La influencia de la Iglesia Católica en los cambios políticos de Polonia

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ABSTRACT

The final years of the Cold War introduced a range of new actors that contributed to the American preponderance in the international system after the demise of the USSR. Among them, we can highlight the rebirth of the oldest diplomacy in the world, which was able to be among the high players in the system once again: the Holy See. This article aims to understand how the Vatican was able to influence the change on the Polish government system. For that, using the method of process-tracing, we will analyze how the change in the Vatican leadership on the year of 1978 contributed to the shift in its foreign policy towards an anti-communism policy that helped on the fall of the Polish communist regime.

Keywords: Religion; Foreign Policy; Poland
Introduction

On the 16th of October, 1978, Karol Wojtyła succeeded Albino Luciani as Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church, becoming Pope John Paul II, the first non-Italian pope since Adrian VII (ROGERS, 2013; WEIGEL, 2005). Wojtyła was the first pope to originally come from the Eastern side of the Iron Wall, a region of the world where religion was living a clash with local governments because of communism (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996). In a period marked by the Cold War, this fact would prove very important in the unfolding of the conflict between the USSR and the USA, especially in pope’s homeland: Poland.

This article aims to show how the actions of the then new pope represented an important factor in the downfall of the communist regime in Poland using only his charisma and the powers granted to him by the Roman Catholic Church as his weapons. By changing the Ostpolitikimplemented by his predecessors, Wojtyła showed that he would not be as passive as John XXIII or Paul VI towards communism, representing a threat to the regime in the entire world. Since this was among the first goals of the new pope, the time period studied by this article will be kept between the rise of Wojtyła – 1978 – to the fall of the communist regime in Poland (which occurred in 1989).

Given the fact that the Cold War is largely studied by analysts of international relations as a whole, the fall of a communist regime in a country during the period deserves to be thoroughly studied, since both superpowers sought not only to expand their areas of influence as well as to defend the ones that they already had.

We must remember that, within the period proposed for this work, the Government of the USA implemented the Reagan Doctrine, a strategy of foreign policy used by the president who baptized it (SCOTT, 1996). It consisted on fighting the communist influence around the globe in a fiercest way than his predecessors, something that was done by funding and sending military aid to anticommunist guerrillas, such as Jonas Savimbi’s in Angola and resistance movements that fought for the end of communist rule in their

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1 Pope Adrian VI was originally from the Holy Roman Empire (currently The Netherlands). His pontificate lasted from 1522 to 1523 (ROGERS, 2013).

2 Policy implemented by the Popes John XXIII and Paul VI aimed at improving relations between the Holy See and the communist states. This policy sought to promote dialogue between the Vatican and the these states at different levels to prevent the persecution of Catholics in these countries. An example can be found in the Second Vatican Council (11/10/1962-08/12/1965), in which many bishops met to discuss precepts of the Catholic faith, but the problem of communism was not even mentioned (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).
countries, as was the Polish trade union Solidarity (another fundamental player to be analyzed in this article).

With the help of the Holy See's foreign policy in the period (which generated a greater proximity between the two States at the time), the policies carried out by the U.S. government during the Reagan Doctrine made the country one of the major donors – along the Vatican itself – of internal anti-Communism movements in Poland, mainly through CIA hidden bank accounts and resources sent through third parties, such as Belgian and Italian groups, disguised as humanitarian help (TARLTON, 2012).

It is important for us to note that the importance of the State of Vatican City is many times overlooked by analysts of international relations, as stated by Troy (2008) and Tarlton (2012), in view of the analyzes based on military and economic/financial power of States, areas in which the Vatican has neither importance or interest. However, it is important to assess cases in which this actor of international relations is a central figure as the one studied in this work and emphasize the importance of the man taking all the most relevant decisions in this State: the pope.

Concerning the methodology, during this research we used the process-tracing variety known as analytic explanation, in which a historical explanation is converted into an analytical causal explanation about the event studied, gradually adding analytical causal explanations, causing it to become part of a theory (ALEXANDER; BENNET, 2005). As this work is part of an expanded research, it is important to note that many factors included in the original analysis will be omitted in this paper, since there would be no room for them in here.

The previously mentioned factors varied from foreign policy analysis theories (WARNER; WALKER, 2011; GOLDSTEIN; KEOHANE, 1993) to analysis made by the author based on bibliography about Polish history and culture (JAKUBOWSKA, 1990; ŁUKASIEWICZ, 2009; DAVIES, 2005a; DAVIES, 2005b; among others). Also, documents from the Politburo as well as the Vatican were used during this research, as was a bibliography on the case, which included the case studies by Carl Bernstein and Marco Politi (1996) and George Weigel (2003; 2005).

Also, we would like to emphasize that we do not aim to affirm that the influence of Wojtyla was the most important or the only factor in the process analyzed: our objective is to understand how his actions were important, recognizing the relevance of other factors
that will not be thoroughly analyzed in this work\textsuperscript{3}. Finally, we would like to emphasize one more time that this article is part of the results of an expanded research conducted by the author\textsuperscript{4}.

**The Rise of a Pope and the Downfall of a Regime**

Many of the cardinals who were part of the second conclave of 1978 say that Wojtyła was elected due to his history: the new pope had never come into direct conflict with the communist government, which made him an excellent candidate to proceed with the Ostpolitik policy applied by his predecessors. Moreover, they believed that Wojtyła, having lived in a dictatorial system and a victim of it, would have greater chances to reform the Church and give more powers to the Curia or any other organizations within the Vatican. However, Pope John Paul II would not take any of these initiatives: in addition to breaking the Ostpolitik in the first months of his pontificate, he ensured that the most important Vatican City State foreign policy decisions would be made by the pope himself (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).

The reaction of the Polish United Workers Party\textsuperscript{5} was of immediate dissatisfaction. Despite never having criticized the government directly, Wojtyła knew how to act against the government in order to move the population. Both the First Secretary of the Party, Edward Gierek, as the Minister of Defense, Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, worried about the news (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996; DAVIES, 2005b; WEIGEL, 2005).

Both knew about Wojtyła’s *modus operandi*, since he had acted in a manner to annoy the government without putting people at risk, especially through requests for building permits of new seminaries and churches (something necessary, since the exercise of any religion was restricted at the time and the government was trying to “choke” the Catholic faith of the Polish people). Wojtyła, largely due to his experience as an actor and writer during adolescence and youth, knew how to use symbols to affect the people,

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\textsuperscript{3} The importance of the election system (OLSON, 1993; ISHIYAMA, 1997), the failing economy and the many shortages (BARKER, 2002), to cite some of these factors.

\textsuperscript{4} Advised by Professor Marcos Alan Shaikhzadeh Vahdat Ferreira.

\textsuperscript{5} There were, according to Staron (1969, p. 577-579), three parties in the country. Besides the local Communist Party, there were two more, smaller ones, that did not represent a real “opposition in the Western sense”. They were the Polish United Workers’ Party (*Polska Zjednoczona Robotnicza Parthia*) and the two smaller ones: the United Peasant Party (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*, directed to the rural population) and the Democratic Party (*Parthia Demokratyczna*).
Wojtyła’s intention as soon as he assumed the post of pope was to visit his homeland, since the 900-year anniversary of the death of St. Stanislaw, the patron of Poland, was coming on April 11, 1979. Notwithstanding the interest of the pope, Soviet authorities advised the local Party not to allow such a visit, which could have unpleasant consequences for the communist Party in the country, due to the history of the pope. Party leaders decided not to prohibit the pope’s visit (fearing further repercussions), but to defer it to a date in which there was a smaller symbolic importance for the country, more precisely between the 2\(^{nd}\) and the 10\(^{th}\) of June of the same year (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996; CORNWELL, 2007).

