

INFORMATION
ABOUT CDE. L. I. BREZHNEV'S MEETING WITH CDES. S. KANIA
AND W. JARUZELSKI¹

On 14 August 1981 a meeting took place in the Crimea between the CPSU CC General Secretary and Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Cde. L. I. Brezhnev, and the PZPR CC First Secretary, S. Kania, and the PZPR CC Politburo member and Chairman of the PPR Council of Ministers, W. Jaruzelski.² Also taking part in the discussion were Cdes. A. A. Gromyko, K. U. Chernenko, and K. V. Rusakov.

The CPSU CC attached great significance to this meeting with the Polish leaders.

At the outset of the discussion, Cde. L. I. Brezhnev expressed great anxiety about where Poland is heading. You hoped, he said to Cdes. S. Kania and W. Jaruzelski, that events would begin to turn around in some definite way after the Congress.³ But in actuality the situation has continued to deteriorate, and the counterrevolution is stepping up its onslaught.

All the steps taken by the CPSU and the Soviet Union throughout the Polish crisis were dictated exclusively by concern about the interests of socialist Poland. Cde. L. I.

¹ Translator's Note: This document from the former SED archive is undated, but a handwritten note by Erich Honecker in the upper right-hand corner of the first page gives the date of 22 August 1981.

² Translator's Note: This session was the final time that Brezhnev met with Kania before Kania was removed as PZPR First Secretary in October 1981. On 18 August, Kania and Jaruzelski provided a detailed account of their meeting with Brezhnev to the rest of the PZPR Politburo. Their summary of the talks is very similar to this Soviet transcript, but it makes a useful complement insofar as it mentions a separate meeting with Andrei Gromyko and gives a greater indication of what Kania and Jaruzelski each said to Brezhnev. (The Soviet transcript usually lumps the two together.) See "Protokol Nr. 3 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 18 sierpnia 1981 r.," 18 August 1981 (Secret), in Wlodek, ed., *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego*, esp. pp. 455-459. For Jaruzelski's and Kania's retrospective accounts of the talks, see Jaruzelski, *Stan wojenny dlaczego*, pp. 231-246; and Kania, *Zatrzymac konfrontacje*, pp. 189-198.

³ Translator's Note: The "Congress" to which Brezhnev is referring is the Extraordinary Ninth Congress of the PZPR, held on 14-20 July 1981. For the proceedings, see *IX Nadzwyczajny Zjazd PZPR 14-20 lipca 1981 r.* (Warsaw: KiW, 1981). As noted above (in my final annotation to Transcript of the CPSU Politburo Session, 18 June 1981), the Congress was lively and boisterous, but in the end it gave Kania most of what he had sought. Brezhnev spoke by phone with Kania on 21 July, the day after the Congress ended. The Soviet leader maintained that "the Congress was a serious test of strength for both the PZPR and you [Kania] personally," and that it "highlighted the danger posed by opportunist forces." He warned Kania that "the counterrevolutionaries do not intend to relent in their attack," and he urged the Polish leader to take "decisive and consistent action to resolve the crisis and stabilize the situation. . . . You must yield no more ground." Brezhnev added that "the nature of Soviet-Polish economic, political, and other relations will depend on how things shape up in Poland," a thinly-veiled hint that Soviet economic largesse might not continue indefinitely. Kania assured Brezhnev that he would "do [his] best to overcome these difficulties" and to "seize the counterrevolution by the throat." For the time being, Brezhnev was willing to accept those assurances. See "Vermerk uber ein Telefongesprach des Generalsekretars des ZK der KPdSU, Genossen Leonid Il'ic Breznev, mit dem Ersten Sekretar des ZK der PVAP, Genossen Stanislaw Kania, am 21.7.1981," 21 July 1981 (Top Secret), in SAPMDB, ZPA, J IV 2/202-550. A copy of the transcript is also available in the Hungarian National Archive (Magyar Orszagos Leveltar), F. 5/832 o.e., ol. 20-24.

Brezhnev proposed in complete candor, as befits Communists, to speak about Polish affairs.

Cdes. Kania and Jaruzelski described the situation in the country and the party in substantial detail. They acknowledged that there is ample basis for the alarm that the leaders of the CPSU and other fraternal parties have expressed about the fate of socialism in Poland.

The Polish comrades emphasized the positive influence of the Extraordinary 9th Congress of the PZPR, after which, in their view, "the party can act more decisively." The PZPR leaders described the new composition of the Central Committee as "manageable." "A process of consolidation is currently under way in the PZPR. . . . An example of this can be seen in the 2nd plenum of the party's Central Committee, where the speeches were notable for their high quality, principled stances, and feeling of certainty," noted Cde. S. Kania.⁴

Referring to the PZPR's struggle to find a way out of the crisis, Cde. S. Kania declared in particular: "Today no one will say that the party does not see any way to overcome the crisis. The PZPR has a program, and today it is seizing the initiative."

Cdes. S. Kania and W. Jaruzelski strove to show that the line they have chosen is in complete accord with the specifics of the Polish situation and is giving a basis for speaking about initial successes on the road to political stabilization. As evidence that the situation is beginning to turn around, they cited the work of the 2nd Plenum of the PZPR Central Committee, the agreements with Solidarity at the LOT airline,⁵ the prevention of street disturbances in Warsaw, and other such things.⁶

⁴ Translator's Note: The 2nd Plenum of the PZPR Central Committee was held on 11-12 August 1981 amidst a wave of public protests and strikes, which were threatening to elude the authorities' control. In his opening speech at the plenum, Kania denounced "adventurist groups in Solidarity's leading organs" who were driving the country inexorably toward a "bloody confrontation" and the "greatest national tragedy." He vowed that the party would "combat anti-socialist forces" and "find a way to ensure that the streets remain quiet." Other members of the PZPR Politburo joined in the condemnation of Solidarity for its "counterrevolutionary statements" and "betrayal of workers' interests." The Central Committee as a whole urged the government to take "resolute action" to curb "disorder" and "anarchy." Quoted from *II Plenum Komitetu Centralnego PZPR 11/12 sierpnia 1981 r* (Warsaw: KiW, 1981), pp. 35, 161.

