

Lecture 27

Epilogue

How far does the past dominate Polish politics today?

‘Choose the future’

Election slogan of Alexander Kwaśniewski in 1996.

‘We are today in the position of Andrzej Gołota: after seven rounds, we are winning on points against our historical fatalism. As rarely in our past - today almost everything depends on us ourselves... In the next few years, Poland’s fate for the succeeding half-century will be decided. And yet Poland has the chance - like Andrzej Gołota, to waste its opportunity. We will not enter NATO or the European Union if we are a country beset by a domestic cold war, a nation so at odds with itself that one half wants to destroy the other.

Adam Michnik, ‘Syndrom Gołoty’, *Gazeta Świąteczna*, 22 December 1996

‘I do not fear the return of communism, but there is a danger of new conflicts between chauvinism and nationalist extremism on the one hand and tolerance, liberalism and Christian values on the other’

Władysław Bartoszewski on the award to him of the Heinrich Heine prize, December 1996

1. Introduction: History as the Means for Articulating Political Orientations

In Poland, as in most countries which have been compelled to struggle to regain their lost independence, an obsessive involvement with the past and a desire to derive from it lessons of contemporary relevance have long been principal characteristics of the political culture. Polish romantic nationalism owed much to Lelewel’s concept of the natural Polish predilection for democratic values. The Polish nation was bound, he felt, to struggle as ‘ambassador to humanity’ and, through its suffering, usher in an era of universal liberty. The positivist rejection of the insurrectionary tradition after 1863

similarly derived intellectual support from the Galician school of historians. Its leading spokesmen, Kalinka, Szujski and Bobrzyński, aimed to provide a theoretical justification for abandoning what they regarded as the futile struggle for independence and for working in cooperation with the partitioning powers. Their work thus stressed the negative features of pre-partition Poland and the responsibilities of the Poles themselves for their weakness and decline. The revival of nationalism and political activism in the 1890s was mirrored in the rise of the Warsaw school of historians such as Korzoń, Smoleński and Aszkenazy. Though they claimed that the historian 'has no obligation to draw (political) lessons from the past', they took a much less critical view of Polish history than the Galicians and emphasized those aspects of Polish life which had survived the loss of statehood.

Similarly, in the interwar years, the division between the supporters of Piłsudski, who was in many ways the inheritor of the romantic-insurrectionary tradition and the adherents of Dmowski, who took much more from their positivist opponents, was mirrored in much historical writing. Dmowski himself pointed to this in 1932, observing:

One of the most striking proofs of the spiritual split in our society is the fact that the history of what has taken place in the last few decades, the history of our regaining of our independence and of the political activity which preceded it, is presented in two different mutually exclusive ways. What one side regards as a ludicrous detail of no importance or consequence, the other sees as an epic deed of great historical significance; what one sees as the true precursor of independence, the other sees as a light-headed and dangerous adventure which did not have disastrous consequences for Poland only because it did not succeed.

This dispute continued after the second world war. In the first years after liberation, before the establishment of monolithic Stalinist rule, some useful and interesting monographs were written and a start was made on the publication of basic documentary sources. The Stalinization of Polish intellectual life from 1948 onwards

ushered in a period in which Soviet historical practice of the worst type was closely imitated. It should be stressed, however that a Marxist approach to historical problems was not entirely new in Poland, since before 1939, Austro-marxist ideas had had a certain popularity within socialist circles. Furthermore, though the initial impact of Marxism in its crude Stalinist form after 1949 was largely negative, from a longer perspective, in stimulating a greater awareness of social and economic factors in historical evolution, its wider reception had many positive consequences.

