Continuity Within Chaos

The role of political discourse in the rebuilding of Communist Party legitimation in Poland, 1988-90

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Abstract

This thesis deals with the ways in which the Polish United Workers' Party's (PZPR) political discourse and its modes of political legitimation changed during the period of the transformation of the political system in Poland between 1988 and 1990.

The central hypothesis is that the PZPR retained a strong series of discursive continuities during this period, although partially reconstructed its discourses along three main axes: Civil - *Public/Private*, Geopolitical - *West/East* and Historical - *Past/Present*. Each element emerged out of the PZPR's existing discourses and simultaneously transformed both them and the PZPR's position within them. Thus one saw the emergence of an autonomous, semi de-institutionalised Communist Party, which became tied by its discursive commitments to an evolving political agreement following the 1989 *round table* talks that it was unable to reverse or oppose.

The thesis adopts a historical case study approach in which changes in PZPR discourses are analysed over four periods.

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Foreword

The Solidarity logo, with its wobbly written '*Solidarność*,' and the figure of Lech Wałęsa remain, even after the collapse of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe, the two most evocative and widely held images of Poland, particularly in Western Europe and North America. Solidarity represented all that was *'noble, good and honest,'* fighting for *'Western'* values against the tyranny of the *'East.'*[1] The Polish anti-Communist opposition movement evoked much uncritical sympathy and support. It was, in many eyes often over-romantically, seen as the main beneficiary of the collapse of Communist structures, particularly from outside Poland, both in Western Polish émigré circles and more generally within the Western press and popular consciousness. It would (and should), as many argued during 1989,[2] provide the basis for a transitional democratic regime, located within a broad coalition of Church, secular, centre-left and centre-right and trade union groups. In many respects, before its acrimonious split in 1990, it did.

As the political and institutional structures of Communism collapsed during 1989, the main focus of explanation assumed or implied a *'return to history'* or a *'return to Europe.'*[3] *"The phrase people use to sum up what is happening,"* Garton-Ash noted in 1990, *"is a return to Europe."*[4] The *'revolutions'* of 1989 represented, from this perspective, a return to normality and the traditions of the pre-war era, a return to 1939. *'1939,'*

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[1] *Radio Free Europe* and the Paris-based periodical, *Kultura*, amongst others, tended to overplay this aspect of the changes.

[2] Lipiec, J., (1990)

[3] Glenny, M., (1990); Ash, T.G., (1990a); Jedlicki, J., (1990)

[4] Ash, T.G., (1990a) Ibid. p.21

from this perspective, represents not only the last period of Polish national sovereignty, but also the last period of democracy. It represents the civil, democratic and *'free'* society craved by many under Communism.[5] Communism was seen as merely an aberration, a product, in Poland, as elsewhere, of Russian imperialism and the peculiar division of Europe after the Second World War. This notion of *'returning to traditions'* suppressed during the Communist period is without doubt valid and vital. However, two problems arise within the various 'romantic'[6] or explicitly anti-Communist interpretations[7] that see Solidarity as the benefactor of the end of Communism. One, the traditions, if indeed they are being or can be returned to, are themselves confused and fraught. Two, the Communist left, as well as the anti-Communist opposition can claim a stake in them. Polish politics during the 1930's must be located within the context of an externally dependent and semi-colonially penetrated national economy, weakly legitimated democratic, and at times authoritarian, structures of power, a strong socialist orientation among large sections of society and the political classes and a multi-ethnic and diverse society. The notion of returning to normality, in the sense of stable and predictable politics, therefore, is returning to a situation in which normality was anything but prevalent.

Furthermore, varied and complex sets of political, ideological and constitutional relations and matrices have emerged since 1989. The new democratic State, for example, remained, until 1997, without a fully codified or consensually accepted constitution and curious new alliances

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[5]Alexander, J.C. (1991) and Michnik , A., (1976). Habermas, J., (Holmes, L., 1993, p.45) refers to the 1989 period as a *"rectifying revolution,"* for example.

[6]Glenny, M., (1990), Ibid.

and political ideologies have emerged. The post-Communist political map in Poland is not easily amenable to the traditionally dichotomised notion of political ideology along a left/right continuum. Much of the post-Communist left - comprised of the PZPR's successor, the Social Democratic Party of the Polish Republic (SdRP), the largest party in the electoral umbrella organisation, Democratic Left Alliance (SLD),[8] and the post-Solidarity left, Labour Union (UP) and Socialist Party (PPS) - is committed to more market deregulation of the national economy than one would associate with traditional or Western European social-democratic parties.[9] It also has significant support from the emerging ownership classes. The right, on the other hand, made up of post-Solidarity (mainly nationalist and Catholic-sponsored) parties, is attached to a stronger redistributive/active State and a Catholic-based constitution (see, for example, the issue of the Concordat, which obtained parliamentary ratification in April 1998[10]). The political landscape of post-Communist Poland is marked not simply by a dichotomy of those committed to market and democratic reformism and those against, but also by a dichotomy of those attached to one version of *'Poland'* and those attached to another. One symbolic community is centred on the secular post-Communist left, the other increasingly around the post-Communist clerical right.

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[7] Zubek, V., (1994) and (1995)

[8] The SLD was officially registered as a political party in July 1999 and the SdRP ceased to exist.

[9] Verdery, K., (1996). Verdery focuses on the changes in Western social democratic thinking after the end of Communism. There is no absolute standard against which to assess social democracy, it is argued, and therefore there are problems of evaluating the process in the area of Central and Eastern Europe, which has neither a tradition of moderate or parliamentary socialism or of democracy at all.

[10] *Gazeta Wyborcza*, May 4th 1998. The Concordat with the Vatican was signed by the Suchocka government in 1993, but did not receive parliamentary ratification until after the AWS-UW government took office in the autumn of 1997.

This post-Communist political polarisation has its roots both in the post-1980 sectoral character of Polish public life and in the specific dynamics of the 1988-90 transition period. This thesis is one attempt to trace the process of Polish reform from the perspective of one, under researched, sector of this socio-political matrix, that of the often-stigmatised PZPR. It is not intended either as a condemnation of or an apology for the PZPR, but an attempt to throw some light onto an area where significant shadows remain.

Chapter 1

Terms and Focus

1. *Introduction*

This work addresses the ways in which, as the Communist[11] political system in Poland changed between mid-1988 and early-1990, the leading party within it, the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR),[12] reconstructed its modes of legitimation via discourse - how it *legitimated*[13] itself. The PZPR redefined three key areas of its pre-existing discourses: one, of its own and of Poland's history (*Past* vs. *Present*); two, of key aspects of its civil discourses, in relation, for example, to the State and society (*Public* vs. *Private*); three, of Poland's geopolitical situation (*East* vs. *West*). By appropriating qualitatively new and redefining existing historical, civil and geopolitical discourses, the PZPR was able, as the system changed in 1989, to remanufacture a public representation of itself. This was a central plank in its process of political legitimation.

The term 'legitimation' does not imply that the PZPR possessed *legitimacy* before, during or after 1989.[14] This is a claim that is problematic for three

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[11] The terms *Communist* and *State Socialist* are used throughout the thesis to refer to the political and socio-economic entity that was the Polish People's Republic (PRL). *Actually Existing Socialism* and *Real Socialism* (Hausner, J., et al., 1992) have also been deployed to define the character of this system. A semiotic or etymological analysis of Communism lies beyond the scope of this work, however and the terms are used here interchangeably for reasons of simplification.

[12] The PZPR is referred to throughout the thesis either as 'the PZPR' or 'the Party.'

[13] *Legitimation* is concerned with the process of altering and reconstituting existing rationales for seeking, obtaining and exercising power. The difference between political legitimacy and legitimation is subject to widespread discussion in political science, Campbell, J., (1986). This is discussed more thoroughly in chapter 2.

[14] Barnard, F. M., (1991); Bernhard, M. H., (1993). Most literature on Communist Poland and the PZPR starts from the premise that neither had any *legitimacy*: that they were equally lacking in the essential attributes necessary for such a term to be adequately applicable. They lacked legitimacy in the sense that

main reasons. One, the problem of evaluation. It is difficult to measure legitimacy in Communist societies, if not also the notion of legitimacy generally. Its conceptual terms and instruments themselves are subject, in many areas of the Polish case, to theoretical and political contestation. The legitimacy of the PZPR was conceived by advocates, for example, as automatically *given* and by opponents as non-existent.[15] Two, the problem of focus - legitimacy of what? The apparent synonymity of State and Party made any analysis of the relative legitimacy of aspects of each awkward. Three, the overwhelming sense that the non-Communist opposition enjoyed *legitimacy* simply by being non-Communist.

The focus in this work is on the PZPR's, as distinct from the State's, *search for* legitimation - on the processes by which this political entity, within the context of a liberalising political system, sought to legitimate itself. Legitimation is used here because it focuses on the contingent and dynamic processes by which political entities, within given contexts, develop ways of reproducing themselves and their claims to hold political power. In this case, legitimation theory allows for a more subtle and varied analysis of the transformation period in Poland and imposes no a priori or absolute standards against which to measure legitimacy. This is important in the context of a theoretical debate imbued with heavy political connotations taking place throughout the 1990's concerning the role of the PZPR in that, for an authentic reconstruction of this period

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Polish society normatively and actively rejected them and in that they were largely unable even to sustain a degree of political, economic or social stability sufficient to talk of legitimacy in terms of relative non-instability.

[15]Carew-Hunt, R. N., (1963), p.134. Communist ideology explicitly projects the legitimate domination of the leading party in terms of its 'historical mission.' Polish opposionists, such as Michnik, A., (1976) op cit. p.56, argued that the leading party, for the same reason, could not obtain legitimacy. The question of legitimacy is relation to Communism appears to represent a case of what may call 'evaluative incommensurability': a state in which there is no consensus as to what can act as relevant indicators of legitimacy. Since a consensual understanding of legitimacy cannot be adequately established it is better left alone.

and this party to be possible, absolute standards and the judgements that inevitably underpin them, must be, if only temporarily, put to one side. The following extract well illustrates the bitterness with which many in post-Communist Poland recall Communism:

> *"At the round table in Magdalenka, just outside Warsaw, we witnessed a shameful collaboration with the Communists, followed by a guilt complex and blocked national catharsis. Millions of citizens who were condemned by Communism to a gloomy existence of poverty, alienation, and daily enslavement were now watching a scene from George Orwell's Animal Farm. People and two-legged pigs ordered everyone to forget about the past in the name of the future."*[16]

The thesis explores the public political language - the *'discourse'*[17] - of the PZPR during the period 1988-90 as a method of exploring the specific dynamics of its legitimation. It is concerned with the types of discursive justifications the PZPR elite used to legitimate its changing role, in relation to key groups within the State, within society and internationally. The thesis focuses specifically on how the PZPR selectively reconstructed its public discourses. In particular it addresses how the Party discursively reassembled the nation's past and its own role within it, notions of what constituted civil society and relations between State and society as well as conceptions of both the *East* (the Soviet Union) and the *West* (Western Europe and North America). These discourses are treated as both markers (or *'signifiers'*[18]) of the type of legitimational formulae employed by the PZPR and as analytical instruments for

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[16]Bielecki, C., (1999)

[17]Kubik, J., (1994), p.8. 'Discourse,' like 'ideology' and 'legitimation,' is a problematic term, since it has such wide ranging definition and application. This work adopts the view that 'discourse' legitimates political parties by 'interpellating' (see chapter 2) groups and individuals.

[18]Kubik, J., (1994) Ibid. p.13. Discourse is, he argues: "*a set of semiotic facts (signs or signifiers) that govern the construction of the extra-discursive world.*"

explaining the pattern of change. Discourses thus both reflected the dominant modes of legitimation and also, in an interactive relation with a rapidly altering set of extraneous factors, themselves played a role in transforming them. Discourses, in other words, operated in a dialectical relationship with the power structures and political possibilities within which they were developed, both partially reflecting them, but simultaneously playing a semi-autonomous role in altering them.

The development of more authentic (that is a more interactive way of articulating its values and policies) as opposed to cosmetic (static and rhetorical) discourse out of Marxism-Leninism during 1989-90 is one of the key elements of the process of PZPR legitimation. The PZPR elite was seeking a medium for discussing problems, raising questions and defining its own and others' identities and hence possibilities for action. It was through revised discourses that the reformist wings of the PZPR, for example, managed to create a negotiating space and within it to negotiate a route through the first stage of the transformation process in 1989. This process has had profound implications for the Polish transition after 1989 and, in particular, for the successes of the reformed PZPR, the Social Democratic Party (SdRP).

There was no system collapse in Poland, contrary to both the common-sense understanding of what happened in Central and Eastern Europe and many of what shall be termed *'monistic'* theories[19] - no date at which one can definitively locate the end of this socio-economic entity, other than in a purely formal, legalistic sense. Furthermore, the ways in which

[19] Walicki, A., (1991). Walicki excellently outlines the propensity of many to deploy monistic (what he terms "totalitarian") theories to explain the collapse of Communism in Europe.

the PZPR managed to legitimate its own transformation during 1989 continues to cast a shadow in the post-Communist period[20] and answers are neither self-explanatory nor can the assumptions that underlie them be taken as incontestable facts. There is, for example, an absence of primary material on relations between the Soviet Communist Party and the PZPR and on Soviet intentions. There is also limited research on the private motivations of Polish leaders. The moral questions of guilt and punishment for Communism, which dominate the post-1989 Solidarity parties, furthermore, makes any objective assessment more problematic than it might be otherwise.

A methodology based on the three previously outlined areas of discourse is deployed and concrete historical hypotheses used to explore the role of discourse in the legitimation of the PZPR during the period 1988-90. The method involves the construction of three ideal-type binary oppositions that marked PZPR discourses - *'Public'* versus *'Private'* (Civil) *'West'* versus *'East'* (Geopolitical) and *'Past'* versus *'Present'* (Historical). They are used as markers to analyse changes over four stages from the opening of the Communist system in April 1988 to the final Congress of the PZPR in January 1990. The analysis is deliberately narrow, both analytically and chronologically, for reasons of empirical detail and theoretical coherence. The period represents a good example of a process of changing political legitimation.

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[20] *Wprost*, April 23rd 1998. The all Solidarity governments have tried to frame de-Communisation legislation, each with little success. The question of whom is responsible for and what constituted crimes under Communism is both politically highly sensitive and logistically and legally problematic.

2. *Hypotheses*

The main hypothesis is that the PZPR's political discourses performed a relatively autonomous role vis-à-vis Party and State institutions during the 1988-90 period. This relative autonomy performed important functions in the dialectical process of changes in the PZPR's legitimation, obliging it, for example, to rethink its own political strategy and institutional position.

2.1. *Continuity*

There were key continuities in PZPR discourses during the 1988-90 period, three of which, referred to in the previous section (*Civil, Historical* and *Geopolitical*), were the most significant. Qualitatively new discourses emerged out of the existing structure of PZPR discourse, but key existing elements were also re-emphasised and the overall structure adapted, both in content and application, to meet new political demands. Discourses were altered during this period within a dialectic relationship between a set of evolving extraneous matrices: institutional, economic and political - that structured the political terrain within which the PZPR was obliged to operate, by narrowing certain political possibilities and widening others - and the pre-existing, predominantly ideological, discourse of Marxism-Leninism. These three areas are outlined below and preliminary propositions as to the types of continuities and discontinuities to be found are offered.

2.1.i. *Civil discourses*

('Public' Vs *'Private')*

In its discourses referring directly and indirectly to the State, the constitution, democratic participation, political accountability and decision-making, to the Catholic Church, trade unions and political opposition and to the working class, there are strong lines of continuity with the pattern of pre-existing PZPR discourse. The main discontinuities lie in the rejection of many of the pre-existing operative discursive methods for talking about them. There was a largely pragmatic recognition on the part of the PZPR elite that changing political realities necessitated revisions in the operative use of *civil* political discourse, which, in turn fed into changes in traditional, ideologically based, discourses. This, in turn, had effects on the PZPR's position within the institutions themselves and on its relations with the groups about whom it was constructing new operative discourses.

2.1.ii. *Historical discourses*

('Past' Vs *'Present')*

The emergence of a qualitatively new kind of historical discourse and a revision and re-emphasis of elements of existing historical discourses, played a role of supplementing *civil* discourses during 1988-90. For example, there was a strong tendency toward re-emphasising the PZPR as a national party committed to a *'Polish Road to Socialism,'* but also emphasising the aggressive and determining role played by the USSR and the PZPR's historical weaknesses in relation to it, most significantly in 1980-81. The key theme is the attempt to locate the 1989 changes in terms of a long line of continuity in both national political, but also socialist, culture.

2.1.iii. *Geopolitical discourses*

('East' Vs 'West')

Revised geopolitical discourses were also selected to emphasise and de-emphasise key areas. This is clear, for example, in the ways in which the *'European'* as opposed to the *'Asiatic'* version of Poland's national interest and its national and political culture was emphasised. It was also witnessed in the ways in which the PZPR's connections with Western-style socialism and social democracy, as opposed to the Eastern or Soviet version, were developed. At the same time, stress was placed on retaining the impression that the PZPR remained the only guarantor of Poland's geopolitical position. The USSR was thus constructed both negatively - as an historical threat and a model of what the PZPR was not - and positively, as a guarantor of continuity within Poland, in particular within the framework of Perestroika.

3. *Locating the research: literature review*

Any attempt to evaluate the PZPR's role in the transition period is stepping into a contested and politically charged area. Communism is still fresh in the collective memory and a source of significant post-Communist political conflict.[21] On one side of the fence sit the majority of the post-Communist Solidarity groups and parties, many of which since 1997's parliamentary elections have grouped around the governing coalition of Solidarity Election Action (AWS) and its smaller partner, the Freedom Union (UW). There have been sporadic threats to implement *'lustracja'* (de-Communisation) and significant sections of AWS talk of Communism in terms of *'crimes'*, *'guilt'* and *'punishment.'* On the other side sit the ex-Communist groups, most notably the social democratic, SdRP - the PZPR's successor and largest party in the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD). Since 1990 they have sought to shield themselves from de-Communisation, while simultaneously constructing a power base within the State (during its period in government between 1993 and 1997) as well as significant support in society.[22]

A consensus as to what questions could and should be asked about the Polish Communist system has not yet been established in Polish public life and, in many areas, in Polish scholarly life. Some basic assumptions and ground rules are yet to be established (if they ever will be) since they remain politically and legally contested. There is, as Hausner suggests, "*no hierarchy of explanatory variables.*"[23] This is partly due to the ambiguity of the

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[21]Karpiński, J., (1994); Michnik, A., (1996); Rakowski, M. R., (1990). All have struggled to explain the sources of the struggle in post-Communist Poland to come to terms with Communism. Each has, in different ways, become caught up in the contemporary political struggle to attribute blame and retribution for Communist 'crimes against the nation.' See also *Wprost*, May 17th 1998.

[22]Zubek, V., (1994). op cit.

[23] Hausner, J., (1992) op cit. p.12

PZPR's leading role within the Communist system, partly the ambivalence felt about the Communist system generally in Poland and partly the confusion of *ends* (Communism) and *means* (State Socialism) which were embedded in the Communist project, in Poland as elsewhere. It also reflects the strength of predominantly Catholic-based nationalism in post-Communist Poland and, in part, the failures of the post-Communist Solidarity parties to define a coherent legitimational framework and discourses of their own after 1990. A significant source of AWS's legitimation, for example, rests on the same foundations of those pre-1989: anti-Communist monism - a blanket critique of all that was associated with the PRL, including those parties that stem from it. However, there does exist a large body of academic literature on the Polish transition in both Poland and the Anglo-Saxon world. Within this literature, given the focus established in the preceding section of this work, three key *gaps* are discernible.

3.1. *Gaps in the field of 'discontinuities'*

Many have argued since 1990 that, with the formal demise of Communist institutional and political structures in 1989-90, the PZPR's modes of discursive legitimation also collapsed.[24] There was either a functional or a causal connection - or both - between the two. Functional in that the two were treated as synonymous, causal in that the former necessarily led to the latter. Reform Communism and the discourses associated with it, from this perspective, was either a contradiction in terms (*"fried snowballs"*[25]) or merely a stage in the process of disintegration of Communism. Thus, as the structures of Communist power fragmented and became transformed in 1989, the language (discourse) of the leading party necessarily collapsed with them. This understanding of the Communist system shall be termed *'monistic.'*[26] As Walicki argues:

> *"Communist authoritarianism had to be aggressively ideological. It derived its legitimacy from a commitment to ideologically inspired action. Hence it could not survive the process of de-ideologisation."*[27]

The monism of the anti-Communist opposition, in particular that of the Committee for the Defence of Worker's (KOR) *'New Evolutionism'*[28] is understandable for political reasons in a certain historical context. It bound a diverse coalition of oppositional intellectuals, workers and Catholic Church figures around a common set of 'negative' signifiers -

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[24]Schull, J., (1992); Walker, R., (1989); Fukuyama, F., (1992)

[25]Staniszkis, J., (1984) p.150. Adapting the well-known remark of Leszek Kołakowski that real Communism was as feasible as frying snowballs, Staniszkis argued that there was an ontological impossibility of reforming Communism without ceasing to be Communist.

[26]Barnard, F. M., (1991) pp.56-73

[27]Walicki, A., (1991) op cit., p.94

[28]Walicki, A., (1991) Ibid.; Michnik, A., (1976) op cit. Both talk of the need to define the enemy in absolute terms, of 'good' and 'evil,' 'us' and 'them.'

for example, the unequivocal view of the PZPR as subservient to the USSR and hence, by extension, indivisibly associated with authoritarian rule and non-national interests. As common sense interpretations go, this one would appear on first reflection to be largely unquestionable. One, the PZPR was the party *of* power (*władza*[29]). Two, it ceased to exist after January 1990 and its overt association with Marxism-Leninism, which did not outlive the PZPR's leading role in 1989, formally collapsed with it. As means of understanding the real dynamics of PZPR legitimation, however, a monistic interpretation is too narrow. It allows no room for variegation either in the structures themselves or in analysis of them.

A branch of rational choice theory which was developed after 1989 fits into this monistic type of analysis. Its proponents sought to explain the Communist system's collapse and, by extension, the PZPR's loss of power in 1989 (the above mentioned 'functional' approach) in terms of a combination of the longer term structural matrices of economic, social and political crises (which defined the rational structure within which the PZPR was obliged to operate) and short-term rational choices made within them.[30] Discourse, if it had any analytical use, was merely a symptom, or effect, of these 'objective' realities to be observed, having no intrinsic or determining role to play of its own. The Party's loss of power in 1989 is thus explicable in terms of the prevailing power constraints and various extraneous 'shocks' which opened up certain political choices and closed others. The collapse of the institutional structure of the system itself meant the simultaneous collapse of the

[29]The Polish word 'władza' is interesting. It means literally 'power,' but was (and is) commonly used to refer to anything or anyone in or to do with authority. The State, regime, Party and police would all fall within this wide definition.

dominant language of the system, embodying a complete rejection of the values and principles contained within it.

Schull and Walker represent the starkest proponents of this rational choice type of interpretation of the Polish transition period. Both equate the 'inevitable' changes in the political system with - in the words of Schull - "*the collapse of the language of State Socialism,*"[31] thus collapsing the distinct concepts of system, systemic discourse (ideology) and Party into one unified, largely undifferentiated entity. Walker's analysis of Marxism-Leninism as a ritual and binding discursive formula without any authentic connection with what she (and others) have termed *'operative reality'*[32] is both interesting and useful. However, Walker, like Schull, is guilty of failing to account for the gaps that existed between the two spheres, between the ritual discourse and 'objective' political and institutional structure. Both Walker and Schull thus fail to recognise the variegated and interactive nature of political ideology and, in the case of Marxist-Leninist ideology, the ways in which Marxism-Leninism, treated as a discourse - regardless of its *effects* in terms of quantifiable outcomes - was, in fact, a real factor in the process of political legitimation. Ideology is treated as an undifferentiated reflection of the structures within which it acted, not to legitimate, but to impose order and limit alternatives.[33] Ideology in Communist societies, as a belief system was often perceived as all embracing and immutable and, as such, as Yan Sun argues, (was)

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[30]Mizrahi, S., (1995). This is a good example of the rational choice approach (and its shortcomings) in relation to Poland.

[31]Schull, J., (1992) op cit., p.738

[32]Walker.R., (1989) op cit. The term *'operative reality'* (often used synonymously with *'social reality'*) is a term borrowed from Taras, R., (1984) op cit. It refers to those areas of ideology that deal with practical or policy issues - how an ideology is 'operationalised.'

[33]Holmes, L., (1993), op cit. pp.17-20. The balance between coercive and consensual legitimation is a common theme in studies in legitimation on Poland.

"either resistant to change or when it does change, changes totally."[34] Schull suggests that:

> "(reform Communism is unfeasible) *and leaves two options open to a political actor in a Soviet-type system: either a conservative defence of ideology or a radical leap beyond it, an outright rejection of the official discourse's authoritativeness."*[35]

The leading party, from this view, merely reflected in its discourses the dominant, ideologically predetermined, power interests of the Communist elite: it mouthed a static and predetermined script. This poses questions to do with the relationship between political institutional structures and political language and between discourse and legitimation, which neither Schull nor Walker appear either interested in, or, within their terms and focus, capable of assessing with any clarity. It ignores the multiplicity of forms of legitimation, the ambiguity of ideology and the elements of continuity that shaped the Communist, transitional and post-Communist periods.

The central problem with this view is that by collapsing State structure and Party discourse into one another, these theories struggle to explain the specific development of PZPR discourse and thus also Solidarity discourse during the immediate transition period in 1989. Both on a theoretical and empirical level the way the problematic itself is framed from this perspective is questionable. Political languages do not simply reflect material conditions but have a meaning, significance and dynamic independent of them, which themselves effect changes. Alterations in

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[34]Yan Sun (1995), p.325

PZPR discourse during 1989 can only be fully understood without reference to the complexities and gradations in public discourses between significant groups within and outside Poland during the period leading up to, during and immediately after 1989.

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[35] Schull, J., (1992), op cit. p.735

3.2. *Gaps in the field of 'continuities'*

Others have concentrated on key elements of Communist institutional and normative structures that survived the overt collapse of Communism in Poland. A branch of elite theory, for example, has sought to explain the longevity of an 'elite class,' stemming from and exploiting its position within or contact with the State bureaucracy *(nomenclature).* Glasman[36] for example, argues that a remoulded ownership class, stemming from the bureaucratic Communist apparatus, has emerged in post-Communist Poland. The transfer of socialised property into private hands benefited a small elite of Communist managers, he argues. Both Eyal[37] and Frydman[38] have also contributed to this area of continuity. However, the tendency here is towards two equally misleading extremes: either an under-determinism or an over-determinism, both of which limit 'continuity'-type analyses as they stand to date. Either, as Tittenbrum argues,[39] the post-Communist ownership class - which, in the absence of empirical verification of its size and political affiliations is (inductively) assumed to have Communist connections - was directly protected by the reforming PZPR and the post-Communist SdRP or, as Glasman argues, the process was *'automatic'*, as it was *'inherent'* within the legalised transformation. The former view mirrors the monistic analyses and is thus problematic, while the latter is problematic in that it implies inevitability and relies too heavily on economic determinism.

Sociological and social-psychological continuities are another key area of post-Communist research. Sztompka, for example, addresses continuities

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[36]Glasman, M., (1994)
[37]Eyal,G., et al. (1998)
[38]Frydman, R., et al. (1996)

in social consciousness, what he calls, the "*legacy of Communist thinking.*"[40] Post-Communist Polish society has tended, he argues, to idealise all that is non-Communist (for example, the 'West' and 'Western-style democracy') without fully understanding what these means in practise. Furthermore, society, he argues, retains a parallel, if semi-conscious, commitment to Communistic-type thinking in everyday life. The State, for example, he argues, is treated with disdain, but simultaneously expected to provide everything.

There is also a strand within the literature that continues to treat Solidarity as the only or true bearer of Western traditions and values.[41] Solidarity was automatically treated as a legitimate national entity, for historical reasons to do with its struggle against Communism and its retention of Catholic and national values. It represents the link between the nation - which was not sovereign between 1944-89 - and the State, which again became sovereign after 1989. Civil society and a democratic State are seen from this perspective as continuous and logical extensions of the Solidarity ethos. This is problematic for two reasons. One, it over idealises the Solidarity movement and fails to recognise its differentiated character. Two, it treats changes in Solidarity in isolation from the wider historical and political framework during 1989. Few have assessed continuities in PZPR discourses. The tendency has been to ignore or marginalise either the role of the PZPR or its use of discourse and techniques of legitimation.

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[39]Tittenbrum, J., (1992)

[40]Sztompka, P., (1993). Sztompka analyses continuities in the consciousness of society, conceived of in the form of binary oppositions within discourse, as the main hangover of Communism in Poland.

[41]Laba, R., (1991)

3.3. *Problems of 'PZPR' literature*

After 1993 various studies began to retrace the development of the post-Communist left in Poland more closely. This was principally in an often rushed and chaotic attempt to explain how and why the reformed Communist Party, the SdRP, had managed to return to power in 1993.[42] Explanations have tended to fall into one of two schools, mirroring the continuity/discontinuity problematic. Discontinuity explanations tend to locate the key causes of the SdRP's successes in purely post-Communist sources, ignoring or downplaying its political and/or ideological roots in the PZPR. This tendency is most clearly visible in the work of Hayden.[43] The SdRP, he argues, cannot be seen in the same terms as the PZPR. It is a radically different political entity with a fundamentally different ideological and political focus. It has built solid societal support within the post-Communist political environment via its overt disassociation from Communism, he suggests. One can, he argues, for example, locate the SLD's electoral successes in specific analyses of each election. This view is difficult to sustain given the many obvious strands connecting SdRP and PZPR discourses, political strategy and organisation.

Continuity explanations, on the other hand, tend to draw on similarities in the covert and elitist motivations and strategies of both the PZPR and SdRP.[44] Zubek, for example, stresses the lack of authentic SdRP commitments to democracy since 1989.[45] His argument is indicative of a more pervasive feeling within Poland (illustrated in various opinion poll

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[42]Lewis, P., (1994); Zubek, V., (1994) op cit. The SdRP was the largest party in the winning SLD electoral organisation at the 1993 Sejm elections. It governed between 1993 and 1997 in coalition with the PSL.

[43]Hayden. J., (1994)

42 Zubek, V., (1995) op cit.; Smolar, A., (1994)

[45]Zubek.V., (1994) op cit.

surveys[46] and elsewhere, in the popular press and anecdotally) that, somehow, the PZPR 'cheated,' that it was merely *the* party of power, and when it lost power in 1989, resorted to any means at its disposal to regain it.[47] Zubek stresses the continuities in anti-democratic culture within the reforming PZPR and the SdRP. The PZPR, from this perspective, can be viewed as an authentic Communist party forced to abandon Communism. It did not, his argument goes, hold any genuine social-democratic values or beliefs - social democracy was simply chosen during and after 1989 as a convenient public cover with which to seek legitimacy without adhering to the principles embedded within authentic social democratic thinking.[48] Respect for the autonomy of the State, the impartiality of the law, pluralism of participation and tolerance of opposition are all either absent or marginal in the political profile of the SdRP, argues Zubek. The PZPR merely exploited divisions within Solidarity and the terms of the *round table* agreement to manoeuvre itself into social-democratic clothing without any substantive commitments to either the democratic process or parliamentary democracy. He takes the question of political tolerance as the key indicator of this and argues that anti-Church campaigns and disrespect for political opponents mark the SdRP's lack of genuine commitments to social democracy.

> "*Western European Marxism and social democracy on the one hand, and Eastern European Leninism, Stalinism and the subsequent post-Stalinist/neo-Stalinist systems on the other, are two fundamentally different systems of thought. Their*

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[46] *Gazeta Wyborcza*, January 11th 1999. A CBOS opinion poll on Poles' attitudes towards the PZPR showed over 65% of respondents agreeing that it should have been more harshly treated.

[47] Glasman, M., (1994) op cit; Kaczyński, J., (1991a), Smolar, A., (1994) op cit; Wańdczyk, P. S., (1996).

[48] Zubek, V., (1995) op cit.; Verdery, K., (1996) op cit. Social democracy, argues, Verdery, itself changed after the collapse of *'State Socialism'* in 1989. The concept is problematic in that the analytical distinction that Zubek draws is less clear-cut than he suggests.

apparent similarity was merely superficial and despite their use of the same concepts, these concepts carried entirely different meanings. Poland's left is rooted in Leninism, Stalinism and post-Stalinism. The vision of the future of Polish society that it espouses does not include fundamental contributions from Poland's right, its Church or the entrepreneurial milieu, nor does it fully accept the market. Poland's left is not a carrier of or an avenue for West European social democratic values, but rather the purveyor of traditional values of the Polish elite in general and the Polish and East European elites in particular."[49]

Two things limit the value of Zubek's work. One, a lack of understanding, or even acknowledgement, of the importance of discourse - what was (and is) actually said, rather than what one interprets it as meaning within a pre-given set of assumptions, most of which are based on a limited conception of ideology in Communist political systems. His analyses are premised on a particularly instrumental version of political transition in Poland. Intentions and actions determined by institutional structure underpin his analysis. He fails to provide an adequate definition of his terms - *social democracy, legalism* and *political tolerance* - and tends also to fall into the trap, previously touched upon, of equating Solidarity, both explicitly and implicitly, with all that is opposite of what he lays the SdRP out to be. He endows the leading party before 1989 with little or no discursive autonomy from the structures within which it operated politically and has conceptualised the post-Communist reformed party as having no real interest beyond the reacquisition and retention of political power. He also accuses the PZPR of various crimes that he never fully deals with, including theft,

[49]Zubek. V., (1995) Ibid., p.812

embezzlement, and blackmail.[50] Two - as with Schull and Walker - a failure to recognise the importance of the gap that existed between State and Party. His tendency to lump all State institutions, actors, their discourses as well as their private intentions into a notion of 'the authorities' or 'the power' (*władza*) is misleading and inaccurate.

The transformation of the PZPR cannot be explained simply in terms of an open, rational pursuit of power for power's sake or as the result of inevitable or irreversible, clearly delineated processes, as Schull suggests and others imply.[51] Without a conceptual understanding of its historical, political and ideological roots within the previous system and the ways in which the PZPR sought to transform itself during the period of system change, any analysis of the changing role of either the PZPR or SdRP is limited.[52] The central focus cannot be solely on either the intentions of key actors, as Zubek suggests, or the political manoeuvrings of these key actors, as Przeworski (albeit in a qualified manner[53]) suggests. It cannot also assume that, if one rejects the more blatant determinism of, for example, Zubek, that one must also reject any notion of continuity.

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[50] *Wprost*, May 17th 1998, op cit. The question of PZPR funds ($7.5 million) that allegedly 'disappeared' in early 1990 has been raised at several points since 1990. The weekly *Wprost*, most recently, alleged that the PZPR had stolen State assets.

[51] Kamiński, B., (1992)

[52] Zubek, V., (1994) and (1995) op cit. This interpretation has been widely questioned within this field. Zubek has questioned both the extent to which Poland has achieved a lasting constitutional arrangement since 1991 or is on course for a fully de-etatised economy. He also questions the commitment of the SdRP to either of these things.

[53] Przeworski, A., (1992). Przeworski deploys the most open rational choice methodology for explaining the transition. His 'prisoner's dilemma' represents a simplified model of the ways in which the negotiated transfer of power took place. Osiatyński, P., (Elster, J., ed. 1996) also shares, to a certain extent, the view that rational calculation can act as a way of conceptualising and explaining the so-called *'transition through transaction.'*

3.4. *What the thesis is not about*

In focusing on the specific area of PZPR discourse this thesis does not directly deal with three other significant areas of the democratisation process in Poland. One, the State and its transformation, in particular the role played by the *round table* in its transformation. There is considerable literature on the changing institutional, political and cultural role of the State and on the pattern of State legitimation after 1989. Two, the emerging party-system in and after 1989. This has provided the focus for several key analyses and constitutes a well developed field within post-Communist studies.[54] Three, the three other main agents in the socio-political matrix of Communist and post-Communist Polish politics: Solidarity, the Catholic Church and USSR (and subsequently the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and/or Russia). All three were necessary factors, however, in effecting changes in PZPR discourse. They defined the external parameters of a dialectic relation within which discourse changed. However, they are insufficient in themselves to explain the specific changes in discourse.

The *round table* talks in 1989 are treated in this work as one factor structuring the process of changing PZPR discourses. They institutionalised the evolutionary and negotiated characters of the transition away from one-party rule, defining the specific mechanism by which Poland extricated itself from the overt institutional structures of Communism. The role of the *round table* is well documented both in

[54]Hausner, J., and Klementewicz, T., (1992); Millard, F., (1994); Rychard, A., (1993); Sanford, G., (1992); McSweeney and Tempest, (1993). The development of the post-Communist party system is dealt with in Lewis, P., (1994), op cit.; Millard, F., (1994), Ibid.; Stokes, G., (ed.) (1991).

Poland[55] and many English sources exist. Kamiński,[56] for example, focuses on the ways in which the *round table* agreements structured the subsequent phases in the de-Communisation process. He deals with the political and constitutional details of the transition, focusing specifically on the re-emergence of pluralism. Lewis deals directly with the *round table* and elections in June 1989.[57] Osiatyński[58] focuses on the internal mechanics of the *round table*, in particular the ways in which participants operated within the negotiating arena while also keeping lines of communication open to their respective leadership teams. All three works are useful and interesting in their own rights and provide plenty of material specifically related to the talks.

The focus of this work however is neither the relegitimation of the State, nor the institutionalisation of an opposition. It lies in the PZPR's construction of a series of discourses that sought to contain reforms within socialism - in other words reform that would retain the leading role of the party. The focus is thus on the ways in which the *round table* was constructed 'from the outside,' in official and semi-official PZPR discourses. The *round table* talks are treated both as a part of the PZPR's evolving *'Public'* discourses as well as one of the necessary variables that unhinged the PZPR from the State.

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[55]In Polish studies of the *round table*, documentary-type analyses are most common. See, for examples: Kowalski. L., (1993); Gebert, K., (1990); Porozumienia Okrągłego Stolu (1989); Smoleński, P., (1989). Gebert's work is perhaps the most interesting in that he writes from the perspective of a 'participant-observer.' As a journalist covering the talks and a representative of the Solidarity negotiating team on the 'Media' sub-table, his study is written in a semi-intimate, semi-academic style, offering insights into the dynamics of the talks.

[56]Kamiński, B., (1992) op cit.

[57]Lewis, P. (1990a).

[58]Osiatyński, P., (Elster, J., 1996)

The thesis does not set out explicitly to explore the role or discourses of the other three main actors within Communist and post-Communist Polish politics - *Solidarity*, the *Catholic Church* and the *Soviet Union/CIS/Russia*. These are well-trodden in contemporary literature on Poland and its post-Communist development and many of these works act as extraneous material in this thesis. They provide the key variables used to explain the process of PZPR legitimation - the contextual framework within which the PZPR was obliged to operate domestically and internationally. A fuller exploration of each is eschewed for reasons of theoretical and empirical focus.

The key to changing PZPR legitimations lies in the ways the party sought to alter discursive constructions of the above entities rather than how they themselves changed. This does not mean that PZPR discourses were neither obliged to recognise changes in both Solidarity and the USSR nor that changes in both variables did not actively structure the discourses of the PZPR, it is rather a question of theoretical focus and emphasis. Changes in the PZPR's discourse, political tactics and strategy can, of course, be understood in terms of changing Soviet foreign policy, alterations within the CPSU or the strategy adopted by Solidarity during 1988-89. However, the focus is on the legitimational discourses of the PZPR in terms of their internal structure - their meaning within the terms of the discourse itself. Furthermore, the process of relegitimation rests on the premise that the PZPR had at least a certain degree of agency and that it was actively engaged in a process of adaptation to changing possibilities, structured by both the USSR and Solidarity. Briefly, this is explained below.

One of the key extraneous factors that structured the process of PZPR legitimation during 1989 is the counter-discursive hegemony of the Solidarity opposition movement. The cultural and political matrix of trade union/intellectual/Catholic Church opposition within Polish society from, at least, 1976 onwards, defined the parameters of the PZPR's domestic political weaknesses.[59] Solidarity emerged in 1980 as an alliance of trade union, intellectual and Church groups. Its strength lay in its claim to national and religious legitimation. Its discourses were seen as legitimate often simply because they contradicted the dominant frame of discursive reference of the Party and State. Solidarity in fact adopted ostentatiously national, religious and historical symbols that challenged the dominant terms of reference of the PZPR. The Solidarity movement was in reality, however, an often cumbersome alliance of different ideological strands and traditions within Poland. It managed to bridge the gaps, between, for example, secularism and Catholicism and leftism and rightism, by articulating a simple, direct and very effective discourse of anti-Communism. When Communism disappeared after 1990 these strands began to unthread themselves.

The role of the USSR is still open to both conceptual and empirical dispute in relation to Poland and the other countries of the region.

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[59]For analysis of the contradictions between Communistic and Catholic values in the discourses of Polish oppositional groups, see Holzer, J., (1984), Holzer, J. and Leski, (1990), Koralewicz, J., et al. (1987) and Lipski, J. J., (1985). Although strands within the Catholic opposition and between it and other parts of the opposition movement were discernible throughout the post-war years, the relative homogeneity of the various groups umbrellered under the Church is extraordinary. See A., Jerschina, J., 'The Catholic Church, the Communist State and the Polish people,' pp.76-97 and Marody, M., 'Contradictions in the subconscious of Poles', pp.227-37 in Gomułka, S., and Polański, A., (Eds.) (1990); Bernhard, M.H., (1993) op cit; Lipski, J.J., (1985) Ibid.; Lisicka, H., 'The role of the Catholic Church in the Political system of the PRL in the 1980's', pp.151-67 (Hausner, J., and Klementewicz, T., (Eds.) 1992) op cit. Solidarity literature is immense both before, during and after the 1989 transformations. The most influential are Ost, D., (1990), dealing with the Solidarity elite, Holzer, J. and Leski, J., (1990) Ibid.; Bernhard, M. H., (1993) op cit; Lipski ,J.J., (1985) Ibid; Sociological analyses: Holzer, J., (1984) Ibid.; journalistic accounts, Ash, T.G., (1983) op cit, 'grass-roots' accounts - Tourraine, A., (1982); Laba, R. (1991) op cit; 'cultural' - Goldfarb, J.C., (1989); Kubik, J., (1994) op cit.

Without doubt the Soviet Union framed, for significant sections of society, almost everything the PZPR did and what it stood for. Various studies have set out explicitly to explain the *Soviet factor* in the democratisation process in Poland and elsewhere. The most insightful studies, in terms of the effects of changes in the international sphere on domestic developments in Poland and elsewhere in the region, are Pridham's and Pridham and Vanhanen's.[60] Osiatyński, also touches upon the Soviet's implicit role in the breakdown of Polish Communism at the *round table.* There is numerous literature on changing Soviet foreign policy, specifically in relation to this region, for example, Cziomer's work. In relation to Poland, Hausner and Klementewicz's edited work represents a key source of empirical and theoretical insights. Official sources either in Poland or in Russia are less easy to find.

[60]Pridham, G., et al.(1994); Pridham, G., and Vanhanen, K., (1997); Cziomer, E., (1990); Osiatyński, K., (Elster, J., 1996) op cit; Hausner, J. and Klementewicz, T., (1992) op cit; Staniszkis, J., (1992) op cit.

Chapter 2

Theory and Methods

1. *Introduction*

This chapter sets out to achieve four objectives. One, to outline the key features of theories of legitimation and select elements which are applicable in terms of the focus outlined in the previous chapter, in particular on the legitimational functions of discourse. Two, to develop a model of the PZPR's discursive legitimation employing elements of the this discursive model of legitimation. Specifically, it examines the role of *civil* (Public/Private), *historical* (Past/Present) and *geopolitical* (East/West) PZPR discourses in the process of constructing and reconstructing types of political legitimation. This model is also located in the context of internal (Polish) and external (international) socio-political structures that both constrained and facilitated the deployment of specific discourses and thus structured the types of legitimation used. The model is analysed developmentally over two stages: the first 1948-1980, the second 1981-1988. Three, to outline a methodology with which to explore the period 1988-90 in terms of the hypotheses outlined in chapter one. Four, to comment on some of the research questions raised, both methodological and epistemological, during the research process.

2. *Legitimation*

The process of *legitimation* rather than the notion of *legitimacy*, is central to all political activity. Legitimacy is an awkward concept. Theories built on the concept of legitimacy tend to assume too much, principally, that there are ontologically unproblematically pre-existing political objects (governments, States, regimes, parties, actors and so on) that are amenable to empirical, quantitative measurement, the criteria for which are themselves deduced from predetermined notions of legitimacy. It is problematic, however, to evaluate if a party, State or regime possesses legitimacy and how much it may possess. As an analytical instrument legitimacy does not provide adequate tools for exploring how these measures themselves are constructed and change, either quantitatively or qualitatively, over time.

It makes more sense then to assess the ways in which political actors seek to legitimate specific things - to see politics as an evolving process within which all political meaning and value is the product of continuous adaptation to changing realities, rather than in terms of rigid sets of outcomes or empirically 'prove' facts. Legitimation does not claim to determine whether or not something *has* legitimacy - and, if so, how much - rather, as a mode of enquiry and method of analysis it focuses on how the political entity, the object, itself is constructed in such a way as to endow it with what the legitimacy theorists would refer to as legitimacy - that is, appropriate types and degrees of political support in historically concrete situations.

