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THE USSR IN THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PRESIDENT WOJCIECH JARUZELSKI IN 1989–1990

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INTRODUCTION

The outcome of the parliamentary elections of 4 June 1989 and the subsequent decision of the United People's Party and the Democratic Party to abandon allegiance to the Polish United Workers' Party and to form a coalition with the Citizen's Parliamentary Club, opened many new perspectives and questions. Among them were the most important ones about the direction, scope and scale of political changes and foreign policy goals. The victory of the Solidarity camp did not mean an easy way to changes. For several months, Poland was the only country in the Eastern bloc in which the communists lost their monopoly on the exercise of power. The geopolitical environment was not prepared for it, which was exemplified by Nicolae Ceausescu's proposal, repeated on various occasions, to intervene in Poland on the basis of Brezhnev's doctrine. In the USSR struggling with a crisis, Gorbachev, however, was not inclined to accept this motion. He had another idea for getting out of trouble, he developed a wide range of his own reforms, he tried to communicate with the West, especially the USA. He was rather winding up the fronts of confrontation than was ready to open new ones. When Ceausescu wanted intervention, Gorbachev declared the right of nations to self-determination and the twilight of spheres of influence. The

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rigid bipolar division of the world was losing its sharpness. Gorbachev was systematically informed about Polish matters by Wojciech Jaruzelski, the then head of the Polish United Workers' Party and the chairman of the Council of State. He gave his consent to the Round Table talks and he was informed about their results (Kowal, and Cieřlik 2015: 283, Strzelczyk 2002: 20). And although the result of the Polish elections surprised him, he lived believing that these changes would not overturn either the mutual relations or the socialist system of the state.

In addition to the already known literature and published documents and memoirs, the article is based on the files from the Presidential Archives and the PPR Historical Records Archive Foundation, not used so far in analyses of international relations. It focuses attention on the president's views and activities, which are less known than the government's actions. It shows a complicated process of reducing dependence on the USSR, of the government's determination as well as caution, argues with the thesis about the government's policy of Finlandisation. The government's actions are juxtaposed with the communists' and the president's activity. It puts forward a thesis that in spite of differences in attitudes to the USSR and systemic issues, the president got into the chariot that carried Poland to the West. The communists' influence gradually weakened, which Jaruzelski was well aware of.

1. THE STARTING POINT

A clear thaw in international relations opened up chances for reforms in Poland. People wanted to live more easily. They were fed up with shortages, queues and rationing of goods. However, the results of the public opinion poll of the Public Opinion Research Centre announced on 10 May 1989 prove the significant inertia of citizens' views and the effectiveness of previous propaganda, which in general did not make it easier for the new authorities to take sensitive political decisions. Over 60% of the respondents had a positive attitude to the USSR. Negative – less than 10%. Nearly 80% had a liking for Gorbachev. No liking – 5%. Nearly 70% supported the reforms he was carrying out. Opponents constituted only 1%. Almost 60% thought that their effect would be a thorough reconstruction of the USSR. Polish-Soviet relations were positively assessed by almost 64% of the respondents, fewer than in 1987, when there were over 75% of such responses. Almost 66% opted for maintaining the membership of the Warsaw Pact, but this

percentage dropped in comparison to the previous year, when it exceeded 70%. Almost 32% were against the membership. In this group, over 81% declared that Poland should remain a neutral state, and only slightly over 13% that it should be associated with NATO. On the list of allied states the USSR dominated – over 39%. Among hostile countries – the FRG – over 35%. 16% of the respondents regarded the USSR as a hostile state (Public Opinion Research Center CBOS 1989).

Thus, new Poland had to create itself anew in conflict with strong views but in symbiosis with the hopes for improving the lot. Tasks that the first non-communist government, headed by Tadeusz Mazowiecki, faced were neither easy nor banal. They had to take into account the interests of voters and current and future foreign allies, divergent intentions of parties forming the government coalition. The Polish United Workers' Party manned four ministries, victorious Solidarity – twelve. Among these four were the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Communists failed to obtain the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, despite the fight. The prime minister appointed Krzysztof Skubiszewski, a professor of international law at the University of Poznań, to the ministerial post (Mazowiecki 2012: 52, Torańska 2004)¹. It was another failure of the communists. Jaruzelski's election to the office of president by a majority of just one vote was also a crippled victory (FADH G I/23, k. 64)². Jaruzelski was quickly made to realise that despite huge powers that the constitution of the Polish People's Republic, amended in April 1989, gave him there was no chance for a proprietary policy, that he was a hostage to the contract, from which he would be freed only by a desperate counterattack involving physical violence. However, it was not what he wanted for many reasons and after some time he was incapable of carrying it out. He clearly sought to replace the image of the person responsible for martial law or the massacre at the Coast in 1970 with the image of a reformer meeting the expectations of Poles. But that was not what his associates from the Polish United Workers' Party wanted (Ciosek 2014: 44, 47, Dudek 2010: 228–231, Koseski, Szaflik, and Turkowski: 2004, 375). The state of tear between the 'in-group' and 'outsiders' became an additional element weakening the position of the president. The removal of communists from power successively in all countries of the eastern camp until the end of 1989 made Jaruzelski a more and more distinctive relic of the past.

