

Poland 1970-1976
The Politics of Polish Industry
A Study of Worker-Party Relations in a Socialist State

A Thesis
Presented to
The Department of
Political Studies
Faculty of Graduate Studies
and Research
University of Manitoba
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Degree
of Master of Arts

by
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782198

October, 1977

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LAWRENCE JOSEPH ROMANS

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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ABSTRACT

The workers' riots of December, 1970 had a significant impact on the history and development of the Polish People's Republic. These protests reaffirmed the importance of the workers in Party politics, a strength first demonstrated in 1956, and showed the ability of the workers to force the Party to change its policies and leadership. The December protests marked the end of the Gomulka era and underlined the failure of Gomulka to satisfy the average Pole's expectations with his policy of a "Polish road to socialism". The ascension of Edward Gierek to the PZPR First Secretary also was to signify the beginning of a new era. After the bleak Gomulka years, the new regime offered a new hope for the Polish people. Gierek promised that his rule would be characterized by a new concern for the average Pole's material conditions and by a new spirit of openness and communication within society. These promises seemed to signal an improvement in relations in Poland and an advance along the road to communism. Of special significance for Gierek was the improvement of worker relations.¹ Worker relationships are important because, according to Marxist-Leninist theory, the worker is the basis for socialist society and through his party, the Communist Party, he leads society. Thus, if

¹By worker relations is meant the association that the workers have with the PZPR (the Polish Communist Party), the state, within industry, and as consumers.

the PZPR is unable to satisfy the workers, it is not fulfilling a basic function of representing the workers. An equally important reason for improving worker relations within Poland was the fact that the workers were a key force in securing Gierek's position. Worker dissatisfaction with Gomulka had led to his downfall and to maintain his position, Gierek had to gain the workers' acceptance.

After six years of rule, Edward Gierek has had ample time to secure his position as PZPR First Secretary and to initiate his program of reforms. Thus, by studying workers' relations within Poland for this period and by comparing them with relations under Gomulka, one can determine whether Gierek has sought to fulfill his promises and how successful any reforms may have been.

Such a study is of importance for it will determine whether relations under Gierek represent a significant development over those during his predecessor's regime or whether there seems to be certain problems which appear to be inherent in socialist Poland. One can also discover the extent to which worker inputs have influenced Party and governmental decisions. Finally, by considering worker relations in other East European countries, one can determine whether any changes in the Polish situation are part of a general East European trend and what significance such a trend may have.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all those people who helped me to complete this work. Mr. Dziedzic of the Polish Press Agency and Mr. Reyman of Radio Free Europe for their helpful information on the changes in the Polish Constitution; Jim Campbell, Sandy Gillies and Teresa Samulski for proofreading my text; and my typist, Jan Hollanitsch, who not only learned how to type Polish but managed to read my hieroglyphics. I would also like to thank all those who tolerated me during my periods of "genius".

My thanks also to the Kosciuszko Foundation. Without their financial aid, I could not have devoted my time and energies to my studies.

Finally, I would especially like to thank Professor Davis Daycock, my advisor, for his patience, direction, and words of wisdom. His enthusiasm and dedication to my thesis inspired me to continue my work through all adversities. Whenever I began to despair, I took solace in Professor Daycock's words to me, "Don't worry, you'll graduate--- eventually."

Larry Joe Romans
October, 1977

FOREWORD

When studying the state of the worker in a socialist society, several introductory observations must be made. According to Marxist-Leninist theory, the worker is to play an important role in the historical development of man. It is the proletariat, as a class, which revolts against the bourgeoisie and capitalism. Only the proletariat can lead mankind to higher stages of development, for, as the Manifesto of the Communist Party stated, "Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern Industry..."¹ After the victory over the forces of capitalism, the working class must assume the role of "...the builder of socialist society."²

Guided by Marxism-Leninism, the Communist Party is dominant in socialist society. This dominance is based on the Party's claim to represent the victorious alliance of workers and peasants through the dictatorship of the proletariat. The ultimate goal of the Communist Party and the workers' state is to reach the highest stage of mankind's development, communism. This goal will be achieved by the development

¹Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, Robert C. Tucker, Editor, The Marx-Engels Reader, W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 1972, pp. 343-344

²Vladimir Lenin, "The Historical Fate of the Doctrine of Karl Marx", Collected Works, Vol. 18 (April 1912-March 1913), Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1963, p. 582

of society politically, economically, and socially. Politically, the Party through the state apparatus, must seek to consolidate its position and eliminate all potential enemies to socialism. A further task of the Party is to encourage and promote the development of mass participation in the decision-making process. Economically, socialist states are marked by the social ownership of the means of production. This means that, "Most natural resources and capital are socialized, including land, manufacturing industries, banking, finance, and domestic and foreign trade."³ During the Stalin years, socialist states were characterized by a command economy. Under the direction of a central planning body, an economic plan, covering all aspects of life was drafted. This plan was "...supposed to provide sufficient investment for the desired rate of growth, guarantee balance among all the industrial needs and outputs and choose the 'best' assortment of goods."⁴ As the economies of some socialist states have developed, the central plan has been supplemented by features of a market economy and greater freedom for individual enterprises. A further characteristic of the socialist economy is the distribution of national income. To achieve a more socially equitable distribution of income,

Property incomes (rent, interest, profits) are virtually eliminated whilst earned incomes are based on the quantity and quality of work. Private consumption is supplemented with a very well-developed system of collective goods and services provided free by the state.⁵

³Joseph Wilczynski, The Economics of Socialism, Aldine Publishing, Chicago, 1970, p. 22

⁴Howard J. Sherman, The Soviet Economy, Little, Brown, & Co., Boston, 1969, p. 18

⁵op. cit., Joseph Wilczynski, pp. 22-23

Theoretically the principal beneficiary under socialism was to be the worker. Through his Party, the worker would control the state, and with the development of mass participation, his voice in the decision-making process. Economically, the worker would no longer be the slave of the capitalist, and was to have a say in the operation of his work place. The worker would also benefit financially, for he would receive a just wage for his labours and more consumer goods would be made available to him.

Despite the key role that the workers were supposed to play in building socialist society, scholars have paid little attention to the state of the worker in existing socialist states. This neglect of the workers' situation has been particularly evident in the East European states. The events in Hungary and Poland in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Poland in 1970 would seem to indicate that, at various times, the workers of Eastern Europe have been dissatisfied with conditions under socialism. Even the dramatic events of those years generally did not inspire any serious work in this field. As a means of advancing the study of the worker in socialist society, this thesis will consider the state of the Polish worker since the 1970 change of leadership.

In order to ascertain any changes in the conditions of the Polish worker, this paper will compare the status of the workers during two periods: the Gomulka years and Gierek's regime. To facilitate the comparison between these periods and to determine better the state of the Polish workers, this paper will consider four aspects of their lives. The first area of consideration will center on worker relations with the Polish Communist Party, the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). The paper will try to determine if there have been any Party reforms which

would allow the worker a greater voice in the decision-making process, and whether the Party is representing the workers' interests. Closely linked to worker-Party relations are worker-government relations. In studying this aspect of worker life, the principal areas of concern will be the distribution of power between the PZPR and the state, and the amount of control and input that the working class has in governmental affairs. In addition to considering the worker in the national scene, one must also study him in his work place. This means that attention must be paid to worker-management relations, the various forms of worker self-management, the role of trade unions in Polish society, work laws, and, in a general perspective, the relationship between central planning and the individual enterprise. This paper also will be concerned with the worker as consumer, comparing such points as the level of consumption, availability and quality of goods, income and housing. To prevent confusion, this thesis will be divided chronologically. The first two chapters will deal with the Gomulka years and the latter chapters will consider the status of the Polish working class under Gierek.

To determine if developments in Polish society reflect a trend common to Eastern Europe, this work will include brief comparisons to situations in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Hungary. These three countries were chosen as a source of comparison of geographic similarities: these nations, with Poland, compose the northern tier states as opposed to the southern states of Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia and Albania. More importantly, these states are similar to Poland economically and politically. All four states can be considered as urbanized industrial states with a political system dominated by the Communist Party and closely tied to the Soviet Union.

The comparison of the two Polish eras will be achieved primarily through the use of Polish periodicals and newspapers such as Contemporary Poland, Kultura, Nowe Drogi, Polish Perspectives, Polityka, Trybuna Ludu, Życie Gospodarcze, Życie Warszawy, and others. However, the comparison between socialist states, basically will rely on secondary materials because of a lack of English-language materials and my lack of a sufficient reading knowledge of Czech, German and Magyar. Although there is a sufficient quantity of Polish source materials available, the strict governmental controls of the press limits their value. Criticisms of the Party, its leadership and policies are virtually nonexistent and coverage of the negative aspects of Polish life is kept at a minimum. Even under such circumstances, it is still possible to determine accurately the true situation by making use of innuendoes, oblique references and western sources.

CHAPTER I

The Worker in Poland

1954 - 1968

In the aftermath of World War II, Poland was in ruins, thousands were dead or homeless and the prospects for the immediate future were bleak. Like the Communist Parties of East Germany and Hungary, the Polish Workers' Party, aided by the presence of the Red Army, assumed the dominant position of the post-war society. This position was legitimized by the electoral victory of the Polish Workers' Party and the Democratic Bloc¹ over their major opposition, the Polish Peasant Party of Mikołajczyk.² This victory ensured the establishment of a "republic of the working people"³ which, in accord with the Leninist-Stalinist teachings on the state, "... is the way to socialism; it is a new form of controlling power by the working masses, led by the working class... The system of People's Democracy can and should.. effectively realize the basic function of the dictatorship of the

¹In 1948, the merger between the PPR and the PPS resulted in the present Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). The Democratic Bloc was composed of the PPR, the PPS, the SD and the ZSL.

²Official 1947 election results: Democratic Bloc 80.1%, Polish Peasant Party 10.3%.

M.K. Dziewanowski, The Communist Party of Poland, Harvard, Cambridge, 1959, p. 204

³Constitution of the Polish People's Republic, Triska, J.P., editor, Constitutions of the Communist Party States, Hoover Institute, Stanford, 1968, pp. 333-348 at p. 333

proletariat."⁴ The leading force of this dictatorship was the PZPR. Thus, a new social system "in accord with the interests and aspirations of the great majority of the people"⁵ became the goal of the Polish People's Republic and the PZPR.

As the development towards a new Poland has progressed, the relationship between the acknowledged leading force of society, the working class, and their representatives has also developed. At times this relationship has been strengthened by mutual agreement over goals, methods and needs. During other periods, however, it has been weakened by disagreement and occasionally by violent conflict. The initial years of post-war Poland were especially difficult for worker-Party relations. A significant portion of the population did not recognize the PZPR as the legitimate ruler of the nation⁶ and the policies of the Party served to harden public distrust of the regime. The policies of the new Polish leadership, as well as of the other East European countries, could have been described as a slavish imitation of Soviet policies.

A policy which characterized the new regimes was the repression of all potential opposition. The Polish secret police (UB), under the direction of the Soviet security police, arrested many people, including members of the PSL, AK and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Those arrested often were sentenced to long jail terms or were sent to labour camps in the Soviet Union. Others avoided arrest by fleeing to the

⁴"Deklaracja ideowa PZPR i statut PZPR", as cited in, op. cit., Dziewanowski, p. 219

⁵op. cit., Constitution of the Polish People's Republic, p. 333

⁶Immediately following the war and until 1947, sporadic fighting between the UB and the remnants of the AK (supporters of the London government) occurred.

West. Following the example of the Soviet Communist Party, the PZPR sought to maintain its ideological purity by purging nationalist elements and other deviants from its ranks. The victims of these purges often were subject to public embarrassment, economic harassment, and imprisonment.

The priority of the new leadership was to rebuild war-torn Poland and to establish a strong economic base. Using the Stalinist model of development, the economic independence of the country was stressed. This model emphasized the expansion of heavy industry often at the expense of light industry and other areas of the consumer sector. This philosophy became the bible of Polish economists and leaders well into the period under consideration and effected all relationships during this era.

The emphasis on industry changed the basic structure of Polish society. Prior to World War II Poland had been basically an agrarian society, in which "the rural population outnumbered the urban population by seven to three."⁷ The leaders of pre-war Poland had sought to improve the economy by emphasizing the development of industry, particularly in the field of metallurgy. Because of the world-wide economic crisis of that period, the Polish leaders had to seek foreign assistance and, as a result, foreign capital controlled many industries. Despite the efforts to increase industrial production, "as late as 1938, agriculture accounted for nearly 45 percent of the national income whereas industry produced only 30 percent."⁸ Under the PZPR, the industrialization of the nation

⁷Hans Roos, A History of Modern Poland, Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1966, p. 274

⁸Andrzej Karpinski, Twenty Years of Poland's Economic Development 1944-1964, Polonia Publishing House, Warsaw, 1964, p. 9

developed and contributed to the growth of the urban population, which accounted for 41.9 percent of the total population by 1954.⁹ As people migrated to the cities, ties with older social institutions were weakened and new demands arose. As Brzezinski stated:

The effect of industrialization was to create a revolutionary social situation in which the only source of cohesion would be the party, the only source of direction the leadership's will.¹⁰

To many people the PZPR appeared initially to be a stable force in an unstable world and the Party experienced a significant growth in membership. This increase was the result of two factors. Firstly, the union of the PPS with the PPR added some anti-Bolshevik socialists to the PZPR ranks.¹¹ More importantly, however, the Party offered security, companionship and benefits to the new residents of urban areas. These were attractions which no other social group, except perhaps the Catholic Church, could offer to the thousands of new urban residents. Thus, of the 1948 total PZPR membership of 1,503,000, 60 percent were from the working class. However, the early 1950's witnessed an erosion of the relationship between the workers and the Party. By 1954, the PZPR had dropped to 1,297,000 members and only 48 percent of the total membership were workers.¹² While the decrease in membership partially was due to purges of nationalistic elements and the anti-Bolshevik socialists, the drastic

⁹Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Rocznik Statystyczny 1956, (1956 Statistical Yearbook), Warsaw, 1956, p. 31

¹⁰Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1967, p. 102

¹¹For an account of this merger see M.K. Dziewanowski, The Communist Party of Poland.

¹²V.L. Bénéš & N.J.G. Pounds, Poland, Praeger, New York, 1970, p. 342

reduction of worker membership could be traced to other factors. One reason for waning working support was the composition of the PZPR leadership. Once Gomulka and his associates were purged from the Party, the political leadership for the most part was composed of Russian-trained Poles. The populace viewed these men not only as stooges of the Soviet Union but, more importantly, because they had failed to act during World War II, they were considered as traitors to Poland. During the early 1950's, the leading role of the PZPR became more complex and demanding as Polish society developed. To meet these new demands, the Party began to recruit more and more white collar workers and members of the intelligentsia¹³ and became a party of bureaucrats rather than a party of workers. The main conflict between the Party and the workers consumed the development of the economy. As the principal architect of the economic policy, the PZPR stressed heavy industry over other aspects of the economy. When this policy resulted in increasing hardship for the workers, the Party was viewed as the source of the workers' difficulties.

Seeing almost no distinction between the PZPR and the government, the workers also distrusted the new government. In accord with the Soviet government model, the Chairman of the PZPR, Boleslaw Bierut, was the Polish Premier and other high ranking Party officials assumed Ministerial positions in the government. The Polish Parliament, the Sejm, dominated by the PZPR, approved all Party decisions and directions without debate or dissent. Thus, governmental decisions were viewed by many as Party directives.

¹³In 1948, white collar workers comprised 17.6 percent of the PZPR, by 1954 their portion had risen to 36.4 percent.
op. cit., Dziewanowski, p. 355

As with the Party, the primary source of worker-governmental tensions concerned the Six-year Plan (1950-1955). As Table 1.1 indicates for 1950-1953, investments in the light and food industries and for building materials were much less than the investments in heavy industry. Rather than increasing the share of the investment fund for the consumer industries, the leadership further reduced their portion for 1954-1955. This policy inhibited the development of the consumer industries and resulted in widespread shortages of many essential goods and housing.

TABLE 1.1

STRUCTURE OF INVESTMENTS 1950-1958 (in %)			
<u>Type of Industry</u>	<u>1950-1953</u>	<u>1954-1955</u>	<u>1956-1958</u>
Energy	9.0	10.4	11.9
Fuel	16.7	17.5	19.7
Metallurgy	19.1	23.2	13.3
Machinery	19.6	14.6	14.3
Chemical & Rubber	12.6	15.1	13.1
Building Materials	5.8	4.7	8.7
Light & Food	11.6	9.6	13.3

Source: Andrzej Jezierski, Historia Gospodarcza Polski Ludowej 1944-1968, (Economic History of People's Poland 1944-1968), Panstwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warsaw, 1971, p. 148

The shortages of consumer goods affected the wage scales established by the government. Since high wages could result in a greater demand by the masses for more and better consumer goods, wage scales and bonuses were kept low. This policy effectively deprived the government of utilizing material incentives as a means of stimulating greater productivity. To maintain acceptable production levels, the government was forced to rely on moral incentives and on high work norms.

One final blow to worker-governmental relations was the Radio Free Europe broadcasts of Colonel Joseph Swiatlo of the UB. These

broadcasts, which dealt with the activities of the UB and exposed the private lives of Party leaders, further discredited the Party and the government.

With respect to worker-management relations at the enterprise level, in each industry the worker had no say regarding the activities of the plant. Such institutions as workers' councils were described by the Party as unnecessary since the enterprises already belonged to the people. Also the concept of workers' councils was considered a Titoist deviation and therefore was anathema to the PZPR. The trade union in each factory theoretically was responsible for safeguarding the workers' interests and rights. Under the combined pressures of the Party and government, however, the unions soon became another tool aimed at meeting the production goals of the plan. By 1956, "in the eyes of most workers, the unions had become another governmental authority concerned with fulfilling the plan rather than defending the interests of the workers."¹⁴

As previously stated, the Six-year Plan hurt consumption levels during the period 1950-1955. Table 1.2 shows that consumption levels peaked for many goods in 1950-1951, then dropped in 1952 and only slowly began to recover to previous levels.

There are no adequate figures for the consumption of other goods, but by considering the prices for certain goods and the average monthly wage,¹⁵ one can see that the average family could not afford simple

¹⁴Adolf Sturmthal, Workers' Councils, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1964, p. 125

¹⁵The average income in 1954 was 960 zloty and in 1955 had risen to 991 zloty.

op. cit., Rocznik Statystyczny 1956, p. 279

consumer goods, while the few luxury items available were priced beyond their expectations.

TABLE 1.2

PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION OF SELECTED CONSUMER GOODS							
<u>Article</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>
Cereals	kg	165.8	160.4	160.5	163.3	166.0	170.7
Meat & fats	kg	38.2	37.9	32.9	35.5	37.0	39.0
Dairy	liter	292.5	318.8	313.4	310.9	322.6	331.9
Butter	kg	3.3	3.4	4.0	4.0	4.6	4.8
Fabrics							
cotton	m	14.6	16.2	15.9	15.3	16.1	16.6
wool	m	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.5
Footwear	pairs	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9

Source: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Rocznik Statystyczny 1956, (1956 Statistical Yearbook), Warsaw, 1956, p. 229

TABLE 1.3

RETAIL PRICES OF SELECTED GOODS (PRICES IN ZLOTY)			
<u>Article</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1955</u>
Bread	kg	3.00	3.00
Meat: pork	kg	27.00	27.00
beef	kg	22.00	22.00
Men's coat 70% wool	1	1160.00	826.00
Men's suit 100% wool	1	-0-	2250.00
Shirt cotton	1	55.80	46.00
Shoes: men	1 pr	330.00	282.00
women	1 pr	255.00	218.00
Bicycle	1	1628.00	1465.00
Radio	1	900.00	810.00

Source: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Rocznik Statystyczny 1956, (1956 Statistical Yearbook), Warsaw, 1956, pp. 230-231

During this period of shortages, high prices and poor quality goods, the workers were further angered by the existence of "yellow curtain" shops. These shops, marked by a yellow curtain in the doorway, were restricted to high ranking governmental and Party personnel and offered many goods unavailable to the public. To the average Pole, this appeared

as straight hypocrisy since those who preached equality practiced inequality.

Another aspect of satisfying worker needs was the housing shortage. Since many dwelling units had been destroyed or damaged during the war, housing construction should have been a priority of the Six-year Plan. From 1950-1955, however, housing construction was delegated to a minor position, receiving only 12.5 percent of the total investment outlay with a construction rate of only 2.6 units per 1000 inhabitants.¹⁶ With this rate of housing development the government was unable to keep pace with urban growth. By 1956 the housing situation could be at best described as equal to the situation as it existed in 1950 and more likely, it had worsened.

By 1956¹⁷ the national political and economic situation had become the paramount issue in Poland. While the PZPR recognized that certain social ills were afflicting the country, the debates on the solutions for these problems had split the Party. The Stalinist faction, the Natolin group, opposed any changes in economic policy and maintained that all dissenters should be dealt with harshly. The coalition of moderates and revisionists favored a restructuring of the economy to develop and improve the consumer industries and urged that the Party seek a reconciliation with those social groups who had become

¹⁶Adam Andrzejewski, "Housing Situation", Polish Perspectives, 8, No. 6, June, 1965, pp. 11-20 at p. 12

¹⁷Many accounts of the 1956 revolts in Poland and Hungary exist including:
Konrad Syrop, Spring in October, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, 1957

Paul E. Zinner, National Communism and Popular Revolt in Eastern Europe, Columbia University Press, New York, 1956

alienated. The first social class to express its discontent with the PZPR had been the intelligentsia. Similar to the Hungarian intelligentsia, Polish intellectuals historically have been a leading force in Poland and have been particularly symbolic of patriotic and nationalistic sentiments. Like their Hungarian counterparts, the Polish intelligentsia decried the repression of freedom and demanded an end to Stalinist practices. Leading intellectuals, such as, the members of the Club of the Crooked Circle, the editors of Po Prostu and Kultura, eminent educators, like Kolakowski, and their students questioned the structure and legitimacy of the PZPR and the government. While the intelligentsia and anti-Stalinist coalition of the PZPR spoke of change, it was the working class who moved the country. In June 1956, the workers from the Poznan Cegielski plant marched in protest against the governmental proposals to increase work norms and taxes. This demonstration grew into an armed revolt, which was quelled only after the Polish army intervened. The Stalinist faction of the Party tried to blame the riots on imperialist agents and provocateurs, who agitated the hooligans and criminal elements in Poznan. In reality, the riots were the fault of the PZPR; as Gomulka later stated:

The attempt to present the painful tragedy of Poznan as the work of imperialist agents and provocateurs was a great naivete. Agents and provocateurs can exist and be active everywhere and all the time, but never and nowhere can they determine the attitude of the working class. Comrades, the causes of the Poznan tragedy and of the deep dissatisfaction of the entire working class lie within us, in the Party leadership and the government.¹⁸

The Poznan riots proved that the Party had lost touch with the masses and illustrated the people's dissatisfaction with the government

¹⁸ibid., Konrad Syrop, p. 102

and the PZPR. Perhaps the most significant result of the Poznan riots was that it signalled the decline in power of the Stalinist faction.

After the Poznan riots, the PZPR realized that to maintain its dominant position in society, it had to change not only its policies but also its leadership. The ideal candidate for First Party Secretary was Wladyslaw Gomulka. A victim of the Stalinist purges, Gomulka represented the type of leadership that the people might accept. Many Poles thought of Gomulka as a Polish patriot; a man who fought in the underground; who was subjected to the Stalinist terror; who stood against the Soviet efforts to choose the new Polish leader; and who favoured a "Polish road to socialism." An equally important fact was that Gomulka did not bear any responsibility for those policies which had caused the severe hardship in Poland.

The ultimate ascension of Gomulka to power and his promises to the people helped to still the unrest throughout Poland. The Soviet invasion of Hungary also contributed in calming the people. The Poles realized that their country was as vulnerable to Soviet force as Hungary and therefore avoided any confrontations.

Once a change of leadership within the PZPR had been effected, the people generally accepted the Party as the ruling force. The Party was faced with an ironic situation where, while the PZPR had been previously discredited in the eyes of the people, the new leadership was acclaimed by the people as heroic. With the acceptable new leadership, the Party could gain strength by reforming and by once again becoming a party of the working class. In an October 1956 address to the Central Committee, Gomulka seemed to be stating such a proposition when he said: "The working class is our class, our invisible might..."

Without it, without the confidence of the working class, each of us would represent a nothing but himself."¹⁹

Despite the promise to reform and the opportunity to gain worker support, by 1959, the PZPR membership dropped by 275,000 with worker membership declining to 42 percent of the total while the membership of white-collar workers and intelligentsia increased to 42 percent.²⁰ Thus, by 1957 the PZPR had less right to call itself the representative of the working class than it did in 1954.

Once the old regime was replaced, the government of Poland underwent a change. The demand that the Sejm truly become the supreme decision-making body arose and individual members began to raise questions on governmental bills and proposals. While the PZPR maintained a majority of seats, more non-party members were allowed to be nominated and elected. During the first Sejm the PZPR held 64.2 percent of the seats. The other parties of the National Unity Front (FJN) possessed 27.1 percent of the seats while non-party members held only 8.7 percent. The second Sejm (1957-1961) witnessed a drop in the PZPR deputies to 52.1 percent. The other FJN deputies increased to 34.2 percent and non-party members held 13.7 percent of the total seats.²¹

Local government began to assume greater importance during this period. The People's Councils were elective bodies responsible for the economic, social and cultural activities within their jurisdiction. The Constitutional role of the People's Councils was expanded by the

¹⁹ibid., p. 102

²⁰op. cit., V.L. Benés, p. 342

²¹Central Statistical Office, Rocznik Statystyczny 1959, (Statistical Yearbook 1959), Warsaw, 1959, p. 390

People's Council Act of 1958 so that, "to the People's Councils belong all matters within the scope of State authority and administration, which have not been expressly reserved for other organs."²²

The principal role of the People's Councils was not as a legislating agency but as the Constitution states:

The People's Councils strengthen the links between the state authorities and working people of town and country, drawing increasing numbers of the working people into participation in governing the State.²³

While the Constitution pointed out the opportunity of allowing the working class to participate in government through People's Councils this simply did not occur because workers were not elected. In 1958, workers composed only 11.7% of all People's Councils and even in the largest cities, they held no more than 30% of the total seats.²⁴

In industrial relations, the workers for a time reigned supreme. Prior to 1956, the trade unions were suppose to safeguard the rights of the workers but had failed in this task. When the entire system came under question during 1956, workers began to establish their own system of government within the factory; the worker councils. These councils were encouraged by the more liberal faction of the PZPR so that when Gomulka assumed power, he had no choice but to accept them temporarily. The Sejm passed the 1956 Law on Workers' Councils, which recognized the right of workers to establish councils in the areas of manufacturing, construction, and state agriculture. The general function of the workers'

²²Stanislaw Ehrlich, editor, Social and Political Transformations in Poland, Polish Scientific Publishers, Warsaw, 1964, p. 165

²³op. cit., Constitution of the Polish People's Republic, Article 36, p. 340

²⁴Alexander Groth, People's Poland: Government and Politics, Chandler, San Francisco, 1972, p. 38

councils was to address economic matters. More specifically these councils were to: 1) determine the organization of the enterprise; 2) advise on improvements in production and efficiency; 3) determine production norms, wages, distribution of the enterprise fund; and 4) express opinions about enterprise activities and to approve the enterprise's balance sheet.

Many Polish economists and sociologists favoured the concept of workers' councils. They believed that an increase in worker participation in the decision-making process would result in improved morale in the work place.

The atmosphere of a factory is extremely important. It is vital to secure the interest and co-operation of employees when there are common problems to be solved..This reflects directly on efficiency and on results.. At the same time the individual will come to realize that the improvements in his own living standards in the economic and cultural relations that surround him are indissolubly tied to the progress of society as a whole.²⁵

Despite such hopes, conflicts immediately arose over workers' councils, regarding their methods, powers and goals. One conflict concerned the role of the delegates to the councils. In his study of a Lodz textile factory²⁶, Jiri Kolaja discovered two opposing views. Most workers saw the delegates as representatives of those who elected them, voicing their opinions and defending their interests. Enterprise managers and Party officials saw workers' councils as transmission belts, helping management, by accepting management's point of view and impressing it upon the workers. This conflict was exacerbated further because, unlike the Yugoslav system of workers' councils, the Polish manager was independent of the council and he could veto any council

²⁵Jozef Kofman, "Worker Self-government", Polish Perspectives, No. 3-4, July-August, 1958, pp. 12-17 at pp. 12-13

²⁶Jiri Kolaja, A Polish Factory, University of Kentucky Press, Lexington, 1960

proposals. Even though the council could appeal any vetoes to the appropriate ministry, the mere possession of a veto gave the manager more power than the councils.

The distinction between the trade unions and the workers' councils seemed to be clear enough; while the unions would defend the workers' interests as employees, the councils would represent the workers in the management of the plant. However, workers' councils originally sprang up because of the failures of the trade unions and so the two bodies often competed for worker support.

Another source of conflict was the goal of workers' councils. The intelligentsia and technicians saw workers' councils as a foundation for a new democratic society. They believed that the councils should be concerned with long term interests and goals, even if it meant short term hardships. On the other hand, workers saw the councils as a means of gaining immediate benefits by increasing wages and dividing the enterprise fund.

Despite these conflicts, workers saw the councils as a popular alternative. In 1957, there were 7,322 workers' councils and by the end of 1958, the total had climbed to 8,698.²⁷

The PZPR may have seen the growing popularity of the workers' councils as a threat to its power. The Party may have believed that the councils could either gain control of the economy and become independent of Party control or they could offer an alternative source of worker representation and become a new political force. Neither of these alternatives were acceptable to the Party, and as a result,

²⁷Adam Bromke, Poland's Politics: Idealism vs Realism, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1967, p. 143

the workers' councils were weakened by new legislation in 1958. With this legislation, Worker Self-government Conferences were established as the supreme worker organizations in each plant. These Conferences were to be composed of representatives of the workers' council, the trade union, the PZPR, the manager's council, technical and scientific associations and Party youth organizations. The Conference was responsible for most economic matters and the workers' council became a means of implementing Conference decisions.

The power of the workers was further restricted by the Party's stand on strikes. During the 11th Plenum of the PZPR, Gomulka stated that strikes were unnecessary and any instigators would be dealt with harshly.

In a socialist state the working class can always defend its right, through its own organization, if someone encroaches on them, without resorting to a strike...Therefore any strike which is not approved by the trade unions is contrary to our idea of order and socialist legality. Strikes of the kind which arise from time to time are signs of anarchy under the conditions of socialist freedom. In Poland they are manifestations of the activity of the class enemy.²⁸

Despite the theory of management-worker cooperation in industry, conflicts still existed. While the workers sought immediate material gains, the managers were more interested in efficiency and output. The attitude of the management was reflected by a Lodz section manager, "The people must be afraid of some authority; they must fear the management."²⁹ Rather than instilling a spirit of cooperation, these views only aroused worker hostility.

²⁸Frank Gibney, The Frozen Revolution, Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, New York, 1959, pp. 244-245

²⁹op. cit., Jiri Kolaja, p. 98

Since economic difficulties had been a principal source of the 1956 crisis, one of the first tasks of the Gomulka regime was to review and reform the economy. During the previous era the economy had been highly centralized. Such a system stifled any local initiative, set unrealistic goals and norms without regard for the local situation and this hampered development. Gomulka countered this problem, to some extent, by the powers of the workers' councils and by granting enterprise managers more authority. The primary criticism of the pre-1956 economy centered on the investment policy favoring heavy industry. After 1956, a more balanced program of investment was undertaken with more funds available for the consumer goods industries.³⁰ As Table 1.4 illustrates, the period 1956-1958 saw an increase in the production of some consumer goods and the introduction of new products.

TABLE 1.4

PRODUCTION OF SELECTED GOODS 1954-1958						
Product	Unit	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958
Auto--passenger	1	1,678	4,015	5,765	7,953	11,507
Motorcycles	,000	19.8	30.1	45.5	62.2	84.9
Adult bicycles	,000	139	167	185	228	310
Radios	,000	308	461	499	646	790
Televisions	,000	-0-	-0-	2.2	16.0	57.1
Refrigerators	,000	2.2	3.4	6.1	9.2	23.4
Washing machines	,000	4.5	28.1	68.2	145	225
Shoes	mil pr	51.6	55.0	61.2	68.8	74.9
Clothing production	mil m					
cotton & cotton-like		165	158	174	213	239
wool & wool-like		15.1	22.0	24.2	25.1	27.5

Source: op.cit., Rocznik Statystyczny 1959, pp. 87-94.