Legitimation is a contingent and dynamic process of structured claims made within given, but themselves also dynamic social, political and

economic structures that inform and are informed by them. The process of making claims and the ways the claims are mediated within these structures, actively constructs and reconstructs the thing being legitimated. Each political actor constructs and articulates a set of rationales or justifications for their various political activities and the structures within which action takes place within particular historical contexts. Each rationale is permanently contested within a matrix of existing values, institutions and practices. Thus a dialectic relation exists between what is said in order to legitimate something (the discourse) and the thing itself - neither can be known independent of each other in an a priori sense.

In Communist States and societies, as Di Palma[61] argued, the temptation was either to dismiss all Party and State legitimation as artificial since the Communist State lacked popular support (and the leading party, from this perspective, simply reflected its institutionalised position within the State) or to treat Communist claims to legitimacy as sufficient on their own terms. Since, however, Communist claims predicated themselves on the notion of a superior truth (truth which cannot be falsified - *"a declared cognitive infallibility"*[62]) - Di Palma argued, it was easier either to dismiss or ignore the real political means by which Soviet-type political elites sustained and reproduced their power, in other words, how they legitimated themselves. Furthermore, the apparent synonymity and functional interdependence of Party and State made any evaluation of one without the other, or discrete aspects of either, difficult.

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[61]Di Palma, L., (1991)

[62]Di Palma, L., (1991) Ibid. p.67

It was widely argued during the 1970's and 1980's within Western political science that any discussion about legitimation in Communist societies was limited to a discussion about the relative stability of the State or the governing party/regime or elite, each of which were often used interchangeably (Holmes[63] and Rigby[64]). From this perspective, any understanding of the transformation of a Communist system could only be understood as the result of the instability of the Communist Party/regime. As Meyer argued, one only knew when a Communist State was illegitimate when it collapsed or was in danger of collapsing.[65]

Theories exploring the varied, and non-exclusively coercive, means by which elites in Communist societies legitimated their rule, however, were developed during the 1980's and some of them provide insights into the diverse ways in which the PZPR legitimated its rule in Poland. Markus's notion of covert and overt forms of legitimation, for example, is useful.[66] Taras also developed theories along the lines of differentiated patterns of official ideology.[67] A variegated legitimational framework provides useful insights into the ways the PZPR managed to retain and reproduce its holding of power during the 1980's. On one hand, the PZPR used ritualised, ideologically-based, discourses to legitimate its position within the State with those within it. On the other hand, it adapted other, less overtly ideological, discourses to seek legitimation with groups and actors in society.[68]

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[63]Holmes, L., (1993) op cit, pp.8-27

[64]Rigby, T. H. et al. (Eds.) (1982), op cit.

[65]Meyer, A., (Sinanian et al. 1972), p.45

[66]Markus, M., (Rigby et al. 1982 op cit.)

[67]Taras, R., (1984) op cit.

[68]Feher, F., (Hausner, J., et al. (1992) op cit). Feher provides a wider analysis of overt/covert dichotomization of discourse in Communist States.

Despite the apparent validity of Rychard's view that the post-Communist State is assumed to be "*more legitimate*"[69] simply because it is not Communist, the ending of Communism in Poland has opened up many questions of legitimation - Solidarity's, the new State's, the democratic constitution's, the party system's and so on.[70] In the case of the PZPR, both in Poland and in Western-Polish circles, questions of legitimation are central, although ambivalence and confusion continue to reign, concerning the adequacy of its application in the pre-democratic era. It was often more politically convenient for opponents of the regime to engage in symbolic stands against the authorities, rather than seek to understand what this 'authority' was actually composed of and how discourses, albeit in a partial sense, legitimated it. The moral dichotomisation of politics in Poland into, for example, those *'dirtied'* by their association with the Communist regime and those *'clean'* by their association with the crusade against the regime before 1989 is something that defines, even late in the 1990's, the key line of political contestation in Poland.[71]

The concerns of political scientists in the 1980's who sought to explain the relative longevity of Communist regimes in terms of theories of legitimation cannot simply be rejected, however, as has largely happened after 1989. Legitimational models in fact can and should be utilised with regards to the PZPR in 1989. In fact, without at least some understanding of the legitimational models of the 1980's and the role played by the PZPR within them, an understanding of both the transition period and post-Communism is diluted and weak. Many studies within

[69]Rychard, A., (1993) op cit. p.67

[70]Rychard, A., (1993) Ibid.; Brzeziński, M., (1998); Higley, J., et al. (1998); Ost, D., (1990) op cit.

the *Comparative Communist* field, which focused on the ways in which Communist elites legitimated their rule non-coercively[72] have apparently lost their initial reason for existing, since the State has, in key respects been transformed. Taras has managed to shrug off many of the conceptual concerns of his earlier work, in particular work on the legitimational functions of ideology in Communist systems, and has developed a broader analysis of the post-Communist political system.[73] This is understandable (and in part necessary) given the obvious need to redefine and rethink the cognitive apparatus in relation to post-Communist States. However, the notion and methodological application of legitimation in relation to the political development of post-Communist parties is one area where there is still much room for more detailed research.

This work is an attempt to deploy the concept of discourses of legitimation in relation to the one sector of the Polish public scene where they appeared least applicable, to the PZPR. On first sight, it would appear that neither discourse nor legitimation could be very easily or satisfactorily applied. Discourse theories could be adequately applied, it

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[71]Wildstein, B,. (1991)

[72] See Holmes, L., (1993) op cit. pp.10-25 for an exploration of the different legitimation techniques adopted by the Communist elites. He proposes seven overlapping modes of legitimation: 'Old' traditional, Charismatic, Goal-rational/teleological, Eudaemonic, Official nationalist, 'New' traditional and Legal-Rational.

[73]Rigby, T. H. et al. (Eds.) (1982) op cit; Taras, R., (1984 and 1995) op cit. These represent the key contributions of legitimation theory during the 1980's to studies of Communist politics. Taras's works span both the period in which Western political science was preoccupied with models of legitimation, i.e., the so-called *'Comparative Communism'* of the late 1970's and 1980's and the apparent pre-occupation in the post-Communist period to eschew these models. Reading Taras's 1995 work one is tempted to think it is written by a different author from that of 1984. The former is devoted to the role of political ideology and its use by the PZPR at official meetings, delegations, conferences and in Party publications, whereas the latter is located within a much 'harder' field of study, that of issue preferences. It is as if he simply gave up the need for concerning himself with ideology when ideology appeared to disappear in 1989. His methodology and many of his insights and analyses into Communist discourse, however, provide insights into the period of transition and, in many ways, can be adopted and adapted for use within the post-Communist, democratic system in Poland.

was widely argued,[74] most successfully to those within the anti-Communist opposition. Most of these groups could only seek to build pockets of support within a monolithic Communist society via the use of often coded or covert discourse, given the absence of direct access to the institutions of State in any formal sense. KOR, for example, constructed a discourse which was not openly anti-Communist, but which adapted elements of the public Communist discourse (about, for example, human rights after 1976) into a critique of the Communist reality (on, amongst other things, human rights).[75] KOR constructed itself discursively within a national and moral (Catholic-inspired) set of signifiers. A significant element of the Solidarity-Church opposition which developed in 1980 was also grounded in discourses of Western-style legalism, with its association with democratic liberties and individual rights.[76]

Analysis of discourse and legitimational discourses, in relation to the PZPR, was ignored or eschewed for often clearly defined historical and theoretical reasons, most notably the fact that it was difficult to conceptualise any Communist regime in terms of a conversation, either with itself, society or anyone else. This view is problematic for two main reasons. One, the notion that neither the Church nor Solidarity had any

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[74]Schull, J., (1992) op cit; Walker, R., (1989) op cit. Discourse implies discussion and dialogue between a plurality of actors. Given Schull's and Walker's view that Communist ideology was merely an empty imitation of this type of pluralistic or democratic legitimation, both argue that discourse could only emerge outside of or after the collapse of this structure.

[75]Michnik, A., (1976) op cit; Bernhard, M. H., (1993) op cit; Walicki, A., (1990) op cit. This example of Michnik's work articulated the emerging discourse of an 'Opposition,' as opposed to a 'dissident' group. Bernhard argues that this switch from a discourse of fatalistic dissidence to one of oppositional hegemony was vital to the emergent force of the Solidarity movement in 1980. Walicki suggests, however, that the stress on the 'purity' of the anti-Communist opposition in comparison with the 'power,' blurred significant cracks in the opposition and undermined any attempts to focus on programmatic coherence. After 1990 this weakness was exposed as Solidarity split acrimoniously.

[76]Kemp-Welch, A., (ed.) (1991) op cit. The key, he argues, to Solidarity's success lay in its appeal to both legal rights and social justice. The appeal to social justice adopted *'State Socialist'* discursive concepts, to do with 'class' and 'historical rights,' for example, but located them in a non-ideological discourse of 'human

power during the 1980's cannot be fully accepted, even in the most restricted (institutional) sense, given the semi-institutionalised role played by the Church and after 1980 and by the *veto* power of the Solidarity trade union movement.[77] Two, because the PZPR was struggling throughout the 1980's to redefine the sources of both its ideological and non-ideological legitimation in society.

Discourse analysis was thus a legitimate field of intellectual inquiry (if with a rather lop-sided application) and amenable to specific historical case study. Kubik,[78] for example, addressed opposition 'discourse,' not fully at the expense of concentrating on the PZPR or State discourses, but in analysing the latter, was prone to collapse the concepts of Party, State and ideology into one overriding concept. Analyses of Communist language, though widespread, tended not to use the term 'discourse,' but 'ideology.' Semiotic content analyses of Party speeches, communiqués and other discursive artefacts were deployed to analyse changes in the politics of Communist States, often as simple reflections of, amongst other things, alterations in the relative positions of competing factions.[79] Kubik's work, however, is influential in that it acknowledges the centrality of the political use of discourses in the process of legitimation

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rights.' The aim, however, was to confront the authorities with an alternative political agenda; to pose an alternative public discourse.

[77]Kamiński, B., (1992) op cit; Holzer, J., (1984) op cit. The Church was semi-institutionalised to the extent that the State was obliged, in times of socio-economic crisis, as in 1981-83, to seek political accommodation with it, as the only autonomous representative of society. The 'veto-power' of Solidarity refers to the way in which underground Solidarity during the 1980's was able to undermine the economic policies of the Jaruzelski regime through a strategy of passive resistance at the workplace and rejection of any form of political compromise within existing "socialist" structures.

[78]Kubik, J., (1994) op cit.

[79]Sanford, G., (1992) op cit. Sanford assessed the ways in which so-called 'Soviet-watchers' in the West tended, given the lack of other sources of material or information from within the system, particularly in the Soviet Union, to focus on 'textual interpretation:' 'Reading' meanings into subtle changes in official ideology, which were treated as merely reflections of institutional and political changes in the State system. In relation to Poland, however, given the specific pattern of socialist development, this view is insufficiently flexible to

in Polish politics. Kertzer deploys an anthropological understanding of the role played by symbolic discourses and rituals in the construction and reconstruction of political identity in relation to the Italian Communist Party during the period of the fall of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe. The importance he attaches to historical discourses is influential in this work.[80] Sztompka has contributed sociological analyses of the ways in which discourses have developed within Polish society since 1989.[81] The social models he has developed are used here in relation to the discourses used by the PZPR.

deal with the ways in which discourse was more varied and how it functioned to legitimate aspects of the system, the Party and the transition.

[80]Kertzer, P., (1996)

[81]Sztompka, P., (1993) op cit.

2.1. *Discourse and legitimation*

The primary assumption underpinning this thesis is that types of political legitimation are reflected in and simultaneously altered via discourse. Discourse is both a product of, and can effect changes in, the structure of legitimation. Discourse is therefore central as both a causal factor - in affecting and defining changing modes of legitimation and as a methodological 'signpost' for evaluating the rate or pattern of changing modes of legitimation. Adopting Giddens' notion of '*structuration*,' discourses are both "*dependent and determining*,"[82] of the institutional structures within which they rise and the agency of those within them.

Discourses - conceptual linguistic frameworks that structure and order complexity - are deployed by contenders for power in specific historical situations to legitimate or delegitimate aspects of their holding or potential holding of power. These elements are arranged and rearranged to provide rationales for actions or positions publicly taken. They are, "*the arguments used*" to justify themselves and their activities.[83] As Kubik suggests, discourse is a "*form of order which determines the inclusion or exclusion of statements.*"[84] Discourses thus define the terrain, the terms and the parameters upon which political activity takes place. They determine which arguments will be used in the first place and bind political actors to given hierarchies of power and structures of authority through "*displays of solidarity, identity and unity...demarcating group boundaries.*"[85]

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[82]Giddens, A., (Kubik, J., 1994 op cit, p.97)
[83]Rigby, T.H., et al. (1982) op cit., p.26
[84]Kubik, J., (1990) op cit. p.13
[85]Kertzer, P., (1996), op cit. p.91

Discourse, in this conception, has two main functions: *'subjectification'* and *'qualification,'* both terms adopted from Therborn's analysis of ideology.[86] Subjectification is related to the processes through which an individual or group realises itself as a subject. Individuals or groups must define what it means to be *them* and not something or someone else. Qualification is related to the specific institutional mechanisms by which these individuals or groups are trained and endowed with skills to operate within the hierarchy within which they have identified themselves. Discourse thus constructed *"interpellates and constructs subjects. It addresses or hails individuals in a certain way, thereby bestowing a position and an identity on them."*[87] Discourse acts to construct and define both individual and group identities within structures and systems of power.

> *"It* (discourse) *serves the function of reproducing the social order by symbolically representing it as a unity in which the individual subject has a place, and at the same time the symbols operate to generate a sense of identification and commitment. Hence the individual is hailed or constructed as a subject within a symbolic discourse and it is these symbolic discourses which constitute ideological or imaginary communities."*[88]

Discourses, thus conceived, define political relations and political identity by defining boundaries between and within groups. They define who *"we"* are and who *"they"* are. As Thompson argues:

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[86]Therborn, G., (1980), pp.73-80

[87]Larrain, J., (1994) op cit. pp.73-84; Therborn, G., (1980) Ibid.; Taras, R., (1984) op cit. The notion of 'interpellation' as a form of political socialisation, comes originally from Althusser and was adopted by Hall and Laclau. In this work Therborn's interpretation is the main source of reference. The word 'interpellation' is, however, not found in most dictionaries and is absent in most other related works (with the exception of Taras).

[88]Durkheim, E., (Thompson, K., 1986, op cit. p.24)

"They act as boundary maintainers through which ideological communities preserve their unity by defining deviance from normative behaviour and mobilising negative sanctions against such behaviour."[89]

2.2. *Grades of discourse*

Taras has suggested that one should define ideology in Communist States in terms of a relationship between a core (*'diachronic'*) structure and an operative (*'synchronic'*) structure.[90] The former defined the overall structure of the discourse and what was central to the value system, the latter the actual use of these structures in everyday official language. The former were, according to Taras, less (although not completely in-) flexible, not generally changing over time, the latter contingent to a much greater extent, on 'social reality.' Operative discourses, thus conceived, change in a dialectical relationship with the reality they must operate within and in another dialectical relationship with the governing principles of the discourse. Thus there is an indirect relationship between social reality and the diachronic sphere of discourse - what is usually referred to as 'ideology.' Both discursive spheres legitimate (via the process of *interpellation*) in different ways (via different *interpellatory* signifiers) to different groups from whom support or a political or socio-economic agreement is necessary.[91] Doctrinal ideology in this case functioned to gel a particular coalition of State and PZPR groups,

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[89]Thompson, K., (1980) Ibid. pp.24-5.

[90]Taras, R., (1984) op cit. The notion of 'operative ideology' is useful, in that claims to rule within ostensible ideologically legitimated societies require operationalisation in concrete situations via speech acts which necessitate both some kind of interpretation and discussion within and without the community that articulates the ideology. Hence it can be described as at least partially "discursive" in the sense being deployed in this analysis.

[91]Holmes, L., (1993), op cit. pp.23-26

defining limits to collective action and institutional change. Operative discourse was used to retain a semblance of continuity, in, for example, national and cultural traditions. It constructed the *'outer'* community - the *'them'* (of society) rather than the *'us'* of the elite. Both spheres socialised politically, the former in an inclusive, the latter in an exclusive sense.[92] The PZPR, particularly after 1981 operated within a narrow sphere of ideological references. The symbolic function of ideology, thus conceived, was to provide a picture of the future within which all present actions could be made legitimate, even if, in private many of these overt claims were discarded or downgraded.

[92]Holmes, L., (1993) Ibid. pp. 16-17

2.3. *Types of legitimational discourses*

One can identify various ideal-type forms of legitimation and locate discourses within them. To a certain they overlap, although each has certain specific characteristics. This typology is simplified, for the purposes of clarity, along an continuum, between *Tradition* as a claim to legitimation at one end and *Legal-Rational* claims at the other.

2.3.i. Traditional *legitimation*

Traditional legitimation is based on what Holmes defines as "a*n established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them.*"[93] In ideologically-defined political systems, the "*force of history*" and "*vanguard*" status of the leading party assume the role previously played by, for example, a monarch or 'strong-man' leader. Other forms of legitimation feed off and into this dominant mode. Legitimation may, for example, rely, at times, on c*oercion* - based either on the use of force to resolve conflicts or the fear of its use. G*oal-rational (teleological* or *eudaemonic)* devices also shape aspects of this type of legitimation. Those holding office within this political system validate themselves in terms either of 'the final goal' (Communism) or medium-term targets, for example production targets - e*udaemonic legitimation* - the promise of satisfying material expectations.[94] *Social-contractual legitimation* - in which groups in society are selectively rewarded with the intention of inducing either societal support or to drive divisions between groups in society - may also be a feature of this traditional mode.

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[93]Holmes, L., (1993) op cit. p.13

[94]Holmes, L., (1993) Ibid., p.13-15

2.3.ii. Legal-Rational *legitimation*

A legal-rational form of political legitimation is closest to that prevalent in modern democratic States. It is based on *"a belief in the legality of patterns of normative rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands."*[95] Rules and procedures are objective and impersonal and obedience is given to codified and consensual norms rather than persons.

[95]Holmes, L., (1993) Ibid. p.15

2.4. *Discursive signifiers*

Three core discourse are selected, outlined and analysed in terms of the model of legitimation developed. The intention of this section is to outline the essential features of these discourses of legitimation. It is not intended as a fully comprehensive historical, but rather a schematic (and inevitably partial) representation of the discourses themselves. Below are outlined three sets of binary opposites which marked and ordered the cultural-symbolic domain within which legitimation was sought. They are selected from various deduced ideal-type discourses, the most important of which stem from Sztompka's[96] seven binary opposites from his work on the post-Communist uses of discourse. It is important to understand this typology as a simplified model within which some discourses may fit into two or all categories. The Catholic Church, for example, can be treated as both a *West/East* and a *Public/Private* signifier.

[96]Sztompka, P., (1993) op cit; Alexander, J. C., (1991) op cit. Sztompka's work is specifically addressed to exploring the pattern of democratic discourse within post-Communist Polish society. His methodology is one that can, however, be used to explore the democratic discourses of the PZPR.

Figure 1) *A schematic representation of the binary opposites in PZPR discourse:*

Private Vs. Public	**West Vs. East**	**Past Vs. Present**
Traditional **Marxism-Leninism** 1. Party: The 'leading role' principle and 'democratic centralism.' 2.Class Party as constitutive of working class interests; 3.State/Constitution As 'private' domain of the PZPR. 4. Opposition/Church Former as a corollary to the State, with participation limited. The latter as instrument for defusing social unrest. Marginal respect for, or references to, either.	**Traditional** **International socialist alliances** 1. 'East: Socialism as an essentially Eastern European product. The USSR treated as guarantor, for example, of Polish national sovereignty. 2. 'West' Negatively signified, in terms of capitalism, exploitation and colonialism. 'Real' socialism contrasted with 'bourgeois' socialism of Western Europe. The Catholic Church as a Western, bourgeois, institution.	**Traditional** **'Glorious' socialist and national past** Ignored or marginalised: -National independence -WW2, Katyń and the role of the USSR -PPS (Socialist party) -1968 and 1970 -1970, 76, 80-81 downplayed or treated as 'counter-revolutionary' or 'anti-constitutional'
Operative **'Socialist constitutionalism' and 'Socialist democracy'** Degree of legality and impartiality, in application	**Operative** **'Polish Road to Socialism'** Symbols of Moscow underplayed, ambivalent forms of nationalism and the concept of the 'lesser evil.'	**Operative** **'1956'** Only significant discursive marker of autonomy from Moscow.

2.4.i. *'Private'* versus *'Public'*

The *'Public'* versus *'Private'* binary opposition concerns the construction of PZPR discourse in relation to the State, Constitution and societal opposition (including the Catholic Church). *'Public'* discourses represent the open and fully democratic - legal-rational - end of a continuum and *'Private,'* the closed, non-democratic -traditional - end. This extract from Sztompka's analysis illustrates the tendency towards 'Private' and 'Public' bifurcation in Poland:

> "*The discourse appears in a number of guises: 'society versus the authorities,' 'the nation versus the State,' 'the people versus the rulers' and 'us versus them.' The private sphere is the domain of the good, of virtue, dignity, and pride; whereas the public sphere is the domain of vice, disdain, and shame. Power centres are perceived as alien and hostile. The government is seen as the arena of conspiracy, deceit, cynicism, or at least stupidity and inefficiency.*"[97]

All political parties seek to locate themselves discursively somewhere between these opposites. The PZPR's ideological discourses were more closely associated with a *'Private'* conception of the State: the State as the 'property' of the Party overseeing a largely disenfranchised society. "*People believe they have no say in the running of public affairs, no opportunity to influence their own well being. Therefore they are reluctant to engage themselves in public life, because they do not see any realistic way in which it could change anything.*"[98] *'Public'* discourses reflect a more open conception of State-society relations. The State is not necessarily 'owned' or 'occupied' by any 'given' group, but

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[97]Sztompka, P., (1993), op cit. p.512

[98]Sztompka, P., (1993) Ibid, p.513

operates according to established rules and principles - in other words, it connotes a legal rational-type of legitimation. Three areas are outlined in terms of their function of discursive legitimation.

2.4.i.a. *'The Party'/'parties'*

The 'leading role of the (Communist) party' principle remained, throughout its existence, the PZPR's key traditional - *private* - signifier. It acted as the key interpellatory mechanism in the process of reproducing loyalty within the State. It defined and demarcated, discursively - simply and clearly, the terms of State-society relations: who was allowed to participate, on what terms and limits to what they could say and do. The PZPR spoke of itself as the highest expression and arbiter of working class interests. Class was central to the discourse, combined with a rejection of other parties and other sources of political representation (with the exception of the PZPR's coalition parties, the Democratic Party, SD and United Peasants Party, ZSL, none of which had any real power).

2.4.i.b. *The State and constitution*

Democratic centralism - the governing principle of the centralised bureaucratic exercise of decision making - was central to the PZPR's construction of its political role within the State. Top-down decision-making and controlled integration of selected non-PZPR representatives is central to this aspect of the discourse. The State was treated as an 'object' of Party intent, with some, although highly limited, constitutional autonomy, in the form, for example, of the Constitutional Tribunal.

2.4.i.c. *Opposition*

The precise discursive definition of an 'opposition' had important legitimational effects for the PZPR. The term '*opposition*' implied all forms of disagreement with or hostility to the regime, whereas the notion of a '*constructive opposition*'[99] (which arose in 1988) implied an opposition that was prepared to submit to the existing rules of the political game. These discursive constructions reflected wider conceptions of the type of political legitimation. Within the original, monistic, conception, the political hegemony of the Communist Party was unquestioned and the recognition of other social or political sources of power was deemed incompatible with the Party's leading role.[100] The role of the Catholic Church complicates the notion of opposition and raises questions of 'symbolic' opposition, for example.

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[99]Ionescu, I., (1967), pp.2-3. See the discussion concerning the distinction made between "opposition" and "political opposition."

[100]Barnard, F. M., (1991), op cit. p.134. Barnard suggests that within the Communist tradition three conceptions of 'opposition' vied for domination. The first was the traditional Marxist-Leninist (or 'monistic') conception. Any opposition to the regime was treated as opposition to the system itself since the system was an 'objective' factor in the historical progression towards Communism. Within the second, intermediate or 'quasi-pluralistic' conception of 'opposition' multiple interests were recognised, but did not impair the leading role of the Communist Party. Pluralism was confined to the social infrastructure, in which interests vied for public acknowledgement. Thus the Communist Party was made out to be the ultimate arbiter in the resolution of sectional conflicts. The third, or 'truly' pluralistic conception recognised diversity in the social realm, but extended this to the political.

2.4.ii. *'West'* Versus *'East'*

The *'West'* versus *'East'* binary opposition concerns the ways in which the USSR and the Socialist bloc (and the values and institutions associated with them) and Western nations (and the values and institutions associated with them) were constructed and represented in discourse. *'East'* signified ideological orthodoxy and therefore political certainty and legitimation within the prevailing geopolitical model, whereas *'West'* signified uncertainty: destructive capitalism, class conflict, inequality and potential loss of national sovereignty.

The ways in which the *'East'* and the *'West'* tended to be constructed in official PZPR discourse was most strikingly at odds with the ways in which society constructed them. As Sztompka suggests there was (and is) a strong tendency within Polish society to construct an uncritically positive vision of the *'West.'*

> *"There is an uncritical glorification of the Western way of life, economic and political arrangements, consumer patterns, products, and artistic achievements."*[101]

2.4.ii.a. *'The East'*

The external parameters of the domestic model of legitimation within which the PZPR found itself was one of a primary association, reflected in various discursive references, with the USSR. The 'USSR' signified geopolitical security, centralised power structures and coercive rule. Ideological (Marxism-Leninist and Socialist Internationalist) discourses most clearly signified a public attachment to this *Eastern* version of socialism. For example May Day, the reverence reserved for Soviet leaders within official discourse and the explicit support for most, if not all, the ideas and/or institutions within the Soviet bloc signified commitments to the USSR and thus commitments to the existing pattern of domestic political decision-making and State organisation.

2.4.ii.b. *'The West'*

'West' references were largely negative - to the divisive and unstable nature of capitalism and, for example, the relationship between capitalism and colonialism. The 'authentic' values of socialism were 'essentially' Eastern European, to be contrasted with the 'bourgeois' socialism of Western Europe (including, for example, the French and Italian Communist Parties experiments with 'Eurocommunism'). Church discourses and discursive references to religion were also significant. The Church was constructed as an institution of the West. There is some obvious ambiguity in that the PZPR, after 1956, legitimated itself within discourses of a *'Polish Road to Socialism,'* which was self-justified neither as fully *'Eastern'* nor as fully *'Western,'* but unique to Poland

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[101]Sztompka, P., (1993) op cit. p.513

2.4.iii. *'Past'* Versus *'Present'*

If the narrative of the future (communism) was constructed for reasons of socialisation and intra-elite unity - having little, if any, connection with the sphere of activity in any other real sense - the picture of the past had to correspond, to a large extent, with the same story since its function within the narrative was to provide a sense of linear progress. In other words, there had to be discursive continuity. Historical discourses legitimated the role of whatever political antecedents best sanctioned contemporary political strategy. References were not merely 'floating' or accidental, rather they acted to link ideological and other discourses into a coherent whole, supporting ideological or other types of discourse by furnishing them with examples, antecedents and illustrations. The discursive construction and representation of *'history'* as Kertzer argues, provides:

> *"a link between how people see themselves and are seen by others to be linked to larger, symbolically constructed entities."* (How) *"we make sense of ourselves by constructing a narrative of our pasts. All parties are actively engaged in a constant 'autobiographical' revision...We fit the pieces, as we confront them, into a framework of our already formed narrative...and when it becomes difficult to fit the pieces into the story, we change the narrative."* [102]

Polish history is open to wide and often fundamental disagreement and groups competing for political power within Poland have always developed competing versions of the past.[103] It thus provides a rich and

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[102]Kertzer, P., (1996) op cit. p. 123

[103]*Wprost*, 19th April 1998. *Wprost* asked various figures on both sides of the political divide to state when, in their view, Poland had become independent: Wałęsa - 28 October 1992 (the date when the last Soviet soldiers left Polish soil), Mazowiecki - 12 August 1989 (the date of the inauguration of the first non-

valuable insight into the changing political-legitimational discourses of the transitional PZPR. The role played by 'history' in Polish politics represents a significant and determining variable within the changing discourses of the PZPR for two main reasons. One, Polish Communists could not achieve any real degree of political stability and popular support largely because they were seen popularly as stooges of the Soviet Union. If the PZPR could disentangle its role in the post-war period from that of the Soviet Union it could redefine its position in relation to society. Two, the economic failures of the 1980's must be understood within the context of a self-organised, historically aware and explicitly anti-Soviet society. Solidarity, for example, placed alongside its demands for political and trade union reforms during 1980/81 a demand for official historical truth, about Katyń amongst other things. 'Underground' literature during the 1980's, furthermore, devoted itself to developing discourses of *'real'* Polish history.[104] KOR's *'Flying University,'* for example, was developed during the 1976-80 period with the explicit intention of challenging the Communist discourses of history.[105] Many oppositional intellectuals retained a strong sense that historical truths needed to act as the cornerstone of any ethical and political opposition to the Communist regime. The strategy of *'New Evolutionism'* (developed in both Poland and Czechoslovakia after 1976 by Havel and Michnik following the Helsinki conventions on human rights to which both regimes signed) to stand morally above the Communist regime, offer a

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Communist government), Jaruzelski and Rakowski- 2nd April 1997 (the date of the new constitution), Suchocka - 4 June 1989 (the date of the semi-open parliamentary elections), Buzek (Premier 1997-) - 11 November 1918 (the date of Polish independence), Krzaklewski (head of AWS coalition, post-1997) - 9th December 1990 (the date of the first fully open elections, to the Presidency).

[104]Bernhard, M.H., (1993) op cit.

[105]Bernhard, M. H., (1993) Ibid.. For a wider exploration of the role played by KOR in the anti-Communist underground movement and Michnik, A., (1988b) and (1976c).

'clean space'[106] and sense of political integrity, is linked to the Communist's legitimational problems. As Gerrits argues:

> "*The historical consciousness of the Poles was an amalgam of truths, myths and miracles, nourished by a seemingly endless series of rituals, commemorations and publications. The nucleus was the struggle for national sovereignty, narrowed down to conflict with Russia. The uprisings against Tsarist occupation, the 2nd Republic, 1919-21 war, 1939, Katyń, the Warsaw uprising. These were the classic themes of uncensored history. The past was an issue of the highest political order and a permanent challenge to the regime.*"[107]

The *'Past'* versus *'Present'* binary opposite concerns the ways in which certain versions of the past were constructed for contemporary legitimational use. In this case, the continuum is marked on one hand by a certain type of closed - *traditional* - historical discourse and on the other by a more open/pluralistic - *legal-rational* - 'national' (in the sense of articulating the national experience) discourse. As Sztompka observes:

> "*The phrase 'before the war' has always signified the best in all domains of life. And when it came to the oppositional struggle and anti-Communist revolution, their main theme was the return to institutions and traditions of the past, rather than shaping new forms for the future.*"[108]

The intention of this section is not a comprehensive historical exploration of each element of the history in its own right, rather it is an overview of the main points of contention and why and how they were

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[106] The notion of 'clean' and 'dirty', those associated with the Communist regime and those not continues into the post-Communist environment.

[107] Gerrits, A.,(1990) op cit. p.64

[108] Sztompka, P., (1993) op cit. p.518

politically significant within the model of PZPR legitimation. Inevitably, therefore, this selection is cursory. It is concerned with explaining history in terms of the specific legitimational-political functions of a regulated and uniform official discourse of power, which was random and not necessarily rational in any sense other than its binding normative - *interpellatory* - function in the production of shared meanings and identity. Below are outlined the areas of special significance in terms of the PZPR's historical discourses and the broad counter-narratives of history as developed by key representatives of Polish society.

2.4.iii.a. *National independence (1918) and 1918-39*

The celebration of national independence (November 1918) and the period up to 1939 marked a profound ambivalence on behalf of the PZPR. On the one hand it sought to locate itself within a discourse of 'nationalism,' while on the other hand Polish nationhood (in its modern form) was defined largely by it anti-Russian, anti-German (and also anti-Semitic) flavour.[109] In seeking nationalism as a discourse of domestic legitimation, the PZPR was obliged to tailor its overt references to the period of independence (1918-39) to fit in with its new found external ideological commitments. *'Piłsudski'* and *'national independence'* discursive references were thus, if not completely rejected, used very selectively to underpin the essentially socialist basis of Poland's national sovereignty. The inter-war period was, for example, constructed as a necessary (bourgeois) stage in the historical materialist process towards socialism and communism.

2.4.iii.b. *World War Two/Katyń*

Atrocities committed by the Soviets in Poland during WWII play a fundamental role in the post-war failures of the PZPR to develop deep-rooted societal support. The PZPR never fully dealt with Katyń, for example, nor the question of deportations of Poles (1939-41), nor the significant (non-)role played by the Red Army in the destruction of Warsaw by the Nazis in 1944, following the non-Communist resistance-

[109]Davies, N., (1997a). The creation of a Polish State in 1918 is only explicable within the context of Russian internal political weaknesses following the revolution in 1917. The possibilities afforded by Russian weakness were exploited by a newly formed Polish army, headed by General Piłsudski, which advanced deep into Russian territory before being pushed back in 1920 to the outskirts of Warsaw. Polish battalions, thus, in the aftermath of WWII, were seen, in Soviet terms, as having fought on the 'wrong' (that is 'white') side during the Russian civil war (1917-20)

led Warsaw uprising. Katyń[110] was the cornerstone of the PZPR's domestic political weakness. The Party could not openly question the official Soviet position, which remained until April 1990 officially unresolved. It was simply unacceptable to equate Katyń with the USSR, although few Polish or Western scholars doubt Soviet responsibility for the crime.[111] The Party, however, was never able openly to address the events of Katyń and this failure underscored its weakness in Polish society.

2.4.iii.c. *PPS-Polish Socialist Party*

In traditional PZPR discourse the role of the PPS was underplayed or selectively ignored. The role of the PPS in the immediate aftermath of WWII is significant in that it had greater popular support than the Workers' Party (PPR) and, largely for this reason, was mistrusted by the Soviet elite (for being too close to non-revolutionary or peasant and trade union movements). The PPS contained a large proportion of those who had been sympathetic to the Popular Front organisations of the 1930's. It also contained some of the brightest intellectuals of the period and a advocated a more sophisticated understanding of socialism. The PZPR's search for solutions to existing crises in 1956, 1970 and 1980-81 can be seen in terms of a partial resurrection of the PPS line within the

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[110]Davies, N., (1997a) Ibid, p.1004 & p.1188. The issue of Katyń centres on the murder of 14,000 officers of the Polish Army and police taken prisoner by the USSR occupying Poland's eastern territories. The prisoners were held in three camps; Kozelsk (near Smoleńsk), Starobesk (Ukraine) and Ostaszkov (Kalinin). All traces of the men were lost in the spring of 1940, one year before the Germans invaded the USSR. In 1943 the Germans found a mass grave in the forest near Katyń containing the bodies of 4,143 men who had been interned in Kozelsk. Each had his hands tied behind his back and had been shot in the back of the head at close range. The official date of the massacre was marked as 1941, a year after the German invasion of Russia: the Soviet Union thus held the Nazis responsible. However, all evidence suggests that the NKVD, Soviet secret police, committed the massacre in September 1940, two weeks after the start of the war.

[111] Garrett, T. and Garrett, F., (1987), and Davies, N., (1988). Editor of *Nowe Drogi*, Ludwik Krasucki referred to Katyń on various occasions in, for example, *The Sunday Times*, May 31st 1987, although never fully within the journal of which he was the editor.

Communist elite - limited constitutional democracy, industrial democracy and mixed market economics.

2.4.iii.d. *1968 ("Marzec") and 1970 ("Grudzień")*

The events of *'Marzec'* (March 1968) and *'Grudzień'* (December 1970) remain subject to bitter dispute at many levels of Polish society.[112] The significance of a discourse (or lack of one) about *'Marzec'* lies in the weakness of the more liberal Communists within the PZPR to stem the arbitrary manipulation of a discourse of Polish nationalism to further hard-line interests within the State. In 1968 Gomułka played a key role in equating so-called 'anti-social forces' (mainly demonstrating students) with Zionism and in initiating the last wave of Polish-Jewish emigration.[113]

December 1970's events, during which the local civil militia shot and killed dozens of striking dock workers in Gdynia, was never fully resolved, at any level, discursive, legal or otherwise. The PZPR continued to downplay the struggle within which the events took place and tended to stress the 'anti-social activities' of the strikers. Its significance, like that of *'Marzec,'* lies in the hard-liners' success in mobilising the repressive force of the State against 'opposition' within society.

2.4.iii.e. *1981-83 (Martial Law)*

The imposition of a state of martial law in December 1981 (lifted in 1983) both reaffirmed the PZPR's traditional ideological discourse and its discourses of historical continuity. At the same time, it symbolised the

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[112] *Wprost*, 31st March 1998

gulf that had emerged between Party and society. Opposition leaders in the struggles of 1980-81, such as Wałęsa and Michnik, were excluded from official discourse after 1982 and that of *socialist legalism* and *socialist constitutionalism* imposed from above. Martial law is still a bone of considerable contention in Poland.

[113]Heller, C. S., (1969) and Checiński, M., (1982) op cit.

3. *The PZPR in historical perspective*

3.1. *1948-80*

The PZPR was created in 1948 in a merger of the long-established PPS (Polish Socialist Party - set up in Paris in 1882) and the newly established PPR (Polish Workers' Party - set up in Soviet Russia in 1942[114]). The merger, in effect, shunted together two political parties with different ideological origins within socialism (and thus different conceptions of 'revolution,' 'democracy,' and 'legality'),[115] relations with the Soviet Union and relations with Polish society. The PPR was the immediate successor to the disbanded pre-war Polish Communist Party (KPP), although with almost no personnel and very few of the ideas inherited from the KPP. It was explicitly set up for the purposes of providing the Soviets with a political foothold in Poland at a time when socialists and various pre-war nationalist and peasant parties dominated the Home Army (AK) resistance to the Nazis. After the war it provided Moscow with a compliant partner in Warsaw. The PPR articulated a rather crude discourse defined by Stalin's interpretation of Marxism-Leninism and was seen by many within the PPS leadership, from the moment of its inception, as a Soviet puppet.

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[114]Reguła, J. A., (1994) The pre-war Polish Communist Party (KPP) was disbanded in 1938 on the orders of Stalin, officially because it had become "disengaged" from the Comintern. Stalin was already attempting to reduce internal Polish potential obstacles to potential Soviet rule in the eastern territories of Poland annexed to the USSR in 1940. The PPS, on the other hand was grounded in the trade union and independence movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

[115]Bernhard, M. H., (1993) op cit. p.219. See the declaration of Poland's underground parliament, the Council of National Unity (RJN), which was dominated by PPS activists, of 15th March 1944, entitled "O co walczy naród Polski?' (What is the Polish nation fighting for?). It called for thorough industrial and agricultural reform, local self-government and parliamentary democracy. This was something, according to Bernhard, "*considerably more radical than the proposals which the Polish Communists were making at that time.*"

Post-war political struggle within the PZPR - between factions loosely based around the pre-existing PPS and old PPR blocs within the new party - concerned, for example, the definition and role of non-PZPR actors in society and the means by which interests should be defined, represented and mediated within the political system. Periodically, after a cycle of social unrest followed by political crisis and changes in leadership (1956, 1970 and 1980-81), the new leadership group within the PZPR opened up the doctrinal language of Marxism-Leninism to versions of limited social, economic and political pluralism within the State and society and toyed with notions of internal Party democracy.[116] However, the ideologically more liberal-Communist wings of the PZPR, remnants of the PPS, on each occasion found themselves either the target of elite purges or isolated and outmanoeuvred by a combination of military and bureaucratic sections of the Party and State.[117]

The PZPR was thus an historical peculiarity. It was Communist Party in all but name: obliged to name itself a *Workers'* party because the term "*Communist*" evoked outright hostility among large sections of Polish society. Stalin also wanted to demonstrate that the People's Democracies of Central and Eastern Europe were of a lower order than the USSR (with the exception of the Czech Communist Party). The Party operated within the Soviet sphere of influence and therefore in a supposedly socialist society, although in a society that had forcibly and

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[116]Hahn, W., (1987) op cit; de Weyenthal, J.B., (1986); Dziewanowski, M.K., (1976) and Eysymontt, J., and Maciejewski, P., (1985). Hahn's work provides a thorough analysis of the democratisation process ("*horizontalism*") that took place within the PZPR during 1980-81.

[117]de Weyenthal, J.B., (1986) Ibid.; Dziewanowski, M.K., (1976) Ibid.; Sanford, G., (1983) and (1984) op cit. For analysis of the specific role played by anti-Semitism in the dynamics of leadership purges within the Communist party, in particular its role during the purges of 1968, see, Heller, C.S., (1969) op cit. and Checiński, M., (1982) op cit.

unambiguously rejected Soviet-type Communism in 1920.[118] Poland was also a society that retained strong radical traditions of insurrection and republicanism and held an historical attachment to the values of collectivism and egalitarianism. It was a party that thus functioned politically within a very limited set of possibilities, its room for political manoeuvre conditioned by its precarious balancing position between a hostile society and an external 'ally,' the USSR, which was, at times, openly hostile vis-à-vis the leading (Communist) Parties in the Soviet bloc. Within the PZPR, furthermore, from its beginning, there was ambivalence and ambiguity concerning the meaning and political application of socialism. As Starski explains:

> "*The only possible legitimation of the ruling elite after WWII was the claim that it was furthering the application of Marxist revolutionary theory to push society from a capitalist to a socialist phase of development. But it is clear that no such revolution was in sight, as the only tradition of militant struggle in Poland always took independence as its first priority. There was, of course, a more vivid tradition of more general social struggle, but in Poland it was represented by a socialist movement favouring co-operatives and non-revolutionary measures, very much like Western social democracy, not by the Communist Party, which had never been too popular due to its indecisive, non-nationalist, pro-Soviet stance.*"[119]

Throughout the 1948-80 period the PZPR operated within a society dominated by a cultural value system marked by its historically

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[118]Davies, N., (1997) op cit. The Polish-Soviet war of 1919-20 is of central importance in the emerging identity of the newly formed independent Polish State and also in terms of the collective social equation in Poland of Communism with anti-Polishness. The defence of Poland against Russia, became, as Davies explains, both a defence against "barbarianism" and "bolshevism," often used interchangeably. See, also, Checiński, K., (1982) for analysis of the peculiar dilemma faced by the Polish Communist Party (KPP).

pronounced anti-Soviet, nationalist and Catholic contours.[120] Within this context, the leading party in the post-war period could never claim any sustained domestic support. By this is meant that the PZPR held formal power but, since it was endowed with little or very weak societal support, was largely unable to achieve many of the objectives defined by the dominant ideology of Marxism-Leninism. This was most clearly witnessed in the failures to collectivise the peasantry and curb the powers of the Catholic Church in the early 1950's. The power of the symbolic association of the Church with the nation is illustrated in the following extract from the 1981 Solidarity Congress:

> *"Because it was Christianity that brought us into our wider motherland Europe, because for a thousand years Christianity has shaped our culture, since in the most tragic moments of our nation it was the Church that was our main support, since our ethics are predominantly Christian, since, finally, Catholicism is the living faith of the majority of Poles, we deem it necessary that an honest presentation of the role of the Church in the history of Poland have an appropriate place."*[121]

Between 1948 and 1956, the Communist system in Poland was marked by the presence of Soviet military advisors within the highest echelons of the PZPR and State and by the leading position of Polish Stalinists.[122] The PZPR adopted a *traditional*-type ideological discourse. That is, the Party believed itself to be enjoying popular legitimation by virtue of its historical status as a vehicle of the socialist project in Poland, which was

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[119]Starski, S., (1982) op cit. p.132

[120]Gomułka, S and Polański, A., (1990) op cit; Bernhard, M. H., (1993), op cit.

[121]*World Affairs* 145, summer 1982

[122]Kersten, K., (1986) and Torańska, T.,(1989) op cit.

based on 'scientific' laws of historical development.[123] It was traditional in the sense that it based its claim to rule on the ideologically derived notion that it had a necessary historical role to play. This form of *traditional* legitimation[124] bypasses the need for independent State or civic institutions, relying instead on an organic or implicit relationship between rulers and ruled. It is the clearest example of a closed, non-constitutional and anti-democratic, *'Private,'* discourse.

A peculiar form of mixed legitimation emerged, most clearly after 1956, marked along three main discursive cleavages: *'Public'/'Private,' 'East'/'West'* and *'Past'/'Present.'* On one hand the PZPR was obliged to honour its *'Eastern'* commitments and, on the other, to construct more national and less-confrontational domestic (but still socialist) discourses in relation to Polish society. The aim was not to crush the indigenous 'culture,' which continued to take, as it's dominant focus of reference, Catholicism and national independence, but to adapt elements of it and fuse them into a socialist discourse. *'Public'* discourses, of constitutionalism, for example, emerged and were submerged at regular intervals, each time legitimated retrospectively[125] by a core discursive commitment to traditional *'Eastern'* signifiers and a limited discursive construction of history. The limits imposed on national historical discourses were clearly designed to reduce any discursive possibilities of refocusing the Party's commitments to the *'Eastern'* discourse i.e. Soviet interests and Marxist-Leninist doctrine. The discourse of Statist

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[123]Burton, F., and Carlen, P., (1979) op cit; Carew-Hunt R.N., (1963) op cit.

