

## **Foreign Policy in Opposition Activities Before 1989**

As I set out to address the subject of foreign policy in opposition activities in the second half of the 1980s, I feel that three comments are in order. First, this study will be concerned with the program and activities of the mainstream Solidarity opposition, by which I mean the communities with affiliations to “the Sixty” and to the Civic Committee of the chairman of the Independent Self-governing Solidarity Union (NZZ Solidarność), as well as the Freedom and Peace (WiP) Movement. The point of reference will be the debate on foreign policy concept as conducted in the opposition press.

Second, the respective points of view of opposition members and of members of the PRL [People’s Republic of Poland] government establishment and diplomacy differ. The former see the Third Republic of Poland’s foreign policy as having its roots in the program and work of the opposition, while the latter emphasize that Poland’s post-1989 foreign policy was in fact a continuation of the pre-1989 one, although conducted in new, favorable geopolitical conditions.

Third, although this paper was written with a firm intent to maintain impartiality, it is nevertheless subjective in the sense that this author had been engaged in opposition activities concerned with the development of Poland’s foreign policy, attending meetings with Western leaders visiting Poland, participating in program debates of the opposition in Central and Eastern Europe and in the work of the Civic Committee. Possibly, others who took part in these events hold different views than those presented below.

### **Foreign Policy: Underground Press Coverage**

In the second half of the 1980s the attitude towards the Soviet Union was the main foreign policy issue. While system changes in Poland (if any) were understood to depend on transformations in the USSR, the future after a potential break-up of the Soviet bloc was rarely addressed. The prevailing belief was that the division of Europe into two blocs would be sustained in the near term. Concepts

of international relations were discussed in the underground press—a debate in which several threads can be identified.<sup>1</sup>

The first thread advocated some form of integration, or of a community, of the Central European states as a “political solution to guarantee independence for all its members and to protect them against revisionist claims and against imperialism of their great-power neighbors, Russia and Germany.”<sup>2</sup> From today’s perspective it is clear that, had things developed that way, Poland would have been in a much better position than in the 1980s, yet it would have remained in a buffer zone between the West and the East.

The second thread subscribed to the logic that since the Polish *raison d’état* required a lasting understanding with Russia, Russia’s interests had to be acknowledged and any idea of supporting the independence aspirations of nations of the USSR had to be renounced. This approach was embraced by a community formed around *Polityka Polska*; they argued, based on ideological premises, that the USSR would not put up with the surrender of power by the communists in Poland.<sup>3</sup> Echoing these sentiments, Stefan Kisielewski insisted that “a courageous (in that it dispenses with the traditional emotional responses) political thinking must adopt the assumption that we are going to remain under Russia and that it is in this Eastern situation that the search for a solution must proceed.”<sup>4</sup> As we know today, the program of close cooperation with Russia for the sake of the Polish *raison d’état* was never realized.

The third thread recommended the strengthening of links with Western states. The position of the mainstream Solidarity opposition, while it merited the designation “pro-Western,” recognized nevertheless the geopolitical realities of the late communist period. Within this thread, the most unambiguous programs were those of the Freedom and Peace Movement—and, in other countries of the bloc, of the Czechoslovak Charter 77. They called for the withdrawal of Russian

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<sup>1</sup> K. Łabędź, *Spory wokół zagadnień programowych w publikacjach opozycji politycznej w Polsce w latach 1981–1989*, Kraków, 1997, p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> The *Niepodległość* group, “Po czterech latach,” *Niepodległość*, 1986, no. 49, p. 3. Quoted after K. Łabędź, *Spory wokół zagadnień programowych..., op. cit.*, p. 187.

<sup>3</sup> A. H. [Aleksander Hall], “Czynnik stały – Rosja!” *Polityka Polska*, 1983, nos. 2–3. Another *Polityka Polska* contributor wrote that Poland’s foreign policy towards a strong Russia faced two courses: of forfeiting its separate identity, or of a “siding wisely with Russia.” J. Czechryński (A. Romanowski), “Iść z Rosją,” *Polityka Polska*, 1983, nos. 2–3.

<sup>4</sup> S. Kisielewski, *Wstęp do programu opozycji*, Warszawa, 1984, p. 6. Quoted after K. Łabędź, *Spory wokół zagadnień programowych..., op. cit.*, p. 173.

forces from Central Europe, for the disbanding of military blocs (the Warsaw Pact and NATO), and for all-European integration. High hopes were pinned on the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe as a foundation for a new international order. There was also awareness that a unified German state was a prerequisite for overcoming the division of Europe. It is this train of thought, one implemented in practice after 1989, that will be the object of this study.

### **Cooperation on Program among Opposition Communities in Communist States**

Cooperation on the program among opposition groupings in Central and Eastern Europe was initiated by the “Prague Appeal” of the Czechoslovak Charter 77. The Appeal was issued to the Western peace movements on 11 March 1985, i.e. as a new generation of signatories open to new concepts and to a positive action program joined the organization. The political division of the European continent is the cause of the tension which poses a threat for the entire world, the Appeal notes. The principle of indivisibility of peace applies equally to states, to relations among societies, and to relations between citizens and their governments.

The process put in train by the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, besides reinforcing the territorial *status quo* (a fact emphasized by the communists) and placing the human rights issue on the agenda (a point highlighted by the Western states), laid down a program for European and Euro-Atlantic cooperation of independent states. Citizens should have the right to develop disarmament initiatives and to take actions designed to bring the European nations closer together. The ultimate aim—the unification of Europe—required the reunification of Germany, which should not be denied the right to self-determination. NATO and the Warsaw Pact should be disbanded, U.S. and Soviet forces withdrawn to their home territories, and the European states’ military forces should be reduced.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Apel Praski. Memorandum ‘Tchnąć prawdziwe życie w porozumienia helsińskie,’* Warszawa, 1987, pp. 4–7. See also “Apel Praski,” *Vacat*, September–October 1985, no. 34, pp. 78–81. The signatories included: Václav Benda, Ján Čarnogurský, Jiří Dienstbier, Jiří Hájek, Václav Havel, Father Václav Malý, Jan Sabata and Peter Uhl. *Tygodnik Mazowsze* wrote: “The ‘Prague Appeal’ issued by Charter 77 in March 1985 sparked broad international debate on the terms on which peace can be maintained in Europe; it contained weighty statements about the necessity to resolve—based on the principle of self-determination of nations—the problem of the unification of Germany, and it called for the disbanding of NATO and the Warsaw Pact and for the withdrawal of foreign military forces from all European countries.” A. Jerke, “Dziesięć lat Karty 77,” *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, 14 January 1987, p. 2.

About the same time Jacek Kuroń published a much-noticed article “Jałta i co teraz?” [Yalta: What Now?], where he argued that peace in Europe was based not so much on the Yalta accords as on the balance of power resulting from the arms race. Wars in postwar Europe had been waged against individual nations—Berlin in 1953, Budapest in 1956, Prague in 1968, and Poland in 1981 being the cases in point. It was the Warsaw Pact forces’ constant readiness for war, rather than the stockpiling of weapons, that threatened peace in Europe. Kuroń also asserted that the Soviet Union was the sole beneficiary of disarmament agreements. In practice, these agreements were binding only upon the West, where democratic procedures provided for the oversight of compliance with these treaties and made circumvention difficult. In the East, where armaments expenditures were classified information, no public supervision was in place to force the rulers to abide by these covenants.

Under the circumstances, do we need disarmament at all? Kuroń asked. In the West the arms race leads to a waste of strength and resources; by increasing the clout of military sector companies, it carries the risk of restriction of democracy; the growth of power and significance of the United States could jeopardize the sovereignty of the West European states. For the East, the arms race means the lowering of living standards, which could trigger social explosions—but “the Soviet leadership and the ruling elites in the satellite countries will have enough strength to suppress such outburst for a long time yet.”<sup>6</sup> Kuroń points to a paradox: so far, disarmament, which is to Poland’s advantage, has invariably turned into a success of the USSR, thus strengthening Soviet preponderance within the camp.<sup>7</sup>

Kuroń argues that it is in Poland’s best interests that the arms race be discontinued through the neutralization and demilitarization of Central Europe. The two German states and Poland should be excluded from the military blocs and no foreign military bases should be permitted on their territories. They would form a zone separating the military blocs, one in which the right to self-determination and freedom to choose a system would be observed. Once demilitarized and posing no threat for any country, Germany could reunify. Kuroń admits that this program is unrealistic for the time being, but he insists it could become viable if espoused by social movements in the East and in the West.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> J. Kuroń, “Jałta i co teraz?” *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, 14 March 1985, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*. Joanne Landy referred to Jacek Kuroń’s proposals in *The New York Times*. See J. Landy, “A New Goal for the Peace Movement,” *The New York Times*, 25 December 1988.

