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Challenge and retreat

The erosion of Soviet power in Poland 1970-1989

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Introduction

The way in which Soviet power collapsed in Eastern Europe in the summer and autumn of 1989, and the swiftness with which it happened, would have been hard to imagine just a few months earlier. Until the summer of that year most observers, Western as well as Soviet, had agreed that the Soviet Union could hardly be pressed to accept more than some sort of "finlandization" of the region. The Soviet Union, it was argued, would demand special security arrangements for itself and would also demand decisive influence on the military affairs of the East European countries, even if the communist parties were to lose their position of power. It was generally assumed that part of the basis of Soviet strategic and foreign policy thinking was the idea that Eastern Europe belonged to the Soviet Union's sphere of security. Even this, however, represented a radical departure from what had been the dominant view earlier the same year. In early 1989 few in the West believed that the Soviets would let go of their main instrument for political and ideological control in the region, i.e. the dominant position of the communist parties.

This study discusses some of the reasons for the collapse of Soviet power in Eastern Europe. It is based on the assumption that the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 resulted from pressure which had accumulated over many years. I will argue that there were few or no alternatives at all to Soviet policy during the events of 1989: the arsenal of Soviet political instruments in Eastern Europe was exhausted. Soviet-Polish relations in the 1970s and 1980s will be described as a series of Polish challenges which forced Soviet reactions, resulting in a continuous Soviet retreat from its positions of power and influence in Poland. Poland, on the other hand, gradually increased its autonomy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, most

strikingly in internal affairs, but to some degree even in matters of foreign policy. For the Soviet Union the process resulted in a correspondingly weakened ability to determine or influence the course of events in Poland.

On the political level the Soviet-Polish relationship may be discussed in terms of a play with three actors. The Soviet leaders and what could loosely be called the Polish people or Polish opinion were the real opponents, with the Polish communist regime occupying a middle position. In its relations with the population the regime sought to secure a degree of legitimacy and passive support - obvious prerequisites for any effective rule. As regards relations with the Soviet Union, the key factors were credibility and confidence. The Soviet leaders had to be convinced that the government in Warsaw safeguarded Soviet interests and implemented Soviet preferences as far as possible.

This is not the place for a comprehensive discussion or definition of Soviet interests in Eastern Europe from 1945 to 1989. The basic Soviet interests in Poland were of a political-ideological, economical, and military-strategic nature. It may be assumed that the military-strategic aspect was initially the most important. In the Soviet view, however, complete political and economic control over the region was a prerequisite for any reliable security arrangement. The communist parties and governments were the main instruments of Soviet power and control in Eastern Europe. In practice the degree of Soviet control could be measured in terms of conformity with the Soviet model of socialist development and loyalty to Soviet foreign policy and strategic interests. Deviations from the ideal path in domestic or international affairs meant that for one reason or another the satellite regime in question had been able to secure for itself a greater measure of autonomous control,

thereby raising doubts about its basic loyalty towards Soviet priorities and preferences.

There were two sources of the Polish challenges to Soviet interests in the country. First, there was the possibility of popular resistance, protest or upheaval, directed against the communist regime and therefore against Soviet interests in Poland. This kind of challenge came to the fore during the protests of the winter 1970-71 and of June 1976, during the "Solidarity" period of 1980-81, and again during and after the strikes and protests of May 1988. Second, the challenges presented by the communist regime itself had their roots in an attempt to forestall this kind of popular action by a policy of compromise. Thus the Polish regime itself championed policies which threatened Soviet interests in the country. The strategy of the Polish government became increasingly dominated by the desperate quest for economic success.

Prior to the final abolition of Soviet power in Poland the Soviet positions had been gradually undermined. Taking into account the reliance of the Soviets on the communist elites as their main instrument of power and influence in Eastern Europe, a weakening of the communist regime's position directly influenced the Soviet ability to exercise control.¹ This was reinforced by the Polish communists' own quest for greater autonomy. In short, since the early 1970s the Soviets' ability to force their will against Polish opposition was gradually reduced. The collapse of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe in the summer and autumn of 1989 was the culmination of a process of Polish challenges and Soviet retreat which was at the heart of the Soviet-Polish relationship during the entire post war period.

This study is meant to outline a general interpretation of Soviet-Polish relations in the 1970s and 1980s. Needless to

say, it does not pretend to present a comprehensive discussion of the topic. Developments prior to August 1980 are treated in greatest detail, for two reasons. First, and this is the primary reason, in the opinion of this author developments in the 1970s were of primary importance for later events, and they also established patterns which were repeated in the 1980s. Second, it may be presumed that the events of 1980-81 and the 1980s are better known to the readers of this study.

Re-evaluation of Soviet-East European relations under Gorbachev

When Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev was elected General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in March 1985, he promised to make the strengthening of "the fraternal relations" between the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries his "first commandment".² With the exception of this noncommittal and general statement, there were few signs that the new leadership at this point considered the possibility of a radical transformation of the relationship between the Soviet Union and its European allies. In his speech to the Central Committee Plenum in April 1985, when Gorbachev sketched the outlines of his reform programme for the first time, he made only a passing reference to Soviet-East European relations. The reform of Soviet relations with Eastern Europe was obviously not considered a priority task by Gorbachev and his men.

Nor did foreign policy discussions in the Soviet media make clear to which degree the new leadership was prepared to reform the Soviet Union's relations with its allies. Foreign policy in general, and Soviet-East European relations in particular, was still an extremely sensitive topic. Whereas the Soviet press soon learned to make use of the new openness to

bring to light formerly hidden aspects of Soviet history and contemporary life, "glasnost" was late in making its definitive appearance in foreign policy discussions. There were, however, signs of a more diversified approach to intra-bloc relations in the Soviet media. Orthodox articles, hardly differing from mainstream thinking of the 1970s, were supplemented by contributions which seemed to imply the possibility of a re-evaluation of relations between socialist countries.³

Only in 1987-88 did the Soviet leaders appear ready to accept a public discussion of the basic parts of the theory of relations between socialist states. Aleksandr Bovin, the *Izvestiia* columnist, argued in the summer of 1987 that relations between socialist states must be based on the same set of principles which were supposed to govern relations between capitalist states and between capitalist and socialist states: respect for each other's sovereignty, non-interference, etc. etc. The important point was Bovin's implicit rejection of "socialist internationalism" as the foundation of relations between socialist countries.⁴

The re-evaluation continued and deepened throughout 1988. A number of statements, also by Gorbachev himself, left no doubt that the Soviet leadership realized the need for rethinking the principles of Soviet-East European relations. Gorbachev introduced the slogan "freedom of choice" as an important element in his "new thinking" in foreign affairs, and thereby seemed to reject past Soviet practices in Eastern Europe and to make the Soviet use of force in the future less probable.⁵ The substance of the Soviet re-evaluation was proved beyond doubt in the summer and autumn of 1989. The "Brezhnev doctrine", the set of dogmas which had restricted East European autonomy in domestic and foreign affairs, was rejected as a means of managing Soviet relations with its East European allies.⁶

Not later than in the spring 1989, when it became clear that Poland was heading for radical political reform, must the Soviets have decided to allow the reform process in Eastern Europe to follow its own course. It seems highly unlikely, however, that at this point the Soviet leadership had elaborated a set of political aims and means to govern their policy towards the East European countries. The Soviet line towards the reformist regimes was purely negative: they kept their hands off and let the East Europeans manage their affairs themselves. The idea that the reform process was in fact directed from a "centre" in Moscow, as argued *inter alia* by the Polish sociologist Jadwiga Staniszkis,⁷ was hardly based in reality. The effect of "contamination", the positive signals from Moscow, together with the magnitude of the economic and political crisis in *all* East European countries, suffice to explain why the collapse of the communist system happened almost simultaneously in the whole region in the course of a few months in the summer and autumn of 1989.