Besides buying more durable consumer goods³¹, the consumption

³⁰See Table 1.1

³¹Expenditures for durable goods was up by 50 percent in 1957. "Changes in Structure of Consumption", Polish Perspectives, No. 3-4, July-August, 1958, p. 55

level of the goods cited in Table 1.4 rose to higher levels by 1958.³²

Wages for employees within the socialized sector of the economy also increased following 1956. In 1955, 53.7 percent of the population earned less than 1000 zloty per month and only 6.4 percent were earning more than 2000 zloty, by 1957, the percentage of those earning less than 1000 zloty had dropped to 28.2 percent and 17.3 percent were now earning more than 2000 zloty.³³ Since prices were maintained near the 1956 levels, the average Polish worker had more money to spend on goods.

The honeymoon between the workers and the new government of Gomulka did not last long. The reforms after 1956 were half-measures which not only proved unable to solve the problems facing the Polish economy but also created new difficulties. While enterprise managers had been granted more autonomy, there was no provision for coordinating the enterprise activities in a general plan, and managers were not given the proper amount of central guidance. Production norms had been reduced to satisfy the workers but the new levels were so low that in some industries, the workers were exceeding their norms by 50-60 percent.³⁴ This meant that the amount workers received as bonuses significantly increased and as a result, a larger portion of the workers' income came from the bonus funds. The lower norms created serious difficulties for the economy. Virtually rewarding the workers for low productivity, the increased bonuses soon became an integral portion of the workers'

³²op. cit., Rocznik Statystyczny 1959, pp. 355-356

³³"Changing Structure of Employment", Polish Perspectives, No. 3-4, July-August 1958, p. 61

³⁴J.M. Montias, "The Polish Economic Model", Problems of Communism, Vol. 9, No. 2, March-April 1960, pp. 16-24 at p. 17

income and any effort to readjust the relationship between bonuses and wages was met with worker resistance. The larger bonuses and the pay raises allowed the worker to spend more money on consumer goods. Unable to meet the growing demands for basic goods and unwilling to adjust the price system,³⁵ the Polish leadership once again was faced with shortages of certain goods. As shortages became more and more common, workers lost their incentive to work efficiently and as they produced less, more shortages resulted. Thus, by 1960 Poland was trapped in the vicious circle of growing demands and increasing shortages. It appeared that only some radical change would avoid future confrontation between the workers and the PZPR.

Although the economic situation in 1960 exhibited problems similar to those that existed in 1956, a key difference between 1956 and 1960 was the state of the PZPR. While in 1956 the Party had been split into factions struggling for power, by 1960, the PZPR was firmly controlled by Gomulka. Once he defeated both the revisionists and the Stalinists, Gomulka did not face any threats to his power base and was able to impose his views on society. Thus, in trying to solve problems of 1960, Gomulka could push for a recentralized economy without fear of being ousted.

By the mid-1960's, the PZPR had evolved into a party of intellectuals, technicians and bureaucrats. In 1964, workers comprised only

³⁵Following the Soviet system, prices in Poland and most East European countries were centrally dictated rather than based on supply and demand. This system did not always allow sufficient flexibility to reflect accurately market demands, since the prices of consumer goods were established according to centrally determined principles. Often this meant that retail prices were lower than production costs and the government was forced to subsidize any differences. Extensive subsidization would result in a drain on the economy, especially funds available for investment.

40 percent of the total membership while the non-manual labour ranks accounted for 44 percent of the Party's membership. This trend, encouraged by the Party's and government's need for technicians and bureaucrats, continued throughout this period so that by 1968, 49 percent of the PZPR's members were non-manual workers.³⁶ The decrease in worker membership created the possibility that the views and goals of the workers would be at variance with those of the Party.

First Secretary Gomulka marked an end to the era of economic experimentation and a return to pre-1956 practices when, at the III PZPR Plenum, he stated:

Comrades, the process of decentralization of economic rule must be reinforced by central controls, especially financial controls and also deeper and quicker directions of economic analysis. This requires the proper organization with the central economic link and in justifying their activities, they (the central organs) could efficiently intervene in cases that are either in conflict with the fundamentals of the plan or are incompatible with the interests of attaining socialism.³⁷

Shortages, a decrease in productivity and loose work norms were problems that Gomulka had to solve, searching for assistance, he turned to the former members of the "Natolin" faction and entrusted them with high governmental positions. With the return of the Stalinist faction, the Party and the government began to assume a more conservative outlook.

The first task facing the Polish leadership was to raise productivity. In the past, productivity often had been raised either by investing more funds in machinery or by increasing the work force. The

³⁶op. cit., Benes, p. 342

³⁷"Przemówienie Iego sekretarza KC PZPR tow. Władysława Gomułkiej" (Address of the First Secretary of the CC PZPR, comrade Władysław Gomulka--III Plenum CC PZPR), Nowe Drogi, 12 (126), November, 1959, pp. 3-32 at p. 28

aim of the 1960 reforms, however, was to raise the work norms. As Życie Warszawy stated: "Next year's (1960) production must result exclusively from increased labor productivity."³⁸

As a direct result of the revised work norms, workers faced a loss of a considerable portion of their wages. Under the previous system, workers had been exceeding their quotas and earned generous bonuses. With the higher norms, bonuses were not as great, in fact, the workers lost as much as 17 percent of their income.³⁹ Although workers' income soon returned to a level close to the pre-reform period, the workers still felt that the reforms had restricted their income and were dissatisfied with the situation. A sign of this dissatisfaction was a strike in Poznan. Reflecting the conservative outlook of the PZPR leadership, the management of the plant rejected the workers' demands for a return to the old norms and fired the strike leaders.

In 1964, a new wave of reforms was initiated by the PZPR. The reforms were intended to be a series of partial acts that would eventually eliminate the negative features of the economic system. To insure greater efficiency while taking local conditions into consideration, the reforms were intended to extend a degree of autonomy to the associations⁴⁰ and individual enterprises while still maintaining strong central control

³⁸"Current Developments--Poland", East Europe, Vol. 9, No. 1, January, 1960, pp. 36-40 at p. 38

³⁹H. Stehle, The Independent Satellite, Praeger, New York, 1964, p. 156

⁴⁰An association "groups together all enterprises in the province which produce the same commodity,...It coordinates and directs the activities of its enterprises in accordance with the national and provincial plan and represents the common interests of its member enterprises."

Jaroslav Piekalkiewicz, Communist Local Government, Ohio University Press, Athens, 1975, p. 217

over the general plan. The very nature of the plans led to confusion within the economy so that following the student riot of 1968 and the power struggle of that year, a new system of economic reforms was introduced.

Relationships within the enterprise deteriorated during the period. A basic premise of the organizational structure of the Polish enterprises was the principle of one-man management. Within an enterprise, it was the manager and his deputies who were responsible for the administration of the enterprise and for production and efficiency. The director of the enterprise was viewed as: "the plenipotentiary of the state. He is responsible for the state property entrusted to him and for organizing implementation of the plan."⁴¹

With the primary responsibility for the enterprise entrusted to the director, any concept of worker council participation in the decision-making process had to be very limited. When the workers' councils were merged into the larger and more docile workers' self-management conferences,⁴² their primary tasks became the implementation of conference directives and "promoting campaigns among the staff aimed at ensuring plan implementation, making fuller use of production capacity, and raising the efficiency of the enterprise."⁴³ In its new role, the workers' council became mainly a tool for increasing productivity. The workers began to view the councils as an instrument of management rather than as

⁴¹Edward Marek, "Workers' Participation in Planning and Management in Poland", International Labour Review, 101, No. 3, March, 1970, pp. 271-290 at p. 277

⁴²See page 16

⁴³op. cit., Edward Marek, p. 275

representatives of the workers.⁴⁴ As this occurred, the worker participate less and less in the councils and as worker participation decreased, the number of active worker councils declined drastically: in 1958, there had been 11,408 active workers' councils but by 1966 they decreased to 8,751.⁴⁵

During this period the stated role of the trade unions remained the same as during previous periods. Unions were suppose to improve work conditions, and to seek just wages and an equitable distribution of social benefits. However, the basic aim of these goals was "setting up conditions in which man can and wants to work efficiently."⁴⁶ The emphasis on the trade unions' economic role caused the unions to become more concerned with meeting economic goals, often at the expense of the workers.

Since the workers' councils and the trade unions had become tools of management, an unofficial group of workers evolved to fill the void. These groups, known as "activists":

... did not identify with the organization which had sponsored them, such as the trade union or the party, but rather identified with the factory department or section in which they worked. This meant that in cases of conflict at the CWSM* they 'represented the finishing shop, or the weaving shop'. Furthermore, the activists identified themselves as a group vis-a-vis the mass of the employees. They belonged to the 'aktyw' rather than to the party or the unions.⁴⁷

⁴⁴A 1961 survey found that 41 percent of the workers in the electronics industry and 47 percent in the manufacturing industry felt that the councils represented the interests of the executives.

Alexander Matejko, Social Change and Stratification in Eastern Europe, Praeger, New York, 1974, p. 130

⁴⁵op. cit., Alexander Groth, p. 40

⁴⁶"Trade Unions--An Organization of Eight Million", Contemporary Poland, 1, No. 7-8, July-August, 1967, pp. 29-32 at p. 30

⁴⁷J. Kulpinska, "Workers' Social Activity in Industrial Business", as cited in David Lane & G. Kolankiewicz, Social Groups in Polish Society, Columbia University Press, New York, 1973, p. 149

*Committee of Workers, Self-Management.

These activists, while not possessing much power at this time, would become important by 1970.

Throughout the 1960's the growth of urbanization continued so that by 1967 over 50 percent of the Polish population lived in urban areas.⁴⁸ This development resulted in greater demands for consumer goods and for more and better housing. Table 1.5 shows an erratic growth pattern for some consumer goods. The availability of many goods depended on the year; in some years there would be an abundance of certain goods and the next year there would be a shortage of these same goods. One important exception was food products, throughout this period they experienced a continual increase.

TABLE 1.5

PRODUCTION OF SELECTED GOODS 1960, 1965, 1966, 1967					
Product	Unit	1960	1965	1966	1967
Auto--passenger	,000	12.9	26.4	29.2	27.7
Motorcycles	,000	122	144	144	119
Adult bicycles	,000	496	622	683	700
Radios	,000	627	624	623	613
Televisions	,000	171	452	412	495
Refrigerators	,000	37.7	289	334	341
Washing machines	,000	531	429	396	433
Shoes	mil pr	82.4	112	111	115
Clothing					
cotton & cotton-like	mil m	217	341	348	315
wool & wool-like	mil m	25.8	33.4	38.6	41.8

Source: Central Statistical Office, Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland, Warsaw, 1968, p. 242

While the production of many goods increased during this period, many goods were rejected as unsaleable. As with other East European

⁴⁸Central Statistical Office, Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland, Warsaw, 1968, p. 10

states, the pressures and rewards to reach output goals were greater than those for producing quality goods. As a result, Polish managers pushed output at the expense of quality. For example, in 1960, 25,000 overcoats worth 19 million zloty were rejected as unsaleable because of poor quality; rather than cutting production in order to improve quality, the manager continued to produce worthless coats.⁴⁹

For the period 1960-1967, wages enjoyed a steady growth. While in 1960 the average monthly wage was 1,671 zloty by 1967 it had risen to 2,127 zloty.⁵⁰ Since food prices had not risen dramatically, the average Pole was able to spend more money on durable consumer goods.

While the consumer's market had generally improved during this period, the housing situation remained a sore point between the PZPR and the people. At 1965 Party meetings with Warsawians, the principle topic of discussion was the severe housing shortage.⁵¹

As the First Secretary of the PZPR, Władysław Gomułka influenced virtually all aspects of the workers' life. His economic policies controlled the income that the workers received and the goods that they could buy with it. His censorship policies regulated the publications that the people read and the performances that they saw. Gomułka's complete control over the PZPR and the government effectively limited the role of the workers in the decision-making process at all levels. By 1968, Władysław Gomułka dominated Polish society. Despite all his strengths and precautions however, Gomułka was unable to prevent the

⁴⁹op. cit, H. Stehle, p. 154

⁵⁰op. cit, Concise Statistical Yearbook 1968, p. 242

⁵¹"Nauki i wnioski z doświadczeń kampanii wyborczej" (Lessons and proposals from the experiences of the electoral campaign), Nowe Drogi, 7 (94), July 1965, pp. 44-62 at p. 58

1968 East European movement towards reform from spreading to Poland. Like a cancer this movement infected and ultimately destroyed the Gomulka regime.

CHAPTER II

The Collapse of Worker Confidence in Gomulka:

1968 - 1970

The late 1960's stand out as one of the most important periods for Poland and all of socialist Eastern Europe. Following World War II, the East European states had adopted the Stalinist model of economic development with little or no adaptation to the local situation. This model stressed extensive growth, that is,

...economic growth achieved due to increases in the amount of the factors of production employed (elimination of unemployment, growth of the labour force and an increase in capital investment)¹

While extensive growth helped most Socialist states to rebuild after the devastation of the war, by the mid-1960's it had outlived its usefulness. Such problems as low levels of consumption, poor quality goods, underutilized industrial capacity, inefficient production, and foreign trade difficulties plagued Eastern Europe and resulted in economic stagnation and mass discontent. Faced with these problems, the East European leaders began to modify their economic policies towards a greater emphasis on intensive development. Unlike the Stalinist model of extensive growth, intensive development would achieve continued economic growth by the increased labour productivity resulting from greater specialization, the improved application of technology and a

¹J. Wilczynski, The Economics of Socialism, Aldine, Chicago, 1970, p. 5

more effective incentive system.

Although there existed general agreement as to the cause of the economic problems, the solution was widely disputed.² In the late 1960's, Czechoslovakia and Hungary initiated a series of economic reforms based on the assumption that "...the transition from extensive to intensive development required a less centralized and generally more flexible economic structure..."³ To achieve this, both reforms changed the previously compulsory central plan to a guide for the individual enterprises. This meant that the enterprises had more power to determine their own goals and methods. Rather than relying on direct commands, the central planning authority turned to the use of indirect regulators such as the enterprise tax, which would penalize an enterprise for inefficiency and poor quality goods. Another method of stimulating efficiency and quality was by judging the enterprise and basing its incentive fund on the profit achieved. Both countries began a slow movement towards a market-based economy by restructuring the price system. Under this new system, goods were divided into three basic categories: those with fixed prices, those within a maximum and minimum price range, and those prices determined by supply and demand. The ultimate goal of both countries was to eventually

²This dispute was significant because it revealed a deep ideological split within the Soviet Bloc. Those nations, which favoured minimal changes in economic policies, believed in maintaining the dominance of the USSR. By implementing previously forbidden capitalistic policies, Czechoslovakia and Hungary indicated an independent spirit which was dangerous for Bloc unity. An economic independence could ultimately lead to wider differences in other domestic policies and an independent foreign policy. If these new policies would prove to be successful, it would weaken the Soviet Union's claim to ideological infallibility and would strengthen the concept of different roads to socialism (polycentrism).

³Charles Gati, "The Kádár Mystique", Problems of Communism, 23, No. 3, May-June, 1974, pp. 23-35 at p. 28

open all prices to market control.

While the economic reforms of Czechoslovakia and Hungary were very similar in their direction, the Czechoslovaks saw economic reform as only a part of a general reform. By 1968, the issue of economic reform had been superseded by discussions of the democratization of the political structure. These discussions, often encouraged and led by Party members, resulted in proposals, which, if adopted, would have brought about a new type of communist society with freedom of speech, the legal institution-alization of democratic procedures, guarantees of free interest-group activity and the development of competing political parties. Although the Dubcek regime felt that the "leading role of the Party" could be maintained in the reformed society and pledged their continued allegiance to the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Union looked on the reforms with great distrust, for

Much more important than the actualities of Dubcek's reform were the potentialities of future development, as assessed by Soviet analysis, in particular the possible expansion of democracy and the elimination of communist power in Prague and, short of that, the growing independence of action of Czechoslovakia in foreign and defense policy and in relations with the Communist bloc.⁴

Faced with the potential independence of Czechoslovakia and the threat that such developments could spread throughout Eastern Europe, the Soviet leadership saw no alternative but to invade the country in August, 1968.

Since the Hungarian economic reforms had been implemented in January, 1968, the invasion of Czechoslovakia concerned them. The Hungarian leadership feared that the USSR might decide to stop their reforms

⁴Gordon Skilling, "Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution", Canadian Slavonic Papers, 10, No. 4, Winter, 1968, pp. 409-429 at p. 429

before they took root in the social system. However, while the Czechoslovakian economic reforms had spread to a general democratization of society, the Hungarians allowed only a minimal change in the political system. As Barnabas Buky notes, "They (the Hungarian Communist Party, HSWP) intended to introduce a new 'mechanism' which would make better use of the economic base without disturbing the political superstructure..."⁵

To maintain the dominant position of the Party, the HSWP, in its monthly theoretical journal, Partelet, published recommendations for Party reform. Changes, such as: 1. an increase in general knowledge and expertise in specific areas for Party members; 2. an increase in economic policy formation by local Party organs; 3. the development of a partnership between the local Party and other local organizations; and 4. an improvement in communication within the Party,⁶ sought to strengthen and improve the HSWP.

Although Kadar had been a strong supporter of Dubcek and reportedly opposed the Soviet intervention up to the last minute, Hungary did participate in the invasion of Czechoslovakia. In a report in the Magyar Hirlap, Kadar, discussing the Czechoslovakian issue, stated that the principles of

"...Marxism-Leninism, the spirit of proletarian internationalism and sentiments of friendship guided Hungary's conduct through all stages of the crisis. The invasion was unavoidable and necessary because the danger of counter-revolution grew more menacing day by day imperiling the heart of Europe as a new field open to the imperialists.

⁵Barnabas Büky, "Hungary's NEM on a Treadmill", Problems of Communism, 21, No. 5, September-October, 1972, pp. 31-39 at p. 32

⁶see William F. Robinson, The Pattern of Reform in Hungary, Praeger, New York, 1973, pp. 264-265

⁷Magyar Hirlap (Budapest), October, 1968, as cited in, "Kádár Returns to View", East Europe, 17, No. 12, December, 1968, pp. 52-53 at p. 53

While Hungary and Czechoslovakia were undergoing economic and political reforms through most of 1968, Poland returned to stricter governmental controls as Wladyslaw Gomulka faced his first serious challenge to power since 1956 and the October revolution. As part of the Polish celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Great October Revolution, Adam Mickiewicz's play Forefather's Eve III (Dziady część III) was performed at the National Theatre in Warsaw in December, 1968. Since this play had been previously performed throughout socialist Poland without incident, the Polish government did not expect any trouble. However, it soon became evident that some of the audience was using the play to express their anti-Soviet feelings. Following some of the more inflammatory passages,⁸ the audience would give the performers a standing ovation to express their agreement with the 18th Century poet. The Polish leadership, determined to prevent these incidents from spreading, ordered the play closed on January 31.

The closing of Forefather's Eve was immediately seen by the students and members of the intelligentsia as another sign of governmental censorship. On the same night as the closing, students demonstrated in Warsaw to protest the government's actions. This protest was quickly broken up and fifty of the demonstrators were arrested. During the month of February there were no further demonstrations but on March 8, the students once again turned to demonstrations to protest against the

⁸"They'll make me free--Yes! I do not know where the news came from,
But I know what freedom is if from the favour of Moscow!
Scoundrels they will remove only the fetters off of my hands and
feet
But will shackle the soul..."

Adam Mickiewicz, Dziady III (Forefather's Eve part III), Prologue, Ksiazka, Warsaw, 1947, p. 119

previous arrests and to demand more freedom. It was at this time that Gomulka's chief rival, Mieczyslaw Moczar, began his drive for power. As Minister of the Interior, Moczar was in charge of security and it is reported that he sent in the police to break up the demonstration as a means of forcing Gomulka out of power.⁹ With the intervention of the security forces, the demonstrations and eventually riots spread to other major university cities. As the demonstrations spread, Gomulka was faced with the dilemma of either admitting that the Party had been too strict or finding a scapegoat upon which to blame the incidents. The scapegoat was provided by Moczar's supporters, who warned of a Zionist conspiracy in Poland. In a speech of March 19, Gomulka began, "Important events have taken place in our country during the past ten days. A significant part of the student youth of Warsaw and other academic centres has been deceived and misled by forces contrary to socialism".¹⁰ These forces were found to be Zionists, revisionists, and reactionaries.

With Moczar's forces demanding the elimination of these enemies of the state, Gomulka began a purge of the Party, especially of the higher levels. Men such as Bobrowski, Schaff, Brus, Bauman and Kutin were dismissed from their posts and purged from the PZPR as Zionists or revisionists.¹¹

⁹see William Woods, Poland: Phoenix in the East, Pelican, Harmondsworth, 1972, and Jan Nowak, "The Struggle for Party Control in Poland", East Europe, 17, No. 5, May, 1968, pp. 2-6 for a more detailed account of Moczar's role in the March riots.

¹⁰"Speech by Wladyslaw Gomulka, Warsaw, 19, March 1968", Polish Perspectives, 11, No. 4, April, 1968, pp. I-XXI at p. I

¹¹The New York Times estimated that by April, 1968, 8,300 members of the PZPR had been purged. As cited in "Chronicle of Events", Polish Review, 14, No. 1, Winter, 1969, p. 69

In an attempt to maintain his position of power, Gomulka strengthened his ties with the Soviet Union and sought their approval for his actions. This approval was not long in coming; in an address, the Soviet Ambassador to Poland, Aristov, praised Gomulka as the "Favourite son of the Polish nation."¹²

By the end of April, Gomulka seemed to have regained control of the situation. The student riots had been ended by mass arrests, harsh police action, and an early closing of the universities. Moczar, though he strengthened his hold on the Department of Internal Affairs and on the veteran's organization, ZBoWiD, did not have the support of Moscow and was not yet strong enough to defeat Gomulka. As soon as the internal problems had been solved, Gomulka was faced with the problem of neighboring Czechoslovakia. If the Soviet Union looked upon the Czechoslovakian reforms with concern, Gomulka viewed them with alarm. Convinced that Czechoslovakia was being led by revisionists identical to the ones he had just defeated in Poland, Gomulka feared that if the reforms in Czechoslovakia were unchecked, he would soon have more problems in Poland. Because of this, he felt that the reforms must be stopped in whatever way necessary and he became one of the most fervent supporters of the invasion by the Warsaw Pact.¹³

¹²ibid., p. 96

¹³The other prominent East European leader who demanded Soviet action was East Germany's Walter Ulbricht. The reasons for Ulbricht's and Gomulka's hard line stand may not only have been their own political conservatism and fear that demands for liberalization would spread to their countries but also may have been due to their belief in a strong Warsaw Pact. East Berlin and Warsaw both feared that any weakening of the Warsaw Pact would jeopardize the security of their national borders. Since Brandt's rapprochement policies had not yet been implemented, Gomulka and Ulbricht worried that the actions of Dubcek would encourage West German designs on their lands.

Throughout this entire period, the workers as a class had remained inactive. Gomulka justified his harsh actions of the claim that:

All over the country numerous mass meetings and gatherings have been held, at which thousands of workers, inhabitants of towns and the countryside, raised their voices, demanding that those responsible for the existing state of affairs should be unmasked and that all those guilty should be severely punished.¹⁴

While the Party laid claim to widespread support for its actions, many Party-sponsored, anti-student demonstrations were poorly attended¹⁵ and often the issue changed from the student demonstrations to the problem with the Polish economy. The workers began to demand explanations for the November, 1967 rises in the price of meat; and for the shortages of certain consumer goods, especially meat and butter. The workers also wanted to learn what remedies the Party and government proposed for the ailing economy.

¹³In relating the reaction of Hungary's Janos Kádár to the Czechoslovakian reforms, Nicholas Bethell noted:

At this point it is worth recalling how in November, 1956, when Gomulka was hero of the world, the villain of the world was the Hungarian Janos Kádár, who had just been treacherously installed by the Russians as ruler amid the carnage of unsuccessful revolution. Such is the irony of history that twelve years later it was Janos Kadar who urged moderation on the Soviet leaders. The puppet became the defender of sovereignty, while Gomulka the hero became the prejudiced aggressor. And it seemed like a fateful coincidence that their victim in 1968 was Czechoslovakia, the country which in 1956 had served as a brutal, unsympathetic wedge between an impressive Polish-Hungarian solidarity.

Nicholas Bethell, Gomulka: His Poland and His Communism, Pelican, Harmondsworth, 1972, pp. 264-265

¹⁴op. cit., "Speech by Wladyslaw Gomulka, 19, March, 1968", p. I

¹⁵At a demonstration at the Zeron Factory in Warsaw only one half of the work force attended.
op. cit., Jan Nowak, p. 4

Thus, the situation in 1968 seemed ideal for the ouster of Gomulka's regime. The youth and intelligentsia viewed him as an entirely discredited man, who had betrayed the spirit of the 1956 reforms. While hoping for a "Polish Dubcek" to lead a reform movement, the intelligentsia continued to pressure the Party and the government for more freedom. Disenchanted with economic policies that caused shortages and higher prices and distrustful of Gomulka's close ties with the USSR, the workers seemed to be ready for a political change. In general,

The lack of confidence of workers, intellectuals and students in the government was exacerbated by unfulfilled promises and heavy-handed application of the administrative decisions in the political, economic and cultural spheres.¹⁶

The failure of a revolution to occur seems all the more surprising when it is recalled that Gomulka's main supporters in 1956 were the same workers and intellectuals who were so disenchanted with him by 1968. However, when one compares Gomulka with his main rival, Moczar, it is clear that Gomulka would be preferable to more Poles than the ultra-rightest Moczar. Perhaps the student slogan "Polska czeka----- na swego Dubczeka"¹⁷ (Poland waits for its Dubcek) best reveals the Poles' desire and need for someone who would offer a more liberal alternative than Gomulka or Moczar.¹⁸ When no alternative appeared in the Party the Poles had no choice but to support Gomulka.

While Gomulka may have alienated his original supporters, he

¹⁶Jerzy Ptakowski, "Behind the Unrest in Poland", East Europe, 17, No. 4, April, 1968, pp. 5-11 at p. 5

¹⁷op. cit., Nicholas Bethell, p. 258

¹⁸A man like Leszek Kolakowski probably would have been welcomed as the new Polish leader by a wide segment of the Polish population but he lacked a base within the PZPR and his views on Marxism were unacceptable to the PZPR and the Soviet leadership.

has significantly strengthened his position within the Party by 1968. Most liberals had either resigned or been dismissed as revisionists and Gomulka had been able to fill the Party hierarchy with strong supporters like Spychalski and Kliszko.¹⁹ By 1969, Gomulka had successfully stripped Moczar of his base in the Ministry of the Interior and the veteran's organization and had placed men more sympathetic to him in these sensitive posts. The unhesitating use of force to suppress the student riots in March may have further deterred the workers from revolt and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia provided an example of what could happen if an attempt was made to oust Gomulka.

Following the return to normalcy within the country and the "successful" solution to the Czechoslovakian problem, the PZPR turned its attention to the economy. Such difficulties as lagging exports, shoddy quality, obsolete machinery, questionable investment policies and unrealistic prices had been recognized as serious problems before 1968 and came under the scrutiny of the Fifth Congress of the PZPR in November, 1968. When the Congress called for "A comprehensive and internally consistent system of planning and management"²⁰ the general debate on economic reforms was resumed.

While most Polish economists agreed that the cause of most problems was the policy of extensive growth, there were two conflicting views of the economic base to be used under a system of intensive growth. One group, led by Professor Brus, had favoured the development of a decentralized economy similar to the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian models.

¹⁹Zenon Kliszko and Marian Spychalski were two allies of Gomulka in post-war Poland. Having suffered with him during the Stalinist purges, these men returned to national prominence in 1956.

²⁰Janusz G. Zielinski, Economic Reforms in Polish Industry, Oxford University Press, London, 1973, p. 17

Their argument that such an economy would produce more efficient results was countered by the view that

...decentralization in planning and management under conditions of increasing concentration of production does not lead to the stimulation of social initiative but results in transferring the powers of decision from democratically elected central authorities to groups of managers. In this way social control becomes more difficult and the centres of political power are unable to influence the economic development of the country.²¹

After the developments in Czechoslovakia, Party conservatives were able to point out the dangers that economic decentralization held for the Party and branded supporters of the market economy as "Revisionists".

With the March riots and the example of Czechoslovakia still vivid in their memory, the Polish leaders decided to build a series of reforms based on the old economic foundation of central planning. One of the most important reforms was that concerning the incentive system. Under the previous system, incentive had been tied to the fulfillment of the plan. This method resulted in a greater emphasis on output at the expense of efficiency, modernization and quality, forcing the individual enterprises to conceal reserves of materials, production capacities and manpower and to seek the easiest plan possible.

The new system of incentives would be based on

...a) making the yardsticks used to measure performance more objective, i.e. tying incentives to actual results (instead of the degree of implementation of the targets of the actual plan; b) pegging incentives to achievement of greater effectiveness; c) directing greater attention and interest to technical-economic progress over a larger period of time; d) making increases in remuneration contingent on actual economic returns, i.e., on the earnings of the enterprises, which means introducing a principle of self-financing in relation to incentive funds.²²

²¹"Planning", Polish Perspectives, 11, No. 2, February, 1968, pp. 59-65 at p. 62

²²Jozef Pajestka, "Streamlining the Economy", Polish Perspectives, 14, No. 2, February, 1971, pp. 7-10 at p. 10

A general aim of the reform was "to orient the economic and financial ground rules of the management of economic organizations and the system of economic incentives towards increasing efficiency and furthering technical progress."²³

Another problem that had plagued the Polish economy had been the pattern of consumption. The growth of the purchasing power of the public had led to "an increased demand for a number of articles. As a result, market supplies---particularly of the most sought after goods-- have been often inadequate, and not enough attention has been paid to the range and quality of goods."²⁴ Because of shortages in consumer goods, the people spent more money on foodstuffs.²⁵ This spending pattern created many problems for the Polish government. Shortages of foodstuffs became more common since the government could not meet the increasing demands. The demand for more food also was detrimental to investment policy since

In order to achieve one percentage point of increase in the consumption of manufactured consumer goods the national economy spends several times less in investment outlays than for achieving the same percentage of increase in foodstuffs consumption²⁶

Thus, the government decided that the growing consumption of foodstuffs must be stemmed and eventually reduced. This was to be

²³ibid., p. 9

²⁴Kazimierz Secomski, "Economy 1967/68", Polish Perspectives, 11, No. 2, February, 1968, pp. 5-9 at p. 8

²⁵"Given an annual growth of per capita consumption, demand for food is rising by 3.1-3.8 percent (the natural increase is 1 percent)." "New patterns of Consumption", Polish Perspectives, 13, No. 2, February, 1970, pp. 51-56 at p. 53

²⁶Stanislaw Kuzinski, "Consumption and the Market", Polish Perspectives, 11, No. 3, March, 1968, pp. 26-34 at p. 26

achieved by two means: an increase in the assortment and availability of other consumer goods and a restructured price system. While Kuzinski was one of the many advocates of a new price alignment, he warned that

It should be noted in passing that one of the essential conditions of activating price policy from this point of view is to overcome an exceptionally deep-rooted dislike, prevalent among large sections of our society, of all price movements, and the lack of understanding for the necessity to use all available media for explaining the reasons for decisions taken in this field so that a realistic appraisal of the situation prevents unjustified negative reactions to the obvious requirements of the national economy.²⁷

The Politbureau members ignored this warning and on December 9, 1970 they decided to initiate a series of price changes for most consumer goods. The new prices, publicly announced on December 12, were to take effect on December 13. As shown in Table 2.1, the government sought to reduce the consumption of foodstuffs by significantly raising the prices and, in an effort to offset the effects of the price increases on the consumer, the prices for certain other goods were reduced.

Our Party can best convert its intentions into fact only when its political line finds the active support of the working class, becomes the line of the working masses, when its aims become the aims of the nation, when millions of people find its ideas and slogans to be correct and beneficial to the country--in a word, when it enjoys the confidence of the masses. Only then can we fully activate the vast potential of will, industry, dedication, and social initiative of the people and eliminate all difficulties and obstacles which may accumulate on this road.²⁸

These words of Gomulka, repeated throughout his career, stress the need for a close tie between the Party and the working class; only when

²⁷ibid., p. 33

²⁸"Closing Address by Wladyslaw Gomulka, The First Secretary of the PZPR, Delivered at the Fifth Congress of the PZPR on November 16, 1968", Contemporary Poland, Supplement, December, 1968, pp. 3-11 at pp. 3-4

TABLE 2.1

SELECTED CONSUMER PRICE CHANGES

A. Price increases on food

Meat and meat products, by an average of 17.6 percent;
Animal fats by 11.1 to 33.4 percent;
Flour by 16 percent;
Milk and milk products by 8 to 25 percent;
Fish and fish products by 11.7 percent;
Jam, marmalade, plum jam by 36.8 percent;
Coffee substitute by 9.2 percent.

