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## **Impact of Independent Self-governing Trade-union “Solidarity” on life of a big city. Łódź in years 1980-1981**

### **A summary of doctoral thesis**

What occurs in the researcher’s mind in the connection with the above topic, are queries they must answer in the thesis. Synthetically subsumed issues are: What was the shape of extra-unional action (including inside the party) undertaken within the influence of existence of the trade-union and why right such forms of activity commanded popularity? In which labor places or institutions mentioned activities were stronger than in the others and what decided about such spreading of them?

Totality of the city buildings in Łódź was being systematically modernized at the end of the 1970s, but still it was dominated by old buildings, also habitable. The economy was based on the light industry, payments in the city remained low. In the 1970s a new phenomenon appeared in Poland: the political opposition. Albeit its strongest central remained Warsaw, Łódź cannot be denied a major role. Very few originally milieu of Łódź opponents to the Communist System took part in the ensuing on September 1976 Committee for Workers’ Defense. On March 1977 a second group originated, which was more traditional - Movement for Defense of Human and Civic Rights- where from very beginning the influence of Łódź inhabitants were more visible. The activity of both oppositional groups centered around the promotion among the society of the need to change the system and in case of the Committee also around the direct help for people harmed by the powers. However, they did not quit undertaking other action, for instance issuing own press. What was specifically essential in the city, was “Puls”, a literary quarterly issued by a group connected with the Committee.

On July and August 1980, what swept down through Poland, was a wave of blue collar workers’ strikes, opposing the price hike of a part of meat wares. Thanks to the previous activity of opposition (first of all in Gdańsk) it flew to negotiate the agreement for inception of an independent to the power trade-union. What was in Łódź especially visible for city inhabitants, was strike in City Communication Enterprise, at whose helm stood Andrzej Słowik, a bus driver. On September 1980 representants of emerging trade-union organizations of the whole country, on encounter in Gdańsk established Independent Self-governing Trade-union “Solidarity”, whose chair became Lech Wałęsa, blue collar worker of Vladimir Lenin

Gdańsk Shipyard, the leader of Gdańsk strike. The union needed yet to exert a struggle for registration in the court, and afterward for powers' allocation of the residences for countrywide and regional authorities. In the background of those events the elections of new, constant trade-union powers took place, which were accompanied by cumulation of internal conflicts. In Łódź on May 1981 Andrzej Słowik became again a chair. A distinctive phenomenon was almost complete elimination of representants of Committee milieu from the new powers, in other regions chiefly composing a keystone of the union, in Łódź from the very beginning repulsed by the leaders. As I demonstrated, it constituted mostly an effect of manipulations of Andrzej Mazur, advisor of the first composition of the Presidium, as well as an agent of the Security Service. Some role was also played by vulnerability of majority of fledging leaders in the region to such action. During the legal activity of the union an array of protest actions was organized, whose most often reason was breaking arrangements by the state powers and lack of improvement in the field of stores supply. Łódź was most distinkted in the scale of the country by two actions. On November 1980 in Łódź negotiations of textile and leather industries representants from whole Poland with representers of the ministry took place. The goal of the negotiation was to increase payments in this business and to enhance the labor conditions. Negotiation was exercised with the part of public. Stiffening of the political situation drove to its disruption and continuation within the officials' studies. Finally, after a few months it flew to reach fulfillment of the most important postulates. What became the next remarkable incident, was a famine march on July 1981. Its reason was further deterioration of supply in comestible products. For fear of an unlisted strike, not controled by "Solidarity", Łódź union activists decided to organize their own protest, consisting on a march of thousands of ready people with banners in the city center. Thanks to the protest it flew to reach a temporary enhancement of supply in the area of Łódź voivodship at the cost of other parts of the country. However, social temper had been defuzed.

"Solidarity" in the establishments consists until now a weakly known issue. I demonstrated, that in Łódź the relations between the trade-union and front office mostly panned out correctly and solving problems in this level of organization ensued quickly. However, venues occured, where supervising legality of company management action by union people led to conflict. The establishment "Solidarity" was also exercising activity directly turned to its own members, for instance cultural.

The party and state powers deported themselves more grudgingly toward the union. My research showed, that in establishment organizations of the Polish United Workers' Party one thing took place, which was ferment. It was the strongest at the academies and at some large

plants. However, it appeared, that it received major size also at the Bureau of the City of Łódź, what possibly resulted from modest opportunity to withdraw the party. In other venues mostly, as party strength was decreasing, temper in it was appeasing.

Intellectual milieus were especially prone to create new social organizations. Students' strike of January and February 1981 - widely described in foregoing literature - consisted the most visible moment when events in Łódź had a ripple effect on situation in whole country. Negotiated then deal guaranteed academies partial autonomy and curricular liberty. The then minister Prof. Janusz Górski, commonly found as diehard enemy of students, in fact was quite close to their postulates, but he was adopting an attitude to appease diehard party activists and not to miss a position. Among other essential independent milieus one must mention Club of Catholic Intelligentsiya, Association of Barristers and Barristers' Trainees, and Polish Ecological Club.

The economy in the communist country was marked by entire rejection of market categories, like profit, demand and supply game, one introduced to this place central planning, based on lack of reliable data and conflicts of diverse lobbies. The effect was constant shortage of any goods and paucity of range. The communist economy as well sustained worse the worldwide shocks like fueled and energetic depression. In relevant period supply was everlastingly insufficient, long lines of customers were appearing, and people having access to commercial chain used it to their own shopping, mostly fully paid. "Solidarity" in order to improve the situation was propounding programs of economic changes. However, they did not cross the border of prescriptive system. What at the end of 1981 became visible, was radicalization of a major part of activists, who denied proficiency of own experts, claimed, that government was hiding eatables, they also wanted to encumber the wealthiest inhabitants of country with the costs of the reform. At the same time moderate activists were trying to negotiate with the government a reasonable economic reform. An important trade-union specialist of economic issues became a chemist from Polytechnic of Łódź Grzegorz Palka, originally radical, later more moderate.

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