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Title	Controversy over Nomenklatura in Poland : Twilight of a Monopolistic Instrument for Social Control
Author(s)	Ito, Takayuki
Citation	Acta Slavica Iaponica, 1, 57-103
Issue Date	1983
Doc URL	https://hdl.handle.net/2115/7927
Type	departmental bulletin paper
File Information	KJ00000033981.pdf



Controversy over Nomenklatura in Poland

Twilight of a Monopolistic Instrument for Social Control*

Takayuki Ito

1. Introduction

The word *nomenklatura* has recently had a phenomenal career in the Western world. A considerable amount of literature, popular and specialised, on nomenklatura had already appeared in the West when workers' strikes broke out on the Baltic coast of Poland, followed by a great controversy on nomenklatura. This greatly helped to popularize the word in the West. Reporters and professional commentators have eagerly taken up the new fashionable word. Many of them see in it a key-word which might explain everything that happens not only in Poland, but in Socialist countries in general. Nomenklatura has thus become a magic word for many people in the West to explain away almost all problems of the actually existing socialism, so-called, from Poland to Afghanistan and from the economic crisis to the gigantic military build-up.¹⁾

How does the nomenklatura actually operate? What has been said on it and what has happened to it in Poland since August 1980? Readers look for answers to these questions in vain. There are only a few serious works on the functioning of the nomenklatura system in general. There is almost none on the nomenklatura controversy in Poland.²⁾ The lack of qualified literature is partly explained by the complexity of the subject-matter. The nomenklatura system is closely connected with the

* The article is based on the paper presented at the annual meeting of the Western Slavic Association, held at Honolulu on March 18–20, 1982, and subsequently published in the *Journal of East and West Studies*, Seoul, vol. 11, no. 1 (November 1982), pp. 49–95.

- 1) It seems that the book by Michael S. Voslensky, an exiled Soviet historian: *Nomenklatura. Moskaus Machtelite*, Vienne 1980 made a great contribution to the boom of the word in the West. See also his interview: "Est: Comment vit l'aristocratie rouge," *Le Point*, 15 September 1980. It is Shin Fujimura, a journalist living in Paris, who introduced the boom in Japan. See his article: "Kazewa umikara fukiorosu (The wind comes down from the sea)," *Sekai* (World), May 1981, pp. 155–179.
- 2) Most serious works are perhaps B. Harasymiw, "Nomenklatura: The Soviet Communist Party's Leadership Recruitment System," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 1969, pp. 493–512; J. Hough, *The Soviet Prefects. The Local Party Organs in Industrial Decision-Making*, Harvard 1969 for the Soviet nomenklatura, and Gert-Joachim Glaeßner, *Herrschaft durch Kader. Leitung der Gesellschaft und Kaderpolitik in der DDR am Beispiel des Staatsapparates*, Opladen 1977 for the East German one. As for the East European nomenklatura in general and the Polish in particular, worthy of mention is Thomas Lowit, "Y a-t-il des États en Europe de l'Est?" *Revue française de sociologie*, vol. 20 (1974), pp. 431–466. The only Japanese contribution is Kenji Uchida, "Nomenklatura seidono ichisokumen (One Aspect of the Nomenklatura System)," *Shiso* (Thought), December 1977, pp. 140–155, which is, however, based mainly on Harasymiw's article.

personnel policy, and the personnel policy is a secret matter in any country and under any system. This makes it difficult to investigate how the personnel policy is operating in concrete cases. The difficulty is extreme in Socialist countries where everything is kept secret, not only the personnel policy. Few empirical data are available on the functioning of the nomenklatura system.

In Poland, however, the taboo on nomenklatura has gradually been lifted in the wake of liberalisation since August 1980. Even an open controversy in the press broke out in the course of discussions preceding the 9th extraordinary congress of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). This offers a unique opportunity for students of the Communist system.

In the following essay the present writer tries first to consider some methodological questions in order to clarify the notion of nomenklatura, around which some confusion seems to have occurred in recent years, then to analyse what course the nomenklatura controversy took among workers as well as intellectuals in Poland, and finally to answer why the nomenklatura system in Poland collapsed so easily.

II. Some Methodological Considerations

In Communist countries no organisation can conduct a personnel policy without prior approval by a superior organ. This principle is called the nomenklatura principle. It applies to almost all organisations in society, including party apparatus, state administration, justice, police, army, universities, research institutes, economic enterprises, trade unions, writers' union, student association, etc. As a result of subordination to a superior organ in personnel policy, a certain hierarchy of authorities is formed which ends up in the secretariat of the central committee of the Communist party. The party tries to control through this system all organisational activities in society, including non-Communist parties or religious institutions. In other words, the nomenklatura principle serves the ruling party as a monopolistic instrument for social control.

In concrete terms, nomenklatura has two meanings: 1. list of posts the nomination for which requires confirmation in advance by a superior organ. It is usually party organs that possess such lists, but some state and trade union organs also are allowed to maintain them. 2. list of people who are entitled to occupy those posts. It operates the same way as the list of posts. Both lists are kept strictly confidential. Lists of posts, however, have from time to time become known to the West, mostly accidentally,³⁾ while lists of names have seldom come to light.

This system is unique to the Communist regime and did not exist in prerevolutionary Russia, unlike many Communist institutions which were inherited from the Czarist regime.⁴⁾ This, however, does not necessarily mean that the Communist

3) For instance, the famous Smolensk papers include the Soviet party's lists of the 20's and the 30's and are investigated by Merle Fainsod, *Smolensk under Communist rule*, Boston 1958, pp. 64-66. For the Polish party's lists, see below chapter 3.

4) Professor Peter F. Sugar of the University of Washington has called my attention to the fact that in Czarist Russia each governmental institution from the highest level to the least important local one had its nomenklatura, a list which contained the various

system rejects any comparison with other political systems, particularly with the pluralistic system of Western type. It is worth trying to find theoretical levels which make it possible to consider the nomenklatura system in a comparative setting. Only then shall we be able to talk about the "uniqueness" of the system, and only then shall we be able to consider the problem in its proper dimension and to stake out the limits of nomenklaturistic social control. The present writer suggests three levels for comparative perspective: elite recruitment, control-and-integration mechanism, and social structurization.

1. *Elite Recruitment*

No social organization could survive without elite recruitment. How the elite is recruited depends on various factors: goals, sizes, cultural backgrounds, historical backgrounds, etc. of the given organization. Political parties have their own elite recruitment systems, too. Generally speaking, political parties in Western democracies have a diffuse, badly organized elite recruitment system, in sharp contrast to the state bureaucracy, which usually has a highly formalized system based on objective criteria. It is difficult for political parties to formalize and objectivise their elite recruitment systems, because no formal qualifications like results of examinations or academic careers would be guarantees for good party leaders. Besides, politics is a world in which gods fight one another. What is a positive value for one is a negative value for another. Politics is an irrational foreign body in a world constantly trying to be rational.

The Communists as a political party have also their own elite recruitment system. They do not like the word *elite* because it sounds undemocratic and anti-egalitarian. They prefer *cadre* to elite. Cadre, however, seems to mean institutionalized elite. In any event, we have to do with a group with the same function. The Communist party has developed its own elite recruitment system, which is a very different one from that of political parties in Western democracies. The Communists have tried hard to make their system as rational and effective as possible, hunting potential cadres for every field of social life, forcing them to undergo a systematic ideological as well as vocational training so that they may qualify as leaders in the given field, providing them with enough positions and privileges so that they may be ready to move at any time and anywhere at the party's direction, and finally subjecting them to severe hierarchical discipline. Why is it possible for the Communists as a political party to build up such a system? The reason lies perhaps in their specific understanding of

positions within the organization, their proper names, their hierarchical relationships and the titles to which people holding the various positions were entitled and the manner in which they had to be addressed; a system of this kind also existed in Germany and Austria-Hungary until 1918. This system, though it was called by the same name, differs basically from the Communist one. It refers only to governmental institutions and was not an informal instrument for overall social control in the hands of a political party. If we seek a historical comparison, it would be the tables of ranks for office-holders or office-candidates in Imperial China or Japan rather than the Communist nomenklatura system. It is, however, interesting that the name is derived from a Czarist institution.

politics as a technique to attain given goals over which no polemics are allowed. It is no coincidence that the elite recruitment system of the Communist party resembles that of the Catholic church and the army, institutions with indisputable goals in view. This implies that when the time comes that politics is no longer a technical matter, but a struggle about goals, the Communist elite recruitment system will be questioned.

2. *Control-and-Integration Mechanism*

Every political party makes efforts to control centrifugal forces in society and integrate them into the ruling system. The personnel policy is an important instrument for these purposes under any system. In Western democracies, however, it is not the most important one. Because there are many other sources for political influence, such as wealth, birth, mass appeal, military fame, etc., it is not necessary to depend upon the personnel policy. The Western system tries to integrate centrifugal forces by allowing them a certain freedom of action. The principle of rule of law, for instance, guarantees this freedom of action and at the same time stakes out its limits. The ruling party makes compromises with centrifugal forces so long as they observe the rules of the game, and it suppresses them if they violate them, but it seldom tries to control and integrate them through personnel policy.

The nomenklatura system is a Communist way to control and integrate centrifugal forces in society. It is based upon the personnel-political control of intra-party as well as extra-party organizations. In the party itself nomenklaturistic control means the control of representative organs by executive ones. Representative organs like a party congress or a central committee plenum are only nominally decision-making bodies. These bodies are not free from the control by executive organs like the politburo or the central committee secretariat, because their composition is predetermined by the latter. In executive organs themselves there is a strict hierarchical order in which organs in lower echelons are subjected to superior ones.

The party tries to extend personnel-political control to all extra-party organizations. But the nomenklaturistic control of the extra-party organizations does not necessarily mean the imposing of completely alien people upon them. Usually they give preference to those people who come out of the milieu in which they should conduct activities. No physical worker is appointed president of the academy of sciences, and no scientist chairman of the trade union. It is possible and even welcome that through those people some influence from extra-party organizations penetrates the party. The so-called transmission-belt theory is based on this hypothesis. But integration through the nomenklatura system is not integration through participation, but integration through mobilization. The elite from extra-party organizations are permanently absorbed into the ruling system, and the organizations themselves are left without their elite. The nomenklatura elite represents the system in the milieu out of which it comes, but not the other way round. If a kind of counterelite that refuses to be absorbed into the system appears, it is promptly eliminated from the milieu and isolated from the society at large.

The control-and-integration mechanism through the personnel policy penetrates

the entire society. Here is a link to the so-called theory of totalitarian society. The Communist control-and-integration mechanism, however, has never been so complete as the theory presupposes. The totalitarian society seems to have remained more a utopia of the ruling caste than a reality.

3. *Social Structurization*

The nomenklatura covers a large number of people whose main profession is political leadership. It is said that there are 700,000 to one million nomenklaturists in the Soviet Union and 150,000 to 300,000 in Poland. Does this group constitute a class? Many writers answer in the affirmative. The notion 'class', however, is controversial. It is a dichotomical concept and presupposes that the society is inevitably divided into two antagonistic classes: a ruling and an oppressed. Is not the reality more complicated? Some prefer 'stratum' to 'class' for this reason. 'Class' is defined usually in economic terms. But the 'ruling class' has also a political connotation. Is not it better to use 'power elite' than ruling class'? Many questions arise in connection with the notion 'class'. However, going into details on this problem exceeds the scope of the present paper. Most discussions on the nomenklatura as a social structure center on the question: 'ruling class' or 'functional elite'. It seems to be enough for the purpose of this paper to consider this question.

The nomenklatura is a product of cadre policy. Cadres are originally functional elite, that is, elite who remain elite so long as they are performing a certain function, but cease being so when they lose the function, for whatever reason.

How is the ruling class distinguished from the functional elite? 1. The ruling class stands out from the rest of society through its rights or privileges, while the functional elite is distinguished by its function or role. 2. The membership of the ruling class is stable, while that of the functional elite is constantly fluctuating. That means, that membership in a class is inherited from generation to generation, while the functional elite must acquire its status each time anew. 3. The ruling class, being conscious that it as a whole is different from others, develops a peculiar feeling of solidarity, while the functional elite, since its members compete against one another, never develops one. They are insulated into various functional groups and often develop a strong *esprit de corps* within the individual groups, which in turn prevents them as a whole from developing a feeling of solidarity.

According to a description of the way of life of the Soviet nomenklatura,⁵⁾ they have long since ceased being functional elite and have become a full-scale ruling class. But it seems that there are two important reservations to this hypothesis. First, it is not only access to political influence, but above all ownership of property or means of production that distinguishes the ruling class from the rest of society. The nomenklatura is nothing but a political status. They lack the indispensable criterion of a ruling class, that is, social sovereignty.⁶⁾ Their income, however large it might

5) Voslensky, *op. cit.*, passim.

6) Werner Hofmann, *Die Arbeitsverfassung der Sowjetunion*, Berlin-West 1956, pp. 499-526.

be, is determined not by themselves, but by others. This leads to a permanent instability of their status. It is true that the decrease of the ruler's arbitrary acts since the death of Stalin and the political stabilization under Brezhnev have created a feeling of stability for the Soviet nomenklaturists, but the thesis, that the nomenklatura is a ruling class comparable to the capitalist class in the West does not find wide acceptance in Poland, where the regime has constantly been suffering instability since its incipience.⁷⁾

Second, all the ruling classes in history have had their existence and their rights sanctioned by law and have never been ashamed of themselves. The nomenklatura, on the contrary, are obliged to lead an informal, even illegal existence which they cannot justify even in the light of ruling doctrine. They are ashamed of themselves and make strenuous efforts to hide themselves from the eyes of the public. Does such a social group deserve to be called a ruling class?

It is true that the nomenklatura have long since ceased being a functional elite, but they have not yet become a class in the traditional sense of the word. They are still awaiting a definition.

III. Nomenklatura System in Poland

Before turning to our subject as such, the controversy over nomenklatura in Poland, let us consider briefly what the nomenklatura system in Poland looked like in actual practice. It is neither possible nor necessary to give an exhaustive analysis in this brief essay. The present writer has, therefore, restricted himself to a depiction of salient features of the system's functioning in Poland at the time the controversy broke out.

Few data are available on the functioning of the nomenklatura system in Poland in its formative years. It was certainly introduced into Poland when the Communists took power in 1944, but its penetration of society could be only a gradual process, since the Polish Communists had to share power with other political forces in the first postwar years and experienced a serious political upheaval in 1956–57. One can guess that it had indeed firmly established itself by the time of Edward Gierk's accession to power in 1971, but it still provided no more than a crude grip on the commanding heights of government and society by the Communists without an elaborate mechanism of overall coordination and self-perpetuation. It was only under Gierk that the nomenklaturistic control of all political and social activities was systematized and gave rise to a closed caste of ruling elite which reproduced itself.

In October 1972 the politburo of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR, the Communist party) passed a resolution on "Further Improvement of Cadre Policy and Raising of the Standard of Directing Cadres' Work" and published directives on the

7) Marek Tarniewski, *Rewolucja czy ewolucja*, Paris 1975, p. 100; Jadwiga Staniszkis, translated by Jin'ichi Daimatsu, *Shakaishugi shakaino bensho*, Tokyo 1981, pp. 289–291 (The type-written original: *The Dialectics of Socialist Society*, Warsaw 1981, is not available for the present writer).

nomenklatura together with a table of posts covered by it.⁸⁾ The resolution stresses the importance of the principle that the party organs confirm (*zatwierdzenie*) cadres for key directing posts covered by their nomenklatura and lays down the basic rules of its functioning.

