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## **POLAND : STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM**

The current internal crisis in Poland has caused grave concern within the Iron Curtain and cautious political speculation in the West. The response of the Polish Communist Party to the crisis has surprised most non-communist observers who expected the usual swift, heavy-handed reprisals. The tremendous restraint and the spirit of compromise consciously adopted by the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) during the negotiation process is *sans doute* a radical departure from the responses of other communist regimes in similar trouble. This paper makes an attempt to understand the developments leading to the crisis and to explore its socio-political significance.

### **1. Cause of the Strike**

Most internal crises in Poland were related to wages and prices of foodstuff. Whenever food prices increased significantly without advance notice or parallel increase in wages, workers went on strike, as in 50, 56, 70, and 76.

In 1950 the Polish workers went on strike to protest against inflation and won wage increases.

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In 1956 during the Poznan Trade Fair the workers of the Stalin Engineering Works struck for the second time over food price increases, low wages, and over demands for intellectual and cultural liberalization. At the time when Stalin's dethronement and a new leadership struggle were taking place in the Soviet Union, Gomulka, who had just replaced Edward Ochab, felt able to accept the workers' demands. Secure in the belief that the Red Army could not intervene until a clear leader emerged in the Kremlin, he

- handed land back to the peasants ;
- made concessions to the Church ;
- relaxed censorship ;
- gave the workers tax rebates and wage increases ranging from 19 to 25 per cent ; and
- allowed the formation of workers' councils (which were gradually rendered impotent).

By 1970 however, the Polish economy had suffered major setback. On December 13, 1970 a general price increase of 8 to 69 per cent was announced and next day there was uprising among the Gdansk shipyard workers, followed by revolt throughout the Polish coast.<sup>1</sup> By the 20th, some workers had died and Gomulka was replaced by Gierek who promised wage increases, a revision of government's economic plans, and an ambitious modernization program.

With Gierek and Jaroszewicz, the new Prime

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1. *Guardian*, 22 July 1980.

Minister in power, there was initial optimism. Domestic consumption and investments were encouraged and loans for industrial construction were secured from the West. Gierek hoped that these loans would help build Poland's infra-structure from which economic modernization could proceed, while hard-currency-earning exports would enable the government to import more food and goods from the West. The immediate results were impressive; the 71-75 industrial output soared to 70 per cent and real wages rose at an annual average of 7.1 per cent.<sup>2</sup> But the extreme emphasis on upgrading the country's technology to get rid of an inefficient industrial base backfired because of

- sudden spiralling of oil prices that brought recession in the West thereby drying up foreign markets;
- misguided emphasis on long-term projects like huge industrial complexes that tied down considerable amount of resources;
- failure to emphasize immediate and much-needed smaller projects, particularly in the consumer sector;
- blatant disregard for agriculture that constitutes 50 per cent of the Polish workforce;
- increasing debt due to borrowing of hard currency to finance the huge industrial set-ups, whose benefits could be realised only in the long run; and

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2. *Time*, 29 September 1980, p. 15.

— hampered production due to mismanagement of the economy and misappropriation of funds. Since 80 per cent of the imported oil came from the Soviet Union, Poland had to divert more exports to the Soviet Union instead of the West, thus putting a tremendous strain on debt repayment; the result has been a whopping \$ 23 billion debt to the West.

The chaotic agricultural system inherited by Gierek did not show any appreciable change because of the government's disinterest in investment in this sector and because of preferential treatment to state-run farms which comprise a mere 25 per cent of total farm land ; fertilizer, fodder and credits for machinery were given to state-run farms only. There was also five years of bad weather and poor harvests.

On June 24, 1976 again there was a sudden 30 to 100 per cent increase in food prices precipitating strikes in 100 factories.<sup>3</sup> Widespread rioting and a few deaths forced the government to withdraw the price increase. And in 1978, the issue of bringing Vietnam into the CMEA and expecting East Europe to foot 50 per cent of the bill also had its affects on the Polish economy.

By July 1980 Poland once again fell victim to labour unrest. Because of its foreign debt, Poland could no longer allocate 20 per cent of its budget for food subsidies. At the same time meat, the last remaining exportable item, continued to be exported to the West causing domestic shortage. Workers went

3. *Guardian*, 22 July 1980.

on strike. The government responded by granting wholesale pay raises totaling \$ 117 million, but refused to lower meat prices. When the strikes continued, the government bowed to their demands ; but the revolt spread rather than subside. Why ? How is the 1980-81 labour unrest different from the previous ones and what is its significance ?