B. Price increases on durable consumer goods and manufactured products

Cotton textiles by 14.5 percent;
Woolen textiles by 19 percent;
Rayon textiles by 28 percent;
Other natural fiber textiles by 37 to 69 percent;
Cotton knitwear by 15 to 19.3 percent;
Leather footwear by 23.8 percent;
Tin and cast iron pots and pans by 19.8 percent;
Glasses by 33 percent;
Some motorcycles by 12.5 percent;
Furniture by 15.6 percent;
Some cosmetics by 15.7 percent.

C. Price reductions of durable consumer goods and manufactured products

Pharmaceutical goods by 31 percent;
Television sets by 13.1 percent;
Radios by 19.2 percent;
Refrigerators by 15.8 percent;
Washing machines by 17 percent;
Tape recorders by 21 percent;
Various synthetic fiber textiles by 15 to 30 percent;
Stockings by 29.2 to 40.5 percent;
Synthetic fiber knitwear by 16.6 to 29.4 percent;
Shirts and no-iron blouses by 16.2 percent;
Some paper industry products by 29.2 percent;
Plastic household utensils by 20.7 percent;
Some food concentrates by 18.9 percent.

Source: Radio Free Europe, "Consumer Price Changes", Polish Situation Report, No. 62, December 18, 1970, pp. 6-7

this tie exists can the Party hope for success in achieving its goals. Apparently, these words were forgotten during the period of economic reforms for both the new system of incentives and the new prices were announced without much advance publicity and resulted from little consultation with the public.

The new incentive evoked almost universal distrust from all the workers. Under the old system, the workers depended on overtime to supplement their wages but in an effort to reduce overtime expenditures, the new system was designed to keep overtime at a minimum. With the new incentive system tied to productivity and modernization, the workers feared that there would be no growth in their income for a number of years. Certain groups, such as the shipyard workers, feared that the new standards would result in a decrease in their bonuses.

Indeed, it could be said without exaggeration that the blue and white collar workers alike soon came to look upon the new scheme of incentives as a monumental plot to rob them of their rightful earnings.²⁹

The system of incentives had been bitter medicine for most workers but the price increase came as a complete shock to the workers. With the average family already spending nearly 56 percent of its budget on food,³⁰ they simply could not afford the increased outlays. The fact that the prices were being raised was serious in itself, but the timing seemed to show the arrogance of the government and its total disregard for the people. Christmas is the single largest holiday in Poland and Polish tradition calls for lavish meals, but with the new prices, few could afford to celebrate the holidays.

²⁹S. Staron, "The Winds of Change", East Europe, 20, No. 4, April, 1971, pp. 2-11 at p. 6

³⁰op. cit., Nicholas Bethell, p. 277

The price increase was the last straw for the workers of the Gdansk shipyards and on Monday, December 14, the workers went on strike and took over the shipyards. The workers then began a march to the voivodship's Party headquarters in an effort to state their grievances. When the Party officials refused to discuss the demands, the workers became angered and attacked the building. Before the night was over, the building had been burnt to the ground.³¹

Because of the violence of the previous day, the use of armed force was decided upon by Gomulka and some of the Politbureau members. On the same day the strike spread through out Gdansk and spread to the neighboring city of Gdynia. An indication of the stand that the Party was to take on the events was given by the speech of the Gdansk Party Secretary, Kociolek. In a televised address, he blamed the demonstrations on youth, drunks, common thieves and hooligans. This view was repeated in each city where disturbances occurred. For instance, the Kurier Szczeciński reported that, "Yesterday, our city was the scene of tragic events. Hiding behind the backs of shipyard workers who had marched into the streets, anarchistic and hooligan elements and long-haired youths set fire to several public buildings,..."³²

On December 17, with the riots rapidly spreading to other industrial cities such as, Elblag, Poznan, and Szczecin, the Council of Ministers declared a state of emergency and authorized the use of whatever means necessary to quell the riots. That evening Premier

³¹As late as May, 1973, this building was still in ruins and was patrolled by armed policemen.

³²Kurier Szczeciński, Szczecin, December 18-19, 1970, as cited in Radio Free Europe, Polish Press Survey, No. 2272, January 15, 1971, p. 5

Cyrankiewicz went on national television to order the workers to return to work and blamed the riots on "...hostile forces endeavoring to create new seats of anarchy."³³

The workers' violent reaction to the 1970 price increases and Gomulka's harsh attitude towards the protestors forced some members of the PZPR leadership to reassess their support for Gomulka. As the riots spread and became more violent, it must have become apparent to a significant segment of the Party that only a change of leadership would avoid a revolution with all its tragic consequences.³⁴ Thus, criticism of Gomulka and his policies mounted within the Party. During a heated discussion at a Politbureau meeting, Gomulka suffered a minor stroke. He was hospitalized and this opened the way for an alliance of Gierek's moderates³⁵ and Moczar's supporters to force his resignation. Edward Gierek was selected as the new First Secretary at the VII Plenary Session of the PZPR.

On Sunday, December 20, Gierek, in a national address, blamed the events of the past week on the failure of the Party to consider the

³³"Exerpts of the Televised Speech of Premier Joseph Cyrankiewicz", New York Times, December 20, 1970, Sec. 1. pp. 1 & 14 at p. 1

³⁴"...over and over again I was assured quietly--by dissidents and even by Party members, that the Polish mood in December 1970 was one of such anger and determination, such depression at the deafness of an all-pervading bureaucracy, such solidarity with the perfectly justified demands of those who actually dared to go into the streets, that if Gomulka had not been replaced there would have been insurrection, and that if, as a result Russians had crossed the frontier, Poles would actually have taken up arms in a forlorn three day's war whose outcome would have been utterly predictable."

op. cit., William Woods, p. 180

³⁵Edward Gierek represented a new generation of Polish PZPR leaders. Since he spent the war years in the West, Gierek was not tied to the old Russian-trained cadre nor to the Communist partisan unit, the AL. Representing the Silesian district in Katowice, Gierek gained a national reputation for the prosperity which he had brought to his district.

views of the people and promised that

The iron rule of our political leaders and our policy in general, must always reckon with reality, wide consultations with the working class and intelligentsia, respect for the principles of collective actions and democracy are the proper concerns of authority.³⁶

With the changes in the Pólitbureau and government and the speech by Gierek, strikes and disturbances died down in most cities but the shipyard workers of Gdansk and Szczecin, continuing to press for their demands,³⁷ maintained their occupation of the docks and refused to return to work. Realizing that the continuation of these strikes could cause the renewal of strikes in other industrial areas, Gierek and Premier Jaroszewicz tried to satisfy the strikers. They visited the workers in Gdansk and Szczecin; listened to their complaints; and made some concessions; but Gierek and Premier Jaroszewicz vetoed any roll-back in prices.³⁸ The reasons they gave were that such a roll-back would seriously harm the economy, cause even more shortages, and would only benefit those who earned more money.

While Gierek did not promise any immediate improvements in the economy, he tried to portray a future Poland, where with the workers' help, things would be much better.

We want to lead you, comrades, as I have already said, to a stage, where you can stay: go ahead the road is straight and smooth, go further young people! And we need your help in this, comrades. And words will not help us get there. You understand--this or that resolution will not help, but concrete action will help us.³⁹

³⁶"Przemówienie Radiowa--telewizji tow. Edwarda Gierka" (Radio and television address of Comrade Edward Gierek), Nowe Drogi, 1 (260), January, 1971, pp. 7-10 at p. 8

³⁷See Appendix I

³⁸Prices were rolled-back to December 12 levels on March 1, 1971.

³⁹Ewa Wacowska, Rewolta Szczecińska i Jej Znaczenie, (The Szczecin Revolt and its Meaning), Instytut Literacki, Paris, 1971, p. 36

The promise of reform and the pleading for their cooperation, finally convinced the workers to give the new leadership a chance and they returned to work on January 24, 1971.

During the meeting with the new political leaders, Gierek and Jaroszewicz, a Szczecin worker raised an important issue when he asked: "We ask for a frank answer from the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the PZPR. Is it necessary to spill blood in order to change the Central Committee and the government?"⁴⁰ This question still waits a satisfactory answer.

⁴⁰ibid., p. 82

CHAPTER III

The Worker and the Party

Once a relative calm had been restored to Poland, especially in the coastal cities, Poles and the new Party leadership sought to determine why the December events had occurred and how the Party of the working class could have so alienated its theoretical source of strength -- the workers. In part to satisfy worker demands and also as proof of the Party's honest desire to reform, the VIII CC Plenum of the PZPR was convened in February to determine the causes of the December riots and to propose reforms that would be acted upon at the VI PZPR Congress in December, 1971.

The VIII Plenum decided that the principal problem within the Party had been the reappearance of the Stalinist error of the personality cult. As the years have passed since his ascension to power in 1956, Gomulka's role as First Secretary continually grew so that by the late 1960's he had assumed a monopolistic control of the decision-making process.

As is typical of a personality cult, a change in emphasis had occurred in Poland. No longer was the Party embodied by the Politbureau or the Central Committee, but rather one man represented the Party, a man who had assumed a cloak of infallibility in his decisions. As Gomulka gained dominance over the Party machinery, his name became synonymous with the nation's successes. Statements such as "... the most important

pages of Poland's recent history are connected with the name of comrade Gomulka"¹ constantly stressed Gomulka's primacy while ignoring the concept of collegial decision-making.

To reinforce his hold over the Party, Gomulka had placed his allies in positions of authority. Old friends, such as Jaszczuk, Kliszko and Strzelecki, as members of the Politbureau were merely "rubber stamps" for Gomulka's policies and those men who dared to disagree with him were soon ousted for holding "revisionist" views. Instead of offering a format for the debate of policy and issues, the Politbureau assumed the character of a tape recorder which "played back" Gomulka's views at the appropriate time. The concept of democratic centralism became a hollow ritual which everyone subscribed to but no one practiced. As the Politbureau became weaker and weaker, Gomulka chose to consult with it less and less. By December 1970, the Politbureau had become such a hollow and ineffective body that Gomulka did not even bother to convene it to discuss the outbreak of the Gdansk riots. Instead he relied on an informal meeting with some of his most trusted advisers to formulate the government's brutal and incendiary response to the situation. If Gomulka had not been hospitalized during the height of the crisis, it is questionable whether his opponents would have had enough strength to depose him.

With the growth of the Gomulka cult, there developed a tendency for the Party leadership to ignore social needs and moods. Armed with the view that what Comrade Wiczyslaw² decides is good for Poland, is good

¹"Current Developments: Poland", East Europe, 18, No. 3, March, 1969, p. 51

²Comrade Wiczyslaw was Gomulka's code name during World War II and he often was referred to by that name.

for Poland, the Party became more interested in achieving higher levels of productivity and in building more heavy industry than in bettering the state of the citizens. The material benefits which were to accompany socialism were to be delayed for future generations while the present generation of workers would have to continue to sacrifice and even to go without certain necessities. The December price increases could be seen as

...one more symptom of the disregard shown for social moods, of the neglect by the Party leadership in recent years of the fundamental objective of a socialist state, which is to strive for the better satisfaction of the people's needs.³

While the Politbureau fell into disuse under Gomulka, another and equally important tool of the Party became rusty for lack of use. In accord with the principles of democratic centralism, the intermediate levels of the Party played an important role in society as transmission belts linking the citizens with the Party leaders. In this role the Party members were to explain the Party's policies and decisions to the people and see that the Party's line was properly carried out, while simultaneously informing the higher levels of the Party of the mood and needs of the people. The role as transmitter of the populace's views became increasingly irrelevant as time progressed. Since Gomulka was certain of the correctness of his policies, he did not bother to listen to the people. When the middle echelon Party activists saw high-ranking Party members sacked for criticizing Party policy, they realized that it was safer to avoid reporting any disgruntlement.

³Mieczyslaw F. Rakowski, "Turning Point", Polish Perspectives, 14, No. 5, May, 1971, pp. 8-13. at p. 10

Even though the middle echelon had fallen into disuse, the proposed price increases were potentially so serious that various Party organizations tried to inform the leadership of the possible repercussions. But the intermediate links had become so irrelevant to Gomulka and his followers that,

Numerous reports attesting to the fact that the Politbureau's letter of December 12 had met with a cold reception by the Party organizations had not been treated seriously as a warning that a sharp sociopolitical conflict might break out. The mood pervading Party meetings was largely disregarded, while the anxiety among the Party members, the *aktyf* and the field Party organizations was ignored and made light of.⁴

The complete disregard of the reports of intermediate levels caused the Party leadership to lose touch with reality. By ignoring the warnings and the worries of the middle echelon, Gomulka and his followers convinced themselves that all was well within the country and that the Party had firm control over every aspect of life. With this self-delusion, the leadership first initiated the controversial price increases and then failed to realize their disastrous results.

The role of the Party's intermediate level as educator and explainer of Party policy also fell into disuse. Rather than allowing the intermediate levels time to lay the foundation for an acceptance of the price increases, the Party leadership disregarded most advice⁵ and sprang the increases upon a completely unprepared nation.

As a result of the personality cult, a situation where "the intermediate links, the everyday channels of communication, linking the citizens and the representatives of public authority and vice versa,

⁴Radio Free Europe, "Documentary Material on the Eighth PZPR CC Plenum", *Nowe Drogi*, Special Issue, undated, "Polish Press Survey", No. 2313, July 14, 1971, p. 5

⁵See page 39

were not functioning"⁶ developed.

Since the key role of the Party's intermediate level was to provide a link between the workers and the Party leadership, any weakening of this level means a simultaneous weakening of the bond between the worker and the Party. By ignoring the advice of the intermediate links, Gomulka was in effect bypassing any worker participation in the decision-making process. As the workers' level of input into the process dropped, their sense of frustration and alienation with the Party increased. This frustration had increased to such a great level by December 1970 that

One clear thing, anti-social forces did not start the events. The discontent of the workers and their anger over the reason for the ill-conceived decisions actually provided the basis for the utilization by enemy forces. Discontent was deepened for the decision carried the essential meaning for the working class that decisions were taken more and more frequently without discussions with the working class.⁷

While the PZPR claimed that improper policies and the lack of consultations had alienated the populace from the Party, a survey by Radio Free Europe showed as low a level of support for the Communist Parties of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Radio Free Europe, through an independent public research institute, conducted surveys primarily among travellers to Western Europe from Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, who planned to return to their homeland.⁸

⁶Tygodnik Powszechny, January 1, 1971, as cited in Radio Free Europe, Polish Press Survey, No. 2264, January 13, 1971, pp. 1-4 at p. 2

⁷Editorial, "Brzemienny Czas--doniosle decyzje" (Heavy times--grave decisions), Nowe Drogi, 1 (260), January, 1971, pp. 22-27 at p. 22

⁸Methodological reservations for this type of survey exist. The type of the composition of the survey was not specified and since the costs of travel to the West are prohibitive, a disproportionate share of the respondents were probably white-collar workers. Although the sample did not constitute an accurate representation of each country's population

In this survey, conducted between May 1968 and December 1970, the interviewee was asked to "Imagine that free elections would be held in his country involving five political parties--a Communist Party, a (non-totalitarian) Socialist Party, a Christian Democrat Party, a Peasant Party and a National Conservative Party."⁹ The respondent was then asked which Party he would vote for.

TABLE 3.1

PARTY PREFERENCES IN HYPOTHETICAL FREE ELECTIONS IN POLAND, HUNGARY AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA (in %)										
	POLAND			HUNGARY			CZECHOSLOVAKIA*			
	'68	'69	'70	'68	'69	'70	'68I	'68II	'69	'70
Communist Party	4	3	3	4	8	5	12	6	3	3
Democratic Socialist Party	20	31	35	21	34	40	44	31	43	41
Christian Democrat Party	34	29	36	29	32	27	16	20	22	26
Peasant Party	11	7	6	12	10	13	6	3	4	6
Nationalist Conservative Party	10	7	5	12	4	2	6	10	8	7
Other/No answer	21	23	15	20	12	13	16	30	20	17
Number of cases	1169	1371	1316	1174	1106	1525	668	1129	1714	1423
* 1968I were surveys conducted prior to the Soviet invasion while 1968II followed the invasion.										
Source: Radio Free Europe, "Party Preference Trends in Hypothetical Free Elections in East Europe", July 1971, pp. 3, 6, 10										

⁸distribution, the results were weighted in order to correct any disproportions and to offer a rough measure of the society as a whole. Other reservations include the fact that the organization which conducted the survey was not specified and that the conditions during the interviews were not given. Despite these reservations, the response patterns seem to be intuitively reasonable and can be used with a high degree of certainty in this study.

⁹Radio Free Europe, "Party Preference Trends in Hypothetical Free Elections in East Europe", July 1971, p. 1

Table 3.1 suggests that during this period the support for the Communist Party in Poland was never very great. Furthermore the study determined that

The pro-Communist minority was much better educated and better positioned than the average; the staunchest supporters of the system seem to be found in the New Class, although even here only 7 percent of the university educated interviewees and 5 percent¹⁰ of the technocrats said that they would support the Communist Party.

It would seem safe to assume that the low level of support in Poland was partially caused by the worsening economic and political situation under Gomulka. However, when comparing the low level of Polish support for the Communist Party with the levels of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, it appears that the Communist Party had little support in any East European country. The only exceptions to this occurred in Hungary in 1969, the year NEM was introduced, and in Czechoslovakia prior to the Soviet invasion. Thus it appears that the Communist Parties in these countries can gain in popularity only by initiating drastic economic and political reforms.

Between June and December 1970, Radio Free Europe conducted another survey using similar methods. The purpose of this survey was to determine the expectations of the people for internal change in their countries. The interviewee was given a card listing five statements and was asked to choose which one was most likely to occur in the 1970's. The five statements were:

- A) In response to the demands of the seventies the system will grant more freedom.
- B) Under pressure from the people the entire system will fundamentally change.

¹⁰ibid., p. 5

- C) The regime will counter demands for more freedom by returning to a harder political line.
 D) Pressure for more freedom will decrease as more and more people pursue only their own interests.
 E) Communism will be increasingly accepted by the population.¹¹

TABLE 3.2

POLITICAL EXPECTATIONS IN POLAND, HUNGARY AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA			
Statement	Poland*	Hungary	Czechoslovakia
A	30%	33%	14%
B	10%	5%	3%
C	26%	21%	35%
D	20%	30%	42%
E	7%	9%	3%
Other/No answer	7%	2%	3%
Number of cases	1316	1525	1423
* Before Gomulka's Fall			
Source: Radio Free Europe, "Czechoslovak, Hungarian and Polish Expectations about Domestic Political Trends in the 1970's", March 1972, pp. 3, 8, 13			

Acting under the assumption that expectations about the future are colored by the perception of the present, "the samples were also asked to compare the political situation in their country with that of 'about one year ago' and to state whether it has become better or worse or has remained unchanged."¹²

Considering the political situation in Poland prior to December 1970, the amount of Poles expressing the belief that the system would liberalize was surprising. It was a figure considerably greater than the Czechoslovakian and nearly equal to the Hungarian expectations.¹³

¹¹Radio Free Europe, "Czechoslovak, Hungarian and Polish Expectations about Domestic Political Trends in the 1970's", March 1972, p. 2

¹²ibid., p. 2

¹³One would expect generally optimistic Hungarian responses because of the reforms that were going on in that country.

TABLE 3.3

ASSESSMENTS OF THE POLITICAL SITUATIONS IN POLAND, HUNGARY AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA			
Assessment	Poland*	Hungary	Czechoslovakia
Better than it was a year ago	11%	25%	7%
The same as it was a year ago	55%	67%	39%
Worse than it was a year ago	34%	7%	53%
Other/No answer	---	1%	1%
* Before Gomulka's Fall			
Source: Radio Free Europe, "Czechoslovak, Hungarian and Polish Expectations about Domestic Political Trends in the 1970's", March 1972, pp. 6, 12, 16			

The fear of a clamp down by the PZPR, expressed by over a quarter of those interviewed, represents a significant portion of the sample, but when compared with the "more liberal" Hungary, it seems remarkable that the percentage was so low.

Perhaps the greatest difference in comparing Poland with Hungary and Czechoslovakia is the portion of the respondents who chose statement D. While a large minority of the Hungarian and Czechoslovakians saw their compatriots pursuing selfish goals, the number of Poles expressing this view was relatively smaller.

As far as the perception of the present situation was concerned, the more positive Hungarian view probably reflected the NEM reforms and the new emphasis on consumer goods, while the continued presence of Soviet troops and the ongoing purges likely gave rise to the Czechoslovakian disgruntlement. While a majority of Poles saw no change in

the political situation, a large minority (34 percent) claimed that conditions were worsening. With the December price increases, one can assume that this minority increased and that this section of Polish society led the December protests.

In considering the December riots, the VIII CC Plenum of the Central Committee tried to determine the cause for the discontent in Poland. In its final report, the Central Committee stated:

The roots of the latest crisis lay not in that Party line (the basic premises), nor in the Party's Marxist-Leninist principles, but in the failure to respect these principles in running the Party and the state. The Party will not abandon the basic premises of its policy, but it will eliminate errors which during the years past, crept in and marred that policy.¹⁴

The cause of the December riots was not due to the structure nor to the basic Party line but was caused by a cancer growing on a healthy body and once this cancer would be removed the body would become strong and healthy again. Further proof of the basic correctness of the Party line was that

...despite all objective and subjective difficulties, the general line of the Party's policies has proved itself within the life of the Nation, becoming the source of its undeniable successes. The Party has always found sufficient strength within herself to make, with the support of the working class and the help of all working people, any essential corrections in methods or directions of her activity. She also knew how to back away from mistaken decisions, to seek and find solutions that better matched social needs and possibilities. This proves the real strength of the Party, her political and moral reliability and role subservient to the needs of the Nation.¹⁵

¹⁴Radio Free Europe, "Documentary Materials on the Eighth PZPR CC Plenum; Political Conclusions", Nowe Drogi, Special Issue, undated, "Polish Press Survey", No. 2315, July 28, 1971, p. 2

¹⁵"For further Socialist development of the Polish People's Republic: Directives of the PZPR CC for the VI Party Congress Adopted at the Plenary Meeting held on September, 1971", Polish Interpress Agency, 1971, p. 11

Once the Central Committee determined what errors had developed under Gomulka, it set forth a series of proposals to correct the Party's faults. One of the first tasks was to correct and reassert the Party's leading role in society. Under Gomulka the Party had lost sight of its obligations. Now, the Central Committee stressed the need of the Party

...to recognize correctly the basic interests of the working class and of the nation and to determine--under specific conditions--the correct proportion between current and long-range interests as well as among the interests of specific groups of the working people.¹⁶

To insure that the Party would maintain and strengthen its leading role, changes within the Party were necessary. In order to guarantee that the Party's leadership maintained its close ties with the working class, the role of democratic centralism within the PZPR needed to be strengthened. The new Party leadership was encouraged to create favourable conditions for a free exchange of opinion within the Party. With a flow of information and ideas from the higher to lower levels and vice versa, the leadership would be able to communicate better with the working class, indeed, "Discussions and consultations should always proceed the taking of any decision and should embrace the concepts involved, not merely the manner of implementing the solutions suggested."¹⁷ Besides discussions, the Party should make extensive use of the mass media in order to communicate with the lower cadre levels and with the public.

While the Central Committee had been designed as the Party's highest ranking political body, it fell into disuse under Gomulka. To control the Politbureau and the Secretariat, the VIII Plenum

¹⁶op. cit., Radio Free Europe, "Polish Press Survey", No. 2315, p. 1

¹⁷ibid., p. 3

recommended that the Central Committee play a more active role in society. The Politbureau and the CC Secretariat were urged to keep the Central Committee constantly informed of the political situation and current activities so that it could better fulfill its role as

...the only body which is lawfully empowered to outline the directions of policy making and to maintain control over the activities of the Politbureau and of the CC Secretariat.¹⁸

With the emphasis on maintaining close communications between the workers and the Party leadership, the role of the activist assumed new importance. It is through the Party's membership at the cadre levels that most of the people come into daily contact with the Party. Through this contact, the Party is able to determine the mood of the people and to discuss policies with them. Thus, it is important that the Party activist be well informed and able to discuss the Party line intelligently. Equally important is the fact that, "The working people from their view judge Party policy not only on the basis of declarations and plenary sessions but also on the basis of the moral aspect and conduct of the members."¹⁹ Thus the Central Committee decided that the key to Party membership should be "quality not quantity".

As previously stated, a key reason for the December riots was that the Party leadership had lost touch with the working class. As Edward Babiuch stated:

Strengthening the workers' cell of the Party and increasing the active role of the worker as well as worker influence in Party

¹⁸ibid., p. 8

¹⁹Edward Babiuch, "O niektórych problemach rozwoju i umacniania partii" (Several problems on the development and strengthening of the Party), Nowe Drogi, 9 (268), September, 1971, pp. 3-12 at p. 6

organization has a key meaning for the activities of the entire Party. From every point of view this is the most important of all activities in the development of the Party, vital for the full revival of the Leninist base of Party activities.²⁰

To achieve the goal of greater worker participation, the VIII Plenum suggested that the percentage of worker activists appointed to Party boards and committees should be increased. Since quality was the key criterion for advancement within the Party, Party schools should be established for worker activists. These schools would help to negate any advantage held by white-collar workers and would facilitate worker advancement.

The entire area of reform by the PZPR centered around the conviction that wider consultations with the people would strengthen the bond between the Party and the working class. Through these consultations the PZPR would be better able to stay in touch with reality and could establish proper Party policy. As the VIII Plenum stated:

When policy corresponds to the aspirations, interests, and sense of proportion of the prevailing majority of the nation, and above all of the working class, when the community begins to feel that effective progress is being made, then the socialist and constructive tendencies exert a dominant influence on its attitude.²¹

Only under such conditions can the journey towards Communism continue.

Following the ouster of Gomulka in December, Radio Free Europe continued its poll to determine if there had been any significant change in the Poles' political expectations and assessments. Despite a small sample (254 cases), Tables 3.4 and 3.5 seem to indicate a marked change in the outlook of the people.

²⁰ibid., p. 9

²¹op. cit., Radio Free Europe, "Polish Press Survey", No. 2313, p. 13

TABLE 3.4

POLITICAL EXPECTATIONS IN POLAND		
Statement	After Gomulka's Fall	Before Gomulka's Fall
A	55%	30%
B	25%	10%
C	13%	26%
D	6%	20%
E	0%	7%
Other/No answer	1%	7%

* For a list of the statements see pages 52 and 53

Source: Radio Free Europe, "Czechoslovak, Hungarian and Polish Expectations about Domestic Political Trends in the 1970's", March 1972, p. 17

TABLE 3.5

ASSESSMENT OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN POLAND		
Assessment	After Gomulka's Fall	Before Gomulka's Fall
Better than it was a year ago	24%	11%
The same as it was a year ago	39%	55%
Worse than it was a year ago	37%	34%

Source: Radio Free Europe, "Czechoslovak, Hungarian and Polish Expectations about Domestic Political Trends in the 1970's", March 1972, p. 18

While the Polish responses to the first survey had been surprisingly optimistic, the post-December survey revealed an even greater feeling of optimism. In the first series of interviews nearly one-third of the respondents had believed that the regime would grant more freedom. By the time of the second interview, the percentage of those choosing statement A had grown to 55 percent. With the change in leaders the portion of the Poles with a favourable perception of the state of the political situation had increased.

The increased belief that the government would liberalize under Gierek placed him in a difficult position. Although most people were willing to cooperate with the new leadership, their cooperation was based on the condition that the problems which had arisen under Gomulka would be eliminated. As he tried to satisfy the people's demands, Gierek had to keep their demands within those limits which Moscow would approve of; he also had to reassert a degree of Party leadership over the reform process or else risk the total alienation of the Party from the people and its complete collapse, as had happened in Hungary in 1956. To add to his problems, during the period that Gierek balanced the demands of the workers with the concern of Moscow, he also had to be aware of the threat presented by either the allies of Gomulka or of Moczar.

If the Pole's optimism for internal change caused problems for Gierek, it was also a source of power and legitimacy for him. By his direct appeals to the people, Gierek and not the Party gained the conditional support of the people. A measure of their support was the many pledges made by factory crews to work harder to help meet the economic goals that Gierek had established. With the tentative support of the populace and especially of the workers, Gierek was able to solidify his position of power and could replace Gomulka's supporters with his own.

Under the leadership of Gierek, wide consultation on issues became a key concept for the PZPR. One of the first acts of the new leadership was a trip to Gdansk to discuss the situation with the striking shipyard workers. Soon after this trip, First Secretary Gierek and Prime Minister Jaroszewicz travelled to Szczecin to try to convince the strikers there to return to work. The Głos Szczeciński's report (January 26, 1971) of the meeting stated:

There were not speeches at this meeting, nor resolutions, there was honest, hard and straight forward discussion. The discussion of the representatives of the highest Party and governmental levels with the workers was a conversation without secrets, open and without diplomatic dodges.²²

Through the Gierek regime, consultation with the populace has become a symbol of the PZPR and as such it had received wide press coverage. As a reply to the Central Committee's request for public discussions on the proposals for the VI Congress, the press, in articles such as those in Kultura,²³ described the debates occurring in various locations throughout the country.²⁴ To further contacts between officials and the public, a televised forum with officials was begun. Called Citizen's Tribune, the program consisted of answers to questions (written or phoned in by the public) by Party and governmental officials and soon became one of the most popular programs. The emphasis on discussions with the people was perhaps best exemplified by a recent article in Polityka. To show how greatly the level of discussion had

²²Ewa Wacowska, editor, Dokumenty--Poznań 1956--Grudzień 1970 (Documents--Poznan 1956--December 1970), Biblioteka Kultury, Instytut Literacki, Paris, 1971, p. 54

²³Danuta Frey-Majewska, "W Elblagu" (In Elblag), Kultura, 9 (431), September 12, 1971, pp. 6-7

²⁴Although the guidelines (of the September 1971 Plenum) seem to have been read and discussed far more extensively and critically than past theses, it is clear from a poll conducted by the Polish state radio and TV opinion polling center (with results announced November 14) that the reading and discussion were by no means universal during the two months after the guidelines were made public. Of those polled 64 percent had not yet read the guidelines and an additional 14 percent only glanced at them. A full 47 percent of the sample had not participated in the pre-Congress discussion. Only 13 percent had actually taken part in discussions at meeting, the other 40 percent having only informally talked about the guidelines with relatives or friends.

Richard F. Staar, editor, Yearbook on International Communist Affairs 1972, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1973, p. 53

increased since Gierek assumed power, the article totaled the number of meetings that he has had with various groups. From December 1971 to December 1975, Gierek has met with 192 groups from industrial plants, 62 from agricultural circles and 152 other groups.²⁵

While there was a noticeable increase in the emphasis on consultations, it appeared to be more on quantity than on quality. Reports of consultations seemed to be interested more in the fact that discussions occurred rather than in the nature of these discussions or their results. A portion of Rewolta Szczecinska i Jej Znaczenia was a transcript of a recording of the meeting between the Szczecin shipyard workers and Gierek and Jaroszewicz. Judging by the transcript, the purpose of the meeting seemed to be not so much a forum for discussion as simply an announcement to the workers of the decisions already made. When the question of the price increases came up, Jaroszewicz and Gierek refused to consider a price rollback and would not explain their reasons beyond giving a few generalities.²⁶

For wide consultations to be effective, a free exchange and spread of information was a necessity. The VI Congress of the PZPR in its final resolutions stated:

It is the obligation of Party and state authorities and of all units in the economic and social apparatus to swiftly and accurately inform public opinion about their activities and plans through the press, radio and television.²⁷

²⁵Mieczyslaw F. Rakowski, "Nie tylko bilans" (Not only a balance), Polityka, 50 (1980), December 13, 1975, pp. 1-2 at p. 2

²⁶The price rollback came on March 1, 1971, but the leaders' refusal to explain their original decision indicated that open debate had definite limits.

²⁷"Resolution of the VI Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party. For further Socialist Development of the Polish People's Republic", Polish Interpress Agency, Warsaw, 1971, p. 37

Immediately following the leadership change, the Party and the press had fulfilled this obligation. The reports of the meetings in Szczecin and Gdansk, while not entirely accurate, were a marked improvement from the press coverage under Gomulka. However, by the time that the VI Congress had passed this resolution, the flow of information to the public had already diminished. When strikes occurred at the Lodz textile plants in February 1971, Radio Warsaw spoke of a "meeting of the Party and workers' akitf with four high Party officials."²⁸ Only by combining this report with the innuendoes in several speeches at the Sejm and with the rumors which were circulating could someone guess that there were difficulties in Łódź. A further indication of the tightening of the flow of information has been the cancellation of the program, Citizens' Forum.