[124]Markus. M., 'Overt and Covert Modes of Legitimation in Eastern European Societies,' (Rigby, T.H., et al. 1982), op cit.

[125]Taras, R., (1986), op cit.. Taras observed the pattern of official justifications of crises within socialist Poland. Each was retrospectively analysed as resulting from mistaken policies (a failure of interpretation) and/or leadership failures rather than a crisis of the system itself.

prerogatives and ideological consistency, for example, articulated in 1968 by a hard-line (*beton*: literally meaning 'concrete') group within the PZPR (centred around General Moczar's so-called *Partisans*) and in 1981, in a revised form (by General Jaruzelski), most clearly sent appropriate signals to Moscow that Polish Communism remained within the Soviet camp, while discourse in relation to Polish society was often deliberately devoid of overt ideological elements, particularly during the 1980's.

> (Thus)...*"the natural reaction of any community confronted with such a paradox was to keep its collective head below the parapet, react conservatively, since the safest course of action was to follow the Leninist Party line."*[126]

The Poznań demonstrations of 1956 which lead, indirectly, to the reinstatement of Gomułka as First secretary of the PZPR, anticipated the events of Hungary later that year and echoed many similar demands: genuine independence from Moscow and political, legal, media and other freedoms. They represented the first reformist openings within the Soviet bloc after the war and precipitated a departure from the language of Stalinism. Socialism could, for example, include a degree of worker self-management, political decentralisation and national autonomy from Moscow. 1956 witnessed the birth of a discursive notion of a *'Polish Road to Socialism.'* Gomułka (First Secretary of the PZPR, 1956-70) promised a renewal of many of the reforms advocated by the PPS. However, during the 1960's, the more the Gomułka regime struggled to resist the monopolising tendencies inherent within *'real'* socialism, the more it became politically compromised by the distance that had emerged between Party and society. During the mid-1960's, culminating in the

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[126]Walker, R., (1989), op cit, p.13

infamous "*March events*" of 1968, Gomułka's power base within the Party began to factionalise and a hard-line/reformist cleavage opened. Gierek manoeuvred within the Party elite to undermine the ascension of hard-liners such as Moczar between 1968 and 1970[127] and rose to power in 1970 following strikes and political unrest in the TriCity area (Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot).

The Gierek years (1970-80) were characterised by a combination of relative economic liberalisation and the continued search of the Communist elite to constitutionalise its leading role within the State. The Party relinquished many of its traditional discourses of national self-sufficiency and closed borders to the West. At the same time, however, a hard-core reaction of many within the Party and State to this relative liberalisation was expressed in two ways. One, in the search for a formalisation of the PZPR's leading role within the 1952 (Stalinist) constitution, witnessed most clearly in 1976.[128] Two, in the increasingly capitalistic style with which many within the Party and State administration sought to manage socialised industry. The emergence of a dichotomised discourse of *'eudaemonism'* in relation to society and a further attempt to institutionalise the role of the PZPR within the State thus most clearly marked the 1970's. Eudaemonic discourse reconstructed the traditional ideological stress on equality and the dominance of production over consumption. Pay differentials, individual bonuses and material incentives were stressed. The legitimational significance lies in the implicit abandonment of Marxist-Leninist discourses used by the PZPR to seek legitimation with society.

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[127]Checiński, M (1982), op cit.

The combination of relative economic liberalisation, Western capital investment and the increasingly entrenched and obstructive role of the Communist nomenclature, however, meant that, while in the short term Polish *State Socialism* appeared to be experiencing an economic boom of unprecedented proportions within the Eastern bloc, in reality, a massive debt burden was being heaped onto a national economy which was unable to sustain it in the longer term.[129] The relative political and civic freedoms allowed under the Gierek regime, furthermore, fostered the growth of a better organised and ideologically distinct opposition, in the form of KOR and ROPCiO in 1976, both of which were to play significant roles in the forthcoming crisis of 1980 and thus for the contorted development of PZPR discourses thereafter.

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[128]Bernhard, M.H., (1993), op cit, p.202

[129]Slay, B., (1994)

3.2. *1981-88*

The post-December 1981 (the imposition of martial law) model of PZPR legitimation was characterised by an intensification of the existing pattern of bifurcated discourses. On one hand, there was a reaffirmation of ideological discourses, a return to *traditional* types of legitimation, which were clearly designed to assuage the Soviet Union and reaffirm intra-Party-State commitments to retaining power. On the other hand, there was a more pronounced emphasis on *legal-rational*, eudaemonic and social contractual elements within discourses aimed at society.

The legitimational function of Marxism-Leninism discourses for the PZPR after 1981 was largely one of placating the USSR - while exploiting fear of the USSR in Polish society - to reimpose its domestic policies and reinforce intra-Party and State socialisation and control. By stressing the centrality of *'historical materialism'* (including the leading role of the Communist Party and democratic centralism), powerful and punitive sanctions could be brought to bear on non-adherents ('outsiders'). This discourse stressed a set of core political principles concerning, for example, the relationship between parties and the State and the possibilities for public discourse in most spheres of civic and public life.

This separation of *'operative'* legitimational discourses and *'doctrinal'* Marxism-Leninism and the specific usage of each to legitimate aspects of system, Party and regime led to a peculiar situation. Official ideology was transformed into a kind of verbal ritual,[130] serving partly the function of self-legitimation of the regime and partly the repressive function of

monopolisation of 'public discourse.' Ideology, thus conceived, became, as Pakulski observed, a series of:

> "*Ritual messages and signals meant to be only formally respected. One is not expected to believe in the correctness of the contents of ideological postulates, but simply to respect them outwardly.*" [131]

In public, doctrinal references were rare, in private they signalled loyalty. Marxism Leninism became a form of "*political ideological hermeneutics practised by specialists.*"[132] Marxism-Leninism provided the more hard-line elements within the Party with a definite rationale for a particular type of rule. As Buchowski[133] argues, at PZPR Plenary sessions of the Central Committee goals to be fulfilled were postulated, based on the assumption that the previously postulated goals had been met, without any authentic evaluation of whether or not they had. Reality, he suggests, was thus constructed via the "*means of the power of words.*"[134] Marxism-Leninism thus committed its adherents to specific types of public behaviour by defining boundaries to acceptable action. Its use, as Schopflin argues,[135] also had a simple censorship function. It kept unsanctioned ideas away from public debate and prevented the expression of alternatives. That, in turn, he suggests, played a central

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[130]Brunner, G., 'Legitimacy Doctrines and Legitimation Procedures in East European Systems', (Rigby, T.H., et al. (Eds.) 1982 op cit.)

[131]Pakulski, J., 'Poland: Ideology, Legitimacy and Political Domination,' (Abercrombie, N., et al. 1990, p.39). Pakulski identified three important elements to the doctrine: references to the logic of history, the Leninist principle of democratic centralism and the notion of the unity of the Socialist camp. A strong reaffirmation of Marxism-Leninism is found in the declarations of the Central Committee in 1984: 'O co walczymy, dokąd zmierzamy: Deklaracja Ideowo-programowo komitetu centralnego' (What we are fighting for, where are we heading: Ideological-Programmatic declarations of the Central Committee, *Trybuna Ludu*, 21st March 1984.

[132]Pakulski, J., (Abercrombie, N. Et al. 1990,) Ibid., p.39

[133]Buchowski, M., (1992), p.13

[134]Buchowski, M., (1992) Ibid. p.37

[135]Schopflin, G., (1993)

political role in the legitimation process by reducing and/or marginalising potential opposition in society and reinforcing the power of the central command structures. Ideology thus acted in Communist Poland to "*disseminate the belief in the inevitability of Communism and to persuade people to accept its irreversibility.*"[136]

There is little doubt, however, that there remained very little normative commitment within the PZPR itself after 1981 to the principles of the dominant ideology.[137] The PZPR retained its position simply because it was the only party acceptable to the USSR. Shorn of revolutionary legitimacy, lacking genuine contacts and sympathies within the working class or elsewhere in society, lacking popular support, embedded in its structurally defined 'leading role' and underwritten by the dual presence of a Soviet threat and internal military forces, it simply existed because there was no real alternative. In the place of overt discursive references of a Marxist-Leninist character directly in relation to society, the Jaruzelski 'pragmatic centre' located the Party within a discourse of *'better the devil you know'*[138] (Soviet covert references), nationalism and eudaemonism (specific production targets, for example). In the absence of a legally autonomous civil sphere within society and without the political and institutional structures to bridge the gap that existed between the dominant ideological claims of the Communist elite and the social reality it was obliged to confront, the Party attached itself to a mono-organisational type of strategy of control and tinkered with various reform discourses. Instead of *'revolutionary'* legitimacy, there emerged

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[136]Kołakowski, L., (1968) op cit. pp.50-62

[137]Czarzasty, M., Gieorgica, J.P., Gilejko, L., and Nowacki, G., 'Partia-Reforma-Rzeczywistość' (The Party-Reform-Reality), (Hausner, J., & Klementewicz, T., 1992 op cit. pp.75-85).

'State-nationalism,' which, in effect, reduced the teleological aspects of the ideology to the profane level: everything the Party did, by definition, was in the interests of both the working class and the nation, since the Party embodied both. The PZPR's refusal to sanction even official usage of the word 'opposition,' for example, throughout the 1980's and its commitments to maintaining the pretence that none existed (and by implication that none needed to exist) marked the central plank of its wider legitimational strategy. Existing structures, both within the State and at local and enterprise levels would be able to express and incorporate any aspirations and discontent arising from specific policies. Everything the PZPR did, however, had to be processed through the existing discourse, although the discourse was, with ever greater regularity, ceasing to correspond to real operations and policies.

The emergence of the Solidarity trade union in Gdańsk in 1980, as an alliance between KOR intellectuals, figures from the Catholic Church and trade union activists put the political feasibility of this discursive balancing act to the test. The PZPR retreated during the summer of 1980 on Solidarity's so-called "*21 Gdańsk demands.*"[139] It underwent conversion, not only at a cosmetic level, to greater openness in the media and internal Party democracy. It recognised the right of self-organised, independent trade unions to exist, that the social legitimacy of the Party itself rested, at least to a certain extent, upon the acquiescence and support of society - and implicitly therefore - that centralism and one-party rule were neither historically inevitable nor politically indispensable.

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[138]Gerrits, A., (1990), op cit, p.163

[139]Torańska, T., (1989); op cit; Kemp-Welch, D., (1991) op cit. The demands included, most importantly, a reduction in the role of the PZPR at the workplace and the right of self-organised trade unions to exist.

Between mid 1980 and the end of 1981 it appeared that the PZPR would be able to transform itself, its position within the Communist system and continue a process of political and economic reform of the Communist system without either a Soviet intervention or a conservative counter-reaction within the State. During the 16 months between the upsurge in trade union activity in Gdańsk in August 1980 and the imposition of martial law on 13th December 1981, the notion of *'horizontalism'* (the notion that decisions could be made at the grass-roots level, i.e. workers' self-management)[140] entered official Party discourse at various levels, undermining the Leninist principle of the leading role of the party. *'Horizontalism'* compromised the established ideological notion that the Communist Party would remain dominant at all levels of the State and in society. It implied that non-Party agents could operate legally within the sphere of a 'civil society' (a notion in itself that was neither fully explained nor publicly sanctioned officially). The Party's role in the State and the powers of the State in all areas of civil and economic life would have been reduced beyond a point where the term *'Communist Party'* would have had any meaning, however.

Many reformers within the PZPR, such as Fiszbach in Gdansk, saw in the Solidarity movement a means of radicalising the stagnant socialist structures of power and introducing a new model of democratic accountability into socialism.[141] However, the weakness of the reformist sections of the PZPR, combined with the relative solidity of the security

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[140] Millard, F., (1994b). Horizontalism, Millard argues, was a tool of self-management and grass-roots participation and a response to the PZPR's new 'democratisation;' horizontalism itself refers to the creation of direct, unmediated sideways links between primary party organisations (POPs) and was designed to check the power of the apparat, with its exclusively vertical, hierarchical linkages.

[141] Włodka, Z. (1992)

forces and military, buttressed by Soviet support, undercut any nascent reformist agenda.[142] During 1981 the military wings of the State apparatus manoeuvred to marginalise centres of reformism within the Party and prepared for a return to a more concerted and hard-line model of political authority.[143] In December 1981, following the dismissal of PZPR First Secretary Kania and the ascension of General Jaruzelski to office of First Secretary, the conservative counter-attack manifested itself in the imposition of a state of martial law. Reformers within the Party were demoted or sacked, Party membership was purged at all levels[144] and key figures within the Solidarity opposition movement were interned and their demands ignored. A new centre of military power within the State (attached via KOK[145] to the PZPR elite) rapidly consolidated its political power base within the Party. Its agenda was clear: to re-impose the authority of the State in society and that of the Party within the State. Above all, its aim was to reassert (or be seen to reassert) the power of the dominant ideological discourses of Marxism-Leninism. Thus what one sees is a pronounced rejection of the various *'horizontalist'* discourses that had marked 1980-81 and a return to a harder ideological language.

Between 1982 and 1986, however, the PZPR embarked on a policy of selective reforms of the political system, constitution and an economic reform programme designed to introduce limited marketisation into the Polish economy (so-called *odnowa*: "renewal"[146]). What emerged during

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[142]Sanford, G., (1983) op cit.

[143]Backer, R., (1990)

[144]Kolańkiewicz, G., (1981a) and Sanford, G., (1984) op cit.

[145]Sanford, G., 'Poland: Communism's weakest link-democratic capitalism's greatest challenge,' (Pridham, G., et al. (Eds.), 1994 op cit.)

[146] *Odnowa* ("renewal") was adopted in 1982 by the PZPR elite. It emphasised the need for reform within socialism, in particular market-type reforms, with some limited constitutional liberalisation.

the 1980's was thus a curious mixture of the re imposition of a top-down (*'vertical'*) model of political decision-making and a set of discourses that were ostensibly located within a legal-rational sphere and which overlapped in style and content with many of the original Gdańsk discourses of the Solidarity movement.

The Party elite, in this context, did nothing more than fall back on the legitimational strategy that had marked all PZPR discourse from 1948 - a selective dichotomisation of political discourse between *traditional* ideological references for Party-State and Soviet consumption and eudaemonic, combined with national discourses for societal consumption. In the absence of any real alternative, the Party's internal discourses were marked, increasingly by a reversion to a narrower language of conservative, dogmatic ideology. The PZPR defined itself in relation to society in a paternalistic, nationalistic way, arguing that it represented the only possible alternative to Soviet intervention or social anarchy and would not recognise that Solidarity existed.

> "*In the history of Poland it has been necessary more than once not to choose between the good and the evil, but between a greater and a lesser evil. We have made this choice.*"[147]

The position of the Party within Polish society was thus both extremely weak (lacking popular support[148]) and extremely strong (its position could not be challenged by virtue of the strong-arm role of the military). The Party elite around Jaruzelski was clearly committed to some form of

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[147]Jaruzelski, (1983) p.40

[148]Kolańkiewicz, G., (1981) op cit; Lewis, P., (1988); Sadowski, Z., (1991) op cit.

legalistic and democratic reform (within socialism), particularly after 1986's 10th PZPR Central Committee Congress,[149] at which the broad outlines of *odnowa* were re-emphasised, but it could not achieve this since any movement towards it weakened its position both in relation to the Soviet Union and - paradoxically - Polish society.[150] What it was committed to delivering in its discourses in relation to society it was largely unable to achieve by virtue of its political commitments to a type of external security arrangement and domestic administrative model that inhibited any impulses towards making possible such commitments. Behind the dominant ideological discourses one can discern a pattern of schisms and cleavages within the Polish Communist elite, between hard-liners and reformers. Reformers tended to be located within academic milieux connected to the Party and most notably supported by academic empirical sociology. Two examples of this reformism, and their failure to become adopted by the Politburo, illustrate the parameters of reformist debate within the PZPR during the 1980's.

The Kubiak report was commissioned by Jaruzelski in 1982 to outline the causes of the 1980-1 crisis and offer prognoses for the reform of the political system. It reported a "*socio-economic contradiction originating in mistaken policies of successive leaders and gap between the advanced social consciousness of society and ossified institutions of interest representation.*"[151] The first part, therefore corresponded to the traditional view that specific leadership errors could explain crises within socialism. The second part,

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[149] *Trybuna Ludu*, October 14th 1986: "O zwiększenie efektywnośći gospodowanie i poprawie warunków życia, o pogłębia socjalistycznej demokracji, o umocnienia międzynarodowej pozycji Polski" (On increasing the economic effects and corrections in the conditions of life, deepening socialist democracy and strengthening Poland's international position).

[150] Ost, D., (1990) op cit; Rachwald, W., (1990) op cit. Both Ost and Rachwald argued that there were moments in 1980's when it seemed that some form of corporatism would emerge.

however, (that institutions needed changing to meet societal consciousness), implied that, one, an autonomous societal consciousness existed, and two, that the institutions of the State needed to meet it, rather than vice versa.

Another reformist strand within the PZPR centred around the so-called DiP (experience and the Future) group.[152] Sociologist, Sławomir Wiatr, a member of the group, wrote extensively of the alienation of government and an opposition between government and governed, which could only be overcome by a limited opening of the political process to social groups other than the Party. He thus recognised a distinction between the State and civil society. Marxism, he argued, was about the end of the State not its reification. State administration was the antithesis of rationality and society had to have mechanisms to stop the State "*running amok*."[153] Trade unions, professional associations and religious institutions, for example - "*a contemporary Socialist civil society*"[154] - needed to be able to organise their own affairs. Wiatr referred to the Gramscian notion of hegemony and the autonomy of civil society as a break on bureaucratisation. Both Wiatr's and Kubiak's prescriptions were selectively ignored throughout the 1980's, although several notions, in particular that of a 'socialist civil society,' and 'socialist constitutionalism' were key features of the *odnowa* discourse.

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[151]Łabędz, L., (1982) and Celt, E., (1984)

[152]DiP (Doświadczenia i Przyszłość), 1978, ('Experience and the Future', Discussion group) found in, Armonk, T., (1981)

[153]Wiatr, S., (1985), p.52

[154]Wiatr, S., (1985). Ibid. p. 53

3.3. *Discursive contenders within the PZPR, 1982-89*

3.3.i. *Inner community ('*pragmatic centre'*)*

The highest elite within the PZPR was composed of a combination of military and civilian individuals and groups closely tied to or part of the core of Party and State executive bodies, principally located in KOK (the National Defence Committee), the Politburo and First Secretary of the PZPR (after 1981, General Jaruzelski). It is referred to throughout this work as the *'pragmatic centre,'* for reasons elaborated below. At the next level within the hierarchy sat the PZPR's Central Committee and the Central Committee's Secretariat, with both the executive (the Council of Ministers and the government) and the legislative branches of government remained largely subservient to decisions emanating from them.

This so-called *'pragmatic centre'* was pragmatic in the sense that its decisions were made and implemented often without agreement from all the branches of the State. The PZPR elite, in effect, used the State apparatus to implement any decisions it had arrived at, without parliamentary or often even executive approval. Pragmatism thus defined the lack of legal-rational rules and procedures and the absence of a rule-based code independent of the leading party. The relative balance of power within the highest echelons of the Party was ambiguously shared between various overt, semi-overt and covert groupings and bodies within the Communist elite networks. Constitutionally, the powers and autonomy of the State - as opposed to those of the PZPR - were enhanced during the 1980's, with, for example the setting up of a Constitutional Tribunal, Parliamentary Ombudsman, and various

parliamentary commissions. However, the power to appoint and dismiss government figures, the powers related to initiation and control over decision-making and the control over all appointments remained the prerogative of key figures within KOK, a body without a clearly or openly defined relationship to the PZPR.

3.3.ii. *Reformers versus hard-liners*

Reformers within the elite did not play a decisive role in the PZPR's core decision-making centres after 1981 and did not re-emerge (many having left the Party altogether in 1980-81) until 1988. Hard-line factions co-opted various reform proposals into the official discourse of *'odnowa,'* but failed to loosen the grip of military and industrial interests within the elite.

3.3.iii. *Reformism within the PZPR*

The reformist bloc within the PZPR which emerged in 1988-89 was split between two main groups, here categorised for the sake of convenience as *Globalist* and *Populist.*[155] Both emerged publicly at the Party's 10th Plenum in December 1988, January 1989. They articulated two competing diagnoses and prognoses for the situation in which *State Socialism* found itself in 1988. *Globalists* are named such because they tended to locate the causes of the Polish crisis in global economic and political terms. The Polish crisis was a product of structural problems of economic management and lack of participatory democracy. Any solution would have to increase the role and powers of a government

[155]Staniszkis, J., (1991) The terms *Globalist* and *Populist* are borrowed here directly from Staniszkis's work. They are convenient ideal-types for the two main stools within the PZPR reformist wings, although other labels could quite as easily have been applied.

endowed with greater autonomy from the PZPR, thus reducing the Party's role to that of 'guidance.' They envisaged a thorough liberalisation of the political system and the legalisation of an independent opposition. For this reason, many were vociferous in their support for the *round table*. *Populists* tended to stress the contingent failures of socialism in a combination of specific leadership faults or mistakes and temporary economic weaknesses. The relationship between these two groups and their joint struggle with the more conservative bureaucratic groups within the Party and State defined the main lines of debate within the PZPR during the period 1988-90. Both began to consolidate their positions within the Politburo after the promotion of Rakowski to Prime Minister in October 1988.

3.3.iii.a. *'Globalism'*

A section of the PZPR located around its Sejm Club of Deputies, in the Ministry of Foreign Trade and within the Politburo articulated a reformist line within the PZPR leading up to, during and after the 10th Plenum. At the Party's 3rd All-National Theoretical Conference in February 1989, the most fully developed version of the line is found. The PZPR, they proposed, must seek to distance itself from the State and redefine the legal basis of non-Party participation in State structures, in particular in the Sejm. Above all, *Globalists* argued that the PZPR itself must seek new sources of political legitimation, defined by a new type of democratic relationship with society. They stressed the need to integrate openly contested democratic elections into socialism.

Globalists argued that traditional forms of legitimation had become exhausted. They proposed a new set of legal guarantees between State

and society. The basic features of socialism would be given up (leading role and collective ownership) in order to accomplish this task. The segment of the Party committed to this view tended to be associated with various professional milieux (in the fields of foreign trade policy, counter intelligence and various scientific institutions). The faction had weaker links than others within the Party at the grass-roots level and within the Communist State. *Globalists* also proposed the withdrawal of the PZPR from the enterprise level and the establishment of two parties of the left - one 'reformist,' the other 'revolutionary.'

3.3.iii.b. *'Populism'*

Populist reformism recognised the need to engage in some form of negotiated agreement with Solidarity, but saw this as temporary and contingent upon the needs of the PZPR. *Populism* found strong centres of support within the All-National Trade Union (OPZZ) leadership. *Populists* tended to pay more attention than *Globalists* to leadership crises and domestic constraints imposed by the 'leading role' principle. They treated political reforms as independent of genuine power-sharing with non-Party actors and regarded privatisation as a temporary manoeuvre that would allow socialism to renew itself. They emphasised the need for a reformed Communist Party, but one that retained its class roots at the enterprise level.

3.3.iii.c. The *'Auxiliary'* community

Within the wider Party-State apparatus, the PZPR's two coalition parties in parliament, ZSL (Peasant Party) and SD (Democratic Party) provided a democratic veneer to the non-democratic decision-making process. While apparently autonomous and active in parliament, their real influence and autonomy was, at best, negligible. The auxiliary community (or 'supporting elite') was made up of those groups either at lower levels within the State structures or on the fringes of the existing power apparatus of the Party and the State: government ministries, the bureaucracy of the State and OPZZ.

An assortment of associations and organisations in society attached to the Party, as well as local PZPR units (POPs) constitute what may be referred to as a 'wider PZPR community.' This group was made up of anything between two to three million people, depending on the criteria used. The Party provided many with 'positions.' Compliance and support for the elite, however, as 1989 illustrated, was heavily contingent on concrete benefits.

4. *Methodology*

This section outlines the methods used to analyse PZPR discourse between 1988 and 1990. Discourses are broken up along selected sets of binary opposites and each element is treated as a sign with a specific legitimational function. This section explains how the three selected discourses discussed in the previous sections are evaluated and analysed.

Key PZPR texts are outlined and analysed on the basis of their specific wording, their prioritisation and stress on key themes. Between June 1988 and January 1990 ten Central Committee plenary sessions, one Ideological Conference, one National Delegates Conference and other, lower level, expressions of the Party elite's discourse took place, most of which have been accessible to the interested (if also the determined) researcher. The Party's official newspaper, *Trybuna Ludu* and its monthly journal, *Nowe Drogi*, represent the key sources related to PZPR discourse and analysis of them acts as the central empirical basis of the thesis.

A more variegated methodology, combining interviews with participants and other non-explicitly discursive spheres - an attempt to build a wider picture of discourse/intentions/outcomes - is eschewed for both practical and epistemological reasons. Practical reasons are related to the absence of or unwillingness of many within the old PZPR to talk about the period, combined with a lack of detailed material related to internal Party motivation and decision-making. Epistemological reasons are to do with the specific theoretical problematic at hand, specifically the role of discourses in defining political identity, community and action.

A ideal-type approach to discourses is useful in this case study in that it provides benchmarks against which historically definable changes in discourse can be evaluated over time. Each chapter is constructed as a definite stage in the process of a transforming type of political legitimational. The period between 1988 and January 1990 is broken down into four stages whose apparently arbitrary chronological parameters have been selected as a method of outlining and explaining the important historical pattern of continuity within the transformation.

The first, June to December 1988, illustrates the weakness of the traditional discourses of legitimation. It shows how qualitatively new discourses were emerging within the gaps vacated by the withdrawal of traditional discourse. It focuses on the ways in which the discourses of compromise, democratic legitimation, Westernism and markets opened up divisions within the Party-State bloc that defined the PZPR elite's power base and how, albeit temporarily, the Party, after October, reverted to a traditional discourse with the aim of stemming these divisions. The second, December 1988 to January 1989, illustrates the pattern of internal Party-State legitimation. The revision of traditional discourses at the 10th Plenum both laid the ground for a *round table* set of talks and manoeuvred the PZPR elite away from its overt commitments to its internal ideological community. The third illustrates how the PZPR sought to sustain its increasingly fragile position within the State during and after the *round table* talks. The key switch from doctrinal to operative discourse is discernible during this phase. The fourth, from August 1989 to January 1990 illustrates a process of consolidation. The PZPR integrated many aspects of the operative sphere into its central discourses.

5. *Sources and non-sources*

Primary material related to Solidarity and the Church is numerous in English and Polish in both the Anglo-Saxon world and in Poland. Key protagonists from the Solidarity-opposition side remain keen to talk and there is much literature related to the post-Communist period and elements of the transitional period (for example, on the *round table* talks), in both Polish and English. However, the core material related to the PZPR's role within the transition process is marked by its absence. Partly this is because of the legal and constitutional limitations on State material, in particular those regulating the release of documents of this type until 30 years after the event, and partly due to the fact that PZPR internal documents and many State documents related to the activity of the PZPR within the State disappeared in or after 1989. Operationalising a methodology thus relies on a combination of using that which is available in print, deductions from this and reflections on actions and/or positions taken analysed in tandem with material from the opposition's and, where possible, Church's sources. However, given the theoretical focus on public discourse, these problems are largely overcome since the question of the motivations of key actors is, at least in significant measure, a product of how discourses were constructed and articulated publicly.

The key material on the discourses of the PZPR come from several key works: Perzkowski's work in the *Tajne Dokumenty* (Secret Documents) series, published in London by Aneks; the official daily newspaper, *Trybuna Ludu* and official monthly journal, *Nowe Drogi* (principally in relation to Central Committee plenary and other sessions), which are

accessible at the London University, School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies' library, *Radio Free Europe* reports, *Uncensored Poland* reports and the *Podstawowe Dokumenty i Materiały* (Basic Documents and material) series of publications published by Książka i Wiedza in Warsaw. Original PZPR documents have proved elusive and attempts to locate their whereabouts has tended to be treated with a combination of amusement and bewilderment, that anyone even contemplates reading such material, paradoxically because it is both so apparently worthless, but also because of its politically delicate and secretive nature.

During a 6-month research field trip in Kraków, at the Jagiellonian University, between 1994-5, most material related to the public discourses of the PZPR was accessed at the university library. Various interviews, most notably with Professors Jan Kubiak at the Sociology faculty of the Jagiellonian University and author of the 1982 'Kubiak Report,' (while a member of the Party Politburo) and Jan Janowski, then head of Kraków's Mining Academy and ex-leader of the Democratic Party, also proved useful in pointing towards potentially interesting and unseen aspects of PZPR discourse. Visits during 1997 and 1998 to the Senate's archives in Warsaw and to Akt Nowych (State archives) also in Warsaw provided some useful background material. Interviews and meetings with Professor Sobociński and Dr. Leszczyńska at the University of Gdańsk and Inka Słodkowska at the Political Science Institute of the University of Warsaw offered some prescriptions for research and facilitated an opening up of the university libraries (something that cannot be taken for granted, for various reasons).

Chapter 3

The Re-emergence of History

May-December 1988

1. *Introduction*

This period began with a series of nation-wide strikes - the first since 1981 - loosely organised by the banned Solidarity trade union as well as the OPZZ[156] - in response to price rises in early 1988. It ended in preparations for the PZPR's Central Committee 10th Plenum at which the political and discursive seeds of a *round table* discussion were firmly established. The period is marked by both a continuation of the key elements of the existing (*traditional*) type of PZPR legitimation, but also by alterations in the three sets of PZPR discourse outlined in the previous chapters. Existing PZPR discourses, within the terms defined by *odnowa*, offered competing possibilities; of more substantive (institutional and legal) reform on one hand and an abandonment of reform on the other. The former sphere marked a return to a more *'Private'* interpretation of socialism (and State-society relations within it), the latter closer to the *'Public'* end of the same civil discursive continuum. The latter, however, had no concrete forms of application. This inherent conflict within the existing, *odnowa*, discourse, between established ideological discourses on one side and the reality of attempting to implement ideology in practise on the other, became increasingly acute as

156 Many of the strikes were not directly organised by either Solidarity or the OPZZ, but by a new generation of strikers (many of whom had no experience of the 1980-81 strike period) who never the less demanded Solidarity's relegalisation.

the character of the socio-economic and political crises became clear during 1988.

The PZPR did seek to widen the terms of its legitimational strategy vis-à-vis groups in society, the Church and elements of the Solidarity trade union and intellectual-based opposition, both in response to the immediate and longer-term failures of the existing form of legitimation. Its failure to construct a workable concept of a *'constructive opposition'* (one that pleased the mutually exclusive interests of both 'inner' (OPZZ) and 'outer' (Solidarity) interests, however, led to a re-submersion of this term and a return to a familiar pattern of eudaemonic and traditional (*'Private'*) discourses. At the same time, the emergence at key levels in the official and Party discourse of re-emphasised historical discourses signified an attempt to fill the gap in various non-traditional ways, by repositioning the PZPR within Polish national and socialist history. Although at this stage this revision of history was fragmented and at a low level of official articulation, it represents an initial acknowledgement that some form of new national discourse (in the absence of national dialogue) was necessary and that the situation had changed with regards the use of force. Added to this one sees a discursive re-emphasis of more *'Western'* signifiers. In particular, after the reversal of a *'Public'* discourse, a more openly *'Western'* (markets as 'goal-oriented' - rather than as an end in themselves) type of economic discourse became discernible and a shift (although still within *Perestroika*) towards a less internationalist (read Soviet-type) form of socialism, signifying a move away from traditional *'Eastern'* signifiers.

2. *Public Vs Private*

From late 1987 the pragmatic centre of the PZPR elite, centred around General Jaruzelski, began - both in private and in various public discursive references - to accept that in order to reinvigorate the national economy, a different type of political legitimation was necessary.[157] This was most clearly seen in the letter drafted by key figures within the higher echelons of the Party, including Urban, Pożoga and Ciosek, which suggested that a series of constitutional reforms would be necessary to augment and underpin the so-called 'second stage' economic reforms then being undertaken by the Messner government. A fragment of the letter read:

> "*The situation is worse than at any time since 13th December* 1981 (the declaration of martial law). *This has been made worse by the increased expectations of society, sparked by the 'Gorbachev effect,' a reduced fear of the Soviet Union and impatient youth who have no experience of the first Solidarity. We propose a referendum on the presidency, free elections to the council of ministers and the creation of a second parliamentary chamber (a senate).*"[158]

The Messner government - backed by Jaruzelski - was tied inextricably to the 'second stage' economic reforms, however and chose not to adopt this political route, refocusing instead on a purely economic solution. It was not until May 1988 that any overtly political reasoning entered Party discourse. The need to redefine the State and its relations with society (as

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[157]Perzkowski, S., (1994) op cit., pp.51-3. These 'private' intentions are, of course, notoriously problematic to evaluate on an epistemological level. However, it is clear from the minutes of several Politburo meetings that Jaruzelski and others were clearly beginning to alter their thinking as regards a solution to the strikes and to search for a conceptual framework within *odnowa* that would extend the terms of participation of society within State decision-making structures.

a prerequisite of successful economic reform) was made obvious by the re-catalysation of the Solidarity-Church alliance during strikes in February-April 1988[159] and the unavoidable weaknesses of the Messner administration in implementing economic reform without any political changes. These marked the first stage in the process of a changing Party conception and discursive representation of '*opposition.*' Without any effective open methods for mediating between the State and society (other than via the official union, OPZZ, which lacked widespread popular support due its perceived sycophancy in the face of the authorities) industrial discontent sparked by the Messner government's decision to raise selected prices in February,[160] was channelled into strike action, at first spontaneous and sporadic and later co-ordinated nation-wide by Solidarity activists. The strikers' original demands for a rescindication of the price rises were combined with demands for the re-legalisation of Solidarity and the reinstatement of all workers sacked for belonging to Solidarity or engaging in trade union activity since 1981. Adding to the weakness of the government at this stage was the fact that both the official union, OPZZ, as well as Solidarity, supported the pay claims of the strikers. The OPZZ leader Miodowicz told *Trybuna Ludu* in early March:

158*Radio Free Europe, Progress Report*, November 27th, 1987

159Perzkowski, S., (1994) Ibid. pp.13-27 'Chronologia strajków.' (A chronology of the strikes); Rakowski, M.R., (1992), pp.109-110; Kamiński, B., (1991) op cit. p. 87. Kamiński notes that the first strike-wave of 1988 was organised by only 5 enterprises where a so-called "Inter-Enterprise Strike Committee" (MZKS) was active, as compared to 1980, when over 700 were active.

160Slay, B., (1994) op cit. pp.69-71: The Messner government decided to phase in 110% increases in food prices over three years and increases of 140-200% in rent, heating and fuel costs. The official trade union, OPZZ, led by Alfred Miodowicz, as well as the bulk of Solidarity leaders, demanded pay rises as compensation for the price increases of 6,000 rather than 1,670 zlotys as offered. 167 factories nationally went on strike in the weeks that followed. See also *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, 15th February 1988.

"We have no choice. What is harmful to workers is harmful to socialism and therefore harmful to the Party. If we don't come out in sympathy we will lose face and any connection with the workers. Is that what they want?"[161]

Despite the role being played by the OPZZ, however, a rapidly re-forming set of local and skeletal nationwide Solidarity structures acquired a leadership presence in all but two of the striking enterprises, readily tapping the deep-seated anti-Communist sentiment within Polish society. The Gdańsk strike committee, the organisational heart of the nation-wide strike action and symbolic centre of anti-Communist resistance since 1980, outlined in a simple communiqué published in the daily newspaper, *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, its motives and demands, reflecting the position it clearly ascribed to itself as the bearer and representative of the nation:

"This is the second 'Sierpień' (August 1980). *The gates are again decorated with the figure of 'Our virgin Mary' and a portrait of Our Pope. We ask for nothing more and nothing less than the legalisation of Solidarity. Only then can other issues be resolved."*[162]

It was becoming increasingly clear that the PZPR's existing strategy of *odnowa* was not able - within the limits set by its terms of 'opposition' and 'legality' - to achieve the economic aims set out under the terms of the second stage of its economic reform strategy. The rapidity with which unofficial (Solidarity-led) strike committees were set up and spread during February and March certainly caught both the Politburo and the

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[161] *Trybuna Ludu*, March 7th 1988

[162] *Tygodnik Mazowsze* April 11th 1988

Messner government by surprise.[163] Neither had a pre-prepared plan and in the vacuum that appeared between the formal ideological discourses of *odnowa* and the reality of implementing it, the Party was obliged to use whatever socio-political instruments were at its disposal in the short term. Having tried and failed to negotiate directly with selected strike committees on purely economic grounds (Messner did in fact annul the price rises), the pragmatic centre within the Politburo invited representatives of the Church to mediate in talks between the two sides, representatives of the government and of individual (Solidarity) strike committees in Gdańsk. Church officials, priests Orszulik and Dąbrowski, and members of the original lay Catholic intelligentsia wing of Solidarity, Mazowiecki and Stelmachowski, in this way, became mediators between representatives of the PZPR, Sekuła and Czyrek, and representatives, including Wałęsa, of one significant centre of strike action.

The Catholic Church thus acquired a central role in the Party elite's search for new methods of dealing with the industrial unrest that had arisen during early 1988. It provided the Party with a means of talking to and negotiating with the strikers. It offered a space within which the two sides could communicate. As Kamiński suggests, "*the Church provided the only channel through which the government could influence the activities of the opposition. It was only through the Church that any views could be discussed with the authorities. Thus the Church became an institutional platform for quasi-pluralism.*"[164] In return for Church mediation, the Party began to re-appraise its traditional antipathies and discursive marginalisation of Catholicism within its official discourse and made clear signals that it was prepared to

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[163]Perzkowski, S., (1994) op cit. p.46

open up a new relationship with the Catholic hierarchy in Poland. This was clearly illustrated in the series of articles in *Trybuna Ludu*[165] marking Primate Glemp's visit to Russia and found further expression also at the PZPR Central Committee's 7th Plenum, held between the 13th and 14th June, where Jaruzelski made an explicit connection between a more liberal attitude toward the Church and an end to industrial unrest.

> *"The needs are clear. What society demands we can give, but only by working closely in tune with the Catholic Church...Catholicism in Poland has deep and profound roots, which we cannot ignore."*[166]

At this early stage, however, the Party was seeking any mechanism that it could use to stop the spread of the strikes. Czyrek's May article in *Trybuna Ludu* illustrates the emerging role within PZPR discourse being played by the Church. Authentic *'Public'* discourses - to do with a forum for wider political and legal discussion with an opposition and changes to the political structures - however, remained discursively marginal at this stage:

> *"We do not accept trade union pluralism in such an understanding. We will not accept the creation of opposition parties. In relation to the Church we want, however, a full and constructive dialogue. An important element was the visit of (Cardinal) Glemp to the USSR. The Church will, of course, not give up its influence in Poland. Experience tells us that the worst results arise when we try to fight the Church in a primitive way."*[167]

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[164] Kamiński, B., (1992) op cit p.123

[165] *Trybuna Ludu* May 23rd 1988

[166] *Trybuna Ludu*, June 15th 1988

[167] *Trybuna Ludu* June 15th 1988. Ibid.

A series of reconciliatory gestures made by the Polish government towards the Vatican after the ending of the strikes in May further underlined the Party's commitments to redefining the role of the Church in Polish society and it's own discursive construction of Catholicism. The Church could, it was hoped, be used as a device for illustrating the capacity of *odnowa* legitimation to meet society's needs and expectations. It would act, in this way, as a substitute for more authentic *'Public'* discourses and actions. Archbishop Francesco Colasuonno (Papal Nuncio for special assignments and head of the Vatican Team for Working Contacts with Poland) met General Jaruzelski following the 7th Plenum with a view to re-establishing diplomatic relations between Poland and the Vatican. At the same time, the government made no effort to restrict Cardinal Glemp's visit to Russia on June 1st to celebrate a thousand years of Russian Orthodox Christianity. Meetings between Politburo member, Sądowski, and Cardinal Glemp in May (about the strikes) and a meeting between Jaruzelski and Glemp in October represent the clearest indication that the Party was altering its ambiguous indifference with regards the Church. Church officials, Dąbrowski as well as leading lay Catholic intellectuals, grouped in KIK (Stelmachowski, amongst others), who were *"invited"* to mediate during the first strike wave, would not sanction any deal without Solidarity, however. Thus the political stalemate continued. The PZPR's discourses remained tightly defined by an inner commitment to ideological signifiers, while *'Public'* solutions could be sanctioned, at this stage, only within a very slightly loosened version of *odnowa.*

In the weeks between the uneasy resolution of the first strike wave and the Central Committee's 7th Plenum in June, both the Politburo and

Messner government accelerated their discursive stress on the *odnowa* principles of *'socialist democracy'* and *'socialist pluralism.'* The struggle, between the PZPR, its own interpellated community and Solidarity, to control the naming of the dialogue that was to take place throughout the rest of the period 1988-90 had begun. As far as the PZPR was concerned, *'socialism,'* as the following interview with Czyrek in *Trybuna Ludu* on 30th June illustrates, was to remain the language within which this dialogue was to take place:

> "*What we are seeking to do is to create a Polish, humane and democratic model of socialism. I say Polish because it should take account of the pluralistic nature of Polish society, its long standing tradition in Poland. I say humane because man and his inner richness, man as the supreme value, has already been the central point of our work. I say democratic because in firmly rejecting the centralised command system as a relic of Stalinism, we have recognised self-management in its broadest sense as the heart of the idea of people's democracy. We do not approve of the rules of bourgeois pluralism with its elements of confrontation and contest. Our line is that of dialogue and national conciliation. This offers an extensive opportunity for all social groups which recognise and are deeply concerned about the well-being of the nation and strength of the state.*"[168]

At this stage it was not clear the extent to which the Party's commitment to a discourse of pluralism would be extended to action. How would pluralism manifest itself in relations between government and strikers and government and Solidarity, for example? Nevertheless the discourse of pluralism, that had been a feature of the *odnowa* rhetoric from 1986 onwards, began to correspond to real actions in a way that it had not

done before. Not since 1981 had the PZPR been faced with open societal resistance of any overt kind. Its strategy of *odnowa* was premised on the understanding that existing institutional channels of interest bargaining would provide the elite with a means of resolving conflicts at the workplace. *Odnowa* had not, however, been tested in practise - in relation to a self-organised society - and it remained unclear whether or not it had either the terms of reference to define if not also to facilitate the construction of genuine and autonomous channels of negotiation. The debate during May and June within the official (that is Party controlled) press and within the Politburo of the PZPR centred around the precise definition of *'socialist-pluralism.'* June's edition of *Nowe Drogi*, for example, was exclusively devoted to defining what this meant in practise. Politburo member, Klimczak, argued:

"The word pluralism is not synonymous with anti-socialism. It is not, however, an idea that has the same meaning in theory as it may have in practise. The debate goes on. We must, in order to deepen the odnowa reforms, recognise pluralism as a vital Marxist concept. It plays a key role in fulfilling the basic Marxist concept of meeting the needs (both material and spiritual) of society. It is not a panacea for all pain, but a means of moving towards real socialism. On the terrain of socialism, society is learning the art of dialogue and co-operation."[169]

The debate was conducted via academic journals, between leading Party and opposition academics. The notion of a *'constructive opposition'* entered the operative discourse of the Party in the May issue of *Konfrontacja.* Gulczyński referred to the opposition as:

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[168]*Trybuna Ludu*, June 30th 1988

[169]*Nowe Drogi*, June 1988

"as an objective fact....experience tells us that the opposition accepts the framework of the constitution and the best solution is its legalisation."[170]

Czyrek called in the same issue for a *"pro-reformatory coalition of forces."* At the 7th Plenum Jaruzelski subsequently adopted this term. The task of defining and constructing this concept in practise fell within the Politburo on minister of the interior, General Kiszczak, who was "*invited*" by General Jaruzelski to "*seek a broadening of the reformatory forces in society.*"[171] A key Solidarity figure, Geremek, had called, in the same issue of *Konfrontacja*, for an *"anti-crisis pact."* This idea had in fact arisen earlier, Geremek stating the case for it following the referendum on economic reform in December 1987.[172] Such a "pact" implied, however, both that the situation was critical (something the Party could or would not accept in public) and that it would be an agreement between equals, both of whom would have equal access to the negotiation process. Quite clearly this was unacceptable language for the ruling Party and the Jaruzelski leadership rejected the semantics (if not much of the actual content of the proposals) out of hand. "*We cannot and we do not accept crisis solutions,*" Jaruzelski told a Party meeting in June.[173] The significance of Geremek's statement, however, lies not solely in the content but in the fact that it was allowed to appear at all. A public debate thus existed in embryonic form and references to *'Solidarity'* were reappearing within PZPR discourses, although at this stage they represented merely a last ditch attempt to calm a volatile industrial situation.