Gierek had gone too far with his ambitious economic modernization plan, completely neglected agriculture, over-looked workers' basic needs, denied workers the right to participate in the economic decision-making, disregarded rampant social injustice, and overlooked misplaced priorities and poor management. He had also brushed aside the warnings of the scientific community of an impending economic doom. Though the trigger for the labour unrest was economic in nature (low wages and high prices) like the previous ones, the Polish workers this time were forced to examine the issues critically.

The workers were tired of cosmetic solutions and wanted permanent ones. They doubted the will and capacity of, as they perceived, incompetent, self-assured technocrats to rectify the ailing economy. They wished to force the government to reconcile with an effete system, a system based on bureaucratic errors and indifference to basic requirements of scientific planning and management. By the latter part of the 70s the previously proclaimed social goals had not only failed to materialise, but in fact socio-economic conditions deteriorated from year to year. At the same

time corruption, embezzlement and misappropriation of funds for the benefit of a privileged few expanded rapidly. This caused widespread bitterness and discontent among the workers and a sense of social betrayal prevailed. As a further insult, the State propaganda machine appropriated the television, radio and press services to churn out slogans, sophistry and mendacity.

The government's attempt to modernise the economy without modernising the political system pointed to the structural anomaly and this led to a list of workers' demands that ranged from, *inter alia*, the call to de-centralise the system, worker input in the socio-economic decision-making, emphasis on scientific socialism to rationalize the system, to a call for free and independent trade unions.

Simply stated, the question most frequently raised was, Why is life still bad after 35 years of toil and labour while adversaries in West Europe enjoy an enviable standard of living? Only a thorough and sincere soul-searching and some drastic changes in the system appeared to be the panacea for the problems that plagued Poland.

## 2. Government Reaction to Worker Demands

The initial response of the government was to discredit the workers involved in the strike by calling the leaders of the strike committee "anarchic, anti-socialist groups." Gierak sought to undermine the reputation of striking labour leaders by typing them as political

agitators bent on undoing the gains of socialist Poland and he refused to deal with them because "nobody can count on compromise and surrender in the face of political demands." Failing to drive a wedge between the workers and the leaders of the strike committee, the government sought to erode popular support for the workers and woo away the populace by claiming that the strikes were costing millions of dollars every day and that needed food supplies were rotting in the ships in Gdansk harbour. Their ploy again failed.

The government finally realised that some major concessions may have to be made and Gierek hastily arrived in Moscow to get the Kremlin's agreement on the limits of permissible concessions. After the first series of concessions failed to appease the workers, Gierek returned to Moscow to inform the Kremlin of the need to sack several politburo hardliners. The workers refused to be taken in by the dismissal of a few scapegoats and demanded dialogue and negotiation with the authorities until an acceptable "permanent" agreement could be reached.

But Gierek's government, in an attempt to deny the Interfactory Strike Committee (IFSC) any kind of legitimacy or political significance, refused to recognise the IFSC as a legitimate representative of the workers. The government insisted on continuing its negotiation with each factory singly. But the futility of such an approach was soon obvious. Gierek finally replaced Tadeusz Pyka, the chief government negotiator, with deputy premier Jagielski, who promptly recognised the

IFSC as the genuine representative of the Baltic enterprises.

By then however workers had been dismissed from their jobs for participating in or sympathising with the strikes; workers' meetings were officially banned, while members of dissident groups like the Committee for the Defence of the Workers (KOR), its successor the Social Self-Defense Committee (KSS "KOR"), the Movement for the Defence of Human and Civil Rights (ROPCIO), and the Student Solidarity Committee (SKS) were subjected to harassment and mass arrests.

On September 6 Gierek resigned as the First Secretary of the Central Committee and Stanislaw Kania, an hardliner previously holding the crucial portfolios of Chief of Intelligence and Internal Security, Party Secretary for the Army and Chief of Church Affairs, was the "unanimous" choice of the 144 members of the Central Committee.