As part of the agreement with the striking workers of Szczecin, Gierek had promised the publication of materials concerning the December riots. This promise was reiterated by the VIII Plenum which stated that the "materials of the meeting will be published in the theoretical monthly of the Central Committee, Nowe Drogi."²⁹ Although the Party had promised to publish the results of the VIII Plenum as soon as possible, the special issue of Nowe Drogi was not published until May 22 and even then only certain Party organizations received issues. Despite promises to make the issue available to the public at a later date, the Party felt that this limited edition was sufficient and the matter was soon dropped.

Another unkept promise was the pledge to disclose fully all

²⁸Radio Free Europe, "Łódź Textile Workers Reported on Strike", No. 4, February 15, 1971, p. 2

²⁹op. cit., Radio Free Europe, "Polish Press Survey", No. 2313, p. 1

discussions which had occurred at the VIII Plenum. While the special issue of Nowe Drogi did contain most of the information, it failed to include a key document--Gomulka's letter to the session--as well as offering only censored versions of several speeches.

A principal goal of the Party following the December events had been to win the support of the workers. To achieve this the Party had to appear to the workers as their own Party. One means of improving the relationship between the workers and the PZPR had been through the press. The front page coverage of the First Secretary's meetings with the workers was used as an example of the Party's continuous consultations with the working class.

Another means of allying the workers with the PZPR was by increasing the worker membership in the Party. However, as Poland became more industrialized, it was faced with a situation similar to that described by Pirages.

Turning to other political concomitants of industrialization. The Party is shaped by its environment, and where there are greater numbers of highly educated white-collar personnel, this is reflected in declining Party proletarianism. The industrial Party is not the Party of the Proletariat, but rather increasingly is the Party of the specialists, undoubtedly seeking self-advancement.³⁰

This tendency in the PZPR is illustrated by the composition of the Party, as shown in Table 3.6

Dennis Clark Pirages, Modernization and Political Tension Management: A Socialist Society in Perspective, Praeger, New York, 1972, p. 189

TABLE 3.6

COMPOSITION OF PZPR						
Year	1948	1954	1959	1964	1968	1975
Membership (in millions)	1503	1297	1023	1568	2296	2453
Workers (%)	60	48	42	40	40.2	40.6
Peasants (%)	18	13	12	11	11.6	9.9
Non-manual workers (%)	17	37	42	44	42.5	42.9
Other strata (%)	5	2	4	5	5.7	6.6

Source: V.L. Benes & N.J.G. Pounds, Poland, Praeger, New York, 1970, p. 342; "Monthly Chronicle", Contemporary Poland, 4, No. 12, December, 1970, pp. 25-28 at p. 25; Stanislaw Milc, "The Polish United Workers' Party", Polish Perspectives, 28, No. 11, November, 1975, pp. 3-8 at p. 5

As Table 3.6 indicates, the percentage of workers in the PZPR has dropped by 20 percent since 1948, and since 1964 has remained near 40 percent, while the portion of white-collar members has grown from 17 to 42 percent.

Perhaps even more important is that:

...in many industrial plants the degree of worker participation in relation to the whole is insufficient. Such Party organizations lose their character as a political organization of the working class. On the grounds of a completed survey in industrial plants it occurred that among the plant's Party activists the disproportion is still greater: there are plants in which Party activists consists of 60-80 percent white-collar workers.³¹

Even if the Party wanted to increase the proportion of worker representation, so that the working class could gain more influence, the Party would still need to encourage many more workers to take an active role in Party life. Studies such as Bauman's³² seem to indicate that the workers do not want to assume such a role, and even those few who do,

³¹op. cit., Edward Babiuch, p. 9

³²See Alexander Matejko, Social Change and Stratification in Eastern Europe, Praeger, New York, 1974.

find themselves no match for the better educated white-collar worker.

At the VIII Plenum the Central Committee addressed problems that had beset the Party under Gomulka and proposed remedies for their solution. However the depth with which the Party looked into its problems was not thorough and so today the PZPR may be threatened by the same troubles as it was in 1970.

To combat the threat of a personality cult, the Central Committee had called for wide consultations and a free flow of information, and under Gierek such consultations have occurred. While these "consultations" have become a trademark of Gierek's regime, it is questionable how much discussion they actually afford. If the Party leadership was unwilling to discuss certain issues with the strikers when it first gained power, why would it be willing to do so now? In order to make any discussion effective a free flow of information is necessary but this flow does not exist in Poland. For the public to have discussed the problems effectively after December, they needed to have read the special issue of Nowe Drogi, but since the circulation was restricted to Party organizations, only Party activists saw the documents. Thus a majority of Poles simply did not have enough information to discuss the reforms rationally.

Even if effective discussion with the masses and a free flow of information existed in Poland, there are still other factors which helped Gomulka to establish a personality cult and which the Central Committee failed to consider. One reason that Gomulka had lost touch with the masses was that he surrounded himself with trusted followers who became nothing more than yes-men. The initial reason for this move was to eliminate potential threats to his power while strengthening his own power base.

Once Gierak became First Secretary, he too began to eliminate the supporters of Gomulka and Moczar and he replaced them with his men. Poland could thus be facing a situation where the leader of the country, by being insulated by trusted advisors, is again losing touch with population.

The failure of the Central Committee to fulfill its obligation "to maintain control over the activities of the Politbureau and of the CC Secretariat"³³ was cited as a reason for Gomulka's complete control of power. However, the VIII Plenum merely stated that in the future the Central Committee must fulfill this task and did not consider it a basic problem facing the Central Committee. While the Central Committee acts as a controlling body, the information that it receives is supplied by the Politbureau and the Secretariat. Thus these two bodies can control the Central Committee by controlling the information that they pass on to it.

In dealing with the workers, the Party is still faced with the problem of deciding what role the worker is to play in the decision-making process. In a society with an increasingly complex division of labour, new interest groups have arisen and are demanding a voice in decisions.³⁴ The Party is now faced with a variety of demands from

³³op. cit., Radio Free Europe, "Polish Press Survey", No. 2315, p. 8

³⁴The existence of interest groups in the USSR and Eastern Europe is recognized by most observers of socialist systems. The military, workers, trade unions, peasants, the intelligentsia, management, and other groups all articulate demands on the political system. For more information on interest groups in socialist systems see:

H.G. Skilling & F. Griffiths, Interest Groups in Soviet Politics, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1971

Ghița Ionescu, The Politics of the European Communist States, Praeger, New York, 1967

these groups and occasionally their demands conflict. The PZPR must now decide how to satisfy most of these groups and how to involve them in the decision-making process. The growing complexity of society has also created problems for the Party. As society has become more complex, new problems have arisen, which demand decisions too complex for the average worker to understand. Often these decisions lead to policies, which the worker believes are contrary to his interests.³⁵

Another problem facing the Party is the confusion between the role of the PZPR and the governmental bodies and agencies. Under Gomulka the government at all levels had become a tool for enforcing his decisions and it has been a task of the Gierek regime to restore the government's credibility in the eyes of the workers.

³⁵The December price increases is one case of worker resistance to a solution for a complex problem. While the price increase could be justified economically, the workers refused to accept these explanations and protested the proposals.

CHAPTER IV

The Worker and Government

In the course of their existence, socialist states often have been confronted by similar difficulties. Among these problems, the relationship between the Communist Party and the state has produced a serious dilemma for some East European states. Czechoslovakia and East Germany have had a long and rich history of parliamentary democracy and, while the Hungarian and Polish experience may not be as extensive as some countries, the people of these two nations have felt a fierce nationalistic pride in their parliamentary bodies. With the ascension to power by the Communist Parties, these nations assumed a system of government bearing a closer resemblance to the Soviet model, under which

...the Communist Party is an authoritative source of values, the state, or government, has the legal power of enforcement: it has the right to apply physical force and sanctions. The party mobilizes the population towards the achievement of particular goals, whereas the state formally arranges the administration and enforcement of policy.¹

Thus, the Communist Party assumed the dominant position in the socialist states: setting the tone and direction for society which was then executed by the appropriate state agencies. In an address at the XVI Plenum of the CC PZPR, Edward Gierek explained the relationship between the

¹David Lane, Politics and Society in the USSR, Weidenfeld, London, 1972, p. 142

Party and government by the slogan, "...the Party directs, the government governs."²

This situation has resulted in some basic conflicts for East European countries. The "Red vs Expert" debates, concerning governmental composition and the role of ideology in the running of the state, has split Communist Parties into factions. One faction believed that a sound ideological base was a prerequisite for the entire governmental apparatus and "is more concerned with political qualities than with performance capabilities."³ The Party's opposing faction stressed efficiency in the running of the state. While this group agreed that a correct ideological background was important, they claimed that a person's qualifications and abilities for a position should be the dominant factor in filling apparatus positions.

The dominance of the Party over government also has affected the relationship between the government and the people. Rather than initiating policy and debating Party directives, socialist governments primarily have been concerned with executing the Party line. Since the Party has been proclaimed as the initiator and directing force of all policy, the only role left for government has been that of administrator. The claims of the various state parliaments to be the supreme legislative bodies and representatives of all the country's citizens probably have been viewed by the masses as half-truths; for, when compared to the powers of the Communist Party, the powers of

²"Przemówienie I sekretarza KC PZPR tow, Edwarda Gierka--XVI Plenum KC PZPR" (The address of First Secretary, of the CC PZPR, comrade Edward Gierek--XVI Plenum CC PZPR) Nowe Drogi, 2 (309), February, 1975, pp. 8-19 at p. 15

³op. cit., David Lane, p. 229

government have been restricted.

Apart from executive and administrative duties, government has played another important role. As Ghița Ionescu stated:

Like most modern non-socialist states, the socialist states base their legitimacy on the representatives of their institutions. The political principle of their sovereignty is that it embodies the 'will of the people' or of the 'working people'. The political expression of the will of the people is ensured by the representation of the electorate in the representative bodies at all levels, from the local soviets, national committees, people's councils, etc. to the supreme soviets, national assemblies or federal chambers."⁴

However, the use of government as a source of legitimacy has been weakened by the dominance of the Party over the state.

[To function properly, socialist government, like the Communist Party, must be based on and must follow Marxist-Leninist principles.]

The importance of correctly ruling the state was acknowledged by the VIII Plenum CC PZPR, which stated:

The methods of ruling and management have a direct influence on the contents of the decisions and the accepted political concepts, and can, in a vital manner, decisively determine their degree of correctness. Wrong methods of ruling and management must, unfailingly, lead to serious political errors.⁵

Foremost among the guiding rules for the correct management of government has been the principle of democratic centralism. The Party and government were to create the conditions necessary for social initiative by the masses and allow for effective, open communication between the leaders of the state and the people. Only when this type of communication has been established can the leadership maintain touch with the people they represent and therefore with the realities of the

⁴Ghița Ionescu, Comparative Communist Politics, Macmillan, London, 1972, p. 41

⁵Radio Free Europe, "Documentary Material on the VIII PZPR CC Plenum", Nowe Drogi, Special Issue, "Polish Press Survey", No. 2313, July 14, 1971, p. 15

nation.

As with Party affairs, the ability of government to properly function was hampered in Gomulka's Poland. As the personality cult of Gomulka grew in scope, government's role in society became increasingly irrelevant. Considered by the leadership only as a means of implementing decisions, governmental bodies, at all levels, had no influence in the decision-making process. Since Gomulka and his followers ignored and discouraged input by the government, this virtually eliminated input to the system by non-Party citizens.

As a result of this, a growing number of economic and political decisions were being taken on the basis of partial and casual information in an intuitive and whimsical manner, in many cases only on the basis of personal guesswork or on the strength of experience dating back many years. Conceited self-assurance led to a gradual weakening of the contact with reality, and to a drop in skill in electing problems according to their importance --a fact which led to the dissipation of enormous quantities of time and energy on matters of less importance.

A characteristic feature of this style of running the Party and state was the lack of a broad view on reality, incompleteness of solutions, the segmental treatment of each particular problem, and inadmissible overfussiness of individual decisions.⁶

As Gomulka came to depend only upon his "trusted" advisors and allies in the decision-making process, Party and governmental cadres fell into disuse. The distinction between the Party and state became less clear during the Gomulka years, particularly in economic areas. The Party leadership extended its authority over the management of various enterprises, bypassing local Party and government agencies, creating distortion which "led to decisions which were imperfect, misguided or totally wrong, even when they concerned generally well-oriented tasks."⁷ The years of misguided or erroneous decisions culminated

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 16

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 16

in the economic crisis of 1970.

In commenting on the distortions of the political system under Gomulka, Gierek stated that: "The fact that the Party leadership actually usurped many functions rightfully belonging to the Government weakened and deformed its role of political leadership."⁸ These distortions in leadership, combined with inadequate policies, so weakened the claim of Gomulka as the legitimate ruler of Poland, that his ouster became inevitable.

In its considerations of the December riots, their causes and possible remedies, the VIII Plenum's most important recommendation was the reinstatement of the practice of consultation and mass participation. During Gomulka's reign this practice had fallen into disuse, causing the leadership to lose touch with the people leading to the December riots. To remedy this situation the Party urged a reopening of the dialogue between the people and Party and governmental authorities. This dialogue would mean, as Tygodnik Powszechny stated: "...above all an exchange of information and exchange of views."⁹ Throughout society, the leadership should inform the people of proposals and policies and should actively encourage the suggestions and criticisms of the people. This proposed dialogue would serve two aims: not only would the Party and government maintain contact with the public, but decisions would be carried out

⁸"Edward Gierek's Speech at the VIII Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party", Contemporary Poland, 5, Special Edition, February, 1971, p. 11

⁹"In the Polish Press--Tygodnik Powszechny", Contemporary Poland, 5, No. 2, February, 1971, pp. 2-5 at p. 4

... not only on the principle of discipline and obedience, but above all on the principle of conviction, recognition of correctness, on the principle of a conscious, voluntary and responsible participation, especially on the part of the working people, by a joint effort aimed at creating our common good.¹⁰

To increase the degree of mass participation in the political system, the Party sought to strengthen the organs of people's participation. The purpose of this development was not only to serve as a means of increasing citizen awareness and activity in the political system. The VIII Plenum directed activity in this direction for "A steady growth in the awareness of the work-people, their political and occupational activeness, is a condition of the development of the socialist state and social system."¹¹ The primary focus in strengthening the organs of participation centered on the Sejm (Polish Parliament) and the people's councils for

The basic principle of the political system is government by the working people, executed through representatives elected to Parliament (called the Sejm) and to the people's councils which act in each of these units of territorial division.¹²

Reforms of government at the local, district (powiat), and provincial or voivodship (województwo) level played an important role in the reforms of the VI Congress of the PZPR. The importance of local governmental organs as the primary source of contact between the people and government had been underlined dramatically by the riots of 1970. Failure by the authorities to reestablish their role as a channel of

¹⁰ibid., p. 5

¹¹"Resolution of the VI Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party--For further Socialist Development of the Polish People's Republic", Polish Interpress Agency, Warsaw, December, 1971, p. 27

¹²Stanislaw Gebert, "Streamlining the Administration", Polish Perspectives, 17, No. 3, March, 1974, pp. 13-22 at p. 13

communication in society would have indicated that the PZPR had no desire to reform and had not learned from Gomulka's errors. However, at the VI Congress, the Party recognized the important role of local government, and in their resolutions, indicated a desire to build local government into a meaningful segment of Polish political life.

In improving the functioning of the state it is necessary to enhance the role and authority of, and create the right conditions for the proper functioning of the people's councils, the local organs of state authority. To this end it is essential to make a clear demarcation of the powers of the people's councils and their commissions. It is necessary to increase the coordinating rule of voivodship and district councils vis-a-vis key industry and the influence exerted by rural councils on the economic and social development of the countryside.¹³

The PZPR also directed its attention towards strengthening the Sejm so that it could better fulfill its Constitutional function as "the highest organ of state power."¹⁴ A motivating factor in the desire to improve the Sejm was the realization that "The working methods, the quality and style of the work of the Government, the ministers and central institutions exert an essential influence on the development of economy and social life."¹⁵ The benefits gained by the PZPR from strengthening the Sejm would outweigh any possible detriments. An active Sejm would provide the Party with an important means of communica-

¹³op. cit., "Resolution of the VI Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party...", p. 26

¹⁴Constitution of the Polish People's Republic, Chapter 3, Article 15, as cited in, Jan F. Triska, Editor, Constitutions of the Communist Party-States, The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford University, Stanford, 1968, p. 336

¹⁵"Directives of the PZPR CC for the VI Party Congress Adopted at the Plenary Meeting held on September 4, 1971--For Further Socialist Development of the Polish People's Republic", Polish Interpress Agency, Warsaw, September, 1971, p. 73

tion with the masses and would offer further proof of the Party's break with the errors and abuses of the Gomulka era. An invigorated Sejm would also provide a means for the PZPR to work with other groups such as the FJN, Catholic organizations and other social organizations, and would provide a check against a reoccurrence of the abuses of Gomulka.

Public pressure also played a great role in the party's decision to improve the situation of the Sejm. As Edward Gierek noted,

The numerous voices heard after the VII Plenum of the Central Committee included rightful demands that the role of representative organs on all levels, but especially the Sejm, be strengthened.¹⁶

These demands were similar to the demands of Poland in 1956 and 1968, of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. On all these occasions, demands were made to restore the national legislative bodies to their legitimate position in society.¹⁷ These demands reflected the general disenchantment in East Europe with the diminished role that the legislative bodies were playing and also illustrated that the historical ties to these bodies had not been weakened during the years of Communist domination.

¹⁶Op. cit., "Edward Gierek's Speech at the VIII Plenum of the CC PZPR", p. 31

¹⁷An example of this demand was included in the "Action Program of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, April 5, 1968":

"The Party regards the National Assembly as a socialist parliament with all the scope for activities the parliament of a democratic republic must have. The Communist deputies must see to it that the National Assembly draws up a number of concrete measures before the new electoral period, measures that will put into actual practice the constitutional status of the National Assembly as the supreme organ of state power in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. It is necessary to overcome formalism in negotiations and the unconvincing unanimity concealing factual differences in opinions and attitudes of the deputies. From this point of view it is necessary to settle, as soon as possible, the relations between the National Assembly and Party bodies and a number of problems regarding internal activities

As a result of public pressure and the desire to strengthen socialist democracy in Poland, the PZPR directed that

The Party will make further efforts for a better functioning of the institution of Socialist democracy, for an increase in the role and prestige of the Sejm and the activity of Sejm committees, consolidation of the principles on which the Government submits the general directions of work and activity of various sectors of state administration before the Sejm...Question and desiderata put forward by deputies and the exhaustive answering by the appropriate bodies, will strengthen the controlling functions of the Sejm.¹⁸

However, during the discussions on the proposed reforms, there were never any questions raised concerning the position and role of the

¹⁷of the National Assembly, particularly those of organization and competence. The result must be a National Assembly which actually decided on laws and important political issues, and not only approves proposals submitted. The Party supports a strengthening of the controlling function of the National Assembly in our entire public life, and, more concretely, with respect to the government. The controlling machinery must be in the hands of the National Assembly, which will establish it as its own body. Together with closer bonds between the National Assembly and our public opinion, all of this may, in a short time, increase the role and the prestige of the National Assembly in our society."

Robin Alison Remington, editor, Winter in Prague, The MIT Press, Cambridge, 1968, pp. 109 & 110

The Hungarian demand of 1956 were more drastic, as illustrated by the "Appeal by the Workers' Council and Student Parliament of Borsod County, October 28, 1956"

1--We demand the formation of a new provisional Government fighting for a truly democratic free and socialist Hungary, excluding all ministers who have served under the Rakosi system.

2--This Government can only be created by general and free elections...

7--General election within two months with the participation of several parties.

Paul E. Zinner, editor, National Communism and Popular Revolt in Eastern Europe, Columbia University Press, New York, 1956, pp. 433-444

¹⁸op. cit., "Directives of the PZPR CC for the VI Party Congress..." pp. 80-81

PZPR. The Party, working through various social organizations and in union with the other parties in the FJN, would maintain its dominant position in Polish society. This meant that:

The leading role of the Party in relation to representative bodies at all levels and the executive organs of the State is expressed in the charting of the basic directions of action, in stimulating their activeness, and in control of the consistency of their activity with the resolutions and guidelines of the Party.¹⁹

While considering the causes of the December riots, the Party also determined that certain laws and institutions had not kept pace with the Polish evolution towards socialism. The need to modernize these organizations and laws was stressed by the VIII Plenum. A principle concern of that Plenum was the need to amend the Constitution, written in 1952, to reflect the social changes which had occurred.

Among other things, it (the Constitution) should include the principle concerning the leading role of the Party, the relations between the supreme bodies of power, administration, justice, the system of supervision and control, the role of the people's councils at each level, the organizations of the work-people and particularly workers' self-government...Wider consideration must be given to the principle of the masses' participation in government, democratic centralism and the planned character of the national economy. There must be a fuller statement of the range of citizens' rights and obligations and a stressing of their socialist character.²⁰

The government, in seeking to bring about closer ties with the people, employed tactics similar to those used by the Party. Governmental meetings with workers and other various groups were widely publicized by the media as examples of the new openness of the leadership. The Polish Prime Minister, Piotr Jaroszewicz, accompanied Edward Gierek on his

¹⁹op. cit., "Resolution of the VI Congress of the PZPR...", p. 24

²⁰ibid., p. 26

famous trips to Gdansk and Szczecin.²¹ The nature of the relationship between the Party and the state was disclosed by the transcript of the Szczecin discussions.²² While Gierek's tone generally was conciliatory, Jaroszewicz took a harsher stand, refusing to roll back prices and stressing that in order to improve conditions, harder work was necessary. The reason for the different tones may have been psychological; Gierek, representing the Party, offered the people a vision of a better future which would be a direct result of cooperation with the PZPR, while the government, represented by Jaroszwicz, presented the sufferings and sacrifices that would have to be endured before reaching the Party goals. By presenting the Party and the government respectively as the future and present conditions, the Party would then be able to blame any future difficulties on the inability of the government to adjust quickly enough to meet Party directives.²³

Government communication with the people was also improved through the television show, "Civic Tribune."²⁴ Like Party officials, governmental authorities answered questions from the public on television, but when this show was cancelled, it was not replaced by a similar program.

Criticisms of the governmental efforts to strengthen and create ties with the people are identical to the criticisms of the PZPR's efforts. While the press emphasized the amount of contact that the government had

²¹See pages 44 and 60

²²Ewa Wacowska, Rewolta Szczecińska i Jej Znaczenie, (The Szczecin Revolt and its Meaning), Instytut Literacki, Paris, 1971

²³This possibility will be considered in Chapter VI

²⁴See page 63

with the public, there was no mention of the content of those meetings. Many of these appear to have been designed more for publicity than for substantive discussions. For example, during the discussions at Szczecin, Jaroszewicz refused to discuss certain worker demands. More recently, a Życie Warszawy article on a meeting between Jaroszewicz and a group of workers devoted more space to naming the participants than to reporting on the contents of the meeting.²⁵

Reforms of local and regional government were initiated in 1973 with a change of government at the rural level. In 1974 the reforms were extended to all levels of local government and, encouraged by the results of these reforms, the Party and government determined that by 1975

...The accelerated dynamics of socio-economic development has produced the condition for its (reforms of government) implementation and simultaneously has emphasized the extremely urgent need to improve the functioning of regional government and administration.²⁶

Prior to the 1975 reforms, Poland was divided into three levels of administrative people's councils; the voivodships (17 & 5 cities), the districts (314 & 75 towns) and the communes (2365) and townships (725).²⁷ The primary function of the people's councils was similar at all governmental levels.

²⁵"Delegacja pracowników przemysłu chemicznego, papierniczego i szklarskiego u premiera Piotra Jaroszewicza" (A delegation of chemical, paper and glass workers meet with Premier Piotr Jaroszewicz), Życie Warszawy, 126 (9924), June 2, 1975, p. 2

²⁶Editorial, "Dla Sprawnego Działania" (For Efficient Work), Życie Gospodarcze, 21 (1236), May 25, 1975, pp. 1-2 at p. 1

²⁷Stanislaw Gebert, "Streamlining the Administration--Stage Three", Polish Perspectives, 18, No. 9 (September, 1975), pp. 16-28 at p. 20

They direct the economic, social and cultural activities of their territory and are competent in all matters of state power and administration not specifically reserved for other state organs... It (people's councils) has therefore the dual function of caring for the needs of the local population and development of the locality as well as of implementing a realization of the national goals and enforcement of the directives of the central government.²⁸

Based on Article 3 of the Act of 1958, this brief description of the basic functions of people's councils gives some idea of the conflict and overlap of authority between the levels of government. The reforms of 1973 and 1974 had eliminated many of the conflicts between local government and the higher levels, but studies revealed that

The situation was gradually changed by the wide-ranging development of the country. New problems arose, which proved bigger in size than the average-sized district could handle... The role of the district was thus reduced to supervision, reviewing appeals,...and relaying information upwards and downwards.²⁹

Originally the district was intended to be the basic unit in Polish government with the power to decide most administrative matters and to effect the direct management of most economic, social and cultural affairs. However as the size of problems increased, the district was generally too small to handle these matters and turned to cooperation with other districts or to the voivodship level for solutions. Thus the district council, as an independent body, had no real power and through its bureaucracy it had hampered the efficiency of the Polish governmental system, and had stifled the participation of the masses. The Party and government determined that the district level of people's councils should be eliminated and that the voivodships would become

²⁸Jaroslav Piekalkiewicz, Communist Local Government: A Study of Poland, Ohio University Press, Athens, 1975, p. 32

²⁹op. cit., Stanislaw Gebert, Polish Perspectives, 18, p. 21

"the sole intermediate link between the central and the primary level (i.e., towns, townships, and communes)."³⁰ In order to ensure that the voivodships were closer to the primary level units and therefore would be more efficient and would take a greater interest in local needs, the number of voivodships was increased to forty-six, plus three metropolitan areas.

A purpose of this reform was to improve the efficiency of management "by reducing its social costs, eliminating obsolete structures, shortening decision-making processes and ensuring their direct effectiveness."³¹ The new system satisfied the demands placed on administrative bodies better than the old system did, and was better suited to meet the needs of a developing society. As Premier Jaroszewicz stated, the new system "not only secures for us but also for our heirs better conditions to manifest the productive forces and the citizens' conscious commitment ...we are shaping the successful future of the country."³²

Another declared purpose of the reform was to improve the degree of citizen participation in the political system. With the reforms, the relationship between the voivodships and local governmental bodies would become more of a partnership. This would mean that

- a) People outside the sphere of the highest command participate (on various footings) in the process of steering the development of the country;
- b) the decision-making process is basically overt, the available facts, the alternative views and the grounds for the final choice being known outside the circle of immediate participants;

³⁰ibid., p. 26

³¹ibid., p. 17

³²"Przemówienie premiera Piotra Jaroszewicza--Plenarne Posiedzenie Sejmu PRL" (Speech of Premier Piotr Jaroszewicz--Plenary Session of the PRL Sejm), Zycie Warszawy, 123 (9921), May 29, 1975, p. 3

c) its participants in the highest spheres take the view that making use of a wide stream of information and letting others share in its handling does not mean an erosion but a replenishment of authority;

d) they look upon the public not only as the addressee and executant of a decision but also a critical contributor.³³

Since the voivodship would be tied closer to the local units, this would allow for greater local initiative and would stimulate grass-root participation.

In commentaries on the theme of the new regional division of the country as well as the concept of a two-tiered organization of government and regional administration one often meets with the qualifier that authority will be closer to the citizen. That means that at the same time, the citizen will be closer to power. The new model, increasing the people's influence in the decision-making process and functioning as a public control, produces the conditions for the development of socialist democracy and for raising the political culture of society.³⁴

The increase of citizen participation in government will not only further the development of socialist democracy but also will stimulate the people to work harder and more efficiently towards the further development of Poland.

The reforms of local government had involved long and careful study by the Party and government. An important area of this study had been the consideration of reforms in other socialist states. The Polish leadership took advantage of the Hungarian and German experiences with structural reforms and determined that the two-tiered system had "essential praxological and political values."³⁵

³³Jan Strzelecki, "Partnership and Dialogue", Polish Perspectives, 15, No. 3, March, 1972, pp. 10-13 at pp. 10-11

³⁴op. cit., Editorial, "Dla Sprawnego Działania", p. 2

³⁵Henryk Rot, "Władza widoczna--czy sprawna" (Authority, Visible or Efficient), Polityka, 20 (950), May 17, 1975, p. 5

One of the principal functions of the proposed reforms had been to increase citizen participation in local government. A study of the reforms and their implementation reveals, however, that any increase in participation would be cancelled by an increase in the PZPR's control over local government. The elimination of the intermediate district over local government has resulted, in all likelihood, in a reduction of citizen appeals to higher governmental bodies. Under the old system, the more numerous districts represented a smaller area with fewer people and, therefore, were more attuned to the local needs and demands than the present system of larger, more populated voivodships. Also, the ordinary citizen probably would prefer to take his problems to a local body rather than a larger unit.

The Party's growing dominance over local and regional government has been illustrated by two developments of the reform. The main force responsible for explaining and gaining acceptance for the reform was not the governmental agencies or authorities but rather the PZPR. This point was borne out by Gierek's speech to the XVII Plenum, "The proposed reform is a task of the entire Party. All our organizations and all our members ought to understand its significance, to explain and popularize it amongst society."³⁶ An even more significant development of the reform concerned the Presidium chairmanship of the people's councils. Formerly, this position, along with the other positions of the presidium, were elected by the appropriate people's council. Under the reforms, the First Secretary of the local PZPR organ was elected as chairman and the

³⁶"Przemówienie I sekretarza KC PZPR tow. Edwarda Gierka--XVII Plenum KC PZPR" (Speech of First Secretary of the CC PZPR, comrade Edward Gierek--XVII Plenum CC PZPR), Nowe Drogi, 6 (313), June, 1975, pp. 8-12 at p. 11

leaders of the allied parties were elected as the vice-chairmen. The purpose of this reform was to enhance the power of the people's council for

By this means a new plane of political consultation was created in the council presidium and the implementation of the leading role of the Party with regard to the state apparatus in the field given an institutional form, thus basically enhancing the stature of the council itself vis-a-vis its executive and the other administrative and economic units in its area.³⁷

While this reform supposedly was designed to strengthen the power of the councils, in reality, it ensured the domination of the PZPR over local and regional administration. In his study of the pre-reformed political system, Piekalkiewicz determined that the chairman was the dominant force on the national council.³⁸ With the reforms,

The First Secretary has a key political influence in his area and at present he directly influences the proper operation of the sub-system of representative organs, while in his capacity as chairman of the council he can exert political control over the executive officer and thus the whole local administration.³⁹

Already constitutionally recognized as "the highest legislative body", the Sejm did not require legislated reforms; all that was needed was the proper recognition of the Sejm by the Party. To be effective the Sejm had to be more active in deciding the policies of the nation and had to have some power vis-a-vis the PZPR. Following his ascension to power, Gierek stressed a greater role for the Sejm. In his first speech to that body, Gierek seemed to indicate that the Sejm would play a significant role in improving the situation in Poland.

³⁷op. cit., Stanislaw Gebert, Polish Perspectives, 18, p. 19

³⁸op. cit., Jaroslaw Piekalkiewicz, pp. 56 & 60

³⁹op. cit., Stanislaw Gebert, Polish Perspectives, 17, p. 19

Before the government, before us all, stands the task of rebuilding and strengthening this indispensable tie of mutual confidence, which ought always to unite us with the working class, with all working people, ties without which it would not be possible to govern in a socialist state.⁴⁰

Although the Polish leadership had indicated the development of a greater role in society for the Sejm, they constantly reiterated that the PZPR was to remain dominant. The primary function of the Sejm still was to give formal approval to and to carry out the guidelines and directives of the Party. Debate over Party directives was to be extremely limited and Sejm approval was not only expected but required. Under such a system not only was the Party's dominance over the Sejm reinforced but also the Party was credited with any success which had resulted. For this reason, Premier Jaroszewicz, in a speech to the Sejm, stated that the successes accomplished since 1970 were due not to the work of the Sejm but to "the correct policy of the Party."⁴¹

The ultimate control of the PZPR over the Sejm and its deputies was dramatically brought to light in the 1975 debates over the Constitutional amendments. The amendments were passed by the Sejm with only one abstention by Dr. Stanislaw Stomma. One of the founders of the independent Roman Catholic group, Znak, Dr. Stomma had been a respected Deputy of the Sejm for twenty years. Following his abstention on the proposed amendments, Dr. Stomma was informed that his candidacy for the

⁴⁰"Przemówienie I Sekretarza KC PZPR tow. Edwarda Gierka-- Plenarne Posiedzenie Sejmu PRL" (Speech of First Secretary CC PZPR comrade Edward Gierka--Plenary session of the PRL Sejm), Nowe Drogi, 1 (260), January, 1971, pp. 11-14 at p. 13

⁴¹Piotr Jaroszewicz, "Budujemy Polske nowoczesna i zamozna" (We are building a modern and affluent Poland), Nowe Drogi, 1 (308), January, 1975, pp. 5-26 at p. 22

⁴²"Polish Parliamentarians on point of disappearing", Winnipeg Free Press, February 25, 1976, p. 46

Sejm elections (March 21, 1976) had not been accepted by the National Unity Front. No official explanation for the FJN decision was given, but its timing indicated that Dr. Stomma was being punished for his abstention.⁴²

A further aspect to be considered in connection with the Sejm is the national elections.⁴³ Rather than immediately calling for elections following the December riots, the leadership waited until they had consolidated their position before calling for a new Sejm in 1972.