This concept featured Poland as a part of a buffer zone between the East and the West—a position certainly preferable to remaining in the USSR’s influence zone, yet much worse than the one Poland actually gained after 1989.<sup>9</sup> Even so, Kuroń’s program appeared very radical to some opposition activists. Tadeusz Mazowiecki championed “predictability”—which meant recognizing, at least in part, the interests of the Polish United Workers Party (PZPR).<sup>10</sup>

The “Prague Appeal” of Charter 77 initiated cooperation between opposition communities in the bloc countries and Western peace movements. This resulted in the adoption of a “Helsinki Memorandum,” a document presented on 3 November 1986, on the eve of the opening of a CSCE review meeting, at a press conference of the European Network for East-West Dialogue by Johano Strasser, writer and a member of the Program Commission of the German Social-Democratic Party. The signatories pronounced the CSCE Final Act, which had confirmed the territorial *status quo* and linked peace and security with freedom and human rights, a possible basis for the unification of Europe. The division of the continent into two blocs could be overcome through giving Europe a constitution that would guarantee the full observance of the principles enshrined in the Helsinki Accords. Peace and security could be ensured through détente and cooperation, while the establishment of direct contacts between societies on both sides of the Iron Curtain would help break up the Cold War pattern of international relations.

The Memorandum also referred to the solution of the German issue as an important element of a program to overcome the division of the continent. The

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<sup>9</sup> Kuroń renounced this proposal in 1988. He declared: “As things are, the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Europe will be tantamount to relinquishing Europe to the Soviets.” Jacek Kuroń and Janusz Onyszkiewicz’s interview for Lynne Jones, Joanne Landy and Mark Salter, Lund, Sweden, 2 June 1988, transcript in this author’s possession, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Mazowiecki wrote that “great and genuine solutions require, also on our side, the presence of a factor that could be termed predictability. A situation when the opposition thought loses from sight the prospect of coexistence will neither prepare this predictability, nor will it bring a chance for change.” TM [Tadeusz Mazowiecki] “Opozycja i dzień dzisiejszy” *Dwadzieścia Jeden*, 1986, no. 1, p. 95. Referring to Kuroń’s concept, one historian stated authoritatively: “None of Lech Wałęsa’s closest co-workers (among whom the leader of the former KOR community was not counted at the time) permitted themselves such far-fetched concepts. Anxious to project its image as a moderate force, Solidarity did not intend to venture into the area of international politics and East-West confrontation in the name of the predictability Mazowiecki advocated.” J. Skórzyński, *Rewolucja okrągłego stołu*, Kraków, 2009, p. 37. In my opinion, situating Kuroń outside—and Mazowiecki inside—the mainstream of “Solidarity” is debatable, and so is attributing to Solidarity a reluctance to address international policy issues.

European nations should be free to shape their existence in accordance with the principle of self-determination and to resolve political and social problems in a democratic way. It also called for the reduction—to be followed by a complete withdrawal—of foreign forces and weapons in the territories of all European states, for the liquidation of foreign military bases, for the disbanding of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and for the termination of military treaties entered into by the CSCE states. A peaceful Europe should be built on the basis of full respect for the right to self-determination and of the observance of the principles set forth in the Helsinki Accords and guaranteed by international law.<sup>11</sup>

The Freedom and Peace Movement, which had been involved, on the Polish side, in the drawing up of the Memorandum, pointed out that while the resumption in the second half of the 1980s of disarmament negotiations between the United States and the USSR offered a chance for the reduction of nuclear potentials, societies, paradoxically, had come to fear the reduction of missiles—either because they feared that the balance of power would be undermined, and so would the security of Western Europe, or because arms reduction had come to be perceived as a value in its own right and the *status quo* in Central and Eastern Europe would be reinforced without a change of the political system.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> “Giving Real Life to the Helsinki Accord: A Memorandum Drawn Up in Common by Independent Groups and Individuals in Eastern and Western Europe,” European Network for East-West Dialogue, November 1996. In Polish, see “Memorandum ‘Tchnąć prawdziwe życie w porozumienia helsińskie,’” in: *Apel Praski. Memorandum...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 8–22. It took a year to agree the final text. Freedom and Peace Movement activists were actively involved in this project, in particular their representative in the West, Jan Minkiewicz. The signatories of the memorandum included, besides Western politicians and peace movements representatives, opposition activists from Central European countries, including: from the GDR—Barbel Bohley, Wolfgang Templin and Ludwig Mehlhorn from the Peace and Human Rights initiative; from Hungary—Miklos Haraszti, Andreas Hegedus, Janos Kis, Gyeorgy Konrad and Laszlo Rajk; from Yugoslavia—Marco Hren and Tomas Mastnak from the Ljubljana Movement for a Culture of Peace, Ivan Jankovic from the Movement for the Protection of Thought, and Bishop Vekoslav Grmic; from Czechoslovakia—Václav Benda, Jiří Hájek, Father Václav Malý, Jiří Ruml, Jaroslav Sabata, Peter Uhl from Charter 77; from the Soviet Union—the Confidence-Building Group; from Poland—Władysław Bartoszewski, Jacek Czaputowicz, Jan Józef Lipski, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Jan Maria Rokita, Zofia Romaszewska, Zbigniew Romaszewski, Dawid Warszawski and the Civic Defense Committee (KOS), the Helsinki Committee, Solidarity Inter-factory Workers’ Committee, the Independent Education Group, the editorial boards of underground publications *Robotnik* and *CDN – Głos Wolnego Robotnika*.

<sup>12</sup> J. Czaputowicz, “Wolność i pokój są nierozdzielne,” *Czas Przyszły*, 1987, no. 1, p. 13. See also: *Wolność i Pokój (WiP): Documents of Poland’s “Freedom and Peace” Movement*, A World Without War Council Publication, Seattle, WA, 1989.

In the political discourse with the Western partners it was argued that technical disarmament alone—focused on the quantities of weapons, withdrawal schedules, control regimes and the like, but lacking the co-participation and co-responsibility of the societies—would not suffice. Indeed, it would petrify the division into opposed political blocs rather than eliminate the ultimate threat to peace. It was political disarmament that needed to be worked towards, one that would remove the causes of the threat to peace rather than deal with the effects alone. In this sense, arms reductions were merely a step on the road to creating enduring foundations for peace: freedom, democracy, human rights and international cooperation. Political disarmament, which required changes both on the international arena and within the different states, should include the withdrawal of foreign forces to their home territories, the disbanding of both military pacts—the Warsaw Pact and NATO, and the integration and unification of the divided Europe. This position, expressed in mass media all over the world, was bringing pressure on the authorities and on the conciliatory-minded part of the opposition.<sup>13</sup>

An important question was whether it was the internal situation that was prompting Mikhail Gorbachev to advance ever new peace initiatives on international forums, or whether the reverse obtained and his domestic reforms were a result of international determinants. Whichever the case, Gorbachev's "peace offensive" was influencing the international policies of the other states in the bloc, a process to which Poland contributed in the form of what is known as the "Jaruzelski plan."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 14. See also "The Wave of the Future? Interview with Jacek Czaputowicz," *Newsweek*, 15 August 1988, p. 48. Daniel Passent referred to this interview in *Polityka*. "The Central and East European states are a system of communicating vessels. One of the younger opposition activists, Jacek Czaputowicz (Freedom and Peace Movement), said in an interview for the *Newsweek* magazine (15 August) that one of the goals of his movement was to bring about the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Poland. 'But do not indulge ourselves. It will require strong public pressure, and it is not something I would expect within a few months. But it is a realistic objective in the long term. The challenge for my generation is to overcome the post-Yalta division of the Continent.'" From there, Passent went on to state that "such words, published in a major American magazine, cannot possibly pass unnoticed in the capitals of the neighboring states and they have been read in the context of developments in Poland. I believe that in the long run the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Poland (and of American forces from the FRG) would be a more realistic proposition had socialism in Poland been more stable." D. Passent, "Próba sił," *Polityka*, 27 August 1988, p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> J. Czaputowicz, "Wolność i pokój są nierozdzielne," *op. cit.*, pp. 9–10.

The Freedom and Peace Movement insisted that the changes underway in the USSR were serious and should be taken advantage of to improve Poland's position. The Polish authorities' reluctance to step out of the "Gorbachev line" was rendering them vulnerable to pressure from the public. Poland's misfortune was that this vulnerability did not coincide with the peak of the Polish society's activity, which had occurred early in the martial law period. At that time the authorities had responded by adopting an unyielding stance, but now that society was becoming weary and resigned, the rulers were more inclined to flexibility and opportunities were arising for a number of demands to be pushed through and for the opposition to influence political developments. Yet the skeptical and mistrustful reception of Gorbachev's reforms by a majority of the Polish opposition and the Polish public provided a rationale for a passive attitude that saw the preservation of the ideals of August [1980], publishing and self-education as the only practicable forms of opposition activity. This was happening amidst disbelief in the purposefulness of more serious opposition work and the lack of aspirations to voice bolder demands loud and clear.<sup>15</sup>

The Cracow chapter of the Freedom and Peace Movement went from theory to practice by sending a letter to Mikhail Gorbachev, calling for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Poland, for disbanding the military blocs (the Warsaw Pact and NATO), and for action for the integration of Europe. "The sovereignty of the states that make up the Eastern bloc is an obvious fiction. The Warsaw Pact functions not as a genuine military bloc, but as a tool of the USSR's foreign policy,"<sup>16</sup> the letter declared. Arms reduction should go hand in hand with major political changes. The withdrawal of all forces—the USSR's from Poland and from the other states of the bloc, and U.S. from Western Europe—should be the first step, to be followed by the dismantling of the military blocs, i.e. of the Warsaw Pact and NATO, and, in the final step, by the unification and establishment of an autonomous Europe.