First, it appears from the document that at each level of the party hierarchy certain collective bodies have the right to decide on appointments to nomenklaturist posts: For instance, at the level of the central committee it is the politburo, the secretariat, a group of secretaries and a group of department heads (at least two, including the cadre department head) that have the right. Since the need to "unify the rules and procedure for making personnel decisions" is emphasized, we can assume that there were no uniform rules or procedure previously. This indirect criticism of practices in the past may refer to Gomułka's dictatorial and often arbitrary personnel management. Now the rule of collective decision on personnel affairs is established, but at the same time the oligarchic nature of decision-making is strengthened, because how far the competence of individual bodies for taking personnel decisions may reach is determined by a superior, narrower body: for instance, by the politburo for the central committee, and by the executive for prefecture committees. Party organs at each level are, indeed, authorized to take personnel decisions falling within their nomenklatura. Higher organs, however, "depending on the principle of democratic centralism," have the right to send cadres to posts covered by the nomenklatura of lower organs, and also to annul wrong or inappropriate personnel decisions.

Second, a certain autonomy of lower organs in personnel management is guaranteed. As it is stated, directing posts in a certain government, social or economic institution may be covered exclusively by the nomenklatura of one party organ. Some exceptions are made to this rule: prefecture committee secretaries, prefects, local police chiefs, presiding judges of local courts, local public prosecutors, etc. Higher organs can interfere with the management of these posts, but must consult the executive of the corresponding party organ.

Third, the guarantee for this autonomy is given in written form. A list of posts, attached to the directives, serves as a guide line according to which a local party organ can determine what factories or institutions are to be covered by its nomenklatura and what posts are to require its confirmation. But the central committee secretariat reserves to itself the power to determine whether the nomenklatura of a particular party organ is to be enlarged or diminished.

Fourth, for the first time in the history of the Polish nomenklatura system it is publicly stated that the party nomenklatura is also binding for posts to be filled through election or nomination, including non-party ones. For elective party posts candidates are *recommended* by a corresponding party organ. This applies *also* to elective directing posts in non-party institutions like local councils, trade unions,

8) *Wytyczne Biura Politycznego w sprawie nomenklatury kadr instancji partyjnych wraz z wykazem stanowisk objętych nomenklaturą KC, KW, KP (KM, KD)*, Warsaw 1972. The pamphlet was published by the state printing house RSW "Prasa" in a printing of 500 copies. For the French translation, see T. Jowitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 451-466.

self-governing cooperatives, and other social organizations. For posts to be filled through nomination candidates are confirmed at the motion of the chief of a superior unit. However, "a corresponding party organ as well as interested central committee or prefecture committee departments can also suggest (może wystąpić z inicytywą) appointment or recall." Such a 'suggestion' by party organs is often decisive under a one party rule, as practice shows. Indeed, the party cell (POP, the basic party organization) or the party organ of the place where the candidate works is supposed to be consulted by the superior organ before his appointment. This principle, however, is often ignored in practice. It is also emphasized that chiefs of government or economic institutions take 'independent' decisions on management of posts not covered by the party nomenklatura. In individual cases, however, it is stated that those chiefs "can consult the directing party apparatus on intended personnel change", which again often turns out to be decisive. In sum, this is nothing but a codification of the party apparatuses' monopolization of all personnel decisions, irrespective of whether party or non-party, elective or nominated, or even nomenklaturist or non-nomenklaturist posts are involved.

Fifth, one is reminded of the care with which personnel affairs should be conducted, and the respect with which nomenklaturist workers should be honored for their longstanding service, regardless of any circumstances that might bring them into disgrace. The suggested procedure for dealing with personnel motions is revealing: Unit organizations send personnel motions, together with complete personnel documentation, to the proper department, which, with its own comment, forwards them to the party's cadre department; the cadre department, having considered the motions, submits them for decision and then notifies the movers of the result. Because of this elaborate network of checks and controls there is little chance for politically unreliable elements to get smuggled into the nomenklatura. It also appears from this that the real power lies in the party cadre department. The same function is performed by the executive in lower echelons of the party hierarchy, which is, however, subjected to personnel-political control by the cadre department of the superior organ.

Emphasis is laid on the need to hold conversations with persons appointed to or recalled from nomenklaturist posts. The task falls on members of the politburo or the central committee secretariat in the case of prefecture committee secretaries, prefects, ministers, deputy ministers, and other dignitaries of the same rank. As for other directing cadres, the scope of conversations is established according to the kind and the weight of their functions.

In addition, the need to work out overall evaluation of activities of persons leaving their posts is emphasized. These evaluations should become known to the interested person and be included in personnel acts. Recognition should be given to persons who have for years served in directing posts and are now going into retirement or moving to less responsible posts owing to age, state of health, etc., and their contributions should be publicly acknowledged. Thus, the nomenklaturists need no longer fear being fired from their posts in disgrace and even persecuted as criminals, as had often been the case in the past.

Controversy over Nomenklatura in Poland

Sixth, the existence of a list of nomenklaturists is hinted at. The party organs are urged to keep records of cadres covered by the nomenklatura "according to previous principles." This suggests that such record-keeping has long been practiced. The directives hold out a prospect of introducing "new, uniform record-keeping for directing cadres covered by the nomenklatura" in 1973. Forms and rules for record-keeping should be determined in accordance with the instruction of the central committee cadre department. Party organs "can keep records also of persons in posts not covered by their nomenklatura. This is indispensable particularly in relation to the cadre in reserve and also for other purposes connected with realization of general principles of the party's cadre policy."

Seventh, rights and obligations of the party cells are defined: The party cells have no nomenklatura and, therefore, can not demand from the direction of economic enterprises and organs the submission of personnel motions for confirmation. The party cells have the obligations: to conduct a systematic and periodical evaluation of the cadre policy of the factory direction; to suggest for directing posts able people who have distinguished themselves in work and enjoy high authority among their colleagues; to demand the recall from posts of people who do not fulfil their tasks in a proper way and do not behave in accordance with accepted ethical norms. Clearly visible here is the consequence of rule by apparatuses: minimal rights and maximal obligations for organizations at the bottom. Even the basic organizations, however, are given certain privileges vis-a-vis the non-party milieu.

The attached table of nomenklaturist posts shows how deep the party's personnel political control reaches into various spheres of social life. There are three tables: central committee's, prefecture committees', and county (city and district) committees'. The central committee's table classifies nomenklaturist posts into 5 groups: 1) party committee secretaries and party organs' political workers; 2) government organs and state and economic administration; 3) social organizations; 4) army; 5) mass communication media, publishing houses and science. Of these five, the prefecture committees' table lacks group 4, and the county committees' table groups 4 and 5.

Group 1 of the central committee's table covers almost all important posts in the party hierarchy, including first secretaries and department secretaries of prefecture committees and first secretaries in ministries and central offices. Group 2 encompasses the widest range of high ranking officials in state and economic administration, from the state council's chairman (state head) down to the fire department head. Included are also presiding judges of the supreme court, prosecutor general, president of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN), presidents of big trusts, cooperative associations, and nation-wide business enterprises like the Polish Airline (LOT), etc. Group 3 includes chairmen, deputy chairmen and secretaries of all important social organizations like trade unions, women's associations, the Polish Association of Economists (PSE), the Association of Polish Journalists (SDP), the Union of Polish Writers (ZLP), etc. Group 4 covers most important posts in the armed forces. The promotion to general's rank is also controlled. The last group covers directing posts of the Radio-Television Committee, the Polish Press Agency (PAP),

and major publishing houses, editors-in-chief of dailies, weeklies and monthlies, departmental secretaries of the PAN, etc. University presidents belong to the table of prefecture committees, and high school principals to the table of county committees.

The politburo took one more important resolution in the same month of the same year: "Range of Competence of the Central Committee in Taking Cadre Decisions for Posts Covered by the Nomenklatura," which was published together with the directives.⁹⁾ As the directives tell us, there are four collective bodies in the central committee which are allowed to make personnel decisions: the politburo, the secretariat, a group of secretaries and a group of department heads. What body controls what posts must be established; otherwise confusion and a struggle for competence would be inevitable. The resolution distributes the posts among the four bodies. It is only the politburo and the secretariat that are allowed to control posts of group 4 (army). The politburo, however, has no say in management of posts of group 5 (mass communication media, publishing houses and science), while all other bodies have some posts of this group under their jurisdiction. Though the politburo controls the most important posts, the secretariat appears more powerful, since it controls the widest range of posts. In addition, it seems that the secretariat can influence personnel decisions of other bodies indirectly since it has its representatives in them. It is not always clear on what principle the distribution of posts is made. Generally speaking, higher and more general posts go to the politburo, and lower and more specialized ones to other bodies. However, higher and more general posts like the sejm speaker or the state council's chairman are often decorative ones devoid of real power, while lower and more specialized posts like first secretaries of party committees in ministries and central offices or department heads of the council of ministers' office which go to the last mentioned body are of crucial importance for day-to-day politics.

What privileges are the Polish nomenklaturists provided with? It is not possible to answer this question with full accuracy since few reliable data are available. One thing, however, seems to be certain: The privileges of nomenklaturists were also systematized and partly sanctioned by law under Gierek. Some insight into the nature of privileges of higher nomenklaturists can be gained through two decrees of the council of state, dated October 5, 1972: "Decree on Renumeration of Persons Holding Directing State Posts" and "Decree on Pensions of Persons Holding Directing Political and State Posts and Members of Their Families."¹⁰⁾ The first decree covers only persons holding state posts; it does not mention persons holding only party posts. This is perhaps because the latter are renumerated from the party fund. The second

9) "Postanowienia Biura Politycznego dotyczące zakresu kompetencji w podejmowaniu decyzji kadrowych na stanowiskach objętych nomenklaturą Komitetu Centralnego PZPR," see *Wytyczne*, pp. 13-18.

10) "Dekret o uposażeniu osób zajmujących kierownicze stanowiska państwowe" and "Dekret o zaopatrzeniu emerytalnym osób zajmujących kierownicze stanowiska polityczne i państwowe oraz członków ich rodzin," *Dziennik ustaw*, no. 42 (7 October 1972), pp. 409-412, items 269 and 270.

Controversy over Nomenklatura in Poland

decree, however, covers "persons holding directing *political* and state posts." It emerges from article 1 that *political* posts in fact mean posts of the Communist party. It is certainly something new in Polish legislation for a state decree to guarantee pensions of activists of a political party. Characteristically, 'political posts' are put ahead of 'state posts' in the title of the decree, which means that the former are more important than the latter according to the legislator's will.

Both decrees classify directing posts into five groups (A-E) in a hierarchical order. The difference is only that 'political posts', that is, party posts, are added to respective groups in the second decree. The party first secretary is placed in the same rank as the chairman of the state council and the minister president (group A); members and candidate members of the politburo, central committee secretaries, and members of the central committee secretariat are on a level with the sejm speaker, the vice-chairman of the state council, the vice-minister president, etc. (group B); department heads of the central committee are ranked with members of the state council, ministers, the president of the PAN, etc. (group C); first secretaries of prefecture committees equal the chief of the state council's office, deputy ministers, prefects, etc. (group D). The lowest category, group E, contains no party posts. There is no mention of posts in political parties other than the Communist one, such as the United Peasant Party (ZSL) or the Democratic Party (SD), although article 18 of the second decree provides for "determining pensions of persons holding directing posts in political parties." Certainly they are integrated into the nomenklatura of the Communist party; only they are considered not high enough to be included into the above-mentioned five categories.

The privileges accorded to state dignitaries are considerable. Apart from high salaries, nice services and good pensions, there are also the following: Ministers may receive the same amount of salary for a certain period after retirement as they do on active service; they may use the official residence for lifetime; grandsons and grand daughters may enjoy a special allowance. This suggests that privileges tend to be inherited. Of course, all the privileges enumerated in the decrees are nothing but the tip of the iceberg. The real amount of privileges of nomenklaturists is hidden behind a thick veil of secrecy. What is important is that the self-consciousness of nomenklaturists has become so strong that they insist on legal recognition of at least a part of their privileges.

The nomenklatura system in Poland attained such a level of sophistication under Gierek that it was almost legalized. It is openly admitted that the party controls non-party posts; the apparatus manipulates elective posts; control is extended to even non-nomenklaturist posts. Practice has shown that the nomenklaturistic control is far more pervasive than the politburo's directives envisage. Nomenklaturists have their privileges protected by the mighty party apparatus; some of the privileges of higher nomenklaturists are even codified. They feel secure in their posts and free from abuse by the authorities. They may even hope that their privileges will be inherited by their offspring. A golden age seemed to have opened for the Communist ruling casts. But just at the height of their glory a revolt from the very bottom of society broke out and shook the system to its foundations.

IV. Workers' Revolt against Nomenklatura

1. *Introductory Remarks*

The paper deals mainly with the period during which the Solidarity Union came into being, spread out in a stormy way, and reached an abrupt, tragic end with the military *coup d'état*, that is, the period from September 1980 to December 1981. While controversy is usually the business of intellectuals, in Poland there was a strong proletarian protest against the nomenklatura system which brought it almost to ruin. Of course, this movement gave a great impetus to the controversy among intellectuals. So it is impossible to consider the controversy among intellectuals in isolation from actual conflicts in society. This paper will consider first the party-union or state-society conflict on the nomenklatura system, and then pass to the controversy among intellectuals.

We may distinguish at least three phases in the Solidarity movement: social, economic, and politicising phases. The social phase starts with the establishment of the Solidarity Union in September 1980 and ends with the Bydgoszcz affair in March 1981. This phase is characterized by an autonomization movement not only of trade unions, but also of all social associations and institutions, including universities and the academy of sciences. March 1981 sees the advent of a new, economic phase which comes to a close at the beginning of September 1981. The basic feature of this phase is a self-management movement in factories and enterprises. The Solidarity congress in September inaugurates the last, politicising phase, which is violently interrupted by the military takeover on 13 December 1981. Rising, though not always consistent, political ambitions of the Solidarity Union mark the phase.

Let us dwell briefly on the pre-entry period. It is not known whether the workers who rose up in 1970–71 on the Baltic coast and in 1976 in Radom and Ursus put forward a demand for abolition of nomenklatura system, though certainly there were egalitarian protests against privileges of party and police functionaries. As is known, the strikers of Gdańsk in the summer of 1980 were at first interested only in improvement of economic conditions. But when the famous 21 points were formulated on 17 August, there were already some demands for political change: recognition of a trade union free from the party and the employer (point 1); selection of directing cadres on the basis not of party affiliation, but of professional qualifications, abolition of privileges of police and party apparatuses (point 3). On the eve of the final negotiation, the strikers suddenly added 'liquidation of nomenklatura system' to their list of demands. On the previous day, 29 August, strikers' information paper had disclosed a confidential document which revealed that the party organization had a decisive voice in nominations for almost all important posts in the shipyard.¹¹⁾ Mieczysław Jagielski, head of the government delegation, strongly opposed the new demand, saying, "Formulations of the agreement are exact enough. There is no need additionally to denounce the nomenkla-

11) *Biuletyn informacyjny "Solidarność"*, No. 9.

tura.”¹²⁾ In the final text of the Gdańsk agreement the strikers withdrew this demand and recognized the ‘leading role of the PZPR in the state.’ It seems that the workers gave way in such abstract questions as nomenklatura or party’s leading role and instead forced through demands which were closer to their everyday life. The workers’ pragmatism, however, also caused them to stick to the demand for a free union, an organ to represent their interests to the authorities. This was a small hole bored into the nomenklatura system, which, as it turned out, soon began to threaten the whole system.