The first pastoral visit of Pope John Paul II and the internal situation

On June 2, Wojtyła landed in Poland. His first visit to his homeland got higher proportions than those expected by the communist leaders. Over a million people came to wait the arrival of the pope who was as much a son of Poland as them. Gierek met Wojtyła on arrival, as he would have met any other head of state. This was the only meeting of the two during the visit of the pope. John Paul II, after brief speeches to the authorities, was taken to the Victory Square, where a mass would be celebrated for the population. That event would be televised to other countries - including the U.S. - and public input was controlled by the military. 300,000 people gathered in the square to watch the mass conducted by the new pope (CORNWELL, 2007).

The homily began full of symbolism and with the words that would mark the visit of the pope: “Together with you I wish to sing a hymn of praise to Divine Providence, which enables me to be here as a pilgrim.” (JOHN PAUL II, 1979c). John Paul II would identify himself throughout this trip as a "pilgrim". This word implies that the Polish territory is a holy land to Catholic Christianity, and identifies the highest authority of religion as a visitor of this land.

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\(^6\) One example of such anticommunist activities by Wojtyła was the celebration of Masses for Christmas in a terrain where the then bishop had requested the construction of a church, but the party insisted on not issuing the permit. For several years, Wojtyła did not celebrate the traditional Christmas Mass at his cathedral in Krakow, but in this terrain, outdoors and with temperatures below freezing, always with full capacity until the building permit was granted (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996; BARNES; WHITNEY, 1999).
On June 9, John Paul II uttered words that would mark the Polish people. In the Shrine of the Holy Cross, in Mogila, he said:

The Cross cannot be separated from man's work. Christ cannot be separated from man's work. This has been confirmed here at Nowa Huta. This has been the start of the new evangelization at the beginning of the new millennium of Christianity in Poland. We have lived this new beginning together and I took it with me from Krakow to Rome as a relic. Christianity and the Church have no fear of the world of work. They have no fear of the system based on work. The Pope has no fear of men of work. They have always been particularly close to him. He has come from their midst. He has come from the quarries of Zakrzowek, from the Solvay furnaces in Borek Falecki, and then from Nowa Huta. Through all these surroundings, through his own experience of work, I make bold to say that the Pope learned the Gospel anew. He noticed and became convinced that the problems being raised today about human labour are deeply engraved in the Gospel, that they cannot be fully solved without the Gospel (JOHN PAUL II, 1979b).

During his farewell on June 10, one more time a million people gathered around the pope in order to celebrate a mass in honor of St. Stanislaw. This time, the words of Wojtyła would serve as an incentive and as emotional support to the Polish people, "You must be Strong, dearest Brothers and sisters! You must be strong with the strength that flows from faith! […] There is therefore no need for fear. We must open the frontiers. There is no imperialism in the Church, only service." (JOHN PAUL II, 1979a).

Even though Wojtyła’s pilgrimage did not mark the beginning of the anticommunist movements in Poland, it surely marked the moment when the Polish people became willing to face the socialist government again. Solidarity members have made similar statements, such as Zbigniew Bujak, who would be the leader of the union branch in Warsaw and had already started a small movement with co-workers from a factory. He said that before Wojtyła’s visit, he had intended to start a movement, but was not sure if there would be any support to his initiative. Bujak said that, upon hearing Wojtyła’s last statement in Poland, he felt that his movement could thrive, stating: "Both the fears we had when we began our struggle against the totalitarian system and our concern over future developments now disappeared […] We saw that there were many of us. This was very important and put our doubts to flight." (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996: p 12).

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7 Nowa Huta was a town built in the early 1950’s by the communists that was meant to be a “workers’ paradise built on communist principles”, which meant that it would represent the perfect communist settlement. Therefore, no church was built, as the workers would be atheists. However, the population of the area spent years claiming for the construction of a church in the region, which was finally achieved in May 1977 with the issuing of a building permit. At that time, the region of Nowa Huta was under Wojtyła’s jurisdiction – as it is a district of Krakow – and he was one of the most active parishioners on that cause, gathering the crowd for important masses as was previously mentioned (BARNES; WHITNEY, 1999).
In order to understand why Pope John Paul II was able to ignite the sparks of revolution with just a visit to his native country, we must also understand the internal situation that the country was living. After several years of communist rule, a key factor is clear within Poland: the country was no longer made up of peasants, but by urban workers with at least basic education, which allowed for the creation of some advanced labor movements. However, Poland was undergoing a completely unfavorable economic environment: the country's GDP fell by 2% in 1979, 8% in 1980 and between 15% and 20% in 1981, marking the highest rates of economic recession of an industrialized economy since the end of World War II\(^8\) (BARKER, 2002).

Moreover, the crisis in the economic area was suffering a spill-over to others. The rapid growth through which the country went through in the 1970s turned out to widen income inequality between social classes. Public corruption was seen by the population as endemic, which led to the lowest levels of popular belief in the history of the regime. Also, foodstuffs were becoming a problem and supplying the population became increasingly difficult. The country was the most polluted of all Europe, causing many health problems, including the high rate of stillbirth babies, the biggest of the continent. Finally, the country owed millions of rubles to the USSR and a value between $20 and $25 billion to Western banks (BARKER, 2002).

Aiming to control the scarcity of food, Gierek implemented a new pricing system. Until then, the prices of this type of product were controlled by the government similarly to the price freeze that was implemented in Brazil during the Sarney government in an attempt to control the accelerated inflation in the country. However, the crisis in the supply always demanded an increase in prices, which infuriated the major population, who did not receive an increase in wages and would eventually have a decrease in household real income (BARKER, 2002).

In search of a solution for the food shortages and the threat of riots, in the late 1970s Gierek created the “free price” stores at market prices, defraying production and avoiding the spread of the effects of the unbalance in supply and demand to be felt by the major population. The idea did not work. Besides generating increasingly large queues at the controlled price shops, the announcement on the 1\(^{st}\) of July, 1980, that the fine cuts of

\(^8\) It is important to note that the years of 1980 and 1981 were severely affected by the activities of Solidarity (BARKER, 2002).
meat would only be offered at market prices stores did blow a wave of strikes that culminated in the city of Gdansk (BARKER, 2002).

To assert that the communist leaders were not accustomed to strikes would be a mistake, as would be to affirm that they did not expect for one after the announcements of price increases. Many of the strikes and demonstrations had finished with more serious repression by the government, in the last four years (1976-80) at least a thousand strikes had occurred in Poland. However, the most serious manifestations of 1956, 1970 and 1976 taught the strikers that the government did not know how to deal with them, with only one mean of negotiation between the two parties: the promise of a wage increase. That was the main reason there were so many strikes in a period of just four years⁹ (ASH, 1999).

The rise of strong mass movements: Solidarity is born

Although there was no news in the media – which was controlled by the government – about the many strikes that were taking place after the rise in the fine cuts of meat, people took notice of such events through a network of information created by the workers themselves¹⁰. Although there was no centralized coordination, the movements became increasingly complex and, what is perhaps most important, confident that they could achieve positive results¹¹ (BARKER, 2002).

It was with this spirit of change and confidence that the demands of the workers began to change. Strikers would not only demand wage growth, now they would also seek the end of free price stores, reduced work week from six to five days, freedom of press, among others. Several newspapers and magazines emerged around these strikers groups, which increased the popularity of the movements and assisted in the communication between the groups. One of these groups, based on the gigantic Lenin Shipyard, decided to start a strike on August 14, 1980. Such a strike would demand, at first, the readmission of Anna Walentynowicz a leader in the local movement. In the morning, members of the movement entered the yard with handwritten pamphlets and handed them to each sector

⁹ Often, according to Barker (2002), workers who did not participate in the strike movement did not receive the benefits that were achieved by the strikes, which encouraged further participation in these movements.
¹⁰ This network consisted of truck drivers and train operators, who would carry the message of new strikes on their trips, as well as phone calls and contact between plants (BARKER, 2002).
¹¹ The government did not care about wage increases causing an increase in inflation due to the fact that only the largest enterprises in the country managed to achieve such increases. Therefore, workers of smaller factories would pay the costs of inflation (BARKER, 2002).
Jerzy Borowczak was one of the workers to hand out flyers. According to him:

I came to the Shipyard at 4:15. After posting posters I prepared leaflets for myself - I had 500 of them and I gave a leaflet to every single person entering the shipyard saying: “Take it and read. The whole shipyard is on strike today.” Some 30 of us gathered and off we went. Two workmates carried one poster at the front of the procession. People emerge from all over the place to see what is going on. We shout: “Turn the machines off and join us”. Many oblige. Now, already a larger group, we cross the bridge. [...] And so there were already more than 1000 people - the crowd grew so dense that we could no longer see the end of the procession (BOROWCZAK, 2014).

