

Focus on:

Poland, August-September 1980

Is a Socialist Revolution under State Capitalism Possible?★

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1. *The Polish scene: some observations*

What was happening in Poland, August-September 1980, can probably best be described as a workers' rebellion aimed at power sharing with the other established pillars of Polish society: state bureaucrats, party, and church. At the very least it is a social democratic reform movement in a state capitalist society, but it also has some of the characteristics of a socialist revolution under state capitalism. There is no doubt that it is part of an internal dialectic that has been working in Poland for a very long time, with the years 1956, 1970, 1976 and now 1980 being well-known eruptions from that dialectic. No foreign factor enters the equation as a necessary or sufficient condition; the revolt is genuine. For an explanation, it is entirely sufficient to work on the basis of a ruling class, in this case an apparat, exploiting a working class because that ruling class controls the means of production so that the individual worker has the limited choice between work on the conditions stipulated by the ruling class or else — no work. That the surplus was spent more as investment in an industrial future than for more or less luxurious privileges and corruptive practices of the ruling class is important from the ruling class point of view — they can afford to have the longer time perspective given their privileged material condition. But from a working class point of view the basic fact was that the buying power of workers' wages either

increased much more slowly than reasonably rising expectations (possibly tied to productivity), or decreased. The increase in meat prices etc. early July 1980 can perhaps be said to have triggered off the process — the apparat calculation that an increase taking place during vacation time would be less dangerous was erroneous.

However, it is hardly correct to attribute that much significance to purely economic matters. The process of conscientization (extensive mass dialogues) that took place in Gdansk and resulted in that remarkable document, the 21 demands, was much broader. Roughly speaking it concerns all aspects of concrete working conditions and satisfaction of basic needs, as witnessed by the nature of the demands (here given in highly summarized form):

1. New and independent trade unions
2. The right to strike
3. End of censorship, freedom of expression, freedom of religion
4. Release of all political prisoners from 1970, 1976, and 1980
5. All newspapers to publish the 21 demands and the communiqué
6. Full information about Poland's economic situation; trade union participation in economic reforms and policy
7. Full salary during strikes
8. Substantial salary increase (about one third) to low pay group; increase to the others; reductions for the top people in party and administration

9. Index-regulated salaries
10. More food in the shops
11. Poland only to export food surplus (after Polish demand is satisfied)
12. Managers in factories should be experts, not politicians; reduction in their privileges
13. Reduced price differences between commercial and state-owned shops, also for meat
14. Pension age to be lowered from 65 to 55 for men, from 60 to 50 for women
15. Substantial increases in pensions
16. Better hospitals and health institutions in general
17. Right for female workers to place children in kindergartens
18. Three years maternity leave with pay
19. Less waiting time for housing
20. Better per diems when travelling for a factory
21. Saturdays free

If we now define 'socialism' as a system where the workers are in control of the means of production and, consequently, also of the surplus generated, so that they are in control of working conditions and can give top priority to the use of surplus for satisfaction of basic needs, then all points above can be seen as elements, and some of them as elementary elements at that, of a socialist approach. It should be noted that basic nonmaterial needs are also included: the end of censorship, freedom of expression, the right to worship, also applicable to radio and TV.

Clearly, a country that does not satisfy such needs is not a socialist country. However, the problem is that Poland refers to itself as 'socialist', so why, then, were these needs not met? Looking at the definition above it may be because workers were, in fact, not in control, or only through 'representatives' increasingly removed from workers and their interests — many of them former workers themselves. But there could also be another factor at work: Poland, like any other country, does not only consist of workers, at least not only of blue collar or

