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SOLIDARITY, THE REGIME AND THE PUBLIC

By DAVID S. MASON*

SINCE the imposition of martial law, Poland is a society that is sullen, pessimistic, rebellious, and divided. It is sullen because of the regime's termination of the country's brief experiment in democracy and the first genuinely popular social movement in postwar history. The sullenness is intensified by a near-universal pessimism that sees little hope for a return to the heady days of Solidarity's existence. Although the independent union has now been banned, it continues to exist in a truncated underground form, and support for it is periodically manifested through popular demonstrations.

Support for Solidarity is not, however, either universal or unconditional. The overwhelming support that Solidarity enjoyed in its first six months began to diminish somewhat by the end of 1981. Some people viewed Solidarity, or its leaders, as being at least partially responsible for the political and economic crisis of 1981. Most of the population desired a return to economic and political stability. The regime, however, overestimated this dissatisfaction with Solidarity and miscalculated in its efforts to discredit that organization. Branding Solidarity and its leaders as counter-revolutionary, extremist and anti-socialist was counter to the experience and opinions of most of the members of that organization, and of the population. Most people opposed martial law and wanted Solidarity to be reactivated. While there are an abundance of public opinion surveys on these issues, the regime has apparently not relied much on these indicators, and instead has hoped to build support for the regime through improving food supplies, maintaining order, discrediting Solidarity and the past party leaders, and repressing all opposition. Given Poland's history of rebellion, and its 16-month experience with Solidarity, however, it seems unlikely that this method can long succeed. Solidarity filled a vital need in Polish society in expressing to the authorities the interests and requirements of the population. This need continues, even under the present regime.

This paper examines the extent to which Solidarity acted as a link between the population and the regime and as a representative of the interests of the workers. It looks first at the reasons for the emergence of Solidarity, and Solidarity's subsequent embodiment of the society's desire for a political and economic order more in line with the ideals of socialism, and more genuinely representative of the workers' interests. It concludes by assessing the charges against Solidarity made by the martial law authorities, the extent of current support for the union and the regime, and the possibilities for a resolution of the stalemate.

All of these issues are examined in this article with the use of survey research material that has issued from Poland between 1979 and 1982. This includes public opinion data collected by the Institute of Basic Problems of Marxism-Leninism (Instytut Podstawowych Problemów Marksizmu-Leninizmu—hereafter IPPML), which is attached to the Central

Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP); the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences; the Public Opinion Research Centre (Ośrodek Badania Opinii Publicznej—hereafter OBOP) of Polish Radio and Television; the Centre for Social Research (Ośrodek Badań Społecznych—hereafter OBS) of Solidarity's Mazowsze region organization; and the Institute of Sociology of the University of Warsaw. The most interesting of these studies are the two national representative samples conducted by the Academy of Sciences at the end of 1980 and the end of 1981, entitled *Polacy '80* (Poles '80) and *Polacy '81*. The first of these was published in a small edition in early 1981.¹ The second was completed just before the introduction of martial law and has circulated only in manuscript form, though reports on the results were delivered in several seminars which the author attended at the Academy in the spring of 1982.

The data in one or other of these surveys may be somewhat suspect, as are all public opinion surveys in communist countries.² But there are two factors that may increase one's confidence in the results. First, the results for similar questions asked by different organizations (e.g. the regime's OBOP and Solidarity's OBS) are often remarkably similar, suggesting a minimal amount of institutional bias in the methodology and the conclusions. Second, the polls that were conducted between the autumn of 1980 and December 1981 occurred in an unusually free and open atmosphere in Poland, no doubt contributing to the reliability of the results.

The Emergence of Solidarity

The turmoil of the summer of 1980 that led to the formation of Solidarity was to a large extent a result of frustrated expectations, blocked channels of communication, and an increasing sense of the lack of congruence between the ideals and reality of socialism.³ For five years after the December 1970 strikes and riots that brought down the Gomułka leadership, there was a feeling that conditions in Poland were improving, politically and economically. Wages, meat consumption, and the standard of living increased at record rates in the period 1970–75. Attitudes toward the political system also became more favourable. In a survey conducted by the Institute of Basic Problems of Marxism-Leninism (IPPML) in 1975, 71·6% of the respondents felt that the influence of people on the policies of the country had increased since 1970.⁴

During the latter half of the 1970s, however, the growth of the economy began to slow down and in 1979 actual decline began. The rapid improvements in the standard of living came to a halt, and popular expectation of Poland becoming a 'second Japan' were dashed. Expectations of a further opening up of the political system were also frustrated as the Gierek regime embarked on a recentralization of political and economic control.