After some time, all the workstations in the Gdansk shipyard stopped working. It was then that the electrician Lech Wałęsa, fired from his job at the shipyard four years before, but still an active member of the local strike movements, jumped over the wall of the yard and stood next to the manager who dealt with the mass of the workers, introduced himself to the crowd and said that this was the beginning of an occupation strike (OSA, 2003).

Other workplaces in the city began strikes this very moment and the staff of some enterprises joined the mass of workers in the yard (among them, public transport drivers). With the pressure of so many individuals, the manager of the shipyard awarded their highest pay rise ever, which made the employees feel satisfied and returned to work. However, Wałęsa was alerted by a bus driver that a lot of people – among them, the public transportation drivers – did not receive any benefits, which made the leader call the workers back and resume the occupation of the site, but only one-tenth of the members who had previously participated returned to the site (BARKER, 2002).

With the prolonged occupation, the Inter-Enterprise Strike Committee (Międzyzakładowy Komitet Strajkowy, MKS) was created in order to better coordinate the strike movements in the region, as well as the 21 demands of the MKS of Gdansk (see Table 1). Many of these demands had no economic content, which demonstrated a maturing of the movement to encompass aspects of the political area. To recover the strength of the movement in the Lenin Shipyard to its initial numbers, members of the MKS started a practice that would become common in the future: the use of religious elements in its manifestations. On the first Sunday after the occupation, August 17, a mass conducted by the priest from the parish attended by Wałęsa was performed. Due to historical reasons, Poles have a strong connection to the Catholic religion, therefore, such a
tactic was successful, causing many of the original occupants to return to the site (BARKER, 2002; OSA, 2003).

At the Vatican, Wojtyła already knew about the movement – which started to spread to other regions, with MKSs being opened in every part of the country without losing the coordination of Gdansk – and began to devise plans to support it. On the 20th of August, a group of Polish pilgrims met Wojtyła at the Vatican and he received them with the words: "God, grant through the intercession of Mary that religion may always enjoy freedom and that our homeland may enjoy security [...] Lord, help this people, and always defend it from every evil and danger" (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996: p 356-357).

Besides that, Wojtyła wrote a letter to the Primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, who attended the Conclave that elected Wojtyła. In this letter, Wojtyła said: "I pray with all my heart that the bishops of Poland […] can even now help this nation in its difficult struggle for daily bread, for social justice and the safeguarding of its inviolable rights to its own life and development" (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996: p 358).

With these words, John Paul II blessed the strike movement and pointed that the clergy from around the country should support the movement at the local level, something that Wyszyński was afraid to do. On the same day that the arrival of this letter was announced August 23, the government began talks with the MKS of Gdansk12. The envoy of the government to start talks was the deputy prime minister of the country, Mieczysław Jagielski, while Wałęsa headed the negotiations by MKS with intellectuals helping him in whatever matter he might need (BARKER, 2002; BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996; NEIER, 2003; CORNWELL, 2007).

On August 30, 1980, Jagielsky accepted all the demands made by the workers of Gdansk and, on the next day, the Gdansk Agreement would be signed. We must emphasize that the communist government was worried about its legitimacy at this time, given that the last clause of the agreement stated that workers should accept the leadership of the party, recognizing its existence and the rights of the rulers. Despite this last clause, Gierek was weakened at the Politburo and was fired and replaced by Stanislaw Kania (OSA, 2003).

12 Although the use of force was considered by the Communist Party members, such a method was not used because of the national aspect that strikes were gaining. Forcing workers to return to their jobs was not a viable option (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996; BARKER, 2002). Gierek himself said: "The situation becomes increasingly difficult, the strikes spread, the demands escalate. I admit that I don’t know what else could be done apart from what we are doing. The party is demobilised, our people do not believe that we will get the situation under control" (2014).
Three weeks after the Gdansk Agreement, on September 17, leaders of the many branches of MKS met in their first national meeting, which decided to establish the creation of the first union without connection to the central government east of the Iron Curtain: the Independent Self-governing Trade Union "Solidarity" (*Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy "Solidarność"*), which, soon after its birth, already counted 3 million members, but had not been officially approved by the government. In few weeks, the movement had grown to the point of numbering 10 million workers, not only in the industrial sector. All classes joined the labor movement with the majority of its members, except the class teachers of primary level, in which the rate of compliance was 48%. Even so, the large number of workers gave the movement an adherence rate of 80% of the entire workforce of the country (BARKER, 2002; OSA 2003).

The growth of Solidarity

In October, members of the Solidarity workers staged a general strike with the duration of one hour across the country. This strike was intended to serve as a warning to communist leaders: the Solidarity trade union should be officially recognized, otherwise more strikes would occur throughout the country. In an economically weak country, such strikes only worsened the situation. In order to grow, the economy in one country may not stop at any time. When 80% of the workforce of a country stops working, the consequences are disastrous. Due to the growth of the union, the *de facto* power of the Party diminished\(^\text{13}\), making more fragile its control over the territory (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996; BARKER, 2002; OSA, 2003).

On October 22, the Party launched the first internal document on the introduction of martial law in the country for reasons of State security. In this paper are described the measures that will be taken if Martial Law is applied in the country, which includes a description of all restrictions on the freedom of the Polish people and also the broadening of the powers of some organizations. Paragraph 3 of the document reads:

3. Due to the lack (among the binding codes of the PRL Constitution, as well as in other statutory acts) of regulations relating to the further consequences of introducing Martial Law, [and] determined to be necessary to guarantee State security under the conditions binding Martial Law, the need arises to take further

\(^{13}\) 2.5 million people were members of the Polish United Workers Party, only \(\frac{1}{4}\) of the number of members of Solidarity, while 750,000 were members of both organizations (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).
legal measures restrict the rights of citizens and enlarge the duties of citizens, and also to expand the authority and duties of selected governmental organs, as well as [those of] the State administration and directors of national economic units (POLISH UNITED WORKERS’ PARTY, 1980).

However, more than a year would pass before the establishment of the martial law in Poland due to internal debate within the Politburo over a direct military intervention in Poland that took into account the participation of another individual of the international scene: the president of the United States of America, Ronald Reagan.

The Politburo began such conversations on October 29, when they prepared a program for the recovery of the Polish economy and discussed the issue of anticommunist movements in the country. The decision of the Politburo leaders was that the authorities should use more force to repress movements, cut the rights of the Church and prepare the economy for the Soviet plan to introduce, among rebates, grants and short term loans, more than 1 billion rubles in the Polish economy (COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION, 1980).

On October 24, Solidarity would gain legal status, which was celebrated by all its members. However, the size of the union caused internal problems: even though the leaders of the branches were popular, contrary currents of thought were emerging within the movement itself. The main current did not know how to act due to the proportion that the movement reached. The crisis of Solidarity would begin the following year, on March 19 (BARKER, 2002).

However, before we proceed to such developments, we have to observe the period in which the Solidarity came to be regarded as the dominant power in Poland and the alliance formed by Reagan and Wojtyła, a decisive factor in the change of political regime.