Gomułka's return to power in October 1956 and the 'little stabilization' which followed ushered in a new period. Censorship was relaxed and the investigation of most, though not all, historical topics was now permitted. Relief at the end of Stalinism and hopes that Gomułka would usher in a real measure of political and cultural liberalization were reflected in the prevailing 'positivism' and acceptance of the need to act within clearly defined limits. The historians of the sixties can broadly speaking be divided into two categories, which in a strange way reflected the older antagonism between the romantic-insurrectionaries and the positivist-realists of the nineteenth century. On the one hand were what can be referred to as the 'Marxist-pessimists'. They tended to take a rather negative view of interwar Poland, stressing the breakdown of democratic institutions, economic failure and the alienation of workers, peasants and the national minorities. They were sharply critical of Polish foreign policy in the 1930's which they felt had made Poland effectively an ally of Nazi Germany. They tended to be sympathetic to Marxist analyses of historical developments and, in some cases, were of Jewish origin. The 'nationalist-optimists' took a more sympathetic view of the Second Republic. While not denying its political and economic failures, they saw these as the result of general

European rather than specifically Polish conditions. They stressed the achievements of the governments in integrating the different parts of the country, in fostering economic growth and in creating a national educational system. The difficulties of the national minorities and, above all, the Jews, were more the result, in their view, of the general economic difficulties of the country rather than of hostility on the government's part. Beck's foreign policy was a rational response to Western appeasement of Hitler, a desperate attempt to deal with a desperate situation. Finally they underlined the major achievements of Poland in these years in the artistic and cultural sphere stressing both the wealth of creative talent and the scholarly success of the universities.

Both schools had much in common. In a sense they were both attempting to find broader roots for People's Poland which would legitimise and strengthen the plural political system which many hoped was developing in the sixties. Thus there was a widespread desire to stress those aspects of the socialist and populist traditions which could be seen as having a contemporary relevance. Equally there was a paradoxical tendency on the part of a number of Catholic historians, notably Andrzej Micewski, to present Dmowski as one of the precursors of People's Poland since the Poland he envisaged - unitary, industrialized, anti-German, Catholic and allied to Russia - bore a considerable similarity to the state which emerged after 1944. Micewski himself was quite explicit about the contemporary relevance of his historical investigations. His book, *Z geografii politycznej Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, was intended, he admitted, to undermine the over-idealized view of the interwar years, which he believed was still widespread in Poland. As he wrote:

There are fewer and fewer people in Poland, who in a travesty of Talleyrand's well-known saying from the time when he was serving the cause of the French

Revolution, that he who had not live before 1789 could no comprehend the true joy of living, could or would wish to say the same of the period before 1939. Nevertheless, in the political consciousness of large sections of Polish society, there still persist many ambivalences in the understanding of the political problems of the interwar period.

The persistence of this too rosy view of the past hindered the adaptation of the Polish people to new realities, and it was this he hoped to achieve in his historical writings. 'Society', he affirmed, 'needs swift and harsh judgments on the past for the use of the present, to help chart the direction of its future path...The striking of a reckoning with our most recent past has an important influence on the political attitudes of today.'

From the late 1960s, the division between these two 'schools' began to diminish. The years between 1918 and 1939 receded further into the past and the passions engendered by them tended to cool. As a new generation grew up, which had not personally experienced the catastrophe of the Warsaw uprising, the positivist and cautious approach to politics which had characterised the sixties became discredited. In historical terms, this had the effect of reviving and strengthening the never dormant interest in the charismatic figure of Józef Piłsudski, and, perhaps, as a consequence, leading to a more critical assessment of his opponents, above all Dmowski.

Further, the increasingly acute political and economic crisis which Poland began to experience from 1970 led to a new understanding and sympathy for the dilemmas and problems which the rulers of interwar Poland faced. At the same time, the experience of the past, and above all of the interwar period was sought as a means for explaining present political difficulties. As Jerzy Wiatr wrote in May 1982:

Discussion of the origins and character of Polish socio-political crises should be couched in a historical perspective, that is, take account of the whole evolution of the system, including those aspects which up to now have been less emphasized for political reasons. Arguments over historical assessment are of value to the

present and future in at least two ways: firstly, they make for a better understanding of today's problems and conflicts and secondly, they help us to estimate the probable efficacy of planned reforms on the basis of historical experience.

