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# Stalemate and Apathy in Poland

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FOR Polish society, the last five years have been, in turn, exhilarating, chaotic and depressing.<sup>1</sup> The dockworkers' and miners' strikes of August, 1980, forced the government to sign the Gdansk Agreements, the first of which allowed the formation of the independent self-governing trade union Solidarity. During the 16 months of Solidarity's legal existence, Poland had the most democratic environment in its postwar history. General Wojciech Jaruzelski, Poland's Prime Minister and party leader, brought this to an end with the declaration of martial law on December 13, 1981. Martial law was formally lifted in July, 1983, and most of the interned Solidarity leaders were released in July, 1984. But many martial law restrictions were continued, and Poland remains a society that is sullen, pessimistic and divided.

Solidarity's impact on Poland was remarkable. The union attracted some nine million members—one-third of Poland's adult population. The universal appeal of this independent, free-spirited organization extended into the Polish United Workers party (Poland's Communist party), one-third of whose members joined Solidarity. The openness of political debate in Solidarity forced a democratization of virtually every other institution in the country, including the party. The flood of independent publications issued by Solidarity groups opened the official press and led to the implementation of a new and vastly more liberal law on censorship. Solidarity's popularity, its programs, and its charismatic leader, Lech Walesa, forced the party and the government to compete for the people's allegiance.

Thus, during 1981, the regime conceded a number of popular issues: legalizing Solidarity and its right to strike; allowing the Sunday radio broadcast of Roman Catholic mass; granting work-free Saturdays and dramatic increases in wages; and permitting Solidarity to publish its own national weekly newspaper, *Tygodnik Solidarnosc*. New legislation provided greater autonomy for universities, decentralized economic reform, and established a system of enterprise self-management in which the work-

ers would share in the governance of the workplace and select its director.

There was, however, a dark side to these concessions. The relationship between Solidarity and the regime was bitter, distrustful and conflict-prone; neither side adjusted to the compromise necessary for democracy. Solidarity accused the government of renegeing on the Gdansk Agreements (it remains a popular myth in Poland that the government never implemented any of the 21 demands). Not trusting the government to accede to its demands through negotiation, Solidarity often resorted to the only tactic that had brought results: strikes, or the threat of strikes.

The regime, on the other hand, claimed that Solidarity had exceeded the boundaries set in August, 1980, making demands that were more political than economic and threatening the constitutional principle of the "leading role of the party." To complicate matters further, the Polish economy continued the nose dive that began in 1979, causing serious shortages of basic products like bread. All this contributed to the crisis atmosphere of late 1981. When Jaruzelski declared a "state of war" (there was no provision in the Polish constitution for martial law), he claimed that he did so in sorrow; Poland was "on the edge of the abyss" and his action was necessary to save the country from civil war and chaos.<sup>2</sup>

The speed and effectiveness of the crackdown were extraordinary. Several thousand Solidarity leaders and activists were "interned" and others went into hiding. The flood of Solidarity publications, banners, posters and buttons disappeared, declared illegal by the military authorities. All organizations, demonstrations and assemblies (except religious ones) were temporarily banned. The regime imposed a curfew, put restrictions on travel, and blacked out communications. The spontaneous strikes and demonstrations launched by workers and miners were starved out or broken up, often violently, by "ZOMO," the motorized riot police.

Jaruzelski's professed task during this period was "normalization" with the promise of a continuation of the process of "renewal" begun in 1981. The apparent stabilization led the regime gradually to relax the restrictions of martial law, while formally eliminating the new and reformed institutions and weakening the laws that

<sup>1</sup>The author would like to thank Robert Sharlet and David Ost for their helpful comments and suggestions on this article.

<sup>2</sup>For an excellent account of the Solidarity experience and the early months of martial law, see Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity* (New York: Scribner's, 1984).

emerged in 1981. In October, 1982, Solidarity was formally banned, with a law providing for the establishment of new unions. In November, Walesa was released from internment and allowed to return to work in the Gdansk shipyards. In July, 1983, martial law was lifted, though many of its restrictions remained in force. In July, 1983, and in July, 1984, the regime proclaimed an amnesty for Solidarity activists under arrest or in hiding.

While the regime may claim some success with "normalization" in the two years since the lifting of martial law, and while it may claim to be on the road to economic recovery and political renewal, in reality the situation is less rosy and more complex. Popular defiance and open resistance may not be so prevalent as they were two years ago, but the regime has not been able to achieve the legitimacy it desires, nor has it mobilized the population toward its economic and political goals.

