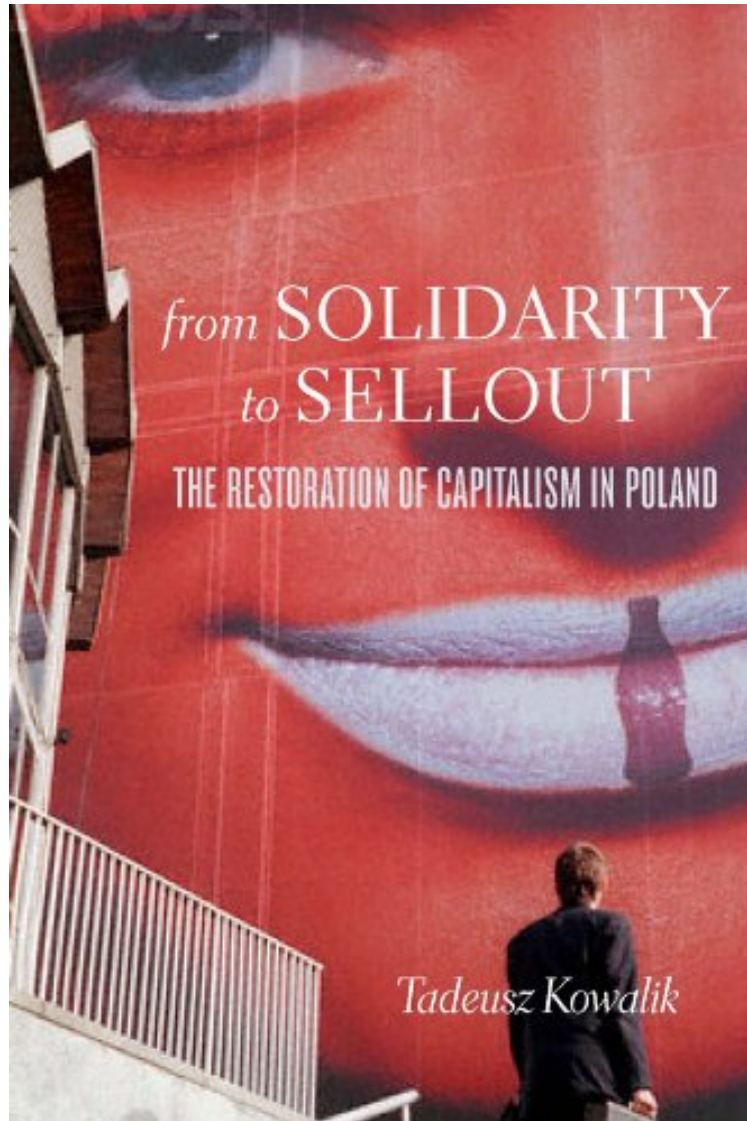


(Download free ebook) From Solidarity to Sellout

## From Solidarity to Sellout

*Tadeusz Kowalik, Eliza Lewandowska*  
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**Tadeusz Kowalik, Eliza Lewandowska : From Solidarity to Sellout** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised From Solidarity to Sellout:

2 of 5 people found the following review helpful. An excellent new book on Polish "Solidarity",-- an idispensible guide to the coming socialist revolution.By Dr. Arthur LipowExcellent important book. For those of waiting for the Coming Revolution in China where a "Solidarity" independent union is yet to emerge, there are many lessons in Kowalik's book about how an independent union must create an independent, democratic, labor/socialist party so that the nomenklatura does not re-establish itself. China is rule by a new class (see Djilas or the book I edited "Neither Capitalism nor Socialism" for the theoretical back ground of the new class society which rules China.) The Chinese

working class must make a revolution and overthrow the party-state which owns the economy in the absence of political democracy or independent unions. We look forward to emergence of a party or parties -- not a Leninist or single "vanguard party" that led to the disaster in Russia and gave birth to the "Soviet Union" ruled by a new class. In short, DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM means that the working class, the overwhelming majority, must "own" the state in the only way it can: by the widest, most thorough democracy. Think of Eugene Victor Debs -- not Lenin or Trotsky -- as your guide. Also see my book "Authoritarian Socialism" -- a study of Edward Bellamy's "Looking Backward" which Bernard Crick, author of the best book on Orwell, called an indispensable guide to the kind of socialism we want --and the kind we don't. A socialist revolution is coming in China and there is much to be learned from the experience of "Solidarity" in Poland. I was there and saw it with my own eyes. By all means read Kowalik, who I am sorry to say, recently died. I would have liked to have met him. Arthur Lipow, formerly Birkbeck College, (University of London) and now co-Chair (with Gretchen Lipow) of "The Center for Global Peace and Democracy" in Alameda, California. Sponsor of the Alameda Public Affairs Forum. Socialism must come from Below -- the title of Hal Draper's inspiring book. Start a democratic socialist movement where you live and build up a network from below out of which a movement can emerge.

