

POLAND'S CRISIS AND EAST EUROPEAN SOCIALISM

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What have come to be called "the events in Poland" represent two unprecedented phenomena in the short history of East European socialism: the rise of a mass labor movement called "Solidarity" and its destruction through the militarization of Polish society under General Jaruzelski.¹ Taken together, do these events indicate fundamental structural contradictions in the East European social formations? Do we have the first indication of how Bahro's "actually existing socialism" could break down?² Does the conflict between state and society in Poland foreshadow a general crisis for Eastern Europe? Or is the Polish crisis something specifically and intrinsically Polish, a conflict born out of economic, social, and political conditions hardly replicable elsewhere? Can the *ongoing* crisis in Poland furnish any clues as to what will happen in the other East European countries or in the Soviet Union?

These are the questions we address in this article. Our purpose will be to place the Polish events within an East European context. Hence, we examine not only those forces that caused Polish society to break apart, but also those that continue to hold it together. This will help determine the degree to which a Polish style crisis could appear in other societies of actually existing socialism. In trying to place Poland within an East European perspective, we focus on three kinds of factors: "structural," "conjunctural," and "specific."

Structural factors refer to the relations between society's economic and political organization on the one hand, and the expectations and demands of key social groups on the other. Structural factors are relevant to all the socialist countries.

Why the structural crisis appears at a certain point in time is due to certain *conjunctural factors* in world politics, economy, or climatic conditions affecting agriculture. Conjunctural factors are neither intrinsically socialist nor

particularly Polish in origin. Nevertheless, as external influences, they may exacerbate existing structural contradictions.

To explain why structural contradictions are expressed differently from one country to another, we must understand the social, political, and cultural conditions of each of the East European societies. These *nation-specific factors* (not to be confused with nationalism) determine the precise nature of the societal response to the structural and conjunctural factors cited above. Each societal response reflects a specific level of political consciousness among the population. It may take on a narrow or mass character depending on the socio-political unity of the regime and of Society at large. The concrete form of societal response will also be a function of the symbolic and organizational resources at Society's disposal.

Nation-specific factors can help determine why a Solidarity-type movement arose in Poland and why it is unlikely to arise elsewhere in Eastern Europe. However, our use of the term "specific" should not be misinterpreted to mean that these factors are idiosyncratic to each country. In fact, we will show that nation-specific factors, while articulated within a national framework, are quite comparable across Eastern Europe.

By elaborating the relationship between the structural, conjunctural, and specific factors, we can predict whether what has taken place in Poland will repeat itself in the rest of Eastern Europe or in the USSR. Of crucial importance is the place of Solidarity in these events. Was Solidarity the cause of the Polish crisis, a symptom of the "disease," or did it represent a possible solution?

We will argue that Solidarity must be understood as a *symptom* of the structural contradictions latent in East European socialism. Solidarity was initially a class-based movement involving the labor aristocracy and middle-level strata. Yet this movement revealed the deeper conflicts between state and society in Poland, conflicts that are latent in all East European societies. These contradictions attained concrete form in Poland because of nation-specific Polish conditions, and they were sharpened further by conjunctural developments of an economic and political nature. In trying to determine whether a Polish crisis could appear in other East European countries, we begin by describing key structural dynamics of East European societies. We then discuss the influence of conjunctural events in exacerbating structural crises, using Poland as an example. The role of nation-specific factors in Eastern Europe is then analyzed, giving special emphasis again to the Polish crisis. A comprehensive comparison of Poland and the other East European

states, while desirable, is impossible within the bounds of this article. Instead, we provide an illustrative comparison between Poland and Romania, a country that seems to have many of Poland's crisis symptoms but that has been without mass social movements. We conclude with a discussion of the consequences of the Polish events for the future of East European socialism.

Structural Contradictions in East European Socialism

The development of Poland, as well as that of the other East European countries, has been characterized by often intense social and political conflicts: civil war, forced collectivization, economic privation, Stalinist terror, purges of key officials and prosecution of entire social groups, all at tremendous human cost. Both as a result of and in spite of these conflicts, Communist Party leaders were remarkably effective in realizing the goals they originally set for themselves. These goals included industrialization, urbanization, mass education, and provision of social services for the population.

The effectiveness with which the East European regimes have been able to achieve their initial development goals can be traced to two principal factors. First, the Communist Parties achieved nearly total control of political and economic institutions; this enabled them to defeat hostile forces and to concentrate economic development in key growth sectors such as heavy industry. Second, the East European systems were able to generate support for their development strategy from those sections of the population that saw their living standards improve under the new regime. These groups included poor peasants and rural workers who were "promoted" into industrial wage laborers and the large numbers of urban workers who saw themselves and their children benefit from mass education; the latter eventually became the technicians, engineers and loyal functionaries of the Party-State apparatus.³

These two factors, *the ability to concentrate political and economic power* and *the high degree of social mobility*, assured the East European regimes a degree of stability and even popular support from key groups in the population (e.g., upwardly mobile workers, urbanized rural workers, functionaries, and party cadres). Other groups were either neglected by the regime (e.g. peasantry) or subjected to intimidation, coercion, or terror (intellectuals, certain ethnic groups, alleged kulaks, political malcontents). We should note that the coexistence of popular legitimacy with terror is not necessarily contradictory. This is true where terror is applied selectively, as was largely the case in post-war Eastern Europe, and even where it was applied on a more massive scale, as occurred under Stalin.⁴ The fact that these regimes – in the initial stages of their development – had achieved a degree of legitimacy

from among the socially mobile sectors of the population should not be taken to mean that all the people's expectations have been realized. On the contrary, the East European regimes themselves must accept blame for raising popular expectations to a level where they became impossible to fulfill.

In all the socialist countries, *the extensive growth phase* was characterized by several features: centrally directed administration, "moral incentives" emphasizing sacrifice for a prosperous future; the use of coercion and administrative mobilization to stimulate production, efforts to increase accumulation and restrict consumption; and the political dominance of interest groups connected with heavy industry, the central ministries, and the Party bureaucracy. Given their organizational framework and limited goals, the socialist countries were relatively successful in laying the groundwork for an industrial economy. However, the above features become counterproductive with a transition from an extensive to an *intensive economy*. Intensive economic growth requires more flexible planning mechanisms. It demands genuine material and career incentives rather than crude coercion or vague promises. It requires a degree of popular participation in economic and political processes, at least in the form of reliable information feedback or popular participation in implementing political programs. Finally, intensive growth entails other interest groups taking their places alongside the traditionally dominant heavy industry lobbies.

Soviet and East European politicians and scholars have themselves spoken of these economic and political necessities in terms of the need for "democratization" (Russ. *democratizatsia*). Marxist-Leninist "democratization" is quite distinct from the Western concept of "democracy." From an *economic* point of view, democratization involves more open channels of information, planning flexibility, decentralization of decision-making, and the controlled use of market forces. The Soviet reform-minded political scientist Kurasvili goes so far as to term democratization a "general law" for the development of socialist society.⁵ "Control via command," Kurasvili states, must be replaced with "control through indirect stimuli" and more "local initiative, self-management" from the citizenry.⁶

In the *political* sense too, Marxist-Leninist democratization differs considerably from the Western emphasis on civil liberties, pluralism, and self-determination. For Soviet and East European theorists, democratization means a process of integrating the population into the political system so that they help implement system goals. Hence, one sees more campaigns for "self-management," exhortations for popular involvement, and efforts to

have the population improve the existing system without questioning its basic premises or challenging its leading groups.