### THE REGIME'S EFFORTS AT "NORMALIZATION"

When martial law was lifted, Prime Minister Jaruzelski told the Sejm (the Polish Parliament):

Our intentions are sincere. They are demonstrated by the implementation of socialist renewal. They are confirmed by the democratization of social life, the strengthening of the position of the working class, the rebirth of the trade union movement, the development of the class-based, independent and self-governing trade unions, by the consolidation of the practice of seeking advice and consultation, and by the far-reaching economic reform.

At the same time, he asserted that "anarchy will not return to Poland. Efforts to undertake antistate activity will be repressed no less resolutely than during martial law."<sup>3</sup> These words exemplify the two-track policy the regime has followed: efforts to elicit controlled participation, advice and support, and forceful suppression of dissent and underground activity. Neither track has been entirely successful.

In its effort to channel and control the participatory spirit bred by Solidarity, the regime has dissolved most of the old institutional structures and has created new ones under the party's supervision. As might be expected, none of these has generated the enthusiasm or participation that Solidarity enjoyed. The regime-sponsored Patriotic Committee for National Rebirth (PRON), established in July, 1982, was to act as a coalition of all social forces, but it has attracted little interest or support. It is widely and openly criticized for not reflecting public needs.<sup>4</sup>

New regime-sponsored organizations for artists, writ-

<sup>3</sup>Wojciech Jaruzelski, *Przemowienia 1983* (Warsaw: Ksiazka i Wiedza, 1984), pp. 167-168.

<sup>4</sup>See, for example, the roundtable discussion titled "An Attempt at Dialogue," in *Polityka*, January 5, 1985; translated in Joint Publications Research Service, *East Europe Report*, no. 85/27 (February 28, 1985).

<sup>5</sup>*Trybuna Ludu*, April 27, 1984.

<sup>6</sup>For the draft of the new legislation, see "Ustawa o zwiiazkach zawodowych," *Zwiiazkowiec*, May, 1985.

ers, journalists and students have been unable to recruit as many members as their more independent predecessors. The new Polish Students' Association, for example, has enrolled only about 10 percent of all students. These new organizations find it difficult to attract members partly because of a continuing Solidarity-sponsored boycott of all "official" organizations.

The regime's main hope seems to lie with the reconstituted trade unions. These organizations, as defined by the law of October, 1982, were to be "independent" and "self-governing" (terms used to describe Solidarity) and were to have the right to strike, which pre-Solidarity unions had not had. But they are limited by a number of restrictions. At first, they could exist only at the factory level, not at the regional or national levels; when they did expand, they were organized by branch of industry, rather than region, as Solidarity had been; and, most critically, there was only one union organization in each enterprise until 1985, though this restriction has been repeatedly extended.

Despite a Solidarity boycott, the new unions now number about five million members, considerably fewer than the Solidarity or the pre-1980 union members but probably more than either Solidarity or the regime expected. In fact, a number of surveys show that about one-third of the new members are former members of Solidarity. Most workers, however, have adopted a "wait and see" attitude toward the new unions, and so far they have not seen very much. The new unions have been short on both resources and legitimacy, and they have been visible mostly in complaints about price increases. In the spring of 1984, national union officials publicly complained that government decisions on price increases had been taken "without any consultation with the trade unions."<sup>5</sup> In 1985, the government actually scaled down price increases, ostensibly in response to union complaints.

To boost the visibility and attractiveness of the new unions and to create central organizations with which the government could "consult," the government allowed accelerated development of national union structures, culminating in the establishment of a centralized Trade Unions' National Agreement (OPZZ) in November, 1984. And in July, 1985, the Sejm passed an updated trade union law that strengthened the factory-level unions by granting them responsibility for all employees (not just union members) and extending their responsibilities, especially in the area of social welfare.<sup>6</sup> While this may have been helpful for the new unions, it struck a double blow at Solidarity: the new legislation extends the ban on multiple unions in a workplace, frustrating Solidarity's demands for trade union pluralism, and it transfers to the unions some of the functions held by enterprise self-management councils, where many Solidarity supporters had directed their support.

In many ways, the trade union issue illustrates the wider dilemmas and paradoxes of post-martial law Poland. A strong and vocal minority, including the most

active Solidarity supporters, refuses to support the new structures and brands those who do as collaborators or opportunists. On the other hand, many Poles believe that the unions provide the only real opportunity to defend the interests of the workers, given domestic and "geopolitical" realities.<sup>7</sup> A broad middle group refuses to identify with either position, preferring to "wait and see" or simply to turn away from public and societal affairs altogether. This roughly equal tripartite division has paralyzed Polish society, making it impossible for either the regime or the opposition to muster enough support to carry through its programs.