The Soviet "theoretical" re-evaluation which was launched in 1987 was one of the reasons for the peaceful course of the transformation. In Eastern Europe the new signals from Moscow served to encourage economic and political reform. It is equally obvious that the "new" Soviet foreign policy on the global level, which had as its foremost aim the securing of detente and cooperation with the West, constituted the best possible environment for the political transformation of Eastern Europe. Direct or indirect Soviet intervention would have removed the foundations and the benefits of the new Soviet-Western relationship. The scale and depth of the transformation in Eastern Europe showed, however, that the Soviet re-evaluation came years too late. It was no longer possible to preserve even rudiments of the old political and economic system. The political and economic crisis formed the immedia-

te background for the transformation of Eastern Europe in 1989. The timing, and the fact that the old regimes with the exception of Rumania gave up their positions peacefully and without serious resistance, were the result of the political situation in the Soviet Union and the Soviet leaders' foreign policy priorities.

1970: Revolt and response

By 1970 Poland had already established for itself a unique position in the Soviet bloc. Poland differed in a number of important ways from the other countries of Eastern Europe, partly as a result of the "Polish October" of 1956. Private small farms dominated the agricultural sector, and the church had been able to defend and even strengthen its position in this strongly Catholic country. The events of 1956 moreover had established patterns which continued to influence the Polish political scene and the Soviet-Polish relationship. Firstly, October had demonstrated that the regime was far from omnipotent when confronted by popular protest, and that oppositional forces could also emerge from within the party's own ranks. Secondly, 1956 had raised the spectre of Polish military resistance to Soviet intervention, and showed that the Soviets could be forced to retreat.

The crisis of 1970-71, which is the point of departure for this study, followed the typical "Polish" pattern. On December 12 in an evening broadcast on television and radio Wladyslaw Gomulka, First Secretary of the PUWP, announced significant price increases for a number of basic consumer commodities, to come into force on the following day. The decision had not been subjected to public debate prior to its confirmation by the politburo on December 11. The price increases concurred with a planned change in the wage system which had already

aroused significant resistance. The new system was designed to make workers' wages dependent on a set of indicators of production and profit.

The proclamation of the price increases provoked spontaneous protests among workers in the three Baltic cities of Gdansk, Gdynia and Szczecin. In confrontations between protesters, police and military detachments on December 14-19, 44 people were killed and 1165 injured according to official sources. While Gomulka ordered tough measures to be used against the rioting workers, he was confronted by mounting criticism in the politburo. After Gomulka had a heart attack on December 18, the power struggle within the party came to an end when Edward Gierak was elected new party leader on December 20. Gierak, the party leader in Schlesien, represented a new generation of "technocrats" in the party. The election of Gierak was accompanied by extensive changes in all sections of the party leadership. A number of Gomulka's close allies left, while Gierak's supporters occupied dominant positions. The new leader argued for the necessity of a dialogue with the workers, and in a speech to the nation Gierak acknowledged that the protests were the results of the failure of Gomulka's economic policies. After renewed protests and strikes in January and February 1971, the government finally declared on March 15 the revocation of the price increases.⁸

The role of the Soviets in the events leading to Gomulka's fall and Edward Gierak's accession to power is still a topic of discussion.⁹ Some authors maintain that Gomulka asked the Russians for help. Apparently the Soviets were not willing to act, and they advised the Polish leaders to find a political solution to the crisis.¹⁰ Little is known about the Soviet attitude and reaction to Gomulka's use of force to quell the protests. The coverage in the Soviet media of the events following Gomulka's announcement of the price increases was rather

restrained. It took several days before the appearance of the first reports which made it clear that something unusual was going on in Poland. The impression of initial Soviet uncertainty about how to react seems confirmed by the chosen tactic of providing news and comments in the form of selected and more or less edited and commented translations of official Polish press material. It is difficult to know exactly how the Soviets at this point evaluated the situation in Poland. Although press reports at the time of Soviet, East German and Czechoslovak troop movements were interpreted as signs of preparations for a WTO intervention, sources in the US administration contended that there were no signs that the Soviet divisions in Poland had been placed on special alert.¹¹ Nor had the Soviet press produced that kind of *a priori* justification which evolved gradually during the months leading up to the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The tentative conclusion is that the Soviet leaders had reached no conclusion on the handling of the crisis when the sudden illness of Gomulka and the election of Edward Gierek as new First Secretary presented them with a new Polish approach to the crisis.

The Soviets gave the new regime and Gierek's conciliatory line full verbal support. A congratulatory telegram from Brezhnev to Gierek enthusiastically endorsed the new leader of the PUP, characterizing him as "a sincere friend of the Soviet Union and a staunch communist-internationalist".¹² In the ensuing months the Soviet media coverage of Polish affairs continued the line of conveying the official Polish version of the events, intermixed with optimistic reports from Soviet correspondents in Poland.¹³ Moscow television and Soviet newspapers also carried parts of Gierek's speech to the 8th Plenum, thereby introducing the Soviet public to the new interpretation of the critical situation in Poland.¹⁴ The Soviet media coverage continued along similar lines from early 1971

to the PUWP Congress in December the same year. The Soviet press did not mention directly the eruption of new strikes and disturbances in the coastal region and in Poznan in January and February, and there were no allegations of renewed activity by "anti-socialist" elements. Although *Pravda* mentioned Gierek's and Jaroszewicz' journey to Gdansk and Szczecin in late January, its readers were only informed that their purpose was to discuss "essential problems" with the workers, with an eye to creating "the correct formation of social relations in the work collectives".¹⁵ A fortnight later the re-establishment of pre-December 12 prices was reported without any further explanation.¹⁶

The strong verbal support for the new leadership was soon followed by extensive economic and material aid to bolster up the new regime. In late December and in connection with Gierek's visit to Moscow on January 5 the two parties apparently agreed on large Soviet emergency deliveries of inter alia grain and building materials.¹⁷ According to CIA estimates, Soviet aid to Poland during 1971 amounted to at least one billion dollars,¹⁸ and may have been crucial to Gierek's policy of meeting the workers' demands. In April 1971 Edward Babiuch, a member of the politburo since December 1970, told the 9th Plenum that overcoming the crisis was made possible by Soviet credits, which had enabled the government to buy large quantities of meat and meat products abroad.¹⁹

The period of a few days from the start of the riots on 14 December to the downfall of Gomulka did not give the Soviet leadership enough time to decide on coherent response tactics. A discussion of Soviet behaviour must therefore include the first two months after Gierek took over, until the situation finally stabilized after the revocation of the price increases on February 15. Robin Remington has described the basic Soviet alternatives during this period in the following words:

They [i.e. the Soviets] could have denounced the strikers as counterrevolutionary, declared Polish socialism in danger, and intervened militarily. Or, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968, they could have adopted a hands-off approach and watched the situation deteriorate until invasion seemed inevitable. Or they could buy time by giving Gierk enough aid to act as a finger in the dike while he consolidated.²⁰

The Soviet response to the Polish crisis may have resulted from an evaluation of actual or potential threats to the three key elements of Soviet control in the region: the "leading role of the party", "democratic centralism" within the party, and loyalty to alliance obligations. At no point during the development of the Polish crisis did Soviet media or officials make allegations that the crisis might pose a serious threat to socialism in Poland. There were no hints of an erosion of the principle of democratic centralism in the ruling party - unlike the situation in Czechoslovakia 1968, there were no signs of an influential "revisionist" faction within the PUWP.²¹ Nor was the party's leading role ever seriously questioned - warnings of anti-socialist activity were regularly accompanied by assurances that the working class and all the Polish working people supported the socialist order and the efforts to overcome the crisis. Soviet commentaries did not mention the existence of a threat to Poland's relations with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. In March 1971 Soviet readers were told that speedy reaction of the PUWP obstructed the plans of anti-socialist forces, who "simply did not have the time to begin their attack". The demonstrations of the coastal workers "were not directed against the socialist order and the party, or against our [i.e. Polish] fraternal union with the other socialist countries".²²