Although the need for economic and political democratization has been acknowledged even by official Soviet and East European theorists, this has not produced the “democratizing” of these societies, even in this limited Soviet sense. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, there was a noted absence of economic reforms, a failure to stimulate popular participation, and an inability on the part of the newer interest groups to curb the dominance of the older, established interests in the party, the bureaucracy, the central ministries, the military, and heavy industry. As a result, the East European economies have been victimized by declining or unbalanced growth, low productivity, poor labor discipline, and low quality goods. The societies are characterized by widespread social alienation, sporadic protests or, as in Poland, organized mass movements. Why have these systems tended to remain in their unchanged, centralized form? Why do efforts at decentralization consistently end up in re-centralization? Why do economic reforms not produce corresponding political reforms? The answer to these questions lies with the power of the vested interests – conservative ideologists, the institutional interest groups and those in the central bureaucracy who have a stake in retaining the existing structure.⁷ These vested interests tend to hinder the passing of structurally necessary reforms or the implementation of even limited reforms. The absence of these reforms prevents the necessary, qualitative changes in the economic growth process, and it is these changes that could create the social support for intensive growth.⁸

The necessity for these political-economic functional imperatives will vary with the development stage of each of the East European societies. As a rough indicator of these stages, we have classified the East European countries according to the proportion of their population occupied in agriculture (see Table 1).

It is among countries with higher developmental levels that we should expect more serious structural contradictions. These are the countries that are experiencing the transition from extensive to intensive growth, or have already undergone it. It is thus significant that the more developed East European countries – GDR, Hungary and Czechoslovakia – have already attempted significant economic reforms and have experienced political perturbations (1953, 1956, 1968 respectively). These reforms continued *despite* the crushing of political protest movements in the 1950s and 1960s. For Poland’s case, the *economic* reforms of the 1970s were either not fully implemented, or were executed incorrectly. This only made the *political* situation more uncontrollable.

TABLE I
Percentages of Labor Force Employed in Agriculture

Country	1930	1950	1960	1970	1980
GDR	–	24	17	13	10
Czechoslovakia	37	38	26	19	14
Hungary	53	49	39	26	22
Poland	64	56	47	35	26
Bulgaria	80	73	56	36	35
Yugoslavia	78	70	58	50	40
Romania	–	74	66	49	30
Albania	–	85	71	66	62
USSR	54	48	39	25	20

Sources: *Narodnoe Khozjaistvo SSRR, 1922–72. Statističeski ežegodnik stran-členov Soveta ekomiceskoj vzaimopomošči*, 1981. Paul M. Johnson, "Changing Social Structure and the Political Role of Manual Workers," in Jan F. Triska, Charles Gati (eds.), *Blue-Collar Workers in Eastern Europe* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1981: 31).

Up to now we have described the contradictions of socialist development in functional terms, i.e., in relation to those changes required for the existing system to reproduce itself. However, these contradictions can also be perceived from the perspective of the citizens' subjective interests. From this societal perspective, the transition to intensive development creates a societal demand for more participation in the political system. Moreover, the regime's own success in the early development phases generate social groups more capable of forging a group consciousness, voicing common interests and acting politically. This group consciousness, based on class, occupation, religion, or interest group, emerges just as the immense social mobility starts to subside. It is the emergence of politically conscious social groups – fed by the regime's own "participation" propaganda – that ultimately leads to overt political action, or in Poland's case, to political conflict. To illustrate the growth of this potential dimension of conflict, we can compare the social origin of the working classes in the various East European states (see Table 2).

As Table 2 indicates, the objective possibility for the emergence of class consciousness and political action is strengthened at that point where social mobility slows down, for social mobility and economic growth have constituted the key elements of regime legitimacy. It should be emphasized that Table 2 indicates only the potential for the heightening of class consciousness. Changes in the working class' living standards play an equally significant role. In a society where most of the workers are first generation, there will remain a close connection between city and countryside. Urban

TABLE 2

Distribution of Blue-Collar Workers by Father's Occupation (male workers only).

Country	With peasant fathers	With worker fathers	With non manual fathers
Czechoslovakia (1967)	37.5%	53.6%	8.9%
Poland (1972)	43.6%	50.4%	6.0%
Hungary (1973)	54.0%	42.8%	3.2%
Bulgaria (1967)	61.5%	33.3%	6.2%
Romania (1970)	65.4%	30.5%	4.1%
USSR (1967)*	32.0%	50.0%	18.0%

* refers to the Skaratan investigation in Kazan.

Sources: Walter D. Connor, *Socialism, Politics and Equality*, (New York; 1979, 119–23, and O. Skaratan, *Problemy social' noj struktury rabočego klassa SSSR*, [Problems of the Social Structure of the Soviet Working Class], (Moscow Nauka, 1970: 451).

workers will be able to sustain close relations with their rural kin and exchange goods and services with them. The persistence of these networks of personal relations means that there will continue to exist alternative channels of supply that can supplement the free market or state shops. When a food shortage occurs, large numbers of the urban population will be able to use these alternative channels to satisfy their food requirements. In the intensive development phase, however, where there is a greater proportion of second or third generation workers, the availability of alternative channels will be reduced. These workers, instead of trying to get *around* the system, will be more likely (if not forced) to react *against* it. Hence the need for the regime to politically integrate the workers, and the more serious consequences if it fails to do so.

In evaluating the significance of living standard for system stability, a key problem is that living standards cannot be analyzed solely in objective terms. Clearly, the East Europeans are not starving. They are not without adequate clothing, they all have shelter, and they are comparatively healthy. The *political* question of living standards in Eastern Europe is not a matter of “absolutes” but of “relatives”: it is a question of how people themselves experience development.

Thus, any advance from a lower stage will generate a degree of popular support, while an unexpected or unjustified decline from a higher living standard can have revolutionary consequences. Popular support will exist as long as there is a degree of noticeable progress, and as long as the groups being compared with fare worse than one's own. It is well known that there have been considerable difficulties with the distribution of food and consumer goods throughout Eastern Europe; this is still the rule in Poland, the

USSR, and Romania. The working classes in Eastern Europe have tended to judge these shortages by comparing themselves with (1) their own historical experiences as peasants or unemployed workers during the depression, (2) the war time or post-war period of material deprivation, or (3) with the relatively less well-off peasants of today. This subjective comparison while contributing to the marked social stability of most East European regimes, was a key factor in explaining the crisis-ridden character of *Polish* society.

As the proportion of second generation workers increases, the rural reference point loses its importance. Instead, a personal evaluation of progress over a shorter period of time becomes more predominant. If the baseline for this evaluation is simultaneously transferred to the capitalist West and its unquestionably higher living standard, and if this comparison is spurred on by government promises based on Western norms of consumption, then living standards can indeed form the political basis for personal alienation, social frustration, and ultimately, political action. This is exactly what happened in Poland.⁹

In this section we have presented some of the structural factors that lay behind the Polish crisis. It can be seen that these are general problems for all socialist societies, problems that have varying intensity because of the varying stages of economic and political development in which each East European country finds itself. The existence of these contradictions does not in itself mean that we can expect a Polish crisis to appear in the other East European states. This is not conditional on the development factor alone, but on the way these structural contradictions interact with conjunctural and nation-specific dynamics in the individual East European countries. Let us first illustrate how structural contradictions could be affected by international conjunctural developments, using Poland as the prime example.