PUWP'S choice of Kania was intended to assure Moscow that the labour unrest will be dealt with effectively and before it spills across the border, that no precedence will be created for East bloc workers and that Poland's commitment to socialist goals and the policies of the Warsaw Pact and CMEA will not be jeopardized. Immediately after his appointment, Kania made an unsuccessful trip to Moscow to secure the Kremlin's confidence in him in order to strengthen his personal position vis-a-vis the party hardliner and also give him a strong negotiating position against the IFSC.

During the closed meetings of the Central Com-



mittee of the PUWP, Kania had argued against the use of force to contain the spreading labour unrest. After election, in a speech before the 6th Plenum of the Central Committee he declared that

We want to solve the difficulties facing the country, while the antisocialist adversary wants to exploit the arisen conflicts for ends running counter to what the workers are aspiring for and advocating. We shall firmly counteract instances of disorder, lawlessness, lax discipline, harassment of people...We shall resolutely defend the cause of socialism, the vital interests of our people's state.<sup>4</sup>

However, the continuing strikes and their debilitating affect on the almost bankrupt economy, the continued popular support for the workers, and the general feeling that something ought to be done soon to deny the Red Army any pretext for armed intervention in Poland's internal affairs, appeared to convince the government that negotiation, reconciliation and compromise were the only peaceful and wise way out of the quagmire.

While maintaining a hardline official stance to appease Moscow and the East bloc, negotiations went on in earnest with the labour leaders. The inclusion of deputy premier Kazimierz Barcikowski (one of the government negotiators in the Baltic coast) and Tadeusz

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4. *Contemporary Poland*, Sept-Oct 1980 (No. 18/19), p. 53.

Grabski, both then considered moderates and economic reformers, in the collective leadership under Kania was indicative of the Polish government's cautious policies and delicate maneuvers designed to appease both Moscow and the Polish people. Contacts with Moscow continued to be maintained as a disarming tactic, while the guidelines for a new, liberal and socially acceptable socio-economic policy was tabled in the *Sejm* by the new prime minister, Jozef Pinkowski, for the parliament's approval. These guidelines endorsed "the consistent priority of social goals" as the chief operating principles of the new government, and included wage increase and reform of the system of family allowances ; tighter control over pricing ; freezing until autumn 1981 of prices of meat and meat products ; recognition of the scientific role in state planning ; changes in the labour code and similar legislation ; development of small industries that will produce "socially indispensable products and services" ; shifts from capital intensive projects to agro-based projects ; development and modernization in agriculture ; governmental support for self-government of farmers and farming cooperatives ; changes in management and planning with greater prerogatives of people's councils as organs of local self-government ; and a redefinition of the censorship over the press, publications and the audio-visual media.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. Restoring Public Confidence

The universality and intensity of labour unrest

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5. *Ibid.*, pp. 57-72.

had placed the PUWP government in a very defensive position. The government could offer no defense against the accusation that it was corrupt, that it did not represent the interest of the workers since their lot had deteriorated year after year, that it was quite ready to dispense short-term emollient but quite averse to permanent socio-economic emoluments. Although the IFSC claimed that it had no political motives, in a sense, the government was faced with a political challenge to prove its good intentions. The continued massive popular support for the IFSC drove the message home.

After the initial hardline attitude, the moderates in the PUWP slowly gained the upper hand and a policy of moderation and compromise was adopted. Serious attempts were made to restore people's confidence by exposing the scandals and corruption that were covered up by the Gierek government. Mr. Szczepanski who was Gierek's speechwriter and confidant and also the chief of Polish Radio and Television was charged with decadent living, embezzlement of state funds and prostitution. His successor, Jozef Barecki, was sacked after four weeks because of loyal services to discredited Gierek. Kania, it appeared, wanted to make a clean break with the former regime.

Following a meeting of the Council of State on August 24, extensive revision of the cabinet was announced. After the September 6 PUWP Central Committee meeting, Kania replaced Gierek and another revision of the cabinet took place. During the October 6 session, Gierek loyalists in the PUWP Central Com-

mittee were dismissed. Every PUWP member removed from power was condemned for personal or bureaucratic or policy errors.