Reagan, Wojtyła and the U.S.-Vatican approximation

President Ronald Reagan came to power on January 20, 1981 and prepared his cabinet with individuals who would help him in the task of approaching the Holy See and, more specifically, Pope John Paul II. One of these men was Zbigniew Brzezinski, who had served as National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter previously, as a consultant specifically on the situation in Poland. Having already had contact with Wojtyła

14 According to Bernstein and Politi (1996), Reagan watched the video of Wojtyła’s first pastoral visit to Poland and was convinced that the Pope could play a major role on his new foreign policy.
during his tenure as pope, Brzezinski was the initial connection between John Paul II and Reagan. The remainder of the president's office was also partially filled by Catholics: the Secretary of State Alexander Haig; Reagan’s new National Security Advisor, Richard Allen; retired Army General Vernon Walters; and the director of CIA, William Casey (the latter two being the most important for the process) (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).

The group came to the conclusion that Solidarity represented a direct threat to Moscow, not only to the Polish Party, which made the aid to the group a major priority of the Reagan administration at the time. Thus, the approximation to the pope was necessary, as well as the approach to the trade union American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) (TARLTON, 2012).

The assistance of John Paul II was necessary for the Reagan administration so that they could get inside information of Polish society, as the bishops and priests served as the eyes and ears of the Pope in Poland and participated intensely in the politics in the country (the Church was considered the third power of the country, along the Party and Solidarity). Also, Wojtyła’s influence over the Poles would prove very important in Reagan’s capitalist cause (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).

Casey and Walters would serve as direct links between Washington and the Vatican, they were the individuals who would visit John Paul II to report U.S. findings on the case and hear what news the pope had to say about it. While the U.S. representatives to the pope showed satellite photos that had been taken recently and CIA reports on the case, as well as scenarios of the likely actions of the USSR, Wojtyła informed the Americans what their bishops in Poland passed him, and increased the reliability of the Poles towards the Americans (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).

Regarding the AFL-CIO, its support was needed mainly due to its contacts in Europe. Since the beginning of Solidarity, the AFL-CIO supplied the group with advice, equipment and financial resources, which provided the organization with a good contact

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15 Weigel (2005) disagrees that such coordination existed due to the low number of meetings between Wojtyła and the two Americans (15 within the period studied). However, the thesis by Bernstein and Politi (1996) is supported by the fact that the Vatican used AFL-CIO, an organization that was working with the CIA, in order to send funds to Solidarity. Also, the Voice of America radio station was used for sending coded messages to members of the outlawed Solidarity on the delivery of equipment and other matters, which included resources from the Vatican. The fact that the Catholic Church itself was undergoing an internal problem with regard to the liberation theology also strengthens the principle that the ideologies of the United States and the Vatican had converged and that there was greater coordination in their policies. Finally, the proximity between Wojtyła and Reagan (they met each other at least four times during Reagan’s presidency) and the timing of the pressure on Poland by the two leaders also indicate a high probability that there has been some coordination between them.
network with European labor organizations that could send such aid to the union, including the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond, ACV) and the aid group Caritas, primarily responsible for the transport of goods to Poland disguised as humanitarian aid. Thus, the AFL-CIO became the channel through which the U.S. government and the Holy See would send its resources to Solidarity, establishing a partnership that would help the survival of the union during the period of its illegality.\(^\text{16}\) (TARLTON, 2012).

The Government of the U.S. would participate in an explicit way, direct or otherwise, in the international scenario. Reagan started international media campaigns to seek support for the cause of Solidarity, as well as domestically. On several occasions, Reagan made pronouncements on TV (REAGANFOUNDATION, 2012; U.S. EMBASSY WARSAW, 2011) with the intention of making the movement internationally known. This rendered the union and Wałęsa international awards such as the 1983 Nobel Peace Prize and the 1982 Time Magazine Person of the Year.

The Reagan Administration would also assist the movement by cutting aid, loans and any other type of financing to the Polish communist government, making its economy even more fragile. Besides that, Reagan would renegotiate the terms of the existing Polish debt in unfavorable terms, if Solidarity did not come to have greater freedom (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996; TARLTON, 2012).

Finally, one can say that the Reagan administration strengthened the union by announcing that there would be retaliation to any intervention made by the Warsaw Pact in Polish territory (REAGANFOUNDATION, 2012). It is true that the Soviet action in Afghanistan may have had a considerable weight in the decision against the intervention (the USSR apparently did not have enough resources to engage in two simultaneous conflicts) (WEIGEL 2005: p. 406), but the statements of Reagan to support Solidarity and the threat of retaliation by NATO may have weighed in the decision making of the communists, who opted to advise the implementation of Martial Law in 1981, rather than direct intervention.

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\(^{16}\) The amount sent by the U.S. government for the Solidarity movement is registered as around $50 million, according to Judt (2005). Tarlton (2012) states that the Catholic Church also sent resources through the AFL-CIO, using the Vatican Bank to raise the necessary funds. However, the same author states that due to the fact that the operation was conducted confidentially, there is no way to determine the exact amount that was sent by the Vatican to Solidarity. Moreover, the accounts of the Vatican Bank do not have the same transparency of other state banks. The importance of the AFL-CIO to Solidarity was such that, when Lane Kirkland, the director of the organization during the period studied here, died, several senior members of the union attended his funeral, including Lech Wałęsa (TARLTON, 2012).
The Politburo reacts

Returning to the situation in Poland, the news about the growth and the political and economic achievements of Solidarity worried the Soviet leadership about the situation in the country. They sent Leonid Zamyatin, an ambassador of the USSR, to assess the situation in the Poland. His report, on January 22, indicated that Solidarity was disputing the role of dominant power in Poland. According to the transcript of the meeting at the Politburo, Zamyatin said:

The complexity of the situation in Poland stems from the fact that activities are carried out by the enemy, against which a decisive struggle is necessary, and that under the pressure of past mistakes the party has lost its creative ties with the people. The working class has many reasons for dissatisfaction. This is especially true of young workers, who have not yet suffered hardships. They are being exploited by Solidarity. [...] Moreover, the group around Walesa, backed by the Church, wields great strength. If we look at the situation in Poland now, it is characterized by a certain increase in the role of the Party and its concrete activities. This of course is leading in turn to a growth of tensions, since the counterrevolutionary forces have their plans and aspire to power, but see that opposition from the PZPR will not enable them to fulfill their plans (POLITBURO, 1981b).

One of the most relevant measures that the Politburo point out at the time of this meeting is to apply more effort on the part of the communists in relation to the media in the country (POLITBURO, 1981b). Despite the fact that all the official newspapers of the country at the time were controlled by the government, the Solidarity campaigns across the country were clearly having an effect. Furthermore, the Catholic Church was acting more actively after the letter from Wojtyla. One of the main methods used by the clergy of the Church was using messages linking human and workers’ rights to religion and nationalism, besides asking the Poles to avoid conflict (POLISH CATHOLIC CHURCH, 2014). Here are some passages from a sermon used at the time:

Almighty and merciful God, who gave the Polish Nation genuine help and defense in the form of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, we ask that you accept our prayers, which we offer you today. Allow us to offer them to you through the mediation of Mary, the Queen of Poland of Jasna Góra. O Mother, we have already experienced Your help so many times in our history. So with all the more trust we beg You to intercede before God, the Father of peoples and of nations, on behalf of our Fatherland. [...] It is You, O Mother, who awakens in us a feeling of responsibility for the Fatherland, for the Nation, for its welfare and its fate in the future. You pour into people's hearts courage in the defense of dignity
and the rights of the working man. We recognize today our boundless trust in You. In Your hands we place our fate. With trust we cry out to You for help. Send us light, show us the way to escape from danger and social chaos. Give us unity, the spirit of love, truth, and mutual understanding, so that we might save the common good of the Fatherland by overcoming all difficulties and diverse points of view. Grant us the spirit of peace and calm consideration, so that bloodshed and war will be avoided. [...] O, Mother of God, Mother of Christ, who faithfully endured under the cross of Your Son, hurry to help us as well, Your children. Hear us and guide us on the way of justice, love, and peace. Amen (POLISH CATHOLIC CHURCH, 2014).