The Freedom and Peace Movement's concept differed from Jacek Kuroń's proposals. While Kuroń assumed that a demilitarized zone would be created in

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>16</sup> "List do M. Gorbaczowa, Ruch 'Wolność i Pokój,' Kraków, 10 kwietnia 1987 r.," *Biuletyn WiP*, nos. 7–8, Warszawa, 26 April 1987, p. 7. Dariusz Rupiński and Bogdan Klich had attempted to hand this letter to the Soviet Consul in Kraków on 10 April 1987, but the SB [security service] placed them in detention for 48 hours, CN103 A-Wire, May 29, 87, Two Freedom and Peace Activists Visit Soviet Consulate in Cracow, Warsaw, May 29, CND/UPI/DPA, KOS 1987, no. 11 (119).

Europe, the WiP went further, urging the withdrawal of foreign forces and the dissolution of the military blocs.

In an open letter to Gorbachev, the Charter 77 activists also demanded the withdrawal from Czechoslovakia of Soviet troops and missiles with nuclear warheads. Seen in a broader context of European security, they argued, this step would contribute to the success of the disarmament negotiations, just as it would convince the Czechs and the Slovaks that democracy, openness and respect of human rights were more than mere slogans in the USSR. The Charter 77 activists held that freedom, democracy and universal values were indivisible.<sup>17</sup>

### **Independent International Seminar in Warsaw**

The shape of future international relations was discussed at an international seminar “International Peace and the Helsinki Accords” held in Warsaw on 7–9 May 1987. The authorities had refused visas to many foreign participants and they had made a number of arrests among Freedom and Peace Movement activists, but the seminar did take place nevertheless.<sup>18</sup>

Entering into a polemic with the Western peace movement, Bronisław Gereemek stated that the post-World War II Western peace movement had supported the *Pax Sovietica*, engaged unilaterally in political conflicts, and had brought about the depreciation of the notion of peace in the public consciousness in a large part of Europe. To become open to the challenges of the future, a new peace movement must adopt strong moral benchmarks, he argued. First—in the international dimension—it should promote the freedom and sovereignty of nations rather than accept the imperial order. Second—in the internal dimension—it should not accept totalitarianism, but recognize instead the democratic internal order as a precondition for the peaceful existence and development of nations. Third—in the moral dimension—it should recognize respect for human and civil rights as the foundation underpinning the coexistence of people and nations. Geremek also argued that the ideological message of Solidarity, one

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<sup>17</sup> Signed by Charter 77 spokespersons Jan Litomisky, Libuse Silhanova, Josef Vohryzek and by Rudolf Battek, Václav Benda, Jiří Dienstbier, Jiří Hájek, Václav Havel, Ladislav Hejďánek, Marie Hromádková, Eva Kanturkova, Marie Rut Krizkova, Ladislav Lis, Václav Malý, Anna Marvanova, Jiří Ruml, Martin Palous, Radim Polous, Jana Sternova, Jaroslav Sabata and Jan Stern, *Bulletin of the European Network for East-West Dialogue*, Trial Number, September 1987, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> See *Seminarium pokojowe w Warszawie, 7–9 V 87. Dokumenty*, Warszawa, 1987.

which put first the elementary ethical and human rights, remained in full force and effect and was relevant for the future of Europe.<sup>19</sup>

Jan Rokita contested the philosophical foundations of pacifism. He argued, invoking Kant's conceptions, that the idea of peace required the implementation of two other ideas: of civil society, in which human rights and the freedom of the individual are guaranteed, and of a European federation, in which the nations' rights to freedom, cultural identity and development are guaranteed.<sup>20</sup>

Bogdan Klich argued that—important as the breakthrough in negotiations on the reduction of medium-range missiles was—agreement did not reduce the risk of the outbreak of a world war III. The USSR continued to enjoy conventional supremacy, but even if equilibrium was restored in this area, this would not eliminate the tension. As long as the two rival blocs existed, there would be small hope for a lasting *détente*. The proper course of action was to withdraw foreign forces in Europe to their home territories; to disband, at the same time, the Warsaw Pact and NATO; and to embark on political, economic and military integration of the continent subject to respect for the states' right to self-determination. Europe should act as a whole in its historical borders, embracing also the Baltic states, Ukraine and Belarus.<sup>21</sup>

The SPD's foreign policy spokesman Karsten Voigt sent a letter emphasizing that the CSCE Final Act could be the foundation for a future peaceful order in Europe. Armaments should be stopped; human rights should not be forgotten; and efforts should be made for an international order safeguarding that Europe will be united, the letter read.<sup>22</sup>

Differences between the Polish opposition and the German Green Party concerned their respective assessments of potential threats to European security and order. The Poles were against unilateral disarmament by Western states,

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<sup>19</sup> B. Geremek, "Pokój i prawa człowieka," *Czas Przyszły*, 1987, no. 1, pp. 4–8. Geremek spoke on the panel "Peace Has a Name: Giving Real Life to the Helsinki Accords" alongside Stefan Braktowski, Standfah Forswell, Aaron Epstain, Jacek Szymanderski, Dieter Esche and Zbigniew Romaszewski.

<sup>20</sup> J. M. Rokita, "Wolność i pokój, czyli jak zwiększyć szanse pokoju w Europie," *Czas Przyszły*, 1987, no. 1, pp. 16–25.

<sup>21</sup> B. Klich, "Na czym miałyby polegać nowy etap polityki odprężeniowej?" a conference paper for a WiP international conference in May 1987, a duplicate in this author's possession.

<sup>22</sup> *Seminarium pokojowe w Warszawie 7–9 V 87. Dokumenty*, op. cit., p. 29. Gert Weisskirchen, deputy to the Bundestag, was the contact person for liaison with the SPD.

construing differently the essence of Soviet totalitarianism and perceiving no threats to Poland's security from NATO.<sup>23</sup>

The seminar marked a breakthrough in the work methods of the Central European opposition. Previously, opposition activists had liaised mostly through people resident in the West. Janos Kiss, who had been refused a passport, wrote to the seminar members: "The distances between Paris and Warsaw, or between Vienna and Budapest have shrunk indeed, but that between Warsaw and Budapest has not."<sup>24</sup> This seemingly paradox statement highlighted the fact that contacts between the two parts of the divided Europe were easier than those among the societies living in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Warsaw seminar met with the interest of the global media. Jackson Diehl pronounced it, in *The Washington Post*, the first conference of that type to have been successfully held in the communist bloc. He quoted Janet Fleischman of the New York Helsinki Watch, who hailed the convening and bringing the conference to conclusion in the center of Warsaw as a remarkable success. Diehl reminded his readers that the government in Warsaw had called the seminar an international-scale provocation bound to sour the climate before John Paul II's visit to Poland scheduled for the following month.<sup>25</sup> Michael Kaufman reported in *The New York Times* that at the seminar Poles with Solidarity affiliations had challenged Western proponents of disarmament. The European peace movement was more mature than its American counterpart, as evidenced by the fact that rather than focus on missiles and weapons alone, it also emphasized the need for institutional guarantees of freedom and human rights as a condition for enduring peace.<sup>26</sup>

The timing of the seminar was particularly awkward for the authorities: on the eve of a Vienna CSCE meeting, where Minister of Foreign Affairs Marian

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<sup>23</sup> A joint declaration by the Freedom and Peace Movement and the German Green Party reads: "As a result of different circumstances and historical experiences there are certain differences of view between us. We differ, for instance, in our analyses of the nature of the Western military alliance and the threat it poses to the Poles; on the opportunities and likely consequences of unilateral disarmament; on the characteristics of Soviet totalitarianism." Yet these differences did not render cooperation impossible, particularly after the Green Party had embraced a principle of fundamental importance for the Poles: observance of human rights. "A joint declaration of members of Die Grünen and of the Freedom and Peace Movement in Kraków, Wrocław, and Warsaw, April 86," in: "*WiP*" a *Zieloni*, Warszawa, 1987, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> J. Kis, "List do Warszawy. Czy możemy mieć wspólny program," *Czas Przyszły*, 1987, no. 1, p. 77. The seminar was attended by Jiří Vančura of Charter 77, who succeeded in getting into Poland via the GDR, Jan Kavan, Charter 77's representative in the West, and Tomas Mastnak from Ljubljana. The opposition movements from other countries sent in their position statements.