Nonetheless, the developments in Poland after December 1970 presented the Soviet Union with obvious dilemmas. Political instability in an East European country would affect a wide range of Soviet regional interests. First, the purely military side of the matter, in the Polish case there might be Soviet concern about the security of their lines of communication with Soviet troops in the GDR. Unspecified government sources in Washington were of the opinion that "the Soviet Union would not hesitate to use its forces in Poland" if the link to East Germany were threatened. Second, meeting the workers' demands would mean the legitimization of the workers' spontaneous action and a victory for forces working in opposition to the regime - which could not be without relevance for the prospects of continued Soviet and local communist party control in other East European countries. Third, Soviet material and economic support to Poland took resources away from domestic Soviet consumption. The resolutions of the 24th CPSU Congress in March-April stressed the development of "group B" (non-capital goods) production. The Soviet leaders seemed to be aware that protests caused by the economic situation might erupt in the Soviet Union too. Fourth, toleration of the protests and the compromise solution might encourage party and non-party forces to press for a policy of increased independence vis-a-vis the USSR.

Against these potential dangers must be weighed the consequences of a violent solution to the crisis, with Soviet or Polish troops. In 1970/71 the Soviet leaders apparently concluded that a violent solution would harm rather than benefit Soviet interests in the region, and decided to support Gierek's efforts to create a new social accord in Poland. The past ability of Polish regimes to cope with domestic opposition - after October 1956 and during the students' revolt of 1968 - may have reinforced the arguments favouring a negotiated solution rather than a violent one.

Although it may be argued that the workers, from the point of view of the long-term results of the 1970-71 events, "achieved an economic victory, but lost politically"²³, the significance of the "December events" from the internal Polish point of view lies above all in the fact that they proved once more that government decisions may be successfully thwarted by resolute popular action. Popular protest, moreover, triggered revolt and change in the top party leadership. In this respect the events which started in December 1970 confirmed the experiences of June-October 1956, and they furnished a pattern which was to be repeated in 1976, 1980-81, and again successfully in 1988-89.

The events also reinforced patterns in the Soviet-Polish relationship. The Soviet response demonstrated Soviet willingness to accede to compromise and allow the Poles to manage the crisis themselves, even if this was bound to pose serious long-term threats to Soviet interests in Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

1970-1980: Compromise communism

Gierek achieved some immediate success in quieting the workers' protests and securing the stability of the regime. During his first years in power, moreover, Gierek could claim even a degree of popularity. The regime's base of support and legitimacy was, however, a precarious one. Gierek launched a programme of rapid development and modernization of the Polish economy, and promised a concomitant rise in the living standard of the people. There was a reorientation of investments away from heavy industry to the production of consumer goods.²⁴ As long as the country was able to sustain this import-led economic boom, which for some years in the

early 1970s placed Poland among the fastest growing economies of the industrialized world, Gierek could count on a measure of popular support. Thus the first half of the 1970s marked the heyday of the period of "goulash Communism" in Poland. When the industrialization drive gradually broke down in the latter half of the decade, partly due to the impossibility of further financing growth by foreign credits, and partly due to the Polish economy's failure to modernize and satisfy the increased demand created by both increased domestic purchasing power and the need to expand exports in order to service the debts, the regime was left without its sole remaining source of popular support.

The most serious warning to the regime was presented by the protests which broke out on June 25, 1976, after the regime had once more declared a rise in the price of basic foodstuffs. Protests and strikes took place in places of work all over Poland, and as a result Prime Minister Jaroszewicz announced the withdrawal of the price rises that very evening. The protests of 25 June 1975 were mainly limited to the price issue, unlike those of December 1970, when the workers also had expressed political demands. They abated after Jaroszewicz' announcement, and led to no other immediate changes in the regime's policy. They did, however, once more demonstrate the possibility of forcing the regime to retreat.²⁵ The regime's dependence on its ability to provide the population with at least a semblance of economic prosperity, at the same time as it was both unwilling to engage in systemic reform and unable to effect the measures which might have brought a degree of stability into the existing system, proved fatal to Poland's economy. In the long run they also spelled disaster for the regime itself.

After the June crisis, as in 1970-71, the Soviets agreed to supply Poland with material and financial aid in order to

support Gierek's attempts to overcome the crisis. There also followed renewed Soviet efforts to reintegrate Poland's economy with the rest of the bloc, and Soviet-Polish trade links were strengthened.²⁶ There are no signs that the Soviet Union hesitated in their support for the Gierek regime during or after the June crisis.

June 1976 not only demonstrated once more the success of popular protest in thwarting an important part of the regime's policies. The events also became a turning point in the development of organized opposition in Poland. A key role was played by the KOR (Komitet Obrony Robotników, The Committee for the Defence of the Workers, later renamed KSS-KOR, [Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej] The Committee for Social Self-Defence-KOR) which was formed with the primary aim of offering help and support to the workers who were suppressed after the June events. Many of the intellectuals who were instrumental in creating KOR had the previous year participated in actions of protest against the proposed changes in the Constitution. The proposed amendments included an article linking each citizen's constitutional rights to his fulfillment of his obligations towards the state, together with a formalization of Poland's alliance relationship with the USSR and the leading role of the Party in Polish political life. Although the action was only partially successful in achieving its primary aim, it succeeded in bringing together groups which were later to supply the nucleus of political opposition in Poland.²⁷

After the October events of 1956, social and political protest in Poland had been hampered by the absence of contacts and the realization of mutual interests between the two main sources of opposition to the regime, workers and intellectuals. Whereas the workers had failed to respond to appeals of support during the events of March 1968 and after, the intel-

lectuals, on the other hand, remained largely aloof from the workers' protests during the winter of 1970-71. The formation and activity of KOR was a conscious attempt to bridge the gap between the workers and the intellectual opposition. In this task KOR was eminently successful. The rise of the independent trade union movement on the Baltic coast, which culminated in the rise of Solidarity in the summer of 1980, demonstrated the close links which had been established between the workers and the oppositional intellectuals since 1976.²⁸ Ever since August 1980, the alliance of workers and intellectuals has been one of the factors most characteristic of, and giving strength to, the oppositional movement in Poland.

Apart from KOR, the latter half of the 1970s was marked by a profusion of oppositional groups and activities of all kinds and orientations. Singular acts of repression notwithstanding, the regime was not able or willing to control, still less effectively suppress, this growing activity of the society. A sign of this process was the rapidly increasing number of unofficial publications, books, periodicals and newspapers. In its dealings with this kind of oppositional activity, the regime showed (for whatever reasons) a degree of tolerance far exceeding that of any other of the East European countries.