¹ The more Jaruzelski and Rakowski pressed for manning the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the more Mazowiecki realised that he would not be able to move Poland from the East to the West with the help of communist officials.

² On doubts in the ranks of Solidarity.

His weakening position was noticed by his immediate surrounding (FADH G I/24, k. 16, 31–32, 124, Rakowski 2005: 575). From the spring of 1990 this was reflected in talks with foreign guests and increasingly clear declarations of the readiness to resign from office.

Hence, if not on his own accord, but under the pressure of events, he ascertained that:

‘My main task was to guarantee security, the evolutionary character of changes, a kind of “soft landing”. The direction of the reforms has already become irreversible’ (Jaruzelski 2001: 100).

Thus, he adopted a passive attitude, which other participants of the political game saw (Geremek and Żakowski 1990: 252). The prime minister remarked:

‘I saw in him a man who safeguards changes on the part of old structures, primarily the army. I had good contacts with President Jaruzelski, especially when the Polish United Workers’ Party still existed. When there were difficulties within the club, when problems arose, General Jaruzelski had a toning-down effect. In international matters, especially in relation to the USSR, in talks with Gorbachev he acted in the right direction, enabling me to make contact’ (Balcerowicz 2014: 176, Mazowiecki 2012: 68).

It can be inferred from Mazowiecki’s words that Jaruzelski certainly did not interfere with the implementation of the government’s programme, he supported it in international contacts, which does not mean that he had the same convictions. This article is devoted to these differences in the president’s and the government’s views on basic political goals.

2. THE GOALS OF THE SOLIDARITY GOVERNMENT

The head of advisers to the Prime Minister, Waldemar Kuczyński, clearly stated the intentions of the solidarity team:

‘The main goal was clear to us from the beginning – to dismantle communism to the end, but safely, so that this red star would not explode in our hands’.

Defining the perspective, however, was not sufficient. The methods of the plan implementation were equally important: Mazowiecki wanted to set the course clearly but avoiding words that could produce a bad echo both in the Polish United Workers’ Party, which had all the power in its hands, and in the Kremlin, where a fuss could be made because the most important country in the communist bloc announced a return to ‘capitalism’ (Kuczyński 1992: 36).

This scenario found its expression in Mazowiecki's inaugural address given in the Sejm on 12 September 1989. In matters of international relations, he presented the idea of a sovereign state, building its relations on a partner basis, excluding dominance and the use of force. He announced the opening of the economy especially to the European Communities. The programme of internal reforms, which focused on democratisation and the rule of law, ended the era of the political monopoly of communists (Sprawozdania Stenograficzne z posiedzeń Sejmu PRL, 1989 r., 7th session, September 12, 6–23). Against this background the assurance about respecting the existing allied commitments did not sound very convincing. It also resulted from a lack of alternative propositions. It was not a good time for turning over the existing security systems. The West focused on ending disarmament talks with the USSR. The vision of chaos and abrupt changes in the East suppressed hasty decisions.

The implementation of the government's plans was reflected in the amendment to the constitution of 29 December 1989 (Ustawa o zmianie Konstytucji PRL z dnia 29 grudnia 1989 r.). Provisions saying that Poland is a socialist state, the Polish United Workers' Party – the 'guiding political force' and friendship and cooperation with the USSR – a determinant of international position were removed. The Polish United Workers' Party deputies also voted for this change, and the president signed it quickly, a few hours after its adoption.

Therefore, in his next speech in the parliament, on 18 January 1990, Mazowiecki was able to say:

'We have opened a new chapter in Polish-Soviet relations. They are not determined by ideology and relations between communist parties. They have become the normal relations of states and their governments, guided by the good of their nations and *raison d'état*' (Sprawozdania Stenograficzne z posiedzeń Sejmu RP, 1990 r., 18th session, January 18–20, p. 18, see also Torańska 2004)³.

Minister Skubiszewski went even further in his first speech in the Sejm on 26 April 1990. He talked about 'non-bloc cooperation' in the field of security and about an urgent task of signing an association agreement with the European Communities (Ceranka 2013: 5–19). Certainly, neither the Polish nor the Soviet communists liked the words about 'clearing international relations of satellite-like relations'. However, they were in harmony with Skubiszewski's

³ About how the Soviet omnipresence irritated the prime minister, see his interview (Torańska 2004).

earlier statement about the obsolescence of the Yalta Declaration and the twilight of spheres of influence (Skubiszewski 1997: 15, 21).

At that time it was impossible to say more or boast of really taken actions (Bereś, Burnetko, and Romanowski 1994, Skubiszewski 1997: 77). The visible effects of building a network of connections between the countries of Central Europe, as well as dual-track policy (separate shaping of relations with the USSR and the republics trying to regain independence), weakened the role of the USSR in the region, as these were not planes of cooperation with the Soviets but with the Western world. The intention was for the USSR to transform from a dominating state into a partner of mutual relations. This vision was not convenient for communists.