<sup>25</sup> J. Diehl, "Poles Host East-West Peace Rally," *The Washington Post*, 11 May 1987.

<sup>26</sup> M. T. Kaufman, "Rights Conference Stirs Warsaw's Ire," *The New York Times*, 14 May 1987.

Orzechowski was to unveil the “Jaruzelski plan.”<sup>27</sup> The organizers of the seminar sustained administrative harassment and a propaganda attack. Government spokesman Jerzy Urban said at a press conference on 12 May 1987: “Wojciech Jaruzelski presented in his address to the PRON [Patriotic Movement for National Rebirth] Congress a new plan to dilute military resources in a broadly construed Central Europe. This is a momentous regional concept aligned to Soviet proposals on global nuclear disarmament and on the reduction of military potentials. Yet Freedom and Peace is promoting a very different project: unilateral disarmament in the name of weakening the socialist states. This makes it not a peace movement, but a movement that—objectively speaking—works for those forces that have been boycotting the numerous peaceful initiatives of the socialist countries.”<sup>28</sup>

The Warsaw seminar inspired opposition movements in other states in the region to follow suit. In Budapest, Hungarian opposition activists, including Miklos Haraszti, György Konrad, Janos Kiss, Gabor Demszky, Ferenc Koseg, and Ferenc Myslivetz, organized on 21 November 1987 a peace seminar similar to the Warsaw event. Discussions were held on the prospects of the Gorbachev reforms, on chances for establishing an all-European democratic movement, and on the right to conscientious objection to military service. In a joint statement the participants undertook to work together for disarmament and to “initiate the process of withdrawal of foreign troops and [military] bases from Europe, in the East and West alike, and of overcoming the division of Europe and the world into blocs. This process will expedite the establishment of a democratic, independent and peaceful Europe.”<sup>29</sup>

In Moscow, Lev Timofeyev of the “*Glasnost*” press club organized on 10–16 December 1987 a seminar on the observance of human rights. The

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<sup>27</sup> Jaruzelski unveiled his plan at the second PRON Congress on 8 May 1987. The plan provided for a phased-in withdrawal of tactical and operational nuclear weapons and conventional weapons, for the conversion of military doctrines into strictly defensive, and for the implementation of confidence-building and verification measures. The proposal concerned nine states: the GDR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the FRG, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and, in a more remote future, the entire Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. On approval by the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact Member States on 28–29 May in Berlin, the plan became a part of a joint disarmament plan.

<sup>28</sup> “Konferencja prasowa dla dziennikarzy zagranicznych” (a stenographic transcript), *Rzeczpospolita*, 18 May 1987, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> Present at the seminar were French philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis, Bundestag members Gert Weisskirchen (SPD) and Milan Horacek and Helmut Lippelt (the Green Party), Italian MP Luciano Negri, and opposition activists: Michael Dymáček (Charter 77), Tomas Mastnak from Ljubljana, Agrid Redke from the GDR, and Jacek Czaputowicz from Poland. See D. Lewis, “East, West Peace Blocs Hold Budapest Meeting,” *The Washington Post*, 22 November 1986; “Seminarium Pokojowe w Budapeszcie, 21–22 listopada 1987,” *Czas Przyszły*, 1988, no. 2, pp. 51–53.

participants, numbering between 300 and 400, discussed in eight thematic groups the freedom of the press, freedom of religion, people-to-people contacts, international trust, disarmament, and nationalities issues.<sup>30</sup> In Prague, the Czechoslovak police prevented twice, on 17–19 June and 11–13 November 1988, the holding of a similar seminar.<sup>31</sup>

A human rights conference organized by the Freedom and Peace Movement and Solidarity's rule of law commission in Cracow on 25–28 August 1988 had the broadest international scope. It was attended by about 1,000 participants, including 400 from outside Poland.<sup>32</sup> A part of the conference was devoted to foreign policy and international relations. A resolution "on the processes of European integration" demanded that the societies of Central and Eastern Europe be given the opportunity to appoint their observers in the European Parliament—an arrangement meant to improve Western societies' awareness of the problems behind the Iron Curtain and the Eastern societies' understanding of the work of the European Parliament. The observers, declared the resolution, should be elected in free democratic elections and, failing this, they should represent independent social movements. Members of national parliaments, not having been elected democratically, would be ineligible. "The overcoming of the post-Yalta division and the unification of Europe" should be the common goal.<sup>33</sup>

A concrete proposal was also put forward: to form in the European Parliament a group to represent Solidarity and the human rights movements in Central and Eastern Europe. Several weeks later such a group was indeed

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<sup>30</sup> The authorities had made it impossible for the seminar to be held in rented premises, but it took place nevertheless, in private apartments. Present were representatives from all over the USSR, including well-known dissidents Larisa Bogoraz and Father Gleb Yakunin. Most of the invited foreign guests, including Freedom and Peace Movement activists, had been prevented from arriving, but Jan Urban of Charter 77 was there, as were members of the U.S. and Swedish Helsinki Committees. For more see M. Henderson, "Report on the Independent Human Rights Seminar in Moscow in December 1987," *Bulletin of the European Network for East-West Dialogue*, 1988, nos. 1–2, pp. 21–27; *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, 16 December 1987, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> J. Hempfling, J. Landy, "Prague: The Tale of Two Seminars," *Peace & Democracy News*, Winter 1988–1989, vol. 3, no. 2, p. 11.

<sup>32</sup> *Międzynarodowa Konferencja Praw Człowieka, Kraków–Mistrzejowice, 25–28 sierpnia 1988 r.*, [Kraków, 1989], p. 437.

<sup>33</sup> "Uchwała nr 6 w sprawie procesów integracji Europy," *Międzynarodowa Konferencja Praw Człowieka, Kraków–Mistrzejowice, op. cit.*, pp. 405–406.

formed, consisting of European Parliament members representing seven states and different political parties.<sup>34</sup>

All in all, documents drawn up by Central and Eastern European opposition activists portrayed a future Europe as a space where human and civil rights—in particular the right to freedom of opinion, assembly and association, which were regarded as prerequisites for unconstrained development of societies and of international stability—would be observed. It was to be a Europe of sovereign and democratic states, no longer divided into opposing blocs; an integrated Europe uniting the two parts of the divided continent. Under this vision, Poland did not acknowledge the USSR's special interests, nor was it permanently linked with the East. It was neither one of the region's states keeping at an equal distance from the East and the West, nor a part of a neutralized and demilitarized Central European buffer zone between the East and the West. This vision featured Poland as a part of the Western civilization organically connected therewith.

### **Foreign Policy in the Civic Committee's Work**

Foreign policy emphases were different for the circle centered around Solidarity chairman's advisors Bronisław Geremek and Tadeusz Mazowiecki. The differences concerned not so much the ultimate aim, which was similar, as the assessments of its viability and ways to attain it. A report prepared in this circle, "Poland Five Years after August," was presented to the public by Lech Walesa on 30 August 1985. It played an important role in the crystallization of the community which subsequently formed the Civic Committee, but it failed to arouse the interest of the authorities or to spark a debate within the opposition.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> The group comprised: Margaret Daly, James Moorhouse, John Tomlinson, John David Taylor, Carole Tongue from the U.K.; Paul Staes from Belgium; Victor Manuel Arbeloa Muru, Jose Coderch Planas, Carmen Diez de Rivera, Concepcio Ferrer i Casals, Carmen Llorca Villaplana from Spain; Jean-Pierre Abelin, Bernard Antony, Alain Bombard, Alfred Coste-Floret, Robert Delorozoy, Andre-Georges Fourcans, Martine Lehideux, Jacqueline Thome-Patenotre, Pierre Pfimlin, Michel Poniatowski from France; Otto Habsburg, Hans-Joachim Seeler, Jakob von Uexkull from Germany; Rui Amaral from Portugal; Ettore Adenna, Giovanni Bersani, Margherita Boniver, Antonio Buttafuoco, Antonio Cantalamessa, Roberto Ciccimessere, Francesco Compasso, Giovanni Negri, Marco Panella, Jiri Pelican, Vera Squarzialupi, Alberto Tridente i Cilvio Vitale from Italy. See "Międzynarodowa Konferencja Praw Człowieka w Krakowie," *Czas Przyszły*, 1989, nos. 3–4, p. 43.