2. Social Phase

The first phase was initiated by the party’s giving permission for the Independent and Self-governing Trade Union ‘Solidarity’ (NSZZ ‘Solidarność’). The permission was a great risk for the ruling party because success of the free union would entail grave consequences for the existing system. First, it would automatically result in a loss of jobs for a great number of functionaries of the old union, most of whom were nomenklaturists. In 1968 there were almost 1.5 million permanent union activists, out of whom more than 10,000 were paid functionaries. Second, it would undermine the legitimacy of the regime. The Communists have always based their right to power upon the claim that they enjoy the support of the great mass of working people. Now it would turn out that they don’t.

We know what happened then. Almost all blue-collar workers and a great many white-collar workers joined the free union. The national organization of the old union, the Central Council of Trade Unions (CRZZ), was forced to dissolve in December 1980. The Industrial Unions (BZZ), successor organization to the old union, still claimed 5.14 million members.¹³⁾ 1.4 million out of this figure, however, were retired people or pensioners. Almost the same number of people had double membership, i.e., they belonged at the same time to the Solidarity Union or to the third union, the so-called Autonomous Unions (ZZA). Most of the remaining members were former activists or functionaries. So the reconstituted old union was like an army with many officers but few soldiers. The bulk of functionaries necessarily became functionless.

This autonomization movement spread to other occupational groups, of which the most important is the peasants. The so-called Peasant Solidarity (NSZZ RI ‘Solidarność’) counted about 2 million members at the time of permission in May 1981. As the Workers’ Solidarity dealt a great blow to the power and prestige of the PZPR, so the Peasant Solidarity dealt a severe blow to the power and prestige of the United Peasant Party (ZSL), a satellite party of the PZPR.¹⁴⁾

The autonomization movement revealed how fragile the hold of the party upon the working mass was. The nomenklatura, professional leaders, picked up from among workers, long drilled for the task, and provided with all kinds of privileges, suffered an ignominious defeat at the hands of free union activists, utter laymen in

12) Cited in: Stanisław Sołtyński, “Bezpartyjni a partia,” *Polityka*, 28 February 1981, p. 3.

13) “W kraju,” *Polityka*, 24 May 1981, p. 2.

14) Cf. “III plenum Naczelnego Komitetu ZSL,” *Życie Warszawy*, 8 May 1981.

leading people, in their struggle for the loyalty of the working masses.

The impact of the autonomization movement was most tangible in the cultural sphere. Let us take two examples: Union of Writers and universities.

Intellectuals, by which they understand first of all writers and poets, enjoy far greater social prestige in East European countries and Russia than in the West. In those countries the national culture has often been suppressed by foreign powers. It is quite natural that writers and poets as bearers of the endangered national culture should command the esteem of the entire society. The chronic lack of freedom of expression in those countries make another background. Writers and poets as specialists of verbal expression are often expected to fulfil a substitute function for parliaments or political parties. That is exactly why the party had kept a vigilant eye on the composition of the guiding body of the Writers' Union in Poland.

In December 1980 an extraordinary congress of the Writers' Union was held in Warsaw. The party representative Andrzej Wasilewski put forward the following demands: 1. A quarter of the seats in the presidium should be assigned to the party; 2. Other candidates should be submitted to the party for confirmation; 3. Chairmen of local organizations, who are mostly party members, should be included into the new presidium so that party members may constitute the absolute majority; 4. Only those writers who observe the Constitution and write works that conform to the new Censorship Law should be allowed into the Union. This clearly shows how tenaciously the party tried to maintain nomenklaturistic control of the Writers' Union. But Wasilewski's motion was rejected by the majority. Only 6 out of the 32 new presidium members were party members, and most of these party members were critically minded. Wasilewski himself failed to get elected.¹⁵⁾ What was more shocking for the party was the new president, Jan Józef Szczepański. He is not only not a party member, but he has long been active in the illegal opposition movement. The danger his election might entail for the party was revealed when he concluded an agreement on cooperation with the Solidarity Union at the time of its first congress.¹⁶⁾

Universities are important for the party not only as research and educational institutions, but also with respect to their influence upon public opinion and their role in reproducing the elite. That is why the party has tried hard to extend its control to the universities. But it was not easy for the Polish party to get the universities under control because Polish universities had a long tradition of academic autonomy and the party did not have enough academic cadres to penetrate the campuses. It was only in 1968 that the party succeeded in establishing almost complete control over the administration of the universities. Since then almost all administrative posts at the universities, including rectors and deans, have been nominated from above, in practice by the party. The party tried to extend control over not only administrative, but also over academic posts. Promotion to professors in particular required prior

15) Scriptor, "Wokół warszawskiego zjazdu Literatów," *Kultura* (Paris), March 1981, pp. 55-62.

16) "Porozumienie," *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 2 October 1981, p. 4; *ibid.*, 9 October 1981, p. 3.

approval by the party.¹⁷⁾

The party also tried to control the student enrollment. As is well known, there is a preference system for children of workers and peasants in Communist countries. This system often served as a means for political manipulation. In addition to this, in Poland there were special quotas for students recommended by the minister of education and the rectors. The so-called rector's quota (miejsca rektorskie) amounted to 10–15% of the total.¹⁸⁾ Here a special channel for elite reproduction was open.

The autonomization movement spread over also to the universities. During the first six months after the Gdańsk agreement new elections of rectors, deans, senators and so on were held at most of the universities. New rectors or deans were often non-party members and sometimes supporters of the Solidarity movement. A *de facto* autonomous status had been restored to universities before a new university law passed the Sejm. Pro-Solidarity students broke away from the old, party-controlled student union (SZSP) and founded a new Independent Student Association (NZS). It seems, however, that the Solidarity movement was not so popular among the academic youth as among young workers or peasants. The NZS could succeed in organizing only 20% of the students. But they also radicalized with the passage of time. Among the slogans of striking students there was always the demand for liquidation of the minister's and rector's quotas. This demand was quietly accepted by the authorities.¹⁹⁾

The autonomization movement indeed dealt a heavy blow to the nomenklatura system, but not a fatal one. Perhaps the party-union relation in the first phase is best illustrated by Lech Wałęsa's formulation: "The party leads and the government governs, and we do our business (a my robimy swoje)." ²⁰⁾ The first half is the party's catchword in Gierek's era. Wałęsa added to it his own. What he suggests is a division of labor: The party manages state affairs, and the union social ones; they should not interfere with each other's business. Presumed is a parallel existence, even peaceful co-existence of party and union, each minding its own business. The party was still allowed to reign dictatorially, as far as the state sphere was concerned. There was no death warrant yet for party rule.

The nomenklatura system came apart where the contradiction between the official doctrine of democracy and the reality of informal control was most obvious. The society took over the domain that it regarded as its own. The state had to surrender what didn't belong to it. As the fashionable saying then in Poland goes, what was seeming (pozorny) has now become authentic (autentyczny).

17) Sołtyński, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

18) "Zasady rekrutacji na studia wyższe," *Życie Warszawy*, 31 December 1980.

19) Andrzej Świecki, "O co chodzi strajkującym studentom," *ibid.*, 18 February 1981; the same author, "O co chodzi studentom," *ibid.*, 2 March 1981; Andrzej K. Wróblewski, "Studencki sierpień w lutym," *Polityka*, 28 February 1981, p. 14.

20) Maciej Poleski, "Umowa i zmowa społeczna," *Kultura* (Paris), January-February 1981, p. 77.

3. *Economic Phase*

The second phase opened with the rise of a new movement from the bottom: the self-management movement. It may be a coincidence that this movement gained momentum when the tension between the party and the union was growing around the Bydgoszcz affair, but surely the rising authority of the Solidarity Union, which successfully overcame the crisis through conclusion of another *modus vivendi*, the Warsaw agreement in April 1981, and the appearance of the first symptoms of disintegration of state and party apparatuses prompted the rebellious workers to take new action.

Initially, the workers were not very enthusiastic about the idea of self-management. No mention was made of it in the 21 points of the Gdansk strikers. No initiative was taken for it during the first six months after the Gdańsk agreement. Why did not the workers show much interest in it? First, they were disappointed by experiences in the past. The workers' self-managements in 1945–46 and 1956–58 became instruments of manipulation in the hands of the authorities. Second, they knew that a conflict between the newly born union and the future self-management would inevitably arise. Why should we create another institution that might weaken the position of the union which had been so painstakingly wrenched from the authorities?

No wonder that it was not the new union, but the old one that first advocated the reactivation of self-management.²¹⁾ Then the government announced an economic reform in which self-management was assigned a prominent place. Self-management from above meant making the workers responsible for the management of enterprises. They thought it might be a good method to split the worker's movement into two parts: one which wants to protect the interests of the workers, and the other which feels more responsible for the management. It was quite natural that the pro-government trade union and the government themselves should propagate the idea of self-management.

The government published the first draft plan of an economic reform in January 1981²²⁾ and the second one in the form of theses in March 1981.²³⁾ Both documents strongly advocated self-management, but remained ambiguous about the competence of self-management in the personnel question, particularly in the question of appointment and recall of directors. The government sent the two documents to the Solidarity Union for comments, but received no answer.²⁴⁾ Apparently the Solidarity Union was not yet interested in self-management. It was only a few individual intellectuals

21) See for instance "Mamy czyste sumienie wobec siebie i klasy robotniczej. Ogólnopolskie spotkanie przedstawicieli branżowych związków zawodowych," *Życie Warszawy*, 25 November 1980.

22) "Podstawowe założenia reformy gospodarczej," *Życie gospodarcze*, 18 January 1981, pp. 7–10.

23) "Tezy projektu ustawy o samorządzie załogi przedsiębiorstwa państwowego," *ibid.*, 22 March 1981, p. 11.

24) "Dyskusja nad reformą—od nowa? Wywiad profesora Władysława Baki dla TV," *Życie Warszawy*, 10 July 1981.

who tried to criticize the government projects.²⁵⁾

In March, however, a self-management movement from below came into being at last. At first the government welcomed this initiative. What is more significant, a handful of Solidarity activists proceeded to stimulate and at the same time to canalize the self-management movement from below. They established a separate organization, called *Sieć* (Network) of Factory Organizations of the Solidarity Union. The idea was to promote self-management first in leading factories of each of the 17 regions of the country. They expected that the remaining factories in each region would follow the example of the leading ones.²⁶⁾

The appeal was a great success, perhaps too great a success. The workers spontaneously began to organize employees' councils (*radę pracownicze*), confirming the old director in his office, or recalling him and inviting a new one through a public contest.

The situation may be best illustrated by the case of Polish Air Lines (PLL Lot). The self-management of Lot was rather moderate. A new employees' council was not elected, but the old Conference of Workers' Self-management (KSR) still continued to function, as was not the case elsewhere. In April, however, the old president retired of his own accord. Now there was a need to find a successor. The KSR decided to nominate one through a public contest in accordance with the good spirit of the time. 6 people applied and finally Mr. Bronisław Klimaszewski, a 37-year-old assistant section head, was chosen after a fair screening. But now the Ministry of Transportation vetoed the candidate and nominated instead a high-ranking Air Force officer, pleading reasons of defence. The employees were angry about it and decided to go on strike on the eve of the party congress in July. How high and all-embracing the mood was appeared from the fact that even the party organization joined the strike.²⁷⁾ As reporters of the official press put it, this was "a true revolution in the management system and the cadre policy of this country."²⁸⁾

At the beginning of June the final Draft Act on the Employees' Self-management of the State Enterprise²⁹⁾ was laid before the Sejm. The Draft Act still placed a lot of restrictions on the right of self-management, particularly on the right to appoint and recall the director. This immediately provoked a fierce attack from intellectuals.³⁰⁾ But this time the most serious challenge came, as expected, from the

25) See for instance Włodzimierz Pańków, "Reforma gospodarcza a uspołecznienie własności," *Kultura* (Warsaw), 15 February 1981, p. 10; Wojciech Parcho, "Dyrektorzy czy samorząd," *Życie Gospodarcze*, 28 June 1981, p. 9.

26) Jacek Poprzeczko, "Zanim reforma nas uszczęśliwi," *Życie Warszawy*, 21 May 1981; "Dyskusja o samorządach i reformie," *Tygodnik powszechny*, 16 August 1981, pp. 1, 4-5.

27) See reports and articles in: *Życie Warszawy*, 27, 28 May, 22, 25 June, 9, 10 July 1981.

28) Jerzy Baczyński and Barbara Romanowicz, "'Robimy reformę od dołu ...' Decyzją Samorządu Robotniczego LOTu—Bronisław Klimaszewski dyrektorem-elektem," *ibid.*, 28 May 1981.

29) "Projekt ustawy o samorządzie załogi przedsiębiorstwa państwowego," *ibid.*, 25 June 1981.

30) See, for instance, "Zdaniem naszych ekspertów," *ibid.*, supplement: *Życie i Nowoczesność*.

Sieć.

Sieć activists published a counter-proposal to the Government Draft at the beginning of July: Draft Act on the Social Enterprise.³¹⁾ This so-called 'Social Draft' explicitly stipulated that 'the employees manage the enterprise,' while the Government Draft ambiguously said that 'the employees participate in management of the enterprise.' The supreme organ of the enterprise, says the Social Draft, is the Employees' Council; the director is nothing but an executor of the will of the Employees' Council; the Council's members cannot simultaneously hold administrative positions in political or social organizations, which in practice implied the party or the trade unions; the Council has the right to appoint and recall the director, to express opinions on his deputies and paymasters, to establish principles of the cadre policy, etc. We see here that all the possibilities of nomenklaturistic interference with the economy are systematically excluded.

What attitude did the Solidarity Union take toward self-management from below? What was the relation between Solidarity and Sieć? Sieć was a separate organization from Solidarity, though it wanted to be recognized as part of it. A group of Solidarity activists, while remaining in the Union, founded Sieć at their own initiative. The leader of this group, Jerzy Milewski, mathematician and docent of the Institute of Calculating Machines in Gdańsk of the Polish Academy of Sciences had a somewhat different scheme for the future from his comrades in the Union. In a pamphlet, published on 12 April 1981, he set forth a very original view: Ten million members of the union have, of course, not only union, but also political and economic interests, but there are no organizations to represent them. The Union is, therefore, forced to tackle political and economic problems, too, by which it invites the charge that it engages in non-union activities, violating the statute. An urgent task is to establish special working groups for political and economic problems within the Union in order that the Union may dedicate itself to purely union tasks. These working groups should become independent of the mother organization in the future. Out of the working group for political problems should emerge a political party, a Polish Labour Party (PPP), and out of the working group for economic problems a coordinating body for self-management. These two organizations should be established at the same time and grow side by side, because their tasks are closely connected with each other.³²⁾ We see here that Sieć was closely linked to a scheme for the establishment of a political party in the original intention of the founder.

It was only in the middle of May 1981 that the National Coordinating Commission (KKP) of the Solidarity Union issued a statement to advocate autonomy and self-management of the enterprise and to oppose any law not confirming these principles.³³⁾ This meant a *de facto* recognition of Sieć by the Union, but not an

31) "Projekt ustawy o przedsiębiorstwie społecznym," *ibid.*, 9 July 1981, supplement: *Życie i Nowoczesność*.

32) Jerzy Milewski, *Założenia programowe*. A critical summary of this document is given in: *ibid.*, "Kto chciał zająć miejsca komitetów zakładowych?" *Trybuna Ludu*, 23 December 1981.

33) Henryk Chądzyński, "Spór o przedsiębiorstwo i samorząd. Przedmiot czy uczestnik?" *Życie Warszawy*, 26 May 1981.

endorsement of Milewski's scheme as a whole. The Union leaders did not like the idea of a political party.