The unambiguous elimination of the USSR's interference in Poland's internal affairs, especially in its foreign policy, making the slogan of the 'road to the West' the guiding principle is in a flagrant contradiction with the thesis put forward in some papers about the adoption of the concept of 'Finlandisation' in relations with the eastern neighbour by Mazowiecki's government. All intellectual achievements of the democratic opposition, including of Mazowiecki, Skubiszewski and Geremek, and the position of Russians who were not seduced by pleasant words also contract this thesis. They knew the power of other arguments: military power, the role of the main supplier of basic raw materials, their own role in the process of the re-unification of Germany and the position of the West which still recognised the USSR as the main partner in security policy. They did not hide their disappointment with the course of affairs in Poland.

On 17 September 1989 Rakowski gave an account of remarks of head of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union who could not understand the reasons for giving power to Mazowiecki, which began the change of relations with the USSR and Poland's road to the West. In his opinion, the idea of building capitalism and not repairing communism, which was the USSR's intention, was bad and pernicious. These observations were accompanied by threats that Poland would lose the support of the USSR, and consequently its borders could return to those of the Congress Kingdom (Rakowski 2005: 523). Also the soviet ambassador in Berlin told Rakowski about being shocked with the state of affairs in Poland (Rakowski 2005: 533). These words are in accord with the form of congratulations sent from the Kremlin to Mazowiecki after he took up the post of prime minister. It was a one-sentence letter signed by the Council of Ministers, without any handwritten word or signature of the sender.

3. SOVIET AND POLISH COMMUNISTS ABOUT THE FOREIGN POLICY PROGRAMME OF THE POLISH GOVERNMENT

A meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was devoted to Polish matters (Dudek 2010: 269–280). The willingness to continue fulfilling alliance commitments caused the greatest concern. It was admitted that the reorientation towards the West had to weaken relations with the East. The Soviets treated declarations of loyalty as a diplomatic subterfuge. They took into account the systematic withdrawal of communists from power, including the removal of Jaruzelski. They ordered a review of bilateral agreements and the preparation of a position on the expected demands for reduction or withdrawal of troops, an explanation of ‘blank spots’, and especially of the Katyń massacre. At the same time, it was recommended to preserve all appearances of good cooperation in contacts with Poles.

Doubts about the possibility of defending the current system were growing slowly among the Polish and Soviet communists.

In the analysis prepared for the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party after the defeated June elections, it was stated that this did not mean the defeat of political system (Dudek 2010: 131). Gorbachev spoke in a similar vein at a meeting of the Warsaw Pact leaders in Bucharest on 8 July 1989. He even stated that the future of the world depended on the future of socialism. Although this system needed reforms, they would give socialism its second wind. He was echoed by Jaruzelski pointing to the perspective of devising modern criteria for the development of socialism and the hope of defeating ‘opposition’ ‘on the basis of the principles of our system’ by acquiring new allies (Dudek 2010: 142–144, 152, 155). None of the communist leaders indicated what reforms should be undertaken. Gorbachev enumerated only goals: to mobilise people, to increase work efficiency. He mentioned the lack of a specific perestroika programme in a conversation with Rakowski who bravely echoed: ‘we do not have a specific plan of revival now’ (Dudek 2010: 304–305). Jaruzelski was equally enigmatic. In a conversation with Egon Krenz he outline a vision of socialism that was

‘economically effective, socially just, politically democratic, ethically, psychologically and morally attractive and close to people’ (Dybicz, and Sołtysiak 2008: 67).

For all communist leaders the West and capitalism had negative connotations. References to oppression, exploitation, and imperialism predominated

in their conversations. And yet everyone expected financial, technological and modernisation assistance from the West. The tradition of the division into ‘us’ and ‘them’, a sense of community within the former camp, recognition of Moscow as a leader pulling the strings still prevailed.

Jaruzelski supplemented these threads of thinking with the assessment of the prospects of the struggle for power in the Kremlin. He fervently supported Gorbachev, seeing the scurrilous attacks of conservatives seeking to restore the previous form of government. He feared that the USSR might be undermined by nationalisms, especially Great Russian one (Archiwum Prezydenta RP 28/4, k. 232). The USSR reforming itself and opening to the West was a safer neighbour. Therefore, in all his conversations with foreign guests, Jaruzelski emphasised his appreciation for Gorbachev himself and his actions.

There are no grounds for doubting Jaruzelski’s words addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Eduard Shevardnadze, that ‘for Poland, the role of the USSR as a guarantor of security and our borders is very important’ and that cooperation with the West ‘cannot take place at the expense of cooperation with USSR’ (Archiwum Prezydenta RP 12/37, t. 1). In the case of Jaruzelski, however, the sense of ties with the Kremlin never crossed the border drawn up by Poland’s interests. In sources from 1989–1990 there is no sign that he played a Soviet card for personal purposes. There is also no sign of undermining the government’s position. We cannot say the same about the last First Secretary of the Polish United Workers’ Party, Rakowski, or the Polish ambassador in Moscow, Włodzimierz Natorf. Both gave expression of greater loyalty to the Kremlin than to Warsaw, in fact in the form of a denunciation in which they confirmed the pro-Western course of the government, the intention to liquidate socialism, allied unfaithfulness, the rise of anti-Sovietism, the government’s financial calculation of Poland’s losses to the USSR (Dudek 2010: 313, 316, 319).