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[170] *Konfrontacja*, May 1988

[171] *Trybuna Ludu* July 1st 1988

[172] Perzkowski, S., (1994) op cit. pp.4-5

The debate, both within the Politburo and between the PZPR and the selected representatives of the Church and lay-Catholic intelligentsia, centred on the precise terminology to be used to define an opposition. Was it to be an *'opposition'* in a formalised and institutionalised sense? Would it have the right to exist as an autonomous legal entity with an authentic political role or was it to be a selected few *'oppositionists'/'opponents'* with limited legal autonomy and no real institutionalised role? The Solidarity side's wording implied a non-institutionalised agreement between government and workers - the government, in a *'pact'* with the workers, would offer re-legalisation of Solidarity in return for an end to strikes. Any political discussions thereafter, Geremek argued, should take the form of a *round table* meeting between *'equal'* partners. The PZPR's notion of 'coalition,' however, implied the limited incorporation of opposition figures (not necessarily from Solidarity) into a broadened national commission of understanding (Consultative Council or PRON). This was not to be in return for the legalisation of Solidarity but in return for an ending of strike action and a promise not to re-engage in strike action for a specified period of time. The term *'re-legalisation'* could not be sanctioned since it implied that Solidarity had existed before - something the PZPR would not recognise. In the period immediately before the 7th Plenum, the notion of a *round table*, one of the negotiating tools used by Kiszczak and Ciosek to bargain an end to the previous strike wave, was discussed in several Politburo meetings and met with conditional acceptance.[174] Wałęsa - set up as a symbolic figurehead - argued Ciosek, could be used to dampen society's

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[173] *Trybuna Ludu* June 13-14 1988

demands and, along with other selected oppositionists, would be allowed to enter a slightly widened legislative elite:

> "*We invite Solidarity people, but not Solidarity...concerning what is best for Poland*".[175]

At the 7th Plenum Jaruzelski initiated the Central Committee debate on the question of legalising an opposition and the notion of setting up a *round table.* He signalled the Politburo's recognition of a worsening of the social situation and demanded a speeding up of the awaited effects of the economic reforms. Jaruzelski told the Plenum that:

> *"The Party is weak. It is not seen as strong but as an irrelevance...Authoritarian, anti-democratic, dictatorial rule is 'sluggish'."*[176]

A wider coalition of 'pro-reformatory forces,' Jaruzelski argued, would *"overcome the fundamental differences between Party and society on basic questions."*[177] Anti-reform reactions within the PZPR were vociferous, however. The notion of a coalition implied a compromise with an opposition and *'opposition'* still evoked wide passions and disagreements within the wider Party-State. This internal opposition was articulated in various speeches at the 7th Plenum and found a keen group of supporters within the Politburo, many of whom were subsequently demoted at the Plenum.[178]

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[174]Perzkowski, S., (1994) op cit. pp.34-49

[175]Dubiński, K., (1990), p.42

[176]Rakowski, M. R., (1992) op cit. p.112

[177]Rakowski, M. R., (1992) Ibid. p.113

[178]Rakowski, M.R., (1992) Ibid. p.114. Wózniak was demoted from the Politburo - for reasons of "ill health" - although, according to Rakowski, he was seen "insufficiently effective." Baka took his place as Economic Secretary. Glowczyk replaced Baryla as Secretary of Information and Propaganda. Mokrzyszek was also demoted, Hupalowski was promoted as head of Highest Court (Prezes Naywyzszej Izby Kontroli), although a

Although a coercive approach to industrial unrest had been broached and rejected within the Politburo in April (*"During the 1980's,"* Rakowski said *"Kiszczak and his service were seen all too often...It is today necessary to reject the option of force."*[179]), the possibility of using force arose in debate during the 7th Plenary session. Gmurka, for example, argued:

> *"In today's Plenum we must clearly say: no to the demolition of our fatherland, no to the lowering of the standards of living of the working class, no to Solidarity. We cannot take the view that the opposition are also patriots who merely think differently to us and that after 7-8 years they have changed.We must take a stronger line."*[180]

Embryonic reformist discourses also emerged at the 7th Plenum, however, although they tended to follow the Jaruzelski line: an opposition could and should be restricted to hand picked, *'constructive'* opponents who would respect the constitutional terms of debate (in other words, within socialism). These people would not represent any formal political entity, would be obliged to *"honour and respect the constitution,"* but would have no real power and their role would be to illustrate, argued Orzechowski, amongst others, the democratic legitimacy of the State.[181] They would also be easily controlled and open to political manipulation. As Wiatr told the Plenum:

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majority of delegates voted against his promotion. Porębski and Ciosek lost Secretariat positions, Orzechowski was effectively promoted, from Minister Foreign affairs to Ideology Secretary.

[179]Rakowski, M.R., (1992) Ibid. p.111

[180]*Trybuna Ludu*, June 13-14th 1988

[181]*Trybuna Ludu* 13-14th June 1988. Ibid.

"Tensions will be milder and easier to prevent in a context of broader consensus than one of continuing divisions and barricades of mistrust and non-communication."[182]

The Party should, Wiatr argued, set up various extra-governmental institutions, widen PRON and create other similar structures, within which to achieve this consensus. It could, according to this view, at the same time, attempt to manoeuvre itself in symbolic terms away from its primary association in the collective perception with *'non-Polish'* or *'Russian'* influences and closer to society - thus being seen more clearly to represent society.

The final resolution of the 7th Plenum located *odnowa* as a defiantly *'Public'* discourse:

"We intend to strengthen the democratic character of our democratic system so as to ensure the fulfilment of the public's expectations."[183]

The use of a notion of 'coalition' marked a tacit acknowledgement of limits on the existing exercise of power. Jaruzelski's final address at the 7th Plenum is also illustrative of the change in the Party's discursive tone:

"Many people do not agree with us in various, often basic questions and the opposition has come to be seen as a patriotic movement...The stereotypical view of the opposition has changed. There is now a need for pluralistic thinking. I call

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182 Wiatr, J. J., (Kamiński, B., 1992 Ibid. p.197)

183 *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, June 30th 1988

for a wide patriotic reform coalition-not as a tactic, but as a part of the overall strategy of the Party."[184]

The Plenum also formally endorsed the *odnowa* discourses, its *"political will to continue socialist odnowa in all areas of public life."*[185] Furthermore, it reaffirmed its support for the Politburo's economic and political policies. Politburo member Czyrek, for example, stated:

"Respect for the political consequences of the diversity of interests, views and orientations in society is central...but the Party will not accept confrontational pluralism, that is the public's independence from official control."[186]

The Central Committee resolutions adopted at the 7th Plenum also aroused sharp anti-reformist sentiments within the wider PZPR, however. During June the OPZZ, which had been vociferous in its condemnation of the Messner government's economic strategy, called openly for a clampdown on the rising tide of *"unofficial"* (read: Solidarity) strikes.

The central dynamic of changing discourses of legitimation, thus, clearly lay in the Party's changing perception, conception and discursive construction of an *'opposition.'* By moving towards a deal with any form of opposition, the Party was obliged to acknowledge that such a thing existed, recognise that it had valid reasons for existing and by implication that it (the Party) was not the sole representative of the working class or society. This is highly significant in that any recognition of alternative

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184 *Trybuna Ludu* 13-14th June 1988. op cit

185 *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, June 30th 1988

186 *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, August 30th 1988

sources or centres of political power represents, within the narrow terms of the dominant ideology of Marxism-Leninism, a shift away from the central canons of *the leading party* and *democratic centralism.* The dialogues that took place between the PZPR and selected members of this opposition began to shift the focus of Party debate towards a less static and dogmatic attachment to existing ideological and historical discourses.

However, before the collapse of the idea of a *round table* in October, the PZPR moved towards establishing closer contacts with the Church and members of Solidarity. In August the decision was made within the higher echelons of the Party to formalise the existing ad-hoc series of dialogues between representatives of the State and society at a so-called *"round table"* set of discussions.[187] Partly this decision was catalysed by a renewal in industrial unrest (a second wave of strikes took place in August). Partly it can be read as a genuine attempt to address the questions raised at the 7th Plenum. Between August 31st and November 9th, discussions took place at a villa owned by the Interior Ministry (MSW) in the suburbs of Warsaw, called *Magdalenka,* between key Party and non-Party representatives.[188] The talks were not widely covered in the official press, nor openly recognised by the Party in any formal or direct way. They were, however, the first (semi-formalised and semi-publicly acknowledged) meetings to take place between Solidarity and the PZPR since 1981. Continuing its cautious acceptance of the need to talk with members of the so-called *'constructive opposition,'* representatives of

[187]Dubiński, K., (1990) op cit. p.20

[188]Dubiński, K., (1990) Ibid. p.7. *"Magdalenka's"* composition (15-16th September, 1988) included on the government side: General Kiszczak, Ciosek, several OPZZ representatives (Krajewski, Matuszewski, Sosnowski and Wiśniewski), Janowski (leader of SD) and on the opposition side: Wałęsa, Stelmachowski, Frasyniuk, L. Kaczyński, Liwak, Mazowiecki, Merkel, Pietrzyk, Radziewicz, Sieńkiewicz;. The Church was represented by Father Orszulik, Dembowski (academic priest).

the Party, led by General Kiszczak, spoke of an *"invitation"* made by the Party to 'constructive' guests and of the talks as *"non-official chats between private citizens."*[189]

The PZPR's discourses of *'opposition'* that were emerging within the PZPR did so both to fulfil internal Party legitimational functions (to retain the interpellatory function of Marxism-Leninism) but also in response to the reality of the opposition as it was actually developing during 1988.[190] The first element, that of the role of the discursive construction rather than the thing itself is significant in terms of the Party's representation of the matrix of threats/opportunities as it sought to strengthen its own position within the Party. It was not, however, necessarily closely related to the reality of the opposition as it was developing. The Solidarity opposition that re-emerged in 1988 was less cohesive, less organised and less idealistic than that which had been crushed in 1981-3.[191] A diverse and often radicalised version of Solidarity had grown up in various extreme groups, for example, the PPS-RD (Polish Socialist Party-Revolutionary) and trade union based radical groups, such as Solidarity '80 and Fighting Solidarity.[192] Within these groups there certainly did exist those who sought violent insurrection against the regime. On the nationalist right, the KPN (Confederation of an Independent Poland), for example, rejected any compromise or even discussion with the PZPR. However, a core of individuals and groups that had developed in the 1970's and been active in the underground

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[189]Dubiński, K,. (1990) Ibid. p.9

[190]Modzelewski, K., (1991) and Balcerowicz, L., (1993)

[191]Holzer and Leski, (1990), pp.159-61. See for example *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, June 1st 1989. Wałęsa was faced with criticism from a more radical opposition within Solidarity, which included "Fighting Solidarity", "Solidarity '80", "KPN". See also Dziadul (1989).

Solidarity structures of the 1980's (such as ROPCiO and KOR), on the ideological moderate left and lay Catholic Christian democrats, such as Stelmachowski and Mazowiecki re-emerged in 1988 to lend their support to the on-going process of negotiation and mediation. Wałęsa, for example, told *Le Monde* in May:

> *"Neither the government nor Solidarity can be winners or losers. What we want is a national resolution to the crisis and we are prepared to relinquish some, though not all, of our 1980-81 demands."*[193]

The Party could, however, as it did during October and November, simply define an opposition within its public discourses as those who sought to overthrow the socialist system. They simply narrowed the definition to exclude individuals or groups they didn't want to negotiate with. Partly this was designed to drive a wedge into existing divisions within Solidarity and partly because many Party leaders were simply apprehensive about engaging in real negotiations with such formidable members of the independent intelligentsia as Michnik and Kuroń, for example. The discourses being used before the collapse of the idea of a *round table* in September did, however, represent something qualitatively new.

The role of the OPZZ and the emergence of an anti-reform alliance within the Party are vital in an understanding of the dynamics of changing PZPR discourse after September 1988. The Party was obliged by Solidarity organised strike action to sanction alterations to its

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[192]Walicki, A., (1991) op cit.

[193]Dubiński, K., (1989) op cit. p.6

traditional discourse, but could not move too far towards institutionalising this alteration (and thus the role of Solidarity and/or other non-Communist trade unions and associations). At the final meeting of the *Magdalenka* teams on 16th August, before the collapse of the idea of a first *round table*, a fierce discussion took place. It found no place in official discourse or within the official press, although its form is illustrative of the emerging struggle between the OPZZ and Solidarity and the key question of Solidarity's (re)legalisation. Jarliński, OPZZ representative spoke of his union's concern for the 'national interest':

> *"Lech, what interests us is the interest of the enterprise and not high politics. I know how "Solidarity" creates divisions within the workforce. It upsets the normalisation process. The OPZZ is open. New structures can be set up, but not in enterprises."*[194]

Pietrzyk, Solidarity's mining representative responded:

> *"Where have you been for the last 7 years, because I haven't seen you at the pit. The miners want pluralism and Solidarity as a guarantee of its interests. As a worker I don't want to be arrested and detained by the Security Police (SB)."*[195]

At the Central Committee's 8th Plenum, held between the 27th and 28th August - and immediately following it - vociferous anti-opposition rhetoric re-appeared within Party discourse at lower levels (outside the Politburo) and following the collapse of the *round table* idea at *Magdalenka* and the dismissal of the Messner government, it became relocated at the centre of the Party's discourses. This internal

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[194]Dubiński, K., (1990) Ibid. pp.26-27

[195]Dubiński, K., (1990) Ibid. p.28

opposition to an 'opposition' can be seen as a central contributive factor in the subsequent decision of General Jaruzelski to sanction a change in government. Messner was obliged to resign and Rakowski, with a mandate to accelerate the existing eudaemonic legitimational strategy became Premier. Rakowski immediately adopted a crudely anti-Solidarity stance, illustrated on 19th October in an Orzechowski article that appeared in *Pravda*:

> *"The initiative remains unalterably in our hands. The Party completely controls the situation. Organised and responsible political forces are controlling the course of events...The Party leadership has defined the limits of compromise...there can be no return to Solidarity in the form and character it had until the imposition of martial law on 13th December 1981."*[196]

The OPZZ and, in particular, its leader, Miodowicz, played a significant role in destabilising and forcing the Messner government to resign in September 1988[197] and in pushing the Party elite away from its fragile discourse of negotiation and trade union reform. In practice this meant the adoption of the principle: one trade union organisation per enterprise and the reduction of discussions at the *round table* to one question: Solidarity's legalisation. PZPR discourse thus reacquired a harder, 'class-drive' edge. *'Class'* references at this time signified a hardening of the traditional discourse of *'Private,'* ideologically based, *'traditional'* legitimation. The so-called *'Secret Letter,'*[198] sent in the aftermath of the 8th Plenum by Jaruzelski to all regional Central Committee delegates,

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196 *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, October 7th 1988

197 *Trybuna Ludu*, August 25th 1988. August 20th OPZZ called for the dissolution of parliament. August 23rd Miodowicz threatened to resign.

198 *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, October 20th 1988

illustrates the way in which this type of discourse was being used by the pragmatic centre to seek to retain unity within its wider interpellated community. A key extract read:

> *"The struggle for the Party's organisational, ideological and political unity is of primary importance. We must defend and strengthen the Party and ensure that Party activists have a clear view of the leadership's intentions. A compromise, a withdrawal is not a matter of goodwill but a function of the balance of power. We are doing all we can to change this balance to our advantage. We are not going to depart from the basic principles of our system: social ownership, the place of the working class, the role of the Communist Party, our international and class alliances, the equality of opportunities and socialist humanism."*[199]

The new premier, Rakowski, also played a decisive role in derailing the first set of *round table* talks which had been planned to take place in mid-October, following on from the preparatory talks at *Magdalenka.* He openly blamed Solidarity for doing so by making unrealistic demands. He refused, for example, to sanction the inclusion of Michnik and Kuroń in any negotiation (the regime's so-called *'bêtes noires'*[200]) and proceeded to alternate between attacking and ignoring Solidarity, while secretly making contacts with key Church and Solidarity figures with the aim of forging splits within the opposition. For example, he sought to winkle Wałęsa away from other Solidarity leaders. Wałęsa was a *"decent and patriotic Pole,"*[201] unlike (presumably) others, suggested Rakowski.

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[199] *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, October 20th 1988. Ibid.

[200] Jaruzelski, General., (1992)

[201] *Trybuna Ludu*, September 13th 1988

The Wałęsa-Miodowicz live TV debate on 30th October underlined the PZPR's hope that a trade union solution to the industrial unrest could be reached and that any political deals could be avoided. The appearance of Wałęsa on national television for the first time in 7 years was treated by many within the Party as a signal that the Rakowski strategy of breaking up the opposition could work. It was a tactic, however, that backfired, Wałęsa resolutely sticking to the original political preconditions (Solidarity's legalisation) of an end to strike action.

During October and November, the talks at *Magdalenka* became derailed and at the public level, the word *'Solidarity'* disappeared from Party public discourse, having only very recently re-appeared. For example, on 8th November, Ciosek ruled out use of the word *'Solidarity'* although he was still prepared to acknowledge that *"room had to be found for an opposition."*[202] The previous openness to notions of pluralism and democracy was thus submerged under the weight of a fierce discursive and propaganda campaign to discredit any form of opposition. For example, during October, Jaruzelski told a Party meeting that the leadership would not *"hesitate to use force should attempts emerge to de-stabilise the socialist State."*[203] He told his audience that any move towards trade union pluralism would take place within the 'confines of existing law' (i.e. that it would not be possible). By early November, both Rakowski and Urban had moved away from acknowledgement that, even for purely political reasons, they

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[202] *The Economist*, December 3rd 1988

[203] *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, October 25th 1988. Rakowski was reported to have told U.S. Congressmen that the PZPR objected to any *"politicisation of the factories and that Solidarity would have to accept not only the constitutional system but also the leading role of the party within it."* However, Wałęsa was publicly paraded as a "private individual" with whom "the Party could do business." For example, in the September issue of *Konfrontacja*, in an October copy of *Tygodnik Powszechny* a full text interview with Wałęsa, which had already been published in *Le Figaro*, appeared in *Trybuna Ludu*.

needed to recognise Solidarity. On October 5th Rakowski told local Party officials, for example, that:

> *"The Party has always had a directing role and we have never lost it because we have had the army, the security and the nomenclature and when it was needed, we have used other means...Although we have lost the hearts and minds of the people we will regain them."*[204]

The Rakowski government, at the same time as attacking Solidarity, began to accelerate the usage of another discourse, aiming to locate the PZPR within a symbolic sphere traditionally appropriated by Solidarity, that of the nation's only true saviour; the PZPR as the only non-sectional, genuinely national party and as the only real representative of the national interest.[205] During November, Rakowski invited various public figures into PRON and left four places open to Solidarity in his Cabinet. By offering the prospect of limited and largely cosmetic power sharing to small, hand picked and elite groups, the Rakowski leadership group sought to play on and extenuate existing divisions within the opposition movement and, at the same time, by co-opting opposition figureheads, reassure international opinion of the regime's reformist credentials.

At the same time as evoking nationalism as a discourse of legitimation, the Rakowski period was marked by a definite attempt to breath new life into the eudaemonic discourses which had become weakened during the

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[204] *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, October 25th 1988

[205] *Trybuna Ludu*, October 30th 1988. Jaruzelski's meeting with Cardinal Glemp on October 26th, during which he apologised for past 'sins' committed during the 1950's (referring obliquely to the treatment of Cardinal Wyszyński).

preceding six months. 'Markets' and 'competition' dominated operative (policy-related) Party discourses. As Zubek notes,[206] the Party began quietly to abandon Marxian economics all together. Rakowski told a local Party meeting in Warsaw, for example, that:

> *"If socialism fails to show that it is economically viable, then it loses in the historical confrontation with its rivals...The economic well being of the people is the important criteria of this government. I haven't heard of anybody who has managed to feed the masses on ideology. Why should people be happy if the economy doesn't work and the fruits of their labour fail to give them the benefits they expect?"*[207]

Rakowski's discursive references to 'efficiency' and 'rationality' underpinned the Party's economic discourses. Clearly Rakowski and Baka sought a type of reform that de-linked the political and economic spheres by introducing market principles without, however, genuine pluralisation of the political sphere. This required a curious combination of *'Public/Private'* discourses, however. One part was designed to legitimate the economic agency of individuals within a nominally free market, endowing them with a private identity and legal status, the other employing the traditional notions of one party rule. The failure of the PZPR to construct an 'opposition' in such a way as to undermine such an entity's unity while at the same time integrate selected *'constructive oppositionists'* into the State undermined this discourse and hard-line reactions from within the PZPR, at the local and national levels, furthermore, obliged a reassertion of more traditional discourse. The

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[206]Zubek, V., (1990) op cit. pp.4-5

[207]*Trybuna Ludu*, November 30th 1988

'*Secret letter*' is again illustrative of the confusion in the Party's ideological discourses:

> "*A greater stress should be put on defending the Party's identity, on arguments in support of the system and national interest. Attempts to set up of illegal structures must be resolutely opposed. The working class trade unions* (OPZZ) *must be actively supported, particularly on the shop-floor. Close bonds with the working class and all our political allies, the Democratic Party and the United Peasants' Party, must be maintained. We are aware of our allies' wavering. Yet the main real danger is the rebirth of Solidarity structures as they existed in 1981, that is as a party of strikes and confrontation. This is what we must all focus our attention on.*"[208]

To underpin his economic reforms, Rakowski brought into his cabinet representatives of industry. Wilczek became Minister of Industry and Jastrzębski, Minister for External Economic Co-operation. These moves, combined with a comparatively radical set of economic proposals,[209] set the tone for a campaign to breathe renewed life into the Polish economy. On 26th November Wilczek called for the closure of the hundred least profitable enterprises in Poland and proposed the setting up of thousands of small enterprises. "*The best,*" he said, "*must be encouraged and*

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[208] *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, December 1st 1988

[209] Zubek, V., (1991) op cit.; Slay, B., (1994) op cit. On November 2nd an economic consolidation plan was announced. It included a re-prioritisation of state resources from heavy industry and defence to consumer markets, the legal equality for all types of enterprise (private, socialised and co-operative), uniform legal principles, a dissolution of the Planning Commission to be replaced by economic advisory board, independence of the banking system, currency convertibility within 5-7 years (486 out of 734 regulations concerning industrial production eliminated, 300 on agricultural production).

the worst pushed down to die."[210] However, Wilczek also framed this ostensibly capitalist discourse in one of a different - a-historical - kind.

> "*We now recognise that Western countries have achieved high living standards using certain methods It is just a matter of coincidence that these methods are called capitalist.*"[211]

The emphasis on markets and economic efficiency was clearly designed to by-pass the need for discussions with Solidarity, which could - at the same time - be portrayed discursively as an obstacle to progress towards a modern, market economy. Rakowski articulated the view on several occasions that Solidarity was an unnecessary burden that society could not afford to bear:

> "*In history some movements have their beginning and their end. Solidarity has had its end. The future of Poland will not be decided by these people.*"[212]

The decision, announced in October, to close the Lenin shipyards in Gdańsk is significant in terms of Rakowski's legitimational strategy after the Messner resignation for two reasons. One, it fitted neatly into the emerging discourse of the market: efficient enterprises survive because they are efficient, weak enterprises represent a drain on the national economy. Two, because it represented a direct attack on one significant centre and source of Solidarity's power base. The decision must be seen within the political context of the breakdown in dialogue between the Party and Solidarity after August. The PZPR elite, however, was still

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[210] *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, November 11th 1988

[211] *The Economist*, December 3rd 1988

[212] *The Economist*, December 3rd 1988. Ibid

divided on the issue of the re-legalisation of Solidarity and the announcement can be seen in terms of a concession to the more hard-line elements within the Party-State apparatus. The decision was, furthermore made public during the visit to Poland of the British Prime Minister Thatcher and in the context of IMF deliberations concerning Poland's external debt repayments. It both illustrated to a sceptical capitalist world that economic reforms within Communist Poland were based on solid, economically rational foundations and, perhaps also, to use Thatcher's experience of anti-trade union strategy in Britain to undercut any public relations victory Solidarity might have hoped to have gained out of her visit.[213]

However, Rakowski's anti-Solidarity discourse was tempered, to a certain extent, by his recognition that obstacles to economic reform existed within the Party-State also. The conservative character of the top administration, Rakowski argued, was high on the list of barriers facing his government:

"*They have completely lost the ability to take risks and progress means taking risks and at the same time, they have the conviction that they are always right.*"[214]

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[213]The Thatcher visit was postponed on two occasions during September, ostensibly because of instability during the change of government, but largely to do with the Party's attempts to derail the *round table* talks. Clearly the party did not want the Thatcher visit to be seen to lend external support to Solidarity which would be able to exert greater pressure on the government. See Rakowski, M. R., (1992), pp.109-111

[214]Ibid.

3. *East* Vs *West*

This largely eudaemonic form of legitimation was underpinned by a continuation, in various elements of Party discourse, of talk of 'foreign interference.' The *'West,'* it was frequently suggested, was financing subversion and 'anti-socialist' forces within Poland (referring to money sent to Solidarity during the 1980's).[215] The Party was clearly ambivalent about the precise geopolitical discursive tone it wished to take, however. Any talk of 'Western' influences in economic discourses indicated that its strategy of non-compromise in the political sphere might have to be revised. The possible effects of an opening of the Polish economy to foreign competition, furthermore, thrust deeper into the existing conflicts between the OPZZ and Solidarity and played on the cleavages between, for example, the neo-liberal intellectual elite within Solidarity and the working class trade union based groups.

Furthermore, any Western financial re-negotiation, for example with the IMF (after October), would inevitably be conditioned - at most - on the PZPR's opening up of the existing political system and - at least - on a revision of the existing trade union legislation (i.e. the re-legalisation of Solidarity). This ambivalence was reflected in a series of speeches made by senior government officials during the period. Baka, for example, during the brief opening of the possibility of an *round table* in August, told Western journalists that trade union pluralism was imminent and that Solidarity would ("probably") be legalised, although only at the level of individual enterprises.[216] Malinowski (the leader of the ZSL), likewise,

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[215] *Trybuna Ludu,* October 17th 1988

[216] *Washington Post*, September 1st 1988; *New York Times*, September 1st 1988

told Western journalists that he saw no reason why the opposition should not be offered the ministries of health, education or housing.[217] However, there emerged no obvious change in IMF policy in relation to Poland.[218] Rakowski stated, defiantly, in late October, that (if the West was looking for concrete proof that Poland was serious in its reform initiatives), "*we will give it to them...its our only chance and we don't have much time.*"[219]

The Soviet Union, furthermore, was softening its hardline in relation to its traditional bloc allies. On September 7th Soviet foreign minister, Shishlin, for example, told *Le Monde* that the CPSU had no power of veto over Poland and that he supported the proposed *round table* negotiations. On October 19th an Orzechowski article appeared in *Pravda* in which he wrote of "*the Party's absolute control, its role in defining the limits to talks.*"[220] Rakowski soon after visited Moscow for talks with the Russian Prime Minister Rzyhkov as well as Gorbachev.

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[217] *The Baltimore Sun*, September 7th 1988

[218] *Trybuna Ludu*, September 17th-18th 1988

[219] *The Financial Times*, October 31st 1988

4. *Past* Vs *Present*

On the one hand the PZPR had began to scrap key ideological discourses in the economic sphere (the formal equalisation of the private and State sectors, for example), on the other hand it has not been able or willing to engage in real political reform. Within this interim context, the PZPR began to search for convenient new discourses to legitimate itself and its democratic credentials without offering any institutional or constitutional mechanisms for real democratic articulation. Most importantly for both relations with Polish society and the Soviet Union, a *'Katyń'* discourse began to emerge.

During this period, the PZPR was seeking to locate itself within two discourses simultaneously. One, *traditional*: the PZPR as the only authentic defender of the (socialist) faith and vanguard of reformism within it. This was located within the traditional (realist) conception of the role played by the USSR in domestic Polish affairs and, in particular, of the PZPR's self-appointed role as appeaser of the Soviet's international intentions. The language of socialism, specifically Marxism-Leninism, signified an implicit understanding of geopolitical reality. Two, as a national party, not tied into a closed version of the past. However, many elements of the past that were closed had become closed because they did not fit into the traditional conception. In other words, a national party would be obliged to adopt, at least to a certain extent, various historical references that (albeit indirectly) criticised the USSR. The delicate balance between these two elements at this stage in the process of changing legitimation lies at the centre of the emerging reformist

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220 *Trybuna Ludu*, October 24th, 1988. An extract from the original *Pravda* interview was reproduced.

discourse previously outlined in this chapter. One of Jaruzelski's key note speeches during the Gorbachev visit in early July illustrates this:

"This meeting illustrates that we can talk calmly about history, although our discussions must not impinge on the work of the 'historical commission.' Economic matters are the key. Political democratisation demands equal commitment. These will help us to build a better mood particularly at a time when economic solutions are still sought. We see three years as an adequate time period to fully introduce our reforms. We continue to count on the USSR. The West continues to make economic solutions difficult. We have introduced economic reform, but the reaction of the West could either be one of revenge, pushing us closer to the USSR or one of enforcing concessions." [221]

To the dismay of PZPR leaders, both reformist and hardline, however, Gorbachev made no references to Katyń during his visit to Poland. This clearly angered many within the PZPR elite who had believed that Katyń would be addressed publicly. Politburo member Król, for example, said at a meeting held between Gorbachev and Polish intellectuals attached to the Party, that *"many facts (*in Polish-Soviet relations*) need no further research. The facts are there. All we need is to talk about them publicly."*[222]

The PZPR's public references to various so-called "*blank-spots*"[223] (those being dealt with by the Joint Polish-Soviet Historical Commission) during 1988, however, were deployed by the PZPR to distance the Party in popular perception from the Soviet Union and locate it within a more national version of socialism within Poland. Subjects that were once taboo, including Katyń, were fitted, often obliquely, into Party

[221] Perzkowski, S., (1994) op cit. p.35
[222] Perzkowski, S., (1994) Ibid. p.8

discourses. The process of opening up national historical discourses, however, quickly acquired a political dynamic beyond the Party's own limited discourse of legitimation, feeding, for example, into the wider struggle for societal legitimacy between the State and civil groups, most notably the Church and Solidarity, in society.

During May and June the first public pronouncements of the Historical Commission were published. On May 28th the Soviet press, principally in *Pravda,* expressed the need for Katyń to be included in the Commission's work. This was clearly taken as a sign by the Jaruzelski team that the Soviets might be prepared to admit responsibility for Katyń. *Trybuna Ludu* confidently reported the *Pravda* reports in full and Jaruzelski prepared to discuss Katyń with Gorbachev. However, on June 7th Soviet radio stated that recent disclosures about Katyń had been "*hijacked*" for "*Western propaganda purposes*" and that there was no reason for "*jumping to conclusions.*"[224]

During Gorbachev's visit,[225] it is clear that the PZPR was pushing the Soviet delegation to make some kind of statement about Katyń and became angered by the refusal to acknowledge even the barest of historical facts. On July 12th, for example, deputy chairman of State, Barcikowski told a press conference that Katyń would be explained soon, thus both indicating to the Soviets that the Polish Party wanted some kind of announcement on the matter, but also that it remained

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[223]Szayna, T. S., (1988)

[224]*Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, July 2nd 1988. June 29th Professor Maciszewki, Polish co-chairman of 'Blank-spots' commission stated that an agreement had been reached about the 1919-20 Russo-Polish war and that the "tragedy of the KPP in 1938" was being prepared. New material "has come to light" about these, he said. But the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, W.W.II and Katyń "will have to wait."

[225]*Radio Europe Progress Report*, October 27th 1988. July 11th Gorbachev visited Poland. He spoke of the "joint tragedy of Stalinism," but said nothing about Katyń.

deferential to the needs of the Soviet Party. Simultaneously, a public clamour for a sign that the Soviets were prepared to admit culpability was being expressed. For example, on July 15th Lech Wałęsa stated that:

> *"Katyń is connected with the legitimacy and birth certificate of Communist rule. If he (Gorbachev) had said anything about it, it would have been a real revolution."*[226]

The PZPR was, however, signalling that it recognised the importance of Katyń for Poles and thus its desire to reclaim some kind of societal legitimacy. On July 17th a Polish army chaplain took mass at Katyń cemetery and two days later the PZPR's press spokesman, Urban, stated that the USSR was not withdrawing (contrary to what appeared to be the case) from 'painful historical points.' Later in July a more straightforward and open series of references emerged within sections of the official Polish press regarding responsibility for Katyń. On July 30th *Przegląd Tygodniowy* described the Katyń massacre as a "*crime of genocide*" and called for the punishment of its perpetrators.[227]

Alongside the struggle to feed Katyń into its legitimational discourses, the PZPR also allowed the publication of a series of historical reports that had been hidden for 30 years in the State's archives. The sanctioning of a *Polityka* serialisation of 'secret reports' from the 1950's which identified the Soviet Union as the main culprit of crimes committed within Poland during the 1948-56 period can, for example, be seen as part of this evolving historical discourse. On July 27th the daily

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226 *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, July 26th 1988

227 *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 30th July 1988

newspaper *Polityka's* publication of Kruszczev's 1956 speech (denouncing Stalin) further illustrated this. This was the first time it had appeared in the Communist press in Poland. This 'unravelling' of the past as a mode of discursive legitimation continued up to the 10th Plenum. The Party, for example, adopted a more open appraisal of the role of the PPS in the post-war merger of PPR and PPS within the Party journal, *Nowe Drogi.*[228] The PZPR was seeking to locate itself as the "*heir to the best socialist traditions in Poland.*"[229] On December 15th, for example, the former Chairman of the State Council, Jabłonski delivered an address in which he said that:

> "*Anyone who strengthened the revolutionary force in Russia served, objectively speaking, the cause of the liberation of Poland. Therefore, while we must not forget all the faults of the SdKil, we should also remember this fact among its achievements.*"[230]

After October, a discourse of blaming *'the remnants of Stalinism'* for the current plight of socialism also emerged much more clearly. On December 4th Rakowski also talked of August 1980 as a precedent for 1989, but also blamed anti-socialist forces inside and outside Poland on the problems of the 1980's. He failed, significantly, however, in the course of a lengthy speech, to mention the word 'Solidarity.'[231] National independence in 1918 was celebrated with full military honours for the first time in the post-war period on November 11th and General

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[228]Kochański, L., (1988). In October three articles in the same edition of *Nowe Drogi* illustrate this: Albrecht, A., (1988), Latyszew, J., (1988) and Firsów, P., (1988)

[229]Albrecht, A., (1988) Ibid.

[230]*Radio Free Europe Situation Report,* November 25th 1988

[231]*Trybuna Ludu,* 6th December 1988

Piłsudski, a figure traditionally ignored in Communist discourse, was officially rehabilitated as a national hero.[232]

One significant effect of this *historical* discourse, was to undermine the more conservative sections of the PZPR which had been suggesting a return to martial law and a clampdown on civil unrest. A national version of the past necessitated a critique of the USSR, the key external guarantor of the hard-line position of the PZPR within the State.[233] Following Gorbachev's visit, the issue of Katyń remained officially closed as far as the Soviets were concerned. CPSU spokesman, Rzheshevsky, cited three previous attempts to pin the blame for Katyń on the USSR. The first, he argued, was at the Nuremberg trials, the second was by the US in the early 1950's and the third, was by Solidarity in 1980.[234] Polish Stalinist groups within the PZPR, led by Bednarski, (a leading figure in the right-wing *'Grunwald'* Patriotic Movement, an organisation close to various extreme anti-Semitic and virulently nationalistic milieux within the PZPR) was unable to locate a response within anything other than a discourse of anti-Russianism, which would undermine both the PZPR's bargaining position in relation to Polish society and the hardliner's position within the Party.

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232 Jakubowska, H., (1990) for analysis of the use of national symbols to legitimate the regime in late 1988.

233Hausner, J. and Klementewicz, T., (Eds.) (1992) op cit. p.167. June 28th - July 1st 19th The CPSU Conference concluded that any improvement in the economic system could not be dissociated from a thorough reconstruction of systems of exercising power.

234*Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, November 5th 1988

5. *Conclusions*

The PZPR moved during 1988 from a predominantly *'Private'* towards a more *'Public'* and back to a *'Private'* type of discourse. Its *'Public'* discourses at this stage, however, were heavily contingent on the outcomes they were able to generate, in particular in stemming industrial unrest and fragmenting the emerging Solidarity-Church opposition. They combined the symbolism of national dialogue (without any formal public dialogue), with a loosened commitment to overt ideological pronouncements, seeking to bridge two traditionally antagonistic spheres.

A series of discursive changes did, however, take place. One, the notion *'opposition'* entered the core *Teza ('Thesis')* of the PZPR Central Committee Plenums. The introduction of the notion of an 'opposition' is of interest in that it reflected the Party's recognition that Solidarity actually existed and thus that the Party's attempt (during the 1980's) to delete it, both ritually (via discourses) and actually (by banning and hounding its members) had failed. In doing so, the PZPR shifted its discourses of State, Party and constitution. It weakened the discursive symbiosis between Party and State and questioned the 'class' character of the Party by opening the question of Solidarity's re-legalisation.

As the *'Public'* discourses relapsed into *'Private'* after October, the PZPR delved into the past in search of signifiers that could camouflage the emptiness of its real democratic intentions. *'Katyń'* became recognised as a key discourse both in the PZPR's attempt to alter its existing relationship with the Soviet Union and as a means of strengthening its appeal to Polish society, by linking itself to a key national sentiment. The

revised notion of the past, in relation to the Polish socialism is also important. By re-emphasising the humanistic version of Polish socialism, the PZPR was registering both that existing socialism was faulty (although was being fixed) and that a wider interpretation of its own interpellated community would be necessary within a more democratic environment. The PZPR developed a coded geopolitical critique of the *'Eastern'* version of socialism (in a Stalinist form), but remained caught in the trap of needing on the one hand to appease the Soviet Union (to retain an external threat with which to underpin its bargaining position with Solidarity) and on the other to be seen to a party of the nation, which necessitated a rejection of any real taint of Soviet connections. This was a state of affairs that could not be sustained for very long.

Chapter 4

Changing Course

December 1988-January 1989

1. *Introduction*

The end of 1988, start of 1989 marked a radical turning point in the PZPR's discourses. The politically fraught character of the Party's previous strategy of seeking to impose economic reform 'from above,' while reconstructing what were apparently 'symbolic' discourses (in relation to history, for example), snapped. Traditional ideological discourses became more clearly disengaged from both internal PZPR debate and its operative language vis-à-vis Solidarity and the Church. The Party's public discourses became much more clearly defined within a *'Public'* sphere. Discursive contestation within the Party also emerged at a much more public level within the Politburo's Plenum *Teza* and at the Plenum itself. These debates took place on two levels. One, pragmatic questions of political tactics in the short term. In the context of internal (Party-State) resistance to reform at the opening stage of the 10th Plenum and the formation of Solidarity's Citizen's Committees (OKs) on 17th December 1988, the PZPR's discourse was obliged to acquire a much more immediate significance. Two, ideological questions to do with the role of the leading party within the State and the identity and purpose of socialism. In several ways the latter discourses began to mirror the former - something that had not been a feature of the previous period. The pragmatic centre, grouped around Jaruzelski and Rakowski, for

example, by making overt contacts with members of the Catholic hierarchy and opposition, while simultaneously purging significant internal opposition to the new line within the PZPR broader elite (in the Central Committee), narrowed the doctrinal possibilities inherent within the discourse of *odnowa*. The rejection of the traditional signifiers of 'non-Solidarity' and 'non-compromise' discourses is central to the process of changing PZPR identity and the process of its legitimational transformation.

Party discourses at both the 10th Plenum and All-National Ideological-Theoretical Conference represented the most open attempts, within the terms of *odnowa*, to cope with the difficult questions - of short-term tactics and longer-term ideological identity - that had arisen during 1988. These internal debates and the Party's official discourses that set the initial terms of reference for debate, illustrated both the rapid delegitimation, within the pragmatic centre, of the existing type of legitimation as well as the internal obstacles to reform from within the Party-State. They marked the opening up of new forms and methods of debate, confrontation and public discourse both within the Party and between State and society and the explicit rejection of many traditional elements in official discourses.

2. *Public* Vs *Private*

The opening 10th Central Committee Plenum *Teza* delivered in late December 1988 by the Politburo, upon which the Jaruzelski-Rakowski pragmatic centre hung its key programmatic and ideological discourses, can be read on many planes. For the Party's reformist elites it was a definite victory, representing its successful manoeuvring within the elite. For the pragmatic centre it was a political necessity but also a continuation of *odnowa.* For the Solidarity opposition, it was a confirmation of the increasingly weak position of the Party within the existing system.

The specific wording of key discursive Party texts is important in that it structured the perceptions and subsequent actions of key groups, inside and outside the PZPR. It redefined the lines of *'Public'* and *'Private'* confrontation and the terms of the Party-opposition dialogue and shifted both elite's (the PZPR's and Solidarity's) relations with their own respective political and wider socio-organisational communities. Of key significance, the Party moved away from its commitments to an a-priori belief in its organisationally inscribed leading role within the State and society and towards what Staniszkis refers to as *"the language of pragmatic control."*[235] The discourse recognised, at times unintentionally, the historical contingency of the leading party; its political as opposed to organisational role in the building of socialism.

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[235]Staniszkis, J.,(1992) op cit. p.158

Rakowski clearly thought that the PZPR could exploit the apparent divisions within Solidarity at the end of 1988.[236] The Solidarity 'of negotiation' (so-called '*constructive opposition*'), according to Rakowski, could be split from that of 'non-negotiation.'[237] The split would render the latter impotent (lacking leadership and direction) and the former would have no real choice other than to fit quietly into the existing structures of representation, thus legitimating and widening them.

Furthermore, the Rakowski government was accelerating its economic reform policies during late December, sending, for example, a series of key marketisation measures to the Sejm (freeing fuel prices and interest rates). In order to relieve the social pressure on the government and force this ideologically sensitive legislation (to many sections of the Party-State directly effected by it) through the Sejm,[238] Rakowski needed to convince the Party centres of power (most notably the KOK elites of Generals Jaruzelski, Siwicki and Pożoga) of the need to reopen the notion of a *round table*, and seek a wider coalition of interests to legitimate and protect the reforms. A highly conditional and limited *round table*, thus constructed, was to act as a device for legitimating Rakowski's reforms. This version of reform fitted neatly into the on-going strategy of the Rakowski government. A 'deal' (not a legalisation) with the unofficial trade unions (Solidarity), combined with limited reforms of the law on

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[236]Holzer, J. and Leski, J., (1990). The struggle within Solidarity concerned the extent to which the leadership group (centred around the Catholic, nationalist and trade union trio of Wałęsa, Kaczyński, Stelmachowski on one side and the secular, leftist trio of Geremek, Michnik and Kuroń on the other) could harness support for its strategy of compromise from within the rank and file of the movement, in the face of fierce criticism from more radical groups and a rising tide of industrial disquiet and antipathy towards any form of compromise with the authorities.

[237]Rakowski's reckoning is found in his own words, Rakowski, M.R., (1992) op cit. p.78; Perzkowski, S., (1994) op cit. p.98. This is also corroborated in documented discussions within the Politburo.

the autonomy of civic organisations and a widening of the legislative chamber (Sejm), which would integrate selected members of a *'constructive opposition,'* would stem societal opposition (and undercut the sources of industrial unrest) and, at the same time, provide the necessary political space within which economic reforms could be accelerated during 1989, without the PZPR losing power.

Rakowski clearly continued to believe that a version of the eudaemonic legitimation initiated after November 1988 would, given the Party's regulation of talks with an opposition (and deals with the Church), act, in the medium term, to re-legitimate the existing socialist system and thus the Party. Hints that 'full' 'socialist parliamentary democracy' would become a reality within a given period of time - for example - references to fully open elections in 1991 (May 3rd) - illustrate this.[239] Rakowski's confidence was reinforced by a December CBOS (opinion poll) survey which showed a marked rise in society's acceptance of (although, significantly, not support for and certainly not support for the Party's role in initiating) economic reform.[240]

The period is marked by a series of debates within the PZPR elite, both within the Politburo and Central Committee, concerning the extent to which the PZPR could or should sanction the legalisation of Solidarity

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[238] *The Financial Times,* 22nd December 1988. Baka called on the OPZZ to support a prices and incomes accord. 24th December Sejm set in motion bills aimed at de monopolising the banking system and introducing new laws on foreign investment, aimed at encouraging Western capital to Poland.

[239] *Trybuna Ludu,* 10th January 1989. Rakowski wrote of a *"fully open democracy"* in 4 years, to be legally enforced on the 200th anniversary of the original Polish constitution of May 3rd 1791

[240] Taras, R., (1995) op cit. chapter 4. CBOS "Opinie o rządzie Mieczysława Rakowskiego" (Opinion of the Rakowski government), BD/329/88 (December 1988).

and on what terms.[241] The question revolved around the role of Solidarity at both the local level (and consequently the role of the OPZZ) and at the national level.[242] The question of the legalisation (or re-legalisation) of Solidarity thus continued to be central to the reform debates within the Party and had immediate ramifications for sections of the Party's lower level community, most specifically the OPZZ. What would be the Party's 'leading role' at all if it was prepared to relinquish its role at the level of its so-called 'class base'? Furthermore, if Solidarity could operate as a free association, what would stop it operating as a political movement?[243] The Party's debates about socialist pluralism are thus not only interesting in terms of an evolving notion of legal-rational legitimation, but are also central to the practical details of the process of legalisation and reform more widely. Any changes in the Politburo's *Teza* adopted at the Central Committee Plenum revealed a great deal about the pragmatic centres' political position in relation to both its own party and the non-Communist opposition movement.