Conjunctural Factors in the Polish Crisis

Though conjunctural dynamics have nothing to do with East European socialism per se, they were crucial in determining the character and scale of social movements in Poland, and their relative absence in the rest of Eastern Europe. Here we discuss four principal types of conjunctural factors which had particular relevance for the Polish crisis: (1) the world economic crisis and its effect on Eastern Europe; (2) the degree to which economic dependence on the West was linked to internal regime legitimacy; (3) the demographic shifts that created certain unresolvable social strains in Polish society; and (4) the effect of natural calamities, poor harvests, and food shortages in creating popular dissatisfaction.

In the 1970s Poland led all other countries of Eastern Europe in linking its own internal stability to political and economic stability in the West. Consequently, Poland became most vulnerable to the West's economic conjunctures. In the economic sphere, this vulnerability lay in Poland's import-dependent investment structure and its immense debt to Western banks and governments. Politically, the Polish leadership had sought to establish itself as a bridge-builder between East and West. The continuation of detente was the political prerequisite for Poland's economic progress. Detente would help Poland maintain its ability to borrow from the West, provide technology for modernizing Polish industry, and refinance overdue loans.

By the late 1970s, however, the world economic recession and the increase in international tension that followed began to show their effects inside Poland. The stagnating Western economies provided poor markets for Polish goods, while the rise in interest rates overwhelmed Poland's ability to borrow hard currency and to service its escalating debt. With heightened East-West tensions and the virtual collapse of detente, the Polish regime's bridge-building role became superfluous.

Poland's economic problems had a demographic component as well, for it was in the mid-1970s that the postwar baby-boom generation came of age. This new generation, 50 percent larger than the previous one, entered a labor market whose educational system and upward mobility channels were all too limited. The result was a generation with frustrated career and material expectations. The limited possibilities for higher education, better housing, and career mobility had deep going effects on this new generation of post-war Poles. Here lies one explanation why the active core of Solidarity comprised largely young people, between 25 and 35 of age¹⁰, many of whom were workers with "academic" educations.

Finally, to these economic, political, and demographic conjunctures came the floods and droughts. Poland's agricultural production was correspondingly reduced, but food products continued to be exported to the West to compensate for the limited market for Polish industrial goods. Adverse weather conditions and the need to export caused food to become increasingly scarce. The events after August 1980 showed that the regime was clearly unprepared for the consequences of the food shortage. While recognizing the seriousness of the floods and droughts, it would be incorrect to attribute Poland's agricultural disaster solely to natural calamities. After all, centrally planned and rationally managed economies are supposed to be able to cope with such disasters, so that they do *not* reach the crisis proportions they reached in Poland. In this sense, the conjunctural factor of natural calamity

was but a consequence of deeper structural contradictions within Poland's system of economic and political (mis)management.

Poland was not the only East European country to be subjected to economic difficulties as a result of the West's economic crisis. However, Poland differed in that it was the only regime whose leaders' legitimacy was tied so closely to continued economic prosperity and East-West detente. At the same time, the Polish leaders were least cognizant of the negative political consequences and least able to deal with them once they took concrete form after August 1980. Dependency on Western conjunctural developments, while not the *cause* of the Polish crisis, aggravated its consequences to a level much more serious than in the rest of Eastern Europe. The dependence on the West that began as a conscious choice in the 1970s became a shackle for Poland in the 1980s.

A Cross-National Comparison

Having outlined the effect of structural and conjunctural factors on the East European states in general and Poland in particular, let us now make a more systematic national comparison, using nation-specific factors. The result of this effort is shown in Fig. 1. While several East European countries have reached the stage where political and economic reforms have become a functional imperative, only Hungary and to a lesser extent Bulgaria and the GDR have actually attempted to implement necessary economic reforms. None of the countries has made any significant political reforms. Hence, structural contradictions are bound to arise.

Within Eastern Europe, Poland and Romania were particularly vulnerable on both structural and conjunctural grounds. Both countries had reached a developmental stage in which a transition from extensive to intensive growth was imperative, but where the economic and political democratization needed to implement intensive growth had not occurred. Both countries had incurred enormous debts to the West and failed to prepare themselves for the world economic recession. Both suffered serious shortages of food and consumer goods, due both to poor harvests and to the need to restrict imports and export all available resources. Finally, both Poland and Romania had staked a considerable amount of regime legitimacy in importing industrialization and a higher standard of living resulting in economic dependence on the West and the support of East-West detente.

The obvious question, then, is why the structural and conjunctural contradictions did not produce in Romania the same kind of societal response as

they did in Poland. Answering this question requires bringing the nation-specific factors into the analysis. Nation-specific factors help to determine the form and intensity of the societal response to structural and conjunctural factors. It is these six factors – listed in Fig. 1 – that help explain why a Solidarity movement can arise in Poland and why it is unlikely to arise or succeed elsewhere.

No social movement is possible without a high degree of political consciousness among the population. Hence, two of our nation-specific factors involve the social *perceptions of regime legitimacy* and the *perception of regime effectiveness in meeting societal expectations*. Since the possibility for resonating social movements depends on the constellation of social forces, a nation-specific analysis must also include the *degree of unity/fragmentation in the leadership* as well as the *social alliances/cleavages within society* (class, regional, ethnic, political). For example, the combination of a fragmented regime and a unified society should generate a possibility for large-scale social movements. Finally, to understand the concrete forms of political action and the extent of their effect, a nation-specific analysis requires knowledge of the symbolic and organizational resources available to society. In Fig. 1 we have listed the possibility of *alternative centers of power* and the *history of prior struggles against the regime* as crucial in determining the form of societal movements and their potential effect. For example, the presence of alternative institutions and prior experiences of struggle should lead to social movements that are better organized and more resonating. In Poland, this resonance achieved an international character. Conversely, lack of alternative power centers and limited experience in anti-regime struggles should generate societal responses that are more individualistic or more easily pacified. Nation-specific factors can help explain both the rise of Solidarity in Poland and the lack of such movements in other East European countries such as Romania, where similar structural and conjunctural variables seem to be at work. It is the application of nation-specific factors to Poland and Romania that forms the remainder of this article.

Specific Factors and the Polish Crisis

The six nation-specific factors listed in Fig. 1 achieve a more nuanced form when applied to the concrete case of Poland. Hence, the system's inability to meet the population's needs became a food crisis, the question of regime legitimacy was in Poland a crisis of near total illegitimacy, the character of the leadership was both fragmented and incompetent, while society was increasingly unified. Finally, the crisis was spurred on by the existence of the Church as an alternative center of power, and by the long history of anti-regime struggle dating from Poznan in 1956. Let us discuss these in turn.