manual workers. Besides the interests of the workers and the ruling class, other interests are also articulated, e. g. farmers, lower tertiary sector people, etc. Moreover, there may be a very high demand for the satisfaction of non-basic needs — e. g. for radios, TVs, motorcycles, cars — and their production may compete for scarce productive factors with the production for basic needs. The first hypothesis points to an explanatory model in terms of a *state* (or better, 'apparat') *capitalism*; the second in terms of general *state* interests (often called 'national interests' to give the impression that they are shared) in any complex society (including the need for security); and the third hypothesis points to an explanatory model based on *capitalism* with its more or less artificially created demands (and here the penetration via tourists, dollar-shops, black market and so on plays a substantial role as appetizer). But in a sense the state capitalism hypothesis subsumes the other two: as the *apparat* gains control, workers' interests decreasingly and *apparat* interests increasingly, are articulated, and towards wants and demands rather than needs. This does not mean that the *apparat* would not have tried to defuse the conflict with economic means had they been able to do so — but that would have been as conflict management, not as a right for the workers. But the *apparat* is caught in an economy that in a sense is a periphery to both sides, both East and West, with debts, inflation etc. The consumerism for the privileged and the spending above its productive capacity is very directly tied to the German *ostpolitik* and the easy credit given by West Germany.

The rest of the story is the usual cycle of conscientization-mobilization/organization-confrontation-struggle followed, possibly, by a victory that will stick, which means a new structure, possibly guarded by new or reshaped institutions. How this will end we do not know today. But some, five to be precise, of the characteristics of the *process* (as seen and interpreted by the present

author) may perhaps contribute to understanding the specificity of this struggle in the concrete situation of Poland 1980.

### 1.1 *Workers, not intellectuals in command*

There is no doubt that Polish workers and intellectuals, both in opposition for the same and for different reasons, have found each other in a joint movement for social change, thereby breaking down one of the classical defenses of any ruling class: fragmentation, *divide et impera* (e. g. among workers, intellectuals, farmers, the socialist bourgeoisie craving for more consumer goods, minorities). But what is the nature of this alliance in which farmers so far seem to play a minor role? It looks as if the workers and not the intellectuals are in command. Thus, intellectuals are used as craftsmen, artisans, not as ideologues ('tell us *how* to draft it, not *what* to draft'). In this there is something of very high importance: a decline in the traditional status of intellectuals — possibly brought about precisely by the socialist aspects of the state capitalist formation. One may even sense the beginning of a new type of class struggle, the struggle by intellectuals for recognition, even for a monopoly position as regards intellectual production, including that of ideology. So far this struggle is latent, blunted by the common enemy or adversary factor, by the bonds of Catholicism (it is perhaps the Catholic Intellectual Club, KIK, rather than the better known — abroad — KOR (Polish Committee for Social Defense) that is most used by the workers' movement, and the common minimum, if implicit, ideology of humanistic socialism. Later on, the struggle may well constitute a second stage that will require considerable talent in working out new roles for intellectuals, more modest than under private state capitalism.

### 1.2 *Intellectuals as a bond and bridge between the parties*

On both sides are intellectuals, or maybe 'intellectuals' for the workers and 'intelligentsia' for the *apparat*. But these are peo-

ple trained at the same institutions, knowing each other from countless meetings and other encounters, professional and non-professional, with shared language and not too strict dividing lines in the relatively complex, less clearly polarized Polish socio-political landscape. They can meet; they can discuss technicalities — workers on one side and *apparat* on the other have a shared interest in limiting their talks to that. The same institute in University or Academy may contribute intellectuals to either side. This is a clear example of the importance of keeping lines of communication between intellectuals in position and opposition open also when it looks totally useless, because openings in social history — like the present one in Poland when things move for some time before they, possibly, freeze over again in a new pattern — are not that frequent.

### 1.3 *The theme of restraint*

That there are strong and justified emotions involved is obvious — of righteousness on one side, fear on the other. Where, then, is this going to end? The control of the speed of the process — neither too slow, nor too quick — is so far admirable. Too slow and the momentum is lost. Deadlines are made reasonable for the other side to explore and accommodate, yet not so far into the future that a certain demobilization will set in.

