
Poland

Behind the failure to reach an accord

by Rachel Douglas, Eastern Europe Editor

In mid-April, the Polish Catholic church and the martial government had resumed talks about "national accord," a dialogue that could begin the restoration of civil rule in Poland. At the start of May, a series of demonstrations under the banner of the suspended *Solidarność* movement cast the church-state effort to stabilize Poland into question.

Although scant information is available on who organized the demonstrations, they bore the signature of British intelligence agencies that have cultivated a capability to detonate unrest in Eastern Europe, as was done in 1980. Their timing, not only in the midst of Church diplomacy but at a moment when British financial powers are observed in the attempt to squeeze Poland into default on its hard currency debt, points to the same conclusion.

Speaking to the Polish parliament on May 4, Interior Minister Gen. Czeslaw Kiszczak blamed Western intelligence services for the eruptions in nine cities, suggesting that "Perhaps this action is undertaken out of a sense of shame over the Malvinas situation."

Authorities reimposed a curfew and cut telephone communications throughout the country the same day. Only a week earlier Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski's government and the Polish Catholic Church's efforts toward "national accord and social compact" had secured the release of 800 internees and the lifting of curfew.

The Church moves for compromise

The process of negotiations began on April 13, when Catholic Primate of Poland, Archbishop Jozef Glemp, released a report from his Bishops' Social Council. It was a draft of terms under which the government might eventually come to terms with *Solidarność*, for whose interred leaders it recommended amnesty. The concessions of 1980, or independent trade unions above all, should be preserved, said the Primate's advisers, but so should "historical realities" be recognized, meaning Poland's alliance with the Soviet Union. They also held that *Solidarność* had to accept some of the blame for the crisis in Poland, and they warned against terrorism and unrest from "opposition-oriented" youth.

Church-state negotiations followed. On April 23 and 24 Jaruzelski presided over a Communist Party Central

Committee plenum that resolved to make some reforms "still in the period of martial law." On April 25 he conferred with Glemp. The dispatch on their talk said, "a unified effort on the part of the authorities and the community is required" to solve Poland's problems.

Then Glemp flew to Rome for a day of talks with Pope John Paul II. From that conference emerged a pledge from Glemp that the Pope's trip to his native Poland would not take place until "the right conditions" were created, a signal that John Paul II was not going to alight in Poland and enflame popular enthusiasms that could upset the order imposed by martial law.

On April 29, the government released 1,000 political internees, 800 of them permanently. Glemp greeted this as "a step toward creating conditions" under which the Pope could come celebrate the 600th anniversary of the icon of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa, the Polish Catholic shrine.

However, 30,000 people under the banner of the *Solidarność* movement joined an unauthorized March through the Old Town section of Warsaw on May 1. The military and the police, alerted to the demonstration by advance leaflets, stood aside. When a smaller crowd took to the streets again May 3-4, against state radio warnings not to, the police broke up the demonstration with fire hoses, tear gas, and night sticks. The demonstrations were sharply condemned by the Catholic Church.

At his Warsaw residence, Archbishop Glemp told the *Washington Post*, "We are aware that extremists are behind this activity. This doesn't help at all since it delays the lifting of martial law. We know that someone wants to prolong it—the extremists from both the right and the left. On this point they agree."

Officially, the Polish Episcopate issued a communiqué that held the rioting responsible for "delaying social accord, halting steps toward normalization, and misguiding the youth."

Glemp, after his visit with the Pope, held a long session with Premier Jaruzelski. He argued the protests were organized without the consent of *Solidarność* leaders. Lech Walesa, he said, had "nothing to do" with the rioting.

The Polish government understands that it is the target of economic as well as street-level provocation. At a Central Committee plenum in early May Jaruzelski accused the West of putting an "iron curtain" around the Polish economy, declaring that if capitalists want Poland to pay its debts they should cancel economic sanctions against the country. Although the Poles have made it clear that they will need debt rescheduling in 1982, editorials in the *Economist* and the London *Times* on May 3 led the London pack that is howling against any form of debt relief for Poland without big political concessions from Jaruzelski's government.

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