The regime has used other methods to pursue "normalization," but these too have had mixed results. In June, 1984, the government staged elections to the local and regional people's councils. There were two candidates for each position, and voters could reject the first in favor of the second candidate. Solidarity's underground Interim Coordinating Committee (TKK) called for a boycott of the elections and arranged for Solidarity supporters to monitor polling places for an accurate reading of the turnout.

The final results allowed both sides to claim a victory. The government claimed a 75 percent turnout which, in government spokesman Jerzy Urban's words, showed "that the public supports stabilization, peace and socialist development in Poland."<sup>8</sup> Solidarity said the government's figures were inflated by between 12 and 15 percent, meaning that some 10.5 million people boycotted the elections—a victory for the banned union.

In an effort to portray an atmosphere of stability and normalization and to assuage Western governments, the government proclaimed major amnesty programs on the official national holiday of July 22 in both 1983 and 1984. The 1983 amnesty was broader, covering "almost 3,700 people guilty of political offenses, and over 1,100 who turned themselves in of their own accord,"<sup>9</sup> but it did not include the most important opposition leaders. The 1984 amnesty did. According to official figures, of 652 political prisoners, 630 were freed; included were 7 members of Solidarity's National Commission and 4 prominent members of KOR, the Workers' Defense Committee. Since the amnesty, some of these people have been arrested again; nevertheless, the amnesty presented a paradoxical situation: an authoritarian Communist state freeing its most prominent opponents.

<sup>7</sup>This is the Aesopian term used in both the official and unofficial press to describe the constraints on Polish action imposed by the Soviet Union.

<sup>8</sup>*Rzeczpospolita*, June 18, 1984.

<sup>9</sup>*Zycie Warszawy*, July 24, 1984.

<sup>10</sup>For example, Lawrence Weschler, "Poland: Three Years After," *Harpers*, December, 1984, p. 18; and Marian Kostecki and Krzysztof Mrela, "Collective Solidarity in Poland's Powdered Society," *The Insurgent Sociologist*, vol. 12, nos. 1-2 (1984).

<sup>11</sup>Solidarity poll reported in *Slowo Podziemne*, May 27, 1984; cited in Radio Free Europe Research (hereafter RFER), "Polish Situation Report," January 23, 1985. Official poll in *Polityka*, July 27, 1985, p. 6.

This is not to say that the Jaruzelski regime has relied only on the carrot. The authorities have periodically cracked down on those who strike, demonstrate, publish illegally, or plan these activities. On February 13, 1985, police broke up a Gdansk meeting of opposition activists organized by Lech Walesa. Walesa was subsequently ordered not to leave Gdansk without prior permission from the police. Three of his colleagues, Wladyslaw Frasnyniuk, Bogdan Lis, and Adam Michnik, were arrested and tried for planning a strike (which never took place), and each was sentenced to two to three years imprisonment.

The authorities have also attempted to rein in the country's intellectuals and the universities which, even under martial law, had been among the most outspoken and autonomous in East Europe. In April, 1985, for example, history professor and Solidarity adviser Bronislaw Geremek was dismissed from the prestigious Academy of Sciences apparently for public lectures critical of the Polish government and its relationship to the Soviet Union. The universities have also been subject to increased pressure. In July, 1985, the Sejm passed a new law on higher education restricting the autonomy of the universities, over the objections of the the university senate and a number of government advisory commissions.

## THE PULVERIZED SOCIETY

In the short term, the regime probably does not need to worry about another round of insurgency. After the excitement and disruptions of 1980 and 1981, the depression of 1982, and the economic hardships of the last five years, many Poles are apathetic and withdrawn from public life. The apathy and hopelessness are heightened by the loss of the sense of "solidarity" that characterized the early months after the Gdansk strikes. While most Poles objected to martial law, some did support it and only a minority of the population now backs the protest activities of the Solidarity underground.

Most Solidarity supporters and many writers<sup>10</sup> suggest that the regime has deliberately promoted this sense of hopelessness and division in Polish society because it is the best protection against rebellion. Whether or not this is true, apathy and privatism are typical of societies that have just been through great upheavals; people turn to personal and family matters for a sense of relief and calm.

