

The Road to Poland's Round Table*

by Tony Kemp-Welch

Seven years after banning Solidarity and interning its leaders and advisers, the same Polish generals invited them to a Round Table to negotiate the future of communist power. Few observers had anticipated the historic compromise by which the Party (PZPR) abandoned its attempt to “govern permanently against the determined opposition of their compatriots”¹. The idea of inviting the ‘adversary’ to a Round Table shocked many in the upper echelons whose political revolt was only quelled when the entire ruling team threatened to resign. Despite their subsequent apologies, the communist authorities did not “benevolently cede their power to the opposition the moment democracy became possible”². They sat down to the Round Table with a strong hand expecting to coopt the opposition but were swept away soon afterwards by an electoral avalanche which no one had anticipated.

Previous offers of “power-sharing” had been mock concessions to get the Party through a current crisis. Gierek’s appeal to the Shipyards to trust him and help in building a second Poland had been designed to neutralise working-class protest³ rather than open a genuine road to pluralism. The Gdańsk Agreement and others signed in summer and autumn 1980 had been ruptured brutally. As the decade proceeded, members of Solidarity increasingly saw the political sphere as alien and discredited - for “them” and not for “us”. They turned towards a moral dimension whereby politics enters into the area of ethical values. The aim was not to take power, but to protect human rights, including the dignity of labour spelled out in the Papal Encyclical *Laborem Exercens* issued during the Solidarity Congress⁴. Their eventual return to politics, at the Round Table, was facilitated by mediators, with Catholic and other independent intellectuals playing the leading parts.

Polish sociologists offer several interpretations of the outcome. One discusses the dynamics of the ‘breakthrough’⁵; another considers the exhaustion of the ‘main stabilisers’ through which the Party retained its ability to rule⁶; and a third explores the idea of ‘failed normalisation’⁷. Two politologists advance the neo-Marxian view that „the structural crisis in the centralised non-market economy was the real director of the political stage”⁸. Poland’s historians, awaiting declassified papers, took somewhat longer to enter the debate. Most importantly, Paczkowski uses Party archives to show how Jaruzelski’s team “lost control over a manoeuvre designed to diffuse responsibility for existing economic difficulties and above all for those still to come”⁹. Building on his pioneering research, this essay traces the long road that led to the opening of the Round Table (6 February 1989). Preparatory talks took long to start, were often postponed and could have collapsed or degenerated into violence at any moment. Their result, the peaceful abdication of a communist party, was something of a miracle. As Michnik has remarked, surveying the country’s tragic history, for once Clio did not desert Poland.

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The General Amnesty

A general amnesty released 225 political prisoners, including major Solidarity figures Bujak, Michnik, Frasnyniuk and Bogdan Lis, over summer 1986. In retrospect, this concession by the authorities removed the first obstacle on the way to agreement between the opposition and those in power¹⁰. As Lityński put it at the time, “The authorities have taken their most significant decision since the declaration of martial law”. Though still lacking a legal basis, Solidarity had re-emerged as a political fact, inaugurating a “post-December” (1981) period, which he predicted would be an era of gradual and limited compromise¹¹.

The amnesty showed a willingness to abandon political repression as the main instrument of policy. Selective use of force remained an option kept in reserve, sometimes resorted to in local contexts almost to the very end of communist rule¹². But the release of political prisoners, held unjustly for many years, implied that old methods of repression were ineffective. Some Party leaders even admitted behind closed doors that the “existing model of socialism is outmoded”¹³. But as Solidarity noted, the amnesty alone did not resolve anything. Release of political prisoners was only one of the necessary preconditions for social dialogue. For genuine reform „there must be reinstatement of trade union pluralism, a rebuilding of the economic system and creation of a situation in which independent social activity is possible”¹⁴. In a clear hint to the authorities that the restored union would work within the law, Wałęsa called for trade union pluralism “in the framework of the Constitution”. A *quid pro quo* was beginning to emerge: if reinstated, Solidarity would co-operate in rescuing the economy. Accordingly, Solidarity formed a Provisional Council on 11 September as a body suitable for negotiating with those in power.

Wałęsa and his most senior advisors such as Geremek and Mazowiecki publicly appealed to the American government to lift the economic sanctions imposed in immediate and political response to martial law. The American charge d'affaires in Warsaw told Polish Party Secretary Czyrek that Washington had responded positively to the recent changes in policy and saw scope for improving bilateral relations if there was a “sustaining of the present situation in Poland since the amnesty”. Czyrek welcomed the improved atmosphere but added that normalisation of Polish-American relations could not depend on the behaviour of „a group of oppositional extremists in Poland, who might attempt to sabotage the process”¹⁵. The American left this tactfully unanswered.

The United States was blamed in a secret report to Jaruzelski for co-ordinating Western policy against the Polish government. America was “disciplining its allies and deliberately hampering the tendency to speed up the process of normalising relations with Poland”. Apart from Germany, the Western European states were “linking their readiness for normal political relations with Poland to the development of the internal situation in our country in the direction expected by the West”. Even the latest Italian coalition under Craxi was setting political preconditions for Jaruzelski's mooted visit. A further irritant was the behaviour of Western ambassadors in Warsaw, who were taking advantage of national holidays to invite “alongside official representatives, ‘prominent’ members of opposition circles”. Particularly annoying was their increased recognition of Wałęsa. The report proposed,

implausibly, to restrict his contacts with the West by exerting influence on him through “members of the administrative authorities, members of the State-Church commission, members of the Episcopate and even the moderate circles of 'legal opposition' in the name of higher interests of state”¹⁶.

A second complication for the Polish government was the change of leadership in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev implies that he came to power intending to liberalise, though not to liberate, Eastern Europe. Meeting its leaders at Chernenko's funeral, he at once called for a relationship based on equality, respect for the sovereignty and independence of each country and mutually beneficial co-operation. Gorbachev himself noted a certain reserve, as though his statements were *deja entendu*¹⁷. Other advisers observed this too. According to Vadim Zagladin, a principal architect of the new policy, Gorbachev's announcement that each state would henceforth be fully responsible for its own internal developments, was received by Jaruzelski and Kadar with equanimity, but by the rest - Honecker, Husak, Zhivkov and Ceausescu - without enthusiasm¹⁸.

When asked why the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress of the CPSU (February 1986) had said so little about Eastern Europe, Soviet officials replied that the matter was „too sensitive” and „too controversial”¹⁹. Clarification came later in the year, when the Politburo approved a memorandum from Gorbachev on relations with Eastern Europe which endorsed the earlier recognition of freedom of choice for the allied governments and, we are told, renounced any future Soviet military intervention²⁰. This was spelled out in Gorbachev's secret address to East European party leaders in Moscow (10-11 November 1986) which stated directly that they must „restructure” their rule and gain legitimacy. The Soviet Union could no longer be expected to keep them in power.

The Polish leadership responded warily towards the new Soviet line. Since it felt increasingly secure at home, having according to its own reckoning „defeated internal opposition”, it made no move towards reform. The Polish Foreign Minister recalls “Jaruzelski believed that Gorbachev was – like Khrushchev – doomed to failure. This view was confirmed by our Moscow Embassy”²¹. Even so, the Soviet approach towards Poland was seen as more successful than towards other allies. Zagladin attributes this to personal factors: Gorbachev came to respect Jaruzelski and his leadership abilities, and encouraged him to experiment in Polish politics “as a training ground, though not as a Russian laboratory”²².

Gorbachev told the Tenth Congress of the PZPR (June-July 1986) that „Poland is obliged to its excellent leader comrade Wojciech Jaruzelski, with his energy and political shrewdness, his foresight and ingenuity in very complicated situations, his stubborn defence of the peoples' interests and of the case of socialism”²³. He considered Jaruzelski a strong supporter of *perestroika*. “He and I had formed a very close and, I would say, amicable, relationship. I explain the General's devotion to reform by the fact that he had been convinced by his own experience that you cannot resolve a country's complex problems by force. Profound changes in the social system and government were required. The Poles and Hungarians had started their reform before we did. Hence their sincere interest in the success of *perestroika*”²⁴.

Such good relations between the two leaders gave Poland scope for change. But how far could change in Poland go? Dramatic moves in Moscow included Gorbachev's telephone call to the dissident Sakharov, followed by his return from exile. Should Jaruzelski now call Wałęsa and summon him to talks in Warsaw? It was evident that more freedom of movement had opened up, perhaps the most in decades, but the limits of permissible experimentation in Poland, and the durability of Soviet reforms, were unknown.

The Tactic of Consultation

Jaruzelski approached change cautiously. The intention was to widen the scope of consultation by bringing new members into existing or specially constituted bodies. Thus, the Politburo announced a „politico-organisational initiative” aimed at reaching a „national agreement”. This was grandly described as a „wide-ranging offensive to engage all social circles in resolving the problems of our country”, and also to assist in „democratisation of the socialist political system and strengthening the socialist state”. There were to be consultative citizens' conventions, a new socio-economic council, a parliamentary secretary for citizen's rights (ombudsman) and a national council on environmental protection. Paczkowski calls his new policy 'co-optation'²⁵.

The lengthy list of innovations to open up „new opportunities for expressing and obtaining the opinions of various groups of citizens” was headed by a Social Consultative Council to be attached to the Chairman of the Council of State (Jaruzelski)²⁶. Politburo papers outlined its general tasks: to normalise socio-political life, assist the state in carrying out the national interest, promote fulfilment of the five-year plan and speed up scientific-technical progress. Membership of the new Council had already been discussed by Party Secretary Barcikowski. He assured Church representatives that the intention was not to “throw it down from above”. The Party wished to collect “Genuine people, respected by society, including Catholics, people who enjoyed the confidence of the Church”²⁷. Later, Barcikowski suggested to Cardinal Glemp that he should delegate a Catholic group, to comprise about one third of a twenty-member Council²⁸. But when invitations were sent out, they led to a sharp division amongst those approached, a consequence the Party had perhaps intended. These led in turn to the re-emergence of the Church as arbiter between the authorities and the opposition.

Archbishop Dłubowski convened a meeting on the Consultative Council with a number of lay Catholic intellectuals. His welcoming remarks came straight to the point: would it be „yet another façade structure”? While the Episcopate did not want to give an automatic „no” to all proposals emanating from the government, he added that there needed to be guarantees that the Council would be an authentic body that Catholics could join with confidence. The meeting agreed to edit a list of further questions and proposals to be put to the government. A special meeting of the Club of Catholic Intellectuals (KIK) in Warsaw endorsed this positive response, but stressed that the future Consultative Council needed to act in a broader social context „so that it would not in fact be isolated”. Amongst other considerations, there would need to be freedom of association, both for Catholic groups and those with neutral world-views²⁹.