Those on the side of the *apparat* are at least equally adept at setting the pace — Walesa and Jagielski are both playing the game extremely well. To say that the *apparat* was forced into concessions is true in the sense that they would not have signed had they not been under pressure, but not in the sense that they had no alternative. They could have moved in with the force of repression at their command, and at an early stage. And they could have done exactly the opposite (Thailand, fall 1973): quit, vacated their jobs, and left a power vacuum for the movement to fill so that it could experience directly the risks and costs and pains of whatever is made, given the fact that the Polish economy is a 'modern', i. e. inte-

grated economy where everything impacts on everything else, and overextended by its export commitments. Needless to say, the Soviet Union would not have permitted this, but as a thought experiment it is nonetheless useful.

Editorials, speeches from high quarters, are relatively moderate and conciliatory. Would all other nations have been able to do likewise, or would passions have been translated into verbal fireworks and too quick, expressive action in general? I am thinking of a meeting I witnessed in Warszawa where the actors' union, people with considerable verbal talent, discussed the terms of joining the new and independent and self-managed trade union, *Solidarity*. The national anthem was sung, a poem was read, the presence of a local party man was pointed out — but all of this is placid compared to what could have happened. The same actually applies to the more distant parties to this conflict: the Soviet Union and the West — so far. Some verbal commentary from both sides, along predictable lines, has been both unavoidable and relatively harmless. Factory workers calmly staying in the factories, using strike and loudspeakers as weapons. Streets in Warszawa so calm, with group after group simply coolly drafting their new terms of reference with the new organizations — this was more surprising. A tremendous victory for non-violence as a way of acting in a conflict — at least so far.

#### 1.4 *Trade unions as of a way of building a social contract*

Trade unions are, in principle, a way of institutionalizing workers' control — workers of all kinds, manual and nonmanual. There is, in principle, built-in conscientization and mobilization with readiness for confrontation and struggle. Knowing this, any ruling class will have among its first tasks that of demobilizing trade unions; in Rumania, for instance by having the same person as minister of industries and secretary general of the trade unions. Hence, a

key problem is how to ensure workers' control, if not over the means of production, at least indirectly through workers' control over trade unions.

In Western countries, we are more used to discussing this in terms of free opinion formation, multi-party systems, free elections in parliamentary or presidential democracies. Perhaps it is an expression of a shift towards socialist articulation, and not only for obvious tactical reasons, that it is the 'trade union issue', more than the 'free election issue' (articulated by the Warsaw university senate, for instance), which looms higher in the Polish context. This means that time honored issues in the theory and practice of trade unions:

- factory vs. local vs. regional vs. national level dominant
- single occupation vs. multiple occupations unions

become highly important issues in the concrete political struggle. So far the preference is for the local and regional levels, the smaller unions that can be controlled more easily by the workers themselves. It is interesting to watch how also intellectuals articulate their concerns in terms of these trade unions, avoiding the insistence on separate union movements known from many capitalist countries, or no union at all.

#### 1.5 *The transition from absurdity to reality*

As late as this spring of 1980 the impression most strongly derived from the Polish scene was one of absurdity: of people playing roles (like in the joke: 'the government pretends that they pay salaries, and we pretend that we work'). To find a person, high or low, anybody, who believed in what he/she was doing was difficult, except at the personal level of making a living, of passing time, waiting for something to happen. Students not only organized absurd theater, they even got state support for doing so: filming an actor who unnecessarily and unasked for washed bus windows at bus stops with an expressionless face, with nobody caring; of people queuing outside an

empty house, parallel to a real meat queue on the other side of the street; of women washing their strange linen, pieces of cloth on which were printed slogans like Socialism, Brotherhood, Freedom, etc., hanging them up to dry, upside down, inside out. An actor dressed up as an eighteenth century soldier in a pink uniform crossing the streets, again with nobody caring. Black marketing, corruption and so on everywhere. Obviously it could not last.

And then reality struck. A guess is that it must have caused a tremendous sense of relief to all parties concerned, if for no other reason simply because of the intolerable situation in being condemned to absurdity even when, or particularly if, it is shared with everybody else. Reality may be painful for those who lose, but it has one intrinsic reward: to be taken seriously by oneself and others, to experience that things can make sense in the concrete, not only in the abstract. A sense of relief, but certainly also because the shock of reality has so far been milder than one could have expected.