What moved the Solidarity Union to support self-management, to which they had taken so negative an attitude up to that time? First, the initiative came not from the government, but from the bottom; there is no danger of being manipulated by the authorities. Second, the self-management movement from below had in the meantime become so strong that it would, feared the Union leaders, take over in the enterprise in any event, regardless of whether the Union leaders supported it or not. Third, intellectuals from the Social Self-defence Committee (KSS KOR) who served as advisers to the Union had advocated the idea of self-management from the very beginning, but they supported self-management in a purely economic sense and strictly rejected the idea of a political party.

A heated exchange of views took place on the issue of self-management, when the presidium of the KKP met in Gdańsk at the end of July.³⁴⁾ The overwhelming majority spoke for self-management. Only Jan Rulewski, leader of the most radical wing, raised a dissonant voice. But at the same time Milewski's conception suffered a definite defeat. Milewski could defend his PPP plan only as private business which he wished to pursue in the future.

With the rise of the self-management movement the state-society conflict entered into a new phase. Enterprise management had never belonged to the workers. But they were now taking it over. Andrzej Gwiazda, then Wałęsa's deputy, characterized self-management as 'takeover in the economy.'³⁵⁾ If the autonomization was grounded on the maxim: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's," then the self-management movement was grounded on the maxim: "Render unto God also the things that are Caesar's."

Society was now claiming the domain which they had not formerly regarded as their own. The state would defend what it believed belonged to it. A conflict was unavoidable. Wałęsa's formula "Let them do their business, and we do our own" would not do any more. The *Nebeneinander* of party and union was no longer feasible. If the autonomization of social organizations was a revolution, self-management of enterprises was a second revolution which went even further.

Now the Union was waging a frontal attack against the nomenklatura system, for self-management would mean taking away from the party the right to nominate cadres for the economy. All of sudden a large army of party nominees in the economy were threatened with unemployment. They would vehemently resist the revolution because it was a question of life and death for them. Could this revolution be confined to the economy in a country where the state controlled almost all economic activities? Solidarity leaders wished to believe it could when they turned down Milewski's suggestion to set up a political party simultaneously with the self-management. Practice showed that it could not.

34) "Dyskusja o samorządach i reformie," *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 7 August 1981, insertion.

35) *Ibid.*, p. 7.

4. *Politicising Phase*

The self-management movement was a popular movement. People did not think about how far they might go and where they should stop. They asked themselves, if we can take over the economy, why not the state itself? Does not that make it easier to solve the economic problem as well? This line of thinking was logical. The Solidarity leaders committed themselves to self-management. Now it was difficult for them, not to speak of the Sieć activists, to resist the logic of popular movement.

As the popular anti-nomenklatura movement developed, the state apparatus began to disintegrate of itself. The nomenklatura officials, exposed to permanent attacks from the mass, were badly demoralized. A kind of power vacuum was coming into being. Someone had to fill this vacuum. Otherwise, the chaos would spread endlessly. Whether they liked it or not, it was upon the Solidarity Union that state tasks were to devolve. Thus, they were drawn into the political sphere step by step. But their attitude toward the problem of political power was inconsistent and ambivalent.

Perhaps the 9th Extraordinary Congress of the PZPR enters history as the first congress of a Communist party that discussed the nomenklatura problem publicly. According to a report in the official press, sharp criticisms of the nomenklatura system were voiced during the discussion on cadre policy in a subcommittee. Delegates made one suggestion after another for reform of the cadre policy: exact definition of the range of nomenklatura, subjection of it to public control, abolition of the nomenklatura of names while leaving that of posts, etc.³⁶⁾ The Congress, however, took no clear-cut decision on this issue, as it did not with almost all issues. Nevertheless, the very fact that the nomenklatura was exposed to open discussion tells how the institution was weakened. It could survive intact only on condition that it be hidden from public view.³⁷⁾

In a press interview of 20 August Marian Wóźniak, newly appointed secretary of the central committee for economic affairs, voiced a candid view of the nomenklatura: "The maintenance of the party nomenklatura in the economy is nothing but the problem of maintenance of the party's leading role in the economy and, to a

36) *Trybuna Ludu*, 18 July 1981.

37) Professor Jerzy J. Wiatr of the University of Warsaw and Professor Włodzimierz Brus of Oxford University, who were so kind as to read the manuscript of the present paper, criticized it for not fully covering the discussion within the party. Referring to his article, "Poland's Party Politics: The Extraordinary Congress of 1981," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 14, no. 4 (December 1981), pp. 813-826, Professor Wiatr pointed out that the democratic procedure which was strictly observed in the elections of the delegates and the new leadership brought the nomenklatura rule completely to ruin. Professor Brus, on the other hand, called my attention to the so-called 'horizontal structures (struktury poziome)' movement in the party organizations which played an important role in the nomenklatura controversy. Though the present writer does not deny the significance of both events, he is inclined to think that neither the 'democratic' congress nor the 'horizontal structures' movement lived up to expectations. In any event, they will be fully taken care of in the forthcoming Japanese edition of the paper.

considerable extent, in the state. The cadre policy whose instrument is the nomenklatura is the basic right of the PZPR as ruling party, which is self-evident and understandable for anyone. *The party will not abandon guiding the economy and shaping and realizing socio-economic policy through nomination of people whom the party trusts most, consequently first of all party members—though not exclusively—for directing posts in the economy. There is no room for discussion on this point.* However, we can discuss and have been discussing for a year how far nomenklatura should reach in the economy. I personally am inclined to think that its range should be restricted to only those posts which have truly basic importance for realization of the party's policy. ... The *new* framework for the nomenklatura on the enterprise level will be determined by the Acts (on Enterprises and Self-management at present under consideration in the Seim), and filled with *new* contents in practice" (italics by Wóźniak's).³⁸⁾

Here we hear from the mouth of the highest party authority on economic affairs that the fate of nomenklatura in the economy depends on the course the self-management movement will take, and that it is directly linked to the fate of nomenklatura in the state. He does not try to justify the party's leading role in the name of ideals of Socialism or Communism, but simply as the inviolable right of a ruling party. What matters is clearly not ideals, but power. One can, however, make a compromise on power, but not on ideals. Wóźniak suggests a certain compromise solution: The most important posts in the economy as well as in the state should be left in the hands of the party, while the less important ones may go to the Solidarity Union.

The Solidarity Union responded to Wóźniak's suggestion by the first resolution of its first congress in September: "The authorities, frightened at the prospect of intensifying and consolidating self-management, try to stifle it in embryo. They are doing it under the pretext of protection of social and state property, but in practice in the name of egoistic interests of the party-state bureaucracy. The defence of the so-called nomenklatura which the authorities have recently undertaken is an attempt to maintain the same cadre system that drove our economy into today's disaster through nomination of managers according to political criteria."³⁹⁾ It emerges from the resolution that the Solidarity Union regards the nomenklatura not as a power problem, but a problem of ideals. There is no room for compromise from this point of view. The Solidarity Union called for a national referendum on self-management. If this referendum had been carried out, it would have amounted to a vote of non-confidence to the government. That would have been nothing but a head-on confrontation of first class political significance between the party and the union.

This crisis could be overcome only through Wałęsa's last minute intervention. On 24 September he arranged a compromise along the line of Wóźniak's statement. He acted arbitrarily on his own authority, which caused great resentment among his comrades in the union. It was only with great pains that Wałęsa managed to get the

38) *Trybuna Ludu*, 21 August 1981.

39) "Uchwała I Zjazdu Delegatów NSZZ 'Solidarność'," *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 11 September 1981, p. 3.

compromise first through the KKP and then through the second half of the congress.⁴⁰⁾

The case of the referendum in the Katowice Steelmill is indicative of what direction the popular movement was taking at this time. In August the bulletin of the Solidarity Union in the Steelmill *Wolny Związkowiec* (Free Unionist), which was printed in the printing house of the Steelmill, carried anti-Soviet articles and caricatures. The Public Prosecutor took the decision to suspend the printing house, a decision which was carried out by the general director of the Steelmill Stanisław Bednarczyk. Then the Solidarity Union launched a campaign against Bednarczyk and called for a referendum on his directorship which was held on 7–8 September. 12,309 out of the 15,776 employees present in the Steelmill on the designated days (78%) participated in the referendum. 9,850 (80%) voted against and 1,594 (12.9%) for the directorship of Bednarczyk. The rest abstained from voting.⁴¹⁾

What is involved here is not an economic problem, but a purely political one. What is more significant is that people believed that through a referendum they could kick out a director whom they did not like politically, and that here lay the sense of self-management.

Symptoms of the disintegration of the state apparatus that had already appeared in April were accelerated. Government authority was visibly declining. This phenomenon was most obvious in the deterioration of public security and rebellions of prisoners. According to a press report, during January–November 1981 disturbances broke out in 109 out of a total of 146 prisons of the country (74.7%), and 47,000 out of a total of 72,000 prisoners (65.3%) took part in those disturbances.⁴²⁾

Not only prisoners, but also policemen were rebelling. Right after the Gdańsk agreement a police union movement appeared which gained strong momentum after the Bydgoszcz affair. It was so advanced by 1 June that a meeting of 2,000 delegates representing all 49 prefectures was held in Warsaw. The delegates brought with them 42,000 signatures of their colleagues to a petition for a Free Police Union. Though 500 activists were fired, the movement went on growing. They demanded, among other things, that the police not be used to solve social conflicts, that the union be independent of the ministry, and that it be allowed to cooperate with other unions. It is symptomatic of the situation that even some functionaries of the security police were said to join the movement.⁴³⁾

Evidently the state apparatus was being deprived of coercing forces, the *ultima ratio* of the state. If some tumult broke out on the streets, the police alone was no longer able to get the situation under control. People called then the nearest branch of the Solidarity Union. It was no rare case for public order to be restored only through mediation of union functionaries. Thus, the union was willingly or unwill-

40) "Obrady KKP 'Solidarności' w Gdańsku" *Życie Warszawy*, 23 September; "Rozpoczęła się II tura Zjazdu 'Solidarności'," *ibid.*, 28 September 1981; "I Krajowy Zjazd Delegatów. Diariusz zjazdowy," *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 2 October, pp. 4–6; "Uchwała," *ibid.*, 9 October 1981, p. 2; "Oświadczenie," *ibid.*, p. 6.

41) "Konflikt w Hucie Katowice," *Życie Warszawy*, 11 September 1981.

42) "W kraju," *Polityka*, 21 November 1981, p. 2.

43) "Chcemy służyć społeczeństwu," *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 9 October 1981, p. 16.

lingly taking over the police function, one of the most important functions of the state.

The *de facto* political role of the union was increasing, and readiness to assume that role as well, but inconsistently. At the Solidarity Congress in September a lot of voices were raised which called for elimination of 'the leading role of the party' from the union's statute⁴⁴⁾ and even for the calling into being of new political parties.⁴⁵⁾ There was also a demand for the holding of free elections on the national level.⁴⁶⁾ The demand for free elections to the Sejm was included in even the "Declaration of the First Congress."⁴⁷⁾

All these demands, however, were turned down by the Congress. The Program of the Union, adopted by the Congress, explicitly forbade the Union to create political parties. It did indeed call for free elections to local assemblies (*radny narodowe*), but of the Sejm said vaguely that "a generally accepted representative character should be restored to it by a new election system which makes it possible for all political parties, social organizations and groups of citizens freely to put up candidates."⁴⁸⁾ Evidently the union top was still determined to uphold the policy of political asceticism, in contrast to the increasingly aggressive mood of the rank and file.

The call for free elections to local assemblies and the vague attitude toward the Sejm elections were a product of compromise. Local elections were scheduled for February 1982, but the Sejm elections for two years later. The Union top took a radical view on local elections, thus accommodating the popular mood, but at the same time they left the more important question of Sejm elections till later on. Now a new question arose: How should union members behave in such elections? Should they vote for the PZPR since they recognize its leading role in their statute? If not, for whom? There is no party of their own to vote for since they forbid themselves to have political parties. How are they going to wage an election campaign? What if they win? Are they going to run local or state affairs without their own political party? How serious are they about their demand for free elections? Do they want only to spite the authorities? Those are difficulties and contradictions resulting from the compromise solution.

Government authority continued to decline rapidly. An opinion poll, carried out among the 500 union members on 26–31 October, yields the following results: To the question "what organizations do you trust?" 95% answered Solidarity Union, 93% Church, 68% army, but only 21% Government, and 7% PZPR. To the question "do you think that popular support for the Government has increased during the last weeks?" 10% answered yes, 65% no, it has decreased, and 17% no change.⁴⁹⁾

Indicative of the impatient popular mood around this time is a wave of referenda

44) "Diariusz zjazdowy," *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 11 September 1981, p. 6 (Jan Rulewski); *ibid.*, 18 September 1981, pp. 4, 6, 8 (Lech Sobieszek).

45) *Ibid.*, p. 3 (Zygmunt Rolicz).

46) *Ibid.*, p. 3 (Patrycjusz Kosmoski).

47) "Deklaracja I Zjazdu Delegatów," *ibid.*, p. 1.

48) "Program NSZZ 'Solidarność'," *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 16 October 1981, supplement, p. 7.

49) "Widziane z dołu," *ibid.*, 20 November 1981, p. 3.

in factories. For instance, in a referendum held in the Fadrom factory in Wrocław on 20 October 3 questions were put: 1. Do you support a vote of non-confidence in the government? 2. Do you support a dissolution of the Sejm and new elections according to the new procedure recommended by the Solidarity Union? 3. Do you support the abolition of the constitutional provision on the leading role of the PZPR? An overwhelming majority voted in the affirmative on all questions.⁵⁰⁾

Shortly thereafter another referendum was held in the Ponar factory in Żywiec which brought about a tangible consequence: expulsion of the party organization from the factory. The action was justified by the argument that no public facility belonging to a self-managing factory may be placed at the disposal of a political party that enjoys little support among the employees.⁵¹⁾ This 'Rout the party out of factories!' campaign immediately spread to other factories, especially in the Mazurian region.⁵²⁾ The campaign was a great success. It was not so widely reported, either in the official press, or in the Solidarity press, but after the military takeover how devastating the campaign was for the party became public. A party activist in the car tire factory in Olsztyn openly admitted that the party was driven out of its base, out of the working mass.⁵³⁾ The frightened secretariat of the central committee on 24 November issued a special appeal asking people to stop the action.⁵⁴⁾ But apparently the appeal was not heeded.

The gradual undermining of government authority from the bottom found inevitably its expression at the top. In October the Solidarity Union proposed to the government the establishment of a Social Council on National Economy. It was supposed to consist of people nominated by independent social institutions like the Solidarity Union, the Catholic Church, the Academy of Sciences, etc. and to have the task of making the decisions of the government on economic policy creditable in the eyes of the public. The Council was to be bestowed with veto on government decisions⁵⁵⁾ This was clearly a challenge to government authority on the highest level. But the Solidarity Union still asserted that it wished to be only controller of the authorities, but not the authorities themselves.⁵⁶⁾

At the closed meeting of the National Commission (KK, renamed in October) of

50) Teresa Grabczyński, Jerzy Bielecki, "Od Olivi do Radomia (4)," *Trybuna Ludu*, 6 January 1981.

51) They are said to have referred to thesis 23, point 3 of the Solidarity Program which calls for: "subordination to law of all factors of public life, including political and social organizations. It is, therefore, necessary to change constitutional regulations concerning the judicial status of those organizations and to define in a clear-cut way their judicial relations to the Sejm and to other organs of administrative authorities." It is not known whether this was intended as a call for such an action.

