

CDDRL

WORKING PAPERS

Number 88
July 2008

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This working paper was produced as part of CDDRL's ongoing programming on economic and political development in transitional states. Additional working papers appear on CDDRL's website:
<http://cddrl.stanford.edu>.

**Paper prepared for CDDRL Workshop on External Influences on Democratic Transitions.
Stanford University, October 25-26, 2007.** Additional working papers appear on CDDRL's website:
<http://cddrl.stanford.edu>.

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Evaluating International Influences on Democratic Development:
Poland 1980-1989

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Section 1: Outcome

The case of Poland in the 1980s is an example of a successful democratic breakthrough with the endpoint defined, for the purposes of this paper, as the election of Tadeusz Mazowiecki—a Catholic intellectual, longtime member of the political opposition, and advisor to the Solidarność trade union movement—to the office of prime minister on August 24, 1989. Solidarność's victory in 1989 was not complete: elections had not been free and, in a power sharing agreement, half of Mazowiecki's cabinet was filled by members from the previous Communist government: the Polish United Worker's Party (PZPR) and their satellite parties, the Democratic Party (SD) and United Peasants' Party (ZSL). Former party leader General Wojciech Jaruzelski also retained power in the newly created position of president. Nonetheless, Mazowiecki's election was the first time a non-communist had led a government in Eastern Europe since World War II, and was substantively and symbolically an exit from Poland's Communist authoritarian period. Within a few months the PZPR dissolved and the government rewrote the constitution. After Mazowiecki's election, the key issues for Poland became democratic consolidation and economic restructuring.

It is much more difficult, however, to define the starting point for this case study. The period of democratic breakthrough can be traced directly to Jaruzelski's decision to seek negotiations with Solidarność leader, Lech Wałęsa, at the end of August 1988, after which the

opposition and the government began direct negotiations in secret. After a PZPR plenum in January 1989, which included the party's acquiescence to Solidarność's preconditions, the very public Round Table negotiations began and ran from February 6 to April 4. The Round Table accords laid out the path for political transformation, forming a new office of the president, creating a 100-member upper house of parliament (Senat), and setting guidelines for semi-free elections: all seats in the Senat were open to competition while the opposition could only compete for 35% of Sejm (the existing lower-house of parliament) seats. As planned, elections were held in two rounds on June 4 and June 18. Solidarność candidates won a resolute victory, but remained a minority party in the government. This victory nevertheless precipitated a crisis of confidence in the Communist leadership, and Wałęsa successfully used it to forge a new political coalition that provided Solidarność the majority it needed to form its own government. In this case study, the period from August 1988 to September 1989 was more of an extended breakthrough moment than the entire period of transition. To find the transition's starting point it is necessary to look earlier.

Many studies of the transformation begin in late Fall of 1986, when the PZPR declared a complete and final amnesty for political prisoners. The amnesty signaled a new *modus vivendi* between the opposition and the government and allowed Solidarność to reemerge from its underground existence, creating necessary conditions for the opposition to eventually negotiate with the government.¹ Another potential starting point is the crisis that caused Solidarność to move into the underground: the declaration of martial law on December 11, 1981. Setting a

¹ See, Andrzej Paczkowski, "From Amnesty to Amnesty: the Authorities and the Opposition in Poland, 1976-1986," paper presented at a conference, "From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975-1985," Artimino, Italy, April 2006; Antoni Dudek, *Reglamentowana Rewolucja* (Kraków: Arcana Historii, 2004), esp. 73-79; and Andrzej Garlicki, *Karuzela* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 2003), esp. 5, 24-32.

December 1981 starting point, however, neglects the previous eighteen-month period during which Solidarność existed legally and freely.

The best starting point for understanding this democratic transition is the creation of the Solidarność trade union at the signing of the Gdańsk Accords on August 31, 1980. While other opposition groups (the Committee for Worker's Defense, Helsinki monitoring groups, Independent publishers associations, the foundation for independent culture, the Student Solidarity Movement, etc.) and even Free Trade Union associations had existed in the 1970s, Solidarność represented a national movement of a new magnitude: within a year it had between eight and ten million members from all walks of society in a population of about 38 million. Moreover, Solidarność was a highly organized social and political movement with hierarchical structures from the national level down to the local level. Most importantly, Solidarność retained institutional consistency throughout the 1980s. Many of the reforms requested in the Gdańsk Accords remained central tenets of the opposition's platform. The list of Solidarność's leaders (Wałęsa, Zbigniew Bujak, Bogdan Lis, Władysław Frasyniuk, Andrzej Gwiazda, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, etc.) and advisors (Mazowiecki, Adam Michnik, Jacek Kuroń, Bronisław Geremek, etc.) also remained the same from 1981 to 1989. Solidarność certainly evolved and employed changing tactics over the decade, but it retained a level of consistency that makes it difficult to talk about Solidarność in 1986 or January 1982 without referring frequently to the 1980-1981 period.

There are also a number of analytical advantages to taking this long-term view. First of all, setting August 1980 as the starting point allows a comparison between Poland's abortive breakthrough to democracy (marked by the declaration of martial law) and the later successful one in 1988-1989. It allows for an accounting of how the opposition and the government learned

from their earlier experiences. Second, it is possible to see the long-term effects of international actors, through economic sanctions for instance, which were not effective in the short term. This wider lens also provides insight into how different international actors’ policies either undermined or magnified the effects of earlier efforts. Finally, defining a shorter transition period can overemphasize the importance of exogenous shocks by minimizing the full extent of long-term historical and structural factors. In Barbara Falk’s metaphor, 1989 was “a peak in a mountain of activity glacial in development and proportion.”² Stepping away from the peak gives greater understanding of the mountain as a whole, providing more precise analysis into the interactions between long term and short-term factors, as well as domestic and international influences.

Section 2: Domestic Variables

Long Term, Structural Factors

Economic Decline. The most important long-term factor in Poland’s development throughout the 1980s was its economic situation, a fact reflected in the amount of paper created by both the PZPR and the opposition on economic issues.³ The economy suffered from: high inflation, decreasing productivity, lack of consumer goods, market disequilibrium within the system, deficits in foreign trade, substantial debt repayment problems, and inefficiencies in the management system. These problems were common across Eastern Europe, but were more acute

² Barbara Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003), 3.

³ This case study is based on a review of archival records available in Warsaw and interviews with both government and opposition officials active during the 1980s. For the PZPR records this includes party, general secretary, and Politburo collections available at the Archiwum Akt Nowych. For the opposition this includes full collections of samizdat available at the KARTA Foundation Archive.

The materials and research utilized in this study were originally compiled for the author’s dissertation, “Supporting the Revolution: America, Democracy, and the End of the Cold War in Poland, 1981-1989” (George Washington University, 2008).

in the Polish case because of recurrent political crises. For example, the period of most intense economic crisis occurred between 1980 and 1982. According to figures compiled by the Communist government, national production income, consumption, and imports all showed decreases through 1983. Moreover, through the end of 1982, all major economic indicators gathered by the government showed losses between 10% and 33% when compared to data from 1978 (see chart).

Polish Economic Development Indicators 1978-1983
(% change in relations to the previous year)⁴

	1978	1980	1981	1982	1983 plan	1978 1982= 100
National Production Income	3.0	-6.0	-12.1	-7.5	2.6	74.3
Consumption	1.7	2.1	0.0	-13.5	1.6	87.5
Gross Investment	2.1	-12.3	-22.7	-19.0	1.6	50.5
Industrial Production	4.9	0.0	-10.5	-4.7*	3.7-4.0	89.2
Import	1.5	-1.9	-16.9	-15.6	11.1	67.9
Export	5.7	-4.2	-19.0	9.4	14.1	90.7

In more macro terms, real GDP per capita measured in 2004 złoty dropped precipitously in 1981 and 1982 before beginning modest growth (between 3.5 and 4.75 percent) from 1983 to 1986. In 1987 and 1988 growth slowed to between 1 and 3 percent, before slipping into decline again in 1989. Overall it took from 1983 to the middle of 1987 to recover from the losses in 1981 and 1982, only to see limited growth before the economy declined again at the end of the decade.⁵

It is important to note that in purely statistical terms the intense period of political instability in 1980-1981 and 1989 correlated with economic decline. In contrast, the economy grew modestly from 1983 to 1988, the exact period of time in which the PZPR was in complete

⁴ Informacja o skutkach gospodarczych wywołanych restrykcjami wprowadzonymi przez państwo zachodnie przeciwko Polsce, [Information about the effectiveness of economic sanctions imposed by Western nations against Poland], dated June 9, 1983, AAN, KC PZPR, V/203, 13.

⁵ For statistics, see Global Financial Data's Poland Real Per Capita GDP in 2004 Złotych (available at <https://www.globalfinancialdata.com/>).

control. Yet it was during this middle period that the opposition was able to rebuild itself. In the Polish case, it was not the economic situation that mattered to political calculations, but rather the public perceptions of the economy, which grew increasingly dark after December 1981. As the PZPR reported in August 1987 just as GDP per capita was peaking, "General anxiety is rising due to the prolonged economic crisis. An opinion is spreading that the economy instead of improving is getting worse. As a result there arises an ever greater dissonance between the so-called official optimism of the authorities ('after all it's better') and the feeling of society. . . . Social dissatisfaction is growing."⁶

In terms of its overall economic development, Poland was an industrialized country in the socialist model. So, while there was not a middle class, per se, there was a large class of industrialized workers, centralized particularly in the coal mining, steel, textile, and ship building industries. There was also a significant class of rural workers, who farmed their own private plots, a uniquely Polish institution in the context of Eastern Europe where most agriculture had been collectivized. Class distinctions between rural and urban work forces were not of particular of note (the formation of Solidarność was followed shortly thereafter by the formation of Rural Solidarność); rather, class tension existed mostly between workers and the ruling elite of bureaucrats, managers, and technocrats (the *nomenklatura*). Moreover, while rationing of essentials like meat and sugar and long lines were a fact of life, there was never a full humanitarian crisis in Poland: food was always available. Consumer goods and housing were also available, but they existed in such small quantities that there were long waiting periods to receive them. In other cases consumer goods were only available at high prices or from stores

⁶ Report, "A Synthesis of the Internal Situation and the West's Activity," dated August 28, 1987, in Paweł Machcewicz, "Poland 1986-1989: From 'Cooptation' to 'Negotiated Revolution' New Documents," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* issue 12/13 (Fall/Winter 2001): 98.

that only accepted foreign currencies. The country suffered from alternating periods of decline followed by slow growth that could not keep pace with Poles' expectations.

An Independent Catholic Church: A second crucial aspect of Poland's transformation was the existence of a powerful institution independent from the government: the Catholic Church.

Unlike other Communist countries where religious organizations had been destroyed or co-opted, the Church in Poland retained a unique role, based partially on the fact that Poland was a nearly homogenously Catholic country after World War II. As the protector of Polish culture and language during the 19th and early 20th century—when Poland had been partitioned out of existence by Germany, Austro-Hungary, and Russia—the Church was intertwined with concepts of nationalism and played more than a purely spiritual role in the public arena.

The Church also saw itself as a protector of the Polish people. In this capacity, the Church created space (literally) for opposition groups to meet and public life to exist outside of state control. For example, churches hosted politically sensitive theater performances and lectures. Student and public protests often either began as mass was letting out or ended at churches where internal security forces did not dare to enter. The Church and its Charitable Commission of the Episcopate (KCEP), with parishes covering every locality, provided an efficient distribution network for humanitarian aid. While recent revelations from the Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs files have shown that some clergy informed on opposition activities, on the whole the Church provided a safe zone from government interference. Although support for the opposition varied according to individual priests (Father Jerzy Popiełuszko in Warsaw and Henryk Jankowski in Gdansk were well known for their outspoken support for Solidarność), in aggregate Church sympathies lay with the opposition.

The Church also acted as an arbiter between the opposition and the government. In the weeks following the declaration of martial law, when many were concerned about violent clashes between the military and the population, the Church under the leadership of Primate Jozef Glemp carefully promoted a public posture, designed to diffuse tension, aiding the government's attempt to maintain control over society. However, the church was also a powerful advocate for freeing political prisoners and monitored their well being while in prison. Finally, high-level clergy consistently advocated negotiations between the opposition and the government. When those negotiations occurred, clergy were always there as witnesses and mediators.

Finally, as a global organization, the Catholic Church provided an international voice for the Polish people, especially because Pope John Paul II was a Pole. The Pope spoke out against the government, echoed calls for restraint during tense times, and supported moves toward negotiations. As a national hero and head of the Catholic Church, the Pope held particular sway with Polish public opinion. The Pope's pilgrimages to Poland in 1979, 1983, and 1987 also provided opportunities for large-scale gatherings with minimal government interference, during which the opposition could exhibit its strength and renew public calls for reform. Many consider the Pope's 1979 pilgrimage an essential factor leading to the creation of Solidarność because it proved to the Polish people that they could organize a massive undertaking without government help. Although it is possible to consider the Pope an international influence, it is difficult to determine where positions by the local officials deviated from Papal orders, and vice-verse. Certainly the existence of a Polish Pope led to a more active policy, but the Church's roles as protector and arbiter existed well before Karol Wojtyla's assumption. For the sake of simplicity, therefore, the Pope is considered a domestic factor.

Secure, Non-brutal State: A third important factor for understanding Poland's transition to democracy is the state's secure position. Although according to Jaruzelski's assessment, "Poland neared the edge of an abyss" in December 1981, PZPR control of the government and internal state security was never in question. The imposition of martial law, in effect, showed that the military was still very much in command. In fact, the government became highly militarized, run by a Military Council for National Rebirth (WRON). Even after martial law was suspended, military officers (Jaruzelski, Czesław Kiszczak, and Florian Siwicki) remained in influential positions in the party (general secretary and Politburo members) and the government (head of state, minister of internal affairs, minister of defense). The military's role reflected both its respected position within society and the country's historical legacy of military strongmen, personified by Marshal Jozef Pilzudski's tenure during the interwar years. With strong military connections to the government, there were no threats of a military coup. Nor were there any internal military threats to the PZPR: while some fringe groups in the opposition advocated violently overthrowing the regime, in general, the opposition remained staunchly non-violent.⁷ State security, in this sense, was never at issue.

Also the government rarely reverted to using deadly force against dissidents. After the Stalinist period (ending about 1956), political killings were relatively rare. In the most unabashed examples of deadly force, between 50 and 80 rioters were killed in Poznan in 1956, a few dozen workers were killed during strikes along the Baltic Coast in December 1970, and a handful of striking miners (6 to 10) were killed in December 1981. In each of these cases the government fired on angry crowds, not executions of individuals. There were certainly localized incidents in which activists were beaten to death or died in police custody (Father Popieluszko being the most well known) during the 1980s, however, political violence never reached extreme levels. In

⁷ For a discussion of the opposition's views on non-violence see Falk, *Dissidence*, 181-184.

the 1970s activists faced the threat of beatings by groups of unidentified thugs, imprisonment of a few years, and economic retribution for speaking against the government. By the early 1980s activists faced mainly imprisonment and economic retribution, and by the late 1980s the state punished opposition activities primarily through economic retribution (fines, loss of employment, confiscation of property, etc.). So, while the state remained authoritarian, repressive, and violent, by the 1980s political activists need not fear for their life, only for their freedom and their livelihoods.