	Structural factors		Conjunctural factors		Nation-specific factors		
	Political adaptation	Economic reforms	Vulnerability to world economic cycles	Dependence on international detente	Political consciousness	Constellation of social forces	Resources for political action
					perception of regime competence	Regime unity	Alternative centers of power
Stage of development							Prior experiences of struggle
Poland	no	no	strong	strong	poor	weak	church yes
GDR	no	yes	middle	strong	satisfying	strong	(church) no
Romania	no	no	strong	strong	poor	strong	no
Hungary	no	yes	middle	middle	satisfying	strong	no
Bulgaria	no	yes	weak	weak	fair	strong	no
Czechoslovakia	no	no	middle	middle	satisfying	strong	no
USSR	no	no	weak	weak	fair	strong	no

Fig. 1. Poland's crisis and East European Regimes: Summary of structural, conjunctural and specific factors.

The crisis in food provisioning has its origin in several causes, most particularly the low productivity of Polish agriculture and lack of incentives for farmers to produce. Low productivity was itself brought on by irrationally small holdings in the private sector, years of inadequate investment, mismanagement of state and collective farms, and a deep mistrust between the authorities and the peasantry. Added to these long-term problems there arose in the 1970s a new one: the parallel dollar economy.¹¹ The declining availability of consumer and industrial products gave the peasants fewer incentives to produce. When they did sell, it was for Western currency rather than for zlotys. Those who had neither the dollar nor access to "special shops" found it steadily more difficult to produce their daily necessities. In particular, these alienated segments comprised young worker families living in newly built towns or workers' neighborhoods, out of touch with rural zones.

In this connection it is important to emphasize that the system's ability to meet material expectations of the population is not reflected in the absolute standard of living but in the relation between popular expectations and what the system can actually deliver. The Poles' expectations were stimulated by years of rapid growth, by the ambitious promises of the Party and State leaders, and by Poland's greater openness to the Western societies from the mid-1970s. These expectations, given the clear inability of the systems to fulfill them, gave Polish society an explosive character.

In all the East European countries, there have been problems with distribution (or lack) of food and consumer goods. Yet with the exception of certain parts of the Soviet Union (where these problems are neither new nor so politically volatile), no East European country has had the kinds of problems provisioning its population that Poland had. Furthermore, no East European country except Poland has seen its food shortage become such a politically volatile issue. The other societies are characterized by: (1) higher living standards, or (2) their informal networks, urban-rural connections, and "second economies" are able to offset the shortages found in the state shops, or, (3) their more limited contacts with the West give them lower expectations than was the case in Poland (e.g., the USSR).¹²

Another nation-specific factor consists of the population's attitude toward the political system. In Poland, this attitude reflects the conflicts between the values of the regime and the values of the major social groups in the population. In Poland, the population viewed the regime and its associated values as being imported, as without roots in Poland's historical and cultural heritage. Any support the regime derived was support based on welfare

legitimation. A similar type of limited legitimacy exists in other East European countries, especially those that had weak pre-War communist parties. While most of East Europe was liberated by the Soviet Army at the end of the War, only Poland was overrun by Soviet troops before it even began. Hence, the Poles' rejection of the Party and its ideology has been exceptionally strong.

The gap between the values of Polish society and those of "actual socialism" in Poland was so great that one Polish sociologist has termed it "social schizophrenia." Such social schizophrenia leads to two responses: "social apathy" and, when the time is right, "social eruption".¹³ A major cleavage between Polish Society and the leadership lay in their conflicting views of the political system. For the State and Party apparatus, used to the Marxist-Leninist concept of "democratization," sought more open channels of communication, effective management, and popular involvement in the political process. Yet the State's view of democratization was quite distinct from Solidarity's call for democratic rights and civil liberties. Where the State accepted the need for *democratization* as a functional imperative, Solidarity and most of the Polish people sought *democracy* as a social value. Thus, the struggle for civil liberties and free expression in Poland was a struggle to achieve a desired social value and not just a smoothly running economy. In comparing Poland to other East European countries, "democratization" in the Marxist-Leninist sense of the word is certainly a common functional imperative for these systems. Only in Poland has the struggle for democracy touched a genuine popular chord, however.

The conflict in values between state and society in Poland was sharpened by the realities of Poland's privilege system, in which luxury goods (or the chance to obtain these by traveling to the West) were distributed to state party functionaries according to their position in the administrative apparatus. For those without a place in this system, the only possibility of procuring such goods was to obtain Western currency. This usually involved an appeal to relatives abroad (with the invariable comparisons between life in Poland and life in the West) or recourse to quasi-legal activities connected with the black market. Such solutions did nothing to generate popular support for the political system, its ideology, or the state and party functionaries attached to the privilege system. The existence of privilege systems is well-documented in other Eastern European countries.¹⁴ As in Poland, the existence of these systems generates dissatisfaction from among those segments of the population who feel left out. Yet nowhere in Eastern Europe did we find a privilege system so arrogant, so extensive, and occurring in the presence of a *widening* gap between the population and the elite. The lack of even basic foodstuffs,

not to mention unequal access to high quality services and luxury goods, made the existence of the privilege system that much more irritating for most Poles.

The character of political leadership is a third key factor in any evaluation of whether a "Polish-style" crisis will occur elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The aggravation of economic and political conflicts in Poland is inextricably linked to weak, fragmented, and at times clumsy leadership. Since 1976, Poland's leaders have been unable to achieve the kind of control that could hinder an economic decline. In trying to retain political power, they succumbed to the demands of regional and sectional interest groups. This took place without regard to national economic and social priorities. The leadership was so weak and so incompetent that Poland gradually became a quasi-feudal state, with competing sectors and bureaucracies set against one another by a weakened Party apparatus.¹⁵

If we turn to the other East European countries, we find no leadership that was so weak and so fragmented as was the case in Poland. Of course, each East European regime has its various factions and interest groups. In each country we can identify groups who want reforms, democratization, and more consumer goods, as well as groups who wish to retain the existing system, to restrict political initiative, and to maintain a focus on heavy industry. However, neither the existence of special interest groups nor the existence of factions within the leadership is necessarily synonymous with a weakened leadership. Only in Poland did we find both powerful special interests and a weak and a fragmented political leadership.

While the gap between state and society was widening, the national composition of Polish society was such that social differences within the population were being reduced to a united front against the regime. Unlike Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, or the USSR, Poland had no more historical ethnic/ national rivalries that could set one group against another. Similarly, Poland has no distinct regions that could set themselves up as the guardian of the nation to the exclusion of others. Up to December 1981, the conflict between state and society was so overwhelming that objective differences between workers, peasants, and intellectuals, between right-wing and left-wing opposition groups, and between radicals and reformists were homogenized into a common struggle against the regime.

When speaking of the Poles' united national composition, it is particularly important to note the extensive degree of collaboration that existed between workers and intellectuals within the oppositional movements. Intellectuals

help to mediate the workers' experiences and to put their concrete demands into a broader political context. In Poland, it was significant that members of both the creative and technical intelligentsia came to the workers' side. Many of these intellectuals were not dissidents or marginal in relation to the regime; they had important formal and informal contacts with the state apparatus. The lawyers knew how to negotiate with representatives of the state. They could "speak their language." The journalists helped to diffuse the message within Poland and abroad, and further solidify the national cause.

A fifth factor that is important for understanding the specific character of the Polish conflict is the existence of an institutionalized opposition or alternative centers of power. Since about 1970, Poland's Catholic Church has functioned as a rallying point for diverse political opposition groups. In addition, it has become the focus of national aspirations for millions of Poles. This phenomenon generates two principal questions. First, why did there arise a need for an alternative center of power in Poland? Second, how was the Church able to assume this function and to fulfill it so effectively?