The new government wished to project a clean image by going public in admitting to the mistakes in past polices. Gierek himself had admitted to serious errors in government policies as early as February 1980 in the "discussion documents" circulated by the PUWP. Stanislaw Kania in his address to the 6th Plenum of the Central Committee further admitted that

serious mistakes in economic policies and distortions in public life were the basic source of the huge strike wave which has swept across Poland since July. . . We treat these strikes as a manifestation of workers discontent, worker protest in its main, pure worker form.<sup>6</sup>

The party leadership initiated an anti-corruption campaign and all senior officials were asked to declare their assets : weekend houses, painting, jewelry, foreign bank accounts, etc. Thus the government hoped to demonstrate its good intentions by punishing, through expulsion from party, members responsible for social injustice, and in serious cases like Szczepanski, by bringing justice to bear upon the deviant. While these measures sought to demonstrate the government's sincerity in tackling social problems, the true measure

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6. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

of its spirit of compromise was to come only with the signing of the Protocol of Agreement in Gdansk.

#### 4. Negotiated Agreements

By end-November 1980 a number of negotiated settlements were concluded in Szczecin, Jastrzebie and other strike areas throughout Poland; the most celebrated one was at the Gdansk shipyard concluded on August 31, 1980. The Gdansk settlement consisted of 21 points mostly related to the official recognition and safeguarding of basic social and economic rights of the working class, rights which did not exist before or were partially granted during previous strikes in 56, 70 and 76 but slowly withdrawn since.

Points 1 through 4 dealt with the the right to form independent trade unions, the legal right to strike, freedom of expression and the restoration of socio-political rights. Point 5 demanded publicity in the mass media of the IFSC demands. Point 6 upheld the public right to be abreast with the latest developments and the right to participate in the discussions regarding general reforms. Points 7, 8 and 9 sought financial compensation for workers in terms of strike pay, raises in basic wages and inflationary adjustments in salary. Points 10, 11 and 13 dealt with corrective measures regarding food prices, food export and meat and meat product rationing. Point 12 demanded management staff selection on the basis of merit instead of party affiliation and also the abolishing of privileges for the elites. Point 14 calling for across-the-board, mandatory lowered retirement age

was rejected by the authorities because it was "impossible to realise in the current economic and demographic situation of the country." Points 15 through 21 dealt with socio-economic rights such as pensions, health service and medical care, nurseries for children of working mothers, maternity leave, travel allowances and work-free Saturdays.

The crucial demand, however, was point 1 which called for the "Acceptance of free trade unions independent of the party and employers, in accordance with convention No. 87 of the International Labour Organization concerning union freedoms, ratified by the Polish People's Republic." The government reacted sharply against it, for it directly challenged the legitimacy and authority of the official communist-run trade unions. Granting the establishment of free and independent labour unions would invalidate the claim that the communist trade unions represented the interest and well-being of the workers. How could parallel trade unions legally exist each claiming to represent the the total interest of the same class? And if free and independent trade unions were legally allowed what role would the communist trade union play? And yet the existence of trade unions to safeguard the worker's interests was a *sine qua non* to the socialist system. Lenin had stated that the trade unions' main task was to defend the interests of the working class in the most direct manner.

Thus, instead of agreeing to free and independent trade unions, the government sought to restore

through new decrees the authority of the official communist trade unions. But the IFSC saw the existing trade unions as appendage of the PUWP and tools of the government, and that instead of looking after the interest of the workers these unions actually manipulated workers in the interest of the government. The IFSC insisted that only free and independent trade unions could be the authentic organizer of the working class and represent and defend their interests and rights.

Gierek's government could not remain unconcerned about the possibility that the workers movement may be taken over by the radicals and dissidents and therefore it was imperative that settlement be reached while the moderates like Lech Walesa still controlled the strikes. The regime was ready to grant the workers their independent trade unions but the IFSC had to concede to certain fundamental safeguards: the new self-governing trade unions

- will observe principles upheld in the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic;
- will defend the social and material interest of employees;
- do not intend to play the role of a political party;
- will recognise the principles of the socialist system;
- will recognise the existing system of international alliances.

The IFSC agreed to the above conditions; but, fearing government effort to gradually emasculate the gains of the Gdansk Agreement, the IFSC applied to the Warsaw District Provincial Court for registration of the new, independent trade union federation, *Solidarnosc*. A potentially serious crisis developed when the Court arbitrarily inserted in the *Solidarnosc* Charter that the Union recognises the leading role of the party and that future strikes would be illegal. In November 10, the Polish Supreme Court upheld the appeal lodged by *Solidarnosc* and over-ruled the legality of the action of the lower court. It was agreed that the leading role of the party would be mentioned in an Annex, including two rulings of the International Labour Convention.

