



Der Spiegel

Workers find the present state of affairs intolerable and ardently seek a change.

Business as usual now in Poland

By David Ost

W A R S A W

This is the first in a two-part series on Poland.

Some people guessed three or four, while others figured perhaps as many as six. But the correct answer was one: that's how many months elapsed before the Polish government rearrested some of the prisoners released under its July "amnesty." The label is a misnomer, because it was only a mass parole. Anyone found guilty of a "similar" crime in the next two-and-a-half years will have to serve the rest of the sentence from which he or she has just been released.

The authorities then announced they were preparing a law that would allow forced deportation of oppositionists. Although its own reports show that the economy keeps tumbling down, yet the government's chief concern remains trying to put down an opposition it knows it cannot crush.

Poland is not the same country it was at the end of 1982. Paradoxically, the reason it is not the same is that it is the same. It is precisely this immobility that then seemed impossible to imagine. There is the same inertia: no reform from above, no lack of opposition from below. Never before has a state socialist system been so unable to restore its hegemony after suppressing a major challenge. What has become normal in Poland is not the old political system, but the resistance to it.

Opposition politics, where it is not permitted, is necessarily conspiratorial. In 1982, when it was still unclear where the line would be drawn, basic rules of conspiracy infringed even on social life in Poland. Today much of this has been cast aside. At home or on the telephone, people say things they would not have dared in 1982. The decline in fear is clearly borne out by the astounding 40 percent boycott of the June elections, despite the threats of repression.

People have become more relaxed, too. 1982 was a year of mourning. People generally refused to be happy, as if a smile would legitimate the repression by proving it could even momentarily be forgotten. Unfortunately, this also meant a refusal to be thoughtful or critical. Reality seemed crystal clear, a balanced assessment of the past and future would have blurred the categories of good and evil in which it was comfortable to think. People were determined not to feel at ease until the political situation was changed. Today people have not accepted the political situation, but they realize that it won't be changed overnight and that asceticism may only postpone the fall by creating a nation of depressed souls unable to mount any serious opposition. So public entertainment is OK again, artistic festivals are no longer boycotted and people seem to be laughing more than before.

There is a dispute about whether the country is being normalized, with the government shouting "yes" and the opposition crying "no." What is "normalization"? No one knows for sure, but essentially it means the system running according to its pre-Solidarity rules, with a supremely powerful state reserving all rights of initiative and with no uncontrolled opposition.

What are the conditions for normalization? It requires neither popular support for the Party—something absent in Czechoslovakia and unattainable in Poland—nor a well-functioning economy since endemic waste was a functional part of the pre-Solidarity "normality." It may not even require a strong Party, because recent experience in Poland has shown that the leadership's orders can be carried out by army instead of Party personnel, while the facade of Party rule can always be maintained by the mass media. What normalization requires is not that individual citizens accept the system, but that they believe that others do. Many Hungarians and Czechoslovakians will tell you that the system is unacceptable. But they will not say that the majority of the population feels the same. In Poland, however, it is not simply the opposition that

believes that most of society is on its side. Even those who support the system continually voice their suspicions that others do not. The government press spokesman can still not go through a press conference without speaking of the underground.

Few messages, however, are as revealing as the slogan posted prominently throughout the country before the June elections to the national councils: "YOU WON'T CHANGE A THING BY STANDING ON THE SIDELINES! VOTE." The admonition that people won't succeed in changing things by boycotting is only an admission that people find the present state of affairs intolerable and ardently seek a change.

Nearly three years after the imposition of martial law, the government is still fighting the trade union movement. The trade union law of 1982, which delegatized Solidarity, allowed for the revival of trade union pluralism in January 1984. In late 1983 the government "amended" the law, moving up the effective date to January 1985. As the deadline approaches again, the government is preparing to abolish the provision altogether. Trade union pluralism, declared press spokesman Jerzy Urban in late June, "has been a failure. We have had a bad experience with it," he said, without bothering to identify the pronoun "we."

The government's position has become even tougher since the "amnesty," when so many trade unionists were suddenly back on the streets. On July 30 a leading Party ideologist wrote an article titled "On the Question of Pluralism" that provided the excuse for the inevitable clampdown. "The demand for trade union pluralism embodied workers demands in the Fall of 1980," the ideologist begins suspiciously. "Pluralism in those conditions were a call for the rejuvenation of the union movement....The same slogan put forward by certain people today however, in the new reality, when unions are really independent and self-governing, has a clear political character to it," and is actually aimed at something "quite far from genuine union activity. The working class needs unity. New trade unions, obviously, only threaten that unity."

The law has not been changed yet, but no doubt it will be shortly. The process is characteristic of law-making in Poland. First the press spokesman hints at a change. The press prints opinions on the matter supporting what the spokesman has hinted. The government then cites those discussions as proof of "consultation with the working class." The law is passed.