A well-phrased document was prepared for the Council of State by „persons representing opinion-forming social circles which do not have contact with the highest state authorities”. It stated that their experience with the Socio-Economic Council (attached to the *Sejm*) had not been very encouraging. A number of queries about the new Council were formulated: Would it include those not representing official political structures? Was there an opportunity to conduct adequate consultation with Wa³êsa on the subject of participation by Solidarity circles? Above all, they asked „What is the real motive for setting-up the consultative organisation?”³⁰. A small delegation presented these points to Barcikowski at the Presidential Palace on 18 October.

Referring to the list of questions as „novel and surprising”, Barcikowski replied that prior consultations with Wa³êsa were not envisaged. He criticised Wa³êsa strongly: it was hard to cooperate with people who were „declared enemies”. He saw no prospect of union pluralism at least in the near future. His visitors were „maximalists” and the authorities saw no need to make concessions to them. Nor was there any urgency to reach a social agreement since popular expectations were now much lower than before. However, Barczkowski did explain his notion of the Council’s composition. There would now be thirty or forty members. The Church would provide eight or ten, and the remainder would be representatives of the Party, allied Parties and „non-party people”. The latter could include „people beyond circles connected with the authorities (but not extremists who are reactivating the structure of Solidarity)”. The Council would be attached to the Head of State (Jaruzelski) and would proceed by consensus³¹.

Solidarity was denigrated by the Minister for Church Affairs, Adam Łopatka, who complained to Archbishop D¹browski that contacts between the Church and the political opposition were „daily worsening the climate” between Church and state. He alleged that the „subversive activities of Wa³êsa and Bujak” were dictated by the West, which was stirring up an „anti-systemic political opposition”. Łopatka set two preconditions for the next papal pilgrimage: „Maintenance of a scrupulous distance between the Church and opposition, and Church support for the Social Consultative Council”³². D¹browski rejected them both.

Following this rebuff, Jaruzelski sought to mend fences with the Vatican. The Catholic publicist Peter Raina tells us that “the Pope considered the first step in this direction (needed) to be the legal activity of Solidarity. Only the process of democratisation could guarantee domestic peace”. We are told that in a private audience in the Vatican on 13 January 1987, he advised Jaruzelski “to instruct the responsible state officials to invite Wa³êsa and other representatives of society for talks at one table, so a social agreement could be reached by direct contact”. Raina thus concludes it was “in the Vatican that the phrase “Round Table” was first heard”³³.

There is no mention of a Round Table in Jaruzelski’s report to the Politburo. He had stated that good relations with the new Soviet leadership gave Poland an exceptionally favourable position. “We are fully independent”. Poland’s “new and unprecedented solutions in domestic politics” (he gave no examples) not only escaped criticism but even received lively interest and a degree of prominence in the Soviet

press. Both Church and State faced inner opposition. He noted that the Episcopate had difficulty in restraining some of its more “provocative” priests, such as Wałęsa’s confessor father Jankowski. Likewise, „the state apparatus, ‘our base’, is sharpening its distrust and unwillingness for dialogue.” Yet “dialogue is inevitable and we on our side will promote it in all spheres”³⁴. In his laconic reply, the Pope referred to the experience of the Polish nation. Its lack of statehood for so many years had made Poles particularly sensitive to questions of national independence and self-determination. He reminded the General that Poland had a long tradition of tolerance: Zygmunt August had accepted the Crown (in 1548) on condition that “I will not be King of your consciences”³⁵.

Jaruzelski enlarged on Poland’s reforms to Archbishop Silvestrini, prior to the Papal visit. His aim was to show Poland on a path of „normalisation”. He claimed that country was „building the institutions of a democratic state and widening the social base (of) the conduct of the authorities”. He cited the Consultative Council as evidence for „the consistent realisation of the process of (reaching?) national agreement” and as helping the „creation of conditions for wide dialogue”. He noted that 70% of the Council’s membership was non-Party, and included religious believers³⁶.

Anxiety arose amongst opposition circles that the authorities might use the papal visit to legitimise the imposition of a ‘state of war’ and to enshrine a subsequent normalisation of „Poland without Solidarity”³⁷. To allay this concern, Wałęsa summoned Solidarity’s political activists and leading sympathisers in intellectual and cultural life to a Warsaw church on 31 May 1987. The general consensus of the ‘Sixty-two’ was that fulfilling „basic social ideals” required free elections, freedom of association for trade unions and other bodies, and free expression and belief³⁸. As yet, the group issued no overt political challenge to the authorities, but it slowly evolved into a Solidarity „Citizens’ Committee”.

From the outset of his visit, the Pope stressed the right of citizens to take part in creating a „Republic of all Poles”³⁹. His sermons, homilies and beatifications, avoided direct contemporary references, but his language - which the authorities called “clerical double-talk”- was perfectly clear. He gave repeated emphasis to human rights, including the freedom of association. In Gdańsk, he made a statement on „the great heritage of Polish Solidarity” to a vast crowd which unfurled Solidarity banners from branches across the whole country⁴⁰. Praising the struggle for human dignity, including the dignity of labour, he paid tribute to those who had fallen as victims in its defence. This had added poignancy under the Shipyard Monument to victims from 1970, where some 10,000 supporters (according to official estimates) assembled to demonstrate for Solidarity and „to chant anti-state slogans”. The Pope noted that the Gdańsk Agreement „remains in constant need of fulfilment”⁴¹.

Jaruzelski’s attempt to use the Church as co-partner in resolving Poland’s long-standing political crisis was inconclusive. The effort was made even more explicit the following year, when the Church was invited to form a „coalition government”⁴². Experience should have taught the Party that such a request to take part in power was unacceptable. In times of crisis, the Church always expressed the willingness to act as a moderator. It accepted the role of arbiter when state and society sought to reach agreement. But the role of co-partner with the atheist state was

rejected. As Dłubowski put it later, “This is because it (the Church) does not want to be a political force; it must not replace society in deciding the fate and future of the nation. At a time when society was deprived of its identity and even voice, it had to take its place out of necessity”. When an agreement was reached, the Church would be a guarantor *for both sides*. Therefore, when the Round Table finally came about „the Church’s role as a substitute was over”⁴³.

The ‘Anti-Crisis Pact’

Vice-President Bush paid a visit to Poland (26-29 September 1987). In five hours of talks with Jaruzelski, he mentioned that the US might support a debt relief package for 1988, if Poland showed its credit-worthiness through domestic reform. Reform should include „an active dialogue between the government and society and compliance with human rights”. Further steps should be taken to allow registration of creative organisations and to end persecution of those engaged in „independent activity”. Bush advocated institutional pluralism, and reform of the electoral system „so that ‘independent opinion’ could be represented”, reform of the law on trade union and possibility of registering independent trade unions⁴⁴. Jaruzelski replied that „recent experience had shown” that allowing trade union pluralism in Polish conditions led to „economic anarchy”. While the 1980 Agreement had not been repudiated, its fulfilment must be a matter of time. Meanwhile, a „reactivation of ‘Solidarity’ and acceptance of its demands would mean suicide”. Rehearsing all his alibis for martial law, Jaruzelski again argued that he had saved the country from chaos⁴⁵.

Kuroń took the view that martial law had achieved its main objective: to atomise society, which could no longer exert effective pressure upon the authorities. They used it to pacify society „of which they are afraid” and to block reform. But the „landscape after battle” enabled Solidarity to lay aside its own “martial law” mentality of “war” and abandon conspiratorial structures. The opposition should learn a new language with which to engage reform-minded party members in discussion. This was a risky and difficult strategy, but the alternative was useless: endless reiteration of the desire for an agreement with the authorities, while simultaneously acting as though no-one believed agreement to be possible⁴⁶. More simply, Lityński declared “the time for negation is over”. It had become clear that the authorities now sought social support, and their change in tactics necessitated a new *modus operandi* for the opposition. Solidarity should co-operate with all those - irrespective of political colour - who wished to carry out reforms⁴⁷.

Solidarity now dissolved its underground and created a National Executive Committee (KKW) as a single leadership body to function in public. The immediate issue it had to address was the authorities’ latest consultative initiative: a nation-wide referendum to ask whether the public supported the *Sejm* programme for overcoming the economic crisis. The stated subject was „the Second Stage of economic reform”, announced in April 1987. Polish officials set great store by a World Bank Report⁴⁸ which deemed its basic „Theses” sound in principle. But the IMF expected them to involve „decentralisation of decisions on output, prices and investment on the basis of enterprise self-management”⁴⁹. However, for most Poles, the „Second Stage” was puzzling. The nature and duration of the „First Stage” had not been explained and the

content of economic reform was left undefined. Solidarity dismissed the referendum as a propaganda exercise and advised the public to boycott the proceedings⁵⁰. Wałęsa commented that Poles did not need to be asked whether they wanted a reform of the state and the economy, since they had made that quite evident since August 1980⁵¹.

Solidarity took the view that there were more important questions to ask the public. Wałęsa sought to formulate them through further consultation with „representatives of independent circles”. He summoned a further meeting of the ‘Sixty-Two’. While their May statement had confined itself to generalities, Wałęsa now proposed they discuss more pointedly political questions

- Does the present economic position make political reform inevitable?
- What institutional changes would create the chance for a wider realisation of objective human rights?
- Is the 1980 programme of social agreements still relevant after the experience of the ‘state of war’?
- Do opportunities exist for mobilisation and self-organisation by society - including social, professional and neighbourhood groups - as well as individuals?⁵².

Despite this attempt to focus the debate, what followed was rather diffuse. Aleksander Hall, a political theorist based in Gdańsk⁵³, argued against the monolithic version of Solidarity as the main key to the future and favoured a more pluralistic opposition⁵⁴. Lityński replied that Solidarity was itself pluralistic, both as a trade union and as a social movement, and therefore needed a consolidated leadership, consensus on the desired direction of change and an agreed programme⁵⁵. Michnik thought the future of Solidarity was still open. „We simply don’t know whether it will be a trade union or, together with the union (there will be) a more clearly political formation”. But he was quite certain that it had a future. „Solidarity is the first symbol since the symbol of the Home Army (AK) with which the public identifies and widely understands”⁵⁶.