The significance of the past was even more strongly underlined by the 'Experience and the Future' Group, set up to report to the government in the late 1970s. In its 'Report on the State of the Nation and the Polish People's Republic, it quoted one respondent:

The source of public consciousness in Poland today lies in the nineteenth century (particularly in its second half) and in the first half of the twentieth century. Modern political thought emerged during this period: timetables were set and choices were made that are often relevant until today.

The underground press in the 1980s produced a number of important historical works, above all on the communist takeover and the history of Solidarity. The end of communism has led to a flood of publications on the previously 'white spots' of the Polish past. The Polish-Soviet war, the fate of Poles in the Soviet Union before and during the second world war, the character of the government established in London during that war and the whole history of People's Poland have been illuminated in a serious and scholarly way, using the extensive documentation both in Poland and in Russia and the other republics of the former Soviet Union. Some have seen in this the emergence of a new consensus on the Polish past – in their eyes, Poland was becoming a 'normal' country in which historical disputes are the province of academics and politics is decided on the basis of rational social and economic preferences. The tyranny of the past, so well described by Miłosz, has been diminished. How far has this gone? You will remember that one of Kwaśniewski's most successful slogans was 'Wybierzemy przyszłość'.

2. The New Political Alignment and the danger of Populism

‘Poland is achieving political stabilization rooted in the development of general political “tendencies” among the mass public. The Left is partly economic, partly ideological, combining those longing after the security of the old system with those who has once served it. The Right is almost entirely ideological in character, united by anti-communism and traditionalism’. (Hubert Tworzecki, *Parties and Politics in Post-1989 Poland*, Westview Press, 1996) Janusz Reykowski has talked about two concepts of democracy which have developed in post-communist Poland. One sees the democratic system as primarily concerned to ensure its citizens the greatest amount of freedom, the other sees democracy as primarily concerned to provide the maximum security for them. Those who favour the first concept can be shown empirically to see the present social-economic situation above all in terms of the opportunities it affords, those who favour the second are above all preoccupied with the dangers inherent in it.

To what extent does the party system in Poland articulate this difference? According to the English-language weekly, the *Warsaw Voice*, writing in December 1996, only two groups would count: the postcommunist Democratic left Alliance (SLD) and Solidarity Election Action (AWS), which has united since its loss in the last elections....AWS is building its popularity on slogans that are uncomfortable close to nationalism and socialism. (*Warsaw Voice*, 12, 96). Another acute observer, the historian, Władysław Władyka, in his review of the year 1996 in *Polityka*, 4 January 1997 wrote:

The year 1997 promises to be an uninterrupted political campaign, divided into several phases...The struggle of two camps, which are themselves divided (especially on the ‘Right’), but which embody the fundamental, historic division

into post-communists and post-Solidarity will drive out, as it were, will remove to the margin all other conflicts - about policies, the constitution, the reform of the economy.

These predictions have not proved to be accurate – in fact, the two camps had more in common than was apparent. The emergence of the new government. Its difficulties. The presidential election of the year 2000. In the campaign which accompanied this, some voices were heard criticising the ‘anachronistic’ divisions in Polish politics. In an article in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, Andrzej Romanowski criticised the overwhelmingly right-wing and clerical character of the ‘post-Solidarity’ AWS as a betrayal of the ideals embodied in the ‘first Solidarity’. This evoked a strong response from Alexander Hall, one of the principal conservative ideologues in Poland:

The division in Poland between the ‘post-August’ political camp and the political camp of the inheritors of the legacy of the PRL will certainly one day lose its *raison d’etre*. Yet at present it still reflects a reality. This should not surprise us. If one hundred years after the French revolution, the French were divided politically above all by their attitude to that revolution, is it strange that Poles, ten years after the establishment of a democratic state should take the events of our most recent history as the main factor in determining their political allegiance. ¹

Have Poles developed a democratic culture? Is compromise still a dirty word? Compromising of old authorities, new ones have still to emerge. Opposition had great difficulty accepting its loss of power. Believed that it was tricked out of office. Father Jankowski. Problem of electoral system. The pre-1997 government had a secure parliamentary majority. Yet is 65% of the seats in the Sejm was obtained with 35% of the votes cast. And barely half the electorate voted. The nature of the 1997 elections. How the future will look. The same situation occurred after 2001.