The sense of despair is as much a result of economic as political factors. Both official and underground public opinion polls show that the overwhelming majority of Poles think that the government's policies will not end the economic crisis and that the economy will deteriorate even further.<sup>11</sup> Other polls show that while almost everyone blames the party and government for the "current crisis," many also blame "the political opposition." In fact, both public opinion polls and conversations with Poles reveal that the only institution in Poland with widespread support is the Church. Even among Solidarity activists, "the underground opposition" is rated favor-

ably by a bare majority (54.6 percent) of the respondents, while the Church is at the top of the list with 74.5 percent.<sup>12</sup> As usual in these polls, the Polish United Workers' party is at or near the bottom of these lists, and other official institutions fare almost as badly.

Frustration, apathy and alienation are particularly evident among the young, who constitute about half the population and who were the driving force behind Solidarity. A report by the Primate's Social Council on the Situation of Young People found "an overwhelming and increasing passivity on the part of most young people who, tormented by futile anger, turn away from the pressure of schools and organizations and seek refuge in individualism and in the passivity and exclusiveness of small groups of friends."<sup>13</sup> This report also noted the increased incidence of religious belief among young people and the increasing support for the Church as both a moral and a political authority.

Even official publications admit that young people have little confidence in "new sociopolitical institutions," do not participate in officially sponsored organizations, and "distance themselves verbally from the socialist system and question its achievements."<sup>14</sup> A survey of Gdansk high school students in 1984 found only 2 percent declaring themselves Marxists; and support is not much higher among university students.<sup>15</sup> Only 11 percent of Polish United Workers' party members are less than 30 years old, the lowest percentage in the party's history. The party also suffers from a steady decline in membership (from 3.1 million in 1980 to only 2.1 million in mid-1985).

There are grimmer aspects to Polish society. According to official sources, alcoholism, drug abuse and crime (including violent crime) are on the increase, and the visitor to Poland is struck by the number of drunks and drug addicts encountered in the streets, many of them young people. This and the attendant alienation and frustration have led two Polish sociologists to describe their country as "a pulverized society."<sup>16</sup>

## THE UNDERGROUND

Underground activity remains widespread in Poland, but Solidarity activists have almost the same difficulty as the regime in penetrating the pervasive apathy and passivity. As one underground publication argues, "society is not with us, nor is it with the authorities—it is keeping to

itself."<sup>17</sup> There are probably tens of thousands of people involved in various kinds of underground activity, but most of this is local and decentralized. The "underground society" permeates the country, but it is not controlled by the persecuted and divided Solidarity leadership.

In the early months of martial law, the underground TKK was able to organize major national demonstrations against the government. But harassment by the police and ZOMO and the fatigue of Solidarity supporters eventually cut down the size of these demonstrations. Of the seven initial members of the TKK, all but Zbigniew Bujak have either surrendered or have been apprehended (although each of them has been replaced by someone else on the TKK). The July, 1984, amnesty added to the ranks of the "above-ground" Solidarity leadership, formally led by Lech Walesa. While most Solidarity leaders have apparently met with Walesa on an individual basis, there have been few group meetings. A meeting was held in September, 1984, at Jasna Gora Monastery in Czestochowa, but another meeting in February, 1985, was broken up by police and led to long prison terms for three of the participants. The authorities continue to harass Walesa and restrict his movements, and refer to him as a "private person" and "the former leader of a former trade union."

Walesa nevertheless remains a popular figure in Poland, his reputation enhanced by the 1983 Nobel Peace Prize. He continues to make cautious statements to Western reporters and the underground press about the future of the movement and the country. He has argued in favor of carving out "relatively independent fields" of activity, including participation in the employees self-management councils in enterprises.<sup>18</sup> In fact, self-management has become the major focus for the national Solidarity leaders, who contend that the self-management councils, with sufficient participation from Solidarity supporters, can effect positive changes. Partly because of Solidarity's increasing interest, the regime has tried to fortify the new trade unions, which often compete with the self-management bodies in the workplace.

Most large enterprises have underground Solidarity structures to which, on average, one-fifth of the work force continues to pay monthly dues. Local Solidarity activities focus on providing financial aid to those persecuted by the authorities and the printing and distribution of Solidarity bulletins and other underground publications. This *samizdat* has reached unprecedented dimensions, with as many as 2,000 regular publications. Some of these are simply 1- or 2-page bulletins (some of which are printed

<sup>12</sup>*Slowo Podziemne*, op. cit.