## 2. *The international scene: some dimensions*

*Will the Russians intervene?* On purpose the word 'Russians' is used; the motivation would be Russian rather than, say, Ukrainian. This concrete event is very hard to predict positively or negatively, but some of the dimensions for analyzing the issue can be discussed. The conclusion of the present author, writing September 1980, is that the Russians will not intervene, but this is conditioned by some factors that may change, and even quite quickly. Thus, one assumption is that they behave rationally, meaning that the mind of the Russian decision-makers is reasonably open to both costs and benefits of an intervention so that sudden acts of despair and anger are ruled out. The following is a list of considerations, not necessarily in order of importance.

### 2.1 *'We want deeds, not words'*

A current joke in Romania portrays the Romanians as having posted big signs on their border, facing the Soviet Union, saying 'We want words, not deeds' — meaning no intervention. Something can be learnt from turning the slogan around. I remember late August 1968, coming to Budapest from Prague where I had quarreled with Soviet tank commanders and distributed some information on nonmilitary defence, how a leading Hungarian politician said the following:

Dubcek's one mistake was to lecture Moscow on socialism. He should have played it the Hungarian way, asking the Soviet comrades to come to discuss certain reforms, advising them on where they might grow wrong — and he would have had the Russians learning, imitating, rather than being threatened and angered lest they lose their position as pioneers of socialism.

Regardless of how this tactic may work out in practice, it seems clear that the situation would become much more serious if the Poles developed their highly concrete struggle into a struggle of ideologies. The banner of socialism must continue to fly high; purification of socialist practice may be even welcome. But the launching of a new socialist theory, a new doctrine ('new socialism', 'socialism with a Polish face') would definitely not. The concreteness of the struggle in general, and the 21 demands in particular, belongs to a school of critical socialism rather than utopian socialism (a distinction often made in Poland), having the concrete situation, the here and now of specific groups, as its point of departure. Any socialists would accept those demands *qua* socialist, almost regardless of what type socialism. The struggle is over practice, not over theory — there is a harsh judgement of current practice, not of socialist theory. For a regime like the Soviet, controlling public words even more than public acts possibly because of the tremendous role played by a *doctrine*, marxism-leninism, this should be reassuring.

The question is how stable the situation

is as to this particular point. If the internal power balance tips more in favor of intellectuals, the movement will almost by necessity tip more in favor of what intellectuals know how to do: chaining words together. Deductive pyramids from which the 21 demands, and others, are deduced, will not only be built, but be published — the pennant flying from the pyramid summit will have an inscription. One reason why that inscription might not be 'socialism' would be the overuse and abuse of that word in Poland, its currency value on the ideology market being seriously depreciated.

## 2.2 *The possibility of a compromise with the apparat*

Central in the theory of the relationship between the Soviet Union and countries in its sphere of influence would be the idea of the Soviet preference for an unpopular Communist government over a popular one (but possibly preference for that one over the anti-Communist alternative). The popular ones (Tito, Mao Zedong) would develop into national communism as opposed to a communism subservient to Soviet goals and leadership, because it would depend on the Soviet Union for continuation of its power and privilege. It might look as if this condition is amply satisfied in Poland. However, the apparat might strike a better deal with the wave of opposition than with a completely Soviet-controlled leadership, even if they would have to relinquish some of their privileges (demands nos. 8 and 12). To be a puppet apparat, squeezed between the *diktat* of an outside power and the opposition/passive resistance of the people, is not an enviable position either, as seems evident from the Czech situation. Thus, the compromise would consist in the apparat yielding to the demands, including some reformation of itself, and the opposition yielding to the demand from the party that it should still have 'a leading role' (the condition for accepting demand no. 1 about independent and self-managed trade unions).