At the first part of the 10th Plenum between 20th and 22nd December, many within the Central Committee and the wider Party apparatus reacted against the proposed new line. Miodowicz, for example, argued that any arrangement with Solidarity would produce "*an agreement between elites, the elite of 'the authorities' and the elite of the opposition.*"[244] Several speeches at the Plenum accused the leadership of adopting "*capitalist*

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[241]Perzkowski, S., (1994) op cit. pp.45-74

[242]Perzkowski, S., (1994) Ibid. pp.225-229.

[243]Perzkowski, S., (1994) Ibid., pp.213-220, 'Tezy do oceny i prognozy sytuacji spoleczno-politycznej' (Thesis to do with opinions and prognoses of the social-political situation).

[244]*The Economist*, January 21st 1989

models" and permitting "*the development of a new bourgeoisie.*"[245] The OPZZ became a mouthpiece of anti-reformist rhetoric. Its leaders, most prominently Miodowicz, realising that the position of the OPZZ at the enterprise level would be challenged, despite assurances to the contrary, began to talk openly of and engage in pressure for a rise in wages during late January. This directly threatened the Rakowski economic reforms and, given Baka's call for a centrally agreed and set incomes policy with the OPZZ, represented a significant obstacle to the setting up of a *round table*, as the *Teza* proposed.

The reluctance of the Central Committee, furthermore, to endorse the Politburo *Teza* during the second part of the 10th Plenum in January, (following a significant purge of anti-reformists from leading positions within the Party), illustrated the gap that had already emerged within the wider PZPR elite on questions of both immediate and longer-term discursive strategy. The effect of this opposition within the PZPR, however, was to push Politburo reformers closer to so-called 'moderates' within Solidarity, a reversal of what had happened in October of the previous year. The Rakowski government had spent the previous three months attacking and belittling Solidarity and trying to cajole and persuade intransigent interests within the Party-State system that economic reforms required a restructuring of the Party's role within the State and economy, but could be achieved without the need to concede any real political initiative to Solidarity. What this had meant in practise, however, was the Rakowski government assuaging conservative demands

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[245] *Trybuna Ludu*, December 21st - 22nd, 1988

for a non-relinquishment of the Party's prerogative position.[246] As the blanket discourse of Party-centred, Party-controlled reform weakened during December in the face of the two sided assault from both inside and outside the PZPR, cracks emerged, as Schopflin puts it, "*in the surface unanimity*"[247] of the discourse. Intra-PZPR struggle during the 10th Plenum opened up various questions and catalysed factions within the Party around different analyses of the existing crisis in socialism, in ways of dealing with it the short term and longer term questions of the political and ideological identity and purpose of the PZPR.

Many hard-liners within the Party sought to deny that the changes proposed to *'real'* socialism were necessary. Instead they claimed that they represented a counter-revolutionary trend and were temporary and avoidable. This fundamentalism represented an extreme version of a more pervasive feeling within the Central Committee and more broadly within the Party, as witnessed, for example, during the opening debates at the Plenum. One local Party secretary connected with nationalist groups in the Party told the Plenum that the defence of socialism was synonymous both with the defence of Poland as a sovereign nation-state and the working class, in whose name the Party led. Socialism, he argued, could not be abandoned, since, after all, it represented the only real legitimation available to the PZPR: it defined its values and identity and its role within the State.[248] This discourse was stoically ideological in form, while at the same time apparently practical - common-sensical -

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[246]*Trybuna Ludu*, January 21st-22nd 1989. The position of the OPZZ and its leader Miodowicz at the International Labour Organisation in Geneva in October and his speech at the 10th Plenum indicated the official trade unions opposition to any form of trade union pluralism.

[247]Schopflin, G., (1993) op cit. p.67

[248]*Trybuna Ludu*, 29th December, 1988

related, for example, to *"the living standards of the majority of Poles"* and *"the interests of the working class."*[249] Central Committee delegate Borys for example argued that the present economic policies were out of tune with *"the ideals of social justice"* and that the Party was being *"elbowed aside."*[250]

This hard-line discourse - if it had any basis other than a simple concern to retain power - lay in the traditional Marxist-Leninist notion of telos. *"We, no-one else, are building socialism in Poland and no-one will can divert us from this path. We have historical forces on our side,"* one delegate said.[251] Supporters of this line tended to be grouped in the lower Party apparatus, full time Party workers, institutional interest groups located predominantly within the military and heavy industry sections of the State.

Jaruzelski demoted the main representatives of this strand of Party discourse in the first half of the Plenum in December 1988, ridding the Politburo of any real opposition to the changes subsequently outlined in the *Teza*.[252] This had the effect of reducing conflict within the Central Committee, but it also meant that disaffected anti-reformers thereafter sat in the ranks of the wider Party, sowing seeds of discontent. Given that much of the dogmatic language being used in these circles was not dissimilar to much of that which Jaruzelski himself had recently been

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[249] *The Financial Times*, December 23rd 1988

[250] *The Financial Times*, December 23rd 1988. Ibid.

[251] *Trybuna Ludu*, December 21st - 22nd 1988

[252] Janowski, K. B., (Sanford, G., 1992. op cit. pp.45-46) Opposition to the Party leadership's pragmatic policies at the Plenum was most clearly evident during its first half . One third of the Central Committee voted against the proposed promotion of a reformer and Jaruzelski figure, Ciosek, to the Politburo and Secretariat. Also, other Jaruzelski appointees such as Czarzasty and Reykowski found little support in CC elections. Six Politburo members and two secretaries who had not been overtly enthusiastic about talks with Solidarity were demoted (including Baryła and Jłowczyk), while the recently resigned premier, Messner also lost his Politburo place. Key Jaruzelski reformers were elected, for example, Stepień, Miller and Czarzasty, although some anti-reform characters retained their positions - Sobotka, for example (from Huta Warszawa, a hard-line stronghold-non-voting member).

using (before the 10th Plenum), the level of disaffection was high. This was something that had various negative consequences for the PZPR's bargaining position within the *round table* and most clearly at the June elections later in 1989. It reduced the bargaining power of the Party-government side within the *round table* negotiation by indicating to the Solidarity negotiating teams that any threats made, for example, by the pragmatic centre to derail the talks would prove politically impossible.

Within the reformist centres of the PZPR elite on the other hand a struggle was emerging at a more open level than previously, between groups advocating competing versions of reform socialism. A cleavage within this group was discernible between what are referred to here as *Globalists* and *Populists.*[253] *Globalism* was rooted in a fundamental rejection of existing structures of economic decision-making. Its proponents were closely associated with the emergence of neo-liberal reform initiatives within the Party (which had been increasingly prevalent after 1986 within Party economic discourses). In order to reform the economic structures, however, political changes were deemed indispensable. Thus a *round table* would have a deep significance in the reform process, not merely as a form of window-dressing or symbolic posturing. It would, argued Cackowski[254] at the Ideological Conference in February, necessitate a rejection of the a-priori myth of the leading party, lead directly to the implementation of accountable political structures, public control of and legality within the State and a stricter framework for making political and economic decisions.

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[253]Staniszkis, J., (1992) op cit.

[254]Cackowski, Z., (1989)

Populist reformers tended to articulate the views of the PZPR's Warsaw Committee, the main core of the domestic security service and sections of the army.[255] They denied that reforms of the economic model necessitated extensive political reform and stressed the 'deformities of socialism' in terms of specific leadership failings and an obstructive bureaucracy, which the leadership had failed to deal with. Their support for reforms at all was conditioned on a renewal in the Party's leading role and in the links between the Party and its socio-economic base within the working class and peasantry. This view was thus most closely in line with that of the pragmatic centre around Rakowski and Jaruzelski, whose interpretation of *odnowa* did not extend to relinquishing the PZPR's leading role. A system of government, of selecting leaders and their exercise of power without the leading role would, argued Wiatr,[256] soon cease to be socialist at all.

Populists articulated a discourse of pragmatic and piecemeal reform within the existing institutions and structures of power and limited, highly conditional support for any deals with traditionally conceived 'enemies' - the Catholic Church, Solidarity and the 'West.' They treated political reforms as an "*autonomous element...as a temporary manoeuvre that will allow socialism to catch its breath.*"[257] Both factions agreed, however, that the existing Party was the main obstacle to reform, due to its so-called 'transmission belt' role for local and branch interests, although reform options differed.[258] *Globalists* proposed the withdrawal of the Party from

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[255]Wiatr, S., (1989)

[256]Kształt Polskiego Socjalizmu, (1989). Three positions: *Radical Globalism*: Cackowski, Z., (1989), backed by Orzechowski; *Moderate Globalism*: Bodnar, A., (1989), backed by Kiszczak, Jaruzelski and Ciosek. and *Populism*: Wiatr, S., (1989), backed by Warsaw Party committee, security and army.

[257]Wiatr, S., (1989) op cit.

[258]Wiatr, S., (1989) Ibid.

the enterprise level,[259] while *Populists* proposed the abolition of the nomenclature, but keeping the Party at the local - class - level, in enterprises.[260] More radical *Globalists* spoke of two parties of the left (reformist and revolutionary),[261] whereas *Populists* talked of *"a strong, lively party, one party of the left and the keeping of factions within the Party)"* - the PZPR as the centre of the power structure, but a different type of Party, one operating in a 'movement' style, like Solidarity (with confrontational and dynamic leadership, active at election time and with wide and loosely affiliated membership). Moderate *Globalists* tended to be interested in a weakening of the PZPR or its transformation into a broadened coalition of smaller leftist and green parties with a highly mobilised representation in parliament.[262]

The discourses outlined by the Politburo at the 10th Plenum were a compromise between the more legalistic version of social democracy *(Globalist),* the more Statist (socialist) democratic *(Populist)* and the more conservative traditions and wings of the Party. Since the key to the legitimation of the PZPR was so closely associated with the type of signification its major ideological 'texts' were able to generate, the construction, presentation and alteration in them is central to the changing Party and the reforming political-economy of the State and nation. These texts are analysed below. At the first part of the 10th

[259] *Trybuna Ludu,* 17th - 18th December 1988. This was something that was agreed, in principle by the Central Committee and incorporated into the body of the final text.

[260] Wiatr, S., (1989) op cit.

[261] Bodnar, A., (1989) op cit.

[262] Bodnar, A., (1989) Ibid.

Plenum Ideological Secretary within the Politburo, Orzechowski,[263] delivered the Politburo's keynote address:

> *"The current State model is certainly in crisis...It does not guarantee, nor does it enforce sufficient effectiveness in the new conditions...We must create a new model of socialism, one that is socially rational, since socialism was only one stage in the development of human civilisation."*[264]

He stated the Party's intentions clearly in relation to "*elimination of the last vestiges of Stalinism,*" a new dialogue with the Catholic Church and the terms on which a "*constructive opposition*" should be allowed to function within the existing system, including the stipulation that its representatives must:

> *"Disassociate themselves from extremist political forces that are funded from abroad and whose activity is aimed against the very essence of the system...This would provide for a limited renewal in 'horizontal structures' which opened in 1981."*[265]

Orzechowski was clearly seeking to wrap the elite's new political strategy in a discourse that would be seen as an extension of *odnowa*, although the reference to *'1981'* is highly significant in that it signified Party recognition that another version of socialism existed and that it had involved Solidarity. The two key slogans which marked the written *Teza* of the 10th Plenum, "*socialist parliamentary democracy*" and "*socialist civil*

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[263]Reforma Partii-warunkiem powodzenia strategii odnowy i reform, (1989)

[264]*Radio Fee Europe Progress Report*, January 11th 1989

[265]*Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, January 11th 1989. Ibid

society," were constructed as a part of the line adopted within *odnowa.* For example:

> *"The basic features of socialism are to be retained, but should be based on the following values: of humanism and socialist personalism, work, social justice, democracy, social ownership, new rights of citizenship, patriotism and internationalism. We envisage a return to man as the basis of society: man as the indivisible element in society in self-realisation with others. Socialism must have a human face; the cult of collectivism has failed."*[266]

However, much of the content of the *Teza* actually "*reversed the established interpretations of Marxism,*" which, as Wiatr suggests, "*had idealised the State while neglecting the importance of associations and organisations, legally guaranteed rights and various forms of property that could protect the individual from encroachments by the State.*"[267] This humanistic element of the Party's discourse is significant in that it echoed and reproduced much of the 10th Congress (*odnowa*) discourse, but - in the context of real political negotiation (with a non-Party opposition) - acquired an immediate political edge. It expressed the same belief in the values of socialism but was much more open in its criticism of socialist practise. Socialism with a "*human face,*" for example, was as old as the "*Polish road to socialism*" (post-1956), but translating this into practise demanded a more rigorous analysis and open assessment of the real possibilities available of achieving it. The *Teza* continued:

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[266]Kształt Polskiego Socjalizmu. (1989) op cit.

[267]*Radio Free Europe Progress Report,* February 6th 1989

"This does not mean reducing the role and significance of classes in society, but recognising that energy comes from individuals...man controlling the processes of work and the needs of society...the end of purely economic rights...in conditions of solidarity between nation and society, which have chosen a socialist route."[268]

The significance of a reworking of the traditional value system of socialism is that it represented the most open first stage in a removal of doctrinal signifiers from the central Party discourse. The notion of *'individualistic socialism'* had become a part of PZPR discourse during the 1970's under Gierek, although its positioning within the central Party discourse in dialogue with itself, as opposed to a discourse aimed at assuaging and appeasing societal demands, is vital. The socialism that was being envisaged came from individuals within civil society, from the *'Public'* sphere, from a sphere that the Party had long failed to subjugate and control completely. *Odnowa* was emphasised as a dynamic discourse of gradually extending civil rights:

"In realising the strategy of renewal and reform, we are still at the start of building socialism. The 1980's will be seen as an historical turning point in Polish history. The gradual creation of civic power, self-government, rights of citizens, transformation of consciousness of society and political culture of society, as well as gradual changes in the role of the State in the economy. In the political system we have seen deep changes - a national understanding, the growth of representative organs of power and the Sejm becoming a real centre of power: the Constitutional Tribunal, Tribunal of State, Parliamentary Ombudsman, High

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[268] *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, February 6th 1989. Ibid.

administrative court, a broader coalition of ZSL, SD and Catholic groups in PRON forum and open and free trade unions."[269]

The discursive notion that the PZPR itself had engineered a radical transformation of society including its democratisation during the 1980's was predicated, however, on its ability to ignore what had actually happened in 1980-81 and subsequently, in particular the role played by Solidarity in articulating the need for almost all of the above self-claimed reforms. Furthermore, the discourse of democratisation, while thorough enough on its own terms, did not, at this point, address the immediate question of *round table* talks with Solidarity or the concrete means by which these grand socialist values would continue to be implemented in practise. References to the doctrinal role of Marxism-Leninism, however, within the opening 10th Plenum *Teza* were, at the same time, diluted and, significantly, marginalised. While Marxism-Leninism was and would remain the ideology of the Party, reaffirmed by both Rakowski and Jaruzelski at the opening and closing ceremonies, within that all-embracing ideology, various re-interpretations were possible. Orzechowski stated at the opening session of the 10th Plenum, for example:

"Within Marxism-Leninism, the ideological-theoretical base of the Party, we find the aims of the Party towards a just society. The values of the system rest there. It is, above all, a dialectic analysis of social reality in terms of the categories of class structure. We often hear that, 'wouldn't it be better if we had a new Lenin?'. But Marxism is a living idea. We must treat it as an objective and critical science whose results can and must be verified in relation to reality.

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[269] *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, February 6th 1989. Ibid.

The spirit of the people lies at its heart. It must be alive and practical. Much is said about the crisis of the (existing) model of socialism. But what we have is a crisis of the first stage of socialism - the 'pioneering stage.' What is needed is a fast ideological re-evaluation. How can it be improved? It must be about real problems and tasks, in agreement with the bases of Marxist thinking. The ideology must not be impoverished."[270]

This text retained, at one level, traditional commitments to Marxism, but at the same time, it cannot be read as a full affirmation of these principles, rather, as an attempt to widen the possibilities the ideology was able to express. In this regard one can view the text in terms of an alteration in key ideological discourses. This alteration had two central legitimational functions; one overt, the other covert. Overt functions were to do with giving off the right impressions to Western governments and financial institutions that Poland was ditching its commitments to an outdated political philosophy and accepting many of the principles of the market economy. This was particularly salient in the context of the Rakowski government's marketisation reforms in late 1988. It also opened up the possibility of talking with 'moderate' (*'Constructive'*) opponents, since it opened up the possibility of discussion within ideology. Covert functions were more to do with the conflicts within the PZPR and the methods used by the power elite to diffuse them. If the elite was obliged to seek new sources of legitimation (i.e. outside its traditional community) it would, inevitably, be obliged also to alter the discursive tone and content of its discourses. The notion of the *'working class,'* for example was central to the ideological discourse of socialism and how it became constructed discursively therefore revealed much

[270]Kształt Polskiego Socjalizmu (1989) op cit.

about the changing character and political role of the PZPR itself. Orzechowski's speech at the opening session of the Central Committee Plenum in December is indicative of this critical question:

> *"The role of the working class in the creation of new structures has developed over the last few years. New structures are needed to reflect the changed and changing role and subjective position of the working class....The leading role remains in the interests of the working class (its aspirations, in line with existing laws, equality of chances) and against the entrenched interests of the administration. But we are against those who interrupt the normal rhythm of work. History tells us that the working class is a unified entity, with common aims. There are no real methods of having two parties of the working class. This would strengthen rivalry within the working class and not help to solve any of the problems of society. The PZPR is the party of working people. It is and will remain a workers' party."*[271]

The reference to the consciousness of the working class was clearly an indirect reference to the on-going struggle between the OPZZ and Solidarity concerning the right to organise trade unions in enterprises (either a one-union per enterprise or plurality of unions). If the working class remained the ultimate source of the Party's strength (as it itself stated) and the working class had itself not changed, the Party was not obliged to accommodate it. If, however, the working class had changed, then the position of the pragmatic centre of the PZPR in relation to the OPZZ and local Party units both at the enterprise level and elsewhere, could not be legitimated without reflecting this change.

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[271] Reforma Partii (1989) op cit.

"The PZPR CC comes out for a strong and independent trade union movement providing that the unions abide by the constitutional and legislative order and trade union statutes, act in favour of economic development, rely upon financial sources in tune with the law in force in Poland and the principle of loyalty to their State."[272]

The "*strong and independent*" trade union referred to, however, was not specified. Given the on-going struggle between the PZPR leadership and both the OPZZ and Solidarity to find methods for negotiating with each other at the local and national levels, this lack of detail did not provide any of the discursive addressees with any substantial affirmation or disaffirmation of their existing negotiational position. However, the language of pluralism, differentiation and institutionalisation of political pluralism within State structures can be read as a major alteration in the ideological text of the PZPR. At the same time as reaffirming its commitments to the working class, a sense of realism underpinned the 10th Plenum *Teza*.[273] It stated that

"..the end has arrived of a certain phase in the development of socialism and also of the ideas of socialism. Whoever doesn't understand that and thinks that one can wait and avoid a bold look at the world in which we live is a sham Marxist. Marxism says that the system, which creates the more perfect conditions for economic progress, is the better one."[274]

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[272]Reforma Partii (1989) Ibid.
[273]Reforma Partii (1989) Ibid.
[274]Reforma Partii (1989) Ibid.

Socialism was thus becoming constructed as one particular, normative option amongst others, with no intrinsic right to exist and prosper. If socialism was only of value in so far as it could satisfy human needs, then either human needs needed either discursive reinterpretation or else *actually existing socialism* was not relevant to these needs. The Party elite was saying that it had no absolute right to govern and that the existing structures of socialism have no necessary connection with the basic principles of socialism. This indicated that the PZPR recognised that it could not claim legitimacy solely from its vanguard role and that other political forces and social actors could contest the public sphere.

> *"No higher force guarantees that the PZPR will retain its leading role in the future development of Poland. That depends exclusively on us, on our ability to perceive the world and its problems in their entire complexity and also to rid ourselves of our narrow mindedness and egoism."*[275]

The PZPR was taking a step which had fundamental consequences for the further transformation of socio-economic and political relations in Poland. As Janowski suggests, "(The PZPR) *recognised its self-limitation as justified and declared its abdication from its monopoly and all embracing influence on the State.*"[276] The following fragment from the 10th Plenum *Teza* represents the clearest indication that the PZPR was prepared to accept the need for a *round table* and that, in order to make this possible, it was prepared to relinquish many of its traditional discourses. A stress on the notions of a "*constructive opposition*" and the "*constitution,*" however, are also evident:

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[275]Reforma Partii (1989) Ibid.

[276]Janowski, K.B., (Sanford, G., 1992. op cit. p.166)

"The Central Committee considers it necessary to define a new formula of shaping political pluralism, reflecting differentiation and multiple interests and political orientations as well as beliefs of particular social groups and circles, be conducive to solving contradictions and disputes with no harm to the supreme values of the nation and law within state structures and not against them. The Central Committee confirms the readiness of the PZPR to conduct dialogue and search for forms of agreement with any constructive political force if the latter - irrespective of political orientation and ideological inspiration - observes the country's constitutional order and regards the well being of the nation and State as the supreme value...The PZPR Central Committee sees the need and the possibility to include a 'constructive opposition' in the political system."[277]

The precondition of political change - that any opposition group had to accept the existing constitution (even if the existing constitution did not sanction any real form of opposition) - reflects the tautological confusion at the heart of the *traditional* discourse. The collapsing of the orthodox dichotomy of capitalism versus socialism, for example, was a central feature of this confusion, as the following text from an interview with an unidentified Politburo member in January 1989 illustrates:

"Capitalism and socialism shape each other, therefore neither model can reject outright elements of the other. Both types of system incorporated universal features and solutions and both of them can take positive examples from each other. For decades the capitalist countries have been carefully following socialist experiments and have accepted some of them. Now it is our turn to learn from

[277]Reforma Partia, (1989) op cit.

the capitalists. The principle is simple: what is good for man is also good for socialism - even if it comes from hell."[278]

This type of pragmatic reasoning was significant in so far as it demonstrated the extent to which the PZPR had moved in its recognition of the need for non-traditional models to improve socialism. Discursive references to socialism were also ceasing elsewhere to be contrasted with, or set up in opposition, to capitalism. Socialism was no longer posited as a unique, self-contained and inherently superior philosophy operating according to a fundamentally different logic, but rather as a moral standpoint or counterbalance to capitalism, as an option rather than the expression of a 'higher stage of history.'[279]

"*The rules of a market economy and political democracy have an older pedigree than capitalism and the use of them in this system should not limit their usefulness in the next one. What is recognisable as 'capitalistic' is simply the result of recognising objective laws and principles, which are independent of the political system. There is no problem of rivalry or the replacement of the socialistic by the capitalistic...Socialism in itself is of no value-it is necessary only in so far as it becomes useful for the survival and life satisfaction of wider circles than in capitalism. We are overcoming the barbaric, essentially mad way of ramming society into discredited political forms and replacing this with a civilised, normal, isolated, evolutionary, reformatory adaptation of the forms of social life to new social needs. We are recognising multiple, intermediate forms,*

[278]Współistnienie (1989)
[279]Współistnienie (1989) Ibid.

between the traditional variables of 'public/private,' 'spontaneous/guided' and 'State/market."[280]

This type of discursive reasoning represented a definite collapse of the traditional focus on the belief that absolute historical analysis is better than intermediate or procedural reasoning.[281] It is important in terms of the evolution both of competing discourses (and practical programmes) and factions within the Party but also for the specific development of Party-opposition dialogues. The weakening of the ideological preoccupation with contradiction was also central to this relaxation of discourse. As Staniszkis suggests, the PZPR was coming to terms with the fact that *"there no longer existed a notion of absolute truth or purity of man, action or system, which could be addressed in terms of contradictions which had, somehow, to be resolved."*[282]

Rakowski's rejection of *'historical rights'*[283] (of the leading party) is vital in an understanding of the Party elite's movement away from its own community and its search for a common language with which to negotiate with Solidarity. Rakowski's speech on 17th January 1989, at the closing ceremony of the 10th Plenum illustrates this:

"The Party has matured and can now look at reality not in categories of wishful thinking or discontent, but on the basis of facts of life...Either socialism will understand this, or it will pass into history as an experiment that failed."[284]

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[280]Współistnienie (1989) Ibid.
[281]Staniszkis, J., (1992) op cit. p.136
[282]Staniszkis, J., (1992) Ibid.
[283]*Trybuna Ludu*, January 18th 1989
[284]Staniszkis, J., (1992) op cit. p.136

Rakowski told the second part of the 10th Plenum, furthermore, that Solidarity was not the same as it had been in 1980-81 and that it could become "*a genuine part of Polish socialism.*"[285] However, the discourse of a 'constructive opposition' was, significantly, tempered by the reality of an opposition that continued to seek more concessions from the government than the PZPR was prepared to offer. During January, thus, the Jaruzelski-Rakowski axis was obliged to clarify the Party's conditions for negotiation with Solidarity. Jaruzelski stated, that:

> *"The one indispensable condition is that Solidarity agrees to accept and respect the legal and constitutional order of the socialist State. Within this framework, everything else, including the pace and the form of building the relationship between the union and authorities, is negotiable."*[286]

In late January Rakowski's invitation to Wałęsa and various Church figures to meet and discuss the forthcoming *round table* was met with a positive response. Rakowski proposed a two-year social-contract between the government and Solidarity that could lead to its eventual legal recognition (3rd May 1991 was suggested) and stated publicly that he was "*not theoretically opposed to trade union pluralism.*"[287] During this period, Solidarity would not be allowed to strike and would be co-opted onto an undefined State 'consultative body.'

In relation to both the Catholic Church within Poland and the USSR, one finds a large degree of ambivalence in Party discourses, however. On the one hand the Party remained constructed as a Marxist-Leninist party,

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285 *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, 20th January 1989

286 *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, January 20th 1989. Ibid.

287 *The Economist*, January 21st 1989

operating within an international movement centred in Moscow. On the other hand the Party wanted to be seen as progressive to the West and as a national party to the nation, a nation firmly committed to Catholicism. Untying these contradictions lay at the heart of the struggle to define and construct new discourses at the turn of 1988-9. Orzechowski talked of the:

> *"...national and workers' character of the PZPR. Socialism in Poland stems from deep national traditions. We are not a foreign party. The Party defends the interests of the nation, its sovereignty and existing alliances within the framework of the Yalta-Potsdam settlements. We feel we are the main heir to the Polish nation and State, within which there are various strands and tendencies-both glorious victories and bitter defeats. There are different classes and values, political orientations and understandings of the national interest. We can return to them in order to find the best contemporary solutions."*[288]

In relation to the Church, he stated,

> "*Since the 9th Congress a great debate has taken place. The majority of society are* (Catholic) *believers and that is an objective fact. There are those within our ranks who argue that materialism and atheism are what the Party should seek. They argue that any talks with the Church will take away the Marxist character of the Party. But our Party doesn't have to be and shouldn't be organised in the spirit of atheism. It must be tolerant. The Party is and will remain neutral. The Party is secular but not anti-religious. Socialism, as a form, is not anti-religion nor anti-religiousness. Its aim is not an atheistic society and socialism is not a choice between religion and atheism. The Party does not*

[288]Kształt Polskiego Socjalizmu, (1989) op cit.

take it upon itself to decide whether God exists or doesn't. The PZPR *values and understands Christian values in the life of society. There is a connection between the universal values of religion and scientific and humanistic values of socialism. Countless elements of Marxist learning have adapted to the teachings of the Church. Many of its values, especially in the sphere of ethics, philosophy and morality are close to ours."*[289]

The discourses of the 10th Plenum clearly signalled the PZPR's acceptance of the Church as a valid and valuable social institution. It also recognised the need to talk with the Church, both to vindicate its discourses of national responsibility and to locate itself closer to Polish society. These discourses were underpinned by meetings between Church and Party representatives. During early January, Rakowski and Church representatives met on various occasions to discuss the *round table.* These meetings were a decisive factor in the PZPR elite's decision to continue to stress the reformist line at the second part of the 10th Plenum. The Church was promised official legalisation in return for an agreement that it would seek to temper any radicalism within the Solidarity negotiating team.

[289]Reforma Partii, (1989) op cit.

3. *Past* Vs *Present*

Interspersing the central ideological alterations in official discourse during this period was a continued search for historical legitimation. At the 10th Plenum the PZPR Politburo reaffirmed its intention of eradicating *'the last remnants of Stalinism'* in Polish socialism, signalled its desire to see a conclusive end to the work of the Blank-Spots Commission, addressed the role played by the PPS in the building of the Polish socialist system and openly apologised to the Church for the treatment of Cardinal Wyszyński during the 1950's. As the Party elite began to move away from its exclusive narratives in the ideological sphere of discourse and began to adopt a more pragmatic stance in relation to non-Party actors, it also recognised that any form of democratic contestation (however limited) demanded that the Party attempt to relocate itself in the popular, national consciousness.

During the 10th Plenum and at the Ideology conference a coded search for both a more national discourse (locating the PZPR in relation to national traditions) and a more variegated and autonomous socialist tradition was evolving. The PZPR elite accelerated, for example, in both *Nowe Drogi* and *Trybuna Ludu*, its re-examination of various 'closed' or 'blank-spots' in the history of the Second and the First Republics (1944-89 and 1919-39 respectively). For example, it began to talk more candidly about the role played by the Soviet Union at Katyń, the issue of responsibility for other crimes against the Polish nation committed by the USSR during WWII and a reappraisal of the brief post-war flirtation of the Polish left with ideas of a *'Grand Coalition,'* within a mixed and

plural socialism, between 1944 and 1948.[290] The PPS was talked of as a *"vital"* and *"significant"*[291] element of Polish socialism. Polish socialists, intellectuals and activists who had been either branded counter revolutionary, both within the pre-1938 KPP (Communist Party) or ignored and marginalised within the post-1948 political settlement, were resurrected as examples of Polish patriotism and socialism. Significantly also were the attempts to re-evaluate the more recent political history - for example, the issue of responsibility for the March events of 1968, the Gdynia massacre of 1970, but not, significantly, responsibility for the imposition of Martial law in 1981.

The opening 10th Plenum *Teza* openly dealt with the question of Stalinism under the heading of *'Liquidating the remnants of Stalinism.'* This discourse of *'Stalinism'* had various significant legitimational functions. *"(Stalinism) was a product of the Soviet Union. (It had) repressive, anti-democratic and self-interested features,"*[292] the *Teza* read. Historical references to Stalinism and the so-termed *'deformities in socialism'* defined the PZPR as a national - and therefore non-Soviet - party. It also constructed Polish socialism as distinct from and independent of the Soviet Union. The *Teza* continued:

> *"1948-56 (was) a time of massive social change - industrialisation and urbanisation. But with what costs? After 1956 Poland rejected Stalinism and returned to moral social justice. Much, however, remained of the centralised -*

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[290] *Nowe Drogi*, February 1989. Articles appeared, locating the reforms of the 1980's in terms of a process of de-Stalinisation begun in the 1950's - Antonszewski, A., (1989); the role of socialist organisations in the struggle for independence in 1918, Sobczak, J., (1989). In January's edition of the same journal, articles about the PPS also appeared.

[291] Sobczak, J., (1989) Ibid.

[292] Reforma Partii, (1989) op cit.

bureaucratic State, economy, Party and all of society. This became the source of dogmatism and conservatism. In the 1980's odnowa has removed many of these remains."[293]

Again, the PZPR was seeking to distance itself from the Soviet Union and locate *odnowa* both within national and socialist traditions.

"Within the Party, these ideas and concepts (of Stalinism) *must be rejected in favour of a new Leninist model - the Party as a mass organisation, with intellectual leadership. How? - the reintroduction of political leadership, the Party as a movement, with independent thinking and activity of members, with inner Party democracy...* (to) *reawaken intellectual criticism."*[294]

This element of the historical discourse recognised, implicitly, that *odnowa* had not fully eradicated *'the last remnants of Stalinism in Poland.'* It did not, however, elaborate on where these obstacles lay, whether they were institutional or cultural (or otherwise) or who the Stalinists were. Under the sub-heading *"40 years of PZPR,"* the *Teza* continued its search for historical legitimation:

"The Party was created in an atmosphere of tension and external pressure. A strong role was played by the PPS. We call for an open re-evaluation of history and appeal to Party historians and to the Academy of Social Science."[295]

This reference to the PPS was, within the context of wider ideological debates within the PZPR and within non-Party socialist groups in

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[293]Reforma Partii (1989) Ibid.
[294]Reforma Partii (1989) Ibid.
[295]Reforma Partii (1989) Ibid.

society, an attempt to appeal to a milder socialist tradition. The PPS signified both the PZPR's pre-Stalinist traditions, its strong national and democratic roots in the workers' movement and thus its mass popular appeal.

Changes in the Party's historical discourses are explicable in terms of two central factors. One, the internal power struggle within the PZPR, in particular the reformist wing's search for labels to define itself and consolidate its position within the elite and its influence over the conservative wings of the Party. Two, the Party's search for discourses with which to appeal to a wider national audience. The PZPR Politburo clearly sought to relocate the Party within a notion of Polish history that reflected, or was seen to reflect, the collective experience and discourses of the Polish people. It linked ideological and historical discourses by offering a rationale and alibi for the so-called 'deformities' of real socialism' (i.e. problems *'within'* socialism not problems *'of'* socialism) by equating contemporary systemic problems with external factors. This was closer to the *Populist* discourse than the *Globalist.* By shedding responsibility for Katyń, the Party would be seen, during the forthcoming period of negotiation, as a truly national and authentically Polish entity.

4. *East* Vs *West*

In attempting to persuade the Soviet Union to speed up its political evaluation of the 'blank spots' investigation during January 1989, the PZPR was seeking, if covertly, a signal from Moscow that its domestic reform process fell within the political limits prescribed by Moscow. The PZPR clearly wanted a Soviet admission of culpability for Katyń, for example, in order to distance itself from the image commonly held in Polish society of the Soviet Union - and, in particular, from the Stalinist model - while at the same time, locating itself in the vanguard of the Perestroika reforms taking place in the Soviet Union.

> *"There is an inevitability of reform...a re-evaluation of the role of the Party in the State is a precondition of change in socialism and must be co-ordinated with the rhythm of changes in the USSR. Historical challenges confront socialism. The Party does not exist just for itself. It wants and needs it be a vanguard party, but this vanguard status cannot be achieved without fundamental changes."*[296]

The Soviets, however, although in close contact - via Czyrek - with the PZPR Politburo, failed to offer any clear signal that responsibility for Katyń would be offered during this period. This apparent discrepancy, however, between Soviet and Polish discourses can also be seen as one of the PZPR's key bargaining chips in the forthcoming negotiations with Solidarity. As Osiatyński suggests,[297] the use of the Soviet threat during the negotiations, in particular at the *round table,* provided the PZPR leadership with an opportunity to exploit the real fear in Moscow that

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[296] *Trybuna Ludu*, 17th - 18th December 1988

[297] Osiatński, P., (Elster, J., 1996 op cit. p.71)

any Solidarity-inspired domestic political changes unsanctioned by the USSR leadership could aggravate an international conflict. Sources related to this period in Soviet-Polish relations are confused on the question of whether this silence on the part of the Soviet elite was a deliberate political ploy or simply a product of domestic Soviet factors, however.

5. *Conclusions*

The 10th Plenum period represents the key turning point in the process of changing PZPR discourses in the period before the *round table* talks. More obviously *Public*-type discourses in relation to and about the Church, the political and trade union opposition, the Soviet Union and various historical references were planted close to the centre of the Party's public and official discourses.

The PZPR openly located aspects of other - traditionally competing - ideologies and discourses at the heart of its legitimational discourse. It borrowed, for example, from both overtly ideological (*social democratic, neo-liberal*) and *'sub-ideological'* narratives (*economic reform, negotiations*) and pieced into these aspects of a national discourse (*democratic heritage, cultural continuity*). The distinction between *'Public'* and *'Private,'* between ideological and non-ideological discourses was thus becoming increasingly blurred.

The Party elite's political pragmatism is central to the partial relinquishment of ideological discourse. The new discourse made a direct connection between the needs of the economy and the decreased intervention of the State in economic matters and of the Party within the State at all levels. This is significant for two reasons. One, it represented a fundamental shift in the legitimational basis of the Communist State, away from a traditional emphasis on the unity of Party and State and the traditional notion that the interests of the Party and the working class were, if not identical, then either should or did coincide to a considerable degree. Two, it opened up various political possibilities both within the

PZPR and between it and the Solidarity elites and its wider movement. That this happened at this point rather than during or after the subsequent *round table* negotiations, meant that the leading group within the PZPR was able to contain, to a greater extent than might have been possible otherwise, the strands of internal factionalism within the Party and movement.

The PZPR's pragmatic centre, at this stage, however, remained confident of controlling the outcome of the *round table* talks and it couched all its ideological discourses in terms of *odnowa.* Without concrete forms of application, *odnowa* would, it was hoped, retain both the central political role of the PZPR (in the form of the leading role principle) and, at the same time, provide a legitimate mechanism for integrating an opposition into the decision making process. *Odnowa* sits at the core of the problematic. It both prescribed medicines for the cure, but at the same time was, itself, the disease - as a product of one party rule - although its overt prescriptions were insufficiently authoritarian to achieve its aims without some form of genuine democratisation. The core of the legitimating discourse thus continued to centre on the notion that the PZPR - in a different organisational form and in a redefined relationship with society and State - would and should retain its avant-garde position in Poland's public and political life. The language used, however, made it less than clear what this actually meant in practise. Within the 'symbolic' realm of discourse the constituent elements of a post-Communist discourse were bred, although at this time, they were legitimating discourses that were shaped by a correlation of historical and structural socio-political and socio-economic forces that the PZPR no longer either fully controlled or understood.

Chapter 5

The End of History

February-August 1989

1. *Introduction*

If the 10th Plenum Central Committee *Teza* had located PZPR discourse within a wider, more *'Public'*-oriented interpretation of *odnowa*, the period February-August 1989 illustrated the political limits to its operationalisation. The transformation of the political system (an independent Sejm, end of the leading role principle) initiating after April by the *round table* accords, pushed the Party elite into re-evaluating the sincerity of its commitments to *'socialist constitutionalism.'* However, many within the pragmatic centre treated the *round table* as an unavoidable political necessity that would buy industrial peace, time and renew the Party by opening it up to a (limited) form of public contestation, while, at the same time, open up divisions within Solidarity. It was not therefore seen as a mechanism for altering the basic value of its leading role, which, in modified form, would continue to define the essential terms of political decision-making. PZPR elite intentions and strategy represented a last attempt, as Kamiński argues, to *'constitutionalise communism.'*[298] That is, retain the core of the leading role of the party principle, while altering various decision-making and administrative structures within the State.

[298]Kamiński, B., (1991) op cit. p.248

The agreements signed between representatives of the government, OPZZ, an opposition centred around Solidarity's newly formed Citizen's Committees (OKs) and representatives of the Catholic Church on 5th April 1989 - in particular the agreements reached on the political sub-table concerning constitutional reform, changes in the legislature and electoral rules - in their political effects, however, undermined the *odnowa* principle that the PZPR would be able to retain its leading role while simultaneously widening the terms of political contestation and decision making within the State. The agreement led to semi-open elections that undermined the political position of the PZPR within the legislative branch of the State and led to a political and constitutional crisis of the one party system. By the time it became clear that the PZPR would not be in a position to implement its version of civic-democratic socialism 'from above' or 'from within' (the State) after June, however, it was too late to return to the pre-10th Plenum discourses of legitimation. The PZPR was losing political support from all sides: the OPZZ, SD and ZSL were shifting their allegiances away from the PZPR, local Party units, in many areas, had failed to support PZPR candidates at the elections in June and the option of force had all but disappeared. In short, the PZPR was obliged to honour many of the largely unintended outcomes of its new discourses.

The key to the pattern of discourse change lies in two interrelated factors. One, in the vagueness of the discursive notion of '*socialist constitutionalism.*' Two, in the PZPR elite's political weaknesses leading up to and at the *round table* itself, in particular its inability to determine the composition of the Solidarity-Opposition team or keep the OPZZ out of

the talks. Its pragmatism and diluted ideological discourses actually made it more difficult to exert direct political pressure in the traditional way.

The PZPR, thus, moved from a position of articulating various, apparently secondary or sub-discourses which the pragmatic centre of the elite saw as peripheral to the key discourses of ideological continuity (within *odnowa*) and the retention of political control (within existing, but altered, political structures), to relying on these discourses for its political survival. The discourses, unhinged from their political sources within the pragmatic centre, acquired a definite political role within the process of changing PZPR legitimation. They anchored the PZPR to the constitutional process of system reform and to the dismantling of State Socialism in Poland, both of which obliged the PZPR to re-evaluate its discourses of political legitimation.

The PZPR continued, however, to seek to locate itself during this period within two broad traditions. The first was *of*, rather than *despite of*, the Polish nation - the PZPR as a genuinely national entity, grounded in Polish traditions and driven by the national interest. This was illustrated in discursive reconstructions of various national signifiers, including historical figures and traditions, support for an accommodation with the Catholic Church and locating itself on the side of *'victims'* rather than *'perpetrators'* of Stalinism. The second was that of Polish traditions of democracy and constitutionalism, the elements of which mirrored many elements of the official discourses of the Party.

2. *Public* Vs *Private*

During March and April 1989, the Party elite declared, at times quite unambiguously, its intention to control and regulate the *round table* talks. Orzechowski, for example, although associated with the *Globalist* project at the 10th Plenum, made repeated references to the PZPR's ability to cancel or abandon the talks at will.[299] A clear example of the traditional type of discourse is found in a March speech made by Rakowski on nationwide television:

> "*We decided, here in government, that after the round table is over, we will make a list of all the proposals, demands and needs that were put forward. Then we will make an economic calculation and will say what can be realised and what is, in fact, merely wishful thinking. We have to stick to reality, or, in Poland, we will achieve nothing.*"[300]

Rakowski also sought to locate the Party on the side of those who had had enough already of what he referred to as "*the constant talking*" and who, in his words, wanted "*bread on the table.*"[301] The assumption was still, therefore, that the Party knew better than anyone else what 'the people' wanted and was able to stand above the process of debate, discussion and contestation at the *round table* (an assumption that evoked the spirit of the Party's belief in its leading role). Repeatedly during the period of the talks, Rakowski sought to undercut their significance in the reform process, both by attempting to make deals with the (supposedly) more pragmatic or opportunist groups within the Solidarity camp and by

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[299] *Pravda*, January 21st *"We have the power, always have had and will continue to use it in a way we see fit,"* Orzechowski reported as saying.

[300] *Trybuna Ludu* 28th February 1989

[301] *Trybuna Ludu*, 28th February 1989. Ibid.

sending sensitive economic reform legislation to the Sejm at the end of March (a week before the final agreements were signed) without the consent of Solidarity. Ciosek's response to Russian journalists who asked what the *round table* meant for the PZPR at a foreign press conference the day after the agreements had been signed, is also illustrative of the Party elite's concerns, particularly for an '*Eastern*' (read Soviet) audience. He said:

> *"The round table is the Party's attempt to build lines of defence. The President and, if need be, the armed forces, would keep things under control and the Party's majority in the Sejm would ensure its ability to block any changes in the constitution."*[302]

The pragmatic centre of the PZPR, around Rakowski, was seeking to use the *round table* as a method of undermining the unity of Solidarity, seeking to 'divide and rule.' Political compromise, Ciosek suggested,[303] would undermine the moral certainty of Solidarity, oblige it to make real, as opposed to 'symbolic,' choices and open up practical issues for groups within it. "*What,*" for example, Rakowski asked rhetorically, (of Solidarity), "*is your economic programme?.*"[304] At the opening round table talks, Ciosek asked Geremek, *"what is your relationship to Socialism?"*[305]

The Party clearly continued to seek to bind Solidarity to making explicit its acceptance of the terms defined by its definition of socialist democracy. This can be seen as an attempt to contain the negotiations

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302 *Pravda*, April 6th 1989
303 *Trybuna Ludu*, February 16th 1989
304 *Trybuna Ludu*, February 16th 1989. Ibid.
305 *Trybuna Ludu*, February 8th, 1989

within limits acceptable to both the wider PZPR community and an international audience - most importantly the USSR. Solidarity's negotiators, most specifically, Geremek, however, refused to be pressured to support, unequivocally, the existing socialist constitution. Geremek, for example, in response to Ciosek's question would not equate socialism with 'actually existing socialism': "*which socialism do we accept? State owning socialism we do not accept and will not understand. To social ownership we do say 'yes'*."[306] The Party-government's *round table* negotiators could not readily summon a response without reverting to the ideological language that had been heavily diluted and at the talks themselves references of this type were conspicuous by their absence.

Even before the talks began, the pragmatic centre was attempting to determine both the composition and, thus it was hoped, indirectly, the outcomes, of the talks. However, having failed to control the Solidarity team's composition (to '*constructive guests*') and also, in many ways, its failure to control the participation of other groups at the talks (in particular the OPZZ[307]), the pragmatic centre sought various ways to underplay the significance of the talks and to construct them discursively within the traditional interpretation of *odnowa*. The Party elite, via covert contacts with it's own negotiating teams, stressed the need to contain the talks to areas that would not threaten the status quo within the State,[308] but its public discourses remained vague and open to multiple interpretation. This confusion can be seen partly as a product of the

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[306]*Trybuna Ludu*, February 8th 1989. Ibid.