Anti-Soviet Nationalism: As mentioned, Poland was partitioned by the Russian empire in the 19th century, and Polish national heroes were revered for having revolted (ultimately unsuccessfully) against Czarist troops. In addition, in the early 1920s Poland successfully defended itself against an invading Soviet army. The Soviet invasion of Poland in September 1939 only increased hatred. When the Red Army returned at the end of World War II, therefore, they were not necessarily viewed as liberators. Also, despite having an active socialist party during the interwar years, communism was frequently seen as an imposed rather than as an indigenous phenomena. Anti-Soviet nationalism exhibited itself in the 1980s in debates about the “blank spots” in the history Polish-Soviet relations, calling specifically for an accounting of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Katyn Massacre. In a domestic context, the PZPR's close relationship with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) called into question both the leadership and the *nomenklatura*'s patriotism, weakening their legitimacy with the Polish people.

Pattern of Economic Crises causing Political Change: Poland's post-war history is marked by a cycle of economic crises that led to significant political changes. In June 1956 workers in

Poznan and around the country took to the streets in response to price increases, after which a nationalistic Pole who had been purged from the PZPR in the early 1950s, Wladyslaw Gomulka, became the new general secretary. In December of 1970, workers along the Baltic Coast went on strike to protest price increases and Gomulka was forced to resign. Edward Gierek took his place. During the extended economic crisis of 1980-1982, Gierek was himself replaced as party leader by Stanisław Kania in September 1980, who was then replaced by Jaruzelski a year later. In each of these cases the striking workers also received pay increases and successfully had price increases rescinded. This pattern showed that workers could effect changes in economic policy and at the highest leadership levels by organizing and taking to the streets (or the shop floors) to push for change.

Precipitating Factors

Spring and Summer Strikes in 1988: In response to price increases (price of foodstuffs, cigarettes, and alcohol increased about 40 percent, the price of gasoline rose almost 60 percent, and the price of some consumer goods rose over 200 percent) all of which were announced on February 1, 1988, workers at the Stałowa Wola steel mill southeast of Warsaw held a protest rally on April 22 calling for pay increases and greater freedom for unions. Three days later, municipal workers in Bydgoszcz held wildcat strikes for twelve hours, which ended only after local Party leaders agreed to raise wages from 83 zlotys to 135 zlotys per hour. After seeing the success in Bydgoszcz, workers at the Lenin Steelworks in Nowa Huta, just outside of Kraków, went on strike beginning April 26, calling for wage increases but also demanding that workers removed for connections to Solidarność be reinstated. Steel workers in Stałowa Wola then followed through on threats and struck, demanding pay raises and the reinstatement of

Solidarność. On Monday, May 2, workers in the Lenin Shipyards in Gdańsk declared a strike in solidarity with the Lenin Steelworks.⁸

In response the PZPR utilized well-tested methods to break the strikes. Riot police stormed the gates of the Lenin Steelworks, beating, arresting, and carrying away protestors.⁹ Elite units of the militia amassed outside of the Lenin Shipyard, shining bright lights and beating their truncheons against police trucks as they marched toward the shipyard entrance, all in a show of force meant to intimidate workers.¹⁰ Outside the walls of striking industries, Polish authorities harassed Solidarność leaders, detaining about twenty-five activists including Bujak and Kuron and even briefly jailing some. The strikes concluded on May 10 with the last workers peacefully exiting the shipyards with their goals unmet, despite the fact that Wałęsa had joined them behind the gates.¹¹ As one prominent historian has summarized, "It looked as though [the PZPR] were no longer in imminent danger, the strike wave would not be repeated any time soon, and the prestige of Wałęsa and Solidarity had suffered a serious blow."¹²

In mid-August, however, a second wave of strikes swept across Poland, beginning with the July Manifesto Coal mine in Jastrzebie in southern Poland, where workers called for pay increases and for Solidarność to be reinstated. Within a week's time, nine other mines had joined. Workers were again occupying the Lenin Shipyards, portions of the Lenin Steelworks, and numerous other small industries. These events were particularly dangerous for the Party because coal exports were a significant source of foreign currency. Second, many of the striking workers

⁸ Information in this paragraph is based on reporting by John Tagliabue for *The New York Times*. In particular, see: "Polish Workers Strike and Win a Raise" (Apr. 26, 1988): A3; "Steel Strike Widens Polish Labor Unrest" (Apr. 27, 1988): A3; "Steel strikes Spreading in Poland; Talks with Official Unions Fail" (Apr. 30, 1988): A1; and "Thousands at Gdansk Shipyard Join Polish Strike" (May 3, 1988): A1.

⁹ Tagliabue, "Security Forces Crush a walkout at Mill in Poland," *New York Times* (May 6, 1988): A1.

¹⁰ Tagliabue, "Young and Wary Strikers Take Solace from Wałęsa," *New York Times* (May 7, 1988): A1.

¹¹ Tagliabue, "Gdansk Workers Reject Polish Offer to End Strike," *New York Times* (May 10, 1988): A10; and "Gdańsk Workers end 9-day Strike; Key Demand Unmet," *New York Times* (May 11, 1988): A1.

¹² Andrzej Paczkowski, *The Spring will be Ours* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 490.

were in their teens and twenties with only vague memories of the 1980 strikes, proving that another generation of Polish workers had been radicalized. Finally, each strike committee called for the reemergence of Solidarność, making these strikes more political than the previous round.

In the midst of these strikes, the Politburo met to discuss the issue of initiating talks with Wałęsa to seek a new political consensus to calm the situation. Meeting on August 21, the Politburo was concerned with strikes intensifying and spreading, leading to “spillover effects” or as Kiszczak defined them, “points of explosion.” Moreover, Politburo members recognized that “the population . . . locates its sympathies on the side of Solidarność.”¹³ Disagreements over the best way forward, particularly on the issue of legalizing Solidarność, continued, but contacts with the opposition intensified. Then on August 26, Kiszczak announced on television that he would be willing to talk with “representatives from diverse social and workers' groups” about the possibility of forming a “round table,” thrusting the concept of round table negotiations into the public eye.¹⁴ When the Politburo met again on August 28, they decided to treat the issue of trade union pluralism as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Wałęsa and his inner circle. As one historian familiar with Politburo records summarizes, “In the situation when the summer strikes were obviously stronger than the strikes in the spring, and Jaruzelski—despite being in charge of preparations—had not decided to introduce an exceptional state [*stan wyjątkowy*], initiating a dialogue with moderate opposition appeared to be the optimal solution. ‘It is a bold path, but it is the path forward,’ he declared to the gathered members of the Politburo, adding simultaneously that ‘tomorrow the situation will be worse.’”¹⁵

¹³ “From the Meeting of the Political Bureau held on 21 August 1988 under the chairmanship of the 1st Secretary of the KC PZPR, comrade Wojciech Jaruzelski,” in the documents briefing book prepared for the conference, “Poland 1986-1989: The End of the System,” in Miedzeszyn-Warsaw, Poland, October 20-24, 1999; quoted at 13 and 10. Copies are available through the National Security Archive.

¹⁴ Krzysztof Dubiński, *Magdalena: Transakcja epoki* (Warsaw: Sylwa, 1990), 4.

¹⁵ Dudek, *Reglamentowana Rewolucja*, 166. The term “exceptional state” is basically a euphemism for imposing martial law.

On August 31, 1988, the eighth anniversary of the Gdańsk accords, Kiszczak met with Wałęsa in the presence of Bishop Jerzy Dąbrowski. Kiszczak invited him to further talks, and referenced the possibility of elections to the Sejm, the creation of a senate, as well as a place for a constructive opposition in the political system.¹⁶

Wałęsa and Solidarność's Popular Legitimacy - In the August 31 meeting, Kiszczak set one precondition for negotiations: the cessation of strikes.¹⁷ Wałęsa gambled and accepted; however, ending the strikes was not easy. When Wałęsa returned to the Lenin Shipyards, where he had so triumphantly overseen the birth of Solidarność, workers "whistled, booed and raised charges of cowardice." From their perspective he had received no real concessions, only a vague agreement to continue negotiations toward trade union pluralism.¹⁸ Neither demands for pay increases nor legalizing Solidarność had been met. As one young worker lamented, "We walked out in May with empty hands. We're going to walk out again with nothing to show for it."¹⁹ Even the Lenin Shipyard's strike committee chairman, a longtime Wałęsa supporter, was quoted as saying, "After 11 days of strikes we have advanced so little. . . . It is a bitter decision." The Gdańsk strikers only acquiesced to Wałęsa's request after "nightlong debates and a narrow vote."²⁰ At the July Manifesto Mine, workers were so reticent to end their strike that they demanded Wałęsa personally visit. The head of Solidarność was greeted by cheers but soon met "some very sharp moments and a sharp exchange, even swearing at first." Again "charges of betrayal" surfaced. As in Gdańsk, the final decision to end the strike came down to a contentious and close vote. As one

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Dudek, *Reglamentowana Rewolucja*, 172.

¹⁸ Tagliabue, "Wałęsa takes to Coal Country to Press for an End to Strikes," *New York Times* (Sept. 3, 1988): A1.

¹⁹ Tagliabue, "Appeal by Wałęsa fails to Resolve all Polish Strikes," *New York Times* (Sept. 2, 1988): A1.

²⁰ Jackson Diehl, "Gdańsk Strikes End, But Others Continue; Polish Union Split Over Government Talks," *Washington Post* (Sept. 2, 1988): A23.

Polish commentator opined, “Wałęsa thought he could strike right in and the miners would follow him. . . . But he got a good lesson. It took him eight hours to convince them.”²¹ By September 4, all major strikes had ended, proving to the government that he retained enough clout with workers to calm the situation. Negotiations between the opposition and the government began in secret on September 16, just outside of Warsaw in the village of Magdalenka.

In his opening remarks Kiszczak explained the PZPR's main focus for negotiations and alluded to why they needed to include Solidarność:

The "round table" could take a stance and eventually correct the economic model, which should ensure that reforms are effectively realized, achieve economic equilibrium, and dissolve the debt issue. The economic reform program's success, through assuring equal chances and workloads to all forms of ownership, depends upon the degree of its comprehension and social acceptance.²²

For the government, the key issue was the economy and finding a way to get opposition support to take the painful and necessary steps needed to get the economy working again. They needed not only to implement changes but insure that they had “social acceptance.” The talks broke when Wałęsa demanded that Solidarność be legalized as a part of the Round Table agreements. In November, Wałęsa continued to demonstrate his position as a legitimate representative of the people when he debated the head of the government-run unions on television. In one night he "shattered to dust years of propaganda attempting to present him as dependent [upon advisors], primitive, heading toward anarchy. That day, Solidarność returned to public life, pulling with it the attention and hopes of millions of Poles." Shortly thereafter, government public opinion polls

²¹ William Echikson, “Who’ll Pay the Price if Wałęsa’s Risk Doesn’t Pay Off?,” *Christian Science Monitor* (Sept. 6, 1988): 7.

²² "Spotkanie Robocze w Magdalence, 16 września 1988 r., godz. 15.15-19.00" [Working Meeting in Magdalenka, 16 September, 3:15-7:00 p.m.], in Dubiński, *Magdalenka*, 19.

showed 73 percent of the population favored legalizing Solidarność.²³

Jaruzelski's Commitment to Round Table Negotiations: Through the fall and winter of 1988 Wałęsa and his advisors stuck to their position that Round Table negotiations could only begin if Solidarność was legalized. On December 20-21, 1988, and January 16-17, 1989, the PZPR held its Tenth Party Plenum. Jaruzelski was able to pass a motion for Solidarność to be re-legalized, but some participants loudly complained that this decision had been forced on them. The issue became so contentious that an emergency Politburo meeting was called during which Jaruzelski asked for a vote of confidence, declaring:

There were clear signals that the *aktiv* does not trust the leadership and that we are creating a dangerous crisis situation. Thus there is no other solution. Either the [Central Committee] members will put full trust in the present leadership, or this leadership will resign, and if such vote of confidence is given, then we have the right to demand the implementation of the adopted resolutions.²⁴

Jaruzelski, Kiszczak, Siwicki, and Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Rakowski threatened to step down from the leadership if the vote did not pass. When the vote was put to the full plenum, 32 of 178 Central Committee members voted against and 14 abstained. Jaruzelski and his fellow reformers remained in office and won the debate to legalize Solidarność. This bold move cleared the final hurdle for the Round Table negotiations, which began on February 6 following a few more secret sessions at Magdalenka. The reformers in the party leadership simultaneously demonstrated their steadfast commitment to resolving Poland's growing economic and social crisis through negotiations with the opposition. They had also forced the rest of the party apparatus to progress with them.

²³ Andrzej Friszke, *Polska: Losy Państwa i Narodu 1939-1989* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo ISKRY, 2003), 448.

²⁴ "Minutes No. 107 from a meeting of the Politburo after the Conclusion of the discussion on January 17, 1989," dated January 17, 1989, "Poland 1986-1989."

Dissolving Party Cohesion: As the January events attest, cohesion in the PZPR was falling apart throughout 1989; however, it was not until after elections in June 1989 that cracks in the party caused a full political crisis. As it turned out, Solidarność candidates won 99 of 100 seats in the Senat (the other seat was claimed by an independent candidate) and all 161 Sejm seats were open to it. Equally surprisingly, after the first round, it appeared that few of the government candidates had reached a necessary threshold of 50 percent support to keep from appearing on the ballot for June 18. Most surprisingly, only two government candidates on the so-called “national list”—mainly well known party leaders, who ran unopposed and only needed 50 percent of the vote to take office—had won seats in the Sejm. Voters took the time to cross out the names on the list, showing their disgust for these party leaders, reformers or not.

These election results further undermined PZPR morale and cohesion. A number of those high level officials on the national list refused to run in the second round. When asked why, one former Politburo member told U.S. Ambassador John Davis, “that would be too humiliating.”²⁵ The government was only able to fill the seats left open by the national list through an agreement with Solidarność to allow others to take their place and maintain the 65/35 split that the Round Table Accords mandated. Second the satellite parties (SD and ZSL) in the PZPR-led coalition began to show their own self-interest. As the U.S. embassy reported two days after the first round of elections, the opposition “quietly claims to have at least 10 perspective Peasant's Party (ZSL) deputies in its pockets. The glue that has held the ruling coalition together—the permanence and inevitability of PZPR rule—has been eliminated.”²⁶

This lack of coherence in the government coalition led directly to an intense political crisis surrounding Jaruzelski's election as president. Although his election was not stipulated in

²⁵ Author's interview with Davis, November 23, 1999.