What this means is simply that the party

must undergo a reform that most properly could be termed 'democratization', as democratization of the rest of the country with the party resisting any such process, yet still clinging to its leading role, would sooner or later lead to contradictions that would break down any compromise. More concretely, the party will have to be more responsive to the lower echelons who are not protected from the demands of the people by social and communication distance, not to say the right-out *isolation*, of the higher echelons of power. At present the party does not seem to be playing this role, the role of articulation and active politicking being carried more by the State Council, the Sejm (parliament) etc. — in a sense mediating between apparat and people.

There are two basic pitfalls in this process. On the one hand, the party might be too unyielding, spawning more recalcitrance among the people, ultimately isolating the party even more, so that any illusion that they play a 'leading role' would be untenable. On the other hand, the movement might press the party and particularly certain top people too far, insisting that they should pay the bill for their wrongs against the people (e. g. corruption). General demands of this type might press them against the wall, more of them would feel 'they mean me' than the accusers themselves know, and the result might be a temptation to appeal for protection from a friendly power.

Thus, the wisest course, or double course since there are two parties involved here, would probably be for the movement basically to stick to a 'let the past be past, we are now turning a new page in history' theme, and for the *apparatus* to insist that 'that new page is in the socialist chapter of Polish history, with a new party refreshed by the only course that could refresh it — the working class'. Politics sometimes means blowing reality into something fictitious. Left to themselves the Poles might not be willing to engage in this act; under the threat of a Soviet invasion they might. Key

elements would thus be precisely the ability to refrain from indulgence in vengeance and to submit, with considerable humility, to extensive self-criticism leading to restructuring of the Polish power system. One interesting aspect of this is that in this process the outcome might, incidentally, be something very similar to socialism — regardless of how much this word inspires a sense of fatigue and boredom, even insincerity, in listeners overaccustomed to it. And regardless of how much this may sound like a replay of 1956, 1970 and 1978.

### 2.3 *The Poles as fighters*

The Poles will fight, it seems, for the continuance of the process that has now been launched and for its results to stick, even against a foreign force. No doubt the reputation acquired by the Czechs, the Yugoslavs, and the Poles during World War II is important here: the Czechs fought neither militarily nor to any appreciable extent in a non-military manner; the other two fought the Germans with all the means at their disposal. Reputations stick. The Czechs came out of the war relatively unscathed but may have to pay dearly for that now because of its highly non-deterrent effect. The Yugoslavs and the Poles incurred horrendous losses during that war, but may now be in the phase of history where the bad things are turning into good things: a powerful neighbor thinking more than twice.

It looks as if the Soviet divisions already stationed in Poland are of little if any significance in this connection. They are reputed to be in far-off places, isolated from people, and with the Polish power centers (in the capital of Warsaw, Radio-TV, communication/transportation centers in general, key buildings for party and government, and in the new capital of Ddansk) out of reach, with hostile population in-between. A massive landing at the airports would, of course, be possible, as would a massive invasion across the long border — but that would not have the clean, surgical touch which troops already stationed in the centers

of control might have given to the operation.

The key point here seems to be, for the Poles, to be able to communicate both determination and calm at the same time: determination to resist, and remaining calm in the belief that an orderly process, as has so far been the case, is possible.

### 2.4 *The role of the Pope*

The roles of the Pope, as the head of 750 million Catholics around the world (but a spiritual guide for many more), and of Professor Wojtyla as some kind of *de facto* head of state of Poland, offer a rather impressive protective shield, even if not in military terms. Socialist demands combined with Catholic and Polish national symbolism form a strong combination — the Pope hovers over two of the corners of this triangle and would hardly be against the third. Possibly Cardinal Wyszynski exhibits some reticence in connection with the 21 demands because they go too far in a socialist direction; the Pope would hardly do so, at least not at his distance. Hence, to forge solid ties between the movement and the Pope would tend to make the movement almost invulnerable. A word from the Pope might not stem the hand of the invaders but would certainly mobilize all those who are His Holiness's double children: the overwhelming majority of the Poles.

### 2.5 *The role of Afghanistan*

The role is ambiguous, but mostly positive from the point of view of avoiding intervention, and not only in the obviously important sense that Moscow decision-makers would not relish the prospect of fighting a two-front guerilla war, both to the South and to the West of the Soviet borders. Three relatively clear motives why the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan will be briefly mentioned for the possible light they might shed on Soviet - Polish relations.