Geremek considered the *nomenklatura* to be the key. Society was exhausted and the authorities were without a policy to overcome the crisis. Solidarity was emerging from the ‘state of war’ into an atmosphere of openness and the question now was whether that openness could be used to achieve change. The meeting had been called to discuss political reform and there was no doubt that the public wished to move in that direction, but it could only succeed if those in power saw it to be in their own interest to introduce reforms. How could society’s demands for democratisation, and its indispensable preconditions such as judicial independence, restriction on arbitrary policing and above all removing the power of the *nomenklatura* to block economic, social and political changes, be met? He thought that a solution was already at hand from the Solidarity Congress of 1981: an „anti-crisis pact” as the first step out of the current *impasse*⁵⁷.

The “anti-crisis pact” was adopted by Solidarity on 5 December. „It is clear to everyone that the realisation of essential economic and political reforms demands a return to social agreement”. Solidarity would help to rebuild the economy, thereby extracting the Party from its political *impasse*, and in return would regain freedom of association⁵⁸. According to Geremek, public life would be divided into two. The Party

would continue to exercise its monopoly of power in the state, while in society, there would be institutional pluralism, guaranteed by law. As its part of the bargain, Solidarity would withdraw from macro-political objectives, such as the installation of a multi-party system, that sometimes figured in its pronouncements⁵⁹. Power would be delimited and divided, rather than shared. The appeal was for reform-minded members of the Party to bypass resistance from its conservative apparatus. There was no anticipation at this point that the communist authorities would abdicate, nor did Solidarity express the wish that they should go.

Further efforts to promote dialogue were taken on 13 December 1987, the sixth anniversary of martial law. A statement by Warsaw Solidarity called for a new method of defending workers' rights by „creating and guaranteeing a new social agreement, initiating an anti-crisis pact”. Outright struggle with the state authorities should be replaced by a positive approach, reconstructing social and economic bonds. They had in mind workers' councils, political clubs and local self-government bodies, which would combine to put pressure on the authorities. Breaking with the negative stance imposed on the union in the underground and martial law, it was an active strategy for achieving change⁶⁰.

On the same symbolic date, the first historian of Solidarity⁶¹ addressed an open letter to Jaruzelski and Wałęsa calling on them to meet without preconditions but with goodwill. „You have the chance through common effort, and moral support which the Church will certainly provide, to reverse the circle of history. In the name of the most fundamental interests of society and the state, make the effort!”⁶². But the communist authorities ignored this dramatic appeal for almost six months.

The Spring of 1988

To accept Solidarity's 'anti-crisis' pact required the authorities to concede that their previous policies had been cosmetic and that façade institutions such as the Consultative Council were little more than talking-shops, whose more pliable non-Party members could be paraded before Western visitors as evidence of Poland's 'socialist democracy'. The pact's official unveiling, in a belatedly published interview with Geremek, was an „important psychological moment”⁶³. Despite the belittling by-line, introducing him as „adviser to the former Solidarity”, he was now associated with a significant initiative designed to channel public frustrations in a positive direction.

In the interview, Geremek suggested that both sides had learned from the experiences of the early eighties. Society had learned that its aspirations and demands must be confined within strict limits; the authorities had learned that without authentic social forces there could not be the turning point (*przełom*) which so many wanted. In a further concession, Geremek noted that society must respect the rule of law „based on the leading role of the Party”. This gave it the monopoly both of domestic politics and foreign affairs, a step beyond the December 1987 decisions. In this way Geremek hoped to induce more reasonable Party leaders to consider that the Solidarity offer lay within the confines of political realism. Prospects for its success came partly from publication itself: the first (and most significant) of interviews with leaders of the „former Solidarity”. It also had resonance within the highest echelons of the Party, to which Geremek had belonged from 1952 until resigning in 1968. Ciosek mentioned to

the Episcopate “Geremek is highly intelligent. It is a pity he doesn’t stand on the Party’s side”⁶⁴.

For Geremek, and many of his contemporaries from the Party school of the 1950’s, the ‘March events’ of 1968, an anti-intellectual and anti-Zionist campaign arising from within the Party leadership, had been a key juncture in their political development. It confirmed the younger generation expelled from Warsaw University, as permanent political activists (such as Michnik and Lityński), which others (such as the Smolar brothers and Blumsztajn) continued in emigration. In reconsidering the ‘March events’, Party leaders wondered how far to go in opening up this most murky episode in their post-Stalinist past. They realised that the „anti-socialist” opposition was going to use the twentieth anniversary to organise „anti-state political demonstrations”. They were sure to „hold us responsible for the events of spring 1968 and impute to us anti-Semitic tendencies and anti-intelligentsia policies”. They recognised that opposition claims were given credence by the one-sided and untruthful versions of events that had hitherto appeared in the official media. To set the record straight in a spirit of openness would give the lie to hostile domestic propaganda and also lead to a positive reaction from international opinion”⁶⁵. But there was one drawback. As Dariusz Stola notes, the investigation might also cast light on the conduct of the only Party leader still in office from those times⁶⁶. Jaruzelski had been promoted to the post of Minister of Defence during the March events and was thus in post in time to help prepare the Warsaw Pact invasion of August 1968.

Student protests gathered momentum. On 17 February, the independent student union (NZS), illegal since martial law, celebrated the seventh anniversary of its inauguration. Pamphleteering passed off peacefully in Gdańsk, Osztyń, Warsaw and Wrocław, and an evening march by some 1,500-2000 students at the Jagiellonian University seemed to take the militia by surprise but they did not intervene⁶⁷. Reaction to the anniversary of the ‘March events’ was very different. After a meeting at Warsaw University on 8 March, students spilled out into the streets where various columns of protesters were broken up by police batons. Some broke through the police cordon and made their way to the Old Town for a special mass. Police batons were waiting for them as they left the cathedral. In Kraków, some two thousand university students sallied forth towards the old Market Square. As in 1968, they threw up impromptu barricades against the advancing militia. There were forty-seven arrests. Students also protested in Wrocław, Lublin and Gwilić⁶⁸.

The Church tried to protect students from state violence. The Episcopate asked the Interior Minister whether the attacks on peacefully demonstrating students had been ordered „from above”. General Kiszczak replied that his instructions had been to preserve the peace. He had looked into the matter personally and found that not a single person had been committed to hospital as a result of the protest. Future street protests would be recorded on film so that it could be established „who had used force and if it was within their instructions”⁶⁹.

A key player in the Polish drama now re-entered the political stage. As usual, the re-emergence of the working-class took the other actors by surprise. Early on 25 April, transport workers halted bus and tram services in Bydgoszcz. When told by Party officials that the meeting held during their „work stoppage”- they did not call it

a strike – was improperly constituted and therefore illegal, they replied ‘This is a spontaneous reaction by employees. The (official) trade unions did not organise it. But they support the employees’ demands’. One of their ten points called for „a different attitude of the Director towards employees”⁷⁰. Although the other postulates were financial, their political implications were clear. In his telex to the Politburo asking for instructions, the local First Secretary blamed ‘lack of vigilance by the Party factory committee, enterprise managers and the security service’ as a source of this ‘surprising form of conflict’⁷¹. Conflict spread to Kraków, where 4,500 workers at Huta Lenina began a strike next day. In addition to wage increases to compensate for higher prices, they demanded the reinstatement of four colleagues who had been sacked for political activities⁷². A strike at Huta Sta³owa Wola on 29 April, supporting the demands from Huta Lenina, called for the release of Solidarity activists and supporters, supplying a list of names and demanded their reinstatement, and called for trade union pluralism⁷³. They meant re-legalisation of Solidarity.

An emergency meeting of Party leaders convened later in the day. General Kiszczak reported that Solidarity *aktyw* had held a meeting overnight in the apartment of ‘a priest known for his hostile attitudes’. They had called a strike, which swelled to 4,000 participants and elected a strike committee. It was headed by a Solidarity activist dismissed on 25 April for organising an illegal demonstration a few days earlier. The ‘illegal committee’ organising the strike had stiffened its position. Their demand that the Director re-instate all dismissed Solidarity activists would be supported by an occupation strike if not acceded to forthwith. There followed ten demands. Jaruzelski interjected „Political or economic?”. Kiszczak replied „Political too: pluralism”. A supporting strike at the Steel processing mill added fresh demands for reinstatement of those „dismissed groundlessly in 1981”. Strikers also called for the removal of „alien services” from the workplace, including the secret police (SB) and ORMO⁷⁴.

This deteriorating situation was worsened by the imminence of the May Day with its traditional parades. Jaruzelski optimistically envisaged an „event of colossal significance” during which „millions of people to turn out, all of them in an orderly fashion, to show their confidence and support” for the authorities⁷⁵. But the balance of forces was shifting. The public was losing the sense of fear instilled by martial law.

The rebirth of Solidarity posed a challenge the authorities could not ignore much longer. But how could negotiations begin? Jaruzelski admitted „They are speaking to us from a position of strength, while we speak from a position of weakness”⁷⁶. He drew attention to Solidarity’s most recent approach. A carefully-worded letter to the Party’s most high-ranking economists, Vice-Premier Zdis³aw Sadowski and W³adys³aw Baka, President of the National Bank, cordially invited them to discuss the national economy together with representatives of „various tendencies in Polish social opinion”. Wa³ęsa added that „You gentlemen, by taking part, will contribute to a fruitful debate based on a citizen’s sense of responsibility”. Attached were preparatory materials drawn up by two independent experts, Wielowieyski and Bugaj, which took for granted that economic reform was impossible without political change.

As Jaruzelski’s Mayday address to the nation was being broadcast live, Wa³ęsa addressed a crowd outside St Brygida’s Church in Gdańsk. In his remarks,

which resumed after mass, Wałęsa responded to calls of cowardice from young people eager for strike action. A voice from the crowd exclaimed „I am young, hot-headed, just a puppy...But please tell me, how long must we wait, dreaming of a free Poland?”⁷⁷.

The new militants pitted themselves against the veterans of 1980. Unlike their elders, they saw little room for compromise, which was indeed regarded as a moral disgrace⁷⁸. Hopes of the authorities that the new wave of workers' strikes would confine itself to “economic” issues were quickly disabused. The Gdańsk Shipyard came out on strike next day. The key demands were the re-legalisation of Solidarity, release of political prisoners and reinstatement of those sacked for Solidarity activities. As in 1980, these were placed first on the negotiating list to indicate the political priority and to emphasise that the strike could not be ended simply by inflationary wage settlements⁷⁹.