However, Solidarity was becoming too big to be controlled effectively by Wałęsa and the members of the central committee. In March 1981, Solidarity promoted one more general strike, but longer: for four hours the country's workers refused to work on March 27. This effort was conducted by the members of Solidarity in the city of Bydgoszcz who were trying to force the government to meet their demands, which included the recognition of Rural Solidarity, within a period of four days (BARKER, 2002).

The episode caused a stir at the Politburo: military exercises were performed near the border by troops of the Warsaw Pact, and Soviet leaders advised the intervention of policemen in the occupied offices in Bydgoszcz. However, Jaruzelski appealed to the clergy. The pope himself asked for the end of the strike in Bydgoszcz, which made Wałęsa and most senior members of the union convinced that the end of the strike was necessary. Nevertheless, a sizeable minority did not agree with the attitude, which made the Solidarity movement become more fragile internally, ending the era of its domain. Now weakened, the central command of the union would have no more power in the decision making of national strikes, which would cause it to lose power and other movements to rise, some even more radical (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996; BARKER, 2002).

It is important to note that the first contact between Jaruzelski and the pope himself – through the Polish clergy – made John Paul II even more relevant in this case: now, Wojtyła was the only subject who had access to all the other parts involved (with the only exception being the Politburo). From then it would become a common practice by

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17 Even though the threat of intervention was real, the Soviets were not willing to start one due mainly to expenditures in Afghanistan and threats of retaliation by Reagan (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996; BARKER, 2002).
18 This response by Wojtyła was based on a U.S. report given to him by Casey. In it, the CIA officials – among them, Casey himself – affirmed there was a possibility of an intervention by the Warsaw Pact troops, in view of their intervention in Afghanistan (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996), which proved to be a misperception from CIA.
19 Anna Walentynowicz herself, one of the first leaders of Solidarity, was against such an attitude (BARKER, 2002).
Jaruzelski to contact the Pope and the Church, which meant that Wojtyła received information from the Party in Poland (through Jaruzelski), from Polish society – through the Polish clergy – and from the diplomacy/U.S. intelligence through Walters and Casey.

September 1981 marked the beginning of Soviet pressure on Jaruzelski regarding the implementation of Martial Law in the country. This event took place primarily after statements made by Solidarity and the pope in the same month. On September 6, Wojtyła told a group of Poles at the Vatican that Poland had the right to be independent. Although the Catholic leader had already said it several other times, this was the first time he spoke in a secular tone, without the use of any kind of religious analogies. Another event that marked the month of September was the first national congress of Solidarity, which still remained very big, despite the internal disagreements. Wałęsa, following the guidance of the pope, called for moderation, besides inviting foreign workers to form unions similar to Solidarity in other countries (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).

It was because of such events that the session of September 10 at the Politburo leaders showed an aggressive tone towards the Party in Poland, as well as emphasized the evil that Solidarity caused to communism, referring to the charter from the union drafted at the Congress: "It's a dangerous and provocative document. It contains few words, but all of them are aimed at the same thing. The authors of the appeal would like to create confusion in the socialist countries and stir up groups of different types of turncoats" (POLITBURO, 1981a).

Because of these answers from the Politburo, the Polish Party began plans for the implementation of martial law on September 13. In document drafted by the Party, we can see that they already knew to which areas should be sent the largest number of troops, besides considered the use of advertisement as a tool to legitimize the implementation of martial law, and try to put public opinion in their favor (POLISH UNITED WORKERS’ PARTY, 1981).

On the 14th, John Paul II issued the encyclical letter *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work), in which he writes about the dignity of the worker. He advocated, in absolute terms, the right of workers to organize in unions, but also talked about the responsibilities thereof, that they should not assume that the individual or group interests are more relevant than national interests. In other words, the economy should take precedence over the interests of individuals or groups (JOHN PAUL II, 1981). Solidarity had now a papal document to celebrate their struggle, which can be emphasized by the fact that the

Despite new efforts by Jaruzelski (who was now First Secretary since Kania abdicated from office in October, 1981), like the "Front of National Reconciliation"20, which promoted a dialogue between the Church (represented by the new primate, Józef Glemp21), Solidarity and the Party, the Politburo did not agree with such measures. After being pressed by the Soviet institution, Jaruzelski was not seeing any other conditions to keep the country under control: the Party simply did not have ties with the population, most of them no longer seemed to want to be part of a socialist system, which meant that the First Secretary had to issue the martial law. At 6am on the morning of December 13, 1981, Jaruzelski was on TV to announce the imposition of martial law, Operation X, which had been started at midnight of the same day. This event marked the end of the period known as the Polish Crisis (BARKER, 2002).

At this time, all leaders of Solidarity branches were arrested – except Bujak, who managed to escape – and people seemed to simply accept the imposition of martial law, not resisting in any way (as internal movements such as the Fighting Solidarity and the Orange Alternative emerged only in 1982, as did Solidarity). Kania, later, would make the following assumption on this lack of fighting spirit of the Polish people at that moment:

The fact that martial law in Poland was [established] without causing enormous protest or bloodshed, without active opposition, was due to the peculiar way that people consented with martial law. People were very tired of the dismantling of the economy, with the permanent strikes. There was no market at all. Shelves in the stores were empty. [...] This created a condition of great fear in society, but not so much that the people began to support the authorities. It would be truer to say that for the moment the support for Solidarity was checked (KANIA in BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996: p. 491-492).

Another factor that may have calmed the population about the reactions to the martial law was the homily by Glemp, which was to be broadcast on television by the Party and whose words were to be distributed in pamphlets, in which he said that the martial law consisted of a "[...] higher necessity, it is the choice of a lesser rather than a greater evil. Assuming the correctness of such reasoning, the man in the street will

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20 Although the Party owned the bureaucratic apparatus of the State, the Polish people felt connected to the other two organizations, which meant that the three institutions were sharing the power in the country (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996; TARLTON, 2012; BARKER, 2002).

21 Wyszynski, who would be remembered as one of the most active Primates of the history of Poland for his role in coordinating the clergy of the country during the political crisis, died in May 1981 due to complications caused by cancer (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).
subordinate himself to the new situation [...] There is nothing of greater value than human life" (GLEMP in BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 496). This reaction by Glemp was not a show of weakness by the primate, but a miscommunication with the Vatican. After the imposition of martial law, the communications of the clergy to the pope were cut, making it difficult for Wojtyła to pass his guidelines correctly. Only on the radio it was possible for Glemp to hear John Paul II utter the words: "Too much Polish blood has already been shed, especially during the last war [...] Polish blood must no longer be spilled. Everything must be done to build the future of our homeland in peace" (JOHN PAUL II in BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996: p 500).

However, the intention of the pope was different. He had drawn on the morning of December 13, 4 points that should be applied at the papal foreign policy from then on: 1) get as much information about what was happening in Poland as possible; 2) discourage acts of provocation; 3) open up new channels of communication with the regime of martial law; and 4) signal to the world and to Poland the Pope and the Church were "in solidarity with the Polish nation", words he would use the next morning at Saint Peter's Square (BERNSTEIN; POLITI 1996, p. p 501).

“This solidarity with the Polish people serves also to bolster certain values and inalienable principles such as the rights of man and the rights of the nation [...] values and principles that must create, now in our times, great solidarity” (JOHN PAUL II in BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996: p. 501). With these words, the Pope sought to establish itself as a major player in the fate of his homeland, as well as emphasize the importance that Solidarity would still have in the future of Poland.