⁵ Translator's Note: Acute tensions emerged at Poland's LOT airline in the spring of 1981 when the government decided to install an Air Force general as LOT's new managing director, rather than accept a civilian candidate proposed by the airline's employees. Negotiations on the matter proved fruitless. On 9 July several thousand LOT employees staged a four-hour strike and threatened to walk out for the full day on 24 July unless the government met their demands. As the 24th drew near, the government finally agreed to resume talks, and Solidarity responded by urging the airline workers to postpone the strike. By early August, a tentative settlement had been reached that provided for a restructuring of the LOT administration, with input from workers regarding the appointment of a managing director. Although tensions at the airline persisted, Kania and Jaruzelski were largely justified in depicting the outcome favorably.

⁶ Translator's Note: Kania's and Jaruzelski's comments about these matters reflected their guarded optimism in the wake of a highly publicized meeting in Gdansk of Solidarity's National Coordinating Commission (*Krajowa Komisja Porozumiewawcza*, or KKP) on 10-12 August 1981. Although the union leaders had bitterly criticized the authorities for renegeing on promises and for trying to blame Solidarity for all of Poland's economic woes, the resolutions and statements adopted at the meeting were construed by

The Polish leaders affirmed that every direct attack against the people's regime will be dealt a formidable rebuff. However, their statements obviously do not imply that they will immediately pursue a decisive, no-holds-barred confrontation with the political adversary and with the counterrevolution. Cde. S. Kania said: "We constantly intend to use the most decisive measures against the counterrevolution. But this will be possible only when popular support is guaranteed."

Cde. S. Kania spoke with satisfaction about the situation in the state security organs and the army, which "despite certain difficulties are both in very good shape."⁷ Referring

senior PZPR officials as an indication that "the KKP is returning to realistic thinking" and "is genuinely concerned about finding ways to overcome the crisis." Even so, it is difficult to see how Kania and Jaruzelski could have legitimately claimed that they had "prevented street disturbances in Warsaw." Turmoil had spread through Poland in late July and early August after government officials announced on 23 July that prices for food and other consumer goods would be increased, and that meat rations would be reduced by nearly 20 percent in August and September. This announcement provoked a wave of "hunger marches" in Warsaw and other cities, as protesters denounced the government's action and demanded "living standards appropriate for a civilized country." Emergency talks between Solidarity and the government on 25 and 27 July brought a repeal of the cut in meat rations for September and some movement on other issues, but the limited agreement between the two sides was not enough to forestall a fresh round of protests and hunger marches. Talks between Solidarity and the government resumed on 3 August, albeit without any progress. On that same day, a strike alert was declared by 240 enterprises in Piotrkow Trybunalski wojewodztwo and by 56 enterprises in Radom wojewodztwo to protest food shortages and meat rationing. The renewed talks between Solidarity and the government on 3 August were further impeded by a large protest rally in Warsaw. The streets of the capital were nearly paralyzed on 3-4 August by a long column of trucks, buses, and municipal workers who were denouncing shortages of food and other staple goods. When the police barred the demonstrators from moving past the PZPR's headquarters near the intersection of Marszalkowska Street and Jerozolimskie Avenue, traffic came to a halt and a tense standoff ensued. Solidarity and the government broke off their negotiations, but returned to the table on 6 August amidst threats of widespread strikes. After the two sides were still unable to reach agreement, the Polish government released a statement on 7 August that "expressed profound concern about the street demonstrations organized by some local Solidarity branches, which threaten the state's security and public order." The authorities warned that "any further organization of street demonstrations, especially suicidal strikes," would pose a "grave danger." Although Kania and Jaruzelski may have hoped that an "Appeal" issued by Solidarity on 12 August would induce rank-and-file workers to eschew mass protests, there was no assurance of that by the time the Polish leaders conferred with Brezhnev on 14 August. The only thing of which they could be certain was that Solidarity's national organization had encouraged union branches in Warsaw, Gdansk, Katowice, Wroclaw, Bialystok, and Bydgoszcz to refrain from taking part in a "Star March" (*Marsz gwiazdzisty*) on 17 August, which was being organized by the Committee for the Defense of Prisoners of Conscience (RKOUP) to demand the "release of all political prisoners" in Poland, including Leszek Moczulski. (The Star March was so named because RKOUP activists were planning to march toward Warsaw from various directions, forming a starlike pattern that would converge in the capital on 22 August.) Solidarity's decision not to support the Star March helped avert what might have become a direct confrontation with the authorities.

⁷ Translator's Note: This represented a notable change from what Kania had been saying to Marshal Kulikov a few months earlier (see my annotations in Transcript of the CPSU Politburo Session, 2 April 1981 and Transcript of the CPSU Politburo Session, 9 April 1981). It also was at odds with intelligence reports from senior KGB officials, who by late April 1981 were reporting that "the police organs have established ties with the Solidarity organization and are informing Solidarity about certain aspects of their activities as well as organizing joint efforts. . . . As a result of the work carried out by Solidarity, the activity of the [Polish] state security organs in the police has been curtailed." The same KGB official claimed that "Solidarity has been actively spreading propaganda among the population to discredit the state security organs and the citizens' police, which has disrupted their activities." Quoted from "Spravka,"

to Solidarity, Cde. Kania declared that “society and the working class are beginning to move away from Solidarity, and its leaders do not want [the union] to be perceived as a destructive force.”

