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THE FOLLOWING IS AN ASSESSMENT BY JIC
POLAND

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(Poland)

1. THE POLISH FREE TRADE UNION ORGANISATION SOLIDARNOSC WAS LEGALLY REGISTERED ON 10 NOVEMBER ON TERMS ACCEPTED BY THE UNION AND THE POLISH LEADERSHIP. THE SITUATION THUS CREATED IS WITHOUT PRECEDENT IN A COMMUNIST STATE. A NATIONWIDE STRIKE IN POLAND HAS BEEN AVERTED AND TENSION HAS EASED SOMEWHAT FOR THE MOMENT. HOWEVER THE COUNTRY'S CRITICAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND LONGER-TERM POLITICAL PROBLEMS REMAIN UNRESOLVED.

2. THE SUPREME COURT RULED ON 10 NOVEMBER THAT THERE COULD BE NO LEGAL OBJECTION TO THE STATUTES PUT FORWARD BY SOLIDARNOSC AND THAT THE PROVINCIAL COURT HAD EXCEEDED ITS POWERS IN AMENDING THEM. SOLIDARNOSC OFFERED DURING THE PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT TO ADD AN ANNEXE TO THE STATUTES CONSISTING OF THE FIRST PART (I.E. THE POLITICAL UNDERTAKINGS) OF THE GDANSK AGREEMENT AND TWO ILO CONVENTIONS (WHICH DEAL WITH THE RIGHT TO ORGANISE AND WITH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING). SOLIDARNOSC FURTHER STATED IN COURT THAT THE PROVISION IN THE STATUTES FOR STRIKES IN THE EVENT OF "OPPRESSIVE ACTION" AGAINST TRADE UNION LEADERS WOULD ONLY APPLY IF SANCTIONS WERE TAKEN AGAINST SUCH LEADERS IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR TRADE UNION ACTIVITIES. (THE PROVISIONS ON STRIKES WILL IN ANY CASE BE SUPERSEDED BY THE PROVISIONS OF THE NEW TRADE UNION LAW WHEN IT COMES INTO FORCE.) THE SUPREME COURT THEN DECLARED SOLIDARNOSC A LEGAL BODY ON THIS BASIS. SOLIDARNOSC THUS ACHIEVED ITS AIM OF KEEPING REFERENCES TO THE LEADING ROLE OF THE PARTY OUT OF ITS STATUTES, AND IN ADDITION GAINED REFERENCES TO THE ILO CONVENTIONS WHICH SHOULD HELP TO STRENGTHEN ITS HAND IN RELATIONS WITH THE AUTHORITIES. THE AGREEMENT REACHED ON THE STATUTES IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS THAT OFFERED BY SOLIDARNOSC THREE WEEKS AGO. ALTHOUGH THE WORDING OF THE STATUTES IS LIKELY TO HAVE LITTLE DIRECT RELEVANCE TO THE PRACTICAL OPERATION OF SOLIDARNOSC, THE CONFRONTATION WAS A TRIAL OF STRENGTH WITH THE REGIME FROM WHICH THE UNION CLEARLY EMERGED THE WINNER.

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3. THE COURT HEARING WAS PRECEDED BY A WEEKEND OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN AIMED PARTICULARLY AT THE MILITANT WING OF SOLIDARNOSC. IT INCLUDED A SERIES OF TOUGH SPEECHES AND ARTICLES WARNING OF THE DANGERS OF POLITICAL PRESSURE AND STRIKES BY THE UNIONS; REPORTS OF SOVIET-POLISH JOINT EXERCISES (WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN OF A VERY LOW LEVEL NATURE) AND THE SCREENING OF A TELEVISION FILM PURPORTING TO SHOW SUCH EXERCISES (THOUGH THE FILM WAS CLEARLY NOT RECENT); AND RESTRICTIONS ON THE ENTRY OF WESTERN JOURNALISTS (WHICH WERE LIFTED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE COURT HEARING). IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE AUTHORITIES

HOPED UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT THAT THE UNION WOULD WEAKEN UNDER ALL THIS PRESSURE, BUT THAT ONCE IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE STRIKES WOULD GO AHEAD IF THE COURT DECISION WERE UNFAVOURABLE TO SOLIDARNOSC THE REGIME SAW NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO MAKE A CONCESSION OVER THE STATUTES.

4. IN DECIDING TO CONCEDE, THE REGIME MUST HAVE FELT THAT THE THREATENED STRIKES REPRESENTED A GREATER DANGER TO POLAND THAN ANY ALTERNATIVE. THE MOOD OF THE COUNTRY WAS ONE OF TENSION AND PESSIMISM. THE SUPPLY SITUATION IS GETTING STEADILY WORSE AND IS BEING AGGRAVATED BY HOARDING. THERE ARE SHORTAGES NOT ONLY OF MEAT BUT OF STAPLES SUCH AS BREAD, POTATOES, SUGAR AND FATS, AND THERE ARE PROBLEMS WITH HEATING IN SOME PLACES. THE REGIME MAY HAVE FELT THAT IF THE SELECTIVE STRIKES WENT AHEAD THEY COULD GET OUT OFHAND, ESCALATING INTO A GENERAL STRIKE, WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE BROKEN, OR SPILLING OVER INTO STREET DEMONSTRATIONS, WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE SUPPRESSED. THE DECISION WILL ALSO HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY INDICATIONS OF THE SOVIET ATTITUDE.

5. ALTHOUGH THE POLISH LEADERS HAVE FOR THE MOMENT AVERTED THE DANGER OF NATIONWIDE STRIKES AND THEIR UNFORSEEABLE CONSEQUENCES THEY HAVE HAD TO PAY A HIGH PRICE IN TERMS OF PRESTIGE AND CREDIBILITY. THEIR WEAKNESS VIS-A-VIS THE WORKERS HAD BEEN CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED AGAIN. THE HARD-LINERS IN SOLIDARNOSC MAY HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED TO PRESS FOR FURTHER USE OF THE UNION'S POWER, ALTHOUGH WALESZA CLEARLY FEELS THAT THE UNION SHOULD NOW PUT ITS ENERGIES INTO HELPING RESTORE THE ECONOMY. DESPITE SOVIET OFFERS OF A HARD CURRENCY LOAN FOR GRAIN PURCHASES AND EXTRA DELIVERIES OF FOOD AND CONSUMER GOODS, THE MARKET SITUATION SEEMS CERTAIN TO DETERIORATE FURTHER. ALTHOUGH THE RUSSIANS MAY HAVE ACCEPTED THE NEED FOR KANIA TO MAKE CONCESSIONS OVER THE STATUTES OF SOLIDARNOSC, THEY ARE LIKELY TO BE DISPLEASED BY HIS MISJUDGEMENT OF THE ATTITUDE OF SOLIDARNOSC AND HIS MISHANDLING OF THE ISSUE; THEIR CONFIDENCE IN HIM WILL NO DOUBT HAVE BEEN WEAKENED.

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