

# Spring in Summer

---

## Strikes, Austerity and Solidarity in Poland (July – August 1980)

**Graham Harris**

**School of History, University of East Anglia**

**Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**September 2015**

This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with the author and that use of any information derived there from must be in accordance with current UK Copyright Law. In addition, any quotation or extract must include full attribution.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a new account of the strikes in Poland between July and August 1980 that led to the formation of *Solidarność* (Solidarity), the first ‘independent, self-governing trade union’ to exist under Communism. Although primarily focussed on the role of civil resistance in Poland, as the first stand-alone account of the strikes to appear in English since the mid-1980s, this thesis has a number of innovations. Firstly, it provides a day-by-day account of the August strikes which seeks to emphasise the immediacy, uncertainty and complexity of events from the perspective of both domestic and international actors. Secondly, with the existing literature dominated by the superpower responses, it integrates Eastern Bloc and West European responses into events. Thirdly, the previously unexplored role of Poland’s negotiations with Western commercial banks during the summer is also discussed. These along with Poland’s economic ‘crisis’ are seen as being of equal importance to the non-violent ‘breakthrough’ achieved by Polish workers in shaping the outcome of events.

## CONTENTS

*Abstract ... p.2*

*Contents ... p.3*

*Acknowledgements ... p.5*

### 1. Introduction ... p.6

- Literature Review ... p.7
- Approach and Sources ... p.12
- Background: Poland's Debt Crisis and the Commercial Banks ... p.14

### 2. Austerity Poland and Lublin's July ... p.19

- Initial Stoppages ... p.20
- Western Governments/Western Banks ... p.27
- Lublin Rising ... p.30
- Tension Mounts ... p.32
- The Reality of Life ... p.36
- The Railway Workers' Strike ... p.37
- Scabs ... p.40
- 'Friends' and 'Partners' ... p.44
- The Need to Look Closer to Home ... p.46
- Lublin Falling ... p.48
- Aftermath ... p.50

### 3. August 1980 ... p.55

- Gdańsk ... p.57
- 14 August 1980 (Thursday) ... p.65
- 15 August 1980 (Friday) ... p.76
- 16 August 1980 (Saturday) ... p.88

- 17 August 1980 (Sunday) ... p.96
- 18 August 1980 (Monday) ... p.105
- 19 August 1980 (Tuesday) ... p.119
- 20 August 1980 (Wednesday) ... p.128
- 21 August 1980 (Thursday) ... p.141
- 22 August 1980 (Friday) ... p.153
- 23 August 1980 (Saturday) ... p.164
- 24 August 1980 (Sunday) ... p.176
- 25 August 1980 (Monday) ... p.184
- 26 August 1980 (Tuesday) ... p.191
- 27 August 1980 (Wednesday) ... p.203
- 28 August 1980 (Thursday) ... p.211
- 29 August 1980 (Friday) ... p.220
- 30 August 1980 (Saturday) ... p.231
- 31 August 1980 (Sunday) ... p.243
- 4. Conclusion ... p.257
- 5. Bibliography ... p.260

## **Acknowledgements**

With thanks to Tony Kemp-Welch, Mike Bowker and Jan Vermeiren for allowing me to pursue this work as I wished. With apologies for emails sent in haste and fractious supervisory meetings. I would like to thank Tony in particular for interesting and encouraging me in the study of civil resistance and Solidarity since I was an MA student.

Thanks also to Lidia Żak, Olena Palko, Dan Howse, Dave Senior, Jim Hannah and above all my family for accommodation/encouragement/food/friendship/reading drafts/support/anything else I've missed (delete as applicable).

With special thanks to Katelyn, Alyssa, Aidan and Ada and above all my grandmother, Eleanor Dawson.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Human affairs must be dealt with humanely, not with violence. Tensions, rivalries and conflicts must be settled by reasonable negotiations and not by force. Opposing ideologies must confront each other in a climate of dialogue and free discussion. The legitimate interests of particular groups must also take into account the legitimate interests of the other groups involved and of the demands of the higher common good. Recourse to arms cannot be considered the right means for settling conflicts. Inalienable human rights must be safeguarded in every circumstance. It is not permissible to kill in order to impose a solution.<sup>1</sup>

Although the words of John Paul II were directed towards international statesmen as ‘a few elementary but firm principles’ for moving away from violence towards peace, they were equally applicable to relations between workers and the state in Poland. Worker-state confrontations in 1956, 1970 and 1976 had all involved the use of violence. So too student protests in 1968.<sup>2</sup> By contrast the worker-state confrontation during the summer of 1980 concluded peacefully. While workers made use of non-violent means of resistance, primarily in the form of strikes, the state also refrained from violence despite plans for a crackdown being made. Negotiations proved to be the favoured means of conflict resolution by both sides, most notably on the Baltic coast where the signing of agreements at Szczecin and Gdańsk led to the formation of the first ‘independent, self-governing trade union’ to exist under Communism: *Solidarność* (Solidarity). This thesis explores the role of civil resistance in the emergence of Solidarity. Was the success of worker protests in the summer of 1980 due to favourable circumstances in the overall power situation, both domestic and

---

<sup>1</sup> ‘To Reach Peace, Teach Peace’, *Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II For The Celebration of the Day of Peace*, 1 January 1979. < [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_19781221\\_xii-world-day-for-peace.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19781221_xii-world-day-for-peace.html) > [August 2015] Note: This quotation has been amended to read ‘Inalienable human rights’ rather than ‘The inalienable human rights’.

<sup>2</sup> See: P. Machcewicz, *Rebellious Satellite: Poland 1956* (Stanford CA, 2009); J. Eisler, *Marzec 1968* (Warsaw, 1991); J. Eisler, *Grudzień 1970: Geneza, Przebieg, Konsekwencje* (Warsaw, 2012); P. Sasanka, *Czerwiec 1976: Geneza, Przebieg, Konsekwencje* (Warsaw, 2006).

international? How important were the methods of non-violence used as opposed to the conditions within which they operated?<sup>3</sup>

In seeking to answer this question a new case study of the strikes in Poland in July and August 1980 that integrates both domestic and international responses to events has been prepared. Given the wealth of new material available on the strikes and the length of time since a new synthesis of the strikes based on archival research has appeared in English, its construction was guided by a simpler question: What actually happened during the summer of 1980? Overall it makes clear that while the use of non-violent means of resistance was vital in the achievement of a peaceful ‘breakthrough’ by Polish workers, it was Poland’s economic ‘crisis’ coupled with a desperate need for new loans from Western banks, internal divisions within the Party, and a reluctance to use force based on past experience and a fear of the consequences that were the main factors in providing the opportunity for Solidarity to emerge peacefully.<sup>4</sup> International restraint was also crucial in this regard. Despite extensive media coverage and government attention, neither East nor West interfered or intervened. Continued Western support for the Polish authorities, as much as Soviet non-intervention, was vital to the peaceful development of events.

## Literature Review

In the early- to mid-1980s an extensive literature on Solidarity developed, including Jerzy Holzer’s first history of Solidarity and numerous accounts by Western and Polish journalists.<sup>5</sup> A handful of works exploring the use of non-violent resistance by Polish

---

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from ‘Initial Questions’ in A. Roberts and T. Garton Ash (eds.), *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present* (Oxford, 2009), pp.xx-xxi.

<sup>4</sup> On the terms ‘crisis’ and ‘breakthrough’, see: A. Kutylowski, ‘Non-violence in the Polish breakthrough: An Introduction’, *Journal of Peace Research*, 19:2 (1982), pp. 103-106 (pp.103-104).

<sup>5</sup> See: N. Ascherson, *The Polish August* (Harmondsworth, 1981); T. Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-1982* (London, 1983); W. Gieżyński and L. Stefański, *Gdańsk Sierpień 80* (Warsaw, 1981); J. Holzer, *“Solidarność” 1980-1981: Geneza i Historia* (Warsaw, 1983); A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983); S. Persky, *At the Lenin Shipyard: Poland*

workers also appeared.<sup>6</sup> This was followed by a significant lull. Despite the increasing availability of primary sources from Soviet and Eastern bloc archives following the collapse of Communism, by the mid-1990s Mark Kramer was noting a decline in interest in the subject. He declared the ‘need for a new synthesis’ of events.<sup>7</sup> Since the appearance of Kramer’s article, the Polish language literature on the Solidarity-era has expanded considerably. Notable works by Andrzej Paczkowski concerning the Party’s preparations for martial law and a multi-volume work edited by Łukasz Kamiński and Grzegorz Waligóra primarily exploring Solidarity on a regional basis have been published, along with a comprehensive new history by Andrzej Friszke.<sup>8</sup>

By contrast work on Solidarity and the Party in English has been limited. Two recent works are notable for their use of interviews with Solidarity activists unavailable elsewhere, but make no use of archival sources.<sup>9</sup> In terms of the study of non-violence meanwhile, the most recent account also fails to make use of archival material.<sup>10</sup> Only Anthony Kemp-Welch’s *Poland under Communism* provides a new account based on the holdings of Polish and international archives as well as Polish secondary sources.<sup>11</sup> However, due to the appearance of a number of significant new works in Polish and the availability of new archival releases since its publication, as well as the restrictions placed on any account of

---

*and the Rise of the Solidarity Trade Union* (Vancouver, 1982); J-Y. Potel, *The Summer Before The Frost* (London, 1982); M. Szejnert and T. Zalewski, *Szczecin. Grudzień-Sierpień-Grudzień* (Warsaw, 1984).

<sup>6</sup> R. Polet, *The Polish Summer: Workers’ victories and popular non-violent civilian defence* (London, 1981); J. Zielonka, ‘Strengths and Weaknesses of Nonviolent Action: The Polish Case’, *Orbis*, Spring 1986, pp. 91-110

<sup>7</sup> M. Kramer, ‘The 1980-1981 Polish Crisis: The Need for a New Synthesis,’ *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin*, 6/7 (1995), pp.276 and 294.

<sup>8</sup> A. Paczkowski, *Droga do "mniejszego zła". Strategia i taktyka obozu władzy lipiec 1980 – styczeń 1982* (Kraków, 2002); Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989. Tom 2-6.* (Warsaw, 2010); A. Friszke, *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980-1981* (Kraków, 2014).

<sup>9</sup> M. Szporer, *Solidarity: The Great Workers Strike of 1980* (Lanham MD, 2012); J.M. Bloom, *Seeing Through the Eyes of the Polish Revolution: Solidarity and the Struggle Against Communism in Poland* (Chicago IL, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> A. Smolar, ‘Towards “Self-limiting Revolution”: Poland 1970-89’, in: A. Roberts and T. Garton Ash (eds.), *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present* (Oxford, 2009), pp.127-143.

<sup>11</sup> A. Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge, 2008), pp.229-331.



the strikes included as part of a broader work on Polish history, the 'need for a new synthesis' arguably still remains. As well as the need to fill the significant gap between the Polish and English-language literature that exists in relation to the Party's plans for a crackdown and the activities of the security services, for example, there is also the need to adopt a less Gdańsk-centric approach to the strikes. Due to the presence of Western journalists at the Lenin Shipyard strike, most accounts remain focussed on Gdańsk. Strikes at Lublin and Szczecin, as well as those elsewhere, remain largely unexplored. They arguably deserve greater recognition. As this thesis shows, doing so helps to reveal far more about the links between the domestic and international context in which events took place, particularly with regard to the role of the Party's pursuit of new loans from the West in shaping their response to events.

Although the international response to events has been detailed more extensively as a result of work by the Cold War International History Project, the role of commercial banks in Eastern Europe is just one aspect that has been overlooked. As with Cold War literature in general, accounts of the Polish crisis have been dominated by the superpowers. The role of Western and to a lesser extent Eastern Europe remains comparatively unexplored.<sup>12</sup> This

---

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of the superpower dominated approach to the Cold War in Europe and the need to bring European actors into the fold, see: F. Bozo, M-P Rey, N. Piers Ludlow and L Nuti, 'Introduction', in: F. Bozo *et al.*, *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal*, (Routledge: Abingdon, 2008), pp.1-8 (p.3). On U.S. and Soviet responses, see: T. Cynkin, *Soviet and American Signalling in the Polish Crisis* (London, 1988); M. Kramer 'Poland, 1980-1981. Soviet Policy During the Polish Crisis', *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin*, Issue 5, (Spring 1995), pp.1 and 116-139; M. Kramer, "'In Case Military Assistance Is Provided to Poland": Soviet Preparations for Military Contingencies, August 1980', *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin 11* (Winter 1998), pp.102-109; M. Kramer, *Soviet Deliberations during the Polish Crisis, 1980-1981*, Cold War International History Project Working Paper No. 1 (Washington DC, 1999); M. Kramer, *The Kuklinski Files and the Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: An Analysis of the Newly Released Documents on Ryszard Kuklinski*, Cold War International History Project Working Paper No. 59 (Washington DC, 2009); D.J. MacEachin, *U.S. Intelligence and the Confrontation in Poland*, (University Park PA, 2002); V. Mastny, *The Soviet Non-invasion of Poland in 1980/81 and the End of the Cold War*, Cold War International History Project Working Paper No.23 (Washington DC, 1998); A. Paczkowski, 'Playground of Superpowers, Poland 1980-1989: A View From Inside', in: O. Njølstad (ed.), *The Last Decade of the Cold War: From Conflict Escalation to Conflict Transformation* (London and New York, 2004), pp.372-401; S.I. Ploss, *Moscow and the Polish Crisis: An Interpretation of Soviet Policies and Intentions* (Boulder and London, 1986); A. Rachwald, *In Search of Poland: The Superpowers' Response to Solidarity, 1980-1989* (Stanford CA, 1990). On East and West European responses, see: J. Baev, 'Bulgaria and the Political Crises in Czechoslovakia (1968) and Poland

represents a significant gap in the literature, particularly with regard to France and West Germany. As is made clear in conversations between Polish First Secretary Edward Gierek and his Czechoslovak and East German counterparts on the eve of Solidarity, France and West Germany remained the most important Western partners for Poland (over and above the United States) even during the crisis of détente that followed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.<sup>13</sup> French and West German responses are amongst those to be integrated into the account of Poland's strikes, therefore.

The widespread absence of West European actors in accounts of Polish events relates to a more specific gap in the literature: the Western economic response. Despite Richard Portes' identification of 'economic means' as the West's main source of influence over events in a 1981 Chatham House paper, it remains unexplored to this day.<sup>14</sup> Although this could be treated as a separate issue to the use of non-violence by Polish workers, its influence on events requires exploring in relation to the Party's response. As Aleksander Smolar has argued:

---

(1980/81)', *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin*, 11 (1998), pp.96-101; P. Jaworski and Ł. Kamiński (eds.), *Świat wobec Solidarności 1980-1989* (Warsaw, 2013); A. Kobus, *Czechosłowacja wobec narodzin, rozwoju i delegalizacji "Solidarności" (1980-1982)* (Toruń, 2006); M. Kubina, 'Moscow's Man in the SED Politburo and the Crisis in Poland in Autumn 1980', *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 11 (Winter 1998), pp.90-95; P. Opris, 'The Polish crisis and its impact on the Romanian economy in the early 1980s', in: L. Nuti (ed.), *The Crisis of Détente in Europe: From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975-1985* (London and New York, 2009), pp.202-213; P. Pleskot, *Kłopotliwa Panna "S": Postawy polityczne Zachodu wobec "Solidarności" na tle stosunków z PRL (1980 – 1989)* (Warsaw, 2013); J. Rychlik, 'Społeczeństwo czechosłowackie i Komunistyczna Partia Czechosłowacji a wydarzenia w Polsce w latach 1980-1981', in: P. Błażek, P. Jaworski and Ł. Kamiński (eds.), *Między Przymuszoną Przyjaźnią a Prawdziwą Solidarnością. Czesi-Polacy-Słowacy. Część II* (Warsaw, 2009), pp.207-220; H. Sjursen, *The United States, Western Europe and the Polish Crisis: International Relations in the Second Cold War* (Basingstoke, 2003); M. Świder, *Z Perspektywy Bonn: Przemiany polityczne w Polsce w latach 1980-1989*, (Toruń, 2011); J. Tischler, 'The Hungarian Leadership and the Polish Crisis of 1980- 1981', *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 11 (Winter 1998), pp.77-89; O. Tůma, 'The Czechoslovak Communist Regime and the Polish Crisis 1980-1981', *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 11 (Winter 1998), pp.60-76.

<sup>13</sup> See: AAN, KC PZPR Biuro Polityczne, V/156, 248-257, Protokół Nr 164 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego w dniu 30 stycznia 1980 r. Załącznik Nr 2: 'Informacja o przyjacielskim spotkaniu roboczym I sekretarza KC PZPR tow. Edward Gierka z Sekretarzem Generalnym KC KPCz Prezydentem CSRS tow. Gustavem Husakiem /Praga, 28.I.1980 r./, pp.3-5; AAN, KC PZPR Biuro Polityczne, V/157, 305-315, Protokół Nr 2 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego w dniu 11 marca 1980 r. Załącznik Nr 2 (11.III.1980r.): 'Informacja o przyjacielskim spotkaniu roboczym I sekretarza KC PZPR Edwarda Gierka z Sekretarzem Generalnym KC NPSJ, Przewodniczącym Rady Państwa NRD tow. Erich Honeckerem /Arłamów, 2-4.03.1980/, pp.3-5.

<sup>14</sup> R. Portes, *The Polish Crisis: Western Economic Policy Options* (London, 1981), p.3.

In a situation of increasing integration into world markets, the Polish authorities became more sensitive to the pressures of the developed and democratic world. Maintaining a positive image of the regime was a necessary concession in order to facilitate increasingly complicated and difficult talks about the rescheduling of a rapidly growing foreign debt.<sup>15</sup>

There is therefore a need to explore the extent to which Poland's economic relations with the West influenced the Party's response to the strikes. There is an additional need to explore the extent to which these relationships influenced the West. After all, as Portes had earlier argued, 'Interdependence Is A Two-Way Street.'<sup>16</sup> Poland's economic problems had potential ramifications for a West experiencing major economic difficulties of its own and vice versa. This was not only the case for Western governments, but also for Poland's other Western partner: commercial banks.

Given the severity of Poland's debt crisis at the time, the Poles could not survive without new loans. Not only did Poland's relationships with Western banks shape the Party's economic reforms, thus triggering social unrest in the first instance, they arguably also shaped the Party's response to events. With the outcome of negotiations uncertain and the Western media watching, they could neither reverse the introduction of austerity nor crackdown against the strikes. Inaction against the strikes was not an option, however. In addition to potentially jeopardising their ability to secure agreements for the loans, social unrest also presented a threat to the Party and brought with it the prospect of Warsaw Pact intervention. This in turn risked the end of the East-West détente that had facilitated Poland's economic dependence on the West in the first place. Already under strain

---

<sup>15</sup> Smolar, p.134.

<sup>16</sup> See: R. Portes, 'East Europe's Debt to the West: Interdependence Is A Two-Way Street', *Foreign Affairs*, 55:4 (1977), pp.751-782

following NATO's 'dual-track' decision and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, détente (and with it arms control) would arguably not survive another blow.<sup>17</sup>

## Approach and Sources

In one of the best known accounts of the Solidarity-era, Timothy Garton Ash recalls the discrepancy between the memory and reality of events in Gdańsk:

Above all I remember a sense of being carried along on some mighty river, which led, majestically and inevitably, to the estuary of the Gdańsk Agreement, and thence to the sea of Solidarity. This memory only shows how deceptive memory can be. For there was nothing inevitable about the outcome of the August strikes. The progress of the Lenin Shipyard occupation (like the authorities' response) was the result of countless arguments, individual decisions, chance and moments of sheer confusion.<sup>18</sup>

While Garton Ash was successful in conveying the atmosphere at the Lenin Shipyard, particularly when making use of a 'diary' format in order to provide 'clarity and immediacy' to events, due to the unavailability of archival sources from the Party and international actors at the time a certain amount of the complexity and confusion surrounding events was arguably (and inevitably) lost. Given that the rapidly changing nature of events, along with the interaction between the domestic and international context surrounding the strikes, was a significant part of what made this period a 'crisis', the absence of such complexity arguably represents a significant barrier to understanding events for those who did not live through them. As such a sense of the dynamics, complexity and uncertainty of events arguably requires capturing.

---

<sup>17</sup> While it is not possible to provide an overview of the international context into which Polish events emerged, for contrasting accounts of détente and its decline see: M. Bowker, 'Brezhnev and Superpower Relations', in: E. Bacon and M. Sandle (eds.), *Brezhnev Reconsidered* (Houndsmills and New York, 2002), pp.90-109; J.M. Hanhimäki, *The Rise and Fall of Détente: American Foreign Policy and The Transformation of the Cold War* (Washington DC, 2013); L. Nuti (ed.), *The Crisis of Détente in Europe: From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975-1985* (London and New York, 2009); O.A. Westad (ed.), *The Fall of Détente: Soviet-American Relations during the Carter Years* (Oslo, 1997).

<sup>18</sup> T. Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-1982* (London, 1983), pp.37-38.

In order to do so, an overlapping narrative involving domestic and international actors has been produced. As well as helping to convey the rapidly shifting context in which the strikes took place and to understand different perspectives as events unfolded, the advantage of such an approach to the study of civil resistance and social movements is well captured by Marshall Ganz:

The telling of the layered stories of people, timing, choices, and events is an effort to portray the intricacies of a social movement as it unfolded with its many moving parts that created new opportunities, challenges, and outcomes with which purposeful actors interacted.<sup>19</sup>

Given the rapidly shifting nature of events during periods of unrest, such an approach is important in gaining an understanding of events. Combined with the widespread availability of sources concerning both domestic and international actors, such an approach allows for a new understanding of the interaction between non-violent resistance and the context in which it took place. In the case of the Lenin Shipyard strike it is possible to do this in a day-by-day form from multiple perspectives, something which is arguably not usually possible when constructing narratives of either violent or non-violent resistance. These have traditionally focussed only on the perspective of those protesting.

A variety of sources from Polish and English language archives are employed in the construction of this multi-perspective narrative. In terms of Poland, these include the files of the Polish United Workers' Party held at the Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN – Archive of Modern Records) in Warsaw as well as the published transcripts of strike negotiations at Gdańsk and Szczecin, the latter previously unused in the English language literature.<sup>20</sup> Published collections of documents concerning the Politburo, Solidarity, and the Polish

---

<sup>19</sup> M. Ganz, *Why David Sometimes Wins: Leadership, Organization, and Strategy in the California Farm Worker Movement* (New York, 2010), p.21.

<sup>20</sup> See: A. Drzycimski and T. Skutnik (eds.), *Zapis rokowań gdańskich. Sierpień 1980* (Paris, 1986); A. Kemp-Welch, (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983); A. Głowacki, (ed.), *Rozmowy Komisji Rządowej pod przewodnictwem Kazimierza Barcikowskiego z Międzyzakładowym Komitetem Strajkowym w Szczecinie w dniach 21-30 sierpnia 1980r. według transmisji radiowęzła Stoczni im. A. Warskiego w Szczecinie* (Szczecin, 1989)

security services, amongst others, have also been used.<sup>21</sup> With regards to the international response, Soviet sources available in translation from the Cold War International History Project and a Polish language collection of Eastern bloc sources have all been used.<sup>22</sup> In addition to this, a large number of Western sources have also been used. These include often previously unused archival sources available digitally from the CIA, the Department of State, and NATO.<sup>23</sup> Newly released British Government files held at the National Archives (TNA) at Kew, including those of the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), have also been used. As well as providing new insights into the British response to events, they also provide extensive details of Poland's negotiations with commercial banks.

### **Background: Poland's Debt Crisis and the Commercial Banks**

Due to the previously unexplored nature of Poland's negotiations with Western banks, an overview of Poland's relations with commercial banks on the eve of the strikes is arguably required prior to the narrative of the strikes that makes up the main body of this thesis. As a secret report delivered to Gierek by Politburo member Stefan Olszowski in January 1980 made clear, during the previous year Poland had experienced a significant worsening of its balance of payments situation with regard to capitalist countries in the West. By the end of

---

<sup>21</sup> See, for example: Z. Włodek (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a „Solidarność” 1980-1981* (London, 1992); A. Drzycimski and T. Skutnik (eds.), *Zapis Wydarzeń. Gdańsk – Sierpień 1980. Dokumenty* (Warsaw, 1999); P. Raina and M. Zbrozek (eds.), *Operacja „Lato-80”. Preludium stanu wojennego. Dokumenty MSW 1980-1981* (Pelplin, 2003).

<sup>22</sup> See, for example: M. Kramer, “‘In Case Military Assistance Is Provided to Poland’: Soviet Preparations for Military Contingencies, August 1980’, *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin 11* (Winter 1998), pp.102-109; Ł. Kamiński, (ed.), *Przed i Po 13 Grudnia: Państwa Bloku Wschodniego Wobec Kryzysu w PRL 1980 – 1982: Tom 1* (Warsaw, 2006).

<sup>23</sup> See: Central Intelligence Agency Freedom of Information Act (CIA FOIA) Electronic Reading Room <<http://www.foia.cia.gov>> [Note: Initially downloaded in June 2010, at the time of writing it no longer appears possible to access the CIA documents cited in this work online.]; Department of State Freedom of Information Act (DOS FOIA) Electronic Reading Room <<https://foia.state.gov/Search/Search.aspx>> [August 2015]; NATO Archives: Documents Relating to Events in Poland (1980-1984) <<http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/81233.htm>> [August 2015]

1979 Poland's debt had increased by more than \$4 billion to stand at a level of approximately \$24 billion. Amongst other problems, the cost of servicing these debts was causing damage to 'the internal balance of the economy', particularly in the light of a fall in national income in 1979.<sup>24</sup> It was a fall which was both the first to occur in Poland since the end of the Second World War and the first recorded by any COMECON member since a similar decrease had taken place in Czechoslovakia prior to the Prague Spring.<sup>25</sup>

Although not stated in percentage terms as a result of the short-term credits on which Poland had become dependent in the late 1970s requiring repayment alongside older long- and medium-term credits, almost one hundred percent of Poland's income from exports was needed to service the nation's debts.<sup>26</sup> To put this in perspective, the manageable safe level of debt according to the IMF is 40 percent.<sup>27</sup> Poland was on the brink of economic collapse. Economic reforms, including the introduction of austerity measures, and new loans were required. So too was popular support. The latter would be most difficult to generate, particularly given that planned austerity measures included meat price increases, traditionally a trigger for worker protests. The domestic context into which these changes were to be introduced also appears to have been ripe for social unrest. Alongside a significant proportion of Poland's population being made up of 15-29 year olds, significant crises of optimism in the future and faith in the Party were also evident.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps

---

<sup>24</sup> AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/504, 1-7: 'Wykonanie Planu Płatniczego 1979 roku i Przewidywania Sytuacja Płatniczego z Krajami Kapitalistycznymi w 1980 roku.'

<sup>25</sup> See: "Poland Reports a Negative Growth", 11 February 1980 [Electronic Record]. HU OSA 300-8-3-4955; Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Publications Department: Background Reports; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest. <<http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:93a4fd36-044c-4ab0-adba-a28b9bbcdf2f>> [August 2015].

<sup>26</sup> 'Wykonanie Planu Płatniczego 1979 roku i Przewidywania Sytuacja Płatniczego z Krajami Kapitalistycznymi w 1980 roku', p.3.

<sup>27</sup> See: D.M. Nuti, 'The Polish Crisis: Economic Factors and Constraints' in, J. Drewnowski (ed.), *Crisis in the East European Economy: The Spread of the Polish Disease*, (London, 1982), pp.18-64 (p.23).

<sup>28</sup> See: M. Zaremba, 'Zimno, ciepło, gorąco. Nastroje Polaków od „zimy stulecia” do lata 1980', in: A. Friszke, K. Persak and P. Sowiński, *Solidarność od Wewnątrz 1980 – 1981* (Warszawa, 2013), pp.11-38.

surprisingly the Party did not anticipate any unrest due to the reforms (see Chapter Two). All other indicators suggest that domestic problems were assured.

Poland also faced significant problems in generating the economic support required for their reforms. Despite Polish requests, the Soviet Union was proving far from supportive in economic terms. To give some indication of the lack of Soviet support for Poland, following a request for new financial credits worth \$700 – 800 million, they were ultimately granted only \$75 million in new credits plus \$219 million in debt rescheduling. Soviet priorities lay elsewhere.<sup>29</sup> Poland's Western 'partners' rather than her 'friends' would provide the majority of Poland's economic support. While a successful approach to the French for help had been made in December 1979,<sup>30</sup> Cold War tensions had increased since then and the emergence of social discontent was only likely to further complicate Poland's drive for much needed loans. Three sets of negotiations concerning loans began prior to the introduction of price increases in July 1980. These involved a predominantly Anglo-American consortium over a \$500 million loan, a West German consortium for a loan of \$570 million, and an Austrian consortium operating on behalf of Vienna in a \$300 million loan deal relating to future coal deliveries.

Although the Poles initially hoped to have the Anglo-American loan completed by the end of June, negotiations were still ongoing as the strikes began. Further talks were scheduled to take place in London on 3 July 1980. Significant concessions had already been granted to the banks by this time: they were to have increased influence and insight into Poland's economic affairs. As the British account of one meeting records, 'the whole

---

<sup>29</sup> See: AAN, PZPR KC w Warszawie, XIA/1109, 1-5, Letter from E Babiuch (Prezes Rady Ministrów, Warszawa) to AN Kosygin (Przewodniczący Rady Ministrów Związku Socjalistycznych Republik Radzieckich, Moskwa), dni\_\_ kwietnia 1980 roku; AAN, PZPR KC Biuro Polityczne, V/157, 727-736: 'Protokół Nr 7 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 20 maja 1980r. Załącznik Nr 4 (20.V.1980r). Informacja o rozmowach przeprowadzonych przez Prezesa Rady Ministrów Towarzysza Edwarda Babiucha podczas oficjalnej wizyty w Związku Radzieckim.'

<sup>30</sup> See: D. Jarosz and M. Pasztor, *Polska-Francja 1970 – 1980: Relacje wyjątkowe?* (Warsaw, 2006), pp.173-174.



operation was unique for a Socialist state – the banks were effectively doing “an IMF job” on the Polish economy and the authorities seemed to acquiesce in this given their need to raise the new loan.<sup>31</sup> Indeed the Poles later provided an ‘agreement to have regular consultations with the consortium of bankers about future progress on economic reform in Poland.’<sup>32</sup> This was unprecedented and provides some indication of how desperate Poland was for new loans.

With regard to the West German loan, Bonn was refusing to provide the banks with official guarantees while simultaneously informing them ‘that it has a considerable political interest in supplying credit to Poland.’<sup>33</sup> By mid-June the banks were still holding firm in their dealings with Bonn in demanding such guarantees, however.<sup>34</sup> The Austrian loan was also problematic. While the Poles had already secured a \$200 million loan from Vienna, a further \$300 million for use in the development of the Polish coal industry was sought. While the relevant agreements would be signed, they would only become binding once the Austrian parliament approved the deal in the autumn. In the interim half would be provided by an Austrian banking consortium. Subject to the provision of a government statement confirming that the Austrian parliament would be directed to approve the credit, the banks would deposit \$150 million with the Poles for a period of 3 months (longer if necessary). The sum was expected to be deposited on 4 July 1980.<sup>35</sup> All three negotiations were ongoing

---

<sup>31</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4154, f56: From Warsaw to FCO. Telegram Number 114 for 21 April [1980], ‘For Battiscombe EESD. Poland’s Financial Situation’.

<sup>32</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4155, f84: From MR Melhuish (Commercial Department, British Embassy, Warsaw) to PG Falloon-Goodhew (Cabinet Office, Whitehall), ‘Poland’s Economic and Hard Currency Trade Prospects’, 6 June 1980, p.1.

<sup>33</sup> TNA:PRO:FCO 28/4155, f77: From MR Melhuish (Commercial Department, British Embassy, Warsaw) to CCR Battiscombe, (EESD, FCO), ‘The Polish Economy’, 30 May 1980.

<sup>34</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4155, f88: From PJ Bull (Bank of England) to MJ Hawtin (HM Treasury), ‘Poland’, (17 June 1980), p.3.

<sup>35</sup> AAN, KC PZPR Biuro Polityczne, V/158, 490-493, Protokół Nr 10 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 1 lipca 1980r. Załącznik Nr 3a [1.07.80r.], Warszawa, dnia 27 czerwca: ‘Informacja o wynikach wizyty Prezesa Rady Ministrów Towarzysza Edwarda Babiucha w Austrii’.

therefore, as austerity and with it social unrest emerged as a major feature of Polish life in the summer of 1980. It was from this unrest that Solidarity was born.

## CHAPTER TWO: AUSTERITY POLAND AND LUBLIN'S JULY

Even before the price increases and toughening of work discipline were implemented in July worker disquiet stemming from talk of proposed changes to work norms had led to the delay of reforms at some enterprises until September.<sup>36</sup> The avoidance of more widespread tension regarding the forthcoming changes in meat prices appears to have stemmed primarily from workers lack of awareness of them. Although a lengthy propaganda campaign trumpeting the need for increases as part of a program of economic reform had been conducted, no specific date was announced for the changes.<sup>37</sup> They took the general public by surprise. As Anthony Kemp-Welch has noted:

Better cuts of meat and meat products simply began to appear at higher prices, which had sometimes doubled. The public thus encountered them by chance. Driving from Łódź to Warsaw, one could find state shops selling the same cuts of meat at four different prices – a novelty for the planned economy. At Huta Warszawa, the works canteen alternated the new and old prices, sometimes several times a day.<sup>38</sup>

The quiet manner in which they were introduced, along with the fact that the changes were relatively minor compared to 1970 and 1976, all demonstrate the caution with which the Party was approaching reforms in spite of their necessity. The fact that all decisions as to when the changes should be introduced were to be taken at the local rather than the national level also suggests a desire on the part of the leadership to distance itself from any unrest triggered by the reforms. Overall, there appears to have been a belief that, as Edward Babiuch had informed the U.S. in May 1980, 'the "public psychology" in Poland would permit prices to be increased, albeit quietly'.<sup>39</sup> Events in July 1980 demonstrated otherwise, however. Although only 2 percent of meat sales were affected, the fact that prices of some

---

<sup>36</sup> D. Iwaneczko, *Opór Społeczny a Władza w Polsce Południowo-Wschodniej 1980-1989* (Warsaw, 2005), pp.56-57.

<sup>37</sup> J.B. de Weydenthal, 'The New Worker-Government Conflict in Poland', in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.31-37 (pp.32-33). [From here: *The Strikes in Poland*]

<sup>38</sup> A. Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge, 2008), pp.231.

<sup>39</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'The Impact of Labor Disturbances in Poland: Some Interim Estimates', 31 July 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW007483.

cuts of meat had increased by 90 – 100 percent without warning had a profound impact on the “public psychology”. Lack of information regarding the changes was a major cause of problems. A number of the initial strikes occurred as workers simply sought further details.<sup>40</sup> Unlike the protests of 1970 and 1976 however, the response of Polish workers was entirely non-violent. Polish workers began to make significant gains. Events were shaped as much by domestic and international factors as non-violence, however.

### **Initial Stoppages**

According to reports compiled by the Interior Ministry (MSW), the first stoppages took place on 1 July when 270 workers on the first shift at the WSK aircraft factory in Mielec in south-eastern Poland, as well as 220 workers on the first shift at the “POMET” metallurgical works in Poznań, refused to work.<sup>41</sup> Although such strikes were similar in scale to those that occurred regularly in Poland, a departmental strike at the “Ursus” tractor factory deserves attention. Although small in scale, as the scene of major protests and repressions in 1976 it was an enterprise that attracted Western media interest. It also symbolised how much protests had changed. While the strike in 1976 had been relatively disorganised, in 1980 a strike committee (later renamed a workers’ commission) was established to formulate demands and negotiate with management.<sup>42</sup> These were significant acts. Despite the economic nature of the strikes, the nature of Communism was such that the founding of a strike committee, as well as the demand for workers’ security to be guaranteed in writing, at strikes such as “Ursus” made them political.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> See: K. Dubiński, ‘Zapowiedź Sierpniowego Przełomu: Meldunki MSW o sytuacji w kraju w okresie 1 lipca – 16 sierpnia 1980,’ *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Paris, 2000), pp.69-164 (p.73); *Robotnik*, Numer Specjalny 57, 12.VII.80r.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 73-74.

<sup>42</sup> See: P. Sasanka, *Czerwiec 1976: Geneza, Przebieg, Konsekwencje* (Warsaw, 2006), pp.222-233; *Robotnik*, Numer Specjalny 57, 12.VII.80r.

<sup>43</sup> J. Holzer, *“Solidarność” 1980-1981: Geneza i Historia* (Warsaw, 1983), p.59.

Workers did not challenge the Party directly, however. As “Ursus” demonstrated, they had learnt from previous confrontations. They were disciplined and cautious. The demands for written security guarantees, for example, demonstrated an awareness of the need to protect themselves from post-strike repressions as experienced in 1976. Additionally workers who in 1976 had blockaded local railway lines took care not to inconvenience the local community or cause damage. The foundry and combined heat-and-power plant were kept running due to the economic cost of putting out the furnaces and the fact that the plant supplied electricity both to “Ursus” and the surrounding area.<sup>44</sup> As is evident from strikes later that summer, such behaviour had the dual advantage of making it easier to gain local support and more difficult for the Party to discredit the workers.

Not only was the strike at “Ursus” better organised, it was also better publicised. The Workers’ Defence Committee (KOR), founded in response to the post-1976 repressions at Radom and “Ursus”, was already established as an information centre. When the strikes broke out information was passed from workers to KOR. According to security service (SB) reports, by late afternoon on 2 July a worker from “Ursus” had already contacted Jacek Kuroń to inform him of the strike and their demands. Andrzej Gwiazda, a worker active with the opposition in Gdańsk meanwhile, had telephoned to inform Kuroń of a strike at the “POLMO” car parts factory in Tczew.<sup>45</sup> Unlike 1976, there was a well-established, pre-existing network for the transmission of information between workers and intellectuals. It was a network trusted not only by Polish workers, but also Western journalists.

---

<sup>44</sup> *Robotnik*, Numer Specjalny 57 12.VII.80r.; On post-1976 repression, see: Sasanka, pp.262-323.

<sup>45</sup> ‘1980 lipiec 3, Warszawa – Meldunek operacyjny dotyczący stosunku KSS “KOR” do sytuacji strajkowej w kraju, opracowany przez starszego inspektora Wydziału IX Departamentu III MSW mjr. Ryszarda Bartnickiego, tajne’, in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *Kryptonim “Gracze”. Służba Bezpieczeństwa wobec Komitetu Obrony Robotników i Komitetu Samoobrony Społecznej “KOR” 1976-1981* (Warsaw, 2010), p.756. See also: A. Friszke, *Czas KOR-u: Jacek Kuroń a geneza Solidarności* (Kraków, 2011), pp.515-516; J. Skórzyński, *Siła bezsilnych: Historia Komitetu Obrony Robotników* (Warsaw, 2012), p.439.

The first public manifestation of KOR's activity that summer was the release of a statement on 2 July at a time of total silence from the Party and the official press. KOR confirmed the introduction of price increases; described what was happening in striking enterprises; and called for the authorities to make all information about the price increases and the food supply available to the public.<sup>46</sup> As such it provided the public with information that was denied to them by the official press, but which they could have learnt from the media in any normal European country. KOR's statement also addressed the issue of provocation during periods of worker unrest. The authorities were warned not to engage in it, while the workers were warned 'against those forms of protest which may be utilised by the authorities to provoke riots.'<sup>47</sup> In keeping with KOR's long-standing tradition of non-violence, it was made clear that they wanted no use of violence by either side. Favouring peaceful means of conflict resolution, they also stated the need for workers to engage in negotiations with the authorities using democratically elected 'independent workers' representatives' to organise, present and negotiate their demands.<sup>48</sup> In contrast to 1970 when the Polish intelligentsia had, in Leszek Kołakowski's words, shown a 'regrettable passivity' during strikes on the Baltic coast, even during the earliest strikes in 1980 it was apparent that workers enjoyed the support of intellectuals.<sup>49</sup> They would not be acting alone. Nor would they be encouraged to take to the streets. KOR was a voice for dialogue and non-violence.

KOR's significance as an information centre was boosted by the Western media, which served to amplify KOR's domestic and international influence. Such ties existed in a number of forms. Firstly, KOR had natural links with émigré Poles from the opposition

---

<sup>46</sup> KOR Statement (2 July 1980), quoted in P. Raina, *Independent Social Movements in Poland* (London, 1981), pp.437-439.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p.439.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.439.

<sup>49</sup> L. Kołakowski, 'Hope and Hopelessness', *Survey*, 17:3 (1971), pp.36-52 (p.51).

milieu, many of whom had gone into exile in the aftermath of 1968. By the evening of 2 July Kuroń had already passed news of the strikes to Eugeniusz Smolar in London, for example. He maintained regular contact with Smolar and his brother Aleksander in Paris.<sup>50</sup> Secondly, KOR enjoyed good relations with Western correspondents in Warsaw. In particular, information about events at “Ursus” was of importance for Western journalists with Kuroń considering KOR’s ability to obtain news about the strike as something of a test case of KOR’s credibility.<sup>51</sup> The passage of information between KOR and foreign correspondents was not a one-way street, however. Foreign correspondents also passed information to KOR concerning official briefings given to the Western media.<sup>52</sup> There was mutual trust between the two sides. Thirdly, KOR was a trusted source of information for Radio Free Europe (RFE). The editor of RFE’s Polish section was known to favour KOR over nationalistic opposition groups such as the Confederation of Independent Poland (KPN) due in part to the ‘factual and interesting’ nature of KOR’s bulletins.<sup>53</sup> The pre-existing relationships and trust between KOR and Western journalists was as vital as their relationship with Polish workers. By 3 July these relationships were already paying dividends. RFE made its first broadcast on this date. Other news agencies also began to file reports.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> ‘1980 lipiec 3, Warszawa – Meldunek operacyjny dotyczący stosunku KSS “KOR” do sytuacji strajkowej w kraju, opracowany przez starszego inspektora Wydziału IX Departamentu III MSW mjr. Ryszarda Bartnickiego, tajne’, in: Kamiński and Waligóra (eds.), *Kryptonim “Gracze”*, p.756; Friszke, *Czas KOR-u*, pp.516, 519-520, 524-525; Skórzyński, *Siła bezsilnych*, p.441.

<sup>51</sup> Friszke, p.519.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p.519.

<sup>53</sup> A. Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington, 2000), p.268.

<sup>54</sup> Friszke, p.516; M. Choma-Jusińska, *Środowiska opozycyjne na Lubelszczyźnie 1975-1980* (Warsaw and Lublin, 2009), p.388; ‘Meat Price Protest Subsides’, *Associated Press*, 3 July 1980; Poland Meat Price Hikes Spark Protest’, *Associated Press*, 3 July 1980. Further reports were published the following day. Western press coverage only continued to amplify: ‘Meat Price Rise in Poland Prompts Work Stoppages in Some Factories’, *New York Times*, 4 July 1980; ‘Polish Workers Protest Increase in Meat Prices’, *Washington Post*, 4 July 1980; ‘Poles Strike Over Meat Price Rises’, *The Times*, 4 July 1980; ‘Wage Demands in Poland’, *Washington Post*, 5 July 1980; ‘Polish Plants Calm After Price Strikes’, *New York Times*, 5 July 1980.

The Party began to acknowledge the introduction of meat price increases on 2 July when the deputy chairman of “Społem” (the Consumer Co-operatives’ Union) appeared on television to officially confirm the price increases. His announcement failed to satisfy the public. Confusion still reigned regarding the changes. The statement was broadcast again that evening in response to public enquiries.<sup>55</sup> It was only the following day that the matter was fully clarified in a statement from the official Polish news agency. Having outlined the nature of the changes, the statement noted that savings made as a result of them were to ‘be earmarked for improving the lot of the lowest-paid, large families and pensioners.’<sup>56</sup> It was a statement that echoed the findings of a survey conducted by the Party’s Institute of Basic Problems of Marxism-Leninism (IPPML) in the aftermath of 1976. According to the IPPML’s research, the public indicated greater willingness to support price increases if the savings were used to increase wages and benefits such as pensions.<sup>57</sup> This points to the continued caution of the leadership in implementing the reforms and their apparent determination to avoid the mistakes of 1976’s attempted alterations.<sup>58</sup> They were keen to distance themselves from any associated problems.

Given the limited scale of the strikes, their resolution was left to enterprise management. The “Ursus” strike provides a useful example of the methods employed. Members of management and the Party *aktyw* spoke directly to workers, encouraging them to return to work. Additional appeals were made to the ‘Party consciousness’ of Party members on strike. Threats were also evident. Workers faced disciplinary action for participating in the stoppages. Enterprise management was also determined to stop news of the strike from spreading and triggering strikes elsewhere. So too was the Party. The official

---

<sup>55</sup> K. Ruane, *The Polish Challenge* (London, 1982), p.1.

<sup>56</sup> ‘Some Changes in the Meat Trade’, *Polska Agencja Prasowa*, 3 July 1980, quoted in *Ibid.*, pp.2-3.

<sup>57</sup> See: D. Mason, *Public Opinion and Political Change in Poland, 1980-1982* (Cambridge, 1985), p.49.

<sup>58</sup> See: ‘Strikers call the tune in Poland’, *The Economist*, 19 July 1980. Gierek’s chief economist claimed ‘the government had learnt the lesson of 1976’. Price increases would be gradual.



media was silent on the strikes. As in 1976 telephones at the enterprise were disconnected and the gates closed. Negotiations were entered into with the workers' commission, however.<sup>59</sup>

At the national level two broader trends appear to explain the authorities' restrained response. Firstly, a combination of compensatory wage increases of between 5 – 10 per cent and media silence was sufficient to resolve strikes. Such a tactic was to be expected. The use of economic means accompanied by media silence was Moscow's established method for containing and resolving strikes.<sup>60</sup> Such methods would not be questioned by the Soviet Union, therefore. Secondly, due to their non-violent response the workers had not provided an excuse for a crackdown. Even the MSW noted the 'peaceful character' of the strike at "Ursus".<sup>61</sup> The caution inherent in the Party's response appears to have been linked to the workers' non-violent actions. According to the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, the Party were 'disposed to wait the workers out, so long as their reaction to the price rises remains non-violent and does not spill outside plant premises.'<sup>62</sup> As long as the workers refrained from violence a crackdown could be avoided. Dissent was not tolerated, however. Opposition activists, such as Andrzej Gwiazda and Joanna Duda-Gwiazda, continued to be arrested for the distribution of opposition leaflets.<sup>63</sup>

It was not only the Party exercising restraint however, but also the United States. On 3 July the Secretary of State Edmund Muskie received assurances from the Board for International Broadcasting (BIB) that Radio Free Europe would 'be exercising special care

---

<sup>59</sup> *Robotnik*, Numer Specjalny 57 12.VII.80r.

<sup>60</sup> See: E. Teague, *Solidarity and the Soviet Worker: The Impact of the Polish Events of 1980 on Soviet Internal Politics* (London, 1988), pp. 37-38.

<sup>61</sup> K. Dubiński, 'Zapowiedź Sierpniowego Przełomu: Meldunki MSW o sytuacji w kraju w okresie 1 lipca – 16 sierpnia 1980,' *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Paris, 2000), pp.69-164 (p.75).

<sup>62</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Meat Price Increases In Poland: Public Reaction July 3/4', 4 July 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW006660.

<sup>63</sup> Dubiński, p.77.

in adhering to program policy guidelines, particularly to hard source rule.’<sup>64</sup> Although the U.S. was ultimately criticised by the Polish authorities for RFE’s coverage of the strikes, Washington was keen not to be accused of interfering in the internal affairs of a state with which it enjoyed good relations.<sup>65</sup> While there was a clear chance that ‘political upheaval’ could emerge in the future, for the time being monitoring events was sufficient.<sup>66</sup>

In Europe both friends and partners continued relations with Poland as usual. In early July, for example, the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MSZ) visited Paris to discuss Giscard d’Estaing’s planned visit to Poland in September 1980.<sup>67</sup> A visit to Poland by the Czechoslovak Minister for National Defence also took place as planned from 7 July 1980.<sup>68</sup> Indeed there appears to have been little concern amongst Poland’s allies at this stage. According to Bulgarian Communist Party documents quoted by Jordan Baev, for example, Polish dissidents were dismissed as ‘an insignificant group of people isolated from society’ prior to the Bulgarian Prime Minister Stanko Todorov’s visit to Poland later that month. It was also claimed that in Poland ‘[t]he people are in a state of sound moral and political unity ... Poland is a strong socialist unit....’<sup>69</sup>

More promising still were renewed high-level contacts between West Germany and the Soviet Union following the meeting of Helmut Schmidt and Leonid Brezhnev in Moscow. This was welcomed by the Polish authorities as a positive step in securing détente

---

<sup>64</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from State to Munich, ‘Rumored Strikes in Poland’, 3 July 1980. Document No. STATE 175830.

<sup>65</sup> See: DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, ‘GOP Complains about RFE’, 28 July 1980. Document No: 80WARSAW007379.

<sup>66</sup> Document 288: ‘Memorandum from Steve Larrabee of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) (Washington, July 3, 1980)’, in *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1977 – 1980, Volume VI: Soviet Union*, (Washington, 2013). <<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v06>> [August 2015].

<sup>67</sup> P. Pleskot, *Kłopotliwa Panna “S”: Postawy polityczne Zachodu wobec “Solidarności” na tle stosunków z PRL (1980 – 1989)*, (Warsaw, 2013), p.60.

<sup>68</sup> ‘Visitors: Czechoslovak Defence Minister in Poland’, *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 9 July 1980.

<sup>69</sup> J. Baev, ‘Bulgaria and the Political Crises in Czechoslovakia (1968) and Poland (1980/81)’, *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin*, 11 (1998), pp.96-101 (p.98).

and aiding the improvement of the general climate of international affairs.<sup>70</sup> Whilst discussions had mostly concerned issues such as Afghanistan and arms control, Schmidt's visit also marked the beginning of negotiations for West German participation in what 'would be the largest East-West trade agreement in history': the construction of a Soviet gas pipeline running from Western Siberia to Western Europe. Of great importance for Moscow, negotiations continued in Bonn during July. A number of other Western states and companies were also involved in the project.<sup>71</sup> While East-West relations post-Afghanistan were undeniably under strain therefore, no further destabilisation took place. This was to the benefit of all Poles. As Adam Bromke reported on the eve of the strikes, 'the deteriorating climate in East-West relations' was of great concern in Poland:

They suffered so much during World War II that they abhor the very thought of another conflict in Europe. They are also painfully aware that the breakdown of détente may lead to a closing of ranks in the Soviet bloc and the isolation of Poland from the West. All this at a time when the domestic Polish scene is already fraught with considerable danger.<sup>72</sup>

A further deterioration in East-West relations would have done nothing to help Poland. Any steps towards improving or stabilising the situation were to be welcomed.

### **Western Governments/Western Banks**

While worker unrest and international instability would do nothing to improve Poland's economic situation, even without taking such factors into consideration Poland's financial outlook was bleak.<sup>73</sup> It was not expected to improve any time soon. This was a matter of some importance not only for domestic, but also for international reasons. A report under preparation by Britain's Joint Intelligence Committee, for example, explored the issue of Polish debt rescheduling as well as its economic consequences for the UK. If Poland chose

---

<sup>70</sup> 'After the Brezhnev-Schmidt Meeting: Polish Reaction', *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 7 July 1980.

<sup>71</sup> A.E. Stent, *Soviet Energy and Western Europe* (New York, 1982), pp.60-64.

<sup>72</sup> A. Bromke, *Poland: The Last Decade* (Oakville, 1981), p.164.

<sup>73</sup> See: CIA FOIA: 'Eastern Europe: Limited Economic Prospects', 9 January 1980; CIA FOIA: 'Poland: Economic Problems', 3 July 1980.

to request Western assistance and a 'moratorium' were called on Poland's officially guaranteed debt, it was estimated that Britain would experience losses 'of up to £150 - £200 million a year'. It was anticipated, however, that Poland would attempt 'to muddle through' rather than seek such an agreement with the West or ask Moscow to 'bail her out'.<sup>74</sup> Britain was not alone in facing such risks at a time of severe domestic economic constraint. France, West Germany, the United States, Austria and Italy were also at risk. An agreement had already been reached on the fringes of the G-7 in June to adopt a multilateral response to any Polish approaches for new government guaranteed credits unless they were 'tied to specific projects'.<sup>75</sup> Poland was facing tough times. In spite of the strikes, it was Poland's economic crisis and the absence of a plan to emerge from it that was being highlighted by France.<sup>76</sup>

It was with her other Western partners that Poland was most closely involved, however. The Austrian, West German and Anglo-American deals all required completion. None of them appear to have been nearing this point in spite of earlier hopes and expectations, however. Although the signing of the Austrian loan was recorded in RFE reports and discussed at Politburo on 1 July, the Austrian banks had not transferred funds to Bank Handlowy by the anticipated 4 July completion date.<sup>77</sup> Reports on the West German loan were also unpromising. The deal remained subject to intense negotiation between the West German government and bankers. The Poles were due in Bonn and Frankfurt during

---

<sup>74</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f118: Letter from CLG Mallaby to Mr Ferguson, 'Poland's Economic Problems', 9 July 1980.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Pleskot, *Kłopotliwa Panna "S"*, p. 60.

<sup>77</sup> "Situation Report: Poland, 9 July 1980", 9 July 1980. [Electronic Record] HU OSA 300-8-47-155-14; Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Publications Department: Situation Reports; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest. <<http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:5aaddbb0-ccf6-4ec7-a37a-6a258f8631bc>> [August 2015]; AAN, KC PZPR Biuro Polityczne, V/158, 490-493, Protokół Nr 10 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 1 lipca 1980r. Załącznik Nr 3a [1.07.80r.], Warszawa, dnia 27 czerwca: 'Informacja o wynikach wizyty Prezesa Rady Ministrów Towarzysza Edwarda Babiucha w Austrii'.

the week beginning 7 July for further negotiations.<sup>78</sup> Polish dealings with the Anglo-American banking consortium were also proving difficult. Although the Polish authorities had presented the banks with improved balance of payments forecasts for 1980 and 1981 at the London meeting on 3 July, there was still no agreement on the loan. As a result, the Poles had agreed to 'reconsider their position'. A telex was sent to over fifty banks to arrange a follow-up session that would take place in London on 10 July. It was anticipated that the Polish side would 'press the banks to commit themselves' during the meeting and 'that, given some hard selling, they might achieve a package of up to [...] \$300 million'.<sup>79</sup> While an agreement was likely in the near future, Poland's short-term economic future was far from assured. Mid-July was likely to be a crucial moment in Poland's economic relations with the West. As the Bank of England observed, 'much will clearly depend on the outcome of this week's meeting of bankers in London.'<sup>80</sup>

While continued strikes were only likely to complicate the negotiations further, the Party was unlikely to rescind the price increases responsible for the unrest due to the importance of the reforms for the banks. As a CIA report concluded:

The uncertain situation may delay final action on a major balance-of-payments loan to Poland, discussed by Western bankers [...]. If Warsaw keeps the situation under control, however, the bankers may be encouraged to proceed, especially since the introduction of price increases is a sign that Warsaw has begun to carry out at least one aspect of a stabilization program.<sup>81</sup>

Given the close interaction between the economic reforms, the loan agreements and the worker unrest, it no doubt came as a relief that by the end of the first working week in July the strikes had died down. This did not mean that they were over, however. As one Western

---

<sup>78</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f112: Telegram from Bonn to FCO. Telegram Number 520 of 3 July, 'FCO Tel 1157 to Washington: Polish Credit', 3 July 1980; TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f116: Telegram from Bonn to FCO. Telegram Number 545 of 08 July, 'MyTelno 528: Polish Credit', 8 July 1980.

<sup>79</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f117: Letter from LFT Smith (Bank of England) to MV Hawtin (HM Treasury), 'Poland', 8 July 1980.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> CIA FOIA: 'Poland: Reaction to Price Increases', 5 July 1980.

journalist noted, the Friday in question preceded the one Saturday a month when industrial enterprises shut down. It was therefore ‘something of a holiday for many employees’ as they would call in sick or not work a full day so as to enjoy a longer break over the weekend.<sup>82</sup> There was still the possibility that strikes would return at the start of the following week, a likelihood increased by the fact that the authorities had not yet fully implemented all of the price increases. According to CIA reports, although they had not been forced to reverse the rises, they had delayed them in 25 per cent of the regions.<sup>83</sup> Enterprises could still emerge on strike once they were introduced.

### **Lublin Rising**

On 8 July a new strike broke out at the WSK aircraft factory in Świdnik, near Lublin. It marked the beginning of the first major strike wave that summer, which would culminate in the total paralysis of the south-eastern city of Lublin. Although the Świdnik strike can be seen as something of a watershed in retrospect, the cause of the strike was no different to the earliest strikes that July: the introduction of higher meat prices. Finding that prices at the enterprise canteen had increased without a compensatory rise in wages, workers downed tools. By 12.30 the entire factory had halted work.<sup>84</sup> By 14.00 Warsaw had been informed.<sup>85</sup> As the strike escalated, so did the workers’ demands. Whilst in initial talks with heads of production and the Party *aktyw* workers demanded only a meeting with management and the abolition of the increases, by the end of the day they had presented 35 demands.<sup>86</sup> Among them was a demand that proved increasingly popular elsewhere: for

---

<sup>82</sup> ‘Polish Plants Calm After Price Strikes’, *New York Times*, 5 July 1980.

<sup>83</sup> CIA FOIA: ‘Poland: Discontent Subsides’, 8 July 1980.

<sup>84</sup> A. Kamińska, ‘Strajk w Świdniku w lipcu 1980 r.’, in: W. Polak and others (eds.), *Czas Przełomu: Solidarność 1980-1981*, (Gdańsk, 2010), pp.425-435 (p.428).

<sup>85</sup> ‘1980 lipiec 8, Lublin – Informacja I sekretarza Komitetu Wojewódzkiego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej w Lublinie Władysława Kruka dla Wydziału Organizacyjnego Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej, Sektor Informacji’, in: M. Choma-Juśńska and M. Dąbrowski (eds.), *NSZZ “Solidarność” Na Lubelszczyźnie 1980 – 1981: Wybór źródeł*, (Lublin, 2011), pp.39-40.

<sup>86</sup> Kamińska, p.428.

workers to receive family allowances at the same level as those received by the police.<sup>87</sup> Despite talks that included not only workers' representatives and management, but also senior members of the regional Party committee, the Świdnik strike continued the following day.<sup>88</sup> It was not the only enterprise on strike in the region. MSW reports list strikes at a number of enterprises on 9 July, including at the "Agromet" agricultural machinery factory in Lublin where a three hour stoppage took place.<sup>89</sup> While the "Agromet" strike was short-lived, the WSK strike remained unresolved. Even the appearance of Aleksander Kopec, Minister for the Engineering Industry, was not enough to bring it to an end. The workers refused to listen to him calling for Gierek instead.<sup>90</sup>

Gierek was in Warsaw addressing the Party's economic leadership on Poland's performance in the first half of the year, however. He presented a positive view of Poland's economic progress. Meat sales were not discussed. Strikes also went unmentioned. He confirmed that there would be no change in economic policy, but promised improvements with regard to a number of welfare related issues the following year. These included increases in family allowances and pensions, along with greater help for single mothers. He also hinted that wages for those on the lowest salaries would improve.<sup>91</sup> Gierek's hopes of being able to buy off Polish workers proved misplaced, however. The Party's policies and promises meant little to workers. Even economists and Party members were critical.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> J.J. Lipski, *KOR: A History of the Workers' Defense Committee in Poland, 1976-1981*, (Berkeley and London, 1985), pp.417-418; J. Holzer, *"Solidarność" 1980-1981: Geneza i Historia*, (Warsaw, 1983), p.59.

<sup>88</sup> See: Kamińska, 428-429.

<sup>89</sup> K. Dubiński, 'Zapowiedź Sierpniowego Przełomu: Meldunki MSW o sytuacji w kraju w okresie 1 lipca – 16 sierpnia 1980,' *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Paris, 2000), pp.69-164 (pp.81-83).

<sup>90</sup> J-Y. Potel, *The Summer Before The Frost* (London, 1982), p.35.

<sup>91</sup> K. Ruane, *The Polish Challenge* (London, 1982), p.3.

<sup>92</sup> The clearest example of this was provided by an article entitled 'The People and the Economy' by *Polityka* editor and Central Committee member Mieczysław Rakowski. Published on 5 July 1980, it attracted much attention in the West. Critical of Gierek it also made reference to Poland's debt problems and the need for structural reforms. Gierek's former chief economist was scathing in response. He argued that Rakowski's appeal for structural reforms 'was quite meaningless [...] unless it was also meant to invoke a "systemic change" that was clearly unacceptable to the majority of the Party (and the Soviet Union) in political terms.'

There was also only limited support from Poland's partners. At their meeting with bankers in London on 10 July the Poles were shocked to gain promises totalling only \$150 - \$160 million. This was insufficient to guarantee the participation of a number of banks who had agreed to become involved if Poland could raise \$300 million and further efforts were undertaken to persuade British banks to play a greater role as a result. Prospects for the West German loan had improved, however. The major West German banks were reportedly pushing for completion of the loan with a view to signing 'on 17 July'.<sup>93</sup> On 11 July meanwhile Zbigniew Brzezinski reportedly assured Rakowski that Gierek and Babiuch could rely on the continued 'help' of the U.S.<sup>94</sup> Such support was vital for the Poles. Due to another bad harvest they required further agricultural credits of \$60 million (1980) and \$670 million (1981).<sup>95</sup>

### **Tension Mounts**

On 10 July a dramatic escalation in the number of strikes across Poland began to take place, particularly in Lublin. While the strike at WSK Świdnik continued, a number of new strikes broke out in the city itself. "Agromet" was amongst those halting work again, this time on a much larger scale.<sup>96</sup> The MSW upgraded its description of the strikes from 'Interruptions in Work and Expressions of Disquiet' to the more serious 'Social Unrest and Conflicts in the

---

Full translations of 'The People and the Economy' were circulated by both the American and British Embassies. The American translation included a message for the article to be forwarded to Zbigniew Brzezinski at the NSC. See: DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Polityka Chief Editor Rakowski Comments on Poland's Current Socio-Economic Situation', 9 July 1980; TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4137, f67: 'Letter from David Joy (British Embassy, Warsaw) to CCR Battiscombe (EESD, FCO)', 18 July 1980; TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f125: Teleletter from WV Fell (Warsaw) to RA Facey (EESD), 'Economic Debates in Poland', 14 July 1980.

<sup>93</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156: From LFT Smith (Bank of England) to MV Hawtin (HM Treasury), 'Poland', 11 July 1980.

<sup>94</sup> 'Kalendarium', in: Z. Włodek (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a „Solidarność” 1980-1981* (London, 1992), pp.600-650 (p.601).

<sup>95</sup> CIA FOIA: 'Poland: Economic Problems', 3 July 1980.

<sup>96</sup> Dubiński, 'Zapowiedź Sierpniowego Przełomu', pp.83-86.



Workplaces'.<sup>97</sup> Strikes spread throughout the region. On 11 July, for example, 1000 workers on the first shift at the FSC lorry factory refused to work. They were joined by 600 workers on the second shift. The workers called not just for pay increases and an end to commercial shops, but for better social conditions and an improvement in the supply of meat.<sup>98</sup> The strike at WSK Świdnik ended, however. A nine point written agreement was signed between striking workers and the Polish authorities (reportedly the first such agreement that summer). The Minister for Internal Affairs warned of the detrimental impact of the agreement on other enterprises as news of it spread, however.<sup>99</sup> The situation was far from under control.

On 11 July an emergency meeting of the Politburo took place. Despite the severity of the problems, Politburo members failed to come up with any solutions. Gierek argued that there was a need to 'take all measures to quickly restore the normal rhythm of work' in striking enterprises, but noted that given Poland's economic problems it was proving difficult to meet the increasing number of demands being made. He also repeated the points from his earlier television address and outlined the need for higher prices, placing responsibility for explaining them onto enterprise management teams.<sup>100</sup> All over the country however, Polish workers were not responding to such efforts. Indeed, management teams were being forced into increasingly desperate measures to break the strikes. For example, that weekend management at one Lublin enterprise carried out activities on the

---

<sup>97</sup> A. Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge, 2008), p.231.

<sup>98</sup> Dubiński, p.87.

<sup>99</sup> See: '1980 lipiec 11, Świdnik – Porozumienie zawarte między dyrekcją a przedstawicielami strajkującej załogi Wytwórni Sprzętu Komunikacyjnego "PZL-Świdnik"', in: M. Choma-Juśńska and M. Dąbrowski (eds.), *NSZZ "Solidarność" Na Lubelszczyźnie 1980 – 1981: Wybór źródeł*, (Lublin, 2011), pp.41-42; M. Dąbrowski, *Lubelski Lipiec 1980* (Lublin, 2000), pp.105-106; A. Kamińska, 'Strajk w Świdniku w lipcu 1980 r.', in: W. Polak and others (eds.), *Czas Przełomu: Solidarność 1980-1981*, (Gdańsk, 2010), pp.425-435 (p.434).

<sup>100</sup> 'Protokół Nr 11 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 11 lipca 1980 r.', in: Włodek (ed.) *Tajne Dokumenty*, pp.19-20.

shop floor overnight in an attempt to fool the first shift on Monday into believing that workers had gone to work as usual on the final shift on Saturday.<sup>101</sup>

The rest of the Politburo were little better than Gierek. They provided support for the policy of price increases and recognised the need to curtail the stoppages, but few suggestions as to how to halt them. Prime Minister Edward Babiuch suggested using the Party *aktyw* to defend the new policy, while Stanisław Kania (responsible for national security) stressed that time was of the essence. He provided no specific solutions.<sup>102</sup> Unwilling to take direct responsibility for the problems facing Poland, the Politburo continued to pass the buck to enterprise management. Managers of larger enterprises were flown to Warsaw and told ‘to buy “social peace” – preferably at limited cost.’<sup>103</sup> Such costs were not limited to wage increases, however. In some cases refrigerators of meat were taken to striking enterprises in an effort to buy off the workers. Although dubbed by Daniel Singer ‘the strangest of strategic reserves’, it provides another example of the use of Soviet methods. Indeed Moscow had made use of this method to quell large scale industrial unrest as recently as May.<sup>104</sup> Such methods proved insufficient, however. Although KOR reported the successful conclusion of thirty-three different strikes with an average wage improvement of 10 per cent, there were more than twenty enterprises on strike in Lublin alone.<sup>105</sup>

On 11 July KOR issued its second public statement that summer.<sup>106</sup> As well as repeating the key points from their earlier appeal, KOR also examined the problem of economic inefficiency within the Polish system. They outlined a number of steps needed to save Poland from disaster. Unlike the Party’s public statements, KOR’s drew attention to

---

<sup>101</sup> Dąbrowski, p.112.

<sup>102</sup> ‘Protokół Nr 11 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 11 lipca 1980 r.’, pp. 21-22.

<sup>103</sup> D. Singer, *The Road to Gdańsk: Poland and the USSR* (New York, 1981), p.213.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 213; E. Teague, *Solidarity and the Soviet Worker: The Impact of the Polish Events of 1980 on Soviet Internal Politics* (London, 1988), p.41.

<sup>105</sup> K. Ruane, *The Polish Challenge* (London, 1982), p.4.

<sup>106</sup> See: KOR Statement (11 July 1980), in: P. Raina, *Independent Social Movements in Poland* (London, 1981) pp. 446-448.

the fact that the country's problems did not lie solely in the economy, but also in agriculture and the lack of accurate information available to society. KOR also adopted a fairer and more egalitarian approach to food shortages than the authorities did. While the price increases introduced by the authorities through the transfer of meat to commercial shops meant that certain cuts of meat would be accessible only to higher earners, KOR's proposal for 'general rationing' meant that all would have equal access to meat. The burden would be shared equally (an outcome far more in keeping with socialist ideals of equality than those achieved through the Party's reforms).

It was arguably the need for dialogue between society and the state, emphasised in the statement's final point that was most important. Once again KOR stressed the need for the non-violent resolution of the worker-state confrontation. They wanted no repeat of recent history. They made clear that not only was the onus on the Party not to use violence, but also to respect the 'fundamental human rights' to which they had committed themselves in international agreements. Respect for such rights was vital and would 'favour an agreement concerning the most urgent economic, political and social reforms.'<sup>107</sup> This appeal to the Party's legal commitments was typical of the approach pioneered by KOR during the late 1970s. So too was KOR's declaration that above all self-organisation, including the creation of 'independent trade unions', was essential for the well-being of Polish society.<sup>108</sup> In keeping with the opposition's political thinking during the 1970s, it exploited the notion that under a system which sought total control, autonomous social action was in itself a form of political action. The self-organisation of workers was one such example of this. Lublin remained at its heart. The FSC lorry factory had taken the place of

---

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p.447.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., pp.447-448.

WSK Świdnik as the main enterprise on strike. By 12 July the entire workforce was refusing to work.<sup>109</sup>

## **The Reality of Life**

In spite of the problems sweeping Poland, the authorities were doing their best to hide them. No official admission that strikes were taking place was made, though officials admitted to foreign journalists that “discussions” were taking place in some factories.<sup>110</sup> The full extent of Poland’s problems even appears to have been hidden from their allies. Following his visit to Poland on 14-15 July, for example, Stanko Todorov praised Warsaw’s response to ‘their current economic problems’. They were ‘approaching the complicated problems with a sense of realism and [were] taking active steps to overcome them, taking into consideration the working people’s feelings.’<sup>111</sup> It was a statement at odds with the reality of Polish life. In addition to the strikes, problems were becoming ever more evident in the form of out-of-the-ordinary food shortages. Not only meat products, but also fruit and dairy products such as milk, cheese and butter were in short supply. Even in Warsaw, where shops were generally well-stocked, supplies were poor. Regular shops selling meat often had none to sell. On some days nor did the commercial shops. It was a similar story throughout Poland. There was also ‘a perplexing shortage’ of apples and other fruits. Although thought to be temporary, the U.S. believed that the severity of these shortages had contributed to labour unrest. It was an additional problem for Gierek and his team to resolve.<sup>112</sup>

The urgency with which they needed to resolve such problems soon increased. The combination of meat price increases and food shortages was beginning to bite, increasing

---

<sup>109</sup> K. Dubiński, ‘Zapowiedź Sierpniowego Przełomu: Meldunki MSW o sytuacji w kraju w okresie 1 lipca – 16 sierpnia 1980,’ *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Paris, 2000), pp.69-164 (p.90).

<sup>110</sup> ‘Polish workers win rises after stoppages’, *The Times*, 12 July 1980.

<sup>111</sup> Quoted in, J. Baev, ‘Bulgaria and the Political Crises in Czechoslovakia (1968) and Poland (1980/81)’, *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin*, 11 (1998), pp.96-101 (p.98).

<sup>112</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, ‘Unusual Food Shortages in Poland’, 15 July 1980. Document No: 80WARSAW07020.

the risk of broader social unrest. A manager of a commercial shop in Warsaw, for example, noted that institutions such as pre-schools and hospitals were no longer able to provide 'an adequate diet' because of the increases.<sup>113</sup> Administrative officials at the University of Warsaw were so concerned by the poor quality of food in the university's dining rooms that they asked the U.S. Embassy if they could provide 'special food allocations' for American students and professors on exchange. They feared they would leave and the exchange programme put at risk if the situation were not resolved.<sup>114</sup> The regime was struggling to fulfil the basic needs of an increasing number of citizens. The British predicted that 'real headaches' were in store for them if no improvement in meat supplies was achieved.<sup>115</sup> Poland faced significant difficulties. Continued economic support was needed. The only promising sign was that on the basis of improved figures for the first six months of 1980 the Anglo-American loan deal was now to be pursued 'on "a best-efforts basis"' with Poland expected to secure in excess of \$200 million.<sup>116</sup> Poland's other problems continued to mount, however. By 16 July more than 8000 workers in 27 enterprises were on strike in Lublin and the surrounding area alone.<sup>117</sup>

### **The Railway Workers' Strike**

That morning a strike broke out amongst railway workers in a number of departments at Lublin's state railways (PKP). By the following day the strike encompassed the entire railway hub. Once again the strike took the form of an unusual style of stay-in or occupation strike. The majority of workers remained on the premises for their shift before being

---

<sup>113</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Polish Meat Price Rises and Reaction: Sitrep July 14', 15 July 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW006998.

<sup>114</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Unusual Food Shortages in Poland', 15 July 1980. Document No: 80WARSAW07020.

<sup>115</sup> TNA:PRO: FCO 28/4156, f130: Telegram from Warsaw to FCO, 'My Telegram No.195. Meat Price Rises', 17 July 1980.

<sup>116</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f126: From LFT Smith [Bank of England] to MV Hawtin [HM Treasury], 'Poland – Balance of Payments Loan', 14 July 1980.

<sup>117</sup> Dubiński, 'Zapowiedź Sierpniowego Przełomu', p.99.

replaced by the next one, which would then emerge on strike. Only the strike committee along with about fifty percent of those on strike remained at the hub for the duration.<sup>118</sup> Although this meant fewer workers occupying the railway hub at any one time than in a fully-fledged occupation strike, it ultimately made no difference to the strength or effectiveness of the strike. This is because the nature of the enterprise targeted by the strike, as well as the skills of those working there, were more significant than the numbers of those withdrawing their labour (a fact suggested by the Party's response).