Solidarity called on [its members] not to permit strikes for two months and to agree to work on eight free Saturdays.⁸ It is known, however, that Solidarity intends to take the output produced on these Saturdays and allocate it through its own channels.⁹

After speaking about the difficult situation in the mass media, Cdes. S. Kania and W. Jaruzelski discussed a number of organizational measures and personnel changes intended to improve the situation in the press. It is known that “*Zolnierz Wolnosci*” is the only newspaper up to now that has adhered to a staunch position.¹⁰ Even “*Trybuna Ludu*” has been tolerant of ideological wavering.

Dispatch No. 638 (Top Secret), 24 April 1981, and "Spravka," Dispatch No. 639 (Top Secret), 25 April 1981, from Lieutenant-Colonel O. P. Donchak, deputy head of the Ukrainian KGB's 7th Border Detachment for Intelligence, both in TsDAHOU, F. 1, Op. 25, Spr. 2235, Ll. 28-29 and 30, respectively. A high-level Soviet military delegation led by Kulikov and General Gribkov arrived in Warsaw on 8 August to confer with Jaruzelski and Siwicki about the "combat readiness of the Polish armed forces." See "Spotkanie W. Jaruzelskiego z W. Kulikowem," *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), 10 August 1981, p. 1. In light of the earlier reports from Kulikov and from KGB sources, Soviet leaders were increasingly concerned that Polish military units and security forces might prove unreliable "if the situation reaches a critical point." Soviet diplomats, intelligence officials, and military commanders in Poland were ordered to keep a close watch on the Polish army and security organs. See, for example, "O nekotorykh aspektakh raboty Pol'skikh organov gosbezopasnosti po presecheniyu podryvnoi deyatel'nosti oppozitsii (Informatsiya na osnove besed s rabotnikami gosbezopasnosti PNR)," Cable No. 931 (Top Secret), 30 November 1981, from A. Kovalev, first secretary at the Soviet embassy in Warsaw, in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 84, D. 611, Ll. 29-31; "O nastroeniyakh sredi soldatov i ofitserov podrazdelenii Voiska Pol'skogo i VMF PNR, dislotsiruyushchikhsya na Gdan'skom poberezh'e," Cable No. 183 (Top Secret), 14 June 1981, from V. Zelenov, Soviet consul-general in Gdansk, in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 84, D. 611, Ll. 17-19; "O politicheskoi situatsii i nastroeniyakh v voevodstvakh yuzhnogo regiona PNR (Politpis'mo)," Cable No. 179 (Top Secret), 12 November 1981, from G. Rudov, Soviet consul-general in Krakow, to the CPSU Secretariat, in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 84, D. 597, Ll. 13-22; and "O trevozhnykh faktakh dal'neishego davleniya na organy Narodnoi militsii (MO)," Cable No. 94 (Secret), 27 May 1981, from G. Rudov, Soviet consul-general in Krakow, to the CPSU Secretariat, in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 84, D. 611, Ll. 2-3.

⁸ Translator's Note: Kania is referring here to specific parts of the "Appeal" issued by Solidarity's KKP on 12 August to rank-and-file members and the broader society ("*Apel do czlonkow zwiazku i calego spoleczenstwa*"). The KKP cited the deepening economic crisis as a reason to forgo mass protest actions for the time being and to encourage union members to work (for full pay) on eight Saturdays that had earlier been designated work-free (*wolne od pracy*).

⁹ Translator's Note: The KKP's Appeal of 12 August suggested that "self-governing committees" (*komitety samorzadow*) and "factory commissions" (*komisje zakladowe*) should exercise control over the output from work on Saturdays to ensure that it was "entirely devoted to rectifying the most acute shortages." Even earlier, on 5 August 1981, Solidarity declared its right to control food production and supplies, and called for an immediate shift to "genuine workers' self-management." This statement came a day after prime minister Jaruzelski had formed an Anti-Crisis Committee under one of his deputies, Janusz Obodowski. Jaruzelski had indicated that this committee would oversee food distribution and fuel supplies, a position that Solidarity wanted to challenge.

¹⁰ Translator's Note: The main daily newspaper of the Polish armed forces, *Zolnierz Wolnosci* ("Soldier of Freedom"), was under the direct control of General Jozef Baryla, the head of the Polish army's Main Political Directorate. Baryla, a long-time ally of Jaruzelski, vigorously supported the Polish leader's efforts throughout the crisis.

Cdes. S. Kania and W. Jaruzelski gave particular emphasis to Poland's difficult economic situation. In their view, this is precisely the issue that accounts for the prolonged nature of the political crisis.

They acknowledged that difficulties in the economy are caused above all by [Poland's] indebtedness to the West and by the destructive activity of extremists from Solidarity. "Poland's foreign debt," said S. Kania, "has grown astronomically. . . . They don't give us loans as a gift. Credits are extended to us at very high interest rates of up to 20 percent."¹¹

During the discussion, Cde. L. I. Brezhnev cited a broad array of facts and comprehensively highlighted the rapidly growing danger posed by the situation in Poland. He focused the attention of the Polish leaders on the threat to the Polish people's socialist gains. Recent meetings with the leaders of a number of fraternal parties in the Crimea confirmed that all of us are alarmed about where Poland is heading.¹² The ranks of the party are depleted. Its leading role has been greatly enervated. Solidarity is in control at a majority of large enterprises and is putting forth outrageous political demands. Anti-socialist forces who are preparing to storm the positions of the PZPR are showing increased signs of aggressiveness.