52) Bie, *op. cit.*; "Ein Kampf, den die Partei gewinnen muß," *Der Spiegel*, 7 December 1981, p. 125.

53) "Z głową do góry," *Trybuna Ludu*, 13 January 1982.

54) "Oświadczenie Sekretariatu KC PZPR," *ibid.*, 25 November 1981. See also Anna Pawłowska, "Niepodważalna obecność," 26 November 1981.

55) Krzysztof Czabański, "Rozmowy," *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 23 October 1981; pp. 1, 3; "O Społecznej Radzie Gospodarki Narodowej," *ibid.*, 27 November 1981, p. 1.

56) Ernest Skalski, "Kontrola—nie władza!" *ibid.*, 23 October 1981, p. 3.

the Solidarity Union in Radom the radical mood finally prevailed. Such radicals as Zbigniew Bujak from Mazuria, Zdzisław Rozwałak from Poznań and Jan Rulewski from Bydgoszcz called for the immediate establishment of a Provisional Government. The proposed Social Council on National Economy would function as a Provisional Government until free elections could be held. This time such a radical suggestion was not objected to by moderates. There was also a proposal to set up a Workers' Guard. Even Wałęsa went so far as to say that a confrontation with the government would be unavoidable.⁵⁷⁾

The radical mood reached a climax at the plenary meeting of the KK in Gdańsk on 11–12 December. Discussions revolved around a national referendum: on what questions, when, what to do if the government rejects, etc. Finally they adopted a resolution which confirmed the line of Radom: A national referendum should be carried out by February 15 on 3 questions: 1. Whether the present government may remain in office; 2. Whether a new government should emerge from free elections; 3. Whether Soviet interests in Poland should be respected.⁵⁸⁾ Given the popular mood at the time, the results of such a referendum were predetermined. Doubtless the Solidarity Union was bidding for state power.

The state-society conflict stepped into the last logical phase. There was no clear-cut dividing line between the economic and the politicising phases, as had been the case between the social and the economic ones. There was only a slow and gradual sliding into the new phase. Sometimes one has the impression that the actors, the union as well as the party, were acting against their will. The union did not want to encroach upon the party's domain, but was forced to penetrate it with the passage of time. On the other hand, the party did not want to provoke the union, but was constantly drawn into conflict with it and made one retreat after another. The politicising phase never came to its logical consequence. It might have come, but it was violently interrupted by the intrusion of a third force, the military.

Could the Solidarity Union have taken the helm of state affairs? It could not, judging from all circumstances. It still lacked the basic condition: competence for managing the economy, not to speak of the state administration. Moreover, it had no clear conception of a foreign policy, particularly a policy toward the Soviet Union, which is of vital importance for Poland. Finally, the economic conditions were so

57) "Szczerość, która musi przerażać. O co im naprawdę chodzi," *Trybuna Ludu*, 7 December 1981. This is partly confirmed by Józef Duriasz, "Radom: stanowisko na dzis," *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 11 December 1981, p. 3.

58) See reports and articles in: *Trybuna Ludu*, 12–13, 14, 18 December 1981, 12, 13 January 1982, and *Życie Warszawy*, 12–13 December 1981. These reports and articles have now become the only Polish sources on the memorable Gdańsk meeting. They are indeed detailed, but tendentious and often omit important aspects altogether. They must be supplemented by Western press agency sources, such as Reuter, DPA, AFP, Kyodo, etc. Postscript: After having written the paper, the writer received two materials from Solidarity source on the conferences in Radom and Gdańsk in Japanese translation: *Porando geppo* (Poland Monthly), no. 2 (25 March 1982), pp. 5–10. The new materials, however, do not seem to necessitate a revision of the passage in the paper.

disastrous that if state responsibility had been imposed upon the Solidarity Union, it would have been nothing but a catastrophe for the Solidarity Union itself. The logic of a revolutionary movement from the bottom, however, compelled it to move in that direction.

V. Controversy over Nomenklatura among Intellectuals

1. *Introductory Remarks*

The controversy among intellectuals over nomenklatura was stimulated by the anti-nomenklatura movement of the mass. The relation, however, might have been the other way round. Intellectuals often stimulate and even precede mass movements. The present writer does not accept the vulgar-Marxist hypothesis of a rigid correspondence between the ideological superstructure and the social base, but supposes that there is a close reciprocal relationship between them. There is also a problem of time lag between the two movements. The movement of the intellectuals has its own logic, as the movement of the mass does. But when there is a time lag, one movement is necessarily influenced by the other; one cannot be independent of the other. It is the case with the intellectuals' controversy over nomenklatura in Poland in the period under consideration.

It is in the pre-entry period that the intellectuals tackled the problem independently of the mass movement. Their criticisms of the nomenklatura system had some impact upon the workers' revolt in the summer of 1980, though it seems to have been minimal. Once the mass rose up against the system itself, the intellectuals obviously lagged behind. It is only in the second phase of the mass movement that the intellectuals' polemics gained some momentum. It was sharp enough, but the odium of 'late-comers' hung about it.

How does a controversy about a social institution proceed? If an existing institution is not challenged, there is no need to defend it. A controversy breaks out only when a challenge to it appears. Thus, it usually takes the following course: first criticism, then defence, and finally total negation of the status quo. In a historical context, the controversy opens with a progressive criticism of the status quo, goes through a conservative defence, and comes to a finish with a reactionary or revolutionary negation. It often happens that the revolutionaries consciously or unconsciously borrow conceptual models from the reactionaries.⁵⁹⁾

The nomenklatura controversy in Poland, however, did not and could not follow this pattern. First, the institution in question, though firmly anchored in society, was after all an informal one. It could not justify itself even in the name of the ruling doctrine. Second, a revolutionary situation was already threatening the institution before the intellectual controversy broke out.

It follows from this that critics of the status quo made a bitter indictment of the institution indeed, but at the same time they could not help defending it

59) Karl Mannheim, "Das konservative Denken. Soziologische Beiträge zum Werden des politisch-historischen Denkens in Deutschland," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, vol. 57 (1927), no. 1, pp. 78-106.

against revolutionary attacks. There was no innocent fury of the progressives who discovered the injustice and the absurdity of the *ancien regime*. Defenders of the status quo were deprived of all arguments for defense and presented symptoms of aphasia. They could not enjoy even the protection of sanctified traditions, which is usually a privilege of conservatives. The beneficiaries of the nomenklatura system themselves were children of a social revolution which had taken place in the recent past. Finally, negators of the status quo could not baldly put forward a utopia which would totally negate reality and at the same time present a vision of the ideal future order as contrasted with the corrupt present one. Rather, they were forced either to justify one change after another postfactumly, or to idealize the pre-Communist past or the present situation of Western countries.

Criticizers of the status quo were represented by the reformist wing of the party and the non-party intellectuals who had always collaborated with the regime. They did not exist as an organization with a clear-cut uniform program and a hierarchy, but as a diffuse group with a certain susceptibility to change in common. The most radical among criticizers of the status quo was perhaps the 'Experience and Future (DiP)' group, led by Stefan Bratkowski, chairman of the Journalists' Association (SDP). Mieczysław F. Rakowski, vice-premier since February 1981 and long time editor-in-chief of the influential weekly *Polityka*, and his group represented the opposite pole and took a stand closer to the status quo group. Rakowski defined his position as 'reformist center' in a speech delivered at the 9th extraordinary party congress.⁶⁰⁾

The reformist wing of the party was influential in journalism, science, culture, the rank and file of the party, and some quarters of the economy, mainly technocrats. They also attracted a substantial part of non-party specialists. The mass media, except television and radio, were almost monopolized by this group. But they were not so influential in the top decision-making body of the party. Rakowski was not elected to the politburo, and Bratkowski was not nominated even delegate to the party congress.

Defenders of the status quo consisted of party conservatives and their followers outside the party. They themselves seemed to prefer the designation 'leftist' or 'Marxist-Leninist' to 'conservative'.⁶¹⁾ They were an organized group with a distinct program and even a hierarchy, in contrast to criticizers of the status quo. For instance, 'Warsaw 80' Club, 'Patriotic Association *Grunwald*', Katowice, Poznań, Szczecin, etc. Fora, 'Association of Clubs of Socio-Political Knowledge *Reality*' and so on were their organizational strongholds which seemed to coordinate their activities with one another. They issued some weeklies and monthlies, such as *Barwy*, *Płomień*, *Grunwald* and *Rzeczywistość*. These journals were noisy and aggressive, but had little influence among the intellectuals. They seldom tried to defend the

60) *Życie Warszawy*, 16 July 1981.

61) A great confusion arose on the notion of 'Left' in Poland after August 1980. See article series "Lewica po polsku" in: *Polityka*, 11 July, 12, 18 September, 4 October, 7 November, 12 December 1981.

nomenklatura as such.⁶²⁾

Their contribution to the nomenklatura controversy lay perhaps not in words, but in deeds which effectively blocked the reform. Their power base was middle-ranking bureaucrats in party, state, and economic apparatuses, the very people who should carry the policy into everyday practice. They had strong anti-modern, anti-Western and anti-semitic tendencies which helped them to attract some extra-party quarters in Polish society. For instance, the Grunwald Association consisted mainly of non-party intellectuals. Defenders of the status quo were strongly represented at the party top by such people as Stefan Olszowski (politburo member), Tadeusz Grabski (politburo member till July 1981), Andrzej Źabiński (politburo member till July 1981), Albin Siwak (politburo member since July 1981), etc.

Negators of the status quo were the intellectuals who flocked to the Solidarity Union. Some Catholic intellectuals joined them, though a large part remained with critics of the status quo or even with defenders of the status quo. *Tygodnik Solidarność*, organ of the Solidarity Union, and *Tygodnik Powszechny*, organ of the Catholic intellectuals, and *Kultura* of Paris, a journal edited by the exiled Polish intellectuals, played a prominent role in publicizing the opinions of the negators of the status quo. There was a large variety of trends within the group, even within the Solidarity intellectuals. In the following section mainly contributions of the KOR and of Catholic intellectuals to the nomenklatura controversy are discussed.

2. Pre-entry Period and Beginning Controversy

It makes little sense to follow the phases of the mass movement while considering the controversy among the intellectuals because the latter took a different pattern of development from the former. Of particular importance for the intellectuals' controversy are the pre-entry period and the economic phase. The social phase was a repetition of the pre-entry period, and the politicising phase a follow-up of the economic phase. No substantially new arguments appeared in either phase. Let us dwell for a while on the pre-entry period and then go over to the economic phase.

The first criticism of the nomenklatura came from those intellectuals who broke with the party after having been active in it, and the second from those who, remaining in the party, tried to criticize the policy of the party leadership. No attempt to analyze the functioning of the nomenklatura was undertaken by the intellectuals who had nothing to do with the Communist movement. The first group is represented by Jacek Kuroń, Karol Modzelewski, and Marek Tarniewski, and the second by Władysław Bieńkowski, Rakowski and the DiP intellectuals.

Kuroń and Modzelewski, in the famous *Open Letter to the Party* of 1964 which analyzed the Polish socialism from the Marxist point of view, set forth the thesis

62) Few media of defenders of the status quo are available in Japan. But the outline of their views can be traced through critical comments by critics of the status quo. See, for instance, Piotr Moszyński's two articles: "Zanim mnie zweryfikują" and "Rzeczywistość," *Polityka*, 4 April and 15 August 1981 respectively. See also Anna Strońska, "Bitwa nad Grunwaldem," *ibid.*, 5 December 1981.

that the party bureaucracy is nothing but a ruling class.⁶³⁾ They did not use the word 'nomenklatura' yet. Besides, what they meant by the 'bureaucratic class' differs from the nomenklatura on certain points. According to them, the 'bureaucratic class' is grounded not on the control of personnel policy, but on the 'collective ownership of means of production', and is interested mainly in 'production for production' and in maintenance of public order for it. Kuroń and Modzelewski distinguish the 'central political bureaucracy' from the technocrats and assert that only the former deserves the designation of a 'ruling class.' The 'central political bureaucracy' counts only several hundred, while we know that the nomenklatura counts a thousand times more. In spite of these differences, however, their views on the need for an anti-bureaucratic revolution and transfer of state ownership to 'social ownership' played a prominent role in the moulding of dissident views on the nomenklatura in Poland.

Marek Tarniewski is a political scientist of independent mind and a very productive publicist. He undertook a detailed analysis of the nomenklatura in a book written in 1972-73.⁶⁴⁾ Tarniewski distinguishes the power elite from the ruling class. The power elite is characterised by participation in power, and the ruling class by ownership of means of production. The union of them is more perfect and structured in Socialist countries than Wright Mills observed it to be in the United States. The ownership of means of production in Socialist countries, claims Tarniewski, has a collective and organized character, and is inherited not by person from person, but by group from group. The owners of means of production, that is, the ruling class, though small in number, are well organized and self-conscious, a true *Klasse für sich* in the Marxian sense. They are the group of apparatchiki from which the power elite is recruited. The nomenklatura is nothing but an institutionalization of this relationship.

In the latter half of the 70's Kuroń and Modzelewski returned to active oppositional activities. Both of them broke with Marxism and stopped making macro-sociological analyses. Their basic motivations for political actions, however, did not undergo a change. Kuroń noted in November 1976: "What I have written here differs basically from what I have been writing and saying for the last 20 years on the same topic. I have remained, however, loyal to the basic values which I wish to serve. I changed my mind only on the form and the way to serve those values best and realistically, and to realize superior values."⁶⁵⁾ It is no coincidence that the idea of 'self-organization of society' underlying Kuroń's and KOR's activities aimed at undermining the personnel-political control of society by the party, that is, the nomenklatura.

Kuroń, Modzelewski, and Tarniewski lay stress on the aspect of social structuration in the nomenklatura. The class approach and the antagonistic view of society which follows from the class theory are characteristic of all revolutionary intel-

63) Jacek Kuroń and Karol Modzelewski, *List otwarty do Partii*, Paris 1966. Only the Japanese translation was available to the present writer.

64) Marek Tarniewski, *Ewolucja czy rewolucja*, Paris 1975.

65) Jacek Kuroń, *Zasady ideowe*, Paris 1978, p. 13.

lectuals in modern history.

Criticism of the nomenklatura, however, was undertaken also by party intellectuals. Władysław Bieńkowski, Gomułka's former comrade and Minister of Education in the post-October period, severely criticized the 'specific understanding' of the party's leading role as early as 1970.⁶⁶⁾ "The leading role of the party is understood in theory as well as in practice as the monopolization of all the directing posts by the party. ... Whenever the progressives in the party try to change this inflexible, outdated principle and to adapt it to the requirements of the time, as in Poland after 1956 or in Czechoslovakia in 1967–68, a violent dispute breaks out, and the status quo group opposes the 'capitulationism' or the 'abandonment of the party's leading role.' Whenever attempts at reform fail, the reins are pulled up, and the cadre policy of the state is divided into the 'nomenklaturas' of the party apparatus which is eager to defend their leading role on all levels. It covers posts not only in the state administration, but also in the entire economy, educational and research institutions, and even social organizations. 'Elective' cadre posts of social organizations are in practice nominated by party committees."⁶⁷⁾

The effectiveness of the cadre selection system depends on how broad the basis is and how proper the criteria are, says Bieńkowski. But such an understanding of the party's leading role automatically narrows the basis for cadre recruitment, because it means distrust of society and suppression of society's initiatives. For the party "the entire mass of society is a foreign sea in which individual lines are cast." On the other hand, "the criterion of 'political reliability', which very often depends on police investigation, results in a permanent negative selection. In other words, selection of this kind eliminates people of broad knowledge and initiative, people of independent mind who take a fresh and critical view of everything. ... Selection and advancement according to such criteria leads straight to fossilization of the apparatus and stiffening of the whole organism and accelerates the process. A merry-go-round of directing posts within the same circle of people has been practiced over years, and persons who have turned out not to be equal to the task are nominated for another, higher post. The party, having performed the leading role in such a way, has caused a lot of moral disintegration, weakening of social bonds and enormous waste of social energy, and has transformed itself from a factor of dynamic development into one of social and economic stagnation."⁶⁸⁾

Bieńkowski's criticism of the ruling system unexpectedly found an echo in the party press after the December uprising of 1970 on the Baltic coast. In the early summer of 1971 the weekly *Polityka* published Rakowski's editorial "A Good Specialist, But Non-Party Man" which sharply attacked party practice in cadre selection and became a journalistic sensation of that time.⁶⁹⁾ The party interferes with person-

66) Władysław Bieńkowski, *Drogi wyjścia*, Paris 1971.