In this situation, Jaruzelski’s and his communist associates’ positions on matters of fundamental importance to Poland’s foreign policy clearly diverged. Contrary to the opinion of his associates, in March 1990, Jaruzelski did not protest against foreign policy assumptions presented to him. This document did not belong to the public domain, so it used a message addressed to a small group of policy makers. Wiesław Górnicki, one of the president’s closest collaborators, wrote furiously in his note that Skubiszewski reviewed the 45-year list of political priorities, assumed ‘full integration of Poland with the West in all sections’, proposed a ‘new approach to the USSR, where this country ceases to be a formal guarantor of our borders and becomes just one

of important partners', and 'policy towards the USSR is characterised mainly by postulates and pretensions' (FADH G I/24).

The evolution of Jaruzelski's attitude was evidenced by his visit to the USSR in April 1990. The content of the talks also attested to the change of Gorbachev's views. That spring, neither of the presidents brought up the question of socialism, its strengthening or resurrection. Gorbachev even pointed to the introduction of the democratic system and market economy in the USSR (FADH J II/96, k. 9–11). All topics discussed by Jaruzelski were in the catalogue of expectations of Mazowiecki's government. He also lavished praise on him. He talked about the need to fill 'blank spots' in the history of both countries, including the most important one – Katyń. He demanded rights for the Polish minority in the USSR, the return of 'Polish cultural objects', the recovery of Poland's losses on joint investments. He also drew attention to the necessity of resolving the question of the Soviet troop presence in Poland and the need to reform the Warsaw Pact. He also brought up the issue of revising the agreement on friendship (FADH G I/ 105, k. 1–10). In a speech delivered on 13 April during a gala dinner in the Kremlin, he concluded that under the existing agreement on friendship

'our sense of national dignity and sovereignty had often been seriously challenged' and the new order 'should reflect the new shape of Polish-Soviet relations, based on equal rights and the principle of partner respect, mutual benefits, and modern rules of economic cooperation' (Jaruzelski 2001: 61–62).

However, the presented ideas of sovereignty, reforms of the Warsaw Pact, regulation of the rules of the stay of Soviet troops did not mean complete overturning of Polish-Soviet relations, the abandonment of an old ally for the benefit of a new one. Jaruzelski was not ready for such an act of apostasy. Probably Gorbachev's words that the direction of changes in Poland was not indifferent to him still resounded in his head (Dudek 2010: 297, 322)⁴, the words repeated during his April visit to Moscow: 'for us Poland is not an opportunistic but a strategic ally' (FADH G I/105, k. 3). The border of this alliance was to be creation of 'an effective non-bloc security system in Europe' (FADH G I/105, k. 3). Jaruzelski accepted this concept as his own although external circumstances were not favourable.

By the end of 1989 communists lost power in the former eastern bloc. The traditional role of the Kremlin as the superior of their activities was over.

⁴ Among others in a conversation in Berlin at the beginning of October 1989 (Dudek 2010: 297), in conversations with Rakowski (Dudek 2010: 322).

The system of international relations based on the ideology and co-operation of communist parties was becoming obsolete. Thus, the role of the USSR weakened. Mostly, its external empire was crumbling. The independence aspirations of the union republics were also growing. The Soviet decision-makers faced the more and more urgent question of how to defend the superpower status of the USSR.

4. FROM THE WARSAW PACT TO THE NATO

The existence of the Warsaw Pact was one of the most important arguments in the USSR's game for a position in the world. The range of the military block determined the sphere of influence. What counted was not the firepower of the member states, less important in comparison with the arsenal of the Kremlin, but the very fact of belonging to the Bloc. It was an authentic, though not articulated publicly, area of conflict between the policy of Poland and of some other Central European countries and Soviet policy. It was also a line demarcating the position of communists, including the president, from the views of the Solidarity camp.

The scale of the problem shows the difficulty that the supporters of a full turn to the West had to overcome, including security issues. Both Mazowiecki and Skubiszewski were fully aware of how breakneck these notions were. They assumed the necessity of engaging Poland in all available forms of activity of the West. Getting close to NATO was the most difficult goal, but pursued from the very beginning of the rule. In contrast to Czechoslovakia and Hungary, it was not disclosed publicly (Skubiszewski 1999: 11, Skubiszewski n.d.: 2/18). The proximity of the goals became, however, a convenient platform for the creation of the Visegrad Triangle. The partners realised that their intentions would not be implemented without dismantling the Eastern bloc, which conflicted them with the Soviets (Archiwum Prezydenta RP 44/37)⁵.