²⁶ Cable from Amembassy Warsaw to SecState, "Election '89 - Solidarity's Victory Raises Questions," dated June 6, 1989, National Security Archive (hereafter NSA), End of the Cold War, Poland 1989 Cables.

the Round Table Accords, it was an unstated agreement that he was the only "serious candidate" for the new office and "was to be guarantor that further changes in the political system would be of an evolutionary nature."²⁷ However, by the last week of June leaders from the ZSL had announced to the U.S. embassy that they "would be loyal to the PZPR only when it served the ZSL's interests and the PZPR's agenda."²⁸ In a separate meeting with a small group of Solidarność parliamentarians, opposition members explained to the embassy that "as many as forty or fifty" coalition parliamentarians refused to vote for Jaruzelski as president in order "to punish him for the party's electoral humiliation."²⁹ Jaruzelski could no longer count on winning a majority of Sejm and Senat votes needed to become president without at least tacit support from the opposition. Many of the opposition candidates had specifically campaigned on pledges that they would not vote for Jaruzelski as president, but the opposition leadership believed that not electing Jaruzelski would undermine the Round Table process and possibly lead the country toward civil war. In the face of large defections by ZSL and SD members, the opposition manipulated the vote in Jaruzelski's favor, systematically moving parliamentarians in and out to create the necessary quorum and, in a handful of cases, voting for Jaruzelski.³⁰ On July 19, Jaruzelski became president exceeding the necessary majority by a single vote.

With the opposition's new-found role of kingmaker, the Solidarność leadership began to pursue the possibilities of forming their own government. Under Wałęsa's leadership (who had not run for public office) the opposition blocked Jaruzelski's nominee for prime minister from

²⁷ Paczkowski, *Spring*, 500.

²⁸ Cable from Amembassy Warsaw to SecState, "Peasant Party Loosening its Bonds with PZPR," dated June 15, 1989, NSA, End of the Cold War, Poland 1989 Cables.

²⁹ Cable from Amembassy Warsaw to SecState, "How to Elect Jaruzelski without Voting for Him and Will he Run," dated June 23, 1989, NSA, End of the Cold War, Poland 1989 Cables.

³⁰ It is interesting to note the American role in supporting Jaruzelski's candidacy for president in 1989. Davis explained the quorum-creating moves Solidarność ultimately used to manufacture the vote for Jaruzelski, and President Bush publicly and privately supported Jaruzelski for president during his June 1989 trip. See, Gregoyr F. Domber, "Skepticism and Stability: Reevaluating U.S. Policy Toward the Democratic Revolutions of 1989," *Contemporary European History* (forthcoming 2009).

forming a government and steadfastly fought against PZPR pressure to create a grand coalition government in which Solidarność would hold cabinet positions but the PZPR would retain the premiership. Wałęsa also quietly instructed Solidarność activists Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński to begin secret negotiations with the ZSL and SD about possibilities for a Solidarność-led coalition.³¹ These negotiations were successful in breaking the remaining bonds between the old satellites and the PZPR. With a new coalition of Solidarność, ZSL, and SD parliamentarians, Mazowiecki was elected as prime minister, bringing Poland's democratic transition to an end. This final maneuver testified to Wałęsa's incredibly adept sense of politics. More importantly, if the government coalition had been able to maintain cohesion, this monumental change would not have been possible.

Section 3: External Variables

Threat of Soviet Military Intervention: In East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968 the Soviet Union and a varying coalition of Warsaw Pact partners had mobilized military force to quell political unrest. Following the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev articulated his doctrine of “fraternal assistance” in which the USSR maintained the right to intervene in any socialist country to defend socialism, limiting the sovereignty of each country behind the iron curtain. Although historians continue to argue hotly over exactly when the Soviet leadership rejected the Brezhnev Doctrine, it is generally agreed that the possibility of an invasion decreased as the 1980s progressed particularly under Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of “new thinking.”

The threat of a Soviet intervention in Poland was most acute in the first 18 months after the creation of Solidarność. In moves reminiscent of events before the invasion of

³¹ Dudek, *Reglamentowana Rewolucja*, 376-377.

Czechoslovakia, an emergency meeting of Warsaw Pact members was convened in Moscow in December 1980 and joint Warsaw Pact exercises were held in Poland in December 1980 and March 1981 (Soyuz 80 and Soyuz 1981). In both December 1980 and March 1981, the threat of a Soviet invasion appeared so imminent, that the U.S. government under President Jimmy Carter and then Ronald Reagan issued hotline messages warning of dire consequences if military force was used. The threat of an invasion only lessened in the months after the declaration of martial law, when it became clear that Polish forces could control their internal situation without “fraternal assistance.” Reflecting their history of frequently being invaded from the East and their deep anti-Soviet nationalism, the threat of a Soviet intervention, however, remained a possibility in Polish perceptions through the end of 1989.

Eastern Political Pressure: Because a Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion never materialized, it remained only a threat and functioned primarily as a form of political pressure to keep the PZPR in line with Moscow's political desires. Since the Red Army installed Poland's first Communist government in 1948, the Soviet Union remained intensely involved in Poland's political decisions and sometimes Moscow itself made the decisions.. While it is oxymoronic to refer to a Communist power as “colonial,” the political relationship between Moscow and Warsaw was much stronger than that of a regional hegemon and a neighbor. The CPSU had a history of imposing political decisions on their vassals, either bilaterally or in multilateral settings like Warsaw Pact meetings. Regular high-level meetings of Polish and Soviet officials—including Brezhnev, CPSU Politburo Member Mikhail Suslov, Marshall Victor Kulikov (commander of Warsaw Pact troops), Kania, Józef Czyrek (Polish foreign minister), and Jaruzelski (who was both minister of defense and prime minister after February 9, 1981)—took place in Warsaw,

Moscow, the Crimea, and even a railroad car in Byelorussia during the 1980-1981 crisis. At each meeting the Soviets spoke about the threat of counterrevolution, telling the Poles that they needed to take decisive action against the opposition and warning of grave consequences. In this way, the PZPR suffered from a certain degree of limited sovereignty whether the Red Army was mobilized or not.

After Brezhnev died in November 1982, the Soviet Union suffered a rapid succession of leaders from Yuri Andropov who died in February 1984, to Konstantin Chernenko who died in March 1985, finally ending with Mikhail Gorbachev who earned the honor as the last Soviet General Secretary. While the Soviet Union maintained significant levers for political pressure throughout Poland's transformation, each of these three leaders exercised it in different fashions and with differing purposes. (For a full discussion see section 4).

Economic ties through COMECON: In addition to close political ties with Moscow, Warsaw also depended on the Soviet Union and the Committee for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON, of which most Socialist countries were a member) for its economic security. Poland received significant amounts of petroleum, oil, and natural gas and most of the necessary raw materials for heavy industry from its Socialist brothers. Moreover, in 1979 countries in COMECON accounted for 57.8 percent of Poland's exports and 51.8 percent of imports. In terms of specific trading partners, the Soviet Union individually accounted for 35.3 percent of exports and 31.4 percent of imports. East Germany and Czechoslovakia were next most important accounting for 7.3 and 7.2 percent of exports and 7.7 and 5.8 percent of imports respectively. Comparatively West Germany (Poland's most important foreign trading partner of the G-7 countries) accounted for 7.2 percent of exports and 6.5 percent of imports, while the

United States commanded only 2.6 percent of exports and 4.3 percent of imports.³² As Poland's key trading partners, the Soviet Union and COMECON's East European members maintained significant mechanisms for pressure outside of the threat of invasion.

Western Political Pressure: In the months between August 1980 and December 1981, the United States and the West, in general, spoke out publicly in support of political developments in Poland. The creation of an independent trade union, where the state's legitimacy was founded on its ability to represent the working class, was viewed in the West as an important move toward increased pluralism. It also directly challenged and weakened the Communist system. The United States supported these changes politically by frequently issuing statements advocating that Poland resolve its problems through a peaceful process of negotiation, condemning Soviet pressure on Poland, mentioning American sympathy for the PZPR's predicament, and explaining that the United States would not interfere in Poland's internal affairs. This support for political change was tempered however by statements explaining American fears that instability in Poland could lead to greater instability in Europe.³³

When the PZPR declared martial law and imprisoned thousands of Solidarność activists, the United States and the West turned their political pressure against Jaruzelski. In the first few hours after December 11, the United States took a decidedly cautious approach, calling for "all parties to exercise the maximum degree of restraint, prudence, and caution."³⁴ However, on December 17 Reagan publicly condemned the use of military force, focusing particularly on the

³² For information on Poland's trade within COMECON and with the West, see Vienna Institute for Comparative Economic Studies, *COMECON Foreign Trade Data 1980* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), esp. 130, 133, 136. All statistics are for 1979, prior to the acute economic problems of the initial political crisis.

³³ For a representative sample of this kind of message see "Notatka Informacyjna z rozmowy z charge d'affaires HE Wilgisem z 19 bm" [Information Note from the Conversation with H. E. Wilgis on the 19th of this month], dated September 19, 1981, MSZ, Dept III (1981), 49/84, W 1, AP 22-1-81/B.

³⁴ Cable from Secstate to U.S. delegation Secretary, "Under Secretary Stoessel's meeting with Bessmertnykh, December 13," dated December 13, 1981, NSA, Soviet Flashpoints Originals, Box 1.

abuse of human rights as violations of the Helsinki Final Act. This was in contrast to other West European voices, particularly the West Germans, who were openly sympathetic toward martial law. From December 1981 to September 1986, American diplomats regularly invoked the Helsinki Agreements as a pretext for raising concerns about treatment of specific individuals and more generalized calls for political amnesty. When the Polish ambassadors in Washington and Tokyo requested asylum, the White House was happy to oblige. In 1982, Reagan frequently spoke out in public against Jaruzelski's government, including a memorable speech to the British Parliament, which called for the West to increase efforts on promoting and defending democracy. After the first anniversary of the declaration of martial law, Poland received much less frequent presidential attention, but the topic continued to surface a few times a year. In addition, the United States refused to hold high-level meetings with Polish officials before 1986, most notably when the White House snubbed Jaruzelski during his visit to the fortieth opening session of the United Nations in 1985. West European leaders maintained similar restrictions on high-level contacts until 1985.

American Economic Pressure: Economic pressure, through both incentives and sanctions, followed a similar course. During the 1980 to 1981 period, the U.S. government showed support for the burgeoning political changes by easing Poland's economic problems. Less than two weeks after the Gdańsk accords, President Carter announced that Poland would receive \$670 million in credits for FY 1980-1981, an increase of \$120 million over FY 1979-1980. In early December of 1981, the Reagan White House was finalizing an agreement to increase aid to Poland to \$740 million including \$100 million in emergency aid for animal feed. As Director of the DCI/DDCI Executive Staff, Robert Gates wrote to DCI William Casey on December 4,

investing foreign aid was a risky proposition, but "our national security interests are well served by gambling \$740 million (or other sums) in credits in the hope that it will allow the Polish experiment to continue and in the knowledge that the experiment's very survival will contribute to the long-term unraveling of the Soviet position in Eastern Europe."³⁵

Mirroring the political turn after December 11, the Reagan White House quickly shifted from economic incentives to economic sanctions. Initially Washington stopped consideration of the \$100 million in emergency aid and blocked sending \$47 million in dairy products left in the FY 1980-1981 account. This provided a real sting to the PZPR, because its poultry industry (an important source of protein) was near collapse and in need of the feed. After about two weeks of martial law, when it became clear that the initial sanctions had not effected change, the administration increased sanctions to include halting the renewal of Export-Import Bank insurance credits, suspending all LOT flights to and from the United States, suspending Poland's rights to fish in American waters, and working with NATO to increase restrictions on technology trade. By the end of the year (following a PZPR decision to officially declare Solidarność illegal) Poland lost MFN status and Washington was blocking membership of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

From the beginning these sanctions were seen as reversible if the PZPR met three clear demands: end martial law, free all political prisoners, and begin a dialogue with representatives of the people. (The Americans initially wanted negotiations with Solidarność leaders, but ultimately settled on a more flexible approach that did not attach the Solidarność name to the process.) Initially these sanctions were seen as an all-or-nothing process in which sanctions would be lifted once all demands were met. By the Spring of 1983, (a year-and-a-half after the

³⁵ Memorandum from Robert M. Gates to the Director of Central Intelligence, "Assistance to Poland: Tuesday's NSC Meeting," dated December 4, 1981, NSA, Soviet Flashpoints Originals, Box 1.

declaration of martial law), sanctions had sparked few changes, so the White House decided on a new negotiating stance labeled the “step-by-step” approach. Step-by-step endorsed the use of sanctions as individual bargaining chips to be lifted as rewards for concessions by the PZPR. Sanctions were no longer an “all-or-nothing” proposal; individual sanctions could be lifted in return for specific changes in Warsaw that progressed towards but did not necessarily fulfill America's three demands.³⁶ From mid-1983 to February 10, 1987, when Reagan lifted the final sanctions, the U.S. government lessened sanctions in return for small changes in PZPR actions.

From 1987 onward, the United States’ main point of economic pressure returned to the incentive side of the equation. Meeting in Warsaw in October of 1988, Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead outlined possible economic support in light of the then ongoing negotiations between Solidarność and the PZPR. In Whitehead’s words, “step-by-step passed the test and it is necessary currently to elevate relations to a new level.”³⁷ This new level included: appropriating \$700,000 for scientific-technical cooperation in FY 1989; providing CCC credits for agricultural purchases; signing an agreement to create a charitable foundation to spend American funds in zlotys; extending OPIC guarantees for investments; extending Ex-Im Bank credits; moving Poland up the list for countries eligible for CCC credits; making available tax relief given to developing countries to help increase exports to the United States; providing direct American financial and economic aid; supporting Poland's programs in the IMF, World Bank, and Paris Club with America's “specific influence”; and further developing bilateral trade with the possibility of joint ventures.³⁸

³⁶ The approach, codified in a national security strategy paper, “Next Steps on Poland,” signed by Reagan on May 13, 1983.

³⁷ Notatka Informacyjna dot. wizyty w Polsce zastępcy Sekretarza Stanu USA Johna Whiteheada (12-14 października 1988 r.) [Information Note regarding U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead’s visit to Poland (12-14 October 1988)], dated October 15, 1988, MSZ, 42/92, W-6, Dep III (1988), AP 220-25-88; quoted at 7.

³⁸ Ibid., 9-10.