The relative leniency towards the political opposition in Poland was hardly welcomed in Moscow. During the 1970s, most noticeably in the latter half of the decade, contacts developed between Soviet and East European human rights activists. They exchanged messages, and on several occasions issued statements in support of activists persecuted by the authorities. When, for instance, Andrei Sakharov was banned to the city of Gorky in January 1980, KSS-KOR publicly protested against the decision. Prior to that, personal contacts had been established between KSS-KOR and the group of Moscow dissidents.²⁹

During the 1970s the Polish leaders were stuck between two apparently contradictory sets of objectives. Somehow they had to pacify or, even better, get the support of main sections of the population. On the other hand they felt the need to remain within the limits set by Poland's great ally. From the Soviet point of view the Soviet-Polish relationship in the 1970s presented an extreme case of the "viability" versus "cohesion" dilemma described by J.F. Brown in the mid-1970s. Cohesion within the Soviet bloc meant

a situation where [...] there is general conformity of ideological, political and economic policy, both domestic and foreign, as laid down by the Soviet Union in any particular period.³⁰

There is no reason to doubt that, until the upheavals in Eastern Europe in 1988-89, the maintenance of this kind of cohesion constituted one of the main Soviet policy objectives in the region. "Viability", on the other hand, meant

a degree of confidence and efficiency, especially economic, in the East European states that would increasingly legitimize communist rule and correspondingly reduce the Soviet need for a preventive preoccupation with that region.³¹

In the case of Poland, the question of "viability" was an acute one, and the Soviet Union was forced to accede to concessions to Polish particularistic ambitions. Even in matters of foreign policy, the Soviet Union was apparently prepared to accept a certain degree of Polish independent action.

Among the popular initiatives which were launched in the early Gierek period were measures to strengthen the position of individual farmers. These measures included an increase in

the procurement prices for farm products, abolition of compulsory deliveries, the settling of uncertain property rights, etc.³² There are no signs of explicit Soviet disapproval of this departure from the socialist model of economic development, although Konstantin Katushev, the CPSU secretary in charge of relations with ruling Communist parties, no doubt had Poland in mind when he wrote that "[s]ocialist transformation of the countryside is [...] an indispensable element of socialist development".³³ One of the few contemporary Soviet press commentaries touching on the theme mentioned the dominating position of private ownership in Polish agriculture, and also stated as a fact that there were no plans in the 1971-75 Five Year Plan to implement any major changes in property relationships in the countryside. The article also suggested that a large-scale shift to bigger units would produce problems in finding new work for 1-2 million people who would no longer be needed in agriculture.³⁴ The Soviets apparently abstained from open criticism of Polish agricultural policies throughout the 1970s.³⁵ A series of articles on Polish agriculture in the summer of 1976 did not herald, as might have been expected, a Soviet press campaign against Polish agricultural policies, although they noted with satisfaction an alleged process of "socialization" in the Polish countryside.³⁶

The Polish government continued its policy of relative tolerance towards the Church. Piotr Jaroszewicz, who became prime minister in December 1970, promised in his inaugural address to the Sejm to ensure "full normalization of state and church relations".³⁷ Early in March 1971 a meeting between Jaroszewicz and Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński took place, and the government agreed to a number of concessions to the Church. But despite this and other attempts at rapprochement the church-state relationship remained one of conflict of competence and interest, and the regime failed to ensure anything close to "full normalization" in its relations with the Church.

Throughout the decade the church maintained and even strengthened its rôle as an independent force capable of criticizing and counteracting the regime's ideological and political endeavors.³⁸ The rôle and prestige of the Church was utterly enhanced by the election of Karol Wojtyla, Archbishop of Cracow, as Pope in October 1978, and by the Pope's pilgrimage to his home country the following summer. The necessity of recognizing and dealing with the Church led to the first official meeting between Gierk and Wyszynski in October 1977, and no doubt also contributed to Gierk's decision to have an audience with the Pope on December 1 the same year. The regime, on the other hand, was not willing to turn to harsh stalinist measures in its struggle against the Church. The Church therefore was able to maintain, or even strengthen, its influence and authority among believers as well as non-believers. It also played an obvious political role by offering its support to victims of political persecution, and by speaking out in defence of what it viewed as basic human rights. The regime, as part of its struggle to gain a measure of popular legitimacy, was forced to recognize or even try to mobilize the support of the Catholic hierarchy.³⁹

At the outset of his rule Gierk used every opportunity to stress the continuity of Polish foreign policies and his absolute loyalty towards the Soviet Union. At the 8th PUWP CC plenum on 7 February 1971 he said that the party continued his predecessor's foreign policy, which had been "correct on all basic questions". He emphasized the necessity of continued cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other SEV and WTO countries, and pledged "tirelessly to strengthen ideological, political, economic and cultural ties with the fraternal socialist countries". Talks with Soviet leaders had shown that there was "unity of views on all key problems".⁴⁰ Gierk's speech on 31 March 1971 at the 24th CPSU Congress was one long declaration of loyalty to the Soviet Union.

Polish foreign policy in the 1970s nevertheless presented a number of departures from previous policies. Revitalization of Poland's relations with the major western countries became a priority aim of Gierek's foreign policy. In seeking these contacts, the Poles wanted to secure western credits for the financing of industrial development and higher living standards in Poland. Polish leaders emphasized the absence of any kind of contradiction between increased economic ties with the West and Polish participation in and verbal support for "socialist economic integration" within CMEA.⁴¹ They gave complete verbal support for the CMEA Comprehensive Program of economic integration as well as for the plan for large joint investment projects in the USSR agreed upon at the 29th CMEA session in June 1976.⁴² The need the Poles felt to reassure the Soviets and their other allies on this point leaves no doubt that they were aware of the possibility of allied resistance to their policy of cooperation with the West. The Soviets, however, apparently approved Poland's "turn to the West" after Gierek's accession to power in 1970.⁴³ From the mid-1970s the Soviets may have become increasingly apprehensive as to the implications of Poland's dependence on the West. For instance, Brezhnev warned against imperialism using economic levers in its struggle against the socialist countries at the 7th PUWP Congress in 1975.

Other aspects of the new approach in Polish foreign policy went beyond the search for credits and western partners for Poland's economic development. The development of relations with the Scandinavian countries and Finland was regularly presented as one of the foremost tasks of Polish diplomacy. Although the Scandinavian countries were characterized as "economically natural partners for Poland"⁴⁴, there are obvious parallels to prewar Polish efforts to develop relations with Scandinavia as part of schemes of cooperation between the

countries of central Europe. The importance attached to relations with France reveals the same tendency to revert to traditional Polish foreign policy orientations, although Germany was by far Poland's most important economic partner in the West; even the activation of relations with the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, primarily the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, fits into this pattern. There were also signs of more active Polish diplomatic activity towards Yugoslavia.⁴⁵ Poland also made efforts to improve ties with the Polish emigré community in the West. Discussions were opened with the Vatican soon after Gierek's accession to power (April 1971), and in 1974 the two sides agreed to formalize and institutionalize the relationship by establishing permanent mixed "working groups". Throughout the 1970s Polish-Vatican relations developed further in the direction set in 1971, although full diplomatic relations were still a matter for the future.⁴⁶

Although the Poles regularly declared their fidelity to the principles of "socialist internationalism" and stressed the need for unity in the socialist camp etc., their views deviated from the Soviet point of view as regards some other ideological points. The Polish view of the nature of East-West relations was strikingly similar to some key points of the Soviet "new political thinking" under Gorbachev. Writing in 1974, Stefan Olszowski rejected "cold war" as the natural condition of relations between socialist and capitalist states. There was not only the danger that it might erupt into hot war, but

also because it was inimical to the tasks with which the nations are and will be confronted and which can only be successfully tackled by the concerted efforts of all of them.