Skubiszewski began to wear away a stone with the speech at the UN session on 25 September 1989. Then he presented the intensions in a conversation with his Canadian colleague Joe Clark on 12 February 1990, with a request for dissemination among the members of the Alliance. He wanted NATO to cease to recognise the USSR's hegemony over Poland

⁵ At the meeting of the heads of the general staff of the Warsaw Pact members, the defence minister of the USSR D. Yazov rebuked his counterpart F. Siwicki for 'the fact that of some countries of the Warsaw Pact were drifting towards NATO'.

and its neighbours, and even desire to surround this region with its own security guardianship. At the same time, he sought to avoid a situation in which Poland or Central Europe would find themselves in a kind of security vacuum, a 'grey zone', which he mentioned in many speeches, interviews and articles (Kuźniar 2011: 383, Skubiszewski 1994: 12, Skubiszewski 1997: 101). In the face of the re-unification of Germany, he took up this thread in talks at the Brussels NATO Headquarters with Secretary General Manfred Wörner and ambassadors of the member states. In August 1990, a Polish liaison mission was created at the NATO Headquarters. In September, Wörner visited Poland. He recommended caution and stated, similarly to Zbigniew Brzeziński (Brzeziński 2002: 53–54, 141–142), or Henry Kissinger (Archiwum Prezydenta RP 28/4), that the expansion of the Alliance at this moment was impossible, although it essentially had an open character.

Despite the observance of the principle of caution in utterances, the statements of the Polish minister became more and more radical. In October 1990, in an interview for *Nowy Dziennik*, a Polish Diaspora weekly published in New York, he said that the Warsaw Pact ceased to be a 'platform for useful cooperation' for Poland and was not needed to have good relations with the USSR (Skubiszewski 1997: 95). He talked in the same vein at the meeting of the North Atlantic Assembly in November 1990. He considered the Warsaw Pact to be 'a product and an element of the past' which 'was going to be dissolved' because, contrary to NATO, it did not survive the test of time (Skubiszewski 1997: 100–101).

The first clear symptoms of the collapse of the current Warsaw Pact formula appeared at the annual meeting of foreign ministers and defence ministers of member countries, which took place in Warsaw at the end of October 1989. The first problem turned out to be the adoption of English as a conference language. Some delegates did not have such interpreters. Poland supported by Czechoslovakia and Hungary, guided by the principle of civilian control over the army and national interest, not used in Warsaw Pact, refused to sign military tasks, which were designated to individual member states. It also put forward a postulate not to combine the command of the Warsaw Pact with the function of the deputy minister of defence of the USSR. In the political part, a novelty was the declaration of

'observing the right of every nation to decide for itself about its fate (...), to choose the path of its development (...) without interference from the outside' (Kuźniar 2011: 130).

The Warsaw Pact was turning into an empty shell. After three sessions of the team authorised to reform the Pact, the prospect of the liquidation of its military and political organs seemed the clearest. The Kremlin did not like the conclusion, therefore it blocked the meeting of the Advisory Political Committee until Hungary supported by Czechoslovakia and Poland threatened to withdraw from the alliance (Kuźniar 2011: 130, Strzelczyk 2002: 177).

The Polish communists shared the Kremlin's position. An expression of their views was the Defence Doctrine of the Republic of Poland adopted by the President on 21 February 1990, perceiving the role of the Warsaw Pact in the country's security system, subject to a change 'if a European security system was built' (Leszczyński, and Koseski 2001: 30). It was difficult to find supporters of NATO in this camp. Rather, they were inclined to recall the amount of missiles aimed at Poland than to seek support from this side (Górnicki 1994: 361, Żurawski *vel* Grajewski 2016: 20). Jaruzelski would agree to dissolve the Warsaw Pact only on condition of the simultaneous NATO dissolution (Anon. 1989), that is he copied Gorbachev's position (Archiwum Prezydenta RP 12/37, t. 2). He said similar words in his conversation with Shevardnadze, stressing that he understood his function as a guarantor of existing alliances (Archiwum Prezydenta RP 12/37, t. 1). He expressed the same view during a conversation with Gorbachev in April 1990. The Declaration ending this meeting also stated that

'until the creation of an effective non-bloc security system in Europe, which Poland and the USSR will promote, the Warsaw Pact remains an important factor of peace and stability on our continent' (FADH J II/96, k. 16).

The direction of permissible changes was defined in the analysis prepared for the president, speaking about the democratisation of command structures, the dominance of defensive objectives over offensive ones, the partnership of the members (FADH WG-T/TSP/J, Moraczewski n.d., p. 8).

The order to retreat had to come from the outside, because none of the communist leaders could afford such disloyalty, despite full awareness that the system was ending. A splendid illustration of the feeling of decline was Górnicki's account of the DKP meeting on 7 June 1990. The mere statement that the debate lasted 2 hours 11 minutes must be considered meaningful. Similarly, differences in the rank of sent delegates can prove the same. The secretary general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the liquidation of

relations with the Warsaw Pact came from the GDR, from Hungary – the director general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

‘The whole era was ending, the socialist camp and the Warsaw Pact were dying, even the creator of perestroika got under the fire of his own artillery’ (Górnicki 1994: 368).