When George H. W. Bush became president, he continued with an incentives program first outlined in his Hamtramck speech of April 17, 1989. In addition to GSP tariff improvements and OPIC investment incentive measures, the United States and Poland expanded agreements for tourism and to cultural centers during Bush's visit in July 1989. While visiting the president also proposed new measures to support scientific (energy sector) coordination, legal support to improve American business's foundation for investment, a housing privatization and development program to promote home ownership and increase the housing stock, and three environmental initiatives for the Kraków worth \$15 million. The administration also pledged to back "two economically viable project loans . . . totaling \$325 million" through the World Bank. The most significant new unilateral initiative launched by the Americans, however, was a \$100 million "Polish-American Enterprise Fund" which would provide funds for private sector development, privatizing state firms, increased technical assistance and training programs, funding export projects, and encouraging joint ventures between private Polish and American investors.³⁹ Shortly after Mazowiecki took power, U.S. commitments in aid to Poland rose to over \$1.2 billion, and the European Union made funds available through food aid and a stabilization fund.

International Debt: During the 1970s, Gierek took advantage of improved East-West relations fostered by détente to gain loans and credits from both Western governments and private Western banks. Government loans were coordinated through an informal group known as the Paris Club, while private loan terms were coordinated through the London Club. While loans had provided easy money to artificially prop up Poland's economy in the 1970s, by 1980 Poland

³⁹ Explanations of all of these initiatives are included in declassified briefing materials, c. July 1989, NSA, End of the Cold War, scanned incoming FOIA documents.

owed around \$23 billion, which was beginning to come due. In November 1980, the Carter White House linked Poland's political situation to negotiations to reschedule debts, augmenting other economic incentives. The Reagan administration followed a similar path negotiating in April 1981 to reschedule payment of 90% of Poland's debt due that year, postponing full payment for five years until 1986. To deal with their debt to private Western bankers the PZPR signed an agreement on December 4, 1981 to reschedule \$2.4 billion in debt principal.

After the declaration of martial law, the U.S. government saw international debt as its most significant pressure point. According to calculations by the State Department, even with the economy in shambles Polish exports could pay for all necessary Western imports. But, in the coming year the Warsaw government did not have enough hard currency to cover their debt payments. To keep their economy afloat the Poles needed \$5.6 billion in public and private debt rescheduling and \$3.8 billion in new export and agricultural credits from the West. In this analysis, Western economic leverage after December 1981 came from "continuing trade relationships; debt service relief, both public and private; and access to new credits, both public and private." This leverage, however, would be weakened if the Poles declared a unilateral moratorium on repayment. Therefore, "Western economic levers [were] most effective if the Poles [attempted] to service their external hard currency debt."⁴⁰

In the short term this meant that it was in the U.S. government's interest to insure that Poland was not declared in default. To guarantee that private bankers did not declare default, the Reagan administration agreed to pay \$71 million to U.S. banks to cover past due payments on government guaranteed loans, committing the White House to paying \$308 million over 1982.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Action Memorandum from Robert Hormats and Lawrence Eagleburger to the Secretary, "Western Economic Leverage on Poland and Secure Phone Call to Regan," dated December 17, 1981, NSA, Soviet Flashpoints, Box 26, December 1-22, 1981.

⁴¹ Dan Morgan, "U.S. tells its Banks Some Polish Debt will be Paid," *Washington Post* (Feb. 2, 1982): A11.

Once the initial default crisis was solved, Washington used the threat of blocking Paris Club talks to pressure the PZPR. However, by early 1983 and with little hope that Poland would be able to pay in full, some other creditor nations—the United Kingdom and several "neutrals," including Switzerland—were expressing "their doubts about the appropriateness of delaying a Polish rescheduling,"⁴² pressuring the United States to allow talks. By August 1983 the U.S. dropped its reservations, because it believed its allies were "prepared to move on their own."⁴³ Negotiations opened later in the year and, on July 15, 1985, the Paris Club announced that it had agreed to reschedule \$12 billion in debts owed from 1982 to 1984.⁴⁴ In November of that year, Polish representatives signed a further agreement rescheduling \$1.37 billion in debt that had come due in 1985, marking the first time since 1981 that Poland was without unrescheduled debts.⁴⁵ After the U.S. lifted all sanctions in 1987 they supported another rescheduling agreement signed in December 1987. When President Bush visited, he pledged to support "an early and generous rescheduling of Polish debt" within the larger Paris Club, to defer about \$5 billion in debt payments in total. Given the multilateral nature of Paris Club agreements, Poland's debt did not become a major pressure point. However, because Poland still had to pay some debt back (100% was not rescheduled) the debt did drain resources.

IMF: Poland was a member of the IMF and the World Bank at the end of World War II, but withdrew its membership in 1950 due to ideological conflicts of the early Cold War. In 1981 Poland reapplied for membership, with American and Western support. This support, however,

⁴² Memorandum from David Pickford, "Senior Interdepartmental Group on International Economic Policy (SIG-IEP)" with attachments, dated January 10, 1983, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library (hereafter RRPL), Executive Secretary NSC, National Security Decision Directives, Box 91286, NSDD 66 [4 of 5].

⁴³ Briefing Memorandum, "Western Policy Towards Poland," dated August 10, 1983, NSA, End of the Cold War, Box 1, September 6-9, 1983: Shultz's Trip to Madrid.

⁴⁴ Christopher Bobinski, "New chapter opens in Poland's debt saga," *Financial Times* (July 17, 1985): A2.

⁴⁵ David Buchan, "West Signs Rescheduling Accord with Poles," *Financial Times* (Nov. 11, 1985): A2.

quickly waned following the declaration of martial law. The United States specifically listed blocking IMF membership as one of its sanctions. This was based on American concerns about human rights abuses and a lack of political pluralism—a quality most members viewed as a prerequisite for membership. After all political prisoners were released in September 1986, the IMF voted to accept Poland's membership application, with the United States abstaining from the vote.

Gaining membership did not immediately lead to investments, however. Poland's application for aid was also greatly limited by its bleak macro-economic situation (particularly indebtedness) and inability to stabilize inflation, wages, and prices. As one scholar has summarized, Poland exhibited “a schizophrenic policy, repeatedly aspiring to fundamental economic restructuring while being unable and unwilling to take the political steps necessary to realize it.” As a consequence, “a skeptical IMF continued to drag out negotiations without ever providing the Jaruzelski government the financing it so desperately needed.”⁴⁶ Financing through the IMF and World Bank did not begin to materialize until after the Solidarność-led government endorsed the “Balcerowicz Plan” to fundamentally restructure the economy.

Monetary Support for Solidarność: While both the Carter and Reagan administration were weary about directly supporting Solidarność in 1980 and 1981 for fear provoking the PZPR or the USSR, American trade unionists were much less reserved. Less than a week after the Gdańsk agreements were signed, Lane Kirkland and the AFL-CIO General Board announced the creation of the Polish Workers Aid Fund (PWAFF) which grew to nearly \$250,000 by November 1981.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ James Bjork, “The Uses of Conditionality: Poland and the IMF,” *East European Quarterly* 29, vol. 1 (Spring 1995), 91-92, 93.

⁴⁷ “Statement on the Polish Workers Aid Fund,” dated September 4, 1980, George Meany Memorial Archives (hereafter GMMA), Information Department, AFL-CIO Press Releases 1980, Box 45, 45/3. Most of the individual

To determine how to spend these funds, the AFL-CIO turned to Solidarność for guidance.⁴⁸ With that guidance, AFL-CIO funds distributed prior to December 13, 1981, were used precisely as Solidarność requested: for the mundane matters of office and printing supplies.⁴⁹

When martial law was declared a number of Solidarność members were caught outside of Poland and rather than returning they decided to work for the opposition outside the country. In early July of 1982, the newly formed leadership committee for the Solidarność underground sent word that they wanted to create a single office to represent Solidarność abroad.⁵⁰ On July 29, the Solidarność Coordinating Office Abroad opened its doors in Brussels under the leadership of Jerzy Milewski, with a mandate to coordinate “effective and wide support for the Union in Poland,” cooperate “with trade unions and their international organizations,” and coordinate “activities intended to inform the public about the actual conditions faced by ISTU 'Solidarność' in Poland.”⁵¹

Under the guise of this new office, Mirosław Chojecki and Sławomir Czarlewski took charge of providing aid to opposition activists. The Coordinating Office had an initial projected annual operating budget of \$175,000 for office and start-up expenses and \$800,000 for support—“material and equipment (photographic, broadcasting, communications, printing, etc.)”—to the

donations are less than \$20, with larger donations from individual unions up to \$10,000. See: AFL-CIO International Affairs Department Files, Inactive Records, “After Nov. 24 PWA [Polish Workers Aid Fund]” and “Letters of Contribution from Individuals to the AFL-CIO Polish Workers Aid Fund, 1981.”

⁴⁸ “Report to the ICFTU on visits to Warschau and Gdańsk, 15/9-18/9/1980,” undated, AFL-CIO, International Affairs Department, Inactive Records, “Wałęsa, Lech.”

⁴⁹ According to internal accounting a total of \$152,000 was spent on office supplies and material for Solidarność prior to December 13; see: “Note to Editors,” dated June 14, 1982, GMMA, AFL-CIO, Information Department, AFL-CIO Press Releases 1937-1995, Box 49, 49/2.

⁵⁰ Andrzej Friszke, “Tymczasowa Komisja Koordynacyjna NSZZ 'Solidarność' (1982-1987),” in his *Solidarność Podziemna 1981-1989* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, 2006), 60-63.

⁵¹ Solidarity International Press Release, dated July 18, 1982, AFL-CIO, unprocessed records, “Solidarność 1982 #2.”

underground.⁵² Funded primarily by European trade unions, especially a French contribution of 8 million francs (\$1 million),⁵³ Chojecki began meeting with Poles who were allowed to travel to Western Europe and to exchange information and reports about the internal situation for money and goods to be smuggled back in to Poland. For larger items, like printing presses, Chojecki's preferred method was to dismantle them, disguise them, and send them with the help of sympathetic truck drivers who were delivering a steady stream of humanitarian aid. The parts would be picked up by opposition activists and reassembled. In addition to printing supplies, Chojecki successfully sent in radios and even an early computer during the Coordinating Office's first year.⁵⁴

While the AFL-CIO and FTUI were supportive of Milewski's Coordinating Office, they did not make a major financial commitment to Brussels at first. Instead, the AFL-CIO teamed up with a newly formed entity, the Committee in Support of Solidarity, co-directed by Irena Lasota, to publicize human rights abuses in Poland and to funnel support to those members of the opposition who were not interned. With financial support from the AFL-CIO as well as grants from private groups like the Smith-Richardson Foundation, Lasota sent parcels to friends in the opposition but not in jail, disguised as care packages. She included censored books and small amounts of cash (in American dollars) hidden in common objects. To aid independent publishers, Lasota purchased containers of Hershey's syrup, emptied the contents, cleaned them, and refilled them with printing ink. Because there were so many care packages being sent,

⁵² Letter from Jerzy Milewski to Lane Kirkland, dated August 1, 1982, AFL-CIO, International Affairs Department Files, Inactive Records, "Milewski, Jerzy." I was unable to locate any records in the AFL-CIO files showing that Kirkland or Kahn sent the requested funds.

⁵³ Quote is from author's interview with Eugeniusz Smolar, December 5, 2007. According to Idesbald Gooderis, a Belgian scholar who works on European trade unions' support for Solidarność, European unions and international labor organizations in Brussels provided the coordinating office's initial budget. I am deeply indebted to Gooderis for filling in the missing European pieces in my own research. Significant aid from the AFL-CIO to the coordinating office did not materialize until early in 1984 after the creation of the National Endowment for Democracy.

⁵⁴ Author's interview with Mirosław Chojecki, December 7, 2007.

Lasota assumed that the government could not possible search all incoming mail, ensuring that a fair amount of support made it to their intended destinations.⁵⁵ In addition to this basic support, Lasota also utilized AFL-CIO funds to send needed technology through trusted intermediaries in Western Europe, including: audio recorders, cassette recorders, accessory tapes, transistors, short wave radios, two-way radios, mobile antennas, base station antennas, and various printing and communications equipment. These shipments did not much exceed \$10,000 between 1982 and 1983.

At the end of 1983, the opposition gained an important new ally: the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). With this new source of money, American labor significantly increased its direct aid to Solidarność. From 1984 through 1989, the AFL-CIO funneled about \$300,000 per year in NED funds through FTUI to Solidarność's Coordinating Office in Brussels, providing about two-thirds of the office's annual operating budget.⁵⁶ When Congress appropriated \$1 million in additional funds to go to Solidarność in FY 1988 and FY 1989, these funds too, went through FTUI. Once in the hands of Solidarność's Brussels office, American money was dispersed mainly to union structures in Poland for their daily work of organizing, for supporting those who could not work, and for publishing independent news. From 1984 through 1989, FTUI also provided about \$100,000 per year to former Solidarność member Mirosław Dominczyk—in a program codenamed "Project Coleslaw"—to smuggle

⁵⁵ Author's interview with Irena Lasota, June 19, 2007.

⁵⁶ This \$300,000 figure is substantiated by research done in Poland based on sources from the Polish underground. According to Andrzej Friszke, in his article "Tymczasowo Komisja Koordynacyjna," the Coordinating office received \$200,000 yearly from 1983 to 1984, and then \$300,000 for 1985 and 1986. Adrian Karatnycky, director of AFL-CIO's Poland programs from 1984 onward confirmed this funding range when he referred to "our traditional \$300,000 allotment to Solidarność from FTUI's unrestricted NED funds." See memo from Adrian Karatnycky to Tom Kahn, "Eastern Europe and the USSR," dated November 29, 1989, AFL-CIO, International Affairs Department, Unprocessed Records, "Adrian Chron 1989."

printing materials, communications equipment, and money to regions and local union organizations that the AFL-CIO felt were being underserved by aid directed through Brussels.⁵⁷

NED also provided funds for sections of the opposition which were not directly linked to Solidarność. Beginning in FY 1984, the Institute for Democracy in East European (IDEE, an organization run by Irena Lasota and affiliated with CSS) received grants to support the Consortium of Independent Publishers, which included all the major underground publishing houses. In total, from 1984 to 1989, IDEE received just over \$800,000 in NED funds to support underground publishing in Eastern Europe, with the vast majority of funds going to Poland. While printing equipment and replacement parts were still needed in the second half of the 1980s, the consortium's biggest problems involved gathering money, a problem which Lasota alleviated by sending funds in \$500 increments to publishers through couriers traveling back and forth from Western Europe.⁵⁸

NED funds also supported Polish émigrés working as publishers in Western Europe. This included Eugeniusz Smolar's ANEKS publishing house and the *Uncensored Poland News Bulletin* both located in London, as well as various publications produced by the Independent Poland Agency in Lund, Sweden. Both of these groups translated and distributed Polish samizdat for a Western audience and produced underground literature that was smuggled into Poland. Between FY 1986 and 1989, ANEKS, *Uncensored Poland News Bulletin*, and the Independent Poland Agency received over \$350,000 in NED funds administered by Freedom House and the Polish America Congress Charitable Foundation (PACCF). A small literary journal founded in

⁵⁷ This brief overview comes from author's interview with Adrian Karatnycky, November 21, 2007. The \$100,000 figure also appears in contemporaneous documents, see Memorandum from Adrian Karatnycky to Tom Kahn, "Eastern Europe and the USSR," dated November 28, 1989, AFL-CIO, International Affairs Department, inactive records, "Adrian Chron 1989." For further information on the project see Arch Puddington, "Surviving the Underground: How American Unions Helps Solidarity Win," *American Educator* (Summer 2005), accessed online at www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/summer2005/puddington.htm.

