bloody precision. Crack troops were sent to strategic Solidarnosc strongholds - the Lenin shipyards, Nowa Huta, the Ursus works; Katowice and key Silesian mines. Most Solidarnosc leaders and noted activists were immediately interned. While thousands of PUWP members threw in their party cards the Stalinists prepared for a ruthless purge of the party (by report members of the Politburo were even arrested).

The workers met the coup with heroic resistance even though their leaders had been rounded up. But the resistance was not sufficient to counter the tactics of Jaruzelski. The Stalinists hoped to use only reliable special units to attack the workers. They wanted to use the 350,000 strong army, half of which is comprised of the conscripted sons of workers and peasants, only as back up and for patrol and supervisory duties.

Only methods of struggle that enabled the workers to win over the conscripts and their arms could have smashed Jaruzelski's coup.

The Catholic hierarchy openly counselled passivity in the face of the coup. While refusing to go so far as to condone the crackdown, they offered to calm the population in exchange for the

release of detainees. And the Solidarnosc leaders counselled tactics that prevented the workers making an open bid to win over sections of Jaruzelski's Army Reserve. The bloody repression of Poznam in 1956 and the Baltic coast in 1976 has understandably strengthened a tendency amongst Polish workers to keep off the streets and to use the occupation and the 'go-slow' in the factory as the most effective means of resistance and defence from Stalinism's bloody militias. Yet, as a tactic this isolates the more militant workers behind their factory gates, at the mercy of the crack troops, while the mass of the workers are consigned to passive resistance.

Only by pulling the vast majority of the working class onto the streets in demonstrations - defended by a workers militia - can the workers ever prove to the conscript army that there is an alternative superior armed force with which to throw in their lot.

Only mass organised defiance can break the morale of the army and therefore save the lives of the militants who otherwise are left alone to face the specialised paratroops and commandos as they choose their time to force their way into factories, docks and mines. That is why we say that at the time of the coup, and after, the workers' leaders should have fought for:

(i) An indefinite general strike of the entire working class to break the military government. To conduct that strike, councils of the representatives of the workers and councils of poor peasants' delegates must be formed under the lead of a democratic central workers' council. This was the road of struggle along which the heroic Hungarian workers started in 1956.

(ii) In the face of the Stalinist thug squads the workers must defend themselves and their organisations. They must build their own armed squads to protect their strikes and demonstrations, and seek to win over the conscript ranks of the army together with their arms. For Workers' Defence, For a Workers' Militia. Only an armed insurrection carried out by the militia of the workers' and poor peasants' councils and led by a Revolutionary communist party, and insurrection which won to

its side the conscript ranks of the army, could destroy the central stalinist bureaucracy and ensure the political rule of the Polish workers in alliance with the poor peasantry.

We oppose the slogan of "Solidarnosc to Power" as it was raised - for example by the IKL in Austria and the FIT - at the time of Jaruzelski's coup. **FIRSTLY** Solidarnosc was not organised as a Soviet at local or national level - our task was to struggle for the formation of Soviets and a workers' militia and a government responsible to them. As such the demand is not analogous to the slogan "all power to the Soviets".

SECONDLY the programme of the Solidarnosc leadership was a programme which, if implemented, would have strengthened the forces of capitalist restoration in Poland. We do not advocate that restorationists take political power from the Stalinists or that the working class should struggle to make this possible. The introduction of the programme of Walesa, Kuron etc. would not represent a gain for the proletariat but would have meant the implementation of measures directly counterposed to the programme of political revolution and the transition to socialism.

(iii) For workers' control of production. All decisions on the length of the working day, on the pace of work and on what is to be produced to be taken by factory committees and the workers' councils. Revise the plan from top to bottom in the hands of the Central Workers Council! Take the planned economy under the direct control of the workers themselves. State property in Poland must be defended as the means by which the workers can organise production consciously to meet their needs and the needs of the poor peasants and not the privileges of the bureaucrats or the rapacious demands of the Western banks.

(iv) Distribution and allocation of goods should be taken into the hands of the workers and poor peasant cooperatives. In order to overcome the anachronistic system of small peasant farming, a triumphant Political Revolution of workers in alliance with poor farmers would commit itself to a programme of (a) taxation of the rich peasants, (b) investment in and production of tractors, fertilisers and agricultural machinery to be done in democratic co-operation and consultation with representatives of poor peasant committees, (c) cancellation of the debts of the poor peasants, (d) cheap credit, improved education and other social services - e.g. adequate guaranteed retirement pensions at 55 and free public water supply to provide the material base for, and win the mass of the poorer peasants to cooperative farming as part of a planned economy.