First, I would see the Soviet invasion as a clear response to the US playing the Chinese card — Brezhnev's very apt description of precisely what Washington is doing.

A giant, reasonably equidistant in its hatred for both superpowers, becomes 'non-aligned in favor of the US', with subtle military ties. The US perimeter brought about by the non-viable SEATO-CENTO system suddenly jumps thousands of kilometers northwards, and in their more pessimistic moments the Russians would certainly add more than one billion Chinese to the list of their NATO enemies. A quick action — no doubt also triggered by the NATO TNF decision 12 December 1979 — even if under the most flimsy pretext, to break out of what the Soviet Union fears most, encirclement, is far from a far-fetched move. Clearly, however, the Chinese card is not played in Europe so the argument does not apply directly to the Polish situation.

Second, there is a high level of 'conductivity' between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan: Muslims on either side, as also Kazakhs, Kirgiz, Tadzhiks. Whatever happens in Afghanistan is relevant for those on the other side, whether it is a Muslim Republic or a 'titoist' socialist system — or, *both*.

And third, there is the 'marxist mystique', the faith in the 'scientific law' that societies develop in *irreversible* jumps according to the law of stages (primitive communism-slave system-serf system-capitalism-socialism-communism). To help as a midwife in the transition from capitalism to socialism and/or to secure the irreversibility of the latter is, accordingly, not intervention but a way of helping a natural process assert its true nature.

The last two arguments both apply, to some extent, to the Polish situation. But there are important differences between the Polish and the Afghan situations. Thus, it would be very hard to maintain that there is any move in Poland in favor of establishing a 'feudal' or even a 'capitalist' order — the Soviet model already having been in operation for more than 30 years, the demands certainly not being in the direction of re-introduction of feudalism or capitalism as a major mode of production. And, then, Poland is much closer to the Soviet Union

— what happens there is much more relevant to the Soviet Union. The 'socialist revolution in a state capitalist society' formula ties the two together.

But does this not increase the chances of an invasion? Not necessarily, for it also makes Poland more relevant as an experimental ground in solving the types of problems also facing the Soviet Union. The condition for this, however, is that the process is played according to the rules indicated in connection with (1) and (2) above.

#### 2.6 *Implications for the strategic balance*

Has the balance of power changed to the disadvantage of the Soviet Union as a consequence of these events? The conclusion is not so obvious as it may seem. That the Poles tend to be anti-Russian and anti-German, and for good reasons, is well known. That they would hardly fight for the Russians in a conflict with the West with any fervor, except under one condition — a German 'revanchist' attack — is not anything new. The Soviet Union would hardly maneuver a possibly more reliable ally, the DDR, closer to the Federal Republic in a unification attempt that *might* engender anxieties in the less reliable ally, at the risk of losing the more reliable one. Thus, there is nothing to lose from the process going on as it has already been lost (in August 1944, to be more precise — and in the 1939 process before that, to mention the more recent). There is a loss of prestige because the shakiness of the 'international Communist system' has become visible, to the point that the West knows that the East knows that the West knows how shaky it is — but not even that is so new.

All this would change the moment there are attempts or moves in the direction of leaving the Warsaw Treaty Organization or the general web of affiliation with the Eastern system — the key point mentioned as a condition of the government for signing demand no. 1. Even attempts to affiliate with Western non-governmental organizations, e.g. in the field of trade unions, would

serve as an indicator. Hence, much depends on the ability to play this point according to that particular ground rule.

### 2.7 The direct cost-benefit analysis

Thus, it is difficult to see that what is happening in Poland so far really constitutes a threat to (a) the state capitalist countries, (b) the state capitalist social formation, or (c) the ruling class in state capitalist countries. The benefits of an invasion would be as a bulwark against possible future developments. These benefits are uncertain and at best long-term; the costs of an invasion are certain and short-term. The costs include considerable increase in armament of all kinds on both sides, a farewell for a long time to detente, including technology transfer, the danger of escalation into a major war with unforeseen consequences, although the latter is less probable.