⁵⁸ Levels of funding come from NED annual reports, available at their headquarters' library. Other information on IDEE's activities is based on author's interview with Lasota.

Paris in December 1982, *Zeszyty Literackie*, benefited from \$100,000 in NED grants from FY 1984 to 1989, administered by the International Freedom to Publish Committee, the Aurora Foundation, and the PACCF. *Zeszyty Literackie* was published both for the émigré Polish population and to be smuggled back into Poland.⁵⁹

NED also focused funds on a variety of humanitarian and human rights efforts. In addition to two \$1 million Congressional allocations which went through NED to the International Rescue Committee to support a Solidarność Social Fund in 1987 and 1989, NED also allocated \$90,000 annually to provide material assistance to political prisoners and their families. POLCUL, a foundation created by a wealthy Polish-Australian philanthropist was also funded to provide annual awards of about \$500 to Polish artists, writers, journalists, lawyers, actors, intellectuals, and scientists. In 1985 and 1986, the Aurora Foundation administered NED grants totaling \$120,000 for the Polish Legal Defense Fund to provide legal support to democracy activists on trial. Between FY 1986 and 1989, NED also provided \$50,000 to the Polish Helsinki Watch Committee, through a grant administered by PACCF.⁶⁰

As a final category of broad support, NED funded groups working to promote educational, cultural, and scientific activities that were neglected, criminalized, or censored by the Polish state, often referred to as "independent culture." From 1986 to 1989 NED provided \$100,000 per year (through sub-grants to PACCF) to OKN, which was an umbrella group for organizations operating in Poland. Each group published their own weeklies, as well as hard to find or illegal academic books and textbooks. More central to its mission, OKN organizations provided "scholarships" to students and academics who were involved in politically sensitive

⁵⁹ Funding levels come from NED annual reports. Specific information on PACCF activities and grants came from NED grants files located at the Polish American Congress's offices in Washington, D.C. I am indebted to Casimir Lenard for making these files available.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

research. Money also funded youth programs and the well known "Flying Universities": secret lectures and discussions held in private apartments or churches to teach censored subjects. For artists, money produced plays and theater events, supported music performances, paid for literary contests, and sponsored art exhibits (over forty in 1987 involving more than one-hundred artists). The committees also supported libraries and archives that collected and lent censored literature, as well as projects for recording oral histories.⁶¹ As an offshoot of these cultural and artistic activities, NED provided a total of \$170,000 from 1986 to 1989 to produce and distribute videos—for example, recordings of independent theater productions, popular lecture series from the Flying University, interviews with underground leaders, coverage of special events like the Papal pilgrimage, movies banned in Poland, and documentaries on martial law and the opposition movement—to be shown in private homes at so-called Flying home cinemas.⁶² None of these activities were overtly political, but helped promote widespread dissidence in Poland.

Without complete records from West European nations who were also supporting the opposition through their own governmental organizations, private initiatives, and trade unions it remains difficult to accurately calculate the total sum of money going to the opposition. However, it is safe to assume that, as with the Coordinating Office's budget, American funds accounted for somewhere between half and two-thirds of all money flowing into Poland. Total amounts of NED money going to Poland began at under \$500,000 per year in 1984 and grew to just over \$900,000 in 1986. Because of increased Congressional interest, Poland received about

⁶¹ The information about OKN is compiled from three annual reports from 1986, 1987, and 1988. See the files located in PAC, Books 4, "Grant # 86-181-E-047-25.0 OKNO" and "Grant #87-181-E-047-17.1 OKNO," as well as PAC, NED 89/90, "OKNO 1988."

⁶² The information in this paragraph is culled from various reports from Agnieszka Holland in PAC, Books 4, "NED Grant #86-181-E-047-50 Polish Video Film." For a fuller list of titles smuggled into Poland and more detailed information on the activities of the Video Association, see the report by the PZPR's Governing Body for Propaganda and Agitation: *Nagrania Video i Magnetowidowe oraz Telewizja Satelitarna w Działalności Propagandowej Przeciwnika Politycznego* [Video and Cassette Tape Recordings as well as Satellite Television in the Political Opposition's Propaganda Activities], dated May 1986, Hoover Institution Archive, Służba Bezpieczeństwa, Box 6, 6:13.

\$1,900,000 in Congressional funds in 1987 and 1988 and just over \$3,300,000 in 1989. Overall from FY 1984 to FY 1989 NED administered just under \$10 million in Congressional funding to promote democracy in Poland.

Political support for Solidarność: Throughout the period of transformation, the Carter, Reagan, and Bush presidencies loaded ample public praise onto Solidarność. World interest was focused on Wałęsa in 1983 when he was awarded the Nobel Prize. Geremek rose to notoriety in 1983 when an international group of academics called for his release from prison. Among other accolades, Michnik and Bujak received the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights award in 1986. All of these Western awards, like mentions of Solidarność by the government, kept Poland in the news and raised Solidarność's international profile.

On a more local level, John Davis (charge d'affaires from 1983 until 1987, then ambassador from the U.S.) consistently supported the opposition. Outside of harassing Polish government officials on the opposition's behalf, John and his wife Helen regularly hosted dinners at the ambassador's residence. Anywhere between thirty to fifty people would come for dinner and a movie, providing the Davises a regular chance to see old friends and make new acquaintances. As John recalls, their old friends "started bringing their Solidarity friends and made sure we got to know them socially as well as politically. By '84-'85 we were having, every week or ten days, we'd have most of the leadership of Solidarity over that was out of jail. Then as people would come out of jail we would add them to the mix."⁶³

From all accounts these parties were more social than political, a kind of American sponsored salon. These meetings were not formal gatherings with an agenda or speeches but social gatherings with groups of Poles sitting at tables of eight to ten with, perhaps, an embassy

⁶³ Ibid.

officer assigned to each table.⁶⁴ Politics was not the focus, but the subject did come up. For opposition activists these dinners became a place to discuss their situation openly. As Geremek remembers:

John Davis tried to give a very personal touch to these meetings. They weren't political meetings with reports, but a dinner, sometimes in the garden, sometimes in his residence, friendly dinners. During these dinners we had the opportunity to discuss, among us, in his presence, among us to discuss the situation, to discuss what can be done, what we have to do and also to present some projects and programs.⁶⁵

Congressmen and government officials also made regular trips to Poland to show their support for Solidarność. A trickle of Congressional delegations traveled to Warsaw between 1982 and 1986, which built to a deluge by the end of the decade. Beginning with Deputy Assistant Secretary Tom Simons' visit in December 1986, high-level government officials also traveled to Poland, including annual trips from 1987 on by Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead and a vice-presidential trip in September 1987 and then a presidential visit in June 1989 by George Bush. With each visit, the American embassy set up two sets of meetings: both "official" meetings with government and party officials and "unofficial" contacts with Church officials and opposition leaders, arranged as dinners and receptions at the ambassador's residence. The residence became a second, informal pillar of American policy, reflecting the dual tracks of relations: government-to-government and government-to-opposition. Invitees for the Congressional visits included a regular group of Warsaw intellectuals and opposition figures. Wałęsa, Lis, and Gwiazda "would come down for dinners . . . from Gdańsk, but of course it was less easy for them to make that trip. It was a long trip to come. They only usually came down for the big time visitors."⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Author's interview with Cameron Munter, June 11, 2004.

⁶⁵ Author's interview with Geremek, July 26, 2006.

⁶⁶ Author's interview with Davis.

For the Congressmen, these opposition dinners gave them a chance to hear another perspective on life in Poland. This was an opportunity for the Americans to hear how the U.S. government could help the democratic opposition, not to advise the opposition on tactics or strategies. Conversely, this was an important chance for Solidarność leaders to have their voices heard. As Geremek explained:

The purpose was to explain the Polish situation. We had the feeling that the information given in such a direct way, in a personal way, had a different importance, could touch American political leaders, members of the Congress. . . . We never had the impression of being given lessons of what to do or of [intentions] to impose a kind of political leadership. I think that probably we wouldn't accept it. But even on the American side I couldn't observe such a will. It was a very partnership relationship. Sometimes what we had to accept from the American side was an interpretation of the international scene which concerned American-Russian, American-Soviet relations, the place of China [. . .], but never a kind of political leadership imposed to us. [. . .]⁶⁷

The American visitors, particularly well known leaders like Bush and Senator Edward Kennedy also often appeared in public with Solidarność leaders, illustrating their support for the opposition.

Broadcasting: The U.S. government also supported the opposition with Radio Free Europe (RFE) broadcasts from Munich. RFE had broadcast news about opposition activities in Poland since before the Gdańsk Agreements, but under Zdzisław Najder's energetic and sometimes controversial leadership, RFE support intensified. More than any other role, RFE's Polish service broadcast messages from the opposition back into Poland, acting as a kind of mouthpiece for the movement. As independent publishing houses printed more and more underground literature, Najder and his office began to receive copies and broadcast portions back into Poland, even translating the information and broadcasting it on other language services to the rest of the Soviet

⁶⁷ Author's interview with Geremek.

bloc.⁶⁸ Najder also received shipments of microfilmed documents smuggled out. The microfilm images included Solidarność proclamations and internal decisions, as well as Polish government materials documenting policies against the movement.⁶⁹ Unlike underground literature, these internal Solidarność and government documents were not read over the air, but were used to inform and enrich editorials and commentaries.

RFE's efforts were most effective at providing information to counteract the barrage of misinformation in government-sponsored press. According to one study, "the circulation of one *zamizdat* rose from a maximum of eighty thousand when distributed on paper to many millions when transmitted by radio."⁷⁰ RFE broadcasts were also utilized to spread calls for strikes and demonstrations providing specific instructions such as where and when protesters should meet, an activity the Polish communists found particularly inflammatory.⁷¹ From the very beginning of martial law, RFE was a major point of confrontation between the United States and Poland. Foreign ministry officials frequently requested meetings with American embassy officers to lodge complaints about broadcasts, which the Poles labeled as infringements on internal Polish matters. As a former propaganda officer in the Army, Jaruzelski understood the importance of information and took a personal interest in RFE broadcasts, particularly any reports that either questioned his patriotism or his Polish-ness.⁷² The conflict over RFE also regularly spilled out

⁶⁸ George Urban, *Radio Free Europe and the Pursuit of Democracy* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997), 124.

⁶⁹ Hoover, Zdzisław Najder Files, Box 10, [Unlabelled].

⁷⁰ Jacques Semelin, "Communication et Résistance: Les Radios occidentales comme vecteur d'ouverture à l'est" (Paris: *Reseaux* no. 53, CNET, June 1992), 9-24, as summarized by Michael Nelson in his *War of the Black Heavens* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 160.

⁷¹ Pilna Notatka z rozmowy z charge d'Affaires USA w Warszawie John'em Davis'em w dniu 18 kwietnia 1984 r. [Urgent Note from a conversation with U.S. charge d'affaires a.i. John Davis on 18 April 1984], dated April 23, 1984, MSZ, 59/86, W-8, Dep III (1984), AP 53-5-8.

⁷² Usually Jaruzelski did not receive information notes on MSZ meetings; however in reviewing the Department III files a pattern emerged in which the general received information on meetings devoted to complaints about RFE broadcasts. This pattern applied particularly to MSZ complaints about RFE broadcasts that specifically mention Jaruzelski. For two examples, see: Notatka dot. złożenia protestu w sprawie RWE i Głosu Ameryki [Note regarding notice of protest in the matter of RFE and Voice of America], dated August 20, 1982, MSZ, 30/85, W-3, Dep III

into public debate with numerous articles attacking RFE published in the government-sponsored press.⁷³ During and after martial law the Polish government and their Soviet partners devoted significant time and effort to blocking RFE broadcasts into Poland. According to scientific research and RFE surveys of émigrés and refugees, the jamming effectively weakened RFE's signal from 46% in 1981 to 24% in 1984, but listenership in western Poland hovered consistently around 66% over the same period.⁷⁴

Humanitarian Aid: In March 1981, Pope John Paul II called on Catholics to send food to Poland, where shortages and rationing were becoming facts of everyday life. CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Project HOPE (a group specializing in medical aid and equipment), and PACCF began programs to send aid to Poland. The PZPR responded by signing Politburo decision 26/81 which opened the way for Western charitable groups by promising "to deliver such gifts from overseas benefactor intended for the specific agencies," so all aid would be sent through the KCEP, not government channels. The U.S. government also became involved by making AID surpluses available to CRS and others. By December 10, 1981, CRS had "responded to urgent requests initiated by the Polish-American community and the Church in Poland by shipping 16,921,128 lbs. of food valued at a total of \$10,181,512.89."⁷⁵

(1982), AP 53-2-82; and Notatka Informacyjna z rozmowy z Charge d'Affaires a.i. USA - Johnem Davisem w dniu 22.xii.1983 [Information Note from a conversation with U.S. charge d'affaires a.i. John Davis on 22.12.1983], dated December 22, 1983, MSZ, 48/86, W-2, Dep III (1983), AP 53-3-83.

⁷³ For a selection of these articles mostly from the 1980s, see Alina Grabowska, *PRL atakuje Radio "Wolna Europa"* (Wrocław: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Ossolineum, 2002).

⁷⁴ See Report, "Impact of Jamming on the Reception of RFE/RL Programs," dated August 1984, Hoover, RFE/RL, Corporate Records, 380, Engineering - Jamming 1978-1987; and Report, "Audience and Opinion Research/East European Area," c. 1987, Hoover, RFE/RL, Corporate Records, 420, 420.4. According to the second report, VOA had a listenership in the mid-40 percent range during the same period, while only about 25% of Poles regularly listened to the BBC. According to other opinions, RFE listenership was closer to a quarter of the Polish population, see Paczkowski, *Spring*, 484. The discrepancy may be due to the RFE's own survey being focused on western Poland, where the signal would have been stronger.

⁷⁵ Letter from CRS Director of Operations Jean J. Chenard to Russel Stover Candy Company, dated December 10, 1981, CRS, EURMENA, XVII-C, Box 4, Poland Correspondence 1970-1986, "1981 Poland Gen."