The sense of frustration was intensified by the increasing blockage of the channels of communication between the population and the elite. Virtually all of the traditional 'transmission belts' between the two were discredited and distrusted by 1980. For the party, which was meant to be the main representative of the working class, support was weak even in the middle 1970s. In the 1975 IPPML study, for example, when asked if the activities of the party factory committees had improved since 1970, 81·3% of the *members* of the factory committees thought so, but only 35·6% of the rest of the sample shared their opinion.⁵ What is remarkable here is not so much the low level of approval for the basic

organs of the party, but the large difference in perspective between party activists and their 'constituents'. By 1975 there was already a serious lack of communication between the party and the population. By the end of 1980, after the formation of Solidarity, the party virtually collapsed. As thousands of members handed in their party cards, or just drifted away from the organization, total party membership declined for the first time since 1971 and by the largest amount ever. In May 1981, when the official Centre for Public Opinion Research of Polish Radio and Television (OBOP) conducted a poll on trust in 15 institutions in Poland, the Polish United Workers' Party appeared in last place, with a positive rating by only 32% of the sample.⁶ This poll showed also that support for the party was particularly weak among young people. Further evidence of lack of support for the party was revealed in the November 1980 survey *Polacy '80* in which only 32% of the sample favoured the idea of strengthening the role of the party in the administration of power.⁷

Other institutions and channels of communication were similarly ineffectual. The local peoples' councils, billed as the basic and most representative agency of the government, had been reduced 'to agents for carrying out decisions of the higher tiers in the hierarchical administrative structure of the country',⁸ as a result of increasing centralist tendencies in the 1970s. One Polish sociologist asserted, in fact, that the peoples' councils 'never played any significant role in local politics' in Polish society.⁹

The old trade unions had also become increasingly less important and less popular since 1956. Even the official press admitted that the old unions were ignored by decision makers and that the authorities were 'changing the ideas of partnership into state paternalism'.¹⁰ In the OBOP May 1981 poll, only 21% expressed unqualified confidence in the branch unions, while another 35% qualified their approval.¹¹

The institution of workers' self-management had also become emasculated as a result of 'the strategy of imposed industrialization' and the consequent centralization of planning and management of the economy.¹² Blue-collar workers in particular were isolated from factory-level decision making as the 'engineering-technical cadres' increasingly came to dominate workers' self-government bodies, as well as party and other organs at the factory level. According to a 1979 survey of 164 workplaces, this skilled white-collar group was twice as likely to take an active part in these organizations as were workers.¹³

As Polish sociologist Witold Morawski wrote, 'until 1980, all social and political organizations operating in individual enterprises—trade unions, party organizations, youth organizations and others—were only "transmission belts" from the authorities to society',¹⁴ but even this downward form of communication was hampered by the lack of participation and trust in these institutions. Some of these problems of blocked communication channels could have been alleviated perhaps by the use of frequent and more penetrating public opinion surveys. Until the late 1970s there was a serious problem of conveying such data from the research centres to the authorities.¹⁵ An attempt was made to remedy this situation by arranging for the official OBOP and the newly created public opinion research centre attached to the Party's Central Committee (IPPML) to ask more interesting questions and to submit results and analyses of the data directly to the Central Committee and other executive bodies. But as a scholar who worked on those surveys complained, the results of the research conveyed to the party leadership were often ignored, even though they were 'a powerful signal of the growing difficulties'.¹⁶

The strikes of the summer of 1980 and the formation of Solidarity were an attempt, born

of frustration, to create an institution genuinely representative of the interests of the workers. As Morawski puts it:

The year 1980 was a turning point, in that for the first time in our postwar history there appeared the possibility for the institutionalization of a system for the articulation of interests and social values. The creation of independent trade unions and the right to strike are institutionalized guarantees that society has certain instruments of control over the centre of power.¹⁷

Solidarity's Representativeness

There is a strong democratic element in Poland's political culture. In polls on the characteristics of a good social system, Poles consistently list, in rough order: equality of opportunity, assurance of a proper standard of living for all, freedom of speech, and influence of citizens on the way society is governed. Freedom of speech is even more highly valued by workers than by intellectuals.¹⁸ In the last few years, there has been a rapidly growing sense that the difference in 'participation in governing' is a major source of conflict and tension in society. Solidarity made a major contribution in filling this need for expression, influence and participation.