Jaruzelski showed certain restraint in the matters of the Warsaw Pact and NATO. It is difficult to notice his any non-verbal activity in this field. He neither counteracted the processes of the Warsaw Pact disintegration, nor supported the way to NATO. Such an attitude showed that his soul was still in the old relation but he did not want to harm the government’s policies. He did not nod in agreement in a conversation with Kissinger, who stated:

‘Realistically, Poland cannot join NATO, Poland should not even think about it, because it would cause a shock in the Soviet Union and spark off a crisis’ (Archiwum Prezydenta RP 28/4).

5. THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS

A derivative of the attitude towards the Warsaw Pact and the prospects of accession to NATO was the problem of withdrawing Soviet troops from Poland. A categorical announcement of such actions and negotiations was included in Skubiszewski’s first speech in April 1990 (Ceranka 2013: 12). In September that year, after making a secret note for the highest authorities and sending a note to the Kremlin via the Soviet embassy, during the discussion in the Senate, Skubiszewski complementarily pointed to the technical issues of the withdrawal process as well as the deadline – the end of 1991 (Skubiszewski 1997: 77). The slow pace of negotiations forced him, however, to change the announcement (Wieliński, and Wroński 2013). The dismissal of Shevardnadze, blamed for the loss of the world role of the USSR, meant a shift in Soviet politics and the beginning of a downturn for all activities that would lead to undermining the importance of Moscow. Hence the prolongation of the Polish-Soviet talks.

However, the determination of Polish negotiators was obvious. The delay in the realisation of the intent to get rid of Soviet troops, alleged sometimes in publications, resulted from fear of the consequences of German re-unification. Particular concern was caused by the 10-point re-unification programme of Chancellor Helmut Kohl of 28 November 1989, in which border issues were not raised at all, though they were discussed in public in the Federal Republic

of Germany in a form that could not be liked in Poland (Mazowiecki 2012: 96, 100–101, Skubiszewski 1997: 29–33). Mazowiecki and Skubiszewski wanted the German side to legally recognise the Polish western border before signing the re-unification act. Many diplomatic interventions were undertaken, views were discussed and agreed upon with G. Bush, M. Thatcher, F. Mitterand. Gorbachev's position in this context was also very important. These actions yielded results, although the order of the signed treaties was opposite to that Skubiszewski strived for.

Starting talks with Russians about the withdrawal of their troops only after settlement of the German issue illustrates, therefore, not a vassal reluctance to take up the topic, but the caution with which they moved in the international space, trying to take the least risky and at the same time effective actions.

The attitude of Jaruzelski and his entourage to the Soviet army and its presence in Poland differed significantly from that of the government. In a peculiar confession, publication from the borderline of memories and political polemics, the general wrote:

'It should not be forgotten that it was the Soviet Army – regardless of various negative side costs – that swept away the genocidal occupant from Poland, extinguished the crematoria ovens, left on our land 600,000 dead soldiers. Talking about the "second occupation" insults millions of Poles on the one hand, putting them in the role of a kind of "collaborators", on the other hand it harms our relations with Russia, with Russians who value their decisive participation in the victory over Nazi Germany' (Jaruzelski 2011: 120–121).

This quote illustrates some important issues. For Jaruzelski the USSR was the primary reference point, the main partner in the international dimension. The passage of time did not change much in this attitude. In a conversation with Soviet minister Katushev, he confessed:

'I will be the last person who would call for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the GDR (...) and consequently from Poland' (Archiwum Prezydenta RP 28/4).

When, at the beginning of August 1990, Skubiszewski's note was sent to the presidential office announcing the intention to submit the proposal to start negotiations with Russians, Jaruzelski's environment reacted quite sharply. The note was considered 'insidious' with two hidden goals: 'introduction of Poland to NATO; the withdrawal of the Soviet army is just a pretext' and the fulfilment of Skubiszewski's ambitions, who wanted to go down in history as the one who 'liberated Poland from the Soviet occupiers' (FADH G I/ 24b). And, although even then the chancellery accepted the prospect of withdra-

wing troops, it moved it into a very distant future, beyond the end of the century. It combined this process with the creation of a European collective security system.

In his conversation with Gorbachev in April 1990 Jaruzelski only brought up the issue of resolving ‘the question of the Soviet troop presence in Poland’ (FADH G I/105, k. 6). The summary of the visit confirmed the readiness to enter into talks in accordance with the statement of the Soviet government of 12 February 1990 (FADH J II/96, k. 17). Jaruzelski referred to this statement earlier, in public, at a conference in Davos and for the Polish press. On both occasions he conditioned the acceptance for the withdrawal of troops on the creation of a new security system (Poprzeczko 1990: 13, Reitter 1990).

Roman Kuźniar succinctly commented on the difference in the government’s and the president’s approach to this issue: The president’s office satisfied the demands of Moscow, and the government showed greater vigilance and strictness (Kuźniar 2012: 57). However, the convergence of positions and activities is clearly visible in one issue: the German one. Jaruzelski, similarly to the Prime Minister and the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, viewed it as a threat to Poland. Together they launched a diplomatic offensive (Dudek 2010: 395–413, Jaruzelski 2011: 72)⁶. Apart from the real ambiguity of German intentions, common generational experience, especially war experience, could play a role.