The fresh wave of strikes reactivated a mediator process, crucial later in reaching the Round Table. The Episcopal Conference stated that “no government, nor any political camp will succeed in solving the urgent problems of our country without extensive participation by society”. This was elaborated by its Social Council's statement “on the necessity of dialogue between the authorities and society” which declared bluntly that it was difficult to “sustain a position in which the majority of working people are deprived of their own voice and are represented by an organisation (OPZZ) which they do not support”⁸⁰. The Warsaw Episcopate dispatched mediating missions to the main places of protest. On written authority from the Church, Stelmachowski, Olszewski and Halina Bortnowska went to Nowa Huta⁸¹ and Mazowiecki and Wielowieyski went to the Gdańsk Shipyard⁸². Despite their efforts, the authorities were in no mood to negotiate. After an eight-day stoppage, against fierce intimidation from the riot police, Wałęsa and A Szablewski (another 1980 veteran) led a march out of the Gdańsk Shipyard to end the strike⁸³.

Despite this apparent success, Jaruzelski's advisers saw renewed confrontation ahead. A secret “team of experts” told him “We are to an increasing degree dealing with a real political crisis”. Everything had to be done to calm social tensions and bring the present unrest under control. The ZOMO option - use of riot police - could only inflame the situation and possibly lead to bloodshed. Society's patience was running out. The threshold of fear had risen considerably and the public was no longer afraid of the authorities. “Memories of martial law no longer have a restraining impact”. They saw only one way to pacify the situation: “political means”, code language for eschewal of force. However, the ‘experts’ warned that rhetoric from the present (Messner) government about “socialist renewal” would not suffice⁸⁴. A new government should be formed on the basis of “wide social agreement amongst all constructive forces”. The “second stage” of economic reform required “much wider social support for the authorities than at present”. Despite all this, they ruled out re-legalisation of Solidarity or the formation of new political parties⁸⁵.

Jaruzelski considered that the ‘Spring Events’ had shown the Party's weakness “which is no surprise”. Local officials had failed to take the initiative during workers' protests on the Coast. Instead of relying on political argument they had simply waited for police batons. This produced the paradoxical effect that the socialist authorities were seen as dictatorial and anti-democratic whilst in reality they were sluggish and

incapable. “We have spent the last seven years blocking the organised activity of the adversary. What has the Party done in this period? It has aged, and young people have left. This is a catastrophe”⁸⁶.

Dubiński (an insider, later secretary of the Round Table) suggests “the authorities were unable to decide what they actually wanted: whether to press ahead with dialogue, or to make limited changes in the method of exercising power while not changing its principles, or alternatively to leave everything be, use force and wait until things sort themselves out. In fact, the principle emerged that all solutions could be attempted simultaneously, the best example being the handling of the strike at Nowa Huta”. His several attempts to investigate this schizophrenic approach had failed. “I do not think they knew themselves. Their awareness of the need to change wrestled with the retention of old habits”⁸⁷.

The Party relied on overtures to trusted partners. Party Secretary Ciosek told the Episcopate that Poland could never become a democracy unless there were stable relations between Church and state⁸⁸. The already-favourable attitude of the Party to church-building, and other concessions to the Church agenda, could be enhanced. But these incentives did not achieve the desired results. A second approach, to non-party intellectuals, was similarly ineffective. New bodies were conjured up for their co-optation. Czyrek told the inaugural meeting of a Polish Club of International Relations that the country needed a broad “pro-reform coalition or anti-crisis pact”. The Party would like “wide social dialogue” in which the Club members could help put the country on the road to “pluralism and agreement”⁸⁹. He publicly floated the notion of replacing the existing government, “which had shown its incapability of leading the country out of crisis” with a “pro-reform coalition” including members of the opposition⁹⁰.

Andre Gerrits sees these initiatives as offering ‘consultative democracy’ to overcome a “crisis of political participation”⁹¹. The Jaruzelski team, reluctantly admitting the existence of independent public opinion and an inability to silence it, attempted to direct political opposition into its desired channels. Dummy institutions of participation under martial law having been ineffective, the Party attempted “to consult and integrate the people it had chosen and the organisations it had established itself”, in order to carry out ‘authoritarian change’. Characteristic of its consultative bodies were a lack of formal competence (or legal standing), a self-evident absence of representation (it hand-picked politically reliable members and sought to veto others)⁹². Perhaps sensing these shortcomings, Jaruzelski’s team took a more dramatic initiative.

Ciosek amazed the Episcopal Secretary, Orszulik, by proposing to end one-Party rule. He declared that Parliament should be more freely elected from a wider range of candidates. A new constitution should restrict the “ruling coalition” to some 60-65% of seats in the lower chamber, with only a minority- say 35-40% - in the Senate. The Church should play a substantial role in setting up this new political order⁹³. But Orszulik’s reply was modest. Rejecting Ciosek’s proposal of a pact between the Church and government, he suggested the authorities seek “agreement with independent opinion”. The first step towards social agreement would be trade union pluralism and re-legalisation of Solidarity. He suggested talks with „suitable

people, ‘anointed’ by the Church from afar’, such as Stelmachowski, Geremek, Wałęsa, Hall and “young people from Jastrzębie (in Silesia) who are not on strike”⁹⁴.

Jaruzelski told a Central Committee Plenum of plans to change the system of government. He envisaged concentric circles. At its core would remain the existing Party and “coalition” partners. Beyond this, a second circle would include Catholic and lay Catholic organisations and the Patriotic Movement for National Rebirth (PRON). A third and outer circle would include those “ready to participate in reform and building an understanding”. Who would be excluded from this outer zone? Much of his speech was devoted to differentiating the opposition into patriots and the others (apparently a sizeable proportion) who owed allegiance to foreign courts. Finally, he declared that the concentric system would come into being at a “Round Table”⁹⁵.

The August Bargain

Poland’s uneasy truce ended with the return of industrial unrest. The “Manifest Lipcowy” coalmine in Jastrzębie began a strike on 15 August, with re-legalisation of Solidarity as its principal demand. Within days, strikes had spread to other mines in Silesia and to the Baltic ports. Jaruzelski admitted to a meeting of the Committee for National Defence (KOK) on 20 August that “the opponent is strong - and senses our weakness and our mistakes”. Strikes were not simply inspired from abroad, but were spontaneous demonstrations “dominated by young people filled with emotion”⁹⁶. Provisions for a state of emergency were made, but without urgency. Force was only mentioned in passing at the Politburo meeting next day, and was not considered a realistic option. Instead, space was being created for a bold political initiative. The Politburo heard reports of two new lines of contact with the political opposition.

The first channel was Stelmachowski. His role stemmed from a meeting in the Warsaw KIK (19 August) which considered ways to help the striking workers and decided to approach Czyrek⁹⁷. Stelmachowski had signalled the readiness of Solidarity for talks, but only with the participation of the “Electrician”. Reassuring Czyrek that Wałęsa had grown more realistic, he said that Solidarity had learned that its political ambitions could be realised in a less confrontational way. Wałęsa would agree to talks in return for extinguishing the new wave of strikes, but only if re-legalisation of Solidarity was on the agenda. Reporting this, Czyrek noted that the Church supported this initiative as a way of ending strikes and coping with economic complaints, such a shortage of coal. He thought that dialogue should be pursued, on specific conditions, above all that the “strike pistol” should be removed first. General Kiszczak could then conduct talks on the government side. He made clear to his colleagues that entering into dialogue with Wałęsa would mean re-legalising Solidarity.

The second channel consisted of Kiszczak’s own talks with the lawyer and veteran human rights activist Si³a-Nowicki, who had recently acted as an independent mediator during the strikes in Silesia. Si³a-Nowicki had warned of uncontrolled outbursts of workers in both mines and factories. He had rung Kiszczak from Katowice to warn that the occupation strike by thousands of coal-miners could end in tragedy. In the discussion that followed, Jaruzelski reported great anger amongst local

Party *aktyw* that the centre (Warsaw) was doing nothing to end the strikes. They awaited decisive action, but the provincial Party Secretary Gorywoda saw no way to end the strike by force. Strikes were also threatening in Warsaw factories where Party cadres “do not feel strong enough and fear that we will not be consistent in the tasks that face us. Memories of 1980-81 (the Solidarity era) are returning”. Apart from one brief reference, on whether to deploy warships in the Baltic ports, force was again not considered. A consensus was emerging to start negotiations⁹⁸.

In his next meeting with Orszulik, Ciosek proposed a new coalition. He outlined a tri-partite arrangement with a Presidency on top, in the middle a Senate, apportioned equally between the “ruling coalition”, the Church and independents, and finally a lower house with 60% “ruling coalition” and 40% “opposition and our non-party friends”. Orszulik replied to this unexpected offer that organisations were better built from the ground rather than from the roof downwards. He took grass roots’ demands for free trade unions as a case in point. Ciosek replied that trade union pluralism was unacceptable both from the economic point of view, and also from the political angle given what they had become in 1981. Orszulik replied that the new era was quite different, to which Ciosek retorted “You think the Brezhnev Doctrine is no longer operative? Gorbachev is making perestroika but against him is a whole army!”⁹⁹.

On the same day, Czyrek told Stelmachowski that he wanted written confirmation that Wałęsa sought dialogue. Stelmachowski travelled to Gdańsk, where Wałęsa signed a letter drafted and edited by Mazowiecki and Michnik setting out the main themes for the Round Table

- Restoration of the workers’ and citizens’ rights set out in the Agreement of August 1980, in particular trade union pluralism
- Social and political pluralism, including freedom of political clubs and association
- Economic reform to take the country out of crisis, to be achieved through greater democratisation and strengthening the role of the Sejm¹⁰⁰

On 26 August, the Episcopal Conference appealed for social peace and conflict resolution through mutual agreement. It also declared the need to “find ways leading to union pluralism and the creation of associations”¹⁰¹.

Kiszczak’s appearance on television later that day was a revelation. Three days before, he had been threatening a curfew and other extraordinary measures, but now he was a model of calm. He announced that the „extinguishing of illegal strikes” had created a new political situation. In his capacity as „Chairman of the Council of Ministers’ Committee on the Enforcement of Law, Public Order and Social Discipline”, he would hold an urgent meeting with “representatives of various social and occupational circles”. This could take the form of a “Round Table”. He set no preconditions or agenda and no participants were excluded except those who “reject the legal and constitutional order of the Polish Peoples’ Republic”¹⁰².

Czyrek, reporting to a special Party Plenum (27-28 August), proposed to offer the opposition a place in parliament, as part of a “wide coalition for reform and renewal (*odnowa*)”. A joint election programme could be worked out by a Council for National Agreement, which, in turn, could be the outcome of debates at a Round Table between „the representatives of various social forces”. The new Council could consider electoral reform, creation of a second chamber and (enhancing) the office of

president. However, the return to trade union pluralism was ruled out¹⁰³. Skórzyński calls this manoeuvre an “escape forward”¹⁰⁴, whereby the Party offered more political concessions than the opposition had expected, in return for its abandonment of Solidarity.