The PKP's strike committee formulated a total of 14 demands, which the MSW recorded as relating to wages and 'social conditions'. A number of their demands were more significant, however. Alongside calls for a pay rise of 1300 złotych, the introduction of work free Saturdays, and parity of family allowances with those obtained by the police and the army, the railway workers also made one political demand: the ability to elect new representatives to the official trade unions.<sup>119</sup> Though not a call for the independent trade unions desired by KOR, it was a significant demand. Not only was it a demand made in Szczecin a decade earlier, but it openly reflected the workers' unhappiness with the official trade unions. They had been conspicuous by their absence that summer. They had not defended the workers at all.

It was not the political nature of this demand that drew the Party's attention to the railway strike however, but one of the workers' actions: the decision to block the railway line at Lublin with 70 locomotives.<sup>120</sup> With Lublin located only 50 miles from the Soviet border it was a significant act of nonviolence affecting not only domestic passengers, but also the Soviet Union and East Germany. This was a point not lost on Gierek. As he later

---

<sup>118</sup> M. Choma, 'Strajk lubelskich kolejarzy w lipcu 1980 r.', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 12 (23), grudzień 2002, pp.21-27 (p.23).

<sup>119</sup> See: Ibid., p.23; M. Dąbrowski, *Lubelski Lipiec 1980* (Lublin, 2000), pp.120-121; Dubiński, p.101.

<sup>120</sup> See: Dąbrowski, p.123; Dubiński, p.101.

acknowledged, it was a route of great significance for Moscow as it was a vital supply line to Soviet troops stationed in East Germany. Soviet goods were also exported to East Germany along this route.<sup>121</sup> It was an act not only of domestic, but also international consequence. As such it was likely to aggravate Poland's relations with her allies, generating pressure on the Polish leadership to act. Quite simply, 'the stoppage looked like thumbing their noses at the mighty neighbour.'<sup>122</sup>

There was no immediate response from the Polish leadership, however. Although MSW reports recorded "breaks in work" at some 40 enterprises in the region on 17 July, including on Lublin's railways, Gierek made no mention of the strikes during his speech at a youth rally in nearby Chełm that day.<sup>123</sup> The official press too had yet to comment: a sign that the Party still wished to prevent contagion. The focus of the media was on generating public acceptance of the Party's economic reforms instead.<sup>124</sup> Nonetheless news of the strikes continued to spread. On the one hand this was simply due to the difficulty of keeping news of a railway strike hidden from passengers. Travelling from Warsaw to Lublin, for example, passengers were alerted to the fact that something was wrong when they had to take a replacement bus service for the rest of their journey from a village close to Lublin. One passenger recalled hearing of the strike when he boarded the bus.<sup>125</sup> On the other hand, it was due to the continued role of KOR in collecting information which was then broadcast back to Poland via Western media such as RFE.<sup>126</sup>

As with other regional strikes, KOR established a team to collect information in Lublin. Led by Wojciech Onyszkiewicz and assisted by a team of activists involved locally

---

<sup>121</sup> J. Rolicki, *Edward Gierek: Przerwana Dekada* (Warsaw, 1990), p.153.

<sup>122</sup> D. Singer, *The Road to Gdańsk: Poland and the USSR* (New York, 1981), p.215.

<sup>123</sup> Dubiński, pp.100-101; Dąbrowski, pp.126-127.

<sup>124</sup> See: 'Trybuna Ludu on "Tidying up the economy"', *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 16 July 1980;

'Trybuna Ludu on earnings and productivity', *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 17 July 1980.

<sup>125</sup> P. Nowacki, "'Zapis", "Spotkania" i potyczki z Kuroniem', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 7-8 (2005), pp.136-147 (p.144).

<sup>126</sup> J. Skórzyński, *Siła bezsilnych: Historia Komitetu Obrony Robotników* (Warsaw, 2012), 443.

with KPN, it played an important role in Lublin.<sup>127</sup> Unlike elsewhere however, information gathering in the Lublin region proved far more difficult for KOR. The group lacked a significant foothold in the region.<sup>128</sup> With pre-existing links largely absent, simply making contact with workers in Lublin and gaining their trust was a major task. Although contacts were finally made, it was far from straightforward. A significant barrier of fear had to be overcome in approaching workers afraid of provocations. Even at the Lublin PKP, where two strike leaders had limited prior contact with the opposition and underground press, making such contacts was far from easy.<sup>129</sup> It was not only KOR that experienced such difficulties, however. The U.S. Embassy in Warsaw dispatched a team of three officials to Lublin to gather information, but they returned without success. Western embassies remained dependent on the Western press for much of their information. The Western press in turn remained dependent on KOR.<sup>130</sup> KOR did not publicise all of the information it collected, however. A later incident concerning the desecration of a Soviet monument in Chełm was apparently not reported for fear of being seen as an ‘anti-Soviet provocation’.<sup>131</sup> KOR was well aware of the geopolitical realities and limits within which they had to operate.

## Scabs

On 18 July a dramatic escalation of the strikes in Lublin occurred. Municipal transport workers along with those of the Polish long-distance bus service went on strike. They were not alone. The MSW estimated that an additional 41 workplaces were striking in Lublin and

---

<sup>127</sup> M. Choma-Jusińska, *Środowiska opozycyjne na Lubelszczyźnie 1975-1980* (Warsaw and Lublin, 2009), pp. 387-388.; J.J. Lipski, *KOR: A History of the Workers' Defense Committee in Poland, 1976-1981* (Berkeley and London, 1985), pp.425-426.

<sup>128</sup> See: Choma-Jusińska.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., pp.389; A. Friszke, *Czas KOR-u. Jacek Kuroń a geneza Solidarność* (Warsaw, 2011), pp.526-527.

<sup>130</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f141: From MR Melhuish (HM Embassy Warsaw) to CLG Mallaby (EESD), ‘Labour Unrest in Poland’, 25 July 1980.

<sup>131</sup> P. Nowacki, ‘“Zapis”, “Spotkania” i potyczki z Kuroniem’, *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 7-8 (2005), pp.136-147 (pp. 146-147). See also: Friszke, pp.529-530; Choma-Jusińska, pp.390.



the surrounding area. Approximately 18,000 workers were on strike.<sup>132</sup> Though not coordinated, the sheer number of workers and enterprises on strike meant that Lublin now presented a more significant challenge than before. In effect, there was a general strike in the city. Nonviolent resistance had reached new heights. The Party did not allow the escalation to go unchallenged. Blacklegs were employed in an attempt to break the strike at the Lublin PKP. Railway workers from elsewhere were sent in to replace not only the workers, but also the skills and knowledge they had withdrawn as a result of the strike. It was not simply a matter of the authorities sending “bodies” in to end the strike. They needed to replace the striking workers with people who could actually do the job. Unskilled replacements would not be sufficient to restore order to the line. The attempt to break the strike proved unsuccessful, however. Following an appeal from the strike committee, the blacklegs refused to take up work.<sup>133</sup>

The strike committee’s success in persuading blacklegs not to break the strike should not be interpreted as a sign of solidarity amongst workers, however. There was evident tension between the Lublin railway workers and those elsewhere. Calls for other railway workers to support them were turned down. Railway workers had never been on strike before and those from Chełm reportedly declared, ‘we are like doctors – we cannot go on strike.’<sup>134</sup> The comparison inherent in this statement between the importance of public transport and the importance of healthcare is an important one. Another contentious strike was that of workers at a hospital clinic. Kitchen staff went on strike and nurses went to buy food with their own money before preparing it for their patients.<sup>135</sup> Strike actions that hindered medical care or the manufacture of medication at a time of acute shortages were

---

<sup>132</sup> Dubiński, ‘Zapowiedź Sierpniowego Przełomu’, p.103.

<sup>133</sup> See: M. Choma, ‘Strajk lubelskich kolejarzy w lipcu 1980 r.’, *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 12 (23), grudzień 2002, pp.21-27 (p.24).

<sup>134</sup> S. Jadcak, ‘Diariusz lipcowych dni’, *Miesiące: Przegląd Związkowy*, 1 (1981), pp. 55- 74 (p. 67). See also: Choma, p.24; M. Dąbrowski, *Lubelski Lipiec 1980* (Lublin, 2000), p.140.

<sup>135</sup> Jadcak, p. 67. See also: Dąbrowski, p.139.

criticised in the official press.<sup>136</sup> Even Kuroń noted that the hospital strike struggled for social approval.<sup>137</sup> Some structures of power were too important to society as a whole to be targeted. Doing so not only caused unnecessary suffering for the most vulnerable members of society, but also acted as a provocation. Keeping health services running was essential, therefore. The railways were more contentious. In spite of the arguments of their colleagues elsewhere in the region, railway workers at Lublin continued their action. They denounced their colleagues from Chełm as ‘scabs’.<sup>138</sup> Solidarity, whilst evident between groups of workers and the opposition, was still far from assured amongst workers themselves.

A significant shift in the Party’s response was also detectable in the official press. In his diary entry for 13 July Stanisław Jadczyk, a local journalist, noted that the language in the official press remained ‘the language of camouflage’.<sup>139</sup> On 18 July a change took place. An appeal co-authored by two Central Committee members from Warsaw ended the Party’s silence on the strikes. For the first time the local Party leadership rather than management publicly addressed the situation. A breakthrough had taken place. Though only published locally in an effort to contain news of the strikes, the appeal provided the first direct acknowledgement that widespread ‘breaks in work’ were causing difficulties in the day-to-day lives of Lublin’s inhabitants. This was a fact already evident to Lublin’s residents for well-over a week, but which had only begun to be acknowledged in the local press the day before.<sup>140</sup>

The appeal called ‘for peaceful and prudent conduct’ in Lublin. Disruptions to deliveries of ‘milk for children, bread for people, supplies for hospitals’ were highlighted, as

---

<sup>136</sup> See: TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f141-142: ‘Our Common Concerns’, *Sztandar Ludu – Lublin*, No.56, 17 July 1980. An example of the criticism: ‘Can one put one’s pay and human life on the scales?’

<sup>137</sup> J. Kuroń, ‘Ostry Zakręt’, in J. Kuroń, *Opozycja pisma polityczne 1969-1989* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.204-208 (p.204).

<sup>138</sup> Jadczyk, p.67. See also: Dąbrowski, p.140; Choma, p.24.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 62. See also: Dąbrowski, p.112.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

were those in transport which caused problems for children and workers travelling to summer camps and holidays. While accepting the 'justified' and 'urgent' nature of the workers' demands and suggesting that they were open to dialogue, there was little to suggest that such prospects were genuine. The Party remained as distant as ever and there was an absence of any sense that the Party was responsible for the problems facing Lublin's citizens. Responsibility for resolving the problems seemed to lie with the city's residents alone. The authorities appealed to their 'hearts and minds' to undertake all possible efforts to restore daily life in Lublin to its usual rhythm. They also called upon the area's renowned 'patriotism, dedication and devotion' qualities which had been demonstrated time and again during the most troublesome moments of Poland's recent history.<sup>141</sup> Not only were such qualities needed once again, but with the annual celebration to mark the formation of the Committee of National Liberation in Poland at Lublin on 22 July 1944 forthcoming, it is possible that there was an added need for Lublin to rediscover her earlier, more virtuous qualities.

The Party did not limit its response to efforts at strike-breaking and appeals. Steps were also taken to ease problems with food supplies caused by Poland's wider problems and strikes at Lublin's bakery and dairy. The police and army were sent in to deliver bread, butter and milk from elsewhere. By the afternoon many shops still lacked staple items. Others had resorted to rationing butter. Hot water shortages were also evident due to strike action at the city's power station.<sup>142</sup> Though Poland's problems were already severe as a result of the Party's long-term mismanagement, it had to take action to prevent the social situation, and with it the strikes, from worsening. The use of the army to deliver food under such circumstances raises an interesting point in this regard. Though as 1970 (but not 1976)

---

<sup>141</sup> '1980 lipiec 18, Lublin – Apel władz lokalnych województwa lubelskiego wystosowany do mieszkańców Lublina w momencie kulminacyjnego natężenia strajków w zakładach pracy', in: M Choma-Juńska and M Dąbrowski (eds.), *NSZZ "Solidarność" Na Lubelszczyźnie 1980 – 1981: Wybór źródeł* (Lublin, 2011), pp.57-58.

<sup>142</sup> 'Polish Army called in as rail strikers blockade station', *The Times*, 19 July 1980.

demonstrated, the Polish army could be used as part of a crackdown during periods of social unrest, events in Lublin demonstrated that they could also serve a humanitarian purpose. Unlike the Party, the army was well respected.<sup>143</sup>

### **‘Friends’ and ‘Partners’**

The international dimension of the railway blockade continued to trouble the Politburo. They feared it might trigger pressure from Moscow. Gierek denounced the blockade as ‘a strategic strike’. If it continued, the Politburo ‘should expect some questions from the Soviet comrades.’<sup>144</sup> Gierek’s comments regarding the ‘strategic’ nature of the strike raise the issue of whether it was the scale of the strikes, as well as the concentration of these strikes in one particular region, or the structure of power targeted by the railway blockade that contributed most to the effectiveness of non-violence in Lublin. While the importance of the widespread nature of the strikes should not be underestimated, it seems that the structure of power targeted by non-violence was of particular significance. As Gierek’s comments indicate, it was the international importance of this particular structure that elevated the strike above others in Poland that summer. By chance rather than strategy, the railway workers had hit upon one of the authorities’ weak spots. The other strikes made it both more difficult and more pressing to resolve.

It was clear that calls to mobilise the Party *aktyw* were inadequate. As Jerzy Łukaszewicz noted at Politburo, ‘The party does not exist in the institutes which went on strike.’ Despite his later denunciation of the railway strike, Gierek did not appear to have a solution in mind, however. Having made his usual call to ‘increase economic efficiency’ and warned of the dangers of acquiescing to ‘excessive demands’, Gierek discussed the

---

<sup>143</sup> See: A.A. Michta, *Red Eagle: The Army in Polish Politics, 1944-1988* (Stanford CA, 1989), p.10.

<sup>144</sup> ‘Protocol No. 13 of PUWP CC Politburo Meeting, July 18, 1980’, in: A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (eds.), *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980 -1981: A Documentary History* (Budapest and New York, 2007), p.48.

possibility of placing the railways under military control. He considered the use of the military problematic, however. Enforcing such a 'militarization' would not only be difficult, but would also 'have very serious implications.' He proposed an appeal to the people of Lublin instead. Alongside a proposal for the formation of a commission headed by Deputy Prime Minister Mieczysław Jagielski to negotiate with workers in Lublin, which at Stanisław Kania's suggestion was to be 'a government one', it was this suggestion that was ultimately adopted.<sup>145</sup> The leadership continued to distance itself from the strikes and sought only peaceful means to resolve them. It was not entirely clear why.

One possible reason lies in the statement published by the Politburo in Lublin's official press. Along with the announcement of the Jagielski commission, the statement ended with the reiteration of the Politburo's standard line: the need for a return to normal working practices and the promise of future improvements in welfare. The opening paragraph of the statement was of greater significance, however:

The Politburo expressed deep dissatisfaction at stoppages in production and municipal enterprises as well as in Lublin's railway hub, and also the general situation in the city. This situation undermines the good name of our country, disturbs the confidence in Poland of her partners and may arouse the anxiety of her friends. The atmosphere of tension is convenient for hostile Poles, it creates a dangerous political provocation.<sup>146</sup>

While the release of the statement in Lublin demonstrated the Party's continued desire to restrict information concerning strikes in an effort to prevent contagion, the statement also revealed much about the Politburo's concerns at this time. In domestic terms it singled out both the railway workers and the 'hostile Poles' in KOR as the most troublesome elements to be tackled. In international terms it referenced problems both East and West. During the meeting of the Politburo the Minister of Defence Wojciech Jaruzelski announced the need to

---

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., pp.47-48.

<sup>146</sup> '1980 lipiec 18, Warszawa – Komunikat prasowy z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR w dniu 18 VII 1980 r. w sprawie sytuacji w Lublinie', in: M. Choma-Juńska and M. Dąbrowski (eds.), *NSZZ "Solidarność" Na Lubelszczyźnie 1980 – 1981: Wybór źródeł* (Lublin, 2011), pp. 59-60.

inform the workers ‘what kinds of threats to the nation are created by stoppages.’<sup>147</sup> The declaration that the situation ‘may arouse the anxiety of her friends’ seems to follow on from this. It drew the attention of Western governments at the time and of historians since being seen as a thinly veiled threat of possible Soviet intervention in Poland or, as Andrzej Friszke recently argued, as a reminder that Polish affairs were not solely their own.<sup>148</sup> While the threat of Soviet intervention at this time was an empty one, the focus of Western governments on this threat was more significant. They overlooked the far more important reference in the statement to the West’s role in Polish affairs.

### **The Need to Look Closer to Home**

On 18 July the Department of State requested further information on the Lublin strikes from the embassy in Warsaw.<sup>149</sup> On 20 July the CIA issued an *Alert Memorandum* to the President.<sup>150</sup> Warsaw was struggling to control worker unrest in Lublin. Previous settlements were ‘coming unglued’. The CIA was ‘increasingly concerned that the strikes could degenerate into a violent confrontation with the regime.’ They warned that:

Festering labor unrest could degenerate rapidly into violence [...] and the regime could be obliged to introduce force. If the Polish leadership proved incapable of restoring order in a situation that had deteriorated into violent confrontation, we believe the Soviets would, as a last resort, intervene.<sup>151</sup>

Despite the fear of violence evident in the memorandum, the use of repressive measures by both the Polish leadership and the Soviet Union was deemed unlikely. Although repressive measures were an option, the ‘conciliatory approach’ appeared to enjoy the support of the

---

<sup>147</sup> ‘Protocol No. 13 of PUWP CC Politburo Meeting, July 18, 1980’, p.48.

<sup>148</sup> See, for example: DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to Moscow, ‘Some Preliminary Thoughts on Polish Workers’ Job Actions’, 25 July 1980; A. Friszke, *Czas KOR-u: Jacek Kuroń a geneza Solidarność*, (Warsaw, 2011), p.528.

<sup>149</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from State to Warsaw, ‘Widespread Work Stoppages Reportedly Halt Essential Services in Lublin’, 18 July 1980. Document No. STATE 188749.

<sup>150</sup> CIA FOIA: ‘Alert Memorandum: Poland’, 21 July 1980. See also: D.J. MacEachin, *U.S. Intelligence and the Confrontation in Poland*, (University Park PA, 2002), 19; R.M Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider’s Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (New York, 2006), 162.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

Party. There were no signs of preparations for a crackdown. It was anticipated that Gierek would be 'extremely cautious and [...] seek to avoid the use of force.' He was well aware that its use in December 1970 had led to the downfall of his predecessor.<sup>152</sup>

Soviet intervention was also deemed unlikely. There was a belief that Moscow would not do so while the Olympic Games were underway and while détente with Western Europe was a priority. They would leave things to Gierek.<sup>153</sup> With the exception of Afghanistan as a restraining factor, the *Alert Memorandum* expressed views similar to those found in an earlier memorandum for Brzezinski: 'the Soviets' hands are tied to a great extent, and in the face of any unrest in Poland, they will try to avoid military action if at all possible (at least until after the Olympics).'<sup>154</sup> There were no signs of a Soviet military build-up in Poland or in the borderlands. The media was also silent.<sup>155</sup> *Pravda's* coverage of Poland concerned only the economy.<sup>156</sup> There was no cause for alarm. A later conversation between Schaufele and Jerzy Dąbrowski, an executive secretary to Cardinal Wyszyński, indicated that the Church held similar views. By issuing their statement at a time when Polish workers were maintaining their 'calm and self-disciplined manner' the authorities were simply highlighting their own anxiety. Moscow would only intervene as 'a last resort'.<sup>157</sup> Unless the workers resorted to violence, even a domestic crackdown was unlikely.

Given universal agreement that the Soviet Union would not intervene, the Politburo's claim that the strikes damaged both Poland's 'good name' and 'the confidence

---

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Document 288: 'Memorandum from Steve Larrabee of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) (Washington, July 3, 1980)' in *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1977 – 1980, Volume VI: Soviet Union*, (Washington, 2013). <<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v06>> [August 2015].

<sup>155</sup> CIA FOIA: 'Alert Memorandum: Poland', 21 July 1980.

<sup>156</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f142: Teleletter from Anne Irwin (Moscow) to DS Broucher (EESD) and A Harrison (Warsaw), 'Labour Unrest in Poland', 25 July 1980.

<sup>157</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Church Position On Polish Labor Unrest', 25 July 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW007303.

in Poland of her partners' is more significant. Although overlooked in both contemporary and historical analysis, it indicates concern that the strikes were damaging Warsaw's efforts to secure loans from her Western partners. Given Poland's economic plight and that none of the loan agreements had been completed, such concerns may have been justified. The use of the word 'may' before the threat of Soviet intervention, but not before the statement regarding the damage being done to Poland in the eyes of 'her partners' certainly seems to suggest a sense of certainty that Poland's loan prospects were being hindered by the strikes. The West does not appear to have detected this reference to the role of commercial banks in the Party's statement, however. This suggests not only a lack of awareness of the West's influence over events, but also raises the question of whether the actions of Western banks would support or undermine the foreign policies of Western governments towards Poland.

### **Lublin Falling**

By the time talks between workers and Jagielski took place on 19 July, the security services had taken their first action against the opposition. On 18 July students from the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL), the only independent Catholic university in the Soviet bloc, were detained as a result of their role in gathering information on the strikes.<sup>158</sup> While this was the first major action against those co-operating with the Warsaw opposition that summer, KOR remained untouched. The SB had already begun contemplating an escalation of their activities against KOR, however. According to Andrzej Friszke, the Polish security services had begun to work on a plan to investigate the activities of the opposition some ten days earlier. It would not be implemented that month, however.<sup>159</sup> In Lublin meanwhile, Wojciech Onyszkiewicz and Jerzy Zieleński (a KOR associate) managed to evade arrest.

---

<sup>158</sup> See: K Dubiński, 'Zapowiedź Sierpniowego Przełomu: Meldunki MSW o sytuacji w kraju w okresie 1 lipca – 16 sierpnia 1980,' *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Paris, 2000), pp.69-164 (p.106); M. Choma-Jusińska, *Środowiska opozycyjne na Lubelszczyźnie 1975-1980* (Warsaw and Lublin, 2009) p.394.

<sup>159</sup> A. Friszke, *Czas KOR-u: Jacek Kuroń a geneza Solidarność* (Warsaw, 2011), pp.555-556.



They defied a number of attempts to detain them due to assistance from locals.<sup>160</sup> The harassment of local opposition members with threatening telephone calls continued, however.<sup>161</sup> Minor symbolic displays of support for the strikes in other regions, such as the flying of a flag in Polish colours marked “Lublin”, were also targeted.<sup>162</sup>

No action was taken against the workers, however. The security services engaged primarily in the collection of information and attempts to end the strikes through talks with workers. The size of the strikes had caught them off guard. There was a risk that the use of repressive means against the strikes would backfire.<sup>163</sup> Such fears appear justified. According to MSW reports, some 42 workplaces and approximately 20,000 workers were on strike in the region on 19 July.<sup>164</sup> Faced with such widespread opposition, there was a clear risk that repressive actions against workers could work against the Party. Given the Party’s belief that the ‘confidence’ of Poland’s ‘partners’ had already been affected, they may also have believed that a crackdown would cause further problems with the West. They relied on talks instead.

By 6pm on 19 July the Jagielski Commission had negotiated an end to the Lublin railway workers’ strike. Although not all demands were met, an agreement was signed demonstrating significant gains by the workers. Amongst the more notable concessions made were an agreement for a printed apology from *Sztandar Ludu* for comments it had made about the strike and the right for workers to put forward their own candidates for

---

<sup>160</sup> J.J. Lipski, *KOR. A History of the Workers’ Defense Committee in Poland 1976 – 1981* (Berkeley and London, 1985), p.426.

<sup>161</sup> Choma-Jusińska, pp.395-396.

<sup>162</sup> A. Brożyniak, ‘NSZZ “Solidarność” Region Południowo-Wschodni’, in Ł Kamiński and G Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.5. Polska Środkowo-Wschodnia (Warsaw, 2010), pp.749-800 ( p.751).

<sup>163</sup> M. Choma, ‘Strajk lubelskich kolejarzy w lipcu 1980 r.’, *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 12 (23), grudzień 2002, pp.21-27 (p.26). On ‘backfire’, see: B. Martin, *Justice Ignited: The Dynamics of Backfire* (Lanham MD, 2007).

<sup>164</sup> Dubiński, ‘Zapowiedź Sierpniowego Przełomu’, p.102.

official trade union elections.<sup>165</sup> The significance of the latter point has been questioned by some as striking workers at Szczecin a decade earlier had gained the same agreement only to see the Party restore their control by removing the newly elected members.<sup>166</sup> While only time would tell whether the Lublin agreement suffered the same fate, for the workers it was seen as ‘a step on the road to independent trade unions’.<sup>167</sup> Perhaps more importantly, as one strike leader noted, ‘finally we had the courage [...] to do something.’<sup>168</sup> They had broken through the apathy that afflicted much of Poland’s workforce and begun to organise. The Lublin strike ‘created an essential breakthrough in the life of the country. Workers, young students, intellectuals stood next to one another.’<sup>169</sup> Peasant self-defence groups had also come out in support of the workers.<sup>170</sup> Solidarity was already in evidence.

## Aftermath

By 24 July Lublin’s strike wave was over. There were no signs that peace had been restored to Poland, however. Though not as severe, strikes continued elsewhere. A report by a Western businessman who visited Stalowa Wola’s construction machinery factory shows quite how tense the situation remained. With strikes reported in some parts of the building and workers engaged in low level acts of non-violence, such as ‘humming patriotic songs’, the authorities appeared worried. A large police and troop presence was reported. Businessmen from the U.S., Great Britain and New Zealand were ‘subject to militia surveillance’ while the ‘nervous and embarrassed’ management tried to hide the strikes from

---

<sup>165</sup> See: Ibid., 26. Choma, p.26; M. Dąbrowski, *Lubelski Lipiec 1980* (Lublin, 2000), p.143.

<sup>166</sup> D. Ost, *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics: Opposition and Reform in Poland since 1968*, (Philadelphia, 1990), 82.

<sup>167</sup> Z. Szpakowski quoted in W. Chudy, ‘Relacje – dokumenty’, *Miesiące. Przegląd Związkowy*, 1 (1981), pp.13-43 (p.42).

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>169</sup> M. Dmochowska, ‘Jedność Związku Stanowiła Dla Mnie Wartość Nadrzędną’, in: L. Próchniak and others (eds.), *Pospolite Ruszenie. Relacje Działaczy i Współpracowników “Solidarności” w Łodzi 1980-1981* (Łódź, 2011), pp.67-74 (p.68).

<sup>170</sup> Dąbrowski, p.147.

their guests.<sup>171</sup> Once again it seems as though the strategic significance of the enterprise was at the heart of the authorities' concern. The West had a significant stake in the enterprise. Along with the importance of the 'tanks, munitions and weapons' reportedly manufactured elsewhere on the site, the factory's manufacture of goods such as bulldozers and machinery for the laying of gas and oil pipelines was 'regarded as one of Poland's outstanding industrial cooperation projects with a Western country.'<sup>172</sup> This, along with the proximity of the strike to the Polish-Soviet border, lent the strike both a domestic and an international edge. Again the enterprise's Western economic links were of concern. The U.S. was later informed that exports to them would be damaged by the strike.<sup>173</sup> Damage was also reputational. It was difficult to persuade the West that Poland was a reliable partner when workers were continually striking. It was already proving difficult enough to do so for economic reasons. Poland had overdue payments of £1.2 million to British exporters alone.<sup>174</sup>

There was some reason for optimism, however. On 24 July Edward Babiuch announced that Poland had received payment of \$150 million from the Austrians during 18 – 22 July.<sup>175</sup> Although late, the payment was significant. As early as May it had been claimed that unless Poland received the money in June, they were done for.<sup>176</sup> The loan was only temporary, however. A favourable decision from the Austrian parliament was still required to secure it more permanently. Negotiations with the Anglo-American consortium

---

<sup>171</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Work Stoppages Continue At Major Polish Construction Machinery Plant', 25 July 1980. Document No: 80WARSAW007371.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'The Impact of Labor Disturbances in Poland: Some Interim Estimates', 31 July 1980. Document No: 80WARSAW007483.

<sup>174</sup> See: TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f139: Letter from KW Cotterill (ECGD) to GC Dick (Commercial Relations and Exports Division 4, Department of Trade), 'Poland', 25 July 1980; TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f145: From Warsaw to ECGD, 'Your letter of 22 July', 31 July 1980.

<sup>175</sup> AAN, PZPR KC w Warszawie, II/92, 1-77, 'Stenogram Narady I Sekretarzy KW PZPR i Kierowników Wydziałów KC PZPR w dniu 24 lipca 1980 r.', p.29. See also: 'Kalendarium', in: Z Włodek (ed.), *Tajne dokumenty Biura Politycznego. PZPR a "Solidarność" 1980-1981*, (London, 1992), p.602.

<sup>176</sup> M.F. Rakowski, *Dzienniki polityczne 1979-1981* (Warsaw, 2004), p.190.

and West German banks remained uncertain. Following a meeting in London (22 July) it seemed likely that Bank Handlowy would secure \$300 million from the Anglo-American consortium by 15 August, but the West German loan appeared to have run into trouble.<sup>177</sup> *Deutsche Bank* was reported to have withdrawn from the consortium ‘pending further talks with Bonn.’<sup>178</sup> There was a risk it would not be completed before September with knock on effects for the Anglo-American loan. A clause in the deal reportedly meant that Poland would be unable to receive any money until the German deal had been signed.<sup>179</sup> In combination with their economic problems, further worker unrest was unlikely to help Poland’s case.

With the strike wave reportedly at an end however, Gierek left for a three week holiday in the Crimea and met Brezhnev on 31 July. According to Gierek they had ‘a fairly unpleasant conversation’ about the strikes during which Brezhnev conveyed his displeasure at Lublin’s railway blockade.<sup>180</sup> Brezhnev was unimpressed. He later complained: ‘All we ever heard was: “Nothing is going on, no opposition exists, the Polish government and Party are in control of the situation.”’ The communiqué issued after the meeting indicated differences of opinion. While it was normally declared that there had been a ‘complete identity of views on all issues’, this time it was replaced with the more restrained ‘complete mutual understanding’.<sup>181</sup> Despite Brezhnev’s annoyance with Gierek, Moscow remained silent. Their only public sign of displeasure took the form of a diplomatic ‘slight’. They downgraded ‘the usual Politburo-level attendance’ at a Polish national day reception in

---

<sup>177</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f136: From LFT Smith (Bank of England) to MV Hawtin (HM Treasury), ‘Poland’, 23 July 1980.

<sup>178</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, ‘The Impact of Labor Disturbances in Poland: Some Interim Estimates’, 31 July 1980. Document No: 80WARSAW007483.

<sup>179</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f136: From LFT Smith (Bank of England) to MV Hawtin (HM Treasury), ‘Poland’, 23 July 1980; TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f140: From Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to Warsaw, ‘For Melhuish from Bruce. Polish Bank Loan’, 25 July 1980.

<sup>180</sup> J. Rolicki, *Edward Gierek: Przerwana Dekada*, (Warsaw, 1990), p.156; J. Rolicki, *Edward Gierek: Replika* (Warsaw, 1990), p.92.

<sup>181</sup> A. Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge, 2008), p.236.

Moscow.<sup>182</sup> Moscow's concern was with Soviet not Polish workers. On 22 July an article was passed for publication, which drew attention to the responsibility of Party officials for defending the rights of workers and criticised managers who violated them.<sup>183</sup>

As July drew to an end, economic problems remained most pressing for Warsaw. Although Gierek denied any problems with managing Poland's debt when challenged by Brezhnev,<sup>184</sup> Poland's economic circumstances were less stable than Gierek suggested. July's strikes had resulted in significant economic damage through a combination of pay increases and lost production. It was estimated that the strikes had cost some \$1.7 billion in annual wage increases, while the Polish Minister of Foreign Trade had 'abandoned all hope' of creating a hard-currency trade account surplus.<sup>185</sup> Reports also made clear the pressure Poland was under from banks. One of the banks' main suggestions for reform since 1979 had been, 'A drastic reduction of multi-billion zloty price subsidies and the raising of prices'. The authorities had assured bankers they would implement this reform. They believed that the "public psychology" would allow for the subtle introduction of such increases.<sup>186</sup> Although their assessment proved inaccurate, by the end of July the Party had succeeded where they had previously failed. Faced with popular unrest they had pushed through the increases; fulfilling one of the bankers' main proposals. Given the economic and social costs incurred, it is hard not to agree with Schaufele's description of this 'victory' as seeming 'pyrrhic indeed.' It was unlikely to have improved the likelihood of being granted new loans.<sup>187</sup> Despite the emptiness of their 'victory', the Party needed to maintain economic progress if they were to persuade their partners of Poland's reliability. Reforms

---

<sup>182</sup> CIA FOIA: 'USSR-Poland: Moscow's Concern', 26 July 1980.

<sup>183</sup> S.I. Ploss, *Moscow and the Polish Crisis: An Interpretation of Soviet Policies and Intentions* (Boulder and London, 1986), 12-13.

<sup>184</sup> P. Kostikow and B. Roliński, *Widziane z Kremla. Moskwa Gra o Polskę* (Warsaw, 1992), pp.243-244.

<sup>185</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'The Impact of Labor Disturbances in Poland: Some Interim Estimates', 31 July 1980. Document No: 80WARSAW007483.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

were only likely to trigger more unrest, however. They would need to appease both partners and workers in order to resolve the crisis. They also had friends to consider.

### CHAPTER THREE: AUGUST 1980

Although not on the same scale as Lublin, strikes continued throughout early August. A total of 45 stoppages in over 20 provinces took place.<sup>188</sup> There was no change in the tactics of either the workers or the state. Alongside wage increases, the media remained the primary means by which the Party attempted to control events. Such efforts enjoyed limited success. The promotion of official trade unions in Łódź, for example, was a failure. The city became a major strike centre in early August.<sup>189</sup> Despite continued unrest, workers were not subject to repression. By contrast opposition activists continued to be harassed and detained by the security services. Most notably KOR activist and *Robotnik* editor Jan Lityński was detained along with two other activists in Warsaw. According to MSW reports, they were held in order to prevent a meeting with workers from “Ursus” taking place.<sup>190</sup> There was a continued desire to prevent contact between workers and the opposition. A KOR declaration on 8 August 1980 detailed the efforts of the authorities ‘to destroy the people who collect and distribute information about the strikes.’<sup>191</sup>

The potential for further unrest was considerable. In addition to social problems, the Party faced extensive problems in agriculture. With agricultural production and food supplies already a problem, continuing bad weather during the summer was a significant source of trouble. Over the course of July and early August farmland in over 20 regions had been flooded as a result of torrential rain.<sup>192</sup> The harvest was under threat and as early as mid-July some farmers had been forced to sell or slaughter animals due to insufficient feed.

---

<sup>188</sup> A. Friszke, *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980-1981* (Kraków, 2014), pp.26-27.

<sup>189</sup> See: B. Czuma, *Łódzka “Solidarność” 1980-1981* (Łódź, 2010), p.14.

<sup>190</sup> K. Dubiński, ‘Zapowiedź Sierpniowego Przełomu: Meldunki MSW o sytuacji w kraju w okresie 1 lipca – 16 sierpnia 1980,’ *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Paris, 2000), pp.69-164 (p.139). The arrests were noted by the CIA on 9 August 1980. See: CIA FOIA: ‘Poland: Unrest Continues’, 9 August 1980.

<sup>191</sup> KOR Declaration (8 August 1980), in: P. Raina, *Independent Social Movements in Poland* (London, 1981), p.459.

<sup>192</sup> ‘Winds, storms and floods devastate Eastern Europe’, *The Times*, 2 August 1980, p.5; ‘Polish Pickle’, *The Economist*, 9 August 1980, p.40.

It is indicative of Poland's circumstances that one farmer saw 'some compensation' from the increased availability of meat caused by 'distress slaughtering but still complained that at the store he can buy nothing.'<sup>193</sup> The situation was unlikely to improve. The impact of bad weather on Poland's food supply held not only further social problems in store, but would also exacerbate Poland's economic difficulties. Further austerity or further borrowing would be needed.

Reports from Western embassies painted a desperate picture of Poland, including 'fears of future famine' amongst peasants in the countryside.<sup>194</sup> The U.S. Embassy captured a similar mood of pessimism in a report of an interview with a worker from Lublin:

The workers' mood is gloomy, bordering on desperation because they can see no way out of Poland's economic impasse. They are very much aware of the huge foreign debt Poland has amassed during the Seventies and they fear the country's leadership has mortgaged the future. However, the benefits which foreign credits have brought to Poland are "invisible" to the average worker [...] who wonders where all that money was really spent.

Unless there was a radical economic improvement, 'large-scale unrest' could emerge again. The worker, who had approached the embassy to request that America "use its influence" to improve the situation in Poland [...] asked apparently facetiously, whether the U.S. would be willing to help by supplying arms.'<sup>195</sup> It is not clear whether the worker was asking such questions on his own initiative or where he obtained his information on Poland's foreign debt and credits.

Despite this limitation, the telegram provides a clear indication of the U.S. line towards events. The embassy noted their continued economic support for Poland and the

---

<sup>193</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Polish Meat Price Rises and Reaction: Sitrep July 14', 15 July 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW006998.

<sup>194</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4160, f12: Letter from Joy (Warsaw) to Mallaby (EESD, FCO), 1 August 1980.

<sup>195</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Lublin Worker Depicts Dark Mood Among His Fellows', 1 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW007540.



‘limited’ nature of their ability to shape Poland’s ‘internal policies’.<sup>196</sup> There were no displays of support for the workers. Given the fragility of international stability and also that it was ‘impossible to judge how widespread the sentiments expressed by this young worker [were] among the general population’<sup>197</sup> it is difficult to see how they could have adopted an alternate line. Perhaps more importantly the U.S. appears to have viewed the economy, not worker unrest, as Poland’s major problem. The CIA, for example, assessed that Gierek’s ‘main challenge’ over the coming months would ‘be to convince the people to accept austerity as the only realistic course.’ He was likely to turn to the Church and appeals to patriotism to aid him.<sup>198</sup> The French meanwhile were questioning how much longer the Party could avoid undertaking a “renewal”.<sup>199</sup> For Gierek, neither domestic nor international instability were likely to improve things.

### Gdańsk

Plans for a strike at the Lenin Shipyard began to be developed at the start of August by Bogdan Borusewicz.<sup>200</sup> There was limited support for the strike amongst Free Trade Union (WZZ) activists at this time, however. Both Anna Walentynowicz and Lech Wałęsa believed the strike to have come about two years too early.<sup>201</sup> It was unclear whether they had sufficient reasons to launch a strike. According to Andrzej Gwiazda, while Kuroń was keen for them to join the strike wave, the activists argued that a more important reason than price increases was needed.<sup>202</sup> It was not until 7 August 1980 that the cause of the Lenin

---

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> CIA FOIA: ‘Special Analysis – Poland: Assessment of Labor Unrest’, 4 August 1980.

<sup>199</sup> P. Pleskot, *Kłopotliwa Panna “S”: Postawy polityczne Zachodu wobec “Solidarności” na tle stosunków z PRL (1980 – 1989)* (Warsaw, 2013), p.60.

<sup>200</sup> Bogdan Borusewicz in, K Madoń-Mitzner, ‘Dni Solidarności’, *Karta: kwartalnik historyczny*, 30 (2000), p.4.

<sup>201</sup> A. Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge, 2008), p.237.

<sup>202</sup> *Gwiazdozbiór w “Solidarności”: Joanna i Andrzej Gwiazdowie w rozmowie z Remigiuszem Okraską* (Łódź, 2009), p.135.

Shipyard strike was found: the sacking of Anna Walentynowicz after thirty years of employment at the yard. She was only five months from retirement.

The politically motivated sacking was not entirely unexpected. A co-ordinated effort to restrict Walentynowicz's opposition activities by management and the authorities had been ongoing since the autumn of 1978 with the possibility of dismissing her from work being raised as early as April 1979.<sup>203</sup> Arguably providing an example of what the Czechoslovak dissident Milan Šimečka referred to as 'civilized violence' – 'People were silenced in a dignified manner and not with a punch in the mouth'<sup>204</sup> – the case was not openly pursued by the SB or management, but via official disciplinary procedures. Following efforts to transfer and suspend Walentynowicz, she received a court order for her reinstatement that was ignored by management. As Walentynowicz later recalled, 'I persisted, fought them. It wasn't easy. [...] It all had to be legal and well-documented.'<sup>205</sup> Given that all official means of defence such as appeals procedures had been exhausted, Walentynowicz had no legal means of recourse left to take. The strike was the last, rather than the first line of defence for Walentynowicz. As such the Lenin Shipyard strike should be considered in keeping with the teachings of Gandhi and Martin Luther King on non-violence. The ultimate aim of the strike: negotiations and dialogue conducted in good faith also fit the Gandhi-MLK model.<sup>206</sup>

---

<sup>203</sup> See: S. Cenckiewicz, *Anna Solidarność. Życie i działalność Anny Walentynowicz na tle epoki (1929-2010)* (Poznań, 2010), pp.98-105.

<sup>204</sup> M. Šimečka, *The Restoration of Order: The Normalization of Czechoslovakia* (London, 1984), p.79.

<sup>205</sup> 'Woman of Iron. Conversation with Anna Walentynowicz', in: M. Szporer, *Solidarity: The Great Workers Strike of 1980* (Lanham MD, 2012), pp.127-146 (p.137).

<sup>206</sup> Although not addressing Walentynowicz's example, Jan Zielonka has claimed Solidarity as part of a tradition of non-violence embodied by the likes of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Both stressed the importance of 'good faith' dialogue and negotiation. According to Gandhian scholar Krishnalal Shridharani, all opportunities for peaceful conflict resolution, including the use of negotiation and those constitutional rights available to citizens, should be taken before embarking upon a campaign of civil resistance. Jean-Marie Muller also echoes this point. Though acknowledging the rarity of negotiations resulting in immediate success, Muller highlights the importance of making 'all possible efforts' to find a peaceful resolution to the dispute prior to undertaking action. Although action may be prepared during the

Planning and preparations for the strike took place over a number of days and involved organising workers active with the Free Trade Union to launch the strike, as well as initial demands, leaflets, and placards. Borusewicz was assisted by three young workers at the yard: Jerzy Borowczak, Bogdan Felski, and Ludwig Prądyński. Though recognising the importance of taking action, the fact that Borusewicz was not employed at the yard meant there were limits to what he could do. He could plan the strike, but could not lead it.<sup>207</sup> Much responsibility would fall on the three young workers during the initial stages. The extent to which they could gain the support of other workers was questionable, however. As Jan Skórzyński has argued, they had not had the opportunity to gain the confidence of more experienced workers. As such Borusewicz asked Lech Wałęsa to lead the strike. Not only was Wałęsa a shipyard worker and veteran of December 1970, he was also an individual with whom other workers were more familiar. He was both an esteemed figure amongst them and a family man.<sup>208</sup> It would be easier for him to appeal for the support of other workers in the yard.

In spite of the importance of Wałęsa, he was only informed of his role the day before due to the need for secrecy.<sup>209</sup> Although others were involved in the preparations, only five knew the date of the strike: Borusewicz, Borowczak, Felski, Prądyński and Wałęsa.<sup>210</sup> While in part such caution must have been standard amongst opposition activists, in this

---

course of negotiations in case they fail, negotiations must be conducted 'in a loyal manner' in keeping with the interests of the movement. See: J. Zielonka, 'Strengths and Weaknesses of Nonviolent Action: The Polish Case', *Orbis*, Spring 1986, pp. 91-110 (p.91); M.L. King Jr., 'Letter from Birmingham Jail' in, *Why We Can't Wait* (New York, 2000), pp.85-112; K. Shridharani, *War without Violence: A Study of Gandhi's Method and its Accomplishments* (London, 1939), pp.28-30; J-M. Muller, *Strategia Politycznego Działania Bez Stosowania Przemocy* (Warsaw, 1984), pp.67-68.

<sup>207</sup> 'Cicha legenda. Rozmowa z Bogdanem Borusewiczem', in: J. Jankowska, *Portrety Niedokończone. Rozmowy z twórcami "Solidarności" 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2004), pp.43-81 (p.62).

<sup>208</sup> J. Skórzyński, *Zadra. Biografia Lecha Wałęsy* (Gdańsk, 2009), p.45.

<sup>209</sup> 'At the Lenin Shipyard: Interview with Jerzy Borowczak', in: S. Persky and H. Flam (eds.), *The Solidarity Sourcebook* (Vancouver, 1982), pp.73-78 (p.74).

<sup>210</sup> Bogdan Borusewicz in, Madoń-Mitzner, p.4.

case it was also triggered by previous experience of finding an agent in their midst.<sup>211</sup> Indeed, a useful illustration of the caution involved in strike preparations can be found in the absence of the word 'strike' from the leaflet printed in defence of Walentynowicz. Those printing the leaflet knew nothing of the intention to strike. The word's absence from the leaflet also served another function: 'In the event of accidents or if the strike didn't ignite, it could not be said that it wasn't successful.'<sup>212</sup> Up until the moment it launched, the strike remained prone to disruption by the security services. There was also no guarantee that the strike would take hold let alone succeed. Jerzy Borowczak estimated they had 'a 50 per cent chance of success.'<sup>213</sup>

As preparations for the strike neared completion, domestic tension and international concern amongst Poland's friends began to mount. The East German Embassy in Warsaw began to send several telegrams a day to East Berlin on events.<sup>214</sup> Based on a report prepared by the East German Minister of State Security Erich Mielke on 12 August 1980, it seems that a strike by transport workers in Warsaw may have been the cause of this concern. With trams and buses in the capital at a standstill, Warsaw's 'security organs' had been placed 'in a state of increased readiness.' Mielke warned that the situation could worsen if the strike continued and broadened to include transport for delivering supplies.<sup>215</sup>

---

<sup>211</sup> 'Cicha legenda. Rozmowa z Bogdanem Borusewiczem', p.63. See also: S. Cenckiewicz, 'Agent-Związkowiec. Burzliwe dzieje Edwina Myszka', in: S. Cenckiewicz, *Śladami Bezpieki i Partii. Studia-Zródła-Publicystyka* (Łomianki, 2009), pp.325-355.

<sup>212</sup> 'Cicha legenda. Rozmowa z Bogdanem Borusewiczem', p.63.

<sup>213</sup> 'At the Lenin Shipyard: Interview with Jerzy Borowczak', p.73

<sup>214</sup> M. Kubina, 'Moscow's Man in the SED Politburo and the Crisis in Poland in Autumn 1980', *CWHP Bulletin* 11 (Winter 1998), pp.90-95 (pp.90-91).

<sup>215</sup> '1980 sierpień 12, Berlin – Pismo Ericha Mielkiego do kierowników jednostek organizacyjnych MBP NRD dotyczące sytuacji w PRL, poufne', in: Ł. Kamiński (ed.), *Przed i Po 13 Grudnia: Państwa Bloku Wschodniego Wobec Kryzysu w PRL 1980 – 1982: Tom 1* (Warsaw, 2006), p.3.

A KOR spokesman informed the Western media of the first detention of a strike leader that summer in relation to a strike by refuse collectors in Warsaw.<sup>216</sup> Though in retrospect this detention can be viewed as something of an anomaly, at the time it threatened an apparent break from the practice of detaining only opposition activists. A fight at the heart of Warsaw also raised concern. While it was not clear whether the ‘brawl’ was a provocation, KOR continued to stress the need for non-violence: ‘the power of this movement lies in its solidarity, discipline, peace and rationality. Anyone who provokes brawls is acting in the interest of the political police and for repressions against society.’<sup>217</sup> Given Mielke’s observations about the capital’s security services, the detention and the ‘brawl’ raise the question of how close Poland came to its first crackdown at this time. Although events do not appear to have drawn much of a response from the regional Party leadership,<sup>218</sup> either violence or a strike at a key enterprise could have triggered the kind of crackdown feared by KOR. While they had no influence over where strikes broke out, through their continued and consistent calls for non-violence KOR promoted an alternative to the violence of the past.

For Poland’s closest friends protests whether violent or non-violent remained a threat, however. Mielke noted that the situation ‘demands the highest vigilance’ and outlined the steps to be taken by the East German security services in response.<sup>219</sup> Events were also beginning to be monitored in Czechoslovakia. Daily reports compiled for the leadership detailed not only events in Poland, but ‘their reverberations in

---

<sup>216</sup> E. Celt, ‘Polish Labor Unrest: A Progress Report (11 August 1980)’, in: *The Strikes in Poland*, pp.42-44 (p.43 (n.17)).

<sup>217</sup> KOR Statement (13 August 1980), in: J.J. Lipski, *KOR: A History of the Workers’ Defense Committee in Poland, 1976-1981* (Berkeley, 1985), p.429.

<sup>218</sup> See: J. Eisler, ‘Komitet Warszawski PZPR latem 1980’, in: K. Persak and others, *Od Piłsudskiego do Wałęsy. Studia z dziejów Polska w XX wieku* (Warsaw, 2008), pp.459-466 (pp.460-461).

<sup>219</sup> ‘1980 sierpień 12, Berlin – Pismo Ericha Mielkiego do kierowników jednostek organizacyjnych MBP NRD dotyczące sytuacji w PRL, poufne’, pp.3-4.

Czechoslovakia.<sup>220</sup> While fear of contagion was evident in both East Berlin and Prague, it was also present in Moscow. As well as fearing the spillover of problems from Poland, the Soviet Union were keen to avoid any further problems in Europe at a troubled time for Moscow.<sup>221</sup> While it is difficult to track the course of Soviet thinking, it is clear that at least some in Moscow were concerned. Soviet silence was broken in early August with the publication of an often overlooked article penned by Oleg Rakhmanin of the CPSU Secretariat's Department for Liaison with Communist and Worker Parties under the pseudonym "O.B. Borisov" in *Voprosy Istorii KPSS* [Problems of History CPSU]. According to Sidney Ploss, the "Borisov" article noted that the historical lessons of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan demonstrated the significance of being able "to mobilize the people for defense of the revolution, relying here on the support of its friends and allies in the international arena, on class brothers." Warsaw was being pressed into gaining control of the situation in a manner that previous Communist regimes had failed to. Military assistance could be provided if required.<sup>222</sup>

Although significant as the first sign of an official Soviet line, the emphasis remained on the Polish leadership gaining control of the situation. No planning had begun for Soviet intervention and it was by no means certain that Moscow would risk such a move. A Polish solution, including the possibility of leadership change, was more likely to be the preferred option. According to Piotr Kostikow, in charge of Polish affairs for the Central Committee, Gierek was far from guaranteed the Kremlin's support and 'they would do everything, so as not to repeat Czechoslovakia or [...] Afghanistan.'<sup>223</sup> Moscow's preference was for a peaceful internal solution. They could not afford another military

---

<sup>220</sup> O. Tůma, 'The Czechoslovak Communist Regime and the Polish Crisis 1980-1981', *CWIHP Bulletin* 11 (Winter 1998), pp.60-76 (p.60).

<sup>221</sup> P. Kostikow and B. Roliński, *Widziane z Kremla. Moskwa Gra o Polskę* (Warsaw, 1992), p.234.

<sup>222</sup> S.I. Ploss, *Moscow and the Polish Crisis: An Interpretation of Soviet Policies and Intentions* (Boulder and London, 1986), p.13.

<sup>223</sup> Kostikow and Roliński, p.238.

intervention, especially at a time of fragile East-West relations. This is a notion arguably reinforced by the low-key nature of the “Borisov” article. Published in an ideological review rather than the mainstream press, it was unlikely to have been detected by the West. In the best case scenario Warsaw would resolve the situation without the need for obvious Soviet assistance. While military action was to be avoided however, there was now one less restraint on Moscow doing so. The “Borisov” article was approved for publication on 4 August 1980.<sup>224</sup> The Olympics had closed the day before. The U.S. had always anticipated that Moscow would not act while they were on.

It was against this background that Propaganda Secretary Jerzy Łukaszewicz held a press conference for Western journalists in Warsaw on 12 August 1980. He used the word “strike” repeatedly throughout the press conference and claimed the worst had passed.<sup>225</sup> The use of the word “strike” was significant. As well as being the first time that the term had been used by the Party that summer, it also held ideological significance: strikes did not exist under Communism.<sup>226</sup> It marked a break with both ideology and the use of official euphemisms such as “stoppages” and “breaks in work”. It was only in talks with foreign journalists, however. According to the diary of one Polish journalist, they did not receive official confirmation of the strikes until 22 August 1980.<sup>227</sup> Łukaszewicz’s overall aim was apparently to counteract the development of events in Poland.<sup>228</sup> He appears to have been attempting ‘to reduce the importance of the strikes in the Western news media’ by putting a

---

<sup>224</sup> Ploss, p.14.

<sup>225</sup> See: E. Celt, ‘Łukaszewicz’s News Briefing on the Strike Situation (14 August 1980)’, in: *The Strikes in Poland*, pp.99-104; DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, ‘Politburo Member Łukaszewicz’ (sic) Press Conference for Foreign Journalists’, 14 August 1980. Doc No. 80WARSAW008041.

<sup>226</sup> As Milovan Djilas notes, the standard Party explanation for the absence of strikes was ‘that the “working class” is in power and owns the means of production through its state, so that if it did strike, it would be striking against itself.’ See: M. Djilas, *The New Class* (London, 1966), p.105.

<sup>227</sup> Z. Ropiński, *Tak to wtedy bywało. Moje zapiski z lat 1977-1981* (Bydgoszcz-Gdańsk, 2013), p.76.

<sup>228</sup> See: ‘Protokół nr 17 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 15 sierpnia 1980 r.’, in: Z. Włodek (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a „Solidarność” 1980-1981* (London, 1992), p.29.

positive spin on events.<sup>229</sup> There seem to be two interrelated reasons for this. Firstly, if the Party could reduce the significance of the strikes in the Western media, they could remove a potential source of encouragement to striking workers.<sup>230</sup> Secondly, they may have been afraid that news of the strikes was harming Poland's prospects in negotiations with banks. As a U.S. telegram had observed in the aftermath of the 1976 protests, 'bankers prefer that the countries to which they lend – whether capitalist or communist – not be concerned about restive populations. Spontaneous outbreaks against either capitalist or communist governments are not looked on as conducive to stable economies.'<sup>231</sup> There is no reason to think that the stance of bankers had changed and with completion of neither the West German nor the Anglo-American loan assured, the Poles appear to have been concerned. A telegram from the British Embassy the day after Łukaszewicz's appearance queried whether worker unrest was having an adverse influence on lending.<sup>232</sup>

While economic concerns pre-dating the strikes appear to have been the cause of the banks' reticence, completion of the loans was far from assured. According to British reports, although documentation for the Anglo-American loan had yet to be completed if all went to plan the deal would 'be signed on 22 August and drawdown [could] start the following week.'<sup>233</sup> U.S. telegrams were more pessimistic. They reported 'some last minute hesitancy'. Completion of the deal was dependent on completion of negotiations with the

---

<sup>229</sup> Celt, 'Łukaszewicz's News Briefing on the Strike Situation (14 August 1980)', p.100.

<sup>230</sup> According to a US report, Łukaszewicz suggested that 'front page attention' may have caused the strikes to continue by providing Polish workers with 'a reason to continue [...] as a matter of honor.' See: DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Politburo Member Łukaszewicz' Press Conference for Foreign Journalists', 14 August 1980. Document No: 80WARSAW008041.

<sup>231</sup> The National Archives and Records Administration: Access to Archival Databases [NARA-AAD], File Unit: *Electronic Telegrams, 1/1/1976 – 12/31/1976, Series: Central Foreign Policy Files (Record Group 59)*: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Polish Debt', 3 September 1976. Document No: WARSAW 6251. <<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/fielded-search.jsp?dt=2082&tf=X&cat=all&bc=sl>> [August 2015]

<sup>232</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f155: Telegram from Warsaw to Department of Trade, 'For Bruce CRE4 from Cohen', 13 August 1980.

<sup>233</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f156: Telegram from Department of Trade to Warsaw, 'For Cohen from Bruce. Your CREDA 33. Consortium Loan', 14 August 1980.



West Germans.<sup>234</sup> It was not clear when this would happen. Chancellor Schmidt continued to appeal to Western bankers to raise new credits for the Polish economy and although the West German loan had been agreed, British reports claimed that the exact terms of the loan had yet to be decided.<sup>235</sup> Given their urgent need to repay their debts and their dependency on Western finance (all acknowledged by Łukaszewicz) the Poles appear to have been concerned that strikes were damaging their credit worthiness. They may have wished to assuage bankers' fears regarding Poland's suitability for loans. Damage limitation may well have been the order of the day. If this was the case, further strikes and Western media coverage would be most unwelcome.

#### **14 August 1980 (Thursday)**

At 4.15am Borowczak and Prądyński met outside Gate Two of the Lenin Shipyard, where on 16 December 1970 striking shipyard workers had been shot and killed by the Polish army. They went straight to department K5 where leaflets, posters and placards prepared for the strike had already been stored. They hung the posters up in the cloakroom and handed leaflets to workers as they arrived. Prądyński repeated the process in his own department.<sup>236</sup> At the same time teams of activists, including one led by Borusewicz, distributed leaflets and instructions on how to strike, as well as *Robotnik* to workers on local trains heading to the yard.<sup>237</sup> The ground work for the strike had already been laid before

---

<sup>234</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Poland in mid-August 1980 – Status Report', 12 August 1980. Document No: 80WARSAW007941.

<sup>235</sup> 'Schmidt Appeals for World Aid to Poland as Strikes go on', *The Guardian*, 14 August 1980; TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4156, f153: Telegram from Bonn to FCO, 'My Telno 528 and 545 (Not to all): Polish Credit', 13 August 1980.

<sup>236</sup> 'At the Lenin Shipyard: Interview with Jerzy Borowczak', in: S. Persky and H. Flam (eds.), *The Solidarity Sourcebook* (Vancouver, 1982), pp.73-78 (p.75); 'How the Strike Began', *Solidarity Strike Bulletin No.11* (30 August 1980), in: O. MacDonald (ed.), *The Polish August: Documents from the Beginnings of the Polish Workers Rebellion. Gdańsk. August 1980* (Seattle, 1981), pp.84-86.

<sup>237</sup> A. Kazański, 'Sierpień '80 w Gdańsku', *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.21-34 (pp.22-23); L. Biernacki and A. Kazański, 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Gdański', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989. Tom 3. Polska Północna* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.7-245 (p.15).

workers arrived for the first shift of the day. Equally, broader networks of support had already come into play. While local art school students had prepared the placards, 6 – 8 thousand copies of the leaflet had been printed by a local underground press.<sup>238</sup>

The text of the leaflet, written by Borusewicz but signed by the editors of *Robotnik Wybrzeża* and the Founding Committee of the Free Trade Unions, was written in a language that was simple, direct and clear. It linked Walentynowicz's dismissal to wider problems facing workers at the yard. It outlined her long and successful career, described the nature of her dismissal, and the work she had done to protect others from injustice and abuse. It concluded with a simple warning:

A.Walentynowicz became inconvenient, because her example acted for others. She became inconvenient because she defended others and could organise colleagues. It is a constant tendency of the authorities, to isolate those who may become leaders [...]. If we are unable to oppose this, there will be no one who stands up against increased norms, health and safety violations or forced overtime. That is why we're appealing to you to stand up in defence of crane operator Anna Walentynowicz. If you don't, many of you may find yourselves in a similar situation.<sup>239</sup>

It was not clear whether Walentynowicz's sacking was a strong enough issue to bring the shipyard out on strike, however. 'It wasn't something that directly affected people.' In spite of this, Borowczak believed that they 'had an ace in the hole' that might just help them enjoy success: the conditions in which they all worked.<sup>240</sup> Although not included in the leaflet, a demand for a wage increase was also made. A sum of 1000 złoty was chosen at the suggestion of Felski. He risked 'being left alone with this placard' for any less.<sup>241</sup>

The posters and the leaflets caught the workers' interest. Small groups began to gather in the cloakrooms asking about Walentynowicz and the strike. Others kept guard of

---

<sup>238</sup> Kazański, pp.21-22.

<sup>239</sup> 'Ulotka Wolnych Związków Zawodowych, Do Pracowników Stoczni Gdańskiej', in: A. Drzycimski and T. Skutnik (eds.), *Zapis Wydarzeń. Gdańsk – Sierpień 1980. Dokumenty* (Warsaw, 1999), p.4. [From here: *Zapis Wydarzeń.*]

<sup>240</sup> 'At the Lenin Shipyard: An Interview with Jerzy Borowczak', p.73.

<sup>241</sup> Bogdan Felski in, J. Eisler (ed.), *Co nam zostało z tych lat...* (Warsaw, 2003), p.160.

the posters. Foremen and management representatives attempted to intervene. They demanded explanations and tried to tear the posters down. Some workers returned to work. They feared the strike would fail unless a larger department came out first. The strike risked collapse. Borowczak gambled. He declared that two larger departments had gone on strike. He did not know if this was really true.<sup>242</sup> As he later observed, 'I was making things up as I went along. What else was I to do?'<sup>243</sup> There was some hesitation. Thirty workers followed Borowczak into the yard. They took the posters with them.<sup>244</sup> The posters and placards carried their first demands: the reinstatement of Anna Walentynowicz and a pay rise of 1000 złoty.<sup>245</sup> His gamble paid off. Prądyński had led his department on strike. The numbers striking began to swell.<sup>246</sup> The outcome was still far from certain. As Borowczak recalled:

We still weren't sure if the strike would go, or last longer than a day. It's a bit intimidating once you actually start, and you're only a trickle. We really were left on our own and had to fend for ourselves, without Wałęsa or Borusewicz anywhere.<sup>247</sup>

Far from all 18,000 workers employed at the yard were out on strike. The minority involved marched slowly through the yard towards Gate Two picking up numbers as they went. From a handful of striking workers, the strike grew to over a thousand and counting. Workers came off the ships to join them. In other departments deals were struck: some workers joined the strike, others secured the machinery.<sup>248</sup>

Though still small in number, the increasing scale of the strike was not due simply to a growth in courage or lessening of fear. It was also due to a re-awakening of hope. One worker recalled that during thirty years of work at the yard he had become 'mute'. Others

---

<sup>242</sup> 'At the Lenin Shipyard: An Interview with Jerzy Borowczak', p.75; 'How the Strike Began', *Solidarity Strike Bulletin No.11 (30 August 1980)*, in: MacDonald (ed.), *The Polish August*, pp.85-87.

<sup>243</sup> "'The People Were the Hero" Conversation with Jerzy Borowczak', in: M. Szporer, *Solidarity. The Great Workers Strike of 1980* (Lanham MD, 2012), pp.15-22 (p.16).

<sup>244</sup> 'At the Lenin Shipyard: An Interview with Jerzy Borowczak', p.75; 'How the Strike Began', pp.85-87.

<sup>245</sup> See: 'Pierwsze postulaty Stoczni Gdańskiej', in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, p.9; *Gdańsk 1980 – pictures from a strike*, (London, 1981), p.19.

<sup>246</sup> 'At the Lenin Shipyard: An Interview with Jerzy Borowczak', p.75; 'How the Strike Began', p.87.

<sup>247</sup> "'The People Were the Hero" Conversation with Jerzy Borowczak', p.16.

<sup>248</sup> 'At the Lenin Shipyard: An Interview with Jerzy Borowczak', p.75; 'How the Strike Began', p.87.

had done too. The workers marching past that morning changed that. They ‘aroused a lively interest in us, a fear mixed with admiration and hope’. It was a hope that perhaps the workers marching past would express something that the others were too afraid to and that they would do so without experiencing reprisals.<sup>249</sup> Maintaining such hope was vital if the strike were to succeed. It would not be easy, however. There was always the risk of failure and persecution. In Borowczak’s opinion, the worst case scenario ‘would be a 48 hours arrest, or I would be canned, perhaps jailed’ along with the other strike leaders.<sup>250</sup> The costs of participation in the strike had to be weighed up by each individual worker, but as Borowczak reasoned, ‘We were young and single – no family, nothing to lose.’<sup>251</sup> Not all workers were in this position. Those with families had more at stake. Older workers also had an additional barrier of fear to overcome. As Felski recalled, the older workers ‘remembered December 1970 when they faced tanks and machine gun fire.’<sup>252</sup> This was why the young took the lead.

They still remembered the lessons of December 1970, however. Some in the crowd called for them to march on regional Party Headquarters. They paused instead, halting by Gate Two for a minute’s silence in remembrance of the victims of the December 1970 massacre. They sang the national anthem before returning to the large square near the yard’s hospital.<sup>253</sup> It was a commemorative ritual rooted in the local opposition’s anniversary commemorations of the late 1970s and would be repeated throughout the strike. Amongst

---

<sup>249</sup> B. Fac, ‘Lech Wałęsa – the Man Who Spoke Up’, in: *The Book of Lech Wałęsa* (Harmondsworth, 1982), pp.47-67 (pp.47-48).

<sup>250</sup> “‘The People Were the Hero” Conversation with Jerzy Borowczak’, p.16.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., p.16.

<sup>252</sup> ‘Hoeing the Moon. Conversation with Bogdan Felski’, in: M. Szporer, *Solidarity. The Great Workers Strike of 1980* (Lanham MD, 2012), pp.41-46 (p.45).

<sup>253</sup> ‘At the Lenin Shipyard: An Interview with Jerzy Borowczak’, p.76; ‘How the Strike Began’, p.87; “‘The People Were the Hero” Conversation with Jerzy Borowczak’, p.17; ‘Hoeing the Moon. Conversation with Bogdan Felski’, p.45.

other things memories of December 1970 also shaped the workers' conduct during August 1980 and the kind of strike employed: an occupation strike.<sup>254</sup>

News of the strike began to spread. In the shipyard's hospital Walentynowicz and Alina Pieńkowska learnt of the strike. Unable to make telephone contact with Kuroń, Walentynowicz left to try a different line. She ended up being chased into hiding at a neighbour's flat by the SB. Pieńkowska ultimately got through.<sup>255</sup> Kuroń informed Reuter's of the strike.<sup>256</sup> He also informed Borusewicz that the strike had taken hold when Borusewicz, who had returned home to sleep, phoned in mid-afternoon.<sup>257</sup> It was not only the opposition that became aware of the strike. The security services launched Operation "Brama" ("Gate") to monitor events at the yard.<sup>258</sup> In Warsaw MSW reports carried news of the initial stages of the strike.<sup>259</sup> Such developments were unsurprising. Security service activity at the shipyard was a standard feature of life. Due in part to the economic importance of the shipyard as well as to the events of December 1970, the shipyard had long been subject to ongoing observation and infiltration by the SB. This had increased with the activities of Free Trade Union activists at the yard. Though not all were directed at opposition activists, a total of seventy agents were deployed by different SB and MO

---

<sup>254</sup> J. Kufel, 'Strajk sierpniowy w Stoczni Gdańskiej i narodziny "Solidarności"', in: A. Friszke, K. Persak and P. Sowiński (eds.), *Solidarność od wewnątrz 1980 – 1981* (Warsaw, 2013), pp.39-53 (p.42); D. Smoleń, 'Tłum czy społeczność zorganizowana? Strajkujący w Stoczni Gdańskiej w sierpniu 1980', in: M. Kula, *Solidarność w ruchu 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2000), pp.151-217 (pp.167-172); R. Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity: A Political Sociology of Poland's Working Class Democratization* (Princeton NJ, 1991).

<sup>255</sup> S. Cenckiewicz, *Anna Solidarność. Życie i działalność Anny Walentynowicz na tle epoki (1929-2010)* (Poznań, 2010), p.112; A. Friszke, *Czas KOR-u. Jacek Kuroń a geneza Solidarności* (Kraków, 2011), p.543.

<sup>256</sup> S. Persky, *At the Lenin Shipyard: Poland and the Rise of the Solidarity Trade Union* (Vancouver, 1982), pp.20-21.

<sup>257</sup> 'Cicha legenda. Rozmowa z Bogdanem Borusewiczem', in: J. Jankowska, *Portrety Niedokończone. Rozmowy z twórcami "Solidarności" 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2004), pp.43-81 (p.64).

<sup>258</sup> S. Cenckiewicz, 'Kalendarium Sierpnia '80 – wypisy źródłowe z dokumentów MO i SB', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 7-8 (54-55), lipiec-sierpień 2005, pp.95-125 (p.97).

<sup>259</sup> K. Dubiński, 'Zapowiedź Sierpniowego Przełomu: Meldunki MSW o sytuacji w kraju w okresie 1 lipca – 16 Sierpnia 1980', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, (Paris, 2000), p.154.

departments within the yard.<sup>260</sup> A maximum of 18,000 people worked at the yard, however. Less than 0.4 per cent of employees were agents.

Supported by several thousand workers, a strike was formally declared and a strike committee elected. Management attempted to intervene. Klemens Gniech, the shipyard's director, confronted them. Speaking from an electric cart he agreed to open negotiations if the workers resumed work first. Some began to disperse. As they did, Lech Wałęsa arrived. Though subject to subsequent debate, SB reports confirm that Wałęsa arrived in the yard by jumping over the shipyard's wall.<sup>261</sup> According to his autobiography, he had been tailed by the SB that morning as part of their ongoing observation of him. He jumped the wall having given them the slip.<sup>262</sup> This must have added to Wałęsa's sense of uncertainty. According to Borusewicz, Wałęsa had always lacked enthusiasm for the strike. While in part this seems to have been due to having recently become a father again, it should also be remembered that Wałęsa was unaware who would be at the yard when he arrived. He was not well acquainted with Borowczak, Felski or Prądyński. They had only met briefly prior to the strike.<sup>263</sup> Leading a strike launched by the three unknown workers was a significant risk to take. While Wałęsa later described his arrival in spectacular style, beneath his bravado he must have been nervous, scared perhaps.<sup>264</sup> In spite of his opposition activity in the late 1970s, he must have harboured memories of December 1970. Certainly, he did not arrive as a fully-fledged leader. Indeed, given the length of time since his dismissal from the yard, many

---

<sup>260</sup> S. Cenckiewicz, 'Stocznia Gdańska im. Lenina w Sierpniu 1980 roku w optyce i działaniach służby bezpieczeństwa', in: S. Cenckiewicz, *Śladami Bezpieka i Partii. Studia-Zródła-Publicystka* (Łomianki, 2009), pp.91-107 (pp.91-93).

<sup>261</sup> J. Skórzyński, *Zadra: Biografia Lecha Wałęsy* (Gdańsk, 2009), pp.46-47.

<sup>262</sup> L. Wałęsa, *A Path of Hope* (London, 1987), pp.40-41 and pp.117-118.

<sup>263</sup> 'Cicha legenda. Rozmowa z Bogdanem Borusewiczem', in: J. Jankowska, *Portrety Niedokończone. Rozmowy z twórcami "Solidarności" 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2004), pp.43-81 (p.63); E. Szczesiak, *Borusewicz. Jak Runął Mur* (Warsaw, 2005), p.141.

<sup>264</sup> See: 'Interview with Lech Walesa', in: S. Persky and H. Flam (eds.), *The Solidarity Sourcebook* (Vancouver, 1982), pp.100-105 (p.102).

workers had never seen him before. Some questioned who the man 'with the moustache' was.<sup>265</sup>

Wałęsa's arrival came as a relief to Borowczak.<sup>266</sup> Writing down the names of those elected to the strike committee, he added Wałęsa's to the list. Wałęsa read it out and asked the crowd if they would accept him despite his dismissal in 1976. They shouted their approval.<sup>267</sup> Initial demands were insignificant, but illustrative of the circumstances in which Polish workers existed: 'minor personal gripes about soap, towels, work shirts'.<sup>268</sup> Already scrapped by the time of Wałęsa's arrival, the committee prepared a new list. The issues at stake increased. They called for the reinstatement of Walentynowicz *and* Wałęsa. The original 1000 złoty pay increase was raised to 2000 złoty. A demand for a cost of living allowance at the level enjoyed by the police was also introduced. They demanded the construction of a monument to the victims of December 1970. A guarantee that there would be 'no repression on account of the strike' was also demanded.<sup>269</sup> By now it was around midday. It had been almost eight hours since Borowczak and Prądkowski had arrived, but the strike was now firmly underway. Beginning as a form of *piecemeal strike* spreading department by department, it had escalated and was now officially an occupation (or *stay-in*) strike headed by Wałęsa. The workers had moved from *economic noncooperation* to *economic intervention*.<sup>270</sup> They were almost ready for talks. Two pre-conditions had to be met: the reinstatement of Walentynowicz and the broadcast of negotiations over the

---

<sup>265</sup> Edmund Soszyński in, M. Latoszek (ed.), *Sierpień '80 we wspomnieniach: relacje z wybrzeża* (Gdańsk, 1991), p.34; 'Wałęsa's Role in August 1980 (Extracts from Memoirs)', in: *The Book of Lech Wałęsa* (Harmondsworth, 1982), pp.160-175 (p.161).

<sup>266</sup> "'The People Were the Hero" Conversation with Jerzy Borowczak', in: M. Szporer, *Solidarity. The Great Workers Strike of 1980* (Lanham MD, 2012), pp.15-22 (p.17).

<sup>267</sup> 'At the Lenin Shipyard: Interview with Jerzy Borowczak', in: Persky and Flam, p.76.

<sup>268</sup> "'The People Were the Hero" Conversation with Jerzy Borowczak', p.17.