The 1972 elections appeared not to have been too different from previous elections. As Table 4.1 shows, the division of seats for the VI Sejm was proportioned in the same manner as the IV and V Sejms under Gomulka.

TABLE 4.1

PROPORTION OF SEATS IN THE SEJM								
SESSION	I 1952-1956		II 1957-1961		III 1961-1965		IV 1965-1969	
PARTY	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
PZPR	273	64.2	239	52.1	256	55.7	255	55.4
ZSL	90	21.2	118	25.7	117	25.4	117	25.4
SD	25	5.9	39	8.5	39	8.5	39	8.5
Non-Party	37	8.7	63	13.7	48	10.4	49	10.7
SESSION	V 1969-1972		VI 1972-1976		VII 1976-			
PARTY	#	%	#	%	#	%		
PZPR	255	55.4	255	55.4	261	56.7		
ZSL	117	25.4	117	25.4	113	24.6		
SD	39	8.5	39	8.5	37	8.0		
Non-Party	49	10.7	49	10.7	49	10.7		

Sources: 1. Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Rocznik Statystyczny 1974, (1974 Statistical Yearbook), Warsaw, 1974, p. 56; 2. Zygmunt Szeliga, "Nowy Sejm i Rząd" (The New Sejm and Government), Polityka, 14 (996), April 3, 1976, p.4

⁴³I will only consider the elections for the Sejm because there has been no publication of the recent election to the voivodship people's councils.

With Szalchcic's recent threat to Gierek's position of power,⁴⁴ the election of 1976 took on a new significance. The pre-election publicity stressed that the election was more than choosing deputies. This election was to be a vote of confidence in the policies of Gierek's reign which have been implemented through the Sejm.

The election, giving voice for the program of the FJN, is not merely a formal act. It is a manifestation of the moral-political union of Poles, a confirmation that the chance of working in peace is guaranteed through socialism, through the union and friendship with the whole family of socialist states with the Soviet Union, of which we are fully availing ourselves. It is a confirmation of this the greatest achievements in our activities and which, through perservering⁴⁵ wise and effective work, we hope to increase in performance.

Polityka stated the basic election issue in even clearer terms through a notice in its election week issue.

MARCH 21
ELECTIONS TO THE SEJM
AND VOIVODSHIP NATIONAL COUNCILS

We are voting on a plebiscite, which is an endorsement of the further modernization of the country and of the improved living standards, it is a declaration of trust in the Deputies and councilmen, who are committed to direct society in this process as competently, wisely and according to the will of the electorate.⁴⁶

The election results, even for a socialist system, were so favourable that they were proclaimed as an overwhelming vote of approval for Gierek and the Party policy since 1970. Members of the FJN list (which included non-Party candidates) received 99,43 percent of the

⁴⁴For further information see page 155.

⁴⁵Editorial, "Wybory" (Elections), Życze Gospodarcze, 12 (1979), March 21, 1976, p. 1

⁴⁶"21 Marca Wybory do Sejmu i Wojewódzkich Rad Narodowych" (March 21 Elections to the Sejm and Voivodship National Council), Polityka, 12 (994), March 20, 1976, p. 2

valid votes cast⁴⁷ and as Table 4.1 shows, the PZPR gained six seats at the expense of the ZSL and the SD. More importantly for Gierek, he received 99.99 percent of the valid votes cast, which is the highest percentage that any PZPR First Secretary has ever received.⁴⁸

After long and careful study, the proposed amendments to the 1952 Constitution were published following the VII PZPR Congress (December 1975). As with the previous administrative reforms, the Polish authorities had considered Constitutional reforms of other East European states before finalizing their amendments. This allowed the Poles to benefit from the experiences of the other socialist states and to keep Poland in step with its allies. For example, Hungarian Constitutional reforms declared that Hungary had become a socialist state and defined the role of the HSWP in society,⁴⁹ two key amendments dealt with in the Polish reforms.

The reasoning behind the Polish Constitutional changes was that the primary task of the Constitution was to reflect the stage of development of Polish society. The 1952 Constitution registered the social changes since 1945 and had laid the foundations for building a new

⁴⁷"W kraju" (In the country), Polityka, 13 (995), March 27, 1976, p. 2

⁴⁸"Around the World", Washington Post, March 24, 1976, p. A 12
 These election results can be interpreted in two ways. Either the high total of votes cast for the FJN lists and especially for Edward Gierek reflect approval of Party policy or Gierek, feeling pressures within the Party doctored the totals to reinforce his position. It seemed that the reports of disenchantment of segments of society with Gierek would have been reflected in a lower amount of votes. Therefore it appears that the totals were doctored and that this election can only be considered in such a light.

⁴⁹Mihaly Korom, "Amending the Constitution of the Hungarian People's Republic", New Hungarian Quarterly, 13, No. 48, Winter, 1972, pp. 15-22

social system. Since 1952 significant changes have occurred in Poland but, on the whole, the Constitution had not kept pace with these developments. Through the proposed amendments, the PZPR and the Special Sejm Commission on Constitutional Amendments

...placed as a goal the legal sanctioning of the socio-economic development which we are realizing from 1971. It would be at least incomprehensible if the proposed changes in the Constitution do not take into account those occurrences and facts which in the present ten year period designate the social and political countenance of Poland.⁵⁰

The proposed amendments covered a wide variety of topics and, although some of the proposals were merely a change in wording, certain key proposed amendments were designed to alter drastically basic relations in Poland. The Polish People's Republic was to become officially known as a Socialist State rather than a People's Democracy.⁵¹ This meant that Poland had developed beyond the restrictions which characterized a People's Democracy,⁵² and was moving onto a higher plane of development. With the development of a socialist system in Poland, the role of the PZPR as "the leading political force of society in building socialism"⁵³ was formally recognized and the FJN was empowered as the "joint area of activity of the social organization of working people and the patriotic union of all citizens."⁵⁴

⁵⁰Editorial, "Zmiany w Konstytucji" (Changes in the Constitution), Polityka, 6 (988), February 7, 1976, p. 2

⁵¹Konstytucja Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej, (The Constitution of the Polish People's Republic), Wydawnictwo "Książka i Wiedza", Warsaw, 1976, Chapter 1, Article 1, p. 8

⁵²See page 1 (Chapter I)

⁵³op. cit., Konstytucja PRL, Chapter 1, Article 3, p. 8

⁵⁴ibid., Chapter 1, Article 3, p. 8

Another aspect of the Constitutional reforms dealt with Poland's relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist states. The Preamble to the 1952 Constitution referred to the "victory of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics over facism" and also to the "First state of workers and peasants."⁵⁵ The new Constitution maintained these acknowledgements to the USSR and added an amendment which strengthened Poland's ties with other socialist states.

The Polish People's Republic in its policy...linked to the proud tradition of solidarity with the forces of freedom and progress, strengthens the friendship and cooperation with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other socialist states.⁵⁶

Under the new amendments, the rights and duties of citizens were expanded. Formerly, the Constitution stated that "the Polish People's Republic, by consolidating and multiplying the gains of the working people, strengthens and extends the rights and liberties of the citizens "regardless of sex, birthplace, education, occupation, nationality, race, creed, as well as ancestry and social position."⁵⁸ Later articles would list amongst these rights, the right to work (Article 68), the right to rest and leisure (Article 69), the right to health care (Article 70), the right to benefit from the environment (Article 71), the right to education (Article 72), the right to benefit from cultural achievements and to participate in cultural events (Article 73),

⁵⁵op. cit., Constitution of the Polish People's Republic, Preamble, Triska, pp. 332-333

⁵⁶op. cit., Konstytucja PRL, Chapter 1, Article 6, p. 10

⁵⁷op. cit., Constitution of the Polish People's Republic, Chapter 7, Article 57, Triska, p. 342

⁵⁸op. cit., Konstytucja PRL, Chapter 8, Article 67, p. 44

plus the freedom of speech, of the press, of meetings and assemblies, of processions and demonstrations (Article 83). Article 67 also mentioned the obligations of the citizens towards the state. "Citizens of the Polish People's Republic must fulfill their duties to the Fatherland honestly and must contribute to its development."⁵⁹

A proposed amendment also dealt with trade unions, legitimizing and defining their role in society.

In the Polish People's Republic, trade unions, which are universal organizations participating in forming and realizing the tasks of the country's socio-economic development, play an important social role. Trade unions represent the interests and rights of working people, they are schools for citizen activists, and are engaged in the building of a socialist society.⁶⁰

Official accounts of the public's reaction to the proposals reported that "the overwhelming majority of the opinions thus expressed (by letter and petition) revealed understanding for the ideas of the bill endorsing it and lending support to it."⁶¹ While it was admitted that a minority had objected to the draft amendments, the PZPR claimed that the protesters had either used the proposals as "...a pretext for manifesting their hostile attitudes towards socialism and the people's state"⁶² or

...were unable to understand the essence of the draft and who quarrelled not with the draft, but rather with their own delusions, especially when separating, as they frequently did, a single article or even a single sentence from the context.⁶³

⁵⁹ibid., Chapter 8, Article 67, p. 44

⁶⁰ibid., Chapter 8, Article 85, p. 51

⁶¹"Changes in the Constitution of the PRL adopted by Parliament on 10 February, 1976: Address by Deputy Henryk Jablonski, President of the Council of State and Chairman of the Special Committee of the House" (Summary), Polish Interpress Agency, Warsaw, February, 1976, p. 3

⁶²ibid., p. 3

⁶³ibid., p. 3

Since the protestors were presented as either anti-socialist or misinformed, the PZPR rejected their objections as irrelevant. Emigre reports, particularly Kultura (Paris), indicated, however, that the dissidents included many members of the elite of Poland's intelligentsia and therefore could not be as lightly dismissed as the political leadership had wished. By means of letters of protest, the protestors had hoped both to convince the political leadership of the widespread opposition within Poland and to arouse the concern of memberships of the Western intelligentsia. Under internal and external pressures, the leadership would then be forced to eliminate or revise the proposed amendments. Three typical letters of protest are presented in Appendix II. In the Letter of the 59 Intellectuals, leading members of the intelligentsia entered into the general discussion of the nature of any Constitutional reforms. The signatories of this letter urged that the Sejm initiate a new stage of development by implementing amendments which honours the basic civil liberties. When the proposed Constitutional amendments were announced, the protestors, in the second letter, tried to pressure the Sejm's Special Commission, if not by its argument then by the stature and numbers of signatories. In his letter, Antoni Slonimski tried to gain the support of the French intelligentsia and criticized them for their indifference.

By studying these letters, one can see the principal points of disagreement that some Poles had with the new amendments. The primary concern of the protestors was that the changes to Article 57 (now 67) would tie the basic rights and freedoms of the Polish citizens to the fulfillment of his duties and obligations toward the state.⁶⁴ The protestors feared that the proposed change under certain circumstances

would "deprive us of these freedoms."⁶⁵

Other points of protest concerned Articles 3 and 6. These Articles, formalizing the PZPR's domination over Polish society and inextricably tying Poland and its interests to the Soviet Union, effectively eliminated any possible alternatives in the development of Poland. With the legalization of the dominance of the PZPR and the USSR, any change in the Polish political system could be accomplished by revolution, a prospect which was unlikely.

The protestors' chief worry about the amendments was that they were the "...decisive step towards the legalization of totalitarianism for the entire life of the country and a threat to the fundamental freedoms and rights of citizens."⁶⁶

Although the Party had tried to dismiss the dissenters as insignificant, they were strong enough to force a rewording of the controversial Article 67. The link between a citizen's rights and his obligation were not as explicit in the final draft but, "...by placing this formulation (a citizen's duties) next to the others (his rights) in the same article sufficient emphasis has been given to the unity of rights and duties without admitting arbitrary interpretations."⁶⁷ Although the protestors may have won a minor victory

⁶⁴The original text for Article 67 stated, "rights of citizens are inseparably bound to honest and conscientious fulfillment of duties to the Homeland." "Constitution of the PRL--The Basic Law", Polish Interpress Agency, Warsaw, February, 1976, p. 6

⁶⁵"Dalsze Protesty w Kraju" (Further protests in the country), Kultura, Paris, 3 (342), March 1976, pp. 28-34 at p. 29

⁶⁶ibid., p. 30

⁶⁷op. cit., "Changes in the Constitution of the PRL...", p. 9 For wording of the approved Article 67, see page 92

over Article 67, it was clear that they were unable to change the spirit of that Article.

Regardless of the protests, the Party claimed that

...these isolated voices could not in the least diminish the powerful chorus of those letters in which endorsement was expressed for the path pursued by us in our work. Most numerous were the letters received from the working class, from factory crews, trade union organizations, and from individual labourers ...Taken together, they showed that the draft was being fully and fervently backed by the working class, that it had received support from the nation.⁶⁸

At this time there exists no evidence to disprove the PZPR's claim of widespread worker support for the Constitutional amendments. However, the issue of Constitutional reform was particularly important for the Party. The reaction to Dr. Stomma's abstention and the denial of any serious criticisms indicated how much emphasis the Party had placed on this issue. Thus the Party, in all likelihood, exaggerated the support of the workers and the lack of coverage of worker protests by the emigre press would indicate that worker participation in this matter lied somewhere between the two extremes. By referring to a similar situation in recent Polish history, one may be able to pinpoint the position of the majority of workers. The situation in 1968, with the protests of the intelligentsia over increasing governmental controls offers an excellent comparison with recent events. The economic situation in early 1976 was somewhat better, and the method of protest was not as violent, but the issue was basically the same. During the 1968 debates and protests, the workers were primarily silent and apathetic, and it would appear that their reaction to the Constitutional amendments may have taken the same course.

⁶⁸ibid., pp. 3-4

A greater portion of this chapter has been devoted to the relations between the Party and the government because that relationship directly affects worker-governmental relations. Governmental reforms under Gierek have served to further the dominance of the PZPR over government. Such reforms can only weaken the relationship between the people and government. With the Party's dominance and government playing an increasingly administrative role, people have been forced to turn to the PZPR to solve their problems.

The obvious goal of the recent reforms has been to strengthen and legitimize the position of the PZPR in Polish society. The motivating force for these changes probably has been the belief of two factors. The first motivating factor may have been the belief that Poland already had evolved to such a level that the further dominance of the Party was a natural and beneficial development. The principal force pushing for the growth of PZPR dominance may well have been Gierek's uncertain position as First Secretary. To satisfy the Russian faction of the Party, Gierek may have tried to "out Russian the Russians", a tactic frequently used by Gomulka. By pushing these reforms, Gierek may have hoped to gain the support of the Soviet leadership for any leadership struggle.

The governmental and Constitutional reforms since 1970 have created problems which eventually may haunt the PZPR. The letter to the Special Sejm Commission indicated a basic distrust of the Party and government. Some time ago the published announcements of changes of the standing Constitution of the PRL aroused uneasiness. Public opinion expressed this amongst other means by collective and individual

letters.⁶⁹

The direction of the reforms and other actions, e.g. tighter censorship and the punishment of Dr. Stomma, have served to reinforce the fears of many.

Historically, Poles have been a democratically oriented nation and this tendency has continued to the present time. As Professor Wladyslaw Markiewicz, Director of the Polish Academy of Sciences' Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, noted, "The contemporary Pole is of a decidedly anti-authoritarian disposition and if there is one thing he craves it is an even wider margin of self-government than the development of socialist democracy can at present give him."⁷⁰ The reforms initiated under Gierek have been contrary to the wishes of the people for more democracy and have even resulted in less democracy.

Perhaps the greatest problem resulting from the trend of the recent reforms will be a legitimacy crisis. As a result of the reforms, the government has become so tied to the will of the Party that it is almost totally subservient to the PZPR. The strength of the Sejm has been affected to the greatest extent. The Hungarian Constitution included an amendment which "...increased the sphere of competence of Parliament. It declares that Parliament has to debate and approve the government programme."⁷¹ Rather than increasing the powers of the Sejm, the recent debate and vote on the Constitutional amendments revealed how powerless the Sejm has become.

⁶⁹op. cit., "Dalsze Protesty w Kraju", p. 92

⁷⁰"The Press in Review--Hopes and Expectations", Polish Perspectives, 17, No. 10 October, 1974, pp. 32-37 at p. 33

⁷¹op. cit., Mihaly Korom, p. 18

The dominance of the PZPR over government, at all levels, has made the Party responsible for all success or failure. Formerly the Party could blame the government for any failures but the ties between these two bodies have become so interwoven that the public can no longer distinguish between them.

The Constitutional amendments also have affected the legitimacy of the Party and the government. As Leszek Kolakowski stated at a solidarity meeting in London:

Obviously, those in power want to have laws that do not hamper them in any way, that put them above the law and let them, at will, temper or accelerate the repressive system according to their actual needs or caprice. But, by the same token, they are entrenching the general demoralization and contempt for the law.

The constitutional changes proposed at this time would also lead to a dangerous deepening of this demoralization. In point of fact, if the rulers show the people every step of the way that they consider the constitution a laughable scrap of paper, what can they expect from the people in return?⁷²

Party dominance over government virtually has closed government as a means of worker input into the Polish political system and eventually may effect the legitimacy of the entire political system. However, if the Party has allowed industry to open the decision-making process to the workers, this may eliminate any negative repercussions of the governmental reforms.

⁷²Leszek Kolakowski, "From a speech given at Solidarity Meeting in London" (exerpts), New Horizon, 2, No. 2, p. 18

CHAPTER V

The Worker in Industry

The proletariat, as the key social class in the struggle for socialism, was also the principal beneficiary of the changes brought about by socialist society. While the changes in government and power may have had a great effect on the working class, the typical worker often was more interested in the immediate benefits of socialism. Thus the relations within the workplace became very important, for it was here that the worker could first see the benefits of socialism. Under capitalism, the worker had been treated like an inconsequential cog in the vast machinery of industry, but with the introduction of socialism, he became far more important for he and all of society now owned the means of production. This new prominence of the working class emphasized the task of redefining, in accord with socialist concepts, the role of the worker and his representative organs in industry.

Of particular importance to the socialist states has been the role of trade unions in socialist society. During the capitalist era, the primary function of trade unions had been to defend the interests of the workers against those of management and of the owners. Under socialism, this function was not necessary because the conflict of interest between management and the working class no longer existed. In the initial years of the Soviet Union, a debate over the new role of the trade unions arose. One group argued that trade unions should

dominate the state apparatus and the economy, while the opposing view stressed the subordination of the unions to the Communist Party and economic administration. The final solution was a compromise, proposed by Lenin, placing the union between the Party and the state. In modern socialist states, the local trade unions generally have assumed the following responsibilities:

1) They cultivate the Socialist attitude to work, devise rules for work discipline and teach the workers how to protect socialized property.

2) They organize meetings to discuss wages and means of reaching and exceeding targets, quality improvements and the rationalization of work.

3) They participate with the management in working out the details of output norms, worker incentives and the distribution of various enterprise funds (especially the 'material incentive fund' and the 'sociocultural and housing fund').

4) They make sure that various facilities for workers and safety devices are provided and maintained in good condition.

5) They take up individual members' grievances against the management concerning such matters as qualification allowances, bonus payments, dismissals, etc.¹

While the topic of trade unions has been agreed upon by most socialist states, the issue of worker participation in the management of industry has provoked great controversy. The Soviet Union has favoured the concept of one-man management over workers' control of industry. Based on the experiences immediately following the Russian Revolution, the Soviet leadership has rejected workers' councils as inadequate in dealing with the demands of society. This view was accepted by the socialist states formed in the aftermath of World War II, but an alternative view soon was brought forward. As a result of the dispute and break with the USSR, Yugoslavia set out on its own road to communism in 1950, and as integral part of the Yugoslav brand of

¹Jozef Wilczynski, The Economics of Socialism, Aldine Publishing, Chicago, 1970, p. 101

socialism was the development of workers' councils. Arguing that these councils represented a significant advance over the Soviet model by directly involving the workers in plant management the Yugoslav leadership has given the councils the power to appoint the enterprise director and to make "other crucial decisions with regard to the use of funds, the distribution of profits, major developments, the prices and marketing of the articles produced."²

Initially the other East European leaders agreed with and copied the Soviet model by eliminating any form of worker control within industry. However, the workers' tendency to assume greater control in times of stress has forced the modification of the leaders' original position. The dissatisfaction of the workers with the Party and their trade unions in Hungary and Poland in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968, spawned the development of a new forum for voicing their complaints; the workers' councils. Because of the turmoil and uncertainty during these periods, these spontaneous councils were allowed to continue to represent the workers. However, once the Communist Party had reconsolidated its position of power, the workers' councils were either eliminated or so weakened that they were no longer effective. The reason for weakening workers' councils was that they presented a direct threat to the Communist Party's claim to represent the working class, and could ultimately threaten the Party's claim to power. As detailed in Chapters I and II, the history of the Polish workers' councils has been the best example of this weakening. Spontaneously evolved

²ibid., p. 102

throughout the country, the Polish councils had played a key role in bringing Gomulka to power in 1956. Once Gomulka solidified his position as leader, these councils were subordinated to the newly created Workers' Self-management Committees (KSR) and lost nearly all their power. Thus, when the workers became dissatisfied in 1970, they turned not to the Party nor to their trade unions and worker councils but once again they formed unofficial committees as their representatives.

The type of relationships within an enterprise often was a key factor in its success or failure. An enterprise that was characterized by cooperation and enthusiasm would in all probability, be more successful than the enterprise marked by antagonism and conflict. The relationship within the work place could also affect relations within society as a whole. The VIII Plenum of the CC PZPR determined that relations in Polish industry had deteriorated during the Gomulka years, particularly the relationship between the worker and management. By subscribing to the theory of one-man management, the decision-making process in Polish industry was dominated by the managerial class while workers and their representative organs played a relatively minor role. Under this system, management also had a great effect on the workers' income. Since the bonus system was based on production factors, the quality of decisions, which affected productivity, would determine the amount of take-home pay for the workers. Under Gomulka, the method of selecting managers often hampered the quality of decisions. The primary considerations in choosing the managerial staff were not technical background, education, nor previous success, but were political loyalty and the proper connections. As a result of this, many managers and directors were not qualified for their positions and hampered the smooth running of the plant. The workers

probably felt that these types of managers were merely Party hacks and resented their positions of power. This resentment was furthered by the failure of the Party to provide opportunities for the worker to advance to a white-collar position. The bonus system also served to increase worker resentment against management because this system was so structured that it "enabled certain managerial staff in industry to obtain earnings much higher than either their qualifications or their responsibilities legitimately entitled them to."³

A further problem within industry was a distortion in the decision-making process. The organs of worker representation, under Gomulka, had failed to fulfill their functions and became subordinate to management and economic goals. Trade unions had two main functions in socialist Poland: to represent the interests of the workers and to stimulate "conditions in which man can and wants to work efficiently."⁴ The task of representing the interests of the workers became secondary to that of stimulating the productivity of the enterprise. This resulted in the feeling of the plant personnel, that trade unions too often identified with the economic administration."⁵

Management further weakened trade unions by using them only as a tool in implementing policies and not allowing the unions any input to

³Stanislaw Chelstowski, "Social Aims First", Polish Perspectives, 14, No. 5, May, 1971, pp. 14-21 at p. 20

⁴"Trade Unions--An Organization of 8,000,000", Contemporary Poland, 1, No. 7-8, July-August, 1967, pp. 29-32 at p. 30

⁵Wieslaw Adamski, "Związki zawodowe--twórczym czynnikiem rozwoju budownictwa socjalistycznego" (Trade unions--constructive factor in the development of socialist building), Nowe Drogi, 9 (268), September, 1971, pp. 13-28 at p. 14

the process. This tendency was recognized by union leaders such as Janusz Prokopiak, Chairman of the Builders' Union,

Before December, leaders made decisions and unions existed principally in order to explain it in the eyes of the workers and to help in their realization. Thus unions were responsible for decisions, on which they did not have any influence.⁶

As the organ of worker representation in plant management, the KSR was to provide

...the conditions for the increasing participation of workers in decisions concerning the basic production, economic and social problems of the plant, promotion of a larger rank-and-file contribution to decision-making processes of all levels of economic management and to supervision and control of administration.⁷

But like the trade unions, the KSR became a tool of management and did not fulfill its functions.

The failures of the trade union and the KSR have weakened these bodies in the eyes of the workers. As the survey of J. Kulpinska⁸ showed, workers were turning to the unofficial group, the "aktyw", rather than to the organized bodies. Further proof of this distrust was given in the formation of ad hoc committees during the December events. Commenting on the demands of the workers, the VIII Plenum noted that, "These demands were accompanied by bitter criticism of the functioning of the administration, with particular regard to that of the trade unions."⁹

These distortions in the field of management hurt the Polish economy. By denying the workers a voice in the administration of the

⁶Hanna Krall, "Rozmowy na najwyzszym szczeblu" (Conversations at the highest levels), Polityka, 45 (818), November 4, 1972, p. 3

⁷Stanislaw Widerszpił & Aleksander Owieczko, "Management and Workers' Control", Polish Perspectives, 14, No. 1, January, 1971, pp. 7-22 at p. 13

⁸See page 23

⁹Radio Free Europe, "Documentary Material on the VIII Plenum CC PZPR", Nowe Drogi, Special Issue, Polish Press Survey; no. 2313, July 14, 1971, p. 3

enterprise, management lost a valuable source of input to the decision-making process. In all probability, the conflicts between management and the worker, and the failures of the worker organizations ultimately led to "distortions in the methods of management and a weakening of ties with the workers and other groups of working people have, in fact, caused a weakening of our socialist state."¹⁰

At the VI PZPR Congress, the Party included the system of management and relations within industry in its considerations for improving Polish society. In dealing with industrial management, the PZPR stressed the need to avoid using managerial positions as rewards for political loyalty or other services. This tendency would be avoided by complying with the demand that

High professional qualifications, active acceptance of the systemic principles of socialism and high moral values must be the basic criterion in appointment of management staff. It must display creative initiative in introducing progress, the ability to harmonize economic assignments with social aims and tasks, a capacity for understanding modern socio-political and economic development processes, a flair for organization, sensitivity to social problems and a high sense of responsibility and discipline, both professional and social.¹¹

To ensure that the management of an enterprise would be competent, the Party also demanded that the managerial staff be responsible for their actions and that those who "cannot claim good results in their work"¹² be removed from their positions.

¹⁰Radio Free Europe, "Documentary Material on the VIII Plenum CC PZPR", Nowe Drogi, Special Issue, "Polish Press Survey", no. 2315, July 28, 1971, p. 4

¹¹"Resolution of the VI Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party--For Further Socialist Development of the Polish People's Republic", Polish Interpress Agency, Warsaw, December, 1971, p. 45

¹²ibid., p. 45

By setting high standards for management and assigning responsibility for one's own actions, the PZPR sought to ensure initiative in the work place and to instill a sense of discipline in one's work. The Party also indicated that the continuous shuffling of personnel would be eliminated, a policy designed to instill a sense of continuity and stability within the enterprise.

A further step to improve the qualifications of management was the introduction of a continuing program of education for the managerial staff and the periodic review of an individual's record to determine if he was performing satisfactorily.

To improve the relationship between the worker and management and to offer the working class a reward for initiative in their activities, the Party felt that

It is necessary to aim at a further opening of the doors of promotion to all able and dedicated working people, particularly the representatives of the working class, and at creating for them the right conditions for raising their professional and political qualifications.¹³

Another aspect of management considered by the VI PZPR Congress was the relationship between the central plan and the individual enterprise. To meet the demands of modernizing the system of planning and management, the Party proposed improvements in two related areas. In the area of central planning, the PZPR urged a stronger more efficient central plan based on satisfying social needs with an increased emphasis on long-term planning. The central agencies of the state would exercise control over the shaping of prices, proportions in wage policy and the accumulation and utilization of supplies. Tied to the proposed changes was the need to stimulate the rational management and dynamic progress in the

¹³ibid., p. 46

individual enterprises. To achieve these goals, new changes had to ensure the individual enterprises:

- extension of their independence and responsibility in the sphere of operating economic decisions;
- basing of action on the principle of interconnection with the central plan;
- the opportunity of reaping the benefits due to better performance and bearing the economic consequences for bad management;
- framing of new standards of measuring the performance of enterprises which create possibilities for comprehensive, periodic assessments of their operations by state organs.¹⁴

In considering methods to improve the efficiency and productivity, it was agreed that "moral motivations will become a more and more important condition of socio-economic development."¹⁵ As Jan Szczepanski, the noted Polish sociologist, recognized, "...people seek not only income, but also the possibility of friendly cooperation, they seek recognition and a place of respect in society, and safety and satisfaction with their work."¹⁶ An important incentive to be used during the Gierek regime was the use of promotions. By offering the workers the opportunity to advance in status as a reward for his actions, it was hoped that this would stimulate initiative and work discipline amongst the workers.

The political leadership felt that the principal source of motivation for the workers was not a single new policy or reform, but rather the development of an overall dynamic social policy.

Only then, when society show its members clear perspectives of the future, realistic prospects, assuring access to recognition, respect, satisfaction with work and a feeling of safety, citizen identification of personal goals united with general goals will follow.¹⁷

¹⁴ibid., pp. 21-22

¹⁵Joanna Horodecka, "Motywacje" (Motivations), Zycie Warszawy, No. 119 (9917), May 24, 1975, p. 3

¹⁶ibid., p. 3

¹⁷ibid., p. 3

The VI PZPR Congress recognized the important task that workers' self-management was to fulfill in Polish society. The KSR was "a particularly important factor of strengthening the role of the working class in the system of administering the national economy in the tapping of reserves in faster and more effective development of social initiatives."¹⁸

Under Gomulka, the basic structure of the KSR had been sound but the system had been disrupted by Gomulka's method of management. Thus, the basic reform discussed by the Party was the fulfillment of the fundamental task of the KSR

...that in the life and work of a socialist plant the workers must be effective joint managers, that their interests and demands--formulated in an organized democratic manner--must be counted and must stand as one of the elements of plant policy.¹⁹

The December events revealed the deficiencies and needs in various aspects of Polish society. Once Gierek gained power, the new political leadership began to overhaul and improve the existing conditions. An important item of change was "the task of opening the way to the unions performing their job of defending and pressing workers' rights."²⁰ Trade unions were recognized by the PZPR as an important organization in Polish society. Their importance stemmed from their functions and from the vast size of their membership. Since the trade unions were the "most widespread organization of the working class and

¹⁸op. cit., "Resolutions of the VI Congress...", p. 28

¹⁹Jerzy J. Wiatr, "Demokracja--samorządność--aktywność" (Democracy--self-government--participation), Nowe Drogi, 10 (269), October, 1971, pp. 150-160 at p. 158

²⁰Jan Strzelecki, "Two Attitudes", Polish Perspectives, 14, No. 7-8, July-August, 1971, pp. 3-7 at p. 6

all working people in Poland",²¹ their actions and policies could have had extensive repercussions throughout Polish society.

The new political leadership felt that trade unions, like the organs of worker self-management, were structurally sound and would perform properly if those distortions, which had developed under Gomulka, were eliminated. At the XXI Plenum of the CRZZ (Central Council of Trade Unions) in February, 1971, discussions on correcting the errors that had developed focused on reestablishing and redefining the functions of the unions. As a result of these discussions, the recognized tasks of the trade unions became:

--the realizing of those worker demands which are possible to settle, as well as, working out, in cooperation with government organs and plant managers, the state of work and the directions of the solutions to the problems of long-range activities;

--creating conditions and the climate to realize the economic tasks, expanding productive activities of the personnel, eliminating the causes of tension amongst particular groups of workers, strengthening obedience to the law as well as work discipline and order in the work place;

--improving the style and methods of the work of the levels and organizations of unions beyond improving the ties with the personnel, increasing the competence and efficiency of union activity in the service of working people.²²

In an effort to improve relations with the workers, the new Polish leadership acted on a promise of the old regime. In late 1956, Gomulka had promised the workers a new, unified codification of the labour laws, since that time, various committees studied the issue and reaffirmed the promise for prompt action. However, as of December, 1970, no action had been taken on this issue, and when Gierek gained power, he quickly submitted to renewed worker demands. The CRZZ came forward with its proposals

²¹Jerzy Lukaszewicz, "Rozwój demokracji socjalistycznej w Polsce" (The development of socialist democracy in Poland), Nowe Drogi, 1 (308), January, 1975, pp. 33-45 at p. 45

²²op. cit., Wieslaw Adamski, p. 14

for a new code and in June 1974, the Sejm passed the final version of the Work Code.