The historic meeting between Kiszczak and Wałęsa took place on the eighth anniversary of the Gdańsk Agreement. The Solidarity leader was accompanied, at his own insistence, by a senior Churchman Bishop Jerzy Dłubowski. Kiszczak set the ending of strikes as a precondition for the Round Table. His agenda centred on the planned electoral reform, opening places in the Senate and other public institutions to “constructive opposition”. Pluralism was accepted in general terms, but there could be no departure from the principle of “one trade union in one workplace”. Those invited to the Round Table would be “people of ‘Solidarity’ but without ‘Solidarity’” and exclude those who rejected the “existing legal order”. Wałęsa replied that “matters of the Round Table are important, but the matter of Solidarity is more important, followed by pluralism”¹⁰⁵. Afterwards the official press agency (PAP) noted cryptically that General Kiszczak had met Wałęsa to discuss a Round Table. But the bulletin gave equal space to his meeting with the leader of PRON and even more to his meeting with members of the Consultative Council, the editor of *Res Publica*, the coalition partners and even some academic administrators¹⁰⁶.

Wałęsa kept his side of the bargain by calling off the strikes. That he did so on his own authority, as Solidarity leader elected at the 1981 Congress, led to renewed murmurings against his autocratic manner behind the scenes¹⁰⁷. Deals with the Party were strongly resisted by union ‘fundamentalists’ who regarded as any arrangement with ‘the reds’ as tantamount to betrayal. Wałęsa had acted wisely in taking a Church ‘witness’ to the talks. Jaruzelski noted the growing divisions within „former Solidarity” with satisfaction and argued that the accusations against Wałęsa were helping to separate “realist and constructive currents” from the „extremist and destructive elements”¹⁰⁸. At the same time, Party activists began a furore against *their* leadership, besieging the Warsaw headquarters with questions, anxieties and doubts about its apparent *volte-face*.

Thirty-nine of the forty-one voivodship Party committees signed a memorandum to the Central Committee opposing talks with Solidarity. One passage stated “We were told for seven years that Wałęsa is an idiot; we now ask: has the idiot become wise and the government idiotic?”¹⁰⁹. But “hysteria and shock” within the Party *apparatus* was accompanied by a sense of relief that the summer strikes had been ended without resort to force, and an awareness that some price had to be paid for the peaceful outcome. To placate the voivodship Party committees, Warsaw sent out a teleprinter message “The Question of Talks with the Opposition”. Its key point was that “*We stress that in conversations with L Wałęsa no guarantee has been given about the registration of Solidarity*”. The stated policy was to use “political methods”: force remained a last resort. But since “People’s power must not misuse the argument of force as a legitimization of government”, partners to dialogue had to be found. This meant sounding out all “realistically-thinking partners” with whom to resolve the problem of social unrest¹¹⁰.

Crossing the Rubicon

The state-run trade union (OPZZ) further complicated the situation. Since the spring it had been attempting to become an autonomous political actor. Its leader Miodowicz, had fulminated against economic policy in general and price rises in particular. He sent a stream of protests letters to the Politburo¹¹¹ (of which he was recently made a member). He declared current economic measures were detrimental to his “own” constituency, the working class, and his Council passed a vote of no confidence in the Messner government.

In Politburo discussions of “The Model of Trade Unions and National Agreement” much time was given to the prospects for the OPZZ, but its contribution to solving the country’s problems seemed entirely negative. It opposed both trade union pluralism and any move towards liberal economic reform. But nor was Solidarity seen as a solution. The Politburo rejected its call for registration as “institutionalising anti-communist opposition” and expressed the worry that its “rotten history” might recur. Possible outcomes for “the evolution of Solidarity as a political movement” were outlined. It was held to be an alarming prospect, „a species of political counter-system” resulting in „anarchistic strikes, empty shelves, rejected offers of agreement, escalation of divisions, threat of civil war, the weakening of Poland’s international position, and loss of confidence amongst trading partners”¹¹².

A similar tone was adopted by Kiszczak at his next meeting with Wałęsa. The summer strikes had cost 54 billion zlotys, 20 million dollars and nine million roubles and “to this negative balance must also be added irretrievable moral, social and political losses”. Kiszczak still sought a Round Table without preconditions, but the authorities had to consider their own constituencies. These were seven million trade unionists; 2.2 million Party members and their families; the officer corps; members of “our great coalition” (ZSL and SD); Catholic and Christian associations. They also represented the many of the non-affiliated “who do not want anarchy, do not always cry “Hosanna” for strikes, for Solidarity or for union pluralism”. Wałęsa’s good offices in extinguishing recent protests could not conceal the fact that Solidarity was still presenting itself as the “party of strikes, as it was in 1981”. Despite all this, he considered that “today’s meeting is the start of the Round Table”¹¹³.

Wałęsa reiterated “there is no freedom without Solidarity”. While admitting that the 1980’s had been a negative decade so far, a seven-year period in which positive proposals had not come from either side, he now saw the chance for progress. The way forward was “pluralism, with a place for Solidarity in it, not that from 1981 but renewed, coming to a Round Table with specific proposals”. While rejecting this, Kiszczak made certain gestures of goodwill: to cease prosecutions for recent strike activity and to cancel the practice of calling-up Solidarity activists for military service exercises¹¹⁴.

A preparatory meeting for the Round Table took place at Magdalenka next day. Of twenty-five participants, thirteen represented the “ruling coalition”, ten the “Solidarity-opposition”, and two were Church observers. Kiszczak welcomed them to the start of a “great debate for the good of the Republic”. No topics were taboo but they should concentrate on the most important:

- economic reform – a new economic model based on developing all forms of property-ownership
- political reform – a new model of the state, empowering the *Sejm* to carry out projects for political reform. The latter could include a new model of union movements and proposals defining their place in the political system.

Wałęsa explained that Solidarity did not seek to displace the official trade unions: “We don’t want a monopoly, we want an equal chance”. Re-legalisation would provide this opportunity. His advisers concurred.

According to Mazowiecki, re-legalisation was “the key point”. Until there was a clear declaration regularising Solidarity’s place in the political life of the country, it would not be possible to make progress on other issues. Stelmachowski was equally categorical. “The essential problem is the legalisation of Solidarity as a fully legal partner in the life of the country and Round Table talks”¹¹⁵. Stalemate ensued. The authorities refused to move and the future of the Round Table seemed in jeopardy. Eventually, the Solidarity side conceded to a final communiqué which merely noted that “the shape of the Polish trade union movement” would be discussed at the forthcoming Round Table.

Although Solidarity did not achieve the immediate goal, its advisers came away with the sense that the meeting did amount to *de facto* recognition. The authorities were talking to Solidarity again in all but name. The Church was a key actor in the restoration of relations. The Primate had delegated Bishop Bronisław Dembowski to attend Magdalenka with the single instruction, drawn from the debacle of November 1981, “make sure the first round of talks is not the last”. Later, Dembowski recalled the function of such mediation. It protected Wałęsa, when meeting Kiszczak, from being disqualified in the eyes of society, and it protected Kiszczak, when meeting Wałęsa, from being disqualified in Party circles. Once agreement had been reached “Our role was to act as guarantor for both sides”¹¹⁶.

During an interval in the talks, Kiszczak suggested to Wałęsa and Mazowiecki that outstanding problems could be resolved after the next session of parliament which was set to dismiss the government. The demise of the Messner government duly took place by 359 votes to 1 (with 17 abstentions). The first communist government to leave office by “parliamentary arithmetic” marked an end to seven decades of Leninism, but in the current climate of Polish politics passed almost unnoticed.

Solidarity moved ahead with Round Table preparations. It sought answers to procedural questions, such as the size of working groups and the deadline for completion of various stages. It set up seven interim teams to advise Wałęsa on key issues. The most important were trade union pluralism (under Mazowiecki), economic matters (Wielowieyski), social pluralism (Szaniawski) and political reforms (Geremek)¹¹⁷. In further talks, Czyrek stated that the Round Table would consist of some 50-70 persons drawn from the “Party-government” with “allies, opposition circles and a third category of well-known independent persons, including Churchmen. A tight timetable was proposed (17 October- 11 November) so that a successful outcome could be celebrated on the seventieth anniversary of Poland’s regaining independence¹¹⁸

The Party leadership also began to realise the urgency of handling a new and rapidly developing situation. Czyrek told the Secretariat (4 October) that a surge of public opinion, initially sceptical, now welcomed the Round Table and expected it to reach a national understanding. He claimed “this proves that our initiative has fallen on fertile social ground”¹¹⁹. Kiszczak was less sanguine. Solidarity was reactivated, and, emboldened by three meetings with him, now assumed it had achieved *de facto* recognition. Under the guise of dialogue and calls for national agreement, its leaders were feverishly preparing to seize the initiative and impose their own concept of talks. Their ultimate goal was to “eliminate the Party’s dominant influence over economic and socio-political life”. Driven on by younger generation, which had been particularly militant in the recent strikes, their organisations in the work-place produced a very dangerous situation: “We should be fully aware that the legalisation of Solidarity is the first, mild stage in the opposition’s struggle for power. Later stages will be much harder for us”¹²⁰.

A further worry stemmed from Magdalenka. Kiszczak noted that “While representatives of the Church and Solidarity were speaking *en bloc* from a unified standpoint, our negotiators often used different language and disparate voices. We must not let that recur at the Round Table”¹²¹. Yet another cause for concern was the conduct of the “coalition partners”. Kiszczak stated bluntly “we don’t have any allies amongst the allies”. They now adopted the same position as Solidarity and claimed always to have opposed its dissolution, enabling Wałęsa to say “You see, General, it’s only you, the Party, who are against reactivating Solidarity”. Party Secretary Cypryński stated that since the coalition partners Catholic groupings and all shades of public opinion wanted political reform and expected rapid results, it was widely thought, “The main obstacle to achieving this end is the Party”¹²².

Poland’s internal debate was taking place during dramatic changes in the Soviet leadership. On 30 September, Gorbachev ousted much of the “old guard”, including Gromyko, and consolidated *perestroika*. Gorbachev’s own advisors mooted the possibility of a political uprising in Poland, perhaps following a failed Round Table. Shakhnazarov’s position paper to the Politburo of 6 October stated that any “extinguishing” of crisis in socialist countries by military means must now be completely excluded. “Even the old (Brezhnev) leadership seems to have realised this, at least with regard to Poland”. Several allied countries including Poland were on the verge of bankruptcy; there could be another round of trouble-making in Poland. He proposed a high-level body to “ask the sharpest questions” and report back urgently to a meeting of East European leaders early in the new year¹²³.