<sup>269</sup> 'A Calendar of the Strike', *Solidarity Strike Bulletin No.12 (30 August 1980)*, in: O. MacDonald (ed.), *The Polish August: Documents from the Beginnings of the Polish Workers Rebellion. Gdańsk. August 1980* (Seattle, 1981), p.90.

<sup>270</sup> See: G. Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Part Two: The Methods of Nonviolent Action (Boston MA, 2005), pp.268-29 and pp.403-405.

shipyard's radio. Both were agreed to. Walentynowicz, soon to be voted onto the strike committee, was fetched by workers in Gniech's car and received a warm welcome at the yard.<sup>271</sup>

The demand for a guarantee of safety was quickly agreed to. It was provided by the management, not by the Gdańsk Party Secretary Tadeusz Fiszbach as requested (a matter that would later be returned to). Gniech also agreed to reinstate Wałęsa. Wages proved problematic. The management argued that workers had been given a major pay increase the previous year. The current system of work also allowed for further gain: a significant bonus, possibly exceeding wage demands, if they engaged in 'further, better organised work'. The workers were unimpressed. Any increase in the cost of goods must be accompanied by wage increases.<sup>272</sup> Gniech was cornered. He was unable to provide an immediate answer on wages. He needed to discuss the matter with his superiors. They should return to work until a decision was made.<sup>273</sup> The workers had other issues to discuss: family allowances and the construction of a monument to the victims of December 1970.

Gniech was on weak ground. He claimed he lacked information on family allowances and was also challenged during discussions of the monument. The workers were clear what they wanted: the construction of a monument to the victims of December 1970 outside the second gate to be completed by the tenth anniversary of the shootings. Gniech tried to deter them. He claimed it would not be possible to meet their demand. The site was being redeveloped.<sup>274</sup> Gniech's protests were genuine. A decision had been taken by the local authorities to build on the site. The aim was to prevent the opposition from marking the tenth anniversary of December 1970 as they had done previous anniversaries. Work had

---

<sup>271</sup> See: S. Cenckiewicz, *Anna Solidarność. Życie i działalność Anny Walentynowicz na tle epoki (1929-2010)* (Poznań, 2010), pp.112-113.

<sup>272</sup> A. Drzycimski and T. Skutnik (eds.), *Zapis rokowań gdańskich. Sierpień 1980* (Paris, 1986), pp.13-17.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 20-21.



already begun and was due to be completed that autumn.<sup>275</sup> Gniech declared it a problem for the local authorities, not just shipyard management.

Another management representative joined the argument. He tried to win them over by suggesting a commemorative tablet. It could be displayed in a shipyard hall already containing plaques commemorating those who had died in the war with Germany. The workers were adamant: 'we want a monument!' Walentynowicz went further. She recalled that the victims of 1970 'were killed with the words on their lips "For bread, for freedom!"' As with the events of December 1970, a plaque would soon be forgotten. That could not be allowed.<sup>276</sup> The events of December had left their mark on the workers. They did not back down. Gniech was forced to. He was not responsible for any decision over the construction of a monument.<sup>277</sup>

Later that afternoon Gniech returned to talks with the strike committee. The authorities had agreed 'in principle' to the construction of the monument. Timothy Garton Ash has described this as a further sign 'that a top-level "flexible-response" had been prepared to counter the expected workers' protests.'<sup>278</sup> The authorities had left themselves room for manoeuvre. An agreement to build a monument 'in principle' is not the same as a legally binding agreement to construct one. The authorities could still find reasons not to construct it once the strike was over. The issues on which the authorities were willing to display a "flexible-response" are also of note. As Jerzy Holzer argues, they had conceded ground on political demands to which they would not usually concede, but had left economic demands to which they normally agreed unresolved. Holzer attributes this to the fact that the workers were demanding considerably more money than was being granted elsewhere. Demands for the equalisation of benefits had been met with universal refusal,

---

<sup>275</sup> L. Biernacki, *Gdy wieje wiatr historii... Studenci z robotnikami, Gdańsk 1976-1980* (Warsaw, 2014), p.331.

<sup>276</sup> Drzycimski and Skutnik, pp.21-23.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>278</sup> T. Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-1982* (London, 1983), p.40.

however.<sup>279</sup> The latter was likely to have been not only for economic reasons, but to avoid alienating the police and security services. Given the importance of security service defections to the success of non-violent campaigns of resistance, any agreement by the Party to undermine the financial standing of the police and security services at this time would have been misguided.<sup>280</sup> They could not afford to lose their support. Nonetheless after six weeks of granting economic concessions, the authorities appeared to be seeking other ways of controlling the strikes. Although still presenting a largely positive picture to the West during loan negotiations, even before the strike the economic cost of strike settlements and Gierek's promises had been raised within the Party.<sup>281</sup> There were limits past which they could not be pushed. They could not afford further economic burdens.

Wałęsa had warned management that if their demands had not been met by 4pm, the workers would stay the night. A guard, food supplies and places to sleep would be organised.<sup>282</sup> The deadline passed. The demands were unfulfilled. The strike went on. It would not do so alone. Workers, including Andrzej Gwiazda, had been listening to events at the yard over the telephone from work at "Elmor" since morning. With the strike having taken hold, "Elmor" would also come out on strike. That night Gwiazda and his wife Joanna met along with others to discuss demands and possibilities for spreading the strike.<sup>283</sup> Plans were also made to spread the strike to the Paris Commune Shipyard in Gdynia. Andrzej Kołodziej, who had only begun work at the Paris Commune Shipyard that day, received

---

<sup>279</sup> J. Holzer, *„Solidarność” 1980 – 1981. Geneza i Historia* (Warsaw, 1983), p.61.

<sup>280</sup> See, for example: E. Chenoweth and M.J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York and Chichester, 2011); S. Erickson Nepstad, *Nonviolent Revolutions: Civil Resistance in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Oxford, 2011).

<sup>281</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Conversation with Deputy Finance Minister on Current Economic Situation', 14 August 1980. Telegram No. 80WARSAW008039; M.F.Rakowski, *Dzienniki polityczne 1979-1981* (Warsaw, 2004), p.222.

<sup>282</sup> Drzycimski and Skutnik (eds.), *Zapis rokowań gdańskich. Sierpień 1980*, p.26.

<sup>283</sup> *Gwiazdozbiór w „Solidarności”: Joanna i Andrzej Gwiazdowie w rozmowie z Remigiuszem Okraską* (Łódź, 2009), p.139.

instructions on launching the strike from Borusewicz during a meeting at the Lenin Shipyard.<sup>284</sup> The Tri-cities were on the verge of a major strike wave.

The Politburo met in Warsaw. Although chaired in Gierek's absence by Babiuch, the meeting was dominated by Kania. He described the situation as developing in a negative manner with the Gdańsk strike adding to those in Łódź and Warsaw. According to Kania, a total of seven demands had been made by striking workers in the yard, including 'the release of political prisoners'. The demands were starting to escalate.<sup>285</sup> This was a misrepresentation of events. No demand for 'the release of political prisoners' had been made during negotiations at the yard.<sup>286</sup> However, it was a demand recorded by the SB as one of twelve Kuroń received over the phone from Gdańsk and one he announced as a turning point in the politicisation of the strike to a less enthusiastic Waldemar Kuczyński that night.<sup>287</sup> The demand was planned, but had not been made. The escalation noted by Kania would not take place until the following day.

A number of Politburo members mentioned KOR's influence over the strikes, including Wałęsa's connection with Kuroń. Others noted the *aktyw*'s criticism of the Party's handling of events. A meeting with them was organised. More seriously militia reinforcements were posted to Gdańsk. Three army regiments were placed on stand-by.<sup>288</sup> Elsewhere, a small group was established amongst the General Staff of the Polish Army tasked with monitoring the strikes and providing both briefs and information to the leadership of the General Staff as well as to the MSW if requested. It was headed by

---

<sup>284</sup> A. Kazański, 'Sierpień '80 w Gdyni', *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.45-56 (pp.46-47).

<sup>285</sup> 'Protokół nr 16 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 14 sierpnia 1980 r.', in: Z. Włodek (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a „Solidarność” 1980-1981* (London, 1992), p.24.

<sup>286</sup> See: Drzycimski and Skutnik (eds.), *Zapis rokowań gdańskich*, pp.13-55.

<sup>287</sup> See: A. Friszke, *Czas KOR-u. Jacek Kuroń a geneza Solidarności* (Kraków, 2011), pp.543-544; W. Kuczyński, *Burza nad Wisłą. Dziennik 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2002), p.50.

<sup>288</sup> 'Protokół nr 16 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 14 sierpnia 1980 r.', p.24.

Colonel Ryszard Kukliński, an agent for the CIA since the early 1970s.<sup>289</sup> The situation was becoming serious. According to Kania, they were faced with a situation in which ‘even a weaker opponent is dangerous.’ They decided to recall Gierek and begin preparations for a television address to the nation. The timing of the address and the official to deliver it would be decided by Gierek on his return.<sup>290</sup>

### **15 August 1980 (Friday)**

As the strike entered its second day, Poland remained at peace. Western reports gave different reasons for the absence of violence in a country renowned for it, however. In a report filed by the Canadian Delegation at NATO the previous day, the authorities were hailed for keeping workers off the streets and preventing any drift into violence through their swift response to events.<sup>291</sup> The U.S. meanwhile reported that the Polish Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade had attributed the confinement of worker actions to factories to lessons learnt from 1956 and 1970. He objected to the use of the word “strike” reportedly uttered by one television commentator the night before, however.<sup>292</sup> Events in the Tri-city region suggested that while the Deputy Minister’s explanation of non-violence was correct, his dismissal of the term “strike” was not. It would be increasingly difficult for the authorities to downplay events in their dealings with the West. Strikes spread peacefully throughout the day.

---

<sup>289</sup> B. Weiser, *A Secret Life: The Polish Officer, His Covert Mission, And The Price He Paid to Save His Country*, (New York, 2004), 200. See also: A. Paczkowski, *Droga do “mniejszego zła”. Strategia i taktyka obozu władzy lipiec 1980 – styczeń 1982* (Kraków, 2002), p.37.

<sup>290</sup> ‘Protokół nr 16 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 14 sierpnia 1980 r.’, pp.24-28.

<sup>291</sup> NATO Archives: Documents Relating to Events in Poland (1980-1984): Reactions and Analysis in the Allies: Canada: CA-14-08-1980: ‘Report on the internal situation in Poland’ (14 August 1980).

<sup>292</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, ‘Worker Unrest: Roundup’, 15 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008086. The claim that the word “strike” was used on television may be inaccurate. Lech Bądkowski noted use of the euphemism “breaks in work” rather than the term “strike” on television on 14 August. See: L. Bądkowski, ‘Przypisy dnia (z dzienników gdańskich 14 VII – 1 IX 1980)’, *Zapis*, 17 (1981), pp.68-99 (p.68)

The first night at the Lenin Shipyard passed without incident. Negotiations resumed that morning. Speaking over the shipyard's radio system, Gniech adopted a new stance. He combined offers with threats. The workers proved more than his match. When Gniech announced a new pay offer with the aim of getting workers to resume work at 6am on Saturday if they agreed, he announced it was to be discussed in individual departments. Wałęsa was swift to counter Gniech's divisive attempt. Accepting his demand for departmental discussions, he made a condition of his own. Once agreement had been reached within departments, it would be discussed by the strike committee. Only once the committee had reached a decision would they announce whether Gniech's offer had been accepted.<sup>293</sup> He boxed clever, outwitting Gniech to retain the strike committee's authority. The second prong of Gniech's strategy was also dealt with. He attempted to discredit and intimidate the workers, claiming there were workers 'under the influence of alcohol'. Anyone found in such a state would be disciplined.<sup>294</sup> Such accusations were countered by the presence of a workers' guard. Not only did they block entry to the yard by anyone without a pass from the strike committee, they also enforced an alcohol ban.<sup>295</sup> Accusations of drunkenness were slanderous.

Unknown to the workers, the position of their strike was now much stronger. While Wałęsa had been countering Gniech's efforts at undermining the strike, much of Gdańsk had come out in support. They were part of a *generalized strike*.<sup>296</sup> According to information received by the MSW by seven o'clock that morning, 2000 workers at the Repair Yard were on strike. So too were transport workers and those at smaller enterprises, including

---

<sup>293</sup> Drzycimski and Skutnik (eds.), *Zapis rokowań gdańskich*, pp.56-58.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., pp.56-57

<sup>295</sup> See: J.J. Lipski, *KOR: A History of the Workers' Defense Committee in Poland, 1976-1981* (Berkeley and London, 1985), p.419; J. Holzer, *"Solidarność" 1980-1981: Geneza i Historia* (Warsaw, 1983), p.61.

<sup>296</sup> See: G. Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Part Two: The Methods of Nonviolent Action (Boston MA, 2005), p.275.

“Elmor”.<sup>297</sup> Not yet reported was Kołodziej’s success in bringing the Paris Commune Shipyard out on strike.<sup>298</sup> Local opposition movements also began to demonstrate support. The Young Poland Movement issued a declaration in support of the workers. Members of the group also attended the strike along with other local opposition activists and continued to play a role in events throughout the strike.<sup>299</sup> Such close worker-opposition links had not been evident in July.

Despite disruption to services, there were no complaints amongst locals. The social mood was positive and independent social acts seem to have developed. Drivers picked up those left waiting in the absence of public transport, for example.<sup>300</sup> The social response should not necessarily be interpreted as a sign of active support, however. While some sympathy for the workers may have been generated by residents’ awareness of December 1970 and local conditions, such as food shortages and housing problems, public support appears to have been mostly tacit at this time. There were signs that it was becoming more active, however. While by the end of Thursday the families of striking workers had begun to gather at the shipyard, by Friday crowds were gathering at the gates where workers in distinctive red-and-white armbands stood guard. Packages of food were delivered to the workers, along with flowers. The police were nowhere to be seen.<sup>301</sup>

The authorities were monitoring the situation carefully. They responded swiftly to the Paris Commune strike. By ten o’clock that morning Norwegian company officials working in Gdynia had reported a significant number of militia gathering in the vicinity of the yard. They were cordoning off an area of approximately 1.5 kilometres in depth. By

---

<sup>297</sup> K. Dubiński, ‘Zapowiedź Sierpniowego Przełomu: Meldunki MSW o sytuacji w kraju w okresie 1 lipca – 16 Sierpnia 1980’, *Zeszyty Historyczne*, (Paris, 2000), pp.69-164 (p.158).

<sup>298</sup> A. Kazański, ‘Sierpień ’80 w Gdyni,’ *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119) wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.45-56 (pp.47-48).

<sup>299</sup> J. Kufel, ‘Rola działaczy Ruchu Młodej Polski w strajku sierpniowym w Stoczni Gdańskiej’, in: W. Polak and others (eds.), *Czas Przełomu. Solidarność 1980-1981* (Gdańsk, 2010), pp551-562.

<sup>300</sup> *Bratniak*, Nr.24 (lipiec-sierpień 1980), p.6.

<sup>301</sup> A. Friszke, *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980-1981* (Kraków, 2014), p.30; *Bratniak*, Nr 24 (lipiec-sierpień 1980), p.6; Bądkowski, ‘Przypisy dnia (z dzienników gdańskich 14 VII – 1 IX 1980)’, pp.68-99 (p.68-69).

midday the U.S. Embassy had informed Washington of events.<sup>302</sup> At the same time telephone and telex connections from the coast to the rest of Poland were cut.<sup>303</sup> While this appears to have come partially in response to the increased number of telephone calls to the area,<sup>304</sup> the need to disrupt the flow of information between the workers and KOR was arguably more significant.

As Kania's claim about demands for 'the release of political prisoners' in the previous day's Politburo session demonstrated, Kuroń had been receiving regular telephone updates on events, which he then passed on to foreign journalists with an apparent emphasis on the workers' political demands.<sup>305</sup> With the escalation of the strike wave and the demands, the authorities appeared keen to break this link. Kuroń's telephone was left connected, but if a phone call concerned strikes rather than personal matters, it was instantly cut off. Kuroń and other activists used alternate telephones, including those of neighbours instead.<sup>306</sup> Ultimately 'a human relay system' was devised that enabled the continued transmission of information from the strikes through the use of public telephones outside the blockade.<sup>307</sup> Innovation from the workers and the opposition allowed KOR to continue its role as an information centre. There were also simpler ways in which news of the strike could find its way around the blockade. Poles returning from holiday on the coast witnessed the strike through train windows, for example.<sup>308</sup> Even with the blockade in place, the Party could not exert complete control over news about the strikes.

---

<sup>302</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Worker Unrest in Gdansk-Gdynia-Sopot Area: Sitrep as of 1200 hours 15 August', 15 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008085.

<sup>303</sup> Lipski, *KOR: A History of the Workers' Defense Committee in Poland, 1976-1981*, p.419; A. Orchowski, 'Przebieg strajku okupacyjnego w Stoczni Gdańskiej im. Lenina w dniach 14-31 sierpnia 1980 roku', in: *Polski Sierpień 1980. Reedycja Almanachu Gdańskich Środowisk Twórczych "Punkt" nr12/80* (New York, 1981), pp.9-44 (p.10).

<sup>304</sup> See: *Bratniak*, Nr.24 (lipiec-sierpień 1980), p.6.

<sup>305</sup> See: A. Friszke, *Czas KOR-u. Jacek Kuroń a geneza Solidarności* (Kraków, 2011), pp.544-545.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.547-548.

<sup>307</sup> M. Dobbs, *Down With Big Brother: The Fall of the Soviet Empire* (London, 1997), p.47.

<sup>308</sup> A. Woźnicki, 'Widziałem, jak spełniają się moje marzenia', in: L. Prochniak and others (eds.), *Pospolite Ruszenie. Relacje Działaczy i Współpracowników "Solidarności" w Łodzi 1980-1981* (Łódź, 2011), pp.269-282. (p.269).

By midday Wałęsa had out-thought Gniech. His attempt to divide and rule had failed. Following the departmental meetings and follow-on discussions, a near unanimous rejection of Gniech's offer was reached. Only a single department accepted. The strike committee would not back down. They wanted a 2000 złoty wage increase and would settle for nothing less.<sup>309</sup> Their determination was increased both by the regional spread of strikes (announced during negotiations) and also by the arrival of a foreign journalist in the yard. Wałęsa hoped the journalist's presence would lift a sense of fear amongst the workers.<sup>310</sup> It may have worked. The workers showed no signs of caving in. After two rounds of talks, the issue of pay remained unresolved. The final round began at 5pm.

The workers were tiring. Wałęsa tried a change of tactic. Abandoning pay discussions, he returned to two issues Gniech thought already resolved: the guarantee of the strike's safety and the reinstatement of Walentynowicz. In the case of Walentynowicz, when it became clear that she had not been reinstated to her original department Wałęsa called an impromptu vote. It resulted in unanimous support for Walentynowicz. Wałęsa challenged Gniech to defy 'the will of the people'. Another member of management tried to intervene. He claimed an agreement had already been reached. Wałęsa responded: 'That was yesterday, and today is today! [...] Yesterday I was full, today I am hungry!' The workers cheered.<sup>311</sup> By retreating to safer ground Wałęsa ensured an easy, morale boosting victory. He also demonstrated the level of support he enjoyed. He was the clear leader of the strike and held the upper hand in negotiations. He dominated Gniech, increasing pressure on him by repeatedly switching tack between threatening to end talks and escalating demands.

Calls were made for an improvement in the supply of food, the release of political prisoners (a day later than Kania claimed) and payment for the strike. It was not clear how

---

<sup>309</sup> Drzycimski and Skutnik (eds.), *Zapis rokowań gdańskich*, p.59.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid., 65; Dobbs, p.31.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid., 76-78; J. Skórzyński, *Zadra: Biografia Lecha Wałęsy* (Gdańsk, 2009), pp.48-49.



far Wałęsa intended to pursue these new demands nor how much support he enjoyed for doing so. Such demands had not been agreed upon by the strike committee. There were limits to what he could do without their support. However, it was not only his authority that was limited in this regard. All such demands went well beyond the limits of Gniech's powers as well. They would need to be dealt with by the authorities. Having backed him into a corner, Wałęsa returned to the central demand for workers: a 2000 złoty wage increase. Gniech's stance had not altered since morning. When he refused to yield to the workers' demands, Wałęsa called an end to the day's talks. He left Gniech with a new demand to consider: the creation of free and independent trade unions.<sup>312</sup>

Although neither Gniech nor the authorities could be sure, Wałęsa was probably bluffing. He may simply have been trying to increase pressure on Gniech in order to force him to cave in to their wage demands. Even though as a Free Trade Union activist this will have been a demand close to Wałęsa's heart, as with the earlier escalation of demands, the call for independent trade unions was not officially listed as one of the strike committee's demands. Though it is clear that Wałęsa was drawing on pre-existing demands formulated by the opposition during the 1970s, such as the aim of 'independent trade unions' outlined in the Charter of Workers' Rights published by *Robotnik*'s editors a year earlier,<sup>313</sup> there were limits to what he could do on the basis of support from the current strike committee. He did not have the necessary authority to pursue such demands on their behalf. This was in marked contrast to enterprises elsewhere in the region, where calls for the dissolution of the official unions and the establishment of independent ones were explicitly stated in the workers' demands. Wałęsa was aware of this. During negotiations with Gniech he read out such demands from two other enterprises.<sup>314</sup>

---

<sup>312</sup> Ibid., 78-82.

<sup>313</sup> See: '1979r., lipiec – sierpień, Warszawa. Karta Praw Robotniczych', in: Z. Hemmerling and M. Nadolski (eds.), *Opozycja Demokratyczna w Polsce 1976-1980. Wybór dokumentów* (Warsaw, 1994), pp.602-609.

<sup>314</sup> Drzycimski and Skutnik (eds.), pp.83-84.

Andrzej Gwiazda and Andrzej Kołodziej had significantly escalated demands. The first three demands of fourteen made at “Elmor” for example, clearly show that the strike was more political than that at the Lenin Shipyard. Workers called for the authorities to:

1. Guarantee the right to strike
2. Respect the guarantee in the constitution for freedom of expression, and thus not repress independent publishers, abolish censorship
3. Respect convention Nr 87 of the International Labour Organisation concerning freedom of association, ratified by the PRL.

The sixth demand on the list called for an end to ‘interference by state organs and enterprise management in the activities of trade unions.’<sup>315</sup> Equally explicit was the fourth of twenty-one demands at the Paris Commune Shipyard: ‘The acceptance of free trade unions (the present do not fulfil their role correctly and are not independent)’.<sup>316</sup> Such demands were fully explained by Andrzej Kołodziej to his new co-workers.<sup>317</sup> Although they required the support of all those on strike to implement them, those associated with the opposition in Gdańsk were beginning to make their influence felt through the demands. The escalation was intentional.

Andrzej Gwiazda had prepared a list the night before that unlike the Lenin Shipyard’s could be used by all enterprises. Political demands for the central authorities were drawn up alongside work-related demands for the director.<sup>318</sup> The most significant demands were made within the framework of domestic and international laws ratified by the Polish authorities. This was in keeping with the stance on legality promoted by KOR since the mid-1970s and was one of a number of opposition methods that proved an effective means of resistance. As Aleksander Smolar observes of such methods, ‘Practical solidarity

---

<sup>315</sup> ‘Żądania strajkowe załogi Elmoru pod adresem władz centralnych, Gdańsk, 15.08.1980’, in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, p.14.

<sup>316</sup> ‘Postulaty załogi Wydziału K-5 Stoczni im. Komuny Paryskiej, Gdynia, 15.08.1980’ in, *Ibid.*, p.15.

<sup>317</sup> A. Kołodziej, *Gdyńscy Komunardzi. Sierpień 1980 w Stoczni Gdynia*, (Gdynia, 2008), pp.57-58.

<sup>318</sup> *Gwiazdozbiór w “Solidarności”: Joanna i Andrzej Gwiazdowie w rozmowie z Remigiuszem Okraską* (Łódź, 2009), pp.139-141.

with the persecuted, the fight against the lie in the domestic sphere, and the use of law – both international and domestic – turned out to be efficient means of resistance.<sup>319</sup> What had begun with the Warsaw intelligentsia in the mid-1970s was continuing with the coastal workers in the summer of 1980.

The spread of strikes in the Tri-city area and the escalation of demands placed the authorities under increasing pressure. Kania continued to dominate the Politburo in spite of Gierek's return. He made clear to the First Secretary the nature and severity of the situation in Gdańsk. However, while noting that demands differed to those elsewhere and also the concerns of Tadeusz Fiszbach, Kania appears to have considered the situation at the shipyard under control. Szczecin was also calm. Although Kania reported an attempted strike at the city's port, it had been dealt with.<sup>320</sup> Strikes had actually been attempted in several Szczecin enterprises and at two enterprises a pre-emptive rate increase had been awarded.<sup>321</sup> The problem of maintaining a strike when faced with a "free Saturday" the following day also appears to have prevented strikes in Szczecin.<sup>322</sup> The absence of strikes did not necessarily mean the Party was in control of events.

Łukaszewicz labelled the demands 'political'. Others singled out KOR as responsible for leading this new, more political phase. Babiuch meanwhile was more concerned by the economic damage inflicted by strikes in higher-earning enterprises. He also pointed to the fact that official media coverage was being undermined by Radio Free Europe and 'gossip'. Rank-and-file members of the Party were passive and unprepared.<sup>323</sup>

---

<sup>319</sup> A. Smolar, 'Towards "Self-limiting Revolution": Poland 1970-89', in: A. Roberts and T. Garton Ash (eds.), *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present* (Oxford, 2009), pp.127-143 (p.128). On the legal character of the demands and subsequent agreement, see: J. Kuisz, *Charakter prawny porozumienie sierpniowych 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2009).

<sup>320</sup> 'Protokół nr 17 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 15 sierpnia 1980r.', in: Z. Włodek (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty: Biura Politycznego: PZPR a „Solidarność” 1980-1981* (London, 1992), pp.28-29.

<sup>321</sup> M. Stefaniak, 'Sierpień '80 w Województwie Szczecińskim – Przebieg i Konsekwencje', *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień-październik 2010, pp.57-64 (p.58).

<sup>322</sup> M. Szejnert and T. Zalewski, *Szczecin. Grudzień-Sierpień-Grudzień* (Warsaw, 1984), p.97.

<sup>323</sup> 'Protokół nr 17 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 15 sierpnia 1980r.', pp.29-31.

The Party was losing control of two of its greatest sources of power while internal support was weak. Action was needed at the highest levels, but Gierek's response was limited. He ordered a television appearance by Babiuch and announced a further meeting for the following day at which a new option would be discussed: the possible use of force.<sup>324</sup> The latter may have been a step to reassure hard-liners that he was willing to take firmer action if needed. There are no signs that he was genuinely considering it. Even Brezhnev does not appear to have advised him to take such a course.

In the Crimea, Brezhnev told Gierek to promote 'socialist internationalism', to employ 'relentless counter-propaganda against attempts to blur the class content of socialist patriotism [...] and to idealize Poland's pre-revolutionary past' and to 'conduct a consistent offensive' against the opposition.<sup>325</sup> He may have advised Gierek to take a firmer line, particularly against the opposition, but he had not advocated the use of force against the workers. Such a step was unlikely to be Brezhnev's preferred course of action when faced with worker unrest. As a KGB report later compiled in relation to 'mass disturbances' in the USSR between 1957 and 1988 demonstrates, in only three of nine such incidents to occur under Brezhnev were weapons employed.<sup>326</sup> Despite a reputation for intervention based on Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan, Brezhnev was unlikely to push for the use of force against strikes rooted in genuine worker grievances. It was not Moscow's usual way of dealing with such events. Ever since Novocherkassk (1962) they had attempted to move away from such responses.<sup>327</sup> This is not to say that Moscow would never advocate such a response, however. As Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968) illustrated, Moscow had set clear

---

<sup>324</sup> Ibid., p.33.

<sup>325</sup> 'Document No.9: CPSU CC Politburo Report on Topics for Discussion with the Polish Leadership (3 September 1980)', in: A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (eds.), *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History* (Budapest and New York, 2007), p.86.

<sup>326</sup> V.A. Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings in the USSR: Protest and Rebellion in the post-Stalin Years* (Armonk NY and London, 2002), p.305.

<sup>327</sup> On Novocherkassk and after, see: Ibid., Ch.12-14; S.H. Baron, *Bloody Saturday in the Soviet Union: Novocherkassk, 1962* (Stanford CA, 2001).

‘ground rules’ for Eastern bloc states in order to protect its regional ‘geostrategic interests’: attempts to leave the Warsaw Pact and challenges to the Party as the sole holder of power would not be tolerated.<sup>328</sup> They were likely to push for an internal solution first if the need arose, however.

With the use of force not under consideration, Babiuch’s speech remained the authorities’ most high profile response. If it was intended to provide a frank account of Poland’s problems and the steps being taken to resolve them, it failed. Despite acknowledging ‘that the public expects a clear answer’, Babiuch did not provide one. Instead of outlining an economic reform programme, he attacked strikes as damaging to the economy and accused the opposition of exploiting the situation ‘for their own political ends’. He appeared defensive, arguing:

In no country in the world is there a universal and miraculous prescription for solving complex economic problems [...]. There have never been miracles in economics, nor will there be any. Our economics, like those of other countries are ruled by firm and strict laws and rules. One can bypass them for a brief period, but later on they will come back with redoubled strength [...] <sup>329</sup>

Poland’s economic difficulties could have occurred under any economic system. They had to be dealt with. The support of the workers was required to do so, but was not forthcoming. Babiuch’s calls for work and unity made little impact. MSW reports recorded that workers in the Lenin and Paris Commune Shipyards were more interested in talking to Babiuch than listening to him. Workers in Szczecin were equally unimpressed.<sup>330</sup>

Criticism was not limited to the domestic arena. The U.S. Embassy was critical of the economic aspects of Babiuch’s speech, describing it as ‘si[n]gularly devoid of new proposals or complete recognition of the magnitude of the problem except by

---

<sup>328</sup> A. Kemp-Welch, ‘Eastern Europe: Stalinism to solidarity’, in: M.P. Leffler and O.A. Westad (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. II: Crises and Détente (Cambridge, 2010), pp.219-237 (p.219).

<sup>329</sup> ‘Premier Babiuch’s Television Appeal’; BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, August 18, 1980.

<sup>330</sup> K. Dubiński, ‘Zapowiedź Sierpniowego Przełomu: Meldunki MSW o sytuacji w kraju w okresie 1 lipca – 16 Sierpnia 1980’, *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Paris, 2000), pp.69-164 (pp.163-164).

implication.<sup>331</sup> By contrast the British seemed more understanding. Although questioning its impact, the following day they praised Babiuch's speech for its 'sound economic sense.'<sup>332</sup> The Poles required money rather than criticism or sympathy, however. Media reports placed greatest emphasis on the West German loan and the pressure being applied to commercial banks by Bonn. Helmut Schmidt was reportedly concerned for the political survival of Gierek due to his stabilising influence on relations between East and West.<sup>333</sup> While the Anglo-American loan had also not been completed, it was the West German loan that was of greatest concern. The following day Babiuch forwarded a translation of a *Der Spiegel* article concerning the loan to Gierek. It highlighted the reluctance of German bankers to participate in the loan despite Schmidt's desire to present the deal to Gierek on his trip to West Germany the following week.<sup>334</sup> The loan must have been of great importance for Babiuch to have forwarded the article to Gierek at this time. The significance of West German support should not be understated. As the article made clear, West Germany was the only country that could provide Poland with the money needed to survive its financial crisis.<sup>335</sup> Maintaining the support of Bonn was vital, especially as no significant help was forthcoming from Poland's friends.

Although rumours had been circulating that Gierek had spent his holiday attempting to secure additional economic aid from Moscow,<sup>336</sup> the outcome appears to have been limited. According to a Soviet summary of economic assistance to Poland, the only hard currency aid Moscow provided during this period was a \$30 million credit for sugar at the

---

<sup>331</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Babiuch speech to the nation', 15 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008110.

<sup>332</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4160, f125: Telegram from Warsaw to FCO, 'Tel No 238 of 16 August 1980', 16 August 1980.

<sup>333</sup> 'German Banks Plan Major Loan to Poland', *The American Banker*, August 15, 1980.

<sup>334</sup> AAN, PZPR KC w Warszawie, XIA/1109, 80-83: '*Der Sipiegel* (sic) nr 33 z dnia 11.08.1980 r.' (Covering note from Babiuch to Gierek dated 16/VIII [1980 r.]

<sup>335</sup> Ibid.

<sup>336</sup> N. Andrews, *Poland 1980-1981. Solidarity versus the Party* (Washington DC, 1985), p.27.

start of the month.<sup>337</sup> Such limited Soviet support would no doubt have come as a surprise to the Western banks. Media reports suggest a belief that Moscow had already loaned Warsaw \$1 billion for debt-servicing that year.<sup>338</sup> If true, commercial banks were significantly overstating the levels of Soviet economic support for Poland. There were no signs that the “Soviet umbrella” was close to opening.

The most high-profile action engaged in by the Soviet Union was military. That day “routine manoeuvres” by Warsaw Pact forces in East Germany and on the Baltic Sea were announced by TASS, the Soviet News Agency. They would take place in early September and involve 40,000 Warsaw Pact troops.<sup>339</sup> The same day a ‘theory article’ appeared in *Pravda*, attacking reform Communists within the leadership in a style similar to that which preceded the Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia 1968.<sup>340</sup> While the appearance in the official press of attacks on “revisionism”, as well as the timing of the announcement and the proximity of the manoeuvres to the Baltic coastline, could be interpreted as a sign of an impending Soviet threat to Poland, the manoeuvres were unrelated to events in Gdańsk. Aside from the fact that pressure was likely to be applied to the Polish leadership prior to any Soviet military action, the East Germans had already announced the manoeuvres prior to the Lenin Shipyard strike. This provides a useful reminder of the East-West context in which Polish events were unfolding. Though economically intertwined with the West, militarily Poland was still at the heart of the Warsaw Pact. It also illustrates a further point: despite the post-Afghanistan rupture in détente, the international norms that had developed during the easing of East-West tensions in the 1970s remained in place. The East German

---

<sup>337</sup> ‘CPSU CC Report on Economic Aid to Poland (1980-1981), 23 September 1982’, in: M. Kramer, ‘Poland, 1980-1981. Soviet Policy During the Polish Crisis’, *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin*, Issue 5, (Spring 1995), pp.1 and 116-139 (p.139).

<sup>338</sup> ‘Polish Pickle’, *The Economist*, 9 August 1980, p.40; ‘Under Western Bankers’ Eyes’, *The Economist*, 16 August 1980, p.58.

<sup>339</sup> ‘Polish Leader Flies Home as Labor Crisis Deepens’, *The Washington Post*, 16 August 1980.

<sup>340</sup> See: S.I. Ploss, *Moscow and the Polish Crisis: An Interpretation of Soviet Policies and Intentions* (Boulder and London, 1986), p.14.

authorities had already provided advance notification of the manoeuvres under the terms of the Helsinki Final Act.<sup>341</sup> The structures of détente were more durable than the spirit. This should not be forgotten when assessing the Soviet threat, particularly with preparations for Madrid underway.

### **16 August 1980 (Saturday)**

By Saturday Poland's strikes were attracting considerable media coverage in the West. The most notable article appeared in the New York Times: 'U.S. Fears that Strikes in Poland Will Encourage Russians to Intervene'. In the first public hint of a response from the Carter administration, officials at the Department of State warned that although there was no reason for alarm at present, the outbreak of strikes increased the risk of problems. Although broadly supportive of the Polish authorities and their handling of events, the White House was watching carefully. Their main fear was that any Soviet intervention reminiscent of Hungary or Czechoslovakia would be met with resistance by Polish workers, placing an additional strain on East-West relations and forcing Carter to respond. While officials could not say what such a response would entail, the report implied that it was unlikely to involve military action.<sup>342</sup> Indeed, the latter will not have been under discussion. Poland was a member of the Warsaw Pact.

Overall, talk of Soviet intervention was premature. Aside from the fact that previous Soviet interventions had been preceded by pressure on the domestic leadership to take action, with the exception of the "Borisov" article and *Pravda*'s on 'theory' there had been few public signals of concern from Moscow. A front-page editorial in *Pravda* suggests that Moscow's main concern was spillover from Poland, as it sought to promote the role of its

---

<sup>341</sup> *World Armaments and Disarmaments: SIPRI Yearbook 1981* (Stockholm and London, 1981), pp.495-496.

<sup>342</sup> 'U.S. Fears that the Strikes in Poland Will Encourage Russians to Intervene', *New York Times*, 16 August 1980.



own trade unions to Soviet workers.<sup>343</sup> Given that coverage of the unions had earlier stemmed from the Baltic regions, the publication of such an editorial on the front page of the national press can arguably be taken as a sign of increased concern. Whether this was triggered by domestic or Polish factors is not clear, however. Even if the latter, Moscow's response to events was still a long way short of that concerning the U.S. While in part American concerns were presumably triggered by memories of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, domestic concerns during a pre-election period in which Carter found himself under pressure from a resurgent Right and suffering from major foreign policy setbacks in Afghanistan and Iran rather than Soviet actions may also have been behind concerns voiced in the report. Carter could not afford to be caught out. There seems to have been little other reason for these comments. Although increasing, Soviet signals were still limited and carried no threat of action. No CIA Alert Memorandum had been issued as at Lublin and the TASS announcement should have come as no surprise given prior notification under the Helsinki provisions. The article also came at a time when events at the Lenin Shipyard were nearing completion.

At the Lenin Shipyard there was no mention of the trade union issue as negotiations got underway. Gniech had apparently decided that the workers' political demands, although genuine, 'could be treated as deliberate over-bidding.'<sup>344</sup> The real issue at stake was money. Gniech reiterated his earlier offer of introducing a new table of wages. The maximum pay rise he could offer was 1200 złoty. While his financial offer remained the same, his tactics changed. The third day of negotiations was to be conducted in a different manner to those on the second. The talks should be 'democratic'. Each delegate would be allowed the opportunity to voice their opinions over the yard's radio system. Wałęsa would not be

---

<sup>343</sup> Ploss, p.14; E. Teague, *Solidarity and the Soviet Worker: The Impact of the Polish Events of 1980 on Soviet Internal Politics* (London, 1988), p.52.

<sup>344</sup> N. Ascherson, *The Polish August* (Harmondsworth, 1981), p.148.

allowed to speak for everyone, a decision others in the hall supported.<sup>345</sup> Gniech was attempting to isolate Wałęsa and undermine his role as strike leader. The broadcast of negotiations would further divide the workers and highlight the fact that they were far from united.

Faced with little choice but to go along with Gniech's proposal, Wałęsa called out departments one by one. Each representative announced their decision over the microphone. Responses varied. They ranged from those happy to accept Gniech's offer to those demanding 2000 złoty for all workers and voicing support for the Free Trade Unions. The consensus was that they would settle for 1500 złoty.<sup>346</sup> Although Gniech had highlighted divisions within the strike committee, he had failed to divide them completely. He was left to appeal to patriotic sentiment and older workers in a last-ditch attempt to gain acceptance for his offer. It was to no avail. The workers would not budge. Gniech had little choice but to accept the workers' decision. As Wałęsa noted, having asked for and received a democratic response to his offer, there was nothing to discuss.<sup>347</sup> Gniech could not agree to such an increase immediately. A second round of talks would begin at eleven o'clock.

In the interim the issue of new trade unions reappeared, but was dropped when Gniech returned after consultations. He accepted the strike committee's demand for 1500 złoty. Talks amongst the delegates now concerned two conditions attached to the pay offer: the evacuation of the yard and a return to work on Monday morning. Intense discussion followed. The guarantee of safety re-emerged as an issue for the workers. The delegates insisted on a signed guarantee from Fiszbach. Fear was evident. They remembered what had happened in December 1970.<sup>348</sup> Although workers outside continued to call for 2000 złoty,

---

<sup>345</sup> A. Drzycimski and T. Skutnik (eds.), *Zapis rokowań gdańskich. Sierpień 1980* (Paris, 1986), pp.86-88.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid., 88-97.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid., 97-98.

<sup>348</sup> A. Kemp-Welch, *Poland Under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge, 2007), pp.241-242.

with the signed guarantee of safety in place their delegates voted to accept the new pay offer. In keeping with the democratic nature of the vote, Wałęsa accepted the majority's decision. At 3pm he declared an end to the occupation of the Lenin Shipyard.<sup>349</sup> Gniech telephoned the Minister for the Engineering Industry Aleksander Kopec to inform him of the news.<sup>350</sup>

The strike was far from over, however. As Wałęsa declared an end to the protest at the Lenin Shipyard, a number of opposition activists were listening in the yard. Amongst them were Bogdan Borusewicz, Andrzej Gwiazda and Joanna Duda-Gwiazda. Upon hearing Wałęsa declare the strike over, the Gwiazdas raced back to "Elmor" to prevent the strike from collapsing elsewhere.<sup>351</sup> In the Paris Commune Yard news of the strike's end triggered confusion. Amongst those informing the yard of the strike's end were workers claiming to be from the Lenin Shipyard and the director of the Paris Commune Shipyard, who broadcast the news over the shipyard's radio system. The Party *aktyw* also strove to undermine the strike. Indeed, it marked the culmination of the day's efforts against both the strike and Kołodziej, following overnight meetings designed to discredit him as an 'agent' amongst other things.<sup>352</sup> Events at the Lenin Shipyard were similarly chaotic. Wałęsa found himself under fire. The words "Traitor" and "Informer" were daubed on the walls.<sup>353</sup> Crowds at the gates started to turn on departing workers. Workers from elsewhere, who had been relying on the yard for protection, found themselves abandoned. Henryka Krzywonos, a representative for transport workers, summarised how many felt. She shouted: 'If you

---

<sup>349</sup> J-Y Potel, *The Summer Before The Frost* (London, 1982), p.50.

<sup>350</sup> S. Cenckiewicz, *Anna Solidarność. Życie i działalność Anny Walentynowicz na tle epoki (1929-2010)* (Poznań, 2010), pp.120-121.

<sup>351</sup> *Gwiazdozbiór w "Solidarności": Joanna i Andrzej Gwiazdowie w rozmowie z Remigiuszem Okraską* (Łódź, 2009), pp.141-142.

<sup>352</sup> A. Kołodziej, *Gdyńscy Komunardzi. Sierpień 1980 w Stoczni Gdynia*, (Gdynia, 2008), pp.65-69.

<sup>353</sup> L. Wałęsa, *A Path of Hope* (London, 1987), p.121.

abandon us, we'll be lost [...] Buses can't face tanks!'<sup>354</sup> Without the support of the largest enterprise in the city, it would be difficult for strikes elsewhere to survive.

Krzywonos' fear of a crackdown was warranted. In addition to memories of 1970, that day Gierek, while noting the need to examine 'the problem of trade unions, work legislation etc.', ordered the establishment of a team headed by Kania to oversee the suppression of the strikes.<sup>355</sup> A directive was immediately issued, announcing the establishment of a twelve member MSW Staff to organise the operation. Led by General Bogusław Stachura, the operation went by the name of "Lato-80" ("Summer-80").<sup>356</sup> A further directive was issued providing an assessment of the situation in Poland. It outlined the measures to be taken by the security services and militia 'in the event of a threat to safety and public order'.<sup>357</sup> In terms of the short-term outcome of events, two sections of this directive appear deserving of discussion: sections seven and eight. They deal with actions to be taken by the SB and MO when faced both with peaceful demonstrations and 'a threat to public order'. In the event of the former they were not to intervene. They were to prevent radical elements from joining the demonstrations. Peace was to be maintained. The SB and MO would perform a watching brief, documenting the proceedings and identifying the key participants. By contrast, in the event of a public disturbance they would take a more active role. Amongst other things, they would be tasked with 'Preventing and counteracting arson, looting, vandalism and theft.' Rather than observing key participants, they would

---

<sup>354</sup> Henryka Krzywonos quoted in, T. Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution : Solidarity 1980-1982* (London, 1983), p.41.

<sup>355</sup> 'Protokół nr 18 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 16 sierpnia 1980r.', in: Z. Włodek (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a „Solidarność” 1980-1981* (London, 1992), p.34. See also: A. Paczkowski, *Droga do „mniejszego zła”. Strategia i taktyka obozu władzy lipiec 1980 – styczeń 1982* (Kraków, 2002), pp.33-34.

<sup>356</sup> 'Zarządzenie Nr 081/80 Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych z dnia 16 sierpnia 1980 r. w sprawie powołania Sztabu MSW do kierowania operacją "Lato-80"', in: P. Raina and M. Zbrozek (eds.), *Operacja "Lato-80". Preludium stanu wojennego. Dokumenty MSW 1980-1981* (Pelplin, 2003), pp.25-26. See also: Paczkowski, pp.35-36.

<sup>357</sup> 'Dyrektywa Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych z dnia 16 sierpnia 1980 r. dot. Działalności jednostek resortu spraw wewnętrznych na wypadek zagrożenia bezpieczeństwa i porządku publicznego prowokacyjną działalnością zorganizowanych grup anysocjalistycznych i żywiołowych wystąpień', in: Ibid., 27.

detain them.<sup>358</sup> On this basis it seems that so long as the workers maintained their adherence to non-violent action, they would be able to escape repression but not observation. They would enjoy comparative benefits from the use of non-violence as opposed to violence, therefore. While there was always the risk of provocation, it seems that the response of the security services in the short-term at least was to be shaped by the actions of the workers. No plans for the security services to play a proactive role in ending the strikes through force had been prepared. This would explain why, as Timothy Garton Ash notes, security forces were not sent into the Lenin Shipyard at a time when activists were working to save the strike.<sup>359</sup>

While Gierek could not afford to appear soft in the face of extensive worker protests and Politburo pressure, it is also questionable whether he could engage in a violent crackdown under the gaze of his Western partners while seeking loans. This may have been behind Gierek's decision to approach 'Western diplomats' about the strikes. Gierek's stance arguably mixed the liberal necessary to appeal to the West with the communist necessary to retain support amongst Poland's allies and the Politburo. While the strikes were seen as lessening, there was to be an admission that economic reforms had caused 'some' stoppages alongside criticism of RFE.<sup>360</sup> With the exception of the apparently standard criticisms of RFE, which were only to be expected at such times, the other elements could all be seen as reassurance that the situation was under control. Economic reforms were continuing with certain problems only to be expected. Similarly, while the approach to the West was to state a clear need to act against 'acts of terror' and the spectre of force was to be raised, for now such action had been avoided.<sup>361</sup> Gierek was performing a balancing act. Under pressure from the workers, he could afford to lose neither the support of the West on the one hand,

---

<sup>358</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>359</sup> Garton Ash, p.41.

<sup>360</sup> See: 'Protokół nr 18 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 16 sierpnia 1980r.', p.36

<sup>361</sup> Ibid., 36.

nor the support of his Politburo and allies on the other. It would be a difficult act to maintain. Reassurance that strikes were lessening and economic reform was underway was likely to appease Western concerns regarding Poland's economic credibility. Raising the spectre of force alongside criticism of RFE meanwhile could help to reassure the Politburo and Poland's friends while also getting the West to back off.

In spite of Gierek's claims, the strikes were far from lessening. At the Lenin Shipyard the strike was saved. Although the yard's radio system had been disabled as soon as negotiations had ended in an effort by management to hasten the strike's demise, a core of activists led by Walentynowicz, Pieńkowska and Ewa Ossowska (a Young Poland Movement activist) attempted to save the strike from collapse. They were joined by Wałęsa. Together they attempted to persuade workers to remain on strike out of solidarity with other workers in Gdańsk. Management attempted to undermine such actions, however. Gniech used a megaphone to announce that wage increases would not be granted to those remaining in the yard after 8pm.<sup>362</sup> According to Walentynowicz, the role of Pieńkowska was crucial at this time. Through her appeals to continue the strike, she succeeded in persuading a number of workers to remain in the yard at the very time that official announcements declaring the strike over were being made. A lack of trust in the official guarantee of security also played its part in the workers' decision to remain.<sup>363</sup> The authorities had failed to keep their promises before. They had nothing to lose. While enough workers remained in the yard that night to continue, their numbers had not been this low since Borowczak and Prądzyński began the strike less than 72 hours earlier.

---

<sup>362</sup> Garton Ash, p.41; J. Kufel, 'Strajk sierpniowy w Stoczni Gdańskiej i narodziny "Solidarności"', in: A. Friszke, K. Persak and P. Sowiński (eds.), *Solidarność od wewnątrz 1980 – 1981* (Warsaw, 2013), pp.39-53 (p.43).

<sup>363</sup> A. Walentynowicz, 'Solidarność była tak wielka...', *Wolność i Solidarność*, 1 (2010), pp.64-67 (p.67); A. Walentynowicz, *Moja Solidarność* (Wrocław, 2007), pp.30-32.

With the situation under control ‘emissaries’ including Walentynowicz, Ossowska, and Borusewicz were sent to local enterprises to announce the continuation of the strike.<sup>364</sup> A similar process had already started elsewhere. In Gdynia a decision had been taken to continue without the Lenin Shipyard if necessary in a strike committee comprised of enterprises still on strike,<sup>365</sup> while at “Elmor” a meeting was held at which workers spoke of the need to maintain unity amongst local enterprises. They put forward a proposal to work together in an Inter-Factory Strike Committee (MKS). With the strike at the Lenin Shipyard saved, the MKS was established there instead. Its first meeting took place in the Health and Safety (BHP) Hall that night. Approximately fifty people were present, including representatives from over twenty striking enterprises and Free Trade Union activists. Together they agreed on the ‘essential principles’ of the MKS, drew up an initial list of demands and elected a Presidium headed by Wałęsa. Work continued on preparations for the next stage of the strike throughout the night.<sup>366</sup>

It marked a significant turn-around for Wałęsa. SB reports suggest a reluctance to continue with the strike, doing so only ‘under pressure’ from other activists.<sup>367</sup> Such reticence was perhaps understandable given his initial misgivings about leading the strike and that he had already achieved all that had been asked of him. Wałęsa, as with all those at the yard, was venturing into the unknown again. The strike remained vulnerable. Rumours were spread by management that workers were being kept in the yard against their will. Threats of MO and SB intervention were made.<sup>368</sup> While it was not clear whether the

---

<sup>364</sup> A. Kazański, ‘Sierpień ’80 w Gdańsku’, *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień – październik 2010, 27; A. Kazański, ‘Sierpień ’80 w Gdyni’, *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień – październik 2010, 52.

<sup>365</sup> A. Kołodziej, *Gdyńscy Komunardzi. Sierpień 1980 w Stoczni Gdynia*, (Gdynia, 2008), p.66.

<sup>366</sup> *Gwiazdozbiór w “Solidarności”: Joanna i Andrzej Gwiazdowie w rozmowie z Remigiuszem Okraską* (Łódź, 2009), pp.142-145.

<sup>367</sup> See: S. Cenckiewicz, ‘Kalendarium Sierpnia ’80 – wypisy źródłowe z dokumentów MO i SB’, *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 7-8 (54-55), lipiec-sierpień 2005, pp.95-125 (p.102).

<sup>368</sup> ‘At the Lenin Shipyard: Interview with Jerzy Borowczak’, in: S. Persky and H. Flam (eds.), *The Solidarity Sourcebook* (Vancouver, 1982), pp.73-78 (p.77).

authorities would use force as in December 1970, Borusewicz later admitted that such means would have brought results at this stage.<sup>369</sup> They had no means of protection. They even lacked sufficient guards along the perimeter walls and gates.<sup>370</sup> The future of the strike was uncertain. It was not clear whether it would survive the Sunday. New enterprises would not be joining the MKS nor were workers likely to return. It would be unclear until Monday whether a new phase of the strike was genuinely underway.

### **17 August 1980 (Sunday)**

Relations between the Church hierarchy and the opposition had been of limited importance during the 1970s compared to those with the authorities on the one hand, and with Catholics (ranging from the clergy to the congregation) on the other.<sup>371</sup> As such the support of the Church for the strikes on the coast was not to be taken for granted. According to Andrzej Friszke, while sympathy for the striking workers from Bishop Kaczmarek of Gdańsk could be anticipated, support for the work of the opposition and involvement in a worker-state confrontation could not. In the days prior to the first Sunday of the strike Kaczmarek had indicated to the local authorities that he held moderate views on events and was also initially against the idea of holding Mass at the yard.<sup>372</sup> The views of the Church hierarchy were not necessarily the same as those of parish priests, however.

In the Gdańsk region, for example, there was a legacy of cooperation between local opposition activists and certain parish priests as a result of earlier religious services dedicated to imprisoned activists that could be built upon. The organisation of prayers every evening at the Lenin Shipyard by two Young Poland Movement activists built on earlier

---

<sup>369</sup> E. Szczesiak, *Borusewicz. Jak Runął Mur* (Warsaw, 2005), p.127.

<sup>370</sup> B. Fac 'Lech Wałęsa – the Man Who Spoke Up', *The Book of Lech Wałęsa* (Harmondsworth, 1982), p.57; L. Wałęsa, *A Path of Hope* (London, 1987), p.125.

<sup>371</sup> See: J. Żaryn, 'Kościół katolicki – hierarchia, kapłani i świeccy', in: K.Kowalczyk, M.Paziewski and M. Stefaniak (eds.), *Między Warszawą a regionem. Opozycja przedsiębiorcza na Pomorzu Zachodnim* (Szczecin, 2008), pp.19-26 (p.19).

<sup>372</sup> A. Friszke, *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980-1981* (Kraków, 2014), p.43.



religious actions held to highlight the case of two imprisoned local activists, for example.<sup>373</sup> Such ties arguably came to the fore on the first Sunday of the strike in spite of Kaczmarek's reticence. Mass was celebrated at a number of striking enterprises in the region, including at the Lenin and Paris Commune shipyards.<sup>374</sup> The origins and the nature of Mass at the two shipyards differed considerably, however.

While Mass at the Lenin Shipyard was celebrated by Father Henryk Jankowski with the ultimate agreement of both Bishop Kaczmarek and the Provincial Governor Jerzy Kołodziejcki,<sup>375</sup> Mass at the Paris Commune Shipyard as well as a later service at the Port of Gdynia was conducted by Father Hilary Jastak without permission from either the local or the Church authorities. Bishop Kaczmarek had warned Father Jastak against doing so in person following a request from Kołodziejcki.<sup>376</sup> Neither the Church nor the authorities ultimately prevented him, however. Although his taxi was halted by the militia cordon around the yard, he travelled the rest of the way on foot. The militia did not stop him. Some even knelt before him.<sup>377</sup> Amongst some of the militia at least, the Church as an alternate source of authority to the Party carried influence.

If such influences were to be felt upon Polish citizens however, the authorities preferred them to be moderate. As such the fact that Jankowski was granted permission while Jastak was not is unsurprising. More than twenty years Jankowski's senior, Jastak had served as a Home Army (AK) chaplain during the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944, an

---

<sup>373</sup> J. Kufel, 'Rola działaczy Ruchu Młodej Polski w strajku sierpniowym w Stoczni Gdańskiej', in: W. Polak and others (eds.), *Czas Przełomu. Solidarność 1980-1981* (Gdańsk, 2010), pp.551-562 (p.556); G. Nawrocki, *Polak z Polakiem* (Warsaw, 1990), p.31.

<sup>374</sup> See: J. Żaryn, "'Błogosławie was i wasze poczynania". Stefan Wyszyński wobec powstania NSZZ "Solidarność"', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 4 (2001), pp.23-33 (p.24).

<sup>375</sup> *Gwiazdźbiór w "Solidarności": Joanna i Andrzej Gwiazdowie w rozmowie z Remigiuszem Okraską* (Łódź, 2009), pp.144-145; A. Kazański, 'Sierpień '80 w Gdańsku', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.21-34 (p.27).

<sup>376</sup> A. Kazański, 'Sierpień '80 w Gdyni', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.45-56 (pp.52-53).

<sup>377</sup> *Gwiazdźbiór w "Solidarności": Joanna i Andrzej Gwiazdowie w rozmowie z Remigiuszem Okraską*, p.145.

experience he invoked during his service at the Paris Commune Yard.<sup>378</sup> He had also been subject to ‘administrative proceedings’ by the authorities for engaging in ‘activity harmful for the state’ in the summer of 1978 after dedicating Mass to a local opposition activist then on hunger strike in prison.<sup>379</sup> He had a clear link with opposition activity, a fact that must have concerned the authorities. By contrast Jankowski appears to have held views far more in keeping with those of Bishop Kaczmarek at around this time. He reportedly questioned whether the strike was justified since economic conditions had been met and suggested that the Church keep its distance from those representing the strike.<sup>380</sup> As such Jankowski’s views appear to have been far more moderate and commensurate with the dominant stance of the Church to the opposition at this time.

This was arguably reflected in the nature of the sermons delivered in Gdańsk and Gdynia. Jankowski’s sermon was by far the more moderate of the two. Amongst other things, Jankowski sympathised with the workers over the nature of work in an industrialised society. However, he also discussed the dignity of work, viewing it as an act that linked ‘humanity in one family, contributing to peace on Earth.’<sup>381</sup> While the Church stood on the side of the Polish nation therefore, a point made clear by a later reference to Pope John Paul II’s June 1979 Victory Square homily which saw the Polish nation and Catholicism as forever bound to one another, work even under these circumstances was also for the good of the nation and should be done. Work was not the only source of peace, however. He concluded his sermon by urging a ‘path of dialogue’ leading amongst other things to ‘peace on the terrain of Gdańsk in our nation’.<sup>382</sup> It was arguably this part of his sermon that

---

<sup>378</sup> ‘Przemówienie i homilia ks. prałata dra H. Jastaka oraz modlitwa powszechna podczas mszy na terenie i portu gdyńskiego, Gdynia, 17.08.1980’, in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, p.55.

<sup>379</sup> ‘KOR Komunikat Nr. 22 (Warszawa, 11 września 1978 r.)’, in: A. Jastrzębski, *Dokumenty Komitetu Obrony Robotników i Komitetu Samoobrony Społecznej “KOR”* (Warsaw and London, 1994), p.286.

<sup>380</sup> Friszke, *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980-1981*, p.43.

<sup>381</sup> A. Drzycimski and T. Skutnik (eds.), *Zapis rokowań gdańskich. Sierpień 1980* (Paris, 1986), pp.109-110.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

chimed most closely with the beliefs not only of the workers and the opposition, but also of the authorities. It was the Church as the voice of moderation.

The attitude to work displayed in Jankowski's sermon, as well as his desire for peace and stability, appears to have been in keeping with sentiments expressed in Cardinal Wyszyński's first public declaration on events.<sup>383</sup> While Wyszyński also used his sermon to demonstrate 'understanding' of Polish workers, his approach was balanced and cautious. The workers' demands but not their actions were supported.<sup>384</sup> This was in stark contrast to the Paris Commune Mass where Father Jastak invoked not only John Paul II's Victory Square homily in support of the defence of 'the inalienable rights of man', but also domestic and international law. Having studied the workers' demands he found them to be supported not only by God, but by the Helsinki Final Act, the Constitution of the PRL, and the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>385</sup> It was clear whose side he was on. This was a point not lost on the Interior Ministry. Although they reported the stance of the Catholic Church favourably, including the sermons of Wyszyński and Jankowski, Father Jastak's influence was negatively assessed.<sup>386</sup> His was a voice of dissent within the Church.

It was presumably due to the scale of the strike at the Paris Commune yard, where 12000 people attended Mass on both sides of the gates (as opposed to 6000 at the Lenin yard), rather than the tone and unauthorised nature of Father Jastak's Mass that caused the authorities to make a renewed attempt to end the strike. As Father Jastak delivered his

---

<sup>383</sup> See: 'Fragmenty autoryzowanego kazania Stefana kard. Wyszyńskiego w Wambierzycach, Per Mariam –ad Jesum, 17.08.1980', in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, pp.51-52.

<sup>384</sup> See: A. Dudek and R. Gryz, *Komuniści i Kościół w Polsce* (Kraków, 2006), pp.352-353; J. Żaryn, "Błogosławie was i wasze poczynania". Stefan Wyszyński wobec powstania NSZZ "Solidarność", *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 4 (2001), pp.23-33 (p.24); A. Paczkowski, *Droga do "mniejszego zła". Strategia i taktyka obozu władzy lipiec 1980 – styczeń 1982* (Kraków, 2002), p.47.

<sup>385</sup> 'Przemówienie i homilia ks. prałata dra H. Jastaka oraz modlitwa powszechna podczas mszy na terenie i portu gdyńskiego, Gdynia, 17.08.1980', in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, pp.54–57.

<sup>386</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (pp.73-74).

sermon, a helicopter circled over the yard and dropped leaflets on the workers below.<sup>387</sup> Amongst other things, the leaflets noted the granting of pay increases to workers despite Poland's serious economic difficulties and contrasted the situation in the Paris Commune Shipyard unfavourably with that in the Lenin Shipyard where an agreement had been reached to conclude the strike and go back to work. It also warned of 'political slogans directed at the basis of social order' being found at the yard and urged them to reconsider their demands. They should think of what they might lead to.<sup>388</sup> It was a typical mixture of concessionary language coupled with insinuations and threats aimed at dividing and undermining the strike. While it proved ineffective, it provides a useful reminder that with the strike still in the balance at the Lenin Shipyard, during the first Sunday of the strike it was the Paris Commune yard that, in terms of numbers of workers still on strike, was the more significant of the two. Had the authorities succeeded in undermining the strike in Gdynia, the strike in Gdańsk may well have proved more difficult to sustain.

Despite the authorities' negative assessment of Father Jastak and their efforts to break the Paris Commune strike, the response to the sermons of Jastak and Jankowski amongst workers seems to have been uniformly positive. At a time of great uncertainty surrounding the strikes, particularly at two enterprises where the collective memory of December 1970 remained so strong, the services helped to save the strikes. They brought the workers together and also drew crowds back to the shipyards. They provided a morale boost at a time of previously low spirits and also strengthened the workers' beliefs. Confidence in

---

<sup>387</sup> Ks. Hilary Jastak in, K Madoń-Mitzner, 'Dni Solidarności', *Karta: kwartalnik historyczny*, 30 (2000), p.23.

<sup>388</sup> "Robotnicy Stoczni im. Komuny Paryskiej" quoted in, A. Kazański, 'Sierpień '80 w Gdyni', *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.45-56 (p.52).

their chances of success also increased.<sup>389</sup> Equally it made clear their commitment to non-violence and to peace. They had no desire for a repeat of 1970.

This was a point reinforced in the aftermath of the Lenin Shipyard's Mass. A simple wooden cross was blessed by Father Jankowski and erected outside the second gate of the Lenin Shipyard, where the first workers had fallen in 1970.<sup>390</sup> Even leaving aside the symbolism of its location, the cross became an important symbol for the strike. As Jan Kubik notes in his analysis of symbolism during the strike, alongside the accepted reading of the cross as a symbol of 'Christianity' and 'Christ's sacrifice', it held additional meaning for the Poles: 'First, it was a *sign of defiance* toward the Communist regime and the authorities; second it was a *metaphor of national martyrdom*; and third, it was a *symbol of Poland as a messiah of nations*.'<sup>391</sup> It was symbolically significant irrespective of whether the workers were Catholics or not. This was also true of Mass itself. Jean-Yves Potel, for example, has described Mass as a source of strength to those who were religious and as evidence of freedom of speech for those who were not.<sup>392</sup> Both understandings were in keeping with the spirit of the strikers' demands. Christianity sowed unity rather than division at the strike.

Mass and the wooden cross were not the only symbolic means of resistance in evidence. While the red-and-white flowers, as with the arm bands of the strike guard, recalled the national colours and were already an established part of Poland's 'repertoire of contention', two further images deserve recognition as part of the workers' symbolic

---

<sup>389</sup> A. Kazański, 'Sierpień '80 w Gdyni', *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.45-56 (p.53); A. Kazański, 'Sierpień '80 w Gdańsku', *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.21-34 (p.27).

<sup>390</sup> T. Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-1982* (London, 1983), p.44; Kazański, 'Sierpień '80 w Gdańsku', p.27; S. Cenckiewicz, 'Kalendarium Sierpnia '80 – wypisy źródłowe z dokumentów MO i SB', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 7-8 (54-55), lipiec-sierpień 2005, pp.95-125 (p.102); L. Biernacki, *Gdy wieje wiatr historii... Studenci z robotnikami, Gdańsk 1976-1980* (Warsaw, 2014), p.400.

<sup>391</sup> J. Kubik, *The Power of Symbols Against The Symbols of Power: The Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Socialism in Poland* (University Park PA, 1994), p.189.

<sup>392</sup> J-Y. Potel, *The Summer Before The Frost* (London, 1982), p.82.

resistance to the state.<sup>393</sup> Firstly, the image of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa, considered by Poles to be 'the Patroness and Defender of Polish sovereignty, national identity, and culture' was present at the strike.<sup>394</sup> It offered a firm reminder of Poland's history of resistance to repression and subjugation by foreign powers, beginning with the Swedes in 1655 and more recently under the authority of Cardinal Wyszyński as a symbol of the Great Novena and renewal of Polish Catholicism in 1966.<sup>395</sup> Secondly, the image of Pope John Paul II was also displayed, as it was at many other strikes. This was a national symbol that had not been long available, but was a vital one. The dual impact of Karol Wojtyła's unexpected election as Pope in October 1978 and his subsequent pilgrimage as Pope John Paul II in June 1979 should not be underestimated. While on the one hand they sowed discord within the Party and provided Poland with a parallel source of sovereignty, they also united Polish society in unprecedented fashion.<sup>396</sup> While the atomisation of society was to some extent reversed therefore, the atomisation of the leadership similarly increased. Although not the only cause of such unity and division in Poland, these events arguably played an important part in laying the groundwork for the success of non-violence in the summer of 1980.

It was the simple wooden cross and one of three sets of words pinned to it that best highlighted the strike's peaceful nature, however. Below a quote from another Polish national figurehead Józef Piłsudski and above a small print of the Black Madonna and a typed leaflet warning those who would destroy the Polish citizenry, the Polish nation and

---

<sup>393</sup> The term 'repertoire of contention' is drawn from the work of Charles Tilly. See: C. Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, MA, 1978), pp.151-159.

<sup>394</sup> Kubik, p.110.

<sup>395</sup> See: Ibid., 109-110. On the Great Novena, see: M.J. Osa, *Solidarity and Contention: Networks of Polish Opposition* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 2003), Ch.2-3.

<sup>396</sup> For one account that captures both the impact of Wojtyła's election as Pope John Paul II on the Party and the impact of his subsequent pilgrimage to Poland on the Polish people, see: J. Zabłocki, *Dzienniki 1976-1986*. Tom.3 Część 1, 1976-1981 (Warsaw, 2013), pp.377-378 and pp.445-446.

the natural environment, was a section of Lord Byron's poem *Giaour*.<sup>397</sup> As Jan Kubik and Timothy Garton Ash note, a vital word was missing from the version of Byron's poem on display at the yard. While the original read 'For Freedom's battle once begun/Bequeath'd bleeding sire to son/Though baffled oft is ever won', the word "bleeding" was absent from that displayed at the shipyard. It was, Kubik presumes, 'omitted [...] in order to emphasize the peaceful, nonconfrontational philosophy of the strike'.<sup>398</sup> While Kubik has also claimed that the three pieces of writing displayed on the cross were symbolic, amongst other things, of the workers' understanding that they were part of a shared and long-established Polish culture of rebellion,<sup>399</sup> it is arguable that December 1970 was the key to understanding these writings and the associated imagery. Workers did not wish to spill blood to achieve their demands. Nor did they wish to go through 1970 once again.<sup>400</sup> It was a desire arguably shared by the local authorities.

In addition to the leaflet dropped on the Paris Commune Shipyard, an appeal by Tadeusz Fiszbach was also broadcast on local television and radio. In many respects, the style and tone of the appeal was similar to that employed in the Party's appeal during the Lublin strike. Arguably there were two differences relating specifically to the coast, however. Firstly, there was a reference to the memory of December 1970 and the need for 'prudence' and 'responsibility' that resulted from this.<sup>401</sup> While this could be read as a 'warning' rather than a 'threat',<sup>402</sup> it could also be seen as a genuine sign of concern that the workers would take to the streets again. For the local Party as with the workers, the memory of 1970 will have been stronger than elsewhere in Poland. The local authorities had no more

---

<sup>397</sup> See: Kubik, p.187.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid., 187; Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, pp.44-45.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid., 187-188.

<sup>400</sup> D. Smoleń, 'Tłum czy społeczność zorganizowana? Strajkujący w stoczni Gdańskiej w Sierpniu 1980', in: M. Kula (ed), *Solidarność w ruchu 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2000), pp.151-217 (p.171).

<sup>401</sup> 'Przemówienie Tadeusza Fiszbacha do mieszkańców Trójmiasta, "Głos Wybrzeża", 18.08.1980', in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, p.65.

<sup>402</sup> K. Ruane, *The Polish Challenge* (London, 1982), p.15.

desire for a repeat of 1970 than the opposition and workers did. As Fiszbach's statement made clear, dialogue was still the favoured outcome.<sup>403</sup> A session of the local Party committee held to discuss events in the region called on Warsaw to establish a government commission to resolve local strike demands.<sup>404</sup> The local Party favoured a resolution along the lines of that of Lublin 1980, than that of the Baltic coast 1970.

Secondly, Fiszbach also hinted at a factor that made both Gdańsk and Gdynia different to earlier strikes and may have added to their desire for a peaceful resolution: the international context. As Fiszbach noted towards the end of his speech, there was a need to demonstrate not only to their fellow citizens, but also to 'international public opinion' that it was possible for them 'to solve our own problems' in an appropriate fashion. A reference in the final line to the influence of the nation's 'reason of state' on their thinking at this time indicated concern over a potential Soviet threat if they failed to resolve matters themselves.<sup>405</sup> Not only did they not wish to employ violence, but perhaps with the forthcoming Warsaw Pact manoeuvres in mind, they did not want Moscow to become involved either. This was particularly the case with Western eyewitnesses present, eyewitnesses who came not only in the form of journalists but also through the region's business ties. As major port cities both Gdańsk and Gdynia were "gateways to the world" and had far more contact with international observers, than a city such as Lublin did. As such there was a greater international context to events on the coast. With both trade and new finance still required from the West, any violence on the coast witnessed by the West (unless it were triggered by the workers and the Party only acted in response) could damage Poland's prospects in this regard. The nation simply could not afford this to happen.

---

<sup>403</sup> 'Przemówienie Tadeusza Fiszbacha do mieszkańców Trójmiasta, "Głos Wybrzeża", 18.08.1980', p.64.

<sup>404</sup> 'Posiedzenie Egzekutywy KW PZPR w Gdańsku, "Głos Wybrzeża", 18.08.1980', in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, p. 61.

<sup>405</sup> 'Przemówienie Tadeusza Fiszbacha do mieszkańców Trójmiasta, "Głos Wybrzeża", 18.08.1980', p.65.



Although events were still uncertain however, there were no signs that the workers were considering the use of violence. They were preparing for the next stage of the strike.

### **18 August 1980 (Monday)**

On Monday morning local radio in Gdańsk broadcast an interview with the Vice-Chairman of the Provincial Board of Społem in which he reassured listeners that shops contained 'sufficient' supplies of basic goods such as bread and milk for the day. There was no need for locals to 'panic' buy goods in excess numbers as they had been doing in recent days.<sup>406</sup> While the authorities sought to reassure a general public preparing for a black day on the coast, in the Lenin Shipyard they were continuing to rely on leafleting as a means of persuading workers back to work. An aeroplane flew over the shipyard scattering leaflets calling for a return to work, while 'every four minutes' Gniech used the radio system (to which the MKS had no access) to appeal to workers outside the shipyard to return to work. A leaflet signed by Gniech was also distributed outside the gates, making a similar appeal.<sup>407</sup> With the survival of the strike at the yard by no means assured due to the limited number of participants, the authorities could still bring it to an end without force.

Having left on Saturday afternoon following the end of the initial strike, the majority of workers were now ready to return. It was not clear whether they would be willing to join the new inter-factory strike, however. Under the influence of the leaflets and appeals, some departments took up work again.<sup>408</sup> The strikers did not allow the efforts of the management to go unchallenged, however. Using a megaphone they called for those who considered

---

<sup>406</sup> 'Gdańsk Radio Coverage on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> August', *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 19 August 1980.

<sup>407</sup> A. Orchowski, 'Przebieg strajku okupacyjnego w Stoczni Gdańskiej im. Lenina w dniach 14-31 sierpnia 1980 roku', in: *Polski Sierpień 1980. Reedycja Almanachu Gdańskich Środowisk Twórczych "Punkt" nr12/80* (New York, 1981), pp.9-44 (p.13); W. Gieżyński and L. Stefański, *Gdańsk Sierpień 80* (Warsaw, 1981), p.61.

<sup>408</sup> J. Skórzyński, *Zadra: Biografia Lecha Wałęsy*, (Gdańsk, 2009), p.52.

themselves workers and citizens of Gdańsk to return to the yard.<sup>409</sup> Wałęsa appealed not only at the second gate, but also within the departments for returning workers to join the strike.<sup>410</sup> Following what must have been a period of confusion, it became clear that the strike was still on. It was a different kind of strike however, both in terms of its nature and demands.