<sup>35</sup> Jan Skórzyński holds that "with Walesa's stamp of approval bestowed on it, the report was a proposal of much higher specific gravity than the voices of individual activists or writers. Yet it shared their lot—the authorities passed it over in silence." J. Skórzyński, *Rewolucja Okrągłego Stołu*, Kraków, 2009, p. 38. Andrzej Friszke wrote: "The report did not trigger in the

In a section addressing the international determinants, the report held that Poland's situation was determined by the policy of the USSR and by the global power pattern. *Raison d'état* required that any thrust for national independence should take into account the current geopolitical pattern. The risk of Soviet intervention marked the perimeters of political activities of the opposition, which, on the one hand, could not allow vital Soviet interests to be threatened and, on the other hand, should be organizing the Poles and building sustained resistance—so that an intervention, should it come, would be costly. Efforts should be made to preserve the Polish uniqueness, the separateness of Central Europe as a civilizational community and Poland's position as a bridge between the East and the West.<sup>36</sup>

Following the amnesty for political prisoners in September 1986, repression against the opposition eased.<sup>37</sup> Between no successes in underground activity and the reforms launched by Gorbachev in the USSR, the opposition communities opted for open activity.<sup>38</sup> September 1986 saw the establishment of an Interim Council of Solidarity, followed by the formation of the National Executive Committee in October 1987.<sup>39</sup> A group of opposition-minded intellectuals and Lech Wałęsa called on the United States to lift the economic sanctions imposed on Poland on the imposition of martial law. That gesture

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underground Solidarity the kind of response the authorities had feared. Only academic communities and the circles of union advisors were aware of it and no genuinely vigorous debate in the underground press followed." A. Friszke, "Komitet Obywatelski. Geneza i historia," in: *Komitet Obywatelski przy Przewodniczącym NSZZ „Solidarność” Lechu Wałęsie. Stenogramy posiedzeń 1987–1989*, Warszawa, 2006, p. 17.

<sup>36</sup> *Polska 5 lat po sierpniu*, London, 1986, p. 353. See also A. Friszke, "Komitet Obywatelski. Geneza i historia," *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>37</sup> See "Propozycja w sprawie rozszerzenia zakresu ustawy amnestyjnej z 17 lipca 1986 r.," in: A. Dudek, A. Friszke (eds.), *Polska 1986–1989; koniec systemu. Dokumenty*, vol. 3, Warszawa, 2002, pp. 13–19.

<sup>38</sup> Jacek Kuroń presented a critical assessment of underground activity, arguing that in the new situation the focus should have been on the official and semi-official spheres. Solidarity had no successes to show, although sometimes "pressures did work indeed. For instance, the WiP succeeded several times ...." (J. Kuroń, *Krajobraz po bitwie*, September 1987). An underground periodical *Dwadzieścia Jeden* wrote: "The same test of overt activity that Solidarity has undertaken on a broader scale after the September amnesty (for earlier initiatives to that end must not be forgotten), the Freedom and Peace Movement has been undergoing successfully from its inception," "Wolność i Pokój," *Dwadzieścia Jeden*, 1987, no. 3, p. 124.

<sup>39</sup> The Interim Council comprised Bogdan Borusewicz, Zbigniew Bujak, Władysław Frasyniuk, Tadeusz Jędynak, Bohdan Lis, Jerzy Pałubicki and Józef Pinor; the National Executive Committee [KKW] consisted of Lech Wałęsa, Zbigniew Bujak, Władysław Frasyniuk, Bohdan Lis, Jerzy Pałubicki, Jerzy Dłużniewski, Stefan Jurczak, Andrzej Milczanowski, and Stanisław Węglarz; later representatives of other regions joined in.

towards the authorities, meant to demonstrate the opposition's predictability in foreign policy matters, eventually contributed to improving the climate and to bringing the Jaruzelski team, gradually, out of international isolation.<sup>40</sup>

On 31 May 1987, prior to John Paul II's visit to Poland, about 60 opposition activists and academics (who subsequently were to become the core of Solidarity chairman's Civic Committee) met at the invitation of Lech Wałęsa. "The Sixty" issued a letter, emphasizing that the Poles had the right to independence and state sovereignty construed as the freedom to shape their internal order in conditions of freedom from external interference and of equality with other states. They demanded the fulfillment of human rights and of the principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations and in the CSCE Final Act.<sup>41</sup>

Foreign policy figured only marginally in the debates of "the Sixty." Requests for the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the territory of Poland, though reflecting the true aspirations of Polish society, seemed too radical for constructive opposition groups. Nevertheless, they were eventually articulated and introduced into public discourse—a move which shifted the border between the possible and the impossible in foreign policy and contributed to the gradual widening of the scope of conceivable political activity options.<sup>42</sup> Yet Ryszard Bugaj was right when he argued in 1988

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<sup>40</sup> Signed on 10 October 1986 by Stefan Bratkowski, Bronisław Geremek, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Stanisław Stomma, Klemens Szaniawski, Jan Józef Szczepański, Jerzy Turowicz, Andrzej Wielowiejski and Lech Wałęsa.

<sup>41</sup> "1987 maj 31, Warszawa – Oświadczenie grona osób, zebranych na zaproszenie Lecha Wałęsy, w którym sformułowano podstawowe cele opozycji w Polsce" (known as the 63 Letter)," in: *Komitet Obywatelski przy Przewodniczącym NSZZ „Solidarność” Lechu Wałęsie, op. cit.*, pp. 327–328.

<sup>42</sup> At a meeting of "the Sixty" on 7 November 1987 Jacek Czaputowicz said: "As I see it, in the second half of the 1980s the situation has changed fundamentally. First, the disarmament talks and the new policy of [Mikhail] Gorbachev offer a chance to raise this issue. Also, the likelihood of an intervention by the USSR, by the Red Army, in Poland, is close to nil. In addition, given the Jaruzelski team's concern for their image in the West, there are chances for certain concessions.... Here are some requests that come forcibly to mind: expenditure on maintaining the armed forces to be reduced. Clearly, the current level of military spending, which puts a heavy burden on the society, is unwarranted in the present international situation. The Warsaw Pact to be dissolved, which is as a rather long-term proposition. Soviet forces to be withdrawn from the territory of Poland. It is important to note that the liquidation of foreign military bases in Poland should also be demanded. Shocking as this demand may appear, in seems that in the current situation of dialogue, disarmament and accord, it can be made without fear that society might thereby come to danger." *Komitet Obywatelski przy Przewodniczącym NSZZ „Solidarność” Lechu Wałęsie, op. cit.*, pp. 110, 112.

that “moderate opposition communities in Poland generally accept that, by and large, matters concerning the military-repressive sector lie in the province of the communist party leadership. It is understood that this shows a realistic attitude that reckons with the geopolitical realities.”<sup>43</sup>

A seminar “Poland in Europe” led by Zygmunt Skórzyński in the Holy Trinity Church in the Powiśle district of Warsaw contributed importantly to the shaping of a program for Poland’s foreign policy. Throughout 1986–1989, over 80 debating sessions on Poland’s foreign policy were held,<sup>44</sup> addressing such issues of key importance for Poland’s future foreign policy as relations with the Germans, relations with the USSR or Central European problems. The results were published in separate brochures and in independent press.<sup>45</sup>

In the course of these discussions, Bronisław Geremek emphasized that Poland felt community with Lithuania and Ukraine on the one hand, and with the Czech, Slovaks and Hungarians on the other, as a consequence of the common historical experience, a sense of exploitation and common interests. He insisted that both these directions needed to be taken into account as a program for future cooperation was developed.<sup>46</sup> However, the seminar participants decided that the Polish road westward led through Germany, whose unification

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<sup>43</sup> R. Bugaj, “Wydatki wojskowe w gospodarce PRL,” in: *Międzynarodowa Konferencja Praw Człowieka, Kraków–Mistrzejowice, op. cit.*, p. 337. However, out of concern for the image of the Polish Solidarity movement, which should not be indifferent to the situation in other parts of the world, the intellectuals and activists invited by Lech Wałęsa adopted, on the initiative of Adam Michnik, a resolution marking the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *coup d’état* in Chile, protesting against human rights violations by the military dictatorship and expressing solidarity with the victims of persecution and harassment. A. Friszke, “Komitet Obywatelski. Geneza i historia,” in: *Komitet Obywatelski przy Przewodniczącym NSZZ „Solidarność” Lechu Wałęsie, op. cit.*, pp. 42–43. Therein the list of the 40 signatories.

<sup>44</sup> The participants included Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Jan Olszewski, Bronisław Geremek, Adam Strzembosz, Andrzej Wielowieyski, Kazimierz Dziewanowski, Stefan Bratkowski and Artur Hajnicz.

<sup>45</sup> See, for instance, “*Europa Środkowa.*” *Konwersatorium Polska w Europie, kościół św. Trójcy w Warszawie*, Warszawa, 1988. This brochure contains a text by Artur Hajnicz, “Stosunki polsko-niemieckie jako element polskiej sytuacji geopolitycznej” based on three debating sessions held in May and June 1986, contributions to the debate by Stefan Bratkowski, Artur Hajnicz, Kazimierz Dziewanowski, Wojciech Lamentowicz, Andrzej Krasicki and Ryszard Turski, and another text by Arthur Hajnicz, “Pakt Ribbentrop–Mołotow.”