Among those tasks he mentioned the consequences of the "galloping strides made in science and technology", ecological

problems, "the rapidly mounting importance of the international division of labour", and "the internationalization of economic and social life". As for the responsibility for the cold war, which the Soviets place squarely on the West, Olszowski argued that this was a matter "that no longer matters", and he refused to choose sides in the conflict.⁴⁷

1980-81: Confrontation

As had been the case in December 1970, the Soviet media were slow to react after the eruption of workers' protests in Poland in the summer of 1980. The first Soviet comment appeared only on August 19, i.e. when the stage was already set for the final part of the drama at the Gdansk shipyard. The delay in Soviet coverage no doubt reflected both uncertainty on the part of the Soviets about the nature of what was happening in Poland, and the hope that the Poles would be able to handle the crisis before it went out of control. The Soviets clearly lacked a coherent strategy to cope with the crisis. Up to this point the Soviet verbal reaction resembled the pattern of December 1970.

Beginning on 20 August, however, when *Pravda* gave a summary of Edward Gierek's speech of two days before, some patterns established themselves. A prominent place was assigned to condemnations of "anti-socialist activities" and "anti-socialist elements", who were spurred from the West in their "inflammatory" and "subversive" activities.⁴⁸ The issue of the link between Poland's independence and security and the country's socialist order was introduced. On 26 August Gierek was reported to have declared that "only a socialist Poland can be an independent state with stable borders and international prestige. Today, only socialism effectively safeguards state and national interests".⁴⁹ Anti-socialist elements were doing "direct

damage to real socialism on Polish soil", and their aim was "to destroy the party's link with the working class". Acting through their puppets in Poland, western circles, particularly West German ones, aimed at no less than damaging "the Polish people's socialist gains" and trying "to divert Poland from the path on which it embarked [...] after its liberation".⁵⁰ Soviet dissatisfaction with the turn of events in Poland was further underlined by the media's highly selective and tendentious coverage of Gierek's speeches and other official Polish statements. The Soviet press also kept the Soviet public in the dark about the content of agreements between the workers and the government, including the Gdansk accord of August 31, 1980.

When paraphrasing or quoting Polish statements, Soviet media consistently ignored the topic of independent trade unions, the role of the Church in Polish society, and the question of censorship and free information - topics which were at the very heart of the Polish debates. Polish media also omitted Polish appeals for Western support to overcome the economic crisis.⁵¹ The Soviet view of trade unions under socialism was made clear in *Pravda* on 25 September. Reiterating the orthodox view of the different roles of trade unions under socialism and capitalism, the author argued that in socialist societies there is no exploitation of man by man, the state is the workers' own state, and the basic antagonism between labour and capital is liquidated. He stressed Lenin's condemnation of "free" trade unions, that "keep aloof from participation in the accomplishment of nationwide tasks, that are 'free' from the ultimate goal of the working class' struggle for socialism and communism and 'independent' of the overall interests of the working people as a whole".⁵² The ruling of the Polish Supreme Court of November 10, 1980, which finally legalized Solidarity's position as an independent trade union, was not mentioned in the Soviet media.

Seen as a whole, the period from the Gdansk accords to the election of general Jaruzelski as First Secretary of the PUWP in October 1981 saw a gradual broadening of the Soviet public criticism. Condemnations of "Solidarity" as a political opposition movement was introduced in early 1981⁵³ and culminated during the congress of "Solidarity" in September. From early April onwards the PUWP itself was subjected to criticism. The immediate reason for the Soviet concern was probably the settlement between the government and "Solidarity" of March 31 and the PUWP CC plenum of March 29-30, which revealed serious conflicts within the party. After the visit to Warsaw of Mikhail Suslov, the chief CPSU ideologist, at the end of April, the Soviet press made direct charges that "revisionist elements" had found their way into the ranks of the PUWP, threatening its role as the leading force in society.⁵⁴ The Soviet dissatisfaction with the policies of the PUWP was made public in June 1981, when Soviet media published a letter of advice and criticism from the CPSU CC to the PUWP CC.⁵⁵ On 17 September PAP reported that Boris Aristov, the Soviet ambassador to Poland, had met with Kania and Jaruzelski and delivered a statement from the CC CPSU and the Soviet government. The statement focused on anti-soviet manifestations in Poland, and concluded by demanding that the PUWP and the Polish government "immediately take determined and radical steps in order to cut short the malicious anti-Soviet propaganda and actions hostile to the Soviet Union".⁵⁶

Within this general trend, however, periods of harsh critique and even direct hints of the possibility of military intervention⁵⁷ interchanged with periods of less coverage or more optimistic reporting. Periods of greater Soviet restraint followed General Jaruzelski's election as Prime Minister on February 11, and again after his accession to the position of First Secretary of the PUWP in October.

The semi-official views of the leading Soviet press organs were in line with the diplomatic and other measures the Soviet government used to influence the situation in Poland. The use of military threats (mobilization of forces along the Polish borders) and official warnings or declarations of confidence in the Polish leadership, were combined with extensive Soviet material and financial help.⁵⁸

There can be no doubt that the events in Poland in 1980-81 presented an extremely serious challenge to Soviet interests in Poland and in Eastern Europe as a whole. The challenge was indeed a basic one: from August 1980 to December 1981 the Soviets were confronted with the prospect of a breakdown of the communist regime in Poland. This in turn would obviously endanger other primary Soviet interests in the area, military as well as economic. The Soviets were also acutely aware that the events in Poland might spill over into other East European countries and the Soviet Union itself by stimulating opposition to the communist regimes.⁵⁹

The question is therefore not whether the Soviet Union considered military intervention to restore *status quo ante*,⁶⁰ but why it *did not* directly intervene but agreed to the uncertainty of a Polish "inner solution". Soviet military intervention, following shortly after the invasion of Afghanistan, would have been extremely costly in terms of Western reactions and Soviet loss of prestige and influence in the international community. The stakes were high. The events in Poland, if left unchecked, might threaten the very existence of the socialist system in Poland and the stability in other East European countries and ultimately the Soviet Union itself. Direct Soviet intervention, on the other hand, would threaten basic Soviet priorities in the fields of arms control and economic cooperation with the West. No less important were calculations of the effects of a Soviet

intervention in Poland itself and in the rest of Eastern Europe. The unavoidable result would have been the complete loss of legitimacy of the communist regime in Poland, and to a varying degree in the other East European countries as well. The Soviets must also take into account the possibility of Polish military resistance. Once arrived, the Soviet forces would have to stay in order to help their Polish colleagues keep the regime in power. In terms of the "cohesion" vs. "viability" dilemma, the Soviets no doubt realized that a Soviet military intervention would exclude any possibility of achieving a "viable" regime in Poland.

The events of 1980-81 and the imposition of martial law in December 1981 once more demonstrated the limits of Soviet power and control in Poland. Martial law was imposed too late to prevent the formation of a new balance of forces in the triangular relationship between the Polish people, the Polish communist regime, and the Soviet Union. Although defeated, "Solidarity" revitalized a potent factor in East European politics: the spectre that a broadly-based popular opposition movement might force the regime to retreat or even enter the path of a gradual dismantling of its power structures. The events confirmed the previous experience to the effect that the post-stalinist communist regime in Poland was far from immune to public pressure.

The very existence of a military regime in a socialist state caused obvious ideological embarrassment. After the imposition of martial law Soviet media stressed that the Polish military had not usurped power but had come to the rescue of the party, and that the Military Council of National Salvation had had as its foremost task the securing of the leading role of the PUWP and the realization of the decisions of the 9th Congress.⁶¹

1981-89: Decline and withdrawal

The situation in Poland during the 1980s was clearly unsatisfactory from the Soviet point of view. Jaruzelski never succeeded in creating the kind of "normalization" which had characterized Czechoslovakia during the years following the WTO invasion, and he may never have tried to do so. Even after the imposition of martial law Poland, with the possible exception of Hungary, remained the most liberal and open of the East European countries. At the same time the Soviets were left with no other choice than to support Jaruzelski's faltering regime. The Polish regime during the 1980s was characterized by a desperate search for solutions to the country's social, economic and political problems. The 1980s in Poland became the decade of failed reform and experimentation. If the regime should have any chance to survive, it clearly needed increased autonomy in its search for a *modus vivendi* with the population. The scenario of the 1970s repeated itself, but this time the stakes were still higher and the chances for success seemed small or non-existent. Martial law had effectively destroyed what was left of the regime's legitimacy. The regime, moreover, proved unable to cope with the country's mounting problems. After some signs of improvement in the mid-1980s, the decline in the economy continued, and the regime proved once more unable to implement effective reform measures.