The Party's fear of initiative from below is well-placed, for society has demonstrated that it is not out of ideas. Nor is it just the Solidarity underground that has them. As the economic crisis drags on, farmers in Pulawy, for example, persist in their efforts to establish consumer and distribution cooperatives. They began seeking the required permission during the Solidarity era, and have been refused continually. What the government appears to find unacceptable is these farmers' open commitment to the principles of the socialist cooperatives of the past. It leaves too little room for control by the center.

Many factory self-management councils have emerged, with greatly restricted powers, yet even these have not proved reliable. Council representatives from the 16 largest factories had planned to meet to discuss the economic situation, but the police arrested the organizer days before the session was to begin and notified the others that the meeting was "cancelled." The problem was that it seemed too much like the continuation of the Network, the Solidarity organization that brought together union representatives from these same 16 plants. To the chagrin of the authorities, old ideas retain their potency. They have difficulty trusting anyone anymore.

Unlike three years ago, they can fully trust the Party, but unlike three years ago, this hardly seems to matter. The Party continues in a state of disarray and even its own leaders, in private, see little

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chance of it being rebuilt as an authoritative institution.

The bastion of support for the regime today comes from the police and the upper ranks of the armed forces. They are still the most powerful forces in the state and the economy, and they know it. This narrow and peculiar social base partially explains why even showcase reform has been stifled. These men have come to shine at last. They are reluctant to tamper with an arrangement that has fared them so well. As far as they're concerned, the real reform is the one they carried out in December 1981, replacing a bankrupt Party with an efficient military administration that was willing to be as tough with the "enemy" as was necessary, and could put an end to a shameful era of vacillation, weakness and indecision. (They look back to the Solidarity years in much the same way, and with the same words, as the American right looks back to the Carter years. Each ruling group feels scandalized by its predecessor's irresolute behavior, and the idea of a return to these periods fills each with dread.) When Poland's rulers now hear talk of reform, they see 1980-81 all over again. The only guarantee they have of not returning to such humiliating times is to now arouse society by initiating even coquettish reforms and to not give power back to the Party.

The future, as always, is uncertain. Nothing has to happen, since public opinion is essentially irrelevant. One possibility, nonetheless, is that de facto status quo will become institutionalized by laws and constitutional amendments guaranteeing the armed forces a

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IN THESE TIMES

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

DID RONALD REAGAN'S conciliatory speech at the United Nations September 24 and his three-hour talk September 28 with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko signal the beginning of a Soviet-American thaw? Or were they simply designed to deprive Reagan's challenger, former Vice President Walter Mondale, of one of his few remaining issues?

The fact that it is hard to say how much of Reagan's "peace offensive" was campaign hype and how much was genuine diplomacy is a measure of its political success. While the only concrete accomplishment was a Soviet-American agreement to send "representatives" to regular meetings on regional issues, the speech and the visit could lay the basis for more ambitious negotiations in the future.

Whether they do depends on factors not readily visible on the campaign trail: the ascendancy or descendancy of various factions within the administration. If Reagan wins a second term, his inclination to make good on the UN speech and Gromyko's visit will rest on his willingness to take sides within his administration.

Administration debate.

From its first day, the Reagan administration has been deeply divided on its approach to arms control negotiations. Its "zero-option" proposal in Europe—offering not to install American missiles if the Soviet Union dismantled all of its SS-20s—was pressed by the Pentagon but opposed by Secretary of State Alexander Haig, who charged that the proposal was "not negotiable."

The administration's START proposals for a strategic arms accord, presented in mid-1982, reflected the Pentagon's insistence that the Soviet Union dismantle its heavy missiles, but did not contain any concessions—or "flexibility," as the State Department termed it—on the American part. Both the initial INF and START proposals were peremptorily rejected by the Russians.

Retired Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, chair of the President's Commission on Strategic Forces (otherwise known as "the Scowcroft Commission") described the division this way: "The administration is basically philosophically split between those who want to dictate the specifics of force structure on each side and

There is a split between those who insist that the strategic balance must be altered favorably either prior to or as a result of negotiations and those willing to subject the negotiations to a process of give-and-take with the aim to perpetuate parity between the two sides.

those who would allow each side to take reductions where they want."

In simpler terms, the administration is split between those who insist that the strategic balance must be altered favorably either prior to or as a result of negotiations, and those who are willing to subject the negotiations to a process of give-and-take with the aim of perpetuating parity between the two sides.

Last year, the division erupted again when Euromissile negotiator Paul Nitze returned to the U.S. with a proposal, worked out with his Soviet counterpart, to reduce substantially American and Soviet deployments. Nitze's proposal was vetoed by the Pentagon.