Solidarity remained a highly popular institution during its entire existence, among both the population and its own members. In a poll on trust in various institutions (similar to the OBOP poll mentioned above) among 900 members of Solidarity in the Mazowsze region, Solidarity enjoyed the most trust (95%) of 15 institutions, ranking above the Catholic Church, the Army and Sejm. In another poll conducted in October 1981 by Solidarity's Mazowsze region Centre for Social Research (OBS) on the union's leadership, support was not quite so high. But when asked if in the preceding weeks Solidarity's national leadership had made any major mistakes, only 17% answered yes, with 51% responding no and 30% undecided. It is clear that support for the leadership of the union was less enthusiastic than for the union as a whole, but the results do not support the regime's claim that the leadership was too extreme. Among those who thought the leadership had made mistakes, for example, less than 10% thought it had been too hard-line or uncompromising. Another 10% said strikes had been too frequent. Asked whether confidence in Solidarity's leadership had grown in recent weeks, 30% thought so, 33% thought there had been no change and 26% believed confidence had declined.¹⁹ Again, while support for the leadership was not unqualified, it certainly remained strong.

The issue of radicalism was directly addressed in the OBS poll by asking members how they would assess the position of Solidarity during the latest negotiations with the government: 11% thought the union had been too hard-line and radical, while 52% believed the union's position was just right, and 16% thought the union had been too soft and ready to compromise. When asked how the union should behave in future negotiations, 36% thought it should be *more* hard-line, and only 17% favoured greater willingness to compromise.

In another poll of some 700 Solidarity members in the east-central region, the respondents were asked in which of ten policy areas Solidarity should be involved, with either a decisive voice or an advisory one. This poll clearly shows the division in the union on the range of activities appropriate for Solidarity. There were only three areas for which a majority thought Solidarity should have a decisive role: improvement of living conditions

of working people (84.3%); improvement of working conditions (65.3%); and assessment of the activities of factory and enterprise leadership (65.3%). But 30% or more favoured a decisive voice for Solidarity in each of the ten policy areas, including nominating candidates to leadership positions in the state administration (31.5%); division of the national income (40.7%); and reforms of the functioning of government (40.9%).²⁰ This shows the divisions within Solidarity, with a strong minority supporting involvement in virtually all spheres of the political and economic system. It also reveals the frustration with other institutions in Polish society; there being no other means to express the legitimate grievances and opinions of the workers, Solidarity would have to do so.

That Solidarity remained firmly entrenched in Polish society right up to martial law is evident from the *Polacy '81* survey, completed just two weeks before the crackdown. Of the 14 (non-farm) occupational categories listed in this study, a majority in all but one (teachers—47.5%) belonged to Solidarity. The union was most strongly represented in that most treasured sector of the socialist workforce—skilled workers. This was especially true in heavy industry, where 86.7% of the skilled workers belonged to the union; 74.1% of such workers in light industry were members. Among skilled workers, even three quarters of the party members were also in Solidarity.²¹

Through numerous surveys conducted during Solidarity's history, the population expressed support for its activities, though this support was strongest in the earlier months. For example, fully 91.7% of a national sample supported the agreements signed by the workers and the government after the summer 1980 strikes.²² At the end of 1980 over 89% supported the national activities of Solidarity; even 45% of party members *decisively* supported the union's activities.²³ In the last national survey before martial law, Solidarity still had the support of a large majority of the population (and of party members) though this support had dropped rather sharply since December 1980 (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF SOLIDARITY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL (%)

	<i>December 1980</i>	<i>December 1981</i>
Decisively support	57.9	33.2
Rather support	31.2	37.7
Rather not support	3.3	9.2
Decisively not support	1.2	4.7
Difficult to say	5.6	15.2

Source: Polacy '80 and Polacy '81.

These results tend to belie both the contentions of the authorities that Solidarity was no longer supported by most people and the assertions of some Solidarity leaders that *everyone* supported the union. Clearly, support for the union remained very high, but the almost unanimous support enjoyed in its early days had begun to slip and a sizeable minority of the population (almost 30%) was at least ambivalent about Solidarity's role.

On specific policy issues, Solidarity also found broad support among the population. One of the major issues between the government and the union at the end of 1981 was access for Solidarity to television and other forms of mass communication. The *Polacy '81*

results show that fully 88% of the population supported this demand for Solidarity, including almost 80% of all party members.²⁴

The one area where Solidarity was losing support was on the use of strikes. In September 1980 89% had thought that the strikes of the previous summer were justified. But by the end of 1981 less than half of the sample (46.3%) supported strikes 'as a form of protest'. While members of Solidarity were more inclined to support strikes than non-members, still only 17.5% of them decisively supported strikes as a form of protest.²⁵

The whole issue of the right to strike had become a critical and divisive one by the end of 1981: 46.2% of the population favoured an outright ban on strikes, while 49% opposed such a ban. Solidarity members were much more strongly opposed to such an idea (over 60%) than was the general population.²⁶ For Solidarity, the strike had become one of the few legal and institutional accomplishments of the movement, and it was the union's only real bargaining tool. But the strikes and work stoppages were compounding an already very difficult economic situation, and many people were becoming fed up with such disruptions.