67) *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 37. See also the same author, *Motory i hamulce socjalizmu*, Paris 1969, pp. 22–23.

68) Bieńkowski, *Drogi*, pp. 36–37.

69) Mieczysław F. Rakowski, "Dobry fachowiec, ale bezpartyjny," *Polityka*, 3 July 1971, pp. 1, 6. See also Rakowski's follow-up article, "Jeszcze w sprawie bezpartyjnych,"

nel policy excessively, whenever and wherever a post with the adjective 'directing' is involved, confirms Rakowski. This has deepened the cleavage between *we* and *they* in social consciousness. Too much emphasis on 'submissiveness (*dyspozycyjność*)' as the basic quality of the directing cadre has brought about two unfavorable phenomena: declining pressure of professional competence upon people performing directing functions on one hand, and declining significance of ideological-moral motivation in joining the party on the other. Rakowski strongly urges the promotion of talented specialists irrespective of their party affiliation. He does, however, make an important reservation: "This, of course, does not mean that the party at the present stage of building socialism can completely abandon the criterion of party affiliation in cadre policy. In our state there are posts which are and should be reserved to party members — here is also the sense of the party's leading role." He only wished to invite talented non-party specialists to politically safe posts, in order to raise economic efficiency. When he was attacked by the party conservatives, he quickly retreated from his original position. His campaign for non-party specialists had little effect, and the nomenklatura system was reinforced.

Bieńkowski's line of thinking was followed by the DiP group at the end of the 70's. The first enquête, conducted by this group in May 1979, not mentioning the nomenklatura by name, pointed to increasing social stratification. The income differences which had reached 20:1 were perceived by society to be a result of political preferment or discrimination. 80% of the directors were party members, and 60% party functionaries. The privileges extended not only to posts and incomes, but also to access to commodities, medical care, education, and foreign trips. The privileged circle had not only enlarged in the 70's, but also inheritance of privileges had come to the fore. "The tendency to nominate 'one's own people' of the younger generation for posts is increasing. Such a tendency is spreading not only to directing posts in the economy or the state administration, but also to all posts, for instance, in publishing houses, universities and research institutes."⁷⁰⁾

The second report of the same group, which came out in May 1980, mentioned the 'so-called nomenklatura' and stressed the "need to liquidate it, or at least to restrict it or change its principles." The nomenklatura was characterized as a cadre policy which is not based on qualifications, responsibility, initiative, professional and administrative abilities and moral qualities, but on criteria which have nothing to do with these, and particularly the merry-go-round of the posts and the party's monopolization of directing posts were criticized.⁷¹⁾

Bieńkowski and the DiP group concentrated their criticism on distortions in elite recruitment which caused a dysfunctioning of the control-and-integration mechanism. The indictment was bitter, but they did not question the party's leading role itself. They presupposed the party's leading role and asked themselves how to realize it best. If not through the cadre policy which inevitably leads to the nomen-

op. cit., 2 October 1971, pp. 1, 11.

70) *Raport o stanie narodu i PRL*, Paris 1980, pp. 75-76.

71) Konwersatorium 'Doświadczenie i Przyszłość,' *Jak z tego wyjść? Opracowanie wyników ankiety*, Paris 1980, pp. 29-30.

klatura, how? This is the eternal question with which all anti-status quo groups are confronted. There was already a certain evolution of thinking from Bieńkowski to the DiP group. Though the DiP group did not take the class approach, they pointed out that a closed social group which rules over society and is provided with all privileges was being formed.

There was little mention of the nomenklatura during the first six months following the Gdańsk agreement. One of the earliest criticisms came from within the party. Wojciech Lamentowicz, docent of the College of Social Sciences (special school for the training of party cadres), published a controversial article, "Party—Director or Leader?" in the *Życie Warszawy* in the middle of November 1980. The author, proceeding on the assumption that there had been a fundamental mistake in the understanding of the party's leading role, elucidated: "It is not the party as a whole, but the party apparatus, that is, the secretariat and the executive on all levels, from the politburo down to the executive of the party cell (POP), that has been active up to now. In addition, the party apparatus has not engaged in the politico-ideological leadership (przywództwo ideowo-polityczne), but in the administrative direction (administracyjne kierownictwo), not holding the elections which are required by the statute, but depending on the elective code (klucz wyborczy) and the nomenklatura."

What is most important is the distinction between administrative direction and political leadership, stressed Lamentowicz. "Leadership is political correlation between leaders and supporters. No leadership exists where no open controversy exists on the goal and means and where citizens and party members are an anonymous mass and the so-called directing staff are also an anonymous 'they.' The condition of leadership is to represent various interests effectively, without façade or pretense."⁷²⁾

Here some explanations on the terminology seem to be desirable. There are three words in Polish which correspond to the English *leadership*: *kierownictwo*, *przywództwo* and *przewodnictwo*. *Kierownictwo*, which is most often used, means something more coercive than *leadership* and is closer to *directing*. *Przewodnictwo*, which is used in the Constitution, means something less coercive than *leadership* and is closer to *guidance*. *Przywództwo* is something in between, a little closer to *przewodnictwo*. The three words have not been distinguished in everyday use, and never in regard to the party's role. Now suddenly Lamentowicz suggested making a distinction. What Lamentowicz had in mind is a party which guides the people not through coercion, but through persuasion. Evidently he echoed Bieńkowski's view. But is it possible to secure the party's leading role only through persuasion, only thanks to an attractive program? What if it turns out to be futile? Lamentowicz' article unleashed a long series of discussions in the party circle which ended up in branding the view as revisionistic heresy and in expelling its author from the party.

Lamentowicz was still a lonely voice in the wilderness at that time. It was only three months later that his followers sporadically appeared in the official press. For instance, Marian Rybicki, a famous party lawyer and professor of the Academy of

72) Wojciech Lamentowicz, "Partia—kierownik czy przywódca?" *Życie Warszawy*, 14 November 1980.

Sciences, in February 1981 attacked "the way the party apparatus gives detailed instructions to social organizations directly, without judicial basis and often by telephone, and makes use of nomenklaturistic dependence for that purpose."⁷³⁾

A month later Artur Starewicz, once influential secretary of the central committee for cultural affairs, joined him, saying: "The monopoly of personnel decisions from top to bottom—a mighty instrument of the authorities—has distorted objective criteria for cadre selection from the very beginning, produced careerists on a mass scale, and eliminated highly qualified non-party specialists. This system has survived over years and caused a negative cadre selection in many fields whose terrible effects the entire society has experienced quite recently."⁷⁴⁾ Such criticisms added nothing new to what Bieńkowski had said ten years before, but the fact that they were now expressed in the official press was new.

What is worthy of mention in this connection is that non-party intellectuals also began to raise their voices. Stanisław Sołtyński, a law professor of Poznań University, wrote in February: "Is the party's leading role compatible with the principle of equality of citizens? Non-party members expect an answer to this question from the coming party congress, for many of us have felt treated as citizens of second class in the past."⁷⁵⁾ Such a non-party voice can be reckoned among criticizers of the status quo, because he does not question the legitimacy of the system itself, but criticizes only its functioning.

In the first phase there were few contributions to the nomenklatura controversy. If there were any, they repeated what had been said in the past. The scene was still dominated by criticizers of the status quo whose most radical wing, the DiP group, was to launch a new cycle of the controversy toward the end of the first phase.

3. *Between Reform and Revolution: Controversy in Its Heyday*

1) **DiP's Program of Radical Reform**

The third report of the DiP group, *Society Facing the Crisis*, came out in February 1981.⁷⁶⁾ The specific weight of the DiP group in the opposition movement had in the meantime undergone a subtle change. They were influential when isolated intellectuals were bearers of the movement. After August 1980, however, the mass replaced the intellectuals as a driving force of the movement. The lack of a mass base in discussion clubs of intellectuals like the DiP group necessarily lessened their role. The DiP group tried to influence party opinion, but with little success. They could not even get their document published in the country. On the other hand, their voice hardly reached the broad mass of the Solidarity Union. Therefore, many authors of the third report simply chose to go over to the Solidarity Union.

73) Marian Rybicki, "Partia—państwo, a organizacje społeczne," *Kultura* (Warsaw), 15 February 1981, p. 7. See also the same author, "Rząd—struktura nieznana," *Życie Warszawy*, 12 and 13 May 1981.

74) Artur Starewicz, "W poszukiwaniu sedna sprawy," *ibid.*, 15 March 1981, p. 8.

75) Sołtyński, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

76) Konwersatorium 'Doświadczenie i Przyszłość', *Raport trzeci. Społeczeństwo wobec kryzysu*, published in: *Kultura* (Paris), May 1981, pp. 109–173.

The DiP group proceeded from the assumption that the development of the situation in the party was of decisive importance for the country as a whole because “the party’s leading role in society is beyond discussion owing to geopolitical necessity and to the historical conditions of the country.” The report reminds the people: “In this country no democracy is possible without democracy in the party, and no change can be permanent without corresponding change in the party.” From this point of view the recent democratization movement in the party, particularly the ‘horizontal ties’ movement, deserves admiration and kindles hope for the future. But at the same time “we must face squarely what a calamity the sudden disintegration of existing party structures may bring about for the state. Because the party structures—owing to the lack of a clear ideological framework—are the mainstay of integrity of the party and symbolize the permanence of socialism in Poland in the eyes of foreign Communists. Therefore, the party reform—however indispensable and urgent it may be—must not have a violent and spontaneous character.”

Of course, the party cannot remain as before, continues the report. The party’s role should change from direction (*kierownictwo*) to guidance (*przewodnictwo*). What is most important for the party as a guide of the nation is an ability to create programs, that is, an ability to win social forces for cooperation through persuasion. What is needed concretely is the following measures: 1) Give ideological activities priority over executive function. 2) Separate the competence of the state apparatus from that of the party apparatus. 3) Restrict the power of the party apparatus, subordinating it to the representative organ. 4) Introduce a tenure system of directing posts (maximum: 2 terms). 5) Permit freedom of criticism in the party. 6) “Abolish all privileges so that no material interests which would be impossible to realize in a normal professional career might be drawn from party posts.” 7) Carry out an ideological renewal, reviving the democratic and self-governing traditions of Polish socialism.⁷⁷⁾

The DiP report attacks the privileged bureaucracy most sharply: Because the authorities have not been subjected to social control, a permanent cleavage has appeared in Polish society, and “a bureaucratic group in state administration, party and economy, closely connected with the ruling elite and concentrating tremendous uncontrolled power in its hands,” has come into being. This group has “accumulated political and economic power thanks to a generous grant of privileges and toleration of corruption and unlawful acts,” particularly since 1976. “From the formal point of view, the ‘bureaucratic’ group is composed of laborers, but laborers of a special kind who determine principles of distribution of the national income, giving preference to their own aims above all, and determine their own formal or informal, open or secret income for themselves. It is possible to foresee that this group, at least a large part of it, will come into conflict with an authentic representation of laborers like the Solidarity Union. ... They will fight for the maintenance of monopoly of power and of the free and uncontrolled right of possession of means of production.”⁷⁸⁾

As seen above, the DiP criticism of the privileged bureaucracy is radical and

77) *Ibid.*, pp. 147–152.

78) *Ibid.*, p. 124.

sounds almost like revolutionary propaganda. There is only one step from the 'bureaucratic group' of the DiP report to the 'bureaucratic class' of Kuroń and Modzelewski, particularly because the 'bureaucratic group' is characterized as the possessor of means of production. But the concrete measures they suggest against the overgrown bureaucracy are unexpectedly mild: "Abolish privileges and formal and informal inequalities before the law; ... change the cadre policy in the administration and economy, basing personnel decisions on qualifications and verified abilities of the candidate; radically restrict the so-called 'nomenklatura' system and practices which make it difficult or impossible for non-party members to assume directing posts."⁷⁹⁾ That means that the DiP report suggests not the abolition, but only a restriction of the nomenklatura system.

Such moderation appears also in their view of self-management of the enterprise. They stress the importance of self-management for two reasons: 1) realization of social values of socialism (Oskar Lange); 2) solution of actual socio-economic problems. Their idea differs from government projects in that they wish to see not pretended, but authentic self-management, based on movement from the bottom and provided not only with joint responsibility, but also with joint right to decide. The DiP report, however, does not mention the problem of who has the right to nominate and recall the director.⁸⁰⁾ In other words, it looks at self-management as a means to realize Socialist ideals and raise economic efficiency, but not as a means to overthrow the existing system.

The program of the DiP, however radical it might sound, is firmly anchored in the system. Indeed, it talks about the privileged bureaucracy, but only as a product of a policy, not of the system, only as a group, not as a class. Indeed, it welcomes pressures from below, but admonishes at the same time that they should not go too far. Though the impact of the DiP program upon the mass was limited, as mentioned above, its influence on the intellectuals was profound, as it soon turned out.

2) Solidarity's Program of Self-limiting Revolution

The Solidarity Union did not have a program for the first year of its existence, a symbolic fact which shows that in the beginning was the act, not the word. The first draft of a program, however, took shape in March 1981. It was published in April as *Lines of Action of the Union in the Present Situation of the Country*.⁸¹⁾

The document declares: The existing political system is not able to improve itself. Therefore, the present crisis cannot be overcome until a profound reform of the political system is undertaken. Solidarity is guarantor of this reform, 'odnowa (renewal)', as it is called in Poland. "Either Solidarity changes its surrounding environment, or the *ancien regime* imposes its norms and aims upon Solidarity, paralyzes our efforts and finally swallows us, destroying hope for renewal. For us there is no return from the path taken. Only forward, forward to a complete renewal of the country!" The either-or thinking—either party or union, either past or future,

79) *Ibid.*, pp. 136–137.

80) *Ibid.*, pp. 157–160.

81) "Kierunki działania Związku w obecnej sytuacji kraju," *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 17 April 1981, insertion.

either evil or good—is peculiar to all negators of the status quo. Solidarity intellectuals did not worry about the future of the party's leading role, as the DiP intellectuals did. Did they then aim at a total negation of the existing system?