Although an initial list of sixteen demands had been drawn up during the night of 16-17 August and distributed by KOR to Western news agencies, it was only during the night of 17-18 August that a final list of twenty-one demands was completed.<sup>411</sup> While the sixteen demands already marked a significant escalation from those put forward at the Lenin Shipyard on 14 August 1980, the twenty-one demands marked a further progression. The main reason for this hinged on the difference between the sixteen and the twenty-one demands in terms of their approach to the MKS' central demand: that for free trade unions. As Jan Skórzyński notes, in the sixteen demands trade unions were represented only in points five and seven. As with the demands made by workers at "Elmor" on 15 August, these called for observation of ILO convention number 87 as ratified by the Polish authorities and an end to 'interference' in the activities of trade unions by the authorities.<sup>412</sup> Perhaps indicating caution on the part of the workers in case it provoked the authorities, the demand for free trade unions was implicit rather than explicit in these demands. It was only in the twenty-one demands that it was made plain. In point one of the demands it stated: 'The acceptance of free trade unions independent from the Party and employers, [in

---

<sup>409</sup> S. Cenckiewicz, 'Kalendarium Sierpnia '80 – wypisy źródłowe z dokumentów MO i SB', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 7-8 (54-55), p.103.

<sup>410</sup> Skórzyński, p.52.

<sup>411</sup> See: J. Skórzyński, '16 postulatów', *Wolność i Solidarność*, 2 (2011), pp. 103-107; 'Dissident [Group] Release Strikers' Demands', *Associated Press*, 17 August 1980; '1980 sierpień 16/17 (sic), Gdańsk – Żądania strajkujących załóg zakładów pracy i przedsiębiorstw reprezentowanych przez Międzyzakładowy Komitet Strajkowy w Gdańsku', in: J. Liszniewicz and A. Zawistowski (eds.), *Sprawy gospodarcze w dokumentach pierwszej Solidarności*, Tom.1: 16 sierpnia 1980 - 30 czerwca 1981 (Warsaw, 2008), pp.67-70.

<sup>412</sup> Skórzyński, p.105.

accordance] with Convention Nr 87 of the International Labour Organisation concerning freedom of unions.<sup>413</sup> As Holzer notes, six further demands were also considered ‘political’, the rest were ‘social’ or ‘economic’.<sup>414</sup> While the former included demands for the release of political prisoners and freedom of expression, the latter included changes to pensions and retirement ages, as well as child care for working women.

They appealed to a broader cross-section of society than the initial demands. They were national rather than local issues, appealing to all Poles rather than to workers at specific enterprises. As point eleven (a demand for the introduction of rationing cards for meat) demonstrates, the workers had a good understanding of the problems facing Poles. As Joanna Duda-Gwiazda later observed, Poles who lived through this period ‘well remember the terrible queues for everything – lemons, toilet paper, and above all for meat.’<sup>415</sup> The workers were well aware of these problems from the experience of their daily lives. The demands were designed to tackle this problem for them all, not just for those on strike. Noticeably the demands also illustrated an awareness of the geopolitical realities within which they were operating. A call for censorship to be abolished was quashed by Borusewicz who referenced the impact of such demands in Czechoslovakia. A demand for free elections was also deemed unacceptable to the Soviet Union.<sup>416</sup> Borusewicz was keen to avoid any provocation of Moscow. The Soviet Union, as he later observed, ‘played a critical role in absentia, since no one could anticipate what they would do.’<sup>417</sup> Amidst the hope and

---

<sup>413</sup> ‘1980 sierpień 16/17 (*sic*), Gdańsk – Żądania strajkujących załóg zakładów pracy i przedsiębiorstw reprezentowanych przez Międzyzakładowy Komitet Strajkowy w Gdańsku’, p.67.

<sup>414</sup> J. Holzer, *“Solidarność” 1980-1981: Geneza i Historia* (Warsaw, 1983), p.62.

<sup>415</sup> *Gwiazdozbiór w “Solidarności”: Joanna i Andrzej Gwiazdowie w rozmowie z Remigiuszem Okraską* (Łódź, 2009), p.147.

<sup>416</sup> T. Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-1982* (London, 1983), p.44; A. Friszke, *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980-1981* (Kraków, 2014), p.33.

<sup>417</sup> ‘The Making of a Solidarity Revolution: Conversations with Bogdan Borusewicz’, in: M. Szporer, *Solidarity. The Great Workers Strike of 1980* (Lanham MD, 2012), pp.23-40 (p.33).

uncertainty, there was realism. There were certain things they could never hope to change. Point one was controversial enough.

Despite being rooted in an international labour convention ratified by the Polish authorities, the demand for ‘free trade unions independent from the Party and employers’ was entirely at odds with Communist ideology. So too was the nature of the strike. As Milovan Djilas explains, ‘proper political conditions for general strikes’ did not exist under Communism. They were possible ‘only in exceptional situations.’ The chances of a free trade union ever emerging were also slim: ‘Trade union organizations and other professional organizations, because of their purpose and functions, can only be the appendages of a single owner and potentate – the political oligarchy.’<sup>418</sup> They were little more than a “transmission belt” for the directives of the Party. A trade union that genuinely represented the working-class would become a significant threat to the Party and also the *nomenklatura*. After all, the working class ‘is the class on which production depends and on which the rise and very existence of the new class depends.’<sup>419</sup> Hence their desire to prevent such organisations from developing

While in the long-term a free trade union could provide the best means through which the workers could defend their interests, in the short term the problem was of how to force the Party to acquiesce to a demand for their creation. Solidarity in the form of the Interfactory Strike Committee (MKS) provided their best chance of success. The purpose of the MKS had already been made clear. In the aftermath of the initial strike a communiqué had been issued announcing its formation. The MKS would be fully responsible for coordinating both the demands and actions of those enterprises on strike in the region. It alone had the power to represent the workers in discussions with the authorities and the

---

<sup>418</sup> M. Djilas, *The New Class* (London, 1966), pp.105-106.

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

strike would be brought to an end only on its say so. The end of the strike would not mean the end of the MKS, however. It would remain in existence to oversee the implementation of its demands and the organisation of free unions.<sup>420</sup> The strike would be of a different order to that of the previous week.

Any striking enterprise signing up to the MKS had to accept each of the 21 demands. The fact that they did so in large numbers, demonstrates just how broad support for these demands really was on the coast. When registration opened that morning, striking enterprises registered *en masse*. At first they came from nearby enterprises, and then from nearby towns to register.<sup>421</sup> The numbers increased rapidly. From 40 enterprises that morning, by the end of the day a total of 156 had registered.<sup>422</sup> The strike was expanding all along the coast. In Gdynia workers had gone on strike at the naval shipyard where some of the Polish and Soviet navies were based.<sup>423</sup> Influenced by news of Gdańsk meanwhile, a solidarity strike had begun in Elbląg. By the end of the day their own demands, including for independent unions, and an MKS had been formed.<sup>424</sup> There were also the first signs of strikes in Słupsk.<sup>425</sup> More significantly Szczecin was now on strike. The “Parnica” Repair Yard was first to come out on strike that morning. It was followed hours later by the region’s dominant enterprise the Warski Shipyard.<sup>426</sup> All three of the main centres of

---

<sup>420</sup> ‘Ulotka, Komunikat Międzyzakładowego Komitetu Strajkowego, Gdańsk, 16.08.80’, in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, p.30.

<sup>421</sup> *Gwiazdozbiór w “Solidarność”*: Joanna i Andrzej Gwiazdowie w rozmowie z Remigiuszem Okraską (Łódź, 2009), pp.148.

<sup>422</sup> A. Kazański, ‘Sierpień ’80 w Gdańsku’, *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.21-34 (p.27); L. Biernacki and A. Kazański, ‘NSZZ “Solidarność” Region Gdański’ in, Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989. Tom 3. Polska Północna* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.7-245 (p.21).

<sup>423</sup> A. Kazański, ‘Sierpień ’80 w Gdyni’, *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.45-56 (pp.53-54).

<sup>424</sup> K. Nawrocki, ‘Sierpień ’80 w Elblągu’, *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119) wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.82-85 (pp.82-83).

<sup>425</sup> I. Hałagida, ‘NSZZ “Solidarność” Region Słupski’, in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989. Tom 3. Polska Północna* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.573-626 (p.575).

<sup>426</sup> M. Stefaniak, ‘Sierpień ’80 w Województwie Szczecińskim – Przebieg i Konsekwencje’, *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, Nr 9-10 (118-119), pp.57-64 (p.58).

activity on the Baltic coast from December 1970 were now on strike. They were different kinds of strikes and would follow different paths, however.

While as with Gdańsk the strike at the “Parnica” yard was not as spontaneous as it might have first seemed to the outside world at least, it did not involve the opposition as that at the Lenin Shipyard did. While there were some centres of opposition in Szczecin, these were far more limited than along the coast.<sup>427</sup> They did not become involved, nor did the workers wish them to. Indeed the strike in Szczecin swiftly and consistently displayed a cool attitude to outsiders.<sup>428</sup> This was a purely working-class affair. This is not to say that it was unplanned, however. According to Aleksander Krystosiak, a veteran of December 1970 and an August 1980 strike leader, the strike was subject to some planning. Discussions had taken place prior to its launch amongst a group of workers. Although they were generally confident of success, there was some fear in case the strike did not ignite and they were imprisoned. They attempted to cover their tracks by adopting a low-key start to the strike. While one worker was sent to one department to inform them that a strike had begun in another department, another worker did the same in the other department. A third worker spread the news to an additional department that the other two were on strike. Although no-one had actually downed tools at this point, the hope was that as workers left their departments to investigate the rumours they would naturally congregate in the main thoroughfare at the yard, attracting other workers in the process. The strike would develop from there. As Krystosiak informed Jack Bloom:

We picked the people who were hardest to remember so they wouldn't get arrested for starting the strike. They were told that as soon as they gave their message, they should disappear. We already had our demands. We

---

<sup>427</sup> See: M. Paziewski, ‘Przedsiębiorstwa opozycja demokratyczna na Pomorzu Zachodnim’, in: K.Kowalczyk, M.Paziewski and M. Stefaniak (eds.), *Między Warszawą a regionem. Opozycja przedsiębiorstwa na Pomorzu Zachodnim* (Szczecin, 2008), pp.55-86.

<sup>428</sup> See: Z. Matuszewicz, *Szczecin 1980-1981: Rewolucja “Solidarności”* (Szczecin, 1997), pp.45-46; M. Szejnert, and T. Zalewski, *Szczecin. Grudzień-Sierpień-Grudzień* (Warsaw, 1984), p.101.

knew the workers were ready for some action and that the news would spread with the speed of lightning.<sup>429</sup>

With the plan unfolding as anticipated, a strike committee was soon elected and demands formulated. News of the strike was then spread to the Warski Shipyard.<sup>430</sup> It also downed tools and formulated its own demands. The demands differed from department to department. However, twenty-two out of twenty-six departments at the Warski yard included demands for either the reform of existing trade unions or the creation of new ones. They were to be 'free and independent' and to operate without interference.<sup>431</sup> A similar demand was also included in the eighteen presented by the strike committee at the "Parnica" yard.<sup>432</sup> As with many other enterprises launching strikes, those in Szczecin skipped the limited demands made during the initial phase of the strikes in July and at the Lenin Shipyard only days before, and went straight for the demand that would dominate the rest of that summer: free trade unions. Events had escalated sharply along the coast in terms of enterprise numbers, geographical spread and demands. They would be more difficult to control.

At a lengthy Politburo session Kania assessed the situation on the coast. Gierek emphasised that no appeals for the workers to take to the streets had been made, but the situation was far from promising. As Stanisław Kowalczyk warned, the possibility of workers doing so could not be discounted.<sup>433</sup> In spite (or because) of previous experience, it seemed unlikely that they would do so however. As one worker involved with the 1970 strike at the Lenin Shipyard informed Janina Jankowska, 'We made mistakes, but we have

---

<sup>429</sup> J.M. Bloom, *Seeing Through the Eyes of the Polish Revolution: Solidarity and the Struggle Against Communism in Poland* (Chicago IL, 2013), p.156.

<sup>430</sup> Ibid., 156-157.

<sup>431</sup> '1980 sierpień 18, Szczecin – Postulaty wydziałów Stoczni im A. Warskiego', in: B. Chmiel and E. Kaczyńska (eds.), *Postulaty 1970-71 i 1980: Materiały źródłowe do dziejów wystąpień pracowniczych w latach 1970-1971 i 1980 (Gdańsk i Szczecin)* (Warsaw, 1998), pp.182 – 203

<sup>432</sup> '1980 sierpień 18, Szczecin – Protokół z posiedzenia Komitetu Strajkowego Stoczni Remontowej "Parnica" z wykazem postulatów', in: Ibid., 204-205.

<sup>433</sup> 'Protokół nr 19 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 18 sierpnia 1980r.', in: Z. Włodek, (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a "Solidarność" 1980-1981* (London, 1992), pp.37-38.

already not repeated these mistakes.<sup>434</sup> The Party could not be any surer of this than the workers could be that the Party had learnt from its mistakes, however. Rumours continued to circulate about army and militia build-ups around the edges of the city.<sup>435</sup> Preparations for “Lato-80” also continued with the strikes in Gdańsk a main focus of attention. In spite of some calls for the use of the militia, they were not heeded. The defence of vital buildings was their primary aim.<sup>436</sup> Preparations amongst the armed forces were also underway, including in the Navy. There was nothing exceptional about their activities at this time, however.<sup>437</sup> Even if there had been, it was unclear whether they would act. That evening at a plenum of the regional Party committee in Gdańsk at which Stanisław Kania also spoke, Rear-Admiral Janczyszyn claimed that despite disquiet amongst soldiers, the armed forces were ‘disciplined’. The army would ‘do nothing to threaten links with society and the workers.’<sup>438</sup> While there were no defections, it is clear that the armed forces would be reluctant to take action against the workers as they had done a decade before.

It was a reluctance shared at the highest levels. Although one Politburo member voiced criticisms of the leadership’s response so far and called for a tougher stance from the Party, and another spoke of the urgent need to quarantine the Gdańsk shipyards ‘from the rest of the country’, a proposal by Gierek to release a Politburo communiqué followed by a radio and television appearance won universal backing. However, many felt that even with the serious situation on the coast the text for Gierek’s television appearance required more work and should be delayed for a day.<sup>439</sup> He ignored these calls. He addressed the nation live on television and radio later that day. He admitted that ‘mistakes in economic policy’ had contributed significantly to Poland’s problems. New measures were to be presented to

---

<sup>434</sup> J. Jankowska, ‘Gdańsk, 18 sierpnia 1980, wieczorem’, *Zapis*, 17 (1981), pp.63-65 (p.64).

<sup>435</sup> L. Bądkowski, ‘Przypisy dnia (z dzienników gdańskich 14 VII – 1 IX 1980)’, *Zapis*, 17 (1981), pp.68-99 (p.73).

<sup>436</sup> A. Paczkowski, *Droga do “mniejszego zła”. Strategia i taktyka obozu władzy lipiec 1980 – styczeń 1982* (Kraków, 2002), p.36.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>438</sup> ‘Plenum KW w Gdańsku 18 sierpnia br. (fragment)’, *Kultura* (Paris), 10/397 (1980), p.154.

<sup>439</sup> ‘Protokół nr 19 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 18 sierpnia 1980r.’, in: *Włodek*, pp.38-43.



the Central Committee in the near future. In the interim he offered further economic concessions, including a step-by-step increase in child benefit levels commencing in 1981.<sup>440</sup> There was little new on offer. Regarding the strikes themselves, he expressed a willingness to engage in dialogue. This is not to say that it would be in good faith, however, or that he would engage in them with the MKS. As he warned:

Attempts to use stoppages at work for political ends and to incite tension by irresponsible individuals and anarchic, anti-socialist groups, are a dangerous aspect of recent events at plants on the Gdańsk coast. [...] [I]t is our duty to state with complete resolution, that any actions which strike at the foundation of the political and social order in Poland cannot and will not be tolerated!<sup>441</sup>

There were clear limits within which Poland had to operate. These could not be challenged. Neither Gierek's promises nor his threats made any impression on the workers. Walentynowicz complained that Gierek was talking down to them and that nothing had changed. They would wait for someone from the capital to come to them in person and negotiate with them in good faith.<sup>442</sup> A similar stance was adopted by Wałęsa. Others also voiced their loss of faith in Gierek.<sup>443</sup> In the minutes after his speech they put the 21 demands on display by the second gate and listened to Radio Free Europe.<sup>444</sup> Gierek was still in charge, but he had only limited control over the coastal workers. Indeed the only significant action on the coast appears to have been the halting of cars flying the national flag by Gdańsk's militia.<sup>445</sup> With the flag being flown to symbolise support for the shipyard workers it had, in the words of Lawrence Goodwyn, been turned against the authorities as 'a private declaration of resistance and a public affiliation with the cause of the shipyard

---

<sup>440</sup> 'Edward Gierek's Radio and Television Address on 18<sup>th</sup> August', *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 20 August 1980.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

<sup>442</sup> S. Persky, *At the Lenin Shipyard: Poland and the Rise of the Solidarity Trade Union* (Vancouver, 1982), p.90.

<sup>443</sup> A. Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge, 2008), p.243.

<sup>444</sup> S. Cenckiewicz, 'Kalendarium Sierpnia '80 – wypisy źródłowe z dokumentów MO i SB', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 7-8 (54-55), lipiec-sierpień 2005, pp.95-125 (p.104).

<sup>445</sup> A. Orchowski, 'Przebieg strajku okupacyjnego w Stoczni Gdańskiej im. Lenina w dniach 14-31 sierpnia 1980 roku', in: *Polski Sierpień 1980. Reedycja Almanachu Gdańskich Środowisk Twórczych "Punkt" nr12/80* (New York, 1981), pp.9-44 (p.14).

workers.<sup>446</sup> It was a relatively minor act of defiance, however, and one that was easy for the authorities to tackle without inflaming the situation. They may also have felt that it increased their chances of halting the spread of support for the strike as well as the transportation of underground publications. Their options in Gdańsk were limited.

They were proving more effective against the opposition elsewhere. Although the security services could not completely prevent the spread of information via the underground press, they had begun to carry out an increased number of detentions over the weekend. According to MSW reports, a major aim was to prevent opposition activists reaching the coast. Seven opposition activists had been detained over the weekend in this regard, including Kazimierz Świton, a free trade union activist from Katowice.<sup>447</sup> A number of opposition detentions were also carried out on 18 August in Wrocław.<sup>448</sup> According to Western media reports, which were now carrying front-page coverage of the strikes, KOR activists in Warsaw were also under increasing pressure.<sup>449</sup> The noose appeared to be tightening around the main opposition centres in the country. The security services did not succeed in stemming the flow of information nor support for the strikes, however. While the countryside remained largely undisturbed by strikes, peasant self-defence activists in Zbrosza Duża had issued a statement over the weekend declaring their support for the shipyard workers. On 18 August they called for further action by farmers and began a collection of money for the workers.<sup>450</sup> In urban areas KOR, *Robotnik* and ROPCiO also indicated their support.<sup>451</sup> Though limited, such signs of support demonstrated the continued

---

<sup>446</sup> L. Goodwyn, *Breaking the Barrier: The Rise of Solidarity in Poland* (New York and Oxford, 1991), p.4.

<sup>447</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.73).

<sup>448</sup> Ł. Kamiński, 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Dolny Śląsk' in, Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.6. Polska Południowa (Warsaw, 2010), pp.317-465 (p.321).

<sup>449</sup> 'Polish strikers demand trade union rights,' *The Times*, 18 August 1980, p1.

<sup>450</sup> Majchrzak, p.73; A.W. Kaczorowski, 'Ruch solidarnościowy na wsi w roku 1980', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 10-11 (105-106), październik-listopad 2009, pp.103-111 (p.103).

<sup>451</sup> 'Apel KSS "KOR" i redakcji "Robotnika" z 18 sierpnia 1980', in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, pp.74-77; G. Waligóra, *Ruch Obrony Praw Człowieka i Obywatela 1977-1981* (Warsaw, 2006), p.272.

links and support of pre-existing opposition networks for the strikes. It will have provided a welcome morale boost for the workers.

Less promising was the international situation. In the Eastern bloc, including East Germany, media coverage had increased although the term 'strike' was not being used.<sup>452</sup> Behind the scenes, the authorities were also starting to pay greater attention to events. In relation to the situation in Poland the State Security Ministry started to produce reports 'on the public mood within East Germany' while the East German National People's Army's Intelligence Department also began to produce reports on Polish events.<sup>453</sup> The army warned that strikes were the work of counter-revolutionaries planning to introduce 'a permanent state of disquiet and uncertainty' and aiming for the 'elimination of the socialist order in Poland.' Such actions against the Polish state had not yet reached their peak.<sup>454</sup> East Germany's domestic concerns appeared limited by comparison, however. A U.S. assessment of the public mood in East Germany's border area with Poland suggested that the authorities should have little fear with regards to contagion. Although East Germans were aware of events in Poland, those they had spoken to saw 'little reason to strike' due to the comparatively good economic situation in East Germany.<sup>455</sup> This is not to say that East Germany's economic situation was assured, however. Though less severe than Poland's economic crisis, East Germany was not without its debt problems. It also shared Poland's oil

---

<sup>452</sup> See: P. Moore, 'Warsaw Pact Press: August 12-18', in: *The Strikes in Poland*, pp.255-257.

<sup>453</sup> M. Kubina, 'Moscow's Man in the SED Politburo and the Crisis in Poland in Autumn 1980', *CWIHP Bulletin* 11 (Winter 1998), 91.

<sup>454</sup> '1980 sierpień 18, Berlin – Informacja nr1/80 wywiadu wojskowego NRD o rozwoju sytuacji w PRL, poufne!' in, Ł. Kamiński (ed), *Przed i Po 13 Grudnia: Państwa Bloku Wschodniego Wobec Kryzysu w PRL 1980 – 1982: Tom 1*, (Warsaw, 2006), pp. 5-6.

<sup>455</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Berlin to State, 'East German reaction to Polish Events', 18 August 1980. Document No. 80BERLIN003785.

dependency on the Soviet Union and faced similar cutbacks as Moscow sought to boost hard-currency earnings.<sup>456</sup> There was always the potential for unrest.

Though no significant signs of disquiet, including amongst Polish workers based in East Germany, were recorded in the first of the Stasi's reports events were being monitored carefully.<sup>457</sup> A more pressing reason for East Germans not to strike, however, was the East German security service. A U.S. telegram noted that those East Germans they had spoken to 'felt that the GDR's security police were so well-organized and firm that no significant number of GDR workers would consider striking even if GDR economic conditions were to deteriorate.'<sup>458</sup> Although in terms of personnel numbers the Stasi was far from its late 1980s peak, a clear increase had taken place since Helsinki.<sup>459</sup> It would be difficult for potential protesters to escape their attention. East Germans were unlikely to risk challenging them. The significant presence of the Soviet army on East German soil was also likely to add an additional barrier of fear. There had been no major worker uprising since 1953 when Soviet forces had crushed it.<sup>460</sup> This was not an experience that Poland had. Although Soviet tanks had rolled on Warsaw during the Polish October of 1956, they had ultimately turned back.<sup>461</sup>

---

<sup>456</sup> See: R. Stokes, 'From Schadenfreude to Going-Out-of-Business Sale: East Germany and the Oil Crises of the 1970s', in: H. Berghoff and U.A. Balbier (eds.), *The East German Economy, 1945-2010. Falling Behind or Catching Up?* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 131-144 (esp. p.139); R. Ahrens, 'Debt, Cooperation, and Collapse: East German Foreign Trade in the Honecker Years', in: *Ibid.*, pp.161-176.

<sup>457</sup> See: 'Pierwsze wskazówki odnośnie do reakcji ludności w związku z sytuacją w Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej (stan na 18 sierpnia 1980r.)', in: W. Borodziej and J. Kochanowski (eds.), *PRL w oczach Stasi*. Tom.II. Dokumenty z lat 1980-1983 (Warsaw, 1996), pp.30-31.

<sup>458</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Berlin to State, 'East German reaction to Polish Events', 18 August 1980. Document No. 80BERLIN003785.

<sup>459</sup> See: J. Gieseke, 'German Democratic Republic', in: K. Persak and Ł. Kamiński (eds.), *A Handbook of the Communist Security Apparatus in East Central Europe 1944 – 1989* (Warsaw, 2005), pp.163-219; O. Bange, 'The GDR in the Era of Détente. Conflicting Perceptions and Strategies, 1965-1975', in: P. Villaume and O.A. Westad (eds.), *Perforating the Iron Curtain: European Détente, Transatlantic Relations, and the Cold War, 1965-1985* (Copenhagen, 2010), pp.57-77 (pp.71-72).

<sup>460</sup> See: H.M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961* (Princeton and Oxford, 2003), Ch.1.

<sup>461</sup> See: K. Persak, 'The Polish-Soviet Confrontation in 1956 and the Attempted Soviet Military Intervention in Poland', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 58:8 (2006), pp.1285-1310.

Despite further major protests in Poland in 1968, 1970 and 1976, the Soviet Union had always stayed out.

East Germany was not alone in paying increased attention to events. In private talks with the Polish ambassador in Washington and in Department of State statements, the U.S. was adopting ‘a hands-off attitude’ to events. They were Poland’s own ‘internal affairs’.<sup>462</sup> Behind the scenes they were more concerned. Their embassy in Warsaw sent no fewer than four telegrams to Washington that day. While two provided situation updates,<sup>463</sup> the others were more interesting. The first carried an economic assessment based on official statistics published for the first six months of the year in *Trybuna Ludu*. While welcoming the fact that Poland’s balance of trade had improved, the U.S. raised doubts about whether it would last. No mention was made of the strikes in connection to these doubts.<sup>464</sup> Although the strikes were becoming increasingly important to the U.S., it is clear that the economy was still of great significance. It was not clear whether they would retain this economic focus as the worker-state confrontation intensified.

Although Gierek had left open the possibility for negotiation over economic demands and compromise, as the second report on Gierek’s speech noted, ‘a confrontation is now much closer with both sides having fewer options than heretofore.’ What happened next was the responsibility of the workers. The report suggested that while the Polish public would support them if they chose to negotiate over economic grievances, they would lose support if they pursued political demands. The majority of the Polish public was ‘not ready to fight for wider political freedoms.’ Meanwhile with Gierek’s reputation at risk it was felt

---

<sup>462</sup> P. Pleskot, *Kłopotliwa Panna “S”: Postawy polityczne Zachodu wobec “Solidarności” na tle stosunków z PRL (1980 – 1989)* (Warsaw, 2013), p.20; *ABC News Transcripts (World News Tonight)*, 18 August 1980.

<sup>463</sup> See: DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, ‘Gdansk Strike Sitrep 1200 Aug 17: Description of Procession’, 18 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008123; DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, ‘Sitrep: #1 Developments in the Tri-City Area and in Poland’, 18 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008135.

<sup>464</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, ‘Polish Socio-Economic Results for the First Half of 1980’, 18 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008133.

that if the workers and the Party were unable to resolve the situation, then his speech had potentially ‘laid the basis for stronger measures.’<sup>465</sup> The CIA warned the workers were ‘on a collision course with the regime’ as a result of their strike demands: ‘Gierek’s reluctance to use police may be severely tested’. If force were used, the situation could escalate.<sup>466</sup> Under such circumstances, Poland’s fragile economy could be threatened and with it the prospect of new loans. These already appeared to be under threat. That day Gierek cancelled his two-day trip to West Germany to meet with Chancellor Schmidt. It had been due to begin the following day. All of the preparations were in place.<sup>467</sup> It was a blow for both sides. While for both Schmidt and Gierek it damaged their respective foreign policies, it will also have hurt Poland’s economic needs. Poland’s much needed bank loan had yet to be signed. The future of Poland’s economic ties with West Germany was far from assured. In the build up to West German elections that autumn, Schmidt faced increasing domestic political pressure over continued economic support for Poland’s communist regime.<sup>468</sup> Due presumably to the importance of Poland’s ties with West Germany not only for economic reasons, but also for peace and stability in Europe, the Poles were keen to reschedule. Although due to the elections the meeting was now likely to take place in November, the Poles had proposed the earlier date of September.<sup>469</sup> This suggests they expected to have the strikes under control within weeks. It was not clear how they intended to do so.

### **19 August 1980 (Tuesday)**

Local press coverage of the previous evening’s regional Party Committee session and the arrival of the Pyka commission suggested that the authorities intended to use negotiations to

---

<sup>465</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, ‘Gierek Offers Strikers Negotiations; Rejects Political Demands’, 18 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008148.

<sup>466</sup> CIA FOIA: CIA, ‘Situation Reports: Poland’, 18 August 1980.

<sup>467</sup> Pleskot, *Kłopotliwa Panna “S”*, p.101.

<sup>468</sup> M. Świder, *Z Perspektywy Bonn: Przemiany polityczne w Polsce w latach 1980-1989*, (Toruń, 2011), p.26.

<sup>469</sup> TNA: PRO: PREM 19/331: Telegram from Bonn to FCO, ‘Telegram Number 610 of 18 August: “Gierek Visit To FRG”’, 18 August 1980.

end the strikes on the coast.<sup>470</sup> Many of their actions suggested otherwise, however. That day an aeroplane circled over Gdańsk dropping copies of an appeal from the mayors of Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot to local residents.<sup>471</sup> The appeal focussed on the local rather than the national impact of the strike, particularly on children and the sick. Essential services needed to be maintained for the good of local residents. They called for a swift return to an 'atmosphere of stability and peace' in the Tri-cities.<sup>472</sup> In the event that such peace and stability did not return to the region, the security services continued to prepare for action. Rumours of an impending crackdown, which some claim were spread by the SB in an effort to undermine the strike, were rife.<sup>473</sup> Even in the Church some feared that violence could result from a confrontation at this time.<sup>474</sup>

The West was also watching with concern. The media reported accounts of riot police being flown into Gdańsk from Warsaw. The U.S. Embassy sent reports of similar sightings to the Department of State, noting that a Finnish source returning to Warsaw had seen "special militia" disembarking from aircraft at Gdańsk's airport. A journalist had also reported militia being helicoptered into the area and 'massing' on the outskirts of the city.<sup>475</sup> Despite maintaining a cautious stance in public so as not to be seen as encouraging unrest, privately the U.S. administration was concerned about the possibility of violence.<sup>476</sup> At NATO the U.S. Mission released an earlier Department of State analysis of events to

---

<sup>470</sup> See: 'Komisja rządowa rozpoczęła pracę, „Wieczór Wybrzeża”, 19.08.1980' and 'Wczoraj obradowało plenum KW PZPR. Aktualna sytuacja gospodarcza i społeczna na Wybrzeżu Gdańskim, „Wieczór Wybrzeża”, 19.08.1980', in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, pp.96-100.

<sup>471</sup> L. Bądkowski, 'Przypisy dnia (z dzienników gdańskich 14 VII – 1 IX 1980)', *Zapis*, 17 (1981), pp.68-99 (p.75).

<sup>472</sup> 'Ulotka prezydentów miast Gdańska, Gdyni i Sopotu, Mieszkańcy Trójmiasta!', Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot, 19.08.1980', in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, pp.126-127.

<sup>473</sup> Bądkowski, p.75; S. Cenckiewicz, *Anna Solidarność. Życie i działalność Anny Walentynowicz na tle epoki (1929-2010)* (Poznań, 2010), p.138.

<sup>474</sup> S. Cenckiewicz, 'Kalendarium Sierpnia '80 – wypisy źródłowe z dokumentów MO i SB', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 7-8 (54-55), lipiec-sierpień 2005, pp.95-125 (p.106).

<sup>475</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Sitrep #2: Regime Proffers Negotiations, But Prepares For Showdown', 19 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW00825; 'More Police Reported Flown to Strike Area', *Associated Press*, 19 August 1980.

<sup>476</sup> See: 'U.S. Wary in Comments on Strikes', *New York Times*, 19 August 1980; 'ABC News Transcripts (World News Tonight)', 19 August 1980.

POLAD's (Political Advisers) and members of the Economic Committee. Alongside the considerable economic ramifications of unrest for the Polish authorities, it included a warning that the 'possibility for more widespread civil disturbances, including bloodshed, cannot be ruled out.'<sup>477</sup> A list of seventeen 'indicators of possible violence' had also been prepared for the Warsaw embassy. The list was not restricted to actions by the authorities and workers, but also included actions by the Church, the opposition and Moscow. Amongst the most noticeable were two referring to a militia build-up in the vicinity of striking enterprises and the 'mobilization and deployment of some elements' of the MSW. A list of units most likely to be deployed in Gdańsk was also provided. A number of others would also become relevant, however: an alcohol ban; public appeals for calm by Cardinal Wyszyński, the Pope or KOR; as well as public Soviet warnings that the situation needed to be 'brought under control'. Private Soviet assurances that Warsaw had the 'situation under control' were also deemed suspicious.<sup>478</sup> Moscow was far from nearing this stage, however.

According to Western media reports, Soviet diplomats were avoiding contact with their Western counterparts so as not to discuss the situation.<sup>479</sup> Although Moscow had finally broken its media silence, Moscow's public response remained relatively restrained.<sup>480</sup> TASS reported on Gierek's address to the nation, but drew particular attention to Gierek's warning about altering the socialist basis of Poland.<sup>481</sup> A similar focus was also evident in the East German and Czechoslovak media.<sup>482</sup> While keen to remind Warsaw of the limits placed on Poland's sovereignty and of one of the key expectations of the Polish leadership, they did

---

<sup>477</sup> NATO Archives: Documents Relating to Events in Poland (1980-1984): Reactions and Analysis in the Allies: United States: USNATO-ECON-OUT-80-115: United States Delegation. From Mr. Harry Blaney, US Counselor for Economic Affairs, to Mr. Philip Joseph, Acting Director Economic Directorate, on the Polish internal situation. (19 August 1980).

<sup>478</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from State to Warsaw, 'Current Labor Unrest: Indicators of Possible Violence', 19 August 1980. Document No. 80STATE219876.

<sup>479</sup> 'Early Soviet Move in Poland Doubtful', *New York Times*, 19 August 1980.

<sup>480</sup> 'Soviet Silence Seen as Helping Gierek', *Washington Post*, 19 August 1980.

<sup>481</sup> 'Soviets, NATO, U.S. Watching Polish Strikes', *Associated Press*, 19 August 1980. See also: L. Sherwin, 'Soviet Media: August 19-26', in: *The Strikes in Poland*, pp.237-240 (p.237).

<sup>482</sup> See: P. Moore, 'Warsaw Pact Press: August 19-21', in: *Ibid.*, pp.258-260 (pp.258-259).



not wish to be seen to interfere in the internal affairs of another country. The latter was an attitude that remained in keeping with both the spirit of Helsinki and arguably also with a realistic assessment of the Soviet Union's national interest at this time, particularly with the war in Afghanistan underway.

It was also an attitude that chimed largely with the thinking of the British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington. Against a backdrop of rumours of an imminent crackdown against the Polish workers with all of the ramifications that it would bring for stability in Poland and Europe, questions were beginning to be asked about what Western diplomacy could achieve under the circumstances. Carrington had replied to such a question following a lecture in Stockholm by stating: 'Well, I think that the short answer to that is that there is nothing very much we can do except if it ever happens to express our disapproval of any means of putting down these things by force.' Until such a crackdown took place or 'a third country' intervened, they should refrain from comment even if they 'sympathise' to some extent with the aims of the workers. As he made clear:

I think once you get interfering into the internal affairs of other countries you get into very considerable trouble and I don't think it is very wise. There is an increasing tendency in some quarters in my country, if I may be allowed to say so, and I daresay in yours too, to behave like the proverbial English nanny and to think that the whole world is your business and you have got to put it right. I am not sure that I believe that this is altogether sensible. But if one sympathises one can sympathise.

If Britain considered Poland to be a Polish problem for the Poles to deal with, then he hoped that neighbouring countries would do also.<sup>483</sup> It was a stance arguably in keeping with longer-term policy towards this region, which despite its interest in human rights saw 'no interest in provoking a crisis in the area, which would again be ended by invasion if the

---

<sup>483</sup> TNA:PRO: FCO 28/4160, f31: Telegram from Stockholm to FCO, 'For News Dept: Question put by Dr Ake Sparring, Director of the Institute of International Affairs, to Lord Carrington after his lecture at the Institute, on East-West relations on 19 August', 19 August 1980.

Russians thought it necessary.<sup>484</sup> It was unlikely to win popular backing from all quarters, however. Criticism of outside interference in another country's 'internal affairs' by regimes such as those of normalisation-era Czechoslovakia and Apartheid-era South Africa had made the stance advocated by Carrington unpopular with some. As one journalist noted, 'In an interdependent world, that argument is invalid.'<sup>485</sup> Balancing the defence of human rights in other nations with the need for world peace was no easy task, but the two could not be separated entirely. As John Paul II argued, 'What happens in a country's internal social life has a considerable bearing – for better or worse – upon peace between nations.'<sup>486</sup> Whatever the outcome of Polish events, they were likely to have an influence more broadly on global peace.

In keeping with the Soviet Union's public line and despite the announcement of military manoeuvres days beforehand, there were no signs of preparations to enforce the socialist basis of society by the Warsaw Pact. A trip to the East German-Polish border area by a U.S. embassy official indicated that the situation was normal. Although East German citizens were aware that intervention was a possibility, there was no evidence of troop movements.<sup>487</sup> Concerns appear to have remained domestic at this time. In Czechoslovakia, for example, despite government officials admitting to concerns in private, they were equally relieved that it had not triggered strikes in Czechoslovakia. Indeed the main repercussion for Prague at this stage appeared to be an apparent delay in price increases,

---

<sup>484</sup> 'Lord Carrington (FCO) to Sir C. Keeble (Moscow), 7 December 1979. Confidential (FCO 28/3683, EN 021/2). *British Policy in East-West Relations*', in: R. Smith, P. Salmon and S. Twigge (eds.), *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, Series III, Volume II. The Invasion of Afghanistan and UK-Soviet Relations, 1979-1982 (London and New York, 2012), p.3.

<sup>485</sup> [P. Hebblethwaite], 'Magisterium' in, J. Whale (ed.), *The Pope from Poland: An Assessment* (London, 1980), pp.97-120 (p.103).

<sup>486</sup> Pope John Paul II quoted in, *Ibid.*, p.103.

<sup>487</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Berlin to State, 'East German Reaction to Polish Events', 19 August 1980. Document No: 80BERLIN003807.

including for meat.<sup>488</sup> As with East Germany, economic rather than socio-political spillover was in many ways the major risk at this time as well. Having undergone a gradual decline in performance since the mid-1970s and in particular since 1979, the Czechoslovak economy was also in need of reform. They had to attempt to resolve a hard currency deficit under difficult international conditions whilst still delivering a standard of living sufficient for their citizens.<sup>489</sup> As any threat to the latter could trigger off social unrest in Czechoslovakia, this was a difficult moment for the leadership in Prague to face the possible spillover of discontent from Poland. With leading figures from Czechoslovakia's main opposition initiatives Charter 77 and the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Persecuted (VONS), including Václav Havel, recently imprisoned there was little chance of a Polish scenario emerging right away.<sup>490</sup> Immediate pressure on the Polish leadership was unlikely, therefore.

Indeed it was the Polish Party rather than its friends that was laying the groundwork for a crackdown at this point. In addition to preparations for "Lato-80" a letter issued by the Central Committee Secretariat that day (and leaked to the Lenin Shipyard), a much harder line was evident. Sent to all Party members, it warned that the Lenin Shipyard's demands 'threaten the essential security of the country.' Poland's 'national survival' was endangered. The demands were 'accompanied by acts of terror and intimidation against anyone who is not with them, against anyone who dares to question their demands'. There was a need to back both the police and security forces in Poland. The Party had been 'called to a battle.

---

<sup>488</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Prague to State, 'Czechoslovak Reaction to Situation in Poland', 19 August 1980. Document No: 80PRAGUE003010.

<sup>489</sup> See: M. Myant, *The Czechoslovak Economy 1948-1988: The Battle for Economic Reform* (Cambridge, 1989), pp.186-191.

<sup>490</sup> On the Czechoslovak trials, see: H.G. Skilling, *Charter 77 and Human Rights in Czechoslovakia* (London, 1981), pp.145-149.

This battle we have to win ....'<sup>491</sup> While this may simply have been an attempt to reassert the Party's leadership over its members and to reassure them that Warsaw was not wavering in the face of unprecedented strike actions, it also laid the ground work for a crackdown if needed. 'West German revisionists' were also singled out for attention in the letter.<sup>492</sup> While such attacks on "German revisionism" were not unknown under Communism,<sup>493</sup> under the circumstances it may also have reflected concerns over criticisms Schmidt faced domestically regarding the provision of the new loan to Poland. It remained unsecured.

Despite the hard line in the letter, the situation on the coast had not developed in such a way as to give any pretext for a crackdown domestic or otherwise. In spite of the rumours regarding the build-up of militia, the situation in the city itself remained calm. There was peace on the terrain of Gdańsk. Local shops were supplied with essential goods and vital services were also maintained. The MKS had also secured a ban on alcohol sales so as to stop any possible troubles from developing.<sup>494</sup> The latter point stood in marked contrast to the claims made by the local mayors in their appeal. The MKS, which now consisted of over 240 enterprises, had ensured that vital services joining the strike had not begun occupation strikes. With the permission of the MKS, health services, public utilities, and food production enterprises were functioning as normal. The MKS recognised that their position as Poland's 'first authentic and free' working-class representatives meant that they

---

<sup>491</sup> 'Letter from the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee, 19 August 1980 (Solidarity Strike Bulletin No.2, 24 August 1980)', in: O. MacDonald (ed.), *The Polish August: Documents from the Beginnings of the Polish Workers Rebellion. Gdańsk. August 1980* (Seattle, 1981), pp.36-37.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>493</sup> For an outline of the role of "German revisionism" in Poland, see: F. Boll and M. Świder, 'The FRG: Humanitarian Support without Big Publicity' in, I. Goddeeris (ed.), *Solidarity with Solidarity: Western European Trade Unions and the Polish Crisis, 1980-1982* (Lanham MD, 2010), pp.159-189 (pp.161-162).

<sup>494</sup> W. Gieżyński and L. Stefański, *Gdańsk Sierpień 80* (Warsaw, 1981), p.68; A. Orchowski, 'Przebieg strajku okupacyjnego w Stoczni Gdańskiej im. Lenina w dniach 14-31 sierpnia 1980 roku', in: *Polski Sierpień 1980. Reedycja Almanachu Gdańskich Środowisk Twórczych "Punkt" nr 12/80* (New York, 1981), pp.9-44 (pp.15-16); A. Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge, 2008), p.244.

bore a tremendous level of ‘responsibility’ for others.<sup>495</sup> Their actions reflected this fact. As Walentynowicz recalled:

We issued permits for food shops to reopen. Delivery lorries still operated, so too did the bakeries. The canning factory stayed at work so that the fish would not be wasted. The factory making tins had to work as well, as did the transport. Drivers wore red and white arm-bands and flags were flown outside the shops.<sup>496</sup>

They also took on responsibility for resolving issues brought to them by others. For example, when farmers complained they needed parts for their tractors, the MKS arranged for a factory to manufacture the parts in question. Petrol was also issued during the strike by the Gdańsk Refinery on the say so of the MKS.<sup>497</sup> Such actions were reciprocated by society in the form of increasing support for the strike. Farmers delivered supplies to the workers, while bread came from private bakeries in both Gdańsk and Szczecin during this period.<sup>498</sup> While the actions of the MKS in preserving vital services were essential if local support were to be maintained, the provision of food and the support of society were just as important if the strike itself were to be maintained.

In many respects it was such solidarity that the authorities sought to undermine. Additional checkpoints were established around Gdańsk in an effort to halt cars related to the MKS, while further checkpoints were also set up in Szczecin and elsewhere in the Tri-cities. Patrols on the electric railway in Gdańsk were also strengthened.<sup>499</sup> Work dedicated to the preservation of ‘security and public order’ in the Tri-city region also continued. Amongst the six detained in Gdańsk that day were a number of significant figures within the

---

<sup>495</sup> ‘Druk „Strajkowego Biuletynu Informacyjnego”, Oświadczenie Międzyzakładowego Komitetu Strajkowego, Gdańsk, 19.08.1980’, in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, p.121.

<sup>496</sup> Anna Walentynowicz quoted in, A. Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge, 2008), p.244.

<sup>497</sup> *Gwiazdźbiór w “Solidarności”: Joanna i Andrzej Gwiazdowie w rozmowie z Remigiuszem Okraską* (Łódź, 2009), p.152.

<sup>498</sup> Giełżyński and Stefański, pp.68-69; J.M. Bloom, *Seeing Through the Eyes of the Polish Revolution: Solidarity and the Struggle Against Communism in Poland* (Chicago IL, 2013), p.166.

<sup>499</sup> G. Majchrzak, ‘Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku’, *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.79).

Polish opposition, including Mirosław Chojecki of the independent publishing house NOW-a.<sup>500</sup> Such actions were far from effective in halting the spread of the strikes and news related to them, however. In Poznań, for example, one hundred leaflets carrying various slogans expressing support for the strikes on the coast were distributed.<sup>501</sup> The first strikes by steel workers at Huta Lenina near Kraków also took place. Alongside socio-economic demands made to management, was a call for the fulfilment of the coastal workers' demands.<sup>502</sup> Local ties were also strengthening. The Elbląg MKS registered with Gdańsk.<sup>503</sup> Events in Gdańsk were also amplified by the Western press, which unlike the domestic press was now descending on the yard in increasing numbers.<sup>504</sup> In Szczecin the situation had also escalated. An MKS headed by Marian Jurczyk had been formed. A list of thirty-seven demands was drawn-up. As with Gdańsk it included a demand for 'free, independent from the Party and Government, trade unions.'<sup>505</sup> Events were slipping from the Party's grip. They had not yet abandoned plans for a peaceful resolution of events, however. Negotiations were still on offer, but not on the workers' terms.

In Szczecin the regional authorities offered discussions if the workers returned to work first. A government commission headed by Deputy Prime Minister Kazimierz Barcikowski also offered to negotiate, but only with the shipyard workers and not the MKS.

---

<sup>500</sup> Ibid., p.79; S. Cenckiewicz, 'Kalendarium Sierpnia '80 – wypisy źródłowe z dokumentów MO i SB', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 7-8 (54-55), lipiec-sierpień 2005, pp.95-125 (pp.106-107).

<sup>501</sup> P. Zwiernik, 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Wielkopolska' in, Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989. Tom 4. Polska Zachodnia* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.9-102 (p.13).

<sup>502</sup> A. Malik, "Nie można oddzielić krzyża od ludzkiej pracy..." *Komisja Robotnicza Hutników NSZZ "Solidarność" Huty im. Lenina (sierpień 1980 – grudzień 1981)* (Warsaw, 2013), p.37.

<sup>503</sup> K. Nawrocki, 'Sierpień '80 w Elblągu', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119) wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.82-85 (p.83).

<sup>504</sup> See: *Bratniak*, Nr.24 (lipiec-sierpień 1980), p.8.

<sup>505</sup> See: '1980 sierpień 18/19 Szczecin – Postulaty strajkowe Stoczni im A.Warskiego uzgodnione przez Międzyzakładowy Komitet Strajkowy w Szczecinie', in: B. Chmiel and E. Kaczyńska (eds.), *Postulaty 1970-71 i 1980: Materiały źródłowe do dziejów wystąpień pracowniczych w latach 1970-1971 i 1980 (Gdańsk i Szczecin)* (Warsaw, 1998), pp. 205-208.

Jurczyk refused. Negotiations were only to be with the MKS.<sup>506</sup> In Gdańsk the authorities attempted similar tactics with slightly greater success. Although the Gdańsk MKS had written a letter to Edward Babiuch calling for the authorities to engage in negotiations at the Lenin Shipyard, it was announced that Tadeusz Pyka would be negotiating only with individual enterprises and their strike committees. Negotiations started that afternoon with talks with the strike committees of the Repair Yard and the Port Board of Gdańsk, major enterprises in the region. Although it was made clear that it was economic rather than political demands that the workers wished to discuss, Pyka was presented with a copy of the 21 demands. He emphasised that he wished to fulfil the workers' demands swiftly and that he was fully authorised to do so by the government, the Politburo and the First Secretary. He implied that all demands would be met, although his stance on trade unions differed somewhat to that demanded by the MKS. While acknowledging problems with the official unions and the workers' unhappiness with them, change rather than the establishment of new trade unions was suggested. The strike committees could be joined with the existing unions once the strike was over.<sup>507</sup> This seems to have been similar to the Lublin solution. As such it may have sounded appealing to a number of the workers involved. After all only the day beforehand Czesław Niezgoda had been elected to the official union in Lublin having previously led the railway's strike. Despite efforts to undermine the democratic process by the authorities, the majority of delegates had been involved in the strikes. It was a major success for the workers.<sup>508</sup>

It was not what the MKS was demanding, however. Merging with the official trade unions and establishing independent trade unions were very different things. While the Party could tolerate the former, they could not countenance the latter. Not only was Pyka

---

<sup>506</sup> Z. Matuszewicz, *Szczecin 1980-1981: Rewolucja "Solidarności"* (Szczecin, 1997), pp.50-52; M. Szejnert and T. Zalewski, *Szczecin. Grudzień-Sierpień-Grudzień* (Warsaw, 1984), pp.106-108.

<sup>507</sup> W. Gieżyński and L. Stefański, *Gdańsk Sierpień 80* (Warsaw, 1981), pp.68-70.

<sup>508</sup> M. Dąbrowski, *Lubelski Lipiec 1980* (Lublin, 2000), pp. 204-205.

attempting to weaken the MKS through engaging in individual negotiations with its members therefore, he was also attempting to buy off the workers at any cost short of new trade unions. Their first and most important demand was the one he sought to water-down the most. He appeared to enjoy some success. Throughout the day he conducted similar talks with other enterprises from the MKS. By late evening some appeared close to ending their strikes if not abandoning their support for the shipyard workers overall.<sup>509</sup>

### **20 August 1980 (Wednesday)**

The meeting between the Pyka commission and seventeen enterprises lasted until the early hours of Wednesday morning.<sup>510</sup> Although the MKS was still not recognised the 21 demands continued to form the basis of discussion. Pyka went to great lengths to reassure sceptical members of the individual strike committees that he had the authority to grant all of their demands (a claim that convinced Party activists and workers present).<sup>511</sup> He claimed willingness to talk to any workers apart from those connected with KOR and tried to win over the workers through promises of action in the near future or by invoking earlier promises made by Gierek and Babiuch.<sup>512</sup> Outlandish promises were also made with regard to the import of vast quantities of meat and work-free Saturdays.<sup>513</sup> Many workers appear to have been convinced. By 6am each of the 21 demands had been discussed and with most of those present having gone home, work on the wording of the agreement got underway. It

---

<sup>509</sup> Giełżyński and Stefański, pp.70-71.

<sup>510</sup> 'Sytuacja w Trójmieście. Rozmowy komisji rządowej z przedstawicielami komitetów strajkowych, „Wieczór Wybrzeża”, 20.08.1980', in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, p.132.

<sup>511</sup> Giełżyński and Stefański, p.75.

<sup>512</sup> 'Protokół ze spotkania Komisji Rządowej z Komitetami Strajkowymi niektórych zakładów pracy Trójmiasta w Sali Herbowej Urzędu Wojewódzkiego w Gdańsku w dniach 19 i 20 sierpnia 1980r., Gdańsk, 20.08.1980', in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, pp.132 – 138.

<sup>513</sup> Giełżyński and Stefański, p.76.



was at this point that Pyka announced that the agreement needed to be passed to the Council of Ministers for approval.<sup>514</sup> He did not have the authority he had claimed.

The Pyka negotiations did not go without challenge by the MKS. They well knew the temptation that a swift agreement presented and the threat this posed to the strike.<sup>515</sup> They faced a struggle to get individual enterprises to agree to abandon the negotiations, however. Even the usually persuasive Wałęsa had problems. When Wałęsa attempted to speak over the fence to workers from the neighbouring Repair yard he found that no one was willing to listen.<sup>516</sup> Andrzej Gwiazda and Anna Walentynowicz made similar attempts. They found the few they talked to determined to end the strike and go home. Although an appeal for “solidarity” from Walentynowicz apparently made an impact, the workers were generally uninterested.<sup>517</sup> The MKS faced a significant challenge. If major enterprises such as the Northern and Repair yards succumbed to Pyka, the unity of the strike would be seriously undermined. Others could follow their example. There was little the MKS could do. They could not make appeals over the walls of every enterprise. Until Pyka returned they could not be sure whether the seventeen enterprises involved would stay with the MKS or break with them and undermine the strike in exchange for a deal with the authorities not involving new unions.

The authorities remained determined not to give ground on this issue. The previous evening the head of the official trade unions, Jan Szydlak, had announced to a meeting of the Gdańsk *aktyw* that ‘We will not give up power, nor will we share it with anyone.’<sup>518</sup> It drew a firm response from the MKS. They issued a statement reiterating the importance of

---

<sup>514</sup> Ibid., p.77.

<sup>515</sup> *Gwiazdozbiór w “Solidarności”: Joanna i Andrzej Gwiazdowie w rozmowie z Remigiuszem Okraską* (Łódź, 2009), p.155.

<sup>516</sup> T. Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-1982* (London, 1983), pp.48-49.

<sup>517</sup> *Gwiazdozbiór w “Solidarności”*, pp.155-156.

<sup>518</sup> Jan Szydlak quoted in, A. Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge, 2008), pp.245-246.

the first demand and strongly criticised the official unions not only for their failure to protect workers' interests, but also for being 'more hostile to the strike action than the party and state organs.' As a result all striking workers within the MKS were to withdraw their membership not only from the Party, but from 'the state-controlled trade unions' as well.<sup>519</sup> Szydlak's statement had resulted in a further, more permanent loss of support. Words as well as force could backfire on the authorities. By contrast support for the workers was mounting. They were confident they had a broad base of support within Poland and around the world due to the 'deeply humanitarian' nature of their demands. They called for the maintenance of 'unity' in the face of efforts by the authorities to weaken the strike.<sup>520</sup> They were determined to succeed. When the authorities sought to divide them, they remained united. This could not be said of the authorities themselves.

In a session of the Politburo led again by Kania, he claimed that although the situation had not altered in Gdańsk, they were 'full of determination, and even rage' at the Paris Commune Shipyard as a result of the Pyka negotiations. Kowalczyk went further. He noted indications in both the Lenin and Paris Commune yards of 'alarm and irritation' concerning the negotiations. Their position would be strengthened if none of the enterprises returned to work as a result of Pyka's talks. The Paris Commune shipyard, which was deemed the larger of the two strikes at this stage, was of particular concern.<sup>521</sup> It was the potential consequences of the demands being acquiesced to in negotiations by Pyka, rather than the potential failure of negotiations that concerned others, however. While for some the concern was political, for Babiuch it remained economic. He warned that Pyka had gone too far in his economic concessions, describing them as 'a time bomb' threatening the national

---

<sup>519</sup> 'MKS Statement No.1 (20 August 1980)', in: O. MacDonald (ed.), *The Polish August: Documents from the Beginnings of the Polish Workers Rebellion. Gdańsk. August 1980* (Seattle, 1981), pp.27-28.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid., p.28.

<sup>521</sup> AAN, PZPR KC Biuro Polityczne, V/159, 129-139, 'Protokół Nr 20 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 20 sierpnia 1980r', pp.1-2.

economy. They also needed to be prepared for a worsening of the situation in Szczecin. It could occur at any time.<sup>522</sup> His suggestion that Gierek hold one-on-one discussions with Politburo members suggested that there were divisions within the Politburo at this time.<sup>523</sup> Gierek faced problems not just with the workers, but within his leadership team. The meeting ended with Gierek considering the ‘crisis of confidence’ in the Party. They all bore responsibility for the situation, but he did the most. Previous officials could not be held responsible. There was a need ‘to restore confidence and credibility’ in the Party and he voiced his opposition to actions that would drive a wedge between them and the working class. Talks could be held with workers at any time.<sup>524</sup>

The use of force against the workers was not an option. The government was keen to make this clear to the West. One Western newspaper report quoted a government spokesman as excluding even ‘the possibility that the Government might be contemplating force’. He also played down the reports of militia and troop movements on the Baltic coast with the excuse that any such movements were to do with ‘traditional army exercises’ held during the summer.<sup>525</sup> The U.S. Embassy in Warsaw also received reports from a variety of Western sources questioning reports of an unusual militia or troop build-up in the area.<sup>526</sup> In a farewell meeting with the ambassador, the Deputy Foreign Minister Kulaga ‘affirmed emphatically’ that the Polish authorities had no intention of using force to end the strikes.<sup>527</sup>

While they may have had no intention of using force, they did have plans if needed. Preparations for “Lato-80” continued. The Staff team met almost daily until the beginning

---

<sup>522</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>523</sup> A. Kemp-Welch, *Poland Under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge, 2008), p.246.

<sup>524</sup> ‘Protokół Nr 20 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 20 sierpnia 1980r’, pp. 10-11.

<sup>525</sup> ‘Warsaw rules out use of force to break Baltic strikes’, *The Times*, 20 August 1980.

<sup>526</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, ‘Sitrep #3: Strikes Spreading; Babiuch in Gdansk’, 20 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008284.

<sup>527</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, ‘Polish Vice Minister Renews Bid for RFE Restraint; Affirms GOP Intends Avoid Use Of Force’, 20 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW00820.

of September.<sup>528</sup> That day General Stachura ordered MO heads in over 20 locations to undertake preparations for the establishment of reserve militia forces. Dependent on location either one or two companies were to be formed. A time-scale of approximately three weeks was set for their readiness for training.<sup>529</sup> This pointed to mid-September at the earliest. On a nationwide scale the Party could not simply draw up and implement plans for a crackdown overnight. Only standard actions were feasible at this time. In the meantime more routine security service actions continued around the strikes. The distribution of illegal literature remained a major focus of activity while further check points were also established. The aim was to restrict the movements of strike committee and opposition members, who were perceived as having a negative impact on events.<sup>530</sup> The latter were now of particular concern. The first major action against them was ordered by the Interior Ministry.

According to documents cited by Andrzej Friszke, the deputy director of Department III of the Interior Ministry (responsible for combatting 'anti-state' activity)<sup>531</sup> signed an assessment stating that an increase in the activities of groups hostile to socialism and the state, including KOR, the Free Trade Unions, and the Young Poland Movement had taken place. They were taking advantage of the social unease and strikes in Poland that summer with the intention of escalating them into serious large scale unrest.<sup>532</sup> While the establishment of the Gdańsk MKS was, according to Friszke's account, seen as an example of this due to the opposition's role in formulating its demands, it seems that the MKS in Szczecin and also Elbląg was not. This suggests that the involvement of the opposition

---

<sup>528</sup> A. Paczkowski, *Droga do "mniejszego zła". Strategia i taktyka obozu władzy lipiec 1980 – styczeń 1982* (Kraków, 2002), p.36.

<sup>529</sup> 'Szyfrogram (Warszawa, 20 sierpnia 1980r., *Tajne*)' in, P. Raina and M. Zbrozek (eds.), *Operacja "Lato-80". Preludium stanu wojennego. Dokumenty MSW 1980-1981* (Pelplin, 2003). pp.40-41.

<sup>530</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje Sytuacyjne MSW z sierpniu 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (pp.81-84).

<sup>531</sup> On the structure and organisation of the Polish security apparatus, see: A.Dudek and A.Paczkowski, 'Poland' in, K. Persak and Ł. Kamiński (eds.), *A Handbook of the Communist Security Apparatus in East Central Europe 1944 – 1989* (Warsaw, 2005), pp.221-283 (pp.221-234).

<sup>532</sup> A. Friszke, *Czas KOR-u: Jacek Kuroń a geneza Solidarności* (Kraków, 2011), p.556.

rather than the form of strike or the manner in which it was organised may have been a factor in shaping the authorities' response to the strikes. Certainly it was the opposition rather than the strikes that were targeted by the security services at this time. While previously the opposition had been subject to various methods of observation, the report concluded that the MSW was now in possession of sufficient evidence to investigate over 40 people active in such groups.<sup>533</sup>

That afternoon Jacek Kuroń's flat was raided and the SB arrested not only Kuroń but also a large number of other KOR activists and associates present. Most would be detained for 48 hours, a practice standard in security service actions against the opposition, while three Western journalists present were escorted from the premises. Further arrests of opposition activists took place throughout the day. Amongst those detained were key figures such as Mirosław Chojecki, Jan Lityński and Adam Michnik.<sup>534</sup> According to MSW reports issued the following morning, a total of 32 opposition activists were detained throughout Poland, eighteen of them in Warsaw.<sup>535</sup> The coast may have been the major strike centre, but it was the capital city that was the major centre of opposition. While the latter presented a challenge of a different nature for the security services, it was also considerably easier to target than the former.

In spite of this, the outcome of the arrests was mixed. On the one hand, they had a significant impact on the main activists in KOR. Kuroń, for example, played no further role in August's events. Using another standard technique of the security services at this time, when his initial 48 hour detention expired he was released before his re-arrest took place moments later. This continued until the end of August when a further escalation took

---

<sup>533</sup> Ibid., pp.555-557.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid., p.557.

<sup>535</sup> See: G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.88).

place.<sup>536</sup> On the other hand, not all of the detentions were beneficial to the authorities. Michnik had been due to travel to Gdańsk in an effort to reign in the workers as both he and Kuroń felt that they were going too far with their demand for free trade unions. His detention prevented him from exerting a moderating influence on events.<sup>537</sup> Equally the detentions failed to end the opposition's role in the strikes and the spread of information. As Friszke notes, KOR retained a presence in the Lenin Shipyard and played an important part in printing the strike bulletin (discussed below). Ewa Kulik, a Student Solidarity Committee activist, was also amongst those who remained in Kuroń's flat to gather news on strikes from across the country. In addition to this the press continued to cover events from the Lenin Shipyard with Radio Free Europe playing an important part in strengthening the strikes across Poland.<sup>538</sup> The mass arrests did little to help the authorities gain control of the situation.

In spite of the role that the Western press and media were playing in transmitting information about the strike in Gdańsk, according to Neal Ascherson, the authorities made no effort to prevent foreign journalists from travelling to the yard. Visas were issued 'to almost every western journalist who applied'.<sup>539</sup> It is not clear why they allowed this to happen. Ascherson has suggested that the Polish authorities 'intention may have been that a publicity barrage might deter the Soviet Union from an immediate intervention'.<sup>540</sup> Another possibility is that they simply did not realise what was happening until it was too late and that sudden restrictions on journalists may have alarmed the West. If they interpreted it as a sign of an imminent crackdown, it might have jeopardised the ongoing negotiations over

---

<sup>536</sup> Friszke, p.558.

<sup>537</sup> 'Anti-authoritarian Revolt: A Conversation with Daniel Cohn-Bendit', in: A. Michnik, *Letters from Freedom: Post-Cold War Realities* (Berkeley and Los Angeles CA and London, 1998), pp.29-67 (pp.59-60). See also, D. Ost, *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics: Opposition and Reform in Poland since 1968*, (Philadelphia, 1990), p.77.

<sup>538</sup> Friszke, p.559

<sup>539</sup> N. Ascherson, *The Polish August* (Harmondsworth, 1981), p.159.

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid.*, p.159.

loans. While the aftermath of June 1976 suggested a continued willingness to lend even after repression had taken place, given Poland's dire economic circumstances the Party could ill afford any risks.

Whatever the reason for the continued presence of Western journalists, it did not mean the authorities were happy with Western broadcasts to Poland on events. Kulaga complained on behalf of the Polish authorities about the media, and in particular about RFE. He asked 'once again for media restraint' as the authorities 'needed time to defuse the situation and come to a constructive solution.'<sup>541</sup> The authorities did not want RFE or other media outlets fuelling the situation. It would only make resolving it more difficult. Such concerns were only increased by their economic needs and dependence on the West. While protesting over Western coverage of the strikes, they also needed to prove that they were a stable partner for the West. In a separate meeting that day between Schaufele and Karski, the Minister of Foreign Trade and Maritime Economy, Karski blamed the Gdańsk and Szczecin strikes for damaging Poland's chances of achieving a trade surplus in 1980. He had hoped for one in order to demonstrate to the West that they were 'a reliable economic partner', but any hope for such a surplus now hinged on the length of the strikes.<sup>542</sup> As MSW reports indicate, the Party was well aware that the economic impact of the strikes on Poland's economy and in particular on the nation's 'solvency' was a major topic of discussion in the West. Although the MSW noted suggestions that these problems should not damage Poland's ability to obtain new loans,<sup>543</sup> French reports suggested a belief

---

<sup>541</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Polish Vice Minister Renews Bid for RFE Restraint; Affirms GOP Intends Avoid Use Of Force', 20 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008280.

<sup>542</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Labor Unrest: Ambassador's Conversation with Minister of Foreign Trade and Maritime Economy', 20 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008278.

<sup>543</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje Sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.83).

amongst Western diplomats that negotiations were being damaged by events.<sup>544</sup> Poland's economic ministries appear to have taken the latter view. In his talks with Schaufele, Karski expressed his hope that these stoppages would not cause any 'last minute difficulties' with obtaining the \$300 million loan from the Anglo-American syndicate. It was due to be signed on 22 August 1980.<sup>545</sup>

The U.S. response in both meetings was sympathetic. Regarding media coverage, they 'had no desire to see the situation in Poland destabilized' and 'hoped Poland would be able to solve its general problems as well as remedy its labor unrest.' They had already made the BIB aware of its stance and were maintaining their hands-off approach in spite of being 'heavily badgered by the press' for comment.<sup>546</sup> On the subject of Poland's financial dealings with the West meanwhile, the ambassador had heard of no potential problems with the loan.<sup>547</sup> Schaufele was also 'reasonably optimistic' about Poland's application for agricultural credits. The West's position had not been altered by Polish events. In addition to stating official recognition of the need for 'some change in the price structure', the ambassador also underlined the fact that the U.S. was 'very sympathetic to Poland in its current difficulties and wants to be as helpful as possible.'<sup>548</sup> In both meetings Schaufele suggested that the use of force would change things for the U.S.<sup>549</sup> This was his personal opinion on the matter, rather than a government policy designed to shape Warsaw's

---

<sup>544</sup> P. Pleskot, *Kłopotliwa Panna "S": Postawy polityczne Zachodu wobec "Solidarności" na tle stosunków z PRL (1980 – 1989)* (Warsaw, 2013), p.21.

<sup>545</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Labor Unrest: Ambassador's Conversation with Minister of Foreign Trade and Maritime Economy', 20 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008278.

<sup>546</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Polish Vice Minister Renews Bid for RFE Restraint; Affirms GOP Intends Avoid Use Of Force', 20 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008280.

<sup>547</sup> Media reports also support this assertion. It was the West German loan that appeared most difficult at this time. Conditions had yet to be made public and remained potentially subject to change as a result of the strikes and foreign policy shifts. See: 'Western Economists Link Polish Trouble To An Inflexible System of Central Planning', *New York Times*, 20 August 1980.

<sup>548</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Labor Unrest: Ambassador's Conversation with Minister of Foreign Trade and Maritime Economy', 20 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008278.

<sup>549</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Polish Vice Minister Renews Bid for RFE Restraint; Affirms GOP Intends Avoid Use Of Force', 20 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008280.



response to events, however. The U.S. refrained from interference in events. Even MSW reports drew attention to the fact that the embassy's private line was consistent with that of the Department of State's in public. Perhaps most importantly, the same reports also highlighted the fact that no attempts to hold meetings with opposition groups had been detected.<sup>550</sup> In its dealings with the Polish authorities the U.S. was conducting its business as usual. They dealt with the state rather than the opposition and did not inflame the situation. Indeed Schaufele appeared concerned about the direction in which events were heading. Privately he warned the Department of State that although pursuing a path of peace and negotiations, the Party was 'in increasingly serious trouble and that time, despite what it may think, is not on its side.'<sup>551</sup>

While attempting to manage their relationship with their partners on the one hand, the Poles continued to attract attention of their friends on the other. Events faced increasing coverage in the Soviet Union and parts of Eastern Bloc.<sup>552</sup> *Pravda* published another summary of Gierek's speech, which focussed heavily on the role played by what it dubbed 'anarchistic, irresponsible, and antisocialist elements' in work stoppages and directly quoted Gierek's assertion that 'Only a socialist Poland can be a free and independent country with inviolable borders.'<sup>553</sup> The first statement has been seen as part of a Soviet propaganda campaign for possible intervention in Poland by blaming Poland's problems on what Arthur Rachwald describes as 'a supposed Western intervention in Poland's internal affairs'.<sup>554</sup> The second has been described by Thomas Cynkin as a statement designed 'primarily to

---

<sup>550</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.88).

<sup>551</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Sitrep #3: Strikes spreading; Babiuch in Gdansk', 20 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008284.

<sup>552</sup> On Eastern bloc media coverage at this time, see: P. Moore, 'Warsaw Pact Press: August 19-21', in: *The Strikes in Poland*, pp.258-260.

<sup>553</sup> *Pravda* (20 August 1980) quoted in, L. Sherwin, 'Soviet Media: August 19-26', in: *Ibid.*, 237

<sup>554</sup> A. Rachwald, *In Search of Poland: The Superpowers' Response to Solidarity, 1980-1989* (Stanford CA, 1990), p.5.

intimidate the Poles' by threatening an intervention by 'non-Polish units' in the event of a worsening of events in Poland.<sup>555</sup> The key link between both statements and analyses is that intervention was only a theoretical possibility at this stage. If one considers an analysis of decision-making during previous Soviet interventions by Constantine Pleshakov, it becomes clear how far Moscow was from intervening. According to Pleshakov, despite changes in leadership between 1956 and 1968 decision-making in the Politburo regarding military intervention remained largely consistent:

alarm signals from the Foreign Ministry and secret services; heated discussions in the narrow circle of oligarchs in the Kremlin; talks with native East European 'revisionists'; consultations with socialist allies; and finally discussion at the Politburo and the taking of a vote.<sup>556</sup>

Providing that no major changes in the decision-making process had taken place since 1968, based on the public response Moscow was not even nearing the first stages of this process. While it was unhappy with Polish events, 'alarm signals' were not being raised. Indeed despite their unhappiness, according to Jaruzelski during that day's Politburo session, the Soviet Union had complied with Polish requests to alter the routes of previously planned military movements on Polish soil.<sup>557</sup> Both Soviet and East German diplomats were also reportedly offering private reassurances that events were solely Warsaw's responsibility.<sup>558</sup> Intervention had not been threatened while Soviet press coverage could be interpreted as a sign of support for Gierek's determination to maintain the Party's hold on power.<sup>559</sup>

Moscow's main concerns remained domestic. While Soviet media coverage of events increased, the flow of information on events from outside the Soviet Union was

---

<sup>555</sup> T. Cynkin, *Soviet and American Signalling in the Polish Crisis* (London, 1988), p.41.

<sup>556</sup> C. Pleshakov, 'Studying Soviet Strategies and Decisionmaking in the Cold War Years' in, O.A. Westad (ed.), *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory* (London and New York, 2000), pp.232-241 (p.235).

<sup>557</sup> AAN, PZPR KC Biuro Polityczne, V/159, 129-139, 'Protokół Nr 20 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 20 sierpnia 1980r', p.8.

<sup>558</sup> See: DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Sitrep #3: Strikes spreading; Babiuch in Gdansk', 20 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008284

<sup>559</sup> See: S.I. Ploss, *Moscow and the Polish Crisis: An Interpretation of Soviet Policies and Intentions* (Boulder and London, 1986), pp.14-15.

simultaneously reduced with the resumption of the jamming of Western broadcasts in violation of the Helsinki Final Act. Although Cynkin has argued that this was designed to ‘allow a free hand in the war of words over Poland, in which they were firing the opening shot’, Ascherson interprets it as a sign of fear of contagion in Moscow.<sup>560</sup> The latter seems the more likely of the two as the resumption of jamming had been trailed in the Soviet press by a campaign suggesting that Soviet youth were a vulnerable target for Western broadcasts.<sup>561</sup> Given that previous Eastern bloc crises in Hungary and Czechoslovakia had prompted a reaction amongst Soviet citizens, including students and dissidents in particular, it is possible that Moscow was wary of Soviet youth gaining outside information on the situation in case it caused domestic unrest.<sup>562</sup> The Western borderlands will have been of particular concern. They were always particularly sensitive areas for Moscow.<sup>563</sup> Moscow would not wish for the Polish unrest to spread to these regions, particularly given their historic ties with Lithuania and Western Ukraine. As recent strikes in the Soviet Union had shown, the Soviet leadership also had problems with workers elsewhere to consider. At a time when the Soviet Union had significant economic and infrastructure problems of its own to overcome,<sup>564</sup> they could not afford for unrest to spread from Poland.

For Warsaw meanwhile the problem remained Gdańsk rather than Moscow. That afternoon the Pyka negotiations collapsed. Only three less important demands of the twelve

---

<sup>560</sup> Cynkin, *Soviet and American Signalling in the Polish Crisis*, p.41; N. Ascherson, *The Polish August* (Harmondsworth, 1981), p.153.

<sup>561</sup> See: Ploss, p.14.

<sup>562</sup> On Soviet problems during earlier Eastern bloc crises, see: R. Hornsby, *Protest, Reform and Repression in Khrushchev's Soviet Union* (Cambridge, 2013), Ch.3-4; J. Suri, ‘The Promise and Failure of ‘Developed Socialism’: The Soviet ‘Thaw’ and the Crucible of the Prague Spring, 1964-1972’, *Contemporary European History*, 15:2 (2006), pp.133-158 (pp.151-152).

<sup>563</sup> See: A. Weiner, ‘Foreign Media, the Soviet Western Frontier, and the Hungarian and Czechoslovak Crises’, in: A.R. Johnson and R.E. Parta (eds.), *Cold War Broadcasting: Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: A Collection of Studies and Documents* (Budapest and New York, 2010), pp.299-317; A. Weiner, ‘The Empires Pay a Visit: Gulag Returnees, East European Rebellions and Soviet Frontier Politics’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 78:2 (2006), pp.333-376; A. Weiner, ‘Déjà Vu All over Again: Prague Spring, Romanian Summer and Soviet Autumn on the Soviet Western Frontier’, *Contemporary European History*, 15:2 (2006), pp.159-194.