<sup>13</sup>Cited in RFER, February 15, 1985.

<sup>14</sup>*Glos Szczecinski*, July 2, 1984.

<sup>15</sup>*Polityka*, August 11, 1984. In the 1970's, similar surveys in different cities found 10 percent or more of young people identifying themselves as Marxists.

<sup>16</sup>Kostecki and Mrela, op. cit., p. 135.

<sup>17</sup>*Mysli Nieinternowane*, January-February 1984; translated in RFER, "Polish Samizdat Excerpts," July 6, 1984. Italics in original.

<sup>18</sup>See his article in the leading underground weekly *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, March 22, 1984; translated in RFER, "Polish Samizdat Excerpts," September 7, 1984.

in tens of thousands of copies), but illegal publishers also produce 500-page books and, more recently, they have begun a line of contraband videotapes for the burgeoning VCR (videocassette recorder) market.<sup>19</sup>

This "second economy" in the mass media is an important source of information for Poles. Moreover, the official media, in competition with the unofficial, is forced to be more open and interesting and to address controversial issues. The result is that Poland, despite censorship, has the liveliest press in the Soviet bloc.

## THE CHURCH

While popular support for the Solidarity underground has diminished, the popularity of the Roman Catholic Church has grown. According to both official and unoffi-

<sup>19</sup>See Teresa Hanicka, "Underground Publications in Poland," RFER, "Background Report," July 26, 1984.

<sup>20</sup>For details and analysis of the Popieluszko affair, see Jane Cave, "The Murder of Father Popieluszko," *Poland Watch*, no. 7 (1985), and David Ost, "Now Solidarity Has a Martyr," *The Nation*, March 2, 1985, pp. 237-240.

cial public opinion polls, it is the most trusted and popular institution in the country. The Church hierarchy, and particularly Archbishop Jozef Glemp, the Primate of Poland, have lost some favor with staunch Solidarity supporters, who often complain of the Church's lack of direct support for the underground movement. But for most Poles, the Church is the main moral and political representative of the people, and perhaps the main outlet for creative and autonomous activity.

Since the imposition of martial law, Glemp has pursued a low-key and conciliatory policy, attempting, above all, to prevent societal or regime violence and to maintain and enlarge the Church's sphere of autonomy and activity. Until 1984, this strategy seemed to work, with relatively good relations between Church and state. The Joint Government-Episcopal Commission met regularly, and progress was reported on a number of key Church issues: the formalization of the legal status of the Church; the granting of permits to build new churches; and the development of the Church-sponsored agricultural fund, which is to raise funds abroad for the development of private agriculture in Poland. There were points of tension, for example, over the attempts by local authorities to remove crucifixes from school classrooms, but these conflicts were usually settled through compromise.

A turning point came in October, 1984, with the abduction and murder of the outspoken pro-Solidarity priest, Father Jerzy Popieluszko, by four officers of the security police. Popieluszko's funeral on November 3, presided over by Archbishop Glemp, attracted some 250,000 mourners.

The Jaruzelski government, at first apparently uncertain how to handle the situation, finally decided to allow a formal investigation of the incident. On December 27, the trial of the four security officers began in the city of Torun.<sup>20</sup> The trial was yet another Polish paradox: the Polish state was publicly trying members of its own internal security forces. The trial lasted more than a month, and was covered extensively by the mass media, including Polish television. During the trial, the chief government prosecutor frequently referred to Popieluszko's "extremism" as a cause of his death. Nevertheless, on February 7, 1985, all four officers were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 14 to 25 years.

The murder and the trial had a number of important consequences. First, it gave Poland a universal martyr. "Father Jerzy" symbolized the conflict between the Church and the Polish state, the unity of the Church and Polish society and, for many, the irreconcilability of the Catholic society and the Communist regime. Buttons, pictures and postcards of Popieluszko are in churches everywhere, and his church and burial site, Saint Stanislaw Kostka in Warsaw, has become a virtual shrine, with a constant stream of visitors and pilgrims.

The murder and trial also soured relations between the Church and the state. The trial led the Polish Episcopate to file a formal complaint against Polish radio and televi-

sion for manipulating trial information in an attempt to discredit the Church. But media attacks on the Church have continued, including an unprecedented attack on the Pope himself.<sup>21</sup> In June, 1985, two priests were convicted after a one-day trial for "organizing and leading an illegal protest" over the removal of crosses from classrooms in the town of Wloszczowa.<sup>22</sup> Shortly thereafter, Jaruzelski and Glemp met for the first time since January, 1984, but the joint communiqué following the meeting suggested little progress in church-state relations.