Thus with the IFSC becoming the *Solidarity*, the initial political battle was won. But its impact was far-reaching. It went beyond the courts, the government and the party, to the very fabric of a socialist society and raised a very fundamental issue: the continued validity of the dialectics of class struggle.

### 5. Class Conflict

It would be patently wrong to compare the current Polish crisis with the Hungarian uprising of 1956 or the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968. The Hungarian regime of Imre Nagy and the Czech regime of Dubcek represented renegade communist regimes whose highly reformist policies left in doubt the continued viability of the socialist alliance structure. Besides, Dubcek's policies emphasizing intellectual liberalization were chancy attempt



by a few liberal thinkers to institute liberalization within the Czech society from the top without sufficiently cultivating support at the base. Not much known for their ability to put up a unified resistance, the movement collapsed as soon as the Warsaw Pact tanks rolled in.

Nor is the current Polish crisis quite comparable to the past crises in Poland where the economic factor loomed large. To be sure there were demands for greater social, political and religious freedom in the past, particularly in the 1956 riots, but by and large the economic factors that directly affected the livelihood of the workers played a more prominent role.

It would be unfortunate to view the Polish crisis in the context of the East-West rivalry. The Polish crisis is an internal struggle. And even internally it is not a struggle between the ruling communist party and the purported anti-socialist forces. It is, in reality, a struggle *between* two distinct social forces, between the "haves" and the "have-nots", between the masses and the elites, between the proletariat and the oligarchy. In other words, it is a class struggle in a supposedly classless society. It is a struggle *about* socialist self-management, a fight to secure direct control over the productive processes in the society and to have a guaranteed say in the economic decision-making. It is a struggle *for* socialist democracy, a fight to elevate into a higher moral category the relationship among people resulting from their rights and obligations over the relationship between man and the state.

The masses have finally rejected what they perceive

to be "capitalistic" tendencies; namely, the accumulation of wealth and power in the hands of an oligarchic few. The masses — for it is not only shipyard workers but also coalminers, transportation workers, farmers, students, etc. — have demanded a return to socialism, to a system that not only theorises but also practices social equality and political and economic justice.

The workers realised that inspite of the forced leadership changes from Ochab to Gomulka to Gierek to Kania, *etatism* remained a potent force, without whose demise the Polish society would remain dichotomised into the elitist minority upholding the superiority of the state and party over the individual, and the vast, non-privileged, labouring majority desiring the recognition of their socio-political and economic rights *vis-a-vis* the state; thus the rationale for the founding of free and independent trade union whose primary function would be to ensure the return to a just and equitable society.

Seen in this context, the charge by a few hardliners within the PUWP that the continuing crisis is the work of a few anti-socialist elements committed to the destruction of the socialist gains in Poland appears to be baseless. In fact, it is from the desire to return to socialism that the masses have publicly and almost unanimously demanded the removal, through constitutional means, of the systemic malaise afflicting the Polish society — namely, institutionalized elitism.

Thus the workers are not content in mere changes in leadership because the *de facto* institutional set-up

that perpetuates elitism would still remain. They — or perhaps more accurately the Catholic and Marxist intellectuals guiding the workers movement at various times — appear to be convinced that without the elimination of the entrenched corruptive tendencies in the party and the state, any new leadership would soon be as corrupt as the earlier one. It is interesting to note that in the workers' twenty-one demands there is no call for changes in regime. Instead, their demand has been to write into the constitution the legitimacy of a separate mass organization in the form of independent trade unions that could check the wanton non-socialist tendencies that are the causes of much of the problems afflicting Poland today. Thus, the workers' lack of confidence on the Polish leadership structure was the deep-seated cause for their revolt for economic control, for political freedom, for social justice, and above all for human dignity.

The power elites who constitute the Polish oligarchy has had an unhindered and unlimited access to the tools of self-aggrandizement at the expense of the society. They not only constitute the government, they also constitute the power base within the PUWP. And it is they who have usually handpicked the delegates to the party Congresses in contravention of the constitutional process whereby the delegates are supposed to be elected by the local party cells. The successive oligarchic leaderships have also controlled and manipulated quite successfully the party rank and file with their wealth and luxuries, powers and privileges, publicized achieve-

ments and screening of criticism of oneself, and with their constant attempts to garner support from the lower echelons of the party by doling out money, rewards and appointments. The oligarchy is a world by itself. It is noteworthy that before the *Solidarnosc* could legally and officially exist, the workers had to accept the government demand that it would not play the role of a political party and that it would recognise the existing socialist alliance system. These pre-conditions were necessary for the oligarchy to preserve its entrenched interests within the country and to ensure the continued political conviviality with the elitist classes in the other countries of the East bloc.