<sup>564</sup> See: P. Hanson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Economy* (London, 2003), Ch.5.

points agreed upon by the government commission and the individual strike committees had been accepted.<sup>565</sup> As with Szydlak's comments the previous evening, the failure of Pyka to keep his word backfired on the authorities. Not only did those enterprises engaged in negotiations with Pyka return to the MKS, but the MKS adopted a tougher line as a result. In a statement released that day the MKS made plain that enterprise strike committees were not to conduct negotiations with the government on 'any of our common demands'. The MKS was 'the only guarantor of the workers' demands being met' and only they would negotiate with the government. Individual strike committees were simply to maintain 'order and safety' at their own place of work until negotiations had been completed and the MKS informed them that they should undertake work again.<sup>566</sup> Having reasserted their leadership over the negotiating process and with over 260 enterprises involved, the MKS was now in a much stronger position than before. It had survived the first significant attempt by the authorities to undermine its authority. In addition to this they had also gained support for negotiations from a further section of Polish society during the day: the intelligentsia.

Organised by the Catholic intellectual Tadeusz Mazowiecki, amongst others, an appeal signed by 64 members of Warsaw's intelligentsia was issued to both the Party and the workers with the intention of avoiding bloodshed.<sup>567</sup> The authorities were blamed for Poland's present difficulties and called upon to negotiate with the MKS. Although the workers were praised for their conduct and aims, both sides were warned of repeating the events of 1970. The appeal concluded with a warning that 'Only common sense and imagination can lead today to an understanding, which will be in the interests of our common motherland. History will not forgive anybody who attempts solutions other than

---

<sup>565</sup> W. Gieżyński and L. Stefański, *Gdańsk Sierpień 80*, pp.77-78.

<sup>566</sup> 'MKS Statement No.1 (20 August 1980)', in: O. MacDonald (ed), *The Polish August: Documents from the Beginnings of the Polish Workers Rebellion. Gdańsk. August 1980* (Seattle, 1981), p.28.

<sup>567</sup> On the origins of the appeal, see: 'Rozmowa niedokończona. Rozmowa z Tadeuszem Mazowieckim' in, J. Jankowska, *Portrety Niedokończone. Rozmowy z twórcami "Solidarności" 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2004), pp.131-171 (pp.133-134).

those stemming from such an understanding.<sup>568</sup> It was an assertion that applied equally to the workers and the state. Neither was favoured by the appeal. Violence was not an acceptable response from either. It was a call for moderation and one that would enjoy increasing support. News of the appeal soon reached Radio Free Europe.<sup>569</sup> In the days that followed 200 more signatures would be added. It was not the only voice of moderation at this time. John Paul II wrote to Cardinal Wyszyński about events that day.<sup>570</sup>

## 21 August 1980 (Thursday)

The Pyka negotiations ended in failure. At Politburo Kania announced his replacement by Jagielski as the head of the government commission in Gdańsk.<sup>571</sup> In the long term his appointment was seen as a positive step due to his role in the peaceful resolution of the Lublin strikes.<sup>572</sup> In the short-term his appointment made little difference. Efforts continued to undermine the strikes. In addition to the ongoing attempts to divide the MKS through individual negotiations, communiqués and the media continued to be the main official means of pressure on the strikes.<sup>573</sup> Although the MKS countered all of these efforts through the use of communiqués, they were no closer to the achievement of their overall aim of negotiations over the 21 demands and with it official recognition of the MKS.<sup>574</sup> In this respect no progress had been achieved in the five days since the MKS was founded. The strike continued to garner support, however. Amongst other things, residents in the Tri-city

---

<sup>568</sup> 'The Appeal of the Intellectuals', in: MacDonald (ed.), pp.38-39. *Reprinted in Solidarity Strike Bulletin No. 3 (25 August 1980).*

<sup>569</sup> See: J. Kufel, 'Strajk sierpniowy w Stoczni Gdańskiej i narodziny "Solidarności"', in: A. Friszke, K. Persak and P. Sowiński (eds.), *Solidarność od wewnątrz 1980 – 1981* (Warsaw, 2013), pp.39-53 (p.51).

<sup>570</sup> See: P. Pleskot, *Kłopotliwa Panna "S": Postawy polityczne Zachodu wobec "Solidarności" na tle stosunków z PRL (1980 – 1989)* (Warsaw, 2013), p.163.

<sup>571</sup> AAN 237, PZPR KC Biuro Polityczne, V/159, 140-151, 'Protokół Nr 21 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 21 sierpnia 1980r', p.1.

<sup>572</sup> 'Rozmowa niedokończona. Rozmowa z Tadeuszem Mazowieckim', in: J. Jankowska, *Portrety Niedokończone. Rozmowy z twórcami "Solidarności" 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2004), pp.131-171 (p.140).

<sup>573</sup> For a selection of leaflets and official media coverage, see: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, pp.150-152, 174 and 179. An article slandering the strike at the Paris Commune Shipyard was also of note. See: A. Kołodziej, *Gdyńscy Komunardzi. Sierpień 1980 w Stoczni Gdynia* (Gdynia, 2008), p.98.

<sup>574</sup> See: 'Informacja MKS, Do strajkujących, Gdańsk', in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, pp.181-182.

region as well as Young Poland Movement activists had all collected money for the strike.<sup>575</sup> Further opposition support meanwhile came from intellectuals in the Polish League for Independence (PPN) in a statement that was as critical of the authorities as it was supportive of those on strike.<sup>576</sup> The Lenin Shipyard also received the support of local members of the Union of Polish Writers with Lech Bądkowski soon elected to the MKS Presidium.<sup>577</sup> Although significant for worker morale, this made little contribution to the achievement of the MKS' aims. With progress stalled at Gdańsk, it was at Szczecin that the most significant progress was made.

Following the failure of negotiations with individual strike committees the previous day, Warsaw had granted permission for negotiations between the Barcikowski commission and the Szczecin MKS to begin on 21 August.<sup>578</sup> Following the introduction of the government team by the Shipyard's director Stanisław Ozimek, Marian Jurczyk read out the 37 demands, including the first: 'To establish trade unions free and independent from the Party and government as well as to create conditions for their independent activity.' He took a firm stand on this demand making clear that the MKS expected the government to agree to it. They would call a halt to talks and refuse to take up work unless the demand was met. Jurczyk's approach failed to draw a positive response. As Barcikowski said, the government commission wished for both talks and agreement. However, they 'must be two-sided talks.'

---

<sup>575</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.86).

<sup>576</sup> 'Dokument Polskiego Porozumienia Niepodległościowego (PPN), „Strajkowy Biuletyn Informacyjny Solidarność”, 26.08.1980', in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, pp.168-171. On the PPN, see: A. Friszke, *Opozycja polityczna w PRL 1945-1980* (London, 1994), pp.400-499.

<sup>577</sup> See: L. Bądkowski, 'The Man of What?', in: *The Book of Lech Wałęsa* (Harmondsworth, 1982), pp.110-111. Although Bądkowski joined the MKS Presidium at this point, the Presidium soon lost another member (Joanna Duda-Gwiazda) due to what was thought to be a nervous breakdown. See: *Gwiazdozbiór w "Solidarności": Joanna i Andrzej Gwiazdowie w rozmowie z Remigiuszem Okraską* (Łódź, 2009), pp.165-166.

<sup>578</sup> See: K. Barcikowski, *U szczytów władzy* (Warsaw, 1998), pp.165-167.

If the workers continued to pursue their demand in this fashion, it was clear that negotiations would not bring results.<sup>579</sup>

While Barcikowski essentially presented himself as being in favour of good faith negotiations during his opening remarks, he adopted a hard line in negotiations and successfully undermined a number of key demands. As Marcin Stefaniak notes, through his negotiating skills Barcikowski was able to reduce the political nature of the strike. Changes were brought about to some of the political demands made by the MKS in a manner that reduced their strength and ultimately contributed to an increased ambiguity in their final wording. By the end of the first day point one, along with demands concerning an end to censorship, 'persecution' of the opposition and the ability to legally establish socio-political groups, had been watered down. The first demand now read: 'To establish free and independent trade unions as well as to create conditions for their independent activity. Free and independent trade unions will not conduct political activities, as should be defined in the Constitution of the PRL and the statutes of the union.'<sup>580</sup> While this alteration retained the demand for new unions, it now placed limits on their activities. What was considered as 'political' did not seem clearly defined and given Jurczyk's adamance regarding the achievement of this demand, the fact that alterations were made does seem surprising. Other less important points might have been expected to have been conceded perhaps, but not this one.

Despite alterations to a number of demands, the significance of the negotiations themselves should not be underestimated. As Andrzej Friszke notes, such negotiations were

---

<sup>579</sup> A. Głowacki (ed.), *Rozmowy Komisji Rządowej pod przewodnictwem Kazimierza Barcikowskiego z Międzyzakładowym Komitetem Strajkowym w Szczecinie w dniach 21-30 sierpnia 1980r. według transmisji radiowęzła Stoczni im. A. Warskiego w Szczecinie* (Szczecin, 1989), pp.6-10.

<sup>580</sup> M. Stefaniak, 'Sierpień '80 w Województwie Szczecińskim – Przebieg i Konsekwencje', *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, Nr 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień-październik 2010, pp.57-64 (pp.61-62). Marcin Stefaniak divides the Szczecin negotiations into two parts: 21-25 August and 26-30 August 1980. He also employs an alternate version of the new version of point one, which misses out 'Free and independent unions will not conduct political activities'. The quotation employed here is taken from Głowacki, p.39.

only comparable to the talks between workers and Gierek a decade earlier.<sup>581</sup> The fact that direct negotiations were only employed in Szczecin at this stage seems significant, however. It is a decision that may have been shaped not only by the failure of Barcikowski's earlier talks with individual enterprises, but also by the differing influence of the opposition on the strikes. While MSW reports continued to note a strong opposition involvement with the Gdańsk MKS, no such influence was detected in Szczecin.<sup>582</sup> This must have made the decision to undertake direct negotiations with Szczecin easier as they did not need to justify direct talks with "anti-socialist groups." The watering down of the Szczecin demands with regard to the opposition and new socio-political groups seems to underline the importance to the authorities of not being seen to cede any ground to such groups in the negotiations. While some opposition activity had been tolerated since the late-1970s, it had never been officially sanctioned. The Party could not afford to change their stance on this. Indeed, even in Szczecin efforts were still made to deny recognition to the MKS. Throughout the first negotiations Barcikowski refrained from using the term MKS in discussions.<sup>583</sup> It is also possible that the size of the strike made it more suitable for negotiations with the MKS. Although numbers for both strikes were increasing, the Szczecin strike was by far the smaller of the two. By the end of the day there were 82 enterprises registered in Szczecin compared to 350 in Gdańsk.<sup>584</sup> It could be undermined more easily than Gdańsk.

The need to undermine the strikes on the coast was certainly greater than it had been. Strikes were spreading to new parts of Poland. The MSW reported strikes in the Toruń,

---

<sup>581</sup> A. Friszke, *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980-1981* (Kraków, 2014), p.38.

<sup>582</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.86).

<sup>583</sup> Z. Matuszewicz, *Szczecin 1980-1981: Rewolucja "Solidarności"* (Szczecin, 1997), p.57.

<sup>584</sup> See: A. Głowacki (ed.), *Rozmowy Komisji Rządowej pod przewodnictwem Kazimierza Barcikowskiego z Międzyzakładowym Komitetem Strajkowym w Szczecinie w dniach 21-30 sierpnia 1980r. według transmisji radiowęzła Stoczni im. A. Warskiego w Szczecinie* (Szczecin, 1989), p.42; A. Drzycimski and T. Skutnik (eds.), *Zapis rokowań gdańskich. Sierpień 1980* (Paris, 1986), pp.164-174



Bydgoszcz, Poznań and Słupsk regions.<sup>585</sup> They were becoming more pressing to control. Despite negotiations in Szczecin, the threat of force still remained. News reached the coast that night of plans for a crackdown on the strike committee at the Lenin Shipyard and the printing facilities at the Paris Commune Shipyard.<sup>586</sup> Such rumours and even threats were common during this period as a means of intimidation. Days earlier Marian Jurczyk had been subject to anonymous phone calls threatening bloodshed and assaults on the shipyard, while Walentynowicz also recalled news of plans for the militia to gather them up 'like fish from a pond' that week.<sup>587</sup> Although the crackdown never came, such threats and rumours appeared to have had an impact. MSW reports note the port in Gdynia being barricaded with pieces of concrete that night and patrolled by guards armed with 'lengths of cable'.<sup>588</sup> Although the strikes had been conducted peacefully so far, its continuation could not be guaranteed when faced with a crackdown. While KOR and the Free Trade Unionists within the Gdańsk MKS had long been committed to non-violence, there were no guarantees that all workers shared their beliefs.

The strikes were not the sole focus of security service activities at this time, however. Runs on the purchase of food were also regularly reported and while MSW reports continued to focus their attention on actions aimed at hindering the opposition, they also noted efforts to target market speculation.<sup>589</sup> As they also served legitimate means such as these, the role of the security services was far from black-and-white.<sup>590</sup> Meanwhile the increasing purchases of food at a time of shortage will only have added extra weight to

<sup>585</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.84).

<sup>586</sup> *Robotnik* nr 60, 30.08.1980.

<sup>587</sup> M. Szejnert and T. Zalewski, *Szczecin. Grudzień-Sierpień-Grudzień* (Warsaw, 1984), p.110; A. Walentynowicz, 'Solidarność była tak wielka...', *Wolność i Solidarność*, 1 (2010), pp.64-67 (p.67).

<sup>588</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.89).

<sup>589</sup> Majchrzak, pp.84, 89, 94.

<sup>590</sup> On the legitimacy of the police and security services under Communism due to the essential nature of some of their functions, see: M. Łoś, *Communist Ideology, Law and Crime: A Comparative View of the USSR and Poland* (Basingstoke and London, 1988), p.55.

claims being made in the official press that food was rotting inside ships that were unable to dock due to the port strikes on the coast.<sup>591</sup> Striking dock workers found a way to counter such criticisms. According to Anna Walentynowicz, when the Gdańsk MKS gave workers at the port written permission to unload the citrus fruits that were alleged to be going off, the workers refused. They knew that fruits held in cold storage would not have spoiled by that time. They also knew that if they started using cranes for unloading, it would be filmed by television crews and used as evidence they had broken the strike. In the end the fruit was sent to Sweden. They were asked to use it and return the same amount of fruit once the strike was over.<sup>592</sup> This was not the only international co-operation with striking workers that was causing the Polish leadership problems with ports, however. The International Longshoremen's Association was calling for its members to cease loading and unloading Polish ships at ports on the East coast of the United States.<sup>593</sup> This was seen by Kania as potentially complicating events.<sup>594</sup> Both domestically and internationally the ports held tremendous economic significance for Poland.

The support of the International Longshoremen's Association was by far from the only source of Western pressure. In the first public criticism of the Polish leadership by Washington, the detention of KOR activists was condemned by the Department of State.<sup>595</sup> While such criticism was arguably in keeping with an administration that had made the defence of human rights a cornerstone of its foreign policy, it was unlikely to make much of

---

<sup>591</sup> See: '14 dissident leaders detained in Poland/Strikes spread to plants in south', *The Times*, 21 August 1980.

<sup>592</sup> 'Opowiada Anna Walentynowicz', in: *Gdańsk – Sierpień 1980: Rozmowy Komisji Rządowej z Międzyzakładowym Komitetem Strajkowym w Stoczni Gdańskiej (23-31 sierpnia 1980r.)* (Warsaw, 1981), pp.4-12 (pp.11-12).

<sup>593</sup> M. Frybes, 'Reakcje Zachodu na polski Sierpień', *Wolność i Solidarność*, 1/2010, pp.35-41 (p.37). The first trade union support had come from Norway on 19 August 1980. See 'Wyrazy poparcia dla strajkujących robotników polskich od Związku Techników Dźwigowych z Norwegii, Oslo, 19.08.1980', in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, p.131.

<sup>594</sup> AAN, PZPR KC Biuro Polityczne, V/159, 140-151, 'Protokół Nr 21 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 21 sierpnia 1980r', p.2.

<sup>595</sup> See: P. Pleskot, *Kłopotliwa Panna "S": Postawy polityczne Zachodu wobec "Solidarności" na tle stosunków z PRL (1980 – 1989)* (Warsaw, 2013), p.21.

an impact on Warsaw. The CIA, for example, considered the Polish authorities 'willing to absorb the foreign criticism' created by the arrests.<sup>596</sup> Indeed it was not clear how much criticism such arrests would attract. A British report, for example, noted that while the arrests indicated a harder-line from the authorities, they were 'not, of course, a breach of their assurance not to use force against the strikers themselves.'<sup>597</sup> In the context of the strike wave, they were comparatively unimportant. Equally, the use of repeat 48 hour detentions was in keeping with the strategy for dealing with the opposition employed since the mid-1970s. Given that this strategy had been in use for some time, there is no reason to think that it would attract particular Western opprobrium at this time. International condemnation of arrests as well as support for the workers, such as that expressed by young Austrian Catholics and Swedish protests,<sup>598</sup> was arguably more likely to provide a morale boost for the workers at this time than to influence Party policy. In terms of obtaining new loans it was further strikes rather than opposition arrests that were most likely to derail agreements. Non-governmental international criticism of the Party and support for the workers would arguably have a more significant influence in the long-term if it could be sustained long enough to influence the policy of Western governments. In this regard the support of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO) for Polish workers, in addition to Republican support for the right to strike and independent unions in Congress, was arguably of the greatest significance.<sup>599</sup> Ronald Reagan was on the horizon.

In the short term the most significant international pressure that day came from Poland's friends rather than her partners. During the Politburo session Gierek read out a

---

<sup>596</sup> CIA FOIA: 'Situation Reports: Poland', 21 August 1980.

<sup>597</sup> TNA: PRO: PREM 19/331: Telegram from Warsaw to FCO, 'My Telno 249: Strikes', 21 August 1980.

<sup>598</sup> See: G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (pp.85-87).

<sup>599</sup> See: Pleskot, p.21; Frybes, p.37.

letter he had received from Brezhnev.<sup>600</sup> Although the contents of Brezhnev's letter are not recorded in the Politburo minutes and the letter has not been obtained from either the Polish or Russian archives since 1989, its contents were described by Stanisław Kania at an oral history conference at Jachranka in 1997. He recalled it as expressing 'quite simply dissatisfaction' with Polish events along with 'impatience'. It contained no suggestions regarding the use of force.<sup>601</sup> Although at Politburo Władysław Kruczek warned that the East German and Czechoslovak First Secretaries could dispatch similar letters to Warsaw, there are no further comments on record regarding the Brezhnev letter. This along with the fact that even Kruczek only suggested a Party plenum was required rather than action tougher than this seems to suggest that Kania's recollection of the letter not pushing for the use of force is accurate. Equally the fact that Gierek read the letter to the Politburo immediately after he had raised the issue of approaching Moscow and East Berlin with regard to 'help for our market' also seems to endorse this fact. Indeed the only other reference to the Soviet Union and East Germany at Politburo came from Edward Babiuch concerning the need to approach them 'about help in unloading ships with raw materials'.<sup>602</sup> Economic issues were at the forefront of discussions regarding Poland's friends at this time. Presumably such approaches for assistance would not have been the main subject of discussion with regard to the Soviet Union and East Germany if the tone of the letter had been stronger than Kania has suggested.

This is not to say that the Soviet and Eastern bloc response to events was entirely clear cut, however. While the CIA noted that there had been no signs of increased activity amongst Soviet troops stationed in Poland since before the strikes on the coast began, some

---

<sup>600</sup> AAN, PZPR KC Biuro Polityczne, V/159, 140-151, 'Protokół Nr 21 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 21 sierpnia 1980r', p.5.

<sup>601</sup> *Wejść nie wejść – Polska 1980-82: wewnętrzny kryzys międzynarodowe uwarunkowania. Konferencja w Jachrance listopad 1997* (London, 1999), p.28.

<sup>602</sup> See: 'Protokół Nr 21 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 21 sierpnia 1980r', pp.7-8.

signals bore resemblance to those employed prior to the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. In the case of the Soviet Union this concerned the resumption of the jamming of Western broadcasts.<sup>603</sup> Resemblances to 1968 were also being reported by the British in their analysis of East German press reports on the forthcoming Warsaw Pact exercise.<sup>604</sup> While naturally there were no such signals in the Czechoslovak press, a detailed information bulletin on the Polish summer was prepared for the Czechoslovak leadership and interior ministry at this point.<sup>605</sup> Any concerns presumably remained mostly domestic although obvious signs of this appear to have been limited. While in the Soviet Union trade unions in Ukraine's Crimean oblast came in for fierce criticism at a plenum attended by the Chairman of the Council of Trade Unions and other high-level officials from Kiev,<sup>606</sup> there were still no signs of spillover amongst East German workers.<sup>607</sup> Given that such spillover was likely to increase the urgency with which the Warsaw Pact would act, there is no reason to think that Moscow or East Berlin had any increased need to do so at this time. Indeed another restraining factor on Soviet actions was also evident that day. In what appears to have been the first contact between the Soviet and U.S. leaders that summer, Brezhnev sent Carter a letter concerning the deployment of medium-range nuclear weapons in Western Europe.<sup>608</sup> No intervention could take place in Poland without further damaging détente and with it control of the arms race. Indeed, although not mentioned in the letter, given the

---

<sup>603</sup> CIA FOIA: 'Situation Reports: Poland', 21 August 1980.

<sup>604</sup> TNA:PRO: PREM 19/331: Telegram from East Berlin to FCO, 'GDR Reaction to Polish Unrest'.

<sup>605</sup> See: '1980 sierpień 21, Praga – Informacji o aktualnej sytuacji w PRL opracowana dla KC KPCz i kierownictwa Federalnego MSW, do użytku wewnętrznego', in: Ł. Kamiński, (ed.), *Przed i Po 13 Grudnia: Państwa Bloku Wschodniego Wobec Kryzysu w PRL 1980 – 1982: Tom 1* (Warsaw, 2006), pp.10-17.

<sup>606</sup> E. Teague, *Solidarity and the Soviet Worker: The Impact of the Polish Events of 1980 on Soviet Internal Politics* (London, 1988), p.66.

<sup>607</sup> As the US Embassy in Berlin noted, 'No GDR worker would think of challenging the security apparatus, well-organized and given firm directions by a ruling party (the SED) dependent on Soviet support and, ultimately on four-hundred thousand Soviet troops in the GDR.' See: DOS FOIA: Telegram from Berlin to State, 'Poland: Recent GDR Citizen Background Comments', 21 August 1980. Document No. BERLIN03839.

<sup>608</sup> Document 298: 'Letter from Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev to President Carter (August 21, 1980)' in, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1977 – 1980, Volume VI: Soviet Union*, (United States Government Printing Office: Washington, 2013). <<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v06>> [August 2015].

leaking of Carter's new nuclear strategy PD-59 in early August, Soviet concerns may well have been heightened at this time.<sup>609</sup> It also serves as a useful reminder that for both the Soviet Union and the U.S., Poland was not the most important factor in superpower relations at this time. Nuclear weapons and the arms race, along with Afghanistan, overshadowed all else.

With no signs of Soviet pressure for a crackdown therefore, the main problems facing the Polish Politburo in addition to the strikes appeared to be economic. Babiuch noted problems with payments due to declining amounts of short-term credits.<sup>610</sup> Although the Politburo minutes do not elaborate upon the reasons for or impact of these shortages, the fact that Babiuch raised the issue alongside requests to the Soviet Union and East Germany for assistance underscores the severity of the economic problems facing Poland. They were easily on a par with those of the strikes. Babiuch's comment that the government was struggling to formulate a new economic program due to time constraints adds to a sense of the leadership's lack of control over the economy at this time.<sup>611</sup> It is also noticeable that in negotiations at Szczecin that day economic issues were directly raised by the authorities with the workers. Stanisław Ozimek, the shipyard's director, stressed the need to quickly conclude negotiations due to the economic losses incurred as a result of the strike. Fines for late completion were amongst the problems mentioned. Action had already had to be taken to avoid paying a fine relating to a West German ship. Barcikowski also noted the problems

---

<sup>609</sup> PD-59 and a number of relevant documents have recently been declassified. See: *Jimmy Carter's Controversial Nuclear Targeting Directive PD-59 Declassified*. <<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb/390/>> [August 2015]. For a balanced Soviet assessment of PD-59 from the glasnost-era, see: A.G. Arbatov, *Lethal Frontiers: A Soviet View of Nuclear Strategy, Weapons and Negotiations* (New York, Westport CT and London, 1988), pp.110-112.

<sup>610</sup> AAN, PZPR KC Biuro Polityczne, V/159, 140-151, 'Protokół Nr 21 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 21 sierpnia 1980r', p.5.

<sup>611</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.

of fulfilling economic demands.<sup>612</sup> The workers would be difficult to persuade on these and all other points, however. As Barcikowski later recalled, there was a strong belief amongst Szczecin's workers that if the Party genuinely wanted to do something, it was possible for them 'to facilitate everything and to create an ideal world'.<sup>613</sup> Squaring worker expectation built up under Gierek during the 1970s with the economic realities facing Poland in the 1980s was going to be a difficult job. Resolving such difficulties would only be made worse if there were divisions within the Politburo regarding their response. As Kania warned, employing the term 'counterrevolution' in relation to the strikes as some in the Politburo had would only hinder their efforts to reach an agreement with the workers. The strikes would continue to develop and the lack of trust in the Party's words was a major problem.<sup>614</sup> High levels of public expectation coupled with low levels of trust and an economic inability to deliver improvements was a significant problem for the Party leadership in resolving the strikes. In spite of this, the Party had not attempted to contact Cardinal Wyszyński to ask him to speak about the situation in Poland, nor did the Polish Primate have any plans to make such a statement.<sup>615</sup> However, earlier comments from a sermon by Wyszyński had been voiced indirectly on Polish television the previous evening 'in the form of an interview with a Catholic deputy to the Polish parliament.'<sup>616</sup> Fragments of Wyszyński's sermon had also been printed by the press in Warsaw.<sup>617</sup> Wyszyński continued to stress moderation, celebrating a Mass that day stressing the need for 'peace' and 'trust in God'.<sup>618</sup> The Church remained a trusted source of guidance and moderation.

---

<sup>612</sup> A. Głowacki (ed.), *Rozmowy Komisji Rządowej pod przewodnictwem Kazimierza Barcikowskiego z Międzyzakładowym Komitetem Strajkowym w Szczecinie w dniach 21-30 sierpnia 1980r. według transmisji radiowęzła Stocznia im. A. Warskiego w Szczecinie* (Szczecin, 1989), pp.12-27.

<sup>613</sup> K. Barcikowski, *U szczytów władzy* (Warsaw, 1998), p.171.

<sup>614</sup> 'Protokół Nr 21 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 21 sierpnia 1980r', p.8.

<sup>615</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Position of Church in Current Polish Situation', 21 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008345.

<sup>616</sup> CIA FOIA: 'Situation Reports: Poland', 21 August 1980.

<sup>617</sup> TNA:PRO: FCO 28/4160, f55: Telegram from Warsaw to FCO, 'My TelNo 250: Strikes', 21 August 1980.

<sup>618</sup> P. Raina, *Kardynał Wyszyński. Czasy Prymasowskie 1980* (Warsaw, 2010), p.60.

At the Lenin Shipyard meanwhile an oft discussed speech was made to MKS delegates assembled in the BHP Hall at around 9pm by Ireneusz Leśniak.<sup>619</sup> Relying on a pre-prepared speech, he appealed to Gierek to personally enter into talks at the shipyard as he had done in 1971. They had 'complete trust' for Gierek as 'apart from our Pope John Paul II you are the only authority capable of leading our country out of the present impasse.'<sup>620</sup> In spite of its pro-Gierek stance, Leśniak's speech was greeted with applause by the listening delegates. This was swiftly brought to a halt by Walentynowicz, who identified Leśniak as one of those involved in her sacking.<sup>621</sup> Although he was escorted peacefully from the shipyard without major incident, the Leśniak affair revealed two important points about the strikes. According to Timothy Garton Ash, the applause for Leśniak's speech indicated that MKS delegates remained unclear 'about their strategy and goals' while the manner in which he was removed from the yard highlights the 'dignity' with which the workers acted throughout the strike.<sup>622</sup> The nature and outcome of the strike was still far from certain at this time and in a tense atmosphere they needed to keep their cool at all times. In spite of the Szczecin negotiations, the authorities were still employing a varied repertoire against the strikes.

## **22 August 1980 (Friday)**

Szczecin and Gdańsk continued to follow different paths. In the former negotiations continued, in the latter the waiting did. Despite events being more advanced at Szczecin however, it was Gdańsk that remained the centre of attention. At Politburo Kania described the situation as deteriorating in the city with the workers demonstrating 'greater and greater determination.' Żandarowski meanwhile noted that it was this strike that held the attention

---

<sup>619</sup> See, for example: T. Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-1982* (London, 1983), pp.49-50; E. Milewicz, 'Ja, happening, stocznia', *Wolność i Solidarność*, 1 (2010), pp. 124-137 (pp129-131).

<sup>620</sup> A. Drzycimski and T. Skutnik (eds.), *Zapis rokowań gdańskich. Sierpień 1980* (Paris, 1986), p.189.

<sup>621</sup> *Ibid.*, p.190; Garton Ash, p.49; Milewicz, p.130.

<sup>622</sup> *Ibid.*, 49-50.



of other Polish workers. It was the barometer by which events were measured.<sup>623</sup> With negotiations ongoing Szczecin remained important, however. According to Kania, the strike committee, which included a number of Party members, was taking a firm stand.<sup>624</sup> Point one remained a major point of discussion. Although Barcikowski noted that any new unions would be 'socialist' in nature, he wanted to undertake further talks on the matter. The need for a new law with regard to trade unions should be included in the agreement with the aim for it to be completed by the end of 1980.<sup>625</sup> The MKS did not accept his proposal. When Marian Jurczyk read out the modified demands later that day, it was made clear that the legal basis of their activity would be provided by article 87 of the ILO covenants already ratified by the Polish state.<sup>626</sup> Along with article 98 of the same covenants, it was a vital legal basis for the demand for new unions along the coast as well. As Andrzej Gwiazda made clear when discussing the relevant ILO articles with workers at Gdańsk, they had both been ratified by the Polish *sejm* in 1956.<sup>627</sup> The legal basis for point one at both strikes already existed. This was a point already clear to all involved with opposition activity in Poland. The Charter of Workers' Rights (1979) issued by the editors of *Robotnik* and signed by many of the Gdańsk opposition had included an account of article 87 amongst others in its text.<sup>628</sup> In many respects Gwiazda was simply continuing the work already begun by *Robotnik* in the late 1970s. He was educating the workers about their rights. With no sign of the government commission agreeing to negotiations with the MKS, there was little else he could do.

---

<sup>623</sup> 'Protokół nr 22 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 22 Sierpnia 1980r.', in: Z. Włodek (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a „Solidarność” 1980-1981* (London, 1992), pp.43-45.

<sup>624</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>625</sup> A. Głowacki, (ed.), *Rozmowy Komisji Rządowej pod przewodnictwem Kazimierza Barcikowskiego z Międzyzakładowym Komitetem Strajkowym w Szczecinie w dniach 21-30 sierpnia 1980r. według transmisji radiowęzła Stoczni im. A. Warskiego w Szczecinie* (Szczecin, 1989), p.54.

<sup>626</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>627</sup> A. Drzycimski and T. Skutnik (eds.), *Zapis rokowań gdańskich*, pp.228-230.

<sup>628</sup> '1979 r., lipiec – Sierpień, Warszawa. Karta Praw Robotniczych', in: Z. Hemmerling and M. Nadolski (eds.), *Opozycja Demokratyczna w Polsce 1976-1980. Wybór dokumentów* (Warsaw, 1994), pp.602-609 (p.606).

Such activities formed an important part of life at the Lenin Shipyard throughout the strike and had already done so for much of that week. Speech after speech was given by delegates and supporters of the MKS. They ranged from the simple repetition of MKS statements to the reading (and re-reading) of messages of support, such as those from the Union of Polish Writers and the appeal of the 64. Speeches were not limited to members of the MKS Presidium. The opportunity to stand at the microphone and make a speech was not restricted solely to the strike leadership. Many who had not been politically active before were able to make statements to the assembled workers. A high school teacher and her colleague from Gdynia noted that they had informed a Party activist at their school that they were breaking with their 'glorious tradition' of inaction in 1968, 1970 and 1976, for example.<sup>629</sup> Although negotiations had not begun, minor breakthroughs such as this were still being made. The open approach to speeches reflected the democratic nature of the strike.

The broadcast of speeches also served a purpose to those outside the hall and at other enterprises within the MKS. As numerous photographs testify, for those workers outside the hall much of the strike involved simply sitting and waiting in the yard or at their enterprise.<sup>630</sup> Given everything else that was happening it is easy both to overlook and to underestimate the importance of this to the survival and success of the strike. Without the patience and support of these workers, nothing could have been achieved. No matter how important an enterprise is to a nation's economy, a strike can only take place with sufficient support from the enterprises' workers and can only be sustained if this support continues. As time passed and boredom set in it would have been easy for this support to dwindle. The broadcast of speeches to the yard and the tape recordings of the broadcasts made by

---

<sup>629</sup> Drzycimski and Skutnik (eds.), p.211.

<sup>630</sup> E. Ciołek, *Solidarność sierpień 1980 – sierpień 1989/August 1980 – August 1989* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.52-53 and pp.68-69. See also photos at: *Solidarność. Dekada Wolności. On-line wystawa fotografii z lat 1979-89*.<<http://www.bialo-czerwona.pl/solidarnosc/>> [August 2015]

delegates and sent back to their enterprises provided a way of sustaining this support and of keeping the majority of workers involved in proceedings. Amongst other things they provided striking workers who were not based at the Lenin Shipyard with the means by which to hold the MKS and their own representatives to account without being present at the yard itself.<sup>631</sup> It also killed time. Speeches from the previous day would simply be rebroadcast when there was nothing important happening.<sup>632</sup> Those outside the gates were similarly kept involved in this manner while listening to RFE was also a significant memory of the strike for those involved.<sup>633</sup> Alongside communiqués and soon a strike bulletin, cassette tapes and broadcasts played a crucial role in keeping those outside the Presidium informed and occupied during the strike. They helped to maintain their support. Such sources of information were also better trusted than the Party.

At Politburo the Party leadership appeared in disarray and disconnected from society. With the social situation deteriorating rapidly and the economy under severe pressure, Babiuch called for urgent action in addressing ‘the crisis of confidence’ that existed between Polish citizens and the Party. The scale and significance of this crisis should not be underestimated. As Gierek observed, ‘Society doesn’t believe us, and it is more threatening than the strikes.’ They needed to act rapidly. According to Babiuch, there was ‘no time for sentiments or friendships’. The Party and the country had to come first. They needed to rally around Gierek in order to aid him in leading Poland ‘from this difficult situation.’ It was vital to maintain him in post due to his domestic and international ‘authority’ without which Poland faced catastrophe. While Gierek should remain as First Secretary, there was a need for a change in the government. Having only been Prime Minister since February, Babiuch revealed that he had offered his resignation to Gierek two

---

<sup>631</sup> J-Y Potel, *The Summer Before The Frost* (London, 1982), p.69.

<sup>632</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>633</sup> See: Ciołek, p.58; P. Machcewicz, *Poland’s War on Radio Free Europe, 1950-1989* (Stanford CA, 2014), p.232.

days earlier. As he observed, all around the world such changes took place at moments of crisis. Major changes were needed for any reshuffle to have credibility in the eyes of the nation. There was a need for 'a new government team'. This was the only way of calming the situation and coming to an agreement with striking workers. If change was not forthcoming, the country faced ruin. Whatever happened, there was a need for those in charge of the economy 'to speak another language.' Gierek, who had asked Babiuch not to raise the issue at Politburo, agreed that change was needed in either the Party or Government. The Prime Minister's post was key as the new incumbent would not have long to act. Although he did not have any clear candidates in mind for the post, he was clear that they should have 'authority and sufficient knowledge and experience' to fill the role at this time. Although he would not be resigning, it is clear that Gierek also knew he was under pressure.<sup>634</sup>

While the contents of Babiuch's failed resignation letter are not known, it seems likely that he was attempting to stand down due to an inability to cope with the economic crisis engulfing Poland. According to Kania reports from the regions were suggesting that the internal market was being threatened by mass purchases.<sup>635</sup> Interior Ministry reports elaborate on this point. Basic goods and in particular 'flour, sugar, *kasha* and butter' were amongst those most hit. In Warsaw 'bread and petrol' were similarly affected.<sup>636</sup> The social impact should not be underestimated. Polish citizens were already experiencing serious shortages of many of these goods prior to the strikes. Runs on goods and further shortages would only fuel further discontent with the Party. Coal was also being affected by events. Kania reported that supplies earmarked for export were now required for domestic

---

<sup>634</sup> 'Protokół nr 22 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 22 sierpnia 1980r.', in: Z. Włodek, (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a „Solidarność” 1980-1981* (London, 1992), pp.47-49.

<sup>635</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>636</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.91).

purposes.<sup>637</sup> Given the importance of coal exports as a major source of much needed hard-currency earnings, this will have been a significant blow to the Party and government's hopes of resolving their balance of payments crisis. The fact that the leadership appeared determined not to countenance strike pay and wage increases, two of the major means of successfully buying off workers since July,<sup>638</sup> only adds to the sense that in economic terms the Party was on the brink. Arguably even more so than the strikes and the worker-state crisis of trust, the economy was Poland's greatest challenge. As Babiuch said, 'The biggest problems are in the economy and the most serious tasks are in this sphere.'<sup>639</sup> The strikes only added to these problems.

Although not discussed at Politburo the cost of the strikes was being placed at £12 million per day in the West.<sup>640</sup> This came at a time when Poland was already falling behind in its repayments to the West for goods. In addition to the £1.2 million owed to British exporters under guarantee from the British government for example, a reported £1.4 million was owed to uninsured exporters. While the Poles had managed to repay £700,000 owed to firms exporting under an official guarantee, the situation illustrated Poland's 'cash flow problems' at this time.<sup>641</sup> While such problems were caused by long-term economic mismanagement in Poland and were more serious than just 'cash flow problems', the strikes did appear to be causing the Poles some problems in terms of trade. For example, a British Aerospace visit to factories in Mielec and Świdnik scheduled for the following week was cancelled. This was possibly due to fear of strikes breaking out in these factories once

---

<sup>637</sup> 'Protokół nr 22 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 22 sierpnia 1980r.', p.44.

<sup>638</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>639</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>640</sup> 'Poles dismiss negotiator in peace move on strikes, Premier leaves capital for Gdansk talks', *The Times*, 22 August 1980.

<sup>641</sup> See: TNA:PRO: FCO 28/4156, f152: Letter from G. Breach (ECGD) to P. Mountfield (HM Treasury), 'Poland: Section 2 Cover', 22 August 1980, p.3.

again.<sup>642</sup> It seems that Polish workers were also deliberately attempting to disrupt Soviet trade with Poland. Although Kania announced that the port in Świnoujście was working,<sup>643</sup> in Gdynia a stir was caused when a Soviet ship left port without official permission from the relevant Polish agencies. The strike committee had vowed that Soviet ships would not take goods from Polish soil.<sup>644</sup> Enterprises with transnational links, in particular ports, remained a sensitive area for the Party leadership.

Under the circumstances even reports reiterating that the West German loan was still due to go ahead without any alteration to the terms attached and that the \$325 million loan from the Anglo-American consortium had been signed that day appear to have offered little economic respite for the Polish leadership.<sup>645</sup> Such loans would not resolve Poland's economic problems or remove the need for structural reforms of the economy. Nor would they buy the Party much time in which to act. Indeed in the long-term it was arguable that the new loans would only cause the Party further problems. As Cam Hudson notes, the Polish authorities received less money and higher interest rates than they had expected. In keeping with earlier cited British government reports on the conditions attached by banks during initial negotiations, according to Hudson, the Polish leadership had also been 'forced to accept [...] that a steering committee of Western bankers would meet regularly (every

---

<sup>642</sup> TNA:PRO: PREM 19/331: Telegram from Warsaw to FCO, 'My Telno 251: Strikes', 22 August 1980.

<sup>643</sup> 'Protokół nr 22 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 22 sierpnia 1980r.', p.43.

<sup>644</sup> A. Kazański, 'Sierpień '80 w Gdyni', *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.45-56 (p.51).

<sup>645</sup> See: '£286m loan for Poland to go ahead', *The Times*, 22 August 1980, p16; 'Britain, U.S., Canada, Japan to Accord Loan to Poland', *Xinhua General News Service*, 23 August 1980. The information on the West German loan contradicts that in the most complete account of Poland's dealings with banks in August 1980 by Cam Hudson. Hudson claims the deal was completed on 12 August 1980. Although it is difficult to trace the course of negotiations over loans, this does not appear to be the case as all information from archival sources discussed earlier contradicts this. It appears to be the difference between an agreement to participate in a loan being announced, and the conditions of the loan being finalised and signed. Hudson also notes that the loan deal with Austrian banks was announced on 20 August 1980. As is known from earlier cited Polish sources, Poland had already received money from the Austrian banks by late July 1980. See: C. Hudson, 'Poland's Indebtedness: Its Role in the Crisis (8 September 1980)', in: *The Strikes in Poland*, pp.174-200 (p.176).

two months) with Polish authorities in order to review Polish economic policies.<sup>646</sup> Western banks were now in a position to hold the Poles to account for their economic policies and performance. It seems unlikely that the banks would countenance anything other than further economic reforms if they were to continue lending to Poland. In order to introduce such reforms however, the Party would need to win back the trust and support of society at a time of social unrest. Simultaneously they would need to persuade them to accept a lower standard of living and to work harder. Retaining the trust and support of their friends and partners would also be crucial.

In the short-term at least the support of their partners seemed assured. With regard to the French, plans continued to be made for the visit of Giscard d'Estaing in September.<sup>647</sup> In terms of West German-Polish relations meanwhile Schmidt wrote to Gierek, noting that Bonn did not wish to be seen to interfere in Polish affairs. He also stated his desire for Gierek to re-schedule his cancelled visit once the elections were over.<sup>648</sup> There were no signs of a change in Washington's position either. Although the situation was discussed at the White House as part of a 'foreign affairs breakfast', a later public statement was made along standard lines.<sup>649</sup> The British stance was also welcomed by the Polish ambassador to London.<sup>650</sup> This is not to say that events in Poland were not without their complications for her Western partners. Schmidt's meeting with Honecker was cancelled that day. It was

---

<sup>646</sup> C. Hudson, 'Poland's Indebtedness: Its Role in the Crisis (8 September 1980)', in: *The Strikes in Poland*, p.176.

<sup>647</sup> P. Pleskot, *Kłopotliwa Panna "S": Postawy polityczne Zachodu wobec "Solidarności" na tle stosunków z PRL (1980 – 1989)* (Warsaw, 2013), p.61.

<sup>648</sup> *Ibid.*, 101. Note: Gierek's correspondence with Schmidt is not included in the relevant file in the Archive of Modern Records in Warsaw. See: AAN, XIA/1109

<sup>649</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21; J. Carter, *White House Diary* (New York, 2010), p.459.

<sup>650</sup> TNA:PRO: PREM 19/331: Telegram from FCO to Warsaw, 'Poland', 22 August 1980.

believed to be due in part to the influence of Polish events. This was a significant blow to Schmidt in an election year.<sup>651</sup>

Despite the stability that Western support for the Polish leadership brought, this is not to say that they were unconcerned by the prospect of violence in Poland. Amongst the most notable U.S. Embassy and CIA reports was a CIA Special Analysis. It argued that the situation, particularly on the Baltic coast, was now at a stage at which ‘clashes between workers and security forces are a distinct possibility’.<sup>652</sup> It did not believe that the use of force was the preferred course of action for the authorities, but suggested that the build-up of security forces in Gdańsk was part of ‘contingency preparations for any violence’. There was a risk that if violence erupted however, that the military in particular ‘might not perform reliably.’ The situation might spiral out of control.<sup>653</sup> This was a view with which the embassy in Warsaw concurred.<sup>654</sup> Despite these concerns, they anticipated a purely domestic scenario.

There was certainly no suggestion that the Soviet Union were intending to intervene. *Pravda* simply referenced an earlier *Trybuna Ludu* article. It emphasised the need for a normal rhythm of work for the resolution of Poland’s difficulties. It praised enterprises that had fulfilled their economic plans. The work of Polish coal miners was also singled out.<sup>655</sup> The latter was an important reference. Not only was Poland one of the biggest producers of coal in Europe at this time, a fact that was of great importance in attracting Western economic support, but the mining region also formed the heart of Gierek’s power base. If he

---

<sup>651</sup> Pleskot, p.102; M. Świder, *Z Perspektywy Bonn: Przemiany polityczne w Polsce w latach 1980-1989*, (Toruń, 2011), p.32

<sup>652</sup> CIA FIOA: ‘Special Analysis: Poland: The Prospects for Confrontation’, 22 August 1980, p.11.

<sup>653</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>654</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, ‘Sitrep #5: Negotiations Continue; Gdansk Calm’, 22 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008391.

<sup>655</sup> L. Sherwin, ‘Soviet Media: August 19-26’, in: *The Strikes in Poland*, pp.237-240 (pp.237-238). The reference to Poland’s coal miners is significant. Gierek came from the coal mining region of Poland. Any sign that he had lost their support, was a sign that his regime was in trouble. It would seem this reference was intended to help maintain their support for Gierek by showing them how much their work was appreciated.



lost their support, his power would be damaged on two fronts. There were no suggestions that this was about to happen, however. In contrast to Western press coverage, the Soviet press was actually used to present ‘an illusion of Gierek’s tight hold on authority.’<sup>656</sup> Moscow was providing its tacit endorsement of Gierek and his response to the situation, a fact that tallies with statements made by Soviet officials and academics to the West. Along with support for Gierek, Afghanistan and a desire for the continuation of détente were given as reasons for this stance.<sup>657</sup> It was clear that they were not pushing for a harder line. Press coverage actually seems somewhat gentler than that published in *Pravda* just two days before. This raises the question of whether they were less concerned now that Poland’s Western loans had either been completed or seemed secure. Certainly continued Western economic support for Poland will have been in Moscow’s interests. They also had their own economic problems to deal with. The CIA considered this to be a further restraint on Soviet action. In spite of this, economic support was considered to be Moscow’s most likely form of action towards Poland.<sup>658</sup> This is not to say that behind the scenes Soviet concern over events was not growing, however. Through Soviet diplomats in Warsaw the West had learnt that the return of the Soviet Union’s ambassador to Warsaw Boris Aristov was imminent. He had not been due back from holiday for another seven days.<sup>659</sup> Moscow’s concern was clearly mounting. So too was East Berlin and Prague’s.<sup>660</sup>

Twelve years since the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, it was the latter’s position that was most noticeable. According to a U.S. Embassy report, although there was

---

<sup>656</sup> S.I. Ploss, *Moscow and the Polish Crisis: An Interpretation of Soviet Policies and Intentions* (Boulder and London, 1986), p.15.

<sup>657</sup> See: CIA FOIA: ‘Situation Reports: Poland’, 21 August 1980, p.3; CIA FOIA: ‘Special Analysis: Poland: The Prospects for Confrontation’, 22 August 1980, p.12-13.

<sup>658</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>659</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, ‘Sitrep #5: Negotiations Continue; Gdansk Calm’, 22 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008391.

<sup>660</sup> See: P. Moore, ‘Warsaw Pact Press: August 22-24’, in: *The Strikes in Poland*, pp.261-262; DOS FOIA: Telegram from Prague to State, ‘Czechoslovak Reaction to Events in Poland’, 22 August 1980. Document No. 80PRAGUE003057.

‘a strong undercurrent’ in local media reports that Poland’s problems were a result of ‘hostile outside forces’, a softer approach to the anniversary of the Warsaw Pact invasion was adopted by the authorities. The ‘emphasis [was] on how the Party is responsive to the people’s needs rather than on how the Soviets saved the country.’<sup>661</sup> Any Warsaw Pact intervention in Poland would need to keep such memories in mind. They would have to persuade a society that had itself been crushed by the Warsaw Pact to support (or at least not to directly challenge) their country’s participation in an identical intervention in a neighbouring country. The primary concern of the Czechoslovak authorities however, remained not to provoke domestic unrest through the implementation of its own price increases for basic goods such as bread, meat, petrol and textiles.<sup>662</sup> They could not delay such increases forever. As a spokesman for the authorities noted, it was vital that these increases were implemented. Many had not changed price for twenty-five years. The authorities were now considering ‘a series of small increases rather than one large one.’<sup>663</sup> Spillover was economic rather than political.

How long the concerns of Poland’s friends would remain primarily domestic was unclear, however. Despite Moscow’s confidence in Gierek, it is clear that his hold on power within the Party was under challenge as was the economy. The challenge he faced from workers was also increasing. The Gdańsk MKS was continuing to gain support from all parts of society. For example, although they continued to work in order to save the harvest, farmers expressed solidarity with the MKS.<sup>664</sup> Intellectuals from Poznań also expressed their support for the strikes in both Szczecin and Gdańsk.<sup>665</sup> The discussion group ‘Experience and the Future’ (DiP) also supported the strikes as the ‘only means of expression’ open to

---

<sup>661</sup> Ibid.

<sup>662</sup> Ibid.

<sup>663</sup> Ibid.

<sup>664</sup> ‘Rezolucja rolników z Kościerzyny, Do MKS – do wszystkich mieszkańców Wybrzeża, Kościerzyna, 22.08.1980’, in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, p.205.

<sup>665</sup> P. Raina, *Independent Social Movements in Poland* (London, 1981), p.490.

the workers ‘in the absence of authentic institutions’ providing similar means. They also outlined a number of much needed reforms and called for ‘dialogue’ between society and the state to prevent future problems.<sup>666</sup> They were not the only voice of moderation. The Church made its first public statement via Bishop Kaczmarek. Following consultations with Cardinal Wyszyński, Kaczmarek expressed sympathy with the workers’ aims, but called for reason and prudence. Work stoppages along with possible unrest and bloodshed were not in society’s best interests.<sup>667</sup> At the highest levels in the Church concern was growing. Wyszyński sent envoys to Gdańsk.<sup>668</sup> The MKS itself also remained keen for a peaceful resolution to events and for dialogue. At 11.50pm a communiqué was issued announcing they had sent a delegation to Jagielski to invite the government to talks at the yard. Jagielski had met them and provided acknowledgement of their request.<sup>669</sup>

### **23 August 1980 (Saturday)**

Following a proposal from the Provincial Governor Jerzy Kołodziejski a “working contact” was established at the Lenin Shipyard in preparation for talks between the MKS and the Jagielski Commission. At 2pm Kołodziejski met an MKS team consisting of Lech Bądkowski, Andrzej Gwiazda, Zdzisław Kobyliński and Bogdan Lis. The aim of the meeting, as Lech Wałęsa reassured delegates anxious at being cut out of the process, was simply ‘to sort out when, where and what we talk about.’<sup>670</sup> Observed by Klemens Gniech

---

<sup>666</sup> ‘From “Experience and the Future”’ (22 August 1980), *Solidarity Strike Bulletin No.4 (25 August 1980)*, in: O. MacDonald (ed.), *The Polish August: Documents from the Beginnings of the Polish Workers Rebellion. Gdańsk. August 1980* (Seattle, 1981), p.43.

<sup>667</sup> S. Persky, *At the Lenin Shipyard: Poland and the Rise of the Solidarity Trade Union* (Vancouver, 1981), p.101.

<sup>668</sup> L. Biernacki and A. Kazański, ‘NSZZ “Solidarność” Region Gdański’, in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989. Tom 3. Polska Północna* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.7-245 (p.25); J. Żaryn, “‘Błogosławię was i wasze poczynania’. Stefan Wyszyński wobec powstania NSZZ “Solidarność””, *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 4 (2001), pp.23-33 (p.24).

<sup>669</sup> ‘Ulotka “Strajkowego Biuletynu Informacyjnego”, Komunikat Prezydium MKS, Gdańsk, 22.08.1980’, in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, p.211.

<sup>670</sup> A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), p.36.

and Wałęsa, the meeting lasted two hours and offered Kołodziejski an opportunity to assess whether there was any hope of reaching an agreement with the workers. Although he was clearly intimidated by his reception outside the negotiating hall, Wałęsa made a positive impression on Kołodziejski from the start.<sup>671</sup> The talks were a success. A breakthrough had been made. Wałęsa made the announcement that the workers had waited ten days to hear: ‘A government delegation is coming to us at 8.00p.m. We will hammer it all out, point by point.’<sup>672</sup>

The significance of the breakthrough should not be underestimated. While as already noted, such negotiations were comparable only to those of February 1971, the most significant factor at Gdańsk was that the government had agreed to negotiate with a group of workers that, as Bogdan Borusewicz notes, they knew were headed by opposition activists with links to KOR.<sup>673</sup> Indeed the membership of the likes of Wałęsa, Gwiazda and Walentynowicz in the Free Trade Unions and their ties with opposition groups such as KOR was highlighted in a number of local security service reports.<sup>674</sup> Given the role of the opposition in the strike and the fact that the Soviet Union is known to have been concerned by the development of an opposition in Poland,<sup>675</sup> undertaking negotiations cannot have been a decision taken lightly. This raises the question of why the authorities did so. It seems unlikely that it was a decision triggered by one sole factor. Although not providing a clear answer, that day’s Politburo minutes indicate a few factors that may have shaped their thinking.

---

<sup>671</sup> J. Kołodziejski, ‘He is Most Certainly a Tribune of the People’, in: *The Book of Lech Wałęsa* (Harmondsworth, 1982), pp.146-152 (p.147).

<sup>672</sup> Kemp-Welch (ed.), p.38.

<sup>673</sup> E. Szczesiak, *Borusewicz. Jak Runął Mur* (Warsaw, 2005), p.132.

<sup>674</sup> See: ‘1980 sierpień 23, Gdańsk – Informacja na temat powiązań Wolnych Związków Zawodowych Wybrzeża z KSS “KOR”, RMP i KPN’ in, M. Kruk and R. Żydonik (with S. Cenckiewicz), *Kryptonim “Klan”: Służba Bezpieczeństwa wobec NSZZ “Solidarność” w Gdańsku*. Tom.1: Wrzesień 1980 – Wrzesień 1981 (Warsaw-Gdańsk 2010), pp.98-101; ‘1980 sierpień 23, Gdańsk – Charakterystyki członków Plenum Międzyzakładowego Komitetu Strajkowego w Gdańsku’ in, *Ibid.*, pp.102-109.

<sup>675</sup> See: P. Kostikow and B. Roliński, *Widziane z Kremla. Moskwa Gra o Polskę* (Warsaw, 1992), p.250.

If one considers the support of inter-factory strikes at Szczecin, Elbląg and Słupsk, as well as the survival of the strike at the Paris Commune Shipyard to be vital to the survival of the MKS at the Lenin Shipyard, then the failure of the Party to break any of these strikes since the start of the week may well have been a factor in forcing the authorities to negotiate with the MKS. At Politburo the situation was considered to be deteriorating in the first three locations, while following a meeting at the Paris Commune Shipyard the previous day the assessment was that ‘the strikers are exhausted but determined.’<sup>676</sup> If the Party could not fracture the solidarity of the strike either in Gdańsk or along the coast, they may have felt they had no choice but to negotiate with the Gdańsk MKS, especially with the prospect of the strike spreading both locally and nationally.

The economic cost of the strikes on the coast may also have been a factor in their thinking. Though such costs were not discussed at Politburo, a CIA ‘Situation Report’ makes clear the economic impact of the coastal strikes:

the port strikes cost Poland \$20 million daily in export earnings. Seventy ships waiting to be unloaded cost the port of Gdańsk \$1.5 million a day in penalty fees. Fifty-seven percent of coal exports – that account for one-fifth of Polish hard-currency exports – and 82 percent of grain imports come through the Baltic ports.

[...] Large oil tankers are waiting to be unloaded for the idle Gdansk refinery, which processes about 18 percent of total Polish output.

Moreover, all Polish shipbuilding – which accounts for 5 percent of Polish hard currency earnings – is now at a standstill. In Gdansk [...] the Lenin Shipyard is losing \$1 million a day in penalty fees for late deliveries.<sup>677</sup>

While it is not possible to vouch for the accuracy of the CIA’s figures, in all likelihood Poland’s economic situation was worse than the West believed. Although the Finance Minister Henryk Kisiel had displayed ‘considerable satisfaction’ at the completion of the

---

<sup>676</sup> ‘Protokół nr 23 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 23 Sierpnia 1980r.’, in: Z. Włodek (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a „Solidarność” 1980-1981* (London, 1992), p.51.

<sup>677</sup> CIA FOIA: ‘Situation Reports: Poland’, 23 August 1980, p.2.

Anglo-American loan 'on schedule' to the US,<sup>678</sup> comments by Babiuch at Politburo suggest that the deal was completed on the basis of misleading figures. In discussing the report to the Plenum, Babiuch noted with regard to Poland's debt that he had an understanding with Kisiel 'so that there was no divergence from the declarations for banks.'<sup>679</sup> This suggests that differing figures were available and that the most optimistic assessment had been provided to banks in order to secure their support. With the West German loan agreed but apparently not yet signed, they may have been keen to avoid any suggestions that the economic situation was worse than thought. Certainly Poland's external debt remained a major factor in shaping the Party's actions that summer. In many respects the entire Politburo was responsible for it. As Jaruzelski observed, having learnt of Poland's external debt levels from Radio Free Europe two years earlier, none of them had taken any action when told that it was a problem for the lenders rather than the Politburo.<sup>680</sup> Now it was something they had no choice but to deal with. Under the circumstances the economic importance of the coastal enterprises for the rest of Polish industry is unquestionable.

It is also clear from comments made by Kania that the supply of raw materials was reaching crisis point. If after ten days supplies of raw materials continued to suffer, then significant parts of Polish industry would be brought to a standstill.<sup>681</sup> There was also the social cost of shortages to consider with food shortages as problematic as those of raw materials.<sup>682</sup> With Poland's economic situation already dire, Kania's remarks suggest that the Party had only until early September to prevent further catastrophe. Given its economic importance to Poland, the coal mines would prove crucial if such catastrophe were to be

---

<sup>678</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Sitrep #6: Talks Continue: Some Dissident Arrestees Released', 23 August 1980. Document No.: WARSAW08425.

<sup>679</sup> 'Protokół nr 23 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 23 Sierpnia 1980r.', p.53.

<sup>680</sup> Ibid., 54-55.

<sup>681</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>682</sup> See: G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.96).

avoided. The Party was already facing problems in these regions, however. As a delegate from Silesia made clear at the Lenin Shipyard that day, they had already struck once and placed demands. They would strike again on 1 September 1980 if they had not been met. Silesia, he believed, would support Gdańsk.<sup>683</sup> It would be a fatal blow to Gierek if they did. As it was Gierek was already facing a serious loss of support within the Party. Regional Party leaders were sharply criticising the Central Committee and their failure to act. They were pushing for a Plenum at which major changes were expected to take place.<sup>684</sup> Much of the Politburo session was dedicated to preparations for this eventuality rather than the strikes.

Although an inability to break the coastal strikes through other means as well as the economic cost of their failure to do so may well have been the driving force behind the decision to negotiate with Gdańsk, the greatest threat to Gierek at this stage was arguably internal. Certainly the Soviet Union was showing no signs of pressuring Gierek into any form of action. That day a *Radio Moscow* broadcast simply noted the country's economic problems and the efforts of the Polish authorities to overcome them.<sup>685</sup> With no sense of threat conveyed in Soviet media reports, it seemed that Gierek was still being given time to act. Certainly there was no pressure for a crackdown. Even the CIA considered any potential crackdown as resulting from the actions of the strikers rather than the authorities. They noted that strikers on the Baltic coast 'are maintaining discipline within their ranks and are not making provocative moves that *would require* a government response.'<sup>686</sup> While the workers retained ultimate responsibility for the avoidance of a crackdown through their

---

<sup>683</sup> A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), p.37.

<sup>684</sup> 'Protokół nr 23 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 23 Sierpnia 1980r.', p.52.

<sup>685</sup> L. Sherwin, 'Soviet Media: August 19-26', in: *The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.237-240 (p.238).

<sup>686</sup> CIA FIOA: 'Situation Reports: Poland', 23 August 1980. Emphasis added.

conduct, if they ceased to adhere to non-violent means of resistance, it was possible that a crackdown may have been deemed necessary and therefore justified.

Demands as well as actions could be provocative, however. A petition to management at one enterprise in southern Poland, for example, included demands for the halving of Soviet armed forces stationed on Polish soil and the return of Poland's former eastern territories, which had been lost to the Soviet Union at Yalta.<sup>687</sup> Although news of these demands was detected by the local security services, they do not appear to have attracted any wider attention. Nonetheless these demands provide a clear reminder of the fact that the coastal workers and opposition activists associated with KOR were no more in charge of events nationally than the Party were. While such demands would not have been made in Gdańsk or in those strike centres influenced by the KOR milieu, the actions of workers without such links always ran the risk of provocation elsewhere. The Gdańsk MKS could not control the actions of workers throughout Poland. It was responsible for its own conduct and demands not those of others. It remained the main centre of strike activity however, and negotiations remained the only realistic option for the Party to pursue. While negotiations continued in Szczecin,<sup>688</sup> they were now set to begin in Gdańsk as well.

The Lenin Shipyard remained the focus of both domestic and international attention. It continued to gain in strength. From strikes in a handful of departments on 14 August it was now at the heart of a strike that represented 370 enterprises in the region.<sup>689</sup> It had been further strengthened by two developments that day. Firstly, a "group of experts" to advise the MKS had been created. Although they had only gone to the Lenin Shipyard to deliver

---

<sup>687</sup> A. Malik, *"Nie można oddzielić krzyża od ludzkiej pracy..." Komisja Robotnicza Hutników NSZZ "Solidarność" Huty im. Lenina (sierpień 1980 – grudzień 1981)* (Warsaw, 2013), pp.44-45; E. Zając, 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Małopolska (1980-1989), in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.6. Polska Południowa (Warsaw, 2010), pp.9-168 (p.19).

<sup>688</sup> See: A. Głowacki, (ed.), *Rozmowy Komisji Rządowej pod przewodnictwem Kazimierza Barcikowskiego z Międzyzakładowym Komitetem Strajkowym w Szczecinie w dniach 21-30 sierpnia 1980r. według transmisji radiowęzła Stoczni im. A. Warskiego w Szczecinie* (Szczecin, 1989), pp.85-103.

<sup>689</sup> Figures in: J. Skórzyński, *Zadra. Biografia Lecha Wałęsy* (Gdańsk, 2009), p.54.



the appeal of 64 Warsaw intellectuals to the MKS and the local authorities, Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Bronisław Geremek had been co-opted as “experts” by the MKS upon their arrival in the early hours of the morning.<sup>690</sup> They would advise, but not impose their views on the MKS. As Mazowiecki told MKS delegates, ‘we shall do our best to help you. But our role is purely advisory. All decisions will remain in the hands of your Presidium.’<sup>691</sup> It was a further development that distinguished Gdańsk from Szczecin. Within 24 hours the team of experts at Gdańsk would expand as further intellectuals including lawyers and economists arrived from Warsaw at the request of Mazowiecki and Geremek.<sup>692</sup> By contrast Jurczyk had just appointed two local lawyers for advice.<sup>693</sup>

Secondly, links with the opposition and the ability of the MKS to publicise itself had also been strengthened. In addition to the free press that had long been operating out of the Paris Commune Shipyard, a Free Press of the Lenin Shipyard had begun. Amongst those involved were key figures from the underground press that had developed in the late 1970s, including Konrad Bieliński and Mariusz Wilk. They published the first of fourteen editions of a strike bulletin “Solidarity” that day.<sup>694</sup> It was a development that helped to continue an important trend from earlier that summer: the use of domestic sources of information by the opposition to inform the West and through them the rest of Poland. The bulletins provided a useful source of information for Western journalists reporting on events and were often republished in part in the Western press. Through Radio Free Europe they were also transmitted back to Poland.<sup>695</sup> The continued support of different cross-sections of Polish

---

<sup>690</sup> See: T. Mazowiecki, ‘Co można było wywalczyć więcej?’, *Wolność i Solidarność*, 1 (2010), pp.74-83 (p.75-77); B. Geremek, ‘Między groźbą a nadzieją’, *Wolność i Solidarność*, 1 (2010), pp.84-95 (pp.85-86).

<sup>691</sup> Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity*, p.36.

<sup>692</sup> See: T. Kowalik, ‘Experts and the Working Group’ in, A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity*, (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.143-167; W. Kuczyński, *Burza nad Wisłą. Dziennik 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2002), pp.11-25.

<sup>693</sup> See: M. Szejnert and T. Zalewski, *Szczecin. Grudzień-Sierpień-Grudzień* (Warsaw, 1984), pp.140-141.

<sup>694</sup> See: J. Błazejowska, ‘Drukarnia – duża szpilka, która kłuje’, *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.35-40.

<sup>695</sup> P. Sowiński, ‘Komunikaty z pola walki’, *Solidarność i Wolność*, 1 (2010), pp.29-34 (p34).

society and continued international publicity meant that negotiations would take place in front of the eyes not only of Poland, but of the world.

That evening the first round of talks between the MKS and the Jagielski Commission got underway. Arriving by coach, the commission were given a hostile reception by the workers until Wałęsa intervened and led Jagielski to the hall.<sup>696</sup> In a small glass-walled room adjacent to the main hall, Wałęsa began the meeting. Broadcast through loudspeakers, he did so in front of three separate audiences: the delegates in the BHP Hall; the workers in the yard; and those outside the shipyard gates.<sup>697</sup> Sitting across from Jagielski, who only 24 hours earlier had tried to have Wałęsa, Gwiazda and Walentynowicz (all WZZ activists) removed from the MKS as a pre-condition for talks,<sup>698</sup> Wałęsa used his opening speech to highlight the scale, determination and conduct of the striking workers in the Tri-city region. Although hoping for a swift end to the strike, Wałęsa made clear that they would not be hurried: 'The serious matters we must settle require us to act prudently and without haste. We have been waiting for nine days and we have plenty of patience left.'<sup>699</sup> For his part, Jagielski made clear his desire for the talks to be held 'in a most straightforward constructive manner.' He wanted the key issues to be resolved 'together, mutually, to the best of our ability.' He also reminded Wałęsa that although they had been waiting for nine days, he had only been in Gdańsk for two.<sup>700</sup> He was trying to disassociate himself from the Pyka negotiations both in terms of substance and of style. Both sides presented themselves as seeking negotiations in good faith.

---

<sup>696</sup> L. Wałęsa, *A Path of Hope* (London, 1987), p.134; *Gdańsk 1980 – pictures from a strike*, (London, 1981), pp.50-51.

<sup>697</sup> T. Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-1982* (London, 1983), p.53.

<sup>698</sup> See: A. Kemp-Welch, 'Introduction', in: A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.1-35 (p.22).

<sup>699</sup> A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), p.39.

<sup>700</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40.

In spite of apparent mutual good intentions, there was little real negotiation at the first meeting, however. Jagielski simply presented the government's views on the demands. As might be expected, his response to the first demand for 'free trade unions, independent of the Party and employers' was not promising. Employing a protest similar to those used by Gniech during the initial strike negotiations, Jagielski sought to deflect responsibility for decisions. He declared: 'I am speaking as a representative of the government on a question which does not lie within its competence. This matter concerns the trade union organisation. We cannot dictate its statute nor any of its functions.'<sup>701</sup> Responsibility for the demand lay elsewhere. He did try to win the workers over and encourage them to settle for less by expressing his own views on the matter, however. Acknowledging their unhappiness with the existing unions and accepting that trade union laws and structures in Poland required change, he presented possibilities that fell far short of what the MKS was demanding: a new trade union law; a new trade union structure or the swift replenishment of the existing one; the appointment of those on the current strike committees to positions within the existing structures; 'regular' discussions between the authorities and the official unions that were 'permanent and continuous: a dialogue between partners.' While Jagielski believed that such options left the path clear for further reform to take place, Wałęsa made clear that though they would discuss the matter further, it was not what they were after. They would move on to the second demand.<sup>702</sup> This was a tactic employed by Wałęsa whenever the meeting started to become too fractious or it felt as though talks were stalling.

The issue of political prisoners, whose roots lay in the post-1976 actions of KOR, proved to be one of the most contentious issues discussed. Jagielski offered assurances based on information provided by the Minister of Justice himself that 'there are no political prisoners in Poland' by which Jagielski meant 'persons convicted for their political

---

<sup>701</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>702</sup> Ibid., 41-42.

opinions.<sup>703</sup> It was a definition that did not include the detentions of Kuroń, Michnik and Lityński. By now the subject of protests by Amnesty International, they remained under arrest.<sup>704</sup> It was also a definition disputed by Wałęsa. Having attended the trials of those prisoners under discussion, he declared ‘I can say straight out because I am a worker and don’t mince words that they were rigged.’<sup>705</sup> It was a direct and unprecedented challenge to Jagielski, his straight-talking approach entirely at odds with the language of obfuscation used by those in power. Andrzej Gwiazda also responded by questioning whether it was possible given previous official falsehoods concerning the Polish economy (‘despite some minor difficulties, everything was running smoothly’), that the judicial system suffered from the same kind of problems.<sup>706</sup> It was an intelligently argued and dignified challenge to the authorities. It arguably made all the greater impact because of it. When he concluded his argument with a call for the re-examination of cases over which the public had questions ‘if only to clear the name of the judicial apparatus’, it was met with applause and by Jagielski noting down the cases under discussion.<sup>707</sup>

Although they differed in approach, the responses of Wałęsa and Gwiazda typified the fact that the strike was as much a struggle over language as it was over free trade unions. As Ryszard Kapuściński reported from the Lenin Shipyard, in Gdańsk ‘a battle about language took place as well, about our Polish language, about its integrity and clarity, about returning to words an unambiguous sense.’<sup>708</sup> As Gwiazda later stated to Jagielski in a dispute over the lack of official press coverage for the MKS,

I second your proposal that we speak the truth. But the truth must be the whole truth. So let’s speak the whole truth: what we are demanding, why

---

<sup>703</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>704</sup> See: G. Majchrzak, ‘Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku’, *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.99).

<sup>705</sup> Kemp-Welch (ed.), 48.

<sup>706</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>707</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>708</sup> R. Kapuściński, ‘Notatki z wybrzeża’ in, G. Pomian (ed.), *Polska “Solidarności”* (Paris, 1982), pp.75-79 (p.77).

we are on strike, what you and the Government Commission propose. We can report later what we have agreed.<sup>709</sup>

Nowhere did this struggle for truth become clearer than in discussions with the Central Committee Secretary Zbigniew Zieliński concerning an important pre-condition that still needed to be met: the restoration of telephone connections. While the connection with Szczecin had been restored, the authorities had not updated them as they had promised to on the reconnection with Warsaw. It still was not working.<sup>710</sup> In a lengthy discussion on the subject, Zieliński announced:

A hurricane passed through Warsaw last night, destroying buildings in large areas of the city. I was in Warsaw at the time, to be exact just after the hurricane. You can see whole streets – such as the avenue from the airport – where huge trees, huge limes, beautiful limes are completely demolished along half the route. The central telephone exchange was completely demolished. So I don't think telephone links with Warsaw will be restored today – even though I haven't been in Warsaw today – and I don't know how advanced the repair work is, or whether it can be finished tomorrow.<sup>711</sup>

While as with so many lies Zieliński's statement may have had the smallest kernel of truth at its heart,<sup>712</sup> coming at a time in which the authorities were already struggling for credibility with the workers, it was a statement that left not only Jagielski unimpressed, but did little to aid the government's position in the eyes of the workers.<sup>713</sup> The workers' response illustrates the difference in attitudes towards language and truth between the workers and the authorities at this time:

**Pieńkowska:** May I point out that telephone links with Warsaw were cut off last Friday, a week ago. Nothing was said then of any hurricane.

---

<sup>709</sup> Kemp-Welch (ed.), p.50.

<sup>710</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>711</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>712</sup> In relation to observations by the defence attaché, a U.S. Embassy telegram noted 'Considerable movement of trucks and personnel [...] cleaning up and removing fallen trees which resul[t]ed from very high winds on Thursday.' See: DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Sitrep #7: Jagielski meets inter-factory strike committee', 24 August 1980. Document No.: 80WARSAW008426.

<sup>713</sup> See: T. Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-1982* (London, 1983), p.54; L. Goodwyn, *Breaking the Barrier: The Rise of Solidarity in Poland* (New York and Oxford, 1991), p.19.

**Zbigniew Lis:** I would like to ask the Deputy Premier why today's press and television made no mention of this hurricane. We have heard nothing about it. [...]

**Gwiazda:** I would like to inform the Minister that in modern telephone exchanges there is no need to push a block into the socket of every subscriber. Disconnection is done simply by transmitting appropriate information to the register from the centre, or by removing it. It really just amounts to issuing an instruction.<sup>714</sup>

In perhaps of one of the simplest expressions of Václav Havel's notion of 'living within the truth' they adopted a dignified response to the lies of the Party and confronted them with the truth.<sup>715</sup> They refused to be taken for fools.