Will Moscow pay this price? Those who argue yes will probably say 'in order to avoid that this type of movement spreads to the other socialist countries'. But that argument underestimates two factors: that if it 'spreads' then there is an objective basis — the same contradictions, more or less — in the other socialist countries. The Polish case would at most serve to dramatize what is well known elsewhere, and perhaps to indicate some concrete steps that could be taken. And the second factor: that it may not be unwanted if kept under reasonable control: in a sluggish economy even this political price may not be too high to get the wheels running faster and better.

And that may in the final analysis be the crux of the matter. The state capitalist economies are sluggish, productivity increases are small, sometimes negative. Most analyses would point to the lack of incentives, material and non-material, for the workers, to become more productive in this connection. A bargain, more productivity for more freedom, seems like an attractive possibility — one can then always argue the terms of exchange. If the two sides of the Polish

struggle are able to pull that one off it may have very positive ramifications in the other state capitalist countries, with the *apparat* asking for higher productivity and the people in general and the workers in particular, demanding more freedom. Thus, for the Soviet Union, Poland may be an experiment worth engaging in.

### 3. Conclusions

Given the conditions indicated, and they are many, there will be no overt military intervention, and I do not think that is just wishful thinking. There will be pressure, but that is not the same. A possible result, far from what is today seen by the Western powers, might even be a strengthened Eastern Europe, even including the Soviet Union. So let us end in the only possible way, but with the somber undertones of that saying: *qui vivra, verra*.

#### NOTE

\* The background material for this article was collected during a stay in Poland the last week of September 1980, and includes extensive discussion with Polish colleagues in connection with lectures at the Polish Academy of Sciences, discussions with people on either side of the trade union/*apparat* confrontation, with Poles in general and written material — the latter being of minor importance. I am grateful to the many who gave me their information and views on the process, and to those who have commented on the first draft of the paper, but the responsibility for the paper rests entirely with the author. Thus, it does not necessarily express the view of the members of the editorial committee. One of the members (Peter Wallenstein), however, had some comments that, with his permission, I would like to add on to the article, because of the particular insights they offer in a complex process:

There is a history of the party compromising with Polish reality: First, it had to yield and not 'socialize' the farmers: thus major sections of Polish agriculture still remain in private hands. The 'state' could aim at controlling the means of distribution, but not the means of production, in this case. This is a digression from the Soviet model, but was possible to sell to Moscow. It certainly did not spill over into the other countries, but was seen as a particular 'Polish' solution.

Second, the party had to yield and not take over the Church. It acquired control again over the means

of distribution (radio, press, TV) but left unharmed a major sector of production of ideology. Also this is a digression from the Soviet model, certainly reinforced by a Pole becoming Pope, but also this was accepted by the others in the Eastern bloc as a particular 'Polish' solution (again, reinforcing the picture of Poland as being a bit more 'backward' in the development of appropriate stages in the socialism building process).

Now, the third yielding of the party, but this time to the trade unions, which in fact will control the means of industrial production, and be influential in setting wages, benefits, etc.; in essence the unions will be able to pursue an economic policy possibly different from the state. Still, the state retains control over the means of distribution, but possibly only for a short spell of time.

Will this be acceptable, to the same extent as the party's loss of control over the other elements has been? Perhaps, perhaps not? The Soviets had

already 'solved' their problem with farmers by the early 1950's, thus no threat to them from a different Polish solution. The Soviets had already gained control over their church when the Polish solution appeared.

In the same vein, Soviets also have control over trade unions today. But does that mean no threat to the Soviets, for the time being? In the longer run, independent powerful trade unions may appeal to trade unionists as well as workers in the other countries, particularly if it appears successful economically. From the point of view of social development, Poland would then no longer be a particular case, but a model. Furthermore, the model might strike a bell further away. In many ways, as a matter of fact, it might even be reminiscent of Peron's Argentina: catholic, farming, and strong trade unions.

(Peter Wallensteen)