Lines of Action did not content itself with the indictment of privileges of the ruling circles. It proceeded further to a class analysis: "*A closed class of rulers who are not subjected to control by the ruled has been formed* in the bureaucratic system of state administration and economic management. People in authority make decisions, taking into consideration not the interests of society, but their own personal interests, material privileges and careers. ... To a considerable extent the economic bureaucracy was responsible that no steps were taken to prevent the outbreak of the crisis in 1976–79. Usually the state bureaucracy also was an adversary of all changes and reforms which might undermine their posts, income and influence." (italics in the original)

It would be logical to call for liquidation of the ruling class if it has become a stumbling block for social justice and progress. But the conclusion of *Lines of Action* was surprisingly moderate. It suggests as 'guarantees for the future' only the following four measures: rule of law, open public life, performance principle, and local autonomy. As regards the nomenklatura, the draft program tolerates it only as for 'political posts.' As regards privileges of the ruling circles, it calls for the introduction of progressive taxation and abolition of the notorious decrees of 1972 which grant large pensions and allowances to high-ranking party and state officials and their families.⁸²⁾

Thus, *Lines of Action* does not aim at an overthrow of the existing system, but only at elimination of certain distortions and excesses of it. The manifesto makes it clear at the very outset: "Being a trade union, we do not intend to replace the state authorities in their tasks, but we want to represent interests of laborers to them." It states on another place: "We do not intend to replace the government, but only to indicate basic directions of economic and social policy." It appears from this that they understand themselves as a force within the existing system, a kind of pressure group.

Though they proceed from a diametrically opposite premise, they come to almost the same conclusion as the DiP group. The difference is reduced perhaps to only one point: who should be the guide of the nation? It is the Solidarity Union for the Solidarity intellectuals, while the DiP group expects this role from the party. If, however, the Solidarity Union is understood as nothing more than a pressure group, this difference is negligible. This is why the Solidarity revolution is characterized as a self-limiting revolution by an oppositional sociologist.⁸³⁾

But the Solidarity manifesto contains at least one demand which might, in its ultimate consequence, cause a disintegration of the existing system. It is a call for self-management. The manifesto, though laying main stress on the strengthening of independence of the enterprise and the raising of economic efficiency, states clearly:

82) See above pp. 66–67.

83) Jadwiga Staniszkis, "Samoograniczająca się rewolucja," *Kultura* (Warsaw), 22 March 1981, p. 9. See also the same author, *op. cit.*, pp. 307–339.

"The participation of employees' self-management in appointment and displacement of the director (nomination, appraisal, or holding of public contest) is especially necessary." The formulation is still careful. It does not demand that the employees' self-management *appoint and displace* the director, but that it *participate* in the process. Nevertheless, it is a call for liquidation of the party's monopoly of personnel decisions in the economy, that is, liquidation of the nomenklatura in the economy. At least it is understood so by the mass. Thus, the program of self-limiting revolution contains certain contradictions from which that of radical reform is free.

The draft program of Solidarity evoked a strong echo in broad circles of Polish society. It was commented on in almost all journals and newspapers, including official ones. Its impact on public opinion was pervasive. In this respect it goes far beyond any other document published during the 16 months of the Polish experiment, including the Solidarity program which was adopted only six months later.

3) Technocrats in Search of Way Out

From March on the self-management movement from below made itself increasingly felt. It is managers on the spot of conflict that were first confronted with the challenge of the workers. Most of them had no special sympathy with self-management, feeling threatened by it in their position. But some showed understanding for the movement and tried to accommodate themselves to the requirements of the time. Especially those in top positions of enterprises, pragmatically oriented economists, and economic journalists welcomed the initiative for reform from below.

On 16 April a round table article with a pregnant title, *Economy in the Nomenklatura* (not *Nomenklatura in the Economy!*) appeared in the supplement to *Życie Warszawy*.⁸⁴⁾ This supplement *Życie i Nowoczesność* (Life and Modernity) appeared under the separate editorship of Stefan Bratkowski and often offered space to oppositional intellectuals and Solidarity sympathisers. Participants in the round table were the economic secretary of the district committee of the party in Warsaw-Wola, the first secretary of the party committee of the wireless factory *Talkom* in Warsaw, the general director of the bulb factory *Rosa Luxemburg* in Warsaw, and two fellows of the Institute of Administrative Organization and Cadre Training who were co-authors of Leszek Barcerowicz' economic reform plan. This was the first article in the official press that, though still limited to the economy, dealt with the nomenklatura problem as such.

The round table brought some interesting facts to light: posts in the state apparatus whose personnel management requires appraisal by party organizations on a certain level were systematized by resolutions of the politburo in 1972⁸⁵⁾ and by supplementary regulations of the secretariat of the central committee in 1977. There are nomenklaturas of the central committee, prefecture committees, community committees, district committees, factory committees, etc. General directors of big factories like the Rosa Luxemburg factory in Warsaw belong to the central committee nomenklatura. The application of nomenklatura principles within the factory

84) "Gospodarka w nomenklaturze," *Życie Warszawy*, 16 April 1981, supplement: *Życie i Nowoczesność*.

85) For the politburo resolutions, see above chapter 3.

changes from case to case. Sometimes appraisal by a corresponding party organization is required, but sometimes appraisal by superior economic organs like trusts (zjednoczenie) or ministries suffices. There is a difference between appraisal (opiniowanie) and confirmation (zatwierdzenie). Superior organs have the right to appraisal, and lower ones to confirmation, or party organizations to appraisal and directors to confirmation. In practice, however, this difference makes little sense, and appraisal is decisive in most cases. According to an investigation, about 75% of the directors are party members. It appears from another investigation by sociologist Dr. Jolanta Szaban in 1979 on directing cadres of trusts that the 'party-ization (upartyjnienie)' of general directors reached 95%. There are cases in which people are asked to join the party before being appointed.

Faults of the nomenklatura system, described by participants, are the following:

1) Economization of the party and politicization of the economy. The authority of the party is often used to justify economic and particularistic interests. On the other hand, criticisms on wrong economic decisions are often regarded as politically harmful.

2) Creation of parallel administrative apparatuses like party, state, trade union, etc. All these apparatuses have the same task to fulfil: to whip up people to carry out the plan. The party apparatus is only one of the transmission belts in the hands of the central authority. When they are going to undertake something, they say: Let's do it via party line, via state line, via union line, etc. No wonder that the Conference of Workers' Self-management (KSR) has become nothing but a farce.

3) When there is a conflict among instructions of these administrative apparatuses, the party instruction has priority. The party instruction has an informal character. Usually it is conveyed by telephone or by briefings (odprawy) and summons (dywaniki) before the party committee. It leaves no traces behind. Therefore, it is neither called to responsibility, nor subjected to sanctions.

4) Creation of clientelism. The most important criterion in personnel decisions is said to be political submissiveness (dyspozycyjność) to the party organ. What is required in practice, however, is purely personal submissiveness to a concrete person in the party organ. Therefore, nomenklaturistic dependence is often used to attain personal aims.

5) Fusion (zrośnięcie) of economic and party apparatuses. The enterprise is a double organization whose face side is an economic, but back side a party apparatus. The more bureaucratized and inflexible the face route is, the more indispensable is the flexible back route. In this sense the party line is convenient and helpful, but at the same time it draws a veil over the problem and opens the way for voluntarism. Under the fusion system it is not clear where the process of decision-making begins and who is responsible for the decision. There is also danger that law order will be undermined.

What should happen then to the nomenklatura? The opinion was divided in the round table. The chairman of the talk, representing the *Życie i Nowoczesność*, put the question in the following way: "I think that the key to the whole mechanism is nomenklatura. For a director or any person in a responsible position the real master is always he who appoints and recalls him. Because this power lies practically in the

hands of the party, his dependence on the party apparatus and party decisions is overwhelming."

Should the nomenklatura be liquidated then entirely? The party secretary of the factory committee responded that it would be wrong to exclude the party organization completely from cadre decisions. The general director of the Rosa Luxemburg factory, however, requested that he be excepted from the nomenklatura because "life forces me to take responsibility before the employees." Here the impact of the self-management movement from below is evident. But he did not question the nomenklatura as such.

A fellow of the Institute of Administrative Organization and Cadre Training went further: "The party apparatus and its way of thinking present a serious threat to the economic reform which is based on self-managing enterprises, responsible only to the market. We must say frankly that in this new economic order there is no place for the previous role of the party apparatus."

The other fellow of the same Institute summed up: 1) Abolish the nomenklatura in the old form, getting the self-management to elect the director. The party exercises influence upon the cadre policy through putting up its own candidate or supporting another candidate. 2) Separate party posts from administrative posts. 3) Abolish industrial branch departments (*branżowe wydziały*) in all party committees. 4) Place representative organs above executive organs. 5) The party restrict itself to formulating a program of principles of economic policy, taking into consideration social justice, directions of the country's development, international ties, etc., and not interfere with concrete individual decisions.

The same participant stressed that the main cause of the evil was that the party had become an administrative apparatus, losing the role of political pioneer and ideological inspirer. Responding to this, the chairman concluded the round table with the remark: "The party should play more the role of a social and political movement and less that of a formal structure which operates with administrative methods."

Here we see that the conclusion of the round table coincided with the program of the DiP group. Of course, the self-management movement from below left its imprint on the round table. The participants, departing from the DiP program, were ready to recognize the right of employees' self-management to appoint and recall the director, which would automatically result in drastic reduction of the nomenklatura in the economy. They supported, however, the idea of self-management, first of all, in order to make the enterprise 'solely responsible to the market.' Is it possible then for the party as a 'social and political movement' to retain the leading role? This question remained unsolved.

The *Życie i Nowoczesność* round table was followed by two articles on the party-economy relation in the weekly *Życie Gospodarcze* (Economic Life), a journal for economists and managers. The first one was signed by Stefan Krajewski.⁸⁶⁾ The second one was a round table of party secretaries, journalists, and university professors.⁸⁷⁾ None of them brought new arguments to the controversy. But they are

86) Stefan Krajewski, "Partia a gospodarka," *Życie Gospodarcze*, 26 April 1981, pp. 1, 4.

87) "Partia a gospodarka," *ibid.*, 7 June 1981, pp. 1, 6-7.

important as information sources on how the technocrats reacted to the ongoing self-management movement from below.

The mechanism and the competence of party activities in the economic field have never been formalized, complained Krajewski. Even the recent government plans have bypassed this problem. Taking advantage of this loophole, the party has interfered with the economy excessively. The most important instrument of intervention is the party's right to cadre decisions. The party has eliminated people of critical mind, favouring only easy-going, submissive people (the so-called 'political criteria'). There is also a tendency for the party organ to trust only the directing staff of the factory whom it appoints and to neglect party organizations in the factory.

In the future the party should play the role not of an economic administrator, but of a mediator, suggested Krajewski. The party apparatus specializing in economic problems and its personnel should be reduced drastically. "But the party as a leading political force cannot be disinterested in the selection policy of directing cadres in the economy." The question is *how* the party participates in it. In the future the party should delegate a great deal of competence to lower organs and try to influence cadre decisions of the enterprise through the lower organs. "We must take into consideration that a substantial participation of the employees' self-management in cadre decisions, up to the point that it appoints the director through public contest, leaving to superior units the right to acceptance, is provided in the economic reform."

The article concluded with the remark: "A lot has been talked and written about the 'nomenklatura' in recent times, in most cases in a negative sense. What is inevitable is its modification and a radical restriction of the number of posts covered by the 'nomenklatura,' at least with regard to the directing cadre on the enterprise level. The fate of 'nomenklatura' will depend first of all on solutions and tendencies of the following problems: 1) democratization within the party, liquidation of the superior position of the executive apparatus and the bureaucratic-centralistic behaviour pattern: 2) switching from the method of institutional exertion of influence to activity through party members: 3) real influence of the employees' self-management upon decisions to appoint and recall the directing cadre (mainly the directing staff)."

Krajewski's article is characterized by a kind of attentism. He acknowledges that a certain positive change has been accomplished by the popular movement. He is ready to adapt himself to further change, but he is not willing to say what should happen in the future. He seems to suggest not a qualitative change, but a quantitative restriction of the nomenklatura principle which can come about only as a result of compromise between conflicting forces. His contribution, if any, is to have made it clear that the fate of nomenklatura depends on how the self-management movement develops further.

One of the participants in the round table which was held on the same weekly a month later talked about "a profound social revolution which we are experiencing at present." Another participant asked himself "how to formulate the party's leading role in a society which is building self-government." He was amazed at what weak resistance the "abdicating class or group" was offering. Such feelings or questions

are more or less shared by all participants in the round table.

4) Program of Revolution from Above

The weekly *Polityka* has been the organ of party liberals since its launching in 1956. It has also attracted some quarters outside the party thanks to its excellent editorial policy. The continuity of editorial policy and staff has been guaranteed by the person of the great opportunist Rakowski who has managed to survive all the ups and downs of Poland's postwar politics. *Polityka* has also played a significant role in leading the public opinion in the nomenklatura problem. One of the irregularities about this party journal is that it includes on the editorial board some non-party intellectuals like Daniel Passent or Andrzej K. Wróblewski. It seems that their role is increasing since Rakowski and Jerzy Urban moved to the government. On the eve of the party congress, Rakowski got one of these men to write an editorial on such a subtle topic as the party's leading role. Wróblewski's article, *To Guide, But How?* may be regarded as program of the moderate reformists on the nomenklatura problem.⁸⁸⁾

Wróblewski declares at the outset: "No ruling party would give up a voice in cadre decisions, to be frank, the right to nominate its own people for posts. Poland is no exception in this respect." It is the very right of the party to nominate 'its own people' that had been heavily attacked in the nomenklatura controversy. Wróblewski presupposes it as something which requires no justification, not because it is the right of a party which is charged with the historical mission to guide the nation to a heaven on earth, but because it is the self-evident right of any party in power.

Perhaps he recalls here a conversation which he had with a local party secretary in March. The secretary elucidated the point to him: "The party must have some voice, and, though I don't like the word nomenklatura, one must think about how to secure influence upon the cadre policy. Is it possible to exercise the leading role—or the guiding role, if you like—without institutional instruments, only through propaganda? I hope that we will come to an agreement, but some conflicts may arise. I may be forced to resort to the Constitution in order to remind them of what is written there about the role of the party. Or, maybe, to the statute of Solidarity."⁸⁹⁾

Wróblewski explains that the mechanism to nominate or recommend people for posts should be considered a combination of command system (system nakazowy) with democracy. That is, high state posts are reserved to the party, but candidates for other posts may be selected on the basis of public contest or recommendation by party organizations.

Having thus secured the hard core of state power to the party, Wróblewski becomes generous: First, the principles of openness should be observed. "It is not enough to abstain from nominating one's own people for posts. One should stop making decisions on cadre problems authoritatively behind closed doors and leave it to broad social control." Second, "There are a lot of politicians who are indeed for the economic reform, but against the party's releasing the economy from control." But the party should stop engaging in details of the realization of the plan and

88) Andrzej K. Wróblewski, "Przewodzić—ale jak?" *Polityka*, 4 July 1981, pp. 1, 6.

89) Andrzej K. Wróblewski, "Osuszyć bagna," *ibid.*, 28 March 1981, p. 7.

concentrate instead on formulating big aims and the way to them. Third, the party should receive its baptism of elections. "Nobody and nothing will release the party from putting up candidates and carrying on election campaigns." There is nothing to deplore even if the party's candidates are defeated. If they are, the party itself will have to change. Finally, rule of law should be established. Indeed, one cannot deny the class character of law, but its application should be unconditionally objective and fair. "Under the rule of law the party should fulfil its role mainly by influencing the formation of law."

Wróblewski considers the problem of personnel policy not as an ideological problem, but as a power problem. This is something new in the nomenklatura controversy. He suggests: The party should secure the key state posts, but having secured the power position, it should loosen control on fields not of vital importance for maintenance of power. At a first glance it looks as though his suggestion, especially on concrete measures, has a lot in common with the Solidarity program. But there is a decisive difference: Wróblewski visualizes a revolution from above, while the Solidarity intellectuals have in mind a revolution from below, though self-limiting. Whether a revolution from above can succeed, however, depends on whether the party is able and willing to carry it out. Perhaps the moderate reformists hoped that they could gain a victory over the conservatives at the forthcoming party congress.