This declining support for Solidarity's methods did not, however, translate into a belief that Solidarity was bringing the country to ruin, as the regime continues to claim. Of those who thought there was a threat to the independence of Poland at the end of 1981, only 4% thought Solidarity was the source of this threat, compared with 36% who identified the USSR, 20.2% 'the socialist states', and 10.8% the government, or 'other internal forces'.²⁷

The support for Solidarity may usefully be compared with support for other institutions in Poland, particularly the party and the government. Table 2 presents part of the results from the surveys on confidence in institutions conducted by the official OBOP in May 1981 and by Solidarity's OBS, among its own members, in October 1981.

TABLE 2
TRUST IN POLISH INSTITUTIONS (% EXPRESSING TRUST)

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Population (May)</i>	<i>Solidarity Members (October)</i>
Catholic Church	94	93
Solidarity	91	95
Army	89	68
Government	69	21
Branch Unions	56	22
Militia	42	22
PUWP	32	7

Source: OBOP, 'Społeczne zaufanie do instytucji politycznych, społecznych i administracyjnych', Warsaw, May 1981; and OBS, 'Członkowie związku o błędach krajowych władz związku', Warsaw, November 1981.

As is obvious, Solidarity was far more popular than any official institution, particularly among members of Solidarity. The party, as noted earlier, fared badly in these surveys, finishing last among the fifteen institutions mentioned in the two polls. During 1981 support for the party declined even further from its already low levels in 1980, as is evident by comparing results from the *Polacy '80* and *Polacy '81* surveys. In 1980 32.8% of the sample favoured 'strengthening the role of the party in the administration of power'; by the

end of 1981 only 20·4% expressed support for that proposition. The opposite question, on *limiting* the role of the party, asked in 1981, was supported by over 60% of those polled, including 46% of all party members!

Two surveys conducted at the end of 1981 directly addressed the question of who was responsible for the country's problems; these shed light on the popular mood in Poland on the eve of martial law. The *Polacy '81* survey asked 'who was responsible for the deepening economic and political crisis in our country', phrased similarly to a question from *Polacy '80* on those responsible for delaying the implementation of the Gdańsk agreements. The results appear in Table 3.

TABLE 3
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CRISIS IN POLAND, 1980 AND 1981 (%)

	<i>Polacy '80</i>	<i>Polacy '81</i>
The Government	61·5	31·7
Solidarity	1·1	3·1
Both Sides	27·3	40·0
Someone Else	5·0	5·8
Difficult to say	5·1	11·4

It is apparent that few people viewed Solidarity as the main culprit. But during 1981 there was also a substantial decline in the number who assigned primary blame to the government. Solidarity was increasingly assigned *part* of the blame.

These findings are confirmed in a poll on 'social tensions' and 'relations between the authorities and Solidarity' conducted by OBOP in September and again on November 23-24, three weeks before the introduction of martial law (See Table 4).²⁸

TABLE 4
RESPONSIBILITY FOR POLAND'S PROBLEMS IN PUBLIC OPINION (%)

	September '81	November '81
1. <i>Among those believing a confrontation is inevitable, placing the blame on:</i>		
primarily the authorities	51	34
primarily Solidarity	12	22
both sides equally	32	41
2. <i>Among those thinking authority-Solidarity relationships are not good, placing the blame on:</i>		
the authorities	35	24
Solidarity	5	7
both sides	53	64
3. <i>Concessions are necessary from:</i>		
primarily the government	18	11
primarily Solidarity	7	7
both sides equally	69	76
4. <i>Those expressing trust in:</i>		
The Government	30	51
Leadership of Solidarity	74	58

Source: OBOP, 'Napięcia społeczne i stosunki władza-Solidarność w opinii publicznej', Warsaw, November 1981.

Even in this officially sponsored (though not published) poll, the authorities were much more likely to be blamed for Poland's crisis than was Solidarity. At the same time, the public increasingly felt that Solidarity was also part of the problem, and that concessions and compromise were necessary on both sides. The data for question four in this table are particularly striking, marking a startling decline in support for the Solidarity leadership in the last months of 1981. Trust in Solidarity's leadership was still somewhat higher than that in the government, but these figures (reliable or not) certainly seem likely to have been a factor in the regime's decision to move against Solidarity in December.