In the wake of martial law, Poland's needs only increased due to sanctions and a particularly hard winter. Private American charitable groups responded and by mid-January 1982, CRS and CARE had raised \$3.7 million in cash and \$1.5 million in private donations. CARE planned to send about 28,000 tons of dairy products valued at \$29 million in 1982. In January 1982, CRS shipped about one million pounds of food and clothing every two weeks. CRS also purchased truck tires, truck batteries, and spare parts to service the government-owned trucks which delivered materials around the country.⁷⁶ Smaller organizations, like the protestant Church World Services and Lutheran World Relief, shipped blankets, quilts, clothing, and hygienic items like water purification tablets and soap.⁷⁷ As the *Christian Science Monitor* reported just before New Year's Day, 1982: "[Humanitarian aid officials] agree that as Poland's difficulties have increased, so has the generosity of contributors. Since the crackdown, says an official of the Boston bank which handles contributions to the Polish Relief Fund, 'the response has just been outstanding.'"⁷⁸

Although sanctions had originally cut Poland off of sources of U.S. government humanitarian aid, in May 1982 Washington had decided to utilize humanitarian aid for political purposes. According to a draft written by an interagency group studying humanitarian aid, the decision to provide increased aid was political, not humanitarian. People were not starving, nor were they on the brink of starvation. As the report argued, humanitarian aid offered certain political advantages:

Our assistance is widely visible in Poland, undermining regime propaganda and providing material evidence of Western support for Solidarity and the Church.

⁷⁶ Letter from Robert Charlebois to Janet Turner, dated January 5, 1982, CRS, EURMENA Program Correspondence Box 11, 1982 Poland: PL-IE-002 Spare parts for Trucks: Tires and Accumulators.

⁷⁷ For a laundry list of assistance sent to Poland in January 1982, see "Emergency in Poland Operations Report #2, January 14, 1982," CRS, EURMENA, Program Correspondence Box 11, 1982 Poland: Agreement/Operational Plan & Relate (Bi-Lingual).

⁷⁸ Rushworth Kidder, "US helping hand extends to Poles," *Christian Science Monitor* (Dec. 31, 1981): 14.

Our continued assistance would help refute European criticism of sanctions and the view that Poland is a screen for a U.S. policy of confrontation with the Soviets. Our assistance also undermines Soviet propaganda portraying themselves as the only true friends of Polish workers.⁷⁹

On May 28, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that the president had authorized \$60 million in aid for FY 1982 and 1983,⁸⁰ allowing CRS and CARE to continue their programs at their current level.

From the end of 1982 through 1985, charitable and humanitarian efforts run by American groups hit a new peak, with Congress adding to the effort. According to Polish government records, between 1981 and 1985 CRS was responsible for 266 thousand tons of aid worth \$188 million.⁸¹ PACCF sent additional humanitarian support: 701 tons in 1982, 1,384 tons in 1983, 706 tons in 1984, and 842 tons in 1985.⁸² CARE and Project HOPE also continued their work, with CARE providing 120 thousand tons of aid worth \$60 million and Project HOPE sending one thousand tons of medical equipment worth \$23 million.⁸³ In total between 1981 and 1985, American humanitarian aid sent through non-governmental organizations totaled 402 thousand tons worth \$362 million. This was augmented by another 130 thousand tons of aid from West European sources.⁸⁴

By the end of 1986, the Polish economy was not supplying all of the consumer goods and commodities needed by the Polish people, but by no means were living conditions as bleak as the

⁷⁹ See Confidential Memorandum, "Draft Decision Memo on Options for Humanitarian Assistance to Poland," dated May 12, 1982, NSA, Soviet Flashpoints, Box 27, April-June 1982.

⁸⁰ *Wall Street Journal* (May 28, 1982).

⁸¹ W nawiązaniu do ustaleń telefonicznych z Tow. V-dyrektorem Pawliszewskim podajemy informację nt. dostaw humanitarnych z USA w latach 1981-85 [In reference to the telephone arrangements with Com. Vice-director Pawliszewski sending information about humanitarian shipments from the U.S. from 1981 to 1985], dated October 24, 1985, MSZ, 2/89, W-8, Dep III (1985), AP 39-2-85. As this is a government report from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare it is possible that the figures are being underreported. However, the figures do match closely with CRS and KCEP sources, so the figures should be generally reliable.

⁸² Kreihs, *Dobro Ukryte*, 69.

⁸³ See note 81.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

first years of martial law. That year, the KCEP distributed 19,775 tons of humanitarian aid, compared to 180,000 tons in 1982. This decrease was similar among all humanitarian groups working in Poland.⁸⁵ Also, by 1986 the focus of the aid flowing to Poland changed from fulfilling basic food needs to prioritizing medical shipments and donations of clothing. For example, in FY 1986, the PACCF sent \$16,560,463 in aid to Poland, of which \$12,150,395 (73%) was medical supplies and \$3,080,913 (19%) was clothing and shoes.⁸⁶

Section 4: Interactions between Domestic and External Variables

The dynamics that led to the creation of Solidarność in August 1980 were purely domestic. Solidarność drew from a mature culture of opposition that had been growing since 1956 and had come to prominence in the 1970s. While opposition intellectuals were aware of Western ideas of democracy and protest and had contact with Western intellectuals and institutions, it is difficult to claim that Solidarność was not a uniquely Polish creation. In line with earlier political crises, August 1980 was precipitated by price increases announced a month earlier, so the crisis's root causes were primarily economic. There were no exogenous shocks or changes in Western or Eastern policies that provoked this crisis. More generally Solidarność's power in 1980-1981 was derived almost exclusively from Wałęsa's ability to call for national strikes that brought the country to a standstill. Solidarność's power also emanated from its domestic legitimacy, as a voice for social discontent: in 1981 nearly 1 in 4 Poles, including PZPR members, were members of Solidarność. Solidarność drew heavily from both anti-Soviet

⁸⁵ Informacja o Zagranicznych Dostawach Humanitarnych w Latach 1982 - I Kwartał 1987 [Information about Foreign Aid from 1982 to the first quarter of 1987], dated July 31, 1987, MSZ, 35/90, W-6, Dep III (1987), AP 39-4-87.

⁸⁶ PACCF Relief for Poland Report, November 1, 1985 to June 30, 1986, dated June 27, 1986, and PACCF Relief for Poland, July 1 to October 31, 1986, dated November 21, 1986, both in PAC, Books 9, "PACCF Registration as a Private Voluntary Organization with AID."

and Catholic traditions in its symbolism and public statements. It was a social movement with immense clout because of both its size and its ability to focus widespread dissatisfaction, economic and otherwise. The PZPR's decision to allow Solidarność's founding and its inability to control the movement are both examples of just how powerful the opposition movement was.

The relatively long period of time from Solidarność's founding to martial law also shows how evenly domestic power was split between the government and the opposition. As early as October 1980, the PZPR began drawing up plans to impose martial law. Martial law was a difficult step for the PZPR to take because it was unclear if it would work or if it would backfire and move the country toward civil war. Jaruzelski and his leadership put off a decision as long as possible in part because of a sense of insecurity and a fear of failure. For evidence of Jaruzelski's personal sense of insecurity, one need look no further than his nervous attitude in the few days before declaring martial law and his frantic last minute call to Moscow looking for security guarantees if martial law failed.⁸⁷ With this equality of domestic forces, it was only under intense political, military, and economic pressure that Jaruzelski decided to impose martial law.

Soviet threats about possible military intervention and Poland's overwhelming economic reliance on COMECON also trumped any offers of aid and political support from the West. The correlation of forces between East and West was so heavily skewed to the East that breaking with Moscow was not conceivable and was not discussed by PZPR leaders. While Western aid and political pressure played on Jaruzelski's anxieties of imposing martial law and helped to lengthen Solidarność's period of open resistance, Western pressure was never equal to its Eastern counterparts.

⁸⁷ Mark Kramer, "The Anoshkin Notebook on the Polish Crisis, December 1981," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* no. 11 (Winter 1998): 17-31.

During this period, however, it is important to note that the West was successful in keeping Warsaw Pact troops from invading. Western leaders including, Carter, Reagan, French President Francois Mitterand, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt were privately and publicly united against Soviet military intervention. NATO even drew up contingency plans for how to respond to such an event.⁸⁸

In contrast, NATO and the Western allies were not nearly as consistent on the issue of a Polish solution to the crisis. In January 1981, NATO had put off contingency plans for such a policy.⁸⁹ Political messages from this period—while adamant about negative consequences of a Soviet intervention—were unclear, confusing, or simply did not exist concerning the use of internal force against the opposition. Some internal PZPR reports on the eve of martial law even went as far as to highlight that Western business interests preferred stability over further democratization. American messages had been so unclear that in the first days after martial law the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs believed, “It is possible to state that so long as the Polish crisis does not threaten territorial agreements within Europe and does not shift power as a result of a Soviet intervention, the Polish Problem will not occupy a high place in the list of the United States’ priorities in their anti-Soviet politics.” They did not expect sanctions.⁹⁰ So while a united Western front was successful in keeping Soviet troops out, a disjointed West made Jaruzelski believe that martial law would not be harshly received.

Beginning with Wałęsa’s release from prison in November of 1982, the PZPR took gradual steps towards political reform and liberalization, including suspending martial law in

⁸⁸ Cable from Secstate to USMission NATO, "Guidance on Poland Contingencies," dated December 4, 1980, NSA, Soviet Flashpoints Originals, Box 1.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ "Notatka Informacyjna Obecne Stanowisko USA wobec Polski" [Information Note on the Present Position of the USA regarding Poland], dated December 21, 1981, MSZ, 49/84, W-1, Dep III (1981), AP 22-1-81/B.

December 1982 and then lifting it in July 1983, allowing Pope John Paul II to make pilgrimages in 1983 and 1987, and announcing a series of amnesties for political prisoners first in December of 1982 and then yearly from 1983 to 1986 on the July 22 anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of Poland. The PZPR also attempted economic reform and liberalization during this period, most notably the "second state" of economic reform announced in June 1986. The question, however, is what drove this slow trend of gradual liberalization?

Despite the fact that American sanctions were immediately painful for the Polish government, in the first three years after the declaration of martial law, sanctions had little effect on PZPR actions and decisions. Rather than conceding quickly to American demands, the Polish government strengthened political and economic ties with the Soviet bloc. In Jaruzelski's first foreign trip after declaring martial law, he flew to Moscow to brief Brezhnev on the internal situation and request sharp increases in Soviet aid, which they received.⁹¹ Jaruzelski also turned to his allies in COMECON for improved support and concessions.⁹² Sanctions caused Poland to turn decisively to the East, weakening Western economic leverage in the area.

Western political pressure also backfired. Rather than forcing the Poles into a conciliatory dialogue with the West, PZPR reacted to American political pressure by doing all it could to stymie and restrict political relations, constantly berating American representatives in Warsaw for interfering in internal Polish affairs. The Poles intensified efforts to harass and limit the American embassy's activities in Warsaw and launched a propaganda campaign against American economic sanctions and political interference. As the most public signs of discord, efforts to limit relations led to three crises in which diplomats were declared *persona non grata*:

⁹¹ Pilna Notatka z wizyty w Moskwie Delegacji Partyjno-Państwowej z I Sekretarzem KC PZPR, Prezesem Rady Ministrów tow. Wojciechem Jaruzelskim, w dniach 1-2 marca 1982 r. [Urgent Note from the Visit to Moscow by the Party-Government with First Secretary of the PZPR Central Committee, Head of the Council of Ministers Wojciech Jaruzelski from 1 to 2 March 1982], dated March 5, 1982, AAN, KC PZPR, V/172, 555-561.

⁹² AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/1394, 3-30.

in May of 1982 and again in February and May of 1985. Utilizing one of their few levers for reverse pressure, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs refused to grant *agrément* to Jack Scanlan, the State Department's choice as the next ambassador, leaving both countries without full diplomatic representation. The PZPR's final rejection of Scanlan came in January 1985 after more than two years of American lobbying and despite clear statements that refusal to accept Scanlan would further damage bilateral relations and leave the United States "no choice but to establish relations at the Chargé level for the foreseeable future."⁹³ In the years directly after the declaration of martial law, the PZPR knowingly and willingly did everything in their power to torpedo bilateral ties, steps that contradict a supposition that Warsaw was liberalizing to improve relations with Washington.

Against this background, the PZPR's limited steps towards liberalization come into focus as responses to domestic, rather than Western pressure. Wałęsa was released in November 1982 following a series of meetings between Archbishop Józef Glemp and Jaruzelski.⁹⁴ A very limited contingent of comparatively unthreatening political prisoners was released in December 1982 at the same time that the PZPR took the symbolic step of suspending martial law in order to focus on Poland's economic problems.⁹⁵ The decision to allow a papal pilgrimage in June 1983 was only taken after lengthy negotiations with Vatican representatives confirmed that the Pope would moderate his political messages, promising to promote understanding between the government

⁹³ Letter from John Davis to Stefan Olszowski with attached note, dated December 19, 1984, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archive (hereafter MSZ), 2/89, W-6, Dep III (1985), AP 10-5-85. For more general information on the Scanlan controversy see informal notes and brief records in MSZ, 2/89, W-6, Dep III (1985), AP 10-5-85.

⁹⁴ For correspondence between Glemp and Jaruzelski see records for the June 29, 1982, Politburo meeting in: Archive of Modern Records, Warsaw, (hereafter AAN), Sygn. 1833, Mikr. 3002, 1-16. For information on internal decision making see Mieczysław Rakowski, *Dzienniki Polityczne 1981-1983* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo ISKRY, 2004), 362. For the final decision see Protokół nr. 56 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR w dniu 18.xi.1982 [Protocol no. 56 from the proceedings of the PZPR Central Committee Politburo on 18.11.1982], dated November 18, 1982, AAN, KC PZPR, V/182, 217-252.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

and the people rather than fanning social discontent.⁹⁶ Finally, the decision to lift martial law and declare a limited amnesty for political prisoners on July 22, 1983 was made after legal changes institutionalized many of the government's new powers and because the PZPR needed to further normalize the economy, which had been severely burdened under the restrictions of martial law. The amnesty announced in July 1984 was only temporary, with many prominent activists finding themselves returned to prison within a few months. From December 1981 to early 1985, scant evidence has surfaced to indicate connections between Western (primarily American) pressure politics and significant moves towards political or economic liberalization.