¹ *Tygodnik Powszechny*, no. 41, 8 October 2000

Yet there are some counter-indications. In his new year address, Alexander Kwaśniewski quoted Pope John Paul II and Adam Michnik, he expressed as his 1996 new year wishes for the Poles a stable democracy, economic growth, a modern constitution and entry into NATO and the European Union. He also admitted that 'today's successes would not have been possible without Lech Wałęsa and Leszek Balcerowicz, as well as such prime ministers as Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Jan Olszewski.

A stabilization has clearly been achieved in economic matters. As Gregorz Kołodko wrote shortly after he resigned as Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for the economy, between December 1993 and January 1997 inflation dropped from 38% to 18%, gross domestic product expanded more than 20% and unemployment fell by 3.5% to under under 13%. At the same time \$10 billion of foreign direct investment was absorbed (*Financial Times*, 13 February 1997). Between December 1995 and December 1996 Poland rose in the ranking of the Heritage Foundation in Washington from number 85 among the states applying the principles of free market economics to number 71. The improved economic situation is reflected in public opinion statistics. In the summer of 1993, just before the SLD returned to power, OBOP asked the following question:

'If you had the choice - to return to life under socialism as it existed in People's Poland in the last ten-twenty years or to live in the Poland of today - which would you prefer? At that time, 36% preferred the first alternative, 41% the second. 23% had no opinion. In autumn 1994, the figures were 27%, 59% and 14%, while by the end of 1996 they were 20%, 69% and 12% (*Wprost*, 15 December 1996). The evidence of the polls is problematic.

Polish Attitudes as Reflected in Opinion Polls

1. Attitudes to the Polish Peoples Republic

In the summer of 1993, just before the SLD returned to power, OBOP asked the following question: 'If you had the choice - to return to life under socialism as it existed in People's Poland in the last ten-twenty years or to live in the Poland of today - which would you prefer? At that time, 36 percent preferred the first alternative, 41 percent the second. 23 percent had no opinion. In autumn 1994, the figures were 27 percent, 59 percent and 14 percent, while by the end of 1996 they were 20 percent, 69 percent and 12 percent (*Wprost*, 15 December 1996).

In 1996, approximately 60 percent of the respondents questioned in a public opinion survey responded that the balance of the PRL was negative, while only 43 percent held that they were living better than they had under communism.

According to a public opinion survey (conducted in December 1998) a positive attitude towards the former communist party is expressed not only by 34% of its former members, but also by 18% of those who never belonged to it ,and even by 10% of those respondents who were too young to join.

Forty percent of Poles in an OBOP poll (August 2002) spoke positively about the pre-1989 Polish United Worker Party (communist party), 35 percent criticised its rule.

45 percent claimed Poland's situation deteriorated under the first post-communist government (1989-1993), 37 percent said the country's situation improved in those years. 30 percent spoke

positively about the 1993-97 leftwing-peasant coalition (SLD-PSL), 44 percent said matters took a turn for the worse under SLD-PSL. 39 percent said they would rather live in communist Poland during its final two decades than in today's reality. This was the first time that the Polish communist party's supporters outnumbered its opponents

2. Attitudes to Martial Law

CBOS has compared a public opinion poll on the imposition of martial law which it conducted in 1983 with a similar poll conducted in November 1996. In the first poll 43 percent stated that they had a positive view of the imposition of martial law, while in the second poll this figure had risen to 54 percent. Those holding a negative view of its imposition fell from 43 percent to 30 percent. 80 percent of the supporters of the left had a favourable view of the imposition of martial law, 54 percent of the supporters of the AWS and 46 percent of the supporters of ROP.

Should the persons responsible for the introduction of Martial Law be held criminally responsible? (CBOS, *Polityka*, 28 December 1996)

Yes and probably yes	36 percent
No and probably no	46 percent

In a survey carried out in 1996 almost one-third of the respondents asked about 'facts which shame Poland' indicated various events and phenomena connected with communist rule.