The first question can be answered by noting that the Church was the only institution that survived the Communist seizure of power in relatively unchanged form. The other institutions of Polish society (the traditional political parties, state bureaucracy, army, universities) sought to reformulate their legitimacy in terms of Marxist-Leninist ideology, an ideology that had never been accepted by the Polish people. Hence, the Church came to constitute a rallying point for Polish national values. These values were not simply Polish, however; they were nationalistic and invariably anti-Soviet. The Church did not become simply another power institution. It became an *alternative* institution, with a completely different view of what "Poland" was and what it ought to be.

In acquiring this position during the 1970s, the Church had unique capabilities for exercising this power. It had its own channels of information, reaching into every locality in Poland. It had international connections for diffusing its message abroad and making sure this returned to the Poles via Western mass media and, after 1979, through the Polish pope. These capabilities gave the Church a unique opportunity to unite, inform, and protect oppositional elements. Under its protective umbrella, the Church was able to hold opposition groups together, despite the political divergencies among the various factions.

As guardian of Poland's national consciousness, the Catholic Church has played a role similar to other churches in Eastern Europe, especially the

Orthodox churches in the Soviet Union and the Balkans. Why, then, has only the Polish church achieved such a great political influence? Part of the answer can be found in Poland's historical traumas, in which a weakened or absent state and Great Power partitioning increased the need for national unity. Another part of the answer can be found in the years after World War II, when the Polish regime was unable to either fully repress or fully coopt the Church (as was the case in the USSR and the Balkans). Left with a degree of integrity and strongly supported by an independent peasant class, the Polish Catholic Church could avail itself of its social strength and international connections in a way the Orthodox churches could not. The Church's power to consolidate horizontal linkages was most markedly demonstrated during the Pope's visit to Poland in June 1979, an event that, according to Polish sociologists, had an extraordinary effect on Polish political life:

Collective religious events connected with the Pope's visit and attended directly by hundreds of thousands of people, and indirectly by millions of Poles who watched them on TV, might have awakened the conscience in many people and revive the weakened social bonds. It is likely that the hot days in June 1979 saw the birth of ordinary human solidarity which one year later brought fruit in the form of the social movement which bears its name.¹⁶

The Pope's visit

not only broke the isolation of primary groups . . . but also resulted in first cases of an efficient self-organization of society, which certainly did essentially contribute to its effective self-organization – outside the sphere of existing institutions, and to some extent also against them – in August 1980 and in the months that followed.¹⁷

One might also ask whether there can be found institutions in other East European countries that could take on the same alternative functions as the Church has acquired in Poland. It is possible that national or ethnic groups could provide such a unifying force, as is the case in Yugoslavia, Romania, and in the Soviet republics. Another possibility is that the East German Church, supported by alienated youth, the fledgling peace movement, and diverse (left- and right-wing) interests in West Germany, could constitute itself as an alternative center of power. Finally, one could ask whether the armed forces could acquire an autonomous, patriotic image as was attempted in Poland. In our opinion, none of these developments presents any immediate possibility of success. At present, it appears that genuine *alternative* institutions of power have existed only in Poland. With the demise of Solidarity and the discrediting of Jaruzelski's "patriotic" armed forces, the Polish Catholic Church remains the only one of these alternative power centers. Moreover, Jaruzelski's attack on Solidarity and on the Church itself has made it more politically powerful than ever.

As the sixth specific factor we cite the opposition's concrete experience of

struggle. Solidarity's organization was an end result of experiences that began in Poznan in 1956, but especially since 1968. Working class actions evolved from spontaneous street demonstrations in 1968 and 1970, to disciplined occupations of factories in 1980 and 1981, to well-organized information activities, and finally, to the regionally organized "Solidarity." Under the current "normalization," there have arisen new methods of struggle and perhaps a new kind of organization (capable of hiding Solidarity underground leaders from the authorities).

The experiences of struggle and the organizational success that is observable in Poland during the last fifteen years cannot be found in any East European country. We find neither the organizational discipline of the working class nor the close collaboration between workers and intellectuals that seem necessary for transforming individual frustrations into resonating political movements with international overtones. Most other East European countries show only sporadic collaboration between oppositional groups of workers and intellectuals (e.g., the attempts of the Budapest School in Hungary and Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia). In fact, East European and Soviet workers and intellectuals exhibit a mistrust of each other rather than collaboration. This has resulted in separate oppositional movements where workers and intellectuals struggle for their respective demands in isolation from each other.

In this section we have been speaking of the Polish crisis in two senses: first as the concrete expression of structural contradictions and conjunctural dynamics in Polish society as they appeared in 1980; second, as the societal reaction to these contradictions as embodied in the Solidarity organization. The nation-specific factors we have cited helped show how structural and conjunctural dynamics achieved their particular form, content, and intensity under Polish conditions. From this one might be tempted to conclude that "Poland had a 'Polish crisis' because it is Polish", i.e., that nation-specific factors played the determinant role. Such a conclusion – besides being tautological – would be incorrect. The Polish crisis is a national variant of deeper structural contradictions that are exaggerated by conjunctural factors. Elements of this crisis appear in other East European countries, even though Polish-style societal responses (i.e., Solidarity) do not. Nation-specific factors help explain why not.

Let us apply these same nation-specific factors to Romania, a country that seems "ripe" for a Polish-style movement on structural and conjunctural grounds, but which nevertheless has been without one. We will show here how the same nation-specific factors used to explain Solidarity can also explain its absence in Romania.

Is Romania the Next Poland?¹⁸

Like Poland, Romania has been plagued by low productivity in both industry and agriculture, shortages of consumer goods, sizable debts to Western banks (twelve billion dollars) and a series of floods and droughts. In confronting these problems, the Romanian State has resorted to a variety of measures: reorganizations, rationing, import restrictions, penalties for hoarding, forced reductions in energy consumption, rescheduling of debts, and price increases for food, transport, services, and energy.

Both countries have experienced increasing dissatisfaction among their populations as economic, political, and social expectations have been frustrated. In Poland, this frustration led to the creation of Solidarity, while in Romania it is manifested in low productivity, sporadic consumer protests, isolated work stoppages, incessant complaining, and cynicism among urban dwellers, and in the increasing numbers of Romanians seeking to emigrate to the West.

Romania has not been without organized protest. There was a miners' strike in 1977, a short-lived "free trade union" formed in 1979, and small groups of priests, intellectual workers, and members of the Hungarian minority have protested against infringements on human rights. These "movements" were rapidly brought under control, however. Their members have been dispersed, jailed, or in several cases encouraged to emigrate to the West.

In trying to account for the absence of a Solidarity-type movement in Romania, one often hears three types of explanations. The Party's official explanation is that the Romanians have no grounds for protest, that they are relatively well-off, and that the link between the masses and the leadership is strong. Romanians themselves assert that Romanian workers simply lack revolutionary courage (compared to Hungarians and Poles) and that they are too passive or too egoistic to unite into a mass protest movement. Finally, Western observers cite the almost mythical effectiveness of the Romanian security apparatus as indication that such a movement could be quickly and brutally stopped. While none of these "explanations" is false, they are still inadequate. The questions are much more complicated: why is the Romanians' "passivity" so much greater than the Poles', in spite of objective conditions that could generate protests? How can a security apparatus function effectively if there is not a degree of support (or acquiescence) from the population? Why do the Romanians seem to be able continually to tighten their belts? Why have they received waves of new price increases with resignation and not with street demonstrations and strikes? It is on these

points that the nation-specific differences between Poland and Romania outweigh their similarities.