6. THE DEATH OF THE COUNCIL FOR MUTUAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

In contrast to the package of issues related to the future of the Warsaw Pact, the problem of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance did not electrify anyone. Skubiszewski in his first speech clearly presented the attitude of the government to this structure as a ‘relic of a bygone era’, the reconstruction of which may prove to be difficult and unnecessary as it is not conducive to cooperation with the countries of the region (Ceranka 2013: 16). It was obvious that only the USSR showed commitment to maintaining this

⁶ The president himself related his involvement in this way: ‘The final international “sealing” of the border (...) took place (...) in September 1990. The road to this final was difficult. It was necessary to overcome strong resistance of Germany, Chancellor Helmut Kohl, to use the support of the USSR and other bloc countries, and finally to gain understanding of the West, especially the USA. In this direction, I, as president and Tadeusz Mazowiecki, as prime minister, worked together...’ (Jaruzelski 2011: 72).

mechanism. As early as the end of September 1989 the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union expressed concern about the direction of changes in Poland that might harm the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and affect the relations between members (Dudek 2010: 273, 280). When the reach of ‘Autumn of Nations’ expanded, a commission for reforming the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance was established. However, it was unable to accomplish the set tasks and a decision was made to dissolve the organisation (Malewicz 2008: 189). Gorbachev’s persuasion to proceed with the organisation cautiously, to let it calmly adapt to the new conditions did not help (FADH G I/105, k. 7). The expectations of the member states, with the exception of the USSR, had shifted towards the European Communities.

7. HISTORY AS AN AREA OF DISSENT

A separate chapter in Polish-Soviet relations was history and reference to negative experiences accumulated over the centuries, and especially in the twentieth century. Stalinist crimes and the Katyń massacre were at the forefront, the explanation of which the Polish government was canvassing. It also wanted to commemorate the victims, compensation for the persecuted and convicted. It solicited the return of Polish plundered cultural objects.

Gorbachev treated these claims as a political bargaining chip. He retreated where he felt internal pressure, because Russians also began to ask about their citizens murdered by the communist apparatus of violence. He therefore agreed to issue a communication which attributed responsibility for the Katyń massacre to the NKVD, departing from the template of German perpetration. It was difficult to notice, however, any effort taken to popularise the corrected version. This failure was noted by a reporter of the meeting of the Polish and Soviet delegations in April 1990 (FADH J II/96, k. 17–18). Till the end of his reign, Gorbachev was cheating Polish interlocutors, including the prime minister and the president (Dudek 2010: 443), that the crime files were still being sought. He had got acquainted with the set of the most important decisions just after taking office. And he did not make these documents public, his successor Boris Yeltsin did it.

But even to the modest extent to which he agreed to retreat, Gorbachev undertook a political game. He was able to give a list of the executed to the prime minister during his visit to Moscow. He preferred, however, to act in Jaruzelski’s (Nałęcz 2017: 58) favour, and he gave him copies of two files

containing the names of the 14,793 murdered prisoners from the camps in Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostaszków. It is also possible that he would have preferred not to raise this issue at all, but the Polish president conditioned paying a visit on progress in explaining the Katyń massacre (Maciszewski 2010: 406).

In the second half of the eighties, especially after Gorbachev announced the slogan of glasnost, the Polish United Workers' Party started to demand the explanation of 'blank spots' in relations with the USSR, war crimes, deportations. Jaruzelski described his own actions as well as changes in personal convictions, especially about the Katyń massacre in the preface to the book *Wydrzeć prawdę [Extort the Truth]* by Jarema Maciszewski. However, this is above all a testimony of dissociative identity. On the one hand, it is hard to deny that Jaruzelski wanted to 'extort this truth', but at the same time he did not want to jeopardise relations with Moscow or undermine the position of Gorbachev. He also seemed satisfied with the achieved effects. His words in Moscow in April 1990 sounded as if he got rid of a burden. He said:

'Katyń was a gaping wound in the understanding of Polish society. Currently, after revealing the perpetrators, we can proceed to its cicatrising' (FADH J II/96, k. 10).

He should have realised how far it was from the truth, especially about the perpetrators and settling the crime. He clearly did not want to put too much pressure on historical issues.

A fragment from *Starsi o 30 lat [30 Years Older]* proves this:

'Good relations with neighbours are in our and in their interest. This is a fundamental truth. Various historical events and current misunderstandings should not conceal it. Poland and Russia – Russia and Poland – history has left us different experiences. In us the memory of painful episodes prevails. When this memory turns into 'vindictiveness', it becomes a tool of current policy. Each nation has the right to its own sensitivity. History has left us various sensitivities, we have a special right to them. But you have to bear in mind that others have their memory, often burdened with imperial nostalgia and a few centuries of experience' (Jaruzelski 2011: 119).