In the big picture, vacillations between repression and liberalization from martial law through 1985 were mirrored more closely by changes in the Soviet leadership than by shifts in Western policies. The PZPR Politburo made final decisions to lift and then suspend martial law only after Brezhnev died. In a striking coincidence, two days after Brezhnev died Wałęsa was released from prison. A general trend toward liberalization persisted under Yuri Andropov's tenure in the Kremlin, reflecting his reformist attitudes. This trend, however, came to an end in the second half of 1984, when Chernenko began pressuring Jaruzelski and his colleagues to slow the pace of change. Liberalization began anew again only once Gorbachev came to power and told East European leaders shortly after Chernenko's death that the USSR would no longer interfere in their internal affairs.⁹⁷ It is important to note that the CPSU did not play a direct role in determining when and how these liberalizations took place; the Soviets did not draft the

⁹⁶ See Report, Wytoczne Polityki Wyznaniowej [Current Vatican Policy], dated February 4, 1983, AAN, KC PZPR, V/191, 11-16; Węzłowe Zadania Polityki Zagranicznej PRL w 1983 r. [Vital PRL Foreign Policy Tasks for 1983], dated c. January 1983, AAN, KC PZPR, V/190, 8-27, esp. 17; Untitled report [re Ikonowicz's visit to the Vatican], dated April 1983, AAN, XIA/1417, Korespondencja z członkami BP i Sekretarzami KC PZPR [Correspondence with Politburo Members and PZPR Central Committee Secretaries], 1983, 1-15; Report on the internal situation, Wydział Informacyjny KC PZPR, dated May 23, 1983, AAN, KC PZPR, V/198, 207-221; as well as published accounts John Kifner, "Free Prisoners, Pope asks Poland," *New York Times* (April 30, 1983): A4; and Rakowski, *Dzienniki 1981-1983*, 460, 494.

⁹⁷ Anatoli Cherniaev, "Gorbachev's Foreign Policy: The Concept," in Kiron Skinner, ed., *Turning Points in Ending the Cold War* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 2008), 132.

decisions or even oversee them. Rather, through regular meetings, Moscow signaled the broad outlines of what was acceptable behavior. They did not directly tell the Poles what to do, but they pressured them not to go too far. It was only after Gorbachev came to power that Jaruzelski had full room to maneuver.

Outside these general trends, the American government did have limited success in leveraging economic sanctions for political gain. In December 1984 Davis and Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Lawrence Eagleburger negotiated with Adam Schaff, a communist intellectual with close ties to the PZPR, for the release of high-profile political prisoners in return for removing sanctions.⁹⁸ Eleven high-profile prisoners were released after only one day of trial as part of an amnesty announced on July 22, 1984. In return, as agreed, the Americans allowed Poland's national airline, LOT, to resume regularly scheduled flights to the United States and announced that scientific-technical exchanges would resume.⁹⁹ Unfortunately, bilateral reconciliation and the period of time the democracy activists remained free were both short lived, further evidence that sanctions provided only very minimal leverage to change the situation on the ground.

Beginning in mid-1985, however, Western political and economic pressure began to show progress. In the face of unsuccessful attempts to improve Poland's economy through internal reforms and increased cooperation with COMECON from 1981 through the beginning of

⁹⁸ Memorandum from Paula Dobriansky to Robert McFarlane, "Poland: Response to Unofficial Emissary Schaff," dated February 9, 1984, PPRL, NSC, European and Soviet Affairs Directorate, Box 91186, Vatican; and Memorandum from Robert McFarlane to the President, "Poland: Response to Unofficial Emissary Schaff," dated February 16, 1984, PPRL, NSC, European and Soviet Affairs Directorate, Box 91186, Vatican. See also Adam Schaff, *Notatki Kłopotnika* (Warsaw: Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza BGW, 1995). These eleven political prisoners included four activists linked to KOR (Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, Henryk Wujec, and Zbigniew Romaszewski) and seven activists linked to Solidarność (Andrzej Gwiazda, Seweryn Jaworski, Marian Jurczyk, Karol Modzielewski, Grzegorz Palce, Andrzej Rozpłochowski, and Jan Rulewski).

⁹⁹ Statement by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Speakes on United States Sanctions Against Poland, August 3, 1984," *Public Papers of the President* (1984), available on the Reagan Library's website: www.reagan.utexas.edu.

1986,¹⁰⁰ PZPR leadership circles accepted that they could not extricate themselves from continuing economic stagnation without Western help. By 1986, the PZPR leadership found their country in an economic Catch 22: they needed to increase foreign exports to earn Western currency to service their immense foreign debt and rebuild their economy; but, to increase foreign exports the Poles needed new Western credits to buy needed technology and raw materials.¹⁰¹ To alleviate the situation, the PZPR rewrote regulations regarding joint enterprises with Western investors and worked to reinvigorate political relations with Japan and Western Europe, most notably Italy, West Germany, France, and the United Kingdom (Poland's largest Western trading partners). This initiative included numerous lower-level visits between Polish and West European officials throughout 1985, culminating with Jaruzelski's summit with French president Francois Mitterand in December 1985, the general's first visit to a Western capital since the declaration of martial law.¹⁰² The MSZ summed up their sense of success in a year-end review, stating "We brought about significant progress in the process of normalizing relations

¹⁰⁰ For an example of this coordination see Informacja o spotkaniu konsultacyjnym Sekretarzy Komitetów Centralnym oraz Stałych Przedstawicieli krajów członkowskich RWPG w sprawie przygotowań do narady gospodarczej na najwyższym szczeblu [Information about the consultative meetings of the Secretaries of Central Committees as well as standing chairmen from member nations of COMECON on the matter of preparations for economic consultations at the highest level], dated March 30, 1983, AAN, KC PZPR, V/197, 249-253.

¹⁰¹ See: Węzłowe Zadania Polityki Zagranicznej PRL w 1986 r. [Vital PRL Foreign Policy Tasks for 1986], dated c. January 1986, AAN, KC PZPR, V/294, 9-31; Informacja o wspólnych przedsięwzięciach z udziałem kapitału obcego w krajach socjalistycznych [Information about cooperative ventures utilizing foreign capital in socialist countries], dated November 14, 1985, AAN, KC PZPR, V/292, 91-96; and Wydział Ekonomiczny Opinia dot.: projektu ustawy o spółkach z udziałem kapitału zagranicznego [Economic Department: Opinion about the legislation project for companies utilizing international capital], dated December 30, 1985, AAN, KC PZPR, V/292, 109-111.

¹⁰² On March 6, 1985, West German foreign minister Hans Dietrich Genscher made an unofficial visit to Warsaw. During Soviet General Secretary Chernenko's funeral, Jaruzelski met briefly with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar, President Alessandro Pertini of Italy, and president Mauno Koivisto of Finland. Visits to Warsaw by West German minister of economics Martin Bangemann, British foreign minister Geoffrey Howe, Italian prime minister Bettino Craxi, and Japanese foreign minister Shintao Abe followed in March, April, May, and June.

with developed capitalist nations. The results gained were quantitatively and qualitatively much greater than those during 1982-1984.”¹⁰³

Contrary to the PZPR's hopes, improved relations with Western Europe became entwined with domestic political concerns in the middle of 1986. In early 1986, the PZPR publicly hinted that it was considering another limited amnesty for political prisoners. Simultaneously, the EEC was pursuing talks with East European countries about starting relations between the EEC and COMECON and restarting bilateral ties with individual countries, both of which had been dormant since 1980. The EEC held exploratory negotiations with Poland on July 14-15, 1986.¹⁰⁴ As the PZPR decided on who to release and who to hold, the EEC (led by Great Britain) sent a demarche explaining that if the upcoming amnesty was not complete (including the release of Bujak, who had managed to evade capture from December 1981 to May 1986), Western European countries would summarily end all of the political and economic deals under discussion. In effect, Poland would lose all of the gains it had made with Western Europe since the beginning of 1985, returning to square one in its push to gain new Western credits. On August 6, a PZPR report, “Concerning the Implications of our Internal Situation for Relations with Western Europe,” stated “the exclusion from the amnesty of the most active members of the opposition” would “have an unfavorable impact upon our potential to conduct an active and effective policy towards Western Europe.” Regarding economic consequences, if the PZPR kept the activists in prison

the meaning of that element will grow as a condition complicating Poland's payment situation and [will create] increasing difficulties in the evolution of a deadline for financial obligations to Western nations. . . . Poland's international

¹⁰³ “Bilans Polityki Zagranicznej PRL w 1985 r.” [Balance Sheet for Foreign Policy in 1985], c. December 31, 1985, AAN, KC PZPR, V/294, 32-53; quoted at 40.

¹⁰⁴ John Maslen, “The European Community's Relations with the State-Trading Countries of Eastern Europe 1984-1986,” in *Yearbook of European Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 338-340.

position in the economic and payment matters may succumb to later weaknesses.¹⁰⁵

In the face of these dire consequences, the PZPR Politburo decided: “Not embracing the [amnesty law] as part of a frontal action against the opposition and the judicial process will provide an opportunity [for the West] to malign the good name of Poland, to continue restrictions, and to slow the development of economic and political relations. On the other hand, embracing the law will permit us to develop actions in international policies, which should bring improvements on a great many levels and will be fruitful with positive results for the country.”¹⁰⁶ Six weeks after the political amnesty was announced, all remaining political prisoners were freed.

This victory for international pressure, however, shows the very complex ways long-term domestic trends and short-term international actions interacted to create a notable political shift. The economic stagnation that forced the Poles to seek Western economic help was driven by long-term weaknesses in Poland's centrally planned economy. Combined with payments to creditors as loans began to come due, the economy was simply overburdened. When it became clear that Poland's socialist brothers could not bail them out, Jaruzelski had nowhere else to turn than the West; Poland's longstanding economic ties to Europe made them the most likely candidates. Moreover, Jaruzelski only sought Western economic support because he and his leadership circles feared a renewed domestic crisis, which he was unsure the PZPR could weather. The EEC demarche also unified American and European economic pressure tactics for the first time since 1980, meaning that the PZPR could not try to play one against the other.

¹⁰⁵ Notatka w sprawie implikacji naszej sytuacji wewnętrznej dla stosunków Polski z państwami Europy Zachodniej [Note concerning the implications of our internal situation for Polish relations with the nations of Western Europe], dated August 6, 1986, AAN, KC PZPR, V/314, 85-92; quoted at 88.

¹⁰⁶ Propozycje w sprawie rozszerzenia zakresu stosowania ustawy z dnia 17 lipca 1986 r. o szczególnym postępowaniu wobec sprawców niektórych przestępstw [Proposition concerning expanding the law from 17 July 1986 about procedures against criminals], dated September 9, 1986, AAN, KC PZPR, V/316.

But, this international pressure to declare a complete and final amnesty for political prisoners in 1986 only accelerated an existing domestic trend. In line with the modest steps towards liberalization that it had taken since 1981, the Jaruzelski government was already moving toward a *modus vivendi* with the opposition. While they feared possible crisis down the road, the PZPR was still in full control of the country; to the Party, democracy activists looked increasingly fractured and irrelevant. By 1986 Solidarność no longer enjoyed the massive public appeal it had during 1980-1981, or even the popular support it initially commanded as a coordinated underground group able to spark nationwide disturbances in May and August 1982. According to PZPR calculations, releasing a few more democratic activists did not shift the domestic balance of power to give the opposition the upper hand. By fall 1986, Moscow was sending significant signals to Warsaw that improved relations with Western Europe and internal political liberalization would not only be tolerated, but were actually desirable. While the PZPR would not have released all political prisoners in September 1986 on their own, Western pressure only accelerated pre-existing internal trends by a few months or perhaps a year.

In the two years following the final release of political prisoners, international economic concerns continued to weigh on the PZPR. As a group of World Bank economists reported to the PZPR in the Summer of 1987, Poland's two main economic problems were indebtedness and its negative balance of payments. To improve its situation, the Bank highly recommended that the PZPR make its economy more pro-export and work to normalize prices.¹⁰⁷ However, Poland was still caught in the same Catch 22. Meeting with East German leader Erich Honecker in late 1987, he lamented that while Western sanctions had been lifted, the change only meant about \$20 million more per year. In Jaruzelski's words. "This doesn't deserve comment. That's nothing."

¹⁰⁷ Informacja o pobycie Delegacji Banku Swiatowego 30.6-2.7.1987," dated September 8, 1987, AAN, KC PZPR, V/363.

Regarding the possibility of new credits, he complained, “in practice the [Western] blockade is continuing.”¹⁰⁸ So even though political messages had changed from the West, the Europeans and Americans were not making new credits available. After the declaration of martial law few countries or private lenders were interested in making new sources of money available. This was particularly true for private lenders because Western governments no longer protected this money with guarantees like the CCC program in the United States. New money did not materialize. The Poles would have to bail themselves out of their economic crisis, further necessitating the price increases announced on April 1, 1988, which led directly to the strikes in Spring and Summer 1988.

In 1988, Solidarność's positive image in the West played a clear role in the PZPR's decision to negotiate with Wałęsa and move toward the Round Table. Although Wałęsa and Solidarność were primarily chosen because of their domestic legitimacy, the PZPR also hoped that negotiations would improve their image in the West and open up more economic opportunities. Since 1986, with Thatcher leading the way, Helmut Kohl replacing Schmidt as Chancellor, and Mitterand taking a harder position, Europe and the United States were consistent in linking the possibility of improved economic relations with political concessions. In explaining the decision to talk with Solidarność, the PZPR leadership stressed the international economic situation to the party aktiv in two of twenty eight points:

Talks and preparatory activities for the “round table” allow us to gain the political initiative and deprive our political adversary and the West of the argument that we don't want to talk, that the dialogue is being simulated and understanding is a façade. . . . ; [and] Wałęsa is being played out in the political game of the West toward Poland Thus, undertaking talks with him is depriving the West an essential argument in its propaganda war with us.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ “Zapis stenograficzny rozmowy Ericha Honeckera z Wojciechem Jaruzelskim 16 września 1987 r. (fragmenty),” *Polska 1986-1989*, 48.

¹⁰⁹ “Teleprinter Message from the Political and Organizational Committee of the PZPR Central Committee to Members and Associate Members of the Politburo and Central Committee Secretaries, on ‘The Question of Talks

Although it is unclear if there was a quid pro quo between the government and the opposition about seeking Western economic support in return for opening negotiations, representatives from both sides increased their meeting schedules with Western governments: Polish Premier Mieczysław Rakowski visited Bonn in late January to speak with Kohl and Genscher; Undersecretary of State J. Kaczurby visited Washington in February; a Polish delegation met with European Community leaders in March; in April French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas visited Warsaw and Wałęsa visited Rome; Solidarność activist Jacek Kuron, Minister of Finance Andrzej Wróbel, Central Committee member Józef Czyrek, and Solidarność advisor Bronisław Geremek all visited Washington while Wałęsa went to Brussels in May; in June Jaruzelski traveled to Brussels and Mitterand visited Poland; in July Polish Foreign Minister Tadeusz Olechowski met with G-7 representatives and President Bush came to Warsaw. The main purpose of each of these meetings was to inform Western leaders about the political changes occurring in Poland and to ask for economic support. From a brief comparison of PZPR and Solidarność requests made in Washington in May, it is clear that both sides of the political divide in Poland were asking for very much the same kind of economic packages from the West.¹¹⁰

In the second half of the 1980s, the West had more leverage over Poland's transformation because Poland's economic situation was weakening and economies throughout Eastern Europe were collapsing. The West had strongest leverage, however, once the PZPR determined that it could not rely on their allies for economic help.

with the Opposition,” dated September 2, 1988, in *Poland 1986-1989: The End of the System*, a briefing book prepared for a conference of the same title in Miedzeszyn, Poland, in November 1999.