The tempered support for Solidarity at the end of 1981 reflected an increasingly moderate and conciliatory stance of the members of Solidarity and of the population. The *Polacy '81* survey showed that the naming of a government of national unity was favoured by three quarters of the population, including 88.3% of Solidarity members. The government subsequently claimed that it was Solidarity that opposed the idea of reconciliation. The same survey found just as many people supporting as opposing the idea of a temporary suspension of free Saturdays in mining and other important sectors of the economy. The issue of free Saturdays was a sensitive one, obviously, since it was one of Solidarity's main achievements from the Gdańsk accords. Yet over 46% of the national sample favoured this idea. In Solidarity's own poll among workers in these affected areas of the economy, 71% to 83% of the workers said they would be willing to work on free Saturdays.²⁹

There was also an increasingly conciliatory stance among the population on the issue of strikes. As noted above, by the end of 1981 about half of the population favoured a suspension of the right to strike. Even Solidarity members were taking a less combative position on this issue. When OBS asked Solidarity members what the reaction of the union should be if the right to strike were suspended, 35% opposed any protest action and only 28% supported the use of a general strike.³⁰ By October 1981 even Lech Wałęsa was increasingly disinclined to use the strike weapon, arguing that in the future strikes should be 'active' ones (with work continuing) that would not further disrupt the economy.³¹ This conciliatory and compromising orientation was matched by an increasingly optimistic assessment of the possibility of a peaceful resolution of Poland's problems. This is evident from the same questions asked by OBOP in September, October and November 1981 (see Table 5).

TABLE 5

OPINION ON THE LIKELY RESOLUTION OF UNREST (%)

	<i>September 1981</i>	<i>October 1981</i>	<i>November 1981</i>
By dialogue and agreement	53	65	69
By a test of strength and the use of force	40	22	19

Source: OBOP, 'Napięcia społeczne i stosunki władza-Solidarność w opinii publicznej', Warsaw, November 1981.

The last of these surveys was conducted on November 24, less than three weeks after the meeting of the 'Big Three', Wałęsa, Głomp and Jaruzelski, and the results undoubtedly reflected optimism that such talks would be both fruitful and continuing. Apparently, the regime felt otherwise.

Solidarity and the Regime under Martial Law

The invocation of martial law may be seen as an attempt to fill the power vacuum in Poland with the only institution that was tolerable to both society and the ruling group. The party was in no position to supersede Solidarity, having lost most of its credibility and a good deal of its membership in the preceding two years. The government was viewed as much more culpable than Solidarity for the country's problems. That left the Church, Solidarity, and the Army. The Church could not and would not play a more direct political role. The ruling group would not allow Solidarity to emerge as a major political force. So the Army filled the breach. The Army, as noted above, still continued to enjoy a high degree of trust from the population. The Army's 'territorial operational groups', set up earlier in the year (ostensibly) to help the economy, were viewed as beneficial to society by 91% of respondents in one survey.³² Jaruzelski himself, who took the position of chairman of the Military Council of National Salvation (WRON), was also a fairly popular figure, and was the top vote getter in the Central Committee elections of the previous July. Jaruzelski and the Army tried at first to play on the theme that the Army was above politics, or at least above the party, and dramatised this by removing the red party flag from the 'House of the Party' in Warsaw and replacing it with the red and white Polish flag.

A month into martial law, OBOP conducted its first survey under the new circumstances, among the residents of Warsaw. The results, reported three weeks later in the Warsaw press, showed that 51% of the respondents considered the decision to introduce martial law 'justified' and only 19% thought it was unjustified.³³ Few people in Warsaw believed the results of this poll and most professionals involved in survey research (in conversations with this writer) doubted that *any* polls in the rigid atmosphere of January 1982 could be considered reliable. But the official press indirectly referred to these results in contending that 'the absolute majority' of the Polish nation 'fully supported the decision of the Military Council of National Salvation'.³⁴

This conclusion seems unjustified, given the results of the early December surveys discussed above. The population continued to support Solidarity and its policies, though there was a demand for greater flexibility on the part of the union's leaders as well as the government. Support for strikes had declined sharply over the course of the year, but most people did not attribute the economic problems primarily to Solidarity. Thus, it is not surprising that many (if not most) Poles considered martial law to have been, at least, an over-reaction.