Such a programme will mean a struggle to mobilise Poland's poor farmers in ever larger groupings of private plots, in voluntary co-operative sharing of land and of increased supplies of machinery, fertilisers, seeds, credit and transport within the guidelines of a central plan. The programme of revolutionary communism (Trotskyism) opposes the forced collectivisation of the poor peasantry of Poland. We stand for the persuasion of the poor peasants of Poland by the workers in a regenerated Polish workers state and by the revolutionary working class internationally, that private farming is historically obsolete. This means patiently winning the poor peasants through the transitional step of co-operative farming as part of a planned economy, to collectivisation.

(v) Alongside the revision of the planning mechanism and its goals in the hands of the workers, all credit and trade relations with foreign states - in the West and in Comecon - must be open to workers' inspection.

Renounce the debts to the western banks. End the economic exploitation of the Polish workers by imperialism. Only by renouncing the debts that have been piled up by the bureaucrats can the Polish workers free themselves and the poor peasants from the domination of the banks and finance houses of Western Europe and the USA.

(vi) For the complete separation of Church and State. The Stalinists have increasingly conceded control of family life, of women's rights, of education to the Catholic church. But that power will be used to strengthen the reactionary mission of the Catholic hierarchy to destroy the struggle of the workers for their own emancipation, to further enslave women and bolster and extend capitalism on a world scale.

(vii) Mobilise Poland's working class and poor-peasant women for political revolution against Jaruzelski's dictatorship. Women have been one of the worst victims of the degeneration of the workers' state in Russia, presided over by the Stalinist bureaucracy. When workers states, modelled on Russia, were imposed by force in the counter-revolutionary expansion of Stalinist rule into Europe after the war, the counter revolution that Stalinist rule represented for women's emancipation was exported there too. This was compounded in Poland by the massive popular power of the Catholic church. To rally the hatred of Poland's working class and poor-peasant women in political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy, a fight must be waged in the councils of workers and peasants for

a) the full right to work for all women
b) equal pay and access to jobs and training and education; c) free and legal contraception and abortion on demand; d) free and legal divorce at the request of one partner; e) for an immediate national crash programme of nursery building so as to make nurseries available to working class and small-farm women at times that suit them, and for workers and peasants control of already existing nursery facilities; f) fully paid maternity and paternity leave; g) for the fullest possible involvement and representation

of women in the unions and councils of workers and poor farmers.

(viii) Take Poland out of the Warsaw Pact. The armed might of the Kremlin has regularly reminded the Polish masses of the armed might they have at their disposal to intimidate and, if needs be, directly smash, the workers of Poland.

The Warsaw Pact is the direct agent of the counter-revolutionary policies of the Kremlin bureaucracy. Its command structure embraces and coordinates all the national Stalinist armies in Eastern Europe. For that reason the USSR was actively involved in the preparations for the coup and plays its part in the administration of the crackdown. Polish workers should refuse to subordinate their armed forces to the Kremlin oligarchy. But they will neither realise their emancipation, nor defend themselves, under the banner of clericalism and Polish nationalism. The abolition of capitalism in the USSR, as in Poland, represents an historic gain without which the working class could not hope to plan production in its own hands and for its own purpose. That gain is at present in the hands of a bureaucracy but it nonetheless remains a gain that workers everywhere must defend against the drive of imperialism to destroy it.

An independent Workers'-Council-Poland should therefore guarantee that it will defend the USSR and the other workers' states unconditionally against capitalist attack and restoration. In this way the Polish workers can hope to win real support amongst Soviet workers and soldiers and thus serve to initiate a struggle for political revolution throughout the states ruled by Stalinism.

In 1956 Soviet troops wavered in the face of the stark contrast between the lies of their bureaucratic oppressors and the aspirations of fraternising Hungarian workers. The only road to stopping the armies of Brezhnev, Husak and Hoenecker is to confront them with a programme of genuine proletarian internationalism, to win their troops to international political revolution. However, in the

face of intransigent military oppression from Warsaw Pact forces, the Polish workers have every right to take all necessary steps to defend themselves.

In these conditions underground and illegal work is a necessary method.

(ix) Since Jaruzelski's coup d'etat serious differences of tactics have emerged amongst leading members of Solidarnosc. Bujak, for example, has developed a tactical line of low profile protest in the hope of encouraging the Stalinists to gradually relax repression against Solidarnosc activists and to permit limited forms of independent organisation. He has openly countenanced a deal with the bureaucracy guaranteeing restraint and an abstention from political action on the part of Solidarnosc.

All such tactics ignore a crucial fact of political life in bureaucratically degenerate workers' states. The bureaucracies will only tolerate the self-organisation of the working class to the extent that they are incapable of mobilising the apparatus of oppression to crush the independently organised working class. Even if the right of self-organisation is officially recognised it will remain in existence only until that point that the proletariat seizes political power OR the bureaucracy is able to destroy the independent organisations of the working class. This means that the working class cannot win rights from the bureaucracy by exemplary self-restraint nor can it hope to preserve the right to self-organisation through a non-aggression pact with the bureaucracy.