Although the rest of the meeting went more smoothly with Jagielski presenting the government's position on each of the remaining twenty-one points, the commission still struggled for credibility in the eyes of the workers. This was a point made clear when in relation to a demand on health care Jagielski paused to discuss his personal experiences. In addition to discussing his heart attack in the late 1970s, he placed his life within the context of recent Polish history. He recalled the experiences of him and his family during the Nazi occupation in World War Two, including that he was 'beat[en] day and night, three times daily with a whip and a loaded stick. I can show you all my scars.'<sup>716</sup> It was, as Neal Ascherson argues, an attempt by Jagielski to show 'that he was as good a Pole as anyone in the room.'<sup>717</sup> A later report by TW "Rybak", an SB informant reporting from the shipyards at Gdańsk and Gdynia since at least 22 August 1980, suggests that for some workers this was just one aspect of Jagielski's appearance with which they were unimpressed. Talking to workers as they were leaving the hall, they expressed embarrassment at Jagielski's offer to

---

<sup>714</sup> Kemp-Welch (ed.), p.54.

<sup>715</sup> V. Havel, 'The Power of the Powerless' in, J. Keane (ed.), *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens against the state in central-eastern Europe* (Abingdon, 2010), pp.23-96. As Havel notes (p.65), 'Most of these expressions remain elementary revolts against manipulation: you simply straighten your backbone and live in greater dignity as an individual.'

<sup>716</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>717</sup> N. Ascherson, *The Polish August* (Harmondsworth, 1981), p.153.

show them his scars.<sup>718</sup> Credibility remained an issue. It remained a problem for the authorities as a whole. The workers did not believe they could resolve the problems facing the country. As Wałęsa stated, 'you did not explain why we keep returning to the same place. This time it took ten years. I expect that in another ten we will be back again where we are now.'<sup>719</sup> The workers did not believe the Party. While the negotiations marked a significant breakthrough for the MKS therefore, they had not resolved the Party's crisis of trust.

### **24 August 1980 (Sunday)**

Eight weeks since the first strikes erupted in response to meat price increases, Poland found itself in the midst of the most significant strike wave in its history. Over the course of the summer 640 000 workers at 533 enterprises in 49 administrative regions had gone on strike. The situation showed no signs of abating. For the Polish leadership, as Stanisław Kania made clear at the Party's IV Plenum, there was a 'real threat that the country may stand in the face of national catastrophe.' The Baltic coast remained the main focus of activity. According to Kania, in the Tri-city area 130 000 workers at 140 enterprises, including the shipyards, ports and the oil refinery were on strike. In Szczecin strikes involved 60 000 workers at 80 enterprises, again including shipyards and the port. Some 25 000 workers at 40 enterprises were also striking in Elbląg and Słupsk. Although no figures were provided by Kania, he made clear that the impact of these strikes on the national economy was severe.<sup>720</sup>

---

<sup>718</sup> See: S. Cenckiewicz, 'TW "Rybak" – Agent Artysta: Trójmiejski Sierpień '80 w raportach konfidenta SB' in, S. Cenckiewicz, *Śladami Bezpieki i Partii. Studia-Zródła-Publicystyka* (Łomianki, 2009), pp.384-419 (p.397).

<sup>719</sup> Kemp-Welch (ed.), p.66.

<sup>720</sup> AAN, Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza Komitet Centralny w Warszawie, III/127, 'Stenogram /nieautoryzowany/ IV plenarnego posiedzenia Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej w dniu 24 sierpnia 1980 roku', pp.2-5.

Three particular strikes appear to have been causing the Polish leadership problems at this time: the ports, transport, and Gdańsk. In economic terms the port strikes were crucial. Although the naval port, along with the Soviet Union and East Germany, were helping to unload goods, as Kania's account of events on the coast made clear many were not in operation. Strikes on public transport were also considered a problem in this region.<sup>721</sup> It was these strikes that attracted calls for particularly strong action from some. Along with a call for the army to get public transport working again so that citizens could get to school and work, Wrocław's First Secretary called for firm action against the ports. He cited the recent French experience of employing the navy to break strikes that were disrupting oil supplies and threatening the national economy as an example that could be followed.<sup>722</sup> Despite the economic significance of the ports as well as the use of such methods in the West, it was not a suggestion that the Politburo took on board at this stage. Nor were they necessarily under any external pressure to do so.

Although reports must have been filed on Polish events throughout the summer, from papers smuggled from the KGB archives in the early 1990s by Vasili Mitrokhin it is known for certain that Moscow was paying attention. That day the Soviet ambassador informed Moscow of the Jagielski negotiations.<sup>723</sup> Despite claims by Gierek to the contrary, there appears to have been no pressure for the Poles to take any action against the strikes, however.<sup>724</sup> Nonetheless Moscow's concerns about the strike in Gdańsk were likely to have

---

<sup>721</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>722</sup> Ibid., 110-111. On the French port strikes, see: 'French Threaten Naval Action to End Blockade', *The Times*, 21 August 1980; 'French Navy Breaks Blockade at Oil Port', *The Times*, 22 August 1980; 'French Leaders Back Navy's Tough Tactics', *The Guardian*, 28 August 1980.

<sup>723</sup> C. Andrew and V. Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West* (London, 1999), p.671.

<sup>724</sup> Gierek claims that he was telephoned by Brezhnev prior to the IV Plenum. According to Gierek's account of the exchange, Brezhnev viewed the situation as counter-revolutionary and pressed to take charge of the situation. Soviet 'help' was offered. Gierek denied that there was a problem. While Gierek's denial that there was a problem certainly fits in with statements made by Brezhnev about his meeting with Gierek in Crimea that summer (discussed earlier), there are no sources to support any other aspects of Gierek's claim, including that a phone call was actually made. In addition to this, unlike all other contacts with Brezhnev in



been similar to those of Warsaw. Alongside the determination and demands of the workers on the coast, a major point of concern appears to have remained the involvement of established opposition activists from across Poland in the Tri-city strikes.<sup>725</sup> It was a factor that distinguished the Lenin Shipyard strike from all others. As Kazimierz Barcikowski made clear the involvement of 'anti-socialist elements' was not an accusation that could be levelled at Szczecin.<sup>726</sup> Indeed, so far as Kania could tell, most workers in the Szczecin MKS were actually Party members.<sup>727</sup> Jagielski's report to the Politburo will only have confirmed perceptions of Gdańsk as an altogether different problem. He described the MKS' 'strategy' as being 'to prolong the strike at all costs and to win.' He went on to describe it as 'Difficult to lead talks, we are degraded, humiliated.'<sup>728</sup> It appears to have made little difference to the Party's strategy for dealing with the strikes, however.

Perhaps because of the admission at the Plenum that the Party was at fault for the severe crisis facing Poland, as well as the fact that despite opposition activity in Gdańsk the strikes were broadly recognised as being genuinely working-class protests, the differences between Szczecin and Gdańsk appear to have made little difference to the actions taken by the Party leadership: changes in the leadership team and the announcement of possible new elections to the official trade unions. The leadership changes amounted to 'one of the most complete leadership changes in the post-war history of eastern Europe'.<sup>729</sup> They made no difference to the workers, however. Interior Ministry reports indicate that the coastal

---

August 1980 it was not discussed at Politburo at any time that month. This suggests that either the conversation was a figment of Gierek's imagination or that he was confusing the IV Plenum (24 August 1980) with the V Plenum (30 August 1980) by which time it is known that Soviet interest was mounting. There is no evidence at present to suggest that this was case, however. Gierek's claims are made in J. Rolicki, *Edward Gierek: Przerwana Dekada* (Warsaw, 1990), p.168.

<sup>725</sup> See: 'Stenogram /nieautoryzowany/ IV plenarnego posiedzenia Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej w dniu 24 sierpnia 1980 roku', p.2.

<sup>726</sup> AAN, PZPR KC Biuro Polityczne, V/159, 214-220, 'Protokół Biura Politycznego KC PZPR w dniu 24 sierpnia 1980r.', p.1.

<sup>727</sup> 'Stenogram /nieautoryzowany/ IV plenarnego posiedzenia Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej w dniu 24 sierpnia 1980 roku', p.9.

<sup>728</sup> 'Protokół Biura Politycznego KC PZPR w dniu 24 sierpnia 1980r.', pp.2-3.

<sup>729</sup> N. Ascherson, *The Polish August* (Harmondsworth, 1981), p.154.

workers were of the opinion that the changes would not help to eliminate the current crisis.<sup>730</sup> Even in Poznań where the changes had at first been met with responses ‘ranging from happiness to inebriated euphoria’, enthusiasm proved to be short lived as people began to question whether they would bring genuine change or more of the same.<sup>731</sup> The changes were arguably more significant for Gierek. They significantly undermined his power base within the leadership team. Critics such as Stefan Olszowski returned to the Politburo, while a number of those removed from office, including Babiuch, were amongst those with the strongest ties to Gierek.<sup>732</sup> Noticeably all of those dismissed from office had also been involved in the failed efforts to halt the strikes without negotiating with the MKS.<sup>733</sup> Not all of those dismissed were paying the price for long-term failures in leadership.

One leadership change in particular was of great importance to Poland at this time: that of Prime Minister. Due to the Prime Minister’s role in formulating policy on social and economic matters, at a time of deep social and economic crisis it was arguably one of the most important positions in the country. While Minister of Defence Wojciech Jaruzelski was the favoured candidate for the post, as in February he declined. In addition to the focus of the Prime Minister’s job on social and economic concerns unsuited to a soldier, there was the obvious risk of the appointment of a military man to the post at a time of great social unrest being misconstrued.<sup>734</sup> The post instead went to Józef Pińkowski. It is indicative of the scale of the problems facing Poland at this time, particularly in the economy, that despite his economic and political experience, Pińkowski considered his appointment as Prime

---

<sup>730</sup> G. Majchrzak, ‘Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku’, *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.107).

<sup>731</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, ‘Sitrep #8: Official Says Changes Will Help Settle Unrest’, 25 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008452.

<sup>732</sup> A. Friszke, *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980-1981* (Kraków, 2014), p.40.

<sup>733</sup> A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), p.187 (n.1).

<sup>734</sup> J. Pińkowski, 1980. *Horyzont przed Burzą* (Warsaw, 1993), p.44.

Minister ‘a certain political suicide’ amongst other things.<sup>735</sup> The economy he was inheriting control over was in serious trouble and had required reform for years.

As the Polish Finance Minister stated on Polish television that night the national debt stood at \$20 billion (the equivalent of 24 months’ foreign exports and based on Olszowski’s January 1980 report an underestimation of some \$4 billion). Although exports would be increased in order to pay off these debts, the country required new loans for the maintenance of living standards as well as for essential imports. This was a significant shift. As a British report concluded, ‘It seems to imply no early reduction in Poland’s indebtedness, which continuation of the strikes may intensify in any case.’ However, it may have been ‘a price the leadership intend to pay to prevent further social unrest.’ The significance of the debt-credit axis was also made clear in the speech. While they could generally obtain new credits, they had to repay their debts on schedule in order to maintain investor confidence.<sup>736</sup> Given the need for increased exports to repay these debts, strikes would only damage Poland’s reliability in this regard. In combination with the economic demands, strikes would only add to the difficulties facing Pińkowski as he resolved these problems.

While Gierek’s personal power base and the economic basis of society crumbled, support for the coastal workers grew. The celebration of Mass once again demonstrated local support for the coastal workers. In Gdańsk Mass attracted over five thousand celebrants with the majority of them outside the shipyard’s gates.<sup>737</sup> In Szczecin Mass attracted similarly large crowds despite the fact that Father Jerzy Sosna was prevented from

---

<sup>735</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

<sup>736</sup> TNA: PRO: PREM 19/331: Telegram from Warsaw to Department of Trade, ‘Poland’s Hard Currency Liabilities’, 27 August 1980.

<sup>737</sup> Friszke, p.43. For (undated) photographs of mass during the strike, see: E. Ciołek, *Solidarność sierpień 1980 – sierpień 1989/August 1980 – August 1989* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.64-67; *Gdańsk 1980 – pictures from a strike*, (London, 1981), pp.34-41; *Solidarność. Dekada Wolności*. On-line wystawa fotografii z lat 1979-89. <<http://www.bialo-czerwona.pl/solidarnosc/>> [August 2015]

delivering a sermon to the workers by Bishop Majdański.<sup>738</sup> In Gdańsk Pope John Paul II's letter to Cardinal Wyszyński was also published in that day's strike bulletin, with the Pope providing a major source of 'spiritual support' throughout the strike.<sup>739</sup> Although he did not actively express support for the strikes, the Pope offered assurances to the Polish Primate 'that in the course of these recent difficult days I am particularly close.' He prayed that the Polish Episcopate under Wyszyński's guidance could assist Poland at this time 'in its difficult struggle for one's daily bread, for social justice and protection of its inviolable right to its own life and development.'<sup>740</sup> It was a statement very much in keeping with the Polish Episcopate's attitude towards events in Poland, but with the added importance of being sent from the Vatican.

The Western media, also mentioned in the Pope's letter, continued to watch as well. Newspaper clippings from around the world were pinned to a notice board in the yard.<sup>741</sup> They provided clear evidence that the workers were not alone. Further evidence of this came from a number of other sources: the Szczecin MKS; the "group of experts"; and the countryside. The previous day Kazimierz Barcikowski had agreed to allow the Szczecin MKS to send delegates to Gdańsk, along with a representative of the government commission, so that they could coordinate their position on point one: the demand for free trade unions.<sup>742</sup> It was an important moment in the strike and one that bore fruit once the delegates arrived. Alongside a decision to send Gdańsk delegates in the opposite direction

<sup>738</sup> R. Kościelny and A. Kubaj, 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Pomorze Zachodnie', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989. Tom 3. Polska Północna* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.249-354 (p.256).

<sup>739</sup> See: L. Olejnik, 'Polski Sierpień 1980 roku. Przyczyny, przebieg Wydarzeń i ich skutki', in: S. Pilarski and D. Rogut (eds.), *Czas Nadziei: NSZZ "Solidarność" w Bełchatowie na tle sytuacji w kraju i regionie* (Łódź, 2011), pp.13-35 (p.33).

<sup>740</sup> P. Raina, *Kardynał Wyszyński. Czasy Prymasowskie 1980* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.60-61.

<sup>741</sup> See: *Robotnicy '80* (dir. A. Chodakowski et al: Poland, 1980); E. Ciołek, *Solidarność sierpień 1980 – sierpień 1989/August 1980 – August 1989* (Warsaw, 2010), p.55; *Gdańsk 1980 – Pictures from a strike* (London, 1981), p.46.

<sup>742</sup> See: A. Głowacki (ed.), *Rozmowy Komisji Rządowej pod przewodnictwem Kazimierza Barcikowskiego z Międzyzakładowym Komitetem Strajkowym w Szczecinie w dniach 21-30 sierpnia 1980r. według transmisji radiowęzła Stocznia im. A. Warskiego w Szczecinie* (Szczecin, 1989), pp.100-102; K. Barcikowski, *U szczytów władzy* (Warsaw, 1998), pp.172-173.

and the establishment of telephone contact between both strikes, the most significant development was an agreement that neither MKS would end the strike without an agreement for the establishment of free trade unions and a guarantee of safety for those on strike being reached.<sup>743</sup> This increased the likelihood of the workers achieving their main aim. If one group of workers succeeded in gaining free trade unions, it would be more difficult to deny the other group the same. However, it also carried a risk. If one strike could be forced into accepting a lesser agreement and ending the strike, the other could also be undermined. No agreement on the wording of point one appears to have been reached. This remained open for discussion.

Further support came with the arrival of more experts. Despite being detained at the airport in Warsaw, where an officer from the Interior Ministry had attributed their detention to news that their flight was being utilised by people hostile to the state, they arrived safely.<sup>744</sup> It seems that the security services had hoped not only to intimidate the experts, but also for them to help bring the situation under control. According to Tadeusz Kowalik, the MSW colonel wished them ‘useful work for the good of the “socialist state.”’<sup>745</sup> They may have hoped that the experts would exert a moderating influence on the workers. Unlike intellectuals from the KOR milieu, these experts were associated with less radical independent initiatives outside the Party framework: the Society for Academic Courses (TKN), the Club of Catholic Intellectuals (KIK) and the Experience and Future (DiP). While it is true that the experts felt the demand for free trade unions could not be achieved, they did not interfere with the workers’ efforts to achieve this. They also made clear that despite their initial stance as mediators, they were very much on the side of the workers. Although

---

<sup>743</sup> M. Stefaniak, ‘Sierpień ’80 w Województwie Szczecińskim – Przebieg i Konsekwencje’, *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, Nr 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień-październik 2010, pp.57-64 (p.62); J. Holzer, “Solidarność” 1980-1981: *Geneza i Historia* (Warsaw, 1983), p.66.

<sup>744</sup> W. Kuczyński, *Burza nad Wisłą. Dziennik 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2002), pp.44-45.

<sup>745</sup> T. Kowalik, ‘Experts and the Working Group’, in: A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.143-167 (p.144).

they were fish out of water at an industrial enterprise such as the Lenin Shipyard and were unused to dealing with workers, from the moment they arrived the experts were loyal to the MKS.<sup>746</sup> Along with further experts from Warsaw and Gdańsk who came to the yard independently to aid the strike, they significantly bolstered the workers' position.<sup>747</sup> With discussions also beginning to take place in agricultural areas, which largely remained calm throughout August, concerning demands and support for Gdańsk,<sup>748</sup> the MKS now enjoyed support from a broad cross section of Polish society. As the Party and the economy weakened, the workers gained in strength.

It was in the midst of these shifting dynamics that the struggle over trade unions became the major point of confrontation. The main problem for the Party, as Jan Szydlak had announced in his last Politburo session as head of the official trade unions, was that the Party's position on trade unions was in direct opposition to international laws they had signed on the matter.<sup>749</sup> The workers only wanted what they were entitled to on paper. The Party did not wish to give it to them, however. This was made clear in a speech by Gierek televised nationally that evening. Alongside promises of wide-ranging economic reforms and admissions of mistakes, Gierek made promises regarding changes to the official trade unions similar to those presented by Jagielski at Gdańsk. New elections were to be considered wherever workers felt necessary and by implication representatives drawn from

---

<sup>746</sup> For a useful account of the interaction between the workers and the experts, see: *Gwiazdozbiór w "Solidarności": Joanna i Andrzej Gwiazdowie w rozmowie z Remigiuszem Okraską* (Łódź, 2009), p.160.

<sup>747</sup> The "group of experts" was chaired by Tadeusz Mazowiecki. Its members included Bronisław Geremek, Tadeusz Kowalik, Waldemar Kuczyński, Andrzej Wielowiejski and Bogdan Cywinski. Although historians were included in this group, law and economics were particularly well represented. Jadwiga Staniszkis (sociologist), who had travelled to the yard independently, later withdrew from the group. The lawyer Leszek Kubicki, who had travelled to the yard with Kowalik and the others, also withdrew once he discovered that the group would not be acting as mediators in the dispute. Jan Strzelecki (author and sociologist), Jerzy Stembrowicz (Professor of Law at the University of Warsaw), Jan Olszewski (advocate) and Andrzej Stelmachowski (Professor of Law at the University of Warsaw) also later advised the workers. Two local lawyers, Jacek Taylor and Lech Kaczyński also became involved.

<sup>748</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.106).

<sup>749</sup> AAN, PZPR KC Biuro Polityczne, V/159, 214-220, 'Protokół Biura Politycznego KC PZPR w dniu 24 sierpnia 1980r.', p.2.

strike committees could continue to represent workers within the framework of the official unions.<sup>750</sup> Essentially it was a similar deal to that gained by workers at Lublin only now being offered nationally. It was unlikely to appease the coastal workers, however. Firstly, while the Party recognised genuine problems with the official unions and the need for workers to have an effective means through which to express their discontent, as with the similar agreement reached in Szczecin in 1971, any influence of newly elected representatives was unlikely to be permanent. It was also unlikely to be available to those associated with the opposition.<sup>751</sup> Secondly, it fell far short of the demand for ‘free trade unions independent from the Party and employers’ made by workers at Gdańsk and guaranteed by ILO covenants signed by the Party. This was unlikely to be granted. As the sole representative of the working class in Poland, the workers’ state could not concede to such a demand without jeopardising their own position of power. As Gierek made clear in his televised speech, demands threatening the basis of the Polish state could not be agreed to.<sup>752</sup> Socialism and the leading role of the Party had to be preserved. Poland’s ties with the Soviet Union must also not be threatened.

## **25 August 1980 (Monday)**

As the military build-up for the forthcoming Warsaw Pact exercise began to take place in East Germany and Brezhnev returned from holiday, Soviet and Eastern bloc media sent out different messages. In East Germany where in an unusual step the previous day Gierek’s speech had been broadcast live to the nation on television, Poland was relegated to brief coverage on the inside pages of *Neues Deutschland* while radio and television remained

---

<sup>750</sup> See: K. Ruane, *The Polish Challenge* (London, 1982), pp.20-21.

<sup>751</sup> Jaruzelski’s remarks at Politburo provide an example of thinking along these lines. See: ‘Protokół Biura Politycznego KC PZPR w dniu 24 sierpnia 1980r.’, p.4.

<sup>752</sup> See: Ruane, p.21.

quiet.<sup>753</sup> In the Soviet Union support seems to have been indicated for Gierek. However, other than in a comprehensive TASS summary, any sections of his speech concerning demands that may have had internal ramifications for Moscow, such as those regarding trade unions, were restricted. The Western response to Polish events meanwhile was heavily attacked in a TASS political commentary by Yuri Kornilov.<sup>754</sup> This suggests three main elements to Soviet concerns at this time: the stabilization of the regime in Poland; the prevention of spillover; and the prevention of Western interference in its sphere of influence and attacks on the reputation of the Communist system. While regarding the latter the most vocal actor in the West was the media rather than politicians and diplomats, based on East German security service reports there appear to have been few signs of spillover in spite of public interest in events.<sup>755</sup> The first point was arguably the most difficult to secure. While there was nothing to trigger Western alarm in the Soviet media, behind the scenes measures regarding Polish events began to be put in place. A Politburo level special commission on Poland known informally as the ‘Suslov commission’ was formed.

Chaired by Moscow’s chief ideologue Mikhail Suslov and featuring a number of other senior Politburo and Secretariat members, the main aim of the commission was to follow Polish events closely and inform the Politburo on their progress. They were also tasked with informing the Politburo ‘about possible measures on our part.’<sup>756</sup> Although this

---

<sup>753</sup> P. Moore, ‘Warsaw Pact Press: August 25’, in: *The Strikes in Poland*, pp.263-264 (p.264).

<sup>754</sup> L. Sherwin, ‘Soviet Media: August 19-26’, in: *The Strikes in Poland*, pp.237-240 (pp.238-240).

<sup>755</sup> ‘Trzecie sprawozdanie o reakcjach ludności NRD w związku z sytuacją w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej’, in: W. Borodziej and J. Kochanowski (eds.), *PRL w oczach Stasi*. Tom.II. Dokumenty z lat 1980-1983 (Warsaw, 1996), pp.32-37. Although it is possible that it was reported elsewhere, there is no mention in the report of an incident mentioned in a U.S. Embassy telegram, which reportedly saw an unexpected protest march in the centre of East Berlin in support of the workers on 23 August: ‘Fifty or more youths were marching and waving Polish flags and banners with [the] Polish eagle.’ See: DOS FOIA: Telegram from Berlin to State, ‘East German Reaction to Polish Events: IV’, 25 August 1980. Document No. 80BERLIN003876.

<sup>756</sup> See: ‘CPSU CC Politburo Decision Setting Up Suslov Commission, 25 August 1980’, in: M. Kramer, ‘Poland, 1980-1981. Soviet Policy During the Polish Crisis’, *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin*, Issue 5, (Spring 1995), pp.1 and 116-139 (p.116); ‘Document No.2: Extract from Protocol No.210 of CPSU CC Politburo Meeting, 25 August 1980’, in: A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (eds.), *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History* (Budapest and New York, 2007), p.50. The main



represented an escalation in Soviet concern, it was not out of keeping with the standard Soviet response to such situations. For example, as Mark Kramer has noted, prior to the invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 such a commission had also been established.<sup>757</sup> Media coverage on the day of its formation indicates that there was no immediate threat to Poland from its formation, however. Nor is it likely that the Polish leadership knew of its existence at this stage.<sup>758</sup> Jaruzelski, for example, notes the formation of the Suslov commission only in September 1980.<sup>759</sup> Indeed the Soviets appear to have been taking great care to do nothing to inflame the crisis in either Poland or in détente at this time. According to one Polish official cited in a U.S. embassy telegram sent from Warsaw the previous day

the idea of Soviet military activity is so sensitive that Soviet troops in Poland have been confined to barracks, and [...] troops scheduled to participate in [the] forthcoming exercise in [the] GDR will travel to [the] GDR through Czechoslovakia to avoid transiting [through] Poland.<sup>760</sup>

This suggests that even before the authorisation of military preparations, the Soviet Union was already well aware of the potential risks of any military movements at this time. They could not act in a way that might inflame the internal situation in Poland. Nor could they fail to take their own domestic and international interests into account: an internal solution was arguably favourable at this stage. This is not to say that they would not pressure the Polish leadership, however. Overnight two Soviet naval vessels would appear briefly near Gdańsk

---

figures in the line-up of the commission were: M.A. Suslov (Chairman, Secretariat and Politburo), A.A. Gromyko (foreign minister and Politburo member), Y.V. Andropov (head of the KGB and Politburo member), Dmitrii Ustinov (defence minister and Politburo member), and Konstantin Chernenko (Secretariat and Politburo member; head of the CPSU Central Committee General Department). Oleg Rakhmanin, author of the first Soviet article on Poland that summer, was also included.

<sup>757</sup> M. Kramer, *Soviet Deliberations during the Polish Crisis, 1980-1981*, Cold War International History Project Special Working Paper No. 1 (Washington DC, 1999), p.10.

<sup>758</sup> A. Paczkowski, 'Playground of Superpowers, Poland 1980-1989: A View From Inside', in: O Njølstad (ed.), *The Last Decade of the Cold War: From Conflict Escalation to Conflict Transformation* (London and New York, 2004), pp.372-401 (p.374).

<sup>759</sup> W. Jaruzelski, *Stan wojenny dlaczego...* (Warsaw, 1992), p.124.

<sup>760</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Sitrep #7: Jagielski Meets Inter-Factory Strike Committee', 24 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008426.

in an apparent signal to the leadership.<sup>761</sup> Moscow had various means of applying pressure to Warsaw.

Steps toward an internal solution of events on the coast were outlined during a meeting of the Secretariat meanwhile. While the study of demands for wage increases and a calculation of their costs were agreed upon, a number of tactics for dealing with the coastal strikes themselves were also outlined. These included highlighting divisions within the workforce by organising a secret ballot concerning whether work should be resumed or the strike continued. Any refusal to undertake such a ballot by the workers was to be exploited for the purposes of propaganda as 'undemocratic'. Even a favourable vote for the continuation of the strike could be exploited according to these plans, by making use of the figures to show how many workers wished to undertake work, for example. Ideally they would continue talks while the workers resumed work, so that the ports and shipyards began to function.<sup>762</sup> Although many of these plans were ultimately not implemented, they demonstrate two important facts about the Party's response to the strikes. Firstly, vital economic structures were given prime importance in tactics for managing the strikes on the coast. Secondly, propaganda was favoured over force as a means of resolving the confrontation. This suggests not only a continued desire for a resolution not involving force, but also that it was the economic importance of the enterprise rather than the scale of the strikes that was most important.

Despite their desire for a peaceful settlement, it was made plain that new trade union structures would not be tolerated as a means by which striking enterprises could be got back to work. Reform was possible, but not efforts to establish a legally-sanctioned 'opposition' group. Noticeably, such concerns came second to those concerning economic matters. These

---

<sup>761</sup> A. Paczkowski, *Droga do "mniejszego zła". Strategia i taktyka obozu władzy lipiec 1980 – styczeń 1982* (Kraków, 2002), p.52.

<sup>762</sup> AAN, PZPR KC w Warszawie Sekretariat, VII/51, 269-274, 'Protokół Nr 10 z posiedzenia Sekretariatu KC PZPR z dnia 25.VIII.1980 roku', pp.3-4.

ranged from improved meat supplies and the reintroduction of a voucher system for sugar to approaching the Soviet Union and Eastern bloc states for aid in the provision of supplies.<sup>763</sup> With the economy apparently remaining a priority over the strikes, the Polish authorities needed not only to contain and extinguish the strike wave, but also to gain as much economic support from their friends and partners as possible. A significant development that day therefore appears to have been the announcement that the terms of the DM 1.2 billion (\$668 million) West German bank loan to Poland had finally been agreed.<sup>764</sup> While this represented a positive development for the Polish side, not everything with regards to the loan was positive. Not only had the Poles secured DM 0.3 million (\$168 million) less in loans than had been expected, the terms of the loan had also deteriorated since negotiations the previous week.<sup>765</sup> It is not clear whether the prospect of a further deterioration in loan terms remained possible if the social and economic situation in Poland worsened, but it may have been a risk. The loan agreement remained unsigned.

A further deterioration in the international context may also have presented a threat. The new Polish team provided assurances to Western embassies that there would be no shift in Poland's foreign policy following the Plenum. As the Polish Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Marian Dobrosielski reassured the U.S. ambassador, they remained committed to disarmament, the CSCE process, and the maintenance of détente.<sup>766</sup> While at the White House an escalation of events was detected by Zbigniew Brzezinski, Dobrosielski was offered assurances that the U.S. position on Poland would not alter 'unless there were some drastic development such as the use of force.' He assured the ambassador that this was not the case although he was also keen to stress the importance of avoiding Western interference

---

<sup>763</sup> Ibid., pp.2-4.

<sup>764</sup> 'German Loan to Poland Is Set', *The American Banker*, 25 August 1980.

<sup>765</sup> Ibid.

<sup>766</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'MFA Deputy Affirms Continuity of Polish Policy: See Economic Reform in Party and Government Changes', 25 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008451. See also: TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4161, f176: Danish Delegation to NATO, 'The Situation in Poland. Conversation with Foreign Minister Czyrek. August 25, 1980.'

in Poland's internal affairs.<sup>767</sup> As well as threatening détente itself, due to the interlinked nature of the global economy, international as well as domestic instability could further damage the already weakened Polish economy. The West could be as responsible for that as the Soviet Union and Eastern bloc could.

Economic concerns aside, it was domestic turmoil that presented the greatest threat to the Party. In addition to the coast, MSW reports highlighted problems in areas such as Toruń, Olsztyn, Tarnów, Rzeszów, Krosno, as well as Nowa Huta. Discontent was also evident elsewhere, threatening disruption.<sup>768</sup> Although not mentioned in the reports, with the support of Bishop Ignacy Tokarczuk a hunger strike was also employed for the first time that summer by activists associated with an underground journal at a church in Stalowa Wola.<sup>769</sup> Although not directly linked to the strikes on the coast, there was some overlap. One demand concerned the release from prison of Jan Kozłowski, a peasant self-defence activist whose case had long been adopted by KOR and whose name was one of three specifically stated in point four of the twenty-one demands regarding the release of political prisoners.<sup>770</sup>

While such activities signified the severity of Poland's plight at this time, it was the decision of the authorities to have Stanisław Kania approach Cardinal Wyszyński for a meeting with Edward Gierek that perhaps signified the authorities' greatest concern with regard to the unfolding situation. At a private meeting with Gierek at the First Secretary's residence five points were discussed, primarily the issue of 'free trade unions.' Although

---

<sup>767</sup> Ibid; J. Carter, *White House Diary* (New York, 2010), p.460.

<sup>768</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.105-106).

<sup>769</sup> M. Bułata, 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Ziemia Sandomierska', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.5. Polska Środkowo-Wschodnia (Warsaw, 2010), pp.641-694 (p.644); M. Choma-Jusińska, *Środowiska opozycyjne na Lubelszczyźnie 1975-1980* (Warsaw and Lublin, 2009), p.354; M. Dąbrowski, *Lubelski Lipiec 1980* (Lublin, 2000), p.210.

<sup>770</sup> For an overview of the case of Jan Kozłowski, as well as those of Edmund Zdrożyński and Marek Kozłowski (also named in point four), see: A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.183-184.

Wyszyński did not take sides in the dispute overall, Wyszyński spoke out in favour of independent unions while Gierek defended the official ones. Soviet intervention was also discussed.<sup>771</sup> Lacking any prior preparation and taking place at Gierek's home it was a meeting without precedent.<sup>772</sup> It is hard to imagine that such a meeting would have taken place unless the country found itself in dire circumstances. Alongside Soviet intervention, as the discussion on free trade unions indicates, the Baltic coast remained at the heart of the Party's concerns.

Although awaiting negotiations with Jagielski, two strands of talks had taken place in Gdańsk since the previous negotiations: one between low-level government representatives and the MKS, the other between the MKS and their advisors. Regarding the former, with Jagielski in Warsaw and no fixed date for the next round of talks, the yard was in a state of limbo as the workers waited for news. In the meantime two preconditions were agreed for the resumption of talks: the immediate restoration of telephone connections with Warsaw and then Poland as a whole; the first twenty minutes of the next negotiations were to be broadcast live on local radio followed by an hour long edit of the meeting approved by the MKS. Initial talks were given a low priority by the government with an assistant of the Provincial Governor's sent to negotiate. They dragged on without conclusion into early evening when Bądkowski assessed that the government were engaging in delaying tactics in order to grind down the workers. The MKS did not alter their position, however. They made clear that with their demands unfulfilled, negotiations would not resume. A late breakthrough with the authorities was ultimately made. Talks would resume the next day.<sup>773</sup>

When they did so, it would be clear that their stance on new unions was as determined as it

---

<sup>771</sup> P. Raina, *Kardynał Wyszyński. Czasy Prymasowskie 1980* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.66-67; A. Friszke, *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980-1981* (Kraków, 2014), pp.44-45.

<sup>772</sup> Friszke, p.45.

<sup>773</sup> L. Bądkowski, 'Przypisy dnia (z dzienników gdańskich 14 VII – 1 IX 1980)', *Zapis*, 17 (1981), pp.68-99 (pp.84-87); 'Solidarity Strike Bulletin No.5 (26 August 1980)', in: O. MacDonald (ed.), *The Polish August: Documents from the Beginnings of the Polish Workers Rebellion. Gdańsk. August 1980* (Seattle, 1981), p.47.

had ever been. The previous day experts had raised the possibility of developing a 'Variant B' as a fall-back option allowing for the comprehensive reform of the existing unions. In a meeting between Presidium members and the experts held away from the BHP Hall, the Presidium rejected this suggestion out of hand.<sup>774</sup> Tadeusz Kowalik claims that during his time in the shipyard he 'did not meet a single striker or delegate who was willing to compromise on this issue.'<sup>775</sup> It was a stance reinforced by the slogans ordinary workers had painted around the yard and in the crosses they had painted through the signs for the official unions.<sup>776</sup> It was an issue over which they were not prepared to back down.

## **26 August 1980 (Tuesday)**

The broader context in which the next round of negotiations at the Lenin Shipyard took place had shifted greatly since the opening round. In terms of the Polish context, the negotiations took place in the midst of a dramatic escalation of the strike wave. Both the scale of the strikes on the coast and the spread of strikes nationally were causing concern.<sup>777</sup> According to MSW estimates, 150 000 workers were on strike in the Gdańsk region, 80 000 in the Szczecin region, 20 000 in the Elbląg region and 12 000 in the Słupsk region.<sup>778</sup> While this increased pressure on the authorities to extinguish the strikes on the coast, it was the spread of the strike wave nationwide that was of greatest concern.<sup>779</sup> Strikes in Łódź and

---

<sup>774</sup> T. Kowalik, 'Experts and the Working Group', in: A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.143-167 (p.145). See also: W. Kuczyński, *Burza nad Wisłą. Dziennik 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2002), pp.36-37; L. Bądkowski, 'Przypisy dnia (z dzienników gdańskich 14 VII – 1 IX 1980)', *Zapis*, 17 (1981), pp.68-99 (pp.84-85); A. Friszke, *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980-1981* (Kraków, 2014), p.49.

<sup>775</sup> Kowalik, p.145.

<sup>776</sup> See: J. Kubik, *The Power of Symbols Against The Symbols of Power: The Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Socialism in Poland* (University Park PA, 1994), p.280; *Robotnicy '80* (dir. A Chodakowski et al: Poland, 1980); *Gdańsk 1980 – Pictures from a strike* (London, 1981), p.24; E. Ciołek, *Solidarność sierpień 1980 – sierpień 1989/August 1980 – August 1989* (Warsaw, 2010), p.69.

<sup>777</sup> 'Protokół nr 25 z posiedzenia KC PZPR 26 sierpnia 1980r.', in: Z. Włodek, (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a "Solidarność" 1980-1981* (London, 1992), p.61.

<sup>778</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.111).

<sup>779</sup> 'Protokół nr 25 z posiedzenia KC PZPR 26 sierpnia 1980r.', p.61.

Wrocław were most significant. In both transport strikes spread rapidly. In Łódź they acted as a trigger for various forms of discontent, including ‘occupation strikes’ and stoppages, throughout the city. In Wrocław similar events culminated in the formation of an Interfactory Strike Committee, which appealed for support for the coastal workers.<sup>780</sup> It was a development which demonstrated that despite ongoing security service efforts at detaining opposition activists, both KOR and Radio Free Europe continued to play a role in the spread of information, including organisation and methods during the strikes.<sup>781</sup> The further use of hunger strikes in solidarity with the coastal workers also continued to grow.<sup>782</sup> The authorities were under increasing pressure from a variety of sources and methods as negotiations got underway. There was a growing urgency with which to extinguish the strikes.

As well as greater pressure locally and nationally, the Jagielski Commission faced a more organised and strategically aware MKS. Unlike the first session, the MKS was acting under advice from the group of experts. At a meeting the previous day the strategy and tactics for negotiations had been discussed. According to one expert, the economist Waldemar Kuczyński, the MKS and the experts worked on the basis that the Jagielski Commission would begin with the less political and more easily achievable demands from the bottom of the list while avoiding point one. To counter this, the MKS were to insist upon

---

<sup>780</sup> B. Czuma, *Łódzka “Solidarność” 1980-1981* (Łódź, 2010), pp.15-16; Ł. Kamiński, ‘NSZZ “Solidarność” Region Dolny Śląsk’, in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.6. Polska Południowa (Warsaw, 2010), pp.317-465 (p.323).

<sup>781</sup> The formation of an MKS at Wrocław that arguably demonstrated the continuing influence of KOR and Radio Free Europe at this time. Having learnt of the telephone number via Radio Free Europe, workers were able to contact KOR for advice on how to strike, as well as of the coastal workers’ demands. See: ‘Z moim dzielnicy ... Rozmowy z Władysławem Frasyniukiem’, in: J. Jankowska, *Portrety Niedokończone. Rozmowy z twórcami “Solidarności” 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2004), pp.405-443 (p.407).

<sup>782</sup> A. Malik, *“Nie można oddzielić krzyża od ludzkiej pracy...” Komisja Robotnicza Hutników NSZZ “Solidarność” Huty im. Lenina (sierpień 1980 – grudzień 1981)* (Warsaw, 2013), p.21; M. Choma-Jusińska, *Środowiska opozycyjne na Lubelszczyźnie 1975-1980* (Warsaw and Lublin, 2009), pp.354-355; M. Dąbrowski, *Lubelski Lipiec 1980* (Lublin, 2000), pp.209-210.

the fulfilment of point one prior to any discussion of further demands. They were to create a favourable context in which negotiations would take place in order to aid negotiations.<sup>783</sup>

Opening the session Wałęsa illustrated the two main points of the experts' advice. In terms of creating a favourable context, he expressed his hopes for a meeting 'fruitful for our country.' Then in keeping with the desire for fulfilment of point one he went on to highlight the importance of free trade unions to the workers. Amongst other things, he argued that Poland's economic problems 'came about because working people did not have their own, authentic union representation.' Despite taking a firm stand on unions, he continued to create a favourable context, however. He went on to stress that such unions were neither a threat to the nation nor to socialism. They wanted what was best for the country and were only striking as a result of the failure of the authorities to keep their promises concerning the running of the country and of enterprises in the past.<sup>784</sup> The experts' advice appears to have been carefully implemented. Wałęsa was firm but reasonable throughout.

Such an approach arguably continued throughout the session in the discussion of two main issues: communications and free trade unions. Regarding the former, delegates continued to conduct themselves both with firmness and with dignity, as they had done during the initial negotiations. This is demonstrated by the delegates' responses to the claims of the Deputy Minister of Communication Stanisław Wylupek. He wished 'to state categorically and responsibly that telecommunications between Warsaw and the whole of Poland have been maintained throughout this period' but that manual rather than 'automatic' connections had been used. The telephone exchange had quite simply been overloaded by the demands placed on it. Although under orders from Jagielski they had restored automatic

---

<sup>783</sup> W. Kuczyński, *Burza nad Wisłą. Dziennik 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2002), pp.43.

<sup>784</sup> A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.69-70.



connections the previous day, the main telephone exchange had once again been placed under such stress that the situation had repeated itself.<sup>785</sup>

The authorities' explanation flew in the face not only of their experiences of the communication blockade and of logic, but was also made worse by the workers' lack of trust in the authorities. This was made clear in the response of one delegate, who questioned the likelihood of such an occurrence 'in the age of electronics and high technology in telecommunications' and pointed out that neither the delegates nor 'ordinary people' believed the blockade to be anything other than intentional. As the authorities said otherwise, however, perhaps they could provide the MKS with a more reliable means of communication: television and radio.<sup>786</sup> The workers were determined to have access to means that would allow them to present their version of the truth in order to counter the lies and propaganda of an official press untrusted by the workers. As another delegate immediately pointed out, they had only ever printed leaflets due to the isolation the MKS experienced as a result of the official press failing to publish the truth about events. Only the international press fulfilled this aim.<sup>787</sup> It was a role they fulfilled only at Gdańsk, however. Whereas Jagielski had earlier protested at the presence of television cameras, in Szczecin the strike guard had detained Swedish journalists the previous day.<sup>788</sup> Although other strikes were significant, it was the Lenin Shipyard strike that remained central to international coverage and the largest scale problem facing the authorities alongside the economy.

While for the authorities the strikes and economic difficulties overlapped, for the workers the two appear to have been interlinked: the strike was a response to the economic crisis and nothing more. The workers wanted a long-term response to the crisis and not a

---

<sup>785</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>786</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>787</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>788</sup> See: M. Szejnert and T. Zalewski, *Szczecin. Grudzień-Sierpień-Grudzień* (Warsaw, 1984), pp.154-155.

quick-fix. New trade unions would help to do so. They were not being demanded in order to challenge the authorities, but to avoid future problems. As Wałęsa put it:

No one wants to come back every ten years to the same point. Something must be done about it. The fact is we don't want political games of any sort. We want straight dealings like those of peasants or workers [...]. Do understand us: we don't want power. We don't want more stoppages, more strikes. This is a last resort, a necessity.

New unions were vital if Poland were not to find itself in this position again. As Wałęsa concluded, 'Even if we get the twenty points but not this one there will be no agreement.'<sup>789</sup>

It was a point reinforced by Andrzej Gwiazda. When Jagielski simply reiterated the official line on trade unions, Gwiazda highlighted the most pressing problems with the Polish economy as well as the need for new trade unions. He placed the issue of trade unions not only within the context of Polish history and personal experience, but also within the relevant conventions of the ILO.<sup>790</sup> There was no divergence of views at this time between Wałęsa and Gwiazda. Their approach might have differed, but their determination to achieve the twenty-one demands remained the same. This included with regard to freedom of expression. New trade unions would need their own press to publicise their beliefs irrespective of whether they were in keeping with those of the authorities. Such a move, Gwiazda believed, would cause the official press to abandon its attempts 'to manipulate society.' Although successful in the short term, they caused problems in the long run: 'Society realises in the end. Indignation flares up, ferment spreads and then the next explosion occurs.' They were tired of all of the usual excuses that accompanied each crisis. They wanted to help identify such problems 'before they grow to such proportions that it is almost necessary to make a revolution in the country.'<sup>791</sup> It is clear that they wanted to avoid trouble not to make it. The existing unions could not be trusted to do this. As Bogdan Lis

---

<sup>789</sup> Ibid., 74-75.

<sup>790</sup> See: Ibid., 76-79.

<sup>791</sup> Ibid., 79-80.

explained, 'The old trade unions are so discredited that even our joining the leadership would not restore them. We don't want an infusion of new blood, we want a completely new organism.'<sup>792</sup> As Wałęsa concluded, they were 'not talking about cures or corrections.' The creation of new trade unions was what they were discussing.<sup>793</sup> This was a sensitive issue for the authorities, however. Aside from ideological concerns, desire for access to the press as well as the say that a trade union would have over economic management presented a major challenge to key areas of the Party's control, the latter especially difficult at a time of economic crisis.

The sensitive not to mention complex nature of negotiations over trade unions appears to have been the reason for further discussions on the issue not taking place in public. In a further difference from Szczecin, a private 'working group' made up of representatives from each side began work on the issue.<sup>794</sup> The MKS was represented by Gwiazda, Mazowiecki, Kowalik, and Jadwiga Staniszkis, as well as Bogdan Lis and Zdzisław Kobyliński from the MKS Presidium. The Provincial Governor Jerzy Kołodziej represented the authorities, alongside Andrzej Jedynak and Krzysztof Kuczyński, with the assistance of the government's newly arrived team of experts (Professors Józef Pajestka, Czesław Jackowiak and Antoni Rajkiewicz), which had already been handed relevant texts on trade unions, including the ILO conventions cited by the MKS.<sup>795</sup> While such secrecy could have been considered an affront to the strike's democratic principles, Wałęsa assured members of the MKS Plenum, as well as crowds at the gate, that no decisions would be taken by this group. Only the MKS as a whole could decide.<sup>796</sup>

---

<sup>792</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>793</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>794</sup> J. Holzer, *"Solidarność" 1980-1981: Geneza i Historia* (Warsaw, 1983), p.67.

<sup>795</sup> A. Rajkiewicz, 'Gdańsk – Sierpień '80. Ostatni Tydzień', in: R. Chwedoruk and D. Przastek (eds.), *Dylematy Historii i Polityki. Księga dedykowana Profesor Annie Magierskiej* (Warsaw, 2008), pp.75-89 (p.78).

<sup>796</sup> See: W. Giełżyński and L. Stefański, *Gdańsk Sierpień 80* (Warszawa, 1981), p.137.

Although due to the importance of the legal aspects of trade unions, the working groups' talks were dominated by the experts and more technical in nature than those within the main negotiations, there was no significant change in position from either side. Both sides stuck to their previously established positions on trade unions, although Kowalik concluded that the government side did not really believe in their proposals and were simply repeating the line established by the Party.<sup>797</sup> Some surprising inferences could be drawn from the government experts' statements on certain issues, however. For example, although they ruled out the possibility of agreeing to a guarantee for all Polish workers to establish their own unions on the grounds that it would resemble the reforms brought about by Dubček in Czechoslovakia in 1968, Jadwiga Staniszkis claims that they were suggesting 'between the lines that they preferred to be forced from below.'<sup>798</sup> While presumably such an outcome would be easier to sell to Moscow if it was clear that the Party really had no choice rather than because they genuinely wanted to, it was an outcome that apparently surprised the workers. Without a universal right to form new unions, it meant that any other workforce wishing to gain the right would have to go on strike to do so. Such an outcome would be catastrophic given Poland's economic circumstances.

While it would have been unthinkable for the government to infer that they would prefer to have their hand forced on the matter in public negotiations, it was not only the private nature of the talks that made such an inference possible. As both Kowalik and Staniszkis note, the intellectuals all shared a similar background in the Warsaw intelligentsia and knew each other either personally or by reputation. This contributed to a relaxed atmosphere in the group.<sup>799</sup> The fact that 'elements of truth existed already' also helped the

---

<sup>797</sup> T. Kowalik, 'Experts and the Working Group', in: A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.143-167 (pp.146-147).

<sup>798</sup> J. Staniszkis, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution* (Princeton NJ, 1984), p.55.

<sup>799</sup> Staniszkis, p.55; Kowalik, p.147.

negotiations.<sup>800</sup> The two sides were able to come to a compromise by the time they concluded for the day. Although the MKS experts had rejected without question the possibility of registering the new trade unions as part of the official unions by the time the talks closed the government side had decided to find a way of registering the new trade unions independently of the official trade union body.<sup>801</sup> Although it appeared to be a significant step forward and Rajkiewicz believed that a swift agreement was possible,<sup>802</sup> success was not assured. Security operations against the strike were still on-going.

As a result of the on-going harassment of MKS delegates and supporters of the strike by the police and security services, an established part of the opposition's repertoire, a 'Chronicle of Repression,' was published as part of the strike bulletin. As well as detailing reported cases of harassment, it also appealed for further acts of repression to be reported to the MKS Presidium.<sup>803</sup> While this did not lead to any change in the behaviour of the authorities, it did provide workers with some measure of empowerment. It provided a further means of organising and strengthening ties, while through openly sharing such experiences with others, it made them less isolated. It also provided a means by which information could be passed to the Western press.

Day-to-day repression was the minimum that workers could expect from the authorities, however. More serious steps were less predictable, but were also underway. Under the auspices of "Łato-80" General Stachura announced the introduction of a 'state of full readiness' in the MSW. On his orders the riot police (ZOMO) were to be amongst those barracked, while officers were to have their leave cancelled or suspended.<sup>804</sup> The "Łato-80"

---

<sup>800</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>801</sup> Ibid., 55; Rajkiewicz, p.79.

<sup>802</sup> Rajkiewicz, p.79.

<sup>803</sup> 'Solidarity Strike Bulletin No.5 (26 August 1980)', in: O. MacDonald (ed.), *The Polish August: Documents from the Beginnings of the Polish Workers Rebellion. Gdańsk. August 1980* (Seattle, 1981), pp.50-51.

<sup>804</sup> 'Decyzja Nr 03/80 Kierownika Sztabu MSW z dnia 26 sierpnia 1980r.', in: P. Raina and M. Zbrozek (eds.), *Operacja „Łato-80”. Preludium stanu wojennego. Dokumenty MSW 1980-1981* (Pelplin, 2003), p.43; A

staff team were also informed of a plan to blockade the shipyard in relation to which 15 commandos were to be transported to Gdańsk as part of the assembled forces.<sup>805</sup> In addition to this, a list of potential courses of action was drawn up for the use of the minister of internal affairs Stanisław Kowalczyk in the Politburo. As well as the blockade, amongst the possibilities suggested were the use of naval units to force open a number of ports on the Baltic coast, arrests and the reinstatement of the communications blockade. No reference to the eight point list was made at Politburo, however.<sup>806</sup> Kowalczyk mentioned only the need to generate an atmosphere in society amenable to the intensified repression of 'anti-socialist elements'.<sup>807</sup> The opposition rather than the workers remained the target for repression.

In terms of enterprises vital to the functioning of the Polish economy, it is clear that the ports also remained a sensitive area at this stage. Here as well the use of force was far from the authorities' first choice of action. In the short term in Szczecin at least, an agreement had been reached between workers and management allowing for the unloading of goods that threatened to go off, so long as the action was not reported in the official media. Efforts to get public transport working in the city again by contrast were proving more difficult. They would not break the solidarity of the strike. Despite the fact that the entire city was effectively now engaged in a 'general strike' (*strajk powszechny*) with the exception of the transport strike, (for residents at least) the city functioned as usual. According to Barcikowski, the MKS was in charge of the situation. They could not break the strike through engaging in negotiations outside the MKS while the conduct and efficiency of those on strike also made such efforts problematic. Although those involved were 'already tired' they would not make any moves that would bring the situation to an

---

Paczkowski, *Droga do „mniejszego zła”*. *Strategia i taktyka obozu władzy, lipiec 1980 – styczeń 1982* (Kraków, 2002), 39.

<sup>805</sup> Paczkowski, p.39.

<sup>806</sup> Ibid., 39-40; A. Friszke, *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980-1981* (Kraków, 2014), pp.40-41.

<sup>807</sup> 'Protokół nr 25 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 26 sierpnia 1980r.', in: Z. Włodek (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a „Solidarność” 1980-1981* (London, 1992), p.62.

end. Jagielski reported a similar situation upon returning from Gdańsk. A key feature of the strike was 'great determination.' There was a 'general strike' that enjoyed the support of all society. Despite the scale of the coastal strikes in terms of both enterprises (in excess of 700 thousand) and participation (approximately 180 thousand people), the MKS were entirely in command of the situation. Perhaps the only difference between descriptions of the two strikes was that Jagielski described the Gdańsk MKS as being engaged in an attempted 'political struggle.'<sup>808</sup> That in Szczecin was not. While this final comment again points to the difference made in perceptions of the strikes by opposition and even intellectual involvement, it is clear that even without considering the demands, it was a combination of factors causing the authorities' problems: the structures of power affected by the strike action and the scale and unity of both participation in and support for the strike. The question of course was of how to deal with it. Although there was a need for the isolation of Szczecin and Gdańsk, as well as for a decision on the coastal blockade and the closure of Poland's borders with the West, Kania made clear at Politburo that despite the threat posed by the worsening of the situation on the coast and the spread of strikes across the country, 'political means' were to be the only ones under discussion.<sup>809</sup> The use of force or violence to resolve the situation was not under consideration.

While the Politburo was clear on their decision to avoid a violent confrontation between the workers and the state on the coast, their approach to the central demand for free trade unions was far less certain. While Kania, who was aware of the potential political threat that free trade unions caused, indicated no change in stance on trade unions (i.e. a willingness to undertake a major renewal of the official unions) and calls were also made for the defence of the existing unions, the attitude of the coastal workers appears to have altered the stance of the lead negotiators. Barcikowski noted that in Szczecin, which had previously

---

<sup>808</sup> Ibid., 69-71.

<sup>809</sup> Ibid., 61 and 65.

accepted the Party's role in trade unions, this was no longer the case. Having just returned from the coast meanwhile, Jagielski expressed the belief, 'that we will have to express agreement on the establishment of free trade unions.' It was the major point of contention in negotiations and all other matters hinged upon it.<sup>810</sup> The Party appeared to have little choice. On the one hand it had already exhausted all other methods at its disposal and was unwilling to use force. On the other the workers were displaying no signs of conceding ground on the issue and were conducting themselves impeccably in a non-violent manner thus giving the Party no excuse for a crackdown. The nature of the enterprises affected by the strikes, as well as the scale of the strikes and support for them, were also providing the Party with little room for manoeuvre. They were faced with a difficult decision: even if they accepted the coastal demands and the strike came to an end, strikes elsewhere might continue. Any decision would need to apply to the country as a whole. Such a decision could not be taken lightly. As Kania stated, 'One should be fully aware, that such a decision means the creation of a force significantly more important than the *Sejm* and the people's councils put together.'<sup>811</sup> While the Party claimed to be the representative of the working class, a free trade union genuinely would be. It would represent a significant threat to the Party's leading role, therefore. It would also cause problems for other socialist states.<sup>812</sup> Even if the internal situation was temporarily resolved through the acceptance of free trade unions, it was unlikely to be accepted by Poland's allies for long. It could bring about similar developments in their own countries. With few options open to them, they appear to have turned to the Church.

Following his meeting with Gierek, Cardinal Wyszyński delivered a sermon at Jasna Góra in which he primarily called for calm and a return to work for the good of the

---

<sup>810</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>811</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>812</sup> Ibid., 75.



nation.<sup>813</sup> Although he had expressed his support for the workers' demands to Gierek, he had also displayed understanding for the authorities. As such his sermon favoured neither side. One section in particular stands out in his homily not only for its resemblance to the official line of the authorities, but also because of its links between the nation's debt crisis and the strikes:

We know that when there is not good work then the best economic system will be unsuccessful and we will only multiply debts and borrowing. And all this will be eaten up straightaway because there is no prosperity without work. And even though man has the right to leisure, and even though, sometimes when there are no other means, man has the right to make his stance known – even if this is by refusing to work – we nevertheless know that this is a very expensive argument, an argument so expensive that they burden the whole national economy and affect the life of the nation, family and every person in some negative way or other.<sup>814</sup>

Although overall responsibility for the economy lay with the Party, it would be work rather than strikes that would help to cure the Polish disease. They could not expect to borrow their way out of trouble. As MSW reports noted, amongst other things Western banks believed that a worsening of credit terms for Poland was the possible outcome of the continuation of a 'high risk operation from Poland'.<sup>815</sup> While this was an issue that ran parallel to the strikes, the economic nature of strikes meant that Poland's economic dealings with the banks could not help but be affected by them. Even certain strike demands presented an economic threat. As such one Politburo member suggested publicising certain demands that could not be facilitated 'if we don't want to lead the economy to ruins.'<sup>816</sup>

With the economy in crisis, as well as the risk of Soviet intervention, it was imperative that the Church acted to calm the situation. It appears to have been with this in mind, that the authorities took the unprecedented step of allowing the sermon's radio

---

<sup>813</sup> See: 'Excerpts of Sermon by Cardinal Stephan (*sic*) Wyszyński', in: A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (ed.), *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History* (Budapest and New York, 2007), pp.51-54.

<sup>814</sup> 'Excerpts of Sermon by Cardinal Stephan (*sic*) Wyszyński', 53.

<sup>815</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.117).

<sup>816</sup> 'Protokół nr 25 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 26 sierpnia 1980r.', p.62.

broadcast, something which had not been done since December 1956.<sup>817</sup> While in 1956 this had taken place at the end of a period of major social unrest and political change, the fact that this took place in the midst of such a period only seems to underline the severity of the authorities' concerns at this time. It was presumably such concerns that saw them attempt to take advantage of Wyszyński's authority within the country. His homily was heavily censored and followed on from a broadcast in which, in keeping with a speech he had made at the IV Plenum, the *Trybuna Ludu* journalist Ryszard Wojna raised the spectre of the Soviet threat as well as Poland's *raison d'état* in relation to a warning that the issue of trade unions were non-negotiable.<sup>818</sup> The authorities had not switched tactics altogether. Threats and slander still accompanied calls for moderation.

Neither speech appears to have made much of an impact at the shipyard, however. Not only did workers ignore Wyszyński's message about the strikes, but according to Timothy Garton Ash at the Lenin Shipyard a message had been attached to an image of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa claiming that she had joined the workers' strike action.<sup>819</sup> Although the Church was positioned between the workers and the state, those on strike continued to claim its iconography as their own. Perhaps noticeably, the home of the Black Madonna remained peaceful. Although pilgrims had spread news of the strikes to Częstochowa since mid-August, no strikes took place that summer.<sup>820</sup> It was industrial rather than religious or rural centres that remained at the centre of the action.

---

<sup>817</sup> J. Żaryn, "Błogosławie was i wasze poczynania". Stefan Wyszyński wobec powstania NSZZ "Solidarność", *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 4 (2001), pp.23-33 (p.26). See also: E.Celt, 'Cardinal Wyszyński Speaks to Workers (27 August 1980)', in: *The Strikes in Poland*, pp.133-136 (p.134).

<sup>818</sup> See: K. Ruane, *The Polish Challenge* (London, 1982), pp.23-24. For Wojna's IV Plenum speech, see: AAN, Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza Komitet Centralny w Warszawie, III/127, 'Stenogram /nieautoryzowany/ IV plenarnego posiedzenia Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej w dniu 24 sierpnia 1980 roku', pp.61-69.

<sup>819</sup> T. Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-1982* (London, 1983), p.58.

<sup>820</sup> See: W. Rotarska, 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Częstochowa' in, Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.6. Polska Południowa (Warsaw, 2010), pp.827-876 (p.828).

## 27 August 1980 (Wednesday)

Talks continued within the working group, but were less friendly than before. They had a clear political tone.<sup>821</sup> This may have been due in part to the fact that Jagielski had informed his experts of discussions within the Politburo regarding the use of force. The experts remained in favour of a peaceful solution, but were of the opinion that with every day lost without agreement on trade union reform the situation deteriorated.<sup>822</sup> The government's stance on new trade unions was presented by Kołodziejski. Perhaps the most significant point related to the need to ensure both that Poland's political system remained inviolable as well as the Party's "leading role" without which a deal would never be acceptable to Warsaw (or to Moscow).<sup>823</sup> It was a condition that divided the experts. Although for Mazowiecki and Kowalik it held little personal significance due to any declaration of this kind being decided by the MKS, Staniszkis rejected the need for such a statement.<sup>824</sup> It was the moment the restrictions the authorities would place on trade union reforms became clear, albeit only the intellectuals rather than the workers were cognizant of this. As Staniszkis explains:

We (experts) understood that the government side wanted us to introduce a formula that would subordinate one, spontaneous, representation of the working class (MKS) to another institutionalized, representation (the communist party). For the ruling group, and probably for Moscow, this was a solution to the political problem created by the existence of working-class representation on both sides of a negotiating table and to the ideological precedent created by that fact.<sup>825</sup>

Unless the MKS accepted the dominance of the Party, it would create a classic case of dual sovereignty, a counter-revolutionary situation in which two groups struggled for overall

---

<sup>821</sup> T. Kowalik, 'Experts and the Working Group', in: A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.143-167 (p.147).

<sup>822</sup> A. Rajkiewicz, 'Gdańsk – Sierpień '80. Ostatni Tydzień', in: R. Chwedoruk and D. Przastek (eds.), *Dylematy Historii i Polityki. Księga dedykowana Profesor Annie Magierskiej* (Warsaw, 2008), pp.75-89 (p.80).

<sup>823</sup> Kowalik, pp.147-148.

<sup>824</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>825</sup> J. Staniszkis, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution* (Princeton NJ, 1984), p.55.

control. As Staniszkis explains, however, the authorities were unable to raise this directly with the workers due to the fact that highlighting the political importance of allowing an independent trade union that did not accept the Party's dominance would only serve to strengthen the workers' hand. The problem being that unless they could explain to the workers how important an acceptance of the leading role of the Party was, they would be unable to get them to accept it. The government expected the experts to act as a go-between in terms of smoothing over this deal. It was this that brought about a significant divergence of views between Staniszkis, who was an independent expert, and the core group of MKS advisers. While the former simply wished to tell the MKS the truth and allow them to make their own decision on the matter, the latter informed the workers that the formulation held little significance and that they should accept it. That they did so was due to a complex range of factors, according to Staniszkis. These included tiredness, 'trust', and 'fear of the consequences of their own principal attitudes.'<sup>826</sup> The workers were also simply distracted by other events.<sup>827</sup> While apparently unimportant to the workers at the time, the issue of the leading role would prove to be a major issue later on. It would also lead to the departure of Staniszkis from the group of experts.

While talks amongst the working group continued in Gdańsk, more and more strikes were breaking out in support of their action nationwide. Transnational support from Norwegian and French trade unions was also now in evidence at the yard.<sup>828</sup> Although there were discussions at Politburo regarding a tightening of censorship following the publication of the 21 demands in the Party youth paper *Sztandar Młodych*, a number of strikes appear to have been unaware of what the demands on the coast actually were, but supported them

---

<sup>826</sup> Ibid., 58-59.

<sup>827</sup> Kowalik, 149.

<sup>828</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.119). There were also other acts of solidarity apart from strikes. A Szczecin hospital expressed support for the MKS, but continued to work as normal, for example.

anyway.<sup>829</sup> Noticeably by now there was also frustration evident amongst Polish journalists with their ability to cover the situation as events unfolded. While the Politburo was already aware of this,<sup>830</sup> for the first time that day journalists had expressed their frustration publicly in the Solidarity strike bulletin. They complained that there was a serious discrepancy between what was being reported and the actual events that were occurring. They considered 'the manner in which it has been commented upon' particularly problematic. It stopped them 'from honestly fulfilling [their] professional duties.' They proposed providing society with a full account of events for the good of the nation in both the present and the future.<sup>831</sup> The Party were struggling with one of their main sources of control. They were, however, prepared to take steps to restrict outside influences. Gierek ordered the restriction of Western journalists to the major crisis zone.<sup>832</sup>

The issue of support for the strike was far from clear cut. A shift in the social atmosphere had also taken place. In some places where support for the strikes had initially been evident, people were becoming tired. They started to believe 'that they increase our economic difficulties.'<sup>833</sup> This presented a potential problem for the striking workers. It would be difficult to achieve their aims without a broader base of social support. The support of significant enterprises was also vital to maintain and relations between Szczecin and Gdańsk remained important. The Party seemed aware of this and attempted to undermine the latter. At Szczecin where negotiations were ongoing between Barcikowski

---

<sup>829</sup> AAN, V/159, PZPR KC Biuro Polityczne, 252-263, 'Protokół Nr 26 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 27 sierpnia 1980r.', pp.2-3; C. Phelps, 'Solidarność in Łódź: An Interview with Zbigniew Marcin Kowalewski', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 73 (2008), pp.106-136 (pp.111); 'Odwaga, krzykliwość i ... ? Rozmowa z Janem Rulewskim', in: J. Jankowska (ed.), *Portrety Niedokończone. Rozmowy z twórcami "Solidarności" 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2004), pp.343-378 (p.352). Alongside their publication in *Sztandar Młodych*, it is noticeable that the US embassy had only transmitted a copy of the 21 demands from a strike bulletin to Washington that day. See: DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Text of the List of Demands Issued by the Inter-Factory Strike Committee at the Lenin Shipyards in Gdansk on August 22', 27 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008543.

<sup>830</sup> 'Protokół Nr 26 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 27 sierpnia 1980r.', p.2.

<sup>831</sup> 'Solidarity Strike Bulletin No.7 (27 August 1980)', in: O. MacDonald, (ed.), *The Polish August: Documents from the Beginnings of the Polish Workers Rebellion. Gdańsk. August 1980* (Seattle, 1981), p.59.

<sup>832</sup> 'Protokół Nr 26 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 27 sierpnia 1980r.', p.11.

<sup>833</sup> Majchrzak, p.123.

and the MKS, Barcikowski played a doctored tape recording of a BBC interview with Lech Wałęsa, which he clearly intended to discredit the MKS Chairman from Gdańsk in the eyes of the Szczecin MKS.<sup>834</sup> Wałęsa was an easy target. After all it is easy to discredit people when no one actually knows them. Only his name was known, not his character or person.

Barcikowski also discussed Poland's economic situation, including Poland's dependency on Western loans for imports and problems with Western economies. Amongst other things he noted America's introduction of a 20 percent interest rate unprecedented in the post-war era as a result of its struggle with inflation. It complicated an already difficult situation in terms of receiving loans. At this time 120 dollars had to be paid back for every 100 borrowed. He also made an explicit link between the broader international economy, Western banks and Poland's debt. The banks were watching and the current situation was not likely to be helping events.<sup>835</sup> This appears to be the only explicit connection between Poland's internal situation and its relations with Western bankers on public record. While one would not expect such a connection to be made during sessions of the Politburo where economic dealings with capitalist countries were not discussed, it is perhaps notable that it came in negotiations with the MKS at one of the major strike centres in the country.

Taken together this suggests that economic factors, alongside the issue of free trade unions, were a major factor in shaping the Party's response to the strike. The same day MSW reports noted talks in NATO concerning the possible rescheduling of Polish debts towards the U.S., West Germany and Western banking consortiums.<sup>836</sup> It was clearly an issue. If one considers the importance of exports to the West as part of Poland's efforts to

---

<sup>834</sup> See: A. Głowacki, (ed.), *Rozmowy Komisji Rządowej pod przewodnictwem Kazimierza Barcikowskiego z Międzyzakładowym Komitetem Strajkowym w Szczecinie w dniach 21-30 sierpnia 1980r. według transmisji radiowęzła Stocznia im. A. Warskiego w Szczecinie* (Szczecin, 1989), pp.111-114; M. Szejnert and T. Zalewski, *Szczecin. Grudzień-Sierpień-Grudzień* (Warsaw, 1984), pp.170. A copy of the much shorter English language broadcast is available in: 'Walesa Interview: Strikes Continue Until Demands Met', in: *The Strikes in Poland*, pp.386-387.

<sup>835</sup> Głowacki, pp.117-118; Szejnert and Zalewski, p.171.

<sup>836</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.125).

pay off its debts, then it is also clear that trading links were being affected by the strikes. Footwear destined for export to the U.S., UK and Canada was being returned from the ports.<sup>837</sup> Poland required not only the continuation of economic support and trade, but also much needed economic reform. The economy was arguably of equal importance to the strikes. Indeed it is noticeable that in a teleconference between the Polish leadership and regional Party leaders only Józef Pińkowski, in charge of the economy, and Stanisław Kania, in charge of security, gave speeches.<sup>838</sup> This suggests that they both enjoyed equal billing at this time. Although the economic crisis pre-dated the social crisis that threatened Poland's security, the two overlapped. They created a crisis in which each one fed into the other with neither being able to stabilise without the other. If neither stabilised, the state could collapse. For those with long-term interests in Poland, this was an undesirable situation. Destabilising the state could harm their long-term interests. If they misjudged their response, they might have to wait a number of years for such an opportunity for change to arise again. Stability was vital, therefore. As West German foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher stated in a Political Co-operation meeting of the Nine:

the political landscape in Eastern Europe was in transition there was a significant movement towards national sovereignty and the establishment of civil liberties. The FRG had decided to continue to encourage financial help to the Polish government notwithstanding criticism that this was stabilising the present regime. The FRG thought that their attitude must be impartial i.e., giving no pretext for Soviet intervention.<sup>839</sup>

The French Council of Ministers issued a similar public statement, stressing Poland's 'fundamental importance for balance and peace in Europe.' It was 'a permanent principle of France not to intervene in the internal affairs of other states.'<sup>840</sup> This was vital not only to

---

<sup>837</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>838</sup> See: AAN, V/159, PZPR KC Biuro Polityczne, 268-284, 'Załącznik Nr.2. Telekonferencja w dniu 27 sierpnia 1980r.', pp.1-17.

<sup>839</sup> TNA: PRO: PREM 19/331: Telegram from UKMIS Network to Priority FCO, 'Telegram Number 1164 of 27 August', 27 August 1980.

<sup>840</sup> TNA: PRO: PREM 19/331: Telegram from Paris to FCO, 'Poland: French Council of Ministers, 27 August 1980.'

Poland's survival and reforms, but also to the maintenance of stability in Europe as a whole. One was required for the other.

Given the importance of Poland for peace and stability in Europe, as well as a desire to encourage liberalisation behind the Iron Curtain, there was a need for a co-ordinated Western response to events. At the suggestion of Brzezinski, Carter sent a letter to their allies in Western Europe.<sup>841</sup> While the letter did not outline any concrete policies on Poland, it did seek to bring about a sharing of opinions on the situation with regard to long-term consequences in 'East-West relations and even for the future of the Soviet Bloc itself.' From the perspective of the U.S. the optimum 'outcome' of events would be a non-violent 'accommodation between the authorities and the Polish people.' Economic affairs would continue to play a role in this and economic aid 'should be designed to encourage the Poles to undertake a more fundamental and systematic reform of their economic system.'<sup>842</sup> The Western economic role in events would be vital, therefore.

Peace and stability in Poland did not simply hinge on Western economic support, however. There was also an additional factor to consider: that of Soviet intervention. Although the Soviet threat existed, all Western assessments indicated that there were no signs that the Soviet Union or Eastern bloc were about to intervene.<sup>843</sup> Indeed a Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman assured them that it was an internal affair for the Poles to deal with. They tried to reassure the West that they had no intention of interfering, but warned the West against doing so too.<sup>844</sup> There was also an additional factor that made events difficult to predict: military manoeuvres in response to domestic instability. Although the

---

<sup>841</sup> Z. Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser 1977-1981* (London, 1983), p.464; J. Carter, Carter, J. *White House Diary* (New York, 2010), p.460.

<sup>842</sup> TNA: PRO: PREM 19/331: 'From President Carter to Prime Minister Thatcher (Prime Minister's Personal Message Serial No T.166/80)', 27 August 1980; 'President Carter's Letter to Allies on Poland (September 1, 1980)' in, A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (eds.), *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980 -1981: A Documentary History* (Budapest and New York, 2007), p.81. The published version of this letter records it as being sent to Thatcher, Giscard d'Estaing, and Schmidt.

<sup>843</sup> TNA: PRO: PREM 19/331: From Moscow to FCO, 'Moscow Telno 518: Poland,' 27 August 1980.

<sup>844</sup> CIA FOIA: Situation Reports: Poland, 27 August 1980, p.4.



CIA predicted increased 'Polish military activity' as the month wore on, distinguishing between activity intended for internal Polish affairs and that for Warsaw Pact manoeuvres in East Germany would prove more and more problematic.<sup>845</sup>

Although security measures were discussed at Politburo, these ranged only from the use of legal sanctions against the opposition to the use of force to ensure that two ports re-opened. According to Pińkowski, this was a 'very urgent matter' due to the number of ships and goods waiting to be unloaded. The use of the army was ruled out although either they or the MO might be used for reconnaissance. It would not be an easy act to carry out. While the MO could force them open and had the equipment with which to do so, they lacked the skills to operate them. Experts would be needed.<sup>846</sup> Equally although force was being considered, the use of violence was not. As with the rest of the summer, no one wished for a repeat of the past. They were also unclear of the repercussions. At Politburo Jaruzelski warned that its use could result in a 'spontaneous solidarity movement' in support of Gdańsk.<sup>847</sup> As the General Staff realised at the time, and Ryszard Kukliński later reported to the CIA, there was a fear that the use of the army against the workers could make the strikers more determined and also make it more difficult to reach an internal solution to the matter.<sup>848</sup> Although Kukliński's information will not have been passed on straight away, having a trusted inside source who could relay information to the CIA will have been of considerable benefit at this time.