<sup>46</sup> B. Geremek, “Wypowiedź w dyskusji na konwersatorium ‘Polska w Europie,’” *Dwadzieścia Jeden*, 1988, no. 7, p. 64.

was relevant, morally justified and to Poland's advantage. The issue of the Oder-Neisse border was considered closed.<sup>47</sup>

### Opposition Representatives' Meetings with Western Leaders

The authorities were anxious to overcome their international isolation. In the early 1980s, Jaruzelski paid visits only to Soviet bloc states, and in 1985 India and the Maghreb states were added to his agenda. As regards contacts with the Western states, he went on a working visit to France, where he met with President François Mitterrand, but that event was accorded a pointedly low ceremony. Poland was visited in the second half of 1984 and in 1985 by the prime ministers of Greece and Italy, Andreas Papandreu and Bettino Craxi respectively, and by the foreign ministers of Germany (Hans-Dietrich Genscher), Italy (Giulio Andreotti) and Japan (Shintaso Abe).<sup>48</sup> Jaruzelski's visit to Italy and the Vatican, on 12–14 January 1987, helped to overcome the boycott.

The price for emerging from international isolation was to permit Western politicians visiting Poland to meet with opposition workers. Practice in this respect was evolving gradually. In December 1985, the leader of the German SPD, Willy Brandt, visiting Poland on the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Poland-FRG treaty, declined to join Lech Wałęsa (who was at the time under a prosecutor's order forbidding him from leaving Gdańsk) in the laying of a wreath at the monument to killed shipyard workers in Gdańsk.<sup>49</sup> The Regional Executive Committee of Solidarity's Mazowsze chapter responded by

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<sup>47</sup> A. Hajnicz, *Ze sobą czy przeciw sobie. Polska Niemcy 1989–1992*, Warszawa, 1996, p. 41. After the 1989 breakthrough, the community centered around the "Poland in Europe" seminar formed a Center for International Studies of the Senate of the Republic of Poland to provide the democratically-elected upper house with on-substance support on foreign policy matters. In March 1990, a "Poland in Europe" Foundation was established by Andrzej Ajnenkiel, Halina Bortnowska, Stefan Bratkowski, Jacek Czaputowicz, Paweł Czartoryski, Kazimierz Dziewanowski, Artur Hajnicz, Zygmunt Skórzyński, Franciszek Sobieski, and Janusz Ziółkowski. See. Z. Skórzyński, "Konwersatorium i Fundacja 'Polska w Europie,'" *Polska w Europie*, no. 2, Warszawa, May 1990, pp. 98–100.

<sup>48</sup> A. Paczkowski, "Model wizyt zachodnich polityków," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, 2002, vol. 2, no. 3 (7), pp. 223–224.

<sup>49</sup> "Willy Brandt w Warszawie," *Dwadzieścia Jeden*, May 1986, no. 1, p. 130. Brandt met with representatives of the Catholic Intelligentsia Club: Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Stanisław Stomma, Andrzej Świącicki and Krzysztof Śliwiński. "Spotkanie przedstawicieli środowisk niezależnych z Willy Brandtem oraz członkami delegacji SPD w Warszawie," *Dwadzieścia Jeden*, May 1986, no. 1, pp. 135–139.

issuing an open letter that declared that the SPD's policy of disregard for Polish society's aspirations was giving rise to mistrust.<sup>50</sup>

A breakthrough came with a meeting between U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead and Lech Wałęsa in January 1987 in Gdańsk.<sup>51</sup> It was followed by meetings between Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky and a number of diplomacy chiefs—Hans van den Broek of the Netherlands, France's Jean-Bernard Raimond, Canada's Joe Clerck, Australia's Bill Hayden and Belgium's Leo Tindemans—with the Solidarity chairman or other representatives of the opposition. Lech Wałęsa's meetings with U.S. Vice President George Bush and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had a broad resonance.<sup>52</sup> On these occasions opposition activists presented their appraisals of the situation in Poland and solicited support .

Solidarity representatives' efforts to secure meetings with Western politicians were supported by the headquarters of those trade unions to which Solidarity was affiliated, notably the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the World Confederation of Labor.<sup>53</sup> Amnesty International and human rights organizations played a similar role *vis-à-vis* the Freedom and Peace Movement.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> The letter also declared that this policy “gives an impression that the differences between the revisionists' line, hostile to Poland and questioning our right to the Western Territories, and the attitudes of social democratic politicians are merely tactical and that both are in fact different varieties of the same German nationalism.” “List otwarty RKW ‘S’ Mazowsze do Willy Brandta, Warszawa, 27 XI 1985,” *Dwadzieścia Jeden*, May 1986, no. 1, pp. 132–133. Signatories: Konrad Bieliński, Zbigniew Bujak, Wiktor Kulerski, Jan Lityński.

<sup>51</sup> When Whitehead suggested to Jaruzelski that Lech Wałęsa and the Solidarity union be included in a national agreement for reforms, he met with a vehement reaction. Jaruzelski declared that Wałęsa and Solidarity were West-created myths in a foreign power's pay, which excluded them from the national agreement. A transcript of Council of State Chairman Wojciech Jaruzelski's conversation with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John C. Whitehead in: W. Borodziej, A. Garlicki (eds.), *Okragły Stół. Dokumenty i materiały*, vol. 1, Szczecin–Warszawa, 2004, pp. 143–146.

<sup>52</sup> Mieczysław Rakowski said in a conversation with Gorbachev: “Mrs. Thatcher will visit us on 3 November [1988]. She will go to Gdańsk and meet Wałęsa there; she is going to visit St. Brigid's church, that haven of the opposition. We have tried to dissuade her, but ... She must show that she cares for our opposition.” “1988 październik 21, Moskwa – Zapis rozmowy sekretarza generalnego KC KPZR Michaiła Gorbaczowa z premierem Mieczysławem F. Rakowskim,” in: *Zmierzch dyktatury. Polska lat 1986–1989 w świetle dokumentów*, vol. 1 (July 1986–May 1989), introduction, text selection and preparation by Antoni Dudek, Warszawa, 2009, pp. 337–338.

<sup>53</sup> K. Łabędź, *Spory wokół zagadnień programowych...*, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

<sup>54</sup> For example, Jacek Czaputowicz was invited in December 1988 by the German chapter of Amnesty International to meet German President Richard von Weizsäcker (the meeting did not take place, because the Polish authorities had denied Czaputowicz a passport).

It will be seen from a Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MSZ) memo of October 1987 that the authorities deplored the expansion of the circle of Western politicians willing to talk with the opposition on their visits to Poland.<sup>55</sup> The authorities attempted to prevent these meetings from being used for propaganda purposes. The Ministry's suggestion to include meetings with representatives of the Consultative Council of the chairman of the Council of Ministers (the office was held by Wojciech Jaruzelski) in the agendas of Western officials' visits, was turned down by Western states.<sup>56</sup>

The admission of meetings with the opposition and acceptance for what was termed a "three-component model of visits" were a prerequisite for the resumption of official government contacts and for the improvement of relations with the West. It was well understood that, should administrative constraints be put on meetings with the opposition, political losses would ensue in the form of Western states' reduced contacts with the Polish government.

The MSZ saw a number of arguments in favor of the policy of openness: the strengthening of Poland's position in East-West dialogue; the commencement of talks at the highest level and at the level of ministers of foreign affairs; the chance to further parliamentary and inter-party dialogue; and the bolstering of economic relations, including in the area of finance and lending. On the negative

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<sup>55</sup> The MSZ claimed that "there is a manifest tendency for the circle of these partners to expand and for the 'quality' of these contacts to improve; unlike earlier visits, when meetings were arranged with much the same group of interlocutors ([Bronisław] Geremek, [Janusz] Onyszkiewicz, [Zbigniew] Bujak), the way the latest two visits proceeded ([Leo] Tindeman's meeting with Freedom and Peace Movement's [Jacek] Czaputowicz, [Hans] Van den Broek's lunch with [Lech] Wałęsa invited for this purpose from Gdańsk) shows that the West desires to escalate and perpetuate the scenario of NATO officials' visits." "1987, [September], notatka Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych w sprawie wizyt zachodnich polityków w Polsce," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, 2002, vol. 2, no. 3 (7), pp. 227–228.