The economy is being strangled under the burden of debts. Instead of a well-tuned rhythm of production, one finds work stoppages, protest meetings, and strikes.¹³ As a

¹¹ Translator's Note: Negotiations were under way at this time between the U.S. and Polish governments to restructure Poland's huge foreign debt. On 27 August the two countries signed an agreement to defer repayment for 5-8 years of 90 percent of the debt owed by Polish institutions in 1981.

¹² Translator's Note: Brezhnev's meetings with East European leaders in late July and August 1981 were summarized in a secret report distributed in late August 1981 by the CPSU Politburo to lower-level party and state organs throughout the Soviet Union, "Informatsiya TsK KPSS ob itogakh vstrech tovarishcha L. I. Brezhneva s rukovoditelyami bratskikh partii sotsialisticheskikh stran v Krymu v iyule-avguste 1981 goda." The lower-level bodies were required to disseminate the Politburo's findings to all party members and employees. An assessment of this process, and of the response from local party members, was sent to the CPSU Politburo on 11 September by Evgenii Razumov, deputy head of the CPSU Central Committee Organizational-Party Work Department, "Ob oznakomlenii partiinogo aktiva s Informatsiei TsK KPSS ob itogakh vstrech tovarishcha L. I. Brezhneva s rukovoditelyami bratskikh partii sotsialisticheskikh stran v Krymu v iyule-avguste 1981 goda," No. P-1714 (Top Secret). See also Memoranda Nos. 33364 and 33387 from Razumov to the CPSU Secretariat, 21 September 1981 (Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 84, D. 76, L. 48. For further information pertaining to these documents, see earlier portions of TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 84, D. 76. Other valuable information about Brezhnev's meetings and the reaction inside the USSR can be found in archives of the former Soviet republics outside Russia. See, for example, "Informatsiya ob otklikakh partiinogo aktiva na itogi krymskikh vstrech General'nogo sekretarya TsK KPSS, Predsedatelya Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR tovarishcha L. I. Brezhneva s rukovoditelyami bratskikh partii i sotsialisticheskikh stran v 1981 godu," No. 1/94 (Top Secret), 2 September 1981, from V. Shcherbytskyi, first secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, in TsDAHOU, F. 1, Op. 25, Spr. 2208, Ll. 44-50.

¹³ Translator's Note: Brezhnev's statements about the effects of unrest in Poland tally well with assessments prepared by senior Polish officials. One such assessment, completed on 10 August, claimed that in the first eight days of August alone, Poland had lost more than \$12.5 million in potential export revenues because of protests and work stoppages by coalminers. The protests, according to the report, had meant a loss of 207,000 tons of coal, including 145,000 tons during a warning strike by miners on 7 August. The report also alleged that strikes were having deleterious effects in many other sectors of the economy, including construction (the purported loss of 100 apartment buildings), transportation (the

result of all of this, the living standard of workers is on the decline. They are dragging the economy to the bottom, labor discipline is collapsing, no clear economic program is at hand, and the economic life of the country is being disrupted by Solidarity.

In the ideological sphere the enemies of socialism are acting with impunity and are casting aspersions on the PZPR, the national state, and socialism.

On the basis of information expressed by the Polish leaders during the discussion, Cde. L. I. Brezhnev dwelt at length, in an acute and precise manner, on the political meaning of recent events in Poland. He especially emphasized that the danger threatening the PZPR is a right-wing danger. Reliable Communists and Marxist-Leninists, who are currently out of office, are an important reserve of the party and must be defended.¹⁴ One's view of this question, emphasized Cde. L. I. Brezhnev, in contemporary circumstances is a criterion of party spirit.

Overall, he said, no matter how one evaluates the results of the 9th Congress, one thing is clear: The Congress in and of itself did not bring radical changes in the course of events. The adversary retained the initiative and actually increased the force of its attack, whereas the party and the people's regime continue to retreat.

It is impossible to stop the adversary without a struggle. There have been enough concessions; there is nowhere left to retreat. Simultaneously you must declare as loudly as possible to the whole nation that the main reason for the current hardships in Poland is the criminal activity of the bosses of Solidarity. Why do you not just flatly say that they are precisely the ones who bear responsibility for the current onerous situation in productive output?

The Polish comrades, said Cde. L. I. Brezhnev, are not ready for a confrontation. By speaking about it as nothing other than "bloodshed," they end up wanting to avoid it all costs. We, though, are speaking about a political confrontation, which is already under way. It is being waged by the adversary. As far as a bloody confrontation is concerned, one might indeed occur if you don't pursue the political confrontation to its logical end and restore the leading role of the PZPR.

diversion of 2,400 vehicles), metallurgy (the estimated loss of 30,000 tons of steel and 300 tons of sheet zinc), engineering (the loss of 15 kilometers of steel pipes), chemical production (the suspension of ammonium nitrate production), and light industry (the suspension of pharmaceutical production). Similar findings were given in a secret report prepared by the PZPR Central Committee apparatus in mid-August 1981, which lamented the "continuously deteriorating supply of basic goods" and predicted that "over the longer run a [violent] confrontation with the extremist elements of Solidarity seems inevitable." See "Prognoza przewidywanych nastrojow społecznych oraz konfliktow z NSZZ 'Solidarnosc' i innymi ugrupowaniami wrogimi politycznie," Ss. 95, 107.

¹⁴ Translator's Note: Brezhnev presumably is referring to Gierek and other senior PZPR officials who had been removed from their posts over the previous year. Brezhnev's effort to ensure that these "reliable Communists" would be "defended" was at odds with a key finding in a secret report prepared by the PZPR Central Committee apparatus on 18 August 1981: "It will be extremely difficult for the government to regain credibility unless the authorities openly acknowledge their mistakes and settle accounts with those responsible for [the country's] current plight." See "Prognoza przewidywanych nastrojow społecznych oraz konfliktow z NSZZ 'Solidarnosc' i innymi ugrupowaniami wrogimi politycznie," S. 95.

