

SUMMARY

Solidarity as a social and political movement – an attempt to square the circle?

Josef Mlejnek

On August 31, 1980, Solidarity was born. Attempts to define its phenomenon have shown that it is not susceptible to traditional classifications. For it was simultaneously a revolution, a great social movement, a national uprising, and – quite simply – a trade union. And it may well have been the world's only trade union with a peak membership of 10 million, representing a cross-section of society and accounting for one-third of the whole 38-million population (not including children and the elderly). Solidarity was also assuming the role of the guarantor of renewal of many spheres of life in Poland, of economic reforms, eradication of injustice, curbing of lawlessness and abuses by the communist apparatus of power, and of restoration of the truth in the mass media and schools. It became a movement for the reclaiming of civic rights and national traditions. Solidarity was a pacifist movement, whose program rejected violence as a means of resolving collective disputes. It operated on a national scale, invoking the principles of social solidarity and moral values in public life. By its very nature it contradicted the rules of the communist system – thus eroding the foundations of communism in Poland, and later – throughout the entire Soviet bloc.

„Military Intervention Can't Even Be Considered“ The Soviet Government and the Crisis in Poland in 1980–1981

Lukas Kamiński

This study focuses on the position adopted and measures taken by the Soviet Union as the leading state in the Soviet bloc towards the People's Republic of Poland from the creation of the Solidarity independent trade union in August 1980 until the declaration of a state of emergency in December 1981. The author draws on the preserved records of Politburo meetings of the Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee, the diplomatic correspondence of representatives of satellite Communist states and other sources. From the off, the Soviet leadership regarded the appearance of Solidarity in Poland as a movement aimed at counter-revolution and unequivocally rejected it. At the same time – in contrast to leaders of satellite Communist parties – it was relatively guarded in its accusations against the leading representatives of the Polish United Workers' Party. The records presented show that from the start of the Polish crisis Soviet politicians exhorted their Polish comrades to adopt a forceful approach against the counterrevolutionary forces. However, at the same time, externally and among themselves, they rejected from the beginning the possibility of a Soviet military intervention aimed at establishing order on Polish soil. The Soviet leadership, as the author shows, in the end pressed for the replacing of Polish party leader Kania and supported his deputy General Jaruzelski, along with his decision

to employ force to liquidate the growing mass extra-party movement. However, the Soviets had already made it clear that they regarded a Soviet military intervention on Polish territory as out of the question, which the author again supports with quotations from key Politburo members Andropov and Suslov. The author attributes the Soviet position – which was formulated at the beginning of the so-called Polish crisis and did not change for as long as it continued – to the country's experience of the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the outcome of its intervention in Afghanistan, and fears of Western economic sanctions.

The GDR and the Polish Crisis, 1980–1981. The Reaction of the SED, the Population and Representatives of the East German Opposition

Tomáš Vilímek

The leadership of East Germany eyed developments at the turn of 1980 and 1981 with considerable disquiet and attempted by all means possible to prevent the so-called Polish bacillus from negatively influencing the situation in the GDR. Erich Honecker was among those who advocated a tough policy towards the Polish leadership, although he was forced to accept the position of Leonid Brezhnev, who unequivocally preferred the announcement of a state of emergency and regarded a military intervention on the part of selected Warsaw Pact countries (CSSR, NDR, USSR) as the most marginal of scenarios. The Polish crisis carried great weight for East Germany for a number of reasons. Apart from the fact that it threatened the positive results of the foreign policy of the 1970s, during which the GDR had succeeded in greatly boosting its political position abroad and improved relations with the Federal Republic of Germany, strikes in the People's Republic of Poland caused marked delays in the deliveries of the black coal that was extremely important for the East German economy. However, the Polish crisis also impacted the domestic political situation because, particularly in the initial period lasting from September to October 1980, Polish workers' demands for independent unions were seen by their East German counterparts as justified, and the East German State Security had to deal with several instances of solidarity with Solidarity, most often in the form of slogans on walls and fliers. Despite the fact that in the subsequent period the prevailing mood in East German society was one of concern that an escalation of the crisis could harm a promising development in relations with West Germany and in the final result lead to a marked hardening of the East German regime, the ideas of Solidarity did meet with considerable welcome among the opposition in the NDR, which what is more had been monitoring developments in the People's Republic of Poland along with events in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the Soviet Union from the mid 1970s on. Many representatives of the East German opposition – including Roland Jahn, Wolfgang Templin, Robert Havemann and Ludwig Mehlhorn – rated the activities of Poland's Solidarity very highly and in the following period also attempted to use certain outside impulses to adapt their own aims.