According to the same survey, 'facts of which the Poles may be proud' include the downfall

of communism and the emergence of a democratic state (29% of the respondents), slightly more than the part played by the Poles in the second world war (28%)

3. Attitudes Expressed on the Fifteenth Anniversary of the End of Communism

Polityka commissioned a poll, conducted by CBOS, for the fifteenth anniversary of the establishment of the democratic system. Its results were relatively optimistic (a poll in *Gazeta Wyborcza* was slightly less positive, showing that its respondents assessing most highly of post-war politicians Edward Gierek and reflecting a very positive assessment of the early 1970s.

Person who contributed most to the success of the Third Republic

Lech Wałęsa	25
Pope John Paul	19
Aleksander Kwaśniewski	12
Tadeusz Mazowiecki	3
Leszek Balcerowicz	2
Wojciech Jaruzelski	1
No such person	4
Other	6
Difficult to say	27
Refused to reply	1

Person who did most damage to the Third Republic

Leszek Miller	17
Lech Wałęsa	13
Andrzej Lepper	6
Jerzy Buzek	4
Leszek Balcerowicz	3
Wojciech Jaruzelski	2
Aleksander Kwaśniewski	1
No-one, there is no such person	4
Other	5
Difficult to say	42

Refused to answer 1

Most important event of the last fifteen years

Entry of Poland into the EU	44
Election of Wałęsa as President	10
Election of Kwaśniewski as President	10
Entry of Poland into NATO	9
Enactment of new constitution	8
Elections of 4 June 1989	7
Creation of Mazowiecki government	6
Rywin affair	5
Olin affair	0
Other	1

Assessment of Changes since 1989

Very positive	7
Rather positive	51
Rather negative	24
Very negative	11
Difficult to say	7

On a scale of 1 to 10 assess the situation in Poland in the following areas

Activity of the media	6.74
Resoucefulness of the citizens	5.82
International position of Poland	5.08
Functioning of democratic system	4.40
Quality of life	4.01
Level of security	3.84
State of the economy	3.61
Level of justice	3.36

Do young Poles today have more chance for a successful life than their parents?

Decidedly more	18
Somewhat more	22
The same	6
Somewhat less	16
Decidedly less	37
No opinion	1
Other	6
Difficult to say	27
Refused to answer	1

3. Populism as the politics of the future

Jerzy Szacki, professor of sociology at the University of Warsaw, has pointed out (*Polityka*, 14 December 1996) that the concepts 'liberalism' and 'populism' have come to play a large role in the politics of post-communist Poland, as well of the other post-communist countries of East-Central Europe, primarily as terms of abuse. 'Relatively few people call themselves liberals, nobody indeed will call himself a populist. Yet these terms are extensively used in relation to others, those who can be held to threaten most seriously our young democracy and against whom one must regard as the main enemy... In a sense, the political scene is divided into two parts: the anti-liberals and the anti-populists.' Szacki enumerates the characteristics of the 'liberals' and the 'populists'. The main features of 'liberalism' are as follows:

1. Taking the capitalist West as a model, while lacking understanding of national traditions and the needs of Polish society. A 'liberal' is someone who 'longs for Europe' and to achieve this 'Europeanization' is willing to play any price.

2. The cult of the free market and free competition: total refecction of the need for state intervention.

3. The acceptance of the increase in inequality and social injustice

4. The overriding stress on economic indicators as the reflection of political success, coupled with the neglect of social problems

5. As a consequence of this stress, the cutting back or liquidation of the institutions of the welfare state.

6. Accelerated privatization of the national patrimony, not taking into account the interests of those who work in the plants affected or the interests of the country as a whole.

7. Amoralism - the recognition that right is always on the side of the economically stronger.

It is a paradox of present-day Poland that the post-communists are also seen as 'liberal' since they have adhered to policies which have maintained the pro-capitalist reforms initiated in 1989. When in power they basically followed the policies of their predecessors who were ostensibly more ideologically committed to these reforms. Why did the post-communists retained the basic outlines of the policies of Balcerowicz?