Events are already spilling out onto the streets.¹⁵ It could very well happen that in such circumstances blood will flow no matter what. And perhaps there will be even greater bloodshed than there would be if you take preventive measures and forceful administrative measures. There has never been a case when revolution triumphed over counterrevolution without a battle and without the use of force.

No one is opposed to acting reasonably. But the anti-socialist forces are not at all inclined to respond in a similar manner. All evidence suggests that they are launching a new frontal attack against the party and socialism. That is why any hope of defending socialism by means of persuasion, without resorting to other means at your disposal, is an illusion. Sooner or later, the Communists will have to square off directly against the enemy.

However, this had better not occur too late: The class enemy is now trying to penetrate the army and state security organs and to deprive you of all your support.¹⁶ Avoiding a confrontation now would mean playing into the hands of your enemies and giving them the opportunity to strengthen their positions even further. Now, in the wake of the Congress, a more or less propitious moment has arisen for you, but it can't last long.

The insidious schemes of the anti-socialist forces have emerged with sufficient clarity. Through strikes or threats of strikes, these forces are keeping the party and government in constant tension, denying any opportunity to stabilize the situation. At the same time, they are giving their main emphasis to the demand for worker self-management, which is of an anarcho-syndicalist nature, going so far as "group responsibility" for the enterprise and the means of production.¹⁷

¹⁵ Translator's Note: Presumably, Brezhnev is referring to traffic blockades and a large-scale protest march in Warsaw in early August 1981, which coincided with a short-lived resumption of talks between Solidarity and the government. Protests and strikes in cities outside the capital— among them, Lodz, Krakow, Wroclaw, Lublin, Gdansk, Gdynia, Katowice, Poznan, Kielce, Olsztyn, Bielsko Biala, Piotrkow Trybunalski, Zielona Gora, Jelenia Gora, Chelm, and Czestochowa—also had caused serious problems for public transportation. These disruptions were often cited by the government to illustrate the effect of strikes on the national economy.

¹⁶ Translator's Note: Since the late spring of 1981, Soviet leaders had been receiving diplomatic and intelligence reports about Solidarity's attempts to set up branches in the Polish army, police, and security forces. (See my annotations in Transcript of the CPSU Politburo Session, 18 June 1981, as well as my earlier annotation in this document.) Soviet officials in Poland warned that "the establishment of these Solidarity branches in [the army, police, and security forces] means the beginning of the political end of People's Poland." Quoted from "O trevozhnykh faktakh dal'neishego davleniya na organy Narodnoi militsii," L. 3.

¹⁷ Translator's Note: In the leadup to Solidarity's first National Congress in early September 1981, union leaders had been demanding the establishment of "worker self-management" in all industrial enterprises. The first round of the Congress, from 5 to 10 September, proposed to abolish the party's *nomenklatura* system (which had long enabled the PZPR to control the appointment of all enterprise managers) and to replace it with a genuine system of self-management that would give "workers' councils" the right to hire and fire enterprise directors. After the first round of the Congress, Solidarity officials met with government representatives to work out a compromise, which allowed for self-management in the majority of enterprises, but left managers at key plants under government control (albeit joint control with the workers'

A concession on this issue would mean the destruction of the economic foundation of socialism. We are talking here about "self-management," which might take the form of a variety of current paths of capitalist development. And in parallel the political system is being undermined. They are demanding that elections to the Sejm and the People's Councils be moved up and are threatening to create a so-called party of labor.¹⁸

councils). Landmark legislation to this effect was approved by the Sejm on 25 September 1981 and formally implemented on 1 October. See "Ustawa z dnia 25 wrzesnia 1981 r. o przedsiębiorstwach państwowych," *Dziennik Ustaw Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej* (Warsaw), No. 24 (30 September 1981), Item 122. High-ranking Soviet officials in Poland regarded the legislation with great hostility, claiming that it "presented a special danger because it will allow Solidarity to consolidate its positions in the majority of enterprises. The full introduction of the reforms would be justified only when the PZPR again controls the situation in the economy." Quoted from "Polozhenie v PORP posle IX S"ezda," Cable No. 857 (Top Secret), 4 November 1981, from B. Aristov, the Soviet ambassador in Poland, to the CPSU Politburo, in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 84, D. 596, L. 52. Thus, the advent of "worker self-management" in Poland reinforced the perception in Moscow that only a limited amount of time was still left before the situation in Poland became irretrievable. Within Solidarity, too, the new legislation encountered fierce opposition, albeit for a very different reason. Even though the two laws had been strongly endorsed by Solidarity representatives who negotiated with members of the Sejm subcommittee, many of the delegates at the second half of Solidarity's National Congress (from 26 September to 7 October) complained that the union's decision to accept a compromise was adopted "improperly," "without regard for democratic procedures," and "under the excessive influence of experts." Although the Congress did not reject the laws outright, it called for a nationwide referendum to be held in industrial enterprises to consider possible amendments. The Congress instructed "Solidarity's National Committee to present the results of the referendum to the Sejm along with a motion demanding appropriate amendments." The Congress exhorted workers in the meantime "to establish genuine organs of industrial self-management in all enterprises as originally proposed by the union." The formation of workers' councils proceeded somewhat haphazardly in October and November 1981, and was somewhat behind schedule by the time martial law was imposed in December 1981. The Polish martial law authorities sharply restricted the powers of the newly-formed workers' councils, but Polish workers had gained a foothold for a greater say in the operation of their enterprises. That foothold proved important at the end of the decade, when the Communist regime was finally dislodged.