Such a strategy will necessarily serve to demoralise the working class and serve to strengthen the tendency towards terrorism and adventurism on the part of frustrated working class youth.

Kuron, on the other hand, has openly declared "We have to acknowledge that violence only retreats in front of violence" (Trygodnik Mazowze No. 13, 12/5/82) and has called for agitation amongst the soldiers and police. Revolutionary Marxists recognise that the Polish workers must organise for an uprising and must seek to break the morale and loyalty of the troops and police. But, against Kuron, we argue

that the purpose of the uprising of the Polish workers must be to take political power into the hands of workers' councils backed by a workers' militia not a government of national compromise and agreement that will inaugurate a programme for the restoration of capitalism and the subordination of Poland to the EEC. Neither is our call to organise for a proletarian political revolution dependent on the refusal of the bureaucracy to open negotiations with Solidarnosc. Whether or not Jaruzelski opens negotiations the task of the Polish workers remains the political revolution to secure their political emancipation.

(x) It is a matter of life and death for the Polish workers that a Party is formed to fight for this programme, a Trotskyist revolutionary communist party. Of necessity it would struggle to build the nuclei of fraternal parties in the other degenerate workers states as a part of a rebuilt Revolutionary Communist International in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky.

13. RURAL SOLIDARNOSC mobilised both the oppressed poor peasants and the richer rural farmers against the regime. In many areas it was the richer farmers and the local priests who gave the leadership to the movement. TO THAT EXTENT it was a movement that aimed at strengthening and extending private property rights in the countryside, breaking up state farms and strengthening the role of the church in social and political life. Within the mobilisations of the peasants in Poland revolutionary Marxists would fight for the formation of poor peasant committees with a national delegate council and representatives in the central and regional workers' councils.

We fight for unions of rural proletarians linked to the unions of workers. We fight therefore to drive the rich farmers out of rural solidarnosc and constitute it on the basis of poor peasant committees as a movement pledged to fight alongside the working class for co-operative organisation of agricultural production in the hands of poor peasant committees.

14. The international organisations claiming to represent continuity with Trotsky's Fourth International have yet again demonstrated their bankruptcy when it comes to presenting a strategy for political revolution. The two largest claimants to Trotsky's mantle, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI) and the Fourth International (International Committee) - FIIC - offer the spectacle of opportunist grovelling before the existing leadership and consciousness of the Polish workers. On the other hand the International Spartacist Tendency (IST) demonstrate the truth of Trotsky's dictum on sectarianism - opportunism in fear of itself. In this case, their fear of the "impurities" of Polish workers' consciousness drives the IST into support for Jaruzelski and the Stalinist bureaucracy.

15. In various declarations the USFI failed to raise the question of revolution against the bureaucracy. It has refrained from emphasising the necessity of a revolutionary leadership, except as an organisational grouping which builds itself together with existing tendencies around 'minimal demands'. The USFI oriented to the workers councils, which were built in the struggle around workers' control, with the dead-end schemes of 'self-management' and an 'alternative plan' from Solidarnosc. The USFI robs Trotsky's programme of soviets of its revolutionary content in that the USFI opens up the perspective of a reformist strategy of power-sharing, with the demand "free election of a second chamber of the Sejm by all the self-management bodies". This naive utopian scheme is justified in terms of the need to create "dual power bodies". The Stalinists' first chamber would then "see its area of responsibility correspondingly reduced". Instead of challenging the programme of the Solidarnosc leadership and pushing forward the first attempts at council-organisation towards building organs of struggle in all social questions up to and including that of political power and control of the state - and so transform them into real soviets - the USFI enabled the Solidarnosc leadership, with its reformist ideas, to integrate

the council organisations into the bureaucratic state apparatus. Decentralisation and market mechanisms are thus seen as a more realistic variety of ideas among reformists than the centralisation of self-management organs and the free election of a second chamber.

This lifeless schema, a farcical parody of February 1917, distorts the reality of actual soviets - presenting them more as organs of dual power than as organs of struggle or of insurrection - the power of the working class.

The idea of "free elections" to the Sejm is rejected by the USFI not because of the parliamentary bourgeois democratic illusions it would foster, nor because such a parliament could be the summit of the forces of restoration, but because "this demand could lead to a confrontation with the bureaucracy on a terrain that is less favourable to the masses than that of self-management". The evolutionary logic of the USFI's position is more brazenly expressed by the SWP(US)'s David Frankel (Intercontinental Press 20/4/81). In quoting Joseph Hansen's definition of the political revolution as "the total series of reforms gained through militant struggle culminating in the transfer of power to the workers", Frankel suggests that this transference itself can only be discovered after the event: "It is only when the process is viewed as a whole, in its origin, its fundamental gains and final results, that it appears for what it really is, a revolution: an organic qualitative change in whatever structure is involved".