5) Dilemma of Revolution from Below

The self-management movement from below had an impact not only upon criticizers, but also upon negators of the status quo. Their program of self-limiting revolution was no longer adequate for the time. If the 'class of rulers' was actually going to fall and the system of ruling to collapse, the revolution could not limit itself. An article by Marek Strzala, *Vassals*, that appeared in Solidarity's organ just before the party congress suggests what evolution the thinking of criticizers of the status quo had undergone.⁹⁰⁾

"The key to understand many phenomena in our public life must be sought in the so-called cadre policy," Strzala points out, because "he who can offer posts to others has the real power. The extent of his power corresponds exactly to how many and what kind of posts he controls." The most important criterion in evaluation of candidates for posts is submissiveness. Too intelligent, too ambitious, too able people are eliminated. Usually such a mechanism results in a gerontocracy, but in Poland comparatively young people sit in positions of influence owing to many political changes after the war. The 'bureaucratic class' is a child of this mechanism. The outcome of the 'renewal' depends not only on how the working class fights, but also on how that class moves.

"The so-called nomenklatura has always been one of the institutions to serve the status quo," continues Strzala. "With only a tiny exception this system covers all the people who can decide on something in the Polish People's Republic, from a principal of a primary school and a chairman of a village youth association up to the premier. It counts, surely, a total of several hundred thousand." To be a member of

90) Marek Strzala, "Wasale," *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 17 July 1981, pp. 8-9.

the nomenklatura is a precondition for all promotions. Once one has become its member, one will not be expelled from it. There are three reactions of the nomenklatura to change: The majority makes a passive resistance, a considerable part an active one, and the minority supports the 'renewal' for a tactical reason or out of insight. The ally of the 'renewal' is only the third group. The second group is an uncompromising enemy. It is better not to antagonize the first group unnecessarily.

The 'renewal,' however, cannot be successful, so long as it cannot change the 'power structure' and the principle of elite selection, emphasizes the author. There are too many unnecessary and incompetent people in directing posts of the administrative apparatus today. But "for the time being there is no one to replace those incompetent people. It goes without saying that there are talented people also in our society. But until now there has not been a mechanism of selecting and training those people so that they might be eligible for directing posts."

At present such a mechanism is coming into being in the Solidarity Union and in the party, Strzała goes on. But there are still too few directing cadres. The modern democratic state cannot survive without 'some kind of common, meaningful mechanism of creating a power elite.' The precondition for it is an economic reform in industry which would make the existence of an enterprise dependent upon its economic performance, and a throughgoing democratization in public life. "So long as such a condition is not fulfilled," concludes Strzała, "all the appeals to purge dishonest and incompetent people and to engage able ones will remain empty phrases."

What is striking about Strzała's article is that it turns exclusively to the camp of negators of the status quo. *Lines of Action* still addressed itself to the other side as well. It seems that the author echoed the view of Lenin's that the power question is at the core of revolution. If the power question is raised, immediately the next question arises: what to do with supporters of the *ancien regime* ('vassals') and how to bring up supporters of the new regime. Strzała discusses strategies and tactics of revolution from below. He no longer dwells only on the problem of the old elite, but proceeds to the problem of a new, revolutionary elite.

Here he is confronted with a dilemma. The revolution, though it may be able to win over some part of the old elite and neutralize the other part, cannot survive without its own elite. The revolution must create its own elite system. The elite basis of revolution, however, turns out to be extremely narrow. Here the strong integration-and-elimination mechanism of the old elite system produces its fateful effect. The jealous old regime has not permitted a counter-elite to be formed. This is perhaps the dilemma which all oppositionist movements in Socialist countries will be confronted with when they come near to power at all.

The nomenklatura controversy among the intellectuals which started with the third report of the DiP group closed a cycle with Strzała's article. It began with an attack on the old elite system and ended with a call for creation of a new, revolutionary one.

4. *Epilogue: Fundamentalists versus Pragmatists*

Bipolarization is an iron rule of revolution. As the revolution advances, fronts

are rearranged along the simple line: friend or enemy. It is increasingly difficult to maintain a middle position. A decomposition of critics of the status quo is inevitable. Symptomatic of this state of affairs are Rakowski's break-off with Solidarity in August and the elimination of Bratkowski from the party in October. Moderate reformists around Rakowski were getting nearer and nearer to defenders of the status quo while radical reformists around Bratkowski were coming closer and closer to negators of the status quo. As a result, the controversy over nomenklatura was increasingly monopolized by negators of the status quo, and the tension within negators of the status quo themselves grew. There are two tendencies of the controversy among negators of the status quo: vulgarization and moderation. Negators of the status quo are eager to disclose evil aspects of the *ancien regime*, one of which is the extravagant privileges of the ruling circles. Solidarity publicist Krzysztof Czabański tried to publish an extensive article on privileges of the nomenklatura as early as June 1981. But the Censorship Office, the Procurator's Office, and finally the Council of Ministers' Office intervened to prevent its publication. It was only in late November that Czabański's article could see the light in Solidarity's organ. The publication was a journalistic sensation in the country as well as abroad. The contents of the article, however, were rather commonplace.⁹¹⁾

In the middle of July an article with the provocative title, *Is there a Class Struggle in Poland in A. D. 1981?* appeared in a Catholic weekly.⁹²⁾ The July-August number of *Kultura* (Paris) also carried an article which pursued a similar line of thinking.⁹³⁾ Both articles are typical examples of vulgar class theory, but certainly mirrored the general mood of society.

The Solidarity Congress in September became a theater of struggle between radicals and moderates, 'fundamentalists' and 'pragmatists,' as reporters put it. Especially the 11th subject group on "Union's Relation to the State Authorities and the PZPR" witnessed a most heated exchange of views from the beginning.⁹⁴⁾ Typical of the thinking of 'fundamentalists' (Leszek Nowak, Andrzej Rozpłochowski, Ireneusz Kosmahl, Andrzej Wieczorek, Kazimierz Firlejczyk, Waldemar Gil and others) is a phrase of their draft program: "The party apparatus has become a new ruling class which concentrates in its hands three basic power elements: property, coercion, and propaganda. Instead of a promised classless society, they have built the most class-divided society in history around whose one pole all political, economic, and doctrinal power revolves, and at whose other pole there are masses deprived of all." Their thinking is clearly oriented towards the Marxist theory of class struggle.

If the 'fundamentalists' are a group of mono-ideological orientation, the 'pragmatists' are a group of multi-ideological orientation. The 'pragmatists' (Karol Mo-

91) Krzysztof Czabański, "Przywileje," *ibid.*, 20 November, p. 8, 27 November 1981, p. 8.

92) Jerzy Ray, "Czy w Polsce A. D. 1981 jest walka klas?" *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 12 July 1981, p. 3.

93) Stanisław Świaniewicz, "Klasowa struktura Europy Wschodniej," *Kultura* (Paris), July-August 1981, pp. 61-72.

94) See the report of the discussion in the 11th subject group by Lech Kaczyński, Aleksander Małachowski, "XI: Związek wobec władz państwowych i PZPR," *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 25 September 1981, pp. 5-6.

dzelewski, Bogdan, Lis, Seweryn Jaworski, Leszek & Jaroslaw Kaczynskis, Andrzej Gwiazda, Siła-Nowicki, Maciej Seweryński, Jacek Bukowski and others) retorted, pointing out that it is impossible to unite 10 million members of the Union through one ideology. Moreover, if the Union takes a fundamentalist view, a head-on confrontation with the regime will be unavoidable. The 'pragmatists', referring to the geopolitical reality of the country, stress the need for moderation.

The two groups could not harmonize their draft programs in the subject group and forwarded them separately to the draft commission of the program. The final version of the program clearly reveals that the pragmatists prevailed. It eliminated the word *class* which had still appeared in the *Lines of Action*. Also it took note of the power relations in Europe which came into being after the war. It called for liquidation of the nomenklatura only in connection with self-management in the economy.⁹⁵⁾

An article by two jurists, entitled *Rule of Law and the Nomenklatura*, which appeared in a Catholic weekly shortly thereafter, sounds like a comment on the Solidarity program.⁹⁶⁾ Indeed, it criticizes an unlawful character of the nomenklatura, but at the same time stresses the need for realism, leaving most important political posts in the hands of the party. Thus, moderation prevailed over radicalism among the intellectuals. But their voice counted less and less in the movement as a whole.

V. Conclusion

The controversy over nomenklatura in Poland was violently interrupted by the military takeover on 13 December 1981. History has not yet given its last word on the fate of nomenklatura in Poland. It is difficult to predict the future of the system at this stage, especially because it is not clear what ideas the military, the new ruler, has on the elite recruitment system and on the control-and-integration mechanism. Certainly it has its own, different from the Communist ones. But they still remain in the dark. In any event, nomenklatura has become so discredited in public eyes in Poland, thanks to the intellectual as well as popular anti-nomenklatura movements, that even Albin Siwak, a hardliner in the politburo, after the military takeover had to denounce those who joined the party because of the nomenklatura.⁹⁷⁾ Even if the Communists are allowed to regain their power, they will have to redefine how far the nomenklatura should reach into the society and how it should function.

Why did the system collapse so easily in Poland? There are general as well as specific Polish backgrounds for it. Let us consider first the general ones.

The Polish events have revealed that politics cannot be a technical matter forever. The time has come in which politics is restored to its old glory. People are looking for new gods. Gods must struggle for souls, and leaders for followers. The Communist elite, however well chosen and well trained they might be, and however

95) "Program NSZZ 'Solidarność'," *ibid.*, 16 October 1981, supplement.

96) Andrzej Kubas and Andrzej Rozmarynowicz, "Praworządność a nomenklatura," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 1 November 1981, p. 3.

97) *Życie Warszawy*, 21 January 1982.

sophisticated their technique of leadership might be, have been completely defeated in this struggle. A rational, that is, based on measurable criteria, and systematic elite recruitment system may be good in the military, in the sciences, or in sports, but not in politics.

The maniac idea of an all-embracing control-and-integration mechanism through personnel policy has born fruits, reverse to those intended. The cadres, delegated from the party to extra-party organizations, do not enjoy authority in the milieu which they should represent. As one Solidarity publicist puts it, the party represents only themselves, not people whom they are supposed to represent.⁹⁸⁾ If their representation is only pretense, they cannot control the milieu. When the central authority has lost favor with the nation, its offshoots must go, too. The old saying "The king is naked" has proven true.

The nomenklatura has a strong integrating force. The authorities have made the utmost efforts to integrate all centrifugal forces so that there might remain no room for the formation of a counter-elite. They acted as if the fate of the regime depended solely on how far they could integrate society through the cadre policy. One must say that their efforts were fairly successful. A Polish sociologist reports that personnel-political integration was so advanced in the 70's that a third of the male citizens between 40 and 50 occupied a directing post.⁹⁹⁾ This far-gone pseudo-integration—how is it possible to bribe entire generations by offering posts?—has left a pernicious aftereffect on society. On one hand, there has arisen a new power which indeed enjoys the support of the mass, but lacks its own elite which would be able to steer the state and the economy. On the other hand, there is still a large army of former administrators and managers who have lost creditability in public eyes, but still monopolize the know-how of administration and management. They are the beneficiaries of the *ancien regime* and, therefore, the most conservative element of society.¹⁰⁰⁾

Finally, the nomenklatura as a social structure has turned out to be fragile. Their position is dependent solely on the function assigned to them by the state. They may have succeeded in inheriting the function from generation to generation, forming a closed caste, accumulating privileges and properties, etc., but it has never been legalized. When the state structure was shaken to its foundations by a social upheaval, there was nothing more that could have protected them as a social stratum from downfall. Their position, as formidable as it may have looked, was after all not secured, at least far less secured than that of the ruling class in Western society.

One of the specific Polish backgrounds is that the ruling party lacks legitimacy. Since August 1980 it is no longer tabu to say that the Communist government was imported from abroad, a product not of indigenous developments, but of interna-

98) Ernest Skalski, "Władza," *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 2 October 1981, p. 3.

99) Staniszkis, *Shakaishugi shakaino bensho*, pp. 290-291.

100) It seems that the authorities have not lost belief in the integrating force of the cadre policy. After the military takeover a party spokesman declared that the party must strengthen the cadre policy to win over the disillusioned youth. *Życie Warszawy*, 20 January 1982.

tional circumstances during and after the Second World War.¹⁰¹⁾ Even Andrzej Werblan, former politburo member for cultural affairs, had to admit it publicly. During the 36 years of its existence the Communist regime has never succeeded in proving its legitimacy in the eyes of the nation and erasing the odium of an imported regime, in spite of Werblan's testimony.¹⁰²⁾ Moreover, the Polish party experienced a series of political crises after the war. As a result, the personnel of the party apparatus has fluctuated constantly and remained rather small in size.¹⁰³⁾ The membership also was small in comparison with other ruling Communist parties, though it expanded considerably under Gierek. With such a weak party which lacks legitimacy it is difficult to penetrate society.

The other background is that a lot of traditional authorities have not only remained, but have been reinforced in postwar Poland. Take the Catholic Church. The party tried to make an 'investiture dispute' against the Vatican in the 40's and the 50's, but gave it up after 1956. Since then the Church has been free from personnel-political control by the party. One can understand how important this is, if one knows that the Russian Orthodox Church is almost completely integrated into the nomenklatura of the Communist party. Universities, the Academy of Sciences, and cultural and scholarly associations often command greater social prestige than the party and enjoy considerable freedom of personnel policy. The party could successfully penetrate only those fields of social life which had to be rebuilt almost from zero after the war, such as state administration, police, army, economy, etc.

No wonder, therefore, that a certain contemptuous attitude towards party functionaries or activists has taken root in postwar Polish society. Such expressions as *kacyk* (cacique), *oddelegowany* (delegated), *donosiciel* or *informant* (denouncer), *piąta kolumna* (fifth column) are often used to designate party functionaries or activists. Here we have to do with people who have to fulfill their mission in a foreign environment—Polish society. In the Soviet Union the word *nomenklatura* has, if not a positive, but at least a neutral meaning. A Soviet dictionary carries the catchword *nomenklatura* with the explanation: "list of posts whose personnel management requires confirmation by superior party, soviet and trade union organizations."¹⁰⁴⁾ But no Polish dictionary carries *nomenklatura* in this sense. Instead we can find the following explanation in *The Great Polish Encyclopedia* under the entry *nomenklator*: "Slave in ancient Rome who always accompanied his master and had the duty to remind him of names of persons with whom his master should exchange greetings when he saw them. It was particularly important in office-hunting in the Republican Period."¹⁰⁵⁾

101) For instance, see Jan Szczepański, "Poszukiwanie rozumnego wyjścia," *Polityka*, 3 January 1981, p. 7; Skalski, "Władza," *Tygodnik Solidarność*, 2 October 1981, p. 3.

102) Andrzej Werblan, "Spór o granicę władzy," *Polityka*, 21 March 1981, pp. 1, 15; "Czego dowiedzieliśmy się o sobie," *ibid.*, 4 April 1981, p. 9.

103) The size of the party apparatus reached its peak in 1948. See Jane Care, "Local party officials of the Polish United Workers' Party, 1956-75," *Soviet Studies*, vol. 33, no. 1 (January 1981), pp. 137.

104) *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, Moscow 1964, vol. 2, p. 107.

105) *Wielka encyklopedia powszechna*, Warsaw, vol. 7 (1966), p. 822.