¹⁸ Translator's Note: From the late 1940s on, all candidates in elections for the Polish Sejm (the national parliament) and People's Councils (local government organs) had to be members of the PZPR or the National Unity Front, a Communist-sponsored umbrella organization encompassing the PZPR and its subordinate parties. The "Appeal" issued by Solidarity's leadership on 12 August 1981 openly challenged both the scheduling and the procedures for new elections to the Sejm and the People's Councils, which had been slated for December 1981. The KKP declared that "the concept of self-governance must not be confined solely to the operation of enterprises. The reforms should also . . . transform the People's Councils and the Sejm into bodies that are genuinely representative of the whole society," rather than being mere extensions of the PZPR. The KKP called for multi-candidate elections on a truly competitive basis within the next two months, and urged that "the powers of the [newly-elected] Sejm and People's Councils be expanded relative to other administrative bodies," including the PZPR. These proposals were reaffirmed a month later by Solidarity's First National Congress, which adopted a resolution on 10 September calling for free elections in the near future that would give Solidarity and other groups "the right to put forward [their own] candidates." A Soviet TASS dispatch on 23 September 1981 responded to Solidarity's demand for free and open elections by claiming that "counterrevolutionaries" were "seeking to achieve the dissolution of the Sejm." Soviet leaders were alarmed that Solidarity might gain control of the People's Councils, and they warned Jaruzelski that "the class enemies are exploiting their current influence among the masses to establish a huge advantage in the upcoming elections for the People's Councils, thus continuing their path toward the legal seizure of power in the country. . . . The elections for the local organs of power will risk the [Communist] party's destruction." Quoted from "O prieme v SSSR partiinogosudarstvennyoi delegatsii PNR i ustnom poslanii L. Brezhneva V. Yaruzel'skomu," L. 4.

Now, as far as we understand, said Cde. L. I. Brezhnev, there is still an opportunity to mobilize all the supporters of socialism and to rebuff the counterrevolution. But to do this you will need to end your faintheartedness.¹⁹ The Polish comrades themselves have emphasized, on numerous occasions, that an extraordinary situation has emerged. Doesn't it follow that measures to deal with the situation must be of the same caliber — that is, “extraordinary”?

Cde. L. I. Brezhnev emphasized that when the Polish friends resort to decisive actions, they have every reason to count on sufficiently broad support from the population, which is tired of anarchy and chaos and is afraid that Solidarity might plunge the country into a national catastrophe.

During the discussion, other thoughts were raised about how to gain control of the situation in the country, including the need to work actively with the branch trade unions, to exert influence on public opinion about the necessity of economic measures, to carry out appropriate work to counter the Solidarity congress, etc.

Referring to the economic situation, Cde. L. I. Brezhnev expressed the conviction that the crisis in Poland is above all of a political nature, and that it is precisely in the political sphere and in the struggle against the enemies of socialism that the key to stabilization of the economic situation lies. You know, he said, how to reestablish your positions in political life, how to bring the mass media back under your control, and how to reaffirm the authority of the regime. Gradual movement toward improving other spheres of Soviet-Polish relations, emphasized Cde. L. I. Brezhnev, will depend on the further course of events in the PPR. Will Poland be socialist, will relations be internationalist, will it move along a different path, will the nature of relations become something different along state, political, and economic lines?²⁰ It is important that all of this be well understood not only by political officials, but also by the broad Polish public. Naturally, we assume that the Polish Communists will do everything possible to prevent the class enemy from shifting the country over to the capitalist camp.

With regard to the consideration of possible measures during the upcoming period,

¹⁹ Translator's Note: Some of Kania's and Jaruzelski's colleagues on the PZPR Politburo were privately expressing grave doubts to the Soviet leadership about this matter. Just a few days before Kania and Jaruzelski traveled to the Crimea, one of the members of the PZPR Politburo, Zbignew Messner, relayed his view that "in the [Polish] Politburo and government there is no conception of how to get out of the crisis, and it has not been established what the adversary might do if a state of emergency is introduced, and how the authorities should respond. Cde. S. Kania fears a repetition of the events of December 1970, and Cde. W. Jaruzelski is unsteady and inconsistent." Messner urged Brezhnev to "have a stern talk with [Kania and Jaruzelski] in the Crimea" and to "impress on them the necessity of adopting harsh measures *vis-a-vis* Solidarity." Quoted from "Spravka o soderzhanii besedy s general'nym konsulom PNR v g. Kieve t. L. Kotarboi 10 avgusta 1981 goda," Memorandum No. 253 (Secret), 10 August 1981, by A. Merkulov, head of the UkrCP Central Committee Department on Foreign Ties, with a cover note from A. Kapto, a UkrCP Central Committee Secretary, in TsDAHOU, F. 1, Op. 25, Spr. 2294, Ll. 1-4.

²⁰ Translator's Note: These are precisely the questions raised in a recent dispatch to the CPSU Politburo from the Soviet ambassador in Poland, Boris Aristov, "Vneshnyaya politika PNR na nyneshnem etape (Politpis'mo)," Cable No. 595 (Top Secret), 9 July 1981, in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 84, D. 596, Ll. 21-34.

Cde. L. I. Brezhnev said: "What precisely is done in the near future must of course be decided by the Polish leadership itself." But we are convinced: The time has come to begin fighting as boldly as possible. To this end, you must mobilize the entire party, rallying it around a Marxist-Leninist platform. Among the concrete steps cited by Cde. L. I. Brezhnev were stern measures against the ringleaders of street demonstrations and disorders and a campaign aimed at making every Pole aware that the country has been driven to chaos, ruin, and hunger not because of the PZPR's mistakes, but because of the subversive work of Solidarity and the leaders of the counterrevolution, which has stemmed mainly from strikes. Obviously, you must categorically reject the demand for a transfer of enterprises to the property of individual collectives; nor must you in any way permit the creation of new parties or go along with early elections for the Sejm.²¹ You must finish the trial of Moczulski and sentence him for his hostile activity.