[307]The OPZZ found a place at the round table against the wishes of either Rakowski or Jaruzelski. See Osiatyński, in Elster, J., (1996), pp.77-78

[308]Osiatyński, P., (Elster, J., 1996 op cit., pp.78-80). Osiatyński talks of the ways in which the PZPR government sought to relay vital information to its representatives in the negotiations, not always with great success.

PZPR's attempt to assuage Soviet fears that negotiation with Solidarity would not inevitably mean loss of Communist power in Poland and partly a product of its need to reassure the more hard-line members of the Party-government 'community' that changes in the organisation of socialism did not mean a loss of prerogatives, either at the local or national levels.

However, the *round table* talks are central to the dynamics of changing PZPR discourses. They ushered in radical changes in the political system which, in turn, created divisions within the PZPR community, isolating the pragmatic centre (which was hung between the two wings of reform and reaction within the Party) and obliged it to honour its overt discourses of constitutionalism. The discourse of *'socialist constitutionalism,'* which acted as the cornerstone of the Party's post-10th Plenum legitimational discourse, played an unavoidable and prominent role in the Party's *round table* discourses. Almost all references at both the opening and closing addresses were defined by the Party's explicit desire to operate within a democratic - and hence legitimate - constitutional system, although one still within 'socialism.' This is illustrated in the opening *round table* speech of Kiszczak on 6th February 1989:

> *"The methods of government must be relevant to the requirements of socialism with an explicitly democratic and humanistic face. Political relations in Poland ought fully to reflect the differentiation of opinions and convictions, as well as create the conditions for their legal articulation. Such far-reaching changes require us to overcome conservative constraints.* Odnowa *demands social calm, consideration and responsibility and the shaping of policy through dialogue. We*

must accept responsibility for, and the philosophy of, gradualness. We must not negate the historical attainments of socialist Poland."[309]

'Socialist constitutionalism' was also slipped into most of the Party's Plenary discourses during and after the *round table.* It provided the Party's *round table* representatives with very little practical guidance within the negotiating environment of the talks themselves, however. In fact, it reduced the PZPR-government's option of threatening to derail the talks.

After almost nine weeks of negotiations between teams of government and opposition representatives in Warsaw, a formal *round table* agreement was signed on April 5th 1989.[310] The agreement laid down the terms and the timetable of reforms in all significant political, economic and social spheres. It made provisions for to the creation of an openly elected upper house of parliament (Senate) with powers of legislative initiation and veto (something that both Jaruzelski and Rakowski had been loath to concede since it would have had the potential to curtail the unbridled executive powers of the Sejm, within which the PZPR was to retain an automatic majority), the creation of the institution of President (to replace the Council of State), a semi-openly elected Sejm and set an election timetable and electoral guidelines. The questions of the role and powers of the Senate and Presidency were the subject of fierce bargaining between the government and Solidarity sides.[311] How they were resolved had significant consequences both for the subsequent

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[309]Smoleński, P., (1989) op cit. p.12

[310]Kowalski, L., (1993); Porozumienia okrągłego stołu (1989)

[311]Osiatyński, P. (Elster, J., 1996. op cit. p.82) For a fuller exploration of the political bargaining, in particular concerning the relative powers for the Senate and Presidency.

transformation of the political system as well as for the process of PZPR legitimation after the June elections.

The possibility of a freely elected Senate arose during late March in discussion between Geremek and Kwaśniewski at the political sub-table.[312] Kwaśniewski (without the explicit sanction of the Politburo[313]) agreed to a freely elected Senate in return for Solidarity's support in the creation of an office of President. The Presidential office was to be non-party based, although, as agreed, would be occupied by the PZPR First Secretary, General Jaruzelski. The office was empowered to override any legislative initiatives and executive decisions taken in either house of parliament. The creation of a strong office of President (though elected by both houses of parliament) was designed to legitimate the reform process in the eyes of the Soviet Union. The Sejm was to have wider representation. All of these agreements, however, undermined the strategy of the pragmatic centre, which was to limit the talks to trade union matters, break up the fragile worker-intellectual alliance within Solidarity and retain the structurally dominant role of the PZPR within the political system.

The PZPR's discourses after the 10th Plenum had been of constitutional reform (widening the State, reforming the Party, creating a civil - if still 'socialist' - society) - which meant that it had no effective public discourse with which to argue against the agreements. The idea of a *'national list'*[314] of 35 senior (mainly Politburo) PZPR (as well as other,

[312]Dubiński, K., (1990) op cit. pp.127-140
[313]Osiatyński, P., (Elster, J., 1996. op cit, p.84)
[314]Lewis, P., (1990)

non-PZPR, for example SD and ZSL) candidates, who would stand uncontested at the June elections, also appeared both to fit into a democratic discourse and meet the pragmatic centre's aim of relocating itself at the apex of the parliamentary system, thus retaining its leading role but *within* the State, rather than *above* it.

The apparently fragile coalition of forces within Solidarity, however, did not crumble during the *round table.* The negotiating teams, in fact, consolidated their contacts with the wider organisation, thus retaining a strong bargaining position in relation to the government side at the talks. Solidarity's negotiating teams, grouped around Geremek (Solidarity-Opposition leader on the political sub-table), for example, kept in close contact with Wałęsa and Pietrzyk of the trade union wing, both of whom retained day-to-day contact with the wider trade union movement. This can be seen as one of several factors that pushed the PZPR-government side into conceding greater constitutional reforms than the pragmatic centre had wanted. Rakowski's aim of opening up existing divisions within the Solidarity bloc, most specifically between trade unionists and KOR based intellectual *'advisors'* explains the apparent ease with which this legalisation was agreed. The Solidarity camp was far better mobilised and more unified than Rakowski expected[315] and the Catholic Church's role in underpinning this unity was also either ignored or simply misunderstood, by Rakowski.

The role of the Church, in retaining unity within the opposition and undermining the political strategy of the PZPR's pragmatic centre during the *round table* was important for several reasons. The Church appeared to

provide a form of indirect social legitimation for a reform process the PZPR believed it could control, without the apparent need to offer real concessions to Solidarity or institutionalise the democratisation process. Before, during and immediately after the round table, the PZPR's discourses referring to the Catholic Church in Poland and Catholicism in general reflected the Party's political strategy of attempting to offer largely symbolic political reform in exchange for an industrial deal with Solidarity.

The Party's traditionally observed ideological antipathies concerning its post-war relationship with the Polish Catholic Church had been reduced at the 10th Plenum (see chapter 4). During and after the *round table* any openly negative formal Party discourses in relation to the Church lapsed into obscurity.[316] The Rakowski pragmatic centre discursively recognised the Church's important role in Polish national culture and began to formalise a relationship of semi-formalised and open political exchange based on what one can surmise it believed to be based on mutual interests. It also continued, after the *round table* and the Party's failures at the June elections, to seek reassurances from Church figures that any attempts to break up the deals agreed at the talks would not be sanctioned by the Church. However the Church's representatives at the *round table* (Orszulik and Dąbrowski) played a definite role in supporting and legitimating the tough stance taken by Geremek at the political sub-table and at various sub-meetings held at Wilanów and elsewhere. The

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[315]Rakowski, M.R., (1992) op cit. pp.171-172

[316]Tanalski, T., (1989) pp.84-93. In the Party's main theoretical journal, *Nowe Drogi*, during February-April, a series of articles appeared, in which the traditional antipathies of Marxism and Religion (specifically Catholicism) were explicitly dealt. Tanalski talked of a series of overlapping values between Socialism and Catholicism and of the need for both parties to work together for the "National good."

Church, in fact sided, in many areas, with the Solidarity teams.[317] The Party's search for a compromise with society that would allow it retain its prerogatives was premised on the view that the Church, as symbol of an autonomous society, would have to be ostentatiously respected. It was hoped that the Church could be tempted by the prospect of greater autonomy within a revised, but still 'socialist' system of government not to play too strong a role in organising and supporting the opposition. Again this premise was based either on faulty analysis or wishful thinking.

Between the formal meeting of Rakowski and the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Colasunno, on January 3rd and mid-April, the Party and Church hierarchies engaged in a series of meetings laying the groundrules for a formal re-legalisation of the Church in Poland and a formal agreement between Church and State.[318] These international talks coincided with and were clearly part of the discussions taking place between PZPR and Church officials within Poland during the period. On March 2nd, the two Church representatives who had sat in on the *Magdalenka* talks, bishops Gocłowski and Orszulik and Czyrek, the Politburo representative responsible for Church-State relations, issued a progress report in which the question of a new State-Church relationship was outlined.[319] This followed a meeting between Ciosek and other members of the Church-State Advisory Council (which had been set up

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317Gebert, K., (1989) op cit. pp.45-49. Gebert talks of the Church playing a very clever mediating role that, almost imperceptible "moved the talks into a new phase."

318Rakowski, M. R., (1992) op cit. Rakowski notes two important meetings between high party officials and Church officials during January 1989. On 4th January Rakowski, Ciosek and Cypriniak met with Macharski, Stroba and Orszulik to discuss the church's role in the *round table* (which at this time was not certain to take place at all) and on 23rd January when a Joint Party-Church commission was set up to oversee changes in Church state relations.

319Dubiński, K., (1990) op cit. pp.59-78

in January), at which the former spoke of 'progress' being made. On the basis of the report and various smaller meetings, a draft law on Church-State relations was agreed. On 15th April, Czyrek met with the Pope in the Vatican and two days later the Roman Catholic Church in Poland was accorded a legal status unparalleled in the history of Easter European Communism. A new legal framework for Church-State relations, which guaranteed freedom of conscience and religious belief (for example, the right to run Catholic schools and social welfare organisations, to regain property confiscated in the 1950's and run its own press), was established. Rakowski also spoke of the Party's use of repressive measures against the Church, "*most heineously*" in 1953, with the arrest of Cardinal Wyszyński. He also referred to the new Polish-Vatican relations as "*a step in the right direction,*" without fully articulating in which direction.[320] On July 17th, the Vatican announced the reopening of diplomatic relations with Poland.

The Church's role in the changing discourse of the PZPR was clearly to underpin the more reformist and conciliatory elements within the PZPR by offering (within its own discourses and contacts with society) support and justification for the *round table*, for national agreement and for evolutionary political changes. The Party's need for a mechanism for appealing to society for social calm and with which to legitimate its own reformism was, in large measure thus met, although at a price higher than the Party would have liked. The failure of the elite to control or effectively regulate the outcomes of the talks can be explained largely by its failure to recognise that the Church would not be prepared to trade its

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[320] *Trybuna Ludu*, May 19th, 1989

own formal legalisation in return for support for a limited political deal between State and Solidarity.

At the *round table* talks themselves the specific dynamics of negotiation also played a significant role in the wider process of democratisation, contrary to what many have suggested, including Staniszkis, that they were merely symbolic events 'for the cameras,' the real political deals having been drawn up elsewhere.[321] The two main sub-tables (political reform and trade union reform) were linked, for example, via often concealed and unreported contacts between smaller sub-tables and key individuals and groups outside of the talks themselves. On the Party-government side, the Reykowski (political reform team) held frequent meetings and discussions with key figures within the Party hierarchy during breaks in negotiation. Between the Party and Solidarity elites (those not represented at the talks themselves) those contacts that had been built up during 1988, between reformist groups within the Party and moderates within the Solidarity group, continued during and after the *round table* talks themselves, at *Magdalenka.*[322]

Another of the keys to the PZPR's failures at the *round table* talks lies in its failure, by the time of the inaugural session, to determine the composition of the Solidarity-opposition team. The refusal of Solidarity in late 1988 and early 1989 to agree to talks with the PZPR without the right to select its own participants was crucial. Kiszczak was thus unable, without moving the Party back into the *traditional* form of legitimation (pre-10th Plenum), to select what had been constructed in PZPR

[321] Staniszkis, J., (1992) op cit. p.90

discourse from mid-1988 as "*constructive oppositionists.*" The Solidarity-Opposition side therefore included those figures who had been ostentatiously excluded from the primary series of talks in 1988, most notably, Michnik and Kuroń. Internal resistance within the PZPR after the 10th Plenum, furthermore, obliged Rakowski and General Jaruzelski to sanction, against their better instincts,[323] the inclusion of those who remained in the words of Kiszczak, "*bête noires*" for the majority of the PZPR apparatus.[324]

Solidarity's *round table* composition is vital to an understanding of the dynamics of the talks themselves and also to the changing discourse of the PZPR. It can be assumed that, had the Party been able to control the composition of the opposition side (i.e. exclude Michnik, Geremek and Kuroń), the Polish transition, and the role of the PZPR within it, would have turned out very differently. Rakowski, for example, clearly believed that the Party could manage a limited reorganisation of the existing trade union laws (to allow Solidarity to operate as a trade union) which would ease social pressure on the economic reform process but he was not prepared to make concessions in the sphere of political reforms. Both Geremek and other leading ex-KOR figures, however, having found their place at the table, linked trade union matters with political and constitutional affairs.[325] This is most clearly illustrated at the sub-table on political reform (headed by Professors Geremek and Reykowski, Solidarity and PZPR respectively). The PZPR was thus faced with a

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[322]Gebert, K., (1989) op cit. pp.41-49

[323]Perzkowski, S., (1992) op cit. p.123. Politburo meeting of 27th January 1989 at which Rakowski spoke of the need to limit concessions.

[324]Beres, W. and Skoczyła, J.,(1991), p.59

[325]Osiatyński, P., (Elster, J., 1996, op cit.) and Gebert, K., (1989) op cit. pp.102-111

situation in which it was obliged, by the logic of its own discourse, to support a deal that undermined its own position within the existing structures of power. Furthermore, the Party-government *round table* team was made up of reformers, many of whom, like Orzechowski and Kwaśniewski, had not been associated with martial law or the PZPR's failures during the 1980's. Many, therefore, did not share the strategic aims of the Rakowski 'pragmatic centre' and could not be treated simply as an extension of the traditional elite.

In part, the pragmatic centre's strategy of seeking to open up divisions within Solidarity had some success, however. Splits did emerge within Solidarity. Within the context of continued industrial unrest (in many areas under the leadership of a younger generation of workers with little or no experience of the Solidarity of 1980) and the general sense of a 'sell-out'[326] by key groups on the margins of the Solidarity movement, these strains began to push the more secular and intellectual, Warsaw based groups further towards making deals and contacts with the reform minded groups within the PZPR. A key public split between the Geremek and Kaczyński groups in June, for example, illustrated one definite line of internal Solidarity discord. Both Elster[327] and Kurski[328] also point to strains developing during the election campaign. The Kaczyński twins, two key Solidarity trade union representatives from Gdańsk, became increasingly concerned, for example, about the over-friendliness of the two post-*round table* elites, suggesting that Solidarity's

[326]Staniszkis, J., (1992) op cit. p.143. The new generation of striking workers in 1988-9, had no historical terms of reference in which to locate their experience and many rejected the conciliatory gestures of the older elite groups, out of hand.

[327]Elster, J., (1996)

[328]Kurski, J., (1993)

Warsaw intellectuals were afraid of losing out to the Gdańsk trade union wing if elections were fully open. KOR figures such as Kuroń, on the other hand, were critical of the role played by the Church in the election campaign.

The PZPR's pragmatic centre, despite this partial success, remained hung somewhere between its negotiating team at the talks themselves and those within its wider, auxiliary community, many of whom were still resistant to the talks at all. This internal tension and the political cleavages it fostered, came to a head at the end of March, as decisions regarding political reform moved to centre stage at the *round table.* The notion that the Party could continue to separate economic/trade union matters from political matters had become increasingly tenuous. Geremek had agreed to support the Party's terms for industrial peace (a strike-free period and recognition of the need for social calm) on the Party's acceptance of a much wider set of constitutional changes than the Party elite wanted to give.[329] This was related to the relative percentage of Party and coalition allocated seats at the June elections, the role and powers of the Senate and of the Presidency.

These political decisions at the *round table* coincided with the PZPR's 11th Central Committee Plenum, which took place on 31st March amid great uncertainty within the Party. Its opening *Teza* and the surrounding plenary debates within the Central Committee illustrated the continued struggle that was taking place within the wider Party community concerning the *round table.* Followed the opening Politburo addresses,

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[329]Rakowski, M.R., (1992) op cit. pp.189-90

opposition to any form of political concession to Solidarity was widely articulated, most notably, as before, by the OPZZ's Miodowicz. He told Tr*ybuna Ludu* during the Plenum:

> *"We see this (the round table) as a tactical error. It will have profound effects on the status of the Polish working class."*[330]

During late March, furthermore, tough negotiations at the political sub-table of the r*ound table* concerning the precise details of the semi-free elections were being brokered between Kwaśniewski and Reykowski on the PZPR-government side and Geremek and Wałęsa on the Solidarity-opposition side. Widening the legislature aroused very little support within the Central Committee, although it voted, by a large majority, to endorse the Politburo's resolutions. The Plenum's resolutions, however, in particular its references to socialism continued to be both vague and open-ended, referring to "*commitments to constitutionalism that must be continued,*" and "*the need for patience and forward thinking in the road to socialism.*"[331] The Party's *Globalist* reform wing, heavily represented at the *round table*, was clearly not prepared, in the heat of open negotiation, to commit itself openly to any overtly ideological discourses. This might have had the effect of furthering existing divisions within the Party community as well as pushing the various groups within Solidarity closer together. Both of these possible outcomes also appeared contradictory to the tactical aims of the pragmatic centre. The Politburo's final resolution at the 12th Plenum, which took place on 15th April, almost two weeks after the signing of the agreements at the *round table*, further illustrates this.

330*Trybuna Ludu*, April 3rd 1989

"The Party is the initiator and promoter of reform, the spokesman of national understanding and at same time, guarantor of the socialist order and internal and external stability of the Polish State and nation." [332]

The 12th Plenum represented a public ratification of the Politburo's commitment to a continuation the 10th Plenum resolutions, within *odnowa*. The centrality of economic discourses at the Plenum also served to underline the increasing absence of ideological discourses. The 12th Plenum *Teza*, for example, promised a continuation of economic reforms (the 'second stage') line adopted by Central Committee at the 10th Congress of 1986. Concerning elections, however, the final resolution stated:

"(We seek) a speeding up of the transformation of the fatherland en route to socialist parliamentary democracy and citizenship. We envisage a continuation of the line adopted between the 10th Congress and 10th Plenum:- economic reform; national understanding; reform and rebuilding of the State. The Party will co-operate with any force that is constructive and supports the dialogue opened at the round table."[333]

During April and May, in the build up to the elections in June, divisions within the PZPR wider community became increasingly apparent. In the opening section of the Party's election manifesto, the Politburo outlined the need to retain the political unity of the auxiliary community.

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[331]Perzkowski, S., (1994) op cit. pp.317-319

[332]Perzkowski, S., (1994). Ibid

[333]Perzkowski, S., (1994) Ibid p.312: Politburo approved Kiszczak's "Projekcie Wystąpienie Gen. Kiszczaka na posiedzeniu koncowym 'Okrągłego Stolu' w dniu 5 kwietnia 1989r" (General Kiszczak's project outlined at the end of the *round table*, 5th April, 1989).

"Who are we? Each group (co-operation between the PZPR, ZSL, SD and lay Catholic and Christian movements, PAX, UChS, PZKS) has its own identity and sovereignty. Our opinions differ on many ideological, political and economic matters. We are not trying to blur these differences, which are found in individual declarations and election platforms. But we want to stand together. We initiated the process, we have exceptional candidates and clean hands."[334]

The Party was clearly recognising that there did exist differences between itself and its traditional coalition parties - something that had become increasingly apparent from the 10th Plenum onwards and acquired critical political importance during and after the *round table.* The discourse did not, however, fully outline what precise shared interests, aims or values linked the parties, other than the explicit support for the constitution and for *odnowa. "Who are we?"* recognised that the coalition was not unanimous in its support for the new line adopted at the 10th Plenum and codified at the *round table.* In fact, the discourses of socialist pluralism and the centrality of the democratic Sejm within this discourse actually made it less clear who "*we*" were and who "*they*" were. This was further compounded by the new political position of the ZSL and SD. Their potential political influence and bargaining position within the new Sejm were enhanced by the decision agreed at the *round table* to increase the majority needed in the new Sejm to overrule Senate decisions from 60% (3/5, as Reykowski had sought) to 66% (2/3, as Geremek had sought).[335] This 6% meant that the PZPR, in order to veto Senate legislation or overrule a Senate veto on Sejm legislation, would be obliged (assuming

[334]Perzkowski, S., (1994). Ibid.
[335]Dubiński, K., (1989) op cit. p.71

that the Party obtained the minimum number of seats in the new Sejm) to seek support from the ZSL and SD. These parties would, in effect, hold the balance of power. Given the PZPR's desire to retain a united 'Popular Front', its parliamentary room for manoeuvre was therefore limited. The second part of the manifesto referred to the role of doctrine in the Party's operative political strategy.

> *"The world is not waiting. Transformations of old dogmas are necessary, while protecting the authentic achievements of the PRL."*[336]

These authentic achievements were not specified; socialism once more left open to a wide range of alternative positions. Each position thus could be held, without negative sanctions, by any of the Party's erstwhile 'allies.' Within the prevailing discourse of "*removing the remnants of Stalinism in Poland,*" socialism was defined by what it was not: not Soviet, not Russian, not bureaucratic and not anti-democratic. It did not define what it was, other than in allusions to weakly defined goals and the notion of a "*Polish road to Socialism.*" At the same time, however, the discourse stressed the 'equality' of Polish-Soviet relations:

> *"For many centuries Poland was crushed between hostile powers. Today it breathes the air of full national security. Even if the past has not always been without blemish, our relations with the CPSU and USSR are authentically on equal terms. We are moving towards an honest assessment of the past and a clear vision of the future."*

The third section of the discourse located the notions of *'responsibility,' 'legality'* and *'national interest'* at the heart of the Party's value system:

"We defend law and common sense. We believe that wise, coherent and carefully observed law is the source of the State's power. We want to take part in the passing of laws in co-operation with people who respect the same principles i.e., anyone guided by the supreme interest of Poland. Our foreign policy guarantees this. Rivalry and political struggle are normal things but should not be conducted without tolerance and respect for democracy."[337]

Again, this declaration is vague and open to multiple interpretation. Clearly the Party elite was caught somewhere between its traditional and revised discourses. References to 'foreign policy' by this stage clearly did not contain the same degree of implicit threat (of Soviet intervention) as they had in 1988, before the 10th Plenum. The fourth section stressed the Party's commitment to democracy with parliament at the core:

"We are determined to continue these changes in concordance with the wishes of the majority of society. We have enrolled as candidates people of action, with remarkable knowledge, definite achievements and clean hands. They will guarantee the continuation of changes free of dangerous turmoil."[338]

This was a reference to the Party's strategy of forming a reformist block within the new Sejm PZPR Club of Deputies (after June). The National List was to represent the Party's pragmatic centre within the Sejm. The core of the democratic reformist block within the Party would thus obtain a central role within a democratically elected Sejm. The PZPR thus confirmed its commitments to parliamentary (although still *socialist*,

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336 Dubiński, K., (1989) Ibid. p.71

337 Dubiński, K., (1989) Ibid. p.74

338 *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, May 13th 1989

i.e. not fully democratic) democracy. This was intended to legitimate the reformist strand within the Party and anchor its position within the reforming institutions of State. The Party could move away from a direct involvement in the State and adopt a *'supervisory'* role during the transition period, thus retaining both the notion of the leading role of the party and simultaneously the veneer of democratic legitimation.

The Party's election campaign was fought on the three principles of 'Reform, Responsibility and Respectability.'[339] *'Reform'* indicated a continuation of the *odnowa* strategy and discourses. It implied limits to the reform process and the continuation of the leading role of the PZPR. At this time the Party elite's commitment to and overt belief in its privileged position remained strong. For example, the manifesto read:

> *"We have taken Poland away from the static command economy and waited long for Solidarity to mature...We control the reform process, which remains socialist in orientation."*[340]

'Responsibility' implied the Party's acknowledgement that it had made mistakes in the past and was prepared to accept that its role had been neither as positive nor as unproblematic as it had traditionally argued. It also evoked an image of a party that could handle relations with external actors (from the USSR as well as the West). *'Respectability'* was related to the PZPR's stand on Polish democracy and its advocation of a strong and healthy State. However, the PZPR election campaign was, by most

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339 Zubek, V., (1990)

340 *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, May 13th 1989. Ibid.

accounts, a ramshackle affair.[341] Full time Party workers were often at odds with their local Party candidates (many of whom were suspected of harbouring Solidarity sympathies), many seats were contested by two or more PZPR candidates sorting out local rivalries and some PZPR and allied party candidates had already offered allegiance to Solidarity. Many Party workers also lacked the spirit and organisation required to mobilise and fight the campaign and the peculiarity of a real election in a one-party State continued to colour the thinking of many. Some leading figures, such as Reykowski, suggested that the elections could not be won at all.[342] The Party would not gain any public respect if it managed to obtain it's reserved (National List) quota (simply because it was a reserved quota), while any losses would be seen as victories for the opposition. Little thought was thus placed on organising and fighting a coherent and unified election campaign against an opponent whose intention, regardless of its commitments to honouring the *'spirit'* of the *round table* (conciliation, non-confrontation and respect for the existing (socialist) constitution) was to win as many votes as possible and thus to undermine the position of the PZPR within at least one sector of the Party dominated State.

At the elections, the Party fared dismally. Although guaranteed at least 38% for its own candidates in the new Sejm, plus another 13% when combined with its coalition partners (ZSL, SD, PAX and other smaller, Catholic parties) the PZPR lost almost the entire openly elected 35% of

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[341]Zubek, V., (1990) and Janowski, K. B., (1992) op cit. Both point to the schisms that had emerged within the PZPR community that undermined its election campaign. Local party workers failed in many cases to support local party candidates, many party candidates fought between themselves and generally the party acted as if the election was, as had always been, a sham and the party could not lose.

[342]*Trybuna Ludu*, 16th March 1988

the vote for the Sejm and the same for the Senate elections. Its 'National list' candidates (bar two) were not elected, even in the *'un-free'*[343] (reserved 65%) proportion of the vote, thus depriving the Party elite of its intended position within the new legislature. After June's hastily re-arranged 2nd round of elections (designed to fill the gaps left by the failure of the National List), it emerged, furthermore, that many new Sejm PZPR deputies had either been personally sponsored by or had strong sympathies and/or connections with Solidarity and Solidarity's Citizen's Committees.[344]

Figure 2)

June 1989 Election Results

PZPR (Communists)	ZSL (Peasants)	SD (Democrats)	Catholic	Solidarity
173 (38%)	76 (17%)	27 (6%)	23 (5%)	161 (35%)[345]

Following the PZPR's electoral disaster the situation turned sharply against the *round table* as a viable method of regulating changes in the political system under the aegis of the PZPR and its traditional coalition allies.[346] The Party, quite simply, had suffered humiliating defeat at the

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[343]Lewis, P., (1990) op cit.

[344]Millard, F., (1994)

[345]Lewis, P., (1990) op cit. 4th and 18th June - Elections to bicameral National Assembly. The 'National List' was almost totally not elected because the majority of voters crossed out (rather than simply left blank) names. Fresh elections for the 33 (of 35) vacant seats, followed a reconvening of the *round table committee*. National List candidates defeated included: Baka, Barcikowski, Ciosek, Czyrek, Kiszczak, Miodowicz, Rakowski, Siwicki, Malinowski (ZSL), Democratic Party leaders and the heads of three pro-government parties - Christian organisations (PAX, Polish Catholic Social Union PZKS and Christian Social Union Uchs).

[346]Lewis, P., (1989) Ibid.

hands of those it had *'invited'* to renew socialism.[347] Added to this, key constitutional questions emerged in the aftermath of the elections. Without a full Sejm (lacking the National List candidates[348]), under the terms of the new electoral laws, a President could not be elected. The PZPR was thus faced with a peculiar situation. It retained its prerogative position within the State and in government but it no longer held a parliamentary majority. This opened up the question of who would become the President and who would lead the new government.[349]

The role of the office of President was central to the negotiated terms of transition and to the dynamic process of changing PZPR discourse. The new office of President was to perform the same functions as those previously performed by the Politburo and Council of State, thus removing the Party from it's leading role within the State, while maintaining continuity of key actors. Solidarity agreed that, within the constraints imposed by *'geopolitical'* realities,[350] the President should be a leading Party figure. However, because the Party had no majority within the Sejm, the theoretical possibility opened of the election of a non-Communist President. The role-played by Solidarity during the constitutional and political crisis that followed is crucial in explaining how the PZPR managed to retain any kind of political foothold within the post-election political environment and acts as one key to continuities in many PZPR discourses as the Party lost power.[351]

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[347]Michnik, A., (1989)

[348]Millard, F., (1993) op cit. p.71

[349]Rakowski, M. R., (1992) op cit. p.236

[350]Both Ost, D., (1990) op cit.; Walicki, A., (1991) op cit.

[351]Staniszkis, J., (1992) op cit. pp.66-72

During June and July, amid negotiation and political struggle between the PZPR and Solidarity (and within each group) to define and construct a viable government, the Party elite underwent a decisive and pivotal process of discursive re-evaluation. Its discourses from this period are illustrative of the inner Party debate and continuity in discursive commitments. The immediate political concern, however, was to stem the flow of support away from the PZPR within the new Sejm and to consolidate existing pockets of support in the wider PZPR-State and areas of society. At the 13th Plenum, held on 29th July, the Central Committee began to engage in a critical evaluation of the its election campaign. The Plenary *Teza*, for example, stated:

> *"We acknowledge a critical appraisal by society of the forces exercising power who are therefore responsible for the long running crisis. We acknowledge that economic weaknesses played a part: a rapid worsening of the socio-economic situation in Poland during the campaign indicated the Party's weakness as a participant in political struggle and mistakes in planning and carrying out it's campaign."*[352]

The main emphasis of the Central Committee, however, continued to lie within the "*unity of the Party as the instrument for the guaranteeing of socialism in a modernised form.*"[353] The following fragment illustrated this recognition of the new political reality, but also underlined the Party's retention of many socialistic values:

> *"The PRL has found itself at a breakthrough moment in its history. The dangerously aggravated economic difficulties, returns to the Sejm and Senate, the*

[352]Janowski, K. B., (1992) op cit.

participation of the opposition in State authority bodies are the main elements of the radically new situation...The Central Committee affirms the correctness of the 10th Plenum and approves the assessment of the elections as presented by the Politburo report. While reaffirming the social ownership of the means of production in the country's social and economic development, we come out in favour of changes in ownership relations which make it possible to fully combine high economic effectiveness with social justice. The CC comes out in favour of a continuation of market restructuring, but stresses the importance of the State's social policy. This policy must ensure equal chances of life, the right to work in line with ones qualifications and pay reflecting the effects of work as well as general social security."[354]

The Party elite's intention was, however - at least in the short term - to carry on the process of implementing *odnowa*, in alliance with the ZSL, SD, PAX and ChSS and PZKS and any other legal political parties and groups ready for such co-operation, including Solidarity. This apparent contradiction could only be resolved with the political acquiescence of Solidarity. The *Teza* confirmed, in this spirit, the Party's readiness to co-operate with the parliamentary opposition on the:

"plane of co-responsibility for Poland, for overcoming the crisis, preventing economic catastrophe, introducing reforms and ensuring a favourable arrangement of relations with Poland's socialist allies."[355]

The Party would, the *Teza* continued, also 'engage in polemics and conduct political struggle' against those who threatened socialism and the

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[353] *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, 3rd August 1989

[354] *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, 3rd August 1989. Ibid

[355] *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, 3rd August 1989. Ibid.

legal order of the Polish People's Republic (PRL). At the same time as recognising in its official public discourses the results of the elections and their political ramifications, however, the Rakowski government began to assert its prerogative status within the State, by, for example, accelerating economic reform legislation to the Sejm without the prior agreement of Solidarity. This strategy was clearly based on the view that the Party would be able to construct a new government and that Solidarity would factionalise after its election victory.[356]

However, the hard-line option that had acted to underpin the pragmatic centre's strategy of limited compromise with Solidarity had become all but redundant. The option arose in debate within the Politburo and found some support from Rakowski, who, it seems clear, was still operating on the basis that a more hard-line reaction within the Soviet Communist Party (CPSU) would develop during 1989 the clearer it became that Poland and Hungary could, quite easily, fall out of the Soviet bloc.[357] The PZPR tried, for example, immediately after the collapse of the National List in June, to paper over the results of the elections by seeking to reinforce a new political centre within the State. That is, a new version of PRON was discussed, which would co-opt leading members of the Church and Solidarity, combined with the traditional sources of political power, the military council (WRON) and representatives of the Politburo.

Neither the PZPR's reformist wings, supported by the PZPR Sejm Club of Deputies nor the intelligentsia branch of Solidarity's OKP, however,

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356*Gazeta Wyborcza*, July 25th 1989

357Staniszkis, J., (1992) op cit. pp.78-80. Staniszkis argues that Rakowski was "gambling" on a conservative Soviet backlash within the Kremlin, which would act to legitimate a tougher domestic line.

would sanction this proposal.[358] Furthermore, the nomination of Kruichkov to the CPSU Politburo and the strengthening of the KGB/Globalist faction within the Kremlin undermined this possibility. Another option discussed was for Solidarity to form a government in coalition with the PZPR, which was rejected by Solidarity, who, at that time did not know that Cypryniak and Gdula had been themselves instrumental in setting up the *round table*, and close to Soviet decision-making via the so-called Kukhanov committee in Moscow.[359]

At the Central Committee's 14th Plenum (19th August 1989),[360] held during this government crisis, the Central Committee finally resolved to join a Solidarity-led government, provided it would be adequately represented with more than defence and interior ministries. Rakowski acknowledged that the old coalition, de facto, now ceased to exist, but was still in favour of a so-called '*Grand Coalition*' - a reworking of the *'pro-reform coalition'* that had arisen in 1988. At the Plenum, which was held behind closed doors, Rakowski dealt with the failure of the PZPR to have its nominated candidate, Kiszczak, appointed premier of a new government:

> "*Poland can be extricated from the present crisis by way of evolutionary and consistent reforms only by a government enjoying the widest confidence and social support including representatives of all parliamentary forces. We are still in favour of a* Grand Coalition *government. It must be a coalition of all forces within the new Sejm. We offer support for a Solidarity government. Neither PZPR nor Solidarity can cope with threats and lift the country out of the*

[358] Kaczyński, J., (1991b)
[359] Szczuciński, P., (1991)

collapse on its own and less so opposed to each other. Partner-like co-operation, free from mutual prejudice can become a qualitatively new fact in the history of Poland...Poland must remain an economically and militarily credible link of the COMECON and Warsaw Pact. Our participation has guaranteed our national security for several decades."[361]

At the same time, however, the PZPR sought to undermine any anti-Communist tendencies within the Solidarity-led (Mazowiecki) government. This it did, for example, by seeking assurances from the USSR that it would not tolerate anti-Communist purges in Poland. Gremitskik, Soviet foreign ministry spokesman, for example, stated that the USSR had "*no problem*" with a Solidarity-led government, provided that Poland remained a member of the Warsaw Pact and that the PZPR remained in charge of "certain" ministries (defence, interior, media and secret services).[362] This reassurance clearly enhanced the influence of the *Populists* on the pragmatic centre by underlining the need for a gradual process of reform, within the existing geopolitical framework. The PZPR also sought to undermine any government initiatives designed to seize Party assets or purge key ministries of personnel. Mazowiecki, against the demands of both Wałęsa within Solidarity, drew what he termed a *"thick line" ('gruba linia')*[363] separating his government with any from the past, arguing that the questions of the PZPR's responsibility for past crimes should be investigated by a Commission of Enquiry and most importantly, he argued against the immediate derailing of the deals agreed at the *round table.*

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[360]*Radio Free Europe Special Supplement*, August 22nd 1989.

[361]*Radio Free Europe Special Supplement*, August 22nd 1989. Ibid.

[362]*Radio Free Europe Progress Reports*, August 28th 1989

[363]Domaranczyk, Z., (1990) pp.106-108

3. *Past* Vs *Present*

As the process of constitutional transformation was unfolding during mid-1989, a series of other PZPR discourses that had arisen from early 1988 onwards, also gained greater prominence. Key historical discourses for example, acquired a greater legitimating significance of their own. The Party's continued deepening of its discursive reconstruction of the past defined a recognition that, within the context of negotiations and semi-open elections, it would have to answer questions that had previously been problematic even to ask. For example, these centred on Katyń above all, the role of the PPR in WWII, the role of the PZPR during the Stalinist period in Poland (1948-56) and various other significant historical *'blank-spots,'* including the question of responsibility for the imposition of martial law in 1981. Interestingly, however, as Gebert explains, during the *round table* itself, there was a tacit understanding reached between the two sides behind the public scenes not to mention martial law and the period 1980-81 during the public sessions.[364] This is well illustrated in a section of dialogue at the *Magdalenka* talks, which ran in parallel to the *round table.* Ciosek said

> *"Martial law, its legal aspects and its correctness, cannot be questioned. I propose that we deal with them at the 'Union table'* (of the round table)*."*

To which he received a unanimous:

"No"

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[364]Gebert, K., (1990) op cit. p.23. The period 1980-81 could not be discussed, argued Kiszczak, since it did not fall within the "terms of the existing law." Geremek, as Gebert explains, although prepared to accept this for the sake of negotiation, sought to embarrass the PZPR by focusing on areas in the "existing law" that illustrated the need to return to 1980-81.

from Mazowiecki, Bujak and Frasyniuk.[365] Martial law, argued Geremek, had either to be treated as a central element of the main *round table* discussions, or not at all. The latter, for obvious reasons, was preferable to the PZPR.

The Party's discourses of the past, in particular areas relating to Polish-Soviet relations, were of importance during the *round table* in so far as they illustrated the changing political rationale of the pragmatic centre, but without, significantly, obliging it to make any concrete moves towards authentic power sharing. Within the context of the *round table,* any references to Katyń can be interpreted as a means by which the Party sought to illustrate that it had autonomy from, but, at the same time, good working relations with, the USSR. The Party, in other words, was attempting to cross the line from "*them*" to "*us,*" to develop a discourse of *'Public'* Poland, competing with the Church-Solidarity discourses which had all but appropriated the national identity and national interest in the post-1981 period. The 11th Plenum *Teza* touched on one particularly significant element of the blank-spots commission's work to illustrate this:

> *"Irrespective of the motives, the advancement of Soviet troops into Poland on 17th September 1939 was based on false evaluations, expressions insulting Poles and the tragic oppression of the Stalin-Beria apparatus."*[366]

This element of the historical discourse also fitted into the issue of Katyń. Within the context of the *round table* negotiations, it was clearly designed to indicate the emergence of a reform-minded elite, whose

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[365]Dubński, , K., (1989) op cit. p.53

hands were not tied by the Soviet Union and whose political roots lay within the nation and within the new democratic discourse. At this stage, however, the discourse was designed to remain firmly within the synchronic sphere of discourse - i.e. not impinge on any areas of PZPR power holding. The National Delegates Conference held in May during the *round table* talks is illustrative of this attempt to deal discursively with an area of historical ambiguity that had traditionally weakened the PZPR. The final resolution of the Conference, under the heading of '*Removing the remnants of Stalinism,*' read as follows:

> "*Criticisms that took place after 1956, while greater than in any other socialist State, did not fully reach the roots of the deformations. The leading politician of the period was Bierut. The current state of historical knowledge authorises one to blame Beirut in particular for the Stalinisation of Poland, including violations of human rights. He initiated numerous unjustified trials of leading groups of activists within the PPR, first of all Gomułka and Spychalski. He was responsible for opposing de-Stalinisation after the death of Stalin and the execution of Beria. Responsibility falls on Beirut, Berman, and Radkiewicz. We come out in favour of full political and moral compensation to the victims of Stalinist lawlessness. The Party, in making a critical assessment of the past, does not prove its weakness but, on the contrary, strengthens its moral power and respect for the nation.*"[367]

At the start of the *round table* talks in February various references to the progress of the on-going Polish-Soviet historical (*'Blank-spots'*) commission's were also pieced into PZPR public discourse, although

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[366] *Trybuna Ludu*, April 2nd 1989

[367] *Trybuna Ludu* April 2nd 1989. Ibid.

were not made at the talks themselves. No member of the Party-government team of negotiators, for example, made any references to Katyń.

Other, non-*round table* references within Party discourse to elements of history were numerous and were significant not only in terms of the effects they had on the thinking and tactical considerations of the participants themselves, but in terms of how the talks were perceived by non-participants. The timing of the first set of discourses is, for example, significant in that they coincided with the end of the first week of the *round table* discussions. During this time various agreements had been reached: on trade union affairs (most significantly the legalisation of Solidarity), the de-monopolisation of the mass media and the allocation of State funds for a Solidarity newspaper (*Gazeta Wyborcza*). The pragmatic centre was clearly willing to sanction this historical discursive opening if it could be seen to have a positive effect on the negotiations at this stage. This type of discourse threaded its way into the 11th and 12th Central Committee Plenums and the National Delegates Conference. By continuing the discourse of anti-Stalinism, the Party clearly wanted to illustrate its reformist credentials (although within the socialist terms of ideological reference) and at the same time, indicate to Polish society that it was a national party. Jaruzelski's speech to the National Delegates Conference on May 6th 1989 illustrates this:

"*Let us state openly, that for many years the Party operated under an umbrella - ideological, political and administrative. This resulted from a monopoly position*

and insufficient feeling of serving society. This omnipotence put an enormous burden on the Party."[368]

Jaruzelski, however, had expected the issue of Katyń (and other Polish-Soviet questions) to have been resolved by the time of the *round table*, thus freeing the PZPR of its negative associations with the USSR. The visit of Gorbachev in July 1988 had clearly encouraged this hope. However, the Soviets' procrastination during 1989 reflected badly on the PZPR for two reasons. One, by refusing to offer full and unconditional responsibility for Katyń, the USSR undermined the notion that reformers within the Kremlin were in ascendance, thus undermining the position of reformers within Poland. Two, by not accepting any blame, the Soviets highlighted the PZPR's domestic weakness. The more the Party made public noises to the effect that it wanted a public resolution of the Katyń issue, while, at the same time refusing to blame the Soviets openly for it, the more Polish society became aware that the PZPR was unable to act without the sanction of the USSR, as was popularly believed. Elster argues,[369] however, that for the Communist Parties in each of the Eastern bloc countries, society's fear of the Soviet Union remained a definite political instrument of domestic legitimation. It offered an implicit advantage in any set of negotiations.

Other references to the role of the Soviet Union in Poland during the Stalinist period added to this scramble for historical legitimation during the *round table.* This is partially evidenced by the setting up of a State *'committee for remembering the victims of Stalinist repression'* on 11th February

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[368] *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, May 6th 1989

[369] Elster, J., (1996) op cit. Chapter 1

1989. Its aim was to assess the claims of those who had suffered at the hands of the Stalinist authorities in Poland. This expressed the Party's responsibility in dealing with the past and its commitment to constitutionalism and legalism. The Committee was, however, responsible to the Sejm and not directly to the Party, and after June, therefore assumed a high degree of autonomy from the Party. Another example was the official weekly, *Odrodzenia,* publishing on 18th February four pages of a *'confidential'* report by the Polish Red Cross on the Katyń massacre. The report, found in British archives, provided evidence that it was the Soviets, not the Nazis, who had carried out the massacre. It concluded that the murder of 4,000 of the officers was carried out between March and May 1940, when the Soviets were in possession of the territory.[370] This revelation is significant in so far as it represented the first official recognition of Soviet culpability (the Polish authorities, aware since 1943 of the existence of this report allowed its publication for the first time). On 21st February, Urban (the Party's press spokesman) stated that the authorities intended to change the inscription on the monument to the victims of Katyń (at Powązki cemetery in Warsaw), although was not prepared to say what the precise wording would be.[371] On 24th February, speaking in the Sejm, foreign minister Loechowski stated that Poland would like to see a definite ending to the Katyń issue. He said that prospects for the development of Polish-Soviet relations were particularly favourable. In reference to the *'blank spots'* commission, he said that an answer would soon be reached.[372]

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370 *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, February 25th 1989

371 *Trybuna Ludu*, February 22nd 1989

372 *Trybuna Ludu*, February 25th 1989

During March, as it became clearer that the Party elite would be obliged to concede more political reforms than it had intended, a tightening of the process of discursive disclosure might have been expected. However, the growing autonomy of State bodies from the direct influence of the PZPR, one of the prerequisites of *odnowa* (as defined by the PZPR itself) and one of the effects of the round table (combined with relaxation in censorship and political interference in the mass media) undermined any attempts within the Party elite to stem the process. This is most clearly illustrated by the Supreme Court's pronouncement on 19th April that the group of leading socialists sentenced to death by the Warsaw Military Court on 14th November 1948 were not guilty.[373] During discussion concerning political and constitutional reform at the *round table* on 7th March, the Polish government for the first time openly placed blame for the Katyń massacres on the USSR. Urban stated that the historical commission had found enough evidence to indicate that "*the crime was committed by the Stalinist NKVD.*"[374] He told a press conference that the last meeting of the *blank spots* commission had produced results which proved this. The Soviet side, however, both within the *blank-spots* commission and within the CPSU sought to blur the issue. They were reported as stating that the evidence was "*circumstantial.*"[375]

Another key historical discourse centred on wider questions of Polish-Soviet relations in WWII. On 7th March, for example, an interview with former President-in-exile, Edward Raczyński was carried in *Przegląd Tygodniowy.* The war, he said, had not started on 17th but 1st September

[373]Kersten, K., (1986). Puzak, Szturm de Sztrem, Dziegielewski, Misiorowski, Cohn and Krawczyk had been accused of attempting to overthrow the State.