## 6. Weakening of Etatism

The formal acceptance and legal recognition of the free and independent trade unions is a major inroad in socialism. If the provisions of the Gdansk Agreement are fully implemented it would create a novel praxis in East bloc socialism. The free trade unions could be a new version of the "historic compromise" in that there is now a theoretical and actual split in the working class—a shattering development in Marxist socialism. For the first time a communist government has partially ceded the right to represent the working class to independent trade unions, not under the control of the communist party. Today, the Polish workers are a step closer to the concept of proletarian dictatorship because the *Solidarnosc* appears to be a successful frontal assault on the regime's power monopoly.

The Party's role as the supreme arbitrator of State at every level of activity has been successfully challenged. The registration of the *Solidarnosc* challenges the PUWP's legal claim to be the sole authentic representative of the working class and acknowledges a parallel organ of authority with the legal right to question policies of the Central Authority. This new pluralism, hailed in the West as democratised socialism, is anathema in the Iron Curtain, as it challenges certain important aspects of the centrality of power and its application. The sudden and precipitous fall in the communist trade union membership and the concomitant increase in the independent trade union membership is a further dilution of centralised authority and a blow to the communist monolith.

The total effect has been a net gain for the Polish work force. The right to participate in the economic planning and distribution of resources and social benefits is a major dilution in the unilateral exercise of power by the government. Politically, the unions' right to "publicly express an opinion" goes beyond the bread-and-butter issue and cuts across, political issues like limits on arbitrary political arrests, rights of workers *vis-a-vis* interests of state employers and elimination of repressions for convictions solecistic to the communist creed.

The Authorities publicly acknowledged that the lack of social basis proved decisive for the failures in previous efforts to change methods of planning and management. Therefore the workers demanded that

henceforth planning must be subordinated to social aims, which they hoped would give them greater freedom to take initiatives and would also bring about greater government awareness of the competences of the workers' self-management with regard to production, investments, wages and work-place social conditions. Equally, the need for uniform application of law and justice and the commitment to uphold basic social needs were realised in the recent agreements.

The legitimacy of socialist egalitarianism and socialist norms gained ground, while the necessary pre-conditions for scientific socialism were accepted. Unity between policy and economics, overlooked earlier, now gained emphasis. Since, theoretically at least, in socialism no sector can attain its goals in isolation from society or in defiance of it, scientific basis for organization and planning became the accepted imperative.

The effects of propaganda may weaken since the myth of socialist "purity" over capitalist "decadence" and the myth of higher qualitative achievements under a socialist system were exposed. Although communist ideologues in Poland have attempted to restore socialism to its pedestal by arguing that it is the deviations from the principles and praxis of socialism that has caused the present crisis — and there is considerable merit to this argument as discussed above — it would hardly change the disposition of the working class to preserve its recent gains.

The courageous act of dissent from the Soviet

orthodoxy has given the Polish workforce a status and legitimacy unique in the Warsaw Pact. Its right to self-govern, together with other freedoms, places nightmarish responsibilities on it. If the economy is not restored the workers may be made to share the blame, giving rise to strong hawkish pressures within the PUWP to renege certain rights. It also remains to be seen how the two competing unions would be officially accommodated and what effect that would have in rest of East Europe.

The creation of self-governing trade unions is undoubtedly a momentous development in the world of communism. Although socialism had taken various shapes in the form of Leninism, Stalinism, Titoism, Maoism and Castroism, these were procedural adaptations to suit particular needs of particular countries without posing any challenge to the monopoly of power. In Poland, however, power appears to have been "de-monopolised" through institutional means, and this creates a dangerous precedence for all communist governments.

It is, however, heartening to note that major Agreements have been reached between the State and the masses, bringing fresh awareness to the needs of Poland and injecting into its tired and geriatric system a breath of fresh air. "Socialism with a human face" may have finally come to Poland; but for how long?