Soviet-Polish relations were far from devoid of conflict. Signs of Soviet dissatisfaction appeared soon after the imposition of martial law. On 20 July 1982, an authoritative article in *Trud*, the organ of the USSR's All-Union Council of Trade Unions, seemed to imply that "Solidarity" should not be allowed to be re-established and play a rôle in the future. At the same time Jaruzelski stated in a speech to the Sejm that trade unions

must be "self-governing and independent from the administration". The sentence was omitted in the TASS summary of the speech.⁶² Although Jaruzelski's remarks were hardly meant to clear the way for the re-legalization of Solidarity (the union was later banned), the episode highlighted the different approaches of Warsaw and Moscow to one of Poland's the most pressing problems.

There were other signs of Soviet dissatisfaction. In September the same year, an article in *Pravda* stressed the point that the history of Polish communism demonstrated that Polish communists succeeded only when they followed and learned from the experience of their Russian fellow revolutionaries. The Soviet press also repeatedly warned Poland and other East European countries against the dangers of becoming economically dependent upon the West.

The position of the church in Poland continued to attract Soviet attention and criticism. In the summer of 1982 the Soviet press launched a campaign against the Pope and the Catholic Church in Poland in connection with the Pope's planned pilgrimage to his homeland. On June 19 *Pravda* argued that the Pope would use his visit to Poland to encourage the Polish underground. In the following weeks criticism of the Church as a main instigator of unrest in Poland was a prominent theme in the Soviet coverage of Polish affairs. The Church, however, continued to consolidate and strengthen its position. During the first Solidarity period 1980-81 and throughout the 1980s the regime's dependence upon the authority of the Church as a mediator vis-a-vis a hostile population became ever more evident. Notwithstanding periodic anti-Church campaigns (most notably during the trial of the Popieluszko murderers), since the early 1970s the Communist regime in Poland has been forced to arrive at a

modus vivendi with the Church and recognize it as an authoritative voice on ethical, social and even political matters.

Partly as a result of the preoccupation with internal affairs, and partly a result of the restrictions imposed by the West after the imposition of martial law, the Jaruzelski regime did not engage in foreign policy initiatives as Gierek did in the 1970s. In the field of internal affairs, however, the particularistic tendencies of the 1970s were continued and even reinforced. The new trade unions, established in 1982, soon assumed a much more independent role than was the case with other official trade unions in Eastern Europe. The primary reason, of course, was the need to present an attractive alternative to the underground structures of Solidarity.⁶³ Nonetheless, the role played by the OPZZ in the 1980s was another example of the regime's basic weakness vis-a-vis society, and it clearly departed from the role allotted to trade unions in other countries of the Soviet bloc.

The opposition, centred around the underground structures of the trade union "Solidarity", was allotted a semi-legal existence. Lech Walesa was able to act openly after his release in 1982, and the intellectual community continued to analyze and criticize Polish society and the way it was run. Other political opposition groups continued their activity more or less openly. There were few restrictions on travelling abroad, and increasing numbers of predominantly young Poles became acquainted with the way of life in Western Europe and North America. The press was by far the most outspoken in the Soviet bloc, and what could not be printed in official publications was brought to the public by the mushrooming underground press. The ordinary Pole was never afraid of stating his opinion: there was a gulf of difference between the comparatively relaxed atmosphere in Poland and, say, the tense suspicion and fear which reigned in the GDR.

The proliferation of the underground press was itself a result of the regime lacking the will to launch an overall attack on the opposition. In 1987 there appeared some 600 different underground newspapers; a great number of books were issued annually by underground printing houses which were part of a highly organized underground publishing system.

The precarious position of the regime was highlighted by the Popieluszko murder in 1984. The succeeding trial of the murderers, even though it was used by the authorities as a platform for attacks on the church, was an unprecedented event in Eastern Europe. The decision to allow the persecution of a number of general Kiszczak's subordinates in the Ministry of Internal Affairs demonstrated the weakened position of the regime in the contest with society.

The referendum in November 1987, when the regime made the realization of its programme for economic reform dependent on society's approval, represented both the ultimate failure of the socialist system in Poland and the logical result of the government's never-ending search for popular legitimacy.

When labour unrest once more broke out in Poland in the spring of 1988 Soviet attitudes to Eastern Europe were in the middle of rapid and fundamental change. Former limitations on Polish autonomy were not valid any more, and it became clear that the Polish regime was given almost unlimited scope to solve its own problems. Although initially sceptical when radical proposals were presented in Warsaw, since the spring of 1988 Soviet media have rapidly adjusted to the new realities and have come out in favour of the reformers. The changing pattern of the Soviet-East European relationship was also reflected in the Soviet willingness, although reluctant, to

discuss some of the touchy "blank spots" in the history of Soviet-Polish relations.⁶⁴ It appears likely, therefore, that the transformation of the Polish political system which began in the summer of 1988 has been an almost purely Polish affair with limited Soviet involvement. The events during the summer and autumn of 1989, when there were no signs of serious Soviet attempts to halt the systemic change in Poland (these came some months later in the rest of Eastern Europe), confirmed that the Soviet Union had renounced its claim to a position of control in Poland and Eastern Europe.

Conclusion

In a lengthy interview recently published in Poland, Edward Gierek, the former First Secretary of the PUWP, argued that the underlying strategy of his regime in the 1970s was to strengthen Poland's economic power in order to "re-negotiate with the Eastern neighbour the position of our country, in the political as well as economic sense, within the socialist camp".⁶⁵ Gierek's statement is, of course, primarily apologetic and it attempts to rehabilitate the economic policies of the 1970s. It is hardly open to doubt, however, that all post-Stalin Polish governments have tried to broaden the scope for Polish autonomous action and strengthen their country's bargaining position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union.

The erosion of Soviet influence and control in Poland in the 1970s and 1980s, however, was basically the result of the inability of the communist regime in Warsaw to arrive at a *modus vivendi* with Polish society. Attempts to achieve popular legitimacy served only to strengthen independent social and political initiatives and structures, while legitimacy itself dwindled. Thus the ground was prepared for the eventual take-over of political power by the forces of the former opposition.

The same process was mirrored on the level of Soviet-Polish relations. The Soviet strategy of allowing the Polish government increasing autonomy in domestic, and to some degree even foreign, affairs in a vain attempt to find a solution to the "cohesion" vs. "viability" dilemma did nothing to strengthen the Polish regime's domestic position. It led, however, to a gradual loosening of Soviet control and prepared the ground for the Soviet capitulation in the summer of 1989.