The superpower and the Pope

A few months later, after maintaining communications through letters throughout the year, Wojtyła and Reagan met at the Vatican on June 7, 1982, in order to draw the strategy that would change the situation in Poland: while Reagan would impose sanctions on Poland and start a campaign internationally so that other countries would do the same, Wojtyła would schedule a visit to Poland in order to give hope to the people of his country and to initiate talks with the communist government22 (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996;

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22 This visit was more easily pronounced than the previous. This was due to the change of leadership in the USSR, since Yuri Andropov took over on November 12, 1982, and had to show empathy towards the pope.
TARLTON, 2012; NEIER, 2003). Therefore, it is possible to state that the alliance between the U.S. and the Vatican was not weaker with the imposition of martial law, but had to take a greater role in the process.

The pope then marked the visit to Poland – approved by the Party – between the 16th and the 23rd of June the following year (1983). Wojtyła still hoped to go beyond his goal of initiating talks with the government: John Paul II was convinced that, due to his history as a child of extremely religious parents and education at Marian Catholic schools, Jaruzelski was a Catholic Polish nationalist before a communist. This meant that the pope considered the possibility that Jaruzelski’s government could still change the political landscape completely, but the First Secretary would need support for that. This was to become one of the biggest perceptions of Wojtyła’s pontificate (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).

Reagan, on the other hand, had already begun the process even before formally entering into the agreement with Wojtyła. On December 23, 1981, in his speech to the American people, the president denounced the abuses committed by the Polish government. He stated:

Already, throughout the Free World, citizens have publicly demonstrated their support for the Polish people. Our government, and those of our allies, have expressed moral revulsion at the police state tactics of Poland's oppressors. The Church has also spoken out, in spite of threats and intimidation. But our reaction cannot stop there.

I want emphatically to state tonight that if the outrages in Poland do not cease, we cannot and will not conduct "business as usual" with the perpetrators and those who aid and abet them. Make no mistake, their crime will cost them dearly in their future dealings with America 'and free peoples everywhere. (REAGAN in REAGANFOUNDATION, 2012).

Through his international campaign, which had yet to denounce the official banning of Solidarity on October 8, 1982 (ANNOUNCEMENT. ..., 1982), Reagan achieved his objectives: in addition to the heavy penalties imposed on the Polish government (they could no longer get loans in the West and the negotiations of previous debts had been unfavorable to the communist country), the U.S. suspended the status of most favored nation of Poland under the GATT, which made the country's economy suffer even more (NEIER, 2003).

This need arose from the Western press rumors that the attempted murder that Wojtyła had suffered on May 13, 1981 was organized by the USSR. Andropov ordered the Soviet newspapers not to attack Wojtyła during the visit, and highlighted his role in the Middle East conflict (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).
The second visit

After the pope landed in Poland on June 16, one of his first appointments was a meeting with Jaruzelski, preceded by speeches from both to a crowd at Belweder Palace, the official Polish residence in Warsaw. From this speech, the pope began his plan to encourage the Poles claiming that Poland had the right to independence, “her proper place among the nations of Europe, between East and West”. Moreover, the path to sovereignty should be built taking into account "social agreements stipulated by representatives of State authorities with representatives of the workers" (BERNSTEIN; POLITI 1996: p 554). By analyzing these words, we can see that Wojtyła was referring to the Gdansk Accords and Solidarity, which should act as representatives for the workers in negotiations.

Negotiations per se were initiated soon after the speeches to the people, having joined Wojtyła and Jaruzelski the Primate Glemp and the President of Council of State, Henryk Jabłoński. Jaruzelski stated that the pope did not deliver an ultimatum or made any threats (with an alliance with the U.S., one would expect something of this nature), but tried to persuade the First Secretary to end the martial law. Moreover, Jaruzelski thought Wojtyła’s positioning regarding the Church strange: in a Poland without Solidarity, the greatest representative of the civilian population as a whole was the Catholic Church, which made such an institution a great power within this scenario. Glemp himself had negotiated the construction of over 200 new churches, even with the economy of the country and its infrastructure crumbling. However, the pope spoke in defense of the Polish people, not the Church (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).

While Jaruzelski wanted the pope isolate the most extremist members of Solidarity to make it possible to negotiate with the U.S., Wojtyła stated that he hoped a state of normacy was achieved as soon as possible and only then Poland would be seen with other eyes by other countries (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).

Wojtyła would make speeches to one million people in Częstochowa and Katowice. At the first city, the Pope passed to the Poles a message that the fight was not over, they should continue fighting peacefully for their rights. Facing the Black Madonna (a religious symbol of great importance to the Poles, given her ties to Polish State-building), John Paul II said: "you have been given us by Providence for the defense of the Polish nation, accept
this call of Polish youth together with the Polish pope, and help us to persevere in hope”

(JOHN PAUL II in BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996: p. 558). He continued:

Man is called to victory over himself […] It is the saints and the beatified who show us the path to victory that God achieves in human history [and to achieve such victory, there is the need for] living in truth […] It means love of neighbor; it means fundamental solidarity between human beings […] making an effort to be a person with a conscience, calling good and evil by name and not blurring them […] developing in myself what is good, and seeking to correct what is evil […] (JOHN PAUL II in BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996: p. 558).

At this time, not only John Paul II affirmed that the end of communism was something that had been achieved23, which caused a great impact on the Polish people, but also made them recall the recent past, when Communism was being fought against by Solidarity. Also, they witnessed the example of the pope himself: after concluding the homily, Wojtyła suspended over his head the clerical girdle he was wearing on the day he suffered the injury during his assassination attempt and offered it to the Black Virgin (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996). John Paul II had fought Communism, suffered a grave injury, but still did not react violently, using only words to fight the evil that was plaguing Poland, as he considered communism.

In Katowice, he reiterated basic workers' rights: a fair wage and safety, but above all, the right to form free associations, or in other words, the right to form labor unions. Criticizing the communist government, he reiterated: "The State does not give us this right, it has only the obligation to protect and guard it. This right is given us by the Creator who made man as a social being" (JOHN PAUL II in BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996: p 559).

On the last day of the pope's visit, he managed to get an appointment that he had requested since the beginning of his trip to Poland: a meeting with Lech Wałęsa, the Solidarity leader who had been released a few months earlier from house arrest, but had not received permission to work. At this meeting, Wojtyła asked the former trade union leader to intervene in the actions of Solidarity (TARLTON, 2012).

Even though they considered the union’s massive actions valuable, Wojtyła and the Church as a whole sought alternatives to this kind of demonstration, since they repudiated violence and did not want the Poles to suffer even more (some manifestations of the union ended in police intervention). So what the pope was asking Wałęsa was that he sought to

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23 By stating that one must correct what is evil and by warning that they should call it by name, Wojtyła was stating that the Poles should have faith and fight communism, not to remain silent.
act with more moderation than before and avoid demonstrations in large numbers, using advertising as its main tool. We can then say that Wojtyła was influential in the decision making of Solidarity since its leader changed the *modus operandi* of the organization due to the pope’s advice. Moreover, an opposition leader who seeks a drastic change in the regime under which he lives, but waits patiently and does not take drastic measures, according to Tarlton (2012), is not common.

Finally, the second meeting between Jaruzelski and Wojtyła would confirm some suspicions that the pope had had at their first meeting. At that occasion, the Pope did not see an extremely communist man. As he suspected, the typical Polish education made Jaruzelski a nationalist and Catholic Polish. Therefore, when he introduced the martial law, the pope reflected during that week, Jaruzelski was actually making the less aggravating decision for the country, bearing alone the weight of that heavy cross and the second meeting only confirmed such suspicions, as the general did not refuse the proposals that Wojtyła based in human rights (mainly the fact that socialism did not have a "human face"). Then when he left his country, Wojtyła was convinced that if the Soviet leaders gave the opportunity, Jaruzelski would appeal to what was best for his country (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).