One fundamental distinction revolves around the basis of regime legitimacy in the two countries. Both Poland and Romania have had historic conflicts with Czarist Russian and both lost territory to the Soviet Union during World War II (Romania having been an Axis ally until 1944). Strong anti-Russian sentiments prevail in both populations. In Poland these sentiments were channeled into the Church and into Solidarity, but in Romania these same anti-Soviet sentiments have been incorporated into official Romanian foreign policy and into Nicolae Ceausescu's personal leadership style. By pursuing a foreign policy somewhat "independent" of the USSR, Romania receives a degree of Western support. Mr. Ceausescu and the Romanian Communist Party earn legitimacy at home as champions of the Romanian people against the Soviet Union.

The Soviets retain no troops within Romania's borders, and Romanians have several times undergone military preparedness drills to counter a possible threat *from the East!* In Poland, the idea that the Soviet Union would support protests by (non-Stalinist) opposition groups would be unthinkable. In Romanian government circles, however, threats to Romania's sovereignty are considered as likely to come from the KGB as from the CIA or Western reactionaries. For example, many Romanians believe that tensions among the Hungarian minority and even certain factory disturbances (e.g. sabotage) are the result of Soviet intrigues. When the authorities clamp down on such protests, they probably have a degree of popular support.

President Ceausescu has been able to integrate Romanians' anti-Soviet attitudes into his foreign policy; he has stifled dissent by attributing any problems to external forces. In this way he binds the state, the party, and the people together under his personal leadership, while taking potential support away from any opposition. Despite Romania's economic problems, Ceausescu maintains a degree of legitimacy and at times pride from among the most patriotic Romanians. This is just the opposite of what has occurred with the Polish Communist leadership.

The Romanian Party's use of nationalist themes has had a direct influence in the formation and perpetuation of its economic policies. Industrialization in Romania became a means for achieving *political* independence from the Soviet Union. Each new factory became a symbol of Romanian resistance to being maintained as a raw materials supplier for the rest of Eastern Europe. For most Romanians, burdened by a re-investment rate of 33 percent, the

1970s were a period of sacrifice. Shortages of consumer goods were accepted because industrialization was a national, patriotic goal. Those who called for slower growth or more investment in the consumer goods sector were considered to be servants of Soviet interests, i.e., they wanted to keep Romania economically (and thus politically) dependent on the USSR. Compared to Romania, the industrial modernization program in Poland had no political or patriotic objectives attached to it. Poles were given high hopes of increased consumption, but received no impetus to sacrifice for the future. Without motivation for such sacrifices, the Polish threshold of tolerance was much lower than that of the Romanians. Where the Romanians patriotically tightened their belts, the Poles occupied factories and formed Solidarity.

Nationalistic appeals for sacrifice do not mean that Romanians view their regime as having satisfied all their material needs. Like Poland, Romanians have difficulty in locating many consumer goods. People wait in lines, and they also use black markets, underground economies, and informal networks of friends and family. In Romania these networks seem to function effectively: if there is no meat or eggs in the shops, these can still be found in most Romanians' refrigerators.¹⁹ In spite of serious difficulties in provisioning the population, there is no real food crisis in Romania.

Poland's economy was inflated and overrun by the legal circulation of dollars. Only with dollars could one buy an apartment, pay bribes, and find food in the hard currency shops. This kind of pressure was absent in Romania, where Romanians are not permitted to possess Western currency. Hard currency shops are smaller, limited to a few tourist hotels and sell (to foreigners) Western luxury items rather than consumer goods and food products as in Poland. Without the stimulus of dollars or hard currency shops, the Romanians' formal networks were not as "overheated" as the Poles', and thus less likely to break down.

Yet the most important differences in access to consumer goods is that Romanian workers have a closer connection to the countryside than the Poles. Using this connection, they can obtain necessary foodstuffs from family and friends in the villages. As shown in Tables 1 and 2, Romania's working class is both numerically, less numerous and proportionally younger than Poland's. The number of Romanian urban dwellers (those most dependent on state shops) is also lower. Outside Bucharest, no Romanian city has more than 325,000 inhabitants. Romania's industrialization is so recent that most workers are either first or second generation, with close social ties to their own, their parents' or their spouse's home village(s).

Furthermore, nearly 30 percent of Romania's urban work force live in villages, commuting to the city daily. In case of food shortages, Romanian workers can use either their own or their family's farm plot to obtain food products. Because of these ties to the land, Romanian workers are more flexible. Thus, *difficulties* with provisioning in Romania have not evolved into a politically volatile food *crisis*. With their elevated notion of sacrifice and more household autonomy in supplying their own needs, Romanians seem to expect less from their government in terms of satisfying food and consumer needs. Romanians tend to solve their problems by going around the system instead of trying to confront it. Romanian "passivity" is not wholly attributable to this reduced level of political consciousness. Active social movements require support from fractions of the regime and a unified social foundation. Both these aspects were lacking in Romania.

The Romanian Communist Party shines in comparison to the PUWP's incompetence, elitism, corruption, and slavish dependence on the Soviet Union. The kinds of privileges of high party-state functionaries that created so much friction in Poland are both more limited and more discreet in Romania. Noticeable privileges are restricted to President Ceausescu, his family and top officials, and most Romanians consider these legitimate trappings of office.

The Romanian Party is dominated by the personalities of Mr. and Mrs. Ceausescu, whose hold on power and rotation of potential challengers have prevented the formation of reform fractions. The most well-known of Party intelligentsia, for example, tend to be rabid nationalists rather than regime critics. Any criticism of political, economic, social, or cultural policy is ultimately treated as a direct attack on the Party First Secretary. Given Romania's nationalistic stance and Ceausescu's self-acclaimed role as guardian of Romania's national integrity, anything approaching an attack on Mr. Ceausescu is stamped as seditious (i.e. Soviet inspired). Compare this with the Polish case, in which the Party itself was fragmented and incompetent, and its alienated population viewed the changing leaders with increasing skepticism.

Without links to progressive factions in the Party or State apparatus, a social movement in Romania must be extremely unified if it is to overcome the stigma of being seditious. Unfortunately, the Romanian working class is itself divided. The sizable number of workers who either live in the villages or who have close links to the countryside are less affected by food shortages; thus, they are more difficult to mobilize. Romania's workers are also fragmented by nationality, especially in Transylvania where the Hungarian

minority lives. Worker protests in Transylvania could easily develop into Hungarian national protests. The Romanian state (and most ethnic Romanians) would find these protests extremely threatening, and would see them as Soviet inspired. Consequently, most Romanian workers would find it difficult to join any movement with anti-Romanian overtones.