[374]East, R., (1992) p.130

1939 - that the Soviets and Germans, in collaboration, attacked the Polish State on the 1st. It was, he said, "*a conspiracy of our neighbours.*"[376] On 9th March the Polish Press Agency (PAP) reported a Politburo plan to rehabilitate the victims of Stalinism in Poland. A special commission to investigate the role played by Bolesław Bierut (First Secretary of the PZPR between 1947-52 and Premier 1952-54) was to be set up in order to "*overcome the negative heritage and to provide for moral retribution to the victims of illegal repression.*" On 15th March, the commission openly "*rehabilitated*" Anders, Mikołajcik, Banczyk and Wojcik, all key figures within the Home Army (AK) and/or members of the London government (in exile). On 16th April, following his trip to Moscow, Jaruzelski stated that the historical "*blank spots*" commission's work would be speeded up. He also said that a joint document on the period before WWII (references to the dismantling of the KPP in 1938) would soon be made public. On 29th April the Sejm finally pardoned those convicted after 1980 for being involved in strikes, demonstrations and supporting banned organisations. By appealing to historical symbols, however, the Party elite was, if inadvertently, distancing itself from the people within the community whose support it needed during the election campaign to fight at the grass roots level. Thus what emerged was a curious discourse. It didn't fully recognise the full implications of the *round table*, which had pushed the negotiations beyond the limits sought by the elite. At the same time it revealed the Party's search for metaphors that signalled a radical rejection of the monistic discourse of power, that of combined (coded) threats of Soviet intervention and the ideological imperatives of the leading role principle. The Party elite was thus caught in a political no-mans land. It

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[375]East, R., (1992) Ibid. p.131

had moved away from its own traditional community by rejecting the Soviet option, diluting Marxist-Leninist discourses and openly castigating the bureaucracy. However, it had not (and could not) sanction any discursive recognition of the fact that it had lost its leading role position already (simply by agreeing to constitutional changes that might lead to the end of the dominant role of the PZPR).

During the election campaign intense revisionism of the past continued, as well as an attempt to relocate the PZPR within a more neutral and sympathetic relationship with the Catholic Church, both within Poland and in relation to the Vatican. The Party's National Delegates Conference (2nd-4th May 1989), at which the PZPR Government-Coalition election manifesto was published,[377] can be read in this light. It was a strategy that backfired on the PZPR, however. On the one hand, the more it changed the less it was able to hold together its interpellated community. For example, Party activists, threatened by a loss of local prerogatives if reformism at the top continued, worked, in many localities, to undermine candidates suspected of reformist leanings and the PZPR's coalition partners, ZSL and SD, talked openly about their own political autonomy.[378] On the other hand, the more it changed, the more society recognised that Solidarity was enforcing real concessions, which added to public support for the Solidarity campaign. The Party, however, by this time had moved towards a historical discourse that acknowledged and sought to deal with events during and after 1980-81 (something it had been reluctant to do during the negotiations at the

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[376]East, R., (1992) Ibid, p.132

[377]Słodkowska, I., (1995), pp.11-13. 'Deklaracja Wyborcza Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej', Materiały programowe' (Election manifesto of the PZPR).

round table) as well as re-setting out its position on the post-war role of the PZPR in Poland. At the National Delegates Conference the 1947-56 period was characterised within Party discourse as a period 'dominated by fear'; of Soviet intervention, of German resurgence (and reclamation of *'lost'* territories) and the role of Polish Stalinists, such as Bierut who "*betrayed the cause of Polish socialism.*"[379] The Party continued to blame its weak domestic position and its use of terror during that period on the imposition of geo-strategic realities and individual errors. The 1956-80 period was analysed and presented as a period of "*Mitigating, objective circumstances and specific leadership errors.*"[380] This fitted into the Party's anti-bureaucracy rhetoric. The so-called '*Salvation of the nation*'[381] became adopted as the Party's explicit explanation of its own role. The Party had been *'waiting,'* this implied, for Solidarity to reform itself and become a 'constructive partner' in the reform process undertaken after 1982. Jaruzelski told *Trybuna Ludu* in May, for example, that:

> "*For 8 years the historical process of* odnowa *has been in progress. Step-by-step, among horrible circumstances and threats, in defiance of the powers of this world, even against resistance in our own ranks, we have not wavered from the chosen road.*"[382]

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[378]Zubek, V., (1990) op cit.
[379]Zubek, V., (1990) Ibid.
[380]Zubek, V., (1990) Ibid.
[381]Zubek, V., (1990) Ibid.
[382]*Trybuna Ludu*, 25th May, 1988

4. *Conclusions*

The PZPR finally grasped the nettle in February 1989 by undertaking the task of negotiating a political settlement to the industrial and social crisis. Its failures and weaknesses at the *round table*, combined with its overt discursive shift away from traditional signifiers meant, however, that, in the absence of genuine alternatives, it was obliged to submit to the principles of democratic accountability.

The Party's inability to control the composition of the opposition's negotiating team (prior to the talks taking place), the relative solidity of the Solidarity movement's various groups, combined with the weakness of internal Party support for the government negotiating team meant that this, in itself, was never likely to satisfy the opposition. Initially neither Rakowski nor Jaruzelski expected the talks to lead to radical change in the Party's prerogative position. The PZPR would retain its leading role, albeit in a revised form. The pragmatic centre of the PZPR was committed to a wider version of the existing legitimational strategy, that of eudaemonism combined with limited relocation of ideological and other discourses (historical and legalistic). The agreement to legalise Solidarity as a trade union in return for its support in economic reform was made very early in the talks (in February). The PZPR was still hoping at this stage to narrow the *round table* to trade union matters only. They continued to couch the language of reforms in the existing *odnowa* discourse: economic reforms and limited constitutional changes would lead to a strengthening of democratic and constitutional socialism. The Warsaw based dissident intelligentsia (KOR and ROPCiO groups), centred around the trio of Geremek, Kuroń and Michnik, pushed the

talks into a harder political phase during March. They pushed the government side into accepting the introduction of key constitutional changes as conditions of the trade union's acceptance of an end to strike activity for an agreed period.

The Party was, as a result, faced with the reality of discourses of democratic socialism - of greater legislative and executive autonomy (a loosened leading role) and thus less direct power in the traditional form. Sections of the Party elite, having acknowledged the potential uncontrollability of semi-open elections, stressed various discursive references that had previously acted to underpin other, supposedly more important discourses - if the Party was obliged to stand and contest for a democratic mandate from *'the people,'* it would have to have something in common with *'the people.'* As it discovered during the election campaign, however, by moving towards *'the people,'* if only discursively, it was losing both the support of its own community and weakening the bonds that held together its traditional alliances with the ZSL, SD and OPZZ. The Party's reformist wings found themselves both isolated from their own auxiliary community and tied into political contracts with the Catholic Church and Solidarity.

The *Globalist* faction which was heavily represented at the *round table* itself, failed, furthermore, to negotiate a deal commensurate with the pragmatic centre's aims. As the negotiations progressed it became increasingly clear that the pragmatic centre's control over the bargaining process was not as strong as it would have liked and its lines of communication weaker than expected. Reformist sections of the PZPR elite, having negatively weighed up the Party's chances of winning a fully

democratic election, began to seek both new sources of support from a widened coalition of forces and locate the Party within a revised version of socialism and the nation. This, it was hoped, combined with limited political reforms and the Party's continued control over the core State apparatus (especially its coercive branch, defence and interior ministries) would anchor the reformist agenda both within the State and society. The failure of the PZPR to manage to achieve any of these things led to a new phase in the process of discursive transformation.

Chapter 6

Becoming Post-Communist

August 1989-January 1990

1. *Introduction*

The end of the PZPR's leading role in August 1989 did not lead to the immediate or unambiguous abandonment of many elements of the Party's *odnowa* discourses, either on the part of the new, non-Communist, government or that of the PZPR itself. Furthermore, the Solidarity government could not afford to abandon the Rakowski-initiated economic liberalisation reforms. Many of the prescriptions contained within the *odnowa* discourse, such as opening up foreign trade, liberalising the banking system, reforming interest rates and seeking credits from the IMF, were central to the so-called '*shock-therapy*' economic plan implemented after January 1st 1990 by the new government. It was clearly the Party itself, therefore, rather than many of its discourses, which had became anachronistic in the context of a rapid shift in the language of State and society towards liberalisation and democratisation.

Two processes effecting changing PZPR legitimation were evolving at different rates, but in synchronicity, between August 1989 and January 1990. One, the PZPR's continuation and consolidation of a discourse of democratic legitimation. Two, a discursive summing up of the past. In an attempt to control the dramatic transformation of political circumstances in which it became obliged to operate, the PZPR ditched many elements

of its existing, *traditional*, discourses, although, significantly retained clear lines of continuity both in form and content. In this period the broad outlines of the post-Communist reformed party's legitimational discourses were formed. Discontinuities within PZPR discourses lay predominantly within the sphere of ideology. This was reflected most clearly in the rejection, at the end of 1989, of the two core principles of the preceding period of PZPR legitimation: the *leading role principle* and *democratic centralism*. The Party continued to deploy historical, civil, and geopolitical discourses, however, in ways similar to those it had been using throughout the late 1980's.

2. *Public* Vs *Private*

The PZPR's civil discourses evolved during this period in response to a series of short and longer term factors similar to those that had patterned the preceding periods. The first were located within an immediate, tactical matrix: in relation to Solidarity, the Soviet Union and Polish society. The second were longer term questions of ideological identity: *'who are we?,' 'what do we stand for?'* and *'who do we represent?.'* Immediate political discourse, however, more clearly than before now influenced core discourses, particularly as traditional ideological signifiers became openly rejected in late 1989 and early 1990. Debates between the 15th and 17th Plenums within the Party Politburo illustrate this tendency. This extract from the *Teza* of the Central Committee's 15th Plenum (held in two parts, 18th September and 3rd October), indicates the confusion at the centre of the PZPR's legitimation, as its traditional - ideological - discourses were being rejected:

> *'What is and should be the Party's immediate line within the context of its weakened political position within the State?, What, for example, can we do to contain anti-Communist forces within the opposition and in government? There is no going back to a false understanding of socialism.'*[383]

The Party's ideological discourses could not remain above or immune from these questions. They had immediate implications for the way the PZPR spoke of itself, for its political and historical role and its identity. They were no longer merely theoretical, abstract notions that could be discussed, agreed on and quietly forgotten.

The Politburo came to terms very quickly after August with the fact that the PZPR would have to operate in a political environment dominated by Solidarity.[384] At the 15th Plenum - one month after the resolution of the government crisis - the newly appointed First Secretary of the PZPR, Rakowski (Jaruzelski having become President), for example, told his audience that:

> *"We have arrived at the end of the 9th Congress (1982) line. The fact that the Party no longer holds the monopoly of power entails great consequences. There are various strands in the opposition, but I think that the one having its roots in the Catholic outlook on life is the most dynamic."*[385]

At the Plenum, the Politburo *Teza* outlined the Party's position in relation to the new government, of which - by this time - it was a junior partner. It recognised that the Party's failures at the election had been, at least in part, self-inflicted in that insufficient stress had been placed on fighting a coherent and organised campaign. The Politburo reiterated, at the same time, that the PZPR would also seek to commit the Mazowiecki government to honouring the terms of the *round table*, in particular those related to co-operation between the PZPR and Solidarity within the Sejm and government.[386] The Plenum, however, took place amid general uncertainty as to the direction a Solidarity government would take or be allowed to take in the context of Soviet foreign policy. There still existed,

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[383] *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, September 29th 1989

[384] Perzkowski. S., (1994) op cit. pp.178-84.

[385] *Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, September 29th 1989. Ibid.

[386] Perzkowski, S., (1994) op cit. p.469: 'Decyzje Biura Politycznego KC PZPR, posiedzenie w dniu 22 sierpnia 1989r.' (22nd August 1989 Politburo decision). The four posts were MON, MSW, Współpracy Gospodarczej z Zagranica oraz Transport (Transport and Foreign Economic Co-operation), and vice-premiership (General Kiszczak). There was also political struggle over control of personnel in the ministry of foreign affairs and attempts, on both sides, to maximise influence over Radio and TV.

furthermore, the real possibility that the Party could, if it so wished, revert to a more traditional method of exercising power, particularly if the political signals from Moscow suggested a non-sanctioning of domestic developments.[387] Rakowski told *Trybuna Ludu* in early September, for example:

> *"Responsibility for the nation does not permit it (the Party) to remain in opposition."*[388]

Bisztyga, the Central Committee press spokesman, also told a meeting of PZPR activists in late August that the Party could and would derail the new processes if it didn't get its *"allotted powers in the new political arrangement,"*[389] although he failed to elaborate on what this meant in practise. Reformist groups within the PZPR elite, however, had already made strong political commitments both at the *round table* and after to moderate groups in Solidarity and many believed that the agreement could actually benefit the PZPR. The PZPR Sejm Club of Deputies, led by Orzechowski, had also become engaged in talks with representatives from Solidarity's Parliamentary Citizens' Committees (OKP) concerning either a parliamentary merger of the two parties or, at least, a working understanding that retained the key elements of the *round table.* Added to this, the qualitatively new political arrangements after August, also put increased strain on alliances within the wider Solidarity movement, in particular between the new government, which was seen by many as

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[387]Rakowski, M.R., (1991) op cit. p.154; Staniszkis, J., (1992) op cit. p.284; Berezowski, M., (1991). Staniszkis argues that this was the Rakowski intention at this time. Berezowski's interview with Orzechowski further corroborates this view.

[388]*Trybuna Ludu*, September 2nd 1989. Interview with Rakowski, in which he reiterated the leading role principle. Contrasted with Orzechowski's "Tylko zgodnie i wspólnie" (Only by agreement and in co-operation), *Trybuna Ludu*, August , 31st 1989.

[389]*Trybuna Ludu*, September 2nd 1989. Ibid.

having compromised too much and too early with the Communists, and its more radical, nationalist and trade union wings. The commitment of many within the Solidarity elite, therefore, to implementing a rapid process of 'de-Communisation' were limited not only by the external conditions imposed by the USSR, but also by the existence of a series of awkward internal political and discursive questions.

In this context the 15th Plenum took place,[390] at which various questions were pieced into the opening *Teza*. "*What next?*," it asked, "*how do we operate in these new conditions? What do we reject, what do we retain in everyday practise? Whom do we serve?*"[391] The questions were of course, in part, designed to bolster the impression that real debates were actually taking place within the PZPR, thus illustrating either the Party's transformation to or its reaffirmation of democratic principles. In part, however, these were questions that needed concrete, practical answers. Furthermore, no-one in the leadership really knew the type or depth of reaction the new discursive line would receive from the Central Committee, Polish society or the USSR.[392] The democratisation of the procedure for selecting Party leaders, as well as changes in the Party's wider political discourses and immediate tactics vis-à-vis the new government were all, however, passed by the Central Committee by a large majority,[393] although the need for

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[390]*Trybuna Ludu,* September 18th 1989: 15th Plenum Teza outlined. Also an interesting interview with Miller: 'Nim spytano o partię zapytano o Polsce, rozmowa z Leszkiem Millerem', (Asked about the Party, asked about Poland - a talk with Leszek Miller)

[391]*Trybuna Ludu*, September 19th 1989

[392]*Trybuna Ludu,* July 28th 1989. Leszek Miller and Marciń Król, two newly elected, *Populist* figures within the Politburo met on several occasions with PZPR local, regional and factory committees, seeking both to find out what the feelings of Party members were at the lower levels and attempt to push themselves and their political line as forcibly as possible within the wider Party.

[393]Janowski K.B., (Sanford, G., (Ed.) 1992 op cit. p.170) The results of poll showed a decisive majority of party members favoured a radical version of the proposed change (72.1% of respondents), with 25% preferring caution. The second part of the 15th Plenum incorporated most of the proposals submitted at the first stage.

internal Party unity, rather than wider ideological debate and reflection, was central to the Politburo's *Teza.* The Politburo communiqué supplemented to the 15th Plenum *Teza* read, for example:

> *"The present social-political situation obliges the PZPR to operate under pressure radicalised by social structures. The majority of the new political forces have negatively evaluated the Party since the elections. This negation of the PZPR relates to Party mistakes and opinions from the past. But the Party must not resign from its mission to retain the most valuable elements of the socialist State."*[394]

This represented both the PZPR's recognition of the autonomous character of collective choice and civic autonomy and the fact that it was not a popular party and had to change. According to Central Committee member, Grzyb, for example, at the 15th Plenum:

> *"We must discard managing, putting labels on trouble makers or oppositionists who nurse different opinions and seek allies through our programme, activity and authority."*[395]

This theme of accepting the process of systemic change and its irreversibility runs throughout the period leading to the PZPR Central Committees final, 11th Congress in January 1990. "*Changes in the sphere of political rebuilding have a revolutionary-evolutionary character...,*" the 15th Plenum *Teza* continued:

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[394]*Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, October 5th 1989 PZPR Central Committee Plenum

[395]*Radio Free Europe Progress Report*, October 5th 1989. Ibid.

"...in the sense of deep transformations in the form and methods of exercising power...They are continuing and irreversible. Sections of the opposition have already moved towards co-operation and programmatic-tactical alliances...We are also aware that the CPSU has made internal changes possible."[396]

Party tactics could not be successful, however, argued Miller at the 15th Plenum, if its discourses evoked indecision or weakness, although the central question remained: how to combine this relative openness and debate with unity within the Party? In other words, how to reconstruct the existing mode of interpellation? Three discursive options - all of which had immediate and longer term significance simultaneously - emerged during the autumn. One was to continue with the PZPR in its present form, reinforcing the traditional, ideological, elements of the discourse, thus eliminating any semantic - and thus intepellatory - ambiguity. This would have been a reversion to a more cynical interpretation of the *round table* accords. The facade of democracy would be retained while 'real' power would be concentrated in a widened, although still Party-controlled, set of committees operating behind the veneer of a democratic Sejm. Another option was a complete rejection of the *round table* accords and a reversion (as would have been most likely, given the socio-economic context) of a confrontation between State and society, as had occurred in 1981. This *traditional* discourse was supported by groups in or around the OPZZ and various ultra-Communist (for example, the Warsaw Workers' Congress Forum), conservative, nationalistic groups who harked back to the traditional methods of exercising power. The discourse was, as it always had been, class-driven. Various speeches opposed, for example, the exclusion of the Party from

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396Perzkowski, S., (1994) op cit. p.198

the workplace and argued against the *"restoration of capitalism in Poland."*[397] The OPZZ was instrumental in the creation of a so-called 'Socialist Bloc,' which combined official trade unionists and old-fashioned Marxists. Miodowicz called on several occasions for the end of the *"squabbling between a dozen leftist parties."*[398] This hard-line option, however, unlike in 1981, had very little support in Moscow, particularly after the victories of Gorbachev at the 15th Plenum of the CPSU in August and was, to a certain extent, also limited by the vociferousness with which many hard-line nationalist Communists had attacked the Soviet regime over, amongst other things, Katyń during 1988 and 1989.

The second discursive option advocated scrapping the PZPR and building a new party in its place. This was proposed by the Movement of 8th July,[399] a radical *Globalist* grouping within the post-election Sejm with strong links with Solidarity. They argued that the PZPR should relinquish its claims to be the only representative of the working class and should merge with the Solidarity movement. This group, perhaps more strongly than any other within the Party-State, was also in favour of a market economy *"combining efficiency with the social responsibility of the State."*[400] *Globalist* sympathies grouped themselves around the Sejm Club of Deputies, led by Orzechowski, which had acquired a degree of authentic political autonomy from the Politburo during the summer's negotiations with the Geremek wing of the OKP. Many joined the PUS (Union of Social democracy) which was set up during the 11th Congress in January 1990.

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397 *Trybuna Ludu*, October 24th 1989

398 *Trybuna Ludu*, October 24th 1989. Ibid.

399 *Trybuna Ludu*, October 24th 1989. Ibid.

At the 13th Plenum, held on 29th July, key *Globalist* reformer and head of the PZPR Parliamentary Club, Orzechowski, lost his place on the Politburo (which he had attained at the 10th Plenum). Thereafter, the discourses espoused by his wing (as above) became increasingly defined in open conflict with the pragmatic centre. Its discourses, however, are significant in that they represent the most openly identifiable social-democratic reasoning within the Party. They acted, in many ways, to underpin one key precondition of the success of the reforming PZPR in the period leading up to the 11th Congress, that of open and unambiguous support for the reform process and strong connections with left of centre groups within Solidarity. The PZPR Parliamentary Club issued this statement in August:

> *"The fiasco of our holding of power and methods of running an economy are now proven facts. The Party has lost the support of a majority of society...a new government is attempting to correct these deformations and we offer it our support. As a club of deputies, we bridge the traditional borders between right and left, believers and non-believers, Party and non-Party, legal and non-legal. We are of the conviction that there have always been people within the* PZPR *searching for reformist solutions. Without them we would not have had either the 9th Congress or the turning point decisions made at the 10th Plenum. The alternative is chaos, anarchy and finally dictatorship, a 'strong-arm' government. There are advocates of this on all sides. We also appeal to the left, to all those identified with the* PZPR *- those who gave us what we have and to others we*

400Janowski, K. B,. (1992) op cit. p.170

stress the ideals of democracy, humanism, freedom, social justice and progress."[401]

The Movement of the 8th July's declarations at the 16th Plenum, held on 6th November, further illustrate this discursive search for democratic, but significantly still socialist, legitimation. They also pre-empted the pragmatic centre's adoption of similar discourses in early 1990. A key fragment of the declaration read:

"We reject the dictatorship of the proletariat as well as the anti-democratic forces of the right. In this struggle we propose co-operation with democratic forces located within Solidarity. The new democratic party must continue to defend the interests of working people, but not at the expense of others and not to the detriment of the law and a tolerant society. The new party must continue to respect friends and allies within the socialist world, although at the same time seek to democratise the Warsaw Pact. The most important thing is the value of national sovereignty...there is no point in attacking the USSR, especially as it is itself undergoing democratic transformations."[402]

The third discursive option that emerged at the 15th Plenum was to form a new left-wing party which would take with it many of the traditional discourses of the old party, but at the same time, change its ideological character and identity: the *'Populist'* option. This was favoured by many within the Politburo, including Rakowski. The pragmatic centre was moving towards accepting the logic of what had appeared previously to be peripheral discourses, but at the same time, holding onto key discourses. Miller's speech, under the heading "*What does socialism mean*

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401 Słodkowska, I., (1995) op cit. pp.13-14

today? (what is laid out and what remains young?,"[403] for example illustrates the support of the new pragmatic centre within the Party for the third option: "*We reject the option of the worse the better...we support the new Grand Coalition...but we say 'Yes...But'."*[404] *Populism* found its mouthpiece in the Ruch Ludzi Pracy (Movement of Working People[405]), whose use of the discourse of *'removing the remnants of Stalinism'* was indicative of the rather conservative and defensive reformism espoused earlier by the pragmatic centre. '*Stalinism*' could be used as a catch-all term which actually denoted very little. "W*ith the fall of Stalinist structures,*" the group's November resolution began:

> "*Society has freed itself. But we see the state of Poland today. Polish wealth, work and ideas are being sold for nothing and Poland is losing its economic sovereignty. The future of our fatherland and the biological entities of our families are the values of the highest order. Our aim is to create a society of freely working people. A real threat is marked by the loss of working class control over the exercise of power.*"[406]

The advocation of a strong PZPR bargaining position within the reform process attracted many middle and lower level Party members and many working in the State administration. *Populists'* call for a defence of "*the working class,*" echoing the first discursive option, for example, indicated to these 'inner' constituencies, a continuity in ideological commitments.

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[402]Słodkowska, I., (1995) Ibid. p.17
[403]Słodkowska, I., (1995) Ibid. p.18
[404]Słodkowska, I., (1995) Ibid. p.18
[405]*Trybuna Ludu*, October 13th 1989
[406]Słodkowska, I., (1995) op cit. pp.34-35

From the 13th Plenum onwards the struggle to influence the pragmatic centre was being won by the *Populist* rather than *Globalist* reformers. This was most evident in the Party elite's rejection of a merger with leftist groups in Solidarity and its resistance to the fundamental rejection of existing ideological and historical discourses also reinforced this. Rakowski and Jaruzelski, began to play a much harder game with Solidarity. A coded discourse of threats emerged; threatening Solidarity with either bureaucratic resistance ("*Your premier, our bureaucracy*"[407]) or outright threats of a return to martial law. The main concern of the pragmatic centre was clearly to preserve as much of the *round table* as possible; to hold onto whatever political gains had been afforded to the Party by the accords. However, in many public speeches in late August Rakowski congratulated Mazowiecki and stated publicly on September 2nd that a government of "*broad coalition*" could count on his party's support. "*The Party does not intend,*" he stated, "*to shun co-responsibility for Poland.*"[408] If Mazowiecki failed, however, Rakowski continued, to meet the Party's expectations, it (the Party) would only occupy the posts of external and internal security and would go into "*constructive opposition.*"[409] However, by mid-September Rakowski's position had hardened:

> *"To Party and non-Party members alike, the Party has not abandoned its position too easily. It is guided in its actions by the national interest and has no desire to adopt the stance of 'the worse, the better.' I am convinced that time will free the Party from the experience of the past. It has an historic chance of*

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407 *Trybuna Ludu*, September 4th, 1989

408 *Trybuna Ludu*, September 4th 1989. Ibid.

409 *Trybuna Ludu*, September 4th 1989. Ibid.

strengthening its political vitality and becoming a broad based party of the Polish left."[410]

The key domestic non-Party factor influencing the new PZPR discourse and political line more widely continued to lie in the deals drawn up at the *round table* and the relationship between reformist sections of the PZPR and moderates within Solidarity. Following the elections and the formation of a non-communist government, the Party's relationship with Solidarity became more complex. Groups within Solidarity began to question the need for an agreement at all. The PZPR was politically bankrupt, argued a significant section of the Solidarity trade union movement, centred around the Wałęsa and Kaczyński milieu in Gdańsk.[411] They called, for example, for a ban on the PZPR, abolition of the nomenclature and stripping of the PZPR's legal right to own property. The trade union wings of Solidarity, supported by a section of the Polish Episcopate and endowed with external (Western) support and societal legitimation, however, were becoming increasingly detached from the Warsaw-based intellectual elites that had dominated the Solidarity *round table* delegation in April. Various de-Communisation legislation was passed during late 1989.[412] However, the Mazowiecki government, which sat, as had the Rakowski government between two extremes within its own ranks, continued to talk of a legal, constitutional

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[410] *Trybuna Ludu*, September 4th 1989. Ibid.

[411] *Trybuna Ludu*, September 4th 1989. Ibid.

[412] Millard, F., (1994) op cit. De-communisation: name change, from Polish People's Republic to the Republic of Poland; abolition of ZOMO special police forces and other sections of the army and police; commission to investigate the activities of the MSW (Ministry of Interior) since December 1981 set up; PZPR privileges, in the form of bank subsidies, credits and tax exemptions were stopped and PZPR assets, those which were accessible, were confiscated. By the end of January 1990 a government commission had been set up to assess the legal title of the PZPR to State assets.

and evolutionary process of transition.[413] The government thus did not seek to marginalise the PZPR immediately and the PZPR promised to continue to provide support for the economic legislative programme undertaken from October 1988 onwards. However, the government also made some concessions to the more hard-line elements within Solidarity by setting up the so-called 'Michnik Committee'[414] to investigate the affairs of the MSW (Ministry of the Interior).

The most coherent answer to the question of why the new government did not seek immediate retribution, however, lies in the alliance of PZPR Sejm deputies and OKP Sejm deputies within the Sejm. Combined, they resisted any executive push towards de-Communisation. The role of the Rakowski leadership group within the Politburo is also significant in this regard. It sought to counter balance any anti-Communist tendency within Solidarity by a dual discourse of hard talk vis-à-vis the USSR and nomenclature and softer talk with those within Solidarity sympathetic to reformers within the PZPR. Furthermore, the rapidity with which Solidarity had come to executive power clearly alarmed many within the opposition movement and the seriousness of economic problems continued to be a crucial factor. Any government would be faced with resolving structural and long-term economic problems (exacerbated in the final weeks of the Rakowski government by the unconditional freeing of agricultural prices[415]). Added to this, Solidarity was already showing signs of fragmenting internally and cleavages that were to develop after 1990 can be seen as significant at this early stage - for example between

[413]Millard, F., (1994) Ibid.
[414]Millard, F., (1994) Ibid.
[415]Staniszkis, J., (1992) op cit. pp.140-143

the leftist, Warsaw based intelligentsia, the Gdańsk based trade union sections and the lay Catholic KIK groups.[416]

The new government was unable to move in any direction without the implicit sanction of the PZPR, which retained control over Ministries of Interior, Foreign Office as well as the Presidency. Thus Solidarity was faced with a paradox. It was popularly committed to de-Communisation, but it could not achieve this without the support of the PZPR - the Communists themselves. The new government was also obliged to operate within the context of a Soviet presence on Polish soil and within the terms dictated by existing commitments both to COMECON and the Warsaw Pact. It was thus faced with various choices conditioned by both of the above factors, as well as pressures exerted through groups within Solidarity, the Church and non-Solidarity opposition and the parameters of possible policy within the existing economic conditions. Between October and January 1990 there was a continuation of the existing political alliances forged during the *round table* talks which acted to shield the changing PZPR. Solidarity leftists such as Michnik, Kuroń and Lityński, who had made contacts with figures within the PZPR, were clearly also aware, however, that any overt merger would undermine the legitimacy of the new government. What, therefore, took place is an implicit compromise between the two factions of their wider constituencies.[417] The PZPR pledged to support the Solidarity government's ambitious economic reform programme[418] in return for a tacit agreement that the Solidarity government would honour the *round*

[416]Staniszkis, J., (1992) Ibid.
[417]Kaczyński, J., (1991a) op cit
[418]Karpiński, J., (1994)

table agreements, i.e. that the new government would not engage in immediate de-Communisation and public purging of Communist officials.[419]

Mazowiecki's "*thick line*" approach represented a refusal to engage in immediate anti-Communist activity. Added to this, the two mouthpieces of the secular and lay Catholic left within Solidarity (*Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Gazeta Wyborcza* respectively) began to emerge as de facto legitimators of this strategy. Michnik even forgave the PZPR for things done in what he called the spirit of "*promethean ideals.*"[420] Contacts and meetings between various members of both reformist camps continued to take place up to and after the PZPR's final Congress, with Rakowski and Wałęsa having at a highly publicised 'informal' meeting at the end of December. Wałęsa offered Rakowski his public support (which he subsequently was obliged to retract) in the rebuilding of the post-Communist left.

What was emerging was a new PZPR which adopted much of the rhetoric of its *Globalist* wings but combined this with a much more *traditional* conception of its role within the political process. The PZPR elite clearly also sought to retain much of the financial, political, organisational and, in part at least, the political-historical capital accrued during 40 years of Communist rule. Between the 15th Plenum and 11th Congress, the Party elite articulated, at different levels, a highly consistent discourse with which to justify itself as a political entity. Rakowski, at the final Congress of the PZPR on 30th January 1990, for example, sought to

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[419]Wildstein, B., (1991) op cit.

salvage something from the ideological baggage that had most clearly defined the PZPR. Socialism was about values and had no necessary connection with the dominating role of the State in public and political life, he argued. It should, thus, not be jettisoned.

> "*We are against the attempts to restore capitalism. However we support the reforms aimed at a social market economy. The parties and organisations active on the left cannot retreat from all forms of socialism. Contemporary socialism cannot shut its eyes to the real contradictions. In this sense, the tradition which we follow is socialist, not Communist, in its ideology. In practise, however, the economic programme of the left will concur with social democracy. The Solidarity group is also looking for an ideological identity. In this the Polish left is indispensable. Its ideals and values are in line with national and personal aspirations of Poles. We have exhausted the strength of the* PZPR *and its possibility of retaining social trust. There is still time to build a new Polish left- in line with Polish left intellectual traditions.*"[421]

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[420] Zubek, V., (1995) op cit. pp.453

3. *East* Vs *West*

Central to the PZPR's evolving discourse of legitimation was the notion of the PZPR as composed of decent-hard working and patriotic Poles, who had been pushed into making compromises (like everyone else) by the strength of hard-liners within the Polish State, supported by the USSR.[422] The 'real' PZPR thus began to be portrayed as a bearer of Polish progressive and cultural traditions, as an outpost of Western social democracy, a carrier of Western values.[423] The PZPR had always been a national party, a public and progressive entity, according to this reasoning:

> *"We reject dogma. We do not defend Stalinism. We reject coercion as a foreign method and source of exercising power. We reject the dictatorship of the proletariat and the undemocratic character of State institutions and instruments used by the Party. We are moving away from primitive collectivism and towards personal freedoms and the rights of man, from the doctrines of a falsification of the understanding of internationalism. We are not capitulating from the past. Socialism is not a level of Stalinism. We are convinced that a new left party will be able to return socialism to its values."*[424]

The notion of socialistic values which pre-date Stalinism was central to the emerging rationale of the new Party elite. Operative or practical socialism - that which the Party could claim to have been deploying throughout the post-Beirut period - was essentially at odds with the doctrines of Marxism-Leninism. If the doctrines themselves could be

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[421] Słodkowska, I., (1995) op cit. pp.18-27
[422] Rakowski, M. R., (1992) op cit.
[423] Kozniewski, A., (1991)
[424] Punk Widzenia (1989)

passed off as rhetorical devices for justifying or covering up Russia's imperial intentions, all the better for the collapsing PZPR and its potential post-Communist legitimation.

However, the PZPR was still caught in a delicate political position. On one hand it was seeking, by deploying in key Party texts a continuation of the discourse of '*crimes of the Stalinist period,*' to locate itself closer to the Polish nation be evoking Soviet repression. On the other hand, after August 1989, the plight of the PZPR was partially conditioned by the involvement of the USSR in the domestic affairs of the newly formed Solidarity government. Alongside the anti-Stalinism discourse therefore, a continuation of socialist internationalism (as a signifier of bloc orthodoxy) was also clear, illustrated in the following passage:

> *"Our place in Europe and the world: The sovereignty and independence of our nation is the highest priority. We reject the role of external domination between States. Our aim is solidarity and national friendship, placing Poland in the heart of Europe. Our membership of the Warsaw Pact alliance should be realised in the conditions of 'our common European home.' We want to move closer to Europe, while keeping our strong links with the USSR. We are an integral member of the European and world left."*[425]

The role of the Soviet Union in the domestic affairs of both the Polish State and the PZPR is significant, if not always clear, during this period. Between August and January a series of meetings took place between representatives of the new Polish government and the Soviet leadership and between CPSU and PZPR leaders. The defining moment took the

[425]Punkt Widzenia (1989) Ibid.

form of a telephone conversation between Gorbachev and Jaruzelski on August 22nd.[426] Gorbachev moved from pressing the PZPR into resisting the relinquishment of its executive position to accepting that fundamental political changes were unavoidable and that the Party must participate in the formation of a government. Subsequent meetings marked the Soviet position in relation to a Solidarity-led government and laid down various implicit and explicit conditions for its effective functioning. The first such meeting, on 25th August, took place between Mazowiecki and Kryuchkov, Chairman of the Soviet State Security Committee (KGB). Kryuchkov spoke of Mazowiecki as a "*solid and principled man*"[427] and stated that Moscow had nothing to worry about over the political changes in Poland, thus signalling the Soviet's recognition of the existing state of Polish affairs. The second signal came on 15th September from Soviet foreign minister, Gerasimov, who stated that the USSR was ready to co-operate with the new Polish government and develop mutual relations. On October 7th Rakowski visited Moscow, assuring various groups, most notably within the CPSU, that those who wanted to dismantle socialism in Poland would be resisted while the PZPR remained in a strong position. "*Who knows,*" Rakowski told *Pravda*, "*economic realities may also undermine the Mazowiecki government. The PZPR supports those of responsible and socialist orientation within Solidarity.*"[428] On 23rd October Gorbachev's senior reformist ally, Shevadnardzy, visited Poland and during a meeting with the new government stated that what was happening in Poland was not "*causing an allergic reaction in Moscow.*"[429] On 23rd November Mazowiecki assured Moscow that Poland was stable and

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[426]Niklasson, T., (Pridham, G., and Vanhanen, K. (Eds.) 1997) p.189

[427]Niklasson, T., (Pridham, G., and Vanhanen, K., (Eds.) 1997. Ibid. p.190

[428]Niklasson, T., (Pridham, G., and Vanhanen, K., (Eds.) 1997. Ibid. p.193

continued to commit itself to the Warsaw Treaty alliance. On 24th November Gorbachev and Mazowiecki exchanged public apologies for so-called *"past mistakes"* and recent anti-Soviet attacks in Poland, respectively. Mazowiecki also called for a clearing up of history and a settling of accounts about Katyń and the deportations and persecution of Poles. Following the collapse of the Berlin wall in November, the USSR restated its commitment to a new mode of socialist alliances, one which recognised the need for national autonomy within the Soviet bloc.

However, it is also clear that the Soviets were keen to guarantee that any changes within the bloc could be controlled and would not undermine the internal security and existing borders of the USSR. The Kremlin sanctioned changes within Poland on condition that Solidarity was made aware that any reforms had to submit to certain preconditions. One, that Poland would not fall out of the existing Warsaw Pact alliance. Two, that trade and other economic commitments within COMECON would be changed gradually. Three, that the PZPR would be allowed to play an important role within the new political environment. The Mazowiecki government was made aware of these conditions at these meetings and via other public communiqués.

Rakowski's speech to the last Congress of the PZPR in January 1990 is symptomatic of the reasoning embedded in the emerging legitimational discourses of the PZPR in relation to the USSR. It is questionable if Rakowski, himself in close contact with figures in the Soviet Union, would have felt able to use such strong language had it not been for three

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[429]Niklasson, T., (Pridham, G., and Vanhanen, K., (Eds.) 1997. Ibid.

factors. One, the Gorbachev line on satellite autonomy within Eastern Europe. Two, the failure of hard-liners within the CPSU to wrestle power out of the hands of Gorbachev during late 1989. Three, the Soviet discourses of Perestroika. All of these combined to make any domestic Polish discourses in relation to the USSR pro-Soviet, anti-Stalinist and nationally oriented at the same time. Rakowski's line was clearly located within the traditional anti-Stalinist line that had been developed from the 7th Plenum onwards in 1988. He rhetorically asked the 11th Congress:

> *"Was the PZPR, which was created out of the unification of PPR and PPS, ever capable of becoming a party, which resolutely went along the Polish road to socialism? Let us remember that the Party was created when Stalin was strengthening his powerful influence on the international Communist movement...the possible choices were very limited. In this situation only a government of the left, accepting subjugation to the USSR was capable of maintaining sufficient range of autonomy and independence. The alternatives were dangerous. The Stalinist repression cannot be forgotten, including that of Gomułka."*[430]

Rakowski's reference to Gomułka is significant in that, by equating Gomułka with Stalinism, he was clearly close to accepting that Polish Communists (even during the post-1956 period of '*A Polish Road to Socialism*') had some domestic autonomy from Moscow. However, his main line of reasoning did not, in fact, seek to equate the two spheres and relied on the traditional rationale:

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[430] *Trybuna Ludu*, February 2nd 1990

"After 1956, the Party sought to gain maximum autonomy in the years before Perestroika. The policy of the USSR in the pre-Gorbachev days had an imperialist character, the effects of which were most sharply felt in 1981. Brezhnev was incapable of understanding the reasons for the mass workers revolt in July and August 1980. Why, they asked, are you not allowing the real Communists to speak? I recall the constant visits of Gromyko, the words of Kulikov and Zamyatin. The above mentioned doctrine blocked, to a large extent, the dismantling of the Stalinist economic and political structures. The imposed model of Soviet socialism was one the main reasons for our heavy defeat (at the June 1989 elections). The Soviet model was developed in a country without deep democratic traditions and was a continuation of customs characteristic of the feudal era. Our nation instinctively felt the artificial and foreign nature of the concept of the political system that was being implemented. This is undoubtedly an unpleasant confession, but it has to be made if we want to win the bridgeheads of credibility for the future leftist socialist party which is being created."[431]

The Rakowski speech is interesting for two main reasons. One, the place, occasion and time of its delivery and two, in that it opened up a more pronounced anti-Soviet discourse. Rakowski was freed, to a certain extent, from the need to appease the USSR. The Soviets had reconciled themselves within the Gorbachev camp to a relinquishment of direct influence and were prepared to deal with the various 'national' parties that were emerging in each previously satellite country. The PZPR was thus no longer central to the Soviet Union in its relationship with Poland.

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[431] *Trybuna Ludu*, January 30th 1990

4. *Past* Vs *Present*

"The Party," Rakowski stated at the 16th Plenum:

> *"must come to terms with its role in the past...not all of which is negative...We recognise the authentic achievements of the* PRL *- post-war reconstruction, advancing the mass of people, assuring peace in Poland and external security."*[432]

The PZPR was developing a discourse that dealt with recent, as well as more distant history. Rakowski, for example, talked of Jaruzelski as a national saviour and martial law as a national tragedy: *"It was a national tragedy brought about by national heroes who, appearing to undermine the nation, saved it."*[433] He also talked of the 1980's as a period during which the PZPR "*had waited for the opposition to grow up.*" The notion of *'impossible circumstances'*[434] also became regularly adopted both at Central Committee sessions and elsewhere in the Party-controlled media to sanction the role of the Party within the period of martial law.

Rakowski was searching for a discourse that was able to evoke the *traditional* signifiers to Party faithful via continued references to Polish socialist precedents while also indicating the Party's desire to run with the course of reforms and not undermine the Solidarity government. He used the traditional language of threats combined with the *Globalist* language of legality, responsibility and progress, all of which could be read both as support for the new regime and as a part of a line of Polish socialist discourse linking the present with the post-1956 PZPR. The

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[432] *Trybuna Ludu*, January 25th 1990.

[433] *Trybuna Ludu*, January 25th 1990. Ibid.

following section is interesting in terms of this historical discursive legitimation:

"*How can we overcome the past, the ballast that is placed on our back? Only by a return to the European and Polish understanding of socialism. If we go back to the origins of socialist thought we see that its authors saw socialism as a development of democratic republicanism. A State governed by law, parliamentarianism, rights, separation of Church and State, secularity and universal education, the autonomy of science, independence of courts, freedom of speech, religion and conscience. The feudal system of socialism created by Stalin distorted these concepts. We must reclaim them. The new party should carry on the living tradition of the Polish left: Dąbrowolski and the Legionnaires, Luella, Dębowski, and the Revolutionary Democrats, Worcell, Krępowiecki, Traugutt and the Reds, Warzyński and Limanowski, Krzywicki and Abramowski, Piłsudski (at the time he was a socialist), Daszyński, Niedzalowski, Kostrewa-Koszutska, Prochnik, Lange and Hochfeld. Without the return of those names there can be no awareness of the left and thus no party.*"[435]

Resolutions of the 17th Plenum in January 1990 further illustrate this historical discourse and its reconstruction of Polish socialism:

"*Above all it (*the new party*) will be a Polish party. It will offer a third way which will be a complete contradiction of real socialism and an alternative to the free market...the long term aim is working towards a new form of democratic socialism, away from the axiological values of Communism. We are leading*

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[434]Wolań, A., (1991)

[435]Punk Widzenia (1989) op cit.

towards the ideals of a rational society: against nationalism, chauvinism and the neutral state."[436]

The pragmatic centre was thus seeking both to oust the *Globalist* factions from the Party's decision-making bodies, while also claiming and articulating many of its discourses. Marxist-Leninist socialism could be passed off as a 'foreign' and even 'anti-Polish' import without actually rejecting the core values of this ideology. Practise had failed, but the values remained the same, in other words. The Party's reformist wings had always, according to Rakowski, been searching for rational solutions and had remained national and close to the Polish people. It was, on this basis, simply a combination of external pressure and internal mismanagement that had undermined the reformist agendas (in 1956, 1970, 1980-81). The PZPR's so-called Programmatic Commission,[437] which was set up at the 16th Plenum in 1989 to organise the final Congress, presented the programmatic resolution of the PZPR at the final Plenum in January 1990, including a re-evaluation of the past and values for the future:

"*The fact is that Stalinism and neo-Stalinism did not rise out of the aims and traditions of the Polish left. The current reform thought developed and became stronger during the last 10 years and co-created the conditions for reforms which were expressed at the 10th Plenum and initiative on the round table. The contradiction between capital and labour does exist, the problem is how to resolve it. Marxist socialism wanted to resolve it unilaterally and radically which caused a halt to economic development, the end of innovation and the strong*

[436]Punkt Widzenia (1989) Ibid.
[437]Punkt Widzenia (1989) Ibid.

State. The attempts at reform since 1956 have been, unfortunately, half hearted. The concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat in this way led to the loss of ideological identity of Communist Parties. The PZPR *was becoming a party for distributing posts and benefits. Society, which has been freed from the barrier of fear, has declared its commitment to Solidarity. Let us say openly that we deserved a good thrashing."*[438]

[438]Punkt Widzenia (1989) Ibid.