Since the qualitative leap (i.e. the point at which revolution has occurred) cannot be pinpointed in advance, it cannot, for the USFI, be programmatically prepared and argued for. Such a position, worthy of a Kautsky or an Otto Bauer, indicates the organic centrism of the USFI's leaders. It explains, but does not excuse, their failure to offer a programme for revolution.

16. The IC (recently FIIC, now ICRFI) in contrast seizes on the demand of Solidarnosc radicals for "free elections" and "plurality of parties", and develops this in a bourgeois-democratic direction. Are these elections to be "free" to bourgeois, White-Guard, restorationist forces? Is the plurality of parties to include parties openly organising for counter-revolution? For the ICRFI, "democracy" is given no class content. The class rule of the proletariat, its dictatorship, is quietly shuffled to one side. The ICRFI may write abstractions on paper, but political life will fill their empty democratic phrases with a real bourgeois content. If the USFI has its "second chamber" of the Sejm, then the ICRFI can go one better - a Constituent Assembly.

The ICRFI identifies the slogan for "free elections", which expresses in Poland the bourgeois-democratic illusions of the working class, with elections to a Constituent Assembly. Communists could relate to the illusions in "free elections" in a tactical manner, where for example forms of Soviets existed but where the workers nonetheless believed that it was possible to solve the question of power (of the bureaucracy) on that level (e.g. Hungary in 1956). In arguing against the illusions in "free elections" and showing the danger of a developing counter-revolution, communists would demand armed soviet control of the elections and oppose every disintegration of proletarian organisations or their disarmament. They focus thereby on the takeover of power through the soviets and on the basis of a soviet constitution. But a Constituent Assembly, which is the demand of the ICRFI puts off the questions of power and constitution from the working class and prepares the way of counter-revolution.

What is a Constituent Assembly? It is a body elected by universal suffrage which shall decide the constitutional basis of the state. It is potentially a revolutionary (bourgeois) democratic demand. Revolutionary communism makes use of this in capitalist countries where bourgeois democratic tasks (land question, national unity and independence, democratic rights) clash with the conditions of bourgeois, pre-bourgeois or imperialist rule. In such conditions revolutionary communists would pose a revolutionary answer to each of these issues, culminating in the transference of power to the proletariat. In a degenerate workers state the organ to which political power must be passed is an organ of proletarian democracy.

17. The International Spartacist Tendency, in terror of contamination by Cross-kissing workers (echoing their jibe of "mullah lovers" during the struggle against the Shah of Iran) have rushed headlong into the embrace of the Polish Stalinists. They accept, without question, Jaruzelski's claim that Solidarnosc was organising a counter-revolutionary rising. They warn the Polish workers against any resistance to martial law. These miserable pedants who can only imagine winning the working class to Trotskyism in the propagandists' schoolroom (i.e. in the absence of struggle) call for a return to Gierek's regime of the 1970s: "If the present crackdown restores something like the tenuous social equilibrium which existed in Poland before the Gdansk strikes last August (1980 - IWG) a tacit understanding that if the people left the government alone, the government would leave the people alone - conditions will be opened again for the crystallisation of a Leninist-Trotskyist party" (Workers Vanguard 18/12/81). They have blood on their hands. Safe at a distance from responsibility they content themselves with the call for the stamping out of political revolution, in order to allow for the "peace and quiet" (of a Stalinist dictatorship!) to allow them to build a "Leninist-Trotskyist" party.

18. Thus the self-proclaimed inheritors of Trotsky's banner drag it in the mud of syndicalism, reformism and stalinism. Against this monstrous defamation of Trotsky, we fight around the slogans:

* Down with Jaruzelski's military-Bonapartist regime!

* Power to workers councils in Poland!

* Defend the statification of the means of production, the monopoly of foreign trade and the centralised plan!

* Revise and democratise the plan from top to bottom in the interests of the proletariat and the working peasantry!

* No bloc with the priesthood, the mortal enemies of democracy and socialism!

* Defend the secular basis of the workers state - the rights of women against clerical obscurantism!

* For a revolutionary communist (Trotskyist) party of the Polish workers!

* For international solidarity with the Polish workers' organisations and the worker and poor-peasant victims of Jaruzelski's repression!

* Black all imports from Poland whilst the repression continues!

* No unity with the Imperialist or White Guard false friends of the Polish workers! Defend the USSR!

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- * Defend the socialist basis of the workers state - the rights of women against clerical obscurantism!
- * For a revolutionary communist (Trotskyist) party of the Polish workers!
- * For international solidarity with the Polish workers' organizations and the worker and poor-peasant victims of Jaruzelski's repression!
- * Black all reports from Poland, withdraw the repression committee!
- * No only with the imperialist m. White Guard lack friends of the Polish workers! Defend the USSR!