The general purpose of the Work Code was to modernize Polish labour laws and to eliminate those statutes which reflected the capitalist era of Poland. In addition to unifying all labour legislation into one section, the new Work Code sought to create "...a new system, suited to the principles of socialism, to the modern requirements of the work organization as well as the real future needs of building socialism."²³

The new Work Code, dealing with matters such as maternity leave, sick pay, disability benefits, and working hours, also considered an important issue of 1970, worker-management relations. The legislation denied any intrinsic conflict between the employer and the employee and stressed that they were to be treated as "mutually complementary parts of the same whole, which is the socialist state."²⁴ To eliminate any possible conflict between white-collar and blue-collar workers, the Code established

--the uniformity of rights and duties of all workers, the new code eliminates legal distinctions between manual and non-manual workers;

--universality, the code embraces in its realm all workers without exception...²⁵

The legislation on the individual enterprises also dealt with the duties of the work place and of the workers. The enterprise was ...required to observe certain specified principles in the interest

²³Eugeniusz Grochal, "Kodeks Pracy" (The Work Code), Nowe Drogi, 1 (308), January, 1975, pp. 63-73 at p. 63

²⁴Jozef Zielinski, "Codification of Labour Law", Polish Perspectives, 17, No. 11, November, 1974, pp. 14-21 at p. 16

²⁵op. cit., Eugeniusz Grochal, p. 66

of its workers--health and safety, for instance, or adequate instruction in the performance of jobs--but also to provide facilities for improving skills and so furthering their chances of promoting and raising their living standards (Article 17) and generally to show a concern for satisfying the material welfare and cultural needs of their employees (Article 16, 94 section 8).²⁶

When dealing with the obligations of the workers, the Work Code stated

...their chief obligations are discipline and obedience, observation of health and safety regulations, getting on with their fellow-workers and, more generally, efforts to do the best possible job and to this end display the proper initiative and 'look after the good of the work place and its property' (Articles 12 & 100).²⁷

In an effort to achieve the proper functioning of workers' self-government, the Work Code also considered the KSR. As previously mentioned, the basic structure of the KSR was judged to be sound and only minor modifications were believed to be necessary to improve these organs of worker representation. Thus the CRZZ proposed legislation which tried to establish "...a clearer qualification of the sphere as well as level of activity of self-government and its organ; the full demarcation of matters on which workers' self-government ought to have the right of deciding, judging and controlling..."²⁸

The December riots and their aftermath offered trade unions an excellent opportunity to improve their position in Polish society. By playing a more active role and reasserting itself as the chief non-Party organ of worker representation, the trade union hoped to regain the support of the workers. This policy appeared to be successful. By late 1972, it was reported that "...during the last two years, union organiza-

²⁶op. cit., Jozef Zielinski, p. 16

²⁷ibid., p. 16

²⁸op. cit., Wieslaw Adamski, p. 21

tions have regained the trust of the working class."²⁹

To further strengthen the position of trade unions in Polish society, the new Work Code dealt with the role of the trade union in the work place.

The code increases the power and role of trade union in the formation of work conditions, strengthening their influence and responsibility for the development of socialist work attitudes.³⁰

The recent Constitutional reforms also dealt with work relations in socialist Poland. A basic right guaranteed to all Polish citizens in the Constitution was the right to work.

The right to work is ensured by the socialist economic system, the planned development of production forces, the rational utilization of all production elements, the constant institution of scientific-technical progress in the national economy as well as the system of education and increasing occupational qualifications. The socialist legislation of work safeguards the proper realization of the right to work.³¹

The Constitution further strengthened trade unions by legitimizing their functions in a new amendment. Article 85 recognized the important social role that trade unions were to play in representing worker interests and rights and in furthering the development of socialism.

The efforts to improve the relationship within the workplace have experienced difficulties and setbacks from a variety of sources. Some of the problems were minor in nature and only required small adjustments, however, more serious difficulties existed which may have had

²⁹"Monthly Chronicle", Contemporary Poland, 5, No. 12, December, 1972, pp. 21-27 at p. 24

³⁰op. cit., Eugeniusz Grochal, p. 73

³¹Konstytucja Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej, (The Constitution of the Polish People's Republic), Wydawnictwo "Książka i Wiedza", Warsaw, 1976, Chapter 8, Article 68, p. 44

possible repercussions for all aspects of Polish society.

As described in Chapter IV, the issue of Constitutional reform had received great attention from certain sectors of Polish society. Like many of the other proposed amendments, the article on the right to work was criticized. In the "Letter of the 59", leading members of the Polish intelligentsia argued that

Freedom of Work. This freedom does not exist when the State is the sole employer and the trade unions are subordinate to Party agencies which, de facto, exercise state authority. Under these conditions--as the experience of 1956 and 1970 indicate--attempts to defend the interests of labour threaten bloodshed and can lead to serious disturbances. For this reason, workers should be assured the possibility of a free choice of their own occupational representation, independent of State or Party organs. The right to strike should also be guaranteed.³²

This criticism, despite being based on a sound argument, drew no response from the political leadership and had no effect on the final draft of the Constitution.

As with most new legislation, the Work Code has experienced difficulties in its initial stages. A minor problem, which may be eliminated as time passes, has dealt with the labour courts. These bodies were established by the Work Code to "adjudicate actions brought by employees for breaches of contracts of service. They act as review bodies for appeals against the decision of enterprise arbitration commissions..."³³ After a year of existence, the Work Code was still not widely understood and disputes arose over the interpretations of certain passages. Because of this, many enterprise organs were uncertain as to what was required

³²"The Letter of 59 Intellectuals to the Speaker of the Diet (Sejm) of the Polish People's Republic", Polish Review, 21, Nos. 1 & 2, 1976, pp. 55-57 at p. 56

³³"Economy and Life--Labour Courts", Polish Perspectives, 18, No. 3, March, 1975, p. 61

or proper and turned to the courts and in discussions with the work judges, it was determined that "...many matters ought not to be found in court."³⁴

While the Work Code sought to level out certain inequalities between manual and non-manual workers, it reinforced certain differences. The code reinforced the dominance of the manager in the work place, a decision which established definite limits for the organs of worker representation. The new Code had equalized benefits such as vacation time and sick leave for all workers but it did not deal with wages. Thus, distinctions in income, long a point of dispute and jealousies, were allowed to continue.

The reforms of the organs of worker representation can be viewed as failures because the political leadership failed to deal with the fundamental faults, which, historically, have prevented these organs from fulfilling their functions.

The concept of one-man management has been reaffirmed by the Gierek regime. This concept maintained management's claim for ultimate power in the plant's decisions and effectively reduced the KSR role to an advisory body. The KSR also was limited in its role by the Party. The dominance of the PZPR over Polish society included its dominance over the KSR for

The principle of self-governmental activities by no means is an alternative in relation of the principle of the leading role of the Party, the basis of the entire conception of socialist democracy. Self-governmental activities instead indicate the realization of the Party's directing role.³⁵

³⁴Stanislaw Podemski, "Kodeks na dotarciu" (The code on attainment), Polityka, No. 5 (1987), January 1, 1976, p. 3

³⁵op. cit., Jerzy J. Wiatr, pp. 159-160

Despite the limitations that the dominance of management and the PZPR imposed on workers' self-government, the KSR could have played an important role in Poland and, perhaps, eventually could have assumed a dominant position. However, recent articles have indicated that the KSR has refused to fulfill even those functions which it presently possessed. A discussion with Aleksandra Plyta, President of the Revolutionary Commission of the Bytom region, revealed that

"In the course of the past half-year of work, I notice that the plant councils try to avoid commitment towards any side. Their representatives speak in generalities and tritely--if they even condescend to attend our sessions. In the opinion of my colleagues and myself, it is not clear that plant councils tried to defend the workers, even when decency demanded it.³⁶

Reports from other regions of Poland indicated that the tendency of KSR noninvolvement was widespread. In the same article, the Secretary of the Plant Council of a mine claimed to have objected, on occasion, to a directors decision "but looking through the file one cannot find any corroboration of his words in the documents."³⁷

The future of workers' self-government in industry recently came under discussion. One view felt that workers' councils and the KSR should be strengthened and its power increased as Polish industry developed. This school of thought argued that as industries expanded and consolidated into WOG's, workers' self-government would provide social control over management and it would avoid danger of worker alienation in industry. The opposing view argued that

...changes in the scale of production and its organization, the creation of large economic organization, as well as, change in the

³⁶Jerzy Loch, "Świeczka i oganek" (The candle and the stump, or To have a foot in both camps), Polityka, 51/52 (981/982), December 20/27, 1975, p. 5

³⁷ibid., p. 5

economic system pulls after itself the necessity of the considerable limitation of the power base of the KSR and worker councils and even the liquidation of the latter. The reasoning is simple; workers' self-government has applicability only in enterprises however, these lose in significance by handing their powers to the WOG, which are not enterprises. Therefore the workers' self government loses the right to exist. Thus, the replacement of plant participation by participation through production conferences is proposed.³⁸

The dominance of management and the PZPR, the failure of the organs of workers' self-government to fulfill their functions and the question of their continued existence combined to weaken the workers' trust in the workers' councils and the KSR. This loss of trust, similar to that of 1970, was illustrated by the growing tendency of the worker "to go with their problem directly to the director or the secretary of the Party organization, which precipitates a weaker plant council, instead of growing with the development of socialism, has become weaker and less relevant."³⁹

Like the workers' self-governmental bodies, the trade unions have suffered during Gierek's regime, despite all efforts at reform. As with the KSR, Polish trade union "...are directed in their activity by the political line of the PZPR and acknowledge its ideological direction... The general line of the Party is the basis of the program of trade union activity."⁴⁰

The two principal functions of trade unions, i.e. representing worker interests and stimulating economic growth and efficiency, while

³⁸Szymin Jakubowicz, "Oblicze przedsiębiorstwa" (An aspect of the enterprise), Polityka, 19 (1001), May 8, 1976, pp. 1 & 5 at p. 5

³⁹op. cit., Jerzy Loch, p. 5

⁴⁰op. cit., Wieslaw Adamski, p. 27

not mutually exclusive, often have been in conflict. During the Gomulka era, trade unions stressed the latter function, often at the expense of the former. This was a practice which contributed to the explosive situation of December 1970. Under Gierek, there have been no reforms to prevent this situation from reoccurring again. Rather, the current political and union leadership has relied on promises to guarantee a proper defense of the workers' interests. This function of trade unions was further hampered by the "principle of the superiority of general social interests."⁴¹ This principle ruled that trade unions could not protest decisions taken to benefit society despite any harm which might happen to the workers.

From the start of his regime, it was evident that Gierek was determined to maintain firm Party control over the trade unions. During the post-December discussions on trade unions, the noted Polish journalist Jerzy Urban suggested a limited veto power for trade unions "which would invalidate all the existing and binding workers' rights."⁴² The concept of a trade union veto was dropped quickly but as a partial defense of workers' rights, the Work Code gave the KSR and the unions the right of appeal. As previously mentioned, this right has been used rarely and ineffectively.

The appointment of Wladyslaw Kruczek as Chairman of the CRZZ

⁴¹ibid., p. 17

⁴²Radio Free Europe, "Polish Press Discussion: A Selective Review", Research Paper no. 7, March 3, 1971, p. 29

⁴³Vincent C. Chrypinski described Kruczek as the "most reactionary member of the Politbureau."

Vincent C. Chrypinski, "Political Change under Gierek", Adam Bromke & John W. Strong, Editors, Gierek's Poland, Praeger, New York, 1973, p. 44

further illustrated Gierek's desire to maintain a close control of the unions. Kruczek, a known conservative,⁴³ would not allow the unions to attempt to gain a greater voice in society and would follow the Party line.

Thus it has appeared that the worker still has been denied an effective voice in the affairs within the work place, In this type of situation, it ultimately may develop that

...people see no hope of carrying out their goals, if they entertain a sense of frustration and grievance, if they do not feel effectively involved in their jobs, if the surrounding realities stand in the way to the process of accepting general goals as one's own, there is a waning of the motivation which gives birth to the will to strive and the will to achieve, to enterprise, initiative, the quality of work.⁴⁴

If this should happen, productivity will decrease and the availability of consumer goods will drop; a situation which would bear a striking resemblance to Poland in December 1970.

⁴⁴Edward Lipinski, "Thoughts about the Future", Polish Perspectives, 16, no. 4, April, 1973, pp. 6-15 at p. 14

CHAPTER VI

The Worker as Consumer

Wages, consumption and housing policies can and do play significant roles in the development of the socialist states. The socialist system of wages may vary from country to country but there do exist certain similarities within the socialist states. Wages in the industrialized sector are composed of two parts: the basic wage structure, which establishes the wage differentiation between occupational levels, is determined by the central economic organs; the second component of wages, the bonus system, often is determined at the local level. Under socialism the wage system has key functions to fulfill. The principal purpose of wages and bonuses is "the motivation aspect, according to which earnings facilitate socio-economic progress (i.e. induce people to act in a way which would benefit society most)."¹ The wide use of bonuses for increased productivity and piece-work scales for basic wages illustrate the importance of income as a means of incentive. A further function of wages is to achieve an income differentiation according to occupations, industries and regions. Based on the Leninist principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work," wages not only encourage greater performance but also "promote vertical (from less to more skilled jobs) and horizontal (between enterprises,

¹Jozef Pajestka, "Factors of Growth", Polish Perspectives, 18, No. 7/8, July/August, 1975, pp. 19-29 at p. 21

industries and regions) mobility of labour, according to planned priorities."² A third function of wages is that of social control. By controlling wages, socialist governments are better able to control effectively the money available for the consumer's use and therefore can control the public demand for consumer goods.

Socialist states divide mass consumption into two general categories: social consumption and private consumption. Social consumption, including public child care, education, pensions, housing, cultural services and other benefits, is provided to the public at a low price and is financed by the state budget, social insurance and other funds. Private consumption plays the principal role in the socialist economy, "constituting about three-quarters of total consumption. It consists of those goods and services which are purchased out of the consumer's own earnings on the basis of his free choice."³ The main function of consumption in the socialist states is to offer the populace incentives for greater work. Consumption is such an important factor in the motivation of the general public because

Experience had shown in the past only too well that material incentives do not produce the desired results if they consist merely of monetary rewards for more and better work. Their operation, intensity and direction depend on the worker's needs, the ways in which such needs are satisfied and, in the ultimate analysis, on the availability of the exact goods and services the labour force wants in its capacity as consumers.⁴

In recent years socialist states have recognized the importance of both social and private consumption in the development of society

²Jozef Wilczynski, The Economics of Socialism, Aldine Publishing, Chicago, 1970, p. 103

³ibid., p. 91

⁴ibid., p. 93

and have realized that

By having his biological, cultural, material and social needs satisfied, the individual should be fully equipped to take part to the best of his natural abilities in developing the vital force and resources of society..."⁵

Closely tied to wage and consumption policies are pricing policies. The functions of pricing include:

1. protection of the consumption needs of the working masses and influence on the direction of consumption;
2. influence on the increase of work productivity;
3. ensuring the essential incomes of the state and enabling the expenditure of qualified sums for social and cultural goals, for accumulation (investment), defense and administration;
4. ensuring to the socialist enterprise the essential incomes for their proper activities as well as their technical and economic development;
5. ensuring market stability as well as equilibrium in turnover of individual products;
6. furthering optimal economic growth;
7. furthering savings in the use of the means of production.⁶

The role of housing in socialist society is very important. As Zbigniew Mikolajczyk noted, the housing situation has "repercussions in the social, motivational, moral and cultural strata of life."⁷ Thus socialist states seek to satisfy housing needs as a means of further motivating the populace. The availability of housing can also stimulate other aspects of the economy; as more families find suitable housing, they begin to purchase other consumer goods such as furniture and household articles.

Difficulties in the fields of income, consumption and housing all

⁵Jan Szczepanski, "Consumption Model for Tomorrow", Polish Perspectives, 18, No. 7/8, July/August, 1975, pp. 11-18 at p. 15

⁶Jerzy Kleer, "Ceny w gospodarce socjalistycznej" (Prices in the socialist economy), Polityka, 26 (1008), June 26, 1976, pp. 6-7 at p. 6

⁷Zbigniew Mikolajczyk, "Mieszkania a efektywność" (Housing and effectiveness), Życie Gospodarcze, 47 (1261), November 23, 1975, p. 5

contributed to the riots of December 1970. The VIII Plenum of the PZPR recognized that although the December price increases may have been the final measure for the workers, "it was not only this measure and the way it was sprung that sparked off the explosion. Disgruntlement with economic and social policy had been coming to a head for a considerable period of time."⁸ The public's dissatisfaction with the Gomulka regime partially was caused by

a tendency for social problems to get lost in the preoccupation with issues of a purely economic nature and for options to be chosen with increasing disregard for public approval. The result was a straining of social bonds and morality...⁹

A more important factor contributing to the general discontent with Gomulka was the worsening economic situation, particularly in the areas of income, consumption and housing.

One aspect of the workers' disgruntlement with income was the development of a disparity "between the effort of the nation, aimed at developing the economy, and the feeling of the working people, as a whole, as not having a fair share in the fruits of this effort."¹⁰ Increases in incomes were evenly distributed throughout the various occupational groupings and regions so that certain social groups benefited greatly while "some social groups profited very slightly, or even

⁸Stanislaw Chelstowski, "Social Aims First", Polish Perspectives, 14, No. 5, May, 1971, pp. 14-21 at p. 14

⁹"The VI Congress", Polish Perspectives, 15, No. 2, February, 1972, pp. 3-6 at p. 3

¹⁰Radio Free Europe. "Documentary Material on the VIII PZPR CC Plenum", Nowe Drogi, Special Issue, Polish Press Survey, no. 2313, July 14, 1971, p. 13

not at all, from the general progress."¹¹

The disparity in wage increases was not the only source of worker disenchantment with Gomulka. By 1970, income increases had become so small that economic growth was almost at a complete standstill.¹² The proposed incentive reforms of 1970 only reinforced the workers' opinion that their wages, at the very best, would stagnate at the 1970 level because

this system, apart from some sound ideas, was designed to limit, to a considerable degree, the increase of wages. The working people's feeling in general was that this meant a freezing of workers' wages at the 1970 level. Putting into effect the new system of material incentives meant limiting the rise of wages brought about by increased labour productivity. The projected rise in wages during the five-year plan was considerably lower than that actually attained in the years 1966-1970.¹³

Aside from the grim outlook for wage increases, the future of consumer goods under Gomulka's regime looked equally pessimistic. Of the total Polish industrial output for the period 1970-1975, only slightly more than a quarter was destined for consumption.¹⁴ This low level of industrial output combined with a poor investment policy resulted in a slow rate of growth in the sale of industrial consumer goods for the domestic market. In a comparison of the Comecon countries for the 1966-1970 period, Poland had the slowest rate of increase.¹⁵ This rate of

¹¹"While the average increase of real wages in any five-year period was 10 percent, in some branches of the economy those wages actually increased by 10 to 20 percent annually, while in other branches they rose by only 2 to 5 percent. There were some groups of employees who actually suffered a decrease in real wages."

Radio Free Europe, "Documentary Material on the VIII PZPR CC Plenum", Nowe Drogi, Special Issue, Polish Press Survey, No. 2316, August 5, 1971, p. 2 & 5

¹²ibid., p. 6

¹³ibid., p. 9

¹⁴"The Press in Review--The Sources of the Crisis", Polish Perspectives, 14, No. 4, April, 1971, pp. 46-51 at p. 48

¹⁵op. cit., Radio Free Europe, Polish Press Survey, No. 2316, p. 5

growth also caused problems in meeting growing consumer demands.

Another problem of the late sixties dealt with the consumption of food. During the five-year period of 1966-1970, agricultural production followed an uneven rate of growth. "During the initial three years, the increase of overall production was 3.9 percent, but during the last two years, owing to inclement weather conditions, agricultural production decreased."¹⁶ The low level of agricultural production resulted in a low supply of food products for domestic use, causing severe shortages for certain goods. The workers felt that the December price increases would serve to worsen the food situation by restricting their ability to purchase certain foods.

During the Gomulka years, housing needs had been ignored. This tendency became more and more evident in the late sixties "so that in 1970, fewer flats were actually handed over to their new occupants than in 1969."¹⁷ The increasing demand for housing further aggravated an already severe housing shortage, and the combination of a decrease in building with an increase in demand resulted in waiting lists, which "have far outstripped the capacity of building enterprises with the result that the gap between the number of actual households and new apartments made available is beginning to become chronic."¹⁸ In a comparison of the number of persons per dwelling and per room for Eastern Europe, Table 6.1 illustrates that the housing situation in Poland was worse than that

¹⁶ ibid., p. 8

¹⁷ Kazimierz Secomski, "Five-Year Plan 1971-1975", Polish Perspectives, 14, No. 9, September, 1971, pp. 3-14 at p. 6

¹⁸ Jerzy Dzieciolowski, "Can We Build More Houses?", Polish Perspectives, 14, No. 11, November, 1971, pp. 16-20 at p. 17

of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany.

TABLE 6.1

HOUSING CONDITIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE		
Country	Average Number of Persons Per:	
	Dwelling	Room
Poland ^a	3.9	1.4
Czechoslovakia ^c	3.6	1.3
Hungary ^a	3.1	1.2
East Germany ^b	2.8	1.1
a 1970		
b 1971		
c 1961		
Source: Bogdan Mieczkowski, <u>Personal and Social Consumption in Eastern Europe</u> , Praeger, New York, 1975, p. 33		

In considering Polish economic problems, the VI Congress of the PZPR proposed a program of reforms. To reestablish a true socialist concern for the welfare of the people, the new economic policy of Poland was to be guided by the "systematic improvement in the material, social and cultural welfare of society."¹⁹ This goal would be achieved by "a growth in productivity; scientific and technical progress; transformation and modernization of the economic structure of the country; and improvement of the entire economic system."²⁰

In the wage policy for the 1971-1975 period, the PZPR recommended a 17-18 percent increase of real wages. This increase was to be spread varyingly among the different occupational groups in order "to eliminate the glaring irregularities and disproportion hitherto to be found in wages which offend the principles of just remuneration and

¹⁹"Resolution of the VI Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party--For Further Socialist Development of the Polish People's Republic", Polish Interpress Agency, Warsaw, December 1971, p. 2

²⁰ibid., p. 2

impede the growth of social productivity."²¹ In addition, the new wage policy was designed to be

conducive to the development of the national economy. It should create conditions that encourage management and employees to seek out reserves, introduce innovation, technical progress and modern technology, and improve work organization and productivity.²²

Another aspect of the proposed wage reform dealt with the relationship between wages and bonuses. Under Gomulka, bonuses had played such an important role, that they often represented a significant portion of a workers' total income. The proposed reforms aimed at correcting this situation and were designed so that the basic wages would play "the decisive role in earnings levels."²³

In the considerations for improving the consumption levels, the Party proposed improvements in various areas of social consumption. Efforts were to be made to improve the state of health care, education, culture, tourism and recreation and for the five-year period, 1971-1975, a 30 percent increase of state expenditures was expected.²⁴ An even greater improvement was planned for personal consumption. Investment for the consumer industries was to rise and the industrial output destined for the consumer was expected to grow by 42 percent.²⁵ Not only did the PZPR propose an increased output but the VI Congress also recommended a significant improvement in the quality and variety of consumer goods. To further the development and availability of consumer goods and services,

²¹ibid., p. 2

²²ibid., p. 7

²³ibid., p. 8

²⁴ibid., p. 9

²⁵ibid., p. 11

private shops and work cooperatives were to be encouraged by the Party and government.

An essential aspect of personal consumption was the availability of foodstuffs for domestic consumption. To meet the public's constantly increasing demands for food products, agricultural production was to increase and to achieve this, "An ever larger role in the development of our agriculture should be played by the state farms, agricultural cooperatives and the farming centres of the agricultural circles."²⁶ To meet the expected increase in the production of agricultural products, the PZPR recommended greater investments and more building in the food products' industries. The VI Congress planned for an increase of 24-27 percent in the value of the total output of the food industry by 1975 with the most significant increases in the meat, dairy and fish industries.²⁷

The Party recognized that the Polish housing construction in 1970 had not been equal to the growing demand. Jerzy Dzieciolowski, in his article, estimated that in the next twenty years, Poland would need 7.5 million new homes.²⁸ The only means to satisfy such a severe demand was through an ambitious long range plan for the building enterprises. Investments in housing construction and related industries were scheduled to be increased and a total of 1,075,000 dwellings were expected to be completed by 1975.²⁹

During the Gomulka years, the PZPR stressed the need for the

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 19

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 19

²⁸ *op. cit.*, Jerzy Dzieciolowski, p. 19

²⁹ *op. cit.*, "Resolution of the VI Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party...", p. 14

present generation to sacrifice so that future generations could gain the benefits of socialism. When Gierek assumed power, this position was rejected and the new Party leadership stated that, "We are not building socialism for the future. We are building before all else for ourselves."³⁰ This new stance meant that the workers were to enjoy the benefits which resulted from their hard work and sacrifice. Although a new emphasis was placed on immediate benefits, the Party leadership recognized the importance of considering future needs and demands. Thus the new policy was tempered by the knowledge that present benefits must be in accord with future needs and must work towards their satisfaction.

To assure more benefits for the workers, the PZPR sought to improve the area of income and wages. Wage reforms under Gierek have been characterized by the slogan "lepsz praca--lepsza placa" (better work--better pay).³¹ This motto signified that the worker would be rewarded for productive and efficient work by higher wages. To achieve this goal the Polish leadership implemented a series of reforms. The purpose of these reforms was:

a) the regulation of the basics, i.e. wage rate structure, forms of remuneration, standard production time, abolition of income tax;

b) creation of a new mechanism to make the whole system more flexible, offer recognizable prospects of a systematic growth of earnings and maintenance of proper proportions, and integrate it with the projected system of management on both the micro and macro scale.³²

³⁰Editorial, "Potrzebna nie tylko poetom" (A need not only for poets), Polityka, 49 (979), December 6, 1975, p. 1

³¹Pawel Bozyk, "Strategia na dziesieciolecie" (Strategy for the ten-year period), Polityka, 31 (961), August 2, 1975, pp. 1 & 4-9 at p. 4

³²Zofia Morecka, "Evolution of the Wages System", Polish Perspectives, 17, No. 12, December, 1974, pp. 17-24 at pp. 21-22

to better secure the proper relationship between efficiency and wages, the reforms established that "premium payments will, if the performance of the enterprise is maintained, become part of the basic wage rate after two years."³³

In considering wage increases, the Polish leadership followed the principle that, "wages, the sum of earnings, must depend on qualifications, on the share of work of each citizen, on the social value of his work."³⁴ Another factor in determining wage increases was the disparity of income between social classes. Any increases were to be directed towards narrowing these disparities and a proper balance between the highest and lowest wage level was to be sought. As Table 6.2 shows the disparity between wage earners has narrowed since 1955.

TABLE 6.2

WAGE DISTRIBUTION PER MONTH (public sector employees)					
Portion of population receiving monthly wages in zloty					
Year	up to 1,000	1,001-1,200	1,201-2,500	2,501-5,000	over 5,000
1955	53.8%	14.8%	28.8%	2.5%	0.1%
1973	0%	4.8%	51.9%	40.0%	4.1%

Source: Zofia Morecka, "Evolution of the Wages System", Polish Perspectives, 17, no. 12, December, 1974, pp. 17-24 at p. 19

The Gierek regime has been marked by a significant growth in real wages. The average income rose from the 1970 figure of 2,235 zloty per month to 3,176 zloty per month in 1974 or an average increase of

³³ibid., p. 23

³⁴"Edward Gierek's Speech at the VIII Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party", Contemporary Poland, 5, Special Edition, February, 1971, p. 16

approximately 42.1 percent.³⁵ In considering wages for the period 1960-1973, Table 6.3 shows that, when compared to other East European countries, the average wage increase in Poland was much greater. For the period considered, the average wage increases for Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Hungary were approximately 58.3, 36.0 and 59.9 percent respectively, while the Polish increase for this period was 79.4 percent. In comparing Polish wage increases for the periods 1960-1970 and 1971-1974, increases for the four year period under Gierek (42.1 percent) nearly equalled the increase gained during Gomulka's last ten years (43.3 percent).

TABLE 6.3

AVERAGE NOMINAL GROSS WAGES IN THE NATIONAL ECONOMY							
Country	Currency	1960	1965	1970	1972	1973	1974
Czechoslovakia ¹	korona	1365	1493	1937	2091	2161	....
East Germany ²	D. Mark	555	....	....	....	755	....
Hungary ¹	forint	1553	1737	2152	2326	2484	....³
Poland ¹	zloty	1560	1867	2235	2509	2798	3176 ³

Sources: 1. Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Rocznik Statystyczny 1975 (Statistical Yearbook 1975), Warsaw, 1975, p. 567
2. Bogdan Mieczkowski, Personal and Social Consumption in Eastern Europe, Praeger, New York, 1975, p. 272
3. Tadeusz Rudolf, "Wyniki nowej polityki społecznej" (Results of the new social policy), Nowe Drogi, 5 (312), May, 1975, pp. 42-53 at p. 45

For a rough comparison of the average wage for these countries the currency exchange rates were obtained and are given in Table 6.4. In terms of American dollars, the highest average monthly wage was that of Czechoslovakia (\$379.12) followed by East Germany (\$302), Poland (\$139.90) and Hungary (\$104.37).

³⁵Tadeusz Rudolf, "Wyniki nowej polityki społecznej" (Results of the new social policy), Nowe Drogi, 5 (312), May, 1975, pp. 42-53 at p. 45

TABLE 6.4

EXCHANGE RATES ON JULY 22, 1976	
Czechoslovakia	5.7 korona per 1 American dollar
East Germany	2.5 D. marks per 1 American dollar
Hungary	23.8 forint per 1 American dollar
Poland	20.0 zloty per 1 American dollar

Source: Department of International Banking, First National Bank, of Minneapolis, July 22, 1976

As previously stated, monetary rewards alone did not offer the workers enough material incentive to be effective, therefore wage increases had to be accompanied by improvements in the field of consumption. During Gierek's years, wage reforms have been followed by more and better consumer goods.

The December price increases had been one of the principal complaints of the strikers in 1970 and when Gierek first assumed power he maintained that the price increases were necessary and would remain in effect. However, the continued workers' pressure for a price rollback must have been successful for by March, 1971, prices were returned to the pre-December levels, and a price freeze on many consumer goods was declared. A review of prices of consumer goods provided by the Rocznik Statystyczny 1975 revealed that the prices for food products generally remained at the 1970 levels or were cheaper through 1974, and that many other consumer goods also remained at 1970 prices.³⁶ Certain consumer goods, such as leather products, radios, motorcycles and alcohol, did experience price increases, but the number of such goods was limited and most increases merely reflected a rise in expenses.