<sup>56</sup> The Council members included the chairman of the Warsaw branch of the Catholic Intelligentsia Club, Andrzej Świącicki, Professor Krzysztof Skubiszewski, Maciej Giertych and Counsellor Władysław Siła-Nowicki. According to Wojciech Jaruzelski, the Council was an important step on the road towards the Round Table and its members showed much courage in defying the opinions of the opposition community. Jaruzelski held that "it is easier to be courageous towards the enemy, while it is much more difficult to do so towards one's friends, who at that time were critical about this form of contact with the authorities." "Transcript of the Conversation between the President of PRL Wojciech Jaruzelski and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Eduard Szevardnadze, Warsaw, Belweder, 25 October 1989," *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs*, 2007, no. 2, p. 118. Bronisław Geremek in turn said years later: "For us, the Consultative Council was beyond the pale. We were distressed to see some people join it. Ourselves, we did not take it seriously, not for a moment.... A replay of the Front of National Unity, that's what it was." "Relacja B. Geremka dla A. Friszkego," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 27 July 2008, quoted after: J. Skórzyński, *Rewolucja Okrągłego Stołu*, op. cit., p. 58.

side, this policy was believed to strengthen the opposition and encourage its activity, increase the prestige of the oppositionists “liaising” with Western officials in their immediate environment and in broader occupational circles, and “to arouse in the opposition circles’ unrealistic aspirations and hopes for their effective role in Poland’s political life in the future.” There were also concerns that the West might attempt to coerce the PRL authorities to “recognize the opposition elites as partners in the political life of the country.”<sup>57</sup>

On the whole, however, the MSZ believed that the balance would be on the positive side and it shrugged off as small the risk of a political build-up the opposition might get from its meetings with Western leaders. It was believed that to discard this policy would mean jeopardizing inter-governmental dialogue and the credibility of Polish international initiatives, running the risk of stepped-up anti-Poland propaganda in the West, and defying the policy of Mikhail Gorbachev just as he had permitted Andrei Sakharov to return to Moscow from his exile in Gorky. The MSZ suggested, by way of response to the West’s activities, that meetings awkward for the hosts be organized during Polish officials’ visits in the West—for instance, with representatives of radical opposition, communist and regional parties, left-wing intellectuals, representatives of civil disobedience initiatives, environmentalists or peace movements.

A discussion on the MSZ memo, held on 19 October 1987 during a meeting of the PZPR Central Committee Secretariat, is illustrative of the authorities’ reasoning. Marian Orzechowski, a Politburo member and foreign minister, reported that during their visits to Poland, Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranicky and SPD leader Hans-Jochen Vogel had met with representatives of the opposition. These meetings were commented in the West as a sign of pluralism and stabilization, but what worried the West was the Polish public’s mediocre interest in these events. Orzechowski also noted that the American press had been disappointed with Vice President George Bush’s meetings with the Polish opposition.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> “1987, [September], notatka Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych w sprawie wizyt zachodnich polityków w Polsce,” *op. cit.*, pp. 230, 233.

<sup>58</sup> “1987, październik 19, fragment protokołu z posiedzenia Sekretariatu KC PZPR,” *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, 2002, vol. 2, no. 3 (7), p. 236. The American press reported that the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw had withdrawn an invitation for Jacek Czaputowicz to a meeting with the vice president. U.S. Embassy spokesman told Associated Press (Charles Gans’ dispatch of 26 September 1987) that the invitation had been issued and was withdrawn indeed, but he denied allegations that this was to avoid embarrassment for the government of the United States or for Mr. Bush. Jackson Diehl in turn claimed in *The Washington Post*, citing sources at the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, that the invitation had been withdrawn out of concern over the

Politburo member Józef Czyrek held that while meetings with the opposition were inevitable, efforts should be made to minimize their significance. In particular, he considered it advisable to discourage Western leaders on visits to Poland from placing wreaths on the grave of Father Jerzy Popiełuszko.<sup>59</sup> In a similar vein, the head of the PZPR CC International Department Ernest Kucza recommended including in the agendas of Polish officials' visits to Western countries meetings with representatives of peace movements with no affiliations to the World Peace Council.

Władysław Pożoga, undersecretary of state at the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MSW), predicted an intensification of meetings with "pacifist and environmentalist movements" (meaning, presumably, the Freedom and Peace Movement) which were "to be cast in the role of an independent social force." Pożoga urged firmer diplomatic measures, ranging from warning through retaliation, retorsion to refusal to receive a visit, and he wanted the programs of Polish officials' visits in the West to include elements awkward for the hosts—and to make the embassies responsible. Henryk Bednarski, member of the PZPR CC Secretariat, favored the discouraging of contacts with new actors, such as the Confederation for an Independent Poland and the Freedom and Peace Movement.<sup>60</sup>

Summing up the debate, Wojciech Jaruzelski expressed concern that visitors from other parts of the world might take up the formula of visits by NATO leaders, one which included meetings with representatives of the opposition. The pointlessness of meeting the opposition should be indicated already at the stage of preparations for the visit, he said, and where such contacts could not be avoided, their damaging impact should be minimized. Jaruzelski recommended

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strained relations between Czaputowicz and Wałęsa" (*The Washington Post*, 26 September 1987). This information was inaccurate; several weeks later Wałęsa invited Czaputowicz to join the group of his advisors known as "the Sixty."

<sup>59</sup> British Under Secretary of State Malcolm Rifkind was one of the first foreign officials placing a wreath on the grave of Father Jerzy Popiełuszko. Jerzy Urban, the government press spokesman, censured him for "acting as if he were in a British colony." Because of this attitude of the Polish authorities, a visit by German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher was cancelled in November 1984. The SPD leader Hans-Jochen Vogel, who had visited Poland earlier, "fully complied with the wishes of his hosts, challenging thereby the conduct of the minister of state at the Foreign Office, Malcolm Rifkind, who had laid a wreath on Father Jerzy Popiełuszko's tomb and had conferred with representatives of non-government circles." Justyn, "Kwestia niemiecka i kryzys polskiej polityki zagranicznej," *Krytyka*, 1985, nos. 19–20, p. 161.

<sup>60</sup> "1987, październik 19, fragment protokołu z posiedzenia Sekretariatu KC PZPR," *op. cit.*, pp. 236–237.

dividing the oppositionists into three categories according to their radicalism, with the first category to include Andrzej Rozpłochowski, Zbigniew Bujak, Jacek Czaputowicz, Adam Michnik, Leszek Moczulski and Jacek Kuroń, the second—Lech Wałęsa, Janusz Onyszkiewicz and Bronisław Geremek, and the third—representatives of the Episcopate.<sup>61</sup> High-ranking government officials would be expected to leave diplomatic receptions attended by “first-category” oppositionists.<sup>62</sup> Last but not least, Jaruzelski suggested drawing up a catalogue of issues embarrassing to the different countries, to be used for propaganda purposes during visits, as well as the development of a more aggressive formula of preventive and retaliatory measures to contain “the extent, significance and public appeal of meetings with the opposition.”<sup>63</sup>

### Moscow’s Position

The PZPR was under pressure from two sides, from the West and from the East. Moscow anticipated a shift towards neutrality in the European socialist states’ policies (“Finlandization”) and the phasing in of relations with Western states that would gradually provide a counterbalance to the USSR. Intent as the Soviet authorities were on preserving socialism, they did not propose to do so at any price or by any means. A document from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reads: “It is absolutely out of the question that we would use force, military force in particular, in relations with the socialist states, even in the most extreme situation....”<sup>64</sup> An armed intervention in a socialist state did not fit the logic of *perestroika*—indeed, it would have been mortally dangerous thereto. Short of foreign military intervention, nothing would justify it.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 238.

<sup>62</sup> A tactic the authorities were already employing. When an opposition activist appeared at a diplomatic reception, top officials left. See “Wywiad z Januszem Onyszkiewiczem,” *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, 25 February 1987.

<sup>63</sup> “1987, październik 19, fragment protokołu z posiedzenia Sekretariatu KC PZPR,” *op. cit.*, p. 239.

<sup>64</sup> A survey of the internal situation in European socialist countries prepared at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR in February 1989. “Procesy polityczne zachodzące w europejskich krajach socjalistycznych. Propozycje praktycznych posunięć,” in: *Polska 1986–1989: koniec systemu. Materiały międzynarodowej konferencji, Miedzeszyn, 21–23 października 1999*, vol. 3, *Dokumenty*, Warszawa, 2002, p. 231.

<sup>65</sup> A document prepared at the Institute for Socialist System Economy of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR reads: “A direct military intervention of the USSR on the side of conservative forces estranged from the nation will obviously spell the end of *perestroika* and our loss of the trust of the global community. It will not arrest the disintegration of the social-economic system in these countries, or stop mass protests that are capable of leading even to armed clashes.”

The Soviet authorities did not expect any state to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact. They assessed that Poland “will by no means resolve to quit the Warsaw Pact, as this would be contrary to its national geopolitical interests.”<sup>66</sup> Gorbachev’s announcement that some Soviet forces were to be withdrawn from the territories of socialist states was meant to undermine the force of this particular demand. Moreover, the Russians admitted the possibility of a single German state—a confederation—being created in a longer term provided international tensions were defused, both German states neutralized, and Gorbachev’s initiative to build “a single European home” acted upon.<sup>67</sup>

The Russians had no objections to the admission of the constructive opposition to public life and government—not even if this was to lead to the communists’ taking a back seat.<sup>68</sup> One can hardly deny the truth of opinions that “the CPSU was watching the situation in Warsaw fairly unperturbed..., Soviet observers accepting without reservations the nuclei of political pluralism and the shift from monopolistic dictatorship to ‘parliamentary coalition’ forms of government.”<sup>69</sup>

At the same time the Soviet authorities, fearing an erosion of communists’ power, proceeded to seek contacts with representatives of the moderate opposition and of the Catholic Church in Poland.<sup>70</sup> Some Polish activists were said to have found themselves in the ranks of the opposition through the PZPR’s errors. Dialogue with them was to further such Soviet foreign policy aims as good relations with the United States and Poland’s remaining in the Soviet influence zone. During his visit to Poland on 11–16 July 1987, Mikhail Gorbachev met in Warsaw’s Royal Castle with representatives of academic and cultural communities, among whom there were moderate opposition activists. On the other hand, in the autumn of 1988 the Polish authorities made it impossible for Adam Michnik to visit Moscow at the invitation of the Association of Soviet Filmmakers, a move received by the Russians as an

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“Przemiany w Europie Wschodniej i ich wpływ na ZSRR,” in: *Polska 1986–1989: koniec systemu...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 245–246.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 246.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 246, 249.