The Church paid close attention to these political manoeuvres. Orszulik had told Ciosek before Moscow’s reshuffle: “We shall see which way the wind blows there”¹²⁴. An outspoken communiqué from the Polish Episcopal Conference (6 October) noted that the August strike wave had given rise to hopes of “a wide political opening” to be followed up by a Round Table. The Bishops reaffirmed the rights of all employees to trade unions chosen by free elections. They declared that agreement on fundamental values was the basis for “reform of the state, its structure and the national economy”¹²⁵.

Party leaders tried to control Wałęsa’s delegation to the Round Table by eliminating the most outspoken. Ciosek stated that Jaruzelski had been personally

“shocked” to find proposed such names as Kuroň and Michnik, Onyszkiewicz and Romaszewski, Jan Józef Lipski and Jan Józef Szczepański¹²⁶. Wałęsa’s mollifying note to Kiszczak proposed that neither side should interfere in the composition of each other’s delegation¹²⁷. But the Interior Ministry drew up a black-list of those to be categorically disbarred from the Round Table¹²⁸.

Jaruzelski elaborated further anxieties to the Secretariat on 10 October. The „illegal union” was rapidly reconstituting its factory base. Wałęsa could say that he was prevented from making negotiating concessions by his radical members. “Why can’t we say we have radicals gripping us by the throat, massing and protesting and so on? It would be good to have a burst of resolutions on this”. Meanwhile, the rank-and-file of the Party and unions (OPZZ) remained passive, and at best looked upwards to see if those on top were “giving in” to Solidarity¹²⁹.

Inner-Party preparations for Round Table included a “long and lively discussion” on whether to enter into dialogue with the opposition¹³⁰. Since an absolute precondition for successful negotiations was unity in Party ranks, it seems safe to assume that those who lost this argument also lost their positions in the Party leadership. Sweeping personnel changes were made on the opening day of the Party’s Tenth Plenum (20 December): eight out of fifteen Politburo members were removed, four of the eleven Central Committee Secretaries also lost their posts. Those promoted to full membership of the Politburo included Ciosek, a key negotiator with Solidarity. Jaruzelski saw the dilemma of December 1988 as the same and no less dramatic than that of December 1981: either to recognise Solidarity, accept it as a party to negotiation and share power in a new political formation, or to defend the *status quo*. This time, he favoured the first option¹³¹. But the Central Committee would have to approve re-legalisation of the opposition. Since this was by no means certain, the first stage of the Plenum was adjourned.

During the interval, Party leaders pondered the future. Czyrek considered the Solidarity issue controversial enough to split the Party. He wanted delegates to the Plenum to be carefully groomed by an Ideological Conference and special meetings of the Party School, as well as “personal consultations”. Since the opposition was playing for time, the Party could adopt a similar tactic, by saying “we are in favour of pluralism, but we need to introduce it gradually by creating the appropriate conditions for constructive activity”¹³². For his part, Jaruzelski tried to define the pre-conditions for pluralism but could only manage generalities such as compatibility with “social peace” or negative attributes such as “not disturbing the stability of the state, not paralysing economic reform and not agitating the working class”. He thought they should emphasise to Party members that the idea of power-sharing was not ‘extremist’, and tell society at large that they were amenable to approaches from ‘all constructive forces’¹³³. During the debate, Baka said the basic difficulty lay in “adapting the work of the Party *apparat* to new socio-economic and political demands and overcoming the party bureaucracy”¹³⁴. While this was no doubt true, much the same could have been said for the past forty years. Party politics had now reached an *impasse*. Social tensions were rising rapidly, fuelled by demands from the official unions. As usual in a crisis, Party leaders turned towards the Church hierarchy.

The new Prime Minister Rakowski presented Episcopal representatives with a grim picture. The economy was under siege: there had been 80% inflation in 1988,

falling hardest on fixed income groups such as pensioners, and the position was set to deteriorate still further. Despite “attacks from left and right, including some from Solidarity”, he wished to clear the ground for economic reform within the next three months. His government was “not so stupid as to believe that economic reform can be carried out without political and social reform”. Elections to the *Sejm* in April would stabilise the political situation. They would be preceded by a “genuine national agreement” on a common programme and shared seats. It would be a non-confrontational election¹³⁵.

Nothing was said about Solidarity. Rakowski relegated the issue to the post-election period, when a formula would be negotiated. Even then there were numerous preconditions for re-legalisation. Solidarity would have to give no-strike guarantees and undertake not to force through wage demands. It must sever its links with the nationalist Confederation of Independent Poland (KPN) and base itself on the Polish Constitution. It would have to give up being financed from abroad. Wałęsa should acknowledge that “Solidarity today is not what it was in 1981”. He should stop shifting his opinions, saying one thing on his recent trip to Paris and another when he got back home. While, Gorbachev’s accession had created a unique opportunity for the socialist countries, which were “for the first time entirely independent in furnishing their own houses”, this did not mean that all Poland’s neighbours accepted change: “The DDR says we have gone mad. Only Hungary understands us”¹³⁶.

Mazowiecki stressed in further meetings (6 and 11 January 1989) that Solidarity’s participation in the elections was conditional on the prior agreement to a process for re-legalisation. Ciosek was equivocal and reluctant to agree a timetable, offering various pretexts such as “We are frightened of an eruption of (Solidarity’s) demands”. The discussion reached deadlock. Orszulik then proposed a compromise document presenting the views of each side. This stated that the Party Plenum (to resume on 16 January) would pass a resolution on union pluralism. Legislation allowing Solidarity to act as a legal trade union would be passed no later than March, with elections to follow in May. Mazowiecki added that the tri-partite division of parliamentary seats as proposed needed to be discussed in public “This is not only a political problem, but also a moral one. We must make progress honestly before society”. The division of seats covering the first election could not be binding for the next¹³⁷.

A Solidarity Organisational Committee, to prepare for elections, was permitted to convene at once. The significance of this moment was not lost on key participants. Czyrek referred to it as “a political conclusion to the state of war”. Ciosek thought the coming Round Table would resume negotiations begun at Gdańsk in 1980. He himself had “crossed the Rubicon” by including the word “Solidarity” in his draft resolution for the Party Plenum¹³⁸. Thus the Party’s most conciliatory negotiators tried to steer the Party to a positive conclusion. But they could not prevent a tempestuous debate in the provincial committees, supported by much of the central *apparat*, in a last stand against ‘the anti-systemic opposition’ and ‘post-solidarity extremists’.

Revolt in the Party

Jaruzelski described the second stage of the Plenum (from 16 January) as an attack on the Party hierarchy “sharp and undiluted, hardly sparing anybody”. The *aktyw* had clearly lost confidence. There was only one alternative: either the Central Committee pass a vote of confidence in the present leadership and vote for its resolution, or accept his resignation. He stated that, on losing a vote of confidence, Kiszczak, Rakowski and Siwicki (Minister of Defence) would also resign. His challenge ended: “This is not blackmail. If anyone else feels strong enough to proceed, please go ahead, the road is clear”¹³⁹.

In the crisis talks that followed, Reykowski thought acting boldly through an ultimatum had the best chance of victory. “Of course this move is risky, but what is the alternative?”¹⁴⁰. Kiszczak considered the Plenum should be given an ultimatum. “We cannot go on like this. Either things are so bad that we should leave, or they are not so bad, there is confidence, and we can stay”¹⁴¹. A closed session of the Politburo decided that the entire leadership would submit itself to a vote of confidence. In a secret ballot, chaired by a senior Central Committee member, the Plenum voted unanimously in favour of the present leadership (with four abstentions). The resolution on union pluralism and agreement with Solidarity then passed by 143 votes to 32 (with 14 abstentions).

In accounting for this victory, we should note Jaruzelski’s skills in political crisis management. When the vote came, Party discipline largely prevailed. The Party now had a significant minority faction for the first time since the “Partisan” movement of the late 1960’s, consisting about one quarter of the Central Committee. But as Paczkowski notes, it lacked a leader of stature or charisma: the most prominent of the „hard-heads” or “concrete” (*beton*) were demoted in 1985 (Kociołek, Milewski and Olszowski, who had emigrated)¹⁴². The forces of ‘law and order’ had remained loyal to the generals. In defeating what Ciosek called a “putsch” planned by the Warsaw and Katowice Party organisations, Jaruzelski had been able to rely on the police and military. External circumstances were also favourable to his team. Unlike the early 1980’s, the Polish leadership’s minority received no support from the Soviet Union¹⁴³. It was also known that further Western credit was dependent on some accommodation with the opposition.

Solidarity gave the Party resolution a cautious welcome. It was a significant step towards social dialogue and “opened up the possibility of negotiations” on national issues. When re-legalised, the Union would co-operate in overcoming the crisis through a programme of agreed reforms under public scrutiny. However, for it to do so, normal conditions of political pluralism would need to be restored. In addition to an independent judiciary, this required freedom of association, freedom of speech and access to the state-run media, including the television. This statement of the Solidarity National Executive Commission was published in the Party press for the first time¹⁴⁴. It made no mention of the participation in future elections on a common programme which the Party had set as a precondition.

Ciosek told the Episcopate that the Party was split 50%-50% on the Solidarity issue. As Barcikowski added, "Enough for two parties"¹⁴⁵. The rank-and-file was driven by "primitive populism". While some members were pleased that progress towards agreement had been made, others called the return of Solidarity a betrayal. The latter had been badly shaken in 1980-81 - when "the masses demanded change" - and viewed current proposals with even greater alarm. Despite this, the Party spokesmen declared a real will for change¹⁴⁶.

Jaruzelski similarly insisted that the Round Table "is our initiative, consistently presented from the beginning and not a tactic". Yet he felt the initiative was slipping away. A week had passed since the Plenum endorsed "not only pluralism, but an opening to economic and political reform, creating a new model of political forces", yet little had been done. Secretariat sessions were wasting time discussing what „should be”, rather than matters of substance. But time was running out and "further delay will be disastrous"¹⁴⁷.

Particularly ominous for the Party was the behaviour of its "coalition partners". Dormant for decades, they had suddenly shown signs of independence. Their insubordination had even extended to demands for the rehabilitation of the Peasant Party (PSL) leader, driven out of government and into emigration in 1948 by rigged elections¹⁴⁸. Czyrek complained that the "allied parties", hiding behind the slogan of "the right to opposition within the coalition" were acting by *fait accompli*¹⁴⁹. Kiszczak noted their passivity in the face of "autonomous tendencies" and the growing criticism of their leadership for „collaboration" with the Party. He accurately predicted that "the constellation in the *Sejm* may become unfavourable to us"¹⁵⁰.