Notes:

1. For an elaboration of this point, see Christopher D. Jones, *Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe*, New York, 1981.
2. *Pravda*, March 12, 1985.
3. For an example of the orthodox view, see O. Vladimirov (apparently a pseudonym for Oleg B. Rakhmanin) in *Pravda*, June 21, 1985. An article by Iurii Novopashin, "Politicheskie otnosheniia stran sotsializma", *Rabochii klass i sovremennyi mir*, 1985, No. 5, introduced arguments which reappeared in force when the foreign policy debate finally "loosened" in 1987-88.
4. Aleksandr Bovin, "Mirnoe sosushchestvovanie i mirovaia sistema sotsializma", *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* (MEMO), No. 7 (July), 1987.
5. See for instance Gorbachev's speech in the United Nations, December 7, 1988.
6. For a discussion of the evolution of Soviet theory on socialist international relations from the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 to 1989, see my study *The Demise of the Brezhnev Doctrine*, *Forsvarsstudier*, No. 2, 1990.
7. Staniszkis in interview in *Polityka* (Warsaw), October 1989.
8. There is a considerable amount written about the events of 1970-71. The most detailed documentation is, however, available only in Polish. Among other works are the relevant chapters in George Blazynski, *Flashpoint Poland*, New York, 1979; Harald Laeuen, *Polen nach dem Sturz Gomulka's*, Stuttgart 1972; A. Ross Johnson, *The Polish Riots and Gomulka's Fall*, Santa Monica (Rand, P-4615) 1971; and Z.A. Pelczynski, "The Downfall of Gomulka", *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 1973, Nos. 1 & 2, pp. 1-23.
9. The Polish Prosecutor General has started legal procedures to clarify inter alia the responsibility for the bloodshed in December

1970. It may be expected that soon much more will be known about the role of the Soviet Union in the December events.

10. Blazynski, *Flashpoint Poland*, pp. 9, 21.

11. "U.S. Warns Against Travelling to Poland in Uncertain Period", *The New York Times*, December 19, 1970.

12. *Pravda*, December 22, 1970.

13. See for example *Pravda*, December 20 and 26, 1970. An explicit declaration of confidence appeared in the form of an article in *Pravda* on December 31, which also ridiculed Chinese hints that the Soviet Union was preparing for military intervention in Poland.

14. *Pravda*, December 22, 1970.

15. *Pravda*, January 28, 1971.

16. *Pravda*, February 17, 1971.

17. RFE Research, "USSR: Foreign Relations", February 1, 1971. Cf. also Robert K. Evanson & James M. Lutz, "Soviet Economic Responses to Crises in Eastern Europe", *Orbis*, Vol. 27 (Spring 1988), p. 78.

18. Franklyn Holzman, *International Trade Under Communism*, New York, 1976, p. 104; as quoted in W.R. Reisinger, "The Brezhnev Doctrine and Polish-Soviet Bargaining, 1971", *The Journal of Communist Studies*, Vol. 3 (1987), No. 3, p. 259.

19. "Sprawozdanie z dzialalnosti Biura Politycznego i Sekretariatu KC przedstawione przez Tow. Edwarda Babiucha", *Nowe Drogi*, 1971, No. 5 (May), p. 173.

20. Robin Remington, *The Warsaw Pact: Case Studies in Communist Conflict Resolution*, Cambridge, Mass. & London, 1971, p. 180.

21. Blazynski, op. cit., p. 41.

22. Wieslaw Bek, "Pol'sha: smysl peremen", *Novoe vremia*, 1971, no. 10, p. 15.

23. Zygmunt Korybutowicz, *Grudzien 1970*, Paris, 1983, p. 140.
24. For a presentation of Gierek's early economic policies, see Michael Gamarnikow, "A New Economic Approach", *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 21 (1972), No. 5, pp. 20-30.
25. The events of 25 June 1976 are treated in most detail in Michael Bernhard, "The Strikes of June 1976 in Poland", *Eastern European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 1 (1987), No. 3, pp. 363-392.
26. Robert K. Evanson & James M. Lutz, op.cit., p. 78; and Andrzej Korbonski, "Soviet Policy towards Poland", in S.M. Terry (ed.), *Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe*, New Haven, 1984, pp. 74-75.
27. On the protests against the proposed changes in the constitution, see for example Jan Józef Lipski, *KOR*, various editions. My edition: Gliwice 1988, pp. 24-29.
28. On the close links between KOR and the founders of the trade union movement on the Baltic coast, see Jan Józef Lipski, op.cit., pp. 208 *et passim*.
29. For more details, see Elizabeth C. Sheets, "Soviet human rights activists support Polich (sic) workers", RL 310/80.
30. J.F. Brown, "Detente and Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe", *Survey*, Vol. 20 (1974), No. 2/3, p. 46.
31. Ibid. A number of authors have used the same argument applied to the Polish case. See for example M.K. Dziewanowski, *The Communist Party of Poland: An Outline of History*, Cambridge, Mass., 1976 (second edition), p. 330.
32. RFE, Background Report 15, May 12, 1972, "Important changes in agricultural policy". On Polish agricultural policies in the 1970s, see Andrzej Korbonski, "Victim or Villain: Polish Agriculture Since 1970", in Maurice D. Simon & Roger Kanet (eds.), *Background to Crisis: Policy and Politics in Gierek's Poland*, Boulder, Colorado 1981, pp. 271-298.

33. K. Katushev, "Mirovaia sistema sotsializma: glavnye tendentsii razvitiia", *Kommunist*, 1972, no. 5, p. 17.

34. D. Klimovich, "Pol'skaia piatiletka 1971-1975gg", *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, 1972, no. 11 (November), p. 113.

35. This does not mean that the Soviets were happy about the dominant position of private agriculture in Poland. The Church and agriculture, according to Gierek, were recurring topics during Polish-Soviet meetings. See Janusz Rolicki, *Edward Gierek: Przerwana dekada*, Warsaw 1990, pp. 115-116 and elsewhere; and similar remarks in the same author's *Edward Gierek. Replika*, Warsaw 1990.

36. *Sel'skaia zhizn'*, July 22, September 22 and September 28, 1976.

37. *Trybuna Ludu*, January 1, 1971; as quoted in M.K. Dziewanowski, *op.cit.*, p. 317. The evolution of state-church relations from 1971 to 1978 is discussed in some interesting detail by Vincent Chrypin-ski, "Church and State in Gierek's Poland", in M.D. Simon & R.E. Kanet, *Background to Crisis: Policy and Politics in Gierek's Poland*, Boulder, Col., 1981, pp. 239-270.

38. As for instance in December 1975 and January 1976, when the Church issued memorandas opposing the government's proposed changes in the constitution, thereby contributing to the pressure which forced the authorities to substantially modify their proposals.

39. For an overview of Church-state and Polish-Vatican relations in the late 1970s until the mid 1980s, see Scot J. Paltrow, "Poland and the Pope: The Vatican's Relations with Poland, 1978 to the Present", *Millennium*, Vol. 15 (1986), No. 1, pp. 1-25.

40. *Pravda*, February 10, 1971, as translated in Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSPP), Vol. 23, No. 6.

41. Cf. Olszowski, "Polish foreign policy in an age of detente", *Polish Perspectives*, pp. 9-10: "Let me emphasize that there is no contradiction between integration of this kind [i.e. socialist economic integration] and the countries involved developing cooperation and

trade with the west. On the contrary, there is a far-reaching interaction".

42. Zwass, "Discussion", in Paul Marer & J.M. Montias, *East European Integration and East-West Trade*, Bloomington, 1980, p. 388; and A. Korbonski, "Poland and the CMEA: Problems and Prospects", *ibid.*, p. 369.

43. M.K. Dziewanowski, *op.cit.*, p. 314.

44. Stefan Olszowski, "Main trends of Polish foreign policy", *International affairs (Moscow)*, 1972, No. 10 (October), p. 6.

45. For the initial stage of the revitalized Polish-Yugoslav relationship, see Radio Free Europe, POLD, SR/46, October 29, 1971.

46. For a detailed treatment of relations between Poland and the Vatican, see Edward J. Palyga, *Polsko-watykanskie stosunki dyplomatyczne*, Warsaw, 1988.