<sup>68</sup> As evidenced also by transcripts of Gorbachev’s talks with Jaruzelski and other members of the PZPR leadership. Antoni Dudek, “Wstęp,” in: *Zmierzch dyktatury. Polska lat 1986–1989 w świetle dokumentów*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>69</sup> J. Skórzyński, *Rewolucja Okragłego Stołu*, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

<sup>70</sup> A research paper on USSR’s relations with European socialist states, prepared by the Foreign Department of the PZPR CC in February 1989: “Uwagi o strategii stosunków z europejskimi państwami socjalistycznymi,” in: *Polska 1986–1989: koniec systemu...*, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

attempt to restrict contacts with representatives of the Polish opposition.<sup>71</sup> In August 1988 *Literaturnaya Gazeta* sought an interview with Lech Wałęsa, but the Polish Embassy in Moscow frustrated that attempt. Eventually, Wałęsa gave an interview to *Novoye Vremya* in February 1989.

Russian analysts hammered out three scenarios of developments in Poland. The best-case scenario featured a compromise over an “anti-crisis” pact between the PZPR and its allies on the one hand, and Solidarity and the *intelligentsia* opposition gathered around the union on the other. Under the second scenario, the anti-crisis pact was broken by PZPR hardliners allied with the All-Poland Trade Union Alliance (OPZZ) and by Solidarity’s extreme faction, but political contacts with the opposition were maintained nevertheless, albeit at a minimum level. This course of events would have resulted in the abandonment of economic reforms, making Poland “the sick man of Europe.” The worst-case scenario also anticipated the breaking of the anti-crisis pact, followed this time by an escalation of the conflict, the worsening of relations with the opposition, and the re-instatement of martial law—or “an Afghanistan in the center of Europe.”<sup>72</sup>

### Round Table

Foreign policy did not figure among the subjects of Round Table talks and no opposition-government working group was appointed to address it. Civic Committee leaders acknowledged the PZPR’s leading role in this area. For instance, Bronisław Geremek said in one of his interviews: “We are realists. We accept the political reality and the PZPR’s leading role in foreign policy and in

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<sup>71</sup> A coded dispatch from the Polish Embassy in Moscow relates the following opinions prevailing in circles close to the Soviet authorities: “Bearing in mind external determinants (dialogue with the U.S.), we will not refer to the political struggle with the opposition. We need to bring closer to [Soviet] society, through the Soviet media, the views of what is known as the constructive opposition. This is the context in which to view the invitation issued last year to Wajda and Michnik by the Association of Filmmakers. Michnik did not come because of your unnecessary objections. A successful development of relations with the U.S. is the USSR’s top priority today and in this context it is necessary to build bridges of understanding among the different political forces in socialist countries. For this reason you should not obstruct our contacts with Polish intellectuals. Many of them went over to the opposition as a result of errors in the PZPR policy and misjudgment of the different individuals. This being the case, we need our own understanding and assessment of opposition activists.” “Szyfrogram Nr 581, nadany za nr 7 dnia 20.01 [1989 r.] godz. 14.30 z Moskwy,” in: A. Dudek, “Rok 1989 w moskiewskich szyfrogramach,” *Biuletyn IPN*, 2004, no. 4. Michnik eventually visited Moscow on 12 July 1989.

<sup>72</sup> “Przemiany w Europie Wschodniej i ich wpływ na ZSRR,” *op. cit.*, pp. 238–239.

the armed forces.”<sup>73</sup> Even so, a sub-group for foreign policy was appointed as part of the Political Working Group. At its first meeting, the sub-group addressed German issues and the prospect of European integration.<sup>74</sup> At the next one, it discussed the establishment of international contacts by the Civic Committee and the proposal to take advantage of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of World War II to build new Polish-German relations, provided the Western borders of Poland were no longer questioned.<sup>75</sup>

The Civic Committee unveiled its foreign policy concept in a statement of 24 April 1989. It declared that in the new post-Round Table political situation, ensuring the country’s sovereignty and political and economic independence was the paramount aim of the Polish nation. The regaining of state sovereignty required arranging relations with Poland’s Warsaw Pact allies on the basis of equal rights and without a political brand. The security of the country would be safeguarded by a policy of disarmament and a reduction of defense spending and by the consolidation of international peace. Efforts should to be taken to overcome the division of Europe, that product of the Cold War, and to develop cooperation among states on the basis of the principles of the UN and CSCE and enhanced observance of human rights. The use of violence and interference in the internal affairs of other states were inadmissible.<sup>76</sup>

Furthermore, the Civic Committee declared its readiness to work together with democratic forces in communist bloc countries and with the nations of the USSR. Overcoming divisions in Europe required the cessation of ideological rivalry and the reconciliation of Poland and Germany based on the recognition of the inviolability of borders, self-determination of nations, and respect for both partners’ identity. Cooperation between Poland and the United States would be of special significance.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> “Solidarity and the Polish Youth: An Interview with Bronisław Geremek,” *Across Frontiers*, Summer 1989, vol. 5, no. 2, p. 48.

<sup>74</sup> The venue was the apartment of Krzysztof Śliwiński; besides the host, present were Stanisław Stomma, Kazimierz Dziewanowski, Zygmunt Skórzyński, Jacek Czaputowicz and others.

<sup>75</sup> Held on 23 March 1989 and attended by Bronisław Geremek, Krzysztof Kozłowski, Adam Michnik, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Jerzy Osmańczyk, Krzysztof Śliwiński and others. See A. Friszke, “Komitet Obywatelski. Geneza i historia,” *op. cit.*, p. 56. The author cites as his source “Załącznik do informacji dziennej 1989.03.28,” IPN 0236/410, vol. 4, sheet 241–242.

<sup>76</sup> “1989 kwiecień 24, Warszawa – Oświadczenie Komitetu Obywatelskiego „Solidarność” w sprawach międzynarodowych,” in: *Komitet Obywatelski przy Przewodniczącym NSZZ „Solidarność” Lechu Wałęsie*, *op. cit.*, pp. 353–355.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibidem*.

Aware of the new geopolitical determinants, the Polish authorities took pains to secure for themselves the best possible position in the new pattern. One must agree with the researchers who assert that in the second half of the 1980s the threat from the Soviet Union, while strictly illusory, was skillfully played by the communist authorities, who in fact were free to act as they saw fit. Jan Skórzyński argues that General Jaruzelski's team "came to the Round Table fully aware that they were taking this step at their own risk and that Moscow was leaving them a free hand in the matter of a compromise with the opposition."<sup>78</sup>

In contrast, the opinions of those researchers who claim that the Western states did not want geopolitical changes, or that there was a serious threat of Soviet intervention, do not ring true.<sup>79</sup> In the second half of the 1980s, the United States and its European allies followed with understanding and hope the freedom aspirations and efforts in Poland and in other countries of the Soviet bloc. They also had a stake in the disbanding of the Warsaw Pact, as championed by the Freedom and Peace Movement and Charter 77, in the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Central Europe and in the overcoming of the post-Yalta division of the continent. Unrealistic as those changes appeared to some, they were all soon to materialize.

*Translated by Elżbieta Gołębiowska*

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<sup>78</sup> J. Skórzyński, *Rewolucja Okrągłego Stołu*, *op. cit.*, p. 264. The author cites Father Alojzy Orszulik, who participated in the talks for the Episcopate. Prime Minister Rakowski told him: "Owing to the way the situation has been developing in the socialist countries and in the USSR, we are totally free, for the first time ever, to furnish our own home."

<sup>79</sup> For instance, Andrzej Friszke writes: "The post-Yalta European order had its defender in the USSR, but the Western powers did not want it disrupted either, in particularly not in any violent manner. Changes in Poland could proceed as long as they did not upset the European equilibrium.... The West supported freedom movements and the prospect of democracy in these [Central and East European] countries up to a limit, and the limit was the USSR's tolerance.... In the late 1980s, the West was careful not to provoke any souring of relations with the USSR." A. Friszke, "Komitet Obywatelski. Geneza i historia," *op. cit.*, pp. 66–67.

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