This is the minimum course of action dictated by current conditions. I have spoken to you numerous times about additional measures on a wider plane. All of these, without doubt, are just as necessary now as when I spoke about them earlier.

Cde. L. I. Brezhnev drew the attention of the Polish leaders especially to the fact that imperialist reaction, in cahoots with Beijing, is seeking to turn the PPR into a source of additional tension in the international situation. To this end, they are voicing speculation about the threat of Soviet intervention and are presenting themselves as champions of Polish independence.²² One must decisively struggle against this line and explain to the

²¹ Translator's Note: Brezhnev is referring here to two controversial issues that emerged in the late summer and early fall of 1981, as discussed in annotations above: (1) worker self-management, and (2) the scheduling of parliamentary and local council elections.

²² Translator's Note: Western concerns about Soviet intentions grew sharply over the next few weeks. On 4 September, the day before Solidarity opened its first National Congress in Gdansk, the Warsaw Pact countries began their "Zapad-81" joint exercises, which continued until 12 September. These exercises, involving ground, air, and naval forces throughout the northwestern USSR and the Baltic Sea (including a concentration of naval power in the Bay of Gdansk), were among the largest Soviet military maneuvers since World War II. Although the main purpose of "Zapad-81" was to test recent changes in Soviet military command-and-control procedures, the maneuvers also were useful in generating pressure on Solidarity and the Polish authorities. A report prepared by the CPSU Politburo's Commission on Poland declared that "the main reason the opposition [in Poland] has not yet seized power is that they fear Soviet troops would be introduced." Quoted from "O razvitiu obstanovki v Pol'she i nekotorykh shagakh s nashei story," L. 3. In addition to the effect that the exercises had within Poland, it is now clear, from recently declassified materials, that Soviet leaders also believed Zapad-81 would have a salutary impact on Western policy. To the extent that the exercises increased fears in the West about a Soviet invasion, they were seen as inducing Western governments to urge greater caution upon Solidarity: "Under no circumstances will Poland be given up. . . . U.S. officials understand this, which is the only reason they exert a restraining influence on Solidarity. They fear our military intervention. . . . The current exercises in the Belorussian SSR, the Baltic states, and Ukraine . . . will enable leaders in the United States to see what they are confronting and the risks they are taking." Quoted from "Gesprach des Generalsekretars des ZK der SED und Vorsitzenden des Staatsrates der DDR, Genossen Erich Honecker, anlasslich seines Aufenthaltes in Kuba mit dem Ersten Sekretar des ZK der KP Kubas und Vorsitzenden des Staatsrates und des Ministerrates der Republik Kuba, Fidel Castro, am 13. September 1981 in Havanna," notes by Joachim Hermann, 15 September 1981 (Top Secret), in SAPMDB, ZPA, J IV 2/2/A-2426. Taking account of these factors, the CPSU Politburo's Commission on Poland urged that "as a deterrent to counterrevolution, [the Soviet authorities] should maximally exploit the fears of internal reactionaries and international

Polish nation that the real danger to its national existence comes from imperialism — our common enemy. In particular, it is essential that everyone in Poland understand that credits lent by Western banks and governments are in no way a gift, but a commercial transaction, for which enormous rates of interest must be paid. For Poland this amounts to servitude.

The discussion touched upon bilateral economic relations between the USSR and the PPR. Referring to the grave economic situation in Poland, Cde. L. I. Brezhnev reported to the Polish comrades that the CPSU CC and the USSR Government approved a decision to defer Poland's repayment of debts for earlier loans until the next five-year plan, to supply the PPR with additional raw materials for light industry as well as certain consumer goods, and to facilitate the fuller exploitation of Poland's industrial potential.²³

At the same time, Cde. L. I. Brezhnev reminded them that the USSR and other fraternal countries are doing a great deal to help People's Poland get out of its current plight. For our part, we have provided economic aid to Poland of nearly 4 billion dollars in just the last few months.²⁴ Unfortunately, however, the economic situation in the PPR continues to deteriorate. This has taken its toll on the Polish side's fulfillment of its obligations to the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, which has had a detrimental effect on our economic working groups who are operating specially in cooperation with

imperialism that the Soviet Union will send its troops into Poland." Quoted from "O razvitií obstanovki v Pol'she i nekotorykh shagakh s nashei storony," L. 5.

²³ Translator's Note: Actually, the decision to defer repayment of Poland's debts to the Soviet Union was not formally approved until two days later, on 16 August 1981, by the CPSU Politburo (No. P23/14) and then ratified by the USSR Council of Ministers that same day. See "Spravka o sovetskoi pomoshchi PNR v svobodno konvertiruemoi valyute v 1980-1981 gg.," No. 2931 (Top Secret/Special Dossier), 23 September 1982, in TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 66, D. 9, L. 2. This decision encompassed more than \$4 billion in Soviet loans that were coming due in 1981. On 17 August, the Soviet government publicly announced that it would allow Poland to defer repayment of those loans until 1986. This deferral was the latest in a series of decisions by the Soviet Union in 1980-81 to allow Poland to defer settling its debts to Moscow. Most recently, the Soviet Union and several East European countries, which had been shipping additional food and consumer goods to Poland, had agreed to postpone repayment for those deliveries (worth roughly \$100 million at official exchange rates) until 1989.