One might have expected the main political division in post-communist Poland to be between 'liberals' and 'post-communists'. This has not come about. The term 'populist' has come into use as an antonym for 'liberal' to denote those beliefs which are hostile to the capitalist transformation or regard it as having been achieved at too high a price. Populism is seldom defined rigidly and is rather used as a way of denoting the negative features of the views of those who oppose the capitalist transformation. Its characteristics, as defined by its opponents are:

1. Demagogy. The populist politicians are those who exploit the misguided sentiments of the masses.

2. A 'populist' is a politician who makes use of such oversimplified concepts as 'the people', 'the majority', 'ordinary people', 'working people' whose interests are clearly at odds with those of the elite (in Polish 'góra')

3. A 'populist' is convinced that the present evils of society have a simple explanation and a simple cure.
4. A 'populist' stresses above all the criteria of 'social justice' and downplays economic factors.
5. A 'populist' mistrusts career politicians and existing political institutions.
6. A 'populist' is inclined to believe in conspiracy theories of history

The new polarization has led to some distressing phenomena. One was the letter sent by ten professors at the Catholic University of Lublin, led by Ryszard Bender, to the bishops of the diocese of Essen in Germany. In this they objected to the award to Władysław Bartoszewski, now Polish foreign minister, of the Heinrich Braun award for his services to Polish-German reconciliation and as a representative of those who had suffered at the hands of the Third Reich on the grounds that he had not advanced Catholic social thought, was not a professor at KUL and was a divorcee. Another is the increasing use of chauvinistic and anti-semitic language in the post-Solidarity camp. This is how Zygmunt Wrzodak, head of the Solidarity branch at the Ursus factory outside Warsaw and a prominent member of Jan Olszewski's Ruch Odbudowy Polski, spoke on the twentieth anniversary of the disturbances at Ursus and Radom, which led to the creation of the Committee for the Defence of the Workers (KOR) and ultimately to the emergence of Solidarity:

The past twenty years have clearly demonstrated that the pink political hyenas who created KOR, battenning onto the Workers, the Church and our Fatherland, had only one goal - to grab power over our backs. Kuroń, Michnik and comrades, set in their zoological hatred of Polishness (Polskość), have cynically exploited our unhappiness, blood and naivete. They declared their pharisaic support, so that they could cunningly infiltrate our, polish, catholic and workers circles. They did this solely to reach an agreement over our shoulders with their ideological bloodbrothers - the communists.

In an environment in which the holder of these opinions holds a significant position in a major right-wing grouping (ROP), it is not surprising that in January 1997, 39% of those polled by CBOS could believe that Jews had too much influence in the country, while only 29% held the opposite opinion. Perhaps one should take consolation in the fact that anti-semitic views were least frequently held by younger respondents.

To quote Władysław Kozłowski again:

A populist-parochial-antisemitic language is and will be used with complete cynicism in the 'political' struggle by parties which are seeking to win power by appealing to an electorate of the poor and dissatisfied, who have sense of grievance.

4. The Persistence of Disputes about the Past

How far is Poland a divided society (*społeczeństwo skonfliktowane*)? CBOS asked its respondents whether Poland was likely to experience 'social conflicts'? 66% answered 'yes'. This is higher than two years ago, than six year ago and even that ten and twelve years ago. Supporters of the right see the greatest danger of conflict (ROP 83%, UW 74%), those who see the least are supporters of the UP (60%) and PSL (64%). In contrast, to the eighties, the antagonisms are not seen as 'government - society', 'poor - rich' or even 'believers - nonbelievers', but are much more politicized. Example of *Zemsta* produced by Dejmek in mid-nineties in which the Regent and the Cup-bearer do not shake hands. As Christopher Bobiński has written (*TP*, Apokryf, no. 10, December 1996), this was above all the result of Alexander Kwaśniewski's victory in the presidential election.

Some areas where opinions are deeply divided in Poland (CBOS, *Polityka*, 28 December 1996).