In the absence of any reliable public opinion data on these issues (only one poll, mentioned above, was published in the first seven months of martial law) it is difficult to assess the support for Solidarity. But there are fragmentary data. An informal poll conducted by Solidarity members in three factories in Warsaw between January 20 and March 3, reported in an underground publication, showed almost unanimous support for the continued existence of Solidarity under its old statutes, and for the leadership of the organization.³⁵ An official survey of attitudes towards trade unions, including Solidarity, conducted by OBOP and the Academy of Sciences at the end of March 1982, produced results surprising enough to the regime to preclude their publication. Apparently the poll showed that over 70% of the population favoured immediate reinstatement of Solidarity.³⁶

While Solidarity continues to enjoy popular support, the party has declined further. Defections from the party had accelerated in the last half of 1981, and continued after December 13 in protest against martial law. Between July 1981 and February 1982 almost 500,000 members left the party,³⁷ the largest drop in the organization's history. Almost 50,000 more were crossed off the party lists in March alone.³⁸ After December 13 there were also widespread resignations among professional party workers—according to Jaruzelski, the largest cadre changes in the party's history.³⁹ This internal disintegration of the party further weakened the effectiveness of an organization already discredited in the eyes of the public.

Jaruzelski was clearly banking on the status and popularity of the Army to maintain some semblance of support for the martial law regime. Given the high levels of trust in the Army demonstrated through public opinion polls, it was likely that there would at least be a certain honeymoon period for the Army in the first months of 1982. But the longer the Army was at least formally in control, the more it became identified with the less popular party and militia, and with the continued suppression of Solidarity.

This raises again the issue of mass-elite linkages and the need for *some* kind of mechanism that would promote dialogue between the authorities and the population. This is particularly necessary now, as the economic crisis continues to deepen while the regime simultaneously attempts to implement an economic reform programme that will result in even more dislocations, at least in the short run. Even the official position is that it will take three years to emerge from the crisis, and eight years for the government to make progress on repaying Western debts. The reform is decentralizing and relies on increased levels of initiative and autonomy at both the factory and the individual level. If the population retains its passive and negative stance toward the authorities, the reform cannot work. Adding to these problems is a projected freeze on wages and social benefits and, because of the abandonment of the principle of planned employment, the expectation that in 1982 alone some 8000 university graduates and 20,000 secondary school graduates would not find jobs.⁴⁰ These factors are bound to increase social tensions. Given the time frame for recovery it is unlikely the Polish population will come along peacefully unless it can be voluntarily engaged in the process of recovery and reform.

The regime was apparently sensitive to this issue in the first months of martial law, and moved to set up a whole series of 'consultative' organs attached to the Sejm, the Council of Ministers and the voivodship governments. The Consultative Economic Council of the Council of Ministers, for example, was envisaged as an 'important instrument of dialogue between the authorities and society'.⁴¹ But all of these were appointed rather than elected and most of them consisted of 'experts' rather than ordinary people. It was unlikely that they could fill the vacuum between the government and the population.

The major issue remained the future role of the trade unions, and particularly of Solidarity. In the first half of 1982 some surprisingly conciliatory statements on Solidarity issued from official sources. In a May 3 speech to the Sejm, for example, Vice-Premier Rakowski recognized Solidarity's contribution to 'the protest against the deviation from socialism, aspirations for complete justice, active participation in decision-making on public matters, and respect for citizens' rights and dignity'. 'The positive aspirations', he said, 'constitute a sacred part of the achievement of People's Poland' and will be carried on.⁴² Jan Szczepański, Poland's most eminent sociologist, who became chairman of one of

the government's new advisory councils, spoke against the tendency to identify Solidarity with 'opposition groups' outside the union. 'Solidarity brought together millions of people who were concerned that the slogans of social justice, respect for dignity, and co-participation in decision-making on public affairs, the same slogans which were marked on the flags of socialism, were really accomplished'.⁴³ The Council of Ministers' draft statutes for trade unions published in February 1982 also left some room for compromise. They called for 'self-governing trade unions independent from the administration and the state employers'. The proposal allowed for the labour movement to have its own press and to benefit from the instruments of mass communication. Unions would have had the right to strike, though only as a last resort, and not for political reasons. And the unions would use these tools 'to call into question opinions by the state bodies'.⁴⁴ The underground Solidarity leadership, however, and apparently Wałęsa as well, insisted on three conditions for the new unions: democratic elections of their leaders; a regional structure; and statutes as passed by Solidarity's First Congress.⁴⁵

As the stalemate continued under martial law, the regime's position became less and less flexible. The government required 'good behaviour' from the population as a condition for relaxation of martial law regulations. Solidarity's underground leaders, however, felt they could expect no concessions from the authorities without continued pressure and demonstrations of the union's continuing existence and support. With each of the major Solidarity demonstrations in May and August of 1982, the regime's response became tougher, and conciliatory voices became less evident. With the formal banning of Solidarity in October 1982, the chance for compromise seemed to disappear. The new trade unions set up by the government attracted relatively few members as Solidarity's underground leadership called for a boycott of the organizations.