²⁴ Translator's Note: The figure of "\$4 billion in just the last few months" is nearly identical to a figure of \$4.2 billion cited by Polish officials in mid-June 1981 when they were describing the volume of credits extended by the Soviet Union to Poland between August 1980 and June 1981. See "Posiedzenie Rady Panstwa," *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), 20-21 June 1981, p. 1. These figures, however, are a good deal higher than the amount mentioned in a secret memorandum compiled by the Soviet Politburo's Commission on Poland in September 1982, which reported that "Soviet assistance to Poland in freely convertible currency in 1980-81" was worth \$2.934 billion. See "Spravka o sovetskoi pomoshchi PNR v svobodno konvertiruemoi valyute v 1980-1981 gg.," Ll. 1-2. One possible explanation of the discrepancy is that the Politburo Commission's memorandum was dealing only with aid provided in hard currency, whereas the figures of \$4 billion and \$4.2 billion encompassed all forms of aid, including subsidies and loans that were left out of the Commission's listings. (Some evidence supporting this notion comes in Transcript of the CPSU Politburo Session, 10 December 1981, which records a statement by the head of the Soviet state planning agency, Nikolai Baibakov, that the Soviet Union had provided "a total of 4.4 billion rubles of assistance to Poland." At official exchange rates, this would amount to roughly \$7 billion.) It is also conceivable that variations arose with the exchange rates and the period covered, or that the amounts cited by Brezhnev and the Polish government were overstated.

the PPR.²⁵

During the discussion, Cde. L. I. Brezhnev said with particularly forceful emphasis: All of us now have no greater hope than that socialist Poland will soon eliminate the threat of counterrevolution, recover from its devastating illness, and return to normal life. I want to hope, declared L. I. Brezhnev, that Comrades Kania and Jaruzelski will do everything necessary to achieve these goals. He expressed the desire that the Polish comrades would match their words with deeds. As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, the PZPR leaders and Communists will always be given firm support. We will always remain allies and brothers in the future.

Comrades S. Kania and W. Jaruzelski thanked the CPSU CC General Secretary for his advice, his thorough analysis of the situation, and his fraternal help. The Polish leaders expressed the view that their course "is a line of seeking agreement, but also a line of struggle." "We will do everything necessary," they declared, "to preserve socialism in Poland."

Among the concrete issues raised by the Polish leaders was a request for us to send to Poland a group of officials from USSR Gosplan headed by Cde. Baibakov.²⁶ Agreement was reached on this matter. The Polish leaders raised the idea of convening a special session of CMEA to consider measures of joint assistance to Poland. They were

²⁵ Translator's Note: This comment echoes countless other complaints about the effect of the crisis on Poland's economic relations with East-bloc countries. See, for example, the comments recorded by Boris Aristov in "Vneshnyaya politika PNR na nyneshnem etape," LI. 21-34.

²⁶ Translator's Note: Nikolai Baibakov, the head of the Soviet state planning agency, was a frequent visitor to Poland in 1981 to handle the economic aspects of the crisis and arrangements for Soviet economic aid. At the PZPR Politburo meeting on 18 August 1981 ("Protokol Nr. 3 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 18 sierpnia 1981 r.," p. 456), Kania indicated that he wanted to meet with Baibakov to request further economic support and to discuss the possibility of Poland's reentry into the International Monetary Fund. The deputy head of the Polish state planning commission, Stanislaw Dlugosz, traveled to Moscow on 9 September to prepare for Baibakov's visit. Dlugosz sent an encrypted cable back to Warsaw on 10 September reporting that in his initial talks with "Soviet experts" (*eksperci radzieccy*) he had been informed that, beginning in 1982, Soviet trade with Poland would have to be conducted on the basis of a "full balance of payments" (*pelnego zbilansowania platniczego*), which would mean a "drastic reduction of [Polish] imports from the USSR, declining from 4.4 billion rubles to 2.7 billion rubles, that is, a reduction of 1.7 billion rubles." The effect, he added, would be especially pronounced in "the whole range of goods that are vital for Poland," including oil, natural gas, foodstuffs, and consumer goods. Dlugosz noted that the Soviet authorities had cited economic justifications for the decision (including the need to adjust the balance of payments for all the socialist countries), but had also "emphasized that their position was motivated as well by the intensifying anti-Soviet campaign in Poland." Dlugosz indicated that "a final decision about this matter will be made during Baibakov's visit to Poland," which, he said, would take place on 20-26 September. Quoted from "Szyfrogram Nr. 2634/III z Moskwy," 10 September 1981 (Secret), in CAMSW, Sygn. 228/16, Ss. 1-2. As it turned out, Baibakov's visit to Poland ran from 22 to 26 September. See "Wizyta delegacji ZSRR w Polsce: Polsko-radziecka wspolpraca gospodarcza," *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), 23 September 1981, p. 1; and the subsequent daily reports through "Delegacja radziecka zakonczyła wizyte w Polsce: Kierunki i mozliwosci dalszego wspoldzialania i kooperacji przemyslowej," *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), 28 September 1981, pp. 1-2. One crucial thing that had changed between 9 September, when Dlugosz visited Moscow, and 22 September, when Baibakov came to Warsaw, is that the KOK had met on 13 September and approved Jaruzelski's proposal to implement martial law.

told that this matter should be referred to CMEA.²⁷

The CPSU CC Politburo completely endorsed the results of Cde. L. I. Brezhnev's discussion with Cdes. S. Kania and W. Jaruzelski. In accordance with the approach to the Polish crisis that has been coordinated with the other fraternal parties, the CPSU regards this new, large-scale political action as a contribution to our common efforts aimed at turning around the situation in Poland to the benefit of socialism.

[Source: SAPMDB, ZPA, J IV 2/202-550]

²⁷ Translator's Note: No special meeting of the CMEA Council was convened in 1981. The 35th Session of the CMEA Council took place in Sofia the previous month, on 2-4 July. Polish representatives at the meeting had hoped to receive pledges of stepped-up financial support from the other CMEA countries, but their hopes were only partly met. The participants did not agree on any joint program of economic aid for Poland.