**The rise of Gorbachev: the rise of the opportunity**

Due to external pressures caused by the Pope and Reagan as well as internal pressure, in less than a month after the Pope's visit, Jaruzelski would negotiate with the Church in a committee composed of members of the institution of the Government, ways to alleviate the draconian measures imposed by the martial law. On July 22, 1983, martial law officially ended and several political prisoners who had been members of Solidarity would be released, thanks in large part to the alliance between Reagan and Wojtyła (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).

In 1985, an event marked the whole process analyzed here. With the death of Andropov's successor, Chernenko, a different communist was to occupy the post of General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Mikhail Gorbachev was to become a key factor in the regime change in Poland, as were Reagan, Jaruzelski, Wałęsa and Wojtyła.
Shortly before Gorbachev took power, the Soviet foreign minister, Andrei Gromyko, visited the Vatican on February 27, 1985. This was the first time that Wojtyła saw a "human face" on socialism, as the diplomat suggested to the pope that negotiations between representatives of the Holy See and the USSR on matters such as the rights of Catholics in the USSR should be initiated soon. This suspicion was confirmed in May, when the Polish clergy began to send reports on the new Secretary of the USSR. When Gorbachev himself went to Poland for a meeting of the Warsaw Pact Advisory Committee, Jaruzelski and he talked about the Catholic Church and Poland. For the first time a Soviet leader showed interest in this important connection, which surprised the Polish leader. Jaruzelski did not know, but all this interest stemmed from the restructuring strategy of the new Soviet leader that would be called *perestroika* (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996; WEIGEL, 2005; CORNWELL, 2007).

*Perestroika* consisted of a series of reforms in the political and economic spheres by the Soviet Union. Driven by the economic stagnation that the USSR lived, Gorbachev planned a change in the economic plan for the economy to grow again. Over time, the political and social arenas would be affected due to the distrust that people had towards the government (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996). About Gorbachev and *perestroika*, Wojtyła said:

> Well, he’s a good man, but he’ll fail […] because he wants to do something that’s impossible. Communism can’t be reformed […] Perestroika is an avalanche that we have unleashed and it’s going to roll on […] Perestroika is a continuation of Solidarity. Without Solidarity there would be no Perestroika. (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996: p. 664-665).

Excited by the new freedom that came with the new USSR leader, Jaruzelski drew plans to take advantage of this new moment in Soviet policy. Such excitement stemmed from the fact that the Western campaign was increasingly pressing the Polish economy: the country was being hampered by sanctions and embargoes led by the U.S., and that country vetoed the participation of Poland in the International Monetary Fund. The pressure on the general was huge on both sides, but with the restructuring policies of Gorbachev, and a more frequent dialogue with the Soviet leader, Jaruzelski felt willing to liberalize the

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24 It is important for us to note that this corresponds to the Wojtyła’s point of view. Although we agree that Solidarity may have been a factor that influenced the beginning of *perestroika*, we disagree with the assertion that the reform program is a "continuation of Solidarity", since many other factors not analyzed in this work were important in triggering this policy reform.
conditions in the country and improve relations with the West (CORNWELL, 2007; WEIGEL, 2005; CURTIS, 1992).

It was for this reason that on September 11, 1986, the regime announced the release of 225 prisoners who had been considered dangerous by the government, thus granting a general amnesty for Solidarity members who were still under arrest. It was the definitive end of the era of martial law in Poland (ASH, 1999).

On January 13, 1987, a historic meeting took place at the papal office in the Vatican: Jaruzelski visited John Paul II, holding the first meeting between them since Wojtyła’s 2nd visit to Poland. At this meeting, the general told the Pope what he knew about Gorbachev and his new policies, as well as the policies that were possible thanks to these changes. Jaruzelski emphasized the importance of the pope’s support regarding the guidance of the Church was crucial, because without such an institution it would be impossible to get the support of civil society, which meant that the general was practically admitting that communism was defeated (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).

The return to Poland and the end of Communism

Aiming to celebrate the success of Solidarity, the pope returned to Poland on June 8, 1987. One of the most symbolic homilies of his entire pontificate, John Paul II took place on the 12th of the same month, when Wojtyła celebrated a mass for 750,000 workers and their families in the city of Gdansk, where the Solidarity movement began (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996). He stated:

I pray for you every day in Rome, I pray for my motherland and for you workers. I pray for the special heritage of Polish Solidarity […] I’m glad to be here, because you have made me captain […] There is no struggle more effective than Solidarity! […] I’m very happy. Now even a fool can understand that finding a passage in this labyrinth […] requires Solidarity. This is the only road. (JOHN PAUL II in BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996: p. 684-685).

After Wojtyła’s third visit, the signs of the weakening of the regime were clear not only for intellectuals and for Solidarity, which would return the legality in 1987 (although it was only officially recognized by the government after the Round Table Talks), but also for the whole country, as Wojtyła’s speeches and the union’s campaigns became wider (ASH, 1999).
However, the situation became increasingly complicated and was getting out of control of any of the parties involved. Wałęsa had warned the rulers that employees would take action by themselves one time or another, which happened between April and May 1988, when a series of strikes began, but without any connection to a central agency, as were the ones organized by Solidarity. The strikes were instigated by the resentment of young workers that grew up watching the Solidarity act. Moreover, the conditions of life deteriorated increasingly with the price increases and wages freezes. To get out of this situation, the government resorted to Wałęsa himself, who failed to calm the momentum of the strikers. As a last resort, Jaruzelski promised the strikers that he would initiate direct talks with the opposition, which would be led by Solidarity (ASH, 1999; BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996; OSIATYNSKI, 1996).

We can see the indirect influence of Wojtyła in this process. Many former Solidarity leaders, including Anna Walentynowicz, the crane operator who initiated the movement in Gdansk with Wałęsa, were no longer part of the union. However, due to the support of the pope to the Solidarność movement, the popularity of Wałęsa and the union itself surpassed that of other movements, which allowed their dominance during the negotiations and in subsequent elections (WENZEL, 1998; OSIATYNSKI, 1996; BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).

This proposal from Jaruzelski was based on a misperception on his part. The general believed that the internal instability created by years of separation of Solidarity members would allow for the implementation of reform policies at the pace he wanted and without an organized opposition. However, the members of Solidarity were able to form a well-structured opposition, even though their official recognition by the government as a union was as recent as January 18, 1989 (ASH, 1999; OSIATYNSKI, 1996).

Such negotiations, that would be known as Round Table Talks and began on February 6, involved three main subjects and were divided into the same number of groups: 1) on the trade union pluralism, in which the goal was the legalization of Solidarity to the fullest (36 negotiators - 14 from Solidarity and 22 from the Government); 2) on

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25 Inflation reached almost 100% annually and real wages were 15% to 20% lower than in 1980 (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996).

26 Osiatynski (1996) also highlights that the party feared a boycott of the population to the 1989 elections, which demanded the participation of at least 50% of the population.

27 Apart from personal disputes between members, disagreements over which economic policy the group should support also emerged. For example, while some advocated for market reforms, another group defended that a market economy would bring inevitable difficulties (ASH, 1999).
policy reforms, in which the conditions under which Solidarity could participate in elections should be established (40 negotiators - 18 from Solidarity and 22 from the government); and 3) on systemic reforms in the economic and social policies, that would discuss the development of an "anti-crisis pact" proposed by Solidarity (46 negotiators – 24 from Solidarity and 22 from the Government)\(^\text{28}\) (OSIATYNSKI, 1996: p 31).

In the end, the opposition got the result they wanted: on June 4, 1989, elections would be organized in the country in which 35% of the Sejm seats would be disputed, as well as all of the seats from the new house of parliament, the Senate. The election for the office of president would occur in 1990, when Wałęsa was elected, and Jaruzelski would remain in office until then (ASH, 1999). The Polish political system had finally been changed.