The Party Secretaries were now divided and bewildered. One thought that the new *Sejm* should form a government of national unity in which the opposition would "share responsibility for extricating (the country) from crisis". Another sought a fresh start - a "zero option"- under which all trade unions would begin anew, with fresh elections and statutes. Thus "new Solidarity" would not be able to rely on resolutions passed before 13 December 1981, and could not set up vertical or horizontal structures prior to registration. A third advocated a dual policy "Solidarity- yes, but...". Attempting to sum up their views, Jaruzelski agreed that re-legalisation was a major problem. They could argue that the Pope, on his last visit, had referred to solidarity in the lower case "in the sense of a spiritual legacy, not an organisation". Divisions within the opposition should be exploited. While keeping to the spirit of the Plenum resolution, it should not be assumed that re-legalisation was a foregone conclusion. "Illegal acts" by the 'adversary' which might be used to defer the talks should be collected and broadcast. However, the Party should stress its own goodwill so that "If there is disquiet, it will not be our fault"¹⁵¹.

The last steps to the Round Table were taken at a final Magdalenka meeting on 27 January. Wałęsa took the initiative from the outset. The question was no longer whether to legalise Solidarity, „since the Plenum agreed to it" but rather "how to do it and who wants to reform our country?"¹⁵². Discussion on this lasted for eleven hours, with a number of tense interludes, although neither side wanted the obloquy of failure. The most contested issue was Solidarity's insistence that its participation in a non-confrontational election was predicated on prior agreement to its own re-legalisation. Geremek stated „We cannot accept a situation in which we are plunged into a

nomenklatura electoral system. We want to find an electoral system that people accept as democratic. We must find a method that gains social acceptance”¹⁵³. In the end, the agreement rested upon an apparent paradox. When Kiszczak stated „We want to win the election”, Wałęsa retorted „We don’t want to win the election. We want to change the system of power in an evolutionary way. We are not barging into government”¹⁵⁴.

Informing the Allies

Jaruzelski tried to explain the “origins, necessity and prospects of the Round Table” during a day trip to Prague on 1 February. He told his sceptical hosts that its necessity arose from a difficult economic situation in which traditional methods had failed to prevent high inflation and market shortages. The economy could not be rectified without wider social support, bringing into decision-making those presently uncommitted. It would be better to neutralise Solidarity now, making it take co-responsibility for reform, than waiting another year or two when problems would be considerably more severe. The coming months were vital. “The game is about swallowing up the opposition by our system, its participation in (re) shaping it. This is a great historical experiment, which – if it works – can have importance beyond Poland’s borders”¹⁵⁵.

Much greater sympathy for Poland’s ‘historical experiment’ was expressed in Hungary. The publics in both countries were closely watching each other’s political development. Budapest’s legislation of 11 January allowing for the formation of independent political groupings had led to rumours about the same in Warsaw. The head of the Central Committee’s Socio-Legal Department demanded a Polish statement that “there will be no new political parties in the near future”, and wanted this to be announced by the President of the Supreme Court¹⁵⁶, though no such statement materialised. Events in Hungary took a somewhat different trajectory. The Hungarian authorities met the opposition on 20 January, starting a process which led to the converging of eight dissident groups at their own “Opposition Round Table” on 20 March¹⁵⁷.

Significant endorsement for Polish reforms came from the Soviet Union. A position paper on Eastern Europe for Alexander Yakovlev noted in February 1989 that the “transition to the principle of equality and mutual responsibility”, launched in April 1985, had reached a crucial stage. Communist Parties could not continue to govern in the old way. But new rules of the game, “managing the group interests that are pouring out and reaching a social consensus”, had not yet been formulated. The Soviet Union should vary its responses. Pluralist developments in Poland and Hungary meant that the ruling parties could only preserve their positions within a framework of alliances, involving the opposition in constructive co-operation. Where the initiative for democratic change, towards a parliamentary or presidential system, was taken by the ruling party “the chances of preserving internal stability and obligations to allies are very high”¹⁵⁸. Thus the Polish Party can “realistically become just one, and maybe not even the main (part) of the power structures; however, Polish geopolitics is such that even the opposition understands the need to preserve some form of alliance with the USSR”¹⁵⁹.

Further Soviet research reviewed prospects for the Round Table in Poland, where the chances of a social explosion remained „far higher than anywhere else in Eastern Europe”. The optimum outcome would be a compromise of the Party and its allies with Solidarity and the ‘opposition intelligentsia’, to co-opt them into government and facilitate reform. Social tensions would gradually reduce, though mini-crises might recur. Less favourably, the failure to reach an “anti-crisis pact” would produce an extended deadlock. Growing anarchy would transform Poland into the chronically “sick man of Europe”. At worst, the collapse of talks would lead to a further explosion (probably in spring 1989) followed by martial law or civil war, the nightmare of another Afghanistan ‘in the middle of Europe’. However, even the most optimistic scenario did not augur well for Polish communism. Poland was most likely to evolve into a “classic bourgeois democracy of the Italian or Greek type”¹⁶⁰.

¹ Z A Pȩczyński, *Poland: The Road from Communism. Special R B McCallum Lecture* 29 May 1982 (Pembroke College, Oxford, 1983) pp 30-31

² A Michnik, “Neither Conspiracy nor Benevolence: The Miracle of the Polish Round Table”, *Gazeta Wyborcza* (English edition) August 1999

³ ‘Zapis spotkania stoczniovców z Edwardem Gierkiem’ (Gdańsk, 25 January 1971), *Grudzień 1970* (Paris, 1986) pp 104-108

⁴ See the useful analysis in J Zielonka, *Political Ideas in Contemporary Poland* (Aldershot, 1989) pp 48-52

⁵ J Staniszkis, *The Dynamics of the Breakthrough in Eastern Europe: the Polish Experience* (Berkeley, Calif., 1991)

⁶ A Rychard, *Reforms, Adaptation and Breakthrough* (Warsaw, 1993) p 121

⁷ B Kamiński, *The Collapse of State Socialism. The Case of Poland*. (Princeton N J, 1991) pp 135-61

⁸ J Hausner and J Klementewicz (eds), *The Protracted Death-Agony of Real Socialism* (Warsaw, 1992) p 8

⁹ A Paczkowski, “The ‘Great Historical Experiment’ or the Demise of Real Socialism in Poland”, *Intermarium* Vol 1 (1)

¹⁰ J Skórzyński, *Uгода i Rewolucja. W³adza i opozycja 1985-1989* (Warsaw, 1995) p 19

¹¹ *Tygodnik Mazowsze* 22 September 1986

¹² A Dudek and T Marsza³kowski, *Walki uliczne w PRL, 1956-1989* (Kraków, 1999) pp 371-98

¹³ M Rakowski, *Jak to siê sta³o...* (Warsaw, 1991) p 101

¹⁴ *Tygodnik Mazowsze* 1 October 1986

¹⁵ PZPR archive at the Archiwum Akt Nowych: AAN 237/V11/320 Cyrek-Davis (30 October 1986)

¹⁶ AAN 237/V/314 Memo to Jaruzelski (6 August 1986)

¹⁷ M Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (London, 1986) pp 464-66.

¹⁸ Critical oral history conference “Poland, 1986-1989. The End of the System”, (Warsaw-Miedzeszyn (hereafter Miedzeszyn) 21-23 October 1999). Vadim Zagladin, Miedzeszyn, 23 October 1999.

¹⁹ R Garthoff, *The Great Transition. American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, 1994) p 573 (note 86)

²⁰ Garthoff, *The Great Transition* p 573 (note 90)

²¹ Orzechowski, Miedzeszyn, 21 October 1999

²² Zagladin, Miedzeszyn, 23 October 1999

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- ²³ *Trybuna Ludu* 1 July 1986
- ²⁴ Gorbachev, *Memoirs* p 485
- ²⁵ A Paczkowski, *Polska 1986-1989: od kooptacji do negocjacji. Kilka uwag o wchodzeniu w proces zmiany systemowej* (Warsaw, 1997)
- ²⁶ AAN 237/V/ 319 PZPR Politburo decisions (21 October 1986)
- ²⁷ P Raina (ed), *Rozmowy z władzami PRL. Arcybiskup Dłbrowski w służbie Kościoła i narodu*. Vol. 2 1982-1989, (Warsaw, 1995) p 136
- ²⁸ Raina, *Rozmowy z władzami* pp 140-41
- ²⁹ A Friszke, *Oaza na Kopernika. Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej 1956 -1989* (Warsaw, 1997) pp 245-46
- ³⁰ Archiwum Stanisława Stommy, Notes (October 1986)
- ³¹ Archiwum Stanisława Stommy, Aide-memoire (18 October 1986)
- ³² Raina, *Rozmowy z władzami* p 152
- ³³ P Raina (ed), *Droga do "Okrągłego Stołu". Zakulisowe rozmowy przygotowawcze*, (Warsaw, 1999) pp 157-58
- ³⁴ AAN 237/V/336 PZPR Secretariat (16 January 1987) pp 7-8
- ³⁵ AAN 237/V/336 *idem* p 8
- ³⁶ AAN 237/V/350 Jaruzelski-Silvestri (27 April 1987) pp 5-7
- ³⁷ Skórzyński, *Uгода i Rewolucja* pp 27-28
- ³⁸ *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, 3 June 1987.
- ³⁹ B Chmiel (ed) *Jan Paweł II w Polsce 8-14 czerwca 1987. Trzecia piegrzymka do Ojczyzny* (Warsaw, 1987) p 17
- ⁴⁰ photograph in Skórzyński, *Uгода i rewolucja* p 31
- ⁴¹ Chmiel (ed) *Jan Paweł II w Polsce* p 118
- ⁴² Raina, *Rozmowy z władzami* pp 241-42
- ⁴³ *Tygodnik Mazowsze* 5 April 1989
- ⁴⁴ AAN 237/V/365 Visit of Bush (29 September 1987) pp 12-13
- ⁴⁵ AAN 237/V/365 *idem* pp 20-21
- ⁴⁶ *Tygodnik Mazowsze* 2 September 1987
- ⁴⁷ *Tygodnik Mazowsze* 21 October 1987
- ⁴⁸ *Poland: Reform, Adjustment and Growth* (New York, 1987)
- ⁴⁹ W Baka, *U źródeł wielkiej transformacji* (Warsaw, 1999) p 64
- ⁵⁰ *Tygodnik Mazowsze* 28 October 1987
- ⁵¹ *Tygodnik Mazowsze* 21 October 1987
- ⁵² Archiwum Senatu, Citizens' Committee, second meeting (KO 2) (7 November 1987) p 2
- ⁵³ see A Hall, *Polemiki i Refleksje. Wybór publicystyki politycznej z lat 1978-1986* (London, 1989)
- ⁵⁴ Archiwum Senatu, KO 2 pp 19-20
- ⁵⁵ Archiwum Senatu, KO 2 p 49
- ⁵⁶ Archiwum Senatu, KO 2 p 58
- ⁵⁷ Archiwum Senatu, KO 2 p 61
- ⁵⁸ *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, 9 December 1987
- ⁵⁹ *Konfrontacje* 1 (February 1988)
- ⁶⁰ *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, 13 January 1988
- ⁶¹ J Holzer, "Solidarność" 1980-1981. *Geneza i Historia* (Warsaw, 1983)
- ⁶² *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, 13 January 1988
- ⁶³ *Rok 1989. Bronisław Geremek opowiada. Jacek Zakowski pyta* (Warsaw, 1990) pp 9-10