Beyond the fragmentation within the Romanian working class, there is also a deep cleft between the workers and the intellectuals. In Poland, these groups gave mutual support to one another, turning "bread and butter" issues into revolutionary demands. In Romania there seems to be a mutual suspicion (if not hostility) between intellectuals and the working class. The intellectuals are preoccupied with either securing their own personal privileges or maintaining the possibility for free expression. Many of the most articulate intellectuals have chosen (or been compelled) to emigrate from Romania. Where Polish intellectuals had helped the workers to formulate and pursue system-changing demands, Romanian intellectuals are struggling for their own personal interests. They are uninterested in or isolated from workers' concerns.

Given the reduced political consciousness, the absence of any sympathetic factions within the elite and divisions within society, prospects for a Polish-style Solidarity movement in Romania do not seem encouraging. The issue is further complicated by a lack of organizational and symbolic resources equivalent to Poland's Catholic Church and its history of prior struggles. Romania's Communist Party stands virtually alone as the only significant institution of power in the country. In contrast to Poland, Romania's Orthodox church is fully integrated into the state apparatus, sharing with the Party many of the same nationalist viewpoints. Were a Romanian Solidarity organization to emerge, it could receive support from some priests, but hardly from the Romanian Orthodox Church as an institution.

It was just such *institutional* support that was so decisive in Poland. And, of course, there is no counterpart to a Polish pope to whom Romanians could appeal in the West. As for nonreligious centers of opposition, one could point to ethnic or regional affiliations as possible bases of destabilization. However, such movements would have a poor chance of uniting the mass of ethnic Romanians.

The same pessimism must hold true for the final of our nation-specific factors: experiences of prior struggle. Part of Solidarity's success can be attributed to the painful struggles of Poland's workers; these struggles began in Poznan in 1956 and have continued up to the present. Romania's workers

lack this experience. The miners' strike of 1977 – Romania's most serious worker protest in the socialist period – brought down no government. It was quickly controlled and its leaders neutralized. Rather than a change of system it brought only a new Minister of Mines.

Lacking this organizational experience, Romanians have been forced to resort to individual and family-centered strategies, "getting by" with the aid of family, friends, and connections. Yet in trying to solve their problems on an individual basis, Romanians have come to regard others as competitors for scarce resources rather than as possible allies. As one Romanian stated, "if we had Solidarity here, every Romanian would have his own." These individualist attitudes make it difficult for them to mobilize for long term, social goals. Romanians may complain about a food shortage. They may even protest the lack of meat. But these subjective factors and their relative success in "getting by" hinder Romanians from turning a meat shortage into a social movement, as was the case in Poland.

Poland's "Solidarity" and Romania's atomization represent two kinds of societal response to similar structural and conjunctural contradictions. The differences reflect nation-specific variations in the regimes' uses of nationalism to assert legitimacy, the differential effect of satisfying consumer needs, the degree of unity within the leadership and division within society, the organizational resources provided by alternative power centers and the importance of prior experiences of struggle. Where Poland's regime lacked popular legitimacy and was perceived as unable to satisfy the population's rising expectations, Romania used anti-Sovietism to foster its industrialization program, build regime support, and vitiate popular discontent with consumer living standards. Where Poland's party leadership was incompetent and divided, Romania retained a unified, personalized regime under Nicolae Ceaucescu. Where Polish society united to contest the Party's mandate, Romanian society was split by class, interest group, and ethnic divisions that could easily be manipulated by the regime. Where an alternative center of power and collective memory of prior struggle helped Poles to sustain Solidarity, Romanians' dependence on individual centered strategies led to a more diffuse type of resistance based on "getting by." Given the way these nation-specific factors were expressed in Romania, we must conclude that a Solidarity-type movement is highly unlikely to appear there.

Yet it is remarkable how many similarities exist between Jaruzelski's militarized Poland and Ceaucescu's Romania. In a sense, one might say that Romania has been "militarized" for years. Ceaucescu has a distinctly military leadership style, ruling with absolute command and strict discipline in a

tightly controlled "war-economy" (with rationing, hoarding penalties, fuel cutbacks, and constant "mobilization of the masses" to achieve his campaigns). Like Jaruzelski, Ceausescu has used the Party as a tool for his own personal strategies. And as in militarized Poland, many Romanian generals now hold civilian posts. The energies that might be expended in social protest have been effectively channeled into cutthroat individual competition for scarce resources and prestige goods. This is a far cry from "Solidarity," but for Jaruzelski it is a "solution" he might envy.

Conclusion

We began this article by asking whether the Polish crisis is a "socialist" or a "Polish" disease. By citing the structural factors, we brought out the common difficulties affecting all East European societies in their political and economic development. These difficulties arose out of the transition from extensive to intensive economic growth and the consequent need to replace political mobilization of the population with their political integration. The structural contradictions occurred together with conjunctural developments in the world economy, the collapse of detente, the post-war demographic explosion, and natural calamities. Poland was least able to cope with these structural and conjunctural dynamics. The result was a society united on a national basis in its conflicts with the Party State apparatus. This conflict was never resolved by Solidarity nor by the subsequent military coup.

While Poland and Romania had quite similar structural and conjunctural dynamics, it was only in Poland that the constellation of nation-specific factors yielded a societal reaction of system-threatening character. Looking at the rest of Eastern Europe, we do not see a similar constellation of factors. Rather, the combination of structural, conjunctural, and specific conditions has prevented the deeper contradictions from evolving into Solidarity-type mass movements of the Polish variety. Thus, we believe that the Polish developments will not be replicated in any of the other East European countries in the foreseeable future.

Does this mean that the Polish experience is so unique that it is without relevance for the other East European states? On the contrary, the recognition of common structural problems points to fundamental conflicts in all the countries of "actually existing socialism." The essence of these conflicts may be the same. It is the ability to identify and deal with them that distinguishes one East European regime from another. This ability varies with the specific and conjunctural factors as applied to each country. While there is little likelihood that the Polish "disease" will spread, this is partly

because the other East European states are beginning to take "preventive measures." In other words, they are "learning" from the Polish experience.

There are several indicators that these regimes have learned from the Polish crisis. We can summarize them in the following predictions:

First, we believe that state power and the repressive apparatus of the various East European countries will be reinforced and made more effective. This applies not so much to overt shows of force but to more sophisticated methods of social control and repression: e.g., limiting information channels, dispersing dissident groups, giving in to workers protests before they spread, taking practical measures to prevent consumer shortages from getting out of hand, and the like.

Second, we can expect that oppositional forces, especially intellectuals, will be increasingly restricted in their ability to formulate and articulate system-threatening demands. The East European states will take any measures – jail, slander, internal deportation, cooptation, forced emigration – to make sure that intellectuals' contact with workers is weakened or at least strictly supervised.

Third, we can expect the Eastern European states to take further measures to integrate potential system-threatening movements into the official system. We will see further attempts to improve the access possibilities for those social interests that have up to now been neglected, e.g. in physical and social infrastructures, neglected regions. Moreover, there will be renewed efforts to make the system of political socialization (education, propaganda, culture) more effective. Finally, we can expect anti-corruption campaigns within the State, Party, and industrial bureaucracies as the elites attempt to make these organs more legitimate in the eyes of the population.