According to a senior State Department official, Nitze argued that the best time to secure concessions from the Soviet Union was before deployment of the American cruise and Pershing II missiles, while the Pentagon argued that the best time would be after deployment.

This summer differences erupted over the Soviet proposal for negotiations on space weapons and a moratorium on space weapons tests. While the State Department favored a moratorium and negotiations, the Defense Department opposed both. The resulting American response—supporting informal talks, but not negotiations or a moratorium—was quickly rejected by the Russians.

The principals in this debate are, on the one side, Secretary of State George Shultz and Richard Burt, the director of the State Department's Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs, and on the other, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, Undersecretary Fred Ikle and Assistant Secretary Richard Perle. Most knowledgeable observers see Perle, a former aide to Henry Jackson, as the principal foe of any arms control agreement.

Sen. Larry Pressler (R-SD), the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Arms Control, blames Perle and his Pentagon allies. "All roads on this subject lead back to Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle," Pressler said.

Preparing for Gromyko.

The tenor of Reagan's UN speech and his willingness to meet with Gromyko reflected pressure from inside the White House and from the State Department. Reagan's chief aides James Baker, Michael Deaver and Richard Darman urged the president to use the occasion to de-

fuse public fears about his position on arms control and the Soviet Union. The aides have also said privately to reporters that they see an improvement of U.S.-Soviet relations as a major objective of Reagan's second term.

But out of fear that the Pentagon would sabotage the speech and the visit, their details were kept secret from Weinberger and his lieutenants until the last moment. Even then, however, a dispute erupted over how the president would respond to the Soviet proposals for a moratorium on space weapons tests.

The State Department wanted him to offer a moratorium—an American test of an anti-satellite weapon is scheduled two weeks after the November elections—but the Pentagon demurred. The Pentagon even took exception to an ambiguous statement in Reagan's speech that the U.S. "would consider what measures of restraint both sides might take while negotiations [on space weapons] proceed."

Under pressure from the Pentagon and the State Department, White House officials kept changing their minds about whether the phrase would appear in the speech. It was not included in a version

given to the U.S. Information Agency for overseas release, but it was finally included in Reagan's speech itself. In Reagan's talk with Gromyko, however, he is reported to have made no specific promises about a moratorium.

Most arms control advocates in Washington believe that if Weinberger, Ikle and Perle retain their posts in a second Reagan administration, any future efforts at arms control negotiations will be sabotaged, regardless of Reagan's private intentions. Former CIA official Arthur Macy Cox said, "Nobody should have any illusions that after the election anything will change, because the people in power don't want any change."

Even if Weinberger does not return as Secretary of Defense and if Shultz remains as Secretary of State, the future of arms control negotiations is in doubt. As the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace's Dmitri Simes told the *National Journal*, the "moderates" or "pragmatists" on the peace issue lack personal commitment, while the hardliners in the Pentagon "are prepared to fight for their proposals and lose even at the cost of their careers."

Perception of the Soviet Union

Ronald Reagan's Sept. 24 speech at the UN was notable not only for its conciliatory tone, but also for its conventional view of the Soviet-American rivalry. In past speeches Reagan had cast it in quasi-religious terms as a battle between good and evil. In his UN speech, he spoke of states with different "interests."

This change in perspective may have been political window dressing. Or it may reflect a change in the administration's view of the Soviet Union.

In the administration's first year, its view of and strategy toward the Soviet Union was shaped by Harvard professor Richard Pipes, who served as the Soviet expert on the National Security Council. Pipes argued that by taking a hard line toward trade and negotiations with the Soviet Union, the U.S. would precipitate an internal economic crisis that would elevate politically moderate economic decentralists to the party leadership and lay the basis for genuine detente.

Pipes' theory informed Reagan's June 1982 speech in London, where he declared that the Soviet Union was undergoing a "great revolutionary crisis," and Pipes' theory also justified the Pentagon's intransigence on negotiations and trade.

But according to the *National Journal's* Michael Gordon, the administration abandoned Pipes' theory last year, about the time when Pipes himself returned to Harvard. Realizing that the U.S.'s European allies were reluctant to cooperate in a trade embargo and skeptical of Pipes' claim that a hardline attitude would soften rather than harden Soviet policy, State Department and National Security Council analysts drafted a new policy statement, National Security Decision Directive 75.

The new statement assumes that the U.S. has only a limited ability to influence internal affairs in the Soviet Union and that it should concentrate on trying to affect the Soviet Union's international behavior. This view could still be used to justify trade embargoes—on the grounds that they imperil the Soviet military buildup—but it could also be the basis of a new administration effort toward negotiations.

—J.B.J.



Reagan administration is divided on arms negotiations