Should the persons responsible for the introduction of Martial Law be held criminally responsible?

Yes and probably yes	36%
No and probably no	46%

In your opinion, has the former division between post-communists and Solidarity supporters re-emerged?

Yes	53%
No	32%

How do you assess the progress of privatization?

Too slow	42%
Too fast	19%
The right pace	16%

Should agricultural land be sold to foreigners?

Yes	32%
No	64%

Should building land be sold to foreigners?

Yes	41%
No	55%

Should Poland conclude the Concordat?

Yes, this year	28%
Yes, but not necessarily this year	29%
In general, no	17%

Should the law on abortion be liberalized?

Yes	52%
No	29%

Are income taxes

Decidedly too high	62%
Rather too high	29%

Inheritance of People's Poland

Problem of holidays: 1 or 3 May, 11 November. How is round table and its outcome to be assessed.

Martial Law

There were attempts on the fifteenth anniversary of the introduction of martial law to reach some sort of consensus on the how this event should be assessed. In

Polityka on 14 December 1996, there was an interview with Stanisław Ciosek, at the time minister with responsibility for contacts with the trade unions and Karol Modzelewski, who was interned as member of the National Council of Solidarity conducted by Marian Turski. Asked in the course of the interview whether the use of force could have been prevented, Ciosek claimed that although he had tried to prevent this outcome, he had feared it from August 1980, and particularly in the months before December 1981 because of the ‘complete failure of the last discussions with Solidarity to produce any results’. This was a situation which was intolerable to the party leadership, but above all to Moscow. Modzelewski agreed that force could only have been avoided if ‘Solidarity could have been restrained, if this very spontaneous, mass movement, characterised by its unheard of social mobilization could have been contained within the existing system.’ He doubted whether this was possible or whether it could have been accepted by Moscow. When Ciosek was asked what was the main lesson he had learnt from these events, it was that he did not know the true character ‘of the people like Karol Modzelewski...we were too fearful, too cowardly to undertake a genuine dialogue with the elite of Solidarity. We were victims of our own propaganda’. Asked whether his claim on 3 December 1981 that if the government declared war on the working class, this would be its last battle was prophetic, whether he felt that he foresaw what was to occur only eight years later, Modzelewski replied simply, ‘No, I did not think that’.

CBOS recently compared a public opinion poll on the imposition of martial law which it conducted in 1983 with a similar poll conducted in November 1996. In the first poll 43% stated that they had a positive view of the imposition of martial law, while in the second poll this figure had risen to 54% Those holding a negative view of its

imposition fell from 43% to 30%. 80% of the supporters of the left had a favourable view of the imposition of martial law, 54% of the supporters of the AWS and 46% of the supporters of ROP.

Nato Membership

The postcommunist Social Democracy of the Polish Republic (SdRP) has called for a referendum on membership in NATO, Polish media reported on 14 February. Izabela Sierakowska of the SdRP said objections against Poland's entry to the EU and NATO were raised by many delegates to the party congress last weekend (see OMRI Daily Digest, 10 February 1997). Deputy Defense Minister Andrzej Karkoszka and Foreign Affairs Minister Dariusz Rosati responded by saying such a referendum is superfluous since the overwhelming majority of Poles are clearly in favor of NATO membership.

According to former Foreign Affairs Minister Andrzej Olechowski, SdRP leaders are pandering to the more conservative party members by proposing a referendum. A January poll by the Public Opinion Research Center (OBOP) showed support for NATO and EU at 90% and 88%, respectively. These are the highest figures for any country in the region.

Zbigniew Siemiatkowski said in *Rzeczpospolita* on 15 February that Russian secret agents are preparing 'provocations' to sabotage Poland's efforts to join NATO and the EU. Siemiatkowski said that the Russians had been stepping up their diplomatic contacts with politicians from Poland's ruling and opposition parties, there had been

attempts to seize large sections of the Polish economy with Russian capital, and there was a Russian

offensive in political and media circles. He said Polish counterintelligence is particularly aware of Russian activities and that no political orientation, including his own Democratic Left Alliance, is immune to Russian efforts at infiltration. He also cited Russian pressure to establish a military base in Latvia and said Russia is behind the recent Lithuanian bank crisis. Siemiatkowski left on 16 February for a four-day visit to Germany to discuss cooperation between the Polish and German secret services

In the event, NATO entry passed off peacefully and commands a high level of social support.