## THE ECONOMY

The regime claims that the major problem facing Poland is economic, not political, and many Poles agree. After four straight years of economic decline (1979–1982), the economy has finally begun to grow again; national income rose about 6 percent in both 1983 and 1984. Still, national income has not yet recovered to 1978 levels, and in some areas (e.g., livestock) production is less than it was in the 1960's. Poles have suffered through six years of shortages, rationing, queuing and inflation. The cost of living increased 357 percent from 1980 to 1984, and three rounds of price increases in 1985 are expected to add another 3 percent over 1984.<sup>23</sup> In the past, food price increases have been met with strikes and demonstrations, but the recent increases have elicited little public response. Many Poles rely on the enormous "second economy" to satisfy household needs; for example, obtaining scarce medicines through friends who work in a hospital; purchasing meat (which is still rationed) from the "veal lady" who brings it door-to-door from the countryside; buying clothes in the unofficial but legal markets in almost any big city.

Poland faces a host of other economic problems: low levels of productivity, declining quality in manufactured goods, an outdated capital stock, a huge international debt, and economic sanctions and credit restrictions from the West. The debt has continued to grow and now amounts to \$26.8 billion to Western countries and 4.8 billion rubles to socialist countries. Partly because of Western sanctions, Poland has reoriented its trade toward the socialist bloc, making it that much more difficult to earn the hard currency necessary to repay the Western debts. The credit crunch may be easing somewhat, however; most United States sanctions were lifted in response to the July, 1984, amnesty, and Poland's 17 Western creditor countries (the "Paris Club") agreed in July, 1985, to reschedule much of Poland's debt repayment.

These problems have complicated the regime's efforts to implement economic reform. Developed during 1981,

<sup>21</sup>*Polityka*, March 30, 1985.

<sup>22</sup>RFER, "Polish Situation Report," June 26, 1985.

<sup>23</sup>*Maly Rocznik Statystyczny 1985* (Warsaw: Glowny Urzad Statystyczny, 1985).

<sup>24</sup>See Stanislaw Gomulka and Jacek Rostowski, "The Reformed Polish Economic System," *Soviet Studies*, vol. 36 (1984), pp. 386–405.

the reform plan is similar to the Hungarian New Economic Mechanism; it allows a greater role for the market and increased autonomy for enterprises, and it sharply reduces central controls and planning.<sup>24</sup> The political restrictions of martial law and the economic crisis have restricted the reform plan; most Polish economists admit the lack of positive results so far. The economic problem is compounded by the political one; the decentralizing reform depends on cooperation and hard work from a labor force that is sullen and withdrawn.

Nevertheless, the 1983 and 1984 increases in national income and gross industrial output are signs of an economic recovery. Nineteen eighty-four set a record for hard coal exports, an important source of foreign exchange for Poland. The agricultural harvests have been good for the last three years because of both favorable weather and a greatly increased share of government investment in private farms.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Jaruzelski regime claims to have achieved a degree of stability and "normalization" since 1981, but it has not been able to achieve political legitimacy. The issues of democracy, political participation, and justice raised by Solidarity have not been resolved and continue to haunt the government. At the same time, Solidarity is unable to mount protests large enough to threaten the regime or force it to be more accommodating.

While Solidarity has been driven underground, its spirit lives on; the experience of 1980–1981 is now a permanent feature of the Polish national consciousness. Given Poland's history of rebellion—the years 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976, 1980 have become almost a litany—there will probably be trouble again. The underground movement is biding its time, educating itself, studying the mistakes of the past, debating long-term strategy, and attempting to build an "underground society." When the time comes, this opposition will be a much more organized, disciplined and potent force than it was in 1980. But it will still have to deal with Poland's "geopolitical realities" and decide how to achieve greater measures of democracy and independence without threatening the leading role of the party and Poland's alliance with the Soviet Union.

In 1985, most Poles do not want to address such issues and have turned their attention to family and Church. The regime has capitalized on the apathy and divisions within society and the primacy of material and economic concerns. The authorities hope to regain political legitimacy through economic growth and a gradual improvement in the standard of living. Given Poland's economic problems, this is a difficult task. But the authorities must reckon with the axiom that revolutions occur not when things are at their worst, when people have neither the time nor energy for political activity, but when the situation is improving. Like the opposition, the authorities will also face a dilemma: how to expand political participation and control it without provoking a revolution.