The most pressing matter for the Politburo remained the issue of independent trade unions. It was the major demand facing them and the most popular amongst workers. According to Kania, 'They think, that new trade unions will guarantee a feeling of strength

---

<sup>845</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>846</sup> AAN, V/159, PZPR KC Biuro Polityczne, 252-263, 'Protokół Nr 26 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 27 sierpnia 1980r.', pp.1-2.

<sup>847</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>848</sup> B. Weiser, *A Secret Life: The Polish Officer, His Covert Mission, And The Price He Paid to Save His Country*, (New York, 2004), pp.200-202.

towards the authorities and the extortion of different demands through strikes.’ The demand was already attracting significant signs of solidarity.<sup>849</sup> Arguably there were two different issues at stake. For the workers, it was one of independence. For the Party, it was one of dominance. Their leading role could not be challenged without their own power being undermined. There was still some indecision within the Politburo as to what approach to adopt. One Politburo member was still suggesting new elections to the old unions, for example. They would win in some places and lose in others, but it was a necessary risk. They were facing dual problems: strikes and the disintegration of the functions of the state, ‘which are quickly widening and deepening.’<sup>850</sup> The economy was also at great risk, something that needed to be stressed, according to Jaruzelski.<sup>851</sup> The Party and the nation were threatened with catastrophe.

To cap it all even some of the Church were unhappy following the broadcast of Wyszyński’s homily. The Press Office of the Polish Episcopate announced that not only was the published version of the homily ‘not integral’ and ‘not authorised’, but Wyszyński had not even been asked for permission to publish it.<sup>852</sup> Individual priests, such as Hilary Jastak, were also angered by the homily.<sup>853</sup> The end result of its unauthorised and censored publication was a clarification of the Church’s position by the Main Council of the Polish Episcopate. In a communiqué it stressed, amongst other things, the need for a swift resolution of the situation through ‘dialogue’ and declared that any agreement between the two sides ‘should be fulfilled [...] in accordance with the principle: *Pacta sunt servanda*’<sup>854</sup>

---

<sup>849</sup> ‘Protokół Nr 26 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 27 sierpnia 1980r.’, p.1.

<sup>850</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>851</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>852</sup> ‘Informacja Sekretariatu Episkopatu Polski z 27.08.1980r. o ocenzurowaniu kazania Prymas Polski, Warszawa, 27.08.1980’, in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, p.308.

<sup>853</sup> ‘Father Prelate Hilary Jastak: Memorandum to the Primate of Poland’, in: A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (eds.), *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980 -1981: A Documentary History* (Budapest and New York, 2007), p.55.

<sup>854</sup> ‘Komunikat z posiedzenia Rady Głównej Episkopatu Polski, Warszawa, 27.08.1980’, in: *Zapis Wydarzeń*, p.295.

– *agreements must be kept*. The following day Cardinal Wyszyński would also meet with workers from the Paris Commune Shipyard to offer reassurances over the broadcast of his sermon.<sup>855</sup>

## **28 August 1980 (Thursday)**

As the third round of negotiations between Jagielski and the MKS got underway, some 600 enterprises were on strike in Gdańsk.<sup>856</sup> Tension throughout Poland also continued to mount as strikes spread to more and more regions and industries. A lack of resolution to events also raised anxiety.<sup>857</sup> It was an anxiety not restricted to society. With mounting tension in the capital evident, the *aktyw*'s criticism of the Party leadership was also on the rise. Further domestic problems were also threatened due to worsening supplies of raw materials. Stoppages could be triggered simply because there were insufficient materials for an enterprise to function.<sup>858</sup> Although there was potential for the situation to worsen further, there was already sufficient pressure for the situation to require bringing under control and Jagielski voiced his hope at the start of the meeting that it would lead to a constructive solution to the issues facing them. He wanted it to be the final one between the two sides in terms of actual negotiations.<sup>859</sup> He was to be disappointed. Although the MKS and their

---

<sup>855</sup> See: 'The Strike Committee of the Paris Commune Shipyard in Gdynia: Minutes of meeting in Warsaw with Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński (28 August 1980)', in: Paczkowski and Byrne (eds.), p.56.

<sup>856</sup> L. Biernacki and A. Kazański, 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Gdański', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989. Tom 3. Polska Północna* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.7-245 (p.27).

<sup>857</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.127).

<sup>858</sup> 'Protokół nr 27 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 28 sierpnia 1980r.', in: Z. Włodek (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a "Solidarność" 1980-1981* (London, 1992), pp.78-80.

<sup>859</sup> A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), p.88.

advisors had met that morning to prepare a draft text for point one,<sup>860</sup> the MKS still had other major issue to discuss, including freedom of expression (point 3).

Pointing to the disparity between Poland as it existed on paper and in reality, Lech Bądkowski made clear they were not looking to abolish censorship, only to ensure that the right to freedom of expression guaranteed in the Polish Constitution was actually met. The MKS fully appreciated ‘the security interests of Poland and the permanence of her alliance, the Warsaw Pact’ and was not looking to challenge them. They simply wanted to be able ‘to express their views in public and to produce books and journals.’ Although Jagielski was in full agreement with the MKS, he sought to add an additional point. While agreeing that censorship should still apply to issues that presented a threat to the Polish system and the Warsaw Pact, he sought to extend it to economic matters as well. He used examples from the West to support his argument, claiming that in countries such as the U.S., Britain and France ‘economic matters are sometimes even more secret than others.’<sup>861</sup> As well as marking a further use of Western methods as a model by which Eastern bloc methods of censorship could be justified, it was one that was particularly significant given Poland’s economic circumstances. It indicates a clear desire to prevent society from obtaining accurate information about the true state of the Polish economy. They did not wish to lose control over economic information at a time of deep economic crisis. Doing so could only further serve to undermine their legitimacy.

A further desire to protect the Polish economy also soon became evident, but this time from the workers. At a point during which negotiations threatened to head out of control following a suggestion from Jagielski that Article 182 of the Constitution be used as the basis for an agreement on point three (an idea rejected by the workers on the grounds

---

<sup>860</sup> See: T. Kowalik, ‘Experts and the Working Group’, in: A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.143-167 (pp.149-150). A draft making use of the phrase ‘independent and self-governing’ in relation to new trade union had already been drawn up.

<sup>861</sup> Kemp-Welch, pp.90-91.

that this article had been in use for years, but ‘despite its wonderful provisions’ excessive censorship was still an issue and there was no means of appeal), Wałęsa emphasised that the workers genuinely wished to reach an agreement rather than to cause problems.<sup>862</sup> In order to support this assertion, he offered to issue an appeal to other workforces to voice their ‘solidarity’ with Gdańsk without actually halting work for the time being. Supported by Jagielski and Fiszbach such a move was designed to protect the economy and allow both sides time to reach an agreement.<sup>863</sup> It served as a useful reminder that neither side had any interest in bringing about further economic damage to the nation. Although one Politburo member, while highlighting the Party’s own weak response, would accuse the opposition of ruining the Polish economy,<sup>864</sup> this was far from being the case. Both the Polish opposition and Polish workers had as much interest in the economic survival of Poland as the Party. In their own ways all Poles were mutually dependent upon it. Although not discussed that day, they simply differed on notions regarding its reform and management. Following further discussions over the issue of political prisoners meanwhile and whether Poland could be considered ‘a police state or a democracy’ the meeting ended with no agreement. More talks over points one – four in the working groups were promised, while negotiations were scheduled to resume at 5pm that afternoon.<sup>865</sup>

While on the coast the Party continued to find itself under pressure from the MKS, they also found themselves under increased pressure from Moscow. Gierek had received an official declaration from Moscow via the Soviet ambassador Boris Aristov. It expressed both their concern over the situation and their unhappiness with the Party’s ineffective ‘counteroffensive’ against the strikes. Alongside complaints about the ‘self-critical or defensive’ nature of Polish press coverage and the presence of Western journalists on the

---

<sup>862</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>863</sup> Ibid., 96-98.

<sup>864</sup> ‘Protokół nr 27 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 28 sierpnia 1980r.’, in: Z. Włodek (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a „Solidarność” 1980-1981* (London, 1992), p.81.

<sup>865</sup> See: Kemp-Welch, pp.110-112.

coast, Moscow also delivered a clear warning. In reference to the first worker uprising under Communism, Gierek had been informed ‘that today’s situation in Poland resembles the year 1921 in the USSR – the struggle of the Bolsheviks with the anarcho-syndicalists.’<sup>866</sup> It was a clear reference to the sixteen day Kronstadt naval rebellion of that year, when sailors issued a fifteen point resolution including calls for ‘freedom of assembly for trade union and peasant organizations’ only for their mutiny to be crushed in an assault by the army.<sup>867</sup> Faced with such pressure, Gierek defended the Party’s response, pointing to the use of prosecutor’s sanctions (carrying a three month sentence and that day introduced against six opposition activists, including Jacek Kuroń, Adam Michnik and Jan Lityński) as well as other repressive measures.<sup>868</sup>

Gierek argued firmly against violence, however. If the army was sent in, little would be accomplished and blood would be shed. He cited Polish experiences dating back to 1956 in support of this. He also drew attention to one key problem: it was not clear whether Polish soldiers would be willing to shoot Polish workers.<sup>869</sup> Although not raised at Politburo, a further risk in the event of any crackdown would be that of military defections, raising the question of whether defectors would act passively as some had done in 1970 or ultimately use their weapons.<sup>870</sup> Although contingency plans remained in place for the use of force, as made clear in talks with East Germany the previous day, they intended to resolve the situation ‘as far as possible without the use of violence.’<sup>871</sup> Although tensions

---

<sup>866</sup> ‘Protokół nr 27 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 28 sierpnia 1980r.’, p.78.

<sup>867</sup> See: P. Avrich, *Kronstadt 1921* (Princeton NJ, 1970). The sailors’ fifteen point resolution, which was issued in the aftermath of strikes in Petrograd, is reprinted on pages 73-74.

<sup>868</sup> ‘Protokół nr 27 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 28 sierpnia 1980r.’, p.78. On the use of prosecutor’s sanctions against KOR and other opposition activists, see: A. Friszke, *Czas KOR-u: Jacek Kuroń a geneza Solidarności* (Kraków, 2011), p.567; J. Skórzyński, *Siła bezsilnych: Historia Komitetu Obrony Robotników* (Warsaw, 2012), p.452.

<sup>869</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>870</sup> On 1970, see: R. Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity: A Political Sociology of Poland’s Working Class Democratization* (Princeton NJ, 1991), pp.33-34.

<sup>871</sup> ‘Rozmowy wiceministra Bezpieczeństwa Państwa, towarzysza generała pułkownika Wolfa, z wiceministrami Spraw Wewnętrznych Polskiej RL, towarzyszymi Stachurą i Milewskim oraz dyrektorem department I MSW Polskiej RL, towarzyszem Słowikowskim, 27 sierpnia 1980 r.’, in: W. Borodziej and J.

were clearly evident within the leadership team Soviet pressure did not lead to any dissent from Gierek's essential stance on this point. Nor if domestic Soviet coverage of events is anything to go by, did Moscow expect them to. That day the standard Soviet press line on "antisocialist forces" was reportedly balanced 'with news that "special government commissions" or negotiating teams were operating on the strike torn Baltic coast.'<sup>872</sup> This is not the kind of press coverage associated with a genuine push for a domestic crackdown and has actually been interpreted as hinting 'at a peaceful outcome' to events.<sup>873</sup> It was a public line at odds with that privately presented to the Politburo, but also at odds with the actions of the Suslov commission.

That day the commission authorised military steps to be undertaken in relation to the continuing strikes in Poland. It was requested that four divisions (three tank and one mechanized rifle division) be prepared for 'full combat readiness [...] in case military assistance is provided' by 6pm the following day.<sup>874</sup> Although with Soviet Politburo minutes for the final week of August unavailable it is impossible to judge how much discussion of a possible intervention in Poland took place at the highest levels, as Mark Kramer notes there is sufficient evidence to suggest that they might have been contemplating such a move. U.S. intelligence suggests that the preparations were certainly genuine.<sup>875</sup> One factor which could indicate that in August at least, such developments were only for contingency purposes, is the fact that despite the apparent urgency with which the four divisions required readying, Brezhnev, along with Andrey Kirilenko (the CPSU's deputy leader), made trips outside of Moscow. Brezhnev would not return until 31

---

Kochanowski (eds.), *PRL w oczach Stasi*. Tom.II. Dokumenty z lat 1980-1983 (Warsaw, 1996), p.41. (Report dated 28 August 1980).

<sup>872</sup> S.I. Ploss, *Moscow and the Polish Crisis: An Interpretation of Soviet Policies and Intentions* (Boulder and London, 1986), p.16.

<sup>873</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>874</sup> M. Kramer, "'In Case Military Assistance Is Provided to Poland": Soviet Preparations for Military Contingencies, August 1980', *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin 11* (Winter 1998), pp.102-109 (p.108).

<sup>875</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

August.<sup>876</sup> Coupled with Soviet media coverage of the coastal negotiations, it seems that while preparations were genuine, military action was not imminent. While a more radical build-up of forces was also proposed in case the situation deteriorated, no timetable was given for such a development.<sup>877</sup> In the short term at least, any potential intervention would be on a scale similar to that conducted in Hungary (1956) with the aim of either shoring up Gierek's leadership or replacing him with an alternate leader.<sup>878</sup> While not on a par with the crushing of the Prague Spring, this is not to say that such an intervention would have been ineffective at crushing the workers' movement. According to Anders Boserup and Andrew Mack, an intervention on the scale of Hungary or even East Germany (which they dub 'massive repression') is more likely to bring an end to widespread acts of civil resistance than more 'limited repression' such as martial law.<sup>879</sup> If implemented, the plan may well have been sufficient to quell worker unrest. This is not to say that such an operation would be without risk, however. There was always the chance that non-violent resistance could turn violent. Poland certainly had a history of violence as the Soviet Union was well-aware.

While such possibilities would need to be considered when deciding to intervene, the Soviet Union could also not act without international consequence. As a U.S. National Security Council (NSC) memorandum made clear, any Soviet intervention 'would be politically very costly' for the Soviets with serious ramifications for the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) amongst other things.<sup>880</sup> Given Brezhnev's earlier message to

---

<sup>876</sup> Ploss, pp.16-17.

<sup>877</sup> According to the Suslov Commission memorandum obtained by Kramer under such circumstances it would be necessary 'to fill out the constantly ready divisions of the Baltic, Belorussian, and Transcarpathian Military Districts up to wartime level. If the main forces of the Polish Army go over to the side of the counterrevolutionary forces, we must increase the group of our own forces by another five-seven divisions.' This would mean that approximately 100, 000 reserves and 15, 000 'vehicles would have to be requisitioned from the national economy.'

<sup>878</sup> Kramer, pp.103-104.

<sup>879</sup> A. Boserup and A. Mack, *War Without Weapons: Non-Violence in National Defence* (London, 1974), pp.82-91

<sup>880</sup> 'National Security Council Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from Steve Larrabee: The Polish Crisis and Beyond: Implications for US Policy (28 August 1980)', in: M. Munteanu and B. Zanchetta (eds.), *From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975-1985: The Globalization of the Bipolar Confrontation* (A CWIHP and CIMA Document



Carter, this would appear to have been a significant concern for Moscow at this time. The fact that Soviet and Western public statements were essentially following the same line, suggests that Moscow was keen to maintain peace and stability in Europe. Ensuring that the process of arms control, which Brezhnev is known to have valued (so long as there was parity), remained underway was perhaps the most significant factor in all of this.

In spite of this, there were limits to how far the Soviet Union could stay out of Polish events. As the NSC memorandum acknowledged 'if the situation were to show signs of spiralling out of control and threatening the leading role of the party, they could feel compelled to intervene.' From the Soviet viewpoint 'it would be better to act precipitously to arrest the rot, than risk the danger of its spreading elsewhere in Eastern Europe at a later date.'<sup>881</sup> While there were no signs of contagion in the Eastern bloc, there was evident apprehension over Polish events.<sup>882</sup> Moscow also continued to have its own problems to deal with in the borderlands as official criticism of Lithuanian trade unions indicated.<sup>883</sup> If contagion were to become an issue, a harder line from the Soviet Union could be expected to develop. Equally had a planned call for railway strikes by KPN activists at the Polish-Soviet border crossing of Medyka come to fruition, blocking raw materials from the Soviet Union, Soviet concerns may well have been further raised.<sup>884</sup>

It was not only Moscow that valued the survival of détente, however. The West did as well. This was made clear in a personal message of support that Gierek received from the

---

Reader, April 2006)

<[https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Briefing\\_Book\\_Helsinki\\_to\\_Gorbachev\\_1975-1985.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Briefing_Book_Helsinki_to_Gorbachev_1975-1985.pdf) > [August 2015].

<sup>881</sup> 'National Security Council Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from Steve Larrabee: The Polish Crisis and Beyond: Implications for US Policy (28 August 1980)', in: Munteanu and Zanchetta.

<sup>882</sup> See: CIA FOIA: CIA, 'Eastern Europe: Reactions to the Polish Crisis', 28 August 1980; DOS FOIA: Telegram from Prague to State, 'Initial Effects of Polish Unrest in Czechoslovakia', 27 August 1980. Document No. 80PRAGUE003114; DOS FOIA: Telegram from Berlin to State, 'Further GDR Reaction to Polish Situation', 27 August 1980. Document No. 80BERLIN003939.

<sup>883</sup> E. Teague, *Solidarity and the Soviet Worker: The Impact of the Polish Events of 1980 on Soviet Internal Politics* (London, 1988), p.66.

<sup>884</sup> See: A. Brożyniak, 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Południowo-Wschodni', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.5. Polska Środkowo-Wschodnia (Warsaw, 2010), pp.749-800 (p.752).

French President Giscard d'Estaing. In addition to sentiments made apparent in France's earlier public statement, such as the importance of Poland for 'stability and peace in Europe' and a belief that Poland could resolve its own difficulties in a manner that fulfilled the desires of the nation, the concluding paragraph is also of note. It makes plain that Poland could continue 'to count on the sympathy and active help of France'. This had been demonstrated a number of times before.<sup>885</sup> It was a clear indication that much needed economic support for Poland would continue to be forthcoming from Poland's major Western partner. Nor were France alone in offering such support. Although not read out at Politburo that day West Germany was equally supportive. While as with all Western states he was sympathetic to the workers, in a letter passed via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Chancellor Schmidt offered Poland further assistance in obtaining loans as well as general support for prospective IMF membership.<sup>886</sup> He voiced similar sentiments in an interview that night. As well as welcoming the continued support of Western banks for Poland, he also indicated that the West German government would provide additional economic support for their Polish counterparts if matters were brought to a peaceful conclusion by the Poles.<sup>887</sup>

In addition to the fact that Warsaw seems now to have had an added incentive to resolve matters peacefully, such support from Poland's two major economic partners in the West was vital for Poland's survival at this time. The more the economy worsened, the more social unrest was likely to increase. The more social unrest increased, the greater the risk of a crackdown with all of the attendant consequences this threatened for détente. Noticeably while Gierek enjoyed the support of Poland's two most important economic partners in the West, that of its third was less forthcoming. The United States had prepared a letter to

---

<sup>885</sup> 'Protokół nr 27 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 28 sierpnia 1980r.', in: Z. Włodek (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a „Solidarność” 1980-1981* (London, 1992), p.83. See also: AAN, PZPR KC w Warszawie, XIA/1109, 39-40.

<sup>886</sup> P. Pleskot, *Kłopotliwa Panna „S”: Postawy polityczne Zachodu wobec „Solidarności” na tle stosunków z PRL (1980 – 1989)* (Warsaw, 2013), p.101.

<sup>887</sup> TNA: PRO: FCO 28/4161, f126: Telegram from Bonn to FCO, 'Letter Cameron/Battiscombe of 22 August and Bonn Telno 631: Polish crisis and Ostpolitik, FRG Reactions', 29 August 1980.

Gierek, but an NSC memorandum recommended delaying its transmission 'until the dust clears.' They did not 'want to send a letter in the middle of a crisis or to a lame duck.'<sup>888</sup>

There was no alteration to the U.S. policy of non-interference in the affairs of a sovereign state however,<sup>889</sup> only hesitation towards Gierek.

## **29 August 1980 (Friday)**

Sixteen days into the Lenin Shipyard strike 643 600 workers at 653 enterprises in 27 regions were on strike throughout Poland. While six areas (Gdańsk, Szczecin, Elbląg, Wrocław, Bydgoszcz and Słupsk) were in a state of general or generalized strike,<sup>890</sup> major strikes were also taking place in Łódź, Katowice and Wałbrzych with the prospect of the situation deteriorating further. There was a genuine risk that strikes could spread to all parts of the country bringing chaos to the Polish economy.<sup>891</sup> Given its already catastrophic state, such a development would have been almost impossible to cope with. As such, each major strike in a vital industrial centre only added greater weight to the pressure on the Polish leadership. While the formation of an MKS in Bydgoszcz, where a strike now involving 24 enterprises had begun the previous day,<sup>892</sup> marked another blow to their control over Poland, it was arguably the strikes in the mining regions that were most significant. Although strikes had already broken out at the "Thorez" mine in Wałbrzych on 26 August, the night of 28-29

---

<sup>888</sup> 'National Security Council Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from Steve Larrabee: The Polish Crisis and Beyond: Implications for US Policy (28 August 1980)', in: Munteanu and Zanchetta (eds.), *From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975-1985*.

<sup>889</sup> This is made clear by a joint statement issued by Edmund Muskie and Hans-Dietrich Genscher. See: 'US and West Germany Call for Restraint in Poland's Crisis', *The Guardian*, 28 August 1980.

<sup>890</sup> Gene Sharp defines a *general strike* as a 'widespread stoppage of labor by workers in an attempt to bring the economic life of a given area to a more or less complete standstill in order to achieve certain local desired objectives.' It can operate 'on a local, regional, national, or international level.' By contrast a *generalized strike* concerns strikes in which 'several industries are struck simultaneously as part of a general grievance but the strikers constitute less than a majority of workers in the important industries of the area.' In this case it is used to describe areas verging on a general strike. See: G. Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Part Two: The Methods of Nonviolent Action (Boston MA, 2005), p.275.

<sup>891</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.135-142).

<sup>892</sup> See: K. Osiński, 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Bydgoski', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980 – 1989*. Tom. 3. Polska Północna (Warsaw, 2010), pp.355-479 (p.362).

August had seen an outbreak of strikes at the “Manifest Lipcowy” and “Borynia” mines at Jastrzębie in the Katowice region. An MKS had been established at the “Manifest Lipcowy” mine and further mines and enterprises throughout the region continued to emerge on strike throughout the day.<sup>893</sup>

This represented another major threat to the Party just as negotiations on the coast, particularly at Szczecin neared their conclusion. Once again the Party was presented with another genuine working class challenge to their authority, rather than one rooted in the opposition.<sup>894</sup> Once again it came in another vital industrial region. The significance of the coal mines was twofold. Firstly, coal was central to the success of the Polish economy. Under Gierek its production had increased dramatically with it making up 14 percent of Poland’s total exports.<sup>895</sup> With only North Sea oil outranking Polish coal as ‘Europe’s most attractive hydro-carbon resource’<sup>896</sup> it was both a major source of attraction for Western investors, but also of hard currency for debt repayments. As the loan agreement with Austria that summer demonstrated, Poland would struggle to attract new investment as well as to meet their repayments to the West, without coal production. Secondly, the Katowice region was Gierek’s heartland and also one that had not been involved in other major Polish worker protests under Communism (to the detriment of Silesian workers’ standing amongst other

---

<sup>893</sup> See: J. Neja and T. Kurpierz, “‘NSZZ’ Solidarność Region Śląsko-Dąbrowski”, in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.6. Polska Południowa (Warsaw, 2010), pp.171-313 (pp.174-175); T. Kurpierz and J. Neja, *“Solidarność” śląsko-dąbrowska 1980-1981* (Katowice, 2012), pp.46-51.

<sup>894</sup> Although the first Free Trade Union to exist in Poland had been established in Katowice in 1978 by Kazimierz Świtoń, they had been heavily repressed and as with those in Szczecin had no influence on the strikes. See: J. Neja, ‘Śląski casus WZZ’, *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 4 (87), kwiecień 2008, pp.8-20. For a comparison of the Free Trade Unions in Katowice, Gdańsk and Szczecin, see: M.H. Bernhard, *The Origins of Democratization in Poland: Workers, Intellectuals, and Oppositional Politics, 1976-1980* (New York, 1993), pp.170-192.

<sup>895</sup> Kurpierz and Neja, p.35.

<sup>896</sup> ‘Under Western Bankers’ Eyes’, *The Economist*, 16 August 1980.

Poles).<sup>897</sup> The loss of the mines represented a double-blow to the Polish leader in terms of the economy and personal prestige at a time of acute crisis, therefore.

While it would be vital to get the miners' strikes under control, the miners would also be a difficult group to buy off. Although throughout the late-1970s they received higher than average wages, due to the economic importance of Polish coal they had also been amongst the most overworked groups in the country. The four-brigade system, which saw three brigades of miners working eight hour shifts six days a week in exchange for two days off on different days of the week, arguably provides the clearest example of this.<sup>898</sup> In operation at over 40 percent of Polish mines (but not "Manifest Lipcowy") by August 1980, the system brought about not only an increased rate of accidents at Polish mines during the late 1970s, but also seriously damaged miners' family lives. It became the norm that they spent only one Sunday every month with their families.<sup>899</sup> The significance of this should not be underestimated in a devoutly Catholic country. Although well remunerated, the miners were far from happy with their lot. As one miner summarised:

You got a day off in the middle of the week, but your wife worked and your children were at school, so what was the point? [...] People continually had to work overtime and with intensity, with no relaxation from 1975 on. Miners, who were overtired and overworked didn't realise what was going on. Take myself: I felt I was making a lot of money, and I didn't even realise that I worked every day – it was just work, work and nothing else. You can't live like that. Anger grows in you.<sup>900</sup>

Given such frustrations amongst coal miners and the fact that the 21 demands at Gdańsk included calls for compensation for those employed under the four-brigade system in the form of increased annual leave or extra time off work with pay, the emergence of an MKS at Jastrzębie arguably added significant weight to the coastal demands at a sensitive moment in MKS-government negotiations on the coast.

---

<sup>897</sup> See: J.M. Bloom, *Seeing Through the Eyes of the Polish Revolution: Solidarity and the Struggle Against Communism in Poland* (Chicago IL, 2013), p.114.

<sup>898</sup> Kurpierz and Neja, p.36.

<sup>899</sup> Neja and Kurpierz, p.172.

<sup>900</sup> Zbigniew Bogacz in, Bloom, p.107.

Having failed to return for negotiations at the Lenin Shipyard the previous day, the news came at midday that once again the Jagielski Commission would not be resuming talks. Within the MKS the news received a negative response. Ordinary workers in the shipyard were also unsettled by the news.<sup>901</sup> Although talks would take place within the working groups, even this made workers nervous as unlike the main negotiations, these talks were never broadcast. Despite the efforts of Gwiazda to reassure them on this issue, there was concern amongst delegates that the Presidium was being cut out of negotiations.<sup>902</sup> After all they had no way of knowing what was going on. They were not alone in this. International actors also struggled to follow events as with the situation changing rapidly and no inside knowledge of events, making judgements was tricky.<sup>903</sup> The sheer scale of hard to verify rumours spreading throughout Poland only confused matters further. The U.S. were not even sure if negotiations were taking place between Jagielski and the MKS that day due to conflicting reports on the matter.<sup>904</sup> Misinterpretation was also an issue which presented problems for outside observers. In a harsh assessment of Wałęsa's appeal for a temporary halt to strikes the previous evening, for example, the CIA warned that it was 'a veiled threat that the strike leaders are prepared to call for a nationwide general strike if their demands are not met soon.'<sup>905</sup> The opposite was actually true. He was actually attempting to calm the situation. With no prior knowledge of Wałęsa and no contacts with the MKS however, the U.S. were not to know this. Nor were they alone in having such problems. Although they naturally benefited from ties with the Polish security services, the KGB also

---

<sup>901</sup> T. Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-1982* (London, 1983), p.62.

<sup>902</sup> T. Kowalik, 'Experts and the Working Group', in: A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.143-167 (pp.150-155).

<sup>903</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Situation in Poland; Prudent Assessment', 29 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008625.

<sup>904</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Sitrep #12: Negotiations uneven; Strikes in Katowice and Poznan', 29 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008624.

<sup>905</sup> CIA FOIA: CIA, 'Situation Reports: Poland', 29 August 1980.

had no prior knowledge of Wałęsa before August 1980.<sup>906</sup> Such a lack of information arguably made it difficult to do anything other than watch.

While foreign security services struggled to interpret events, the actions of the domestic security services continued. In addition to the extension of prosecutor's sanctions to further opposition activists, including Leszek Moczulski (KPN), as well as road blocks in eight regions halting over 2250 vehicles,<sup>907</sup> that day also saw the infiltration of an advisory group to the Szczecin MKS. While work continued at Szczecin amongst two sub-groups formed earlier in the strike (the Editorial Commission and the Commission of Legal Experts), including on the issue of trade unions, that morning also saw the arrival of a group of three advisors from Warsaw to work on economic and social matters. They were joined by a fourth who had travelled independently from Łódź, the sociologist Andrzej Mazur.<sup>908</sup> Unknown to the Szczecin MKS, Mazur's presence was organised at the yard by the SB. With the agreement of the head of the SB in Łódź and with apparent help from a secret collaborator active within Szczecin's opposition, Mazur travelled to the yard in order to help bring an early end to the strike through raising problems in talks. Amongst other things, he helped introduce the scale of the financial losses being brought about by the strike into conversations as well as highlighting the Party's fear of trade unions as a parallel source of political authority in Poland into talks.<sup>909</sup> Both were key areas of concern for the Party at this time. While it is difficult to assess Mazur's exact impact on the outcome of the Szczecin strike, his role was interpreted favourably by the Łódź SB.<sup>910</sup> It appears to be the most high-

---

<sup>906</sup> See: W. Pawłow, *Byłem Rezydentem KGB w Polsce* (Warsaw, 1994), p.218.

<sup>907</sup> See: A. Friszke, *Czas KOR-u: Jacek Kuroń a geneza Solidarności* (Kraków, 2011), p.567; G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.142).

<sup>908</sup> The three advisors from Warsaw were Prof. Andrzej Tymowski, Dr Janina Walunkowa and the writer Andrzej Kijowski. See: Z. Matusiewicz, *Szczecin 1980-1981: Rewolucja "Solidarności"* (Szczecin, 1997), p.77; M. Szejnert and T. Zalewski, *Szczecin. Grudzień-Sierpień-Grudzień* (Warsaw, 1984), p.184.

<sup>909</sup> B. Czuma, *Łódzka "Solidarność" 1980-1981* (Łódź, 2010), pp.18-19; A. Friszke, *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980-1981* (Kraków, 2014), pp.61-62. For Mazur's contribution to discussions, see: Szejnert and Zalewski, pp.187-196.

<sup>910</sup> Czuma, p.19.

profile act of infiltration that summer and adds a further dimension to the SB's other activities against the strikes, which also included efforts to infiltrate strikes and employ "disintegration" techniques.<sup>911</sup> It was not necessarily the most unusual effort by the authorities to influence events, however.<sup>912</sup>

At the Lenin Shipyard talks continued between working groups from both sides. Unlike those at Szczecin these appear to have been conducted entirely in good faith. On the government's side Kołodziejowski announced the need for clarification on several aspects of the demand for new trade unions and Professor Rajkiewicz then presented the authorities' position on this point. According to Kowalik, Rajkiewicz's speech contained three points on the matter of trade unions:

1. Toning down the negative assessment of existing trade unions. Replacing the sharpest phrase about their being compromised with a statement that their conduct 'had not lived up to the hopes and expectations of employees'.
2. Attempting to blur the impression of a clear-cut choice between the old and new unions by listing a number of alternatives. [...]

---

<sup>911</sup> For examples of SB efforts at "disintegration", see: T. Kurpierz and J. Neja, *"Solidarność" śląsko-dąbrowska 1980-1981* (Katowice, 2012), p.57; A. Malik *"Nie można oddzielić krzyża od ludzkiej pracy..." Komisja Robotnicza Hutników NSZZ "Solidarność" Huty im. Lenina (sierpień 1980 – grudzień 1981)* (Warsaw, 2013), p.40.

<sup>912</sup> A telegram sent by William Schaefele that day described a meeting that had taken place at short notice at the request of the Poles on 28 August. During the meeting the Deputy Polish Foreign Minister Marian Dobrosielski had explicitly asked for US assistance on the matter of independent trade unions. While he did not expect direct intervention from the US government, he expressed a desire for 'American personalities' associated with politics and trade unionism to broadcast statements on Radio Free Europe and Voice of America informing the workers that the creation of free trade unions 'would have to evolve over time [...] it was unrealistic to expect everything to happen at once.' He claimed that the request had been discussed with "new members of the team." Interestingly, only days earlier the US had received similar requests from Jan Wojnarowski, a man claiming to be part of a Free Trade Union group in Warsaw. Wojnarowski's requests included calls for Polish language broadcasts on US trade unions by Radio Free Europe or Voice of America, and a 'Polish-speaking advisor' to assist in organising the unions. Wojnarowski had apparently 'just returned from Gdansk' where he claimed to have met MKS members at the Lenin Shipyard and 'spoken with Jan Kielbasa, one of the leaders of the strike committee.' There were no free trade unions in Warsaw (or in any other of the locations mentioned by Wojnarowski) and no one called Jan Kielbasa was a leader at the Lenin Shipyard. Given the similar request from Dobrosielski and his reference to the "new team", which was presumably headed by Kania, it seems possible that this was a ploy developed in conjunction with the security services to use trusted Western broadcasters to calm the situation. More research is required into the background of these requests. See: DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Ambassador's Meeting with Dobrosielski', 29 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008615; DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Warsaw Free Trade Union Activist Seeks Coordinated Labor Position', 26 August 1980. Document No. 80WARSAW008507.



3. Regarding registration of the new trade unions [...] the point of disagreement was: which court? We insisted on the Supreme Administrative Court, while their side favoured a public court.<sup>913</sup>

All of these issues would need to be resolved before an agreement between the two sides could be reached. While the sudden need for the government side to clarify the exact phrasing of point one could be seen as a simple attempt to water down the content of any agreement, it was received positively by the MKS' working group and viewed as an attempt to save face rather than to undermine the first demand. They felt as though they were nearing an understanding with the authorities over new trade unions according to Kowalik, and recognised that the authorities could not afford to be seen as having lost to the workers. The government team emphasised 'that the Agreement was a victory for a particular line of policy, rather than one side.'<sup>914</sup> While Gdańsk edged closer to an agreement on point one, Szczecin went one step further. Late that night Marian Jurczyk announced that agreement had been reached on point one of Szczecin's demands: free trade unions. It would be the final night of the strike.<sup>915</sup> Although the exact course of events leading to the end of the Szczecin strike prior to that in Gdańsk remained unclear even after the agreement was signed, despite the need for solidarity it seems that the Szczecin MKS were assured by one of their advisers following a phone call to Gdańsk that they should end the strike. On point one they had a good deal.<sup>916</sup> After just under two weeks on strike, the authorities were finally nearing the point at which the Szczecin strike could be brought to a close. As

---

<sup>913</sup> T. Kowalik, 'Experts and the Working Group', in: A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.143-167 (pp.152-153). Although Rajkiewicz provides a detailed account of the day, he does not provide any specific details to corroborate Kowalik's account. See: A. Rajkiewicz, 'Gdańsk – Sierpień '80. Ostatni Tydzień', in: R. Chwedoruk and D. Przastek (eds.), *Dylematy Historii i Polityki. Księga dedykowana Profesor Annie Magierskiej* (Warsaw, 2008), pp.75-89 (p.85).

<sup>914</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>915</sup> Matusiewicz, *Szczecin 1980-1981*, p.79.

<sup>916</sup> This issue was discussed by three key figures in the Szczecin MKS (Marian Jurczyk, Aleksander Krystosiak and Marian Juszcuk) in a Solidarity-era interview. The matter does not appear to have been entirely clear to them even one year on from the strike. See: 'Nie partner lecz przeciwnik', *Jedność. Tygodnik NSZZ Solidarność Pomorza Zachodniego*, 34 (52), 28 sierpnia 1981r., pp.1, 6-7.

Politburo minutes for that day reveal however, it was unlikely to be the end of the matter in either domestic or international terms.

Based on Gierek's introductory comments at Politburo it appears to have been a combination of factors rather than one particular strike that finally forced the Party's hands on the issue of trade unions. Faced not only with increasingly widespread strikes and ever growing demands, along with a clear loss of support within the Party, Gierek appears to have been at a genuine loss as to what to do. They were already doing everything that they could. Under such circumstances and faced with a 'general strike' throughout Poland, Gierek felt that agreeing to free trade unions might be the only option in the short-term. Although he remained opposed to them, the Party might have 'to choose the lesser evil, and then attempt to get out of it.'<sup>917</sup> There appears to have been little immediate support for Gierek in the Politburo on this point. In part this may have been due to the origins of free trade unions in the opposition activities during the 1970s, a point noted again by Kania during that day's Politburo session.<sup>918</sup> A more pressing concern was the fact that such a decision could not be taken without consultations with Moscow. This was made plain by General Jaruzelski, while Stefan Olszowski also pushed for talks with Poland's allies. They were needed, as one Politburo member observed, as 'what happens in Poland, may have repercussions in the whole socialist camp.'<sup>919</sup> Such repercussions were potentially significant. As a letter from the Ideological and Educational Department of the PZPR's Central Committee to the Tri-city authorities warned, such a 'structure [...] would be a bridgehead for anti-communist western forces in our country.'<sup>920</sup> Although Moscow's precise response was far from certain, they were likely to hold similar views on the matter.

---

<sup>917</sup> 'Protokół nr 28 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 29 sierpnia 1980r.', in: Z. Włodek (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a „Solidarność” 1980-1981* (London, 1992), p.84

<sup>918</sup> Ibid., 84-85.

<sup>919</sup> Ibid., 87-89.

<sup>920</sup> 'Solidarity Strike Bulletin No.10 (29 August 1980)', in: O. MacDonald (ed.), *The Polish August: Documents from the Beginnings of the Polish Workers Rebellion. Gdańsk. August 1980* (Seattle, 1981), pp.79-81.

All Poles were well aware of what the worst case scenario would be, however. In a number of regions speculation was already mounting as to the possible impact of the strikes on Poland's relations with neighbouring socialist states and a potential Warsaw Pact invasion.<sup>921</sup> While unknown to the Poles, preparations for an initial deployment of four Soviet divisions were due for completion that day, internal action remained the most likely outcome if force were used. That day General Stachura informed Central Committee members of the department's readiness to undertake the liquidation of the strike on the coast.<sup>922</sup>

Despite Gierek's move towards accepting free trade unions, perhaps the most prominent discussions at Politburo that summer regarding the domestic use of force took place that day. They focussed on two possible uses of force in Poland. The first concerned the introduction of a 'state of emergency' (*stan wyjątkowy*). The second concerned its use against the port blockades. Both were ultimately ruled out, but for different reasons. In response to a suggestion from one Politburo member that the introduction of a 'state of emergency' should be considered, the response from General Jaruzelski was clear. Under the terms of the Polish Constitution it was impossible for such a state to be introduced in Poland. Only martial law (*stan wojenny*) could be introduced.<sup>923</sup> Even the introduction of martial law at this time would be far from straightforward, however. On a practical level, as Jaruzelski noted, there was the problem of introducing martial law at a time when all of Poland was out on strike. As Kania had remarked in response to a call from a regional Party secretary for the use of force, such notions were 'a chimera' (*mrzonka*) due to the scale of the strikes and possible repercussions of any crackdown.<sup>924</sup> The risk of 'backfire' was

---

<sup>921</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.138).

<sup>922</sup> A. Paczkowski, *Droga do "mniejszego zła". Strategia i taktyka obozu władzy lipiec 1980 – styczeń 1982* (Kraków, 2002), p.41.

<sup>923</sup> 'Protokół nr 28 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 29 sierpnia 1980r.', pp.84-87.

<sup>924</sup> *Ibid.*, 85-87.

tremendous. On a legal level there were also difficulties as the necessary provisions for its introduction did not exist. As Andrzej Paczkowski later noted in his post-communist report for the *Sejm Commission on Constitutional Oversight*:

While statute 2 of article 33 of the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic [...] at the time authorized the Council of State to "introduce martial law on part or the entire territory ... if deemed necessary for the protection of the security of the state", no executive acts were passed. Even the document submitted to the KOK [Komitet Obrony Kraju – Committee for the Defence of the Homeland – G.H.] on 19 January 1979, regarding "Martial Law in order to protect the state", was not submitted to the legislative process. In fact, the work to complete a parallel act, that would enable the legal introduction of Martial Law "for reasons of state security", was not even started.<sup>925</sup>

Faced with such widespread strikes, as well as a lack of legal and military preparations, the introduction of martial law was not a possibility at this stage. Equally there were also international factors to consider. Firstly, discussions would be needed with Moscow. Secondly, they would need to take into account the impact of any such decision on their Western economic ties. As William Schaufele warned Henryk Kisiel (newly appointed as Vice Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Chairman of the Planning Commission), while the U.S. was sympathetic to the Polish government's situation and the problems caused by the strikes, 'if there were a use of force in the present Polish crisis', efforts to obtain new agricultural credits from Washington 'would be very difficult.'<sup>926</sup> Given Chancellor Schmidt's remarks the previous day, as well as those of Giscard d'Estaing, it is difficult to see how Poland could introduce martial law without taking such ties into consideration. Domestic and international factors would come into play.

---

<sup>925</sup> A. Paczkowski, 'The Conditions and Mechanisms Leading to the Introduction of Martial Law: Report to the Commission on Constitutional Oversight', in: A. Paczkowski and A. Werblan, *"On the Decision to Introduce Martial Law in Poland in 1981" Two Historians Report to the Commission on Constitutional Oversight of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland* (CWIHP Working Paper No.21: Washington D.C., November 1997), pp.5-25 (p.9).

<sup>926</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, 'Ambassador's Call on Vice Chairman Kisiel', 29 August 1980. Document No. WARSAW08618. This conversation is also of note due to the fact that as well as affirming the importance of the recent bank loans, Kisiel also noted that Poland's balance of payments projections for the following year would now differ from those on which the recent loans were based. It was not yet entirely clear how much the strikes had altered these projections, however.

The port strikes represented a problem of a different nature. Given that the issue of forcing the ports to re-open was initially raised by Prime Minister Pińkowski, it seems that concerns remained regarding the impact that these strikes were having on the fragile Polish economy as a result of their significance for imports and exports. Although he had discussed the situation with the Party Secretaries in Szczecin and Gdańsk, both had warned that it would result in a confrontation. As well as the apparent risk that it could provoke an attack on regional Party headquarters (as had happened on the coast in 1970, as well as at Radom in 1976), he had also been warned of the risk of bloodshed. Alongside this risk, a further problem raised again by Pińkowski and others at Politburo was that of who would operate the ports if the army or MO forced them open.<sup>927</sup> They could not be operated without skilled workers. As such this also remained out of the question. The only options left open to the Party were to approach Moscow and to hold another Party Plenum concerning free trade unions. A combination of factors ranging from the scale of the strikes to the difficulties (and also reluctance to) crackdown appeared to have forced their hand.

With limited options available and at the prompting of several Politburo members, most notably Olszowski, the decision was taken to enter into talks with the Soviet Union. At Gierek's request, he would be joined in consultations with the Soviet Union by Olszowski, Jaruzelski, and Kania.<sup>928</sup> While Gierek provides no account of the meeting in his memoirs, according to Kania's recollections the original plan to travel to Moscow for talks with Brezhnev was vetoed by the Soviet Union, in part due to Brezhnev's absence from Moscow. Talks with the Soviet ambassador to Poland Boris Aristov were suggested instead.<sup>929</sup> According to the Soviet account of the meeting provided by the *Mitrokhin Archive*, the Poles argued that they had no choice but to agree to new trade unions:

---

<sup>927</sup> 'Protokół nr 28 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 29 sierpnia 1980r.', pp.86-88.

<sup>928</sup> Ibid., 87-90.

<sup>929</sup> S. Kania, *Zatrzymać Konfrontację* (Warsaw, 1991), p.30; *Wejść nie wejść – Polska 1980-82: wewnętrzny kryzys międzynarodowe uwarunkowania. Konferencja w Jachrance listopad 1997* (London, 1999), p.28.

We must take a step back in order not to fall into the abyss, and agree on the creation of self-governing trade unions. We have no other political means of normalizing the situation, and it is impossible to use force. By staging a [tactical] retreat, we can prepare for offensive action.<sup>930</sup>

It is a description that tallies well with Kania's account of talks with allies throughout the second-half of August: they had no option but to reach an agreement.<sup>931</sup> The difference this time appears to have been that the Poles were actively seeking approval from Moscow for their decision due to the ideological ramifications of allowing an independent trade union to exist. As the Poles realised, independent trade unions were a matter that affected all socialist states and not just Poland. As such they sought Brezhnev's views on the matter.<sup>932</sup> While Kania's account contradicts this slightly in claiming that they did not wait for a response from Moscow as no questions were asked of them, it is clear from the following day's Politburo minutes that a response was expected.<sup>933</sup> In spite of the meeting, the Soviet response remained uncertain.

### **30 August 1980 (Saturday)**

Between two and three o'clock in the morning on Saturday 30 August 1980 agreement was reached between the Barcikowski Commission and the Szczecin MKS on what became known as the Szczecin Agreement. The formal signing took place at eight o'clock that morning. On paper the demand for new trade unions had been met. As the relevant section of the agreement read:

Self-governing labor unions, which will be socialist in character, in keeping with the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic, will be established on the basis of the opinions of experts [...]. As soon as the

---

<sup>930</sup> C. Andrew and V. Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West* (London, 1999), pp.671-672. *The Mitrokhin Archive* dates the meeting to 27 August 1980. However, given that the decision to hold a meeting was not made by the Polish Politburo until 29 August, it seems that the report in *The Mitrokhin Archive* is misdated. Although Aristov was in regular contact with the Party leadership, there is no Polish record of a meeting between the Soviet ambassador and the Polish leadership team on any other date.

<sup>931</sup> Kania, p.30.

<sup>932</sup> Andrew and Mitrokhin, p.672.

<sup>933</sup> Kania, p.31; 'Protokół nr 29 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 30 sierpnia 1980r.', in: Z. Włodek (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a „Solidarność” 1980-1981* (London, 1992), p.91.

strike is over the strike committees will become workers' committees, which will organize – as necessary – general, direct, and secret elections to the ruling bodies of union organizations. Work will continue on preparing the law, the statutes, and other enactments provided for by Article Three of [International Labor Organization] Convention 87. A suitable work schedule will be devised for this purpose.<sup>934</sup>

It seemed to be a major success for both the government and the workers. For the government after a thirteen day strike at Szczecin, they had finally extinguished the second largest strike in Poland. For the workers, they had gained their most important demand of independent unions. The agreement was welcomed in closing speeches by both Barcikowski and Jurczyk.<sup>935</sup> Euphoria and relief was evident at the yard. There appears to have been a similar response from crowds (if not the MKS Chairman) once news reached the Lenin Shipyard.<sup>936</sup> As the separate document drawn up concerning the legal basis for the establishment of the new unions suggested however, there were limitations on the nature of the new unions. Amongst other things, although they were described in the main agreement as 'self-governing', according to the separate legal document the new trade unions were to be registered through the Central Council of Trade Unions (CRZZ) in accordance with existing trade union laws.<sup>937</sup> This provided significant scope for limiting the new union's activities in the future (discussed below). In spite of this, news of the signing was not well-received by the Party leadership.

At Politburo Kania was particularly scathing in his assessment of Barcikowski. He described the signing of the Szczecin Agreement as an 'act of great lawlessness' by the

---

<sup>934</sup> 'The Szczecin Agreement (30 August 1980)', in: A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (eds.), *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History* (Budapest and New York, 2007), p.66.

<sup>935</sup> See: A. Głowacki (ed.), *Rozmowy Komisji Rządowej pod przewodnictwem Kazimierza Barcikowskiego z Międzyzakładowym Komitetem Strajkowym w Szczecinie w dniach 21-30 sierpnia 1980r. według transmisji radiowęzła Stoczni im. A. Warskiego w Szczecinie* (Szczecin, 1989), pp.148-163.

<sup>936</sup> S. Cenckiewicz, 'Kalendarium Sierpnia '80 – wypisy źródłowe z dokumentów MO i SB', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 7-8 (54-55), lipiec-sierpień 2005, pp.95-125 (p.123).

<sup>937</sup> 'Opinia', *Jedność. Tygodnik NSZZ Solidarność Pomorza Zachodniego*, 34 (52), 28 sierpnia 1981 r., p.8.

Deputy Prime Minister.<sup>938</sup> There were two main reasons for Kania's anger. The first concerned the difference between 'initialling' an agreement and 'signing' one. Barcikowski had been granted permission to do the former, but not the latter.<sup>939</sup> The second concerned the lack of Party and Soviet approval for the signing. Despite efforts to contact both Kania and Pińkowski in the early hours prior to the signing, Barcikowski had been unable to do so. His third choice Olszowski had advised him to delay the signing, but had left the decision to Barcikowski alone.<sup>940</sup> Gierek was not consulted. As such Barcikowski had lacked approval from Warsaw for his decision. Perhaps more importantly, the V Party Plenum that day had been meant to approve the agreement before signing, while the Soviet Union had also yet to respond following the Aristov talks. It was not clear when their response would come or what it would be. As both Olszowski and Gierek noted, a response might not come until early the following week. Alternatively, as Olszowski also pointed out the Soviet Union might simply take note of the Polish decision without providing a response at all.<sup>941</sup>

As the Politburo awaited Moscow's response, there was no public indication from Brezhnev as to his feelings on the matter. In his first public speech that August, he instead reported on the state of international affairs, focussing on the Soviet Union's desire to normalise world affairs. A call for talks on the limitation of medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe was particularly important.<sup>942</sup> No mention of Poland was made. It is clear that his priorities lay elsewhere at this time. The same is arguably true of Jimmy Carter. Although Edmund Muskie publicly re-stated Washington's line of non-interference in Polish affairs that day,<sup>943</sup> it seems that US priorities also lay in the sphere of arms control over and above

---

<sup>938</sup> 'Protokół nr 29 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 30 sierpnia 1980r.', in: Z. Włodek (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a „Solidarność” 1980-1981* (London, 1992), p.91.

<sup>939</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>940</sup> See: K. Barcikowski, *U szczytów władzy* (Warsaw, 1998), p.179.

<sup>941</sup> 'Protokół nr 29 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 30 sierpnia 1980r.', p.91.

<sup>942</sup> 'Brezhnev Urges U.S. To Aid Normalization', *New York Times*, 30 August 1980; 'US policy dangerous, Mr Brezhnev says', *The Times*, 30 August 1980.

<sup>943</sup> 'U.S. Vows Restraint on Polish Disputes', *New York Times*, 30 August 1980.



Eastern Europe. A response from Carter to Brezhnev's earlier letter prepared for transmission that day suggested that talks on this matter would be far from easy.<sup>944</sup> While with Polish workers beginning to garner limited intellectual support in the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc and the East German press taking a particularly critical line against a Polish leader they 'privately considered [...] weak and out of touch',<sup>945</sup> spillover would obviously be a factor in shaping any Soviet response, arguably arms control would be a more important consideration. With détente at serious risk of collapse, they would have to take the issue into account.

With Moscow's attention apparently elsewhere and no approval for the Szczecin Agreement from Kania or the Party Plenum, Barcikowski's signing appeared to have left the Party leadership in an awkward position. The agreement had not been formally approved yet nor could it be withdrawn. Although Kania continued to make plain his unhappiness with the Deputy Prime Minister at the Party Plenum, Barcikowski defended his decision. Pointing to the response of Warsaw at the time the agreement was ready to be concluded, he noted the difficulties of explaining to striking workers in the early hours of the morning, when they believed that the agreement had been finalised and would be signed within hours, 'that we don't have the right to sign, we only have [the right] to initial.' As he put it, 'a king's ransom to whoever distinguishes for the shipyard what the difference is between initialling and signing.' The only 'legal difference' that Barcikowski appeared aware of was

---

<sup>944</sup> See: Document 299: 'Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the Soviet Union' in, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1977 – 1980, Volume VI: Soviet Union* (Washington, 2013). <<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v06>> [August 2015].

<sup>945</sup> A. Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge, 2008), p.265. On dissident and media responses, see: W.F. Robinson and V.V. Kusin, 'Reaction by Charter 77 and Hungarian Dissenters to Polish Strikes (29 August 1980)', in: *The Strikes in Poland*, pp.148-151; E. Scheetz, 'Soviet Human Rights Activists Support Polish Workers (1 September 1980)', in: *Ibid.*, pp.152-156; '1980 sierpień 29, Budapeszt – Szyfrogram nr 2523/III z ambasady PRL do MSZ, tajne', in: Ł. Kamiński, (ed.), *Przed i Po 13 Grudnia: Państwa Bloku Wschodniego Wobec Kryzysu w PRL 1980 – 1982: Tom 1* (Warsaw, 2006), p.22; P. Moore, 'Warsaw Pact Press: August 29-31', in: *The Strikes in Poland*, pp.272-275 (p.274).

that the former took place at the side of the agreement, and the latter underneath.<sup>946</sup> Although Barcikowski realised he had erred in signing, he did not feel the criticism being directed his way was warranted. After all, the agreement on trade unions was not entirely unfavourable. For example, he pointed to the possibilities for exploiting legal weaknesses in the agreement, such as the registration of the new unions through the CRZZ and their ‘socialist character’ to control the formation of the new unions if necessary.<sup>947</sup> Although he was being criticised now, in the long-term the agreement still left the Party in a strong position. Differences in legal interpretation meant that in the future they could challenge the new unions legally (and therefore peacefully). The problem of resolving the situation in Gdańsk through peaceful means remained open, however.

Although there had been some concern amongst the government experts when they learnt of the Szczecin Agreement that it could prolong the strike in Gdańsk if the MKS decided to reconsider their own agreement, Jagielski was reportedly optimistic.<sup>948</sup> Events appeared to justify his high spirits. Having listened to Andrzej Gwiazda read out all seven points on new trade unions during that day’s session, Jagielski initialled the text of the Gdańsk Agreement. Provisionally at least ‘new, independent, self-governing trade unions’ had been accepted subject to confirmation by the V Plenum in Warsaw that night. The text of point two concerning the right to strike and the safety of those currently striking or assisting the strike was initialled and accepted in a similar fashion.<sup>949</sup> Although the

---

<sup>946</sup> AAN, KC PZPR w Warszawie, III/128, ‘Stenogram /nieautoryzowany/ V Plenarnego Posiedzenia Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej w dniu 30 sierpnia 1980 roku’, pp.17-18.

<sup>947</sup> Ibid., 22. Barcikowski’s argument was rooted in the registration of the new unions through the Central Council of Trade Unions in accordance with article nine of Poland’s trade union laws, as well as the ‘socialist character’ of the new unions in accordance with the Constitution. A key document in terms of the Szczecin Agreement is the legal opinions of both MKS and Government experts on the legal basis for the creation of new trade unions concluded on 28-29 August 1980. The six point agreement was later reproduced in Szczecin Solidarity’s newspaper. See: ‘Opinia’, *Jedność. Tygodnik NSZZ Solidarność Pomorza Zachodniego*, 34 (52), 28 sierpnia 1981r., p.8.

<sup>948</sup> See: A. Rajkiewicz, ‘Gdańsk – Sierpień ’80. Ostatni Tydzień’, in: R. Chwedoruk and D. Przastek (eds.), *Dylematy Historii i Polityki. Księga dedykowana Profesor Annie Magierskiej* (Warsaw, 2008), pp.75-89 (p.85).

<sup>949</sup> See: A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.113-118.

agreement was not yet fully finalised, it marked a significant achievement for the MKS. It also brought an end to a potential rupture within the MKS between those working with the experts in the belief that an agreement with the government was possible and those working alongside a group of lawyers to prepare statutes for the new trade union with the aim of swiftly establishing a new union and presenting the government side ‘with a *fait accompli*.’ A source of serious arguments within Presidium meetings since the previous night, these had only been halted when unofficial information had reached Gdańsk that the Party had accepted the wording of the agreement on trade unions.<sup>950</sup> The initialling of the agreement finally put these divisions to bed.

This is not to say that talks went smoothly, however. Using the Szczecin Agreement as a model, Jagielski tried to rush through the rest of the agreement. He argued that the other demands could be sent to Warsaw so that ‘a definite programme for their implementation’ could be prepared. He suggested preparing a communiqué showing that a provisional agreement had been reached, as well as their desire to halt the strike and resume work. He would return from Warsaw with the final agreement that night. Everything could be finalised and they could enjoy a day of rest.<sup>951</sup> The workers at Gdańsk would not be rushed, however. As Wałęsa reportedly commented once the meeting had closed, unlike Szczecin things would be done correctly at Gdańsk.<sup>952</sup> Besides it would not take long to work everything out. They had already waited for quite some time, so there was ‘really no hurry’. They could work all weekend to get it finalised ‘in writing.’ As Wałęsa noted, ‘If all goes well, we really do want to go back on Monday. But we must have it down in black and white.’ The point was not lost on Jagielski: ‘When something is written down in ink, it

---

<sup>950</sup> T. Kowalik, ‘Experts and the Working Group’, in: A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.143-167 (pp.155-157). On the development of the new trade union statutes, see: J. Kuisz, *Charakter prawny porozumień sierpniowych 1980 – 1981* (Warsaw, 2009), pp.79-83.

<sup>951</sup> Kemp-Welch, p.120.

<sup>952</sup> S. Cenckiewicz, ‘Kalendarium Sierpnia ’80 – wypisy źródłowe z dokumentów MO i SB’, *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 7-8 (54-55), lipiec-sierpień 2005, pp.95-125 (p.123).

cannot easily be erased.’<sup>953</sup> Any agreement between the two sides would be binding. As the possibilities for legal exploitation of the Szczecin Agreement demonstrated however, how binding would be a different matter.

Apart from a desire to ensure that the agreement was watertight, the MKS also had an additional reason to prolong the strike: the prosecutor’s sanctions against KOR members, news of which had reached the coast in a letter from Grażyna Kuroń the previous evening.<sup>954</sup> Although those detained under prosecutor’s sanctions had been held since earlier that month, rather than for 48 hours they could now be detained for three months. More detentions had been made that day.<sup>955</sup> Ewa Milewicz, a KOR activist involved with the strike bulletin, lobbied the MKS to secure their release: Andrzej Gwiazda agreed without question.<sup>956</sup> Although some were less enthusiastic, it was an important point of principle. As Kowalik observed, ‘While the authorities declared that they intended to resolve conflicts within the framework of the law [...] they were simultaneously acting outside the law.’<sup>957</sup> They were not acting in good faith. Trust could be undermined. Equally as Wałęsa argued when he called upon the authorities to stop the arrests, KOR was not responsible for the strikes. They had only assisted them. He did not want their detentions to derail negotiations when they were so close to an agreement. As such he did not push the argument too far. Jagielski barely acknowledged the issue and left for Warsaw with no agreement for their release.<sup>958</sup> It remained a major issue for the MKS. The Party had more pressing concerns, however.

---

<sup>953</sup> Kemp-Welch, *The Birth of Solidarity*, 120.

<sup>954</sup> E. Milewicz, ‘Ja, happening, stocznia’, *Wolność i Solidarność*, 1 (2010), pp.124-137 (p.134).

<sup>955</sup> J.J. Lipski, *KOR: A History of the Workers’ Defense Committee in Poland, 1976-1981* (Berkeley and London, 1985), pp.430-431; A. Friszke, *Czas KOR-u: Jacek Kuroń a geneza Solidarności* (Kraków, 2011), p.567.

<sup>956</sup> See: Milewicz, pp.134-135; T. Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-1982* (London, 1983), p.65.

<sup>957</sup> Kowalik, ‘Experts and the Working Group’, p.155.

<sup>958</sup> See: Kemp-Welch, *The Birth of Solidarity*, pp.120-123.

Although the Szczecin Agreement had brought an end to the majority of the strikes in Szczecin and had also brought about the immediate resumption of work at the port,<sup>959</sup> it had done nothing to halt the spread of strikes throughout Poland overall. Although Kania was keen to stress that the majority of Polish workers (90 per cent) continued to work, figures he quoted at the Plenum that day illustrate that even since the previous Plenum a week earlier the situation had escalated dramatically. From strikes in nine administrative regions and the total paralysis of transport in four cities, the Party were now faced with strikes in thirty-four administrative regions and the total paralysis of transport in fourteen cities.<sup>960</sup> Wrocław was now a major point of concern. So too were the Katowice and Wałbrzych coal mines as well as strikes at the Warsaw and Katowice steelworks.<sup>961</sup> In addition to this problems with shortages of raw materials and evident dissatisfaction in many enterprises brought with them the possibility of further disruptions. Social tensions remained high during the ongoing negotiations. Amongst other things, there was an increasing fear that events would result in a worker-state confrontation comparable to that of 1970 or a Warsaw Pact intervention.<sup>962</sup> As such it was imperative that the Party gained control of the situation.

Theoretically at least force remained an option for the Party. Within the MSW plans continued to be developed for the event of a general strike and ZOMO (riot police) were transferred to Gdańsk where they were to be used as part of plans to launch a raid on the MKS at the Lenin Shipyard.<sup>963</sup> These were not discussed by the Polish leadership, however. As both Kania and Gierek made plain at the Plenum, the use of force was not under

---

<sup>959</sup> Z. Matusiewicz, *Szczecin 1980-1981: Rewolucja "Solidarności"* (Szczecin, 1997), p.83.

<sup>960</sup> AAN, KC PZPR w Warszawie, III/128, 'Stenogram /nieautoryzowany/ V Plenarnego Posiedzenia Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej w dniu 30 sierpnia 1980 roku', p.2.

<sup>961</sup> Ibid., 3; 'Protokół nr 29 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 30 sierpnia 1980r.', in: Z. Włodek (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a "Solidarność" 1980-1981* (London, 1992), p.91.

<sup>962</sup> G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.146).

<sup>963</sup> A. Friszke, *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980-1981* (Kraków, 2014), p.65.

consideration. As Gierek concluded, they had striven to avoid the use of force and the introduction of ‘tanks on the streets, or armoured vehicles.’<sup>964</sup> It was a clear reference to the events of December 1970, when some 27,000 troops, 550 tanks and 750 armoured vehicles were amongst those involved in a violent crackdown on the coast that left 45 workers dead and 1,165 wounded.<sup>965</sup> They wanted no repeat of this. The question then remained of how to deal with Gdańsk, which as Kania made clear was (alongside Szczecin) central to the calming of events in the country. Changes in the sphere of trade unions remained the only option. This was not a straight-forward issue due to the fact that although the slogan ‘free trade unions’ or as they were now referred to ‘self-governing trade unions’ had their roots in the post-1976 opposition in Warsaw, the slogan had now been taken up by workers across the country who were unaware of its origins and genuinely wanted improved trade union representation due to the problems with the existing ones. While there was an obvious risk that a relaxation of the trade union structures could lead to problems in one or two places if attempts were made to utilise them for opposition purposes (such as in Gdańsk, where Kania had already noted the involvement of the opposition), the Party had little choice. Unwilling to use force, as Kania observed, it was ‘better to take a step in law (*krok w prawo*), than into the abyss.’ The Party could then go on the offensive once the situation had normalised.<sup>966</sup> It was the ‘lesser evil’ of which Gierek had spoken of before. It was also a development largely endorsed by Jagielski in his Plenum speech upon returning from Gdańsk.

Although there was an opposition element in Gdańsk and behind the free trade union demand, as Jagielski emphasised, the Party and its members could not ignore the fact that it was faced with not only a city-wide strike, but an ‘authentic workers movement’ supported by society and directed against the Party’s mistakes. New trade unions were ‘for society –

---

<sup>964</sup> ‘Stenogram /nieautoryzowany/ V Plenarnego Posiedzenia Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej w dniu 30 sierpnia 1980 roku’, p.63.

<sup>965</sup> J. Eisler, *Grudzień 1970: Geneza, Przebieg, Konsekwencje* (Warsaw, 2012), pp.32-33.

<sup>966</sup> ‘Stenogram /nieautoryzowany/ V Plenarnego Posiedzenia Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej w dniu 30 sierpnia 1980 roku’, pp.3-7.

for hundreds and thousands of shipyard workers and dockers, metal workers and transport workers' considered to be 'the only real guarantee' for fulfilling their demands and resolving society's problems. In order to resolve the situation the Party needed to employ political means. They also needed to allow for the creation of new trade unions along the following lines:

Establishing independent and self-governing trade unions the MKS states, that they will abide by the principles defined in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Poland, they will defend the social and material interests of the workers, not aiming to fulfil the role of a political party, they will stand on the basis of the principle of the social ownership of the means of production, the essence of the socialist system in Poland.

In addition to promoting the genuine working-class nature of the movement to the Plenum, Jagielski also sold this final legal aspect of the future Gdańsk Agreement well. In many respects he downplayed any sense of threat to the Party that may have been considered to be inherent in the agreement. As he used the above quoted (alternate) passage of the agreement to demonstrate, the 'leading role' of the Party was assured and so too were Poland's international obligations. In a victory for the Party, the limits of the union's activities were also clearly defined. Finally there was a legal obligation to allow for the creation of new unions as they were in keeping with the ILO statutes, especially numbers 87 and 98, already ratified by the Party.<sup>967</sup> There was little the Party could object to in the agreement. It would end the strike while maintaining the leading role and Poland's alliances in accordance with Polish law. As such the agreement was approved. Both everything and nothing had changed. Only the response of the Soviet Union remained.

Although Jagielski had presented the agreement as a positive solution for the Party, it was arguably also a victory for the workers. The use of the ILO statutes to justify the

---

<sup>967</sup> Ibid., 9-13. Differences between the version of the Gdańsk Agreement quoted by Jagielski at the Plenum and the final version are relatively minor with slight differences in phrasing. The most significant addition to the final version was the addition of the word 'new' prior to 'independent, self-governing trade unions'. For a Polish language version of the Gdańsk Agreement to compare with that cited by Jagielski, see: J. Skórzyński and M. Pernal, *Gdy niemożliwe stało się możliwe. Kalendarium Solidarności 1980-1989* (Warsaw, 2005), pp.269-278.

agreement by Jagielski at the Plenum represented a line of opposition thought espoused in the Charter of Workers' Rights upon its publication a year earlier and also at the Lenin Shipyard by the likes of Andrzej Gwiazda. In spite of this the mood was far from settled at the yard. While Anna Walentynowicz had described her happiness at the outcome of the negotiations and spoken optimistically to Western journalists of founding the new trade union and its own newspaper on Monday morning,<sup>968</sup> by later that day divisions were evident at the yard. During a session of the working group to finish work on points three and four of the agreement in time for the deal to be signed that night, an opposition activist had stormed into the meeting, accusing the experts of selling the workers down the river and betraying them over the issue of the Party's leading role in the agreement.<sup>969</sup> According to Jadwiga Staniszkis, Jagielski's emphasis on the new trade union's accordance with the Polish constitution, the Party's leading role and international obligations during his closing speech at the yard had drawn the attention of the workers to what their compromise with the government fully entailed.<sup>970</sup> It raised the issue of whether the unions would be truly independent from the Party. It was at this point that solidarity at the yard most seriously threatened to breakdown.

Harsh accusations of class betrayal were directed at MKS delegates in the working group, while the term 'Judas's hands' was also heard to be used.<sup>971</sup> The argument spread to the main hall bringing with it a dramatic shift in the mood at the yard. According to Neal Ascherson, then present at the yard, the 'majestic self-restraint' that the workers had displayed throughout the strike showed signs of strain: 'their solidarity was cracking at

---

<sup>968</sup> J-Y Potel, *The Summer Before The Frost* (London, 1982), pp.164-165.

<sup>969</sup> See: T. Kowalik, 'Experts and the Working Group', in: A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.143-167 (pp.157-158); Kowalik, 'The Experts and the Working Group', 157-158; N. Ascherson, *The Polish August* (Harmondsworth, 1981), p.163; T. Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-1982* (London, 1983), pp.64-65.

<sup>970</sup> J. Staniszkis, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution* (Princeton NJ, 1984), p.60.

<sup>971</sup> Ascherson, p.163; Kowalik, p.158.



last.<sup>972</sup> It was a dangerous moment. The argument rapidly spread to different issues and the success of the strike was threatened. As Tadeusz Kowalik recalled:

Not only was the proposed political compromise questioned and the freeing of prisoners loudly demanded, but also personal allegations were being made about the Presidium being too soft, isolating itself from the delegates and the strikers. Wałęsa was said to manipulate, conceal and even betray, and the experts were held to negotiate ‘behind closed doors’, to be ‘in collusion’ with the authorities.

Ruptures even occurred within the Presidium itself over the issue.<sup>973</sup> It took an appeal from a visiting worker from “Ursus” not to jeopardise ‘the greatest victory in thirty-five years’ to help calm the situation.<sup>974</sup> While Lech Wałęsa sought to defuse events outside the negotiating hall,<sup>975</sup> Andrzej Gwiazda appears to have had the most significant influence inside the hall. The Gdańsk Agreement was not the end of the matter. They would continue to fight their case once it had been signed. After all, ‘We have only one real guarantee, which is ourselves.’<sup>976</sup> Although the situation at the yard was ultimately dampened down by the strike leaders, it had an obvious impact at the yard. With a fear of *provocateurs* in the yard and alcohol evident for the first time, not only did Wałęsa have the BHP Hall cleared by the strike guard of anyone who was not meant to be there, but the decision was taken to postpone the signing of the agreement until the following day. Under the circumstances, they could not guarantee the government delegation’s security.<sup>977</sup> The experts were removed from the working group as it continued work on the final points. Only three MKS delegates,

---

<sup>972</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>973</sup> Kowalik, p.158.

<sup>974</sup> Unnamed worker quoted in, Ascherson, p.166.

<sup>975</sup> See: Potel, *The Summer Before The Frost*, 170-171.

<sup>976</sup> Andrzej Gwiazda quoted in, Ascherson, p.166. See also: Potel, pp.167-168; Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution*, p.65.

<sup>977</sup> Kowalik, pp.158-159. For an alternate account of events in the yard that day, see: S. Cenckiewicz, ‘TW “Rybak” – Agent Artysta: Trójmiejski Sierpień ’80 w raportach konfidenta SB’, in: S. Cenckiewicz, *Śladami Bezpieki i Partii. Studia-Zródła-Publicystyka* (Łomianki, 2009), pp.384-419 (pp.414-419).

including Gwiazda, were involved, however.<sup>978</sup> With the end in sight, the strike still had to survive a final night.

### **31 August 1980 (Sunday)**

At a Mass attended by some 7000 Tri-city residents that morning Father Jankowski pointed not only to the achievements of the strike, but also to the fact that there was still work to be done and solidarity to be maintained. It was clear that he was aware of the tensions that had erupted at the yard the previous night. In what may have been a reference to Poland's unlikely victory over the Soviet Union during the Polish-Soviet War (1919-1920) as a result of the 'Miracle on the Vistula', Jankowski spoke of 'a miracle of faith, a miracle on the Baltic.' This miraculous victory it seems stemmed in large part from the conduct of those present. In a clear reference to the non-violent and dignified behaviour of all those who had participated in the strike, he pointed to the Christian path those present had chosen in accordance with Christ's message 'I am the way, the truth and the life.' It was a path which all those gathered at the gates had witnessed. There was still work to be done if the agreement were to be concluded, however. Jankowski encouraged 'behaviour of total peace' and spoke of the need for 'further dialogue' by the MKS.<sup>979</sup> If the workers wished for success, they needed to continue to support those representing them and to maintain the impeccable conduct of the previous two-and-a-half weeks.

With MSW reports noting the previous day's arrival of two emissaries sent by Cardinal Wyszyński with plans to undertake talks with strike representatives and conclude

---

<sup>978</sup> Ascherson, 166. Bogdan Lis and Zdzisław Kobyliński made up the other two members of the working group.

<sup>979</sup> A. Drzycimski and T. Skutnik (eds.), *Zapis rokowań gdańskich. Sierpień 1980* (Paris, 1986), pp.406-411; S. Cenckiewicz, 'Kalendarium Sierpnia '80 – wypisy źródłowe z dokumentów MO i SB', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 7-8 (54-55), lipiec-sierpień 2005, pp.95-125 (p.124). On the Polish-Soviet War and Miracle on the Vistula, see: N. Davies, *White Eagle, Red Star: The Polish-Soviet War 1919-1920 and 'The Miracle on the Vistula'* (London, 2003).

an alternate agreement if that with the government failed,<sup>980</sup> it seems that the Church was determined to ensure a peaceful end to events on the coast even if that meant higher profile acts of moderation such as these. Indeed the Bishop of Szczecin had made similar efforts as the Szczecin Agreement neared completion the previous day.<sup>981</sup> With Cardinal Wyszyński receiving regular updates on events, including from Father Jankowski, such efforts are likely to have been made out of concern at the course of events both domestic and international. However, as a meeting of the Main Council of the Polish Episcopate demonstrated there was also a belief that not only the crisis, but also the moral troubles that accompanied it, needed resolving.<sup>982</sup> The Church's response to events arguably encompassed two areas therefore: the spiritual and the practical. In this regard it was arguably Mass that remained the single greatest source of the Church's influence on events, as events not only at Gdańsk, but also Huta Warszawa, the "Thorez" mine, and Jastrzębie demonstrated. With Saint Barbara (the patron saint of miners) making a reappearance alongside images of John Paul II and the Black Madonna of Częstochowa at the latter, it is clear that Catholicism and its symbols continued to provide a major source of strength for those on strike.<sup>983</sup> It was also a major attraction to observers. At the Lenin Shipyard, for example, only 4500 people were reported to be present at Gate Two when the final round of MKS-government talks got underway after eleven o'clock that morning compared with 7000 for Mass.<sup>984</sup>

---

<sup>980</sup> See: G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (p.151); J. Żaryn, "Błogosławie was i wasze poczynania". Stefan Wyszyński wobec powstania NSZZ "Solidarność", *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 4 (2001), pp.23-33 (p.27); P. Raina, *Kardynał Wyszyński. Czasy Prymasowskie 1980* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.91-92.