5. *Conclusions*

It was within this period that the most open discursive transformations of the PZPR took place. The Party ditched most of it's core discursive commitments to Marxism-Leninism, while retaining and rethinking various core values of socialism. This social-democratisation of the PZPR, given the gradual and transactional character of the *round table* process of democratisation, the Party's own transformation from the 10th Plenum onwards, combined with the weaknesses of the Solidarity government and the continued external legitimating presence of the Soviet Union, however, was less problematic and more unilinear than one might have expected.

The PZPR transformed itself at various levels simultaneously. On one level it altered various ideological and historical discourses. It refocused on the role of the PZPR reform wings during the 'dark years' of Stalinist repression, located itself as the nation's saviour during martial law and stressed the essential values of socialism that had been submerged under the weight of Soviet and military pressure. It offered its conditional and *'principled'* support for the new Mazowiecki government but also sought a means of using its parliamentary position to safeguard itself from the rapid de-Communisation strategy advocated by many within Solidarity during late 1989. In relation to Western actors, the Party worked hard to position itself on the side of responsibility, in particular, its conditional support for the 'shock-therapy' programme.

After August 1989 such a transformation appeared unlikely. The Party was losing support within its own ranks and the Central Committee,

which had been less than unequivocal in its support for the elite's decision to enter into the *round table* talks, was acquiring political autonomy. Solidarity's Sejm Club of Deputies had forged good working relations with sections of the PZPR Club of Deputies and the latter was also distancing itself and asserting its independence from the Politburo. Added to this the Mazowiecki government, under pressure from the more nationalistic and trade union wings of the Solidarity movement, was seriously engaged in a debate concerning the abolition of the PZPR altogether and the State's re-acquisition of its funds and properties. However, at the same time, Solidarity's leftist elites argued that the PZPR could not be allowed to disappear for two main reasons. The first was strategic-geopolitical: the importance of recognising the continued relevance of the Soviet Union as a player in domestic politics and the need to reassure the CPSU that Poland was not undergoing a Catholic-nationalist coup, which would have been seen as threatening its internal security. The second was related to the need for a strong left in the democratic transition. On the other hand, reformers within the PZPR were obliged to play a delicate game of political negotiation with Solidarity. Solidarity moderation would, it was argued, provide the Party with a means of quietly transforming itself and re-adjusting to new political realities.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

1. *Introduction*

This chapter sets out four objectives. One, to provide an overview of continuities and discontinuities in PZPR discursive legitimations and from this to evaluate, on an empirical level, the central *continuity* hypothesis. Two, to comment on the theoretical relevance of discourses of legitimation in the Polish transition and more widely. Three, to assess these conclusions in the light of the post-Communist legitimations of the SdRP. Four, to summarise the relevance of the work on post-Communist studies more widely.

2. *Continuity/Discontinuity*

Contrary to many studies of both the PZPR during the Polish political transition in 1989 (in particular Zubek's and Smolar's[439]) and the role of Communist ideology during and after the collapse of Communism (Schull's[440]), there is a strong case for continuity hypotheses in PZPR discourses. The PZPR's changing mode of legitimation during 1988-90 represents a case of re-ordering and re-emphasising key discursive elements. It is not, as Schull suggests, a total negation of the ideological legitimations of pre-1989 nor, as Zubek suggests, simply a reflection of fragmenting institutionalised elite interests. Schull's argument reduces the complexity of the transition. His views postulate over-deterministic relations between system and Party and Party and ideology. He therefore fails to understand how, as the system transformed in 1989, both the Party and ideology altered. Zubek fails to recognise that discourse itself plays an important role in the legitimation process and, in this case, a key role. Re-ordering and re-emphasis of discourse imply a process of selective shedding and reinterpretation of elements of the discourse. The PZPR articulated a series of discourses of continuity and adaptation, reconstructing and retaining key elements in the normative sphere and loosening or abandoning many of its commitments to existing means of achieving them.

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[439]Zubek, V., (1995) op cit.; Smolar, A., (1994) op cit.

[440]Schull, J., (1992) op cit.; Walker, R., (1989) op cit.; Fukuyama. F., (1992) op cit.

2.1. *Establishing 'continuity'*

The dominant tendency during 1988-90 was a reemphasis away from *traditional* towards more *legal-rational* discourses of legitimation. This was illustrated in the three discourses of *'Public'* Vs *'Private,' 'Past'* Vs *'Present'* and *'East'* Vs *'West.'*

2.1.i. *'Public' discourses*

More pronounced *'Public'* discourses evolved out of the PZPR's pre-existing ideological structures. This process was driven by a dynamic of internal and external forces that necessitated political reappraisal within the higher echelons of the PZPR during late 1988 and early 1989 and was accelerated by the *round table* agreements and collapse of the PZPR's leading role thereafter. The evolving *'Public'* discourses centred on a discursive reconstruction of *'society'* (and discrete aspects of it), *'the State'* and *'constitutionalism.'* PZPR discourses, for example, focused on those elements within socialism that corresponded, in discursive terms, with aspects of Western-type constitutionalism and of Western-style social democracy. The leading role of the party, for example, became reconstructed in contingent rather than absolute terms - in terms of a dialectic relation not solely between the State (as the subject) and society (as the object), but in terms of the Society as an autonomous subject to be guided, cajoled and persuaded by an autonomous (although still privileged) leading party.

This process of selection and re-emphasis is illustrated most clearly in the PZPR's discourses of *'the working class,' 'trade unions'* and *'opposition.'* At the 10th Plenum in January 1989, the working class ceased to represent the

only driving force of society moving towards socialism, but as one amongst a plurality of groups and classes in society. The political imperative to legalise Solidarity in early 1989 reduced the political scope of the PZPR elite to continue with notions of controlling trade unionism. This was driven by factors beyond the PZPR's control, within which it became increasingly attached to a set of discourses that had little connection with its existing exercise of holding power.

2.1.ii. *'Western'* and *'historical'* discourses

The PZPR developed various *'Past'* discourses to underpin its changing relationship with both the USSR and the opposition, but sought to marginalise them within a wider discourse of 'socialist reform' (*odnowa*). As the Party lost power during 1989, however, various discourses of Polish-Soviet history and Polish history, for example, acquired a more pronounced and significant place in the PZPR's search for legitimation, both in relation to Polish society and other key groups within the State and international society. This is most clearly seen in the discourses of Katyń and *'removing the remnants of Stalinism.'* It is also clear in the ways in which selected aspects of Polish independence, the traditions of pre-war Polish socialism and even martial law were partially reconstructed.

2.2. *Continuity in* 'traditional' *discourses*

In many ways the tendency towards *'Public'* ideological and historical discourses was either partial or non-existent,' however. Partly this is explicable in terms of the pre-existing model of discursive legitimation, which had been a fragmented and confused combination of competing strands within the Communist ideological project, in particular the ways in which elements of nationalism and legalism during the 1980's had played legitimating roles. The PZPR retained throughout the period 1988-90 certain discourses that were less unequivocal in their rejection of ideological principles, of the USSR and of '*socialist history,*' representing a more traditional, prerogative form of legitimation. Continuities are found in many areas, for example, in discourses related to the retention of prerogatives in the form of Party control of the security services, the military and attempts to retain a widened version of WRON (the Military Council) after the elections in 1989. There is a line of continuity within the pragmatic centre's discourse related to the notions and applications of an '*opposition,*' for example, which was linked by a desire to continue to use the *round table* agreements as a means of legitimating the continued prerogatives of the leading party. Rakowski was clearly willing to sanction the continued opening of sub-discourses related to the history of Polish-Soviet relations, of Polish socialism and *State Socialism*, since they appeared to have no immediate political ramifications in terms of the holding and wielding of power. However, in relation to the concept and application of an opposition the PZPR elite was bound by the necessity to concede political ground to the Solidarity opposition. The pragmatic centre did not fully sanction and did not fully support the *round table* agreement and continued to seek, even after the agreement was signed

and June elections held, to break up the Solidarity-OKP coalition, steer selected members of the Solidarity elite into a widened centre of prerogative power within KOK and hoped for a signal from Moscow to limit the democratisation process, even as late as November 1989.

2.3. *Longer and shorter-term explanations*

Many of the historical weaknesses of the *State Socialist* system in Poland, paradoxically, made it easier rather than more difficult for the PZPR to reconstruct its discourses during 1989-90. The PZPR leadership could claim, for example, that it had played a crucial role in retaining a greater degree of national sovereignty than would otherwise have been possible within the context of the Cold War, the USSR's aggressively imperial interests and Poland inherently weak geopolitical position. Almost every significant milestone in the post-war period provided the possibility of multiple interpretation and thus, for the PZPR, space for reinterpretation. *'1956,' '1968,' '1970'* and *'1980-81'* could all be reconstructed discursively in terms of gradual reforms within socialism that at the same time cemented Poland's relationship with the USSR.

The short-term political dynamics of the negotiated transition in 1989 are also central to the changing pattern of PZPR discourses. In particular, the key lies in the dialectic between the political, economic and social (both domestic and international) forces acting on the PZPR and the changing internal politics of the PZPR itself. The central features of this dialectic of discourse and political possibilities are as follows:

2.3.i. *The moderate Solidarity opposition*:

The pragmatic discourses of the PZPR, combined with the apparent impossibility of defining a new political arrangement between State and society outside of the existing Soviet realm of influence as late as 1990, in effect, obliged the Solidarity leadership to adopt a cautious and negotiational strategy during 1989. Many within the Solidarity leadership retained the desire to 'reform the system from within.' This meant that a potential rationale for hard-line reaction within the PZPR to 'anti-socialist agitators' was undercut. Solidarity moderates thus played a definite role in legitimating a reformist branch of the PZPR elite. *Globalists* and *Populists* were thus able to define themselves within a political discourse that avoided potentially destabilising possibilities.

2.3.ii. *The* round table *talks*

The agreements reached at the *round table* institutionalised a legalised conception and application of reform and also an institutionalised political role for the PZPR. Within this framework the PZPR was able to redefine itself in symbolic terms away from a primary association within Polish society with non-Polish, authoritarian, and ideological signifiers.

During and after the *round table* talks, PZPR discourses arose within the gap between the formal ideology of the State and the flexible discourse of socialist renewal (*odnowa*), that was being used to legitimate the negotiations. *'Past'* and *'West'* discourses were exploited by reformers within the PZPR and sanctioned by the pragmatic centre within the Party during and after the *round table*, for example, because they appeared to

legitimate the negotiations taking place, without actually playing a determining role within them. They also appeared to sit comfortably within the PZPR's existing historical and ideological framework of discursive legitimation. They represented continuities within PZPR discourse, linking the present with the past of *State Socialism* in Poland. Thus the PZPR could claim to be a party of the nation, for example, by re-identifying itself in discursive critiques of Stalinism and pointing to the distance between itself and its Russian counterparts. It could also point to the principles embedded within *odnowa* as currents within a deeper 'Western' democratic and legalistic tradition. Socialism, for example, became associated with many signifiers of the Western social democratic and socialist tradition, and thus tied into the historical development of Marxist thinking in Western Europe rather than the authoritarianism of the Eastern version.

The PZPR's deployment of 'socialist reformist' (*odnowa*) discourses in the period of the *round table* facilitated the repositioning of the Party in symbolic terms away from its primary association with the Soviet Union, while at the same time the PZPR made clear signals that its position within Polish society and the State was a necessary condition of the Soviets' sanctioning domestic developments. Since *odnowa* did not bind the PZPR elite to any definite strategy, the language was sufficiently flexible to allow the emergence of strands of the discourse.

2.3.iii. *The role of the USSR*

The weakening of the Soviet rationale for PZPR dominance within the State and the specific correlation of the role of Solidarity and the Church in the construction of a national dialogue undermined any harder-line interpretations of the socialist reform process and allowed a reform minded set of factions to arise within the pragmatic centre of the PZPR, most clearly after the 10th Plenum.

The Soviet Union did not make any definite signal throughout this period that it planned to interfere in Polish internal affairs. If anything, it signalled that the Polish example could be used as a kind of 'test-case' for the region. Thus, what one sees is the absence of another key legitimational stabiliser for the pre-existing interpretation of *State Socialism* in Poland. The discourse of gradualism inherent within *odnowa* relied upon the tacit and at times open understanding that the USSR would not sanction any reforms within Poland that crossed an arbitrary 'socialist' line. As the line blurred and in places disappeared altogether, reformers within the PZPR pushed existing interpretations within official discourse into a more pronounced articulation of the democratic and constitutional elements within *odnowa.*

3. *The relevance of Discourse*

This thesis illustrates how discourse both facilitates and inhibits political action and political intention. Discourse is woven by competing groups for power in a process of negotiation and compromise. Parties seek to locate themselves within aspects of overlapping and generalised modes of representing and constructing the world, without 'owning' or occupying exclusively these symbolic terrains. Thus the questions of intentions and strategies in politics needs reassessment. Those post-Communist studies that have tended to focus on the rhetoric of the SdRP and its implicit connections with the PZPR (which is often, rather unhelpfully, demonised), have tended to focus on one aspect of the transition that, in many ways, is less relevant than the overt content and functions of discourse in constructing and determining these intentions and strategies in the first place. The discourse of *odnowa*, for example, contained within its overt articulation, references to parliamentary democracy, to economic marketisation reform, to the rights of man and other, apparently non-Communist discourses. It provided the PZPR elites with an ideological reference point, but at the same time, provided the same elite with many areas where operative (synchronic) interpretation was possible.

In the general works on system change in Central and Eastern Europe there is a marked absence of work on the ways in which players within the political game came to be located on one side or the other, how they saw themselves and each other not simply in terms of objectively quantifiable 'positions' governed by the logic of rational self- and collective- interests, but in often symbolic terms, as part of a "*project*" or

"*community*" or "*set of values,*" for example. The ways in which discourse both appeared to 'liberate' the PZPR elite from its commitments to Marxism-Leninism, but simultaneously attached it to a democratisation process that it was unable to control, adds weight to this theoretical position. Discourse, by avoiding the pitfalls of models of legitimation that stress either belief or action or both, is better equipped to deal with the complexities that structured the pattern of political change during this period in Poland.

A discursive analysis of the PZPR's transition challenges some basic assumptions in the field of Polish transition studies, in particular those represented by Walker and Schull, that the ideological collapse of Communism can be equated with the ideological collapse of the PZPR. Within the sphere of those who, at least in part, recognise and accept the need to adopt a more variegated conception of Communist legitimation, such as Zubek[441] and Przeworski,[442] certain historical and theoretical details of the transition in Poland, in particular the role played by the discourses of the PZPR and the role of discourse in defining and delineating the Party's (as well as the system's) transformation are also questioned. By constructing forms of political identity, discourse acted to alter group relations during this transition. A rational choice understanding of the transition, however, fails to conceptualise how pre-existing identities can structure political choices, and therefore, political outcomes.

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[441]Zubek, V., (1994) and (1995) op cit.

[442]Przeworski, A., (1992) op cit. Przeworski deploys the most open rational choice methodology for explaining the transition. His "prisoner's dilemma" model cannot simply be rejected because it represents a clear and simplified model of the ways in which the negotiated transfer of power took place. Osiatyński (Elster, J., (ed.) (1996) also shares, to a certain extent the view that rational calculation can act as a way of conceptualising and explaining the so-called "Transition through transaction" in Poland. However, Przeworski himself recognises the limits to this approach and the weakness of its historical accuracy.

4. *The SdRP's political legitimation, 1990-97*

Continuities (and selective discontinuities) in PZPR discourses before 1990 provided one significant means by which the post-Communist SdRP was able to retain a political presence and build a post-Communist legitimational discourse. In post-Communist Poland, the SdRP has managed to survive successive attempts to ban and bankrupt it, undertaken in the name of de-Communisation.[443] It has more than merely survived, however. It began rapidly after 1990 to dominate the political left. Having contested initially with other left and centre-left parties, both from the ex-Solidarity movement (Democratic Union, UD, and the Union of Labour, UP) and from the old PZPR itself (Polish Union of Social-democracy, PUS),[444] it emerged as the strongest party of the left and the largest single party in the Sejm at the 1993 Sejm elections. From 1993 to 1997 the SdRP dominated a coalition government (with the reformed peasants' party, PSL) of the centre-left.

The SdRP inherited extensive institutional and organisational structures from the PZPR.[445] It also possessed an experienced leadership and many who had left the PZPR as it was collapsing in 1989-90 moved back towards the party.[446] Furthermore the leftist wing of Solidarity (around

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[443] *Wprost*, 17th March 1998 op cit.

[444] The literature on the rise of the SdRP after 1990 is quite extensive both in Poland and in the West. See, Lewis. P. (1993d) op cit.; Kaczyński, J., (1991) op cit.; Frydman.R, et al., (1996); Glasman.M., (1994) op cit.; Jones.M ,. (1993); Malinowski, W., (1989); Michnik, A., (1996a) op cit.; Smolar, A., (1994) op cit.; Wojciechowski.J., (1990) op cit.; Zubek.V (1995) and (1994) op cit.; Walicki. A., (1997) op cit. Lewis offers perhaps the best analysis of the initial (1990-93) period of post-Communist politics in Poland. He deals with the factionalism within the post-Solidarity movement and the 'quiet rebuilding of the SdRP,' while Zubek provides a strong account of the relationship between PZPR reformers and Solidarity moderates. The national debate to do with Communism, furthermore, continues to rage well into the post-Communist period. Smolar, A., (1994) op cit.; Michnik, A., (1996) op cit., Wańczyk, P.S., (1996), Walicki, A., (1997), and Zaremba, M., (1998) represent the tip of an iceberg in terms of the wider debate about the role of the PZPR within the old system.

[445] Zubek, V., (1995) Ibid.

[446] Kadzmarek, L., (1991) op cit.

Michnik and Kuroń), during 1990-93, dominated a government campaign against the idea of de-Communisation.[447] The Solidarity left tended to define its main enemy as the Solidarity right rather than the SdRP. The SdRP also managed to retain, via its control of the Presidency (until late 1990) and the Ministries of Internal and External Affairs (also until late 1990) a strong foothold within key institutions of the State.[448]

This apparent reversal of fortunes was neither predicted nor at all self-explanatory. The end of Communism, one might reasonably have expected (and one heard much talk of during and immediately after 1989[449]), heralded the political consolidation of one or more of the Solidarity groups that emerged during 1990 as the organisational structure of the Solidarity movement wound itself down and split into various camps (ROAD, and later UD, on the centre-left and KLD, on the centre-right). The SdRP, however, had cleared up many historical questions,[450] disattached itself from dogmatic ideology and reworked its legitimational discourses to deal with many of the negative effects felt during the immediate period of economic transformation. It appeared for many moderate, secular and competent in comparison with the Catholic and nationalist right. A central dynamic of the SdRP's political successes lies in the ways in which the PZPR had anchored itself before 1990 in the three key discourses examined during this thesis.

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[447]Wildstein, B., (1993) op cit.

[448]Staniszkis, J., (1992) op cit.

[449]Lipiec, J.J., (1990) op cit; Poprzeczko, J., (1990)

4.1. *Past/Present*

Having dealt with much of its past during 1989, the reformed PZPR, the SdRP, was able to redefine itself more clearly within a national conception of history after 1989. Furthermore, various discourses of continuity evoked a link back to what were seen by many as better times. It retained, for example, a strong commitment to 'the achievements of the People's Republic (PRL),' many of the values of the 'socialist project' and constructed a defence of its own role within the transition. Furthermore, the SdRP did not apologise for the Communist period, instead actively promoting itself as a defender of the national interest by, for example, rethinking the role of General Jaruzelski during the martial law period. Publicly, the SdRP adopted the discourse and programmatic aims of Western socialist and social democratic parties, although continued to talk of several infamous names from recent Polish history as 'heroes' and 'mentors' (people such as General Jaruzelski and Edward Gierek[451]).

[451]Zubek, V., (1995) op cit; Walicki, A., (1990) op cit. Jaruzelski was portrayed, for example in his own biography (1992), in various speeches of Kwaśniewski, as a valiant patriot whose actions were motivated, not by any commitments to external powers (the USSR), but by a genuine commitment to and love of his fatherland, see both.

4.2. *'Public/Private'*

The PZPR reconstructed its ideological discourses during 1989 and early 1990, thoroughly shedding commitments to authoritarian signifiers, reasserting the values of socialism and locating itself within the reform process as an 'initiator' and 'defender' of both constitutionalism and modernism. This ideological reassembling provided the SdRP with a set of values and a discursive framework within which to develop its own focus of legitimation which would not be bound by Marxist ideological commitments. The SdRP represented itself as standard bearer of reformism and the more progressive and pragmatic achievements of the PRL. It offered friendly, although highly conditional, support for the post-Solidarity parties (UD and UP) of the left wing, stressing their common roots within the PZPR.[452] On the other hand it reasserted the position of the old faithful: that section of the PZPR that remained committed to the cause until the end (not having left during the 1980's or after 1989).[453] The SdRP paints itself as a progressive force, both in terms of its commitments to the working class and the 'poorest sections of society,' as well as in terms of its commitments to various of the welfare and educational priorities of the Communist system, such as free education, free health care and legal abortion, where post-Communist tensions and disaffections run high.

The SdRP situates itself within a version of social-democracy that is secular (keeping the Church away from direct political involvement in the constitutional process). It actively courts any left leaning group within

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[452]Zubek, V. (1995) op cit.

[453]Zubek, V., (1995) Ibid.

Polish society, seeking to draw centrist and green and other left parties and groups into the SLD. The SdRP has successfully managed to retain within the SLD the hard-line ex-Communist left, the PPS (which during the transition period most vehemently attacked the PZPR), various ecology groups, the ex-official trade union (OPZZ) and various employer based organisations.[454]

The Solidarity opposition that was largely held together by its anti-Communist discourses before 1989, did not manage, on the other hand, to define itself coherently other than in terms of often vague, traditional commitments to Catholicism and trade union rights. Until the election victory of AWS (Solidarity Election Action)-UW (Freedom Union) coalition in September 1997's Sejm elections neither had been able to furnish the various smallish rightist groups with a cogent purpose or set of operative discourses or policies.

3.3. *'East/West'*

In the post-Communist period, the PZPR's association with the USSR, before 1990, has acted to construct the impression that the SdRP remains in touch with the 'real' power players in Moscow, and thus, given Polish society's ambivalence towards Russia, underpins the party's legitimation, in the eyes of many, through the traditional combination of fear and respect.

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[448]Significant members of the SLD at the time of the 1995 Presidential campaign included, the ex-official trade union, OPZZ (Ogólnopolskie Porozumienie Związek Zawodowych), Partia Pracy (Party of Work), Polska Partia Socjalistyczna (Socialist Party), Polska Partia Zielonych (Greens), Ruch Ludzi Pracy (Movement of working people), Ruch Niezależna Inicjatywa Europejska "NIE" (Anti-European Union group), Socjaldemokracja Rzespospolita Polskiej (SdRP), Związek Komunistów Polskich "Proletariat" (Communists), Związek Socjalistycznej Młodziej Polskiej (Socialist Youth League), Związek Zawodowy Pracowników Rolnictwa w RP (Agricultural workers).

5. *Thesis contributions and relevance*

This thesis is intended to act, at one level, as a corrective to some of the more one-sided analyses of the Polish transition in 1989. It links previously ad hoc elements of the transition together, for example, the pre- and post-Communist fields of study - in particular in the role of discourse in theories of legitimation. The methodological and theoretical work of Taras in the early 1980's, for example, on the structure of ideology used by the PZPR between 1956 and 1983, cannot be ditched simply because the thing itself appears to have disappeared. One, because the *"it"* itself has not simply disappeared - given both the relative non-totalitarianism of the old regime and the ways in which the Polish transformation evolved legally within existing structures. Two, because political discourses are necessarily bifurcated by a contingent and dynamic relationship between beliefs, how they are structured into bodies of thought and the ways in which they become operationalised in speech acts (discourse), which are ontologically distinct from, if also interdependent of, the original structure.

The thesis also provides a more detailed analysis of the PZPR during its final period of existence than exists at present within existing literature. Zubek's implicit (and at times explicit) view that one can analyse politics in general, and this case in particular, in terms of the intentions and rational calculations of key actors within given matrices, while logically consistent in its own terms, fails to address the ways in which these actors both become actors and saw themselves and others within the matrices so defined.

The thesis has raises various questions, many of which within the scope of the work, have been touched upon but left unanswered. One, the possibilities of comparing the Polish case with other similar cases in the region, developing a wider theoretical comparative contribution. Two, the possibility of deploying a longer time-span with which to assess the legitimation process of the PZPR and its successor party, the SdRP. Three, the theoretical use of discourse and theories of legitimation.

Comparative analysis was deliberately eschewed in this work for methodological and theoretical reasons. The aim of the thesis is also to concentrate on depth rather than breadth. What this work loses by way of wider theories of regional democratisation - in particular the role by the Communist parties of, for example, Hungary or Czechoslovakia - it has gained in empirical and historical detail. Consequently, however, the door is left open to those who might seek some kind of comparative analysis of these Communist Parties, their roles within the democratisation process and even of their post-Communist developments.

This thesis provides a solid study of one particular case, which can act as an empirical base for other studies. The period provides not only insights into the nature of legitimation, asking questions which may be challenged and explored in any future research work, but also provides a study of one aspect of the 'Polish experience' that has implications for both a study of contemporary Polish politics and a wider historical study of the problems facing Poland as it moves towards the European Union.

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Acronyms used in main text and notes

AWS	Solidarity Election Action
CBOS	Opinion Poll Organisation
CC	Central Committee of the PZPR
ChSS	Independent Christian Association
CKKR	Central Party Control and Auditing Commission
DiP	Experience and the Future Reform group.
KIK	Catholic Club of Intellectuals
KKW	Solidarity's National Election Commission
KLD	Liberal Democratic Congress
KO	Solidarity's Citizens' Committee
KOK	National Defence Committee
KOR	Committee for the Defence of the Workers
KPN	Confederation of the Polish Nation
KPP	Polish Communist Party (1926-38)
MSW	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MSZ	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MON	Ministry of Defence
NSZZ	Solidarity's Independent Self-Governing Trade Unions
NKVD	Soviet Secret Police (pre-KGB)
OKP	Solidarity's Parliamentary Citizens' Committee
OPZZ	All National (official) Trade Union
OZI	Citizen's Intelligentsia Association
POP	Basic Party Unit
PRON	Patriotic Movement of National Renewal (1982-89)
PSL	Polish Peasants Party (after 1990)
PPR	Polish Workers' Party (1942-48)
PPS	Polish Socialist Party (1892-1948)
PPS-RD	Polish Socialist Party-Revolutionary
PUS	Polish Union of Social democrats
PZPR	Polish United Workers Party
ROAD	Citizens' Movement for an Alternative Democracy
ROPCiO	Committee for the Defence of Workers
RM	Council of Ministers
RP	Council of State

SD	Democratic Party
SdKPiL	Social Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania
SdRP	Social Democrats of the Republic of Poland
SLD	Democratic Left Alliance
UD	Democratic Union
UW	Freedom Union
UP	Labour Party
WRON	Military Council of National Salvation
Pb	Politburo
ZSL	Polish Peasants Party (to 1990)

Appendix i)

Key PZPR Actors

W. Baka Secretariat of the CC to 29th January 1990. Minister of Economy, 1986-89, Politburo member, leader of government working sub-group on 'Economy and Social Policy' at the *round table.*

K. Barcikowski Deputy Chairman of RP (Pb until 29th July 1989)

S. Ciosek Head of CC socio-legal Dept. Secretary General of PRON (Pb until 29th July 1989)

K. Cypriniak Head of CC Political and organisation Dept. (Pb until 29th January 1990)

J. Czyrek CC secretary (international) (Pb until 29th July 1989)

A. Gdula Leader of government sub-group on 'Law and Society' at the *round table.*

J. Głowczyk CC secretary (propaganda) (Pb until 21st December 1988)

M. Gorywoda Pb and Secretariat from 29th July 1989 to 29th January 1990

Gen. J. Baryła CC secretary (security) (Pb until 21st December 1988)

Gen.W.Jaruzelski First Secretary of PZPR (1981-89), President of Poland, 1989-90)

Gen. C. Kiszczak Minister of Internal Affairs, Leader of Council of Minister's Committee, member of Politburo and Central Committee.

Gen. J. Pożoga Member of KOK, close adviser to Jaruzelski

A. Kwaśniewski Minister of Sport, member of Council of Ministers, member of trade union pluralism working group at *round table,* leader of SdRP, President 1995- .

I. Lubowska Pb and Secretariat from 21st December 1988 until 29th January 1990

J. Kubasiewicz Pb and Secretariat from 29th July 1989 to 29th January 1990

M. Król Pb 29th July 1989 to 29th January 1990

Z. Messner Chairman of RP and Premier (1985-1988) (Pb until 21st December 1988

Z. Michałek Pb (from 21st December 1988 until 29th January 1990

L. Miller Pb and Secretariat from 29th July 1989 to 29th January 1990

A. Miodowicz Chairman of OPZZ

W. Mokrzyszczak	Chairman of CKKR (Pb until 14th June 1988)
Z. Murański	Party Foreman (Pb until 21st December 1988)
M. Orzechowski	Foreign Minister, Secretariat until 29th January 1990
T. Porębski	CC secretary (general affairs) (Pb until 21st December 1988)
M. Rakowski	Sejm vice-marshall, Premier October 1988 - July 29th 1988, First Secretary PZPR until 31st January 1990
J. Reykowski	Pb and Secretariat 21st December 1988 to 29th January 1990. Head of government political reform team at *round table.*
G. Rembisz	Pb and Secretariat from 21st December 1988 to 29th January 1990
F. Siwicki	Minister of Defence
A. Sekuła	Politburo member
Z. Stępień	Textiles Worker
Z. Świątek	Pb and Secretariat from 21st December 1988 to 29th January 1990
A. Wasilewski	Culture, director of publishing
M. Woźniak	CC secretary (economy) (Pb until 14th June 1988)

Government team non-PZPR members at *Round table*:
OPZZ
J. Jarliński, Mieczyslaw Krejewski, Harald Matuszewski, Andrzej Stelmachowski, Jerzy Uzieblo, Romuald Sosnowski.
SD Jan Janowski.
ZSL Bogdan Krolewski.

The Central Committee was the highest party authority between Congresses, which were held ever 5 years and was bound to meet at least once every 6 months. The CC elected the politburo and Party Secretaries. The Politburo was the leading executive organ of the party and was responsible for the conduct of party affairs on a day-to-day basis. By virtue of the party's leading role the Politburo and CC Secretaries had the statutory obligation to "articulate their position in relation to the most important problems of socio-economic and political life in the country" (referred to in the main body of the thesis as *'teza'* (one) or *'tezy' (more than one)*).

Appendix ii)

Chronology of key events, November 1987 - February 1990

1988

February

Messner government introduces price rises in fuel and housing sectors - as part of an *"equilibrium"* (of prices and wages) economic strategy.

April

24th-30th Strikes at Bydgoszcz by MPK (communications workers), at Nowa Huta, Kraków and sympathy strike in Gdańsk in support of Nowa Huta - demands for higher pay, wage indexation, amnesty for sacked Solidarity activists.

May

8th Meeting between representatives of opposition intellectuals and union representatives in Warsaw, following invitation of Mazowiecki and Stelmachowski by Czyrek and Kiszczak to act as mediators in the industrial disputes. "*Without Solidarity, the aspirations of the country will not be realised*,"declares Mazowiecki.

10th Strike ends at Gdańsk shipyard after mediation from Mazowiecki and Bishop Goclowski.

11th Special laws granted to the government to intervene in inefficient State enterprises.

Monthly journal *Konfrontacja* publishes discussions between various proponents and opponents of a "*Pro-reform coalition.*"

June

13-14th 7th Plenum of the PZPR Central Committee

Jaruzelski calls for a "*wide patriotic reform coalition,*" stating that "*society's acceptance of the government's decisions is essential to their implementation.*"

The final resolution of Plenum: "*to introduce changes in economic and administrative bodies and to strengthen the democratic character of our Socialist system so as to ensure the fulfilment of the public's expectations.*"

Plenum marked by a continued dichotomisation of opposition into those who "*seek to destroy the Polish State*" and "*those prepared to take part in a programme of reform and reconciliation*". The Plenum formally expresses the "*political will to continue socialist renewal in all areas of public life*" and endorses all leadership economic and political activities

July
Visit of Gorbachev and his "*omission*" of any references to Katyń. Lull in strike activity. Meetings held at Magdalenka between Wałęsa and Czyrek, with Kiszczak and Goclowski meeting elsewhere.

August
Start of strike in Jastrzębia mines (key pit: Manifest Lipcowy). An interfactory strike committee set up (MKS).
17-20th Occupation strikes all over the country. The main demand is the legalisation of Solidarity.
20th Secret talks between Cryrek and leader of Warsaw KIK - Stelmachowski - on the prospects of *round table* talks.
26th Special meeting of Politburo about talks with opposition. Ciosek no longer finds the word 'Solidarity' "*intolerable*" nor "*the thought of co-operating with it.*" Cryrek talks with Miodowicz about the possibility of offering a role to Solidarity in the workplace. The proposal is rejected by the Politburo. Jaruzelski proposes Kiszczak to head team of negotiators with an opposition.
27th Kiszczak states; "*I have become convinced...that it is necessary to speed up the time of the meeting between leaders of various groups in society and workers. This could take the form of a round table*" - but also rejects the participation of any groups that threaten the constitution.
27-28th 8th Plenum of Central Committee
Politburo calls for "*the establishment of a broad coalition of pro-reformatory forces that both understands the need for and is willing to take part in the process of change,*" as remedies for the country's ills. Reaffirmation of *odnowa.* Politburo member, Czyrek, states: "*respect for the political consequences of the diversity of interests, views and orientations in society is central...but the Party will not accept confrontational pluralism, that is the publics' independence from official control.*" Jaruzelski calls for a new Council for National Agreement out of the existing Consultative Council and giving it greater powers of proposing legislation for Sejm.
Severe criticism of Messner government by OPZZ leader, Miodowicz, amongst others, including PRON, ZSL and SD.
31st Kiszczak-Wałęsa meet, following Wałęsa's role in calling for an end to the strikes, but also for the legalisation of Solidarity. Dąbrowski and Ciosek (head of PRON-Patriotic Movement for National Rebirth) careful to draw a clear distinction between Wałęsa as a private individual and as leader of banned Solidarity

September
3rd End of strike at Manifest Kopalni mines.
15-16th Two meetings in preparation for *round table* - Kiszczak-Wałęsa-Dąbrowski plan to start the *round table* in October. Kiszczak promises a "*role*" for Solidarity in the country's politics but pleads for "*calm and restraint.*" Kiszczak also appeals to Wałęsa to not include Michnik or Kuroń in the proposed talks.
19th Messner government and Council of Ministers resigns.
27th Rakowski becomes Premier. Jaruzelski states that martial law is the primary condition for the *round table* talks.
27th Sejm passes a bill that provides the basis for the direct and relatively free flow of capital in the form of bonds-all sectors of economy eligible-aim being to 'release' 5,000 bn złoty of savings.

October
1st Decision to close Lenin shipyard in Gdańsk announced.
18-19th Second meeting between Wałęsa and Kiszczak. Also involved-Ciosek, Mazowiecki, Gocłowski, Orszulik.
26th Jaruzelski meets with Primate, Cardinal Glemp

November
2nd Economic consolidation plan announced - stress away from heavy industry and defence to consumer markets. Seen as set of guidelines-equality for all types of entreprise (private, socialised and co-operative).
4th Thatcher visit to Poland
11th Celebration of 70 years of independence - recognised with full military honours, for the first time under Communism. Resurrection of Pilsudski as a *'national hero.'*
17-18th Wałęsa meets with Dąbrowski and then Kiszczak (also there, Orszulik (spokesman for the Church), Goclowski, (Bishop of Gdańsk), Ciosek and Mazowiecki.
30th Wałęsa-Miodowicz live tv debate. Miodowicz states that the debate could "*take the place of the round table, if it were exceptionally successful.*" It is the first appearance on Polish tv of Wałęsa since 1981.

December
15th Party celebrates 40th anniversary - portrays itself as: *"the heir to the best traditions in Polish Socialism,"* claiming descendence from the SdKiLP and PPS.

20-22nd Central Committee 10th Plenum, under the title "*Changes in the Party, the Party in changes.*" Two slogans used to describe 10th Plenum: "*Socialist Parliamentary Democracy*" and "*Socialist Civil Society.*"
23rd Opposition to Party leaderships' "pragmatic policies" witnessed in one third of the Central Committee voting against the promotion of *round table* initiator, Ciosek, to the Politburo and Secretariat.(of 212 CC members, 143 voted for his election).
24th Sejm approves two bills aimed at demonopolising the banking system and introducing new laws on foreign investment, aimed at encouraging Western capital investment in Poland.

1989

January
16-18th Second part of 10th Plenum. Concerning trade union pluralism, the Central Committee states "*we see the need and the possibility of moving to a system open to members of the 'constructive opposition'...considering the progress made in political dialogue, in democratic life and its needs, the Central Committee agrees to the conditions for a national understanding and thus the formation of new trade unions.*"
18th The Politburo threatens to resign if its position is not fully endorsed by the Central Committee on the 'question of political and trade union pluralism'. Voted by 143 to 32 with 14 abstentions.
19th Party accepts the prospect of a legal "*reintroduction of political pluralism and the creation of new labour unions, including Solidarity,*" in return for:-
-all executive power to be retained in the hands of the Party
-laws to prevent the new unions from taking action *that "might destabilise the country."*
-the severence of all oppositional links with foreign supporters and its promise to refuse financial aid from abroad
-The opposition's oath of loyalty to the constitution.
27th Wałęsa and Kiszczak finalise details of the *round table.*

February
2-4th Third All-National Ideological-Theoretical Conference.
6th Start of *round table.* Kiszczak speaks of nonconfrontational elections and social consensus and about the support of society for political and economic reforms
6-8th Strikes at mines in Belchatów.
8-10th Sub-working groups begin their work at the *round table.*

March

7th Polish government openly blames the USSR for the Katyń massacre. Urban states that the historical commission had found enough evidence to indicate that "*the crime was committed by the Stalinist NKVD.*"

9th Initial agreement on political reform. Draft electoral laws introduced to the Sejm, however, appear at variance with agreement. They reduce the role and powers of the Sejm and make the Senate effectively powerless by reducing its power to veto.

Strikes by transport, postal and textile workers.

31st Central Committee Party Plenum (11th) - Czarzasty states that "*little of essence of the new stage of the national agreement has reached Party members.*" Plenum reaffirms conclusions of the 10th Plenum.

29th Disagreements at the *round table* lead to new meeting between Wałęsa and Kiszczak, on questions of indexation, nomenklatura, sacked workers.

April

5th End of meetings of *round table.* Agreements on creation of Presidency, free elections to Senate and semi-free elections to Sejm.

17th Solidarity legalised (Rural Solidarity 3 days later).

May

17th Roman Catholic Church accorded status unparalleled in Eastern Europe. New legal framework for Church-State relations which guarantees freedom of conscience and of religious belief (for example, rights to run schools and social welfare and won back property confiscated in 1950's, own press).

29th Parliament pardons those convicted since the 1980 Gdańsk Accords for strikes, demonstrations and supporting banned organisations.

June

4th and 18th Election to bicameral National Assembly. No Senate seats and only those reserved for them won by PZPR. National List (35 unopposed seats for top government and Party leaders) rejected because majority of voters crossed out names. Fresh election of 33 vacant seats (2 out of the 35 reserved seats won by PZPR, given 50% rule), following reconvening of *round table* Intervention Committee, which agreed to endorse a supplementary decree by Council of State.

National List candidates defeated included: Baka, Barcikowski, Ciosek, Czyrek, Kiszczak, Miodowicz, Rakowski, Siwicki, Malinowski (ZSL), Democratic Party leaders, heads of three pro-governmental Christian

organisations (PAX, Polish Catholic Social Union PZKS and Christian Social Union Uchs.
6th Jaruzelski offers to include Solidarity in coalition government. It is not accepted by Solidarity.
7th Jaruzelski states that the PZPR would relinquish power in 1993 if it was defeated in free elections scheduled for that year.
30th PZPR fails to agree on candidacy for Presidency. Jaruzelski proposes Kiszczak but then stands himself.

July
8th Movement of the Eighth of July set up-advocating new party of the left-close links with PZPR Parliamentary Club of Deputies
19th Jaruzelski wins election as President, uncontested (by the smallest possible margin, the vote being engineered by Solidarity to turn out as it does)
29th 13th Plenum of the Central Committee - representatives of local party aparat openly blame leadership for election failure.
Plenums proceedings produce political directives for the Party's activity which envisage "*its fundamental restructuring.*" Main emphasis is on the unity of the Party as the "*instrument for the guaranteeing of Socialism in a modernised form.*" In preparation for the PZPR 11th Congress - a special, previously unpractised questionnaire opinion poll is issued concerning the procedure for the Congress, election of delegates, the manner in which competing programmatic, ideological and organisational-political platforms would be presented. Continues at the 15th Plenum in September.
29th Rakowski succeeds Jaruzelski as First Secretary of the PZPR. Politburo and Secretariat changes strengthen the reformist factions in the Party. OPZZ sets up Ruch Ludzi Pracy (Movement of Working People), to establish its independence and the basis for a new party of the left.

August
2nd Kiszczak elected by Sejm as Premier, but unable to form a government when SD and ZSL make deals with Solidarity.
14th Kiszczak proposes Malinowski (leader of ZSL) as premier.
17th After discussions between Malinowski and Józwiak (leader of SD) the idea of a 'government of national responsibility' is accepted.
19th 14th Central Committee Plenum of the PZPR agrees to join a Solidarity led government provided it is adequately represented with more than defence and interior ministries.

24th Mazowiecki elected premier and makes a speech stating his intention of "*drawing a thick line*" separating his responsibility from that of his predecessors. New Commission set up to investigate the activities of the Ministry of the Interior since 1981.

September
12th Sejm swears in Mazowiecki government-containing 4 reps of PZPR.
15th Miller delivers a critical report to the Central Committee: the Party must transform itself into party of the Polish left if it is to avoid marginalisation, he says.
18th 15th Plenum, part 1 (second part 3rd October). Results of poll from 13th Plenum: a decisive majority of party favoured radical version of proposed change
29th ZOMO disbanded

October
3rd Part 2 of 15th Plenum. Incorporated most of the proposals submitted at the first stage: democratised selection of delegates, granting of passive and active voting rights to candidates, open discussion on competing programmes and the intention of transforming the Party, in programme, statute and name.
12th Government plans for rapid transition to market economy published-Balcerowicz and Sachs instrumental.

November
6th 16th Central Committee plenary session. One document under discussion is the dismantling of the PZPR and the creation of a new party not bound by the doctrines of Marx or Lenin. Rakowski talks about the future, as the past, he says, *"is now being resolved."*
8th German Chancellor, Kohl reassures Poland that the agreement of 1970 will remain - West German parliament accepts borders.
PRON dissolves itself
23rd Mazowiecki assures Moscow that Poland is stable and continues to commit itself to the alliance.
24th Mazowiecki and Gorbachev exchange apologies about unnamed "*past mistakes*" and Mazowiecki for recent anti-Soviet attacks in Poland. Mazowiecki calls for a clearing up of history and a settling of accounts about Katyń and the deportations and persecution of Poles.
29th Rakowski visits Hungary and is "*frightened by the 'Hungarian solution'*" - that is, conflict between the left groups that splintered after the formal ending of the Hungarian Workers Party.

December

12th Director General of IMF Michel Camdessus states that agreement had been reached on the austerity plan, the principle precondition of Western financial assistance. Assistance would include an IMF stand-by loan, restructuring loans, rescheduling of Polish debts and a $1,000 million stabilisation fund set up by 24 Western nations.

13th PZPR buildings and offices attacked in various cities on 8th anniversary of Martial Law. EC approves an economic package of aid to Poland on condition that IMF stipulations are met.

14th The Polish government approves a draft austerity budget.

16th Parliamentary Clubs, including the PZPR, reject Wałęsa's plan to give the government more powers.

23rd Poland signs agreement with IMF.

29th Sejm amends constitution - all references to socialism and the leading role erased, the name of the country changed to the Republic of Poland, the national eagle has its crown restored. Supported by an overwhelming majority of the Sejm.

30th Wałęsa meets Rakowski, saying that it would be wrong to "*rebuild Poland with a right but without a left leg.*"

1990

January6th 16th Central Committee Plenum. Approves plans to dissolve the party and create a new 'left wing party'. Approves a document stating that the dictatorship of the proletariat and democratic centralism are to be dropped and offering its support for free elections.

22nd *Trybuna Ludu* criticises a draft bill presented on 9th January by 93 deputies concerning the nationalisation of the PZPR's assets. It calls this a "*Bolshevik act of revenge*" and warns that it could upset the agreement between Solidarity and the Communists. Several local PZPR headquarters are occupied.

27-30th PZPR 11th (and final) Congress. PZPR is renamed Social Democracy of the Polish Republic (SdRP). Its property is transferred, with the support of 1533 delegates out of 1633. Kwaśniewski is elected chairman and Miller general secretary. Wałęsa supports breakaway faction (PUS), saying that: the SdRP would "*not stand the test of time.*"