**Conclusion**

Given the arguments presented above, we can now reach a conclusion regarding the main theme of this work: the participation of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II on the regime change in Poland process.

Wojtyła could not act directly within the process itself, but acted as an influencer in the process, using the Polish identity to the Catholic religion\(^\text{29}\) to be able to achieve his goal of ending the communist regime in his homeland. The fact that a compatriot became the leader of the Catholic Church represented a turning point with regard to communist rule in Poland in view of the force that this religion has in this country. It is possible for us to say that Wojtyła knew he had such power from the moment he was elected, in view of the drastic change in the foreign policy of the Vatican that the new leader would implement.

Wojtyła used the Solidarity labor union to reach his goal. The union itself had been, somehow, a creation of Wojtyła after his first visit to Poland as pope. Given the "generic"\(^\text{30}\)

\(^{28}\) It is important to mention that Wałęsa planned to discuss seven issues within these groups: 1) trade union pluralism; 2) economic issues; 3) social pluralism; 4) political reform; 5) law and the legal system; 6) agriculture and farmers’ unions; and 7) questions about the miners (WAŁĘSA, 2014).

\(^{29}\) Even though this is an important matter for the understanding of this work, we cannot develop it any further given the constraints to the size of this article. As introductions to these important themes (such as the idea of Christ of the Nations, the importance of the Black Madonna and the connection between Poland and the Vatican itself, among others), we recommend the readings of: Łukasiewicz (2009), Jakubowska (1990), Gerould (1980) and Staron (1969).

\(^{30}\) Generic in the sense that it could be used to affect workers of different segments.
nature of the Catholic religion in the country, the support of the religious leader made it possible for the union to grow more than expected, reaching labor classes that were not expected at first, like intellectuals and teachers, for example.

Also, he used his speeches in order to reach the Polish people and motivate them in the fight against Communism, using Solidarity as his main "tool" in Poland. Through the nationwide strikes organized by the union (that received the blessings of Wojtyła), the country's economy was becoming increasingly fragile, which made weaker the State control over the population, especially in a society in which the Catholic Church was almost as important as the government itself and was commanded by a man who was clearly against the communist principles.

Wojtyła used religion as a speech act, similarly to the method exposed by Mona Sheikh (2012). His position as the absolute leader of the Catholic Church allowed him to preach against communism, which he never did in a direct way during the period studied here. In his speeches, Wojtyła never spoke out against the regime itself, but always left the impression that the Poles should fight for their rights and, perhaps more importantly, for their freedom. The Polish history is marked by the partition of their territory and the difficulty in determining their country's very existence (DAVIES, 2005b). Therefore, in suggesting that the Soviets represented a further obstacle in the self-determination of the Polish people, Wojtyła was influencing the Poles to join the movement that aimed at the end of communist rule, especially Solidarity.

The period when the union became illegal in Poland, especially during the implementation of Martial Law, represented the moment in which the figure of Wojtyła was more present during the process. With his speeches emphasizing the union, the pope promoted a positive advertisement of the same, which facilitated the popularization of the movement, even without the approval of the regime, which may have helped the positive outcome for Solidarity on the elections after the Round Table Negotiations.

Also during this period, Wojtyła used resources from the Vatican to finance the activities of Solidarity. Bearing in mind that the union, even illegal, still represented a very strong link between the anticommunist movement and population, John Paul II sent funds

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31 In 1991 Wojtyła would issue the encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, which is a partial refutation of the communist ideology, celebrating the hundredth anniversary of the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, issued by Pope Leo XIII, one of the first papal documents repudiating communism and unrestricted capitalism (JOHN PAUL II, 1991).
from the Vatican Bank to the union, which allowed – along the resources sent by the U.S. Government – the development of positive propaganda by the union itself and its survival.

The development of the alliance with the U.S. also proved to be positive. Despite not having been an initiative of Wojtyła, the meetings with Walters, Casey and even Reagan allowed a level of cooperation that had never existed between the two states. Before that, there were no relations formally established between the U.S. and the Vatican due to pressure from the U.S. population (MELADY; STEBBINS, 2012). However, such pressure was at a low level during the analysis of this period, which allowed the development of an alliance between these States. Reagan's support proved crucial when the already fragile economy of Poland was further hampered by Western sanctions imposed by the U.S. President, which helped persuade Jaruzelski that negotiations with the opposition were necessary.

We should also emphasize the use of process tracing on this research. This method enabled us to observe the dynamics between the actions of Wojtyła and the role played by Solidarity. Through our analytic explanation, we noted that the Pope's support proved crucial to the survival of the union, by sending financial as well as technological resources – even the presses used in the manufacture of union propaganda were sent by the alliance between Reagan and Wojtyła (TARLTON, 2012) – and mainly keeping the movement alive in the memory of the Polish people, not allowing it to be forgotten and to eventually become predominant during the regime change.

Finally, the performance of Wojtyła in the process was indirect, mainly through speeches and becoming a sort of "campaign manager" for the union. Being a popular individual, leader of the Catholic Church and countryman, the Pope's support proved crucial to the growth of the labor movement that was about to put down the Polish communist regime. Through strikes (supported by the pope), the union caused damage to the local economy (due to the almost total membership of the labor force of the country), providing the possibility of talks between the government and the opposition, led by Lech Wałęsa and his fellow Solidarity members.
References


TARLTON, Jesse. *The Catholic Church as a proeminent transnational actor in Int'l Relations*. Exam for Ph.D. in International Relations: Central European University, 2012.


# Annex

## Table 1 – 21 Demands of the MKS of Gdansk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Demand</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Acceptance of free trade unions independent of the Communist Party and of enterprises, in accordance with convention No. 87 of the International Labor Organization concerning the right to form free trade unions, which was ratified by the Communist Government of Poland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A guarantee of the right to strike and of the security of strikers and those aiding them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Compliance with the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech, the press and publication, including freedom for independent publishers, and the availability of the mass media to representatives of all faiths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A return of former rights to: 1) People dismissed from work after the 1970 and 1976 strikes, and 2) Students expelled from school because of their views. The release of all political prisoners, among them Edward Zadrozynski, Jan Kozlowski, and Marek Kozlowski. A halt in repression of the individual because of personal conviction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Availability to the mass media of information about the formation of the Inter-factory Strike Committee and publication of its demands.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The undertaking of actions aimed at bringing the country out of its crisis situation by the following means: a) making public complete information about the social-economic situation, and b) enabling all sectors and social classes to take part in discussion of the reform programme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Compensation of all workers taking part in the strike for the period of the strike, with vacation pay from the Central Council of Trade Unions.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>An increase in the base pay of each worker by 2,000 zlotys a month as compensation for the recent raise in prices.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Guaranteed automatic increases in pay on the basis of increases in prices and the decline in real income.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>A full supply of food products for the domestic market, with exports limited to surpluses.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>The abolition of 'commercial' prices and of other sales for hard currency in special shops.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>The selection of management personnel on the basis of qualifications, not party membership. Privileges of the secret police, regular police and party apparatus are to be eliminated by equalizing family subsidies, abolishing special stores, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The introduction of food coupons for meat and meat products (during the period in which control of the market situation is regained).</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Reduction in the age for retirement for women to 50 and for men to 55, or after 30 years' employment in Poland for women and 35 years for men, regardless of age.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Conformity of old-age pensions and annuities with what has actually been paid in.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Improvements in the working conditions of the health service to insure full medical care for workers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Improvements in the working conditions of the health service to insure full medical care for workers.</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Paid maternity leave for three years.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>A decrease in the waiting period for apartments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>An increase in the commuter's allowance to 100 zlotys from 40, with a supplemental benefit on separation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>A day of rest on Saturday. Workers in the brigade system or round-the-clock jobs are to be compensated for the loss of free Saturdays with an increased leave or other paid time off.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GLOBAL NONVIOLENT ACTION DATABASE, 2014.