<sup>981</sup> See: M. Szejnert and T. Zalewski, *Szczecin. Grudzień-Sierpień-Grudzień* (Warsaw, 1984), p.196; Z. Matusiewicz, *Szczecin 1980-1981: Rewolucja "Solidarności"* (Szczecin, 1997), pp.79-80.

<sup>982</sup> See: Raina, pp.90-95.

<sup>983</sup> See: A. Dudek and R. Gryz, *Komuniści i Kościół w Polsce* (Kraków, 2006), pp.355-356; Ł. Kamiński, 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Dolny Śląsk', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.6. Polska Południowa (Warsaw, 2010), pp.317-465 (p.328); J. Neja and T. Kurpierz, "NSZZ" Solidarność Region Śląsko-Dąbrowski', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.6. Polska Południowa (Warsaw, 2010), pp.171-313 (p.179); T. Kurpierz and J. Neja, *"Solidarność" śląsko-dąbrowska 1980-1981* (Katowice, 2012), pp.60-61.

<sup>984</sup> S. Cenckiewicz, 'Kalendarium Sierpnia '80 – wypisy źródłowe z dokumentów MO i SB', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 7-8 (54-55), lipiec-sierpień 2005, pp.95-125 (pp.124-125).

Despite this apparent fall in numbers, optimism remained evident at the yard as talks got underway. Wałęsa expressed his hope that agreement would soon be reached ‘to everybody’s satisfaction.’ Apparently taking into consideration the events of the previous evening and workers’ feelings of isolation from the negotiations, he suggested providing ‘a brief summary’ for those outside the hall of the points agreed upon by the two sides, a suggestion to which Jagielski agreed. First was the demand concerning press freedoms (point three). Although the text did not allow for the abolition of censorship, it paved the way for greater openness in Polish life, as well as for the broadcast of Sunday Mass. In a state in which the Party sought to control everything it marked a significant breakthrough for the workers and a major concession for the Party. Nonetheless, Jagielski promptly accepted, initialling the point.<sup>985</sup> Not only would many of the techniques fostered during the years of underground publishing now become more prominent, but the workers would also be able to hold the Party to account more easily. The broadcast of Mass also marked a major spiritual breakthrough in a state in which formally God did not exist. It was an unprecedented step.

Point four, concerning the reinstatement of those persecuted after the protests of 1970 and 1976 as well as the release of political prisoners, proved more contentious. Although Jagielski accepted and initialled the text of the agreement ‘in the spirit of understanding the importance of this matter’, he was less forthcoming when it came to the matter of the KOR detainees.<sup>986</sup> The call for the release of KOR activists, who had done much to help workers since the mid-1970s and had also supported the strike, continued to cause problems. As the U.S. ambassador William Schaufele observed, it was one of a

---

<sup>985</sup> A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.123-125.

<sup>986</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

number of factors that marked Gdańsk out as ‘a more political’ strike than Szczecin.<sup>987</sup> With their demand for the release of KOR activists they were pushing the authorities as far as they could. As Schaufele summarised:

In playing this card they are attempting to exact a concession that the highest authorities in Poland will find difficult to grant. On the other hand, to prolong the strike could be more costly to the government than to find a face-saving device to free those arrested.<sup>988</sup>

With the agreement nearing completion, including over free trade unions, the release of KOR detainees threatened to make or break the strike. It was primarily a question of whether the authorities could afford to cave in on this point or not. In the short term Jagielski did his best to avoid such a decision for the authorities. The MKS gave him little choice but to confront it. Adopting a tactic employed frequently by Gniech during the earliest rounds of negotiations at the yard, he denied responsibility for the matter. It was a matter for the public prosecutor, not for a government representative. However, he promised that if an agreement between the two sides were signed that day, he would inform Warsaw of the matter ‘just as it was presented here.’<sup>989</sup>

As with earlier attempts to employ this tactic, it was not accepted by the workers. Anna Walentynowicz countered first. She stressed the importance of those detained to those on strike: ‘those now under arrest helped the families of workers sacked in 1976. Workers still remember it.’<sup>990</sup> Although Andrzej Gwiazda also weighed in with similar arguments, it proved to no avail. Jagielski continued to stress the limits of this authority and to promise only to report the matter to Warsaw. As he argued, ‘I have no jurisdiction other than what I do on my own responsibility and conscience. No other jurisdiction. I am speaking to you frankly – that is all I can say.’ It was Wałęsa who concluded the argument bluntly. ‘If these

---

<sup>987</sup> DOS FOIA: Telegram from Warsaw to State, ‘Sitrep #14 Gdansk Holds Out for Dissidents’ Release’, 31 August 1980. Document No: 80WARSAW008661.

<sup>988</sup> Ibid.

<sup>989</sup> Kemp-Welch, pp.125-126.

<sup>990</sup> Ibid., 126.

people are not released, we shall declare another strike.’ They should move on to discussion of the following point.<sup>991</sup> The release of KOR activists remained a point of contention.

As with this most political of demands, economic demands also remained controversial. While point six concerning economic reform and ‘wider public participation in discussing the reform’ was promptly accepted by Jagielski and even the issue of strike pay (point seven) was swiftly agreed to despite the fact that it was one of the few points on which the working group had failed to reach agreement, point eight concerning wage increases of 2000 złoty proved more contentious.<sup>992</sup> Although he did not highlight Poland’s debt problem, it was clear from Jagielski’s response to this demand that at a time of economic crisis the impact of such increases for Poland would be catastrophic. He asked the workers ‘to consider what this would mean: not only for Gdańsk, but for the whole nation.’ In total such increases would result in ‘an annual expenditure of 12 000 million złotych.’ As Jagielski stressed, ‘Such a decision would cause instant inflation and completely ruin the economy.’ Although Jagielski’s assessment in this regard appears to have been sound, the argument was not accepted by the workers. They had different ways in which the money could be found. As Wałęsa stated:

Prime Minister, we realise that money can’t be produced without something to back it. But we would like to suggest where the money is: in the swollen state apparatus. It can be taken from them – not all in a rush but by an acceptable date. [...] We have our unions, free independent unions. They can deal with this, saying where the money is to be found, and how to take it.<sup>993</sup>

While it was a response that highlighted a genuine desire on the part of the workers to help improve the Polish economy, it was also one that highlighted their (understandable given the lack of media debate) lack of awareness of the scale of the problems facing Poland at this time. With debts of over \$20 billion and a debt-service ratio of almost 100 per cent, Poland

---

<sup>991</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>992</sup> Ibid., 127-130.

<sup>993</sup> Ibid., 130-131.

faced near impossible economic times ahead. From the Party's perspective, the presence of an independent trade union wishing to help shape economic reform and with the right to strike to enforce their demands presented a difficult problem to grapple with at a time of major economic crisis. Ideological and geopolitical factors only added to this. With numerous economic conditions included in the Gdańsk Agreement, such as improvements to pensions and better supplies of meat and other consumer goods, future economic problems were being kept in store for the Party, the workers and the nation.<sup>994</sup>

Although all such conditions were agreed to by the end of the session, Poland's economic situation at the time meant that they would be almost impossible to fulfil. Under such circumstances, as Gierek's chief economic advisor Paweł Bożyk later observed, 'Well if someone were a magician, then he could conjure up the fulfilment of these sorts of demands.'<sup>995</sup> There was no magician on hand however, and with the strike wave around the country not yet over, the economic situation was only likely to deteriorate further. Poland's best hope at this time was further economic assistance from the West. Unsurprisingly therefore it was this aspect of events that was arguably of greatest interest to Poland's Western partners. While socio-political developments in Poland held open the possibility of either liberalisation or repression depending upon the ultimate Soviet response, as a British Embassy telegram dated 30 August 1980 and ultimately seen by Margaret Thatcher demonstrates, a major interest lay in the economic turn of events. Despite attempting to predict the course of future Polish events and the political ramifications of the strikes, it was the strikes' economic impact that took up most of the report. There were clear economic implications for the West. As the final section (frequently underlined by Thatcher) indicated, Poland's economic future remained bleak with its debt crisis potentially

---

<sup>994</sup> For a useful summary of the economic demands included in the Gdańsk Agreement, see: A. Friszke, *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980-1981* (Kraków, 2014), pp.72-73.

<sup>995</sup> *Struggles for Poland: Episode 9: The Workers' State 1970 – 1980* (US/UK/FRG TV Documentary. First UK broadcast: 31.03.1987).

worsening and its dependence upon the West remaining. The final paragraph summarised the problems facing both Poland and the West at this time:

A multi-lateral re-scheduling of Poland's debts must be on the cards. In any case Poland will face great difficulty in securing further large hard currency loans from commercial sources. If this is so Polish pressure on national governments for new loans will increase.<sup>996</sup>

Poland's economic future was tied not only to its own domestic reforms, now due also to be shaped by its first 'independent, self-governing trade union', but also upon its relationship with Western governments and commercial banks. They would be unlikely to survive without the West's help and if the banks withdrew their support, Western governments would be expected to shoulder a greater burden at a time when they had their own economic problems to deal with. Due to Poland's lack of IMF membership any rescheduling would also be a major problem.

In spite of their economic demands, for the workers the primary issues remained being able to represent their own interests and the release of political prisoners, however. Regarding the former it was clear that they had achieved much, but would need to continue to fight both to protect and to build on their gains. As Wałęsa declared, they had 'all fought like lions' to get this far, but none of them would be excused from 'further work.' As he concluded, 'If we mess up the next stage, we'll be back to square one. That's the truth.'<sup>997</sup> They still had much to do. While their gains had not been easily won, they could be easily lost. The authorities had undermined such agreements before. They knew this from experience. If the promised changes remained on paper only, then their victory would be a hollow one. Poles were well aware of this. As the warning towards the end of *Man of Iron*, Andrzej Wajda's film based on the strike, made clear: 'This agreement is meaningless. The

---

<sup>996</sup> TNA: PRO: PREM 19/331: Telegram from Warsaw to UK Del NATO, 'The Polish Crisis', 30 August 1980, p.4.

<sup>997</sup> Kemp-Welch, p.138.



law doesn't recognize agreements made under duress. It's only a piece of paper.'<sup>998</sup> While some within the Party at least would seek to undermine it, the true value of the agreement would come from the effort the workers put into enforcing it. This was a longer-term issue, however. In the short-term the release of KOR activists remained most important.

Raised as an issue again by Alina Pieńkowska, the MKS would not let the release of the KOR detainees drop. Bogdan Lis called for Jagielski to agree the matter with Warsaw during a break. Retiring to the management building, Jagielski ultimately entered into talks with Kania. As he awaited a response, he spoke first to Wałęsa and following further talks with Warsaw to Gwiazda.<sup>999</sup> During his private talks with Jagielski it was made clear to Gwiazda that Jagielski felt their release could be achieved (he would not be discussing it otherwise). The immediate release of the prisoners would take place, so long as the strike was brought to an end first. Doing so would strengthen Jagielski's position in relation to this matter. Accepting Jagielski's word 'was a risk', but ultimately Gwiazda placed his trust in him.<sup>1000</sup> Although Gwiazda now faced an anxious wait to see whether his trust would be rewarded, in the short-term it meant that the Gdańsk Agreement could be concluded. At the start of that afternoon's session Jagielski was able to read a statement declaring that the relevant authorities would decide upon the release of the prisoners by midday the following

---

<sup>998</sup> *Man of Iron* [Człowiek z żelaza] (dir. A. Wajda: Poland, 1981). Andrzej Wajda arrived at the Lenin Shipyard on 30 August and was interviewed by the strike bulletin. MSW reports dated 29 August 1980 meanwhile reveal that Wajda co-authored a letter along with his fellow directors Aleksander Ścibor-Rylski and Krzysztof Kieślowski during the strikes demanding greater freedom for film makers and a settling of accounts with those film critics who had attacked the 'cinema of moral anxiety'. According to the Interior Ministry, the aim of the letter was to separate 'cinematography from the ideological front.' See: 'Solidarity Strike Bulletin No.11 (30 August 1980)', in: O. MacDonald (ed.), *The Polish August: Documents from the Beginnings of the Polish Workers Rebellion. Gdańsk. August 1980* (Seattle, 1981), pp.88-89; G. Majchrzak, 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (pp.138-139).

<sup>999</sup> A. Rajkiewicz, 'Gdańsk – Sierpień '80. Ostatni Tydzień', in: R. Chwedoruk and D. Przastek (eds.), *Dylematy Historii i Polityki. Księga dedykowana Profesor Annie Magierskiej* (Warsaw, 2008), pp.75-89 (p.87); Friszke, p.68.

<sup>1000</sup> *Gwiazdozbiór w "Solidarności": Joanna i Andrzej Gwiazdowie w rozmowie z Remigiuszem Okraską* (Łódź, 2009), p.170; 'Umowa jest umową. Rozmowa z Andrzejem Gwiazdą', in: J. Jankowska, *Portrety Niedokończone. Rozmowy z twórcami "Solidarności" 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2004), pp.83-129 (p.100)

day. With the agreement in place, Jagielski asked Wałęsa to sign the necessary documents to end the strike.<sup>1001</sup>

In front of MKS delegates in the main hall with a statue of Lenin to one side and posters on the wall bearing the slogans ‘Solidarność’ and ‘21 x Tak’ (21 x Yes), as well as a crucifix, the MKS Presidium and the Jagielski Commission signed the agreement into being. Wałęsa used a twelve inch souvenir pen of the Pope’s pilgrimage to Poland to do so.<sup>1002</sup> As Wałęsa called an end to the strike, he recognised the role that the government side had played in its peaceful resolution. Not only had they avoided the use of force, but they (along with the MKS) had been willing to enter into dialogue and to compromise. As he observed, ‘That is why this settlement is so truly great. There was no force used here. Everything was settled as it should be.’<sup>1003</sup> Without such qualities being demonstrated by both sides, the outcome of events could have been considerably different as the workers were aware.

Jagielski was slightly more cautious in his response. While noting that ‘we talked as Poles should talk to one another: as Pole with Pole’, he also used his speech to emphasise that the agreement should not be considered a victory for the workers (or perhaps more importantly, a defeat for the Party). ‘There are no winners or losers: no victors and no vanquished. What matters most is that we have reached an agreement.’ While the Party leadership could not afford to settle the strikes in any other fashion, given the pressure they faced from both Party members and their allies, nor could they be seen to have suffered a defeat at the hands of the very workers they were supposed to represent. Perhaps more importantly, and with the West German loan yet to be concluded, nor could they continue to suffer the economic losses triggered by the strikes. As Jagielski declared, ‘Only effective work can produce the goods which we then share out. The whole country is watching us. Let

---

<sup>1001</sup> Kemp-Welch, pp.139-140.

<sup>1002</sup> See: E. Ciołek, *Solidarność sierpień 1980 – sierpień 1989/August 1980 – August 1989* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.72-75; *Gdańsk 1980 – pictures from a strike*, (London, 1981), pp.57-59; *Robotnicy '80* (dir. A Chodakowski et al: Poland, 1980); *Man of Iron [Człowiek z żelaza]* (dir. A. Wajda: Poland, 1981).

<sup>1003</sup> Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity*, p.141.

us set an example of selfless, reliable work.’<sup>1004</sup> The Lenin Shipyard, and indeed the entire country, needed to get back to work for the good of the economy. There were already some positive signs in this regard. MSW reports recorded improvements in twelve administrative regions prior to the conclusion of Gdańsk Agreement, while the resumption of work at the ports of Szczecin and Świnoujście and an appeal from the Szczecin MKS to make up for losses caused by the strikes were also of benefit to the Party. Problems still remained in the Katowice, Wałbrzych and Wrocław regions, however, particularly in the mines.<sup>1005</sup> These needed to be resolved.

While some enterprises did not have access to television and would wait until their own emissaries returned from the Lenin Shipyard and others would begin talks to conclude agreements with management as they awaited firmer news of events on the coast,<sup>1006</sup> the live broadcast of the Lenin Shipyard’s strike on television and radio was a significant moment in Polish history. Normal programming was interrupted to provide the nation with their first glimpse of Wałęsa. Although the terms of the Gdańsk Agreement and the deal on prisoners were not broadcast,<sup>1007</sup> it was a breakthrough moment nonetheless. Of greatest importance in the agreement that broadcasts showed Jagielski and Wałęsa to be signing was that of point one. Acknowledging the failure of the official trade unions to meet ‘the expectations of the workers’, the MKS and government commission had agreed to the creation of ‘new, independent, self-governing trade unions.’ As point two of seven relating to the new trade unions clearly stated:

Establishing new, independent, self-governing trade unions, the MKS states that they will abide by the principles stated in the PRL Constitution. The new unions will defend both the social and material interests of the

---

<sup>1004</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>1005</sup> G. Majchrzak, ‘Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku’, *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155 (pp.149-150).

<sup>1006</sup> See, for example: B. Czuma, *Łódzka “Solidarność” 1980-1981* (Łódź, 2010), p.16; J. Neja and T. Kurpierz, ‘“NSZZ” Solidarność Region Śląsko-Dąbrowski’, in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.6. Polska Południowa (Warsaw, 2010), pp.171-313 (p.178).

<sup>1007</sup> Rajkiewicz, ‘Gdańsk – Sierpień ’80. Ostatni Tydzień’, p.87.

workers and have no intention of playing the role of a political party. They are based on the principle of collective ownership of the means of production – the essence of socialism in Poland. Acknowledging the leading role of the PZPR in Poland, and not impairing the existing system of international alliances, the new unions wish to provide the working people with the appropriate means of control, freedom of opinion, and protection of their interests.

Amongst other things they were also guaranteed non-interference in union affairs by the government and the new unions were to be established in accordance with ILO conventions number 87 and 98 as ratified by the People's Republic of Poland. 'Point 1 of the Law on Trade Unions of 1949, which says that workers and employees are guaranteed the right voluntarily to form free trade unions in Poland' was also to be respected.<sup>1008</sup> This represented a major breakthrough in the history of worker-state relations under Communism, never before had such a union been agreed to. With the role of the unions clearly defined in the agreement, it also represented what was arguably a better deal than that achieved at Szczecin. As David Ost has noted in his comparison of the two agreements, although the Gdańsk Agreement did not explicitly guarantee the creation of new trade unions throughout the whole of Poland, it did leave open the possibility (as the MKS intended) that they could be. By contrast under the terms of the Szczecin Agreement, which was often favoured by the authorities, this was 'left extremely unclear.' Indeed, Ost suggests that a valid interpretation of the Szczecin Agreement is that it assured 'the subordination of the emerging unions to the old union structure.'<sup>1009</sup> The significance of this should not be underestimated. As Benedykt Czuma has argued, without the Gdańsk Agreement the reference at Szczecin to the new union's registration through the official ones would have

---

<sup>1008</sup> 'The Gdańsk Agreement (31 August 1980)', in: A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (eds.), *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History* (Budapest and New York, 2007), pp.70-71. For reasons of consistency the terms 'trade unions', 'PRL' and 'PZPR' have been substituted for 'labor unions', 'PPR' and 'PUWP' employed in the Paczkowski and Byrne translation.

<sup>1009</sup> D. Ost, *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics: Opposition and Reform in Poland since 1968*, (Philadelphia, 1990), p.86.

caused ‘serious problems’ in the establishment of new trade unions throughout Poland.<sup>1010</sup> It would have made it significantly easier for the Party to undermine and control them in the future. The absence of experts at Szczecin has been pointed to as a possible factor by Ost in explaining the discrepancy between the two agreements. This could explain why, as Ost observes, ‘Where the Gdańsk Accord was an explicit, clear-cut agreement, the Szczecin Accord was a model of vagueness.’<sup>1011</sup> While it would still take later strikes to explicitly guarantee the creation of ‘new, independent, self-governing trade unions’ for the whole of Poland, the Gdańsk Agreement left the situation far clearer than that at Szczecin did. Its language was also more difficult to challenge. Perhaps more importantly, not only did the Gdańsk Agreement hint at the possibility of new unions for all workers, it also left open the door for increased activity by rural activists and farmers.<sup>1012</sup> Whereas the Party had generally only faced unrest in urban areas during the summer of 1980, the potential for problems in rural regions also existed.

While the Gdańsk Agreement bought the Party some breathing space in the short-term, it far from solved their problems. With strikes ongoing in other industrial regions, the potential for further problems in both urban and rural areas, as well as an on-going debt crisis to manage, much would hinge on the response of their allies. It was difficult to read what it would be at this time, however. As the Soviet Politburo met with Brezhnev for the first time since his departure from the capital on 28 August, public signals were not promising. While the reproduction of an article by the American Communist Party leader Gus Hall, which had appeared in the East German press a day earlier, saw the phrase “strikes” being used in the Soviet press for the first time, it also included a sharp attack on the Polish leadership. In addition to this, while news of the agreements on the coast was not

---

<sup>1010</sup> B. Czuma, *Łódzka “Solidarność” 1980-1981* (Łódź, 2010), p.19.

<sup>1011</sup> Ost, pp.86-87.

<sup>1012</sup> See: A.W. Kaczorowski, ‘Ruch solidarnościowy na wsi w roku 1980’, *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 10-11 (105-106), październik-listopad 2009, pp.103-111 (p.103).

publicized, an article published that night by TASS signed by the authoritative “A. Petrov” went further in attacking those leading the strike on the coast, as well as their links to emigres and Western media support. Noticeably, it was not only the political, but also the economic demands that were attacked. Claims were made that the economic situation had been exploited for political gain.<sup>1013</sup> The unhappiness of Moscow both with events and with the Polish leadership appeared plain. It was a disquiet shared equally by their allies. Günther Sieber, the East German ambassador in Warsaw, provided a bleak assessment of events. The Party along with its allies had ‘suffered an ignominious defeat.’ The ‘political consequences’ of the accords reached on the coast went ‘further than those of 1956.’<sup>1014</sup> While this would suggest that a hard-line was forthcoming from Moscow and East Berlin, as well as Poland’s other allies, it seems that beneath the surface their response would be less clear cut than such assessments and media coverage suggested. As Sieber also noted in a passage heavily underlined by Erich Honecker:

We have close, intensive contacts with friendly embassies, particularly with the Czechoslovakian and Hungarian embassies. We have contact as well with the Soviet comrades. They ask us, to show understanding in relation to them, since they in their opinion must be highly reserved, because too great attention focusses presently on their reaction.<sup>1015</sup>

Despite the hostility of Soviet press coverage therefore, Moscow’s reaction (and with it that of their allies) was likely to be far more nuanced than the Petrov article or the negative East German assessment of Polish events suggested.

For the West meanwhile what happened next was equally unclear. Although the Western media, which covered events extensively, recognised the significance of the

<sup>1013</sup> S.I. Ploss, *Moscow and the Polish Crisis: An Interpretation of Soviet Policies and Intentions* (Boulder and London, 1986), pp.16-17; L. Sherwin, ‘Soviet Media: August 27 – September 2’, in: *The Strikes in Poland*, pp.241-246 (p.242-244).

<sup>1014</sup> ‘1980 sierpień 31, Warszawa – Opracowanie Günther Siebera Polityczna ewolucja PRL między IV i V Plenum KC PZPR (tydzień od 24 do 31 sierpnia 1980r.) i sytuacja w dniu 31 sierpnia 1980r. (*fragmenty*)’, in: Ł. Kamiński, (ed.), *Przed i Po 13 Grudnia: Państwa Bloku Wschodniego Wobec Kryzysu w PRL 1980 – 1982: Tom 1* (Warsaw, 2006), p.25.

<sup>1015</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

workers' achievements, they were far less certain about what would follow. It was not yet clear if the workers would genuinely be allowed to form the 'new, independent, self-governing trade unions' committed to at Gdańsk and to a lesser extent at Szczecin. Even if they did, as the *New York Times* so bluntly put it, it would then become a question of how long Moscow would 'tolerate a bastardized system that could sow heresy in Eastern Europe and even inside the Soviet Union'.<sup>1016</sup> This is not to say that intervention would be Moscow's preferred course of action, however. As the British had already assessed, 'The possibility of Soviet and Warsaw Pact intervention continues to be unthinkable. But when all other possible outcomes appear to be impossible, it may yet be the only way that this crisis is to be concluded.'<sup>1017</sup> Moscow would only intervene under exceptional circumstances. Whatever the ultimate outcome of this particular aspect of the crisis, as Zbigniew Brzezinski had been warned prior to the signing of the coastal accords, 'Poland is likely to be a festering sore within the Soviet bloc – and political flashpoint – for some time to come.'<sup>1018</sup> The Polish breakthrough, as with the Polish crisis running in parallel alongside it, would not be resolved in the foreseeable future.

---

<sup>1016</sup> 'Can Poland Live With Its Bargain?', *New York Times*, 31 August 1980.

<sup>1017</sup> TNA: PRO: PREM 19/331: Telegram from Warsaw to UK Del NATO, 'The Polish Crisis', 30 August 1980, p.2.

<sup>1018</sup> 'National Security Council Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from Steve Larrabee: The Polish Crisis and Beyond: Implications for US Policy (28 August 1980)', in: M. Munteanu and B. Zanchetta (eds.), *From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975-1985: The Globalization of the Bipolar Confrontation* (A CWIHP and CIMA Document Reader, April 2006).

## CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

In concluding one of the earliest accounts of civil resistance by Polish workers in the 1980s, Jan Zielonka observed that ‘nonviolence constitutes an important weapon of social struggle, provided that facts are not confused with fiction and that theoretical dreams do not ignore practical experience.’<sup>1019</sup> It is a statement that offers a noticeable contrast to the more romanticised view presented by Robert Polet, who concluded the first such account on Poland by noting that, ‘the potential of the Polish people to defend themselves has been considerably increased – and this has been achieved without the purchase of any missiles or fighter planes!’<sup>1020</sup> When placed fully in their domestic and international context, the strikes of 1980 arguably provide support for Zielonka’s line of thought as opposed to Polet’s. While there is no question that methods of non-violence employed consistently by Polish workers throughout the summer contributed to the peaceful conclusion of events, the manner in which such methods functioned was far from straightforward. Their success depended upon a number of factors, including the scale of protests and the structure of power affected by them. Domestic and international circumstance also played a significant part.

There was significant variance in the way in which non-violent resistance operated. While at times it depended upon the scale of support for the strikes (either locally as at Lublin or nationally at Gdańsk) at others it depended upon the nature of the enterprise affected. It was enterprises of the greatest economic significance that proved to be most sensitive to non-violence, especially at a time of economic crisis, along with international structures of power. This explains why the ports, which were of both economic and international importance, were of greatest concern and most carefully considered as targets

---

<sup>1019</sup> J. Zielonka, ‘Strengths and Weaknesses of Nonviolent Action: The Polish Case’, *Orbis*, Spring 1986, pp.91-110 (p.110).

<sup>1020</sup> R. Polet, *The Polish Summer: Workers’ victories and popular non-violent civilian defence* (London, 1981), p.38.



for a crackdown. The fact that the *skills and knowledge* of those operating the ports as well as *human resources* required replacing made them a particularly problematic issue for the Party.<sup>1021</sup>

Overall, non-violence was perhaps most significant in terms of avoiding a crackdown. The consistent application of non-violent methods by the workers coupled with a refusal to take to the streets meant that the authorities had no excuse for the use of violence against them. Particularly under the gaze of the Western media, such actions were only likely to backfire with possible implications for much needed Western economic support. Realistically only the opposition, limited in numbers but providing a vital information service for the workers, could be targeted for repression without attracting Western criticism and threatening new credits and loans. The same could not be said for the workers and their enterprises. Based on Politburo minutes and documents prepared for “Lato-80” during the summer of 1980, the use of such means by the authorities was only ever countenanced in relation to attacks on vital installations. The onus was therefore on the workers rather than the Party to maintain non-violence. It was the scale of the protests, as well as the difficulties of replacing vital skills at key enterprises, that provided the greatest barrier to any use of force by the Party, however. As numerous observations by the likes of Kania and Jaruzelski made clear, the use of force against such widespread discontent was simply impossible. They also lacked the legal means to do so.

Circumstance also played a significant part in shaping the outcome of events, however. With a debt-service ratio of almost 100 percent even before the strikes began, it is clear that the Party had lost control of the structure of power central to their day-to-day survival. They were struggling to fulfil what many Poles considered to be their basic human needs, such as the supply of food, not to mention expectations. As such challenges to their

---

<sup>1021</sup> See: G. Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Part One: Power and Struggle (Boston MA, 2006), pp.10-12.

authority as well as their ability to respond to them consistently through tried-and-tested methods such as wage increases were limited. Combined with a reluctance to use force, this left them dependent upon a propaganda apparatus that vast numbers of citizens ignored or use of the law as a means of control. While the latter could be employed against the opposition in the short-term, any ability to restrain Polish workers through legal means depended upon the long-term struggle over implementation of the coastal agreements. The law could not be used to control strikes on such a scale.

In international terms meanwhile with the Soviet Union limiting economic support for the Poles prior to the onset of the strikes and a Polish credit dependency on the West at a time of economic crisis, the West had significant influence over events. There is little evidence to suggest any real efforts at linkage between Poland's desire for new loans and the peaceful outcome of events throughout the summer, however. Arguably there was no need. The Poles themselves appear to have considered the strikes unlikely to aid their negotiations for new loans and seemingly took this into consideration of their own accord. In addition to this, given Western support for economic reform and their high-levels of exposure to Poland at a time of their own economic difficulties, the extent to which the West could support the workers without damaging their own economic interests is questionable. Worker unrest was only likely to hinder Poland's ability to pay-back the West. Peace and stability in Europe would also be damaged by interference in Polish affairs.

Perhaps more importantly, the loans under negotiation mostly concerned banks rather than governments. There was little Western governments could do during the summer other than continue business as usual, while banks were motivated solely by economic concerns rather than by a desire to see liberalisation occur within the Eastern bloc. Even for governments the prospect of liberalisation did not encourage interference. As comments such as those by Lord Carrington indicate, they were well aware that if they did not refrain

from interference in Polish affairs nor could they expect Moscow to. Arguably similar considerations confronted Moscow at this stage. They had their own economic problems to consider. Any interference by either side was also only likely to damage peace and stability in Europe, and with it the process of arms control.

Given the close association between Solidarity and non-violence throughout 1980-1981, as well as later under martial law (1981 – 1983) and during the collapse of Communism in 1989, the question of the extent to which non-violence continued to operate effectively within the rapidly changing domestic and international context of the Cold War's final decade requires an answer. While the role of the U.S. in influencing events in Poland and Eastern Europe is already subject to debate,<sup>1022</sup> the roles of not only France and West Germany, but also commercial banks during these periods deserve further consideration. Indeed given the heavy exposure of Hungary, Romania, East Germany and Yugoslavia to Western finance during the 1970s and 1980s, the role of commercial banks and Western financial institutions such as the IMF in both the violent and non-violent collapse of Communism arguably requires exploration. So too does the Soviet Union's role not only in military terms, but also in terms of economics, trade and energy politics with regards to the Eastern bloc.

---

<sup>1022</sup> See: G. Domber, *Empowering Revolution: America, Poland, and the End of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill NC, 2014); T. Blanton, 'Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and the Revolutions of 1989: American Myths Versus the Primary Sources', in: M. Kramer and V. Smetana, *Imposing, Maintaining, and Tearing Open the Iron Curtain: The Cold War and East-Central Europe, 1945-1989* (Lanham MD, 2014), pp.279-304.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Archival Sources

Archiwum Akt Nowych (Archive of Modern Records), Warsaw.

The National Archives, London.

### Digital Archives

Central Intelligence Agency Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room

<<http://www.foia.cia.gov>> [Note: Initially downloaded in June 2010, at the time of writing it no longer appears possible to access the CIA documents cited in this work online.]

Department of State Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room

<<https://foia.state.gov/Search/Search.aspx>> [August 2015]

NATO Archives: Documents Relating to Events in Poland (1980-1984)

<<http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/81233.htm>> [August 2015]

Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Publications Department: Situation Reports; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest.

<<http://www.osaarchivum.org/greenfield/repository/osa:f80cb1e2-fb79-4068-af0f-80c7a39465cb>> [August 2015]

The National Archives and Records Administration: Access to Archival Databases, File Unit: *Electronic Telegrams, 1/1/1976 – 12/31/1976*, Series: *Central Foreign Policy Files* (Record                      Group                      59).                      <<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/fielded-search.jsp?dt=2082&tf=X&cat=all&bc=sl>> [August 2015]

## **Published and Online Documents, Collections of Documents, and Strike Transcripts**

Borodziej, W. and J. Kochanowski (eds.), *PRL w oczach Stasi*. Tom.II. Dokumenty z lat 1980-1983 (Warsaw, 1996)

Chmiel, B. and E. Kaczyńska (eds.), *Postulaty 1970-71 i 1980: Materiały źródłowe do dziejów wystąpień pracowniczych w latach 1970-1971 i 1980 (Gdańsk i Szczecin)* (Warsaw, 1998)

Choma-Juśńska, M. and M. Dąbrowski (eds.), *NSZZ "Solidarność" Na Lubelszczyźnie 1980 – 1981: Wybór źródeł*, (Lublin, 2011)

Drzycimski, A. and T. Skutnik (eds.), *Zapis rokowań gdańskich. Sierpień 1980* (Paris, 1986)

Drzycimski, A. and T. Skutnik (eds.), *Zapis Wydarzeń. Gdańsk – Sierpień 1980. Dokumenty* (Warsaw, 1999)

Dubiński, K. 'Zapowiedź Sierpniowego Przełomu: Meldunki MSW o sytuacji w kraju w okresie 1 lipca – 16 sierpnia 1980,' *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Paris, 2000), pp.69-164.

*Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1977 – 1980, Volume VI: Soviet Union*, (Washington, 2013). <<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frU.S.1977-80v06>> [August 2015]

Głowacki, A. (ed.), *Rozmowy Komisji Rządowej pod przewodnictwem Kazimierza Barcikowskiego z Międzyzakładowym Komitetem Strajkowym w Szczecinie w dniach 21-30 sierpnia 1980r. według transmisji radiowęzła Stoczni im. A. Warskiego w Szczecinie* (Szczecin, 1989)

Hemmerling, Z. and M. Nadolski (eds.), *Opozycja Demokratyczna w Polsce 1976-1980. Wybór dokumentów* (Warsaw, 1994)

Jastrzębski, A. (ed.) *Dokumenty Komitetu Obrony Robotników i Komitetu Samoobrony Społecznej "KOR"* (Warsaw and London, 1994)

*Jimmy Carter's Controversial Nuclear Targeting Directive PD-59 Declassified.*  
<<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb/390/>> [August 2015]

Kamiński, Ł. (ed.), *Przed i Po 13 Grudnia: Państwa Bloku Wschodniego Wobec Kryzysu w PRL 1980 – 1982: Tom I* (Warsaw, 2006)

Kamiński, Ł. and G. Waligóra (eds.), *Kryptonim "Gracze". Służba Bezpieczeństwa wobec Komitetu Obrony Robotników i Komitetu Samoobrony Społecznej "KOR" 1976-1981* (Warsaw, 2010)

Kemp-Welch, A. (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983)

Kramer, M. 'Poland, 1980-1981. Soviet Policy During the Polish Crisis', *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin*, Issue 5, (Spring 1995), pp.1 and 116-139.

Kramer, M. "'In Case Military Assistance Is Provided to Poland": Soviet Preparations for Military Contingencies, August 1980', *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin 11* (Winter 1998), pp.102-109.

Kramer, M. *Soviet Deliberations during the Polish Crisis, 1980-1981*, Cold War International History Project Special Working Paper No. 1 (Washington DC, 1999)

Kruk, M. and R. Żydonik (with S. Cenckiewicz), *Kryptonim "Klan": Służba Bezpieczeństwa wobec NSZZ "Solidarność" w Gdańsku. Tom.1: Wrzesień 1980 – Wrzesień 1981* (Warsaw-Gdańsk 2010)

Liszniewicz, J. and A. Zawistowski (eds.), *Sprawy gospodarcze w dokumentach pierwszej Solidarności*, Tom.1: 16 sierpnia 1980 - 30 czerwca 1981 (Warsaw, 2008)

MacDonald, O. (ed.), *The Polish August: Documents from the Beginnings of the Polish Workers Rebellion. Gdańsk. August 1980* (Seattle, 1981)

Majchrzak, G. 'Informacje sytuacyjne MSW z sierpnia 1980 roku', *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 145 (2003), pp.65-155.

Munteanu, M. and B. Zanchetta (eds.), *From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975-1985: The Globalization of the Bipolar Confrontation* (A CWIHP and CIMA Document Reader, April 2006)

<[https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Briefing\\_Book\\_Helsinki\\_to\\_Gorbachev\\_1975-1985.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Briefing_Book_Helsinki_to_Gorbachev_1975-1985.pdf)> [August 2015].

'Opinia', *Jedność. Tygodnik NSZZ Solidarność Pomorza Zachodniego*, 34 (52), 28 sierpnia 1981 r., p.8.

Paczkowski, A. and M. Byrne (eds.), *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980 -1981: A Documentary History* (Budapest and New York, 2007)

Persky S. and H. Flam (eds.), *The Solidarity Sourcebook* (Vancouver, 1982)

'Plenum KW w Gdańsku 18 sierpnia br. (fragment)', *Kultura* (Paris), 10/397 (1980), pp.153-154.

Raina, P. and M. Zbrozek (eds.), *Operacja "Lato-80". Preludium stanu wojennego. Dokumenty MSW 1980-1981* (Pelplin, 2003)

Skórzyński, J. '16 postulatów', *Wolność i Solidarność*, 2 (2011), pp. 103-107.

Skórzyński, J. and M. Pernal, *Gdy niemożliwe stało się możliwe. Kalendarium Solidarności 1980-1989* (Warsaw, 2005)

Smith R., P. Salmon and S. Twigge (eds.), *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, Series III, Volume II. The Invasion of Afghanistan and UK-Soviet Relations, 1979-1982 (London and New York, 2012)

‘To Reach Peace, Teach Peace’, *Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II For The Celebration of the Day of Peace*, 1 January 1979. < [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_19781221\\_xii-world-day-for-peace.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19781221_xii-world-day-for-peace.html) > [August 2015]

Włodek, Z. (ed.), *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PZPR a „Solidarność” 1980-1981* (London, 1992)

### **Published Interviews, Diaries, Memoirs, Recollections, Biographies, and Conference Transcripts**

‘At the Lenin Shipyard: Interview with Jerzy Borowczak’, in: S. Persky and H. Flam (eds.), *The Solidarity Sourcebook* (Vancouver, 1982), pp.73-78.

Bądkowski, L. ‘Przypisy dnia (z dzienników gdańskich 14 VII – 1 IX 1980)’, *Zapis*, 17 (1981), pp.68-99.

Bądkowski, L. ‘The Man of What?’, in: *The Book of Lech Wałęsa* (Harmondsworth, 1982), pp.106-125.

Barcikowski, K. *U szczytów władzy* (Warsaw, 1998)



Brzezinski, Z. *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser 1977-1981* (London, 1983)

Carter, J. *White House Diary* (New York, 2010)

Chudy, W. 'Relacje – dokumenty', *Miesiące. Przegląd Związkowy*, 1 (1981), pp.13-43.

'Cicha legenda. Rozmowa z Bogdanem Borusewiczem', in: J. Jankowska, *Portrety Niedokończone. Rozmowy z twórcami "Solidarności" 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2004), pp.43-81.

Dmochowska, M. 'Jedność Związku Stanowiła Dla Mnie Wartość Nadrzędną', in: L. Próchniak and others (eds.), *Pospolite Ruszenie. Relacje Działaczy i Współpracowników "Solidarności" w Łodzi 1980-1981* (Łódź, 2011), pp.67-74

Eisler, J (ed.), *Co nam zostało z tych lat...* (Warsaw, 2003)

Fac, B. 'Lech Wałęsa – the Man Who Spoke Up', in: *The Book of Lech Wałęsa* (Harmondsworth, 1982), pp.47-67.

Gates, R.M. *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (New York, 2006).

Geremek, B. 'Między groźbą a nadzieją', *Wolność i Solidarność*, 1 (2010), pp.84-95

*Gwiazdźbiór w "Solidarności": Joanna i Andrzej Gwiazdowie w rozmowie z Remigiuszem Okraską* (Łódź, 2009)

'Hoing the Moon. Conversation with Bogdan Felski', in: M. Szporer, *Solidarity. The Great Workers Strike of 1980* (Lanham MD, 2012), pp.41-46.

‘Interview with Lech Walesa’, in: S. Persky and H. Flam (eds.), *The Solidarity Sourcebook* (Vancouver, 1982), pp.100-105.

Jadczak, S. ‘Diariusz lipcowych dni’, *Miesiące: Przegląd Związkowy*, 1 (1981), pp.55- 74

Jankowska, J. ‘Gdańsk, 18 sierpnia 1980, wieczorem’, *Zapis*, 17 (1981), pp.63-65

Jaruzelski, W. *Stan wojenny dlaczego...* (Warsaw, 1992)

Kania, S. *Zatrzymać Konfrontację* (Warsaw, 1991)

Kapuściński, R. ‘Notatki z wybrzeża’, in: G. Pomian (ed.), *Polska “Solidarności”* (Paris, 1982), pp.75-79

Kołodziej, A. *Gdyńscy Komunardzi. Sierpień 1980 w Stoczni Gdynia* (Gdynia, 2008)

Kołodziej, J. ‘He is Most Certainly a Tribune of the People’, in: *The Book of Lech Wałęsa* (Harmondsworth, 1982), pp.146-152

Kostikow, P. and B. Roliński, *Widziane z Kremla. Moskwa Gra o Polskę* (Warsaw, 1992)

Kowalik, T. ‘Experts and the Working Group’, in: A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.143-167

Kuczyński, W. *Burza nad Wisłą. Dziennik 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2002)

Latoszek, M. (ed.), *Sierpień ’80 we wspomnieniach: relacje z wybrzeża* (Gdańsk, 1991)

Mazowiecki, T. ‘Co można było wywalczyć więcej?’, *Wolność i Solidarność*, 1 (2010), pp.74-83.

Milewicz, E. ‘Ja, happening, stocznia’, *Wolność i Solidarność*, 1 (2010), pp. 124-137.

‘Nie partner lecz przeciwnik’, *Jedność. Tygodnik NSZZ Solidarność Pomorza Zachodniego*, 34 (52), 28 sierpnia 1981r., pp.1, 6-7.

Nowacki, P. “‘Zapis”, “Spotkania” i potyczki z Kuroniem’, *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 7-8 (2005), pp.136-147.

‘Odwaga, krzykliwość i ... ? Rozmowa z Janem Rulewskim’, in: J. Jankowska (ed.), *Portrety Niedokończone. Rozmowy z twórcami “Solidarności” 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2004), pp.343-378.

‘Opowiada Anna Walentynowicz’, in: *Gdańsk – Sierpień 1980: Rozmowy Komisji Rządowej z Międzyzakładowym Komitetem Strajkowym w Stoczni Gdańskiej (23-31 sierpnia 1980r.)* (Warsaw, 1981), pp.4-12.

Pawłow, W. *Byłem Rezydentem KGB w Polsce* (Warsaw, 1994)

Phelps, C. ‘Solidarność in Łódź: An Interview with Zbigniew Marcin Kowalewski’, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 73 (2008), pp.106-136.

Pińkowski, J. 1980. *Horyzont przed Burzą* (Warsaw, 1993)

Rajkiewicz, A. ‘Gdańsk – Sierpień ’80. Ostatni Tydzień’, in: R. Chwedoruk and D. Przastek (eds.), *Dylematy Historii i Polityki. Księga dedykowana Profesor Annie Magierskiej* (Warsaw, 2008), pp.75-89.

Rakowski, M.F. *Dzienniki polityczne 1979-1981* (Warsaw, 2004)

Rolicki, J. *Edward Gierek: Przerwana Dekada* (Warsaw, 1990)

Rolicki, J. *Edward Gierek: Replika* (Warsaw, 1990)

Ropiński, Z. *Tak to wtedy bywało. Moje zapiski z lat 1977-1981* (Bydgoszcz-Gdańsk, 2013)

‘Rozmowa niedokończona. Rozmowa z Tadeuszem Mazowieckim’, in: J. Jankowska, *Portrety Niedokończone. Rozmowy z twórcami “Solidarności” 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2004), pp.131-171.

Szczesiak, E. *Borusewicz. Jak Runął Mur* (Warsaw, 2005)

“‘The People Were the Hero’ Conversation with Jerzy Borowczak’, in: M. Szporer, *Solidarity. The Great Workers Strike of 1980* (Lanham MD, 2012), pp.15-22.

‘The Making of a Solidarity Revolution: Conversations with Bogdan Borusewicz’, in: M. Szporer, *Solidarity. The Great Workers Strike of 1980* (Lanham MD, 2012), pp.23-40.

‘Umowa jest umową. Rozmowa z Andrzejem Gwiazdą’, in: J. Jankowska, *Portrety Niedokończone. Rozmowy z twórcami “Solidarności” 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2004), pp.83-129.

Walentynowicz, A. ‘Solidarność była tak wielka...’, *Wolność i Solidarność*, 1 (2010), pp.64-67.

Walentynowicz, A. *Moja Solidarność* (Wrocław, 2007).

‘Walesa Interview: Strikes Continue Until Demands Met’, in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.386-387.

‘Wałęsa’s Role in August 1980 (Extracts from Memoirs)’, in: *The Book of Lech Wałęsa* (Harmondsworth, 1982), pp.160-175.

Wałęsa, L. *A Path of Hope* (London, 1987)

*Wejść nie wejść – Polska 1980-82: wewnętrzny kryzys międzynarodowe uwarunkowania. Konferencja w Jachrance listopad 1997* (London, 1999)

‘Woman of Iron. Conversation with Anna Walentynowicz’, in: M. Szporer, *Solidarity. The Great Workers Strike of 1980* (Lanham MD, 2012), pp.127-146.

Woźnicki, A. ‘Widziałem, jak spełniają się moje marzenia’, in: L. Prochniak and others (eds.), *Pospolite Ruszenie. Relacje Działaczy i Współpracowników “Solidarności” w Łodzi 1980-1981* (Łódź, 2011), pp.269-282.

Zabłocki, J. *Dzienniki 1976-1986. Tom.3 Część 1, 1976-1981* (Warsaw, 2013)

‘Z mojem dzielnicą ... Rozmowy z Władysławem Frasyniukiem’, in: J. Jankowska, *Portrety Niedokończone. Rozmowy z twórcami “Solidarności” 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2004), pp.405-443.

## **Newspapers, Media Bulletins and Underground Bulletins**

*ABC News Transcripts*

*Associated Press*

*BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*

*Bratniak*

*Miesiące: Przegląd Związkowy*

*New York Times*

*Robotnik*

*The American Banker*

*The Economist*

*The Guardian*

*The Times*

*Washington Post*

*Xinhua General News Service*

## **Secondary Sources**

Ahrens, R. 'Debt, Cooperation, and Collapse: East German Foreign Trade in the Honecker Years', in: H. Berghoff and U.A. Balbier (eds.), *The East German Economy, 1945-2010. Falling Behind or Catching Up?* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 161-176.

Andrew, C. and V. Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West* (London, 1999)

Andrews, N. *Poland 1980-1981. Solidarity versus the Party* (Washington DC, 1985)

'Anti-authoritarian Revolt: A Conversation with Daniel Cohn-Bendit', in: A. Michnik, *Letters from Freedom: Post-Cold War Realities* (Berkeley and Los Angeles CA and London, 1998), pp.29-67.

Arbatov, A.G. *Lethal Frontiers: A Soviet View of Nuclear Strategy, Weapons and Negotiations* (New York, Westport CT and London, 1988)

Ascherson, N. *The Polish August* (Harmondsworth, 1981)

Avrich, P. *Kronstadt 1921* (Princeton NJ, 1970)

Baev, J. 'Bulgaria and the Political Crises in Czechoslovakia (1968) and Poland (1980/81)', *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin*, 11 (1998), pp.96-101.

Bange, O. 'The GDR in the Era of Détente. Conflicting Perceptions and Strategies, 1965-1975', in: P. Villaume and O.A. Westad (eds.), *Perforating the Iron Curtain. European*

*Détente, Transatlantic Relations, and the Cold War, 1965-1985* (Copenhagen, 2010), pp.57-77.

Baron, S.H. *Bloody Saturday in the Soviet Union: Novocherkassk, 1962* (Stanford CA, 2001)

Bernhard, M.H. *The Origins of Democratization in Poland: Workers, Intellectuals, and Oppositional Politics, 1976-1980* (New York, 1993)

Biernacki, L. and A. Kazański, 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Gdański', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989. Tom 3. Polska Północna* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.7-245.

Biernacki, L. *Gdy wieje wiatr historii... Studenci z robotnikami, Gdańsk 1976-1980* (Warsaw, 2014)

Blanton, T. 'Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and the Revolutions of 1989: American Myths Versus the Primary Sources', in: M. Kramer and V. Smetana, *Imposing, Maintaining, and Tearing Open the Iron Curtain: The Cold War and East-Central Europe, 1945-1989* (Lanham MD, 2014), pp.279-304.

Bloom, J.M. *Seeing Through the Eyes of the Polish Revolution: Solidarity and the Struggle Against Communism in Poland* (Chicago IL, 2013)

Błażejowska, J. 'Drukarnia – duża szpilka, która kłuje', *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.35-40.

Boll, F. and M. Świder, 'The FRG: Humanitarian Support without Big Publicity' in: I. Goddeeris (ed.), *Solidarity with Solidarity: Western European Trade Unions and the Polish Crisis, 1980-1982* (Lanham MD, 2010), pp.159-189.

Boserup, A. and A. Mack, *War Without Weapons: Non-Violence in National Defence* (London, 1974)

Bowker, M. 'Brezhnev and Superpower Relations', in: E. Bacon and M. Sandle (eds.), *Brezhnev Reconsidered* (Houndsmills and New York, 2002), pp.90-109

Bozo, F., M-P Rey, N. Piers Ludlow and L Nuti, 'Introduction', in: F. Bozo *et al.*, *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal*, (Routledge: Abingdon, 2008), pp.1-8

Bromke, A. *Poland: The Last Decade* (Oakville, 1981).

Brożyniak, A. 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Południowo-Wschodni', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.5. Polska Środkowo-Wschodnia (Warsaw, 2010), pp.749-800.

Bukała, M. 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Ziemia Sandomierska', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.5. Polska Środkowo-Wschodnia (Warsaw, 2010), pp.641-694.

Celt, E. 'Polish Labor Unrest: A Progress Report (11 August 1980)', in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.42-44.

Celt, E. 'Lukaszewicz's News Briefing on the Strike Situation (14 August 1980)', in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980. The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.99-104.

Celt, E. 'Cardinal Wyszyński Speaks to Workers (27 August 1980)', in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.133-136.

Cenckiewicz, S. 'Kalendarium Sierpnia '80 – wypisy źródłowe z dokumentów MO i SB', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 7-8 (54-55), lipiec-sierpień 2005, pp.95-125.



Cenckiewicz, S. 'Agent-Związkowiec. Burzliwe dzieje Edwina Myszka', in: S. Cenckiewicz, *Śladami Bezpieki i Partii. Studia-Zródła-Publicystyka* (Łomianki, 2009), pp.325-355.

Cenckiewicz, S. 'Stocznia Gdańska im. Lenina w Sierpniu 1980 roku w optyce i działaniach służby bezpieczeństwa', in: S. Cenckiewicz, *Śladami Bezpieki i Partii. Studia-Zródła-Publicystyka* (Łomianki, 2009)

Cenckiewicz, S. 'TW "Rybak" – Agent Artysta: Trójmiejski Sierpień '80 w raportach konfidenta SB', in: S. Cenckiewicz, *Śladami Bezpieki i Partii. Studia-Zródła-Publicystyka* (Łomianki, 2009), pp.384-419.

Cenckiewicz, S. *Anna Solidarność. Życie i działalność Anny Walentynowicz na tle epoki (1929-2010)* (Poznań, 2010)

Chenoweth E. and M.J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York and Chichester, 2011)

Choma, M. 'Strajk lubelskich kolejarzy w lipcu 1980 r.', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 12 (23), grudzień 2002, pp.21-27.

Choma-Jusińska, M. *Środowiska opozycyjne na Lubelszczyźnie 1975-1980* (Warsaw and Lublin, 2009)

Cynkin, T. *Soviet and American Signalling in the Polish Crisis* (London, 1988).

Czuma, B. *Łódzka "Solidarność" 1980-1981* (Łódź, 2010)

Davies, N. *White Eagle, Red Star: The Polish-Soviet War 1919-1920 and 'The Miracle on the Vistula'* (London, 2003).

Dąbrowski, M. *Lubelski Lipiec 1980* (Lublin, 2000)

Djilas, M. *The New Class* (London, 1966)

Dobbs, M. *Down With Big Brother: The Fall of the Soviet Empire* (London, 1997)

Domber, G. *Empowering Revolution: America, Poland, and the End of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill NC, 2014)

Dudek A. and A. Paczkowski, 'Poland', in: K. Persak and Ł. Kamiński (eds.), *A Handbook of the Communist Security Apparatus in East Central Europe 1944 – 1989* (Warsaw, 2005), pp.221-283.

Dudek, A. and R. Gryz, *Komuniści i Kościół w Polsce* (Kraków, 2006)

Eisler, J. 'Komitet Warszawski PZPR latem 1980', in: K. Persak and others, *Od Piłsudskiego do Wałęsy. Studia z dziejów Polska w XX wieku* (Warsaw, 2008), pp.459-466

Eisler, J. *Marzec 1968* (Warsaw, 1991)

Eisler, J. *Grudzień 1970: Geneza, Przebieg, Konsekwencje* (Warsaw, 2012)

Erickson Nepstad, S. *Nonviolent Revolutions: Civil Resistance in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Oxford, 2011)

Friszke, A. *Opozycja polityczna w PRL 1945-1980* (London, 1994)

Friszke, A. *Czas KOR-u: Jacek Kuroń a geneza Solidarności* (Kraków, 2011)

Friszke A. *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980-1981* (Kraków, 2014)

Frybes, M. 'Reakcje Zachodu na polski Sierpień', *Wolność i Solidarność*, 1 (2010), pp.35-41

Ganz, M. *Why David Sometimes Wins: Leadership, Organization, and Strategy in California Farm Worker Movement* (New York, 2010)

Garton Ash, T. *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-1982* (London, 1983)

Giełżyński, W. and L. Stefański, *Gdańsk Sierpień 80* (Warsaw, 1981)

Gieseke, J. 'German Democratic Republic', in: K. Persak and Ł. Kamiński (eds.), *A Handbook of the Communist Security Apparatus in East Central Europe 1944 – 1989* (Warsaw, 2005), pp.163-219

Goodwyn, L. *Breaking the Barrier: The Rise of Solidarity in Poland* (New York and Oxford, 1991)

Hałagida, I. 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Słupski', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989. Tom 3. Polska Północna* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.573-626

Hanhimäki, J.M. *The Rise and Fall of Détente: American Foreign Policy and The Transformation of the Cold War* (Washington DC, 2013)

Hanson, P. *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Economy* (London, 2003).

Harrison, H.M. *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961* (Princeton and Oxford, 2003)

Havel, V. 'The Power of the Powerless', in: J. Keane (ed.), *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens against the state in central-eastern Europe* (Abingdon, 2010), pp.23-96

[Hebblethwaite, P.], 'Magisterium', in: J. Whale (ed.), *The Pope from Poland: An Assessment* (London, 1980), pp.97-120

Holzer, J. *"Solidarność" 1980-1981: Geneza i Historia* (Warsaw, 1983)

Hornsby, R. *Protest, Reform and Repression in Khrushchev's Soviet Union* (Cambridge, 2013)

Hudson, C. 'Poland's Indebtedness: Its Role in the Crisis (8 September 1980)', in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.174-200

Iwaneczko, D. *Opór Społeczny a Władza w Polsce Południowo-Wschodniej 1980-1989* (Warsaw, 2005)

Jarosz D. and M. Pasztor, *Polska-Francja 1970 – 1980: Relacje wyjątkowe?* (Warsaw, 2006)

Kaczorowski, A.W. 'Ruch solidarnościowy na wsi w roku 1980', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 10-11 (105-106), październik-listopad 2009, pp.103-111

Kamińska, A. 'Strajk w Świdniku w lipcu 1980 r.', in: W. Polak and others (eds.), *Czas Przełomu: Solidarność 1980-1981*, (Gdańsk, 2010), pp.425-435

Kamiński, Ł. 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Dolny Śląsk', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.6. Polska Południowa (Warsaw, 2010), pp.317-465

Kazański, A. 'Sierpień '80 w Gdańsku', *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.21-34

Kazański, A. 'Sierpień '80 w Gdyni', *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.45-56

Kemp-Welch, A. 'Introduction', in: A. Kemp-Welch (ed.), *The Birth of Solidarity: The Gdańsk Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke, 1983), pp.1-35

Kemp-Welch, A. *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge, 2008)

Kemp-Welch, A. 'Eastern Europe: Stalinism to solidarity', in: M.P. Leffler and O.A. Westad (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. II: Crises and Détente (Cambridge, 2010), pp.219-237

King Jr., M.L. 'Letter from Birmingham Jail', in: *Why We Can't Wait* (New York, 2000), pp.85-112

Kołakowski, L. 'Hope and Hopelessness', *Survey*, 17:3 (1971), pp.36-52

Kościelny, R. and A. Kubaj, 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Pomorze Zachodnie', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989. Tom 3. Polska Północna* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.249-354

Kozlov, V.A. *Mass Uprisings in the USSR: Protest and Rebellion in the post-Stalin Years* (Armonk NY and London, 2002)

Kramer, M. 'The 1980-1981 Polish Crisis: The Need for a New Synthesis,' *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin*, 6/7 (1995), pp.276 and 294

Kubik, J. *The Power of Symbols Against The Symbols of Power: The Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Socialism in Poland* (University Park PA, 1994)

Kubina, M. 'Moscow's Man in the SED Politburo and the Crisis in Poland in Autumn 1980', *Cold War International History Project Bulletin 11* (Winter 1998), pp.90-95

Kufel, J. 'Rola działaczy Ruchu Młodej Polski w strajku sierpniowym w Stoczni Gdańskiej', in: W. Polak and others (eds.), *Czas Przełomu. Solidarność 1980-1981* (Gdańsk, 2010), pp.551-562

Kufel, J. 'Strajk sierpniowy w Stoczni Gdańskiej i narodziny "Solidarności"' in, A. Friszke, K. Persak and P. Sowiński (eds.), *Solidarność od wewnątrz 1980 – 1981* (Warsaw, 2013), pp.39-53

Kuisz, J. *Charakter prawny porozumienie sierpniowych 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2009)

Kuroń, J. 'Ostry Zakręt', in: J. Kuroń, *Opozycja pisma polityczne 1969-1989* (Warsaw, 2010), pp.204-208

Kurpierz, T. and J. Neja, *"Solidarność" śląsko-dąbrowska 1980-1981* (Katowice, 2012)

Kutylowski, A. 'Non-violence in the Polish breakthrough: An Introduction', *Journal of Peace Research*, 19:2 (1982), pp. 103-106

Laba, R. *The Roots of Solidarity: A Political Sociology of Poland's Working Class Democratization* (Princeton NJ, 1991)

Lipski, J.J. *KOR: A History of the Workers' Defense Committee in Poland, 1976-1981* (Berkeley and London, 1985)

Łoś, M. *Communist Ideology, Law and Crime: A Comparative View of the USSR and Poland* (Basingstoke and London, 1988)

MacEachin, D.J. *U.S. Intelligence and the Confrontation in Poland*, (University Park PA, 2002)

Machcewicz, P. *Rebellious Satellite: Poland 1956* (Stanford CA, 2009)

Machcewicz, P. *Poland's War on Radio Free Europe, 1950-1989* (Stanford CA, 2014)

Madoń-Mitzner, K. 'Dni Solidarności', *Karta: kwartalnik historyczny*, 30 (2000), pp.2-103

- Malik, A. *“Nie można oddzielić krzyża od ludzkiej pracy...” Komisja Robotnicza Hutników NSZZ “Solidarność” Huty im. Lenina (sierpień 1980 – grudzień 1981)* (Warsaw, 2013)
- Martin, B. *Justice Ignited: The Dynamics of Backfire* (Lanham MD, 2007)
- Mason, D. *Public Opinion and Political Change in Poland, 1980-1982* (Cambridge, 1985)
- Matuszewicz, Z. *Szczecin 1980-1981: Rewolucja “Solidarności”* (Szczecin, 1997)
- Michta, A.A. *Red Eagle: The Army in Polish Politics, 1944-1988* (Stanford CA, 1989)
- Moore, P. ‘Warsaw Pact Press: August 12-18’, in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.255-257
- Moore, P. ‘Warsaw Pact Press: August 19-21’, in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.258-260
- Moore, P. ‘Warsaw Pact Press: August 22-24’, in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.261-262
- Moore, P. ‘Warsaw Pact Press: August 25’, in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.263-264
- Moore, P. ‘Warsaw Pact Press: August 26’, in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.265-266
- Moore, P. ‘Warsaw Pact Press: August 27’, in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.267-268
- Moore, P. ‘Warsaw Pact Press: August 29-31’, in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.272-275
- Muller, J-M. *Strategia Politycznego Działania Bez Stosowania Przemocy* (Warsaw, 1984)

Myant, M. *The Czechoslovak Economy 1948-1988: The Battle for Economic Reform* (Cambridge, 1989)

Nawrocki, G. *Polak z Polakiem* (Warsaw, 1990)

Nawrocki, K. 'Sierpień '80 w Elblągu', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 9-10 (118-119) wrzesień – październik 2010, pp.82-85

Neja, J. 'Śląski casus WZZ', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 4 (87), kwiecień 2008, pp.8-20

Neja, J. and T. Kurpierz, "'NSZZ" Solidarność Region Śląsko-Dąbrowski', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.6. Polska Południowa (Warsaw, 2010), pp.171-313

Nuti, D.M. 'The Polish Crisis: Economic Factors and Constraints', in: J. Drewnowski (ed.), *Crisis in the East European Economy: The Spread of the Polish Disease*, (London, 1982), pp.18-64.

Nuti, L. (ed.), *The Crisis of Détente in Europe: From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975-1985* (London and New York, 2009);

Olejek, L. 'Polski Sierpień 1980 roku. Przyczyny, przebieg Wydarzeń i ich skutki', in: S. Pilarski and D. Rogut (eds.), *Czas Nadziei: NSZZ "Solidarność" w Bełchatowie na tle sytuacji w kraju i regionie* (Łódź, 2011), pp.13-35

Orchowski, A. 'Przebieg strajku okupacyjnego w Stoczni Gdańskiej im. Lenina w dniach 14-31 sierpnia 1980 roku', in: *Polski Sierpień 1980. Reedycja Almanachu Gdańskich Środowisk Twórczych "Punkt" nr12/80* (New York, 1981), pp.9-44.



Osa, M.J. *Solidarity and Contention: Networks of Polish Opposition* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 2003)

Ost, D. *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics: Opposition and Reform in Poland since 1968*, (Philadelphia, 1990)

Osiński, K. 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Bydgoski', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980 – 1989*. Tom. 3. Polska Północna (Warsaw, 2010), pp.355-479

Paczkowski, A. 'The Conditions and Mechanisms Leading to the Introduction of Martial Law: Report to the Commission on Constitutional Oversight', in: A. Paczkowski and A. Werblan, *"On the Decision to Introduce Martial Law in Poland in 1981" Two Historians Report to the Commission on Constitutional Oversight of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland* (CWIHP Working Paper No.21: Washington D.C., November 1997), pp.5-25

Paczkowski, A. *Droga do "mniejszego zła". Strategia i taktyka obozu władzy lipiec 1980 – styczeń 1982* (Kraków, 2002)

Paczkowski, A. 'Playground of Superpowers, Poland 1980-1989: A View From Inside', in: O. Njølstad (ed.), *The Last Decade of the Cold War: From Conflict Escalation to Conflict Transformation* (London and New York, 2004), pp.372-401

Paziewski, M. 'Przedsierpniowa opozycja demokratyczna na Pomorzu Zachodnim', in: K. Kowalczyk, M. Paziewski and M. Stefaniak (eds.), *Między Warszawą a regionem. Opozycja przedsierpniowa na Pomorzu Zachodnim* (Szczecin, 2008), pp.55-86

Persak, K. 'The Polish-Soviet Confrontation in 1956 and the Attempted Soviet Military Intervention in Poland', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 58:8 (2006), pp.1285-1310

Persky, S. *At the Lenin Shipyard: Poland and the Rise of the Solidarity Trade Union* (Vancouver, 1982)

Puddington, A. *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington, 2000)

Pleshakov, C. 'Studying Soviet Strategies and Decisionmaking in the Cold War Years', in: O.A. Westad (ed.), *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory* (London and New York, 2000), pp.232-241

Pleskot, P. *Kłopotliwa Panna "S": Postawy polityczne Zachodu wobec "Solidarności" na tle stosunków z PRL (1980 – 1989)* (Warsaw, 2013)

Ploss, S.I. *Moscow and the Polish Crisis: An Interpretation of Soviet Policies and Intentions* (Boulder and London, 1986)

Polet, R. *The Polish Summer: Workers' victories and popular non-violent civilian defence* (London, 1981)

Potel, J-Y. *The Summer Before The Frost* (London, 1982)

Portes, R. 'East Europe's Debt to the West: Interdependence Is A Two-Way Street', *Foreign Affairs*, 55:4 (1977), pp.751-782

Portes, R. *The Polish Crisis: Western Economic Policy Options* (London, 1981)

Rachwald, A. *In Search of Poland: The Superpowers' Response to Solidarity, 1980-1989* (Stanford CA, 1990)

Raina, P. *Independent Social Movements in Poland* (London, 1981)

Raina, P. *Kardynał Wyszyński. Czasy Prymasowskie 1980* (Warsaw, 2010)

Robinson W.F. and V.V. Kusin, 'Reaction by Charter 77 and Hungarian Dissenters to Polish Strikes (29 August 1980)', in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.148-151

Rotarska, W. 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Częstochowa', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.6. Polska Południowa (Warsaw, 2010), pp.827-876

Ruane, K. *The Polish Challenge* (London, 1982)

Sasanka, P. *Czerwiec 1976: Geneza, Przebieg, Konsekwencje* (Warsaw, 2006)

Scheetz, E. 'Soviet Human Rights Activists Support Polish Workers (1 September 1980)', in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.152-156

Sharp, G. *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Part One: Power and Struggle (Boston MA, 2006)

Sharp, G. *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Part Two: The Methods of Nonviolent Action (Boston MA, 2005)

Sherwin, L. 'Soviet Media: August 19-26', in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.237-240

Sherwin, L. 'Soviet Media: August 27 – September 2', in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.241-246

Shridharani, K. *War without Violence: A Study of Gandhi's Method and its Accomplishments* (London, 1939)

Singer, D. *The Road to Gdańsk: Poland and the U.S.S.R* (New York, 1981)

- Skilling, H.G. *Charter 77 and Human Rights in Czechoslovakia* (London, 1981)
- Skórzyński, J. *Zadra. Biografia Lecha Wałęsy* (Gdańsk, 2009)
- Skórzyński, J. *Sila bezsilnych: Historia Komitetu Obrony Robotników* (Warsaw, 2012)
- Smolar, A. 'Towards "Self-limiting Revolution": Poland 1970-89', in: A. Roberts and T. Garton Ash (eds.), *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present* (Oxford, 2009), pp.127-143
- Smoleń, D. 'Tłum czy społeczność zorganizowana? Strajkujący w Stoczni Gdańskiej w sierpniu 1980', in: M. Kula, *Solidarność w ruchu 1980-1981* (Warsaw, 2000), pp.151-217
- Sowiński, P. 'Komunikaty z pola walki', *Solidarność i Wolność*, 1 (2010), pp.29-34
- Staniszki, J. *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution* (Princeton NJ, 1984)
- Stefaniak, M. 'Sierpień '80 w Województwie Szczecińskim – Przebieg i Konsekwencje', *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, Nr 9-10 (118-119), wrzesień-październik 2010, pp.57-64
- Stent, A.E. *Soviet Energy and Western Europe* (New York, 1982)
- Stokes, R. 'From Schadenfreude to Going-Out-of-Business Sale: East Germany and the Oil Crises of the 1970s', in: H. Berghoff and U.A. Balbier (eds.), *The East German Economy, 1945-2010. Falling Behind or Catching Up?* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 131-144
- Suri, J. 'The Promise and Failure of 'Developed Socialism': The Soviet 'Thaw' and the Crucible of the Prague Spring, 1964-1972', *Contemporary European History*, 15:2 (2006), pp.133-158
- Szejnert, M. and T. Zalewski, *Szczecin. Grudzień-Sierpień-Grudzień* (Warsaw, 1984)

Świder, M. *Z Perspektywy Bonn: Przemiany polityczne w Polsce w latach 1980-1989*, (Toruń, 2011)

Šimečka, M. *The Restoration of Order: The Normalization of Czechoslovakia* (London, 1984)

Teague, E. *Solidarity and the Soviet Worker: The Impact of the Polish Events of 1980 on Soviet Internal Politics* (London, 1988)

Tilly, C. *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, MA, 1978)

Tůma, O. 'The Czechoslovak Communist Regime and the Polish Crisis 1980-1981', *Cold War International History Project Bulletin 11* (Winter 1998), pp.60-76

Waligóra, G. *Ruch Obrony Praw Człowieka i Obywatela 1977-1981* (Warsaw, 2006)

de Weydenthal, J.B. 'The New Worker-Government Conflict in Poland', in: W.F. Robinson (ed.), *August 1980: The Strikes in Poland* (Munich, 1980), pp.31-37

Weiner, A. 'The Empires Pay a Visit: Gulag Returnees, East European Rebellions and Soviet Frontier Politics', *The Journal of Modern History*, 78:2 (2006), pp.333-376

Weiner, A. 'Déjà Vu All over Again: Prague Spring, Romanian Summer and Soviet Autumn on the Soviet Western Frontier', *Contemporary European History*, 15:2 (2006), pp.159-194

Weiner, A. 'Foreign Media, the Soviet Western Frontier, and the Hungarian and Czechoslovak Crises' in: A.R. Johnson and R.E. Parta (eds.), *Cold War Broadcasting: Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: A Collection of Studies and Documents* (Budapest and New York, 2010), pp.299-317

Weiser, B. *A Secret Life: The Polish Officer, His Covert Mission, And The Price He Paid to Save His Country*, (New York, 2004)

Westad, O.A. (ed.), *The Fall of Détente: Soviet-American Relations during the Carter Years* (Oslo, 1997)

*World Armaments and Disarmaments: SIPRI Yearbook 1981* (Stockholm and London, 1981)

Zajac, E. 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Małopolska (1980-1989)', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*, Tom.6. Polska Południowa (Warsaw, 2010), pp.9-168

Zaremba, M. 'Zimno, ciepło, gorąco. Nastroje Polaków od "zimy stulecia" do lata 1980', in: A. Friszke, K. Persak and P. Sowiński, *Solidarność od Wewnątrz 1980 – 1981* (Warszawa, 2013), pp.11-38.

Zielonka, J. 'Strengths and Weaknesses of Nonviolent Action: The Polish Case', *Orbis*, Spring 1986, pp. 91-110

Zwiernik, P. 'NSZZ "Solidarność" Region Wielkopolska', in: Ł. Kamiński and G. Waligóra (eds.), *NSZZ Solidarność 1980-1989*. Tom 4. Polska Zachodnia (Warsaw, 2010), pp.9-102

Żaryn, J. "“Błogosławię was i wasze poczynania”. Stefan Wyszyński wobec powstania NSZZ "Solidarność"', *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, 4 (2001), pp.23-33

Żaryn, J. 'Kościół katolicki – hierarchia, kapłani i świeccy', in: K. Kowalczyk, M. Paziewski and M. Stefaniak (eds.), *Między Warszawą a regionem. Opozycja przedsierpniowa na Pomorzu Zachodnim* (Szczecin, 2008), pp.19-26

### **Photographs, Films and Documentaries**

Ciołek, E. *Solidarność sierpień 1980 – sierpień 1989/August 1980 – August 1989* (Warsaw, 2010)

*Gdańsk 1980 – pictures from a strike*, (London, 1981)

*Man of Iron* [Człowiek z żelaza] (dir. A. Wajda: Poland, 1981)

*Robotnicy '80* (dir. A. Chodakowski et al: Poland, 1980)

Solidarność. Dekada Wolności. On-line wystawa fotografii z lat 1979-89.

<<http://www.bialo-czerwona.pl/solidarnosc/>> [August 2015]

*Struggles for Poland: Episode 9: The Workers' State 1970 – 1980* (U.S./UK/FRG TV Documentary. First UK broadcast: 31.03.1987)