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. No Polish Road to Capitalism  
By R. L. Huff  
When the USSR liberated the Polish masses enslaved under the heel of fascism, the first things its quisling collaborators did in constructing their satellite regime was build a "Polish road to socialism", and find ways to elevate the devastated economy, setting its people back to work. But, forty years hence, when the Democratic West liberated the Polish masses enslaved under the heel of Communism, the first thing its quisling collaborators did in setting up their satellite regime was deconstruct the economy, putting millions out of work and rejecting any Polish road at all. This picture look a bit upside down from what the paid-off Western critics used to rave over? In his last book, the late Tadeusz Kowalik - a leading Polish economist and ex-Solidarity activist - shows how yet another regime, built in the "name of the working class," screwed over its constituency yet again. Yet how could a movement for a "self-governing workers' republic" end up as a bastion of Hayekian/Thatcherite extremism? A clue can be found in Peter Schweizer's "Victory," where it's shown how the Solidarity movement and its leaders became dependent on Reagan's CIA for survival under martial law, and were turned toward the ideological agenda of their benefactors. Unlike 1944, there was no military occupation; yet in 1989 the country's leaders showed less flexibility and sensitivity in ramming their agenda down the throats of a hungry, weary but hopeful nation. Leszek Balcerowicz, Thaddeus Mazowiecki, Adam Michnik and Lech Walesa were not forced to take the extreme path to capitalism - they \*chose\* to do so for political advantage over the "reform Communists," a case of becoming more Catholic than the Pope in pimping for the IMF and Western investors. I find Kowalik's contention that these leaders were more naive than knave a bit of a stretch: they knew the radical "free market" agenda and its Friedmanite "individualism" were a cover for the corporate takeover of the Polish economy; but simply did not care as long as their intellectual selves could profit selling off the country and shearing its human sheep. Other paths to capitalism were deliberately ignored in pursuit of a rigid ideological utopia. As a result Poland has returned to the 19th century, with the most unequal society and highest rate of unemployment in Europe outside Albania. While the elite jetset to Berlin and New York, the unemployed masses follow as a century ago, as Poland was transformed into the Mexico of the continent. And true to the 19th century, an ersatz military tradition has lent itself to mercenary pursuits, helping bring the same regime to Iraq - a rerun of 1944, with steel bayonets but without a trace of irony. The book may be a bit deep for non-economists, but its message is clear. Unfortunately few in the West or in positions of power in Poland want to hear it. For a Western establishment still befogged by cold war triumphalism its truths are inconvenient. For a Polish one still mired in Yalta or Catholic fundamentalism, as lightning rods for the country's real problems, it can only be grateful that open borders prevented the destruction of its schemes - which took only four, not forty years, to meet a dead end.

3 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Useful study of Poland's suffering under capitalism  
By William Podmore  
Tadeusz Kowalik was for many years an activist in Solidarity. In this revealing book, he shows the effects of Solidarity's efforts to overturn socialism. He also shows how, after the counter-revolution, Solidarity attacked the Polish working class and embraced capitalism. Since the restoration of capitalism, Poland has suffered 25 years of economic stagnation, mass unemployment and poverty. In 1990 industrial output fell by 30 per cent. Unemployment rose from nearly nothing to 3 million, where it has stayed ever since, leading to Europe's largest peacetime emigration, of two million people. Harvard 'expert' Jeffrey Sachs had forecast unemployment of 'less than 200,000'. In 1989, real wages fell by 34 per cent. Private farmers' incomes fell by 40 per cent. By 2006, Poland's employment rate was 54 per cent. Its unemployment rate was 16 per cent, its youth unemployment 40 per cent. Only 13 per cent of the unemployed got any benefits. Polish governments have imposed deindustrialisation and cut RD, leading to a low level of technology. The country has a high level of imports (56 per cent of the domestic market), causing huge trade deficits and debts. The government's effort to cut its deficit by cutting welfare spending added to the deficit, and to unemployment. By contrast, when Sweden's unemployment reached 13 per cent, in 1993, the government there raised spending. This increased the deficit, but cut unemployment. Poland's counter-revolution shifted wealth from the poor to the rich and increased poverty. Privatisation was a huge scam: public assets were sold off at 10 per cent of their value, to benefit looters, foreign and domestic. 12 per cent of the population live below the subsistence level, 58 per cent

below the social minimum. Two million children are undernourished. Women earned just 57 per cent of men's earnings. Poland is one of the most unequal countries in the EU. The 2009 Index of Social Justice ranked Poland 26th, after the UK at 21st. Poland's leaders strive to make the EU members' economies even more Thatcherite. Solidarity carried out a return to 19th century capitalism, making Poland a colony of both the EU and the USA, which proved that Solidarity it was always more a Thatcherite political party than a trade union.

In the 1980s and 90s, renowned Polish economist Tadeusz Kowalik played a leading role in the Solidarity movement, struggling alongside workers for an alternative to "really-existing socialism" that was cooperative and controlled by the workers themselves. In the ensuing two decades, "really-existing" socialism has collapsed, capitalism has been restored, and Poland is now among the most unequal countries in the world. Kowalik asks, how could this happen in a country that once had the largest and most militant labor movement in Europe?

About the Author