Conclusion

Martial law did bring about a temporary stabilization of the economic situation, especially in terms of food supplies. But it did not solve, and indeed exacerbated, the underlying political problems in Poland. The fundamental problem remains the lack of communication between the leadership and the society. As a Polish sociologist pointed out, 'if we do not want cyclical outbreaks of social rebellion on a mass scale, there must be conditions for the systems of mobilization from above and articulation from below to have relatively equal strength'.⁴⁶ Solidarity provided that kind of balance, but the regime never fully accepted the idea of a balance of power in the political system. The problem was compounded as both sides lacked experience in handling political conflict in a peaceful way. As Jacek Maziarski put it in 1981:

our society is not yet used to living with publicized open conflicts, because until now they were kept secret and pushed under the surface. Over the years, we have gotten used to a fictitious vision of public life devoid of differing positions and conflicts.⁴⁷

During the Solidarity era both sides tended to be rigid and uncompromising, to question the motives of the other, and to focus attention on the 'extremists' on the other side rather than trying to nurture the moderates. As a result, as the crisis deepened and the lines

hardened, the hard-liners became more vocal in both Solidarity and the government. With the imposition of martial law, the latter prevailed.

Contrary to these trends, however, the Polish public was increasingly inclined toward negotiation and compromise during 1981. While most people continued to support Solidarity, there was increasing dissatisfaction with the union's leadership. It is likely, therefore, that eventually the leaders would have come to reflect the more moderate and conciliatory views of the members, and of society. In any case, the views of Solidarity leaders were much closer to those of the population as a whole than were the government's views. On virtually every issue, there was a wide gap between the opinions of high level leadership and the population. The regime had become isolated from society, even to the extent of retarding the grass-roots reform movement within its own party.

Given the breadth and depth of support for Solidarity, the belief by most people that Solidarity embodied the ideas of socialism better than any other institution in Poland, and Poland's history of rebellion, it seems inevitable that there will be new convulsions in that country if Solidarity is not allowed to re-emerge. It is probably still true, as Solidarity adviser Andrzej Tymowski said in November 1981, that Solidarity and the authorities need each other:

the Party and the government are necessary for Solidarity to protect it in the system of our international relations; on the other hand, Solidarity is necessary for the other side . . . as a buffer protecting it from society.⁴⁸

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¹ *Polacy '80: Wyniki badań ankietowych* (Warsaw: Polska Akademia Nauk, Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii, 1981).

² See, for example, Zvi Y. Gitelman, 'Public Opinion in Communist Political Systems', in Walter Connor and Zvi Gitelman, eds., *Public Opinion in European Socialist Systems* (New York, 1977), pp. 1-40.

³ For an excellent treatment of these issues, see Alex Pravda, 'Poland 1980: From "Premature Consumerism" to Labour Solidarity', *Soviet Studies*, vol. XXXIV, no. 2 (April 1982), pp. 167-199.

⁴ 'Społeczne i gospodarcze problemy rozwoju kraju w opinii społeczeństwa', in Zbigniew Sufin, ed., *Społeczność Polskie w drugiej połowie lat siedemdziesiątych* (Warsaw, 1981), p. 20.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁶ Ośrodek Badania Opinii Publicznej i Studiów Programowych, Komitet do Spraw Radia i Telewizji 'Polskie Radio i Telewizja' (hereafter OBOP), 'Społeczne zaufanie do instytucji politycznych, społecznych i administracyjnych' (Warsaw, May 1981).

⁷ *Polacy '80*, op. cit., p. 118.

⁸ Jacek Tarkowski, 'Patrons and Clients in a Planned Economy', in S. N. Eisenstadt and R. Lemarchand, eds., *Political Clientelism, Patronage and Development* (London, 1981).

⁹ Jacek Tarkowski, 'Władze terenowe po reformie' (part 3 of an unpublished manuscript), p. 13.

¹⁰ Ryszard Kondrat in *Rzeczpospolita*, April 8, 1982.

¹¹ OBOP, 'Społeczne Zaufanie', op. cit.

¹² Witold Morawski, 'Society and the Strategy of Imposed Industrialization: the Polish Case', *The Polish Sociological Bulletin*, no. 4, 1980.