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- ⁶⁴ Raina *Rozmowy z w³adzami* 3 June 1988 p 242
- ⁶⁵ AAN 237/VII/88 Proposal to PZPR Politburo (December 1987) pp 164-74
- ⁶⁶ D Stola, *Kampania antysyjonistyczna w Polsce 1967-1968* (Warsaw, 2000) p 263
- ⁶⁷ Dudek and Marsza³kowski, *Walki uliczne* pp 372-73
- ⁶⁸ Dudek and Marsza³kowski, *Walki uliczne* p 373
- ⁶⁹ Raina, *Rozmowy z w³adzami* (13 April 1988) p 218
- ⁷⁰ AAN 237/VII/88 Strike chronology (11 May 1988) p 1
- ⁷¹ AAN 237/VII/88 *idem* p 2
- ⁷² P Smoleñski, *A na hucie strajk...* (Warsaw, 1988) reprinted in *Robotnicy '88* (London 1989) pp 20-21
- ⁷³ AAN 237/VII/88 Strike chronology (11 May 1988) pp 2-3
- ⁷⁴ AAN 237/VII/88 PZPR Secretariat (29 April 1988) p 6
- ⁷⁵ AAN 237/VII/88 *idem* pp 243-45
- ⁷⁶ AAN 237/VII/88 *idem* p 332
- ⁷⁷ T Tabako, *Strajk 88* (Warsaw, 1992) p 68
- ⁷⁸ See the essays collected in L Mazewski and W Turek (eds), *'Solidarnoœæ' i opozycja antykomunistyczna w Gdañsku 1980-1989*, (Gdañsk, 1995)
- ⁷⁹ Tabako, p 70. Also W Gie³yñski, *Gdañsk, maj 88* (Warsaw, 1988) reprinted in *Robotnicy '88* (London, 1989) pp 104-110
- ⁸⁰ P Raina (ed), *Koœció³ w PRL. Koœció³ katolicki a pañstwo w œwietle dokumentów*. Vol. 3, 1975-1989 (Poznañ, 1996) pp 584-85
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- ⁸² Gie³yñski, *Gdañsk, maj 88* p 131
- ⁸³ Gie³yñski, *Gdañsk, maj 88* pp 183-95
- ⁸⁴ Baka, *U źróde³ wielkiej transformacji* pp 62-66
- ⁸⁵ AAN 237/V/409 Team of Experts (5 May 1988)
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- ⁸⁷ W Beres and J Skoczy³as, *General Kiszczak mowi...prawie wszystko* (Warsaw, 1991) p 260
- ⁸⁸ Raina *Rozmowy z w³adzami* p 232 (25 April 1988)
- ⁸⁹ Archiwum Andrzeja Stelmachowskiego, Czyrek's address (11 May 1988)
- ⁹⁰ *Trybuna Ludu* 16 May 1988
- ⁹¹ A Gerrits, *The Failure of Authoritarian Change. Reform, Opposition and Geo-Politics in Poland in the 1980's* (Dartmouth, 1990) p 95
- ⁹² Gerrits, p 37
- ⁹³ Raina, *Rozmowy z w³adzami* p 256 (3 June 1988)
- ⁹⁴ Raina, *Rozmowy z w³adzami* p 257
- ⁹⁵ *Trybuna Ludu* 14 June 1988
- ⁹⁶ L Kowalski, "Stan wyj¹tkowy – okr¹g³y stó³", *Arka* 1993 (2/3) pp 18-19
- ⁹⁷ A Stelmachowski, *Kszta³towanie siê ustroju III Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw, Jaktorów, 1998) p 42
- ⁹⁸ AAN 237/V/422 PZPR Politburo (21 August 1988)
- ⁹⁹ Raina, *Rozmowy z w³adzami* p 256
- ¹⁰⁰ Stelmachowski, *Kszta³towanie siê* pp 43-44
- ¹⁰¹ Raina, *Koœció³ w PRL* p 586
- ¹⁰² K Dubiñski, *Okr¹g³y Stó³* (Warsaw, 1999) p 35
- ¹⁰³ *Trybuna Ludu* 29 August 1988
- ¹⁰⁴ Skórzyñski, *Ugoda i rewolucja* p 90

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- ¹⁰⁵ Dubiński, *Okr¹g³y Stó³* p 15
- ¹⁰⁶ Dubiński, *Okr¹g³y Stó³* p 52
- ¹⁰⁷ Stelmachowski, *Kszta³towanie siê* p 45
- ¹⁰⁸ AAN 237/V11/91 PZPR Secretariat (1 September 1988) pp 2-3
- ¹⁰⁹ Stelmachowski, *Kszta³towanie siê* p 46
- ¹¹⁰ *Tajne dokumenty Biura Politycznego i Sekretariatu KC. Ostatni rok w³adzy 1988-1989* (London, 1994) pp 44-51
- ¹¹¹ AAN 237/X1A/1435 Miodowicz-Jaruzelski (30 May 1988)
- ¹¹² *Tajne dokumenty BP* pp 49-51
- ¹¹³ Dubiński, *Okr¹g³y Stó³* pp 65-67
- ¹¹⁴ Stelmachowski, *Kszta³towanie sie* pp 49-50.
- ¹¹⁵ Accounts in Dubiński, *Okr¹g³y Stó³* pp 68-82, Raina, *Droga do "Okr¹g³ego sto³u"* pp 224-35, and Stelmachowski, *Kszta³towanie siê* pp 50-56
- ¹¹⁶ B Dembowski, "Od Bia³o³êki do Magdalenki i dalej. Wspomnienia o³wiadka", in *Ksi¹¿ka dla Jacka. W szeæædziesi¹t¹ rocznicê urodzin Jacka Kuronia* (Warsaw, 1975) pp 47-48
- ¹¹⁷ Stelmachowski, *Kszta³towanie siê* p 56
- ¹¹⁸ Archiwum Andrzeja Stelmachowskiego, Stelmachowski-Wa³êsa (1 October 1988)
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- ¹²⁰ *Tajne dokumenty BP* pp 62-63
- ¹²¹ *Tajne dokumenty BP* p 65
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- ¹²³ G Shakhnazarov, *Tsena svobody: Reformatsiya Gorbacheva glazami ego pomoshchnika* (Moscow, 1993) pp 367-69
- ¹²⁴ *Tajne dokumenty BP* pp 66-67; Raina, *Rozmowy z w³adzami* pp 281-83
- ¹²⁵ Raina, *Koæció³ w PRL* pp 592-93 (12 November 1988)
- ¹²⁶ Raina, *Rozmowy z w³adzami* pp 286-87 (meeting of 7 October 1988)
- ¹²⁷ Dubiński, *Okr¹g³y Stó³* p 92
- ¹²⁸ They included: the "KOR" group (Kuroñ, Michnik, Onyszkiewicz); "so-called political parties" (PPS, KPN, PPN and others); "extremists active in illegal structures" (forty Solidarity members), Dubiński, *Okr¹g³y Stó³* pp 111-113
- ¹²⁹ *Tajne dokumenty BP* pp 134-35
- ¹³⁰ *Tajne dokumenty BP* p 212
- ¹³¹ Baka, *U Ýróde³ wielkiej transformacji* pp 67-68
- ¹³² AAN 237/V11/93 Czyrek (23 December 1988) pp 3-5
- ¹³³ AAN 237/V11/93 *idem* pp 6-7
- ¹³⁴ AAN 237/V11/93 *idem* p 8
- ¹³⁵ Raina, *Rozmowy z w³adzamy* pp 329-330
- ¹³⁶ Raina, *Rozmowy z w³adzamy* pp 239-32
- ¹³⁷ Raina, *Rozmowy z w³adzamy* pp 339-44
- ¹³⁸ Raina, *Rozmowy z w³adzamy* p 349
- ¹³⁹ *Tajne dokumenty BP* p 229
- ¹⁴⁰ *Tajne dokumenty BP* pp 229-30
- ¹⁴¹ *Tajne dokumenty BP* p 230
- ¹⁴² Paczkowski, *Intermarium I* (1) pp 63-4
- ¹⁴³ Raina, *Rozmowy z w³adzamy* p 351
- ¹⁴⁴ *Trybuna Ludu* 23 January 1989. This was Ciosek's initiative, Raina, *Rozmowy z w³adzamy* p 354

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- ¹⁴⁶ *Tajne dokumenty Państwo-Koæció³* pp 559-63
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- ¹⁵¹ *Tajne dokumenty BP* p 245-47
- ¹⁵² Dubiñski, *Okr¹g³y Stó³* p 179
- ¹⁵³ Dubiñski, *Okr¹g³y Stó³* pp 184-85
- ¹⁵⁴ Raina, *Rozmowy z w³adzamy* pp 237-38
- ¹⁵⁵ *Tajne dokumenty BP* pp 260-62
- ¹⁵⁶ *Tajne dokumenty BP* p 236
- ¹⁵⁷ A Bozoki, "The Hungarian Road to Systemic Change: the Opposition Round Table", *East European Politics and Society* (7) 1993
- ¹⁵⁸ The National Security Archive , Memo from International Department of the CC CPSU (February 1989) pp 1-3
- ¹⁵⁹ *idem* pp 15-18
- ¹⁶⁰ The National Security Archive, Memo from the Bogomolov Commission (Marina Sylvanskaya) (February 1989)