The extended price freeze combined with the growth of wages since

³⁶ Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Rocznik Statystyczny 1975, Warsaw, 1975, pp. 395-401

1970 affected the Polish economy in many ways. Since food prices remained at 1970 levels, most Poles could afford to purchase goods regularly, which they previously had enjoyed only occasionally, thus the demands for products, such as meat, fish, sugar and alcohol, increased dramatically. The average Pole was able to spend a smaller portion of his income on foodstuffs and could afford to spend more for other consumer goods. A study of the period 1970-1974 revealed that

The increase of the consumption fund already produced significant changes in the structure of expenses...the share of expenses for food fell from 38.5 percent to 35.7 percent and the proportion of expenses for non-food articles and services rose from 52.8 to 55.1 percent. (Unfortunately the share of expenses for alcohol rose from 8.7 to 9.2 percent).³⁷

During the years of Gierek's rule, the demand for consumer goods, both for food and for other goods, has risen significantly. To meet these increasing demands, the amount of investment in the consumer industries has had to be increased. The best example of this has been the food industries, where investments have been "more in the past five years (1971-1975) than in the entire period of 1945-1970."³⁸

Table 6.5 reveals that the consumption level of certain foodstuffs has increased significantly since 1970. This increase has allowed some Poles to claim that "our country satisfies in full the food needs of the citizens."³⁹ The reduction in the consumption of some products, such as potatoes reflected a policy of the Gierek regime to change

³⁷Jerzy Gdynia, "Potrzeby Polaków dziś i jutro" (The needs of Poles, today and tomorrow), Polityka, 37 (967), September 13, 1975, p. 4

³⁸Marcin Makowiecki, "Pieciolate w przemyśle spożywczym" (Five years in the food industry), Życie Gospodarcze, 44 (1259), November 2, 1975, p. 8

³⁹op. cit., Jerzy Gdynia, p. 4

the structure of consumption, "in the direction of the systematic reduction of the direct consumption of grains and potatoes in favour of increasing consumption of meat, fruits and vegetables."⁴⁰

TABLE 6.5

PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION OF FOODSTUFFS AND RELATED GOODS - POLAND						
Product	Unit	1960	1965	1970	1973	1974
Meat and meat products	kg	42.5	49.2	53.0	62.1	65.6
Pork	kg	25.6	29.5	29.2	38.8	39.4
Beef	kg	6.8	9.7	12.6	11.5	13.1
Fish	kg	4.5	5.0	6.3	7.2	7.3
Edible fats	kg	15.6	17.5	20.8	22.3	22.5
animal	kg	7.4	6.8	8.2	8.4	8.2
vegetables	kg	3.5	5.7	6.6	7.2	7.5
butter	kg	4.7	5.0	6.0	6.7	6.8
Sugar	kg	27.9	32.6	39.2	42.0	44.0
Vegetables	kg	....	....	98.0	93.0	84.3
Fruit (except citrus)	kg	....	....	22.9	20.3	19.4
Tea	g	115	177	266	341	364
Beer	l	22.8	24.0	31.6	37.8	36.6
Wine	l	4.5	4.8	5.7	6.5	6.7
Alcoholic drinks						
100% alcohol	l	2.4	2.6	3.3	4.2	4.0

Source: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Rocznik Statystyczny 1975 (Statistical Yearbook 1975), Warsaw, 1975, p. 95

Despite differences in determining the composition of various categories from country to country, one can compare roughly the per capita consumption for Poland (Table 6.5), East Germany (Table 6.6) and

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 4

Hungary (Table 6.7). In a comparison of these tables, one can see that, except for the consumption of fruit, Poland consumed slightly more than Hungary in most areas. A similar comparison between East Germany and Poland revealed that consumption levels in East Germany were much higher for almost all the goods considered.⁴¹

TABLE 6.6

PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION OF FOODSTUFFS AND RELATED GOODS EAST GERMANY					
Product	Unit	1960	1965	1970	1973 ^a
Meat and meat products	kg	....	58.7	66.1	74.0
Pork	kg	....	36.2	38.7	45.1
Beef and veal	kg	....	18.5	22.3	20.8
Fish	kg	....	9.1	7.9	8.3
Edible fats	kg	....	33.7	33.6	32.4
animal	kg	....	6.6	5.8	5.1
vegetables	kg	....	2.7	2.2	2.0
butter	kg	....	12.5	14.6	14.1
Sugar	kg	....	18.1	17.1	15.5
Vegetables	kg	....	63.8	84.8	99.5
Fruit	kg	....	46.5	55.5	68.8
Tea	g	....	90.0	91.0	91.0
Beer	l	....	80.6	95.7	112.7
Wine	l	....	4.2	5.0	5.8
Alcoholic drinks					
100% alcohol	l	....	4.8	6.1	7.3
a) approximate figures					
Source: State Central Administration for Statistics, <u>Statistical Pocketbook of the German Democratic Republic 1974</u> , Berlin, 1974, pp. 108-109					

⁴¹Certain differences in consumption levels may have reflected cultural tendencies and tastes rather than the availability of goods.

TABLE 6.7

PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION OF FOODSTUFFS AND RELATED GOODS HUNGARY						
Product	Unit	1960	1965	1970	1973	1974
Meat and meat products	kg	47.6	51.6	57.6	63.7	66.4
Pork	kg	24.7	27.3	29.8	35.7	....
Beef	kg	8.7	9.2	10.1	9.5	....
Fish	kg	1.5	1.6	2.3	2.6	2.6
Edible fats	kg	23.5	23.1	27.7	28.4	28.1
pig fat	kg	19.8	18.6	22.0	22.3	22.2
poultry fat	kg	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.6	
butter	kg	1.4	1.6	2.1	1.7	1.6
Sugar	kg	26.6	30.1	33.5	37.1	37.5
Greens and vegetables	kg	84.1	76.7	83.2	86.7	88.0
Fruit	kg	55.3	52.8	72.5	75.2	78.0
Tea	dkg	3.4	5.9	7.2	7.7	8.0
Beer	l	36.7	44.2	59.4	61.6	66.0
Wine	l	29.9	32.8	37.7	38.5	38.0
Alcoholic drinks 50% alcohol	l	2.8	3.0	5.4	5.8	6.5

Source: Hungarian Statistical Office, Statistical Yearbook 1974, Budapest, 1976, p. 366

Polish efforts to alleviate the housing shortage have been portrayed as much more successful than had been anticipated. For the period 1971-1975, 1,125,000 new dwelling units had been built, 50,000 more than had been anticipated⁴² and nearly 200,000 more units than had been built during the 1966-1970 period.⁴³ This dramatic increase in

⁴²Karol Szwarc, "Into a New Quinquennium", Polish Perspectives, 18, No. 11, November, 1975, pp. 9-16 at p. 12

⁴³Tadeusz Zarcki, "Pieciolecie 1971-1975" (The five year period, 1971-1975), Życie Gospodarcze, 12 (1279), March 21, 1976, p. 3

building was the result of greater investments for the building industries. In fact, the investment for this period had been 18 percent more than had been expected.⁴⁴ Realizing that the housing problems could not be solved immediately, the Party has planned for the current five-year plan a policy, which "anticipates the building of nearly one half million apartments."⁴⁵

Although significant gains have been made in the income, consumption and housing policies during the Gierek regime, pressing problems still existed. While the income policy of Gierek has resulted in the overall increase of wages for the people, it also reinforced disparities in wages between industries. "In 1955, the average gross monthly wage at either end of the scale was, in terms of the industrial average, 140.4 (fuels) and 72.1 (clothing) in 1973 it was 160.0 (coal) and 76.0 (clothing)."⁴⁶ The high position of the coal industry may have reflected the fact that Gierek represented the Silesian district, where a rather large portion of the coal industry was located.

The increase in earnings also led to the development of a problem in maintaining a proper market equilibrium.

The problem is not, however, one of a straight balance of supply and demand alone. As the affluence of the population grows, consumer demand changes, shifting towards modern and fashionable goods and superior services.⁴⁷

To meet the growing demand for consumer goods, Polish industry

⁴⁴ibid., p. 3

⁴⁵T.G. "Mieszkania" (Housing), Życie Gospodarcze, 51/52 (1266/1267), December 21/28, 1975, p. 9

⁴⁶op. cit., Zofia Marecka, p. 18

⁴⁷Antoni Wiatrowski, "The Final Straight", Polish Perspectives, 18, No. 1, January, 1975, pp. 6-10 at p. 8

continued a policy which had existed under Gomulka; a policy which emphasized quantity over quality. As a result of this policy, many of the goods available to the consumer were of poor quality and of limited assortment.

A more pressing problem which continued during the Gierek regime has been the shortage of key consumer goods. An article in Polityka discussed the recent shortage of various medicines. These shortages were caused by various factors including: the increased prices of imported materials used in making drugs; changes to new types of medicines and even a shortage of glass.⁴⁸ Serious shortages also occurred for certain household items which were caused by the increase in the number of apartments. With more and more families moving into their own apartments, there developed "an unusual pressure by customers for furniture and all home utensils, kitchen equipment, bathroom supplies, etc."⁴⁹

Perhaps the most serious shortage, which the Gierek regime has faced since 1970, has been the continuing shortage of certain foodstuffs. In mid-1975, Warsaw workers complained that "When they are returning from work, they have difficulties in purchasing such basic articles as bread, milk, cheese, vegetables and fruit",⁵⁰ and that this situation was particularly harsh on Saturday afternoons. A survey of grocery and

⁴⁸Jacek Mariarski, "Dlaczego brakuje lekarstw--Z/mgr. Piotrem Liberskim, Dyrektorem Zjednoczenia Przedsiębiorstw Zaopatrzenia Farmaceutycznego 'Cefarm'" (Why there a shortage of medicine--An interview with Piotr Liberski, director of the United Enterprise of Pharmaceutical Supply, 'Cefarm'). Polityka, 12 (994), March 20, 1976, pp. 4-5

⁴⁹Andrzej Mozolowski, "Dlaczego Zabrakło" (Why are there shortages?), Polityka, 18 (948), May 3, 1975, pp. 1-6 at p. 1

⁵⁰"W kolejce po pieczywo i warzywa" (In line for bakery and vegetables), Życie Warszawy, 155 (9933), July 7, 1975, p. 12

fruit-vegetable stores by reporters from Życie Warszawy, revealed that the workers' complaints had been justified. The reporters' survey showed that

having a free afternoon and healthy legs, one could have bought, last Saturday, all the vegetables, fruit, dairy products and bakery needed for Sunday, but, to achieve this goal one had to visit several shops and had to stand in line.⁵¹

The reporters showed that the shortages were not caused by a lack of supplies but rather resulted from difficulties "with the distribution of goods and the system of supply of the individual stores with supplementary deliveries."⁵² The immediate improvement of the system of supplies was demanded for "it is difficult to tolerate empty shelves in the area of bakery, milk and dairy products at 4:00 and 5:00 P.M."⁵³ The survey conducted by the reporters of Życie Warszawy only dealt with Warsaw, the capital and major tourist center of Poland. Personal experience⁵⁴ has indicated that the situation was much worse in the less important cities. In 1972-1973, stores in Poznan often sold out their supplies of the basic products (bread, vegetables, meat, etc.) by the early afternoon and did not carry some of the goods available in the larger cities.

The most serious food shortage since Gierek assumed power occurred in early 1975 when a meat shortage struck all of Poland. The shortage of meat was the result of several factors. Wage increases occurred in February for most workers in the socialized sector. These

⁵¹ibid., p. 12

⁵²ibid., p. 12

⁵³ibid., p. 12

⁵⁴For the academic year 1972-1973, I was a student at the University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznan, Poland.

increases resulted in more money available for spending in the market and increased the public's demand for meat. Another factor which affected the supply of meat was that, in February, the market "ran into difficulties with the milk market, into shortages of vegetables, tied with small supplies of fish and fish products."⁵⁵ These shortages forced the substitution of meat for other staples in the Polish diet, increasing the demand for meat. The situation in February "created the impression of widespread serious shortages",⁵⁶ an impression which psychologically affected the people. When shortages for the various goods appeared, the people feared that meat would soon be hard to find and consequently, they may have purchased more meat than they usually did. The principal cause of the meat shortage was in the agricultural field. Bad weather, poor harvests and rising costs for feed and equipment reduced the production of cattle and hogs. The low governmental purchase prices for cattle and hogs did not provide sufficient incentive for the private farmers to sell their stock to the government and many farmers found it more profitable to use the slaughtered stock for their own consumption or to sell it on the black market. No significant changes were established to alleviate the meat shortages but Szeliga reported that the difficulties had been corrected by the end of February and that the severest shortages had passed. He also stated that the current policy was striving for "the growth of meat consumption to the high level of the fully developed European countries at 90-95 kilograms annually per person."⁵⁷

⁵⁵Zygmunt Szeliga, "Mięso--Kłopoty i Perspektywa" (Meat-- Difficulties and Prospects), Polityka, 11 (941), March 15, 1975, pp. 1 & 6 at p. 6

⁵⁶ibid., p. 6

⁵⁷ibid., p. 6

Replies from the public on the matter of the meat shortage and Szeliga's article were received by the editors of Polityka almost immediately. One aspect of the shortage criticized in these letters was the lack of a proper advance warning, as M.T. of Sokolka stated:

The press and television ought to have acquainted society with the significance of these difficulties earlier. And I do not doubt that it was possible to foresee those difficulties already in January and, without beating around the bush, to pass the news that, for example, in 1975 because of such and such difficulties but not others the periodic shortages of definite consumer goods or industrial articles will occur. Such prognoses are compiled accurately yearly (and even quarterly) but this news is transmitted exclusively to a circle of people from several institutions who do not have the right to spread it.⁵⁸

Other letters disagreed with Szeliga's claim that the severest part of the meat shortage already had passed. A letter from Cracow stated that "Cracow is badly supplied; even today there is no pork joint nor beef with its bone, neither on Saturday nor on any day, at least in the afternoon."⁵⁹ Still other writers questioned the priorities of the Polish government and revealed a dislike for the policy of exporting Polish meat, "why must my child be treated worse than, for example, the German or English child, who can eat our ham at will, while in a butcher shop my child is offered only Edam cheese or some other cheese."⁶⁰

While the economic problems previously considered may have been solved by reordering the economic priorities or by adjusting investment policies, the Polish leadership has been faced with more serious and complicated difficulties. These problems have been so serious that they

⁵⁸"Listy do Redakcji" (Letters to the Editor), Polityka, 14 (949), April 5, 1975, p. 7.

⁵⁹ibid., p. 7

⁶⁰ibid., p. 7

ultimately may have a profound affect on all relationships within the country.

The emphasis on the material satisfaction of the worker during the Gierek regime has prompted ideological concerns about the priorities of the Polish people and their further development. The Polish leadership has been worried that the increasing availability of consumer goods will result in a situation where "the concept 'to have' obscures for us the concept 'to be'."⁶¹ Such an emphasis on possessions and the material aspects of life would hamper the development of the "socialist man" and would impede the development of socialism in Poland for "if an individual channels all his energies into the pursuit of material gains, his contribution to society's all-round development is severely limited."⁶²

An issue which has plagued Poland since Gierek assumed power has been the price freeze on most foodstuffs. In 1970, some type of price increases were necessary to keep pace with costs and demands, however, worker pressure caused a change in leadership and a rescission of the price increases. Since March 1971 (when the official price rollbacks occurred), the prices for most food products has remained at 1970 levels. This price freeze has placed an increasingly heavy burden on the Polish economy. As previously noted the average Polish worker has enjoyed a substantial increase in income, which resulted in greater demands for consumer goods and food products. To meet this demand, Poland was forced to increase its investment in light and food industries while also increasing its imports of consumer goods and essential raw materials,

⁶¹Editorial, "Wśród Ludzi i rzeczy" (Amongst people and things), Polityka, 48 (1975), November 29, 1975, pp. 1 & 4 at p. 1

⁶²Jan Szczepanski, "Consumption Model for Tomorrow", Polish Perspectives, 18, No. 7/8, July/August, 1975, pp. 11-18 at p. 16

such as Russian oil and American wheat. The combination of higher wages and investments, and the rising costs for imported goods⁶³ contributed to an inflationary situation in Poland. Rather than passing on the increased costs to the consumers, the government subsidized the prices for many goods. These subsidized prices potentially were dangerous for the Polish economy because it forced the state

to run large budget deficits or reduce spending on other projects such as agricultural investments or a new steel mill.

In the end, inflation in the centrally planned economies means near worthless money because the investment cuts have so reduced the goods available on which to spend it.⁶⁴

The only means available to the Polish government to alleviate this increasing inflationary crisis was to pass on the rising costs to the consumer through selected price increases.

Unlike the Gomulka increases, the current political leadership sought to prepare the public for any price increases. Before the VII PZPR Congress, Edward Gierek revealed that "food prices would gradually rise."⁶⁵ In his opening address to the newly-elected Sejm, Premier Jaroszewicz echoed Gierek's words and indicated that food price increases were probable.⁶⁶

In considering the possible solutions to the problems caused by rising costs, the Polish leadership had two alternatives available: the

⁶³Poland's expenditures for imports rose by \$1.4 billion in the past two years.

James Feron, "A Warsaw Puzzle", The New York Times, June 29, 1976, p. 6

⁶⁴Clyde H. Farnsworth, "Polish Price Crisis Reflects Inflation Ills", The New York Times, June 29, 1976, p. 6

⁶⁵Richard F. Staar, "Poland: The Price of Stability", Current History, 40, No. 414, March 1976, pp. 101-106 & 133-134 at p. 101

⁶⁶"Around the World", The Washington Post, March 28, 1976, p. A 13

price increases either could have been graduated over a longer period of time or could have been implemented at once. On June 24, 1976 in a speech to the Sejm, Premier Jaroszewicz indicated that the latter alternative had been chosen when he announced the governmental proposals for price changes. These proposals included an average increase of 69 percent for the better cuts of meat; 50 percent for the cheaper cuts; poultry would experience a 30 percent increase; and a 60 percent increase in the price for butter and the better cheeses was planned. Lower price increases were proposed for vegetable oil, eggs and other types of cheese; sugar was to rise by 20 zloty, necessitating increases in the prices of goods using sugar; and a 30 percent increase was planned for fish, vegetables and fruit. In the same speech, Jaroszewicz announced that the prices for grain, grain products, milk and low grade dairy products would remain the same.⁶⁷

In the same proposals, the government included a scale of re-compensations to help to alleviate the higher cost of living that would result from the price increases. This system, the result of consultations with some workers' councils, was scaled with "relatively higher compensation for lower salaried workers as well as for the disabled and pensioners and lower compensations for higher income groups."⁶⁸

Accompanying the plans for increasing prices and the system of recompensation, governmental proposals included plans for increasing the purchase price for agricultural goods. In discussing this proposal, Jaroszewicz gave the social and economic reasoning.

⁶⁷Zygmunt Szeliga, "Zmiana struktury cen" (The change of the price structure), Polityka, 26 (1008), June 26, 1976, pp. 1 & 4 at p. 1

⁶⁸"Przemówienie prezesa Rady Ministrów, Piotra Jaroszewicza" (Address of the Premier of the Council of Ministers, Piotr Jaroszewicz), Zycie Warszawy, 150 (10249), June 25, 1976, pp. 3-4 at p. 4

Socially because it answers the socio-economic basis of our policy of closing the rate of the income increase between the city and village. Economically because it is a basic condition for increasing farm production."⁶⁹

TABLE 6.8

SELECTED PROPOSED RECOMPENSATIONS FOR 1976 PRICE INCREASES			
Wages--Disability-- Pensions (złoty per month)	Wages zł.	Additions To Percent Increase	Disability Pensions zł.
1,201--1,300	240	20.0	280
1,501--1,800	300	20.0	340
2,001--2,300	350	17.5	390
2,501--2,800	400	16.2	430
3,001--3,500	440	14.7	460
3,501--4,000	460	13.1	480
4,001--5,000	480	12.0	500
5,001--6,000	500	10.0	520
over 6,000	600	7.5	620

Source: "Przemówienie prezesa Rady Ministrów Piotra Jaroszewicza" (Address of the Premier of the Council of Ministers, Piotr Jaroszewicz), Życie Warszawy, 150 (10249), June 25, 1976, pp. 3-4 at p. 4

In trying to explain the price increases and their necessity to public, the Polish press compared the present conditions to that of 1970. The editor of Polityka, Mieczysław Rakowski, reminded the people that in the late sixties "the Polish economy showed signs of stagnation. Wages stood in place or rose very slowly."⁷⁰ A review of the current state of the Polish economy revealed that "today millions of workers receive significantly more money for their work than at the end of the sixties."⁷¹ Not only wages were higher, but the average Pole was able to buy more and

⁶⁹ibid., p. 3

⁷⁰Mieczysław Rakowski, "Kilka uwag" (Several considerations), Polityka, 26 (1008), June 26, 1976, p. 2

⁷¹ibid., p. 2

better goods. Further justifications for the price increases included the governmental effort to narrow the disparity in income between urban and rural areas; to stimulate agricultural production; and to pass on the increased price for imported goods. The proposed price increases would have fit well into the existing price structure and would

improve the relationship between the prices of food and the prices of industrial goods and also the prices of particular foodstuffs. In effect the structure of the prices of goods services in our country approaches the existing structure⁷² of several other socialist states.⁷³

Another argument for the price changes expressed by Premier Jaroszewicz dealt with the future of Poland.

What we propose today is necessary in order to clear one of the barriers on the road which we have been on steadfastly since December 1970, in order to realize successfully a policy which has passed and continues to pass all examinations. It is a policy saturated with a frank and honest concern for the future of Poland and Poles, that our Fatherland will grow in its strength of influence and that its citizens will grow prosperous.⁷⁴

First Secretary Gierek also had discussed the future prosperity of Poland and its people at a pre-VIII Congress meeting. "He painted a vision of Poland as a major industrial power by 1980, without food queues or inadequate housing, with washing machines for all and even with traffic jams."⁷⁵ However to achieve this future Poland, the proposed price increases were necessary.

The emphasis in the reports on the workers' reactions to the

⁷²Increases in the prices of various goods rose in December 1975 and January 1976 and the price of meat was to rise on July 1, 1976.

Jerzy Kleer, "W kierunku równowagi" (In the direction of equilibrium), *Polityka*, 18 (1000), May 1, 1976, p. 12

⁷³op. cit., "Przemówienie prezesa Rady Ministrów...", p. 4

⁷⁴ibid., p. 4

⁷⁵op. cit., Richard F. Staar, p. 101

proposed price increases varied according to the source. Western sources reported that 5,000 workers went on strike at the Ursus tractor factory near Warsaw and disrupted rail transportation. There were reports of other protests including a strike in Plock, sit-ins in Gdansk and Szczecin, and an attack against the PZPR headquarters in Radom.⁷⁶ Polish reports of the situation emphasized the widespread support that the Party and government had, and the particularly strong support for comrades Gierek and Jaroszewicz personally. Headlines such as the June 28 issue of Życie Warszawy proclaimed:

THE RESOLUTE VOICE OF WORKING POLAND

We support the policy of the Party and government
 We support the program of the country's development
 We condemn the wreckers of the public order⁷⁷

Reports were carried in the Polish press of the mass demonstrations of support held throughout Poland and of the thousands of letters and telegrams of support. A typical report on the demonstrations stated:

The participants of the public meetings, expressing full trust and support for Party policy and for Edward Gierek and Piotr Jaroszewicz personally, emphasized that the change of the price structure is an economic necessity conditioning the further favourable development of Poland as well as the full realization

⁷⁶The New York Times and The Washington Post offered adequate coverage of the recent Polish events. Of particular interest may be the following New York Times articles:

- "Poland Announces Big Food Price Rise", June 25, 1976, Sec. A, pp. 1 & 4
- "Poland Cancels Food Price Rises After Discords", June 26, 1976, Sec. A, pp. 1 & 5
- "East Berlin Reports Polish About Face", June 27, 1976, Sec. A, pp. 1 & 8
- "A Party Office Was Attacked by Poles", June 29, 1976, Sec. 8, p. 8
- "Official in Poland Concedes Protests Affected Third City", June 29, 1976, Sec. A, pp. 7 & 8

⁷⁷"Stanowczy Głos pracującej Polski" (The resolute voice of working Poland), Życie Warszawy, 151 (10251), June 28, 1976, pp. 1 & 2 at p. 1

of the programmed assumptions of the current five-year plan in the scope of improving work conditions and the life of all society.⁷⁸

Official reaction to those workers, who struck and protested against the proposed price increases, was to brand them as hooligans and criminal elements. Letters, such as the one from the workers and brigades of the Pollena Chemical Plant of Nowodworski, condemned "with complete severity, the behaviour of individuals and groups, who want to hinder the realization of the wide, objective consultations on the proposal to change the price structure."⁷⁹

Despite the claims of widespread support for the proposed price changes, the activities of the protestors may have recalled memories of December, 1970, for the proposal was withdrawn on June 25, the day after it was first proposed. The official reasons for the withdrawal were given by Premier Jaroszewicz in a nationally broadcast address.

All of today in the majority of work plants throughout the country consultations on this matter occurred.

Amongst the great part of the participants, the motive and intention of the governmental proposal was understood. Simultaneously, however, many questions and concerns were voiced on the proposed change in the price structure, on the sphere of changes, as well as on the principles of the recompensation level.

Very many of the concrete proposals (which resulted) are worthy of a very penetrating study.

In this situation the government considers necessary a renewed analysis of the entire matter. This requires a longer time, at least several months of work.⁸⁰

During the period when the proposed price increases were announced,

⁷⁸"Niezłomna wola dalszego urzeczywistniania programu wszechstronnego rozwoju ojczyzny" (A firm will for the further realization of the program for the all-round development of the fatherland), Życie Warszawy, 153 (10252), June 29, 1976, pp. 1 & 2 at p. 1

⁷⁹op. cit., "Stanowczy Głos pracującej Polski", p. 2

⁸⁰"Oswiadczenie prezesa Rady Ministrów" (Pronouncement of the Premier of the Council of Ministers), Życie Warszawy, 151 (10250), June 26/27, 1976, p. 1

Edward Gierek had been attending the European Communist Conference in East Berlin so that he did not discuss the Polish events until his return to Poland. In a nationally broadcast address, Gierek reviewed some of the reasons for the necessity of increasing prices and emphasized that

No great and ambitious undertaking can be arrived at easily. And we must smooth out the obstacles on our road and must solve many complex matters. One of these difficult matters is the policy of pricing...One can simply state the heart of the problem as: the active policy of increasing wages and incomes of the people, which we followed for five years with good results and with great public support, demands a very elastic policy of pricing.⁸¹

However, in this speech the issue of the price increases played a secondary role as Gierek stressed the key concepts which constantly have been stated during the regime. The First Secretary reviewed the Party's policy since 1971 and reminded the people that

For five and one-half years, we mapped out, in union with the entire nation a new socio-economic strategy, turning towards the individual and his affairs. The primary goal of this strategy is the acceleration of the development of Poland, as well as the improvement of the material and cultural conditions in the working people's life. Such is the essential political line of the VI and VII Congresses of our Party.⁸²

Gierek also reminded the people that the basic decision-making process had changes under his rule.

In the past such problems arising for us in the life and development of society were not always solved well nor penetratingly. On occasion it happened that the voice of the nation and of the working class was ignored, that the advice, judgement and experience of the working people was not utilized. We

⁸¹"Zbiorowa mądrość, praca, dyscyplina budujemy siłę Polski i pomysłowość Polaków--Przemowienie Edwarda Gierka" (With collective wisdom, work and discipline we will build a strong Poland and prosperous Poles-- A speech by Edward Gierek), Życie Warszawy, 157 (10256), July 3/4, 1976, pp. 1 & 2 at p. 1

⁸²ibid., p. 1

rejected this method of behaviour--this is also an essential trait of the VI and VII Congresses.⁸³

This policy was so important to Gierek that he stated that

I was, am and always will be convinced that in our country nothing will be attained, nothing solved, nothing built without the understanding, support and general cooperation of Poles. That you, dear comrades and citizens meeting here and listening to me throughout Poland, determine the strength and solidarity of our state.⁸⁴

In following this policy, in which the working class played an essential role, Gierek claimed that the complex issue of price changes had been presented to the workers and others for thorough discussion and consideration⁸⁵ and that the political leadership

counted on the wisdom and experience of our society, we waited for its sensible advice. We were not disappointed. From the factory crews, from workers' collectives, from the individual citizens we gained thousands and tens of thousands creative and constructive, as well as critical, considerations and suggestions, which undoubtedly helps to solve this difficult problem.⁸⁶

After all the protests, the speeches and demonstrations had ended and everyone had returned to work, the basic situation in Poland had not changed.⁸⁷ Food prices were still at the old levels and the

⁸³ibid., p. 1

⁸⁴ibid., p. 1

⁸⁵Actually, the workers and the various representative bodies only could have discussed the issue from June 24, the day the proposals were announced, to June 28, the day they were to be implemented; hardly enough time to consider thoroughly such a complex matter.

⁸⁶op. cit., "Zbiorowa mądrość, praca, dyscyplina, budujemy siłę Polski i pomysłność Polaków...", p. 1

⁸⁷One result of the recent events was the trial and conviction of 13 men for their participation in the events at Warsaw and Radom. Their sentences, ranging from three to ten years, may indicate that the leadership will not accept any disagreements with Party policy.

"13 workers sentenced for Polish riots", St. Paul Dispatch, July 20, 1976, p. 5

proposed increases for the purchasing price of agricultural products were rescinded. This meant that Poland still was faced with a possible economic crisis due to the continuing inflationary pressures. The failure of the government to act may have worsened the already bad situation. By rescinding the prices for agricultural goods, the government may have further alienated the already disgruntled farmers. By not meeting the farmers' demands for higher purchase prices, the government risked so angering the farmers that they would withhold even more of their products from the market. This would result in a greater scarcity for certain products and would contribute to the inflationary situation. It seems obvious that the present economic situation cannot continue and that the government must act soon.⁸⁸ Any new policy must solve many problems and must satisfy the demands of various interest groups. New governmental proposals must increase the prices paid to the farmer and must try to close the disparity in income between the city and the village. Increases for agricultural goods plus increased costs for imported goods and production costs must be passed on to the consumer to stem the growth of inflation but these price increases are limited by the real threat of worker protests. The various pressures and demands on the Polish economy will force some type of compromise plan on the Polish leadership; a proposal which may fail to satisfy any group completely and ultimately may result in a greater disenchantment with

⁸⁸Recent reports stated that the price of meat may rise by 35 percent later this year but to this time, no definite proposals have been advanced.

Hubert J. Erb, "Discontent has Poland on defensive", St. Paul Dispatch, July 20, 1976, p. 11

the current regime.

A problem facing all socialist states is the relationship between the Party and the economy. As Dennis Pirages noted:

With the Workers' Party so clearly dominating economic organization, it accepts all credit for successes and is harnessed with the blame for all setbacks. Thus, the price of meat in the neighborhood store, the availability of a flat, or the supply of consumer goods in the central department store are political issues. The socialist citizen, perhaps more clearly than his capitalist counterpart, recognizes that contemporary society is one big organization with political figures playing managerial roles.⁸⁹

The Polish experiences of 1970 and 1976 indicate that this relationship has been a particularly vexing problem for Poland. During the December unrest, the workers' protests were directed against the PZPR as dramatically demonstrated by the burning and looting of the Party headquarters in Gdansk. The 1976 attack on the PZPR headquarters in Radom further illustrated the ties between the Party and the economy. The official reaction to the 1976 events also indicated that the political leadership of Poland has recognized this relationship. The official reaction to the June events did not emphasize the necessity for price increases but rather stressed the mass support for the PZPR and especially for First Secretary Gierek and Premier Jaroszewicz. Thus it would seem that in Poland, economic problems are regarded primarily as political problems, which directly affect the public's support or discontent with the Party.

⁸⁹Dennis Clark Pirages, Modernization and Political-Tension Management: A Socialist Society in Perspective, Praeger, New York, 1972, p. 109

CHAPTER VII

The Future of Worker Relations in Poland

When Edward Gierek first assumed power, he seemed to herald a new breed of East European leader, the technocrat. Apparently more concerned with satisfying the needs of the people than with ideology, Gierek promised to initiate wide ranging reforms and vowed that he would lead Poland further along the road to communism. Although the leadership of Gomulka had disillusioned some Poles, many believed that life would improve under Gierek¹ and were willing to cooperate with him. However, after six years of rule, Gierek has neither deviated from Gomulka's basic policies nor has he solved those problems which toppled his predecessor and worker relations in Poland have disintegrated.

One of the essential promises of Gierek in 1970 was to reform the PZPR by eliminating those aberrations which had developed during Gomulka's era. In discussing the policies to be implemented, Gierek promised a new role for the worker; a continuing dialogue with the people; an openness to just criticisms; and an elimination of the personality cult. Yet, during the past six years, Gierek has not pursued these goals. The workers' role within the Party has not significantly changed since Gierek assumed power. Like some other East European Communist Parties, the composition of the PZPR still

¹See Tables 3.4 and 3.5

favours non-manual workers² and there has been no concerted effort to advance workers within the Party hierarchy.

A key promise of the new Gierek regime was to maintain a

²While complete up-to-date statistics on Party composition are not available for all East European countries, Table 7.1 gives some indication of Party composition for these countries.

TABLE 7.1

PARTY COMPOSITION				
Party	KSC ¹	SED ²	HSWP ³	PZPR ⁴
Date	1970	1972	1972	1975
<u>Occupation</u>				
Blue Collar Workers	26.4	56.6*	58.3*	40.6
Peasants	5.3	----	14.2	9.9
White Collar Workers	----	----	----	42.9
Others	----	----	----	6.6
Total Membership (approx)	1.2	1.9	.7	2.3 ⁵
Population (approx)	13.0	17.3	10.4	33.7 ⁵
* It is unclear as to how the term workers is defined for these figures. Therefore these totals could include white collar workers.				
Sources: 1. Otto Ulč, <u>Politics in Czechoslovakia</u> , Freeman, San Francisco, 1974, p. 43				
2. Richard F. Starr, Editor, <u>Yearbook on International Communist Affairs 1974</u> , Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1975, p. 25				
3. <u>ibid.</u> , p. 33				
4. Stanislaw Milc, "The Polish United Workers' Party", <u>Polish Perspectives</u> , 28, No. 11, November, 1975, pp. 3-8 at p. 5				
5. <u>op. cit.</u> , Richard F. Starr, p. 47				

continuing dialogue with the populace, particularly the workers. Beginning with the January 1971 meetings with the Gdansk and Szczecin strikers, the First Secretary and the Prime Minister have carried out well publicized interviews with worker delegations. While these meetings have been offered as proof of the Party's contact with the people, the quality of these "dialogues" must be questioned. As early as the Szczecin meeting, Gierek and Jaroszewicz indicated that certain issues were not open to discussion. The workers' surprise and bitter reaction to the 1976 proposed price increases has further illustrated the Party's failure to discuss the issues with the people and its inability to prepare them for change.³

Under Gierek, the Party has never been too open to criticism. In its consideration of the causes of the December 1970 unrest, the Central Committee did admit that certain aberrations had occurred under Gomulka but also maintained that the general Party line had never been wrong. The severe punishment for the protestors of the Constitutional amendments and of the price increases has shown that the Party will not tolerate much criticism.