Constitution

The preamble of the constitution as drafted by Tadeusz Mazowiecki:

We, Polish citizens, both those who believe in God as the source of Truth, Justice, the Good and the Beautiful, as well as those who do not share this belief, but who acknowledge these values as deriving from other sources... establish this constitution.

This involved abandoning the use of the phrase 'In the name of Omnipotent God'. This has given rise to considerable controversy, with some arguing that the new formula is 'the language of the bishops' while others have claimed, like the Catholic senator Alicja Grześkowiak, that the formula respects the feelings of the minority of non-believers, while offending those of the Catholic majority. The Church is divided over the issue. Bishop Pieronek, the designated successor to Primate Glemp has accepted the formula and thanked its author, while Fr. Józef Krukowski, the representative of the episcopate on the Constitutional Commission has accused Mazowiecki as 'lacking good

will'. A sensible compromise, applauded by *Tygodnik Powszechny*. A slightly different version was suggested by the SLD representatives on the Constitutional Commission:

We, Polish citizens, both those for whom the source of highest values is God and those who find that source above all in the humanistic inheritance and experience of Mankind... establish this constitution.

This compromise formula not acceptable to the opposition. In mid-February, more than a quarter of respondents said they would vote in a referendum for the Solidarity-sponsored draft constitution, while a quarter would support parliament's draft constitution, Polish media reported on 18 February. The proposal by Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) to submit both drafts in a referendum--contrary to the current law--is supported by 67% of respondents. More than 40% of those surveyed think that a future parliament should approve a new constitution, 33% think the current parliament should. The AWS wants a future constitution to include a more explicit reference to God, protection of human life from conception, and recognition that Poland under communist rule was not a sovereign country. It demands that a referendum on the constitution be valid if at least half the voters turn out. In the event, this also proved to be easily and satisfactorily resolved.

Lustracja and Question of Behaviour under Communism

Mazowiecki's line

Kisiel's memoirs

'Hanba domowa'.

Editor of *Wprost*, Marek Król. Roles of Marian Świtalski and Jerzy Urban in this matter.

Issue of Oleksy. This has not been laid to rest by 'White Book'. Sejm created commission. This quickly split into two groups and produced two mutually incompatible reports. Role of Andrzej Milczanowski. This has affected freedom of expression. The Warsaw Procuracy has taken legal action against *Życie Warszawy* for failing to divulge the source of the opinion given by Procurator Gorzkiewicz justifying the discontinuation of the case against Oleksy.

Media

Change after the Presidential election. Wiesław Walendziak replaced as head of the Supervisory Council of TVP by PSL politician, Ryszard Miazek

Cultural Matters

Szyborska. Reactions to death of Miłosz.

Kwasniewski at Olympics

5. The 'Unconquered' Past

1. Jewish Issues

Significant progress here,

2. Ukrainians

Debate over sixtieth anniversary of the Volynian massacres

3. Germans

Role of Catholics in achieving reconciliation. The Polish-German rapprochement seems to have a firm base in public opinion. This is graphically illustrated in a poll conducted by Omnibus in May 1966 (*Poliyka*, 21 December 1996).

Poles expressing positive views about French and Germans (in percentages)

	1993	1994	1995	1996
about French	61	51	67	62
about Germans	23	26	35	43

How far has the dispute over the Expellees changed this,

4. Russians

Polish Soviet war. Murder of Soviet prisoners. Katyn.

5. Lithuanians

Problem of new Lithuanian government. Actions of Zigmantas Zinevicius, the new Lithuanian minister of education. Polish-Lithuanian Treaty of 1994.

Conclusion

How far has the past 'been conquered', to use a phrase of George Sakwa's.