

## 4 – From Solidarność to System Transformation

### Polish Politics in a European Context

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## The result of Gierek's economic policy

### ➤ Gierek's plan of economic recovery failed:

- Oil Crisis prevented exports to the West
- Licensed products were not developed and quickly outdated
- Part of credits went directly into consumption
- Planning system was inefficient
- Barter trade with Eastern Block was not based on comparative advantage, but political decisions

⇒ Poland needs to export basic goods to serve its credits

⇒ Food and other items become rationed

Dissent

"S"

Martial Law

Round Table

All Party

## Strikes 1976 and systems reaction

In 1976 there is a new wave of strikes

- System reacts with legal means against activists (imprisonment, loss of jobs, ...)

Intellectuals form supportive organisations, such as **Committee for the Protection of Workers (KOR)**

Dissidents require rights given to them in Polish law and what Poland agreed in the Helsinki Accord

⇒ **Formation of a civil society outside the control of PZPR:**

- Independent publications, independent observers in court, contact with emigrants, "flying university"

System reacts with intimidation, terror and creating an atmosphere of distrust and immorality

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**SOLIDARNOŚĆ**

New price rises lead to strikes in Summer 1980

- Workers of the „Lenin Shipyard“ in Gdańsk form the independent trade union **Solidarność** (they are joined by KOR)
- Workers demand variety of demands („21 Postulaty“):
  - **Workers' rights** (right to strike, independent trade unions, ...)
  - **Civil rights** (freedom of expression, restriction of rights of militia and secret service, ...)
  - **Socio-economic demands** (early retirement, fixing wages to prices, child care for everybody, free Saturdays, ...)

PZPR gives in to most demands in **Gdańsk Agreement**

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## SOLIDARNOŚĆ

Solidarność questions the system – as it covers the whole society

- Workers (trade union)
- Intelligentsia (student organisation and professional association)
- Peasants (Rural Solidarność)

1981 Solidarność has about 10 Million members (PZPR has 3 Million of which 1 million is member in "S")

### Dilemma 1981

- Opposition has questioned the state in its fundamentals but does not move on (*self-limiting revolution*)
- Party is not willing to give in to further demands
- Dissent spreading in PZPR and block parties
- Economic situation declines further
- Fear of Soviet invasion to Poland



## Martial Law

- 1980 Gierek is forced to step down – in 1981 Minister of Defence Wojciech Jaruzelski becomes PM and Gen Sec.

December 13<sup>th</sup> 1981 Jaruzelski declares Martial Law (Stan Wojenny) over Poland:

- Dissolution of Solidarność
- Imprisonment of leading members of the opposition
- Military control over the country
- Censorship of all media

Only with the help of the army can the party regain its monopoly of power

US and many Western European countries impose sanctions on Poland

*With the Soviet Invasion in Afghanistan this leads to the so-called Second Cold War*



## The Round Table

### Internal situation

- Economic situation declines further
- Abolition of martial law leads to new wave of strikes

### External factor:

- Gorbachev's reforms allow more freedom for satellite states
- West will give economic aid if political situation changes

### Plan of the party

- PZPR tries to give opposition responsibility without giving up power
- In Spring 1989 **Round Table** talks:

*Talks between Party and Solidarność on the future of Poland*

- Reforms of the social and economic system
- Political institutional reforms
- Plurality of trade unions



## The April Agreement (Kontrakt)

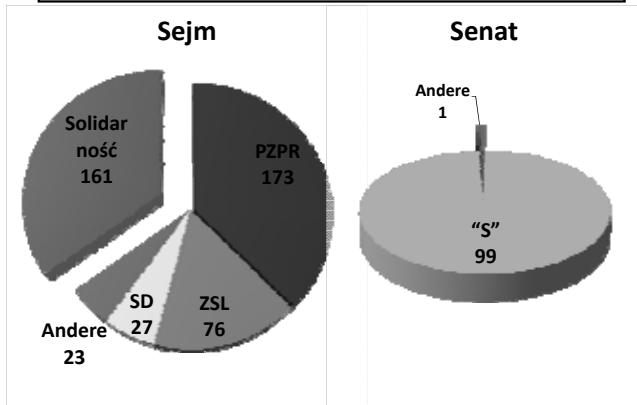
Round Table agrees on an agreement covering:

- new Law on Associations – legalisation of Solidarność and other civil society organisations
- partly free elections to the Sejm (2/3 to List of National Unity - 1/3 of seats freely elected by majority voting)
- Creation of the Senate – free elections in majority voting
- Reestablishment of the President – elected by the National Assembly (Sejm + Senat)
- Opposition receives access to media

No agreement on economics, social policy, foreign policy and secret services – decision to be taken by new government



## Elections 1989



## Contract government

### Landslide victory of Solidarność

- List of National Unity could rule alone, but block parties reject coalition with PZPR
- Proposal: “Your President, our Prime Minister”
  - National Assembly elects Jaruzelski as President („S” abstains)
  - Tadeusz Mazowiecki becomes Prime Minister of an All Party government (June 1989)
- December 1990 - Jaruzelski steps down, Wałęsa elected President
  - In the election campaign between Mazowiecki and Wałęsa does Solidarność splits into a large number of political parties

1991 Free elections to Sejm



## “Thick Line”

How to deal with victims and perpetrators of the Communist regime?

„We make a thick line under the past. Our responsibility is only to save Poland from the crisis” (**Mazowiecki 1989**)

- Secret services continue to exist and operate - with majority of personnel
- Secret services can destroy parts of their archives
- Many secret service officers use their contacts for economic interests
- Names of informers were not disclosed
- Communist politicians were not made responsible and could build up a post-communist party

**The lacking decommunisation is still a major topic for the political right in Poland**