Czechoslovakia and the Polish Crisis 1980–1982

Petr Blažek

The main subject of this historical study is Czechoslovak reactions to the Polish crisis of the early 1980s. The author primarily looks at the position of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the activities of the security apparatus, the position of the Polish minority, Polish stereotypes and the opposition movement's view of the Polish „infection“, the worsening of the financial situation and the repeated system crises seen at the end of the 1960s. For that reason, they engaged in long-term criticism of the leadership of the Polish United Workers' Party and backed the violent halting of the Solidarity „carnival“. In December 1980, on the basis of orders from Warsaw Pact leadership, selected units of the Czechoslovak People's Army were put on battle alert for several days. Gradually, tourist travel between the two states was limited, although it was fully renewed in 1981. Within the framework of various operations (the biggest was named „North“ and took place in the years 1981–1984), the security apparatus attempted to restrict unofficial contacts, particularly between opposition and religious activists. They also closely monitored members of the Polish minority. As part of the operation „Circle“ the State Security implemented a slew of preventative measures and created plans to suppress any strikes held at industrial plants. The official Czechoslovak media launched an extensive propaganda campaign criticising the activities of Solidarity and reinforcing „anti-Polish“ stereotypes among the domestic society. Developments in Poland gave encouragement to the fragmented Czechoslovak opposition movement and religious activists. Charter 77 monitored the situation in the neighbouring state with interest and its spokespersons expressed support for Solidarity in a number of documents.

An Unsteady Picture. Solidarity in Rudé Právo 1980–1981

Tomáš Zahradníček

This study comprises an analysis of the reaction of Rudé Právo to the Polish crisis divided into two sections. The first provides an overview of presented and quoted reactions of the official organ of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in the period in question, while the second analyses the reactions of Rudé Právo and posits a thesis on the approach of the Communist Party to the Polish crisis in the media sphere. The author describes a gradual movement on the part of Rudé Právo from efforts to conceal events to criticism of Polish workers to questioning of Poland's Communist leaders and declarations of support for the hard-line party core. His main thesis is that editorials on events in Poland – unequivocally critical of Solidarity – were at the same time without substance and lacking continuity or a unified line, which the author says partly points to the dependence of journalists on orders from the central author-

ity (which arose in reaction to a developing situation), and partly demonstrates that Rudé Právo can only be regarded as a supplementary source when it comes to assessing Czechoslovak reaction.

The Security Service Against Solidarity 1980–1981

Grzegorz Majchrzak

This study is chiefly focused on examining the strategy of the Polish secret police – the Security Service – against the Solidarity trade union movement in the period when the movement was an officially permitted mass organisation. It is a very broad subject, so the author confines himself to outlining the main activities of the Security Services and its results. He maps the subject, presenting the development of the Polish opposition movement and the views of the leadership of the Polish Communist Party in 1980, and the assignment of strategy to the chief unit of force, the Security Service, describing in detail its approach in the subsequent period. Its main strategic task in that period was to manipulate Solidarity and rule it „from within“ by means of operative-based operations and deployed influential collaborators, while curtailing its activities „from without“. The author demonstrates that the governing regime played a two-sided game with the independent union and from the off prepared for the complete control of Solidarity. This was meant to culminate with the faked creation after its banning of a „neo-Solidarity“ fully controlled by the Security Service. However, this never came to pass due to the plan’s excessive riskiness and the fact that the movement was in any case sufficiently pacified.

Lech Walesa as a Secret Collaborator Code-Named „Bolek“ – A Reconstruction of his Cooperation with the Security Service (1970–1976)

Slawomir Cenckiewicz

This study, which is based on quoted archive materials, maps the cooperation of the leading representative of the Solidarity trade union movement Lech Walesa with the Polish Security Service (the SB secret police) in 1970–1976, the period of Solidarity’s foundation. Its introductory section sums up briefly Walesa’s biography, with an emphasis on the most significant aspects of his public engagement, from his participation in the strike movement in December 1970 and subsequent first arrest by the SB to his election as president and his haul of state and international awards. The next part attempts to find an answer to the question: Who was hidden behind the code-name agent „Bolek“? It contends that it is possible to reach a conclusion, despite the disappearance of several SB documents in the years 1992–1995; on the basis of an analysis of preserved evidential documents of the 3rd department of the voivode (regional) leadership of the Milicja Obywatelska (Citizens’ Militia) in Gda-

nsk, an explanation of the rules of the secret police agency evidence, and other information, the SC (secret collaborator) „Bolek“ is identified as Lech Walesa. Passages are quoted from other preserved documents in which his controllers appraise the activities of SC „Bolek“, as are fragments from reports, mainly from 1971, which SC „Bolek“ delivered to the secret police and which featured, among other things, information on the situation in the workers' movement and on concrete individuals. The following section maps out an answer to the question: What kind of a collaborator was the SC code-named „Bolek“? This is considered in the context of the fact that in the period 1971–1972 he was an active collaborator who supplied the secret police with valuable information and received financial rewards for doing so. Gradually, however, his activities abated, as „Bolek“ began to become involved in the trade union movement and to criticize the situation in Poland in 1974–1976. Despite warnings from his controllers, he continued in those activities and in 1976 was released from the employment of the SB, while also being excluded from the network of agents over his unwillingness to cooperate. The study concludes with the assertion that while the historical role that Lech Walesa played in the formation and activities of the Solidarity independent trade union movement from August 1980 saw him become part of the Polish national pantheon, he should not be excepted from objective historical appraisal. The author writes that carrying out such appraisals of publicly active figures is the duty of historians and the opportunity to access them is the right of citizens. He points also to the fact that while Lech Walesa has always strongly denied being an agent and is the holder of a negative court screening, he has never carried out his threat to sue historians who publish untrue information about him.