CONCLUSION

Looking from a thirty-year perspective at Jaruzelski's presidency and trying to understand its intentions, it is impossible to resist the impression that within a few months after taking office he made a complete reappraisal of his abilities, position and plans. In the spring of 1989, when the parliamentary

elections were called, he felt his own power. After the results were announced, he lost his confidence. Forced to accept the Solidarity government, he began to feel weak. And this feeling only escalated further. In the spring of 1990, he clearly lost the desire to confront the winners, although his surroundings urged him to do so. He was more and more inclined to resign from his post. He did not want to use any of the suggested tricks to defend his office. He realised that his role was over. He declared that he wanted to be a guarantor of a peaceful transformation, and it is difficult to argue with such an assessment. He did nothing to the detriment of the government. He often actively supported the new authorities.

Jaruzelski himself would not have revalued relations with the USSR. He would have accepted some modifications according to the proposals submitted by Gorbachev. No transformation success can be attributed to him. However, he certainly acted as a buffer both in internal relations and with the eastern neighbour. Tadeusz Mazowiecki's government, which consistently sought to bind Poland both with the structures of the Western world and its system of values, was the engine and helmsman of changes, not only in foreign policy.

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THE USSR IN THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PRESIDENT WOJCIECH JARUZELSKI IN 1989–1990

Abstract

The article shows the attempts to overthrow the USSR's hegemony over Poland of the Solidarity camp which on 4 June 1989 won the first free post-war parliamentary elections in Poland. The author presents views and intentions of communists removed from power as a result of the elections from the camp of which the then Polish president, Wojciech Jaruzelski, came from. The amended constitution of the People's Republic of Poland equipped the president with enormous competences. The article reports the history of the president-communist in times of nascent democracy in Poland and his relations with the USSR, who, however, did not take any steps to hinder Poland's accession to the European Union and NATO. The study argues with the thesis that the government pursued the policy of Finlandisation.

The author reached for the files from the Presidential Archives and the PPR Historical Records Archive Foundation, not used so far in analyses of international relations.

Keywords: Polish-Soviet relations, Wojciech Jaruzelski, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Krzysztof Skubiszewski, Warsaw Pact, Comecon, The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, withdrawal of Soviet troops from Poland, Polish-Soviet disputes over history

ZSRR W POLITYCE RZĄDU I PREZYDENTA WOJCIECHA JARUZELSKIEGO W LATACH 1989–1990

Streszczenie

Artykuł ukazuje historię próby obalenia hegemonii ZSRR nad Polską przez obóz „Solidarności”, który 4 czerwca 1989 roku wygrał pierwsze wolne powojenne wybory parlamentarne w Polsce. Autorka przybliży poglądy i zamiary odsuniętych od władzy w wyniku wyborów komunistów, z obozu których wywodził się ówczesny prezydent Polski, Wojciech Jaruzelski. Znowelizowana konstytucja PRL wyposażyła prezydenta kraju w ogromne kompetencje. Artykuł relacjonuje historię prezydenta-komunisty w czasach rodzącej się demokracji w Polsce i jego relacje z ZSRR, który jednak nie wykonał żadnego ruchu, aby utrudnić Polsce wstąpienie do Unii Europejskiej i NATO. Artykuł podejmuje polemikę z tezą o uprawianiu przez rząd polityki finlandyzacji.

Autorka sięgnęła do niewykorzystanych dotąd dla analizy stosunków międzynarodowych źródeł – akt Archiwum Prezydenta i Fundacji Archiwum Dokumentacji Historycznej PRL.

Słowa kluczowe: stosunki polsko-sowieckie, Wojciech Jaruzelski, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Krzysztof Skubiszewski, Układ Warszawski, RWPG, wycofanie wojsk sowieckich z Polski, polsko-sowieckie spory o historię

СССР в политике правительства и президентства Войчеха Ярузельского в 1989–1990 годах

Резюме

В статье представлена история попытки гегемонии СССР над Польшей через лагерь «Солидарность», который 4 июня 1989 года выиграл первые свободные послевоенные парламентские выборы в Польше. Автор иллюстрирует взгляды и намерения отстраненных от власти в результате выборов коммунистов, одним из представителей которых являлся тогдашний президент Польши Войцех Ярузельский. Новелизированная Конституция Польской Народной Республики наделила президента страны большими полномочиями. В статье рассказывается об истории президента-коммуниста

в период становления демократии в Польше и его отношениях с СССР, который, однако, не предпринял никаких шагов, препятствующих вступлению Польши в Европейский Союз и НАТО. Автор также полемизирует с тезисом о том, что правительство проводило политику финляндизации.

Автором были использованы международные источники, которые до этого времени не были востребованы, с целью анализа международных отношений – это такие источники, как акт Архива Президента и архивные фонды исторической документации Польской Народной Республики.

Ключевые слова: польско-советские отношения, Войцех Ярузельски, Тадеуш Мазовецки, Кшиштоф Скубушевски, Совет Экономической Взаимопомощи (СЭВ), вывод советских войск из Польши, польско-советские споры об истории

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