In recent months there seems to be considerable evidence that the East European regimes have taken all these measures. There have been attempts to re-invigorate the official trade unions. Yuri Andropov's succession was marked by a highly publicized anti-corruption campaign designed to win favor among rank-and-file workers. In Romania there have been exhortations towards more self-sufficiency and self-management, so that individual producers will be less dependent on State retail outlets, and the country less dependent on costly foreign imports. The reduction in East-West trade and decline of detente have also given more leeway for the East European repressive apparatus to crack down on dissidents and oppositional movements. With reduced trade, the economic benefits of detente no longer exist

as a restraining factor on the authorities. The West now has reduced influence on domestic politics in East Europe. The combination of integration and repressive measures has so far prevented the structural contradictions from growing into true political crises of the Polish variety. Eastern Europe (and Poland) is remarkably quiet.

With the broad enthusiasm fostered in the West by the rise of "Solidarity," it is understandable that its brutal demise had generated parallel feelings of disillusionment. It would be erroneous to consider the Polish events as an archetype for Eastern Europe. The problems of East European regimes reflect a general system crisis (economic and political), each country's response depends on specific local conditions and fortuitous conjunctures. If the Polish events are to be understood, they must be explained as a variant in a larger East European context.

Having concentrated on the crisis aspects in Poland and Romania should not blind us from the fact that these systems have an amazing ability to reproduce themselves – to "muddle through." "Actually existing socialism" is more than simply brute force. Each of the East European societies exhibits a complex dialectic between the forces of functional stability and the forces of immanent contradictions. As such, in addition to their structural aspects, we must analyze each of these societies in their differing vulnerability to conjunctural events and in their specific political, social, and cultural characters.

For those who seek to replace "actually existing socialism" with a more emancipatory socialism, the Polish crisis constitutes a key point of departure. It should be discussed both in terms of what it means for Poland, and for Eastern Europe. The Polish events provide further evidence that the tasks of social theory reside as much in explaining why societies "muddle through" as why they fall apart.

NOTES

1. Previous versions of this paper were presented in November 1981 at a Conference on the Polish Crisis held at the University Centre of South Jutland, and in June 1982 at the *Kapitalistate* International Conference on the State, held in Cosenza, Italy. A preliminary version was published in Danish in June 1982 in *Polens Krise*, edited by Ole Nørgaard (Institute of East-West Studies, University Centre of South Jutland, Esbjerg, Denmark). We wish to thank our colleagues in Esbjerg and Cosenza for helpful comments and valuable critiques. Also, we thank the Danish Social Science Research Council for generous financial support. Except for the section on Romania (for which Sampson is responsible), this article is a collaborative effort. There is no senior author.
2. Rudolf Bahro, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* (London: New Left Books, 1978).
3. For the Soviet Case, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet*

- Union, 1921–1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); and Richard Lorenz, *Sozialgeschichte der Sowjetunion* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976). For the Polish case, see for example Kazimierz Slomczyński and Tadeusz Krauze (eds.), *Class Structure and Social Mobility in Poland* (New York: M. E. Sharpe Inc., 1978).
4. See Alec Nove, *Was Stalin Really Necessary?* (London: Allan and Unwin, 1964).
 5. B. P. Kurashvili, "Ob'ektivnye Zakony Gosudarstvennogo Upravlenija," in *Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo i Pravo* [The Objective laws of State Administration] in *Soviet State and Law*, 1983, 10: 43.
 6. Ibid.
 7. There is a voluminous literature on the bureaucratization of actually existing socialist societies. See Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1940). Milovan Djilas, *The New Class* (New York: Praeger Pub. Co., 1940); Serge Mallet, *Bureaucracy and Technocracy in the Socialist Countries* (Nottingham: Spokesman Books, 1974); David Lane, *The Socialist Industrial State* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1976); Rudolf Bahro, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* (London: New Left Books, 1978); György Konrád and Ivan Szelényi, *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1979); Maria Hirszowicz, *The Bureaucratic Leviathan: A Study in the Sociology of Communism* (New York University, 1980); András Hegedüs, *Socialism and Bureaucracy* (London: Allison and Busby, 1982); Adam Schaff, *Die Kommunistische Bewegung und Scheideweg* (Frankfurt am Main: Europa-verlag, 1982).
 8. For an elaboration of this point as perceived by East European social scientists, see the so-called "Novosibirsk paper" by Tatjana Zaslavskaja: "Doklad o neobchodnosti bolee uglublennogo izutjenija v SSSR social' nogo mekhanizma razvitija ekonomiki," [Speech on the necessity of more fundamental research on the social mechanism of the development of the economy] *Materiala samizdata, Radio Liberty Research Report* no. 35/83, August 23, 1983 and Rezső Nyers: "Interrelations between Policy and the Economic Reforms in Hungary" in *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 1983, no. 7.
 9. For an elaborate description of working class behavior in normal times and times of crisis, see Thomas Lowit: "Political Power and Industrial Relations in Eastern Europe: Normal Times and Crisis," in *Organizational Democracy and Political Processes*, ed. by C. Crouch and F. Heller, (Chichester, John Wiley and Sons, 1983).
 10. Wladyslaw W. Adamski, "Structural and Generational Aspects of a Social Conflict," *Sisyphus: Sociological Studies*, 1982, vol. 3; *Crisis and Conflicts: The Case of Poland 1980–81* (Warsaw Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1982: 49–57).
 11. There exists a burgeoning literature on the study of the Soviet and East European "Second Economies." See Gregory Grossman, "The Second Economy in the USSR," *Problems of Communism*, 1977, vol. 26, No. 5: 25–40; Aron Katsenelinboigen, "Coloured Markets in the Soviet Union," *Soviet Studies*, vol. 29: 62–85; D. O'Hearn, "The Second Economy in Goods and Services," *Critique* (Glasgow) 1981, No. 15: 93–110. For Eastern Europe, see István Kemény, "The Unregistered Economy in Hungary," *Soviet Studies*, 1982, vol. 34, No. 3: 349–366; Janos Kenedi, *Do It Yourself: Hungary's Hidden Economy* (London: Pluto Press, 1981); Steven L. Sampson, "Rich Families and Poor Collectives: An Anthropological Approach to Romania's Second Economy," *Bidrag till Öststatsforskningen* (Uppsala), No. 12, 1983. Gregory Grossman is also editing a collection on Second Economy, to be published by University of California Press.
 12. C. Chase, "Symbolism and Food Shortage in Current Polish Politics," *Antropological Quarterly*, 56, 1979: 76–82.
 13. Wnuk-Lipinski, "Dimorphism of Values and Social Schizophrenia: A Tentative Description": 88.
 14. For Poland, see The Experience and Future Discussion Group, *Poland: The State of the Republic* (London: Pluto Press, 1981: 70). For the Soviet Union, see Mervyn Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978).

15. Bogusław Galeski, "Social Structure – Conflicts of Interests – Social Forces in Poland (the author's point of view)," *Sisyphus*, 1982: 59–68.
16. Włodzimierz Pankow, "The Roots of the Polish Summer: A Crisis of the System of Power," *Sisyphus*, 1982: 46.
17. Edmund Wnuk-Lipinski, *Sisyphus*, 1982: 89.
18. A preliminary version of this section appeared under the same title in *Critique* (Glasgow), No. 16, 1983: 139–144.
19. For further discussion of rural-urban linkages in Romania, see John Cole, "Family, Farm and Factory: Rural Workers in Contemporary Romania," in Daniel Nelson (ed.), *Romania in the 1980s* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981: 71–116); and Steven L. Sampson, "Rich Families and Poor Collectives."