A principal criticism of Gomulka had been the development of a personality cult during his rule. Although Gierek promised to avoid this aberration, his regime has begun to assume the characteristics of such a cult. Like Gomulka, Gierek has sought to secure his position by replacing the allies of his rivals with his own trusted followers.⁴

³Since Gierek used the 1970 riots to prove Gomulka's lack of openness and his failure to communicate with the people, he now seems open to similar charges.

⁴For example, by 1976, nearly three-quarters of the full Central Committee members and almost all deputy members have been

While this policy may be politically astute, Gierek may eventually find himself surrounded by yes-men and isolated from society: two factors which contributed to Gomulka's downfall. Another tactic employed by Gierek has been to isolate his rivals from the Party and society. The best example of this tactic has been the case of Franczisek Szalchcic. Minister of the Interior, Szalchcic possessed a formidable base for building power and his philosophy of "liberal" nationalism made him an attractive alternative to Gierek and his ties with the USSR. To eliminate Szalchcic, Gierek removed him not only from the Interior Ministry but also from the Politbureau. Such a tactic destroyed Szalchcic's power base and effectively limited his contact with the PZPR and the public. Gierek has also used the Polish media to further his personality cult. In praising Gierek and emphasizing his importance in Poland, the press has sought to increase his popularity and to insure his position.⁵ A particularly important aspect of press coverage has dealt with Gierek's relationship with the Soviet leadership. By emphasizing his close personal ties with Brezhnev, Gierek, like his predecessor, has hoped to convince the

elected since Gierek's rise.

Adam Bromke, "A New Juncture in Poland", Problems of Communism, 25, No. 5, September-October, 1976, pp. 1-17 at p. 8

⁵An example of the Polish coverage of Gierek is an article in Zycie Warszawy which stated:

One would like to add a word about the First Secretary, about his modesty, simplicity, and straightforwardness in dealing with the people and at the same time about his sense of responsibility...responsibility before history for the fate of the Poles and People's Poland.

Zycie Warszawy, December 12, 1971, as cited in Adam Bromke, "Poland under Gierek: A New Political Style", Problems of Communism, 21, No. 5, September-October, 1972, pp. 1-19 at p. 19

Poles of his indispensibility.⁶ The reaction of the leadership to the June protests has offered further proof of the development of a personality cult. The Party and the press turned the issue of price increases into a question of Gierek's popularity. In covering the events, the Polish media emphasized the mass demonstrations of support for the leadership and avoided the issue of the price increases.

During the rule, Gierek has failed to solve a problem which has confronted socialist Poland since the end of World War II: a peaceful means of succession. Death or violence has played a significant role in all PZPR leadership changes and the worker has been instrumental in both Gomulka's and Gierek's rise to power. Bouyed by the knowledge of their past role, the workers may now regard violence as the legitimate and perhaps the only means of change. Gierek has further exacerbated the succession crisis by attempting to eliminate his opposition, by not indicating who his likely successor will be⁷, and by not indicating when he will step down. Gierek's unwillingness to discuss his retirement may become an important factor for it may remind the public of Gomulka's lengthy reign and could reinforce their belief that leaders can be changed only by violence or death.

One of the most significant developments in worker-Party

⁶For an example see "Brezhnev hug ends-Gierek-in-hot-water-rumor", Winnipeg Free Press, December 9, 1975, p. 8

⁷Edward Babiuch presently is considered as Gierek's heir apparent, however, this position is fraught with difficulties. If Babiuch gains too much power, Gierek could consider him a threat and would try to eliminate him. If violence is used to depose Gierek, Babiuch's close ties may make him unacceptable to the people.

relations under Gierek has been the dominance of the PZPR over all other aspects of society. While the Party has always been dominant in socialist Poland, recent reforms have furthered this dominance and have given it a new legitimacy. As Table 7.2 indicates, Poland has followed other East European countries in constitutionally recognizing the Communist Party's dominance in society.

TABLE 7.2

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS ON THE PARTY'S ROLE	
State and Date of Constitution	Provisions on Party's Role
Czechoslovakia 11 July 1960	Article 4: The CPCS "is the leading force in the community, as well as in the state."
Hungary 19 April 1972	Article 3: The HSWP "is the leading force of society".
East Germany 7 October 1974	Article 1: The GDR "is a socialist state of workers and peasants...under the leadership of the workers' class and of its Marxist-Leninist Party."
Poland 10 February 1976	Article 3: The PZPR is "the leading political force of society in building socialism."
Sources: Radio Free Europe, "Polish Intellectuals Oppose Changes in Constitution", December 31, 1975, p. 6	
<u>Konstytucja Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej</u> (The Constitution of the Polish People's Republic), Wydawnictwo "Książka i Wiedza", Warsaw, 1976, Chapter 1, Article 3, p. 8	

As with the 1956 change of power, the December 1970 crisis stimulated discussions of elevating governmental bodies to a more responsible position in society. The VIII CC PZPR Plenum promised that the People's Council and the Sejm would assume their constitutional roles and indicated that these bodies would play a dynamic social role. Despite these pledges, the workers' relationship with the government has been

severely damaged during Gierek's reign. The governmental reforms initiated under Gierek have destroyed nearly all public confidence in the integrity of the government. The ascension of the local Party secretary to a new dominance over the People's Councils has virtually eliminated any independence of local government and has insured Party control over the councils. The 1976 Constitutional amendments may have done more than any other action to discredit the government in the eyes of the public. The original version of Article 67 destroyed the myth of individual freedom in Poland, while Articles 3 and 6 underlined and legalized the dominance of the PZPR and the Soviet Union over Poland. The Sejm's meek acceptance of these new amendments illustrated the state's total subservience to the Party while the subsequent exclusion of Dr. Stomma from the 1976 ballots offered proof that the PZPR would tolerate no opposition.

A key problem in Gomulka's Poland had been the failure of the workers' industrial organization to fulfill their primary functions. Rather than protecting the workers' interests or participating in an enterprise's decision-making process, the trade unions, workers' councils and KSRs were used to stimulate productivity and to meet the assigned goals of the plan. Under Gierek, there has been no effort to correct this situation. Gierek, like Gomulka, has accepted the dominance of central planning⁸ and one-man management as the basis for

⁸Unlike other East European countries, Poland has not turned to a mixed socialist-freemarket economy. A principal criticism of such a system is that "It would do away with the very foundation of our system-- central planning."

all industrial relations. Under such conditions, the organs of worker representation, the workers' councils and the KSRs, have become irrelevant in the Polish workplace. Subservient to the Party and to management, these bodies have become so weak that they are even unwilling to fulfill their basic functions. The movement favouring the replacement of the KSRs, in the decision-making process, with the WOGs illustrates the dramatic decline in the workers' organizations' influence. As with other East European countries, the role of trade unions in Gierek's Poland has presented a problem. Socialist trade unions occasionally are faced with a conflict between their two basic objectives of increasing productivity and protecting workers' interests. Often the trade unions have been forced to sacrifice one goal to achieve the other and since the central plan and management have been dominant in the Polish workplace, this has meant that the trade unions must foresake the workers' interests when they conflict with the smooth running of the plant. As a result, the trade unions have remained an unreliable vehicle for the workers' interests and have not gained support during the Gierek years.

Gierek's chief concern during his rule has been to improve the economy. When he first assumed power, Gierek sought to appease the workers by raising wages and freezing prices at pre-December levels. While these policies may have been initially necessary, their continued existence has created serious problems for Poland. With higher wages and prices still at 1970 levels, workers demands for consumer goods, particularly foodstuffs have increased. Unable to meet these demands

⁹Supplies of many food products have been further affected by three consecutive years of bad weather and by large exports to the USSR.

and unwilling to lower them by raising prices, the Polish leaders have been faced with severe shortages of many essential goods.⁹ The hoarding of popular articles has exacerbated this situation and has had a serious psychological effect on the people. In an effort to control the growing crisis, the Party has resorted to a pre-Gomulka tactic: rationing. Last employed in 1950, the rationing of certain goods accurately reflects how critical the current situation is and indicates the desperate tactics of the leaders.

The inability or unwillingness of Gierek to raise prices has created other serious problems for Poland. Like all other East European nations, Poland is affected by international economics. Thus, world-wide inflation has meant higher costs for many imported goods, especially raw materials. Unlike the other East European states, Poland has not passed the rising production costs on to the consumers by raising prices, but rather has tried to subsidize the consumer sector by diverting funds from other areas. This policy has created a serious drain on the Polish economy: the state is forced to reduce spending on other projects, such as investment and modernization, or must run large budget deficits and

In the end, inflation in the centrally planned economics means near worthless money because the investment cuts have so reduced the goods available on which to spend it.¹⁰

Perhaps the most important result of the state's inability to raise prices has been the psychological impact on the workers. The removal of Gomulka had convinced many workers that they possessed a veto power over the leadership and its decisions. The immediate

¹⁰Clyde H. Farnsworth, "Polish Price Crisis Reflects Inflation Ills", New York Times, June 29, 1976, p. 6

withdrawal of the 1976 price increase proposals has reaffirmed the workers' belief that they possess the ultimate control over society.

When Edward Gierek assumed power, it seemed that to succeed he would have to satisfy workers' demands while correcting Poland's pressing economic problems. After six years of rule, Gierek has failed in both of these tasks. The workers are increasingly disenchanted with the state of the economy and they blame the current crisis on the PZPR leadership.¹¹ While shortages and budget deficits have become commonplace in Poland, Gierek has been unable to implement the most effective reform, price increases. Fearful of further alienating the workers, Gierek currently is faced not only with disgruntled workers but also with a bankrupt economy.

While Gierek's economic policies have angered the workers, his cultural policies have disturbed the intelligentsia. A large segment of the intellectuals view policies such as stricter censorship laws and the Constitutional amendments as a step towards "the legalization of totalitarianism"¹² and now distrust the Gierek regime.

¹¹The bitterness of the times may be best reflected in current Polish jokes such as the mock government slogan: "We promised you times would be tough--and we kept our promise."

op. cit., Anthony Collings, p. 48

Another indication of the harsh feels of the times has been the development of the Polish League of Independence. The demands of this domestic group are more radical than any of the demands stated in 1956 or 1970. For excerpts of the League's programme see Appendix 3.

¹²"Dalsze Protesty w Kraju" (Further Protests in the Country), Kultura, 3 (342), March 1976, Paris, pp. 28-34 at p. 30

Now that Edward Gierek has alienated the workers and the intelligentsia, his days as leader of Poland may be numbered. No Polish leader has survived workers' protests and it is simply a matter of time before Gierek must try to establish realistic prices. While Gierek and his policies are presently supported by the PZPR and the Soviet Union, it would be easier for them to change leaders than to quell nation-wide riots. At this point, Gierek's survival hinges on his ability to convince the people that price increases are necessary. If Gierek can accomplish this, he can control the availability of goods and can move towards balancing the budget. If he fails, Gierek must either impose price increases or face economic stagnation; either of which would ultimately destroy him. Assuming that Gierek is unable to convince the people¹³, any new Polish leader would face the same problems which have plagued Gierek. However, he would not have the time that Gierek has had, for no matter who rules, price increases are a necessary and crucial step. An intriguing question on any attempt to change leaders comes to mind: have the Poles' disillusionment with Gomulka and Gierek been so great that they will not accept any member of the PZPR? While the Party is blamed for most of the

¹³Judging by the June protests, it seems unlikely that most Poles will willingly accept any price increases.

¹⁴In discussing the possibility of Soviet intervention, one dissident stated, "We are always afraid of one thing. We don't want a Czechoslovakia on our soil." Another dissident noted, "I've seen Warsaw leveled once in my lifetime and that's enough."

Henry Muller, "Poland: The Winter of Discontent", Time, November 8, 1976, p. 69

nation's ills, it does not seem likely that the Poles are willing to lose all that they have gained in a futile revolution.¹⁴ While there are too many variables to predict accurately the extent of any Polish disturbance¹⁵, the important concerns are that some disturbances seem inevitable and that they could lead to another Czechoslovakia.

¹⁵Factors which could determine the extent of the disturbances include:

- 1) the size and severity of any disturbances (the larger and more violent the actions, the greater the chances for Soviet intervention);
- 2) the demands of the protestors (the PZPR would probably agree more readily to economic demands than to political demands);
- 3) the reaction of the PZPR (a harsh reaction could cause any disturbance to spread and grow in violence);
- 4) the ability of the PZPR to present an acceptable new leadership (any widespread disturbance probably would not accept Gierek's continued leadership and would possess some sort of veto over any new leaders);
- 5) the reaction of the USSR (any Soviet intervention could escalate any disturbance into a patriotic war against the Soviet invaders).

APPENDIX 1

DEMANDS OF THE WORKERS OF THE SZCZECIN SHIPYARDS

The shipyard workers, in sympathy with the workers of Wybrzez, supporting their just demands to a sitdown strike, propose the following demands:

1. We demand the resignation of the present Central Council of Trade Unions, who never rose in the defense of the working masses.

We demand independent trade unions subordinate to the working class.

2. We demand a reduction on the price of foodstuffs to the levels of December 12, 1970.

3. We demand a 30% increase in wages.

4. We demand normal pay for the strike days.

5. We demand compensation for those sustaining a loss in connection with the strike, and especially the care of the wives and children of the workers, who died or became incapacitated during the events.

6. We demand the release of the workers arrested in connection with the events and freeing them from any further legal and official consequences.

7. We demand, that in regards to the Strike Committees and strike participants, there will be no use of legal and official punishments.

8. We demand no armed intervention in the plants and no degrading military honors for those police disguised in military uniforms.

9. We demand the published retraction of the resolution of the

Ministers' Council of December 17, 1970 about the use of weapons.

10. We demand the punishment of those responsible for the massacre of the workers fighting over just workers' rights and the ruthless use of rifle fire on the unarmed working mass.

11. We demand the punishment of those responsible for the present economic crisis, irrespective of their position in the Party or government.

12. We demand the retraction in the press, television and radio of labeling the workers as hooligans and punishment for those who called us that. The working people were forced to demonstrate.

13. We demand restrictions on and the equalization of the wages of the apparat workers of the Party and government to the average wage in industry.

14. We demand the equalization of the price of meal tickets in the police and Party mess-halls to the level of the general public prices in the country.

15. We demand the creation of suitable conditions for the increase in building apartments, also for the just distribution of apartments without preference for privileged groups of society.

16. We demand the decrease of the administrative apparat to reasonable levels.

17. We demand the end of the tele-communications blockade of Szczecin.

18. We demand regular and honest information about the economic and political situation of the country through the Polish media.

19. We will not return to work until several of our demands are settled and we receive information about it through the media.

20. We demand a meeting with the Szczecin delegation to the Sejm with General Jaruzelski to deal with our just demands.

21. We, shipyard workers, denounce all political and unpatriotic pronouncements for the character of our pronouncements is exclusively economic.

After the fulfillment of our demands we will begin honest and straight-forward work.

Strike Committee
Shipyard A. Warski

Strike Committee
Shipyard Remotowa

Source: Ewa Wacowska, Rewolta Szczecińska i Jej Znaczenia, (The Szczecin Revolt and its Meaning), Instytut Literacki, Paris, 1971, pp. 196-197

APPENDIX 2

PROTESTS TO CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

The Letter of 59 Intellectuals to the Speaker
of the Diet of the Polish People's Republic

Warsaw, December 5, 1975

To the Speaker of the Diet,

Herewith, I transmit to you a copy of the letter with reference to the proposed changes in the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic. The letter has been signed by 59 persons. I hereby attest to the authenticity of these signatures.

I have been authorized to inform you, Mr. Speaker, that a separate letter concerning the same problem will be sent to you, signed by about 300 research workers, students and graduates of institutions of higher learning.

With expressions of the highest regard and respect,

Prof. Dr. Edward Lipinski

P.S. Copies of this letter are being sent to the Council of State of the Polish People's Republic, the Parliamentary clubs, and to the secretariat of the Primate of Poland.

The "Directives for the VII Congress of the Polish United Workers Party" contained an announcement of changes in the Constitution. After the conference at Helsinki at which the Polish government together with 34 governments of other states solemnly confirmed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we consider that the implementation of these basic freedoms should become a new stage in the history of the nation and in the lives of individuals. Motivated by civic concern, we consider that the Constitution and the legislation based on it should, above all else, guarantee the following civil liberties:

Freedom of conscience and religious practice. These freedoms do not exist when people adhering to religious beliefs or manifesting a conception of life differing from the one officially prevailing are not admitted to a considerable part of the executive posts in public offices and institutions, social organizations and the national economy. Therefore all citizens, without reference to religion, conception of life and party political affiliation, should be assured equal rights to assume public office. The only determining factors should be individual quali-

fications and personal integrity. Also, all religious groups should be permitted free exercise of their religious practices as well as erection of places of worship.

Freedom of work. This freedom does not exist when the State is the sole employer and the trade unions are subordinate to Party agencies which, de facto, exercise state authority. Under these conditions--as the experiences of 1956 and 1970 indicate--attempts to defend the interests of labor threaten bloodshed and can lead to serious disturbances. For this reason, workers should be assured the possibility of a free choice of their own occupational representation, independent of State or Party organs. The right to strike should also be guaranteed.

Freedom of speech and information. If there is no freedom of speech, there is no free development of the national culture. When all publications are subject to State censorship before they appear, and publications and the mass media are controlled by the State--citizens are unable to take an informed stand on decisions of the State authority, while the authority does not know what is society's attitude toward its policies. The particularly dangerous consequences of the State monopoly on publications as well as the impact of preventive censorship, appear in literature and art which are not fulfilling their socially important functions. Therefore, trade unions, creative, religious, and other associations should be enabled to establish publications and periodicals independent of the State. For this reason, preventive censorship should be abolished, and in the event of violations of press regulations action is to be taken only by judicial process.

Freedom of learning. There is no freedom of learning when the criteria for selection of the academic cadre and the subjects of research are determined by the State authorities and have a political character. Consequently, the autonomy of the institutions of higher learning should be restored and the independence of the academic milieu should be assured.

The guarantee of these basic freedoms cannot be reconciled with the presently prepared official acknowledgment of the leading role of only one of the parties in the system of State authority. Such a Constitutional confirmation would give the political Party the role of a State organ, not responsible to the people, not controlled by the people. Under such conditions the Diet cannot be considered the supreme executive organ, and the courts are not independent.

Implementation must be assured of the rights of all citizens to propose and elect their own representatives in five-adjectival elections. The independence of courts from executive authority needs to be assured, and the Diet must in fact be made the supreme legislative power. We consider that the non-observance of civil liberties can lead to the destruction of our collective effectiveness, to the disintegration of social bonds, to the gradual deprivation of society of its national consciousness, and to the breaking the continuity of the national tradition. It is a threat to the nation's existence.

The statements and postulates which we submit represent our

conviction that responsibility for the fate of our society is collective. The recognition of these freedoms, which were reaffirmed by the Helsinki Conference, has at present acquired international importance since there is neither peace nor security where there is no freedom.

Stefan Amstedamski
 Stanislaw Baranczak
 Ewa Bienkowska
 Jacek Bierezin
 Irena Byrski
 Tadeusz Byrski
 Bohdan Chwedenczuk
 Ludwik Cohn
 Andrzej Drawicz
 Jerzy Ficloski
 Kornel Filipowicz
 Zbigniew Herbert
 Ryszard Herczynski
 Maryla Hoppinger
 Zdzislaw Jaroszewski
 Anna Kamienska
 Jakub Karpinski
 Wojciech Karpinski
 Jan Kielanowski
 Stefan Kisielewski
 Jacek Kleyff
 Leszek Kolakowski
 Julian Kornhauser
 Maria Kornilowicz
 Marcin Krol
 Ryszard Krynicki
 Jacek Kuron
 Stanislaw Lesniewski
 Edward Lipinski
 Jan Jozef Lipski

Zdzislaw Lapinski
 Rev. Stanislaw Malkowski
 Jerzy Markuszewski
 Adam Mauersberger
 Adam Michnik
 Halina Mikolajska
 Jan Niepomucen Miller
 Ludwik Muzyczka
 Zygmunt Mycielski
 Jerzy Narbutt
 Jan Olszewski
 Antoni Pajdak
 Krzysztof Pomian
 Jozef Rybicki
 Rev. Jacek Salij
 Wlagyslaw Silanowicki
 Stanislaw Skalski
 Antoni Slonimski
 Aniela Steinbergowa
 Julian Strykowski
 Jan Jozef Szczepanski
 Adam Szczepiorski
 Kazimierz Szelagowski
 Wislawa Szymborska
 Jacek Trznadel
 Maria Wosiek
 Adam Zagajewski
 Waclaw Zawadzki
 Rev. Jan Zieja

Source: "The Letter of 59 Intellectuals to the Speaker of the Diet of the Polish People's Republic", Polish Review, 21, Nr. 1 & 2, 1976, pp. 55-57

Letter to the High Commission of the PRL Sejm

Warsaw, January 31, 1976

To the High Commission of the PRL Sejm
for the Preparation of the Proposals of Change
of the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic

Some time ago the published announcements of changes in the standing Constitution of the PRL aroused uneasiness, public opinion expressed this amongst other means by collective and individual letters. Now, after the publication of information by PAP on the theme of preparing the proposed changes in the Constitution, the social uneasiness happens to be well-founded. The signatories below, joining to earlier voices of concern and protest, believe that a particularly dangerous proposal is the supplement to article 57 (67 in amended Constitution*), stating 'the rights of citizens are inevitably tied with the honest and conscientious fulfillment of duties towards the Fatherland.'

Democracy in general and thus, socialist democracy, establishes that the execution of citizen's rights cannot be limited by some special conditions, especially by unclearly formulated conditions and allowing the possibility of discretionary interpretations by the government as well as individual trustees of power. They cannot for example deprive a person of his rights for political views which are incompatible with the views of the Party in different parts of the new proposals such as 'the leading political force of society' or persons who have a critical attitude towards the actual method of governing. Naturally even persons condemned to a jail term for definite offenses cannot be deprived of their rights unless individually determined by a legal judgment of the court. If various articles of the present Constitution ensure the citizens 'freedom of speech, press, meetings and assemblies, processions and demonstrations' one cannot enforce an article which would allow the execution of the aforementioned freedom to be under certain circumstances, at variance with 'the honest and conscientious fulfillment of duties towards the Fatherland' and consequently deprive us of these freedoms. Besides under the circumstances of the perceptible and constantly growing restriction of the aforementioned freedoms in the PRL (for example the variance between the freedom of speech and press and the intensive pressure of censorship) the introduction of the quoted amendment to article 57 must be interpreted as a clear, grave and even decisive step towards the legalization of totalitarianism for the entire life of the country and a threat to the fundamental freedoms and rights of citizens.

*Editors note

Jerzy Andrzejewski, Eligia Bakowska, Dr. Ludomir Bienkowski, Henryk Blachnio, Jacek Bochenski, Maria Bogucka, Janusz Bogucki, Kazimierz Brandys, Marian Brandys, Mieczysława Buczkowna, Tomasz Burek, Zofia Chadzyska, Wiesława Czerniawska-Beylin, ..., Stanisław Dygat, dr. med. Marek Edelman, Irena Eichlerowna, ..., Wanda Leopold, ...Marek Nowakowski, ...prof. dr. Czesław Zgorzelski, Juliusz Zulański. (There were a total of 99 signatures.)

Source: "Dalsze Protesty w Kraju" (Further Protests in the Country), Kultura (Paris), 3 (342), March, 1976, pp. 28-34 at pp. 29-30.

Letter of Antoni Slonimski (excerpts)

I only ask without hypocrisy! I will not discuss with you here the influence of French culture on the Polish intelligentsia in the XIX Century when, at this moment, we are fighting over maintenance of our national culture.

Together with fifty eight writers, artists, and professors, I signed a letter to the leaders protesting against the projected Constitutional changes, which if voted on, would amount to the legalization of the dictatorship of the Communist Party and the liquidation of an independent Poland. This conflict has a vital meaning for us. It concerns the future of culture in this country. If the French intelligentsia wish to have some real impact here, they ought to side with our stand.

But I do not have any illusions. Frenchmen do not care one cent worth for what happens here. They only wish that there would be order in Warsaw. I understand the point of view of the leaders. The government wants to trade with the East. Peace and security are needed in Central Europe for this. From this point of view its interests are the same as the Soviet Union. DIRTY BUSINESS! But why does your intelligentsia remain silent? For many long years they were incredibly naive. They did not see the actual situation in the Soviet Union incredibly and with us. For example in 1956, Satre did not wish for Polish writers to deviate from socialist realism in order not to weaken the socialist camp towards the U.S. Freedom for him, all restrictions for us.

Today, thanks mainly to Solzhenitsyn, the whole world can recognize the true side of the Soviet Union. And your own intelligentsia treat him contemptuously and do not want to hear him. Meanwhile he has carried out with Sakharov and several others a huge and vital task. And millions of people here admire him for his courage.

The French intelligentsia have renounced the mission which they sometimes have fulfilled: the struggle for creative freedom in the whole world, wherever it is threatened. But because they possess it, they leave others to their own fate.

We are demanding compliance with the Helsinki Agreement. A real, free circulation of ideas and people. At this time they offer us a caricature. If for example I want to read some English or American newspaper I cannot but it at a kiosk as you can in Paris. If I want to read some Western book which has a political theme which interests me, I must look for an unofficial source since I cannot get it in Warsaw. Is this the intention of Helsinki? It is to end hypocrisy! If it wishes detente, I question its achievements. Let culture spread freely! Because acquiescing culture does not deserve the name culture. Here is a good occasion for the French intelligentsia to establish contact with the

historical traditions of freedom and revolution. Let them support our demands. National borders do not exist for the mind.

I am deeply convinced now that free people must raise their voices, regardless of any immediate risks. My long experience knows that one always gained by not submitting to orders and by speaking what one thought. Of course in my era it was easier to speak on certain truths on which others are silent. But when I look at the behaviour of the young, when I hear them, I feel proud. They are braver than the older generation, who for many years have been accustomed to silence. Undoubtedly the risk today is less than twenty years ago, this, however, fills me with optimism for the future.

Take the letter of the fifty nine. For the first time since 1956 I have hope that we will be victorious, that the leaders will consider our demands. This will prove that the courage of the intelligentsia will.

I am not unduly apprehensive about Poland. I have seen many changes in life. I believe that anything is possible. Even change for the better.

Source: Antoni Slonimski, "L'Ordre regne a Varsovie" (Order for the reign in Warsaw), Kultura (Paris), 3 (342), March, 1976, pp. 26-27.

APPENDIX 3

THE POLISH LEAGUE FOR INDEPENDENCE

A Programme for Poland (excerpts)

In the existing political framework, the people of Poland are not allowed to influence either the internal or the external policy of their country. Furthermore, they are prevented from exercising control over the government. In fact, the wishes and aspirations of the people are increasingly disregarded, and the party-state apparatus is heading unmistakably towards restricting further such liberties as have been won in 1966 and 1970. A look at the international situation makes it clear that it would be useless to rely on foreign influence or pressure to improve our situation. It is up to ourselves to act.

There are numerous indications of a growing need for a programme expressing not only the discontent of the people but also their specific demands and long-term objectives. It is widely felt we must reach beyond disjointed protests for a clear definition of the aspirations of the majority of our people.

...Our programme means to provide a foundation for appraisal of the changing situation in this country and abroad and of the political conduct of groups and individuals. The nation is fragmented and the Party tries to prevent any degree of understanding and cooperation between different groups by all means at its disposal. The existence of the common platform we propose should serve to bring together ideas and, at an opportune moment, actions of all who share a common purpose even if they have no formal ties.

The Polish League for Independence brings together people of different backgrounds. We differ in our views on many specific economic and political problems. We do agree, however, on the essentials. This programme is the measure of our agreement made possible because, at present, the interests of all Poles are the same.

The countries of the "socialist bloc", i.e. countries subordinated to Moscow, and the USSR itself, are in a state of continuing, although concealed, crisis. The reasons for it are the growing internal tensions, the discontent among the oppressed nations, the malfunctioning of the economy together with the continuing backwardness in technology, culture and social welfare. The crisis is bound to come into the open, both internally and internationally.....

We have built our programme on the following assumptions:

1. The nation, in the sense of a group of people conscious of national identity, is sovereign and has an inalienable right to decide its own destiny.

2. All citizens are absolutely equal before the law and should have equal opportunity to organize their own lives.

3. The enormous majority of Poles are people of religious beliefs; the majority of those are Catholics. The political system in Poland cannot be based on discrimination against the majority.

4. The Polish national tradition was based on the progressive expansion of civil rights and the participation of an increasing number of people in government. Polish political thinking has been foremost in the development of democratic ideas since the sixteenth century. The autocratic, anachronistic, totalitarian system imposed on us is humiliating and alien to our tradition.

5. Poland belongs historically to the great family of nations of Western and Central Europe, the inheritors of the Greco-Roman and Christian civilization. We wish to continue within that tradition, strengthening our ties with nations close to us spiritually.

The Polish League for Independence has, as its general objectives:

1. The regaining of genuine national sovereignty.

2. The giving to all Poles the opportunity to participate in the government of the country.

3. The introduction of civil rights in accordance with our own tradition and the natural development of free nations of Europe.

4. The creation of legal and organizational frameworks for the introduction and continuous existence of a multi-party democracy.

5. Real prosperity, to be experienced by the people and not measured by overfulfillment of fictitious norms; the progress of the national economy, without constant sacrifices and acts of self-denial being called for.

6. The free development of learning and national culture.

7. Throwing open Poland's windows onto the world with freedom of movement, of exchange of thought and of information.

...The Party does not even try to satisfy the people. The only thing it wants from them is inactivity, indifference to what is being done to the country. It is supremely important that those who disagree with what the Party stands for should adopt an active role. To start with, let it be at least an intellectual exercise; constant attention to the possibility of different courses of action, better decisions and more sensible personal conduct. To oppose is not the same as to complain or to grumble. Our aim is to provide alternative solutions.

The task has to be undertaken by the whole of the intelligentsia, historically responsible for the spiritual life of the nation. The most powerful section of society, the industrial workers, must share in the responsibility. The events of the last 30 years have amply demonstrated that they represent an invincible force.

Source: "Documents: The Polish League for Independence--A Programme for Poland", Survey, 22, No. 2, Spring, 1976, pp. 182-193.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- AK (Armia Krajowa)-- Home Army (the London-based Polish Underground).
- AL (Armia Ludowa)-- People's Army (the Communist Polish Underground).
- CRZZ (Centralna Rada Związków Zawodowych)-- The Central Council of Trade Unions.
- KC (Komitet Centralny)-- Central Committee (CC).
- Comecon-- Council of Mutual Economic Assistance.
- FJN (Front Jedności Narodowej)-- Front of National Unity (composed of the PZPR, ZSL, SD).
- HSWP-- The Hungarian Social Workers' Party.
- KPP (Komunistyczna Partia Polski)-- Communist Party of Poland (until 1938).
- KSC (Komunistická Strana Československa)-- Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.
- KSR (Komitet Samorządowy Robotniczy)-- Workers' Self-Management Committee.
- NEM-- New Economic Mechanism (Hungarian economic reforms initiated in 1968).
- PPR (Polska Partia Robotnicza)-- Polish Workers' Party 1942-1948.
- PPS (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna)-- Polish Socialist Party to 1948.
- PRL (Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa)-- Polish People's Republic.
- PSL (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe)-- Polish Peasant Party (Mikolajczyk).
- PZPR (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza)-- Polish United Workers' Party.
- SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands)-- Socialist Unity Party of Germany (GDR).
- SD (Stronnictwo Demokratyczne)-- Democratic Party.
- UB (Urząd Bezpieczeństwa)-- Polish secret police.
- WOG (Wielkie Organizacje Gospodarcze)-- Large Economic Associations.
- ZboWiD (Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację)-- Association of Fighters for Liberty and Democracy (Polish Veterans' Organization).
- Znak-- "Sign" (Association of Polish Catholic intelligentsia).
- ZSL (Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe)-- United Peasant Party.