47. Olszowski, "Polish foreign policy in the age of detente", pp. 3-4. In a subsequent article ("Niektóre problemy ideologiczne"), however, Olszowski apparently endorsed the Soviet point of view.

48. See the article in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* on 28 August, translated in CDSP, Vol. 32, No. 33, p. 4.

49. *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, August 26, 1980, as translated in CDSP, Vol. 32, No. 33, pp. 3-4.

50. Throughout the crisis, this signature was interpreted as the most authoritative conveyer of the official Soviet view.

51. Cf. Radio Moscow's coverage of Kania's speech of September 8 in Gdansk. According to PAP, the Polish news agency, Kania said that Western countries should be interested in the stability of Poland. Poland, he continued, "is interested in the development of cooperation with these states". This paragraph was omitted by Radio Moscow. Lawrence Sherwin, "Omissions figure heavily in Soviet citing of Polish reports", RL 330/80.

52. *Pravda*, September 25, 1980, as translated in CDSP, Vol. 32, No. 38, p. 5.

53. In a TASS commentary of January 29, 1981.

54. TASS, April 25, 1981, as quoted in Elizabeth Teague, "Revisio-
nism: Ponomarev's seven deadly sins", RL 184/81

55. The letter was published on June 12, 1981.

56. PAP, on September 17 and 18, as quoted by Bruce Porter, "Central Committee of CPSU demands action from Polish leadership", RL 373/81.

57. On September 22, 1981, for instance, *Izvestiia* stated that the defence of socialism from attacks by rightists "directly concerns the interests of the entire Socialist community, since a threat to People's Poland is equal to a threat to all fraternal states and to peace and security in Europe."

58. In December 1980 it was announced that the Soviet Union had given Poland commodities and hard currency credits totalling more than \$1 billion, and in early 1981 western experts were reported as expecting Soviet aid to Poland in 1980-81 to reach 4 billion rubles. See Bruce Porter, "Soviet diplomacy towards Poland since the Gdansk accords", RL 460/80; and Yakov Samoilov, "Soviet economic aid to Poland", RL 49/91. A report prepared for the US Congress in 1983 stipulated that Soviet bloc extra-ordinary (price subsidies excluded) assistance to Poland 1980-81 amounted to \$ 3.1. See Korbonski, "Soviet Policy toward Poland", p. 89.

59. The Soviet Union, the GDR and Czechoslovakia soon after the Gdansk accords made steps to limit the movements of persons and information over their borders with Poland.

60. There is no doubt that Soviet military intervention was a real option in 1980-81. This was recently confirmed by General Jaruzelski himself, and also Stanislaw Kania has stated that the Soviets kept the military option open. Well informed Soviet sources argue that

Brezhnev urged a direct Soviet intervention, which, however, was blocked by the resistance of KGB chairman Andropov.

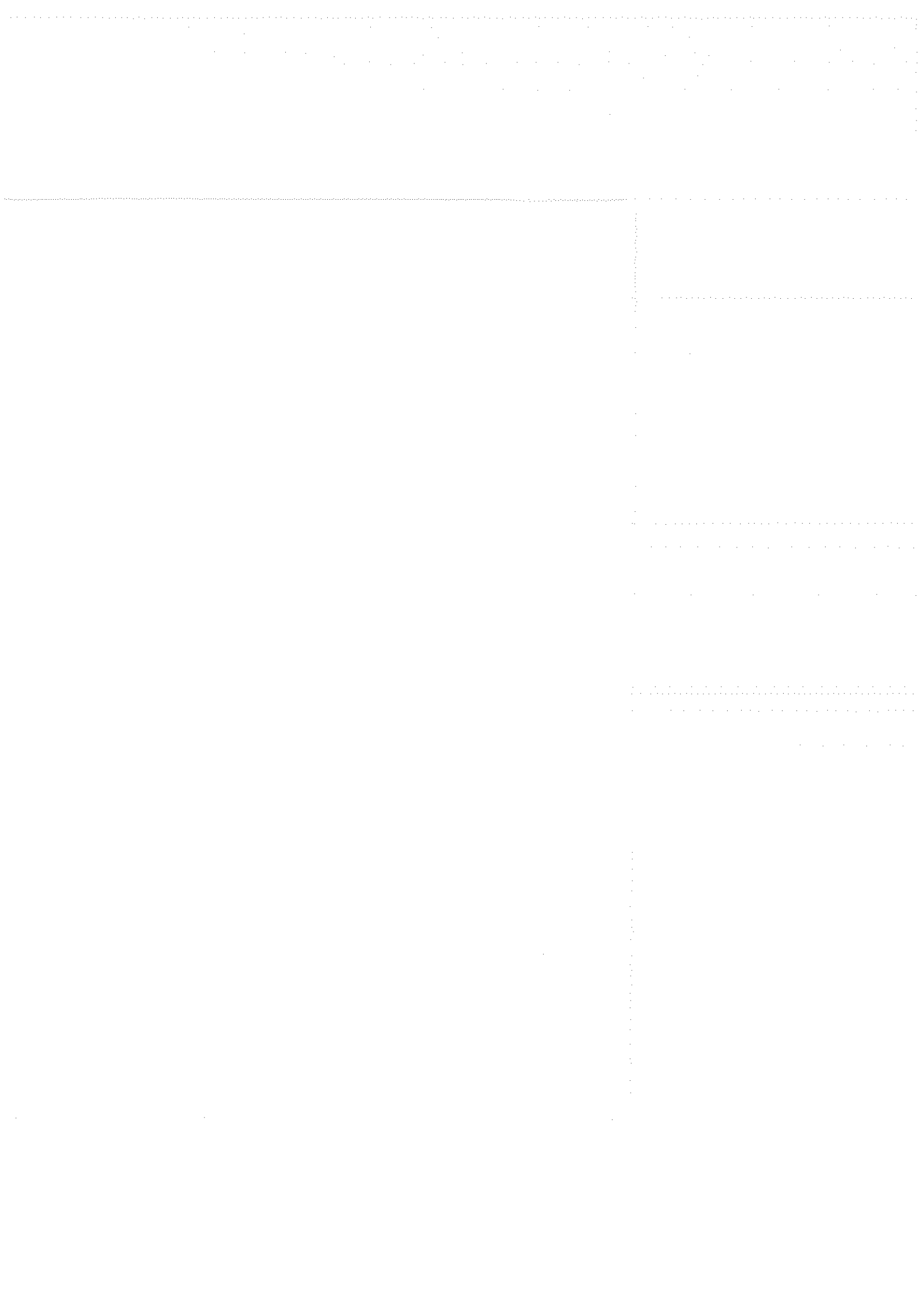
61. Bruce Porter, "The CPSU and the PUWP since the imposition of martial law", RL 59/82

62. See Elizabeth Teague, "'Trud" discusses the trade union "Solidarity"', RL 301/82.

63. The new trade unions gradually strengthened their positions. In the late 1980s they were numerically much stronger than clandestine "Solidarity". Even after "Solidarity" was legalized, OPZZ has maintained its position as the strongest central trade union organization.

64. For the early phase of these discussions, cf. Thomas S. Szayna, "Addressing "blank spots" in Polish-Soviet relations", *Problems of Communism*, vol. 37 (1988), November/December, pp. 37-59.

65. Janusz Rolicki, *Edward Gierek: Przerwana dekada*, Warsaw 1990, p. 73.



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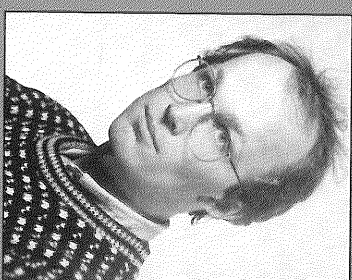
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The erosion of Soviet power in Poland, 1970-1989

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