¹¹⁰ See numerous cables dealing with PZPR and Solidarność activists trips to Washington and Western Europe in: Gregory F. Domber, ed., *Ku zwycięstwu „Solidarności”: Korespondencja Ambasady USA z Departamentem Stanu, styczeń-wrzesień 1989* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych, 2006).

Second, Jaruzelski was committed to economic reform. He feared what could happen if the economy was not turned around.¹¹¹ However, his government could have also chosen a more repressive path, allowing the economy to crumble and control the situation by ratcheting up repression. As with the decision to impose martial law in 1981, there would have been little the West could have done if Jaruzelski had chosen that path once again. Finally, Western economic pressure did not cause any abrupt reversals in PZPR policies; instead Western influence accentuated or accelerated domestic trends. Jaruzelski had already chosen the path of liberalization and economic reform as early as 1986 based on domestic circumstances.

In terms of the effects of political and economic support to the opposition. It is important to note that *Solidarność's* was not guided politically by the West. To the contrary, Wałęsa and his colleagues were successful at shaping the Western response to the changing situation in Poland. In two obvious examples of this trend, Reagan only lifted sanctions after Whitehead had travelled to Warsaw to meet with him and confirm *Solidarność* wanted sanctions lifted; as Reagan wrote in his diary, "I signed a measure lifting Polish sanctions in answer to pleas by Pope & Lech Wałęsa."¹¹² Second, when Congress decided to send \$1 million directly to *Solidarność* (rather than the regular channels through FTUI) in 1987, Wałęsa explained that the union could not accept funds directly from Congress and requested that it be reappropriated to the social fund. Congress followed his wishes exactly.

In addition, because of the multiple subgrantees of American money, the United States could not exercise political influence over how the money was utilized by the opposition. The money came from America, but once NED funds were dispersed through the grantee organizations to its final sub-grantee destination, the people who handed the money or sent the

¹¹¹ See for example the conclusions in: "Informacja o stanie nastrojów społecznych i działalności przeciwnika w pierwszym okresie II etapu reform" dated March 2, 1988, in *Polska 1986-1989*, 65-82.

¹¹² Douglas Brinkley, ed., *The Reagan Diaries* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), 476.

printing presses into Poland from Western Europe, were themselves Polish émigrés. While this system provided a certain amount of political cover for Polish activists who were consistently accused of being American agents, it also meant that beyond basic guidelines for grants, few if any Americans were directly involved in deciding how the money was used. When, why, and how to spend American money was determined by Poles themselves. While the Polish opposition understood that, in general, this money came from the United States there was no real mechanism for converting American money into direct political influence.

The utility of Western money, however, is a different matter. When Wałęsa spoke to an AFL-CIO convention in November 1989, “He thanked the United States, its people, its labor movement and its government for being ‘our most steadfast allies.’”¹¹³ Beyond the realm of political theater (Wałęsa visited Washington to ask for financial aid and had reason to be flattering), Polish democracy activists openly admit the centrality of international support. As Konstanty Gebert, an underground editor and independent publisher throughout the 1980s, summarized when asked about the role of the West: “Money. We could not have done it on our own.”¹¹⁴ The question then becomes not whether, but how and under what circumstances Western money had tangible effects on the movement toward democracy.

First, American financial and political support for Solidarność did almost certainly influence internal dynamics *within* the opposition. Throughout the 1980s, the opposition movement was by no means monolithic. Some groups that gained substantial followings, like Fighting Solidarity (Solidarność Walcząca) and the Confederation for an Independent Poland (Konfederacja Polski Niepodległy) maintained more radically anti-Communist positions than Solidarność, like violently overthrowing the communist system and declaring complete

¹¹³ Lawrence Knutsen, “Wałęsa to Address a Joint Session of Congress,” *Associated Press* (November 15, 1989).

¹¹⁴ Author's interview with Konstanty Gebert, August 3, 2006.

independence from Soviet domination. Groups popular amongst students like Freedom and Peace (Wolność i Pokój) and Orange Alternative (Pomarańcza Alternatywa) successfully organized students to protest, but articulated no specific political or democratic platform.

By supporting Solidarność and activists closely aligned to their centrist point of view, Western support privileged their perspective within Poland. In terms of political pressure, U.S. support gave leaders like Wałęsa greater visibility and gravitas than other more radical groups. Other leaders did not meet with Bush or Whitehead when they came to town.¹¹⁵ Other groups could not claim such an international presence. Moreover, by sending most of its aid through Solidarność (over 60% of all NED funds for democracy in Poland were allocated directly through Solidarność channels), the United States gave Wałęsa and his colleagues the power of the purse. As Chojecki understood, he had power within opposition circles because he had access to money.¹¹⁶ As the major recipient of foreign money Solidarność could decide which opposition groups other than their own received foreign support, limiting other opposition activists' ability to push their own, separate agendas. American and international financial support allowed Solidarność to be more active than it would have been without outside sources of money, magnifying what they could do. Radios allowed Solidarność activists to communicate quicker than through slower written channels. Smuggled computers made editing and layout work easier. More ink and more printing presses allowed underground publishers to produce more samizdat. More money allowed for more scholarships for independent artists to produce more politically sensitive or subversive theatrical productions. Because Solidarność was the main conduit for

¹¹⁵ Solidarność publicized their leaders' meetings with American celebrities and politicians in their samizdat to prove to the Polish public their position as international leaders. See in particular, "Jane Fonda i Tom Hayden Dla 'TM'" [Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden for TM] *Tygodnik Mazowsze* nr. 201 (March 4, 1987): 1. For meetings with Zbigniew Brzezinski and Ted Kennedy, see: *Tygodnik Mazowsze* nr. 213 (May 4, 1987): 1. For Whitehead's visit, see *Tygodnik Mazowsze* nr. 197 (February 4, 1987): 1, 2, all available at KARTA, Archiwum Opozycji.

¹¹⁶ Author's interview with Chojecki.

American support, they could choose the voices and efforts within Poland with which Solidarność leaders agreed politically and tactically, enhancing their standing against other opposition voices. This was particularly important given the PZPR's attempts to split the opposition against itself.

However, the ability to magnify, augment, or boost a trend does not mean that American money was essential for how political transformation took shape. As with the issue of sanctions, American funding and support might have only accelerated and accentuated domestic trends. Here two counterfactuals help to focus on the ways that foreign money affected the broader situation.

Following the signing of the Round Table Accords, the opposition only had a few months to create a list of candidates and run an election campaign. Solidarność officials expected the entire national campaign would cost \$250,000, of which the committee had raised only \$30,000 from domestic sources by the end of April.¹¹⁷ During a trip to Washington in May 1989, Geremek met with Kirkland at AFL-CIO headquarters and received a suitcase full of \$100,000 in cash for the campaign.¹¹⁸ If the opposition stuck to their original budget, NED money accounted for 40% of their entire budget. Again it is safe to assume that American money enhanced ongoing activities, allowing the opposition campaign to print more flyers and posters, rent more sound trucks, and hold more rallies—perhaps 40% more—but the question remains: did this infusion of cash have significant effect on the outcome?

¹¹⁷ Cable from Amembassy Warsaw to SecState, "Campaign '89 - Solidarity Spokesman as a Parliamentary Candidate," dated April 28, 1989, NSA, End of the Cold War, Poland 1989 Cables.

¹¹⁸ Puddington, "Surviving the Underground." Presumably this money came from NED funds already allocated to the PAC and the AFL-CIO. I did not come across any records in either AFL-CIO or PAC files dealing with this transfer of money or programs to raise it. Moreover, it is unlikely that either of these two organizations could have raised this large of a sum of cash without NED assistance.

In this case it is doubtful that boosting opposition activities was essential to Solidarność's electoral victory. First, Solidarność candidates won an overwhelming victory, particularly compared with the fact that nearly all Communist candidates did not even receive the necessary percentage of votes to secure seats in the first round. Most telling, voters took time to individually cross names off of a so-called "National List" to ensure that they would not remain in government, despite the fact that Wałęsa and other prominent Solidarność members had asked voters to support this list of candidates. While many voters were motivated to go to the polls to vote *for* Solidarność, the elections in June 1989 were essentially a referendum *against* forty years of Communist rule. Given the opportunity to choose their leaders, Polish citizens overwhelmingly voted against the Communist system. As Davis surmised at the time,

The elections in June are, for the regime, an unpredictable danger and, for the opposition, an enormous opportunity. The authorities, having staked a great deal, are hoping for some modest success, but they are more likely to meet total defeat and great embarrassment. The party, despite its touted superior organization, is vastly disliked and nearly incapable of persuading an electorate through traditional campaign techniques, with which it has had no experience. . . . It is difficult to see how the party's core will be able to elect many—or any—candidates to the Senate. . . .¹¹⁹

Solidarność's victory was much more the result of long-term historical, national, and cultural trends than of any recent infusion of American money. Solidarność candidates won in a landslide not because of outside influence; they won because voters rejected Communism and because the democratic opposition had earned their votes over the previous decade.

In a separate crucial stage of Poland's democratic breakthrough, however, American money may well have played a more pivotal role. In between the Spring and Summer 1988 strikes, Jerzy Milewski wrote to the AFL-CIO with an urgent request. On May 3, Solidarność issued a communiqué committing to "discharge financial assistance" for up to six months to

¹¹⁹ Cable from Amembassy Warsaw to SecState, "Election '89 - The Year of Solidarity," dated April 19, 1989, NSA, End of the Cold War, Poland 1989 Cables.

workers who had lost their jobs as a result of strikes and to cover financial losses “as a result of repressions” against workers. By early June the Coordinating Office had already forwarded “all money currently at our disposal,” so Milewski requested that FTUI “speed up the transfer of the first quarterly installment of \$250,000” and “to arrange for the prompt transfer of the second \$250,000 quarterly installment.” In addition to paying workers already affected by government repression, the money was meant to support “emergency funds to cover future events which are expected, but not specifically predictable.”¹²⁰ In total, FTUI forwarded half-a-million dollars to help affected workers.

Given the narrow margin by which Wałęsa was able to convince reluctant workers to leave their barricades following the second wave of strikes in August (see Section 1), the importance of this infusion of American money should not be overlooked. Certainly Wałęsa's political clout, charisma, and ability to seize the political moment went a long way to convincing both young and old workers that the government would follow through with their promises to begin negotiations and to legalize Solidarność; however, strikers' demands were economic as well as political. They had demanded recognition of Solidarność *and* pay increases. Moreover, the centrality of economic matters in the earlier strikes in April and May clearly showed how essential these issues were to workers. As one shipyard worker related, “We found it hard to understand [Wałęsa's] reasoning. . . . He was talking about the state of the economy, but our economic situation was also very difficult.”¹²¹ In addition, one of the most contentious issues between workers and management were demands “for assurances of personal safety and job security”; workers were afraid of reprisals and economic repression.¹²² Solidarność had recently

¹²⁰ Letter from Jerzy Milewski to Lane Kirkland, dated June 6, 1988, AFL-CIO, International Affairs Department, unprocessed records, “FTUI.”

¹²¹ Tagliabue, “Workers Heed Wałęsa and Agree to End Last of Strikes,” *New York Times* (Sept. 4, 1988): A1.

¹²² Tagliabue, “Wałęsa takes to Coal Country,” A1.

received \$500,000 in Congressional funds through FTUI (a sum greater than the usual annual NED allocation to Solidarność for the year) to help in precisely this manner. Because of American (and possibly broader Western funding), Solidarność could economically support striking workers to guarantee that they received at least some pay.

Unlike Solidarity's overwhelming victory in elections in June 1989, in September 1988 Wałęsa only narrowly succeeded in getting striking workers to return to work. In a situation in which the vote to cease strikes was so close and so contentious, in which just a few votes decided the outcome, economic motivations certainly played an important, perhaps pivotal role. Because Congress had already allocated \$1,000,000 for FY 1988 to Solidarność (in addition to the usual NED allotment), money was available, and FTUI could respond quickly to Milewski and Solidarność's requests for support. In turn, foreign monetary support provided Solidarność the means to provide some economic security to workers, easing workers' economic concerns and the sense of uncertainty of ending a strike before their demands had been met. Without international support, Solidarność would not have had this tool to convince workers to end their occupation strikes. Therefore, in this case, American monetary support to Solidarność certainly played a significant role in determining how events played out on the ground in Poland.

Section 5: Conclusion

This case study on Poland's democratic transformation in 1989, leads me to a few basic conclusions about the process. First, withholding economic incentives worked much better than economic pressure. The PZPR chose not to respond to American sanctions until well after Washington embraced the step-by-step framework. Moreover, impressive concessions to Western political demands did not begin to occur until 1986 when the PZPR determined that

they could only improve their situation by courting Western money. The threat of ending possible incentives by the EEC proved particularly influential, and the possibility of improved economic relations with the West shored up Solidarność's political position from 1987 onward. In many ways it was the hope of Western support (money did not actually materialize until after Mazowiecki was in office) that lead Jaruzelski and others to make political concessions to the internal opposition.

The clear exception to this was the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact's implicit and explicit threats of military intervention. Economic incentives did not hold a candle to the threat of military force. Moreover, it was only after Gorbachev came into office and the Soviet commitment to the Brezhnev doctrine began to wane that Jaruzelski felt secure enough to pursue meaningful political concessions to the Polish people and the opposition.

Second, Western pressure was only effective when it was well coordinated. American sanctions were ineffective in part because Western Europe did not join them in full until July 1986. Similarly, uncoordinated messages in 1980 and 1981 about possible responses to a declaration of martial law led Jaruzelski to believe that the consequences of this action would not be too harsh.

Third, regional hegemons played a much more important role than the United States. As the superpower next door, the Soviet Union was always the elephant in the room. However, Poland's important economic connections to COMECON were also of greater significance than trade with America. Finally, when the PZPR decided to engage with the West, it was specifically with Western Europe and EEC, not the United States. Again, before martial law Western European countries had accounted for much more of Poland's foreign trade than the United States, making them the obvious place to look to restart Poland's economy.

Fourth, international influences seem to be most effective (either for or against democratization) when domestic political forces are evenly matched between the authoritarian government and the domestic democratic opposition. It is only these situations in which international pressure can tip the scales in one way or another. Otherwise, domestic trends always trump international influence.