¹³ Zbigniew Sufin, 'Współzarządzanie pracownicze—postawy i formy aktywności', in Z. Sufin, ed., *Diagnozy społeczne w okresie narastającego kryzysu* (Warsaw, 1981), pp. 98-100; and Bartłomiej Gasiorowski and Zbigniew Sufin 'Gospodarowanie zasobami pracy i kadrami kierowniczymi', in Sufin, *Diagnozy Społeczne*, p. 149.

- ¹⁴ Witold Morawski, 'O źródłach i naturze kryzysu 1980–1981 w Polsce', *Literatura*, September 24, 1981, p. 5.
- ¹⁵ Gitelman, 'Public Opinion', op. cit., pp. 29–30.
- ¹⁶ Sufin, *Diagnozy Społeczne*, op. cit., p. 2.
- ¹⁷ Morawski, 'O źródłach' op. cit., p. 5.
- ¹⁸ Stefan Nowak, 'Values and Attitudes of the Polish People', *Scientific American*, Vol. 245, no. 1 (July 1981), pp. 46, 52.
- ¹⁹ Ośrodek Badań Społecznych NSZZ Solidarność, Region Mazowsze (hereafter OBS), 'Członkowie związku o błędach krajowych władz związku' (Warsaw, November 1981).
- ²⁰ Nina Krasko, 'Oceny, szanse, niebezpieczeństwa', in *Ruch Związkowy*, no. 1 (Warsaw: Ośrodek Prac Społeczno-Zawodowych KKP NSZZ Solidarność, 1981), p. 187.
- ²¹ *Polacy '81* (Warsaw: Polska Akademia Nauk, Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii, typescript). This survey was conducted at the end of November and the beginning of December 1981. The results have not yet been published, though some were presented in a series of seminars at the Academy in the spring of 1982, and have appeared in typescript for limited circulation.
- ²² *Polacy '80*, op. cit., p. 9.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.
- ²⁴ *Polacy '81*, op. cit.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ OBOP, 'Napięcia społeczne i stosunki władza-Solidarność w opinii publicznej' (Warsaw, November 1981). While one should treat OBOP data on these issues with caution, there are similar results from a Solidarity poll of its members in October 1981 on who was responsible for the conflict between the authorities and Solidarity. Only 30% said 'exclusively the authorities'. Another 39% said 'mainly the authorities, but also somewhat Solidarity', and 20% said both were equally responsible. OBS, 'Komunikat z badań: 26–30 Października 1981' (Warsaw, 1981).
- ²⁹ *Polacy '81*, op. cit., and Bohdan Ofierski and Andrzej Radzko, 'Wyniki badań opinii na temat zawartego w apelu KKP wezwania do podjęcia pracy w wolne soboty', (Warsaw, OBS, August 25, 1981).
- ³⁰ OBS, 'Komunikat z badań: 26–30 Października 1981' (Warsaw, 1981).
- ³¹ *Washington Post*, October 29, 1981, p. A22.
- ³² OBOP, 'Opinie o terenowych grupach operacyjnych' (Warsaw, November 1981).
- ³³ *Życie Warszawy*, February 6–7, 1982.
- ³⁴ *Żołnierz Wolności*, February 23, 1982.
- ³⁵ 'Wyniki badań ankietowych wśród członków Solidarności zatrudnionych w trzech dużych zakładach pracy w Warszawie', *KOS Solidarność*, no. 7, April 2, 1982.
- ³⁶ This writer saw the questionnaire before it was administered, but not the results. This figure was mentioned to me by several people who did see them.
- ³⁷ *Rzeczpospolita*, February 9, 1982.
- ³⁸ *Trybuna Ludu*, April 21, 1982.
- ³⁹ *Rzeczpospolita*, February 25, 1982.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, May 12, 1982.
- ⁴¹ *Trybuna Ludu*, April 19, 1982.
- ⁴² *Trybuna Ludu*, May 4, 1982.
- ⁴³ Jan Szczepański, 'Kontynuować politykę ugody', *Życie Warszawy*, May 6, 1982.
- ⁴⁴ *Rzeczpospolita*, February 23, 1982.
- ⁴⁵ *Wolny Związkowiec*, March 13, 1982.
- ⁴⁶ Morawski, 'O źródłach', op. cit., p. 6.
- ⁴⁷ Jacek Maziarski, 'Do We Want Strong Authority?' *Kultura* (Warsaw) January 25, 1981; translated by Joint Publications Research Service, *East Europe Report*, March 18, 1981.
- ⁴⁸ Andrzej Tymowski, 'Strzały do Pana Boga', *Czas*, November 8, 1981, p. 12.